CHAPTER 16

Pindar and Bacchylides*

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Epinician is less rich in characterization than epic or tragedy. Its narratives are generally too short to explore abiding traits of character or to characterize in a dynamic and integrative way. Extended descriptions of appearance or emotions are rare. Dialogue tends to be lacking. We are seldom invited to speculate about character beyond what is on the page, and what is there is often meagre. On the other hand, nearly all techniques of characterization indicated in the Introduction to this book are interestingly in evidence within this corpus, and some poems are spectacularly rich in characterization. These poems offer the most satisfactory starting-point to the subject; the three most impressive cases therefore follow, in ascending order of complexity and scale.

Pythian 9

Of Cyrene in *Pythian* 9, Burton wrote: 'Pindar has succeeded in clothing Cyrene with more personality than almost any other figure in his stories except Jason in *Pythian* 4.'[1] She is described first by the primary narrator-focalizer (18–28), then by Apollo as secondary narrator-focalizer (30–37). A preliminary passing reference to her *physical beauty* (18 *euōlenon*) is followed by the primary narrator-focalizer's description, concentrating on her *actions*: first, her choice of life in general (18–25), consisting of the rejection of normal feminine pursuits (18–19) and the embracing of a heroic out-of-doors life (20–25); second, a specific occasion on which she was seen by Apollo wrestling bare-handed with a lion (26–28). Apollo briefly notes her *physical strength* (30 *megalan dunasin*), then expatiates on her various *qualities of character* (30 *thumon gunaikos*, 31 *atarbei … kephala*(*i*), 31a–32 *mokhthou kathuperthe … / ētor*, 32 *phobō*(*i*) *d' ou kekheimantai phrenes*, 35 *alkas apeirantou*). In case it were not obvious that these add up to sexual desirability, Apollo next ponders out loud whether it is permissible to 'lay his hand on her' on the spot (36–37). As Cyrene is char-

* This chapter, like its predecessors in *SAGN* 1–3, restricts itself to epinician.

1 Burton 1962: 42.

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acterized through Apollo's focalization, so later the *laudandus* Telesicrates is characterized through the focalization of Cyrenaean girls (97–100): 'girls saw you winning often … and prayed silently that you were their beloved husband or son' (with humorous gender reversal of the Cyrene-Apollo scene).[2] Not only a technique of characterization but also various traits of character link Cyrene with Telesicrates or athletes in general, especially her 'heart above toil' (31a–32).[3] Cyrene's *genealogy* (13–18), rehearsed at length prior to the primary narrator-focalizer's description (18–28), prepares for her characterization by emphasizing both 'overweening' human ancestors (14 *Lapithan huperoplōn*) and personified features of the natural world (Oceanus, Naïs, Gaea), befitting one who is to be settled on the 'third' continent (8).[4] Finally, *setting* also contributes to the characterization: the translocation from a windy, rugged Thessalian wilderness (5, 15, 30, 34, 51) to a lovely, fertile Libya (6a–8, 53, 55, 58) prefigures the transformation of Cyrene from virgin daughter of Hypseus to bride of Apollo and mother of Aristaeus.[5] In this process, 'beautiful Cyrene' (17–18 *tan euōlenon / … Kuranan*), the heroine, evolves into Cyrene, eponymous Libyan city(-nymph), 'fatherland of beautiful women' (74 *kalligunaiki patra*(*i*)).

Nemean 10

The climax or *kephalaion*[6] of the mythical narrative (cf. 55–59 and 89–90) consists in the shared mortality/immortality of Castor and Polydeuces and the 'choice' (cf. 59 *heilet'*, 82 *hairesin*) made by Polydeuces to share his immortality with his brother. Names, elsewhere a notable vehicle of characterization in epinician, are used especially creatively in this poem.[7] The twins are referred to as *Tundaridais* (38) before the narrative begins; the patronymic is of course

2 Carey 1981: 75, 98.

3 See Carey 1981: 70–71, 75, 76, 97.

4 Kirkwood 1982: 223 'The Lapith background is violent (as the adjective *huperoplos* suggests) and northern …, befitting this *agrotera* who hunts by night and wrestles a lion'; 224 'the presence of Oceanus in the genealogy and the fact that Hypseus' mother Creusa is a water-nymph (Naïad) and a daughter of Earth add a primeval element to the Thessalian ruggedness.'

5 Cf. Kirkwood 1982: 223.

6 Cairns 2010: 104.

7 For names as a window onto character in epinician, note especially B. 5.173, where the name Daïaneira ominously conjures up through its etymology ('man-/husband-destroyer') the story of Heracles' death (cf. Antiphanes, *Poesis* fr. 189.4–6 *PCG*, for the allusive power of mythological names: 'if the poet just says "Oidipous", [the audience] knows the rest'). This example shows that we should not require etymological plays on names to be made

conventional (*O*. 3.1, 39; *alias*), but imprecise when predicated of them both, as this narrative will go on to show. In the summary narrative of 55–59, they are both said to spend alternate days 'by the side of their dear father Zeus' (55–56), which is imprecise for the opposite reason. In the narrative proper, Polydeuces is called *Lēdas pais* (66)—correctly, but his maternity was never in question. In 73, Polydeuces is *ho Tundaridas*, inaccurately. Polydeuces then invokes Zeus as *Pater Kroniōn* (76): a formula (cf. 29 *Zeu pater*; *P*. 4.23, *Pae*. 15.5, *alias*), yet ironically accurate in Polydeuces' mouth. The authoritative statement of paternity finally comes from Zeus (80–82): 'You are my son; him, therefore, the hero who is her husband dripped as mortal seed when he lay beside your mother.' This is to take *epeita* as inferential, 'therefore', rather than temporal ('subsequently').[8] This translation and interpretation assume that in a world without DNA testing paternity is proven, in such a case, by the mortality of one twin; even Zeus was ignorant until now of which offspring was his.

Polydeuces' immortality, or rather his divine birth, thus emerges as a hidden quality of character that is revealed late, both in his life and in this narrative. Names here, and especially *antonomasia*, characterize indirectly. The continual variation in the signifiers is part of an attempt to grasp the essence of the signified, Polydeuces as immortal son of Zeus. But Polydeuces' decision to share his immortality and paternity with Castor, and to share the latter's with him, renders the two of them alike *both* Tyndaridae *and* Dioscuri; that is, while the revelation of Polydeuces' paternity (80) renders the preceding application of patronymics inaccurate in a first retrospect, Polydeuces' subsequent decision (89) renders them justified in a second retrospect. The patronymics characterize Castor and Polydeuces through contrast and analogy; and that contrast and analogy are reinforced by a further contrast with the Apharetidae. There is no doubting the paternity or the mortality of the latter pair. Their patronymic is applied only once in the narrative (65), with straightforward and stable reference. And here again setting also subtly characterizes; it is not a casual detail that the Apharetidae rallied at their 'father's tomb' (66).[9]

Names (patronymics) are a coarse-grained way of capturing the mortal/immortal character of the Dioscuri and of conveying what is involved in the sharing of that mortality/immortality; more fine-grained characterization is forth-

explicit, *pace* Braswell 1988: 104, 370; Carey 1981: 137. For explicit examples, see: B. 9.12, 14 (Archemorus); B. 6.1–2 (Lachon); *O*. 6.43, 47, 55–57 (Iamus); *I*. 6.49–54 (Ajax). Arguable implicit examples: *P*. 4.6, 51–53, 61–62 (Battus: Currie 2005: 233); *P*. 4.28 (Medea; differently, Braswell 1988: 104); *P*. 4.119 (Jason: see below; differently, Braswell 1988: 370).

8 Cf. *Il*. 5.812–813 (Athena to Diomedes): 'you are not therefore (*epeita*) Tydeus' son.'

9 Cf. *SAGN* 3: 293 (Currie).

coming in 73–90. Polydeuces' choice is made comprehensible by the distinctive way he thinks and feels, revealed in *speech*. The value he attaches to 'loved ones / friends' is declared in his own words (78 *philōn*). His sense of justice is indicated by Zeus' speech (86), having been previously proleptically hinted at by the primary narrator-focalizer (57). These qualities of character resonate also through the non-mythical parts of the ode. Theaeus and his family are 'just men' (54), of whom the Dioscuri 'take care' (54), much as Polydeuces cared for Castor (85–86). The semi-divine twins are 'loyal' (54 *piston*) to this family, as they were to one another (78 *pistoi*); it is they who are responsible for the family's athletic successes (38, 49–54).

Polydeuces' *emotions* are explicit in his tears and groans on finding Castor fatally wounded (75–76), and implicit in his unhesitating decision to revive him (89–90). This is a notable technique found elsewhere in Pindar: in *Olympian* 6, Aepytus' (suppressed) anger at Evadne's pregnancy is explicit at 37–38; his concern for the newly-born Iamus remains implicit in 47–52. In both *Olympian* 6 and *Nemean* 10 we are left to infer that a turn-about in events has brought about a corresponding turn-about in feelings.[10] (We will soon observe a similar technique with Pelias in *Pythian* 4.) These emotions are important to the narrative: Polydeuces' is not a cold, rational, decision, but one springing from very human emotions, which makes that decision comprehensible. There is a palpable difference between Polydeuces' grief for Castor here and that of thoroughbred immortals for the mortals who are close to them in Homeric epic (Ares' for Ascalaphus, say, or Zeus' for Sarpedon, or even Thetis' for Achilles: *Il.* 15.113–114, 16.459–460, 24.84–85).

Other than here, Pindaric heroes do not weep or pray for death. Bacchylidean heroes do: Croesus (3.34–35, 47), Heracles (5.155–157, 160–162), and Proetus (11.85–98)—a sizable proportion of a much smaller oeuvre. The Croesus-scene in particular resembles the Polydeuces-scene: in each, we have tears and the wish for death; a remonstration with divinity; a divine intervention; and finally a form of immortality granted. Yet these similar scenes mask quite different characterizations. Croesus is desperate, resigned, recriminatory, passive; Polydeuces makes an active, heroic choice (77, 89–90)—a variant of *iuncta mors* or *Liebestod*, akin to Phaedrus' portrayal of Achilles as choosing to 'die after' Patroclus in Plato (*Smp.* 179e–180a).[11] We can see that characterization

10 Hutchinson 2001: 396 'events, and Aepytus' feelings, have been completely altered', cf. 391.

11 For Maehler 2004: 92, 93, Croesus is heroic, defiant. Carey 1999: 24, 25 emphasizes despair followed by dramatic *peripeteia*. Cf. Hutchinson 2001: 342, on Croesus: 'Divine criticism is pushed to the furthest point.'

is affected not only by genre, but by individual styles within a genre, or different conceptions of the genre. 'Where Pindar's myths emphasize heroic choice and struggle, Bacchylides' myths frequently emphasize human weakness and ignorance.'[12] This broad difference in active and passive conceptions of heroic character seen in Pindaric and Bacchylidean epinician can also be seen with Sophoclean and Euripidean tragedy, and the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in epic.[13]

Pythian 4

Pythian 4 presents an extraordinarily rich characterization of Jason and Pelias in a ninety-line section of narrative (78–167). Kirkwood comments: 'What is … remarkable is the strength of characterization, the differentiation and conflict of characters in this confrontation … Both are real persons, in contrast with most Pindaric figures. Pelops, Perseus, Tlepolemus, Iamus, and even Heracles are not so much living persons as abstract embodiments of divinely favoured *aretē*.'[14]

Jason is characterized directly through four successive descriptions of his physical appearance, focalized by (a) the primary narrator-focalizer (78–85), (b) Iolcians in the market-place (86–92), (c) Pelias (94–96), and (d) his father (120–123). He is characterized indirectly by his own speeches (101–120 and 136–156 = (g)); his first speech also contains direct self-characterization (especially 104–106). Pelias is characterized indirectly by the emotions attributed to him by the primary narrator-focalizer (73–75, 94–97), and through his own speeches (96–100 = (e) and 156–167 = (f)). He is characterized directly in Jason's speech at 109–112, and characterizes both himself and Jason directly, briefly, in terms of their respective ages, in his second speech (157–158). Each of these subsections, (a)–(g), calls for comment.

(*a*) *Lines 78–85*. The long physical description of Jason given by the primary narrator-focalizer is highly unusual for Pindar.[15] It marks Jason as an important character in this narrative after his conspicuous absence from the preceding Argonautic narrative (10–58). Closely comparable is the long physical description of Theseus at B. 18.46–60 (not an epinician), another unrecognized 'ephebe' returning to his paternal home.[16] Jason carries two spears (like The-

12 Quotation from Carey 1999: 21.

13 Sophocles versus Euripides: Knox 1964: 5. *Iliad* versus *Odyssey*: Cook 1999.

14 Kirkwood 1982: 162–163.

15 Köhnken 1993: 55, with n. 9. Cf. Segal 1986: 57–58.

16 Maehler 2004: 203 'Theseus … is … portrayed as the quintessential Athenian ephebe.'

seus, B. 18.49), and wears 'dual clothing': local Magnesian (Thessalian) dress, plus a leopard skin. Braswell argued that the two spears and leopard skin approximate Jason to the Homeric heroes.[17] But the utilitarian purpose specified for the leopard skin, to ward off precipitation, seems to point in a rustic direction (cf. Hes. *Op*. 543–545), and it has been taken to evoke mountain life or a gift of Chiron.[18] Perhaps we lack the requisite cultural or literary 'script' to make a definite interpretation, or the ambiguity may be at least part of the point. The hair worn long is an ephebic trait; it triggers the coming comparison to Apollo (87).[19]

(*b*) *Lines 86–92*. This *tis*-speech, the vocalization of an anonymous speaker on behalf of a group, is unparalleled in epinician and is a conspicuously Homeric (→) technique.[20] Following the 'objective' description of the primary narrator-focalizer, it presents a subjective, but collective and non-partisan, reaction to Jason's appearance. The Iolcians are 'awed' (86), and proceed to compare Jason with gods and heroes.[21] The signals again are mixed. The gods chosen, Apollo and Ares ('the bronze-charioted husband of Aphrodite'), suggest a mixture of warrior and lover.[22] The comparison with Otus and Epialtes is evidently motivated by Jason's impressive stature (79 *anēr ekpaglos*, in narrator-text), but coupled with Tityus, these comparisons suggest a pattern of transgression (in particular of a sexual nature, 92) followed by punishment: there may be ominous irony here.

(*c*) *Lines 94–96*. The individual reaction of Pelias contrasts with the collective reaction of the *tis*-speech. Whereas the Iolcians 'did not recognize him' (86), Pelias instantly identifies the stranger of the oracle (75–78). The only thing he seems to notice is the missing sandal, and he is the only person who notices it: 'straightaway he was amazed, gazing at the sandal plain to see [*arignōtos*: this, it should be noted, is Pelias' focalization] only on the right foot' (95–96). What is the significance of the single sandal and how does it characterize?[23]

17 Braswell 1988: 174, 176 finds the two spears and the leopard skin 'normally' and 'often' worn by Homeric heroes; cf. Schwartz 2011: 932; differently, Kirk 1985: 267.

18 *Scholl. P*. 4.140a, b; Burton 1962: 154; cf. Kirkwood 1982: 183.

19 Burton 1962: 154; Braswell 1988: 179.

20 Braswell 1988: 181 'As the epic frame (86 and 93–94) shows, it is Homer's technique that the lyric poet is employing.' Cf. de Jong 1987; ead. 2001: 62–63.

21 See Segal 1986: 66–68.

22 Apollo as lover: *HAp*. 208–213.; *Il*. 9.559–560; *P*. 9 (Cyrene); *P*. 3 (Coronis).

23 Some views: Race 1986: 76 'Even his missing sandal symbolizes his half-way position.' Segal 1986: 58 'The key detail of the single sandal marks him out as distinct from others, an anomaly. But it also marks him out as the one chosen by the gods as the winner, the true king.'

Ambivalently, it seems: the deliberate wearing of one sandal might suggest a combat-ready ephebe, but the accidental loss of the other, a careless hick.[24] But we are interested not so much in the original significance of the single sandal as its significance in this narrative. It is surely significant that the sandal is not mentioned in the descriptions given either by the primary narrator-focalizer or by the assembled Iolcians; it features only in the report of the oracle received by Pelias and in Pelias' sizing-up of Jason. Thus it seems to signify, ambivalently again, Jason's power over Pelias (as his predestined killer) and Pelias' upper hand over Jason (as the one knows that destiny and recognizes its omen). The sandal, in other words, characterizes Jason and Pelias essentially in their relationship to one another.

(*d*) *Lines 120–123*. The reaction of Jason's father contrasts again with the group reaction of the Iolcians and the individual reaction of Pelias. No *gnōrisma* is mentioned and apparently none is needed: this is instant, instinctive recognition (120 *ton men … egnon ophthalmoi patros*), unlike other parent-son recognitions (Laertes-Odysseus, Aegeus-Theseus, Creusa-Ion) and more reminiscent, in this regard, of Odysseus and his dog Argus (*Od.* 17.290–327).[25] Aeson's focalization of Jason, 'finest / most beautiful of men' (123) captures, as it were incidentally, a crucial aspect of Jason's character: Jason as *Frauenheld*.

(*e*) *Lines 96–100*. Pelias is characterized directly by the primary narrator-focalizer as having a 'cunning heart' (73 *pukinō*(*i*) … *thumō*(*i*)). He is characterized indirectly through the emotions attributed to him (fear!): he received a 'chilling oracle' (73; *kruoen* is his focalization), warning him to be 'greatly on his guard in every way' (75) against the wearer of a single sandal; on hearing of the stranger's arrival (apparently), he came post-haste (94–95); addressing Jason, he 'suppressed his fear' (96–97). It is debatable exactly how Pelias is characterized through his first speech (97–100). His inquiry into the stranger's country of origin and parentage is in itself formulaic, as is his request for a truthful answer.[26] According to Burton, 'The context is indeed suggestive of rudeness and vulgarity, and Pelias' tone is displayed clearly enough in the highly emo-

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24 Ephebe: Vidal-Naquet 1986: 108; Hornblower 2004: 29; but see Fowler 2013: 206–208. 'Hick': cf. Pherecydes fr. 105 Fowler 'Pelias was going to sacrifice to Poseidon and invited everybody to be present … Jason happened to be ploughing near the river Anauris and crossed it unshod. On crossing it he put on his right sandal but forgot the left one, and so went to the feast.'

25 *Schol. P.* 4.213b, exercised by the implausibility of Aeson's recognition, invents the rationalizing explanation that Aeson had visited Jason in Chiron's cave in the interim.

26 Inquiry into nationality and parentage: cf. *Od.* 1.170, *alias*; *P.* 9.33–35; B. 5.86–88, 18.31–32. Request for a truthful answer: cf. *Od.* 1.169, 174; *alias*.

tive variant of *atrekeōs katalexon* in vv. 99 f. The impression of his character conveyed here is foreshadowed by Hesiod's description of him in *Theogony*, 995 f. … "the arrogant king Pelias, insolent man and wicked worker of violence."'[27] According to Giannini, however, 'The presence in these words of a provocative or intimidatory tone is doubtful.'[28] It is quite plausible that Pelias in 99–100 simply shows himself as a man who deplores disingenuousness (cf. 99 *ekhthistoisi … pseudessi*: compare Achilles, *Il.* 9.312–313), and that he flatters the stranger with the suggestion that an untruthful account of his birth must 'degrade' it (100 *katamianais*).[29] But if not rude or vulgar, Pelias' interrogation is certainly devious. Behind the routine-seeming inquiry is not simple courtesy, but Pelias' desire for specific knowledge: whether the stranger is a descendant of Aeolus, at whose hands or through whose wiles he is fated to meet his end (cf. 71–72). Here and throughout it is unclear to what extent we are entitled to appeal, with Burton, to an intertextual model (Pelias in early epic).[30] It is also unclear whether we may measure him against the negative stereotype of the tyrant.[31]

(*f*) *Lines 156–167*. The emotion behind Pelias' second speech is merely implicit. The speech-introduction ('he replied quietly / gently', 156–157 *aka*(*i*) *d' antagoreusen kai Pelias*), gives little away. Apparently, we know enough now about this character to infer the rest for ourselves (the principle of 'primacy': compare the pattern observed above for Aepytus in *Olympian* 6 and Polydeuces in *Nemean* 10). The key components of Pelias' character, cunning and fear, have, after all, been established early and clearly. We may also hope to understand Pelias' character with reference to the recognizable fictional role he plays: the king who sets hero a (supposed) impossible task to get him out of the way.[32] A

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27 Burton 1962: 155–156. Cf. Segal 1986: 34 n. 4.

28 Giannini in Gentili et al. 1995: 456 'Dubbia in queste parole la presenza di un tono provocatorio e intimidatorio'; cf. Braswell 1988: 189. Köhnken 1993: 58 argues that *P.* 4.101–102 *tharsēsais … ameiphthē*, of Jason, shows that Pelias' speech was offensive; *Od.* 3.75–76 *antion ēuda / tharsēsas*, of Telemachus answering Nestor's inquiry into his identity, shows otherwise.

29 So, approximately, *scholl. P.* 4.172, 177 and Braswell 1988: 191. Cf. Köhnken 1993: 56.

30 Carey 1980: 150 '[Hes. *Th.* 994–995] does not help us with Pindar. If Pindar wants us to see through Pelias' intentions he must help us … That Pelias elsewehere has a sinister motive for suggesting the quest is irrelevant.'

31 Braswell 1988: 186 '[Pelias] resembles in some respects … a typical stage-tyrant.'

32 This is explicitly the role of Pelias at Hes. *Th.* 994–995; Mimn. fr. 11.3 West *IEG*. For others in this role, cf. Aeetes-Jason; Eurystheus-Heracles; king of Lycia-Bellerophon; Polydectes-Perseus. An international tale-type: Thompson 1955–1958: H1211 'Quests assigned in order to get rid of hero', H1212.1 'Quests assigned because of feigned dream.'

vital contribution is made by a striking discrepancy between character-text and narrator-text: Pelias' account to Jason of the oracle he allegedly received from Delphi (163) is exposed—for us—as a trick by our knowledge of the oracle he actually received (73, narrator-text). It is thus not the case that '[Pindar] gives us no hint that Pelias is lying.'[33]

(*g*) *Lines 101–120 and 136–156*. It is harder to establish how Jason is characterized in his two speeches. This is chiefly because Jason gives no indication that he knows he is actually addressing Pelias in his first speech, and because his second speech does not explicitly acknowledge that they have spoken before. But the second speech, which is notably more conciliatory in tone, implicitly 'corrects' the first.[34] In the first speech Jason addressed only the Iolcians (117 *kednoi politai*) and spoke of Pelias in the third person (109 *Pelian*, cf. 111–112); by contrast he opens his second speech with an elaborate periphrastic address (138 *pai Poseidanos Petraiou*). In the first speech, Jason called Pelias 'lacking justice' (109 *Pelian athemin*); in the second, he proposes that they both 'make their characters just' (141 *themissamenous orgas*). In the first speech, Jason referred to Pelias' seizure of his ancestral lands in evaluative and emotive language (110); that reference is toned down in the second speech (149–150). The difference between the two speeches and their implied characterization of Jason is striking, and surely interpretable; but the interpretation is vexed.[35] According to Braswell, Jason in the first encounter 'is still the ephebe', 'basically defensive', while in the second he is 'fully established as the legitimate claimant to the throne who moves to the offensive'; '[t]he dividing of the confrontation into two parts with the intervening scene in which Iason effectively assumes the leadership of his clan has thus allowed Pindar plausibly to present a now mature Iason capable of undertaking the great quest.'[36] But why should Jason undertake this 'great quest' at all, simply to reclaim his birthright? The division of the confrontation into two parts appears above all to be to Pelias' advantage, buying him the time to compose his fear and devise a stratagem. On one possible reading, the conclusion to the confrontation, 'approving this agreement, they parted' (168), implies the success of Pelias' stratagem.[37]

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33 Carey 1980: 150.

34 See Köhnken 1993: 57.

35 Köhnken 1993: 57–58 sees an angry confrontation in the first exchange as being followed by polite diplomacy in the second.

36 Braswell 1988: 186. For a different explanation of the division of the confrontation into two parts, see Carey 1980: 150 with n. 146; Köhnken 1993: 55.

37 For a very different interpretation of 168 and of the scene as a whole, see Köhnken 1993: 58.

What character is revealed in Jason's first speech (102–119)? According to Burton, 'The tone of Jason's [sc. first] speech reflects an attractive character, calm, courteous, and resolute. He gives no sign that he recognizes Pelias; he confronts his insolence with the good manners learnt in the school of Chiron.'[38] Jason, indeed, gives no sign that he recognizes Pelias; *does* he in fact recognize him?[39] This question, crucial to Jason's characterization, is strangely infrequently posed. It is, notably, by Köhnken, who rightly emphasizes the narrator's silence on this point.[40] Köhnken, finding testiness in Jason's first speech, argues that he responds in kind to Pelias' speech, that Pelias' first speech is therefore provocative, and that Jason has recognized Pelias, so that his reference to 'Pelias lacking justice' (109 *Pelian athemin*) is an intentional retort.[41] One could just as easily argue the converse: that Jason has not recognized Pelias, that Pelias' speech is inoffensive, and that Jason speaks with an ill-advised candour about himself and his unrecognized interlocutor, which plays into the latter's hands. That might be what we would expect of a clash between Jason's youth, strength, and ingenuous simplicity and Pelias' fear, (fore)knowledge, and cunning. Medea will, subsequently, be Pelias' match (250 *tan Peliaophonon*); but is Jason, now? Has 'Chiron's teaching' (102) adequately prepared the hero for the challenges he is going to face, now in Iolcus and later? Jason boasts that, in the twenty years spent in Chiron, Chariclo and Philyra's tutelage, he has not 'said any word out of place (*ektrapelon*)' (104–105).[42] Does he do so now, in his first public appearance?

Much in the foregoing is very speculative, and it would be unwise to insist on the correctness of a particular reading of either character.[43] Thankfully, that is ultimately unimportant for our purpose. What is important is that Pindar's narrative here (quite untypically) invites us to read and speculate about character: these characters are mimetically conceived. True feelings and motives

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38 Burton 1962: 156.

39 Pelias' arrival by mule-cart (94; Braswell 1988: 187) probably did not suffice to identify the regent: cf. S. *OT* 750–753; Hdt. 1.59.4. Or perhaps we are to suppose Pelias alighted from his cart and addressed his questions to Jason from among the throng of ordinary Iolcians.

40 Köhnken 1993: 56 'Der Erzähler verschweigt …, ob Jason den fragenden Pelias auf Grund seines Auftretens identifiziert hat (eine Frage, die das begründende Epos wohl nicht offengelassen hätte), ob also seine Bemerkung über den gottlosen Usurpator (V. 109 …) als gezielter Angriff auf sein Gegenüber verstanden werden soll oder nicht.'

41 Köhnken 1993: 56.

42 For the reading *ektrapelon* and its interpretation, see *schol. P.* 4.186a; Braswell 1988: 196. Differently, Gentili and Giannini in Gentili et al. 1995: 130–131, 458–459.

43 Carey 1980: 149–151 offers a positive interpretation of Pelias in the second encounter.

are suppressed, both explicitly (96–97) and implicitly (156–167). That is rare for epinician (but note *O.* 6.37–38; also, of the *laudandus*, *N.* 10.29–30). It would be wrong in this narrative to suppose that, because Aeetes' duplicitous intent in revealing the whereabouts of the fleece is made explicit (243 *elpeto d' ouketi hoi keinon ge praxasthai ponon*), Pelias' intent, if duplicitous, would have to have been made explicit.[44] This ninety-line section of narrative provides (again untypically) integrative and dynamic characterization. The variously focalized descriptions of Jason, (a)–(d) above, build on each other, and the two speech-pairs (Pelias-Jason: 96–100, 101–120; Jason-Pelias: 136–156, 156–167) define each other complexly in turn. And Pindar's narrative guides us throughout very uncertainly in our reading of character. Its silences and indeterminacies are striking.[45] Köhnken sees these as characteristic of 'Pindars lyrische Erzählstil', contrasting the 'explizierend[e] Erzählweise' of Homeric epic.[46] '*Pindar's* lyric narrative style', perhaps; but not 'lyric narrative style', *tout court*: it is hard to think of Stesichorus narrating this way. The characterization here is untypical of Pindar in its extent and depth, yet entirely Pindaric for its complex, clipped, elliptical quality.

We need, finally, to consider another dimension to the characterization in *Pythian* 4 which is fully typical of Pindar: the interaction between the characters of the myth (i.e. of the narrative) and the characters of the reality of the composition. Arcesilas and Damophilus are characterized against the backdrop of the confrontation of Jason and Pelias. The situation of Arcesilas resembles that of Jason, as the legitimate ruler; but Damophilus' situation resembles Jason's, as a returning exile. Each has the potentiality also to resemble Pelias: Arcesilas as the king potentially fearful of the returning citizen; Damophilus as one potentially interested in seeing power wrested from the one who legitimately wields it. Moreover, character traits indicated for each link them to Jason. Arcesilas is metaphorically a 'physician' (270 *iatēr*), sc. of the city-state; a folk-etymology of Jason's name (119) as 'healer' is probably assumed in the mythical narrative.[47] Arcesilas' hand is to be 'gentle' (271

44 *Pace* Carey 1980: 150.

45 On the elliptical winding-up of the first encounter, cf. Burton 1962: 156–157 'Pindar omits all reference to the effect of this announcement on Pelias and passes at once to a new scene with a notable "cut" in the middle of the epode at v. 120. This "cut" would probably have been supplemented in Epic by an account of Pelias' reaction, perhaps in the form of a speech.' See esp. Köhnken 1993: 55 and nn. 7–8, 56 with n. 14.

46 Köhnken 1993: 58.

47 See above on etymological plays in epinician.

malakan khera), like Jason's voice (137 *malthaka*(*i*) *phōna*(*i*)).[48] Arcesilas' obligation to put the city back on its feet (270–276) recalls Jason's role of restoring order (106–107); already Jason's proposal to relinquish royal estates (148–149) 'zoomed' to the historical reality of reforms in late-archaic Cyrene (cf. Hdt. 4.161.3). Damophilus, like Jason, is 'just' by nature (280–281 *dikaian / Damophilou prapidōn*), avoids offensive speech (283, cf. 104–105), and hates *hubris* (284, cf. 112). This ode avoids simple one-to-one equations of the hero of the myth with the *laudandus* (for which see e.g. B. 3.61–66; *P.* 2.15–20, *P.* 6.19–46, *N.* 9.39–42) in favour of the more complex and shifting correspondences that are suited to the (assumed) personal and diplomatic circumstances of this particular commission.[49] Instead of black-and-white positive and negative *exempla* (compare Tantalus and Pelops in *Olympian* 1, Croesus and Phalaris at *Pythian* 1.94–96), Jason and Pelias are painted in shades of grey. Since Jason-Pelias cannot be mapped onto either Arcesilas-Damophilus or Damophilus-Arcesilas, a putative opposition between Arcesilas and Damophilus resolves into something more like harmonious affinity.

The political background of *Pythian* 4 is no doubt part of the explanation of this ode's extraordinary approach to characterization. But also, more simply, the ode's monumental length (itself perhaps a consequence of that political background) made its untypical approach to characterization both possible and necessary.

The Importance of Character to Epinician Narrative

The three poems discussed above are untypical; how important then is character to epinician narrative really? Like space (*SAGN* 3: 285, Currie), character generally tends to be invisible in epinician mythical narratives; sporadic indications of character may be offered when the narrative calls for it, or not at all. Thus, *Nemean* 7 narrates Neoptolemus' journey to and his death and subsequent hero cult at Delphi without any indication of the hero's character (33–47). Contrast Euripides' *Andromache*, a play in which Neoptolemus does not even appear![50] Ajax' suicide is narrated at *Nemean* 8.23–32 with only the barest indication of his character (24 *tin' aglōsson men, ētor d' alkimon*); con-

48 Note also esp. *N.* 3.55 *malakokheira*, in the context of healing, and Chiron's teaching.

49 On the circumstances, see Braswell 1988: 1–6.

50 On Euripides' play, cf. Allan 2000: 52: 'Most remarkable is the wealth of information given [sc. in the prologue] about Neoptolemus … It is notable that we get a sense of

trast, again, Sophocles' *Ajax*. In general, characters are more often actantially than mimetically conceived (again, *Pythian* 4 is exceptional).

However, character need not be developed at length in the narrative for character to be important to the poem. Sometimes a quality of character attached to the *laudandus* explicitly motivates the mythical narrative.[51] (But character seemingly performs this function less frequently than space: *SAGN* 3: 291, Currie.) In *Pythian* 6, Thrasybulus' filial devotion motivates the mythical narrative. After we have heard how Thrasybulus observes Chiron's injunction to honour one's parents (19–28), the poem segues thus into the mythical narrative: 'in former times, too, there was the mighty Antilochus, who was of this mind …' (28–29); the conclusion to the myth reiterates the link with Thrasybulus' father-loving character (44–46). In *Olympian* 6, with similar explicitness, Hagesias is compared with the hero Amphiaraus for their rare conjunction of prophetic and military skills (12–18). Sometimes it is not (only) a stable quality of character, but (also) a particular ethical choice (*proairesis*) that links hero and *laudandus*. In *Olympian* 1, Pelops decides to race his chariot with Oenomaus, despite the capital danger (81–85); so too, by clear implication, Hieron has determined to enter the single-horse race at Olympia: these are laudable 'heroic' choices of a kind made elsewhere by mythical heroes (*P.* 4.185–187) and athletes (*O.* 6.9–11). In *Pythian* 6, again, Antilochus decides to save his father's life even at the 'cost' (39 *priato*) of his own; so too, it seems, Thrasybulus has taken the decision to rescue his father's name from oblivion by commissioning the epinician for his Pythian victory, at a cost on which Pindar has the delicacy not to dwell.[52] Sometimes, again, it is physical resemblances between *laudandus* and hero that bring the mythical *exemplum* to the poet's mind. In *Isthmian* 4, the (only here) short (53–54) Theban hero Heracles, who goes to wrestle the giant Antaeus, parallels the short Theban Melissus, victor in the pancration

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the complexity of his character although he never speaks … We are asked to reconstruct his persona from the remarks of others …'. Also cf. van Emde Boas in this volume (Euripides, →).

51 Cf. Pfeijffer in *SAGN* 1: 224 'Sometimes the primary narrator motivates his narrative by relating it explicitly to the primary narratee', discussing *P.* 8.35–47.

52 In general for the victory ode as a rescue from death, cf. *P.* 3.112–115, *N.* 7.12–20, *I.* 1.67–68. Thrasybulus evidently commissioned *I.* 2 for his father's Isthmian victory, composed after the latter's death (note the past tenses at *I.* 2.37, 39–41); Thrasybulus' prominence in *P.* 6 (15, 44–54) suggests the same is likely to be true of that poem. Differently, Gentili in Gentili et al. 1995: 184–185 assumes that Thrasybulus drove the chariot for Xenocrates, at great personal risk, thus resembling Antilochus at the funeral games of Patroclus (*Il.* 23.301ff.). Cf. Currie 2016: 250.

(49–51). In *Pythian* 1, the physically infirm Philoctetes who sacks Troy (52–55) parallels by implication the physically infirm Hieron, who has just defeated the Etruscans.[53]

General Reflections on Character

Pindaric epinician also offers, in its non-narrative parts, much general reflection about character. The 'innate essence' conception of character is, of course, prominent; the buzz-word is *phua*.[54] Hence the interest in birth and a person's fate at birth (*O.* 8.15–16, *O.* 13.105, *N.* 7.1–8), hence too the attention lavished on heroes' births in mythical narrative (*O.* 1.26, *O.* 6.39–56, *I.* 6.45–54, *N.* 1.35–59). Excellence is hereditary and runs in families (*P.* 8.44–45, *P.* 10.12, *N.* 6.15), though plainly not all generations are successful (*N.* 6.8–16, *N.* 11.37–42, *P.* 4.64–67, *I.* 4.7–24). Circumstances enable (*O.* 12.13–19) or disable (*N.* 11.22–32) the display of native talent. But crucially, the 'innate essence' conception seems to accommodate a concept of 'character change.' The classic articulation is *Pythian* 2.72 *genoi' hoios essi mathōn*: 'may you [Hieron] become the kind of person you are on learning,' sc. the kind of person you are.[55] It is doubtful whether this should be seen just as a form of 'the encomiastic command, whereby the addressee is ordered as the best course to do what he has done.'[56] Rather, the encomiast's rhetoric seems meant to confirm the *laudandus* in an ethical course on which he is, or rather is stated to be, already embarked. The protreptics to virtue addressed to tyrants (*P.* 1.85–92, 4.276) are both congratulatory and exhortatory; descriptive praise is also normative, at least 'if you wish *always* to hear a sweet repute' (*P.* 1.90). Epinician can regard certain qualities of character as both already formed and in the process of being formed; the apparent paradox is no greater than the Aristotelian paradox that we become just by doing just things (*EN* 1105a17–21). Mythical narrative rarely depicts change in character (as opposed to changes in fortune, which are extremely common). A possible exception are the Proetides in Bacchylides' eleventh ode. Their initial offence against Hera was committed 'with mind still girlish' (47 *parthenia*(*i*) ... *eti psukha*(*i*): more easily taken as mitigating the offence than exacerbating it, as if their mind was less mature than it should have been), and they are shown

53 Cf. *scholl. P.* 1.97, 89b.

54 *O.* 2.86, 9.100–102, 11.19–20, 13.13; *P.* 8.44–45; *N.* 7.54–55; cf. *N.* 3.41–42, etc. Bowra 1964: 171–172.

55 On the expression, see Cingano in Gentili et al. 1995: 393; Carey 1981: 50.

56 Carey 1981: 50.

at the end of the narrative piously engaged in religious observance (110–112: but for Artemis, not Hera), and implicitly, as mature women, not girls (cf. 112 *gunaikōn*).[57]

Physical Appearance

Not surprisingly, the *laudandi*'s beauty and youth receive much attention (*O.* 8.19, *O.* 9.94, *O.* 10.103–105, *N.* 3.19); both qualities are conventional for recipients of praise-poetry (Ibyc. S151.46–48 Davies *PMGF*), and athletic victors in particular ('Sim.' *Epig.* 30.3 Page *FGE*; S. *El.* 685–686).[58] It is a natural expectation of epinician that fine physical form correlate with fine achievements (*I.* 7.22); in *Olympian* 9, this expectation is met by both the hero, Opous (65–66 *huperphaton andra morpha*(*i*) *te kai / ergoisi*), and the *laudandus*, Epharmostus (94 *hōraios eōn kai kalos kallista te rhexais*). But there is a counter-current too: personal prowess may be all the more impressive when discordant with appearance (cf. Tydeus, *Il.* 5.801; Archil. fr. 114 West *IEG*). In *Isthmian* 4, as we have seen, that counter-current is demonstrated with respect to both *laudandus* and hero: the pancratiast Melissus 'did not receive the stature of Orion, but is contemptible to look at, though grievous to fall in with in combat' (49–51); and Heracles, idiosyncratically in this ode, is 'short in form, but unbending in spirit' (53–54). In *Pythian* 1, Philoctetes is 'weak in body' and 'oppressed by his wound', but still the destined saviour of the Greeks (52–55); similarly with Hieron (see above). At *Olympian* 4.24–27, the grizzled Erginus, victorious in the games held by the Argonauts on Lemnos, proves that one can look older than one's years; it is unclear whether the *laudandus* Psaumis should be inferred also to have been prematurely grey.[59] Here, then, we have notions of lifelikeness, a deviation from 'ideal standards', and an acknowledgement that physiognomy can be an unreliable guide to character.

Unique personal characteristics are quite rarely indicated. Lynceus' preternatural eyesight, mentioned at *Nemean* 10.62–63, is a traditional detail, derived from the *Cypria* (fr. 15 Bernabé), and required for the comprehensibility of the narrative: the Apharetidae would not otherwise have killed Castor. The Arg-

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57 See Cairns 2010: 295. On 47 *parthenia*(*i*) ... *eti psukha*(*i*), see Maehler 2004: 146; differently, Cairns 2010: 279–280. At *P.* 5.109–110, Arcesilas is praised for having 'a mind greater than his age.'

58 Cf. Carey 2000b: 171 and nn. 12–13.

59 See Lomiento in Gentili et al. 2013: 101–102, 438, after *scholl. O.* 4.39a, b; differently, Gerber 1987: 22.

onauts Zetas and Calaïs, sons of Boreas, have wings on their backs (*P.* 4.182–183): another traditional detail, one that is mentioned but not developed in Pindar's narrative. In two cases, however, unique personal characteristics are traditional but imbued with special significance in the narrative: Jason's single sandal (and his other attire) has been discussed above; no less significant, and no less enigmatic, is the ivory shoulder with which Pelops was born (*O.* 1.26–27).[60] On Pindar's reinterpretation of the traditional myth (cf. *O.* 1.28–29, 36), this has apparently become not so much a prosthesis required to repair the unfortunate anthropophagy as an innate mark of divine favour; we might compare, perhaps, the golden thigh sported by Pythagoras.[61]

The appearance and actions of the *laudandus* and the hero (especially in athletic poses) are regularly focalized by onlookers. At *Olympian* 10.100–105, the focalizer is the poet-*laudator*: '[Hagesidamus], whom I saw prevailing in the strength of his hand by the Olympian altar back then, fine in form and imbued with the youth that once warded off unseemly death from Ganymedes …' The descriptions of the appearances of Cyrene and Telesicrates, focalized by Apollo and Cyrenaean maidens respectively (*P.* 9.30–37 and 97–100), have been discussed above, as have the variously focalized descriptions of Jason's appearance in Iolcus (*P.* 4.78–85, 86–94, 94–96, 120–123). Jason's subsequent success in Colchis in ploughing with the fire-breathing bulls is focalized through the reactions of, first, a dumbfounded Aeetes and then of jubilant Argonauts (*P.* 4.237–238, 239–241). Similarly, the baby Heracles' strangling of the snakes is apprehended through the stunned reaction of the father Amphitryon (*N.* 1.56–58), the boy Achilles' hunting prowess through the amazed reaction of Artemis and Athena (*N.* 3.43–52), and so on: our own responses to an athlete's or hero's achievements are regularly channelled through another's responses within the text.

Qualities of Character

We are sometimes treated to a conspectus of a hero's whole life: their birth, lifetime exploits, and even afterlife being reviewed synoptically; so Pelops (*O.* 1.25–95), Heracles (*N.* 1.35–72), and Achilles (*I.* 8.47–61). In these cases, the heroes' births, lives, and afterlives are all equally remarkable and admirable. However, heroes' lives may also be marred by misdeeds; in Pindar, as elsewhere,

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60 Most 2012: 270 'the reason for the ivory prosthesis remains entirely obscure.'

61 Pythagoras' thigh: Burkert 1972: 159–160.

Greek heroes are not saints. Tlapolemus killed Licymnius in anger (*O.* 7.27–31), before going on to be Rhodes' founding hero (77–80); Peleus had a hand in the death of his brother Phocus (*N.* 5.14–17), before being rewarded by Zeus with the hand of Thetis for rejecting Hippolyta's advances (31–34); Bellerophon, after several glorious exploits (*O.* 13.87–90), tried insanely to gain access to Olympus (91). Peleus and Bellerophon's misdeeds are passed over in *praeteritio*, but are not the less present to the audience's mind.

The Pindaric narrator is not reticent about passing moral judgment on the characters of his narrative (the Bacchylidean narrator more so).[62] Examples include the Moliones and Augeas in *Olympian* 10 (34 *huperphialoi*, 34 *xenapatas*, 41 *aboulia*(*i*)), Coronis in *Pythian* 3 (13 *amplakiaisi phrenōn*, 24 *tautan megalan aüatan*, 32 *athemin te dolon*, the last phrase also construable as Apollo's focalization), and Ixion in *Pythian* 2 (26 *mainomenais phrasin*, 28 *hubris*, 28 *aüatan huperaphanon*, 30 *amplakiai*). These examples are much more concerned to evaluate character than to understand personality. Coronis is promptly subsumed under a character-type: 'the most foolish breed among men' (21) who hanker after the unattainable (19–23); Ixion, strapped to the wheel, now and for ever exhorts mankind to repay one's benefactor well (*P.* 2.21–24). A possible exception—that is, an arguable attempt to understand personality—is Clytemnestra, murderess of Agamemnon and Cassandra, at *Pythian* 11.17–28. She is first roundly condemned by the primary narrator-focalizer as 'woman without pity' (22 *nēlēs guna*).[63] But alternative motivations for her actions are then floated by the narrator: anger at Iphigenea's killing or an adulterous infatuation (22–25)?[64] According to the ode's most recent commentator, 'The narrator is so horrified by Clytemnestra's crime that he struggles to find a motive which could possibly explain it … The overall effect … is to suggest that Clytemnestra's evil defies all understanding.'[65] In fact, the narrator finds two, individually sufficient and mutually compatible, motives. The posing of such unanswered questions implies that the character's psychology is not straightforwardly accessible to the narrator; in other words, the fictional

62 Carey 1999: 19 'Gnomic comment from the narrator within the myth is not absent from Bacchylides, but there is in general far less visible authorial judgement within the narrative.'

63 For similar emphatic phrases, at period end, in choral lyric, see B. 5.139 *artabaktos guna* (Althaea); A. *Ch.* 45 *dustheos guna* (Clytemnestra). There seems to be no proper equivalent with *anēr*; *P.* 2.37 *aïdris anēr* (Ixion) is much tamer in moralizing tone.

64 See Herington 1984: 139–141.

65 Finglass 2007a: 94.

character is treated as a real, autonomous, person.[66] Since Clytemnestra is a mythical, not a purely fictional, character, the double questions could be seen as reflecting the narrator's inability to decide between received mythological alternatives (cf. B. 19.29–36). But even so, it is hard to separate an attempt by the narrator to arbitrate between traditional alternatives concerning a character's motivation from an interest on the narrator's part in that character's motivation. It seems legitimate to recognize here an attempt to understand personality, not just to brand Clytemnestra guilty of a particular form of immorality. So also there is an attempt to understand the psychology of Pelias in *Pythian* 4 (see above), not just to evaluate him as immoral *hubristēs* (cf. Hes. *Th.* 995–996).

It is not possible to do more than touch on the qualities of character of the *laudandi*. These are, naturally, presented differently from the mythical heroes; for one thing, they are always positively appraised. They are often subject to social 'typification.' This may be illustrated by comparing the extended character-praise of Damophilus, Arcesilas and Thrasybulus at the end of *Pythians* 4, 5, and 6 respectively.[67] As model aristocrats, these men are prudent beyond their years (*P.* 4.282, *P.* 5.109–110), careful in their speech (*P.* 4.283, *P.* 5.111), agreeable at the symposium (*P.* 4.294–297, *P.* 6.52–45), skilled musicians (*P.* 4.295–296, *P.* 5.114, *P.* 6.49), and skilled charioteers (*P.* 5.115, 6.50–51). In contrast with this typification, there is obvious individuation in the description of the Theban pancratiast Melissus' character (whose 'lifelike' physical description has already been touched on above): 'resembling in his heart the daring of loud-roaring lions in the struggle, and in his cunning a vixen, who sprawling on her back awaits the swoop of an eagle; one must do everything to impair the enemy; he did not receive the stature of Orion, but is contemptible to look at, though grievous to fall in with in combat' (*I.* 4.45–51). The *laudandi* of epinician are also crucially characterized through their membership of micro- and macro-social groups. *Isthmian* 4 opens (it is a long 'opening', 1–29: one-third of the poem) with praise of the Cleonymidae, Melissus' clan; Melissus' Isthmian victory gives occasion to sing of *their* excellences (3–4 *humeteras aretas* … *haisi Kleōnumidai thallontes aiei*, etc.). The ode proceeds to catalogue their

66 Cf. A.R. 4.2–5 (Apollonius of Rhodes, →). The positing of alternative motivations for characters becomes typical for historiography and biography. See e.g. Hdt. 1.86.2, 2.181.1, 7.54.2–3, etc., with Baragwanath 2008: 122–130; Tac. *Ann.* 3.3.1 (… *an* …), 14.4.8 (*siue* … *seu* …); also see the chapters in this volume on Herodotus (→) and Plutarch (→).

67 *P.* 4.281–299, *P.* 5.109–117, *P.* 6.46–54. Cf. Braswell 1988: 380 'Behind both descriptions [sc. of Damophilus at the end of *P.* 4 and Thrasybulus at the end of *P.* 6] is the same aristocratic ideal of behaviour.'

ancient honours in Thebes, their proxeny, their lack of *hubris*, their activity as horse-breeders, their success in chariot-racing in various local and Panhellenic contests, and the loss of four of their members in a single military engagement. Melissus' achievement is also to be understood against this family background. In the (slightly modified) words of Hubbard, 'The praise of [relatives] provides the perspective of inherited nobility that lies behind all achievement in the Pindaric world; achievement is meaningless except as a broader reflection on one's entire family, clan, and social context.'[68] The *laudandus*' membership of a kinship group is also commonly balanced with their membership of the macro-social group, the city-state. In *Nemean* 6, extended praise of Alcimidas' clan (15–44) is followed by praise of Aegina through its Aeacid heroes (45–53); Alcimidas is related to both. In *Isthmian* 7, the *laudandus* Strepsiades is presented as the latest addition to the roster of Theban local heroes (Dionysus, Heracles, Tiresias, Iolaus, etc.: 1–21); in this he has been recently anticipated by an uncle, also called Strepsiades, arguably one of the city's heroized war dead (24–36).[69] Through his membership of such groups the *laudandus*' character is shown in heroic light.

The Poet-Laudator

Since Pindar was the subject in his lifetime of an extraordinary non-idealizing portrait bust (he is in fact the earliest Greek known to have been thus realistically represented), it is noteworthy how anaemic his self-characterization in epinician (probably) is.[70] The only consistent and uncontroversial aspect of that self-characterization, apart from the poetic profession, is nationality. Pindar is a Theban (*I.* 8.16; *O.* 6.85–87; *I.* 6.74; *P.* 4.299; *I.* 1.1), and hence a 'foreigner' in other city-states (*N.* 7.61; *P.* 2.68–69: the ode 'sent' across the sea); likewise, Bacchylides is a Cean (3.98), and a foreigner elsewhere (5.9–12, cf. 10.10). Pindar's Theban identity can on occasion have interesting repercussions for the mythical narrative. Thus, in *Isthmian* 6, the narrative of (the Theban) Heracles who augurs the glory of the son (Ajax) whom his Aeginetan host Telamon is expecting is inspired by the Theban Pindar's doing the same for the Aeginetan

68 T.K. Hubbard, as modified by Gerber 1999: 33–34. Cf. Carey 1989: 113, on 'the solidarity of the family in Greek thinking (i.e. the idea that a human being is part of a larger unit, not simply an individual in his own right).'

69 Currie 2005: 205–225.

70 For the bust, see Himmelmann 1993.

Lampon's son Phylacidas.[71] But Theban nationality amounts to a meagre form of characterization, and the only national stereotype that is explicitly conjured up is repudiated (*O.* 6.89–90 'Boeotian sow')!

The relevant technique of characterization here is obviously speech, involving both *ēthopoiia* and *gnōmai*. But complications, and qualifications, need to be recognized. First, there is the problem of who speaks. For several scholars, including the contributor on Pindar and Bacchylides to *SAGN* 1, 'there can be no doubt whatsoever that the first-person singular or plural occurring in the odes represents the poet … He is the primary narrator … This primary narrator is overt and visible. Especially Pindar refers to himself and his narrating activity in many of his odes, tells us about himself, and comments openly upon his stories, frequently using emphatic first-person statements to do so.'[72] For other scholars, including the present writer, Pindaric first-person statements have fluctuating reference: while some passages (on the whole, relatively colourless ones) are to be referred to the poet, others are to be referred to the chorus or *laudandus*.[73] There is, on this view, more than one speaker behind the epinician first person, and the scope for the characterization of the poet is accordingly diminished.

Ēthopoiia is a concern of epinician, as it is of oratory.[74] Roman oratory in fact provides a closer comparandum than Greek, where the split between *patronus* and *cliens* parallels that of *laudator* and *laudandus* in epinician (Greek oratory lacks a tradition of advocacy). However, in stark contrast with Cicero, Pindar and (even more) Bacchylides draw on their own lives and character infrequently and insubstantially.[75] Regarding their lives: it is doubtful whether *Pythian* 8.56–60 refers to a personal experience of the poet on his way to Delphi, rather than the *laudandus*; and doubtful whether *Nemean* 7.102–104 is the poet's defence of an unpopular earlier poem (*Pae.* 6).[76] This is not to banish all (substantive) autobiography from the poems.[77] Still, the epinician poets do not go out of their way to characterize themselves. Regarding their character: Pindar may purport to be forgetful of one commission (*O.* 10.1–3), or busy with another (*I.* 1.1–10), but these rhetorical poses do relatively little to char-

71 Indergaard 2010: 303.

72 *SAGN* 1: 216–217 (Pfeijffer).

73 Currie 2013.

74 Carey 1999: 17.

75 On Cicero's *ēthopoiia*, see May 1988.

76 On *P.* 8.56–60, Currie 2013: 259–263; on *N.* 7.102–104, Currie 2005: 317–321, cf. 321–330.

77 It is unclear, for instance, what to make of *P.* 3.77–79; Currie 2005: 387–388.

acterize the poet.[78] Nor does a professed tendency to sidetrack (*P.* 11.38–40, *N.* 3.26–27).[79] Claimed pre-eminence in poetic skill (e.g. *O.* 1.115b–116) is another typical element, belonging to the poet's 'seal' (*HAp.* 169–173; Thgn. 23).[80] The Pindaric *laudator* declares religious scruples (*O.* 1.52, *O.* 9.35–41), abjures envy (*P.* 2.52–53, *N.* 7.61–63), disavows contentiousness (*O.* 6.19, *N.* 7.66–67), and deprecates dishonest flattery (*N.* 8.35–36, aptly called by Bundy 'the *laudator*'s *proairesis*').[81] These are indeed ethical qualities of character, but they seem to be created *ad hoc* to promote the programme of praise.[82] Epinician *ēthopoiia*, unlike the *ēthopoiia* of oratory, is more concerned with constructing the character of the *laudator* (a rather shallow rhetorical construct) than of a historical person; again, the way Cicero draws on his own historical (or would-be historical) character is different.

Pindar's epinicians are full of *gnōmai* presented in the speaker's persona (in Bacchylides there is a greater tendency to place them in the mouths of characters). These too seem to characterize the speaker / narrator less than, say, Hesiod's or Phocylides', or than is envisaged at Aristotle *Rhetoric* 1395b12–17. Neither Pindar's ownership nor his endorsement of these *gnōmai* can be straightforwardly assumed.[83] They are, typically, commonplaces, and must often be understood to be in inverted commas even when not explicitly ascribed to an external source.[84] Moreover, their truth is not simply taken for granted: our understanding of them is quite often refined in the course of an ode.[85] There are notable differences in the self-presentation of Pindaric and Bacchylidean narrators-*laudatores*, arising chiefly from their different *ēthopoiia* and uses of *gnōmai*. The Pindaric narrator-*laudator* is more self-assertive and obtrusive, the Bacchylidean more self-effacing and restrained.[86] This difference is not equatable with a difference in the poet's characters any more than the difference in satirist's persona adopted by Horace and Juvenal. It is only tongue-in-cheek

78 Bundy 1962: 1 n. 4, 41–42.

79 Miller 1993–1994.

80 Carey 2000: 172 with n. 17, on the 'poet's claim to excellence.'

81 Bundy 1962: 40 n. 16.

82 Cf. in general Carey 2000: 173–176.

83 Kirkwood 1982: 23 '[*gnōmai*] are not original perceptions, and some are demonstrably well-known maxims.'

84 Commonplaces: e.g. *P.* 11.51–54 (cf. Archil. fr. 19 West; E. *Med.* 119–130; A. *A.* 471–474; E. *HF* 642–648). Explicit ascriptions to a source: *P.* 4.277–278, *P.* 6.21–28, *P.* 9.94–96, *N.* 9.6–7, *I.* 2.9–11.

85 Currie 2005: 78–81.

86 See Carey 1999: 18–21; Hutchinson 2001: 327–328; Most 2012: *passim*.

that recent critics allow themselves such comments as, 'Pindar was, I imagine, a difficult man to live with'; 'perhaps Pindar was simply haughty and arrogant as a person, Bacchylides sociable and affable.'[87] Probably few Pindaric critics nowadays would be tempted to dedicate a chapter to 'The Poetic Personality.'[88]

Conclusion

Epinician characterization takes very different forms according to who is being characterized: *laudator*, *laudandus*, or the characters of the mythical narrative. The *ēthopoiia* of the epinician *laudator* is very roughly analogous to the *ēthopoiia* of the speaker in (forensic) oratory, but we are dealing more with a rhetorical construct than a real person, mimetically conceived. The *laudandus* may be characterized directly by the *laudator* in terms of both his physical appearance (both idealization and deviation from ideal standards are found) and in terms of character (where typification is common: the 'ideal aristocrat'). At least as important is the *laudandus*' indirect characterization through analogy with the hero(es) of the mythical narrative, and through membership of the key micro- and macro-social groups (*genos* and *polis*). The characters of the mythical narrative are often not extensively characterized at all; however, when they are (as in *P.* 9, *N.* 10, and *P.* 4) an impressive array of direct and indirect techniques as well as different focalizations may be found. *Pythian* 4 is exceptional in the epinician corpus, and offers integrative and dynamic characterization of fully mimetically-conceived characters (Jason and Pelias).

87 Respectively, West 2011: 50 and Most 2012: 271 (note the continuation: 'it must be admitted that personality does not explain everything'). Cf. Carey 1999: 18 with n. 6 'It would be a mistake to interpret [Bacchylides'] more self-effacing approach in biographical terms.'

88 Bowra 1964: ch. ix.