THE FUNCTION OF DIRECT SPEECH IN BACCHYLIDES' POETRY
The case of ode 5 and ode 18

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The narrative art of Bacchylides of Ceos has already been investigated in several studies and articles[1]. His tendency to insert ample narratives of mythical tales by adding a wealth of details, his taste for vivid descriptions and the liveliness of the scenes bear reminiscence of Stesichorus' poetry[2]. Both poets have been defined as 'epic-like' with regard to their ways of developing mythical contents. One of the most important features in Bacchylides' narrative style is undoubtedly his peculiar use of direct speech. Using *mimesis* instead of pure narrative[3], the poet achieves a greater 'expressivity', meaning the degree of involvement of the speaker[4], with the effect of increasing the *pathos* of the scene, as shown by the despair conveyed by the words of Croesus in ode 3 (ll. 37–47[5]). Direct speech is also designed to make the episodes more lively, as in the speech by Menelaus in ode 15 (ll. 50–63) or in the tense dialogue between Minos and Theseus in ode 17 (ll. 20–80).

This paper is aimed at analysing Bacchylides' narrative choices and the role played by and the effects of direct speech in two poems of his, namely ode 5 and ode 18. These odes are among the best conserved poems in the Bacchylidean *corpus*, and all their features have been deeply investigated[6]. Despite wide differences in terms of genre, content and structure, the use of direct speech makes them comparable. The use of direct speech in these odes allows the poet to achieve narrative effects that would be unthinkable by resorting only to an extradiegetic narrator and to pure narrative. These effects rely on a 'narrative' similar to the one used by drama's authors, by which the primary narrator and the primary narratees, that is the poet and the spectators[7], know more than the characters who are speaking[8]. Actually, the audience knows the *fabula* of the whole narrated myth,

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[1] See Gentili (1958); Kirkwood (1966); Segal (1976); Burnett (1985); Calame (1999); Pfeijffer (1999); Rengakos (2000).

[2] Kirkwood (1966) 100; Stern (1970) 300f.

[3] See Genette (1983) 162f., who refers to Pl. *Rep.* 3.392c–395.

[4] See Beck (2009) 142.

[5] All references to the text of Bacchylides' odes follow Maehler's edition (2003).

[6] For ode 5, see Stern (1967); Lefkowitz (1969); Goldhill (1983); Villarubia (1993); Cairns (1997); Antoniono, Cesca (2011). For ode 18, see Wind (1972); Merkelbach (1973); Barron (1980); Vox (1982); Ieranò (1987); Arnauld (2001).

[7] See De Jong (2004) 7f.

[8] See Genette (1983) 188f.

and the poet skilfully exploits this situation to create an effect of dramatic irony[9]. The investigation of narrative structures can therefore help to understand in depth the aims of Bacchylides' poetry and how he achieves them, thereby highlighting his close relation with the authors of fifth-century Attic tragedy.

Ode 5, one of the most famous epinician poems by Bacchylides, was composed to celebrate the victory of Hieron, ruler of Syracuse, in the horse race at the Olympian games of 476 BC. Like all the most elaborate epinician poems, it features a mythical narrative: the meeting of Heracles and Meleager in Hades. It is a minor episode in the saga of Heracles, as it is often the case with the mythical narratives inserted by Bacchylides in his odes. Heracles has descended to the underworld to capture the dog Cerberus, and among the dead's souls he sees the imposing figure of Meleager. Worried by the threatening appearance of Meleager's shadow, Heracles nocks an arrow on to his bowstring; his act causes the reaction of Meleager, who speaks to the living hero, starting a dialogue with him (ll. 79–96):

> "υἱὲ Διὸς μεγάλου,
>   στᾶθί τ᾽ἐν χώρᾳ, γελανώσας τε θυμόν (80)
> μὴ ταΰσιον προΐει
>   τραχὺν ἐκ χειρῶν ὀϊστόν
> ψυχαῖσιν ἔπι φθιμένων·
>   οὔ τοι δέος." ὣς φάτο· θάμβησεν δ᾽ἄναξ
> Ἀμφιτρυωνιάδας, (85)
>   εἶπέν τε· "τίς ἀθανάτων
> ἢ βροτῶν τοιοῦτον ἔρνος
>   θρέψεν ἐν ποίᾳ χθονί;
> τίς δ᾽ἔκτανεν; ἦ τάχα καλλίζωνος Ἥρα
>   κεῖνον ἐφ᾽ἁμετέρᾳ (90)
> πέμψει κεφαλᾷ· τὰ δέ που
>   Παλλάδι ξανθᾷ μέλει."
> τὸν δὲ προσέφα Μελέαγρος
>   δακρυόεις· "χαλεπὸν
>
> θεῶν παρατρέψαι νόον (95)
>   ἄνδρεσσιν ἐπιχθονίοις. [. . .]"[10]

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[9] The use of the device of dramatic irony in Bacchylides' odes 5 and 18 has been studied by García Romero (2012). He makes however a lexical analysis focused on the ambigous meaning of the words uttered by the characters.

[10] Bacchylides 5.79–96 (p. 18): "«Son of great Zeus, stay thou there and calm thy heart, and launch not vainly from thy hands a brute arrow against a dead man's ghost. There's naught to fear». The princely son of Amphitryon marvelled at his words and said, «What God or man reared such a scion as this, and where? And who slew him? Sure the fair-girdled Hera will soon send the slayer of such an one against me

When Meleager tells him that there is no point in attacking the souls of the dead, Heracles stops in his tracks. He admires the handsome figure in front of him and asks Meleager about his identity, his birth, and finally about the identity of his murderer: he is certain that his enemy Hera will send that one (κεῖνον, line 90) to kill himself too. The answer of Meleager is a long speech opened by the gnomic statement that it is difficult for human beings to change the mind of gods. Looking back with nostalgia on his life on earth, he goes over the events that caused his death: during the battle for the spoils of the Calidonian wild boar, he killed unintentionally two brothers of his mother, thereby arousing the grieving woman's anger. In a fit of rage, she burned the brand to which the life of Meleager was magically connected since his birth[11]. Thus the life of the young hero was extinguished along with the brand burnt by the fire.

The story of Meleager's death arouses the compassion and the tears of Heracles, who utters words of pity, then the dialogue between the two heros is resumed (ll. 160–175):

τᾶδ᾽ ἔφα· "θνατοῖσι μὴ φῦναι φέριστον   (160)
    μήδ᾽ ἀελίου προσιδεῖν
        φέγγος· ἀλλ᾽ οὐ γάρ τίς ἐστιν
πρᾶξις τάδε μυρομένοις·
    χρὴ κεῖνο λέγειν ὅτι καὶ μέλλει τελεῖν.
ἦρά τις ἐν μεγάροις   (165)
    Οἰνῆος ἀρηϊφίλου
ἔστιν ἀδμήτα θυγάτρων,
    σοὶ φυὰν ἀλιγκία;
τάν κεν λιπαρὰν ⟨ἐ⟩θέλων θείμαν ἄκοιτιν."
    τὸν δὲ μενεπτολέμου   (170)
ψυχὰ προσέφα Μελεά-
    γρου· "λίπον χλωραύχενα
ἐν δώμασι Δαϊάνειραν,
    νῆϊν ἔτι χρυσέας
Κύπριδος θελξιμβρότου."[12]   (175)

After a pessimistic remark about human condition, peculiar to Greek thought[13], Heracles states that mourning is vain, and that one should speak rather of what one intends to achieve. Then he asks Meleager if he has an unmarried sister who resembles him still living in the palace of Oineus: he would like to marry her. The whole mythical episode ends with Meleager's evocation of 'fresh-necked' Deianira, still ignorant of love.

The long narrative about Meleager's death amounts to an explanatory *metadiegesis*[14] in which Meleager becomes an intradiegetic narrator[15]. The use of *metadiegesis* to narrate events preceding the episode that constitutes the primary narrative allows the poet to concentrate a long story in one dramatic moment[16]. The use of direct speech is here clearly aimed at increasing the *pathos* of the related events, even more so since Meleager, besides being a homodiegetic narrator, is the victim too. However, the use of direct speech and dialogue in this ode has an additional effect which is related to Heracles. Just when he assumes that the killer of Meleager is a male warrior and that Hera will send him after himself too, a divergence in the extent of knowledge by the character and by the audience emerges: the latter knows in advance the outcome of the whole story. Meleager's narrative will then give Heracles the information about the murderer of the dead hero, but only the audience could grasp the ominous allusion to Heracles' death contained in his words: both of them are bound to be killed by a woman, Meleager by his mother and Heracles by his bride. This play of dramatic irony reaches its climax at the end of the mythical episode, when Heracles, deeply admiring the dead, expresses his will to marry Meleager's sister: by doing so, he determines his doom unawares[17]. The name of Deianira, Heracles' future bride—and murderer—reverberates significantly in the last lines uttered by the soul of the hero, and keeps the audience in a suspense full of ominous forebodings[18]. Afterwards the ode goes back to the present occasion, and to the celebration of Hieron's victory by emphasizing the role of poetry in praising glorious deeds.

Ode 18 (Θησεύς) corresponds to the fourth dithyramb in the collection of poems contained in Bacchylides' papyrus (*PLitLond* 46). Its formal structure makes it unique: it comprises four strophes with no triadic structure and it consists entirely of a dialogue in direct speech between two characters, the king of Athens, Aegeus, and a group of Athenian citizens, even though their identity is not explicitly stated[19]. Since the dialogue is not introduced by an extradiegetic narrator, the identity of the speakers becomes clear

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[13] "θνατοῖσι μὴ φῦναι φέριστον / μηδ᾽ ἀελίου προσιδεῖν φέγγος" (ll. 160–2): "for human beings the best thing is not to be born and not to see the sunlight"; cf. Theogn. 425–8; Soph. *O. C.* 1224–7.

[14] See Genette (1983) 232.

[15] See Genette (1983) 248.

[16] See Pfeijffer (2004) 226f.

[17] The intention of Heracles to marry Meleager's sister seems to be a novelty introduced by Bacchylides in the episode, whereas in Pindar's dithyramb 2 Meleager himself asks Heracles to marry his sister; cf. Maehler (1982) 80ff.

[18] Rengakos (2000) 41.

[19] The real development of the performance is uncertain: the role of Aegeus could have been interpreted by one actor and the other role by a chorus, but the performance might also have been played by two semi-choruses; cf. Ieranò (1987) 89 n. 7.

only through the words they utter. However, the real protagonist *in absentia* is Theseus, on whom the speeches of the characters centre. Although the dithyramb is named after him, his name is never pronounced along the ode. As we shall see, in this poem the poet plays with the issue of his identity.

The classification of this poem in the lyric genre of dithyrambs, like many of Bacchylides' odes that are contained in this section of the papyrus, is not straightforward. As it is the case with almost all Bacchylidean dithyrambs, neither Dionysus nor his cult are mentioned in the ode[20]; moreover, a mimetic structure consisting entirely of a direct speech dialogue does not fall into the general categories of poetry as described by Plato in the relevant well-known passage from the *Republic*, where he actually classified dithyrambic poetry as δι᾽ ἀπαγγελίας αὐτοῦ τοῦ ποιητοῦ ("by means of the recital of the poet himself") that is a kind of narrative wholly performed by means of an extradiegetic narrator[21].

As far as the performance setting is concerned, it can be safely assumed that the dithyramb was addressed to an Athenian audience, but the specific festival in which it was performed is still a matter of controversy[22]. The social, political and cult-related aspects and symbols have been deeply investigated by several scholars[23]. In the following pages attention will be focused on the use of direct speech and on the effects of this narrative choice. The text of ode 18 is quoted below:

CHORUS
Βασιλεῦ τᾶν ἱερᾶν Ἀθανᾶν,
    τῶν ἀβροβίων ἄναξ Ἰώνων,
τί νέον ἔκλαγε χαλκοκώδων
    σάλπιγξ πολεμηΐαν ἀοιδάν;
ἦ τις ἁμετέρας χθονὸς   (5)
    δυσμενὴς ὅρι᾽ ἀμφιβάλλει
στραταγέτας ἀνήρ;
    ἦ λῃσταὶ κακομάχανοι
ποιμένων ἀέκατι μήλων
    σεύοντ᾽ ἀγέλας βίᾳ;   (10)
ἦ τί τοι κραδίαν ἀμύσσει;
    φθέγγευ· δοκέω γὰρ εἴ τινι βροτῶν
ἀλκίμων ἐπικουρίαν
    καὶ τὶν ἔμμεναι νέων,
ὦ Πανδίονος υἱὲ καὶ Κρεούσας.   (15)

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[20] Burnett (1985) 117; for the controversial question of the nature of Bacchylidean dithyrambs, see Zimmermann (1992) 64–116; García Romero (2000) 47–57; Fearn (2007) 163–225.
[21] Pl. *Rep.* 3.394b–c.
[22] See Maehler (2004) 189ff.
[23] See above note 6.

Aegeus

Νέον ἦλθε⟨ν⟩ δολιχὰν ἀμείψας
    κᾶρυξ ποσὶν Ἰσθμίαν κέλευθον·
ἄφατα δ᾽ ἔργα λέγει κραταιοῦ
    φωτός· τὸν ὑπέρβιόν τ᾽ ἔπεφνεν
Σίνιν, ὃς ἰσχύϊ φέρτατος   (20)
    θνατῶν ἦν, Κρονίδα Λυταίου
σεισίχθονος τέκος·
    σῦν τ᾽ ἀνδροκτόνον ἐν νάπαις
Κρεμ⟨μ⟩υῶνος ἀτάσθαλόν τε
    Σκίρωνα κατέκτανεν·   (25)
τάν τε Κερκυόνος παλαίστραν
    ἔσχεν, Πολυπήμονός τε καρτερὰν
σφῦραν ἐξέβαλεν Προκό-
    πτας, ἀρείονος τυχών
φωτός. ταῦτα δέδοιχ᾽ ὅπᾳ τελεῖται.   (30)

Chorus

Τίνα δ᾽ ἔμμεν πόθεν ἄνδρα τοῦτον
    λέγει, τίνα τε στολὰν ἔχοντα;
πότερα σὺν πολεμηΐοις ὅ-
    πλοισι στρατιὰν ἄγοντα πολλάν;
ἢ μοῦνον σὺν ὀπάοσιν   (35)
    στ⟨ε⟩ίχειν ἔμπορον οἷ᾽ ἀλάταν
ἐπ᾽ ἀλλοδαμίαν,
    ἰσχυρόν τε καὶ ἄλκιμον
ὧδε καὶ θρασύν, ὅς το⟨σ⟩ούτων
    ἀνδρῶν κρατερὸν σθένος   (40)
ἔσχεν; ἦ θεὸς αὐτὸν ὁρμᾷ,
    δίκας ἀδίκοισιν ὄφρα μήσεται·
οὐ γὰρ ῥᾴδιον αἰὲν ἔρ-
    δοντα μὴ 'ντυχεῖν κακῷ.
πάντ᾽ ἐν τῷ δολιχῷ χρόνῳ τελεῖται.   (45)

Aegeus

Δύο οἱ φῶτε μόνους ἁμαρτεῖν
    λέγει, περὶ φαιδίμοισι δ᾽ ὤμοις
ξίφος ἔχειν ⟨ἐλεφαντόκωπον⟩

ξεστοὺς δὲ δύ᾽ ἐν χέρεσσ᾽ ἄκοντας

κηὔτυκτον κυνέαν Λάκαι-   (50)

   ναν κρατὸς πέρι πυρσοχαίτου·

χιτῶνα πορφύρεον

   στέρνοις τ᾽ ἀμφί, καὶ οὔλιον

Θεσσαλὰν χλαμύδ᾽· ὀμμάτων δὲ

   στίλβειν ἄπο Λαμνίαν   (55)

φοίνισσαν φλόγα· παῖδα δ᾽ ἔμ⟨μ⟩εν

   πρώθηβον, ἀρηΐων δ᾽ ἀθυρμάτων

μεμνᾶσθαι πολέμου τε καὶ

   χαλκεοκτύπου μάχας·

δίζησθαι δὲ φιλαγλάους Ἀθάνας.[24]   (60)

In the first strophe the chorus of Athenians asks Aegeus the reason why a trumpet was blown to sound an alarm[25] and reminds the king of the presence of brave young people ready to defend the community. The identity of the addressee becomes clear thanks to the apostrophe "son of Pandion and Creusa" at the end of the strophe: Pandion was one of the ten eponymous heroes of the Attic 'tribes' and Aegeus' father[26]. In the second strophe Aegeus gives an account of what a messenger has just told him about the deeds of a young warrior, who defeated a lot of the dangerous bandits who overran the territory of the Isthmus. The king sounds very worried about these events. In the third strophe the chorus asks Aegeus if the young warrior travels with few companions or with a whole army. They argue that a god must be driving him on, if he can accomplish such amazing deeds, and they sound confident about the future. In the fourth strophe Aegeus answers that two men go with him, and gives information about the appearance, the clothes and the attitude of the young man. He is heading for the 'splendour-loving' Athens.

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[24] Bacchylides 18 (pp. 21–23): CHORUS: "King of holy Athens, lord of the soft-living Ionians, what new thing means the war-song that cries from the brazen-belled clarion? Doth a captain of enemies beset the bounds of our land? or thieves of ill intent drive our herds of sheep perforce in their keepers' despite? or what is it pricks thy heart? Prithee speak; for thou, methinks, if any man, hast aid of valiant youths to thy hand, O son of Pandion and Creüsa." // AEGEUS: "A messenger is but now come running, by way of the long road of Isthmus, .with news of the deeds ineffable of a mighty man, who hath slain the huge Sinis that o'erpassed the world in strength, child of the Earth-shaker Lytaean, the son of Cronus, and hath laid low the man-slaying sow in the woods of Cremmyon, aye, and the wicked Sciron, and hath ended the wrestling-place of Cercyon, and Polypemon's strong hammer is dropt from the hand of a Maimer who hath found his match. I fear me how this all shall end." // CHORUS: "Who and whence saith he that this man is, and what his equipage? Comes he with a great host under arms, or travelleth alone with his servants like a merchant that wanders abroad, this man so mighty, stout, and valiant, who hath stayed the great strength of so many? Sure a God must speed him for to bring the unjust to justice, for it is no light task to come off ever free of ill. All things end in the long run of time." // AEGEUS: "Two alone, he saith, are with him, and there is slung to his bright shoulders a sword of ivory haft, and either hand hath a polished javelin; a well-wrought Spartan bonnet is about his ruddy locks, and a purple shirt around his breast, with a cloack of the frieze of Thessaly; and as for his eyes, there goes a red flash from them as of Lemnian flame; a lad is he first come to manhood, bent on the pastimes of Ares, war and the battle-din of bronze; and his quest is unto splendor-loving Athens." Translation by Edmonds (1980).

[25] A real trumpet might have been blown just before the performance; cf. Maehler (2004) 194.

[26] Maehler (2004) 195.

The ode is structured and the direct speech is used in such a way as to lead the audience to share the anxiety of the characters until the names of the bandits defeated by the young hero are mentioned in the second strophe. From this point onwards, the audience realized that the young man is Theseus, Aegeus' son, who is coming to Athens to be recognized by his father, and can witness Aegeus' fear alternating with the chorus' enthusiasm, both equally ignorant of present and future events. In particular, the sentence uttered by Aegeus (ταῦτα δέδοιχ᾽ ὅπᾳ τελεῖται, l. 30) seemed to convey a deeper meaning: while the fear of forthcoming troubles—the real fear that fills the soul of the king in the poem—sounded groundless, since the event was bound to have a happy outcome as the audience knew only too well, the above sentence took on a more ominous nuance in the light of what will happen afterwards. Actually, Theseus will be the cause of his father's death, even though unintentionally[27]. The words of line 30 are re-echoed by those uttered by the chorus at line 45 (πάντ᾽ ἐν τῷ δολιχῷ χρόνῳ τελεῖται); in the form of a more universal statement, they convey the feeling that future events will surely happen driven by divine justice, from the enthusiastic and positive perspective of the chorus of the Athenians.

The dithyramb ends abruptly—like many Bacchylidean dithyrambs—upon the image of Theseus approaching Athens, so that the young hero is expected to come on the scene at any moment.

In regard to the nature of the scenes in the two odes, two different models might be identified. Ode 5 depicts the meeting between two heroes, a scene typical of the epic genre; in particular, the similarity to the episodes of the meeting between Odysseus and Heracles (*Od.* 11.601 ff.) and of the meeting between Odysseus and Agamemnon (*Od.* 11.385 ff.) during the descent of the former to Hades is striking[28]. Conversely, the situation depicted in ode 18, namely the account of a messenger's speech, as well as the dialogue between a king and an assembled group of people, is typical of the tragic genre[29]; in particular, the scene depicted in the first strophe is very similar to the one in the parodos of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, where the old citizens of Argo question their queen Klytaimestra about a message that has just been sent through fire-signals[30]. The metadiegetic narrative of important events that have already happened or that are happening just as they are narrated, as in ode 18, is a device often used by the tragedians. Actually, it makes possible the performance of scenes that otherwise would be very difficult to stage. Nevertheless, frequently it was a deliberate dramatic choice, since what is heard is sometimes more impressive than what is seen; thus, by using the highly imaginative power of words, a stronger suspense and a deeper tragic sense are conveyed. This effect is quite different from the one achieved by Meleager's speech in ode 5: in this poem the autodiegetic

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[27] Burnett (1985) 122f.; Rengakos (2000) 103f.

[28] See Lefkowitz (1969) 63ff.

[29] Cf. Aesch. *Pers.* 302–30 and 353–432; Soph. *OT* 1–77.

[30] Aesch. *Ag.* 83–103, esp. 83–7. Bacchylides might have been influenced by this passage of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* in composing ode 18 given its peculiar structure; cf. Maehler (2004) 193.

narrative of the death's moment by the victim himself is aimed at increasing the *pathos* aroused by the sad event besides adding a new episode to the myth-telling[31].

Although the dialogue-based scenes of odes 5 and 18 differ very much as far as context and situation are concerned, the direct speeches made by Heracles and Aegeus convey a similar form of dramatic irony to the audience. Even statements having a universal value, like the one uttered by Heracles at the end of Meleager's narrative, that are so recurrent in archaic and classical Greek thought, take on new nuances when they are made by characters[32]. In Heracles' case, the tragic sense conveyed by those well-known words (ll. 160–2) is twofold, since Heracles is bringing himself to ruin by his free choice to marry Deianira[33].

The tragic nature that characterizes Bacchylides' poetry is comparable to that of tragedy itself, whose golden age was starting in those years with Aeschylus' dramas. He plays with the contrast between reality and the restricted or misleading knowledge of characters[34], who are often opposed to an omniscient deity before an omniscient audience's eyes. In particular, the doubts and uncertainties of men at the mercy of divine power are expressed similarly in both odes: in ode 5, Heracles expresses his worry that Hera will send Meleager's killer against him—but Pallas will take care of it (ἦ τάχα καλλίζωνος Ἥρα κεῖνον ἐφ᾽ ἁμετέρᾳ / πέμψει κεφαλᾷ· τὰ δέ που Παλλάδι ξανθᾷ μέλει, ll. 89–92); in ode 18 the Athenians' chorus states that the young hero must be driven on by a god in his victorious fight against the evil-doers, since it is not easy for mortal beings to accomplish such an uninterrupted series of deeds without incurring ruin (ἦ θεὸς αὐτὸν ὁρμᾷ, δίκας ἀδίκοισιν ὄφρα μήσεται· οὐ γὰρ ῥάδιον αἰὲν ἔρδοντα μὴ ᾽ντυχεῖν κακῷ, ll. 41–44)[35]. In both cases a god's agency is assumed, but human beings cannot get a clear knowledge of it[36].

Beyond these similarities there is a difference in the kind of tragic situation depicted in the two odes. The tragic aspect of Heracles' ignorance lies in his action—the words ἀλλ᾽οὐ γὰρ τίς ἐστιν / πρᾶξις τάδε μυρομένοις· χρὴ κεῖνο λέγειν ὅτι καὶ μέλλει τελεῖν (ll. 162–4) are significant—, that is, in a choice that will unintentionally drive him to death. In the *Theseus* dithyramb, the tragic sense lies in the mere depiction of human blindness and the ambiguity of all wordly events, since in the ode there are not either action or intention, but

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[31] See above p. 28.

[32] Kirkwood (1966) 103ff.; Stern (1970) 304f.

[33] As far as the meaning of Heracles' statement in ll. 160–4 is concerned, it is worth mentioning the interpretation given by Senger (2008) 147ff: by assuming that the abrupt end of myth's narrative has the effect of reminding the audience not only of Heracles' tragic death but also of the subsequent hero's apotheosis, Senger suggests a less pessimistic interpretation than the ones followed in this paper. In Senger's opinion, Heracles' words χρὴ κεῖνο λέγειν ὅτι καὶ μέλλει τελεῖν (l. 164) convey a pragmatic feeling: to be born is a fact that cannot be altered and as a consequence men must try to do what they have the power to accomplish while being aware of human limits and frailties.

[34] Cf. Burnett (1985) 116f., where Bacchylidean poetry is compared with Pindaric poetry.

[35] As for line 41, I adopt Maehler's (2003) affirmative interpretation of the particle η (hence ἦ) and not Slings' interpretation of a disjunctive ἤ (Slings [1990]); cf. Maehler (2004) 199.

[36] The gap between omniscient and limited narrative when the gods are involved is a feature that can be found back in Homer; see Scodel (2009) 421.

just a wait[37]. This divergence between the two odes reverberates in the effect of suspense at the end of the narrative (which in ode 18 corresponds to the end of the poem): whereas in ode 5 the abrupt interruption upon Deianira's name allows the audience to foresee the dramatic events that will happen[38], in ode 18 the final description of Theseus and of his approaching Athens leads the audience to imagine the sudden coming of the hero on the scene, which will definitively dispel the fears of his father.

Finally, it is essential to recall the different occasion and therefore the different aims of the two Bacchylidean odes considered in this paper. The first one is a victory ode: the insertion of the mythical narrative, with its pessimistic and subdued tone, is aimed at offsetting the excitement caused by the sports victory, which is a typical process of epinician poetry. The ominous end of the mythical narrative is then followed by the return to the praise of Hieron, of his victory and of the merits of poetry; however, the preceding mythical narrative casts a shadow on the celebration that takes on a deeper awareness of human destiny.

Conversely, ode 18 is designed to celebrate a civic community in a sort of social rite involving the ephebes[39]. It is a glorification of Athens by celebrating its mythical founder and its youth filled with warlike ardour.

These differences point out Bacchylides' ability to adapt the tragic effect to various situations. This paper was meant to show that in odes 5 and 18 this effect is achieved, first and foremost, thanks to the poet's masterly use of several narrative levels and in particular the narrative mode of *mimesis* adopted by resorting to direct speech. This mode highlights the gap of knowledge between characters on the one hand and the narrator and the audience on the other, thereby creating an effect of dramatic irony that reminds us of the best achievements of Attic tragedy.

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[37] Burnett (1985) 121ff.
[38] Rengakos (2000) 104f.
[39] Cf. Merkelbach (1973) and Ieranò (1987).

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