



The Performance of the Victory Ode

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THE PERFORMANCE OF THE VICTORY ODE

In common with most readers of Pindar since at least the Hellenistic period, I have always assumed that his victory odes were performed by a male chorus which both danced and sang. However, the assumption that choral performance was inevitable has now been questioned in two recent articles devoted to the performance of the epinician and more briefly in a third which rejects the current division of Greek lyric poetry into choral lyric and monody.¹ Since this issue is of some importance for the interpretation of a number of passages in the odes, for an appreciation of the formative factors which distinguish the longer odes intended for the “official” celebration from the shorter odes which were sung at the place of victory, odes such as *O.* 11 and *Bakch.* 2,² and for the vexed question of the reference of first person statements in the odes, and since the evidence for choral delivery as the normal and quite probably the only mode of performance for the formal victory ode has in my view been dismissed too lightly, it may be of use to present a case for the traditional view. This article will concern itself almost exclusively with the victory ode, but something will be said at the close on the issue of the classification of Greek lyric poetry.

In examining statements in Pindar and Bakchylides relating to the circumstances of performance, I make three assumptions: (i) that an interpretation gains in cogency according to its consistency with Pindar’s linguistic or literary usage; (ii) that in reconstructing a situation described or adumbrated by Pindar or Bakchylides an economical interpretation (by which is meant one which does not require the reader to supply facts not mentioned in the text) is to be preferred; (iii) that such evidence has a cumulative value, i.e., that the volume of evidence which must be explained away if a belief is to be rejected is a useful indicator of the plausibility of the belief in question.

¹ M. R. Lefkowitz, *AJP* 109 (1988) 1–11; M. Heath, *AJP* 109 (1988) 180–95; M. Davies, *CQ* 38 (1988) 56f. I am grateful to Mary Lefkowitz and Malcolm Heath for their comments on an early version of this paper, to John Killen for his comments on a later draft, and to my colleague Malcolm Campbell and Isobel Longley–Cook for patient discussion of the issues.

² For this category of ode see now T. Gelzer, *MH* 42 (1985) 95–120.

μή μοι κραναά νεμεσάσαι
 Δάλος, ἐν αἷ κέχυμαι.
 τί φίλτερον κεδνῶν τοκέων ἀγαθοῖς;
 εἶξον, ὦ Ἀπολλωνιάς· ἀμφοτέρων τοι χαρίτων σὺν θεοῖς ζεύξω τέλος,
 καὶ τὸν ἄκερσεκόμαν Φοῖβον χορεύων
 ἐν Κέωι ἀμφιρύται σὺν ποντίοις
 ἀνδράσιν, καὶ τὰν ἄλιερκέα Ἴσθμου
 δειράδ(α).

(I.1–10)

Pindar is here stressing the importance of the victory by stating that he has postponed completion of another commission, a Paean for Delos, in order to praise Herodotos. In the verses in question, in which he meets an imaginary objection from Delos, Pindar maintains that both tasks can be completed. For our purposes the key word is χορεύων. Elsewhere, when Pindar uses the root χορ– with reference to his own composition he clearly has in mind a *formal group performance* of song and dance.³ This is obviously what Pindar promises Delos in these verses, as is made clear by σὺν ποντίοις ἀνδράσιν (vv. 8f.). But the context in I.1 strongly suggests that what Pindar offers the Isthmus (by which he clearly means his present song in praise of Herodotos of Thebes) is identical in mode of performance but not in content to the performance on Delos; i.e., Pindar will celebrate both god and victor *by means of* group song and dance. As a panegyrist, Pindar had an ample range of verbs to express the notion ‘praise’ (such as αἰδέω, αἰνέω, ἐπαινέω, γεγωνέω, ὑμνέω, κελαδέω, τιμαλφέω, τιμάω, γάρυω) which were neutral with respect to the mode of performance and therefore capable of being used simultaneously of a choral celebration on Keos and a solo performance in Thebes, had he so wished. Instead he has chosen a verb which is not elsewhere used of solo song and appears to be etymologically incapable of being so used. We may also rule out the possibility of a reference to informal or spontaneous dancing to Pindar’s song, for by using the explicit term χορεύων *of himself* and *within his poem* Pindar is clearly indicating an inevitable aspect of the performance *as he intends it* (as elsewhere when he uses this root with reference to his own work) not some adventitious feature of the celebration. His choice of terminology is reliable evidence that I.1 was intended for a formal group performance of song and dance.

³ Cf. *Pae.* VI.9, frag. 75.1, *Parth.* II.39, frag. 94c.1.

ἀλλά με Πυθώ τε καὶ τὸ Πελοποννησίον ἀπέει
 Ἄλεῦα τε παῖδες, Ἴπποκλέαι θέλοντες
 ἀγαγεῖν ἐπικωμίαν ἀνδρῶν κλυτὰν ὄπα.

.....
 ἔλομαι δ' Ἐφυραίων
 ὄπ' ἀμφὶ Πηγεῖδον γλυκεῖαν προχερόντων ἑμάν
 τὸν Ἴπποκλέαν ἔτι καὶ μᾶλλον σὺν αἰοδαῖς
 ἕκατι στεφάνων θαητὸν ἐν ἄλιξι θησέμεν ἐν καὶ παλαιτέροις
 νέαισιν τε παρθένοισι μέλημα. (P.10.4–6, 55–59)

Lefkowitz⁴ sees in the first of these passages a *komos* “involved not in the performance of this ode, but in some more informal celebration of the victory singing in unison as well as dancing.” There are however problems with this view. Firstly, it involves the surprising assumption that the formal celebration of the victory, commissioned presumably at great expense from a foreign poet, was less elaborate than the informal celebration by the victor’s friends, the former being a solo performance with musical accompaniment, the latter a more demanding combination of synchronized song and dance. Secondly, it is not recommended by an unbiased reading of Pindar’s words in their immediate context. Pindar begins with praise of Thessaly and its ruling family, expressed in a flattering comparison with Sparta, the most powerful Greek state of the day. In v. 4 he stops himself with a rhetorical question, τί κομπέω παρὰ καιρόν, ‘why this excessive boast?’ The question clearly refers to the opening pronouncement on the blessedness of Thessaly, that is to the performance of Pindar’s song which has actually begun. So should the answer, which justifies the praise by listing the forces which prompt Pindar’s (με 4) song. ἐπικωμίαν ἀνδρῶν . . . ὄπα refers explicitly to collective singing by a group of men. The circumstantial participle θέλοντες explains why the Aleuadai ‘call on’ Pindar. To say “the Aleuadai prompt my ode because they want collective singing for Hippokleas” makes little sense if Pindar’s song is a solo performance. Thirdly, we find Pindar elsewhere stating at the opening of his ode the factors which prompt praise (cf. *O.*3.6–10, *N.*1.7), with reference to his own song. Given Pindar’s stylized approach to the task of praise, it is natural to interpret *P.*10.4–6 in the same way.⁵

⁴ Lefkowitz (note 1 above) 5.

⁵ Note also the verbal similarity ἀπέει . . . ἐπικωμίαν . . . ὄπα (*P.*10), ὀτρύνει . . . ἐγκώμιον . . . μέλος (*N.*1).

The second passage is taken by both Lefkowitz and Heath as a reference to subsequent informal performance of the ode by the victor's fellow-citizens.⁶ But again there are problems. Firstly, there is nothing in the text to suggest that the reference is to later performances. This is in marked contrast to *N.4.15*, which explicitly speaks of repeated performance, and *Bakch.3.96ff.*, where subsequent singing of Bakchylides' ode is indicated by the indefinite τις. We should be wary of an interpretation which requires us to supply an important detail which Pindar omits. Secondly, the ring-composition employed in the ode⁷ favours our linking the two references to a plurality of voices celebrating the victor in vv. 6 and 56; since the first clearly refers to the original performance, so most naturally will the second. Since we have seen unequivocal evidence of choral performance of one epinician (*I.1*), there is no good reason to resist the strong *prima facie* case for choral performance of another.

δέδεξαι τόνδε κῶμον ἀνέρων

.....

τὸν ἐν αἰοιδᾷ νέων

πρέπει χρυσάορα Φοῖβον ἀπύειν

(*P.5.22*, 103f.)

These two passages taken together argue strongly for choral performance of *P.5*. Verse 103 could conceivably refer to other songs. There is however no reason to detect a reference beyond the ode, since the injunction to praise Apollo is fully realized within *P.5* itself (vv. 23, 60–81). In the same way, the advice in vv. 26 and 43f. to praise Karrhotos is merely a graphic description of what actually takes place in *P.5* (vv. 27–42, 45–53). There is no obvious reason to treat these parallel injunctions to praise the benefactors, human and divine, differently. Verse 22 clearly refers to the present occasion (τόνδε). In theory, the *komos* of men referred to here could have another role in the celebration, distinct from Pindar's song. But it is far more likely (given Pindar's self-confidence and his insistence on the longevity of song) that Pindar would count his patron "blessed" for the receipt of his song

⁶ Lefkowitz (note 1 above) 5, Heath (note 1 above) 187, n.18.

⁷ The ring structure (which does not embrace all the themes in the ode) is as follows: A1 Good government, good ancestry (1–3), B1 Poet's song, commission by Aleuadai (4–6), C1 Instability of human happiness (20–21), D1 Perseus' visit to the Hyperboreans (31–34), E Description of Hyperborean paradise (34–44), D2 Perseus' visit to the Hyperboreans (44–46), C2 Instability of human happiness (61–63), B2 Poet's song, commission by Aleuadai (56, 64–66), A2 Good government, good ancestry (70–72).

than for any other aspect of the celebration. This natural assumption has the support of parallel passages at *O.*7.11 and *P.*5.45ff. The latter is especially significant in view of the evident similarity of the praise of Arkesilas to that of Karrhotos in 45ff. Each receives a *makarismos* (20 μάκαρ, 46 μακάριος), and their blessedness is in both cases explained as due to victory in the games and celebration in song. In the case of Karrhotos the song is explicitly Pindar's enduring epinician. If the parallel holds good, then the phrase τόνδε κῶμον ἀνέρων should refer to Pindar's song. Pindar refers to his song elsewhere as a *komos*. A certain example is *O.*4.9⁸ where a reference to Pindar's song is rendered inescapable by the description of the *komos* as χρονώτατον φάος εὐρυσθενέων ἀρετᾶν, "most lasting light of mighty achievements." The victory-*komos* is clearly transient; what lasts is the ode, as *N.*4.6, *N.*7.11ff., *I.*4.40–45. Also highly probable are *P.*3.73, *P.*5.100,⁹ *P.*8.70,¹⁰ *I.*6.58, *I.*8.4.¹¹ That the song may be designated *komos* is also indicated by Pindar's use of the verb κωμάζω of his own activities as panegyrist, as *P.*9.89, *I.*4.72, *I.*7.20.¹² There is therefore no good reason to doubt that by "this *komos*" Pindar refers principally to his song. ἀνέρων is then naturally taken as a reference to the singers who are performing *P.*5.

τὸν μὲν οὐδὲ θανόντ' αἰοδαί γ' ἔλιπον,
 ἀλλὰ οἱ παρά τε πυρὰν τάφον θ' Ἑλικώνιαι πάρθενοι
 στάν, ἐπὶ θρήνῳν τε πολύφαμον ἔχεαν.
 ἔδοξ' ἦρα καὶ ἀθανάτοισ,
 ἔσλόν γε φῶτα καὶ φθίμενον ὕμνοις θεᾶν διδόμεν.
 τὸ καὶ νῦν φέρει λόγον, ἔσσυται τε Μοισαίῳν ἄρμα Νικοκλέος
 μνάμα πηγμάχου κελαδῆσαι. γεραίρετέ μιν. . . .

(I.8.62)

⁸ Cf. Gelzer (note 2 above) 100, n.11; D. E. Gerber, *QUCC* N.S.25 (1987) 16.

⁹ What the dead ancestors hear is Pindar's song; cf. *O.*8.81ff., *O.*14.20ff., *N.*4.85f. The use of the plural κῶμων presents no problem for Pindar elsewhere uses the plural of a single song, as *N.*7.81, *I.*2.45, *I.*4.43. Heath (note 1 above) 186 argues that "there is a tendency to distinguish κῶμος from χορός" in the classical period. This claim is not borne out by the Ar. *Thesm.* 101–4, 988 (where as Heath notes we have "the dancing of a religious κῶμος"), frag. 505 PCG (since the χορός is more obviously characterized by its activity than by its dress, ὥσπερ οἱ χοροὶ there refers to ἀιδόμεν . . . ἐγκώμιον and not just the wearing of garlands; for the generic background to this fragment see C. W. Macleod, *Phoenix* 35 (1981) 142–44), Eur. *Phoen.* 791 κῶμον ἀναυλότατον προχορεύεις.

¹⁰ The point here is that the poet's praise is well-deserved; cf. *O.*6.12, *P.*9.95f., *N.*3.29, *Bakch.*13.199–202.

¹¹ I believe *N.*2.24 to be another example. See note 14 below.

¹² The second person command is clearly self-address, since the imperative is based on the preceding statements about survival in song.

Theoretically, the command *γεραίρετε* 62 could be addressed either to those present or to the community at large; it would then presumably refer to other songs or to non-musical forms of praise and would be primarily a graphic means of stressing that Nikokles deserves praise. There is however no obvious reason to refer the command beyond the ode itself, and one good reason why we should not. The command *γεραίρετε* is followed by the praise of Nikokles (63–65) which is announced in vv. 61–62 (*τὸ καὶ νῦν κτλ.*). The example of other passages in Pindar in which an imperative demanding praise is followed by the praise which is demanded, and in which a reference beyond the ode appears to be excluded by the use of the singular (*O.9.108–12, N.3.26–32, N.5.50–54, N.10.21ff.*), strongly suggests that the praise of Nikokles in vv. 63–65 is the fulfilment of the command *γεραίρετε*. Though not conclusive, this consideration is of some weight in a poet with Pindar's tendency towards stylization and in default of any indication to the contrary. It is then likely that the command refers to *I.8* itself. If so, the group addressed is presumably the *νέοι* of v. 2, referred to in v. 66 as *ἄλικες*. We may therefore conclude that the *komos* which the young men are bidden to begin in vv. 1–4 is the performance of *I.8*.

νίκαν τ' ἔρικυδέα μέλπεν', ὦ νέοι,
Πυθία, μελέταν τε βροτωφελέα Μενάνδρου . . . (Bakch. 13. 190f.)

Taken alone, this command could refer to praise outside Ode 13. But the context does not favour this, for the command to praise Menandros is in fact followed in vv. 193ff. by a praise of Menandros. The parallels adduced above on *I.8* suggest that the command to praise him is fulfilled by the praise which follows, while the command to sing of victory is primarily a bridge from the preceding praise of Aigina to an item more directly connected with the victory. Like *I.8.62*, the imperative would then belong to a recognizable range of expressions in which the panegyrist, instead of saying "X is my theme" says "I shall sing," "let us sing," "sing" (imperative), "I should/must sing."¹³ If the

¹³ The fullest discussion of this range of expressions is by W. J. Slater, *CQ* N.S. 19 (1969) 86–94, who expands the observations of E. L. Bundy, *Studia Pindarica* (Berkeley 1962) 21f. on Pindar's use of the future where prosaic realism would demand the present, termed by Bundy the "encomiastic future."

command does not refer beyond the ode the second person plural indicates a plurality of performers.¹⁴

I have reserved for more detailed discussion two passages which are most naturally taken as evidence for choral performance, but where the interpretation is complicated slightly by a pronounced rhetorical element.

ὦ πότνια Μοῖσα, μήτηρ ἀμετέρα, λίσσομαι,
 τὰν πολυξέναν ἐν ἱερομηνίαι Νεμεάδι
 ἴκεο Δωρίδα νᾶσον Αἴγινα· ὕδατι γάρ
 μένοντ' ἐπ' Ἀσωπίῳ μελιγαρῶν τέκτονες
 κώμων νεανίαι, σέθεν ὄπα μαιόμενοι.
 διψηῆι δὲ πρᾶγος ἄλλο μὲν ἄλλου,
 ἀθλονικία δὲ μάλιστ' αἰοιδὰν φιλεῖ,
 στεφάνων ἀρετᾶν τε δεξιωτάταν ὀπαδόν.
 τὰς ἀφθονίαν ὄπαζε μήτιος ἅμας ἀπο·
 ἄρχε δ' οὐρανοῦ πολυνεφέλα κρέοντι, θύγατερ,
 δόκιμον ὕμνον· ἐγὼ δὲ κείνων τέ μιν δάροις
 λύραι τε κοινάσομαι.

.....
 Ζεῦ, τεὸν γὰρ αἶμα, σέο δ' ἀγών, τὸν ὕμνος ἔβαλεν
 ὅπῃ νέων ἐπιχώριον χάσμα κελαδέων.

(N.3.1–12, 65f.)

The interpretation of the first of these passages is complicated by the presence of a prolonged fiction. The situation in these verses is clearly not “real,” by which is meant that we are not witnessing Pindar in the act of composing his ode, as he claims to be. Pindar is projecting

¹⁴ Reference should also be made to Bakch.6.4–9, 11.9–14, both of which refer to celebration by young men. The comparison in the former between victory and celebration past and present, and the fact that the latter is primarily an indirect means of introducing the victor's name, suggest that we have in both a reference to the mode of performance of the ode in question. However, the degree of subjectivity in the argument advanced here makes these passages useful only as corroborative evidence. At N.2.24f. I believe, with Slater (note 13 above) 90, that the commands there are addressed to the chorus and that they are self-fulfilling, and therefore, that the *komos* referred to is the performance of N.2 itself. But since the use of the term ‘citizens’ opens up (in theory at least) the possibility of a reference to informal celebration after the ode, this passage again has only corroborative value. The same is true of O.3.5 *πεδίλωι*, where many scholars (correctly in my view) see a reference to dance; but since the word is partly metaphorical (‘rhythm’), we cannot claim that it offers unambiguous support for choral performance.

into the future an act (the completion of his song) which self-evidently belongs in the past, since the demand for a song is heard within the song itself. This fiction is common in Pindar, who frequently speaks as though he were meditating on the contents or shape of his song prior to or during composition, whereas of course the ode is complete by the time of performance. This fiction, which I have termed elsewhere the “oral subterfuge,”¹⁵ is useful to the poet in a number of ways. It can serve a structural purpose by allowing for a striking opening (as *O.10.init.*, *N.5.init*) or easing a transition to a new theme (as *P.1.81ff.*, *N.4.44*). A related use is what we might term “scene-setting.” The fiction of meditating/composing can stress the importance of the praise which is to follow by expressing the difficulty of praising the patron adequately or the need for inspiration (as *P.1.42ff.*, *P.9.89a–90*). The fiction also has an aesthetic aspect. The poet of praise has a constant need to vary the language he uses to convey a limited range of ideas in order to avoid monotony.¹⁶ The pretence of meditation gives the poet a wide range of expressions for the notion “my next topic is. . .” And of course the pretence of extempore composition gives the ode a freshness which would be lacking if the poet appeared merely to proceed from *topos* to *topos* as though checking off items on a list.

The opening of *N.3* is clearly an example of this subterfuge. The urgent summons to the Muse, the request for a song, the anticipation of the young men waiting in Aigina¹⁷ do not reflect a real situation. But

¹⁵ *A commentary on five odes of Pindar* (New York 1981) 5. The following survey (which does not pretend to be a comprehensive list) should indicate the pervasiveness of this fiction: *O.1.17ff.*, *O.2.89ff.*, *O.9.11ff.*, 80ff., 108ff., *O.10.1ff.*, *O.13.93ff.*, *P.1.43ff.*, 81ff., *P.4.247ff.*, *P.8.29ff.*, 67ff., *P.9.89a–90*, *P.10.4.*, 51f., *P.11.38ff.*, *N.3.26ff.*, *N.4.9ff.*, 33ff., 93ff., *N.5.1ff.*, 14ff., 50f., *N.6.26f.*, *N.7.52*, *N.8.19ff.*, *N.9.1–5*, 53ff., *N.10.19ff.*, *I.1.1–10*, 52, *I.5.22ff.* Cf. (outside the victory odes) especially *Parth* II.6ff., where in the fiction the girls have not yet dressed for the song and dance which they are actually performing. This type of fiction is found as early as Alkman (3.7–9).

¹⁶ For the importance of variety, and for one means by which it is achieved, see W. H. Race, *TAPA* 113 (1983) 95–122.

¹⁷ Verses 3–5 (‘Go to Aigina; the youths are waiting for your voice’) suggest that the young men are in Aigina. The phrase ὄδατῖ . . . ἐπ’ Ἀσωπίῳ appears to conflict with this, but Kallistratos (in schol. *N.3.1c*, in A. B. Drachmann, *Scholias vetera in Pindar’s carmina* [Leipzig 1903–27] III.42) speaks of a water-source Ἀσωπίς on Aigina, and this is supported by Et.M. s.v. Ἀμφιφορίτης (quoted by Pfeiffer *ad* Kallim. frag. 198; I owe this reference to Richard Stoneman). The alternative is to see a reference to the Boiotian river Asopos. But this is rather an odd place (even within a fiction) to wait for a song from a Theban which must be conveyed to Aigina; a reference to Dirke or Ismenos (i.e., to a spot at Thebes itself) would be more natural. (See now G. A. Privitera, *QUCC* N. S. 29 [1988] 63ff.)

the Muse of course is real, as are Pindar, the instrumentation (v. 12) and the young men; also real presumably is the relationship between these elements. To grasp this relationship we must look closely at the progress of thought in vv. 1–12, which may be schematized as follows:

- 1) Muse, come to Aigina (1–3)
- 2) For the young men are waiting, desiring your voice (3–5)
- 3) Desires differ, but victory needs song (6–8)
- 4) Grant abundant song from my mind (9)
- 5) Begin a song (10–11)
- 6) I shall blend it with their voices and the lyre (11–12)

Clearly step 2 here explains step 1; the Muse must come to Aigina *because* the young men desire her song. This desire (μαίόμενοι 5) is then generalized in step 3, which explains the young men's need for the Muse; victory needs song. This in turn prompts Pindar's request for a song, steps 4 and 5, which resume step 1. The structure is chiasmic. It is clear from the progress of thought that Pindar's summons to the Muse to provide a song for the young men is identical with the request for Pindar's song (μήτιος ἀμᾶς ἄπο 9). Since these young men are explicitly described as singers (4–5 μελιγαρύων τέκτονες κώμων 'makers of sweet voiced *komoi*'), the obvious explanation for their desire for Pindar's song is that they wish to sing it. This is made clear in vv. 11–12, where Pindar promises to blend his song with their voices. Lefkowitz¹⁸ takes this as indicating an audience of young men. ὄαρος

¹⁸ Lefkowitz (note 1 above) 8f. This interpretation is ruled out completely if we follow T. K. Hubbard, *Phoenix* 41 (1987) 1–9 in taking the datives in vv. 11f. as instrumental, with κοινάσσομαι meaning 'communicate to the public.' However, his argument is unconvincing. 1) He objects to the role given to lyre and voice according to the common interpretation ("share with their voices and the lyre"), on the grounds that they should be "subordinate accompaniments" (p.2). But Pindar often treats musical instruments as though they were active agents. Cf. *O.*6.97, *O.*10.93, *P.*1.97f., *P.*10.39, *N.*4.44, *N.*9.8, *N.*10.21.2) There are good parallels for the notion of "giving" a song to the instruments of performance, to which he objects (pp. 2–3). At *P.*8.29ff., in order to avoid this interpretation, Hubbard is compelled to take the datives λύραι and φθέγματι as instrumental. But the normal usage of ἀνατίθημι favours a dative of indirect object (it is surely asking too much to expect an audience to supply Αἰγίνα here). If, as Hubbard argues with some force, the religious connotations of ἀνατίθημι as 'dedicate' are too strong for it to be used with λύραι and φθέγματι, the verb may be taken as 'entrust to' or 'impose upon,' as Thuc. 8.82.1, Ar. *Nub.*1453, *Av.*545. At *P.*1.97f. we find the idea of giving a song to the lyre inverted to that of the lyre receiving a song. I quote the passage in full, since the verbal similarity makes its relevance to *N.*3.11f. obvious: οὐδέ μιν φόρμιγγες ὑπαρῶφαι κοινανίαν μαλθακᾶν παιδῶν ὄαροισι δέκονται. If the lyre may receive a theme it may surely

however appears to rule this out. Lefkowitz takes the word as ‘conversation.’ However, since the lyre mentioned in v. 12 is clearly part of the performance of the ode, one would naturally expect ὄροις to refer to song.¹⁹ Nor is Lefkowitz’s interpretation recommended by the suggested parallel passage at *P.1.97f.*, οὐδέ μιν φόρμιγγες ὑπώροφται κοινανίαν μαλθακὰν παίδων ὄροισι δέκονται, for παίδων ὄροισι there must refer to song. Firstly, if ὄροισι there refers to speech, we should expect ἀνδρῶν ὄροισι, for although we find boys on occasion among the guests at *symposia* (suitably chaperoned in the case of decent boys, as *Xen. Symp.* 1.8, or without chaperon in the case of immodest ones, as *Lys.* 14.25), these were in essence adult gatherings; we should therefore expect the boys to be there as singers (as *Ar. Pax* 1265–1301, *Xen. Symp.* 3.1) rather than as participants in the conversation. Secondly, and more subjectively, a reference to voices in *P.1* is recommended by *Theognis* 239ff., on which this passage appears to be modelled:

θοίνης δὲ καὶ εἰλαπίνησι παρέσσηι
 ἐν πάσαις πολλῶν κείμενος ἐν στόμασιν,
 καὶ σε σὺν αὐλίσκοις λιγυφθόγοις νέοι ἄνδρες
 εὐκόσμως ἔρατοὶ καλὰ τε καὶ λίγεια
 ἄισονται.

The instrumentation differs, since Pindar wishes to recall at the close the lyre which opens the ode. But both passages deal with survival in

be given a song. 3) Hubbard rejects the one Pindaric parallel for the use of the verb, *P.4.115* νυκτι κοινάσαντες ὄδον, where the meaning is ‘share with,’ ‘entrust to,’ because that passage is “highly metaphorical” (p. 4). But the passage remains a good parallel, both semantically and syntactically, for the traditional interpretation of the verb in *N.3.12*. In that passage, as in most of the examples in his n.11 which contain a dative, the dative is an indirect object. So one would naturally take it in *N.3*. Certainly the verb may take a modal (*Eur. Alk.* 426) or instrumental (*Arist. Pol.* 1264a1) dative, but only where the context makes this clear. This is not the case in *N.3*, for it is natural after a statement of the performer’s desire to receive a song (3–6) for Pindar to state that he will provide it for them. 4) Hubbard argues (p. 6) that κοινάσομαι is “an ‘encomiastic future’: a programmatic statement directly proclaiming the present act of celebration,” and so must refer to “the public proclamation of the song by chorus and lyre” rather than “the poet’s transmission of the song to the musicians.” But κοινάσομαι and ἔξει in v. 12 are part of a coherent progression of thought (vv. 1–12) which *consistently* places not just performance but also composition in the future; these verbs cannot be isolated in this way. I conclude that the traditional interpretation of this sentence is correct.

¹⁹ Cf. *O.2.47*, *O.3.8*, *O.6.97*, *P.8.31*, *N.4.5*, *N.11.7*.

song through commemoration at feasts by means of voice and accompaniment.

Heath,²⁰ accepting that ὄρωπος would naturally refer to song in this context, suggests that “the point could as well be that the young men have already been singing, and that the poet is now to add a solo song as his own contribution to the festive proceedings.” In support of this suggestion he observes: “On the assumption of a unison performance, we have to suppose that the κῶμος is waiting for the song *and* singing the song *and* singing that they are waiting for the song that they are singing, all at the same time; this is unnecessarily convoluted.” The latter observation is unduly literal-minded. It fails to take account of the rhetorical background which was discussed above; it is normal for Pindar to treat the actual as potential. There is no more reason to suppose that these young men are really waiting than to assume that at *O.*10.1ff. Pindar really needs to be reminded that he has to compose a song for Arcestratos; both odes were composed some time after the victory they celebrate (*O.*10.1ff., 85, *N.*3.2 ἱερομηνία, 80), and both use a dramatic fiction (the poet’s need to have his memory jogged, the urgent need for a song in Aigina) to express this fact vividly and to provide a striking opening of the sort which (with studied ingenuousness) Pindar tells us at *O.*6.1ff. he prefers. Indeed, Heath’s stricture applies as much to solo performance as to choral performance, for Pindar would still be using the opening of his song to request at some length the song he is already singing, and he would be stating that the young men are waiting to hear the song in which they already hear Pindar stating that they are waiting. *Any* attempt to take the opening literally leads to convolution. Heath’s suggestion that the young men have already been singing and are now to listen to Pindar’s solo song supplies two details which are self-evidently absent from the text. Pindar says nothing of any song which has already been sung by the young men, nor does he say anything about their listening to his song. We should be wary of any interpretation which requires us to supply data on which the text is silent, unless the data is necessary for an understanding of the text. This is not the case in the present passage. Pindar describes the young men as singers desiring a song (4–5) and promises to add his song to their voices and the lyre (11f.). All of this is perfectly intelligible without any supplement as a statement that Pindar is to supply the singers with the song they desire. The only reason to sup-

²⁰ Heath (note 1 above) 187f.

plement the text with conjecture is a disinclination to accept choral performance. This is not reason enough.

Further evidence that *N.3* was performed at its premiere by a chorus comes in vv. 65f., where Pindar says: “Zeus, yours is the blood, yours the contest, which the song struck, praising the delight of the land with the voice of young men.” This comes immediately after a myth which praises the descendents of Zeus (his “blood”), the Aiakidai, and appears in context to be a comment on the song which is in progress. The only alternative is to interpret the aorist as a reference to some earlier celebration. But there is nothing in the context to support such a view, and elsewhere Pindar’s references to earlier celebrations are explicit (*O.9.1ff.*, *P.8.19f.*, *I.4.27*). A reference to Pindar’s song is also suggested by the verbal echo of 11f. in 65f.²¹ This is an important consideration, in view of the ringcomposition discernible in the ode.²² Individually and collectively these two passages in *N.3* argue strongly for choral delivery.

ὄτρυνον νῦν ἑταίρους,
 Αἰνέα, πρῶτον μὲν Ἴηραν Παρθενίαν κελαδήσαι,
 γνῶναί τ’ ἔπειτ’, ἀρχαῖον ὄνειδος ἀλαθέσιν
 λόγοις εἰ φεύγομεν, βοιωτίαν ὕν. ἐσσί γὰρ ἄγγελος ὄρθός,
 ἠῦκόμων σκυτάλα Μοισᾶν, γλυκὺς κρατῆρ ἀγαφθέγκτων αἰοιδᾶν.
 εἶπον δὲ μεμνάσθαι Συρακοσσᾶν τε καὶ Ὀρτυγίας: (O.6.87–92)

This example too is complicated by a fiction, since the audience hears the poet, who evidently did not attend the performance, give instructions to an individual who presumably acts in some sense as his intermediary; again as in *N.3* the times of composition and performance are blended. It can be maintained that the commands in these

²¹ Cf. (note 18 above) Hubbard 7, n.19, following J. B. Bury, *The Nemean Odes of Pindar* (London 1890) 58.

²² Thus the thirst of victory for song (6f.) is slaked by Pindar’s song, which is a drink (76–79), and the young men’s search for a song (5) is balanced by the poet’s unerring search for the appropriate means of praise (80f.). The element of waiting expressed in the proem recurs in an explicit statement that his song is late (80), which may mean that it is overdue, or merely that it was composed at least a year (v. 2) after the victory which it celebrates.

verses refer to other songs, not to the performance of *O.6* itself.²³ In which case the ἑταῖροι of v. 87 need not be the performers of *O.6*. However, W. J. Slater would class these commands among the range of futures and future-related expressions whose intention is fulfilled by the act of speaking itself.²⁴ If we examine the whole context, we shall see that Slater's interpretation is correct. Verses 89–90 are an epinician commonplace, a claim by the panegyrist that his praise is true.²⁵ The command to Aeneas to bid his comrades recognize the truth of Pindar's praise is therefore in all likelihood equivalent to a statement of the truth of Pindar's praise of Hagesias rather than a reference to activity to be carried on outside the ode. The command to mention Syracuse and Ortygia in v. 92 is primarily a bridge to the praise of Hieron which follows, as we can see from the relative allocation of space in vv. 92 and 93–97, just as the command to sing of victory at Bakch.13.190 effects a bridge to Menandros; so again the purpose of the command is fulfilled within the ode. Since i) these commands concern the activity of Aeneas' ἑταῖροι, ii) the commands do not refer beyond the ode, we may reasonably conclude 1) that the command to mention Hera is likewise self-fulfilling, that is, that the command is itself the praise of Hera, 2) that Aeneas' ἑταῖροι are performing *O.6*. In this context the description of Aeneas (90f.) suggests that his role is to drill them. For the series of self-fulfilling commands in this passage we may compare the series of self-fulfilling statements of obligation at *I.1.52–56*.

The above passages when read without any presuppositions about the manner of delivery would most naturally suggest choral performance of the odes in question. Collectively their weight is considerable. That they are not more numerous is consistent with the general paucity of information concerning the performance in Pindar's odes.²⁶ Thus we are rarely given any indication of the *precise* place of performance, the time of year or interval after the victory, the musical mode

²³ So Lefkowitz (note 1 above) 6f., Heath (note 1 above) 191. Heath states: "After the ceremony is over (ἐπειτα) Aeneas is to enquire . . ." This is mistaken. ἐπειτα in 89 answers πρῶτον in 88. This is relative time (first A then B), not absolute time.

²⁴ Slater (note 13 above) 88f. Cf. note 13 above.

²⁵ Cf. e.g., *O.2.92*, *O.4.17*, *O.13.52*, *N.1.18*, *N.11.24*.

²⁶ See C. J. Herington, *Poetry into drama* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1985), 27–30 for the indications of performance in the odes themselves.

employed in the accompaniment, and we are given only sporadic information about the instrumentation. There is in addition a number of passages which while they do not refer directly to the performance of the ode in question make better sense on the assumption of choral delivery. Chief among these is *N.5.22–23*:

πρόφρων δὲ καὶ κείνοις ἄειδ' ἐν Παλίοι
Μοισάν ὁ κάλλιστος χορός . . .

καὶ κείνοις here explicitly compares the choral performance of the Muses in praise of Peleus with another performance. Since the only other reference to a song of praise in the ode thus far is the poet's song for Pytheas (*N.5.1ff.*), it seems likely that καὶ here compares the Muses' chorus with the performance of *N.5*.²⁷ If this reasoning is sound, the logical conclusion is that *N.5* too was performed by a chorus. Other passages which gain in force once we assume choral performance are *O.14.8–12*, *P.1.1–12*, *P.10.37ff.*, all of which offer an implicit comparison between present celebration and celebration in a more blessed place, and all of which include a reference to choral performance. *I.8.56aff.*, quoted above, also perhaps falls into this category, since the collective performance of the Muses is explicitly adduced as the prototype and justification for the praise of Nikokles in *I.8*. These passages are of some use as corroborative evidence.

The modern assumption that Pindar's victory odes were performed by a chorus is shared by the Pindaric scholia. Often their statements are based on Pindar's words and therefore do not amount to independent evidence for a reconstruction of the circumstances of performance.²⁸ There are however sufficient passages in which this belief is expressed without any prompting from Pindar's text to indicate that

²⁷ For the use of καὶ here there is an excellent parallel at *O.8.25*, καὶ τάνδ' ἄλιε κέα χώραν, where καὶ compares Aigina with Olympia, praised at the opening; see the discussion of L. R. Farnell, *The Works of Pindar* (London 1932) II, 62f. (I do not however share his belief that *O.8* was performed at Olympia). The phrase καὶ κείνοις at *N.5.22* is discussed by S. Fogelmark in *Arktouros, Hellenic studies presented to Bernard M. W. Knox* (Berlin 1979) 71–80; he concludes that there is an implicit reference of the wedding of Kadmos and Harmonia, which I find obscure in context.

²⁸ Cf. schol. *O.3.10c*, Drachmann I.108, *O.6.149a*, Drachmann I.188 (this scholium certainly contains unfounded conjecture, and there is no reason to believe that the scholiasts have any authority for their identification of Aineas), *P.5.24a*, Drachmann II.174, *P.10.8b*, Drachmann II.243, *N.3.6a*, Drachmann III.43, 18a-c; Drachmann III.44.

the predominant assumption in the Hellenistic period was that the odes were intended for choral delivery.²⁹ It is of course true, as has recently been observed, that the scholia nowhere give a source for this assumption.³⁰ This does not however mean that we are offered guesswork, for the authority of a scholium is not to be assessed solely on the presence or absence of attribution. For instance, the scholia on *N.6* cite a seemingly authoritative note from Asklepiades which is almost certainly erroneous,³¹ while the scholia on *O.3* include without attribution a note on the Olympic crown whose source, which is clearly describing a contemporary practice, can be dated to within half a century.³² The evidence of the scholia deserves neither uncritical acceptance nor automatic rejection. Each piece of evidence must be treated on its own merits. We cannot say for certain that the scholiastic references to choral performance rest on a reliable authority. But we can say that they are consistent with the internal evidence of Pindar's text on the most obvious interpretation of that text. And we can say that interest in the principles of choral poetry began as early as the fifth century, if we may trust the statement that Sophokles wrote an essay on the chorus.³³ Thus the Hellenistic scholars from whose works the scholia derive their information may have had earlier authority for their apparently unanimous assumption that the victory odes were performed by choruses.

"May" of course is not "must," and we may feel free to dismiss the statements in the scholia without hesitation as guesswork if we have evidence that they are certainly or probably erroneous, that is, if we can adduce passages to demonstrate that the victory ode was commonly or inevitably performed by a soloist. The same evidence would also incline us to accept the less obvious interpretation of the passages in Pindar and Bakchylides which appear to speak of choral performance. However, when we turn to the evidence for solo performance we find it to be distressingly meagre.

²⁹ Cf. schol. *O.4.7g*, Drachmann I.131, *P.8.78a*, Drachmann II.214, 99a, Drachmann II.215, *P.9.172*, Drachmann II.236, *N.7.123a*, Drachmann III.134, *N.9.1a, b*, Drachmann III.150, *I.7.51a*, Drachmann III.266. What is at issue here is not the correctness of the interpretation in each case but the automatic assumption of choral performance which these notes imply.

³⁰ Herington (note 26 above) 231, n. 68.

³¹ Schol.*N.6.* inscr. Drachmann III.101. See my discussion in *CQ* 39 (1989).

³² Schol.*O.3.60*, Drachmann I.122. For the date of the source see L. Drees, *Olympia* trans. G. Onn (London 1968) 35.

³³ Cf. the Souda lexicon s.v. Σοφοκλής, 815 Adler.

ἀλλὰ Δωρίαν ἀπὸ φόρμιγγα πασσάλου
λάμβανε

(*O.1.17f.*)

Lefkowitz³⁴ sees here a reference to solo performance³⁴ of *O.1*. As with the opening of *N.3* there is an element of fiction here, since the proposal to take down the lyre is made some time after the ode has begun, although the lyre has presumably been accompanying the ode since v. 1. This does not however make the lyre a fiction; and it can be argued that we have a literal self-address by the player of the lyre, indicating a solo performance as at *Od.8.68*. But the rhetorical element here may embrace more than the timing of the command. The use of the second singular imperative in self-address in odes which we have seen to be choral (*P.10.51*, *N.3.26–32*) indicates that this form is not a reliable guide to performance. We should moreover note that Pindar describes himself as a physical participant in the celebration even when he gives us good reason to believe that he was not present at the performance, as also does Bakchylides.³⁵ We should therefore beware of taking this command too literally.

ὦ πότν' Ἀγλαΐα
φιλησίμολπέ τ' Εὐφροσύνα, θεῶν κρατίστου
παῖδες, ἔπακοοῖτε νῦν, θαλία τε
ἔρασίμολπε, ἰδοῖσα τόνδε κῶμον ἐπ' εὐμενεῖ τύχαι
κούφα βιβῶντα· Λυδῶι γάρ Ἀσώπιχον ἐν τρόπαι
ἐν μελέταις τ' ἀείδων ἔμολον

(*O.14.13–18*)

Heath³⁶ remarks on these verses: “the κῶμος is seen, but what is heard is the singing, which is what ‘I’ do, not what ‘this κῶμος’ does.” However, this interpretation rests on an arbitrary assumption that γάρ explains only ἔπακοοῖτε. It is equally possible that γάρ explains the whole preceding sentence, including ἰδοῖσα as well as ἔπακοοῖτε; this would make the singer (ἀείδων) part of the κῶμος (note βιβῶντα . . . ἔμολον) which is seen “stepping.” This passage is of no use as evidence.

There is in fact only one passage in which Pindar speaks

³⁴ Lefkowitz (note 1 above) 4.

³⁵ Cf. *O.7.13–14* with 8, *I.2.12* with 45–49. See further Bakch. frags. 20B.1–3, 20c.1–2 discussed in note 49 below.

³⁶ Heath (note 1 above) 187.

unequivocally of solo performance of his ode, *N.4.14–16*. But there the context speaks unambiguously of repeated revival, not the premiere.³⁷

Thus we are left with *O.1.17* as the sole piece of evidence which might indicate solo performance. And we have seen that Pindar's practice elsewhere gives us reason to suspect the possible presence of a fiction. The evidence for solo performance is therefore both quantitatively and qualitatively weak, unlike that for a choral delivery.³⁸ There are of course many passages in which we have a first person singular statement of the sort "I sing/shall sing." But we know from tragedy and comedy that the dramatic chorus could speak as a collective personality;³⁹ Pindar's fragments and Alkman's *Partheneion* tell the same story.⁴⁰ We also find first person statements in the odes which must refer to the poet himself.⁴¹ But the occurrence of such expressions in odes which according to the most probable interpretation of the evidence were performed by a chorus (*O.6.84–7*, 89f., 105, *P.10.55f.*, 63–66, *N.3.1–12*, 75f., *I.8.6ff.*, *Bakch.13.221–29*)⁴² and in odes where the poet evidently was not present at the performance (*O.7.8*, *P.3.63ff.*, *N.3.77* *πέμπω*, *I.2.45–48*) makes them unreliable evidence for what the audience actually witnessed during performance. And the matter-of-fact nature of most of the references to choral performance strongly suggests that this was the normal if not the only mode of performance at the premiere. I therefore find it easier to suppose that all utterances in the odes were physically made by a chorus of young men who also

³⁷ The same is true of the epinician of Simonides which is envisaged as being sung solo at *Ar.Nub.1355f.*, as Davies (note 1 above) 57 rightly notes.

³⁸ Davies (note 1 above) 57 asks: "why is it not the regularly vague references to the singer-dancers of the *epinicia* that are conventional and unreal?" The answer is that there is no obvious parallel for the fiction imagined by Davies (a solo performer pretending to be a chorus), while there are excellent parallels for the presentation of a collective persona by a group of singer-dancers, for the utterance of a statement by the chorus referring to the poet but using a first person singular or second person singular self-address, and for the poet (in the first person or equivalent) ascribing to himself activities which the audience could see to be fictitious. See notes 35, 39, 42, 49.

³⁹ See M. Kaimio, *The Chorus of Greek drama* (Helsinki 1970) 36–103 for discussion and examples of the use of singular and plural by and of the chorus in lyrics.

⁴⁰ Cf. *Pae. II.4*, 24ff., 102, *Pae.IV.2*, 15, 21ff., 36, *Pae.IX.22*, 34, *Parth.II.6–15*, 33–39, Alkman frag. 1.99 with 39f., 43, 52, 77, 85–88.

⁴¹ Cf. *O.1.115b–16*, *O.2.86–88*, *O.6.85–90*, *O.7.8*, *O.9.26*, *P.3.63–79*, *P.4.248*, *P.10.64–66*, *N.1.19ff.* (*ἀλλοδαπῶν* 22), *N.3.9*, 76–82, *N.7.102–4*, *I.1.1–10*, *I.2.45–48*. For my views on the reference of the first person in Pindar see *op.cit.* (note 15 above) 17.

⁴² Cf. *Pae.VI.1–15* and see also *Bakch.19.1–10*, self-address by the poet in what would appear from vv. 49–51 to be a choral dithyramb in honour of Dionysos.

danced, but that by tradition statements about the poet could be uttered by the chorus in the first person; in such cases the chorus spoke for the poet. This does not of course mean that nobody ever wrote a lyric song in praise of an athletic victory for solo performance. Such an assertion would go far beyond our evidence, and would fail to take account of the host of minor talents, amateur, professional and semi-professional which common sense compels us to conjecture but about which we have no information. I would maintain only that the epinicia written in literary "Doric" which were commissioned from the international poets for the formal celebration of athletic success were intended for choral delivery.

We now turn to the general issue of the modern division between choral and monodic poetry. Davies rightly insists that this distinction was of no importance in the ancient world for the classification of lyric poetry. In place of the choral/monodic division Davies suggests one based simply on form, both metre and language.⁴³ The metrical and linguistic divisions coincide. One group of poets uses simple metrical structures, "stichic, distichic or monostrophic," with short stanzas which are used in more than one poem rather than created specifically for the individual poem. The second group uses more complex metrical patterns; their poetry is usually triadic (though not invariably), with longer stanzas whose length may vary, involving a metrical structure unique to each poem. The former group employs "something closely approximating to their own vernacular," while the second group uses "an artificial Doricized international poetic dialect with variations from poet to poet." Now the linguistic and metrical features ascribed to the second group are clearly discernible in the victory odes of Pindar and Bakchylides, which according to the conclusions drawn above were probably performed by a chorus. They are also clearly discernible in other odes by these poets which were performed by a chorus.⁴⁴ There is in addition another body of lyric poetry where the same

⁴³ Davies (note 1 above) 63–64.

⁴⁴ The assumption that the dithyrambs, paeans, partheneia and hyporchems of Pindar and Bakchylides were choral receives explicit support at *Pae.* VI.9, frag. 75 (a dithyramb), *Parth.* II.39, frag. 94c, frag. 107b, *Bakch.* 16.11 (presumably), 17.130, 19.49–51 (see note 42 above), frag. 15. We may therefore add the surviving fragments of these genres to the evidence for the association of choral performance with the metrical and linguistic characteristics of Davies' second group. The *prosodia* as processional hymns should also be added to this (despite the absence of internal evidence); cf. schol. *Ar.* *Av.* 853 and Schol. *Lond.* *Dion. Thrac.* p. 451, 17f. *Hilg.* The hymns offer no internal evidence, though as works commissioned for public celebration they are more readily imagined as choral. The dirges likewise offer no internal evidence.

features may be discerned, and where again choral delivery is assured, and that is the lyrics of Attic tragedy. The ratio of monostrophic arrangements to those involving a non-responding stanza is the reverse of that attributed to the second group above, but the latter type is still common.⁴⁵ The length of stanzas varies, but usually exceeds the short stanzas of the first group above, even where the tragedians use verses common in poets of that group. Each song has its own metrical structure. The language is non-vernacular and composite. Though it would be erroneous to describe the dialect of the choral odes of tragedy as "Doric,"⁴⁶ since the most distinctive feature of the dialect, the use of long alpha where Attic-Ionic used eta, is common to all dialects outside that group, the combination of this feature with Ionic-Homeric and Aeolic forms strongly suggests that what we have is the "artificial Doricized international poetic dialect" with the West Greek elements, already attenuated in Bakchylides and Simonides, reduced to the point of the merest and most obvious gesture. This dialect is of course shared by the choral songs with kommos and solo; but the chorus as the origin of the genre is to be presumed the original home of the forms, other sung parts being assimilated to this dialect for homogeneity. Thus the evidence of tragedy, added to that of Pindar and Bakchylides (where the manner of performance can be established by explicit evidence or the most natural interpretation of the text), provides us with a substantial body of material which possesses the characteristics of the second group of poets as described by Davies, all of it choral. Now given the general conservatism of Greek literature in the treatment of formal aspects of established genres, it is a reasonable assumption that these choral odes assume the form which they do because this was the appropriate form for serious choral music. This creates the natural expectation that poetry whose manner of performance is unknown but which shares most or all of these features will also be choral poetry. This would naturally include Alkman, Stesichoros and Ibykos, other poets in Davies' second group. And there is nothing in the surviving fragments of these poets which necessarily tells

⁴⁵ Cf. M. L. West, *Greek metre* (Oxford 1982) 79 for the structure of the choral odes of tragedy.

⁴⁶ Cf. Herington (note 26 above) 113f. Two features not shared by all dialects other than Attic-Ionic are genitive plural of α -stems in $-\alpha\upsilon$ and the genitive singular of masculine α -stems in $-\alpha$. Boiotia and parts of Thessaly have the uncontracted forms. The contracted forms therefore are not common Greek. In view of the diversity within the Aeolic dialects these features in tragedy are probably due to the influence of West Greek through the medium of Dorian lyric.

against this assumption. Indeed, in the case of Alkman, wherever we can establish the mode of performance we find that this was choral (1.93f., 3.72, 10b, 14a, 26, 27, 32, 37b, 38, 45, 48, 59b), while there is not a single passage which speaks of solo delivery. That poems as long as those of Stesichoros could be performed by a chorus is to the modern reader at least surprising. But it should be noted that we know nothing about the nature of the dance, the role of the music (we do not know for instance if the poem was sung from start to finish without interruption, which would be a tiring feat either for a soloist or for a chorus, or if it was somehow subdivided, perhaps by regular instrumental interludes) or the occasions on which these songs were performed. We might add that the dithyrambs from which Attic tragedy evolved were presumably substantial choral narrative poems.⁴⁷ Moreover, Bakch. 13 shows that there was nothing odd to the ancient taste in the choral performance of a long narrative with epic content and language. Again, it seems at first sight odd that the *encomia/skolia* of Pindar and Bakchylides should be choral. But a glance at the recipients of these compositions reveals a striking coincidence of identity or status with the patrons of the victory odes, which suggests that these were commissioned works. As such they were presumably intended in the first instance not for some casual party but for a special celebration.⁴⁸ There is therefore no implausibility in the assumption of formal choral performance.⁴⁹ The erotic poetry of Alkman and Ibykos is a little more

⁴⁷ It is sometimes suggested that the length of Pindar's *P.4* makes choral performance unlikely. But if we consider the number of lyric verses sung by an Aeschylean chorus during a single day at the Dionysia (or indeed within a single play) we can hardly suppose that a poem the length of *P.4* (as sole performance by the chorus) was beyond the memory or physical capacity of a Greek male chorus or beyond the attention span of a Greek audience.

⁴⁸ In the case of Pindar frag. 122 the dedicatory nature of the composition is self-evident.

⁴⁹ Davies (note 1 above) 56 finds in Bakch.20B.1ff and 20C.1ff. evidence of solo performance. In both the poet speaks as though he were himself playing the lyre and singing at the performance. But in both the poet proceeds to speak of *sending* his song to its patron. This is another instance of the kind of fiction exemplified in note 35 above, according to which the poet describes himself as participating physically in the celebration when he clearly did not. Davies 55 describes Pindar frags. 123, 124a–b as “very personal” and therefore unsuitable for choral delivery. I see nothing intimate in the ode for Thrasyboulos, and in the case of the ode for Theoxenos I find “personal” an unhelpful term in view of the common use of erotic motifs for encomiastic purpose in the victory odes, for which cf. *PCPS* N.S.22 (1976) 26.

problematic, but given the degree of stylization in archaic love poetry, at least by the date of Ibykos, even here we may doubt that choral delivery would seem inappropriate since we are dealing with a highly sophisticated and conventional genre. It is however time to add a note of caution. It would probably be unwise to insist that no ode which possesses the linguistic and metrical characteristics of Davies' second group was ever composed for solo performance. We can however maintain that the association of these characteristics with a substantial body of poetry which was certainly or probably choral justifies the assumption that most if not all poetry of this type was choral; on the other hand, in default of internal and external evidence to the contrary, we may reasonably suppose that the bulk of the output of the major poets in Davies' first group (Sappho, Alkaios, Anakreon) was monodic. So while we should not insist absolutely rigidly on the modern distinction between choral and monodic poetry, there is evidence of a broad formal distinction between the two. Moreover, this is a distinction which can easily be rationalized (particularly in view of the metrical affinities between Davies' second group of lyric poets and Attic tragedy) in terms of the presence or absence of dance, which would be circumscribed by the short stanzas and repetitive patterns of the first group. Though Davies is right to stress that the distinction between choral and monodic poetry is no more than a modern deduction from surviving texts and notices, it is not the product of "facile schematism" but a realistic reconstruction based on the totality of surviving evidence.

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