Ancient Greek ekphrasis: Between description and narration
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2. Methodology, Test Cases, and Corpus

2.1 Introduction
In the previous chapter, a number of elements have been established that are prototypical for narration and description. In this chapter, I will use these elements to draw up a model for the analysis of ekphrasis (section 2.2). Before I turn to the analysis of my corpus of ekphraseis, I will first test the validity of my model by applying it to two smaller passages: the harbour of Phorcys and the Cave of the Nymphs (Od. 13.96-112) and Agamemnon’s arming scene (Il. 11.15-46). The first passage (section 2.3) has been chosen because it is regarded as a prototypical example of a description. I thus expect that it contains prototypically descriptive features. Agamemnon’s arming scene (section 2.4) has been called both narrative and descriptive, on account of which I expect that it contains both prototypically narrative and descriptive features. After a conclusion (section 2.5), this chapter discusses the selection of the corpus of ekphraseis (section 2.6).

2.2.1 A Model for Analysis: Introduction
In this section, I want to discuss the way in which the prototypical elements of description and narration can be studied in relation to ekphrastic passages. As has been argued in the previous chapter, an ekphrastic text contains two levels of representation. We have a text which represents an image; the image, in turn, also represents something. In the ekphraseis of this study, almost all images represent figures engaged in actions – in other words, the images represent some kind of narrative.

The relation between text and image in ekphrasis is complex. All we have is the text: the narratees “see” the image only through the text. Furthermore, the text may refer to different aspects of the image: the narrator may focus on the actions that are represented by the image, on what the figures look like, and on the materials of which they are made. The narrator may also add elements that are not depicted, but which are evoked by the image. Notwithstanding the complex relation between text and image, I distinguish between the two levels of representation for methodological purposes. Throughout this study, I use the terms as follows. The text, rather obviously, is made up out of words. The image, on the other hand, consist of what the narratee is invited to imagine on the basis of the verbal clues in the text. Under the notion of image, I will not

1 See further section 1.3.1.
I will start my analyses with a discourse linguistic analysis of the text. Such a formal analysis helps to uncover whether some of the prototypical elements of description and narration are present. Seeing that in the ekphraseis of this study the narrator deals with objects, a priori one would expect the text to be organized descriptively: fabula time has stopped, and the narrator focuses on what is depicted in the images on the object. On the other hand, the images represent some kind of narrative, so it could also be the case that the text features a sequence of events. In this case, the text contains the first basic element of narrative, event sequencing, and thus has a narrative organization. After this formal linguistic analysis, I further investigate which prototypical features of description are found: the presence of descriptive details, and a focus on sensory appearances.

I next turn to the image. Since the corpus of this study consists of ekphraseis with narrative images, the main question is which of the three basic elements of narrative – event sequencing, world disruption, and ‘what-it’s-like’ – are represented by the image. The results of my formal linguistic analysis serve as a starting point: if the text is organized descriptively, how is it possible that the image is narrative? On the other hand, if the text contains a sequence of events, does this mean that the image necessarily represents a sequence of events, too? It could also be the case that this sequence of events is merely evoked by the image. Of central concern, thus, will be the issue of what is depicted in the image and what is evoked.

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1 The need for linguistic tools in narratological research has recently been expressed by Grethlein 2012, who wonders ‘if the presentation of space in narrative can be adequately explored without linguistic tools’. This remark seems to apply particularly to description, in which narrators usually present spatial elements. In section 2.2.2 below, I explain how a discourse linguistic analysis works.

3 See for these elements sections 1.4.2 (on narration) and 1.5.2 (on description).

4 Other forms of textual organization may also occur in ekphrastic passages, for which see sections 1.3.1 and 5.3.2.

5 See the discussion of ‘time in ekphrasis’ in section 1.3.2.

6 As may be noted, the prototypical elements of description will mainly be investigated in relation to the text, whereas the prototypical elements of narration will mainly be dealt with in relation to the image. There are various reasons for this. First, it would seem that the narrativity lies in the image: the text does not refer to events that are happening in the primary storyworld, but to events that are depicted on an object of that storyworld. Second, it is the narrative
2.2.2 A Model for Analysis: The Discourse Modes

In this section, I will introduce the discourse linguistic framework that will be used throughout this study. I will make use of a framework devised by Rutger Allan for the linguistic analysis of the *discourse modes* in Greek narrative texts. As has been discussed in the previous chapter, narrative texts are not monolithic, but are made up out of different elements, such as narration or description. The idea behind the theory of the discourse modes is that these different elements are characterized by a recurring set of formal linguistic properties. The level of analysis is that of the passage.

Allan distinguishes four discourse modes, the *displaced diegetic*, the *immediate diegetic*, the *descriptive*, and the *discursive* discourse mode. For the purposes of this features of the image that require investigation, because the visual medium can be characterised as an essentially descriptive medium (see section 1.5.4 and cf. Wolf 2007: 44: "it is not so much the frame 'description' that requires marking in pictures, as it seems to be the default option in this medium anyway (at least as long as it is used as a representational medium), but rather the exceptional frame narrative").

7 Allan 2007, 2009, and 2013 (where see for further bibliography). It should be noted that Allan speaks of *narrative* modes. See also (for Greek) Bakker 1997; and (for Latin) Kroon 2000, 2002, 2007; Adema 2007 and 2008. Adema speaks of *discourse* modes. I use this term to avoid confusion between narration and narrative mode.

8 See section 1.4.2.

9 Smith 2003: 7 writes that "[t]here are intuitive differences between the passages of a discourse. People recognize passages of several kinds, namely Narrative, Description, Report, Information, and Argument. The intuitions are linguistically based: the passages have a particular force and make different contributions to a text. They can be identified by characteristic clusters of linguistic features". On this point, linguists seem to agree with narratologists. For instance, Bal [1985] 1997: 8 writes that "[i]t is (…) possible to examine what is said in a text, and to classify it as narrative, descriptive, or argumentative" (emphasis in the original).

10 Within narratological research, the need to distinguish description and narration at the level of the passage (and not, for example, at the sentence level) has been stressed by Chatman 1990: 16, Lopes 1995: 20-1, and Herman 2009: 91.

11 Allan 2009: 172, and passim. The discourse modes are also known as narrative modes; the various discourse modes, too, may have different names (for further terminological clarification see Allan 2009: 173, note 7). The discourse modes have been compared to text types. Thus, Smith 2003: 2 writes that "[t]he Modes correspond to ‘text types’ which have been recognized as important in discourse but not analyzed before (…) in terms of their linguistic properties". Herman 2009: 75-104 also approaches narrative and description as text types. For text types and
study, I do not need the distinction between a displaced and immediate diegetic discourse mode, and I will therefore simply speak of the diegetic discourse mode.\textsuperscript{12} The discursive discourse mode is relatively scarce in the ekphraseis of this study, and will not be discussed here.\textsuperscript{13} We are thus left with the diegetic discourse mode, the default mode in which stories are told, and the descriptive discourse mode, the default mode to describe the storyworld. In the following, I present only those features of the discourse modes that are relevant for my argument.

The distinctive linguistic feature of the discourse modes is the use of tense and aspect.\textsuperscript{14} This comes as no surprise: tense and aspect are linguistic means by which time is expressed in a text, and time is central to any definition of narrativity – without time, there would be no narrativity at all.\textsuperscript{15} As stated above, prototypical instances of narration feature a sequence of events, whereas descriptions do not. It is this difference in temporality on which the distinction between the diegetic discourse mode and the descriptive discourse mode is based.

The \textit{diegetic discourse mode} presents a sequence of events and states. The text is structured temporally: both fabula time and story time advance.\textsuperscript{16} This means that the text advances temporally: the text progresses as narrative time advances.\textsuperscript{17} Temporal adverbs are found in the diegetic discourse mode, too.

The tenses found in the diegetic discourse mode are aorists, imperfects, and historical presents.\textsuperscript{18} In a discourse mode analysis, only tenses in main clauses are taken
into consideration. An aorist characterises an event as completed; an imperfect characterises an event as not-completed (ongoing). Thus, a sequence of events is typically expressed by aorists; background information (i.e. ongoing events or states) is expressed by imperfects. Historic presents are also found in the diegetic discourse mode. These do not, however, occur in the corpus of this study. In short, the presence of aorists in a given passage is a strong indication of a sequence of events. This means that such a passage contains the diegetic discourse mode.

In the descriptive discourse mode time is static. When the narrator describes, for example, an object, only story time advances; fabula time comes to a halt. Instead, the text progresses spatially. Consequently, spatial adverbs are often found.

Descriptions typically begin with an explicit denomination of the (main) theme which will be described (e.g. “a house”) and an indication of the location of this theme. Theme and location function as a framework for the subsequent description. The description itself consists of an enumeration of the subthemes (e.g. “a wall” or “a door”) of the (main) theme. Of both theme and subthemes of a description, either a property (in linguistic terms, a state) may be described (e.g. “the house was red”) or an ongoing activity (e.g. “the house was shaking”). It should be noted that descriptions typically have a hierarchal, tree-like structure, in that a subtheme may itself have subthemes, too. In such cases, the subtheme is also a main theme vis-à-vis its subthemes.

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19 This is due to the fact that main clauses determine the temporal structure of a text; subordinate clauses depend on the main clause for their temporal point of reference.
20 Rijksbaron [1984] 2002: 11. A state may also be expressed by a perfect or pluperfect (see ibid.: 35-8).
21 A sequence of events cannot consist of ongoing events only (see Smith 2003: 26).
22 Cf. Allan 2013: 374: “aorists (...) advance the event sequence, while imperfects or pluperfects (...) specify states and activities that accompany the sequence of actions”. For a discussion of the imperfect in relation to narrativity, see Rijksbaron 2012: 341-52.
23 For the historic present, see Rijksbaron [1984] 2002: 22-4 and 2011: 4-10.
24 See also Wolf 2007: 31.
25 For the notion of theme and subtheme, see more extensively Hamon 1982: 149, 159-60 and Hamon [1981] 1993: 127-63.
26 Allan 2009: 179. The theme of a description will activate its accompanying frame (for the term frame see 1.4.2). For example, when confronted with the theme “house”, the frame “house” is activated, and the narratee will naturally assume the house has a door, walls, a roof, etc. In other words, the theme of a description activates the world knowledge of the narratee.
27 Allan 2009: 179.
The tense typically found in the descriptive discourse mode is the imperfect, which either designates a state or an ongoing event. Other tenses may also occur. If the description concerns habits and properties that still hold at the time of narrating, the present is also found. Such present tenses are called habitual or omnitemporal. The perfect or pluperfect, which locates a state resulting from the completion of the preceding state of affairs in the present or in the past, is also found. In sum, a passage in which imperfects occur, perfects/pluperfects or habitual/omnitemporal presents is in the descriptive discourse mode.

The following table illustrates the prototypical linguistic features of the diegetic and the descriptive discourse modes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diegetic Discourse Mode</th>
<th>Descriptive Discourse Mode</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>textual progression</td>
<td>spatial, enumerative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(theme(s) and subtheme(s))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tenses</td>
<td>imperfects, pluperfects;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>perfects, habitual/omnitemporal presents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adverbs</td>
<td>temporal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>spatial</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.1: Linguistic Features of the Diegetic and Descriptive Discourse Modes

As stated above, the distinctive linguistic feature of the discourse modes is the use of tense and aspect. The aorist plays a key role: it is present in the diegetic discourse mode, and absent from the descriptive discourse mode.

2.3.1 The Harbour of Phorcys and the Cave of the Nymphs (Od. 13.96-112):
Introduction
The passage dealing with the harbour of Phorcys and the cave of the Nymphs is generally regarded as a description. Set-piece or block descriptions – passages in

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5 For further properties of the discourse modes see the overviews in Allan 2009: 187 and 2013: 389.
which a character or landscape is extensively described, which usually results in a
pause\(^\text{33}\) – do not occur in the *Iliad*.\(^\text{34}\) The *Odyssey*, on the other hand, does contain a
number of readily identifiable descriptive passages.\(^\text{35}\) I single out, among others,
Calypso’s cave (*Od*. 5.63-75, focalized by Hermes), Goat Island (*Od*. 9.116-41, described by
Odysseus to the Phaeacians), and what is perhaps the largest description in the
*Odyssey*, the palace and garden of Alcinous (*Od*. 7.81-135, focalized partly by Odysseus
and partly by the narrator). For this section, I have chosen the Harbour of Phorcys and
the Cave of the Nymphs in *Od*. 13.96-112. This passage has been selected since it is one of
the few descriptions which are focalized by the narrator.

In book 13, Odysseus departs from Scheria, the island of the Phaeacians, and finally
arrives in Ithaca. After having said farewell to the Phaeacians (36-63), Odysseus
embarks and falls asleep on the Phaeacians’ ship (64-92). The ship approaches Ithaca
and lands on the beach:\(^\text{36}\)

\[\text{εὖτ' ἀστήρ ὑπερέσχε φαάντατος, ὃς τε μάλιστα} \quad \text{[aor.]}\]
\[\text{ἐρχεται ἀγγέλλων φάος Ἠοῦς ἠριγενείης,} \quad \text{[pres.]}\]
\[\text{τῆμος δὴ νῆσῳ προσεπίλνατο ποντοπόρος νηῦς.} \quad \text{[imf.]}\]
\[\text{Φόρκυνος δὲ τίς λιμήν, ἁλίοι γέροντος,} \quad \text{[pres.]}\]
\[\text{ἐν δήμῳ Ἰθάκης: δύο δὲ προβλήτες ἐν αὐτῷ} \quad \text{[pres.]}\]
\[\text{ἀκται ἀπορρώγεις, λιμένος πότι πεπτημαίαι,} \quad \text{[pres.]}\]
\[\text{αἱ τ' ἀνέμων σκαπόωσι δυσαήων μέγα κῦμα} \quad \text{[pres.]}\]

\(^\text{33}\) For block descriptions see Nünning 2007: 106.
\(^\text{34}\) Cf. Hellwig 1964: 34. For description in the *Iliad*, see further Willenbrock [1944] 1969 (restricted
to objects), Létoublon 1998, Minchin 2001: 100-31 (largely restricted to objects; description as a
concept is not defined), and Tsagalis 2012: 375-448 (again, the concept description remains
without definition). For description in both *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, see Andersson 1976: 15-52,
21-38 (discussed under the overriding notion of ‘space’).
\(^\text{35}\) There is no monograph dealing with description as a separate phenomenon in the *Odyssey*; it
is usually discussed in relation to landscape or setting. To the bibliography of the previous note
can be added: Nestle 1948: 32-50 (“Odysselandschaften”), Müller 1968 (description of objects,
houses and other man-made things), Elliger 1975: 103-56 (discussion of landscape), Byre 1994a
(on the Harbour of Phorcys and the Cave of the Nymphs), Byre 1994b (on Goat Island), and de
Jong 2001: xiii (see her observations ad loc., too).
\(^\text{36}\) Text by Von der Mühll; translation by Lattimore (adapted, for which I have made use of Bowie
2013: 114-7). Verbs in subordinate clauses have been put between square brackets.
When the brightest star rose, which most often comes announcing early-born Dawn’s light, (95) then the seafaring ship was approaching the island. There is a certain harbour of Phorcys, the old man of the sea, in the land of Ithaca. In it are two jutting precipitous headlands, sloping down towards the harbour, which keep out the great wave caused by the storm winds (100) [so that is stays] outside; inside, well-benched ships stay without mooring whenever they come to the anchorage, [which is] the end of their voyage. At the harbour’s head is a long-leaved olive tree, and near it [is] a pleasant dusky cave, sacred to the nymphs who are called Naiads. (105) In it are mixing bowls and amphoras of stone; and there bees store their honey. In it [are] very long stone looms, where the nymphs weave sea-purple webs, a wonder to behold; and in it [are] waters, ever-flowing. It has two doors, (110) one leading down for men at the northern end, but the other to the south belong to the gods, and men never enter by it, but it is a path of the immortals. There they rowed in, knowing it from before. Next she [the ship] ran ashore on land, as far [up the shore] as half of all [the ship], because it was driven so forward by the arms of the rowers.

2.3.2 The Harbour of Phorcys (Od. 13.96-112): Analysis
The description of the harbour of Phorcys is embedded in a larger narrative passage. This is clear from the difference in the tenses that are used in main clauses between on the one hand lines 93-5 and 113-5 (aorists and imperfects), and 96-112 on the other (only present tenses). The alternation of aorists and imperfects in the main clauses of lines 93-5 and 113-5 suggests a narrative style that highlights the immediacy of the events, while the present tense in lines 96-112 provides a more continuous and ongoing description of the harbour, emphasizing the peaceful and sacred nature of the place.
93-5 and 113-5 indicate that these lines contain the diegetic discourse mode. Temporal adverbs and a temporal conjunction are found, too: εὖτε ("when", 93), τῆμος ("then", 95), ἔπειτα ("then", "next", 113). As is to be expected, these lines contain a sequence of events. The events are part of the fabula of the Odyssey.

The present tenses, together with the spatial textual organization around a main theme (Φόρκυνος...λιμήν), indicate that lines 96-112 contain the descriptive discourse mode. In the descriptive discourse mode, time is static: fabula time has stopped, which results in a pause. Nevertheless, the narrator suggests that fabula time moves forward while he is describing the harbour and the cave. By employing the imperfect προσεπιλνατο (95), "was approaching", the narrator indicates that the description takes place while the ship approaches the island; the aorist εἰσέλασαν (113), "they rowed in", in combination with ἔνθα, "there", indicates that the ship has completed its journey.

The narrator focalizes this description, since Odysseus is asleep. By using the present tense, the narrator indicates that the harbour had such-and-such a layout when Odysseus was approaching it, and that it still has that very same layout in his own 'now'. In other words, the present tense indicates that the scenery has looked (level of the fabula) and still looks (level of the story) as it is described. This is the omnitemporal...
use of the present tense. The omnitemporal present tense involves a narrator who focalizes, since what is being described or narrated in the present omnitemporal tense necessarily pertains to the narrator’s ‘now’.

It has been established that lines 96-112 realise the descriptive discourse mode, which means that this passage has a prototypically descriptive organization. I now want to further investigate this descriptive structure, and establish whether any other prototypically descriptive elements are present. Descriptions prototypically begin with a denomination of the theme, and an indication of the location of this theme. This is the case here, too: the theme is mentioned first (Φόρκυνος...τίς ἐστι λιμήν, 96), and located on Ithaca (ἐν δήμῳ Ἰθάκης, 97). The theme functions as a framework for the rest of the description. We could say that the theme harbour activates the ‘harbour frame’. The harbour frame may have the following elements in the Odyssey: jutting headlands (which provide shelter against the elements), a nearby spring, a cave, trees at its head, and a lookout.

In the following chart, I have schematized the structure of the description. Every rectangle represents a theme:

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42 The omnitemporal present is often used, too, in comparisons and general statements (Chantraine 1953: 190-1). It should be noted that most comparisons feature a sequence of events which is a prototypically narrative feature (cf. Richardson 1990: 64: “the content of most similes involves action through time (...)").


44 Geographical descriptions are often introduced by the ‘there is a place X’ motif (ἐστι δέ τις); the narrative is often resumed with anaphorical ἔνθα, “there” (de Jong 2001: 83). This is the case in this passage, too (ἔνθα οἵ γ’ εἰσέλασαν, “there they rowed in”, 113).

The chart makes clear that the harbour of Phorcys has three subthemes (underlined; spatial indicators in bold): (1) δύο δὲ προβλῆτες ἐν αὐτῷ / ἀκταῖ (97-8); (2) αὐτὰρ ἐπὶ κρατός λιμένος τανύφυλλος ἐλαίη (102); (3) ἀγχόθι δ' αὐτῆς ἄντρον (103). The narrator uses existential ἐστι to introduce the description, but omits (locative) forms of the verb ‘to be’ in the case of the subthemes. He proceeds by enumeration (δὲ, 96; αὐτάρ, 102; δὲ, 103) and uses spatial prepositions. The first two subthemes are located spatially vis-à-vis the main theme, but the last subtheme vis-à-vis the previous subtheme, the olive tree. The last subtheme (ἄντρον) itself has four subthemes, and thereby becomes a theme, too. The subthemes are again located spatially vis-à-vis the theme. The narrator proceeds by enumeration (δὲ) and uses three spatial adverbs: (1) ἐν δὲ κρητῆρές τε καὶ ἀμφιφορῆες ἔασι (105); (2) ἐν δ' ἵστοι λίθεοι περιμήκεε (…) (107); (3) ἐν δ' ὕδατ' ἀενάοντα (…) (109); (4) (…) δύω δὲ τέ οἱ θύραι εἰσί (109). Again, we find forms of the verb ‘to be’ (ἔασι, 105; εἰσίν, 109; ellipsis in 107 and 109).

The main theme of this description concerns a place, which is a prototypically descriptive subject. All themes are static and spatial, and can be regarded as existential phenomena. It is now time to further investigate the way these themes are described. The main theme, the harbour, is identified (Φόρκυνος (...) ἁλίοι γέροντος, “of Phorcys,

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66 According to Elliger 1975: 127, αὐτάρ marks a small break in the structure of the description: "mit αὐτάρ setzt nach der Beschreibung der Eigentlichen Bucht die Darstellung des Uferstreifens an ihrem inneren Ende ein". Yet perhaps αὐτάρ indicates a shift to another location only (which is the basic function of αὐτάρ, according to Bonifazi 2012: 218: “the main presentational functions of αὖ, αὖτε and αὐτάρ deal with vision. All three primarily mark a shift from what is ‘on the one side’ to what is ‘on the other side’").
the old man of the sea) and located on Ithaca (ἐν δήμῳ Ἰθάκης), but does not receive any further elaboration: the layout and appearance of the harbour are described by its various subthemes.

The narrator does describe the appearance of the first subtheme, the headlands (ἀκταί, 98). He uses a numeral (δύο, "two", 97), two adjectives (προβλῆτες, "jutting"; ἀπορρῶγες, "precipitous", 97-8), and a participle (λιμένος πότι πεπτηυῖαι, "sloping down toward the harbour", 98) to visually describe the headlands. He thus sketches the general layout of the harbour. The first subtheme also has a relative clause appended to it (99-100, αἵ τ’…ἔκτοθεν). This clause does not describe the appearance, but the function of the headlands, which is to provide shelter. The epic τε in this relative clause indicates that the present tense expresses an omnitemporal or habitual action. The narrator then moves from the outside (ἔκτοθεν) to the inside (ἔντοσθεν) of the headlands, and adds (δέ) another function; it again concerns a habitual action, with a present tense and epic τε in 110, and a temporal clause with distributive-iterative subjunctive, ὅτ’…ἵκωνται in 111.

The second subtheme, the olive tree (ἐλαίη, 102), has only one adjective that describes its appearance (τανύφυλλος, "long-leaved", 102). The third and last subtheme (ἄντρον, 103) does not only have four subthemes, but is also described by three adjectives (103-4): it is pleasant (ἐπήρατον), dusky (ἠεροειδές), and sacred to the nymphs (ἱρὸν Νυμφάων). The structure of the first two subthemes (κρητῆρές τε καὶ ἀμφιφορῆες, 105; ἱστοί, 107) is similar. After having introduced the subtheme with one (λάϊνοι, 106) or more adjectives (λίθεοι περιμήκεες, 107) which give a physical description of the subtheme, the narrator indicates by means of ἔνθα which activity habitually takes place in that subtheme (made explicit by epic τε in 107). In both cases, ἔνθα locates the activity at the subtheme which immediately went before. Thus in 106, ἔνθα refers back to the bowls and amphoras, rather than to the main theme; therefore, the translation of τιθαιβώσσουσι, "store up honey", seems apt, as bowls and amphoras are suited for this purpose.47

47 LSJ s.v. τιθαιβώσσω A. The LfgE translates as “Honigwaben anlegen”, “to build honeycombs”, which amounts to the same thing. Hoekstra 1990: 171 states that the exact sense and etymology are unknown; nevertheless, this interpretation seems most likely. The translation by LSJ is approved by Matthews 1996: 282 (ad fragment 108 by Antimachus of Colophon): "(...) Homer uses the word of bees storing up their food". Elliger 1975: 128 interprets the bowls and amphoras as evidence of the fact that humans offer sacrifices to the gods in the cave.
"Ἔπειτα (106) might seem out of place in a description, since there is no temporal progression on the level of the fabula. However, ἔπειτα does not function as a temporal adverb in 106. According to Hoekstra, it "serves to introduce a new element in a description".48 We might rephrase Hoekstra’s remark, and state that ἔπειτα functions as a presentational discourse marker.49 Presentational discourse markers help to make the structure of the text clear.50 Ἔπειτα signals that the eyes of the narrator have moved to a new item. In the case of a description, ἔπειτα often introduces the theme or a subtheme.51 In 106, in combination with (spatial) ἔνθα δέ, it introduces an activity which takes place in a subtheme introduced earlier.

The only adjective that goes with the third subtheme provides both a physical description as well as a habitual action: the waters are ever-flowing (ἀενάοντα, 109).52

The last and fourth subtheme, which consists of two elements (δύω…θύραι, 109), is first introduced in toto.53 It is the only subtheme which is not located spatially vis-à-vis its main theme. The narrator next describes each entrance separately (αἱ μὲν (…) / αἱ δ’ αὖ

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48 Hoekstra 1990: 171 (italics in the original).
49 Ἔπειτα is recognised as such by Bonifazi 2012: 208. A clear example of ἔπειτα as a presentational discourse marker in tragedy is found in S. Ant. 53, on which Kamerbeek 1978: 46 remarks that ἔπειτα is “not temporal, but introducing the second item of the threefold calamities (cf. τρίτον δ’ 55)”. Kamerbeek is followed by Griffith 1999: 132.
50 On the presentational level of discourse, see Kroon 1995: 73-5.
51 Hoekstra 1990: 171 compares the use of ἔπειτα in Od. 13.106 with ἔπειτα in Od. 1.106, which does not, however, occur in a description. Better parallels to ἔπειτα in Od. 13.106 are Od. 4.354 and 9.116, both island descriptions. In both cases, ἔπειτα functions as a discourse marker and introduces the main theme of the description. We should compare Ameis, Hentze, and Cauer [1894] 1920: 119 on ἔπειτα in 4.354: “dann; dies ist das nächste, was ich zu erzählen habe”.
52 οἱ in 109 refers back to the cave in 103, the main theme of this section. It may be noted that if the antecedent is the main theme, the distance between the pronoun and its antecedent can be quite large. This is due to the fact that during the whole description the main theme is topical, i.e. it is what the passage is about. Similarly, in the description of Alcinous’ palace in Od. 7.81-135, the pronoun οἱ (in 109 and 122) is far removed from its antecedent (Ἀλκινόος, 85), as scholars have noted (see Müller 1968: 140, and Elliger 1975: 137, note 107 for a refutation of earlier views that οἱ is problematic). In both cases, οἱ refers back to the main theme of the description, specifically its owner, who is closely identified with his palace; the main theme is introduced as Ἀλκινόου πρὸς δώματ’ (…) κλυτά (…) in 82, and again so described in 85 (δώμα καθ’ ὑψερεφές μεγαλάτορος Ἀλκινόος).
53 The τε in 109 is, again, epic.
(...), 110-11), by listing location (πρὸς βορέαο, 110; πρὸς νότου, 111) and function (καταιβαταὶ ἀνθρώποισιν, 110; θεώτεραι, 111). This last entrance is special, in that it is not (οὐ-δέ, 111) used by humans. This is the only place in this passage where the ‘description by negation’ technique is employed; here, it emphasises the fact that mortals cannot use the entrance used by the gods.

In describing the subthemes, the narrator first focuses on what a subtheme looks like. He does so by using adjectives (in 98 a perfect participle) which mostly relate to the physical appearance of the subtheme; emphasis thus lies on their sensory appearance, and the dominant sensory quality is visual. By using these adjectives the narrator attributes qualities to the subthemes, which leads to the presence of details. In two instances, the narrator is content with describing the subtheme only (the ἐλαίη in 102 and the ὕδατα in 109). In the case of the other subthemes, the narrator also describes their function. He does this by adding a relative clause (99-101) or an adverbial clause with a spatial adverb (ἐνθα in 106 and 107). The clauses in 99-101 expresses states, but those in 106-7 events. These events are habitual, and as such associated with description.

This passage does not feature a sequence of events. The two events that do occur have a different subject, which is not a human character and which cannot act...

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54 The plurals in αἱ μὲν and αἱ δέ are explained by Stanford [1948] 1962: 203 as poetic; according to Ameis, Hentze, and Cauer [1862] 1910: 8, the plural is used since θυραί can refer to a single entrance only. Bonifazi 2012: 221-2 states regarding αὖ in 111 that ‘αὖ-discourse markers [this includes αὖ, αὖτε, ἀὐτὰρ] can convey atemporal discreteness in location as well, as in the description of the two entrances of the Ithacan cave of the Nymphs (...). The speaker uttering αὖ, αὖτε, or ἀὐτὰρ helps the recipient to track items that are shifted in possibly different directions: on the side, on the opposite side (...).’

55 ‘The description by negation’ technique is “employed to define things or conditions which are the reverse of normal, mortal existence (Elysium, life of the gods, exotic countries)” (de Jong 2001: 234; see Davies 1987 for an extensive discussion of this technique). The longest instance in the Odyssey is Odysseus’ description of Goat Island in Od. 9.116-41. Elliger 1975: 128 detects ring composition: Φέρκυνος (a sea god, 96) and ἀθανάτων (the immortals, 112).

56 In 110-1 only does the narrator uses forms of the verb “to be” to further specify a subtheme (ellipsis in 110; εἰσί in 111). This specification concerns location and function at the same time in 110 (πρὸς βορέαο καταιβαταὶ ἀνθρώποισιν); in 111 the narrator specifies location and ownership (πρὸς νότου εἰσί δεώτεραι); the function of this last entrance is described by using the adverb κείνῃ in 111 (so glossed by LSJ s.v. ἐκεῖνος III; similarly Ameis, Hentze, and Cauer [1862] 1910: 8, who translate κείνῃ with illac, “by that way”).
intentionally (headlands, 99; ships, 101; bees, 106). Only the nymphs could be
characterised as "intelligent agents who have a mental life and react emotionally to the
states of the world". Of the mental life of the nymphs, the narratee learns nothing.
They are aligned with the bees of the previous line: just as bees, nymphs are inseparable
from the landscape, and closely associated with caves. They are weaving, an activity
which is typical of nymphs and women in general. As such, I regard their weaving as a
natural activity: just as the bees gather honey, the nymphs weave their webs.

World disruption is absent, too. The events do not introduce a disruption into the
storyworld. Rather, the harbour and the cave are described in their normal and usual
state. This is clear from the use of the stative verb 'to be', and the habitual and iterative
present tenses, which do not introduce changes but rather describe the storyworld as it is.

At first sight, the element of 'what-it’s-like' might seem present in line 108, in which
the narrator comments that the nymphs weaving their sea-purple webs is a wonder to
behold (θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι). This phrase does not describe the feelings of the nymphs or of
any other character in the storyworld. It concerns the feelings of the narrator, who
expresses his mortal admiration for this divine sight to the narratees. Narratorial
comments are found in descriptions, too.

I sum up. The passage dealing with the harbour of Phorcys and the cave of the
Nymphs (Od. 13.96-112) can be regarded as a prototypical description. The passage is in
the descriptive discourse mode, which indicates that it has a descriptive structure:
textual progress is spatial, as witness the many spatial adverbs, and only story time
advances. Furthermore, all the prototypical elements of description are present;
prototypical features associated with narration are absent. I conclude that this passage
has a high degree of descriptivity and zero narrativity.

2.4.1 Agamemnon arms for battle (Il. 11.15-46): Introduction
In the previous section, I have investigated a prototypically descriptive passage. In this
section, I want to investigate a passage that contains both descriptive and narrative

57 A condition for narrativity, according to Ryan 2007: 4.
58 Larson 2001: 8-10.
59 E.g. Calypso is weaving when Hermes arrives (Od. 5.62); similarly Circe (Od. 10. 222 and 227).
60 For this phrase, see de Jong [1987] 2004: 48-9 and 2001: 167 ("the expression θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι (…) is
typically used by mortal focalizers in connection with immortal persons or objects").
elements, Agamemnon’s arming scene in Iliad 11.15-46. I will briefly compare this passage with Patroclus’ arming scene in Iliad 16.131-44 (section 2.4.3).

Agamemnon’s arming scene is regarded by Becker as an “extended description of representational art.”61 I doubt whether this is the case. There are only a few sections that can be called ekphrastic or representational, i.e. of which the text refers to a piece of Agamemnon’s armour that represents something else in turn: lines 26-7 (serpents), lines 36-7 (the Gorgon, Fear and Rout), and lines 39-40 (a snake). Thus, apart from the fact whether one can speak of art in connection with Agamemnon’s armour, representational sections are scarce. Becker also argues that the serpents in lines 26-7 are described as alive.62 As I shall argue below, the serpents are not described as being alive, but as static entities.

Other scholars have assessed the passage differently. An important strand of criticism, starting with Lessing, regards Agamemnon’s arming scene as a dramatized description.63 Rather than simply enumerating the parts of Agamemnon’s armour, the narrator has Agamemnon put on his armour. By integrating the description into the fabula, the narrator avoids a descriptive pause.64 A dramatized description is also

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61 Becker 1995: 67, who discusses the whole arming scene (ibid.: 67-77); the scene is also discussed by Morris 1992: 7-9.
62 Becker 1995: 71: “the serpents may be images made of blue enamel, but they are also stretching and writhing beasts; they are described as representations, but also as alive”.
63 Hamon 1981: 16-7, referring to Lessing [1766] 1930: 56-7 (who however refers to Agamemnon’s dressing scene in Iliad 2.42-6): “[i]f indeed special circumstances compel Homer to fix our glance for a while on some single corporeal object, in spite of this no picture is made of it which the painter could follow with his brush; for Homer knows how, by innumerable artifices, to set this object in a succession of moments, at each of which it assumes a different appearance, and in the last of which the painter must await it in order to show us, fully arisen, what in the poet we see arising (…). If Homer would should us how Agamemnon was dressed, then the King must put on his whole attire piece by piece before our eyes: the soft undervest, the great mantle, the fine laced boots, the sword; and now he is ready and grasps the sceptre. We see the attire as the poets paints the action of attiring; another would have described the garments down to the smallest ribbon, and we should have seen nothing of the action” (emphasis mine).
64 A character who acts upon an object is one of three techniques of integrating a description into the narrative. The other two are (i) having a character look at an object (e.g. Hermes who looks at Calypso’s cave in Odyssey 5.59-74), and (ii) having a character speak of an object (e.g. Athena who describes the Harbour of Phorcys to Odysseus in Odyssey 13.345-51). See Hamon [1981] 1993: 172-98 (who speaks of le travailleur descripteur, le regard descripteur, le bavard descripteur); and for a
known as a Homeric description. I return to these observations at the end of my analysis.

In book 11 of the Iliad, Agamemnon is given an aristeia. In book 8, the Achaeans have been forced back to their ships. After the unsuccessful embassy to Achilles in book 9, Diomedes urges Agamemnon to renew the battle the next day and to enter the fighting himself (9.697-709). Book 11 opens with the dawn of a new day (1-2). Zeus sends Strife (Ἐρίς) to stir up the Achaeans (3-14). Next, Agamemnon arms for battle: 66

shorter and English overview Hamon 1982: 149-57. For further discussion, see Byre 1994a: 4-5 and de Jong 2012c: 8-11.


66 Text by Allen; translation by Lattimore (adapted); the sections that contain the descriptive discourse mode have been italicised.
And Atreus’ son cried out aloud and ordered the Greeks to gird them, and he himself put on the shining bronze. First he placed along his legs the greaves, beautiful, fitted with silver ankle-pieces. Second he put on about his chest a corselet, (20) which Kinyras had given him once, to be a guest present. For he had heard from Cyprus the great rumour that the Achaeans were to sail against Troy in their ships; therefore he had given it to him, showing the king favour. Of it ten circles were of dark blue enamel, (25) and twelve of gold and twenty of tin; and serpents of blue enamel had been stretched out towards the neck, three on either side like rainbows, which the son of Cronus fixes in the clouds, a portent for mortal men. Across his shoulders he slung his sword; and on it studs (30) of gold were gleaming, and about [it] the scabbard was silver, [and the sword] was fitted with golden straps. And he took up the man-enclosing elaborate stark shield, beautiful, around which were ten circles of bronze, and on it were twenty knobs of tin, (35) [gleaming] white, and in the very centre was one of dark blue enamel. And upon it was set as a wreath the Gorgon, of horrid aspect, glaring terribly, and around it [were] Fear and Rout. And from it [the shield] was a silver shield strap, and on that was twisted a snake of blue enamel, and it had (40) three heads, turned this way and that, grown out of a single neck. Upon his head he set the helmet, two-horned, four-sheeted, with the horse-hair crest, and the plume above it was nodding terribly. And he took two strong spears tipped with bronze, sharp [spears]; and far from himself into heaven (45) the bronze was shining. And at that sight Athena and Hera thundered, doing honour to the king of Mycenae rich in gold.

2.4.2 Agamemnon arms for battle (Il. 11.15-46): Analysis
On the basic of the use of tenses (which includes aorists and imperfects), we might conclude that the passage contains the diegetic discourse mode. However, if we look closely, we see that some sections are in the diegetic discourse mode, but others in the descriptive discourse mode. The lines that contain the diegetic discourse mode are 15-23 (aorists and imperfects), 29 (aorist), 32 (aorist), and 41-6 (aorists and imperfects). In the other sections, no aorists occur, but only imperfects and pluperfects. The following lines contain the descriptive discourse mode (italicised in the text above): 24-8
(imperfects and pluperfects), 29-31 (imperfects), and 33-40 (imperfects and pluperfects).

The passage contains a sequence of events that are part of the fabula of the *Iliad*. These are narrated by aorist tenses; only ἄνωγεν in line 15 is an imperfect. Εδύσετο in line 16 is a complexive aorist, which sums up the following action as a whole (Agamemnon’s arming); this action is then narrated in detail by the following aorists. Two imperfects occur, too, in lines 42 (ἔνευεν) and 45 (λάμπ'). These imperfects do not express events which are part of the sequence of events and do not advance narrative time. Rather, the events are simultaneous with the aorist verbs they accompany. Only two temporal adverbs are found (πρῶτα, 17; δεύτερον, 19); the other verbs are connected solely by δέ. Textual progression is temporal. Agamemnon is the subject of all actions, apart from that in line 45, the subject of which are Athena and Hera.

Lines 20-3 also contain a sequence of events, but these events are not part of the main fabula. These lines are a relative clause (τόν, 20) which forms an external analepsis (ποτέ, “once”). It is common to relate the history of an object in this form. The analepsis is characterized by ring composition: two anterior aorists (δῶκε, 20 and 23, “had given”) are framed by two imperfects (πεύθετο, 21; ἔμελλον, 22). The main events of this external analepsis are expressed by aorist tenses, too, while the imperfects provide background information.

The lines that are in the descriptive mode (24-8, 29-31, and 33-40) can be recognised by a change in the use of tenses: only imperfects and pluperfects occur, and no narrative aorists. In these sections, three parts of Agamemnon’s armour receive further

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67 The relative clause in lines 27-8 contains a gnomic aorist (for which see below).
68 The sequence consists of the following ten events: 1. Ατρεΐδης δ’ ἐβόησεν (15), 2. ζώννυσθαι ἄνωγεν (15), 3. ἐν δ’ αὐτὸς ἐδύσετο νώροπα χαλκόν (16), 4. κνημῖδας μὲν πρῶτα (…) ἔθηκε (17), 5. δεύτερον αὖ θώρηκα (…) ἔδυνε (18), 6. ἀμφὶ δ’ ἀρ’ ὡμοίας βάλετο ξίφος (29), 7. δ’ ἔλετ’ (…) ἀσπίδα (…) (32), 8. κρατὶ δ’ ἐπ’ ἀμφὶ άμφισφαλὸν κυνέην ἔθα (…) (41), 9. ἔπετο δ’ ἀλκίμα δοὺρε δύω (…) (43), and 10. ἐπὶ δ’ ἥγησαν Αθηναίη τε καὶ Ἦρη (45).
70 The nodding of the plume (ἔνευεν, 42) takes place when Agamemnon puts on his helmet (θέτο, 41). Similarly, the bronze is shining (λάμπ’, 45), when Agamemnon grabs his two spears (ἐξελετο, 43). The subject of both verbs is not Agamemnon – as is the case with all events in the aorist tense – but rather a part of the previously mentioned object: the plume (λόφος) is part of the helmet (κυνέην); the bronze (χαλκός, 44) refers back to the armour as a whole.
71 See Minchin 2001: 119-22 for objects and their history in Homer.
elaboration: his corselet (24-8), his sword (29-31), and his shield (33-40). These sections centre around a theme, the parts of which are enumerated and/or spatially connected; time is static and progression is spatial. The main themes of these descriptive sections are introduced in the diegetic sections, as the direct object of a transitive verb: θώρηκα (…) ἔδυε (18), ἀμφὶ δ' ἄρ' ὤμοισιν βάλετο ξίφος (29), and ἂν δ' ἕλετ' (…) ἀσπίδα (32). Thus, in this passage the descriptive sections are embedded in the diegetic sections. In this sense, this passage differs from the Odyssean passage of the previous section (13.96-112), in which the main themes were introduced in the descriptive discourse mode by a stative verb.

If we survey the passage as a whole (15-46), we see that it has a narrative backbone, in the sense that it features a sequence of events. In lines 24-40, however, only two lines contain the diegetic discourse mode (29 and 32); the other lines contain the descriptive discourse mode. In the surrounding lines (15-23 and 41-6), the diegetic discourse mode is found.

I now want to further investigate this passage. I will focus on the lines that constitute the arming scene proper, lines 17-44. I have schematized these lines in the chart on the following page. The six events that are part of the fabula of the Iliad are listed in the left column; in the right columns, I have listed the external analepsis and the descriptive sections:

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72 Friedländer 1912: 4 has identified the same parts as Beschreibung, although he has the description of the sword start at line 30 (instead of 29).
κνημίδας μὲν πρῶτα
περὶ κνήμῃσιν ἔθηκε
(17)

δεύτερον αὖ θώρηκα
περὶ στήθεσσιν ἔδυνε
(19)

καί εἶκασι καστέτροιο
[όμοιο] (20)

κωδάνει δὲ δράκεντες
ἀρμάχθη (26-8)

ἐν δὲ οἱ ἤλοι / χρύσειοι
πάμφαιον (29-30)

ἀμφὶ δ’ άρ’ οἴμοι
βάλετο ξίφος (29)

ἐν δὲ οἱ ὀμφαλοὶ ἦσαν
ἐν δὲ μέσοισιν
[ὀμφαλὸς] (35)

κρατὶ δ’ ἐπ’ ... κυνέην
θέτο (41)

εἶλετο θ’ ἄλκιμαι δούρε
(43)

ἄνθις θ’ ἔλεγ’ ... ἀστῖδα
(34)

κρατὶ θ’ ἔπ’ ... κυνέην
θέτο (41)

εἶλετο θ’ ἄλκιμαι δούρε
(43)

ἐν δὲ οἱ ἤλοι / χρύσειοι
πάμφαιον (29-30)

ἄγετα περὶ κουλεὸν ἦεν
ἀργύρεον (30-1)

χρυσέοισιν ἀορτήρεσσιν
ἀρηρός (31)

ἀν δ’ ἕλετ’ ...
ἀσπίδα (32)

ἣν πέρι μὲν κύκλοι ...
ἦσαν (33)

ἐν δὲ οἱ ἤλοι / χρύσειοι
πάμφαιον (29-30)

ἐν δὲ μέσοισιν ἄγεται
[ὀμφαλὸς] (35)

τῆς δ’ ἐξ ... τελαμὼν ἦν
(38)

κεφαλαὶ δὲ θ’ ἔκρασ / ... τρίτης (39-40)

τὸν ποτὲ οἱ Κινύρης
βάλε... (20-3)

τόδ’ θ’ ἔταξε οἵμοι
ἐσαν μέλανος κωδανία
(24)

δωδεκα δὲ χρυσοῖο
[ὁμοῖοι] (25)

κυάνεοι δὲ δράκοντες
ὀρωρέχατο (26-8)

κυάνεοι δὲ δράκοντες
ὀρωρέχατο (26-8)

κυάνεοι δὲ δράκοντες
ὀρωρέχατο (26-8)

κυάνεοι δὲ δράκοντες
ὀρωρέχατο (26-8)
As the chart makes clear, the passage has both a narrative and descriptive organization: it contains a sequence of events, but also themes and subthemes. The main theme is found at the very beginning of this passage, in line 16: ἐν δ’ αὐτὸς ἐδύσετο νώροπα χαλκόν, “and he himself put on the shining bronze”. As stated above, ἐδύσετο in line 16 is a complexive aorist, which sums up the action as a whole. The reason why the narrator first sums up the whole action could be attributed to the fact that it allows him to introduce the main theme, in this case the νώροπα χαλκόν. In every other major arming scene – that of Paris in book 3, of Patroclus in book 16, and of Achilles in book 19 – a complexive aorist with accompanying main theme is found. The shining bronze refers to Agamemnon’s armour, which has six parts; these can be regarded as its six subthemes: 1. κνημῖδας (greaves, 17), 2. δώρηκα (corselet, 19), 3. ξίφος (sword, 29), 4. ἀσπιδα (shield, 32), 5. χαλκὸς (helmet, 41), and 6. δοῦρε δύω (two spears, 43). The narrator returns by ring composition to the main theme in 44-5: τῆλε δὲ χαλκὸς ἀπ’ αὐτόφιν νώροπαν εἴσω / λάμπτη. The subtheme(s) of this description are all found in a diegetic section, i.e. they are introduced via an action. This does not mean that these lines do not contain any descriptive material. If we look at the first subtheme (17-8), we see that the run-over line 18 consists wholly of descriptive details: κνημῖδας μὲν πρῶτα περὶ κνήμῃσιν ἔθηκε / καλὰς ἀργυρέοισιν ἐπιφυρίοις ἀραρυίας, “first he placed along his legs the greaves / beautiful, fitted with silver ankle-pieces”. In general, lines which are in the diegetic discourse mode may contain descriptive material. The reason to assign such a line to the diegetic discourse mode is that it contains an event (ἔθηκε) which is part of a

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73 In all five occurrences of νώροπα χαλκόν, the phrase refers to armour (II. 2.578, 11.16, 14.383, Od. 24.467 and 500). The phrase νώροπα χαλκῷ occurs thrice; two times it refers to armour (II. 7.206 and 16.130), once to bronze decoration of a shield (II. 13.406).
74 II. 3.328 (...ἐδύσατο τεῦχεν καλά), II. 16.130 (...κορύσσετο νώροπι χαλκῷ), and II. 19.368 (δύσετο δῶρα θεοῦ...). Arend 1993: 93 speaks of an Ankündigungsvers.
75 According to the commentators, αὐτόφιν equals αὐτῶν (Ameis and Hentze [1868] 1906: 45; Willcock 1978: 44), in which αὐτόφιν refers to the separate parts of Agamemnon’s armour. The translators (Murray, Lattimore) translate with “from him”, in which case αὐτόφιν refers to Agamemnon himself. This last option is to be preferred (best translated with “from himself”, giving αὐτός full force), since χαλκός, the main theme, already refers to the pieces of Agamemnon’s armour as a whole; this makes ἀπ’ αὐτῶν redundant. Furthermore, in line 16 αὐτός refers to Agamemnon, too. A recapitulating line such as this is absent from the other major arming scenes.
There is, then, a difference between a line in the diegetic discourse mode and a line in the descriptive discourse mode: the former is part of a sequence of events, and advances narrative time (both fabula time and story time advance); the latter is not part of a sequence of events, and time is static (only story time advances). Both lines may contain descriptive details and thus provide an idea of what the storyworld looks like, but they do so in different ways.

Lines 17-8 are not the only lines in a diegetic section with descriptive details. The same holds for lines 32-3, 41-2, and 43-4. Of all subthemes in this passage, three (greaves, 17-8; helmet, 41-2; two spears, 43-4) do not receive any elaboration other than the details introduced in the diegetic discourse mode; the narrator does not pause to describe these subthemes. In the case of the helmet and the spears (41-5), the narrator does add another line in which background circumstances are related. In both cases, the imperfect is found. When Agamemnon puts on his helmet, the plume above it nods terribly (δεινὸν δὲ λόφος καθύπερθεν ἔνευεν, 42). The other instance (…τῆλε δὲ χαλκὸς ἀπ’ αὐτόφιν οὐρανὸν εἴσω / λάμπ’, “and far from himself into heaven the bronze was shining”) does not specifically relate to the spears, but to the armour as a whole.

There are three subthemes which the narrator further elaborates: Agamemnon’s corselet (20-8), his sword (29-31), and his shield (33-40). The theme of lines 20-8 is Agamemnon’s corselet (θώρηκα, 19). The narrator first relates the history of the corselet by way of an external analepsis in 20-3. The description proper starts in 24 with τοῦ, which refers back to θώρηκα in 19. The main theme has four subthemes. The bands consists of three different materials which form three different subthemes: 1. δέκα οἶμοι ἔσαν μέλανος κυάνοιο; 2. δώδεκα δὲ χρυσοῖο; 3. καὶ εἴκοσι κασσιτέροιο (24-5). The narrator uses (locative) εἰμί (ἔσαν, 24) or an ellipsis of this verb (25) to introduce these subthemes. The fourth subtheme are the snakes (δράκοντες, 26-7), introduced by the pluperfect ὀρωρέχατο. Since the pluperfect introduces a state in the past, the snakes are conceived of as static entities. None of the subthemes is spatially located vis-à-vis the main theme or each other, but they are simply enumerated. After having compared the snakes to rainbows (ἴρισσιν ἐοικότες, 27), the narrator describes in a permanent-digressive relative clause (27-28, with epic τέ and the gnomic aorist στήριξε) a general

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76 In the words of Chatman 1990: 16: “[a]t the surface level a sentence may provide a great deal of description even though its main thrust may be narrative”.

77 They are thus not described as “representations, but also as alive”, as Becker 1995: 71 will have it.
quality of rainbows. This relative clause does not describe Agamemnon’s armour, but rather provides general information about rainbows.\(^{78}\)

The main theme of lines 29-31 is Agamemnon’s sword (ξίφος, 29). Textual progression is spatial. The subthemes are made up of the different parts of the sword. The first subtheme, the studs (Ἠλοί, 29), is located spatially vis-à-vis the main theme by the adverb ἐν; οἱ refers back to the preceding main theme, as often in descriptions.\(^{79}\) The subtheme is not introduced by a form of the verb to be, but by the imperfect πάμφαιον, which refers to the gleaming effect of the studs. The next subtheme, the scabbard (κουλεόν, 30) is also spatially located vis-à-vis the main theme by the adverb περί; it is introduced by (locative) εἰμί (Ἦν).\(^{80}\) The last subtheme, the sword straps (ἀορτήρεσσιν, 31), is not spatially connected to the main theme: the sword is said to be “furnished with” (Ἀρηρός) sword straps. However, by making use of his world knowledge – of the frame ‘sword’ – the narratee knows how these sword straps are connected to the sword.

Agamemnon’s shield (Ἀσπίδα, 32) receives the most elaborate description. The description proper starts with a relative clause (Ἦν, 33), but even the preceding diegetic section contains four descriptive epithets.\(^{81}\) Its various subthemes (underlined) are all connected spatially (spatial markers in bold), be it vis-à-vis the main theme (1-4; 6) or another subtheme (5): 1. πέρι μὲν κύκλοι (…) ἦσαν (33); 2. ἐν δὲ οἱ ὀμφαλοὶ ἦσαν (34); 3. ἐν δὲ μέσοισι ἦν [ὀμφαλός]; 4. τῇ δ’ ἐπὶ μὲν Γοργὼ (…) ἐστεφάνωτο; 5. (…) περὶ δὲ Δείμος τε Φόβος τε; 6. τῆς δ’ ἐξ (…) τελαμών ἦν. The shield strap becomes itself a main theme, and has one subtheme: (…) αὐτὰρ ἐπ’ αὐτοῦ / (…) ἐλέλικτο δράκων. The snake becomes a main theme, too; its subtheme is not spatially connected to it: κεφαλαὶ δὲ οἱ ἦσαν (…).\(^{82}\)

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\(^{78}\) This general information can, of course, be relevant in the context. Thus, Fränkel [1969] 1975: 39 states that “(...) the rainbow is not a bridge of peace for Homer’s people but an awful presentiment of approaching horror (cf. Il. 17, 544-52).”

\(^{79}\) Hainsworth 1993: 220 states that “the use of ἑ, οὑ, οἱ with reference to things is unusual, but cf. 1.236, 9.419, 21.586, 24.452”. The list is much longer; for some Odyssean examples, see note 52 above. In fact, the phenomenon is common in descriptions; as Hainsworth himself notes, it recurs twice even in this passage (ὁι in 34 and 39). Ameis and Hentze [1868] 1906: 44 understand it as referring to Agamemnon (as in 34), but this is unlikely.

\(^{80}\) Ατάρ (30) is employed as δὲ, “mais sa valeur fondamentale est oppositive, tandis que l’emploi transitif est secondaire: on pourrait décrire ατάρ comme coordonnant oppositif-transitif, δὲ comme coordonnant transitif-oppositif” (Ruijgh 1971: 135; see also ibid.: 714).

\(^{81}\) ἀμφιβρότην πολυδαίδαλον (…) θούριν / καλήν, 32-3.

\(^{82}\) The narrator uses either forms of the verb ‘to be’ (33, 34, 35, 38, 39, ellipsis in 37), or pluperfects (36, 39). All verbs designate states in the past. Becker 1995: 75 has misunderstood the meaning of
Again, the narratee will use his world knowledge to connect these heads to the snake at the right place.

If we survey the passage as a whole, we may conclude that all prototypically descriptive elements are present. First of all, the passage provides an idea of what Agamemnon’s armour looks like. The focus is not on Agamemnon, but rather on the various parts of his armour (object). Throughout, emphasis lies on sensory appearances; the dominant sensory quality is visual: we may note the many references to different colours and various precious metals. By means of adjectives or nouns in the genitive (e.g. μέλανος κυάνοιο, 24), qualities are attributed to the subthemes; the passage contains a wealth of descriptive details.

The attribution of qualities happens in two different ways. In the sections that contain the diegetic discourse mode, the narrator attributes qualities to subthemes by using adjectives which accompany subthemes that are direct objects of a verb. These verbs are part of a sequence of events, and these events are part of the fabula of the Iliad. In the diegetic sections, both fabula time and story time advance; progression is temporal. However, in the sections that are in the descriptive discourse mode, the narrator only attributes qualities to subthemes. He uses forms of the verb ‘to be’ (most often) or pluperfects (thrice), both of which designate states. This means that fabula time stops; textual progression is spatial/enumnerative. The passage, then, has an organization that is associated with narration as well as with description: its backbone is narrative, so to speak, but three embedded sections are descriptive.

I now want to return to the sequence of events, and investigate its nature. First of all, every event in this passage introduces a theme. Secondly, the themes are often introduced with considerable descriptive detail. Thirdly, although the text progresses temporally, it nevertheless contains a considerable number of spatial markers. In four out of six events a spatial marker occurs which indicates that Agamemnon puts a part of his armour on his body (ἐν δ’ αὐτὸς ἐδύσετο in 16): 1. κνημῖδας μὲν πρῶτα περὶ κνήμῃσιν ἔθηκε (17), 2. θώρηκα περὶ στήθεσσιν ἔδυνε (19), 3. ἄμφι δ’ ἄρ’ ὄμοιοιν βάλετο ἔριψε (29), and 4. κρατὶ δ’ ἔπ’ ἄμφιφαλον κυνέην θέτο (41). Every new event thus also includes a change in the pluperfect in 39: “[t]his section (…) brings them [the images] to life with both eledikto (was quivering) and ekpephuiai (having grown out)”. Heracles’ shield also contains snakes (Hes. Sc. 161-7), for which see section 4.3.2, 1-3.

83 In addition, all verbs come from the same semantic field, as is clear from the complexive aorist ἐν (…) ἐδύσετο in 16: the verbs mean either ‘to put something on’ (ἔθηκε, 17; ἔδυνε, 19; βάλετο, 29; θέτο, 41), or ‘to take something up’ (ἂν δ’ ἔλετ’, 32; ἔλετο, 43).
location, spatial movement, as the narrator moves from one part of Agamemnon’s body to another, from toe to head: legs (κνήμῃσιν) – chest (στήθεσσιν) – shoulders (ὀμοίσιν) – head (ἁρπτι). We could say that these three elements give the sequence of events a descriptive flavour.

A sequence of events is one of the basic elements of narrative. Yet in order for a passage to qualify as a prototypical narrative, a sequence of events must satisfy a number of additional criteria. In Agamemnon’s arming scene, the events are particularized and involve an intentionally acting human character. These are the only narrative features present. The other two basic elements of narrative, world disruption and ‘what-it’s-like’, are absent.

Agamemnon’s arming scene is an example of a type scene, “a more or less standard combination of narrative elements describing recurrent events like preparing a ship, putting on armour, or receiving a guest”. Type scenes have an order of events which is stereotyped and fixed; they can thus be compared to scripts. The narrator may, however, interrupt or alter the order of events (for an example of which see the next section). Agamemnon’s arming scene features no such interruption. The scene follows the fixed order: greaves, breastplate, sword, shield, helmet, and spears. Unusual in Agamemnon’s arming scene is the amount of description, which underscores his importance as supreme commander.

In Agamemnon’s arming scene, the narrator follows the stereotyped and fixed order, the script. No noncanonical or disruptive events occur; world disruption is thus

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84 ἂν (= ἀνά) in 37 does not relate to a part of Agamemnon’s body, but is a modifier of the verb ἕλετ’.
85 de Jong 2012b: 3. There are many studies dealing with type scenes; I here mention Arend 1933 and Edwards 1992.
86 Minchin 2001: 39; for the notion of script, see section 1.4.2.
87 E.g. Edwards 1992: 288: “[t]he poet may occasionally abruptly alter or interrupt the structure of a type-scene for special effect”. Much work has been done to show that there is in fact much variation in type scenes (see e.g. Edwards 1980: 1-3).
88 For this and the other major arming scenes, see Arend 1933: 92-7, and table 6; Armstrong 1958; and Kirk 1985: 313-15. Tsagarakis 1982: 95-9 has studied the shorter arming scenes.
89 Comparative material consists of the three other major arming scenes: Paris (II 3.330-8), Patroclus (II 16.131-44), and Achilles (II 19.369-91). Only the shield of Agamemnon is called ἀσπίς (and not σάκος), which might indicate that he will be wounded during his aristeia (so tentatively Bershadsky 2010: 16, note 51).
absent. The element of ‘what-it’s-like’ is absent, too. Of the three basic elements of narrative, only event sequencing is present. This sequence of events also has a number of descriptive features. In addition, the passage also contains three sections which have a prototypically descriptive structure. If we survey the passage as a whole, we see that all prototypically descriptive features are present. Thus, we may conclude that Agamemnon’s arming scene is low in narrativity, and high in descriptivity.

Scholars who regard Agamemnon’s arming scene as an instance of a dramatized, i.e. Homeric description do so with good reason. By having Agamemnon dress for battle, the narrator avoids a descriptive pause: Agamemnon’s consecutive acts are part of the fabula of the *Iliad*. However, the narrator does not avoid a pause completely: in lines 20-8, 29-31, and 32-40, narrative time does not progress. Thus, Agamemnon’s arming scene is dramatized, but only to a certain extent.

2.4.3 Patroclus arms for battle (*Il*. 16.131-44)
In Agamemnon’s arming scene, the narrator follows the script. In Patroclus’ arming scene, the narrator deviates from the script. In book 16, when the Trojans have just set fire to the stern of a ship (122-4), Achilles bids Patroclus to arm for battle. Both are momentous events in the *Iliad*. Patroclus will, of course, wear Achilles’ armour. The arming scene follows the script closely, with little elaboration, up until 139. Only the corselet receives an additional, particularized line, to remind the narratees that Patroclus is not donning his own armour: δεύτερον αὖ θώρηκα περὶ στήθεσσιν ἔδυνε / ποικίλον ἀστερόεντα ποδώκεος Αἰακίδαο, “secondly, he girt on about his chest the corselet, elaborate, starry, of swift-footed Aiakides” (133-34). When the narratees come to the last element of the script, the spears, all seems normal, initially at least (139-44):

εἵλετο δ’ ἄλκιμα δοῦρε, τά οἱ παλάμηφιν ἀρήρει.  
ἐγχος δ’ οὐχ ἕλετ’ οἶον ἀμύμονος Αἰακίδαο  
βριθὺ μέγα στιβαρόν· τὸ μὲν οὐ δύνατ’ ἄλλος Ἀχαιῶν  
πάλλειν, ἀλλὰ μν ὀλοφ ἑπίστατο πῆλαι Ἀχιλλεὺς  
Pηλίαν ἄλκιμαν, τὴν πατρὶ φίλῳ πόρε Ἐχείρων  
Πηλίου ἐκ κορυφῆς, φόνον ἐξεμέναι ἡρώεσσιν.

91 Armstrong 1958: 346: “Patroclus arms as other heroes have done before him. All seems normal, regular, customary”. Similarly Fenik 1968: 191: “it is thus a typical scene par excellence, (…) where identical actions are described in exactly or almost exactly the same words”.

92 For this and other modifications, see Janko 1994: 333.
He took up two powerful spears that fitted his hand’s grip. Only he did not take the spear of blameless Aiakides, heavy, huge, strong; no one else of the Achaeans could handle it, but Achilles alone knew how to wield it, the Pelian ash spear which Cheiron had given to his father from high on Pelion to be a death for heroes.

After Patroclus has taken up his two spears (139), the narratee might expect Patroclus’ arming scene to be finished. Patroclus is indeed fully armed, but the scene is not finished, as the narrator adds another five lines (140-4). The fact that the two spears in 139 are said to fit Patroclus’ grasp (τὰ οἱ παλάμηφιν ἀρήρει) prepares for the following lines: Patroclus takes these spears, because these do fit his grasp, but that of Achilles does not.93 The in this case double use of the negative (οὐχ, 140; οὐ, 141) negates an expectation on the part of the narratees.94 The negatives also draw explicit attention to the deviation from the script, since the expectations of the narratees precisely derive from scripts, in this case the arming script.

The implications of the fact that Patroclus is unable to take up Achilles’ spear are many: Patroclus is unfit for the task, and inferior to Achilles.95 The narratee may also be reminded of Patroclus’ impending death.96 The spear itself is a significant object, too, as it will be used by Achilles to kill Hector.97 What is of particular interest for my argument is that Patroclus’ arming scene has a higher degree of narrativity than Agamemnon’s arming scene. Whereas Agamemnon’s arming scene follows the script, Patroclus’ arming scene deviates from it. The expected course of events is disrupted (world disruption) by an event that is expected but that does not take place. This transforms the passage from a mere sequence of events, such as Agamemnon’s arming scene, into something that is more prototypically narrative. In addition, the amount of descriptive detail is much lower, and the narrator nowhere pauses to further describe a part of Patroclus’ armour.

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93 Armstrong 1958: 346. Leaf [1898] 1902: 166 misunderstood this: “[e]qually awkward is the description 141-44 in a negative passage; the poet should enlarge upon the spear when it is being taken, not when it is being left behind.”
95 Janko 1994: 333. In this sense, the elaboration in 140-4 does not increase the importance of the hero (as does the elaboration in the case of Agamemnon), but rather diminishes it (Patzer 1972: 36).
97 22.317-27. For the significance of the spear, see Shannon 1975: 31-86 and de Jong 2012b: 93.
2.5 Conclusion
In this chapter, two passages (Od. 13.96-112, and Il. 11.15-46) have been studied by making use of the model introduced in section 2.2.2. The properties of these passages can be summarised as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prototypical features of narration</th>
<th>Harbour of Phorcys</th>
<th>Agamemnon's arming scene</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>event sequencing</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>world disruption</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘what-it’s-like’</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prototypical features of description</th>
<th>Harbour of Phorcys</th>
<th>Agamemnon's arming scene</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>attribution of qualities to object/place</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>details</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>focus on sensory appearances</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spatial textual organization</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 2.2: Prototypical features of Od. 13.96-112 and Il. 11.15-46*

The passages differ in one crucial point, event sequencing. In the case of the Harbour of Phorcys it is absent. The passage has a high amount of descriptivity and no narrativity. It is, in fact, a prototypical example of a description. Agamemnon’s arming scene is not a prototypical example of a description, because it features a sequence of events. It is neither a prototypical example of narration, because it only features a sequence of events. On account of its sequence of events, its narrativity is higher than that of the Harbour of Phorcys, but it is still low: no other narrative elements are present. We may compare Patroclus’ arming scene, which has a higher amount of narrativity due to the element of world disruption.

We may wonder whether the presence of a sequence of events necessarily decreases the descriptivity of a passage – in other words, whether Agamemnon’s arming scene has a lower amount of descriptivity than the Harbour of Phorcys. For one, the passages differ in their textual organization. Yet Agamemnon’s arming scene makes
clear that a temporal organization does not prevent the realization of every prototypical feature of description. Therefore, it seems best to conclude that the presence of a sequence of events does not necessarily decrease the descriptivity of a passage.

2.6 Corpus
For this study, five ekphraseis have been selected: (1) the shield of Achilles in Il. 18.478-608; (2) the shield of Heracles in Hes. Sc. 139-320; (3) the goatherd’s cup in Theoc. Id. 1.27-60; (4) the cloak of Jason in A.R. 1.721-68; and (5) the basket of Europa in Mosch. Eur. 37-62. The reason why these ekphraseis have been selected is that they all have a visual layer which is extensive enough to convey at least one story of a certain length. In other words, their visual layer is not only narrative, but it also of such a size that it can represent more than just a simple narrative – they may, potentially, have a high degree of narrativity.

These ekphraseis share a number of features. They are all part of a larger narrative work of poetry written in hexameters. This means that ekphraseis in tragedy and prose are not included in this study. For example, I do not discuss the Imagines of Philostratus. This might seem strange at first in a study on ekphrasis, but the Imagines differ considerably from the ekphraseis selected for this study. Philostratus’ ekphraseis are independent, i.e. they are found in a work which consists only of ekphraseis. Due to the scope of this work, as well as the different aims of the Philostratean narrator, the Imagines merit a separate discussion.98

The five ekphraseis fall into two groups. On the one hand, there is ekphrasis in archaic epic, represented by the shields of Achilles and Heracles. On the other, we have Hellenistic ekphrasis. This group may be further divided into epic ekphraseis (Jason’s cloak and Europa’s basket) and bucolic ekphrasis (the goatherd’s cup). Between the archaic and the Hellenistic ekphraseis, more differences may be noted: e.g. large vs. smaller ekphraseis, and shields vs. other objects.

The corpus encompasses ekphraseis written in hexameters from different periods. The corpus thus has a certain unity, but within this unity there is enough variation to make comparison between ekphraseis possible. Each ekphrasis will be discussed in a separate chapter; the chapters are ordered in chronological order. The main aim of the chapters is to establish the degree of narrativity or descriptivity of the ekphrasis; as has

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98 For recent studies on the Imagines, see Ghedini, Colpo, and Novello 2004; and Baumann 2011.
been noted above, a distinction will be made between text and image. The answering of this question, however, invariably leads to the discussion of other issues, too, such as the closely-related issue of the possibility of visualization.99

99 See further section 1.3.3.