

THE 'THEBAN EAGLE'.*

The eagle has always been recognized as one of Pindar's most potent and characteristic images. Horace borrowed it to construct the first four stanzas of his Pindaric imitation in *Carm.* 4.4, and he presents both himself and Pindar as soaring birds: see *Carm.* 4.2.25 and 2.20, where the swan outflies Daedalus and Icarus in a way that the imitators of Pindar cannot hope to do. It is standard doctrine that Pindar often describes himself as an eagle, and that Bacchylides 'imitates' the notion in his fifth ode (e.g. C.M. Bowra, *Pindar* (1964), p.1).

In fact the idea of the poet as any kind of bird is surprisingly rare in early Greek. Outside the standard passages of Pindar it seems to occur only in Anacreon 378 P, not a very easy fragment to interpret. The 'light winged thing' in Socrates' description of the poet in Pl. *Ion* 534 b is explicitly a bee not a bird. The topos of the poet as a swan — the regular one in Horace — is rare before the Hellenistic period. It occurs in Pratinas 708.5 P; in Eur. *HF* 691 the chorus of old men claim that they sing 'like a swan'.¹ The poet is slightly more often compared to a nightingale (Bacch. 3.98, Eur. fr. 588.3 N², Theoc. *Id.* 7.47); but in both these cases it is not flight but song for which the bird is distinguished (oddly in the case of the swan, but this may be an effect of its association with Apollo as early as 'Hes'. *Sc.* 34 and the *Homeric hymns* (xxi)).

The extended passage of Aristophanes' *Birds* (1372–1409), which begins with the passage of Anacreon referred to, portrays the dithyrambic poet Cinesias wishing, in the accents of Euripidean escape-lyric, that he could become a bird in order to fetch down fluttering melodies from the sky (1385). The poet appears as a bird, then, in order to catch his flying poems: cf. *Peace* 829–31. The image is not that of the flights of poetic genius.²

The eagle seems, in Pi. *N.* 5.20f., to be a (paratactic) simile of just that easy competence which characterises the poet:

ἔχω γονάτων ὀρμὴν ἐλαφρὰν·
καὶ πέραν πόντοιο πάλλοντ' αἰετοί.

It is customary to add, as expansions of the topos, *N.* 3.80 f., *O.* 2.91 ff., Bacch. 5.16 ff. I wish to suggest that in all these passages it is rather the addressee who is compared to an eagle.

The earliest occurrence of flight in a poetic context is Thgn. 237 ff., Σοὶ μὲν ἐγὼ πτερ' ἔδωκα, where it is Cynus who has been clad in the wings of fame as a result of Theognis' poetry. A precisely similar idea is often employed by Pindar:

P. 8.32–4 Τὸ δ' ἐν ποσὶ μοι τράχον
ἵτω τέον χρέος, ὦ παῖ, νεώτατον καλῶν
ἐμᾷ ποτανὸν ἀμφὶ μαχανᾷ.

* I wish to thank Professor H. Lloyd-Jones and Mr. T.C.W. Stinton for comments on and discussion of earlier drafts of this paper. It should not be supposed that either of them agrees with my interpretation of all the passages discussed.

¹ Cf. Eur. *I.T.* 1104 f., ἐνθά κύκνος μελωδὸς Μούσας θεραπεύει.

² Perhaps there is a hint also that the fluttering of birds is an appropriate image for the dithyrambists' muddled diction.

cf. N.7.22 f. ἐπεὶ ψεύδεσσι οἱ ποτανᾶ <τε> μαχανᾶ
σεμνὸν ἔπεστί τι,

with Σ29b, ποτανὴν δὲ μηχανὴν τὰ ποιήματα εἶπε, καθὸ ὑψοῖ καὶ μετεωρίζει
τὰς ἀρετὰς τῶν ὑμνουμένων. Here, that is, ποτανός is 'transitive': poetry causes
the virtues of the victor to become airborne; its own wings are only significant
in that they make this possible (cf. I.5.63).

I.1.64 ff. εἴη νῦν εὐφώνων πετρύγεσσω ἀερθέντ' ἀγλααῖς
Πιερίδων . . . Ἀλφειοῦ ἔρνεσι φράξαι χεῖρα . . .

P.9.125 πολλὰ δὲ πρόσθεν πετὰ δέξατο νικᾶν.
Archilochus, 181.11 West, spoke of the πετὰ of poetry — an idea which clearly
goes back to Homer's ἔπεα πετρόεντα — but we cannot tell how he used the
image.³

At N.6.48 the fame of the Aeacids

πέταται δ' ἐπὶ τε χθόνα καὶ διὰ θαλάσσης τηλόθεν
(cf. Aesch. A. 575–6 ὥς κομπάσαι τῷδ' εἰκὸς ἡλίου φάει
ὑπὲρ θαλάσσης καὶ χθονὸς ποτωμένοις.)

The victor takes flight as a result of his victory at P.8.88–91:

ὁ δὲ καλὸν τι νέον λαχὼν
ἄβρότατος ἐπὶ μεγάλας
ἐξ ἐλπίδος πέταται
ὑποπτέροις ἀνορέαις.

The comparison of the victor specifically with an eagle is unequivocally made
at P.5.107–15:

ἄνδρα κείνον ἐπαυέοντι συνετοί . . .
θάρσος δὲ τανύπτερος
ἐν ὀρνίξιν αἰετὸς ἔπλετο
ἀγωνιάς δ', ἔρκος οἶον, σθένος
ἐν τε Μοῖσαισι ποτανὸς ἀπὸ ματρὸς φίλας
πέφανται θ' ἁρματηλάτας σοφός.

The comparison is appropriate for a charioteer, as the eagle is a type of speed
(P.2.50, N.5.21); but also for any victor as it represents *power* in general
(I.3.65).⁴ The same is true of the dolphin, which figures in P.2.50 (again), in
I.9.6 f. and in fr. 234 as an example of swiftness (cf. PMG 939.8), but at N.6.
64–6 is used simply as an example of ἀρετὰ in its own field equivalent to that of
the *laudandus*, (here, of the trainer Melesias) in his.⁵ Furthermore, a mechanical
bronze eagle and dolphin were mounted at the starting gate of the stadium at
Olympia, which respectively flew up and dived down when the mechanism of

³ He may have thought of his words as
arrows rather than birds, as Homer surely
did: see M. Durante, *Atti d. Accad. Naz.
dei Lincei, Rendiconti* ser. 8.13 (1959),
3–14. See also Pratinas 708.5. P, Bacch.
fr. 20B.4.

⁴ At S. Aj. 167–71 the hawk is a simile
for Ajax. Eagles and hawks were not readily

distinguished by the Greeks; see D'Arcy
Thompson, *A Glossary of Greek Birds*²
(1936), pp. 5 f. The general point is clearly
similar.

⁵ The two beasts are combined on coins of
Sinope: Imhoof-Blumer and Keller, *Tier-
und Pflanzenbilder auf Münzen und
Gemmen* (1889) Taf. V 12.

the gate was operated.⁶ Both were clearly regarded as emblematic of athletic success.

So much for air and sea. The king of land beasts is the lion. This too is duly used as a comparison with the victor (along with the fox!) at *I*.3.65. Lion and fox recur together at *O*.11.19 f.

But this is the first of the problematic passages. E.L. Bundy (*Stud. Pind.* 1962, i. 29–32) wished to take lion and fox here as good and bad laudatores – i.e. Pindar and his hypothetical rivals. The unequivocal *I*.3.65 is against this: but neither do the passages he adduces (*O*.2.91–105, *O*.9.107–20 (sic), *N*.3.7–80, *N*.4.33–44, *N*.8.19–39) support it. He rightly interprets lion and fox as examples, respectively, of *φύα* and *διδασχῆ*, the natural ability of the aristocrat and the mere technical knowledge which can never raise a natural plebeian above his station; but he is wrong to say that this contrast is used, in the passages he cites, to highlight the *poet's* talent. The first, third and fourth of the passages will receive special consideration below. *O*.9. '107–20' (i.e. 100–13) begins

τὸ δὲ φύα κράτιστον ἅπαν· πολλοὶ δὲ διδασκαῖς
ἀνθρώπων ἀρεταῖς κλέος
ῶρουσαν ἄρεσθαι·
ἄνευ δὲ θεοῦ, σεσιγαμένον
οὐ σκαιώτερον χρῆμ' ἔκαστον.

which one might paraphrase, 'The real right thing is that which is by nature. But many men try to achieve glory by book-learned skill. When there is no god in it, it is not gaucherie that a thing should be kept in silence.' Here the reference to *ἀρετά* pins the *gnome* on the victor at least as much as on the poet. But as the *gnome* is designed to lead in to the assertion at 108–11 that the victor is mighty by divine gift,

τοῦτο δὲ προσφέρων ἄεθλον,
ὄρθιον ῶρυσαι θαρσέων,
τὸνδ' ἀνέρα δαμονία γεγάμεν
εὐχεῖρα, κ.τ.λ.

in explicit contrast to anything that is *ἄνευ θεοῦ*, it is only reasonable to take the *ἀρετά* as that of the victor. Priamels of the type *ἐντι γὰρ ἄλλαι* are regularly used to introduce praise of the victor.⁷

N.8.19–39, the story of the rivalry of Ajax and Odysseus, is also intended to highlight the integrity of Ajax against slanderers (*ἐχθρὰ δ' ἄρα πάρφασις ἦν καὶ πάλαι* 32), not to contrast incompetent praise with good.

But it is time to consider *O*.2.83–100 (for the passage cannot easily be split up). Most commentators have assumed that the ravens are rivals or critics of Pindar. Σ 157a, *αἰνίττεται Βακχυλίδην καὶ Σμλωνίδην, ἑαυτὸν λέγων ἄετον, κόρακας δὲ τοὺς ἀντιτεχνούς*. Farnell argues that as Bacchylides was not in Sicily at this time, the phrase must be interpreted as referring to 'two local critics'. The whole historicist hare was started by the reading *γαρύνετον*, dual. The interpretation *γαρύνετων*, 'let them chatter', which is equally consonant with Pindar's ΓΑΡΥΤΕΤΟΝ, is also equally good sense. It obviates the need to decide *whom* the ravens represent – they are a type, and Pindar dismisses them

⁶ See Paus. 6.20.10–12, M.I. Finley and H.W. Pleket, *The Olympic Games* (1976), pp. 28 f.

⁷ *O*.1.113, *N*.1.25, *N*.4.91, *Bacch.*10.35 ff., Bundy *Stud. Pind.* I. 4–10. Cf. n.15 below.

contemptuously: the σοφοί have no need to fear their rivals, for φνῶ will always show its superiority.⁸ But a type of what? Bundy appears to follow that part of the interpretation which makes the ravens foils to Pindar when he says, apropos of lines 95–100 of this poem, '[The] arts [of the lover of words], pursued for their own sake in a void, are not rooted in nature and frame but shadow resemblances of the real (ἄκραντα O.2.96, ἀτελεῖ N.3.40)'.⁹ But this means that the thought of 95–100 simply goes over the ground of 86–9: praise (89–95) is encircled by claims to ability to praise adequately. This is possible, but not Pindar's usual laconic approach. I suggest that there is a more continuous progression in these lines.

The whole passage from 83 must be taken together. Pindar has, he says, many ways of praising Theron, which, like the mysteries of which Theron was no doubt an initiate,¹⁰ are clear to those who understand, but in general¹¹ a stumbling-block and foolishness, or at least in need of good interpreters. σοφός ὁ πολλὰ εἰδὼς φνῶ, he goes on, 'wise is he who knows much by nature.' In such a context, who can the wise man be but the initiate, he who understands the speaking of the arrows? The wise man is then instantly contrasted with the μαθόντες, who are like chattering ravens. It would be odd to contrast the victor in this way with his incompetent laudatores, which is what is involved if the ravens are foil to Pindar's self-assertion. The only relevant contrast would be between the σοφός and his inferiors.

These inferiors are described as μαθόντες. Pindar has a good deal to say about learning. At N.3.41, ψεφεννός is the word used of those who have only διδασχῇ. Mere learners never achieve anything: their part is darkness. So in O.1.82–4, when Pelops determines to make trial of himself, the alternative he sets up to his hoped-for success is 'a nameless old age, sitting in darkness':

θανεῖν δ' οἴσω ἀνάγκα, τὰ κέ τις ἀνώνυμον
γῆρας ἐν σκότῳ καθήμενος ἔσποι μάταν,
ἀπάντων καλῶν ἄμμορος ;

It is better to run the risk of incurring φθόνος by one's achievements than to remain insignificant, for φθόνος can always be quenched where real merit exists (I.2.43–5):

μή νυν, ὅτι φθονεραὶ
θνατῶν φρένας ἀμφικρέμανται ἐλπίδες,
μήτ' ἀρετάν ποτε σιγάτῳ πατρώων,
μηδὲ τοῦσδ' ὕμνους.¹²

⁸ Cf. n. 12, n.16, and Bundy, loc. cit. in next note.

⁹ 'The Quarrel of Callimachus and Apollonius Rhodius', *CSCA* 5 (1972), 90, n. 113. See also C.A.P. Ruck, *Hermes* 100 (1972), 167 ('the crows are obviously poets') – 168.

¹⁰ Wilamowitz, *Pindaros* (1922), p.251. The latest treatment of the doctrines expounded in O.2 is by N. Demand, *GRBS* 16 (1975), 347–57.

¹¹ ἐς τὸ πᾶν. Cf. P.2,54 τὰ πολλὰ(d): 'for

the most part.'

¹² Cf. N.1.24 f, where I accept H. Fränkel's interpretation (*Göttinger Gel. Anzeiger*, 190 (1928), 273–4) 'Es ist dem Chromios vergönnt (durch seine im Vorangehenden geschilderte gastliche Freigebigkeit) den Neid, der sich gegen die Reichen und Mächtigen wendet, schon im Keime zu ersticken.' Cf. Plut. *de Inv. et Od.* 538 a αἱ δὲ τῶν εὐτυχημάτων ὑπεροχαὶ καὶ λαμπρότητες πολλάκις τὸν φθόνον κατασβεννύουσιν.

Indeed *φθόνος* is one of the rewards of virtue:¹³ those who cannot arouse it are condemned to silence and darkness:

πάντι δ' ἐπὶ φθόνος ἀνδρὶ κεῖται
ἀρετᾶς, ὃ δὲ μὴδὲν ἔχων ὑπὸ σι -
γᾷ μελαίνα κᾶρα κέκρυπται. (fr. 94a 8-10)
ἴσχει τέ γάρ ὄλβος οὐ μείονα φθόνον
ὃ δὲ χαμηλὰ πνέων ἀφαντον βρέμει. (P. 11. 29 f)

It is precisely those who do not achieve success, because they have only *διδαχή*, who become envious of those who do, as is clear from *N.4.39-43*:

φθονερά δ' ἄλλος ἀνὴρ βλέπων
γνώμαν κενεὰν σκότῳ κυλίνδει
χαμαὶ πετοῖσαν. ἐμοὶ δ' ὅποιαν ἀρετὰν
ἔδωκε Πότμος ἄναξ,
εὖ οἶδ' ὅτι χρόνος ἔρπων πεπρωμέναν τελέσει.

Pindar states that 'another man' (i.e. one who has not achieved success like the victor) looks on in envy as he remains obscure, 'he rolls his vain conception in the dark, and it falls to the ground';¹⁴ he goes on to say that he will be satisfied with his allotted *ἀρετά*, knowing that 'creeping time' will fulfil what is fated. He is demanding that people should not become *φθονεροί* through being dissatisfied with their portion of *ἀρετά*: in the long run it will be of no avail. The thought,¹⁵ though expressed in the first person, is entirely general in its application: it is made persuasive by being presented as the utterance of the divinely inspired poet. There is also no doubt a suggestion that time *has* brought Timasarchus' *ἀρετά* to fruition, by giving him a victory. In 44 ff. Pindar begins the praise that is due by praising his home, Aegina.

There are thus two types who can be contrasted with the victor: the losers, and those who carp and say that the victory was undeserved. Clearly the two groups are likely to be largely identical.

In *O.2*, as in *N.4*, the contrast of *σοφός* and inferiors leads directly into praise.¹⁶ The progression is logical: either the victor is simply contrasted with his inferiors, the inevitable losers (cf. *P.8. 81-92*), or the danger of *φθόνος* is alluded to but discounted as ineffectual.¹⁷ It is not unreasonable for the two ideas to occur in a single passage. Here the ravens represent the failures; but as emphasis is laid on their 'croaking vainly' it would be unreasonable to deny that the futility of their *φθόνος* may also be alluded to. In that sense their words about the victor are less good than Pindar's, but that is incidental: the point is that they highlight the victor's supremacy.

There is a further danger in praise, which should not be confused with *φθόνος*, and that is *κόρος*. This is the poet's own offence against taste, while

¹³ It is at any rate better than pity: *P.1.85*. Cf. *Plut. de Inv. et Od.* 537e *μισοῦμεν γὰρ μάλλον τοὺς μάλλον εἰς πονηρίαν ἐπιβίοντας, φθονοῦσι δὲ μάλλον τοῖς μάλλον ἐπ' ἀρετῇ προϊέναι δοκοῦσι*.

¹⁴ Cf. also *N.7.61* *σκοτεινὸς ψόγος*: but this is cavil at the poet's incompetence.

¹⁵ Cf. *P.12.28-32*.

¹⁶ Other examples of this progression: *O.9.100* ff. (above); *P.10.59* ff.; *I.1.40* ff,

where the achievements of *ἀρετά* are contrasted with *φθόνος* and then set off by a long *ἄλλοι ἄλλα* priamel. The positive statement follows at 50-1. Cf. *N.7.5* f. (followed by 'Naming Complex' at 7 f.).

¹⁷ Cf. *P.2.61*: anyone who claims that there are people who excel Hieron *χαῦνα πραπίδι παλαίμονει κενεά*. See n. 12 above.

In this poem, the theme of *κῶρος* follows at 95 ff., after the praise of Theron. The progression in *N.4*, for example, is that the *φθόνος* theme leads to the assertion of virtues, which is followed by their meed of praise (cf. *N.1.24*, *P.2.54*, etc). In *O.2*, praise is further enhanced by the following *κῶρος* motif (cf. *Bacch.10.47* ff., 5.187–97,²⁰ *P.2.57–67*, where *ἀκύνδυνον* represents the *καίρως* theme). It is a natural progression to say ‘φθόνος attends those who receive those who receive praise for their proven superiority; but it is futile, so I will give praise. But it is an error of taste to praise excessively, and will bore people; I will simply hint at the multitude of Theron’s virtues.’ I suggest that the chattering crows are the inferiors, the *φθονεροί*, and the bird of Zeus the mighty tyrant Theron.

The next passage I wish to consider is *N.3.76–84* (again, the passage must not be split up), where as at *O.2.86 ff* the image of the eagle and lesser birds (here, jackdaws) leads directly to praise of the victor. But the passage begins:

84 . . . δέδορκεν φάος.

(*PCPS* 46–8 (1897), 14 f) on the coin types of Syracuse, in which he used a similar argument about the emblematic status of the dolphin in Pindar. He ‘proved that the dolphin was the special badge of Syracuse just as the tunny was of Cyzicus. Hence Pindar in referring to the eagle (the well-known badge of Agrigentum) and to the dolphin was deliberately warning Theron and Hiero.’ I am pleased to find support for my view of the significance of the coin types, but cannot divine what ‘warning’ it is that Ridgeway had in mind.

The reference of the whole passage to the victor is made very likely by the connective to his explicit mention, *τῷ γε μέν*. This collocation of particles has a consistent sense in Pindar (see J.D. Denniston, *The Greek Particles*, pp. 386 ff) except perhaps in *N.* 10.33 where it may be adversative.²³ Denniston, on Bowra's advice, included *N.* 3.83 in this category. But far commoner are the progressive and affirmative uses ('Yes, and . . .') which are characteristic also of *γε μὴν* (the phrase used by Pindar except where the metre demands a short syllable). This meaning fits perfectly here: 'The eagle seizes its prey with assurance, while the daws hug the lower air (the paratactic *δέ* of polar expression has a subordinating effect, as at *N.* 1.54): yes, and on you too a light shines.' Only dogmatism about the reference of the eagle image in Pindar produced the other, unnatural interpretation of *γε μέν*. The daws here are not *φθονεροί* — they do not caw — but merely inferiors who cannot soar so high (or see so far: cf. Arist. *H.A.* 9. 619 b 5).

But how is the passage connected with what precedes? A natural way of taking it is to assume a pointed contrast of *ὀψέ* and *ὠκύς*: though the poem is late, the poet, swift as an eagle, can make up for lost time.²⁴ But nothing that is said about the eagle has *particular* relevance to the poet. Though the poet reaches his goal swiftly, it is the victor who successfully snatches his prey (a victory).

There is no need to assume a connection of thought at all. Pindar has 'concluded' the main part of his poem, *χαῖρε, φίλος* . . . He then describes the ode and apologizes for its lateness, just as at *P.* 2.69 ff. he describes his ode as merchandise after a similar *χαῖρε*. In that poem there is apparently a complete break in the train of thought, and Pindar begins a disquisition on flatterers and envy,²⁵ which highlights the victor's achievement. The same is the case here.

There is a rather similar series of thoughts in *N.* 5.19–23:

εἰ δ' ὄλβον ἡ χειρῶν βίαν ἢ σιδαρίταν ἐπαινῆ-
σαι πόλεμον δεδοκῆται, μακρά μοι
αὐτόθεν ἄλμαθ' ὑποσκά-
πτει τις ἔχω γονάτων ὁρμᾶν ἐλαφρᾶν·
καὶ πέραν πόντοιο πάλλοντ' αἰετοί.
πρόφρων δὲ καὶ κείνους ἀειδ' ἐν Παλῖω
Μοισᾶν ὁ κάλλιστος χορός . . .

The first line is a priamel, the three terms of which are all applicable to Peleus, who is to be the subject of the myth that follows. He is a paradigm of *ὄλβος*

²³ But the regular meaning would make good sense: 'The Olympic Games are best: yes, and <you have a chance since> you have won at the Panathenaea.'

²⁴ C.A.P. Ruck ('Marginalia Pindarica', *Hermes* 100 (1972), V, 'the poet's tardiness: *N.* 3.80–1' and VI 'O. 2.85–8: more crows and the date of *Nemea* 3', pp. 153–69) argues (1) that the lateness is occasioned by the diversion of the song's course as far as the Pillars of Hercules. I find this fanciful. A parallel for the literal interpretation is provided by a story in Athenaeus 4. p. 152. (2) that the eagle's

swiftness in reaching the point is contrasted with the quality of a man who because he 'writes without such inspiration, is misunderstood and ineffectual', and quotes lines 41–2. I have argued above that this passage refers to failures in general: anyway there is no need to connect it with lines 79 ff.

²⁵ Cf. H. Lloyd-Jones, *JHS* 93 (1973), 123. I think, as Erasmus Schmid did, that the focus of interest here too is the addressee and not Pindar; but cannot argue the case here.

because the gods attended his wedding.²⁶ His strength is more conspicuous in *N. 3.* (35 f. *Θέτω κατέμαρψεν ἐγκονητί*) but is not inappropriate to his character here. Likewise his dealings with Hippolyta were directly followed in the legend by his war against Iolcus (see again *N. 3.34*).

Pindar goes on to declare his readiness to provide what he has promised (20). The phrase *ἔχω γονάτων ὁρμὰν ἐλαφράν* recalls that of *N. 8.19*. *ἵσταμαι δὴ ποσσὶ κούφοις, ἀμπνέων τε πρὶν τι φάμεν*, where however the priamel follows this statement, in a *γάρ* clause (*πολλὰ γάρ πολλὰ λέλεκται*, 20).

After *N. 5.20* the train of thought becomes obscure. It is perhaps not a valid objection to say that if an eagle can fly across the sea, it does not need a jumping pit dug for it. Greater inconcinnities can be found in Pindar's metaphors.²⁷ But what does *κείνοις* refer to? Commentators have normally taken it as a construction according to the sense, referring to Peleus (but not Telamon or Phocus), the subject of the preceding short myth. It could alternatively be taken as deliberately unspecific, 'and for those (men of old) too, the Muses sang. . .':²⁸ the information contained in the rest of the sentence makes clear whom Pindar has in mind. It is, however, worth observing that the only masculine plural noun preceding *κείνοις* is *αἰετοί*. Bury²⁹ was the first to point out the striking parallel of *N. 6.48*,

*πέταται δ' ἐπὶ τε χθόνα καὶ διὰ θαλάσσης τηλόθεν
δνυμ' αὐτῶν.*

Here, as in the case of Cynrus (Thgn. 237 ff.) it is *fame* that flies over land and sea. The image, that is, is appropriate to the victor.³⁰

If, as is likely in view of the passages already discussed, the audience will have recognised the eagle as indicating the *laudandi*, it is not hard to square this interpretation with the context. Pindar is using the victor's greatness as a paratactic simile³¹ for the excellence of his own art. Pindar's alacrity in praise bears comparison with the *ἀρετά* of his heroes.

The *ἀρετά* of poets and of heroes, kings, and victors is commensurable:

*ἐκ γάρ τοι Μουσέων καὶ ἐκηβόλου Ἀπόλλωνος
ἄνδρες ἀοιδοὶ ἔασω ἐπὶ χθόνα καὶ κινθαρισταί
ἐκ δὲ Διὸς βασιλῆες· ὁ δ' ὄλβιος, ὄντινα Μοῦσαι
φίλωνται· γλυκερὴ οἱ ἀπὸ στόματος ῥέει αὐδὴ.
(Hes. *Th.* 94-7)*

In the archaic manner, the passage is constructed in a series of *δέ* clauses, so that one at first supposes that *ἀοιδοί* are being regarded as inferior to kings because their grace is from the Muses and Apollo and not from the king of the gods. But the hierarchy of gods is irrelevant here; it is their functions that are significant.

²⁶ *P. 3.87-95*. Cf. *N. 4.66-8*, *O. 2.78*.

²⁷ e.g. *O. 12.13-15* (cocks do not shed leaves); *N. 6-26-9* (winds or arrows?); *P. 11.38-40* (winds rarely blow chariots off course).

²⁸ Cf., perhaps, *O. 7.49*, where *κείνοισι* broadens the reference from the institutors of fireless sacrifices to the whole people of Rhodes.

²⁹ *The Nemean Odes of Pindar* (1890), p. 85.

³⁰ Bury further argued that this is easy to understand because Pindar sees an omen in the echo *αἰετός/Αἰάκος* as he does in *αἰετός/Αἴας* in *I. 6.53*; but that is another poem, and the speaker is Heracles. It is nevertheless possible that the association was familiar to the Aeginetans. But the parallel would have to be *αἰετός/Αἰακίδης*, as the subject of the myth is Peleus.

³¹ Cf. *P. 2.50*, where the eagle is an image expressing the god's swiftness.

The second clause attributes ὄλβος to poets,³² and that is the greatest blessing a mortal can have.

It is therefore not presumptuous of Pindar to make such a comparison between himself and his addressee. Further, it is necessary, for a poet must be worthy of his task.³³ The comparison of Pindar's ability with the greatness of the *laudandus* is used to suggest that his art is adequate to his subject.³⁴

I am aware that this passage is the most intractable from the point of view of my general thesis: but it is a difficult passage on any interpretation, and I hope that the above remarks are at least plausible.

In conclusion I wish to consider a passage which seems to me much more straightforward, inasmuch as the poet who wrote it is less subtle than Pindar: Bacch. 5. 16–30. No one has contested the view that the eagle in these lines represents the poet, though M. Lefkowitz³⁵ seems to have had some qualms: 'Key motifs are reiterated: isolation, individuality, traversal of distance, and in this respect, curiously enough, the eagle seems to resemble Hieron as much as the poet' (p. 54). I would go further: there is nothing in this passage that is appropriate to the poet, and all is suited to the victor.

It begins 'The servant of Urania (i.e. Bacchylides) wishes to praise Hieron. The eagle is a mighty bird.' It would be very odd to say in effect 'I wish to praise Hieron. I am a mighty poet'; for the second clause signally fails to fulfil the intention of the first. Then, the eagle is the bird of kings, as we saw above, *εὐρύνακτος ἄγγελος Ζῆνος* (19 f.): *εὐρύναξ* derives from the Homeric *εὐρυσθένης*, used of βασιλεῖς. The image evoked here is entirely appropriate to a βασιλεύς like Hieron.³⁶ The other birds are *λιγύφθογγοι*: true, this is an epithet of heralds in Homer, and the metaphor of the poet as a herald is not uncommon: but it would be wrong, I think, to press the interpretation of this word either in this direction or in that of a comparison with the chattering of the *φθονεροί*. It is rather a descriptive epithet to point up the contrast with the mighty eagle, in a polar expression (cf. PLF fr. incert. 10 LP, p. 296, *Il.* 16. 582 f.), and perhaps to suggest their noisy chirping in fear: cf. *Il.* 17.755–7

τῶν δ' ὥς τε ψαρῶν νέφος ἔρχεται, ἥε κολοιῶν,
οὐλὸν κεκλήγοντες, ὅτε προΐδωσιν ἰόντα
κίρκον, ὅτε σμικρῇσι φόβον φέρει ὀρνίθεσσιν,

and S. *Aj.* 167–71. So too the eagle is described as *ἄγγελος Ζῆνος* because it *is*, not because Bacchylides is the herald of Hieron's achievement. Bacchylides does not weigh every word, and this is the kind of traditional phrase he is least likely to think about. Like a Homeric simile, his image goes off at a tangent.

Bacchylides is, according to Mrs. Lefkowitz, 'like the eagle in his power to comfort a troubled and fearful king; but at the same time the eagle's isolation

³² I do not agree with West (ad loc.) that the words imply 'the Muses' favour is always beneficial (*even to a king*)' (my italics). He makes the passage unnecessarily complicated. For a series of *δές* putting a simple view in antithetical terms, cf. *N.* 6.1–4.

³³ The rhetorical trope of *ἀξιοπιστία*. Cf. Plat. *Legg.* 829 d ὅσοι δὲ ἀγαθοὶ τε αὐτοὶ καὶ τίμιοι ἐν τῇ πόλει, ἔργων ὄντες δημιουργοὶ καλῶν, τὰ τῶν τοιούτων

ἀδέσθω ποιήματα, εἰ μὴ μουσικὰ πεφύκη.

³⁴ Those who are not seduced by my argument that there is a break in the thought at *N.* 3.80 may prefer to see that passage too in these terms.

³⁵ 'Bacchylides' Ode 5', *HSCP* 73 (1969), 45–96.

³⁶ He is called a βασιλεύς at *O.* 1.23 and by implication 114; *P.* 3.70; Deinomenes at *P.* 1.30, cf. 68.

... recalls the explicit superiority of Hieron's judgement and with it, his implied separation from other Syracusans as general and leader' (p.56). It is quite unclear to me how eagles comfort fearful kings; but the second part of this analysis seems to me absolutely correct. All the traits of the eagle are those of the king, none of the poet. This picture is strengthened if we interpret $\nu\omega\mu\hat{\alpha}$ (or $\nu\omega\mu\hat{\alpha}\tau\alpha\iota$: Walker) as absolute: 'the eagle is the leading power in the air', as does E. Bonnafé,³⁷ who compares Soph. fr. 855N² = 941 P.11 (but he goes on to speak of 'la souveraineté majestueuse de l'aigle, symbole du génie du poète qui méprise les obstacles').

The only problem then is $\tau\hat{\omega}\varsigma$ (31): 'the eagle is a mighty bird: and likewise for me there are many paths of praise open'. Is the implication that the eagle has all the paths of the air open to him, and that Bacchylides in this point resembles the eagle, in his freedom of choice? Even if this is suggested, it can hardly be enough to justify the whole eagle passage. This may be another of those slides in the sense where the figures of poet and laudandus coalesce (cf. p. 9 above on N.4.41). But this is not necessary: it is not hard to interpret, taking $\tau\hat{\omega}\varsigma$ with $\kappa\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\epsilon\upsilon\theta\omicron\varsigma$ rather than with $\kappa\alpha\iota\ \acute{\epsilon}\mu\omicron\iota$, 'there are likewise many paths of praise open to me', i.e. there are many virtues which I could attribute to Hieron,³⁸ just as there are many activities distinctive of the eagle, though all alike depend upon his soaring prowess. The syntax does not seem so unequivocal that a looser interpretation like this is impossible, particularly if one has regard to the natural meaning of the rest of the passage as I have interpreted it.

To conclude, then, there is in my view no passage where the eagle is a symbol of the poet; it is everywhere the victor, supreme in power and assurance, seizing his deserved victory without hesitation. Horace may have some misunderstandings of Pindar to answer for, but not this one: in *Carm.* 4.4 it is Drusus who swoops like an eagle on the Vindelici; the poet is an invisible presence. Pindar may have been a less modest poet than the Matine bee: but direct comparisons with the kings of beasts on land and sea and in the air are reserved for his victors.

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³⁷ *ZPE* 7 (1972), 39 f.

³⁸ Cf. *O.* 2.98-100.