

## PINDAR, VIRGIL, AND THE PROEM TO *GEORGIC* 3

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THIS PAPER ARGUES that certain prominent features of the proem to *Georgic* 3 owe a direct debt to Pindar and are thematically and stylistically distinct from the epinician poetry of Callimachus.<sup>1</sup> In 1969, L. P. Wilkinson made the case for Pindaric influence in the proem, but since then Richard Thomas and others have advanced powerful arguments, based on newly discovered Callimachean papyri, to the effect that the proem is colored throughout by allusions to Hellenistic poetics.<sup>2</sup> These studies mark an advance in our understanding of the proem, but the pendulum has swung too far; scholarly attention to the passage's Callimachean refinement and Hellenistic allusions has begun to obscure the equally important mood of Pindaric triumphalism which characterizes it.<sup>3</sup> The matter is undoubtedly one of critical emphasis. It is a well-established principle of Virgilian scholarship that, even in short passages, Virgil can allude at once to two, or sometimes three, other authors.<sup>4</sup> As a result, while acknowledging the significance of a Callimachean presence in the proem, I shall argue that Pindar has been undervalued in recent years and that our understanding of the proem can be considerably enriched if we pay closer attention to its Pindaric overtones.

Two general points should be made before turning to the proem itself. First, it is wrong to draw too sharp a contrast between Pindar and Callimachus, since we know that Callimachus himself was indebted to Pindar. Several recent studies have detailed Pindar's thematic and stylistic influence on Callimachus, and, given Pindar's own allusiveness, selectivity, and refinement, a connection between these poets should come as no surprise.<sup>5</sup> It is possible that some allusions that appear

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<sup>1</sup>The interpretation I propose thus develops the arguments of Wilkinson 1969 and Wilkinson 1970; cf. also Lundström 1976; Buchheit 1972; and now Instone 1996: 24, suggesting that Virgil uses victory-ode topoi in order to compose an elaborate *recusatio*. As Wilkinson argues, it is very likely that Virgil knew Pindar, since Horace's own lyric poetry gives evidence of multiple debts to Pindar; on Horace's use of Pindar, see Highbarger 1935; Wilkinson 1951; Wilkinson 1970; and recently Harrison 1990: 31–43 and Harrison 1995: 110–115.

<sup>2</sup>See especially Thomas 1988; Thomas 1983: 92–113; Thomas 1986a: 61–73; Perkell 1989: 61–63; Cameron 1995: 480–481.

<sup>3</sup>For the complexity of the problem, see the statement of Newman 1986a: 189: "The Ascræan Georgics, which also pay homage to Pindar in precisely one of their most ambitious and yet most Alexandrian passages, the proem to Book III, were the essential preparation for the *Aeneid*."

<sup>4</sup>Here as elsewhere Thomas has added a great deal to our understanding of Virgilian poetics: see Thomas 1986b: 193–198, where he discusses the concept of "conflation" or "multiple reference."

<sup>5</sup>On Callimachus' debt to Pindar see Smiley 1914; Newman 1967; Pfeiffer 1953: 2.127–140 (*Index Rerum Notabilium*, s.v. Pindar); Thomas 1983: 94, n. 13; Fuhrer 1988; Fuhrer 1993; Parsons 1977: esp. 45–50; Newman 1986a.

Pindaric were also overlaid by a Callimachean treatment that is now lost. Still, I think there is a significant distinction in tone and purpose between these authors' epinician poetry; it is plausible to conceive this distinction as the difference between the Pindaric attempt to monumentalize athletic victories in a splendid, glorious, and heroizing way, and the Callimachean rejection of traditional themes of heroism and grandeur in favor of humbler themes in the "leptotic" style.<sup>6</sup> True, Callimachus did occupy a range of positions along this spectrum, as recent discussion of his epinician poetry suggests<sup>7</sup>; but he treats his predecessor Pindar in the same way he treats Homer, by artfully rearranging, and in some cases subverting, the conventions and expectations of the genre.<sup>8</sup> Although we should handle the distinction between Callimachus and Pindar with caution, we should remain attuned to the differences that do exist in tone and style.<sup>9</sup>

The second point is that hypotheses about the fragmentary remains of Callimachus' poetry become suspect if they encourage the critic to make unsubstantiated claims about typical practices or about generic tradition. In the absence of specific Callimachean evidence on individual themes or passages, it is best to look to the Pindaric evidence that we do have rather than to the Callimachean "evidence" that is now lost.<sup>10</sup> Despite recent discoveries that have advanced our understanding of Callimachean poetics, the usefulness of these discoveries

<sup>6</sup>On several issues involved in making this distinction, see Harrison 1995: esp. 110–115, 126–127. For Pindaric poetics see generally Bowra 1964; Carne-Ross 1985; Race 1986; Steiner 1986. The contrast comes through most clearly in *Aetia* fr. 1.3–5; Callimachus advocates Pindaric brevity and perhaps complexity, but surely cannot favor Pindar's themes or his attempt to glorify and monumentalize athletic victories in an ambitious style. For Callimachus' themes and for the "leptotic" style in general, see Clayman 1977; Reitzenstein 1931; Klein 1976.

<sup>7</sup>Parsons (1977: 46) writes: "In some sense Callimachus' normal manner is Pindaric: allusiveness, uneven tempo, mannerist distortions. But here [in *Victoria Berenices*], in the proem, and throughout the *Victoria Sosibii*, he seems to outdo himself. Is this a special tribute to the 'os profundum' of his model?"

<sup>8</sup>This is one of the central theses of Fuhrer 1993: 83–87; cf. Fuhrer 1988: 58, which suggests that Callimachus uses Pindaric conventions primarily in order to show off his own wit and erudition.

<sup>9</sup>The contrast is hard to draw in a way that would satisfy the most skeptical critic; and yet I believe there is a point to it. The difference between the poets can be brought out, for example, by their contrasting ways of handling myth: in Callimachus' epinician there is either no myth (*Victoria Sosibii*) so far as we know, or the myth is treated in an anti-heroic way (*Victoria Berenices*). On this subject see Fuhrer 1993: 84–87; Fuhrer also draws several important distinctions between Callimachus and Pindar that concern audience expectation and the use of erudite references. Roughly, whereas Pindar exploits encomiastic conventions in order to glorify and heroize his victors, Callimachus manipulates encomiastic topoi in order to make witty allusions and to display erudition. See Fuhrer 1993: 89 ("[Callimachus'] epinician becomes a vessel for philological commentary") and Fuhrer 1988.

<sup>10</sup>On the difficulties in interpreting the fragmentary remains of several Callimachean poems, see Newman 1986a: 183–184. Thomas 1983 relies quite heavily on hypotheses about Callimachus' typical practices in writing epinicia; consequently, his *Victoria Berenices* ends up having not only "a celebration involving statues and/or a temple" (97), but also "a traditional reference to epinician Envy" (100). But in the absence of firm evidence about Callimachus' actual standard practices, I have reservations in accepting Thomas' conclusions without qualification.

in contextualizing Virgil's poetry must remain open to debate because of their fragmentary character.

In a passage that symbolically presages the writing of Virgil's majestic epic, and written at about the time of Octavian's triple triumph, we might expect the poet to use celebratory language and to evoke the triumphant tone of a victory celebration.<sup>11</sup> Thomas has argued persuasively that, in the proem, Virgil self-consciously rejects Callimacheanism by using marked Callimachean terminology; conversely, and at the same time, we should consider whether Virgil has in mind a positive model of poetic triumphalism, which he asserts in place of Callimachean poetics. I suggest that he does, and that his central vehicle for the epinician elements is provided by Pindar. In the proem, Virgil is self-consciously abandoning a Callimachean tone in favor of certain key features of Pindar's own encomiastic rhetoric. This passage's celebratory inflections are reminiscent of a variety of characteristically Pindaric motifs and image-systems. Re-reading the proem with an eye to Pindar will show that Virgil is adapting Pindar's epinician conventions in order to honor Octavian's military victories.

I believe that, despite the recent shift in critical focus, Wilkinson's argument in favor of the Pindaric reading remains strong. Hence I do not intend to undertake an exhaustive study of the proem, but rather to add further considerations to Wilkinson's argument, and to point out several problems with the Callimachean reading of the proem. My argument investigates in particular several parallels between Virgil and Octavian which mirror the parallels between Pindar and his athletic victors. Before considering these points, however, it will be useful to review the evidence that Wilkinson adduced in favor of Pindaric influence.

# I

According to Wilkinson, Virgil's proem reformulates a cluster of characteristically Pindaric themes and images, including the architectural metaphor for song, warding off envy in an epinician context, the path of song, the chariot of song, and the use of precious building-materials.<sup>12</sup> These images do occur in the work of other poets, but their concentration in both Pindar and Virgil's proem strongly suggests a direct connection between the two. These points of comparison could be elaborated in some detail, but examination of a single ode, *Olympian* 6, illustrates not only that we can find individual Pindaric precedents for Virgil's imagery, but also that the particular motifs found in the proem were already closely interconnected in Pindar's own poetry.

<sup>11</sup> *Contra* Thomas 1988: *ad loc.*, it seems to me unlikely that Octavian had already celebrated his famous triple triumph of 29 B.C. by the time this proem was composed, since the proem mentions only two triumphs (3.32–33), and since the details are highly impressionistic, whereas in the *Aeneid* Virgil is very specific in saying that Octavian had celebrated a triple triumph (*Aen.* 8.714–715; cf. Suet. *Aug.* 22). For further views on the victories referred to, see Drew 1924: 201; Mynors 1988: *ad loc.*

<sup>12</sup> Wilkinson 1969, 1970.

*Olympian* 6 begins with a description of a splendid hall with golden pillars and a shining facade:

χρυσέας ὑποστάσαντες εὐτειχεῖ προθύρῳ θαλάμου  
κίονας ὥς ὅτε θαπτὸν μέγαρον  
πάξομεν· ἀρχομένου δ' ἔργου πρόσωπον  
χρὴ θέμεν τηλαυγές. (Pind. *Ol.* 6.1–4)

This μέγαρον clearly stands for the glorious song in which Pindar will commemorate the victor, whom he specifically calls an “Olympic victor,” Ὀλυμπιονίκας (*Ol.* 6.4). Pindar’s columns are golden (χρυσέας, 1), his μέγαρον is θαπτὸν (2), and its πρόσωπον is τηλαυγές (3–4). Similarly, Virgil imagines his future *Aeneid* in terms of a finely-wrought architectural monument, a *templum de marmore* (13); its doors show, in scenes of gold and ivory, the arms of victorious Quirinus (*ex auro solidoque elephanto . . . victorisque arma Quirini*, 26–27).<sup>13</sup> Thomas has argued that Pindar’s architectural metaphors are too brief to be considered legitimate parallels for Virgil’s elaborate treatment of the image, but there is no reason why Virgil could not have elaborated an image that was already present, albeit in smaller scope, in Pindar.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, Virgil’s architectural motif occurs in the context of a number of other familiar Pindaric images which cannot be explained by reference to Callimachus.

Pindar calls the citizens of Syracuse ἀφθόνων in their praise (*Ol.* 6.7), an epithet which differentiates them from those who are envious of the victor (φθονεόντων, *Ol.* 6.74). Pindar’s widespread use of the topos “malicious envy” constitutes a precedent for Virgil’s *Invidia infelix* (3.37).<sup>15</sup> Like Pindar, Virgil says that his poetic prowess, which he displays in his proem’s magnificent symbolic temple, will ward off envy from both his own and Octavian’s achievements. The image of Envy does occur in Callimachus’ poetry too (*Hymn* 2.105–112; *Aetia* fr. 1.17; cf. fr. 384.58 Pf.), but it is used very differently. As Newman (1986b: 130) has suggested, “What had in Alexandria and in the Preface to the *Aetia* been a personal quarrel between the poet and his detractors now acquires larger significance when that poet is the eulogist of Roman greatness. Identified with the patron he now serves . . ., he is able to think of his *invidia* as a threat to something bigger, and what threatens that something bigger in turn threatens him.” This conception of Virgil’s use of the motif is close to that found in Pindar, who is concerned to ward off envy from the victor, the victory celebration, and

<sup>13</sup>Using precious metals to honor a victor symbolically is a standard Pindaric conceit: cf. *Nem.* 4.81; 7.77–79; Wilkinson 1970: 288–289.

<sup>14</sup>Thomas 1983: 97. Thomas argues that Virgil’s architectural motif is Callimachean, but the Callimachean passages which Thomas cites are not really parallels to the Virgilian passage, since they are too fragmentary to give the required sense. Still, Callim. fr. 118 Pf. does mention a temple, and it may be used in a metapoetic way, but the concentration of images seems to me to tell in favor of Pindar’s influence.

<sup>15</sup>For *phthonos* and *aphthonos* in Pindar, see Bundy 1986: Index s.v. *phthonos* along with the important recent discussion of Bulman 1992: esp. 15–36.

himself. Virgil is "shaking off" Callimachus' leptotic, literary treatment of envy, even as he alludes to it, in favor of Pindar's civic and monumentalizing use of the motif.

After praising the victor further through the conventional means of mythology, Pindar then employs another well-known epinician image, that of the chariot of song: "But now it is high time, O Phintis, for you to yoke me the sturdy mules with all good speed, so that we may mount the car in the clear and open path" (*Ol.* 6.22–24, tr. Sandys [adapted]). Pindar exploits a parallelism between his own chariot of song and the chariot driven by the victor in the games, suggesting that he will be as successful in driving the chariot of song as the victor has been in his own race.<sup>16</sup> Pindar's chariot is, characteristically, driven along a metaphorical "path of song."<sup>17</sup> Both the chariot and the path of song play a prominent role in Virgil's proem (3.8, 18). The ode unites a variety of standard Pindaric motifs in order to enhance its praise of the athletic victor. Individually each of these motifs is common enough throughout Greek and Latin literature that the presence of one or two in Virgil's proem would not be telling. But the combination of motifs in a passage of such limited scope strongly suggests Pindaric influence in the proem.

## II

For the present paper, the most important of Wilkinson's observations is that the proem evokes a parallelism between Virgil and Octavian which recalls the Pindaric parallels between poet and victor. The motif of setting poetic victory alongside the athletic, or in Virgil's case military, victories of the *laudandus* is a quintessential feature of Pindaric epinician; so far as we know, it occurs nowhere in the poetry of Callimachus.<sup>18</sup> Wilkinson's observation can be developed at

<sup>16</sup>For another combination of these motifs in Pindar, see *Pythian* 6, which praises Xenocrates of Acragas for a chariot victory, employing the image of a "treasure-house" of song; for other chariot motifs in Pindar see *Ol.* 9.81; *Pyth.* 4.247–248; *Isthm.* 2.2; with Simpson 1969: 437–473. Callimachus celebrates chariot victories in two of his epinician poems (*Victoria Berenices*, *Victoria Sosibii*), but at least as far as we can tell does not there use the image of the chariot of song, perhaps because that would be too "monumentalizing" for his purposes. *Aetia* fr. 1.27 does of course mention a chariot of song, but Callimachus' chariot is there explicitly rendered inappropriate to the celebration on a grand scale of a global military triumph. For Virgil's use of the motif, see section III.

<sup>17</sup>For Pindar's use of the "path of song" metaphor as an image of his poetic celebration of athletic skill, see, e.g., *Ol.* 1.110; *Nem.* 6.45–49; *Paean* 9.4; with Becker 1937; Wilkinson 1970: 288; Steiner 1986: 76–86; Buchheit 1972: 153–154.

<sup>18</sup>For Pindar's characteristic analogy between his own poetic victory and prowess, and those of the athletic victor, see, e.g., *Ol.* 6.22, 8.54, 13.93–95; *Nem.* 4.93–96, 5.19–20, 7.71; with Lefkowitz 1976 and Steiner 1986. Although Thomas is right to say that "Pindaric" and "epinician" are not "interchangeable terms" (1988: *ad* 3.7–8), there seems to be every reason in this particular case to see a reference to epinician that is peculiarly Pindaric. Again we are hampered by not having enough Callimachean poetry to make well-founded claims about his epinician practices, but none of his extant epinicians exploit the parallelism between poet and victor that we see in both Pindar and Virgil. This

a much deeper level, however, if we focus on the key terms *via* and *victor* as used both in this proem and in the programmatic concluding lines of *Georgic* 4 (4.559–566). These two passages should be read together because Virgil employs these passages to make explicit comments about his poetic program.

At the end of the *Georgics*, Virgil creates a contrast between himself and Octavian in order to distance his early and middle poetic compositions from the type of poetic work he sees as appropriate to a thunderous military conqueror.<sup>19</sup> Describing Octavian's military victories, he writes that Octavian *victorque volentis / per populos dat iura viamque adfectat Olympo* (4.561–562). By contrast, Virgil is described as *studiis florentem ignobilis oti* (4.564). While Octavian has been out conquering the world, Virgil has been idly sitting at home composing light, refined poetry.

But Virgil is not always the Alexandrian poet of idleness and contemptible ease; in the proem to *Georgic* 3, he adopts a poetic stance that allows him to identify fully with the victories-in-arms won by Caesar. Alluding to Ennius, Virgil says that he wants to fly on the lips of men, and to soar above his fellows as a *victor* (3.9).<sup>20</sup> In the proem, in fact, both Virgil and Octavian are victorious in their different fields of activity (3.9, 17, 27). This parallelism is elaborated in lines that draw a close connection between the Virgil of *Georgic* 3 and the Octavian of *Georgic* 4. When Virgil describes the poetic composition that can pay suitable tribute to Octavian's victories, he says *temptanda via est, qua me quoque possim / tollere humo victorque virum volitare per ora* (3.8–9). This self-presentation is closely linked in language and spirit to the description of Octavian's activities at the end of *Georgic* 4. The verbal echoes *viam/via* and *victorquel/victorque*, as well as the image of rising aloft to the sky as a sign of greatness, suggest that Virgil connects the language and imagery of this proem with the conclusion of the entire poem in order to portray himself as achieving the same imposing and magnificent stature that Octavian has achieved through his military victories.<sup>21</sup> It is only by reaching a certain altitude of poetic grandeur that Virgil can fittingly commemorate the monumental victories of Octavian.

The image of the victorious poet is further developed through the physical attributes which Virgil imagines himself to bear: he carries the palm of victory (*Idumaeas . . . palmas*, 12), and wears the olive garland (*caput tonsae foliis ornatus*

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may be connected to the different poetic stance occupied by Callimachus as epinician poet, which Fuhrer (1993: 84) has described as being that of a "bystander," and to the fact that the poet is often not speaking in his own voice in this poetry.

<sup>19</sup>On the importance of the image of "thundering," see Callim. *Aetia* fr. 1.19, which distances Callimachean poetry from Virgil's description of Octavian (*fulminat*, 4.56) and, if my argument is correct, also from the proem to *Georgic* 3, where Virgil envisions his own poetry as celebrating Octavian's thunderous victories.

<sup>20</sup>As a further strand in this passage's complex allusiveness, it is useful to note that these lines echo Lucretius' praise of Epicurus and Ennius in *DRN* 1.62–79 and 117–119.

<sup>21</sup>At *Ol.* 1.115 Pindar himself also uses the image of "treading on high" (ὕψοῦ . . . πατεῖν) as a sign of athletic (and perhaps political) greatness.

*olivae*, 21) that athletic victors typically wore (cf. Pind. *Ol.* 3.13, 4.11). Pindar himself also dons the celebratory garlands of victory at *Isthmian* 7.39: ἀείσομαι χαίταν στεφάνοισιν ἄρμόζων.<sup>22</sup> Just as Virgil claims the outward emblems of victory for himself, he also blazes a similar *via* to the heavens as Octavian. Virgil's path of song is sufficiently magnificent to celebrate the greatness of Octavian's path to Olympus. The connections forged by the repeated language of *victor* and *via*, and the parallelism between Virgil and Octavian on both counts, create a celebratory atmosphere in which the greatness of both poet and victor are commemorated. This parallelism between *laudator* and *laudandus* recalls the encomiastic relationships that Pindar typically established with his own honorands. Virgil calls attention to this parallelism by creating linguistic parallels in two explicitly programmatic sections of his poem.

The next four lines (3.10–13) elaborate Virgil's reformulation of Pindaric themes and images and make oblique reference to Pindar's native city Thebes, even as they call to mind two other poetic predecessors, Hesiod and Callimachus. Virgil claims for himself, *primus . . . Aonio rediens deducam vertice Musas* (10–11). The complexity of Virgil's allusions throughout the proem is concisely illustrated in his use of the term *Aonio*. Mynors has rejected the equation of *Aonio* and Hesiod on the grounds that it would not make sense in context: Virgil's future poem, at least as depicted in this proem, has little to do with Hesiod's style of poetry. But this interpretive stance is too rigid to do justice to the richness of Virgil's terminology. Given the multiple adaptations of Hesiod throughout the first two books, it is likely that *Aonio* would call to mind that Boeotian poet. Moreover, Virgil also seems to be referring to Callimachus: the adjective *Aonius* is not found with certainty before Callimachus, who does use it once (fr. 572 Pf.). Finally, as a crowning touch, although *vertice* of course suggests Helicon, *Aonius* can also mean "Theban."<sup>23</sup> It is likely that Virgil is programmatically referring to Pindar by referring to Pindar's own fatherland. Through using this multiply significant term, Virgil pays homage to both Hesiod and Callimachus, while intimating, through specific use of geographical language, that he is adapting Pindaric epinician to a Roman triumphal context.

In bringing Pindar back to Rome, Virgil imagines himself not only as a victor, but also as a poetic *triumphator*: *deducam* pointedly refers to bringing home spoils

<sup>22</sup>For Virgil as victor, see Perkell 1989: 61–63. It is striking that in *Isthm.* 7.24–36, just before putting on his celebratory garlands, Pindar envisions the pancratiast Strepsiades as allotting a share in his victory-crown to his uncle, who had died in battle while attempting to protect his fatherland (27). Virgil's *laudandus* Octavian had of course achieved military rather than athletic success, but Pindar's treatment of martial themes in an epinician context provides a precedent for the link between warfare and athletic encomium which Virgil adapted for his own poetic purposes.

<sup>23</sup>*OLD* s.v. *Aonius*, 1b; *TLL* s.v. *Aonius* 1. Buchheit (1972: 158) has also remarked that Virgil is referring to Pindar in this passage, but has not confirmed this point by reference to the term *Aonius*, which is strong evidence for a Pindaric connection.

and captives in a military triumph.<sup>24</sup> At the same time, after the programmatic use of *deductum* at *Eclouge* 6.5, it is likely that educated Roman readers would perceive an allusion to Hellenistic literary controversies whenever the verb appeared.<sup>25</sup> This term, too, offers a compact image of the poetic complexities of the proem as a whole. Virgil alludes to Callimachean poetics while asserting and extending the mood of Pindaric triumphalism. Virgil repeats his boast of primacy,<sup>26</sup> temporal and otherwise, in lines 12–13, *primus Idumaeas referam . . . palmas . . . templum de marmore ponam* (12–13), lines which refer equally to the triumphal procession of foreign peoples and goods, to the tradition of building a temple as thank-offering after a military triumph,<sup>27</sup> and to Pindar's use of the architectural metaphor for song.<sup>28</sup> Virgil emphasizes that he is returning to Rome with the spoils of poetic warfare, viz. the Pindaric Muses, in his train.

The idea of victorious return plays a significant role in the parallelism that Virgil draws between himself and Octavian. Like Virgil, Octavian is also bringing back to Rome the spoils of victory, which are represented in Virgil's description of the temple (3.30–33), and which show that Octavian's triumphal procession into Rome is anxiously awaited.<sup>29</sup> Although critics have sometimes recognized elements of the convergence of epinician and triumphal themes in the proem, one of the most important elements of Virgil's adaptation of epinician to his triumphal context has hitherto been neglected. That is the theme of return to one's homeland after an athletic victory or a successful military campaign.<sup>30</sup> Recent Pindaric scholarship has demonstrated the importance of the victor's *nostos* in Pindaric epinician.<sup>31</sup> As Leslie Kurke has argued in reference to Pindar's poetry, "the loop of *nostos* is a recurrent image in the epinikia, for by this pattern the poet 'brings the victory home'."<sup>32</sup> At the end of *Nemean* 2, for example, which celebrates the victory of Timodemus of Acharnae in the pancratium, Pindar says,

<sup>24</sup>For the triumphal connotations of *deducere* see, e.g., Livy 28.32.7: *quos secum in patriam ad meritum triumphum deducere velit*; Horace *Odes* 1.37.31–32.

<sup>25</sup>Cf. Hofmann 1985: 223–241 for the importance of *carmen deductum* in Ovid. For the sake of convenience, I list the uses of *deducere* in Virgil: *Eclouges* 6.5, 6.71, 8.69; *Georgics* 1.114, 1.255, 1.269, 3.11, 3.122; *Aeneid* 2.800, 3.71, 4.398, 6.397, 10.618.

<sup>26</sup>Newman 1986a: 179–180 has noted that "*primus*-language" appears also in Pindar (*Pyth.* 4.248).

<sup>27</sup>See Mynors 1988: *ad loc.*; Drew 1924.

<sup>28</sup>See *Ol.* 6.1–4; *Pyth.* 3.113, 6.5–18, 7.3; cf. *Pyth.* 3.113; with Wilkinson 1970: 288 and Buchheit 1972: 153–154; and now Instone 1996: 24.

<sup>29</sup>As Fairclough (1986: 157, n. 2) remarks, "The rivers and mountains (e.g., the Niphates) of conquered people were often represented in triumphal processions."

<sup>30</sup>For another example of Augustan *reditus*, cf. Horace *Odes* 3.14, and also *Odes* 4.2.17, which implicitly compares Augustan military and Pindaric athletic *reditus*, with Harrison 1995: 113–118. Buchheit (1972: 155) briefly mentions the idea of return, but does not develop it. Again, the idea of returning home does occur in Callimachus, but is not there "thematized" as an issue important to Callimachus' poetics, e.g., Callim. fr. 384.4–5 Pf.; *SH* 254–269 *passim*. This poses a sharp contrast with the use of the return-theme in both Pindar and, I think, Virgil's proem; for *nostos* and reintegration in Pindar see Crotty 1982; Kurke 1991.

<sup>31</sup>See Slater 1984 and Kurke 1991.

<sup>32</sup>Kurke 1991: 38; cf. also Instone 1996: 151, 159; *Pyth.* 9.75.



τόν, ὃ πολῖται, κωμάξατε Τιμοδήμῳ σὺν εὐκλείῃ νόστῳ (24).<sup>33</sup> As Kurke has emphasized, the victor's return to his *oikos* and to his *polis* is significant because it enables the victor to bring home glory as an adornment for both his family and his city. As in Virgil's case (3.22–23), both Pindar and Bacchylides adopt the point of view of someone accompanying the triumphal procession rather than that of someone welcoming the victor upon his return.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, as Slater argues, Pindar's processions sometimes make their way to an altar or a temple for the sake of dedication; this is of course comparable to the procession to Virgil's imagined temple (3.21–23).<sup>35</sup> Finally, Pindar's *epinikia* mention the sacrifice of oxen as a way to celebrate and commemorate athletic victory (e.g., *Ol.* 5.4–6), which is a precedent for the slaughter of steers that Virgil himself supervises (3.23).

Virgil thus reformulates the theme of return to one's homeland and includes details of Pindaric triumphal processions, but he also strengthens the parallelism between poet and victor by emphasizing his own, as well as Octavian's, victorious return to Rome. In the case of *Georgic* 3, both Virgil and Octavian are returning home triumphantly and victoriously (3.9, 11, 17, 27), which is appropriate to the triumphal and epinician motifs that structure this proem. Virgil's return to Italy represents a Roman victory over Greek poetry, and this victory paves the way for a commemoration of Octavian's military victories over the peoples of the East. Virgil's own return is described in the triumphal terms of bringing back the Muses from Greece and Idumaeian palms from the East:

*primus ego in patriam mecum, modo vita supersit,  
Aonio rediens deducam vertice Musas;  
primus Idumaeas referam tibi, Mantua, palmas.*

(*Georgics* 3.10–12)

Michael Putnam has argued that “we are reading a *Works and Days* Latinized from the Greek but we are witnessing a brilliant triumph over Hesiod as well.”<sup>36</sup> True, we are witnessing a brilliant triumph, but Virgil is triumphing over Pindar as well as Hesiod, and bringing Pindar's Muses back to his fatherland (*patriam*) for the sake of publicly celebrating Octavian's military triumphs. Like Pindar, Virgil conceives his poetic triumph to be at once personal and public. Octavian's return to Rome is commemorated in the foundation of a temple in his honor (16), which is the standard culmination of a successful military campaign.<sup>37</sup> This passage surely looks to the close connection between the triple triumph of 29 B.C. and Augustus' temple of Palatine Apollo (cf. *Aen.* 8.675–728).<sup>38</sup> Hence the passage is meant to foreshadow Octavian's victorious return to Rome, and to

<sup>33</sup> See also *Nem.* 3.24; *Nem.* 4.76–77; *Nem.* 11.24–26; with Kurke 1991: 15–61.

<sup>34</sup> Slater 1984: 243, n. 9.

<sup>35</sup> Slater 1984: 245, n. 24, citing *Ol.* 9.111–112, *Pyth.* 11.1–10.

<sup>36</sup> Putnam 1979: 167.

<sup>37</sup> See Mynors 1988: *ad loc.*, and, for further discussion of the temple motif, see Buchheit 1972: 150–151 on *Ol.* 6 and *Pyth.* 7.

<sup>38</sup> See Drew 1924: 197–198; Wilkinson 1969: 169–170; Mynors 1988: *ad loc.*

represent Octavian's victories as a victory for the entire Roman state. Octavian's *nostos*, like those of Pindar's athletic victors, is accompanied by an encomiastic celebration that befits the greatness of his accomplishments and, like Virgil's own return, Octavian's *nostos* brings with it glory for Rome as a whole.

## III

Let me conclude by suggesting, admittedly in a more speculative way, that the parallelism between Virgil and Octavian has a more general thematic significance which can be uncovered by looking more carefully at the chariot motif. At the end of the first book of the *Georgics*, the Euphrates is stirring up war (*movet Euphrates . . . bellum*, 1.509); Mars rages wantonly; and the whole world is out of control (1.510–514). In order to convey the extent of this disturbance of order, Virgil uses the image of an uncontrollable chariot whose driver tugs at his reins in vain:

*ut cum carceribus sese effudere quadrigae,  
addunt in spatia, et frustra retinacula tendens  
fertur equis auriga neque audit currus habenas.*

(*Georgics* 1.512–514)

In context Virgil is expressing hopes that Octavian will take control of the reins of state, and put an end to the civic disruption that had plagued Roman politics throughout the century (1.500–502, 505–511). Can anything further be said about this chariot in connection with Virgil's chariot of song in the proem to *Georgic* 3?

I note first that in contrast to the end of *Georgic* 1, Octavian "thunders beside the Euphrates" (4.561) at the end of *Georgic* 4, like Jupiter, and emerges victorious over Rome's enemies in the East.<sup>39</sup> By the end of the poem, Octavian is fully in control of the Roman empire, and is poised to enter Rome as a triumphal victor. The proem to Book 3 celebrates Octavian's victories and establishment of order, and in terms of its imagery prepares for Octavian's triumphal entry into Rome. In order to commemorate these victories, Virgil refashions the chariot motif for celebratory purposes, and imagines himself driving a hundred four-horse chariots in procession (3.17–18). The uncontrollable chariot of state in Book 1 is transformed into Virgil's chariot of song in Book 3, which celebrates Octavian's newly-won control of the state.<sup>40</sup>

Driving horses, therefore, has important symbolic associations with Virgil's own poetry and with Octavian's military activities and leadership of the state. It is wrong to extrapolate excessively from Virgil's programmatic sections to his treatment of horses throughout Book 3, but it should be noted that the book is

<sup>39</sup>For the force of *fulminat*, which is always used of Jupiter elsewhere in the *Georgics*, see Thomas 1988: *ad loc.*

<sup>40</sup>I note additionally that the "metapoetic" chariot at the end of Book 2 (2.541–542), which prepares the reader for the chariot in the proem to Book 3, also contrasts with the first book's uncontrollable chariot.

punctuated by an emphasis on caution in dealing with both racehorses and war-chargers (cf. 3.8, 17–18, 44, 49–50, 72–94, 103–122, 179–208, 211, 250–254, 266–283, 463, 498–514). Virgil's treatment of horses culminates in the lengthy description of a *victor equus* (3.499) stricken by the plague (3.499–514). This description of devastation wrought by disease (*morbus*, 3.504) is at odds with the optimism of the proem, and Virgil's use of the term *victor* (3.499) pointedly contrasts with the celebratory use of the term *victor* in the proem. It may be suggested that the proem's mood of Pindaric triumphalism, represented by the Pindaric chariot of song, cannot be sustained if the horses that drive the chariot of state are forced to a halt by disease (*morbus*, 3.504), especially if that disease implies civic, rather than simply physical, decay.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Among the many examples of *morbus* used metaphorically to describe a civic "contagion," see Livy 24.2.8; 24.29.3. For another Virgilian community wracked by disease, see *Georgic* 4.252, where it is Aristaeus' bees who are destroyed by *morbus*. This community of bees has of course been interpreted as symbolizing the Roman state: see Griffin 1979.

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