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# The Journey as Device for Structuring Poetic Knowledge: A Poetic Method in Pindar's Epinicia

## Summary

This paper analyzes the usage of the journey (incl. the different modes of moving: going, sailing, jumping, flying) as a metaphor or image for poetry in Pindar's epinician odes. It suggests that especially the notorious problems of composition and unity in some Pindaric songs can be if not solved but at least softened by taking more seriously the metaphor of the song as path and the poet as traveler. This is exemplified by a reading of *Nem.* 9, an ode in which the journey from the place of victory to the home of the victor serves as an instrument in generating the poem's unity. The image of the poem as journey or path shapes also the concept of the 'materiality' of Pindaric poetry in contrast to later Greek literature where the book determines the concept.

Keywords: Pindar; Epinician; path; journey; ode as journey; 'Abbruchsformel'

Der Beitrag analysiert den Gebrauch der Reise (einschließlich der verschiedenen Modi von Bewegung: Gehen, Segeln, Springen, Fliegen) als Metapher oder Bild für Poesie in Pindars Epinikien. Er schlägt vor, dass bestimmte Probleme der Komposition und Einheit Pindarischer Lieder leichter lösbar erscheinen, wenn man Pindars Metaphern des Liedes als Weg und des Dichters als Reisenden ernst nimmt. Eine Interpretation von *Nem.* 9 soll dies veranschaulichen; hier wird die Reise vom Ort des Sieges zur Heimat des Siegers zum Instrument, dem Gedicht Einheit zu verleihen. Das Bild vom Gedicht als Weg prägt zudem das Konzept, in dem sich die ‚Materialität‘ Pindarischer Poesie versteht, im Gegensatz zum Konzept des Buches, das die spätere griechische Literatur prägt.

Keywords: Pindar; Epinikion; Weg; Reise; Gedicht als Reise; Abbruchsformel

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Mannigfach begegnet bei Pindar die merkwürdige Vorstellung, dass das Lied dem Dichter ein Weg ist, den er dichtend geht. Many times, the strange notion appears in Pindar that the song is a path for the poet, which he walks while versing.

— Otfried Becker

Starting from this old observation by O. Becker,<sup>1</sup> this contribution focuses on the main topic of this book: the journey. How Pindar uses the ‘path’ as motif – as Becker observes – can be seen as an image or – in its extended form – as a metaphor. It would indeed be a dramatic understatement if one were to state that the importance of the metaphor<sup>2</sup> in Pindar’s poetic work has not yet been sufficiently researched. The opposite is true: the analysis of exactly this literary device is a recurring topic in Pindar research. In recent years alone the following books were published: G. Patten issued *Pindar’s Metaphors: A Study of Rhetoric and Meaning* in 2009; C. Lattmann *Das Gleiche im Verschiedenen. Metaphern des Sports und Lob des Siegers in Pindars Epinikien* in 2010; and Z. Adorjáni’s *Auge und Sehen in Pindars Dichtung* dates to 2011. Finally, in 2015, B. Maslov added *Pindar and the Emergence of Literature*, which deals thoroughly with “image, metaphor, concept: the semantics of the poetic language”<sup>3</sup> This small list could be significantly extended by more Pindar research from the last 50 years: for instance, D. Steiner’s *The crown of song: Metaphor in Pindar* published in 1986. The extensive literature reports by D. Gerber and, recently, A. Neumann-Hartmann list many works dedicated to metaphor or – more generally – the image in Pindar’s poetry.<sup>4</sup>

Thus, the metaphor seems to be, if published research is the measure, arguably the central literary device of Pindaric poetry, through which diverse thematic areas of the epinicia can be expressed: sport and victory,<sup>5</sup> the symposium,<sup>6</sup> the effect of song, and finally song itself. Equally, those thematic areas can themselves be used as metaphors for other things. It seems Pindar plays virtuously with ‘tenor’ and ‘vehicle’.

On an abstract-analytical level this shows nothing less than a significant prevalence of this observation in comparison to the concept in Pindaric works. This prevalence is much clearer than in the works of other authors, at least within Greek poetic literature, in which one of the most characteristic features is that potentially general themes are treated in special cases. Does Pindar ‘think in images’?<sup>7</sup> – this could be asked with reference to a former study.

Without delving too deeply into the complex contemporary discussion regarding metaphor, we can differentiate two functions of metaphor in ancient literature. On the

1 Becker 1937, 68.

2 Explaining ‘metaphor’ would need its own book. For the ancient concepts see Lau 2006.

3 Maslov 2015, 117–245.

4 Gerber 1989; Gerber 1990; Neumann-Hartmann 2010.

5 Lattmann 2010.

6 Athanassaki 2016.

7 In reference to the title of Bernard 1963.

one hand, it can be used to make ‘unfamiliar things’ familiar; with this cognitive acquisition metaphor fulfills one of the fundamental functions of language. On the other hand, metaphor can also make ‘familiar things’ unfamiliar. With Russian formalism in mind, one could name the latter function ‘defamiliarization.’<sup>8</sup> Here we find a basic condition for the ‘poeticness’ or ‘literatureness’ of a text.

Modern metaphor theory differentiates between ‘dead’ and ‘living’ metaphors; that is, whether or not the metaphoric content of a linguistic expression is still recognized as such in a speaker, listener, or reader community. The differentiation between dead and living metaphors is an empiric task – and hence, when dealing with ancient works without extant speaker communities, is difficult.<sup>9</sup>

Let’s return to the ‘poem as a journey’ in Pindar discussion. Becker has already noted that the basis for the Pindaric image is apparently an old notion of the speech as a journey.<sup>10</sup> This notion also appears in the Homeric epics. Thus, Nestor can preface his speech with the words ἐξείπω καὶ πάντα διίξομαι (*Il.* 9.61), “I will speak forth and walk through everything”. The poet (or singer) can hence be imagined moving too.

Thus, Odysseus asked the Phaeacian singer Demodocus to switch from one topic or theme in his speech to another, ἀλλ’ ἄγε δὴ μετάβηθι καὶ ἔπαιον ἄεισον (*Od.* 8.492), “But now, walk over [=switch] and sing about the construction of the horse.” Demodocus fulfills the request and thus the Epic continues, ... ὁ δ’ ὀρμηθεὶς θεοῦ ἤρχετο (*Od.* 8.499), “he [Demodocus], moved by the god, began”.<sup>11</sup> In the same way it can be said of singers like Demodocus that the Muse has taught them the way (= the singing), οὔμας Μοῦσ’ ἐδίδαξε (*Od.* 8.481).

The fact that we find in Hesiod or in the Homeric hymns similar equating of song and way,<sup>12</sup> and, additionally, the fact that the word ‘proem’, which refers to the opening part of a poetic work and is in this function attested in poetry since the fifth century,<sup>13</sup> contains the meaning ‘pre-way’, indicates with some certainty that the notion that poetry is a journey was known in older Greek poetic works.

In 1935, K. Meuli had suggested in his still-relevant article ‘Skythika’ that the origin stems from the ecstatic netherworld journeys of shaman singers (whose traces are still detectable in the traditions around Musaios, Epimenides, or Aristeas), where the singer literally traveled to the places where the reported events happened: “Wir erschließen also für den griechischen ἀοιδός, und nicht nur für den Propheten und Apokalyptiker,

8 Maslov 2015, 10, in reference to Shklovsky and Jakobson in note 23.

9 Dornseiff 1921, 45, said in a pointed remark: “Welche Gewähr hat man dafür, dass in einem Ausdruck das ursprüngliche Bild noch gefühlt wird, und dass er nicht schon Scheidemünze der Umgangs- oder Dichtersprache geworden ist?”

10 Becker 1937, 68–70.

11 See Becker 1937, 60 n. 52.

12 See for instance *Erga* 659, *Hymn to Hermes*. 451, to this in general Becker 1937, 69.

13 See for instance Pind. *Pyth.* 1.4; *Nem.* 2.3; Aesch. *Ag.* 1354. See also Meuli 1935, 172 n. 3.

ein ekstatisches Erlebnis ganz ähnlicher Art wie beim Schamanen.“ “We attest, thus, for the Greek ἰσοδόξ and not only for the prophet and apocalyptic an ecstatic experience similar in nature to the shaman.”<sup>14</sup>

Of course, this would just mean that only one particular type of poetry, the form that leads to the hexametric epics of the historic period, is connected to the concept of journey or travel.<sup>15</sup> In addition, Meuli’s argument has a ‘flaw’: there is a difference between whether a poem is perceived as travel, in which the poem describes what is encountered during the travel, or as having traveled to a destination, and then reporting what happens at that destination (Meuli’s point). More poignantly formulated, it does not follow that the notion of travel would be the characteristic property of a poem, when the very essence of traveling is missing. Meuli’s argument has, thus, not been followed much in literature.<sup>16</sup>

If we cannot trace the concept of a song as a path or journey to the narrative epic or the singer shamans, we must look to other forms of poetry for the roots of this concept. One possible starting point is the remark by H. Fränkel, which can be found – *nota bene* – in the register of his book *Dichtung und Philosophie des frühen Griechentums*: “das Lied ‘existiert’ also nicht nur, sondern es ‘geschieht,’ entsprechend dem archaischen Stil eines kontinuierlichen Ablaufs in mannigfachen Figuren [...]” “[T]he poem does not only ‘exist,’ but it ‘happens’ according to the archaic style of a continuous sequence in various figures [...]”<sup>17</sup> If, thus, the archaic Greek poetry, that is, specifically the melic poetry, implicates a ‘happening’ and thus agency<sup>18</sup> that is expressed in the text, it stands to reason that we would also see agency in the references to walking a path. Here, the observations of this article seem to accord with the so-called pragmatic Pindar-interpretations, especially the Italian Pindar research since the 1970s that demands we take into account “gli aspetti situazionali ed extralinguistici della ‘performance’ della lirica pindarica”, “the situational and extra-linguist aspects of ‘performance’ in Pindaric lyric.”<sup>19</sup> In this tradition is the study by E. Krummen that analyzes *Isthmian 4* and *Pythian 5* in the context of Theban, or Cyrenic, festival proceedings.<sup>20</sup> But this argument will not be pursued in what follows; even if we can see considerable parts of the Pindaric composition in the context of ritual walking, processions (κῶμοι), or symposia, we can rarely attest based on the individual texts alone that they are referring to such happenings. Can we really conclude – as did Krummen<sup>21</sup> – from *Nem. 2.24–25* that this song was shown at a komos?

In the *Nemee* we find the following:

14 Meuli 1935, 172–173, quotation 173.

15 See Meuli 1935, 172.

16 Cf., for instance, the criticism, albeit to other points, by Becker 1937, 69–70, n. 55.

17 Fränkel 1969, 587 s. v. Chorlyrik, allgemein.

18 Cf. for instance the *verba visendi* in Alkman Frg. 1

(PMG): V. 40: ὄρω, V. 50: ἦ οὐχ ὄρηται; – here the seeing of the speaker, or rather the prompting of the recipient to see, is expressed.

19 See Cingano 1979, 169.

20 Krummen 1990.

21 Krummen 1990, 276.

... τόν, ὃ πολῖται, κωμάξατε Τιμοδήμωι σὺν εὐκλεί νόστωι·  
 ἀδυμελεῖ δ' ἐξάρχετε φωνῶι.

For him [sc. Zeus], oh citizens, arrange a procession, for Timodemos and his glorious return, and start with a sweet-sounding voice.<sup>22</sup>

With this double imperative the song concludes, which means that the text imagines an apostrophized audience, the citizens of Acharnae, to organize a procession in celebration of the victory when the victorious Timodemos returns (an exact date is not given; it is an indefinite point in time in the future). In addition, the brevity of the poem indicates that the song occurred where the competition was taking place; or, to reference the fortunate phrase, which Thomas Gelzer derived from Bacchylides (2.11), the song was a Μοῦσα ἀθύρηνος.<sup>23</sup> Thus, *Nem.* 2 simply anticipates a potential event in the future; the reference to 'komos' alone does not indicate that the poem took place during such an event. We are, then, left with the text and what happens in the text alone – even if one may assume that the Pindaric songs were not just intended for reading. In the text we find – and this may be seen as one of the accomplishments or attractive aspects of Pindaric lyric – a wide range of concepts (I will avoid categorization into 'metaphors' or 'images' here) about producing poetry and the poet.<sup>24</sup>

Pindar can see his songs as prayers (*Ol.* 12.1: λίσσομαι; 14.5: εὔχομαι); they can be called 'nectar drink, gift of the Muses' (*Ol.* 7.7: νέκταρ χυτόν, Μοισᾶν δόσιν), or even a kind of 'letter of the Muses' (*Ol.* 6.91: σκυτάλα Μοισᾶν). The range of representations for the entity 'voicing' the text (be it the poet or the choir) is similarly broad: the entity can become an archer and the song an arrow (*Ol.* 2.83; 9.5), or the entity is referred to as a javelin thrower and the song the javelin (*Ol.* 13.33; *Pyth.* 1.44); the poet can be compared to a cork boat floating on the ocean (*Pyth.* 2.80: ἀβάπτιστος εἶμι φελλὸς ὡς ὑπὲρ ἔρκος ἄλμας), signaling how easy the work is for him; or referred to as a long jumper (*Nem.* 5.20); finally, the song itself can even be compared to Phoenician goods sent across the ocean (*Pyth.* 2.67–68).<sup>25</sup>

If one analyzes the instances that present the song as a path and the entity speaking the song as a 'traveler,' a dichotomy becomes apparent that was not treated by Becker. For it is possible – *grosso modo* – to differentiate between a traveling choir, a procession or κῶμος, on the one hand, and a messenger bringing news on the other. While, as already suggested, the traveling choir hints at traditional processions at Greek festivals, the concept of the song being presented as narration by a messenger is somewhat different.

22 Pindar is quoted on the basis of the edition Maehler 1997 and Maehler 2001, the translations follow the excellent German translation of Dönt 1986.

23 See Gelzer 1985, further to Bacchylides in Hose 2000.

24 Still read-worthy: Gundert 1935.

25 Equally the speed at which a 'poetic message' travels: fast like a horse or a ship: *Ol.* 9.23–25.

*Archegetes* of staging the voice as messenger is Solon's opening of the Salamis elegy (Frg. 1 IEG<sup>2</sup>):

αὐτὸς κῆρυξ ἦλθον ἀφ' ἡμερτῆς Σαλαμῖνος  
κόσμον ἐπέων †ὠιδὴν ἀντ' ἀγορῆς θέμενος.

I came as a herald from lovely Salamis myself  
placing, on the market, artful words in a song, instead of a speech.

In Pindar<sup>26</sup> this is a common orchestration. For instance, we find in *Nem.* 4.73–74:

Θεανδρίδαισι δ' ἀεξιγυῖων ἀέθλων  
κάρυξ ἐτοῖμος ἔβαν.

Gladly I came for the Theandrides as herald of the contests, which strengthen  
the limbs.

Similarly, *Nem.* 6.57b–59 has:

[...] ἄγγελος ἔβαν,  
πέμπτον ἐπὶ εἴκοσι τοῦτο γαρύων  
εὐχος [...].

I come as messenger,  
to announce this twenty-fifth victory.

Aside from κῆρυξ<sup>27</sup> and ἄγγελος, the text further has μάρτυς – witness (Frg. 94b, 38–39) – or τιμάρορος – a person honoring somebody (*Ol.* 9.83–84) – as metaphors for the function of the (vaunting) poet or their words.<sup>28</sup> The second type, that of a choir that is traveling or at least conducting a procession, does not occur less frequently than the first type. The κῶμος or rather the verb κωμάζειν is part of Pindar's core vocabulary.<sup>29</sup> Admittedly, this, often with the phrase τόνδε κῶμον,<sup>30</sup> without further connotation, refers to the choir singing the song; a 'journey' is not implicit. That being said, there are of course further, more interesting connections. One of those we find in *Nem.* 9, which will be analyzed more thoroughly in what follows. This song has not been praised much by recent scholarship. Th. Poiss, who has written – aside from B. K. Braswell – the most

26 See the collection in Nünlist 1998, 230–232.

27 Compare Pindar *Diib.* Frg. 2.23–24: ἐμὲ δ' ἐξάιρετον  
κάρυκα σοφῶν ἐπέων Μοῖσ' ἀνέστας' Ἑλλάδι.

28 Furthermore, the poet can be thought as an 'eagle'; that is, a fast-flying entity: *Nem.* 5.21; 3.80–81  
(similarly *Ol.* 2.86–88 and Bakchylides 5.16–38).

Annamaria Peri pointed me also to the specifically Pindaric technique to also combine typologies of traveling (so in *Ol.* 9.23–25, *Pyth.* 11.38–40, *Nem.* 6.53–57).

29 See the evidence in Slater 1969, 296–297.

30 *Ol.* 4.9; 8.10; 14.16; *Pyth.* 5.22.

thorough analysis of this work, has called the song Pindar's "most average";<sup>31</sup> indeed, it contains all typical elements of an epinicion: stating the occasion, mythos, gnomic reflection, and praise of the victor and his homeland.<sup>32</sup> Yet, as Poiss argues, the connection between those parts is not obvious: "zahlreiche Topoi, ein Bündel schwer zu funktionalisierender Wort- und Themenbezüge und ein verunglückter Mythos." "[V]arious topoi, a bundle of hardly functionalizable word and topic relations, and an unsuccessful mythos."<sup>33</sup>

It would, hence, be a stretch to interpret *Nem.* 9 as a Pindaric masterpiece. Yet, the concept of the journey in this text is noteworthy: for instance, *Nem.* 9 (possibly written in 474 BC to honor Chromios of Aitnai's victory in the chariot race) starts as follows:

Κωμάσομεν παρ' Ἀπόλλωνος Σικυωνόθε, Μοῖσαι,  
τὰν νεοκτίσταν ἐς Αἴτναν, ἔνθ' ἀναπεπταμέναι  
ξείνων νενίκανται θύραι,  
ὄλβιον ἐς Χρομίου δῶμ'.

We shall organize a procession, o Muses, of Apollo from Sicyon  
to the newly founded Aitnai, where open  
doors cannot take in more guests,  
to the blessed house of Chromios. (v. 1–3)

This song celebrates, as indicated by the reference to Apollo and Sicyon and observed by the scholion *ad loc.*<sup>34</sup> for this and the two following songs, a victory not at the Nemean games, but at the so-called Pythian games at Sicyon.<sup>35</sup> This is, for this analysis, of importance, as it begins with the request<sup>36</sup> to start a procession, for which the origin and destination are also given: Σικυωνόθε ... τὰν νεοκτίσταν ἐς Αἴτναν. The length of the song (11 stanzas with a total of 55 verses) indicates that it is an epinicion that is imagined to be recited not at the place of the competition, but the home city of the victor; that is, Aitnai. The beginning of the song, however, in its combination of hortative and adverb of place – 'from Sicyon' – gives the impression that during the first verses the whereabouts of the speaker/singer is the place of competition. The song itself, thus, is an – imaginary – journey to the destination.

The epinicion can be divided in five parts.<sup>37</sup> The first part (ll.1–10) can be called prologue; I will discuss it in due course. The second part (ll.11–27) narrates the mythos

31 Poiss 1993, 29.

32 Braswell 1998, XI.

33 Poiss 1993, 72–74.

34 *Schol. Nem.* 9 (ed. Drachmann 1927, 149–150): ... ἀφ' οὗ καὶ οἱ Σικυώνιοι τὰ Πύθια πρῶτον παρ' ἑαυτοῖς ἔθεσαν. [...] αὐταὶ δὲ αἰ ᾠδαὶ οὐκέτι Νεμεονί-

καις εἰσὶ γεγραμμένα·

35 See Currie 2005, 23.

36 Regarding the verb in subjunctive, see Braswell 1998, 45.

37 See Braswell 1998, 42–44.

of Amphiaros; he had ousted Adrastos to Sicyon (where the latter founded the games), but he then reconciled with him and took him back, which ended in the disastrous move of the Seven against Thebes, where Amphiaros was brought with his chariot to the underworld by one of Zeus' lightning bolts. The third part of the song (ll.28–34) prays for the prosperous future of Aitnai, while the fourth (ll.34–47) reports of Chromios' military successes and rewards. The final and fifth part (ll.48–55) leads to the feast, which then has its – imaginary – start and shall celebrate the victory of Chromios in Aitnai. The individual parts are entwined; because the metric stanzas do not agree in scope with the thematic parts, there is, in addition, a formal entanglement of the whole song.

Part 1 and part 5 seem significant to me. The song begins with the request to the Muses to perform a procession. Given the divine addressees, the procession is independent of time or physical geography. It suffices to name the origin and destination of the procession. At first, however, the song has a concrete time and place: in verse 4 Chromios boards the chariot, with which he won and with which he – apparently – will ride to his home in Aitnai. In that moment, the choir of Muses would start singing: ll.6ff. introduced and justified by a gnome cue this by prompting a lyre and flute (l.8). The connected thematic reference, the crown of the horse race that Adrastos endowed for Apollo, bridges to the mythos.

In this imaginary situation, the choir (sc. of the Muses) should sing the song that follows line 11. The choir of the Muses moves forward together with Chromios on the chariot during the song. Aitnai (the choir prays that it will not share Thebes' fate; 30–31) and Chromios (who is not brought to the underworld through one of Zeus' lightning bolts, but receives Olbos, l.45, from the gods) build counterpoints to Amphiaros and Thebes. With those counterpoints in mind, the choir arrives in the presence of the victory feast, to which verses 48 ff. point. The choir – as well as Chromios and his chariot – have now arrived in Aitnai from Sicyon: the aorist and the origin of the travel πέμψαν ... ἐκ τᾶς ἱερᾶς Σικυῶνος (52–53) mark the end of the journey.

It seems that in this song travel and singing is entwined; origin and destination are connected by the mythos. The journey evidently allows this connection and can serve as a vehicle to lead to a logic of connectedness of the elements. In this respect, maybe this is not Pindar's 'most average' song.

Now for the other type of the traveler, the messenger or 'herald'. It has to be said that the role of the messenger is less developed. However, there is some usage on a simple linguistic level. For instance, when Pindar writes in *Nem.* 4.71–72:

ἄπορα γὰρ λόγον Αἰακοῦ  
παίδων τὸν ἅπαντά μοι διελθεῖν.

For I find no way to walk through the whole story of Aiakos' sons.



This, then, produces an image where the speaker walks through the story, as if it were a physical space, and the structure of the story is determined by that space – or rather in this case: should be determined.

Furthermore, it is possible for Pindar to model even his song as a traveler or messenger. For example, there is the famous phrase in *Nem.* 5.1–3:

οὐκ ἀνδριαντοποιός εἰμι, ὥστ' ἐλινύσοντα ἐργάζεσθαι ἀγάλαματ' ἐπ' αὐτᾶς βαθ-  
μίδος ἐσταότ'· ἀλλ' ἐπὶ πάσας ὀλκάδος ἔν τ' ἀκάτω, γλυκεῖ' αἰοιδά,  
στεῖχ' ἀπ' Αἰγίνας, διαγγέλλοισ', ὅτι ...

I am not a sculptor, so that I create statues that rest permanently on their pedestal. No, you sweet song, board every transport ship and barge from Aigina and announce that ....

'Boarding' and 'announcing' are abilities of a messenger and as such the poem is thought.<sup>38</sup> A messenger reports what they have seen themselves. Usually this is something contemporary to the audience that they could not see or experience themselves. This, by the way, is the concept of the messenger report in a drama. In this aspect, Pindar 'breaks' with this rule. In *Pyth.* 2.52–56 we find:

ἐμὲ δὲ χρεῶν  
φεύγειν δάκος ἀδινὸν κακαγοριᾶν.  
εἶδον γὰρ ἐκάς ἐὼν τὰ πόλλ' ἐν ἀμαχανίᾳ  
ψογερόν Ἀρχίλοχον βαρυλόγοις ἔχθεσιν  
παινόμενον·

I have to forbear the offensive bite of evil speeches. For I could, living in a different world, still see, how Archilochos, fond of blaming, brought himself in helpless situations many times, bloating hate-filled speeches.

Since it seems biographically dismissible that Pindar knew Archilochos, this shows an expansion of the role of the messenger in telling uncontemporary content. The messenger became a time traveler.

If the song can be understood as a journey or path,<sup>39</sup> there are some consequences for the materiality of the song. How do you shorten a song (or how do you make it short)? Pindar's most famous *Abbruchsformel* (closing formula) shows how: *Pyth.* 4.247–248:

38 The image that the leader of the choir is a letter is similar: see *Ol.* 6.91.

39 Cf. *Nem.* 6.53–54 or *Frg.* 52h (*Pae.* 7b), 11–14: early poetry (the Homeric epic) is thought to be streets

that are drivable for a chariot; *Isth.* 3 and 4.19: many paths are open to the poet to praise the family of the victor.

μακρά μοι νεῖσθαι κατ' ἀμαξιτόν· ὥρα γὰρ συνάπται καὶ τινα  
οἶμον ἴσαμι βραχύν· πολλοῖσι δ' ἄγῃ σοφίας ἑτέροις.

It is too long for me to continue the journey on my path. For time hurries me,  
and I also know a short way. I can show this skill to many others.

If the song is understood as a path, then shortening the song can only mean to find a short-cut. *Pythian* 4 speaks in the same way when referring to the οἶμος βραχύς that the song walks along and finds. In the world of the image of a path the sudden stopping of the song is plausible; nothing is 'missing' at the end of the song because the logic of the short-cut helps to reach the destination faster.<sup>40</sup> To be able to understand the song as a path is based on the following requirements: the requirement of the performance of the song in an unspecified here-and-now and the requirement of the song as a 'happening' (H. Fränkel). When those requirements change, as happens clearly in Hellenism,<sup>41</sup> when the song is understood as a text and hence as a material object, then a new metaphor replaces the image of the path. The '*Abbruchsformel*' makes this change apparent, as a Callimachean fragment – from *Victoria Berenikes* (SH 264,1) – shows: αὐτὸς ἐπιφράσσαιτο, τάμοι δ' ἄπο μῆκος ἀοιδῆι, "add yourself [sc. the reader] mentally and that way cut some length from the song!"

This fragment<sup>42</sup> is in the context of the narrative telling how Heracles meets the farmer Molorchos, at whose place he had stayed before, again after the fight with the lion. But the poem does not report the fight with the lion – which should be considered by the reader as complementing the poem – as the poem itself can leave it out and, freed from the obligation of narrating the fight, is made shorter. The effort of the readers, their independent imagination, contributes to this brevity. Callimachus, however, does not form it into the image of a path – for instance, encouraging the reader to take a short-cut. Rather, the song and the book, the roll of papyrus that contains the song, are virtually merged. The song is shortened by cutting something away from it (sc. the material on which it is written). Instead of a path that is traveled with and in the poem, in Hellenism, the song becomes a book.

40 We find the image of the path also in the *Abbruchsformel* of *Pythian* 11,38–40: the poet pretends to have lost his way at a crossing (or at the sea).

41 This change has been thoroughly researched in re-

cent decades; see, for instance Bing 1988 and Bing 2009.

42 Text and translation after Asper 2004, see here in general Hose 2008.

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