

THE *TEPMA* AND THE JAVELIN IN PINDAR, NEMEAN vii 70-3, AND GREEK ATHLETICS

(PLATES I-II)

Εὐξένιδα πάτραθε Σώγετες, ἀπομνύω
μὴ τέρμα προβαίς ἄκονθ' ὥτε χαλκοπάραον ὄρσαι
θοὰν γλῶσσαν, ὅς ἐξέπεμψεν παλαισμάτων
αὐχένα καὶ σθένος ἀδιαν-
τον, αἴθωνι πρὶν ἀλίω γυῖον ἐμπεσεῖν.

'O Sogenes of the Euxenid clan, I swear that I did not, having stepped up to the line, hurl forth my tongue like a bronze-cheeked javelin which sends the neck and strength of limbs without sweat from the wrestling before the limb falls in the glare of the sun.' (*Nem.* vii 70-3)

In the passage given above, Pindar employs the image of the javelin thrower to describe the kind of poet which he is. Within the simile there occurs the participial phrase, *τέρμα προβαίς*, which I translate as 'having stepped up to the line', the line here being the one from which the athlete throws the javelin and over which he cannot step without being penalised. However, before I present my reasons for this interpretation of the phrase, it will be helpful to explain more fully the meaning of the simile.

First the image itself. The poet compares himself to a javelin thrower in order to assure the audience that his pronouncements do justice to the merits of the victor. In Greek athletics the javelin throw was one of the five contests which comprised the pentathlon, the other four event being the foot race, discus, long jump, and wrestling. The man who won the final event, the wrestling, was the victor for the entire pentathlon competition. Qualification for the wrestling was determined by success in at least one of the four preceding events.¹ In *Nemean* vii the poet is denying that he is like an unsuccessful pentathlete who has made a losing cast with the javelin and so been eliminated from the toil of the wrestling and a chance at capturing first prize in the overall competition.² The unsuccessful throw of

For their assistance with the photographs I am indebted to the following: PLATES Ia and Ib: Ms J. Goldstein and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. PLATE IIa: Dr E. Rohde and Die Staatliche Museen, Antiken-Sammlung, Berlin; Dr K. Vierneisel; Ms B. Diehl, Mr B. Perry and the Indiana University Press, Bloomington, for permission to reproduce pl. 12A from H. A. Harris, *Greek Athletes and Athletics* (Bloomington & London 1966). PLATE IIb: Professors A. E. and I. K. Raubitschek and the Hearst family. PLATE IIc: Martin v. Wagner-Museum, Würzburg.

The text of Pindar is the Teubner edition of H. Maehler post B. Snell, *Pindari Carmina Cum Fragmentis* i (Leipzig 1971). Note that in line 71, the manuscripts read *προβάς*, but that Maehler-Snell and Turyn both prefer the Aeolic *προβαίς*. For the Scholia I have used A. B. Drachmann, *Scholia Vetera in Pindari Carmina*, 3 vols., (Leipzig 1903). For the text of Julius Pollux, *Onomasticon*, I have used the edition of E. Bethe, 3 vols. (Leipzig 1900-1937), which is the Teubner *Lexicographi Graeci*, ix 1-3.

¹ There is disagreement among scholars concerning (a) the order of the first four events in the pentathlon, and (b) the system of qualification for the wrestling finale. For recent opinions see H. A. Harris, *Greek Athletes and Athletics* (Bloomington, Indiana and London 1966) 77-80, henceforth *GAA*, and R. Patrucco, *Lo Sport Nella Grecia Antiqua* (Firenze 1972) 199-222, who furnishes a comprehen-

sive bibliography. Harris (77-8) believes that the foot race was held fourth and that the victors in the four preliminary events moved on to the final contest; if, however, an athlete managed three victories prior to the wrestling, the competition was halted at that point and he was declared the winner of the pentathlon. Patrucco (198-9) leans toward the view that the foot race was held first and uses *Nemean* vii 73 to support his opinion that the javelin, not the race, was prior to the wrestling. The passage, however, is not ideally conclusive. Patrucco also denies that the pentathlon could end before the wrestling, and advocates (220-1) a system of points as the means for deciding who would participate in the wrestling.

² For the interpretation that Pindar denies having made a *losing* throw, I follow C. P. Segal, 'Two Agonistic Problems in Pindar, *Nemean* 7.70-4 and *Pythian* 1.42-45', *GRBS* ix (1968) 31-45. However, E. D. Floyd, 'Pindar's Oath to Sogenes (*Nemean* 7.70-4)', *TAPA* xcvi (1965) 139-51, argues that Pindar is disavowing comparison to a *winning* javelin thrower who has made the event a third victory and thus won the pentathlon without having to endure the toil and sweat of the wrestling match; by such a comparison the poet intends to assert that his praise is not yet over and that he has still more to say on behalf of the victor. There are several difficulties with Floyd's interpretation. As I attempt to show in

a losing contestant is equivalent to inadequate praise. By implication the poet is claiming that, on the contrary, his utterances are like a winning cast.

Support for this interpretation comes from *Pythian* i 42–5, where the comparison between praise and a javelin throw is made more explicitly:

ἄνδρα δ' ἐγὼ κείνον
αἰνήσαι μενουῶν ἔλπομαι
μὴ χαλκοπάραον ἄκονθ' ὡσεὶτ' ἀγῶ-
νος βαλεῖν ἔξω παλάμα δονέων,
μακρὰ δὲ ρίψαις ἀμεύσασθ' ἀντίους.

'In striving to praise that man (Hieron), I hope that I have not flung outside the place of contest the bronze-cheeked javelin which I brandish in my hand, but that I have made a long throw and surpassed my opponents'. In the javelin competition, distance was the criterion for deciding the winner. But there was also the stipulation, as our passage from *Pythian* i indicates, that the throw had to fall within the confines of the ἀγών, the 'place of contest', which seems to have been the stadium. The ἀγών was bounded on both the left and right by lines, perhaps the long sides of the stadium floor. Should a toss fly off at a bad angle so as to land outside these lateral boundaries, the effort did not count, whatever its merit in absolute length.^{2a} In *Pythian* i 42–5, the poet is therefore expressing the wish that he has made not a bad throw but a good one, that he has praised not badly but well. The resemblance between the two athletic images also extends to the vocabulary. We note the χαλκοπάραον ἄκονθ' of *Pythian* i and the ἄκονθ' . . . χαλκοπάραον of *Nemean* vii.

Turning back to *Nemean* vii, we can perceive further clues to the meaning of the simile. The image of the javelin thrower does not occur in isolation but is one of a cluster of passages which are to be found after midpoint in the ode. These passages contain statements which, like the simile, are delivered in the first person singular. If, following E. Thummer, we regard these statements as variations of the epinician *topos*, 'Lob für den Dichter und seine Kunst', we will find reinforcement for the interpretation that Pindar employs the simile to defend the quality of his praise:^{2b}

ξεῖνός εἰμι· σκοτεινὸν ἀπέχων ψόγον,
ὔδατος ὡτε ροὰς φίλον ἐς ἄνδρ' ἄγων
κλέος ἐτήτυμον αἰνέσω·
ποτίφορος δ' ἀγαθοῖσι μισθὸς οὗτος.
Δ' ἔων δ' ἐγγὺς Ἀχαιοὺς οὐ μέμμεται μ' ἀνήρ
'Ιονίας ὑπὲρ ἀλὸς οἰ-
κέων, καὶ προξενία πέποιθ', ἐν τε δαμόταις
ὄμματι δέρκομαι λαμπρόν, οὐχ ὑπερβαλῶν,
βίαία πάντ' ἐκ ποδὸς ἐρύσαις· ὁ δὲ λοιπὸς εὐφρων
ποτὶ χρόνος ἔρποι. μαθὼν δέ τις ἀνερεῖ,
εἰ παρ μέλος ἔρχομαι ψάγιον ὄαρων ἐννέπων.
Εὐξένηδα πάτραθε Σώγηνες, ἀπομνύω
μὴ τέρμα προβαίς ἄκονθ' ὡτε χαλκοπάραον ὄρσαι
θοὰν γλῶσσαν, ὅς ἐξέπεμψεν παλαισμμάτων

this article, it is based on an inaccurate definition of *τέρμα* and fits less clearly with other portions of the ode. It is also open to Segal's objection, *op. cit.* 34, 38–9, that it necessitates an uncommon usage of *ἐκπέμπειν*. The word means 'to send away, to dismiss', not 'to exempt', as Floyd would have it.

^{2a} On the javelin throw in general, see Harris, *GAA* (above, note 1) 92–7, and Patrucco, (above, note 1) 171–88. For the interpretation of ἔξω ἀγῶνος Patrucco, *op. cit.* 181–5 and especially 183–4, n. 5, gives a valuable summary of the alternate interpretations. I concur with his view that ἔξω ἀγῶνος is not an equivalent expression for *τέρμα προβαίς*, though I

believe he is in error in taking the latter as a reference to a foul.

^{2b} E. Thummer, *Pindar: Die Isthmischen Gedichte* i (Heidelberg 1968) 82–102, for the *topos* in the odes; on pp. 94–8, he discusses *Nemean* vii. For the theoretical principles underlying Thummer's views, see E. L. Bundy, *Studia Pindarica* i, ii (= *University of California Publications in Classical Philology* xviii [1962] 1–34 and 35–92) 1–4, 35–6, 91–2. E. Tugendhat, 'Zum Rechtfertigungsproblem in Pindars 7. Nemeischen Gedicht', *Hermes* lxxxviii (1960) 399–404, also has a valuable discussion of the section following the myth.

αὐχένα καὶ σθένος ἀδιαν-
τον, αἴθωνι πρὶν ἀλίῳ γυῖον ἐμπεσεῖν.
εἰ πόνος ἦν, τὸ τερπνὸν πλέον πεδέρχεται.
ἔα με· νικῶντί γε χάριν, εἴ τι πέραν ἀερθεῖς
ἀνέκραγον, οὐ τραχὺς εἶμι καταχέμεν.

'Guest-friend am I. Avoiding the dark shadows of blame I shall praise true merit, like one who brings streams of water to a dear friend. It is the just reward for a man of merit. An Achaean from above the Ionian sea will find no fault with me should he come near. I put my trust in friendship. Among these citizens^{2c} my gaze is bright and clear, for I have shunned excess and thrust violence from my feet. May the time to come be beneficent. If I come uttering discordant, violent speech, someone will discover and expose it. O Sogenes of the Euxenid clan, I swear that I did not, having stepped up to the line, hurl forth my tongue like a bronze-cheeked javelin which sends the neck and strength of limbs without sweat from the wrestling before the limb falls in the glare of the sun. If there was toil, the delight which follows is greater. Forgive me. If in elation I have raised too loud a cry, for the victor's sake I am not too rude to make due payment.' (*Nem.* vii 61–76) These statements develop a line of thought established in preceding portions of the ode. In the first antistrophe it is stated that poetry is necessary to preserve the memory of men and their achievements: *ταὶ μεγάλαι γὰρ ἀλκαὶ / σκότον πολλὸν ὕμνων ἔχοντι δεόμεναι*. 'Even great deeds of courage have much darkness if they lack songs' (*Nem.* vii 12–3). Reminders of the inevitability of death heighten the seriousness of the poet's task: *ἀφνεὸς πεινχρὸς τε θανάτου παρά / σᾶμα νέονται* 'Rich and poor pass on to the tomb' (*Nem.* vii 19–20). The ensuing mythical section (20 ff.) illustrates and amplifies these points. Through Homer's art the reputation of Odysseus has been augmented unduly to the detriment of Ajax, who was the greater warrior. Another reminder of death is furnished: *ἀλλὰ κοινὸν γὰρ ἔρχεται / κῦμ' Ἀίδα, πέσε δ' ἀδόκητον ἐν καὶ δοκέοντα* 'The wave of Hades comes upon all, and falls upon the inglorious and the glorious' (*Nem.* vii 30–1).^{2d} The mythical section is followed by a return to the eulogy of the victor Sogenes and his father Thearion (55 ff.). Here amidst the eulogy we encounter the claims of the poet made in the first person singular. These claims, including our simile of the javelin thrower, when taken in the context of the inevitability of death, the consequent importance of poetry, and the negative example of Homer, seem to be Pindar's way of saying that he is a poet conscious of his weighty task and, implicitly, that he is not a Homer who abuses the powers of his art.^{2e}

From passages both within *Nemean* vii and from elsewhere, we can see how the poet's denial of making an unsuccessful toss of the javelin amounts to a declaration that his praise does justice to the subjects of his encomium. There still remains, however, the problem of the precise meaning of the phrase *τέρμα προβαίς*. To this difficulty we now direct ourselves.

Concerning the meaning of *προβαίς*, I follow the interpretation set forth by E. D. Floyd and C. P. Segal.³ Both concur that *προβαίνειν* means 'to advance forth' in accordance with its common Classical usage; and both reject the definitions held by both ancient and modern scholars that the word means either (a) 'to overthrow', as the Scholia (*ad Nem.* vii 106b, c, d

^{2c} I find attractive the interpretation of Thummer (above, note 2b) 97 note 82, who takes the 'citizens' to be the Aeginetans and connects this allusion with the reference given immediately beforehand to the Achaeans who dwell over the Ionian Sea. The result is an antithetical doublet meaning 'all Greeks, both near and far'. The other possibility is to see in the Achaeans an allusion to the Molossians mentioned earlier in the ode (38), whom Neoptolemos ruled for a while. The 'citizens' would then be either the Thebans of Pindar's homeland or the Aeginetans.

^{2d} For *ἀδόκητον* and *δοκέοντα* as 'inglorious' and 'glorious', I follow David C. Young, 'A Note on Pindar *Nemean* 7.30 f.', *California Studies in Classical Antiquity* iv (1971) 249–53.

^{2e} I explore the meaning of this difficult ode more fully in an unpublished article, 'The Poetic Laudator and the Conclusion of *Nemean* 7', in which, following Bundy's approach, I explain the conclusion (*Nem.* vii 102–5) not as an apology for *Paeon* vi but as another instance of the poet asserting the quality of his praise. The 'apology' is internal to the poem. For a recent study of the ode with the relevant bibliography, see H. Lloyd-Jones, 'Modern Interpretation of Pindar: The Second Pythian and Seventh Nemean Odes', *JHS* xciii (1973) 109–35, who sees a reference to *Paeon* vi.

³ Floyd (above, note 2) 139–42, and Segal (above, note 2) 33–4, 37–8. Floyd, 142, and Segal, 38, then take *τέρμα* as an accusative of goal with a verb of motion.

Drachmann) suggested, or (b) 'to step over', thus synonymous with *ὑπερβαίνειν*, as Hesychius understood it. In support of the definition presented by Floyd and Segal, there is the fact of its normal usage. Against the conjectures of the Scholia and Hesychius, there is a corresponding lack of parallel uses. Furthermore, to refute the suggestion of Hesychius, Segal presents an especially compelling argument in the form of a quotation from Gorgias in which the words *ὑπερβάς* and *προβήσομαι* occur together with an obvious contrast in meaning.⁴ However, apparently unaware of the works of Flóyd and Segal, two scholars of Greek athletics, H. A. Harris and R. Patrucco, in their recent studies have continued to translate *προβαίς* as 'to step over'.⁵ Their rendering of *προβαίς* in this manner is closely tied to their understanding of the noun *τέρμα*, to which we now must turn.

For the meaning of *τέρμα*, a number of possibilities have been advanced.

(a) The word means 'finish-line', and thus acquires the metaphorical, abstract sense of 'conclusion'. In adopting this possibility Floyd would have Pindar say, 'having advanced to the finish-line, having advanced to completion'. In effect the poet would be stating that he has not yet come to the end of the ode.⁶ Pindar would then be mixing his imagery in lines 70-3 by combining similes of racing and throwing.⁷

(b) According to Eustathius, Homer (*Od.* viii 193) employs *τέρμα* as a synonym for *σῆμα* in describing a competition with the discus. The word thus denotes a marker used to indicate the length of a throw. Segal, adapting this usage to the javelin throw, would then have Pindar say that he is 'stepping forth toward the marker (set by other javelins)'.⁸

(c) J. Jüthner took *τέρμα* to refer to the outer limit of the throwing area, a limit set in advance of the competition or determined by the best throw up to a given moment.⁹ But such an interpretation depends upon the unacceptable meaning of *προβαίς* as 'having overthrown', and must be rejected accordingly, as Segal has noted.¹⁰

(d) With the interpretation given above, Jüthner rejected his earlier hypothesis that *τέρμα* indicated the lateral boundaries of the throwing area.¹¹ This view has no adherent at present.

(e) In Homer and in Classical Greek, *τέρμα* sometimes means 'turning post' and is thus synonymous with the Latin *mela*.¹² This possibility has been ignored in attempts to solve the enigma of our passage from *Nemean* vii, presumably because it would make little if any sense to speak of hurling the javelin from the turning post. However, the idea is neither as irrelevant nor as far-fetched as it may first appear to be; indeed on the contrary it supplies an important clue for understanding the significance of *τέρμα*.

(f) The *τέρμα* denotes the line which marks the limit of the approach of a javelin thrower as he runs up to launch the missile, and over which he cannot step without committing a foul. This is the meaning preferred by scholars of Greek athletics, including E. N. Gardiner, and, more recently, Harris and Patrucco.¹³ However, Floyd and Segal, following Jüthner, dismiss this interpretation on the grounds that *τέρμα* cannot have the sense of 'starting-line' or 'line from which one throws'.¹⁴

⁴ Segal (above, note 2) 34 quotes Gorgias *Helen* 5, DK¹¹ ii 289.17-19: τὸν χρόνον δὲ τῷ λόγῳ τὸν τότε <τῷ> νῦν ὑπερβάς ἐπὶ τὴν ἀρχὴν τοῦ μέλλοντος λόγου προβήσομαι . . .

⁵ Patrucco (above, note 1) 182; H. A. Harris, 'Greek Javelin Throwing', *Greece and Rome* n.s. x (1963) 28; also E. N. Gardiner, 'Throwing the Diskos', *JHS* xxvii (1907) 10, and 'Throwing the Javelin', *ibid.* 268-9.

⁶ Floyd (above, note 2) 142-3.

⁷ Such a mixture of imagery is not by itself an argument against Floyd's interpretation. Cf., for example, *Isthmian* ii 35: μακρὰ δισκίσσαις ἀκοντίσασμι τοσοῦθ' . . .

⁸ Segal (above, note 2) 37-9, following Eustathius.

⁹ Jüthner, 'Zu Pindar Nem. 7, 70 ff.', *WS* 1 (1932) 168-9.

¹⁰ Segal (above, note 2) 33.

¹¹ J. Jüthner, *Über antike Turngeräthe*, (Vienna 1896) 56-7, which Gardiner, *Javelin*, (above, note 5) 268, and Patrucco (above, note 5) 183-4 and 183 n. 5, both discuss and reject.

¹² LSJ s.v. See also *Iliad* xxiii 309, 462 and 465.

¹³ See the works cited above, note 5. Harris appears to maintain this view in his later *Greek Athletes and Athletics*, (above, note 1) 81, 93, and 205 n. 33, but without a specific reference to *Nemean* vii 71.

¹⁴ Floyd (above, note 2) 141 and Segal (above, note 2) 33, following Jüthner *WS* (above, note 9) 168. W. J. Slater, *Lexicon to Pindar* (Berlin 1969) s.v., offers 'starting, finishing mark', but provides no further explanation. Floyd, *op. cit.*, 141 n. 7 says that F. A. Paley, *The Odes of Pindar* (Cambridge 1868) 199 n. 5, takes *τέρμα* to mean the starting line or the mark from which one throws; I have not seen Paley.

This last definition I believe to provide the correct meaning of *Nemean* vii 71. However, it will not be sufficient to confine the defence of this interpretation to this specific context. Rather, the broad meaning of *τέρμα* must also be considered and account must also be taken of the two definitions drawn from the race-course, (a) 'finish-line', and (e) 'turning-post'. For these two definitions joined with (f) suggest that *τέρμα* has a more general meaning, 'limit, boundary, extremity, end, line', which indicates spatial bounds and which can be translated more specifically according to the context.

Support for these conclusions comes from archaeology, philology, and art. In the ensuing discussion I will make the following points: (1) that the lines for starting and finishing were frequently the same and thus dispose of the objection that *τέρμα* cannot mean 'starting-line' or 'line from which one throws'; (2) that the lines used in racing were also employed in the competition with the discus, the long jump, and, more pertinently, the javelin; (3) that the word *τέρμα* can be applied with justification to the lines when they are used in the contest with the javelin.

First, that the lines for start and finish were often one and the same.

We begin with a question. By definition (a), *τέρμα* means 'finish-line', thus, 'conclusion'; and by definition (e), it means 'turning-point'. We must now confront an enigma. The turning-point marks not the end but the mid-point in a race. How, then, did the same word come to be applied to two opposing concepts?

Here, archaeology comes to our aid. In Ancient Greece, a racecourse was defined by two straight lines, one at each end, and thus differed from the oval shape of the modern track. These lines, which very probably originated as marks scratched in the dirt, in historical times took the form of stone sills embedded in the ground with places for each runner, holes in which poles were placed as part of the apparatus which comprised the starting gates (the *husplex*), and a column in the middle of the sill to serve as a turning post.¹⁵

Why two lines and two columns?

There were three distances in the running events: (1) the *stadion* or stade, which was the short sprint and consisted of one length of the course; (2) the *diaulos*, two lengths; and (3) the *dolichos*, for which varying distances of 7, 8, 10, 12, 20, and 24 lengths are given.¹⁶

The purpose of the two lines is explained by the *stadion*. Starting from one end, Line A, the contestants would sprint the length of the course and finish at the opposite end, Line B (see FIG. 1).

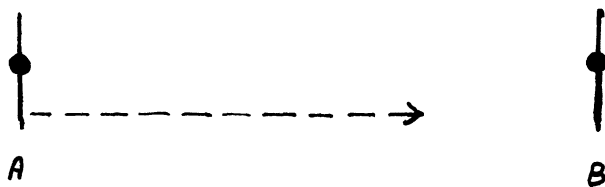


FIG. 1.

However, in the *diaulos*, the runners would begin at one end, turn the post at the opposite end,¹⁷ and then finish at the line from which they had commenced. Here we must note two points: first, that for the *diaulos*, the starting line and the finish-line are identical; and second, that given the possibility of either starting all races at the same end, or, alternatively, of maintaining a common finish-line (and thereby changing the line used for the start depending upon the distance being run), the Greeks chose the latter. Thus, in the *diaulos*

¹⁵ For Greek stadia and the starting gates, see Harris, *GAA* (above, note 13) 64–73, and plates 23a–29a; much the same information is contained in briefer form in his earlier 'Stadia and Starting-grooves', *G & R* n.s. vii (1960) 25–35, and the more recent *Sport in Greece and Rome* (London 1972) 27–33, henceforth *SGR*. However, at some stadia, for example in Priene, there is evidence of only one sill, as Harris, *SGR* 30–1, notes.

¹⁶ See Harris, *GAA* (above, note 1) 73; Patrucco (above, note 1) 96.

¹⁷ There is some dispute about the nature of the turn in the *diaulos*. For the view that the runners all turned round a common post, see Harris, *SGR* (above, note 15) 31–2, and *GAA* (above, note 13) 71–2. Patrucco (above, note 1) 106–10, would have each runner turn around a separate post.

the runners would commence at Line B rather than Line A, turn the post at Line A, and then complete the event back at Line B (FIG. 2).

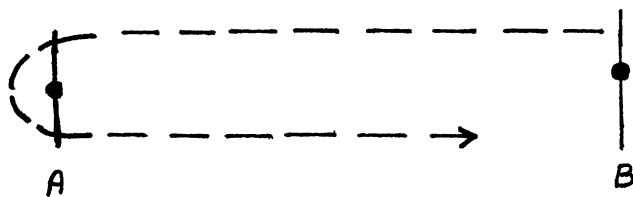


FIG. 2.

The reason for keeping the finish-line the same for all races lay in the greater convenience for the judges. In comparison, the apparatus for the starting gates was easy to set up and to remove. It was more convenient to move the gates than the judges. With such an arrangement the judges would remain at Line B of our diagrams, and the gates would be put up at A for the *stadion*, B for the *diaulos*, and at A for the *dolichos* if an odd number of lengths was to be run or at B if an even number.¹⁸

The need for one turning post is explained by the *diaulos*. For the *dolichos*, which covered several lengths of the course, the need for a second turning post at Line B is manifest.

The Greek race-course was, then, marked by two stone sills similar in appearance. Both lines were used for starts and both as turning points. One of them was used for both start and finish when the *diaulos* or the *dolichos*, when this consisted of an even number of lengths, was being run.

With these observations of the physical nature of the race-course in mind, we are now in a position to explain how *τέρμα* can signify both the conclusion and the turning point in a race. Generically, the word means 'end, boundary' (see LSJ s.v.). In the stadia of historical times, for example at Olympia or Delphi, the boundaries would be the stone sills. The specific context would determine whether *τέρμα* could be translated more precisely as the line where one finishes or as the end where one makes the turn. With respect to the latter we would seem to have an example of metonymy. Through association perhaps *τέρμα* came to be applied to the column situated in the middle of the line as well as the line itself. However, we have an attractive alternative suggested by the scene of the Funeral Games for Patroklos in *Iliad* xxiii. There, a more primitive form of the *diaulos* is held in an open field and a tree-trunk serves as one of the bounds or limits indicated by Achilles. For this rudimentary and expedient turning post, no line need be assumed on which the post rested.

We can observe instances of other words which, like *τέρμα*, can be translated by words opposed in meaning when placed in specific contexts. The Greek verb *ἔρχεσθαι* means both 'to go' and 'to come'. *Salve* in Latin and *ciao* in Italian are used for both 'hello' and 'goodbye'. With the Latin *altus* a similar ambiguity occurs. If asked to define the word, most of us would answer that it means 'high', probably having in mind the derivative 'altitude', and we could produce the example of 'altis de montibus' (*Eclogue* 1.83). Yet the word also means 'deep', as in 'gurgite in alto' (*Eclogue* 6.76). One word in Latin, two in English; and the single Latin word, rendered in English by opposites, really conveys the idea of vertical extension. Since any adjectival form of 'vertical extension' would be too awkward and because no exact equivalent exists in English for *altus*, we must resort to the more particular 'high' and 'deep'. Finally, a more complex example from English involving athletics. In a number of sports—football, hockey, basketball—the playing area is marked by goals at each end. Each team defends one *goal* and has the *goal* of scoring at the *goal* defended by the opposing team. A team can start from near its *goal*, namely the *goal* it is defending (spatial denotation) or likewise be near the other team's *goal*. Again, a team can accomplish its *goal* (aim, purpose) of scoring a *goal* (physical location, purpose, and particular athletic connotations all involved). The single word 'goal' undergoes subtle variations

¹⁸ That the finish and not the start remained the same is the consensus of opinion; see E. N. Gardiner, *Athletics of the Ancient World* (Oxford 1930) 133-5,

hereafter, *AAW*; Harris, *GAA* (above note 1) 70 and 204 n. 33, and *SGR* (above, note 15) 30-1; and Patrucco (above, note 1) 106.

of meaning in an athletic context. Yet, to a native speaker who knows his athletics the meaning would be perceived with little or no difficulty despite the fluctuations in the significance of the word. Indeed, in all likelihood, the oxymoron of 'starting from one's goal' would go unnoticed, as it often is when we speak of 'starting at one end'.

The preceding archaeological and philological considerations are intended to show that *τέρμα* need not necessarily mean 'finish-line' when employed with respect to racing events; that on the contrary it has a more general meaning, 'boundary, end, limit', which in a specific context can mean 'turning point' or 'finish-line'; and that when applied to a Greek stadium, it refers to the stone sills located at both extremities of the course and able to be used for starts and finishes, though in fact only one of them served the dual purpose.

What is the relation between race-course and javelin? The connection lies in the identification of the stone sill with the line from which the javelin was hurled.

Here vase-painting comes to our aid. On the interior of a kylix in Berlin (PLATE IIa), an athlete is depicted in the act of throwing the javelin. To his left and in the background there is a column resting on a base. We note similar scenes of javelin throwers and columns on the exterior of a kylix in Boston. On one side (PLATE Ia) the scene is identical to that of the Berlin cup; on the other (PLATE Ib) the javelin thrower is shown at a slightly earlier moment, revealed by his left foot which has not yet been planted firmly. A black-figured stamnos in Würzburg (PLATE IIc) also presents a javelin thrower against the background of a column, here without a base.¹⁹

Similar columns with or without bases occur frequently in vase-paintings of runners. On a skyphos from the Hearst Collection, Hillsborough (PLATE IIb), a column with a base is shown adjacent to an armed runner in a starting position.²⁰ If we turn once again to the Würzburg stamnos (PLATE IIc), we note the column placed between several runners (there are six altogether moving from our left to our right) and the seated individual watching them. The individual is an umpire who is either judging the conclusion or, if the race is to consume several laps, making sure that none of the runners cheats by taking a short cut in front of the post instead of going around it. At the other end of the same painting, another seated umpire and a column likewise placed between him and the departing runners have been depicted by the artist.²¹ The identity of the columns is clear. They are the turning-posts and they indicate the presence of the stone sills on which they rest and which have not been drawn by the artists. The resemblance between these columns and those on the paintings of the javelin throwers supports the conclusion that the sills were also employed in throwing the javelin.²²

These same stone sills performed a similar function for the discus throw and the long jump. Once more the kylix in Boston provides the verification. On one side (PLATE Ia) the javelin thrower shares the sill with a discobolus and a jumper; on the other side (PLATE Ib) with another jumper about to take off while a trainer looks on.²³ When we consider that

¹⁹ The javelin thrower on the Würzburg stamnos has straightened his body and begun to bring his arm forward to launch his throw; the moment is thus subsequent to that represented on the cups from Berlin and Boston (PLATE Ia). On the other hand, it may be argued that his bearing is too relaxed and that the moment represented is that when the athlete is about to begin his run prior to throwing. If the second interpretation is true then the column is merely decorative.

²⁰ To judge from the evidence of vase-paintings and sculpture, the crouching start with at least one hand on the ground was very rare in Ancient Greece. The standing start was by far the common practice. Harris, *GAA* (above, note 1) 66, denies that Greek runners started off their hands; but see Gardiner, *AAW* (above, note 18) 142, fig. 97, and Patrucco (above, note 1) 113-5.

²¹ Harris, *GAA* (above, note 1) 73-4, so interprets

the scene. For the entire painting see Harris, *GAA* pl. 4a-b, or J. Jüthner, *Die athletischen Leibesübungen der Griechen*, ed. F. Brein, i (Vienna 1965) plate XIb and c, and ii (Vienna 1968) pl. VI [=Akademie der Wissenschaften, Vienna, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse, 249, 1-11]; henceforth *Leibes*.

²² Jüthner, *Leibes*. (above, note 21) ii 346-7, denies the connection on the basis of the columns, but is controverted by both Patrucco (above, note 1) 149-50, 180, and Harris, *GAA* (above, note 1) 229 note to plate 12a.

²³ It is possible though somewhat improbable that several athletes would employ the same stone sill simultaneously, as shown on the Boston kylix, and we are probably meant to view the action of the athletes separately, each using the sill in turn. The superimposition of several actions on one another results in a composite picture which is not meant to be viewed by the standards of strict realism. The lack

these four events—foot-race, long jump, discus, and javelin—together with wrestling comprised the pentathlon and, furthermore, that all five events appears to have been held in one day, the convenience to all concerned—participants, judges, and spectators—of locating as many events as possible in one place, the stadium, is obvious enough.²⁴ And it would have been most convenient if the stone sills had been used for the races as well as the jumping and throwing competitions.²⁵

The philological evidence also attests to the multiple use of the stone sills. The grammarian Julius Pollux, writing in the second century A.D., provides the following pertinent information (iii 147): ‘Where they start from is called the *aphesis*, *husplex*, *grammē*, and *balbis*, that around which they turn, the *nyssa* and *kamptēr*; where they stop, the *telos*, *terma*, and *batēr*, but to some, the *balbis*.’²⁶

First of all, we note the usage of *balbis* for both start and finish. Such a use of the word would be consistent with what we have pointed out earlier concerning the employment of one line for both purposes. More significantly, the word *balbis* also denotes the rectangular areas from which the discus was thrown. The area was bounded by the stone sill and two lines perpendicular to it, the rear being left open.²⁷

Secondly, the word *batēr*, one of the synonyms for the finish, is also used of the threshold from which the athletes leap in the long jump. Pollux, in a passage just a few lines after the one given above, comments (iii 151): ‘The place from which the jump is made is the *batēr*, whence the expression, “He has hit the *batēr* with a bang”.’²⁸ Curiously, Pollux does not note any use of the word to indicate the starting line, though such a usage, by analogy with *balbis*, would seem plausible enough.

Thirdly, Pollux does not give *terma* as an alternative to *nyssa* and *kamptēr*, despite the examples of such usage.

From philology, archaeology and art, it is clear, then, that the stone sill was employed as the line from which the javelin was thrown. We now come to the crucial question. Can *τέρμα* be used of the sill in the context of the javelin throw, just as *balbis* and *batēr* are employed respectively for the discus and the long jump? Or is it more like *telos*, which can only refer to the sill in its capacity as the conclusion of a race? What is the range of meaning for *τέρμα*?

I have stated above that *τέρμα* has the general meaning of ‘boundary, limit, end (in the spatial sense), line’, and that the specific context determines whether the word will possess a more precise significance such as ‘end where one completes the race, finishing line’, or ‘end where one makes the turn, turning point’. Thus, the meaning of *τέρμα* is not as restricted as that of *telos*.

How, then, should we interpret *τέρμα* in line 71 of *Nemean* vii? There are two possibilities.

(1) The word here expressly means ‘conclusion’. In this case two explanations are possible. The *τέρμα* is (a) the stone sill used for the finish of races and which the javelin thrower approaches as he prepares to throw, albeit from the opposite direction which the runners take, or (b) that very same sill, but in its capacity as the end or conclusion of the approach allowed to the javelin thrower. This latter view was stated by Jüthner, who then immediately rejected it in favour of the interpretation mentioned earlier, that the *τέρμα*

of realism is carried one step further in the scene illustrated in PLATE Ia, where the jumper is advancing in the direction opposite to that of his comrades. Placing the jumper in this direction enables the artist to effect a symmetry which echoes that on the other side of the cup.

²⁴ Often, as in the Boston kylix (PLATES Ia–b), objects such as sponges, strigils, and aryballoi are depicted in the background and are to be understood as hanging from a wall. In such cases the athletes are exercising in a gymnasium, the porticoes of which provide the shade lacking in the open area

of the stadium. See Harris, *GAA* (above, note 1) 144. The paintings if precisely interpreted thus bear testimony of the existence of stone sills with columns in the gymnasium.

Both Patrucco (above, note 1) and Jüthner *Leibes.*, (above, note 21) are convenient and abundant sources of vase-paintings depicting Greek athletes. In many of the illustrations columns can be seen. Gardiner, *AAW* (above, note 18) and L. Drees, *Olympia* (Stuttgart 1967) are also well-illustrated.

²⁵ Xenophon, by his use of the term *τὰ δρομικά*, ‘the stadium events’, (*Hellenica* vii 4.29), indicates that at

denoted the outer boundary of the area in which the javelins landed, the boundary being established by the best previous throw.²⁹

(2) The word refers to the sills and simply means 'line, limit, boundary', without any necessary implication of the conclusion or finish of anything, whether a race or an area of approach. Given the setting of the stadium bounded by stone sills and the use of these sills for starts, finishes, and turning points of races and for the field events as well, I find this second alternative preferable.

How does Pindar use *τέρμα* elsewhere? In *Olympian* iii, line 33, Herakles desires to plant olive trees *δωδεκάγναμπτρον περὶ τέρμα δρόμου*. Since the *terma* is described as 'turned twelve times', it appears to be a specific reference to the east side of the stadium. The allusion is to the *dolichos* of twenty-four stades, in which the runners would begin and finish at the west end, and in which the east would thus be turned twelve times, the west, eleven. In line 114 of the *Ninth Pythian*, Danaus places the band of suitors courting his daughters *ἐν τέρμασιν . . . ἀγώνος*. Here, Pindar must mean that he placed the young men either 'at or on the lines', or, perhaps, 'within the limits of the field', a periphrasis for 'in the field'. The poet could not have meant 'finishing line' in this instance. In contrast to the two preceding examples, *τέρμα* in line 67 of *Isthmian* iv³⁰ does convey the further sense of 'goal, conclusion' with the additional connotation of 'climax'. In this passage the poet calls the pankration the *τέρμα* of the Games, the 'grand finale'.

We return to line 71 of *Nemean* vii. Here the poet wishes to compare himself to a javelin thrower. However, instead of the simple expression, 'I am not a javelin thrower who . . .', he resorts to a more vivid, more elaborate form. He asserts, 'I swear that I did not, having stepped up to the line, hurl forth, like a bronze-checked javelin, my tongue . . .'. Rather than making explicit use of poet and athlete as the terms of the comparison, the image is effected through the references to the athlete's javelin and the poet's tongue. Furthermore, the action of the athlete is broken down into two parts, the act of stepping up to the line to gain momentum and then the actual cast. Contrary to the interpretations of the scholars of Greek athletics, who fail to understand *προβαίς*, no transgression of the line, no foul is being described. Contrary to the view shared by Jüthner, Floyd, and Segal, *τέρμα* can indeed refer to the line from which the javelin is thrown. Their interpretations fail to account for the varied but related meanings of the word and pay insufficient heed to the evidence provided by archaeology and art.

The view of Segal, which, following Eustathius, regards *τέρμα* as synonymous with *σήμα* (the athlete advances to the markers set by the throws of his rivals) requires additional comment, for it is not without its attractions. But in light of the reasons given above, it is, I think, the more difficult reading. We may also add this consideration. Our passage from Pindar has *τέρμα*, that from Homer *τέρματα*. Although the use of singulars for plurals is not unusual, nevertheless we can account more neatly for both passages with our range of definitions for *τέρμα*. In the *Odyssey* viii 193, Athena has marked the *τέρματα* (the 'ends, limits') of the throws by means of the *σήματα*; in *Nemean* vii, the athlete advances to the

Olympia, the first four events of the pentathlon were held in the stadium, and the wrestling nearby between the stadium and altar. See Patrucco (above, note 5) 205 and n. 3.

²⁶ Pollux iii 147 *καὶ ὅθεν μὲν ἀφίενται, ἀφῆσις καὶ ὕσπληγξ καὶ γραμμὴ καὶ βαλβίς, περὶ δ' ὁ κάμπτουσι, νόσσα καὶ καμπτήρ· ἵνα δὲ παύονται, τέλος καὶ τέρμα καὶ βατήρ, ἐνίοις δὲ καὶ βάλβις*. Both *aphesis* and another word for start, *apheteria*, are derived from *ἀφίημι* and thus mean literally 'release, letting go'. The *husplex* is more properly the starting gate; see references in note 15. The *grammē* was originally simply a line scratched out in the ground. The derivation of *balbis* is more enigmatic. The *Suda*, s.v. *balbis*, states, 'For the *grammē* under the *husplex* is called the *balbis* on account of the fact that the

runners take their place on it'. Patrucco, (above note 1) 105–6 n. 8, handily provides a collation of the relevant texts.

²⁷ For the *balbis* in the discus, see Harris *GAA* (above, note 1) 87–8, and Patrucco (above, note 1) 147–51.

²⁸ Pollux iii 151: *καὶ ὅθεν ἄλλεται, βατήρ, ἀφ' οὗ καὶ τὸν θιατῆρα κέκρουκεν*.

For the use of the sill in the long jump, see Harris *GAA* (above, note 13) 83 and Gardiner, *AAW* (above, note 18) 144.

²⁹ Jüthner, *WS* (above, note 9) 168–9. Patrucco (above, note 1) 183 and n. 2, appreciates the merit of this interpretation.

³⁰ *Isthmian* iv 67 = *Isthmian* iii + iv 85 in Snell-Maehler.

τέρμα (the 'line, limit'). The marker is a kind of limit; the limit is not a form of marker. We thus avoid the necessity of explaining the use of the singular for the plural.

Since no foul is being indicated by the poet, two explications of lines 70–3 remain. We have already discussed these earlier.³¹ Floyd sees the poet denying that he has made so successful a throw that as a result he wins exemption from further toil in the pentathlon. For Segal, with whom I agree, the opposite is true, and the poet is disavowing any similarity to a *losing* javelin throw which eliminates the athlete from further competition. With either view the interpretation of *τέρμα προβαίς* presented in these pages will fit.

As we turn our gaze once more to the vases in Boston and Berlin and focus upon the athletes stepping up to launch their throws, does not Pindar provide the caption for these paintings: *τέρμα προβαίς*?

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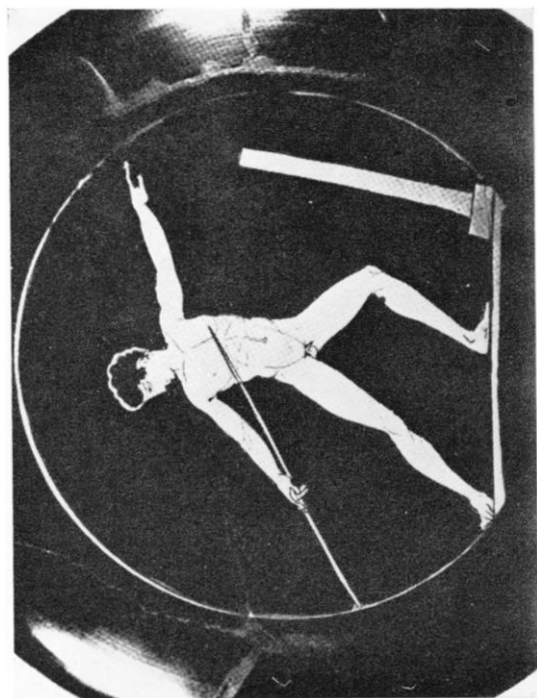
³¹ Above, note 2.



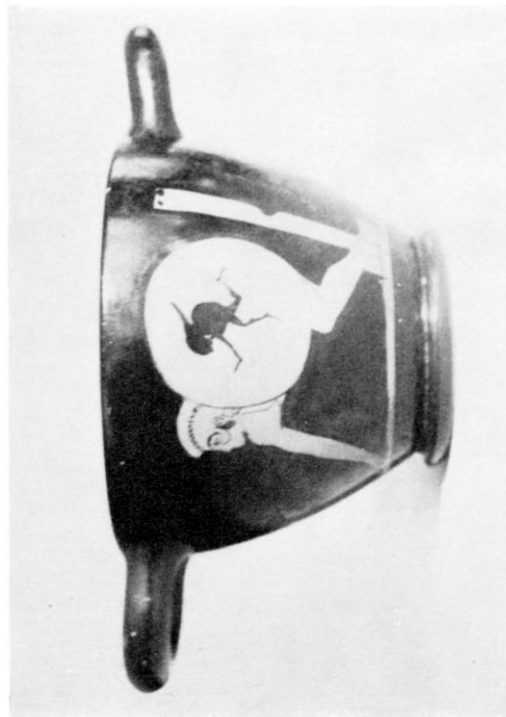
(a) Discobolus, javelin thrower, jumper. Red-figured kylix, Boston 01.8033, *ARV*² 817.4, by the Telephos Painter. (Courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.)



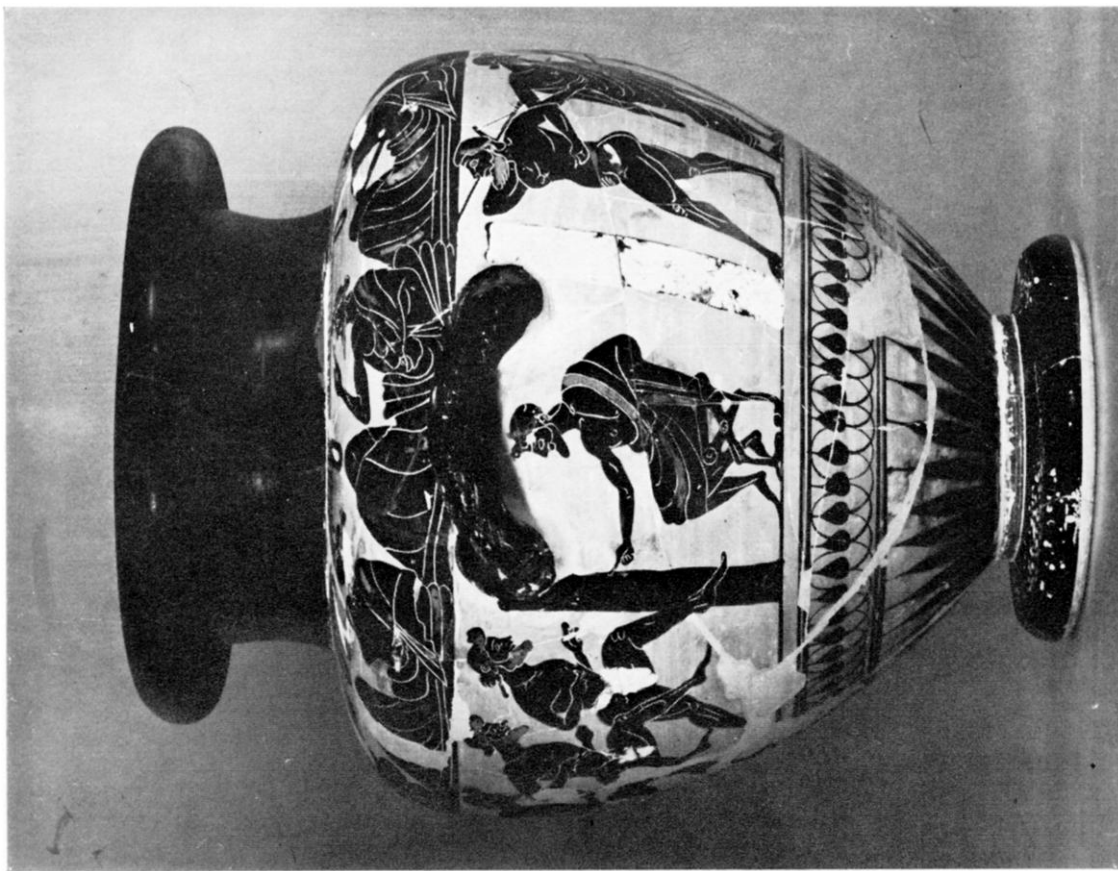
(b) Javelin thrower, jumper, trainer. Reverse of Boston 01.8033. (Courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.)



(a) Javelin thrower. Red-figured kylix, Berlin F.2728. *ARV*² 1275.4. Between the Codrus Painter and Aison. (Courtesy, Die Staatliche Museen, Antikensammlung, Berlin.)



(b) Hoplite runner in starting position. Red-figured skyphos, Hearst Collection, Hillsborough, California, *ARV*² 561.11. Near the Pan Painter. (Courtesy, Professors A. E. and I. K. Raubitschek.)



(c) Runners, umpire, javelin thrower. Black-figured stamnos, Würzburg 328, *ABV* 343.3, by the Michigan Painter. (Courtesy, Wagner-Museum, Würzburg.)