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Vergil, *Georgics* 1.1-42 and the *pompa circensis*

For Philippe Borgeaud

1   In the eighth book of the *Aeneid* Vergil brings Aeneas, a character from Homer's *Iliad*, the future founder of Lavinium and, ultimately, a father figure of the Roman people, to Pallanteum, an Arcadian settlement on the site of the future Rome. Aeneas arrives there in the wake of Hercules, who, on his way back to Greece with the cattle of Geryon, had killed the local monster Cacus on the Aventine. Within the typological scheme inherent in Vergil's narrative, Hercules functions as a forerunner of Augustus, who, later in the same book, will be represented on the shield of Aeneas, an artifact which, while closely modelled on the Iliadic shield of Achilles, also celebrates the post-Actium triple triumph of 13-15 August 29BCE. Every reader of the *Aeneid* must attempt to make sense of this bewildering combination of epic myth-making, poetic allusion and historical reference to contemporary Roman concerns. D. Feeney has this to say about one particular aspect of Vergil's technique and of the demands it places on his readers:

> We may read the eighth book of the *Aeneid*, with its obsessive interest in Hercules, as an intelligent – if rather recherché – redeployment of Greek categories of god, demi-god, and human: the poet can focus on the hazards of stupendous mortal achievement with the aid of a structuralist schema drawn from his foreign literary sources. But for at least 150 years before Virgil was born, and possibly much longer, his fellow-citizens had been viewing processions before the games, the *pompa circensis*, in which divine images were, very probably, grouped according to just these divisions: first the twelve Olympian gods – itself a Greek category – and then Hercules, Castor and Pollux, Aesculapius, the sons of gods by mortal mothers. These mythic categorisations were part of the state's religious apparatus, and therefore part of the mental equipment of Virgil's readers.[1]

2   For the Triumviral and early Augustan period of Roman history, during which questions of divine status and deification were very much part of the political scene, these categories and ways of thinking about them, representing them and exploiting them are obviously of special importance. In this paper, we would like to take as a starting point D. Feeney's remarks about the *pompa circensis*, a ritual which he elsewhere describes as "the city's most elaborate display of the gods' images",[2] in order to show how awareness of this remarkable procession and of some of its meanings and resonances may help to shed light on another passage of Vergilian poetry in which Greek myth and contemporary Roman concerns are closely intertwined.

3   Vergil's *Georgics* begin with a remarkable prologue which begins by summarizing the main topics of the work as a whole (1-5a), before going on to invite a series of twelve deities to come forth and be present (5b-23). It then continues with an appeal to a person named as 'Caesar' (25; Vergil is referring to Octavian), who is said to be on his way to becoming a god and is invited to preside over the work's beginning (24-42). After the opening sentence, depending on how the text is punctuated, the remainder of the prologue is made up either of one massive sentence of thirty seven and a half verses, or of two sentences, one of eighteen and a half lines in length followed by another of nineteen lines. Mynors and Thomas place a full stop after *imbrem* in line 23, but most editors (e.g. Conington and Nettleship, Page, Richter, Erren, Geymonat, Williams) place only a semi-colon at this spot.[3] As we shall see, a detailed look at the syntax of the passage tends to plead in favour of the second solution. It also usefully draws attention to the ways in which Vergil introduces the deities he invokes and helps readers to grasp the imagined physical setting in which they are supposed to appear.

4   The first word of the invocation proper is *uos* (5). The Sun and the Moon are then referred to and Liber and Ceres are named. The initial vocative is then picked up and repeated by *et uos* in line 10, and in turn the Fauns and Dryads are asked to approach, *ferte...pedem* (11). A second

person singular follows, *tuque o* (12), also recalling the initial *uos, o*. Followed by a relative *cui* (12), it introduces Neptune (14). A connective *et* then adds Aristaeus, identified only as *cultor nemorum*, whose entry in the list is similarly introduced with a second use of the word *cui* (14), thus connecting these two deities. Next, without any connective, an *ipse* (16) introduces Pan, who is adressed directly with the second person iussive subjunctive *adsis* (18), recalling the earlier *ferte...pedem* (11). On this occasion also, the second person form is followed by another exclamatory *o*, following its use in lines 5 and 12. It is at this point that the reader finally appreciates the syntax of the whole sentence and realizes that the earlier uses of *uos*, *uos* and *tu* all imply the ellipsis of verbal expressions meaning 'come hither' or 'be present'. Subsequently, Minerva, Triptolemus and Silvanus are introduced in a syntactically parallel manner to Pan by the *que* of line 18, the *que* of line 19 (each attached to an objective genitive, *oleaeque Minerua/inuentrix* and *uncique puer monstrator aratri*) and the *et* at the beginning of line 20. The fact that the final name, that of Silvanus, appears in the vocative, *Siluane* (20), followed immediately by the generalizing formula *dique deaeque omnes*, confirms that the syntax of the whole sentence and this long series of vocatives is held together by the reader's consistent provision of verbs or expressions meaning 'be present' (*adsis*), or 'come hither' (*ferte pedem*).[4] When the next sentence, introducing Caesar, begins with *tuque adeo* (24), recalling the *tuque* which introduced Neptune (12-14), the reader realizes that the poet is unifying the whole prologue by subtle and varied repetition of vocatives and easily supplies once more a verb to express the ideas of movement and presence. It is the second person subjunctive *uenias* (syntactically dependent on the indirect question introduced by *incertum est*, 25) of line 29 which finally makes explicit the idea of Caesar's physical presence, in parallel to that of the other twelve deities.

5　These deities having been invited to come forth and be present, questions remains to be asked: present at what? Where is the reader to imagine them going? Where is s/he to place them? The obvious answer is that they are to attend the beginning of Vergil's poem, and that what we have here is simply an example of a relatively standard kletic hymn.[5] But it is our contention that there is a further level of reference present in the text and that for a Roman reader this appeal to a series of deities to come forth and be present at the beginning of Vergil's poem would have clearly evoked a very precise context and occasion, the *pompa circensis*, the procession of deities which marked the ritual beginning of Roman circus games.[6] This connection has already been made by M. Erren in his commentary on the *Georgics*:

> Er zählt die Götter nicht nur einfach auf, wie Varro in seinem Prosabuch, sondern spricht sie an und versammelt sie wie zu einer Götterbewirtung, einem Lectisternium, zu dem sie in einer Pompa circensis (vgl. K. Latte, Röm. Religionsgesch. 248ff.) in den Circus maximus einziehen und auf den Kultbetten (Pulvinaria) Platz nehmen, um der Darbeitung präsidieren;[7]

6　A series of references to chariots and chariot racing at later points in the *Georgics* tends to confirm that Erren has indeed caught an important feature of Vergil's text.[8] To put it simply, the way in which the gods are invited to come to be present at the beginning of Vergil's poem is modelled on the great procession of the gods which marked the ritual opening of the *ludi circenses*. It is our intention in this paper to produce further arguments in favour of making a clear and meaningful connection between prologue and *pompa*.

7　In the immediate context, Vergil ends his prologue in such a way as to draw attention to the act of beginning and the connection with chariot races:

> da facilem cursum atque audacibus adnue coeptis,　　40
> ignarosque uiae mecum miseratus agrestis
> ingredere et uotis iam nunc adsuesce uocari.
> But smooth my path, smile on my enterprise,
> Pity with me the unguided steps of farmers,
> Come forward and learn already to answer prayers.[9]

8　As poet, Caesar and reader stand at the start of the work (*coeptis*), these lines present the poem as a *cursus* and its course of instruction as *a uia*. This imagery programmatically presents the

complete poem as a journey of a particular kind, a chariot race in which the poet, in a variation on the ancient Greek motif of the poetic chariot of the Muses, presents himself as a charioteer, the movement of whose chariot represents the actual development of the poem.[10] It is the realization of this aspect of the text which explains the presence of the verbal correspondences between these lines and *Amores* 3.2, Ovid's extraordinary account of a *pompa circensis* and a day at the races.[11] If one compares Vergil, *Georgics* 1.16-42 and Ovid, *Amores* 3.2.43-58, it is obvious that there is some kind of intertextual relationship between the two passages. Vergil writes in his prologue, which, with Erren, we read as alluding to the *pompa*:

> ipse nemus linquens patrium saltusque Lycaei
> Pan, ouium custos, tu si tibi Maenala curae,
> **adsis**...   18
> **da** facilem cursum atque audacibus **adnue coeptis**,   40
> Yourself, leaving the high arcadian glades,
> Your birthplace, Pan of Tegea, graciously,
> Draw near...
> But smooth my path, smile on my enterprise,

In his description of an actual *pompa*, Ovid writes:

> sed iam **pompa** uenit: linguis animisque fauete;
>   tempus adest plausus: aurea **pompa** uenit.
> prima loco fertur passis Victoria pinnis:
>   huc **ades** et meus hic fac, dea, uincat amor.
> ...
> auguribus Phoebus, Phoebe uenantibus **adsit**;
> ...
> plaudimus: **inceptis adnue**, diua, meis
> **daque** nouae mentem dominae, patiatur amari;
>   **adnuit** et motu signa secunda **dedit**.
> But now the procession is coming - keep silence all, and attend!
> The time for applause is here - the golden procession is coming.
> First in the train is Victory, borne with wings outspread - come
> hither, goddess, and help my love to win!
> ...
> And Phoebus - let him be gracious to augurs, and Phoebe gracious
> to huntsmen... we applaud... smile, O goddess, upon my undertakings,
> and put the right mind in my heart's new mistress! Let her endure
> to be loved![12]
> She nodded, and by the movement gave favouring sign.

9   Vergil requests of a series of deities that they be present as his poem begins (*adsis*). Ovid welcomes the gods as they parade in the *pompa* (*ades*, *adsit*). Each poet asks one particular deity (in Vergil, a person named 'Caesar' (i.e. Octavian-Augustus) and in Ovid, Venus) to look favourably on their undertaking (*adnue coeptis* and *inceptis adnue*) and grant them a particular favour (*da*, *daque*). At this point, a careful reader may also note that Minerva, Neptune, Ceres and Bacchus appear among the deities mentioned in both passages. The particular association of the latter two with the countryfolk (*ruricolae*) in Ovid corresponds to Vergil's idea that he is invoking only gods with a particular interest in farming (*studium quibus arua tueri*) as part of his aim to instruct countryfolk (*agrestis*). Presented in this way, the verbal similarities are clear enough. On one level, of course, we have here some of the standard vocabulary one would expect to find in a prayer of invocation.[13] But since Ovid's language in *Amores* 3.2 is specifically used in relation to the *pompa circensis*, it is at least possible that when very similar vocabulary appears in Vergil the same context could potentially be in the poet's mind.

10   The Latin word *pompa*, from the Greek πομπή meaning, among other things, a procession or parade, is usually found in relation to three types of ceremonies: the *pompa triumphalis*, the *pompa funebris* and the *pompa circensis*.[14] The most detailed surviving description of the third type occurs in Dionysius of Halicarnassus, in the seventh book of his *Roman Antiquities*

(72.1-18). This passage raises many questions of interpretation which, for the purposes of this paper, may be set aside.[15] Here, it will suffice to concentrate on those elements of Dionysius' account which seem most immediately relevant to the Vergilian text. The first crucial point is that Dionysius confirms that the *pompa* is a spectacular procession which involves divine figures and which marks the opening of the circus games. Both aspects are relevant to the argument that Vergil is evoking it at the beginning (*coeptis*) of a poem which he likens to a *cursus* and which opens with the invocation of a long list of deities. In Dionysius' description, at the end of the procession come "the images of the gods, borne on men's shoulders, showing the same likenesses as those made by the Greeks and having the same dress, the same symbols, and the same **gifts** (δωρεάς) which tradition says each of them invented and bestowed on mankind." (7.72.13; trans. Cary 1914). In Vergil too the gods are described in relation to the gifts which they have granted to mankind (*munere*, 8; *munera*, 12:). The deities in question come in three distinct categories. First Dionysius mentions the Capitoline Triad (Zeus/Jupiter, Hera/Juno, Athena/Minerva) plus Poseidon/Neptune, before adding all the others "whom the Greeks reckon among the twelve deities" (Aphrodite/Venus, Artemis/Diana, Demeter/Ceres, Hestia/Vesta, Apollo, Ares/Mars, Hephaistos/Vulcan et Hermes/Mercury.) Next come the earlier generation of deities, those which the mythographers say to be the parents of the Olympians, Kronos/Saturn, Rhea/Ops, Themis, Leto/Latona, the Moirai/the Parcae, Mnemosyne. Then comes the closural formula, "all the gods to whom the Greeks dedicate temples and sacred precincts." Finally come those deities considered to come later than Jupiter, Persephone/Proserpine, Eileithuia/Lucina, the Nymphs, the Muses, the Horai, the Graces, Dionysus/Liber, as well as the demi-gods or heroes who were divinized after death and received the same honours as the gods, Herakles/Hercules, Asklepios/Aesculapius, Castor et Pollux, Helen (?),[16] Pan, and numerous others. Again, there are similarities to Vergil, who also combines figures from among the twelve Olympians with divinized humans, and includes Pan (16-18).[17]

11   Dionysius insists on the antiquity of his source, Fabius Pictor, whom he describes as "the most ancient of all the Roman historians" (7.71.1). In turn, he says that the *pompa* was first celebrated around 500 BCE. Wether this is true or not, his detailed description raises the question of the importance of the *pompa* in Augustan Rome. Earlier in the *Antiquities* he had described the splendour of the Circus Maximus, describing it as the most impressive building in the city (3.68). That this construction was important to Augustus personally is demonstrated by the fact that in his *Res Gestae* (19) he refers to the *puluinar ad Circum Maximum*. This place, which in the Greek version is translated by the term *naos*, seems to have been both the imperial lodge and a sacred space for the statues of the gods, where they were placed on cushions (*puluinaria*) after having been paraded in the *pompa*.[18] Concerning the actual fabric of the Circus Maximus, it is important to realize the scale of Augustus' intervention. It was he who completed work begun by Julius Caesar, bringing to a completion the monumental form of the site and adding at a later date the obelisk (10-9BC). It was no doubt after the fire which destroyed much of the Circus in 31 BC (Dio 50.10.3) that Agrippa was put in charge of both the rebuilding of the structure and the reorganization of practical aspects of the organization of the games (Dio 49.43).[19]

12   In light of this massive building programme and its wider political and cultural significance, there can surely be little doubt concerning the massive contemporary relevance of both Dionysius' account of the *pompa* and also of possible Vergilian references to the Circus and its games as he was writing the *Georgics* in the late 30s and early 20s BC. And one further consideration must be added to the various ways in which the organization of Circus spectacles may have had special contemporary importance. As mentioned at the beginning of this essay, the gods of the *pompa* are presented in terms of very precisely articulated "mythic categorisations". There is interesting evidence to suggest that this aspect of the *pompa circensis* was of very particular interest to onlookers.

13   Suetonius, in his life of Julius Caesar states that allowing himself to appear in the *pompa circensis* was one example of Caesar's tendency to present himself as a god (*Caes.* 76.2):[20]

> sed et ampliora etiam humano fastigio decerni sibi passus est: sedem auream in curia et pro tribunali, tensam et ferculum circensi pompa, templa, aras, simulacra iuxta deos, puluinar, flaminem, lupercos, appellationem mensis e suo nomine...;
>
> he even allowed privileges to be bestowed on him which were greater than is right for mortals; a golden seat in the senate house and in front of the speaker's platform, a chariot and litter in the procession for the circus games, temples, altars, statues placed beside those of the gods, a couch, a priest, an extra college of Luperci, and a month of the year named after him.

14   Dio Cassius tells a similar tale, again showing how political manipulation of the *pompa* functions as one aspect of a wider communicative effort on the part of Caesar (43.45.2; see also 44.6.3): [21]

> Καὶ τότε μὲν ἀνδριάντα αὐτοῦ ἐλεφάντινον, ὕστερον δὲ καὶ ἅρμα ὅλον ἐν ταῖς ἱπποδρομίαις μετὰ τῶν θείων ἀγαλμάτων πέμπεσθαι ἔγνωσαν.
>
> And they decreed at this time that an ivory statue of him, and later that a whole chariot, should appear in the procession at the games in the Circus.

15   It is Cicero who permits us to see how such things could be perceived, as the following letter demonstrates (Cic., *Att.*, 13.44; July 45 BC):[22]

> suauis tuas litteras! (etsi acerba pompa. uerum tamen scire omnia non acerbum est, uel de Cotta) populum uero praeclarum quod propter malum uicinum ne uictoriae quidem ploditur!
>
> What a delightful letter yours was! Though the procession was unplesant news; still it is not unplesant to know everything, even about Cotta. The people were splendid not even to clap Victory because of her bad neighbour.

16   These words bring out with great clarity the political reverberations arising from Caesar's attempts to manipulate the *pompa*. And further evidence suggests just how attentive the public could be to this kind of manipulation when, five years later in 40 BCE, the people applaud the arrival of Neptune, in order to show their attachment to Sextus Pompeius (Dio 48.31.5):[23]

> καὶ ἄλλα τε ἐπὶ θεραπείᾳ αὐτοῦ διεθρόουν, καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἱπποδρομίαις κρότῳ τε πολλῷ τὸ τοῦ Ποσειδῶνος ἄγαλμα πομπεῦον ἐτίμων καὶ ἡδονὴν ἐπ´ αὐτῷ πολλὴν ἐποιοῦντο. ἐπεί τε ἡμέραις τισὶν οὐκ ἐσήχθη, τούς τε ἐν ταῖς ἀρχαῖς ὄντας λίθοις ἐκ τῆς ἀγορᾶς ἐξήλασαν καὶ ἐκείνων τὰς εἰκόνας κατέβαλον, καὶ τέλος, ἐπειδὴ μηδ´ ὥς τι ἐπεραίνετο, σπουδῇ ἐπ´ αὐτοὺς ὡς καὶ ἀποκτενοῦντές σφας ὥρμησαν.
>
> They not only kept up a general talk to foster his interests, but also at the games in the Circus honoured by loud applause the statue of Neptune carried in the procession, thus expressing their great delight in him. And when on certain days it was not brought out, they took stones and drove the magistrates from the Forum, threw down the statues of Caesar and Antony, and finally, when they could not accomplish anything even in this way, they rushed violently upon these men as if to kill them.

17   The removal of Neptune from the *pompa* by Augustus reappears in another text (Suetonius, *Aug*. 16.5):[24]

> ... quasi classibus tempestate perditis exclamauerit etiam inuito Neptuno uictoriam se adepturum, ac die circensium proximo sollemni pompae simulacrum dei detraxerit.
>
> ... claiming that when the ships were lost in the storm he had cried out that he would conquer even without the will of Neptune and that the next time the circus games were held, he had Neptune's image removed from the festival procession.

18   Finally, Augustus' keen interest in the *pompa* is demonstrated in yet another passage of Suetonius (*Aug*. 43.12):

> Accidit uotiuis circensibus, ut correptus ualitudine lectica cubans tensas deduceret.
>
> When he was giving votive games in the Circus he happened to fall ill and led the procession of sacred chariots reclining in his litter.

19   Between organizing the divine procession and being a part of it many Roman spectators may have seen a line being crossed.

20   These anecdotes help to illustrate how the *pompa* is one element in the Roman culture of spectacle which became a focal point for issues relating to power and divinity in the late Republic and early Empire. At the same time, it plays an important role both in Dionysius' presentation of the Romans as Greeks and in his use of aspects of contemporary Augustan culture to contribute to his image of the Roman past. These ideas and associations help to illustrate the importance of trying to decide whether Vergil did indeed conceive of the opening of his *Georgics* in terms of a *pompa circensis*. Vergil's text is one in which the issue of Octavian's apotheosis is central to the thematic unity of the whole.[25] It is also one in which the mingling of Greek and Roman elements is particularly eye-catching, and this feature merits some brief discussion in terms of both prologue and *pompa*. As shown above, Dionysius uses the *pompa* to reflect on the nature of the relationship between Romans and Greeks. It would be absurd to argue that Vergil's handling of Greek elements in the prologue is inspired directly by such features in the *pompa*, but it is at least worth pointing out some aspects of Vergilian technique. It will become clear that the interaction of Greek and Roman elements is an important theme in the *Georgics* and that by means of one particular reference to Greece in another section of the poem he draws attention to the underlying presence of the *pompa* at the start of book 1.

21   Already in lines 8-9 of the book 1 the world of Greek myth is introduced. After naming Liber (the only occasion on which he uses the Italic name for Bacchus in the poem) and Ceres, Vergil explains their presence by referring to the gifts which they have bestowed upon humanity (7-9):

> uestro si munere tellus
> Chaoniam pingui glandem mutauit arista,
> poculaque inuentis Acheloia miscuit uuis;
> since your grace
> Procured that earth should change Chaonia's acorns
> For the rich ears of grain, and grapes be found
> For lacing cups of Acheloüs' water;

22   Chaonia is in Epirus, the River Achelous in Aetolia, and Vergil seems to present them as "the cradle of the human race".[26] By taking his readers back to the origins of agriculture and to the appearance of corn and wine Vergil inaugurates an important theme in the poem, that of aetiology and the origins of culture in general.[27] He does so by looking to Greece, where the Achelous was seen as the oldest of all rivers. Chaonia of course evokes Dodona, which was known to be the site of an ancient oracle of Zeus.[28] Greek and Roman elements again seem to be deliberately combined in line 11, with the invocation of both and Fauns and Dryads, the inclusion of the latter as a close Greek counterpart of the former being particularly marked by the way in which they seem at first to be overlooked and are then named parenthetically, almost as an afterthought (11), the *Fauni* having been first mentioned alone. Next, in quick succession, comes a series of Greek place names, Cea, Lycaeus, Maenalus, Tegea (14-18), the first in connection with Aristaeus, the others with Pan. Subsequently, Erigone and the Chelae, two more Greek names are mentioned. Erigone is a story of catasterism, with the young girl becoming the constellation Virgo. Vergil's choice of myth is dictated at least in part by the immediate context, in which he is evoking the possible catasterism of his Caesar.[29] The Chelae, the Greek word for claws, represent the pincers of Scorpio seen as a separate and quite distinct constellation. It is in the space between the two that the deified Caesar may find his niche. Whatever the astronomical details, intermingling of Greek and Roman elements is again prominent. But the most striking reference to Greece comes in lines 38-9:

> quamuis Elysios miretur **Graecia** campos
> nec repetita sequi curet Proserpina matrem
> Though Greece is spellbound by the Elysian Fields
> And Proserpine is loath to follow Ceres
> Calling her back to earth;

23   Vergil comes close to invoking Greek mythology as a discrete body of narratives and beliefs. It is important to realize that in doing so he has in mind stories which are particularly appropriate to this context. Mention of the 'Elysian fields' gives rise to thoughts about stories relating to what happens after death. Vergil is dealing in the passage as a whole with the apotheosis of Caesar and his entry into the *deorum concilia* (24f). In line 39 the mention of Proserpina may allude most immediately to the Eleusinian mysteries, closely associated with the agricultural cycle of course and so highly relevant to this georgic poem; she also had a temple, the *Aedes Cereris*, near the Circus, and appears in Dionysius' account of the *pompa*.[30] At 1.163 Vergil mentions the Eleusinian mother. But the myth of Proserpina is also one which deals with life after death, and so it is relevant, once again, to the presentation here of Caesar as some kind of god-in-waiting.

24   In relation to all these elements Vergil probably has specific Greek literary texts in mind, but it is not possible to trace in full his intertextual strategy. What is his model, for example, for the unusual version of the Proserpina story he chooses? Normally, she follows her mother out of Hades. He no doubt has Eratosthenes' *Erigone* in mind and Aratus too for the details about the Chelae. In one case, it is possible to imagine the presence of Callimachean echoes, given that the expression *nouum...sidus* of line 32 may be intended to recall him via Catullus 66.64, *sidus...nouum*. Given that the *Coma Berenices* of the end of *Aetia* 4 is a model elsewhere in the poem, and that its twin the *Victoria Berenices*, a poem in celebration of a victory in the chariot race at the Nemean Games, is the direct model for the prologue to book 3, it seems reasonably certain that Vergil is modelling his striking praise of Caesar on Callimachean encomium. But the discussion of Greek elements in the prologue should not be restricted to the search for literary models alone, even if the whole question of Vergil's relationship with and manipulation of Greek literary tradition is extremely important throughout the *Georgics*.[31] Greece is important in other ways too. Many Greek places are named throughout the poem and, perhaps most crucially, at the end of book 1 Greece is central to some of the poem's main concerns because of the fact that it was at Philippi in Macedonia that the bloody civil war arising from the assassination of Julius Caesar had been fought. For Vergil, Greece is a place of cultural origins, but it is also a part of the world ruled by Rome and it is a place in which the fate of Rome is played out. Furthermore, it is a place which has strong cultural associations with Ptolemaic Egypt, a country with which Rome was at war during the period of the writing of the *Georgics*. Vergil even goes so far as to imagine the Nile depicted on the doors of the Caesarian temple he describes in the prologue to the third book (26-29). By doing so he celebrates Octavian's victory over Antony and Cleopatra at Actium and subsequently in Alexandria, giving rise to the ironical fact that he is drawing on the Ptolemaic encomium of Callimachus for Berenice as the direct model for his production of encomium of the man he calls Caesar, i.e. Octavian, for his victory over Cleopatra. If Vergil is confident enough to envisage the deification of the same Caesar already in the prologue to the first book, it seems reasonable to conclude that the triumphs celebrated at the beginning of book 3 are already won and so underpin the optimism of the poem's opening. This connection between the work's two grand prologues (books 2 and 4 have much shorter and less ambitious openings) helps to bring into focus a similarity between the two passages which is particularly interesting for the argument that the *pompa circensis* is an important point of reference.

25   The word *Graecia* appears only twice in the whole poem, at 1.38 and 3.20. The former we have already looked at in some detail. The word's second occurrence is as follows (16-20):

>   in medio mihi Caesar erit templumque tenebit:
>   illi uictor ego et Tyrio conspectus in ostro
>   centum quadriiugos agitabo ad flumina currus.
>   cuncta mihi Alpheum linquens lucosque Molorchi
>   cursibus et crudo decernet **Graecia** caestu.   20
>   ipse caput tonsae foliis ornatus oliuae
>   dona feram. iam nunc sollemnis ducere **pompas**
>   In the middle of the shrine, as patron god,
>   I will have Caesar placed, and in his honour

> Myself as victor in resplendent purple
> Will drive a hundred chariots by the river.
> For me all Greece, deserting the Alpheüs,
> Olympia's river, and the groves of Nemea
> In racing and in boxing will compete.
> Myself as priest, my brow with olive wreathed,
> Will offer gifts. I see myself already
> Leading the solemn procession joyfully
> To the shrine and watching bullocks sacrificed,

26 In the preceding lines Vergil has foreseen (*deducam*, 11) the triumphal transfer of the Muses from Greece to Italy. This triumph will be accompanied with a temple foundation and *ludi circenses* (*centum quadriiugos agitabo...currus*, 18), as well as other sporting contests (*caestu*, 20) and theatrical performances (*scaena*, 24). Furthermore, Vergil predicts that all of Greece will attend these games. The expression *cuncta...Graecia* must surely recall the occurrence of *Graecia* at 1.38. There, in a striking combination of Roman and Greek concerns, Vergil had evoked certain myths of the Greeks in relation to the forthcoming apotheosis of Caesar, while here, once more in a context in which the deification of Caesar is of central importance, the Greeks will desert their Olympic and Nemean games, which Vergil evokes by learned reference to place-names (Alpheus and Nemea (*lucos Molorchi*), 19). In the midst of the description of all these future plans there occurs a striking switch to an impersonal verb in the present tense (*iam nunc iuuat*) after a long series of future tenses. Suddenly, Vergil imagines a *pompa* actually taking place. When it is described as making its way to altars (*ad delubras*) where sacrifices (*caesi...iuuenci*) take place, the reader may think of it as a sacrificial *pompa*. But in the immediately preceding lines, as we have just seen, Vergil has been imagining circus games on a remarkable scale, with himself as organizer and/or participant (*centum quadriiugos agitabo...currus*, 18), and so it surely makes more sense to see the *pompa* of line 22 as the *pompa circensis*, the procession which will actually mark the beginning of the triumphal games he is looking forward to.[32] If this is indeed the case, given the other connections between this prologue and that of book 1 just discussed, there is further support for seeing the implicit presence of a *pompa* underpinning the invocation of the 13 deities which opens the whole poem.

27 In conclusion, there are good reasons for believing that a Roman reader would easily have seen connections between the prologue of the first book of the *Georgics* and the *pompa circensis*. The parallels between the Vergilian text and the detailed evocations of this remarkable ritual by Dionysius of Halicarnassus and, in very different mode, by Ovid, are economically explained by this suggestion. But perhaps more importantly, Vergil is also drawing on a vital aspect of the significance of the *pompa* in contemporary Roman culture. This brilliant display of the gods had become a reference point for consideration of divine status and political power in triumviral Rome. These very matters lie at the heart of Vergil's prologue and indeed of his whole poem. Appreciation of the presence of the *pompa circensis* at the work's opening thus becomes more than simply a matter of formal recognition of one simple aspect of the particular way in which the gods are invoked to attend this particular beginning. Rather, it becomes an important element in the reader's approach to the interpretation of a central theme running right though the poem as a whole, that is consideration of the importance of the name 'Caesar' in recent Roman history and brilliantly insightful investigation of evolving patterns of Roman ruler-cult at a crucial turning point in that history. Of the *pompa circensis* D. Feeney has written:

> As the principal venue for display of divinity, the *pompa* could arise high emotions and was necessarily adaptable to changes in ideology... and Caesar's introduction of his own statue into the *pompa* was the first step in the imperial appropriation of the pageant.

28 Right at the opening of the *Georgics*, when we are told of the forthcoming deification of Caesar Octavian, who had of course been known as *Divi Filius* for many years already, we see Vergil reflecting on ideological change and imperial appropriation in post-Actian Rome. At the very end of the poem, when we see Caesar for the last time, it is perhaps not surprising that the

final words we read about him in the poem (4.562) imagine him making his way towards immortality: *per populos dat iura uiamque adfectat Olympo.*

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Notes

1 Feeney 1998: 55; see also 87, 96, 109f. Thanks are due to Denis Feeney and J. McKeown for help and encouragement at an early stage and to Jacqueline Fabre-Serris for her saintly patience throughout. We would also like to thank the anonymous readers who offered searching criticisms and sound advice, which helped to improve this paper in many ways.

2 Feeney 1998: 96.

3 For the most recent detailed discussions of the syntactic structure see Jenkyns 1998: 326-329 and Erren 2003: 31-32.

4 As often, Page in his note on *tuque* in line 12 puts it succinctly and correctly: "There is no verb in this or the next clause; the vocatives, however, mark clearly that some form of appeal is intended, and the third clause makes the nature of this appeal clear, viz. 'be present to aid me,' line 18 *adsis*." Erren (e.g. on 5f and 11f) also catches well the whole aspect of physical movement which characterizes Vergil's depiction of the deities as they are invoked to attend, noting of the parenthesis in lines 11 and 12a that it "gibt eine Regieanweisung für den Einzug in die Arena".

5 This is the view taken by one of the anonymous readers, unconvinced by the argument that the text offers a more precise contextualization. For a description of the form of a kletic hymn see Menander Rhetor 334.5-336.4 Spengel = Russell and Wilson 1981: 8-13.

6 It is worth noting in passing that at the beginning of his *De re rustica* Varro twice refers to the circus: at 1.2.11 he links the taking down of the last egg which marks the last lap of a race to the egg which was traditionally eaten at the beginning of a Roman dinner; and at 1.3 he has Agrasius compare the course of the work's instruction to that of a race, beginning at the starting gates (*a quibus carceribus*) and running (*decurrat*) to its end (*ad metas*). These associations illustrate the pervasive force of circus imagery in the mentality of Romans and how easy it was for them to make sense of its use in literary texts. For an example of the ways in which consideration of the topography of the Circus Maximus can enrich the interpretation of a literary text, the Ovidian chariot ride of Phaethon, see Barchiesi (2008) = (2009b).

7 Erren 2003: 13. Cf. also his note on *ingredere* in line 42: " 'Geh voran!' in den Circus und zur Pompa und den Sacra (vgl. 2,475f und 3.21ff). Vergil verlässt die mit Absicht nicht anschaulich ausgeführte Fahrtmetaphor von 40 und lenkt auf die Vorstellung des Einzugs zum Lectisternium zurück." Cf. also his note on *iam nunc assuesce*, 42. It is worth noting that we established a connection between Vergil's prologue and the *pompa circensis* before consulting Erren's magnificently rich commentary. On the much discussed links between Vergil's prologue and Varro's invocation of twelve deities with particular interest in agriculture see Wissowa 1917, Erren 2003: 13-15. For excellent readings of the prologue as a whole see Thomas 1988 and Mynors 1990: on 1-42, Horsfall 2001[2]: 99-100.

8 See Nelis 2008 for a full discussion, with bibliography, of references to chariot racing in the *Georgics*, including treatment of such passages as the chariot running out of control at the end of book 1, the races mentioned in the prologue to book 3, the discussion of how to train racing horses later in book 3 and the metapoetic and cosmic aspects of circus imagery; see also Nelis 2010.

9 Translation by Wilkinson 1982.

10 See Nelis 2008: 502-504 for detailed discussion. Erren 2003: 42 on 1.40, while accepting the presence of an element of ambiguity over whether Vergil is thinking of a sea journey or a circus race, notes "denkt man sich aber das ganze Lectisternium im Zirkus, so liegt die Vorstellung eines Rennwagens näher". For the specific use of *cursus* to refer to racing see *OCD* s.v. 2b and *TLL* s.v. 1531.3-31.

11 In his forthcoming commentary on the Ovidian poem, a draft of which he has generously shared with us, J. McKeown notes the similarity between Ovid's *inceptis adnue* (3.2.56) and Vergil's *adnue coeptis* (1.40). For a literary reading which does justice to the brilliance of the elegy see Henderson 2002. Cf. also *Ars am.* 1.135-170 for another Ovidian description of the *pompa circensis*; see also *Fast.* 4.389-394.

12 Translation by Showerman 1914.

13 One of the anonymous readers compares *Georgics* 2.39-46 (*ades*, *da*, *ades*), Germanicus, *Arat.* 16 (*adsis*), Ovid, *Fast.* 1.1-18 (*ades*, *adnue*, *da*), Statius, *Theb.* 1.56-87 (*adnue*). For *adsis fauens* in a prayer cf. *ILS* 3530 and see Chapot and Laurot 2001: 268-70 on the prologue as a whole. In one of Vergil's key models, the prayer to the twelves deities at the opening of the *De re rustica* (1.1.4-6), Varro uses first person verbs with direct objects, *inuocabo eos*, *adueneror*, *precor*; he closes his prayer with the words, *deis ad uenerationem aduocatis*.

14 For some recent work in the whole area of Roman processions see for example Bastien 2007, Beard 2007, Hölkeskamp 2008, Krasser, Pausch and Petrovic 2008, Fless 2008, Östenberg 2009, Pelikan Pittinger 2009, Arena 2010. On the circus games in general see Humphrey 1986, Nelis-Clément and Roddaz 2008, Marcatilli 2009. On the culture of spectacles in the late Republican and early Imperial period see for example Beacham 2005, Sumi 2005, Benoist 1999, 2005. For the earlier material and Republican *ludi* see Bernstein 1998.

15 For discussion see Thuillier 1975, Nelis-Clément 2002: 270-272, Nelis-Clément 2008: 440-444, Arena 2010: 54-61.

16 There is considerable doubt about this reading in the MSS and various emendations have been proposed.

17 On the deities who are, so to speak, already in the Circus, i.e. those represented on the central *spina* and in the monumental architecture of the complex as a whole see Marcattili 2006, 2009: 18-135. On Ceres, Liber and the agricultural associations of the Circus and its cults see Marcattili 2008 (and especially p. 207 for the connection with the prologue of *Georgics* 1), 2009: 135-141; see also Le Bonniec 1958: 185-192, 264-266, 278 and 378.

18 See Long 1987: 97-98, T. 34 and on *Res Gestae* 19 see Scheid 2007: 55-56, Cooley 2009: 187-188; more generally see on the *puluinar* Hugoniot 2006, Van den Berg 2008.

19 For full discussion see Roddaz 1984: 152-3, Humphrey 1986: 73. Tacitus, *Ann*. 2.49 refers to the reconstruction by Augustus *iuxta Circum* of the temples of Bacchus, Ceres and Proserpina; this was in fact a single temple, known as the the *Aedes Cereris*; see Coarelli 1993. All three deities are mentioned in Vergil's prologue, which is highly suggestive of the topicality of the passage; Vergil reiterates the importance of Ceres for *Georgics* 1 as a whole by naming her again at 1.96, 147, 338-50. In general see Le Bonniec 1958: 52-77, 108-164.

20 Translation by Edwards 2000. On Caesar and the *pompa* see Weinstock 1971: 184-6.

21 Translation by Carey 1916.

22 Translation by Winstedt 1918.

23 Translation by Carey 1917.

24 Translation by Edwards 2000. On this incident see Beard, North, Price 1998: 262, Feeney 1998: 96.

25 See Nelis 2010.

26 Conington 1898: ad loc.

27 See Gale 2000: 27-31.

28 On various different beginnings in *Georgics* 1 (e.g. Deucalion and Pyrrha; Jupiter's inauguration of a new *via*) see Hardie 2005. 23-25 = 2009: 41-3. For the suggestion that Chaonia puns on Hesiodic Chaos see Hardie 2005: 23 n.11 = 2009: 42 n.2.

29 See Ruiz de Elvira 1967.

30 See n.19 above on Proserpina and the Circus; and for a recent survey of the presence of mystery cult in the poem see Johnston 2009.

31 See Farrell 1991.

32 Cf. Erren 2003: 572 on 3.22 for the same conclusion.

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Résumé

In this paper we attempt to show that the prologue of the first book of the *Georgics*, in which a series of deities is invoked to preside over the beginning of Vergil's text, should be related to the *pompa circensis*, the grand procession of deities which preceded the celebration of the *ludi circenses*. The Vergilian passage is compared with the descriptions of the *pompa* to be found in Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 7.72.1-18 and Ovid, *Amores* 3.2. It is also discussed in relation to the prologue of *Georgics* 3, where a *pompa* is explicitly mentioned. In addition, we relate the prologue's prediction of Octavian's apotheosis to the fact that the *pompa circensis* was Rome's most remarkable display of images of the gods and hence a major focus for the categorization of the divine, particularly in Triumviral and early Augustan Rome.
Mots clés : Vergil, Georgics, pompa circensis, Circus games, Circus Maximus, Roman Religion.