

REREADING CALLIMACHUS' *AETIA* FRAGMENT 1

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FEW HELLENISTIC TEXTS have been read as often, and from as many angles, as the opening of Callimachus' *Aetia*.¹ The bibliography on these lines is enormous.² Scholars, however, have shown less interest in sustained readings of the fragment than in textual restoration, in Callimachus' supposed position on elegy versus epic, in the establishment of an artistic program for the Hellenistic period, or in finding a model for the aesthetics of Augustan and post-Augustan Roman poetry.³ Such selective readings may well reflect the apparent privileging of discontinuity of the opening, but we have concluded that there is much to be gained from viewing this fragment as "one continuous poem." Our intent, therefore, is to outline the broader issues that emerge from the opening as a whole in order to reopen discussion of the many enigmatic moments in these lines. Our analysis falls into two parts: the initial reading explicates the text to make clear the basis for our subsequent argument; our rereading focuses on the ways in which Callimachus both selects and misreads his poetic predecessors as he sets out his own poetic program.

THE FRAGMENT

Our text is taken from R. Pfeiffer's 1949 edition, with a few variations discussed as they occur:⁴

πολλάκι]ι⁵ μοι Τελχίνες ἐπιτρύζουσιν ἀιοιδῇ,
νῆιδε,ς οἱ Μούσης οὐκ ἐγένοντο φίλοι,
εἵνεκε,ν οὐχ ἔν' ἄεισμα διηνεκῆς ἢ βασιλ[η

1. Sometimes with innovative and controversial results, most notably Cameron 1995.

2. See Massimilla 1996 and Lehnus 2000a for a summary of scholarship.

3. An exception is Schmitz 1999.

4. Pfeiffer's text is derived from *P Oxy.* 2079, frag. 1, with some additions to lines 14–21 supplied by *P Oxy.* 2167, frag. 1. *P Oxy.* 2079 was originally edited by A. S. Hunt (*The Oxyrhynchus Papyri* XVII [1927], 45–55). For recent treatments of the fragment see D'Alessio 1996, 366–77, Massimilla 1996, 16–26, and Lehnus 2000a, 41–50.

5. Pontani (1999, 57–59) has made a strong case, based on the scholium in *Marc. gr.* 613 ad *Od.* 2.50 (μητέρι μὲν ὡς πολλάκις Τελχίνες), that Lobel's conjecture πολλάκι]ι for the first word of the poem is correct. Certainly the number of times Callimachus uses πολλάκι as a line opening is significant: cf. frag. 263.3, *Hymn* 4.41, *Hymn* 5.22, *Epigr.* 41.4 (Gow-Page, *HE*), frag. 202.60 (πολλ[άκις), *Hymn* 5.65 (πολλάκις). Cameron (1995, 339) provides further parallels. The supplement is an important one, as it introduces the first of many distinctions in the poem between frequentative and simple utterance. Note that the sentence opens with πολλάκι]ι, which πολλάις χιλιάσιν in the exact center picks up and οὐκ ὀλίγη closes out (the paranomasia in frag. 23.20 . . . πολλάκι πολλά is similar).

-]ας ἐν πολλαῖς ἥνυσα χιλιάσιν
 ἦ]ους ἥρωας, ἔπος δ' ἐπὶ τυτθὸν ἐλ[⁶ 5
 παῖς ἄττε, τῶν δ' ἐτέων ἡ δεκάς, οὐκ ὀλίγη.
] . [.]και Τε[λ.]χῖται ἐγὼ τόδε· “φύλον α[
] τήκ[ειν] ἦπαρ ἐπιστάμενον,
] . . ρεην [ὀλ.]ιγόστιχος· ἀλλὰ κατέλειπε
] ποῖλὸν τὴν μακρὴν ὀμπνια Θεσμοφόρος, 10
 τοῖν δὲ] θυοῖν Μίμνερμος ὅτι γλυκύς, αἰὶ κατὰ λεπτόν
 ῥήσεις] ἡ μεγάλη δ' οὐκ ἐδίδαξε γυνή.
 [. . . .]ον ἐπὶ Θρήϊκας ἀπ' Αἰγύπτοιο [πέτοιο
 αἵματ]ι Πυγμαίων ἡδομένη [γ]έρανος
 Μασσα, γέτα, κ,αὶ μακρὸν οἵστεύοιεν ἐπ' ἄνδρα 15
 Μῆδον· ἄ[η]δονίδες] δ' ὦδε μελιχρ[ό]τεραι.
 ἔλλατε Βασκανίης ὀλοὸν γένους, αὐθὶ δὲ τέχνη
 κρίνετε,] μὴ σχοίνω Περσίδι τήν, σοφίην.
 μῆδ' ἀπ' ἐμεῦ διφᾶ, τε μέγα ψοφέουσιν αἰοιδήν
 τίκτεσθαι· βροντᾶν οὐκ ἐμόν, ἀλλὰ Διός.” 20
 καὶ γὰρ ὅττε πριῶτιστον ἐμοῖς ἐπὶ δέλτον ἔθηκα
 γούνασιν, Ἀ[πό]λλων εἶπεν ὁ μοι Λύκιος·
 “.] . . αἰοδέ, τὸ μὲν θύος ὅττι πάχιστον
 θρέψαι, τή]ν Μοῦσαν δ' ὠγαθὲ λεπταλέην·
 πρὸς δέ σε] καὶ τόδ' ἄνωγα, τὰ μὴ πατέουσιν ἄμαξαι 25
 τὰ στεῖβε,ιν, ἐτέρων ἴχνια μὴ καθ' ὁμά
 δίφρον ἐλ]ᾶν μῆδ' οἶμον ἀνά πλατύν, ἀλλὰ κελεύθους
 ἀτρίπτους, εἰ καὶ στεῖλιγοτέρην ἐλάσεις.”
 τῷ πιθόμην· ἐνὶ τοῖς γὰρ αἰδομεν οἱ λιγὺν ἦχον
 τέττιγος, θ]όρυβον δ' οὐκ ἐφίλησαν ὄνων. 30
 θηρὶ μὲν σ,ύατόεντι πανεῖκελον ὀγκήσαιτο
 ἄλλος, ἐγ]ῶ δ' εἶην οὐλ[α]χύς, ὁ πτερόεις,
 ἃ πάντ,ως, ἵνα γῆρας ἵνα δρόσον ἦν μὲν αἰδῶ
 πρῶκιον ἐκ δίης ἥερος εἶδαρ ἔδων,
 αὐθὶ τ,ὸ δ' ἐκ,δύοιμι, τό μοι βάρος ὅσσον ἔπεστι 35
 τριγ,λφ,χι,ν ὀλ,οφ, νῆσος ἐπ' Ἐγκελάδφ.
] Μοῦσαι γ,ὰρ ὅσους ἴδον ὀθμα,τ,μ παῖδας
 μὴ λοξῶ, πολιοῦς, οὐκ ἀπέθεντο φίλους.
]σε[. .] πτερὸν οὐκέτι κινεῖν
]η τ[ῆ]μος ἐνεργότατος. 40

Often the Telchines croak at my song, fools, no friends of the Muse,⁷ because I did not complete one continuous poem on kings [. . .] in many thousands of lines [or . . .] heroes, but [. . .] my tale little by little, like a child, though the ten-count of my years is not small. [. . .] to the Telchines I [say] this: “tribe [. . .] knowing how to waste your liver [. . .] few-lined. But bountiful Demeter drags down by far the long [lady?], and of the two, the slender verses taught that Mimnermus is sweet,⁸ not the large lady. [. . .] may

6. Pfeiffer prints Hunt's conjecture ἐλ[ίσσω; Friedländer 1929 conjectures ἐλ[αῖνω. Neither metaphorical expression with ἔπος is, in our opinion, completely convincing; see our 2001 discussion.

7. Translations of these lines conventionally render this as “who are not friends of the Muses,” i.e., as a generic rather than a specific characterization of the Telchines. Surely, however, Μούσης (line 2) already evokes the metaphor of line 24, where the Muse is Callimachus' own poetic composition; cf. frag. 75.76–77: ἔγθεν ὁ πα[τ]ρίδος / μῦθος ἐς ἡμετέρην ἔδραμε Καλλιόπην. For the subsequent development of this metaphor in Roman elegy, its occurrence in the very opening of the elegiac *Aetia* is extremely revealing.

8. We retain Pfeiffer's text αἰὶ κατὰ λεπτόν and Rostagni's conjecture ῥήσεις; cf. however Bastianini 1996 and Lehnus 2000b, 23, 31.

the crane rejoicing in the Pygmy's blood fly [. . .] to Thrace, and may the Massagetae shoot at their man, the Mede, from afar. So are nightingales sweeter. Be gone Envy's baneful race. And in turn judge poetry by its art, not by the Persian chain. Nor ask me to produce a loud-sounding song. To thunder is not mine, but Zeus'. " For when, for the very first time, I placed my tablet on my knees, Lycian Apollo enjoined me thus: "[. . .] singer, raise your victim to be as fat as possible, but, my good man, your Muse to be slender. And I bid you this, go there, where wagons do not pass; do not drive your chariot along the same ways as others, nor along the broad path, but the untrodden roads, although you will drive a narrower route." I obeyed him. For we sing among those who love the shrill sound of the cicada, not the din of asses. Let another bray like the long-eared beast; I would be the small, the winged one, ah truly, that I may sing feeding upon the moisture, the morning dew from the divine air, and that in turn I may shed old age, which is a weight upon me, as is the tricorn island upon destructive Enceladus. [. . .] for whom the Muses look upon with favorable eye as children, these they do not put aside when gray. [. . .] no longer to move its wing [. . .] then the most vivid.

THE ARCHITECTURE OF A POEM'S OPENING LINES

In this section we offer an analysis of what we have called the "architecture" of the poem's opening, that is, the way in which the edifice of the text and its overriding themes are constructed from the smallest parts. The argument itself depends upon two densely interwoven oppositions, old-young and large-small, which come to function as essential components of Callimachus' poetics. Initially, Callimachus constructs his textual persona as having incurred the accusation that he is "like a child" (παῖς ἄτε). In the mouths of the Telchines this accusation seems to mean that Callimachus' poetic style is childish or immature, because he has failed to write one long continuous poem. But as the poem's opening unfolds, this accusation is transformed first into an aesthetic and then into the basis for Callimachus' immortality. "Like a child" becomes small, slender, thin-voiced, which in turn is transformed into the cicada, a familiar image for the immortality of song. The cicada provides the mythological prototype for Callimachus. Tithonus, the consort of the Dawn, was given immortality without eternal youth. But he succeeded in shedding the weight of old age by being turned into a cicada. Even Callimachus' choice of language reinforces this—τυτθόν (line 5) seems to be an implicit pun on Tithonus, so that the old man/cicada is already present in the small and episodic poet of the opening. The close association of child and old man is highlighted in the careful antithesis of line 6: παῖς ἄττε, τῶν δ' ἐτέων ἡ δεκάτης οὐκ ὀλίγη and repeated in the interweaving of images of old age and childhood at lines 35–38.⁹ Callimachus

9. Old and young voices are similarly juxtaposed at other strategic points in Callimachus' poetry. In *Epigr.* 1 Pf. (*HE* 54), the "advice" of the aged wise man, Pittacus, is reprised as the prophetic injunction of children. Frags. 67–75 Pf. provide a differently figured parallel in the confluence of "authors" (the poet Callimachus, Acontius author of erotic inscriptions, the chronicler Xenomedes). For Xenomedes γέρον is chronologically "younger" than Acontius παῖς; indeed the confusion of ages appears to be a deliberate narrative strategy. The poet Callimachus, who compares himself to a child in his careless use of knowledge at 75.8–9 is, in his relations to Acontius, conceived as an older voice. The close association of σέθεν at 75 and παῖς at 76 in part effects this: he "chronicles" Acontius, as does Xenomedes, and his Calliope immortalizes the boy's love story. Further, the old Xenomedes with his tablets (frag. 75) matches the old Callimachus of fragment 1, recollecting himself as a young boy.

continues this association in the narrative of the dream (frag. 2) where the old man of fragment 1, who first learned poetry from Apollo, is now (according to the scholiast's account) ἀ]ρτιγένειος ("newly bearded").¹⁰

If the figure of "Callimachus" in the opening lines is characterized as childlike or childish, his detractors are old, in terms of their mythological provenience as well as their creative aesthetics. The Telchines¹¹ were chthonic figures who belonged to the pre-Olympian past, the world of Titans and Giants. Associated with the islands, particularly prehistoric Rhodes and Ceos, their demise was linked imaginatively to earthquake damage that destroyed earlier habitations in these regions.¹² They were said to have been wizards who could alter weather phenomena, sometimes malevolently.¹³ As metalworkers, they were also the first statue makers, whose crude efforts were replaced over time:¹⁴ in other words, they were primitive artists.¹⁵ They are stigmatized as "not friends of the Muse" (line 2), that is, they lack artistic inspiration; and as "knowing how to waste [their] liver" (lines 7–8), that is, they cannot really create, but only brood and destroy. The subsequent discussion of poetry proceeds to demonstrate the aesthetic limitations of the Telchines while it justifies Callimachus' own aesthetic's supplanting theirs. Juxtaposition and contrasting word placement contribute much of the humorous effect of croaking/song in line 1: ἐπιτρύζουσιν ἀ]ιοιδῇ.¹⁶ The combination of dental and palatal sounds in Τελχίνες/Τε[λ]χίσιν (lines 1 and 7) recurs in τήκ[ειν] (line 8) and in the infinitives at line 20 (τίκτεσθαι· βροντᾶ,ν), where the juxtaposition "gives birth to thunder"¹⁷—all "sounding" poetic misconception.¹⁸ Also, in his placement of Τε[λ]χίσιν and τήκ[ειν] at the caesura in consecutive lines, Callimachus is surely playing on the "etymology" that derives Τελχίνες from τήκειν.¹⁹ Indeed, the reflection of sounds in lines 5 (ἔπος, δ' ἐπὶ τυτθὸν ἐλ[ι]) and 8 (τήκ[ειν] ἦπαρ ἐπιστάμενον) appears to reinforce both verbal associations of Tithonus/τυτθόν and Telchines/τήκειν. In each the essence of its subject is linguistically embedded.

10. *Scholia Florentina*, line 18 Pf.

11. We are not concerned here with who, if any, of Callimachus' contemporaries should be identified with the Telchines, but with their poetic function in fragment 1; on the former question, see Massimilla 1996 ad loc.

12. For a general survey see Herter 1934, 197–224. For the Telchines and Rhodes, see Diod. Sic. 5.55.1–6; for the Telchines and Ceos see Maehler 1982, 1.2.4–8 and Rutherford 2001, 288–90. Callimachus himself describes the destruction of the Telchines in the Acontius and Cydippe episode of *Aetia* 3 (frag. 75.65–69 Pf.), a destruction previously related in Pind. *Pae.* 4 and Bacchyl. 1. The poet's disclaimer at frag. 1.20 "it is not mine to thunder, but Zeus'" may refer to the Telchines' practice of weather magic as well as to the manner of their death.

13. Their status as γόητες may account for the language of line 17 (ἔλλατε Βασκανίης ὀλοὸν γένος) and line 38 (μὴ λοῖσθῶ) that links them with the evil eye while seeking to avert its effect.

14. Diod. Sic. 5.55.2: ἀγάματά τε θεῶν πρῶτοι κατασκευάσαι λέγονται.

15. As Wimmel 1960, 72–73 succinctly notes; whereas in *Ia.* 12 the poet (Apollo) or engraver (Athena) are artists par excellence.

16. On the meaning of ἐπιτρύζειν here see Cameron 1995, 340.

17. In another response to critics Callimachus also uses τίκτεσθαι of misguided art: cf. *Ia.* 13.14 and 66. Several of his uses of this verb elsewhere are associated with negative imagery: cf. *Hymn* 3.128 and 4.241.

18. The same combination recurs at frag. 2.5 τεύχων . . . τεύχει in another chiasmus.

19. See Rostagni 1928, 7. For similar metrical effects note that in the pentameter the caesura frequently marks what the poet rejects: e.g., line 10 μακρὴν, line 12 μεγάλη, line 18 μὴ σχοίνω, line 26 ἐτέρων, line 30 θ]όρυβον.

Formally, the poem falls into an opening “charge” placed in the mouth of the Telchines, followed by a much longer response in the persona of Callimachus. These two parts are bracketed by *μοι Τελχῖνες* in line 1, which the poet’s *Τελχῖσιν ἐγὼ* reverses syntactically in line 7. The response itself is structured around a set of interlocked injunctions that fall into grammatically demarcated sections of 10, 12, and 10 lines respectively before the text breaks off.²⁰ Further, each section exploits various permutations of large-small: weight, measure, and volume. In what follows we wish to make clear how even in their fragmentary state, these lines display extraordinarily tight organization, reinforced at every level, so that the form throughout both supports and foregrounds the content. This is true alike in syntactic structure, in word placement, in repetition of sound, and in metrical effect.

Lines 1–7

The charge. Within the *εἵνεκεν* clause (lines 3–5) phrases are arranged chiasmically: *ἐν ἄεισμα διηνεκές* corresponds to *ἔπος δ’ ἐπὶ τυτθόν*, and the disjunction of kings and heroes is distributed around *ἐν πολλαῖς χιλιάσιν*, with *ἦνυσα* located in the center. We suspect that the negative within the *εἵνεκεν* clause was deliberately positioned to create the illusion of two possible meanings: “one continuous poem I did *not* complete” or “one *non*continuous poem I did complete.” In fact, the words of the *εἵνεκεν* clause accurately describe the contents of the *Aetia*, a noncontinuous narrative of many thousands of lines on kings and heroes, but with the story told in small increments (*ἐπὶ τυτθόν*). Kings, both contemporary and mythic, and heroes figure in virtually every fragment; an anonymous epigram in the *Palatine Anthology* actually states that the themes of the poem were the *aetia* of ancient heroes and the blessed ones.²¹ We also note that the Telchines’ description of what Callimachus does *not* write occupies two and one-half lines (3–5), while the description of what he *does* do—line 5 *ἔπος δ’ ἐπὶ τυτθὸν ἐλ*—occupies only a half-line. Also, the caesurae at line 3 effectively set *διηνεκές* apart, metrically recreating the effect of discontinuity. Thus, even in his articulation of the Telchines’ charge Callimachus reproduces his own principles. The poet and his song in line 1 (*μοι . . . ἀιτοιδῆ*)²² surround the raucous Telchines, who, unknowing and not her friends, in turn surround the Muse in line 2: the caesurae in each line, following a monosyllable, heighten the opposition of Telchines and Muse.

Lines 7–16

Callimachus’ response is expressed initially with indicative and optative verbal constructions. It consists of a series of examples that appear to have been culled from earlier elegiac and hexametric poetry. Initially he weighs

20. Lines 39–40 are too fragmentary for certainty, but we are inclined to take them as part of a coda in which Callimachus continues his transformation into a cicada.

21. *Anth. Pal.* 7.42.7–8: αἱ δὲ οἱ εἰρομένης ἀμφ’ ὀνυγίων ἡρώων / αἶτια καὶ μακάρων εἶρον ἀμειβόμεναι.

22. Whether taken as a double dative or assuming, e.g., *ἐπὶ* with *δοιδῆ*. Cf. Pfeiffer on this line; Hopkinson 1988, 92; Massimilla ad loc.; Magnelli 1999, 52–54.

poems that are identified as large or fat ladies, while in the next section Apollo advises on fat sheep and slender Muses. He then shifts to the metaphor of weighing and measuring that becomes explicit in the “Persian chain” (line 18), by introducing examples of long-flying cranes and far-shooting Massagetae. We note that in lines 13–16, the crane is placed as far away from Thrace as possible, and Massagetae and Mede are at either end of their sentence. At line 15, the combination of word placement and metrical effect (e.g., the caesura after μακρόν) creates in the line a reflection of the length of the arrow’s shot. Repetition of sound within each distich distinguishes the mythical battle scene from the modern, human one. In lines 13–14 (ἐπὶ Θρηϊκάς ἀπ’ Αἰγύπτιοι [πέτειτο / αἶματ]· Πυγμαίων ἥδομ-
ἐνη [γ]έρα[νος]) the repeated juxtaposition of αι and π is emphasized by the playful inversion of sound in Αἰγύπτιοι / Πυγμαίων. In lines 15–16 the repetition of initial μ highlights the chiasmic arrangement of syllable length in the distich’s four essential words: Μασσαίγεται / μακρόν / Μῆδον / με-
λιχρότεραι. Further, each pentameter contains the “object” of the epic action of the previous hexameter.

Lines 17–28

This section is framed in a series of prohibitions: μὴ . . . στείβειν, μὴ . . . [ἐλ]ᾶν, [κρίνετε] μὴ, μηδὲ διφᾶτε, βροντᾶν οὐκ ἐμόν, ἄλλα, Διός. Callimachus supports his argument with the examples learned from his childhood encounter with Apollo. Apollo’s advice reprises the physical images of fat-thin (παχύς-λεπτός) already introduced and elaborates with images of broad-narrow (πλατύς-στενός).²³ Here, he uses short terms to describe the broad, popular paths in lines 26–27 juxtaposed with more attenuated terms to describe the untrodden paths; in line 28 the poet-addressee literally drives such an attenuated course: εἰ καὶ στελιγοτέρην ἐλάσεις. The dynamic of this section reinforces the images of childhood and clearly associates singer and god. The order of line 22 (Ἀ[πό]λλων εἶπεν ὅ μοι Λύκιος), with the god placed at the conclusion of each *hemiepes* surrounding the poet, contributes to the effect. Callimachus enjoins his second-person-plural audience (Telchines/readers) as Apollo enjoins the second-person-singular Callimachus; both poet and god perform a paideutic role. Callimachus addresses his critical audience in pejorative terms (lines 7–8), which refer, whatever epithet should be read at the end of line 7, to their artistic barrenness; in contrast, Apollo’s opening address αἰοδέ (line 23) instantly valorizes the poet in his position as aesthetic spokesman.

Childhood figures prominently in this section in the special relationship Callimachus claims for himself with Apollo, who spoke to him “when he first placed his tablet on his knees.” The tablet has two associations. First, we know that schoolboys started to write with tablets rather than more costly papyrus. And δέλτοι is the most likely reading at *Iambus* 5 (frag. 195.41 Pf.), a poem that concerns a schoolmaster (γραμματοδιδάσκαλος) and

23. On παχύς as a rhetorical stylistic criterion see Krevans (1993, 157–58); she notes that παχύς/λιγύς are also aesthetic terms in sound and music.

appears to include other images of the schoolroom.²⁴ Its use here, therefore, will reinforce Callimachus' status as pupil in respect to his teacher Apollo. Second, since writing on wax was impermanent, the tablet is the space for children's writing and may also evoke a poet's rewriting and improvement. By extension, writing on the tablet could imply short compositional units—letters, single poems (*paignia*, as it were)—rather than the long continuous narrative of a papyrus book roll. The contrast of the physical “texts” of Catullus *carmina* 1 and 50 is illuminating here. The *libellum* of *carmen* 1, smoothed with dry pumice and ready to be presented as a *munus*, is, literally and metaphorically, a finished object. The playful writing in *meis tabellis* of *carmen* 50 evokes rather the image of art in the process of its creation. Callimachus, by using this image in *Aetia* fragment 1 of himself as he first set a tablet on his knees, portrays a relationship with the advice-giving Apollo that calls forth both associations.

Lines 29–38

Here, the consequences for Callimachus and the Telchines of obeying or ignoring these dicta are set out. The text returns to indicatives and optatives and progresses through a series of examples of thin and raucous sounds. At line 29 (ἐνὶ τοῖς γὰρ αἰδομεν οἱ λιγὺν ἤχον), the verb αἰδομεν appears literally among those who prefer the shrill sound, the word order precisely mirroring the statement. Line 30 has the placement of the cicada and donkeys at beginning and end of the line, and forms a larger chiasmic structure with the following couplet, cicada-donkey-donkey-cicada. The fable of the cicada and the ass, with the onomatopoetic λιγὺν ἤχον/οὐλ[α]χὺς and ὀγκήσαιτο, is rendered the more effective because the position of the final “braying” word turns the line spondaic, one suspects to convey the maladroitness of the Telchines.²⁵ In lines 31–32 (θηρὶ μὲν οὐατόεντι πανεῖκελον ὀγκήσαιτο / ἄλλος, ἐγὼ δ' εἶην οὐλ[α]χὺς, ὁ περόεις), beasts large and small (and large- and small-voiced) surround large and small optative verbs.²⁶ At lines 32–34 the poet, imagining himself now winged, appears to flit through the lines of verse, and Callimachus now sings.²⁷ The result of his obedience to the god's injunction is his realization as singer. Indeed, throughout the fragment Callimachus associates the language of song only with himself, never

24. Posidippus *Suppl. Hell.* 705, a fragment with many thematic parallels with *Aetia* frag. 1, draws a suggestive distinction between *deltos* and *biblos*. At lines 5–6: νῦν δὲ Ποσει[τ]δῖππῳ στυγερόν σφραγίσσαστε γῆρας / γραψάμεναι δέλτων ἐν χρυσείαις σελίσιν (“sing now with Posidippus of his hateful old age, [sc. you Muses] upon writing in the columns of golden tablets”); contrast lines 16–17: Πειλαῖον γένος ἄμὸν· ἔοιμι δὲ βῆλον ἐλίσσων / τάμωφ' λαοφόροι κείμενος εἰν ἀγορῇ (“My race is of Pella. And may they place me, unrolling a papyrus, in the market where the people go”). The *biblos* of Posidippus' statue presumably marks his entire oeuvre, while the Muses are taking down his poem in dictation. On the imagery and language of writing in this poem see Bing 1988b, 15.

25. We are indebted to Nita Krevans for this observation; see also Magnelli 1999, 57.

26. So Crane 1986, 273. If the restoration [ἄλλος, ἐγὼ] at the beginning of line 32 is correct, the chiasmic effect is all the more striking.

27. αἰδομεν (line 29) is conventionally taken as *pluralis modestiae* (so, e.g., Massimilla). Yet one wonders if in a passage so self-consciously declarative, in which all other first-person verbs are singular, this first-person plural is not meant to further associate Apollo and singer; cf. frag. 384.53 where the first person, αἰδομεν, is used rather differently.

with his critics. The repetitions of ἀείδω/ἀοιδή/ἀοιδός (lines 1, 19, 29, 33) underscore the legitimacy of Callimachus qua singer.

In the final section, the ostensibly aesthetic criteria of weight, measure, and volume undergo one final transformation, into the physical circumstances of the poet and the Telchines. Length becomes old age, the weight of old age has its analogue in the island that sits upon Enceladus, and the poet's persona morphs into the slender, enduring voice of the cicada, while the Telchines are equated with braying asses. The final lines return us to the opening: whom the Muses love as children have enduring grace even in old age. Those who are not friends of the Muse, however, presumably end up weighed down like Enceladus, a giant punished for his *hubris* by Athena, just as the Telchines will be punished for *hubris*.²⁸ The motif of Enceladus' punishment balances here the theme of divine punishment introduced implicitly at the opening of the fragment in the "Telchines." The word that characterizes Enceladus, ὀλοός, in line 17 was applied to the Telchines; the rare word τριγλώχιν occurs in the Delos hymn in connection with the Telchines.²⁹ The logic of this passage is that old age, which is like the real weight of the island on Enceladus, whose fate was parallel to that of the Telchines, will be removed from Callimachus because of the value of his song, which brings immortality. The grumbling and graceless Telchines are doomed to bear the weight of their own churlishness forever.

The childlike poet defeating the dour and malevolent Telchines plays out a favorite theme in Callimachus' hymns—the triumph of a child-god over the forces of chaos, in mythological terms, the pre-Olympian generation. Zeus, who defeats the γηγενεῖς in *Hymn* 1, and Apollo, who defeats Pytho in *Hymns* 2 and 4, are revealing examples.³⁰ In the Delos hymn, the Telchines are associated with the cosmic upheaval that led to the birth of islands, at a time before the birth of Apollo.³¹ In contrast, the child-gods bring order and poetry. The opposition of chthonic and Olympian is a commonplace in Greek thought, particularly in classical art and literature. Perhaps the best example is the *Oresteia*, in which the rule of law for humans is linked to the young gods Apollo and Athena, who displace the chthonic Eumenides. In the opening of his *Aetia* Callimachus appears to be appropriating for himself the creative energy of childhood he has elsewhere attributed to his Olympians in the cosmic and divine realm. Just as the young Olympians bring a humane political order and a rule of law, in comparison to the older,

28. Diod. Sic. 5.55.1–5, and p. 241 above.

29. Cited n. 31 below.

30. Callimachus employs language similar to frag. 1 also in the encounter of Artemis and the Cyclopes, chthonic creatures who live under Mt. Etna in Sicily; cf. *Hymn* 3.64–65: οὐ νέμεσις· κείνους γε καὶ αἱ μάλα μηκέτι τυτθαῖ / οὐδέποτε' ἀφρικτὶ μακάρων ὀρώσει θύγατρες, where the Cyclopes are dire to look upon for the Nymphs, but not for the child Artemis. Compare also 30–31: τυτθὸν κεν ἐγὼ ζηλήμονος Ἥρης / χωομένης ἀλέγοιμι, where the child's grace can ward off the envy of Hera. For the precocity of gods in Callimachus, see Henrichs 1993.

31. *Hymn* 4.30–32: ἦ ὥς τὰ πρῶτιστα μέγας θεὸς οὖρεα θείων / ἄορι τριγλώχινι τὸ οἶ Τελχίνες ἔτευξαν / νήσους εἰναλίας ἐργάετο, where the Telchines have made the tricorn weapon (= trident) for Poseidon with which he struck the mountains and fashioned the islands; see Bing 1988b, 112–33 for a discussion of this passage.

chthonic forces of the past, so too Callimachus' poetry introduces a new aesthetic order in contrast to the confused and outmoded aesthetic that the Telchines represent.

A MAP OF CALLIMACHUS' MISREADING

To read the first fragment of Callimachus' *Aetia* is to enter into a reading at once of earlier poetic utterance and of Callimachus' reworking of earlier poetic utterance, and to observe a continuing engagement with poetic predecessors in a complex act of artistic self-definition. Within these thirty-two lines of response to the Telchines Callimachus incorporates at least ten different literary figures or texts: Mimnermus, Philotas, perhaps Antimachus, Aristophanes, Homer, Euripides, probably Choerilus, Hesiod, Pindar, Aesop, Plato, and the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*.³² In addition, Callimachus appropriates vivid metaphors from Aristophanes' *Frogs*, Hesiod's *Theogony*, and Plato's *Phaedrus*—all from passages about aesthetics. In this way he seems to select a metatext for each section whose critical language and imagery organizes the subsequent set of allusions, though he alters or reverses the rhetorical force of each of these earlier texts. His re- or misreadings constitute a self-conscious act of poetic "coming into being": in these lines the persona of Callimachus becomes a poet. Harold Bloom has defined poetic incarnation as "... the fearsome process by which a person is re-born as a poet," and as the result of an Empedoclean "catastrophe".³³ "initial love for the precursor's poetry is transformed rapidly enough into revisionary strife, without which individuation is not possible."³⁴ In an earlier study, Bloom characterizes this stage of artistic engagement as one of completion: "A poet antithetically 'completes' his precursor, by so reading the parent-poem as to retain its terms but to mean them in another sense, as though the precursor had failed to go far enough."³⁵ In the pages that follow we reread the opening fragment of Callimachus' *Aetia* to expose his misreading of earlier texts.

The most remarkable feature of the reply to the Telchines is a conceit from the *Frogs*—the weighing of poetry—deployed by Callimachus in such a way that virtually all other images in the fragment are transformed into metaphors for poetry. Callimachus "mis"reads a passage in which Aeschylus has just chosen the word "death" to put on the scales, while Euripides counters with "Persuasion." Dionysus responds that "Persuasion is light and senseless, but now choose something . . . that will draw the scale down for you [καθέλξει], something powerful and large [μέγα]" (1396–98). In Aristophanes, Aeschylus and the poetry of war and death win out over Euripides and Persuasion. But Callimachus reverses these poles. In his lines it is apparently the lighter (or shorter) poem identified as ὄμνια Θεσμοφόρος that surpasses the long (lady?) (τὴν μακρὴν). For Callimachus it is the per-

32. Others have been suggested, but we limit discussion to those that are certain or for which the probability is very high.

33. Bloom 1975, 10.

34. Ibid.

35. Bloom [1973] 1997, 14.

suasiveness of poetry, as evidenced by the elegance and delicacy of its execution, that wins out over the bombast of war and death.³⁶ The specific term Callimachus employs to valorize poetry—λεπτός—in the *Frogs* is associated with Euripides.³⁷

The identities of the poets whose oeuvre is “weighed” à la Aristophanes in lines 9–12 are the subject of long and ongoing dispute, which has tended to deflect critical attention from the wider framework in which the allusions to these poems are embedded.³⁸ Whoever the actual poets in these couplets are, Callimachus has constructed a catalogue of poems all of which are distinguished as feminine (“bountiful Demeter,” “the long [lady?],” “the slender verses,” and “the large lady”), thus situating himself in the catalogue tradition of Hesiod but also in an allusive literary tradition that stands in marked contrast to Hesiod. Further, this catalogue may implicitly generate an erotic field, which will extend through the next pair of examples, since at least two of his choices (whether Mimnermus’ *Nanno*, Philitas’ *Bittis*, or Antimachus’ *Lyde*) were thought to have been addressed to poetic mistresses.

Callimachus’ next misreadings are deliberately contrived to foreground length, and they shift the focus from the small and potentially, if not yet explicitly, erotic elegies that feature women to hexameter and warfare.³⁹ But Callimachus selects not Greeks and Trojans or famous heroic battles, but the decidedly nonheroic figures of pygmies and cranes. Virtually all we now know about this incident comes from Homer and black-figured pottery,⁴⁰ and, in fact, Callimachus seems to have been imitating *Iliad* 3.3–6:

ἡύτε περ κλαγγὴ γεράνων πέλει οὐρανότι πρό,
αἵ τ’ ἐπεὶ οὖν χειμῶνα φύγον καὶ ἀθέσφατον ὄμβρον,
κλαγγῇ ταί γε πέτονται ἐπ’ Ὠκεανοῖο ῥοάων,
ἀνδράσι Πυγμαίοισι φόνον καὶ κῆρα φέρουσai·

Just as when the clamor of cranes reaches upward to heaven,
when they flee winter and ceaseless storms,
they fly with a clamor to the streams of Ocean,
bringing death and destruction to Pygmaian men.

Callimachus, however, reverses the direction of the cranes’ flight in Homer—in his text they move *from* Egypt to Thrace. This is consistent with his

36. Cf. *Hymn* 1.65: ψευδοίμην, αἰόντος ἃ κεν πεπιθοῖεν ἀκούην, where Callimachus has less of an interest in “truth” than in persuasive fictions. See the discussion of Plato and rhetoric below.

37. *Frogs* 876, 956. On λεπτός and λεπτότης there is a large and complex bibliography; see recently Cameron 1995, 321–31 and 488–93. Wimmel (1960, p. 115, n. 1) lays out in detail the many parallels between the agon of Aeschylus and Euripides in Aristophanes’ *Frogs* and *Aetia* frag. 1.

38. The candidates are Philitas, who wrote a poem on Demeter (*Coll. Alex.*, pp. 90–91), to which ὀμπνία Θεομοφόρος undoubtedly refers; Mimnermus, who is named; and possibly Antimachus, because Callimachus described his poem, the *Lyde*, as παχὺ γράμμα (frag. 398 Pf.). According to the Florentine scholia, however, the comparison is between the short and long poems of Philitas and Mimnermus. This is based on the observation that the abbreviation in line 15 of the scholia would normally be αὐτ(ῶν), not another case; see McNamee 1982. For a recent discussion of the identity of these poets, see Cameron 1995, 307–20, and for bibliography Massimilla 1996 and Lehnus 2000a, ad loc.

39. Thus the contrast of war and love that Ovid evokes in, e.g., *Am.* 1.1 exists, if it is not explicitly outlined, in the opening of the *Aetia*.

40. See Kirk 1985, p. 265, nn. 5–6.

Alexandrian poetics, to banish ugly sounds from Egypt. It also coincides with the flight of the cranes in the third stasimon of Euripides' *Helen* (1478–86), who fly over the arid Libyan plains to carry the news of Helen's return to Greece (for the relevance of Helen to the opening of the *Aetia* see below).

The image of pygmies and cranes is followed by what at first glance seems to be another rather forced example of length—the battle of Medes and Massagetae. But the non sequitur is only apparent. The Persian Cyrus was eager to marry the Massagetan queen, Tomyris, but she refused. As a result, the two kingdoms fought a war at long distance (hence arrows) in which Cyrus was killed.⁴¹ The Massagetae lived in the same region as the Amazons and are identified as Amazons by a later writer.⁴² Thus we seem to have epic pygmies and Amazons (Massagetan queen) to match the elegiac exempla of large and small ladies. The parallel is further reinforced because whatever poem we equate with the “large lady,” Callimachus' choice of this phrase goes a long way to suggest an implicit play on the name of Mimnermus' famous poem the *Nanno*, since νᾶνος = dwarf. Either the *Nanno* is ἡ μεγάλη . . . γυνή (and Callimachus plays on the oxymoron) or the phrase αἱ κατὰ λεπτόν refers to the *Nanno* in comparison with Mimnermus' other known poem, the *Smyrneis*.⁴³ Further, the tale of the Medes and Massagetae has the potential for a nonmilitary or even erotic treatment but turns out—to paraphrase Vergil's words—as a tale of “queens and battles”: the enjambment ἄνδρα / [Μῆδον] at 15–16 wittily encapsulates this potential.⁴⁴ This matches the emphasis on women of the preceding examples and would have been further reinforced by the poems addressed to Ptolemaic queens that open Book 3 and close Book 4.

If the first two couplets compare long and short poems of Mimnermus and Philitas (or Antimachus), we have one archaic elegist (indeed the poet who is said to have invented the genre) followed by a later, or perhaps contemporary, practitioner. This is followed by an example culled from Homeric epic, while the encounter of the Massagetae and Medes depends upon a late or Hellenistic epic source.⁴⁵ This would give the chiasmic arrangement of late elegy, early elegy, early epic, late epic, poetic pairings that seem to reach their logical fulfillment with Callimachus' coupling of himself with Hesiod—that is, early didactic with late didactic. Callimachus describes his youthful encounter with Apollo in language that recalls the moment of di-

41. The story is best known today from Herodotus (1.205–14), though the logic of the passage requires that Callimachus had a poetic treatment in mind.

42. Polyaeus (*Strat.* 8.28) in relating details of this battle refers to Tomyris as “queen of the Amazons.”

43. Cameron's argument (1995, 312–13) that the *Smyrneis* was about the foundation of Smyrna by an Amazon is attractive here, since that would make the parallels of dwarf and Amazon exact, though the joke works even if the *Smyrneis* is not one of the poems in play.

44. We owe this observation to discussion with A. Barchiesi.

45. Barigazzi (1956, 168–82) identified Choerilus as the post-Homeric epic poet in question because he was said to have been a contemporary of Herodotus who wrote on the battle of Persians and Greeks at Marathon (see *Supp. Hell.* frags. 314–23; frags. 904–5, 928–37, 950 have also been assigned to Choerilus by editors, but *Supp. Hell.* demurs). A scholium on Verg. *G.* 1.482 (212 Hagen, 4 Bernabé, *Supp. Hell.* 332) attributes a “Gerania” to Choerilus. This is usually emended “Germania,” but if it is not a copyist's error, it does not necessarily provide information about a real poem; it could merely result from a misunderstanding of this passage of Callimachus. An evocation of Choerilus would also, of course, make the reference to “Persian chain” in line 18 a more pointed barb.

vine visitation in the *Theogony*: καὶ γὰρ ὅτ' ἐπὶ πρῶτιστον ἑμοῖς ἐπὶ δέλτον ἔθηκα / ἱγούνασιν, Ἀ[πό]λλων εἶπεν (21–22) parallels τόνδε δέ με πρῶτιστα θεαὶ πρὸς μῦθον ἔειπον (*Theog.* 24), where δέλτον appears to be a deliberate contrast with μῦθον. Apollo's advice about sheep and Muses in fragment 1 anticipates fragment 2.1: ποιμένοι μῆλα νέμοντι, Μουσέων ἑσμός and that earlier poetic initiation where Hesiod had to choose between his sheep and the Muses: ἄρνας ποιμαίνοντα . . . Μοῦσαι Ὀλυμπιάδες (*Theog.* 23–25).⁴⁶ The juxtaposition of thundering Zeus and the delicate voice of the poet in line 20 recalls Hesiod (*Theog.* 40–41): γελαῖ δέ τε δώματα πατρὸς / Ζηνὸς ἐριγδούποιο θεῶν ὅπ'ι λειριοέσση (“the house of father Zeus, the loud-thunderer, is delighted by the delicate-sounding voice of the goddesses.” Hesiod's epithet “delicate-sounding” (λειριοέσση) occurs in *Iliad* 3.153 of the cicada (discussed below), the image that Callimachus consistently uses in the *Aetia* to describe his own voice. The sentiment that “whoever causes evil to another, causes evil to his own heart” (τεύχων ὥς ἑτέρῳ τις ἐῷ κακὸν ἦπατι τεύχει, frag. 2.5) reminds us of the Telchines in frag. 1.8 (τήκ[ειν] ἦπαρ), but also of Hesiod's pejorative description of shepherds.

Callimachus rereads, or completes, the initiatory scene of the *Theogony* in his own terms. He is not, as is Hesiod, awed and inspired to sing, but rather he regards the Muses' appearance as a chance to interrogate them on thorny questions of mythology. And if the encounter with the Muses conferred vatic powers on Hesiod, Callimachus at the sublime moment appears to be taking dictation. If the Muses sang an original song to Hesiod, Apollo's advice to the newly fledged poet demonstrates his thorough familiarity with earlier poetry. It consists of a series of well-known sentiments about literary composition that predate Callimachus by several centuries, just as Callimachus' own composition is framed in terms of earlier poems. Thus, Apollo initiates Callimachus into his role as singer in the very terms with which the poet Callimachus defines his own poetic. Indeed at one level the *Aetia* as a whole can be read as an act of completion: Hesiod's *Theogony* tells of the genesis of gods and heroes; Callimachus tells of the *aetia* of their cults and practices.⁴⁷ His ordering assumes the earlier cosmology.⁴⁸ Both the opening of Hesiod's *Theogony* and that of Callimachus' *Aetia* foreground Muses and song, and in both the poet's interaction with the Muses is delayed;⁴⁹ in each interaction, the poet, now configured as shepherd on Helicon, follows a catalogue. Hesiod's catalogue sets his poem in the realm of theogonic song; Callimachus' catalogue of literary ladies places him in a complex discourse with earlier poetry and poetic statement. In fragment 2 he even takes on the guise of the archaic poet by becoming (in his dream) a youth on Helicon.

46. See Reinsch-Werner 1976, 337–38.

47. Well articulated in Fantuzzi and Hunter 2002, 74–76.

48. The gods of the *Aetia*, apart from Apollo and the Muses, are seen a degree apart: they are not actors, as those of Hesiod's *Theogony*, but are present in their cults and statues. Apollo and the Muses, on the other hand, function as a living metaphor of poetic inspiration.

49. Frag. 2 opens with the meeting of poet-shepherd and Muses. A fragment of a scholium (frag. 1a Pf. Addenda II 100–101, frag. 2 Massimilla) provides lemmata for lines that must have occurred between what are now preserved as frags. 1 and 2 Pf.: these suggest an invocation of some kind. See Torraca 1969, 74; Kerkhecker 1988; Bing 1988a. Krevans (1991) suggests that not the Muses but the Libyan goddesses of frag. 602 Pf. might be invoked here.

However, he locates his poetic persona and his aesthetic in Libya or Egypt, perhaps in deliberate contrast to the Panhellenic aesthetic embodied in the earlier poet.⁵⁰

If Apollo's advice about sheep and Muses has a distinctly Aristophanic cast, his remarks on poetic decorum in lines 25–28 are linked to the Homeric pygmies and cranes and the author of a poem on Medes and Massagetæ. These metaphors of paths and chariots were familiar from a number of sources, including Presocratic philosophy as well as poetry.⁵¹ It seems likely, though not absolutely certain, that Apollo is indulging in his own rereading of Pindar *Paean* 7b.10–14: κελαδήσαθ' ὕμνους, Ὀμήρου [.] τριπτόν κατ' ἀμαξιτόν / ἰόντες, ἀ[.] λωτρίαις ἀν' ἵπποις, / ἐπεὶ αὐ[.] πτανὸν ἄρμα | Μοῖσα[.] μιν (“Sound forth your songs travelling [. . .] Homer's [. . .] wagon track, [. . .] upon different horses, since we [.] the winged chariot of the Muses”).⁵² While this text has been frequently discussed and emended, its central point would seem to be that Pindar urges his chorus not to travel on Homer's familiar path without (at the very least) recourse to alternate sources of inspiration.⁵³ Callimachus himself may be giving us a demonstration of how to do this in his choice of pygmies and cranes, the simile substituting for Greeks and Trojans in Homer's text. By foregrounding the simile he reconstitutes warfare in terms of the small and aligns Homeric practice with his own, in which the ensuing animal fable of ass and cicada plays a central role.

On balance it is likely that Choerilus' well-known sentiment about late epic from his poem on the Persians and Greeks at Marathon is also in play here. Choerilus' *Persica* opened:

ἄ μάκαρ, ὅστις ἔην κείνον χρόνον ἴδρις ἀοιδῆς,
Μουσάων θεράπων, ὅτ' ἀκήρατος ἦν ἔτι λειμών·
νῦν δ' ὅτε πάντα δέδασται, ἔχουσι δὲ πείρατα τέχναι,
ῥστατοι ὥστε δρόμου καταλειπόμεθ', οὐδέ πη ἔστι
πάντῃ παπταίνοντα νεοζυγὲς ἄρμα πελάσσαι.

Blessed was he who was skilled in song in that time, a servant of the Muses, when the meadow was as yet undefiled. Now when everything has been allotted, and the arts have

50. *Anth. Pal.* 7.42.5 claims that Callimachus was transported from Libya to Helicon—whether in Cyrene or Alexandria it is significant that Callimachus physically locates himself outside of Greece proper at the opening of the poem; see Crane's remarks (1986, 271); and Krevans 1991.

51. Asper (1997, 21–107) provides an extensive study of the origins of these metaphors, not just in the context of Greek poetry, but also in religion and cult. In poetry, he would associate them particularly with lyric. He observes (p. 64) that the Callimachean metaphor in lines 25–29 is characterized by the oppositions of οἶμος/κέλευθος, ἀμαξία/δίφρος (assuming Hunt's conjecture of δίφρον ἐλ[ᾶν]), and finally by the verbs of motion he chooses. Callimachus reverses οἶμος/κέλευθος; for him κέλευθος is the untrodden path. οἶμον . . . πλατύν and κελεύθους ἀτριπτοῖς form an oxymoron (a widely used οἶμος becomes a κέλευθος).

52. Pind. *Pyth.* 4.247–48 may also be relevant: μακρὰ μοι νεῖσθαι κατ' ἀμαξιτόν· ὥρα / γὰρ συνάπτει καὶ τίνα / οἶμον ἴσαμι βραχύν (“It is a long distance for me to go by the main road, for time is pressing. And I know a shortcut”)—though it adds no more than vocabulary to the more complex expression of *Paean* 7b.

53. Whether a negative is restored in the first lacuna or not, the text delineates the need for those following Homer to adapt different poetic strategies (different mares). Asper (1997, 64–72) argues against a specific reference to *Pae.* 7. He points out that the similarities between the Pindar fragment and Callimachus might equally well result from editorial restorations. Asper's critique of the restoration of τριπτόν (p. 67) is based on the earlier spacing, and is obviated by D'Alessio (1992, 81–83), who demonstrates that the lacuna is larger than previously assumed; see also Rutherford 2001, 247–49.

limits, we are left behind in the race, and for someone looking there is nowhere to drive a newly yoked chariot.

If Callimachus is alluding to Choerilus' treatment of Massagetae and Persians in his earlier remarks (lines 15–18), it would not be surprising if he accorded him a treatment here that is in keeping with his invocation of Aristophanes' *Frogs* and of Hesiod. Callimachus would be rewriting Choerilus' views in declaring that it is still possible to write poetry, if one is prepared to abandon the obvious topics and to take the less commonly chosen road. If this line of argument is correct, Callimachus has constructed a scenario in which the epic poets in question can be used to demonstrate the validity of his own position.

The final section of fragment 1 incorporates literary precursors in a different way: the image of the cicada now seems to dictate the allusive frames of reference. As such the cicada serves as both poetic metaphor and as metatext: through the image of the cicada we recall other cicadas, and the texts that figure them.⁵⁴ In this way Callimachus' use of the cicada is both enigma and solution: it must be understood through the same texts that it rewrites. The section begins with an animal fable known from Aesop—the Ass and the Cicada (lines 29–34), in which the ass tries to imitate the cicada by feeding only on dew drops and, of course, starves to death.⁵⁵ Next Callimachus introduces old age (line 33) as a significant component of his cicada image. Gregory Crane has demonstrated the ways in which Tithonus (and perhaps the version of the myth found in the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*) is important for the text at this juncture,⁵⁶ but Tithonus only accounts for old age, not for the positive values Callimachus associates with the cicada's voice.

Although the *Iliad* is not usually cited as an intertext for this fragment of Callimachus, Homer's description of old men in the *Iliad* is surely the first to combine the elements of old age, cicadas, and skill with words. The Trojan elders in book 3.150–52 are described as:

γῆραϊ δὴ πολέμοιο πεπαυμένοι, ἀλλ' ἀγορηταὶ
ἔσθλοί, τεττίγεσσιν ἔοικότες, οἳ τε καθ' ὕλην
δενδρέφ' ἐφεζόμενοι ὅπα λειριόεσσαν ἱεῖσι·

Old men finished with war, but distinguished speakers,
like cicadas, that sit upon the branch
of a tree, singing in a clear voice.

54. Riffaterre (1990, 56–77), while reading a text of quite different character than this, a prose poem of André Breton, follows a sequence of demands placed on the reader by enigmatic imagery rather similar to Callimachus' use of the cicada here; see his discussion (pp. 57–58) of indices that compel the reader to search for an intertext, especially the dual nature of these indices.

55. 184 Perry: ὄνος ἀκούσας τεττίγων ἁδόντων ἦσθη ἐπὶ τῇ εὐφωνίᾳ καὶ ζηλώσας αὐτῶν τὴν ἡδύτητα εἶπε· “τί σιτοῦμενοι τοιαύτην φωνὴν ἀφίετε;” τῶν δὲ εἰπόντων “δρόσον” ὁ ὄνος προσπαραμένων τῇ δρόσῳ λιμῷ διεφθάρη. οὕτως οἱ τῶν παρὰ φύσιν ἐπιθυμοῦντες πρὸς τῷ μὴ ἐπιτυχεῖν, ὧν ἐφίενται, καὶ τὰ μέγιστα δυστυχοῦσιν (“A donkey upon hearing the cicadas sing was pleased with their harmony and envying them their sweetness of voice said: ‘on what do you feed that you let forth such a sound?’ and on their responding ‘on dew,’ the donkey by subsisting only on dew perished of hunger. So those desiring what goes against their nature in addition to failing to get what they desire, also suffer the worst calamities”).

56. Crane 1986, 269–75.

These lines belong to one of the most famous passages in the *Iliad*, prefacing the appearance of Helen on the walls and the *Teichoscopia*. The battle of pygmies and cranes, which Callimachus rewrites at lines 13–14, comes from the opening of this same book of the *Iliad* (3.3–6). In Homer, the old men greet Helen's appearance with a speech that begins οὐ νέμεσις, a phrase that has been suggested more than once as the supplement for frag. 1.37.⁵⁷ They go on to say that because of her beauty, no blame attaches to her for the sufferings the two armies have endured. It would be in keeping with Callimachus' professed poetics to misread Homer in this way, to extract not the material of battle, but similes that have the contours of animal fable. Moreover, they come from a section of the poem in which Homer's own speakers, the old men, so elevate Helen's beauty and the power of her erotic spell, that war itself fades into the background. Allusion to Helen is appropriate for a number of reasons: she is a paradigmatic figure in Greek poetry so beloved by the gods that she not only escapes the consequences of her actions, she escapes her own mortality. Moreover, her causal relationship to war and hence to Homeric epic is only one dimension of her mythology. From Sappho on she is also an emblem of the erotic. Finally, she has strong mythic associations not only with the Greece of Homer, but especially with Egypt.⁵⁸

The dominant image of this section, however, seems to be derived from Plato's *Phaedrus*.⁵⁹ Plato's cicadas were once men who, so delighted by the song of the Muses, gave no thought to food or drink but died. They became grasshoppers who now function as spies informing the Muses who honors them on earth (παρὰ Μούσας ἀπαγγέλλειν τίς τίνα αὐτῶν τιμᾶ τῶν ἐνθάδε, 259c5–6). Plato's text is significant for two reasons: first, the myth of the cicada introduces a discussion about the nature of rhetoric. In terms of the dialogue, rhetoric is seductive and spellbinding like the voice of the cicada, and for these reasons to be rejected. In his textual encounter with Aristophanes, however, we saw Callimachus' preference for the language of slenderness and elegance associated with Persuasion. It should not be surprising therefore that Callimachus appropriates the cicada as emblematic of the value of song. If Callimachus' voice is that of the slender, winged cicada, by analogy the voice of the Telchines is that of the braying ass. The sound imagery of *Aetia* fragment 1—grumbling Telchines, noisy cranes, loud-sounding song—embodies all that is anathema to the Muses. As is clear from Plato, the subject of sound is not merely a gratuitous reiteration of the small/large dichotomy. In Hellenistic aesthetics, sound was as significant as the visual and verbal, and certainly for Callimachus sound and the effects of sound are prevalent throughout his extant poetry.⁶⁰ Callimachus by becoming the thin-voiced cicada associates himself with the se-

57. See most recently Faraone 1986, 53–56. His argument for the reading is independent of this passage of Homer.

58. She is also associated with Ptolemaic Egypt in the opening of *Aetia* 3 (*Supp. Hell.* frag. 254.5 (10) εἰς Ἑλέ[ας νησιδ]α). We hope to turn to Helen's central and extraordinarily variegated role in the poetry of this period in a later study; her presence as theme, metaphor, and organizational element, and that of the Dioscuri, in both Callimachus and Theocritus, is revealing; cf. Callim. frags. 227–28, Theoc. *Id.* 15, 18, and 22.

59. On Callimachus' use of Plato see White 1994; cf. also *Ia.* 13.30–33 and its possible rewriting of Plato's *Ion* 534b7–c7.

60. See the discussion of Andrews 1998.

ductive qualities associated with rhetoric. Secondly, Callimachus identifies himself with the figure that in Plato is the Muses' informant. Thus his opening remark that the Telchines are not friends of the Muse (line 2) is now seen to be instrumental in their downfall. The cicada in Plato was an informant about all forms of artistic creativity—to Terpsichore about dancing, to Erato for lovers, to Urania for philosophers. This aesthetic versatility closely parallels, then, Callimachus' own behavior in this opening, as he moves through a variety of genres (including prose) to delimit his own aesthetic criteria.

As the section progresses, the poet imagines himself now winged, changing into the cicada. Richard Hunter makes the attractive suggestion that the dream that follows this section may not have taken place at night but at mid-day,⁶¹ that dangerous time in which the sound of the cicadas enchants the unwary (as Socrates warns Phaedrus). If so, Callimachus will have ended the section by inscribing himself into Plato's myth, but with a difference. For if he listened to cicadas on a literal level as a prelude to his dream, within that dream he not only listens to the Muses as they sing their spell-binding songs, but can sing his own in reply.

The opening fragment of Callimachus' *Aetia* offers a synopsis of previous metaliterary moments, statements of artistic self-awareness ranging over all the genres in which we know such moments to have occurred—lyric, comedy, epic, philosophy,⁶² and theogonic poetry. His self-conscious act of re-reading is calculated both to incorporate and supplant his predecessors.⁶³ The relationship of this fragment to the subsequent text of the *Aetia* is similarly definitive. Fragment 1 prefigures the subsequent poem, certainly the subsequent two books, in its dialogic structures, and sets in motion the complex recollection of earlier and contemporary poetic texts that will characterize the whole work. The fragment activates the aesthetics that will be those of the rest of the poem. And its initial recollection of earlier poetic texts provides in itself a paradigm of poetic interpretation for the subsequent course of the poem. Throughout the *Aetia* a variety of poetic indices—thematic, lexical, metrical—will direct the poem's audience at once to earlier poetic texts and then back to Callimachus' rendition of them, his completion of earlier poetry. And, in effect, with its definitions of style and occasion, of how and why, the opening fragment is not, as has been occasionally argued, unlike the rest of the etiologal poem.⁶⁴ Rather it provides the *aetion* for the song that follows.⁶⁵

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61. Hunter 1989, 1–2.

62. That both the opening of the *Aetia* and Theoc. *Id.* 7 recall Plato's *Phaedrus* is well known; there remains much work to be done, however, on the recollection of Plato elsewhere in Callimachus. White 1994 and Andrews 1998 have set out intriguing directions for future discussion.

63. As Callimachus himself becomes effectively here the new Hesiod, or in *Ia.* 1 the new Hipponax.

64. Fantuzzi and Hunter 2002, 88.

65. The proximate cause for this article was two graduate seminars taught respectively at the University of Michigan and Stanford University in the Spring of 1999. We are grateful to our students who asked the kind of questions that required us to move beyond the traditional answers. We also owe an enormous debt of gratitude to Alessandro Barchiesi, Marco Fantuzzi, Annette Harder, Nita Krevans, Jim Porter, and Jay Reed, whose advice and careful readings have improved this article in every way.

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