

CALLIMACHUS, *AETIA* FR. 1.9–12

My main purpose is to propose a new supplement at the beginning of line 10, but, in so doing, one can not avoid discussing 11–12 as well. First, then, 9–10:

ἀλλὰ καθέλκει
 πο]λὺ τήν μακρὴν ὄμπνια Θεσμοφόρο[ς
 ‘but fruitful Demeter far outweighs the long?’

Both *καθέλκει* and *πολύ* are guaranteed by the London scholia (Pfeiffer vol. i, p.3), so the gap is reduced to the tantalizingly small one of a monosyllabic feminine noun in the accusative case, most probably of four letters.¹ The number of possibilities cannot be unlimited. My own suggestion must necessarily remain in limbo in the present state of our knowledge concerning the poet or poets whom Callimachus is talking about, but at least it seems to me less bizarre than other restorations currently in the field.

When A. S. Hunt published P. Oxy. vol. xvii, no. 2079 in 1924, Housman’s *δρὺν* occupied this space, and the editor paraphrased ‘Corn is much better than acorns, though they grow on a tall tree’. This was both coherent and comprehensible: the lofty oak represents mankind’s primitive diet of acorns, and Demeter the later diet of corn, which, though not standing so tall, was far superior. But Housman did not yet have before him the Florentine scholia on this passage (Pfeiffer, vol. i, p.3), according to which Callimachus *παράτιθεται ἐν συγκρίσει τὰ ὀλίγων στίχων ὄντα ποιήματα Μυμνέρμου τοῦ Κολοφωνίου καὶ Φιλίτα τοῦ Κῶου βελτίονα τῶν πολυστίχων αὐτ (ῶν)² φάσκων εἶναι*. Curiously enough, W. M. Edwards did not know the Florentine scholia either, when he first suggested (*CQ* 24 (1930), 110) that *ὄμπνια Θεσμοφόρος* denotes Philetas’ elegiac poem *Demeter*. Although many of Edwards’s ideas now look wild, his reference to the *Demeter* is generally accepted. By chance we know that Philetas mentioned the very rare Attic word *ὄμπνιος* in his lexicographical writings (see Pfeiffer on Call. fr. 287), and it is a fair guess that he used it in his elegy.³ The exhibits in the literary debate which these lines of Callimachus reflect must have been so well known at the time that an oblique allusion sufficed to identify them.

¹ Mr. Parsons warns me how dangerous it is to be dogmatic on this point. The line-beginnings are lost in the papyrus. One can reconstruct the left margin by reconstructing the lines which can be supplemented with certainty (2, 3, 6), and, from a tracing of the letters lost, try to estimate the initial lacuna in the other lines — remembering always that scribes are not regular in their letter-sizes and spacing, and that the margin may slope leftwards as the column goes down. So it works out that the letters before *πολύ* occupied *approximately* the same space as *παῖς* in line 6. But of course some letters are wider than others. In Mr. Parsons’s tracing, both *θεῖν* and *Κῶν* (which Pfeiffer calls ‘brevius spatio’) occupy exactly the same space; if

one is palaeographically possible, so is the other. In fact they both come out as one letter too *long* for the space, which just shows the difficulty of reaching certainties!

² For the reading *αὐτ (ῶν)* see below.

³ The demand on Callimachus’ readers would be considerably lightened if Philetas had used the words *ὄμπνια Θεσμοφόρος* together at some important place in the *Demeter*, e.g. at or near the beginning, so that they became a recognizable ‘tag’ for identifying the whole poem. Thus Roman poets can refer to the *Aeneid* with ‘arma virumque’, or even ‘arma’, and Ovid identifies the *de Rerum Natura* by ‘Aeneadum genetrix . . . alma Venus’ (*Tristia* 2.261–2, from *Lucr.* 1.1–2).

One might have thought that recognition of Philetas' *Demeter* in ὄμπνια Θεσμοφόρος would make scholars abandon, together with Housman's interpretation, δρῦν at the start of the line. But this has not happened; some have treated δρῦν as reverentially as if it were to be read in the papyrus, or at least were the only possible supplement. Thus H. Herter in Bursian's *Jahresbericht* 255 (1937), 99 pronounced it 'wohl sicher', H. Erbse defended it in 1955 (*Hermes* 83, 425 n.2) and W. Wimmel, *Kallimachos in Rom.* (1960), p.87, still accepts δρῦν. Naturally enough, people sought a literary reference in δρῦν to balance that in Θεσμοφόρος. Edwards (op. cit.) started the fashion of accepting Housman's supplement, but understanding it in a way which Housman never intended; to him δρῦν . . . τὴν μακρὴν was 'the long poem about the δρῦς', i.e. the δρῦς ὑψίκομος of Dodona which provided the sacred stem-post of the Argo (*Od.* 14.327 ff.) — and so we arrive at Apollonius' *Argonautica*.⁴ Alternatively, could Philetas have composed a poem on a δρῦς (see Herter, p.101 — the evidence amounts to nothing), or δρῦς be a collective title for a miscellaneous work? More than one scholar has seen an allusion to a fable like that in Babrius 36, where a great δρῦς is uprooted by the wind, but a lowly κάλαμος is not (Wimmel, p.88 n.2). Finally, Pohlenz (*Hermes* 68 (1933), 319) brought in the story of Eriphanis (see Athenaeus 619).

Apart from δρῦν, most consideration has been given to γρᾶν (Gallavotti, Milne), γρηῦν or γρεῦν (Maas), meaning poems of Philetas addressed to Bittis.⁵ It is quite possible that Philetas composed for Bittis not personal love-elegy in the Roman manner but a catalogue of mythical loves like the *Lyde* of Antimachus or the *Leontion* of Hermesianax. Such a work might have looked backwards to Antimachus, and so have lacked the refinement of the *Demeter*; certainly there is little to be excited about in the long fragment (7 Powell) of the *Leontion*. Mimnermus too may have written similar poetry for Nanno, and indeed Callimachus may refer to it in line 12 of the *Aetia*-prologue (ἡ μεγάλη . . . γυνή). But, granting all this, and waiving any doubts over the space in the papyrus (will it take five letters?) and the form of the monosyllable (see Pfeiffer's note), a description of Bittis as 'the old woman' would surely be grotesque.⁶

I suggest θεῦν . . . τὴν μακρὴν, which has, I think, some positive merits, and makes the relatively less demanding assumption that Philetas (or conceivably another poet) wrote a long work bearing, like the *Demeter*, the name of a goddess for its title; Hellenistic poets often named their works after gods or goddesses. θεῦν, unlike δρῦν, requires no far-fetched explanation and the form is definitely Callimachean (fr. 731 τὴν θεῦν Ἄρτεμιν οἱ ἔπαθεν cf. *hymn* 6.57 for the nominative θεύς). The poet who spoke of keeping his Muse slender (fr.1.24) and of the 'fatness' of Antimachus' *Lyde* (fr.398) might well have been amused by the

⁴ It is virtually certain that Apollonius did not figure in the Florentine Scholiast's list of the 'Telchines'. Vogliano *ap.* J. G. Milne (*JEA* 17 (1931), 118) preferred νηῦν in the same sense; likewise, presumably, A. P. Smoritsch (ναῦν) in 'Miscellanea di Studi Alessandri in memoria di A. Rostagni' (1963), 250–1, who adds the unhelpful remark that καθέλκω is often used of ships — in the literal sense of drawing them down

to the sea.

⁵ Vitelli's Κῶν (*PSI* vol.xi, p.141 n.2) would postulate a foundation-poem by Philetas on his homeland. 'Brevius spatio', says Pfeiffer, but see n.1 above.

⁶ And not much better of *Lyde*. A writer of bygone days can be called 'an old man' in both Greek and Latin, but I do not know a parallel for calling the female subject of an old poem 'an old woman'.

notion of weighing two goddesses, one against the other, in the scales, and by the paradox that in the scale of true worth the smaller outweighed the larger. A number of scholars have observed the relevance to Callimachus of the *agon* between Aeschylus and Euripides in Aristophanes' *Frogs* (see Wimmel, p.115 n.1).⁷ There we find verses being weighed and also measured (799 ff., cf. Call. fr.1.18 *μη σχοίνω Περσίδι τὴν σοφίην*). The idea of matching two divinities on the scales could have sprung from *Frogs* 1391 ff., where Euripides throws in Persuasion (*οὐκ ἔστι Πειθούς ἱερὸν ἄλλο πλὴν λόγος*) and Aeschylus Death (*μόνος θεῶν γὰρ θάνατος οὐ δώρων ἐρᾷ*); Death, *βαρύτατος κακῶν*, is pronounced the weightier (note *καθέλξει* nearby in 1398). Furthermore *θεῖν . . . τὴν μακρὴν* would balance nicely with *ἡ μεγάλη . . . γυνή* (12). So if one day we recover more titles of poems by Philetas, it will be interesting to see whether there might be a 'long goddess' among them.

Hitherto I have for the most part assumed that the short poems of Philetas and Mimnermus are being compared with the long poems of *those same authors* (Pfeiffer's view), but now we must consider this notorious problem, and bring in lines 11–12:

τοῦν δὲ | δυοῦν Μίμνερμος ὅτι γλυκύς, αἱ | κατὰ λεπτόν
 ῥήσιες⁸ | ἡ μεγάλη δ' οὐκ ἐδίδαξε γυνή.

Following Pfeiffer's interpretation, the shorter poems of Mimnermus, called *αἱ κατὰ λεπτόν* | *ῥήσιες* (?),⁹ are set against a long poem which, if its title is known to us, might be the *Nanno*: *τοῦν δὲ δυοῦν* would mean 'of the two works'.¹⁰ Many scholars, however, e.g. M. Puelma (*MH* 11 (1954), 101 ff.) and most recently P. M. Fraser in *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, vol. ii, p.1053 n.253 and p.1058 n.287, believe that the short poems of Mimnermus and Philetas are set against long poems by *different authors*. This view has undoubted attractions. For example, Philetas is vindicated as a poet entirely on a level with Callimachus, which is how the Romans depict him, instead of having a foot in both camps. In line 11, *τοῦν δὲ δυοῦν* could mean 'of the two authors', and *ἡ μεγάλη . . . γυνή* refer to Antimachus' *Lyde* — particularly appropriate because the *Lyde*, as well as being disliked by Callimachus (fr.398) earned praise from two of the 'Telchines', Asclepiades (*Anth. Pal.* 9.63) and Posidippus (*Anth. Pal.* 12.168), so that the *Aetia* Prologue could be another shot in a continuing war over the *Lyde*. If *θεῖν . . . τὴν μακρὴν* were correct in line 10, one can even point to a plausible candidate for the 'long goddess', viz. the *Artemis* of Antimachus, comprising at least two books (fr. 75 Wyss). Only one reference to that work has survived, but it could have been more celebrated in Callimachus' day; Maas suggested that the first part of the remarkable Antimachus-commentary (*PRIMI* vol. i (1937), no.17) may be expounding the *Artemis*.¹¹

⁷ It is interesting that an ancient commentator cited the *Frogs* in connection with Call. fr.398 (see Pfeiffer ad loc.).

⁸ Rostagni's supplement — not certain, but highly attractive, gaining support from Call.'s praise of the *λεπτά* | *ῥήσιες* of Aratus in *epigram* 27.3–4 Pf.

⁹ Like the short poems of Aratus, and those ascribed to Virgil.

¹⁰ Some would have the words mean 'the fine utterances of the two books of

Mimnermus', based upon the 'duo libri' ascribed to him by Porphyrio on Horace, *Epist.* 2.2.101. This seems clumsy. M. L. West's sober but gloomy comment on the whole couplet of Callimachus in his *Testimonia* to Mimnermus (*Iambi et Elegi Graeci*, vol. ii, p.82) is 'locus non intelligitur'.

¹¹ If so, it was apparently a hexameter poem, not an elegy, since at one point there seem to be two consecutive hexameters (fr. 174 Wyss).

The fact that neither Antimachus nor any other poet opposed to Philetas and Mimnermus is actually named in the surviving text of Callimachus or in the scholia does not refute the view of Fraser and others. Callimachus must have been able to rely on his readers picking up allusive references; quite possibly there was nothing to suggest to them the name of Philetas beyond *δυμνια Θεσμοφόρος*.¹² The less learned London Scholiast¹³ may have said something helpful, but what survives has been supplemented by the champions of each view to support their own position.¹⁴ As to the Florentine scholia, these are of higher calibre, but remain silent on many points which we would be glad to know; e.g. they do not say specifically that *Θεσμοφόρος* refers to the *Demeter*, nor in effect do they notice anything in fr.1 later than line 12 (of course they may be extracts from a fuller commentary), passing from there straight to fr.2. None the less, I believe that there is evidence in the Florentine Scholia, and, more important, in the actual text of Callimachus, which strongly supports Pfeiffer's view, and, at least as far as lines 11–12 are concerned, virtually refutes the alternative.

First the Scholia: the crux comes in line 15, where an abbreviation has been interpreted either as *ᾠτ(ῶν)* or *ᾠτ(ά)*. In the former case the sense will be 'saying that [the short poems of Mimnermus and Philetas] are better than *their* long poems'; in the latter 'saying that *they* [the short poems of M. and P.] are better than long poems [as a general class — particular long poems not being specified by the Scholiast]'. Now the abbreviation in line 15 is *ᾠτ'*. Could this equally well represent *ᾠτῶν* and *ᾠτά*? Mr. Parsons tells me that the odds are heavily on the scribe having intended *ᾠτῶν*: (a) this is the normal use of the sign according to Pauly-Wissowa s.v. *Siglae*, col.2297 (admittedly an obsolete list),¹⁵ and (b) in the Florentine Scholia (*PSI* 1219) *τ'* always *may* represent *τ(ῶν)*, and in several places *must* do so, from the context (lines 17, 19, 26, 31). One might also argue that *ᾠτά* would be more or less redundant, while *ᾠτῶν*¹⁶ has real point, but perhaps it is unwise to lay too much stress on this; the palaeographical argument is clearer.

Turning now to the text of Callimachus, lines 11–12, with Pfeiffer's view we encounter no difficulties of translation or interpretation: 'of the two works, the small-scale poems established the charm of Mimnermus, and the large Woman [*?Nanno*] did not'. If we take the contrary view, it is far from easy to provide a satisfying translation or paraphrase. The best that I can do, allowing for the Greek word-order, would be something like: 'the small-scale poems established that, of the two writers, Mimnermus was charming, but the Large Woman [*Lyde*] failed <to establish the same for Antimachus>'. One is never surprised by

¹² Thus, Pfeiffer supplements the beginning of line 9 e.g. *ἡ μὲν δὲ γὰρ ἔην ὀλιγόστιχος*. Wimmel (p.87 favours *Κώιος οὐκ ἄρ' ἔην ὀλιγόστιχος*; the latter only really fits the view that short poems of Philetas are set against long poems of *different* authors — there would be little point in calling Philetas *ὀλιγόστιχος* if he were also *πολύστιχος*.

¹³ His remark that *πολύ* can be taken either with *καθέλκει* or with *μακρὴν* hardly inspires confidence.

¹⁴ *ἐδίδαξαν αἱ κατὰ λεπτὸν | οὐκ ἐδίδαξαν ἡ μεγάλη | λέγει ὅτι γλυκὺς ὁ Μίμνερμος* has

been alternatively taken to mean (a) 'he is saying that Mimnermus is delightful <in his short poems, but not in his long ones>' or (b) 'he is saying that *Mimnermus* is delightful <and not the author of the *μεγάλη* . . . γύνη, i.e. Antimachus>'.
¹⁵ It is part of a peculiar system used in scholia and such, quite distinct from the system used in documents.

¹⁶ Which can only mean 'of Mimnermus and Philetas', not, surely, 'of the poets opposed to Callimachus who have been mentioned above in the scholium'.

compressed utterance or contorted word order in Callimachus (on this score it would be hard to beat fr. 1.33–5), but the above seems rather a piece of clumsiness which I would hesitate to ascribe to the poet from Cyrene. It is not the difficulty of identifying the *Lyde* from ἡ μεγάλη . . . γυνή without Antimachus' name which gives offence, so much as the lack of balance in the whole couplet, with one side represented by both the poet's name and his work, the other solely by his work.¹⁷

We must, I feel, admit that only Mimnermus is involved in lines 11–12. Most probably the same is true of Philetas in the previous couplet. But perhaps a compromise, though less likely, is not altogether excluded. Even if 11–12 refer to just one single poet, it is still possible that two different poets might be involved in 9–10. There is certainly nothing illogical in the sequence 'the *Demeter* of Philetas is far superior to the *Artemis* of Antimachus [supposing that θεῶν and the particular reference for it were correct], and Mimnermus' short poems are much better than his long ones'. But one would have to argue that the Florentine Scholiast is mistaken, or at least not telling the whole truth.¹⁸

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¹⁷ Things might be a little easier if Antimachus had been brought to readers' minds by the previous couplet (e.g. with θεῶν . . . τήν μακρόν and a reference to the

Artemis), but not much.

¹⁸ I am grateful to Professor Lloyd-Jones, Messrs. W. S. Barrett, J. Griffin, and P. J. Parsons for valuable comments.