"I Hate All Common Things": The Reader's Role in Callimachus' *Aetia* Prologue

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When in 1928 a papyrus discovered in the Egyptian town of Oxyrhynchus revealed large portions of the prologue to Callimachus' *Aetia*, critics immediately recognized that this text was one of the most important of all of Hellenistic poetry. Accordingly, it has attracted the attention of a great number of interpreters.[1] A large portion of this interest, however, has concentrated on historical and biographical problems rather than on the text itself. This interpretative emphasis was already apparent in antiquity. Fragments of an ancient commentary on a papyrus now in Florence (*PSI* 1219), the so-called "Florentine scholia," show that ancient scholars tried to identify the opponents whom Callimachus designated under the name of Telchines (3–9). Modern critics have followed suit, and a disproportionate amount of scholarly work has concentrated on the question of who these envious and evil creatures were. It was widely assumed that the names given in the Florentine scholia were those of epic poets. Epic poetry, | critics thought, was far more popular in the fourth and third centuries than the Callimachean style of writing, and Callimachus had to grapple with constant criticisms of his works.[2] In the most recent contribution, A. Cameron has questioned this belief. He shows effectively that our evidence does not support the assumption that a large mass of multi-book epics was being written during the Hellenistic age.[3] He himself is convinced that the controversy really was not about epic poetry, but rather about the critical assessment of Antimachus' *Lyde*.[4]

However, it is important to realize that a number of common assumptions underlie both positions. Critics who follow either approach believe that there was a unique historical situation in which the polemic between the poet and the evil Telchines took place and that the prologue was written in and for this precise situation only.[5] In their view, Callimachus was trying to defend his own position against that of other poets who would not accept any poetry unless it was written in a high-flown, epic style. This reading in turn led to the assumption that what we have before us is just one manifesto of a much larger "battle of the books": "'Short poem' and 'long poem' were, after all, the battle-cries of the two opposing factions in the tussles of the coteries. Callimachus' own position as the leader of a school advocating the highly-wrought short poem is too well known to require documentation."[6]

1   The lively scholarly discussion which followed the discovery of the papyrus has been described by Benedetto [5]. Asper [3] appeared when this article was already finished; I can only note that we agree in many important points.

2   Especially Ziegler [111].

3   Cameron [15], esp. 277–89.

4   On this assumption, see also Knox [57], and Krevans [60]. On Antimachus' reputation in antiquity, see Matthews [72:64–76].

5   Cameron's [15] position is not entirely consistent. On the one hand, he accepts the identification of the Telchines offered by the Florentine scholia and thinks there was a "real" feud behind the prologue (e.g. 230, 328), on the other hand, he seems to allow for a certain degree of fictitiousness about the polemic when he writes regarding the prologue and *Iamb.* 13 (359): "[…] both replies are best read as dramatized presentations of the critical principles underlying the two works rather than serious defenses of embattled positions." The former element, however, is by far preponderant in his study.

6   Brink [12:1.71]; see also Smotrytsch [94], Lohse [68], esp. 41.

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What | emerges from this type of description is the picture of an ongoing debate between exponents of well-defined literary movements, a picture which appealed (and still seems to appeal) to many modern interpreters because it squares so well with what we think we know about how the *genus inritabile uatum* behave. It also caters to our seemingly insatiable appetite for biographical details about those who wrote the poems that still fascinate and delight us.[7] Perhaps the most conspicuous consequence of this kind of criticism was the notorious assumption that there was a quarrel between Callimachus and Apollonius Rhodius which has haunted studies of Hellenistic poetry for such a long time. The "Prinzipienstreit, der sich zwischen [Kallimachos] und einer anderen, besonders durch seinen Schüler, den Rhodier Apollonios vetretenen Anschauung über die Aufgaben der Poesie, zumal der epischen, erhoben hatte," appeared as a well established fact of the history of ancient literature and was referred to in almost all standard accounts; today, hardly anyone believes in its existence any longer.[8]

This historico-biographical approach could be labeled "closed interpretation." All (or almost all) elements in the text "stand for" or "represent" real, i.e., extratextual events and people: the Telchines "really are" Callimachus' opponents,[9] their poetological program is contrasted with Callimachus'

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own. The text and its referents, its context, form a self-contained unity which appears hermetically sealed off against any | approach from the outside. Readers alien to this context can only observe this unity from without; they are not invited to participate in the debate. The text is seen as a riddle, encoding these straightforward realities in bizarre poetical language. The critic's task consists in solving this riddle by finding out what the underlying reality was. Once he has reached the correct answers, there is nothing much else to do.[10] The danger inherent in such an approach is that the text is seen merely as a mine of historical information while its literary aspects are being treated as something that can be stripped off in order to grasp the really relevant issues. Today, such interpretive attempts meet with ever-growing skepticism.[11] An increasing number of scholars now seem ready to accept that the prologue is first and foremost literature and that it should be interpreted as such before one could even begin to extract historical information out of it: "[…] the Telchines and [Callimachus'] reply to them, like Apollo's speech [in the *Hymn to Apollo*] represent a fictitious situation: the *Aetia* prologue was not intended as a report of an actual historical event any more than the first person statements in Pindar's victory odes."[12] The "literariness" of the text should dissuade any premature closure of its sense and entails a rejection of any simplistic one-to-one relation to reality.

It is not the aim of this paper to adopt a modish deconstructionist stance and deny any connection between the *Aetia* prologue and historical reality. It is indeed possible, even probable, that contemporary issues were on Callimachus' mind when he wrote the prologue (even though I should like to caution that one has to be careful not to mistake conjecture, albeit plausible, for precise

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7   For U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, fighting for his poetical style was one of the most important aspects of Callimachus' whole life, see [105:1.178]: "Eine entschiedene Überzeugung hatte Kallimachos nur als Dichter, für sie focht er mit offenem Visier und zwar von seinen jungen Tagen an." Against, see now Cameron [15:452]: "So Callimachus' famous literary theories do not really amount to much—as theories."

8   The quotation is from von Christ/Schmid/Stählin [104:131–3], cf. Lesky [64:729–30], Fraser [25:1.749–54] and Smotrytsch [94]; he believes in a political quarrel between the "democratic" Apollonius and the "royalist" Callimachus). Against, see the most recent study of the evidence: Rengakos [85], 55–67 with note 55. The history of this fictitious biographical detail, which was invented in late antiquity and amplified by modern scholars, has been explored by Benedetto [5:40–91], with ample bibliography given at note 54.

9   As is still assumed by Massimilla [71:1.199]: "I Telchini—cioè gli avversari del poeta […]."

10 See Iser [45:4–5]: "[This approach to literature] is fatal not only for the text but also for literary criticism, for what can be the function of interpretation if its sole achievement is to extract the meaning and leave behind an empty shell? The parasitic nature of such criticism is all too obvious […]."

11 See, e.g., Hutchinson [44:9]

12 Lefkowitz [63:124].

knowledge, as has sometimes been the case in the past). Moreover, some elements of the text are clearly topical and require recourse to extratextual evidence. Literary critics have long since given up the naive assumption of early structuralism that poetic texts are self-contained entities that can be understood without leaving their autonomous universe.[13] Readers of the | *Aetia* prologue have to bring external knowledge to their reading. For instance, we find that in lines 9–12, several literary works are evoked. While Mimnermus (quoted by name in 11) by the Hellenistic age had been established as a "classical" author and knowledge of his poems could be expected of educated readers, Philitas (to whose poetry lines 9–10 appear to allude) was more recent and may not have been widely known throughout the Greek world.[14]

Those readers who had detailed knowledge of Philitas, his works and the critical assessment of his poetry in Alexandria will have had a deeper understanding of the text than those who knew less or hardly knew him at all. Yet even such topical allusions do not mean that the text is incomprehensible to this latter class of readers. W. J. Ong has shown how seemingly topical elements in Hemingway's prose (such as names or demonstrative pronouns) force a sense of closeness upon the reader:[15] "The reader—every reader—is being cast in the role of a close companion of the writer." In a recent paper, R. Scodel has made the interesting suggestion that the same technique may have been applied in early Greek lyric:[16] "[…] one of the particular effects of this poetry for outsiders is precisely the sense of eavesdropping, of admission to a small, enclosed world. I call this pseudo-intimacy, and if it is possible in monodies whose original performance context was genuinely intimate, it can be very striking in poetry whose claims to a broader audience are explicit." The same can be argued for Callimachus. Topicality in his poems is not intended to exclude those without topical knowledge; quite to the contrary, it can create the feeling of belonging to the poet's world, of being his intimate friend and partner.[17] Hence, it is | unquestionable that Callimachus' text has connections with the real world, but these references work in a much more subtle and varied way than the historico-biographical readings have allowed for. It is certainly not sufficient to treat the prologue as a historical document; looking for external events and people to whom the text alludes does not exhaust its interpretation.

Therefore, I propose to spend more time within the framework of the text before exploring its connection with the outside world. In doing so, I follow a suggestion made by the German critic W. Iser in a seminal paper published for the first time in 1970. Analyzing the relation between literary texts and the real world, Iser writes:[18] "It is part of the ineradicable naiveté of literary criticism to think that texts represent real objects. The reality of texts is always constituted by the texts themselves and thus a reaction to the real world." This paper, then, will focus on the reality constituted by the text rather than on the extratextual world. I will argue, firstly, that whoever reads the *Aetia* prologue, is not aloofly witnessing an aesthetic debate. Rather, he is invited to find his own place in the world as it is constituted by this text. While I do not deny the possibility that extratextual polemic may be one aspect of the text, I also want to contend that in the prologue, Callimachus is not making a plain statement of his poetological principles. Instead, he uses these principles and their proclamation

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13   See Scholes [88:35–8] (on the famous discussion about reading Baudelaire's "Les Chats" between R. Jakobson and C. Lévi-Strauss on the one side and M. Riffaterre on the other).

14   I am not here concerned with the thorny question of which poems exactly are alluded to in these lines; see the lengthy exposition in Massimilla [71:1.206–12] and the bibliography and discussion in Puelma [83:186–8]. A comprehensive account of Philitas' *Nachleben* can be found in Knox [56].

15   Ong [77:13] = [61:408] = [78:63].

16   Scodel [90:60–1].

17   For an explanation of the way in which such allusions work see Greimas [34:91]: "[…] son caractère événementiel est hypostasié comme 'unicité,' dans le temps et dans le lieu, d'un événement dont on ignore tout […]."

18   Iser [46:11] = [107:232]. This passage is not included in the English translation of the article in [74].

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as a means to secure his audience's concurrence and sympathy.[19] When Callimachus emphasizes the learned and recondite nature of his poetry, he does not claim to be | writing for a small elite of courtiers and fellow poets.[20] Rather, his strategy is to flatter his readers by letting them know how clever they are. I will show that this was a traditional device which can be found in poetry well before the Hellenistic age. Seen from this perspective, the seemingly exclusive technique of emphasizing the difficulty and allusiveness of his poems can paradoxically be read as an inclusive device, an elaborate kind of *captatio benevolentiae*. In the second step, I will show how this rhetorical purpose of the poetological program can be illustrated at work in other passages of Callimachus' poems as well. Only after analysing this communicative function will I attempt to integrate the results of my reading into the historical context of Callimachus' poetry and thus explore why this kind of writing seemed attractive to so many poets (and readers) at this particular time.

The prologue to Callimachus' *Aetia* begins with a summary of the Telchines' reproaches: they scold him because he does not write a long, continuous poem (ἓν ἄεισμα διηνεκές)[21] about the deeds of kings and heroes (1–6). The poet defends himself by arguing that poetry must not be judged by the measuring rod. He cites examples to show that small and refined things are always superior to

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the big and misshapen (7–20). He then quotes Apollo's authority: the god has once told him that poetry ought to be delicate (λεπταλέην),[22] not fat, and that he ought to | walk on untrodden paths (21–30). The legible fragments of the prologue end with the poet's prayer to be transformed into a cicada in order to escape the burden of old age (31–40).

When we read these verses attentively, we realize that the first person, the "I" that we encounter in them cannot be the historical person Kallimachos of Cyrene who worked as a librarian and poet in Alexandria during the third century B.C. The first person in the poem is capable of receiving advice from Lycian Apollo; he directly addresses the mythical Telchines. This apostrophe (see ἔλλετε, 17, διφᾶτε, 19 and probably κρίνετε, 18) serves as a sign of fiction; it demonstrates that the message which is sent to these evil creatures is not restricted to a specific time and place, but takes place within the everlasting now of the poetic discourse.[23] This first person, then, is elusive and fictitious, it is not the historical Kallimachos, but rather an "implied" author, "an ideal, literary, created version of the real man," as W. C. Booth's definition has it.[24] Virgil's adaptation of lines 21–24 shows that

19   A similar, though less far-reaching, interpretation for the poetological remarks in Callimachus' epigrams has been proposed by Meyer [73:172]: "Wichtig scheint mir daran, daß wir es nicht mit einer losgelösten Reflexion des Autors zu tun haben, sondern daß es sich hier um eine Verständigung über Fragen der Ästhetik mit den zeitgenössischen Lesern—etwa mit Dichterkollegen—handeln muß." See also Köhnken [58:438] (on *ep.* 21 Pf.).

20   This has been the accepted opinion in the past, see, e.g., the quotation from D. Meyer in n. 19 above, Hose [43:46–7], or Schwinge [89:23]. Somewhat more cautiously Goldhill [33:223–4] writes: "Social and intellectual exclusivity, then—*however wide the readership for Alexandrian poetry is supposed to have been*—is as integral to the contextualization of Hellenistic writing as the values and institutions of collectivity and openness are to fifth-century theatre." (emphasis added). Against, see Hutchinson [44:6]. Concerning this question, too, Cameron [15] is somewhat inconsistent. While he insists that Hellenistic poetry was not written exclusively for a small elite (56–63), he thinks the prologue would have been incomprehensible to readers outside the coteries of the Alexandrian court without a commentary (230; cf. Hose [43:54 n. 54].

21   On this notion see Cameron [15:341–52] Massimilla [71:1.203].

22   On λεπτόν and related terms in Hellenistic esthetics, see Reitzenstein [84]; Lohse [68:21–34]; Cameron [15:323–8], with extensive bibliography given in note 104, and Massimilla [71:1.218–9]. For a long time, critics had assumed that the idea had already been mentioned in 11 α‸ἱ κατὰ λεπτόν‸, but for papyrological reasons, Luppe [70] has recently argued against this conjecture.

23   On this function of apostrophe, see Culler [17:152–3]. The fictionality of the dialogue with the Telchines has rightly been emphasized by Lefkowitz [63:124]. Dubielzig [21] has recently made the interesting proposition that the Telchines may be a parodical allusion to the Phaiakes of *Odyssey* 8.481. This would make them even more "textual," one step further away from the real world.

24   Booth [9:75]; see also Scholes [88:29]: the poet "is not […] the same as the man of the same name, who pays the poet's bills, sleeps with his wife, and uses language in lots of ordinary ways […]." Despite his earlier misgivings about the assumption of an implied author (and reader), expressed in [31:135–54], G. Genette now seems to accept the

this was understood by ancient readers: In *Ecl.* 6.3–5, he has Apollo address the fictional character "Tityrus," not the poet himself.[25] Virgil thus avoided reading the *Aetia* prologue as autobiography (or at least, restricting his reading to autobiography).

There can be no doubt that the implied author (whom I will call Callimachus to avoid confusion with the historical Kallimachos) has some features in common with the real man. When he proclaims delicacy, | λεπτότης, as the characteristic ideal of his poetry, we can be sure that this is true for the implied and the historical author, as the correspondence between poetological theory and poetical practice is a decisive feature of Callimachus' (or rather Kallimachos') poems.[26] It is difficult, however, to define how far this identity extends. Does Callimachus' wish to "shed old age" (γῆρας […] ἐκδύοιμι, 33–5)[27] and the Telchines' reproach that his words are short like a child's though the number of his years is great (5–6) necessitate the inference that Kallimachos wrote these lines when he was an old man himself? It was, among other things, the acceptance of this premise that led Pfeiffer and others to the assumption that this prologue was written for a "second edition" of the *Aetia*.[28] More recently, A. Cameron has given compelling arguments against this view, although he still presumes that by ancient standards, the "real author" Kallimachos could be considered an old man at the time of writing the prologue (which he dates to ca 270).[29] But I think we ought to question the validity of the underlying supposition.

Callimachus' lines are of course not the only instance where a poet talks about his age. To quote two famous examples: Dante wrote the beginning of the *Divine Comedy* "Nell mezzo cammin di nostra vita" in 1300. Historical documents show that he was born in 1265, and in this case, both the implied and the real author were really "in the midst of their life," as 70 was considered to be the normal span of a human life. On the other hand, T. S. Eliot wrote his "I grow old… I grow old… | I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled" when he was 29, and "Here I am, an old man in a dry month" when he was 32,[30] a clear | example of a young real author creating an old implied author. Of course, it could be argued that Eliot's poems alert their readers to the fictional persona by their titles. In Callimachus' case (as in the case of Theocritus' second *Idyll*, for example) we do not know whether there was any paratextual information which helped readers decide if the image of the implied author is as "true" as Dante's or as "false" as Eliot's. However, these examples show that there are no hard and fast rules defining at which age authors are entitled to create the image of old poets or speakers,[31] and as we have only severely limited external evidence about the date at which Callimachus wrote the *Aetia*, I think it is paramount to consider the literary and cultural implications of the poet's old age.

Let us look first at the Telchines' reproach in lines 5–6. Their comment that Callimachus writes "like a child" (παῖς ἅτε, 6) appeals to the Greek sentiment that children's mental capacities are utterly inferior to those of adults.[32] Homeric epithets emphasize their lack of reason and rational speech (e.g., the adjectives ἄφρων and νηπίαχος), and comparisons to children are used in poetical texts to

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necessity of these narratological instances, cf. [32:75–9].

25 See Thomas [99].

26 This has been shown in the painstaking and convincing analyses of E.-R. Schwinge [89:5–25]. However, I do not accept his "political" interpretation of this and other features of Alexandrian poetry.

27 On the expression γῆρας ἐκδύειν which is technical for snakes or insects shedding their slough see Massimilla [71:1.227].

28 Pfeiffer [81] = [82:98–132]. The assumption of a second edition was shared by Wilamowitz (see Benedetto [5:18]; it is still accepted by many scholars, see the discussion in Massimilla [71:1.34–40] (Massimilla himself is also inclined to believe in the second edition).

29 Cameron [15:104–18, 174–184].

30 The first quotation is from "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," 1917, the second from "Gerontion," 1920. I owe these references to James W. Halporn who quotes them in an as yet unpublished paper on Callimachus.

31 However, Torraca [102:101], e.g., gives a precise answer to this question: "[…] il poeta è vecchio, almeno sessantenne."

32 See Garland [30:127–9].

disparage foolish adults: Nestor calls the Achaeans "an assembly of young children" (*Iliad* 2.336–337: ἦ δὴ παῖσιν ἐοίκοτες ἀγοράασθε | νηπίαχοις), Theognis accuses his addressee of "fooling me like a small child" (254 : ὥσπερ μικρὸν παῖδα λόγοις μ' ἀπατᾷς). Particularly, their judgment in artistic matters is considered flawed (see Pindar *Pyth.* 2.72–73 and *Nem.* 7.105). By the same token, old men are supposed to have reached the peak of wisdom (as old Nestor in the *Iliad*).[33] Accordingly, the Telchines lend weight to their accusation by way of this contrast: an old man should know better than to write such foolish things. Yet apart from drawing on these cultural stereotypes, the prologue also alludes to specific literary passages. As has already been observed by Pfeiffer, the poet's wish in 33–38 evokes the second stasimon of Euripides *Hercules* (656–686) where the chorus prays to be rejuvenated.[34] Yet the literary allusion | goes further: in this passage, Euripides himself is quoting Hesiod, as has been shown by R. Scodel.[35]

I would contend that these implications are more important than the author's real age. Nevertheless, it is unquestionable that the ancient public would not read a poem by Callimachus as a completely "autonomous" text pronounced by a disembodied voice; instead, they would intuitively construct an image of the poet who was speaking to them. Readers without personal knowledge would have been able to construct their portrait of the artist as an old man by drawing on elements given in the text and on their cultural expectations. Those who were personally acquainted with the author would probably use their knowledge of his life for this purpose. If the author really was an old man, they will have felt that this fact gave additional significance to his wish to escape old age "which weighs upon me as heavy as Sicily on Encelados" (τό μοι βάρος ὅσσον ἔπεστι | τριγλώχιν ὀλοῷ νῆσος ἐπ' Ἐγκελάδῳ, 35–36).

But what if those readers knew that Kallimachos was only, say, 35 at the time of his writing the prologue? Would they still have accepted this literary play in the same way that we accept Eliot's "Gerontion"? Many classical scholars will no doubt argue that it would be anachronistic to assume experiments with a completely artificial poetical persona or an unreliable narrator in ancient poetry. Most of us find it problematic to accept that ancient audiences should be sophisticated enough to appreciate such literary playfulness. Nevertheless, the listeners of archaic Greek lyric must have had an astonishing ability to differentiate between, say, the private man Pindaros of Thebes and the role of *laudator* that he and his chorus would assume when praising a victor,[36] and I see no reason for believing that the public in Hellenistic times had lost this ability. Hence, I think it rash to draw inferences about Kallimachos' age by using his poetry as a biographical source.

For the time being, it thus appears safer to turn our attention to the implied author and his counterpart, the implied reader.[37] The latter is | the imaginary recipient whose image can be constructed from elements given in the text. Sometimes, his function is made explicit, e.g., when the author chooses to address his public directly or when he makes statements about the way he wants his texts to be read and understood. Important observations about the implied reader can also be made from what is *not* said in the text.[38] When Callimachus begins an epigram by saying "there are four Graces" (Τέσσαρες αἱ Χάριτες, *ep.* 51 Pf. = *AP* 5.146 = 1121 Gow/Page), it is obvious that these words presuppose a reader who knows that the regular number of Graces is three, not four (and who will shortly see this knowledge confirmed by what follows: the epigram explains the paradoxical statement by telling that a fourth has been added). This implied reader is thus a textual function, an idealized version of what readers ought to experience as they try to make sense of the text.

33   Garland [30:263–6].
34   Pfeiffer [81:328–30] = [82:121–2], see further Torraca [102:66–9].
35   Scodel [91:318–9].
36   I cannot explore this topic at this place and will only give a sweeping reference to Slings [93].
37   The notion of implied reader has first been developed by Booth [9:137–9]; the most thorough study of the reader's role in literature is Iser [45], see esp. 34–8.
38   On the underlying methodology, see Lotman [69].

As was the case for implied and real author, the relation between implied and real reader is problematic. When literary communication works successfully, real readers will (at least for the period of their reading) look through the eyes of this ideal reader and perceive reality as produced by the text. For a limited period of time, they will merge with this fictional image. Hence, the role of the implied reader can be described as an offer that the text makes to us. But real readers have to be persuaded to accept this offer. Consequently, authors try, by means of textual strategies, to lure their readers into adopting the role of the implied reader and concurring with the implied authors, into sharing their view of the world and their convictions.[39]

These categories help us understand the textual strategies which are utilized in the prologue. Callimachus defines his implied readers by means of a negative foil. The way the Telchines read poetry shows that they are anti-readers, the exact opposite of ideal readers. The only criterion for poems they accept is sheer size and loudness; they want the poet to "thunder" (βροντᾶν, 20). Callimachus sets his own standards against these criteria: poetry ought to be judged according to its craftsmanship (αὖθι δὲ τέχνῃ κρίνετε […] τὴν σοφίην, 17–8); as Apollo had prescribed, it should be slender (λεπταλέην, 24), not fat. But the | way in which the implied reader will perceive poetry is not only shown by means of this negative foil, it is also explained in a distich which at first sight seems inconspicuous. After Apollo's speech the poet continues: "I obeyed him. For we sing before listeners who love the shrill voice of the cicada, not the noise of asses" (τῷ πιθόμην· ἐνὶ τοῖς γὰρ ἀείδομεν οἳ λιγὺν ἦχον | τέττιγος, θόρυβον δ' οὐκ ἐφίλησαν ὄνων, 29–30). Here, Callimachus defines his audience in positive terms. Unlike the Telchines, they know how to appreciate good poetry. At this point, real readers cannot but accept the ideal role which is offered to them. Who would choose to take sides with such dubious fellows as the envious Telchines and listen to the asses roaring,[40] rather than prefer the delicate and well-wrought and listen to the cicadas' song, together with Apollo and the implied author?

Thus, notwithstanding the question whether the Telchines represent real opponents of Callimachus', we may observe that they perform a precise function in the prologue's textual reality. As anti-readers, they teach us how not to read a (this) poem. There are many ways of reading a text, but Callimachus narrows this immense choice to just two alternatives: this negative foil and the role of the ideal reader as defined in 29–30. This is a quite subtle way of manipulating readers. Politics shows how important it is to have an identifiable opponent. Imaginary opponents arguably are even better than real ones because we can be sure that they will reliably behave in a consistently negative way, thus allowing a clear-cut polarity between "us" and "them." The Telchines, "ignorant and enemies of the Muses" (νήϊδες οἳ Μούσης οὐκ ἐγένοντο φίλοι, 2), form just such an out-group and accordingly serve to define the in-group (consisting of the author and all his intelligent readers) and to strengthen their solidarity.

This manipulation is just a variation of an element which is quite familiar in Greek poetry and rhetoric long before Callimachus. Every intelligent reader will already have seen that the appeal to the public's competence in artistic matters is a subtle form of the *captatio benevolentiae*. Exactly the same technique can be found in fifth-century vic|tory odes. Bacchylides begins an epinician, written in 476 B.C. for king Hieron of Syracuse, with the words: "Blessed war-lord of chariot-whirling Syracusans, you if any mortal now alive will rightly assess the sweet gift of the violet-crowned Muses sent for your adornment" (Εὔμοιρε Συρακοσίων | ἱπποδινήτων στραταγέ, | γνώσῃ μὲν ἰοστεφάνων | Μοισᾶν γλυκύδωρον ἄγαλμα, τῶν γε νῦν | αἴ τις ἐπιχθονίων, | ὀρθῶς, *ep.* 5.1–6); in a similar vein, Pindar calls

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39 See Booth [10:168–224].

40 On possible connotations that asses had for Greek readers see Livrea [65] (not all his suggestions are equally convincing). Ambühl [2] has recently proposed that the contrast between the asses and the cicada may imply a rejection of Dionysiac poetry in favor of the Apollinian lyre. I find this rather strained.

Hieron "expert in beautiful things" (καλῶν […] ἴδριν, *Ol.* 1.104).[41] It is obvious that such passages can be analyzed according to the model of literary communication that we have been establishing so far. The rhetorical function of this topos is to form a feeling of sympathy and solidarity between implied author and reader.

It could be contended that the poetological principles which Callimachus voices in the *Aetia* prologue as well as in passages from his other poems[42] are particularly apt to create such bonds of solidarity between the author and his readers. This poetic ideal propagates an aesthetics of the small and refined and deliberately purports to appeal not to the general readership, but to a small and refined elite only. This becomes evident when we look at *epigram* 28 which contains the famous statement "I hate all common things" (σικχαίνω πάντα τὰ δημόσια, *ep.* 28.4 Pf. = *AP* 12.43.4 = 1044 Gow/Page).[43] Here, the author emphasizes this claim to exclusivity. Nevertheless, I do not think this should be understood as saying that from the beginning, Callimachus wrote for a small, clear-cut circle of friends and colleagues at the Museion. The words "I hate all common things" certainly imply a reader who will say, together with this author: "*We* loathe all common things because we are much superior to them." The role which this stance implies was fundamentally open to every reader who was educated enough to understand the difficult language and intertextual allusions in the poems. Of course, this would apply to a small elite only, but given the low rates of literacy in the ancient world, the readership | was confined to a fairly small educated group anyway. Yet this group was by no means restricted to courtiers in Alexandria. Rather, it encompassed cultivated, literate people all over the Greek world. These readers were meant to be flattered by this claim to exclusivity which is so prominent in Alexandrian poetry because it would confirm their feeling that they belonged to the "happy few."

I will now turn to examples that show this basic poetological principle at work in the texts. We will see that Callimachus' poetry comprises a number of features that aim at producing a special relationship between the implied author and his readership and guiding their sympathy in the direction which the author desires. The two aspects that I want to analyze here can be subsumed under the central notion of "elegance" or "delicacy" (λεπτότης): on the one hand the erudite character of Callimachus' poetry, on the other hand the ideal of brevity, of ὀλιγόστιχον, as the *Aetia* prologue has it (9).

Almost every single line of Callimachus' poetry could be quoted to illustrate the learned and difficult quality of his style. Here, I want to point out one passage in which erudition is not just an incidental by-product but instead modifies the reader's perception of the text in an important way. My example is the elegy Callimachus wrote for the victory in the chariot-race which Queen Berenice won at the Nemean Games.[44] The poem seems to have formed the beginning of the third book of the *Aetia*. Although some fragments were known from an Oxyrhynchus papyrus, our knowledge was greatly increased in 1976 by the publication of more substantial fragments which were reconstructed from a piece of mummy-cartonnage discovered in the Fayum in 1901–2.[45] The papyrus from which these fragments originate can be dated to the third century B.C.; as P. J. Parsons reminds us, it "was written within a generation of the poet's death."[46] The lines which will interest us here run as follows: "For the golden word has just arrived | from the country of Danaus who was born from a cow to the island of Helen and to the Pallenian seer, the shepherd of seals, that [they] ran by the tomb of Opheltes, the son of Euphetes […]" (fr. 254.4–8 SH = 383.4–8 Pf.):

41 On this frequent topos see Bundy [14:1.25–26]; Young [110:50] and Verdenius [103:2.45] on *Ol.* 1.104.
42 See Bing [6:94–5], Schwinge [89:5–23].
43 On this epigram and especially its famous opening lines, see Henrichs [38].
44 I am not concerned here with the possibility that there may have existed two versions of the Victoria Berenices, see Hollis [40]; against this view see Livrea [66]. On Callimachus' elegiac epinicians see Fuhrer [27] and [28]
45 After the *editio princeps* by C. Meillier, an exemplary edition with commentary has been given by Parsons [80].
46 Parsons [80:4]

ἁρμοῖ γὰρ ⌊Δαναοῦ γ⌋ῆς ἀπὸ βουγενέος
εἰς Ἑλένη[ς νησῖδ]α καὶ εἰς Παλληνέα μά[ντιν,
  ποιμένα [φωκάων], χρύσεον ἦλθεν ἔπος,
Εὐφητηϊάδ[αο παρ'] ἠρίον οὔ[νεκ'] Ὀφέλτου
  ἔθρεξαν (…).

What follows is, due to lacunae in the papyrus, not totally intelligible, but the general sense seems clear enough: no horses ran faster than those drawing Berenice's chariot.

There are easier ways to express the idea "word of Berenice's victory came from Nemea to Egypt." The quality of Alexandrian poetry that Wilamowitz called "the principle of avoiding the κυρία λέξις"[47] can be seen at work in these lines. At all costs, the poet seems to prefer periphrastic, recondite expressions to "normal" words. Some examples of this stylistic device will suffice. Our passage begins with the rare gloss ἁρμοῖ, meaning "just now, lately." It rarely occurs in older poetry: Pindar fr. 10 Snell/Maehler, [Aesch.] *PV* 615 and Pherecrates fr. 115 Kassel/Austin,[48] but becomes frequent in Hellenistic poetry: Callimachus fr. 274.1, Theocritus 4.51, Lycophron *Alexandra* 106 and Apollonius Rhodius 1.972 (as an ancient variant reading recorded in the scholia; this is the text adopted by Vian, but not by Fränkel). The "land of Danaus" should be Argos, strictly speaking; here it is a metonymy for Nemea which belonged to Argos. Danaus is called βουγενής "born from a cow" because he is descended from Io who had been transformed into a heifer. The circumlocution for Egyptian Alexandria is even more puzzling. "Helen's isle" is a small island off Alexandria opposite the Nile delta; "the seer from Pallene" and "shepherd of seals" designates Proteus, the latter attribute alluding to a passage from the *Odyssey*: in 4.448–53 Menelaus narrates how he ambushed Proteus as | he lay sleeping amid his herd of seals and eventually forced him to put his visionary power at his disposal. At last, the poem returns to Nemea: the Nemean Games are depicted in a circumlocution which alludes to the fact that the Seven aginst Thebes are said to have founded the games in honor of Opheltes, the son of Euphetes (or, as a more common tradition has it, of Lycurgus).

What is achieved by this encoding? How does the relationship between implied author and audience change when the meaning of the text reveals itself to the reader only after so many detours, after so many difficulties have been overcome? To begin with, it is obvious that this kind of text demands a high degree of cooperation from its audience. Of course, every serious literary text calls for the investment of a certain amount of energy—it has to be read, understood, pondered upon. But in many cases, it is possible to dodge this demand. We can settle for an interpretation which is no more than a superficial understanding, we can content ourselves with what M. Riffaterre has called the "heuristic reading,"[49] a reading that will produce merely the surface meaning of the text without exploring its deeper significance which has to be found by "hermeneutic reading." We can read the *Iliad* as a bloodthirsty anecdote or *Oedipus the King* as an exciting whodunit without taking into account that the text demands a more thorough, deep-reaching interpretation. In Callimachus' case, however, even the heuristic reading will require a very high degree of interpretive energy. Meaning *and* significance have to be elicited by strategies, and the distinction between both levels gets blurred in the process. We can read this text only by taking pains—or we cannot read it at all. Readers who

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47 von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff [105:2.150] (on Lycophron): "Das Prinzip, die κυρία λέξις zu vermeiden, herrscht durchaus […]."

48 It has been conjecturally restored in Sophocles, *Ajax* 245, see Lloyd-Jones/Wilson [67:15–6], and in Aristophanes *Acharn.* 393, see Sommerstein's [95] note *ad loc.*

49 Riffaterre [86:4–6]. Hofstadter [39:582–3] has established the somewhat similar distinction between "syntactic" and "semantic" meaning. Of course, if we follow deconstructionists such as S. Fish, this distinction will eventually break down as no meaning can be proved to reside in the text itself, without any interpretation, see, e.g., [22:68–86]. But this does certainly not entail that there are no different levels of meaning which require different amounts of interpretive energy.

simply do not know who "the shepherd of seals" is or who do not think it worthwhile to activate this knowledge will not perceive a meaningful text, but just a string of incomprehensible words.

When readers have finally decoded the text, the energy that they had to invest will make this text appear all the more precious. And while | readers are investing energy to decode the difficult text, they come close to accepting the role which the implied author envisages them to fulfill. Just like the implied author, they evidently deem it worthwhile to acquire remote knowledge about rare words, mythology or geography. Hence, it is obvious that reader and author have many things in common. Furthermore, the knowledge and interests which they share are not just arbitrary peculiarities, they are at the very heart of their cultural self-definition because they are shaped by a common tradition: Homer, the poet of all Greeks, and the myths which record the common Panhellenic history.[50] This definition of common tradition is again a feature that will create a feeling of solidarity between the author and his readership, a feeling which will be enhanced by an idea implied in all these erudite passages: apart from the "happy few," the small elite capable of decoding these difficult and learned allusions, there exist the masses whose knowledge is not up to this formidable task.[51] All of Alexandrian poetry was, as Castorion of Soli said about his own iambic hymn,[52] "difficult to understand for the uninitiated" (δύσγνωστα μὴ σοφῷ κλύειν, fr. 310.4 SH).

Modern critics have shown that a great range of instances of figurative language create similar effects. W. C. Booth has shown that this feeling of solidarity and concurrence is created by metaphors or irony: "Though each kind of figuration would no doubt yield somewhat different ethical results if we dwelt on it at length, we can see that all of them invite us to an intellectual dance [...]. That *pas de deux* commits us in turn to the inviter's entire enterprise."[53] T. Cohen analyses the "intimacy" which is achieved by the use of metaphor: "There is a unique way in which the maker and the appreciator of a metaphor are drawn closer to one other. Three aspects are involved: (1) the speaker issues a kind of concealed invitation; (2) the hearer expends a special effort to accept the invitation; and (3) this transaction constitutes the acknowl|edgement of a community."[54] This special use effectively forces us to cooperate with the implied author, to adopt his point of view, to think in his tracks—otherwise, no coherent sense can be made of the text. Hence, we have to accept the role of the implied reader while we try to decode the meaning of what we read—whether we like it or not! The way this technique works was already well understood in antiquity. Quintilian, for example, writes (8.2.21):

> [...] *peruasit* [...] *iam multos ista persuasio, ut id demum eleganter atque exquisite dictum putent quod interpretandum sit. sed auditoribus etiam nonnullis grata sunt haec, quae cum intellexerunt acumine suo delectantur, et gaudent non quasi audierint sed quasi inuenerint.*

> Many people now believe that only passages which need interpretation are elegant and refined. But even some listeners find pleasure in such a style, for when they have understood such passages, they are pleased with themselves because of their acumen, and they are delighted as if they had not merely heard, but actually invented the phrase.

From the rhetorician's point of view, Quintilian has precisely described the effect which this sort of language has on the audience. By giving the impression (or rather illusion) that readers are not just passive recipients but co-produce the meaning, texts of this kind are convincing. Readers will feel

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50 Bing [6:74–5] has analyzed this aspect of literary allusion very well; however, he did not take into account that it may work on the reader's as well as on the poet's side.

51 See Scholes [88:36] (on irony): "One of its primary qualities is that it divides its audience into an elite group who 'get' the irony and a subordinate group who miss it."

52 On this hymn, see Bing [7] and [6:24–7].

53 Booth [10:298–304], the quotation is from 299.

54 Cohen [16:8].

proud of their own acumen and thus identify themselves with the elitist implied author.[55]

I contend that a similar effect is achieved by the erudition in Callimachus' poetry: it made readers proud of their own erudition and thus persuaded them to accept the implied author's view. Of course, in this case it is particularly misleading to speak of "the" audience. We have to take into account that different groups of readers would perceive the text in different ways. We can think of these groups as of concentric circles. While the innermost circle, consisting of the author and his closest | friends, would be able to grasp every learned allusion, understand every mythological and linguistic detail, less intimate readers would understand only part of this. But it is certainly not necessary for every reader to comprehend every detail. In the absence of dictionaries, handbooks and grammars, less erudite readers will perceive a text a small part of which is tantalizingly obscure, but not to the extent of being repellent. This becomes clear when we compare Callimachus' erudition to, say, Lycophron's *Alexandra*. Here, the effect of the learning is exclusive; in Callimachus' poetry, this does not seem to be the case. Even those in the outermost circle would thus be able to enjoy Callimachus' text. We should view the text as possessing different layers of meaning, with the most basic layer accessible to a substantial number of readers, who would feel, as C. Jacob has phrased it, "[le] plaisir suprême de déchiffrer comme un idiome étranger le langage de ses ancêtres."[56]

Callimachus' erudite style, then, is not the product of a pedantic scholar who wrote pedantic literature in poor taste, but a way of seizing the audience's attention and sympathy, of creating intimacy. The second element of λεπτότης that I want to analyze in this context is brevity. This aspect can be interpreted in terms similar to those which we employed for the analysis of erudition in Callimachus' poetry. His preference for small forms of poetry instead of the "one continuous poem" (ἓν ἄεισμα διηνεκές, 3), is multifaceted. One example is the allusive style that he uses in narrative passages. He avoids giving a serial, unbroken narration of events, and concentrates on less known elements which had been neglected by previous poets, while the main action often will merely be alluded to or evoked briefly. A good example of this narrative technique is the epyllion *Hecale* of which important fragments have been preserved.[57] As far as we can see, Callimachus gives a rather lengthy narration of secondary details, e.g., the conversation between Theseus and old Hecale, who gives shelter to him during a thunderstorm, or the dialogue between two birds in which the crow's | prophecy of how the raven will one day exchange his white feathers for black ones is inserted as a self-contained set piece. The main heroic action, on the other hand, Theseus' fight with the bull of Marathon and his victory, appears to have been mentioned in the briefest terms.[58]

Again, we see that the poet demands a high degree of narrative cooperation of his readers. The text addresses a public which is familiar with the main lines of the narrative and will be able to fill the gaps in the story relying on its knowledge of the poetic and mythological tradition. Callimachus himself makes this nexus between small form and the necessity to fill the gaps explicit. In a fragment from the second book of the *Aetia* where the loss of the larger context is to be deplored even more than usually, Callimachus writes: "He may suggest to himself, and cut short the song's length" (fr. 57.1 Pf. = 264.1 SH: αὐτὸς ἐπιφράσσαιτο, τάμοι δ' ἄπο μῆκος ἀοιδῇ). We may safely assume that, as Pfeiffer has proposed in his edition, "the reader of this poem" may be supplied as the subject of the verb.[59]

This principle of the audience's involvement in the narration can be seen at work in smaller units,

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55 Perceptive remarks on the same quality in Pindar's style can be found in Most [75:23–4], where this passage from Quintilian is also quoted.

56 Jacob [48:69]. Bing [8] shows that Aratus' poem was also aimed at a broad audience and that not all readers would be able to decode all allusions and acrostics. (I owe this reference to Michèle Lowrie.)

57 On the *Hecale*, see Hollis [41] and Kerkhecker [54].

58 Cf. Fuhrer [27:85] on a similar device in the *Victoria Berenices*.

59 Pfeiffer writes in the notes on these lines: "αὐτὸς sc. ὁ ἀναγιγνώσκων vel ὁ ἀκούων ipse excogitet quid aliud fecerint." On this fragment, see further Harder [35:296 n. 27].

too. In the third book of the *Aetia*, Callimachus mentions a Naxian marital custom: the bride spends the night before the actual wedding ceremony in bed with a young boy. Here is how the poet explains this custom: "For they say that once upon a time Hera—dog, dog, refrain, my impudent soul! You will sing even of that which it is not lawful to tell. It is a great blessing for you that you have not seen the rites of the dread goddess, or else you would have blurted out their story too" (fr. 75.4–7: Ἥρην γάρ κοτέ φασι—κύον, κύον, ἴσχεο, λαιδρὲ | θυμέ, σύ γ᾽ ἀείσῃ καὶ τά περ οὐχ ὁσίη· | ὤναο κάρτ᾽ ἕνεκ᾽ οὔ τι θεῆς ἴδες ἱερὰ φρικτῆς, | ἐξ ἂν ἐπεὶ καὶ τῶν ἤρυγες ἱστορίην). The break-off of the narrative creates a blank which readers have to fill by means of their knowledge of the poetical tradition.[60] The key-|words "pre-marital intercourse" and "Hera" are to remind them of a well-known passage of the *Iliad*. In book 14, when Zeus sees Hera, he is stirred by passionate love, "as much as on that time they first went to bed together and lay in love, and their dear parents knew nothing of it" (295–6: οἷον ὅτε πρῶτόν περ ἐμισγέσθην φιλότητι, | εἰς εὐνὴν φοιτῶντε, φίλους λήθοντε τοκῆας, transl. by R. Lattimore).[61] It is obvious that the implied author expresses the religious reasons for this break-off tongue in cheek. He has carefully seen to it that the piquant story about the divine couple's premarital sex be not broken off before every important detail has been given and the blank can be filled easily by any educated reader.

No narrative can be totally complete—even in the Homeric epics, the audience has to engage in some narrative cooperation.[62] But in Callimachus' poetry, the call for this collaboration has been made a major feature of style. The effect he achieves with this device is that readers perceive the text not in a passive manner, but "as if they had invented it themselves," to quote Quintilian's words. Callimachean brevity, then, is just another stratagem to entice the audience to accept the role of the implied reader and thus ultimately to arouse their sympathy.

Our two examples have shown how the Callimachean form of poetry, by requiring a high amount of cooperation in decoding the text, aims at establishing harmony, a sort of solidarity between the audience and the implied author. This result squares with our analysis of the function of the reader and the author in the *Aetia* prologue. We have seen that in this passage as well, the poetological reflection functioned as a device which tried to lure the reader into adopting the role of the implied audience. If actual readers accept this offer, they will receive the impression of being allied with the implied author against the negative anti-readers.

After analysing this rhetorical mode of function, it is now time to leave the hermetical world of the text and to explore how these results | fit in with the reality of Callimachus' world. Why should these strategies of solidarity be so important in his poetry? The overwhelming part of Greek literature of the archaic and classical periods was heard and understood in certain well-defined social situations, as was the case for the rhapsodes' recitations, the religious festivals where a chorus of young girls would perform the odes of Alcman or the victory celebrations where the epinicians of Pindar or Bacchylides would be sung.[63] These occasions would define the community of listeners and establish their sense of togetherness. The greater part of the audience would know each other as citizens of the same *polis* and they would know that the poet whose songs they were listening to belonged to this community as well. They needed to have no doubts that they were the people the texts were adressed to, that these poems were meant to be heard and understood by them.

The situation in which a poetical text by Callimachus was perceived was completely different. His poems were not written to be performed before specific audiences in well-defined situations. Rather,

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60 On the importance of blanks see Iser [47] as well as the more elaborate treatment in his [45]. On break-offs in Hellenistic poetry see Fuhrer [29] and Harder [35:296–7].

61 For the possibility that there is also a reference to Sotades fr. 16, see Cameron [15:19–22], but the evidence is too slight to warrant certain conclusions.

62 See Delrieu/Hilt/Létoublon [19], Willcock [108], esp. 189, Scully [92] and my [87], esp. 17–22.

63 See the excellent survey by R. Kannicht, [51] = [52:68–99]; further Thomas [101:118–23] and, most recently, Stehle [96].

as P. Bing has shown, in the Hellenistic period, reading became more and more the predominant way of perceiving literature: "Poetry […] became a private act of communication, no longer a public one. Through reading, the literary community too was broken down into individual readers responding to a given text in isolation (or at best in circumscribed groups)."[64] Of course, poetry was still being recited, e.g., at competitions or at the Alexandrian court.[65] But the subsequent reception by a reading public was not a mere accidental supplement any longer. Instead, the texts show in their style and composition that their authors | expected them to be read by a wider audience.[66] Thus, they could no longer expect to find a community of listeners, they would write for a widely scattered reading public. This explains why the context of reception which hitherto had been defined by the external event came to be integrated into the text itself. An especially good example of this change can be seen in the so-called "mimetic" hymns that Callimachus wrote. Although some critics still assert that the *Hymns* were meant for actual performance, I find the case for artificial mimesis of occasional poetry compelling.[67] By way of dramatic monologue, the author has integrated into his text the ritual situation in which these hymns were traditionally performed. Integrating these situations into the text means to fictionalize them. Obviously, Callimachus' hymns were read at occasions other than traditional ritual gatherings, and the text created a fictitious congregation of which every reader could imagine herself or himself a member.

An analogous technique can be found at work in a genre which appears to have been very popular in the Hellenistic time, the epigram. Originally, these poems had been just what the Greek word says: inscriptions on objects such as votive offerings or funeral monuments. As the monument itself stood before the eyes of the reader, it did not have to be described or even referred to.[68] When the objects themselves are lost, as is frequently the case either because they were destroyed or because the epigram has been transmitted through literary sources only, we often no longer understand the words. In the Hellenistic period, however, we find rather book-epigrams.[69] As there is no object that | could constitute a communicative situation shared by author and reader, these epigrams have to create this context themselves.[70] They will give a precise description of the object on which they pretend to be inscribed (e.g., a luxurious chandelier in Callimachus, *ep.* 55 Pf. = *AP* 6.148) or they will play with the conventions of the genre, thus reminding the reader of the traditional context in which "epigrammatic communication" normally took place (e.g., in fictional funerary epigrams as Callimachus, *ep.* 15 Pf. = *AP* 7.522).[71]

I want to argue that the features of Callimachean poetry which we have analyzed so far are to be seen in the context of this "literarization of literature." Callimachus' public no longer was a community in real life. Therefore, he had to create a sense of togetherness in his texts, thus establishing an imagined community which included himself as well as his audience. He had to visualize what hitherto had been self-evident: that the poet would find an audience for his texts, that this public would listen to him and understand his language.

In one of his most well-known contributions to the field of linguistics, R. Jakobson, taking up

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64 Bing [6:17]. See further Kerényi [53]; on the general consequences of literacy for the reception of texts see Ong [79:101–3].

65 On competitions see Cameron [15:29–45], on recitals see Hose [43:54–5], on Hellenistic poets and the court see Kerkhecker [55].

66 This has convincingly been demonstrated by Bing. Therefore, pace Cameron and Hose (as quoted in n. 20), I still accept his account of Hellenistic literature as valid. On the changing relationship between poet and public in the Hellenistic age see also Goldhill [33:223–5].

67 See Hopkinson [42:32–43], Bulloch [13:3–13], Albert [1:1–95], and most recently Depew [20].

68 For the close connection between monuments and inscriptions in the archaic period, see Thomas [101:78].

69 On evidence for collections of book-epigrams in the Hellenistic period, see Fraser [25:1.607–608].

70 A very telling example of this technique is an epigram by Heraclitus of Halicarnassus (*AP* 7.465); cf. the analysis in Fraser [25:1.580].

71 This has been explored in a brilliant paper by Walsh [106]; see also Köhnken [59], esp. 120–121.

a term that B. Malinowski had coined, discerned the phatic function of language. This serves "to establish, to prolong, or to discontinue communication, to check whether the channel works ('Hello, do you hear me?'), to attract the attention of the interlocutor or to confirm his continued attention […]."[72] Some acts of verbal communication appear to focus almost exclusively on this phatic aspect of language—what is important is not what is said but that something is said at all. Language is one of the most powerful tools that human beings use to create a community, and we all know how dismal and threatening it can feel when the person opposite us either refuses to communicate or is unable to do so. The phatic function of language, then, is very important in everyday oral communication, and it is certainly not a mere coincidence that the phatic aspect "is also the first | function acquired by infants; they are prone to communicate before being able to send or receive informative communication."[73]

Callimachus' efforts to secure the attention and benevolence of his audience can be compared to this phatic use of language as adapted to written communication. The author continuously has to make sure that the channel for communication is still open and that the contact with an audience which is unknown to him remains active. The means by which Callimachus achieves this goal are his poetological reflections and the way in which these principles are put into action in the poems. These features make retaining the audience's concurrence and solidarity paramount in his poetry. Being unable to rely upon distinct social situations, his texts have to create their own public, as it were. P. Friedländer has already expressed a similar view of Hellenistic poetry when he writes about Callimachus' *Hymns*: "Der Spiegelcharakter des nachklassischen Hymnos zeigt sich darin, daß kultisch-lyrische Elemente in die epische Form hineinbezogen werden. Kallimachos stellt nicht in einen gegebenen Raum seine Dichtung, sondern er muß mit der Dichtung zugleich den Raum für sie schaffen."[74]

Of course, the difference between Hellenistic and older poetry should not be taken to extremes. Even in older texts, we find similar beginnings of fictionalizing the speaker and the audience and thus establishing a sense of togetherness.[75] I am deeply skeptical of interpretations such as Gentili's who sees archaic Greek literature as essentially oral and composed for the immediate social or ritual context only. Pindar's epinicians, for example, clearly bear signs of being composed not merely for the victor, his immediate family, friends and fellow-citizens. They rather wish to carry the glory of the victory into the whole world of Greek-speaking people and thus, like Callimachus' poems, address a public which will hear or read these texts in all imaginable situations.

Nevertheless, there is an important difference between Hellenistic writers and these earlier poets. The audience for which the latter wrote was homogeneous or was at least imagined to be so; these writers felt it was possible to encompass their whole world. The Hellenistic world, on | the other hand, had grown to a scale which defied human understanding; it was fragmented and broken up—a *monde éclaté* as the French would call it. This rendered phatic communication much more important than it had been hitherto. When Callimachus emphasized the phatic aspect of poetic communication, this was not an act of total innovation, not a *creatio ex nihilo*. Instead, he took up older elements and developed them in a way which suited the changed world he was living in.

We can now look back to the beginning and reexamine the "open" interpretation of the *Aetia* prologue that I had introduced. It can come as no surprise that Callimachus should emphasize the importance of this phatic element by putting it right at the beginning of his arguably most important work. Before starting the literary communication proper, he makes sure that the medium of contact is working and that he reaches exactly the audience that he wants to reach.

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72 Jakobson [50:68]. The paper "Linguistics and Poetics" had first been published in 1960.
73 Jakobson [50:69].
74 Friedländer [26:36].
75 This point will be argued in a paper that I am preparing for publication.

I want to lay particular emphasis on a point which was made only in passing at the beginning: the fact that the role of the implied reader which we are offered by this text is basically open. Of course, Callimachus knew that his learned friends at the library or the Ptolemaic court in Alexandria were knowledgeable enough to understand his poems; he could be quite certain that they were capable of fulfilling the role of the implied reader. But the text does not restrict the offer it makes to an esoteric circle of connoisseurs by alluding to occult knowledge or private gossip. Rather, every educated Greek could be expected to possess the learning which would enable her or him to decode the texts by cooperating with the author. It was not the membership in some hermetic circle that allowed readers to regard themselves as Callimacheans, it was rather the willingness to accept the role of implied reader which the text offers and the ability to fulfill the required narrative cooperation.

This openness of the role of the reader resulted in a certain dehistoricization—from the beginning, Callimachus' poems had the potentiality of being read outside their original historical situation, of being interesting and attractive to all kinds of readers, provided that they possessed the appropriate knowledge of Greek language and tradition. This explains why his poetry has exerted such a powerful

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influence over the centuries. People who read the *Aetia* prologue a quarter of a millenium later, at Rome, could still accept the role of the implied reader and see | their respective enemies in the role of the Telchines.[76] This openness is not due to coincidence; it is produced by the way in which Callimachus' text constitutes its own fictional reality.

76   On the amazing adaptability of the *Aetia* prologue's rhetorical polemic see Thomas [100].

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