

AN UNNOTICED IMITATION OF CALLIMACHUS, *AETIA* FR. 1.1 PF.

The first word of Callimachus' *Aetia* is missing in the papyrus (*POxy.* 2079) that preserves the rest of the opening line, providing only one iota of evidence about how it begins (fr. 1.1 Pf.):

.....]ι μοι Τελχῖνες ἐπιτρύζουσιν ἀοιδῇ
... the Telchines squeak away at my poem

Other suggestions to fill the gap of six or seven letters have been proposed, but Lobel's *πολλάκι* has long attracted much support.¹ This conjecture has recently been confirmed by F. Pontani, who adduces convincing evidence from the scholia to Hom. *Od.* 2.50.² Armed with this new certainty about the incipit of the *Aetia*, A. Barchiesi has shown how Catullus evokes the beginning of Callimachus' elegiac masterpiece in the last poem in the transmitted text of his works (116.1–2):³

Saepe tibi studioso animo uerba ante requirens
carmina uti possem mittere Battiadæ . . .

Often for you with earnest thought I've been searching for words, in order to send you poems of the Battiad . . .

The programmatic purpose of this poem in suggesting a shift to iambic content has been noticed before;⁴ Barchiesi's elegant discussion underscores this point with the clinching reference in *saepe* (followed by a pronoun in the dative case) to the first word of Callimachus' celebrated programmatic statement. Did any other Roman poet exploit the opening of the *Aetia* in this way for allusive effect?

Near the end of his first book, Martial addresses an epigram to a friend, L. Julius,⁵ who has urged him to write poetry with more substance (1.107):

Saepe mihi dicis, Luci carissime Iuli,
'Scribe aliquid magnum: desidiosus homo es.'
otia da nobis, sed qualia fecerat olim
Maecenas Flacco Vergilioque suo:
condere uicturas temptem per saecula curas
et nomen flammis eripuisse meum.

¹ E. Lobel, 'Callimachea', *Hermes* 70 (1935), 31–45, at 32. For the most cogent defence of this conjecture, cf. A. Cameron, *Callimachus and his Critics* (Princeton, 1995), 339.

² F. Pontani, 'The first word of Callimachus' *Aitia*', *ZPE* 128 (1999), 57–9.

³ A. Barchiesi, 'The search for the perfect book: a PS to the New Posidippus', in K. Gutzwiller (ed.), *The New Posidippus: A Hellenistic Poetry Book* (Oxford, 2005), 320–42, at 333–6. For further discussion of the Prologue with the newly guaranteed incipit, see B. Acosta-Hughes and S. A. Stephens, 'Rereading Callimachus' *Aetia* fragment 1', *CPH* 97 (2002), 238–55.

⁴ See the earlier discussion in C. Macleod, 'Catullus 116', *CQ* 23 (1973), 304–9 = *Collected Essays* (Oxford, 1983), 181–6; cf. also T. P. Wiseman, *Catullus and his World: A Reappraisal* (Cambridge, 1985), 184–6 for further discussion of the programmatic character of this poem, with speculation that it announces a more radical change of genre.

⁵ Commentators—e.g. M. Citroni, *M. Valerii Martialis Epigrammaton Liber Primus* (Florence, 1975), 326, P. Howell, *A Commentary on Book One of the Epigrams of Martial* (London, 1980), 328—express doubts about the identity of this Julius, but D. R. Shackleton Bailey, *Martial: Epigrams*, 3 vols. (Cambridge, MA, 1993), 1.53, n. harbours none: 'there can be no doubt that the Julius of this and other epigrams is M.'s closest friend, L. Julius Martialis'.

in steriles nolunt campos iuga ferre iuueni:
pingue solum lassat, sed iuuat ipse labor.

You often say to me, dearest Lucius Julius: 'Write something big: you are a lazybones.' Give me leisure, I mean such leisure as Maecenas once made for his Flaccus and his Virgil. Then I would try to write works that would live through the centuries and snatch my name from the funeral fires. Oxen don't like to bear the yoke into barren acres. A thick soil tires, but the very labor is joy.
(Trans. Shackleton Bailey)

Critics have recognized that in this epigram, Martial is playing with the themes typical of Augustan *recusationes*,⁶ which he travesties by representing grand poetic inspiration as a matter of finding the right patron. As P. Howell puts it, Martial 'clearly means that it is as unlikely that he would ever write serious poetry as that he should ever find a real second Maecenas'.⁷ But what critics have not recognized is that the opening couplet actually bypasses the Augustan poets and makes playful allusion directly to Callimachus' *Aetia*. In the second line, Martial humorously recasts the criticisms of the Telchines. The phrase *scribe aliquid magnum* clearly replays on a humorously reduced scale the criticism of Callimachus that he did not produce 'one continuous poem on the deeds of kings or heroes of old in many thousands (ἐν πολλαῖς . . . χιλιάσιν) of lines' (fr. 1.3–5 Pf.).⁸ Likewise, in the phrase *desidiosus homo es* Martial compresses the Telchines' accusation against Callimachus that he wastes his time because he steers his song 'like a child into small compass (ἐπὶ τυτθὸν . . . παῖς ἄτε), despite decades not a few' (fr. 1.5–6 Pf.).⁹ Having been cast in the role of the Telchines, Martial's addressee will not have been deaf either to the echo of Callimachus in the opening *saepe mihi*, the only instance in which a Roman poet begins a poem by quoting the first two words of the *Aetia*.¹⁰

University of Colorado, Boulder

PETER E. KNOX

Peter.Knox@Colorado.edu
doi:10.1017/S0009838806000723

⁶ Citroni (n. 5), 326: 'alla richiesta di comporre un'opera di più vasto impegno artistico e di tono più elevato M. risponda con una *recusatio* che in certo senso capovolge i termini delle tradizionali *recusationes* dei poeti augustei'; cf. Howell (n. 5), 327–8 and for Martial's attitude toward Callimachean poetics, J. P. Sullivan, *Martial: The Unexpected Classic. A Literary and Historical Study* (Cambridge, 1991), 74–5.

⁷ Howell (n. 5), 328.

⁸ Of course, *magnum* triggers recognition, although none of Martial's commentators quite say this. Howell (n. 5), ad loc. compares, not quite aptly, Call. fr. 465 Pf. τὸ μέγα βιβλίον ἴσον ἔλεγεν εἶναι τῷ μεγάλῳ κακῷ—a poet's complaint, or a librarian's? Cf. Cameron (n. 1), 52. For the epic associations of phrases such as *magno* . . . *ore* (Ov. *Ars* 1.206), *magni* . . . *oris opus* (Prop. 2.10.12), *maiore* . . . *plectro* (Hor. *Carm.* 4.2.33), *vel sim.*, cf. Cameron (n. 1), 467–71.

⁹ For the various associations invoked by the Telchines' accusation that Callimachus writes 'like a child', cf. Cameron (n. 1), 182–3.

¹⁰ Indeed this is one of only two instances in which a Latin poem begins with *saepe mihi*; the other, Mart. 1.92, apparently does not invoke Callimachus.