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Delusions of Grandeur:
Homer, Zeus and the 'Telchines' in Callimachus' *Reply* (*Aitia* Fr. 1)
and *Iambus* 6*

The visual representations of Homer were often modelled upon those of Zeus. Furthermore, not only in the visual arts, but in poetry as well Homer was often in one way or another brought in connection with Zeus. This article discusses the modes of representation of Homer in the visual arts and literature and Callimachus' usage of the metaphors 'Zeus' and the 'Telchines' in the preface to the *Aitia* and in the sixth *Iambus*. The discussion of the *Reply* investigates a hitherto neglected characteristic of the Telchines, namely their expertise as visual artists and its implication for the interpretation of the passage and the picture of Callimachus' critics.

Based on the discussion of the *Reply* and on the analysis of the modes of representation of Homer in Greek literature and in the visual arts, I propose a new, allegorical interpretation of the sixth *Iambus*: the statue of Zeus stands for Homeric poetry and the speaker of the poem is a Telchine. The description of the statue of Zeus in the sixth *Iambus* is intended to mimic, with sarcastic implications, the logic of the critics who can only value huge size and the imitators who want to follow Homer so closely they might as well tape-measure him.

1. *Visual representations of Homer*

In the year 1827 Ingres completed a painting *Apotheosis of Homer* the Louvre commissioned from him as a ceiling decoration. The majestic figure of Homer with a sceptre in his left hand and a scroll in his right occupies the centre of the painting. He is seated on the highest step in front of an Ionic temple and is being crowned with a laurel wreath by a winged Victory. The wreath is on the same level as the inscription on the architrave of the temple: ΟΜΗΡΟΣ and, if one looks closely, partially hidden behind the wreath stands the word ΘΕΟΣ.

On the stairs leading to the temple numerous figures of ancient and modern artists flock around the seated Homer.¹ Beneath Homer the personifications of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*

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¹ Parts of the paper were presented at conferences *Bildtext* (Giessen, July 2004) and *Visualising Epic* (Nottingham, September 2005). I wish to thank all those who participated in the discussion. I also thank the British Museum for permission to publish the photographs of the Archelaos Relief. On the identification of the figures, Rosenblum (1985), pp. 130–133.

are sitting on the steps leading to the temple. They are flanking the inscription beneath Homer's feet: ΑΝΔΡΩΝ ΗΡΩΩΝ ΚΟΣΜΗΤΟΡΙ.

On the step beneath yet another inscription can be read. It is the anonymous epigram from the *Palatine Anthology* (16, 301):

*εἰ θεός ἐστιν Ὅμηρος, ἐν ἀθανάτοισι σεβέσθω
εἰ δ' αὖ μὴ θεός ἐστι, νομιζέσθω θεός εἶναι.*

‘If Homer is a god, he should be worshipped among the immortals,
But again, if he is not a god, he should be acknowledged to be one.’

On the lowest step, two further inscriptions can be read. With an almost philological accuracy, the Latin passage is cited as Quintilianus, *Inst. Or.* Lib X Cap 1. The text runs as follows:

modesto tamen et circumspecto iudicio de tantis viris pronuntiandum est, ne, quod plerisque accidit, damnent quae non intellegunt. Ac si necesse est in alteram errare partem, omnia eorum legentibus placere quam multa displicere maluerim.

‘However, modesty and circumspection are required in pronouncing judgement on such great men, since there is always the risk of falling into the common fault of condemning what one does not understand. And, if it is necessary to err on one side or the other, I should prefer that the reader should approve of everything than that he should disapprove of much.’²

The Greek text on the left is simply titled *Longinus*:

Ἐνδείκνυται δ' ἡμῖν οὕτως ἀνὴρ. εἰ βουλοίμεθα μὴ κατολιγορεῖν. ὡς καὶ ἄλλη τις παρὰ τὰ εἰρημένα ὁδὸς ἐπὶ τὰ ὕψηλὰ τείνει. ποῖα δὲ καὶ τίς αὐτῆ; ἢ τῶν ἔμπροσθεν μεγάλων συγγραφέων καὶ ποιητῶν μίμησις τε καὶ ζήλωσις. καὶ γε τοῦτου, φίλτατε, ἀπρὶξ ἐχώμεθα τοῦ σκοποῦ.³

‘This writer⁴ shows us, if only we were willing to pay him heed, that another way (beyond anything we have mentioned) leads to the sublime. And what, and what manner of way, may that be? It is the imitation and emulation of previous great poets and writers. And let this, my dear friend, be the direction in which we firmly point our gaze.’⁵

The painting could be seen as an attempt to answer the tantalising question posed in the epigram inscribed on the step beneath the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* – Is Homer a mortal or a god? The ancients asked the same question and answered it: What makes a poet a god? What makes *anyone* a god? The divine honours bestowed upon him. For artists who look up to Homer as the ideal of perfection, he *is* a god, because they strive to emulate him; he is the one that, in the words of Longinus, ‘leads them to the sublime’.

The road that leads to the sublime is the imitation and emulation – μίμησις τε καὶ ζήλωσις – of previous great poets and writers. Of all great artists, Homer is the greatest, a god among lesser gods and heroes. The godly status of Homer is signified not only through the textual citations in the painting, but also through the overall stylisation of his figure – he not only holds a papyrus roll, but also a sceptre, he is being crowned by Nike, he has a temple with the inscription ‘Homer (is a) god’, he is clad in a godly manner and the ultimate symbol of Zeus, the eagle, is spreading his wings on the tympanum directly above his head.

² Slightly addapted translation of Butler (1961).

³ *De Subl.* 13. 2. 1.

⁴ Longinus is discussing Plato.

⁵ Modified translation of Rhys Roberts (1907).

In fact, as is suitable for an academic painting, this particular representation of Homer is in many respects similar to the chryselephantine statue of Olympian Zeus as described by the ancient sources.⁶ The overwhelming seated Zeus was so big that the observer had the impression he would break through the roof of his own temple if he decided to stand up. According to Pausanias,⁷ the god held a sceptre in his left hand and a Nike with a wreath in his right hand. Seated on a sceptre was his bird, the eagle.

But where does the conception of Homer as Zeus originate? Ingres was hardly the first to come up with this idea. In fact, his sophisticated painting alludes to numerous previous representations of Homer's divinity, most notably the famous relief by one Archelaos of Priene, now in the British Museum (Brit. Mus. 2191, plate 1).

Due to the resemblance of the figure of Homer on this relief to that of Zeus, immediately after its discovery in Italy in the 17th century the relief was titled *The Apotheosis of Homer*.⁸ Firm dating of the relief has proved to be very difficult,⁹ but recent studies suggest the late third century BC¹⁰ and link the work with Alexandria, on the basis of the similarity of two figures to portraits of Arsinoe III and Ptolemy IV Philopator.¹¹ Since it was Ptolemy IV who founded a shrine in honour of Homer in Alexandria¹² placing a majestic seated statue of Homer in it, recent studies¹³ connect relief to this sanctuary and suggest an Alexandrian context for its creation.

The relief was probably a votive monument dedicated by a poet as commemoration of a victory in a poetic contest.¹⁴ It shows 27 figures in four tiers and two settings.¹⁵ The lowest register is a typical representation of a sacrifice, but the worshippers and the god are unusual: as identified by inscriptions beneath, the seated Zeus-like figure with a scroll in his right hand and a sceptre in the left is Homer. He is receiving a sacrifice of a cow from a boy labelled as 'Myth' and a female labelled 'History' who are stylized as an altar boy and a priestess;¹⁶ behind them more labelled figures (Poetry, Tragedy and Comedy) make offerings on the altar and Physis, Arete, Mneme, Pistis and Sophia observe the sacrificial ritual. On either side of Homer, the personifications of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* kneel. Behind Homer

⁶ For *testimonia* see Overbeck (1959) T 692-754.

⁷ Paus. 5. 11. 1.

⁸ G. Cuper first entitled it *Apotheosis* in his publication *Apotheosis vel consecratio Homeri* (1671). The literature on it is immense. See Pinkwart (1965a; 1965b); Richter (1965), Vol. I, pp. 53-4; Pollitt (1986), pp. 15-16; von Hesberg (1988); Ridgway (1990), pp. 257-268; Smith (1991), pp. 186-7; Cameron (1995), pp. 273-7; Zanker (1995), pp. 154-158; Clay (2004), pp. 91-92.

⁹ See Richter (1965) Vol. I, p. 54 for a summary of attempts at dating the relief.

¹⁰ See Pollitt (1986), pp. 15-16; Smith (1991), pp. 186-87.

¹¹ On the identification of Chronos and Oekumene, La Rocca (1984), p. 538 (with further literature). The most complete survey of all suggested identifications with Hellenistic rulers is still Pinkwart (1965a), pp. 36-42.

¹² On Homereion of Alexandria, Clay (2004), p. 74 and *testimonia* in the Appendix *Homer* (T6) p. 139.

¹³ Richter (1965), Vol I, p. 54; Pollitt (1986), pp. 15-16; Smith (1991), pp. 186-87. Other suggestions have been made, namely the temple of Homer in Smyrna: Pinkwart (1965), p. 90. Voutiras (1989) suggests a Stoic interpretation and connects the relief with Pergamon, but see the objections in Zanker (1995), p. 340 n. 15. Ridgway (1990), pp. 264-6 considers the possibility of a Roman context, notably Bovillae and its general area (where the relief was found) and connects the relief with the *Tabulae Iliacae*, dating it as late as the first century BC.

¹⁴ It takes a poet to recognise a poet - J. W. von Goethe (1827), p. 28 was the first to suggest a commemorative relief of a victorious poet, whereas previously one tended to see the relief simply as an allegorical representation of Homer's apotheosis. See Pinkwart (1965), pp. 16-17 for the overview of interpretations proposed thus far.

¹⁵ For the detailed description see Pinkwart (1965b), pp. 55-57.

¹⁶ Pinkwart (1965b), p. 57.

two figures are standing, identified by *tituli* as Inhabited World (Oikoumene) and Time (Chronos) and taken to be the cryptoportraits of Arsinoe III and Ptolemy IV.

The second scene, above, is a mountainous area, represented in three slope-like registers. The highest register is occupied by a stately figure of a reclining, half-naked Zeus, with a sceptre in his right hand and an eagle by his side. Slightly beneath Zeus is the mother of the Muses, Mnemosyne. On her left side a Muse is descending the slope and approaching the second register, where her four sisters with their respective attributes are represented. On the third slope there are four Muses and, on the far right side, a statue of the victorious poet with a tripod. The poet is holding a scroll in his right hand. His head, now badly damaged, could once have been a portrait. On his right side is a cave where Apollo *Musagetes* is playing the lyre next to the Delphic Omphalos.

The mountain setting of the upper three registers suggests Parnassos (due to the Omphalos) or Helicon (a more attractive interpretation, since it would place the relief more firmly in the Alexandrian setting¹⁷).

Pollitt (1986), p. 16 proposes the following interpretation of the relief:

«Inspiration springs from Zeus (...) and Memory and is passed from heaven to earth by the Muses. Its foremost recipient was Homer, both a patron god and symbolic ancestor of the victorious poet for whom the relief was made. Homer's epics will last for all times and are universal (hence he is crowned by Chronos and Oikoumene); they celebrate both myth and history. They are the fountain head of the literary genres that came after epic (lyric poetry, tragedy and comedy, arranged, in an appropriately learned fashion, in the historical order of their invention) and they have bestowed, like all worthy poetry, essential moral virtues upon human nature.»

What makes this representation of Homer so similar to Ingres' painting is not only the general subject – the road to the divine through imitation and emulation of the great predecessors – but also the conception of Homer as Zeus. While Ingres avoided representing Homer and Zeus together, Archelaos is by this very device stressing the similarity of the two characters. Homer is a mirror-image of Zeus, since he himself is also a patron god from whom inspiration flows. The «double projection» of some of the figures in both scenes underlines this: History, Tragedy and Comedy appear as Muses in the upper setting¹⁸ and as worshippers of Homer on the lower setting.

The allegorical representation of Archelaos is not the earliest example of a Zeus-like Homer. Even though our knowledge of Homer's cult statues from his sanctu-

¹⁷ Ptolemy IV Philopator and his wife Arsinoe III promoted the cult of Muses in Thespias and were involved in reorganisation of the *Museia*. On this see Schachter (1986), p. 160 and 164–166; SEG XXII, 376.

¹⁸ The identification of individual Muses on the relief is a notoriously difficult problem. Pinkwart (1965a), pp. 79–80 is balanced to a fault, arguing against individualisation of the Muses and tentatively suggesting only two identifications, namely Urania (Muse with the globe in the second register) and Calliope (the far right Muse in the second register). However, her discussion of the specialisation of the Muses is, at least as far as texts are concerned, deficient (Pinkwart (1965a) Exkurs II, pp. 174–182): She neglects several important Hellenistic passages, for example several occurrences of Καλλιόπη and Κλειώ in Callimachus' *Aitia* (most notably Fr. 43, 56 Pfeiffer where Κλειώ provides information about Sicilian cities; Fr. 7, 22 Pfeiffer: Καλλιόπη provides information about cult idiosyncrasies on Rhodes and Anaphe; and Fr. 75, 77 Pfeiffer). Ascribing particular domains to individual Muses, at least as far as history, tragic and comic poetry are concerned is surely attested for the early third century BC and arguable as early as the fifth. (Pinkwart does not discuss a single line from Aristophanes and does not consider Plato *Phdr.* 259c–d to be enough evidence for the individualisation of the domains of the Muses.)

aries¹⁹ is tantalisingly limited, it is possible that the cult statue from the *Homereion* in Alexandria resembled Homer on Archelaos' relief. According to Aelian (*Var.Hist.* 13. 22) the Alexandrian temple featured a 'magnificent seated Homer' in the centre and, in a circle around him, all the cities that claimed Homer as their own. The 'road to the divine through the emulation of great predecessors' message was transmitted with what would to many a modern observer appear to be a rather repulsive literalness: The painter Galaton drew Homer vomiting and the other poets collecting the vomit.²⁰

A similar representation of Homer surrounded by his devotees could be seen in Memphis: In the exedra of the Sarapeion, the over life-size statue of seated Homer was surrounded by (or rather, flanked by, if one accepts the semicircular arrangement of the figures proposed by Picard²¹) the statues of great philosophers and writers: Protagoras, Thales, Heraclitus, Plato, Aristotle on the right side, and Hesiod, Orpheus, Demetrios of Phaleron and Pindar on the left side. The identification of the figures as well as the date of the sculptural complex has been debated: Instead of construction in the time of Ptolemy II, as argued by Picard and Lauer,²² recent scholarship is more inclined to date the group at the first or the second half of the second century BC²³ and to identify some of the figures as Alexander the Great, Indian Dionysos and Diogenes. However, the identification (and the positioning) of Homer is not in question.

If some of the statues are correctly identified as members of the Ptolemaic dynasty,²⁴ the significance of Homer's position in the Hellenistic pantheon and the importance of his cult for the self-presentation of the rulers in the Hellenistic period is additionally stressed: Homer is not only the ultimate source of inspiration for any artist, but also for the divinised rulers.²⁵ This points towards the tendency to perceive Homer not only as a god, but as a presiding divinity in his own pantheon.²⁶

The unique standing of Homer's cult in Alexandria is further supported by the anonymous epigram addressed to Ptolemy IV Philopator probably contemporary to the founding of the cult of Homer.²⁷

As the institution of the cult of Homer in Alexandria was not only a way to pay respect to the best of the poets, but also played an important role in the self-presentation of the Ptolemies as the patrons of arts and as such contributed to their own prestige,²⁸ it was

¹⁹ On the cult and sanctuaries of Homer, Clay (2004) pp. 74–76 and *Testimonia* 136–143.

²⁰ One might note that in the Louvre, the image of the poet surrounded by cities that claimed his birth is repeated: Beneath the painting of Ingres there are seven female figures, representing Smyrna, Chios, Kolophon, Argos, Salamis on Cyprus, Athens and Rhodes. The painting's placement in the Hall of *Egyptian* antiquities is rather intriguing as well.

²¹ Picard / Lauer (1955), p. 153.

²² Picard / Lauer (1955), pp. 38–47, 48–171.

²³ See the discussion in Ridgway (1990), pp. 131–134 with further literature.

²⁴ Matz (1957) identified Ptolemy Philometor in one of the heads; Pietrzykowski (1976) identifies one thus far unidentified figure as Ptolemy I.

²⁵ Zanker (1995), pp. 166–7.

²⁶ In the Hellenistic age, the divinity ascribed to poets by poets became a commonplace. See Gabathuler (1937) for epigrams on this subject and Clay (2004) for cults of poets.

²⁷ SH 979.

²⁸ The relief of Archelaos is a significant indicator for the Ptolemaic modes of self-representation, since Ptolemy IV and his wife are the ones that are crowning Homer. One wonders if the *titulus* Oecumene hints at the attempts of the Ptolemies to conquer a significant part of the Mediterranean, and if the *titulus* Chronos

probably the aspect of prestige that prompted the individual cities to establish cults of Homer.²⁹

The cities who claimed Homer as their own tended to establish his shrines and to issue coins honouring him. There is evidence for his cult in Argos, Chios, Smyrna and Ios. Smyrna, Chios, Kolophon, Kyme, Nikaia, Temnos, Ios and the colony of Smyrna, Amas-tris issued coins representing Homer. The earliest sources for the cult come from the fourth century BC (Argos, Chios). Ios issued coins with Homer in the fourth century BC and his cult in Smyrna was founded in the early third century BC.³⁰

How did the cities represent Homer in their shrines? Of this, we possess frustratingly little information. There was a bronze statue of him in Argos;³¹ Strabo mentions a *xoanon* in the temple of Homer in Smyrna³² – the word implies a particularly old, perhaps wooden statue.³³ The iconographical characteristics of the statues are not discernible, but some impression of what they might have looked like might perhaps be gained from the coins issued in honour of Homer.³⁴

Coins from Smyrna, Kolophon, Chios, Nikaia and Cyme depict a bearded, seated Homer who is wearing a mantle and holding a scroll, often with one hand raised to his chin. Especially interesting are the coins from Smyrna, since some of them represent Homer with a staff or sceptre in one hand and a papyrus roll in the other.³⁵ Esdaile (1912) argued that this series unquestionably reproduces the bronze statue in the *Homereion* at Smyrna. Even if this statement is too enthusiastic,³⁶ the seated Zeus-like Homer was, according to Zanker, the preferred representation of Homer on the coins of Smyrna.³⁷

The representation of a seated, Zeus-like Homer holding a sceptre and scroll is also attested on the coin from Cyme.³⁸

The striking similarity with Zeus is a feature of Homer's portrait on the coin of Ios (4th century BC).³⁹ Zanker claims that without the inscription 'Homer' everyone would think that the image represents Zeus and concludes (p. 160): 'Man sieht daran, wie früh Homer

stands for their efforts to preserve the literary legacy of the Greeks by instituting and supporting the Museum and the Library.

²⁹ On the cults of Homer see now Clay (2004), pp. 74–5 and *Testimonia*, pp. 136–143. See also the survey in Pinkwart (1965a), pp. 169–173.

³⁰ Pinkwart (1965b), p. 172.

³¹ Clay (2004) T 10 = *Cert. Hom. Hes.* 302–4 Allen.

³² Strabo 14. 37 = Clay (2004), T 20.

³³ Zanker (1995), p. 157.

³⁴ For the coins, Esdaile (1912); Richter (1965) Vol. I, pp. 55–6; Heyman (1982); Klose (1987), Clay (2004), p. 82.

³⁵ Richter (1965) Vol. I, fig. 127; Zanker (1995), fig. 88b.

³⁶ Schefold (1943), p. 219 argues against it: 'Als man nach der Schlacht bei Magnesia 188 zuerst Homer auf die Münzen setzte, entsprach das Kultbild im Homereion nicht dem hochhellenistischen Geschmack. Man griff deshalb auf einen zeusähnlichen Typus (...) ähnlich der Homerstatue im Homereion von Alexandria. Die Gemeinsamkeit des Herrschersymbols, des Szepters, spricht sogar für direkte Abhängigkeit.' See also Zanker (1995), p. 160: 'Nicht alle diese Bilder können auf tatsächlich existierende Statuen oder gar «Kultstatuen» zurückgehen, aber ihre Vielfalt bezeugt, wie intensiv man sich mit Homers Gestalt beschäftigte.'

³⁷ Zanker (1995), p. 160: 'Am beliebtesten war auch in Smyrna das Bild eines zeusähnlich thronenden Homer, der wie auf dem Archelaos-Relief ein hohes Szepter und (statt des Blitzes!) eine Buchrolle hält. Auf einer der frühesten Prägungen war er Zeus noch mehr angeglichen, hatte wie dieser einen nackten Oberkörper und streckte seine Rechte mit der Rolle gebieterisch aus.'

³⁸ Esdaile (1912), Plate V, 9.

³⁹ Zanker (1995), fig. 87.

selbst zu einer mythischen Gestalt wird und dass die Angleichung des Homerbildes und das des Zeus auf alte Vorstellungen von der einzigartigen Bedeutung des Homer zurückgeht. Die Gestalt des Sängers verschmilzt mit der der Götter und Heroen, von deren Welt er kündigt.»

Since the general characteristic of the portraits of Homer in antiquity was «a dignified, Zeus-like aspect with long hair and beard» (Richter (1965), Vol. I, p. 56) it may have been argued that the cult statues of the poet emphasised the Zeus-like aspect as a matter of course.

2. What do poets talk about when they talk about Zeus?

We have seen that Homer was worshipped as god and probably represented in a Zeus-like manner in his shrines. One could argue that, in the manner of other Greek divinities, he instituted and, in a way, took care of his own cult: he called the singers in the epics θεῖοι ἄοιδοι⁴⁰ and θεῖος ἄοιδός soon came to be his own other name.⁴¹ But then, other poets did the same, as well: they either called themselves θεῖος (not surprisingly, Bacchylides,⁴² the «Cean nightingale» is one among them) or were pronounced by others to be «divine» and so many θεῖοι ἄοιδοί came into being. Numerous praises of Homer as the greatest poet, the offspring of Muses, the messenger of the gods are to be found in Greek literature, and equally numerous are the assertions of his special status among the poets,⁴³ but comparisons with Zeus are more difficult to find, especially in the classical period. In the Hellenistic era however, the divine status of poets seems to have been subject to inflation – so numerous are the poets to whom divinity was ascribed to, that it becomes a commonplace. This is the period when the equation of Homer with Zeus is to be expected, and, indeed, is to be found.

The oldest example for the equation of Homer with Zeus comes from the *enfant terrible* of the Greek dithyramb, Timotheos of Miletus (ca. 450–360 BC), who is enthroning Homer as Zeus only to overthrow him and declare him Kronos in the same line.⁴⁴

Asper (1997) discusses several instances of poetic identification of Homer with Zeus.⁴⁵ The epigram of Leonidas (AP 9. 25) is particularly interesting, since in it the poet Aratus is being praised as «second to Zeus» (l. 5–6 Διὸς ... δεύτερος), a praise that would make much more sense if one takes «Zeus» to mean «Zeus of poets», that is Homer. In an epigram which seems much like a reply to this one, Ptolemy III asserted that Aratus is not second to Zeus, but does indeed hold the sceptre himself.⁴⁶

The motif of holding a sceptre was obviously very *en vogue* in Hellenistic epigrams on poets and could be taken to mean «to be the Zeus of poetry», as in the following epigram of Antipater of Thessalonica:⁴⁷

⁴⁰ On the conception of Homer's divinity in Greek literature, Skiadas (1965), pp. 64–111.

⁴¹ See Skiadas (1965), pp. 66–8 for numerous examples.

⁴² Cf. 9. 3

⁴³ Skiadas (1965) *passim*.

⁴⁴ PMG 796. See the discussion in Asper (1997), p. 197, n. 279.

⁴⁵ Asper (1997), p. 141 (Callimachus *Ep.* 6 Pfeiffer) and p. 197 (Leonidas *Ep.* 101.2577 *HE* = *AP* 9.25; Ps. Longinus 9. 14; Quintilian 10. 1. 46, Plutarchus *Quom. Adul.* 10. 54).

⁴⁶ *SH* 712: Many poets, including Hegesianax and Hermippus wrote on similar subjects, (V.4) ἄλλ' ὅ γε λεπτολόγος οὐκ ἔπιτρον Ἄρατος ἔχει.

⁴⁷ *AP* 7. 409.

Ὄβριμον ἀκαμάτου σίχον αἴνεσον Ἀντιμάχῳ,
 ἄξιον ἀρχαίων ὄφρ' ὄσος ἡμιθέων,
 Πιερίδων χαλκευτὸν ἐπ' ἄκμοσιν, εἰ τορὸν οὐδας
 ἔλλαχες, εἰ ζαλοῖς τὰν ἀγέλαστον ὄπα,
 εἰ τὰν ἀτριπτον καὶ ἀνέμβατον ἀτραπὸν ἄλλοις
 μαίεσαι· εἰ δ' ὕμνων οὐκ ἄπτρον Ὅμηρος ἔχει,
 καὶ Ζεὺς τοι κρέσσων Ἐνοσίχθωνος, ἀλλ' Ἐνοσίχθων
 τοῦ μὲν ἔφ' ὑμῶν, ἀθανάτων δ' ὕπαιτος·
 καὶ ναετὴρ Κολοφῶνος ὑπέζευκται μὲν Ὀμήρῳ,
 ἀγεῖται δ' ἄλλων πλάθεος ὕμνοπόλων.
 «Praise the sturdy verse of tireless Antimachus,
 worthy of the majesty of the demigods of old,
 beaten on the anvil of the Muses, if thou art gifted
 with a keen ear, if thou aspirest to gravity of words,
 if thou wouldst pursue a path untrodden and unapproached by others.
 If Homer holds the sceptre of song,
 yet, though Zeus is greater than Poseidon,
 Poseidon his inferior is the chief of the immortals,
 so the Colophonian bows before Homer,
 but leads the crowd of other singers.»⁴⁸

Antipater operates with a whole parallel pantheon of the poetic gods, a strategy which surely would not have been possible, if the assimilation of Homer to Zeus was not a motif already established.

The comparison of Homer to Zeus is a reflection of his standing in Greek literature as the ultimate and best poet, the measure to which every aspiring artist must be compared. The custom to praise writers by comparing them to Homer was not only reserved for the writers of epics. Herodotus, Stesichorus, Sophocles, Euripides, Plato – even Thucydides was praised as his heir⁴⁹ and, in one way or another, all literary genres were thought to have had their origin in his epics.

The relief of Archelaus presented in the language of the visual arts what was taken to be a fact in the Hellenistic period: not only literature, all arts (and artists) are indebted to Homer. But there are emulations and emulations. Not all was idyllic in the picture of Homer as the ultimate ideal. And as much as one might appreciate the serene, dignified classicism of Ingres' *Apotheosis*, it does somehow make one a bit drowsy. Ingres would probably faint at the sight of Dali's work on the same subject from 1944/5, an image of disorientation and destruction worlds apart from the tranquil certainty of Ingres' dead artists' society.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Translation: Paton (1917). This epigram celebrates the works of Antimachus in a distinctly Callimachean language, the pun being the fact that Callimachus himself was attacking Antimachus' *Lyde* vigorously. On Hellenistic epigrams against Callimachus, Hunter (2004), pp. 446–9. See also the discussion of this epigram in Skiadas (1965), pp. 118–124.

⁴⁹ Cameron (1995), p. 275.

⁵⁰ Dali's *Apotheosis of Homer* (now in *Staatsgalerie Moderner Kunst* in Munich) represents Homer as a crumbling plaster bust supported by a walking stick, a rather clever pun on the image of the blind bard. This compelling work of art demonstrates a conspicuous parallel to Callimachus' *Reply*: Out of the mouth of Homer's crumbling bust a child's head emerges. Chronologically it was possible for Dali to read the *Reply*, but the *πῶς ἄτε* parallel may well have been a product of the similarity of concepts of avant-garde rather than a product of a close reading of Callimachus.

But then again, didn't Pindar profess his choice to take 'the road less travelled' in the fifth century BC⁵¹ and didn't Timotheus refuse to have anything to do with Homer's Muse and told her to hit the road in the fourth? The problem for both was not the work of Homer itself, but the kind of μίμησις τε καὶ ζήλωσις the poet should choose when producing his own poetry, which brings us to the image of Zeus in Callimachus.

3. Thundering is not my job, but Zeus'

In his programmatic preface to the *Aitia* 'Reply to the Telchines',⁵² Callimachus uses a number of notoriously cryptic metaphors.⁵³ One of them evokes the image of Zeus: the speaker of the *Reply* refuses to produce 'a loud-resounding poem' (v. 19) and states: 'Thundering is not my job, but Zeus!' (v. 20). He claims that the Telchines (on whose insults he is not brief) are 'constantly mumbling against his poetry' because it is not 'one continuous poem (ἓν ἄεισμα διηνεκές)⁵⁴ in thousands of lines on kings or heroes.'⁵⁵

The defence of the speaker is one of the most influential passages of Greek literature: after additional jabs at Telchines and naming a few examples of poems he appreciates, he goes on to refuse to produce a 'loud-resounding poem' and advises the Telchines to 'judge poetry by art, not by the Persian *schoinos*'⁵⁶ (Fr. 1, 17–20 Pfeiffer):

ἔλλετε Βασκανίης ὀλοὸν γένο[ς]· αὐθι δὲ τέχνη
κρίνετε,][μὴ σχοίν]φ Περσίδι τῆ[ν] σοφίην·
μηδ' ἀπ' ἐμεῦ διφᾶ]τε μέγα προφέουσαν ἀοιδίην
τίκτεσθαι· βροντιά]ν οὐκ ἐρόν, [ἀλλὰ] Διός.

'Off with you, wretched race of Malice! In future (judge) fine poetry by art, not by the Persian *schoinos*. Do not look to me for the birth of a loud-resounding poem: thundering is not my job, but Zeus'.⁵⁷

The cluster of Callimachus' poetic metaphors is extremely complex and ingeniously allusive and most probably these verses were written to tease⁵⁸ – after all, they have been teasing (and tormenting) scholars for almost eighty years. The issue at stake here is obviously big vs. small⁵⁹ and the appeal to the critics to reject length and bombast as sole

⁵¹ Paean 7b Fr. 52h.10–14 Snell/Maehler. For Pindar's usage of the «road» metaphor, Asper (1997), pp. 26–38; For this fragment and *Aitia* pp. 64–72. Asper is extremely cautious about accepting Callimachus' direct imitation of Pindar, but the majority are not – see Hunter (2004), p. 70 with further literature.

⁵² *Reply* is a much-discussed poem indeed. See Benedetto (1993) on the history of interpretation; Asper (1997) for the fullest discussion, and now also Hunter (2004), pp. 66–76.

⁵³ On Callimachus' poetological metaphors, Asper (1997).

⁵⁴ On possible Aristotelian connotations of this reproach, Hunter (1993), Appendix, pp. 190–196.

⁵⁵ *Aitia* Fr. 1, 3–5 Pfeiffer.

⁵⁶ According to Pfeiffer (1928), p. 318 the «Persian *schoinos*» is the largest measure for length, equal to παρασάγγελος (app. 6 km).

⁵⁷ All translations of the *Reply* are from Hunter (2004).

⁵⁸ As stated by Hunter (1993), p. 190.

⁵⁹ For a very thorough discussion of big vs. small in Callimachus' poetological metaphors, Asper (1997), pp. 135–156 with bibliography. I cannot however follow Asper's main thesis (that Callimachus' poetological metaphors cannot be deciphered because they function as *Leerstellen* (see also Asper (2001), pp. 86–8 for a synthesis of this argument). For the lack of space here I only state my main reasons for trying to

aesthetic criteria – indeed, bombast and length seem to merge into a single criterion in this passage (since the poem is characterised as μέγα ψοφέουσα).⁶⁰

The additional issue at stake in the *Reply* is the problem of self-positioning in the literary tradition. To cut a very long *Forschungsgeschichte* short:⁶¹ the Zeus from the *Reply* is not being rejected altogether, nor is his thundering seen as a negative characteristic; the speaker is simply refusing to accept the need for thundering for his own poetry.⁶² According to the speaker, the Telchines demand of him to produce a poem much like that of Zeus, and it is the closeness to the model in length and in style the speaker is unwilling to deliver.⁶³

Cameron (1992) argues that the speaker of the *Reply* is protesting against the sort of imitation which is unsophisticated because of its closeness to the model:⁶⁴ the model is not being questioned, it is the requirement to follow it too closely that is problematic.

If we take *Zeus* from the *Reply* to metaphorically stand for *Homer* – which is in my opinion the most plausible interpretation of the passage⁶⁵ – then modes of imitation and emulation of Homeric epics are being discussed here, and the Telchines are representing the view that the Homeric model should be followed very closely. Their positive example might have been the kind of epic poetry that experienced its revival with the age of Alexander and the Diadochs: historical, historical-encomiastic and historical-geographic epic, probably of the cyclic type, closely imitating Homer both in language and scope and reaching grandiose proportions⁶⁶ but it is also possible that the Telchines would have appreciated contemporary historical-encomiastic elegy, a genre that also appears to have flourished at this time and whose authors apparently also closely followed the style of the Homeric epics.⁶⁷

Both genres appear to have been characterised by heavy borrowing from Homeric language and formulaic repetition – all characteristics that Callimachus, Theocritus and Apollonius Rhodius rejected.⁶⁸ Those poets who enthroned Homer as Zeus and attempted to write exactly as he did were, according to the *Reply*, actually committing the act of hubris and, lost in their delusions of grandeur, in an attempt to thunder like Zeus produced nothing better than the 'braying of asses'.⁶⁹

decipher them: They function as a system, not only in the *Reply* but in the whole opus of Callimachus and they do not function alone, but are combined with allusions.

⁶⁰ As argued by Hunter (2004), pp. 69–70 (with bibliography and the discussion of Aristophanes' *Frogs* in this context).

⁶¹ Asper's analysis of the metaphor *Zeus* in the *Reply* (1997), pp. 196–198 provides an extensive bibliography.

⁶² Asper (1997), p. 196: 'Der ausschließliche Nexus des Donners mit Zeus impliziert nicht nur eine Ablehnung des Donnerers für Kallimachos selbst, der nicht Zeus ist, sondern auch für alle anderen, die ebenso wenig Zeus sind. Der Gedanke ist also apologetisch und polemisch zugleich.'

⁶³ As discussed in Hunter (2004), pp. 69–72 (with further literature).

⁶⁴ Cameron (1992) and (1995), pp. 268–302 argues that the genre in question is elegy, not contemporary epic, but see n. 66.

⁶⁵ See Asper (1997) p. 196 for this interpretation (with bibliography).

⁶⁶ Cameron (1995) questions the very existence of Hellenistic traditional epic as postulated by Ziegler (1965); however, we do possess Hellenistic inscriptions honouring the poets for works of this kind. See the discussion of inscriptions in Chaniotis (1988); on traditional epic in the Hellenistic age, Fantuzzi (1988) XXXIV–XLI; Lehnus (1999); Fantuzzi (2004) pp. 21–23; 246–9.

⁶⁷ On Hellenistic encomiastic elegy see now the extensive study of Barbantani (2001). (On p. 25 Barbantani suggests itinerant elegiac poets as the target of Callimachus' attack in the *Reply*).

⁶⁸ On this see Fantuzzi (2004), pp. 246–9 (with bibliography).

⁶⁹ *Fr.* 1, 29–30 Pfeiffer: ἐνὶ τοῖς γὰρ ἀειδομένοις οἱ λιγὺν ἤχον / τέτυγος, θόρυβον δ' οὐκ ἐφίλησαν ὄνων.

Instead of trying to reproduce Homeric thunder (sc. stylistic grandeur), Callimachus rather chose to pay respect to the god of poets by selective use of Homeric words and avoidance of the formulae, thus creatively changing his language and adapting it to his own, thematically and stylistically different kind of poetry. This applies to Theocritus and Apollonius Rhodius as well: in the words of Fantuzzi (2004) p. 249, they 'set up the dialectic between «formularity», allusion, and innovation which characterises their work and distinguishes them from the more unimaginative imitators of Homer».

The image of the Telchines from the *Reply* adapts well to the idea of hubris: in Greek mythology, the Telchines are a race of demonic creatures skilled in all manner of metalwork, but (or rather: therefore) also in magic, invidious and dangerous, having the Evil Eye. On account of their rendering the soil (mostly on Greek islands) infertile or demonstrating lack of respect for the gods, they were destroyed by one of the greater gods, Zeus, Poseidon or Apollo.⁷⁰

Pfeiffer tentatively suggested that in the *Reply* Callimachus was alluding to a legend, according to which the hubris of the Telchines was punished by Apollo in the form of a wolf – hence his epithet Λύκειος.⁷¹ Since in the *Reply* Apollo Λύκειος defends Callimachus' poetical *credo* from the criticism of the Telchines (who are obviously demonstrating hubris towards Zeus), the image of the vindictive god punishing the critics would fit the imagery of the *Reply* perfectly.⁷²

The choice of the metaphor 'Telchines' for critics is a very clever one, providing Callimachus with a range of negative connotations for his opponents, thus rendering his figure of the narrator more credible and winning the favour of the reader in advance.⁷³ But, at the same time, depicting his critics as absolute and hopeless amateurs and total bad guys would also be a mistake – why even engage in a critical discussion with someone who is totally worthless? True, the Telchines are characterised as 'mumbling against' the speaker's poetry (v.1), as 'ignorant and no friends of the Muse' (v.2);⁷⁴ they are addressed with the words 'race who know how to melt your own liver (sc. with envy)' (7–8); and 'wretched race of Malice' (17) but still, the speaker *is* engaging in a critical discussion with them, and even trying to instruct them how they should judge fine poetry in the future.

⁷⁰ On Telchines in Greek mythology, Herter (1934); Forbes (1950), pp 78–91; Kambylis (1965), pp. 76–7; Brillante (1993); Rakoczy (1996), pp. 166–7; 170–1.

⁷¹ Pfeiffer (1928), p. 320 citing Servius on Verg. *Aen.* 4. 377 *sive quod in lupi habitu Telchinas occiderit* and Eust. 2. 789. 16 ἢ τοξευθέντες ὑπ' Ἀπόλλωνος ὄλοντο.

⁷² And would provide a picture very coherent with the closure of the *Hymn to Apollo* (where Apollo is again defending the Callimachean poetics against Momos and Phthonos – cf. Call. *H. Ap.* 105–13 and the interpretation of Williams (1978), pp. 85–97). Epigram 21 Pfeiffer provides an additional piece for the metaphorical mosaic: There Callimachus is characterised as the one whose song was *stronger than βαοκανία* (v. 4: ὁ δ' ἤγειρεν κρέσσονα βαοκανίης) e.g., the one whose poetry survived the test of time and invidious critics. Giangrande (1968), p. 716 argues that βαοκανία here means only 'destruction', not 'enviousness' but I do not see why both meanings should not be implied.

⁷³ For Callimachus' poetological metaphors as a strategy for *Sympathienlenkung* see Asper (1997) *passim*; see also Schmitz (1999) on Callimachus' strategy of 'luring the readers into adopting the role of the implied reader' (p. 162) in the *Reply*. I agree with both Asper and Schmitz that the *Reply* aims at defining the implied reader, but think that, just as it refers to (at that time) extant works of his predecessors, the speaker also suggests the existence of readers who would prefer different approaches to the Homeric model. The historical identity of the Telchines is not the subject of this paper. On that, Cameron (1995), pp. 185–232 (with bibliography).

⁷⁴ Magnelli (1999) offers an extensive discussion of the syntax of this difficult verse.

The accumulation of expressions like «envy» and «malice» brings to mind an aspect of the Telchines thus far largely neglected in the discussions of the *Reply*:⁷⁵ one can envy only the things that are *enviable*. Why were the Telchines so often depicted as destructive, malicious creatures? Because they were artisans themselves and their envy was directed at those who could claim the same or a higher level of craftsmanship.⁷⁶

In ancient texts, there are two characteristics of the Telchines regularly mentioned: their envy and their craftsmanship. Their excellence in arts and crafts, particularly in metal-work is mentioned in numerous texts and some went as far as specifying them as «inventors of (useful) skills»,⁷⁷ or, more specifically, of the forging of metals.⁷⁸

Especially interesting is their relationship with the gods: on the one hand, there are several traditions of them being destroyed by the gods on account of their hubris, but, on the other hand, they were credited with invention of the art of making cult statues (ἀγαλματοποιία).⁷⁹ Many cult statues of the gods were, according to legend, made by the Telchines – even a statue of Apollo on Rhodes.⁸⁰ Furthermore, the Telchines were, like the Cyclopes, credited with forging the arms of the gods, for instance the sickle of Cronos.⁸¹ Their negative qualities, such as association with magic, envy and the possession of an Evil Eye, are connected with their expertise in arts and excellence as metal-workers. Their envy is actually presented as an occupational disease since they are jealous of artistic skills. They are described as φθονεροὶ ἐν τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ τῶν τεχνῶν by Diodorus (5. 55. 3) and as τεχνῖται δὲ ὄντες καὶ τὰ τῶν προτέρων ἔργα μωμησάμενοι by Nicolaus of Damascus.⁸²

In my opinion, Callimachus did not want to blend out the artistic connotations of the Telchines in the *Reply*; on the contrary – he appeals to their several characteristics simultaneously: to their image as malicious, vindictive critics, to their destruction on account of hubris, and to their association with arts. This is accomplished through typical Calli-

⁷⁵ With one exception: in their 2002 paper, Acosta-Hughes and Stephens do discuss the artistic connotations of the Telchines, but they interpret them as «primitive artists» lacking artistic inspiration (p. 241). This view is based on their reading of Diod. Sic. 5. 55. 2 as a source for Telchines as «first statue makers, whose crude efforts were replaced over time» (p. 241). Diodorus does ascribe the invention of statue-making to the Telchines, and numbers several examples for cult statues they produced, but nowhere does he say that these were replaced. The crudeness of the statues is not mentioned in the text either: Diodorus calls them ἀφιδρύματα ἀρχαία. ἀφίδρυμα (as opposed to ξόανον) does not connote the crudeness of the work (for the term ἀφίδρυμα see Donohue (1988), pp. 81–82). As for the fact that their very invention of the skill of ἀγαλματοποιία would connote the crudeness of their work, one only need recall the image of Daedalus to see that the notion of an archaic artist does not imply aesthetic limitations, crudeness or lack of skill (to the contrary). Finally, their interpretation of the remark «not friends of the Muse» (v. 2) as «they lack artistic inspiration» is in my opinion incorrect, since the Muses were never considered to be patrons of the visual arts and artists.

⁷⁶ On the craftsmanship of the Telchines, Herter (1934), Sp. 202–207; Forbes (1950), pp 78–91. See also the *Testimonia* on the Telchines as artisans in Overbeck (1959), T. 40–55.

⁷⁷ Cf. Diod. 5. 55. 2: τεχνῶν τιῶν εὐρείᾳ καὶ ἄλλων τῶν χρησίμων εἰς τὸν βίον τῶν ἀνθρώπων εἰσηγηταί.

⁷⁸ See on this the texts quoted by Herter (1934), Sp. 200–202 and Overbeck (1959), T 42, 44; 48.

⁷⁹ Overbeck (1959), T 44; 45.

⁸⁰ Overbeck (1959), T. 44; 45; 46.

⁸¹ Overbeck (1959), T. 40; 42.

⁸² Stob. *Anth.* 3. 38. 52: Τελχίνες ἄνθρωποι ὀνομαζόμενοι τὸ ἀνέκαθεν Κρήτες, οἰκίσηαντες δὲ καὶ ἐν Κύπρῳ μεταναστάντες δ' εἰς Ῥόδον καὶ πρῶτοι τὴν νῆσον κατασχόντες, βάσκανοί τε σφόδρα ἦσαν καὶ φθονεροί. τεχνῖται δὲ ὄντες καὶ τὰ τῶν προτέρων ἔργα μωμησάμενοι Ἀθηνας Τελχίντας ἀγαλμα πρῶτοι ἰδρύσαντο, ὥσπερ εἰ τις λέγοι Ἀθηνας βασκάνου.

machean word-play. By addressing the Telchines as φύλον ... τήκ[ειν] ἥπαρ ἐπιστάμενον (v. 7–8), Callimachus is alluding to their reputation as experts, and to one etymology of their name: the word Τέλιχος was usually etymologised as deriving either from Θέλειν <bewitch> or from τήκειν <to melt (metals)> / <to cause someone to pine away>.⁸³ By characterising the Telchines as a φύλον ἐπιστάμενον, Callimachus is first alluding to their reputation as experts and artisans, but then he insults them with a clever etymological pun: Yes, you are fine experts in melting indeed ... but in melting your own liver! The usage of the word ἥπαρ with τήκειν is here attested for the first time,⁸⁴ an unusual combination that can be easily understood as the occasional but exceptional adaptation. This further attracts the reader's attention to the sophisticated joke Callimachus is making on Telchines' account.

By stating that the Telchines are <no friends of the Muse> (v. 2: νήιδες οἱ Μούσης οὐκ ἐγένοντο φίλοι) Callimachus is overriding the metaphor he created in the first line: after reading the first line of the *Reply*, the reader will assume the Telchines to be a metaphor for contemporary critics, but in the second line Callimachus is describing the Telchines *qua* mythological creatures, ancient artisans specializing in the formgiving of metals and producing the weapons and cult statues of gods, since to say that they are <no friends of the Muse> is a learned remark about the fact that the Muses were never assumed to be patrons of *visual* arts. Telchines as artisans never *needed* to be friends with the Muses, whereas the critics should attempt to be just that.

νήιδες is another matter altogether: this word, in essence a negation of ἰδεῖν, is an etymological pun very similar to that on τήκειν from line 8: through ἰδεῖν a notion of the Telchines as *experts* is being brought into the reader's mind, and immediately negated (νη-) in the form of the insult.⁸⁵ The speaker of the *Reply* is getting carried away with insulting the Telchines and is using just the same unfair tactics everyone does when angry: He is cruelly choosing the insults that would hurt the most and is renouncing the Telchines the very characteristics they cherish the most – their expertise, their knowledge, their artistry. At the same time, he is aiming at their very heart (or liver) by pronouncing the painful truth – they were not born to be friends with the Muses. To add salt to the wound, he is

⁸³ On this etymologising, see the commentaries of Pfeiffer, Hopkinson (1988), Massimilla (1996) *ad loc.* The commentators stress the aspect of sorcery in the interpretation of the passage. Kambylis (1965) entertains the thought of *Künstlerneid* of the Telchines briefly (p. 76) but then concentrates fully on the aspect of the Evil Eye and sorcery.

In my opinion, Callimachus is making the most of the ambiguity of τήκειν and hinting at both its meanings – a strategy not unusual for him (see n. 85).

⁸⁴ See Pfeiffer (1928), p. 311, n. 5. On ἥπαρ see also Call. *Aet. Fr.* 2. 5 Pfeiffer and Pfeiffer's commentary *ad loc.*

⁸⁵ Magnelli (1999) analyses the meanings and the implications of the word νήιδες and offers a compelling interpretation: νήιδες was also a term used to signify a race of Greek mythological creatures, a kind of large pre-historic animals with extremely loud and powerful voices. By using this particular word to characterize the critics, Callimachus might be enriching his cluster of metaphors with an additional one pertaining to the sound.

Kaesser (2004) argues that ἀοιδή and ἀοιδός in the *Reply* are also etymological puns and that Callimachus implied different etymologies ranging from οἰδέω <to swell> with a *privativum* to οἶδα with α *privativum* and α *intensivum*. The switching between two opposed meanings of the word derived from οἶδα underlines the poet's <constant switching between presence and absence of knowledge in the Aitia> (Kaesser (2004) p. 41). This interpretation seems probable, especially in the light of Callimachus' play with the double etymology of Telchines.

underlining his own long-lasting friendship with the goddesses (v. 37–8) and with Apollo Λύκιος (v. 21–33) – their archenemy. Finally, to add insult to injury, the speaker mentions the race of Pygmies (and the ‘crane, delighting in their blood’, v. 13–14) and is thus reaching the peak of political incorrectness – the Telchines were very probably thought of as dwarfs⁸⁶ and were thus vertically challenged!

Taking the speaker's characterisation of his critics *cum grano salis* and keeping in mind their general characteristics as depicted in the *Reply* (and other poems of Callimachus) – their hubris and punishment,⁸⁷ their expertise in metallurgy,⁸⁸ and finally, their malice, enviousness and sorcery⁸⁹ – the question to be posed now is: what does one gain when the aspect of the Telchines' artistry is added to the mosaic that is the *Reply*? Do we understand their objections to the *Aitia* better and do we gain a better insight into the poetics of the author? I think we do. If Callimachus is bringing the visual arts into play in the *Reply*'s metaphors, and if we consider the fact that the Telchines as visual artists were credited especially with the production of the weapons of the gods and their ἀγάλματα, then their accusations gain a new perspective – obviously, they busy themselves with the production of *big* things that are in some way *useful* for practical purposes.

On the other hand, when one thinks of the Telchines as artists who make cult statues, it is obvious that they were bound to delight in the close imitation of dignified, elevated subjects. That is why they accuse Callimachus of being ‘childish’ (v. 6: ἡλιὸς ἄνε) implying not only that the poetry of Callimachus is not grand enough, but also that his subjects are not elevated, and that he is playing for his own amusement. When one sees this accusation in the context of the Telchines being artists themselves, and furthermore, artists who possess skill, but who are also very envious of the skill of others, then their qualification of Callimachus' poetry can be seen in a new light: they notice the technical excellence of Callimachus and they can value *techne*. Since the amount of *techne* in the *Aitia* is very high, the Telchines are invidious and the only fault they can find is the subject-matter of the work. And that is why the speaker in engaging in a technical discussion with them in the first place – because the very fact that the Telchines are mumbling against his book proves that it is technically enviably good. Only the subject matter, not the poet's skill is in question. Precisely this point is the very core of the speaker's defence, since he is implying that the grandeur of the subject is less important than the artistry of the work. If the Telchines would judge solely the skill of the *Aitia*, and not the subject-matter by measuring it with the Persian *schoinos*, he would win the argument. When the speaker admonishes his critics to do just that (v. 17f. αὖθι δὲ τέχνῃ / κρίνετε,)[μὴ σχοίν]φ Περσίδι τῆ[ν] σοφίην), he is defending his work against someone who *can* make a good judgement of *techne*, not from ignoramuses oblivious to any artistic criteria.

⁸⁶ Herter (1934), Sp. 211.

⁸⁷ The hubris of the Telchines is also briefly mentioned in the aition *Acontius and Cydippe* (*Aet. Fr.* 75, 64–69 Pfeiffer) where Callimachus is relating the episode from Xenomedes' (lost) *History of Ceos* about the destruction of the Telchines who inhabited the island. Since the Ceian Telchines did not pay respect to the gods, they destroyed them, save for the humble Macelo.

⁸⁸ This aspect of Telchines is also mentioned in the *Hymn to Delos* v. 30–32 where Callimachus relates the legend about Poseidon who hit the mountains with a ‘trident made for him by the Telchines’ (v. 31: ἄορι τριγλώχινι τὸ οἱ Τελχίνες ἔειυξαν) and thus created the islands.

⁸⁹ This aspect is also mentioned in *Acontius and Cydippe: Aet. Fr.* 75, 64–5 Pfeiffer: ἐν δ' ὄβριον θάνατόν τε κεραυνίον, ἐν δὲ γόητας / Τελχίνας.

But, in the end, the Telchines, being what they are, cannot accept the poetry of Callimachus because they are not interested in the poetic of *λειπότης* – and how could they possibly be, being specialists for *ἀγάλματα* and the forging of the weapons that crush mountains? They must appreciate stylistic qualities like bombast, to be able to produce an image of a god! By stating: ‘thundering is not mine, but Zeus’, the speaker of the *Reply* is refusing to engage in a close mimesis of a god in all his grandeur and is thus signifying where exactly the difference between him and the Telchines lies. But he is also using a metaphor that can be understood in both the visual and the literary discourse. On the visual level it could mean: ‘I do not intend to make *ἀγάλματα* and thus am not interested in bombast’. In the discourse of literary criticism, it could mean: ‘I do not intend to pursue a close imitation of Homer’. In both cases, the grandeur is inapplicable and can thus not be applied as an aesthetic criterion to the *Aitia*.

The image of the Telchines and the image of Homer as Zeus thus come together in the *Reply* and create a cluster of metaphors poet is using to express his opinion on what poetry should be like. By perceiving the Telchines not only as malicious sorcerers, but also as visual artists, we are able to understand the *tenor* of this metaphor: the critics are professionals, they understand and can judge the *techné*, but they are at the same time artists interested in an entirely different kind of production, demanding poetry on a grand scale, that is a close imitation of Homer’s epics in style and length. The aspect of *ἀγαλματοποιία* serves to explain their preferences further: whereas their objects of mimesis are big and elevated, Callimachus is nourishing the slender Muse and playing like a child (that is with small things).

Finally, by employing the metaphors from the domain of the visual arts, Callimachus is providing his readers with an apt parallel for contemporary literary disputes. The opposition between the poets such as Theocritus, Apollonius and contemporary elegists and epic poets whose works were more closely modelled upon Homer, and/or were long catalogic poetry could be compared to the situation in the visual arts, especially sculpture, where two opposite tendencies were also present at the same time: on the one hand, the immense influence of Lysippus’ school with its majestic sculptures of gods and heroes, and, on the other hand, the small-scale, intricate representations of subjects such as children playing with pets or scenes from ordinary life.⁹⁰

Perhaps one can go even further with the images of Homer as Zeus and the Telchines as visual artists. In my opinion, both motifs come together again in another poem of Callimachus. This is the much-discussed 6th *Iambi*⁹¹ offering a curious *ἐκφρασις* of Pheidias’ statue of Zeus – an extensive, detailed and precise summary of its dimensions. The setting of the poem is a *προπεμπτικόν*. According to the *Diegesis*, someone who is about to visit the Olympian sanctuary of Zeus is being instructed by his acquaintance. ‘He narrates the length, height, and breadth of the base, the throne, the footstool, and of the god himself, and how much was the expense, and that the creator was the Athenian Pheidias the son of Charmides.’⁹²

⁹⁰ In his book on Hellenistic epic, Ziegler (1966²), pp. 44–50 discusses this phenomenon in the visual arts and its possible implications for contemporary literature. See also on Hellenistic art and literature Webster (1964); Onians (1979); Fowler (1989); Zanker (2004).

⁹¹ The *Iambi* have recently been the subject of two monographs: Kerkhecker (1999) and Acosta-Hughes (2002).

⁹² *Diegesis* 6. 25–31: Γνωρίμω αὐτιῦ ἀιοπλέου κατὰ θέαν τοῦ Ὀλυμπίου Διὸς εἰς Ἥλιον διηγέεται μῆκος ὕψος πλάτος βάσεως θρόνου ὑποποδίου αὐτιῦ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ὄση ἢ δαπάνη, δημιουργῶν δὲ Φειδίαν Χαρμίδου Ἀθηναίων. Text: Pfeiffer; translation: Acosta Hughes (2002).

The fragmentary remains of this *Iambus* do not allow an extensive analysis, but, nevertheless, some impression of the poem can be gained. It is written in the Doric dialect in alternating iambic trimeters and ithyphallics. To say that it 'perplexed modern critics' (Acosta-Hughes (2002) p. 289) is to say too little: the modern interpretations range from a parody of προπεμπτικόν and a failed or an ironic ἐκφρασις to a declamation of a tourist-guide in Elis and a 'monstrous display of erudition'.⁹³

One of the main issues for the interpretation of this poem is the identity of the speaker. We have no clues as to who he is, save the way he is treating his subject-matter. The subject is a different matter altogether – this particular statue of Zeus was one of the most celebrated works of art in antiquity, famous for its artistic qualities, the impression it left on its observer and for its technical excellence. It was one of the Seven Wonders of the World⁹⁴ and was famous as a representation of a divinity approved from the highest place – Zeus himself.⁹⁵

The Olympian statue of Zeus was brought into close connection with the works of Homer. According to widespread tradition,⁹⁶ Pheidias' representation of Zeus was inspired by the following verses from the *Iliad* (1. 528–30):

Ἦ καὶ κυανέησιν ἐπ' ὄφρῶσι νεῦσε Κρονίων·
ἀμβρόσιοι δ' ἄρα χαῖται ἐπερρώσαντο ἄνακτος
κρατὸς ἀπ' ἀθανάτοιο· μέγαν δ' ἐλέλιξεν Ὀλυμπον.⁹⁷

‘As he spoke the son of Kronos bowed his dark brows, and the ambrosial locks swayed on his immortal head, till vast Olympus reeled’.⁹⁸

Based on both Callimachus' usage of the metaphor *Homer: Zeus* and the metaphor *mythical visual artists Telchines: literary critics*, I propose a new interpretation of the sixth *Iambus*. What if the Zeus of *Iambus* VI is yet another metaphor for Homer? We have seen that in the *Reply*, Homer is being referred to as Zeus and that the issue at stake is mimesis: Zeus-Homer is being rejected as a direct model by the speaker and obviously postulated as the only desirable model by the Telchines. In the case of the statue of Olympian Zeus, so closely related to Homer in its very process of production, the identification with Homeric poetry could be even more natural. But then, why would the speaker of the sixth *Iambus* be so interested in its measurements? And why is he speaking in a Doric dialect? Who in the world would be interested in measuring Homeric verses? Well, thinking of the *Reply*, especially the verses αὐθι δὲ τέχνῃ κρίνετε,][μῆ σχοίν]φ Περόδι τῆ[ν] σοφίην one could say that the Telchines might be inclined to do just that. The iambic scorn of the sixth *Iambus* would thus be directed against the Telchines: their interest in all things grand and thundering is being ironically exaggerated to the point of absurdity. A poem describing one of the most celebrated statues of the classical world without (apparently) a word of proper description of its aesthetic peculiarities is intended to mimic, with sarcastic implications, the logic of the critics who can only concentrate on huge size and the imitators who want to follow Zeus/Homer so closely, they might as well tape-measure him.

⁹³ Thus Zanker (1987), pp. 64–5. Both Kerkhecker (1999), pp. 166–181 and Acosta-Hughes (2002), pp. 288–294 offer an extensive survey of interpretations proposed thus far.

⁹⁴ On the Seven Wonders, Ekschmitt (1996).

⁹⁵ Cf. Paus 5. 11. 9.

⁹⁶ See T 692–754 in Overbeck (1959).

⁹⁷ Text: Monro / Allen.

⁹⁸ Translation: Butler (1898).

This interpretation would explain why this ‘description’ is so infused with the language of the rivalry and greed⁹⁹ – this fits perfectly with the image of Telchines in Callimachus and hints at their interest in grandeur and their envy and malice. On the other hand, if one was about to produce an exact imitation of the statue, one would obviously want to know not only its measurements, but also the cost.

One could, perhaps, take the last point further. It is reported anecdotally that writers of Hellenistic historical epic were so greedy, that some of them requested a pay *per verse*. The longer the poem, the better their wage.¹⁰⁰ This could explain the greedy thirst for knowledge of *just how costly* Zeus / Homer was.

On taking a closer look at the fragments of the 6th *Iambus*, some expressions and motifs gain an additional nuance of meaning when one imagines one of Telchines as its speaker.

The very opening brings to mind the connection of Telchines with the statues of the gods and their envy of *techne* (Fr. 196. 1 Pfeiffer):

Ἀ]λεῖτος ὁ Ζεὺς, ἃ τέχνη δὲ Φειδία.
 ‘The Zeus is of Elis, the skill of Pheidias.’¹⁰¹

One would now expect to hear more about what is so special about the *techne* of Pheidias and what makes the statue so famous, but the rest of the poem seems to enact the motto ‘size matters’ (Fr. 196. 37–38 Pfeiffer):

αὐτὸς δ’ ὁ δαίμων πέντι[ε] τ[ᾶ]ς ἐφεδρ[ί]δος
 παχέεσσι μύσσων·
 ‘and the god himself is taller than the throne by five cubits.’

Kerkhecker (1999) pp. 157–8 discusses the strange wording in this fragment: Callimachus is not using the common word for throne (θρόνος), but a hapax ἐφεδρίς. Unfortunately, one can not even say whether the expression is a technical or a poetic one but it is surely connected to ἐφέδρα and ἐφεδρος ‘seat’ and as such (especially considering the connotations of ἐφεδρος) strikes a competitive note.¹⁰²

The primary meaning of the verses would be that the image of the seated god is taller than his seat by precisely five cubits. If however, we imagine one Telchine describing the statue to another, the implication of this verse would be (self)ironic: however hard they might try to immitate his grandeur, the god (Homer) is still grander than his successors.

The next passage is also infused with the motifs and language of the rivalry – the word μειονεκτεῖν ‘to be at disadvantage’ evokes a rather jousting atmosphere. Even the Seasons and Graces are taking part in a size contest (Fr. 196. 42–4 Pfeiffer):

παρθένοι γὰρ ὤραι
 τᾶν ὀργυιαῶν ὄσσον οὐδὲ πάσ[σα]λφ[ν]
 φαντὶ μειονεκτεῖν.

⁹⁹ For the language of the *Iambus* see Kerchecker (1999), pp. 151–163 and Acosta-Hughes (2002), p. 290.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Suid. s.v. Χοιρίλος: ἐφ’ οὗ ποιήματος κατὰ στίχον στατήρα χρυσοῦν ἔλαβε (about Alexander’s poet Choerilus of Iasus).

¹⁰¹ All translations of Callimachus’ *Iambi* are Acosta-Hughes’ (2002).

¹⁰² Cf. LSJ s.v. ἐφεδρος 4: ‘the third competitor in contests, who sits by to fight the conqueror and (5) generally, one who waits to take another’s place, a successor.’

«For the virgin Seasons¹⁰³ say they do not fall short of the women who are one fathom high by so much as a peg.»

Since the measurements obviously do not satisfy the addressee's thirst for knowledge, he inquires about the costs (Fr. 196. 45–46 Pfeiffer):

τ[ὸ] δ' ὄν ἀναισίμωμα - λίχνος ἔσοι [γάρ
καὶ] τό μευ ἰυθέοθαι

«And as to the expense of these – for you are greedy to learn this too of me.»

Kerkhecker (1999), p. 161 notes that the word ἀναισίμωμα «the cost» is unusual in two ways: First, it is a rare expression and secondly, it is a markedly Ionic word (from the verb ἀναισιμῶω¹⁰⁴) in a literary Doric context.

Could it be that this unusual word usage is intended to attract the reader's attention? Kerkhecker (p. 162) further notes its prominent placement: «After ἀναισίμωμα, the sentence breaks off: the word is left to ring out, the shock to settle in the reader's mind. Protestations of urgency heighten the sense of incongruity. Direct address signals the importance of this most fascinating item.»

I suppose that, faced with an unusual word, one could try to etymologise, and, bearing in mind just how fond Callimachus is of etymological word-play, this just might prove to be a fruitful approach. So, what do we get when we deconstruct this word? We could try with an a *privativum* / αἴσα / μῶμος. Now, μῶμος is a familiar enough occurrence in Callimachus¹⁰⁵ and ἀνάσιμος «unseemly» is attested elsewhere. Could we decipher this expression as «unseemly criticism»? Another (self)ironical utterance of the speaker of the *Iambus*, perhaps another joke at the cost of the Telchines and their unseemly modes of criticising great works of art.

Maybe the text of the whole *Iambus* was pervaded with double-edged expressions that could hint to the careful reader at the true nature of the speaker and his aesthetic criteria. The subject of aesthetics and the modes of criticism connect this poem to the *Reply*, where Callimachus not only used «Zeus» as a metaphor for «Homer», but also introduced the discourse of literary criticism through the metaphorical entrance of the Telchines. Finally, the demand not to judge fine poetry by length brings the *Reply* and the sixth *Iambus* together and, in my opinion, provides a hint for the interpretation of the *Iambus*. Here we have the critics who are demonstrating *in vivo* what unseemly criticism looks like – a strategy very appropriate to the iambic genre.

Seeing that the sixth *Iambus* fits well into the general tone of the programmatic passages of Callimachean poetry, it remains to be seen how this interpretation suits the corpus of the *Iambi*. Acosta-Hughes (2002) persuasively argued that the programmatic first *Iambus* with its *persona loquens* Hipponax introduces the discourse of literary criticism as one of the main subjects of the book. Furthermore (and very significant for the proposed interpre-

¹⁰³ Behind the throne of Zeus the Seasons and Charites were represented.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Schmitt (1970), p.103 n. 26 on ἀναισιμῶω: «Das wie das zugrunde liegende ἀναισιμῶω nur bei Herodotus belegte Wort ist ein speziell ionischer *terminus technicus* für «Kosten», dessen Verwendung in einem dorischierenden Text auffällt». See also Kerkhecker (1999), p. 161 n. 78.

¹⁰⁵ The programmatic closure of the *Hymn to Apollo* features Apollo defending the Callimachean poetic from Phthonos and Momos. In the fragmentary epigram (Fr. 393 Pfeiffer) Momos is poking fun at the philosopher Diodorus of Iasus.

tation of the sixth *Iambus*) the figure of Hipponax can be seen as the positive foil of the Telchines, since he, too, is a literary critic, but also has connotations with the *visual* arts.

As argued by Acosta-Hughes (2002), pp. 32–47, Callimachus is using the figure of Hipponax as a critic because Hipponax was famous for his attacks of the sculptors Bupalus and Athenis and a painter named Mimnes – all artists. Hipponax attacks them because of the aesthetic faults of their works and thus presents himself as a *critic of aesthetics*. What Callimachus is doing by introducing the figure of Hipponax as a *literary critic* is a shift in discourse – while the poet Hipponax criticized visual artists, the Callimachean Hipponax *redivivus* is criticizing Alexandrian poets. Callimachus «employs the choliambic line (...) as a medium for the criticism of a poetic composition».¹⁰⁶

But the shift in discourse is not complete, precisely as it is not complete in the case of the Telchines in the *Reply*, where Callimachus does not blend out the Telchines' connection with the visual arts. In his book of *Iambi*, literary criticism is an explicit subject in several poems,¹⁰⁷ but in others, works of plastic art are being discussed¹⁰⁸ and in at least two of these,¹⁰⁹ the sculptures are metaphors for literary genres.

In the sixth *Iambus*, the description of a sculpture could be interpreted as an allegory for literary criticism. By depicting the Telchines' way of viewing of the statue of Zeus Callimachus is satirically portraying their way of reading and imitating Homer. Here, Callimachus is further exploring the possibilities of the Telchines as a metaphor for critics. Their connection with the visual arts, especially with the statues of gods, enables Callimachus to satirize their aesthetic criteria by letting them speak of the statue of Zeus as they would be speaking of poetry of Homer.

It remains to be seen *how exactly* the Telchines see the poetry of Homer. The ancient and modern readers of the sixth *Iambus* did not fail to notice the excessive accuracy as the main characteristic of the discussion of the statue. Hunter (2003) persuasively argues that accuracy (*ἀκρίβεια*) was perceived as a positive stylistic characteristic in the circles of the learned poets of Alexandria. In the classical period, however, this particular quality was perceived as a typical characteristic of prose, most notably of rhetorical and historical writings. In the domain of rhetoric was especially important for the judicial speeches delivered in courtroom, as opposed to the speeches written for delivery before the assembly;¹¹⁰ in the domain of history, *ἀκρίβεια* was postulated by Thucydides to be the most important quality in relating and interpreting of events.¹¹¹

The dichotomy between the poets who create their poems thanks to divine inspiration and those who rely on labour and strive to achieve a true and accurate account of events, famously postulated in the «method chapters» of Thucydides' *History*, reaches its peak in the domain of accuracy: a bard claiming divine inspiration relates his poetry orally and is thus able to transfer his enthusiasm to his audience, that is to say to *elevate* it – and this is the point where orality and inspiration come together forming the very notion of gran-

¹⁰⁶ Acosta-Hughes (2002), p. 35.

¹⁰⁷ *Iambi* 1, 2, 13.

¹⁰⁸ *Iambi* 6, 7 and 9.

¹⁰⁹ In a forthcoming article, I argue that the statue of Hermes in *Iambus* 7 is a metaphor for the iambic genre.

¹¹⁰ In *Rhetoric* 3. 12 Aristotle explicitly links precision with judicial speeches. On this passage, see Hunter (2003), pp. 218–19.

¹¹¹ Th. 1. 20–23, esp. 1. 22. 1–3. For an overview of the concept of *ἀκρίβεια* in the fifth and fourth century BC, see Kurz (1970).

deur – yet, he is not as obliged to the principle of accuracy as a historian writing to be read, since the main objective of a historian (as seen by Thucydides) is not to produce an effect on his audience (or ‘mere entertainment’¹¹²) but rather to relate the information as accurately as possible¹¹³ and to educate the reader.

It seems that early on, the ideal of akribeia became closely connected with literature *for reading* as opposed to orally transmitted poetry, which is dependant on delivery and aims at grandeur.¹¹⁴ Hunter argues that in the domain of prose, a higher level of akribeia was demanded in the cases when delivery did not play an important role, that is in the speeches delivered before one judge or those commissioned from the professional speech-writer.¹¹⁵ The grandeur on the other hand, was perceived as lacking in (or, more precisely: not *needing*) akribeia. However, things became different with the arrival of Hellenistic book poetry. Since it did not depend on delivery, poetry written for reading could require more precision. Equally important for admission of akribeia into the domain of poetry was the learned aspect of the Hellenistic poetry. The self-stylization of poets like Callimachus, Theocritus and Aratus as diligent philologists and their introduction of the idea of labour as an artistic prerequisite for creating poetry and the narrative strategy of insisting on closing, rather than opening their works to the general public resulted in the final admission of akribeia into poetry. Hellenistic poets are only too happy to state that they have learned something (preferably by reading a book) and the amassing of information not only was not perceived as unworthy of poetry, it was the very subject (and a narrative frame of the first half) of most Hellenistic of all poetry books – the *Aitia*.

So how is a high level of akribeia to be explained in a poem by Callimachus, where the speaker is not really his *persona*, but the hated Telchines speak through his voice?

If one recalls the image of the Telchines from the *Reply*, especially their possession of *techné*, one will understand why the technical virtuosity with which they are stating the measures of the Olympian Zeus is actually in keeping with their general image in Callimachean poetry. What is ridiculed in the sixth *Iambus* is the fact that they so stubbornly insist on imitating Homer and yet manage to ignore the crucial characteristic of his style: the grandeur that not only does not need accuracy, but is radically opposed to the very idea of precision and meticulous learning. Grandeur cannot be learned, nor can it be imitated.

The Telchines are desperately trying to re-create the poetry that belongs in a different era and whose production and performance is radically different from the Hellenistic circumstances. The idea of transferring enthusiasm to an audience by meticulously stating data is hilarious. Callimachus really knew how to drive a point home.

Thus the game of guessing the speaker of *Iambus* Callimachus which is playing throughout the book¹¹⁶ reaches its peek in the sixth *Iambus*, where the reader should demonstrate

¹¹² This is admittedly a rather daring translation of ἀγωνισμὰ ἐς τὸ παραχρημα ἀκούειν (Thuc. 1. 22. 4). I wonder though if this sentence could be seen as the first instance of highbrow smirking at popular culture.

¹¹³ Thuc. 1. 22. 3 professes his goal of relating the events with ‘as much accuracy as possible’: ὅσον δυνατόν ἀκριβεῖα.

¹¹⁴ Hunter (2003).

¹¹⁵ Hunter (2003), pp. 218–19.

¹¹⁶ Cf. Fantuzzi (2004), p. 11 on the voice of the *Iambi*: In these poems, moreover, Callimachus plays some very iambic variations on the game of masking the *persona loquens*, thus concealing, as Aristotle thought iambic authors did, his own identity when impersonating a series of more or less embarrassing roles.

not only his thorough knowledge of other works of Callimachus, but should also remember that the Telchines were always connected with Rhodes and Crete¹¹⁷ – areas where Doric was spoken, so explaining the Doric dialect of this poem.

The guessing game is not made easy (but then again, what is *ever* easy in Callimachus?): the motifs of προπεμπτικόν and ἔκφρασις play an important role in this poem and Doric was also spoken in Olympia, but Callimachus is not playing unfairly, either. It is clear (even from the extant fragments, without the help of *Diegesis*) that the addressee is about to leave for Olympia and is not yet there, which would rule out the dialect of Elis for the sixth *Iambus*. The motifs of προπεμπτικόν and ἔκφρασις, on the other hand, are not obstacles to an allegorical interpretation. In his other *Iambi*, Callimachus very successfully introduces different genres into the iambus: one finds fables, epigrams, aitia, even an epinician scattered throughout the book.¹¹⁸

Since the opening and the closing *Iambi* of the collection evoke the atmosphere of contemporary Alexandria, address the *literati*, and engage in a discussion of literature, the appearance of Telchines in the sixth *Iambus* should not come as a great surprise. I might be suffering from a delusion myself but I suggest that one actually expects them to make an appearance and furthermore that it would be very Callimachean to let them enter unannounced. Not revealing their identity explicitly also fits in with the general tone of the *Iambi*, since Callimachus is avoiding personal invective and is rather presenting types of personality of behaviour.¹¹⁹

4. οὐδ' οὐ θάνατος, εἰσοὶ γὰρ αἰεὶ

I do not intend to propose that Callimachus' *Hymn to Zeus* is also an allegory of Homer (although this verse (9) does indeed tease) but to pose a different question: If Archelaos' *Apotheosis of Homer* were really ordered to celebrate the literary achievements of Callimachus, as Cameron tentatively suggested¹²⁰ how would he be presented? If we carefully examine the representation of the poet on the relief (plate 2), we will notice that the only other similar figure is Apollo *Musagetes*. Both have the same posture and both are holding a scroll in their left hand.¹²¹ Between them, there is a Muse (Calliope) holding a scroll in her right hand. Pinkwart interprets her gesture as presenting the scroll to Apollo.¹²² But, what if she is receiving the scroll *from* Apollo in order to give it to the poet? Could it be that the second register of the relief is depicting the poet who receives his poetical manifesto from Apollo directly – as Callimachus claimed to have done in the *Reply*?

¹¹⁷ For the sources see Herter (1934). The association of Telchines with Rhodes would provide an additional parallel with the world of the visual arts: The pupil of Lysippus, Chares of Lindus produced the biggest statue of antiquity for his home island, Rhodes, and had his school there.

¹¹⁸ See Fantuzzi (2004), pp. 10–17 with further literature.

¹¹⁹ Acosta-Hughes (2002), pp. 32–47

¹²⁰ Cameron (1995) pp. 276–7 suggests the identification of a poet with Callimachus or Eratosthenes.

¹²¹ Cf. Pinkwart (1965b) p. 63: «Die Statue wird nicht nur durch diesen Standplatz isoliert, sondern auch durch das Schreitmotiv nach rechts von den übrigen Figuren getrennt. Schwacher Bezug zur Apollongruppe sind ihre Kopfwendung und ihre Haltung, die die des Apollon fast getreu wiederholt.»

¹²² Pinkwart (1965b), p. 61.

We may never know when this relief was made, who ordered it and where (and if) it was dedicated. Maybe this is a significant part of its allure. Nevertheless, this allegorical representation of Homer's apotheosis is in many ways illustrative of the Alexandrian, especially Callimachean concepts of imitation: There was no poet greater than Homer and his poetry was acknowledged as immortal. But, whereas the personifications of History, Poetry, Myth, Tragedy, Comedy, Human nature, Arete, Mneme, Pistis and Wisdom are paying him respect and offering sacrifices on his altar, the fellow poet is curiously absent from this group. He is on a different level, and, although close to Apollo and Calliope, he stands alone. We do not know if he was looking at Homer, or turning his head towards Apollo. Maybe, just maybe he was looking in a different direction altogether, searching for his own way.

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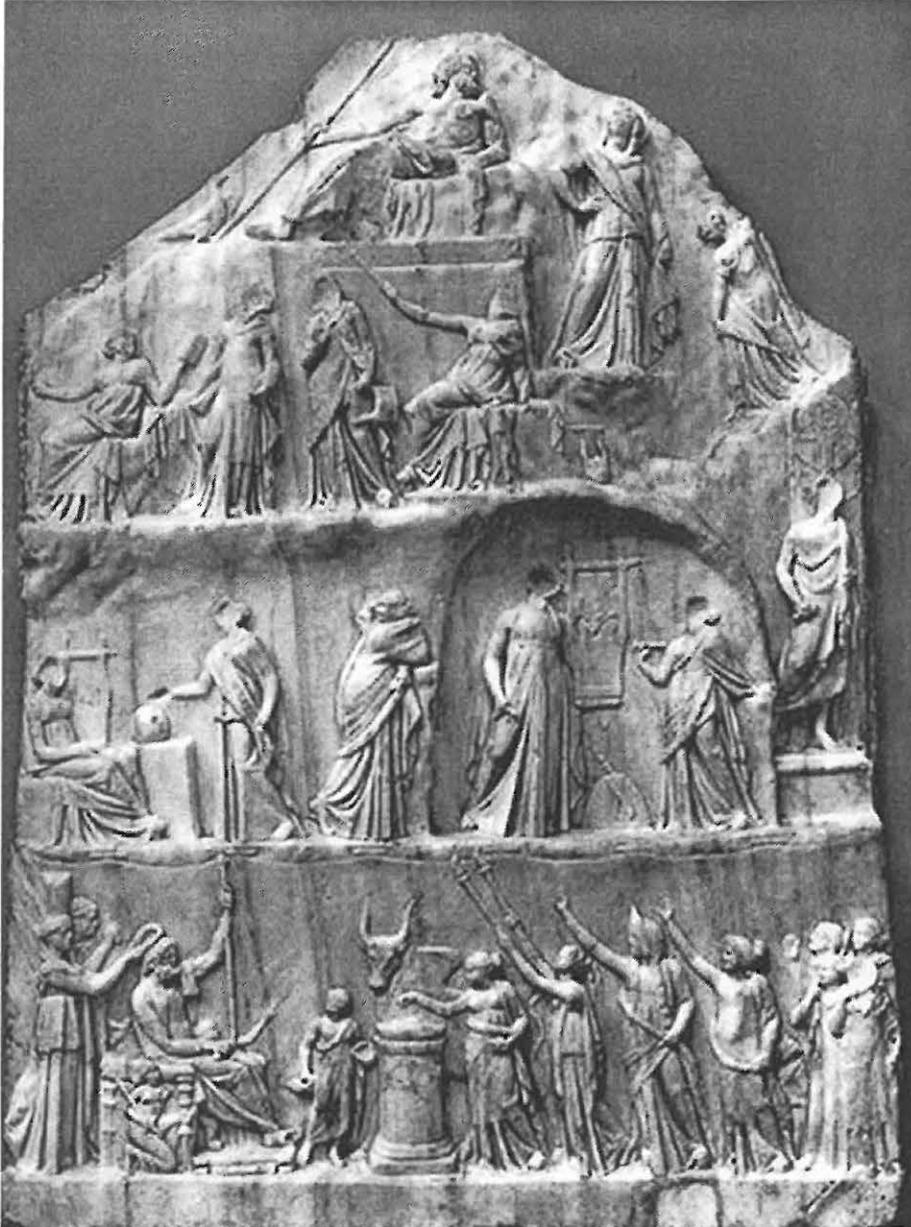


Plate 1: *The Apotheosis of Homer*, a bas-relief by Archelaos of Priene (Brit. Mus. 2191)

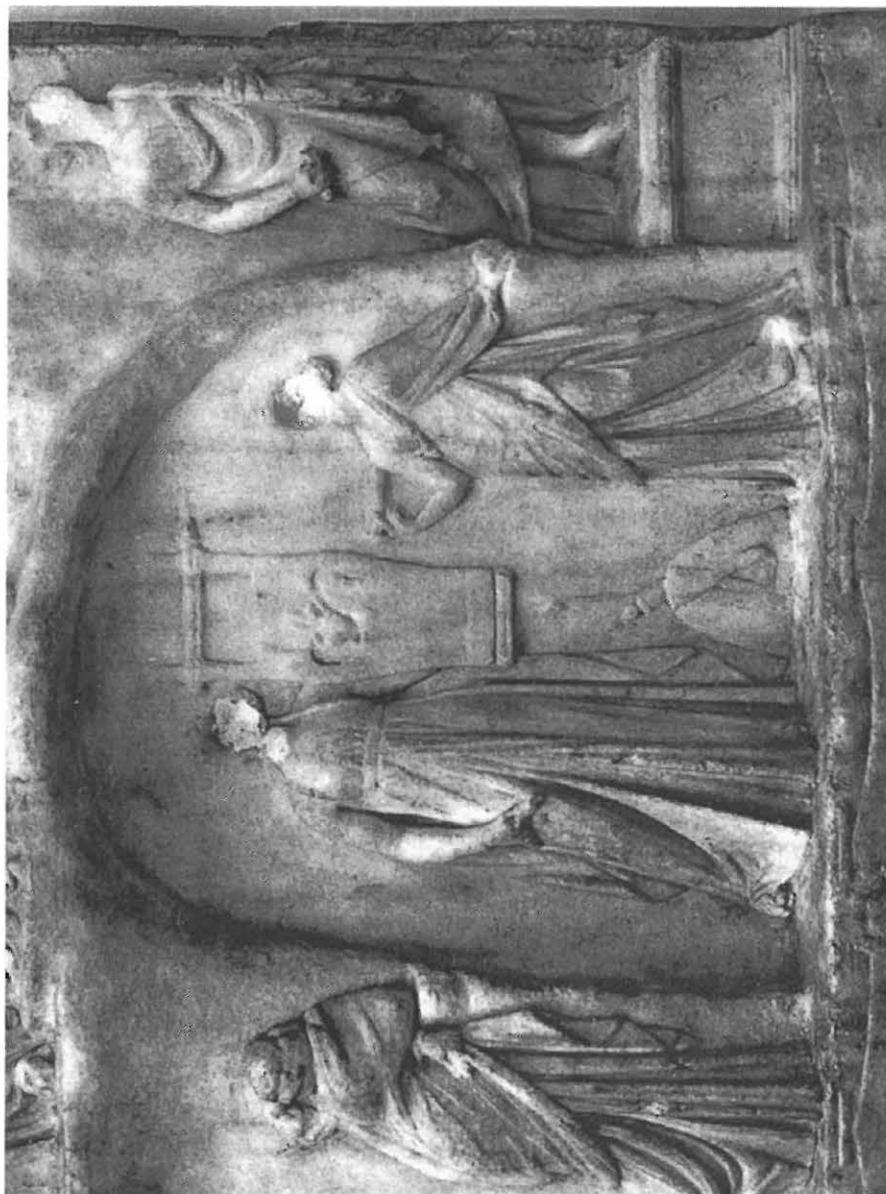


Plate 2: *The Apotheosis of Homer* (detail)