

The Figured Capsa

On Viewing and Reading Callimachus' Epigrams

For Ben Folit-Weinberg

My Tocayo

The Alexandrian poet Callimachus composed, inter alia, epigrams of a variety of types, including several short homoerotic love poems. Among the most striking of these erotic epigrams is his Archinus epigram (42 Pf. = 8 GP):¹

Εἰ μὲν ἐκῶν, Ἀρχῖν', ἐπεκώμασα, μυρία μέμφου,
εἰ δ' ἄκων ἦκω, τὴν προπέτειαν ἔα.
ἄκρητος καὶ ἔρωσ μ' ἠνάγκασαν, ὧν ὁ μὲν αὐτῶν
εἴλκεν, ὁ δ' οὐκ εἶα τὴν προπέτειαν εἶν.
ἐλθῶν δ' οὐκ ἐβόησα, τίς ἦ τίνος, ἀλλ' ἐφίλησα 5
τὴν φλιγν' εἰ τοῦτ' ἔστ' ἀδίκημ', ἀδικέω.

Sources: AP 12.118 Καλλιμάχου; S 92; wall of Roman house on the Esquiline (Kaibel, Epigrammata Graeca 1111, p. 502); Plutarch, "On the Restraint of Anger", Moralia, 455b–c lines 5–6 without attribution. Not in Planudes.

1 Ἀρχῖν' Bentley ἀρχειν P 2 ἄκων P S ἀέκων Meineke ἔα S εαι murus ὄραι P 3 μ' ἠνάγκασαν
Meineke με ἠνάγκασαν S μ' ἠνάγκασεν corr. Ap.L. Ap.R. με ἀνάγκασεν P Ap.G. Ap.V. 4 τὴν
προπέτειαν εἶν Dressel Ἰετηνεαν murus τὴν βίαν ὄσσην ὄρα S σώφρονα θυμὸν ἔχειν P 5 ἐφίλησα
P ἐφύλαξα S 6 φλιγν Plut. φιλίην S ἰαρήν P ἀδικέω Meineke ἀδικῶ P S Plut. ἀδικῶι murus

If of my free will, Archinus, I brought a revel, blame me a thousand times, but if I am here against my will, permit my rashness. Pure wine and love compelled me: one dragged me, the other would not let my rashness go. Once here, I did not shout out who I was or whose son, but I kissed the doorpost. If this is transgression, I transgress.

This poem, from the *Palatine Anthology's* twelfth book, was in the first century CE also painted adjacent to the entrance of the so-called *Auditorium of Maecenas*, inside of which ran a Dionysiac frieze with satyrs. The eye-level inscription (Antiquario Comunale, Rome, inv. 32363) invited the viewer to participate in the poem's many verbal plays, and to join in the speaker's plaintive apology.²

There are several ways in which the viewer might once have gazed upon the inscription. (The inscription in its entirety no longer exists, and it was already damaged when it was copied in the nineteenth century). One is a line-by-line reading; another is a gaze at repeated letters (which would also take in alliteration), or the beginnings and endings of lines. The placement of the epigram adjacent to a wall that also once held a frieze of drinking satyrs (Prioux 2022: 129) might have encouraged the viewer both to see the poem *as an* image and to read the poem *as a*

¹ Susan Stephens and I treat this poem in our 2025 edition of Callimachus' *Epigrams* pp. 271-76.

² And, thus, the epigram itself plays on the concept of *paraclausithyron* "by the closed door". I owe this observation to Évelyne Prioux.

text. Indeed, the various syllabic repetitions encourage rereading of the text: line 1 **ἐκόν** ... **ἐπεκώμασα**, line 2 **ἄκων ἤκω**, line 3 ἄκρητος / ἔρωσ, ὦν / αὐτῶν, line 4 εἶα προπέτειαν ἐάν, line 5 ἐβόησα ... ἐφίλησα, lines 5-6 ἐφίλησα... **φλήν**, line 6 ἀδίκημ', ἀδικέω. The effect when read aloud (as was the practice of the Ancients) is almost hypnotic, and the gaze is all but distracted by syllables whether repeated or juxtaposed.

The crucial point is that the Archinus epigram was *both* viewed *qua* image (three elegiac couplets that formed a six-line epigram), one among other images viewed on the wall of the *Auditorium*, and read *qua* text.

Callimachus' nautilus epigram is a poem that certainly allows for a similar engagement of viewing and reading. Here, the poem (5 Pf. = 14 GP) takes on the convoluted imagined shape of a nautilus shell:

Κόγχος ἐγώ, Ζεφυρίτι, πάλαι τέρας· ἀλλὰ σὺ νῦν με,
 Κύπρι, Σεληναίης ἄνθεμα πρῶτον ἔχεις,
 ναυτίλος, ὃς πελάγεσσιν ἐπέπλεον, εἰ μὲν ἀῆται,
 τείνας οἰκείων λαῖφος ἀπὸ προτόνων,
 εἰ δὲ Γαληναίη, λιπαρὴ θεός, οὖλος ἐρέσσων. 5
 ποσσίν—ἴδ' ὡς τῶργῳ τοῦνομα συμφέρεται—
 ἔστ' ἔπεσον παρὰ θίνας Ἰουλίδας, ὄφρα γένωμαι
 σοὶ τὸ περίσκεπτον παίγνιον, Ἀρσινόη,
 μηδέ μοι ἐν θαλάμησιν ἔθ' ὡς πάρος—εἰμὶ γὰρ ἄπνους—
 τίκτηται νοτερῆς ὤσον ἀλκυόνος. 10
 Κλεινίου ἀλλὰ θυγατρὶ δίδου χάριν, οἶδε γὰρ ἐσθλά
 ῥέζειν καὶ Σμύρνης ἐστὶν ἀπ' Αἰολίδος.

Sources: Athenaeus 7.318b–c εἰς τὸν ναυτίλον...φέρεται τι Καλλιμάχου τοῦ Κυρηναίου ἐπίγραμμα οὕτως ἔχον; Etymologicum Magnum 664.49–51 (περισκέπτῳ) ἢ περίσκεπτον, ὃ τις ἂν κατανοῶν θαυμάσειεν· οἷον ὄφρα...Ἀρσινόη. Not in P or Planudes.

1 πάλαι τέρας Jacobs Pf. παλαιότερος Athen. παλαιότερον Bentley G-P με Musurus μοι Athen. 2
 fortasse ἄνθεμ' ἔρωτος Meineke 3 ναυτίλος Kaibel ναυτίλον Athen. 6 ποσσίν—ἴδ' Schneider GP
 ποσσιν ἰν' Athen. ποσσί νιν divisit Hermann ὡς τῶργῳ Schneider ὡσπεργῶι Athen. ὡστ' ἔργῳ
 Casaubon ὡς τῶργῳ Haupt ἄνω σπέρχῳ Giangrande 7 Ἰουλίδος Casaubon. 8 Ἀρσινόη Et. M.
 Ἀρσινόης Athen. 9 ἄπνους P ἄπλους Lentz 10 τίκτηται νοτερῆς corr. Bentley τίκτει τ' αἰνοτερῆς
 Athen. ἀλκυόνος corr. Bentley ἀλκυόνης Athen.

I am a shell, Lady of Zephyrium, a marvel of old; but now you hold me, Cypris, as the first dedication of Selenaea, a nautilus that sailed upon the seas; if there were winds, by stretching my sail on my own halyards, if there was Calm, that shining goddess, by scuttling vigorous with my feet—see how my name matches my action—until I landed upon the shore at Ioulis to become a much-admired plaything for you, Arsinoe. No longer in my chambers as before—for I am breathless—is the egg of the watery kingfisher lain. But favor the daughter of Cleinias, for she knows how to do noble deeds and is from Aeolian Smyrna.

As Susan Stephens and I observed in our 2025 commentary to this poem (p. 118), the epigram appears to imitate the object it describes: the long, circuitous period of lines 3-10 seem to imitate

the circular folds of the nautilus shell. Callimachus here effectively creates a nautilus shell in verse.

Callimachus' epigrams feature several other poems that appear to take the shapes of the objects they describe. The fiction, or illusion, is informed by the actual tradition of epigram inscribed on objects: hence the speaking bow (κέρας) of *Ep.* 37 Pf. (17 GP), the breastband of *Ep.* 38 (20 GP) or even the temple of *Ep.* 39 (19 GP). The poems, an ancient equivalent of Lewis Carroll's "Mouse's Tail" visually capture the objects they configure – and are, incidentally, strong evidence for the literary rather than oral/aural character of these epigrams.

Figure poetry is a minor genre of the early Alexandrian period: Jan Kwapisz has done a masterful treatment of the six surviving so-called *technopaignia*,³ poems that have the actual shape of the object they portray (altars, wings, an axe, a pan-pipe – the poems are included at the end of the OCT *Bucolici Graeci*). Inspired by these *technopaignia* and struck by the 'shaping' of Callimachus' nautilus epigram and the alignment of verses of his Archinus epigram, I would like to examine two of his other epigrams from the perspective of poetic images at once read and 'seen', to determine whether he is not doing something similar with his 'book-roll' poems in particular, his epigrams that comment on poems.

In a recent *CQ* article on Callimachus *Ep.* 2 Pf. = 34 G-P I proposed that the six-line epigram, the poet's lament for his dead friend Heraclitus, might be read as a kind of epitome as it were, of the two Homeric epics: the first two lines, the first couplet, seems to echo signal moments of the of the *Iliad*, whereas the following two couplets in turn seem to echo signal moments of the *Odyssey*. To recapitulate my argument:

Εἶπέ τις, Ἡράκλειτε, τεὸν μόρον, ἐς δέ με δάκρυ
ἤγαγεν· ἐμνήσθην δ' ὀσσάκις ἀμφότεροι
ἥλιον ἐν λέσχῃ κατεδύσαμεν. ἀλλὰ σὺ μὲν που,
ξεῖν' Ἀλικαρνησεῦ, τετράπαλαι σποδιή,
αἰ δὲ τεαὶ ζώουσιν ἀηδόνες, ἧσιν ὁ πάντων 5
ἀρπακτῆς Ἄϊδης οὐκ ἐπὶ χεῖρα βαλεῖ.

Sources: Diogenes Laertius 9.17 τρίτος [Heraclitus] ἐλεγείας ποιητῆς Ἀλικαρνασσεύς, εἰς ὃν Καλλίμαχος πεποιήκεν οὕτως; *AP* 7.80 εἰς τὸν αὐτὸν Καλλιμάχου; οὐχ ἀρμόσει τοῦτο εἰς Ἐφέσιον φιλόσοφον; *Anthologia Planudea* IIIb 126.3 fol. 96v Καλλιμάχου; *Suda* λ 309 λέσχη Adler quotes lines 2–6 without attribution. 1 δέ με C δέ δε P δ' ἐμέ Diog. 3 ἥλιον ἐν λέσχῃ P *Suda* ἥελιον ἐν P1 Diog. ἥελιον λέσχη Bentley κατελύσαμεν Diog. v.l. 4 Ἀλικαρνασ(σ)εῦ Diog. *Suda* v.l.

Someone mentioned your demise, Heraclitus, and this brought me to tears; I remembered how often we both set the sun in conversation. But you, I suppose, Halicarnassian friend, were ashes very long ago. But your nightingales live on, upon which Hades, everyone's brigand, will not cast his hand.

³ Kwapisz 2013.

Now *were one* to see this six-line poem of three elegiac distichs as an image of six papyrus rolls in a *capsa*, an image that an Alexandrian reader, accustomed to looking upon *biblia* and *capsae* in his reading space might sensibly devise, there results a striking division. Three of these lines for a learned Alexandrian reader, familiar from youth with Homeric language and imagery, would evoke that poet's *Iliad*, in which *μóρος* as fate or death is particularly frequent, as is the phrase *ἠέλιος κατέδω* and its many variants. And the second three lines would evoke the *Odyssey*, in which *σποδιή* and *ἀηδών* are both Homeric *hapax legomena*, a feature that would certainly strike our Alexandrian Homerist. Our Alexandrian reader might easily then consider the epigram representative of the two Homeric epics, or better as a representation of the two poems lain side by side in a *capsa*. Now, an attentive modern reader of this essay might object to the numbers; after all, the ancient edition of Homer would have consisted of many more papyrus rolls (at two books per roll then some 12 rolls of each poem). But the point may not be the number itself but rather the equal division in the figure: three lines each per poem resulting in an 'image', a *capsa*, as it were, of six rolls. The two Homeric poems are thus lain side by side. That the two *hapax legomena* from the *Odyssey* are in the second trio seems to me especially compelling.

The nightingale image of the final couplet recalls Penelope sorrow over her 'lost' husband, Odysseus: the poet's sorrow for his dead friend, Heraclitus, is thus imagined in terms of the two great images of personal loss and grief in Homeric poetry, Achilles' for Patroclus and Penelope's for Odysseus.⁴ As a result the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are 'contained', as it were, in one epigram, which, perhaps, is the point – they are 'figured', as it were, as six papyrus rolls in a *capsa*. In other words, the two Homeric poems are represented in the epigram's six lines, with *ἀμφοτέροι* at the end of the second line serving to *both* identity the two friends, Callimachus and Heraclitus, and to represent the two poems, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

Now, consider another Callimachus epigram that shows something similar (6 Pf. = 55 G-P):⁵

Τοῦ Σαμίου πόνος εἰμὶ δόμῳ ποτὲ θεῖον ἀοιδόν
 δεξαμένου, κλείω δ' Εὐρυτον, ὅσσ' ἔπαθεν,
 καὶ ξανθὴν Ἴόλειαν, Ὀμήρειον δὲ καλεῦμαι
 γράμμα: Κρεωφύλω, Ζεῦ φίλε, τοῦτο μέγα.

Sources: Strabo 14.638; Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus Mathematicos* 1.48; Eustathius 1.516.22–23 van der Valk omits κλείω...Ἴόλειαν; Scholia on Dionysius Thrax, Gr. Gr. 1.3.160.12 Hilgard repeated at 1.3.448.3, Ὀμήρειον δὲ καλεῦμαι γράμμα; 1.3.163.36–164.2 Hilgard, Κρεωφύλου...Ὀμήρειον δὲ γράμμα καλεῦμαι Κρεωφύλου. Not in P or Planudes.

1 τοῦ Σαμίου Strabo Κρεωφύλου Sext. sch. Dionys. θεῖον ἀοιδόν Sext. sch. Dionys. θεῖον Ὀμηρον Strabo sch. Dionys v.l. Eust. 2 κλείω Sext. καίω Strabo κλαίω sch. Dionys. v.l. Ernesti

I am the labor of the Samian who once welcomed the divine bard in his home, and I celebrate Eurytus, how he suffered, and fair-haired Iole: I am called a composition of Homer. This, for Creophylus, dear Zeus, is a big deal.

⁴ I wonder now whether the point might be pressed a little further: line 2 ἐμνήσθην δ' ὅσσάκις ἀμφοτέροι has of course an immediate significance in terms of the personal memory of the epigram itself, but might it also evoke something further: *μυνήσκω* can be used of poetic composition or recitation, so there *might* be something of a *double-entendre* here (the verb is something of a *sine qua non* of epic poetry) with ἀμφοτέροι suggesting not only both singers but also both Homeric poems? Perhaps too ingenious, but then this *is* Callimachus.

⁵ We treat this poem in our 2025 edition of Callimachus' epigrams pp. 109-12.

The epigram's speaker is the poem itself, the epic *The Siege of Oechalia* (Οἰχαλίας ἄλωσις), composed by Creophylus of Samos. The poem's authorship, however, was already problematized in Antiquity. Creophylus was connected to the so-called *Creopyleioi*, or descendants of Creophylus (οἱ ἐπίγονοι οἱ Κρεοφύλου, Plut. *Lycurg.* 4.4.3): Glaucus in Plato's *Republic* 10 (600b6-c1) mocks him for his name (*Kreophylos* ~ *race of flesh*) and his neglect of Homer. Of his poem, *The Siege of Oechalia*, only one line is extant;⁶ we know something of the poem from other sources, and it forms part of the background of Sophocles' *Trachiniae*.⁷ The final line here serves as a playful comment on the epigram's theme: the composition (γράμμα), if thought to be by Homer, is then an oversized 'compliment' for Creophylus, whom it surrounds (the contrast between divine and human is re-enforced by the quasi-rhyme in Κρεωφύλω, Ζεῦ φίλε).

Callimachus uses the term γράμμα in the singular elsewhere to refer to a specific book of poetry or prose: at *Ep.* 23.4 of Plato's *Phaedo* (Πλάτωνος / ἐν τὸ περὶ ψυχῆς γράμμα), and at fr. 398 Pf., fr. 4 Stephens/Acosta-Hughes, of Antimachus' *Lyde* (Λύδη καὶ παχὺ γράμμα καὶ οὐ τορόν). There are several other features of the epigram that *might* suggest books/papyrus-rolls: πόνος when used of a poetic composition (cf. Pind. *Nem.* 3.12 χαρίεντα...πόνον), καλεῖμαι of a book title finds a sort of parallel at Pind. *Nem.* 9.41 ἐνθ' Ἀρείας πόρον καλέουσι or *Pyth.* 3. ἤ τινα Λατοῖδα κεκλημένον. Ap. Rh. 4.115-16 ἵνα Κριοῦ καλέονται εὐναί is especially noteworthy, as this is a contemporary Alexandrian poet using καλέω of etymology.

The poem combines some of the features of funerary and dedicatory epigram, with Ζεῦ φίλε doing, as it were, double duty as both exclamation and votive expression. The opening geographic reference in the genitive (τοῦ Σαμίου) works with the participle δεξαμένου in the following line, to effectively enclose (i.e. *receiving*) the poet/guest Homer (θεῖον αἰοιδόν). The poem celebrates (κλείω) the events of the *Siege of Oechalia*, and is *named* an Homeric epic (Ὀμήρειον δὲ καλεῖμαι / γράμμα) with a fine but crucial distinction of 'Ὀμήρειον (i.e. 'Homeric') rather than 'Ὀμήρου ('of Homer').⁸ Only at line 4 Κρεωφύλω is the poem's author finally named, the 'Homeric' fiction thus being kept until the very end, indeed a 'big deal' for Creophylus.

This epigram again plays on the visual conceit of the *capsa*. Two lines (one and four) represent the poet: τοῦ Σαμίου (line 1), Κρεωφύλω (line 4), with two other 'persons', Homer (line 1 θεῖον αἰοιδόν) and Zeus (line 4 Ζεῦ) in his 'company'. Two lines (lines 2 and 3) contain the poem's

⁶ Fr. 1 Bernabé ὦ γύναι, <αὐτῇ> ταῦτά γ' ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ὄρηαι ("Woman, you <yourself> see these things before your eyes"). The source of this line is the *Epimerismi Homerici* ο 96 (= 2.573.17-21 Dyck), where it is prefaced by the comment that the poem is attributed to Homer, but Creophylus wrote it, and that the line was spoken by Heracles to Iole (ἦ

εἰς Ὀμηρον ἀναφέρεται, ἔστι δὲ Κρεώφυλος ὁ ποιήσας Ἡρακλῆς δ' ἔστιν ὁ λέγων πρὸς Ἰόλην).

⁷ On the fragments of Creophylus see Tsagalis 2022: 13-23.

⁸ Stephens/Acosta-Hughes 2025 ad loc. The adjective is rare before Callimachus. It first appears in Herodotus (5.67.1: Ὀμηρείων ἐπέων) as part of a discussion of the political use of Homeric verses. Plato in the *Republic* (600b6-c1) uses it to refer to ideas that occur in Homer. It is also featured in a figure poem of Simias of Rhodes (AP 15.22 = CA Simias 25 = 1 Kwapisz), the Axe, where it may be used ironically of Epeius, who dedicates his axe to Athena 6-7: ἀλλ' ἀπὸ κρανᾶν ἰθαρᾶν νᾶμα κόμιζε δυσκλής. | νῦν δ' ἐς Ὀμήρειον ἔβα κέλευθον ("but a man of no importance [Epeius] who carried water from the pure fountains, now he has embarked upon the Homeric path").

material, its principal figures (Eurytus, Iole) and then the poem's attributes: a heroine who is ξανθή (a standard feature of epic heroes/heroines, ergo Homeric) and a poem that is 'Homeric' (because it is 'called' Homeric). The syllabic balance and verbal rhyming in Ἰόλειαν, Ὀμήρειον adds a further touch – one can almost sense the Callimachean smile.

Ep. 27 Pf. (56 GP) famously juxtaposes two poets of didactic hexameter, Hesiod and Aratus, both of whom can be defined as authors of τὰ ἔπη (line 3), an expression that then cleverly aligns the two poets.

Ἡσιόδου τό τ' ἄεισμα καὶ ὁ τρόπος· οὐ τὸν ἀοιδὸν
ἔσχατον, ἀλλ' ὀκνέω μὴ τὸ μελιχρότατον
τῶν ἐπέων ὁ Σολεὺς ἀπεμάξατο· χαίρετε λεπταί
ρήσιες, Ἀρήτου σύντονος ἀγρυπνίη.

Source: AP 9.507 Καλλιμάχου εἰς τὸν Ἄρατον; Life of Aratus I [Achilles] 9.13-16 Martin Ἡσιόδου...ἀγρυπνίης, 6.11-13 Martin ἀλλ'...ἀπεμάξατο; Life III [Theon] 18.1-2 Martin σύγγονος ἀγρυπνίης; P. Oxy. 68.4648.25-27 Ἡσιόδου...ἀπεμάξατο. Not in Planudes.

1 τό τ' Blomfield: τὸ δ' P, Vita I ἀοιδὸν P Vita I G-P ἀοιδῶν P. Oxy. 4648.26 Scaliger Pf. 1-2 fort. οὗτοι ἀοιδῶν | ἐσχάτου Page 4 σύντονος P σύγγονος Vita I, III σύμβολον Ruhnken Pf. G-P ἀγρυπνίη P ἀγρυπνίης Vita I, III

Hesiod's is the subject matter and the style; not the poet in every respect, but I daresay upon the very sweetest of his hexameters the Solean modeled himself. Greetings, elegant expressions, the intense wakefulness of Aratus.

Line 3 ἀπεμάξατο is particularly striking: the very is used in a variety of contexts of modeling, taking impressions, e.g. Pl. *Tim.* 50e 8-9 ὅσοι τε ἐν τισιν τῶν μαλακῶν σχήματα ἀπομάττειν ἐπιχειροῦσι, 'whoever try to make impressions in soft substances.' Here the poet uses it to connect works of plastic art with poetic composition. The final half-line is contested. The *AP* text has σύντονος ἀγρυπνία, which S. Stewart (2008: 586-600) has recently proposed amending to σύντομος ἀγρυπνίη, 'concise sleeplessness': Stewart (*ad loc.*) provides several examples of σύντομος as a rhetorical term that equates to λεπτός. This noun-adjective duo would nicely parallel those of τὸ μελιχρότατον τῶν ἐπέων, λεπταί | ῥήσιες and, for that matter, τὸν ἀοιδὸν ἔσχατον, so a series of nouns and modifiers. Stewart's proposed reading may find some support from the poet Cinna, who also treats Aratus in an epigram (fr. 11 Courtney):

Haec tibi Arateis multum vigilata lucernis
Carmina, quis ignis novimus aërios,
levis in aridulo malvae descripta libello
Prusiaca vexi munera navicula.

Here's a poem for you, produced during many wakeful nights by the lamplight of Aratus, whereby we learn of celestial fires, inscribed in a trifling little book cured from smooth mallow that I brought you as a present in a Bithynian boat.

The first line *multum vigilata lucernis* is very close to Stewart's suggested σύντονος ἀγρυπνίη;

Ruhnken's emendation (which Pfeiffer follows) σύμβολον ἀγρυπνίης would rather continue the sense of ἀπεμάξατο 'made an impression' as in striking a coin).

Callimachus' epigram clearly celebrates Aratus in terms of that poet's fidelity to Hesiod, and it places the two poems (Hesiod's *Works and Days* and Aratus' *Phaenomena*) side by side, both having famously treated the night sky in hexameter verse.⁹ The *Phaenomena* of Aratus runs to some 1,150 lines: Hesiod's *Works and Days* is a little over 800 lines, his now lost *Astronomia* may, if considered together with the *Works and Days*,¹⁰ have made for a larger Hesiodic poem. The average ancient papyrus roll was some 700-900 lines: it is possible, allowing for the longer Hesiod poem, to think of the Hesiod and Aratus poems combined to form four papyrus rolls, and that, I believe, is the point here – the impression of the poem of the first two lines is effectively remade in the second distich, Hesiod being 're-formed' as the λεπταί/ρήσιες of Aratus. Each poet receives, as it were, his own distich (line 1 Ἡσιόδου, line 4 Ἀρήτου, with Hesiod's poetry appropriately characterized as τὰ ἔπη (so Homeric era verse), Aratus' as λεπταί/ρήσιες, poetry that concords with Callimachus' own poetic aesthetic.

Epigram 51 Pf. (15 GP) is another *jeu d'oeil*, one that again plays on the distinction of viewed image and read text.

Τέσσαρες αἱ Χάριτες· ποτὶ γὰρ μία ταῖς τρισὶ τήναις
ἄρτι ποτεπλάσθη κῆτι μύροισι νοτεῖ,
εὐαίων ἐν πᾶσιν ἀρίζηλος Βερενίκα,
ἄς ἄτερ οὐδ' αὐταὶ ταὶ Χάριτες Χάριτες.

Source: AP 5.146 Καλλιμάχου [C] εἰς τὴν γυναῖκα Πτολεμαίου Βερενίκαν. Not in Planudes.
1 τήναις Wil. κείναις P 2 ποτεπλάσθη corr. Ap.B. ποτ' ἐπλάσθη P 3 ἀρίζηλος P ἀρίζαλος Brunck

Four are the Graces, for one in addition to those three has just been fashioned and is still wet with perfume. Berenice, blessed one, envied among all, without whom the very Graces are not the Graces.

Petrovic/Petrovic (2003) have offered the attractive explanation that Callimachus here commemorates his recently completed *Aetia*; χάρις is then understood in two senses, as 'Grace' and as 'papyrus roll', a sense that Theocritus vividly evokes with his unhappy *charites* grumbling in their home at *Id.* 16.8-12.¹¹ In Callimachus' epigram the Charites appear literally

⁹ Callimachus and Aratus both knew Hesiod's *Astronomia*, which has not survived.

¹⁰ Cingano 2009; 129-30.

¹¹ Theocr. 16.8-12: Τίς γὰρ τῶν ὀπόσοι γλαυκὰν ναίουσιν ὑπ' ἠῶ | ἠμετέρας Χάριτας πετάσας ὑποδέξεται οἴκῳ | ἀσπασίως, οὐδ' αὐθις ἀδωρήτους ἀποπέμψει; | αἱ δὲ σκυζόμενα γυμνοῖς ποσὶν οἴκαδ' ἴασι, | πολλὰ με τωθάξοισαι, ὅτ' ἀλιθίην ὁδὸν ἦλθον, | ὀκνηραὶ δὲ πάλιν κενεᾶς ἐν πυθμένι χηλοῦ | ψυχροῖς ἐν γονάτεσσι κάρη μίμοντι βαλοῖσαι, | ἔνθ' αἰεὶ σφισιν ἔδρη, ἐπὶν ἄπρακτοὶ ἴκωνται.

For who of those who dwell below the grey dawn will gladly receive our Charites at home, and not send them away unrewarded? They come home grumbling on naked feet, and often scold me that they journeyed in vain; and shrunken back at the bottom of an empty coffer they they remain, their heads cast on cold knees, where is ever their seat, when they come home their work unaccomplished.

thrice (lines 1 and 4), and are four (line 1 τέσσαρες) with the addition of one (line 1 μία) to three (line 1 ταῖς τρισὶ τήναις), Berenice now added to the Graces. The four lines, the four papyrus rolls, are aligned as two distichs. The eye that views the poem immediately captures the Τέσσαρες : Χάριτες / Βερενίκα / Χάριτες Χάριτες, as well, in line 1, of μία ταῖς τρισὶ τήναις (i.e. 1 + 3, with the one *mu* and the three *taus* figuring the occasion). The reader understands the equation with Berenice, a singular figure but portrayed in two lines of glorious epithets (lines 2-3), now added (line 1) to the three Charites of lines 1 (ταῖς τρισὶ τήναις) and 4 (αὐταὶ ταὶ Χάριτες) to make four Charites (lines 1 and 4 Τέσσαρες αἱ Χάριτες / Χάριτες). The four graces are both ‘viewed’ and ‘read’, the epigram thus capturing the *Aetia* as physical and ‘read’ text.

Epigram, as its names suggests, is written upon something: the short poem, as in the case of inscription on a headstone, can be both perceived as an image and read as a text. Callimachus plays with this duality in the epigrams I have discussed here. A larger study would entail further comparison of images and texts, as well as careful consideration of ancient practices of viewing and reading. For now, though, I offer this small discussion as a prelude, an initial epigram, as it were.¹²

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