

## THE CONTRAPOSITION BETWEEN ΕΠΟΣ AND ΕΠΥΛΛΙΟΝ IN HELLENISTIC POETRY: *STATUS QUAESTIONIS*<sup>1</sup>

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### Resumen

En este artículo se esbozan algunos de los hitos más importantes que configuran, desde Antímaco de Colofón hasta las últimas manifestaciones poéticas helenísticas y romanas, la contraposición entre el ἔπος y el ἐπύλλιον. Sobre este último «género», repleto de elementos etiológicos y largas digresiones, se aportan y se comparan datos importantes mediante dos métodos conocidos: la *Quellensforschung* y la comparación entre seguidores de la escuela de Calímaco y los denominados Telquines. Se analizan epigramas concretos, epilios de Teócrito, Mosco, la *Hécale* de Calímaco, epilios de Trifiodoro, Hedilo, Museo, Euforión, Partenio, Poliano, así como de Cornelio Galo y Cinna. Finalmente, se estudia la dicotomía «agua»/«vino» como símbolos de inspiración y se ofrece una posible clave para focalizar el paso de dicha contraposición desde la literatura helenística griega a la romana.

*Palabras clave:* Epos, epyllion, hellenistic poetry, Cantores Callimachi.

### Abstract

This paper describes some highly important aspects than configure, from Aminachus of Colofos to the latest Hellenistic and Roman poetic pieces, the contraposition of the concepts ἔπος and ἐπύλλιον. About this latter 'genre', filled with etiological and digressive elements, data are contrasted according to two well known methods: *Quellensforschung* and comparison between Callimachus' followers and Telquines. Specific epigrams are reviewed, also some epic poems by Theocritus, Moscos, the *Hecale* by Callimachus, epic poems by Trifiodorus, Hedilus, Museus, Euforius, Partenius, Polianus, Cornelius, Galius, and Cinnas. Finally, dichotomous elements like 'water'/'wine' are studied as symbols for inspiration. In addition, a possible key to focus on contraposition is examined across Greek and Roman literature.

*Keywords:* Epos, Epillion, Hellenistic poetry, Cantores Callimachi.

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<sup>1</sup> This paper belongs to «Literatura Helenística e Imperial» project (E019-03). It has been translated from Spanish by M. Ángeles Fuentes.

0. Pindar in his *Olympian* II 91-94 set himself magnificently on the line of hermetism as he proclaimed: «I have under my elbow, in my quiver, fast abundant arrows which only have voice for the skilled, but need interpreters for the masses». The understanding of this poetry demands a particular skill, an introduction, sometimes a real key. However, those who boasted of being enigmatic were the Alexandrian poets. Lycophron, in the beginning of his *Alexandra*, 8-15 proclaimed a very complete literary program in this field. Nevertheless, I am not going to refer to the hard and obscure poetry but to the exquisite, brief and learned poetry. Notwithstanding, a close relationship between both kinds will be often found.

We can find Choerilus of Samos and Antimachus of Colophon among others as forerunners of the contrast ἔπος-ἐπύλλιον as early as the IVth Century B.C. The former mourns for how much poetic genres are overused (see fr. 317 LL.-J./Parsons). That extract is itself symptomatic of strength when new means of poetic creation are introduced. Choerilus refused to limit his work, as in the «cyclical» tradition to mythological contents and he put forward the historic epic, promoting in his *Proem* the tediousness from conventions and a desire for change.

Antimachus of Colophon gives us an idea of the figure of the Alexandrian *poeta doctus*. There is almost no trace of his work, but some statements subsequent to his era let us guess some general features of Antimachus' poetry, whose public readings were a complete disaster, and it was Plato the only one who attended the whole reading of one of Antimachus' poems. This implies that the poet no longer writes for the audience, his poetry is educated and does not satisfy the demands of public reading. A new poetic production aimed at individual reading starts with Antimachus. Poetry becomes an end in itself. It is then when the aesthetic criterion of «art for art's sake» is born. At the same time, there is in this poet a precedent of the philological activity linked to the poet's labour: In the list of the editions of the Homeric text, elaborated by Aristarchus, Antimachus' poetry appears first in the list of those known as *Kat'andra*.

The *Lyde* was a long elegiac composition —for this reason it deserved Callimachus' censorship— in which the poet compared his unfortunate love with the greatest wretched mythological love stories. M. Fantuzzi has recently remarked that the tales of unhappy love in Antimachus' *Lyde* were not only mythological, but also «subjective» insofar as they were designed as the pain caused by the death of his beloved (Fantuzzi 1993: 54-56).

Antimachus' long-winded epic *Thebais* (one should not confuse this piece of work with Homer's work of the same name, which is a fragmentary epic poem previous to the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*) was his best-known writing

in the Old age. It was an epic poem, whose contents resembled the works by the poets of the epic cycle who, in the Alexandrine period, enjoyed little prestige because they were opposed to Homer and it was common to censure the former but to worship the latter. In fr. 3 Wyss, Zeus' and Europe's love is explained in order to justify the mythological origins of Thebes. However, Antimachus pays attention to etymological matters related to the name of Mount Boeotia, where the lovers meet. He does that so that we do not doubt the truthfulness of the legend. In this way, the mythical past comes closer to the reality of the present and the myth gets mixed up with history.

1. On the other hand, it was evident that Philetas and Callimachus were considered the masters of Hellenism, as I.M. Lonie says, with an in-depth study of fragments where Callimachus and Philetas are associated with love elegy (Lonie 1959: 17-34). Callimachus and Theocritus, who belonging to a later generation to Philetas, are also a reliable and very eloquent testimony to the literary significance of the poet from Cos in the Hellenistic period. Philetas, then, was considered the main author of Hellenistic elegy. Callimachus mentions this in *In Telchinas* (*Aetia* Book 1 Pfeiffer), where he links him to the shortest compositions. From W.M. Edwards' work, it already becomes *communis opinio* that the ὄμπνια Θεσμοφόρος is a clear reference to Philetas' narrative elegy *Demeter* (Edwards 1930: 110 f.). In fact, Callimachus wants to show the superiority of the ὀλιγοστιχίη and it arises from the comparison between short and long compositions written by the same author, Philetas or Minnermus. In all other respects, Philetas had in Cos and in Alexandria an unquestionable teaching relating to forms and topics. As for form, which was the hexametric or elegiac poem with a length no longer than a few hundred lines, a slight euphuism is established.

Philetas means, therefore the separation from the great epic poem and the connections to a shorter and more concise form. In fact, some centuries later, (and together with the passing of time we move forward in the topic as well), Propertius, when mentioning a young man (III 1, 1 ss.) who is looking for inspiration in the shade of Mount Helicon, the same place where Hesiod got his own inspiration, declares that he is going to imitate Ennius, author of the great epic poem. Calliope herself appears and persuades Ennius to sing only love poems. The young poet finishes saying: *ora Philetea nostra rigavit aqua* (III 3, 52), with this we find an evident source of inspiration. All this together points us into the line of insertion of a love affair within an epic narration (ἐπύλλιον) more than into subjective elegy. The works by R.J. Baker (1968: 35-39) and most recently in Spanish the *status quaestionis* by E. Calderón (1988: 7-34) regarding these questions are interesting.

Recapitulating briefly we should mention that the revolution that Hellenistic poetry meant had been prepared by poets such as Choerilus of Samos and Antimachus (Philoxenus or Timotheus should also be mentioned) and Philetas, and we should state these poets as the forerunners of the literary controversy in the Callimachean *In Telchines* as well as of that of other poems and epigrams by the poet from Cyrene. All in all, it is not necessary to mention more archaic antecedents such as Hesiod, Pindar and Aristophanes' *Frogs* above all.

Let's now deal with the «genre» (in inverted commas) of the ἐπύλλιον. Indeed, this word, derived from ἔπος, means «short line» in some places for Aristophanes (*Ach.* 398-400; *Pax* 531 f., *Ran.* 941 f.) and for Clemens of Alexandria (*Strom.* III 3,24), whereas in Athenaeus II 65, It already appears with the sense of «short epic poem». Summing up, this is what P. Chantraine suggested in his *Dictionnaire etymologique*.

In any case, the person responsible for the use of the term ἐπύλλιον as the name of a particular literary gender, and in particular that of the «*carmina narrativa parva, exceptis elegiacis*» seems to be a modern philologist, J. Heumann, the well-known author of the dissertation *De epyllio alexandrino* (Heumann 1904). The exclusion of the elegiac narrative poems from the category of the ἐπύλλιον is due to the fact that the former, apart from being fairly unknown in the Greek world though better known in the Latin one, were always set by old grammarians among elegies.

Maybe ἐπύλλια should be known as «poems in a new narrative style, opposed to the Homeric epic» above all from the work by W. Allen, in which this author finds many similarities between the so called ἐπύλλιον and the narrative elegy (Allen 1940: 1-26). Therefore, ἐπύλλια should not be set under a single category as, among other reasons, there was no critical genre awareness by the ancients. To the denial of the existence of the Alexandrian ἐπύλλιον as autonomous genre D'Ippolito has attempted to present a refutation by means of the following argument: this «genre» would be «il superamento delle barriere dei generi» (D'Ippolito 1964: 48). According to D'Ippolito, the ἐπύλλιον would be a mixed genre which continues in hexameters the narrative elegy.

All in all, we could list some characteristics of the epyllion (hexametric narrative poem), according to Heumann —maybe too many features to define a genre—:

- 1 It has a substantial unit.
- 2 It develops a single narrative unit.
- 3 Presence of a plurality of characters (often two).
- 4 Long digressions.

- 5 Narrative continuity; the moments of the action are dealt with in an ordered succession as they take place.
- 6 Environmental description and long speeches.
- 7 Plenty of mythological topics, without insistence on religion.
- 8 Development of the aetiological element.
- 9 Heroes are presented as common men.
- 10 Authors «*cavent ne quidquam quod contra naturam fiat fingant*». Therefore, they include family-like pictures as well as bucolic and idyllic.
- 11 The love element prevails over any other feeling.
- 12 Muses were often invoked; there is a brief preface, a brief summary and a brief final comment.

For his part, M.M. Crump, who believes in the existence of the genre and tries to clarify its main aspects in classic poetry, has referred to the formal virtuosity of the ἐπύλλιον as more than not true poetry and to the pathetic and psychological elements (M.M. Crump 1931).

As for Callimachus, he reserved his most public poetry (the hymns) to the hexameter and his *Hecale*, to the mythological ἐπύλλιον, whereas he composed the *Aetia* in elegiac distiches, a work of exoteric and exclusive erudition. In the *Epilogue* of his *Aetia*, probably written for a complete edition of the works (or for other works) in which the *Aetia* were placed before the *Iambi*, so that the *Epilogue* was used as a bridge, Callimachus said solemnly goodbye to Zeus and declared he would go then through the «pedestrian pasture of the Muses» [fr. 112, 9: αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ Μουσέων πεζὸν ἔπειμι νόμον (the «pedestrian Muses» are the *Iambi*, according to *communis opinio*)].

Precisely, accordint to what can be inferred from the famous *In Telchinas*, as R. Pretagostini has pointed out, Callimachus wants to defend his own ὀλιγοστίχη (fr. 1 9) from the attack of the Telchines, malign demons who were said to be the first workers in metal, and who, by means of allusion, would designate the literary adversaries of the poet, whose term will be reflected in the fr. 1 7, in Hesychius' gloss at the foot of the page, in the fr. 1 18, and finally in the *Scholia*. In order to do so the poet of Cyrene proposes two literary examples: Philetas (v. 10) and Mimnermus (v. 11) —remember that, as Szádeczky-Kardoss highlighted, Mimnermus became fashionable in Hellenistic time through Philetas' mediation—, and then Callimachus proposes an inner contraposition between the short and long works of both authors, and the first shows its superiority.

To Philetas, the contraposition would be between his *Demeter* and a long poem with which it was compared and has been lost (see 9-10); To Mimnermus between the *Nanno* and the historical poem *Smyrneis*. In both cases, the long historical composition (whose theme was the remembrance of the past, on the one hand the history of Cos, on the other hand Smirna's *Large*

*Woman*, 12) is felt as inferior. But there is still more. The *Scholia Florentina* to this passage (see Pfeiff. I, 3), give several identifying names of the Telchines, among which we can find Asclepiades (I, 4) and Posidippus (I, 5), the famous Alexandrian poets, known to us through their epigrams in the *Palatine Anthology*, but also Praxiphanes of Mitilene, the Grammarian (I, 7). However, there is a background contradiction: neither Asclepiades, nor Posidippus composed epic poems; thus, to think that aesthetic and personal matters were mingled may be reasonable.

In spite of that, it is convenient to remember the famous epigram in which Asclepiades of Samos praises Antimachus of Colophon' *Lyde* (xxxiii Page), and the contrary opinion by Callimachus [fr. 398 Pfeiffer: *Lyde kai pakhy gramma* (thick, dense poem) *kai ou toron* (unclear and incomprehensible)]. This judgement was, in all probability, the reason why one edition of his works was missing. Thus, undoubtedly, is not a coincidence the fact that the poet from Cyrene, in *In Telchinas*, placed Asclepiades and Posidippus among his adversaries, who had praised the *Lyde* with enthusiasm.

Let's read some aspects of the Prologue *In Telchinas* now. It is not my aim to delay with detailed questions of conjectural character about the *Prologue*. But I will mention some very interesting questions about literary symbology to understand the kinds of poetics that Callimachus defends. The topic of the «poetic path» (image from Pindar), for instance. Callimachus says (see 22 f.) that Lycian Apollo tells him «to tread a path which carriages do not trample» (translation by C.A. Trypanis 1978: 7), not through flat paths (οἶμον πλατύν) but through unworked paths (κελεύθους ἀτρίπτους) still when you have to ride through a more narrow one (στεννοτέρην).

Another important symbol is the idealization of the singing of the cicada as a model of delicacy as opposed to the noise of the asses, and also the identification of the poet himself with the cicada. On the other hand, the personification of the Envy (frequent term in the *defixiones*, and that appears in the epigram xxi 4 Pf, and partly in Callimachus' *Hymn* II, 105-113) to which I will refer next, not without adding first what Callimachus finally comes to lash is the *carmen perpetuum* of the compact and ambitious work with the tone of the high epic and the sublime genres.

The end of Callimachus' *Hymn* II 105-113, is full of references to the literary controversy we have been referring to between those defending the long poem and those in favour of the short poem or *ἐπύλλιον*. It goes as follows (translation by A.W. Mair 1977: 57-58):

Spake Envy privily in the ear of Apollo:

«I admire not the poet who singeth not things for number as the sea».

Apollo spurned Envy with his foot and spake thus:

«Great is the stream of the Assyrian river, but much  
 filth of earth and much refuse it carries on its waters.  
 And not of every water do the Melissae carry to Deo,  
 But of the trickling stream that springs from a holy fountain,  
 Pure and undefiled, the very crown of waters.»  
 «Hail, O Lord, but Blame —let him go where Envy dwells!».

Mῶμος, that is, Blame, represents and personifies reproach, which can appear specifically in literary contexts. That is the way in which the Greek literary tradition takes it in those cases when a poet shies away from Mῶμος attacking his work. The most noteworthy example is quite likely that of Timotheus (*Pers* 210 f.), where Apollos' help is also sought: Φθόνος is often translated as «Envy» and it must be added that it is a malicious envy. It is a dangerous and undesirable divinity; often identified with *Baskanía*; which reminds us of Βασκανίης ὀλοὸν γένος (fr. 1 17 Pfeiffer), said about the Telchines. Consequently that Φθόνος is the same as the Telchines seems likely but it is also seen in that fragment how Callimachus is not against a piece of work formed by many lines, he simply states that it is not worthy as quality criterion.

Callimachus' opposition against the «Assyrian river» (*Hymn* 11 108) is not due to its length, but because it is impure, that is to say, a bad elaborated poem. If the poet from Cyrene shows himself in favour —but never brutally— of shorter works it is because the literary technique he supports makes it very hard to maintain a degree of quality when writing a work of thousands on lines [fr. 1 4 Pfeiffer: ἐν πολλαῖς (...) χιλιάσιν, which is what Telchines demand].

The abstract model for the poetry defended by Apollo —and Callimachus— is the sacred and pure source, whereas, the source for the Telchines is πόντος (sea). The source does not designate any kind of literature, but a literary attitude in search of originality (see C. Garriga 1985: 69-125).

I must mention H. White's recent interpretation, in which she remarks how lines 105 f. of Callimachus' *Hymn* 11 are a criticism of Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautica*, if we read πόντος meaning *Pontus Euxinus*. If, on the other hand, we read πόντος as «sea», this word should denote Homer, and so Callimachus would attack all those who wrote long epic poems in the Homeric tradition, such as e.g. Rhianus or Apollonius (H. White 1999: 111-113). On the allusions of πόντος in Callimachus' *Hymn to Apollo*, see J.A. Clúa (1992: 177-181). For the relation between Callimachus and the epic, see the paper of K.K. Newman (1974: 342-360), and for a global reading of the poem, see C. Miralles (1987: 633-639). This is neither the best place nor moment for a discussion about Bundy's correctness in his thorough search of the tradition that there is in the end of *Hymn* 11 (see Bundy 1972: 39-94).

Finally, another breach in that controversy is the emblematic epigram II Gow-Page, *A.P.* XII 43, v. 1: ἐχθαίρω τὸ ποίημα τὸ κυκλικόν, which remembers on the one hand the exordium of the epigram written by a so called Pollianus (II century A.C.?, *A.P.* XI 130) in which the τοὺς κυκλίους ... μισῶ («I hate cyclical poets», who he names plunderers of other poet's lines) is once more repeated and also the *Od.* III 1,1 from Horace: *Odi profanum vulgus et arceo* which loathes the path which draws the crowds who don't drink from the public fountain and who are disgusted by the popular.

All this underlines what we found in *In Telchinas* under other terms: that his carriage should not follow the traces left by others, and that he has to sound like cicalas. On the other hand, the allusion to the cyclic poetry of those succeeding Homer and Apollonius Rhodius is more than evident. I leave aside the analysis of the consideration that is fairly accepted nowadays, that Callimachus' foes based themselves on Aristotle's criteria.

2. The reasons for the dispute which separates Apollonius and Callimachus, still remain in the dark (J.A. Clúa 2004: 493-497). But Apollonius' *Argonautica* certainly are the practical answer to Callimachus' argument when he pointed out that «a great book is a big nuisance». The poem is unique in his genre, nonetheless, as a whole it meant, according to many experts in the topic, the failure of an erudite. Apollonius was able to draw a painting magnificently, but was unable to narrate poetically a heroic story in an era in which faith in the myth had been lost, converting it into a legend.

Nowadays critics proceed with caution when they deal with such *querelle*. Rather they are in favour to state more and more that in Apollonius' *Argonautica* there is much in common with the principles of Callimachus and his school. Above all if we take in to account that the traditional testimonies of such a literary dispute can hardly corroborate anything: a note to the line 447 of the *Ibis* by Ovid, an annotation which must belong to the xvth Century, and an epigram, anonymous in Maximus Planudes and in Eustathius, attributed to Apollonius the Grammarian in the *Palatine Anthology* and to Apollonius Rhodius is simply a later annotation (see *Test.* 25 Pfeiffer). All these former interpretations only have speculation as their basis.

What is certainly evident is that Callimachus created an aura of literary controversy around his *In Telchinas*, the end of the *Hymn to Apollo*, the epigrams XXI and XXVIII and several fragments of his *Iambi* among others, even though the critics start to talk about a certain deal of literary conventionality. G. Montes Cala (1987: 211 f.) refers to this quarrel stating that, but always according to a general and vast *communis opinio*, there are not any arguments that may refer to this quarrel (on this quarrel, see Th.M. Klein 1975: 16-25, as well as the *status quaestionis* by M. García Teijeiro 1988: 808-809).



3. As far as other followers of ἐπύλλιον are concerned we could mention Theocritus (compositions number 13, 24 and 25 with all certainty) or even the *Circe* by Alexander the Aetolian, or the *Dionysos* by Euphorion (see A. Barigazzi 1963: 416-454, and J.A. Clúa 1991: 111-124) and, of course, Callimachus' *Hecale* (by the way, edited and with comments in Spanish by J.G. Montes Cala, published in the University of Cadiz in 1989, with a new distribution of fragments based in the narrative order, or that edited with introduction and commentary by A.S. Hollis, in 1990, at the Oxford University Press), a piece of work we can consider the most notable of the ἐπύλλια from the Hellenistic period and master piece of Callimachus from Ancient times.

As for the growth of the genre in Rome, we take into account the *Ciris* and the *Culex* by Catullus. At the same time we can isolate or extract ἐπύλλια in long poems such as in Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautica*, in Vergilius (e.g. Aristaio's fable) and mainly in Ovid whose *Metamorphosis* were considered a *Kollektivgedich*, that is to say, a magnificent juxtaposition of ἐπύλλια.

In order to illustrate the topic with examples, let's focus on some ἐπύλλια. The *Hylas* by Theocritus is a subject dealt with much more *brevitas* and lyrical concentration compared to the didactic-aetiological effusiveness of his predecessor Apollonius Rhodius (1 1207-1271). Nevertheless, this first example of ἐπύλλιον, before the controversy Apollonius-Callimachus, is also previous to the *Hecale*.

As for Moschus, he seems to have offered the first epic elaboration of the myth of Europe who was kidnapped by Zeus in the shape of a bull, which received great acceptance from there on. All in all, as we have mentioned Moschus after Theocritus as a tribute to the tradition which turns him into a milestone of bucolic poetry, we should go back some centuries in time and mention again Callimachus' *Hecale*. An annotation to Callimachus, *Hymn* π 106: οὐκ ἄγαμαι τὸν αἰοῖδὸν ὃς οὐδ' ὅσα πόντος ἀείδει wanted to explain *cur Callimachus Hecalam scripserit*: ἐγκαλεῖ διὰ τούτων τοὺς σκώπουντας αὐτὸν μὴ δύνασθαι ποιῆσαι μέγα ποίημα, ὅθεν ἠναγκάσθη ποιῆσαι τὴν Ἐκάλην. It seems to be an allusion to the mentioned controversy about Apollonius Rhodius and his admirers (see Suidas, *s.u.* Ἔβρις), but it is not possible to attribute any kind of value to it, in spite of the hermeneutic attempts made by some philologists. The appearance of a μέγα ποίημα is strange because the *Hecale* is an example of a limited poem which can confirm the main matter of Callimachus' poetic art: the hostility against the «making something big, huge» and the request for expressive perfection in compositions «di breve respire» just as F.M. Pontani points out in his monograph about *L'epillio greco* (Pontani 1973). The poem depicts the hospitality of the old Hecate towards Theseus and his fight with the bull from Marathon, his sacrificial offering to Apollo and the funerals in honour of Hecale.

On the other hand, the title itself under which we know Theocritus' *Εἰδύλλια*, namely *Idyls*, is a testimony to the settlement of the artistic ideals which supported short works instead of long: the diminutive *εἰδύλλιον* is meaningful in this sense, the same happens to the names we find between Alexandrian poets and *Novi* for the literary work itself: *παίγνιον*, *libellus*, *opusculum*, *nugae*. The Sicilian Muse appears, after all, as a variety of the *οὔσα λεπταλέη* advocated by Callimachus.

Yet, Callimachus' aesthetics remained operational in the bulk of later Greek and Latin poetry. This was due to its skill in technique, its verbal intensity, its *limae labor*, its domain of all the expressive means, its elegance and conceptual depth.

Therefore, some other poets of various sensitivity and pervaded of *πάθος*, fascinated by the spectacular effects of violent chiaroscuro had not forgotten with the time the recommendation to briefness which allows to «chisel» perfect episodic hymns *per se* within confusing structures despite the technical rigor in the *conlocatio* and in metrics. I refer to Nonnos, the most important poet of the Late Greek classicism, to refer how the direct line pointed at by the title of Wifstran's book (*Von Kallimachos zu Nonnos*) is not only a line of filiation regarding hexametric versification.

4. Trying to locate or rescue *εἰδύλλια* or also *ἐπύλλια*- in Nonnos' *Dionysiaca* (certainly well made) means breaking arbitrarily the oriental intemperance of that poet and the phantasmagorical element of his landscapes together with his romantic gentleness. Even so, it is worth mentioning that some minor episodes were elaborated previously to the composition of the poem and are close to Hellenistic sketches, from which *Hecale*, with all the differences in inspiration and tone, continued being its model. Besides, if among the works of the style of Nonnos' works we can list poems such as *Posthomeric* by Quintus of Smyrna, at least three more poets of the imperial era, namely Tryphiodorus and his work *The Taking of Ilios*, Collutus and *The Rape of Helen* or Musaeus' *Hero and Leander* wrote poems not that different to those which were, more or less correctly, referred to as *ἐπύλλια*.

There are traces of a Hellenistic taste in the field of the form. This is found for instance, in the assimilation of the expressive modules of the most varied poets. It is obviously very risky to talk about the survival of the return to the *ἐπύλλιον*. Not even the hypothetical survival would be the proof of an effective and critical consciousness of the existence of the *ἐπύλλιον* as an autonomous «genre». All the same, it must be put on record that between the 4th-5th Centuries A.D. a new kind of composition appears, the same as in the Hellenistic poetry. This narrative composition is written in hexameters

of brief length, intense moving-sentimental effusiveness and of a watched technique.

In a work entitled «Water and wine as symbols of inspiration», N.B. Crowther (1979: 1 f.) points out that although the first author to mention the sacred sources is Hesiod in his *Theogony* and that Pindar is the first poet to talk about his inspiration from the sacred tendencies, but Callimachus is the *crux* of the problem.

As a matter of fact, although «water» is generally an important symbol for Callimachus, it is the Late Greek authors of epigrams who make references to the *querelle* between the wine and the water drinkers. So, Antipater of Thessalonica, in the height of the Augustan era, attacks pedantic poets who drink from the sacred current and shows himself in favour of the «wine drinkers» Archilochus and Homer (*A.P.* XI 20); he prefers to drink a cup of wine rather than a thousand of Hypocrene (*A.P.* XI 24); in this last poem he mentions Hesiod and the sources of the Helicon (1-2). Apart from this reference to Hesiod, not any other «water drinker» is mentioned by the authors of epigrams even when they are really identified with Callimachus' school (see M. Brioso 1991: 93-111).

However, an epigram by Hedylus (III Century B.C.) seems to contradict this inference, unless the poet is distorting the terminology by Callimachus' for his own good, as it suggests that the ideal of the λέπτον is achieved by «drinking wine». All the same, and as a milestone of interest to be mentioned here, there is neither mention nor reference in any of the fragments by Callimachus to the *querelle* between «water drinkers» and «wine drinkers». In all other respects, it is not infrequent, according to the data provided by Crowther, that both types of poets look for their inspiration in the sacred fountains and in wine.

In order to understand the moving of the contraposition ἔπος-ἐπύλλιον to Rome we need to study Euphorion of Chalcis at the same time as Parthenius and Cornelius Gallus. If we elucidate whether Euphorion was or was not an elegiac poet, then we will understand better the two poetic traditions I will make references to when I refer to the contraposition Ennius-*Cantores Euphorionis*.

Although some old testimonies gave rise to the possible consideration of Euphorion as an elegiac poet (*elegiarum scriptor*), nothing sure can be inferred, being *communis opinio* that the Latin commentators came to the fallacious conclusion that the poet from Chalcis was «elegiac» because Gallus made use of him. (*Gallus... transtulit in latinum sermonem...; Euphorion... quem transtulit Gallus, etc.*).

But what Gallus really did was to «move», to «adapt» the style, the matter and the poetic *maniera* to his own poems we should remember, in this sense,

the dedication Parthenius wrote to C. Gallus in the beginning of his *Erotika pathemata*:

αὐτῷ τε σοὶ παρεσται, εἰς ἔπη καὶ ἐλεγείας  
ἀνάγειν τὰ μάλιστα ἐξ αὐτῶν ἀρμόδια.

«You will have at your disposition, to transfer them  
into epic and elegiac poems, those stories which most agree».

As can be verified, C. Gallus followed the style (Probus himself made the following note: *Euphorion elegiarum scriptor Chalcidensis fuit, cuius in scribendo secutus colorem videtur Cornelius Gallus*), but nothing leads us to assume that the Latin poet adopted the meter. Besides, the one hundred and fifty lines by the poet from Chalcis and which are conserved in their totality are all hexametric, the nine fragments with a known title and with a length longer than two lines are all epic and were not part of any elegy. Even more, had Euphorion been famous as *elegiarum scriptor*, the omission by *Suidas* of this part of the work would be, in such a case, incomprehensible.

5. In my opinion, the key for a right focus on the problem may be found, as I have previously mentioned, in Parthenius of Nicaea, one of the most confusing figures of the 1 Century B.C. He influenced C. Gallus and was the bearer of Euphorion's poetry to Rome (see C. Francese 2001).

Although there are sound data to allow us to talk about an effective influence of Parthenius on Roman elegy, the truth is that in spite of this, the contribution and the influence of Parthenius has been mistaken with that of Euphorion. We can state, at a speculative level, that Parthenius —not Euphorion— inspired the topic of the poem *Zmyrna* by G. Helvius Cinna, the Neoteric Poet, or that he had a certain weight in his *Propempticum Pollionis*, likewise, the elegies of the poet from Nicaea (most precisely his *epicedium* for his wife Arete) or the well-known *Erotika pathemata* (in prose) exerted an outstanding influence —mainly on the topic, but quite likely on the meter as well, specifically through the *epicedium* for Arete— in the poetic *corpus* of certain elegiacs, C. Gallus among them.

Therefore, there is no direct line between Euphorion's work and Gallus', not in the meter, or in the subject used. Parthenius will keep on being the traditional link between Euphorion and the *Cantores Euphorionis*. So, the confusion of the grammarians and Latin commentators to consider Euphorion *elegiarum scriptor*, can partly have its origin in considering petty Parthenius's influence (metric and thematic) on Roman elegy (Gallus, Tibullus, Propertius, Ovid), and on the first adopters of the *ἐπύλλιον* in the Latin world (see X. Ballester 1989: 117-24).

As I have pointed out (J.A. Clúa 1991: 39-55), a concrete example may become helpful to understand what has been mentioned. In the poem about the *Grynaeus* wood (frs. 121-122 de Cuenca = frs. 124-125 Clúa), Euphorion follows Hesiod (fr. 278 M.-West), and we know that such a poem was written in hexameters. C. Gallus, at the same time, developed this same topic in his elegies —*Gallus transtulit in Latinum sermonem* (Servius, *ad Ecl.* vi, 72)—. Servius' quotation would be taken as canonical and conclusive of the influence exerted by Euphorion on C. Gallus if we did not have a fragment by Parthenius dealing with the same topic (fr. viii Calderón = fr. 6 Cuartero = 620 Ll.-Jones & Parsons) written in elegiac meter (not hexameters) dealing with Delos and Apollo *Grynaeus*. We can once more corroborate that the bridge between Euphorion and C. Gallus (*Cantor Euphorionis*) is Parthenius, both in metrics and in topic.

No matter how, we must remember that already mentioned quotation of an epigram by Pollianus in which cyclic poets were criticised (τοὺς κυκλίουσ [...] μισῶ). The association between Callimachus and Parthenius in such an epigram is then meaningful. It seems as if Pollianus had taken them respectively as the pioneer and the last successor of an «antihomeric» school.

Now from the opposing side there are some other symbols, such as one of Erichius' famous epigram included in the famous funerary inscriptions which make up the Book vii of the *Palatine Anthology*, n. 377 mentioned, these symbols are: the poet driving a carriage —often used in tragedy as an image to represent insane characters (the insistence on the «carriage» in the *Prologue In Telchinas* by Callimachus should be remembered)—, or the sick (ἐνήμεσε μυρία κείνα φλέγματα), the dirt of abominable elegies (μυσαρῶν ἀπλυσίην ἐλέγων) and the *miaroglóssos* topic, or the full-mouthed Parthenius, etc., as F.J. Cuartero stresses in his edition of Parthenius from Nicaea (see Cuartero 1987).

Erichius, by using the figure of Parthenius, attacks the poets following Callimachus' ways who, imitating and at the same time underestimating Homer, did not succeed in their literary enterprise because they dealt with rather ignoble topics in a pedantic style. Cuartero also explains how Erichius got to the point of craziness in which he said that the *Odyssey* was a «quagmire» and the *Iliad* a «bramble» (ἀγορευσαι πηλὸν Ὀδυσσείην καὶ βάτον Ἰλιάδα). Besides, we should remember that neoteric named the traditional narrative poetry a «quagmire» and a «bramble».

6. We still have to tackle, although only superficially, the famous opposition Ennius-*Cantores Euphorionis* as well as the terminological distinction between *Cantores Euphorionis* and *Neoteroi*. As N.B. Crowther has recently said (1976: 65-71), the real influence of Parthenius on the *Poetae novi* is only to C. Gallus and to Cinna, but not the whole pleiad of Catullus' followers.

As a result, Euphorion's poetry existed as a kind of distinctive and separated poetry, that is one of the several existing reasons why we must investigate the nomenclature *Cantores Euphorionis* instead of *Cantores Callimachi*. The expression *Cantores Euphorionis* which Cicero used to contrast the latter to the great national epic poet Ennius, should not be used as a reference for all the *Neoteroi* nor to refer directly to Gallus and to Cinna in particular because of chronological reasons studied by A. Gandiglio (1904: 69). My opinion is, after having studied the latest works by L.C. Watson (1982), Burzacchini (1978), C. Tuplin (1976 y 1979), that when Cicero used the expression *Cantores Euphorionis* he was referring in general to the patrons of those who wrote that type of poetry that did not follow Ennius' style. That is the origin of the semantic difference, which is worth mentioning, between *Cantores Euphorionis* and *Neoteroi*.

There is a fragment by Propertius (iv 10, 1-4) in which a literary program, which is related to that of Callimachus, was emphasized (see C. Miralles 1970: 375-378). Propertius advocates effort and a polished technique. This opinion has also been held by Philetas, who would talk about looking for the difficult versions of each myth (πολλὰ μογήσας in *Stobaeus* II 4-50), and whom Propertius knew was related to Callimachus, judging by III/I 1-2.

7. In conclusion, I would say that when we elaborate a general scheme of the tendency towards «brief, educated and elaborated poetry by means of *limae labor*» as opposed to the «long poetry praised by those following Homer» we are facing a hard task, so that the following verifications should at least be mentioned.

a) We can start from the hypothesis that the original distinction between the distich and the hexameter in terms of «seriousness» and «universality» could have been taken into account as early as in the 4th and 3rd Centuries B.C. and having exerted influences in Antimachus' preferences as well as in Philetas' and Callimachus'. We also know that these preferences later on influenced Latin authors of the classic era (it is enough to think about Ovid, *Am.* I 1).

b) Another conclusion is the real existence of the *ἐπύλλιον*, above all in the Hellenistic period, the *epos* and the elegy were also present and they all coexisted mainly in the Hellenistic period. Philetas, Callimachus, Euphorion, Parthenius, etc realistically appear to be opposed to Antimachus and the Telchines Asclepiades, Posidippus (mixed up with personal reasons) and even possibly Apollonius Rhodius, etc.

c) Although «water» is generally an important symbol for Callimachus and there are references which present the poet from Cyrene as a likely «water

drinker» the truth is that it is the Late Greek poets of epigrams who refer to the *querelle* between «wine drinkers» and «water drinkers». They also identify «water drinkers» as poets who look for their inspiration in sacred fountains.

d) If the influence exerted by Euphorion of Chalciss on C. Gallus by means of Parthenius of Nicaea was not related to the metre, but to the topic, (remember our previous argument), and if we remember Cicero's expression *Cantores Euphorionis*, then we will understand both possible derivations on Latin grounds, which are that of the followers of the obscure and gruesome Euphorion and that of Callimachus' followers (Catullus, Propertius, etc.). Both branches share the essential elements and they have a common tendency towards «brief poetry», both in the ground of ἐπύλλιον and in the Hellenistic elegy.

e) That the bucolic eclogue itself, as a poetic Neoteric sample, belongs to the same group as the ἐπύλλιον, the elegy, the epigram, the didactic poem and even the satire and the comedy, according to the abundant *recusationes* between Augustan poets who opposed light-hearted muse and serious muse to the epic poems and tragedy which are rejected by Callimachus' poetry. See *cf.* A. Fontán (1964: 193 f.) for more on the opposition existing among Augustan poets of light-hearted and serious muses.

f) That in spite of the clear aura of literary controversy between Callimachus and the Telchines, we can present a certain amount of «literary conventionality». Something very different is the real and proven establishment of the aesthetic ideals which short works advocated in Hellenistic and Roman periods opposed to the long works (see M. Brioso 1983: 127-146 and *idem* 1990: 31-70). There is no doubt that there was a literary controversy between the supporters of an educated and exquisite poetry, Callimachus, Hermesianax of Colophon and their later imitators for instance and the opposing group, those who followed Homer's ways and respected tradition.

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