

# Epigrammatic Communication in Callimachus' *Epigrams*

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**D**URING THE LAST DECADE Hellenistic epigram has seen a steep surge in scholarly work.<sup>1</sup> One important factor for this renewed interest was undoubtedly the publication of the Milan papyrus containing what appears to be our earliest example of a collection of poems arranged and composed by one Hellenistic author, Posidippus of Pella; this discovery immediately spurred a minor industry of scholarly work.<sup>2</sup> The recent publication of a number of important individual works and collected volumes on epigram (both Hellenistic and archaic) indicates the vigorous interest of scholars.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Callimachus is quoted here after the edition by Rudolf Pfeiffer (Oxford 1949–1953); translations are my own. Further abbreviations are: G.-P. = A. S. F. Gow and Denys L. Page, *The Greek Anthology* I–II (Cambridge 1965); *FGE* = Denys L. Page, *Further Greek Epigrams* (Cambridge 1981); *GVI* = W. Peek, *Griechische Vers-Inschriften* I (Berlin 1955).

<sup>2</sup> To cite only a few of the more important publications: Guido Bastia-nini, Angelo Casanova (eds.), *Il papiro di Posidippo un anno dopo* (Florence 2002); Benjamin Acosta-Hughes, Elizabeth Kosmetatou, Manuel Baumbach (eds.), *Labored in Papyrus Leaves. Perspectives on an Epigram Collection Attributed to Posidippus* (Cambridge [Mass.] 2004); Kathryn Gutzwiller (ed.), *The New Posidippus. A Hellenistic Poetry Book* (Oxford 2005). Not all scholars are convinced that the papyrus does indeed represent an organized poetry book; see e.g. Stephan Schröder, “Skeptische Überlegungen zum Mailänder Epigrammpapyrus,” *ZPE* 148 (2004) 29–73; against this skeptical view, see Gutzwiller, “The Literariness of the Milan Papyrus or ‘What Difference a Book?’,” in *The New Posidippus* 287–319, and Bardo Gauly, “Poseidipp und das Gedichtbuch. Überlegungen zur Sphragis und zum Mailänder Papyrus,” *ZPE* 151 (2005) 33–47.

<sup>3</sup> Alan Cameron, *The Greek Anthology* (Oxford 1993); Kathryn Gutzwiller,

Doris Meyer's important book has successfully demonstrated the extent to which Callimachus' epigrams make use of developments and devices already visible in archaic and classical inscriptions.<sup>4</sup>

While I find myself in agreement with most of the painstaking literary analyses that Meyer proposes, I think that her insights can be taken one step further. Meyer is right in paying special attention to the personae of speaker and addressee of epigrams as they are constructed in the process of reading Callimachus' texts. While she is careful in pointing out that inscriptional epigram had already offered a wide variety of possibilities for the relationship between reader and speaker in epigrammatic texts, my aim in this paper is to demonstrate that these inscriptional epigrams already display a large number of features which are often seen as being typical of Hellenistic book-literature. I want to argue that epigram was attractive to Hellenistic poets because the position of the writer in these texts and the manner in which they constructed their ideal audience are in a way similar to the Hellenistic poets' own situation. In particular, I am convinced that the Hellenistic poets came to know many of these older texts not exclusively in the form of actual inscriptions, but also partly through collections in papyrus-rolls. Their own epigrams recreated, for their own readers, the intellectual and emotional response which these collected inscriptions, severed from their original context,

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*Poetic Garlands. Hellenistic Epigrams in Context* (Berkeley 1998); M. A. Harder, R. F. Regtuit, G. C. Wakker (eds.), *Hellenistic Epigrams* (Leuven 2002); Peter Bing, John Steffen Bruss (eds.), *Brill's Companion to Hellenistic Epigram* (Leiden 2007); Christos C. Tsagalis, *Inscribing Sorrow: Fourth-century Attic Funerary Epigrams* (Berlin 2008); Manuel Baumbach, Andre Petrovic, Ivana Petrovic (eds.), *Archaic and Classical Greek Epigram* (Cambridge 2010).

<sup>4</sup> Doris Meyer, *Inszeniertes Lesevergnügen. Das inschriftliche Epigramm und seine Rezeption bei Kallimachos* (*Hermes Einzelschr.* 93 [2005]); a short English summary of her main arguments can be found in Doris Meyer, "The Act of Reading and the Act of Writing in Hellenistic Epigram," in Bing/Bruss, *Brill's Companion* 187–210.

elicited from their readership.

As is well known, the epigram became one of the favorite genres of Hellenistic poetry. When we speculate about the reasons for this splendid career of what was, after all, a fairly minor genre during the archaic and classical periods,<sup>5</sup> we could point to the fact that in epigrammatic communication, the Hellenistic poets found a precursor of their own mode of interacting with their public. The transformation of Greek poetry from a culture of performance and communal reception to a culture of reading and individual, “bookish” reception has often been described. It could be argued that, of all texts that were known to the Hellenistic poets, epigram came closest to what they wanted to achieve in their own productions. Let me summarize a few of the most important characteristics that Hellenistic poets may have found especially appealing.

(1) In epigrammatic communication, the pragmatic rules for the use of first and second person forms were temporarily suspended.<sup>6</sup> The speaker in an epigram could equally well be the monument itself (the type of the “speaking object”) or the deceased (in the case of funerary inscriptions) or the reader herself

<sup>5</sup> For the epigram as a minor genre, see Peter Bing, Jon Steffen Bruss, “Introduction,” in Bing/Bruss, *Brill's Companion* 1–26, at 4.

<sup>6</sup> The same can of course be said for many forms of poetical communication in the archaic period; a particularly clear example is the floating use of the first person singular and plural in choral lyric, one of the most debated problems in early Greek poetry. See e.g. Simon R. Slings (ed.), *The Poet's I in Archaic Greek Lyric* (Amsterdam 1990); Mary R. Lefkowitz, *First-Person Fictions. Pindar's Poetic I* (Oxford 1991); Giovan Battista D'Alessio, “First-Person Problems in Pindar,” *BICS* 39 (1994) 117–139; Christopher Carey, “The Panegyrist's Persona,” in Maria Cannatà Fera, Simonetta Grandolini (eds.), *Poesia e religione in Grecia: studi in onore di G. Aurelio Privitera* (Naples 2000) 165–177. For a convincing argument that Callimachus was aware of and made literary use of this wavering identity of the first person in choral lyric, see Wolfgang Kofler, “Kallimachos' Wahlverwandtschaften. Zur poetischen Tradition und Gattung des Apollonhymnos,” *Philologus* 140 (1996) 230–247; cf. Andrew D. Morrison, *The Narrator in Archaic Greek and Hellenistic Poetry* (Cambridge 2007), esp. 4–24.

or himself; the addressee could be the god(dess) to whom a dedication was made or the deceased or, again, the reader.<sup>7</sup>

(2) More importantly, these different positions of the first (and second) person had to be actualized by the living voice of the reader.<sup>8</sup> Instead of expecting actual performances by real performers, readers of epigrams thus developed the skill to stage imaginary acts of communication in their own voice, and because of the dissociation of the subject of the enunciation (*sujet de l'énonciation*) from the subject of the statement (*sujet de*

<sup>7</sup> For a fuller analysis, see my "Speaker and Addressee in Early Greek Epigram," in Baumbach/Petrovic/Petrovic, *Archaic and Classical Greek Epigram* 25–41, where more references to the substantial scholarly literature can be found; here, I will provide just one example of the different forms listed above: the monument speaks in numerous archaic inscriptions, e.g. *CEG* 326; the deceased often speaks in epigrams for those killed in battle (*CEG* 131 = "Simonides" 11 *FGE*); the reader speaks in *CEG* 470 = 16a (the "anonymous mourner"). The god is addressed in *CEG* 190, the deceased in *CEG* 48; the reader is the addressee in *CEG* 110. Cf. Michael A. Tueller, *Look Who's Talking. Innovations in Voice and Identity in Hellenistic Epigram* (Hellenistica Groning. 13 [2008]) 12–57.

<sup>8</sup> See Jesper Svenbro, *Phrasikleia. An Anthropology of Reading in Ancient Greece* (Ithaca 1993) 93, and "Archaic and Classical Greece: The Invention of Silent Reading," in Guglielmo Cavallo, Roger Chartier (eds.), *A History of Reading in the West* (Cambridge 1999 [original Rome 1995]) 37–63, at 45: "Reading is thus putting one's own voice at the disposition of the writing (and behind it, at the writer's disposition); it is lending one's voice for the duration of the reading, a process in which the writing appropriates the voice, which means that while the reader is reading, his voice is not his own." I am not here concerned with the vexed question whether we may assume silent reading in antiquity or not; some recent contributions are Alexander K. Gavrilov, "Techniques of Reading in Classical Antiquity," *CQ* 47 (1997) 56–73; Myles F. Burnyeat, "Postscript on Silent Reading," *CQ* 47 (1997) 74–76; William A. Johnson, "Toward a Sociology of Reading in Classical Antiquity," *AJP* 121 (2000) 593–627; Stephan Busch, "Lautes und leises Lesen in der Antike," *RhM* 145 (2002) 1–45. Even if (as I believe to be the case) silent reading was not as unusual as some scholars assume, we must still accept that most texts were read out loud. For my argument, it is of little importance whether the reader lends her or his physical voice to the text (s)he reads or whether this vocalization is purely interior.

*l'énoncé*),<sup>9</sup> they could not be certain which role their own voice would play in these acts.

(3) The first person of the epigrammatic utterance became available for such free-floating actualizations because of the absence of the author or the performer.<sup>10</sup> This meant, by the same token, that authors of epigrams had to take this absence into account when they composed their texts. For them, the entire act of communication was shifted to the realm of the imaginary, in a much more radical sense than it had ever been before in other poetic texts: they were aware that readers who might be completely unknown to them, and whose emotional, intellectual, or personal circumstances they could not foresee, would be confronted with their epigrams, and they anticipated this situation in their texts.<sup>11</sup> Authors of epigrams were thus in the typical position of writers for whom the audience is “always a fiction,” as W. J. Ong expressed it in a classic treatment.<sup>12</sup> When epigrams address their readers as *παροδῖτα* (“passer-by”) or *ξέινε* (“stranger”), this is due to this anticipation: inscribed

<sup>9</sup> There are no commonly accepted English equivalents for these French terms; see John Lechte, *Julia Kristeva* (London 1990) 70.

<sup>10</sup> See Jesper Svenbro, “J’écris, donc je m’efface. L’énonciation dans les premières inscriptions grecques,” in Marcel Detienne (ed.), *Les Savoirs de l’écriture en Grèce ancienne* (Lille 1988) 459–479.

<sup>11</sup> For an example see *CEG* 28 (*IG* I<sup>3</sup> 1204) *Ἀνθροπε ἡδὸστέιχε[ι]ς καθ’ ὁδὸν φρασὶν ἄλα μενοιῶν*, “you, who are walking on this road with other things on your mind.” On this inscription cf. Ute Ecker, *Grabmal und Epigramm. Studien zur frühgriechischen Sepulkraldichtung* (Palingenesia 29 [1990]) 168–173; Peter Bing, “Ergänzungsspiel in the Epigrams of Callimachus,” *A&A* 41 (1995) 115–131, at 120; on the topic of the “distracted reader” see Bing, “The Un-Read Muse,” in Harder/Regtuit/Wakker, *Hellenistic Epigrams* 39–66, at 44–45. I find Bing’s pessimism about readers’ indifference towards epigrams somewhat exaggerated, but as he acknowledges himself (62), the evidence for archaic and classical epigram is slim. At least for the imperial period, we can point to Pausanias, who emerges from his *Perihegesis* as an attentive and interested reader of epigrams.

<sup>12</sup> Walter J. Ong, “The Writer’s Audience Is Always a Fiction,” in *Interfaces of the Word. Studies in the Evolution of Consciousness and Culture* (Ithaca 1977) 53–81 (first published 1975).

monuments were lined up along roads; the readers whom they addressed were walking by and might be in a hurry; if the monument was in a foreign country (as was often the case for soldiers buried at the site of the battle where they died), readers were ξένοι both in the sense of “foreigners” and “strangers,”<sup>13</sup> and they had to be convinced to spend time in reading the text.<sup>14</sup>

(4) While epigrams, especially those containing dedications or inscribed on funerary monuments, can be understood as being part of ritual acts and as communicating to their readers the emotional and intellectual attitude which was considered fitting for these rituals, one of their foremost functions was to convey information to their recipients, and they had to do this in a minimum of space. There was a certain tension between these “didactic” requirements of providing, e.g., the name of the deceased or of the *honorandus*, the name of parents, and the cause of death on the one hand, and the poetic expression of these facts and the anticipation of the appropriate emotional response on the other.

(5) Epigram constitutes a generic system of its own which is (at least in part) orthogonal to the established system of poetic genres defined by performative contexts. Epigrams partake of a variety of occasions and social, ritual, or political circumstances, some of which are associated with other poetic forms (such as epinician, ritual lament, encomium, prayer, hymn, or elegy, to name but a few).<sup>15</sup> By its very nature, epigram was

<sup>13</sup> See Tueller, *Look Who's Talking* 44–46.

<sup>14</sup> E.g. *CEG* 110 and 131; cf. *CEG* 34 and 28 (quoted n.11 above); in these texts the reader is given reasons why (s)he should bother to read the inscription. On roadside burials as a social phenomenon see Jon Steffen Bruss, *Hidden Presences. Monuments, Gravesites, and Corpses in Greek Funerary Epigram* (Leuven 2005) 38–39.

<sup>15</sup> Gutzwiller, *Poetic Garlands* 116–117, convincingly argues that the advent of book-collections blurred the generic distinction between epigram and elegy and thus helped development of the new form of sympotic epigram; cf. Bing and Bruss, in *Brill's Companion* 11–14. Ewen Bowie, “From Archaic

characterized by its medium and its form rather than by its occasion and its performance; hence, the “performative context” had to be integrated into the epigrammatic text.<sup>16</sup>

It should be clear, then, why the Hellenistic poets found the form of the epigram particularly apt for their own poetic endeavors: they could see the writers of such texts as precursors. While items 4 and 5 above pertain to a great number of Callimachus’ texts (the tension between didactic and poetic expression is one important aspect of, e.g., the *Aetia*;<sup>17</sup> generic innovation can be found in virtually all his poetical writings), the other items are more immediately relevant for understanding his epigrams. When we look at the different ways in which the roles of speaker and addressee could be constructed in archaic epigram (item 1 with n.7), we almost get the impression that Callimachus made a systematic effort to provide examples for every possible way: the deceased speaks in *ep.* 21 (29 G.-P., *Anth.Pal.* 7.525) and 26 (47 G.-P., *Anth.Pal.* 7.460), the monument in 12 (43 G.-P., *Anth.Pal.* 7.521), an anonymous mourner in 14 (44 G.-P., *Anth.Pal.* 7.519) and 17 (45 G.-P., *Anth.Pal.* 7.271); the deceased is addressed in 14 (44 G.-P., *Anth.Pal.* 7.519) and 58 (50 G.-P., *Anth.Pal.* 7.277), the reader in 9 (41 G.-P., *Anth.Pal.* 7.451).<sup>18</sup>

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Elegy to Hellenistic Epigram?” in *Brill’s Companion* 95–112, is more skeptical.

<sup>16</sup> On this aspect see a number of contributions by Joseph W. Day (with whose conclusions I do not always agree): “Interactive Offerings: Early Greek Dedicatory Epigrams and Ritual,” *HSCP* 96 (1994) 37–74; “Rituals in Stone: Early Greek Grave Epigrams and Monuments,” *JHS* 109 (1989) 16–28; “Epigram and Reader: Generic Force as (Re-)Activation of Ritual,” in Mary Depew, Dirk D. Obbink (eds.), *Matrices of Genre: Authors, Canons, and Society* (Cambridge [Mass.] 2000) 37–57; “Poems on Stone: The Inscribed Antecedents of Hellenistic Epigram,” in Bing/Bruss, *Brill’s Companion* 29–47.

<sup>17</sup> See e.g. Christian Kaesser, “The Poet and the ‘Polis’: the *Aetia* as Didactic Poem,” in Marietta Horster, Christiane Reitz (eds.), *Wissensvermittlung in dichterischer Gestalt* (Palingenesia 85 [2005]) 95–114.

<sup>18</sup> For Callimachus’ use of inscriptional epigram cf. George B. Walsh, “Callimachean Passages: the Rhetoric of Epitaph in Epigram,” *Arethusa* 24

One could further speculate that a number of late archaic and classical innovations and experiments encouraged Callimachus and other Hellenistic authors to explore the generic possibilities of speaker and addressee. Several fifth-century epigrams demonstrate that authors of this period were already consciously experimenting with the openness of these functions. One particularly clear example is given by epigrams in which there is a change of speaker, such as Simonides *ep.* 31 *FGE* (*Anth.Plan.* 23):<sup>19</sup>

εἶπον, τίς, τίνος ἑσσί, τίνος πατρίδος, τί δ' ἐνίκης;  
Κασμύλος, Εὐαγόρου, Πύθια πύξ, Ῥόδιος.

“Give your name, father’s name, native city, and victory.”

(1991) 77–105; Meyer, *Inszeniertes Lesevergnügen*; Michael A. Tueller, “The Origins of Voice and Identity Ambiguity in Callimachus’ Epigrams,” in M. A. Harder, R. F. Regtuit, G. C. Wakker (eds.), *Callimachus II* (Hellenistica Groning. 7 [2004]) 299–315.

<sup>19</sup> The epigram is attributed to Simonides in *Anth.Plan.* Some scholars have contended that it is not by Simonides, but rather a product of the Hellenistic age, but so far they have failed to offer conclusive arguments. Page (*FGE* p.245) is in doubt whether it is “a copy of a contemporary inscription” or “a product of Alexandrian ingenuity”; he finds the latter view likelier because of the dialogic form. However, as is discussed below, we have other examples of dialogic epigrams from the classical period, so Page’s argument does not hold water; cf. Tueller, *Look Who’s Talking* 194 with n.2. Similarly, Adolf Köhnken, “Epinician Epigram,” in Bing/Bruss, *Brill’s Companion* 295–312, at 301–302, argues against authenticity of the epigram on the grounds that it “fails to disclose whether it is supposed to be dedicatory or sepulchral.” In this, Köhnken neglects his own insights (n.24 below) into the difference between literary and inscriptional texts: in combination with a monument (such as a statue of the victor), the words τί δ' ἐνίκης; “what was your victory?” are entirely sufficient to mark the purpose of the inscription. Moreover, Casmylus is an obscure Rhodian boxer (for whom Pindar composed an epinician, fr.2 Maehler), so he is not an obvious candidate for Alexandrian playfulness; see further Luigi Bravi, “L’epigramma simonideo per il pugile Casmilo di Rodi,” *Nikephoros* 14 (2001) 11–19. Hence I see no reason to doubt the attribution, but my argument does not depend on the poem’s authenticity. For a more optimistic account of epigrams attributed to Simonides, see n.43 below.



“Casmylus, Euagoras, Rhodes, Pythian boxing.”

The author of this text (Simonides?) clearly saw the poetic opportunities offered by the semantically empty roles of first and second person: since readers of epigrams could never be certain which part of the epigrammatic communication they would be assuming in the act of reading, as they might now be the addressee, now the speaker, our writer took the obvious step of making these roles change within the same text. And we must be aware that this demanded some “epigrammatic competence” from the readers: in the absence of outward signs (such as quotation marks), a reader had to realize that her or his own voice was incorporating a different speaker in the second line of this inscription.

This dialogic form of epigrams became common in the Hellenistic period; however, we have some earlier examples in addition to the Simonidean text.<sup>20</sup> This funerary inscription from Attica, dated to the middle of the fourth century B.C.E., first addresses the dead Melite; in the last line, Melite replies (*CEG* 530):

χαῖρε τάφος Μελίτης· χρηστή γυνή ἔνθαδε κείται·  
 φιλοῦντα ἀντιφιλοῦσα τὸν ἄνδρα Ὀνήσιμον ἦσθα κρατίστη·  
 τοιγαροῦν ποθεῖ θανοῦσάν σε, ἦσθα γὰρ χρηστή γυνή·  
 καὶ σὺ χαῖρε φίλτατ' ἀνδρῶν, ἀλλὰ τοὺς ἔμοῦς φίλει.

“Hail, tomb of Melite. A good wife rests here. You were the best because you reciprocated the love of your husband Onesimus; therefore, he misses you after your death, because you were a good wife.” “And hail to you, most beloved husband; continue loving my dearest.”

Who is the speaker in the first lines of this poem? The writer of

<sup>20</sup> See Meyer, *Inszeniertes Lesevergnügen* 84–86; Tsagalis, *Inscribing Sorrow* 257–261; Tueller, *Look Who's Talking* 42–43. *CEG* 120 may be a very early example of a dialogic epigram, but the text is too mutilated to reach certainty. María Luisa del Barrio Vega, “Epigramas dialogados: orígenes y estructura,” *CFC(G)* 33 (1989) 189–201, claims that literary, not inscriptional, texts were at the origin of dialogic epigrams; this seems wrong on the basis of our evidence.

this text was clearly aware that the speaker in epigrammatic communication is an empty role, and he used this emptiness for dramatic effect. The salute *χαίρει* occurs frequently in funerary epigram; it can be addressed either to the passer-by and reader (generally, in the plural) or to the deceased.<sup>21</sup> With *τάφος*, a nominative, here *metri gratia* used for the vocative, the reader would probably assume that (s)he was in the role of the speaker, addressing the tomb. With the words *καὶ σὺ* in line 4, however, the reader would have to rethink her or his entire interpretive strategy: not only would (s)he have to realize that there is now another voice speaking, but also that the first lines should probably be understood to be spoken by Onesimus. But the wavering position of the first lines is never entirely fixed; the openness remains an important part of the reading process.<sup>22</sup> The reader is thus surprised by being transported from a position well outside of the text's emotional impact into the person of the mourning husband. The emphasis on mutual love and on the sense of familial bonds (*φιλοῦντα ἀντιφιλοῦσα, τοὺς ἑμοὺς φίλει*) thus encompasses the reader. The author of these lines makes conscious use of the openness of epigrammatic communication and of the dialogic structure.

This dialogic form, then, made the rules of epigrammatic communication particularly visible, and it is no coincidence that Callimachus employed it in several of his own epigrams (such as *ep.* 4 [51 G.-P., *Anth.Pal.* 7.317] and 61 [42 G.-P., *Anth.Pal.* 7.725]).<sup>23</sup> It was only a relatively minor step to make the

<sup>21</sup> For examples see *GVI* 1209–1212 (addressed to the reader, 6<sup>th</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> c. B.C.E.) and 1384–1388 (addressed to the deceased, 6<sup>th</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> c. B.C.E.).

<sup>22</sup> Meyer, *Inszeniertes Lesevergnügen* 86, explains the third person *ποθεῖ* in line 3 as a device to keep the reader focussed on Melite. This is possible, but her reading is too positive in its identification of the speaker; the third person is part of the elusiveness of speaker and addressee.

<sup>23</sup> One can compare the way in which Callimachus highlighted and emphasized the “dialogic” nature inherent in epic invocations of the Muses; see the convincing analysis in Annette Harder, “Callimachus and the Muses: Some Aspects of Narrative Technique in *Aetia* 1–2,” *Prometheus* 14

speaker change more than once in the same short text, as he did in *ep.* 13 (31 G.-P., *Anth.Pal.* 7.524) or in this poem (*ep.* 34 [22 G.-P., *Anth.Pal.* 6.351]):<sup>24</sup>

τίν με, λεοντάγχ' ὄνα σουκτόνε, φήγινον ὄζον  
θῆκε. τίς; Ἀρχίνος. ποῖος; ὁ Κρής. δέχομαι.

“To you, o Lord, strangler of the lion, killer of the boar, I, a branch of oak, am dedicated.” “By whom?” “Archinus.” “Which?” “The Cretan.” “I accept.”

The reader of this distich will at first be reassured because (s)he discovers a familiar pattern: this is obviously a dedicatory epigram of the type of the “speaking object.” The dedicated wooden club addresses the god to whom it is dedicated; but before it is able to name the dedicator and the reason or purpose of the gift, a second voice chimes in. Again, we have to remember that our ancient reader was not warned by any punctuation or capitalization that the speaker of the second word of the second line was different from this wooden club (and we can even assume that in a manuscript which had no word boundaries or accents, the reader would at first naturally interpret the letters *ΘΗΚΕΤΙΣ* as *θηκέ τις* and would later have to go back and correct her or his first attempt at making sense of the text). After our reader had solved this initial puzzle, it was easy to recognize the accelerando in the second line in which both speakers spoke in turn, each uttering one word.

We could thus compare this epigram to the famous definition of parody (and of literary discourse in general) which the Russian Formalists gave: Callimachus is “laying bare the de-

(1988) 1–14.

<sup>24</sup> On this epigram, see Adolf Köhnken, “Gattungstypik in kallimacheischen Weiheepigrammen,” in J. Dalfen, G. Petersmann, F. F. Schwarz (eds.), *Religio Graeco-Romana. Festschrift für Walter Pötscher (GrazBeitr Suppl. 5 [1993])* 119–130, at 121–123; Meyer, *Inszeniertes Lesevergnügen* 214–215; on dialogue in Hellenistic epigram (both literary and inscriptional) see Anja Bettenworth, “The Mutual Influence of Inscribed and Literary Epigram,” in Bing/Bruss, *Brill’s Companion* 69–93, at 86–89.

vice”;<sup>25</sup> he is calling his readers’ attention to the characteristics of what reading an epigram really means.<sup>26</sup> As Köhnken has convincingly demonstrated in his interpretation of this epigram, this text is clearly written for publication in a book: the speaking object neatly identifies itself as *φήγιμος ὄζος*, thus giving readers the necessary information and the context which, in a “real” epigram, would be provided by the object on or near which the text was inscribed.<sup>27</sup> The ideal or intended reader of these lines thus is somebody who knows the conventions of dedicatory epigram (from having seen numerous texts of this type). Looking at Callimachus’ text, the reader at first recognizes the typical form. But the second line suddenly makes visible just how artificial these conventions really are: that the reader’s voice is lent to an inanimate object; that the addressee of this form of message is usually absent and thus not able to participate in the communication. The last word *δέχομαι* “I accept” could be read as an utterance which is implied in every epigrammatic communication—after all, if the god does not accept the offer of the dedicator, why would the object be found in his temple? Again, we see Callimachus highlighting aspects of what is part of normal epigrammatic communication and thus raising his readers’ awareness of the conventions which the genre presupposes.

Similar interpretations could be given for a number of Callimachus’ epigrams. They are not merely an attempt to

<sup>25</sup> See the two important papers by Victor Shklovsky in Lee T. Lemon, Marion J. Reis (eds.), *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays* (Lincoln 1965) 3–60; for the implications of this view (and some problems with it) cf. Fredric Jameson, *The Prison-House of Language. A Critical Account of Structuralism and Russian Formalism* (Princeton 1972) 75–79.

<sup>26</sup> Similar elements can be found in other Callimachean epigrams; see the excellent discussion in Gregory Hutchinson, *Hellenistic Poetry* (Oxford 1988) 71–76.

<sup>27</sup> See the excellent methodological discussion in Ivana Petrovic and Andrej Petrovic, “Stop and Smell the Statues: Callimachus’ Epigram 51 Pf. Reconsidered (Four Times),” *MD* 51 (2003) 179–208, at 181.

“translate” a popular poetic genre into a new medium. Much rather, reading them provides a double perspective: the reader decodes a written text in a book that is very much *like* an inscription; at the same time (s)he pretends that she is reading a fictitious inscription. The text on the (real) papyrus leaf and the text on the (imaginary) stone overlap, yet they never merge completely. We could describe this mode of reading as “generic intertextuality”: Callimachus’ texts point to the well-known conventions of the genre they are transferring and transforming into a new medium and a new form.

This complex game of actual reading and imaginary reading becomes especially visible in some epigrams in which readers are made to construct the text of an inscription which exists only in the reading itself. The clearest example is *ep.* 15 Pf. (40 G.-P., *Anth.Pal.* 7.522):

Τιμονόη. τίς δ' ἔσσι; μὰ δαίμονας, οὐ σ' ἂν ἐπέγνων,  
 εἰ μὴ Τιμοθέου πατρὸς ἐπὴν ὄνομα  
 στήλῃ καὶ Μήθυμνα, τεῆ πόλις. ἦ μέγα φημί  
 χῆρον ἀνιᾶσθαι σὸν πόσιν Εὐθυμένη.

“Timonoë.” Who are you? By the gods I would not have recognized you, if the name of your father Timotheus were not written on the tombstone, and your city Methymna. Truly, I think that your widowed husband Euthymenes is in profound grief.

Who is the speaker in these lines? It has often been said (and rightly) that this epigram is a dramatization of the act of reading an epigram.<sup>28</sup> Line 4 with the keyword ἀνιᾶσθαι “grieve” suggests that the speaker can be understood as being the conventional “anonymous mourner” who shares the sadness of the bereaved. But who is speaking the first word *Τιμονόη*? Most modern editions and interpretations make it clear that they assume a change of speaker between the first word and the rest

<sup>28</sup> See Meyer, *Inszeniertes Lesevergnügen* 202–205; the relevant scholarly literature is listed at 202 n.269. Tueller’s recent analysis (*Look Who’s Talking* 80) does not do justice to the intricacies of this epigram.

of the epigram;<sup>29</sup> in this case, we would have another example of a dialogic epigram: the monument speaks first by giving the name of the deceased, then the reader reacts to this speech act, recognizes the dead as someone whom (s)he knew in life, and turns from an uninvolved passer-by into a mourner. However, this is not the only way of making sense of the first word. As we have seen, readers of epigrams would listen to their own voice and try to determine which speaker this voice was embodying; we have also seen that different types of epigrams cast the reader in different roles. Callimachus' book epigram recreates this process within the scope of the same text: here, readers hear their own voice pronounce the name "Timonoë." The following words *τίς δ' ἐσσί;* "who are you?" clearly are the beginning of a new sentence (as *δ'* shows); hence, our reader must infer that "Timonoë" is a complete sentence in itself. Since there is no obvious way of integrating this first word into the utterance, it constitutes a challenge to our understanding (or, in Michael Riffaterre's terminology, an "ungrammaticality" that will stimulate the reader to look for another plane of understanding).<sup>30</sup> It is only in the further course of decoding the poem that readers become aware that they are involved in a complex game of different perspectives: their voice is, at the same time and within the same text, reading both the epigram they see on the papyrus in front of them and the imaginary inscription that this epigram evokes.<sup>31</sup> As Kaibel first pointed out, Callimachus' text allows us to construct this imaginary inscription in the form *Τιμονόη Τιμοθέου Μηθυμναίου, γυνή δὲ Εὐθυ-*

<sup>29</sup> But cf. Walsh, *Arethusa* 24 (1991) 95: "The first word apparently read aloud from the stone..." Similar problems concerning the identity of the speaker of the first words are found in *ep.* 58 Pf.; see Tueller, in Harder/Regtuit/Wakker, *Callimachus* II 312–314.

<sup>30</sup> Michael Riffaterre, *Semiotics of Poetry* (Bloomington 1978), esp. 4–6.

<sup>31</sup> For similar effects in other Callimachean epigrams see George B. Walsh, "Surprised by Self: Audible Thought in Hellenistic Poetry," *CP* 85 (1990) 1–21, esp. 1–4, 11–13.

μένους.<sup>32</sup> The first word *Τιμονόη*, then, is part of both the “real” and the “imaginary” text and alerts readers to the ambivalence that is characteristic of this epigram: their own voice is involved in an interior dialogue; it is simultaneously uttering the words of this inscription and expressing the emotional and intellectual response that this inscription stimulates.

Other Callimachean epigrams can in a similar fashion be interpreted as reenactments of epigrammatic communication. In *ep.* 11 (G.-P. 35, *Anth.Pal.* 7.447), the identity of the speaker is again difficult to determine.<sup>33</sup> The words ἐπ’ ἐμοί can hardly mean anything but “upon me,”<sup>34</sup> so the epigram appears to fall into the well-known category of the gravestone which speaks and tells about the dead person whom it covers (as in *ep.* 12 [G.-P. 43, *Anth.Pal.* 7.521]). But this tombstone is different in that it reads out and reflects about its own inscription. As in *ep.* 15, the reader is thus invited to share a double perspective; this time, he lends her or his voice to a speaking object which is, as it were, at the same time speaking and reading. In *ep.* 18 (38 G.-P., *Anth.Pal.* 7.272),<sup>35</sup> the stone on a cenotaph is at the same time expressing its thoughts about the cruel fate of the deceased Lycus and “proclaiming” (*κηρύσσω*) a message to the readers of the inscription.

It is thus obvious that the act of reading epigrams was of

<sup>32</sup> Georg Kaibel, “Zu den Epigrammen des Kallimachos,” *Hermes* 31 (1896) 264–270, at 264; Kaibel assumes that the poet himself is the speaker of the epigram: “die ersten Worte ... zeigen uns den Dichter, wie er den Stein liest und wie ihm beim Lesen die eigene theilnehmende Deutung der wortkargen Aufschrift erwächst.”

<sup>33</sup> Interpreters disagree about the exact meaning of the words and about the point of the epigram. For a doxography and a tentative solution see Meyer, *Inszeniertes Lesevergnügen* 191–192; cf. Gutzwiller, *Poetic Garlands* 198–200. Unlike Meyer and Gutzwiller, I do think that the first and last words of the poem, σύντομος and δολιχός, are ambivalent; readers are not expected to decide between the meanings “concise/long-winded” and “short/tall,” but see both at the same time.

<sup>34</sup> Gow/Page ad loc.; cf. Bruss, *Hidden Presences* 25–26.

<sup>35</sup> On this epigram see Bruss, *Hidden Presences* 107–110.

special interest to Callimachus and that some of his own epigrams can be interpreted as staging this very act of reading. We have seen numerous reasons why the Alexandrian poets might have found the traditional genre of the epigram so attractive for their own poetic endeavors; the traditional openness of the roles of speaker and addressee was one of the most important. A number of recent contributions have provided excellent insights into the various characteristics of Hellenistic book epigrams which accompanied this transformation of the inscriptional to the bookish model of writing.<sup>36</sup> It is important to remember that some of these bookish and literary qualities are already visible in inscriptional epigram and that decoding and understanding an epigram was in many ways akin to decoding and understanding a written literary text.

One might now wonder why Callimachus was so interested in the act of reading and decoding epigrams. The following thoughts must of necessity remain somewhat speculative; nevertheless, they may help us understand the peculiar position of speaker and reader in some of Callimachus' epigrams. One question that may further our understanding of this Alexandrian playfulness is: in which form did Hellenistic writers, especially the Alexandrian scholar-poets, actually encounter epigrams? Of course, poetic inscriptions were used everywhere in the Greek-speaking world. Our Alexandrian poets knew numerous examples of honorary, funerary, or dedicatory epigrams from having seen such inscribed objects, and they could

<sup>36</sup> I name only some of the most important: Köhnken, in Dalfen/Petersmann/Schwarz, *Religio Graeco-Romana* 119–139; Bing, *A&A* 41 (1995) 115–131; Richard F. Thomas, “Melodious Tears: Sepulchral Epigram and Generic Mobility,” in M. A. Harder, R. F. Regtuit, G. C. Wakker (eds.), *Genre in Hellenistic Poetry* (Hellenistica Groning. 3 [1998]) 205–223; Bettenworth, in Bing/Bruss, *Brill's Companion* 69–93; Petrovic/Petrovic, *MA* 51 (2003) 179–208; Bruss, *Hidden Presences* 58–62; Tueller, *Look Who's Talking* 57–64. There are some healthy reminders against drawing too strict a division between “oral” and “literal” modes of composition and reception in Jon Steffen Bruss, “Lessons from Ceos: Written and Spoken Word in Callimachus,” in Harder/Regtuit/Wakker, *Callimachus II* 49–69.



presuppose similar knowledge in their readers. Epigrams were part of everyday culture, and familiarity with the forms of address used in them allowed the Alexandrians their rhetorical game of securing their readers' attention and sympathy by allusion to and evocation of shared knowledge.<sup>37</sup>

However, it seems improbable that the Alexandrians knew epigram *only* from actual inscriptions. Our ancient evidence is not sufficient to obtain certain knowledge in this question, yet it seems plausible that epigrams were also available in the form of written books.<sup>38</sup> Four different forms of such books can be envisaged:

(1) There can be no doubt that Hellenistic writers and readers found epigrams quoted in historical treatises. We have examples of such quotations in Herodotus and Thucydides, and we have information about other historians in the fifth and fourth centuries.<sup>39</sup> Local historians and geographers, who were so important for Alexandrian poetry,<sup>40</sup> probably contained numerous references to and examples of such local inscriptions.

(2) Recent contributions have pointed out that recurrent formulae in epigrams seem to suggest the existence of "copy-books" of exemplary epigrams which provided models for the

<sup>37</sup> For this interpretation of intertextuality as a rhetorical (and ultimately social) strategy, see Thomas A. Schmitz, "I Hate All Common Things": The Reader's Role in Callimachus' *Aetia* Prologue," *HSCP* 99 (1999) 151–178; Markus Asper, "Gruppen und Dichter: zu Programmatik und Adressatenbezug bei Kallimachos," *A&A* 47 (2001) 84–116.

<sup>38</sup> A good overview can be found in Andrej Petrovic, *Kommentar zu den simonideischen Versinschriften (Mnemosyne Suppl. 282 [2007])* 90–109. Andrej Petrovic is preparing a paper on the use of inscribed epigram by the orators, in which he comes to the conclusion that already in the fourth century B.C.E., the Attic orators used collections of epigrams. I am grateful that I could consult a pre-publication draft of this paper.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Carolyn Higbie, "Craterus and the Use of Inscriptions in Ancient Scholarship," *TAPA* 129 (1999) 43–83.

<sup>40</sup> See e.g. G. O. Hutchinson, "The *Aetia*: Callimachus' Poem of Knowledge," *ZPE* 145 (2003) 47–59.

composition of texts;<sup>41</sup> it seems reasonable to conjecture that such collections must have been available to scholars working at the Library.

(3) It is plausible that Alexandrian and pre-Alexandrian editions of the works of famous poets may have contained inscriptions ascribed to these authors. There is no scholarly consensus on this question, but I would accept the argument that the survival of so much archaic poetry under the name of specific poets points to the existence of early collections, going back to the poets themselves or their immediate social surroundings.<sup>42</sup> The case that has received the most intense scholarly debate is a collection of epigrams composed by (or attributed to) Simonides, conveniently, if somewhat misleadingly, labeled *Sylloge Simonidea*. Since the nineteenth century, scholars have argued for the existence of such a collection; this view has found a number of supporters in recent years, most notably Hartmut Erbse and David Sider.<sup>43</sup>

(4) Finally, we can confidently assume that collections of inscriptions were available to the Alexandrian scholars. This is an area where our evidence is inconclusive; we have hardly more than mere glimpses and assumptions. We know that the

<sup>41</sup> Tsagalis, *Inscribing Sorrow*, esp. 53–56.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Egert Pöhlmann, *Einführung in die Überlieferungsgeschichte und in die Textkritik der antiken Literatur I Altertum* (Darmstadt 1994) 13–16; Andrew Ford, “From Letters to Literature. Reading the ‘Song Culture’ of Classical Greece,” in Harvey Yunis (ed.), *Written Texts and the Rise of Literate Culture in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge 2003) 15–37, at 20–21.

<sup>43</sup> Hartmut Erbse, “Zu den Epigrammen des Simonides,” *RhM* 141 (1998) 213–230; David Sider, “*Sylloge Simonidea*,” in Bing/Bruss, *Brill’s Companion* 113–130; cf. Gutzwiller, *Poetic Garlands* 50–51; Massimo Magnani, “Callim. *Aet.* III fr. 64,9s. Pf. e la *Sylloge Simonidea*,” *ZPE* 150 (2007) 13–22, at 17–18. Petrovic, *Kommentar* 90–109, gives a thorough overview of the ancient evidence; he finds the assumption of a collected edition of Simonides’ poetry plausible. For an extremely skeptical view see Page, *FGE* pp.119–123; Luigi Bravi, *Gli epigrammi di Simonide e le vie della tradizione* (Rome 2006), also assumes that the *Sylloge* was not composed before the beginning of the Hellenistic era.

historian Craterus (whose identity cannot be ascertained with certainty; he may have been a contemporary of Alexander the Great or the son of this Craterus who lived until the middle of the third century B.C.E.) collected official inscriptions from Athens (*Συναγωγή τῶν ψηφισμάτων*).<sup>44</sup> Aristotle's various antiquarian interests seem to have inspired collections of inscriptional and archival material.<sup>45</sup> Most of our firm evidence for dedicated collections of epigrams postdates Callimachus: Philochorus (late fourth or early third century B.C.E.) collected Attic epigrams, Aristodamus collected the epigrams of Thebes. Polemo of Ilium, who was active during the first decades of the second century B.C.E., was nicknamed *στηλοκόπας* ("tablet-glutton"?) because of his interest in inscriptions; his collection *Περὶ τῶν κατὰ πόλεις ἐπιγραμμάτων* was organized according to geographic principles.<sup>46</sup>

If we accept that the Alexandrian scholar-poets were familiar with epigrams not only from actual inscriptions but also from such collections and editions, we gain a deeper understanding of what Callimachus is conveying in his own epigrams. As soon as epigrams are collected in books, they are decontextualized; we can be confident that such collections did not contain much information about the monument that the epigram adorned, about the "archaeological" and material context; far rather, they just contained the text of the inscription itself. Instead of walking from inscription to inscription and decoding the messages inscribed on funerary, dedicatory, or honorary monuments, readers of such collections would let their eyes wander from text to next. Every short poem would present a challenge to their interpretive skills, would require them to negotiate the positions of speaker and addressee, would necessitate reflection and decisions about the norms and conventions of epigram-

<sup>44</sup> Higbie, *TAPA* 129 (1999) 43–83.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Higbie, *TAPA* 129 (1999) 65–78; George Huxley, "Aristotle as Antiquary," *GRBS* 14 (1973) 271–286, at 280–283.

<sup>46</sup> For the evidence, see Petrovic, *Kommentar* 93–95.

matic communication as they were enacted in the text.

The voices speaking from such collected epigrams, then, were doubly disembodied: the original speech act of the inscription had already been an imaginary communication between an absent speaker and an absent addressee; its recording in a papyrus roll staged a fiction of a fictional act of communication. If we imagine Callimachus sitting in the Library and reading such collected epigrams, he was thus constantly trying to recontextualize these multilayered fictions; he had to extrapolate and imagine the context from which the words had been severed. We have seen a number of Callimachean epigrams such as *epp.* 11, 12, and 18, in which the real text of the papyrus and the imaginary text of the stone coexist and are superimposed in the act of reading. In these texts, then, Callimachus provided an artistic version of a reading experience which for him (and all other readers of such collected epigrams) must have been a familiar phenomenon: looking at words on the page, they constantly had to supply a mental image of the inscriptional context which these words presupposed. Every reader of collected epigrams was thus involved in a complex and stimulating “Ergänzungsspiel,” to borrow Bing’s felicitous phrase.

Thus I am convinced that the material presentation of texts in the Hellenistic era had a profound influence on the way that readers perceived these texts and that Hellenistic writers composed their own new texts as responses to this situation. In this assumption, I find myself in agreement with a suggestion which Martin Hose has recently made with regard to *P.Hibeh* 179 (third c. B.C.E.):<sup>47</sup> Hose argues that in their own texts, Hellenistic writers applied the principles of brevity and selection because this was the way in which they read older texts; poetic practice and reading experience thus coincided.

We can end our analysis of epigrammatic communication in

<sup>47</sup> Martin Hose, “‘Der Leser schneide dem Lied Länge ab.’ Vom Umgang mit Poesie im Hellenismus,” *Hermes* 136 (2008) 293–307.

Callimachus' epigrams by asking what consequences this new mode of reading and writing entailed for the epigram as text. As has already been seen (381 above), Hellenistic epigram (and Hellenistic literature in general) is characterized by the fact that the text itself becomes more and more self-sufficient: information which had previously been supplied by the material, ritual, or performative context had to be integrated into the text; readers had to be enabled to understand and appreciate this text in the absence of any outside markers. Callimachus' epigrammatic communication can, on the one hand, be understood as a counterbalance against this autonomy of the Hellenistic text: by referring to inscriptions and their conventions, it is a constant reminder to his readers that there is a world outside of the text and outside of the library. These references are so many holes drilled into the hermetic shell of the self-sufficient book. On the other hand, Callimachus' epigrams demonstrate the power of literature to evoke, conjure, or even create "reality." Like his *Hymns*, in which the ritual and the performance have become part of the text itself, his epigrams allow readers to remain securely inside of their study while imagining that they walk dusty Greek roads and look at monuments and their inscriptions. This appears to be the deeper sense of the "double perspective" of Callimachean epigram: it raises the question of what comes first, the text or the world it creates and describes, and thus challenges readers' convictions about the textuality of reality and the reality of textuality.

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