

Callimachus' Hesiodic Homer: the Callimachean *Hymn to Demeter* as a Synthesis of the
Homeric Hymn to Demeter and Hesiod's *Catalogue of Women*

This paper traces the influence of both Homer and Hesiod on the sixth hymn or *Hymn to Demeter* of Callimachus. Scholarship has firmly established the reliance of Callimachus' *Hymn to Demeter* on the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (Bing 1996: 30-33; Nagy 2011: 332-33; Stephens 2015: 267). Hopkinson (1984: 18-22, 43-44) points out the influence of both Homer and Hesiod on Callimachus but concentrates on the Homeric Epics and does not discuss the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*. Richardson (1974: 33-41, 168, 200, 208), in his commentary on the *Homeric Hymn*, cites parallels with the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women* and Callimachus' sixth hymn but only mentions Callimachus in passing and does not discuss the degree to which Homer and Hesiod influenced the Cyrenian poet. Robertson (1984: 396-97) and Hunter (2005: 256-57) analyze the influence of the Hesiodic account of Erysichthon on Callimachus' sixth hymn but omit the influence of the *Homeric Hymn* on Callimachus. This paper argues that Callimachus borrows the Homeric hymnic form but adapts Hesiod's account of Erysichthon for the content of the sixth hymn.

Bing (1996: 29) notes that although there were other Hellenistic hymns to Demeter, Callimachus' hymn stands out in that this poem is written in hexameters in imitation of the form of the *Homeric Hymn*. Bulloch (1977: 117, n. 27), however, observes that Callimachus uses the content of the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* to a very small extent in the sixth hymn. The plots of these two hymns are obviously very different: in the *Homeric Hymn* Demeter loses her daughter Kore to Hades (ll. 19ff.) and resides at Eleusis (ll. 96ff.), where she establishes the Eleusinian Mysteries (ll. 273-74). In Callimachus' hymn, on the other hand, Erysichthon violates

Demeter's grove and is punished by the goddess with perpetual hunger (ll. 66ff.). Instead of rewriting the *Homeric Hymn*, Callimachus adapts Hesiod's account of Erysichthon from the *Catalogue of Women* for his own hymn. Callimachus thus principally relies on Hesiod's epic poetry rather than on the *Homeric Hymn* for the content of the sixth hymn, although the Hellenistic poet still alters details of the Hesiodic account. Callimachus, for example, calls Erysichthon a "youth" (τέκνον, l. 46), while in Hesiod this same character is older and has a daughter Mestra (Fragments 43a-b; Robertson 1984: 396). While the extant Hesiodic fragments do not explain why Erysichthon is afflicted with hunger, Callimachus attributes this punishment to attacking Demeter's grove. Callimachus also situates his version in Dotium in Thessaly (l. 24), whereas Hesiod's account takes place in Athens (Fragment 43a; Hopkinson 1984: 18; Rutherford 2005: 101).

This paper argues that Callimachus, in typical Hellenistic fashion, composes a learned poetry which derives from Hesiod while also allowing for variation in the Erysichthon myth. While retaining the form of a Homeric Hymn, Callimachus' sixth hymn borrows and adapts Hesiod's erudite epic in order to create a unique literary piece that combines characteristics of these two Archaic predecessors to Callimachus. The result becomes a Homeric hymn of a Hesiodic story or a "Hesiodic Homer."

Bibliography

- Bing, Peter. "Callimachus and the *Hymn to Demeter*." *Syllecta Classica* 6 (1996): 29-42.
- Bulloch, Anthony. "Callimachus' Erysichthon, Homer and Apollonius Rhodius." *American Journal of Philology* 98 (1977): 97-123.
- Hopkinson, N. (Ed.). *Callimachus: Hymn to Demeter*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge

- University Press, 1984.
- Hunter, Richard. "The Hesiodic *Catalogue* and Hellenistic Poetry." In *The Hesiodic Catalogue of Women: Constructions and Reconstructions*." Ed. by Richard Hunter. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005. pp. 239-65.
- Most, Glenn W. (Ed.). *Hesiod: The Shield, Catalogue of Women, Other Fragments*. Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2018.
- Nagy, Gregory. "The Earliest Phases in the Reception of the *Homeric Hymns*." In *The Homeric Hymns: Interpretive Essays*. Ed. by Andrew Faulkner. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. pp. 280-333.
- Richardson, N.J. (Ed.). *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974.
- Robertson, Noel. "The Ritual Background of the Erysichthon Story." *The American Journal of Philology* 105.4 (1984): 369-408.
- Rutherford, Ian. "Mestra at Athens: Hesiod Fr. 43 and the Poetics of Panhellenism." In *The Hesiodic Catalogue of Women: Constructions and Reconstructions*." Ed. by Richard Hunter. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005. pp. 99-117.
- Stephens, Susan A. (Ed.). *Callimachus: The Hymns*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2015.