

It has long been noted by commentators, often only in passing, that Callimachus' poetry engages with earlier prose models, much as it does with poetic sources, as representatives of specific traditions, authors and themes to be endorsed, reconsidered, or refuted. The *Aetia* especially references diverse types of prose works, from historiography to philosophy, and accordingly can be read as a meditation on how the traditional didactic authority of poetry may coexist with knowledge imparted by philosophic and academic prose sources. This paper considers the interplay between concepts of poetic and prosaic authority in the *Aetia* on the small scale by analyzing two relevant sections of the work, the relatively understudied conversation between poet and Muses regarding Zancle and other Sicilian cities (Pf. 43) and selected portions of the much-discussed prologue (Pf. 1.17-19; 1.29-38). These passages, this paper argues, spotlight Callimachus' use of prose models both to reinvent the role of the didactic poet and to incorporate the matters of academia and Platonic literary theory into a traditional poetic framework.

In prefacing his question to the Muses regarding the sacrificial customs of Zancle, Callimachus provides a catalogue of Sicilian cities that in large part incorporates information from the prose works of Ephorus, Duris, Thucydides, and other historians. The poet demonstrates his investment in broadcasting his own knowledge of the area's past and his ability to communicate this knowledge to others through the repetition of such vocabulary as οἶδα (43.46, 43.50) φήσω (43.41), and ἔχω ἐνισπεῖν (43.52). The foregrounding of the poet's abilities, without the aid of divine inspiration, is a departure from the conventional Homeric and Hesiodic models. Callimachus instead re-imagines the authorial persona of the didactic poet as an Alexandrian master of interdisciplinarity and by so doing challenges traditional notions both about the hierarchical teacher-student relationship of the poet with the Muses and the role of non-poetic sources in conveying knowledge. Moreover, Cleo's reply to the poet's question about Zancle also has roots in a prose source, Thucydides' "Sicilian Archaeology" (6.4.5-6). The Muse's response, however, is not a basic versification of Thucydides, but a modification of the historian's chronicle in terms of both language and content that adapts a standard historiographical account to a poetic context. Thus the Muse herself, just like the poet, appropriates a prose author's product and makes it her own.

The second half of the paper considers Callimachus' interpretation of the relationship between the didactic poet and the Muses in terms of Platonic literary theory as expressed by allusions to *Ion* 533c-535a and *Phaedrus* 259a-d in the prologue. As Richard Hunter has observed, Callimachus' linguistic allusions to the *Ion* challenge Socrates' view that divine inspiration is of greater importance than artistry for successful poetic composition (1989:1-2; compare Depew 1992: 326-7 and Acosta-Hughes 2002: 285-89). On the other hand, the Socratic *aetion* of the cicada, to which Callimachus refers at 1.29-36, implicitly reasserts the necessity, if not primacy, of the Muses' cooperation in artistic endeavors. Yet rather than effecting a dramatized tension between the value of the poet and that of the Muses, these two allusions of contrasting substance are united by the poet to express Callimachus' vision of the more collaborative association of the educated poet with the divine that is manifested in the dialogue concerning the Sicilian cities.