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# CALLIMACHUS REVISITED

## NEW PERSPECTIVES IN CALLIMACHEAN SCHOLARSHIP

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# NEW BORDERS OF FICTION? CALLIMACHAEAN AETIOLOGY AS A NARRATIVE DEVICE IN OVID'S *METAMORPHOSES*

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## 1. Introduction: Callimachus and Ovid as Aetiological Writers

Callimachus' *Aitia* represent something new and strikingly different in literary history. New is the idea of composing an elegiac poem consisting exclusively of aetiological stories. New is also the selection of the individual mythological narratives presented within the *Aitia*. Callimachus' literary invention turned out to have an enormous and far reaching impact on both the history of literature and the history of literary criticism. The ever-enlightening *Shadow of Callimachus* (Hunter 2006) was of key importance for the poets of the Hellenistic age, but also for the literary transformation process of Roman literature in the Augustan and the imperial age. Roman poets like Catullus, Propertius and Ovid, to mention a few, drew inspiration from the Hellenistic period, from Callimachus and his *Aitia*.

When Callimachus composed the *Aitia,* thereby founding a seminal literary genre, he not only initiated a different form of writing fiction, but he also created an entirely new poetic way of looking at the world with all of its intellectual, anthropological, and historical dimensions. He built, as Annette Harder has stated, a kind of "aitiological world history".[1] Perhaps no other author of ancient times has followed the Callimachean path so closely as the Augustan poet Ovid. In both of his major works, the *Fasti* and the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid undertook to recreate a poetic world history inspired by the myth-aetiological tradition of Greek and Roman culture, a world which was both similar to, but also different from Callimachus. The *Fasti* closely follows Callimachus' model of aetiological poetry in elegiac couplets. The *Metamorphoses*, on the other hand, is not only indebted to Callimachus, but also to a tradition of hexametric *metamorphosis*-poetry exemplified in works such as Nicander's *Heteroioumena*. And while Callimachean aetiology displays a significant amount of aetiologies connected to cult and religion, Nicander's *Heteroioumena*

1. Harder (2010: 97).

and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* are characterized by a heightened interest in nature, in nature itself *and* in the anthropological dimension of nature, notably depicted in the idea that nature in some way mirrors human behavior.[2] Another general observation needs to be mentioned here. While the Greek poet Callimachus sought the extraordinary, the remote and the far-fetched in his aetiological stories, Roman poets focused mainly on the city of Rome and its established and prominent cults.[3] In the 4th book of his *Elegies* Propertius organized his 'Roman' aetiologies according to aspects of space. In his *Fasti* Ovid did so according to the calendric principle of time. Given the use of aetiological thinking, it is not surprising that Ovid is most 'Callimachean' at the beginning and at the end of his poem *Metamorphoses* — in the opening book 1 and in the final books 14 and 15. Here the poet sets foot in his contemporary time or, in other words, he enters the realities of the Augustan age.[4]

In the following I would like to explore the relationship between Callimachus and Ovid further and more deeply. I will focus on the aspect of fiction itself and surmise how both poets determine and thematize the boundaries of fiction in their aetiological stories, with emphasis on the *Aitia* and the *Metamorphoses*.[5] This seems especially worthwhile, since very few writers have explored these boundaries as deeply as Callimachus and Ovid did:

> "In his *Aitia* Callimachus gives a great deal of attention to the presentation of the stories. This results in a refined narrative technique of a highly 'self-conscious' character, in the sense that much attention is given to the process of storytelling and the activities of the narrator as well as to the transmission

2. Loehr (1996: 56). For an anthropological interpretation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* cf. Schmidt (1991): "Die poetische Leistung Ovids besteht in dieser Transformation der aitiologischen Tradition. Es ist eine Transformation durch Universalisierung (Welt / Menschheit), Generalisierung (der Mensch / Psychologie als anthropologische Hermeneutik), Humanisierung (Anthropomorphisierung der Welt auf menschliche Bedeutung hin) sowie Totalisierung und Vertiefung des Begründungsanspruchs durch Verschiebung von vorrangiger Erklärung der Faktizität partikulärer Ausnahmen zu wesentlichem Verstehen des Menschen, wie er sich im Spiegel der Welt deuten läßt" (74).

3. For the Callimachean preference of the extraordinary and remote cf. e.g. Asper (2004: 28), on Ovid's *Fasti* in comparison to Callimachus: Loehr (1996: 112). Cf. also Schmidt (1991: 72-73).

4. This paper avoids, however, a generalizing on 'Callimachean' and 'anti-Callimachean' marks in Ovid's poetry, not least because Ovid seems to be very Callimachean in passages which look 'anti-Callimachean' at first sight; cf. also Barchiesi (2011: 529-530). It also avoids the category of 'new and old' for the poetic self-understanding of the Hellenistic poets, cf. Hunter (2006: 3-5). On aetiology and closure cf. Asper (2013).

5. Cf. in general Feeney (1991: 229-232); Myers (1994: 91-93); Waldner (2007: 216-220). – For the terminology of fiction I follow Schmid (2010: 21-22): "A novel is *fictional*, the world it portrays *fictive*", "Where the *fictive* is contrasted with the *real*, the opposite of the *fictional* is the *factual*" (italics by the author of this paper).

> and reception of knowledge. Callimachus creates an impression of authority, which forces his readers to discover and accept the 'truth' and relevance of the stories and helps to get his multi-layered messages across." (Harder)
>
> "Ovid perhaps exploited this paradox (i.e. on fiction in aitiological stories) beyond all earlier poets. Although one often reads that it is part of Ovid's poetic 'agenda' to point out the fictitious nature of mythology, we should rather understand that Ovid reveals 'a keen awareness of the suspension of disbelief and belief which constitutes fiction." (Myers)[6]

## 2. The Narrative Attractiveness of Aetiology

As a starting point, let us take a look at Marco Fantuzzi's definition of aetiology in *Brill's New Pauly*. It states:

> "Aetiology is the term given to an explanation, generally referring to a mythical past (aetiological myth), of the αἴτιον (aítion), i.e. of the origin, of some phenomenon affecting the present-day situation of the author and his public, whether it be an object, a city, a custom, or, as is frequently the case, a religious ritual."[7]

Here, as in similar definitions by Gerhard Binder and Fritz Graf, a key element of aetiology is time.[8] On a temporal axis, the difference between the past and the present is established. Often there is the notion of the past as being 'mythical' or *fictive* and of the present as being 'non-mythical' or *real*. The movement from past into present can be either explicit or implicit. In the latter case, it is up to the recipient to make the connection between past and present.[9] In some cases, when the text describes the *status nascendi* of a cult, a special version of aetiological storytelling occurs which Loehr defines as "futurische Einsetzung" and which is especially connected to the motive of *catasterismos* (*Verstirnung*).[10] In *The Invention of Past, Present and Future* Harder describes this kind of future aetiology with the example of the *Coma Berenikes* in Callimachus' *Aitia*:

> "The readers of the *Aitia*, particularly those who have read the whole work, may have realized that after all the stories about present rituals or objects

6. Harder (2012: 1.51-52); Myers (1994: 19-20). On Ovid cf. also Solodow (1988: 64); Feeney (1991: 225); on Ovid and Callimachus cf. Wilkinson (1999); Hutchinson (1988: 329); Thomas (1993: 201); Barchiesi (2011: 517-518); Acosta-Hughes (2009); Acosta-Hughes & Stephens (2012: 257-269).
7. Fantuzzi (2006).
8. Binder (1988); Graf (2002: 115).
9. Asper (2004: 30).
10. Loehr (1996: 48); Graf (2002: 116).

> explained by events from the past they were now witnessing the emergence of a new story which would become the past for future generations […]"[11]

Most aetiological objects — such as cults, rituals, statues, etc. — can be found balanced on the boundary between the past and the present. 'Presence' as a category of time has been used so far with regard to the time of the author of a text. This is, for example, the case in the *Coma Berenikes* which tells a story in which the time of the narrated event and the time of the author are more or less identical. There is, however, also the possibility of a relative chronology *within* a narrative itself. This is especially prevalent in epic texts such as Apollonius' *Argonautika*. To clarify this significant difference in perspective between Apollonius and Callimachus more precisely, Köhnken has used the terms *Rückgriff* and *Vorgriff*:

> "Bei Kallimachos finden merkwürdige Einrichtungen, Kulte und Gebräuche der zeitgenössischen Gegenwart durch den *Rückgriff* auf eine mythische Vergangenheit ihre Erklärung, bei Apollonios werden in der Regel Details der Argonautenerzählung im *Vorgriff* und Ausblick auf die zukünftige Entwicklung zum Ursprung ständiger Einrichtungen erklärt. Die Aitiologie des Kallimachos geht aus von der Frage *wie kommt es, daß* […], die des Apollonius läuft zu auf die Fragestellung *so kam es, daß* […]."[12]

The very fact that poets like Callimachus experiment in moving aetiological objects toward new boundaries like the border between the present and the future (from the standpoint of text production) in works such as the *Coma Berenikes* show a heightened awareness of and interest in the special character these objects have.

The general narrative attractiveness of aetiological objects can partly be described as a result of the particular properties they carry as 'border objects'. Regarding writers such as Callimachus and Ovid who have repeatedly been characterized as 'border crossing poets' (*Grenzgänger*) the interest in such objects does not come as a surprise.[13] Not only do

11. Harder (2003: 303).

12. Köhnken (2006: 110). On *aitia* in epic poetry cf. Harder (2012: 1.32-34); on the Aeneid cf. Binder (1988: *passim* and esp. 261): "Im Überschreiten der zeitlichen Ebene der Erzählung durch Aitiologien eröffnet der Erzähler dem Hörer/Leser des Epos mehrere Perspektiven: Aus der Sicht der epischen Handlung wird die historische Gegenwart (= Gegenwart des Dichters/Publikums) zur Zukunft; aus der Sicht der Gegenwart (des Dichters/Publikums) wird die Zeitebene der epischen Erzählung zur (eigenen) Vergangenheit. In aitiologischen Erzählungen des Epos werden also gleichsam drei zeitliche Ebenen übereinander projiziert, eine Erzähltechnik, die Vergil nicht erfunden, in der Aeneis aber konsequent genutzt hat."

13. Cf. Albrecht (2000: 305) and Fränkel's interpretation of Ovidian figures as being characterized by a "wavering identity", with Schmidt (1991: 48-55).

such objects stand between the present and past or between the present and future, but they also imply other dimensions of fundamental oppositions such as the local versus the universal, the peripheral versus the central, the known versus the unknown, the extraordinary versus the normal. This list gets even longer when one includes the poetic practices and the social dimensions of literary texts from the Hellenistic and the Augustan age. There is, for example, an opposition between the scientific and the mythical, the highly educated and the less learned (in terms of an implied or real audience), between legitimation and de-legitimation in terms of possible functions of aetiological stories, an opposition between pretext/hypotext and present text/hypertext in intertextual constellations, or, as in case of the Roman appropriation of Greek literature, the opposition between two literary traditions which are distinct and yet interwoven at the same time.[14] All of these possible oppositions are, in one way or the other, closely intertwined with the universal problem of *fact* and *fiction*.[15] This is in particular the case with regard to the opposition between past and present, because it is often the mythic past which is judged as *fictive* while the aetiological object itself in its given or felt presence is regarded as *real*. This explains why aetiological objects tend to be stable and unchanging, while the stories which explain the origins and causes are rather fluid and changeable.[16] Finally, the way we define the fictional status of an aetiological story and its aetiological objects has consequences as to how we define the literary character of a text as a whole, on an axis between *fictional* and *factual narrative*.[17]

Regarding a theory of fiction, it turns out to be quite a tricky task to locate the exact position of aetiological objects between *fact* and *fiction*. Since they reside on the boundary of fiction and reality, they combine properties which belong fundamentally to ontologically distinct worlds. In the first book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, we encounter the story of Apollo and Daphne (*Met*. 1.452-567). Here, the laurel which is a direct result of Daphne's metamorphic escape is both *real* and *fictive*. The

14. On the tension between a scientific and a mythical understanding in aetiological thinking cf. Myers 1994: 19; Fantuzzi & Hunter (2004: 50): "The aetiological mode of explanation suits the boundless curiosity of the scholar and the child — Callimachus' two most prominent modes of self-presentation — but it also offers a world which is 'invented' and then remains without change"; Sistakou (2009); Harder (2012: 27-30) on the relation of the *Aitia* to didactic poetry. On the contemporary audience of Callimachus cf. Harder (2010: 94-95 and 2012: 1.39-41); Stephens (2010).

15. On the aspect of intertextuality cf. for Callimachus e.g. Harder (2012: 1.49-51).

16. Loehr (1996: 25).

17. 'Fiktionales versus Faktuales Erzählen': cf. the Freiburg DFG Research Training Group 1767 *Faktuales und fiktionales Erzählen*.

laurel tree itself is a tangible, real object belonging to the realm of everyday life, while Daphne is a mythical figure and the process of her metamorphosis belongs exclusively to the fictive world of the *Metamorphoses*. In Ovid's time, the laurel was a symbol of the god Apollo and an emblem of the Augustan empire. This exemplifies a typical sliding transition from an aetiology of nature to a cultural aetiology (*Natur- und Kultaitiologie*).

Thomas Pavel coined the term "surrogate object" to define objects that 'migrate' from the real world into the textual world and are significantly modified by this migration process: "Surrogate objects are fictional counterparts of real objects in those fictional texts that substantially modify their descriptions".[18] In Pavel's model, these *surrogate objects* stand in a middle position between "native objects" and "immigrant objects". While *native objects* are exclusively at home in the fictive world of the text, such as gods and other divine powers, *immigrant objects* migrate from the real world to the textual world like the *surrogate objects*, but are only altered very little, or not at all. In the story of Apollo and Daphne, the god Apollo and the nymph Daphne are *native objects*, while the laurel, the aetiological result of the story, is more a *surrogate* than an *immigrant* object, because it carries an *aition* which is not connected to the actual plant found in the real world. Of course, literature has always been full of objects that combine properties from the real world in one way or the other; this applies for example to objects like cities, countries, figures, objects of daily use, etc. Aetiological objects, however, are of special interest to a theory of fiction, because the idea of aetiological thinking itself creates objects that are not incidentally, but rather fundamentally positioned at the borders of fiction. If one accepts this thesis of aetiological objects as eminent *fictive* objects, one might conclude that aetiological thinking and aetiological story writing, especially, open doors to *metafictional* or *metapoetic* reflections on the fictional status of poetic texts.

Two aspects of aetiology seem of special interest when *metapoetic* structures come into play. First, the problem of **unreliable narration** (*chapters 3 and 4*) and, secondly, the **framing of books or other textual unities** (*chapter 5*) by passages that carry some kind of message *about* the text and its positioning within a wider literary world of predecessors, fellow poets, and implied or real audiences.

18. Pavel (1986: 29); cf. Zipfel (2001: 97).

## 3. Aetiology and the Problem of Unreliability

It has already been observed that aetiological narratives are often connected to the notion of **unreliability**.[19] Since legitimation is one of the traditional key functions of aetiology, unreliability is of particular importance here due to its destabilization and undermining effect.[20] In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, for example, the first love story (*primus amor*, 1.452) introduces the reader to the god Apollo not only as a god who fails in the business of love, but also as a god who — despite his position as an Olympian oracular god of prophecy — proves to be unable to control his own future:

> *Phoebus amat visaeque cupit conubia Daphnes,*
> *quodque cupit sperat suaque illum oracula fallunt.* […]
>
> Phoebus caught sight of her, fell in love and longed to possess her.
> Wishes were hopes, for even his powers of prophecy failed him.
> (Met. 1.490-491, transl. by Raeburn 2004: 29-30)

Apollo does not appear here as a narrator of an aetiological story in the *Metamorphoses*. Nevertheless his failure is noteworthy and has an indirect, yet momentous effect on the aetiological storytelling in the *Metamorphoses*. Since Apollo is not only the god of oracle, but also, in a very Callimachean sense (cf. *Aitia* frg. 1.22 Harder), the inspiring divinity of poetry, the story of Apollo and Daphne may very well be read as a marker which gives the reader an idea about the possibly unreliable nature of the primary narrator himself, thereby providing direction on how to read the *Metamorphoses* as a whole. This seems to be even more relevant if one takes into account that the preceding story, also presented by the primary narrator, recounts the aetiological story of the origins of the Pythian Games as a result of Apollo's slaying of the Pythian dragon.[21]

19. Solodow (1988: 64): "The poet of the *Metamorphoses* never makes himself more evident than when he turns on his own narrative and criticizes it. Not only does he remind us again and again that *he* is telling the story; he also frequently hints that it is not altogether reliable, but instead is *merely* a story that *he* is telling. By wondering aloud about it, the poet calls into question the truth of mythology. At least he seems to deny its literal truth. And when he does this repeatedly he reinforces the implicit, unspoken assumption that literal truth is the only kind, as if there were no symbolic truths, and once one has cast doubt on whether a reported event took place it is robbed of the values traditionally ascribed to it. Such literalization is characteristic of Ovid." For ancient texts in the light of modern theories of unreliability one can think of Lucian's *Verae historiae* or Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, cf. Martinez & Scheffel (2009: 100); cf. also Kimmerle (2015); Morgan (2004: 497 and 508); Pausch (2010); Slater (2017: 444 s.v. *unreliable author*). On Booth's theory of unreliability and his concept of the "implied author" cf. below chapter 4.

20. On the legitimizing function of aetiology cf. e.g. Waldner (2014: 28). Cf. also note 75.

21. On the preceding embedded narrative of Jupiter telling the story of Lycaon (Ov. *Met.* 1. 211-239) cf. note 46.

There are various modes of generating unreliable narration in literary texts. One technique is the *embedding* or *framing* of subordinated narratives within a larger context, a literary technique which was fashionable among Hellenistic poets.[22] The reader is confronted with two (or more) narrative voices which offer different or even opposing views and evaluations of a given context. An example can be found in the eighth book of the *Metamorphoses*. The book concludes with three embedded (or framed) narratives, as part of the story of Theseus visiting the river god Achelous (*Met.* 8.547-884). All three narratives recount a metamorphosis, two of them are told by the host Achelous himself and one by a figure called Lelex, an aged and distinguished man and an old friend of Theseus. In terms of the disposition of the passage as a whole, it is clearly highly complex and noticeably 'Callimachean', carrying a wealth of intertextual references especially to Callimachus' *Hymn to Apollo* and to the *Hecale*.[23] An Ovidian invention of some irony seems to be the choice of the river-god Achelous as internal narrator, because he is introduced at the beginning using rather non-Callimachean metapoetic words such as 'swollen' river (*imbre tumens*, Ov. *Met.* 8.550). Stephen Hinds interprets this as "a self-referential comment" on the epic style of the passage which sounds, as some scholars have argued, almost 'Ennian'. According to Hind's interpretation, Ovid is here "de-Callimachizing Callimachus."[24] Perhaps it is no coincidence that this Callimachean passage stands almost exactly in the middle of the *Metamorphoses* which can easily be interpreted as a structural marker in line with the Callimachean passages at the beginning and at the end of the work.[25] Of special interest here is the middle of the entire passage in which Lelex recounts the story of Philemon and Baucis in an *embedded narrative* (*Met.* 8.547-884). At first sight Lelex's story seems to be of decent origin and solid reliability. His speech is the direct reply to a brief statement by the son of Ixion, Pirithous. Pirithous, as a *spretor deorum*, had discredited Achelous' previous story of the

22. Myers (1994: 20): "Ovid's frequent use of framed narratives, a feature indebted to Alexandrian techniques, is another indicator of this narrative self-reflexivity. Like the Alexandrian poets, Ovid uses scholarly aetiological and etymological detail to play with suggestions of veracity and credibility, while eschewing an authoritative epic posture." For voices and narrative instances in the *Metamorphoses* cf. in general Wheeler (1999: 185-193 and *passim*); Barchiesi (2006). On framed narratives in Hellenistic poetry cf. Goldhill (1991: 240 and *passim*).

23. Hollis (1970: *ad locum*); Hutchinson (1988: 345-352); Myers (1994: 90 with further bibliography).

24. Hinds (2006: 36); cf. Barchiesi (2006: 276-284) on "A River as Narrator", here esp. 277: "a most blatant negative symbol according to the poetics of Callimachus." On "Ennius as a post-Callimachean?" cf. Barchiesi (2011: 515-517).

25. Holzberg (2007: 79).

origin of two islands (Echinades, Perimele, *Met.* 8.577-610) by calling into question the power of the Olympian gods:

> *Amnis ab his tacuit, factum mirabile cunctos*
> *moverat; inridet credentes, utque deorum*
> *spretor erat mentisque ferox, Ixione natus:*
> *'ficta refers nimiumque putas, Acheloe, potentes*
> *esse deos' dixit, 'si dant adimuntque figuras.'* 615
> *obstipuere omnes nec talia dicta probarunt,*
> *ante omnesque Lelex animo maturus et aevo*
> *sic ait: 'inmensa est finemque potentia caeli*
> *non habet et quicquid superi voluere peractum est.* […]
>
> The river-god held his peace. His amazing story had moved
> the whole of the company. One poured scorn on their credulous wonder,
> Pirithoüs, a young tearaway, who had no use for the gods.
> 'Pure fiction!' he said. 'Acheloüs, you credit the gods with too much
> power, if you think they create and then alter the shapes in Nature.' 615
> All were aghast at these blasphemous words and voiced disapproval,
> especially Lelex, whose mind reflected his riper years.
> 'The power of heaven cannot be measured,' he answered firmly.
> 'lt knows no bounds. Whatever the gods decree is accomplished […]
> (Ov. Met. 8.611-619, transl. by Raeburn 2004: 323)

This seems to be the beginning of a reliable story and Lelex does everything to affirm his claims regarding the veracity of his tale: he believes in the power of the gods, he has been told the story by old men who have no reason to lie, and he has been in Phrygia and seen the trees into which Philemon and Baucis had been transformed with his own eyes (Ov. *Met.* 8.620-22: *tiliae contermina quercus* / *collibus est Phrygiis, medio circumdata muro.* / *ipse locum vidi*, cf. 722-723 *narravere senes; equidem pendentia vidi* / *serta super ramos*). Through this affirmation Lelex connects the reality outside of the story with the story itself in a manner typical for aetiological storytelling.[26] The conventional phrasing of the transition between the here and now of the aetiological object and the explanatory story of the past is depicted in the adverb *adhuc*, 'until now' (Ov. *Met.* 8.719-720 *ostendit adhuc Thyneius illic* / *incola de gemino vicinos corpore truncos*).[27] The local flavor and the rich detail of the story support the story's trustworthiness. However, if one looks at this embedded narrative more closely doubts arise as to whether this story and also the two other stories are told by a reliable narrator. The very fact

26. Cf. for the phrasing Waldner (2007: 219).

27. For aetiological formulas like *adhuc, nunc quoque, etc.* cf. Solodow (1988: 176 note 30); Loehr (1996: 35 and 134-136 with note 215). For the formula *quia, quod, etc.* cf. Loehr (1996: 82).

that Pirithous classifies Achelous' preceding story about the origin of the two islands as *ficta* (Ov. *Met*. 8.614) leaves the reader with an uneasy feeling and a general sense that there is the possibility of non-factuality in the story of Philemon and Baucis (and in the two related stories). The reader is confronted with two possible, but opposing views and evaluations of a given context: "Readers tend," as Feeney has put it, "to be either Lelex or Pirithous." The Lelex-passage has been interpreted in this metapoetic and disillusioning sense by Otis, Solodow, Feeney, Myers, and Waldner.[28] It is, however, as Feeney and Myers point out, not Ovid's agenda to destabilize and deconstruct what remains, even in an embedded story, but rather to make visible the (poetic) mechanisms in which aetiological storytelling works. Here, and in many other passages, Ovid gives us a glimpse into the poetic 'workshop of fiction'.

> "By splitting our response up into these two polarized alternatives he (i.e. Ovid) is making us realize that to swim successfully in the sea of the *Metamorphoses* we must be both Lelex and Pirithous. […] The double vision that comes from being both Lelex and Pirithous may indeed be seen as a necessary condition for reading any fictions." (Feeney)

> "Ovid here self-consciously uncovers the use of an *aition* as a stratagem for verification by reference to extend reality. He makes explicit the mechanisms by which narrative authenticates in fictions, by providing in the framed narrative a possible audience-response to his own stories." (Myers)[29]

Two other aspects need to be taken into consideration. First, though the key-word *ficta* belongs primarily to the voice of Pirithous in the Lelex and Pirithous episode (Ov. *Met*. 8.614), it can also be read as an 'atmospheric marker' for the entire passage in the sense of Genette (*Vorhalte, amorces*).[30] And secondly, what Feeney convincingly explains as "double vision … as a necessary condition for reading our fictions" can also be described as 'strategic ambiguity' which seems to be a key feature of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.[31]

The technique of using *embedded* or *framed narratives* is, however, not the only way through which texts can produce unreliability. Unreliability also occurs, for example, when a text offers a multiplicity of views, explanations, and evaluations. This narrative device — often called multiple explanations (*Mehrfacherklärungen*) — seems to have been highly popular among authors of the Hellenistic and the Augustan

28. Cf. Feeney (1991: 230); Myers (1994: 91-93); Waldner (2007: 219).

29. Feeney (1991: 230-231), with reference to Newsom (1988: 134-135); Myers (1994: 93), cf. also ibid. 19, and Waldner (2007: 217-218).

30. Genette (2010: 45); cf. also Barthes (1966: 7), who uses the term *germe*.

31. Cf. Bauer et al. (2010); Knape & Winkler (2015).

age.[32] Multiple explanations can, but do not have to be narrated by means of multiple narrative voices, as is the case when, for example, *embedded* or *internal narratives* are applied. Multiple explanations can also be presented using one and the same narrative voice. As an example, one might take a look at the three aetiological stories in the first book of the *Metamorphoses* which tell the story of the creation of humans (Ov. *Met.* 1: v. 76-88, 158-162, and 367-415).[33] All three stories belong to one and the same narrative voice, the primary narrator of the *Metamorphoses*, interrupted only by Jupiter telling the story of Lycaon (Ov. *Met.* 1.211-239).[34] There is some evidence that this technique of multiple explanations also dates back to Callimachus: the Milan *Diegesis* reports a triple explanation of the cult of the Diana Lucina and there was also a multiple explanation of the origins of the Charites.[35]

In addition to the techniques of embedded narrative and of multiple explanations, there is yet another way of generating unreliability. Often the narrative voices are characterized as unreliable not because of the content of their narration and aspects which might not be in accordance with other voices and views, but rather through their direct characterization. The literary tradition of aetiological storytelling has one particular kind of figure that invites the question of unreliability: aetiologies are often narrated in a dialogue configuration of question and answer.[36] The responsibility of the answer is given to a voice which has characteristics making them especially reliable with regard to the aetiological story being told. In the first two books of Callimachus' *Aitia*, the Muses take over this role of answering. In the story of Philemon and Baucis in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, it is the character's old age that makes the figure of Lelex a trustworthy senior informant. When we look at religious *aitia* ('Kult-Aitien') explaining the origins and institutions of cults, rituals, and other practices, statues of gods and goddesses are often used as narrators. Such speaking statues or objects were popular among Hellenistic poets

32. For Callimachus' use of direct speech to generate multiple perspectives cf. Harder (2012: 1.55).

33. Schmidt (1991: 35-36) reads this key passage in the light of his anthropological interpretation: "Die dreifache Variation der Wesensaussage über den Menschen in Entstehungsgeschichten präludiert der Vielfalt der Gestalten des Gedichts. […] Die Erschaffung des Menschen in ihrer dreifachen Variation, vom Sinn und Ziel der Kosmogonie an über den Ursprung aus Gigantenblut und Steinen, ist die dichterische Herstellung des Gegenstandes der Verwandlungen — das ist der Mensch — und des Themas der Dichtung — das ist der Mensch in der Mannigfaltigkeit seines Wesens und Schicksals, wie sie sich in den Gestalten der Verwandlungen vom Stein bis zum Gott spiegeln."

34. Loehr (1996: 168-170).

35. Loehr (1996: 194-198).

36. Cf. in general Harder (2012: 1.51-56).

in general. One only needs to think of their extensive use in the literary epigram, and it is likely that Callimachus deliberately played with elements deriving from different genres, as Annette Harder has argued.[37] In aetiological texts like Callimachus' *Aitia* the authoritative character of the divinity speaking to him- or herself has mostly been exploited for narrative purposes. Unreliability (or the possibility of unreliable narration) comes into play when a statue speaks not only in a limited, 'personal' perspective about its own (local) cult, but also when it extends the general and aetiological information it offers beyond its proper area of influence and control.[38] When this happens, one might suspect that the authoritative voice is being undermined or destabilized by an untrustworthy expansion of possible knowledge.

In a surviving fragment of the *Aitia* Callimachus applied this technique of speaking statues in an interplay of questions and answers. In this story, which may have been part of the third book, a statue of the Delian Apollo answers the question of an unidentified *interlocutor* (frg. 114 Harder).[39] Propertius, in his *Elegy* 4.2, transforms this motif when he gives voice to the statue of Vertumnus. In Rome, the statue of Vertumnus, the god of seasons, gardens, and fruit, had a prominent location in the city, thus fitting perfectly into the Propertian program of creating a 'nationalized' Roman aetiological world history.[40] Clearly this is a reference to the Callimachean model of Apollo speaking.[41] In Ovid examples of speaking statues are more prevalent in the *Fasti* than in the *Metamorphoses*.[42] Still, in the *Metamorphoses* the god Vertumnus appears again, noticeably in the last love story of the work in the 14th book (Ov. *Met.* 14.622-771). Here, the reader sees Vertumnus in the role of a lover which reminds us of the first love story of the *Metamorphoses* in which Apollo unsuccessfully desires Daphne.[43] Vertumnus has fallen in love with Pomona, but

37. Harder (1998; 2012: 2.894-895 with further parallels). On Hellenistic epigrams cf. also Tueller (2008); Männlein-Robert (2007a/b).

38. Cf. Waldner (2007: 223), and Barchiesi (1997). One could, tentatively, apply here Genette's term *paralepse*. Genette (2010: 126) uses *paralepsis* as part of his theory of focalization to describe situations in which a figure offers more information than it ought properly to have. This happens, for example, when an external focalization slides into internal focalization and the figure keeps speaking like an external voice.

39. The statue carries a bow and the Charites in his hands; cf. the commentary by Harder (2012: 2.892-906).

40. For literary and epigraphical evidence on the Roman cult of Vertumnus cf. Myers (1994: 117-118); Hutchinson (2006: 86-87); Waldner (2007: 22 note 78).

41. Myers (1994: 113-132, here 120); Loehr (1996: 82-84.198-206); Barchiesi (1997: 186-187).

42. Myers (1994: 120).

43. The last love story of the *Metamorphoses* ends somewhat more positive than the first one, as Holzberg (2007: 108) points out; cf. also Myers (1994: 125 and 114): "The

he cannot win her over. He disguises himself as an old (Italian) woman and gives her a warning by telling the story of Iphis and Anaxarete: Anaxarete does not respond to Iphis' love, Iphis hangs himself, and Anaxarete is turned into a stone (Ov. *Met.* 14.698-764). In the story Anaxarete is described as *dura* in the well known terminology of Roman love elegy.[44] Vertumnus affirms that his story is not fictive and that even in his time a statue of Anaxarete can be visited in Salamis in a temple of Venus (Ov. *Met.* 14.759-761 *neve ea ficta putes, dominae sub imagine signum / servat adhuc Salamis, Veneris quoque nomine templum / Prospicientis habet*). In the Ovidian version of Vertumnus, the god does not speak as a statue, but narrates an aetiological story revolving around another statue, the statue of Anaxarete. Although Vertumnus does not speak via a statue, the intertextual link to Propertius' *Elegy* 4.2 and through Propertius also to Callimachus' *Aitia*, enables the reader to think of the Ovidian Vertumnus "as both a statue and an aetiological internal narrator" (Myers).[45] As a result in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* Vertumnus appears as an aetiological storyteller of reduced and questionable reliability.[46] Again Ovid metapoetically opens a glimpse into the making of aetiologies and into his workshop of fiction.

In summary, one might identify three distinct, though partly interconnected means of generating unreliability in literary texts in which aetiologies are presented:

(1) embedded (or framed, internal) speech
(2) multiple explanations ('Mehrfacherklärungen'), within one and the same narrative voice or being split over multiple voices, by means such as embedding
(3) direct characterization of narrative voices

story of Vertumnus and Pomona not only inverts the amatory norms established by the first love story but contains a number of parallels and echoes of this story that suggest it performs a similarly programmatic function in highlighting themes that are important in the remainder of the poem: Italian and Roman religious and topographical *aetia*."

44. Myers (1994: 123). For a gendered reading cf. Wheeler (1999: 57-58).

45. Myers (1994: 120, ibid. 119) on the intertextual links to Propertius in Ovid's version. On the etymological wordplays in the elegy of Propertius with its multiple explanations cf. Loehr (1996: 206), and Barchiesi (1997: 187).

46. Similar to the Vertumnus-episode is the Lycaon-episode in the first book of the *Metamorphoses* (Ov. *Met.* 1. 211-239). The story is narrated by Jupiter as internal narrator. When he finishes, the applause is described as being somehow divided among the public: *Dicta Iovis pars voce probant stimulosque frementi / adiciunt, alii partes adsensibus inplent* (1.244-245). Cf. Anderson (1997: 175 *ad locum*): "Ovid analyzes the response of Jupiter's audience. This council, like the Roman senate in so much of Tacitus' *Annales*, consists of yes-men and who merely explore the possibilities of obsequiousness. *frementi*: not a dignified word to describe the tone and manner of Jupiter's speech."

So far it has been argued that aetiological story-telling is of special interest for a theory of fiction due to the particular position of aetiological objects on the boundary of fiction between the *here and now* of the object and the historicizing story explaining its causes and origins. We have also seen that the poets of the Hellenistic and Augustan age such as Callimachus and Ovid displayed a heightened interest in aetiology as a narrative device for metapoetic reflections on the fictional status of their texts. We also argued that unreliable narration is one aspect of aetiological storytelling which enables the poet to cause the reader to reflect upon the fictional status of the text by breaking the illusion of a concordant or unified world view. The popularity of embedded narratives with its potential of generating unreliability is in line with the Hellenistic preference for intertextuality. Both techniques — which are distinct in principle, but often intertwine — are similar in their effect of creating through a multiplicity of voices and viewpoints a highly complex and dense textual universe.[47]

## 4. Modern Narrative Theories on Unreliability

Modern theories of narrative unreliability were initiated by Wayne Booth's monograph *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, first published in 1961. Booth takes his starting point from the difference between, "self-conscious narrators, […] aware of themselves as writers" (e.g. *Tristram Shandy* or *Dr. Faustus*) and "narrators […] who rarely if ever discuss their writing chores" (e.g. *Huckleberry Finn*).[48] Apart from the question of whether the narrator is part of the story (*homodiegetic*) or not (*heterodiegetic*), there is always a "degree and kind of distance that separates them from the author, the reader, and the other characters of the story".[49] Booth explores the aspect of distance further and argues that a narrator is *reliable* when and in so far as he/she narrates in compliance with the norms of the work as a whole. If he/she deviates from this norm, modes of unreliability evolve. The effect of such deviation is a kind of dramatic irony, "and a secret communion occurs between the latter (*i.e. the implied author*) and the reader behind the narrator's back."[50] Since Booth relates the narrator to the implied author of the text, his line of argumentation is based upon an inner-textual understanding. His theory has initiated a wide-ranging

47. For intertextual voices in Callimachus cf. e.g. Cusset (2011).
48. Booth (1983: 155).
49. Booth (1983: 155).
50. Shen (2013: [4]).

and ongoing discussion on the mechanisms of literary unreliability. Today and especially in postmodern discourses unreliability is recognized as a fundamental category of narrative.[51]

One of the changes since Booth's *Rhetoric of Fiction* has been a shift away from the implied author as point of reference to the real reader of the text, thus replacing the original inner-textual model with an extra-textual one.[52] In complex texts with embedded narratives, the norm giving reference can then be located both outside the text in the reader's world or within the text among the inner-textual recipients of the embedded narrative. This shift to the real audience is not without hazards for historical philology, yet offers ways of interpretation especially with regard to intertextuality. A modification has been proposed by Phelan and Martin who established three axes: an axis of *facts*, an axis of *value*, and an axis of *knowledge*. This taxonomy results in a distinction of six types of unreliability falling into two major groups. Dan Shen uses this approach for a basic definition of unreliability:

> "In its narratological sense, unreliability is a feature of narratorial discourse. If a narrator misreports, -interprets or -evaluates, or if she/he underreports, -interprets or -evaluates, this narrator is unreliable or untrustworthy."[53]

How would this differentiation apply to a text like the Vertumnus-episode in the 14th book of the *Metamorphoses*? Certainly, one could argue that Vertumnus uses or rather abuses the aetiological story of Iphis and Anaxarete for the purpose of courtship. Thus, on the axis of value, one might assume that he *misevaluates* the story, because the emphasis is put on his personal moral of the metamorphosis ('don't be a *dura puella*!').[54] On the other hand, given the practices of Hellenistic intertextuality, he fully complies with what Ovid advises to lovers in his *Amores*. On the axis of

51. On the concept of unreliability and its various modifications since Booth's *The Rhetoric of Fiction* cf. Nünning (1997; 1998); Kindt (2008: 28-67); Shen (2013); Kimmerle (2015: 117-130) on Lucan's *Bellum civile*; Margolin (2015); Nünning (2015b); Sternberg & Yacobi (2015). Schmid has introduced the term "abstract reader" to avoid the moral aspect coming along with Booth's model of the "implied reader", cf. Schmid (1973; 2010: 36-51, here esp. 40-42). A reaction to Schmid is offered by Berendsen (1980). For a criticism of both the concept of implied and the abstract author cf. Bal (1981: 208-209).

52. For this approach cf. Nünning (1997).

53. Shen (2013: [5-6]), with reference to Phelan & Martin (1999) and Phelan (2005: 34-37. 49-53); cf. Phelan & Martin (1999: 94): "narrators may deviate from the implied author's view in their roles as reporters, as evaluators, and as readers or interpreters. […] the metaphor of axes of unreliability helps to differentiate among these kinds: unreliable reporting belongs to the axis of facts/events; unreliable evaluating occurs along the axis of ethics/evaluation; and unreliable reading occurs along the axis of knowledge/perception."

54. Myers (1994: 123): "Vertumnus underlines the moral lesson of this metamorphosis, a maneuver unusual in the rest of the *Metamorphoses*."

knowledge, one could argue that the Ovidian Vertumnus does not *under-report*, but in contrast rather *over-reports*. In the story of Anaxarete and her image at the temple of *Venus Prospiciens* at Salamis he displays a kind of far-reaching knowledge which seems to be beyond his natural sphere. In the Lelex-episode in the eighth book of the *Metamorphoses* it is again the axis of evaluation that is of importance. Much like the god Vertumnus (who uses his story in the attempt to win love) the aged Lelex introduces his story of Philemon and Baucis for the purpose of refuting Pirithous' criticism of the gods. The possibility that Lelex *misevaluates* his story arises less from the story itself, but rather from the story's context and its intratextual references to the two other stories within the same passage, which are told by the swollen river god Achelous (Ov. *Met*. 8.550). The characterization of Achelous as 'swollen' has been interpreted as an intertextual reference to the metaphorical categories of Callimachean poetics, holding a prominent position in the middle of the *Metamorphoses*. Since the entire passage transports a plethora of intra- and intertextual references which are decoded and supplemented in the reader-response-activities, the Lelex-episode rather displays a mode of *over-reporting* than of *under-reporting*.

Intertextuality seems to be of central importance for an understanding of the narrative mechanisms of unreliability in ancient texts. Hansen has introduced a model of unreliability which lends itself well for this purpose. His model contains a taxonomy of four categories:

(1) *Intranarrational*: "[…] designates the 'classical' definition — that is unreliability established and supported by a large stock of discursive markers."
(2) *Internarrational*: "[…] designates the situation in which a narrator's version of incidents is contrasted by another or several other narrators' versions. […] In opposition to the *intranarrational* version, *internarrational* unreliability is not necessarily marked discursively in the unreliable narrator's discourse, but comes into being by the framing of other voices and a non-correspondence with what is taking form as the factual story on their behalf […]."
(3) *Intertextual*: is "based on manifest character types that, on behalf of their former existence, in their configuration or paratextual mentioning […] already direct the reader's attention towards their reliability." (Examples provided by Hansen are typical figures as Naïfs and Clowns).
(4) *Extratextual*: "designates unreliability depending on the reader's direct implementation of own values or knowledge in the textual world. […] this category is the most ambiguous."[55]

55. Hansen (2007: 241-243).

The value of this model is that it does not center on the typical textual markers of unreliability as such (1: *intranarrational*). Instead it lays emphasis on the communication between different voices, be they part of one and the same text (2: *internarrational*) or generated in part by the reader's knowledge which is positioned outside of the text itself (4: *extratextual*).[56] What Hansen classifies as *internarrational* describes unreliability as it occurs in the aforementioned passages of Vertumnus and Lelex, because in both instances unreliability is, at least partly, the outcome of *framing* (*embedding*) of voices or the confrontation of accumulated *framed voices*. The third and especially the fourth category of *extratextual unreliability* is suitable for describing the mechanisms of intertextuality as in case of the complex double reference to Propertius and Callimachus in Ovid's Vertumnus-episode.

Hansen also discusses an approach by Dorrit Cohn that offers a distinction between *unreliable* and *discordant narration*.[57] Discordance is used here to determine unreliability when it occurs not on an axis of facts, but rather on an axis of ideology creating a distance between the author and the narrator of a text.

> "It suggests the reader's sense that the *author* intends his or her work to be understood differently from the way the *narrator* understands it: in a way that can only be discovered by reading the work against the grain of the narrator's discourse, providing it with a meaning that, though not explicitly spelled out, is silently signaled to the reader behind the narrator's back."[58]

Hansen points to the historical axis of interpretation and as an example he uses the interpretation of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and the ideological problem of colonialism which it may or may not be criticizing. In the example of the Ovidian Vertumnus-episode one could argue that Ovid, through an intertextual reworking of Propertius, evokes the possibility of a discordant unreliability in the referred text: having read Ovid's *Metamorphoses* a reader may be able to detect and decode silent signals of discordance in Propertius' *Elegy* 4.2. At the same time Ovid opens a metapoetic view of his own poetry as well as of poetical production in general. This way of interpretation falls in line with observations that Ovid uses the Vertumnus-episode explicitly to overwrite Propertius' decisively Roman approach in order to enact a de-centering by widening the view to the Greco-Roman world and its literary tradition as a whole.[59]

56. The third category (*intertextual unreliability*) suits, for example, for typical figures such as in Comedy and the Novel.

57. Hansen (2007: 243); cf. also Fludernik (2005) and Cohn (2000).

58. Cohn (2000: 307).

59. A mode of de-centering and overwriting ("Überschreibung", Walde 2000) is very Ovidian and can be found in different parts of his oeuvre, notably in the *Heroides* and his

Booth's theory of unreliability in the *Rhetoric of Fiction* (Booth 1983) and the ongoing development of this approach is a promising narratological tool for the interpretation of literary aetiology and its potential to metapoetically decode and explicate the mechanisms of fiction. The discussed examples of aetiological storytelling that carry signals of unreliability and offer metapoetic readings, display a tendency of *over-reporting* rather than of *under-reporting*. The reason for this finding is evidently the high degree of intertextuality and the preference for embedded narratives which is typical for the literary production of the Hellenistic and the Augustan age. Since modern theories of unreliability build upon modern texts (mainly the modern novel) this says much about the special features of this époque. It might also be seen as an affirmation that ancient texts can contribute to overall theory building in a diachronic narratology.

Does Ovid, in the end, fall victim to his own playfulness with the borders of fiction? Does his voice as the implied author of the *Metamorphoses* become unreliable itself? In the first instance unreliability bears a negative tone that asks for a counterbalance of some kind (though this is not a granted aesthetic principle). Critics have, however, also taken a more positive approach to it. Solodow understands unreliable narration in Ovid as part of poetic *self-doubt* and *self-criticism*:

> "The poet of the *Metamorphoses* never makes himself more evident than when he turns on his own narrative and criticizes it. Not only does he remind us again and again that *he* is telling the story; he also frequently hints that it is not altogether reliable, but instead is *merely* a story that *he* is telling. By wondering aloud about it, the poet calls into question the truth of mythology."[60]

This fits well with Mieke Bal's general observation that unreliability is connected to self-analysis.[61] Furthermore, narratological model building on unreliability in the wake of Booths' *Rhetoric of Fiction* has also emphasized possible *bonding effects* of unreliable narration in contrast to its distancing and estranging effects. Phelan proposes six sub-types of such a *bonding unreliability*: "literally unreliable but metaphorically reliable", "playful comparison between implied author and narrator", "naïve defamiliarization", "sincere but misguided self-deprecation", "partial progress toward the norm", and "bonding through optimistic

exile poetry where he gives a voice to those who are unheard otherwise. Another theoretical approach to describe the shifting of the *borders of fiction* into the textual world itself by giving attention to the (unfulfilled) wishes, dreams and fears of figures offers the *Possible Worlds Theory* (cf. e.g. Kirstein 2015).

60. Solodow (1988: 64).

61. Bal (2009: 131), with particular regard to autobiographical genres.

comparison."[62] Especially aspects like "playful comparison" or "bonding through optimistic comparison" seem to be promising categories for Ovid's intertextual poetry.

## 5. Conclusion: Ovid as a Callimachean poet and the Narrativization of Aetiology

It has been noted that Ovid is most 'Callimachean' in book one and then again in the 'Roman' books 14 and 15, possibly underlined by the Callimachean Achelous-passage in the middle of the *Metamorphoses* (book 8, *s. above*). In the first book, we find the aetiological story of the Pythian games (Ov. *Met.* 1.416-451, esp. 445-451), a theme which resembles the *Victoria Berenices* (frg. 54-60j Harder) at the beginning of the third book of Callimachus' *Aitia*. Since books three and four of the *Aitia* are normally regarded as a unit equal to books one and two, there is an intertextuality of patterns between the beginning of the *Metamorphoses* with the Pythian games and the beginning of the second half of the *Aitia* with the Nemean games.[63] Furthermore, the episode of Apollo's victory over the Pythian dragon is placed in an eminent position within the first book, namely between the early history of the world from cosmogony to flood (the *Urgeschichte*, Ov. *Met.* 1.5-415) and the first love story, the story of Apollo and Daphne with the aetiology of the laurel. This episode can in many ways be regarded as a key passage for the understanding of the *Metamorphoses* (Ov. *Met.* 1.452-567). At the end of the *Metamorphoses* Callimachean influence is even more prevalent when Ovid finally reaches Rome and his own times at the end of his 'world history'. Alessandro Barchiesi has remarked that the *Metamorphoses* span, on an axis of time, "from the creation of the world to its own conception."[64] Ovid's approach of Rome has both a temporal and spatial dimension, as is evident in the Glaucus-episode (Ov. *Met.* 14.1-74) in which Italian borders are reached for the first time in the narrative. Here we find, among others, the extended Vertumnus-episode with the aetiological story of Iphis and Anaxarete in book 14 (Ov. *Met.* 14.622-761) and the Aesculapius-episode in book 15 (Ov. *Met.* 15.622-744). The story of the origins of the Aesculapius cult in Rome stands out in the *Metamorphoses*, because it is the only aition

62. Phelan (2007: 226-232); cf. Phelan & Rabinowitz in Herman et al. (2012: 33-37); Nünning (2015b: 10; 2015c: 102).

63. For Callimachus cf. Harder (2012: 2.384-388 and 495 on frg. 60c). On the relation between Ovid and Callimachus cf. Loehr (1996: 47. 139); Barchiesi (2011: 533).

64. Barchiesi (1997: 75); cf. Holzberg (2007: 113).

of a cult (*Kult-Aition*) which is introduced as such in the typical Callimachean manner of question and answer.[65] In addition, the framing of books 3 and 4 of Callimachus' *Aitia* with the connecting theme of the *Victoria* and *Coma Berenikes* may have served as another model for Ovid's own composition, especially since with Berenike a contemporary subject matter is given.[66] Richard Thomas has shown that in his *Georgics* Vergil imitated these structural patterns in a similar way.[67]

The borders of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* seem to be Callimachean in at least two ways. First, they display aetiological stories that resemble Callimachus' poetry in general. And secondly, they mirror, on the level of the macro-structure and patterning, the principle of framing the work through related elements. The thesis of a Callimachean framing receives even more support from an analysis of the proem which introduces the work as a Callimachean poem or at least a poem that engages in a dialogue with Callimachean poetics by employing the ambiguous verb *deducere* (Ov. *Met.* 14.3-4 *primaque ab origine mundi* / *ad mea perpetuum deducite tempora carmen*).[68] To sum up, there is a multiplicity of Callimachean framing and patterning in the introductory and concluding parts of the *Metamorphoses*.

It is evident that Ovid used a multi-layered Callimachean framework in his *Metamorphoses*. That he does so, *inter alia*, by placing aetiological stories at the borders of his work, seems especially appropriate. Hellenistic poets display a general preference to place meta-poetic reflections at the borders of their books, and what narrative device could serve this purpose better than aetiological stories with their heightened potential of exploring the boundaries of fiction? Another attractive aspect of aetiologies arises from the possibility of introducing Greek themes. It is striking that at the moment when Ovid touches upon Roman grounds he maintains his narration of Greek stories.[69] Again the Vertumnus-episode is a great example. Ovid changes the Propertian story with its emphasis on Rome by forcing Vertumnus to tell a story which takes place in Greece and explains the origins of a Greek cult. At the very moment when the disposition of his world history from chaos to Augustus seems to require a *zoom-in* on Rome, Ovid applies a decisive *zoom-out*, both in time and in place.[70]

65. Loehr (1996: 138).

66. On the structure of the *Aitia* cf. Asper (2004: 28); Fantuzzi & Hunter (2004: 44-49, here 45); Harder (2010: 93. 96-97); Harder (2012: 1.2-12, here 11).

67. Thomas (1983); cf. Thomas (1993: 205-206).

68. Harder (2003: 305-306). On the many discussions of the proem cf. e.g. Wheeler (1999: 8-30).

69. For statistics which show the preponderance of Greek themes in comparison to Roman themes cf. Feeney (1991: 208 note 74); Myers (1994: 126).

70. Myers (1994: 125-126): "Programmatically the story [*i.e. of Vertumnus*] prepares for Ovid's predominantly Callimachean treatment of Roman themes in the final books of

In the systematics of Pavel, the Ovidian Vertumnus appears as a narrative object that is decisively more *surrogate* than the Propertian version. By applying modes of unreliability in the story of Vertumnus and thus metapoetically making the mechanisms of fiction explicit, Ovid de-centralizes Rome and positions it in a wider Graeco-Roman framework, thus in some way mirroring Callimachus' own modes of de-centering Greece.[71] The aetiological stories in the last two books of the *Metamorphoses* are part of what seems to be an overall destabilizing of imperial Rome, and once again Callimachus appears as the "code" of discussion (Richard Hunter) through which Romans define their attitude toward Roman values.[72] Their manipulative potential and the play of fiction with the past, present, and future, and also with the center and periphery address Roman self-perception at its very core.[73] Past and present, old and new played an important role in the Augustan discourse, across a variety of media, most notably in literature and in the monuments of the *urbs Roma*. Since aetiological stories not only connect different sections on the axis of time, but also connect monuments and literature, their impact reaches beyond the text in a trans-medial way, by extending their metafictional (and potentially manipulative) effects on Roman monumental self-presentation.[74] Through the import of Greek mythology to Rome and through the application of these myths onto the city's monuments the lack of typical Roman myths, on the one side, and the richness of monuments, on the other side becomes strikingly apparent. Keeping this idea in mind, one can interpret the end of the *Metamorphoses* as a 'de-monumentalization' of Rome.[75]

Ovid's play with the borders of fiction in the *Metamorphoses* reaches its climax in book 15 with the aetiological story of the Aesculapius cult

the poem, where the stories from Italian legend Ovid chooses to present are almost of religious-aetiological nature."

71. Cf. Acosta-Hughes & Stephens (2012: 149-155).

72. Hunter (2006: 2). Cf. Myers (1994: 126) on the function of the Vertumnus-story: "Thematically and generically, the Vertumnus-Pomona story, with its erotic content, relegates the surrounding apotheoses in Book 14 to a nonhierarchical position in the poem and does not allow the patriotic Augustan themes to overwhelm the narrative."

73. On aetiology in imperial discourses cf. Asper (2011) and Klooster (2014), on the manipulation of the past in Apollonius's *Argonautika* cf. Stephens (2000).

74. Barchiesi (1997; 2011: 518). On aetiology in Roman discourse cf. also Loehr (1996: 116): "Ovid projiziert die kallimacheischen *Aitia* mit ihren Tendenzen, Nuancen und Formen auf eine römische Monumentalität", and Walter (2004: 420): "Die hermeneutische Figur der Aitiologie und die Urgeschichte als Projektionsfläche werden zu maßgeblichen Mustern der Gegenwartsdeutung."

75. In addition, two more functions of the aetiological stories in the final books of the *Metamorphoses* can be defined: (1) Aetiology has a momentum of stabilizing, because aetiological narratives normally result in an unchangeable status which might be regarded as suitable for framing purposes (cf. e.g. Schmidt [1991: 62] for this aspect of unalterability). (2) Aetiology has a momentum of intellectual curiosity and thirst of knowledge.

and its transfer to Rome (Ov. *Met*. 15.622-744).[76] The story is "the summation of a repeated pattern of exodus from Greece to Italy that occurs in the last three books of the *Metamorphoses*."[77] Furthermore, it stands out because of the invocation of the Muses (line 622), its general Callimachean style and organization, and because it is the first story of the *Metamorphoses* which dates back firmly to 292/91 BC, thus dividing historical and contemporary Roman times from the mythical past narrated before.[78] The transition is smoothly prepared via the story of the legendary Roman commander Cipus and his refusal to become king of Rome (Ov. *Met*. 15.565-621, only separated from the Caesar-episode by a few lines). Since the story of the introduction of the Aesculapius cult to Rome comes directly before the Caesar-and-Augustus-passage (Ov. *Met*. 15.745-870) and the poet's epilogue (871-879) it is of even more significance.[79] As a whole, it serves as a 'jumping board' (*Springbrett*, Loehr) to the climax of the *Metamorphoses*.[80]

It is at this most significant turning point of his narrative that Ovid employs the aetiological story of Aesculapius for a no less significant development of aetiological story-telling as such: he uses the aetiology with its inherent boundary of fiction as a complex *narrative device* to lead from the *fictional* part of the *Metamorphoses* to its final '*factual'* part. This aetiological story no longer explores the borders of fiction *within* the story, but the aetiological story as a whole serves as a narrative device to mark the border of fiction. The border of fiction is not in the story, but the story itself has become the border. Once again, this *rhetorizing* or *narrativization* of aetiology makes explicit the mechanisms of fiction and of narration in Ovid's Callimachean *Metamorphoses*.

76. Cf. Wheeler (1999: 105 and 196); Feeney (1991: 210-213); Fränkel (1956: 108); Loehr (1996: 134.136.139 note 216).

77. Wheeler (1999: 196).

78. On the Callimachean influence cf. Loehr (1996: 138), on the dating Feeney (1991: 208), and Holzberg (2007: 112). On the introduction of Asclepius in Rome and the founding of a temple cf. Edelstein & Edelstein (1998: 431-452, here nr. 850); Beard et al. (1998: 1.69-70); cf. also Broughton (1951: 182). Feeney (1991: 208 note 74) observes that the Asclepius-epsiode takes almost as much lines as Caesar and Augustus together.

79. On the transition in lines 745-746 cf. Solodow (1988: 26); on the word-play *urbis-orbis* in Latin poetry cf. Hardie (1986: 364-366).

80. Loehr (1996: 138). Holzberg (2007: 111) sees also the moment of separation book 15, but rather connects it with the speech of Pythagoras: "Vielleicht hat Ovid die *mise en abyme* des ganzen Hexameterepos an den Anfang des letzten Buches gestellt, weil er die noch folgenden Abschnitte vom übrigen Werk etwas absetzen wollte. Sie haben gemeinsam, daß sie römische Mythen bieten und aitiologisch nur noch Kulte beziehungsweise Gegenstände erklären, die eine historische Bedeutung haben."

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