

6 — Creophylus | 55 G-P

Τοῦ Σαμίου πόνος εἰμὶ δόμῳ ποτὲ θεῖον ἄοιδόν
δεξαμένον, κλείω δ' Εὐρυτον, ὅσος' ἔπαθεν,
καὶ ξανθὴν Ἰόλειαν, Ὀμήρειον δὲ καλεῖμαι
γράμμα· Κρεωφύλῳ, Ζεῦ φίλε, τοῦτο μέγα.

Sources: Strabo 14.638; Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus Mathematicos* 1.48; Eustathius 1.516.22–23 van der Valk omits κλείω...Ιόλειαν; Scholia on Dionysius Thrax, *Gr. Gr.* 1.3.160.12 Hilgard repeated at 1.3.448.3, Ὀμήρειον δὲ καλεῖμαι γράμμα; 1.3.163.36–164.2 Hilgard, Κρεωφύλου...Ὀμήρειον δὲ καλεῖμαι γράμμα Κρεωφύλου. Not in P or Planudes.

1 τοῦ Σαμίου Strabo Κρεωφύλου Sext. sch. Dionys. θεῖον ἄοιδόν Sext. sch. Dionys. θεῖον Ὀμηρον Strabo sch. Dionys v.l. Eust. 2 κλείω Sext. καίω Strabo κλαίω sch. Dionys. v.l. Ernesti

I am the labor of the Samian who once welcomed the divine bard
in his home, and I celebrate Eurytus, the many things he suffered,
and fair-haired Iole, but I am called a composition of Homer.
This, for Creophylus, dear Zeus, is a big deal.

This is one of five epigrams on poets and poetic production (see also epigram 2 on Heraclitus, 8 on Timarchus, 27 on Aratus, and fr. 4 on Antimachus); but unlike the other four, this one does not appear in the *Palatine Anthology*. The speaking subject is an epic poem known as *The Siege of Oechalia* (Οἰχαλίας ἄλωσις), written by Creophylus of Samos. The epigram thus functions as if intended to be inscribed on a copy of the poem. Creophylus was connected to an eponymous school of Homeric rhapsodes, the Creophyleioi or descendants of Creophylus (see, e.g., Plutarch, *Life of Lycurgus* §4.4.4, who states that Lycurgus first brought the works of Homer to the Peloponnese, having gotten them in Samos from οἱ ἔκγονοι οἱ Κρεοφύλου). However, Creophylus' relationship to Homer and the authorship of this epic poem were matters of dispute in antiquity. Glaucus in Plato's *Republic* 10 (600b6–c1) identifies him as a companion of Homer (ὁ τοῦ Ὀμήρου ἐταῖρος) and speaks about him with contempt. The *Suda* entry (κ 2376) claims Creophylus was either a Chian (that is, from Homer's homeland) or a Samian epic poet, and either a son-in-law or a friend of Homer. Callimachus' epigram is later quoted by Strabo to substantiate that it was not Homer, but Creophylus who authored the epic poem. Sextus Empiricus quotes the epigram as well in a discussion arguing that γράμμα is the equivalent of σύγγραμμα and may be used for poetry as well as prose. Subsequent ancient references echo one or another of these sources.

The *Siege of Oechalia* seems to have been a free-standing epic in the Homeric style, and not part of an epic cycle. We know the story from later sources: Eurytus the king of Oechalia insisted that men who wished to marry his daughter Iole defeat him at archery. Heracles fell in love with Iole and entered the competition. When he defeated Eurytus, the king reneged on his promise. In retaliation, Heracles returned with an army, sacked his city, and killed Eurytus. Only one line from the epic survives: ὦ γύναι, <αὐτῇ> ταῦτά γ' ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ὄρηαι ("Woman, you <yourself> see these things before your eyes"). The source of this line is the *Epimerismi Homerici* o 96 (= 2.573.17–21 Dyck), where it is prefaced by the comment that the poem is attributed to Homer, but Creophylus wrote it, and that the line was spoken by Heracles to Iole (ἢ εἰς Ὅμηρον ἀναφέρεται, ἔστι δὲ Κρεώφυλος ὁ ποιήσας Ἡρακλῆς δ' ἐστὶν ὁ λέγων πρὸς Ἰόλην). Sources for the story of Eurytus and Iole today include Sophocles' *Trachiniae*, where it serves as background to Deianeira's anger against Heracles (see, e.g., 351–354, 472–478, 1220), and Euripides' *Hippolytus* 545–554. For testimonia and fragments of Creophylus, see now Tsagalis 2022: 13–23. It is notable that Callimachus does not mention Heracles in his epigram, despite his importance for the fall of Oechalia. It is possible that Creophylus' epic focused on the plight of Iole and the death of Eurytus rather than the battle and thus aligned with Callimachus' aesthetic preferences.

Interpretation of the epigram hinges on an estimate of Callimachus' regard or disdain for Homer and Homeric imitators. Also relevant is Callimachus' own work on the *Pinakes*, a bibliographic list of literary texts apparently organized by genre and then author, arranged alphabetically. Part of this process would have required determining the authenticity of a work, which was often difficult when the texts were, like those of Homer, products of rhapsodic transmission and more than one work became attached to Homer's name as a means of promotion. What was authentically Homer's and what was a subsequent poetic or rhapsodic imitation, therefore, posed an ongoing challenge for ancient scholars. Eustratius on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (6.7.2) provides additional evidence for Callimachus' interest in Homeric authorship: he states that "in an epigram" (ἐν τῷ ἐπιγράμματι) he asserted that the *Margites* was by Homer (see fr. 9 = fr. 397 Pf.). It is thus likely that the attribution of the *Siege of Oechalia* to Creophylus was a product of Callimachus' own judgment. For this poem to be mistaken for a work of Homer would have been high praise for Creophylus, but overall is the epigram positive or a slyly negative comment on the quality of the work? Some critics read the epigram as a sarcastic or less than enthusiastic comment on Homer as well as his successors (e.g., Gabathuler 1937; Giangrande 1975; G-P), while others see it as a compliment for a good example of writing in the Homeric style without imitating Homer's supposed faults (Cameron 1995a: 401; Hardie 2020). While Callimachus does distance his poetics

from some aspects of Homer (particularly length and repetitive style) and thematically he prefers the *Odyssey* to the *Iliad* (as in the *Hecale* and in the Molorchus episode in the *Aetia*), the evaluative language of the epigram (πόνος, θεῖον, κλείω) seems to be positive. But the final words are not as straightforward. In Posidippus, ep. 88.6 A-B and Longinus 10.4.3 τοῦτο μέγα is positive. But μέγα in Callimachean aesthetics is often pejorative (see, e.g., *Aetia* fr. 1.19–20 Harder: μηδ' ἅπ' ἐμεῦ διφᾶτε μέγα ψοφέουσιν ἀοιδὴν | τίκτεσθαι, “Do not look to a great sounding song to be produced by me”). Also, Athenaeus’ comment “that Callimachus used to say that the big book is equal to big trouble”, ὅτι Καλλίμαχος...τὸ μέγα βιβλίον ἴσον ἔλεγεν εἶναι τῷ μεγάλῳ κακῷ (Athenaeus 3.72a = fr. 465 Pf.) suggests that the choice of μέγα in the final comment is at best double-edged.

1. **τοῦ Σαμίου**: the reading of Strabo; Sextus and the scholia on Dionysius Thrax read Κρεωφύλου, which is most likely a gloss since the name occurs in the final line. The postponement of the name until then will be deliberate (see epigram 27 for a similar strategy). Meineke in support of τοῦ Σαμίου notes that Callimachus often identified well-known men by their patronyms: Aratus as ὁ Σολεύς (27) and Py-lades as τῷ Φωκέος (59).

πόνος: this word can refer to a composition that has been carefully crafted and refined in style: see, e.g., Pindar, *Nemean* 3.12: χαρίεντα...πόνον, Asclepiades, *AP* 7.11.1 = 28.1 G-P, Sens: ὁ γλυκὺς Ἡρίννας οὗτος πόνος, and Antipater of Thessalonica, *AP* 9.186.1 = 103.1 *GPh*: βίβλοι Ἀριστοφάνεως, θεῖος πόνος, and compare Latin *labor*. However, it may also carry the meaning of “trouble” or “distress”, especially in a funerary context, see epigram 12.1.

θεῖον ἀοιδόν: the reading of Sextus Empiricus; Strabo’s θεῖον Ὅμηρον is probably the result of a gloss. “Divine poet” was a term used for other Archaic poets as well as Homer (see, e.g., Theocritus, *id.* 16.44, where the poet so called is Simonides). By choosing to refer to Homer in this way, the speaker/Callimachus aligns him with his own bards: at *Odyssey* 1.336 θεῖον ἀοιδόν describes Phemius and at 8.43 and 8.47 Demodocus.

2. **κλείω**: the reading of Sextus; Strabo has καίω, surely an error of mistaking an itacistic variant, ΚΑΙΩ, for ΚΑΙΩ; Ernesti thought the variant κλαίω (“I weep for”) had some merit. This spelling of the verb is rare; before Callimachus only at *Odyssey* 17.418, where Odysseus in disguise as a beggar tells Antimachus, one of the suitors, that he will “celebrate” him. Odysseus keeps his promise, but not in the way Antimachus might have imagined. The verb here might function in a similar way: what makes the story famous is its attribution to Homer. There may also be a pun:

Κλείω is the usual spelling for Clio, the Muse of history, a category that loosely fits the *Siege of Oechalia* (see Hardie 2020: 59–60).

ὅσσ’ ἔπαθεν: the phrase is surprisingly rare; at *Odyssey* 7.221 Odysseus complains that the need for food makes him forget ὅσσ’ ἔπαθον; at 8.490 Odysseus praises Demodocus for singing of “all that they [sc. the Achaeans] did and suffered” (ὅσσ’ ἔρξαν τ’ ἔπαθόν τε).

3. **Ἰόλειαν** = Ἰόλη. For the variant spelling see Σεληναίης, Γαληναίη (epigram 5).

Ὅμηριον δὲ καλεῦμαι: that is, the poem in question was a work in the Homeric style. The adjective is rare before Callimachus. It first appears in Herodotus (5.67.1: Ὀμηρείων ἐπέων) as part of a discussion of the political use of Homeric verses. Plato in the *Republic* (600b6–c1) uses it to refer to ideas that occur in Homer. It is also featured in a figure poem of Simias of Rhodes (*AP* 15.22 = *CA* Simias 25 = 1 Kwapisz), the *Ax*, where it may be used ironically of Epeius, who dedicates his ax to Athena 6–7: ἀλλ’ ἀπὸ κρανᾶν ἰθαρχᾶν νᾶμα κόμιζε δυσκλῆς | νῦν δ’ ἐς Ὅμηριον ἔβα κέλευθον (“but a man of no importance [Epeius] who carried water from the pure fountains, now he has embarked upon the Homeric path”). For a discussion of the word in later epigram see Garulli 2017: 141–149.

4. **γράμμα**: Callimachus uses γράμμα elsewhere to indicate a specific book of poetry or prose: in epigram 23.4 it refers to Plato’s *Phaedo*; in **fr. 4** = fr. 398 Pf. to Antimachus’ *Lyde*. Like Creophylus’ poem, neither of these is short, which suggests that γράμμα may not be an appropriate term for any poem (e.g., for an elegy or epigram). This epigram was quoted together with 23 by Sextus (*Adversus Mathematicos* 1.48) and later grammarians to support an argument that the term for γραμματική was derived from γράμμα, not in the sense of “letter of the alphabet” but as Callimachus uses it, from γράμμα as a “composition”. (See also introduction to epigram 23.)

Ζεῦ φίλε: with this prayerlike address Callimachus presumably calls upon Zeus as a witness to the truth of the statement that the *Siege of Oechalia* was in fact by Creophylus. A similar address to Zeus occurs in Theognis 373 at the opening of a long request for an explanation of why the god permits unjust acts. Micylus calls upon Γαῖα φίλη to rest lightly on him in 26.2. Callimachus calls on οὐράνιε Ζεῦ as a fellow lover in epigram 52.3 as does Asclepiades in *AP* 5.167.6 (= 14.6 G-P, Sens), but in these cases, it will have been prompted by Zeus’ love for Ganymede (on Asclepiades, see Sens 2011: 95).

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- Asper (1997) 141–144.
Barigazzi (1973) 186–194.
Cameron (1995a) 399–401.
Campbell (2013) 69–72.
Hardie (2020) 55–81.
Hunter (2019) 172–175 = (2021b) 287–290.
Montes Cala (2012) 249–260.
Schwinge (1986) 9–11.
Tueller (2008) 111.
Wilamowitz (1924) 2. 124–125.