CHAPTER 5

Callimachus

Annette Harder

Introduction

For this study of characterization in the works of Callimachus I will discuss the story of Erysichthon's attack on Demeter's grove and his punishment by the goddess in *Hymn* 6 as a case study in which I will show how Callimachus deals with the various techniques of characterization listed in the Introduction to this volume. The reason for choosing this hymn is that it is the most elaborate example of characterization among the preserved texts of Callimachus and thus offers an opportunity for giving a good survey of his techniques in this respect.

I will embed this case study in the results of a more general investigation of the small corpus of (more or less) preserved narrative passages in Callimachus' work, to which I will refer at relevant points: the story of Leto's pregnancy and search for a place where her children can be born in *Hymn* 4, the story of the blinding of Tiresias by an angry Athena in *Hymn* 5, and the love story of Acontius and Cydippe from the *Aetia*. Sometimes I have adduced details from other passages if they could help to illustrate or elaborate a specific point. It should be noticed that in all cases in Callimachus, apart from the very fragmentary *Hecale*, we have to do with short stories, so that all aspects of characterization are dealt with and conveyed within a very small compass.

An important element in this study, discussed under metaphorical characterization, will be Callimachus' use of intertextuality, which seems to be used to add extra dimensions and to extend the limits posed by the format of the short stories.

A specific point which I will leave out of consideration is the question whether the descriptions of character in Callimachus have metapoetic or political aspects. It has been argued, for instance, that the way in which Erysichthon cuts the trees of Demeter characterizes him as a representative of the wrong kind of poetry.[1] In a comparable way the character of Zeus in *Hymn* 1 was

1 See Murray 2004.

thought to be shaped in a way that may be related to Ptolemaic kingship.[2] These interpretations are interesting and attractive and should certainly be taken into account when one attempts an overall evaluation of characterization in Callimachus, but they are outside the purely narratological scope of this volume.

The story of *Hymn* 6, which seems to be told by a female participant or mistress of ceremonies at the women's festival of the Thesmophoria, is briefly as follows: Erysichthon, the son of Triopas, together with his servants attacks a sacred and much cherished grove of Demeter in order to use the wood for a dining hall. The goddess first tries to calm him down, but after his insolent answer punishes him with an insatiable hunger so that he cannot stop eating and drinking. His parents are ashamed and desperate: his mother keeps him in the house and refuses invitations with a variety of excuses and his father prays in vain to Poseidon for help when the food runs out. When all the food is gone from the palace the young man ends as a beggar at the crossroads.

Names

Erysichthon's name (*Erusikhthōn*, lit. 'tearing up the earth') is part of the mythical tradition.[3] Even so, it should be noticed that there was another name, Aethon, given to the same character, because of his violent, 'burning' (i.e. *aithōn*) hunger, as we are told in Hesiod fr. 43(a).5–6 and elsewhere.[4] Callimachus seems to be alluding to this name in *Hymn* 6.67, where he applies the adjective *aithōn* to Erysichthon's hunger. Thus the reader is reminded of another, more 'speaking' name of Erysichthon[5] and is thus given additional information about his character.

Interestingly, the same name, Aethon, is also used by Odysseus of himself in *Odyssey* 19.183, when he tells Penelope a false story about his identity. This

2 This way of adapting characters to specific purposes does not seem to be unique in Callimachus; we find similar treatments of Heracles as an ancestor of the Ptolemies as well as charged with metapoetic significance in e.g. Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautica* and Theocritus 24; see in general the references in Harder 2012: 2.214; and on the metapoetic aspects Heerink 2015.

3 For the evidence see Hopkinson 1984: 18–26.

4 For further discussion and a survey of all the evidence see Hopkinson 1984: 18–22 and on *Hymn* 6.67.

5 The phrasing also recalls Apollonius Rhodius 1.1245 where Polyphemus is compared to a hungry lion. Speaking names are found a few times in the *Aetia* too, e.g. of Acontius, who 'hit' unhappy lovers (fr. 70), or Leimonis, who was probably seduced within the customary erotic setting of a 'meadow' (fr. 94–95c), but are on the whole not very frequent in Callimachus.

story, like the story of Erysichthon has to do with food and entertainment, as 'Aethon' tells Penelope that he has entertained Odysseus and his men for twelve days on Crete with barley, wine and the meat of oxen (*Od.* 19.197–198). Later in the hymn the sequel of this passage, when the tears streaming down Penelope's cheeks are compared to snow melting on the mountain-tops (*Od.* 19.204–209), is alluded to (*h.* 6.91),[6] and *Hymn* 6.88 recalls *Odyssey* 17.358 about the beggar Odysseus eating.[7] At the end of the story *Hymn* 6.115, 'begging for crusts and scraps thrown away from the feast', about Erysichthon as a beggar, is strongly reminiscent of *Odyssey* 17.220 and 222, spoken by Melantheus about the apparent beggar Odysseus. The reasons for these references to Odysseus are not entirely clear, but Callimachus' technique regarding the name is obviously quite complex: Erysichthon has his own name, but another more relevant name is alluded to and a connection to large-scale epic hospitality is added.[8]

Direct Characterization

A complicating factor in evaluating particularly the direct characterization by the narrator in Callimachus' sixth hymn may be that he (or rather she) is a member of the audience in the mimetic setting of the hymn, who is obviously a devotee of the goddess Demeter and in fact in *Hymn* 6.116–117 takes sides against those who are hated by the goddess: 'Demeter, let not him you hate be a friend or neighbour of mine. I hate evil neighbours'.[9] A certain partiality in favour of the goddess therefore seems to be implied by the *persona* of this narrator and may evoke questions when confronted with the attitude of Erysichthon's parents: between the biased devotee of the angry goddess (who, even so, is not quite devoid of pity, as one can see in 6.68 and 93) and the worrying parents an 'objective' view of Erysichthon's character seems hard to achieve.[10]

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6 See Hopkinson 1984: ad loc.

7 See the fuller treatment of this allusion below.

8 See on these allusions Bulloch 1977. On possible metapoetic overtones see Murray 2004. On the issue of hospitality in the characterization of Erysichthon see below.

9 All translations from *Hymn* 6 are by Hopkinson 1984.

10 The other hymns are comparable in this respect: in *Hymns* 2 and 5 we also have participants in a ritual (in honour of Apollo and Athena respectively) as narrators, in *Hymn* 1 the narrator seems to take part in a symposium in which Zeus is honoured, in *Hymns* 3 and 4 the narrators present themselves as singers closely connected with Artemis and Delos as nurse of Apollo respectively.

After an elaborate description of Demeter's beautiful and much-loved grove the narrator tells us, without further introduction of the boy, in 6.32 that 'a bad idea took hold of Erysichthon's mind' and adds another comment in 6.36, where he and his men are said to run 'shamelessly' into the sanctuary of Demeter to cut it down in order to build a dining-hall. Then again in 6.45, when Demeter tries to calm him down, the narrator describes Erysichthon as 'the wicked, shameless man', as it were recapitulating her earlier comments and particularly repeating the notion of shamelessness, which thereby seems to be turned into a prominent feature of Erysichthon's character and his specific brand of 'badness'. In 6.50–52 the narrator uses a simile of an angry lioness to describe Erysichthon's fierce and insolent reaction to Demeter's soothing words (see below on indirect characterization) and in 6.56 his aggressive answer to Demeter's words is described by the narrator as 'his evil speech'. What we see here fits in with the observations in the Introduction to this volume about the Greek tendency to evaluate character largely in ethical terms, i.e. in terms of right and wrong, which in its turn could lead to a typical rather than an individual picture.

The effect of these comments on the reader's mental picture of Erysichthon, given early in the story and focusing on 'badness', must have been strong, so that, as argued in the Introduction, the effect known as 'primacy' plays an important part: 'information about a character which is given early on will strongly determine the mental model of a character formed, and a considerable amount of material which is inconsistent with that model needs to accumulate before a reader is willing to abandon or fundamentally modify it'. This accumulation of material modifying the picture of Erysichthon's evil character in fact does not happen, but even so after 6.56 the narrator offers no further comments on the badness of Erysichthon. Instead, she perhaps calls him a 'poor wretch' in 6.68 (*skhetlios*)[11] and in the remainder of the story focuses on the pathetic effects of his punishment on himself, until 'only skin and bone were left the wretch' (6.93), and on his family, which is clearly devastated. Thus, in the end one seems to be invited to think that in spite of the narrator's direct comments

11 Although in Homer the word is always used of wrong and stubborn behaviour, its use in the sense of 'miserable' is attested from the fifth century BCE onwards. Hopkinson 1984: ad loc. adduces parallels which show that in Callimachus the notion 'wretched' also occurs, as in *Hymn* 5.77 of Tiresias innocently trespassing on the bathing Athena and possibly in *Hymn* 3.124, though there, as in the case of Erysichthon, the wretchedness is that of people who had first behaved wrongly. This connotation of earlier mischief may be present in *Hymn* 6.68 as well, so that the notion of 'being wretched through his own fault' may spring to mind.

in the early part of the story there is also another side to Erysichthon and that he was after all an object of pity and the son of loving and protective parents. In this respect it is also significant that his father Triopas calls the young man a 'baby' in his prayer to Poseidon, again emphasizing his wretchedness (6.100). So one could argue here that Callimachus at least gives hints of another perspective on Erysichthon.

Elsewhere we see a similar tendency to offer direct characterization at the beginning of the story, as in e.g. *Aetia* fr. 67, where we are told explicitly that the lovers Acontius and Cydippe are young, beautiful and of good families, but also that the young Acontius was not a very clever talker and needed the help of Eros himself to get his bride. However, we also sometimes find short remarks in the course of the story as in *Aetia* fr. 23.6 about Heracles' lack of gentleness or towards the end as in *Aetia* fr. 80.20–23 about the diplomatic skills of Pieria, who had achieved peace between her town and Miletus after a long time of war.

On the whole, though, direct characterization seems to be only one of the means Callimachus is using to draw his characters and, in fact, indirect characterization seems to play a much larger part and to add further dimensions to the pictures.

Metaphorical Characterization

Comparisons and Similes

Although Callimachus uses comparisons and particularly long epic-style similes rather sparingly,[12] there are two passages in the story of Erysichthon were these techniques can be found and have implications for our view of Erysichthon's character. In *Hymn* 6.50–52 the narrator uses a simile in the epic style to describe Erysichthon's insolent reaction to Demeter's soothing words:

> he looked at her more fiercely than a lioness
> in the mountains of Tmarus looks at a huntsman
> when she has just given birth (then, it is said, her look is most fearful).

In 6.91–93 Erysichthon's emaciation is described by two brief comparisons:

> like snow on Mimas or a wax doll in the sun

12 See Hopkinson 1984: on *Hymn* 6.50–52.

—even more quickly than these he wasted away to the very sinews:

only skin and bone were left the wretch.

The striking use of these devices at these points may help to connect cause and consequences, i.e. Erysichthon's guilt and his punishment, as the narrator highlights both the boy's misguided anger and the disease which destroys him by using the—for Callimachus—rare technique of similes/comparisons. At the same time their message seems a little ambivalent as they may add an element of doubt about the moral issues in the poem: after all, one could sympathize with the anger of a lioness who has just given birth against the threat of an armed huntsman, and the notion of utter powerlessness evoked by the idea of snow or wax melting under the fierce rays of the sun may evoke some pity for Erysichthon's fate.

Elsewhere similes and short comparisons are also used for characterization of other characters. Thus the character of Iris as a faithful and always vigilant servant of the goddess Hera is illustrated by a long simile in *Hymn* 4.228–232, in which she is compared to a faithful dog of Artemis. In *Aetia* fr. 23.2–7 the indifference of Heracles, who is eating a farmer's plough ox, towards the angry threats of the farmer is illustrated by a series of three brief comparisons, and in fr. 67.8 another brief comparison likens Acontius and Cydippe to beautiful stars. Thus one can see that this means, though used sparingly, is definitely part of Callimachus' technique of characterization.

Intertextuality: Similarities and Contrasts

There is much emphasis on Erysichthon's shameless behaviour particularly at the beginning of the story. Although at first sight the main crime seems to be the cutting down of Demeter's sacred grove, it soon becomes clear that there is an ill-conceived idea of hospitality behind this as Erysichthon wants to use the wood for the building of a dining hall (6.54–55). By means of a range of allusions to misbehaving hosts and guests in earlier literature Callimachus seems to draw attention to various counterparts of Erysichthon in this respect and to add a further dimension to this side of his character, embedding it in a larger literary and mythological framework.

However, for his learned readers Callimachus seems to have added yet another dimension of characterization in his use of allusions, 'fleshing out' characters by referring the readers to other characters who may present an instructive kind of contrast.[13] Thus we are invited to consider Erysichthon not

13 See also the Introduction to this volume on similarity and contrast as techniques of

only in relation to similar bad guests and hosts, but also as a contrast to the hot-headed, but noble and repenting Antilochus from the *Iliad*. The references to Antilochus in *Hymn* 6 suggest a notion of repentance and growth, i.e. of a certain change, in that epic character, which is lacking in Erysichthon and finally made impossible by the wrath of Demeter, as a result of which he can do nothing more than eat and drink.

Bad guests and hosts: As argued above the central issue of the story of Erysichthon and the reason for his punishment is his misguided behaviour as a prospective host, which then, through Demeter's punishment, turns him into an impossible guest. He begins to cut down the sacred grove of Demeter and in 6.54–55 declares that he is doing this in order to build a dining hall where he can provide his friends with endless meals; subsequently, when his punishment is beginning to take effect and he eats everything in sight, his mother keeps him away from meals at the homes of others (6.71–86). The notion of misguided behaviour in relation to eating and hospitality is mentioned here only briefly and judged critically by the narrator (see above on direct characterization), but if one takes the references to Homer into account it is illustrated by a range of epic examples of similar bad behaviour.

Following the order of the hymn one is first reminded of Tantalus, as the rare word used for 'then' (*toutakis*) in 6.14 may point to *Odyssey* 11.585–586, where a similar word (*tossaki*)[14] is found in a description of Tantalus unable to drink and eat because of his punishment, thus suffering the opposite of what Erysichthon had to endure. The reason for his punishment is not mentioned, but later authors relate it to *hubris* connected with eating (so e.g. Pi. *O*. 1.36–66, where Pindar rejects the version that he offered his son Pelops to the gods and states that he stole nectar and ambrosia from them and offered these to mortals). The mere use of *toutakis* may not be a very strong pointer to the fate of Tantalus, but the idea is strengthened by the fact that some allusions to the same Odyssean passage occur in the immediate context: the description of

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characterization and important aspects of the metaphorical presentation of character and the role of intertextuality in this process. Callimachus usually alerts his readers to an allusion by using a rare word or special phrase that occurs only once, or a few times at the most, in Homer, often in the same metrical position in a line. The assumption is that his learned readers would easily recognize these rarities and remember their context. These contexts may then provide a background or foil against which a given text can be read. See on these criteria, and for some further discussion of characterization by means of allusions in Callimachus, Harder 2002: 190–195.

14 This word occurs three times in Homer: *Il*. 21.268; 22.197 and *Od*. 11.586.

Demeter's grove in 6.25–29 recalls the description of the place where Tantalus is standing near a spring surrounded by trees (*Od.* 11.588–592); the use of the Homeric hapax *kallikhoros* in 6.15 recalls *Odyssey* 11.580–581 in a passage about Tityus,[15] who is described just before Tantalus.

After Tantalus the beginning of the story of Erysichthon is marked by a group of allusions to various kinds of evil or misguided behaviour related to dining. In 6.31–34,

> But when their good genius became angry with the Triopidae
> a bad idea (*kheirōn … bōla*) took hold of Erysichthon's mind.
> He rushed forth with twenty servants, all of them in the prime
> of strength, all men-giants fit to lift a whole city

we are reminded of several passages from the *Odyssey*: (1) the episode where the men of Odysseus kill and eat the cattle of Helius: Bulloch (1977: 105–106) points to *Odyssey* 12.294–295 and 339, both from the beginning of this episode, where the 'bad idea' of the men of Odysseus, led by Eurylochus, is described in very similar terms (*kakēs … boulēs*, 12.339);[16] (2) the description of the way in which Aegisthus makes preparations for killing Agamemnon at dinner and selects 'twenty men' from the town to help him (*Od.* 4.530), with the same number (*eeikosi*) in the same metrical position as here; (3) a passage about the behaviour of Penelope's suitors, notorious offenders of the laws of hospitality because of eating Odysseus' possessions, in which Antinous is preparing an ambush for Telemachus and also chooses 'twenty men' to help him (*Od.* 4.778); (4) the episode of the Laestrygonians, who in *Od.* 10.120 are said to look 'not like men, but like Giants' (*ouk andressin eoikotes, alla Gigasin*), and thus show some similarity to Erysichthon's giant servants (*androgigantas*), and subsequently kill Odysseus' men and pick them up 'like fish' for their meal in 124.[17]

Thus after referring the reader to Tantalus, who offended the gods by his behaviour as a host, the text evokes fools who cannot suppress their hunger, men who violate the laws of hospitality in various ways by threatening the life and possessions of the rightful owners of the houses they have invaded,

15 There may be another reference to Tityus in *Hymn* 6.82; see further Bulloch 1977: 106–108 on the references to Tityus in *Hymn* 6.

16 On the relevance of the episode of the cattle of Helius for *Hymn* 6 in general see Bulloch 1977: 104–106.

17 It may be worth noticing that the fact that the ship came to the Laestrygonians was caused by Odysseus' men opening the bag of the winds, is described in *Odyssey* 10.46 as a 'bad idea', which recalls *Hymn* 6.32.

and cannibalistic giants. All these characters may add an extra dimension to Erysichthon's character and crime. They suggest that his behaviour resembles that of epic fools and villains, but also help to draw attention to the differences as Erysichthon's crime and punishment take place in a domestic setting and have repercussions mainly within the small compass of the family and its social environment.

Later in the hymn these themes are picked up again by further allusions, sometimes again appearing in clusters.

The episode of the cattle of Helius is evoked again in 6.67. Here the verb in the phrase 'he was tortured by the great disease' (*estreugeto*) recalls *Odyssey* 12.350–351, where Eurylochus thus concludes his proposal to kill the cattle of Helius and refuses to be 'tortured' (*streugesthai*) by hunger on the deserted island where they have found the cattle.[18] Another reference may be found in 6.88 about Erysichthon 'consuming' a large amount of food. The latter passage may recall the three Homeric instances where forms of the same verb (*esthiō*) are found in the same metrical position, each time of situations which may be considered to have some relevance for *Hymn* 6: *Odyssey* 1.8–9 about the eating of the cattle of Helius; 9.292 about the Cyclops, another misbehaving eater, eating two of the men of Odysseus like a lion and leaving nothing; 17.358 about Odysseus as a beggar in his own palace.

Aegisthus and the suitors are referred to again in 6.72, where the noun *eranos*, used of the 'feasts' from which Erysichthon's parents keep him away, is a word that occurs only two times in Homer, in *Odyssey* 1.225–229, where Athena in the guise of Mentes speaks at some length to Telemachus about the suitors' misbehaviour, and 11.412–415, where Agamemnon tells Odysseus how Aegisthus killed him at dinner.

Summarizing one may say that the bad and shameless character and behaviour of Erysichthon as a host and guest seems to be emphasized by the way in which Callimachus by means of various allusions places him in the company of a number of mythical and literary characters of a notoriously bad reputation in these respects.

Antilochus: A range of allusions to the young epic hero Antilochus seems to be one of the means Callimachus employs to stimulate further thinking about the character and behaviour of Erysichthon in *Hymn* 6 and to add a strong moral dimension.

18 The only other Homeric instance of the verb is *Iliad* 15.512.

In *Iliad* 23.262–650, the description of the chariot race at the funeral games for Patroclus, the youthful Antilochus, a son of Nestor and a brave fighter, performs an act of *hubris* when he passes the chariot of Menelaus on a narrow and dangerous part of the road without paying attention to Menelaus' warnings and thus finishes in second place, after Diomedes, who wins the race. Achilles then offers the second prize, a six-year-old horse pregnant with a mule, to Eumelus, who comes last because of an accident. Antilochus protests and Achilles offers Eumelus the armour of Asteropaeus instead, but Antilochus is scolded by an angry Menelaus, who asks him to swear that he did not win in a devious manner. Antilochus then repents and offers to give back the prize to which he is not really entitled. Impressed by his candid admission of having been in the wrong Menelaus then offers him the horse anyway. The reader is first reminded of the chariot race in *Hymn* 6.4. Here the verb used for looking at the procession of Demeter (*augassēsthe*) recalls a Homeric hapax in *Iliad* 23.458 spoken by Idomeneus (*augazomai*), who—rightly as it soon turns out—thinks that he is seeing the horses of Diomedes running first in the chariot race. Then, if one investigates the allusions in Callimachus' hymn in a systematic way, it turns out that the scenes about Antilochus' behaviour in this chariot race are often evoked.

In the course of Callimachus' sixth hymn a number of words may be considered as allusions to passages about Antilochus. They do not appear in Callimachus in the order in which they appear in the *Iliad*, but taken together may be regarded as evoking this scene: after the reference to the end of the chariot race in 6.4, discussed above, there are references to the first mention of the prizes in the chariot race in 6.100, to Antilochus' irresponsible behaviour in the race in 6.44 and 97, to the scene with Menelaus after the race in 6.22 and 77, and to the young man's death in 6.94–96. In all instances Callimachus' phrasing recalls Homeric *hapax legomena* or phrases used only once in Homer in this particular manner, so that the connections seem fairly cogent.

In 6.22 the noun used to indicate Erysichthon's 'transgression' (*huperbasias*) is a Homeric hapax and recalls *Iliad* 23.589 about the 'transgressions' (*huperbasiai*) typical of young men, where Antilochus offers his apologies and prize to the angry Menelaus. Menelaus accepts his apologies and gives the horse again to Antilochus. The effect of this allusion is that immediately at the beginning of the story of the 'transgression' of Erysichthon a connection and contrast between him and Antilochus is established.[19]

19 Moreover, in connection with the interpretation of Erysichthon in terms of Callimachean poetics, where he stands for the wrong and un-subtle kind of poetry on account of his

In 6.44 the adjective used of the key hanging 'on the shoulder' (*katōmadian*) of Demeter disguised as her priestess is a Homeric hapax and recalls *Iliad* 23.431–433 about the horses of Menelaus and Antilochus, who run parallel to each other for the distance covered by a discus thrown 'from the shoulder' (*katōmadioio*) of a boy. Then Antilochus does not make room for Menelaus on a narrow part of the road and thus achieves his victory in the chariot race by means of dangerous driving.

In 6.77 the word used for the 'demanding' of a debt (*apaitēsōn*) recalls another Homeric hapax in *Iliad* 23.591–595, where Antilochus is addressing Menelaus after the chariot race and offers to give him back the horse he has taken as an undeserved prize by means of his irresponsible behaviour and to give him even more if he would 'demand' it (*epaitēseias*).

In 6.94–96 the phrasing (beginning with *klaie men*) as well as the pattern of several people 'crying' and then special attention for one of them in particular (Erysichthon's father) recalls *Odyssey* 4.184–186, the only Homeric instance of a passage beginning with *klaie men*. Here Menelaus has recognized Telemachus and everyone is moved. Then the narrative focuses on Pisistratus, the son of Nestor, who remembers the death of his brother Antilochus and refers to him at the end of his speech to Menelaus in 199–202. Menelaus answers him politely, but tactfully avoids further mention of Antilochus—and readers like Callimachus may have remembered the somewhat painful scene of the *Iliad*.

Then again in 6.97 the use of the participle with the negation used of 'the unheeding Poseidon' (*ouk aïonta*), who does not listen to the prayer of Erysichthon's father Triopas, is a phrase used only once in Homer, in *Iliad* 23.429–430 about Antilochus ignoring Menelaus' urgent request not to endanger them both 'looking like someone who was unheeding (*ouk aïonti*)'.

Soon afterwards in 6.100 we find Triopas calling his son a 'baby' (*brephos*), using a word which is a hapax in *Iliad* 23.265–266 about the 'baby' of the

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tree violation (see Murray 2004), it is striking that Antilochus explains the tendency to transgressions of young men in *Iliad* 23.590 with a reference to the 'thin' or 'meagre' mind of young men, using the adjective *leptos*. While the young Antilochus admits to this cause of his reproachable behaviour, he shows himself at the same time in possession of a positive qualification in terms of Callimachean poetics. Thus Antilochus is the opposite of Erysichthon on two levels, moral as well as aesthetic: he repents and corrects his transgressions and his mind is unwittingly tuned to the subtle demands of Callimachean poetics. For a similar kind of re-evaluation of terminology cf. *Aetia* fr. 1.9–10, where the 'lightness' which was a negative characteristic of Euripides in Aristophanes' *Ranae* appears as a positive characteristic in terms of the new Callimachean poetics.

pregnant mule, the second prize in the chariot race, which Antilochus acquires by his irresponsibly overtaking Menelaus.[20]

Summarizing one may say that the way in which Antilochus is able to respond in a proper way to Menelaus' criticism may be regarded as a contrast with Erysichthon's reaction to the words of Demeter in the guise of her priestess Nicippe: here we have a young man who like Erysichthon also behaves badly, but unlike Erysichthon is able and willing to admit that he was at fault and to be reconciled with his opponent. On the whole the scene suggests a standard of civilized and sensitive behaviour, which is lacking in the arrogant and headstrong Erysichthon and in the angry Demeter.

This technique of characterizing the people in his stories by means of allusions to their opposites in other literary texts is used by Callimachus elsewhere too, for instance in the *Aetia*. There we are invited to consider the rather helpless Acontius in relation to the clever and talkative Odysseus (fr. 67), the farmer Molorcus fighting the mice invading his home to epic heroes (fr. 54c), and the modest and unselfish Pieria, who refuses precious gifts from her lover and only wants peace for her country, to the oriental princess Medea presented with precious gifts (fr. 80).[21]

Metonymical Characterization

In the story of Erysichthon Callimachus also relies heavily on metonymical characterization. The first we hear about Erysichthon's behaviour and actions is the description of his attack on Demeter's grove (in 6.33–36):

> he rushed forth with twenty servants, all of them in the prime
> of strength, all men-giants fit to lift a whole city,
> whom he had armed with both axes and cleavers,
> and they all ran shamelessly into Demeter's grove.

These lines create a picture of shameless aggression, not only by means of the narrator's comment, but also by the details about the companions Erysichthon has chosen and the weapons he has given them. He appears as shameless,

20 A particular point of interest here is that the noun (*brephos*) is usually used of people, as in *Hymn* 6.100, but occasionally of animals, as in *Iliad* 23.266 of the mule. Elsewhere, in *Hymn* 2.51 and fr. 62a (formerly fr. 60 Pfeiffer) Callimachus too used the noun of an animal.

21 For details see Harder 2012 on those fragments.

strong and aggressive. In the course of the poem the reader hears more about the young man's emotions (more about his aggression in 6.37–56, about his 'despotic' attitude to his twenty servants in 6.61–62, and then about his hunger in 6.66–115), the groups he is part of (apart from the young hooligans also his loving family and its social environment of friends), and his further actions (after his attack on the trees Callimachus describes his insolence towards Demeter in 6.50–56, his endless eating and drinking in 6.66–70 and 6.87–93, and finally his begging at the crossroads in 6.113–115), and his insolent words to Demeter are quoted in direct speech (6.53–55). The reader is also made aware of the way in which Erysichthon's appearance changes in the course of the story: from a young man who forms part of a group of 'giants' (6.33–36) and glares at Demeter like an angry lioness (6.50–52) he is reduced to 'skin and bone' (6.93).

As to focalization, the reader is presented with different views of the world of the story and of Erysichthon himself as part of that environment. As discussed above, the narrator is a devotee of the goddess Demeter and this may be reflected in her focalization of Erysichthon. A certain bias against him seems plausible. Within the story several views of the situation and of Erysichthon appear: Erysichthon's aggressive and arrogant attitude, which suggests that he regards himself as master of his world, Demeter's love for her sanctuary and her angry view of Erysichthon (in which she is backed by Dionysus), the shame, sadness and despair of Erysichthon's family and friends on his behalf as well as on behalf of their social position and property, and in the background the unsuspecting people in the neighbourhood who keep inviting the young man to their parties and the indifference of Poseidon, who does not listen to the prayer of Erysichthon's father.

The views of the main protagonists are highlighted by passages of direct speech, which also fit in with the other indications of their character. The description of Erysichthon's aggression is followed by a description of Demeter's anger in 6.40–41, which she is still able to control in her first speech to him. In 6.45–49 Demeter, in the guise of her priestess Nicippe, addresses the shameless Erysichthon 'in soothing tones' (6.45):

> 'My child, you who are felling the trees dedicated to the gods,
> stop, my child, much prayed-for child of your parents,
> stop and send away your followers, lest the lady Demeter
> become angry—it is her sacred grove you are laying waste.'

Even so, the words 'much prayed-for child of your parents' may suggest a threat that the parents may lose this child. Erysichthon's answer (6.53–55), which is

also quoted, conveys the same idea of aggression that was suggested by the earlier descriptions of his behaviour and the narrator's comments:

> 'Be off with you, lest I stick my great axe in your hide!
> These trees will roof over my hall, where I shall
> sate my comrades constantly with delicious banquets'

The narrator's comment in 6.56 once again marks his words as 'evil' (*kakan*). When Demeter again addresses Erysichthon she is 'unspeakably enraged' (6.57) and shows herself as a goddess again, which frightens the other young men so that they run away immediately (6.57–62). When she calls Erysichthon 'dog' in her second address of him in 6.63–64 the reader is again reminded of the earlier narrator's comments about his shamelessness. The end of it is that Demeter punishes the boy with an insatiable hunger, thus transforming and frustrating his plan to 'sate my comrades constantly with delicious banquets' (6.55).

In the latter part of the story direct speech in the list of excuses of Erysichthon's mother (6.75–86) and in his father's prayer to Poseidon (6.96–110) illustrates the despair of his parents. Their behaviour shows them as ordinary, loving parents, who worry deeply about their son's situation and try to make the best of it. They are ashamed to send him to parties (6.71–72) and his mother tactfully rejects various invitations from neighbours by inventing a long list of excuses (quoted in brief bits of direct speech in 6.75–86) and cries with his sisters, his nurse and the servants (6.94–95). Erysichthon's father Triopas prays in vain to his father Poseidon and tells him how all the food has disappeared from his house (6.96–110). Apparently they keep the boy with them as long as there is something to eat, but then they have to let him go as a beggar at the crossroads (6.111–115).

The description of the settings keeps pace with the process of Erysichthon's physical decline and helps to illustrate aspects of his character and moral attitude. The story in *Hymn* 6 begins with an elaborate description of its setting in Demeter's beautiful and much-loved grove, which Erysichthon is going to destroy (6.25–30), so that the enormity of this feat and Erysichthon's ruthless and selfish aggression become clear at once. It then focuses on the palace of his parents, where in the end he can no longer find food and protection, and the larger setting of the houses of friends, from which the boy is excluded by his disease. The palace becomes a claustrophobic place in which Erysichthon is reduced to a victim of a hunger which is beginning to destroy him. Finally the setting becomes the desolate crossroads where Erysichthon's story ends in hunger and isolation and the 'son of the king' (6.114) is just a desperate beggar.

Similar techniques are also found in Callimachus' other works. A good example of the use of actions to indicate character is the courageous behaviour of Asteria/Delos in *Hymn* 4, which is the only part of the world that waits for Leto and allows her to give birth on the island, whereas the other landscapes, islands and rivers (with the exception of the river Peneius, who is willing to wait, but allowed to go by Leto) all run away for fear of Hera's anger. In the *Hecale* we get a glimpse of the description of actions as a means of characterization in a longer text as a number of fragments (fr. 29–36 Hollis) are about the ways in which Hecale is making her young guest Theseus comfortable. Her behaviour clearly indicates a caring and loving character. In the *Aetia* one line about the unpleasant laugh of Thiodamas in fr. 24.13, when Heracles has politely asked him for food for his starving son, shows his grim character. Other elements of metonymical characterization also appear, as in the description of Athena's feelings towards Chariclo, from whom she never parts (*h.* 5.57–67) or of the way in which the small farmer Molorcus is upset when mice invade his cottage (*Aetia* fr. 54c). As in *Hymn* 6 we see various kinds of focalization that help us to look at the characters in their context from different angles. A good example is the way in which the beauty of Acontius and Cydippe is described as seen through the eyes of others in *Aetia* fr. 67–70: we read how mothers wanted Cydippe as their daughter-in-law when she was still small, we read about her beauty as she appears at religious occasions, we hear about young men admiring Acontius and—apparently—falling in love with him to no avail.

Direct speech, as well, is often used to highlight aspects of character and emotions which have been indicated before. Thus a brave speech accompanies the courageous action of the river Peneius in *Hymn* 4.121–149, when he wants to welcome Leto; Hecale describes the way she looked after her sons in a way that recalls her care for Theseus (*Hec.* fr. 48 Hollis); and Acontius describes his feelings for Cydippe in a—somewhat complex—monologue in the countryside in *Aetia* fr. 73–74. Settings are used as a meaningful background in e.g. *Hymn* 5.70–74, where the midday heat and silence on Mt. Helicon are mentioned twice and suggest a threatening atmosphere for the innocent and unsuspecting Tiresias, when he trespasses on the bathing goddess, or in *Aetia* fr. 54c, where an epic time indication reminds the readers of the efforts of heroes on the battlefield and the description of the homely attributes of Molorcus, which are destroyed by mice, shows him as a poor farmer—who will nevertheless make an epic effort in putting down two mousetraps.

Conclusion

In the story of Erysichthon we see that the main character is characterized in various ways, by name, by direct and by indirect characterization. Among the latter we may observe techniques of metaphorical and metonymical characterization.

Erysichthon is given a few characteristics, which help the development of the plot of the short story and do at first sight not seem very complex: the boy is just arrogant, aggressive and shameless. The other characters present a similar picture: Demeter is a mighty goddess who is duly, but fiercely angry, his parents are loving and protective and possess a sense of shame.

Even so, there may be hints of other ways of looking at the characters, as Erysichthon in spite of his 'bad and shameless character' is still loved and protected by his parents. Thus there seems to be a certain amount of 'lifelikeness' as described in the Introduction, which may be recognized by readers using their knowledge of the world, and in the end seems to evoke some pity, so that the picture is to a certain extent dynamic rather than static. A further hint of a more complex picture is offered by the fact that the story is told by a narrator who may have been somewhat biased as a devotee of Demeter and, even so, gives some hints of pity for the young man and his family.

Metaphorical techniques, in particular, play an important part in the characterization of Erysichthon. On the one hand we see that Callimachus makes use of similes/comparisons. On the other hand intertextuality adds an important further dimension. Allusions to bad hosts and guests help to place Erysichthon's behaviour in a larger framework and underline his bad character as a host and guest. Allusions to the Homeric Antilochus help the reader to gain further insight into the character of young men in general: Antilochus provides a morally instructive contrast, but also could evoke some pity for Erysichthon because Antilochus was able to repent and thus rehabilitate himself thanks to the generosity of Menelaus, whereas Erysichthon was not, due to his own personality and the implacable anger of Demeter. Thus these allusions add depth to the characterization and evoke questions about the morality of men and gods.

The techniques here analysed for the sixth hymn as a case study can be observed in Callimachus' other works as well, as has been illustrated by a number of examples. There too, a closer analysis of all the techniques used in a given story might lead to a similarly complex picture as that in the story of Erysichthon—which is a good example of how Callimachus with his fondness for 'brevity' could indeed achieve much in a few lines.