

CALLIMACHUS AND HIS LEGACY

In this chapter I examine a poem by Callimachus and its legacy in Graeco-Roman poetry. Callimachus was a prolific Hellenistic author of poetry as well as prose. He was a voracious reader of earlier literature and versatile in his composition of new works, composing epigrams, hymns, iambics, lyric poems, an epyllion (miniature epic) and a catalogue elegy, all innovative in generic form and intellectual content. His poetry had a considerable impact on Augustan Latin poets, as did his cataloguing efforts at the Library of Alexandria on literary history and bibliography. There is no doubt that he is an important and influential poet.¹ My intention in this chapter is to demonstrate that one undervalued strand of this literary heritage is his involvement in the question of the place of number and counting in the literary evaluation of Greek, and so subsequently Roman, poetry.

This chapter begins by analysing the opening lines of Callimachus' *Aetia*, in which he addresses the Telchines and their criticism of his poetry and offers a response that outlines his own position. The Reply to the Telchines constitutes a significant and extended engagement with Hellenistic literary currents. It was well known, valued and imitated in antiquity, and it has been the focus of considerable modern scholarship.² My contribution to the interpretation of these heavily commented-upon lines will be to emphasise

¹ For his versatility and engagement with earlier traditions see e.g. Hunter (1989a); Hunter (1996); Hunter (1997); Acosta-Hughes (2002); Acosta-Hughes and Stephens (2002); Acosta-Hughes et al. (2011) part 3; Acosta-Hughes and Stephens (2012) and the edited volumes of Harder et al. (1993); Harder et al. (2004); Klooster et al. (2019). The commentary of Harder (2012) now stands as fundamental reference work that catalogues all Callimachus' literary interactions in the *Aetia*. For his influence on Roman poets see e.g. Wimmel (1960) and Hunter (2006); for his contribution to bibliography see Blum (1991).

² Cf. e.g. Verg. *Ecl.* 6.3–5, Hor. *Sat.* 1.10, Prop. 3.1 and 3.3, Oppian *Cyn.* 1.20–1. Wimmel (1960) 128–65. For further extensive bibliography on the Reply and the reception of individual phrases and verses see Harder (2012) II, *ad loc.*

the presence of number and counting. I study both Callimachus' characterisation of the Telchines' attack and his response to their criticism, with the aim of showing that the Reply's debate about poetic form and content can be better understood by appreciating the role of counting. This will involve first looking back to depictions of poetic criticism that Callimachus has inherited, and more specifically to the contest between Aeschylus and Euripides in Aristophanes' *Frogs*, in order to more clearly appreciate his representation of the Telchines as critics and what their counting implied. I then discuss Callimachus' second address to the Telchines later in the Reply and demonstrate how his account of Apollo's advice to him as a youth is intended to replace length as a criterion with a measure of poetry that does not require number. One important aim of the Reply, in short, is Callimachus' attempt to extricate his poetry from criticism based on counting.

Having reappraised Callimachus' engagement with number and counting, I then focus on a series of further Greek and Latin works that follow Callimachus in his resistance to counting as a criterion of judgement, but that also develop their anti-numerical stance in new contexts. I first examine an epigram by Antipater of Sidon praising the poet Erinna and her style. In describing Erinna, I show, his epigram hews close to Callimachus and his emphasis on the non-numerical measure of *sophia* for poetry instead of numerical length. Antipater's rhetorical use of counting within the epigram, however, adds to the Callimachean aspects. He underscores that when poems are produced in large quantities, particularly short forms like epigram, their sheer multiplicity precludes an appraisal in any other terms than the numerical, which leads to their inevitable neglect. An excessive *number* of poems can be just as bad as a poem of excessive length: counting, Antipater implies, is helpful for neither.

I turn in the third section to select Roman receptions of Callimachus' engagement with counting. From an analysis of poems 1, 5 and 7 in Catullus' collection, it will become clear that Callimachus' stance with regards to counting as a form of criticism remained a salient intertext. Catullus moves from employing enumeration as a form of self-positioning in the clearly programmatic *c.* 1, towards the performative use of counting in *cc.*

1.1 Counting in Callimachus' Reply to the Telchines

5 and 7 in order to (attempt to) reject criticism as a cultural practice in its entirety. Catullus turns the critics' tool against them. Later poets were not so brazen. An epigram by Martial with which I conclude the chapter shows that criticism could (be imagined to) extend to the number of books of poetry as well as the number of poems or verses. Martial's response, alluding to Roman predecessors rather more than to Callimachus, nevertheless fits neatly into this tradition as he attempts to square the Callimachean rejection of measuring poetry with the question, raised already by Antipater, of how many poems are *too many*. What I hope will become clear over the course of this chapter is that Greek and Roman poets found it important to follow Callimachus' lead and to avoid critics counting up their compositions.

1.1 Counting in Callimachus' Reply to the Telchines

Callimachus begins his *Aetia*, or one edition of it at least,³ by giving voice to his critics, whom he represents as the Telchines, dwarf-like Rhodian metalworkers:

πολλάκι μοι Τελχίνες ἐπιτρύζουσιν ἀοιδῆι
νῆιδες οἱ Μούσης οὐκ ἐγένοντο φίλοι,
εἶνεκεν οὐχ ἔν ἀεισμα διηνεκές ἦ βασιλ[η
... ..]ας ἐν πολλοῖς ἦνυσα χιλιάσιν
ἢ]ους ἦρωας, ἔπος δ' ἐπὶ τυτθὸν ἐλ[ίσσω
παῖς ἄτε τῶν δ' ἐτέων ἢ δεκάς οὐκ ὀλίγη.
... ..][.] και Τε[λ]χίσιν ἐγὼ τόδε· “φῦλον α[
... ..] τήκ[ειν] ἦπαρ ἐπιστάμενον,
... ..]..ρηην [ὀλ]ιγόστιχος”

(Callimachus *Aetia* fr. 1.1–9 Harder)

³ Pfeiffer (1928) 338–41 read the Reply autobiographically and argued that it must have been added to a later edition of the *Aetia*. Parsons (1977) 49–51 proposes that the Reply (fr. 1 Harder) and the Epilogue (fr. 112 Harder) frame the four books of the *Aetia*, following Callimachus' composition of Books 3–4 at a later date. Cameron (1995) 174–84 makes the case that the Reply began the first edition of Books 1–2. I would tend to follow the attitude of Schmitz (1999a) and Asper (2001) that the Reply is rather a foil to outline his aesthetic credo rather than strict autobiography, a position that few would hold today in any case. This, of course, does not resolve the question of when and for what version of the *Aetia* the Reply was composed, but my analysis here does not rely on any specific dating or version.

Callimachus and His Legacy

Often the Telchines mutter against me, against my poetry, who, ignorant of the Muse, were not born as her friend, because I did not complete one single continuous song (on the glory of?) kings ... in many thousands of lines or on ... heroes, but turn around my *epos* a little like a child, although the ten-count of my years is not small. I in turn say this to the Telchines: 'tribe, well able to waste away your own liver ... of a few lines'⁴

Regardless whether the Telchines represent historical individuals, in the poem they serve as a foil for Callimachus to introduce his own approach to poetry.⁵ My interest here is the constellation of numerical terms which cluster in the opening lines and characterise aspects of the Telchines' literary criteria and concomitantly mark out Callimachus' lack of adherence to them. Callimachus' claim that the Telchines desired a single poem in many thousands of lines constitutes the core of my focus. It has been at the centre of considerable debate. While Callimachus' critics, he says, grumble at him for not composing something which sounds very much like epic, Alan Cameron argues forcefully that at issue in the prologue was not Hellenistic epic, either mythological or historical, but the different styles of contemporary elegy.⁶ Such a proposal is supported by Callimachus' subsequent contrast of elegiac poets and their works (9–12; Mimnermus, Philetas, Antimachus(?)). The suggestion is weakened, however, by the emphasis on kings and heroes and the fact that '[k]ings, both contemporary and mythic, and heroes figure in virtually every fragment'.⁷ If the Telchines criticise Callimachus' poem for its focus on kings and heroes it is not likely to be a representative of the kind of elegiac poetry that he alludes to in the following lines. It should be observed, though, that the Reply deals with a range of concerns at once – size (9–16), novelty (25–8) and auralty (29–34) – which are all represented as in some way responding to the four lines of criticism. There is an obvious mismatch between the brief criticism of the Telchines and Callimachus' much more extended response. Instead of seeing any one section of the response mapping directly and easily on to the

⁴ Translations of Callimachus' *Aetia* are adapted from Harder (2012).

⁵ For the biographical tradition see Lefkowitz (1980) and for the Telchines as a foil see Schmitz (1999a); Asper (2001).

⁶ Cameron (1995) 328: 'It is contemporary elegy that was the bone of contention between Callimachus and his critics.'

⁷ Acosta-Hughes and Stephens (2002) 242.

1.1 Counting in Callimachus' Reply to the Telchines

Telchines' critiques, there is more to be gained by seeing their criticism as misguided because of the very framework within which it operates and then seeing Callimachus replace as well as reject and reformulate their criteria. My argument is that this is precisely what Callimachus does in the case of numerical criticism. By spotlighting first the literary history of the Telchines' enumeration and then setting it alongside more well-established aspects of Callimachus' programme, I wish to show how he deconstructs the idea of poetic judgement as a form of numerical measurement which can be applied to a poem's extent and then compared with its content. Instead he articulates a way of thinking about poetic form and content *beyond* enumeration.

1.1.1 Aristophanes' *Frogs* and Models of Counting Criticism

In Aristophanes' *Frogs*, Dionysus ventures to the underworld with the intention of retrieving Euripides, yet on arrival at Pluto's house it transpires that Euripides has challenged Aeschylus' claim to be the best tragedian. The ensuing poetic contest between Euripides and Aeschylus sees the two playwrights exchange representative verses from their plays as well as critique and attempt to undermine each other's poetic styles. The decision Dionysus must make at the end is to choose whomever he considers to be the tragedian best equipped to save Athens, and he chooses Aeschylus. The contest was important for the later tradition not just because of the focus on explicit poetic judgement within poetry itself, but also because of the range of criticism used to appraise and evaluate the tragedians' works. As has long been observed, the contest was one of a number of key intertexts for Callimachus in the Reply. He reconfigures those many images of poetry and its evaluative criteria in staging his own contest with, and response to, the Telchines.⁸

An underexplored aspect of the *Frogs* is the audience or critic as a counter of poetry. After each of the tragedians has outlined their own poetic credo, defended their verbal art and rubbished their

⁸ See e.g. Wimmel (1960) 115 n.1; Clayman (1977); Cameron (1995) 328–9; Acosta-Hughes and Stephens (2002) 246–7; Nelson (2018) 245–51.

opponent (907–1118), Euripides and Aeschylus turn to criticising lines from each other’s prologues, with Dionysus as arbiter. When Aeschylus recites the opening of the *Oresteia*, Dionysus asks Euripides what aspects there are to criticise.

EY: πλεῖν ἢ δώδεκα.
 ΔΙ: ἀλλ’ οὐδὲ πάντα ταῦτά γ’ ἔστ’ ἄλλ’ ἢ τρία.
 EY: ἔχει δ’ ἕκαστον εἴκοσιν γ’ ἁμαρτίας.
 ΔΙ: Αἰσχύλε παραινῶ σοι σιωπᾶν: εἰ δὲ μή,
 πρὸς τρισὶν ἰαμβείοισι προσοφείλων φανεί.⁹

(Aristophanes *Frogs* 1129–33)

EUR: More than twelve.
 DION: But all of that is not more than three lines long!
 EUR: And each one has twenty errors.
 DION: Aeschylus, I advise you keep quiet. If you don’t, you’ll stand to owe more than three iambic lines¹⁰

Presenting himself as an arch-investigator, Euripides tallies up the things which can be criticised and, when Dionysus notes that only three lines have been given, he accounts more specifically the line-to-mistake ratio. Euripides later enacts a different accounting of Aeschylus’ plays: εἰς ἓν γὰρ αὐτοῦ πάντα τὰ μέλη ξυντεμῶ (‘I will reduce all his lyrics into one [sort]’, 1262); Euripides shows that all Aeschylus’ lyrics are based on the same metrical pattern. In response, Dionysus joins in with the counting: καὶ μὴν λογιόυμαι ταῦτα τῶν ψήφων λαβῶν (‘and indeed I will take some pebbles and reckon them’, 1263). Euripides will go on also to question the logic of Aeschylus’ plays (1139–50) and even critique the collocation of verbs (1152–7). Aeschylus’ criticism of Euripidean prologues, by contrast, is not concerned with counting mistakes or metrical patterns; he instead appends the bathetic ‘[he] lost his little oil flask’ (ληκύθιον ἀπώλεσεν, 1208, 1213, 1219, 1226, 1233, 1238, 1241) to Euripidean lines. It no doubt made the audience laugh, but it is a playful undermining of his poetry rather than a poetic nitpicking. Aeschylus did have specific criticisms of Euripides earlier, such as his debasement of the art and the presentation of unworthy models for the audience (1013–17,

⁹ The Greek follows Dover (1993).

¹⁰ Translation adapted from Sommerstein (1996).

1.1 Counting in Callimachus' Reply to the Telchines

1039–44), but when particular lines become the focus, he does not bring the same pedantic level of scrutiny as Euripides. Hellenistic poets were well versed in contemporary literary scholarship and composed their poems in such a way as to reflect literary critical interests.¹¹ From a later standpoint, Euripides' 'setting of reason and inquiry into the poetic art' (λογισμὸν ἐνθεῖς τῇ τέχνῃ | καὶ σκέψιν, 973–4) that was aimed at getting the audience to examine their household organisation more thoroughly (975–9) could be seen to present one model of Hellenistic poetic practices.¹²

The final weighing of Aeschylean and Euripidean verses presents an enumerative appraisal of poetry from a different perspective. Euripides chooses a 'heavy' line from his *Meleager* (531 *TrGF*), an 'iron-heavy club' (σιδηροβριθῆς . . . ξύλον, 1402), while Aeschylus chooses a battle line from his *Glaucus Potnieus* (38.1 *TrGF*) with two uses of polyptoton: 'for chariot upon chariot and corpse upon corpse' (ἐφ' ἄρματος γὰρ ἄρμα καὶ νεκρῶ νεκρός, 1403). Dionysus, no doubt influenced by Euripides' counting, reduces Aeschylus' polyptota into numbers: 'He put in two chariots and two corpses, which even a hundred Egyptians could not lift' (δύ' ἄρματ' εἰσέθηκε καὶ νεκρῶ δύο | οὓς οὐκ ἂν ἄραιντ' οὐδ' ἑκατὸν Αἰγύπτιοι, 1405–6). This supposed arbiter of the contest keeps straying into a rather strict numerical approach to poetic appreciations.¹³ Aeschylus rejects this method; Euripides could throw himself, his family and all his books on the scales (1407–9), all Aeschylus needs is 'two lines' (δύ' ἔπη, 1410). It is not that Aeschylus is not interested in his verses being evaluated; indeed, he is eager for the weighing to occur since he sees it as the decisive form of judgement (1366–7). Rather, he is making the point that the weight of poetry is not equivalent to its verses, however many there are and however many numbers they are stuffed with. He implies instead that the weight comes from their style. Despite this form of measurement clearly favouring Aeschylus and his weighty

¹¹ For Hellenistic poetic responses to Homeric scholarship see Rengakos (1993).

¹² Hunter (2009) 21–5 sets out the affinities between the poet's questioning and early poetic scholarship and criticism.

¹³ His interjection at 1400 to advise Euripides what to say is also emphatically numerical: 'Achilles has thrown two dice [probably meaning 'ones'] and a four' (βέβληκ' Ἀχιλλεύς δύο κύβω καὶ τέτταρα).

words in the *Frogs* – there is no tool for measuring ‘lightness’ . . . – it is not ultimately the basis on which the winner is chosen. It is the poets’ respective advice and value to the polis which ultimately informs Dionysus’ decision (1417–23). Consequently, the respective success of their poetry is defined neither against Euripides’ counting up of errors nor against Aeschylus’ weighing. These two forms of criticism can be applied to poetry but are not represented as conclusive within the logic of the play.

The contest in the *Frogs* thus provides Callimachus with two forms of poetic measuring: a weighing and a counting. As with other contrasts between Aeschylus’ and Euripides’ judgements in the *Frogs*, however, the incorporation of these two forms of criticism into Callimachus’ prologue is not straightforward. Callimachus addresses three contrasting criteria that can also be observed in the *Frogs*: poetic fatness versus thinness,¹⁴ sonic contrasts¹⁵ and the measurement of poetry.¹⁶ The contrast in the Reply between Callimachus and what the Telchines hoped for broadly draws on the distinctions between Euripides and Aeschylus as poets, the one being bloated and bombastic, the other streamline and subtle. There is, though, no consistency in the way the contrasts in *Frogs* map on to those in the Reply. Elsewhere in the prologue, Callimachus intertwines numerous images and intertexts, meaning that simple polarities of poetic style are undermined. For example, in contrast to the clear cicada there is the braying sound of the ass (30–1) but there is also the thundering of Zeus, which is not obviously negative or positive (20). Similarly, the paths that Callimachus is advised to follow are not wide but both untrodden *and* narrow (27–8). This seems to be

¹⁴ Compare the fat tragedy slimmed down by Euripides after Aeschylus (941), and the ‘big lady’ of Mimermus fr. 1.9–12 Harder. Euripides is a slender speaker (828, 956), and Apollo advises Callimachus to raise a slender Muse (fr. 1.24). For an extended exploration see Cameron (1995) 303–38; Asper (1997) 135–207.

¹⁵ Aeschylus’ poetry is loud-thundering (814), whereas Euripides’ poetry is simply winged (1388). Callimachus rejects a requirement to thunder (fr. 1.20) and wishes to be ‘winged’ and produce a ‘clear sound’ (fr. 1.29). For more on the contrasts of sound here see Livrea (1996); Acosta-Hughes and Stephens (2002) 35–40.

¹⁶ In the *Frogs*, Aecus explains to Xanthias that Pluto is planning ‘to make a trial and test of their skill’ (ποιεῖν . . . κρίσιν | κἀλεγχον αὐτοῖν τῆς τέχνης, 785–6), and Euripides’ and Aeschylus’ lines are weighed (1365–1410). Callimachus wants poetic *sophia* ‘judged by skill, not the Persian chain’ (τέχνη | κρίνετε, μὴ σχοίνωι Περσίδι, fr. 1.17–18), on which see more below.

1.1 Counting in Callimachus' Reply to the Telchines

used to direct him to novelty of subject matter, but the contrast of wide and narrow also has stylistic connotation.¹⁷ In engaging with earlier conceptions of poetry, he is often seeking to reconcile them or expose their contradictions at the same time as he is forging an image of his poetry's own uniqueness.

Euripides' counting and Aeschylus' weighing as a contrasting pair of scenes that address the measuring of poetry are likewise cross-fertilised in the Reply to characterise both Callimachus' poetry and the Telchines' poetic preferences. On the one hand, it is Euripides together with his fellow accountant Dionysus who considers the numerical mode to be a (meaningful) form of criticism. This is the position of the Telchines in the opening lines when they show their concern for the number of verses that Callimachus has composed. On the other hand, it is Aeschylus who wishes for his and Euripides' poetry to be judged in terms of their weightiness – a challenge that cannot help but favour Aeschylus. For Callimachus too, poems can be weighed against each other. Yet, in contrast to the weighing in *Frogs*, it is a slender work that paradoxically outweighs the larger. Callimachus states: ἄλλὰ καθέλκει | . . . πολὺ τὴν μακρὴν ὄμπνια Θεσμοφόρος ('But the nourishing Lawgiver by far outweighs the long . . .', fr. 1.9–10 Harder). While much is unclear in these fragmentary lines, on the basis of the *scholium* identifying a reference to a poem by Philetas in these verses (fr. 1b.12–15 Harder), it is probable that the 'nourishing Lawgiver', an epithet of Demeter, refers to Philetas' *Demeter*. On the same basis, it is also probable that the *Demeter* was meant to be a short poem that outweighed some longer poem, either by Philetas or by another poet altogether.¹⁸ Poetry which is λεπτός (*leptos*, 'slender') like Euripides' words can succeed in a weighing contest just as Aeschylus' two lines would. Callimachus rejects Euripides' counting strategy for poetic evaluation and uses instead the idea of weighing as Aeschylus had suggested, but he also values slender Euripidean-style poetry rather than longer compositions. This adds a further level to the Reply's reception of Aristophanes' multiple conceptions of

¹⁷ Harder (2012) II, 66–7.

¹⁸ For an extended discussion of the possible interpretations and further bibliography see Harder (2012) II, 32–6.

literary criticism in the *Frogs*. Callimachus may (in general) take over his poetic self-representation from the figure of Euripides, but in talking about the *Demeter* he utilises the mode of poetic judgement which was used by, and favoured, Aeschylus.

In seeking to elucidate this reconfiguration of Euripidean and Aeschylean poetic characterisations, Benjamin Acosta-Hughes and Susan Stephens have appealed to historical context. Callimachus' modification of the judgement that the weightiest wins highlights an interest in a different kind of wisdom or knowledge, where the subtle art of persuasion trumps the destructive art of warfare, a shift that they see as related to the political circumstances of the Ptolemaic state.¹⁹ To my mind, the rejection of Euripides' counting and modification of Aeschylus' weighing together find an explanation much closer to home. Callimachus as a scholar was more than familiar with an enumerative approach to literary works. Organising the Alexandrian Library's collection, he produced the *Pinakes*, a list which gave an account of its holdings. He was concerned with placing texts into generic categories but also with the number of lines in a text. It was foundational for later bibliographical writings, although it survives only in fragments.²⁰ The form of entries is as follows:

τοῦ Χαιρεφῶντος καὶ σύγγραμμα ἀναγράφει Καλλιμάχος ἐν τῷ Παντοδοπαῶν Πίνακι γράφων οὕτως· δειπνα ὅσοι ἔγραψαν· Χαιρεφῶν Κυρηβίωσι. εἴθ' ἔξῃς τὴν ἀρχὴν ὑπέθηκεν· “ἐπειδὴ μοι πολλάκις ἐπέστειλας.” στίχων τοε'. (Callimachus fr. 434 Pf. = Athenaeus 6.244a)

Callimachus also lists a prose treatise by Chaerephon in his *Catalogue of Miscellaneous Works*, writing as follows: Authors of descriptions of dinner parties: Chaerephon to Bran [the nickname of a parasite called Epicrates]. Then immediately afterward he appends its opening words: 'Since you often wrote to me'. 375 lines of text.

Broadly speaking, this form of categorising influenced how genres were defined, making categorical pronouncements regarding which list a work should be written upon. Since it was placed in the catalogue of miscellaneous works, Chaerephon's treatise was a composition that was hard to pin down generically. In creating

¹⁹ Acosta-Hughes and Stephens (2012) 46.

²⁰ See Blum (1991) chapter 4 and chapter 5 on the reception of the *Pinakes*.

1.1 Counting in Callimachus' Reply to the Telchines

the *Pinakes*, importantly, Callimachus *pioneered* the consistent and systematic counting up of lines. This makes the Reply all the more surprising: he characterises the Telchines as having the same enumerative habit which he himself had practised in the creation of the *Pinakes*.

It can be nothing but purposeful that a poet who recorded prologues and counted lines chose to respond in his prologue to an alleged interest in a poem's number of lines. This can best be explained as a conflict between poetic composition and criticism. Counting may well make sense in the context of the Alexandrian Library, where texts were being inventoried, catalogued and stored. It makes less sense for a composing poet. Later sources record that in the generation before Callimachus, Choerilus of Iasus in the retinue of Alexander was notorious for selling his verses for a fixed price per line (*SH* 333). Callimachus may thus have had something to prove, both because his patron was a Macedonian monarch and because his 'day job' was listing books and counting up the lines of texts. He may have wanted to emphasise that composition of poetry should not be 'by the line' either because of the financial reward from rulers or because of bibliographic practice. His caricature of the Telchines' counting represents them as making this precise mistake, of taking counting to be a tool of criticism rather than a bibliographic feature. Whereas Callimachus has a tendency in the Reply to align himself with Euripides' representation in *Frogs* – for example, in the slender, winged and airy nature of his poetry (cf. fr. 1.32–4 Harder and 1388, 1396)²¹ – his deviation in respect of Euripides' counting makes it clear that *as a poet* he pays no heed to the number of verses, nor does he see it as an important criterion.

In responding to the Telchines' enumerative criticism, as Acosta-Hughes and Stephens have demonstrated, Callimachus draws on various images from earlier poetry through which poets articulated their poetics: his reference to the battle of the pygmies and the cranes comes from the *Iliad* (3.3–6; cf. fr. 1.13–14); the battle of the Medes and Massagetae, from an epic by Choerilus of Samos (*SH* 317; cf. fr. 1.15–16); the wagon and the

²¹ Callimachus is also influenced by Plato's *Ion* 534b here; see Hunter (1989a).

narrow path, from Pindar (*Paean* 7b.11–12); the fable of the ass and the cicada, from Aesop (e.g. 184 Perry; cf. fr. 1.29–34); and Aetna and Enceladus, from Euripides (*Heracles* 638–40; cf. fr. 1.35–6).²² Whereas the Telchines judge using the bibliographic tool that Callimachus had invented for the Library, Callimachus himself advances an approach to poetry based on its imagery and on the terms in which poets themselves had viewed their works. The Telchines, since they are ‘no friend of the Muse’ (fr. 1.2), understand and appreciate poetry through a numerical criterion alone and not as a poetically and culturally generative process.²³ When it comes to his use of poetic images as well as his rejection of number in this Prologue, Callimachus is very much on the side of the poets. This aspect of the Reply clarifies Callimachus’ reworking of Aeschylus’ weighing alongside the rejection of the Telchines’ counting which is so reminiscent of Euripides in *Frogs*. Despite his wish to have their respective verses weighed up, as I outlined above, Aeschylus corrects Euripides’ assumption that the number, or numerical content, of the verses correlates with their weight. Aeschylus defines this poetic weighing as a judgement that does not correspond to the traditional measuring and numbering of an object’s weight when set on a balance. In arguing against the application of bibliographic practice to poetic appreciation, Aristophanes’ *Frogs* provides Callimachus with a model of counting criticism in Euripides but also with a model for measuring the value of a poem in a way that does not involve number.

1.1.2 *Apollo’s Advice and a New Measure of sophia*

The opening lines of the Reply, then, see Callimachus distance himself from his bibliographical practice in the *Pinakes* and project counting as a form of literary criticism on to the figure of the

²² See Acosta-Hughes and Stephens (2002) and Harder (2012) II, *ad loc.*

²³ This is not to imply that librarians are thus no friends of the Muse. Historically speaking it is probable that those who worked in the Alexandrian Library also had access to the connected Museum and its intellectual, collegiate environment. The practice of the librarian, though, is not the same as that of the critic or the poet. Callimachus, in my view, is arguing against the application of bibliographical treatments of texts to the criticism of poetry, not the practice of bibliography per se.

1.1 Counting in Callimachus' Reply to the Telchines

Telchines. The poem by Philetas outweighing the longer poem in verses 9–11 presents in response a form of literary judgement that may seem to be related to measure but which does not involve enumeration.

A second address to the Telchines later in the Reply resumes the question of poetic form and how it ought to be judged. Here, Callimachus defines more clearly and positively the criterion he sees as the correct kind of poetic judgement; it is one where counting plays no part.

ἔλλετε Βασκανίης ὄλοον γένος· αὐθι δὲ τέχνηι
κρίνετε,] μὴ σχοίνωι Περσίδι τὴν σοφίην·
μηδ' ἀπ' ἐμεῦ διφᾶτε μέγα φοφέουσαν ἀοιδίην
τίκτεσθαι· βροντᾶν οὐκ ἐμόν, ἀλλὰ Διός.”
καὶ γὰρ ὅτε πρῶτιστον ἐμοῖς ἐπὶ δέλτον ἔθηκα
γούνασιν Ἄπ[ό]λλων εἶπεν ὁ μοι Λύκιος·
“... ἀοιδέ, τὸ μὲν θύος ὅττι πάχιστον
θρέψαι, τῆ]ν Μοῦσαν δ' ὠγαθὲ λεπταλέην·

(Callimachus *Aetia* fr. 1.17–24 Harder)

Be off, destructive breed of Bascania, and hereafter judge cleverness by craft, not by the Persian *schoinos*. Do not expect a loud thundering song to be born from me. For when I put a writing-tablet on my knees for the first time Apollo Lycius said to me: ‘... poet, feed the sacrificial animal so that it becomes as fat as possible, but, my dear fellow, keep the Muse slender’.

Callimachus wishes to get away from the Telchines as critics and forge a new means of conceptualising poetic value, drawing on his patron god Apollo for support in the endeavour. This further characterisation of the Telchines implies that they are more interested in measure and extent than enumeration per se, although the two are of course connected. The Telchines' judgement is again of the same kind as Euripides' in *Frogs*. Euripides is a counting critic, but he also presents himself as the poet who taught the Athenians ‘the introduction of subtle rulers and the set-squarings of words’ (λεπτῶν τε κανόνων εἰσβολὰς ἐπῶν τε γωνιασμούςς, 956). The implication of Callimachus' verses, that the Telchines would use the Persian *schoinos*, can be interpreted in two ways: as condemning poetic judgement that is interested in quantity alone, or that the *schoinos*, which is many *stadia* long, is condemned because of its excessive length. The Telchines are introduced in the Reply as

interested in ‘continuous’ poems of ‘thousands’ of lines, which, in addition to representing them as interested in an enumerative form of poetic appreciation, suggests a focus on extremes of extent. The couplet following the mention of the *schoinos* in the above passage (19–20) provides some help in dealing with these two options. While Annette Harder seems to rule out an association between Zeus and Homer, I would instead follow those who see these lines as Callimachus distancing his own poetry from the grandeur of Homeric epic, without any negative implication for the thundering of Zeus or the Homeric style.²⁴ Such an interpretation, moreover, helps explain the progression of Callimachus’ argument. At 17–18 there is a command to replace a criterion of measure with that of *sophia*. If the *schoinos* is bad because it is both a criterion of extent and one which is excessive, then the couplet rejecting thundering (19–20) deals with the imagined excessive quality of the poetry that the Telchines value, such as long epics, while the following four lines (21–4) deal with extent as a criterion per se by employing the language of fatness and thinness.

The image of fat and thin sacrifices seems also to have the contest in *Frogs* in mind, recalling Euripides’ mention of inheriting the bloated τέχνη (*technê*, ‘art’) of tragedy from Aeschylus, which he then thins out (941). Callimachus is likewise thinking about his poetic practice and the type of qualities he wishes to embody when he describes the Muse that he has been instructed to cultivate as thin. Although it may initially appear that this contrast of fat and thin sacrifices is concerned with numerical measure, it is important to understand that this mention of a ‘slender Muse’ follows on from the discussion of his preference for poetry to be judged by *technê*. The γάρ at line 21 is explanatory: his promotion of poetic judgement not beholden to measure in 17–20 is *because* he cultivates a ‘slender Muse’ following Apollo’s advice given at 21–4. In which case, slenderness cannot be a criterion susceptible to numerical measuring (as, for example, length and weight are), since this would make for a confused connection between the

²⁴ See Harder (2012) II, 54–5. The position I take is argued by, *inter alios*, Asper (1997) 196–8 and Petrovic (2006) 24–6.

1.1 Counting in Callimachus' Reply to the Telchines

advice which Apollo gave the poet in his youth and Callimachus' immediately preceding dismissal of the *schoinos* as a criterion in favour of *technê*: his rejection of enumerative criticism would have arisen from the god's promotion of a numerically measurable aesthetic quality.²⁵ The resulting sense would be something like, 'do not judge poetry by length . . . although Apollo told me to cultivate a countable Muse'. The fact that sacrifices should be fat and poems slender, however, is not to say that the relationship between form and content should be abandoned, despite numerical measurement no longer being a criterion.

A roughly contemporary passage illuminates Callimachus' thinking, since it too extracts enumeration from the critics' toolkit (at least as an absolute concept) and has rather a speaker or poet's intellectual ability in its sights:

τὸν μὴ λέγοντα τῶν δεόντων μηδὲ ἔν
μακρὸν νόμιζε, κἄν δὴ εἴπη συλλαβάς,
τὸν δ' εὖ λέγοντα μὴ νόμιζ' εἶναι μακρὸν,
μηδ' ἂν σφόδρ' εἴπη πολλὰ καὶ πολὺν χρόνον.
τεκμήριον δὲ τοῦδε τὸν Ὀμηρον λαβέ·
οὗτος γὰρ ἡμῖν μυριάδας ἑπῶν γράφει,
ἀλλ' οὐδὲ εἷς Ὀμηρον εἶρηκεν μακρὸν.

(Philemon fr. 99 KA = Stobaeus 3.36.18)

Consider long-winded the man who says not even one of the things which is necessary – even when he says two syllables – but consider not to be long-winded the one who speaks well – even if he speaks very many things and for a long time. Take Homer as evidence of this; for he has written tens of thousands of lines for us, but not one person has said that Homer is long-winded.

This is a fragment of the comic poet Philemon, active in the decades preceding and following the start of the third century BCE. Since it is recorded by Stobaeus (fifth century CE) in his collection of excerpts (his *Anthology*), neither a secure context for the lines nor the identity of the speaker can be ascertained. As a fragment from a comic work aimed for the stage, though, these lines provide additional evidence for a debate about the

²⁵ Certainly Callimachus can be playful in his combination and collapsing of competing literary priorities and perspectives. It would be illogical in this case, however, for Apollo's advice to be contradictory when Callimachus' earlier words are said to be justified on the very basis of what Apollo had told him as a child.

interrelation of poetic content and extent, beyond the elite, intellectual circle for which Callimachus was writing. Quite different from what Callimachus alleges the Telchines have to say about a ‘single’ poem in many lines, the contrast of the one and the many in Philemon playfully shifts from someone speaking at length but not saying a single important thing to Homer as someone who has written many thousands of lines but is not called long-winded by a single person. Still, Philemon’s passage is important for understanding the articulation of Callimachus’ poetic credo. In short: enumeration for the speaker is beside the point. Even if one speaks few and countable utterances (δύ’ εἴτη συλλαβάς), if they do not say ‘necessary’ or ‘essential’ things (τῶν δεόντων) then they ought to be considered long-winded.²⁶ The speaker is not concerned with brevity, then, as Alan Cameron suggests in his important discussion of the passage, but is promoting a compact relationship between intellectual import and length, without making length (or indeed extreme brevity) a criterion per se.²⁷ The focus on ‘not-long-windedness’ in this fragment pushes poetic judgement beyond measurement precisely by making the ‘two words’ or ‘thousand lines’ ultimately irrelevant polar opposites. Callimachus’ *sophia* operates in the same way as Philemon’s ‘necessary things’: it is the nature and importance of the content which dictates its judgement: ‘[W]hat matters is *technê*, “poetic craft”, however long the poem.’²⁸ Thus, all too well aware of the reductive potential of numbers, Callimachus in the Reply develops *technê* as a measure of poetry that does not require number. The measure is *technê*, and it is an indication of *sophia*. σοφία (‘wisdom’, ‘cleverness’) is an intellectual quality of a work that is dependent on its content and far more subjective than counting; to characterise a poem numerically would be precisely to ignore its

²⁶ As a comic text, of course, the speaker’s account could have been intended to parody or mock an attitude towards speaking well and Homer as a prime example. There may be humour in presenting this view of literary evaluation, but I detect no contradiction or illogicality: the humour would not be derived from a mismatch of terms or ideas, but from the thesis itself. It is, in other words, an easily understandable and methodical approach to literary criticism, quite aside from the possibility that it is humorous.

²⁷ Cameron (1995) 335 n.154. His translation of σύντομος wavers between brief (336) and succinct (342).

²⁸ Fantuzzi and Hunter (2004) 69.

imagery and language. Callimachus places poetic skill beyond the realm of the accountable and thus beyond the reach of the Telchines and their poetic tallying. He may be measuring up literature in the Library, but his Muse is not susceptible to mathematical measurement.

Callimachus' championing of a criterion of poetic value that does not reduce poetry to the numerically measurable demands a nuancing of the Telchines' criticism and Callimachus' response. Given that Callimachus will go on to reject length as a criterion altogether and focus instead on *technê* and the *sophia* it produces, it makes little sense to see his first response to the Telchines' enumerative approach as also being interested in absolute length. Unfortunately, the beginning of Callimachus' response, and especially the start of line 9, is irretrievable. Either a person or a poem could be being described as ὀλιγόστιχος ('of a few lines'), and there is a possibility that a negative adverb ('X is not of few lines') or even a conditional conjunction ('if X was of few lines') has been lost in the lacuna. The surest information, but by no means correct, is the comment of the scholiast: 'they criticise him because of the meagreness of his poems and because no length ...' (με]μφομ(έν)ο[ι]ς αὐτοῦ τὸ κάτισχρον τῶν ποιη]μάτ(ων) κ(αί) ὅτι οὐχὶ μῆκος, fr. 1b.8–9 Harder). The fact that the scholiast understands the Telchines to be making two distinct points, that his poems are 'meagre' and that they lack a certain 'length', means that he cannot be referring to the content of lines 3–4 alone, where the Telchines' interest is only in length.²⁹ On this basis, I consider ὀλιγόστιχος to refer to a work by Callimachus – or less probably to Callimachus himself³⁰ – which does not live up to

²⁹ ἰσχνός, from which κάτισχνος is formed, refers to a thinness, leanness or meagreness and in stylistic terms may refer to a plain or unadorned style, cf. LSJ s.v. ἰσχνός 1, 2 and 5. It may be thought that the parallel of Ar. *Ra.* 941, where Euripides 'reduces' Aeschylean tragedy, means that κάτισχνος in the scholiast refers to a reduction of length, as suggested by Harder (2012) II, 92. However the corporeal bloatedness that is implied in Aristophanes' passage – on which see Sommerstein (1996) 239 – does not really align with a reduction in length but a thinning out of matter. I therefore take the scholiast to have two interests in mind, rather than that κ(αί) ὅτι οὐχὶ μῆκος elaborates κάτισχνος as a term signifying a reduction in length.

³⁰ I follow Harder (2012) II, 36, who notes the lack of evidence in Greek for the *ην* preceding ὀλιγόστιχος in the papyrus to be taken as a first-person singular imperfect as opposed to the common third-person singular: that is, ἔην is more likely to be 'it was' than 'I was'.

the Telchines' expectations, but which verses 9–12 effectively defend by *comparanda*, not as a work of insufficient length and meagre poetic content, but as a short work that nevertheless has great poetic 'weight'. In other words, Callimachus avoids perpetuating the Telchines' critical frame of reference and thinking of ὀλιγόστιχος as a solely enumerative term and argues in 9–12 that works that are ὀλιγόστιχος can be brief but poetically powerful. Diogenes Laertius' later use of the term evidences a similar strategy. When talking about Herillus of Carthage's books, he comments that they are ὀλιγόστιχα and δυνάμεως δὲ μεστὰ ('full of force', 7.165). Again, what is important is the extension in relation to content; few lines does not necessarily imply meagre content.

What Callimachus is doing in the Reply then is articulating an aesthetics of scale. In an illuminating work, Jim Porter deals with the big question of Hellenistic poetry's concept of λεπτότης ('finesse', 'delicacy'), encapsulated by Callimachus himself with the declaration that 'a big book is big evil' (Καλλίμαχος ὁ γραμματικὸς τὸ μέγα βιβλίον ἴσον ἔλεγεν εἶναι τῷ μεγάλῳ κακῷ, fr. 465 Pf. = Ath. 3.72a) and with his criticism of Antimachus' *Lyde* as 'a fat poem and not lucid' (Λύδη καὶ παχὺ γράμμα καὶ οὐ τορόν, fr. 398 Pf.). Porter convincingly proposes that 'smallness' as an aesthetic criterion, in both Hellenistic art and poetry, is only one side of the coin. Instead, he reads a number of Hellenistic works as operating an 'organized aesthetic of *contrastive opposites*': the large set against the small.³¹ Posidippus' epigrams on stones set finely wrought gems (e.g. 3–5 AB) against cyclopean boulders (19 AB), while Theocritus' *Encomium of Ptolemy Philadelphus* (*Idyll* 17) overflows with hyperbole in a short compass. Certainly, I am not the first to propose that Callimachus' wider outlook involves an aesthetics of scale.³² Yet what I hope to have outlined here is that his focus on scale, on the variable relationship between extent and content, must be understood to go hand in hand with his rejection of counting criticism in the Reply. Counting has the worrying ability to reduce poems to their numerical aspects. Indeed, in the *Pinakes* works are presented as being defined

³¹ Porter (2011) 285. ³² See Porter (2011) 294 and Squire (2011) 273.

1.2 Erinna and the Epigrammatists

merely by a generic label, an opening line and a sum of lines.³³ This is a scaling down that could diminish the profile of a poetic work and its intellectual content. By doing away with numerical measure altogether and advocating for *technê* as the key criterion, Callimachus presents his own poetry (and those predecessors mentioned at 9–12) as enacting an aesthetics of scale where the effective contrast is between the (relatively) short compass of poems and their ability to be weighty and contain a great amount of *sophia*. Indeed, this *sophia* is not only explicitly theorised in the Reply but also demonstrated by the densely allusive texture of his verses. His response to the Telchines draws on the entire arsenal of poetic tradition. This exemplifies what a great amount of *sophia* in only a few lines might look like: his own complex matrix of images cannot simply be sized up or scaled down by numbers.

1.2 Erinna and the Epigrammatists

In the prologue to arguably his most famous poem, Callimachus thus makes a case for extracting enumeration from the practice of poetic criticism. What was the impact of his argument? In this section, I look at a single epigram by Antipater of Sidon, written as an epitaph for the poet Erinna, who is commonly dated to the late fifth or fourth century.³⁴ I show that Antipater, who was active roughly a century after Callimachus, has observed his aesthetics of scale and redeploys it in an equally polemic context to praise Erinna and her work.³⁵ I propose, moreover, that Antipater tailors Callimachus' concern with numerical forms of poetic judgement to the specific nature of Erinna's *Distaff*, a short hexameter lament, which is compared with the output of epigrammatists. In so doing, he expands the range of numerical criticism that one could apply to poetry to cover also the number of compositions (as well as the extent of individual compositions) and in response develops further imagery to support a poetic criticism without number that

³³ See also Porter (2011) 286–7 on scale in relation to the *Pinakes*, without a reference to number.

³⁴ See Neri (2003) 42–7.

³⁵ Antipater was probably active in the middle to late second century, and at the latest his epigrams were collected in about 125 BCE; see Gow and Page (1965) I, xv and II, 32.

applies to the number of compositions. Callimachus' crusade against counting is being adapted to new contexts and criticisms.

Erinna was famous for having composed the *Distaff*, a 300-line poem which develops traditions of women's lament within the hexametrical poetic form (*SH* 401). She appears to speak in her own voice as she recalls childhood experiences that she shared with her girlfriend Baucis, whose premature death – perhaps shortly after her marriage (cf. 2 *HE* = *AP* 7.712) – Erinna subsequently laments. The distaff of the title appears within the text as an object upon which Erinna gazes (*SH* 401.44); it may have been a gift given to Baucis (cf. Theoc. *Id.* 28), or it may represent the work of spinning, which is all that is left for Erinna to do. She was the subject of numerous epigrams in the Hellenistic and Imperial period, and a number of those ascribed to Erinna may well be later imitations of, and homages to, her style.³⁶ Antipater of Sidon's epigram is one of the longer epigrams in praise of Erinna and undoubtedly the most complex in terms of its combination of images.

παυροεπής Ἥρινονα καὶ οὐ πολὺμυθος ἀοιδαῖς
 ἀλλ' ἔλαχεν Μούσας τοῦτο τὸ βαιὸν ἔπος.
 τοιγάρτοι μνήμης οὐκ ἤμβροτεν οὐδὲ μελαινῆς
 νυκτὸς ὑπὸ σκιερῇ κωλύεται πτέρυγι·
 αἱ δ' ἀναρίθμητοι νεαρῶν σωρηδὸν ἀοιδῶν
 μυριάδες λήθη, ξεῖνε, μαραινόμεθα.
 λωίτερος κύκνου μικρὸς θρόος ἢ ἐκοιοῶν
 κρωγμὸς ἐν εἰαριναῖς κιδνάμενος νεφέλαις.

(Antipater of Sidon 58 *HE* = *AP* 7.713)

Erinna was of few words and not verbose in her songs, but this little *epos* has the Muse as its lot. For she had not failed to gain a memorial nor is she hindered by the shading wing of black night. But, stranger, we innumerable myriads of young poets, heaped, fade into oblivion. The small song of the swan is better than the cawing of jackdaws spreading out through the spring clouds.³⁷

The poem is highly structured. The first couplet characterises Erinna and her work. The second describes the fortune of her

³⁶ Epigrams on Erinna as a poet: Asclepiades 28 *HE* = *AP* 7.11; Anon. 39 *FGE* = *AP* 7.12; Leonidas 98 *HE* = *AP* 7.13; Anon. 38 *FGE* = *AP* 9.190; Epigrams purportedly by Erinna: 1 *HE* = *AP* 7.710; 2 *HE* = *AP* 7.712; 3 *HE* = *AP* 6.352. For discussion on the authenticity of the epigrams see Neri (1996) 195–201.

³⁷ Translations of works found in *AP* are adapted from Paton (1916–18).

work's afterlife. The third contrasts this fortune with the fortune of other poets. The fourth explains this comparison by analogy to the different sounds of the swan and the jackdaw. The first and the third couplet, to which I will soon turn, address matters of measurement. The second and fourth, by contrast, combine avian and meteoric images: black night and dark wings in the second, the croaking of the jackdaw that spreads through the clouds in the fourth. So too, the central couplets are marked by the antonyms of memory and forgetfulness.

An epigram by Antiphanes (no later than the mid-first century CE) rails against grammarians who are 'so proud of their Erinna, [and are] bitter and harsh barkers at Callimachus' command' (ἔπ' Ἡρίννη δὲ κομῶντες | πικροὶ καὶ ξηροὶ Καλλιμάχου πρόκυνες, 9.3–4 GP = AP 11.322.3–4).³⁸ Antiphanes does not explain the connection between the two, but what is clear is that allegiance to Callimachus in literary critical matters could lead to an appreciation of Erinna.³⁹ Kathryn Gutzwiller has recently argued that Callimachus' opening description of his poetic practice in the Reply – 'I turn around my *epos* a little' (ἔπος δ' ἐπὶ τυτθὸν ἐλ[ίσσω, fr. 1.5 Harder) – should be understood as a weaving image – 'I twist' or 'I spin my *epos*' – and that a probable influence was Erinna and her *Distaff*. Although Callimachus does not name Erinna in any extant work, it is quite possible that this shared representation of poetic composition brought the two together in Antiphanes' mind.⁴⁰ This seems also to be the case with Antipater of Sidon. On first reading, the epigram pointedly varies Callimachus' language and focus in the Reply. The 'foolish' or 'unpractised' Telchines who acted as a foil for Callimachus' poetics are matched by the youthful poets in Antipater who are dissolving into oblivion just as the Telchines had wasted away their own liver.⁴¹ Verbally, Antipater's τὸ βαιὸν ἔπος ('little *epos*')

³⁸ Since he is included in the *Garland* of Philip, cf. AP 4.2.10.

³⁹ In the words of Gow and Page (1968) II, 114: Erinna is 'an unexpected example. Erinna's brief and comparatively lucid work gave little scope for the ἀκαυθολόγοι [i.e. nitpickers].'

⁴⁰ See Gutzwiller (2020).

⁴¹ It is unclear whether the Telchines were also poets, but later tradition thought so at least; cf. fr. 1b.2–7 Harder. Hunter (forthcoming) notes the possibility that αἰοιδῶν in line 5 could be understood as a feminine genitive plural referring to poems, 'countless

resembles Callimachus' own *ἔπος* (fr. 1.5 Harder) and οὐ πολὺμυθος ('not verbose') looks to invert a Callimachean usage of πολὺμυθος ('verbose') to refer to the maiden Crethis in a funerary epigram (37.1 *HE*). The term *ἔπος* will hold a similar weight of reference when it is used by Crinagoras of Mytilene, late first century BCE, in an epigram on Callimachus' *Hecale*, in which it is identified as 'this chiselled *epos*' (τὸ τορευτὸν *ἔπος* τόδε, 11.1 GP). Antipater's description of Erinna's 'little *epos*' is modelled on Callimachus' presentation of his own compositional practice in the Reply.⁴²

Two further epigrams exhibit similarities in the way they praise Erinna, but their differences are equally important.

ὁ γλυκὺς Ἡρίνας οὗτος πόνος, οὐχὶ πολὺς μὲν
 ὧς ἂν παρθενικᾶς ἐννεακαιδεκέτευσ
 ἄλλ' ἑτέρων πολλῶν δυνατώτερος· εἰ δ' Αἴδας μοι
 μὴ ταχὺς ἦλθε τίς ἂν ταλίκον ἔσχ' ὄνομα;

(Asclepiades 28 *HE* = *AP* 7.11)

This is the sweet labour of Erinna, but not great in extent, since it is by a maiden of nineteen years, but it is greater in power than many others. If death had not come quick to me, who would have had such a name?

Λέσβιον Ἡρίνης τόδε κηρίον· εἰ δέ τι μικρόν,
 ἀλλ' ὅλον ἐκ Μουσέων κιννάμενον μέλιτι.
 οἱ δὲ τριηκόσιοι ταύτης στίχοι ἴσοι Ὀμήρω,
 τῆς καὶ παρθενικῆς ἐννεακαιδεκέτευσ,
 ἦ καὶ ἔπ' ἠλακάτη μητρὸς φόβω, ἦ καὶ ἔφ' ἰστῶι
 ἐστήκει Μουσέων λάτρις ἐφαπτομένη.
 Σαπφῶ δ' Ἡρίνης ὅσσον μελέεσσιν ἀμείνων,
 Ἥρινν' αὖ Σαπφούς τόσσον ἐν ἐξαμέτροις.

(Anonymous 38 *FGE* = *AP* 9.190)

This is the Lesbian honeycomb of Erinna. Though it is small, it is entirely mixed with honey from the Muses. Her three hundred lines are equal to Homer, though

thousands of recent songs heaped up', evocative of piles of unread papyri left to decay. This certainly cannot be discounted, especially given the allusion to epigram collections (see below), but as he admits, poets make more natural speakers of the epigram. νεορῶν is a Homeric *hapax* characterising the Achaean troops as young children prior to the Catalogue of Ships (see below). If this intertext is operative in the epigram it further suggests that people and not poems are meant.

⁴² Although, as Hunter (forthcoming) sets out clearly, this does not mean that Crinagoras uses *ἔπος* in the same way as does Callimachus: it must refer to a poem in the former, but it is difficult to take it as such in the Reply.

1.2 Erinna and the Epigrammatists

by a maiden of nineteen years. Either at the spindle in fear of her mother or at the loom she stood applying herself as a handmaid of the Muses. As much as Sappho is better than Erinna in lyric metres, this much in turn is Erinna better than Sappho in hexameters.

Asclepiades was writing in the early third century BCE; the second epigram is of unknown date but is probably later.⁴³ Both epigrams, like Antipater's, share a focus on the contrast between the extent of Erinna's poem and its content. For Asclepiades, Erinna's poem is short in compass but nevertheless 'rather powerful' or 'forceful' (in a similar way to Diogenes Laertius' appraisal of Herillus' books; see above). For the anonymous epigrammatist, although her work is small, it is even able to match up to Homer himself. Asclepiades' poem shows, then, that an appreciation of her poetry as exhibiting a contrastive aesthetic of scale predated Antipater's epigram. Yet an interest which is present in these two epigrams but absent from Antipater's poem is quantification. Both give her age with the striking παρθενικῆς ἔννεακαιδεκέτευς fitted into the pentameter, presumably borrowed in 38 *FGE* from Asclepiades.⁴⁴ The anonymous epigram has counted up the lines of her *Distaff* for comparative purposes too: her verses are counted for a comparison with Homer (300) and her metre for a comparison with Sappho (ἐν ἑξαμέτροις, 38.8: lit. 'in measures of six'). As Callimachus had caricatured in his Reply, the Telchines were concerned with the number of his verses but also with his age and the fact that his 'decades are not few' (fr. 1.6 Harder). In addition to the Callimachean style of his epigram, it is further significant that, unlike Asclepiades and the anonymous epigrammatist, Antipater does not focus on the quantifiable aspects of Erinna and her poetry despite the aesthetic of scale that all have identified in her work. Antipater rather follows Callimachus' attitude as outlined in the Reply by not applying counting as a critical tool, even for positive evaluations. To Antipater, it would seem,

⁴³ Given the probable allusion to Asclepiades at 28.4 *FGE*; see below. For a discussion of Asclepiades' dates see Sens (2011) xxv–xxix; he may well have begun composing at the end of the fourth century.

⁴⁴ And ultimately, probably, from Erinna herself, who seems to mention her age in what can be discerned in the papyrus that has preserved a fragment of the *Distaff*: ἐννεα[κ]αὶ δέκατος (*SH* 401.37).

the precise number of her years and the number of her verses are not relevant.

However, this is not to say that Antipater does not have a point to make about numbers in relation to poetry. As Alexander Sens has shown, in the first and final couplets Antipater draws on Antenor's recollection of Menelaus' and Odysseus' rhetorical style in the Teichoscopya of *Iliad* 3.⁴⁵ Antipater's παυροεπής . . . οὐ πολὺμυθος echoes Homer's description of Menelaus as '[speaking] few words but very clear, since he was not a man of many words' (παῦρα μὲν ἀλλὰ μάλα λιγέως, ἐπεὶ οὐ πολὺμυθος, *Il.* 3.214). His newly coined παυροεπής ('of few words'), and Erinna as someone who does not 'miss out on' (ἤμβροτεν) a memorial, respond to the Homeric *hapax* describing Menelaus as 'not missing the mark in speaking' (ἀφαμαρτοεπής). The allusion to Menelaus suggests that Antipater followed Callimachus in espousing a critique that does not involve enumeration, but conceives of a relative relationship between content and extent that produces a contrastive aesthetic of scale: here, few but exacting words. In contrast to Menelaus, Odysseus in Antenor's view speaks 'words like winter snow' (ἔπεα νιφάδεσσιν εἰκότα χειμερήσιον, *Il.* 3.222): Homer also contains the seeds of a criticism interested in quantity.⁴⁶ The third couplet sees Antipater rework this contrast between Menelaus and Odysseus into a contrast between Erinna as a singular success and the innumerable epigrammatists. The Iliadic scene gives examples of how successful different characters are at speaking and the content of their speech, whereas the contrast in Antipater has become one in which a single work is set against numerous works. This change is occasioned, I would tentatively suggest, by the simile of Odysseus' words being like winter snow in contradistinction to Menelaus as a speaker who is not verbose (οὐ πολὺμυθος), where Odysseus' many words have been taken to imply a multiplicity of works. A further concern for judging between different styles and their relative success, then, is not

⁴⁵ Sens (2007) 376–81.

⁴⁶ A contrast the terms of which Antipater varies in the final image of the jackdaws' cry described not as winter snow, but as spreading out through the spring clouds.

only the interrelation of content and extent in a way that exhibits one's *sophia*, but also the quantity of poetic output per se.

Consequently, Antipater may seem to follow in the Telchines' footsteps by making an evaluative statement by counting up and contrasting Erinna and the epigrammatists. However, his use of the adverb *σωρηδόν* points to a deeper sophistication. It brings to mind the philosophical *sorites* problem. Susanne Bobzien summarises it as follows:

'Does one grain of wheat make a heap?' – 'No'. 'Do two grains of wheat make a heap?' – 'No' 'Do three?' – 'No'. – etc. If the respondent switches from 'no' to 'yes' at some point, they are told that they imply that one grain can make a difference between heap and non-heap, and that that's absurd. If the respondent keeps answering 'no', they'll end up denying e.g. that 10,000 grains of wheat make a heap. And, they are told, that's also absurd.⁴⁷

The problem is about definitions that have in-built vagueness; the image of the *soros* points to enumeration as wholly unsuitable for defining certain things. Indeed, the possibly fuzzy nature of counting, as well as numbers' unsuitability for delimiting certain quantities, is already embedded in the paradoxical *ἀναρίθμητοι* . . . *μυριάδες* (58.5); *μυρίας* can mean 'ten thousand' and 'a countless amount' (LSJ *s.v.* *μυριάς* A.I). Having the *sorites* problem in mind on reading this epigram both raises the question of how many new poets are enough and how many too much, at the same time as it suggests that enumeration is not a useful metric: these *μυριάδες* are *ἀναρίθμητοι*. Just as Callimachus ultimately argues for the pointlessness of simply counting up lines, so this implied *soros* focuses rather on the poets as a large multitude, not requiring – or susceptible to – enumeration.⁴⁸

An unmeasured multitude finds precedence elsewhere in *Iliad* 3. Antipater draws imagery from the opening of that book to depict the oblivion that Erinna might have faced. The opening similes depict the gathered Trojan contingent; the sound of their mass is 'like a clamouring flock of cranes' (*ἥύτε περ κλαγγή γεράνων, Il.*

⁴⁷ Bobzien (2002) 218. Cf. e.g. Cic. *Acad.* 2.93; Galen *Medical Experience* 16.1–2, 17.102; Sext. *Emp. Math.* 1.69.

⁴⁸ Also worth considering is Callimachus' *νήιδες* (2). One meaning of the verb *νέω* is to heap. If later readers perceived this etymology in Callimachus' description of the Telchines, then *νεαρῶν σωρηδόν ἄοιδῶν* could be read as Antipater's elaboration of Callimachus' anonymous critics.

3.3) and the resulting dust cloud from the marshalling is ‘a mist better than night for the thief’ (ὀμίχλην | . . . κλέπττη δέ τε νυκτὸς ἀμείνω, *Il.* 3.10–11). Birds and blotting out the sunlight go together. Antipater’s elliptical description that Erinna is ‘not constricted by the shadowy wing of black night’ brings together two aspects of this multitude, their flock-like behaviour and their ability to cast shadows. This image becomes more understandable on reaching the third and fourth couplets, where other poets are an immeasurable mass, whose poems spread like the cry of the jackdaws. A related simile from *Iliad* 17 clarifies the mention of the cry of the jackdaws in the epigram’s final couplet.

τῶν δ’ ὡς τε ψαρῶν νέφος ἔρχεται ἢε κολοιδῶν,
 οὔλον κεκλήγοντες, ὅτε προΐδωσιν ἰόντα
 κίρκον, ὃ τε σμικρῆσι φόνον φέρει ὀρνίθεσσιν,
 ὡς ἄρ’ ὑπ’ Αἰνεΐα τε καὶ Ἔκτορι κοῦροι Ἰαχαιῶν
 οὔλον κεκλήγοντες ἴσαν, λήθοντο δὲ χάρμης.

(Homer *Iliad* 17.755–9)

And as a cloud of starlings or jackdaws flies, shrieking cries of destruction, when they see a falcon coming on them that brings death to small birds, so before Aeneas and Hector fled the youths of the Achaeans, shrieking cries of destruction, and forgot all fighting.

The repetition of κεκλήγοντες in this passage highlights the change in circumstances from *Iliad* 3: this time it is the Achaeans’ turn to clamour. Antipater evokes the first line of the passage in his final couplet; the phrase ἢε κολοιδῶν is found only here in this form and *sedes* in Homer, and κολοιδός only appears once more in any form in Homer (at *Il.* 16.583). In a pointed contrast, the cloud (νέφος) of jackdaws has become the clouds through which they croak in Antipater’s poem. Following the logic of this simile, if other poets are the mass of jackdaws, then Erinna is the falcon; she can turn lesser poets to flight. Antipater’s mention of poetic oblivion (λήθη, 6), too, finds a model in the jackdaws, who forget about the lust of battle. This intertext provides a model for the swan *qua* bird achieving avian success over the host of other poets, whom Erinna leaves behind to be forgotten.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ It may have been a pre-existing image for Erinna’s song, if the anonymous epigram describing Erinna as having brought forth her song ‘sounding with a swan-like voice’

With the *Teichoscopia* in Book 3 already evoked by the epigram's opening lines, what Erinna now appears to have avoided in the second couplet is the effects of the gathering Trojan host at the opening of that same Iliadic book; she meets no flock of cranes nor is overshadowed by their battle cloud. Likewise, the opening lines of that book also make explicit the sonic contrast with the Greek army; the Trojans are like a clamour of cranes, but the Greeks 'came up to them in silence, breathing fury' (οἱ δ' ἄρ' ἴσαν σιγῇ μένεα πνεύοντες Ἄχαιοί, *Il.* 3.8). There seems to be some analogical thinking on Antipater's part in the two scenes, or parts of them, which he has chosen to combine: just as Odysseus' words were a blizzard, so the cranes create their clamour 'as when they flee the winter storm and the unspeakable rain' (αἶ τ' ἔπει οὔν χειμῶνα φύγον καὶ ἀθέσφατον ὄμβρον, *Il.* 3.4). In effect, Antipater uses these images from *Iliad* 3 to do two interrelated things. The allusion to Menelaus' rhetorical abilities and the contrast with Odysseus characterise two forms of composition in which one type of speech or poetry involves the production of multiple works. The allusion to the flock of birds and Erinna as the single swan make the distinction on the level of people, between the individual fighters and the multitude of the gathered troops, between the one and the many. Erinna has not been obscured by the countless flock of poets, as it were, because she composed a single powerful work rather than many works that are susceptible to being left among the uncountable multitude.

Such a reading is also reflected in the use of σωρηδόν. As well as recalling the *sorites* problem, σωρηδόν in the context of epigrams and epigram collections would evoke the shadowy Hellenistic *Soros*.⁵⁰ This epigram collection was either the first to collect Posidippus of Pella's poetry, or may have been the first to combine epigrams from different authors; in either case it would have been a well-known collection.⁵¹ The adverb, together with the

(κυκνεῖω φθεγγομένην στόματι, *AP* 7.12.2 = Anonymous 39.2 *FGE*) can be dated before Antipater.

⁵⁰ I am indebted to Daniel Anderson for the discussions we shared about the possible connection between the *Soros* and the *sorites* problem.

⁵¹ The proposal for the *Soros* as an anthology was first made by Reitzenstein (1893) 96–102. For more recent criticism and differing reconstructions see Cameron (1993) 369–76; Gutzwiller (1998) 18–19 and 155–6; Bing (2017).

epigrammatist's first-person plural *μαραινόμεθα*, 'we fade into oblivion', thus raises the possibility of a poetic *sorites* problem: how many epigrams make a book, perhaps; but also: how many epigrams are too much? Callimachus had sought to reject epic length in his Reply, whereas Antipater champions Erinna's poetry as refined and Callimachean by contrasting the *Distaff* with epigram. The image of a heaped mass of epigrammatists suggests that poems, like grains of sand, can get too small, at which point they paradoxically proliferate and together become an unmanageable and unaccountable multitude. Whereas the Telchines were interested in a single work of great length, Antipater is focused on the opposite extreme of poetic extent: he figures the *Distaff* as achieving Callimachus' non-numerical aesthetics of scale where epigram fails.

An equally important intertext for Antipater's epigram, as well as Callimachus' Reply, is Homer's Invocation to the Muses in *Iliad* 2. As Homer is clear to state: 'the multitude I could not tell or name' (*πληθὺν δ' οὐκ ἄν ἐγὼ μυθήσομαι οὐδ' ὀνομήνω*, *Il.* 2.488). He and the audience must settle instead for the catalogue counting up the ships, the leaders and the soldiers per ship but not the names of or stories associated with individual soldiers. Likewise, the great proliferation of epigrammatists has the same effect on Antipater in his role as a commemorator of poetry and poets. They are so many that only their numerical total can be captured in the poem; unlike Homer's Catalogue, though, their number is so large that it borders on the entirely uncountable. Erinna avoids the ignominy of oblivion. Antipater is able to recall and commemorate Erinna as a leading poet just as Homer, with the help of the Muses, was able to recall the leaders of the contingent and their stories. In conception, that is, Antipater models the distinction between Erinna and the epigrammatists on Homer's foundational expression of the effect that quantity has upon the ability to commemorate and his resolution that counting at least enables him to account for each soldier. I would also argue that Antipater signals his debt to Homer's concern for counting and commemoration in *Iliad* 2 within the epigram. As I have noted, the simile of a flock of screeching birds appears in *Iliad* 17, but it is imagery which is used to describe the Trojan troops at the opening of *Iliad* 3, and to describe the gathering Achaean troops in *Iliad* 2, in a run of similes

immediately prior to the Invocation (*Il.* 2.459–65). The same image bookends Homer’s roll call of both the Greek and Trojan contingents at Troy and thus forms a ring composition, which is a common feature of Homeric poetry. The particular contrast in this case is that similes describing a multitude are set in contrast to the counting up of a multitude. In characterising the epigrammatists as a shrieking flock, Antipater deploys imagery in his epigram that also contrasts with his counting, or inability to count, in the third couplet. In a more allusive vein, Antipater addresses the epigrammatists as νεαροί (‘young’), which is a Homeric *hapax* taken from *Iliad* 2, in a scene where Odysseus compares the Achaean troops to ‘youthful children’ (παῖδες νεαροί, *Il.* 2.289), disheartened and longing for home. If the Homeric source of the term is observed in the epigram, then the reader is given a direct clue that Antipater sees the uncountable heap of epigrammatists as akin to the unnamed but numbered multitude of Achaeans at Troy who will also fade into oblivion. Antipater, then, not only follows in Callimachus’ footsteps and carefully avoids numerical assessment of Erinna’s poetic skill in his epigram. He also raises the idea, which can be traced back to Homer’s Invocation, that counting as a form of description is all that remains when the poetic output is so large as to risk becoming unmanageable, and it is a counting that likewise obscures commemoration as well as a detailed treatment of a poet’s *sophia*.

Antipater’s epigram exemplifies the extent to which Callimachus’ approach to numerical poetic criticism permeated Hellenistic literary discourse. His characterisation of Erinna bears all the hallmarks of a Callimachean appraisal that avoids number in favour of poetic refinement. Antipater combines Callimachus’ interest in scale and the question of multiplicity in contrast to the singular – as shown by his allusions to *Iliad* 2 and 3 – in order to contrast Erinna’s short (epyllion-like) hexameter lament and the mass of epigrammatists. This shift in generic focus attests to the malleable use of number and of Callimachean criticism in the literary landscape: what was once a concern used to justify Callimachus’ poetics at the opening of an aetiological elegiac catalogue is now also extended to epigram and epigram collections. There is an engagement with Callimachus and Homer and

the pairing of a poet who rejects numerical criticism with the poet who displayed his ability to count at length. Later readers are influenced by Callimachus' rejection of counting criticism, but they read it alongside other passages that also set poetry and counting in dialogue.

1.3 Roman Reckonings

Callimachus' influence on Roman literature was widespread and is well known in modern scholarship. My intention in this section is to show that his engagement with the question of how numbers and counting relate to criticism is not ignored by later Roman poets. Rather, they take up this concern and develop it, observing both how it relates to an aesthetic of scale, and also – as in the case of Antipater – adapting Callimachean themes to the question of quantity: *how many* compositions are poetically appropriate? I begin first with Catullus and some programmatic poems from his collection: *cc.* 1, 5 and 7. While his Callimachean allegiance is not in doubt, I wish to bring more clearly into focus his awareness and reworking of Callimachus' concern with counting.⁵² Subsequently, I examine an introductory poem to Martial, Book 8. It addresses the number of poetry books that Martial has produced and what the implications are of this count for an appreciation of his poetry. What will emerge is two poets' attentiveness to, and rejection of, the range of reckonings that Roman readers could apply to their poetry books.

1.3.1 *Catullus Kisses Goodbye to Criticism*

Catullus *c.* 5 – *uiuamus mea Lesbia atque amemus* ('Let us live, my Lesbia, and love', 5.1) – is one of the most famous poems in Latin and arguably the most famous counting poem in antiquity. Together with *c.* 7, its focus on the numerical has garnered much attention. The substance of this subsection is devoted to arguing

⁵² Scholarship has generally undervalued the Callimachean themes in *cc.* 5 and 7, or at least not advanced a coherent interpretation of them. The companion piece of Knox (2007) on Callimachus and Catullus makes no connection, nor do, e.g. Clausen (1970); King (1988); Hunter (2006). The major commentaries are equally sparse.

1.3 Roman Reckonings

that an underemphasised aspect of the poems is their engagement with counting as it relates to criticism. In particular, I wish to build on the work of earlier scholars and propose that *c.* 5, with the help of *c.* 7, reworks Callimachus' Reply to the Telchines and thus constitutes a programmatic statement about the nature of counting as a means of poetic appreciation and the extent to which it can be applied to his poetry and its erotic subject matter. I will tentatively suggest, moreover, that this problematisation of counting as a means to appreciate Catullus' poetry may be extended to the collection as a whole.

First, though, I discuss *c.* 1, Catullus' opening poem in the collection as found in the manuscripts, and the emphasis it places on Callimachean poetics and numerical appraisals of literature, at the same time as it introduces – albeit subtly – the erotic current that runs through the collection.

cui dono lepidum nouum libellum
arido modo pumice exolitum?
Corneli, tibi: namque tu solebas
meas esse aliquid putare nugas,
iam tum cum ausus es unus Italorum
omne aeuum tribus explicare cartis
doctis, Iuppiter, et laboriosis.
quare habe tibi quicquid hoc libelli,
qualecumque; quod, o patrona uirgo⁵³,
plus uno maneat perenne saeclo.⁵⁴

(Catullus *c.* 1)

To whom do I give this new fine little book, recently polished up with dry pumice? To you, Cornelius; since you always used to think my trifles worth something, you who now dare of all Italians to unroll all the ages in three books – learned ones, by Jupiter, and laboured! So have for yourself this work such as it is, whatever it is worth; and may it, o virgin patroness, remain for more than one generation.⁵⁵

Since Catullus presents his *libellus* as a gift, the poem probably prefaced at least one collection of his works. It has long been noted

⁵³ The term has long exercised critics; see Thomson (1978) 99 and 198–200 with discussion and further bibliography.

⁵⁴ Latin text following Mynors (1958), with emendations noted where I think they are required.

⁵⁵ Translation adapted from Lee (1991).

that the poem, with its advertisement of the *libellus* as *lepidus*, translates the Callimachean interest in poetic refinement at the opening of the Reply – θρέψαι τὴν Μοῦσαν δ’ ὠγαθὲ λεπταλέην ([‘but], my dear fellow, keep the Muse slender’. fr. 1.24) – for the context of a Roman poetry collection. So too, the final line of Catullus’ poem characterises his *libellus* in the same way that Callimachus’ describes his own work at the conclusion of his first *aition* in the *Aetia*: ἔλλατε νῦν, ἐλέγοισι δ’ ἐνιπήσασθε λιπώσας | χεῖρας ἔμοις, ἵνα μοι πουλὺ μένωσιν ἔτος (‘Be gracious now and wipe your shining hands upon my elegies, so that they will remain for many years’, fr. 7.13–14 Harder).⁵⁶ In terms of its programmatic effect, Bruce Gibson identifies how the poem ‘anticipates and outmanoeuvres criticism’ and that ‘[t]he basic technique is similar to that used by Callimachus in the *Aetia* prologue’.⁵⁷ Catullus diverges from this model somewhat in emphasising Cornelius Nepos’ appreciation of his *nugae* rather than his (negative) criticism, although it is no simplistic positive appraisal: precisely what value he ascribes to the *nugae* is left pointedly vague (cf. *aliquid*, 4 and 8–9), and the fact that he ‘used to’ (*solebas*, 3) hold them in esteem begs the question of what, if anything, has changed in the present. Nevertheless, Catullus follows the broader structuring of the Reply by beginning with a response to someone else’s appraisal of his existing poetry.

He also copies the critical frame of the Reply with regards to the extent of the *Chronica* and of his *libellus* in relation to their content. The single time span of all Roman history fits in Nepos’ three books, while Catullus wishes his single *libellus* to last over an entire *saeculum*.⁵⁸ Just as the Telchines, Callimachus claimed, focus on the numerically measurable extent of the poem that they desired of him and its nature as a continuous work, Catullus

⁵⁶ On this point, see Acosta-Hughes and Stephens (2012) 221–2.

⁵⁷ Gibson (1995) 572–3.

⁵⁸ For history and time in *c.* 1 see Rauk (1997). If the lacuna at the end of verse 5 of Callimachus’ prologue were to be filled by ἐλίσσω, then Catullus’ description of Nepos as ‘unfolding’ (*explicare*) his works would set him more firmly as producing a history in the manner that Callimachus presents himself as composing at the opening of the *Aetia*. It is debatable whether Callimachus’ representation in the opening lines referred to the composition of the *Aetia*, but for a later reader it is a plausible interpretation. See Cameron (1995) 340; Acosta-Hughes and Stephens (2001); Harder (2012) II, 7–9, all with further bibliography.

1.3 Roman Reckonings

likewise measures out the three books of Nepos' *Chronica* and identifies its continuous nature: *omne aeuum* glossing Callimachus' διηνεκές ('continuous').⁵⁹ Gibson interprets this as Catullus subtly and with playful irony critiquing Nepos' *Chronica*.⁶⁰ In effect Catullus adopts the pose of the Telchines when characterising the *Chronica*, despite the fact that he has scaled so much history into just three books, and so *learnedly*. In (re)presenting his own *libellus*, however, he evokes Callimachus' emphasis on slenderness as part of a contrastive aesthetic by reworking the connection between the one and the continuous and between time scale and the quantitative aspect of the text. The hope is that his single poetry book offered in response to or in exchange for Nepos' labouring over the *Chronica* will be impressive for the contrast between its small size and the length of time for which it survives. Catullus' collection, that is, begins with a demonstration of his ability to judge literary works through enumeration as the Telchines had, but also his commitment to a Callimachean slenderness and its contrastive aesthetic when it comes to accounting for his own poetry.

The final aspect of *c. 1* that is important for my current discussion is its introduction of the erotic tone, which is then immediately developed in the infamously teasing *passer* poems.⁶¹ *C. 1* participates in what William Fitzgerald terms an 'erotics of poetry' that is directed at Catullus' readership. His overarching claim is that sexual provocation is a constituent element of Catullus' poetry and the relation constructed between poet and audience. What Catullus is doing is 'exploring an aesthetic relation that unsettles the rigid framework of Roman conceptions of power and position as they are metaphorised by sex and gender'.⁶² On this view, the opening poem addressed to Nepos has flirtatious undertones. The

⁵⁹ Setting to one side the literary debates into which Callimachus may be intervening, it is accepted in more recent scholarship that διηνεκές at the least implies a 'continuous linear narrative', Cameron (1995) 343, or the 'telling of a story completely', Harder (2012) II, 20. This well suits the presumably annalistic (and exhaustive) shape of the *Chronica*.

⁶⁰ Gibson (1995) 570.

⁶¹ There is a fairly extensive bibliography on these poems which circles around the question of whether the *passer* is simply a bird or symbolises the penis. See e.g. Jocelyn (1980); Skinner (1981); Hooper (1985); Jones (1998); Pomeroy (2003).

⁶² Fitzgerald (1999) 34–5.

book ‘recently polished up with dry pumice’ (*c.* 1.2) plays on the idea that bodies too could be polished with pumice and advertise effeminacy: ‘Catullus’ book has a teasing sexuality that is provocatively effeminate.’⁶³ By calling his Muse *patrona uirgo* (9), though, he pulls the rug out from under Nepos: the book may appear sexually available, but cannot be ‘taken’ in a sexual sense since it is virginal and so is to remain ‘for more than one generation’ (10).

The opening poem thus carefully introduces three aspects of Catullus’ poetic world: his adherence to Callimachean criteria when appraising literature; his additional use of number and numerical measures of poetry as a tool of distinction; and his sexual positioning of himself and of his poetry vis-à-vis others. To put this another way, Catullus matches his drama of position through sexual language in the social sphere with a self-consciously literary positioning through both Callimachean poetics and enumeration. My argument is that *c.* 5 with the support of the ‘response’ in *c.* 7 combines these three aspects again in an equally programmatic way. It intertwines Callimachean motifs, counting and erotics in order to introduce his love for Lesbia explicitly and at the same time reject criticism of his account of that love affair. What is important about Catullus developing Callimachus’ poetics and refusing to adopt counting as a critical measure is that he adheres to these principles at the same time that his poem performs counting within its verses. In so doing, *c.* 5 rehearses the collocation of motifs seen in *c.* 1, but is fundamentally different in its use of counting not as a tool of criticism, but a tool *against* it.

Here is the text and a translation of *c.* 5 and 7.

uiuamus, mea Lesbia, atque amemus
 rumoresque senum seueriorum
 omnes unius aestimemus assis.
 soles occidere et redire possunt;
 nobis, cum semel occidit breuis lux,
 nox est perpetua una dormienda.
 da mi basia mille, deinde centum,
 dein mille altera, dein secunda centum,

⁶³ Fitzgerald (1999) 41.

1.3 Roman Reckonings

deinde usque altera mille, deinde centum;
dein cum milia multa fecerimus
conturbabimus illa ne sciamus
aut ne quis malus inuidere possit
cum tantum sciat esse basiorum.

(Catullus *c.* 5)

Let us live, my Lesbia, and let us love, and let us value all the rumours of rather severe old men at a single *as*. Suns will set and rise; for us, when our single brief light has set, night is one perpetual sleep. Give me a thousand kisses, then another hundred, then another thousand, then a second hundred, then yet another thousand, then a hundred. Then, when we have reached many thousands, we will confound them all so that we might not know, nor any evil person look with spite and know, how many the kisses are.

quaeris quot mihi basiationes
tuae, Lesbia, sint satis superque.
quam magnus numerus Libyssae harenae
lasarpiciferis iacet Cyrenis
oraclum Iouis inter aestuosi
et Batti ueteris sacrum sepulcrum,
aut quam sidera multa, cum tacet nox,
furtiuos hominum uident amores;
tam te basia multa basiare
uesano satis et super Catullo est,
quae nec pernumerare curiosi
possint nec mala fascinare lingua.

(Catullus *c.* 7)

You ask how many of your kissifications, Lesbia, would be enough and then some. As many as the great number of the Libyan sands that lie around silphio-phoric Cyrene among the sweltering oracle of Jove and the sacred tomb of old Battus, or as many as the many stars that look upon the hidden loves of men when night is silent. To kiss you with that many kisses is enough and then some for deranged Catullus, which busybodies will neither be able to count up nor curse with their evil tongue.

The resonance between these two poems has long been noted: 7 is a ‘pendant’, a delayed reply, or a reworking of 5. Poem 5 begins with a call to love (1), which is made urgent by the observation of the brevity of life, a life critiqued by older generations (2–6). There follows the count of the many kisses Catullus orders Lesbia to give him (7–10). The poem concludes with the confounding of this freshly made account so that no evil onlooker may know the tally

(11–13). Poem 7 begins by representing Lesbia in response having asked how many kisses would be sufficient for Catullus (1–2). He replies by offering two images of the innumerable – sands and stars – both of which he has nuanced and personalised beyond their (already) stereotypical usage (3–8): these are Libyan sands around Battus’ tomb and stars that spy on clandestine loves.⁶⁴ In the case of the number of the stars, Catullus makes the theme particularly topical by resuming the theme of the night as a space for lovers (cf. 5.6 and 7.7). He concludes by reiterating that such an amount would satisfy ‘mad’ Catullus and mean that ‘busybodies’ will be not be able to count them up nor utter curses against them (9–12).

One early question was the type of counting Catullus represents. Harry Levy suggested that Catullus keeps the score of Lesbia’s kisses upon the abacus, while Roger Pack, considering the abacus to be too mercantile for Catullus, proposed instead that he is counting on his fingers.⁶⁵ The issues with these two reconstructions notwithstanding, it is difficult to identify within the poem anything that demands a specific counting method, let alone one that is operative from a literary perspective.⁶⁶ I therefore leave the matter aside since it will not have an impact on the following interpretation. In a different vein, Francis Cairns designated *c.* 5 an *arithmetikon* and compared it to arithmetic poems found in Book 14 of the *Palatine Anthology*.⁶⁷ As will become evident in Chapter 4, the majority of those compositions postdate Catullus, and neither the term nor the genre would likely have been recognised by Catullus. A more useful historical contextualisation is the financial aspect of Catullus’ counting, or rather, accounting. The views of an older generation are valued by Catullus in monetary terms, but so is the treatment of his own kiss count, *conturbare* (11) having the sense of ‘to bring one’s financial affairs into

⁶⁴ For sand cf. e.g. *Il.* 2.800, 9.385, Pind. *Ol.* 2.98, Callim. *Hymn* 6.253. For the stars as numerable cf. *Il.* 8.555–9, Callim. *Hymn* 4.175.

⁶⁵ Levy (1941); Pack (1956).

⁶⁶ On the one hand, such round numbers as Catullus deals with seem least to require the use of an abacus to keep score; on the other hand, Pack has to pull together sparse hand gestures from a range of disparate sources in order to even suggest that such a practice was commonly employed in antiquity.

⁶⁷ Cairns (1973).

1.3 Roman Reckonings

disorder’, ‘to go bankrupt’.⁶⁸ Catullus’ defining of his relationship with Lesbia in this way draws on definitions of social interaction in economic terms that are part of his larger transactional outlook, observable most clearly in his ‘contractual’ approach to love (e.g. *cc.* 76.1–6, 109). Indeed, the sense of exchange is already present in the ‘you ask: I answer’ form of *c.* 7. At the very least, then, counting is operative in this poem inasmuch as it reflects an everyday, economic reality in the Roman world.

Especially relevant for my current purposes, though, is the connection between *c.* 5 and Callimachus’ Reply, noted by Francis Cairns and Stephen Heyworth.⁶⁹ I delineate here the Callimachean resonances in the poems, before looking at the development of counting as a theme in the two poems. Catullus’ designation of the upper limit of desired kisses turns, at the centre of *c.* 7, to the tomb of ‘old Battus’ (6). Contextually, his immediately preceding mention of Cyrene (4) means that he is referring to one of its kings named Battus, quite probably the first of that name and its founder (cf. *Hdt.* 4.150–9; *Pind. Pyth.* 5.87). Equally, however, since the patronymic *Battiades* is elsewhere used by Catullus to refer to Callimachus (*cc.* 65.16 and 116.2) – following Callimachus’ own presentation of his genealogical connection to Battus (cf. epigrams 29 and 30 *HE*) – Catullus is making a connection to one of his poetic models. His choice to allude to Callimachus’ place of birth and lineage in a pair of poems so reliant on enumeration, given Callimachus’ own rejection of counting, is clearly a provocative move. But Catullus does more than refer to Callimachus by alluding to his heritage.

Consider again the opening of Callimachus’ *Aetia*.

πολλάκι μοι Τελχίνες ἐπιτρύζουσιν ἀοιδῆι
νῆιδες οἱ Μούσης οὐκ ἐγένοντο φίλοι,
εἶνεκεν οὐχ ἔν ἀεισμα διηνεκὲς ἢ βασιλῆ
... ..]ας ἐν πολλαῖς ἦνυσα χιλιάσιν
ἢ]ους ἦρωας, ἔπος δ’ ἐπὶ τυτθὸν ἐλ[ίσσω
παῖς ἄτε τῶν δ’ ἐτέων ἠ δεκάς οὐκ ὀλίγη.
... ..]...] και Τε[λ]χίσιν ἐγὼ τόδε· “φῦλον α[

⁶⁸ See e.g. Grimm (1963) 19; Wiseman (1985) 101–7. *OLD s.v. conturbo* 1.3.

⁶⁹ Cairns (1973) 19, Heyworth (1994) 70–2; noted also by Henderson (1993) 243 and Wray (2001) 152.

Callimachus and His Legacy

.] τήκ[ειν] ἦπαρ ἐπιστάμενον,
.]..ρεην [δολ]ιγόστιχος'

(Callimachus *Aetia* fr. 1.1–9 Harder)

Often the Telchines mutter against me, against my poetry, who, ignorant of the Muse, were not born as her friend, because I did not complete one single continuous song (on the glory of?) kings . . . in many thousands of lines or on . . . heroes, but turn around my *epos* a little like a child, although the ten-count of my years is not small. I in turn say this to the Telchines: 'tribe, well able to waste away your own liver . . . of a few lines'

In *cc.* 5 and 7, Catullus responds to the opening of the Reply to the Telchines by reworking its key themes. First, Catullus' representation of those who would criticise his and Lesbia's love recalls the Telchines. In both cases, the poet is reacting to the chatter (cf. *rumores*, 5.2; ἐπιτρύζουσιν, fr. 1.1 Harder) of others who talk about him. So too, both sets of critics are connected with envy. The Telchines, as Callimachus will go on to say, are from 'the destructive race of Bascania' (Βασκανίης ὀλοὸν γένος, fr. 1.17 Harder). Bascania is a malign influence or jealousy that had the capacity to bewitch those who were the object of envy; it comes to be associated with the Evil Eye (LSJ *s.v.* βασκανία). Likewise, Catullus emphasises at the end of both poems the invidiousness of the supposed onlooker (*ne quis malus inuidere possit*, 5.12; *nec pernumerare curiosi | possint nec mala fascinare lingua*, 7.11–12).⁷⁰ Indeed, βασκαίνειν and *fascinare* derive from the same root (*OLD s.v. fascino*); Catullus may thus be etymologically alluding to Callimachus' 'race of Bascania'. The onlookers' interest, as with the Telchines, is to employ counting when prying into the poet's own affairs (*cum tantum sciat esse basiorum*, 5.13; *pernumerare*, 7.11). Catullus makes a connection between the critics' envy and enumeration, a connection which Callimachus had implied later in the Reply where the Telchines as the breed of Bascania seek to employ the *schoinos* to measure poetry.

It may be thought – despite these parallels – that this is rather a coincidence of broader themes related to the envy of the poet. But even setting the reference to Callimachus' Cyrenean lineage in *c.* 7 to one side, further phrases in *c.* 5 suggest that Catullus is

⁷⁰ I am taking both the *senes seuiores* and the imagined onlooker(s) as interchangeable figures of criticism.

1.3 Roman Reckonings

looking specifically to Callimachus' Reply and knowingly appropriating it for his own poetic needs. The Telchines' first criticism as presented by Callimachus is that he did not compose 'one long poem in many thousands of lines'. There is debate about how this comment relates to wider trends of criticism in the Hellenistic period.⁷¹ The minimum that can be said is that their desire is for a poem which is both in some way 'singular' (ἔν) and 'continuous' (διηλεκές, fr. 1.3 Harder). This is a set of terms that Catullus reworks across the two poems to diverse effect. As has been observed, Catullus' statement *nox est perpetua una dormienda* (5.6) responds to the Telchines' desired poem, and indeed in later Roman poets *perpetuus* will come to signal an engagement with Callimachus' poetics in the Reply, such as in Horace's first book of *Odes* (1.7.6) and, famously, in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (1.4).⁷² The same terms are also loosely evoked by Catullus' evaluation of the *rumores* of the old men: they 'value them all at a single *as*' (*omnes unius aestimemus assis*, 5.3). The criterion of the singular can be decidedly negative when it refers to monetary value, but it is a criterion that the Telchines value in poetry: Catullus has used the Telchines' criticism to shut up his critics. This is also the case with his emphasis that *nox est perpetua una dormienda*. He again adopts the numerical aesthetics that the Telchines espoused only to use it against his own murmurers. A single continuous time span emerges as synonymous with the eternity that follows death, a simply unmanageable time frame that is meaningless for humans who occupy the repeated divisions of time into day and night (5.4–5). A time span that would be suitable for the Telchines would leave no space for the prying of the *senes*.

Yet, evidently, Catullus breaks away from the Callimachean model when his poem descends into a counting of kisses. In Callimachean terms, enacting enumeration in poetry is uncharted territory. This is part, I would argue, of Catullus' strategy of co-opting the Telchines' terms in his defence against his own (imagined) critics. As the Reply makes clear, counting is the interest of the critics. As John Elliott has shown, the Evil Eye is

⁷¹ See Hunter (1989b) 190–5 and Cameron (1995) 340–5. ⁷² Heyworth (1994) 71.

connected in many ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern cultures with possessiveness and accounting: miserliness or excessive abstemiousness of one's own possessions incurs the influence of the Evil Eye, while those who are unwilling to share their own possessions are said to cast the Evil Eye on others.⁷³ It is this connection between the critics' envy and enumeration which Catullus draws out of the Reply. Callimachus banishes the destructive race of Bascania (ἔλλετε Βασκανίης ὀλοὸν γένος, fr. 1.17 Harder), after which he outlines the critical framework which ought to be adopted for judging his poetry, a framework which does not require measure. Catullus' strategy is to count up his kisses – or appear to – in a way which responds to 'all the rumours' (*rumoresque . . . omnes*), but which also strips the numbers of their signification. The hypnotic quality of 5.7–10 places the emphasis on sound and also responds to the Telchines' fame for witchcraft with an incantation of Catullus' own.⁷⁴ In any case, the conclusion to *c.* 5 makes explicit the distance between his own counting and the traditional world of accounts and their susceptibility to the Evil Eye, as he exhorts himself and Lesbia to 'throw into confusion' (*conturbabimus*) the account of their affair.

Catullus, then, employs his kiss count as a countermeasure. One thing he is aiming to ensure is that the affair lasts and continues for an extended period of time, a concern which also has its roots in the Reply. There, the Telchines measure up Callimachus' poetry and his verses but also count up the years of his life, seemingly making a connection between his age and the poetry he produces (fr. 1.5–6 Harder). Catullus' kisses replace the counting of lifespans with a counting that cannot be turned to express temporal extension. This resistance of erotics to measurement is resumed in 7, where the kisses that would satisfy Catullus are 'as many as the stars which watch over the stolen loves of humans, when night is silent' (*quam sidera multa, cum tacet nox | furtiuos hominum uident amores, 7.7–8*). This time,

⁷³ See Elliott (2016) II, 126, 147–8, with references.

⁷⁴ The Telchines were known for their envy-induced sorcery, Diod. Sic. 5.55. For more on the cantatoric nature of the poem see Schwindt (2016). This brand of counting and confusion may itself have a Callimachean root, since the etymology of Battus' name comes from the fact that he had a stammer (Hdt. 4.155). *Batti* at 7.6 may gloss the repetitive nature of the count in *c.* 5 as a Callimachean response.

1.3 Roman Reckonings

within which erotic clandestine liaisons occur, allows no criticism: there are no human onlookers here, only the eternal and innumerable stars. Catullus takes the Telchines' concern with age and counting and carves out a time which is not susceptible to envy and criticism, but which is also not the *perpetua nox* of *c.* 5. He opens up a new temporality for his love and for love poetry, moreover, that co-opts the Telchines' own conception of poetic unity of time: not 'one long poem on kings and heroes in many thousands of lines' but 'one long night for lovers with many thousands of kisses'.

This pre-emptive counting up and kissing goodbye to criticism, moreover, fits within Catullus' wider erotics of reading. For Fitzgerald, *c.* 5 represents a failed assertion of masculinity through its focus on foreplay rather than penetration, reminiscent of the *puer delicatus* or even the impotent.⁷⁵ Yet if the poet is all mouth and no trousers, there is good reason. As Benjamin Eldon Stevens has elucidated, speech and silence are recurring themes in Catullus and can be explained against the backdrop of Rome as *tam maledica ciuitas* ('so gossipy a city', Cic. *Cael.* 58): in the case of Catullus' kiss count: 'While a sexual oral activity like kissing precludes or occludes speech, causing a sort of inarticulacy, this is yet more desirable and valuable than articulate speech, which has been, in the poet's view, more truly perverted, put to use in worthless rumormongering and "bad, hexing speech".'⁷⁶ Such speech comes from those who, like the Telchines, would look upon Catullus and criticise, and they are characterised as orally polluted in that they have a *mala lingua*.⁷⁷ Rather than foreplay being failure, in Fitzgerald's terms, kisses are an empowering form of oral articulation that is not contaminated by the *mala lingua* of his critics.

Poems 1 and 5 therefore combine their use of Callimachean poetics with Catullus' focus of love affairs and erotic interactions. Eroticism is insinuated in *c.* 1, but by *c.* 5 such imagery has come to the surface, undoubtedly supported by the well-explored erotic undertones of the intervening *passer* poems. Still, *c.* 5 exhibits similarities with *c.* 1 that suggest a close dialogue. Both respond to appraisal and judgement of Catullus (Nepos of Catullus' *nugae*;

⁷⁵ Fitzgerald (1999) 53. ⁷⁶ Stevens (2013) 55.

⁷⁷ Stevens (2013) 56 makes a further connection between *rumor* and *ir-rum-atio*.

the old men of Catullus' love affair), and both are cognizant of singularly long spans of time (the single *saeculum* and *perpetua nox*). Both too engage with Callimachus at the same time that they introduce enumeration. The connection may be strengthened by the particular number of the kiss count: Nepos' *Chronica* stretches over three books, while Catullus counts up 3,300 kisses with 1,100 set over three lines (7–9).⁷⁸ Just as his *Chronica* contains all Italian history, there is the implication that Catullus' kisses also stand for the duration of the affair, all the kisses that must be made before that *nox perpetua* comes to them. Of course, the development in 5 is equally important. If Catullus demonstrates that he is able to wield counting as criticism in *c.* 1 then he rejects the possibility of accounting for love in *c.* 5, where the enacted enumeration is swiftly undercut by his confounding of the count they have made: love, and the acts of love, cannot be so easily accounted for.

To what extent can this counting and subsequent confusion be understood as programmatic for Catullus' collection? Counting plays an important role in Catullus' poetic outlook in other poems. He counts up volumes elsewhere in the collection: his friend Cinna takes nine years to produce his *Zmyrna* (*c.* 95.1–2), while one Hortensius, according to the most likely construction of the couplet, 'produces half a million verses in a year' (*milia cum interea quingenta †Hortensius uno*, 95.3).⁷⁹ Perhaps the most pointed case of numerical criticism on Catullus' part is in his poem on the poetry of Suffenus:

⁷⁸ Not unlike the count at Theocritus *Idyll* 17.82–4; see Chapter 3, Section 3. It is also remarkable that the focus on three parallels most modern divisions of Catullus' *libellus* into three distinct parts. Here is not the place to enter into discussion about the constitution of the collection as it survives. See Butrica (2007) for a guide to the history and transmission of the text and the debates about its parts. If Trappes-Lomax (2007) 35–6 is right in arguing that *o patrona uirgo* was originally *o Thaleia uirgo*, then this Thalia would be the ideal deity to preside over a three-part collection, since she is the third Muse listed by Hesiod (*Theog.* 77) and also one of the three Graces (*Theog.* 907).

⁷⁹ Catullus is also adept at measuring his metres. From the poem addressed to Calvus it is clear that he thinks himself to be well versed in metrics: *ludabat numero modo hoc modo illoc* ('[each of us] played with rhythms, now in this measure, now in that', 50.5). He shows his awareness of metrical practices elsewhere, when judging the book of poetsasters that Calvus sends him for the Saturnalia, telling him to go back 'to the place from which [you] brought those faulty feet' (*unde malum pedem attulistis*, 14.22), alluding to, and parodying through its very metrical form, the poor versification he has encountered. The verse is not necessarily ingenious as Fordyce (1973) 139 suggests; the notable elision of *c.* 73.6 shows Catullus is able to play with the metre and the meaning of a line.

1.3 Roman Reckonings

Suffenus iste, Vare, quem probe nosti,
homo est uenustus et dicax et urbanus,
idemque longe plurimos facit uersus.
puto esse ego illi milia aut decem aut plura
perscripta, nec sicut fit in palimpsesto⁸⁰
relata: cartae regiae, noui libri . . .

(Catullus *c.* 22.1–6)

That Suffenus, Varus, whom you know very well, is a charming fellow, and has wit and good manners. At the same time, he makes many more verses than anyone else. I bet he has got some ten thousand or even more written out, and not, as is often done, put down on used sheets: [but] imperial paper, new rolls . . .

Commentators have often observed how the poem sets form against content, material text against verbal artistry and appearance against sentiment, simultaneously highlighting how in a social context these contrasts can reveal people's lack of self-awareness.⁸¹ The primary contrast is that Suffenus seems witty, but writes reams upon reams of poor poetry straight on to deluxe paper. Although verbally he shares many valued qualities with Catullus, such as *uenustus* and urbanity, when it comes to writing it down it all reads as doggerel.⁸² Just as with Hortensius' many lines, Catullus diagnoses a central fault of modern poets as being their obsession with length and so sharing the Telchines' critical framework.⁸³ Equally, Catullus is aware that his own poetry can be counted. He implies, without providing a finite figure, that his verses are enumerable in a poem attacking his *puella*, calling together his hendecasyllables 'as many as there are' (*quot estis | omnes, c.* 42.1–2). In demanding that Asinius 'return his napkin' (*linteum remitte, c.* 12.11), he warns him just how many invective lines he will be sent: 'or expect three hundred hendecasyllables' (*aut hendecasyllabos trecentos | expecta, 12.10–11*). Enumeration

⁸⁰ And not *palimpseston*, following Thomson (1978) 259–60.

⁸¹ See e.g. Selden (1992) 476–7; Krostenko (2007) 223–5.

⁸² For *uenustus* and its opposites cf. e.g. *cc.* 3.1–2, 10.3–4, 12.5–9, 86.1–4, 89.2, with Wiltshire (1977). Urbanity is ascribed to 'spice' (*sal*) and 'charm' (*lepor*). For these and their opposites cf. e.g. *cc.* 13.5 and 86.4 and 10.4 and 32.2, with Seager (1974); Nielsen (1987); Fuqua (2002).

⁸³ Contrast *c.* 68b.41–6, where he describes to the Muses the support that Allius has offered him and asks in return that they spread his fame to 'many thousands [more]' (*multis | milibus, 45–6*). For more on the scale of gift-exchange in the context of poetry, see Chapter 3, Section 1.

appears as a strategy of articulating his distance from other poets and literary figures, whether in judgement of their work, as seems to be generally the case, or as part of an invective characterisation of his own poetic retaliation.

It is only in *c.* 5, however, that counting is directed at Catullus' actions, and it is only in *c.* 5 that counting is resisted by first being performed and then confounded. The main difference is that Catullus is appraising literary works elsewhere, whereas in *c.* 5 it is Lesbia's kisses that are under threat of being enumerated. Nevertheless, it is a strong supposition based on his allusion to Callimachus and the Reply that this poem is drawing on a model of poetic criticism and responses to it. As I have suggested, too, the account of the kisses could be interpreted as an account of the love affair, an affair which plays out over the course of Catullus' *libellus*. What I propose is that Catullus is adapting the model of criticism in the Reply to his new poetic context, the literature of love. Catullus may count when appraising others' mythological poetry (Cinna's *Zmyrna*) or historical works (Nepos' *Chronica*), but when it comes to poetry about love, the same sort of enumerative criticism cannot apply. Putting the deeply personal into poetry leaves oneself and not simply one's work open to criticism, as will become clear in *c.* 16. There, Furius and Aurelius have in fact supposedly read *c.* 5 – *quod milia multa basiorum | legistis* ('since you have read my many thousand kisses, *c.* 16.12–13)⁸⁴ – and make too close a connection between what his poetry says and its relation to real life.⁸⁵ In *c.* 5, at the very point when the erotics of his collection transition from flirtatious insinuation to explicit surface meaning, Catullus also chooses to emphasise that his is a new kind of poetry, for which traditional measures of poetic evaluation, such as counting, will simply not do.

⁸⁴ It might be thought that this refers to Catullus' Juventius poem: 'if someone let me kiss for a while, I'd kiss up to three hundred thousand times' (*siquis me sinat usque basiare | usque ad milia basiem trecenta*, 48.2–3). See e.g. Quinn (1970) 143; Sandy (1971) 51. But I think that the connection with poetic criticism in *c.* 16 is more in line with the themes of *cc.* 5 and 7. De Vasconcellos (2015) has shown, furthermore, that 16 recalls 5 in its structure: the opening lines of both are balanced in the same way; *milia multa* are placed in the same *sedes* (5.10 and 16.12); 5, 7 and 16 all conclude with a reference to the 'bad' intent of the onlooker (5.12, 7.12, 16.13).

⁸⁵ On the play of poetry and the poetic persona see e.g. Martin (1992) 76–80; Selden (1992) 477–82, and for the erotic and/or sexual element see Fitzgerald (1999) 48–52.

1.3 Roman Reckonings

This argument about the interplay of the erotic, enumerative and literary critical aspects of *c.* 5 supports the modern image of Catullus as a descendant of the learned Alexandrians revelling in *recherché* references and intricate intertextualities *as well as* the first Roman lyricist to create for his audience the impression of intense moments of passion fervently transcribed on to the page.⁸⁶ In this particular case, paying attention to his reworking of Callimachean themes alongside the performance of counting shows Catullus to be a poet who is deeply aware of, and subtly thematises, the inconcinnity of applying an enumerative form of criticism to poetry so intimate, erotic and personal. A traditional form of poetic *aestimatio* is no match for the poet's *aestus*. Indeed, those modern scholars who have attempted to analyse Catullus' love by numbers, to adapt the title of Helen Dettmer's 1997 monograph (*Love by the Numbers: Form and Meaning in the Poetry of Catullus*), have thus singularly ignored the programmatics of *c.* 5.⁸⁷ In showing that his account is not something available for enumeration by the critic in *c.* 5, Catullus is making a claim also about the content of his love poetry: the inscription of love into the collection, just like its effect on the mind, is illogical, disordered and *incalculable*.

1.3.2 Counting up the Collection

My claim has been that Catullus' counted kisses are utilised as a means to defend against critics not only of his love for Lesbia, but also of his literature about love. I concluded that *c.* 5 and its dialogue with the equally Callimachean *c.* 1 makes it possible that the resistance to counting as a form of poetic criticism extends to the Catullan collection as a whole. Here I wish to show that his use

⁸⁶ For these traditions of reading Catullus, see the summary of Fredricksmeier (1970) 431–5.

⁸⁷ Dettmer (1997). Her monograph, however, is simply the most explicit formulation of a wider project to find and impose order on the Catullan book. See Ellis (1867) 221–304: *Catulli carmina ratione quadam arithmetica diuidenda esse* ('The poems of Catullus ought to be divided up according to a certain arithmetical logic', 221). In more recent times, Skinner (1981) pushed the question to the fore, as did the special volume of *Classical World* from 1988 in which she brought together a number of scholars to discuss structure; see Skinner (1988). Numerical accounting for the collection can still be seen in e.g. Hutchinson (2012).

of enumeration, and the reworking of Callimachean themes, has a noticeable afterlife which constitutes slender but positive evidence for Roman readers' awareness of the interweaving of counting and poetic criticism. I present just one example of a later engagement with the ideas that Catullus first raised in Latin. The most notable development will be that, while in Callimachus' Reply there is no mention of books or their number, a programmatic wariness about the enumeration of poetry has transformed into a focus on the numbering of books, a movement which I have suggested began with Catullus.

Martial is not a love poet, but he is a keen reader of Catullus.⁸⁸ He is also a poet for whom numbers always matter. As Victoria Rimell has explored in depth, Martial's interest in enumeration arises from his imperial and urban context. Exchanges of gifts, favours and poems require a keen mathematical eye in order for the reader to keep track of who values whom at what, while the operations forming and forcing the many into the 'one' is the reflex of the Roman Empire's 'ecumenical' attitude.⁸⁹ Here, though, I focus in on a programmatic poem that crystallises the concerns which I have been tracing about numerical criticism and applies it to the question of how many books of poetry ought to be produced.

'quinque satis fuerant: iam sex septemue libelli
 est nimium: quid adhuc ludere, Musa, iuuat?
 sit pudor et finis: iam plus nihil addere nobis
 fama potest: teritur noster ubique liber;
 et cum rupta situ Messalae saxa iacebunt 5
 altaque cum Licini marmora puluis erunt,
 me tamen ora legent et secum plurimus hospes
 ad patrias sedes carmina nostra feret.'
 finieram, cum sic respondit nona sororum,
 cui coma et unguento sordida uestis erat: 10
 'tune potes dulcis, ingrata, relinquere nugas?
 dic mihi, quid melius desidiosus ages?
 an iuuat ad tragicos soccum transferre cothurnos
 aspera uel paribus bella tonare modis,
 praelegat ut tumidus rauca te uoce magister 15

⁸⁸ See Swann (1994) and Lorenz (2007).

⁸⁹ Rimell (2008) chapter 3, with extensive references to Martial's enumerating epigrams.

1.3 Roman Reckonings

oderit et grandis uirgo bonusque puer?
scribant ista graues nimium nimiumque seueri,
quos media miseros nocte lucerna uidet.
at tu Romano lepidos sale tinge libellos:
agnoscat mores uita legatque suos.
angusta cantare licet uidearis auena,
dum tua multorum uincat auena tubas.⁹⁰

20

(Martial 8.3)

‘Five had been enough. Already six and seven books is too much. What is the benefit, Muse, of playing still further? Let decency be the end. Fame can add nothing further for us. My book is a commonplace everywhere. And when Messala’s site lies as broken stone, and Licinius’ tall marble is dust, I will still be read and many visitors will take my poems back home with them.’ So I concluded, and the ninth Muse, with her hair and dress all perfumed, responded as follows: ‘You ingrate, are you able to give up your sweet trifles? Tell me, what more idle thing will you do? Will it please you to swap the comic boot for the tragic buskin or to thunder harsh war in equal rhythms; that the overblown schoolmaster in rough voice read you out, and the grown girl and good lad despise you? Too serious, too grave men write such things – miserable men whom the lamp looks upon in the middle of the night. But you dip your books in Roman spice and refinement. Life must read and recognise its habits. By all means be seen to sing on a slender reed, as long as your reed beats the trumpets of the many.’⁹¹

Martial’s books seem not to have been titled but simply numbered, and in joking about their numbering he shows he is well aware of their ordering.⁹² This epigram makes that numbering programmatic. (The following poems in the book also return to the question of counting: 8.7, 9, 10, 13.) Surely if one is counting books, eight is too many? Martial already has his eternal imperishable fame. To this counting critique the ninth Muse responds: stick with epigrams, serious themes are not for you.⁹³

In response to his concern about an excessive number of books, the ninth Muse justifies the importance of (being suited to) a more playful poetic mode with two clusters of allusions. First, verses

⁹⁰ The Latin follows Shackleton Bailey (1990).

⁹¹ Translation adapted from Shackleton Bailey (2006).

⁹² Cf. 2.93, 5.2, 10.2. For thorough discussion of the order and names of books, see Coleman (2006) xxv–xxvii.

⁹³ 5, 6, 7 and 9 are mentioned, but 8 is conspicuously absent. Since it is the ninth Muse who responds (in line nine!), perhaps she is waiting for the future book dedicated to her, just as Lucian suggests that Herodotus’ nine books were each dedicated to one Muse (*Herodotus* 1).

17–19 refer to Catullus’ poetry. As commentators have observed, the *lepidos* ... *libellos* cannot but recall *c.* 1.1, and *sal* (‘spice’, ‘charm’) is a quality Catullus specifically describes his poetry as having at *c.* 16.7.⁹⁴ While these references to *c.* 1 have been noted, it has gone unobserved that 17–18 also rework Catullus’ imagery in *cc.* 5 and 7. The image inverts Catullus’ own valuing of the overly serious at an *as* and the night as a time within which lovers love. Here, serious topics make severe old men work through the night – not unlike Callimachus’ Aratus (cf. 56.4 *HE* = *AP* 9.207.4) – while the lamp, more often the witness to lovers’ trysts, must make do with looking over them.⁹⁵ Whereas Catullus had marked out a time within which severity is to be abandoned, Martial presents the effect of serious poetry as reversing those manners and so reversing Catullus’ poetological programme: the mark of a witty, charming poet is that his *dulces nugae* are reserved for the daytime alone. Second, in verses 21–2 the ninth Muse simulates the advice in Vergil’s sixth *Eclogue*, where Apollo warns Tityrus to avoid composing epic – ‘the shepherd, Tityrus, ought to feed his sheep fat, but speak a drawn-out song’ (*pastorem, Tityre, pinguis | pascere oportet ouis, deductum dicere carmen, Ecl.* 6.4–5) – which itself evokes Callimachus’ Reply.⁹⁶ Martial’s poem thus concludes by alluding to a number of poems which in different ways draw on a Roman Callimacheanism to negotiate their poetics.

Although Martial does not directly point to the numerical concerns of those intertexts, it is nevertheless clear that he is

⁹⁴ Newman (1990) 110; Schöffel (2002) 117.

⁹⁵ There is a tradition of the lamp looking over the affairs of lovers in the epigrams of the Greek Anthology, cf. e.g. *AP* 5.8, 128, 165–6, 197. It is attested already though in Aristophanes’ *Ecclesiazusae* 6–16.

⁹⁶ For the evocation of Callimachus here see fr. 1.21–4 Harder and e.g. Clausen (1964) 193–5. Martial’s *angusta* ... *auena* gives the qualities of the song which Apollo had advised at *Eclogue* 6.4 to the reed with which Tityrus was playing at the opening of the *Eclogues* (1.2). A further reason for connecting the lines to *Eclogue* 6 specifically is related to the Muse who addresses Martial. The emphasis on comedy (cf. 13) suggests that the comic Muse Thalia is meant, and Schöffel (2002) 107–8 provides further reasons to think that Thalia is meant. Thalia is also the Muse who inspires Tityrus’ playful song in *Eclogue* 6: Martial makes Thalia voice what Vergil has Apollo command regarding genre. If the Catullan emendation of Trappes-Lomax (2007) 35–6 is followed (*o Thaleia uirgo*, p. 64 n.78 above), then Martial is drawing together a number of earlier poetic directives associated with that Muse.

1.3 Roman Reckonings

mobilising their poetics to legitimise his production of a large number of books. Callimachus' slender Muse cannot be appraised by a numerical criterion, but Martial employs Vergil's 'translation' of that passage in *Eclogue* 6 to make a numerical point in his final line. Composing such finely wrought and slender poetry, Martial suggests, is acceptable if it is witty and refined enough to compete with the works of epic. Yet since he contrasts the singular *auena* with the many of the *multorum . . . tubas* (22), it is clear this is an unequal fight and is not simply an issue of the scale of poems, whether large or small. The question Martial leaves unresolved at the close of the epigram is: how does his single refined 'reed' compete with the grand works of many people? The nature of his works offers two answers that are not mutually exclusive. As Rimell has shown, the one/many distinction/s informs his attitude towards books of epigrams; they are full of many smaller compositions, but ultimately constitute a unified whole.⁹⁷ His work beats the many since a single book of his is itself a multitude of different poems. This reading of the final lines explains how epigram can compete with loftier genres, but it does not clearly answer the opening rhetorical question of how many epigram books are sufficient. By the same token, though, if an epigram book can be understood as a unity or a unit, then books too can be added together to form a multitude. The ninth Muse's answer to the question of how much is *too* much borrows from Martial's own thinking. With a conception that seems to reverse Antipater's attitude to epigram collections (see above), Martial makes it the adding of *books* together that enables the genre to compete with the likes of epic, just as adding poems together is what makes a good book.

Martial acknowledges the criticisms that might arise from the number of books he has written and seeks out earlier passages in Latin literature in order to respond. The epigram shows Martial following in Catullus' (and Vergil's) footsteps, engaging with Callimachus' poetic positioning in the Reply (whether at first hand or more probably through Roman receptions) and turning it towards a goal that he had not intended and which is manifestly in contradiction to his poetics, under the guise – it seems – of

⁹⁷ Rimell (2008) 115.

continuing to reject grand epic themes. Where Callimachus had argued for poetic judgement beyond number, a Muse without numerical measure, Catullus and Martial co-opt the discourse of number in the Reply and turn it towards the ends of both framing and defending their multiple book projects. This is not to say, however, that they had not absorbed Callimachus' articulation of an aesthetics of scale as an alternative to numerical measures of poetry; both Callimachus and Martial show a clear awareness of the slenderness advocated by Callimachus. Their engagement with number as well is thus a purposeful move. Despite Callimachus' efforts to banish enumeration from poetry's critical discourse, Roman poets of the first centuries BCE to CE demonstrate that the habit has not been shaken and they produce ever more sophisticated ways of responding to readerly reckonings.