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## **Propagandizing from the Womb: Callimachus' *Hymn to Delos* and the *Oracle of the Potter***

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Callimachus' *Hymn to Delos* is an *encomium* written in honour of Ptolemy II Philadelphus.<sup>1</sup> The subject-matter of the hymn is the birth of the god Apollo. Consequently, one of the main issues of the *Hymn to Delos* is the equation of Apolline power with the Ptolemaic sovereign. There has been a growing interest in tracking down Egyptian influence from the *Hymn to Delos*.<sup>2</sup> For instance, Apollo is born when the Delian river Inopus floods due to its subterranean connection to the Nile. In addition, Apollo shows a striking resemblance to the Egyptian god Horus in the hymn of Callimachus. Allusions to the Egyptian prophetic literature and in particular to an anti-Greek polemic known as *The Oracle of the Potter* have, in my opinion, been neglected in scholarly literature.<sup>3</sup> *The Oracle of the Potter* is a revolutionary text: it belongs to a tradition of native Egyptian propaganda representing a pharaonic topos attested already in *The Prophecy of Neferti* (c. 1991-1786 BC).<sup>4</sup>

In this article, I am concerned to achieve two objectives. First, I argue that Callimachus' *Hymn to Delos* not only alludes to *The Oracle of the Potter*, but conforms to an Egyptian narrative mode known as 'prophetic Königsnovelle'. Second, I illustrate that the Callimachean hymn could have been written in order to reassure the Egyptian priestly and scribal elite that Ptolemy II Philadelphus will respect and continue the time-honoured pharaonic traditions.

### ***The Context and the Content of the Hymn***

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<sup>1</sup> For the earlier Greek *encomium*, see Fraustadt 1909: 8-41.

<sup>2</sup> Koenen 1983: 174-190; Mineur 1984: 13; Bing 1988: 139-145; Koenen 1993: 81-84.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Koenen, 1983: 181-190

<sup>4</sup> Assmann 1983: 357-364.

The three centuries long Greek rule over Egypt started when the Persian commander Mazakes handed Egypt over to Alexander the Great in 332 BCE. Alexander abided by the traditional pharaonic protocol, visited Heliopolis and the capital of the Two Lands, Memphis, where he administered Egyptian rites. Additionally, he received a full royal Egyptian titlature.<sup>5</sup> The satrapy of Ptolemy, son of Lagus, who later became the king of Egypt, began after the death of Alexander. Ptolemy afterwards utilized the Greek worship of Alexander in order to legitimize his rule.<sup>6</sup> While the worship of Greek kings was not at all confined to Egypt, it was in Ptolemaic Egypt where the dynastic cult found the fullest expression.<sup>7</sup>

The biggest challenge for the Ptolemaic regime was to achieve a balance between the Greeks and the Egyptians. The Greeks were, after all, a small minority and chiefly dependent on the existing structures of the government. The ruler's role, for instance, was unclear. For the (Macedonian) Greeks, the king was a βασιλεύς, whose legitimacy was primarily based on military victory.<sup>8</sup> For the Egyptians, on the other hand, the king was a pharaoh, an earthly manifestation of the god Horus and the 'son of Re', who through cultic actions preserves the world order.<sup>9</sup> In the *Hymn to Delos*, Callimachus investigates the *monarchie bicéphale* of Ptolemaic Egypt.

The *Hymn to Delos* is one of Callimachus' few works which can be dated at least with some precision. Through intra-textual references to historical events it can be deduced that the *terminus post quem* of the hymn is the defeat of the rebellious Galatian mercenaries in 275 BC. *Terminus ante quem* on the other hand is the loss of the Ptolemaic fleet at the end of the Chremonidean war in 261 BC. The Ptolemaic empire then lost control of the island of Cos, which has a substantial role in Callimachus' hymn. Additionally, Φοίνισσα [...] Κύρνος

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<sup>5</sup> Beckerath 1999: 232-233.

<sup>6</sup> Chaniotis 2005: 435.

<sup>7</sup> Fraser 1972: 214. For an overview of the royal cult in the Hellenistic world, see Chaniotis 2005.

<sup>8</sup> For instance, Suid. s.v. Βασιλεία β: οὔτε φύσις οὔτε τὸ δίκαιον ἀποδοῦσι τοῖς ἀνθρώποις τὰς βασιλείας, ἀλλὰ τοῖς δυναμένοις ἡγεῖσθαι στρατοπέδου καὶ χειρίζειν πράγματα νουεχῶς· οἷος ἦν Φίλιππος καὶ οἱ διάδοχοι Ἀλεξάνδρου.

<sup>9</sup> Hölbl 2001: 1.

(19) suggests a date before the Roman occupation of Corsica (259 BC). Although most scholars agree a date between 274-270 BC, more exact dates have nonetheless been proposed. Wilhemn Mineur argues that '7 March 274 B.C could not unreasonably be considered as the date on which Callimachus recited *Delos* for the first time in the Alexandrian Museum'.<sup>10</sup>

The content of the hymn can be summarized as follows. While avoiding the pursuing of Zeus, the nymph Asteria jumped into the Mediterranean and became a floating island. Leto, however, who was pregnant (with Apollo) by Zeus, fled throughout the Aegean sea from the wrath of Hera, searching for a place to give birth to her son. Leto arrived at the island of Cos, but foetal Apollo urged her to find a second island because another god (θεὸς ἄλλος), Ptolemy II Philadelphus, was destined to be born there. Eventually, Leto arrived at Asteria, who welcomed her and where she gave birth to Apollo. After the birth of Apollo, Asteria was called Delos. The Delian river Inopus flooded and the island became fixed in the sea: Asteria was no longer invisible (ἄδηλος) or a wanderer (πλαγκτή), but visible and significant (δῆλος). Finally, Asteria-Delos became Apollo's nurse and launched for his amusement a series of games.

On a more general level the *Hymn to Delos* is, however, concerned with chaos and order or, in particular, the victory of order over chaos. Indeed, chaos is everywhere in the pre-Apollonian world: in Greek terms, ἀνάγκη, the brute force, reigns in the world.<sup>11</sup> There are several examples of ἀνάγκη in the *Hymn to Delos*. For instance, Callimachus describes (30-35) how Poseidon, the μέγας θεός, violently ripped the islands out of the earth with a weapon made by the infamous Telchines, who would later represent Callimachus' literary adversaries in the *Aetia* prologue (fr. 1.1-2 Pf.). Additionally, Ares and Iris, the henchmen of Hera, keep watch on the continent and the islands (he from Thracian mountain Haemus, she from Ionian mountain Mimas) in order to prevent Leto from giving birth to Apollo. The gigant Briareus, who dwells

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<sup>10</sup> Mineur 1984: 18.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Bing 1988: 112-113.

under Mount Aetna, is active, but above all Apollo's chthonic arch-enemy, the atrocious serpent Python devastates Delphi.

The most obvious comparison with the *Hymn to Delos* is, of course, Callimachus' *Hymn to Zeus*.<sup>12</sup> In both texts, an Egyptian subtext coexists with the Greek. The narrative details of the *Hymn to Zeus*, apart from being characteristically Hesiodic, conform to the Egyptian tale of Horus-in-Chemnis.<sup>13</sup> However, Callimachus' *Hymn to Delos* is in my opinion mainly concerned with propagandizing the Egyptian priestly and scribal elite. I hypothesize that Callimachus is choosing a myth variant that helps him to promote the Ptolemaic regime to indigenous Egyptians: 'But if a great many songs / in circulation now have you for their theme, / what are my options? What would you like to hear?'<sup>14</sup>

### **Apollo's Speeches from the Womb**

Although Callimachus' hymn is based rather faithfully on the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*,<sup>15</sup> there are, not surprisingly, several divergences. For instance, Callimachus' hymn is more verbose than the *Homeric Hymn* when dealing with Leto's despondent roaming around the Mediterranean. Noteworthy is also the almost complete absence of Apollo's twin sister Artemis.<sup>16</sup> One of the major differences is, particularly, that in the *Hymn to Delos* Apollo delivers two speeches from his mother's womb (v. 90-97, 162-195). Divine babies are often capable of doing miraculous deeds: think of, say, the lyre-inventing and cattle-

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<sup>12</sup> Between the *Hymn to Delos* and the *Hymn to Zeus* there are points of resemblance. For instance, just before Apollo's second prophecy, Callimachus describes (v. 160) Cos as the primeval island *ῶγγυῖν* [...] *νῆσον*. The expression reminds us of the description of the birthplace of Zeus in the *Hymn to Zeus* (v. 10-14): *ἔνθεν ὁ χῶρος / ἱερός, οὐδέ τί μιν κεχρημένον Εἰλειθυΐης / ἔρπετόν οὐδέ γυνή ἐπιμίσγεται, ἀλλά ἐ΄Ρείης / ῶγγύγιον καλέουσι λεχώιον Ἀπιδανῆες*.

<sup>13</sup> Stephens 2003: 77-114.

<sup>14</sup> Callim. *Del.* 28-29: *εἰ δὲ λίην πολέες σε περιτροχόωσιν ἀοιδαί, / ποίη ἐνιπλέξω σε; τί τοι θυμῆρες ἀκοῦσαι*. The translations of Callimachus are taken from Nisetich 2001.

<sup>15</sup> See Mineur 1984: 4-5.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. *Hom. Ap.* 15: *τὴν μὲν ἐν Ὀρτυγίῃ, τὸν δὲ κραναῆ ἐνὶ Δήλῳ*. Nevertheless, there is an unexpected reference to Artemis in the last verse of the poem (v. 326): *χαίροι δ' Ἀπόλλων τε καὶ ἦν ἔλοχεύσασα Λητώ*.

stealing newborn infant Hermes, but a loquacious foetus is a baroque-esque novelty in Greek literature. Some scholars conclude that Apollo's speeches merely characterize Callimachean waywardness and quirkiness,<sup>17</sup> but I illustrate that Callimachus is here experimenting with Egyptian literary conventions. Furthermore, Apollo's prophecies are *post eventum*, a device not at all uncommon in Egyptian literature, especially when a pharaoh appears in a role of a renewer of cosmic and political order.<sup>18</sup>

In the first prophecy (v. 90-97), Apollo foretells how he will defeat the monstrous serpent Python and further the children of inconsolable Niobe, both of which are enemies of Apollo. In the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, Python is an offspring of Hera.<sup>19</sup> However, in the *Homeric Hymn*, the serpent was reared by Typhon, whose name was used by the Greeks to denote Seth, the Egyptian god of death and of violence.<sup>20</sup> It would seem that the first prophecy might allude to the Egyptian story of Horus defeating the serpent Apophis.

In the second prophecy (v. 162-195), Apollo foretells the birth of Ptolemy II Philadelphus and the elimination of the Galatian mercenaries, the late-born Titans (ὀψίγονοι Τιτῆνες). At first Apollo forbids his mother to give birth to him on the island of Cos because another god (θεὸς ἄλλος) is destined to be born there. The other god is Σαωτήρων ὑπατον γένος. Callimachus is, of course, referring to the reigning pharaoh of Egypt, Ptolemy II Philadelphus, son of Ptolemy I Soter and Berenice I, who were known in Ptolemaic dynastic cult as θεοὶ σωτήρες. Apollo continues: “[B]eneath his diadem / will come—not unwilling to be governed by / a Macedonian—both of the two lands”.<sup>21</sup> The phrase “both of the two lands” (ἀμφοτέρη μεσόγεια) has been a puzzle to scholars. Instead of meaning Africa and Asia, two continents, the phrase can be interpreted as ‘both inland regions’. Therefore, it refers to one of the

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<sup>17</sup> See, Mineur 1984: 120. Other affinities are with Pindar's *Hymn* 1 and *Paeon* 7b and Bacchylides 17. (Stephens 2011, 4.)

<sup>18</sup> Stephens 2003: 120.

<sup>19</sup> *Hom. Ap.* 305-355.

<sup>20</sup> Te Velde 1986: 908-911.

<sup>21</sup> Callim. *Del.* 166-168: ὦ ὑπὸ μίτρην / ἴξεται οὐκ ἀέκουσα Μακηδόνι κοιρανέεσθαι / ἀμφοτέρη μεσόγεια.

conventional titles of an Egyptian pharaoh (in Greek Μέγας Βασιλεὺς τῶν τε Ἄνω καὶ τῶν Κάτω Χωρῶν).<sup>22</sup>

Then Callimachus moves on to the description of the annihilation of the Gallic mercenaries, which was a joint effort by Philadelphus and Apollo. In one gargantuan sentence (v. 171-187), Callimachus narrates the tough contest against the Κελτὸν [...] Ἴαρηα. The Gauls succeed in reaching no less than the tripods of Apollo until they are intercepted. The incident with the Gallic mercenaries was of little historical importance and it has been recorded in only two other sources, namely the scholia to Apollo's prophecy and Pausanias 1.72. According to these texts, Philadelphus had hired 4000 Gauls as mercenaries in order to fight against Magas, king of Cyrene, who was preparing to attack Egypt. The Gauls mutinied and Philadelphus consequently lured the rebels to a deserted island in the Sebennyitic branch on the Nile where they were exterminated by fire.<sup>23</sup> It was a traditional method of some pharaohs to destroy their enemies by incinerating them.<sup>24</sup> Two men were annually burned as 'Typhonians' in Alexandria.<sup>25</sup>

The main issue of the passage is the equation of Apolline power with the Ptolemaic sovereign. Indeed, the amalgamation of Apollo and Philadelphus is a rather atypical feature, especially given that Callimachus wrote in his *Hymn to Zeus* (v. 79) that 'kings are from Zeus' (ἐκ δὲ Διὸς βασιλῆες).<sup>26</sup> However, Greek gods had their counterparts in Egyptian pantheon, Apollo's counterpart was, of course, the god Horus.<sup>27</sup> Every Egyptian king was always identified with Horus.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, Callimachus writes (v. 171) that the ἄεθλος of Apollo and Philadelphus against Κελτὸν Ἴαρηα is ξυνός. Moreover, in his *Hymn to Apollo*, Callimachus writes 'the man who contends with my king /

<sup>22</sup> Koenen 1983: 186-187; Mineur 1984: 165.

<sup>23</sup> Schol. ad. v. 175-187): ἀπάγει πρὸς τὸ στόμιον τοῦ Νείλου τὸ λεγόμενον Σεβεννυτικὸν καὶ κατέκαυσεν αὐτοὺς ἐκεῖσε

<sup>24</sup> Koenen 1983: 180.

<sup>25</sup> Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 73.

<sup>26</sup> Hes. *Theog.* 94-96: ἐκ γάρ τοι Μουσέων καὶ ἐκηβόλου Ἀπόλλωνος / ἄνδρες αἰοδοὶ ἔασιν ἐπὶ χθόνα καὶ κιθαρισταί, / ἐκ δὲ Διὸς βασιλῆες.

<sup>27</sup> Hdt 2.144.2: Ὑστατον δὲ αὐτῆς βασιλεῦσαι Ὠρον τὸν Ἰοσίριος παῖδα, τὸν Ἀπόλλωνα Ἑλληνας ὀνομάζουσι.

<sup>28</sup> Selden 1998: 387.

would contend with Apollo'.<sup>29</sup> Slaying the chthonic serpent and the burning of the mutinous mercenaries are different aspects of the same fight against the forces of chaos.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, it was not the grandness of the deed that mattered, but that the king appeared in a role of a pharaoh, who successfully fights against the minions of Seth and maintains the right cosmic order (*ma'at*).

### ***The Oracle of the Potter and the Prophetic Königsnovelle***

Callimachus' hymn conforms to a popular Egyptian narrative of Horus. In the story, the pregnant Isis flees from the wrath of Seth and takes refuge on the island of Chemnis, where she gives birth to god Horus.<sup>31</sup> The story is already attested in some form in the Pyramid Texts,<sup>32</sup> but also in Greek historiography. Hecataeus of Miletus was the first Greek historian to tell the story,<sup>33</sup> Herodotus, on the other hand, tells the story in more detail.<sup>34</sup> However, Herodotus' account does not entirely equate to native Egyptian stories. For instance, in Egyptian myth, Horus is sisterless.<sup>35</sup> Regardless, references to the *Oracle of the Potter* have, I argue, been neglected in scholarly literature.

*The Oracle of the Potter* (or *The Apology of the Potter*, ἀπολογία κεραμέως) is an anti-Greek polemic written by an Egyptian priest.<sup>36</sup> *The Potter* has survived

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<sup>29</sup> Callim. *Ap.* 25: ὅστις ἐμῷ βασιλῆι, καὶ Ἀπόλλωνι μάχοιτο.

<sup>30</sup> Bing 1988: 131.

<sup>31</sup> Selden 1998: 404.

<sup>32</sup> Bergman 1968: 138.

<sup>33</sup> *FGrHist.* F 305: ἐν Βούτοις περὶ τὸ ἱερὸν τῆς Λητοῦς ἔστι νῆσος Χέμβις ὄνομα, ἱρὴ τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος, ἔστι δὲ ἡ νῆσος μεταρσίη καὶ περιπλεῖ καὶ κινέεται ἐπὶ τοῦ ὕδατος.

<sup>34</sup> *Hdt.* 2.156.1.5: τῶν δὲ δευτέρων νῆσος ἡ Χέμμις καλεομένη. Ἔστι μὲν ἐν λίμνῃ βαθῆῃ καὶ πλατέῃ κειμένη παρὰ τὸ ἐν Βουτοῖ ἱερὸν, λέγεται δὲ ὑπ' Αἰγυπτίων εἶναι αὕτη ἡ νῆσος πλωτή. Αὐτὸς μὲν ἔγωγε οὔτε πλέουσιν οὔτε κινηθεῖσαν εἶδον. τέθηπα δὲ ἀκούων εἰ νῆσος ἀληθέως ἐστὶ πλωτή. Ἐν δὲ ἦν ταύτῃ νῆος τε Ἀπόλλωνος μέγας ἐνὶ καὶ βωμοὶ τριφάσιοι ἐνιδρύαται, ἐμπεφύκασι δ' ἐν αὐτῇ φοινικὲς τε συχοὶ καὶ ἄλλα δένδρεα καὶ καρποφόρα καὶ ἄφορα πολλά. Λόγον δὲ τόνδε ἐπιλέγοντες οἱ Αἰγύπτιοί φασιν εἶναι αὐτὴν πλωτήν, ὡς ἐν τῇ νήσῳ ταύτῃ οὐκ ἐοῦσα πρότερον πλωτῆ Λητῷ ἐοῦσα τῶν ὀκτῶ θεῶν τῶν πρώτων γενομένων, οἰκέουσα δὲ ἐν Βουτοῖ πόλι ἵνα δὴ οἱ τὸ χρηστήριον τοῦτο ἔστι, Ἀπόλλωνα παρὰ Ἴσιος παρακαταθήκην δεξαμένη διέσωσε κατακρύψασα ἐν τῇ νῦν πλωτῇ λεγομένη νήσῳ, ὅτε τὸ πᾶν διζήμενος ὁ Τυφῶν ἐπήλθε. θέλων ἐξευρεῖν τοῦ Ὀσίριος τὸν παῖδα.

<sup>35</sup> Gwyn Griffiths 1960: 93-96.

<sup>36</sup> The edition of the text is Koenen 1968. For additional corrections, see Koenen 2002: 140 n7.



in three papyri which are, regrettably, in a very fragmentary state.<sup>37</sup> Dating the text is taxing; the very loose *terminus post quem* is the foundation of Alexandria (332 BCE), the *terminus ante quem* is the sixth Syrian war (170-168 BCE).<sup>38</sup> Ludwig Koenen argues that the extant versions go back to the early first century BCE.<sup>39</sup> On the other hand, the *Potter's Oracle* refers to Alexandria as the city which is being founded (ἡ κτιζομένη πόλις); the present participle suggests a date from the beginning of Greek rule. The Greek *Potter* is probably a translation from Egyptian.<sup>40</sup> *The Oracle of the Potter* belongs to a tradition of native Egyptian propaganda and it is likely that *The Potter's Oracle* was updated in the light of historical events.<sup>41</sup> Therefore, it seems that Callimachus knew an older version of the oracle. Koenen has moreover argued that the version familiar to Callimachus was pro-Greek,<sup>42</sup> but I disagree with him.

The story of *The Potter* in outline is as follows: the potter, who is an incarnation of the creator god Chnum, goes to the island of Helios (Ἡλίου νῆσος), where he makes pottery. However, people break the pottery and drag the potter before the king Amenhotep. Then the potter defends himself by interpreting the breaking of the pottery as a prophetic sign. According to the potter, Typhon-Seth and his followers (τυφώνιοι, ζωνοφόροι) are terrorizing Egypt, the Nile is parched and Chaos dominates the Two Lands. Eventually, a perfect (Horus) king will come from the sun, rescue Egypt and restore the right Order.

On a more general level *The Potter's Oracle*, just like Callimachus' *Hymn to Delos*, is concerned with chaos and order. Between Callimachus' *Hymn to Delos* and *The Oracle of the Potter* there are several parallels of detail, namely:

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<sup>37</sup> P. Graf (G.29787), P. Rainer (G.19 813) and P. Oxy. 2332. P. Graf is dated to second century AD, P. Rainer and P. Oxy. are dated to third century AD.

<sup>38</sup> Huss 1994: 173.

<sup>39</sup> Koenen 1968: 186-193.

<sup>40</sup> Koenen 2002: 180-183.

<sup>41</sup> Collins 1997: 204.

<sup>42</sup> Koenen 1993: 83.

1. Apollo speaks from his mother's womb in highly idiosyncratic Greek. His prophecies are filled with opaque expressions and peculiar compounds such as the imposing ἀμφιπεριστείνωνται 'are crowded on all sides' (v. 179).<sup>43</sup> This might, albeit anachronously, remind us, for instance, of the obscure riddles of Lycophron's *Alexandra* or the lugubriousness of Euphorion. However, the tone between Apollo's prophecy and *The Oracle of the Potter* is strikingly similar.

2. Gaulish mercenaries wear similar girdles as the enemies of the gods in *The Oracle of the Potter*. In *The Oracle of the Potter*, enemies are referred to as *girdle-wearers* (ζωνοφόροι). In *The Hymn to Delos*, the Gauls are wearing ζωστήρας ἀναιδέας.

3. In the *Hymn to Delos*, the Delian river Inopus floods when Apollo is born: '[...] sat down by the stream / Inopos, abounding then in waters sprung / from the earth, in the season when the Nile / comes at his greatest, cascading / down the Egyptian plateau'.<sup>44</sup> In *The Potter's Oracle*, the Nile floods when the new Horus king is installed.

4. In both texts, the intruders (the Galatians in Callimachus' hymn and the ζωνοφόροι in *The Oracle of the Potter*) are eventually destroyed by fire.

I argue that Apollo's prophecy in the *Hymn to Delos* conforms to an ancient Egyptian narrative discourse, *Chaosbeschreibung*, that centres around foreign domination of Egypt and the return of the saviour king, who will dispel foreigners. In the late 1930's Alfred Hermann identified an influential genre in Egyptian literature called *Königsnovelle*, which takes a king from the past as a focal point of the narrative.<sup>45</sup> The term 'prophetic Königsnovelle' was later coined on the basis of *Chaosbeschreibung* and the traditional elements of

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<sup>43</sup> Mineur 1984, 173.

<sup>44</sup> Callim. *Del.* 206-208: ἔζητο δ' Ἴνωποῖο παρὰ ῥόον ὄν τε βάθιστον / γαῖα τότ' ἐξανίησιν, ὅτε πλήθοντι ῥεέθρω / Νεῖλος ἀπὸ κρημνοῖο κατέρχεται Αἰθιοπῆος.

<sup>45</sup> Hermann 1938.

*Königsnovelle*.<sup>46</sup> The characteristics of the prophetic *Königsnovelle* are in brief as follows.<sup>47</sup>

1. At first king from time immemorial receives a prophecy from a seer or other prophetic figure [...]; his decisions and actions regularly lead to the writing down of the prophecy, which in turn guarantees authentication for the entire document.

2. The prophecy itself foretells of coming woe for Egypt. A future king will receive warning of impending invasion. [...] [T]he invader will then descend upon Egypt, humiliate the priests, open the temples, and slaughter the sacred animals.

3. After a period of time fixed by the prophecy the same future Pharaoh will return, or perhaps his descendent acting in his place, and will expel the invader and restore order to Egypt.

As we can see, Callimachus' hymn conforms closely to the narrative discourse of prophetic *Königsnovelle*. In this respect, the *Hymn to Delos* resonates with the Egyptian prophetic literature.<sup>48</sup> The key feature of this narrative discourse is the presence of a text within the text.<sup>49</sup> That is to say there is a frame and a centrepiece.<sup>50</sup> In *The Potter's Oracle*, the frame is the potter's voyage to the Island of Helios where he was dragged to the king. The centrepiece is, of course, the potter's prophecy. In Callimachus' *Hymn to Delos*, the frame is the story of Apollo's birth. The centrepieces are Apollo's prophecies and the joint destruction of the forces of chaos by Apollo and Philadelphus. In this narrative discourse, two pharaohs are central: the first pharaoh always legitimizes the latter.<sup>51</sup> It is Apollo-Horus who refers to Philadelphus as θεὸς ἄλλος and it is worth keeping in mind that if a man

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<sup>46</sup> See, Koenen 2002: 173.

<sup>47</sup> Dillery 2005: 390-391.

<sup>48</sup> For the *Prophetische Texte*, see Quack 2005: 148-161.

<sup>49</sup> Dillery 1999: 102.

<sup>50</sup> Lloyd 1982: 51.

<sup>51</sup> Dillery 1999: 103.

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becomes a pharaoh, it suggests that he had to have had divine approval.<sup>52</sup> Every Egyptian pharaoh had to overcome the chaos at his accession to the throne.

Egypt had a fear of foreign domination and, as a consequence, it is characteristic of writings in the discourse of *Chaosbeschreibung* to emphasise the non-Egyptian background of the conquerors.<sup>53</sup> To put it briefly, all the enemies of Egypt are always minions of Seth. Equally to *The Oracle of the Potter*, external enemies of Egypt are often called τυφώνιοι. Manetho, for instance, describes the capital Avaris of the loathed Hyksos as ἡ πόλις κατὰ τὴν θεολογίαν ἄνωθεν Τυφώνιος.

### ***The Propaganda of Callimachus***

Because the Greeks in Egypt were a small minority, the Ptolemaic regime needed, for pragmatic reasons, assistance from native Egyptians. This is demonstrated by the fact that Egypt was initially administered in Demotic; not until from the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus did the existing scribal class start to function in Greek.<sup>54</sup> Although the upper-class in Ptolemaic Egypt was primarily Greek, it is evident that there were members of the Egyptian elite in the Ptolemaic court who could also contribute at a literary level.<sup>55</sup> I am primarily thinking, of course, Manetho of Sebennytus. According to Manethon's Suda entry, he was a high priest (ἀρχιερεύς) and therefore had access to the sacred records (the Egyptian temple libraries). Manetho was familiar with Greek culture as well.<sup>56</sup> His *floruit* was early in the reign of Philadelphus and therefore he was a contemporary of Callimachus.<sup>57</sup>

*The Leper Fragment* (FGrHist 609 F 10) of Manetho is of particular interest to

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<sup>52</sup> Dillery 2005: 399; Hölbl 2001: 77: '[T]he legitimate pharaoh had to be the one who was recognized as such by the gods.' See also Gwyn Griffiths 1983: 289.

<sup>53</sup> For Seth as a foreigner, see Te Velde 1967: 109-151.

<sup>54</sup> Thompson 1994: 75.

<sup>55</sup> Weber 2011: 240-241.

<sup>56</sup> Jos. *CAP* 1.73: τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς μετεσχηκῶς παιδείας.

<sup>57</sup> Fraser 1972: 505.

my paper. The passage deals with a leprous priest, Osarseph,<sup>58</sup> who leads a group of polluted people (οἱ μίρποι) living in Avaris, the Hyksos capital. The Osarsephites drifted into war with the Pharaoh Amenophis and, as a consequence, Egypt falls into chaos. Manetho's fragment also conforms to the Königsnovelle model. The similarities between *The Leper Fragment* and *The Oracle of the Potter* are numerous. For instance, the name of the pharaoh (Amenophis) is the same in both texts. The times of sorrow are also told in a similar way.<sup>59</sup> In (the Oxyrhynchus version of) *The Potter's Oracle* there is a mention of a lamb that is clearly *The Lamb of Bokkhoris*.<sup>60</sup> Likewise, we know that Manetho was familiar with *The Lamb of Bokkhoris*, which was one of the key texts of Egyptian prophetic literature. Thus, Manetho seems to have been one of the channels through which some of the native literature was transmitted to the Greeks living in Egypt.<sup>61</sup>

In my opinion it is likely that Manetho took pleasure in Callimachus' works and other high poetry that was produced in Alexandria. Instead, it is quite difficult to assess what was the relationship between the bilingual cadre of the Ptolemaic regime and the *recherché* poetry of Alexandria. At least some of the Egyptian priests and scribes had to learn Greek due to the vigorous attempts of the Ptolemaic regime to establish a new administrative class by means of tax-concessions and a widespread programme of education.<sup>62</sup> Subsequently, indigenous administration started gradually to function in Greek. Even though we do not know much about how the scribes were actually educated, we know from a Ptolemaic Greek school book that contemporary Alexandrian poetry was also taught in schools along with Homer, the tragedians and New Comedy.<sup>63</sup> As an illustration of this we should explore the interlinear notes of the Lille Papyrus of Callimachus' *Victoria Berenices* (SH 254). They seem to be 'eclectic enough to be personal' and could represent the private

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<sup>58</sup> He is later identified with Moses by an anti-Semitic commentator on Manetho.

<sup>59</sup> Dillery 1999: 103.

<sup>60</sup> Gwyn Griffiths 1983: 287.

<sup>61</sup> Fraser 1972: 509.

<sup>62</sup> Thompson 1994: 75.

<sup>63</sup> Parsons 2011: 139-141.

Rosetta 12. [http://www.rosetta.bham.ac.uk/issue\\_12/laukola.pdf](http://www.rosetta.bham.ac.uk/issue_12/laukola.pdf)

preparations of a schoolteacher.<sup>64</sup> Therefore, at least some of the scribes may have had at least some knowledge of Callimachus.

In Egypt, all authority, religious or other, was derived from the pharaoh.<sup>65</sup> For this reason, interaction was needed between the Greek court and the Egyptian priestly elite. Indigenous priests helped the Ptolemaic regime to run the country and maintain stability while the Macedonian pharaoh simultaneously granted the legitimacy of the priests. Although most of the native priestly elite co-operated with the Ptolemaic pharaoh, a number of priests must have felt that none of the Ptolemies was a true Horus, but merely henchmen of Seth aiming to destroy Egypt.<sup>66</sup> The aspiration to see an Egyptian as a pharaoh of the Two Lands instead of a Greek conqueror was manifested in prophecies such as *The Oracle of the Potter*. By alluding to *The Potter* and adapting the narrative model of prophetic Königsnovelle, Callimachus must have struck a chord among those Egyptians working within the Ptolemaic administration, who were familiar with his *oeuvre*.

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<sup>64</sup> Parsons 2011: 149.

<sup>65</sup> Koenen 1993: 39.

<sup>66</sup> Gwyn Griffiths 1983: 289.

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