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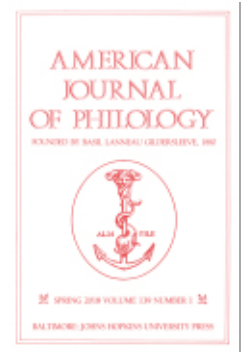
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THE DIDACTIC AESTHETICS OF MARCELLUS' *DE PISCIBUS* (*GDRK* 63)

FLORIS OVERDUIN



Abstract: This article aims to demonstrate that the extant fragment from *De piscibus* (101 hexameters, Heitsch, *Griechischen Dichterfragmente der römischen Kaiserzeit* 63), which was part of the medical corpus of the Greek physician Marcellus of Side (second century C.E.), should not be considered merely pedagogical, as has been the prevailing view so far. In his approach, structure, lexical originality and style Marcellus strives to be a true didactic epicist, in the vein of his Hellenistic model Nicander of Colophon, and in acknowledgement of Hesiod, the fountainhead of didactic epic. The view that Marcellus should be considered an artful poet, concerned with literary aesthetics, is corroborated by an allusion to Hes. *Op.* 519, which has thus far gone unnoticed.

1. INTRODUCTION

IN THE HISTORY OF THE STUDY of Greek didactic poetry, Marcellus (fl. ca. 140–160 C.E.), an author from the Pamphylian city of Side, has not received copious attention, to say the least.¹ Little remains of his vast output, the *Iatrika*, which according to the *Suda* comprised 42 books in hexameters on medical lore.² The extant remains consist of a fragment

¹For Marcellus in general, see Arena and Cassia 2015; cf. Keyser and Irby-Massie 2008. He is not to be confused with several other *medici* of the same name, among whom are Marcellus of Bordeaux and Marcellus of Anticyra; see Arena and Cassia 2015, 139–53. For the text of Marcellus of Side see Heitsch 1964 (= *GDRK* 63), adopted by Arena and Cassia 2015 (with an Italian translation) without the app. crit. Marcellus' fame lived on at least until the early fifth century C.E., as Hieronymus mentions him in *Adversus Iovinianum* 2.6, among other *physikoi* such as Aristotle and Theophrastus.

²Suidas s.v. Μάρκελλος Σιδιήτης (M 205); cf. Eudocia, *Violarium* 626. It may have been known under an alternative name, viz. *Chironides* (“daughters of Cheiron”); see n. 11. The use of hexameters for large poems on medical matters was not unique in this age: Heraclitus of Rhodiapolis, called the “Homer of medical poetry” (ιατρικῶν ποιημάτων Ὅμηρον, *TAM* II.3.910; see Samama 2003, 396–9) also wrote in the second century C.E. The era must have produced quite a lot of medical poetry on a smaller scale as well. Among the remains are, in hexameters, Eudemus' *Theriaca* (*SH* 412A), the *Carmen de viribus* (*GDRK* 64), and the

from the Ἱατρικὰ περὶ ἰχθύων (*De remedis ex piscibus*, “Treatments involving fishes,” 101 dactylic hexameters) and a prose fragment titled Περὶ Λυκανθρώπου (“On the werewolf”).³ Moreover, two inscriptions found in the Triopion, the estate of Herodes Atticus on Rome’s Via Appia, addressed to, and presumably commissioned by, Herodes and his wife Regilla, have been ascribed to this same Marcellus.⁴

The literary quality of the extant didactic fragment from Marcellus of Side, usually referred to as *De piscibus*, has not been appreciated.⁵ Indeed, Marcellus has been considered an exception to the rule that didactic poets usually had little hands-on knowledge of (or experience in) the subjects they taught, and that they were no less interested in poetics than in proper learning. It has therefore been suggested that Marcellus’ prime concern was indeed to teach the subject of his poetry, in a much stricter sense than Hesiod, Aratus, and Nicander “taught” (cf. Effe 1977, 197; Kneebone 2017, 222). Wilamowitz, however, rightly warns that there is ultimately no way to tell if Marcellus really was an expert physician,

older Hellenistic works of Nicander (*Theriaca*, *Alexipharmaca*) and Numenius (*SH* 589–95). P. Oxy. 15.1796 (from *De plantis Aegyptiis*) contains 22 hexameters of a poem that appears to be connected to medicine too. In elegiacs we have the recipes of Aglaias (*SH* 18), Philo (*SH* 690), and Andromachus the Elder (*GDRK* 62). Servilius Damocrates (Bussemaker 1851, still the most recent edition) was responsible for most medical poetry in iambs. Of Petrichus’ *Ophiaca*, a medical-didactic poem on snakebites, nothing but its title remains.

³The remains of *De piscibus* were initially presented as three contiguous fragments; see J. G. Schneider 1775, 97–100, followed by M. Schneider 1888, 124–31. There is no reason to assume, as Effe 1977, 196–7, does, that the extant fragment of *De piscibus* did not belong to the *Iatrica* but to a separate work; cf. Kneebone 2017, 223, n. 47. The fragment of Περὶ Λυκανθρώπου was transmitted as part of the corpus of the medical writer Aëtius of Amida 6.11 (= *CMG* 8.2, 151–2). For the history of the text of Marcellus, transmitted in five mss, see Heitsch 1963, 39–44.

⁴*CIG* 6280 = Kaibel, *EG* 1046 = *IG* XIV.1389. Although only one of the two inscriptions mentions Marcellus by name, the ascription of the other is certain enough, which adds 98 lines to his extant corpus; for the identification, see Bowie 1990, 66–9. The Triopion poem is discussed in Wilamowitz 1928; Peek 1977; Ameling 1983; Tobin 1997, 34, 356–7; Skenteri 2005; Davies and Pomeroy 2012; Arena and Cassia 2015, 205–54.

⁵In fact, until very recently, it has hardly been studied at all. For lack of enthusiasm for the poetical activities of Marcellus, see Kroll 1930, 1497 (“streng sachlich und ohne eigentlich poetische Zutaten”); Lesky 1971, 909; Effe 1977, 196–7; Bowie 1990, 69 (“tedious monotony”). The few relevant studies on Marcellus (e.g., Wellmann 1934, who is primarily interested in Marcellus as a doctor) show little interest in style, or his position within the history of didactic poetry. Even Arena and Cassia (2015), in their extensive recent study of Marcellus—the first monograph ever focusing exclusively on Marcellus—pay virtually no attention to matters of aesthetics, apart from a few cursory remarks (e.g., 160, 168–70). For some discussion of Marcellus’ poetical merits, see Wilamowitz 1928; Rebuffat 2001; and Kneebone 2017.

rather than a dedicated poet: "Daß der Verfasser selbst Arzt war, folgt nicht mit Notwendigkeit, denn Nikander und Arat haben fremde Weisheit in Verse gesetzt."⁶

It would not be a great exaggeration to state that in the *Works and Days* Hesiod primarily gave a dramatic impression of life in the country, rather than providing a genuine handbook; for all that can be learned from Hesiod, most concerns life lessons, rather than farming skills (cf. Nelson 1996). Aratus updated Hesiod through an Alexandrian or even Callimachean lens,⁷ without really having farmers and sailors in mind as a genuine audience.⁸ And in the case of Nicander, in turn, it is evident that the practical lessons taught, colored through many sorts of literary devices, are not to be taken too literally.⁹ For Marcellus, however, it has been argued that instructing must have been an aim in itself, as there seems to be little focus on the sort of poetics found in the Hellenistic didactic poets. In this article I will, against the prevailing view, show that even if he was a teaching physician, disseminating aspects of his medical profession, in this fragment Marcellus is also concerned with particular aesthetics. Section (2) shows how Marcellus' epitaph (*AP* 7.158) not only testifies to his reputation as a professional physician, but also as an accomplished poet. Section (3) outlines how Marcellus' refined catalogue fits the epic-didactic tradition. Section (4) shows how self-consciously Marcellus adopts the didactic mode to place himself in the tradition of didactic epic. Section (5) is concerned with Marcellus' unusual yet refined epic style. Section (6) shows how *De piscibus* alludes to Hesiod's *Works and Days*.

2. MARCELLUS' EPITAPH (*AP* 7.158)

Ancient testimonia on Marcellus and his professional qualities are few and far between. The Greek Anthology, however, contains a valuable comment in the following epigram (*AP* 7.158 adesp. = Peek, *GV* 1.637).

⁶Wilamowitz 1928, 198. Bliquez, however, in his discussion of Marcellus' use of a *triaine* to perform cauterization, considers Marcellus a medical expert, interested in splenic diseases. This requires, however, that the Marcellus mentioned in Paul. Aeg. 6.48.1 is indeed Marcellus of Side, as Bliquez assumes; the same goes for *quidam* in Cael. Aur. *Tard.* 3.4.57; see Bliquez 2015, 169.

⁷Or a Stoic one; see Hunter 1995. For Aratus' *Phaenomena* as an update of Hesiod's *Works and Days*, see Fakas 2001.

⁸It is notable that for some ancient critics, in their evaluation of Aratus (e.g., Call. fr. 27 Pf. = *HE* 56 = *AP* 9.507) and Nicander (Cic. *de Orat.* 1.69), it was *not* the content of their poetry that came first, either in praise or blame.

⁹Gow and Scholfield 1953, 18; Overduin 2014 and 2015 *passim*.

association with Herodes Atticus. But this is at least a testimony of the value attached to his works, expressing the significant status that comes with an emperor and his son dedicating the poet's works as sacred objects. If Marcellus composed the epitaph himself, the epigram must have served, at least partly, as an expression of great pride in this dedication, and of course as a means of preserving and disseminating awareness of this achievement.¹² Indeed, in (6) it is *kudos* that Marcellus should be given by future readers, on account of his eloquence (εὐεπία, 7). Whether this refers to his general eloquence in technical medical writing, or to a more poetical quality of his verse (choice of words, style, register, euphony), it is at least markedly positive.¹³ It is, moreover, used in its Ionic form, which may hint at Marcellus' skill in epic poetry. The mention of Apollo in particular (7) may point in the direction of praise for the refinement of Marcellus' poetry, but Apollo's connection to healing cannot be ruled out here. Perhaps the eulogist, rather than being ambiguous, chose Apollo particularly for his traditional endorsement of both healing and literature.

Although epigrams in hexameters, rather than elegiac couplets (or even iambs), are not exceptionally rare within the *Greek Anthology*, it is significant nonetheless that the epigrammatist chose to present this *epitymbion* in dactylic hexameters.¹⁴ This is a remarkable choice, as it reflects a clear awareness of the type of verse suitable for a laudandus who was apparently considered an epic poet. The epic register, as exemplified by, e.g., περικλυτός (1), φώς, κύνιστος (2), ἐκτίμενος (3), and the use of πάς as a disyllabic noun, belonging to two different feet (5), underlines Marcellus' status as an epic poet, rather than a versifying physician. In addition, the remark that he wrote ἠρώφω . . . μέτρῳ (8), serves to underline that it is a poet who wrote specifically in "heroic metre" that is praised in this epigram, a remark placed emphatically in the epigram's closing line. Moreover, rather than calling Marcellus a writer, the epigrammatist mentions Marcellus' poetical activities as singing (μέλψαντι, 8). No-one

¹²For the dedication of books as sacred objects (e.g., Heraclitus' dedication of his work to Artemis in the temple of Ephesus, as mentioned in D.L. 9.6 = A1 DK), see Rouse 1902, 64–66. This does, however, not seem to have been very common; discussion in Finckelberg 2017, 23–4.

¹³A close verbal parallel in terms of two different levels of skilfulness expressed (albeit incidentally) in the use of the noun εὐεπία is the isopsephic *AP* 6.322 by Leonides of Alexandria, in which εὐεπία emphatically implies both poetic skill in crafting literary epigrams, and literary dexterity owing to the additional restriction of isopsephy in composing.

¹⁴To give a sample indication: of the 748 epigrams in book 7 of the *Greek Anthology*, which contains assorted funerary epigrams, only eight are written entirely in hexameters, rather than the standard elegiac couplets.

will imagine this physician *singing* his dactylic verse on medical remedies in public, μέλπω surely being used as a synonym for composing verse.¹⁵ Yet it does show that Marcellus was both authoritative as a physician *and* at least appreciated *qua* epic poet.

3. CATALOGUE AND SUBCATALOGUE

The structure of the extant portion of *De piscibus* (101 hexameters) is straightforward. After the proem (Marc. Sid. 1–4, to which I shall return) the first part consists of a catalogue of 91 species of fish, crammed in some 35 lines.¹⁶ This first part ends with lines 41–3, in ring composition with the proem, as the use of nature (φύσις, 1) against ailments is restated, with a slight variation in 41.¹⁷ The second part (44–101) consists of an overview of the therapeutic application of fish parts, divided into over twenty remedies. As such, *De piscibus* could be considered to be a catalogue of treatments, comprising yet another catalogue, viz., a subcatalogue of kinds of fish.¹⁸

¹⁵For the quite common practice of referring to singing in the context of the composition of (epic) verse, already present in the Homeric proems (even if such poetry was recited, rather than sung, or, later, simply read), cf. [Opp.] C. 3.485 (ἐμαὶ μέλψουσιν ἄοιδαί), although μέλπω rarely occurs in a context where there is any evidence of written composition. One may compare, however, ὕμνοπῶλος (Emp. fr. 146.4, Nic. *Al.* 629) and ἄοιδοπῶλος (*SH* 18.2). Cf. Bruss 2004, who shows that even within Callimachus' world of "bookish" literature, literary communication is still very much expressed in terms of speaking, listening, even singing, rather than (silent) reading and writing.

¹⁶For the contents of this catalogue, with a recent attempt at proper identification of all the different species, see Arena and Cassia 2015, 160–83. It is interesting, although most likely accidental, that the fragment as transmitted shows another traditional element of Greek didactic epic: its bipartite structure, found in the two-part structure of the *Works and Days*, of Aratus' *Phaenomena*, of Nicander's *Theriaca* and of Parmenides' didactic poem; see Overduin 2015, 49–52. As we only have a fragment of *De piscibus*, virtually nothing can be said about the larger structure, but on the level of micro-structural organization, Marcellus may be showing his awareness of this convention here.

¹⁷The ring composition is, moreover, doubled through the use of the cognates κητέωντα (5) and κήτεα (40), a pair that constitutes a second ring composition closely within the one marked by the references to φύσις (1 and 41). It is surely not accidental that the references to φύσις and κήτος, not used elsewhere in this fragment, are placed to encompass a rounded-off part of the poem.

¹⁸Catalogues of fish are by no means unique to Marcellus. Not only was catalogue poetry (either embedded in narrative, e.g., A.R. 1.23–233, or read as a mostly independent genre, e.g., Ovid's *Fasti* and, in a sense, *Ibis*) quite popular throughout antiquity, but we know of several catalogues of fish in particular. In Archestratus' *Hedypatheia* (4th century B.C.E.) the obtaining and preparation of tasty fishes is catalogued (see Olson and Sens 2000), there is the catalogue of fish in the Homeric parody Ἀττικὸν Δείπνον (fr. 1.16–81

On a first reading, the catalogue of ninety-one types of fish in the first part (including dolphins and shellfish, although these are of course technically not fish) strikes the reader as quite overwhelming. Presenting so many fish names, often adorned with epithets, within the scope of only thirty-three verses, is an effective way of impressing the addressee with the vast knowledge the teacher has in store. It hardly leaves the reader a pause to breathe. Such a dense catalogue is—certainly when viewed from the context of didactic epic (let alone epic in general)—reminiscent of earlier catalogues, such as Hesiod's catalogue of the daughters of Nereus in *Theogony* 233–64, or the Iliadic Catalogue of Ships, to which Marcellus evidently alludes here.¹⁹ In addition, the phenomenon of a catalogue (to wit of fish names) within a didactic catalogue-poem (of fish-based remedies) can be considered not untypical of the genre.²⁰ The inclusion of a catalogue, moreover, may be taken as a sign of aesthetic intent on behalf of the poet. As Clauss [1993, 26], argues, commenting on the catalogue of Argonauts in Apollonius, within epic poetry “catalogues were not simply an expected epic conceit but a highly esteemed and desirable art form *per se*, both in Apollonius' day and beyond.”

= *SH* 534 = Ath. 4.134d–7c) of Matro of Pitane (4th century B.C.E.; see Olson and Sens 1999), Ausonius' *Mosella* (4th century C.E.) is famous for its fish catalogue, listing all the species that abound in the river after which the poem was named (cf. Hunink 2001), and most importantly there is Oppian's *Halieutica* (ca. 176–180 C.E.), in which the concept of the fish catalogue is taken to its limits, in a full five books on the subject (see Rebuffat 2001, 99–102; Kneebone 2008). The genre of the *Halieutica* (“On fishing”) itself is much older than Oppian, as testified by the scanty remains in *SH* 237, 568–88, and 709, and by the Latin fragments from (ps.-)Ovid's *Halieutica*, of which 134 lines remain; see Richmond 1962; Capponi 1972; for fish treatises in the early Roman empire in particular, see Corcoran 1964. As Arena and Cassia (2015, 163–70) point out, the fish catalogue in Artemidorus' *Oneirocritica*, albeit in prose, should not be overlooked either, as it was written at the same time as Marcellus' didactic poetry.

¹⁹Kneebone 2017, 223. For the catalogue as a constituent element of Greek epic (not only the catalogue of ships in *Il.* 2.484–877, but also the descendents of Glaucus in *Il.* 6.151–211; the Nereids in *Il.* 18.39–49; the sons of Priam in *Il.* 24.247–263; the Nereids in Hes. *Th.* 243–62; the Oceanids in *Th.* 349–61; the catalogue of Argonauts in A.R. 1.23–233) see Kühlmann 1973 and Lightfoot 2014, 88–100. For an overview of studies on catalogues in classical literature, see, e.g., Lausberg 1990, 188, n. 71. For the Homeric catalogues see Sammons 2010; for the Homeric catalogue of ships within the context of early Greek epic in particular, see Visser 1997.

²⁰Cf. Arat. 257–67, Nic. *Ther.* 934–56, or even Ov. *Met.* 3.206–55 (a catalogue of Actaeon's dogs within the grand catalogue of metamorphoses that make up the poem); see Overduin 2015, 29–31.

The enumeration of fish after fish, in the regular pattern of the hexameter, may serve as a means to impress the reader with Marcellus' grasp of his subject matter. By presenting a long list of species with seemingly appropriate adjectives, combined with the ease with which this is seemingly achieved, the poet creates the impression that he knows what he is talking about. The impressive flow is also created by the fact that lines 5–39, almost all of the poem's first part, are one long continuous sentence.²¹ It is telling, however, to observe the correspondence between the catalogue of fish in the first part (8–40) and their application in the second (44–101). Of the ninety-one species of fish mentioned in the first part, only twenty-two find their way into the second part.²² The other sixty-nine species of the first part may have been treated in sections of the poem that are no longer extant, but it is not impossible that Marcellus only knew of the medicinal use of the twenty-two mentioned.²³ If this is the case, mentioning the other sixty-nine could be considered a way to impress the audience with the author's poetic skill in accommodating all these names in a small number of epic verses. Compared to Hesiod's dense catalogue of Nereids, which, according to West, may well consist of the poet's own invention, Marcellus' skill is put to the test even stronger, as for him making up names, as Hesiod could, was not an option.²⁴ This division (a skilled catalogue, followed by a limited selection of elements actually discussed), can, moreover, already be found in, e.g., Apollonius' *Argonautica*: of the fifty-two Argonauts included in the catalogue (1.23–233), only a dozen or so actually feature in the Argonauts' adventures. Such a division can therefore be considered typical of the catalogue, a feature that appears to be recognized by Marcellus here.

²¹This effect is reminiscent of Nicander's *Theriaca*: after the proem (1–20) the poet starts enumerating all the different places to look out for snakes, in a single sentence that runs from *Ther.* 21 to 34.

²²Moreover, the ὕαινα (73) and the δράκων (47 and 84) are present in the second part without having been mentioned in the first part. The correspondence between the first and second part is evident in the order of the κέφαλος (9), πήλαμυς (12), πέρκη (16), and γλαύκος (18), which are treated in the same order consecutively in 59, 63, 64 and 66.

²³Within the genre it is not unknown that a poet ultimately does not teach us all he claims to do. Cf. Nic. *Ther.* 494 (ρίζοτόμον τε δειύσομαι . . . ὄρην), where the poet tells his addressee that he is going to tell him the right time for cutting herbs, which he never does.

²⁴West 1966, 236, suggests that Hesiod made up most of the Nereids' names, although this could also be the invention of a predecessor.

4. THE DIDACTIC MODE

One approach to assessing Marcellus' poetical qualities is to examine his way of dealing with the generic legacy of Greek epic didactic poetry.²⁵ The "opening verses" of *De piscibus* contain clear markers of adherence to the genre of didactic epic (1–4):²⁶

Εὖ δὲ καὶ εἰναλίῳν ἑδάην φύσιν ἰήτειραν
 <σχ>ήμασι παντοίοισιν ἐμὸν νόον ἐξερεείνων,
 ὡς αὐτός τ' ἐνόησα καὶ ἄλλων μῦθον ἄκουσα·
 ὧν τοι ἐγὼ πληθὺν ἠδ' οὖνομα πᾶν ἀγορεύσω.

I have also learned well the healing nature of sea-creatures,
 thoroughly searching my mind in all sorts of ways,²⁷
 both as I have learned myself and heard stories from others:
 of these I will tell you the multitude and all the names.²⁸

In the extant text a distinct addressee (i.e., more distinct than τοι in 4) is lacking, but considering that this is only a fragment, it is impossible to know whether a named addressee preceded these lines.²⁹ If a named

²⁵For markers of the epic didactic genre and the Greek didactic tradition see, e.g., Effe 1977; Toohey 1995; Dalzell 1996; Volk 2002; Gale 2004; Harder 2007; Sider 2014.

²⁶If it were not for καὶ (1), these proemial opening lines would not give the impression that they were originally preceded by anything. The addition of καὶ, however, implies a larger poem, not only about fish, but perhaps also about birds or land animals, as can perhaps be surmised from line 43; cf. Wilamowitz 1928, 198. If this is the case, καὶ would act as a structural marker within the meso- or macro-structure of Marcellus' didactic catalogue poem, much like the Hesiodic catalogue formula Ἡ οἴη worked for the *Catalogue of Women*, a convention imitated by later catalogue poets, thus confirming the idea of Ἡ οἴη as a structural marker within the genre of catalogue poetry. For such imitations cf. Phanocl. *CA* 1.1 p. 107 (Ἡ ὡς); Sostrat. *SH* 731–4 (Ἡοῖοι); Hermesian. *CA* 7.1 p. 98 (Οἴην); in his *Γυναικῶν κατάλογος* (*CA* 2 p. 2) Nicaenetus will surely have used a similar approach. Such structural particles appear to belong to catalogue poetry rather than didactic epic; Overduin 2015, 61–2.

²⁷Or: "I have also learned well the variously healing nature of sea-creatures, thoroughly searching my mind." All translations are my own, unless noted otherwise.

²⁸Or: "of these I will tell you the multitude of their names," reading πληθὺν ἠδ' οὖνομα as a hendiadys.

²⁹The presence of a direct addressee is signalled by the second person addresses in 72, 84 and 89 (although these rather qualify as addresses to a "general you"), but the lack of imperatives is remarkable. Instead we get instructions of the type "X is useful for Y," or an occasional τις (as in 77). As such, the didactic frame seems less important than the exposition of the subject matter. Although the presence of a named addressee within the

addressee was mentioned earlier, then that could explain the use of *τοι* here, rather than an unnecessary (though by no means uncommon) repetition of the addressee's proper name.³⁰ Yet the proem displays many of the characteristics of a didactic poem.³¹ Apart from the essential and emphatic first person voice of the persona of the teacher—*ἐδάην* (1), *ἐνόησα* (3), *ἄκουσα* (3), *ἀγορεύσω* (4)—the poem's didactic subject is stated immediately in the first verse (cf. Kneebone 2017, 223). The statement is, moreover, *concise* and relatively *precise* at the same time: there can be little doubt as to what the poet makes his audience expect, a certainty he shares with Nicander, who is the main example for this type of didactic epic. The idea in line 1 that “nature” (*φύσις*) can be “healing” (*ἰήτεια*) is taken up again straight after the fish catalogue, in 41–3, although there it applies to *φύσις* in general, not only to the nature of sea-living creatures.³²

The strong presence of the teacher, corroborated by *ἐμὸν* (2), *αὐτός* (3), and *ἐγώ* (4) is, moreover, given credibility through the use of a double authority.³³ The poet possesses excellent (*εὖ*, 1) ability himself, because he has thoroughly checked the knowledge stored in his mind (*ἐμὸν νόον ἐξερεείνω*, 2).³⁴ He has observed whatever there was to be learned himself (*ὥς αὐτός τ' ἐνόησα*, 3), but has also augmented his knowledge

teacher-student constellation is a clear marker of many didactic epics (see Stoddard 2004, 15; Overduin 2015, 37–8), it is not essential. Cf. the lack of named addressees in Aratus' *Phaen.* (on which see Bing 1993) and Dionysius' *Periegesis* (on which see Lightfoot 2014, 11–7); nor does the addressee have to be mentioned straightaway in the poem's opening part (cf. Lucretius' *DRN*, in which—after the opening hymn—Memmius is not addressed by name until 1.411). Arena and Cassia (2015, 160) consider the *βροτοί* in 43 as “*destinatari*,” but they qualify as beneficiaries rather than real addressees.

³⁰Repetition of the addressee's name in didactic poetry varies a lot from one poem to the other. There are ten repetitions in Hes. *Op.* and Lucr. *DRN*, three in Verg. *G.*, but none in Nic. *Ther.* and *Alex.*

³¹For such objective criteria of didactic poetry cf. Toohey 1996, 1–19; Dalzell 1996, 8–34; Volk 2002, 25–68; Gale 2004, xiii–xv; Kruschwitz 2005, 9–15; Lightfoot 2014, 100–19.

³²The addition of *φύσις* also underlines that in ancient perception Marcellus was a *φυσικός*, rather than simply an *ἰατρός*. Practical application of physical knowledge would surely be part of Marcellus' work, but studying, writing on, even composing about *φύσις*, puts him in the realm of study shared with Pliny and the like. The interpretation of the Ionic *ἰήτεια* (**ἰάτεια*, a potential comparandum, does not occur in antiquity) is not unproblematic within the syntax. LSJ⁹ (s.v. *ἰάτεια*) considers it to be an abstract noun, “healing,” although, as the feminine of *ἰητήρ*, “healer” would be more apt. But the idea that nature is healing in general (more clearly expressed in 41–2) is different than the specific nature of sea-dwelling creatures, and in 1 it makes more sense grammatically to take it as an adjective.

³³On the aspect of authority in didactic poetry see Kneebone 2017.

³⁴Cf. Auson. *Mos.* 270, *vidi egomet*.

by what he has learned from others (καὶ ἄλλων μῦθον ἄκουσα, 3).³⁵ These combined efforts have enabled him to offer the bulk and the appropriate designations (πληθὺν ἢδ' οὖνομα πᾶν, 4) of what is to be learned on this subject. Moreover, the topic is to be treated in full (πᾶν, 4), in line with earlier didactic poems.³⁶ A strong focus on the ability of the teacher, who has made an effort to win the confidence of the addressee (albeit an unexpressed one), is reminiscent of Marcellus' predecessors.³⁷ Marcellus' use of the future ἀγορεύσω (4) also fits the pattern of a didactic proem, particularly in its quality as a performative future (cf. Faraone 1995; Overduin 2015, 37). Although the performative future itself is not primarily connected to didactic epic, it is a clear marker of the didactic mode, in which the future usually does not express future actions, but coincides with actions in progress.

5. STYLE

Overall, Marcellus' presentation is lucid, both in terms of structure and with regard to clarity of meaning.³⁸ Nicander may have been a model of sorts, but his arcane means of expression are very different from Marcellus' relatively straightforward verses, which are an example of σαφήνεια of which Galen certainly would have approved.³⁹ That is not to say, however, that Marcellus refrained from complicating embellishment. After the proem, Marcellus opens in a grand style (5–7):

³⁵ Cf. Rebuffat 2001, 20, n. 3, who points to the thematic and verbal similarity of [Opp.] C. 4.16–18: αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν ἐρέω τά τ' ἐμοῖς ἴδον ὀφθαλμοῖσι / θήρην ἀγλαόδωρον ἐπιστείχων ξυλόχοισιν, / ὅσσα τ' ἀπ' ἀνθρώπων ἐδάην τοῖσιν τὰ μέμηνεν. But the splitting of these two sorts of knowledge goes back at least to Thucydides (1.22: ὦν αὐτὸς ἤκουσα καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοθεν ποθεν ἐμοὶ ἀπαγγέλλουσιν).

³⁶ For the idea that a didactic poem needs to be comprehensive (at least in the way it presents itself), neither being part of a larger non-didactic whole (as in didactic passages in Homer), nor finished before the entire subject has been treated in some detail, see Effé 1977, 22–3. The latter criterium is of course problematic when assessing a mere fragment.

³⁷ E.g., the use of ρεῖα in Nicander, underlining the ease with which he can teach: ρεῖά κέ τοι μορφάς τε σίνη . . . / ἔμπεδα φωνήσαμι (*Ther.* 1–4), ρεῖά κέ τοι ποσίεσσιν ἀλέξια φαρμακοέσσαις / αὐδήσαμι' (*Al.* 4–5); cf. D.P. 30: ρεῖα δέ τοι κᾶν τήνδε καταγράψαμι θάλασσαν. The didactic elegy of Aglaias (*SH* 18) likewise focuses on the qualities of the teacher (ἐσθλὸν in 1; εὐμογία in 4); authorial strategies in imperial Greek didactic poetry are discussed in Kneebone 2017.

³⁸ Cf. Rebuffat 2001, 102–3: “poco più che un nudo elenco di nomi.”

³⁹ Jacques 1979, 145–6, and 2007, 110. For σαφήνεια as a paedagogical virtue in Galen, see, e.g., *De antidotis* 1.15 (14.89 Kühn). According to Kroll (1930, 1496) Galen must have met Marcellus, but as the only reference to him (*De remediis parabilibus*, 14.459 Kühn) is considered to be pseudo-Galenic, perhaps one should not be too sure.

Βένθεα κητώεντα πολυσκοπέλοιο θαλάσσης
 ἰχθύες ἀμφινέμονται ἀπείριτοι ἀργινόνεντες
 παμμέλανες περκνοὶ τε καὶ αἰόλον εἶδος ἔχοντες.

Around the sea-creature filled depths of the sea with its many cliffs
 innumerable fish dwell, bright-shining,
 all-black, dusky, and variegated in appearance.

The succession of two “heavy” *versus tetracoli*, immediately after the proem, appears to set the tone.⁴⁰ All three nouns (βένθεα, θάλασσα and ἰχθύες) are given epithets, with ἰχθύες (6) being qualified as both innumerable (ἀπείριτοι) and bright (ἀργινόνεντες). The nice triple *homoiokatarkton* of the consecutive α-initial words in 6 complements the treatment of contrasts between white, dark grey, and shiny. The adjective κητώεις (5) is a Homeric rarity of disputed meaning, particularly in the Homeric context: κοίλην Λακεδαίμονα κητώεσσαν (*Il.* 2.581, *Od.* 4.1). When applied by Homer to Sparta, “full of sea creatures” (as derived from κήτος) is not unproblematic, against the alternative reading καιετάεσσα, “full of crevices” (as derived from καιετός).⁴¹ Marcellus, however, finds a highly suitable context for this Homeric *dis legomenon*, a practice reminiscent of Hellenistic poets (notably Apollonius and Callimachus), keen on reusing Homeric rarities.⁴² Line 43 displays a true Homeric epithet, but conversely applied to a new context: ἐξ ἄλδος ἐκ γαίης τε καὶ ἠέρος εὐρυπόροιο.⁴³ Whereas

⁴⁰ On the marked use of such four-word hexameters, see Basset 1919, echoed in, e.g., Mineur 1984, 93 (“stately,” on Call. *Del.* 50), and De Jong 2012, 92 (on *Il.* 22.132); cf. Kidd 1997, 35, and Fränkel 1968, 10. The poet’s attention to shapely composition, however, does not preclude prosodic infelicities, such as recurring hiatus, on which see Schneider 1888, 119–120.

⁴¹ The noun καιετός is used by Strabo (8.5.7) to indicate a fissure produced by an earthquake (LSJ⁹ s.v. καιάδα; cf. Hollis 1990, 191–2). ΣD *Il.* 2.581 also offers και<ε>τάεσσαν as an alternative reading, synonymous to καλαμινθώδη (“full of mint”), καλαμίνθη being called καιέτα in Sparta (according to Zenodotus, Σ *Od.* 4.1), where it abounds; cf. Beekes s.v. κητώεσσαν and LfgrE s.v. κητώεις and καιετάεσσα. Morris 1984, however, provides a plausible explanation when stating that Homer’s remark does not refer to Sparta’s main land, but to the gulf of Sparta that is “full of sea creatures.”

⁴² See Rengakos 1992; 1993, 85–6; 1994; García Romero 1989.

⁴³ A tripartite division of the world was already itemized in early epic (*Il.* 15.189–93), but there it is the sky, the sea, and the “murky darkness” that are allotted to Zeus, Poseidon and Hades, whereas the earth and Olympus remain common to all. A tripartite division of the *natural* world rather reminds us of the three realms of hunting, which was a popular topic in a set of responding Hellenistic epigrams. The model seems to have been Leonidas of Tarentum’s *AP* 6.13, aemulated by Antipater of Sidon (*AP* 6.14), Zosimus (*AP* 6.15), Archias (*AP* 6.16), and finally Leonides of Alexandria (*AP* 6.325, which in turn stood as a model for Leonides’ own *AP* 6.329). The division is also central to the proem of Oppian’s *Haliuettica* (*H.* 1.12–55). Leonidas may not have been so influential as to affect Marcellus here, but the idea may well have been current in similar poems now lost.

in Homer εὐρύπορος is always used of the sea, Marcellus has transferred the epithet to the sky.⁴⁴

Marcellus' style has been labelled Homerizing (Kroll 1930, 1497), yet closer inspection reveals generical epic elements rather than specifically Homeric ones. His use of epithets, moreover, yields many new coinages. The catalogue of fishes (8–40) contains most of these. The adjective ἀγκυλόδοντες (“with crooked teeth”) for the *hepatus*-fish (10) is not found earlier, ἴουλοι (“rainbow-wrasses,” 15) are called πετρώεντες (“rock-haunting”). Where ἀργιόδους (“white-toothed”) was previously used only for the white teeth of dogs and boars (Homer, Apollonius), Marcellus is the first to apply it to fish (20). Moreover, it is applied to the unidentified fish called κορακῖνος, which emphatically brings out the contrast between the black “little raven” and its white teeth.⁴⁵ The κόκκυγες (“pipers”) are ὀξύκομοι (21), because of their pointed spines. The κόλλουρος (unknown fish, 22)⁴⁶ is called ἡμόεις (“haunting the shore”), an epithet thus given a proper context, whereas in Homer it was of doubtful meaning (*Il.* 5.36, ἐπ’ ἠϊόνεντι Σκαμάνδρῳ). The coined adjectives ὀξέθειρ (“with sharp points,” 35), πετρηγενής (“rock-born,” 38), and φιλοσκόπελος (“rock-loving,” 70, of the tunny-fish) may not all be particularly sparkling, yet their concentration lends freshness to Marcellus' epicising style.⁴⁷ The coined *homoiokatarkton* πολυπλόκαμος (36) for an octopus (πουλύπους) is not only a very apt metaphor, but of course also adapts Homer's famous ἐυπλόκαμος in a Nicandrian anthropomorphizing style.⁴⁸ Such a style, often concerned with giving heroic or warrior-like traits to animals through the use of Homeric epithets (cf. Overduin 2015, 125–7) can also be seen in the adjective εὐθώρηκες (30) applied to mussels (μύες). Although the epithet is not found in Homer, it evokes an Iliadic combat setting, as is reflected by similar Homeric adjectives such as χαλκεοθώρηξ (*Il.* 4.448, 8.62), αἰολοθώρηξ (4.489), and εὐκνήμις

⁴⁴*Il.* 15.381; *Od.* 4.432, 12.2; imitations of this epithet by later epicists usually refer to water as well (*Opp. H.* 1.363, 3.620; [*Opp.*] *C.* 3.176; *Q.S.* 1.18, 1.64, 5.74, 8.384), with some late exceptions (Paul. *Sil.* 50, 426, and 516, of windows and rooms of the Hagia Sofia).

⁴⁵Thompson 1947, 122–5; Arena and Cassia (2015, 162) suggest it is a “castagnola” (*Chromis chromis*).

⁴⁶Arena and Cassia (2015, 162) suggest it is a brown wrasse (*Labrus merula*).

⁴⁷That an epithet such as φιλοσκόπελος is appropriate to mark the connection between the tunny and the rocky headland follows from one of Alciphron's letters of fishermen: in 1.14 a certain Θυνναῖος addresses his letter to a certain Σκόπελος, thus playing on such an association.

⁴⁸Also used of octopuses, perhaps in imitation of Marcellus, by ps.-Oppian (*C.* 3.182). For Nicander's stylistic use of the personification of animals, see Overduin 2015, 98–101.

(1.17). To apply such an adjective to a mussel, however appropriate, is a marked epic personification.⁴⁹

When the *χελιδών* (“flying-fish”) is called *ώκυπέτεια* (17) we see a characterization transferred from the swallow to its marine equivalent, through the unique feminine of the Homeric *ώκυπέτης*:⁵⁰ the “swift-flying flying-fish” thus becomes a remarkable instance of “meta-theriomorphic” aesthetics, that shows Marcellus’ awareness of the poetic potential of a fish catalogue. In a similar vein the *κήρυκες* (“trumpet-shells,” 34) are called *εύονυχες*, varying on several adjectives regarding the hoofs of animals.⁵¹ Here too the poet surprises by unexpectedly transferring an ostensibly horse-related epithet to a shell, which of course has its very own kind of *δνυξ* for its shell. The effect of briefly painting so many characteristics of so many fish in the continuous dactylic flow shows that Marcellus had poetic aspirations indeed.⁵² Only the dolphin in line 39 is given more than a single-word epithet: *καὶ γυροὶ δελφίνες αἰὲν αὐτήριον ἑταῖροι* (“and the curved dolphin, always a companion to sailors”).⁵³ This is a marked exception, and one that comes as a pleasant surprise: the emphatic use of *polysyndeton* in 7–39 is suddenly broken to present the reader with a miniature *tableau*, while at the same time ushering in the end of the fragment’s first part.

Another coinage of interest is *ιχθυμέδοντα* (54), a hapax, but one that is easily constructed in similar fashion as *άλιμέδων* (Ar. *Th.* 323), *ποντομέδων* (Pi. *O.* 6.103 etc.), or the later *θαλασσομέδων* (Nonn. *D.* 21.95). The noun is used for the parrot wrasse (*σκάρος*) here, but it is not known as “king of fish” from other sources (Thompson 1947, 238–41). The epithet is, however, close to Nicander’s *βασιλῆιος ὄρνις αἰετός* (“kingly bird”),

⁴⁹The epic quality of the adjective *εὐθώρηξ*, a favourite of Nonnus, is clear from its fifteen appearances in the *Dionysiaca*, but its only other occurrence is in *AP* 9.389, used of a soldier of Ares “equipped with a good cuirass.”

⁵⁰Although there is no attestation of a swallow (*χελιδών*) called *ώκυπέτης*, the adjective was used for similarly fast birds in epic, cf. Hes. *Op.* 212 (*ώκυπέτης ἴρηξ*); A.R. 1.1049–50 (*κίρκου / ώκυπέτας*).

⁵¹E.g., *μώνυξ* (“with single/uncloven hoof,” *Il.* 5.236), *κρατερώνυξ* (“solid-hoofed,” *Il.* 5.329), *κοιλώνυξ* (“hollow-hoofed,” Stesich. 49), *κερώνυξ* (“with horn hoofs,” of Pan in D.P. 995).

⁵²I therefore do not agree with Kroll 1930, 1497, who qualifies Marcellus’ coinages as “leere und geschmacklose Epitheta”.

⁵³How exactly dolphins are true companions to sailors (virtually as business associates in the hunting of fish) is narrated in Opp. *H.* 5.425–47. But as Marcellus’ literary activities (140–160 C.E.) predate the composition of Oppian’s *Halieutica* (176–180 C.E.) by a few decades, Marcellus’ comment on the dolphin here may be more general.

for the eagle.⁵⁴ Nicander also calls the basilisk, which Marcellus lists in line 26, ἐρπηστῶν βασιλῆα (“king of snakes”), although Marcellus may be referring to a different animal.⁵⁵ Perhaps Marcellus picks up on the idea that each natural realm ought to have its own king and thus coins ἰχθυμέδων for the occasion. Alternatively the designation may refer to another quality of the parrot wrasse, which was particularly known for its ethical social behaviour when it comes to saving its comrades (cf. Ael. *HA* 1.2; Opp. *H.* 4.41–6). From that point of view each individual parrot wrasse could be called ἰχθυμέδων, not as “ruler,” but as “protector” of fish (c.q. fellow parrot wrasses), an interpretation which μέδω/μέδομαι may allow. If the idea that parrot wrasses emphatically look after one another was known as a fact from animal lore (which is suggested by their treatment in Aelian and Oppian), then the epithet would make sense to a general reader.

That Marcellus read Nicander can be seen more specifically in the phrasing of line 87.⁵⁶ The use of the gall of a fish known as the φθείρ as a remedy for ear-ache is said to bring healing that is προφερέστατον ἄλλων (“most excellent of all”). This is a rare combination that is only found previously in Nicander, twice (*Ther.* 396, 498), in the same *sedes* at line-end. The only other poet to use this exact phrasing is Dionysius Periegetes, who probably picked it up from Nicander too, a sign that we are dealing with poets working within the same didactic tradition, a tradition that partly developed as a Nicandrian branch of literary didactic epic.

The first fish in the catalogue of cures is the red mullet (τρίγλα), discussed in Marc. Sid. 44–6. This species is shown to be very useful, as it can eradicate ἄνθρακες (i.e., carbuncles).⁵⁷ The combination of τρίγλα and ἄνθραξ, however, is also suggestive of cooking, and at a first glance the *anthrakes* may not be identified straightaway as carbuncles (a *terminus*

⁵⁴Nic. *Ther.* 448–9. But the idea of the eagle as the king of birds is much older, cf. A. Ag. 114; Pi. *O.* 13.21.

⁵⁵Nic. *Ther.* 397. Nicander's basilisk, possibly an agame, is evidently not a fish, as it is not treated in the section on dangerous fishes (*Ther.* 822–36). To which animal Marcellus refers is not clear; see Arena and Cassia 2015, 161.

⁵⁶For general lexical similarities between Marcellus and Nicander (among others), see Heitsch' apparatus (*GDRK* 63).

⁵⁷See, e.g., Hp. *Epid.* 3.3.3.5, 3.3.7.7; Gal. 7.719 Kühn; Paul. Aeg. 4.25. The metaphorical use of ἄνθραξ for carbuncle (ostensibly a dead metaphor in medical texts) does not derive directly from ἄνθραξ as coal, but from dark-colored precious stones (rubies, or indeed “carbuncles”), viz. an alternative natural manifestation of carbon; cf. Arist. *Mete.* 387b18; Thphr. *Lap.* 8.18; Phylarch. 41 et al.

technicus from the realm of ancient Greek medicine), but as coals over which to fry a lovely fish (44–6):⁵⁸

Τρίγλα μὲν ἀνθεμόεσσα πυρὸς ῥιπήσι καεῖσα
 σὺν μέλιτι ξουθῶ κυαναυγέας ἀνθρακας ἔλκει
 ῥιζόθεν, οἱ πνεῖουσι φόβον κρυεροῦ θανάτοιο.

A red mullet, flowerlike, heated over the flickerings of a fire,
 with yellow honey, takes out dark-gleaming carbuncles
 from the root, which breathe the fear of cold death.

As soon as the reader grasps that he is not reading about hot coals for cooking, but about nasty wounds, Marcellus contrasts the heating of the fish with the cold fear of death, a nice stylistic touch rounding off the *παρὰ προσδοκίαν* effect of the dark coals/carbuncles.⁵⁹ Another nice touch is the use of the adjective *ξουθός* in one of the rare cases where it must certainly mean “yellow,” ostensibly as a poetic (though perhaps wrongly equated) variant of *ξανθός*, be it golden yellow or tawny. Critics, both ancient and modern, have been uncertain of the adjective’s exact interpretation, which either may involve color (varieties of yellow, although in Opp. *H.* 2.452 it is used for blood, stretching the adjective’s meaning to include red) or sound (buzzing, whirring). As it is mostly applied to birds or bees, it is often impossible to decide, both color and sound being applicable.⁶⁰ But perhaps relevant for Marcellus is the fact that

⁵⁸That the combination of a *trigla*, *anthrakes*, and the process of heating objects over a fire is found in a context of food preparation is shown by *AP* 6.105.1: Τρίγλαν ἀπ’ ἀνθρακιῆς (“a red mullet from the grill”).

⁵⁹The juxtaposition of *ξουθός* (“golden yellow”) and *κυαναυγής* (“dark-gleaming,” a rare, though not necessarily poetic adjective, found before Marcellus only in *E. Alc.* 261; *Ar. Av.* 1389; *D.P.* 169 and *Luc. Dom.* 11.18) adds to the stylistic contrast within this very brief verse recipe, an effective way of opening the catalogue of cures in style, which in itself forms a marked contrast between poetic style and an utterly prosaic subject matter. The poet’s interest in stylistic *παρὰ προσδοκίαν* is arguably put to use in *Marc. Sid.* 59 too: δευόμενον δὲ κάρηνον εὐγλήνου κεφάλαιο (“the moist head of the bright-eyed sea-mullet”), where *κεφάλαιο* refers to a sea-mullet (*κέφαλος*), yet undeniably calls to mind the cognate *κεφαλή* as a synonym of *κάρηνον*. Of course it is all but impossible to prove that ancient audiences were sensitive to such a pun, yet the near collocation of the two nouns is striking enough to be intentional.

⁶⁰This is already the case in, e.g., *B.* 5.17–8, *ξουθαῖσι* . . . *πεπτεργέσει*, of the eagle’s tawny wings, where it makes equally good sense to interpret *ξουθός* as “nimble”; cf. Campbell 1982, 426. As Campbell points out, the parallel with *A. Ag.* 1142 does not help, as there the adjective, when used of nightingales, could still carry its common meaning of “trilling,” rather than “tawny,” “yellow” or “brown.” For discussion of the general meaning of *ξουθός*, with earlier references, see Kidd 1997, 535.

the reading ξουθῶν (for ξανθῶν) is also attested for his didactic forebear Empedocles, who used the adjective for honey (fr. 128.21 DK, ξουθῶν τε σπονδὰς μελίτων ρίπτοντες ἐς οὐδὰς, “pouring libations of yellow honey on to the treshhold”). Whereas in Empedocles ξουθός may simply have been a variant reading (perhaps an inferior reading), for Marcellus it appears to have been a lexical rarity from the epic-didactic tradition. If Marcellus was, moreover, aware of the problematic interpretation of ξουθός in general, and its use in Empedocles (which is after all the only other *locus* where honey, rather than bees, is called ξουθός), this may have triggered his interest in imitating it, thus reflecting his interest in poetic language, rather than plain exactitude.⁶¹

Marcellus is not devoid of arresting imagery either. His cure for an awkward inconvenience is presented as follows (59–62):

δευόμενον δὲ κάρηνον εὐγλήνου κεφάλαιο
 ἀλμυροῦ ἐν χύτρῃ κεραμηίδι καὶ λιβάδεσσι
 κινράμενον μέλιτος Λυκαβηττίου εὐκυκλον ἔδρην
 ἀλθαίνει συκῆσι περίδριον ὄφρυοέσσαις.

With regard to the verbal sequence Λυκαβηττίου εὐκυκλον ἔδρην (61), the proximity of these words could appear to refer to “the well-rounded” (εὐκυκλος) hill of Lycabettus, which rises as a metaphorical throne (ἔδρη) above Athens.⁶² The adjective Λυκαβήττιος is a hapax and would not need to point at anything other than the eponymous hill, which indeed is remarkably circular. The colorful adjective περίδριον (62) is derived from the noun δρίος (“wood,” “copse”): the throne/hill is like a small wood (δρίος), a thicket encircled (περι-) with leafy (ὄφρυοέσσαις) figs (συκῆσι) around the edges. So far this could be a Pausanian description of the site of the Lykabettus hill, still encircled even today with green wood. Such an interpretation, however, is grammatically impossible, as the adjective does not agree grammatically with ἔδρην, but with μέλιτος. It is used as a mere synonym for Attic and made to refer to Attica’s famous honey. This use of the adjective Λυκαβήττιος is, however, remarkable, as Marcellus’

⁶¹ If Empedocles did write ξουθῶν instead of ξανθῶν, one could tentatively suggest an *enallage*, the elliptical bees’ buzzing or whirring being applied to the honey. Oppian’s use of the adjective for red blood may reflect the same lexical attitude as Marcellus, considering the former’s close attention to the epic language of the past.

⁶² For ἔδρη, normally a seat (LSJ⁹ s.v. ἔδρα I.1), as a throne cf. *A. Pr.* 203 (of Cronus’ seat) and 391 (of Zeus’ throne); *A. Pers.* 466 (of Xerxes’ throne, installed to view the battle of Salamis). To refer to (the top of) a hill as a seat may not, however, be very exceptional anyway. Cf. “Arthur’s Seat,” being the main peak rising above Edinburgh.

is the only reference in extant Greek literature to “Lycabettan honey,” a fact that strengthens the idea that the juxtaposition of Λυκαβηττιου and ἔδρη may have been intentional, their proximity playfully hinting, at least superficially, at some connection.⁶³ The εὐκυκλον ἔδρην (“the well-rounded seat”) so does not refer to the famous hill, but is a bold simile for something completely different. The recipe in fact aims to cure an anus with hairy or brow-like haemorrhoids all around it (59–62):

The moist head of the bright-eyed sea-mullet in a ceramic vessel, with water, mixed with Lycabettan honey, cures a well-rounded seat, encircled with a cluster of brow-like figs.

The well-rounded anus is an εὐκυκλον ἔδρην indeed, with figs representing piles.⁶⁴ Whether one finds such a metaphor tasteless or not, Marcellus clearly takes an original approach to such an evidently unpoetic subject.⁶⁵ The fact that this description is composed in—again—a stately four-word line (62) adds to the marked contrast between lofty poetic presentation and strikingly unpoetic subject matter.⁶⁶ The hapax Λυκαβήττιος is, moreover, not the only instance of a variation on adjectives referring to Athens (74–7):

ζωοῦ δ' ἔψομένου μεγάλου ἐνὶ τεύχει γόγγρου
Παλλαδίου πλήθοντι πυρὸς καθύπερθεν ἐλαίου,
κεῖνο λίπος τρητοῦ διανεύμενον ἠθητῆρος
ἦν τις ἐλῶν τήξειεν Ἐλευσινίου μετὰ κηροῦ.

If someone takes this substance, of a large conger-eel cooked alive over a fire
in a vessel filled with Palladian oil, put through a perforated colander,
and melts it with Eleusinian wax.

⁶³ E.g., Ar. *Th.* 1192; Ath. 1.60, 3.28; Plin. *HN* 11.32 and Str. 9.1.23 (Mount Hymettus in Attica), in addition to dozens of references to Attic honey by Galen and many others.

⁶⁴ The use of σῦκον and cognates for body parts, warts, excrescences *et cetera* was not unknown as a metaphor (cf. Ar. *Ra.* 1247: large wart on the eyelid; Ar. *Pax* 1350: female genitals; see Henderson 1991, 117–9, for an overview of double entendres on figs), and became part of common medical diction (Poll. 4.200: tumors; Orib. *Syn.* 8.37: piles).

⁶⁵ Wilamowitz 1928, 216, n. 3: “Die Vergleichung der Menge Geschwüre um den After mit einem δρῖον kam dem Verfasser gewiß besonders gelungen vor”.

⁶⁶ Marcellus’ use of *versus tetracolos* (only in 4–5 and 62) thus seems to be limited to lines that deserve special attention, either for their position within the poem, or for their demarcation of marked “poetic” effect.

The adjective Παλλάδιος in line 75 is not found elsewhere. Of course the connection between Pallas and olive oil is anchored in Greek myth, but rather than referring to the oil of Pallas Athena, it makes sense to take the qualification as a regional adjective.⁶⁷ The same goes for Ἐλευσίνιος in line 77. This is not a hapax, but its reference to κηρός, “bees-wax,” refers to Attica in general, not specifically to Eleusis.⁶⁸ Together with Λυκαβήτιος Marcellus thus applies three different unusual designations of Attica. The lack of excursions, myths, metaphors or similes in the extant fragment (which consists after all of only 101 lines) may disqualify Marcellus from the higher ranks of didactic epic, but in terms of style his poetry certainly shows ample refinement.⁶⁹ To this can be added the ring composition in 41, where the element of φύσις is recapped from 1. Here, though, it refers to the whole of nature, not to the particular nature of certain kinds of fish as in 1.

A full study of Marcellus' use of metre is outside the scope of this article. For some useful observations, see Schneider 1888, 119–20. Some additional specifics: with regard to the main caesura, there is a high rate of feminine caesurae, with 75 trochaic caesure against only 24 lines having a penthemimeres. Of the remaining two lines, 36 contains a hepthemimeres, but 59 does not show any of the common types of the main caesura at all, which is quite exceptional, and immediately disqualifies Marcellus as an observant of Callimachean metrical practice. Seventeen lines have a spondaic fifth foot, a high number, but comparable to some of the Hellenistic poets who had a liking for σπονδειαίζοντες. With seven instances in thirty-four lines, spondaic lines are, not surprisingly, most frequent in the fish catalogue (7–40), where spondaic lines appear to be necessary to fit particular fish names into the hexameter. This is even more demanding within lines that are built around the frequent coordinating combination of τε καί in the middle of the line, as the spondaic instances in 9, 13, 18, 21 and 22 show. Pairs of consecutive spondaic lines (a Hellenistic mannerism) are found in 8–9, 21–22 and 56–57. Bucolic diaeresis is found in almost

⁶⁷The connection between Athena and the olive tree is related in [Apollod.] 3.14.1; cf. Paus. 1.24 and 27; Ov. *Met.* 6.70.

⁶⁸As Attica was famous for its honey (particularly from the Hymettus: Plin. *HN* 11.32–3; Hor. *Od.* 2.6.13–5; *Sat.* 2.2.15 etc.), a preference for Attic wax is not hard to imagine.

⁶⁹Although Marcellus' interest in myth does not show from our extant fragment of *De piscibus*, McKay 1962, 16–7, 37, 98, shows how Marcellus' treatment of the myth of Triopas in his Triopion poem for Herodes Atticus differs from Callimachus' treatment of the same Triopas in his *Hymn to Demeter*, thus reflecting Marcellus' “Alexandrian” interest in playing on different versions of obscure myths.

half of the lines (47 out of 101), and is quite evenly spread, although its absence from 11 to 22 stands out, which may, again, be connected to the demands and restraints of the fish catalogue (7–40).⁷⁰

6. AN ALLUSION TO HESIOD?

Thus far the assessment of Marcellus' fragment has yielded a somewhat Homerizing style, a voice not untypical of didactic, a subject reminiscent of Nicander and his followers (Eudemus, Andromachus), and a structure similar to Hesiod's catalogue poetry. All in all, there is good reason to consider Marcellus' poetry the fruit of a poet who has made a conscious effort to align himself with his predecessors in the epic-didactic genre, walking in the footsteps first set by Hesiod. But in addition to the elements summed up so far, I suggest one step further could be made, showing an even more engaged involvement with Marcellus' generic predecessors than is already clearly present. Although specific intertextual references do not seem to abound, I suggest that the section on the use of the conger eel, already partly cited above, contains an unnoticed allusion to Hesiod's *Works and Days* (Marc. Sid. 74–81):

ζωοῦ δ' ἔψομένου μεγάλου ἐνὶ τεύχει γόγγρου	
Παλλαδίου πλήθοντι πυρὸς καθύπερθεν ἐλαίου,	75
κεῖνο λίπος τρητοῦ διανεύμενον ἠθητήρος	
ἦν τις ἐλὼν τήξειεν Ἐλευσινίου μετὰ κηροῦ,	
ἐν δὲ πλάσας ὀθόνη μαλακῆ περι γαστέρα θείη	
ἄρτιτόκοιο γυναικός, ἀναιδέες οὐ νύ τι ῥωχμαί	
σάρκα διαρραίουσιν, ἀεὶ δ' ἀγανῶπιν ἄτρωτον	80
οἶά τε <u>παρθενικῆς ἀπαλόχροος</u> αἰνήσουσι.	

If someone takes that substance, of a large conger-eel cooked alive over a fire in a vessel filled with Palladian oil, put through a perforated colander, and melts it with Eleusinian wax, let him place it, after putting it in a soft linen cloth, around the belly of a woman who has just given birth: now the shameless wrinkles do not break up the flesh, but will allow, always, a gentle and unwounded appearance, like that of a soft-skinned maiden.

⁷⁰There are no violations of Hermann's Bridge. Meyer's First Law is violated in 55 and 79. Line 55 also infringes on Meyer's Second "Law," which is also the case in 23. Meyer's Third Law is often ignored (4, 12, 15, 34, 97), though mostly, again, in the fish catalogue. There are no infringements of Hilberg's Law. Naeke's Law is only ignored in 3 and 8. Tiedke's Law is violated in 46 and 94. Monosyllabic words at line-end are entirely absent, if one ignores the enclitic τε in 8 and 29.

This recipe is aimed at women who have just given birth. When prepared and applied correctly, this mixture can prevent or even cure *ῥωχμαί* (“wrinkles,” LSJ⁹, a revision from “fissures,” LSJ⁸), a rare noun that appears to refer to stretch marks (*striae*) in particular on the skin of the woman’s belly (σάρκα διαρραίουσιν, “break up the skin”).⁷¹ This rather technical passage ends in verse 81 with the striking combination of *ἀπαλόχρως* and *παρθενική*, a collocation only found twice before, in the same *sedes*. Its use in *h.Aphr.* 14 (παρθενικὰς ἀπαλόχροας) does not appear to be relevant here.⁷² Its only other occurrence is, however, in line 519 of Hesiod’s *Works and Days*, a passage that contains a marked contrast with the context Marcellus presents. Could this be an intertextual nod to the *Works and Days*, which is after all the mother of all Greek didactic epic? (518–21):

ἴς ἀνέμου Βορέω· τροχάλον δὲ γέροντα τίθησιν
καὶ διὰ παρθενικῆς ἀπαλόχροος οὐ διάησιν,
ἦ τε δόμων ἔντοσθε φίλη παρὰ μητέρι μίμνει
οὐ πω ἔργ’ εἰδυῖα πολυχρύσου Ἄφροδίτης

the force of the wind Boreas: it makes the old man curved like a wheel, but it does not blow through the *soft-skinned maiden* who stays at the side of her dear mother inside the house, still ignorant of the works of golden Aphrodite (tr. Most 2006, 129).

In Hesiod the cold wind cannot blow through the soft-skinned girl: she is, so to speak, safely protected from (natural) violation of her bodily integrity. In Marcellus there is also a context of protection of bodily integrity, but this time it is not the wind from the *outside*, but wrinkles or stretch marks from the *inside* that can be kept at bay. In Hesiod, moreover, the girl, not just a maiden but emphatically a virgin, stays safely with her

⁷¹ Marcellus’ concern with young mothers is remarkable. In *Marc. Sid.* 50–1 a mullet drowned in wine is presented as a means to ease a painful delivery. And in addition to care for stretch marks as mentioned above (77–81), two cures are presented to stimulate the production of breast milk. In 67–9 a soup of sea-bream should help nurses to get their milk flowing, whereas 90–1 is for mothers whose breasts, due to painful labour, are temporarily shut off from giving milk and should be rubbed with the gall of a mackerel to get production started.

⁷² It is of course true that the adjective *ἀπαλόχρως* itself is not particularly rare, being used in both poetry (Thgn. 2.1341, E. *Hel.* 373, *Anacreont.* 57.14) and prose (albeit only by Galen, who uses it ten times), but the combination with *παρθενική*, an exclusively poetic word, is, I suggest, too striking to be a coincidence.

mother, “ignorant of the works of Aphrodite.”⁷³ In Marcellus she has grown up and must have tasted the very works of Aphrodite, as she is now associated with birth and motherhood. Following the instructions of the didactic poet she can, however, still remain unharmed, and still look like the Hesiodic soft-skinned girl (οἶά τε παρθενικῆς ἀπαλόχροος, Marc. Sid. 81). The presence of an intertextual allusion, *ipsis verbis*, in the same *sedes*, to the fountainhead of hexametric didactic epic, in a passage that echoes the Hesiodic setting, yet shows how Hesiod’s maiden has grown into a woman, constitutes an allusive nod that adds meaning on different levels.

7. CONCLUSION

The fragment of *De piscibus* as transmitted may be short, yet it shows ample attention to matters of presentation and style. To call Marcellus a mere teacher does not give an accurate impression of the level of attention he paid to his verse, or to the diverse aspects of his alignment with the Greek epic-didactic tradition, shaping his presentation in special language according to his predilections. His numerous coinages, his use of an extraordinary metaphor, his variation on and reuse of Homeric epithets, his use of contrasting images, his punning, the refinement in his catalogical presentation, and his eye for variation in geographical synonyms show that mere *metaphrasis* was not his only goal.

But although Marcellus writes in a mode that can easily be compared to other medical and pharmacological poets, and one that shows clear signs of awareness on the part of the poet of the genre of didactic epic, it had nonetheless been difficult to connect Marcellus to particular predecessors on points of detail.⁷⁴ This refinement can now be extended to an allusion to Hesiod. Not only does it show that Marcellus can play the intertextuality game of his Hellenistic predecessors, it also shows an awareness (and acknowledgement) of Hesiod as the fountainhead of the

⁷³As Canevaro 2015, 118–9, points out, Hesiod focuses on the woman’s status as girl, not mother, yet her being depicted, in the same scene, as bathing (*Op.* 522–3, εὐ τε λοεσσαμένη τέρενα χροά και λιπ’ ἐλαίω / χριασμένη μυχή καταλέξεται ἐνδοθι οἴκου, “after washing her tender skin well and anointing herself richly with oil she lies down in the innermost recess inside the house”; trans. Most) triggers images of Aphrodite nonetheless.

⁷⁴M. Schneider’s observation that Marc. Sid. 60 (ἐν χύτρῃ κεραμηίδι) appears to be taken from Androm. 90 (ἐν κεραμηίδι χύτρῃ) is, however, noteworthy; cf. Wilamowitz 1928, 215, n. 2. I mentioned earlier Marcellus’ borrowing from Nicander (προφερέστατον ἄλλων, *Ther.* 396, 498) in 87.

didactic genre. A literary allusion to the *Works and Days* is thus a way for Marcellus to associate himself with a particular strand of didactic epic for which Aratus and Nicander before him were famous.⁷⁵

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⁷⁵ An early draft of this paper was presented in Amsterdam on 11 December 2015 at a meeting of OIKOS, the National Research School in Classical Studies in the Netherlands. I would like to thank the participants of that meeting, particularly Dr. Emily Kneebone, for their comments. Thanks are due too to Professor André Lardinois and Dr. Vanessa Cazzato for their comments on later versions, and to the external reviewers of *AJP*, whose comments have been most helpful.

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