

Callisto and the Arcadians in Callimachus' *Hymn to Zeus*
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Scholars have long recognized Callimachus' extensive use of etiology in his hymns, as a means of linking past to present and of lending credence to mythological accounts (see esp. Depew 1993, 57-71), and McLennan in his commentary on the *Hymn to Zeus* (1977, 41, 70-71) has noted the *aitia* in this hymn's Arcadian section: the first *aition* (11-14) following the brief description of Zeus' birth, the second (37-41) capping the account of the god's bath and the Arcadian episode as a whole. This paper proposes that these two *aitia* together introduce a secondary mythological tale, Callisto's near death before her rescue by Zeus himself. In recalling Callisto at Zeus' birth and then his bath, Callimachus achieves a narrative tension and resolution that ultimately emphasize the Arcadian debt to Zeus and his favor.

The *aition* that caps the account of Zeus' birth records of the site that "ever since, the place is / sacred, and none at all in need of Eileithyia – neither beast nor woman – approaches it" (ἐνθεν ὁ χῶρος / ἱερός, οὐδέ τί μιν κεχρημένον Εἰλειθυΐης / ἔρπετόν οὐδὲ γυνή ἐπιμίσηται, 11-13). This prohibition differs remarkably from Pausanias' report that *any* trespasser must die (8.38.6), an indication that Callimachus may be reworking the tradition. While extant accounts agree that Callisto was transformed into a bear (hinted at here by the pairing of ἔρπετόν and γυνή), they differ regarding the circumstances under which Zeus made her a constellation. Callimachus, I propose, fuses two versions to suit his purposes in this hymn. While his caution against trespass recalls Arcas' attempt to kill Callisto for her entrance into this very same precinct (Hesiod, fr. 163 M-W), the reference to the need for Eileithyia alludes to versions in which Artemis tries to kill a Callisto still pregnant with Arcas (Ps. Apollod., *Bibl.* 3.8.2-3; Paus., 8.3.5-6). By suggesting that it was a pregnant Callisto who violated Zeus' birth-site, Callimachus casts Zeus' birth as a potential threat to the lives of Callisto and her unborn child Arcas, and consequently to the very existence of their Arcadian descendants.

Later in the episode, after Rhea splits the earth with her staff and bathes her infant Zeus in the flood that pours forth (28-32), a climactic *aition* begins with the naming of that new stream, the Neda (37-38), after the nymph who will convey Zeus from Arcadia to a secret Cretan cave. But Callimachus quickly shifts the focus of this *aition* to make mortals the episode's final and climactic concern: the Neda now offers water to the Arcadians of Callimachus' day: "the descendants of the bear, Lycaon's daughter, drink" (υἱῶν οἱ πίνουσι Λυκαονίης ἄρκτοιο, 41). With the final word of this *aition* (and of the entire Arcadian section) Callimachus returns his audience to the tale of the bear Callisto and assures them of its happy resolution: Zeus did indeed save Callisto and her unborn Arcas, despite the violation of his shrine. Furthermore, whereas Callisto has become a constellation that famously never drinks (Ursa Major), her descendants live to drink from the Neda. The two *aitia* of the Arcadian section thus rework the myth of Callisto to stress the Arcadians' debt to Zeus, not only for their sustenance by the waters of his bath, but also for their very existence. He is their forefather through Callisto and his son Arcas, and he is their savior thanks to his favor toward their ancestral mother.