

## Between Arcadia and Crete: Callisto in Callimachus' *Hymn to Zeus*

The speaker of Callimachus' *Hymn to Zeus* famously asks Zeus himself whether he should celebrate the god as "Dictaeon," i.e. born on Mt. Dicte in Crete, or "Lycaean," born on Arcadian Mt. Lycaeus (4-7). When the response comes, "Κρητες ἀεὶ ψεῦσται" ("Cretans are always liars," 8), the hymnist agrees, and for support recalls that the Cretans built a tomb for Zeus, who is immortal (8-9). In so dismissing Cretan claims to truth, the hymnist justifies an Arcadian setting for his ensuing birth narrative (10-41). Curiously, however, after recounting Zeus's birth and bath, the hymnist suddenly locates the remainder of the god's early life in Crete after all (42-54). The transition is surprising, not only because it runs counter to the previous rejection of Cretan claims, but also because the Arcadians themselves held that Zeus was both born *and* raised in Arcadia (Paus. 8.38.2).

While scholars have focused on how the ambiguity of two place names (κευθμὸν... Κρηταῖον, 34; Θενάς/Θεναί, 42, 43) misleads the audience and/or prepares them for the abrupt move from Arcadia to Crete (Griffiths 1970 32-33; Arnott 1976 13-18; McLennan 1977 66, 74-75; Tandy 1979 105, 115-118; Hopkinson 1988 126-127), this paper proposes that the final word of the birth narrative, ἄρκτοιο ("bear," 41), plays an important role in the transition as well. This reference to Callisto a) allusively justifies the departure from Arcadia, by suggesting that the Arcadians are liars not unlike the Cretans; b) prepares for the hymnist's rejection of the Cretan account of Helice; and c) initiates a series of heavenly ascents that binds the Arcadian and Cretan portions of the hymn and culminates climactically with Zeus's own accession to the sky.

The allusion to Callisto inevitably recalls her eternal place among the stars. Although her catasterism at Zeus's hands was likely a late – perhaps even Hellenistic – addition to her myth (Sale 1962 140; Sale 1965 34; Henrichs 1987 258-264), it was known to Callimachus, who

elsewhere identifies her with the constellation Ἄρκτος, familiar as Ursa Major (Call. *Aet.* fr. 17.9-10 Harder; Catullus, 66.65-66; Harder 2012 2.181-184). To the extent that Callimachus, who authored a treatise on Arcadia, was familiar with that region and its lore, the reference to Callisto here in *Hymn* 1 also recalls the tomb that Arcadians built for her (Paus. 8.3.7, 8.35.8). Just as the Cretans' tomb for immortal Zeus inspired the hymn's Arcadian birth narrative (8-9), then, so an allusive nod to the Arcadians' tomb for the immortal Callisto marks the departure from Arcadia to Crete (41).

This allusion to Callisto also prepares for the rejection of an emphatically Cretan tradition wherein the bears Helice and Cynosura nursed Zeus in the Dictaeon cave and later became the constellations Ursa Major and Minor (Arat. *Phaen.* 27-37; cf. Diodorus Siculus, 4.80.1-2; pseudo-Hyginus, *Astr.* 2.2). As the constellation Ἄρκτος, Callisto thus supplants Helice as Ursa Major even before the hymn's Cretan episode has begun. Then, within this Cretan narrative, Helice proves to be supplanted as Zeus's nurse as well, by the she-goat Amalthea (49), herself allegedly rewarded with catasterism for this service (Arat. *Phaen.* 163; Ps.-Hygin. *Astr.* 2.13; Antoninus Liberalis, *Met.* 36).

Together, then, the bear Callisto and the goat Amalthea bind the hymn's Arcadian and Cretan episodes through the catasterism they enjoy at the hands of Zeus. But the pair also prepare for Zeus's own ascent into the heavens in the following episode (57-67). There Callimachus takes pains to argue, against Homer, that Zeus acquired the sky not by lot, but through his own power (60-67). Taken together, the series Callisto–Amalthea–Zeus lends unity to a rather episodic hymn through the theme of immortality, celebrating Zeus's power not only to attain the sky for himself, but also to confer a like and eternal gift on others as well, tomb or no.

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