

## Something Funny in the Midst of Acheron: Callimachus on the Soul in *Iambus* 1

In this paper, I propose a new reading of *Iambus* 1 (fr. 191 Pf.), building on Callimachus' complex network of allusions and parallels with Plato's dialogues, as documented by Acosta-Hughes and Stephens [Acosta-Hughes, Stephens 2011]. In *Iambus* 1, the poet Hipponax returns to Alexandria from Hades and addresses quarreling Alexandrian scholars. He tells the story of the golden cup, bequeathed by Bathycles, the Arcadian, to the one who is the wisest. The cup is passed around to the Seven Sages until it returns back to Thales, who dedicates it to the temple of Apollo in Didyma. I argue that Callimachus employs references to Plato's dialogues not only as a critical point for expressing his views on poetry but also as a means of responding to Plato's teaching on the soul and its reception.

In the first part of the paper, I focus on a close reading of the scene that depicts old Arcadian Bathycles on his death bed (lines 32-43, fr. 191 Pf.) surrounded by his sons. With the analysis of narrative strategies and vocabulary, I demonstrate that this scene has substantial parallels with the beginning of Plato's dialogue "Phaedo" (*Phaedo*, 58d-60c) and can be considered as a parody of the scene of Socrates' conversation with his followers before his death.

In the second part of my paper, I explore other Callimachean texts that supplement my reading of this scene. One of the important intertexts is *Epigram* 23 Pf. (= 53 GP), which tells the story of Cleombrotus, Socrates' follower, notoriously absent from the prison on the day of Socrates' execution. In this epigram, Cleombrotus jumps from the wall after reading Plato's dialogue "On the Soul" (i.e. "Phaedo"). This epigram clearly demonstrates that Callimachus was particularly interested in this dialogue [Acosta-Hughes, Stephens 2011, 23-25]. With the

semantic analysis of this epigram, I argue that Plato's teaching on the soul receives humorous treatment in Callimachean poetry and becomes the topic of an anecdote.

The second important intertext is *Iambus 2* (fr. 191 Pf.), inspired by Aesopic fable, which narrates the judgment of Cronus: he takes away voices from animals and gives animal voices to humans. *Iambus 2* provides an indirect reference to the "Phaedo": it is reminiscent of Socrates composing metrical versions of Aesop's fables while in prison (*Phaedo*, 60d). I also suggest that *Iambus 2* in fact employs a parallel to the tenth book of "The Republic." In the "Myth of Er," Plato describes humans receiving animal souls and animals receiving human souls (*The Republic*, 620a-b). Thus, I argue that *Iambus 2* further develops platonic themes introduced by the *anabasis* of Hipponax in *Iambus 1*.

In the conclusion of my paper, I summarize all of the possible interconnections and references to Plato's teaching of the soul in Callimachus' *Iambus 1*. With my analysis, I demonstrate how Callimachus depicts death and the afterlife through the prism of the humorous reception of Plato's "Phaedo" and "The Republic".

#### Bibliography

Acosta-Hughes, B., & Stephens, S. (2011). *Callimachus in Context: From Plato to the Augustan poets*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.