

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-00857-1 - Callimachus in Context: From Plato to the Augustan Poets

Benjamin Acosta-Hughes and Susan A. Stephens

Excerpt

[More information](#)

Introduction

The paradox of Callimachus is that his influence is inversely proportional to his survival – the more important his poem was in antiquity, the less we have of it. Only his collection of six hymns and about sixty of his epigrams survive intact. The *Hecale*, *Aetia*, and *Iambi* are assembled fragments that often lack narrative and aesthetic coherence. Their reconstructions seem to require a steep learning curve or an act of faith that often leaves the average scholar of classical literature disadvantaged, and he or she quite naturally turns to the later, Roman reception of Callimachus for help in negotiating his poetic terrain. A related paradox is that he consistently wrote about kings and contemporary events, but the reception of his poetics, what is now popularly called “Callimacheanism,” is essentially aesthetic, premised on his rejection of epic, his display of erudition, and his disengagement from contemporary social contexts. The extreme view of this disengagement was articulated by Bruno Snell, who claimed in an influential chapter in his *Discovery of the Mind* that, suffering from “post-philosophical exhaustion,” Callimachus was incapable of the boldness of thought of earlier ages.¹ However exaggerated Snell’s formulation may appear, his underlying assumption that Callimachus retreated into a bookish, “slender” poetics is echoed in much of what is written about this poet today.

The aim of this study is to consider why this formulation of Callimacheanism persists and to reframe the traditional discussion in the following ways. Initially we examine Callimachus’ aesthetic agenda, but within the context of previous Greek speculations about the role of poets and poetry in the civic environment, the role played by philosophers, particularly Plato, in this discussion, and the trope of the literary quarrel. We then turn to Callimachus’ particular creative moment, to situate him not simply as a poet of the book, but as a poet conscious of his position

¹ Snell 1953: 274.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-00857-1 - Callimachus in Context: From Plato to the Augustan Poets

Benjamin Acosta-Hughes and Susan A. Stephens

Excerpt

[More information](#)

within a long tradition of public performance embedded in specific communities, who is able to capitalize on the universalizing poetic strategies permitted by the written text. In our third chapter we take up his geographies and genealogies, arguing that much of what now appears obscure and eccentric to earlier poetry is the result of his project to re-map the Mediterranean, de-centering mainland Greece to focus on places of familiarity and importance to court and society in early Ptolemaic Alexandria. Finally, we assess the ways in which Roman poets appropriated Callimachus, how they reconfigured, exaggerated, or ignored various aspects of his poems, thus conditioning the way in which we read Callimachus today.

In order to contextualize Callimachus within his intellectual traditions and within his physical and social environments, let us begin with what is known about his time and place. Aulus Gellius placed his *floruit* in 268 BC,² which coincides with the approximate dates of internal references within some of his poems. These include what appears to be an *epithalamium* for the marriage of Ptolemy II and Arsinoe II (between 279–74),³ the *Hymn to Delos*, with its vignette of a revolt of Gaulish mercenaries (275); Arsinoe II's death and apotheosis (270); the marriage of Berenice II and Ptolemy III (246); and Berenice II's chariot victory at the Nemean games (245 or 241). No poems to which dates may be assigned survive between 270 and 246 BC. However most of the poems to which we can assign dates were occasional, praising the Ptolemaic queens Arsinoe II and Berenice II. Because Ptolemy II did not take another wife after the death of Arsinoe in 270, there was no queen of Egypt until Berenice's marriage in 246, a circumstance that might explain the apparent hiatus in his production. The earliest of his poems to which a plausible date may be assigned is the *Hymn to Zeus*. Either it was written for Ptolemy I or for his son, Ptolemy II, at the beginning of his assumption of power, which gives it a *terminus ante quem* of 282, the year of Ptolemy I's death.⁴ Callimachus' elegiac epinician for Sosibius was either written for the nefarious minister of Ptolemy IV or for an earlier figure credited with a treatise on kingship written under Cassander.⁵

² 17.21.41 (= *test.* 8 Pf.). See Lehnus 1993: 76–7.

³ Arsinoe returned to Egypt in 279/278 (Just. 24.2–3); she is named “loving her brother” in the Pithom Stele in the 12th year of his reign (274/273). See Fraser 1972: 2.367 n. 228.

⁴ For Ptolemy II: Koenen 1977: 62–3; Claus 1986: 155–6; Stephens 2003: 77–9; for Ptolemy I: Carrière 1969. Meillier 1979: 61–78 and Laronde 1987: 366 make a case for Magas as the recipient, but the identification is difficult to reconcile with lines 56–66 in which ‘Zeus’ (identified with Ptolemy), receives the best portion (Olympus) although he is the youngest of his siblings.

⁵ The younger Sosibius was, according to Polybius (5.34–9), responsible for the death of Berenice II. His high status makes him a more suitable participant in Panhellenic athletic contests than the older Sosibius identified by Athenaeus (144e).

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-00857-1 - Callimachus in Context: From Plato to the Augustan Poets

Benjamin Acosta-Hughes and Susan A. Stephens

Excerpt

[More information](#)*Introduction*

3

Based on the assumption that the epinician was for the younger Sosibius, Callimachus' birth is generally taken to have been around 305 BC. But if it was the earlier Sosibius, that poem is unlikely to be later than the 290s and requires Callimachus' birth date to be adjusted upwards, perhaps as early as 320 BC.⁶ As to the extent of his life, Athenaeus (252c) mentions that Callimachus recorded in his *Pinakes* that one Lysimachus wrote on the education of Attalus. However, the first king so named took the throne only in 241; for Athenaeus' statement to be accurate, Callimachus must still have been writing in 240, and very probably even later.⁷ In either case, Callimachus lived the majority of his adulthood during the reign of the second Ptolemy (282–46), the period when the Ptolemaic empire was at its height. The *Suda* tells us that he was an elementary schoolmaster in Eleusis,⁸ but if he is already writing for the court in the late 280s BC, his academic career must have been quite brief. In contrast, Tzetzes records that he was a “youth of the court” (νεανίσκος τῆς αὐλῆς), an official status that is incompatible with elementary school teaching, but would fit with a poetic career that seems to have begun in his early twenties.⁹ The easiest explanation for the *Suda*'s information is that it was extrapolated from poems in which Callimachus speaks of the schoolroom or schoolmasters.¹⁰

Although he wrote for the Alexandrian court, Callimachus identifies himself as a native of the Dorian colony of Cyrene, claiming descent from the Battiads, the city's founding line.¹¹ His grandfather, also named Callimachus, was probably the Cyrenean general.¹² Callimachus' sister, Megatima, seems to have married into a high-ranking Cypriot family.¹³ A great-grandfather has been identified as Anniceris, a Cyrenean, who according to an anecdote preserved in Lucian (*Dem. enc.* 23) and Aelian (*VH* 2.27), tried to impress Plato by driving his chariot (bound for the

⁶ See Wilamowitz 1924: 2.88. ⁷ See Lehnus 1995. ⁸ *Test.* 1.8–9 Pf.

⁹ *Test.* 14c.1 Pf. Cameron argues that if Callimachus was one of the youths reared at court, as the term implies, then the family must have been in residence in Alexandria during the reign of Soter (1995: 4–5, 7–8).

¹⁰ E.g., *Ep.* 26 GP = 48 Pf. or *Iambus* 5. See Cameron 1995: 3–6 and Lehnus 1993: 77.

¹¹ *Ep.* 30 GP = 35 Pf. Cameron 1995: 8 points out that the term “Battiades” refers to lineage, not the name of a close relative.

¹² *Ep.* 29 GP = 21 Pf.: “Whoever walks past my tomb, know that I am the child and parent of Cyrenean Callimachus, and you would know both: one once led his country's armies, the other sang beyond the reach of envy.” Cameron 1995: 7 notes the combative symmetries: the one bested the enemy in battle, the other in poetry.

¹³ Cameron 1995: 8–9. For the details based on inscriptional evidence see Laronde 1987: 110–3, 118 and Meillier 1979: 336–7.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-00857-1 - Callimachus in Context: From Plato to the Augustan Poets

Benjamin Acosta-Hughes and Susan A. Stephens

Excerpt

[More information](#)

Olympic games) around the periphery of the Academy.¹⁴ Anniceris must have been a man of considerable wealth because he was also said to have ransomed Plato from Dionysius of Syracuse.¹⁵ Callimachus' lifetime largely overlapped the heyday of Cyrenaic philosophy, which traces its descent from Aristippus, a Cyrenean who traveled to Athens and frequented the circle around Socrates.¹⁶ From 330 to 275 BC, four figures dominated the Cyrenaic school – Aristippus the Younger (the grandson of this earlier Aristippus), Hegesias,¹⁷ Theodorus,¹⁸ and the younger Anniceris. Their philosophy advocated a hedonism probably developed in response to the Epicureans, but focusing not on the long-term goal of the avoidance of pain, but the enjoyment of ephemeral pleasures both physical and intellectual.¹⁹ One of these men, Theodorus, wrote a book denying the existence of gods, and was expelled from Athens, but, according to Diogenes Laertius, was pressed into service as an ambassador for Ptolemy Soter. He too may have been related to Callimachus.²⁰

Cyrene had been the most important Greek city on the coast of North Africa in the three centuries before the foundation of Alexandria. According to Herodotus, Battus founded it in the seventh century when he led out colonists from Sparta via Thera to Libya at the instruction of the Delphic Apollo.²¹ Increasing migration to the region led to considerable instability, with the result that by the mid-sixth century external threats from the Libyans, Amasis' Egypt, and internal political machinations led Battus III to consult the Delphic oracle once again. The Pytho instructed him to solicit Demonax from Mantinea in Arcadia as an advisor, who reorganized the citizens into three tribes: the original (Spartan) Theraean settlers, another consisting of Peloponnesians and Cretans, and the third

¹⁴ Lehnus 1993: 76 n. 8 and F. Williams 1996: 40–2, who suggests that Anniceris demonstrated his skills by driving several times in the same tracks, and that the instruction not to drive one's chariot "along the same tracks as others" in the *Aetia* Prologue was a sly reference to his ancestor's derring-do.

¹⁵ D.L. 3.20. ¹⁶ He is named in the *Phaedo* (59c3), and see below, ch. 1 n.1.

¹⁷ White 1994: 142–3; D.L. 2.86.

¹⁸ D.L. 2.97–103. Theodorus the Cyrenaic is to be distinguished from Theodorus of Cyrene, a geometrician, and sometime companion of Socrates (in the *Theaetetus* and the *Sophist*). According to D.L. 3.6, Plato visited the latter in Cyrene.

¹⁹ See, e.g., Long 1999: 634. Most of what we know about the Cyrenaics is based on the account in D.L. 2.65–104.

²⁰ D.L. 2.101–3. Meillier 1979: 335–7 prints Chamoux's hypothetical family tree, based on Cyrenean and other inscriptions (though Cameron 1995: 8 n. 31 points out Callimachus' great-grandfather could only have been the older Anniceris).

²¹ Hdt. 4.150–9. The traditional foundation date is 631 BC. For ancient references to and modern discussion of this story see Giangiulio 2001: 122–7, and especially his notes. The myth is also celebrated in a statue group that, according to Pausanias (10.15.6), the Cyreneans dedicated at Delphi. It was a figure of Battus in a chariot with Cyrene, who holds the reins. He is being crowned by Libya.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-00857-1 - Callimachus in Context: From Plato to the Augustan Poets

Benjamin Acosta-Hughes and Susan A. Stephens

Excerpt

[More information](#)*Introduction*

5

of the remaining islanders.²² Battiad rule continued until some time in the mid-fifth century, exerting a hegemonic influence over the rest of the Cyrenaica. When their rule came to an end, Cyrene became a republic. Civic tensions between the aristocratic and democratic factions erupted in the late fourth century, as a result of which the oligarchic party appealed to Ptolemy I to intervene. He placed his general Ophellas in charge, who attempted to quell the demotic insurgency; but Ptolemy himself decided to intervene in 321/320, restructuring Cyrene's constitution to leave it an oligarchy,²³ though he continued to exert *de facto* control. This did not end civil discord; it continued for two decades as various factions tried to assert their independence from the imperial grasp.²⁴

In 301 BC Magas, the son of Berenice I, and Ptolemy I's stepson, reconquered Cyrene, administering it as *strategos* for the Ptolemies until 275, at which time he declared his independence and ruled Cyrene as its king from 275 to 246. During this period the two cities engaged in frequent hostilities, but it is unclear whether political tensions created an impermeable barrier to travel and trade, and if they did, whether Callimachus spent these years in Alexandria or Cyrene. Of his topical poetry, only the *Apotheosis of Arsinoe*, which must have been written soon after her death in 270, would seem to require a presence in Alexandria; all of his other poems with date-sensitive material fall around or before 275 or after 246. Cyrene returned to Ptolemaic control when, at the end of their lives, Magas and Ptolemy II brokered a marriage between their children. Both fathers died before the marriage and, despite bloody intrigues to prevent it,²⁵ Magas' daughter, Berenice II, and Ptolemy III were married in 246 BC. Callimachus' writing includes discrete details of both Alexandria and Cyrene, and it is significant that his poem on the marriage, the event that led to the reconciliation of the cities, was given the final and most emphatic position in the *Aetia*.

Cyrenean literary attainments before Callimachus appear rather slender. The city could lay claim to a thriving philosophical school, but it did not produce great international poets. However, a sixth-century Cyrenean

²² Hdt. 4.161. See Hölkeskamp 1993 on Demonax's reforms and their duration. Maass 1890 makes the intriguing suggestion that Callimachus' first three hymns reflect Demonax's phylitic structure: Zeus's birth is an amalgam of Arcadian (Peloponnesian) and Cretan legends; the Spartan-Theran colonization myth occurs in the second hymn; Artemis' cultic connections with the islanders is important in the third.

²³ For the constitution (the *diagramma*) of Cyrene (*SEG IX.1*) see Laronde 1987: 85–128. Ptolemy's reforms opened up the citizen body to include the offspring of Cyrenean men and Libyan women, an event that Callimachus may well be acknowledging in his dance of the Spartans with yellow-haired Libyan women in *hAp.* 85–6.

²⁴ Laronde treats these wars in considerable detail, see 1987: 41–84 and 95–136.

²⁵ See, e.g., Hölbl 2001: 45–6.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-00857-1 - Callimachus in Context: From Plato to the Augustan Poets

Benjamin Acosta-Hughes and Susan A. Stephens

Excerpt

[More information](#)

epic poet, Eugammon, allows a glimpse into regional poetics and how it operated within the broader Panhellenic context.²⁶ Eugammon is credited with a *Telegonia*, the adventures of Telegonus, a son of Odysseus and Circe that provides a variant ending to the *Odyssey*. According to Proclus' epitome, after Odysseus returned to Ithaca and killed the suitors, he needed to propitiate Poseidon by traveling inland until he encountered a people who did not know the sea.²⁷ He journeyed to the land of the Thesprotians (Epirus), married the queen of the country, and sired a son. When he returned to Ithaca, Telegonus, who had been searching for him, killed him in ignorance with a spear dipped in poison from a stingray. Telegonus then transported his dead father, Penelope, and Telemachus to the Islands of the Blessed; he married Penelope, while Telemachus married Circe. The poet included another son of Odysseus and Penelope, named Arcesilas. Since this name was hereditary in the Battiad line, the figure was surely meant to have been a "genealogical compliment" to the house.²⁸ Distinctive elements of the *Telegonia* also surface in Athenian tragedy. Sophocles apparently wrote a play entitled *Odysseus ἀκανθοπλήξ* ("Odysseus struck by a stickle-back fish"), which Aristotle identifies (along with the *Oedipus Tyrannus*) as an example of his favorite tragic plot.²⁹ In addition, later Italian writers must have known the epic, since Telegonus occurs in their own colonizing histories.³⁰ All of which suggests a fairly wide circulation for the Cyrenean poem.

Whether or not Eugammon was the source, it is reasonable to assume that other Cyrene-specific myths like the Libyan adventures of the Argonauts and the Cyrenean fragments in Hesiod's catalogue poetry depended on local traditions, both oral and written.³¹ These sources certainly underpin Herodotus' Libyan material, and Pindar too incorporated local myths in his *epinicia* for Cyrenean victors. *Pythian* 4, written for Arcesilas IV's chariot victory at the Pythian games in 462 BC, includes a temporally layered narrative of the foundation myth of Cyrene within the broader adventure of the Argonauts. Medea prophesies that one of them, Euphemus, will receive a gift of Libyan earth from a god disguised as a man

²⁶ See Giangiulio 2001: 123 n. 22 for bibliography. For the fragments see Bernabé 1987: 100–106 and West 2003: 164–71.

²⁷ A line expressing this sentiment found in a letter of the fourth century AD Cyrenean Synesius has been attributed to Eugammon by Livrea 1998.

²⁸ Phillips 1953: 54–5. When referring to Cyrenean monarchs, the Doric form of the name Arcesilas is used throughout, in preference to Arcesilaus.

²⁹ See *TrGF* Sophocles fr. 453–62 Radt, pp. 374–5 and *Poetics* 1453b29–34 (the unwitting murder of kin).

³⁰ See, e.g., Horace, *c.* 3.29.7–8 with Nisbet and Rudd 2004: 350 for other occurrences.

³¹ West 1985: 87; Giangiulio 2001: 127.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-00857-1 - Callimachus in Context: From Plato to the Augustan Poets

Benjamin Acosta-Hughes and Susan A. Stephens

Excerpt

[More information](#)*Introduction*

7

(17–38) and that the heaven-sent clod (δοιμονίη βώλαξ) was a promise that in the seventeenth generation his ancestors will return to colonize the land. *Pythian* 9, written for the victory of Telesicrates of Cyrene in the race in armor at the Pythian games in 474, rehearses the story of Apollo's love for the eponymous nymph, Cyrene, whom he carries off from Thessaly to Libya. There she gives birth to Aristaeus. Pindar's poems include many of the city's features: Carneian Apollo and his festival of the *Carneia*, the tomb of the founder, Battus, and the garden of Aphrodite.

Evidence for dramatic performance in Cyrene is tantalizing but inconclusive. Its earliest theater (with at least two building phases) was located beside the precinct of Apollo. This early Greek theater may have had support for a *skene*, which would indicate that full dramatic productions took place there, though no evidence for the presence of tragic actors in the city has come to light.³² A close connection with Athens in the fifth century and evidence for the popularity of the Alcestis story in Cyrene might mean that Athenian plays were performed there, but it is more likely that the myth figured in or was performed as part of the celebration of the Spartan and the Cyrenean *Carneia*.³³ Apart from the architectural remains, our knowledge of performance practices depends primarily on two fourth-century inscriptions (*SEG* 9.13 and 48.2052). These are fragmentary accounts of the *damiourgoi* listing expenses for tragic choruses, dithyrambic choruses, an *auletes*, and prizes of an ox for each chorus.³⁴ It is not clear from these inscriptions whether citizen groups or professional performers constituted the choruses. Because *SEG* 9.13 specifies three tragic choruses it is tempting to identify them with Demonax's three tribes, but the number of dithyrambic choruses does not match, which would be a much more dependable index. C. Dobias-Lalou would link the three tragic choruses to the Athenian practice of tragic competition, but again the argument is not conclusive.³⁵ P. Ceccarelli and S. Milanezi in their discussion of these texts raise the possibility that, given the lack of evidence for the worship of Dionysus in Cyrene before the first century BC, the dithyrambic choruses might have been intended for the celebration of another god. If so, the most probable candidate would be Apollo, in connection with the nine-day festival of the *Carneia*. But they too admit uncertainty. The most that can

³² Stucchi 1975: 34–6; Bonacasa and Ensoli 2000: 123, with a discussion of construction phases for the classical and Hellenistic theater.

³³ Quatrocelli 2006.

³⁴ They also list sums for the bear, presumably of Artemis, and for the priestess of Athena. For a discussion of these inscriptions in the context of tragic and dithyrambic performance, see Ceccarelli and Milanezi 2007.

³⁵ 1993: 35.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-00857-1 - Callimachus in Context: From Plato to the Augustan Poets

Benjamin Acosta-Hughes and Susan A. Stephens

Excerpt

[More information](#)

be said is that choral performance of some kind took place on an annual basis and that myths originating elsewhere (like that of Alcestis) circulated in Cyrene.

Since Callimachus wrote topical poems that featured Ptolemy II and Arsinoe II, he must have taken up residence in Alexandria at some point early in his life (if he was not resident as a child). In fact, civic unrest in Cyrene and the Cyrenaica created conditions that encouraged many residents from this region to migrate to Alexandria at the beginning of the third century. Although our information about the ethnic identity of Greek immigrants to Alexandria is sketchy, migration patterns into the rest of Ptolemaic Egypt show large numbers from North Africa.³⁶ In the period between 320 and 250 BC immigrants in some numbers also came from Thessaly and Thrace, Athens, the southern Aegean islands, and, in the second century BC, from Judea.³⁷ There is no inherent reason to think that patterns of immigration to Alexandria would have drawn on different communities or in radically different proportions since Cyrene and the Cyrenaica contained the Greek populations closest to the newly established city. The conclusion to draw from this is that Callimachus was not an isolated figure but would have belonged to one of the city's largest ethnic groups (Macedonians were probably the largest, but the majority would have been soldiers, and often on campaign). Cyreneans would have brought a local perspective to their reception of his poetry, and this may in turn have conditioned his treatment of specific topics. (For example, the *Hymn to Apollo* could have been written for the immigrant Cyrenean community in Alexandria.) How long he lived in Alexandria is not known, nor if he traveled elsewhere.³⁸

Because Callimachus wrote six hymns to Olympian divinities – Zeus, Apollo, Artemis, Delos (Apollo), Athena (in Argos), and Demeter – it is helpful to review the respective religious environments of Cyrene and Alexandria. They differed in important ways. Cults to these five Olympians flourished in Cyrene. Apollo was its patron deity, whose temple was first constructed in the sixth century BC. Its environs included the garden of Aphrodite, a temple of Artemis, and an *exedra* to Leto with a bronze

³⁶ The data in La'da 2002 indicates that the largest number identified by ethnicity were Macedonians (414), then those from Cyrene or the Cyrenaica (205), those identified as Jews (98), Athenians (58), Syracusans (22).

³⁷ See Mueller 2005: 87. Jewish immigration does not happen much before the second century BC.

³⁸ Oliver 2002 would identify the Callimachus listed as a benefactor in an Athenian decree of 248/247 BC as the poet, which would guarantee his residence in Athens at the time. But the identification is far from secure.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-00857-1 - Callimachus in Context: From Plato to the Augustan Poets

Benjamin Acosta-Hughes and Susan A. Stephens

Excerpt

[More information](#)

Introduction

9

Delian palm.³⁹ The colossal cult statue of Apollo was found in 1861 and now resides in the British Museum. It is a Roman copy of a Hellenistic original that is assigned to the second century BC.⁴⁰ Callimachus features the Cyrenean festival of Apollo Carneius in his second hymn. A cult temple of Zeus Olympius was also centrally located, with a cult statue that replicated Phidias' renowned statue of Zeus at Olympia.⁴¹ Herodotus mentions an extramural sanctuary of Zeus Lycaeus (4.203), though this has never been found. Another important extramural sanctuary belonged to Demeter and Kore. Deposits of piglet bones indicate that the *Thesmophoria* would have been celebrated there.⁴² The fourth-century Cathartic Law from Cyrene confirms the centrality of the cult of Artemis, particularly in connection with marriage and childbirth.⁴³ A surviving fragment from an altar to Artemis features the slaughter of the children of Niobe.⁴⁴ Worship of Athena is attested as early as Pindar (*Pythian* 9.97–8), and she also appeared on Cyrenean coins. Were some of Callimachus' hymns written for Cyrene? The strongest case can be made for the *Hymn to Apollo*, since its central section narrates the history of the *Carneia*. Archaeologists have also turned to the *Hymn to Demeter* to reconstruct various features of the city's topography, although Donald White is surely correct in his assertion that Callimachus was not writing *Blue Guides*.⁴⁵ However, the poetry does contain so many seemingly specific references to place and to local objects that it makes sense to evaluate the accuracy of each description on its own merits, rather than to generalize.⁴⁶

Cyrene and the Cyrenaica had had centuries of interaction with pharaonic Egypt and Egypt under Persian rule,⁴⁷ so it is not surprising to find that the non-Greek divinities Amun and Isis were also well

³⁹ Stucchi 1975: 107 draws a connection to the opening of the hymn to Apollo; for the precinct see Bonacasa and Ensoli 2000: 105–18 (and the city plan, 38–9).

⁴⁰ Higgs 1994. With his long flowing hair, rather loosely draped cloak, lyre, and quiver (with an entwined Delphic snake) the Roman copy is remarkably like Callimachus' description of Apollo in *hAp.* 32–41. Of course, the Hellenistic model for the Roman copy postdated Callimachus, but the general attributes may have reflected an even earlier cult statue.

⁴¹ Bonacasa and Ensoli 2000: 137–42. The date of the statue is uncertain. The temple itself was rebuilt in the Roman period.

⁴² Kane 1998: 292.

⁴³ For a text and commentary on the law, see Parker 1983: 344–6 and Robertson 2010.

⁴⁴ Bonacasa and Ensoli 2000: 122 and 189. Apollo mentions the children of Niobe in *hDel.* 96.

⁴⁵ White 1984: 47–8. Does the *hDem.* describe an actual Cyrenean festival route? Stucchi 1975: 107–116, Chamoux 1953: 265–8, and Laronde 1987: 362–6 all argue that it does; White demurs.

⁴⁶ See Bonacasa and Ensoli 2000: 187–206 for important sculptural fragments found at Cyrene, a number of which, like the Three Graces and Cyrene with a Lion, coincide with figures in Callimachus' poetry.

⁴⁷ Chamoux 1953: 38–68.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-00857-1 - Callimachus in Context: From Plato to the Augustan Poets

Benjamin Acosta-Hughes and Susan A. Stephens

Excerpt

[More information](#)

established there. Worship of Isis is attested for Cyrene by the fourth century BC,⁴⁸ and the shrine of Zeus Ammon at the Siwah oasis was among the most prominent oracles in the ancient Mediterranean.⁴⁹ It was this oracle that proclaimed Alexander a god when he consulted it before his expedition to Babylon and India. Zeus Ammon was also worshipped in Cyrene from the sixth century, though as F. Chamoux points out, under a form that was Hellenic in style.⁵⁰ Cyrene seems to have been instrumental in the exporting of this Hellenized cult to Attica in the fifth century, and a temple to Zeus Ammon was established in Macedon near Pallene in the fourth.⁵¹

Alexandria provides a marked contrast to Cyrene. It was founded no more than twenty or thirty years before Callimachus' birth, and in a location on the Libyan coastline previously devoid of any Greek settlement. Alexander is usually credited with laying out the city: Arrian (3.1.5), for example, claims that he marked out where the city's agora should be and "how many temples and of which gods, the Greek [sc. gods] on the one hand and Egyptian Isis on the other," but his language (ἱερὰ ὅσα καὶ θεῶν ὠντινῶν, τῶν μὲν Ἑλληνικῶν, Ἰσιδος δὲ Αἰγυπτίας) does not instill confidence that he really knew how many or which Greek divinities. In contrast, Tacitus (*Hist.* 4.83.1) says that it was the Ptolemies who were responsible for building the city's walls, temples, and cults, and he discusses no Olympians, only the cult of Serapis. It is also important to remember that this early city was not the one described by Strabo, who was writing at the end of the first century BC: Callimachus' Alexandria had some sort of walls, the palace environs, the Museum, and the beginnings of the Library.⁵² The lighthouse was built between 297 and 285; the stadium (*Lageion*) was completed by the time the *Ptolemaia* was celebrated about 276; the *Heptostadium* and dockyards were built during Ptolemy II's reign to accommodate his extensive fleet. The Cape Zephyrium temple and the *Arsinoeion* were constructed (probably) just prior to and immediately after Arsinoe II's death in 270. The great temple to Serapis was only completed under the third Ptolemy, perhaps after Callimachus' death.⁵³ Probably there was a third-century theater and a *Thesmophorion*, though the latter is not mentioned before Polybius. Ptolemy IV is credited with building the *sema*

⁴⁸ Stucchi 1975: 100–1.

⁴⁹ The cult was exported to other Greek cities even before Alexander, see Classen 1959.

⁵⁰ Chamoux 1953: 331–8.

⁵¹ For Athens, see Chamoux 1953: 336 and n. 8; for Pallene see Bohec-Bouhet 2002: 41 and n. 1.

⁵² For the archaeology of the early city, see McKenzie 2007: 32–62.

⁵³ For the Great Serapeum see McKenzie 2007: 53–5.