

FESTIVALS, CULTS, AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF CONSENSUS IN HELLENISTIC POETRY

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The importance of festivals and public cult in the construction and reinforcement of social cohesion and political power in the Hellenistic age is a familiar fact of the history of the period. Very few Ptolemaic events, for example, have been as much studied from these perspectives as the 'Grand Procession' of Ptolemy II¹. It is a similarly familiar fact about Hellenistic poetry that narratives and representations of song, of cult, and of festivals are (perhaps surprisingly) common. This is often (and rightly) associated with the fact of the greater spread of, and assumption of, reception through reading – to put it banally, the further poetry gets away from live enactment in performance, the more it scripts versions of such performances, as some kind of 'compensation' – and with changes in the nature of poetry itself (the separation of the music from the words, the fact that elite poets now wrote predominantly, though not of course exclusively, in hexameters and elegiacs etc). Other factors are, however, clearly involved also. Both representational art and the lyric texts themselves which had survived from the archaic and classical periods were suggestive of a past culture which was both very different from the conditions – social, political and literary – prevailing in the Hellenistic period, but also suggestive of striking continuities. As the rich epigraphic record attests, festivals and cultic performance of all kinds blossomed all over the Hellenistic world, and the support for festivals, and the buildings and temples associated with them, by rulers both great and small was a fact of life which, from the point of view of the great poets of the third century, must have seemed a vital part of the archaic and classical heritage which they sought to reconstruct. In this paper I cast a brief glance at two themes in Hellenistic poetry which are both related to this interest in festival and cult and also related to each other. One is how this interest manifests itself in the representation of a participating audience in the act of observing and being drawn into cult and song, and the other is cultic aetiologies, which are, of course, ubiquitous in Hellenistic poetry, but whose function and resonance are not always as straightforward as is sometimes made out.

¹ Bibliography in HUNTER 2003, 2 n. 5.

In one of Theocritus' best known poems, *Idyll* 15, two women of relatively humble means have a day out to the Alexandrian palace to take part in the Adonis-festival staged by Queen Arsinoe and to listen to the singing of the 'Adonis song' by a solo performer². The women are what we might call participant observers, not really so far removed in fact from the voices of Callimachus' so-called mimetic hymns to Apollo, Athena and Demeter, and this is, as I have already observed, a position repeatedly dramatised and narrativised in Hellenistic poetry. Of course, this is hardly new. The famous description of the Delian festival in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* places both the poet and his audience in the position of spectators and admirers of the performers and also scripts the appropriate reaction: 'anyone who was there when the Ionians gathered together would say that they were immortal and ageless' (151-152), 'everyone would say that he himself was speaking [when the Deliades imitate voices]' (163-164). It is just such a reaction – an admiration for 'lifelikeness' – that the women of Theocritus 15 give us, but this time in mimetic form: 'Look first at the tapestries, how fine and graceful they are! You will say that they are the garments of the gods' (15,78-79)³. The poet of the *Homeric Hymn* almost makes the god too an observer – 'they delight you with boxing and dancing and song' (149) – as indeed performers of any cultic enterprise would expect the relevant god to watch them doing honour to him or her. Callimachus goes one step further, and in more than one poem. In his *Hymn to Apollo*, the Cyrenean rites and dances for Apollo which 'we' are now performing were witnessed immemorially long ago by Apollo himself, who 'was very delighted' (85) at what he saw, as in the *Homeric Hymn*. What might be thought a 'typically Hellenistic' touch is that the god was not just a passive observer/member of the audience, but he pointed things out to his new bride (90-91), just like the excited women of Theocritus 15. In Hellenistic poetry the gods still look on, but can be more animated about it. We may compare the scene in the fourth book of the *Argonautica* (922-964) in which Thetis and the Nereids, as like a maiden-chorus as Nausicaa and her friends on the beach, escort the *Argo* through the Planktai, while Hephaestus takes a break to watch (like the Syracusan women?) and Hera throws her arms around Athena in excited fear, just like two teenagers watching a scary movie. Visualisation, *our* visualisation, is at the core of such scenes. Apollonius has perhaps gone some of the way towards breaking down the sharp Homeric distinction between the divine

² The description of women visiting a shrine of Asclepius in Herodas 4 is standardly and rightly compared, and if that shrine is indeed supposed to be the great Coan site, then the Ptolemaic dimension of that poem is unavoidable, cf., e.g., ZANKER 2006.

³ Some might think it indicative of the shift from the archaic to the Hellenistic period that in the *Homeric Hymn* what is being described is real cultic performance, whereas in Theocritus it is a work of art, but I cannot pursue that subject here.

audience and the contemporary one, composed of ‘men of now’ who fail to measure up to the great figures of the past, but it was always a distinction which implied a complex and suggestive similarity. We may perhaps compare the multi-faceted relationship between the watching chorus and the watching spectators of Attic tragedy.

In his *Hymn to Delos* Callimachus produces yet another take on this. With an extraordinary geographical perspective (or the perspective of one who has been looking at a map), he imagines the islands performing circular dances around Delos (as may well have been in fact re-enacted in historical times), and it is again observer status which is emphasised: ‘Hesperos looks down upon (καταβλέπει) you neither silent nor without sound, but always ringing with noise’ (vv. 302-303). Examples of this interest in the observer could be multiplied many times. When in a similar passage of Callimachus’ *Hymn to Artemis* the nymphs honour Artemis with circular dances – obviously the divine avatar of a very common form of human performance – Helios stops his chariot to watch and the days become long; the sense of festival, of carnival time (cf., again, Ptolemy’s ‘Grand Procession’), affects the whole cosmic order. So too, when Apollo is praised, even Thetis and Niobe cease from their lamentation:

εὐφημεῖ καὶ πόντος, ὅτε κλείουσιν ἀοιδοί
ἢ κίθαριν ἢ τόξα, Λυκωρέος ἔντεα Φοίβου.
οὐδὲ Θέτις Ἀχιλλῆα κινύρεται αἶλινα μήτηρ, 20
ὀππὸθ’ ἰὴ παιῖον ἰὴ παιῖον ἀκούσῃ.
καὶ μὲν ὁ δακρυόεις ἀναβάλλεται ἄλγεα πέτρος,
ὅστις ἐνὶ Φρυγίῃ διερὸς λίθος ἐστήρικται,
μάρμαρον ἀντὶ γυναικὸς οἴζυρόν τι χανούσης.

The sea too keeps reverent silence, when bards celebrate the lyre or the bow, the implements of Lycorean Phoibos. Not even Thetis, his mother, mourns wretchedly for Achilles, whenever she hears ‘Hie Paieon, Hie Paieon’. And the tearful rock postpones its woes, the moist cliff standing in Phrygia, a marble block taking the place of a woman crying piteously.

(Callimachus, *Hymn to Apollo* 17-24)

Here too we have a sense of festival/lyric time defying the laws of nature – not because Helios is not moving, but because even the sea is silent, in a familiar motif of divine epiphany. We move from the sea, to Thetis who dwells in the sea and may even be a metonymy for it (so that in some senses v. 20 expresses the same thought as v. 18, but expresses it in a different mode)⁴, to

⁴ Williams’s helpful note ad loc. makes a similar, though differently directed, point. I discuss this passage also in HUNTER 2011.

the watery rock which is Niobe. The ‘pun’ (though that is an unhelpful term) in ἀναβάλλεται, ‘postpones’ but allowing the sense ‘strike up’ (musically) (cf. Pindar, *Pythian* 1,4) to resonate also, encapsulates precisely this configuration of lyric time – the time of music and dancing – as a time of postponement, of watching and listening.

The evocation of cultic experience and the perspective of the viewer/participant is thus one way in which Hellenistic poetry both draws its audience in and also offers (usually oblique) encomium of those responsible for these public events. Less obvious perhaps is to what extent the concern with cultic aetiology and history, which we find everywhere in Callimachus and Apollonius of Rhodes, serves similar ends. At least two, not mutually exclusive, approaches to this material seem possible. On the one hand, we can plot the areas of local cult against known areas of influence or interest to rulers, so that such poetic material may be seen to have an inherently ‘political’ dimension, even if any such explicit concern seems very far from the text. Very often of course we will have to leave matters at the level of suggestion. Delian cults under Ptolemy II are a special case, and certain other examples are hard to resist. Ptolemaic interest in the Samothracian mysteries has long been connected with the fact that Apollonius’ Argonauts stop on the island on the voyage out in order to be initiated⁵. So too, H.W. Parke and Alan Cameron have rightly drawn attention to Callimachus’ persistent interest in the oracular cult of Apollo at Didyma, where the temple was rebuilt on a massive scale and the cult reorganized, both to reflect the Delphic pattern, at the end of the fourth century and the early part of the third⁶; from 279-259, in the reign of Ptolemy II, Miletus was in the sphere of influence of Alexandria, and it is thus hard not to see, as Wilamowitz already did, poetic concerns here moving in step with major events of interest to the patron⁷. Callimachus celebrated (and perhaps helped forge, at least for later ages) the ‘new’ foundation legend in his poem ‘Branchos’ (fr. 229 Pf.), which seems to have told of Apollo’s epiphany to a lovely shepherd boy of Delphian descent and his foretelling of the cult that Branchos would found on the site⁸.

Callimachus is here celebrating local traditions (of however recent re-in-

⁵ Bibliography and discussion in HUNTER 1995, 20.

⁶ Cf. PARKE 1986, 129-130; CAMERON 1995, 167-169.

⁷ A helpful survey of the arguments in EHRHARDT 2003.

⁸ Texts relevant to the myths concerning Branchos are gathered by LELLI 2005, 71-73. Both ASPER 2004, 271 and LELLI 2005, 79 rightly raise the possibility (it can be no more) that ἀνάκτων ἱερὸν γενέθλην at v. 17, near the end of the poem, refers not to, e.g., the Branchidai, but rather to the Ptolemaic house. Lelli compares Σαωτήρων ὑπαίου γένος at *Hymn to Delos* 166, but a more suggestive ‘parallel’, particularly given the possibility that ‘Branchos’ was the closing poem of a collection, is the prayer to Zeus to preserve οἶκον ἀνάκτων in the ‘epilogue’ to the *Aitia* (fr. 112,8 Pf. = 215,8 Massimilla).

vention) and local families, much as generations of ‘wandering poets’ had done, and would continue to do, in the hope of rewards and honours from the communities they had celebrated⁹. It is, however, unlikely that many such poets used stichic ‘catalectic choriambic pentameters’ for their songs of praise and commemoration¹⁰, and we must admit that it is very difficult to be sure how this combination of rewritten cultic tradition and metrical experimentation actually ‘felt’ to its original audiences. Too often, the fact that a poem of Philicus, which looks like a hymn to Demeter in choriambic hexameters, another metrical ‘sport’ which Hephaestion cites alongside Callimachus’ choriambic pentameters, is explicitly offered to the γραμματικοί as an ‘innovative composition’ (*SH* 677) is taken as a sign that all such poems are just that: literary games with no purchase at all in the realities or imagination of cult or religious ideas (broadly understood). We must rather learn to be sensitive to difference as well as to similarity. The tension between generic and linguistic form, a tension found elsewhere in Callimachus (cf., e.g., the elegiac epinicians for Berenice and Sosibios), seems almost to reflect an acknowledgement of the complex cultural signals which the public creation of tradition brings with it.

Typical of the issues which arise in this area, though untypical in other ways, is Callimachus’ account of the aetiology of the cult of Dictynna on Crete:

ἔξοχα δ’ ἀλλῶν Γορτυνίδα φίλαο νύμφην,
 ἔλλοφόνον Βριτόμαρτιν ἑύσκοπον· ἦς ποτε Μίνως 190
 ποιηθεῖς ὑπ’ ἔρωτι κατέδραμεν οὖρα Κρήτης.
 ἦ δ’ ὅτε μὲν λασίησιν ὑπὸ δρυσὶ κρύπτετο νύμφη,
 ἄλλοτε δ’ εἰαμενηῖσιν· ὁ δ’ ἐννέα μῆνας ἐφοίτα
 παίπαλά τε κρημνούς τε καὶ οὐκ ἀνέπαυσε διωκτύν,
 μέσφ’ ὅτε μαρπτομένη καὶ διη σχεδὸν ἦλατο πόντου 195
 πρηόνος ἐξ ὑπάτοιο καὶ ἔνθορεν εἰς ἀλιήων
 δίκτυα, τὰ σφ’ ἐσάωσαν· ὅθεν μετέπειτα Κύδωνες
 νύμφην μὲν Δίκτυναν, ὄρος δ’ ὅθεν ἦλατο νύμφη
 Δικταῖον καλέουσιν, ἀνεστήσαντο δὲ βωμούς
 ἱερά τε ῥέζουσι· τὸ δὲ στέφος ἦματι κείνῳ 200
 ἦ πίτυς ἦ σχίνος, μύρτοιο δὲ χεῖρες ἄθικτοι·
 δὴ τότε γὰρ πέπλοισιν ἐνέσχετο μύρσινος ὄζος
 τῆς κούρης, ὅτ’ ἔφευγεν· ὅθεν μέγα χώσατο μύρτωι.

Particularly above others you loved the nymph of Gortyn, deer-slaying Britomartis, whose aim does not miss. Once Minos, crazed with love for her, roamed the moun-

⁹ Cf., e.g., HUNTER 2003, 26-27; HUNTER - RUTHERFORD 2009.

¹⁰ This is the ancient analysis; modern scholars describe the length rather as an aristophanean (-uu-u-) expanded by the insertion of three choriambic.

tains of Crete. The nymph hid, now under the leafy oaks, now in the low meadows, but for nine months he wandered over the crags and cliffs and he did not cease from his pursuit; when she was all but caught, she jumped into the sea from a lofty headland and fell into fishermen's nets (δικτυα) which saved her. As a result of this, the Kydonians afterwards call the nymph Dictynna, and the mountain from which she jumped Diktaion, and they set up altars to her and conduct sacrifice. On that day garlands are made of pine or mastich, and hands do not touch myrtle; while she was fleeing, a myrtle-branch became entangled in the girl's robes, and for this reason she conceived a great anger against myrtle.

(Callimachus, *Hymn to Artemis* 189-203)

A number of features make this passage particularly worthy of attention in the current context. It is, for Callimachus, a relatively extended narrative, and one which has a fair chance of being innovative¹¹; there are clear indications, moreover, that the value of Callimachus' account was discussed in antiquity (cf. below). Secondly, there are indications elsewhere that Callimachus was well informed about Cretan cult, whether through personal observation, informants, written sources or a combination of all three¹²; this does not, of course, of itself tell us anything about the nature of this particular narrative, but it is a salutary reminder (if we needed one) that such cultic tales *may not* be simply the result of an overheated scholarly imagination and thirst for witty combinations. Third – and a cause for both particular interest and particular frustration – is the fact that, although we know that several Cretan cities had political ties to Ptolemaic Alexandria and that there was important mercantile and intellectual exchange between Crete and Alexandria, the state of the evidence makes it very difficult to track the relationship in any detail¹³; the best evidence, beyond the presence of Cretans in Egypt and of Ptolemaic officials in Crete, is for the development of Itanos in the far north-east of the island as a Ptolemaic naval base, but Ptolemaic interest stretched much further west than that also. Chance survivals show us what we are missing. A treaty between Polyrrenia and Phalasarna, recorded on a stone originally placed in the temple of Dictynna near Kydonia (cf. below), shows the Spartan interest in west Crete¹⁴; other powers were no doubt sniffing around also. The treaty between Magas of Cyrene, whose shifting relationship with Ptolemy II was an important fact in Alexandrian politics (and may well have been so

¹¹ It is at least a peculiar misreading when CHANIOTIS 2001, 213 includes this passage among Cretan stories which were 'so well known to every educated Greek that Callimachus could content himself with vague allusions to them'.

¹² Cf. CHANIOTIS 2001.

¹³ Cf., e.g., SPYRIDAKIS 1970; BAGNALL 1976, 117-123; KREUTER 1992, 17-45.

¹⁴ *ICret.* II xi,1 = CHANIOTIS 1996, 179-181.

also for a Cyrenean poet resident in Alexandria), and a *κοινόν* of west-Cretan states, dating probably from the latter part of the first half of the third century, suggests a search for influence of a kind at which Ptolemy and his agents were also past masters¹⁵; the treaty was mediated by Gortyn, which seems to have been already allied with Magas, and the principal deity overseeing the treaty and in whose temple at Lisos the treaty was recorded was indeed Dictynna. It is not, of course, that this treaty has (necessarily) anything to do with Callimachus' *Hymn to Artemis*, where, in any case, we are hampered by our ignorance of the date of the hymn¹⁶, but rather it starkly reveals both our ignorance and the kind of question we ought at least to be asking. Britomartis also had a cult on Delos¹⁷, and how important that island was to the evocation of a specifically Ptolemaic world we have already seen.

The interrelations between the west-Cretan goddess Dictynna, the predominantly east- and central Cretan goddess Britomartis (or Britomarpis)¹⁸ and Artemis are fraught with problems, not all the result of the (lack of) evidence, and cannot be pursued here in any detail¹⁹. Even if, moreover, we were able to sort out the cultic history with some kind of clarity, we know that, not only were ancient writers known to disagree widely about Cretan history and culture (cf. esp. Diodorus Siculus 5,80,4), but for ancient poets and chroniclers Crete was also very much a land of the imagination where invention and creative fantasy were as much at home as hard ethnographic fact²⁰. There is indeed a broad consensus among historians of Cretan religion that Dictynna, Britomartis and Artemis remained discrete deities on Crete through the Hellenistic period, and that Callimachus' conflation of Britomartis and Dictynna as a beloved nymph of Artemis and 'Dictynna' as subsequently a name for Artemis (vv. 204-205) – a syncretism indeed attested outside Crete – is, to put it simply, a literary fiction which plays to familiar types of scholarly construction and to Callimachus' particular interest in name-changes over the course of history²¹. So it might well be

¹⁵ *ICret.* II xvii,1 = SCHMITT 1969, n. 468; cf. KREUTER 1992, 35-36.

¹⁶ Cf. BORNMANN 1968, vii-xi.

¹⁷ Cf., e.g., GUARDUCCI 1935, 198-199; 202.

¹⁸ That *μαρπητομένη* in v. 195 alludes to this Cretan form (so, e.g., tentatively BORNMANN 1968, *ad loc.*) is an attractive suggestion; the nymph's leap marks the moment of transition from one name to another.

¹⁹ For some guidance cf. GUARDUCCI 1935; GUARDUCCI 1939, 128-140; WILLETTS 1962, 179-193; SPORN 2001; SPORN 2002, 323-325; FLINTERMAN 2009, 240-246.

²⁰ There is much relevant information and bibliography in Chapter 4 of TZIFOPOULOS 2010.

²¹ In the geographical poem of Dionysius, son of Calliphon (cf. further below), it is stated that 'men say' that there is a temple of Artemis at Phalasarna where the goddess is called Dictynna (vv. 118-122); Phalasarna lies in the far north-west of Crete, not very far from Kydonia and the temple of Dictynna. Dionysius' source is unknown; I would be tempted to guess it to be this very passage of Callimachus, but the specificity of the reference to Phalasarna gives pause.

(see further below), but that does not exhaust what we need to ask.

A striking feature of Callimachus' narrative is what we might call its pan-Cretanism. Britomartis is 'correctly' placed in the centre-east of Crete by her identification as a 'nymph of Gortyn', whereas Dictynna is also properly associated with Kydonia (modern Chania) in the west, near where there was the most famous shrine of the goddess, on the eastern side of the headland of Titiros or Psakon (the most northerly point of Crete); the temple is already mentioned by Herodotus (III 3,59,2)²². We know almost nothing of the history of the temple in Callimachus' day, though it would not be an unreasonable inference, if not strictly a necessary one, that the temple was under the control of Kydonia; in Strabo's day, on the other hand, it seems to have been under the control of Polyrrhenia (10,4,13)²³. How politically charged Callimachus' references are, we cannot say. Be that as it may, the narrative is in part framed by references to Crete (vv. 191, 205), and the nymph's wanderings take her over 'the mountains of Crete', i.e. – or so we are to understand – over the whole island. Geographical puzzles are, of course, a familiar feature of Callimachus' poetry, but here the bringing together of Britomartis and Dictynna, of Gortyn and Kydonia, and (perhaps) of Mt Dikte and the Kydonian Diktynnaion (cf. below) draws the traditions of the island together, in an overt, because at first puzzling, manner, and fashions a specifically Cretan pool of narrative traditions. Callimachus is by no means alone in this period in treating Crete as a 'single unit', but we would dearly like to know more of his motives.

Callimachus' narrative appealed to, and gained authority from, his audience's knowledge of or beliefs about Cretan practice. To what extent Callimachus' identification of Britomartis - Dictynna (whose name very likely really means 'Lady of Dikte') as a nymph-companion of Artemis, and his explanation both of the change of name and of the cultic practice of avoiding myrtle garlands were innovative, it is no longer really possible to say, though this relatively full narrative does seem to have found wide resonance²⁴. Two critiques of versions of the story survive from writers quite close in time to each other, and one of them (Strabo 10,4,12) is explicitly a criticism of Callimachus²⁵; this

²² Both, e.g., GUARDUCCI 1939, 130 and BORNMAN 1968, *ad loc.* understand Κύδωνες in v. 197 as simply a learned way of saying 'Cretans' (cf. *Hymn to Zeus* 45), but this seems most improbable in view of what we know of the shrine of Dictynna. Cf. further SISTAKOU 2005, 253-254.

²³ On this temple and the problem of its control cf. SPORN 2002, 277-280.

²⁴ Nicander, *Alex.* 618 Δίκτηννα ... ἐχθήρατο κλώνας (of myrtle) looks like an echo of v. 203 of Callimachus' hymn (note στέφος in v. 619); this passage of Nicander may be a late interpolation, but that does not affect the point at issue. Cf. further below on echoes in Roman poetry.

²⁵ Callimachus is also named as the source for the story, though not necessarily the only one, by the scholiast on Eur. *Hipp.* 146. The scholiast on Ar. *Frogs* 1356 tells what might be a 'cleaned up' version: Britomartis was out hunting and fell 'by chance' into nets from where she was saved by Artemis; she then established a shrine of Artemis Dictynna. On Strabo's criticism cf. further F. JACOBY, *FGrHist*, IIIA, 221-222.

too suggests that Callimachus himself was treated as the principal authority for (and perhaps author of) the story. Strabo's objection is, he tells us, not his own but derived from unnamed others: Callimachus' story, according to these anonymous critics, cannot be correct, because Kydonia is nowhere near Mt Dikte, and the mountain shrine of the goddess near Kydonia is not Δικταῖον but Δικτυνναῖον; clearly, then, it was the ὄρος ... Δικταῖον which had most roused Callimachus' critics. Modern scholars see here rather a 'typically Callimachean' geographical conflation, based on similarity of names, between Mt Dicte and the Δικτυνναῖον, to match the conflation of Britomartis and Dictynna into a single character, or understand that Callimachus' Δικταῖον actually stands for Δικτυνναῖον²⁶, or (D'Alessio ad loc.) see a humorous linguistic compromise between Δίκη and Δικτυνναῖον; certainly, πρήγιος ἐξ ὑπάτοιου suggests the headland rather than a mountain. Diodorus Siculus 5,76,3-4 also criticises the story as we find it in Callimachus (who is, however, not named)²⁷, but on the grounds that it is not πιθανόν, not because it would take a pretty extraordinary leap to reach the coast from Mt Dicte, but because a goddess who was the daughter of 'the greatest of the gods' should not have got into such a helpless state as to need help from men²⁸, nor was it δίκαιον to ascribe such an act of impiety to a man as renowned for his probity as Minos. It seems not improbable that Callimachus is at least one of Diodorus' targets here.

What was involved, and what at stake, in the criticisms of a poetic narrative? The criticisms of Callimachus are of a very familiar kind, and we might think that such activities, like other forms of philology, were one of the ways in which a particular élite group marked out its own territory²⁹, and there must indeed be something in that. Nevertheless, the great interest in the story, and in Callimachus' version of it, attested by Strabo and probably Diodorus Siculus, suggests that such aetiological legend was not merely a poetic game, but one in which the identity and ideology of cultic sites and narratives was very much involved; 'getting it right' was something that actually mattered, however fast and loose a Callimachus could be with traditional tales. We perhaps tend to lose sight of the authority that an Alexandrian text, and particularly one bearing the name of Callimachus, might carry; the *Nachleben* of this passage in Latin poetry in fact says much of the central role that Alexandria now played in the preservation

²⁶ Cf. BORNHANN 1968, on vv. 199-200.

²⁷ That Diodorus is here talking of Britomartis - Dictynna rather than Artemis - Dictynna seems probable because he is taking issue with the aetiology of the name, having just given an alternative aetiology which is explicitly attached to Britomartis - Dictynna. Moreover, although both Artemis and Britomartis are daughters of Zeus, it seems unlikely that Diodorus would adduce the paternity of the Olympian as one of the reasons for not believing the story.

²⁸ Callimachus himself famously used this criterion to reject unwanted myths (*Hymn to Zeus* 65).

²⁹ Cf. ASPER 2001, 109-110.

and dissemination of cultural knowledge. Callimachus' mini-narrative may have been taken up and expanded in Roman neoteric poetry (Valerius Cato's *Diana / Dictynna*)³⁰, if it had not already been so used in later Hellenistic poetry³¹, and it may have contributed something to Ovid's narrative of Apollo and Daphne, a narrative full of allusions to the *Hymns* of Callimachus (including the *Hymn to Artemis*). Here then, quite unusually, we can identify a Callimachean aetiological narrative which attracted the attention not just of fellow-scholars and poets, but also of mythographers and students of cult; poet and audience share knowledge of a type of narrative and of a mode of explanation, and (as importantly) of what such explanations are worth.

The aetiological mode itself appeals at more than one level³². Callimachus' audience share not just in the myriad local cults of the Greek world, but also in the stories that lie behind them; if it is true, as widely held, that Homeric epic was a potent force in forging a pan-Hellenic identity, the sense of a shared 'Greekness', then the return to the local which we see everywhere in, particularly, Callimachus performs a similar function with very different tools. The cult of the grand, rather remote Olympians gives way to very particular, sometimes embarrassingly so, deities and near-deities; Homer is, as has often been noted, notably short on the particularities of cultic detail, particularly as expressed in aetiology³³ – such 'local' detail would work against the kind of poetic world which he created and which was, in its own way, so influential on Greek culture. Explanation is a striking instance of this. Homeric characters wonder (in both senses) at and about the gods, but they devote almost as little time to their histories and particularities as they do to their statues³⁴. The Hellenistic aetiological project is thus not merely the heir to Hesiod's *Theogony*, in moving from the gods themselves and the establishment of the Olympian order to their cults on earth³⁵, but it also seizes territory (deliberately) abandoned by Homeric epic. As is well known, Hellenistic poets often adduce – or gesture towards (as Callimachus' geographical epithets in the Britomartis nar-

³⁰ Cf. LYNE 1978, 223-224; 229.

³¹ It is often thought that the version of the story in Antonius Liberalis 40 goes back to Nicander. In this version, which links Britomartis to a number of Artemis cults in the Mediterranean, the nymph is hidden by Cretan fishermen in their nets, rather than falling into them, and is then conveyed by a fisherman (Andromedes, presumably one of her Cretan rescuers) to Aegina, where he tries to rape her; she escapes and disappears ('becomes ἀφανής') at the place where is now the cult of Aphaia. The argument of MAASS 1923 that an epodic poem, partially preserved on *POxy* 661 (= *CA* pp. 194-195), was on the subject of Dictynna has not won much favour.

³² Cf. FANTUZZI - HUNTER 2004, 49-51; ASPER 2001 is an important discussion to which I am indebted.

³³ Cf. recently LANE FOX 2008, 372-373.

³⁴ Cf. HUNTER 2011.

³⁵ Cf. FANTUZZI - HUNTER 2004, 51-60.

rative perhaps do) – alternative aetiologies for particular practices, and even when they do not, the sense of competition, of histories which may compete with each other and hence ask audiences to make choices, to exercise *krisis* (which may of course range from the serious to the utterly frivolous), is always lurking. Audiences give or withhold ‘consent’ to aetiological poetry in a quite different way than ‘consent’ is offered to epic poetry, and this is not merely, I think, a question of emotional ‘distance’ from what is being narrated. In the present case, Callimachus’ reason for why myrtle is avoided in the cult of Dictynna invites an alternative explanation: myrtle is the plant of Aphrodite, associated with sex and weddings, and hence utterly out of place in the cult and the event it commemorates³⁶. The two explanations may of course be to some extent combined. Was Aphrodite actually behind the impediment caused by the myrtle as Britomartis fled? Minos’ sexual designs on the nymph were, after all, honouring her. How loudly does silence speak? Are we in fact encouraged, or – perhaps better – do we encourage ourselves, to see the gods at work in narrative when other, more contingent, explanations may in fact be appropriate. Aetiology, no less than more traditional modes of epic narrative, raises questions about how and why gods act, and leaves silences waiting to be filled; in both cultic narrative and cultic performance there is an unexplained excess, and we might think that it is that excess, as much as anything else, which builds ‘consensus’. Does what we believe about the history of ritual actually matter as we perform it?³⁷ Another kind of question which we might ask is: Was there such a thing as a clear answer, or indeed any kind of answer, to the question of whether in Callimachus’ day Artemis was ever called Dictynna on Crete? What for Callimachus and his audience would constitute evidence?

One poem of Callimachus which addresses some of these same issues, and with much the same divine personnel, seems to have been *Iambus* 10. The *diegesis* gives us the opening verse (fr. 200a.1 Pf.) and informs us as follows:

‘The Aphrodites – for the goddess is not single’ (τὰς Ἀφροδίτας – ἡ θεὸς γὰρ οὐ μία). In Aspendos in Pamphylia pigs are sacrificed to Aphrodite Kastnietis for the following reason: Mopsus, leader of the Pamphylians, when going out hunting vowed to [the goddess] that if the hunt was successful he would sacrifice to her whatever he first caught; when he caught a wild boar he fulfilled his vow. For this reason the Pamphylians too do this to this day, for if the goddess was not pleased, Mopsus would not

³⁶ Cf. BORNMAN 1968, on v. 201, who however writes as though there were (real) reasons why myrtle was avoided, although we do not know what they were; rather, of course, there were explanations, all ‘real’ though in different senses. Andrew Ford has suggested that δλωκτὸν in v. 194 suggest yet another possible etymology of Dictynna.

³⁷ Important work in this area has been done on Roman literary representations of ritual and its explanation; for a helpful orientation cf. FEENEY 1998, chap. 4.

have caught this animal. [The poet] also praises the Artemis of the Eretrians because she rejects nothing that is sacrificed to her.

This account is partially confirmed by a passage of Strabo:

Καλλίμαχος μὲν οἶν φησιν ἐν τοῖς ἰάμβοις³⁸ τὰς Ἀφροδίτας (ἡ θεὸς γὰρ οὐ μία) τὴν Καστινήτην ὑπερβάλλεσθαι πάσας τῶι φρονεῖν, ὅτι μόνῃ παραδέχεται τὴν τῶν ὑῶν θυσίαν (καὶ μὴν πολυίστωρ, εἴ τις ἄλλος, κτλ.)

In the *Iambi* Callimachus says that the goddess of Kastnie surpasses all Aphrodites (for the goddess is not one) in good sense, because she alone accepts the sacrifice of pigs (and Callimachus is a very learned man, if anyone is...)

(Strabo 9,5,17)

How closely Strabo follows Callimachus' text is a difficult question, and editors vary in the extent to which they are prepared to make further iambic trimeters out of Strabo's prose; fortunately, progress in understanding is not entirely dependent upon certainty of reconstruction.

As the *Diegesis* says that this same poem referred also to the cult of Artemis at Eretria, it is universally accepted that a scholium on Aristophanes, *Birds* 872 should also be referred to *Iambus* 10; the scholiast is discussing the cult of Artemis Κολαινίς:

...Euphronios says that Κολαινίς occurs at Amarynthos [in Euboea] because Agamemnon sacrificed a hornless (κόλος) animal because of the difficult situation (ἐκ τοῦ καιροῦ)³⁹. Callimachus says about her:

τὴν ὠγαμέμνων, ὡς ὁ μῦθος, εἶσατο
τῆι καὶ λίπουρα καὶ μονῶπα θύεται

...whom Agamemnon established, so the story goes, to whom tailless and one-eyed animals are sacrificed...

(Callimachus, fr. 200b Pf.)

This may, however, be an improvisation, for the people of Myrrhinous [in Attica] call Artemis Κολαινίς...

³⁸ KERKHECKER 1999, 208 proposed ἰάμβοι, but Radt *ad loc.* objects that we might then also have expected the standard οὐ ἢ ἀρχή; Kerkhecker's point, however, that the parenthesis reads very oddly remains true, and I am not confident that Strabo's text was indeed as transmitted. Presumably through a slip, Kerkhecker also implies that the text of Strabo does not transmit τὰς Ἀφροδίτας. Kerkhecker's discussion (pp. 207-213) is the principal contribution since Pfeiffer's edition and I am much indebted to it; in particular, Kerkhecker rightly stresses the importance of the fact that there were indeed two Aphrodites at Aspendos.

³⁹ Cf. below.

Sorting out the various accounts and explanations of this cult title, which is known certainly to have existed at Myrrhinos, is beyond the scope of this paper⁴⁰, but we must note that the standard title of Artemis at Amarynthos, her major shrine not far from Eretria, was Amarousia and that there is no confirmation in either the Callimachean couplet which the scholiast quotes or in the *Diegesis*, which refers merely to the omnivorousness of the ‘Artemis of the Eretrians’, that Callimachus actually mentioned the title Κολαινίς. Moreover, for what it is worth, the account given by the *Diegesis* would sit well with Pausanias’ account of a cult of Artemis at Aulis, just across the Euripos strait:

Here there is a temple of Artemis and images of white marble, one holding torches and the other like a woman shooting a bow. They say that when the Greeks were about to sacrifice Iphigenia on the altar in obedience to the soothsaying of Calchas, the goddess made the victim a deer rather than her ... It is also said that at Aulis the Greeks did not receive a favouring breeze, but when a favourable wind suddenly got up, they sacrificed to Artemis whatever each had, alike female and male victims; from that time it has remained the case that at Aulis all victims are acceptable.

(Pausanias 9,19,6-7)

There is some unclarity surrounding the chronology of the various strands of Pausanias’ narrative here, but certain points may be drawn out. Although Pausanias is talking about Aulis, not Amarynthos or Eretria, it is very hard to believe that both he and Callimachus are not referring to essentially the same cultic practice of the acceptance of ‘imperfect’ sacrificial victims; Pausanias says nothing of any cult title for Artemis. The practice for which Pausanias gives an *aition* and that for which the *Diegesis* says that Callimachus praises the Eretrian Artemis are the same: ‘all victims are acceptable’ ~ ‘no victim is rejected’. The clear impression of Pausanias’ narrative is that the Greeks at Aulis sacrificed ‘whatever each man had’ when the wind got up, not as the result of a seer’s instruction (contrast the sacrifice of Iphigenia), but rather because they were caught unawares by the sudden turn of events and (perhaps) so that they could catch the favourable wind before it died. Whether or not Callimachus did call the Eretrian goddess Κολαινίς, it is easy enough to imagine a similar kind of narrative there: Agamemnon’s offering was one usually disallowed, but he had no choice ἐκ τοῦ καιροῦ, ‘given the (difficult) circumstances’. This phrase in the Aristophanic scholia is not necessarily to be emended away, as it almost always is⁴¹. Despite the fact that we cannot be

⁴⁰ Cf. esp. JACOBY on *FGrHist* 323a F 13; 325 F 3.

⁴¹ Holwerda proposed ἐκ τοῦ κληροῦ ‘as a result of a prophetic lot’ (in other words, Agamemnon was instructed to do this by, e.g., a seer); this is adopted by KERKHECKER 1999, 211 n. 79.

sure that Callimachus gave an aetiology for the Eretrian cult of Artemis, it is at least worth considering the possibility that behind Pausanias' account of the cult at Aulis stands, precisely, Callimachus; it is curious, but perhaps no more, that the verses dedicated to this cult in the geographical poem of 'Dionysius, son of Calliphon' might (though, of course, need not) echo Callimachus:

Αὔλις τε Βοιωτῶν πόλις, πρὸς ἧι λιμὴν
κάρτέμιδος ἱερὸν ἄγιον, ὃ λέγεται κτίσαι
'Αγαμέμνον', εἶτ' κτλ.

...and Aulis, city of the Boeotians, where there is a harbour and a holy shrine of Artemis, which Agamemnon is said to have founded...

(Dionysius Calliphontis 88-90)

Why is Aphrodite Kastnie surpassing in φρονεῖν? Speculation about this cannot be divorced from the question of the goddess' rôle in Mopsus' successful hunt. Ever since the *Diegesis* was published it has been suspected that 'for if the goddess was not pleased, Mopsus would not have caught this animal' is a paraphrase of something in the poem itself, rather than a piece of reasoning by the author of the *Diegesis* or his predecessors. This is very likely right, and Arnd Keckhecker thus suspects that her φρονεῖν consists in 'getting what she wants'⁴². He must be right to look for an explanation which would suit the iambic mood, but perhaps we can narrow down a little the range of possibilities. If Artemis is praiseworthy because she did not reject offerings which, though imperfect and unusual were nevertheless a mark of piety and all that the Greeks had, might not Aphrodite reveal her common sense by taking a similarly broad view, even though she normally finds pig offerings anathema? 'If the goddess was not pleased, Mopsus would not have caught this animal' is a very 'human' piece of *post factum* reasoning, perhaps attributed in the poem to the Pamphylians. We, however, do not have to assume that Aphrodite actually sent the boar Mopsus' way or even that 'Aphrodite seems to be rather keen on pork'⁴³, for her common sense may rather have manifested itself in not turning away an offering which showed piety and brought her honour, even if it was very unusual. In broad outline, the aetiology for this very unusual sacrifice which Callimachus offers is almost certainly one offered by the people of Aspendos themselves long before Callimachus; it adapts to a Greek mode of explanation a practice which appears thoroughly un-Greek⁴⁴. Nevertheless, it would be

⁴² KERKHECKER 1999, 213.

⁴³ KERKHECKER 1999, 212.

⁴⁴ Cf. esp. ROBERT 1960, 177-178 for the evidence from Aspendian coinage as early as the fifth century; LANE FOX 2008, 232.

typical of Callimachus to drive a poetic wedge between aetiological explanation and ritual practice itself, or at least to make it clear that they do not necessarily stand or fall together. Callimachus indeed seems constantly to nudge us towards 'myth and ritual' questions which seem surprisingly modern: does the nature of the explanation adopted (and we may well have to make a choice between aetiologies) actually have any effect in the world of the ritual? Do we live in a world where things happen by divine design, or is 'design' one of the patterns we impose upon events in order to persuade ourselves that they make sense? How 'self-serving' is the reasoning of Mopsus and/or the Pamphylians once confronted with the apparent requirement of making what was usually an abhorrent offering? Is this indeed how we use the gods to justify ourselves across a much broader field of activity? Moreover, how does the ascription of such (very human) reasoning to the distant mists of aetiological time not just make us smile with self-recognition, but also bind us in the same web of time as this Pamphylian of long ago, in other words build a social consensus based on shared identity?

In the state of our evidence it is of course impossible to say how the transition within Callimachus' poem from one cult to the other was made; we have already seen several motifs which they have in common. Further connections can be imagined. Mopsus' pig-sacrifice was the result of a vow while hunting, Agamemnon's problems at Aulis seem to have been the result of an intemperate boast while hunting. More rewarding might be to pause for a moment on the combination of a cult of Aphrodite in inland Pamphylia with a Boeotian cult of Artemis, a goddess traditionally opposed to Aphrodite; the former cult seems outlandish and 'marginal' (at best), the latter takes us into the heart of traditional Greece and the heart of perhaps the best known 'sacrifice story' of all Greek mythology: it is probably not fanciful to see a manifold contrast between the 'old world' and the 'new', a contrast which however is also a confirmation of continuity. Shared Greek identity stretches from Boeotia to Pamphylia (and presumably beyond); even the gods of epic and tragedy who are most opposed to each other (Aphrodite and Artemis) share fundamentally similar, and very Greek, values (*φρονεῖν* and *φρόνησις*).

What, if anything, did these cults mean to an Alexandrian audience? Pamphylia was a place of considerable interest to the Ptolemies⁴⁵, and Aspendos was believed to be a foundation of Argos, a city central to much Ptolemaic self-fashioning; an Argive decree of probably the late fourth century offers privileges to Aspendos, which not long before had been harshly dealt with by Alexander⁴⁶. For what it is worth, we know that there was an 'Iseon' at

⁴⁵ Cf. HUNTER 2003, 165 with earlier bibliography.

⁴⁶ Cf. STROUD 1984; LANE FOX 2008, 237-238.

Eretria visited by Egyptians (or Egyptian Greeks) at least from the beginning of the third century⁴⁷. This is, of course, not to suggest anything as definable as a 'Ptolemaic context' for *Iambus* 10, but it is worth stressing that we must not assume that what we are dealing with is simply learned and antiquarian *Spielerei* with no purchase in the actual experience or imagination of the audience. We do not know why Callimachus chose to tell and link these two aetiologies for an Alexandrian audience at a specific date in the third century, and it would be rash to assume that his audience would have given a univocal answer to the question of how and why (or indeed whether) they were linked with each other. Enough perhaps that we can make a good guess at the questions to be asked, and assure ourselves that they are worth asking.

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⁴⁷ Cf. BRUNEAU 1975.

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