

*A Cyrenean Trio*

*A Three-Part Study in Callimachean Poetics*

*For Enrico Magnelli*

*Amicus et sapiens*

**Part I A Lyric Quartet**

The *diegesis* summaries of four poems come between those of Callimachus' *Iambi* and his hexameter *Hecale* in *P. Med.* 18 (the so-called 'Milan Diegesis', henceforth *diegesis*). In his 1949 edition of Callimachus' fragmentary poetry Rudolf Pfeiffer hesitantly entitled these four poems μέλη, 'lyrics', in part following the information in the *Suda* life of the poet (line 12) that Callimachus composed μέλη.<sup>1</sup> I have treated these four poems at length in two earlier studies (Acosta-Hughes 2003 and Acosta-Hughes and Stephens 2017), and it is not my intention to recapitulate those studies here. My purpose here rather is, specifically, to consider them as a quartet that treats Eros from several perspectives, and then to compare them with another quartet, of Callimachus' near-contemporary poet Theocritus (*Idd.* 28-31) that does the same. Both quartets are in some ways atypical of their authors' other extant poetry, and it is indeed in part this novelty that I would like to highlight here. I conclude with some brief thoughts about the 'quartet' itself as a poetic aesthetic entity, and a suggestion on a further Alexandrian 'quartet', the four books of Apollonius' *Argonautica*.

Unlike the *Hecale*, which has a centered title at *Dieg.* X 18 'Εκάλης, no individual title distinguishes these four poems from the *Iambi*, which are distinguished in the *diegesis* from the entries to the last book of the *Aetia* by the *subscriptio* that follows the *diegesis* to fr. 110 (*Coma Berenices*), the closing entry of *Aetia* 4. Some scholars, informed in large part by the unusual number '17' of Horace's *Epodes*, have understood these four poems, fr. 226-229 Pf., to be four further *Iambi* that follow the seemingly closural *Iambus* XIII. It is *not* my intention to revisit this question here. Rather I would like to consider these four poems, all in unusual 'lyric' meters, as a quartet, specifically an erotic one, and, in the second part of this essay, to then consider this quartet in comparison with another erotic quartet of poems in unusual meters, *Idylls* 28-31 of Theocritus: in both quartets there is something of a sliding scale of *philia* and *eros*, and for this reason I have kept the more generic English term, 'love' for both Greek terms. Two of these poems (Callim. fr. 228 and 229) my co-author Susan Stephens and I treated in our 2017 study "Callimachean Lyric", treating these then as examples of Callimachean *threnos* and *paean*.<sup>2</sup> Callim. fr. 227 Pf. is 'marked' rather by its occasion: this is a *pannychis*, an all-night revel, where

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<sup>1</sup> *Suda* s.v. Κάλλιμαχος.

<sup>2</sup> Acosta-Hughes/Stephens 2017.

revelers play with dice (*kottaboi*). Callimachus's elegiac narrative *Acontius and Cydippe* in *Aetia* III showcases Acontius as the object of erotic desire in a *kottabos* game on such an occasion (fr. 69).<sup>3</sup>

Only the first line, preserved by the *diegesis*, survives of Callim. fr. 226. The poem's meter is probably phalaecean hendecasyllable, the meter favored by the Roman poet Catullus (c. 1 and 39 other poems), and one used by both Sappho and, perhaps importantly in this instance, Anacreon.<sup>4</sup>

Ἡ Λῆμνος τὸ παλαιόν, εἴ τις ἄλλη

*Lemnos of old, if any other*

The Milan *diegesis* gives the following summary:

Πρὸς τοὺς ὠραίους φησὶν ἡ Λῆμνος πάλαι ποτὲ εὐδαίμων γενομένη ἐκακοδιμόνησε, ἐπιθεμένων τῶν θηλειῶν τοῖς ἄρρεσιν διόπερ καὶ ὑμεῖς εἰς τὸ μέλλον ἀποβλέπετε.

*He speaks to handsome men (lit. 'men in season'). Lemnos of old, once fortunate, fell into ill-fortune, when the women attacked the men – wherefore do you also look to the future.*

The tale of the Lemnian women, of the killing of their husbands, and of the princess Hypsipyle's rescue of her father Thoas, was perhaps best known through Euripides' (now fragmentary) play *Hypsipyle*.<sup>5</sup> The narrative of Euripides' play is one of intense melodrama; the episode of the killing of the Lemnians and the rescue of Thoas are part of the past of the figure Hypsipyle, now sold into slavery as a nursemaid in the household of the king of Nemea, Lycurgus. We cannot know from the one line preserved by the *diegesis* how much of the Lemnos Hypsipyle narrative was relevant to the Callimachus poem; the *diegesis* may suggest that the focus of the Callimachus poem is rather the essence/danger of being ὠραῖος, 'in the bloom of youth'/'ready for marriage', which would fit with the youthful figures of the following three poems (youthful beauty is central to all four). The term ὠραῖος, 'in season' used of people, calls attention to the seasonal nature of male beauty; the poet urges the men thus to be aware of the passing of beauty, and to make good use of it.

The narrative of the Lemnian women appears in *Argonautica* 1, when the Argonauts come to Lemnos (lines 608 ff.). Apollonius tells the narrative at some length (lines 609-632) at the beginning of the long erotic tale of Jason and Hypsipyle, which occupies much of *Argonautica* I.

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<sup>3</sup> Callim. fr. 69 Pf. (168 Massimilla) πολλοὶ καὶ φιλέοντες Ἀκόντιον ἦκαν ἔραζε | οἰνοπόται Σικελᾶς ἐκ κυλίκων λάταγας, 'many of the wine-drinkers who desired Acontius cast the Sicilian lees from their cups to the ground.' See Massimilla 2010: 341-2; Harder 2012: 568-71.

<sup>4</sup> See Acosta-Hughes 2010: 162-63 on the Alexandrian edition of Anacreon.

<sup>5</sup> Bond's 1963 edition is still the standard reference commentary: see now Kannicht *TrGF* v. 2, 2004). Cf. further Cockle (Rome 1987).

Callim. fr. 227 Pf. is in part preserved by Hephaestion (p. 53, 10 C) in his comment on asynartetic meters,<sup>6</sup>

Ἔνεστ' Ἀπόλλων τῷ χορῷ· τῆς λύρης ἀκούω·  
καὶ τῶν Ἐρώτων ἠσθόμην· ἔστι κάφροδίτη.

· · · · ·  
· · · · · ]την[...][λ]  
θυμηδίην τ[ ] δεῦτε παννυχ[  
ὁ δ' ἀγρυπνήσας [συνεχῆς] μέχρι τῆς κο[ρώνης] 5  
τὸν πυραμοῦντα λήψεται, καὶ τὰ κοττάβεια  
καὶ τῶν παρουσῶν ἣν θέλει, ἧν θέλει, φιλήσει.  
ὦ Κάστορ [ ] καὶ σὺ Πωλύδ[ευκες  
καὶ τῶν ἄ[ ] καὶ ξενω[ ]

*Apollo is in the chorus, I hear his lyre, and I perceive the Erotes. There is Aphrodite...revelry...hither all night? He who is awake straight until dawn will get the baked cakes and the dice, and of those present will kiss her whom he loves, and him whom he loves. Castor ... and you, Polydeuces, and of.... (friends?)*

The *diegesis* supplies a little more information: Ἔνεστ' Ἀπόλλων τῷ χορῷ Παροίνιον εἰς τοὺς Διοσκούρους· καὶ Ἑλένην ὕμνει, καὶ παρακαλεῖ τὴν θυσίαν δέξασθαι· καὶ προτροπὴ τοῖς συμπόταις εἰς τὸ ἀγρυπνεῖν. *Apollo is in the chorus. A wine-song for the Dioscuri. And he hymns Helen, and urges them to receive the sacrifice. And an enjoiner to his fellow-drinkers to stay awake.*

The poem is in a meter that Hephaestion (p. 53, 10 Consbruch) terms 'Euripidean fourteen-syllable line', an iambic dimeter + ithyphallic. The first two lines are preserved by Hephaestion in his discussion of the meter; the remaining seven by *P. Berol.* 13417 B 1-13. It is unclear how many verses are missing lines 2 and 3. Athenaeus XV 668 discusses the *kottabos* game used at a *pannychis*: his discussion supplies some readings of the Berlin papyrus (ἦν δέ τι καὶ ἄλλο κοτταβείων εἶδος προτιθέμενον ἐν ταῖς παννυχίσιν, οὗ μνημονεύει Καλλιμάχος (Κάλλιπος cod.) ἐν Παννυχίδι διὰ τούτων·).

Callimachus evoked the all-night revel and the *kottabos* players in the now fragmentary first part of his Acontius and Cydippe narrative in the third book of his four book elegiac *Aetia* (fr. 69 Pf.): πολλοὶ καὶ φιλέοντες Ἀκόντιον ἦκαν ἔραζε | οἰνοπόται Σικελὰς ἐκ κυλίκων λάταγας, 'and many of the wine-drinkers in love with Acontius cast their Sicilian lees from their goblets to the ground'.

The Dioscuri are prominent deities in Alexandria, and important model demi-gods, as is their sister Helen, for Ptolemaic ruler-cult. They are central figures again in the following poem, the

<sup>6</sup> West 1982 43-44.

*Deification of Arsinoe*, and the juxtaposition of the two poems, fr. 227 and 228, with the prominent role of the demi-gods for both, is clearly intended.

The inscription of Callim. fr. 228, of which some 75 lines remain, the so-called *Deification of Arsinoe* (the title Ἐκθέωσις Ἀρσινόης is taken from the diegesis *ad loc*; this may also just be a description of the poem's content), is in another stichic lyric meter, archebuleans. I have treated this poem at some length elsewhere and so limit myself here to just a few relevant observations.<sup>7</sup> The poem is another lyric type, a *threnos*, v. line 70 θρήνοι, a poem of lament sung to an aulos. Pindar composed a book of threnoi, of which a small number of fragments survive (128c-137 S.-M.) and there are several in Greek tragedy (famously Euripides *Helen* lines 338-385).<sup>8</sup> The poem is thematically structured around three sibling pairs: Philotera/Arsinoe, Arsinoe/Ptolemy, and the Dioscuri. The geopolitical quadrangle of Sicily, Lemnos, Mt. Athos and Libya provides a poetic canvass of Ptolemaic geo-political ambition; at the same time, components of line 70 πόλιν ὑμετέρ[αν and line 73 ὁμόδελφον localize the setting as Alexandria.

The inscription of the final poem, Callim. fr. 229, *Branchos*, is also taken from the *Diegesis* summary:

Δαίμονες εὐνυμότατοι, Φοῖβέ τε καὶ Ζεῦ, Διδύμων γενάρχα Ἀπ[ό]λλων ἐκ Δήλου ἀφικνεῖται εἰς τὸ Μιλήτου χωρίον ὃ καλεῖται ἱερὰ ὕλη, ἵνα Βράγχος.

*Gods well-hymned, Phoebus and Zeus, rulers of Didyma. Apollo arrives from Delos to the are of Miletus which is called 'the holy forest', where Branchus is.*

Susan Stephens and I have treated this poem briefly in our 2017 study: as only a modest portion of the poem survives, I give it below with a translation.

Δαίμονες εὐνυμότατοι, Φοῖβέ τε καὶ Ζεῦ, Διδύμων γενάρχα

. . . . .  
 ]ποδων λοιμὸς ἐπέλθη κατάρατος ἄρπαξ,  
 ]ωτρισεμο\_χ\_μεν[. ]λείτας ἀπὸ κεν τράποιτο  
 ]πε\_ησπέ\_α χλωρὴν βοτάνην νέμοιτο  
 ]ι\_ ]ετ\_ρ[ ] τῆσδε μελέσθω· [σὺ] δὲ καὶ προπάππων 5  
 ]οδ\_κ[ ]υσλ\_ ]θιν ὀμαρτεῖν· ἐτ[εὸ]ν γάρ ἐστιν  
 ]σοι πατρόθεν τῶν ἀπὸ Δαίτε[ω], τὸ δὲ πρὸς τεκούσης  
 ]Λαπίθην α[ ]δ\_κειομ\_ ] εὐγένει[ο]ν.  
 ]το[ ]δ' ἔφ\_ ]υδ\_ιδω\_ ἀνέπαλτ[ο θ]υμός·  
 ]οι τέμ[ε]ν[ο]ς [κα]λὸν ἐν ὕλῃ, τόθι πρῶτον ὄφθης, 10  
 κρη]έων διδύμων ἐγγύθι δάφνης κατὰ κλῶνα πήξας.  
 χαῖρε δὲ Δελφ]ίνι' ἄ[ν]αξ, οὖν[ο]μα γάρ[ρ] τοι τόδ' ἐγὼ κατάρχω,  
 εἵνεκεν Οἰκούσ]ιον εἰς ἄ[σ]τυ σε δελφίς ἀπ' ἔβησε Δήλου,

<sup>7</sup> Acosta-Hughes 2010: 68-69,

<sup>8</sup> Pindar' *Threnoi* are treated by Cannatà Fera 1980; D'Alessio; Race in his 1997 Loeb Pindar pp. 360-71.

].[...].[...].[.....]	α τιμᾶ, μετὰ δ' ἄψ [έ]ς ἄλλον	
]υμω[	]ον Ὀλύμπ[ο]υ θυόεν[τα] νηόν	15
]ουσο.[	φ]ιλήτωρ .[.].εξεφο[.]β.[	
	]ατ' ἀγάκτων ἱερὴν γενέθλην	
	]ρις ἔξει	
	]αστηρ	
	]αρησμ[.]	20
	]π[.]	
	]αιοδη[	
	]ναι.	

Gods happily hymned, Phoebus and Zeus, leaders of Didyma

(an unknown number of lines are missing)

*a rapacious cursed plague be absent from the [quadru-]peds...would be turned from...and flocks made fat from good fodder...let there be a care of this...And you, ancestor (5) to accompany. For truly it is...on your father's side from Daïtes, and from your mother from the Lapiths...nobility...spirit leapt...fair sanctuary in the forest, when first you were seen (10), upon affixing a laurel-bough near twin springs. Hail Delphinian Lord, for I begin with this name for you, since once a dolphin brought you to the Oikousian city from Delos, ...honor, after back to another... kisser... sacred race of kings...*

Hephaestion cites the first line as an example of catalectic choriambic pentameter (a meter we find in Aristophanes *Acharnians* at lines 1150-73. The narrative of Apollo and the boy Branchus is best known from Varro (which we find in a scholion to Statius *Thebaid* VIII.198 (where see Agoustakis *ad loc.*), and Conon *FGrHist* 26 F. 1, XXXIII. In return for the boy's kiss Apollo (line 16 note the epithet φιλήτωρ) gives Branchus prophetic powers.

The motif of homoerotic love in fr. 229 may be paralleled by the seemingly homoerotic motif of fr. 226 (note the *Diegesis ad loc*: πρὸς τοὺς ὠραίους φησὶν 'he speaks to youthful men'. The Dioscuri, objects of worship in fr. 227 are certainly paralleled in the Dioscuri as active agents in fr. 228; it is they who bear the deceased Arsinoe, assimilated to Helen in the queen's royal cult and so the 'sister' of Kastor and Polydeuces, to Heaven. It would seem then that we have not only four lyric poems, but more specifically four erotic poems that treat varieties of divine and paideutic eros – the inclusion of the grieving widower Ptolemy II Philadelphus (fr. 228.13 μέγας γαμέτας) in this context may be at once tactful and discrete. We might add further that all four poems have a male perspective, whether the object is one of male desire (so fr. 226, 227 and 229) or male lament (fr. 228).

## Part II

### Contemporary Quartets

In the first part of this paper I have treated Callimachus' four fragmentary lyric poems as a compositional quartet, two homoerotic poems framing two poems that celebrate the Dioscuri. I would like now to consider Callimachus' quartet in relation two other poetic quartets, Apollonius' epic *Argonautica* and Theocritus *Idd.* 28-31.<sup>9</sup>

The comparison of Callimachus' lyric quartet with Apollonius' poem is broadly thematic. The episode of the Lemnian women referenced in the *Diegesis* to Callim. fr. 226 figures in the first book of Apollonius' poem: lines 609-632 provide the narrative background to Hypsipyle's reception of the Argonauts and her romantic involvement with Jason (particularly figured in radiant beauty, 'like a star', as he walks to the city (lines 774-781). At the conclusion of *Argonautica* 2 the heroes arrive at the river Phasis at night (line 1260 ἐννύχιοι...ἴκοντο) and in the nocturnal gloom await the dawn (lines 1284-85 οἷγε διὰ κνέφας ἠὺλίζοντο· | ἦὼς δ' οὐ μετὰ δηρὸν ἐελδομένοισι φαάνθη, 'there in the gloom they spent the night, and not long afterward dawn appeared to them in their longing'). So, the parallel with Callim. fr. 227 *Pannychis* is temporal, one of nocturnal vigilance. *Argonautica* 3 centers on the love of Medea for Jason and the salvation she renders him: the erotic component, as well as Medea's tutelage of Jason (she, albeit portrayed as a girl, is the markedly more experienced in terms of knowledge and ability), loosely parallels Arsinoe's tutelage of her brother which is evoked in the course of Callim. fr. 228 (cf. lines 12-13 ἅ δ' ἐχρύδαν ἐδίδασκε λύπα | ...] μέγας γαμέτας). Arsinoe II was older than her brother, and married him after a complicated history that included two other marriages; the second of these, to her half-brother Ptolemy Keraunus, resulted in the murder of two of her children at Ptolemy's instigation. Medea's murder of her own children lies outside of Apollonius' narrative; the parallel with Arsinoe's experience remains a vivid one.

Fr. 229 Pf., *Branchus*, centers on Apollo's instruction of the boy Branchus in the art of prophecy: the poem treats the foundation of Apollo's cult at Didyma. *Argonautica* 4 finds the heroes in desperate straits in the Libyan desert: there they are rescued by the Libyan maidens (lines 1309 ff.) who prophesy their successful return. In both episodes prophecy is a central component.

Callimachus treats episodes of the *Argonautica* narrative elsewhere in his extant *oeuvre*: *Aetia* fr. 7.19-21 tell of the return of the Argonauts and the miracle at Anaphe (the subject of *Argonautica* 4), *Iambus* 8 tells of the Argonauts' founding the rite of the *Hydrophoria* on the island of Aegina, which is the final episode of *Argonautica* 4 (lines 1765-1772).

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<sup>9</sup> Theocr. *Idd.* 28-31 are newly treated in V. Palmieri's 2018 commentary.

The remarkable conclusion: Callimachus fr. 226-228, four ‘lyric poems’, are paralleled in the main themes of Apollonius’ four-book hexameter epic. This would seem to be a stunning example of poetic parallelism of two Alexandrian artists often seen as rivals: I have written on this theme before (Acosta-Hughes *Poets in Dialogue cit.*), and add this further instance of parallelism to that collection.

Theocritus *Idylls* 28-31 are a quartet of poems in meters used by the lyric poet Sappho in the Alexandrian edition: greater Asclepiad (Theocritus *Idd.* 28, 30 and 31, the meter of the third book of Sappho) and Sapphic dactylic pentameter (Theocritus *Id.* 29, the meter of the second book of Sappho). That these four poems form a lyric quartet *must* be hypothetical: *Id.* 31 is only fragmentary, there are other attested fragments of the *Idylls* (meters unknown). Three of these poems (*Idd.* 29-31) are termed παιδικά in the manuscript tradition: *Id.* 28 celebrates the friendship of Theocritus and Nicias, the addressee of Theocritus’ ‘homoerotic’ *Id.* 13. Yet we should note that our collection of Theocritus ‘concludes’ with a lyric quartet, and a quartet in which Theocritus’ model Sappho figures most prominently.<sup>10</sup>

So, we have three Alexandrian quartets. Why quartets? The number four features in a couple of remarkable passages in Plato’s *Republic*: the four cardinal virtues at *Rep.* 4.426-435, and the four limits of assimilating and dissimilating *Rep.* 8.546b in Plato’s ideal number. There are four books of Callimachus’ *Aetia*, four of Apollonius’ *Argonautica*, and now four of Callimachus’ lyric poems. The Pythagoreans gave a particular significance to the number four, there are Hesiod’s four ages, Empedocles’ four elements. For now, let us conclude with the observation that the quartet was a significant aesthetic figure of Alexandrian poetics, and that Callim. fr. 226-229 Pf. is an important and often overlooked example.

### Part III

#### Two Callimachean Dedications

Let us stay for a moment with the number four and now turn to a different fourth element: the fourth poem of the Catullan corpus; the speaker of the poem is a phaselus, a small bean-shaped light boat used primarily on the Nile.

Catullus *c.* 4

*Phaselus ille, quem uidetis, hospites  
ait fuisse nauium clerrimus,  
neque ullius natantis impetum trabis  
nequisse praeterire, siue palmulis  
opus foret uolare sine linteo.  
et hoc negat minacis Hadriatici*

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<sup>10</sup> I treat these four poems in Acosta-Hughes 2010: 107-122.

*negare litus insulasue Cycladas  
 Rhodumque nobilem horridamque Thraciam  
 Propontida trucemue Ponticum sinum.  
 ubi iste post phaselus antea fuit 10  
 comata silua: name Cytorio in iugo  
 loquente saepe sibilum edidit coma.  
 Amastri Pontica et Cytore buxifer,  
 tibi haec fuisse et esse cognitissima  
 ait phaesus: ultima ex origine 15  
 tuo stetisse dicit in cacumine,  
 tuo imbuisse palmulas in aequore,  
 et inde tot per impotentia freta  
 erum tulisse, laeua siue dextera  
 uocaret aura, siue utrumque Iuppiter 20  
 simul secundus incidisset in pedem:  
 neque ulla uota litoralibus deis  
 sibi eses facta, cum ueniret a mari  
 nouissimo hunc ad usque limpidum lacum.  
 sed haec prius fuere: nunc recondite 25  
 senet quiete seque dedicate tibi,  
 gemelli Castor et gemelle Castoris.*

*This light skiff, which you behold, guests, says it was the fastest of boats, nor was the onrush of any swimming ship able to overpass it, whether it needed to fly with oar-blades for with sail. And this she says the shore of the threatening Adria?c and the Cyclades and noble Rhodes and the savage Thracian Propon?s or the rough Pon?c bay cannot deny, where this aCerward skiff was before verdant forest, for on the Cytorian ridge oCen it evoked a voice with its loquacious strands. Pon?c Amastris and boxwood bearing Cytorus, to you the skiff says these things were very well known. Upon your summit she says she stood in her earliest ?me, and from thence was borne over the violent seas, where either leC-leaning or right-leaning breeze bore her, or a favorable Jove fell on either sheet at once, and that never made she any prayer to the shoreline gods, when she came from the sea for the last ?me to this quiet lake. But those things happened before; now she grows old in hidden quiet, and dedicates herself to you, twin Castor and Castor's twin.*

Callimachus *Ep.* 5 Pf. (14 G.-P.)

Κόγχος ἐγώ, Ζεφυρίτι, πάλαι τέρας· ἀλλὰ σὺ νῦν με,  
 Κύπρι, Σεληναίης ἄνθεμα πρῶτον ἔχεις,  
 ναυτίλος, ὃς πελάγεσσιν ἐπέπλεον, εἰ μὲν ἀῆται,  
 τείνας οἰκείων λαῖφος ἀπὸ προτόνων,  
 εἰ δὲ Γαληναίη, λιπαρὴ θεός, οὖλος ἐρέσσων 5  
 ποσσίν—ἴδ' ὡς τῶργῳ τούνομα συμφέρεται—  
 ἔστ' ἔπεσον παρὰ θίνας Ἰουλίδας, ὄφρα γένωμαι  
 σοὶ τὸ περίσκεπτον παίγιον, Ἀρσινόη,  
 μηδέ μοι ἐν θαλάμησιν ἔθ' ὡς πάρος—εἰμὶ γὰρ ἄπνους—  
 τίκτηται νοτερῆς ὤεον ἀλκυόνος. 10

Κλεινίου ἀλλὰ θυγατρὶ δίδου χάριν, οἶδε γὰρ ἐσθλά  
ῥέζειν καὶ Σμύρνης ἐστὶν ἀπ' Αἰολίδος.

Sources: Athenaeus 7.318b–c εἰς τὸν ναυτίλον... φέρεται τι Καλλιμάχου τοῦ Κυρηναίου ἐπίγραμμα οὕτως ἔχον; Etymologicum Magnum 664.46–51 (περίσκεπτον) ἢ περίσκεπτον, ὃ τις ἂν κατανοῶν θαυμάσειεν· οἶον ὄφρα... Ἀρσινόη. Not in P or Planudes. 1 πάλαι τέρας Schneider Meineke Pf. παλαιότερος Athen. παλαιότερον Bentley G-P με Musurus μοι Athen. 2 fortasse ἄνθεμ' ἔρωτος Meineke 3 ναυτίλος Kaibel ναυτίλον Athen. 6 ποσσίν—ιδ' Schneider G-P ποσσιν ἰν' Athen. ποσσί νιν divisit Hermann ὡς τῶργω Schneider ὡσπεργωι Athen. ὡστ' ἔργω Casaubon ὡς τῶργω Haupt ἄνω σπέρχω Giangrande Clayman 7 Ἰουλίδος Casaubon 8 Ἀρσινόη Et. M. Ἀρσινόης Athen. 9 ἄπλους P ἄπλους Lentz 10 τίκτεται νοτερῆς corr. Bentley τίκτει τ' αἰνοτερῆς Athen. ἀλκύνος corr. Bentley ἀλκύνῃς Athen.

*I am a shell, Lady of Zephyrium, a marvel of old; but now you hold me, Cypris, as the first dedication of Seleneaea, a nautilus, who used to sail upon the seas; if there were winds, by stretching my sail on its own halyards, if there was Calm, that shining goddess, by rowing myself vigorously with my feet—see how my name matches my action—until I landed upon the shore at Ioulis, that I might become a much-admired plaything for you, Arsinoe. No longer in the seas as before—for I am without the breath of life—is the egg of the watery kingfisher lain. But grant favor to the daughter of Cleinias, for she knows to do good things and is from Aeolian Smyrna.*

Two votive objects, a light boat and a nautilus shell, the first dedicated to the Dioscuri, the second to Arsinoe Aphrodite, each with a history, each with a brief travelogue, each with a final resting place, each, though inanimate (the nautilus self-declaratively so, the skiff in its narrative of past life), given a speaking voice. At the center of each narrative is a travel history: the light boat, once a tree that stood above the Paphlagonian (southern Euxine) coast of the Pontus, the nautilus once a living creature that sailed about on the seas. Both the skiff and the seashell present themselves in the terms of shipwreck epitaphs and therein lies part of the pathos of both poems.<sup>11</sup>

The deification of Arsinoe is in part effected through her association with Helen, sister of the Dioscuri addressed at the end of Catullus' poem. There was a temple of the Dioscuri in Ptolemaic Alexandria (Fraser, 1972 207; II 119 n. 41): otherwise frustratingly little is known about their cult there. In Callimachus' poem *On the Deification of Arsinoe* (fr. 226 Pf.) it is the Dioscuri (her 'brothers') who bear the deceased queen to Heaven; the association of Arsinoe with Helen was an integral component to the queen's deification for a Greek audience. The poem *On the Deification of Arsinoe* is now fragmentary: the 'Thracian sea' (line 42 of that poem) is the northernmost part of the Aegean, and so very close to the Propontis, the 'Thracian Propontis' (lines 8-9) of Catullus' poem.

Susan Stephens and I have treated Callimachus' epigram at some length in our 2025 commentary (pages 117-124), and Deification of Arsinoe in our 2017 study of Callimachus' lyric poems; I only repeat essential points here relevant to the present study. The nautilus gives an autobiography of how it, once a moving sea creature, came to be a motionless votive object in a shrine of Arsinoe; the narrative simultaneously provides an overview of the titles of Arsinoe-Aphrodite (line 1 Zephyritis, line 2 Kypris, line 4 Galeneia, line 8 Arsinoe). So the small in the context of the grand. The shell describes itself (line 8) as Arsinoe's περίσκεπτον παίγνιον, 'much admired plaything', at once emphasizing both the 'grandeur' of the cult and the playfulness of the votive object, a seashell. The emphasis on the creature's unusual means of movement (lines 3-4) is given, quasi-seriously, as the reason for its 'name' ('little ship').

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Stephens-Acosta-Hughes 2025: 118.

The phaselus of Catullus' poem also gives a biography and a travelogue. A phaselus is a bean-shaped light boat, used primarily by Egyptians on the Nile; the limpidus lacus of line 24 of Catullus' poem is likely Lake Mareotis (now Lake Mariut), once a freshwater lake near Alexandria.<sup>12</sup> There was a small temple of Arsinoe-Aphrodite Euploia located at Cape Zephyrium, slightly to the west of the Canopic mouth of the Nile (see Strabo 17.800), and this appears to be the final setting for both dedicatory objects. The temple featured a statue of the deified queen that was elevated daily to the ceiling by magnets.

Now, traditionally, scholars have seen the *limpidus lacus* of line 24 as Lake Garda of poem 31; but I suggest, given the customary Nilotic setting of the phaselus and the presence of the Dioscuri as the poem's addressees there is reason to consider another possibility – the role of the Dioscuri in Callimachus' fragmentary lyric poem *The Deification of Arsinoe* (fr. 228 Pf.), where the brother gods, the Dioscuri, bear their 'sister', the dead Arsinoe, to Heaven must indicate rather Lake Marotis. Indeed, the very alliteration of line 24 *limpidum lacum* may be a Catullan play on the λίμνη λιμναῖος of Ancient Alexandria.<sup>13</sup> Heliodorus *Aethiopica* 1.31.2 figures such a light boat.<sup>14</sup>

This would rather suggest that the similarities of Catullus *c.* 4 and Callimachus *Ep.* 5 Pf. (14 G.-P.) are more than incidental: *both* objects, phaselus and nautilus, with their 'reported' histories, are dedications to Arsinoe-Aphrodite in her temple at Zephyrium. I would venture that in *c.* 4 Catullus has rendered yet another Callimachean poem into his own idiom; we do not have the Callimachean original, though with the nautilus epigram we have a striking parallel.<sup>15</sup>

Two votive offerings, two narratives, two prayers. One, a nautilus shell, dedicated to Arsinoe-Aphrodite in her cult at Zephyrium (Zepheritis); one, a phaselus or light Nilotic boat, dedicated to the Dioscuri, the 'brothers' of Arsinoe in cult (here Callimachus fr. 228 Pf. is, as will be compare clear, a crucial *comparandum*).<sup>16</sup> Commentators on Catullus' poem have wondered about the Roman poet's treatment of a light boat or skiff ill-suited to Lake Garda;<sup>17</sup> and herein there may be something of a clue. The phaselus *does* appear elsewhere in Latin poetry (Virg. *Geo.* 4.289, but here of a setting on the Nile; Prop. 3.21.20 Mart. X.30.13), but all in passages with marked Callimachean allusions).

In his 1997 commentary on Catullus 4 D.F.S. Thomson (p. 213 suggested that Catullus' poem might be an adaptation of a lost *Phaselus Berenices* (Βερενίκης φάσηλος). I would suggest that Thomson was pointing in the right direction; the Catullus poem *is* likely an adaptation of Callimachean original, and the similarity to the nautilus epigram in dedicatory language and

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<sup>12</sup> Goddio 2003: [146]-[181].

<sup>13</sup> Strabo *Geogr.* 17.1.7 (of Lake Marotis) ὁ λίμνη ὁ λιμναῖος. Cf. Fraser ii fn. 182. It is striking cf. Cat. 4. 13 Cytore buxifer that the artificial harbor (Eunostos) of Alexandria was called "Κίβωτος" box. Strabo Alexandria 795.

<sup>14</sup> Καὶ τὸν μὲν λουδορησάμενος εἰπὼν τε ὡς ἔφθη τὸ κάλλιστον θυμάτων ἱεροουργήσας, ἐπιβαίνει τε τοῦ σκάφους αὐτὸς καὶ ὁ Θέρμουθις καὶ τρίτος ὁ ἐρέτης· οὐ γὰρ πλείονας οἶά τε φέρειν τὰ λιμναῖα σκάφη ἀπὸ μόνου ξύλου καὶ πρέμνου παχέος ἐνὸς ἀγροικότερον κοιλαινόμενα.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Magnelli 2021: 230-231.

<sup>16</sup> We treat this poem in Acosta-Hughes/Stephens 2025: 117-124.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Syndikus 2001: 88; Quinn 1970.100; Merrill 1893:12.

travel narrative is surely not coincidental – these are both Callimachus epigrams in their original form. Both celebrate a Ptolemaic queen – either Arsinoe II or Berenice II, Callimachus composes for both. How much of the Catullus poem is taken from a Callimachean original is unknowable; Catullus (as *c.* 66 exemplifies) adapts rather than translates Callimachus.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Cf. Callim. *Ep.* 15 GP and Cat. *c.* 1: both are poetic ‘syllaboi’, both detail a 4-book final gift, but Catullus’ first poem very much pertains to his own collection.

