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WINGED CALLIMACHUS

In ZPE 66 (1986) 269-78 Gregory Crane discussed the implications of Callimachus' self-identification with the cicada in the light of the suggestion of earlier scholars\(^1\) that the poet here sees himself as Tithonus, but a Tithonus who is not abandoned by his beloved deities. The present note calls attention to a further pattern of meaning in the passage which may have important implications for its structure.

Callimachus, the favourite of Apollo, longs to be ὁ ἐλαχύς, ὁ πτερόεις. The reference is to the cicada, but the language can hardly be other than a reworking of the famous words which Plato puts in Socrates' mouth at *Ion* 534b: κούφων γάρ χρήμα ποιητής ἐκτιν καὶ πτηνόν καὶ ἰερόν.\(^3\) Callimachus' familiarity with this passage - which would hardly require proof - is in fact established by an echo of *Ion* 534c in *Iambus* 13 (fr. 203.31-3).\(^4\) Socrates' 'light, winged, and holy' poet is like a bee rather than a cicada, but this hardly weakens the certainty of the echo; in any case, Callimachus elsewhere suggests a likeness between himself and the bee (h. 2.110-12). In his amusing speech at *Ion* 533c-5a Socrates argues that poets do not compose ἐκ τέχνης, but rather ἐνθεοί, ἐκφρονεῖς and κατεχόμενοι like bacchants; poets are merely ἐρμηνεῖς τῶν θεῶν. This position is directly opposed to Callimachus' insistence upon τέχνη as the chief poetic criterion (fr. 1.17) and his self-presentation as the

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1 Supplementary: v.30 Lobe; v.32 Hunt.
2 Cf. A.Rostagni, RFIC n.s. 6 (1928) 23; H.Diller, Hermes 90 (1962) 120.
3 G.O.Hutchinson, Hellenistic Poetry (Oxford 1988) 80 n.107 cites the Platonic parallel to Callimachus' verse but not, apparently, as its source. Dr. N.Hopkinson suggests that δἰς in v.34 picks up ἰερόν, the third of Plato's epithets for the poet.
4 Cf., e.g. D.L.Clayman, Callimachus' Iambi (Leiden 1980) 50. The humour of citing Plato's Ion in a poem in which the poet defends himself by the example of Ion of Chios has strangely been lost on many critics.
deliberate artist, composing pen-in-hand (fr. 1.21-2): 'not for him the affectation of vatic inspiration', as Neil Hopkinson has recently put it.5

Thus in offering a poetics quite unlike that of the Platonic Socrates, Callimachus in fact adopts Socrates' language and partially takes over his view of the poet. The famously problematic6 syntax of vv. 33-5 can now be seen as amusingly suggestive of the ecstatic, 'possessed', mode which Socrates ascribes to poets and into which Callimachus suddenly changes; the change is mediated through the echo of the Ion in v.32. The whole passage - so typical of Callimachus' creative use of earlier literature - is thus a powerful assertion of poetic craftsmanship and lyric inspiration.

One final speculation. The link between the Reply to the Telchines (fr. 1) and the Dream (fr. 2) remains very unclear.7 We also know nothing of the dream's circumstances. It is usually assumed to have occurred at night, but certain times of the day were also very suitable for dreams and encounters with the divine, and Socrates tells Phaedrus the myth of the cicadas ἐν μεσημβρία and stresses that they should not nod off into sleep in the heat like most men (Phaedrus 259a). If Callimachus' dream took place in the heat of the day, the image of the cicada may have formed part of the link between it and the Reply. This is no more than a guess, but at least it would not be the only such poetic encounter to be set at such a time (cf. Theocr. 7.21).8

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5 A Hellenistic Anthology (Cambridge 1988) 95. Critics differ as to whether vv.21-2 refer to Callimachus' first attempt at poetry or to his first efforts at writing when a little boy (so, e.g. W.Wimmel, Kallimachos in Rom, Hermes Einzelschrift 16, Wiesbaden 1960,101). The former seems more likely (cf. the address ἀοιδή and the imitations in Roman recusationes), although the superlative πρώτιστον, παίδαξ in v.37, and the tradition that Callimachus was at one time a schoolteacher in Alexandrian Eleusis (Suda κ 227 = Test. 1 Pfeiffer) - and therefore only too familiar with writing lessons - may be thought to suggest the latter. It may be in fact that Callimachus thinks of the two moments as coincident.

6 A selection of criticism: Pfeiffer's note quoting P.Friedländer, Hermes 64 (1929) 383; H.Herter, Bursian's Jahresbericht 255 (1937) 104-6; Wimmel op.cit. 113 n.4; A.Kambylis, Die Dichterweihe und ihre Symbolik (Heidelberg 1965) 82-9; Hopkinson op.cit. 96-7.


8 Theocr. 7.139, τέττιγες λαλασειντες ἔχον πόνον, suggests the πόνος of the 'Callimachean' poet.