

**Zeitschrift:** Museum Helveticum : schweizerische Zeitschrift für klassische Altertumswissenschaft = Revue suisse pour l'étude de l'antiquité classique = Rivista svizzera di filologia classica

**Herausgeber:** Schweizerische Vereinigung für Altertumswissenschaft

**Band:** 59 (2002)

**Heft:** 1

  

**Artikel:** Artemis' fourth throw (Call. Dian. 121f.)

**Autor:** Massimilla, Giulio

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-46001>

### **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

### **Conditions d'utilisation**

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

### **Terms of use**

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

**Download PDF:** 09.12.2025

**ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>**

## Artemis' fourth throw (Call. *Dian.* 121f.)

By Giulio Massimilla, Potenza

In vv. 119–123 of the Hymn to Artemis, Callimachus asks the goddess how many times she tested her silver bow. In answering his own question, Callimachus mentions the four throws whereby Artemis made trial of her weapon. Here is the text, as in Pfeiffer's edition:

ποσσάκι δ' ἀργυρέοιο, θεή, πειρήσας τόξου;  
120 πρῶτον ἐπὶ πτελέην, τὸ δὲ δεύτερον ἦκας ἐπὶ δρῦν,  
τὸ τρίτον αὖτ' ἐπὶ θήρα. τὸ τέτρατον οὐκέτ' †ἐπὶ δρῦν†,  
ἀλλὰ †μιν εἰς ἀδίκων ἔβαλες πόλιν, οἳ τε περὶ σφέας  
οἳ τε περὶ ξείνους ἀλιτήμονα πολλὰ τέλεσκον.

Callimachus says that Artemis shot firstly at an elm, secondly at an oak, thirdly at a wild beast and fourthly at the city of unjust and evil men. The transition from the third to the fourth target is emphasized by the poet: while with her first three throws Artemis was just practising, with the fourth one she took on her religious role of avenging goddess. Regrettably this transition, which occupies the second hemistich of v. 121 and the beginning of v. 122, suffers from corruption in our manuscripts: Pfeiffer obelizes both ἐπὶ δρῦν at the end of v. 121 and μιν in v. 122.

And indeed the transmitted text, although metrically correct, raises problems regarding its sense:

1) τὸ τέτρατον οὐκέτ' †ἐπὶ δρῦν†. After mentioning the elm, the oak and the wild beast, why should Callimachus single out the second target and write: "The fourth time (you) no longer (shot) at an oak"? ἐπὶ δρῦν at the end of v. 121 can easily be explained as an erroneous repetition of the *explicit* of v. 120.

2) ἀλλὰ †μιν εἰς ἀδίκων ἔβαλες πόλιν. The pronoun μιν should refer to τόξου in v. 119: but there – as Pfeiffer points out in his apparatus – the word means "bow", whereas here the meaning required is "arrow"<sup>1</sup>.

1 Some scholars try to defend the *textus receptus*: A. Ronconi in: F. Bornmann, *Callimachi Hymnus in Dianam. Introduzione, testo critico e commento* (Firenze 1968) 134 proposes keeping ἐπὶ δρῦν; A. Meineke, "Kritische Bemerkungen zu Kallimachos", *JCPH* 6 (81) (1860) 44 and *Callimachi Cyrenensis Hymni et Epigrammata* (Berolini 1861) 163f., and Q. Cataudella, "Hellenistica (Filita, Menandro, Callimaco, Teocrito, Eroda)", *Helikon* 7 (1967) 408f. = *Intorno ai lirici greci. Contributi alla critica del testo e all'interpretazione* (Roma 1972) 200f. are in favour of μιν; K. J. McKay, "Mischiefs in Kallimachos' Hymn to Artemis", *Mnemosyne*, s. IV 16 (1963) 249–254 and G. Giangrande, "Artemis and the Oak-trees in Callimachus", *CL* 3 (1983) 69–71 think that both verses are sound.

The conjectural emendations of the text so far proposed (some of which do not tackle the problem of μιν) follow four different routes:

1) Some scholars assume that a verse was lost after v. 121, where the elm and the wild beast appeared again: in this way all the first three targets (not only the oak) would be mentioned twice. According to Schneider<sup>2</sup>, such a verse might be something like οὐδ' ἔτ' ἐπὶ πετέλην, οὐδ' ἀγροτέρους ἐπὶ θήρα<sup>3</sup>. Haupt<sup>4</sup> contrives, e.g., the hexameter οὐκ ἔτ' ἐπὶ πετέλην ἦκας βέλος, οὐκ ἐπὶ θήρα. Wilamowitz<sup>5</sup> too supposes that a verse is missing after v. 121, but does not volunteer any supplement.

I find such an approach unappealing, as the whole passage would become highly redundant and incompatible with Callimachean concision.

2) Others put a different complement at the end of v. 121, instead of ἐπὶ δρυῖν. Meineke<sup>6</sup> thinks that it would have been more natural for the poet to mention the third target (the wild beast) again, rather than the second (the oak), before going on to the fourth one: therefore he changes οὐκέτ' ἐπὶ δρυῖν into οὐκ ἔτι θήρα or οὐκ ἐπὶ θήρα. This conjecture seems to me implausible because the verse form (its two hemistichs beginning with a numeral adverb and ending with the same word) would be clumsy<sup>7</sup>.

Sitzler<sup>8</sup> and Cataudella<sup>9</sup> try to convert ἐπὶ δρυῖν into a complement which summarizes the three targets previously named: they propose substituting οὐκ ἐπὶ τοῖα or οὐκ ἐπὶ ταῦτα for οὐκέτ' ἐπὶ δρυῖν. In this way the *clausula* of the verse would be smooth, but rather flat.

3) Mair<sup>10</sup> replaces ἐπὶ δρυῖν in v. 121 with an adverbial phrase. He writes οὐκέτ' ἐπὶ δῆν instead of οὐκέτ' ἐπὶ δρυῖν and translates: "But the fourth time – not long was it ere thou didst shoot at the city of unjust men." This conjecture has the advantage of providing an easy palaeographical explanation for the erroneous ἐπὶ δρυῖν, but is utterly implausible with respect to prosody and sense. First of all, Callimachus would not be expected to lengthen the *iota* of ἐπὶ before δῆν, because he does not take into account the original *digamma* of this adverb

2 O. Schneider, "De locis quibusdam Callimachi lacunosis", *Philologus* 6 (1851) 554f. and *Callimachea* I (Lipsiae 1870) 226.

3 As often in Schneider's conjectural versification, this hexameter infringes a Callimachean metrical rule (a masculine caesura should be followed by either a hephthemimeres caesura or a bucolic diaeresis or both): see G. Massimilla, *Callimaco. Aitia, libri primo e secondo* (Pisa 1996) 41f.

4 M. Haupt in: Meineke, *Hymni et Epigrammata* (n. 1).

5 U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Callimachi Hymni et Epigrammata* (Berolini 1925) 21.

6 *Opp. cit.* (n. 1).

7 The problem is perceived by T. Gomperz, "Zu Kallimachos", *WS* 32 (1910) 2 = *Hellenika. Eine Auswahl philologischer und philosophiegeschichtlicher Kleiner Schriften* II (Leipzig 1912) 309, whose attempt to improve Meineke's emendation is nevertheless far-fetched: τὸ τρίτον αὐτ' ἐπὶ σῶν, τὸ δὲ τέτατον οὐκ ἔτι θήρα.

8 J. Sitzler, *PhW* 43 (1923) 267.

9 *Op. cit.* (n. 1).

10 A. W. Mair, *Callimachus. Hymns and Epigrams* (London/Cambridge, Mass. 1955) 70f.

(\*δφήν) in *Hec. fr.* 49.3 H. μετὰ δὴν (short *alpha*)<sup>11</sup>. Then, Mair's translation shows that the meaning of the passage would be very contorted.

4) Others put a verb at the end of v. 121, instead of ἐπὶ δροῦν. Gallavotti<sup>12</sup> suggests οὐκέτ' ἔπαιζες and changes ἀλλά μιν εἰς (v. 122) into ἀλλ' ἰοῖς: "The fourth time you were no longer sporting, but struck the city of unjust men with your arrows." Barber<sup>13</sup> proposes οὐκέτ' ἔπαισας (or ἔπαιξας) and ἀλλά τιν': "The fourth time you sported no longer, but shot (your arrow) into a certain city of wrongdoers."

In my opinion, this conjectural approach is the most promising: after three practice throws, with the fourth one Artemis became the goddess of vengeance *par excellence*.

I would like to propose a new emendation in accordance with the last approach to the text. My proposal is based on the close similarity between our verses and a passage from the story of Acontius and Cydippe in the third book of Callimachus' *Aitia*<sup>14</sup>.

After Cydippe had unwittingly sworn by Artemis that she would marry Acontius, her wedding with another youth was three times prevented by the goddess, who plagued the girl firstly with epilepsy, secondly with quartan fever and thirdly with a deadly chill. The fourth time Cydippe's father waited no longer, but consulted the Delphian Apollo. On learning the truth, he gave his daughter to Acontius in marriage. Within the story, the following verses are the most relevant for our purpose (*fr.* 75.14–21 Pf.):

ἦ τότ' ἀνιγρή (scil. epilepsy)

- 15 τὴν κούρην Ἀΐδεω μέχρ' ἔτηξε δόμων.  
 δεύτερον ἐστόργυντο τὰ κλισμῖα, δεύτερον ἢ πα[ῖ]ς  
 ἑπτὰ τεταρταίῳ μῆνας ἔκαμνε πυρί.  
 τὸ τρίτον ἐμνήσαντο γάμου κάτ'α, τὸ τρίτον αὖτ[ε]  
 Κυδίππην ὀλοὸς κρυμὸς ἐσώκισατο.  
 20 τέτρατον [ο]ὐκέτ' ἔμεινε πατήρ ἐ . . . φ . . . ο . . . [  
 Φοῖβον· ὁ δ' ἐννύχιον τοῦτ' ἔπος ηὔδατο.

The two passages resemble each other from many points of view: 1) They present a series of the same numeral adverbs: τὸ δὲ δεύτερον (*Hymn*) = δεύτερον ... δεύτερον (*Aitia*); τὸ τρίτον αὖτ' (*H.*) = τὸ τρίτον ... τὸ τρίτον αὖτε

11 The *digamma* of δὴν is metrically effective in Homeric poems (cf. *Il.* 1.416 and many other passages), but is constantly disregarded by Hellenistic and imperial authors: cf., e.g., A.R. 2.135 etc., *Euph. fr.* 9.8 Powell, Nonn. *D.* 23.11.

12 C. Gallavotti, *PP* 8 (33) (1953) 469.

13 E. A. Barber, *CR* 68 n.s. 4 (1954) 229.

14 The resemblance is pointed out by H. Herter, "Kallimachos und Homer. Ein Beitrag zur Interpretation des Hymnos auf Artemis", in: *Xenia Bonnensia. Festschrift zum 75jährigen Bestehen des philologischen Vereins und Bonner Kreises* (Bonn 1929) 96 = *Kleine Schriften* (München 1975) 409, Pfeiffer *ad locc.*, Bornmann *ad loc.*

(A.); τὸ τέτρατον (H.) = τέτρατον (A.). 2) In both places three preliminary occurrences are followed by a fourth one, which develops (H.) or solves (A.) a situation. 3) In both passages the culminating fourth event is introduced by the phrase (τὸ) τέτρατον οὐκέτ', which – thanks to its retarding effect – emphasizes the transition<sup>15</sup>.

Given this striking similarity, I suspect that Callimachus used the same verb in *fr.* 75.20 Pf. and *Dian.* 121. Therefore, in the latter passage, I would change οὐκέτ' ἐπὶ δοῦν into οὐκέτ' ἔμεινας<sup>16</sup>: after three practice throws, “the fourth time (you Artemis) waited no longer”, but hit the city of wrongdoers. The erroneous μιν in v. 122 is possibly an itacistic trace of the previous ἔμεινας.

At the beginning of v. 122, I would tentatively replace ἀλλά μιν with ἄρδιν δ': you Artemis waited no longer, “but shot the point of your arrow at the city of unjust men”. The rare word ἄρδις is to be found in Call. *fr.* 70.2 Pf.

To sum up, I propose correcting Call. *Dian.* 121f. as follows:

τὸ τέτρατον οὐκέτ' ἔμεινας,  
ἄρδιν δ' εἰς ἀδίκων ἔβαλες πόλιν.

15 Callimachus elaborates a typical Homeric pattern, according to which three attempts are followed by an unforeseen event or (more rarely) by a successful outcome: cf. *Il.* 5.436–439; 13.20; 16.702–706, 784–787; 20.445–448; 21.176–179; *Od.* 21.125–129 (similarly *Od.* 2.106–109; 19.151–155; 24.141–145 and – in a broader context – *Il.* 22.188–213). While Apollonius Rhodius (3.654f.) faithfully imitates this outline, Callimachus extends and refines it. On the one hand, the Homeric τρεῖς is changed into a detailed account of the three initial occurrences; on the other, the following event is first presented in a negative form (οὐκέτ') and then related. (The latter feature is also to be found in Call. *Del.* 249–255 κύκνοι ... ἐκνυκλώσαντο ... ἑβδομάκις περὶ Δῆλον, ἐπήεισαν δὲ λοχείῃ ... ὄγδοον οὐκέτ' ἄεισαν, ὃ δ' ἔκθορον.) See Herter, *op. cit.* (n. 14), F. Göbel, *Formen und Formeln der epischen Dreiheit in der griechischen Dichtung* (Stuttgart/Berlin 1935) 44f.

16 For the position of the phrase at the end of the hexameter, cf. [Hom.] *Batr.* 301 οὐδ' ἔτ' ἔμειναν, *Orac. Sib.* 5.520 μηκέτι μεῖναι.