

S3_E19_Camelopardalis_MythsRetCons

Intro

Jordan: Hi, I'm Jordan.

Kit: And I'm Kit.

Jordan: Welcome to Starry Time, where stars plus lines

Kit: equal stories.

Jordan: Like Lynx, Camelopardalis doesn't have a Greco Roman or, uh, actually really any myths specifically tied to it. So this episode is going to be more like our Lynx episode where we talk a bit about myths and other folklore related to giraffes and then we'll propose our own myth for this constellation in our newest segment Waxing Poetic.

History

Kit: I really couldn't find much about what this constellation was before it was giraffe. It seems like Ptolemy maybe just like kind of ignored it

Jordan: in traditional Chinese astronomy. However, most of the stars in the current constellation of Camelopardalis are in what we've talked about before and is known as

the purple forbidden enclosure. And they are spread over a number of asterisms within that enclosure, such as the four advisors, the chief judge, the guest house and eight kinds of crops.

Kit: I have so many questions I'm really looking forward to when we finish the IAU constellations and can just like get a little bit more into the traditional ancient Chinese astronomy, like asterisms and the houses and the mansion, like, it's just all fascinating. And I want to know so much more.

Jordan: In looking in Gavin White's Babylonian star lore book, which has provided a lot of helpful information, there was nary a mention of Camelopardalis, and the map seems sort of empty in that region of space where we would expect it. Much like the ancient Greek take.

Kit: Thank goodness for Petrus adding the giraffe. This sounds like it was just like a very neglected part of the night sky.

Jordan: I like it. They were just like, we don't got anything there. Slap a giraffe on it.

Kit: Yeah. I mean, a giraffe is an interesting shape, you know?

Jordan: Yeah.

Kit: Yeah. So I think we're really indebted to him. And now I think we're ready to talk about the myths related to giraffes. We are going to be doing a Creature Corner later, so we're just going to constrain ourselves today to giraffe lore.

Giraffe Lore

So we discussed this in our last episode, but the ancient Greco Roman word for giraffe and the constellation's name, Camelopardalus, is, um, but it's derived from Greek and essentially it means leopard camel or spotted spotted camel. So right away we see some lore about how the giraffe was thought of in the Greco Roman sort of ancient world. One account says the first giraffe was seen in Europe and it was brought there from Alexandria by Julius Caesar in 46 BC. But I didn't actually see any specific stories or legends or myths about giraffes at all Um, from the ancient Greco Romans.

Jordan: Which makes sense, of course, because giraffes aren't just wandering about in Europe. On the other hand, the ancient Egyptians had a specific hieroglyph for giraffes. And there are a number of folktales from across Africa which focus particularly on how the giraffe got its long neck. One of these stories comes from East Africa and is recounted on the Millennial Matriarchs website, which Kit will link on our socials if you'd like to read more.

Kit: Yes, you can find at Universeodon dot com slash at starrytimestepod

Jordan: the story goes that all animals once had the same legs and neck. But one time during a drought, giraffe and rhino talked about seeking the help of a magician to get help reaching the fresh leaves high on the acacia trees. But rhino forgot to show up, and giraffe was given enough herbs for two animals and ate both. When rhino saw giraffe eating all the leaves, Rhino asked the magician who said there were no more left. Rhino grew angry and charged while giraffe remained tall.

Kit: I like that we have both rhino nature like, you know, charting at things and giraffe

lore in this one. I think this is wonderful. There are there seem to a lot of iterations of this exact sort of folklore out there, but I wasn't able to find much more giraffe lore. So if you know any other giraffe lore or myths, be sure to let us know on our socials.

Jordan: Let's take a quick break and then we can wax poetic. [Music]

Waxing Poetic

Kit: Welcome back to Waxing Poetic, a segment where we create our own myths, legends or rationales for the constellations of the night sky in hopes of capturing your minds, your hearts, and perhaps your very souls. Uh, Jordan, do you want to get started for Camelopardalis?

Jordan: So in my myth, we have to go back to season one. We have to remember a time when Zeus would disguise himself as a great eagle, wandering after mortal women and men for that matter.

Kit: Mhm.

Jordan: However, in my constellation, on one of these endeavors, Zeus has turned himself into a great eagle so that Hera will not find him. But unfortunately got caught off guard, was not paying attention and crashed into a giant tree and was entangled in its branches. So his talons are all locked up, he's trapped in eagle form and he's screaming out asking for help and all the other gods can hear. And Hera's laughing, you know. Finally got you. And eventually, a small deer came to the tree where Zeus was trapped and looked up at Zeus and said, Zeus, lord of Thunder, I will help you, though I

am small. And so this deer, with all their strength, climbed up to the top branch and started chewing the lower branches down. And she would bite and pull and tear the branches until finally the eagle, Zeus was freed. Zeus flew out of the tree and said, thank you for rescuing me when none of the other Olympians would. From this day forward, your neck shall reach the sky. You will eat where no beast can eat. You will see what no beast can see. So the giraffe's neck grew and grew. A gift and a reward. And the camelopardalis that we see in the night sky today is Zeus paying tribute to the poor, humble animal who would help him when none of the other gods would. All right, Kit, uh, where did you go for this?

Kit: Long ago, when Artemis was a child, she followed a pride of lions through the savannah in search of an adventure. Her mother, Leto, let her go, but reminded her to return home before Nyx, the goddess of the night, who even the mighty Zeus feared took over the world. Hours passed, and little Artemis was so enthralled with the trek of the lions to the watering hole, and uh, for a hunt, that Helios rode his chariot across the sky and Nyx took the savannah. Artemis, still young and without a bow, became afraid. The eyes of creatures she didn't yet know seemed to follow her and she ran quickly becoming lost and disoriented. Alone and scared, she wandered for some time before coming across a tower of sleeping giraffes. They were calm and kind eyed. And the matriarch of the herd woke and asked her if she needed help. Artemis saw her aunt Asteria, the goddess of falling stars in the night sky. And the giraffe stood and allowed young Artemis to stand on her head to speak with her aunt. Her aunt Asteria sent word to her sister Leto, who came and took young Artemis home safely. The giraffe's kindness and aid to the young goddess Artemis was commemorated in the night sky as the consolation Camelopardalis

Jordan: Kit, I love your ret- constellation I think we both tried to do it from, We both tried

to latch upon the one thing we know about giraffes

Kit: right tall,

Jordan: and then combine them with the one thing we know about constellations you gotta help God out to get there. And within those constraints, I think you told a much more uplifting story about a child being saved. Whereas I told a story about a monster being freed.

Oracle AI

Kit: Now it's time

00:10:00

Kit: for our segment Oracle AI, where we ask the oracle to create a myth related to the constellation. Our prompt asked the oracle to create a short, modern, non problematic myth about the constellation Camelopardalis. Would you please voice the oracle for us, Jordan?

Jordan: So saith the oracle. Long ago, when the stars still whispered to the earth, a gentle giraffe named Kamala roamed a world where animals could speak and dreams shaped reality. Unlike the others, Kamala could see far beyond the horizon, not just with her eyes, but with her heart. She wandered endlessly, guiding lost travelers through deserts and doubt, offering silent comfort with her towering presence. One night, a young child looked up to the sky and wished they could always find their way. The stars

heard, and to honor Kamala's kindness, they etched her silhouette into the northern sky. Long necked and quiet, ever watchful, so that all who feel lost might follow her path. Gentle guidance is its own kind of strength.

Kit: I don't understand the myth. So, like, the name is, uh, is something, but I just like, don't understand. I'm like, what is the dream shaping reality mean? It's like a mirage of a myth.

Jordan: There was no cause and effect really, or no narrative.

Kit: Uh, right.

Jordan: That I could see. This one seemed a lot like when you are generating word on a text.

Kit: Yes.

Jordan: This, I think the oracle really showed its language learning mechanism. Um, which is too bad because we've been doing this podcast for a few years now and you would think it would be getting

Kit: much better.

Jordan: Or maybe it's great that it's getting worse.

Kit: Right, right. It really does vary. Like sometimes it, sometimes the myth makes sense, sometimes no sense. Like it really does seem to be pretty hit or miss, which I

guess is, you know, good for the the lore builders of the world.

Outro

Jordan: This brings us to the end of our episode this week. Join us next week for the pop culture segment of our exploration of the constellation Camelopardalis.

Kit: This has been Kit

Jordan: and Jordan,

Kit: sisters who love stars and stories.

Jordan: And we'll see you next time

Kit: on Starry Time

00:12:54