

SPEC
LD
1801
.F6h
2002
B66

**University Honors Program
University of South Florida
St. Petersburg, Florida**

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

Honors Thesis

**This is to certify that the Honors Thesis of
Tara Bonds
has been approved by the Examining Committee
on May 2nd, 2002
as satisfactory for the thesis requirement
for the University Honors Program**

Examining Committee:

**_____
Thesis Advisor: Ava Chitwood, Ph.D**

**_____
Member: J.D. Noonan, Ph.D**

**_____
Member: William M. Murray, Ph.D**

*Moods and Motives:
A Comparison of Catullus and Ovid in the Story
Of Ariadne and Theseus*

By

Tara Bonds

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements of the
University Honors Program
St. Petersburg Campus
University of South Florida

May 2, 2002

Thesis Advisor: Ava Chitwood, Ph.D

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Chapter 1: The Myth	3
Chapter 2: The Poets and Their Backgrounds	6
Chapter 3: Social & Political Context	11
Chapter 4: The Context of the Poems	16
Chapter 5: Analysis	18
Appendix: The Poems	
Catullus	23
Ovid	29
Bibliography	34

Introduction

Many different myths date back to Ancient Greece. The ancient Greeks' love of mythical stories manifested itself in a collection of tales that have survived two millennia. These tales often told great feats of strength and wisdom, punishments doled out to mortals by the gods, or stories of love, heartbreak, and anguish. One such story is that of Ariadne and Theseus, which the later Roman poets Catullus and Ovid revisited in the late first century BCE and early first century CE. Both writers stayed true to the standard tale of these ill-fated lovers, but presented very different moods in their interpretations.

Although this paper will not present an in-depth study of the biographies of Catullus and Ovid, some understanding of the poets' lives may broaden the reader's understanding of the poems. This paper will analyze both works, to determine why the same tale has such different moods and agendas in the hand of these two poets for, despite their similarities in background and chosen genre, each wrote in different social climates. A discussion of the literary, social, and political influences on both poets is included in this thesis and suggests why each poet presented the tale of Ariadne and Theseus so differently.

The thesis begins with a retelling of the Ariadne and Theseus myth. Once the basic storyline has been explained, a brief historical survey of the political and social environment of Catullus and Ovid follows, for the changes in Rome and the historical context in which each wrote must be taken into consideration. Next, Catullus and Ovid's presentations will be analyzed within the literary context each writer provides. Catullus wrote his version within a wedding hymn, among stories of other lovers; Ovid's version

of the myth is placed within his *Heroides*, a collection of fictional letters written by mythological female characters.

The moods and motives of these two versions of Ariadne and Theseus offer a new understanding of the poets' intent. The literary contexts in which the poets wrote provide readers with a broader grasp of their purposes and ancient audiences, while a historical perspective presents the literary freedom allowable for each poet in their respective societies. A social context provides a broader comprehension of why each writer chose to present the male and female characters as they did. Studying one myth in two distinctly different social and political cultures therefore prompts a better understanding of the Ancient Roman world.

Chapter 1: The Myth

The traditional story of Ariadne and Theseus begins with King Minos of Crete and King Aegeus of Athens. King Minos angers the god Poseidon by refusing to sacrifice a prized bull to him, and was then punished by Poseidon.¹ The god causes Minos' wife, Queen Pasiphae, to fall in love with the bull. The product of this liaison was the Minotaur. Minos then had an intricate labyrinth built for the Minotaur, designed by Daedalus, the master craftsman and engineer, so that the Minotaur would be hidden from sight. Minos, who also hated the Athenians and went to war against them frequently, blamed them for the death of his son Androgeos. (Androgeos had been murdered by the Athenians after winning all the prizes at the their games.) To avenge his son's death, Minos demanded that the Athenians send seven youths and seven maidens every nine years, to be sacrificed to the Minotaur. King Aegeus of Athens, to prevent war with Crete, complied with these terms. Aegeus' son, Theseus, volunteered to go as one of the sacrificial victims, but he did so in order to kill the Minotaur, and thus end the tribute and the deaths of the Athenians. Theseus traveled with the other youths and maidens to Crete, and upon disembarking was seen by Ariadne, the daughter of Minos. Ariadne immediately fell in love with Theseus. Ariadne, fearing that her half-brother, the Minotaur, would kill Theseus, provided Theseus with tools to defeat the Minotaur and to escape the labyrinth. Having discovering the secret of the labyrinth from Daedalus, she equipped Theseus with a sword and gave him a thread to wind his way back to the entrance.

¹ Many different Greek writers told aspects of this story and its characters, including Hesiod, Stesichorus, Euripides, Philochorus, Callimachus, Apollonius of Rhodes, and Plutarch.

Theseus was victorious. He killed the Minotaur and escaped the labyrinth. Theseus and Ariadne then sailed from Crete, and on the return journey to Athens, stopped at the island of Dia, or Naxos.² While Ariadne slept in their makeshift bed on the sand, Theseus boarded ship with his sailors and left. When Ariadne awoke, she was alone on the island, and Theseus' ship was far off on the horizon.

Reasons for Theseus' betrayal were debated, even in the ancient world. Homer said Theseus had been commanded by the gods to leave her. Plutarch wrote, according to Paeon the Amathusian, that Theseus had been driven onshore, and left Ariadne behind because she was uncomfortable on the tossing ship, due to her pregnancy. Then, while Theseus was trying to secure the ship, the storm blew him back out to the sea.³

Athenaeus, on the other hand, explains that he was in love with another woman.⁴

Whatever the reason, Theseus returned to Athens, while Ariadne remained on Naxos.

There exist still other tales of Ariadne, and different representations of her character and subsequent history. In one myth, after Theseus left Ariadne, Dionysus found her on Naxos and married her. In another, Ariadne is already married to Dionysus before eloping with Theseus, and after he leaves her, is killed by the bow of Artemis. Another version tells how Ariadne hanged herself after Theseus abandoned her. Beyond this, another tale relates that Ariadne bore Theseus three sons. However before any of these

² B.C. Dietrich, *Oxford Classical Dictionary*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 156. Both names of the island are denoted.

³ Plutarch, *The Rise and Fall of Athens: Nine Greek Lives*, trans. Ian Scott Kilvert (London: Penguin Books, 1960), 43.

⁴ Plutarch, *The Rise and Fall of Athens: Nine Greek Lives*, trans. Kilvert, 44.

versions and their personifications of Ariadne came to exist, Ariadne may have been a Minoan goddess of nature.⁵

In all versions, Theseus leaves Ariadne on Naxos alone and, realizing that she has been left behind, Ariadne runs frantically around the island, crying. Not sure what to do, or what would become of her, Ariadne wails and tears her hair. Both Catullus and Ovid make the distraught Ariadne the focus of their poems. Neither writer prefaces their poem with the story of the lovers' meeting. Rather, assuming that their audience would have been familiar with the tale, and that it provided an unnecessary distraction from the focus on the lovers, both left it out. The emphasis for both poets is the anguish of Ariadne, and especially her bewilderment in not understanding her desertion by her lover.

⁵ Dietrich, *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 156.

Chapter 2: The Poets and Their Backgrounds

Callimachus, a renowned scholar and Alexandrian poet⁶ was one of the chief influences⁷ upon Catullus and his fellow neoteric poets.⁸ Callimachus wrote with elegance and often derision, held epic poetry in disdain, considered the best writing to be short and scholarly, and strongly defended himself against his critics, referring to them as “ill-natured literary dwarfs.”⁹ Callimachus supported the short epic¹⁰, the Hesiodic epic¹¹, and a wider variety in theme and form. He also advocated a new perception of traditional myths, in which gods and heroes were modernized, reducing their previous representations in classical poetry.¹² “Modernization, familiarity, brevity, lightness, variety, rapid transition, episodic curtailment, the startling treatment of detail – all these were part of the new Callimachean manner.”¹³ Perhaps his most lasting influence on Catullus lay in his invention of the epyllion¹⁴, which we see in Catullus’ poem 64, *The Marriage of Peleus and Thetis*, an epyllion or mini-epic that encompasses his version of Ariadne and Theseus.

Apollonius of Rhodes was another important influence for Catullus. Apollonius’ *Argonautica* contains a version of the story of Peleus and Thetis, and of Ariadne and Theseus. In contrast to the ‘reduced’ characters of Callimachus, Apollonius presents

⁶ E.J. Kenney, ed., *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 181.

⁷ Kenney, ed., *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature*, 180.

⁸ The neoterics are discussed below.

⁹ Kenney, ed., *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature*, 181.

¹⁰ A self-contained poem approximately 200 to 500 hexameters.

¹¹ Short self-contained stories in didactic meter.

¹² Brooks Otis, *Ovid As An Epic Poet*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 5.

¹³ Otis, *Ovid As An Epic Poet*, 6.

¹⁴ A smaller epic only a few hundred lines in length composed on mythological themes.

female characters of vitality and emotion. For example, in his *Argonautica*, Apollonius presents another heroine, Medea, who is full of strength, love, hate and sorrow, a character individual in her own right, and not just as a supporting player for Jason: "Such is the Medea of Apollonius. He cannot make her happy; but he does contrive to lift her from the dusty pages of mythology and make her a living woman. And he gives her so much of his heart that he makes us love her too."¹⁵ His Ariadne is another such character, and a woman loved by the gods.¹⁶ Catullus used this strong feminine persona to give strength to his character of Ariadne, whom most other writers treat in a cavalier manner. Catullus wrote his version of Ariadne and Theseus, then, borrowing style and content from these Greek two writers.¹⁷ Ovid, on the other hand, used Catullus as his primary source for his version of the Ariadne and Theseus myth.¹⁸ His elegies were the Augustan conclusion of the neoterics work, in the earlier Republic.¹⁹

Catullus, as a neoteric poet, was a part of the *delicata iuventus*, according to Cicero.²⁰ This group of young poets chose to emulate Hellenistic Greek culture rather than the *mores* and manners of their own Republican Rome. The neoterics' 'revolution' was the offspring of the third century BCE Alexandrian poetic movement, wherein a small group of poets broke away from the accepted classical forms and experimented with new forms of style and genre. This new style turned from the long epic form of Homer to the Callimachean style of brevity and novelty. These young poets were part of a new breed,

¹⁵ *The Voyage of Argo Introduction*, trans. E.V. Rieu (London: Penguin Books, 1959), 18.

¹⁶ Kenney, ed., *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature*, 192.

¹⁷ According to E.V. Rieu, *The Voyage of Argo*, Apollonius was the director of the Alexandrian library, not Callimachus, as stated in *OCD*. The two poets were bitter rivals, and possibly teacher and student.

¹⁸ Kenney, ed., *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature*, 422.

¹⁹ Otis, *Ovid As An Epic Poet*, 4.

²⁰ Hans Peter Syndikus, *Oxford Classical Dictionary*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 156.

not from the old aristocratic families, but primarily from rich families outside Rome.

They were aware of their importance and new metropolitan sophistication, and shared a corresponding dislike for rustic living.²¹ The neoterics' most marked innovation, differing from standard Roman heroic poetry, was to express personal feelings in lyrical form.²² Whereas personal sentiment was uncharacteristic of Hellenistic epigrams, the neoterics choose to write their verses on subjects derived from everyday life.²³

In contrast, Augustan poetry adhered to a style of expression that turned from personal emotions to a science of form. "But it was in Augustan times that Roman poetry reached its summit. There we find formal perfection in the most varied categories, with precise expression, harmony between metrical elements and poetic rhythm, a rich musicality of language, in short, perfect congruence of form and content. The poems of the Augustan age are as a rule concentrated and polished mostly spare in their range, not dashed off with a carefree hand (except by Ovid) but achieved with great intellectual labor."²⁴

Ovid's work, in comparison with other Augustan writers, is often considered frivolous. In contrast to the passion of Catullus and earlier neoterics, Virgil and Horace wrote with an aloofness that offered them a kind of protection during Augustan times. Their discretion and political acquiescence pleased Augustus, which was tantamount to a writer's security in the early Imperial time period. In contrast, Ovid did not conform to Augustan principles as Virgil and Horace did. He was not anti-Augustan, but instead, a throwback to the neoterics of Julius Caesar's time. "Ovid was indeed irreverent towards

²¹ John Boardman, ed., *The Roman World*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 133.

²² Otis, *Ovid As An Epic Poet*, 7. Although we only have Catullus' work to base this on, some evidence exists that Calvus, Cinna and even Varro and Valerius Cato wrote original lyrics.

²³ Boardman, ed., *The Roman World*, 133.

Augustus' state, laws, (and) image. But he was irreverent towards any solemn and sitting target."²⁵

Two poets that are exemplary of the Augustan style are Virgil and Horace. Both poets worked under the patronage of Augustus, via Maecenas. Through Augustus and Maecenas, Virgil and Horace were able to live very comfortably, either in town or in the country.²⁶ In turn, the two poets gave back to Augustus the styles of poetry he preferred. Virgil became fascinated with the rural, simplistic life (in direct contrast to the neoterics disdain of it), and the life of the small, independent farmer. He used his high perception of the small farmer as an example and metaphor for morality.²⁷ Even as his portrayal of the rustic life was old-fashioned, romantic and unrealistic, it provided Roman poetry with beauty that encouraged the state's morality delineation, by use of imagery.

Additionally, Augustus desperately wanted his own epic. He desired to have "his heroic deeds enshrined in an epic – his piece of immortality."²⁸ Both Virgil and Horace were pushed to present such a work. Horace, in his *Odes* 3.5, compared Augustus to the Roman hero, Regulus. By use of association, substitution and juxtaposition, he was able to create a new Regulus in Augustus. Then, under the direct patronage of Augustus, Horace wrote a fourth book of the *Odes*, which contained poems elaborate in their praise of the Emperor and his family.²⁹ Yet, it was not until the *Aeneid* that Augustus finally got his great epic. Virgil drew from the *Iliad*, and the *Odyssey*, Attic tragedy, Hellenistic

²⁴ Karl Christ, *The Romans*. (Berkeley: University of California Press), 138.

²⁵ Boardman, ed., *The Roman World*, 238.

²⁶ Boardman, ed., *The Roman World*, 221.

²⁷ Boardman, ed., *The Roman World*, 223.

poetry, Latin predecessors, Greek philosophy, and Roman history and values. "Roman history must be presented as a crescendo leading up to Augustus, a thousand years in the future."³⁰ Maintaining his jocular view on life, Ovid's presentations of Augustus were more often mocking. "Jupiter compared to Augustus in one context is, within a few hundred lines, chasing a girl in another."³¹

²⁸ Boardman, ed., *The Roman World*, 221.

²⁹ Boardman, ed., *The Roman World*, 228.

³⁰ Boardman, ed., *The Roman World*, 243.

³¹ Boardman, ed., *The Roman World*, 243.

Chapter 3: Social & Political Context

The popularity of this myth, along with many other Greek stories, found its way to Rome. The vitality and variety of ancient Rome is a fascinating study. Outstanding characteristics of Rome include pride in heritage (even if adopted), determination, confidence and an uncanny ability to reinvent itself, as necessary. The time of Catullus and Ovid, between the late Republic and early Empire, represents such a time of remodeling. During this time, from the later years of Julius Caesar through the reign of Augustus, Rome underwent various political, economic, and religious changes, but the changes in social order were what affected the Roman poets most.

Catullus lived under the rule of Julius Caesar, in the late Republic, as a son of a prominent family. His father, Valerius, acted as host to Caesar in Verona while Caesar was proconsul (the governor of a dependent territory) of Cisalpine Gaul. Catullus met Caesar before he, Catullus, moved to Rome, while still in his early twenties. Partly due to the security of Catullus' inherited wealth and prestige, and partly because of his father's friendship with Caesar, Catullus felt free to mock Caesar several times in his writing, along with other high Roman officials. His mockery held no subtlety; rather, it was libelous and often obscene.³² The other factor that allowed him this freedom was the social climate of Rome itself, during Caesar's rule. Romans, traditionally, highly valued their freedom of speech, and the political lampoon was an accepted form of satire. Caesar himself was a writer, and though he also understood the power of words, he also understood the importance of the Roman traditions.

Julius Caesar was an able ruler, whose strength of character carried him through many difficulties. Whether wielding a weapon, a pen, or his wit, Caesar was regularly victorious.³³ Taking the office of consul in 59 BCE, Caesar immediately showed himself to be a man of strong will and a ruler of strong consequences. However, Caesar also knew when to turn his attention away from certain problems. Politically, he knew when to turn a blind eye to the troubles of others, and when to join the attack. His attitude towards writers is similar, in that it varies from the beginning of his rule to the end. For example, Catullus' attacks on him were blatantly disrespectful and their purpose was to make a fool of him. In c. 29, a poem in iambic trimeter, Catullus viciously attacks Caesar's chief engineer, Mamurra. (Mamurra's desire to spend money lavishly was renowned and only equaled by his vanity.³⁴) Catullus spears Mamurra with his insults, as well as Caesar and his political ally, Pompey, since they supported Mamurra.

*Who can bear to look, who endure the sight?
Except of course a shameless, greedy crook:
All the gravy the long-haired Gauls had,
All the far-flung Britons had, Mamurra's got.
You homo Romulus, will you look on and stand for this? ...³⁵*

Catullus went after Mamurra and Caesar again in c. 57. In this hendecasyllabic piece, Catullus gives free rein to his viciousness.

*Between two dirty queers a sweet understanding prevails,
Mamurra the queen and Caesar his queen...*

*...Nothing to choose between them in their appetite for others' wives,
joined in friendly rivalry in the pursuit of maidens, too.³⁶*

³² Daniel H. Garrison, H. *The Student's Catullus*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), Ix.

³³ M. Cary, H.H. Scullard, *A History of Rome*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1975), 281.

³⁴ Tenney Frank, *Catullus and Horace Two Poets in Their Environment*. (New York: Russell & Russell, Inc, 1965), 87.

³⁵ Kenneth Quinn, *Catullus, An Interpretation*. (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1973), 275.

³⁶ Quinn, *Catullus, An Interpretation*, 42-44.

Caesar had ignored much of Catullus' taunting, but c. 57 pushed him too far and he demanded a meeting with Catullus.³⁷ At the meeting, Caesar forgave Catullus once the poet explained his feelings regarding Mamurra. According to Cicero, Caesar's 'forgiveness' was normally politically motivated and usually advantageous to Caesar himself.³⁸ As Caesar grew older, however, his manner became more imperious and pettier. Although he scolded Catullus for his acerbic attacks and then invited him to dinner, he harshly punished the mime-writer D. Laberius for similar mockery by forcing him to perform publicly one of his own parts (apparently a serious insult to a person from the *eques* class).³⁹ Because of the meeting between Caesar and Catullus, the poet did not publish c. 57. After his death the following year, though, his collected works were published posthumously, despite Caesar's attempts to prevent the slanderous poem from being widely read.

Caesar's steady departure from the conventions of the earlier Republic towards a monarchy revealed itself in these progressively autocratic attitudes, which later would have the greatest import for Ovid. The freedom of speech valued by Romans became intertwined with the Republic's dying breath and slipped into political disregard. After Caesar's death, and the ascension of Octavian, the future Augustus, the noose tightened around the neck of *libertas*, in both the literary and political worlds. By 30 BCE, Octavian was sole ruler of Rome. Augustus sought and succeeded to return peace and

³⁷ Catullus wrote one other poem to Caesar, a short elegiac statement declaring his utter lack of interest in the ruler's opinions (c. 93).

³⁸ Frank, *Catullus and Horace Two Poets in Their Environment*, 89.

³⁹ Cary and Scullard, *A History of Rome*, 280.

prosperity to the state. He endorsed the censorship of Caesar's rule, and increased it with new reforms. Peace and prosperity were bought for Romans at the expense of personal liberty and freedom of speech. The vulgarity and free rein of Republican poetry was discouraged under Augustus. "The young man who, as Antony put it, owed everything to his name, in a revolutionary situation entered on Caesar's heritage. By giving political force to Caesar's will, by the ruthless application of material power, the mobilisation of Caesar's *clientela*, by unscrupulously changing sides but also consistently legalising his position each time, by the systematic broadening of his political and military base in a structure of solid power, he was victorious in Italy and throughout the empire."⁴⁰

With an aristocracy now subservient to their ruler, afraid they might lose what power they still possessed, Augustus put forth a series of moral and social reforms. To encourage matrimony and increase the population, Augustus created the *Lex Iulia de maritandis ordinibus*, which penalized the celibate and childless. Then Augustus made adultery a crime, by the *Lex de adulteriis*. While Augustus was endeavoring to create a higher moral Roman society, albeit an artificial one, created solely by legislation, Ovid's erotic verses brought him no favor with the Princeps. Augustus was basically synonymous with the state. His patronage meant assertion over writers' works that supported the government's policies, and polished its image. Among Rome's leisured, upper classes, however, Ovid's writing was very popular, and this clearly revealed to Augustus that his aristocracy, despite his legislative attempts to enforce an artificial morality, still enjoyed their immoral habits. Augustus, in fact, attempted to impel his own ruling family to set the example, a plan that disastrously backfired when, in 2 BCE,

⁴⁰ Christ, *The Romans*, 49.

Augustus exiled his own daughter, Julia, to the island of Pandateria, for political intrigue and immorality.⁴¹ In the following year, Ovid produced his *Ars Amatoria*, a tongue-in-cheek instruction guide for acquiring lovers. By continuing to write outside the acceptable guidelines demanded by Augustus, and adhered to by the other Augustan poets, Ovid steadily progressed into growing disfavor with Augustus. Eventually, in 8 CE, Ovid was exiled to Tomi on the Black Sea. The charges brought against Ovid were vague. The common explanation has been that he was witness to or had overheard some intrigue concerning Julia. A possible scandal of the ruler's family, along with the *Ars Amatoria*, was all Augustus required to send Ovid into permanent exile.

⁴¹ Cary and Scullard, *A History of Rome*, 344.

Chapter 4: The Context of the Poems

The context of the poems also provides insight to the intent of the writers. Catullus' c. 64 tells the wedding story of Peleus, King of Thessaly and the goddess Thetis, future parents of Achilles. The story of Ariadne and Theseus is placed in the middle of the betrothed couple's wedding hymn, creating a contrast between the fate of the two couples. The marriage of Peleus and Thetis is a happy event, which foretells the birth of a great hero.⁴² The tragic affair of Ariadne and Theseus interrupts a presentation of intricate beauty, and its abruptness shocks the reader. Although the story of Peleus and Thetis is considered a great love story, the digression into the story of Ariadne and Theseus, and the foreshadowing by the Fates of the blood-thirsty Achilles, thus creates a dichotomy within c. 64. Catullus' purpose appears to be that ideal love is a myth, in and of itself. The poem begins with the meeting of Peleus and Thetis, and progresses to the wedding party, complete with a happy couple, joyful guests and gracious gods. Once the poem returns to the story of Peleus and Thetis, the mortal guests are leaving, the gods are presenting their gifts, and the Fates create yet another story within a story. The Fates' ominous digression upon Achilles demonstrates that the perfection of the love of Peleus and Thetis will be tarnished by the deaths caused by their son, Achilles. I propose that Catullus wrote c. 64 in order to frame his own anguish of heartbreak. By retelling the stories of two diverse couples, he was able to produce the idyllic union he had dreamed of, and the betrayal he felt, when their love affair ended.

⁴² Albeit, the ultimate outcome is the Trojan War.

In comparison, Ovid's *Heroides*, in which his tale of Ariadne occurs, takes well-known mythological characters, and creates a format into which each heroine is placed, creating a pattern of women defeated by love.⁴³ The other female characters, Phyllis, Briseis, Oenone, Hypsipyle, Sappho, Phaedra, Medea, Dido, and Hermione, all experience separation or abandonment by their lovers.⁴⁴ Ovid's poetic and technical brilliance is shown by his clever approach to these women of tragedy. The letters the heroines "write" relate their sorrow, and yet are not filled with the standard emotion of other literary presentations. Instead, the letters emphasize the absurdities of love, even while staying true to the traditional mythic or literary plot. The weakness each heroine suffers is due to love. The women whine, and voice their complaints, as the focus of the poems, and the victims. Ariadne maintains the pattern found in the other *Heroides*, by bewailing her abandonment in a subtle comic fashion, and being unable to correct her own situation.

⁴³ There are a few exceptions, such as Helen, Penelope and Laodamia.

⁴⁴ Otis, *Ovid As An Epic Poet*, 264.

Chapter 5: Analysis

Catullus' version of Ariadne is a study of pure grief. Ariadne loves and trusts Theseus completely, madly at first sight. She assists Theseus in slaying her half-brother, betrays her family, and leaves her ancestral home for him. Once she realizes that Theseus has left her, she is in a state of total shock, unaware of her dishevelment, only able to stare at his sails, her chest heaving with grief-ridden sobs.

prospicit et magnis curarum* fluctuat undis*+,
non flavo**+ retinens subtilem* vertice mitram*,
non contacta* levi velatum pectus amictu*,
non tereti** strophio* lactentis*+ vincta papillas+,
omnia quae toto** delapsa e corpore passim*
ipsius ante pedes fluctus salis adhudebant*.
sic neque tum mitrae neque tum fluitantis amictus
illa vicem curans toto ex te pectore**, Theseu,
toto animo*, tota pendebat perdita mente*.
ah misera*, adsiduis quam luctibus exsternavit*
spinosas Erycina* serens in pectore curas
illa tempestate*, ferox**⁴⁵*

...(Ariadne) gazes after him, heaving with great waves of grief. No longer does the fragile fillet bind her yellow locks, no more with light veil is her hidden bosom covered, no more with rounded zone the milky breasts are clasped; fallen down from her body everything is scattered here and heaving with great waves of grief. No longer does the fragile fillet bind her yellow locks, no more with light veil is her hidden bosom covered, no more with rounded zone the milky breasts are clasped; fallen down from her body everything is scattered here and there, and the salt waves toy with them in front of her very feet. But neither on fillet nor floating veil, but on you, Theseus, in their stead, was she musing: on you she bent her heart, her thoughts, her love-lorn mind. Ah, woeful one, with sorrows unending distraught, Erycina sows thorny cares deep in your bosom..⁴⁶

⁴⁵ E.T. Merrill, trans. *Carmina* 64. Perseus Database, <<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Perseus%3A1999.02.0003%3Apoem%3D64%3Aline%3D103&submit=change+now>> {December 2001}.

⁴⁶ Leonard Smithers, trans. *Carmina* 64. Perseus Database, <<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Perseus%3A1999.02.0006%3Apoem%3D64%3Aline%3D1&submit=change+now>> {December 2001}.

Catullus writes that Ariadne and Theseus had given each other vows of matrimony, and thus it is not only her lover who betrayed her, but her husband. Through Ariadne's shock comes the rage of heartbreak. She pronounces Theseus a heartless, selfish, ruthless liar who broke both promises and their wedding vows. After acknowledging the actions she committed for him, and expressing the treachery with which he repaid her, Ariadne swears that, whatever short amount of time she may survive alone on the island, she will not die before she has beseeched the gods for a just penalty against Theseus. She prays not that he may find heartbreak, but that with his own cruel selfishness he may bring himself and his family to utter ruin.

quare, facta virum multantes vindice poena
 Eumenides, quibus *anguino redimita capillo**
 frons *expirantis** *praeportat** pectoris iras,
*huc huc adventate**, meas audite querelas,
 quas ego, *vae miserae**, extremis proferre medullis
 cogor inops, *ardens**, amenti *caeca** furore.
 quae quoniam verae nascuntur pectore ab imo,
 vos nolite pati nostrum vanescere luctum,
 sed quali solam Theseus me mente reliquit,
 tali mente, deae, funestet seque suosque.⁴⁷

*Wherefore you requiters of men's deeds with avenging pains, O Eumenides, whose front
 entwreathed with serpent-locks blazons the wrath exhaled from your bosom, come here,
 here, listen to my complaint, which I, sad wretch, am urged to outpour from my
 innermost marrow, helpless, burning, and blind with frenzied fury. And since in truth they
 spring from the very depths of my heart, be unwilling to allow my agony to pass
 unheeded, but with such mind as Theseus forsook me, with like mind, O goddesses, may
 he bring evil on himself and on his kin.*⁴⁸

Ovid's Ariadne is also shocked by Theseus' betrayal, but his heroine, by comparison, is almost comic in her grief. While still half asleep, she discovers Theseus missing from

⁴⁷ Merrill, trans. *Carmina* 64, Perseus Database.

their bed and runs her hands over the entire bed to make sure he is not there. She then throws herself from their bed and rushes hysterically around the island, tearing her hair and beating her chest. Once she reaches the crest of a mountain, she sees Theseus' ship sailing away, in the distance. Ariadne yells to him, and what she cannot enunciate in words, she intersperses with shrieks. She stand on top of the mountain, screeching, tearing her hair, waving her arms, and even attaching a white robe to a pole to get his attention.

'Quo fugis?' exclamo; 'scelerate revertere Theseu!
 Flecte ratem! *numerum non habet illa suum* *!
 Haec ego; quod voci deerat, *plangore replebam* *;
 Verbera cum verbis mixta fuere meis.
 Si non audires, ut saltem cernere posses,
 Iactatae late signa dedere manus;

40

Candidaque inposui longae velamina virgae --

Scilicet oblitos admonitura mei!⁴⁹

*"Whither do you fly? Return, perjured wretch, change your course; the ship has not her complement." Thus I complained: I made up in shrieks what was wanting in articulate sounds, and mingled my words with repeated blows upon my breast. My hands, waved high in the air, made signs, that, if you could not hear, you might at least perceive me. I also held out a white robe upon a long pole, to admonish you of her whom you had left behind.*⁵⁰

After Theseus' ship disappears from the horizon, she wanders aimlessly, and begins to picture the various possible means of her death, whether it be by wolves, lions, or tigers, her fantasies growing progressively wilder and more comic. Although Ariadne wishes she had not left Crete with Theseus, she never curses him; she just accepts a fate of death.

⁴⁸ Smithers, trans. *Carmina 64*, Perseus Database.

⁴⁹ R. Ehwald, trans., *The Epistles of Ovid, Ariadne to Theseus*. Perseus Database, <<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Perseus%3A1999.02.0068%3Atext%3Dep.%3Apoem%3D10%3Aline%3D55&submit=change+now>> {December 2001}.

⁵⁰ *The Epistles of Ovid, Ariadne to Theseus*. Perseus Database, <<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Perseus%3A1999.02.0085&query=head%3D%2310>> {December 2001}.

The difference between the heroines' emotions in the two versions is unmistakable, as displayed by the women and expressed by the poets. Catullus' Ariadne is a woman betrayed by her husband, who in her deepest grief, wishes for divine vengeance. She does not quietly weep, and insipidly wait for death. Instead she begs the gods with her heart's most innermost anguish to hear her prayer. Her actions on behalf of Theseus before his desertion, and her demands for justice portray her as a character of strength and deep emotion. Catullus places his version of this myth within the wedding hymn of Peleus and Thetis, a strange setting to elucidate a story of betrayal. Did Catullus use this tale as a warning to betrothed couples, or simply as an artistic opportunity to write his own epyllion, advertising his allegiance to the Callimachean model and establishing his own poetic style as a neoteric? Or was his motive perhaps more personal, to create an Ariadne who personifies his own feelings of betrayal by Lesbia? If so, the wedding hymn would then have been appropriate, for Catullus claims that Lesbia had agreed to marry him when her husband died. By using this myth in writing his poem, Catullus presented his first epyllion, and simultaneously used it as a vehicle to pour out his personal devastation.

Ovid's version of Ariadne, on the other hand, does not present such depth of emotion. Instead, Ovid takes a well-known myth and manipulates it through his ability to write poetry that moves gracefully and like quicksilver. Ovid does not attempt to touch the heart with this poem, as much as to amuse the mind. The story itself is still tragic, but his presentation of it is light and full of mockery. Ovid's cheeky, almost disrespectful style is appreciated all the more within the perspective of the staid Augustan morality.

“There is a great risk of assessing Ovid too negatively: he is, we say, parodic, irreverent, unserious, unAugustan, amoral, even immoral, merely rhetorical or ingenious. This can, and should be, rephrased. Ovid is funny.”⁵¹ His interpretation of Ariadne and Theseus is not for personal, emotional reasons, but to mock the heroes and tales many Romans accepted and revered.

⁵¹ Boardman, *The Roman World*, 243.

Appendix: The Poems

Gaius Valerius Catullus, Carmina 64:

namque fluentisono* prospectans litore Diae***
Thesea cedentem celeri cum *classe** tuetur
*indomitos**+* in corde gerens Ariadna *furores**+*,
necdum etiam sese quae visit visere credit,
ut pote fallaci quae tunc primum excita somno
desertam in sola miseram se cernat harena.
*immemor** at iuvenis fugiens pellit vada remis,
irrita ventosae linquens promissa procellae+*,
quem procul *ex alga*** maestis Minois ocellis
saxea ut effigies bacchantis *prospicit, eheu,*
*prospicit** et magnis *curarum* fluctuat undis**+*,
non *flavo**+* retinens *subtilem* vertice mitram**,
*non contecta** levi velatum pectus *amictu**,
non *tereti** strophio* lactentis**+* vincta *papillas+*,
omnia quae *toto*** delapsa e corpore *passim**
ipsius ante pedes fluctus salis *adhudebant**.
sic neque tum mitrae neque tum fluitantis amictus
illa vicem curans toto ex te *pectore***, Theseu,
toto *animo**, tota pendebat perdita *mente**.
ah *miseram**, adsiduis quam luctibus *exsternavit**
spinosas *Erycina** serens in pectore curas
illa *tempestate**, *ferox*** quo ex tempore Theseus
egressus curvis e *litoribus** Piraei
attigit *iniusti** regis *Gortynia** tecta.
*nam perhibent*** olim crudeli peste coactam
*Androgeoneae** poenas exsolvere *caedis**
*electos** iuvenes simul et decus *innuptarum**
*Cecropiam** solitam esse dapem dare Minotauro.

quis *angusta** malis cum moenia vexarentur,
ipse suum Theseus pro caris corpus Athenis
proicere optavit potius quam talia Cretam
*funera*** Cecropiae nec funera portarentur.
*atque ita**+* nave levi *nitens** ac *lenibus* auris**
*magnanimum** ad Minoa venit sedesque *superbas**.
hunc simul ac *cupido+* conspexit lumine *virgo*
*regia**, quam *suavis* exspirans** castus *odores**
lectulus in molli complexu matris** alebat,
*quales** Eurotae progignunt flumina myrtos
aurave distinctos educit* verna colores**+*,
non prius ex illo flagrantia declinavit
lumina quam *cuncto** concepit corpore flammam
funditus atque *imis**++* exarsit tota *medullis**+++*.

heu misere exagitans immiti corde furores,
*sancte**+ *puer*+, *curis** hominum qui gaudia misces,
quaeque regis Golgos quaeque Idalium frondosum,
qualibus incensam iactastis mente puellam
fluctibus in flavo saepe *hospite** suspirantem!
quantos illa tulit languenti corde timores,
*quanto** saepe *magis** fulgore *expalluit** auri,

cum *saevum** cupiens contra contendere monstrum
aut mortem appeteret Theseus aut praemia laudis.
non ingrata tamen frustra munuscula *divis*+
promittens *tacito succendit vota labello**.
nam *velut** in summo quatientem *bracchia** *Tauro**
quercum aut conigeram sudanti cortice pinum
indomitus turbo contorquens flamine robur
eruit (illa procul *radicitus** exturbata
prona cadit, † lateque cum eius obvia frangens),
sic domito saevum prostravit corpore Theseus
*nequiquam** *vanis** iactantem cornua ventis.
inde *pedem** sospes *multa cum laude** *reflexit**
errabunda regens tenui *vestigia*** filo,
ne *labyrintheis** e flexibus egredientem
tecti frustraretur *inobservabilis error**.
*sed quid** ego a primo digressus carmine plura
commemorem, ut linquens genitoris filia vultum,
ut *consanguineae** complexum, ut denique matris,
quae misera in gnata *deperdita** laetabatur,
omnibus his Thesei dulcem *praeoptarit** amorem,
aut ut vecta rati *spumosa** ad *litora** Diae
venerit, aut ut eam *devinctam lumina somno**
liquerit immemori discedens pectore *coniunx**?
saepe illam perhibent *ardenti corde** furentem
*clarisonas** imo fudisse ex pectore voces,
ac tum praeruptos tristem conscendere *montes**
unde aciem in *pelagi*+ *vastos*+ protenderet *aestus*+,
tum *tremuli** salis adversas *procurrere** in undas
*mollia** *nudatae** tollentem tegmina surae,
atque haec *extremis***+ maestam dixisse querelis,
*frigidulos** udo *singultus** ore cientem:
“sicine me patriis avectam, perfide, ab *aris**,
perfide, deserto liquisti in litore, Theseu?
sicine discedens *neglecto numine divum**
immernor ah *devota** domum periuria portas?
nullane res potuit crudelis flectere mentis
consilium? *tibi** nulla fuit clementia praesto
immitte ut nostri vellet miserescere pectus?
at non haec quondam *blanda** promissa dedisti

*voce** mihi, non haec *miseræ** sperare iubebas,
 sed *conubia*** laeta, sed optatos hymenaeos:
 quae cuncta aerii discerpunt irrita *venti**.
*nunc** iam nulla viro iuranti femina credat,
 nulla viri speret sermones esse fideles:
 quis dum aliquid cupiens animus *praegestit** apisci,
 nil metuunt iurare, nihil promittere parcunt:
 sed simul ac cupidae mentis satiata libido est,
 dicta nihil meminere, nihil periuria curant.
 certe ego te in medio versantem *turbine* leti**
 eripui et potius *germanum** amittere *crevi**
 quam tibi fallaci *supremo in tempore** deessem:
 pro quo *dilaceranda** feris dabor alitibusque
 praeda neque iniecta tumulabor mortua *terra**.
 quaenam te genuit sola sub rupe leaena,
 quod *mare** conceptum spumantibus exspuit undis.
 quae Syrtis, quae *Scylla rapax**, quae vasta Charybdis,
 talia qui reddis pro *dulci** praemia *vita**?*
 si tibi non *cordi** fuerant conubia nostra,
 saeva quod horrebas *prisci** praecepta *parentis**,
 at tamen in *vestras*+* potuisti ducere sedes
 quae tibi iucundo famularer *serva** labore
 candida *permulcens** liquidis vestigia lymphis
*purpureave** tuum constemens veste cubile.
 sed quid ego ignaris nequiquam conqueror auris
*exsternata** malo, quae nullis sensibus *auctae**
 nec missas audire queunt nec reddere voces?
*ille** autem prope iam *mediis** versatur in undis,
 nec quisquam adparet vacua mortalis in alga.
 sic nimis insultans *extremo tempore** saeva
fors+ etiam nostris invidit questibus auris.
 Iuppiter omnipotens, utinam ne tempore primo
*Gnosia** Cecropiae tetigissent litora puppes,
 indomito nec dira ferens stipendia tauro
 perfidus in Creta *religasset** navita *funem**,
 nec *malus hic*+* celans dulci crudelia forma
 consilia in nostris requiesset sedibus hospes!
 nam quo me referam? *quali** spe perdita nitor?
*Idaeosne** petam montes? ah, gurgite lato
 discernens ponti truculentum ubi dividit aequor?
 an patris auxilium *sperem**, *quemne** ipsa reliqui
 respersum iuvenem *fraterna* caede+* secuta?
 coniugis an fido consoler memet amore,
*quine** fugit lentos incurvans gurgite remos?
 praeterea *nullo** litus, sola insula, tecto,
 nec patet egressus pelagi cingentibus undis:

nulla fugae ratio, *nulla spes**: *omnia muta**,
 omnia sunt deserta, ostentant omnia letum.
 non tamen ante mihi languescent lumina morte,
 nec prius a fesso secedent corpore sensus
 quam iustam a divis exposcam prodita multam
 caelestumque fidem postrema comprecet hora.
 quare, facta virum multantes vindice poena
 Eumenides, quibus *anguino redimita capillo**
 frons *exspirantis* praeportat** pectoris iras,
*huc huc adventate**, meas audite querelas,
 quas ego, *vae miserae**, extremis proferre medullis
 cogor inops, *ardens**, amenti *caeca** furore.
 quae quoniam verae nascuntur pectore ab imo,
 vos nolite pati nostrum vanescere luctum,
 sed quali solam Theseus me mente reliquit,
 tali mente, deae, funestet seque suosque.⁵²

...For looking forth from Dia's beach, resounding with crashing of breakers, Ariadne watches Theseus moving from sight with his swift fleet, her heart swelling with raging passion, and she does not yet believe she sees what she sees, as, newly-awakened from her deceptive sleep, she perceives herself, deserted and woeful, on the lonely shore. But the heedless youth, flying away, beats the waves with his oars, leaving his perjured vows to the gusty gales. In the dim distance from amidst the sea-weed, the daughter of Minos with sorrowful eyes, like a stone-carved Bacchante, gazes afar, alas! gazes after him, heaving with great waves of grief. No longer does the fragile fillet bind her yellow locks, no more with light veil is her hidden bosom covered, no more with rounded zone the milky breasts are clasped; fallen down from her body everything is scattered here and there, and the salt waves toy with them in front of her very feet. But neither on fillet nor floating veil, but on you, Theseus, in their stead, was she musing: on you she bent her heart, her thoughts, her love-lorn mind. Ah, woeful one, with sorrows unending distraught, Erycina sows thorny cares deep in your bosom, since that time when Theseus fierce in his vigor set out from the curved bay of Piraeus, and gained the Gortynian roofs of the iniquitous ruler.

⁵² Merrill, trans. *Carmina* 64, Perseus Database.

...But why, turned aside from my first story, should I recount more, how the daughter fleeing her father's face, her sister's embrace, and even her mother's, who despairingly bemoaned her lost daughter, preferred to all these the sweet love of Theseus; or how borne by their boat to the spumy shores of Dia she came; or how her husband with unmemoried breast forsaking her, left her bound in the shadows of sleep? And oft, so it is said, with her heart burning with fury she poured out clarion cries from depths of her bosom, then sadly scaled the rugged mounts, whence she could cast her glance over the vast seething ocean, then ran into the opposing billows of the heaving sea, raising from her bared legs her clinging raiment, and in uttermost plight of woe with tear-stained face and chilly sobs she spoke thus:--

"Is it thus, O perfidious, when dragged from my motherland's shores, is it thus, O false Theseus, that you leave me on this desolate strand? thus do you depart unmindful of slighted godheads, bearing home your perjured vows? Was no thought able to bend the intent of your ruthless mind? had you no clemency there, that your pitiless bowels might show me compassion? But these were not the promises you gave me idly of old, this was not what you bade me hope for, but the blithe bride-bed, hymenaeal happiness: all empty air, blown away by the breezes. Now, now, let no woman give credence to man's oath, let none hope for faithful vows from mankind; for while their eager desire strives for its end, nothing fear they to swear, nothing of promises forbear they: but instantly their lusting thoughts are satiate with lewdness, nothing of speech they remember, nothing of perjuries care. In truth I snatched you from the midst of the whirlpool of death, preferring to suffer the loss of a brother rather than fail your need in the supreme hour, O ingrate. For which I shall be a gift as prey to be rent by wild beasts and the carrion-fowl, nor dead shall I be placed in the earth, covered with funeral mound. What lioness bore you beneath lonely crag? What sea conceived and spued you from its foamy crest? What Syrtis, what grasping Scylla, what vast Charybdis? O you repayer with such rewards for your sweet life! If it was not your heart's wish to yoke with me, through holding in horror the dread decrees of my stern sire, yet you could have led me to your home, where as your handmaid I might have served you with cheerful service, laving your snowy feet with clear water, or spreading the purple coverlet over your couch. Yet why, distraught with woe, do I vainly lament to the unknowing winds, which unfurnished with sense, can neither hear uttered complaints nor can return them? For now he has sped away into the midst of the seas, nor does any mortal appear along this desolate seaboard. Thus with overweening scorn bitter Fate in my extreme hour even grudges ears to my complaints. All-powerful Jupiter! would that in old time the Cecropian ships had not touched at the Gnossan shores, nor that the false mariner, bearing the direful ransom to the unquelled bull, had bound his ropes to Crete, nor that yonder wretch hiding ruthless designs beneath sweet seemings had reposed as a guest in our halls! For whither may I flee? in what hope, O lost one, take refuge? Shall I climb the Idomenean crags? but the truculent sea stretching far off with its whirlings of waters separates us. Dare I hope for help from my father, whom I deserted to follow a youth besprinkled with my brother's blood? Can I crave comfort from the care of a faithful husband, who is fleeing with yielding oars, encurving amidst whirling waters? If I turn from the beach there is no roof in this tenantless island, no way shows a passage, circled by waves of the sea; no way of flight, no hope; all denotes dumbness, desolation, and death. Nevertheless my eyes shall not be dimmed in death, nor my senses secede from my spent frame, until I have besought from

the gods a just penalty for my betrayal, and implored the faith of the celestials with my last breath. Wherefore you requiters of men's deeds with avenging pains, O Eumenides, whose front enwreathed with serpent-locks blazons the wrath exhaled from your bosom, come here, here, listen to my complaint, which I, sad wretch, am urged to outpour from my innermost marrow, helpless, burning, and blind with frenzied fury. And since in truth they spring from the very depths of my heart, be unwilling to allow my agony to pass unheeded, but with such mind as Theseus forsook me, with like mind, O goddesses, may he bring evil on himself and on his kin."⁵³

⁵³ Smithers, trans. *Carmina* 64, Perseus database.

P. Ovidius Naso, Epistulae 10:

[Illa relicta feris etiamnunc, improbe Theseu,
Vivit: et haec aequa mente tuisse velis:]
Mitius inveni quam te genus omne ferarum *;
Credita non ulli quam tibi peius eram.
Quae + legis, ex illo, Theseu, tibi litore mitto
Unde tuam sine me vela tulere ratem,
In quo me somnusque meus male prodidit et tu +, 5
Per facinus somnis insidiate meis.
Tempus erat, *vitrea* * quo primum *terra* * *pruina* *
Spargitur et tectae fronde queruntur aves.
Incertum *vigilans* * ac somno languida movi
Thesea * *prensuras semisupina manus* * -- 10
Nullus erat! referoque manus iterumque retempto,
Perque torum moveo brachia -- nullus erat!
Excussere metus somnum; conterrita surgo,
Membraque sunt viduo praecipitata toro.
Protinus adductis sonuerunt pectora palmis, 15
Utque erat e somno turbida, rupta coma est.
Luna fuit; specto, siquid nisi litora cernam.
Quod videant oculi, nil nisi litus habent.
Nunc * huc, nunc illuc, et utroque sine ordine, curro;
Alta puellares *tardat* * harena pedes. 20
Interea toto clamavi in litore 'Theseu!':
Reddebant nomen concava saxa tuum,
Et quotiens ego te, totiens locus ipse vocabat.
Ipse locus miserae ferre volebat opem.
Mons fuit -- apparent frutices in vertice rari; 25
Hinc *scopulus* * raucis *pendet* * *adesus* * aquis.
Adscendo -- vires animus dabat -- atque ita late
Aequora prospectu metior alta meo.
Inde ego -- nam ventis quoque sum crudelibus usa --
Vidi + *praecipiti* * carbasa tenta *Noto* * . 30
Ut vidi haut dignam quae me *vidisse* + *putarem* + ,
Frigidior glacie semianimisque fui.
Nec languere diu patitur dolor; excitor illo,
Excitor et summa Thesea voce voco.
'Quo fugis?' exclamo; 'scelerate revertere Theseu! 35
Flecte ratem! *numerum non habet illa suum* * !'
Haec ego; quod voci deerat, *plangore replebam* * ;
Verbera cum verbis mixta fuere meis.
Si non audires, ut saltem cernere posses,
Iactatae late signa dedere manus; 40
Candidaque inposui longae velamina virgae --
Scilicet oblitos admonitura mei!

Iamque oculis ereptus eras. tum denique flevi;
Torpuerant molles ante dolore genae.
Quid potius facerent, quam me mea lumina flerent,
Postquam desieram vela videre tua?
Aut ego diffusis erravi sola capillis,
Qualis ab *Ogygio** concita Baccha deo,
Aut mare prospiciens in saxo frigida sedi,
Quamque lapis sedes, tam lapis ipsa fui.
Saepe torum repeto, qui nos acceperat ambos,
Sed non acceptos exhibiturus erat,
Et tua, quae *possum** pro te, vestigia tango
Strataque quae membris intepuere tuis.

45

50

55

Incumbo, lacrimisque toro manante profusis,
 'Pressimus,' exclamo, 'te duo -- redde duos!
Venimus huc ambo; cur non discedimus ambo?
 Perfide, pars nostri, lectule, maior ubi est?'
Quid faciam? quo sola ferar? vacat insula cultu.

60

Non hominum video, non ego facta boum.
Omne latus terrae cingit mare; navita nusquam,
Nulla per ambiguas puppis itura vias.
Finge dari comitesque mihi ventosque ratemque --
 Quid sequar? accessus *terra** paterna negat.

65

Ut rate felici pacata per aequora labar,
 Temperet ut ventos *Aeolus** -- exul ero!
Non ego te, *Crete centum digesta per urbes**,
 Adspiciam, puero cognita terra Iovi,
Ut *pater et tellus iusto regnata parenti*+

70

Proditum sunt factum, nomina cara, meo.
Cum tibi, ne victor *tecto morerere recurvo**,
 Quae regerent passus, pro duce fila dedi,
Tum mihi dicebas: 'per ego ipsa pericula iuro,
 Te fore, dum nostrum vivet *uterque**, meam.'

75

Vivimus, et non sum, Theseu, tua+ -- si modo vivit
Femina periuri fraude sepulta viri.

Me quoque, qua *fratrem** mactasses, inprobe, clava;
 *Esset**, quam dederas, morte *soluta** fides.
Nunc ego non *tantum*** , quae sum passura, recordor,

80

Et quaecumque potest ulla relicta pati:
*Occurrunt** *animo** *pereundi*** *mille** *figurae*** ,
 Morsque minus poenae quam mora *mortis** habet.
Iam iam venturos aut hac aut suspicor illac,
 Qui lanient avido viscera dente, lupos.

85

Quis scit an et fulvos tellus alat ista leones?
 Forsitan et saevas tigridas insula habet.
Et freta *dicuntur*** *magnas expellere** *phocas**!
 Quis vetat et gladios per latus ire meum?
Tantum ne religer dura captiva catena,

90

Neve traham serva grandia pensa manu,
Cui pater est Minos, cui mater *filia Phoebi** ,
 *Quodque** magis memini, quae tibi pacta fui!
Si mare, si terras porrectaque litora vidi,
 Multa mihi terrae, multa minantur aquae.

95

Caelum *restabat** -- *timeo** *simulacra** deorum!
 Destitutor rabidis *praeda*+ *cibusque*+ *feris*+;
Sive colunt habitantque viri, diffidimus illis --
 Externos *didici** *laesa** *timere** *viros** .
*Viveret** *Androgeos** utinam! nec facta luisses

100

In *pinia funeribus** , *Cecropi** *terra** , tuis;
Nec tua mactasset *nodoso** stipite, Theseu,
 Ardua parte virum dextera, parte bovem;
Nec tibi, quae reditus monstrarent, fila dedissem+ ,
 Fila per adductas saepe recepta manus⁵⁴

*BEASTS of the most savage nature have proved more mild and gentle to me, than you;
nor could I have been intrusted to more faithless hands. The epistle which you now read,*

⁵⁴ Ehwald, trans., *The Epistles of Ovid, Ariadne to Theseus*, Perseus Database.

Theseus, is sent to you from that shore, whence your ship, leaving me behind, was borne by the spreading sails; where soft sleep, and you also, who barbarously watched the opportunity of my slumbers, fatally betrayed me. It was the season when the earth begins to be covered with shining frost, and the birds, lurking among the leaves, complain of the decaying year; when, half awake, and still in slumber languidly reclining, I stretched my arms to grasp my *Theseus*. No *Theseus* was there: I suddenly pulled back my hands, and then tried once more to find him. I wandered with my arms over all the bed: still no *Theseus* was there. Fear instantly shook off sleep: I started up in a consternation, and headlong threw my limbs from the deserted bed. Forthwith my breast resounded with the repeated strokes of my hands; and I tore my hair, as yet disheveled from sleep. The moon shone: I looked round if I could discern any thing besides the shore. My eager eyes found nought to look at but the shore. I ran sometimes here, sometimes there, and with wild disorder on either side: the deep yielding sands impeted my tender feet. Mean-while the hollow rocks over all the shore resounded the name of *Theseus* to my incessant cries. As often as I named you, the place re-echoed the sound: the very place seemed willing to alleviate my wretched lot. Near the spot was a mountain, whose top was thinly covered with tufted shrubs; and where a steep rock, undermined by the beating waves, impended. I mounted the ascent: my passion gave me strength; and thence with wide prospect I surveyed the mighty deep. Hence (for the winds also were cruelly unkind) I could observe your sails full-stretched by stiff southern gales. I either saw, or, when I thought I saw, remained cold as ice, and half-dead with concern. Nor did grief long permit this indolent respite: I was roused by that sensation; I was roused, and in a loud complaining strain called upon *Theseus*: "Whither do you fly? Return, perjured wretch, change your course; the ship has not her complement." Thus I complained: I made up in shrieks what was wanting in articulate sounds, and mingled my words with repeated blows upon my breast. My hands, waved high in the air, made signs, that, if you could not hear, you might at least perceive me. I also held out a white robe upon a long pole, to admonish you of her whom you had left behind. But, alas! I soon lost sight of you; it was then I began to weep; my tender cheeks had hitherto been stiffened with grief. What could my eyes do better, after ceasing to behold your sails, than help me to bemoan my forlorn state? Sometimes I wandered solitary, with my hair disheveled, like the raving priestesses inspired by the Theban God. Sometimes, fixing my eyes upon the sea, I silently seated myself upon some pointed rock, cold and senseless as the stone whereon I sat. Often I repair to the bed which once sheltered us both: Alas! it will never more exhibit the once happy lovers. I kiss the print left by your dear body, and love to repose myself upon the spot which your dear joints have warmed.

[55] I throw myself down; and watering the couch with profuse tears, Here, (I cry,) we pressed thee together: bring us together again. Hither we both came; why not both also depart? Perfidious bed, what is become of my dearer half? What shall I do? Whither, thus desolate and forsaken, shall I fly? The island lies uncultivated, and affords no prints either of men or cattle. The sea encompasses me. No mariner appears, no ship to bear me through the ambiguous tract. And suppose a ship, companions, and winds were in my power, what could I do? my native country denies access. Even if in a prosperous ship I should traverse the quiet seas, *Æolus* restraining the murmuring winds, still I should remain an exile. I shall never more behold you, O *Crete*, planned out into a hundred cities, ----- the isle where infant *Jupiter* was nursed. I have basely betrayed my father,

and his kingdom ruled by just laws, ---- names that must be ever dear to me. For you have I betrayed them, when, anxious lest the victor should be bewildered in the labyrinth, I gave you a clue to guide your uncertain steps: when you deceived me by false protestations, and swore by the dangers from which you had escaped, that, while life remained, we should be inseparably one. We live; and yet, Theseus, I am no longer thine; if indeed an unhappy woman, oppressed by the treachery of a perjured man, can be said to live. If you, barbarous man, had murdered me with the club with which you slew my brother, my death would have absolved you from your vow. Now I not only figure to myself those ills which I shall suffer, but every mishap that can befall one in my forlorn condition. A thousand shapes of death wander before my eyes. Death itself appears less terrible, than the lingering life that threatens me. Sometimes I fancy that ravenous wolves may rush upon me unseen, and tear my bowels with their bloody teeth. Who knows but the island may nourish savage lions? perhaps too it is infested with fierce tigers: the shores are said to be fertile in sea-calves. How am I screened from the stroke of a piercing sword? But most I dread to be led a captive in cruel chains, and to prosecute the toilsome task with servile hands; ----- I, who boast of Minos for my father, who was born of the daughter of Phœbus; and, (what is still more to me) who was solemnly engaged to you. If I turn my eyes toward the sea, the earth, or the winding shore, both earth and waves threaten me with a thousand dangers. Heaven only remains, and yet even here I fear the forms of the Gods. I am left a prey, and food for savage beasts. If men inhabit or cultivate these fields, I am apt to mistrust even them. already a sufferer, I have learned to be slow in giving credit to strangers. Oh that Androgeos had still lived, nor the land of Cecrops been condemned to expiate that wicked deed by its funerals! Oh that thy strong arm, Theseus, had never killed my monstrous brother, half ox, half man, with a knotted club, and that \ had never given you the thread to guide your returning steps, the thread often grasped by your alternate bands!⁵⁵

⁵⁵ *The Epistles of Ovid*, Perseus Database.

Bibliography

- Boardman, John. *The Roman World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.
- Cary, M. and H.H. Scullard. *A History of Rome*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1975.
- Christ, Karl. *The Romans*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Dietrich, B.C. *Oxford Classical Dictionary*. Edited by Simon Hornblower. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- Ehwald, R. trans., *The Epistles of Ovid, Ariadne to Theseus*. Perseus Database, <<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Perseus%3A1999.02.0068%3Atext%3Dep.%3Apoem%3D10%3Aline%3D55&submit=change+now>> {December 2001}.
- Frank, Tenney. *Catullus and Horace Two Poets in Their Environment*. New York: Russell & Russell, Inc., 1965.
- Garrison, Daniel H. *The Student's Catullus*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995.
- Havelock, E.A. *The Lyric Genius of Catullus*. New York: Russell & Russell, Inc., 1967.
- Hine, Daryl. *Ovid's Heroides*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991.
- Jacobson, Howard. *Ovid's Heroides*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974.
- Jestin, Charbra Adams and Phyllis B. Katz. *Ovid Amores Metamorphoses Selections*. Wauconda: Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, Inc., 2001
- Kenney, E.J. ed., *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.
- Kilvert, Ian Scott, trans., *Plutarch, The Rise and Fall of Athens: Nine Greek Lives*. London: Penguin Books, 1960.
- Merrill, E.T. trans., *Carmina 64*. Perseus Database, <<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Perseus%3A1999.02.0003%3Apoem%3D64%3Aline%3D103&submit=change+now>> {December 2001}.
- Otis, Brooks. *Ovid As An Epic Poet*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970.

- Quinn, Kenneth, ed. *Approaches to Catullus*. Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons Limited, 1972.
- Quinn, Kenneth. *Catullus An Interpretation*. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1973.
- Quinn, Kenneth. *The Catullan Revolution*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1959.
- Rieu, E.V. trans., *The Voyage of Argo*. London: Penguin Books, 1959.
- Ross, David O. Jr. *Style and Tradition in Catullus*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969.
- Smithers, Leonard C. trans., *Carmina 64*. Perseus Database,
<<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Perseus%3A1999.02.0006%3Apoem%3D64%3Aline%3D1&submit=change+now>> {December 2001}.
- Syme, Ronald. *History in Ovid*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978.
- Syndikus, Hans Peter, *Oxford Classical Dictionary*. Edited by Simon Hornblower. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- Verducci, Florence. *Ovid's Toyshop of the Heart: Epistulae Heroidum*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985.

