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CRETAN WOMEN

PASIPHAE, ARIADNE, AND PHAEDRA
IN LATIN POETRY



Rebecca Armstrong

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in Latin Poetry*

REBECCA ARMSTRONG

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Preface

I HAVE been living with various manifestations of this book for about seven years now. Its first stirrings came in work I produced during my Master's year (1997–8), but the bulk of it is based on my 2001 doctoral thesis. Along the way, I have accrued many debts of gratitude to a great many people and institutions.

My first and greatest thanks are owed to my doctoral supervisors, Stephen Heyworth and Oliver Lyne, whose help, patience, and abundant learning have been invaluable to me, both during the production of the thesis and afterwards. Their contributions are too numerous to mention; suffice it to say that their influence pervades the whole work, both in the larger structures and ideas, and in the details.

Only a couple of months after I delivered the finished manuscript to Oxford University Press, Oliver died very unexpectedly while at his house in Italy for the Easter vacation. I will always miss him—his sharp intelligence, his generosity, his humour—and will always consider myself fortunate in the extreme to have been his student, colleague, and friend for so many years.

I am very grateful to my D.Phil. examiners, Stephen Harrison and Maria Wyke, for their constructive criticism and suggestions for other avenues to pursue. Stephen has continued to be generous in sharing ideas and offering support ever since. Thanks also go to Edith Hall, for her much valued assistance with my Masters dissertation many years ago, and for her ongoing interest in my progress. Again, I am grateful to others who have helped with various parts of the book over the years: Richard Buxton, Denis Feeney, Rolando Ferri, (the late) Don Fowler, and Matthew Leigh.

Llewelyn Morgan, as my academic adviser appointed by the Press, has offered many useful suggestions and plenty of encouragement (and has nobly suffered the slings and arrows of being asked for endless letters of reference during the process of applying for jobs which accompanied the revision of this book). I would also like to

thank Dorothy McCarthy, Hilary O'Shea, and Enid Barker for their invaluable input.

Jasper Griffin, Michael Comber, and Kinch Hoekstra also played an indirect, but important, role in shaping this book. As my undergraduate tutors first and, later, my colleagues and friends, their advice, assistance, and inspiration has been a formative part of my academic development. Michael sadly died while I was in the later stages of revising the book, so he never had the chance to see the finished version. I'm not so sure that he would have liked it—there's far too much Ovid here for his tastes—but I would have enjoyed hearing his verdict anyway, expressed in his inimitable style.

The Arts and Humanities Research Board gave me a grant for the duration of my graduate studies (1997–2001), for which I am duly grateful. Thanks also to the Craven Committee (at Oxford University), who gave me a grant in 1999 to spend five months in Italy thinking and reading about Cretan women. (And thanks to the library of the Scuola Normale in Pisa, where I spent almost every day of those months.) The bulk of the transformation from thesis to book was achieved during my second year as Dyson Junior Research Fellow in Classical Culture at Balliol College Oxford. I would like to thank Balliol most warmly both for that much-valued research time, and for all the help and support offered in its previous incarnation as my undergraduate and graduate *alma mater*.

Finally, thanks to my friends and family for putting up with me and listening to my endless ramblings about bestiality and other such joys. Here I might single out a few: Rebecca Hughes and Matthew Robinson, who, as fellow Classicists, have offered both cups of tea and insights into Latin poetry; Grace Koh, who was my housemate for much of the time I was writing my thesis, and so bore the brunt of the inevitable printer failures and crises of confidence; my mother, Judith, who has always encouraged me to do what interests me; and, especially, Paul Tracey, who is much, much nicer than any of the men I've written about in this book.

R.A

St Hilda's College Oxford
January 2005

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Abbreviations

AJA	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>
AJP	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
ANRW	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i>
BICS	<i>Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies</i>
CJ	<i>Classical Journal</i>
CLE	<i>Carmina Latina Epigraphica</i>
CP	<i>Classical Philology</i>
CQ	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
CR	<i>Classical Review</i>
FGrH	F. Jacoby, <i>Fragmente der griechischen Historiker</i>
G&R	<i>Greece and Rome</i>
GRBS	<i>Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies</i>
HSCP	<i>Harvard Studies in Classical Philology</i>
ICS	<i>Illinois Classical Studies</i>
JHS	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
JRS	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
LCM	<i>Liverpool Classical Monthly</i>
LIMC	<i>Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae</i>
MD	<i>Materiali e Discussioni</i>
OLD	<i>Oxford Latin Dictionary</i>
PCG	R. Kassel and C. Austin, <i>Poetae Comici Graeci</i> , vol. 1 (1983), 2 (1991)
PCPS	<i>Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society</i>
PMG	D. L. Page, <i>Poetae Melici Graeci</i> (1962)
QUCC	<i>Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica</i>
RE	A. Pauly, G. Wissowa, and W. Kroll, <i>Real-Encyclopädie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft</i>
REA	<i>Revue des Études Anciennes</i>
RhM	<i>Rheinisches Museum für Philologie</i>
SH	H. Lloyd-Jones and P. Parsons (eds.), <i>Supplementum Hellenisticum</i> (1983)
SIG	W. Dittenberger, <i>Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum</i> , 3rd edn. (1915–24)

SLG	D. L. Page, <i>Supplementum Lyricis Graecis</i> (1974)
SO	<i>Symbolae Osloenses</i>
TAPA	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i>
TLL	<i>Thesaurus Linguae Latinae</i>
WS	<i>Weiner Studien</i>
YCS	<i>Yale Classical Studies</i>
ZPE	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>

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Introduction

THE island of Crete occupies a fascinating position in the ancient world; at once central and marginal, it forms the southern border of Greece, but is as close to mysterious Egypt as to the mainland of the Peloponnese.¹ A land of unexpected twists and contradictions, Crete claims to be not only the cradle of Zeus, but also his tomb.² This country, renowned for the establishment of one of the earliest legal systems, is also notorious for the bizarre and transgressive acts of some of its inhabitants.

The majority of Cretan myths cluster around the family of the great king Minos, son of Zeus and Europa.³ A complicated figure, he

¹ The connection between Crete and Egypt was made repeatedly in the ancient world: e.g. Odysseus' false story about being a Cretan involves a spell in Egypt (*Odyssey* 14.243–86). Again, Aristotle (*Politics* 1329^b) tells us that the 'caste system' still prevalent in the Crete and Egypt of his own times was established by Minos in Crete and by Sesostris in Egypt: see further Willetts (1965), 47–8. Pliny (*Historia Naturalis* 36.85–6) asserts that the famous Cretan Labyrinth is modelled on the great Egyptian maze at Heracleopolis: see Doob (1990), 17–25; more widely, Santarcangeli (1967), ch. 4 and 5. For continuing Egyptian influence in archaic Crete, cf. Watrous (1998).

² e.g. Callimachus, *Hymn to Zeus* 8–9; Ennius *apud* Lactantius (*Divinae Institutiones* 1.11.46); Diodorus Siculus 3.61.2 says that this is the tomb of an ancient Cretan king called Zeus, not that of Zeus the god. For Crete simply as the birthplace of Zeus, e.g. Hesiod, *Theogony* 468–84; Agathocles fr. 2; Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 1.1.6. For an interpretation of the story of Zeus' tomb that presents the Cretans as proto-Euherists, cf. Spyridakis (1992), 1–7.

³ Various interpreters, at least from Sir Arthur Evans on, have used the Cretan myths as a starting point from which to piece together the history and cult practice of bronze-age Crete. Leonard Cottrell's (1953) popular summary, *The Bull of Minos*, communicates some of the excitement engendered by the archaeological discoveries on Crete which not only confirmed the fact of a civilization which long pre-dated the

was famed for his domination of the seas,⁴ his establishment of a code of law,⁵ and his eventual position as judge of the dead,⁶ but also for his cruel persecution of his enemies⁷ and his roving eye.⁸ The ambiguous nature of Minos' reputation can be seen in two extracts from the *Odyssey*: 19.178–9 identifies him as the king who was bosom friends with mighty Zeus,⁹ but at *Odyssey* 11.322, he is *ὀλοόφρων* ('baleful'), a stern, even menacing, presence. For all his fame as a bringer of law and order, he has a hard time managing the affairs of his household. Minos' wife, Pasiphae, sleeps with a bull and gives birth to the Minotaur, which has to be housed in the inextricable Labyrinth, built by the exiled craftsman Daedalus. Later, Minos' daughter Ariadne elopes with Theseus after helping him to escape the Labyrinth. Minos is unlucky (in a different way) with his sons, too: Androgeus is murdered at a festival in Athens, and Minos first wages war on the city and her allies, then demands the sacrifice of seven youths and seven maidens to the Minotaur in retaliation. Another son, Glaucus, dies after falling into a pot of honey, but is revived by

'historical' Greece of the First Olympiad (776 BC), but also dangled the tantalizing possibility that the myths of Minos and his family were not figments of folk imagination, but fragments of folk memory.

⁴ A post-Homeric tradition found in Herodotus 3.122.2, Thucydides 1.4, and Aristotle, *Pol.* 1271^b38. Whilst Herodotus is sceptical, Thucydides offers a rational picture of the myth of Minos' domination of the Aegean, which argues that he conquered the Cyclades, and cleared the surrounding seas of pirates in order to protect his revenues. Starr (1955) takes a sceptical view of the historicity of the legend of Minos' thalassocracy.

⁵ e.g. [Plato], *Minos* 318d.

⁶ e.g. Homer, *Od.* 11.568.

⁷ Witness the feeding of young Athenians to the Minotaur. When the Neopythagorean philosopher Apollonius of Tyana visited Crete in the 1st cent. AD, he refused to be a tourist of the Labyrinth and other traces of 'the injustice of Minos', though his companions went to see the sights (Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* 4.34.2).

⁸ Apollodorus says that Minos had affairs with the nymphs Paria and Dexithea (*Bibl.* 3.1.2) and with Procris (*Bibl.* 3.15.1; cf. also Ovid, *Remedia Amoris* 453). His unrequited love for Britomartis is treated by Callimachus (*Hymn to Artemis* 189–203; cf. also Strabo 10.4.12; Pausanias 3.30.3; *Ciris* 301; Antoninus Liberalis 40; Diodorus Siculus 5.76.4).

⁹ These lines are discussed by [Plato], *Minos* 319b–e. Cf. *Il.* 13.449–52, where Idomeneus tells of his descent from Minos, the son of Zeus whom the god made a guardian of Crete. Hesiod (fr. 144 MW) describes Minos as the most kingly of all mortal kings. Horace calls the king, *Iouis arcanis Minos admissus* ('Minos, privy to Jupiter's secrets', *Odes* 1.28.9).

the seer Polyidos, who is threatened and bullied into doing so by Minos. Polyidos is not the only clever man to be terrorized by the king: he attempts to keep the fabled craftsman Daedalus on his island, but Daedalus grows tired of his restrictions on his freedom, and famously flees Crete on wings of wax and feathers. Although Minos, rather puzzlingly, did not go after Theseus and Ariadne,¹⁰ he *does* pursue Daedalus to Sicily, where the craftsman is being sheltered by King Cocalus. And it is in Sicily that Minos reaches an unglamorous and unpleasant end, scalded to death in a bath offered to him by the daughters of his royal host, who does not want to give Daedalus up to him.¹¹

The combination of greatness and depravity to be seen in Minos filters into subsequent generations of the royal family: Minos' son Catreus has difficulties with his daughter Aerope, who is banished from Crete for sleeping with a slave. She then causes havoc in the house of her husband, Atreus, through an affair with his brother Thyestes. Minos' grandson, Idomeneus, is a far more respectable figure, though, who brings an impressive muster of eighty ships (*Iliad* 2.645–52) to fight with the Greeks at Troy,¹² yet even his story reaches a sad conclusion. During a storm on his return to Crete from Troy, Idomeneus vows he will sacrifice to Poseidon the first living creature that meets him when he reaches home. This turns out to be his son, and when he fulfils (or tries to carry out) his promise, a plague strikes the island, driving him into exile in Italy.

¹⁰ The question of why Minos, who is famously unforgiving, chooses not to pursue Theseus when he abducts Ariadne was much debated. Apollonius Rhodius (*Argonautica* 3.1000) wittily 'ends' the debate by having Jason assert that Theseus and Minos came to terms over the issue, whilst Seneca (*Phaedra* 245) refers to the debate again via an allusion to the 'mildness' of Minos in the case of Ariadne.

¹¹ I would like to thank Richard Buxton for allowing me to read some of his unpublished work on Minos. He persuasively describes the great king's contradictory character and myths as revolving around ideas of 'doubleness': transgression vs. law; confining vs. movement; immortality vs. mortality. As will become apparent, my own views about the myths of the Cretan women take a similar turn, accepting paradox and contradiction as integral to any treatment.

¹² Interestingly, according to Herodotus (7.169–71), Minos, now in the Underworld, disapproved of Cretan involvement in the Trojan War, since the Cretans had not rushed to his aid when pursuing Daedalus to Camicus, and had failed to sack the city in their five-year siege of the place after his death. Moreover, when the Cretans returned to their island after the Trojan War, they were afflicted by a plague, which Herodotus argues was brought on them by Minos' wrath.

So, mythical Crete is a place of extremes and contradictions. Justice cohabits with tyranny, and darkness with revelation.

Within the treatments of Cretan myths, even in the earliest literature, we can see some lasting impressions of the island being formed (or confirmed).¹³ The Cretans' prowess in seafaring and archery, along with their reputation as liars, can already be seen in Homer. In the *Iliad*, Idomeneus and his squire Meriones are presented as important and respected members of the Greek forces, and their actions are those of heroes who observe the traditions and conventions of their class and calling (indeed, their prowess is the focus of 13.210–515). Meriones fights with the spear, but also uses a bow and arrows (13.650), and gives Odysseus the present of a bow before he sets out on his night mission at 10.260. His use of the weapon does not attract disapproval, but it is perhaps worth noting that Diomedes, shot in the foot by Paris, characterizes his enemy's use of the bow as cowardly and ineffectual (*Il.* 11.385–90).¹⁴ The potential is there for seeing the Cretan hero's bow as something falling short of the heroic ideal, but nothing is said directly, and the Cretans of the *Iliad* find their honour unimpeached.

As for Cretan lies, while it seems that the reputation of the islanders as false and untrustworthy was promulgated by the fifth-century Athenians in particular,¹⁵ there is an argument for seeing this as a development of a longer standing tradition. The famous phrase *Κρηῆτες ἀεὶ ψεύσται* ('Cretans always lie') was attributed to the late seventh-century Cretan holy man Epimenides, and it is tempting to see humour as well as paradox in this attribution. Going back earlier still, Odysseus' lying stories about his 'past' as a Cretan which he tells on his return to Ithaca (*Od.* 13.256–86; 14.199–359; 19.172–202) gain both piquancy and humour if we assume that the original audience would have been aware of the stereotype of Cretan

¹³ For the place and reputation of Crete in historical times, see Appendix 1.

¹⁴ Arrows are sometimes seen as the weapons of cowards in later literature too: cf. Sophocles, *Ajax* 1120–4; Aristophanes, fr. 411; Plutarch, *Moralia* 234e.

¹⁵ According to [Plato], *Minos* 318d, we have the tragedians to blame for the negative picture of Minos as a cruel tyrant. The picture is not exclusive to the tragedians in this period, however: Bacchylides' Third Dithyramb (17), dating from the early 490s, tells how Theseus upbraided the amorous king for making unwelcome advances on Eriboea (one of the Athenian maidens brought to feed the Minotaur) and astonished Minos by proving that he was indeed the son of Poseidon.

mendacity. A similar argument applies to Demeter's false Cretan story in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (119–44).¹⁶

Again, the Cretans' close connection with the sea, which even gives rise to a proverbial expression *ὁ Κρήτης ἀγνοεῖ τὴν θάλατταν* ('the Cretan does not understand the sea'),¹⁷ can be found from Homer on. Odysseus in his Cretan guise describes various sea voyages, while in the *Homeric Hymn to Pythian Apollo* (388–530), Cretan sailors are pressed into the god's service at Delphi. In the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, part of the goddess's lying story is that she was kidnapped and taken from Crete by pirates.

In these vignettes too, we perceive the contradictory nature of mythical Crete. It is a place that produces fine warriors, but many of those warriors use a weapon, the bow, which has a dubious status in the heroic world. Cretans are great sailors, but can use their skills for piracy as well as for legitimate trade and the transportation of troops. Even their most famous vice, lying, can be viewed in different lights, as evidence of laudable (or at least entertaining) Odyssean cunning as well as a mark of general moral depravity.

It is with these contradictions and paradoxes in mind that I now turn to the subject of this book, the myths of the Cretan women, Pasiphae, Ariadne, and Phaedra.

1. AN OUTLINE OF THE MYTHS

The story¹⁸ begins in the generation before Pasiphae's, in a land five hundred miles away from Crete. Agenor's daughter, Europa, is seen and desired by Zeus as she gathers flowers in a meadow outside Tyre. The god disguises himself as a bull in order to get close to the maiden; deceived by the animal's beauty and gentleness, Europa

¹⁶ Cf. Haft (1983–4); Sherratt (1996). There is even a theory that the myth of the cunning Odysseus is itself a remnant of an older Cretan story: cf. Faure (1980).

¹⁷ This refers to someone who pretends not to know about what they do know. Cf. Alcman, fr. 164 Page; Strabo 10.4.17.

¹⁸ Here I give a condensed account of the most familiar versions of the myths. Variations and discrepancies will be highlighted and discussed in the following sections and during the course of the book.

climbs upon his back, whereupon the bull races off over the sea with her. Arriving in Crete, Zeus satisfies his passion for Europa, and has three sons by her: Minos, Rhadamanthys, and Sarpedon. Minos becomes king of Crete and marries Pasiphae, daughter of the Sun.

Pasiphae, whether through her own or her husband's fault, conceives a savage and overwhelming desire for sex with the most handsome bull in the royal herds. Assisted by the exiled Athenian inventor, Daedalus, she climbs into a wooden cow in order to deceive her beloved bull into thinking her an appropriate mate. The trick works and the leader of the herd mounts the decoy to impregnate the queen. The offspring born of this union, half man, half bull, is incarcerated in the Labyrinth, a maze built by the same Daedalus in a vain attempt to conceal the product of such extraordinary lust from the world.

Here Pasiphae's story ends, perhaps with suicide, and Ariadne's begins, when it occurs to her father Minos to use the Minotaur as a means to avenge the death of his son Androgeus in Athens. He demands from the city a regular sacrifice of seven youths and seven maidens to be fed to the monster to atone for the murder. When the time for the third sacrifice comes, King Aegeus' adopted son Theseus is one of those Athenians to whom the lot falls, and he sets off for Crete with his companions, determined to establish his heroism and to liberate his city from Minos' cruelty. When he arrives at Cnossus, Ariadne falls in love with him, and gives him a sword and a thread to trace his way back out of Daedalus' maze once he has killed the monster. The lovers leave Crete along with the rescued Athenian victims. Although he has benefited from her help, and has probably promised to make her his wife, Theseus takes Ariadne only as far as the island of Dia or Naxos, where, forgetful of his vows, he abandons her as she sleeps. Dionysus finds the forlorn heroine, marries her and sets her crown in the heavens.

Phaedra, following in her sister's footsteps and beyond, later marries Theseus as part of a political settlement made between Crete and Athens to untangle the web of mutual offence after the deaths of Androgeus, the Athenian youths, and the Minotaur. The young queen, however, falls in love with the wild and impossible Hippolytus, son of Theseus by the Amazon Antiope/Hippolyta.

Unable either to tame or to seduce him, and fearing for her reputation, she accuses him of rape, so tricking Theseus into directing against his own son a powerful curse granted to him by his father Poseidon. Phaedra commits suicide and Hippolytus is killed by a great bull which roars in from the sea.

In the next generation, Aerope, daughter of Catreus and niece of Ariadne and Phaedra, continues the tradition of Cretan sin. Dismissed from her father's house for having sex before marriage, she is sent to Nauplius in Euboea to be executed for her misdemeanour. Nauplius does not carry out this instruction, however, and Aerope goes on to marry Atreus, giving birth to Agamemnon and Menelaus. Atreus and his brother Thyestes are rivals for the throne of Mycenae, the claim to which rests on the possession of a golden lamb. Thyestes seduces Aerope and persuades her to hand over the lamb to him. Plotting his revenge for this, and for his brother's adultery with his wife, Atreus feigns a desire for reconciliation with Thyestes and invites him to dinner. There, he serves up Thyestes' own children (in some versions, these children are those born to Thyestes and Aerope), and the sun recoils in horror at the sight, retreating back to the east. Aerope's final fate is unclear, though it seems hard to believe that Atreus would have treated her with lenience.

Thus the women's stories deal in extremes—the passionate, the monstrous, the divine—to create powerful patterns of contrast and similarity, to present characters who at once excite sympathy and impede it.

2. CRETAN WOMEN AND GREEK POETS

The Greek sources for the myths are often fragmentary, and frequently contradictory. The vagaries of history have left us with one complete Attic tragedy devoted to the story of Phaedra, but nothing so substantial for Pasiphae and Ariadne, while Aerope appears in a confusing tangle of different versions. Nevertheless, it is clear both from the references that do survive and from the popularity of the Cretan myths in the visual arts that these were familiar figures to many in the Greek world from very early times.

The first references to Ariadne and Phaedra come in Homer.¹⁹ The dancing floor which Hephaestus carves on Achilles' shield is compared to the one which Daedalus made for Ariadne in Cnossus (*Il.* 18.590–2), while the ghosts of Phaedra and Ariadne are seen by Odysseus in *Odyssey* 11. No gloss is given of Phaedra's myth (nor of Procris', who appears beside her), but there is a brief, and rather puzzling, description of Ariadne's story:

Φαίδρην τε Πρόκριν τε ἶδον καλήν τ' Ἀριάδνην,
 κούρην Μίνως ὀλοόφρονος, ἣν ποτε Θησεὺς
 ἐκ Κρήτης ἐς γουνὸν Ἀθηνάων ἱεράων
 ἦγε μὲν, οὐδ' ἀπόνητο πάρος δέ μιν Ἄρτεμις ἔκτα
 Δίῃ ἐν ἀμφιρύτῃ Διονύσου μαρτυρήσι.

(Homer, *Odyssey* 11.321–5)

I saw Phaedra and Procris and beautiful Ariadne, the daughter of baleful Minos, whom once Theseus took from Crete towards the citadel of holy Athens, but did not have the joy of her; first, Artemis killed her in sea-girt Dia on the witness of Dionysus.

This implies a rather different version of the myth from the usual form where Theseus abandons Ariadne and she goes on to marry Dionysus. The story here seems to be that it is Ariadne who has sinned in some way, perhaps betraying Dionysus to whom she was already married when Theseus arrived in Crete.²⁰ At any rate, by the time of the *Eoiae* and *Aigimios* we find the more familiar story of Theseus' faithlessness emerging, as he abandons Ariadne after falling in love with Aegle and/or Hippe (Hesiod, *fr.* 147, 298 MW).²¹ Her marriage to Dionysus is also confirmed by Hesiod, where, however, the ending seems happier than in Homer, as Ariadne is made immortal (*Theogony* 947–9). After this, the form of her myth stays more

¹⁹ However, going back some six or seven centuries before the Homeric poems, a Linear B text discovered at Cnossus (Gg 702) records an offering of two amphorae of honey to the 'Lady of Labyrinthos' whom some scholars have been tempted to identify as Ariadne. Cf. Webster (1964), 50.

²⁰ Cf. Barrett (1964) on Euripides, *Hippolytus* 339; Webster (1966); Gantz (1993), 114–16. See also Ch. 1, sect. 1.1.

²¹ Note also that in the *Cypria*, one of the stories Nestor tells Menelaus is that of Theseus and Ariadne (Proclus, *Chrestomathia* 1 = *Cypria* 1). Cf. Gantz (1993), 269.

or less constant,²² and it seems likely that she appeared in tragedies, although nothing substantial survives.²³ She is a popular subject in art, pictured with both Theseus and Dionysus.²⁴ Her most colourful appearance in Hellenistic literature comes in Apollonius' *Argonautica*, where her story is used (or, rather, abused) by Jason as a way of persuading Medea to help him.²⁵

After the *Odyssey*, Phaedra does not appear again in extant literature until the dramas of Sophocles and Euripides. It is hard to tell whether she was always Ariadne's sister. Her appearance next to Ariadne in the Homeric *nekuia* would be better evidence of their relationship if the Athenian Procris were not there as well.²⁶ Nevertheless, in later versions, their blood ties are apparent, and even explicitly dwelled upon.²⁷ Euripides' extant *Hippolytus* was his

²² Although it should be noted that another significant blip comes in some Athenian responses, which attempt to lessen Theseus' culpability in the affair, asserting that he was commanded by the goddess Athena to leave his lover on Naxos (so e.g. Pherecydes, *FGrH* 3. 148). It is said that Peisistratus deleted the line from Hesiod's *Aigimios* (fr. 298) which claimed that Theseus left Ariadne for Aegle (Plutarch, *Theseus* 20.1–2). See Walker (1995), 36 for a sceptical view. On the Athenian manipulation as seen in art, cf. Webster (1966).

²³ Ariadne probably appeared in a *Theseus*, but there is a debate over whether to assign the play to Euripides or Sophocles.

²⁴ Cf. Eisner (1977); Bernhard and Daszewski (1986).

²⁵ Apollonius, *Arg.* 3.997–1004; also, 4.430–4. I discuss Apollonius' use of the myth in Ch. 1. Other references to Ariadne from this period can be found in Aratus, *Phaenomena* 71–3; Callimachus, *Aetia* fr. 67.13–14; Theocritus, *Idylls* 2.45–6; Eratosthenes, *Catasterismi* 5. Interestingly, Callimachus' account of Theseus' escape from Crete does not mention Ariadne (*Hymn to Delos* 307–15).

²⁶ Indeed, it has even been argued that these lines are a later Athenian interpolation: cf. Kiessling and Wilamowitz (1884), 149–50. Procris *does* have a Cretan connection: when separated from Cephalus, she spends some time in Crete, and even sleeps with Minos (Apollodorus, *Bibl.* 3.15.10; Palaephatus 2). Again, though, it is not clear whether this version of her myth is as old as the Homeric poems.

²⁷ e.g. Euripides, *Hipp.* 337–41. Later treatments explore the idea further: in Chaucer's *House of Fame*, 405–26, Theseus takes both Ariadne and Phaedra from Crete at the same time, but finds in the end he prefers Phaedra, so leaves Ariadne on the island. Arthur Murphy's *The Rival Sisters* (1786), inspired by the younger Corneille's *Ariane*, also tells of rivalry between Ariadne and Phaedra for the love of Theseus. (Thanks to Edith Hall for this reference.) Later, in her novel *The King Must Die* (1958), Mary Renault plays with the idea of Phaedra as a child being fascinated by Theseus when he comes to Crete. As far as I know, no such story survives from antiquity, though it is worth noting that at Nonnus, *Dionysiaca* 48.536 Ariadne's ghost, finding that Dionysus is now interested in another woman, reflects that Theseus went on to marry Phaedra.

second attempt at the story, and presents Phaedra in a reasonably sympathetic light as a woman driven to extremes by the force of her divinely induced passion for her stepson. It appears that in Euripides' earlier version, Phaedra made far less of an effort to preserve her virtue, and even propositioned Hippolytus in person.²⁸ In contrast to Ariadne, Phaedra seems not to have been a popular subject in art before the fourth century, and such representations as there are broadly conform with the outline of the myth familiar from Euripides.²⁹

The story of Pasiphae lies behind Hesiod, fr. 145 MW, where Minos' wife gives birth to a son with the body of a man and the head of a bull. She resurfaces in Bacchylides' fragmentary *Ode* 26, asking Daedalus to help her out in her passion by building her something—presumably the wooden cow.³⁰ Then Euripides, never one to avoid challenging tales of extraordinary women, puts her centre-stage in his *Cretans*, the action set after her encounter with the bull, when her strange adultery is revealed by the birth of the Minotaur. Although the play is fragmentary, a wonderful section of Pasiphae's speech survives, in which she defends her actions as caused by divine madness and even tries to pin the blame on Minos himself because of his failure to sacrifice to Poseidon. Unsurprisingly, perhaps, Pasiphae was also the subject of comedies, although little is known beyond titles.³¹ In Apollonius' *Argonautica*, although her story is not mentioned, her family tree is, and we are reminded

²⁸ The more shameless Phaedra is referred to in Aristophanes' *Frogs* 1043: ἀλλ' οὐ μὰ Δι' οὐ Φαίδρας ἐποίουν πόρνas οὐδὲ Σθενεβοίας ('but, by god, I did not make Phaedras and Sthenoboeas into prostitutes'). Seneca's Phaedra also seems to have elements in common with both of Euripides' treatments. As for Sophocles' *Phaedra*, little is known, other than that during the course of the action, Theseus returns from Hades, having been assumed dead earlier (fr. 686, 687 R). Seneca makes use of this element of the tradition at *Phae.* 91–8. For an account of the different versions, cf. Barrett (1964), 10–45; Webster (1967), 64–76.

²⁹ Cf. de Bellefonds (1994).

³⁰ The first extant source to describe the wooden cow is Palaephatus 2.

³¹ e.g. Alcaeus' *Pasiphae*. There are testimonies also to two comedies with the title *Cretans* (by Apollonophanes and Nicochares), two entitled *Minos* (by Antiphanes and Alexis) and four *Daedalus* (by Plato, Aristophanes, Philippos, and Euboulos), some or all of which might well have contained some reference to Pasiphae. Aristophanes' *Daedalus* fr. 191 may moot the idea that passion such as Pasiphae's is common to all women. (A sentiment recycled by Ovid in the *Ars Amatoria*.)

that she, like Circe and Aeetes, is a child of the Sun, and the aunt of Medea as well as Ariadne's mother (*Arg.* 3.999, 1076).³² She rarely appears in Greek art, but is a popular figure in both Etruscan and Roman art.³³

Europa is first mentioned in the *Iliad* (14.321–2) as the mother by Zeus of Minos and Rhadamanthys, and it seems that the story of her abduction by the god is at least as old as Hesiod. A scholion to *Iliad* 12.292, which cites its sources as Hesiod and Bacchylides, gives the familiar version of the story, where she is picking flowers in a meadow when lured away by Zeus in the bull's disguise and carried off to Crete.³⁴ In this account, she has three children, Minos, Rhadamanthys, and Sarpedon, and she is handed over to the Cretan king Asterion to marry. Eumelus and Stesichorus both composed poems entitled *Europeia*, which must have dealt with her story, but have not survived.³⁵ In a fragment of Aeschylus' *Cares* (fr. 99 R), Europa, now much older, looks back on her abduction with regret and tells how she misses her grown-up sons.³⁶ Herodotus mentions a demythologized version of her story in the introduction to his *Histories* (1.2), citing hers as one in a string of east-west abductions of women perpetrated by humans, not gods (in this case, the Cretans). In the Hellenistic period, Europa becomes the subject of an 'epyllion' by Moschus, which tells again the story of the young girl picking flowers, seduced by Zeus in bovine form. She is a popular subject in both Greek and Roman art, with Greek images appearing from as early as the seventh century BC. Most pictures show her either on or next to the bull, though a few illustrate her grieving over Sarpedon or in other scenes with a Cretan connection.³⁷

³² The first extant reference to Pasiphae as daughter of the Sun comes in Bacchylides, *Ode* 17.50, where Minos is described as the Sun's son-in-law (although the earliest source where she is explicitly named as such is the 4th-cent. Isocrates, *Helen* 27).

³³ Cf. Papadopoulos (1994).

³⁴ ΣAb *Il.* 12.292 = Hesiod Fr. 140 MW = Bacchylides fr. 10 SM.

³⁵ The Stesichorus poem is attested by the scholion on Euripides, *Phoenissae* 670; a Europa of Simonides is mentioned in *PMG* fr. 562.

³⁶ A gap in the text prevents us from learning what had happened to Minos, but Rhadamanthys has become immortal (perhaps in the Isles of the Blessed: cf. *Od.* 4.564), and Sarpedon is fighting at Troy (where, of course, he will die: cf. *Il.* 16; in Homer, however, Sarpedon is not Europa's son but Laodameia's, daughter of Bellerophon).

³⁷ Cf. Robertson (1988).

Early versions of Aerope's myth are misty,³⁸ but there is evidence that she was known to the epic poets and Hesiod. Scholia on the *Iliad* say that while Homer makes Agamemnon the son of Atreus and Aerope, in Hesiod, he is the son of Aerope and Pleisthenes.³⁹ Since this information is not given to us in the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*, the scholiast presumably gets it from somewhere in the Epic Cycle. Her myth is particularly popular in Greek tragedy, and many variants on her story are to be found. However, although many tragic versions of the Atreus-Thyestes myth are attested, no complete plays survive.⁴⁰ Euripides' *Cressae* probably dealt with the story of Aerope's seduction by Thyestes, and seems to have focused on her wantonness.⁴¹ Certainly, in Sophocles' *Ajax*, Aerope has become a byword for immorality, and Teucer argues that Agamemnon should be ashamed of his mother (1291–7). In Euripides' *Electra*, the Chorus tells the story of the golden lamb, placing a little more emphasis on Thyestes' duplicity than on Aerope's wantonness, but there is no sense either that we should forgive her for allowing herself to be seduced.⁴²

3. ROMAN POETS AND THE APPEAL OF CRETE

The Roman obsession with Greek literature and wholesale adoption of Greek mythology is a well-known (and much discussed) phenomenon. In one sense, the answer to the question, 'Why do Roman poets

³⁸ The Atreus-Thyestes myth seems not to have captured the imagination of the visual artists. Although the men in her life appear in art from time to time, there are no representations of Aerope to be found in *LIMC*.

³⁹ ΣΑ *Il.* 1.7 = Hesiod fr. 194 MW. Tzetzes asserts that in Hesiod, Aeschylus, and others, Pleisthenes is the son of Aerope and father of Agamemnon and Menelaus (*Exegesis in Iliadem*, pp. 68–9 Hermann). For further discussion, cf. Gantz (1993), 552–3.

⁴⁰ The list of tragedies in which Aerope either certainly or possibly appeared is long: Sophocles, *Atreus*, *Thyestes*, *Thyestes in Sicyon* (but there is debate about the number of Thyestes plays by Sophocles); Euripides, *Cressae*, *Thyestes* (?); Agathon, *Aerope*; the younger Karkinos, *Aerope* (?).

⁴¹ Or so says the scholion on Aristophanes' *Frogs* (Σ *Batr.* 849).

⁴² Euripides, *El.* 699–736. On Aerope: κρυφαίαις γὰρ εὖ- | ναῖς πείσας ἄλοχον φίλαν | Ἀτρεῶς, τέρας ἐκκομί- | ζει πρὸς δώματα ('persuading Atreus' own wife by sleeping with her in secret, [Thyestes] took the wondrous lamb to his house', 720–3).

write about Cretan women?’ is simple: because the Greeks did. The Romans inherit a vibrant, complex tradition which they can replay and remould in their own particular way. But this simple answer, of course, gives rise to a great deal of more detailed and complicated considerations of exactly how, where, and why the tradition is preserved or altered. Much of this book is concerned with the exploration of those very details and complexities, the relationship between different Roman treatments and their earlier Greek incarnations.

So the Romans were fascinated by the myths of the Cretan women because they were part of the Greek tradition. Moreover, we should not underestimate the attraction of what are, quite simply, great stories. Nevertheless, it is also possible to detect elements within these myths which appeal to particularly Roman, rather than just literary, sensibilities. The Crete of myth, as an embodiment of so many paradoxes and contradictions, struck a chord with a society which was itself attuned to the tensions and oppositions within its own identity. Like Rome, Crete was a famously pious society, yet it was also notorious for its propagation of the impious ‘lie’ that Zeus had died and was buried on the island.⁴³ Like Crete, Rome was a law-bound, not to say law-obsessed, culture which nevertheless (and inevitably) found the flouting of convention and the defiance of the law fascinating and even strangely appealing. Witness, for example, the ghoulish obsession with the bad emperors’ every breach of constitutional and sexual propriety, or, earlier, with Catiline’s audaciously self-serving coup. Indeed, within Suetonius’ seemingly endless catalogue of Nero’s faults and foibles, we even find a specifically Cretan reference. Not content with simply reading about the antics of Pasiphae and the bull, Nero ordered that they should be replayed

⁴³ This lie is given an intriguing Roman twist at the end of the eighth book of Lucan’s *Bellum Civile*. On Pompey’s grave, the poet comments: *ueniet felicior aetas, | qua sit nulla fides saxum monstrantibus illud; | atque erit Aegyptus populis fortasse nepotum | tam mendax Magni tumulo quam Creta Tonantis* (‘a happier age will come, when those who point out that stone will not be believed; and perhaps Egypt will be deemed by our descendants just as false in her story of Magnus’ tomb as Crete in that of the Thunderer Jupiter’, *Bell. Civ.* 8.869–72). Appropriately enough, however, the poet’s attitude towards Pompey and his tomb is more ambivalent than this passage implies: cf. Mayer (1981), 185. Similarly, Jupiter’s tomb on Crete is both a tourist attraction and rejected as a falsehood; it both confirms and undermines the Cretan reputation for piety and closeness to the gods.

before a live audience: *inter pyrricharum argumenta taurus Pasiphaam ligneo iuuencae simulacro abditam iniit, ut multi spectantium crediderunt* ('amongst the subjects of the pyrrhic dances was a bull who penetrated Pasiphae, hidden in the wooden replica of a cow, as many of those watching believed', Suetonius, *Nero* 12.2).⁴⁴ Again, the short-lived emperor Galba, who in a break with tradition was in no way related to his predecessor Nero, is reputed to have displayed in his house a family tree that illustrated his descent (on the mother's side) from Pasiphae.⁴⁵

The link between Pasiphae and the Roman arena also feeds into another theme of this book, and another Roman obsession: the interaction and definition of the wild and the tame. Pasiphae's wild and bizarre lust is transformed into various forms of art, the epitome of civilized activity. Yet, as the image of Romans baying for blood at the games or taking pleasure in observing bestiality amply illustrates, within civilization lies the thirst for its antithesis. Crete, as I have mentioned, is famous both for having laws and transgressing them; similarly, it is famous both for being advanced and for being backward. In the historical period, opinion is divided, Strabo finding many positive things to say about Cretan civilization, and Polybius often denouncing the island as a refuge of scoundrels and liars.⁴⁶ Cicero reflects the view of Crete as a place of moral rectitude, but characterizes this virtue as somehow out of date, eclipsed by the Roman ability to mix a reasonable degree of austerity with the gentler arts of civilization.⁴⁷ Cicero's rhetoric, of course, consciously oversimplifies the balance of the rough and refined in his own city, whilst also (consciously?) overlooking the contradictions in Crete itself.

⁴⁴ Continuing on the Cretan theme, the fall of Icarus is then re-enacted, and the emperor is spattered with the doomed youth's blood. K. M. Coleman (1990), 63–4 and 68, discusses the use of a similar scene between Pasiphae and the bull staged as part of an execution in the Roman arena (Martial, *De Spectaculis* 5), and draws a parallel with the scene in Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 10.29.34, where a woman is due to be punished by being mounted by an ass (who, naturally, turns out to be Lucius).

⁴⁵ Suetonius, *Galba* 2. Cf. Silius Italicus, *Punica* 8.470. And these two emperors (and the poets) were not the only Romans interested in Pasiphae. Cf. Papadopoulos (1994), 199: 'It would appear that artists, particularly during the Roman Imperial period, were greatly intrigued by the story in its various episodes'.

⁴⁶ For more on this subject, see Appendix 1.

⁴⁷ Cretans may not eat while reclining like the Romans, but they were still hammered into submission by the Roman army: Cicero, *Pro Murena* 74.

Crete is, as I keep emphasizing, an island of contrast and paradox; it is also a place where history has a tendency to repeat itself. As such, it can be used as an image to reflect the circularities and repetitions within Roman history. Much as Rome in the first century BC appeared to be doomed to endless cycles of civil war and self-destruction even as its power extended across the world, so the house of Minos suffered repeatedly from its own vice and misfortune despite the great king's power over the Mediterranean.⁴⁸ In the *Aeneid*, Vergil's hero makes a stop in Crete, mistakenly thinking it to be the place where he and the Trojan survivors are destined to settle, only to be driven on by a plague which bears a striking resemblance to that which afflicted the Cretan Idomeneus on his return from the Trojan War.⁴⁹ Aeneas moves on and does get to Italy, but a sense remains that Rome needs to take care lest it become a new Crete.

Even the sexual intemperance of the Cretan women can be given a renewed, Roman resonance. It seems that the poor reputation of Cretan women implied by Sophocles' Teucer was also accepted at Rome, or at least in Roman literary circles. Lucilius talks of a woman called (or defined as) Cretaea who shows a welcome lack of modesty.⁵⁰ Under Augustus, a famous (or infamous) raft of moral reforms was passed, making adultery and the toleration of adultery a criminal offence.⁵¹ Personal morality became intimately linked with

⁴⁸ It might also be worth noting that, according to Herodotus (7.170–1) at any rate, the Cretans had a habit of getting wiped out. Those who went to Sicily to avenge Minos' death were prevented by storms from returning to their island, and ended up settling in Italy. The island was then repopulated by various others (mostly Greeks), who were, a couple of generations later, almost eradicated by a plague following their return from the Trojan War. After these came the present-day Cretans, who (says Herodotus) opted not to take part in the Greek war against the Persians for fear that they too would fall prey to the Cretan curse.

⁴⁹ Aeneas' detour to Crete, significant in any case, is made more so by its apparent originality: it appears to have been an episode invented by Vergil, not inherited from earlier tradition. Cf. Armstrong (2002), 329.

⁵⁰ Cf. Varro, *De Lingua Latina* 6.69: '*spondere*' est dicere '*spondeo*' a '*sponte*'... itaque Lucilius scribit de Cretaea, cum ad se cubitum uenerit, *sponte ipsam suapte adductam ut tunicam et cetera reiceret* ("spondere" is to say "spondeo—I promise", from "sponte—willingly"... and thus, Lucilius writes about Cretaea, when she came to sleep with him, she was led *sponte*—willingly—and of her own accord to take off her tunic and the rest of her clothes').

⁵¹ There are numerous discussions of these reforms. Some recent responses include Treggiari (1991), 60–80; Edwards (1993), 34–62; Habinek (1997); McGinn (1998).

the preservation and strengthening of Roman society. In the context of Augustan Rome, women such as Pasiphae, Phaedra, and Aerope (and even Ariadne, on some accounts) come to represent not just the wildness of the sexual impulse, or even women's proverbial lustfulness, but an alternative lifestyle which is at once diametrically opposed to the Augustan ideal and, presumably in a slightly less extreme form, all too prevalent at Rome. It is not my contention that the Augustan poets are necessarily launching a clandestine attack on the moral reforms simply by retelling the Cretan myths,⁵² but they are, nevertheless, reflecting a current and controversial obsession.

For the Roman poets, Crete is a place that concentrates the mind on particular preoccupations: paradox, confusion, the vulnerability of law and civilization, the inescapability of vice and self-destruction. The repeated reworking of earlier versions of the stories of Pasiphae, Ariadne, and Phaedra is evidence simultaneously of the more general fascination with literary history and of the particular appeal of Cretan themes. Thus literary histories shade into literary geographies: Crete becomes a location (whether literal or metaphorical) for certain moral dilemmas and certain emotional states, for the monstrous, the mendacious, and particularly for the voicing of feminine passion.⁵³

4. THE STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

To approach the myths of the Cretan women is to enter the Labyrinth with its twists and turns, its variations of darkness and light, the

⁵² Certainly, there is no direct political commentary to be found intertwined with the Roman treatments of the myths. Nevertheless, some versions could be regarded as at least potentially provocative. Ovid's Pasiphae in *Ars Amatoria* 1 is an obvious example (see Ch. 3, sect. 1.1), but one could also make a case for seeing a certain cheekiness in Horace's bull-loving Europa (*Odes* 3.27) placed within a book which claims to teach morals to the youth of Rome (in particular, cf. *Odes* 3.2).

⁵³ Several studies have already established the symbolic importance of various places and their myths within Greek culture. See, for example, Loraux (1986) on Athens and Zeitlin (1986/1990) on Thebes (through Athenian eyes). Crete's place in the Greek and Roman imagination has an analogous force. I am indebted to Richard Buxton for this point.

promise of solution lying alongside the threat of permanent misdirection. It is to travel the same road over and over again, but to see a different view every time. This study focuses on the literature of the late Roman Republic and early Empire, by which time Pasiphae, Ariadne, and Phaedra have become figures familiar from both art and literature, and many have wandered the Labyrinth already. Yet the fascination remains, the challenge is one too tempting to refuse, and the journey is still one well worth making.

In this book I follow the same path several times, entering repeatedly into the maze, but look at the surroundings each time through a slightly different lens. Fragments are drawn together into a picture, then fragmented again to form a new one. All myths are complex, made of interweaving tracks in which different patterns can be discerned, depending on one's perspective; the Cretan myths in particular welcome an indirect, non-linear approach. I am not so much interested in where these stories start and where they finish, as in the ways they travel, how they diverge, converge, and colour other stories too.

In accordance with this aim of examining and re-examining the same myths from different angles, my investigation falls into two halves, thematic and textual, each divided into chapters treating a particular motif or group of texts. The first chapter of the thematic section serves both as an examination of the importance of remembrance in the myths and as an explicit experiment with the theories of allusion and intertextuality which implicitly underlie the entire study. An essential characteristic of Latin poetry is its consciousness of literary history and of the endless possibilities for subtlety in reminiscence of and engagement with earlier works. In this self-aware literary world, the Cretan women, and Ariadne in particular, come to play an important role as indicators of poets' attitudes to the anxiety and the inspiration of influence. By tracing the story of Ariadne from Apollonius to Catullus and Ovid, I attempt to set forth an account of some of the tricks of memory that the poets use. I also show the way in which Ariadne remains an instantly recognizable individual, yet simultaneously becomes a composite figure, made up of layers of her own and others' previous poetic appearances. It is this tension between the necessity of retaining certain stock, essential features of a mythological character and the

poet's desire to leave his own stamp upon the poetic clay that makes the investigation so fascinating. The poet's relationship with his creation is one of a paradoxically limited omnipotence, and the choices he makes in his presentation of a mythological figure can form a powerful statement of his poetic affiliations and aspirations. Accordingly, the critic's task in unravelling the literary memories stored in a character is something more interesting, and more perilous, than a simple cataloguing of sources.

As I have said, complexity of allusion and literary memory is a feature of Latin poetry in general, but in the treatments of Ariadne and her sister Phaedra such elements achieve a greater density because of the emphasis placed on the characters' actual memories within the fictions. For Catullus' Ariadne, a victim of Theseus' lack of memory, it is a firmly held belief that there is a moral duty to remember the good deeds others have done and to be generous in return. The character's condemnation of Theseus as forgetful, *immemor*, and her concern with memory complements and intertwines with the poet's own interest in capturing within his work memories of the earlier texts which have helped to form the character in his poem. Ariadne's insistence on the importance of remembrance is itself recalled by a later character, Vergil's Dido, and one more link in the chain of personal and poetic memory is made. By contrast, Phaedra finds that memory plagues her, as authors from Euripides to Seneca present her as a woman painfully conscious of her mother Pasiphae's sin, and her sister Ariadne's unfortunate love. Her family history is also literary history, and she is caught in a double trap, bound to be Phaedra for reasons of psychology and of poetic convention. These different memories are also shown to have particularly Roman resonance, reflecting the society's obsession with memorialization and the use of the past to shape the present.

The second thematic chapter, 'The Call of the Wild', turns to the important, recurring images of wildness which can be found in the myths. The starting points, naturally, are the two bulls of Europa and Pasiphae. Europa's encounter with Zeus in bovine form is superficially the antithesis of Pasiphae's love for a real bull: she is the object of the god's lust and does not herself desire the animal, yet some versions of her story efface this distinction, and make the bull a focus of erotic infatuation for the young Tyrian woman. The grotesque

nature of Pasiphae's passion for her bull exerts a fascination over the poets, whose reactions and treatments range from the sympathetic to the unashamedly sensational. The transgression of the boundary between human and animal gives rise to (frequently tongue-in-cheek) attempts to blur that division: the bull becomes humanized, Pasiphae bestialized, and their union presented now as bucolic love, now a rather urban affair, now as an illustration of the wild nature of passion common to all living creatures. The wildness does not stop with Pasiphae and the bull, though, but can be traced through their offspring, the half-human, half-bovine Minotaur, and into the stories of Theseus and Ariadne, then, later, of Phaedra and Hippolytus. In a neat reversal, the brutality one would expect of the Minotaur is attributed instead to the monster-killer Theseus by Catullus' and Ovid's Ariadne, who also sees the threat of further savagery all around her on the uncultivated island where the hero has abandoned her. And as she laments her fate on the shore, in walks another strand of wildness, in the form of Bacchus on his tiger-drawn chariot with his ecstatic followers. Like the animal, the divine represents a boundary on the other side of the human, and between the two, man is isolated on a sea of inexplicable, unaccountable violence. In Phaedra's story, Artemis reveals again the closeness of the gods to the beasts: both represent forces which stand outside of civilization, and are thus at once attractive and repellent to mankind, the political animal. Phaedra's longing to commune with nature as part of her hunt for Hippolytus shows the attractions of the wild life, yet her rejection by the young man, who is himself wild like the bull that ultimately destroys him, gives form to the improbability, or even impossibility, of a reconciliation between nature and civilization.

The third chapter, 'Vice and Virtue', turns to look again at the myths from another angle, starting from the stereotypes of vice attributed to Cretans in general and Cretan women in particular: the lies, the sexual intemperance. The scandalous stories of lust and deception understandably give rise to a bad press, and in the first part of the chapter I look at the ways in which the Latin representations of the Cretan women confirm this reputation. Pasiphae employs Daedalus to help her to deceive the bull, and indulges in a particularly shameful form of adultery; Ariadne, though later a victim of Theseus' treachery, is herself guilty of betraying family and homeland for a

stranger; Phaedra contemplates adultery with her own stepson and then precipitates Hippolytus' destruction through her lies. Indeed, the taint of vice is so strong that it can spread to others too, whether Cretans themselves, like Aerope, who sleeps with her husband's brother, or those merely associated with Crete, like Ovid's Scylla who, in her unrequited passion for Minos, tries to present herself as a wronged Ariadne, but succeeds rather in emphasizing how both heroines betrayed their families. Having subjected the Cretan women to such a stern assessment of their vice, however, it seems only fair to look a little more closely at the moral records of the men who accuse them and with whom they are involved. Minos and Theseus themselves emerge as unconscionable philanderers, whilst Daedalus' role as an abettor to bestiality casts him in a distinctly shady light. Thus prejudices against the women are modified in view of the imperfections in the men.

In the final part of the chapter, having uncovered the possibility that the Cretan women can be seen in some senses as victims as well as perpetrators of vice, I then make the attempt to redeem them further, to see if they can make any claim to some ancient concept of virtue despite their wicked deeds. An investigation of Phaedra's use of silence in the tragedies of Euripides and Seneca is set within the context of the view of the Greek and Roman patriarchy that for women of good breeding and high morals silence is golden. Exploring the particularly Roman attitudes found in Seneca leads to a comparison of Phaedra with that paragon of Roman virtue, Lucretia. Surprising though it may seem at first, the comparison is not purely one of contrast, and although Phaedra ultimately fails to preserve her virtue, her very struggle against the impulse to sin is testament to the possibility of seeing in her a more complex moral character than the stereotype of the lustful woman. Moving from virtue externally viewed to a woman's own sense of self-respect, I then go on to look at Ariadne's use of soliloquy, and the way in which the absence of an audience is in some ways positive, enabling a preservation of dignity. The chance a true soliloquy gives for unhampered expression is underlined by Ovid's presentation in *Fasti* 3 of the soliloquy which turns out not to be one, where Bacchus' appearance after Ariadne's self-communing defuses the power of her complaint, and sets her up once more as a passive recipient of male kindness or unkindness.

The examination of the appearances of the Cretan women from a thematic perspective offers insights and illustrates links which are best viewed in cross-section. However, it is also important to look more directly at the major texts which treat Pasiphae, Ariadne, and Phaedra, allowing each text its own unity, and thus giving each figure the chance to stand alone. Accordingly, the second half of this book devotes due space to a concerted investigation of the different versions of Ariadne in the works of Catullus and Ovid, of Pasiphae in Vergil and Ovid, and of Phaedra in Ovid and Seneca. These chapters also look at the literary history, but with a sharper focus on the meanings and implications for the individual texts of the reminiscences of and variations from earlier accounts of these myths.

The overall aim, therefore, is to offer a comprehensive account of the myths which allows for diversity as well as similarity of treatment. A more purely linear approach, tracing the development of the myths from their Greek origins to their Latin climax would have had its merits, but would also, I believe, have been less rich and perhaps even a little dishonest. Developments and changes can of course be traced, but they should not always be granted centre stage purely because of their status as change or development. An unfortunate side-effect of keeping only to chronological order is that it almost inevitably tends to imply a kind of constant development, even some sort of progress and perfection of the stories into a more advanced form, or, conversely, a deterioration from some canonical *ur*-text, which would be a misrepresentation of the more complex (and interesting) reality. As it is, I have made use of a chronological approach in a more fragmented form, which gives due force to the importance of earlier influences on later texts, but which does not allow that to be the exclusively dominating factor. So, rather than leave Pasiphae, Ariadne, and Phaedra all neatly labelled in their specimen jars, a door is opened into a labyrinth of mirrors which reveals their myriad forms, along with those of other women like Dido, Medea, Europa, Aerope, Iphis, Scylla, and Lucretia whose personalities come to be intertwined with theirs. For the poets who use these myths, reference does not have to be straightforward nor correspondence simple. A whole gallery of representation is open to them, and they can create their own mazes of reference, more or less convoluted, to inject their characters with a vitality and individuality that makes an academic

investigation, a walk in these tunnels of endless reflection and refraction, at once rewarding and frustrating, confusing and enlightening.

5. UNDERPINNINGS AND ASSUMPTIONS

Much as I view the myths from different angles, so at times I make more use of one particular methodology or theoretical position, and later abandon or sideline it in favour of another. I do not regard it as always either necessary or desirable to adhere strictly to one particular theory, and I hope that this study will demonstrate that fluidity and variation in approach can yield insights and enable connections to be made which might be ruled out by a more rigid, exclusive reading. It may be useful, nevertheless, to clarify at the outset various assumptions and ideologies which underlie my work.

5.1. Poetic Memory

The term ‘poetic memory’ was coined by Gian Biagio Conte to refer to the dense web of interconnection found in Latin literature, where one work carries memories of another, and is complicated, enriched, and even defined by its relationship with other texts.⁵⁴ I have chosen to make prominent use of this term, alongside the more universal labels of ‘intertextuality’ and ‘allusion’, because, as will become apparent, the idea of remembrance is itself central to the myths of the Cretan women. The link between personal and poetic memory is stronger than one simply of shared vocabulary: an emphasis on the importance of memory on the narrated level shades into the poet/narrator’s concern with his own literary memories. In this respect,

⁵⁴ See Conte (1985), the revised Italian version, and (1986), the English translation by Charles Segal. Fowler (2000), 117 offers a concise outline of the idea of intertextuality as viewed from a structuralist perspective (such as Conte’s): ‘We do not read a text in isolation, but within a matrix of possibilities constituted by earlier texts, which functions as *langue* to the *parole* of individual textual production: without this background the text would be literally unreadable, as there would be no way in which it could have meaning.’

the creator is not so very different from his creations, and is as profoundly aware of his poetic history as the characters are of their 'lived' past. Like Conte, I will also talk of 'allusion', but perhaps with a broader application than the word traditionally enjoys, not always being limited to an author-centred view of the relationship between texts, but extending also to cover the system of reference between texts.⁵⁵

The poetic memory of a network of literary tradition is a storage jar of words, phrases, and *topoi*⁵⁶ common to many texts, which have worked their way into the consciousness (and subconsciousness) of authors and readers, and, when reused and reread can bring to mind other earlier instances of their use. A code of association and allusion is formed, which functions as an aid to compression and complexity: a single phrase carries with it a whole host of memories. Naturally enough, as Conte stresses, not just any phrase will do, and not just any combination of familiar words will have the full force of allusion as opposed to vague reminiscence:

Before the allusion can have the desired effect on the reader, it must first exert that effect on the poet. The more easily the original can be recognized—the more 'quotable' (because memorable) it is—the more intense and immediate its effect will be. The reader's collaboration is indispensable to the poet if the active phase of allusion is to take its effect. Thus allusion will occur as a literary act if a sympathetic vibration can be set up between the poet's and the reader's memories when these are directed to a source already stored in both.⁵⁷

Conte's words here tend rather more towards intentionalism and an (unstated) idea of an ideal reader than I would like to go. Whether an apparent allusion in a text was intended by the author is a notoriously hard case to prove,⁵⁸ and whether an allusion is picked up by

⁵⁵ See the table on p. 117 of Fowler (2000) for his assessment of the difference between allusion and intertextuality. My kind of allusion lies somewhere in between.

⁵⁶ I blithely include *topoi* in the list in the belief that it is reasonable to maintain that specific allusion can be achieved through general similarity, though obviously one has to be cautious in these cases. Cf. Hinds (1998), 26–9.

⁵⁷ Conte (1986), 35.

⁵⁸ Witness, for example, the controversy over Vergil, *Aen.* 6.460, *inuitus, regina, tuo de litore cessi* ('unwillingly, queen, did I leave your shore'): is this an intentional allusion to, or simply an unconscious reminiscence of Catullus 66.39? See Lyne (1994).

every reader or by only one does not necessarily entail either that the allusion is not a good one, or that that particular reader is a better one. The relationship brought about between texts by allusion is not always a clean one simply explained. I do not wish to resort to the precarious position of claiming that any similarity at all which can be perceived between two texts is meaningful,⁵⁹ but merely to emphasize that because of the very existence of the reservoir that is poetic memory, allusion is frequently a complex (deliciously, fascinatingly complex) matter, open to greater and lesser degrees of probing for different texts, different authors, and different readers. As Hinds (1998) puts it, 'the study of the complex allusion is a relationship between author and reader which can involve indirection as much as direction, concealment as much as revelation' (p. 25). Moreover, even when poetry seems to be at its most self-conscious, most aware of its own place in literary history, the great web of association which can be brought into play could be seen to go beyond any neat correspondences, rather plunging the text into a sea of meanings and nuances which, by their sheer number and diversity, defy any attempt at a complete confinement and categorization.

This said, I come to much the same sort of conclusion as both Conte and Hinds, in that for practical purposes at least, some reversion is necessary to a schema of a reconstructed (reconstructible) authorial voice—on the proviso that this does not make any claim to historical intentions. Resistance needs to be offered to the seemingly ineluctable slide into the chasm of raw intertextuality which hails the death of the author, gives texts independent, infinitely inter-referential existence, and can even discount the relevance of times of composition, leaving us with texts of Shakespeare influenced by Eliot and so on.⁶⁰ Indeed, for poetic memory to be a meaningful term at all, a broad awareness of some kind of historical, linear

⁵⁹ Here, cf. Conte's (1986), 40 discussion of Heinrich Lausberg's concept of reusable and non-reusable language.

⁶⁰ Fowler (2000), 130 gives an ingenious defence of the idea. I accept absolutely that later texts influence *our* reading of earlier ones, but am inclined to sit on the fence between structuralism and post-structuralism, between the assertion that texts exist within (and cannot escape from) a system, and the idea that each reader creates meaning. I think the reader creates meaning *within* a wider system of meaning established within a particular culture.

sequence is essential: after all, we remember the past not the future.⁶¹ I will also make use of the terms ‘author’ and ‘reader’ on the understanding that these are the most effective forms of reference to two sides of the poetic endeavour (composition and reception), and not that I wish to imply any privileged knowledge of intentions of the author, or any canonical, exclusive status for the observations attributed to the reader.

5.2. Ethical Values

In this study I also make extensive use of ethical readings of the texts and assessments of the characters. These are conducted on two levels, ancient and modern, in an attempt to reflect both the possible reactions of a contemporary readership to these poems, and those which come more readily to the reader and critic of today. There is a shift, therefore, between the poles of a ‘reconstructed’ ancient audience (with the usual rider that I don’t claim this to be the truth about how the poems *were* actually read), and even the poem’s internal audience (so at times I examine, for example, Minos’ and Theseus’ reactions to the heroines), and the ‘modern’ (usually, but not always, more sympathetic) audience. The ‘modern’ audience, of course, includes other critics, but it must be admitted that the dominant voice is inevitably my own.

A self-confessedly ethical reading of the poems may, perhaps, seem a little old-fashioned, but I believe that there are few occasions when we do not in fact read a narrative with at least some latent sense of the moral implications of the text. This is not, of course, to claim that Catullus 64 is a simple cautionary tale, or that *Eclogue* 6 functions as a moral guide book, but merely to acknowledge that in reading stories, in encountering characters, we make assessments of their personalities, and make judgements about their actions. Moreover, the myths of the Cretan women frequently draw overt attention to the morality or immorality of the actors: is Pasiphae mad or just bad?

⁶¹ This of course refers to which *texts* can be seen to influence others; characters *within* a text can ‘remember’ events which have not yet happened, as Apollonius’ Medea recalls (and so anticipates) Euripides’.

Is Ariadne a victim or a villain? Is Phaedra an emblem of depravity, or just neglected and misunderstood? The ethical side of my interpretation of the texts is at its most overt in Chapter 3 (as evinced by the title, 'Vice and Virtue'), but it pervades the whole book in more or less concentrated form.

I have chosen to make readings both from the inside and the outside, as it were, of the culture, from both ancient and modern perspectives, in order to lay open the field of interpretation, to illustrate the wonderful potential for multiplicity of meaning within a text. My choice to take *both* a more fixed, even historicist, approach *and* a more fluid textualist one will, I hope, not appear to be simply a case of critical and theoretical fence-sitting; it seems to me that it is both necessary and desirable in our assessments of ancient poetry to attempt to reach some understanding of the contemporary ethical expectations but at the same time not to ignore our own. To quote Duncan Kennedy, 'we are not faced with a choice—textuality *or* history—but must live with them both, for it is only in the making and manipulation of such distinctions that meanings can be generated'.⁶²

5.3. Psychological Realism

A third concern which emerges at various stages throughout the book is that of psychological realism. In many ways, this follows on from the ethical readings described above, but broadens out into a fuller assessment of the characters presented in the literature. The basic questions being asked are: do the representations of these characters convince a reader that the women are in an important sense realistic? (This is not, of course, that one needs to think the events really took place, but that, within the fictions, they are coherent, believable.) If so, how? And if not, why not, and what is the effect of this? The assumption here is clearly that figures represented in narratives are at least in some sense to be regarded as characters with a certain degree of integrity, possessing emotions, memories, and personality traits. However, I do not always wish to privilege such factors to the

⁶² Kennedy (1993), 10. His italics.

exclusion of other elements in the presentation of the mythical women studied here. Their importance as symbols, manifestations of ideas (about vice, about wildness, about the relationship between texts) is just as great as their presence as personalities. Indeed, the two aspects are often surprisingly hard to separate. And why should we want to?

Reading for character may seem to some to be a thing of the past, associated more with criticism of the early to mid-twentieth century. It seems to me, though, to be a valuable approach, and one which an honest reader may well admit to finding perfectly natural. I hope it will be obvious that I do not consider these the only questions to be asked, and I readily acknowledge that there are frequently times when other, more complex, often more theory-driven, questions yield more interesting answers. Nonetheless, to neglect this side of literary criticism is, I believe, to make the process artificially, overly cerebral. Instinct, emotion, and personal reaction cannot and should not be eradicated from our readings and interpretations of texts, and on this point both postmodernists and romantics can, I assume, agree.

5.4. And finally... Feminism

In these days of theory-conscious Classical literary criticism, it is perhaps inevitable that a book with 'Women' in the title (especially one which is also written by a woman) will be assumed to offer a particularly feminist take on the subject. I must confess here that a reader hoping for such a perspective will be disappointed. This is not a work bristling with references to Foucault, Cixous, and Irigaray (or even to Hallett and Richlin). Nevertheless, it is a study which arguably qualifies as feminist in a muted sense, given that it allows centre stage to female figures and regards them with a sympathetic female eye.⁶³ I am ready and willing to expose gender bias and stereotyping within the texts, but am also eager not to regard these male-authored works as inevitably, irreparably alien and chauvinist. Rather than

⁶³ In certain respects, my work has similarities with that of Spentzou (2003), who makes an eloquent case for setting the female writers of the *Heroides* in the limelight and giving them due attention, rather than focus purely on the cleverness of Ovid and the amusement of the learned reader.

throw up my hands in horror at the prejudice of the ancients, I try to examine the subtleties of the representations, and find ways in which it is possible either to discern understanding (and even proto-feminism) displayed in terms potentially accessible to the contemporary author and audience, or to rehabilitate the texts to suit our own (my own) modern tastes. Moreover, given that one of the many contributions of feminist criticism has been to confer legitimacy on the personal voice in scholarship,⁶⁴ I feel more confident in sticking to my own approach (perhaps eclectic, but at least true to myself), rather than sallying forth under the flag of any one particular theoretical stance.

⁶⁴ Cf. Hallett and van Nortwick (2001).

Part One

Themes

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1

Ethics and Poetics: Literary and Personal Memory in Representations of Cretan Women

The myths of the Cretan women frequently dwell on ideas of memory. Most obviously, Ariadne has cause to complain of Theseus' *lack* of memory when he abandons her on the island, and this is developed into a recurring theme by first Greek, then Roman sources. Phaedra too, locked in a painful self-examination prompted by her uncontrollable love for Hippolytus, finds herself haunted by the memory of the cautionary tales to be found in her own family, whether her mother Pasiphae's love for the bull, or her sister Ariadne's unhappy relationship with the man who is to go on to become Phaedra's own husband. Alongside this established theme of personal memory which is integral to the narratives of the Cretan myths, in the Hellenistic and Roman periods, another strand develops: literary remembrance. Just as the characters within the text remember events from the past, so the text itself, as it were, remembers other texts from the past. The combination of personal and poetic memories forms a fascinating web which becomes more intricate, more tangled with every generation of poets.

1. ARIADNE AND THE WORKINGS OF POETIC MEMORY, FROM APOLLONIUS TO OVID

1.1. Apollonius

The figure of Ariadne in Apollonius makes an appropriately complicated start for this investigation, appearing indirectly in the form of an example used by Jason to persuade Medea to help him with his mission. The appeal to poetic, mythical memory at *Argonautica* 3.997–1004 is an appeal to a *false* memory of a story that never was, where Ariadne seems to enjoy a happy ending with Theseus. A myth emerges with a double thread: the version spoken by Jason for Medea to believe, and, silently, the version (or versions) everyone except Medea knows to be the truth. Jason launches into his account with the words, *δή ποτε*, which carry with them the air of literary reference and ‘once upon a time’:¹

δή ποτε καὶ Θησῆα κακῶν ὑπελύσατ' ἀέθλων
παρθενικῇ Μινωῖς εὐφρονέουσ' Ἀριάδνη,
ἣν ῥά τε Πασιφάη κόρη τέκεν Ἥελίοιο.
ἀλλ' ἢ μὲν καὶ νηὸς, ἐπεὶ χόλον εὔνασε Μίνως,
σὺν τῷ ἐφεζομένη πάτρην λίπε· τὴν δὲ καὶ αὐτοί
ἀθάνατοι φίλαντο, μέσῳ δέ οἱ αἰθέρι τέκμωρ
ἄστερόεις στέφανος, τὸν τε κλείουσ' Ἀριάδνης,
πάννυχος οὐρανίους ἐνελίσσεται εἰδώλοισιν
(*Argonautica* 3.997–1004)

Once, too, Minos' virgin daughter freed Theseus from terrible trials, sensible Ariadne, whom Pasiphae the Sun's daughter bore. And she, when Minos had laid his anger to rest, left her fatherland and sailed away on a ship with him. The immortals themselves loved her, and as proof of this in the middle of the sky, a starry crown, which they call Ariadne's, wheels all night among the heavenly signs.

¹ Words which also, as Hunter (1989), 207 points out, mark the chronological innovation Apollonius is making in placing Theseus and Ariadne's affair in the past for Jason and Medea, when conventional chronology placed an older Medea with Aegeus in Athens when Theseus first came there from Troezen, before his expedition to Crete.

Here is an Ariadne unfamiliar from other accounts, whose father relents and lets her leave with the hero after she has helped him in his task (deliberately made to sound like Jason's),² and whom, it is implied, the gods reward for her sensible kindness. Not a word about Dionysus, and not a word about Theseus' desertion of the heroine. The catasterism of Ariadne's crown, traditionally an everlasting memorial to Dionysus' love, is held out as bait to Medea by Jason, the dissembling Theseus, as though it were an honour bestowed on the Cretan princess for helping the Athenian hero.³ For a would-be heroic young woman, thirsting for glory and immortality in stories, the temptation is too great. For the reader, conscious of the other strand of memory, the weight of the literary history of desertion belonging to Ariadne and awaiting Medea, this compressed and distorted version of a familiar myth sparks at once amusement and deeper questions about the uses of a paradigm. Jason both plays the part of a character charming and lying his way into another character's favour, and takes on the mantle of surrogate narrator.⁴ As every Classical author knows, myth and tradition provide both material and constraints; through his shameless manipulation of some well-known elements of Ariadne's story, and through the actual lie he tells about Minos' compliance,⁵ Jason is failing to respect the usual requirements of poetic remembrance; it might even be argued that he is issuing a challenge.

² Cf. ἀέθλων (997), ἀέθλου (989); Ariadne and Medea are linked by the word παρθενική (975, 998). These correspondences noted by Hunter (1989), 208.

³ Another literary memory evoked by this speech is, of course, Odysseus' flirtation with Nausicaa (*Od.* 6.180–5); however much he may allow her to imagine that he is suggesting himself as the man to marry, though, he never goes as far as either Jason or Theseus in exploiting the innocent girl.

⁴ The tale of Ariadne in *Argonautica* 3 is, in its way, a *mise en abyme*, inviting us, when presented with the outrages of Jason as surrogate narrator, to think again about Apollonius' own narrative technique throughout the epic. However, the main narrator does not give up his position without a fight. When Jason ends his version of Ariadne's story, the narrator comments, Ὡς φάτο, κυδαίνων ('So he spoke, fawning', 1008); κυδαίνω means both 'glorify' and 'flatter', and perhaps both senses can be perceived here, as the narrator implies both that Jason is (disingenuously) talking up Ariadne's fame and the parallel between the two heroines, and that he is a slippery character using his charm to trick Medea into helping him.

⁵ Though this was also one of the famous mythological puzzles: why did Minos, who exacted revenge for Androgeus' death and pursued Daedalus to Sicily, not track Theseus as he eloped with the king's daughter? Clausen (1977) argues that the

A little later, the hero indulges once more in narratological sleight of hand. Medea's curiosity has been roused, and she wants to know more about Jason's background, and about Ariadne: *εἰπὲ δὲ κούρην | ἦντινα τήνδ' ὀνόμηνας ἀριγνώτην γεγαυῖαν | Πασιφάης, ἣ πατρὸς ὁμόγνιός ἐστιν ἐμεῖο* ('and tell me about that girl you spoke of who became so famous, the daughter of Pasiphae who is my father's sister', 3.1074–6).⁶ Jason obliges with a dutiful and dryly Hellenistic description of the geography and history of his land (3.1083–95). Then he smoothly pretends to have answered Medea's question about Ariadne so fully as to bore her, when in fact he has given her no new information, merely repeating his lie about the reconciliation between Theseus and Minos:

ἀλλὰ τίη τάδε τοι μεταμόνια πάντ' ἀγορεύω,
 ἡμετέρους τε δόμους τηλεκλείτην τ' Ἀριάδνην,
 κούρην Μίνωος, τόπερ ἀγλαὸν οὖνομα κείνην
 παρθενικὴν καλέεσκον ἐπήρατον ἦν μ' ἐρεεῖνεις;
 αἶθε γάρ, ὡς Θησῆι τότε ξυναρέσσατο Μίνωος
 ἄμφ' αὐτῆς, ὥς ἄμμι πατήρ τεὸς ἄρθμιος εἶη.
 (Apollonius, *Argonautica* 3.1096–1101)

But why do I talk about all this idle stuff, my home and far-renowned Ariadne, daughter of Minos, the lovely maiden whose name they called famous, about whom you asked me? If only your father would be friendly towards us, just as Minos then came to terms with Theseus over her.

The mixture of the otiose information about Corinth and the lack of details in Ariadne's story marks Jason out yet again as a wilfully biased and clever narrator, who might well spark admiration as well as exasperation in a reader. Here is a storyteller who seems to

allaying of Minos' anger is alluded to at Catullus 64.117. Something of the kind is hinted at by Seneca's Phaedra, who imagines that the *mitis Ariadnae pater* ('Ariadne's gentle father', 245) would not be too opposed to her love for Hippolytus. By contrast, Pherecydes (*FGrH* 3.150) says that Minos failed to pursue Theseus because the Athenian hero had sabotaged his boats.

⁶ Medea's unfamiliarity with her cousin Ariadne is such that she seems not even to remember her name. It is possible that Medea is herself being disingenuous here, testing the tricky Jason to see if he will ever reveal the truth about the famous heroine. The irony still works well, though, if we accept the apparent *naïveté* and ignorance of the young Medea, especially when she makes comments like *οὐδ' Ἀριάδνη | ἰσοῦμαι* ('I'm no match for Ariadne', 3.1107–8).

have complete control over the narrative, who will not be pushed or cajoled by his audience into revealing anything more or less than he chooses to reveal, and who will use the material offered him by poetic tradition exactly as he sees fit.⁷

Ariadne reappears in the fourth book of the *Argonautica*, linked to a cloak given to Jason by Hypsipyle, which he in turn uses as one of the deceptive friendship gifts to Medea's brother Apsyrtus:

τὸν μὲν ῥα Διωνύσῳ κάμον αὐταί
Δίῃ ἐν ἀμφιάλῳ Χάριτες θεαί, αὐτὰρ ὁ παιδί
δῶκε Θόαντι μεταῦτις, ὃ δ' αὖ λίπεν Ὑψιπυλείῃ,
ἢ δ' ἔπορ' Αἰσονίδῃ πολέσιν μετὰ καὶ τὸ φέρεσθαι
γλήγεσιν εὐεργὲς ξεινήιον. οὗ μιν ἀφάσσω
οὔτε κεν εἰσορόων γλυκὺν ἥμερον ἐμπλήσειας
τοῦ δὲ καὶ ἀμβροσίῃ ὀδμῇ πέλεν ἑξέτι κείνου
ἔξ οὔ ἄναξ αὐτὸς Νυσήμιος ἐγκατέλεκτο
ἀκροχάλιξ οἶνω καὶ νέκταρι, καλὰ μεμαρπώς
στήθεα παρθενικῆς Μινώιδος, ἣν ποτε Θησεύς
Κνωσσόθεν ἔσπομένην Δίῃ ἔνι κάλλιπε νήσῳ.
(*Argonautica* 4.424–34)

For the divine Graces themselves worked on it for Dionysus in sea-girt Dia, but afterwards he gave it to his son Thoas, and he left it to Hypsipyle, and she later gave it to Jason to have, along with many wonders as a well-wrought guest-gift. You would never get your fill of sweet pleasure from touching it and gazing on it; the ambrosial scent was still on it from the time when the Nysian lord himself lay on it brim-full of wine and nectar, clasping the beautiful breast of Minos' daughter, whom Theseus once left on the island of Dia as she accompanied him from Cnossus.

The false story earlier used by Jason is now corrected, passed before Medea's very eyes, though she is still unable to see the truth. The marital bliss that Ariadne enjoyed was not with Theseus, but with Dionysus; the ambrosial scents of their wedding night still cling to the fabric of the cloak. Theseus, it is now made clear, deserted the heroine on the island of Dia. His offence may be softened slightly by

⁷ Here we might once again compare (and contrast) Jason with the main narrator, Apollonius, whose grip on his own tale begins to slip during the course of the epic, and who is driven to ask the Muses for more and more support. Cf. Feeney (1991), 89–93. See also Spentzou (2002) for a discussion of Medea as Muse in the *Argonautica*.

the emphasis on the beautiful, holy marriage which took place afterwards, but it remains, occupying the last line and a half of the description. The comparison between himself and Theseus which Jason invited, then made even more pointed by his deception, is here strengthened once more through the memory of Hypsipyle, another woman loved and left by Jason, whose very gift to him recalls Theseus' perfidy as it commemorates Dionysus' passion. The link is affirmed still more by the oblique reference to the fact that Hypsipyle is descended from Ariadne: her father, Thoas, was the son of Dionysus and Ariadne.

The memories do not stop there, though, as the Homeric resonances at the beginning and end of the description *Δίη ἐν ἀμφιάλῳ* (425) and *ἦν ποτε Θησεύς | Κνωσσόθεν ἐσπομένην Δίη ἐνι κάλλιπεν ἡγήσω* (433–4) both recall Odysseus' vision of the ghostly Ariadne:

Φαίδρην τε Πρόκριν τε ἴδον καλὴν τ' Ἀριάδνην,
κούρην Μίνως δλοόφρονος, ἦν ποτε Θησεύς
ἐκ Κρήτης ἐς γουνὸν Ἀθηνάων ἱεράων
ἦγε μέν, οὐδ' ἀπόνητο· πάρος δέ μιν Ἄρτεμις ἔκτα
Δίη ἐν ἀμφιρῦτῃ Διονύσου μαρτυρήσει.

(Homer, *Odyssey* 11.321–5)

I saw Phaedra and Procris, and beautiful Ariadne, the daughter of baleful Minos, whom Theseus once brought from Crete towards the citadel of holy Athens, but he did not have the joy of her; first Artemis killed her in sea-girt Dia on the witness of Dionysus.

Though for a Hellenistic poet, Homeric reference may often seem inevitable and thus unremarkable, this is a particularly interesting intertext to choose because it points not only (directly) to Ariadne's abandonment by Theseus, but also to an aspect of her relationship with Dionysus which is largely mysterious, alien.⁸ Why does Artemis kill Ariadne, and what does 'on the witness of Dionysus' actually imply? Pherecydes, as reported by the scholia on these lines of the *Odyssey*, comments that Artemis' reason for killing her is that she 'threw away' her virginity (*προεμένην τὴν παρθενίαν*), yet this

⁸ It is also worth noting that Apollonius here chooses to locate the abandonment on Homeric Dia, rather than Naxos as some later sources (including Callimachus) did. Cf. Jackson (1999).

explanation appears alongside, and fits ill with, the more familiar tale of Theseus leaving, Dionysus arriving, and the catasterism of her crown to mark their marriage. It is possible that the story hinted at here is one of an Ariadne who plays the part of transgressor rather than victim: already married, or promised, to Dionysus, she elopes with Theseus, only to have her joys cut brutally short by Artemis.⁹ If this hypothesis is correct, she would have a mythical partner in Coronis, who betrayed Apollo with Ischys when she was already pregnant by the god. When Apollo complained to his sister Artemis, she shot Coronis full of arrows.¹⁰ Did Ariadne, like Coronis, fail to be content with her immortal husband, proving in her way to be every bit as fickle as Theseus? But why, then, is Theseus not punished, while Ischys is either blasted by Zeus' thunderbolt or shot by Apollo himself? I wonder if this version of the Ariadne myth might not have been just as mysterious in the Classical world, given the lack of any satisfying explanation to be found in the scholia.¹¹

Whatever Ariadne's relationship to Dionysus in the *Odyssey*, it certainly seems not to be the happy one which underlies the passage in *Argonautica* 3, and is seen in book 4. Even as Apollonius draws our attention to the mechanics of poetic memory, seeming to state some rules about the limits of innovation, the importance of truth in reminiscence, he reminds us of the other difficult fact that every story can have a different ending, every myth has different facets. Although many of what we regard as the mainstays of Hellenistic and, later, Roman poetic practice rely on the existence of a canonical tradition, Apollonius hints that there *is* no canon, or that, like Jason, we make our own to suit our own poetic purposes.

⁹ Epimenides (*FGRH* 457 F 19) implies that Ariadne's marriage with Dionysus took place on Crete, which would support a version where she later leaves the god for a man. For discussions of this version of the myth, cf. Webster (1966) and Barrett (1964) on Euripides, *Hipp.* 339.

¹⁰ Sources for this story include: Pindar, *Pythians* 3.8–46; Pausanias 2.26.6; Apollodorus 3.10.3.

¹¹ Webster (1966), 23–4 argues that this might be the version of the tale told by Nestor in the Cypria, to comfort the deserted Menelaus with stories of unfortunate husbands. This is quite possible, of course, and there is no reason why even a variant found in two places need not be superseded completely by later accounts.

1.2. Catullus

The cloak in Apollonius is the literary forerunner of Catullus' coverlet on Peleus and Thetis' bridal couch,¹² carrying with it (though not embroidered on it) the story of the wedding of Dionysus and Ariadne. This wedding forms a neat counterpart to the surrounding narrative of Catullus 64 (a mortal man, Peleus, marries a goddess, Thetis; a god, Bacchus, marries a mortal woman, Ariadne), and one might thus have expected Catullus to give it a full description, rather than privilege instead the desertion of the Cretan princess by Theseus. The memory of one text in another revives a story under-narrated in the latter text, bringing to mind once again Apollonius' games with myth and memory.

Ideas of both personal and poetic memory receive even sharper attention in Catullus than in his Hellenistic predecessor.¹³ When Catullus chooses to make a digression, or to change the direction of his poem, he often covers it with a reference to the familiarity of the tales he tells. The very mechanics of narration, its twists and turns, are thus closely associated with the literary tradition, the poetic memories which give rise to the narrative. So, having described Ariadne deserted on the seashore, he moves back in time to tell of the curse brought on Athens by the death of Androgeus, and then of Theseus' voyage to Crete where Ariadne falls in love with him, prefacing the story with the words, *nam perhibent olim* ('for

¹² There is a fair amount of scholarship on the many links between Apollonius' *Argonautica* and Catullus 64: e.g. Perotta (1931), Avallone (1953), Thomas (1982), Clare (1996).

¹³ On the most obvious, verbal level there is a preponderance of words related to tradition, trust, and remembrance in Catullus 64. Tradition and speech: *dicuntur* (2); *fertur* (19); *perhibent* (76); *perhibent* (124); *ferunt* (212). Trust and remembrance: *uos ego saepe mero, uos carmine compellabo* ('I will often toast you with wine and with song', 24); *immemor at iuuenis* ... ('but the forgetful youth ...', 58 f.); *commemorem* ('may I relate', 117); *immemori* ... *pectore* ('forgetful heart', 123); *perfide* ... *perfide* ... *immemor* ('false ... false ... forgetful', 132 ff.); *dicta nihil meminere, nihil periuria curant* ('they have no remembrance of words, no care for perjury', 147); *oblito* ... *pectore* ('neglectful heart', 208); *memori* ... *corde* ('mindful heart', 231); *nec ulla obliteret aetas* ('let no lapse of time erase [these instructions from your mind]', 232); *prius constanti mente* ('with constant mind before', 238); *mente immemori* ('forgetful mind', 248); *perfidiae quod post nulla arguet aetas* ('which no age to come will accuse of falsehood', 322).

they assert that once...’, 76). Again, when he moves from the picture of Theseus’ mind being enveloped in a fog of forgetfulness following Ariadne’s curse back to the instructions Aegeus gave his son before he ever set out on his voyage, Catullus uses the same conceit: *namque ferunt olim* (‘for they say that once...’, 212). When Aegeus urges Theseus to concentrate on the instructions he gives him and not to forget to change the colour of his sails as a sign that he has survived the ordeals awaiting him on Crete, he says, *tum uero facito ut memori tibi condita corde | haec uigeant mandata, nec ulla obliteret aetas* (‘then indeed make sure that these instructions stay fresh, stored up in your remembering heart, and that no passage of time should erase them’, 231–2). These words hint at a poetic self-consciousness which emerges in a different way. Within the narrative, of course it makes sense that Theseus’ father, eager to know the outcome of his son’s daring trip to Crete as soon as possible, should take pains to impress on him the importance of these instructions. It is worth pausing for a while, however, over his use of the word *aetas* (‘passage of time’). It is on the surface a strange word to choose in this context, as it more naturally refers to great expanses of time than to shorter periods within one person’s lifetime.¹⁴ Indeed, it is used in this way by Catullus himself at 68.43–4, where (significantly, I would argue) the word suggests the longevity of a work of art: *ne fugiens saeculis obliuiscens aetas | illius hoc caeca nocte tegat studium* (‘lest fleeting time through the forgetful centuries cover this kindness of his with blind night’). His memory of Allius’ help to him, preserved in the text, will survive for centuries. With this in mind, it becomes tempting to see Aegeus’ use of *aetas* in poem 64 as evidence of Catullus indulging in meta-poetics. Through the words of Theseus’ father, the poet is commenting on the enduring nature of myth and poetry, and perhaps even expressing a hope (or making a claim) for his own poetry to last for generations.¹⁵ The play in Aegeus’ speech between ideas of memory and forgetting throws up a nice irony:

¹⁴ Although it can be used to refer to a period of time in life, such as infancy or old age (cf. *OLD aetas* 2), it more frequently denotes longer expanses of time, whether a lifetime or an era. It might also be worth remarking that the verb *condere* (cf. *condita*, here translated as ‘stored up’) is also commonly used to describe poetic composition.

¹⁵ Here compare the hope expressed in Catullus’ first poem, *plus uno maneat perenne saeclo* (‘may it remain everlasting for more than one lifetime’, 1.10).

Aegeus' words, which are forgotten by Theseus, are remembered by later generations precisely because of the consequences of Theseus' forgetfulness. The hero's failure to remember results not only in his father's suicide, but in the writing of many poems on the subject which carry the memory of his forgetfulness far into the future.

The more poets play the game of intertextuality, the longer the chains of reference grow, and one memory sets another in motion until the present text seems to be full of the chattering voices of past apparitions. The Medea of Apollonius' *Argonautica* constantly reminds us, via both contrast and premonition, of Euripides' enraged, chilling, child-killing protagonist, the woman she will become. This is delicately and amusingly handled by the poet, but is to some extent what we would expect or even find necessary.¹⁶ Then in Catullus 64, we find that even a treatment of very different myths can be powered (and problematized) by close references to Apollonius, and Ariadne comes to sound more and more like Medea. However, when Catullus' Apollonian echoes drag along Euripidean ones too, injecting hints of wonder and even menace into the portrait of the initially gentle, virginal Ariadne, the result is even more explosive. Comparison can work two ways, but it is not the same dynamic every time. In a simple sense, Catullus takes a heroine who was compared by Apollonius to Medea and makes her the subject of his story, while allowing implicit comparisons to Medea to pepper his text. However, Catullus is not just reversing the direction of Apollonius' allusion, or even 'correcting' him, but is also creating a new, very challenging Ariadne who carries more memories inside her than those strictly her own.

As Catullus 64 opens, the reader is presented with a literary puzzle: does the reference to the pine-tree felled to build the *Argo* (which goes on to sail to Colchis) indicate that this poem is to be a *Medea* or

¹⁶ There is plenty of encouragement given in Apollonius' text to think of the woman Medea becomes, but I doubt whether it would be possible to tell a story of a pre-crime, pre-horror Medea that positively discourages or even prevents thoughts of her future. As with reference to another text, which brings with it so much baggage, use of a myth, of a name entails tapping into mythical/poetic memory. For the same kind of view phrased differently, cf. Stanford (1968), 6: 'Despite the many factors which tend to alter or supplement the qualities and adventures of a mythical hero, his evolution will depend primarily on his archetypal nature, the nature, that is, of his earliest definitive portrait.'

an *Argonautica*?¹⁷ Which part of the story—and which kind of Medea—are we going to see? Will she be the (relatively) innocent young sorceress met by Jason and the Argonauts on their quest for the Golden Fleece, or the terrifying and vindictive jilted lover of later years whose passion will drive her to kill her own children? As the poem progresses, the narrative appears to resolve itself and to answer that in fact this will not in any sense be a *Medea*, but rather a section of an *Argonautica* which deals with the happy subject of the marriage of Peleus and Thetis. This answer and this resolution are only partial, however: the double aspect of Medea continues to raise its head throughout the poem, and is particularly marked in the Ariadne ecphrasis. So, for example, the account of how Ariadne fell in love with Theseus at first sight is accompanied by a familiar-looking apostrophe to Amor:

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 flauo saepe hospite suspirantem!

(Catullus 64.94–8)

Alas, holy boy, wretchedly stirring up frenzy with your cruel heart, you who mix men's joys with cares, and you, goddess, who rule Golgi and leafy Idalium, on what waves you tossed the girl, her mind on fire, often sighing over her golden-haired guest!

As critics often point out, this passage alludes to Apollonius' attack on Eros in the *Argonautica*:

σχέτλι' Ἔρως, μέγα πῆμα, μέγα στύγος ἀνθρώποισιν,
ἐκ σέθεν οὐλόμεναι τ' ἔριδες στοναχαί τε γόοι τε,
ἄλγέα τ' ἄλλ' ἐπὶ τοῖσιν ἀπείρονα τετρύχασιν
δυσμενέων ἐπὶ παισὶ κορύσσειο δαῖμον ἄερθεῖς
οἷος Μηδείῃ στυγερὴν φρεσὶν ἔμβαλες ἄτην.

(Apollonius, *Argonautica* 4.445–9)

Wicked Eros, great bane, great abomination for mankind, from you come destructive strife and groans and grief, and the other limitless pains which

¹⁷ Lines 1–18 recall the openings to Euripides' and Ennius' *Medea* as well as various episodes in Apollonius' *Argonautica* (and even *Il.* 18.65–72 with the emergence of the Nereids from the sea). Cf. Thomas (1982) and Clare (1996).

fall on the troubled. Arm yourself against the sons of our enemies with your power aroused as when you cast hateful folly into Medea's heart.

The same unconscionable god who pushes Medea to betray her brother for love urges Ariadne to help Theseus, and thus to betray her own brother.¹⁸ It seems that a simple and direct comparison is being drawn, yet on further examination it emerges that in some ways the comparison is actually one of contrast. The love god in Apollonius is a bane, his effects to be wished upon one's enemies, since all he brings in his wake is strife, pain, and unhappiness.¹⁹ Catullus' Cupid and Venus bring similar pain and confusion, but mix it up with joy as well, a bitter-sweet combination. This image belongs not to Apollonius but to a different tradition: one might think of Sappho fr. 130, *Ἔρως δὴ ὕτέ μ' ὁ λυσιμέλης δόνει, | γλυκύπικρον ἀμάχανον ὄρπετον* ('Limb-loosening Eros shakes me again, a bittersweet, unmanageable, creeping thing'). The apostrophe both recalls and softens Apollonius' attitude, infusing a more romantic strain from erotic tradition into the epic-tragic motif of the destructiveness of love.²⁰

At 116–17, *sed quid ego a primo digressus carmine plura | commemorem...?* ('but why should I deviate from my first song and tell more...?'), Catullus' poem makes a shift back into self-consciousness again, the narrator asserting his own presence in the text and his control over it. Catullus' lines are similar to *Argonautica* 1.648–9, *ἀλλὰ τί μύθους | Αἰθαλίδεω χρεῖώ με διηγεκέως ἀγορεύειν;* ('but why should I keep on telling stories about Aethalides?'), where the poet breaks off from an incipient digression on the history of the herald Aethalides in order to press ahead with his account of Hypsipyle's welcome of the Argonauts to Lemnos.²¹ As Clare (1996), 73 points

¹⁸ This correspondence is also remarked upon by Clare (1996), 70–1. It is worth remembering, too, that Ariadne reappears, as it were, shortly after these lines in Apollonius: one of the gifts used in the deception of Apsyrtus is the cloak which Hypsipyle gave Jason, inherited from Dionysus and still suffused with divine scent after his celebration of his wedding with Ariadne on the very same cloth.

¹⁹ Vergil's version of the reproach to love is more in line with Apollonius': *improbe Amor, quid non mortalia pectora cogis!* ('wicked Love, what do you not force mortal hearts to endure!'), *Aen.* 4.412).

²⁰ For the negative attitude to great passion in tragedy, cf. e.g. Euripides, *Hipp.* 443–6, 525–32.

²¹ Is Apollonius having some fun here with Callimachean aesthetics? By rejecting the idea of telling the story of the herald *διηγεκέως*, and so recalling Callimachus'

out, however, these lines are not a precise equivalent, since, unlike Apollonius, Catullus *does* proceed with the story he wonders why he should continue, albeit in an abbreviated form (117–23). A closer parallel can be found in Jason's words at *Argonautica* 3.1096–1101 (quoted in Section 1.1 above). While professing to cut himself short, Jason says enough to hammer home some important, persuasive points about his exemplum: Ariadne gained a famous name for helping Theseus, as well as her father's eventual forgiveness or even approval. This is a particularly cunning example of the rhetorical trope, as Jason implies he has *already* said far more than he has. The speech he interrupts is concerned with his country's history alone, and not with far-famed Ariadne. Jason's narrative, like his truths, is economical.

So does the narrator Catullus identify himself with the surrogate narrator Jason rather than the primary narrator Apollonius? The obvious point is important enough to restate: Catullus explicitly tells the story Jason refuses to acknowledge, and the lines which follow the Jason-esque *sed quid ego... plura commemorem?* emphasize the sacrifice that Ariadne makes, the *loss* of her family (as opposed to the phoney reconciliation claimed by Jason), and her subsequent abandonment by Theseus. In fact, the bare bones of the story of desertion told by Catullus were reported by the narrator Apollonius in the *Argonautica*, during his description of Jason's cloak (4.424–34, quoted in Section 1.1 above). Yet if we lean a little harder on the correspondence to be seen between Catullus and Jason, and argue that the voice that is here recalled *is* that of the flawed, false narrator Jason, Catullus could just as well be issuing a veiled warning about the reliability of his own narrative as making a correction, making amends.²² As if to hide from these implications, or to leave the question provocatively open, the poet soon chooses to silence his own voice, as it were, by donning the veil of common poetic knowledge with the formula *saepe illam perhibent* ('they say that she often...'), 124) as he leads up to Ariadne's great soliloquy.

refusal to write *ἓν ἄεσιμα διηνεκές* ('one continuous song', *Aet.* fr. 1.3), he is actually bringing himself back to the main plot and so eschewing the type of digression which might exemplify a more Callimachean approach.

²² Theodorakopoulos (2000), 128–9 takes a similar view.

Here, alas, we encounter one of the perennial problems of working with sources for which our own poetic memory is incomplete, and the critic has to tread a little carefully. Nevertheless, at this point where the poet claims to be following a literary tradition it *seems* that he is actually proffering a poetic innovation. In surviving literature this speech, which Catullus asserts to be the sort of thing Ariadne always says, is actually the first. Why, then, does Catullus imply that it is nothing out of the ordinary? It could simply be whimsy, or it could even substantiate the warning just described that this is the work of an engaging but unreliable narrator. Yet there is a sense in which the poet is telling the truth: this long, passionate speech may represent the first time a figure called Ariadne says these words, but in important ways it is not new. There are numerous echoes present of the speeches of various Medeas, amongst others. When Apollonius' Medea delivers 'this' speech in the fourth book of the *Argonautica*, she is in a more fortunate position than Ariadne, merely fearing (and pre-empting, or postponing?) desertion, rather than already standing alone as her lover's ship retreats into the distance. Even so, many of the motifs are the same: Medea's accusations of Jason's forgetfulness (Arg. 4.356) and oath-breaking (4.357–8) become one of the strongest complaints in Ariadne's lament (see especially 64.132–5); both refer to promises of marriage (μελιχρὰὶ ὑποσχέσιναι—'honeyed promises', 4.359; *blanda promissa*—'charming promises', 64.139); both regret their abandonment of home and family, then demand vengeance from the Erinyes (4.386) or Eumenides (64.193). As ever, though, it is not enough simply to point to the parallels between Ariadne's and Medea's speeches and leave it at that. Clare (1996) remarks, '[a] reading of Catullus 64 whereby Ariadne is granted moral superiority over Theseus through allusion to a woman who, according to a parallel myth, is a would-be murderess of Theseus, clearly subverts itself' (p.76). Indeed, but it is an allusion which also forces us to take Ariadne's complaint more seriously, aligning a figure who fits more naturally into the role of gentle, romantic victim²³

²³ For hints of which, compare my remarks above on the reproach to Love, also bearing in mind the hymeneal imagery of lines 86–93 which precede it, and the vulnerability of the naked Ariadne in the opening tableau (52–75). I say more about this in Ch. 5, Sect. 1.

with one of the most uncompromisingly passionate and terrifying heroines of myth.

To add another layer of reference and complication, the memory of Euripides' *Medea* which, as I have said, bubbles under the surface of Apollonius' heroine, is allowed to emerge again in Ariadne's speech. This is particularly noticeable as she reaches a crescendo of indignation and desperation just before she demands justice from the gods:

nam quo me referam?²⁴ quali spe perdita nitor?
Idaeosne petam montes? at gurgite lato
discernens ponti truculentum diuidit aequor.
an patris auxilium sperem? quemne ipsa reliqui
respersum iuuenem fraterna caede secuta?

(Catullus 64.177–81)

For where shall I turn? On what hope do I lean, lost? Should I make for the hills of Ida? But separating me from them with its broad abyss the ferocious waters of the sea lie in between. Or should I hope for help from my father? The father I myself left behind when I followed the young man spattered with my brother's blood?

νῦν ποῖ τράπωμαι; πότῃρα πρὸς πατρὸς δόμους,
οὓς σοὶ προδοῦσα καὶ πάτῃραν ἀφικόμην;
ἢ πρὸς ταλαίνας Πηλιάδας; καλῶς γ' ἂν οὖν
δέξαιντό μ' οἴκοις ὧν πατέρα κατέκτανον.
ἔχει γὰρ οὕτω τοῖς μὲν οἴκοθεν φίλοις
ἐχθρὰ κατέστηχ', οὓς δέ μ' οὐκ ἐχρῆν κακῶς
δρᾶν, σοὶ χάριν φέρουσα πολεμίους ἔχω.

(Euripides, *Medea* 502–8)

Now where shall I turn? To my father's home, which I forsook for you and came to your fatherland? Or to the poor daughters of Pelias? They would happily receive me in their home, the one who killed their father. For it stands like this: I have become hateful to my loved ones at home, whom I should not have treated badly, and bearing it for your sake I have them as enemies.

Setting these passages side by side, though, one is also struck by how much more innocent Ariadne is. However much we may frown at her

²⁴ I wonder if it is possible to see a double meaning in this question. As well as 'Where shall I turn?', Catullus' deeply intertextual heroine asks 'What source should I refer to?'

desertion of her family and the part she plays in the death of her monstrous brother, the Minotaur, it is hard to maintain that these actions are on a moral par with Medea's murder of Pelias and her impending murder of her own children. And here we run up against a fundamental ambiguity of poetic allusion: who is doing the alluding, character or narrator? If we see only Catullus at work here, the result is a neat dramatic irony, as the reader at once sees the comparison being drawn and acknowledges its shortcomings.²⁵ While this is perhaps the safer route to go, the default position, it is sometimes tempting (and to me this seems to be one of those times) to read the text as if the character herself were drawing comparisons between her own situation and that of another character in another text. Such a meta-literary existence adds poignancy to the poetic figure, who works in partnership with the poet to establish an allusion which is ultimately a failed one. Ariadne *wants* to be Medea, and *wants* to revel in the guilt of more serious crimes and to feel the same guilty power, but through her very attempt at self-definition as Medea Mark II she is revealed to be a far gentler character, and a weaker one. Despite her efforts to ally herself with Medea, painting her part in the death of the Minotaur as fratricide, she really has committed a far lesser crime than her model, and has done nothing on the scale of Medea's murder of Pelias. The result is not entirely a contrast—there is some truth in what Ariadne says—but her position (ironically) is undermined. Because she is *not* the murdering witch she implies she is, her speech dissipates into hyperbole.

Again, Ariadne is set apart from Medea via another reminiscence of Euripides' *Medea* earlier in her speech, as she accuses Theseus of inhuman hardness and ingratitude:

quaenam te genuit sola sub rupe leaena,
quod mare conceptum spumantibus expuit undis,
quae Syrtis, quae Scylla rapax, quae uasta Charybdis,
talìa qui reddis pro dulci praemia uita?

(Catullus 64.154–7)

²⁵ Apollonius' Medea comes to mind again: οὐδ' Ἀριάδνη | ἰσοῦμαι ('I'm no match for Ariadne', Arg. 3.1107–8).

What lioness gave birth to you under a lonely cliff, what sea conceived you and spat you out from its foaming waves, what Syrtis, what ravening Scylla, what vast Charybdis, you who give such rewards in return for your sweet life?

This image recalls Jason's words to Medea after he has discovered her murder of their children:

οὐκ ἔστιν ἦτις τοῦτ' ἄν Ἑλληνὶς γυνή
 ἔτλη ποῦθ', ὧν γε πρόσθεν ἤξιον ἐγὼ
 γῆμαι σέ, κῆδος ἐχθρὸν ὀλέθριόν τ' ἐμοί,
 λείαναν, οὐ γυναιῖκα, τῆς Τυρσηνίδος
 Σκύλλης ἔχουσαν ἀγριωτέραν φύσιν.
 (Euripides, *Medea* 1339–43)

There's no Greek woman who would have ever dared this, yet I thought it better to marry you than any of them, you, a hateful and destructive trouble for me, a lioness, not a woman, with a spirit wilder than the Etruscan Scylla.

Here Ariadne implicitly aligns herself with the victim of Medea's revenge, rather than with Medea herself as wronged victim. However, as is frequently pointed out, another, very different, source also lies behind Ariadne's insult, and her reproach alludes to that offered by Patroclus to Achilles when he persists in his refusal to fight despite the Greeks' desperate situation:

νηλεές, οὐκ ἄρα σοί γε πάτηρ ἦν ἱππότα Πηλεΐς,
 οὐδὲ Θέτις μήτηρ γλαυκὴ δέ σε τίκτε θάλασσα
 πέτραι τ' ἠλίβατοι, ὅτι τοι νόος ἐστὶν ἀπηνής.
 (Homer, *Iliad* 16.33–5)

Unkind one, indeed your father was not horse-taming Peleus, nor Thetis your mother, but the grey sea bore you and the sheer rocks, which is why your heart is harsh.

Through this double reminiscence, Ariadne is associated with the good but doomed Patroclus, yet also with Medea's faithless (but here heartbroken) husband Jason. A certain tension is evoked by the frustration of the tendency, satisfied elsewhere, to identify Ariadne with Medea. Once again, Catullus presents us with a set of multiple memories which cannot be reconciled absolutely, but which combine to underscore one of the first images of Ariadne we see in the poem. As the ecphrasis opens, the heroine stands like a statue on

the shore whilst great emotions seethe inside her: *saxea ut effigies Bacchantis, prospicit, eheu, | prospicit et magnis curarum fluctuat undis* ('like a stone statue of a Bacchant, she looks on, alas, she looks on and is tossed on great waves of sorrow', 64.61–2). She is in this way just like her text, which is presented as a static, manageable work of art, but is in fact a shifting tangle of mutinous associations.

1.3. Ovid

At various stages in the continuum of poetic production, a work emerges which, even if not the first in its line, attains the kind of status which (for want of a better word) one could call canonical. It therefore comes to play a slightly different role in the process of allusion and poetic remembrance, and can be regarded as a primary, more privileged source for later references in other texts. Catullus 64 is such a work. Ovid's awareness of Catullus in his various presentations of Ariadne provides us with a (famous)²⁶ example of the evocation of poetic memory at its most obvious and most self-conscious. In the *Fasti* he invents²⁷ a story that Bacchus went on to cheat on Ariadne just as Theseus had abandoned her before, and he even makes the heroine quote herself in her former life as neurotic neoteric: *dicebam, memini, 'periure et perfide Theseu!'* ('I remember, I used to say "Perjured and faithless Theseus!"', *Fasti* 3.473). Ovid's repeated use and reuse of Ariadne is quite striking,²⁸ and can in part be put down to the poet's evident interest in the interrelations of texts which at once present their own mythical figures and reanimate the figures created by other poets in the past. Accordingly, Ovid takes his cue from Catullus and the Hellenistic poets to develop a kind of referential signposting. The words he chooses to constitute an 'Alexandrian footnote' are often more obtrusive than those of his models,

²⁶ Cf. Conte (1986), 60–3; J. F. Miller (1993), 153; Barchiesi (1993), 346–50; Hinds (1998), 3–4; Landolfi (1997).

²⁷ At least, it seems likely to me that he has invented this variation. Nonnus, *Dion.* 48.528–63 makes use of a similar conceit, having the ghost of Ariadne appear to reproach Dionysus for taking up with Aura. This could imply that the story appeared in that elusive entity, the 'lost Hellenistic original'. I am not fully convinced, however, by arguments that Ovid cannot have had any influence on Nonnus.

²⁸ I investigate the poet's relationship with Ariadne more fully in Ch. 6.

and thus force the issue of poetic memory further out into the open. In *Fasti* 3, in place of Catullus' references to tradition in formulae such as *nam perhibent olim* ('for they assert that once upon a time', 64.76), he openly uses the words, *en iterum* ('see again', 471 and 2), *dicebam, memini* ('I remember, I used to say', 473), and the blatant, *nomine mutato causa relata mea est* ('with the name changed, my case has been repeated', 476) and, *me miseram, quotiens haec ego uerba loquar?* ('alas, wretched me, how often must I speak these words?', 486). The narrative seal is temporarily punctured as the poet directly reveals the presence of other sources in his own work. I wonder if we might not also perceive a kind of raising of Ariadne's own level of consciousness. Is Ovid here allowing his character to express her exasperation with the endless repetition her story seems to merit? Is this a complaint from the woman made to suffer desertion again and again in so many different texts, revealing her boredom with the stereotype she has become?²⁹

In support of this, from a slightly different angle, comes Ariadne's charming, but futile, wish that this second great betrayal should remain unknown:³⁰

ne sciat hoc quisquam, tacitisque doloribus urar,
ne totiens falli digna fuisse puter!
praecipue cupiam celari Thesea, ne te
consortem culpa gaudeat esse suae.

(*Fasti* 3.489–92)

Let nobody know about this, and let me burn with silent grief, lest I should be thought to deserve deception so many times! Most of all, I'd wish it

²⁹ If such boredom can be perceived, it reveals not so much a poet's real frustration with the limits placed on the material he can use as Ovid's amused reflection on the fact that, Latin poetry being as allusive and self-reflexive as it is, an author needs to be aware of the pitfalls presented by the use of the very reserves of poetic memory which are its life-blood.

³⁰ Compare Propertius 1.18, where the poet chooses a lonely place in which to pour out his grievances against Cynthia unheard: *Haec certe deserta loca et taciturna querenti, | et uacuum Zephyri possidet aura nemus. | hic licet occultos proferre impune dolores, | si modo sola queant saxa tenere fidem* ('This at least is an abandoned and silent place for lamenting, and the breath of the Zephyr occupies the empty grove. Here I may reveal my hidden grief without penalty, if only the lonely rocks can keep faith', 1–4). However, here the poet himself chooses to betray his own secrets by publishing them; Ariadne's position, as written character as well as apparently autonomous speaker, is more vulnerable and more complicated.

hidden from Theseus, lest he might take pleasure in having you as a partner in his guilt.

There is little chance that a complaint of Ariadne's could go unheard, given the fame of her laments and their status as a literary commonplace by this time. As the author of the *Aetna* remarks, *quis non periurae doluit mendacia puppis | desertam uacuo Minoida litore questus?* ('who has not grieved over the lies of the perjured ship and lamented the daughter of Minos abandoned on the empty shore?' 21–2) Indeed, even within the narrative this speech cannot be delivered in private or go unnoticed, since Bacchus, following behind, overhears it. While the grief Ariadne feels is intensely personal, as a poetic character she is doomed not only to repeat her lament, but to repeat it to an audience which may even (as her words here hint) come to feel less sympathetic with every repetition.

In book 8 of the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid plays in a different way with the audience's expectations of Ariadne. The description of the Labyrinth at 8.159–68 seems to be leading up to the story of Theseus and Ariadne, but when it comes, it is compressed in the extreme. In just eight lines we are rushed from the Cretan heroine's assistance of Theseus, to her abandonment by him, then to her subsequent marriage to Bacchus and the catastrophe of her crown:

utque ope uirginea nullis iterata priorum³¹
 ianua difficilis filo est inuenta relecto,
 protinus Aegides rapta Minoide Diam
 uela dedit comitemque suam crudelis in illo
 litore destituit; desertae et multa querenti
 amplexus et opem Liber tulit, utque perenni
 sidere clara foret, sumptam de fronte coronam
 inmisit caelo.

(Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 8.172–9)

And when with the maiden's help the complicated way out, never reached again by anyone before, was found by winding up the thread, Aegeus' son at once set sail for Dia with the stolen daughter of Minos and cruelly

³¹ Perhaps it is not being too obsessively intertextual to find here a little joke: Theseus himself may have been the first to find his way out of the Labyrinth, but this story is hardly *nullis iterata priorum* ('reached again' / 'repeated by nobody before', 172).

abandoned his companion on that shore; Liber brought embraces and help to the abandoned and much-lamenting girl, and that she might be distinguished by an eternal star, he took the crown from her forehead and threw it into the sky.

The whole story is presented in shorthand, but the most striking compression is that of Ariadne's speech: here, in stark contrast to Catullus' text,³² she herself says not a single word, and her complaint can be described by the narrator in just two: *multa querenti* ('much-lamenting', 176). Ariadne's lament is the stuff of cliché now, and thus can go unspoken.

Or can it? On reflection, it seems that a different woman, Scylla, has already made the speech at 8.108–42, stealing Ariadne's thunder, and leaving the narrator disinclined to repeat himself within such a short space by granting the deserted-heroine-on-the-shore speech even to its rightful owner. Ariadne is a victim of her own literary success, perhaps: now every frustrated female can sound just like her.

As a final twist to the tale, it needs to be observed that, although Ariadne appears in Ovid's work with surprising frequency, he never tells the same part of the story at any length more than once. In the *Heroides* the heroine has just been deserted by Theseus, and in the *Ars Amatoria* she is picked up by Bacchus, only to think herself deserted by him in turn in the *Fasti* before finding her place in heaven. These accounts which seem to be, even claim to be, repetition are in fact a continuous, progressing narrative in different styles, and different genres. Ovid is a poet particularly absorbed by the possibilities for (and dangers of) repetition and variation in his work; through his obsession with Ariadne, he is not only able to show how he as a poet can *referre aliter saepe... idem* ('often retell the same thing differently', *Ars Am.* 2.128), but he can also illustrate how a mythical figure can retain her personality and our interest even in the midst of apparently endless action-replay.

³² And in more qualified contrast to Ovid's earlier treatments too. *Heroides* 10 is, in a sense, 152 lines of a lament by Ariadne, but the actual seashore speech she reports is only two lines long (35–6), whilst in the *Ars Amatoria* her protests occupy only a line and a half (1.536–7). Ovid has already toyed with the idea of robbing Ariadne of her lament, then, but this is the first time he (effectively) renders her completely silent. Cf. Ch. 6 for further discussion of these earlier texts.

2. A DIFFERENT STRAND OF MEANING: PERSONAL MEMORY IN THE MYTHS OF THE CRETAN WOMEN

2.1. Ariadne, Catullus, and Dido

Alongside his cerebral, literary treatment of the theme of memory in Catullus' 64th poem comes an investigation of personal remembrance, a theme which receives more emphasis here than in Apollonius, though the seeds are there in the *Argonautica*.³³ The acts of remembering and forgetting acquire a moral colouring, as for the first time in extant treatments of the myth, Theseus' betrayal of Ariadne is explicitly linked with his father's death, which also came about as a result of his forgetfulness.³⁴ In return for his failure to remember her, Ariadne prays that Theseus should come to regret his lack of care, and this curse, uttered by the deserted heroine on the seashore, is later fulfilled by Jupiter (204–6). Ariadne's outrage is understood by the gods who, at least in this heroic world, ensure that such a great crime of faithlessness and forgetfulness will not go unpunished. Courtney (1990) argues that there is a qualitative difference between Theseus' two acts of forgetting, and that the poet means us to see the first, the abandonment of Ariadne, as morally culpable, but the second, the failure to change the sails, as a divinely orchestrated accident. This is true, to a degree: the forgetfulness which clouds the hero's mind as he sails back to Athens is indeed sent by the gods, whereas Theseus apparently managed to forget Ariadne without any divine intervention.³⁵ However, I would like

³³ In particular, cf. *Arg.* 3.1069–70: μνῶεο δ' ... οὐνομα Μηδείης ('remember the name of Medea') and *Arg.* 4.356–7: ἦέ σε πάγχυ λαθιφροσύναις ἐνέηκαν | ἀγλαΐαι...; ('has your splendid success made you utterly forgetful?'). Medea's speech from 4.355–90, itself not without its debt to Euripides, influences Ariadne's complaints at Catullus 64.132–201.

³⁴ That forgetfulness *per se* was associated with Theseus before Catullus is clear from Theocritus, *Id.* 2.45–6: τόσσον ἔχοι λάθας ὅσσον ποκά Θησέα φαντί | ἐν Δία λασθήμεν ἐνπλοκάμω Ἀριάδνας ('may he be forgotten just as they say once Theseus forgot fair-haired Ariadne on Dia').

³⁵ This itself is an important silence on the author's part, ignoring as he does other versions of the myth (cf. Philostratus, *Imagines* 1.15.1 and schol. Theocritus, *Id.* 2.46)

to see a closer connection between the two events and their morality than Courtney does. He quotes lines 207 and 238–40, adding, ‘the mention of winds in the latter passage is purely incidental’ (p. 117). Yet surely in a poem which makes such clear and extensive use of interrelated images and vocabulary, the winds simile must have more than incidental significance.

haec mandata prius constanti mente tenentem
 Thesea ceu pulsae uentorum flamine nubes
 aereum niuei montis liquere cacumen.

(Catullus 64.238–40)

These instructions, which before Theseus held fixed in his mind, left him as clouds driven by a blast of wind leave the airy crest of a snowy mountain.

Similar images are used of the winds blowing away words and promises at lines 59 and 142,³⁶ and I find it hard not to see a connection here.³⁷ The fact that Theseus’ forgetfulness on his return to Athens is brought about by Jupiter enhances the tragedy of the situation, but does not exonerate him entirely from the blame for his father’s death. Ariadne’s revenge, it has been established, is both appropriate and justified, and the sting of it can only be truly felt if Theseus is at least in some sense *responsible* for Aegeus’ suicide. It is the awareness of his own culpability in this case, having failed to recognize it before with Ariadne, that constitutes the punishment as much as the loss of his father:

sic funesta domus ingressus tecta paterna
 morte ferox Theseus, qualem Minoidi luctum
 obtulerat mente immemori, talem ipse recepit.

(Catullus 64.246–8)

where Bacchus makes Theseus forget Ariadne because he wants her for himself. Many artistic representations (both on Greek vases and Roman wall paintings) also, or instead, show Athena calling Theseus away to his duties in Athens.

³⁶ *irrita uentosae linquens promissa procellae* (‘leaving his broken promises to the blustering breezes’, 59); *quae cuncta aerii discernunt irrita uenti* (‘which the airy winds have scattered, all broken’, 142).

³⁷ It is tempting, too, to see a connection between these sentiments and those expressed in poem 70, where the poet bitterly contrasts what Lesbia says with what she does: *dicit: sed mulier cupido quod dicit amanti, | in uento et rapida scribere oportet aqua* (‘she says this: but what a woman says to her eager lover should be written on wind and rushing water’, 3–4).

So fierce Theseus entered the house that mourned his father's death, and he himself received such grief as he had brought to the daughter of Minos with his forgetful mind.

In many ways, the sentiments expressed in Catullus 64 about the inviolability of trust and the sacred nature of friendship fall under the umbrella of Roman morality and the conventions of *amicitia*. Relationships between *amici* (friends)—whether in the political or private sphere—were considered to revolve around balance and reciprocity.³⁸ A favour given must be returned, a request for help should be granted.³⁹ Theseus is thus presented as the despicable figure of a false *amicus*, who has violated not only trust and decency, but also a fundamental social order. But Ariadne also taps into a much older, Greek ethical structure which could be termed Aeschylean in its inescapable rigidity. Within the framework of systems of vengeance, the importance of memory is underlined once again. To take an Aeschylean example, Orestes knows only too well that past crimes are not to be ignored, and his persecution by the Furies is memorably depicted in the *Eumenides*. It is in a loaded allusion to such precedents that Ariadne calls on the Eumenides to take vengeance on Theseus:⁴⁰

quare facta uirum multantes uindice poena
Eumenides, quibus anguino redimita capillo
frons expirantis praeportat pectoris iras,
huc huc aduentate, meas audite querellas,
quas ego, uae misera, extremis proferre medullis
cogor inops, ardens, amenti caeca furore.

(Catullus 64.192–7)

³⁸ This does not necessarily entail that the two *amici* will be of equal social standing. The system of poetic patronage, for example, is a branch of *amicitia*, where, of course, the client poet is considerably lower in the pecking order than his wealthy patron. All the same, the poet's compositions can be termed (euphemistically, perhaps, but importantly) as a gift in return for favours received.

³⁹ For more on *amicitia*, see Brunt (1988), 351–81.

⁴⁰ Medea calls on the Erinyes at *Argonautica* 4.386, which may be the only connection to make here. However, there is no reason why Aeschylus should not be lurking there too. In which case, may there be something significant in the change Catullus makes from Erinyes to Eumenides? Ariadne appeals to dispensers of justice rather than wild persecutors.

Wherefore, Eumenides, who punish the deeds of men with vengeful penalty, whose foreheads crowned with snake-hair proclaim the rushing anger of your hearts, come here to me and hear my laments, which I, ah! wretched, am forced to bring forth from my innermost bones, helpless, ablaze, blind with mad rage.

For Ariadne, and perhaps even for Catullus,⁴¹ Theseus' crime of forgetfulness is of a gravity equivalent to an act of murder, the traditional way to provoke the wrath of the Furies.

It is often remarked that the ethical concerns of the Ariadne ecphrasis reflect a similar obsession with the morality of remembrance in Catullus' personal poems.⁴² Indeed, it is in the story of Ariadne and Theseus that we find the clearest, or at least best satisfied expression of the kind of thoughts the poet expresses elsewhere. Compare, for example, the address to his false friend Alfenus:

Alfene immemor atque unanimis false sodalibus,
iam te nil miseret, dure, tui dulcis amiculi?
iam me prodere, iam non dubitas fallere, perfide?
(Catullus 30.1–3)

Alfenus, forgetful and false to your dearest comrades, now do you have no pity, hard one, for your sweet friend? Now do you not hesitate to betray me, to deceive me, traitor?

The verbal echoes in Theseus' departure and Ariadne's cry are clear:

immemor at iuuenis fugiens pellit uada remis,
irrita uentosae linquens promissa procellae.
(Catullus 64.58–9)

But the forgetful youth beat the shallows with his oars as he fled, leaving his broken promises to the blustering breeze.

sicine me patriis auectam, perfide, ab aris,
perfide, deserto liquisti in litore, Theseu?

⁴¹ Ariadne's revenge is brought about by Jupiter rather than the Furies themselves, which could be seen as an argument for viewing Theseus' crime as one which, however serious, does not merit the intervention of these terrifying creatures. Nevertheless, as I commented above, the narrator's comments imply that he sees poetic justice at work.

⁴² This similarity has led some to argue that there is a close personal identification between Catullus and his heroine: e.g. Putnam (1961); Forsyth (1976).

sicine discedens neglecto numine diuum,
 immemor a! deuota domum periuria portas?
 (Catullus 64.132–5)

Is this, traitor, how you have carried me from my family altars, traitor, and left me on an abandoned shore, Theseus? Is this how, leaving without thought for the gods' will, forgetful ah! you carry your cursed perjury home?

Similar sentiments are voiced in several of the poems describing Catullus' relationship with Lesbia, such as 70, 72, 73, and 76.⁴³ Importantly, though, the closural elements present in poem 64 are absent from these, as they are absent from poem 30. That is, the fulfilment of Ariadne's prayers for revenge and the subsequent appearance of Bacchus, representing the Cretan girl's happier future, provide a pointed underlining of the Catullan ethical ideal that faithfulness should be rewarded and that wrongdoing should not go unpunished. However, when the poet himself (or his outraged persona) utters an Ariadne-like threat (*si tu oblitus es, at di meminerunt, meminit Fides, | quae te ut paeniteat postmodo facti faciet tui*—'even if you have forgotten, the gods remember and Faith remembers, who will ensure that one day you will repent what you have done', 30.11–12), the poem has to end there with silence, and without emphatic fulfilment.⁴⁴

The morality of memory is brought to the fore once again by Vergil, most obviously in his treatment of the love affair of Dido and Aeneas. There are many other literary models feeding into the fourth book of the *Aeneid*, but Catullus 64 is clearly a major influence, and the image of Ariadne deserted on the beach often overlays that of the Carthaginian queen. From the opening lines of the book, the memory of Ariadne is conjured up: *At regina graui iamdudum saucia cura | uulnus alit uenis et caeco carpitur igni* ('But the queen, now for some time wounded by painful cares, nourishes the wound in her veins and is gnawed by hidden fire', 4.1–2) recalls *multiplices animo uoluebat*

⁴³ I assume that 73 is a Lesbia poem, reading *quae* with Birt in line 6.

⁴⁴ The closest approximation to the explicit fulfilment of the poet's need for revenge that I can find comes in poem 78b. This fragment appears to achieve its aim to punish the man who has defiled a pure girl with his kisses by exploiting the idea of poetry preserving infamy as well as virtue: *uerum id non impune feres: nam te omnia saecula | noscent et, qui sis, fama loquetur anus* ('but you will not get away with it: all the ages will know you and fame in her old age will tell who you are', 78b.3–4).

saucia curas ('wounded, she turned her many cares in her mind', 64.250).⁴⁵ When she hears of Aeneas' imminent departure, Dido rushes through the city like a bacchant, animating the earlier simile of Catullus' Ariadne, who is *saxea ut effigies bacchantis* ('like a stone statue of a bacchant', 64.61). She delivers to Aeneas' face a version of the speech Ariadne delivers to the waves over which Theseus is sailing, making use of one of the key words of Catullan immorality: *perfidus* ('false', *Aen.* 4.305, 366; also 421—in her speech to Anna).⁴⁶ After Aeneas has made a characteristically blundering attempt to calm the queen and excuse his own behaviour, Dido replies with a speech of impressive savagery, once more resting on her Catullan model, picking up Ariadne's doubts about Theseus' genealogy at Catullus 64.154–7:⁴⁷

nec tibi diua parens generis nec Dardanus auctor,
perfide, sed duris genuit te cautibus horrens
Caucasus Hyrcanaeque admorunt ubera tigres.
(Vergil, *Aeneid* 4.365–7)

Your mother was no goddess, nor Dardanus your ancestor, traitor, but the Caucasus, bristling with hard crags, gave birth to you and Hyrcanian tigers gave you their teats to suck.

Dido makes much of the importance of trust and the remembrance of good deeds done, having much in common with the Catullan position. However, Vergil also problematizes this moral system, raising questions more directly than his predecessor both about the

⁴⁵ The *caeco* ('hidden/blind') also brings to mind Ariadne's description of herself as *inops, ardens, amenti caeca furore* ('helpless, ablaze, blind with mad rage', 197), and the subsequent fog which clouds Theseus' mind: *ipse autem caeca mentem caligine Theseus | consitus oblito dimisit pectore cuncta* ('but Theseus himself, his mind filled with blind fog, banished all this from his forgetful heart', 207–8). These correspondences are regularly noted by the commentaries.

⁴⁶ In fact, Dido is able to make use of other Catullan poems expressing similar sentiments, too, perhaps recalling poem 76 with her plaintive, *si bene quid de te merui, fuit aut tibi quicquam | dulce meum* ('if I have done you any service, or if anything of mine was sweet to you', 4.317–18).

⁴⁷ Cf. also Catullus 60: *Num te leaena montibus Libystinis | aut Scylla latrans infima inguinum parte | tam mente dura procreauit ac taetra, | ut supplicis uocem in nouissimo casu | contemptam haberes, a nimis fero corde?* ('Surely it was not a lioness which gave birth to you in the Libyan mountains, or did Scylla barking with the part below her loins make you with a mind so hard and foul that you should hold the voice of a suppliant in his last need in contempt, ah too savage-hearted?')

security of Dido/Ariadne's moral high ground, and about the swift-ness and exactness of retribution. The question of Dido's own *culpa* (guilt) has been much discussed,⁴⁸ and is too complex to address here fully, but I would like to concentrate on one particular aspect, her 'betrayal' of Sychaeus, and the complicating effect this has on her own demand for revenge.

In book 1 of the *Aeneid*, Cupid has been set to work by Venus to ensure that Dido feels nothing but goodwill towards Aeneas, and here we are presented with an interesting presentation of the onset of forgetfulness:

at memor ille
matris Acidaliae paulatim abolere Sychaeum
incipit et uiuo temptat praeuertere amore
iam pridem resides animos desuetaque corda.
(Vergil, *Aeneid* 1.719–22)

But Cupid, mindful of his Acidalian mother began little by little to banish thoughts of Sychaeus and tried to turn with living love her mind which was calm before and her unpractised heart.

The cruel irony of these lines is clear: Cupid is *memor*, mindful and respectful of his mother's commands, yet the very fulfilment of his duty rests on the erosion of Dido's own capacity for memory, the seat (or a seat) of her *pietas*. This forgetfulness persists and grows as the story goes on, and Aeneas too is so much infected with it as to treat Carthage as though it were to be his new home. The two lovers are described by Fama as *regnum immemores turpique cupidine captos* ('forgetful of their kingdoms and captivated by shameful desire', 4.194). They are both in a way like Theseus: the *caeco... igni* ('hidden fire' 4.2) mentioned before recalls both Ariadne's passion and Theseus' forgetfulness. Vergil brings out a similarity between the traitors only hinted at in Catullus. The guilt and torment which Dido suffers, and makes herself suffer, because of her perceived betrayal of the dead Sychaeus⁴⁹ reveals her to be a 'Theseus' with a conscience, aware that

⁴⁸ e.g. Rudd (1976), 32–53; Haury (1981).

⁴⁹ This act of Dido's is surely more excusable than Ariadne and Medea's betrayals of their living parents and brothers. Perhaps Vergil is reflecting and continuing the diminution of culpability which I have already discussed in connection with Medea (the 'worst') and Ariadne (who is not as bad).

she is just a link in a chain of forgetfulness and treachery which must inevitably be punished.

Aeneas, too, is conscious of the importance of memory, even if he still fails to act completely in accordance with the demands of *pietas*, at least as Dido would perceive them. In response to Dido's passionate reproaches, he says, *nec me meminisse pigebit Elissae | dum memor ipse mei, dum spiritus hos regit artus* ('I will not be ashamed to remember Elissa, as long as I am mindful of myself, as long as my spirit controls these limbs', 4.335–6). In this respect, it seems that he is one up on Theseus. All the same, saying is one thing, and doing is another. As an oblique comment, perhaps, on the likelihood (or otherwise) of our hero keeping to the spirit of his words, Aeneas' promise to remember carries uncomfortable memories of the speech Apollonius' Jason makes to Medea shortly before he faces the fire-breathing bulls: *καὶ λήν οὐ νύκτας δόιομαι οὐδέ ποτ' ἤμαρ | σεῦ ἐπιλήσεσθαι προφυγῶν μόρον* ('and truly if I escape death, I think I will never forget you by night or day', *Arg.* 3.1079–80). The same Jason, of course, for all his assurances that Medea's help will not go unappreciated, later abandons her in pursuit of a more respectable future for himself and his family. Moreover, one might question the tone of Aeneas' words at this point. His promise echoes his own rather more gallant speech on his first meeting with Dido:

in freta dum fluuii current, dum montibus umbrae
lustrabunt conuexa, polus dum sidera pascet,
semper honos nomenque tuum laudesque manebunt,
quae me cumque uocant terrae.

(*Aeneid* 1.607–10)

As long as rivers flow to the seas, as long as the shadows move in the hollows of the mountains, as long as the sky feeds the stars, your name and honour and praises will always remain, whatever lands call me.

When recalled, this far more fulsome and flattering pledge makes Aeneas' later *nec me . . . pigebit* ('I will not be ashamed', 4.335) sound grudging rather than soothingly understated. Besides, the muted echo of his earlier words, uttered *before* their love affair began, when Aeneas did not find it so difficult to thank Dido for the help she gave him and his comrades, gives the impression that he would like to think that their association remains cordial and uncomplicated. Like other

unreliable lovers before him, he implicitly tries to recast his relationship as one of harmless flirtation, reducing his guilt by belittling its importance. Like Jason and Theseus, he may, after all, prove to respect the morality of remembrance far less than he should.

What, then, of Dido's curse (4.607–29)?⁵⁰ She utters it, like Ariadne, in the full grip of passion and in the conviction that the gods and justice will ensure that Aeneas will not escape the consequences of his perfidy. Yet Vergil gives no clear-cut response to this and makes no comment about its fulfilment or failure. In one respect, the curse does seem to come to fruition: Dido stirs up a lasting enmity between her people and those of Aeneas (*tum uos, o Tyrii, stirpem et genus omne futurum | exercete odiis*—‘then you, Tyrians, must harry his line, and his whole future race with your hatred’, 4.622–3; *pugnent ipsique nepotesque*—‘let they themselves and their descendants fight’, 629). The poet has already made it clear to us that in the future there will be hostility between Carthage and Rome (*Aen.* 1.12–22), and again in book 10, the conflict is predicted by Jupiter (10.11–14). However, I think it is less clear how many of the evils Dido wishes upon Aeneas himself (4.615–20) actually come to pass, at least in the spirit she intended.⁵¹ The picture given of Aeneas forced to see Iulus torn from his embrace and his friends dying in battle could be taken to describe the war in Latium, but presents it in rather more negative terms than the subsequent narrative allows. The wish for Aeneas' early death, it could be argued, is also fulfilled in tradition, and alluded to within the poem by Jupiter's tactful formulation at *Aen.* 1.265–6: *tertia dum Latio regnantem uiderit aestas, | ternaue transierit Rutulis hiberna subactis* (‘until the third summer has seen him ruling over Latium, and the third winter passed with the Rutulians subdued’). Aeneas will only survive for three more years once he reaches Latium. Yet this fulfilment of Dido's curse, if it can qualify as such, bears none of the immediacy, the sense of direct consequence provided by the confirming authorial voice of Catullus: *qualem Minoidi luctum | obtulerat mente immemori, talem ipse recepit*

⁵⁰ Cf. O'Hara (1990a), 94–111 and Khan (1994) for fuller discussion.

⁵¹ Though see Lyne (1987), 128–32 for a persuasive argument that Aeneas at *Aen.* 8.18–25 is ‘in a turmoil of Dido-like anxiety in response, it might seem, to a Dido-uttered curse’ (p. 131).

(‘he himself received such grief as he had brought to the daughter of Minos with his forgetful mind’, 64.247–8). The moral truths of the *Aeneid* are more obscure than those of Catullus, and Dido as a latter-day Ariadne cannot hope to find the Cretan’s fate replayed precisely in her own.⁵²

2.2. Phaedra’s Inheritance

In the story of Phaedra, we see another angle on personal memory, as she recalls not services rendered and duties owed, but the dark tragedies of her family history, which seem to make her present trouble all the more grotesque and all the more inevitable. She starts to remember in Euripides, and the recollection continues to haunt her in subsequent manifestations, reaching a crescendo of paranoia in Seneca. I will discuss this aspect of Seneca’s play and of Ovid, *Heroides* 4 more fully in Chapter 7, but a preliminary tracing of the history of Phaedra’s memories seems appropriate here.

Euripides’ *Hippolytus* gives us the first clear indication of such self-consciousness about the pattern of family sin:

Φα. ὦ τλήμων, οἶον, μῆτηρ, ἡράσθης ἔρον.
 Τρ. ὃν ἔσχε ταύρου, τέκνον; ἢ τί φῆς τόδε;
 Φα. σύ τ’, ὦ τάλαιν’ ὄμαιμε, Διονύσου δάμαρ.
 Τρ. τέκνον, τί πάσχεις; συγγόνους κακορροθεῖς;
 Φα. τρίτη δ’ ἐγὼ δύστηνος ὡς ἀπόλλυμαι.
 (Euripides, *Hippolytus* 337–41)

PH. Oh mother, what a wretched passion you felt!

NU. The one for the bull, child? Or what is it that you are saying?

PH. And you, my poor sister, Dionysus’ wife.

NU. Child, what’s wrong? Are you slandering your family?

PH. And I, the third unlucky one, how I am undone!

At this stage in the play, before her love is out in the open, Phaedra’s allusion takes the form of a cryptic riddle for the Nurse, and a clever reference for the audience. One might not immediately associate the

⁵² One might also contrast the heroines’ afterlives. Ariadne, married to a god, is catasterized, or at least represented among the stars; Dido lurks in the Underworld with the ghosts of women like Phaedra and Pasiphae, glimpsed dimly like the cloud-covered moon (*Aen.* 6.453–4).

protagonist's adulterous/incestuous desires with those of Pasiphae for the bull and of Ariadne for Dionysus, yet Phaedra clearly sees the pattern (τρίτῃ δ' ἐγώ 'and I the third'). Once made, it is a persuasive association. Yet it also raises a question: why does she refer to Ariadne as wife of Dionysus rather than the heroine deserted by Theseus? Perhaps the most attractive interpretation (offered by Barrett (1964), 222–3) is that we have here a reference to the Ariadne of the *Odyssey*, who seems to have abandoned Dionysus for Theseus.⁵³ Through reference to an older and less common version of her sister's story, Phaedra thus places herself in a line of female transgression and impiety. Her inheritance of sexual sin is not presented as an excuse for present behaviour, but rather as a terrible recognition of a family curse; a recognition which comes too late to prevent the movement towards death and disgrace.

In Euripides' first *Hippolytus* play, however, Phaedra was (notoriously) far less of a tortured, honest soul, and far more an unscrupulous, shameless woman in pursuit of the gratification of her illicit passion. It is interesting, therefore, to find there an expression of the inescapability of sin when divine will and inherited tendencies combine:

ὦ δαῖμον, ὥς οὐκ ἔστ' ἀποστροφὴ βροτοῖς
τῶν ἐμφύτων τε καὶ θεηλάτων κακῶν.
(Euripides, fr. 444 N)

There is no escape for mortals from inborn and god-sent evils.

Barrett (1964), 22 suggests that these lines come as a comment towards the end of the play when the truth has been discovered and Phaedra has committed suicide. Certainly it may seem unlikely that a shameless Phaedra would offer this verdict on herself, yet it is not beyond the realms of possibility, as later evinced by Seneca's *Phaedra*. Whoever speaks these lines, however, it is apparent that the theme of inherited and god-sent evil was treated in the earlier play too.⁵⁴ Even a brazen, mendacious whore⁵⁵ has her past and her reasons for being as she is.

⁵³ For fuller discussion, see above, Sect. 1.1.

⁵⁴ Reckford (1974) remarks, 'Euripides is using "Crete" to represent, not just sexual passion, but the inevitability of moral failure' (p. 325).

⁵⁵ To use Aristophanes' term for Euripides' Phaedra: cf. *Frogs* 1043.

The pattern of Phaedra's family inheritance is picked up later by Ovid, who cleverly extends the line (as elsewhere) to include Europa:⁵⁶

Forsitan hunc generis fato reddamus amorem,
 et Venus ex tota gente tributa petat.
 Iuppiter Europen—prima est ea gentis origo—
 dilexit, tauro dissimulante deum.
 Pasiphae mater, decepto subdita tauro,
 enixa est utero crimen onusque suo.
 perfidus Aegides, ducentia fila secutus,
 curua meae fugit tecta sororis ope.
 en, ego nunc, ne forte parum Minoia credar,
 in socias leges ultima gentis eo!
 hoc quoque fatale est: placuit domus una duabus;
 me tua forma capit, capta parente soror.
 Thesides Theseusque duas rapuere sorores—
 ponite de nostra bina tropaea domo!

(Ovid, *Heroides* 4.53–66)

Perhaps this love is the price I pay for my family's destiny, and Venus takes her tax from the whole line. Jupiter loved Europa—that is the first beginning of our line—with a bull's form disguising the god. My mother Pasiphae, mounted by the bull she deceived, gave birth to her reproach and burden from her own womb. The faithless son of Aegeus, following the guiding thread, escaped the winding house with my sister's help. And look, now I, lest I should be thought not enough the daughter of Minos, am the last to come under the shared laws of my family! This too is fated: one house has pleased two of us; your beauty has captivated me, and my sister was captivated by your father. Theseus' son and Theseus have carried away two sisters—set up a double trophy from our house!

Whereas Euripides starts the line of descent with Pasiphae, Ovid points out that in the previous generation, Europa had already started the trend for bizarre love affairs. Jupiter had taken on the form of a bull to trick his way into the embrace of this girl who would become Minos' mother. Then Minos' wife Pasiphae in turn had a love affair with a bull, though this time she was the one who was the agent of deception, hiding within a wooden cow for the animal to

⁵⁶ Cf. Scylla at *Met.* 8.120–37.

mount.⁵⁷ Ariadne's abandonment by Theseus is the next item in the list, made parallel to Phaedra's love for Hippolytus: as the elder sister fell victim to the father, so the younger sister positions herself as (would-be) victim of the son. The correspondences are neat and compelling, and Phaedra is now able to explore with wit, eloquence, and above all familiarity, the repetitive cycle of Cretan sin which for Euripides' Phaedra had been the focus of newly horrified recognition.

By the time Phaedra is treated by Seneca, then, her character has already long been associated with ideas of an inherited tendency to sin, and this is developed into one of the major themes of his play.⁵⁸ When Phaedra first speaks to the Nurse of her sickness, she remarks:

fatale miserae matris agnosco malum:
peccare noster nouit in siluis amor.
(Seneca, *Phaedra* 113–14)

I recognize the deadly misfortune of my wretched mother: our love has learned to sin in the woods.

And then:

stirpem perosa Solis inuisi Venus
per nos catenas uindicat Martis sui
suasque, probris omne Phoebeum genus
onerat nefandis: nulla Minois leui
defuncta amore est, iungitur semper nefas.
(Seneca, *Phaedra* 124–8)

Despising the offspring of the hated Sun, Venus takes vengeance through us for her chains and those of her Mars, and loads the whole family of Phoebus with unspeakable disgrace: no woman of Minos' has ever got away with a gentle love; sin is always joined to it.

Ovid's Phaedra had hinted at some special involvement of Venus in her family's fate (*Venus ex tota gente tributa petat*—'Venus takes her

⁵⁷ For a fuller examination of the parallels between Europa and Pasiphae, see Ch. 2.

⁵⁸ Cf. the Nurse, *memorque matris metue concubitus nouos* ('remembering your mother, have fear of strange unions', 170); *prodigia totiens orbis insueta audiet, | natura totiens legibus cedet suis, | quotiens amabit Cressa?* ('will the earth hear of monstrous prodigies, will nature relax her laws every time a Cretan woman falls in love?', 175–7); *NU. patris memento. PH. meminimus matris simul* (Nurse: 'Remember your father'. Phaedra: 'I remember my mother at the same time', 242).

tax from the whole line', *Her.* 4.54), but gave no sign of knowing a reason *why* the goddess should want to persecute the women of Minos' house in this way. Now, at last, Phaedra can see why she, her sister, and her mother should find themselves victims of Venus: their ancestor, the Sun, revealed her affair with Mars, and this is her way of avenging his indiscretion. This awareness of a divine cause of her love, and her sense of the futility of trying to be anything different, can sometimes become distorted into a sighing sort of self-justification. In contrast to Euripides' Phaedra, who does not want to claim mitigating circumstances, only to recognize the pattern, Seneca's heroine finds in this recognition an excuse not to fight her desires, but instead simply to acknowledge the power they have over her:

Et ipsa nostrae fata cognosco domus:
fugienda petimus; sed mei non sum potens.
(Seneca, *Phaedra* 698–9)

I too recognize the destiny of our house: we seek what should be shunned; but I have no control over myself.

When Phaedra approaches Hippolytus to explain her position, she further elaborates the spectre of history repeating itself, speaking of her stepson as the youthful face of Theseus (646–50), and claiming that her sister Ariadne would rather have fallen for Hippolytus than his father, had both come to Crete to fight the Minotaur. Phaedra is so like her sister (and so like her mother too), that their passions appear interchangeable: *domus sorores una corripuit duas, | te genitor, at me gnatus* ('one house carried away two sisters, the father you, and me the son', 665–6). Memory, inheritance, and desire form a potent and complex combination.

Once again, we find that personal and poetic memory intertwine. The memories possessed by Seneca's Phaedra are not only personal but textual, and her sin seems inevitable on both levels. While Ariadne in Catullus 64 bears the textual memory of Apollonius' and Euripides' Medea, she herself is not Medea, and this, as we have seen, can undermine the strength of the association. The textual memories which feed into Seneca's Phaedra, however, are mainly (though not exclusively) memories of her former incarnations as Phaedra. Not only is she, as a character, aware of the family history

of unhappy love which is set to be her inheritance, but as a literary creation she draws on sources which have already described her fall from grace. Her love and death are, as it were, over-determined, doubly remembered, set in the banks of both personal and poetic memory before they even happen.

3. ROMAN MEMORIES

The poets' twofold focus on memory in the myths of the Cretan women is neither incidental nor unique. These are stories which invite, even provoke, such a focus, it is true, but Roman culture more widely was in any case fascinated by memory. The Roman present was frequently viewed in relation to the Roman past: a past which was both a blessing—example and inspiration—and a curse. Tales of the illustrious Romans of history were treasured and repeated, used to shape the characters of the young. Yet the dismal memories of Roman vice, strife, and disaster provided an ever-looming counterpart to the sunnier self-image of the city. The cycles of corruption and civil war which dominated the recent history of the Augustan poets made it more difficult than ever to decide whether to preserve the memory of Rome's troubles as a warning for future generations, or to efface that memory in an effort to exorcize the past.⁵⁹ All the same, Augustus' projects of renewal (both moral and physical) relied heavily—and openly—on the past, albeit in a scrubbed-up and carefully shaped form.⁶⁰ His moral reforms heralded a return to the good old values, the moral core which had made Rome great; his building projects reconfirmed Roman piety to the gods and celebrated Roman sophistication.⁶¹ Questions of how to remember the past and how to memorialize

⁵⁹ Of course, they did both. For Vergil's various reactions to the civil wars, cf. *Ecl.* 1 and 9; *Geor.* 1.463–514; *Aen.* 6.826–35. In Horace, *Epodes* 9 we find a clear expression of the opposing impulses: to celebrate Octavian's victory over Antony, or to drown all the sorrows and worries aggravated by the civil strife with a good bottle of wine.

⁶⁰ Cf. Zanker (1988), 101–66.

⁶¹ Augustus famously boasted that he found Rome made of brick and left it made of marble (Suetonius, *Augustus* 28.3).

the past were of enduring importance,⁶² and Rome itself became a repository of memories.

It could be argued that something of the Roman obsession with the concrete memorializing of the past in buildings and inscriptions has rubbed off on Ovid's Ariadne. When contemplating her future as unburied bones and Theseus' as a much-applauded hero, Ariadne is driven to use the imagery of the physical, as well as mental, memorial:

ossa superstabant uolucres inhumata marinae?
 haec sunt officiis digna sepulcra meis?
 ibis Cecropios portus patriaeque receptus,
 cum steteris turbae celsus in ore tuae
 et bene narraris letum taurique uirique
 sectaque per dubias saxea tecta uias,
 me quoque narrato sola tellure relictam!
 non ego sum titulis subripienda tuis.

(Ovid, *Heroides* 10.123–30)

Will the sea birds stoop over my unburied bones? Is this the tomb worthy of my services? You will go to Cecrops' harbour and be welcomed back to your fatherland; when you have stood aloft before the gaze of your followers and prettily told of the death of the bull-man and the rocky maze cut through wandering paths, you should tell of me too, left in a lonely land! I should not be erased from the record of your exploits.

Ariadne's unburied bones will, ironically, be the only marker of her grave, and the only living things who will know her by this marker will be the birds. Theseus has not only left Ariadne to die, having

⁶² An interesting comment on the politics of memory in Augustan Rome can be found in Horace, *Odes* 3.5. There, in response to the fear that Romans captured at Carrhae might forget their Roman identity and values, the poet offers the story of Regulus, an exemplum from history. Sent by the Carthaginians to persuade the Romans to ransom the men taken in war, Regulus forbids the Senate to assent to any such thing and, in a supremely Roman gesture of self-abnegation, returns to certain torture and death rather than be remembered as a coward. His apparent rejection of all that binds him to the city—his wife, his children, his civil rights (*Odes* 3.5.41–4)—confirms, in the style of a truly Stoic paradox, his undeniable right to be regarded as Roman. Moreover, he acts as he does not purely because this seems to him the noble course of action at the time, but because he, at least, is acutely conscious of the power of memory and example. In the future, he believes, Romans will be driven by the remembrance of his actions to behave nobly themselves.

forgotten what he owes her,⁶³ but he has also left her without a memorial. Ariadne imagines Theseus' triumphant return home,⁶⁴ and thinks of him telling the admiring crowds of his deeds—killing the Minotaur, escaping the Labyrinth. As Ariadne's train of thought starts out, Theseus is pictured as a returning hero who relates his own adventures, but in the final pentameter, it seems that Ariadne envisages that these adventures could even be written down. Theseus not only tells his tale to a receptive audience, like Odysseus or Aeneas, but even appears to merit the treatment awarded to a hero of Roman times, whose achievements are recorded beneath his statue, or on a monument raised in his honour.⁶⁵ If Theseus is to get his monument, says Ariadne, her name should be carved alongside his. Or, to put it another way, if *she* were to tell the story, hers would be a very different version from his.

And here comes the twist. Memories, like monuments and memorials, appear to point to particular facts, particular events. It is perfectly possible, though, for two people to remember the same event very differently, to interpret the same monument in opposite ways.⁶⁶ For all the Romans' insistence on the importance of memory, for all their foundation of moralizing rhetoric on the exemplum,⁶⁷ for all their feverish building of monuments and carving of inscriptions, they knew very well that memory can fade, be distorted, be

⁶³ The opening couplet quoted here clearly harks back to Catullan concerns of the morality of memory: Ariadne does not deserve to be treated so badly by the man she has saved. The language (note in particular *officiis*—'services'), like Catullus', taps into the vocabulary of *amicitia*.

⁶⁴ And here she contrasts with Catullus' Ariadne, who wants to ensure that no such joyful homecoming will be open to Theseus.

⁶⁵ As an added strand to this idea of concrete memorialization, perhaps we could even see here an allusion to a different meaning of *titulus*—the title of a book. Theseus' narrative of his exploits, couched in a literary form, would naturally be given the title *Theseis*; Ariadne wants her name to be on the title-page too. Although the first extant (and unambiguous) use of *titulus* in this sense comes from a slightly later period, it is Ovidian (cf. *Tristia* 1.1.7; *Ex Ponto* 1.1.17), which makes me feel less hesitant in offering this extra interpretation.

⁶⁶ See the excellent discussion of monuments in Rome in Fowler (2000), 193–217, along with Edwards (1996), 27–43, a chapter (also excellent) entitled 'The City of Memories'.

⁶⁷ Cf. Edwards (1993), 21–2.

obliterated.⁶⁸ To take a literary example, Vergil's evasiveness on the subject of whether or not Dido *was* married to Aeneas might well be seen, in part, as a response to the apparent moral and factual certainty of Catullus' Ariadne: even the fact of a marriage, the substance of a promise, can be open to dispute. Again, on the doors of Apollo's temple at Cumae, Daedalus has carved the figures of Pasiphae and the Minotaur, glossed as *Veneris monimenta nefandae* ('reminders of/memorials to an unspeakable passion', *Aen.* 6.26), alongside that perennial symbol of the perils of interpretation, the Labyrinth.⁶⁹ *Monimentum* is rarely an easy word to interpret in Vergil,⁷⁰ but here the difficulties multiply. Is it the picture that is the monument, or Pasiphae and the Minotaur themselves? Is this a cautionary tale, as it were,⁷¹ or a sad celebration of the love-cursed Cretan queen and her monstrous child? Or is it a meta-textual nod to poetic predecessors?⁷² What, moreover, might the poem's internal reader, Aeneas, make of the scenes he sees? Even something so much more solid than a word can be viewed differently, seen as a reminder of different things.

Memory is desperately important in Rome, inseparable from Roman identity and Roman literary history alike. The literary world, so bound up with the past, reflects the social world, where memory also works to preserve and shape traditions. Ariadne's cries

⁶⁸ A stark illustration of the obliteration of memory can be found in the convention of *damnatio memoriae*. Should it be decreed that a dead man was the enemy of the Senate, various options were open to those who desired even his memory to be killed off: portraits might be destroyed, or their display made subject to a fine; his name could be struck off inscriptions; a man's *praenomen* (forename) could even be forbidden in his family. As ever, though, this practice can throw up some ironies: history has actually preserved for us the names and deeds of some of those sentenced with *damnatio memoriae* (e.g. Sejanus, Messalina, Commodus, and Elagabalus).

⁶⁹ I discuss the Labyrinth further in Ch. 3, Sect. 2.2.

⁷⁰ Indeed, *monimenta* crop up at many of the most pivotal and complicated passages of the *Aeneid*: e.g. 4.498; 8.312, 356; 12.945. For other occurrences (not without complexity themselves), cf. 3.102, 486; 5.538, 572; 6.512.

⁷¹ With this in mind, it may be worth noting the etymological link between *monumentum* and *monéo* ('I warn'), as set out by the *OLD* and *TLL*.

⁷² Epiphraisis itself is frequently the locus of intense referentiality, representing (in a text) a concretized form of other, earlier texts. When the object being described is itself termed a *monumentum*, the move is one which slips further into the allusive abyss: poems themselves can be characterized as monuments (as, most famously, Horace does in *Odes* 3.30). Cf. Fowler (2000), 86–107; Barchiesi (2001), 135–9.

of anger and disillusionment echo the language of Roman obligations and transform the *quid pro quo* of *amicitia* into eloquent, passionate reproach. From a different angle, Phaedra's gloomy reflections on her inheritance serve as a warning: to recognize (and even to despise) the past is not necessarily to be able to avoid it. To recall what 'really' happened is not to know how others will remember an event. And to remember one text in another is not to repeat precisely what has gone before.

The Call of the Wild

In ancient myth and literature, the island of Crete projects intricate images of darkness and light, embracing obscurity and contradiction. This land of a hundred cities, the cradle of the law and the epitome of civilization, is also closely associated with civilization's antithesis: wildness, savagery, and the obstinate refusal to bow to the laws of man and even the laws of nature. For the Roman poets, members of a culture whose own sense of identity rests on complex reflections on law and lawlessness, sophistication and savagery, the ambiguous Crete of myth provides a fertile and fascinating arena in which to explore ideas of wildness and civilization.

In any investigation of the theme of the wild and untamed in Cretan mythology, the image of the bull is one which keeps on returning to play a series of cameo roles. Starting from the bull disguise which Jupiter adopts to trick Europa into crossing the sea with him to Crete,¹ the bull reappears as the fine creature in Minos' herds which becomes the object of Pasiphae's lust, then (in part) as the Minotaur, the two-formed product of their union, which both brings Theseus to Crete and threatens his life.² Later, the bull rears its head again as the supernatural monster which rises from the sea and finally destroys Hippolytus after Phaedra's false accusations of rape. The bull represents ferocity, wild strength, and even divinity³—all elements which recur more widely in these myths where the barriers

¹ Or perhaps the image even goes back as far as Io, Europa's great-great-grandmother, who was herself transformed into a cow. The link between these two is brought out in Moschus' *Europa*.

² For Theseus, there is also the bull of Marathon to conquer.

³ In addition to various bulls' connections with divinity (whether Jupiter in bovine form, or the bull from the sea sent by Neptune) in the mythical context,

between nature and civilization and even between human and animal become less solid, more difficult to preserve.

1. PASIPHAË'S INDIVIDUALITY (AND THE PARALLEL POLYPHONTE)

Myths about intercourse between humans and animals are not as unusual as we may think they ought to be. There are many myths involving sexual encounters between women and beasts, and sometimes the women too take on an animal form. Overwhelmingly, however, these are tales of gods in disguise.⁴ The women are frequently tricked or taken unawares: attracted by apparently harmless creatures, they unwittingly lay themselves open to sexual attack. It could be argued that the act of sexual union with an animal points to the 'otherness' of the young woman and the wild nature of female sexuality.⁵ I am certainly tempted to see some of this in such stories, yet when they are compared with Pasiphaë, who actively sought a union with a real animal, these other women start to seem much more civilized.

The offspring of such unions often turn out to be great heroes;⁶ it is the divinity of the rapist, rather than his temporary bestial state, which is of greater importance in the long run. There are exceptions to this pattern, such as Philyra, who was raped by Cronus in the form of a stallion. She gives birth to Chiron the Centaur, whose appearance is evidence of his mixed parentage. Nevertheless, this half man-half

note the importance of the bull in religious cult practice on the island. Cf. Willetts (1962), 99–103; 108–13; 220–1.

⁴ e.g. Antiope, raped by Zeus as a satyr; Asterie, as a quail, by Zeus as an eagle; Canace, by Poseidon as a bull; Demeter, as a horse, by Poseidon as a horse; Dryope, by Apollo as a snake; Leda, by Zeus as a swan; Medusa, by Poseidon as a bird; Melanthis, by Poseidon as a dolphin; Nemesis, as a goose, by Zeus as an eagle; Philyra, by Cronus as a stallion. In an interesting example from a mythologizing historical tradition, Olympias, the mother of Alexander the Great, coupled with Zeus in the form of a snake (cf. Plutarch, *Alexander* 3.1–2).

⁵ See Robson (1997).

⁶ For example, Leda gives birth to Helen and the Dioscuri, and Antiope to Zethus and Amphion.

horse has an infinitely more civilized disposition than his fellow Centaurs, who are renowned for their violence and drunken licentiousness. Chiron is full of wisdom and cares for and trains some of the greatest heroes, including Achilles and Jason.⁷

Pasiphae's situation, in many ways analogous to those of other women who have sex with animals, is also very different in three important ways. First, she is a married woman who has (probably) already had ordinary children by her human husband. Secondly, far from being taken unawares, it is she who seeks out the bull's favours and who uses extraordinary and deceptive means to requite her passion. Thirdly, the resulting child, the Minotaur, significantly retains half the appearance and all of the savagery of his father. The combination in him of the human and the animal seems only to make him more gruesome and terrifying. Unlike Chiron, he is not softened by his share in humanity; rather, he reacts against it and becomes the destroyer (and in some sources even the devourer) of the Athenians who are handed over to him.

This kind of ferocity is also found in the children of Polyphonte, Agrius ('Wild Man') and Oreius ('Mountain Man'). Their mother provides another literary example of a mortal woman who actively seeks sexual intercourse with a real animal. Her story, found in Antoninus Liberalis 21, fits the familiar pattern of the young woman who spurns worship of Aphrodite and turns to Artemis instead.⁸ In frustration, the love goddess inspires her with a passion for a bear. Once Polyphonte has committed the act and become pregnant, she is rejected by Artemis, and flees back to her parents' house where she gives birth to two large and vicious sons. They respect neither man nor god, and develop a taste for human flesh. Zeus grows tired of them, and while Ares (who happens to be their great-grandfather) manages to save them from being killed, Hermes is sent to change them into birds. Polyphonte herself is turned into a *στύξ*, a kind of bat, and she spends her time, no doubt as an apposite comment on her sexual preferences, hanging upside down.

⁷ Cf. Mathé (1995).

⁸ Compare Hyginus' version of the Pasiphae story (*Fabulae* 40), where her passion arises from her neglect of Aphrodite.

Polyphonte's story, then, bears a significant similarity to that of Pasiphae in that she actively seeks sexual union with an animal. There are, however, significant differences too. Stories of this kind as a rule involve metamorphosis at some stage, yet there is no hint of one in Pasiphae's myth. The queen achieves a contrived and temporary transformation when she conceals herself within the wooden cow in order to deceive the bull, yet this is far from an actual metamorphosis. Rather, it points once again to the perversity of her passion, which cannot be satisfied except by bizarre and underhand means,⁹ and which has no share in the supernatural element common to other women's bestial unions.

In short, Pasiphae's tale of animal passions is part of a distinct tradition of human-animal intercourse myths, but also stands in marked contrast to the majority. Her bull is no god in disguise; she consciously seeks him out as her mate, rather than enduring his advances; her child is a monster not a hero; and there is no metamorphosis to be found in the most common versions of her myth. Hers is a distinctive and particularly challenging account of the overlap between human and animal, between the tame and the wild.

2. RIDICULOUS BEAUTY: PASIPHAЕ'S BULL AND HIS COUNTERPARTS

So what, then, can Pasiphae have been thinking when she fell in love with a bull who did not even have the saving distinction of being a god in disguise? In her infamous speech of self-defence from Euripides' *Cretans*, Pasiphae speaks frankly about the idea of a woman finding a beast attractive. Her argument is intended to be one from impossibility: how could anyone, unless stricken by some divine-induced madness, be filled with the desire to have sex with a bull?

ἔχει γὰρ οὐδὲν εἰκός· ἐς τί γὰρ βοὸς
 βλέψας ἐδήχθη θυμὸν αἰσχίστη νόσῳ;
 ὥς εὐπρεπὴς μὲν ἐν πέπλοισιν ἦν ἰδεῖν,

⁹ I say more on the element of deception in the story of Pasiphae (and of Europa) in Ch. 3, Sect. 2.1.

πυρσῆς δὲ χαίτης καὶ παρ' ὀμμάτων σέλας
οἶνωπὸν ἐξέλαμπε περ[καί]νων γένυν;
(Euripides, *Cretans* fr. 472e.11–15)

It just doesn't seem likely: for what did I see in the bull to be bitten in my heart by a hateful sickness? How handsome he looked in his robes, how a brightness shone from his red hair and eyes, making his chin dark like wine?

Her words surely have their force. Although it appears that Minos was not persuaded to forgive his wife, it is still easier to believe in a queen driven insane by the angry gods¹⁰ than in the alternative, grotesquely perverted wife. However, the literary legacy of her words has worked more for the opposite effect, as poets begin to play with the idea of what *would* seem attractive in a bull.

As I have emphasized, in Pasiphae's story we have a real bull, not a god in disguise.¹¹ All the same, the Latin poets still take a certain delight in describing the good looks of Pasiphae's 'ordinary' bull.¹² Vergil is fairly restrained, mentioning just the bull's snow-white hide (*Ecl.* 6.46) and giving a picture of the creature reclining winningly on a bank of flowers, perhaps a little like one of the herdsmen of the *Eclogues*:¹³

ille latus niueum molli fultus hyacintho
ilice sub nigra pallentis ruminat herbas
aut aliquam in magno sequitur grege.
(Vergil, *Eclogues* 6.53–5)

¹⁰ Whether Pasiphae is driven mad by Poseidon, angered because Minos had failed to sacrifice the bull to him (cf. Euripides, *Cretans* 472e; Diodorus Siculus 4.77.2; Apollodorus, *Bibl.* 3.1.3; Pausanias 1.27.9), or by Aphrodite, either feeling slighted by Pasiphae's failure to worship her (Hyginus, *Fab.* 40), or pursuing her old vendetta against the daughters of the Sun (Seneca, *Phae.* 124–8).

¹¹ The first Vatican mythographer (1.47) and Porphyry on Pindar (fr. 91 SM) claim that this bull too was Zeus in disguise, but there is a strong likelihood of confusion or manuscript corruption at work here. Note also the (highly rhetorical) reversal of this by Scylla at *Met.* 8.122–5, who claims that it was not Zeus at all who carried off Minos' mother Europa, but a real, fierce bull. This does, however, tally to some extent with the version which seems to have been followed in Aeschylus' *Cares* and Acousilaus (2 F 29), where Zeus remains on Crete and sends a real bull to fetch Europa.

¹² This may in part be in self-conscious contrast to Moschus' insistence on the aesthetic difference between divine and ordinary animals when describing Zeus' disguise as a bull: see below.

¹³ Perhaps even like an Epicurean sage: cf. Lucretius, *DRN* 2.29–33.

He lays his snowy flanks on soft hyacinths and chews the pale cud under a dark ilex, or follows some cow among his great herd.

Ovid is a little more revealing in his description, adding the endearing detail of the black patch in between the bull's horns:

forte sub umbrosis nemorosae uallibus Idae
candidus, armenti gloria, taurus erat,
signatus tenui media inter cornu nigro;
una fuit labes, cetera lactis erant.

(Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* 1.289–92)

It happened that in the shady valleys of wooded mount Ida there was a white bull, the pride of the herd, marked out by a small black spot in the middle of his forehead between the horns; that was his one blemish, the rest was milky-white.

Because of his beauty the bull is very popular amongst the cows of Crete (1.293–4), yet he proves to be even more popular with the queen.

Yet Pasiphae is not the only woman with a Cretan connection who has an erotic encounter with a bull: Europa's abduction by the king of the gods disguised as a bull can be presented as a kind of prelude to Pasiphae's later, and still more bizarre, affair. And as with Pasiphae, so poets may wonder why Europa was so won over by an animal. We can see such thoughts surfacing in Moschus' *Europa*, where Zeus appears in remarkably handsome bovine form:

τοῦ δὴ τοι τὸ μὲν ἄλλο δέμας ξανθόχροον ἔσκε,
κύκλος δ' ἀργύρεος μέσσω μάρμαιρε μετώπῳ,
ὅσσε δ' ὑπογλαύσσεσκε καὶ ἴμερον ἀστράπτεσκεν.
ἴσα τ' ἐπ' ἀλλήλοισι κέρα ἀνέτελλε καρήνου
ἄντυγος ἡμιτόμου κερᾶς ἅτε κύκλα σελήνης.

(Moschus, *Europa* 84–8)

He had a body quite different from this, coloured yellow, but a silver-white circle flashed in the middle of his forehead, and his eyes were grey beneath and threw out lightning desire. The horns of his head rose equal with each other, like the circles of the rim of the horned moon cut in two.

In his version of the story in the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid is also keen to linger on the beauty of Europa's lover:

quippe color niuis est, quam nec uestigia duri
calcauere pedis nec soluit aquaticus auster.

colla toris exstant, armis palearia pendent,
cornua parua quidem, sed quae contendere possis
facta manu, puraque magis perlucida gemma.
nullae in fronte minae, nec formidabile lumen:
pacem uultus habet.

(Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 2.852–8)

He is the colour of snow which no hard foot's tracks have trampled, nor the watery south wind melted. His neck stands out with sinews, his dewlaps hang down by his shoulders, his horns are small, it's true, but such as you would swear had been made by hand, and brighter than a pure jewel. There are no threats in his brow, no terrifying eye: his face is full of peace.

The most obvious interpretation of these passages is that they are trying to explain why a tender young girl would dare to move close enough to a huge bull for it to be able to carry her off in the first place. Moschus is careful to point out how the bull that Zeus became was very different from an average, real bull. While gods make handsome bulls, one is not expected to find an ordinary one beautiful: οὐχ οἷος σταθμοῖς ἐνιφέρεται, οὐδὲ μὲν οἷος | ὦλκα διατμήγει σύρων εὐκαμπὲς ἄροτρον ('not one such as feeds in the stable, nor who carves the furrow, dragging the well-curved plough', Moschus 2.80–1). And the bull of *Metamorphoses* 2 comes, it would seem, from a truly Ovidian stable, boasting as he does a fine set of horns which look more like the work of an artist than of that imperfect creator, Mother Nature. Nevertheless, at times it seems hard not to detect an element of the tastes of Pasiphae, her future daughter-in-law, in Europa's contemplation of the winsome bull. Moschus' Europa exchanges kisses with the bull which seem something less than chaste (2.93–7), while Ovid's bull is allowed to kiss the virgin's hands in seductive preliminary to her abduction (*Met.* 2.863).

Although Zeus may no longer be in bovine form when he consummates his passion with Europa,¹⁴ the idea of the handsome bull can develop into something provocatively approaching a real Pasiphae-esque sexual encounter between woman and animal. This is the

¹⁴ The question of the shape that Zeus took during the actual sexual intercourse is usually glossed over. However, Moschus at *Europa* 163 and Ovid at *Met.* 3.1–2 say the god put aside his disguise on reaching Crete. Graves (1960), 195 mentions a variant version (found on coins from Gortyn) in which Zeus transforms his shape from that of a bull to that of an eagle when he has intercourse with Europa.

line Horace takes, making his Europa less of a duped virgin, and more of a bold young woman who later regrets and feels shamed and even angered by her close encounter with the bull.

si quis infamem mihi nunc iuuen-
 cedat iratae, lacerare ferro et
 frangere enitar modo multum amati
 cornua monstri.

(Horace, *Odes* 3.27.45–8)

If someone now would hand over the disreputable young bull to me in my anger, I would strain to wound him with a sword and to break the horns of the monster I just now loved so much.

The girl's long lament, on which she embarks the minute she reaches Crete, would be rather over the top if she did not have at least some grounds for her sense of shame. Her conviction that her father would want her to kill herself ('*uilis Europe*', *pater urget absens*: | '*quid mori cessas?*'—'Cut-price Europa', my absent father insists: "Why do you delay your death?"; 3.27.57–8) implies that she has not simply left home without permission, but that she has lost her virginity (or at least her honour) in dubious circumstances. Given that Venus, hugely amused by the situation, has to inform her that she is the *uxor inuicti Iouis* ('the wife of unconquered Jupiter', 3.27.73), it is hard to avoid the insinuation that Europa, unaware of his true identity, might have had sex with the god while he was still in the shape of a bull. Small wonder, then, that she feels such shame and remorse: she has been inveigled into sleeping with an animal without having any idea that he is in fact a god in disguise. The convenient double meaning of *iuuen-cus*—a word which can denote a young man as well as a young bull—enables the poet both to avoid an indelicately direct commitment to a picture of Europa in a passionate embrace with an animal, and humorously to hint at just that picture.

Europa's desire in Horace's *Ode* to break the horns of the bull she recently loved so much also hints at a sexual double meaning. The breaking of a creature's horns obviously symbolizes the breaking of his power, but the horn can also stand, in Latin as in English, for the male member.¹⁵ The double entendre on *cornua* is perhaps also

¹⁵ Cf. Adams (1982), 22. For the breaking of horns as a subduing of both physical and sexual potency, compare the lament of the river Achelous at Ovid, *Met.* 8.879–

perceptible in Ovid's treatment of Europa: he depicts the heroine clinging desperately to the god's horn at *Metamorphoses* 2.874, *dextra cornum tenet* ('she holds his horn in her right hand'), and at *Amores* 1.3.24, *uirginea tenuit cornua uara manu* ('she held his crooked horns in her virginal hand'). Perhaps the idea that Europa was not entirely unimpressed by her bovine rapist also lurks behind Propertius' pairing of Europa and Pasiphae in the Underworld at 2.28.52.¹⁶

So Europa can, in some versions, come to seem rather more like Pasiphae than we might expect. And this tendency can be traced to the Cretan queen's daughters too. Unlikely though the comparison may seem at first glance, Ariadne is even able to liken her mother's love for the handsome bull to her own love for the god Bacchus, whom she describes in his bovine form at *Fasti* 3.499–500: *ceperunt matrem formosi cornua tauri, | me tua* ('the horns of a beautiful bull captivated my mother, and yours have captivated me').¹⁷ The end of line 500, *at hic laudi est, ille pudendus amor* ('but this love is to be praised, the other to be ashamed of'), serves to set apart the two loves just compared, but without completely invalidating the comparison. Indeed, placed as this is within Ariadne's lament over her husband's faithlessness, the link drawn between Bacchus and Pasiphae's bull may be seen to constitute a muted repetition of the heroine's earlier complaint against Theseus that he is more savage than an animal.¹⁸ Here, however, the implication is more provocative: it was the wildness of the god, his tendency to appear in (complete or partial) animal form,¹⁹ which rendered him so very attractive to Ariadne in

9.88. Fighting Achelous for the hand of Deianira, Hercules breaks off one of his horns, thus winning the battle and winning his girl.

¹⁶ It is interesting also to note that a 4th-cent. AD mosaic from North Africa (cf. LIMC Europe I, 163) shows Europa sitting astride the bull (she is usually depicted more modestly, riding side-saddle), bending to kiss the bull's upturned muzzle.

¹⁷ And here we have another example of the double entendre hovering around bull's horns, *cornua*.

¹⁸ Cf. Catullus 64.154–7; Ovid, *Her.* 10.1–2, 131–2. These passages are discussed more fully below, Sect. 4.

¹⁹ The god appears as dragon, lion, panther, bear, boar, goat, and snake as well as bull: e.g. Euripides, *Bacchae* 1017; Horace, *Odes* 2.19.23; Ovid, *Met.* 5.329; Antoninus Liberalis, *Met.* 10; Apollodorus, *Bibl.* 3.4.3; Nonnus, *Dion.* 40.38 ff., 36.291 ff. See Otto (1965) for an investigation of the significance of the god's zoomorphic manifestations. Ariadne's concentration on his aspect as bull is clearly most appropriate for a Cretan myth.

the first place.²⁰ Her self-comparison to her mother is, after all, far from ill placed.

Continuing this line of association, we find that yet another Cretan woman, another female from Minos' family, Phaedra, finds herself drawn to a mate with something bestial about him. Hippolytus, her chaste stepson and a committed hunter, is himself often likened to a wild animal. At *Heroides* 4.165–6, Phaedra urges Hippolytus not to be even fiercer than Pasiphae's bull in his resistance to her love: *flecte, ferox, animos! potuit corrumpere taurum | mater; eris tauro saeuior ipse truci?* ('fierce one, change your mind! My mother could seduce a bull; will you yourself be more savage than a ferocious bull?'). Seneca's Phaedra even hopes that her love will tame him: *amore didicimus uinci feros* ('we have learned that wild beasts can be tamed by love', *Phae.* 240). More tellingly still, in her opening speech which confesses her love for Hippolytus, Phaedra characterizes hers as a passion which fits very closely into the family pattern. Much as her mother Pasiphae fell hopelessly in love with a (real) animal, so it is Phaedra's miserable fate to fall for a wild man: *peccare noster nouit in siluis amor* ('our love has learned to sin amongst the woodlands', 114). Unlike Pasiphae, however, Phaedra has no Daedalus to help her win her beloved; again it seems that Hippolytus is more extreme, more untouchable and more savage than the bull himself. A source of despair this may be, but it is also the source of the attraction.

3. PASIPHAЕ'S ANIMAL PASSIONS

Pasiphae's bull may appear an unlikely candidate for the role of romantic lead, but his attractions can be presented as very real. Moreover, his union with the Cretan queen not only represents perversion and a distortion of nature's laws, but also hints at the

²⁰ That the violent part of the god's nature appealed to Ariadne is emphasized when she mentions the fact that Bacchus was born (for the first time) from the womb of his mother as she was burned by a lightning bolt: *nec, quod nos uris, mirum facis: ortus in igne | diceris et patria raptus ab igne manu* ('nor does it cause me surprise that you set me on fire: you are said to have been born in fire and snatched from the fire by your father's hand', *Fasti* 3.503–4).

disturbing but powerful pull exerted by the wild even on mild and tender maidens. In his treatment of Pasiphae's story in *Eclogue* 6, Vergil explores the tensions inherent in such a mixing of the wild and the tame. Her passion is presented in terms which at once bring her closer to the animal world, and equate the animal more closely with the human. At line 52, the poet/Silenus addresses Pasiphae, *a, uirgo infelix, tu nunc in montibus erras* ('ah, unlucky maiden, now you wander in the mountains'). She wanders like a grazing animal (more on this shortly), but also like an elegiac lover displaying classic signs of lovesickness. Cicero talks of the lovelorn Orion as *excelsis errans in collibus amens* ('wandering, out of his mind, in the high hills', *Aratea* 421), and in Propertius, the prototypical elegiac lover Mila-nion *Partheniis amens errabat in antris* ('wandered, out of his mind, among the Parthenian glens', Propertius 1.1.11). An earlier example of this trope can be found at Callimachus, *Hymn* 3.190–1, where Minos, in love with Britomartis, pursues her for nine months: ἥς ποτε Μίνως | πτοιοιθεὶς ὑπ' ἔρωτι κατέδραμεν οὐρεα Κρήτης ('for love of her Minos was once distraught and wandered the hills of Crete').²¹ Perhaps this is a particularly apposite reference to have in mind, as a comparison is subtly drawn between the philandering Minos and his more tragically stricken wife. The motif of the mad lover also present in these lines gains a certain amount of force and poignancy when applied to Pasiphae, whose love madness strays far beyond the bounds of others whose objects of desire are at least anthropomorphic, if unsuitable or uncooperative. The spirit of line 47, *a, uirgo infelix, quae te dementia cepit?* ('ah, unlucky maiden, what madness has seized you?') is found again in Apollo's (less indulgent) address to Gallus at *Eclogue* 10.22, '*Galle, quid insanis?*' ('Gallus, why are you raving?'). The similarity and the disparity between the queen and other lovers are brought out with a sympathy and a gentle humour that contrasts with all the other representations of Pasiphae's story where horror or a harsher sense of comedy tend to gain the upper hand.²²

²¹ These parallels are adduced by Clausen (1994), *ad Ecl.* 10.55–6, and (1986), 163–6. For the story of Minos and Britomartis linked to another love affair, cf. *Ciris* 294–305.

²² A possible, partial exception being Phaedra's exclamation at Euripides' *Hippolytus* 337, ὦ τλήμων, οἶόν, μῆτερ, ἡράσθης ἔρπον ('Oh, mother, what a wretched love you felt').

But now we return to the other implication of *errans* in line 52, that Pasiphae is wandering like a grazing animal.²³ One might be tempted in this context to recall a common trope of ancient literature which likens young women to heifers and other animals. Virgins are there to be tamed, to be turned away from the wild freedom of sexual ignorance towards the order and maturity of marriage.²⁴ The hint that Pasiphae is like a heifer is doubly appropriate: not only is she approaching a strange kind of sexual initiation, but this particular affair is also one which would be much better suited to a real animal.²⁵ The reference to the daughters of Proetus helps both to confirm our impression that there is something cow-like about Pasiphae, and to bring out the contrast between the Cretan queen and a real animal:

Proetides implerunt falsis mugitibus agros,
at non tam turpis pecudum tamen ulla secuta
concubitus, quamuis collo timuisset aratrum,
et saepe in leui quaesisset cornua fronte.

(Vergil, *Eclogues* 6.48–51)

The daughters of Proetus filled the fields with their feigned lowing, but none of them pursued such a shameful union with cattle, however much she may have feared the plough on her neck, and often felt for horns on her smooth forehead.

Even these girls from Argos, maddened by Hera into believing that they were cows,²⁶ never went so far as seeking to mate with a bull.

²³ Cf. *Ecl.* 2.21, *errant in montibus agnae* ('the lambs wander in the mountains'); or *Geor.* 4.11, *errans bucula campo* ('the young cow wanders on the plain'). Wright (1983), 116 sees a potential for *errare* ('wander') to have poetic connotations in the *Eclogues*, representing the poet's project of writing pastoral verse. (Cf. also *pascere* ('graze'), especially at *Ecl.* 1.45 and 6.5.)

²⁴ Polyxena compares herself to a mountain-reared whelp and a heifer at Euripides, *Hecuba* 205–6, and at Sophocles, *Trachiniae* 530 the bride Deianira is compared to a lonely heifer, *πόρτις ἐρήμια*, suddenly taken from its mother. Peleus refers to Hermione as a barren heifer, *στερρὸς . . . μόσχος*, at Euripides, *Andromache* 711. Cf. also Sappho fr. 58.16 LP–V; Archilochus (Cologne Epode) *SLG* 478.31; Bacchylides 13.84–90; Euripides, *Helen* 1476, *Bacch.* 866–76, *Iphigenia in Tauris* 359, and *Iphigenia at Aulis* 1080–4 (the latter two both perhaps problematic, though, because of textual corruption); Anacreon fr. 417 Page; Apollonius, *Arg.* 4.12–13; Horace, *Odes* 1.23.

²⁵ In another sense, though, the comparison between Pasiphae and an innocent virgin (whether made implicitly as discussed here, or explicitly through the use of the word *uirgo*) is utterly inappropriate. See Ch. 4, Sect. 1.

²⁶ There are two possible reasons for Hera's actions: disgust with the girls' over-indulgence in love affairs, or anger because they had stolen gold from her image at

Pasiphae's confusion, and thus her shame, is more complete: she knows she is human, yet she still lusts for an animal. The connection between the two myths is strengthened by a reminiscence in Vergil's Pasiphae of the actions of the Proetides in Callimachus' *Hymn to Artemis*:

ἤ μὲν τοι Προῖτος γε δύο ἐκαθίσσατο νηούς,
 ἄλλον μὲν Κορίης, ὅτι οἱ συνελέξαι κούρας
 οὖρεα πλαζομένας Ἀζήνια, τὸν δ' ἐνὶ Λούσοις
 Ἠμέρη, οὐνεκα θυμὸν ἀπ' ἄγριον εἶλεο παίδων,
 (Callimachus, *Hymn* 3.233–6)

For you indeed Proetus established two shrines, one of Virgin Artemis, because you gathered for him his daughters wandering on the Azanian hills, and one in Lusa for Gentle Artemis, because you took the wild spirit from his daughters.

Like the daughters of Proetus (and like Minos in the same Callimachean hymn), Pasiphae wanders madly in the mountains, but unlike them, she has no goddess to cure her and take her particular kind of wild spirit out of her.²⁷

A further bovine link can be found in the famous reminiscence of a line from Calvus' *Io* to be found in Vergil's repeated apostrophe, *a uirgo infelix* ('ah, unlucky maiden', *Ecl.* 6.47 and 52).²⁸ *Io*, transformed into a cow by her lover Jupiter to conceal her from the jealous gaze of Juno, is a neat counterpart to Pasiphae, who loves and pursues a bull.²⁹ The awkwardness and the impulse behind cross-species love are reversed so that Pasiphae, who is in many ways the aggressor, the hunter, receives elements of the sympathy due to *Io*, who is the object (or the victim) of Jupiter's love. Pasiphae,

Tiryns (these variations reflecting the common perception of women's main motivational forces as lust and greed): cf. Pherecydes, *FGRH* 3.f 114, Probus *ad Ecl.* 6.48. Apollodorus, *Bibl.* 2.2.2 says that according to Hesiod they had offended Dionysus.

²⁷ The Proetides are usually cured by Melampus (e.g. Hesiod fr. 37 MW), but, as well as Callimachus, Bacchylides (11.95–112) has Artemis appeal to Hera on their behalf after Proetus has prayed to her.

²⁸ Calvus' *Io* fr. 9 Büchner: *a, uirgo infelix, herbis pascere amaris* ('ah, unlucky maiden, you will graze on bitter grasses').

²⁹ The *Io* myth also appears, with similar thematic appropriateness, in Moschus' *Europa*. Vergil demonstrates his Alexandrian affiliations as well as his appreciation of the Roman neoterics.

apparently, deserves an empathetic sigh—‘ah unlucky maiden!’—rather than ridicule or rejection.

While Vergil hints delicately at the idea that there is something bestial about Pasiphae herself, Ovid is rather more direct. In response to Vergil’s subtle inclusion of the stories of Io and the deluded daughters of Proetus as mythical echoes of Pasiphae’s own passion, Ovid has the queen openly wish that she had the good fortune to belong to a myth other than her own: *modo se Europen fieri, modo postulat Ion, | altera quod bos est, altera uecta boue* (‘now she wishes she could be Europa, now Io, the one because she was a cow, the other because she was carried off by a bull’, *Ars Am.* 1.323–4).

The excursus on Pasiphae in the *Ars Amatoria* comes as the most fully investigated item in a list of lustful women. This section, aimed to encourage men into amatory action with the knowledge that women are even more interested in sex than they are, is prefaced by a *faux*-scientific passage which sets the Cretan’s love firmly within the world of animal passions:

mollibus in pratis admugit femina tauro,
femina cornipedi semper adhinnit equo:
parcior in nobis nec tam furiosa libido;
legitimum finem flamma uirilis habet.
(Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* 1.279–82)

The female lows to the bull in the soft pastures, the female always whinnies to the horn-hoofed stallion: lust is more sparing in us men, and not so frenzied. Man’s love-fire has a proper limit.

The description of lust in nature clearly harks back to Vergil’s discourse on love in the natural world in the third book of the *Georgics*. There, great emphasis is placed on the irrationality and paradoxical destructiveness of the procreative urge in both humans and animals. Once bitten by the desire to mate, a lioness will wander away from her cubs, boars will fight, horses will cross rivers and mountains in their frenzy, and a young man will swim through rough seas in a storm to reach his lover (*Geor.* 3.245–83). The marked absence of any name given to the human couple in this description (though in outline it recalls the story of Hero and Leander) serves to show just how close to animals humans can be in the extremes of their passion. Importantly, however, it must be noted that the Vergilian source

shows both male and female to be equally unrestrained in their irrational devotion to love or lust. Ovid's 'georgic' section of the *Ars*, by contrast, argues that women are quite simply more lustful (and less rational about their lust) than men. And here the poet betrays another influence: the literature of misogyny.

The most notoriously anti-female text from the ancient world is probably Semonides 7, but it is not difficult to find many other misogynist rants from Hesiod on. An interesting parallel to Ovid's unflattering list of lustful women can be found in Propertius 3.19, where Pasiphae is also used as an example to prove the point, in the company of Tyro, Myrrha, Medea, Clytemnestra, and Scylla, all of whom (except Tyro) reappear in Ovid's longer catalogue. The similarity of both lists marks out the supposed exposé of feminine lust as the stuff of proverb and cliché. In both Propertius and Ovid, moreover, there is an implicit confession of the ridiculousness of this old-style misogyny which argues that women are worse than men in matters of sex. Propertius is careful to state the woman's side of the argument in the opening line of his poem, *Obicitur totiens a te mihi nostra libido: | crede mihi, uobis imperat ista magis* ('You complain so often about our lustfulness: believe me, it rules you women more', 3.19.1–2); Ovid amusingly undermines the thrust of his present argument through the echo of the more balanced (if gloomy) point of view of the *Georgics*, as well as the barely submerged fact that these examples of female lust are adduced to encourage men to believe their own lust can be easily assuaged. It seems that Ovid not only emphasizes the animal, wild side of Pasiphae, but also defines that association as the kind of one made by men who feel threatened by female sexuality.³⁰ Moreover, he marks Pasiphae, in all her strange and animal-like splendour, as in some sense run of the mill. Rather than being extraordinary, hers are merely an extreme manifestation of the animal passions to be found in all women.

³⁰ I would like to think that Ovid's work is, on balance (and in an extremely indirect way), more a celebration of women than an attack on them. Nevertheless, I am aware that his rhetoric could easily be used to support the opposite view: cf. Leach (1964), or, more broadly on Ovidian rape scenes, Richlin (1992), 158–79.

4. THE HUMANITY OF MONSTERS, THE MONSTROSITY OF HEROES

The myths of the Cretan women are about betrayals as well as devouring passions, and in this respect family relations gain an added significance. The birth of the Minotaur represents not just the bizarre nature of Pasiphae's lust and the horror of its consummation, but also the problem presented to the family when the abstract passion becomes concrete. In most respects, and to most eyes, the Minotaur appears as something terrifying and hideous; his very existence should be an impossibility,³¹ yet here he is, untameable and ferocious, feeding on human flesh. To his immediate family, though, the Minotaur is something far more problematic—a son and a brother. Little is said about Pasiphae's relationship with her strange child,³² and it seems that Minos takes the initiative after the birth, ordering the construction of the Labyrinth and the incarceration of the monster. In the visual arts, however, there is some evidence that the idea of Pasiphae as the monster's mother excited a degree of curiosity: a picture on an Etruscan vase³³ shows Pasiphae with the baby Minotaur on her lap, like any normal child. Perhaps, were the literary treatments of the myth better preserved, we might have found a poetic scene of this odd tenderness between the mother and her hybrid son.³⁴

³¹ As Palaiphatos crossly points out: *περὶ Πασιφάης μυθεύεται ὡς ἡράσθη ταύρου νεμομένου . . . τὴν δὲ κυῆσαι καὶ τεκεῖν παῖδα σῶμα μὲν ἔχοντα ἀνδρὸς, κεφαλὴν δὲ βοός. ἐγὼ δὲ τοῦτο οὐ φημι γενέσθαι. πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ ἀδύνατον ἐρασθῆναι ζῶον ἔτερον ἐτέρου μὴ ὁμοίως ἔχον τὴν μήτραν τοῖς αἰδοίοις· οὐ γὰρ δυνατὸν κύνα καὶ πίθηκον καὶ λύκον τε καὶ ὕαιναν ἀλλήλοις μίγνυσθαι . . .* etc. ('A story is told about Pasiphae that she fell in love with a grazing bull . . . and she lay with him and bore a child with a man's body and an ox's head. I say this did not happen. First of all, it is impossible for one kind of animal to be loved by another when it does not have a womb to match the genitals; for a dog and a monkey and a wolf and a hyena cannot mate with each other . . .'; *Peri Apiston* 2).

³² Indeed, it is altogether unclear what happens to Pasiphae after giving birth. Vergil, *Aen.* 6.447 places her in the Underworld among women who were oppressed by love, but again, it is unclear whether it is implied that this caused her death, and if so at which stage of her story.

³³ Cf. Beazley (1947), 54–5; *LIMC* VII.2: Pasiphae 25.

³⁴ Such a relationship is not an impossibility in ancient literature: witness, in particular, the three-bodied monster Geryon's close (even Achilles-like) bond with his mother in Stesichorus' *Geryoneis*. Again, Poseidon in the *Odyssey* indirectly displays a great deal of fondness for his monstrous son, the Cyclops Polyphemus.

For Ariadne, her wild brother proves to be both an obstacle and an opportunity: it is in a way the Minotaur who brings Theseus to Crete, allowing him the chance to become a hero by threatening him with death. From the moment Ariadne sees Theseus, she falls in love with him, and takes on the role of the heroine who helps the hero to succeed and to survive. This love immediately ranks her against her own father and against the monster in the Labyrinth. Both Minos and the Minotaur are usually depicted as cruel and pitiless, and in this respect it is easy to find sympathy for the girl who throws in her lot with the side of right and good, the strong young force of civilization versus the dark ferocity of mystery and tyranny. However, as she herself realizes once the 'civilized' Theseus has abandoned her on an uninhabited island, in assisting the Athenian on his path to becoming one of the greatest Greek heroes, she has both betrayed her father and played a part in the murder of her brother:

certe ego te in medio uersantem turbine leti
eripui, et potius germanum amittere creui,
quam tibi fallaci supremo in tempore dessem.

(Catullus 64.149–51)

To be sure, I pulled you out as you twisted in the midst of death's whirlwind, and I decided rather to lose a brother than to desert you, false one, in your hour of need.

an patris auxilium sperem? quemne ipsa reliqui
respersum iuuenem fraterna caede secuta?

(Catullus 64.180–1)

Or should I hope for help from my father? When I myself left him and followed a young man spattered with my brother's blood?

Without realizing, without quite intending to, Ariadne has become like Medea, who killed her (fully human) brother Apsyrtus in order to facilitate her escape with Jason from her furious father.

Is this a fair parallel to draw, though? There must surely be a difference between the death of a human and the death of a monster, who in a sense exists only to be exterminated by the hero in his relentless march towards fame and the eradication of nightmares. The monster, however vile, however violent, however cunning, will always be destroyed in the end. As inhabitants of the world made safer now that Hercules has killed the Hydra and the Nemean Lion, and

Theseus has dispatched Procrustes and the Minotaur, we inevitably side with the victorious heroes. Nevertheless, it is possible sometimes in both Greek and Latin literature to perceive elements of sympathy felt for the monster. Odysseus' blinding of the Cyclops, though to a degree justified,³⁵ is particularly gruesome and does not go unpunished by Poseidon. When Polyphemus reappears in *Aeneid* 3, although he is still truly terrifying, there is also something pathetic about this huge creature having to tap his way blindly along the paths on the hillside and wash the gore from his eye-socket in the sea.³⁶ Stesichorus' *Geryoneis* provides the triple-formed giant with a worried mother, like a Thetis or Hecabe, who urges her son to take care when he goes out to fight Hercules.³⁷ In the Roman world, a different—but, I think, related—sympathy can be found in the story of a Roman audience's distress at the violence done to elephants in the games put on by Pompey to celebrate the opening of his theatre in 55 BC:

in quo admiratio magna uulgi atque turbae, delectatio nulla exstitit; quin etiam misericordia quaedam consecutast atque opinio eius modi, esse quandam illi beluae cum genere humano societatem (Cicero, *Ad Familiares* 7.1.3)

There was great wonder at this sight among the common crowd, but no delight; indeed, a certain pity even overtook them and a kind of belief that there was a certain fellowship between that beast and human kind.

Although it must be acknowledged that such a reaction to cruel treatment of animals in the arena was hardly common, it is an interesting and revealing anecdote all the same.

³⁵ The Cyclops, of course, has set himself outside the accepted sphere of behaviour through his blatant and savage neglect of the conventions of hospitality. This is hubris and merits punishment, yet the violence of the punishment can itself be deemed hubris, as Polyphemus complains at Euripides, *Cyclops* 665. Cf. Fisher (1992), 88, 161 and 500–1.

³⁶ Indeed, in some manuscripts, the half-line at *Aen.* 3.661 is completed with the words, *de collo fistula pendet* ('a set of pipes hangs from his neck'). The pastoral hints are picked up effectively, and the Cyclops here could be seen more directly to recall Theocritus' bucolic Polyphemus (*Id.* 6 and 11). In Theocritus, the Cyclops is portrayed (apart from some echoes of his Odyssean role, which have the effect of disturbing premonitions) outside of the heroic world as a frustrated lover, and hence with a much more consistent sympathy from the author.

³⁷ Cf. also Pindar fr. 169, where it is possible to perceive a certain disapproval of Hercules' unprovoked attacks on Geryon and Diomedes: cf. Fisher (1992), 233–5. However, Pavese (1968), 67–8 and Lloyd Jones (1972), 55–6 reject such a possibility.

I would argue that as for these beasts and monsters, so for the Minotaur, there can be some sympathy. Look, for example, at the description of his death in Catullus 64:

nam uelut in summo quatientem brachia Tauro
quercum aut conigeram sudanti cortice pinum
indomitus turbo contorquens flamine robur
eruit (illa procul radicitus exturbata
prona cadit, late quaecumque habet obuia frangens),³⁸
sic domito saeuum prostrauit corpore Theseus
nequiquam uanis iactantem cornua uentis.

(Catullus 64.105–11)

For as an unconquered whirlwind twisting the trunk with its blast downs an oak tree shaking its arms on the top of the Taurus mountains, or a cone-bearing pine tree with its sweating bark (it falls prone afar, thrown out from the roots, and smashes everything in its way far and wide), so Theseus laid the beast low, its body tamed, as it tossed its horns in vain at the empty air.

In dying the Minotaur resembles a great tree falling, an image which recalls the deaths of Homeric heroes.³⁹ To enhance further the pathos of the description, the trees in the simile are even given rather human-sounding parts: the branches are *brachia* ('arms') and the bark sweats (*sudanti cortice*).⁴⁰ The Minotaur's heroism and even humanity are delicately asserted. He is a worthy opponent for the hero Theseus, and his death therefore cannot go unmarked, or without a certain sense of regret that such a great being has been destroyed. The sense of the sadness of the monster's death is strengthened later in the poem as Ariadne's own desperate state

³⁸ Reading with Goold; OGR read *lateque cum eius*.

³⁹ e.g. Homer, *Il.* 13.389–91 (=16.482–4). Interestingly, this simile is also very like the one used by Apollonius to describe the fall of another Cretan monster, the bronze giant Talos, at *Arg.* 4.1682–6. Talos, moreover, is there shown to be rather less terrifying a prospect than Medea, who uses the Evil Eye to bring him toppling down. Cf. Hutchinson (1988), 140–1; Hunter (1993), 130–1, 166; Clare (2002), 258–60.

⁴⁰ The word *brachia* is commonly used (with its metaphorical sense blunted) for the branches of trees; however, in this context where the tree is compared to a human (or semi-human), it seems to me that the primary meaning, 'arms', is reactivated (*pace* Thomson (1997) *ad* Catullus 64.105). Similarly, the sweating pine bark, which, of course, most literally refers to the way that the tree oozes resin, might also hint at an association with the sweating of the Minotaur as he battles for his life.

seems to echo that of her brother. Deserted by Theseus, who proves to be harsher than the beast he killed, Ariadne cries out complaints which she thinks will have no effect: *sed quid ego ignaris nequiquam conqueror auris...?* ('but why should I complain in vain to the unknowing breezes...?', 64.164). We remember the Minotaur vainly tossing his horns; Ariadne receives no more pity from the hero than he did.

The men with whom the Cretan women are involved are themselves, it seems, fierce and harsh, if not actually wild. The real cruelty in Catullus 64 is perpetrated by Theseus and not by the Minotaur, who comes to be identified with Ariadne as one of the victims of the hero's sense of his own glory. Deserted on the shore and given time to reflect, Ariadne begins to wonder if Theseus himself is fully human:

quaenam te genuit sola sub rupe leaena,
quod mare conceptum spumantibus expuit undis,
quae Syrtis, quae Scylla rapax, quae uasta Charybdis,
talìa qui reddis pro dulci praemia uita?

(Catullus 64.154–7)

What lioness bore you under a lonely crag, what sea conceived you and spat you out from its foaming waves, what Syrtis, what ravening Scylla, what enormous Charybdis, you who give such a return for the gift of your sweet life?

Surely such a cruel man could only have been conceived by a savage lioness, or the sea and its hideous monsters.⁴¹ This famous formulation, with its roots in the *Iliad*,⁴² is adapted by Dido at her most Ariadne-esque (*Aen.* 4.365–7)⁴³ and goes on to enjoy further life in Ovid's Ariadne:⁴⁴ *mitius inueni quam te genus omne ferarum; | credita non ulli quam tibi peius eram* ('I have found the whole family of wild beasts to be gentler than you; I could not have been entrusted to any

⁴¹ Perhaps there is also an allusion here to Theseus' claim that the sea-god Neptune was his father.

⁴² γλαυκὴ δέ σε τίκτε θάλασσα πέτραι τ' ἡλίβατοι ('the grey sea bore you, and the steep rocks', *Il.* 16.34). Important, too, is Euripides, *Med.* 1342–3, where Jason says that he married λέαιναν, οὐ γυναικα, τῆς Τυρσηνίδος | Σκύλλης ἔχουσιν ἀγριωτέραν φύσιν ('a lioness, not a woman, with a nature more wild than the Etruscan Scylla'). Cf. *Ch.* 1, Sect. 1.2.

⁴³ With which, compare also *Ecl.* 8.43–5, on Aeneas' brother, Amor.

⁴⁴ And Scylla: cf. *Met.* 8.120–5.

of them with worse results than to you', *Her.* 10.1–2); *nec pater est Aegeus, nec tu Pittheidos Aethrae | filius; auctores saxa fretumque tui* ('your father is not Aegeus, nor are you the son of Pittheus' daughter Aethra; your parents are the rocks and the sea', *Her.* 10.131–2).

Later on, Phaedra experiences Theseus' harshness herself, whilst remembering his poor treatment of both her sister and her brother:

sola nec haec ad nos iniuria uenit ab illo;
in magnis laesi rebus uterque sumus.
ossa mei fratris claua perfracta trinodi
sparsit humi; soror est praeda relicta feris.
(Ovid, *Heroides* 4.113–16)

Nor is this the only wrong which has come to us from him; we are both wounded by him in serious ways. With his three-knotted club, he scattered the broken bones of my brother on the ground; my sister was left as prey for the wild beasts.

In Seneca's *Phaedra*, Theseus' ferocity is emphasized (as is his unfaithfulness) by his discontented wife, who comes in the end, obliquely, to identify him with the monsters and wild bandits against which he battled in his youth. Addressing the shredded remains of Hippolytus, shortly after attacking Theseus (*o dure Theseu semper—* 'O Theseus, forever harsh', 1164), she asks:

membra quis saeuus Sinis
aut quis Procrustes sparsit aut quis Cresius,
Daedalea uasto claustra mugitu replens,
taurus biformis ore cornigero ferox
diuulsit?

(Seneca, *Phaedra* 1169–73)

What fierce Sinis, or what Procrustes scattered your limbs, or what savage Cretan two-formed bull, filling Daedalus' prison with his great roar, tore you apart with his horned head?

These monstrous beings who defined Theseus' early heroism are now used to illustrate the savage death of the hero's son, caused by his over-hasty curse.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Picking up this hint, at 1223–5, Theseus calls the tortures of Sinis and Sciron on himself, clearly wanting to be punished for destroying his own son, but also shifting away from the uncomfortable implication that he is as bad as these ogres.

It is not just Theseus whose humanity is questioned or challenged by poets and lovers alike. Minos, as well as the cuckolded husband and betrayed father, is the cruel tyrant known from Homer as *δοόφρων* ('baleful').⁴⁶ While he has little sympathy for his wife's claim to have been possessed by divine madness,⁴⁷ he is not averse to making rather grim political capital of the product of that madness, the Minotaur. He periodically feeds him fourteen young Athenians in a long-drawn-out atonement for the death of his son Androgeus, which comes to be more an expression of his great power over his own and neighbouring states than an expression of grief. When Scylla falls in love with Minos and betrays her father and her city for love of him, he takes advantage of her weakness, but gives her no kindness or even any promises in return. The heartbroken girl is driven to an Ariadne-like reproach where she accuses Minos of greater ferocity than a bull:

iam iam Pasiphaen non est mirabile taurum
praeposuisse tibi: tu plus feritatis habes.

(Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 8.136–7)

Now, now it is no wonder that Pasiphae preferred a bull to you: you are more savage.

And so we come full circle: the heartlessness of the human male makes him appear little different from a wild animal. Indeed, the animals even seem somehow preferable because more innocent, even more attractive. What is usually left understated, an undercurrent of sympathy for the monster and disapproval of the behaviour of men, can sometimes rush to the surface, leaving us with a world reversed, where the heroic, civilizing forces struggle to retain their accustomed praises and position in the right. Moreover, one of the strangest of all mythical passions, Pasiphae's love for the bull, echoed and reflected in so many other love affairs, comes to seem excusable and even,

⁴⁶ Homer, *Od.* 11.322.

⁴⁷ Euripides, *Cretans* fr. 472e.1: οὐ γάρ τιν' ἄλλην φημι τολῆσαι τάδε ('I say there is no other woman who would have dared to do this'). It seems that he has threatened to kill his wife, to judge from her comments in the same fragment: πρὸς τὰδ' εἴτε ποντίαν | κτείνειν δοκεῖ, σοι, κτεῖν' ἐπίστασαι δέ τοι | μαιφόν' ἔργα καὶ σφαγὰς ἀνδροκτόνους ('so if you have decided to kill me in the sea, kill me—you know all about bloody deeds and cut-throat murders', 35–7).

paradoxically, quite reasonable. With a husband like the cruel and tyrannical Minos, who can blame her for seeking comfort elsewhere?

5. ARIADNE'S WILD ISLAND

The story of Ariadne, in essence a simple tale of love and betrayal, is complicated by the elements of wildness which creep into her life, channelled first through her half-bull brother, then through the harshness of both her father and her lover. In keeping with this increasing realization of the presence of the uncivilized even amongst humans, the island where Theseus leaves her is itself a savage place, which she fears may be full of beasts ready to tear her body to pieces.

Reflecting on the contrast between the help she gave Theseus and the 'service' he now renders her, Ariadne protests, *pro quo dilaceranda feris dabor alitibusque | praeda* ('for this I shall be given as prey to be torn apart by wild beasts and birds', Catullus 64.152–3). In contrast to the homeland she has left, with its palaces and temples, this place has no sign of habitation at all:

praeterea nullo colitur sola insula tecto,
nec patet egressus pelagi cingentibus undis.
nulla fugae ratio, nulla spes: omnia muta,
omnia sunt deserta, ostendant omnia letum.

(Catullus 64.184–7)

Besides, this lonely island is not cultivated with any house, nor does a way out lie open, with the sea's waves encircling. There's no plan for escape, no hope: everything is silent, everything abandoned, everything points to death.

It is her growing awareness of the hopelessness of her situation that drives Ariadne to curse Theseus, calling on the wild and angry Eumenides with their hair of snakes to exact justice from the man who has abandoned her to such helpless rage and fear.

Ariadne's terrors are developed in the *Heroides* into a veritable nightmare, Ovid picking up where Catullus left off:

occurrunt animo pereundi mille figurae,
morsque minus poenae quam mora mortis habet.
iam iam uenturos aut hac aut suspicor illac

qui lanient auido uiscera dente lupos.
 forsitan et fuluos tellus alat ista leones.
 quis scit an et saeua tigride Dia uacet?
 et freta dicuntur magnas expellere phocas!
 quis uetat et gladios per latus ire meum?⁴⁸
 (Ovid, *Heroides* 10.81–8)

A thousand forms of perishing rush into my mind, and death holds less penalty for me than the delaying of death. Now, now I look here or there for wolves who will come to rip my innards with their greedy fangs. Perhaps this land rears tawny lions too. Who knows if Dia is even free of the savage tiger? And they say the sea casts up huge seals! And who is there to stop swords from piercing my side?

Ariadne reveals both ignorance about the kinds of dangers one should expect on an island not too far from the northern coast of Crete, and a humorous degree of prescience. Although there is no real reason for her to worry about meeting lions or tigers in such a place, in fact, as the reader knows, she *will* encounter tigers (or lynx)⁴⁹ here on Naxos when Bacchus arrives. There is a gentle irony present as Ovid allows his heroine to succumb to a ridiculous fantasy about how her life will end, which will in fact be fulfilled in the form of her salvation. Verducci (1985) has little sympathy for this manifestation of Ariadne, seeing her as an over-indulgence, a ridiculous burlesque of the traditional abandoned woman and, more specifically, of Catullus' complex heroine. She terms this list of terrors 'a vein of elaboration whose prolixity and excess destroy the Catullan equation of internal and external desolation, emotion and situation' (p. 270). Admittedly, the self-consciousness of the letter renders the tone lighter than the pained and lonely self-revelation of the Catullan soliloquy. Nevertheless there is something engaging here in the heroine's hysteria. For once we are presented with the vision of a more mundane Ariadne, a

⁴⁸ Lines 85–6 are printed as in Knox (1995), following Heinsius. Housman (1972), 401–2 suggests *quis scit an et fuluos tellus alat ista leones? | forsitan et saeuas tigridas insula habet*; he acknowledges, however, that the elision of *insula habet* at the end of the couplet is problematic. The lines may be interpolated, but I rather like the hint of Bacchus' tigers in line 86. The tigers actually appear at *Ars Am.* 1.549–52: see Leigh (1997), 605 n. 1. For a discussion of line 88 (and lines 95–8), see Hewig (1991), who sees swordfish rather than armed pirates on the island.

⁴⁹ Cf. Propertius 3.17.8, *lyncibus ad caelum uecta Ariadna tuis* ('Ariadne carried to the skies by your lynx').

spoiled city girl stranded on an unknown island, her fears exacerbated by her ignorance—a far cry from the woman of passion and mystery who has much closer connections with the wilder side of nature, both back on Crete and in her future life with the god Bacchus.

6. DIONYSIAC WILDNESS

Ariadne's connection with Bacchus provides an interesting, extra degree of wildness which even sets her apart from Phaedra and Pasiphae, who might at first be assumed to have closer connections with animals and nature. The transition from deserted heroine to Bacchant is not a simple one, though, and her relationship with the god always seems to contain a mixture of fear as well as devotion. Bacchus' arrival on Naxos, on one level the advent of a rescue party, is in other ways the fulfilment of Ariadne's nightmares about the kinds of wild and uncontrollable forces she may encounter there. In the *Ars Amatoria* Ovid makes clear how for Ariadne the approach of the god and his followers must have been yet another source of anguish and fear: *excidit illa metu rupitque nouissima uerba; | nullus in exanimi corpore sanguis erat* ('she fainted in fear and broke off her last words; there was no blood in her breathless body', 1.539–40); *horruit, ut steriles, agitat quas uentus, aristae, | ut levis in madida canna palude tremuit*⁵⁰ ('she bristled, like barren oats which the wind rustles, like a slender reed which trembles in the sodden marsh', 1.553–4).

Catullus' description of the arrival of the god and his train on the island carries with it a sense of unease about the bizarre aspect of the divine, which (as in poem 63) might so easily lapse into cruelty and terror:

at parte ex alia florens uolitabat Iacchus
cum thiaso Satyrorum et Nysigenis Silenis,
te quaerens, Ariadna, tuoque incensus amore.

⁵⁰ Cf. Ovid, *Her.* 10.139, where Ariadne tells Theseus how scared she is to be alone on the island: *corpus, ut impulsae segetes aquilonibus, horret* ('my body bristles, like corn blown by the wind'). Ariadne's fear both before and after 'safety' arrives is much the same.

cui Thyades⁵¹ passim lymphata mente furebant
 euhoe bacchantes, euhoe capita inflectentes.
 harum pars tecta quatiebant cuspidē thyrsos,
 pars e diuolso iactabant membra iuuenco,
 pars sese tortis serpentibus incingebant,
 pars obscura cauis celebrabant orgia cistis,
 orgia quae frustra cupiunt audire profani;
 plangebant aliae proceris tympana palmis,
 aut tereti tenues tinnitus aere ciebant;
 multis raucisonos efflabant cornua bombos,
 barbaraque horribili stridebat tibia cantu.

(Catullus 64.251–64)

But from the other side, bright Iacchus was revelling with his band of Satyrs and Sileni born in Nysa, seeking you, Ariadne, and on fire with love for you. For him the Maenads raged all around with their crazy minds, crying ‘Evoe!’ as they raved, ‘Evoe!’ as they tossed their heads. Some of these shook thyrsi with their points hidden, some threw about the limbs from a dismembered bullock, some wreathed themselves with twisting serpents, some celebrated the secret rites with their deep baskets, rites which the uninitiated long in vain to hear; others beat the drums with hands lifted high, or raised thin chimes on polished bronze cymbals; many blew harsh-sounding booms on horns, and made the barbarian flute scream with its raucous song.

The sudden noise and the violence of the Maenads, tossing their heads and tearing a cow to pieces, contrasts with the quiet vulnerability of Ariadne whose lonely voice is simply carried away by the winds. The image of Bacchus seeking out Ariadne carries a disturbing echo of the kind of relentless pursuit one suffers in a nightmare; his passion may be true, but it may not be gentle.⁵²

Nevertheless, the turbulence within Ariadne’s heart is every bit as wild as that shown in Bacchus and his followers. Indeed, earlier in the poem, Ariadne’s mental state and her future life are both hinted at in the description, *saxea ut effigies bacchantis* (‘like a stone statue of a Bacchant’, 64.61). The extraordinary depths of her passion in response to her abandonment by Theseus will find their reflection both later on in the ecphrasis as real Bacchants arrive and in

⁵¹ Going with Skutsch’s conjecture in place of OGR’s *qui tum alacres*.

⁵² Cf. Wiseman (1977 and 1978), who argues that there are hints in Catullus that Ariadne is to be raped by Bacchus.

Ariadne's future beyond the poem as Bacchus' wife and the leader of his celebrants. This combination of present and future is repeated and expanded in *Heroides* 10:

aut ego diffusis errauī sola capillis,
qualis ab Ogygio concita Baccha deo,
aut mare prospiciens in saxo frigida sedi,
quamque lapis sedes, tam lapis ipsa fui.
(Ovid, *Heroides* 10.47–50)

Either I wandered alone with my hair in disarray, like a Bacchant stirred up by the Ogygian god, or I sat, cold, on a rock, looking out to sea, and I was as much stone as the stone I sat upon.

This Ariadne is already like an animated Bacchant as well as Catullan stone. By the time she appears in Nonnus, *Dionysiaca* 47, though, Ariadne is a real and fully committed Bacchant, acting as the leader of the god's female devotees and even racing into a battle to defend his honour when Perseus' fame looks set to challenge that of her husband.⁵³ There, in another neat echo of the Catullan simile now made substance, the (actual) Bacchant Ariadne becomes (actual) stone again, when in the midst of the battle Perseus shows her the Gorgon's head: *λαϊνέην ποίησε κορυσσομένην Ἀριάδνην* ('he turned armed Ariadne into stone', *Dion.* 47.451–2).

The presentation of a passionate woman as a Bacchant is not, of course, exclusive to Ariadne, but it comes to be very closely linked with her. The first example of the comparison comes in *Iliad* 22.460–3, where Andromache hears news of Hector's death, and rushes from the house *μαινάδι ἴση* ('like a maenad', 460) to stand on the city walls.⁵⁴ Tartaglini (1986) explores the links between *Iliad* 22.460–72 and Ariadne in Catullus 64, remarking that Andromache lies behind Ariadne's falling headdress (64.63) as well as her comparison to a

⁵³ Nonnus gives the fullest description of Ariadne as an actual Bacchant, but Propertius characterizes her as *euhantis dux Ariadna choros* ('Ariadne, leader of the bacchic dances', 2.3.18). From the late 5th cent. bc there is a tendency in Attic painting to show Ariadne looking like a Maenad: Eisner (1977), 179; cf. also McNally (1985) on the similarity between representations of sleeping Ariadne and sleeping Maenads.

⁵⁴ Cf. Seaford (1994), 330–8, who links the comparison of Andromache to a Maenad with the confusion of gender roles and the marriage ritual, her speech at 22.477–84 functioning as a kind of reversal of the blessings of the bridal ceremony.

Maenad. It is a powerful image which accrues ever more associations each time it is reused by the poets. So, for example, we might see hints of both Ariadne and Andromache in Dido when, driven wild by her love for Aeneas, she roams through the city like a Bacchant:⁵⁵

saeuit inops animi totamque incensa per urbem
 bacchatur, qualis commotis excita sacris
 Thyias, ubi audito stimulant trieterica Baccho
 orgia nocturnusque uocat clamore Cithaeron.
 (Vergil, *Aeneid* 4.300–3)

She rages, out of her mind, and on fire she raves throughout the city, like a maenad stirred up by the ecstatic rites, when they start the triennial celebrations with the cry 'Bacchus!' and at night Cithaeron calls with its din of revelling.

Again, in the *Ars Amatoria*, as Pasiphae wanders over the mountains in pursuit of her beloved bull, she is also likened to one of the followers of Bacchus, in a complex web of reference which encompasses not only hints of her daughter Ariadne's future role, but also a reminiscence of Amata's feigned Bacchic frenzy in the *Aeneid*:⁵⁶ *in nemus et saltus thalamo regina relicto | fertur, ut Aonio concita Baccha deo* ('leaving her bedchamber, the queen is carried out to the woods and groves, like a Bacchant stirred up by the Aonian god', *Ars Am.* 1.311–12). As if to confirm the link between the mother and the daughter, the pentameter line, but for the more common *Aonio* in place of *Ogygio*, is a virtual repetition of Ariadne's self-description at *Heroides* 10.48 (quoted above). Once more, keeping it in the family, there is a link with the wild spirit of the Maenad for Phaedra too: *nunc feror, ut Bacchi furiis Eleleides actae, | quaeque sub Idaeo tympana colle mouent* ('now I am carried along, like the maenads driven by Bacchus' frenzy, and those who shake the tambourine beneath Ida's hill', *Her.* 4.47–8). An image generally appropriate for any woman in the grip of passion accrues peculiar relevance for the Cretan women and their analogues through the memory of Ariadne, wife of the wild god Bacchus.

⁵⁵ Perhaps it is as a result of my particular bias that I am inclined to see more of Ariadne than Andromache here. All the same, such an identification would receive support from the fact that Catullus' Ariadne has a recognizable impact on the characterization of Dido throughout *Aeneid* 4.

⁵⁶ *Aen.* 7.385–91.

7. ARTEMISIAN WILDNESS

In Phaedra's story, we find the influence of a different divinity, and a different kind of wildness. Through her love for that most committed follower of Artemis, Hippolytus, Phaedra herself comes to see the attractions of the life of the hunter. Since her interest is driven by sexual passion, however, it can only ever be a distorted reflection of the devotion of her beloved stepson. Indeed, there is even a sense that her enthusiasm for all things Artemisian is little short of blasphemy. Or at least, this is how it would seem to Hippolytus.

In Phaedra's defence, she is not always even aware of the turn her fantasy and madness have taken. In Euripides in particular, the need she feels to race out into the countryside comes upon her not as any kind of conscious choice, but as a form of possession not unlike Maenadism. When she returns to her senses, the irony that such delusions of following the life of a devotee of chaste Artemis have been forced upon her by love (or, to give the play's prologue its force, by Aphrodite herself) is not lost on her. For this Phaedra, the longing to go out to the hills is just another form of the exquisite torture that threatens to break her silence and drives her towards death.

In the *Heroides*, however, the impulse towards a life of outdoor pursuits is explored far more self-consciously, and is even used as a rather naïve proof of Phaedra's compatibility with her stepson. In her letter she tells Hippolytus how she has made a start on her new hobby and, following his example, now holds Diana as the greatest of the gods (*Her.* 4.37–46). As in Euripides, though, her enthusiasm is still characterized as a form of possession. Interestingly, as mentioned above, that possession invites comparison with a devotee of different gods, Bacchus and Cybele, as well as the semi-divine Fauns and Dryads:

nunc feror, ut Bacchi furiis Eleleides actae,
 quaeque sub Idaeo tympana colle mouent,
 aut quas semideae Dryades Faunisque bicornes
 numine contactas attonuere suo.

(Ovid, *Heroides* 4.47–50)

Now I am carried along, like the Maenads driven by Bacchus' frenzy, and those who shake the tambourine beneath Ida's hill, or the half-divine Dryads and two-horned Fauns who are stunned, touched by their own power.

For all the passion to be found in his own devotion to the goddess, it is hard to imagine that Hippolytus would view *his* exploits in the woods and hills as anything akin to the raving of the Maenads, and far less the shenanigans of the proverbially sex-crazed Fauns. Once again, Phaedra's brush with the lifestyle of the huntress is revealed to be something far removed in spirit from the chaste dedication of the real enthusiast. Indeed, she even hints that she actually finds the wilds in themselves a frightening place, though there would be no need to fear were Hippolytus by her side:

ipsa comes ueniam, nec me latebrosa mouebunt
saxa neque obliquo dente timendus aper.

(Ovid, *Heroides* 4.103–4)

I myself will come as your companion, and the shadowy rocks will not trouble me, nor the fearsome boar with its slanting tusk.

In Phaedra's mind, the woods are a place dignified by love. There is, for her, no contradiction or conflict between following Diana and falling in love: after all, didn't the hunters Cephalus, Adonis, and Meleager pursue their affairs in the open (93–100)?

Although Phaedra's main strategy is to persuade Hippolytus that hunting and sex go hand in hand, she also makes some attempt to emphasize her virtual (if not literal) chastity, thinking perhaps that her beloved might be swayed by a picture of the kind of youthful innocence loved by the goddess. She may be mistaken in assuming that the young hunter admires every aspect of his favourite deity, but she is, ironically, quite right to hint at Diana's other manifestation as patron goddess of the young girl about to marry. Diana represents not only abstinence from sex, but also the passage from childhood chastity to a normal and appropriate sexual awakening. This is, of course, a side of his beloved goddess that Hippolytus chooses to ignore. For Phaedra, however, it is an aspect to be capitalized upon. She therefore chooses to subscribe to a romantic fallacy that because this is the first time she has really been in love, she is effectively a virgin,⁵⁷ and she uses imagery familiar from Sappho's hymeneals to carry this message to Hippolytus:⁵⁸

⁵⁷ This is discussed more fully at Ch. 7, Sect. 1.2.

⁵⁸ Cf. Sappho fr. 105a, and also Catullus 61.87–9, 62.39–47.

est aliquid plenis pomaria carpere ramis,
et tenui primam delegere ungue rosam
(Ovid, *Heroides* 4.29–30)

It is something to pluck fruit from the orchard with full branches, and to pick out with delicate nail the first rose.

She wishes that Hippolytus would play the part of the handsome groom, in his way as innocent as the young bride he will wed, but ready to leave childhood behind and enter the realm of adult emotions. She wants him to recognize that even Diana has her gentle side. She wants, in short, to tame him.

Seneca's Phaedra also mixes fantasies of the outdoor life with dreams of sexual fulfilment, carrying the distortion of the Artemisian ideal much further. She even makes a prayer to Diana that her love might turn out well:⁵⁹

Regina nemorum, sola quae montes colis
et una solis montibus coleris dea,
conuerte tristes ominum in melius minas.
(Seneca, *Phaedra* 406–8)

Queen of the woodlands, you, goddess, who alone haunt the mountains, and alone are worshipped in the lonely mountains, change the omens' sombre warnings for the better.

Indeed, the goddess herself is a more sexually ambiguous figure in Seneca than Euripides. Although in the earlier play there does seem to be a certain amount of tension between the goddess and her favourite Hippolytus, the presence of Aphrodite as the face of both ordinary and extraordinary sexual relationships tends to minimize the erotic dynamic between them. In Seneca, neither Diana nor Venus are physically present, and the division of the two goddesses' realms into the erotic and non-erotic soon breaks down. The prominence of the imagery of the hunt at once problematizes any easy definition of Diana as asexual, recalling as it does both the amatory tradition of love as pursuit of a wild animal⁶⁰ and the deeper

⁵⁹ I attribute this speech to Phaedra rather than the Nurse, as, for example, Mayer does in Coffey and Mayer (1990), 60. This seems to make the better dramatic sense: Hippolytus' address to the goddess is reworked by his would-be lover Phaedra.

⁶⁰ Brought out also by the description of the 'hunter' Cupid with his bow and arrows (276–8, 281–2): cf. P. J. Davis (1984).

contradictions inherent within myths of violent virgins like Diana and the Amazons.⁶¹ Phaedra and her Nurse both characterize the pursuit of Hippolytus in terms strongly reminiscent of Hippolytus' opening speech.⁶² He is a *ferus* (240),⁶³ a wild beast, but one which, Phaedra hopes, can be not only caught, but tamed by love: *amore didicimus uinci feros* ('we have learned that wild beasts can be conquered by love', 240). In her optimism (in her madness), Phaedra confuses the two kinds of hunting, of wild animal and of love object. She holds up Pasiphae as a model of success in this regard (*meminimus matris simul*—'I remember my mother too', 242), both forgetful and yet painfully aware of how bizarre it would be to talk of love in that context:

genetrix, tui me miseret: infando malo
correpta pecoris efferum saeui ducem
audax amasti; toruus, impatiens iugi
adulter ille, ductor indomiti gregis—
sed amabat aliquid.

(Seneca, *Phaedra* 115–19)

Mother, I pity you: seized by an unspeakable misfortune, boldly you loved the wild leader of the savage herd; grim and unable to endure the yoke was that adulterer of yours, the master of the untamed drove—but at least he loved.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Cf. King (1983) on Artemis; Dowden (1997) on Amazons; Fowler (1987) and Mitchell (1991) on virgins in the *Aeneid* are also useful for the wider concepts.

⁶² Cf. P. J. Davis (1983) for an excellent discussion of the forces of nature in the play, including the idea of the hunt as one of man's attempts to control nature, which inevitably backfires.

⁶³ Cf. also *iuuenem ferum | mentemque saeuam* ('the wild young man and his fierce mind', 272–3).

⁶⁴ Mayer (following Farnaby) interprets this line as a reference to *Ecl.* 6.55, hinting at the bull's interest in a cow (Coffey and Mayer (1990), 101–2). However, I think the argument runs better if the implication is rather that the bull might have been fierce but at least he was prepared to engage in some sort of sexual activity, and had passion enough to consummate Pasiphae's lust. The mention of Daedalus which follows would back up this interpretation, I believe, whilst a fleeting reference to a beloved cow would be a little obscure. Support might also be gained from Iphis' speech at Ovid, *Met.* 9.735–44 (which appears to influence Seneca here), especially lines 37–40 where Iphis argues that Pasiphae's love was less shameful than her own, at least being directed at one of the opposite sex, and therefore having some hope of being satisfied.

As the play progresses and Phaedra's lovesickness grows more extreme, she even begins to dress as a huntress, casting aside her rich, royal garments (387–403). At this stage, a further complexity emerges in her relationship to her stepson, as she begins to look like an Amazon, like Hippolytus' mother, the only mortal woman he could ever love:⁶⁵

qualis relictis frigidi Ponti plagis
egit cateruas Atticum pulsans solum
Tanaitis aut Maeotis et nodo comas
coegit emisitque, lunata latus
protecta pelta, talis in siluas ferar.⁶⁶
(Seneca, *Phaedra* 399–403)

Like a woman of Tanais or Maeotis who has left the region of cold Pontus behind and led her squadrons, treading the Attic soil, who puts her hair up in a knot and lets it free, her side covered by a half-moon shield, thus will I be borne into the woods.

Once more, Phaedra conflates the seemingly opposed spheres of the virginal and erotic, and in so doing taps into the contradictory nature of the Amazon Antiope. She was a wild, virginal woman, but was tamed and yoked in marriage by the 'civilized' Theseus; later she was killed by him, to leave a legacy of virginal wildness in the form of their son Hippolytus: *genus Amazonium scias* ('you would know he is of Amazon blood', 232). Phaedra, by contrast, makes the transition from tame to wild because of the force of her passion, and crosses outside the bounds of civilization with her incestuous impulses (which are, of course, exacerbated by her temporary resemblance to Hippolytus' real mother).

⁶⁵ As Hippolytus makes clear at lines 578–9, *solamen unum matris amissae fero, | odisse quod iam feminas omnes licet* ('I have one consolation for the loss of my mother, that now I can hate all women'). His love for her was presumably not sexual, though, whatever Phaedra may hope, and whatever Theseus may insinuate: *iam iam superno numini grates ago, | quod icta nostra cecidit Antiope manu, | quod non ad antra Stygia descendens tibi | matrem relinqui* ('now, now, I give thanks to the powers above, that Antiope fell, struck by my own hand, that I did not leave your mother to you as I went down to the Stygian caverns', 926–9).

⁶⁶ Heinsius deletes line 398 (*talis seueri mater Hippolyti fuit*—'the mother of stern Hippolytus was like this') with good reason, I think, since this point is adequately but more subtly made by the following simile.

Phaedra's appropriation of the Artemisian is in many ways a travesty, a wilful (or unconscious) failure to grasp both the depths of Hippolytus' commitment to the goddess and the details of what the commitment entails. Nevertheless, it also reveals the complexities and contradictions inherent in the goddess's worship. She is not only the spirit of the wild, but also the strength of the one who can tame: the huntress is both at one with nature and locked in a battle to control it. Phaedra may fail to understand Hippolytus' devotion, and she may ultimately belong much more to Venus than to Diana, but through her wild fantasies and her manipulation of those fantasies she illustrates a puzzle which fascinated both Greeks and Romans alike. Where does nature end and civilization begin?

8. WILD LOVE AGAIN: DIDO IN CRETE

Although Phaedra's linking (sometimes conscious, sometimes unconscious) of the imagery of the hunt outdoors and the hunt of love seems to Hippolytus nothing less than a blasphemous conflation of Artemis and Aphrodite, it is a persuasive and popular comparison for others less averse to accepting the prevalence of Eros in the world. In Euripides' *Hippolytus* the connection between hunting animals and hunting a mate is clearly perceptible, as Hippolytus' lifestyle catches Phaedra's imagination and is transformed into something erotic. In the wake of this, and more explicit Hellenistic treatments of the conceit, such as Callimachus, *Epigram* 31 Pf., the Latin poets especially enjoyed making this comparison.⁶⁷ The imagery also re-surfaces in the Dido episode of the *Aeneid*. During the setting of the scene in book 1, emphasis is placed on the wildness of Libya from which Carthage will rise like an oasis of civilization: *at pius Aeneas ... | ... locosque | explorare nouos, quas uento accesserit oras, | qui teneant (nam inculta uidet), hominesne ferae, | quaerere constituit ...* ('but pious Aeneas decided to explore the strange lands, the shores to which he had been blown by the wind, and to find out who

⁶⁷ e.g. Horace, *Serm.* 1.2.105–8; Ovid, *Am.* 2.9.9.

lived there (for the place seemed uncultivated), whether it be men or beasts', *Aen.* 1.305–9). Venus then appears, looking like Diana or a nymph with her skirts hitched up, wearing hunting boots and carrying arrows (1.314–20; 326–9).⁶⁸ The connection is reinforced again later as Dido on her first appearance is graced by a simile that likens her to Diana too (1.498–502). These hints lead up to a double climax, one in another simile, that of the wounded deer, and one in the actual hunt during which Dido and Aeneas find themselves alone in a cave with the elements and the nymphs crying their wedding hymns.⁶⁹

It is with this and the wild side of the Cretan women in mind that I would like to examine the deer simile more closely:

qualis coniecta cerua sagitta,
quam procul incautam nemora inter Cresia fixit
pastor agens telis liquitque uolatile ferrum
nescius: illa fuga siluas saltusque peragrat
Dictaeos; haeret lateri letalis harundo.

(Vergil, *Aeneid* 4.69–73)

Like a deer pierced by an arrow, whom from a distance as she wanders carelessly through the groves of Crete a shepherd hunting with his weapons has unwittingly fixed with his flying arrow-head: in flight, she passes through the woods and groves of Dicte; the deadly shaft sticks fast in her side.

The general tenor of this simile and the implications for our interpretation of Dido and Aeneas' relationship have been set out clearly by other critics,⁷⁰ but a question remains: why is there such emphasis

⁶⁸ The sexual undertones in Aeneas' interview with Venus are heightened by the obvious influence on this episode of Odysseus' meeting with Nausicaa in *Odyssey* 6: cf. Reckford (1995–6), 12. This intertext should be remembered here in evaluating the elements of love already present in the hunting imagery before the deer simile and the actual hunt.

⁶⁹ Later on, Dido wishes she could have led an innocent life like that of a wild animal (4.550–2), and never have betrayed Sychaeus' ashes by her affair with Aeneas, seeming to forget how very wild their union was in the first place.

⁷⁰ e.g. Lyne (1989), 77–9. Cf. also Connors (1992), 17, who argues that links between this deer and Sylvia's stag shot in book 7 point to the story of Cyparissus, who killed his pet deer by accident, and was transformed into a cypress tree because of his grief. This parallel would bring out well the confusion present in both *Aeneid* passages between what is wild and what is tame, what is the legitimate object of the hunt, and what is not.

on the setting of the simile in Crete?⁷¹ It is *twice* stated that the wounded deer is wandering in the wilds of this island (*Cresia*, 70; *Dictaeos*, 73), and it seems hard to believe that the geography is purely incidental. Dido, as something of an honorary Cretan woman, bears a close and obvious resemblance to Ariadne,⁷² but also to Phaedra and even Pasiphae.⁷³

Phaedra's delirious fantasies in which she wishes she could go out into the countryside with Hippolytus are realized for Dido in the hunt of *Aeneid* 4. Indeed, the involvement of Venus in events at Carthage, Dido's failed attempts to suppress her growing passion for Aeneas, her conversation with her sister, Anna, who encourages her to give in to love, and even Dido's eventual suicide, all fit into a pattern which carries distinct reminiscences of Phaedra's tragedy.⁷⁴ In addition to the Phaedra-esque elements of Dido's fantasy, it is possible to see an allusion to the Pasiphae of *Eclogue* 6, who also wanders maddened by love in the Cretan countryside:⁷⁵ *a, uirgo infelix, tu nunc in montibus erras!* ('ah, unlucky maiden, now you wander in the mountains!'), *Ecl.* 6.52). The witty, but not unsympathetic observation that Pasiphae would have been happier if cattle had never existed (*fortunatam, si numquam armenta fuissent*, *Ecl.* 6.45) is echoed more heart-rendingly by Dido's epitaph on herself, *felix, heu nimium felix, si litora tantum | numquam Dardaniae tetigissent nostra carinae* ('fortunate, alas, all too fortunate, if only the Trojan ships had never touched our shores', *Aen.* 4.657–8).⁷⁶ Again, the epithet used twice of Pasiphae within six lines, *infelix*, is frequently applied to Dido.⁷⁷

⁷¹ One answer to this question, which I have discussed elsewhere (Armstrong 2002), is that we are intended to make a connection between the situation here and the Trojans' earlier detour to Crete in *Aeneid* 3: Carthage, like Crete, is *not* the proper goal for Aeneas, and like Crete it is pregnant with the possibility of tragedy and death.

⁷² See Ch. 1, Sect. 2.1 as well as Duclos (1970–1) and Armstrong (2002), 331–3.

⁷³ Pace H. C. Rutledge (1971–2), who says in the context of book 6, 'we should not want to go so far as to equate Dido and Pasiphae—that would be too gross' (p. 112). For the identification supported in book 6, cf. Pöschl (1962), 150; Otis (1964), 71; Fitzgerald (1984), 56; Skulsky (1987), 70; Doob (1990), 230 n. 8, 238; P. A. Miller (1995), 232.

⁷⁴ Cf. Hardie (1997), 322.

⁷⁵ Clausen (1987), 44 notes a link between the *Aeneid* and *Eclogues* here via *Dictaeos* (*Ecl.* 6.55–6, *Aen.* 4.73), but does not expand on the implications.

⁷⁶ A line which also echoes Ariadne at Catullus 64.172.

⁷⁷ *Aen.* 4.450 (*infelix Dido*), 529 (*infelix Phoenixissa*); 5.3 (*infelix Elissa*); 6.456 (*infelix Dido*). She is, of course, not the only figure in the *Aeneid* to be dubbed *infelix*, but the epithet does seem to attach itself to her as of right, a little like *pious Aeneas*.

As a final echo of the stories of the Cretan women to be found within Dido, it might be remarked that both Pasiphae and Phaedra accompany her in the Underworld, too, where she appears among the women plagued by love (*Aen.* 6.447).⁷⁸ Through the wildness of her passion and the wildness of her surroundings, Dido is, as it were, transported to a Cretan landscape where her actions and emotions become a reflection (and a refraction) of those of the women of Minos' household many generations before. The emphatic mention of Crete in the simile in *Aeneid* 4, which clearly, disturbingly, identifies Dido with the hunter's prey, also brings out the Cretan side of the Carthaginian queen, the side that identifies with nature rather than culture, passion rather than passivity.⁷⁹

In both Phaedra's and Dido's stories, the conflation of love and the hunt, while in essence a simple idea, soon becomes charged with the possibility of complication and reversal, as the target of the hunt changes. Although Dido is the victim, the object of Aeneas' hunt, in some ways she recalls the more predatory Cretan women, Phaedra and Pasiphae. Although Hippolytus is a hunter,⁸⁰ he is very soon hunted by Phaedra, and potentially even by Diana, as implied by the comparisons with Endymion in Seneca's play.⁸¹

⁷⁸ There is more to be said about the list of women in the Underworld. Line 445, *his Phaedram Procrimque locis maestamque Eriphylem*, ('in this place [he sees] Phaedra and Procris and sad Eriphyle') is obviously a partial translation of Homer's *Φαίδρην τε Πρόκριν τε Ἴδον καλήν τ' Ἀριάδνην* ('I saw Phaedra and Procris and beautiful Ariadne', *Od.* 11.321). In Homer, Eriphyle comes at lines 326–7, after the description of Ariadne. The latter is, therefore, markedly absent from Vergil's infernal catalogue. Indeed, Ariadne is never named at all in the *Aeneid*, and the only direct reference to her is as the rather ambiguous *regina* ('queen') at 6.28: cf. Fitzgerald (1984), 56.

⁷⁹ Dido's civilizing force weakens once she falls in love. The growing city which so impresses Aeneas when he first arrives ceases to receive her attention: *non coeptae adsurgunt turre, non arma iuuentus | exercet portusue aut propugnacula bello | tuta parant: pendent opera interrupta minaeque | murorum ingentes aequataque machina caelo* ('the towers she began do not rise up, nor do the young men practise fighting or prepare the ports or safe defences for war: the works hang disrupted, both the walls' huge battlements and the machines which reach tall as the sky', *Aen.* 4.86–9). She turns instead to the wild lands outside the walls where she and her guest are to hunt. Cf. Hardie (1990), 228: 'Carthage... is undone when man falls prey to the uncontrollable forces of nature.'

⁸⁰ This is the aspect emphasized most by Seneca; in Euripides, he is characterized more as horseman and athlete, with much greater stress on his purity, something simply assumed by Seneca at 236–9. Cf. Coffey and Mayer (1990), 88–9.

⁸¹ Cf. *Phae.* 309–16, 422, 785–94. See P. J. Davis (1983), 115–17.

The wildness which finds its expression in the stories of the Cretan women has many different aspects and levels, sometimes taking a dominantly grotesque form, like Pasiphae's lust for the bull, sometimes existing more as background imagery, as in the hints of Ariadne's future Maenadism or Phaedra's present Amazonian tendencies. The effect of each hint, each motif, is to knit the women, and others like them, more closely together, and to present a world in which civilization is only superficial, where women's passions run high, where heroes and monsters are not so easy to tell apart, and where the huntsman had best take care lest he himself become prey in an altogether wilder, more devastating kind of hunt.

3

Vice and Virtue

A cliché, operative at least from the fifth century BC, sets among the ranks of disreputable females the Cretan woman who is incapable of controlling her desires, and whose reputation could easily taint those of her relatives. In Sophocles' *Ajax*, Teucer makes a spirited response to Agamemnon's insults about his slave mother by referring to the king's own origins as the grandson of the Phrygian barbarian Pelops, and the son of Atreus, who fed his brother his own children, and of Aerope, who was caught in an adultery:

αὐτὸς δὲ μητρὸς ἐξέφυς Κρήσσης, ἐφ' ἧ
λαβὼν ἐπακτὸν ἄνδρ' ὁ φυτύσας πατήρ
ἐφῆκεν ἔλλοις ἰχθύσιν διαφθοράν.
(Sophocles, *Ajax* 1295–7)

You yourself are born of a Cretan mother, whom her father, finding another man with her, sent to be destroyed by the dumb fish.

The implication of these lines is that there is shame enough in the bare fact of having a Cretan mother; what is more, coming as the climactic third item in the list describing Agamemnon's shameful background, it would appear to be the greatest disgrace. Teucer makes a point of going on to assert the nobility of his own Trojan mother, even if she lived the latter part of her life as a slave. This demonstrates the importance of female virtue within the male realm just as much as in its own right; if a man's wife or daughters are said to be lax in their morals, the slight touches the whole family.

Although reprehensible behaviour is by no means restricted to Cretan women, when their deeds *are* represented, it attracts notice. In Aristophanes' *Frogs* the old-timer Aeschylus complains of

Euripides' portrayal of the outrageous Phaedra¹ and of his 'Cretan monodies':

ὦ Κρητικὰς μὲν συλλέγων μονωδίας,
γάμους δ' ἀνοσίους εἰσφέρων εἰς τὴν τέχνην
(Aristophanes, *Frogs* 849–50)

You who scrape together Cretan monodies, and bring unholy marriages into your art.

There is much debate over which works of Euripides are referred to here,² but I would be tempted (whilst being ready to admit bias) to see this as, amongst other things, an allusion to a lost song of Pasiphae in *Cretans*, perhaps professing her relative innocence in her affair with the bull as she is led off to be incarcerated in the Labyrinth. That union with the bull would surely count as a γάμος ἀνόσιος ('unholy marriage'), as would the later Cretan woman Aerope's seduction of Thyestes, her brother-in-law, treated in Euripides' *Cretan Women*.

The cliché of the sinful Cretan woman continues to appear in Latin literature. So, for example, Ovid's Iphis shows her awareness of Crete's tendency to have more than its share of women indulging in grotesque sexual relationships,³ while the Nurse in Seneca's *Phaedra* proves to be heartily sick of the disruption brought about by the women of the house of Minos:

prodigia totiens orbis insueta audiet,
natura totiens legibus cedet suis,
quotiens amabit Cressa?
(Seneca, *Phaedra* 175–7)

Will the world hear of monstrous prodigies, will nature relax her own laws, every time a Cretan woman falls in love?

We may well feel that Teucer, Iphis, and the Nurse have a point. Judging from the stories of Pasiphae, Phaedra, Aerope, and even Ariadne, it would seem that the smoke of their reputation is not without the fire of their wicked deeds. All the same, the details

¹ ἀλλ' οὐ μὰ Δῖ' οὐ Φαίδρας ἐποίουν πόρνους οὐδὲ Σθενεβοίας ('but, by god, I did not make Phaedras and Sthenoboeas into prostitutes'), Aristophanes *Frogs* 1043.

² Cf. Dover (1993), 298–9.

³ Ovid, *Met.* 9.735–40. Discussed below, Sect. 2.1.

lurking behind the cliché invariably furnish us not with a collection of cautionary tales about bad girls meeting bad ends, but with a complex and fascinating group of myths which explore the intricate contrasts and overlaps between vice and virtue.

In the context of Augustan Rome, moreover, tales of female sexual immorality (or even impropriety) gain an added edge. A constant theme of mythology—women are strange and passionate creatures—is given a new political twist. The poets' fascination with this dysfunctional Cretan family perhaps reflects (and distorts) the Emperor's concern to re-establish the virtuous, unassailable family as the heart of Roman society and morality.⁴ The stories serve as a reminder (as if Augustus, with his wayward daughter and granddaughter, needed one)⁵ of the difficulties of keeping the nuclear family together, and the name of the house untarnished.⁶

1. ADULTERY AND BETRAYAL

1.1. Unbridled Passion: Pasiphae and Aerope

Pasiphae's bestial lust defies easy categorization. We can label it 'bizarre' and 'transgressive', but that does not completely contain it. Indeed, it acts as a reminder that the effect of transgression is not simply to cross boundaries, but by crossing them to call them into

⁴ Augustus famously attempted to set up his own household as a model for other elite Romans to follow. His womenfolk were encouraged to engage in the virtuous womanly activities of spinning and weaving (Suetonius, *Aug.* 64.2). In a grand reflection of the overlap between the private and political in the city, the Emperor himself became the *Pater Patriae* (Father of the Fatherland) in 2 bc. For signs of Augustus' family in buildings all over Rome, cf. Zanker (1988), 143–5. For the 'sentimental ideal' of the Roman family, which developed from the late Republic on, see Dixon (1991). For an analysis of Ovid's response to Augustan ideas about love and family, see O'Gorman (1997).

⁵ Both Julias were found guilty of immoral behaviour and banished (in 2 and 9 bc). For all his high moral dudgeon, however, Augustus was apparently famous himself for committing adultery (Suetonius, *Aug.* 69).

⁶ The political aspect is not necessarily central to all representations of the Cretan myths (for a start, Catullus' Ariadne sets the scene long before the Augustan reforms), but it is a consideration, an extra dimension, to be borne in mind.

question, to show they are not as rigidly set as they seem. Yet Pasiphae's story can even put in doubt exactly which boundaries have been crossed: those between civilized and uncivilized, between human and animal, between sanity and madness, or between legitimate passion and overweening lust? With such elemental contrasts in mind, it might seem odd to place the affair more firmly within the human, social realm, and to view it with the eye of a lawyer searching for grounds for divorce. Nevertheless, the fact remains that Pasiphae's sin is, in a basic sense, adultery.

Ovid's treatment of Pasiphae and others in *Ars Amatoria* 1 is there, he says, to illustrate the unbridled nature of female passion, in contrast with men's more steady approach to such matters:

omnia feminea sunt ista libidine mota;
acrior est nostra plusque furoris habet.
(Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* 1.341–2)

All females are moved by that lust; theirs is fiercer than ours, and more frenzied.

The list of lustful women offered is quite an impressive one, running from Pasiphae, through Aerope, Scylla, Clytemnestra, Medea, Phthia, and Phaedra to Idaea. Of all these, Minos' wife is the only one to receive full treatment. Perhaps she has best claim to the status of woman driven to the most extreme behaviour as a result of her uncontrollable sexual desire, yet Ovid concentrates less on the extremity of the crime than one might expect. Part of the humour present in the Pasiphae episode comes from the presentation of the queen's passion for a bull almost as though she were in love with a human. A love so bizarre that elsewhere Pasiphae herself argues it had to be divinely inflicted,⁷ is partially rehabilitated and presented in amusingly, disarmingly anthropomorphic terms.

The queen's desire for the bull is given the apparently incongruous title of adultery, *Pasiphae fieri gaudebat adultera tauri* ('Pasiphae rejoiced to become a bull's adulteress', 295), which is subsequently shown not to be quite so incongruous after all. Pasiphae certainly behaves as though she were embarking on a very human seduction, prompting the poet-observer to ask in horror and surprise, *quo tibi*,

⁷ Euripides, *Cretans* fr. 472e.20–33.

Pasiphae, pretiosas sumere uestes? | ille tuus nullas sentit adulter opes ('why have you put on those expensive clothes, Pasiphae? That adulterer of yours doesn't notice wealth', 303–4). Although Ovid makes sure to reject Pasiphae's love as undesirable, there is a sense in which his language at the same time panders to this lust: *ille tuus ... adulter* ('that adulterer of yours') is of course sarcastic, a dismissal, yet there also lurks a feeling that he is conniving in her redefinition of bestiality as adultery. The poet's contempt for Pasiphae's preening on the mountainside is not the absolute disgust of the moralist, but rather the despair of the *praeceptor amoris* ('teacher of love') observing completely inappropriate techniques used for an unusual brand of seduction. As far as the worldly-wise Ovid is concerned, Pasiphae is getting it all wrong, she is inept: *quid totiens positas fingis inepta comas?* ('silly woman, why do you arrange and rearrange your hair so many times?', 306). He stops short, though, of actually offering advice on how better to win the bull's heart. Instead he takes a different turn, wittily urging her to a different, lesser sin—try it with a man if you must commit adultery:

siue placet Minos, nullus quaeratur adulter;
 siue uirum mauis fallere, falle uiro.
 (Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* 1.309–10)

If Minos pleases you, there's no need to look for a lover; but if you prefer to deceive your husband, deceive him with a man.

It is here that we encounter a familiar political provocation⁸ and a more mainstream Ovidian argument. In the *Ars Amatoria* the *praeceptor* often gives the impression that he is explaining ways to set up affairs which bear the taint of the adulterous and illicit, despite his claim that married, respectable women are not his target.⁹ In the story of Pasiphae he has hit upon a wonderful way of being able actually to recommend adultery and yet still make it seem acceptable.

⁸ Adultery became politicized after Augustus' attempts to enforce moral reform in Rome. Especially significant was the *lex Iulia de Adulteriis Coercendis* of 18 BC, which made adultery a criminal rather than civil offence. In the *Tristia* Ovid indignantly claims to have been accused of undermining Roman marriage in the *Ars: arguor obsceni doctor adulterii* ('I am accused of being the teacher of indecent adultery', *Trist.* 2.212). For discussion of the adultery laws, see Treggiari (1991), 60–80; Edwards (1993), 34–62.

⁹ *Ars Am.* 1.31–4; 3.57–8. Cf. Gibson (2003), 25–37; 111.

Compared to the spectre of a woman having sex with a bull, would it not be better that she engaged in common or garden adultery with a man?¹⁰

To stay with the *Ars Amatoria* for the moment, it is interesting to see the attitude displayed by the narrator to the next example in his list, another badly behaved Cretan woman, Pasiphae's granddaughter Aerope. The moralizing tone is similar, and the distinction between the two is even blurred: the first word *Cressa* would lead the reader to expect that Pasiphae is still the subject, until the next, *Thyesteo*, makes it clear we have jumped a couple of generations in the space of a line:

Cressa Thyesteo si se abstinuisset amore
 (et quantum est uno posse carere uiro?)
 non medium rupisset iter curruque retorto
 Auroram uersis Phoebus adisset equis.
 (Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* 1.327–30)

If the Cretan woman had kept herself from Thyestes' love (and how much is it to be able to do without one man?), Phoebus would not have broken off mid-journey, twisted back his chariot and turned his horses towards Aurora.

Aerope's crime was to have an affair (seemingly quite a long-lasting one) with her husband Atreus' brother and rival, Thyestes. Yet the story is more complicated than this, and Ovid's potted version is not only brief but also potentially misleading. Although his wife's infidelity was naturally not welcomed by Atreus, an added sting lay in the fact that Aerope gave to Thyestes the golden lamb which was the symbol of the kingship of Argos, and her betrayal was thus political as well as sexual.¹¹ The narrator of the *Ars Amatoria* chooses to ignore this aspect, concentrating only on the idea of the Cretan woman's inability to control her lust. The aside of line 328, 'how hard can it be to do without one man?', seems to imply that the heroine has had so many men that it would be no great sacrifice to go without one of them. We might well see a veiled reference to Aerope's earlier history of indulging in love affairs, which had resulted in her banishment

¹⁰ Minos' position as shamefully betrayed husband, cuckolded by a bull, is also given emphasis at line 302, *Minos a boue uictus erat* ('Minos was beaten by a bull').

¹¹ Cf. Monteleone (1991), 221 (in relation to Seneca's *Thyestes*): 'l'adulterio è visto come strumento e via per il *furtum regni*, l'unico vero scopo dell'antagonista'.

from Crete.¹² This woman who became the lover of her husband's brother is presented as immoderate, voracious; her behaviour (it is intimated) was enough to send the sun off its course, recoiling in horror. Which, of course, is only indirectly true: in revenge for his brother's affair with his wife, Atreus killed Thyestes' children and fed them to their father, and it was *this* act which made the sun turn back on its course.¹³ Whilst in the case of Pasiphae, Ovid prefers to present the bizarre love affair as a variation on the common theme of adultery, with this more straightforward story of adultery and political betrayal, he implies a level of supernatural horror which should traditionally attend Aerope's husband's acts and not her own.

1.2. Betrayals: Ariadne and Scylla

The potentially disruptive force of love and sexual relationships for mainstream, patriarchal society extends beyond the sphere of marriage and into the family. Just as a husband is eager to ensure his wife's fidelity in order to be certain that any children born are his own, so a father wants to control his daughters' sexual behaviour to ensure that his stock is mingled suitably and that his own authority within the house is confirmed. Accordingly, the anxiety that a daughter could assert her own erotic choice and abandon her home and her father finds its expression in many myths, which usually provide either an unhappy ending for the girl concerned (to prove that betrayal does not pay), or a reconciliation between the father and the chosen lover.

Ariadne's assistance of Theseus on Crete and their subsequent elopement falls into this mythological genre, and adds the aspect of a sinner to a heroine so easily seen as the victim of another's crime. In the *Argonautica*, Jason makes a deceptively optimistic claim that

¹² Cf. schol. *ad* Sophocles, *Ajax* 1297.

¹³ e.g. Hyginus, *Fab.* 88: *filiosque eius infantes Tantalum et Plithenem occidit et epulis Thyesti apposuit. qui cum uesceretur, Atreus imperavit brachia et ora puerorum afferri; ob id scelus etiam Sol currum auertit* ('he killed his baby sons Tantalus and Plithenes and served them to Thyestes in a banquet. When he had eaten, Atreus ordered the boys' arms and heads to be brought out. Because of this crime, even the Sun turned his chariot aside').

Theseus and Minos were reconciled.¹⁴ In his version, the effect of Ariadne's desertion of her family can be reduced to a temporary misunderstanding rather than a damaging rift, yet it simultaneously serves to highlight that betrayal, at least for the wary reader, better informed than the young Medea. When given the opportunity elsewhere to think about her own actions, moreover, Ariadne reflects with despair on the wrong she has done:

an patris auxilium sperem? quemne ipsa reliqui
respersum iuuenem fraterna caede secuta?¹⁵

(Catullus 64.180–1)

Or shall I hope for help from my father? Whom I myself abandoned when I followed a young man spattered with my brother's blood?

non ego te, Crete centum digesta per urbes,
adspiciam, puero cognita terra Ioui,
ut pater et tellus iusto regnata parenti
proditum sunt factum, nomina cara, meo.

(Ovid, *Heroides* 10.67–70)

I will not see you again, Crete, divided between a hundred cities, the land Jupiter knew as a boy, since my father and the land ruled by my just father, dear names, have been betrayed by my deed.

Nevertheless, Ariadne is not the most extreme of such treacherous daughters: unlike the murder of Medea's brother Apsyrtus, the death of Ariadne's brother the Minotaur is, after all, the death of a monster, and, in contrast to the likes of Scylla and Tarpeia, Ariadne's assistance of the enemy Theseus does not result in the overthrow of her father's rule and the conquest of her fatherland. In this respect it might be best to view such expressions of guilt by Ariadne as, textually, dependent on representations of more seriously guilty women like Medea, and, psychologically, an indication of the heroine's endearing sensitivity, the tragedy of her realization that by following her heart she has cut herself off forever from her hearth.

This being so, it is interesting to find that Propertius' Tarpeia, who betrays Rome for love of the Sabine Tatius, uses Ariadne and Scylla as mythological excuses for her own decision to yield to desire's persuasion:

¹⁴ Apollonius, *Arg.* 3.1000, 1100–1.

¹⁵ Cf. also Catullus 64.116–20.

quid mirum patrios Scyllam secuisse capillos,¹⁶
 candidaque in saeuos inguina uersa canis?
 prodita quid mirum fraterni cornua monstri,
 cum patuit lecto stamine torta uia?
 (Propertius 4.4.39–42)

Why wonder that Scylla cut her father's hair, and that her pale groin was turned into ravens' dogs? Why wonder that the horns of a monstrous brother were betrayed, when the winding path lay revealed by the gathering of a thread?

Although Scylla¹⁷ is an obvious candidate for comparison with Tarpeia, Ariadne has to be rather unfairly accused of being an accessory to fratricide. Indeed, in Tarpeia's use of the word *monstri* ('monster') to refer to the Minotaur, lurks at least a partial acquittal from the guilt of the murder of a brother who was not fully human. And this is, of course, the desired effect of Tarpeia's rhetoric. Nonetheless, the comparison can work both ways, and through her association with the treacherous Roman girl eager to make her own sin seem less, Ariadne is made to appear more of a traitor than she really is.

Perhaps taking his cue from this passage of Propertius 4.4, when Ovid treats the myth of Scylla in the *Metamorphoses*,¹⁸ he makes strong links between Scylla and Ariadne. The story goes that as part of his campaign against the Athenians and their allies after the death of his son Androgeus, and before his demand that the Athenians send the youths to the Labyrinth, Minos attacks Nisus' city. The siege goes on for six months, during which Scylla has time to watch the movements of troops from the walls and comes to know all the Cretan captains by sight, and Minos in particular. Moved by love, she persuades herself that it would not be such a bad thing if she were to bring about the defeat of her city so that she could get close to

¹⁶ Reading with *g*; W gives *in patrios... saeuisse*.

¹⁷ Here Propertius has conflated the different Scyllas of myth: the daughter of Nisus who betrayed him, and the monster of the *Odyssey* with ravens' heads from the waist down. This conflation is something of a learned in-joke (cf. Lyne (1978), 14, 125–6), and appears also at Vergil, *Ecl.* 6.74–7 and Ovid, *Ars Am.* 1.331–2, *Rem. Am.* 737, *Fast.* 4.500. (Ovid keeps the myths separate in the *Metamorphoses*, treating the daughter of Nisus in book 8, and the other in books 13 and 14.)

¹⁸ *Met.* 8.1–151.

Minos, who would no doubt be moved to love her out of gratitude if not attraction. Her father, she thinks, is the only thing that stands between her and her heart's desire: *di facerent sine patre forem!* ('gods grant that I should have no father!', *Met.* 8.72). Much to her dismay, however, after she has cut the purple lock of hair on which her father's life and the city's safety depend, Minos turns out to be fierce but honourable (or just politically astute), and he refuses to condone Scylla's crime or act in any way which would imply that he had given her reason to believe he would find such a betrayal welcome. Her city captured and her father dead, all for nothing, Scylla is left to cry her reproaches after Minos' rapidly retreating ship, and, leaping into the sea to follow him, she is turned into the Ciris bird, pursued in her turn by Nisus, now changed into an osprey.

Scylla's speech as Minos sails away recalls Catullus' Ariadne looking at Theseus *cedentem celeri cum classe* ('leaving with his swift ship', 64.53), and the various rhetorical tropes used—'Where can I turn?', 'You are more cruel than a beast!'—are familiar from Catullus too. Here, though, Ariadne's situation, deserted on the shore, is burlesqued as the disappointed Scylla, given strength by her desire (*Met.* 8.143) swims after the Cretan ship and, with superhuman agility, manages to cling to the stern, a *comes inuidiosa* ('hateful companion', 144).¹⁹ To correspond with Scylla's 'Ariadne', Minos has to take on the part of a 'Theseus', however reluctantly. Certainly, like Theseus, he is not averse to taking the advantage offered him by the enamoured princess's assistance, and there is a certain wry humour in the brief description of Minos' taking of the city after his speech of rejection to Scylla:

dixit, et ut leges captis iustissimus auctor
hostibus imposuit, classis retinacula solui
iussit et aeratas impelli remige puppes.
(Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 8.101–3)

He spoke, and once the most just leader had imposed laws on his captured enemy, he ordered his fleet's mooring ropes to be loosed and the bronze-prowed ships to be rowed away.

¹⁹ In other versions, Scylla is dragged behind Minos' ship as punishment: cf. *Ciris* 390, *per mare caeruleum trahitur Niseia uirgo* ('Nisus' maiden daughter is dragged through the blue-green sea').

It is true that Minos has a reputation for justice, but he is also famously cruel, and Ovid plays with the young king's self-presentation as virtuous and upright and its incongruous combination with his willingness to profit from the very act he condemns.²⁰ He piously bars Scylla from ever coming to Crete:

di te summoqueant, o nostri infamia saeculi,
orbe suo, tellusque tibi pontusque negetur!
certe ego non patiar Iouis incunabula, Creten,
qui meus est orbis, tantum contingere monstrum.

(Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 8.97–100)

May the gods banish you from their earth, you scourge of our age, and let both land and sea be denied to you! For certain, I will not allow the cradle of Zeus, Crete, which is my world, to come into contact with such a monster.

Minos is not only disingenuous; he is also (ironically) unaware of the symmetry that events like to assume. While he may keep one monster, Scylla,²¹ from his island, another, the Minotaur, is waiting in his own palace; though he reviles Scylla's betrayal of her father, his own daughter will, before too long, commit a similar act of betrayal.

1.3. Man's Inconstancy: Minos and Theseus

There seems to be a certain parallelism, a reciprocity, in the patterns of Minos' relationships with women. Just as he benefits from a young princess's betrayal of her father, so he later comes to understand what it is to be a father betrayed. Similarly, as a young man, perhaps following in his divine father's footsteps, he has several affairs, displaying a particular penchant for nymphs.²² Apollodorus, *Bibl.* 3.1.2 says that in addition to his children by Pasiphae, Minos had Eurymedon,

²⁰ Catullus also shows awareness of the conflicting sides of Minos' character, talking both of the *iniusti regis Gortynia templa* ('the Gortynian temples of the unjust king', 64.75) and of *magnanimum... Minoa... sedesque superbas* ('great-hearted Minos and his proud home', 85). Cf. Cressey (1981), who asserts that line 85 could imply both 'despotic' and 'splendid', and Matthews (1981) for an argument against that reading.

²¹ Here we can probably see again a humorous hint of the conflation of Scylla daughter of Nisus and the other, monstrous, Scylla of the *Odyssey*.

²² The Cretan king's sexual double standards might also put one in mind of Augustus, who passed laws against adultery, yet was guilty of the crime himself.

Nephalion, Chryses, and Philolaus by the nymph Paria, and Euxanthius by Dexithea. Antoninus Liberalis, *Met.* 41 tells how Pasiphae grows so enraged by her husband's many infidelities that she puts a spell on him whereby he ejaculates serpents, scorpions, and millipedes instead of sperm when he sleeps with other women.²³ He is cured by Procris, who fled to Crete after being revealed an 'adulteress' by Cephalus' trap, giving him a prophylactic drink (ironically enough made from a drug associated with Pasiphae's sister Circe) before she sleeps with him herself. Fearing Pasiphae's anger, she flees back to Cephalus and Athens.²⁴ Later on, however, all Minos' philandering is reflected, and trumped, by Pasiphae's adultery with the bull.

Theseus, too, has a reputation for being a ladies' man, and Ariadne is by no means the only woman he loves and leaves. After killing the bandit Sinis, Theseus takes up with his daughter Perigune, who forgives him her father's death and falls in love with him at first sight, later giving birth to their son Melanippus. Theseus later passes her on to the Oechalian Deioneus to marry. Similarly, after defeating Cercyon, Theseus rapes his daughter Alope.²⁵ Even during his Cretan adventure, Theseus manages to sleep with Periboea and Phereboea, two of the Athenian maidens sent to feed the Minotaur,²⁶ as well as win the heart of Ariadne, and Hesiod says he abandoned the Cretan princess because he was in love with Aegle.²⁷ Once again, when he wants to marry Phaedra in order to secure an alliance with Deucalion of Crete, Theseus leaves the Amazon Antiope, and kills her when she

Indeed, Suetonius remarks that he divorced his first wife Scribonia because she was too free in her complaints about his mistress (*Aug.* 69.1).

²³ Pasiphae here displays a rare glimpse of the talent for witchcraft common to daughters of the Sun, Circe and Medea in particular.

²⁴ Apollodorus, *Bibl.* 3.15.1. It is hard to know whether this myth was invented to account for Procris' presence with the Cretan women in the Underworld (cf. *Od.* 11.321, *Aen.* 6.445), or whether it gave the reason for the association in the first place. Minos' affair with Procris is also mentioned at Ovid, *Rem. Am.* 453: *Pasiphaes Minos in Procride perdidit ignes* ('Minos lost his passion for Pasiphae when he met Procris'). Ovid's treatment of the story of Cephalus and Procris at *Met.* 7.690–862, a tale of tragically misplaced jealousy, makes no mention of Procris' liaison with Minos, but its juxtaposition to the story of Minos and Scylla at the opening of *Metamorphoses* 8 is suggestive.

²⁵ Plutarch, *Thes.* 8 and 29.

²⁶ Plutarch, *Thes.* 29.

²⁷ Hesiod, *Eoiae* fr. 76.

rushes, mad with jealousy, into the wedding feast.²⁸ Together with his friend Peirithous, Theseus abducts the young Helen from Sparta, and later attempts to abduct Persephone, but is trapped in the Underworld until Hercules frees him.²⁹

Ovid presents us with a Phaedra only too aware of her husband's harsh treatment of women; not only did he abandon her sister Ariadne, but he even killed Hippolytus' mother instead of doing the decent thing and marrying her:

prima securigeras inter uirtute puellas
te peperit, nati digna uigore parens;
si quaeras ubi sit—Theseus latus ense peregit,
nec tanto mater pignore tuta fuit.

(Ovid, *Heroides* 4.117–20)

The foremost in bravery of the axe-wielding girls bore you, a parent worthy of her son's strength; if you ask where she is—Theseus pierced her side with his sword, nor was your mother safe even with such a great pledge [as having you as her son].

And Seneca's Phaedra prefaces her account of her own illicit love for her stepson with an expression of her loneliness, effectively abandoned by Theseus as he attempts to seize Persephone down in the Underworld:

profugus en coniunx abest
praestatque nuptae quam solet Theseus fidem.
fortis per altas inuii retro lacus
uadit tenebras miles audacis proci,
solio ut reuulsam regis inferni abstrahat;
pergit furoris socius, haud illum timor
pudorue tenuit: stupra et illicitos toros
Acheronte in imo quaerit Hippolyti pater.

(Seneca, *Phaedra* 91–8)

See, my fugitive husband is away, and Theseus shows his usual faith to his bride. A brave henchman for a bold suitor, he goes through the deep shadows of the lake from which there is no way back, that he might snatch away and drag back a bride from the throne of the king of the Underworld. He presses on, madness' ally, and neither fear nor decency have held him

²⁸ Apollodorus, *Epit.* 1.17.

²⁹ Diodorus Siculus 4.63.

back: Hippolytus' father seeks rape and forbidden marriage in the depths of Acheron.

So, much as Cretan women may be less than perfect wives,³⁰ their husbands are often far from being angels. Philandering may be more acceptable (at least in ancient eyes) when men practise it, and women's peccadilloes achieve all the more impact and notoriety because of this. Yet there is even a sense in which we could see the men in these stories as riding for a fall. The bullying Minos, so cavalier about the feelings of women (whether it be his wife, or Scylla, or the nymphs he pursues), finds his authority challenged by them, his dignity crushed by them, and, ultimately, he is even killed by them.³¹ Again, Theseus, who is heartless enough to abandon Ariadne on a deserted island, and cheeky enough to marry her little sister,³² finds his house overturned by Phaedra's love and lies, and drives his own son to his death because of them. For all Minos' reputation as a lawgiver and lord of the seas, he is every bit as famous for the bad behaviour of his womenfolk. For all Theseus' heroism and his benefactions to mankind, he is remembered just as much for his wilful forgetfulness on Naxos and, later, his culpable willingness to believe that his bed has been dishonoured by his own son.

Theseus' famous faithlessness sets such a pattern, indeed, that it even seeps into Ariadne's other relationship, her marriage to Bacchus. She (at least) feels she has good reason to suspect the god of having an affair with a beautiful captive Indian girl:

Bacche leuis leuiorque tuis, quae tempora cingunt,
frondibus, in lacrimas cognite Bacche meas,
ausus es ante oculos adducta paelice nostros
tam bene compositum sollicitare torum?
heu ubi pacta fides? ubi, quae iurare solebas?

³⁰ It is interesting to note that Ariadne actually loses the aspect of adulteress in later Greek and Latin literature which she appears to have had in some earlier variants on the myth, as glimpsed in *Odyssey* 11. See Ch. 1, Sect. 1.1.

³¹ The daughters of Cocalus scald Minos to death in a bath when he arrives at their father's home to demand the return of the escaped craftsman Daedalus. I do not wish to imply that there are any erotic overtones to this part of his story, merely that, once again, Minos finds his blustering self-importance challenged by the actions of women.

³² Not to mention his murder of Hippolytus' mother!

me miseram, quotiens haec ego uerba loquar?

(Ovid, *Fasti* 3.481–6)

Bacchus, light in love and lighter than the leaves which wreath your brow, Bacchus known to me only to cause me tears, have you dared to bring your mistress before my eyes and to upset our marriage bed so well made? Alas, where is the faith you promised? Where are the oaths you used to swear? Poor me, how often shall I say these words?

In a similar move, Nonnus has the ghost of Ariadne appear to reproach Dionysus for his love for Aura, a betrayal which reminds her of Theseus' desertion of her before:³³

ἀμνήμων Διόνυσσε τεῶν προτέρων ὑμεναίων,
 Αὔρης ζῆλος ἔχει σε, καὶ οὐκ ἀλέγεις Ἀριάδνης·
 ὦμοι ἐμοῦ Θησῆος, ὃν ἥρπασε πικρὸς ἀήτης,
 ὦμοι ἐμοῦ Θησῆος, ὃν ἔλλαξεν ἀνέρα Φαίδρη.

(Nonnus, *Dionysiaca* 48.533–6)

Dionysus forgetful of your former marriage, desire for Aura possesses you, and you don't care for Ariadne. Alas for my Theseus, whom a bitter wind carried off! Alas for my Theseus, whom Phaedra got as her husband.

Interestingly, again, we can see hints of a similar obsession in Pasiphae's relationship with the bull. It is as if the queen has learned not to trust any male as far as affairs of the heart are concerned. In *Eclogue* 6 she calls on the nymphs of Dicte to help her round up her beloved, who may have been lured off to the stables by some cows (6.55–60). Ovid's Pasiphae finds her fears more developed still, and she comes to regard the bull as her *dominus* ('lord', in the erotic sense) and the cows that might attract him as her rivals:

a, quotiens uaccam uultu spectauit iniquo
 et dixit 'domino cur placet ista meo?
 aspice ut ante ipsum teneris exultet in herbis;
 nec dubito quin se stulta decere putet!'

(Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* 1.313–16)

³³ The idea that Bacchus may find a woman other than Ariadne attractive, already seen in *Fasti* 3, is used for rhetorical purpose in Statius, *Silvae* 1.2.131–3, where it is asserted that, had Bacchus caught sight of the lovely bride Violentilla first, he would have preferred her to Ariadne. (For this conceit, compare Seneca, *Phae.* 661–2, where Phaedra asserts that, had Ariadne seen Hippolytus before Theseus, she would have fallen in love with the former.)

Ah, how often she watched a cow with spite in her face and said, 'Why does that one please my lord? Look how she frisks before him in the delicate grass; no doubt the fool thinks it suits her!'

The word *paelex* is used twice in consecutive lines (320, 321) to describe the unlucky cows Pasiphae comes to view as competitors for the bull's affections, as she gives orders for them to be used in hastily improvised sacrifices and holds their entrails in her hands with alarming glee.³⁴ The parallels with the myth of Dirce's persecution of Antiope, and in particular with Propertius' version of the story (3.15),³⁵ serve to emphasize the extent to which Pasiphae here is not only the preening would-be adulteress, but also the ferociously jealous self-perceived victim of adultery. The atmosphere on Crete, it seems, is thick with betrayal.

1.4. Daedalus the Go-Between

In an investigation of the relationships between Cretan women and their men, Daedalus occupies an important, but complicated position. Exiled from Athens for the murder of his nephew, Daedalus finds a home, and employment, in Crete. In a sense, then, he is Minos' man, who undertakes tasks (such as building the Labyrinth) for the king who has offered him refuge. On the other hand, as is evinced by the lengths to which he goes to escape Crete, the craftsman comes to regard himself as imprisoned rather than sheltered by Minos. Moreover, it is he who enables Pasiphae to mate with the bull,

³⁴ The *commenta sacra* ('feigned rites', 319) both indicate the ferocity of Pasiphae's jealousy, and provide a witty reminder of the reason the queen was possessed by this strange passion in the first place: the neglect of a sacrifice, whether her own or Minos' (cf. Euripides, *Cretans* fr. 472e.21–34; Diodorus Siculus 4.77.2; Apollodorus, *Bibl.* 3.1.3–4; Pausanias 1.27.9).

³⁵ Cf. Hollis (1977), 95. Propertius makes Dirce's motive for persecuting Antiope a groundless suspicion that the girl has slept with her husband Lycus. Ovid repeats the neoteric-elegiac phraseology of Propertius: *a quotiens... a quotiens...* ('ah, how often... how often', Propertius 3.15.13, 15) reappears as Pasiphae looks on her rival cows: *a quotiens uaccam uulto spectauit iniquo* ('ah, how often she looked at a cow with spite in her face', *Ars Am.* 1.313). Dirce's own punishment at the hands of Antiope's sons Amphion and Zethus may have intensified the links Ovid perceived between the two: *puerique trahendam | uinxerunt Dirce sub trucidis ora bouis* ('the boys bound Dirce beneath the head of a wild bull to be dragged apart', Propertius 3.15.37–8).

and assists Ariadne and Theseus in their escape from the Labyrinth after the killing of the Minotaur. His motivations for helping the royal women in their love affairs are obscure, and the various treatments hint at any interpretation ranging from political subversion to immorality or even an amoral, detached fascination with the solving of technical problems.

In a fragment of Euripides (988), long ago assigned to the *Cretans* by Wilamowitz,³⁶ a reproach is made to a good-for-nothing craftsman: τέκτων γὰρ ὢν ἐπρασσεσ οὐ ξυλουργικά ('though a carpenter, what you have practised is not woodwork'). The reference appears to be to Daedalus' construction of the wooden cow in which Pasiphae hid to be mounted by her bovine lover. Although it is uncertain exactly how much of the play was devoted to an exposé of the Cretan queen's bizarre union with the bull and the birth of the Minotaur,³⁷ the largest surviving fragment, Pasiphae's speech of self-defence (472e), makes it clear that it was an important theme, which we can expect to have been fully developed by the author.

The line is assigned most naturally to Minos, who, in keeping with his position as indignant royal husband (and perhaps as future judge of the dead?), seems to spend much of this play interrogating and accusing others.³⁸ The immediate meaning of the line is clear enough: you are a carpenter, but what you have practised is not woodwork. Perhaps this constitutes a reference to the fact that in constructing the decoy cow for Pasiphae, Daedalus also made use of ox-hide to make the contraption more convincing.³⁹ The carpenter has thus strayed outside his proper sphere of activity, using unusual materials for bizarre ends. Might it be plausible, though, to expand rather more on just *what* a strange and grotesque thing Daedalus has

³⁶ Wilamowitz (1935–72), i. 192.

³⁷ Although fr. 988 is the only fragment surviving which implies the presence of Daedalus, it seems likely, given the mention of Icarus' 'bold monody' by the scholiast on Aristophanes' *Frogs* 849, that the play also dealt with the escape of Daedalus and Icarus from Crete. For full discussion of possible plot and themes, see Rivier (1958); R. Cantarella (1963); Webster (1967), 87–92; Collard, Cropp, and Lee (1995), 53–8.

³⁸ Pasiphae's speech is most naturally interpreted as a response to accusations and death-threats (cf. 35–41) from her husband. At fr. 472bc, Minos appears to be interrogating someone else (perhaps the Nurse) about the nature of the baby Minotaur.

³⁹ Cf. Hyginus, *Fab.* 40; Apollodorus, *Bibl.* 3.1.4. See also Euripides fr. 472e.17–18, a reference to the wooden cow, unfortunately very fragmentary.

done? Not only has he put his art to a rather novel use, but to a distinctly shocking one, enabling Minos' wife to have sex with a bull. The implication of Minos' words could therefore be seen to be more like, 'You have practised not carpentry, but pimping'.

Unfortunately, the other dramas which dealt with some part of the Daedalus story have met with a fate even less kind than that of Euripides' *Cretans*, so it is impossible to know whether the Daedalus as warped procurer motif was exploited more.⁴⁰ For obvious reasons the Pasiphae story seems to have been quite popular with the comedians, and the comic possibilities for Daedalus the pimp seem too good to be missed, especially given the dubious moral status of this magician-craftsman in other parts of his story too.⁴¹ The clearest indication that this could have been the case is an episode in Aristophanes' *Daedalus* where the carpenter makes Zeus an artificial swan in which to seduce Leda.⁴² This is, of course, in part a humorous conflation of two famous examples of Daedalian ingenuity, the wooden cow and the wings he made for himself and Icarus,⁴³ but the implication that Daedalus is a fix-it man for all sorts of out of the ordinary sexual unions is clear too.

The word τέκτων refers to a builder in wood, and it is worth noting that Daedalus was particularly famed as a maker of wooden statues which moved.⁴⁴ There is no other τέκτων or ζυλουργός known in tragedy, though in Bacchylides, fr. 26.6 Sn., where Pasiphae approaches Daedalus to tell him of her terrible passion, he is called

⁴⁰ Often precious little survives beyond titles, but Sophocles' *Camici* (and its parody in Aristophanes' *Cocalus*) would have treated Daedalus in Sicily; Sophocles also wrote a *Daedalus* and a *Minos* of unknown content. Comic treatments include four *Daedalus* plays by Aristophanes, Plato, Philippus, and Eubulus, *Cretenses* by Nicochares and Apollonophanes, and *Minos* by Alexis and Antiphanes. However, the most likely candidate to have treated this part of the story is Alcaeus' *Pasiphae*, produced in 388 bc. In Rome, Accius wrote a *Minos* or *Minotaur*, but nothing further is known about the play.

⁴¹ Daedalus is exiled from Athens for the murder of his nephew, issues a challenge to Nature with his flight from Crete, and conspires with the daughters of Cocalus in the gruesome murder of Minos. These dark elements can give him a tragic air, but lend themselves equally well to burlesque.

⁴² Cf. PCG 3.2.198. This reference from Collard, Cropp, and Lee (1995), 59.

⁴³ In Aristophanes, fr. 192, it seems that Zeus fears he may fall out of the wooden swan on his way back up to heaven (following Kock's interpretation), presumably a joke at Icarus' expense, whose flight was cut short.

⁴⁴ Cf. e.g. Euripides, *Hec.* 838; Philostratus, *Imag.* 1.16.1.

τεκτόν[ω]ν σοφω[τάτω] ('the most skilled of carpenters'). As far as it is possible to tell, Daedalus' behaviour is not so reprehensible in Bacchylides, and he appears rather as a subject simply carrying out his queen's orders. Still, there is a sense in which he plays the role of the confidant, which can so easily slip into the role of procurer.⁴⁵

Some appearances of Daedalus in Latin literature also offer hints that his role could at least sometimes be seen in this light. In Seneca's *Phaedra*, as part of the long-running theme that Phaedra's passion for Hippolytus is both an echo of, and more deplorable than, Pasiphae's for the bull, the heroine laments that at least her mother found an outlet for her lust, and someone to help her in its consummation, whereas she lacks such a helper: *quis meas miserae deus | aut quis iuuare Daedalus flammis queat?* ('what god or what Daedalus can help my burning passion?', 119–20).⁴⁶ This recalls a similar, but less self-indulgent, lament by Ovid's Iphis (herself a Cretan woman trapped in what she sees as a bizarre lust) that there is no hope for her: even Daedalus could not transform her into a real man so that she could go ahead with her marriage to Ianthe.⁴⁷

In contrast to these approaches, Vergil's Daedalus seems, far from being an unscrupulous pimp, to be a champion of humanity, moved by pity to help Ariadne in her love for Theseus: *magnum reginae sed enim miseratus amorem* ('but he took pity on the great love of the queen', *Aen.* 6.28).⁴⁸ On closer inspection, though, it would appear that Daedalus has not completely renounced his partiality for dissembling and disguise. As Fitzgerald (1984), 54 points out, Daedalus' part in Pasiphae's mating with the bull, his building of the Labyrinth, and the names of Theseus and Ariadne are all suppressed in the

⁴⁵ Compare many of the Nurses of tragedy (particularly in Euripides' *Hippolytus*), and the Paidagogos in Euripides' *Ion*.

⁴⁶ There is a possible sexual overtone in the verb *iuuare*. Cf. *OLD* 5: '(usu. of things) to give pleasure, delight, gratify'. Phaedra, of course, has her nurse to act as go-between, and even makes a direct approach herself.

⁴⁷ Ovid, *Met.* 9.742–3. Note that Iphis' *passion* for Ianthe appears to be Ovid's addition to the basic frame of the story adapted from Nicander (cf. Antoninus Liberalis, *Met. Syn.* 17), something fitting for the frequently erotically charged atmosphere of the *Metamorphoses*, and more fitting still for a woman from Crete (as Iphis herself is only too well aware).

⁴⁸ Putnam (1987) and Perkell (1989) give illuminating accounts of the importance of pity for Vergil as a poet, and of the power of art (and hence the responsibility of the artist) both to move and to educate an audience by eliciting this emotion.

description of the temple frieze.⁴⁹ The absence of the names may not signify an omission on Daedalus' part if the figures *are* there on the actual frieze,⁵⁰ but the other two omissions are rather more serious. From the death of Androgeus and the sin of Pasiphae, to the Minotaur ready to devour the young Athenians, Daedalus himself stays in the background, later standing suddenly, heroically forward to solve the puzzle of the Labyrinth: *Daedalus ipse dolos tecti ambagesque resoluit, | caeca regens filo uestigia* ('Daedalus himself solved the tricks and windings of the building, guiding his blind footsteps with a thread', *Aen.* 6.29–30). The *ipse* could, at a pinch, be taken to imply the contrast, 'Daedalus built the Labyrinth, but now shows Theseus the way out because he has taken pity on Ariadne'. However, given the absence of the artisan from the action earlier, the contrast seems more naturally to be, 'Crete is full of monstrous, inextricable difficulties, but look! here is Daedalus to solve the problem'. It seems that Daedalus is not just the tragic, empathizing artist, but also the autobiographer inclined to paper over the cracks of his own dubious behaviour. His inability to depict the death of Icarus is understandable,⁵¹ but it is also another example of his failure (for whatever reason) to acknowledge the full truth about his past. The temple carvings are a monument to his own successes (*redditis his primum terris tibi, Phoebæ, sacrauit | remigium alarum posuitque immania templa*—'when he first returned to the earth here, he dedicated the oarage of his wings to you, Phoebus, and built a huge temple,' *Aen.* 6.18–19) which omit the morally dubious aspects of these, and the sacrifice he had to make for his own survival.

Daedalus makes an interesting companion for the Cretan women, being himself a character who dwells in the moral shade. A master-

⁴⁹ The absence of names enables the link between Ariadne and Dido to be strengthened through the word *regina* (6.28; cf. 2.3, 4.1, 6.460). The lack of specificity also allows an ambiguity as to whether the queen is Ariadne, as the context would seem to demand, or Pasiphae, as would be more appropriate to the title.

⁵⁰ It is worth noting the difficulty of deciding exactly what was depicted on the doors of the temple. Lines 28–30 may either be a description of something present in the 'original' artefact, or the narrator's gloss (a familiar hazard in the interpretation of ecphrasis). The problem is here made more acute and more self-conscious by the account of Daedalus' failure to depict the death of Icarus (6.30–3).

⁵¹ It also, of course, serves another function: a reflection on the difficulties of personal art. Cf. Putnam (1987).

craftsman with extraordinary—even supernatural⁵²—skills, he is also a murderer, a meddler, and a man who does not hesitate to assist women in adultery and betrayal.

2. *Κρηῆτες ἀεὶ ψεύσται*: FORMS OF DECEPTION

When Callimachus is in doubt about whether to accept that Zeus was born in Arcadia or on Crete,⁵³ the matter can be easily, amusingly settled for him by recourse to one of the great stereotypes of antiquity, the lying Cretan. An aphorism which started life (or was given new life) as a sixth-century philosopher's paradox, 'Epimenides the Cretan says Cretans always lie,' comes to be taken as a statement of fact, and a whole island nation branded as mendacious. Although it is tempting, and sometimes necessary, to defend particular characters against the indiscriminate wielding of clichés, it is interesting nevertheless to take the stereotype as a starting point for an investigation into the various forms which lying and trickery take in the myths of the Cretan women.⁵⁴

Ovid positively invites us to remember the stereotype when, as he introduces the story of Pasiphae, he at once summons up the memory and dismisses it as an untenable excuse:

nota cano; non hoc, centum quae sustinet urbes,⁵⁵
quamuis sit mendax, Creta negare potest.
(Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* 1.297–8)

⁵² Cf. Delcourt (1957), 157–62; Morris (1992), 213–37.

⁵³ Callimachus, *Hymn to Zeus* 3–9.

⁵⁴ It must be admitted that deception is hardly the exclusive province of Cretans in myth. Dishonesty was often seen as characteristic of all women (e.g. Aeschylus, *Ag.* 1636; Plutarch, *Mor.* 256b; Ovid, *Ars Am.* 1.645–6). However, the fact that the lying Cretan cliché exists invites a closer examination of Cretan lies.

⁵⁵ Ovid here turns cliché-monger: Crete's hundred (or a number almost as large) cities are familiar from Homer onwards. The words *nota cano* ('I sing familiar things'), with their Callimachean associations (cf. fr. 612, ἀμάρτυρον οὐδὲν αἶδω—'I sing nothing unattested'), showily point to the echo of the *Hymn to Zeus* in the following line, and no doubt contain an added layer of meaning, that Ovid is aware that Callimachus himself was dealing in stereotypes in the very passage recalled.

I sing familiar things; however mendacious it may be, Crete, which supports a hundred cities, cannot deny this.

Ovid, it seems, has come up with a convenient, if arbitrary and philosophically unsound, solution to Epimenides' paradox: since Cretans are liars, their opinion on any matter concerning their own history can be disregarded, and we can either (like Callimachus) count as false any Cretan story favourable to the island, or (like Ovid) consider to be true any scandalous tale which Cretans would be keen to deny.

2.1. Deceptive Art: Pasiphae's Wooden Cow and Other Illusions

The concern with mimicry and illusion, with the deceptive qualities of art, is a common theme which links various artefacts, and none more so than Daedalus' most famous creations: the wooden cow, the Labyrinth, and the wings with which he and Icarus fly from Crete. Whilst the latter two inventions perhaps contain more potential for all kinds of symbolic interpretations by the poets, the wooden cow in which Pasiphae conceals herself in order to mate with the bull also holds a real fascination, not least for the part it plays in the mythology of deception.⁵⁶ The second-century AD theologian Clement of Alexandria says that this artist's skill was great enough to fool a real, wild bull:⁵⁷

⁵⁶ It is worth noting that Roman artistic depictions of the myth of Pasiphae focused in particular on the wooden cow, often with Daedalus standing by. Cf. Papadopoulos (1994), 'The absence of an *established* [his italics] Greek tradition in the iconography of P., coupled with the fact that the Etruscan tradition is totally different to the Roman, would strongly argue that the Roman iconography of P. is a wholly Roman creation' (p. 200).

⁵⁷ For such persuasive possibilities of an artistic creation, compare the many poems about the incredibly lifelike cow made by Myron (*Palatine Anthology* 9.713–42, 793–8), especially the two which claim that a bull would be fooled by the illusion into wanting to mount the statue (730, Demetrius of Bithynia; 734, Dioscorides). Propertius (2.31.7–8) mentions four amazing cows made by Myron in his description of the temple of Palatine Apollo: it seems the Romans shared this fascination.

ἡ δὲ βοῦς, ἡ Δαιδάλου, ἡ ἐκ τοῦ ξύλου πεποιημένη, ταῦρον εἶλεν ἄγριον, καὶ κατηνάγκασε τὸ θηρίον ἡ τέχνη πλανήσασα ἐρώσεως ἐπιβῆναι γυναικός. (Clement of Alexandria, *Protrepticus* 4)

And the cow, Daedalus', the one made out of wood, fooled a wild bull, and art deceived and coerced the beast into mounting a woman in love.

This obsession with the object as much as the act is reflected in two of Propertius' references to Pasiphae. In 3.19 Propertius cites various mythological examples to back up his claim that women are more lustful than men, placing Pasiphae and her wooden cow at the top of the list: *testis, Cretaei fastus quae passa iuueni | induit abiegnae cornua falsa bouis* ('you can bear witness, who endured the disdain of the Cretan bull and put on the false horns of a wooden cow', 3.19.11–12). And in book 4, the ghost of Cynthia comes to Propertius to scold him for neglecting her after her death and to tell of the different parts of the Underworld: *unda Clytemestram stuprumue ad Tartara Cressae | portat, mentitae lignea monstra bouem*⁵⁸ ('the wave carries Clytemnestra to Tartarus, or the Cretan woman's disgrace, the wooden monster of the woman who tricked the bull', 4.7.57–8). Pasiphae's contraption is as memorable as her bestial lust itself. Again, that other evidence of her adultery, that other strange creation, the Minotaur, could also be perceived here, lurking behind the word *monstra* (monster).⁵⁹ Pasiphae herself is a liar, *mentitae*, both in the sense that she deceived her husband, but also, more immediately, in that she deceived the bull. The trickery involved is emphasized in the earlier passage too: *cornua falsa* ('false horns', 3.19.12). It is interesting to note that Propertius appears to place the whole blame (and credit?) for the ingenious, if twisted, idea on the queen; clearly, to mention Daedalus might interrupt the argument for female wickedness, but his absence is marked none the less.

⁵⁸ Reading with Heyworth (who follows Weidgen). The text given by the MSS (*una Clytaemestrae stuprum uehit altera, Cressae | portat mentitae lignea monstra bouis*) is very corrupt: Shackleton Bailey (1956), ad loc., regards the asyndeton as 'insupportable'. See also Allen (1975) for an attempt to salvage the manuscript reading.

⁵⁹ For a similar echo of the Minotaur, without his actual presence, cf. Minos to Scylla at Ovid, *Met.* 8.99–100: *certe ego non patiar Iouis incunabula, Creten, | qui meus est orbis, tantum contingere monstrum* ('for sure, I will not allow the cradle of Jupiter, Crete, which is my world, to come into contact with such a monster'). The Minotaur himself is (naturally enough) described as a *monstrum*, e.g. at Catullus 64.101.

In *Ars Amatoria* 1, Ovid brings his long description of Pasiphae's love for the bull and jealous persecution of rival cows to a swift climax with this rather matter-of-fact description of the mating in the wooden cow:

hanc tamen impleuit uacca deceptus acerna
dux gregis, et partu proditus auctor erat.
(Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* 1.325–6)

All the same, the leader of the herd impregnated her, deceived by the maple-wood cow, and the parent was revealed by his offspring.

Yet again the language of deception and betrayal can be found: the bull is tricked into the union by the convincing maple-wood contraption,⁶⁰ and his part in the Minotaur's conception cannot be concealed, since the child's very appearance blurts out the secret.

The queen's use of trickery and illusion to satisfy her passion surfaces once more in Iphis' account of Pasiphae and the bull in the *Metamorphoses*:

ne non tamen omnia Crete
monstra ferat, taurum dilexit filia Solis,
femina nempe marem: meus est furiosior illo,
si uerum profitemur, amor; tamen illa secuta est
spem Veneris, tamen illa dolis et imagine uaccae
passa bouem est, et erat, qui deciperetur, adulter.
(Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 9.735–40)

But lest Crete should not have every kind of monster, the Sun's daughter loved a bull, though of course she was a female in love with a male: my love is wilder than that one, if we confess the truth; at least she followed the hope of Venus/sex, at least she submitted to the bull through trickery and the likeness of a cow and there was an adulterer there to be deceived.

Born on Crete to a poor father who cannot afford the expense of raising and dowering a daughter and to a pious mother who cannot bear to see her baby exposed when it turns out to be a girl, Iphis spends her childhood disguised as a boy.⁶¹ When she gets older, she is betrothed

⁶⁰ Ovid here has the cow made of maple, whilst in Propertius 3.19 it is made of fir. Perhaps he reflects, or wants to set in motion, the sort of debate which seems to have raged over the type of wood out of which the *Argo* was constructed (for which, cf. Thomas (1982), 146–8).

⁶¹ For a fuller discussion of this episode in the *Metamorphoses*, based around an exploration of Iphis' unisex name, cf. Wheeler (1997).

to the lovely Ianthe, and the two fall passionately in love, though Ianthe does not know that her fiancé is in fact a woman. Iphis is trapped twice over—by the betrothal itself and by her passion for Ianthe—and driven to exclamations of despair and self-disgust.⁶² She sees herself as fitting into the long-established pattern of Cretan women engaging in bizarre love affairs: she is a monster,⁶³ like Pasiphae and the Minotaur itself; her double life as a man is equivalent to Pasiphae's use of the wooden cow to trick the bull, or even worse than that. To a harshly critical eye (in this case, that of a Cretan woman herself), Iphis' recourse to deception is shameful, but not, perhaps, surprising; Crete is, after all, a land defined by its lies and its monsters.

Again, tracing backwards in time to the generation before Pasiphae, we find that the idea of deception and disguise is already established. In the reverse of Pasiphae's situation, Europa on her way to Crete is herself deceived by Jupiter's artful impression of a bull. The picture of this episode woven by Ovid's Arachne points to the deception: *Maeonis elusam designat imagine tauri | Europam* ('she traces out Europa, tricked by the image of a Maeonian bull', *Met.* 6.103–4).⁶⁴ The proleptic echo of the trick which will later be played by Europa's daughter-in-law adds another thread to the ecphrasis, another link in the chain of Cretan indiscretions: from one deception comes another.

⁶² The Romans were not generally in favour of lesbianism: cf. E. Cantarella (1992), 164–71; Hallett (1997). In a way, then, Iphis' story fits well into this section of the *Metamorphoses*, coming as it does after the incestuous passions of Byblis. Nevertheless, such disapproval of Iphis' passion for Ianthe as is expressed is actually voiced by Iphis herself. In essence, this is a tale not of unspeakable love, but of a miracle granted by the goddess Isis in consideration of the piety of Iphis and her mother.

⁶³ The story of Iphis is introduced with a reference to another monster or marvel, the transformation of the incestuous Byblis into a fountain: *fama noui centum Cretaeas forsitan urbes | inplesset monstri, si non miracula nuper | Iphide mutata Crete propiora tulisset* ('The rumour of this new/strange prodigy might perhaps have filled Crete's hundred cities, had Crete not recently had a miracle closer to home when Iphis was changed', *Met.* 9.666–8.) The narrator, then, sets up Iphis' tale as miraculous, not monstrous, but Iphis herself chooses to view her situation (that is, her love, not her transformation) as unnatural and repellent.

⁶⁴ Ovid's other account of Europa's story, which bridges *Metamorphoses*, books 2 and 3, contains a similar emphasis on deceit: the bull's footsteps are false (*falsa uestigia*, 2.871); later, on reaching Crete, the god puts aside his disguise (*iamque deus posita fallacis imagine tauri | se confessus erat*: 'and now the god had revealed himself, setting aside the disguise of the false bull', 3.1–2). Hardie (2002a), 167, points to another layer of deceptiveness in this story: the god who usually appears in a bull's guise is not Jupiter, but Bacchus. Even Jupiter's disguise is a red herring.

2.2. Misdirections: The Labyrinth

After Pasiphae's deception of the bull and the birth of the Minotaur comes the construction built to hide the monster: the Labyrinth, itself the very embodiment of dark diversions. So it may not be inappropriate at this stage to make a slight digression of my own, to investigate the significance of one of the most powerful images from the Cretan myths. The complexities of the Labyrinth's form are reflected by the potential complexities of its meaning; its blind, tortuous passages come to symbolize so many things, from the windings of a ritual dance to the physical representation of intellectual and moral conundrums.⁶⁵

From its first appearance in Greek literature, the Labyrinth is connected with artistic self-consciousness, an awareness of the intricacies of description which can accrue film upon film of meaning and association. Set within an ecphrasis, the Cretan maze built by a human craftsman serves as the model for an artistic depiction of a dance floor made by the god Hephaestus on Achilles' shield:

ἐν δὲ χορὸν ποίκιλλε περικλυτὸς ἀμφιγυήεις,
 τῷ ἴκελον οἶόν ποτ' ἐνὶ Κνωσῷ εὐρείῃ
 Δαίδαλος ἤσκησεν καλλιπλοκάμῳ Ἀριάδνῃ.
 (Homer, *Iliad* 18.590–2)

The famous limping god engraved a dance floor too, like the one which Daedalus once made in broad Cnossus for lovely-haired Ariadne.

The dance which is then described, young men and women drawing circles like a potter's wheel while acrobats tumble amongst them, carries with it a ghostly echo of other, long-past dances connected with Crete, like the one led by Theseus to commemorate his escape from the Labyrinth.⁶⁶

Catullus' description of the Labyrinth (itself buried within an ecphrasis) at once portrays it as a puzzle being solved (it is described

⁶⁵ Cf. Willetts (1962), 102–3, 123–4 on the Labyrinth as dance floor; Jeanmaire (1939), 319–20 on initiatory aspects; more widely, Santarcangeli (1967) and Doob (1990) are very useful.

⁶⁶ Cf. Callimachus, *Hymn* 4.312–13; Plutarch, *Thes.* 20. For discussions of the origins and meaning of this story, see e.g. Johansen (1945); Willetts (1962), 123–6; Otto (1965), 186–7.

when Theseus is finding his way out, following the thread) and as a symbol of continuing confusion and digression on which his own work is modelled, as it winds back and forth in time and takes different perspectives:

inde pedem sospes multa cum laude reflexit
errabunda regens tenui uestigia filo,
ne labyrinthis e flexibus egredientem
tecti frustraretur inobseruabilis error.
sed quid ego a primo digressus carmine plura
commemorem...?

(Catullus 64.112–17)

From there, safe and to great applause, he turned his step, directing his wandering tracks with the fine thread, lest an unseen error in the house tricked him as he walked out of the labyrinthine twists.

But why should I say more, wandering off course from my first song... ?

In case we might be tempted to see the Labyrinth purely as a mythical object, the poet sets a self-conscious reflection on his own composition immediately after the account of the perils of slipping imperceptibly into obscurity. Like Theseus, Catullus has courted danger with his daring foray into this twisting, multilayered style of composition, but has found his way out safely. Or has he? The temptations and complications of his art are implied to be too much to resist: while the poet wonders why he has deviated from the path of his first song,⁶⁷ rather than return to the straight and narrow, he continues to wander for a while in the realm of the spoken unspoken, telling the story of how Ariadne left home only to be deserted by Theseus. So the maze gains a double status both as place in the narrative and as narratological figure, and serves to baffle both characters and readers.⁶⁸

In the *Aeneid* the Labyrinth is encased in art once again, represented in the central description of the doors of the temple of Apollo at Cumae, along with Pasiphae's terrible, secret love:⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Another complication, of course, is the ambiguity about *which* is Catullus' *primum carmen* ('first song') here: the picture of Ariadne on the beach or the wedding of Peleus and Thetis?

⁶⁸ Cf. Theodorakopoulos (2000), 119: 'the ekphrasis is for the reader as the labyrinth for a thread-less Theseus'.

⁶⁹ This is a passage that attracts radically different interpretations: e.g. Zarker (1967); H. C. Rutledge (1971–2); Boyle (1972), 113–23; Paschalis (1986); Skulsky

hic crudelis amor tauri suppostaque furto
 Pasiphae mixtumque genus prolesque biformis
 Minotaurus inest, Veneris monimenta nefandae;
 hic labor ille domus et inextricabilis error;
 magnum reginae sed enim miseratus amorem
 Daedalus ipse dolos tecti ambagesque resoluit,
 caeca regens filo uestigia.

(Vergil, *Aeneid* 6.24–30)

Here is the cruel love of the bull, and Pasiphae mated with him by stealth and the mixed family and two-formed offspring, the Minotaur, the memorial of unspeakable Love; here is that task of the house, the inescapable wandering; but taking pity on the queen's great love Daedalus himself solved the tricks and windings of the building, guiding blind steps with a thread.

The narrative digression and compulsive wandering of Catullus 64 is present here too, but moves even further, into narrative paralysis. Having solved the riddle of the maze, setting the thread to be followed as Catullus' Theseus did, Daedalus attempts, but fails, to illustrate the flight and fall of Icarus: *tu quoque magnam | partem opere in tanto, sineret dolor, Icare, haberes* ('you too would have had a large part in such a great work, Icarus, if grief had allowed it', 6.30–1). Whilst Catullus emerges from one Labyrinth into another, telling stories he claims not to be telling, Vergil's Daedalus is unable to tell a story he wants to tell. Within the narrative itself, Aeneas and his companions are prevented from completing their own interpretation of the scenes by the arrival of Achates and the Sibyl with her terse reprimand, *non hoc ista sibi tempus spectacula poscit* ('this is no time to be looking at those sights', 6.37). Aeneas' reading, we are told, was not yet complete: *quin protinus omnia | perlegerent oculis, ni iam praemissus Achates | adforet* ('they would have read through all these scenes one after the other, if Achates, sent ahead, had not arrived', 6.33–5). Not only is the spectator within the text denied the vision of Icarus which Daedalus was unable to carve, but he does not even see every panel of the temple doors. How far, we might wonder, did he get?⁷⁰

(1987), 64–8; Doob (1990), 30–3, 227–53; P. A. Miller (1995), 232–3; Casali (1995–6); Barchiesi (1997b), 274.

⁷⁰ Casali (1995–6) approaches this question from a different angle, arguing that the description of what *is* depicted on the doors is itself incomplete: perhaps the story of Theseus' desertion of Ariadne was there to remind Aeneas of Dido. The clear allusions to Catullus 64 invite the telling of this part of the story, which is left out.

When Ovid comes to describe the Labyrinth, although the focus is still mostly on the artist Daedalus,⁷¹ the potential for multiplicity of meaning is slightly reduced. By contrast with the Labyrinth in Homer, Catullus, and Vergil, the Ovidian maze does not appear within an ecphrasis. Instead, it is compared to the twisting, turning course of a river, a work of nature not of man:

Daedalus ingenio fabrae celeberrimus artis
 ponit opus turbatque notas et lumina flexum
 ducit in errorem uariarum ambage uiarum.
 non secus ac liquidus Phrygiis Maeandros in aruis
 ludit et ambiguo lapsu refluitque fluitque
 occurrensque sibi uenturas aspicit undas
 et nunc ad fontes, nunc ad mare uersus apertum
 incertas exercet aquas: ita Daedalus implet
 innumeras errore uias uixque ipse reuerti
 ad limen potuit: tanta est fallacia tecti.

(Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 8.159–68)

Daedalus, most famous for the genius of the craftsman's art built the work and confused the signs and drew the eye into a twisting trick by the windings of different paths. Just as the watery Maeander plays among the fields of Phrygia and twists forward and back in confusing flow and meeting itself it sees its own waters coming up, and now turned towards its source, now towards the open sea it busies its confused waters: so Daedalus filled countless paths with wandering and scarcely himself managed to get back to the threshold: so great was the building's trickery.

Nevertheless, for those who want to see literary self-reflexivity in any poetic description of the Labyrinth, there is scope here. The wandering river to which the paths within the maze are compared might itself form a model of Ovid's artistic project in the *Metamorphoses*: could this be the river of his epic undertaking which sparkles, plays, flows back on itself, contrasting with the wide, silted, pedestrian waters of Callimachus' despised Euphrates?⁷² Again, the Labyrinth also carries hints of the old fear that an artist may become trapped and lost inside his own work. Here even Daedalus himself endures a

⁷¹ The involvement of Pasiphae and Ariadne in the Labyrinth's story is emphatically underplayed.

⁷² Cf. Callimachus, *Hymn* 2.108–9.

worrying moment as he has difficulty finding his way out of his own artistic construction.

To make a further digression, and to step a little further outside the remit of this book, another interesting view of the Labyrinth can be found in Statius' *Thebaid*. There, in appropriately self-conscious fashion, the maze once more makes a cameo appearance in a work of art—this time on Theseus' shield:

at procul ingenti Neptunius agmina Theseus
angustat clipeo, propriaeque exordia laudis
centum urbes umbone gerit centenaque Cretae
moenia, seque ipsum monstrosi ambagibus antri
hispida torquentem luctantis colla iuuenti
alternasque manus circum et nodosa ligantem
bracchia et abducto uitantem cornua uultu.
terror habet populos, cum saeptus imagine torua
ingreditur pugnas: bis Thesea bisque cruentas
caede uidere manus; ueteres reminiscitur actus
ipse tuens sociumque gregem metuendaque quondam
limina, et absumpto pallentem Gnosida filo.

(Statius, *Thebaid* 12.665–76)

But in the distance, Neptune's son Theseus dwarfs the lines with his huge shield, and on its boss bears the beginnings of his own glory, the hundred cities and hundred walls of Crete, and himself in the windings of the monstrous cave twisting the hairy neck of the struggling bullock, and binding him with either hand and his knotted arms, and avoiding the horns with his head pulled back. Fear grips the people when he enters battle, fenced off by this fierce picture: they see Theseus twice, twice his hands bloodied from the slaughter; he himself remembers the deeds of old, looking at his comrade band and the threshold once to be feared, and the pale Cnossian girl with her wound-up thread.⁷³

Following the epic thread of placing an ecphrasis on a hero's shield, Statius' Theseus not only makes a bold return to Homer via the

⁷³ Although this image of Ariadne as a relatively docile, anxious figure winding up the thread is far from uncommon, her presentation here as the object of the hero's impassive, fearless gaze (in the same breath as the Labyrinth itself) perhaps places her somewhere between the poles of those who need to be impressed and those who need to be defeated. And for the great masculine hero, these poles are not so far apart. Cf. Keith (2000), 99 for an assessment of Theseus' claims to heroism, based on his hostile and friendly connections with the Amazon and Argive women respectively.

presence of the Labyrinth (compare Achilles' shield), but also takes the fascinating step of representing himself on his own shield.⁷⁴ The moments that made him a hero—the conquests of the Minotaur and the Labyrinth—are preserved as a simultaneous gesture of self-definition and a threat. Indeed, Theseus himself comes in a sense to echo the Labyrinth with his intricate, multi-directional, but inescapable grip on the Minotaur (669–71). The effect on his current enemy is gratifyingly straightforward: presented with a double image of fearsome, blood-soaked Theseus, they are appropriately terrified. Those who beheld the shields of Achilles, Aeneas, and Turnus may, by contrast, have been prompted to stand back and look at the images with the eye of a connoisseur, pondering the significance of these more elusive pictures. Which is not to say that Statius is being simplistic, dumbing down for a debased literary age—far from it—but, rather, that Theseus in his maturity regards the Labyrinth as a conundrum solved (*metuendaque quondam* | *limina*—‘the threshold *once* feared’, 675–6) and his heroism as unassailable.⁷⁵ The contrast with earlier representations is unmistakable.⁷⁶

Now, though, I will turn back on my tracks to look at the images from a different angle. The Labyrinth is still far from drained of its significance, playing as it does such a pivotal role in the stories of both Pasiphae and Ariadne. In Homer's description, the Labyrinth is a dancing floor, not a prison: this is an association which seems to have been made later. In Callimachus' *Hymn to Delos*, we find both dance and gaol combined:⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Compare Hannibal in Silius Italicus, *Pun.* 2.426–8, 451–2. His shield, however, is a gift to him from his admirers, and also shows other scenes (such as the stories of Dido and Regulus).

⁷⁵ Cf. Hardie (1993), 48: ‘Here at last, perhaps, is a self-sufficient epic “man”’.

⁷⁶ At the same time, of course, the correspondence between this and earlier Labyrinths is flagged up, not only by its presence within ecphrasis, but also by the reference to *ambages* (668): cf. Vergil, *Aen.* 6.29 and Ovid, *Met.* 8.161.

⁷⁷ The Labyrinth is first mentioned as the place of the Minotaur's confinement here, and in Philochorus (328 F 17); it seems, though, that the tradition goes much further back than the surviving literary sources suggest. On the ‘François Vase’ (c.570 BC) Ariadne holds a wreath and a ball of wool, which hints at her assistance in Theseus' escape from the Labyrinth. Cf. Young (1972) for an account of the artistic representations of the battle between Theseus and the Minotaur.

δὴ τότε καὶ στεφάνοισι βαρύνεται ἱρὸν ἄγαλμα
 Κύπριδος ἀρχαίης ἀριήκοον, ἣν ποτε Θησεὺς
 εἶσατο σὺν παιδεσσιν, ὅτε Κρήτηθεν ἀνέπλει.
 οἱ χαλεπὸν μύκημα καὶ ἄγριον νῖα φυγόντες
 Πασιφάης καὶ γναμπτὸν ἔδος σκολιοῦ λαβυρίνθου,
 πότνια, σὸν περὶ βωμὸν ἐγειρομένου κιθαρισμοῦ
 κύκλιον ὠρχήσαντο, χοροῦ δ' ἡγήσατο Θησεύς.
 (Callimachus, *Hymn* 4.307–13)

Then too the holy statue is loaded with garlands, the famous statue of ancient Cypris, whom Theseus once established with the youths when he sailed back from Crete. Fleeing the cruel bellowing and the wild son of Pasiphae and the curved dwelling of the twisted labyrinth, around your altar, lady, they danced in a circle to the music of the lute, and Theseus led the dance.

The Labyrinth is there with its twisting paths, along with the savage son of Pasiphae: the whole story in contracted form. Indeed, even Ariadne is present in a sense (under erasure); though pointedly absent from the story, we are reminded of her by the familiar line-ending ἣν ποτε Θησεύς which, while referring to the statue of Cypris,⁷⁸ recalls the line-ending of *Odyssey* 11.322, where Theseus' loss of Ariadne is related.⁷⁹ The Athenian youths escape apparently unaided, and Theseus leads the dance alone on Delos.⁸⁰

Something of the brevity and allusiveness of Callimachus' formulation of the Cretan story survives in Vergil's description of the Labyrinth in *Aeneid* 6. Here, however, the savagery of the Minotaur is underplayed, and the epithet *crudelis* ('cruel', 6.24) is applied rather to the love that drove Pasiphae to mate with the bull in the first place. At once this gives a different slant to the account, setting the unfortunate queen in the company of those hosts of unhappy lovers of

⁷⁸ According to Pausanias (9.40.3–4) and Plutarch (*Thes.* 21), this statue was brought from Crete by Ariadne, then taken by Theseus and dedicated to Delian Apollo. It also is worth noting that Ariadne was associated with the goddess Aphrodite: cf. Plutarch, *Thes.* 20.4, Diodorus Siculus 5.77, Pausanias 9.40.3–4. On Ariadne's supposed roots as a goddess, cf. Farnell (1921), 48–9; Nilsson (1932), 172, 175; Willetts (1962), 193–7; Otto (1965), 181–8.

⁷⁹ A similar use of the Homeric line-ending is also made by Apollonius Rhodius at *Arg.* 4.433, where Theseus' loss of Ariadne in the *Odyssey* is 'corrected' to his desertion of her. Cf. Ch. 1, Sect. 1.1.

⁸⁰ For discussion of this dance—probably the Crane Dance (cf. Plutarch, *Thes.* 21)—see Mineur (1984), *ad* 313.

mythical and literary history *quos durus amor crudeli tabe peredit* ('whom hard love consumed with cruel wasting', 6.442), whose ranks she joins in the Underworld. Most notably, of course, as has been observed by others,⁸¹ this aligns her with Dido, victim of cruel love, lover of cruel Aeneas. The results of her passion, the Minotaur and the Labyrinth, are described as *Veneris monimenta nefandae* ('the memorial of unspeakable Love', 6.26), recalling both Dido's call to burn the objects Aeneas has left behind, *nefandi | cuncta uiri monimenta* ('all the memorials of the unspeakable man', 4.497–8), and her gift horse which Iulus rides in the labyrinthine Troy Game, given him as *monimentum et pignus amoris* ('memorial and pledge of her love', 5.572). Then as the story progresses in the ecphrasis, Daedalus' pity for the love of the queen becomes the motivating force for his provision of the solution to the maze, *magnum reginae sed enim miseratus amorem* ('but taking pity on the queen's great love', 6.28), a phrase echoed by Aeneas' reaction to the ghost of Dido as she turns away from him, *prosequitur lacrimis longe et miseratur euntem* ('he followed her from afar with his tears and pitied her as she went', 6.476). The 'queen' would most naturally be assumed to be Ariadne, not Pasiphae, but (as Fitzgerald argues)⁸² there is a case for seeing an intentional ambiguity here. Daedalus feels pity for both the mother and the daughter, and his assistance of one shades into his assistance of the other. The shifting, ambiguous quality of this passage, both elusive and allusive, presents a surprising morality, a strange picture: here is a woman whose passion for a bull is not to be condemned outright, but to be pitied and even consummated by stealth,⁸³ a Minotaur of mixed, double form who nonetheless fails to play the part of the monster, and the love affair and escape of Theseus and Ariadne, who remain unnamed whilst Daedalus holds the guiding thread.

2.3. Phaedra's Lies

While Pasiphae is an active, vigorous agent of deception, who tricks the bull and attempts to conceal the baby Minotaur from her

⁸¹ e.g. Pöschl (1962), 150; Otis (1964), 71; Fitzgerald (1984), 56; Doob (1990), 230 n. 8, 238; P. A. Miller (1995), 232.

⁸² Fitzgerald (1984), 64 n. 14.

⁸³ A project of sympathy started in *Eclogue* 6. See Ch. 4, Sect. 1.

husband, Ariadne is more the victim of lies, of her false hopes, and Theseus' worthless promises. As the keeper of the thread that guides the hero from the Labyrinth, she is even on the side of revelation and clarification. Perhaps we could see this aspect of her character being picked up later by her position in the stars, set as a marker for ships: *saepe reges dubiam Cressa corona ratem* ('as the Cretan Crown, you will often guide a wandering ship', Ovid, *Ars Am.* 1.558). Nevertheless, her story is exploited by Jason in the *Argonautica* as an aid to deception and seduction: the victim of one faithless lover is used to prepare the bed for another one. Phaedra, on the other hand, falls more easily into the category of active deceiver, with her slanderous accusation of rape.

In her most extreme form, as shameless would-be seductress, Phaedra has already sinned enough, as it were, with her attempts to engage in incestuous adultery, and her lies about Hippolytus' behaviour towards her put the seal on her irreversibly bad reputation. It is likely that in Euripides' first *Hippolytus*, as in Seneca's play, she voiced the lie to Theseus in person.⁸⁴ It is tempting to imagine an even more outrageously direct accusation in Euripides than that made in Seneca, enough to justify the play's bad reputation. Nevertheless, in Seneca's version, Phaedra's speech is a masterpiece of deception. She slowly forces Theseus to draw the (false) inferences himself, recalling in heavily ironic fashion the earlier slow and reluctant revelation of Hippolytus' name to the Nurse by Euripides' second Phaedra.⁸⁵ How better to convince than by feigning *pudor*, an unwillingness to reveal the shameful 'facts'?

PH. Ipsa iam fabor, mane.

TH. Quidnam ora maesta auertis et lacrimas genis
subito coortas ueste praetenta obtegis?

PH. Te te, creator caelitum, testem inuoco,
et te, coruscum lucis aetheriae iubar,
ex cuius ortu nostra dependet domus:
temptata precibus restiti; ferro ac minis

⁸⁴ This assumption is supported, e.g. by Euripides, fr. 440 N²: *Θησεῦ, παραινῶ σοὶ τὸ λῶστον, εἰ φρονεῖς, | γυναικὶ πείθου μὴδέ τ' ἀληθῆ κλύων* ('Theseus, I give you the best advice: if you have any sense, don't believe your wife—you are not hearing the truth'). Cf. Barrett (1964), 11.

⁸⁵ Cf. Euripides, *Hipp.* 288–361, especially 345–52.

non cessit animus: uim tamen corpus tulit.

labem hanc pudoris eluet noster cruor.

TH. Quis, ede, nostri decoris euersor fuit?

PH. Quem rere minime.

TH. Quis sit audire expeto.

PH. Hic dicet ensis, quem tumultu territus
liquit stuprator ciuium accursum timens.

(Seneca, *Phaedra* 885–97)

PH. Wait, I'll tell you myself now.

TH. Why do you turn your sad face away and hide the tears which have suddenly fallen on your cheeks, holding up your gown?

PH. I call you to witness, you, father of the gods, and you, shimmering blaze of heavenly light, from whose origin our house descends: tested by prayers, I resisted; my mind did not yield before threats and steel. But my body endured force. My blood will wash away this stain on my honour.

TH. Who was it, tell me, who overturned our virtue?

PH. One whom you'd least think.

TH. I'm waiting to hear who it is.

PH. This sword will tell you, which the rapist left, startled by the uproar, fearing the citizens' approach.

The sword which does the final talking was in fact left by Hippolytus as he fled in horror from his stepmother's advances. Phaedra shows herself to be an adept and opportunistic liar.

Euripides' second Phaedra uses quite a different method to make her accusation, setting it out in a letter shortly before hanging herself. She is a less shocking figure than her earlier incarnation, explicitly characterized as the victim of Aphrodite's piqued anger, and it is easy to read this Phaedra's lie as somehow more excusable, a way to divert her disgrace from her children, rather than to take her revenge on Hippolytus.⁸⁶ Yet her final speech does in fact state that she wants to teach Hippolytus a lesson:

ἀτὰρ κακόν γε χᾶτέρω γενήσομαι
θανοῦσ', ἵν' εἰδῇ μὴ 'πὶ τοῖς ἑμοῖς κακοῖς
ὑψηλὸς εἶναι τῆς νόσου δὲ τῇσδ' ἐμοὶ
κοινῇ μετασχὼν σωφρονεῖν μαθήσεται.

(Euripides, *Hippolytus* 728–31)

⁸⁶ Cf. lines 715–18. This is the interpretation favoured, e.g. by Gantz (1993), 287.

But by dying I shall become an evil for the other, so that he may learn not to be haughty in the face of my troubles, but taking a share in this sickness of mine, he will learn to be moderate.

Moreover, as *θανοῦσ'* ('by dying') implies, the very thing which is supposed to preserve her virtue, her suicide, has the effect of strengthening her false allegation. Although she is not there to denounce Hippolytus in person, the strange power which accrues to the written word, intensified by her death, allows her, at least in Theseus' eyes, a virtual presence as accuser:

βοᾷ βοᾷ δέλτος ἄλαστα· πᾶ φύγω
βάρος κακῶν; ἀπὸ γὰρ δλόμενος οἴχομαι,
οἶον οἶον εἶδον γραφαῖς μέλος
φθεγγόμενον τλάμων.

(Euripides, *Hippolytus* 877–80)

The tablet shouts, shouts insufferable things! How can I escape the weight of misfortune? I am destroyed, poor wretch, I have seen such a song sounding out from the writing.

νῦν οὖν—τί ταῦτα σοῖς ἀμιλλῶμαι λόγοις
νεκροῦ παρόντος μάρτυρος σαφεστάτου;⁸⁷

(Euripides, *Hippolytus* 971–2)

So now—why should I contend thus with your words when her corpse is here as the clearest witness?

It is as if this gentler, less openly confrontational Phaedra is an even better liar. The suicide note gains an importance and impact which it would have been harder for the living woman to achieve. That is to say that, despite her better claim to virtue, despite the credit she deserves for her genuine attempt to fight her passion, Phaedra cannot escape her association (both genetic and generic) with falsehood: it just emerges in a more devious way.

The events are seen from a different angle, but still with a natural emphasis on deception in *Metamorphoses* 15,⁸⁸ where the victim of

⁸⁷ Cf. also 943–5 and 1076–7.

⁸⁸ Ovid's other account of the death and revival of Hippolytus at *Fast.* 6.733–62 makes briefer and more neutral reference to the causes of his destruction: *notus amor Phaedrae, nota est iniuria Thesei* ('Phaedra's love is well known, well known is Theseus' wrong', 737).

Phaedra's lies, Hippolytus, having been magically brought back into existence as Virbius, gives his own account of the events that led to his death. He defines Phaedra first as that universally hated figure, the *nouerca* (stepmother),⁸⁹ and then, with a more family-based slur, as *Pasiphaeia*, aligning her lust with her mother's strange passion and deceitfulness:

Fando aliquem Hippolytum uestras si contigit aures
credulitate patris, sceleratae fraude nouercae⁹⁰
occubuisse neci: mirabere, uixque probabo,
sed tamen ille ego sum. me Pasiphaeia quondam
temptatum frustra patrium temerare cubile,
quod uoluit, uoluisse infelix crimine uerso
(indiciine metu magis offensane repulsae?)
damnauit, meritumque nihil pater eicit urbe
hostilique caput prece detestatur euntis.

(Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 15.497–505)

Perhaps the story has reached your ears of a certain Hippolytus who was laid low in death because of his father's credulity and his evil stepmother's deceit: you'll be amazed, and I will scarcely give proof, but I am he, all the same. Pasiphae's daughter once tried in vain to make me disgrace my father's bed, and, the wretch, reversed the accusation and convicted me of desiring what she had desired (was it more through fear of my evidence or out of pique for being rejected?), and my father threw me, deserving none of this, out of the city and invoked a curse on his enemy as I left.

Despite the new god's obvious self-pity in this account, it is comforting to note that he displays a greater equanimity and even sympathy for Phaedra than the disgusted Hippolytus ever managed in his rejection of his stepmother's advances.⁹¹ He calls her *infelix*, as Vergil termed her mother Pasiphae (*Ecl.* 6.47, 52) and the frequently Cretan-esque Dido; this need not disarm his condemnation of her act, but it does suggest at least the possibility of forgiveness for the crimes to which passion can drive a Cretan woman.

⁸⁹ Cf. Gray-Fow (1988), Watson (1995).

⁹⁰ Cf. *arte nouercae* ('by a stepmother's art') in Vergil's account at *Aen.* 7.765.

⁹¹ Cf. Euripides, *Hipp.* 616–68; Seneca, *Phae.* 671–97.

3. THE POSSIBILITY OF REDEMPTION?

For all the focus I have given so far to the idea of concealment and dissembling as essentially immoral acts, it might also be argued that the urge to conceal is not necessarily an entirely negative impulse. Consider Pasiphae's attempt to hide the Minotaur from her husband;⁹² whatever her motives, the result would not have been unwelcome, at the very least to the Athenians whom Minos subsequently fed to the monster. Perhaps after all we could see a benefit in concealment, or in a modest lack of communication on certain subjects. Perhaps Cretan women may find, as other ancient women do, a haven in silence, and even the potential redemption of lost integrity.

3.1. Silence as a Virtue: Phaedra and Lucretia

The voicelessness of women within both public and private life in Athens and Rome is a familiar theme, and one which did not escape the attention of various poets from Euripides to Ovid (and beyond).⁹³ It is easy, and, to a great extent, justified to see women as being silenced by men and by male preoccupations with a view to preserving their ideals of female virtue to act as a prop for their own. In societies where the family constitutes the central hub around which the larger legal and political community forms, a certain amount of pressure is bound to fall on the females within those groups to preserve the integrity of the family, both literally through their chastity and symbolically through their generally modest behaviour.⁹⁴ Although upper-class Roman women appear to have

⁹² Cf. Euripides, *Cretans* fr. 472e.29–33. Contrast Ovid, *Met.* 8.155–6, where the Minotaur and Crete's disgrace grow too big to hide any more.

⁹³ See also the famous (or infamous) speech of Pericles (Thucydides 2.45.2), where the ideal is expressed that a good woman should not be the subject of male conversation, whether in praise or criticism.

⁹⁴ Cf. McGinn (1998), 10: 'The link between personal and familial honour extends beyond the family unit, to the extent that female chastity tends to serve as a prime indicator of social worth.' He offers support, alongside notes of caution, for the idea that Roman culture *was* affected by this sense of shame: one must not regard the issue

enjoyed greater freedoms than those in fifth-century Athens, they still had to take care to reflect their virtue through appropriate dress, a stately and reserved gait, and the limited and seemly use of speech. Silence crudely perceived represents submission, even subservience to the stronger, more visible and more audible male. A well-known funerary inscription includes in the list of attributes of a traditionally virtuous woman this observation: *exiguo sermone inreprehensa manebat* ('she remained irreproachable in her sparing conversation').⁹⁵ Women's silence or taciturnity thus represents masculine ideals. Perhaps, though, despite the apparent rigidity of such principles, a space can be found for more female-centred virtue between the laws laid down by men.

One of the differences between Euripides' *Hippolytus* and Seneca's *Phaedra* lies in the varying approaches taken by each author to the subject of silence. There is never much doubt about what Seneca's *Phaedra* is suffering. A combination of love, self-disgust, and self-justification forces her to speak, whether directly to the Nurse or in a kind of attempt at soliloquy with all-too-present witnesses. Her fainting fits and wild, opaque ramblings come, unlike those of Euripides' *Phaedra*, *after* the full revelation of her passion to those on stage as well as the audience. (In Euripides, of course, Aphrodite's prologue makes it clear to the audience what the queen is suffering before we even see her.) Similarly, whereas Euripides' *Phaedra* ends her life and, as it were, utters the final word on the matter of Hippolytus' alleged rape in written form, Seneca's *Phaedra* continues to live long after her initial threat to commit suicide, and just as she is able to speak of her illicit love to Hippolytus' face, so she can in Theseus' presence cause the father to bring about the son's destruction.

too simplistically, but the terms are useful nevertheless (pp. 10–14). From the Greek perspective, Carson (1990), 158 remarks, 'A woman's sexual porousness poses a threat to the integrity of the *oikos* of which she is a part and to the integrity of the *polis* that encompasses this *oikos*.' On women's social position in the ancient world generally, e.g. Pomeroy (1975); Finley (1977), 124–36; Foley (1981); Cameron and Kuhrt (1983); and Hawley and Levick (1995). On the importance of good morals in a potential Roman wife, cf. Treggiari (1991), 105–7. On the difficulty of even separating the male ideal from the female reality in Rome, cf. Culham (1986).

⁹⁵ Epitaph on the freedwoman Allia Potestas (*CLE* 1988 (Rome)), 11.

In some ways it seems that through her speech and presence Seneca's Phaedra clarifies things which Euripides' Phaedra leaves unspoken, and only half hinted at. In Euripides, Phaedra obliquely refers to what seems to be the curse on her family of unfortunate and sinful love: ὦ τλῆμον, οἶον, μῆτερ, ἡράσθης ἔρον ('Oh what a wretched love you felt, mother', 337) and σύ τ', ὦ τάλαιν' ὅμαιμε, Διονύσου δάμαρ ('and you, my poor sister, Dionysus' wife', 339). Seneca's Phaedra develops these (via Ovid)⁹⁶ to the far less subtle statements, *fatale miserae matris agnosco malum: | peccare noster nouit in siluis amor...* ('I recognize the deadly misfortune of my mother: our love has learned to sin in the woods', 113–14) and *nulla Minois leui | defuncta amore est, iungitur semper nefas* ('no daughter of Minos has ever had a gentle love; sin is always joined with it', 127–8). Yet the breaking of silence, or the decrease in silence, is surely more than a chance variation in expression. Euripides' Phaedra is far more the unwilling sinner, and she shows this most of all by her initial silence and by her desperate attempt to retrieve it once it is broken. Seneca's Phaedra never quite understands its value, and persistently undermines the power of her speech by the absence of silence.

The Senecan Phaedra's difficult, and even paradoxical, relationship with speech and silence is perhaps best encapsulated in the lines which precede her overt confession of love to Hippolytus:

O spes amantum credula, o fallax Amor!
satisne dixi? precibus admotis agam.
miserere, tacitae mentis exaudi preces—
libet loqui, pigetque.

(Seneca, *Phaedra* 634–7)

[*Aside*] O naive hope of lovers, o deceitful Love! Have I said enough? I'll carry on with prayers brought to bear. [*To Hippolytus*] Pity me, and listen to the prayers of my silent mind—I like to speak, but am ashamed to.

⁹⁶ Cf. *Her.* 4.53–66. In particular, *en, ego nunc, ne forte parum Minoia credar, | in socias leges ultima gentis eo! | hoc quoque fatale est: placuit domus una duabus; | me tua forma capit, capta parente soror* ('see, now I, lest I should be thought not enough Minos' daughter, am the last to come under the shared laws of my family! This too is fate: one house has pleased both of us; your beauty captivates me, and my sister was captivated by your father', 61–4). For fuller discussion, see Ch. 1, Sect. 2.2.

Phaedra is unsure whether or not Hippolytus has understood what she has been hinting at so far, and she cannot any more see where speech should end and silence begin. Her 'silent mind' is about to reveal its innermost desires, just for him. The lines economically encapsulate the different sides of Phaedra's character, the would-be virtuous woman and the seductress: to preface a speech with the rider, 'I'm ashamed to say this', can be a genuine expression of reluctance, or an attempt at titillation. Even virtuous thoughts about silence can be transformed by Phaedra into a method of seduction.⁹⁷

The Phaedra of Ovid's *Heroides* in a way occupies the middle ground between Euripides and Seneca. On the one hand, she displays a greater awareness of the need for modesty than in Seneca and is conscious of the difficulty of expressing passion out loud without appearing contemptibly forward. On the other, she essentially lacks the crippling, but paradoxically elevating, sense of shame from which Euripides' heroine can never escape, and which goads her far more than her passion, the self-confessed driving force behind both Ovid's and Seneca's protagonists.⁹⁸ Her attitude to writing itself is interesting, as she seems to be able to draw a stronger distinction between the written and spoken word than one might think justified:

ter tecum conata loqui, ter inutilis haesit
lingua, ter in primo restitit ore sonus.⁹⁹
qua licet et sequitur, pudor est miscendus amor;
dicere quae puduit, scribere iussit amor.
(Ovid, *Heroides* 4.7–10)

⁹⁷ Cf. Morelli (1995).

⁹⁸ Cf. *fama—uelim quaeras—crimine nostra uacat. | uenit amor grauius, quo serius—urimur intus* ('Should you ask, my reputation is without stain. Love comes more heavily because it comes later—I'm burning inside', *Her.* 4.18–19); *quid ratio possit? uicit ac regnat furor, | potensque tota mente dominatur deus* ('What good can reason do? Madness has conquered and reigns, and the powerful god holds sway over my whole mind', Seneca, *Phae.* 184–5); and *Amoris in me maximum regnum reor | reditusque nullos metuo* ('I think that Love is the greatest power over me, and I fear nobody's return', 218–19).

⁹⁹ Phaedra's words, *ter... conata... ter...* ('three times I tried, three times...'), recall others' failed attempts to embrace their (dead) loved ones: cf. Odysseus and his mother's ghost at *Od.* 11.206–8; Aeneas with first Creusa's ghost at *Aen.* 2.792–3, then Anchises' at 6.700–1.

Three times I tried to talk to you, three times my useless tongue stuck, three times the sound stopped on my lips. As far as it is possible and comes easily, modesty should be mixed with love; what it caused me shame to say, love bade me write.

This, the literary forerunner of the ‘silent mind’s prayers’ of the Senecan Phaedra, at least attempts to find a substitute for speaking: writing. Yet even this distinction, this compromise is reached without much examination of the argument. After all, the written word can be just as sinful and destructive as the spoken word, especially for Phaedra. While Phaedra claims to be keeping her love a secret, just like her Euripidean predecessor, her written confession (and proposition) can hardly equate with the silent suffering described by Aphrodite in the prologue of the tragedy:

ἐνταῦθα δὴ στένουσα κάκπεπληγμένη
κέντροις ἔρωτος ἢ τάλαιν’ ἀπόλλυται
σιγῇ, ξύνοιδε δ’ οὔτις οἴκετῶν νόσον.
(Euripides, *Hippolytus* 38–40)

But now, groaning and stricken by the goads of love, the poor wretch perishes in silence, and none of her household knows of her sickness.

Far from suffering in silence until the Nurse drags a confession from her, Ovid’s Phaedra gives full rein and full expression to her passion for her stepson in a letter—the very medium which for her Euripidean model marks the final and most desperate attempt to preserve her honour and, arguably, the greatest slip from virtue. Ovid exploits the incongruities and ironies inherent in having Phaedra write a letter to Hippolytus that confesses her guilty love rather than accuses him of a crime he did not commit. Her opening gambit, *quid epistula lecta nocebit?* (‘what harm will reading a letter do?’, *Her.* 4.3) demonstrates both the author’s wit and the heroine’s (wilful?) lack of modesty and poetic memory. Hippolytus and Theseus will soon discover to their cost just how much harm reading a letter can do.

Again and again, then, we are presented with images of Phaedra’s poor moral health, whether she be guilty of malice, deception, self-deception, or just weakness. Yet it is also possible to view her more charitably, to see sparks of virtue in her character which offer mitigation and even excuse for some of her behaviour. Hippolytus’ tirade against women in Euripides’ play (lines 616–68) may at first seem an

unlikely place to look for a defence of Phaedra's virtue. Nevertheless, although his own hatred of his stepmother and of all womankind is never diluted, it is possible for an outsider to observe a close similarity between his ugly caricature of how a woman's life should be and the lifestyle Hippolytus claims for himself, and even the dignity that Phaedra tries to preserve at the start of the play. In the delirious fantasies of her first scene on stage, Phaedra expresses a longing to be free to run in the mountains with the hunt, or to tame horses with Artemis, which of course immediately recalls Hippolytus' preoccupations, but also finds a warped echo in his denunciation of women.¹⁰⁰ Women, he says, should only have the company of dumb beasts so that their lusts cannot be spread abroad by friends and go-betweens:

χρῆν δ' ἐς γυναῖκα πρόσπολον μὲν οὐ περᾶν,
 ἀφθογγα δ' αὐταῖς συγκατοικίξειν δάκη
 θηρῶν, ἵν' εἴχον μήτε προσφωνεῖν τινα
 μήτ' ἐξ ἐκείνων φθέγμα δέξασθαι πάλιν.
 (Euripides, *Hippolytus* 645–8)

No servant should go near a woman, but fierce, speechless beasts should live with them, so that she may have no one to talk to nor from whom to hear reply.

Not only does this seem like a mixture of the silent life Phaedra was trying to lead inside the house and the one she wanted to live on the mountainside, but this isolation from society and the companionship of animals is not so far removed from Hippolytus' own existence. Longo (1989) neatly sets out this correspondence between the two protagonists, both of whom choose a life withdrawn from the public, filled with silences and asceticism: 'l'ascetismo della segregazione, del silenzio e del digiuno' (p. 51). Hippolytus' insistence on keeping 'pure' from sex (1003) is mirrored by Phaedra keeping 'pure' from food (138). The shortcomings of such ways of living are readily highlighted both by the play itself and by the critics, yet it should also be acknowledged that such withdrawal and deprivation is a reaction to the harmful elements in a more sociable life. The wild, sex-free

¹⁰⁰ Davies (2000) offers a more positive view than many critics of Hippolytus in general, and this speech in particular. These are not the words of an unhinged misogynist, he argues, but of an able rhetorician.

world of Artemis can be destructive, but so, it is clear, can the urban, 'normal' world of Aphrodite. Both Phaedra and Hippolytus, in different ways, seek security and even salvation in a world without too much contact between people. Hippolytus, then, cannot claim the monopoly on this kind of virtue. And whatever the inadequacies of both Hippolytus' and Phaedra's philosophies, it is surely significant that their destruction and Phaedra's disgrace is hastened by the intervention of the Nurse—a spokeswoman of the 'normal' world, of accepted *mores*.

Well, Euripides' second Phaedra is perhaps not the most difficult candidate for moral rehabilitation. What, though, of her shameless Latin alter ego, who owes so much to the notorious first Euripidean Phaedra? Despite the apparent lack of any but the most tattered threads of virtue in Seneca's Phaedra, there are interesting, and surprising, similarities to be seen between the later scenes of Seneca's tragedy and one of the most influential stories of Roman female virtue: the rape of Lucretia.¹⁰¹ Her lying speech to Theseus at lines 888–93 draws heavily on the spirit and substance of Lucretia's famous speech in Livy and on the narrative surrounding it:

temptata precibus restiti; ferro ac minis
non cessit animus: uim tamen corpus tulit.
labem hanc pudoris eluet noster cruor.

(Seneca, *Phaedra* 891–3)

Tested by prayers, I resisted; my mind did not yield before threats and steel. But my body endured force. My blood will wash away this stain on my honour.

Compare Lucretia's words: *ceterum corpus est tantum uiolatum, animus insons; mors testis erit* ('for all that, it is only my body which has been disgraced, my mind is innocent; my death will be my witness', Livy 1.58.7).

Livy's description of Tarquinius' attack on Lucretia is also echoed in this passage of Seneca's play by the use of the images of both prayers and force combined (in Livy: *ferrum in manu est* ('there's a sword in my hand', 1.58.2); *miscere precibus minas* ('mixing threats with prayers', 58.3)). Phaedra paints a picture of herself as a kind of

¹⁰¹ A correspondence regularly noted by the commentaries.

Lucretia, that paradigm of virtue. Although, of course, she is not innocent, Phaedra can play upon the expectations established in a Roman audience (and a Romanized Theseus) by Lucretia's example; this scene cannot help but bring to mind with irony Lucretia's famous line, *nec ulla deinde impudica Lucretiae exemplo uiuet* ('and no unchaste woman after me will live, using Lucretia's example', 1.58.10). However, though Phaedra is trying hard to play the part of a Lucretia, she fails on two counts in particular: she lacks Lucretia's economy of speech (itself a reflection of *pudor* which Phaedra lacks too) and her conviction of action (hence the delay between disgrace and suicide).

However much she herself may fall short of the ideal, Phaedra has chosen a fine model in Lucretia. Her story provides fertile ground for investigations into woman's virtue from all sorts of angles, not least from that of the implications of silence. In many respects we are presented here with a prime example of the silencing power of the aggressive male over the female, and, by analogy, of the patriarchy over the lesser orders.¹⁰² Tarquin's hissing injunction, *tace, Lucretia . . . Sextus Tarquinius sum; ferrum in manu est; moriere, si emisericis uocem* ('silence, Lucretia . . . I am Sextus Tarquinius; there's a sword in my hand; you will die if you make a sound', 1.58.2), is one of such impressive savagery as well as obvious symbolic importance that it is easy to read the whole of the ensuing scene as the imposition of a violent young man's will over a helpless young woman. Yet the woman, in her quiet way, fights back. In Livy's account, Lucretia for a long time preserves the silence that the man has imposed upon her, but this does not mean that she immediately submits to his obviously greater strength. In fact, Tarquin's first utterance gives the false impression that he unquestionably has the upper hand: Lucretia, though silent, and perhaps even given strength through her silence, resists his advances, reducing him to both prayers and threats: *tum Tarquinius fateri amorem, orare, miscere precibus minas* ('then Tarquin confessed his love, begged her, mixing threats with prayers', 1.58.3). The immediate threat of violent death posed by a man hovering above her bed with a sword is not enough to make her submit; the winning card Tarquin has to play is the fear of *dedecus*, the loss of her good name if it were to be alleged that the

¹⁰² Cf. Joshel (1992).

noble man staying as her guest had discovered her in bed with a slave. Lucretia is not a woman to waste words, and after her rape she does not scream the house down, but rather sends for her father and husband. Her description of what has happened to her and what she intends to do about it is the only time Livy gives her direct speech, and her powerful, concise rhetoric perfectly reflects as well as contrasts with her former silence.

Livy's Lucretia is a grown woman, grave and self-possessed rather than passionate and juvenile, and it is interesting to compare the patterns of speech in this version with that created by Ovid in the *Fasti*. There, before the attack, as Collatinus and his friends are watching his wife in secret, Lucretia speaks with endearing *naïveté* of her love for her husband and her concern for him (*Fasti*. 2.741–60). She is less austere and somehow more vulnerable than Livy's upright woman, resembling more the elegiac wife Arethusa in Propertius 4.3, or one of Ovid's own heroines from the *Heroides*. Interestingly, too, Lucretia even echoes the Ovidian lover's despair over the infidelity of his girlfriend: *mens abit et morior, quotiens pugnantis imago | me subit, et gelidum pectora frigus habet* ('my senses leave me and I die as often as the image of him fighting comes to me, and a cold chill takes hold of my breast', *Fasti*. 2.753–4) is a reworking of *mens abit et morior, quotiens peccasse fateris, | perque meos artus frigida gutta fluit* ('my senses leave me and I die as often as you confess you have sinned, and chilly drops flow through my limbs', *Am.* 3.14.37–8). The echo underscores the difference between the innocent, happy marriage of Lucretia and Collatinus and the tortured love affairs of elegy, but also hints at a similarity of mindset in the speakers. For Lucretia, it would in a sense be a betrayal of their love were Collatinus to die while away at the war. The irony that it is *she* who will die by the sword adds a different poignancy.

Despite her earlier loquacity, though, and in contrast to Livy's account, Tarquin has no need to tell his victim to keep quiet, as both during and after the rape, Ovid's Lucretia has all her words knocked out of her by her fear and surprise: *illa nihil: neque enim uocesque uiresque*¹⁰³ *loquendi | aut aliquid toto pectore mentis habet* ('she says

¹⁰³ Here, as often, there is a play on the etymology of *uires* (strength), as that which belongs to a man, a *uir*. Speech, as an expression of power, is, as it were, gendered male.

nothing: indeed, she does not have the voice or the strength for speaking or any sense left in her whole breast', *Fast.* 2.797–8). Her helpless silence is given pathetic emphasis as the narrator uses the words to describe Tarquin's deceitful entrance into the house which Livy's Lucretia had earlier spoken herself: *hostis ut hospes init penetralia Collatini* ('the enemy entered Collatinus' inner room like a guest', *Fast.* 2.787); compare, *hostis pro hospite* ('an enemy instead of a guest', Livy 1.58.8). When her husband and father arrive to see what is wrong with her, she can barely tell them what happened, and finds yet more cause for disgrace in having to put into words what she has suffered: '*hoc quoque Tarquinio debebimus? eloquar,*' *inquit*, | *'eloquar infelix dedecus ipsa meum?'*' ("Must I owe this too to Tarquin? Shall I speak", she said, "shall I speak, poor wretch, of my own disgrace?"), 825–6). Ovid himself seems to pity her; he puts the little she manages to tell of her rape into indirect speech, as if to spare her the shame of speaking within the text as well as within her story. Though her family are eager to forgive her, she simply says, '*quam . . . veniam vos datis, ipsa nego*' ('what forgiveness you give me, I deny myself', 830). She lacks the grandeur and dignity of Livy's Lucretia, perhaps, but makes up for it with her honest emotion and that very vulnerability which had so attracted Tarquin. And like Livy's Lucretia, in her own way, she is able to salvage her *pudicitia* and regain her former state in death: *tum quoque iam moriens ne non procumbat honeste*, | *respicit; haec etiam cura cadentis erat* ('then too, already dying, she took care lest she should not lie modestly; even this was a concern to her as she fell', 833–4). Her last action of modesty recalls that of Polyxena as she falls under the sacrificial knife,¹⁰⁴ and I am sure it is no mistake that here she is implicitly compared to a virgin. Whilst for Livy's Lucretia it is important that her example should never be used for unchaste ends, so for Ovid's Lucretia, it is important for her to regain her state of innocence. Her silence and the difficulty she finds in speaking underline both the overwhelming, gagging power of Tarquin¹⁰⁵ and her own determination to preserve as much of her virtuous former self as she possibly can. Her silence is dignity, fear, and pain mixed together.

¹⁰⁴ Euripides, *Hec.* 568–70 and Ovid, *Met.* 13.479–80.

¹⁰⁵ And the political system he represents: cf. Feeney (1992), 10–11.

There are, as I have pointed out, stark differences between Livy's Lucretia and Ovid's, but the central images and concerns are much the same. One of the messages to be gleaned from both treatments of the legend is that the greater part of virtue lies in the way that others perceive you.¹⁰⁶ And this, to return to Phaedra, is something recognized equally well by our Cretan heroine. It is an overriding concern for Phaedra, whether in Euripides, Ovid, or Seneca, that she should keep her disgrace concealed, that she should at least appear to be virtuous. This is not in itself a dishonourable idea, as Lucretia's celebrated suicide for the sake of 'keeping up appearances' shows.¹⁰⁷ Where Phaedra makes an important (and admittedly rather elementary) mistake, though, is in wishing to equate the semblance of chastity with its reality. Interestingly, it is here for the first time that Seneca's Phaedra could be seen as surpassing Euripides' in terms of moral maturity: she is allowed the time to realize this. Although one might criticize her for lacking the courage of her convictions, for failing to kill herself when she 'should', there is something engaging in her final confession and her determination that Hippolytus' name should not be sullied even if her own is mud:

uana punisti pater,
iuuenisque castus crimine incesto iacet,
pudicus, insons—recipe iam mores tuos.
mucrone pectus impium iusto patet
cruorque sancto soluit inferias uiro.

(Seneca, *Phaedra* 1194–8)

Father, you punished in vain, and a chaste young man lies low because of an unchaste crime, modest, innocent—now take back your true character. My wicked breast lies open for the just dagger, and my blood fulfils the funeral offerings to a pure man.

She has, in a sense, finally done the decent thing. Nevertheless, her suicide does not quite do the work of Lucretia's; while it confirms the truth (that she was the unchaste one, not Hippolytus) rather than a

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Segal (1970), 288–92 on the importance of seeming.

¹⁰⁷ It is also worth remarking that, ironically, it is Lucretia's apparent chastity which gets her into trouble with Tarquin in the first place: *cum forma tum spectata castitas incitat* ('along with her beauty, her observed chastity drives him on', Livy 1.57.10).

lie (that Hippolytus raped her), it cannot do the whole job of reinstating her as a virtuous wife. She may have found some release from guilt, but she offers no apology to Theseus, only reproach, and, perhaps more importantly, *he* cannot forgive her, or see her as anything other than wicked. Euripides' heroine, by contrast, does manage in a sense to preserve her good name, and Artemis' revelation at the close of the play excuses as well as accuses her, giving her a share of the honours given Hippolytus after death: *κοῦκ ἀνώνυμος πεσὼν* | *ἔρως ὁ Φαίδρας εἰς σὲ σιγηθήσεται* ('Phaedra's love for you will not go unnamed and be unspoken', 1429–30). This has to be antithetical to the final sentence for Seneca's Phaedra, uttered by the broken Theseus, *istam terra defossam premat*, | *gravisque tellus impio capiti incubet* ('let the soil press on her where she is buried, and let the earth lie heavy on her wicked head', 1280).

Phaedra's approach to both silence and suicide, then, may not result in a full rehabilitation of her character as a virtuous woman misunderstood. It does, however, illustrate her concern, even her *attempt*, to (re-)enter the realm of the morally upright. This is a bad girl who wants (at least sometimes) to be good.

3.2. A Voice in the Silence: Ariadne's Soliloquy as a Recovery of Dignity

The soliloquy of Catullus' Ariadne is in obvious ways far from being a silence. This is the first time in extant literature that the heroine speaks.¹⁰⁸ More importantly, perhaps, this is the first time a figure in ecphrasis speaks. We should not underestimate the impact of this; it was common in ecphrasis to place great emphasis on how lifelike the figures were, how they looked almost as though they could move or speak,¹⁰⁹ but Catullus goes that one step further. In the opening description of the quilt, he uses quite conventional language to

¹⁰⁸ It is, unfortunately, difficult to know quite how much to make of this point, given the patchy nature of our sources for the myth. For example, Ariadne would presumably have spoken in any tragedy which explored her story, and she may have been able to voice her complaints in other genres too.

¹⁰⁹ For example, Theocritus, *Id.* 1.33–44; the tradition continues at Vergil, *Aen.* 5.252–7; 8.649.

show the skilful work on the coverlet: *haec uestis priscis hominum uariata figuris | heroum mira uirtutes indicat arte* ('this cloth decorated with the figures of men of old shows the virtues of heroes with wondrous skill', 64.50–1). Again, the description of Ariadne looking like a statue, *saxea ut effigies bacchantis* ('like a stone statue of a bacchant', 64.61) self-consciously draws attention to the fact that a static art-object is being described, which only *seems* to contain motion and emotion within its threads. Indeed, there are even signs after the languishing description of Ariadne losing her clothes on the seashore, that the ecphrasis is coming to a close:

a! misera, assiduis quam luctibus exsternauit
 spinosas Erycina serens in pectore curas
 illa ex tempestate, ferox quo tempore Theseus
 egressus curuis a litoribus Piraei
 attigit iniusti regis Gortynia templa.

(Catullus 64.71–5)

Ah, poor thing, whom Erycina (Venus) plagued with ceaseless grief, sowing prickly cares in her heart, from the time when fierce Theseus, after setting out from Piraeus' curved shores, reached the Gortynian temples of the unjust king.

Yet then the poem veers off into narrative proper, *nam perhibent olim* ('for they say that once upon a time', 76), to tell the story of Ariadne's first sighting of Theseus, only to return later (at 116) to the picture of the deserted heroine weeping on the shore. And then she speaks:

sicine me patriis auectam, perfide, ab aris,
 perfide, deserto liquisti in litore, Theseu?

(Catullus 64.132–3)

Is this, faithless one, how after carrying me away from my father's altars, you have left me on an abandoned shore, faithless Theseus?

It must be allowed that Catullus has by now created a certain distance in the reader's mind between the outright description of the quilt and the 'incidental' telling of the tale of Theseus and Ariadne,¹¹⁰ but at

¹¹⁰ The preponderance of signpost words like *perhibent* ('they say', 76, 124; 212, *ferunt*) points away from description of a work of art to the reporting of a poetic and mythical tradition. The use of the word *saepe* ('often', 124) would also seem to imply that a lengthy speech by Ariadne is a familiar thing. If this was the case, then Catullus' version has the more limited distinction of being the earliest to survive.

line 251 (*at parte ex alia*...—‘but from the other side...’) we are reminded once more of the presence and importance of the coverlet described in the poem, and this, I think, once more casts the shadow of self-conscious ecphrasis over the narrative section that has gone before.

So, these qualifications aside, the speech of Ariadne within the ecphrasis is a remarkable and unexpected piece of expression. It is interesting, too, that Catullus presents the moment when she does speak as a time when she is utterly alone.¹¹¹ This is a device which obviously increases the pathos of her situation, but I wonder, in the light of my earlier discussion of silence and female virtue, if there may not be a sense here too that this is the time and place where she is most free to speak. On the one hand, to admit to passion is shameful: it makes a woman appear lustful, weak, or simply foolish. But, on the other hand, the release, the relief which speech affords provide different and compelling reasons *not* to keep silent. Phaedra is driven to the point of insanity by an attempt to keep quiet; alone on the beach, Ariadne can let loose her rage and fear without witnesses to judge her.

For Ariadne, however, it is not so easy to see this more positive side of her loneliness and desperation. She believes it would be far better to have an audience for her passionate complaints:

sed quid ego ignaris nequiquam conqueror auris,
exsternata malo, quae nullis sensibus auctae
nec missas audire queunt nec reddere uoces?
ille autem prope iam mediis uersatur in undis,
nec quisquam apparet uacua mortalis in alga.
sic, nimis insultans extremo tempore saeua
fors etiam nostris inuidit questibus aures.

(Catullus 64.164–70)

But why, beside myself with woe, do I complain in vain to the unknowing breezes, which are blessed with no senses, and cannot hear the speech I make nor give any in reply? By now, though, he must be almost in the middle of his course, and no living soul can be seen on the empty beach. So brutal

¹¹¹ *utpote fallaci quae tum primum excita somno | desertam in sola miseram se cernat harena* (‘when for the first time woken from sleep, she saw herself, poor thing, abandoned on the lonely sand’, 64.56–7); *deserto liquisti in litore* (‘you left me on the abandoned shore’, 133).

chance, too harsh in my final hour, even begrudges me an audience to hear my complaints.

In the literary tradition from which Ariadne's speech takes some of its impetus, the complaints of Medea to Jason, the heroine has always had the privilege of a listener to hear her expressions of grief and reproach. However, Euripides' Medea does not always benefit from having people around her to hear her wild cries and threats. As Jason says,

οὐ νῦν κατεῖδον πρῶτον ἀλλὰ πολλάκις
τραχεῖαν ὁργὴν ὥς ἀμήχανον κακόν.
σοὶ γὰρ παρὸν γῆν τήνδε καὶ δόμους ἔχειν
κούφως φερούσῃ κρείσσονων βουλεύματα,
λόγων ματαίων οὔνεκ' ἐκπεσῇ χθονός.

(Euripides, *Medea* 446–50)

I have not just seen it now for the first time, but often, how fierce anger is an irresistible evil. You could have stayed in this land and house by quietly accepting the rulers' resolutions, but because of your foolish words you are banished from the country.

What is more, in return for the satisfaction of berating Jason to his face and calling up the many counts of his ingratitude and oath-breaking, Medea also has to suffer his patronizing speech of self-justification, something which only serves to make her rage all the more uncontrollable and the destruction she will bring about all the more inevitable.¹¹² In some ways, then, the absence of the hero, the absence of a rational or pseudo-rational voice of self-justification is a gain for Ariadne, who, unlike Medea, will not have to suffer to hear her own part in Theseus' victory belittled, his obligation to her denied.

Buried in soliloquy is both the wish to be heard by those most closely and intimately connected with the speaker and the wish to preserve secrecy and silence. Speech and revelation can result in

¹¹² Again, in Apollonius' reworking of the confrontation between Medea and Jason, the outcome of their conversation (at a time when Jason finds it more necessary, or more congenial to co-operate with Medea) is reconciliation between the two of them, but death for Medea's brother Apsyrtus: ἵσκειν ὑποσσαιίνων· ἡ δ' οὐλοδὸν ἔκφατο μῦθον ('he spoke, wheedling, but she replied with a deadly speech', *Arg.* 4.410).

vulnerability, exposure: the dropping of Ariadne's clothes one by one into the waves prefigures the nakedness of her heart in her speech. Perhaps her solitude changes the nature of her complaint; the words no longer need belong to a disappointed woman haranguing her ex-lover, but take on a form at once grander and more pathetic, a real *crie de cœur*. Ovid seems to perceive the special nature of Ariadne's soliloquy and exploits our Catullan expectations in *Fasti* 3, where Ariadne is left to bemoan desertion again, this time by Bacchus. Despite the lighter, more literary tone of much of her speech, some traces of the pathos of Catullus 64 persist. The attention brought to the repetition involved (e.g. *dicebam, memini, periure et perfide Theseu*—'I used to say, I remember, perjured and faithless Theseus', 3.473), as well as functioning as a witty allusion to Catullus, serves to show how enduringly genuine Ariadne's lament can be. Within her speech, Ariadne expresses the hope that no one, and especially not Theseus, should find out about this second betrayal:

ne sciat hoc quisquam, tacitisque doloribus urar,
ne totiens falli digna fuisse puter!
praecipue cupiam celari Thesea, ne te
consortem culpa gaudeat esse suae.

(Ovid, *Fasti* 3.489–92)

Let nobody know of this, and may I burn with silent grief, lest I should be thought deserving of being deceived so many times! I would especially want it hidden from Theseus, lest he should take pleasure in having you as a companion in his guilt.

This is an engaging, psychologically convincing, wish that her abandonment should not become public knowledge, as the previous had, and that Theseus should not find himself Bacchus' companion in crime (*consortem culpa*) when Ariadne should be the god's companion in marriage (cf. *sorte tori gaudens*—'rejoicing in the marriage she won', 463). The lines also have a less personal force, though, acting as a comment on what a soliloquy should be: an equivalent to silence (*tacitisque doloribus urar*—'let me burn with silent grief'), which allows the speaker to keep her dignity, to stay outside the sphere where others feel they can comment on her guilt or innocence.

Building upon Ariadne's express desire for secrecy, and with the Catullan model so clearly brought to mind, Ovid has prepared the

ground for another surprise turn. It turns out that this Ariadne has an audience after all, and Bacchus hears what he should not:

dixerat: audibat iamdudum uerba querentis
 Liber, ut a tergo forte secutus erat.
 occupat amplexu lacrimasque per oscula siccant
 et 'pariter caeli summa petamus!' ait.
 (Ovid, *Fasti* 3.507–10)

She finished speaking: Liber had been listening to her complaints for a while, as it happened that he followed behind her. He seized her in his embrace and dried her tears with kisses, and said, 'Let us make for the heights of heaven together!'

Ovid both grants the Catullan Ariadne's wish that someone might hear her complaints and hints that perhaps Catullus' Bacchus also heard the soliloquy before. But in so doing, I think, he exposes the unsatisfactory nature of such a solution. The god all too easily diffuses the emotion here, promising Ariadne the privilege of a place in heaven in such a way as to devalue both the nature of the reward and the legitimacy of his wife's complaint. His reply to the speech, which at least seemed to contain elements of the genuine passion and grief of soliloquy, makes what went before appear spoiled and petulant. Rather than an honour for all eternity, Ariadne's transformation into the goddess Libera¹¹³ now takes the form of a sweetener, a pretty gift presented by her husband to stop his wife complaining. (And are we to imagine he does this out of guilt, like many a married mortal?) Just as Ovid the poet is eager to avoid a full-length repetition of a Catullan soliloquy, so the character Bacchus conspires to cut off Ariadne mid-lament. As a result, the heroine, hovering on the borders of emotional integrity, of real and uninhibited expression of emotion, finds herself denied the chance to speak without being judged. She is bound from the start by an author's concern with wit¹¹⁴ and poetics, and then by her husband's eagerness, whether justified or not, to put a stop to his wife's speech as well as her grief. As long as Catullus' Ariadne is alone, to an extent

¹¹³ Usually, it is just Ariadne's crown which is set among the stars. Cf. Appendix 2.

¹¹⁴ And I do not wish to underplay what a clever and funny approach this is, though for now my interests are more on the emotionally serious side.

she is free, and she can speak; though Ovid's Ariadne has finally found beatitude, she must in exchange resume her silence.

3.3. Dido's Restorative Silence

If women's silence in the presence of others can be closely linked with ideas and ideals of both dignity and chastity, it may be interesting to venture an interpretation on the silence of Dido in *Aeneid* 6.¹¹⁵ Various explanations of this scene have been offered, ranging from the idea that Dido indulges in a heroic sulk like Ajax in the *Odyssey* to the concern to show that Aeneas was indeed wrong, or indeed right, to leave his lover and Carthage back in book 4.¹¹⁶ Whilst I accept that it is both possible and desirable to see some such elements in this powerful and difficult scene, I would also like to highlight another possible interpretation: might there be something in Dido's silence which aims not so much at reproach as at the preservation or reappropriation of dignity?

As Laird points out, there are hints in the text which lead us to expect a reply from Dido, thus marking out her silence as a remarkable one, and not simply the product of narrative economy.¹¹⁷ When Aeneas begins his speech, Dido keeps her eyes on the ground, her head turned away, *illa solo fixos oculos auersa tenebat* ('she turned away and held her gaze fixed on the ground', 469),¹¹⁸ much as she did back in book 4 (*taliam dicentem iam dudum auersa tuetur* ('for a while now as he spoke these words, she turned her gaze away', 4.362)),

¹¹⁵ Dido, as must be apparent from various discussions in this book, often assumes the status of honorary Cretan woman. Although in respect of her silence she is not most readily linked with, say, Phaedra, it is illuminating nevertheless to set her attempt to reclaim her integrity alongside those of the Cretan women she so frequently resembles elsewhere.

¹¹⁶ Some interpretations: Phinney (1964–5); Skinner (1983); Skulsky (1987), 71–6; Smith (1993); Drew Griffith (1995); Putnam (1995*b*), 82–4.

¹¹⁷ Laird (1999), 184–8. He notes also (along with Austin (1977), ad loc.) that Dido is moving away from Aeneas as he speaks (cf. *siste gradum* ('stop!', 465), *quem fugis?* ('whom do you flee?', 466)); the text after Aeneas' speech restates what was happening as he spoke: at first Dido kept her eyes on the ground and stood still, and then moved off to join Sychaeus.

¹¹⁸ Moreover, in this silence through which she reappropriates her *pudor*, Dido perhaps resembles a virgin goddess. Line 469 recalls the image of Athena on Dido's

where, however, she soon began to make her voluble reply. The way *she* appears in the Underworld¹¹⁹—immovable and harsh—reflects the way she said *Aeneas* appeared to her back in Carthage:

nec magis incepto uultum sermone mouetur
quam si dura silex aut stet Marpesia cautes.
(Vergil, *Aeneid* 6.470–1)

She did not move her face when he began to speak any more than if she stood there, hard flint or Marpessan rock.

duris genuit te cautibus horrens
Caucasus Hyrcanaeque admorunt ubera tigres.
(Vergil, *Aeneid* 4.366–7)

The Caucasus bristling with hard cliffs bore you and Hyrcanian tigers gave you their breasts to suckle.

Yet there is another set of images to which this description could be said to belong. Aeneas himself is compared to an oak tree resisting a gale at *Aeneid* 4.441–6 where he stands unmoved before Anna's pleas on Dido's behalf, and at *Aeneid* 7.586–90, Latinus resisting the people's cry for war is compared to a rock in the wild sea. These passages reflect the Stoic ideal of the man who endures and stands firm in the belief that he knows what is right.¹²⁰ Stoicism is not a philosophy which receives unambiguous praise in the *Aeneid*,¹²¹ and it is important to see a distinction between principled restraint in the face of emotional appeals and an insensate, unthinking coldness which pretty much equates with cruelty. In the gloom of the Underworld, it is easy to imagine that Dido clings bitterly to her memories of her affair with Aeneas, yet I wonder if it might not also be possible to see her as making an attempt to return to the strength and chastity

temple, refusing to soften before the appeals of the Trojan matrons: *diua solo fixos oculos auersa tenebat* ('the goddess turned aside and kept her gaze fixed on the ground', 1.482). On one level, this neatly underscores Dido's implacable hostility towards the Trojan Aeneas, but on another, might she be identified with that goddess's strict chastity?

¹¹⁹ Does she seem this way to Aeneas or to herself? Cf. Fowler (1990), 52–5 for a discussion of the different focalizers to be perceived in this episode.

¹²⁰ Cf. Fantham (1975), who examines the use of this imagery to describe Hippolytus' resistance to persuasion, or seduction, in Seneca, *Phae.* 580–2.

¹²¹ Most obviously, one might think of the ambivalence expressed towards Brutus' actions at 6.819–23.

which so marked her out before Aeneas and Cupid came to her city. Might her silence be one of stoical dignity rather than heartbroken hostility?

At the beginning of book 4, Dido expresses her strong desire to remain true to her own self-image and to the memory of her dead husband Sychaeus:

sed mihi uel tellus optem prius ima dehiscat
uel pater omnipotens abigat me fulmine ad umbras,
pallentis umbras Erebo noctemque profundam,
ante, pudor, quam te uiolo aut tua iura resoluo.

(Vergil, *Aeneid* 4.24–7)

But I would rather that the earth should gape open for me from its depths, or that the all-powerful father should with his lightning drive me to the shades, the pale shades in Erebus and the deep night, before I violate you, my honour, or relax your laws.

Famously, fatally, she *does* act against the dictates of her *pudor*, but through her death she takes the revenge on herself that she wished Jupiter would. Is it possible that now in the Underworld she can consider that she has atoned for her sin and return to her former state of integrity? I do not think that she is able to view Aeneas with indifference, and the *inimica* ('enemy') of line 472 would seem to indicate a persisting enmity towards him,¹²² but presented with another chance to react to him, she chooses a cold, but dignified silence in contrast to her earlier, heated accusations. Now she is able to turn away from Aeneas, who is now in turn the one who is moved to tearful pleas, and go to the shade of her former husband:

tandem corripuit sese atque inimica refugit
in nemus umbriferum, coniunx ubi pristinus illi
respondet curis aequatque Sychaeus amorem.

(Vergil, *Aeneid* 6.472–4)

At last she gathered herself and hurried away, hostile, into the shadowy grove, where her former husband Sychaeus matched her cares and equalled her love.

¹²² However, this could be seen as focalized through Aeneas, given a chance to experience for himself the ambiguity of Stoic unemotion. He may read her silence as hatred, we may read it as dignity.

The presence of the murdered Sychaeus in this gloomy woodland supposedly set aside for those who died because of love¹²³ could seem problematic, and I assume therefore that his presence is required to make a particular point. It does not seem that Dido is now unambiguously *happily* reunited with her husband (she is still plagued by *curae*), but perhaps her return to him is meant to demonstrate to Aeneas her determination to knit together some semblance of her old life before she ever met the Trojan, to find a way of presenting herself once more as that Roman feminine ideal, the *uniuira*.¹²⁴ In death, and through her silence, Dido is making a return to a virtuous existence.

It emerges, then, that for all their reputation as the bad girls of myth, Cretan women (and their literary analogues) inhabit a more complex moral universe than can comfortably be defined by the clichés of Cretan duplicity and sexual intemperance. Their stories are, to be sure, inextricably bound up with ideas and images of deception and betrayal, but these themes are developed by the poets in subtle and convoluted ways. In a literary tradition which is so fascinated by histories and parallels, by explanations and excuses, nothing is black and white.

¹²³ *hic quos durus amor crudeli tabe peredit | secreti celant calles et myrtea circum | silua tegit; curae non ipsa in morte relinquunt* ('here hidden places conceal those whom hard love has consumed with cruel wasting, and a myrtle wood fences them round; even in death, their cares do not leave them', *Aen.* 6.442–4).

¹²⁴ For the Roman ideal of the *uniuira* (a woman who only married once), see Treggiari (1991), 230, 233–6.

Part Two

Texts

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Pasiphae in the *Eclogues* and *Ars Amatoria*

In much Latin poetry, Pasiphae tends to be the stuff of a brief, frowning reference, a figure who represents in shocking short-hand the worst excesses of female passion and deceitfulness. Yet despite the inclination to stereotype when Pasiphae makes a cameo appearance, the only two substantial treatments of her story in Augustan poetry present the reader with quite different, and challenging, views of the myth. Vergil offers an unusually subtle, sympathetic account of the queen's love; Ovid takes a more traditional tack, mixing disapproval with ridicule, but by mediating his version through *Eclogue* 6 and other poetic influences, he still creates a figure far more complex than the cliché she is supposed to represent.

1. VERGIL, *ECLOGUE* 6.45–60

At the forefront of *Eclogue* 6 lies a game of poetics, mingling the self-conscious awareness of the poet's presence in a work with a learned play of genres and subjects. The tell-tale signs of literary self-reflexivity abound: the first lines describe the poet's Callimachean encounter with Apollo, who tells him, *pastorem, Tityre, pinguis | pascere oportet ouis, deductum dicere carmen* ('Tityrus, a shepherd should rear fat sheep, but sing a fine-spun song', 4–5).¹ As Silenus sings his song, the Fauns, beasts, and oaks dance, delighting more in this work than in the songs of the arch-poets Phoebus and Orpheus (27–30).

¹ Cf. Callimachus, *Aet.* fr. 1.22–3. For details of the correspondence, see Clausen (1994), 174–5.

Then, to complement Apollo's earlier instructions, Silenus tells how the poet Gallus received from Apollo's son Linus the pipes which Hesiod used when the Muses taught him song (64–73).² The list of mythological subjects in Silenus' song, framed by these passages with their strong Callimachean associations, thus appears to be something of a catalogue of poetic themes suitable for a Roman poet concerned to emphasize his Alexandrian affiliations.³

As his song moves from a variation on the Lucretian creation story to early myth, Silenus first tells of Pyrrha, Prometheus, and Hylas, and then comes to Pasiphae. The account of the queen's love is more expansive than that of any other subject in the song, even Gallus' *Dichterweihe* (which covers only ten lines to Pasiphae's sixteen).⁴ The topic is particularly attractive to the poet in neoteric guise, and although it has been argued that all the subjects of Silenus' song represent poems already written, it seems more likely that so much space is given to Pasiphae specifically because she has *not* yet been treated in this way in Latin poetry. Yet to label this depiction of the lovelorn Cretan merely as part of a literary manifesto is to fail to enjoy the palpable emotion and to appreciate the detail of the portrait. Vergil's Pasiphae inhabits a world that borders both the mythical and the pastoral, and is thus exposed to two quite different approaches from the poet: the distant, learned, half-amused attention of the Callimachean mythographer, and the intermittently involved sentiment of the rural singer-poet. The different elements can be discerned with more and less clarity, yet the fragile beauty of the poem resists any too clinical dissection. In attempting to make some distinctions, to tease out some threads, I hope not to unravel the whole.

As I have said, the myth of Pasiphae is of particular appeal to the poet in neoteric guise. He follows a poetic fashion of the generation

² Cf. Hesiod, *Theog.* 22–34. Of obvious importance is Callimachus, *Aet.* fr. 2, where the poet tells of Hesiod's dream-encounter with the Muses.

³ Or, possibly, a catalogue of poems already written, perhaps even by Gallus himself? For this idea, no longer in vogue, see F. Skutsch (1901), 38–48; (1906), 128–55. For the links between the Gallus section of *Eclogue* 6 and his actual poetry, see Ross (1975), 32, 34–6, 118–20.

⁴ Admittedly, narrative imbalance is a mark of Hellenistic aesthetics, so the greater length of the Pasiphae episode cannot in itself assign it supreme importance in the poem.

before which was fascinated by stories of women trapped in bizarre and unhappy love affairs. Indeed, Vergil even openly trumpets the neoteric associations of his Pasiphae via the echoes of Calvus' *Io* to be found in the repeated *a, uirgo infelix* ('ah, poor maiden', 47, 52). Calvus, in characteristically mannered style, expresses sympathy for Io, a girl who is transformed into a cow because of Jupiter's love for her and Juno's jealousy of that love, through the line, *a uirgo infelix, herbis pascere amaris* ('ah, poor maiden, you will graze on bitter grasses', fr. 9). The compassion for Io's suffering is not without humour, but the humour is gentle and perfectly compatible with the humanity of the poem.⁵ Vergil's quotation of Calvus helps to bring a similarly sympathetic slant to his treatment of the story of Pasiphae. The echo of the earlier epyllion in the *Eclogue* is also thematically appropriate, and the Io myth acts as a neat counterpoint to that of Pasiphae: a girl who becomes a cow because of another's lust complements and contrasts with a woman who herself lusts for a bull. A further contrast, still on the bovine theme, is also provided in the reference to the Proetides (*Ecl.* 6.48–51), women who were never actually transformed into cows, but were under the delusion that they had been.⁶ It is not known whether Calvus referred to the daughters of Proetus in his work too; it would have been an appropriate myth to include in the *Io*, and it seems plausible that Calvus would have used mythical references of this kind in his work. All the same, I wonder whether Vergil would have felt it necessary to adhere quite so closely to a model already clearly evoked through quotation. However we interpret the inclusion of this reference, though, the poet is ostentatiously referring to a characteristic feature of Hellenistic short epic through this inclusion of an inset myth, related but different, to be framed by the main narrative.⁷

⁵ As far as it is possible to tell what the poem as a whole was like. Similar tenderness can be found, for example, in fr. 13, *sol quoque perpetuos meminit requiescere cursus* ('the sun too remembers to rest his eternal course'), which seems either to be a complaint of Io's that even the sun sleeps yet she cannot, or gentle persuasion from another party to encourage her to get some rest.

⁶ For more about the Proetides, see Ch. 2, Sect. 3.

⁷ Compare the myth of Io depicted on Europa's basket in Moschus' *Europa* (43–62), and that of Ariadne surrounded by Peleus and Thetis in Catullus 64. Callimachus' *Hecale* contained many inset myths and digressions within the frame of Theseus' visits to the hospitable old woman Hecale. On the characteristics of epyllion,

There is, however, a complication inherent in Vergil's use of Calvus here. The phrase *a, uirgo infelix* is used *twice*, focusing more attention on the words than perhaps they can bear under the circumstances.⁸ Pasiphae, after all, is the wife of Minos and the mother of (at least) five children by him,⁹ and emphatically *not* a *uirgo*. R. Coleman (1977) suggests that the word is being used loosely, to imply that Pasiphae was a young and chaste wife to Minos before Poseidon induced her madness. But, whilst Watson (1983), 133 seems to go along with this interpretation, she also acknowledges that the reference to Pasiphae as *uirgo* here is the only clear instance where the word is used of a married woman whose marriage is known to have been consummated.¹⁰ The tenor of Silenus' song is rendered still more complex, as sympathy is elicited for Pasiphae through the repeated use of a title, *uirgo*, to which, it is revealed on further thought, she has no real claim. All the same, the implicit comparison with Io remains appropriate, even persuasive.

What is more, in keeping with the idea of the association of stories made in Hellenistic and neoteric style, there may be a faint echo in the *Eclogue* of yet another myth: Io is the great-great-grandmother of Europa, and her story appears as an inset myth in Moschus' *Europa*. Europa herself also has her mythological links with Pasiphae as a girl (literally) carried away by a bull, albeit Jupiter in disguise, and as mother of Pasiphae's husband Minos. R. Coleman (1977), 192 persuasively sees the possibility of an oblique association to be made

see Ch. 5, introduction, and, further, Crump (1931); Lyne (1978), 32–6; Hollis (1990), 23–6.

⁸ Wills (1996) has no specific comment on these lines, though they may fit neatly into his general thesis: perhaps the repetition is simply a recycling of a repetition in Calvus' original text. Even so, this need not prevent a reader from finding the repetition puzzling in other ways.

⁹ Claimants for the title of child of Minos and Pasiphae include Deucalion, Acale, Xenodice, Ariadne, Androgeus, Catreus, Glaucus, and Phaedra. Cf. Pausanias 8.53.2; Diodorus Siculus 4.60.4; Apollodorus, *Bibl.* 3.1.2. It seems unlikely that Pasiphae gave birth to these human children *after* her liaison with the bull; there is even a hint in Euripides' *Cretans* (fr. 472e) that Minos may have put her to death after the discovery of the baby Minotaur. In Catullus 64, though, she is still alive when Ariadne elopes with Theseus (64.88, 118).

¹⁰ Nevertheless, it is worth remarking that *uirgo* is a word used of the Muses (cf. Catullus 65.2; Propertius 2.30.33), even though they are variously mentioned as mothers, usually of musically talented children. Cf. Gantz (1993), 55 for the full list.

between Pasiphae and Europa in *Eclogue* 6 via the Dictaeon nymphs (who nursed the baby Jupiter) and the reference to Gortyn (60) where, according to Pliny,¹¹ there was a plane tree under which the god made love to Europa.¹² Such a reference may well be obscure, but, again, it is part of the neoteric style to pepper a work with a mixture of evident emotion and abstruse references to be detected only by the true cognoscenti.

Vergil even chooses to underscore his poetic affiliations still more firmly, and Calvus is not the only neoteric poet whose work is echoed in this section of *Eclogue* 6: there are also some interesting memories of Catullus 64. When Pasiphae calls to the Nymphs to close off the groves in case the bull should wander her way, she talks of the *errabunda bouis uestigia* ('the bull's wandering footsteps', 58), recalling Catullus 64.113, where Theseus escapes the Labyrinth *errabunda regens tenui uestigia filo* ('directing his wandering footsteps with the fine thread').¹³ Already on the Cretan hills, in the tracks of the roving bull, can be found the proleptic memory of the wandering corridors of the Labyrinth which has yet to be built to house the offspring of Pasiphae's bestial passion. Interestingly, the allusion of the bull's footsteps¹⁴ points not to Catullus' Minotaur, as one might have expected, but to his Theseus, the much-desired lover of Ariadne who will go on to cause her the utmost pain, just as Pasiphae's longed-for union with the bull she tracks through the countryside will not ultimately bring her happiness. The *stabula... Gortynia* ('Gortynian stables', 60) also bring to mind Catullus' *Gortynia templa* ('Gortynian temples', 64.75); the urban setting of the corresponding section of Catullus' poem is here transmuted to the pastoral one of the *Eclogues*, as temples become stables and Pasiphae haunts the slopes of the Cretan mountains instead of the city palaces.

¹¹ Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* 12.11.

¹² I have already discussed some of the parallels to be drawn between various treatments of Europa and Pasiphae in Ch. 2, Sect. 2.

¹³ This echo is noted by both R. Coleman (1977), 192 and Clausen (1994), 197–8.

¹⁴ I am tempted to see an intertextual pun in *uestigia* (footsteps). The traces left by the bull are likened to the traces left by Theseus, but to put it another way, Vergil self-consciously draws attention to the fact that he is here echoing Catullus, that is, following in his footsteps.

For all these echoes of Catullus and Calvus, the tone of this section of Silenus' song is not exclusively neoteric, however. Elements of pastoral are equally prominent: Pasiphae wanders in the mountains like a herdsman, or like an animal herself, while the bull reclines amongst the hyacinths, happy in his rural idyll, like both animal and herdsman. As the queen calls on the Nymphs to help her round up the bull, she acts like a cowherd ready to drive the animals home for the evening. In her love, too, Pasiphae resembles the kind of lovesick herdsman familiar from the *Eclogues*, most particularly Corydon of *Eclogue* 2. Pacing the hills, looking for the bull's tracks, she recalls Corydon's hopeless *tua dum uestigia listro* ('while I trace your footsteps', 2.12), and the bull, as far as he can be, is cast in the role of the elusive beloved. Like the *candidus* ('pale', 2.16) Alexis who can be compared to *alba ligustra* ('white privet', 2.18), the bull is emphatically white (*niuei*—'snowy', 6.46; *latus niueum*—'snow-white flank', 6.53). He is also, at least at the time of the poem, emphatically absent, absorbed in pursuits which do not include Pasiphae—grass and cows—much as Corydon's Alexis is off in the city with his lover Iollas and his urban interests. There may also be some significance in the fact that the bull is referred to as *iuuencus* (young bull) rather than *taurus* (bull); this makes him a somewhat gentler object, youthful, the word even sounding close to *iuuenis* (young man).¹⁵ Most markedly, the second half of line 47, *quae te dementia cepit?* ('what madness has seized you?'), echoes Corydon's cry of despair and self-reproach, *a, Corydon, Corydon, quae te dementia cepit?* ('ah, Corydon, Corydon, what madness has seized you?', 2.69).¹⁶ Whilst Corydon confronts the hopelessness and irrationality of his passion through song, Pasiphae is as yet unable to find solace in music, and the nuance of the half-line is thus changed to reflect the sympathy of the poet telling her story, rather than any self-frustration on her part. When she does speak, she is still in the grip of romantic delusion, caught up in the hunt for her beloved, conscious that he may himself

¹⁵ The *OLD* s.v. *iuuencus* c. notes that the word can be transferred to mean a young man, as in Horace, *Odes* 2.8.21, *te suis matres metuunt iuuenis* ('mothers fear for their sons because of you').

¹⁶ This correspondence, as well as that mentioned earlier with *Ecl.* 2.12, is also noted by R. Coleman (1977), 190.

be concerned with a different love-object, chasing a heifer back to the stables.

The significance of Pasiphae's resemblance to Corydon does not end with the correspondence between two unhappy loves set in the pastoral world. Corydon's despairing sigh—*quae te dementia cepit?*—which can be traced from the second *Eclogue* through to *Eclogue* 6, has its own trail which leads back to Theocritus, *Idyll* 11.72. There the lovelorn Cyclops reproaches himself for his madness, ὦ Κύκλωψ Κύκλωψ, πᾶ τὰς φρένας ἐκπεπότασαι; ('O Cyclops, Cyclops, where have your wits flown?'). Corydon's more serious love, and his humanity, contrast with the amusingly grotesque Polyphemus who finds his heart soothed by song.¹⁷ While the seriousness and pathos of *Eclogue* 2 is extended to *Eclogue* 6, the memory of Theocritus' ridiculous, but sympathetically treated, Cyclops also shows faintly through. Throughout her treatment in *Eclogue* 6, Pasiphae weaves a tentative dance between the monstrous and the pathetic, between the neoteric and the pastoral. Her resemblance to the Proetides, her extremity in longing for such a *turpis... concubitus* ('shameful union', 49–50) could easily make her a grotesque figure, an object of derision, but this is offset by the evident compassion, rather than condemnation, offered by the narrator. And this tension and reconciliation is reflected with beautiful and astonishing economy in the single line 47: *a! uirgo infelix* recalls Calvus' *Io*, but *quae te dementia cepit?* brings us back to the Corydon of *Eclogue* 2, himself the more desperate, tragic, humanized echo of Theocritus' Polyphemus.

In its delicate way, this cameo portrait of Pasiphae is far more daring than any other extant treatment of the myth. Her bestial love is not made a source for melodrama, schoolboy humour, or disgust, but for a fragile, intimate sympathy. Although the subsequent lines illustrate the difficulty of her passion and its opposition to the social and sexual norm, the episode is introduced with the important, curious words, *Pasiphaen niuei solatur amore iuuenci* ('he consoles

¹⁷ Unlike *Eclogue* 2, which ends when Corydon's sad song finishes, *Idyll* 11 is framed by lines in the authorial voice which confirm the Cyclops' as a story of the ability of song to soften the blow of unrequited love. Vergil provides his reader with no such confirmation.

Pasiphae with the love of the snow-white bull').¹⁸ Silenus consoles Pasiphae for the pain brought on her, the isolating transgression into which she is forced, with the fact that her love was consummated. Strangely, strikingly, the bestial union itself serves as a kind of redemption, enough to make up for the trouble that union caused.¹⁹

As I mentioned earlier, *Eclogue* 6 is concerned with approaches to poetry, and the figure of the poet can be found contained in layer after layer of the text: Vergil writes as the shepherd-poet Tityrus, who tells of the song of the god Silenus, which includes a vignette relating the poetic initiation of the Roman poet Gallus. Although for the most part, Pasiphae appears as the subject of song and not its singer, there are some interesting suggestions which could set her among the community of poets. Towards the end of her article, M. Hubbard (1975), 61–2 argues from Pasiphae's structural position as counterpoint to Gallus that we should see a similarity between the two, and find that even a (spiritual) metamorphosis of such a grotesque nature as hers is a transformation into a poet. A closer investigation of the similarities between the Cretan queen and the Roman poet, and of the language used, may back up such an intuition: just as Pasiphae roves in the mountains (*tu nunc in montibus erras*—'now you wander in the mountains', 52), Gallus is later found wandering by the river (*errantem Permessi ad flumina Gallum*—'Gallus wandering by Permessus' stream', 64). He will be wandering again, distraught with love, in *Eclogue* 10, while here in *Eclogue* 6 his wandering by the river comes as a prelude not to a lover's lament, but to a poet's initiation.²⁰ A connection is thus established between the actions of a lover and the actions of a poet.²¹ It might well be argued, however, that, the

¹⁸ Line 46. The verb *solari* takes the accusative of the person consoled or the reason for consolation, and the ablative of the consolation itself: i.e. Pasiphae is consoled *with* the love of the bull, not *for* it. It is possible, of course, that Vergil has chosen to bend the rules and means that Pasiphae is consoled *for* her love for the bull; however, I cannot find an example of another instance where Vergil (or any other poet of this period) uses the verb this way.

¹⁹ This sentiment is, I think, unique, although Ovid's Iphis hints at something akin to it at *Met.* 9.738–40: *tamen illa* (sc. Pasiphae) *secuta est | spem Veneris... | ... et erat, qui deciperetur, adulter* ('at least she followed the hope of Venus/Sex... and there was an adulterer to be deceived').

²⁰ On the poetic resonance of *errare*, cf. Wright (1983), 116.

²¹ A similar connection is made in the poet/singer and lover Corydon. Like Gallus, he appears in two different *Eclogues*, and in each appearance, a different aspect is

poetics of wandering aside, Pasiphae overtly displays only the characteristics of a lover, and none of a poet. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that Pasiphae's call to the Nymphs to close off the groves, *claudite, Nymphae, | Dictaeae Nymphae, nemorum iam claudite saltus* ('close off, Nymphs, Dictaeon Nymphs, now close off the woodland groves', 55–6) has the air of a poetic as well as venatic closure.²² It is as if, like Gallus, if less obviously so, she is both the subject of her song and to an extent master of it: her words, which act within her story as an expression of her madness and passion, are also those which herald (even demand?) an end to this epyllion-like section of the *Eclogue*.

In 'Vergil's Sixth *Eclogue* and the Problem of Evil', Segal (1969) takes a different view, arguing for a stark opposition in *Eclogue* 6 between the poet-type (Silenus, Gallus) and the sinner-type (Pasiphae, Philomela)²³ which signify respectively the positive and negative sides of passion. However, since I cannot agree that Pasiphae's love is here represented as something which even remotely corresponds to the English word 'evil', neither can I see the contrast between Pasiphae and Gallus, or even between Pasiphae and Silenus as so conveniently and clearly drawn. Nevertheless, I mention this very different interpretation in order to acknowledge that the vague intimations of Pasiphae taking on the aspect of a poet are undeniably surprising. Perhaps they are best explained by reference to her pastoral position: in the *Eclogues* we find that being in love and being in the country can make poets out of goatherds, so why should passion not make poets out of queens too?

highlighted. In *Eclogue* 2, Corydon is a lover first and a singer second, while in *Eclogue* 7, it seems that he is a singer first and a lover second.

²² Cf. *Ecl.* 3.111 (the poem's closing line), *claudite iam riuos, pueri* ('now close off the streams, boys'). The repetition of *claudite* itself recalls Theocritus' closural bucolic refrain, *λῆγετε βουκολικὰς, Μοῦσαι, ἴτε λῆγετε ἀοιδὰς* ('Cease, Muses, come cease the bucolic songs', *Id.* 1.127, 131, 137, 142), and its cousins in the *Eclogues* (8.61 and 109). For a discussion of the repetition, see Wills (1996), 96–9.

²³ He also points out the correspondence between Pasiphae and Philomela via the word *infelix* (47, 52, 81). I think the issue is more complicated than one of 'evil', though—the very word which links them may imply sympathy, as much as condemnation. Moreover, Vergil has here attributed to Philomela actions (making a banquet of Tereus' son) more usually assigned to her sister Procne. (Compare the learned 'mistake' of the conflation of Scylla daughter of Nisus and Scylla the sea-monster at 6.74–7, which immediately precedes the Philomela story.) There is more to the Philomela story in *Eclogue* 6 than meets the eye.

2. OVID, ARS AMATORIA 1.289–326

Ovid's treatment of Pasiphae in the *Ars Amatoria* is the longest he allows her, and, indeed, the longest surviving account in Latin poetry. Adduced as a prime example of woman's lustfulness, Ovid's Pasiphae is constructed from a humorous, if sometimes jarring, combination of the influences of *Eclogue* 6, love elegy, and drama.

The episode is introduced with the word *forte* (289), a common narrative device which opens a scene with the air of 'once upon a time'. If it is read as something more than a conventional introduction, though, the assertion that this was an event which just 'chanced' to happen could also be seen as offering a provocative denial of the widely accepted explanation that Pasiphae's passion was divinely inspired.²⁴ Ovid's assertion that women are more lustful than men (*parcior in nobis nec tam furiosa libido; | legitimum finem flamma uirilis habet*—'lust is more sparing in us and not so frenzied; the male love-fire has an acceptable limit', 1.281–2) works alongside the assumption that women can in an important sense be held responsible for their lustful actions.²⁵ The force of his argument thus requires that Pasiphae's sin be voluntary. However, this need not be the only reason for the pointed omission of any hint of divine involvement; throughout his account, Ovid takes an oblique, if not polemical, stance against tradition.

The opening description of the bull in the shady groves of Ida hints at a bucolic setting:

*forte sub umbrosis nemorosae uallibus Idae
candidus, armenti gloria, taurus erat*

²⁴ The divine cause is usually Poseidon, angered by Minos' failure to sacrifice the beautiful bull to him as promised (cf. Euripides, *Cretans* fr. 472e; Diodorus Siculus 4.77.2; Apollodorus 3.1.3; Pausanias 1.27.9), though Hyginus, *Fab.* 40 blames Pasiphae's love on the anger of Venus, who feels slighted by the queen's failure to worship her. Here, compare (and contrast) Seneca, *Phae.* 124–8.

²⁵ This is made particularly clear by the poet's apostrophe to another lustful Cretan woman, Aerope: *et quantum est uno posse carere uiro?* ('how hard is it to do without one man?', *Ars Am.* 1.328). Overwhelming though feminine passion may be, women can still be blamed for their actions.

signatus tenui media inter cornua nigro;
una fuit labes, cetera lactis erant.

(Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* 1.289–92)

It happened that down in the shady valleys of wooded Ida there was a pale bull, the pride of the herd, marked out by a small black spot in between his horns; this was his one blemish, the rest was milky white.

Indeed, the setting seems not just generally bucolic, but particularly reminiscent of Vergilian bucolic. Although Vergil's reference to nymphs of Dicte at *Eclogue* 6.56 seems to set his version of Pasiphae's story on a different mountain,²⁶ Ovid fits in some close correspondences. In particular, *umbra* ('shade') is a catchword of the *Eclogues*.²⁷ Moreover, the composition of line 290, *candidus, armenti gloria, taurus erat*, with an adjective and a noun enclosing a phrase in apposition, occurs also in Vergil, for example, *raucae, tua cura, palumbes* ('hoarse doves, your delight', *Ecl.* 1.57),²⁸ and could be assumed to be continuing the evocation of the Vergilian setting. Unlike Vergil, though, Ovid makes no bones about calling the bull a *taurus*, and aligns the creature more with Europa's bull than with a bucolic beloved like Corydon's Alexis by stating that he is marked out with a black spot in between his horns.²⁹

²⁶ There is probably a hint in the Ovidian passage of the Trojan/Cretan Ida confusion; the Cretan mountain may well not be the first of the two options to come to mind. Of the five other instances in Ovid of the phrase, *uallibus Idae* ('valleys of Ida'), all but one are clearly referring to Trojan Ida (*Her.* 16.53; 17.115; *Fast.* 6.15, 327). The possible exception, *Am.* 1.14.10–11, gives too little context to be certain which mountain is meant. To back up the idea that Ovid may here be teasing his reader with the expectation of a scene on Trojan Ida, it is worth remarking that Pasiphae's fussing over her appearance at 1.305–6 is reminiscent of Callimachus' Venus attending to her hair before the judgement of Paris on the Trojan Mount Ida (*Hymn* 5.21–2).

²⁷ Cf. *Ecl.* 1.4, 83; 2.8, 67; 5.5, 40, 70; 7.10, 58; 8.14; 9.20, [42, *umbracula*]; 10.75, 76 (*bis*). And for *umbrosus*, cf. *inter densas, umbrosa cacumina, fagos* ('among the thick beech trees, their shady tops', *Ecl.* 2.3).

²⁸ See also *Ecl.* 1.57, 69; 2.3; 3.3; 7.21; 9.9, 22. Cf. Solodow (1986), who points out that the first certain examples of this phenomenon in extant Latin poetry occur in Vergil (and are more prevalent in the *Eclogues* than the *Georgics* or *Aeneid*). Although Ovid uses the conceit fairly often (50 times over all), occurrences are less frequent in his amatory elegiacs. This, coupled with the other bucolic hints in this section strengthens the link with Vergilian usage.

²⁹ Cf. Moschus, *Eur.* 84–5. It should be acknowledged, however, that the motif of an animal marked by a different coloured patch is a common one. Cf. Hollis (1977), *ad Ars Am.* 1.291. For more about the bull's beauty, see Ch. 2, Sec. 2. Regarding the

As the description progresses, Ovid moves from the gentle, pastoral world to one of cruder, urbanized passion and more obvious learning. The cows of the great Cretan towns Cydon and Cnossus behave like debutantes eager for a good husband as they long to feel this handsome bull's weight on their backs (293–4).³⁰ Pasiphae, meanwhile, hates the *formasas* ... *boues* ('pretty cows', 296) as though they were ordinary rivals in love, and longs to indulge in that most urban of pursuits, adultery: *Pasiphae fieri gaudebat adultera tauri* ('Pasiphae delighted to become an adulteress with a bull', 295). The poet then indulges in two lines of Callimacheanism (297–8) so blatant that they verge on the parodic as he crams in the all too familiar commonplaces of lying Crete and its hundred towns, introduced by *nota cano*, the Latin translation of Callimachus' ἀμάρτυρον οὐδὲν ἀείδω ('I sing nothing unattested', fr. 612).³¹ Only ten lines into his account of Pasiphae's love, Ovid has already set up and partially defeated expectations of a Vergilian approach, subtly recalled the formative description of Europa's handsome bull by Moschus, spoken of the affair in an incongruously urbane tone, and set himself up as a no-nonsense Callimachean narrator who refuses to allow Crete the chance to deny or mitigate Pasiphae's crime.

What he is doing is, it would appear, new. Rather than take up Vergil's challenge to treat Pasiphae with sympathy, he seems to reject

spot on Pasiphae's bull, it is perhaps worth pausing on part of line 292, *una fuit labes* ('this was his one blemish'). Hollis (1977), ad loc., says that from the sacrificial point of view, any spot would disqualify the animal (and this may be relevant in light of all the sacrificing going on later in the episode), but might it also imply that this endearing little spot was what really got Pasiphae (and the cows) going, that it was the cause of their amatory undoing?

³⁰ *illum Cnosiadesque Cydoneaeque iuuencae | optarunt tergo sustinuisse suo* ('the young cows of Cnossus and Cydon longed to feel him on their backs'). This is a consciously crude adaptation of the trope familiar from Callimachus, *Aet.* fr. 67.9–10 and Vergil, *Aen.* 11.581–2, where many mothers long to mark out eligible, beautiful virgins as wives for their sons. Here the desirability is transferred to the male in the equation, in an effort both to burlesque the original idea and to emphasize just what a good-looking bull this really is.

³¹ If *nota cano* alone need not necessarily invoke Callimachus, the combination of this with a mention of mendacious Crete à la *Hymn to Zeus* must set some Alexandrian alarm bells ringing. For more on these lines in Ovid, cf. Ch. 3, Sect. 2, introduction.

that whole side of the neoteric project and views her instead with the scathing, all too observant eye of the social critic. The queen is shown to be fully conscious of what she is doing, even if her tastes are undeniably deranged. There is a marked absence of any of the Vergilian vocabulary of sympathy—this is no *uirgo infelix* afflicted by a pitiable *dementia*. Nonetheless, small shreds of a more Vergilian approach remain to remind the reader just how different this version is: at 303–10, in true neoteric style, the narrator repeatedly apostrophizes Pasiphae, though the tone is full of mockery rather than compassion. This poet is amused rather than moved by his heroine's attempts to win the bull's heart. Again, the phrase *a, quotiens...* ('ah, how many times', 313) also belongs to the sentimental style, but the jealous persecution of the rival cows which ensues is more suited to tragedy and farce. At 308 the narrator says that the queen wishes horns would grow on her head, *quam cuperes fronti cornua nata tuae!* ('how you would long for horns to be born on your forehead!'), recalling with less subtlety the parallel made between Pasiphae's madness and that of a daughter of Proetus in *Eclogue* 6, who *saepe in leui quaesisset cornua fronte* ('often searched for horns on her smooth forehead', 6.51). Sympathy and sentimentality themselves are laid open to mockery almost as much as the lovesick Cretan queen.

So the poet both sticks quite closely to his model and radically alters its tone. And here might be found some more convoluted implications to his use of the 'Alexandrian footnote'.³² When Ovid says *nota cano* ('I sing familiar things', *Ars Am.* 1.297), this is broadly true: of course the educated Roman reader knows the story of Pasiphae. But it's a fair bet at the same time that he doesn't know her quite like this. Again, in proper Alexandrian style, Pasiphae's gathering of fodder for her beloved bull is sanctioned by tradition through the use of *fertur: ipsa nouas frondes et prata tenerrima tauro | fertur inadsueta subsecuisse manu* ('it is said that with her unaccustomed hand she herself cut new leaves and the most delicate grass for the bull', 299–300). There may be an earlier source, now lost to us, which has Pasiphae performing menial tasks like this for her would-be lover,

³² Cf. Ross (1975), 78; Hinds (1998), 1–5.

perhaps even Euripides' play,³³ but as the tradition stands, this is something new. Ovid seems to be playing a complicated game of reference here: while in 'real life' the wife of King Minos may very well never have cut leaves before, could her *inadsueta manus* ('unaccustomed hand') not also carry a metapoetical sense? Her hand is unused to cutting fodder precisely because Pasiphae has never been shown in quite this light before.³⁴ The joke is cemented, and made more elaborate by the apparent reference to tradition in *fertur*.³⁵ Perhaps there is also a real, if more general reference here, to the elegiac motif of *seruitium amoris*,³⁶ which comes to prominence in Ovid's treatment of Pasiphae's story as she refers to the bull as her *dominus* ('master', 314). Ovid's relationship to elegiac love poetry is often one of inversion. Pasiphae is relegated (or relegates herself) to a more passive, and hence more stereotypically female, position which the male elegiac lover used to occupy,³⁷ yet, of course, the reversal has carried her way past the point of any conservative re-establishment of the 'proper' relative positions of male and female, since she, a queen, now serves an animal. Her duty to King Minos is usurped by her passion for the *dux gregis* ('leader of the herd', 326).

In addition to the motif of *seruitium amoris*, it is worth noting some other ways in which Ovid's treatment of Pasiphae shows elegiac influence. In the first place, the use of the Cretan queen as an example of women's greater lust takes its cue from Propertius 3.19, where the same argument is advanced with mythological exempla to back it up:

³³ A parallel of sorts to Phaedra's fantasies of country living in Euripides, *Hipp.* 208–11, 215–22, 228–31.

³⁴ Of course, if there *was* an earlier source for Pasiphae cutting vegetation which Ovid is following, then it is *fertur* that is honest, and the *inadsueta* becomes disingenuous. The literary joke stands either way.

³⁵ For a similar use of *fertur* when Ovid is actually departing from tradition, cf. *Fast.* 4.533–4 and Fantham's (1998) note. (Although it must be acknowledged that, again, Ovid's reference there may be to a lost source, perhaps Philetas.)

³⁶ Hollis (1977), ad loc., quotes Tibullus 2.3.17–20 on the story of Apollo and Admetus, a paradigm of *seruitium amoris*. On the figure in general, cf. Lyne (1980), 78–81.

³⁷ Compare his approach in the *Heroides*, where the women are returned to the position of passive victim of love (instead of the suffering male elegiac lover), but do not always fit neatly into a pre-elegiac mould, retaining some aspects which could still be associated with the dominating elegiac mistress. Cf. Rosati (1992).

Pasiphae appears first in the list as she lurks in the wooden cow at lines 11–12.³⁸ Her jealousy of the cows her beloved bull finds more attractive may remind one a little of the ferocious jealousy of an elegiac *puella* who discovers, or imagines, rivals for her lover's affection, such as Cynthia in Propertius 4.8.³⁹ Even the rites she invents (*commenta . . . sacra*, 319) in order to have an excuse to sacrifice one of her rival cows may recall those of Tarpeia at Propertius 4.4.23–4.⁴⁰ At 303–8, Pasiphae dresses up as if she were trying to impress a human lover, whilst the poet wonders, with a mixture of mockery and more tender exasperation, why she bothers:

quo tibi, Pasiphae, pretiosas sumere uestes?
 ille tuus nullas sentit adulter opes.
 quid tibi cum speculo montana armenta petenti?
 quid totiens positas fingis inepta comas?
 crede tamen speculo, quod te negat esse iuuenecam:
 quam cuperes fronti cornua nata tuae!

(Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* 1.303–8)

Why have you put on expensive clothes, Pasiphae? That lover of yours doesn't notice any finery. Why are you making for the herds on the mountainside with a mirror in your hand? Why so often, inept, do you rearrange your hairstyle? Well, you should trust your mirror, which tells you that you're not a cow: how you would love horns to be born on your forehead!

The idea of the uselessness of preening oneself when in love is picked up from Tibullus 1.8,⁴¹ where Marathus, who used to take more care over his appearance than the average female, finds himself longing for a girl instead of being longed for:

³⁸ Indeed, Ovid uses again all the women taken as examples of lust in Propertius' poem, with the exception of Tyro, and adds some extra just for good measure (Byblis, Aerope, Phthia, Phaedra, Idaea).

³⁹ The jealousy the male lover feels when he suspects there are rivals for his mistress's affections tends to take a less physical aspect. Contrast the scratching of skin and tearing of hair by Cynthia (Propertius 4.8.57, 61) and Corinna (Ovid, *Am.* 2.7.7).

⁴⁰ Cf. Hollis (1977), 95–6.

⁴¹ A correspondence noted by the commentaries on both Tibullus and Ovid, which also point out that another use of the motif appears at Ovid, *Am.* 1.14.35–6; there, the link with Callimachus, *Hymn* 5.21–2 is strengthened by the comparison of the *puella's* hair to that of Venus (33–4).

quid tibi nunc molles prodest coluisse capillos
 saepeque mutatas disposuisse comas,
 quid fuco splendente genas ornare, quid unguis
 artificis docta subsecuisse manu?⁴²
 frustra iam uestes, frustra mutantur amictus,
 ansaque compressos conligat arta pedes.

(Tibullus 1.8.9–14)

What good does it do you now to have styled your soft hair and often undone a changed arrangement of your locks? What good to decorate your cheeks with shining rouge, to have your fingernails trimmed by the learned hand of a professional? Now your clothes, your cloak are changed in vain, in vain the narrow shoes that cramp your feet.

Both passages have their roots in Callimachus' description of Venus' preparations for the judgement of Paris in *Hymn* 5.21–2: *Κύπρις δὲ διαυγέα χαλκὸν ἐλοῖσα | πολλάκι τὰν αὐτὰν δις μετέθηκε κόμαν* ('Cypris, taking a bronze mirror, often arranged the same lock twice-over'). Pasiphae, fancying herself to be like an elegiac *puella*, or even the goddess victorious in a beauty contest which has not yet taken place, succeeds only in making herself ridiculous with her attempts at stylish coiffure amongst the cattle on the mountainside. And however much she may attempt to humanize the animal object of her passion, he will always remain a strange and disgraceful kind of adulterer: *siue placet Minos, nullus quaeratur adulter; | siue uirum mauis fallere, falle uiro* ('if Minos pleases you, there is no need to look for a lover; but if you'd rather deceive your husband/man, at least deceive him with a man', 309–10).⁴³

⁴² This line is echoed by Ovid at *Ars Am.* 1.300, where Pasiphae cuts fodder for the bull (discussed above), adding a further layer of reference.

⁴³ A final source worth mentioning in the context of Pasiphae dressing up for the bull is Philostratus' description of a wall painting in a suburb outside Naples, which shows the queen making eyes at the bull, while he only has eyes for a cow who is in turn playing hard to get: *ἡ Πασιφάη δὲ ἔξω περὶ τὰ βουνόλια περιανθρεῖ τὸν ταῦρον, οἰομένη προσάξεσθαι αὐτὸν τῷ εἶδει καὶ τῇ στολῇ θεῖόν τε ἀπολαμπύσῃ καὶ ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν ἴριον βλέπει τε ἀμήχανον καὶ γὰρ γινώσκει, ὁποίων ἐρᾷ καὶ περιβάλλειν τὸ θηρίον ὠρμηκεν, ὃ δὲ τῆς μὲν οὐδὲν ξυνίησι, βλέπει δὲ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ βοῦν . . . ἡ δὲ . . . ἀπαξιοῦ . . . τὸν ταῦρον.* ('Pasiphae, outside in the cattle fold, gazes on the bull, thinking to draw him in by her beauty and by her robe, which is divinely resplendent and more beautiful than any rainbow. She has a helpless look—for she knows what the creature is that she

Pasiphae's mixed-up literary influences do not even stop there. Intermingled with the neoteric and elegiac elements of Ovid's account, and winning out quite emphatically in the end, come hints of tragedy, or rather of melodrama. Discussing the play at 310 on the two senses of *uir*, as 'husband' and 'man', Leach maintains that it is possible to detect an echo of Pasiphae's argument in Euripides' *Cretans* that to commit adultery with a man would have been a sin, while to have sex with a bull could only be divinely inspired madness.⁴⁴ This may be possible, but perhaps overestimates the extent to which one can see here elements of Greek tragedy, rather than traces of a more black-humoured, farcical influence. It is worth remembering that this story was the subject of comic treatments on the Greek stage, and was later replayed with a darker twist in the Roman arena.⁴⁵ Pasiphae's excessively cruel, grotesque, treatment of her rivals at 313–22 could resemble that of a spiteful tragic queen like Dirce.⁴⁶ Given that the rivals are animals, not humans, however, the punishments are appropriately and amusingly georgic: the innocent cows are set to pull the plough or to fall as sacrificial victims.⁴⁷ One wonders whether, despite the (overblown) shock expressed by the narrator, this fate is so very different after all from that which most cows enjoy. Pasiphae's gloating over the entrails is Senecan in its horror as long as the reader sees the cows as she does, as *paelices* (320, 321), but dissolves into broad farce once it is remembered that these are not human victims.

The relationship of the text of *Ars Amatoria* 1.289–326 to its sources and influences is one of very Ovidian excess: no model is allowed to stand unchallenged, and at no time is any serious emotional response allowed to flourish, whether the sympathy of

loves—and she is eager to embrace it, but it takes no notice of her and gazes at its own cow. And she . . . disdains the bull', Philostratus, *Imag.* 1.16.4.)

⁴⁴ Leach (1964), 143 n. 1a. Cf. Euripides, *Cretans* fr. 472e.6–20.

⁴⁵ Cf. Suetonius, *Nero* 12.2 (Pasiphae appears as part of a Pyrrhic dance); Martial, *Lib. Spect.* 5 (a woman is executed in the arena, acting out Pasiphae's story). See Introduction, Sect. 3.

⁴⁶ As noted by Hollis (1977).

⁴⁷ The emphasis on sacrifice may also hint obliquely at the ignored cause of Pasiphae's passion, which in some versions (including Euripides' *Cretans*) arose from Minos' failure to sacrifice the bull in the first place.

Eclogue 6 or the horror of tragedy. Indeed, even Callimachean poetics do not come out unscathed. Despite all these literary and meta-literary shenanigans, though, Pasiphae herself emerges as a character very clearly drawn, and as memorable as she is different from Vergil's version of the Cretan queen.

Ariadne in Catullus 64

Catullus' sixty-fourth poem is an extraordinary work, which takes the form of the Hellenistic epyllion, already a subtly sophisticated sub-genre, and pushes it to its limits.¹ From its origins in works such as Callimachus' *Hecale* and Theocritus' *Hylas*, which showed heroes in unheroic aspects, the epyllion became in Moschus' *Europa* a vehicle for the mock-epic treatment of a heroine, a tactic adopted by the neoteric poets Calvus and Cinna in their *Io* and *Smyrna*. In this poem, Catullus inverts again a genre characterized by inversion to make contact once more with conventionally epic elements through his treatment of the myth of the Argonauts, whilst preserving neoteric contact with the feminine in the form of the Ariadne ecphrasis. This 213-line section (which takes up just over half of the poem) is also one of the most important, and most sensitive, treatments of the story of Ariadne in classical literature. It was recognized as a formative influence by later Latin poets not only for their own versions of Ariadne's story, but even for their portrayal of other characters, such as Vergil's Dido and Ovid's Scylla.

For the purposes of this investigation, it will not be necessary to dwell too much on some of the knottier questions of publication and the unity of the poem which have often occupied Catullan scholars, but it will be expedient to set out briefly the assumptions which underpin this chapter. It is unclear exactly what form the Catullan corpus took when it was originally published, though many agree that it is unlikely that the collection as we have it would have been

¹ Although the actual term 'epyllion' is a 19th-cent. coinage, it is a useful shorthand for the type of short, learned epic favoured by some poetic schools from the Hellenistic era on.

familiar to the Roman readership. It is possible, too, that poem 64 was published separately, as a self-standing work.² Given the uncertainty which surrounds this issue, a certain caution must be exercised when reading the poem alongside the personal lyrics and elegies as well as the other long poems, as it is tempting to do. Nonetheless, I believe that there is no overwhelming need to exclude any reading which treats the Catullan corpus as unified by authorship if not by publication date. Questions of the relative priority of individual poems do have their place, and are of obvious importance if trying to assess an author's development over time, but it is not imperative for critics from a later time to limit their appreciation of similarities, contrasts, and apparent self-reference within the text on the strength of a chronology which may itself be mistaken.³

Another critical preoccupation, this time directed at poem 64 itself, is the question of the work's unity or lack of unity.⁴ The stories of Peleus and Thetis and of Ariadne are, in broad terms, complementary, both involving the marriage of a mortal and a god, although this element is stressed in the former narrative and underplayed in the latter. Moreover, it may be worth noting that in one version of the myth,⁵ when Ariadne marries Dionysus she is given Thetis' bridal crown, which Theseus received from the sea-goddess on his dive to retrieve Minos' ring. If Catullus knew of this mythical variant, he was perhaps adding another chronological twist to a poem that delights in the confusion of standard chronologies.⁶ It is true that the work provides many pitfalls for readers who wish to

² The Catullan corpus contains 2311 lines, yet the introductory poem refers to the book Catullus published as a *libellus* ('little book', 1.1); moreover the ordering of poems can sometimes be infelicitous (e.g. the abusive 33 is followed by the devotional 34, and 51 appears after 11). Such observations need not conclusively prove that the surviving order is not Catullus', but they do encourage debate. The bibliography on these issues is large, but for different views (and further references), cf. Ullman (1960), Most (1981), T. K. Hubbard (1983), and Thomson (1997), 6–11.

³ One might compare a work like the *Aeneid*; it is clear that some parts were written earlier than others, but that does not exclude the possibility for all parts to allude to all others. Cf. Sharrock and Morales (2000), 1–39.

⁴ A recent, brief account of the poem's structure can be found in Nuzzo (2003), 42–9.

⁵ Hyginus, *De Astronomia* 2.5. This seems a little confused, but it is still significant that the link is made.

⁶ On this subject, cf. Weber (1983).

draw too close correspondences and too neat analogies between its different parts. I consider this to be a blessing rather than a curse, however; and here my approach coincides with that of Gaisser (1995),⁷ for example, who allows many apparently contradictory interpretations and impressions to coexist:

[T]he poem is a work of competing perspectives whose authority is repeatedly called into question and...within it Catullus has created a space separate from the logic and chronology of the external world where different stories come together to become the same story and all times exist at the same time (pp. 579–80).

When the guests come to Peleus' palace for his wedding with Thetis, they are presented with a vision of exquisite splendour, of gold, silver, and ivory, and in the centre of the mansion is placed the most important and most marvellous article of all, the marriage couch, made of ivory and covered with purple. The coverlet, the poet says, is embroidered with tales of the heroes:

haec uestis priscis hominum uariata figuris
heroum mira uirtutes indicat arte.
namque fluentisono prospectans litore Diae,
Thesea cedentem celeri cum classe tuetur
indomitos in corde gerens Ariadna furores
(Catullus 64.50–4)

This coverlet, embroidered with pictures of men of old shows the virtues of heroes with wondrous art. For, looking out from the wave-resounding shore of Dia, Ariadne watches Theseus leaving with his swift ship, her heart seething with uncontrollable passions.

The heroic deeds are classified as *uirtutes*, and it is thus surprising to find that, while the great name of Theseus soon comes up, the subject of the sentence illustrating these virtuous deeds is a woman, Ariadne, in the process of being deserted in none too virtuous a way by the Athenian hero. Various explanations have been offered, ranging from the argument that heroic deeds are actually treated in the episode of Theseus and the Minotaur⁸ to the idea that Catullus is

⁷ An approach also shared by Theodorakopoulos (2000).

⁸ Cf. Kroll (1923). Although I think it needs to be remembered that the death of the Minotaur falls into the area of narrative rather than description of the actual coverlet (as e.g. Kinsey (1965), 916 points out).

being deliberately pessimistic about the heroic age, showing Theseus behaving shamefully rather than heroically from the outset.⁹ Perhaps, but it is also possible to look at the effect of this surprise from a generic perspective. Having created the impression that he is about to catalogue heroic, epic feats of bravery, the narrator then turns to a hero's shameful act, regarding it from the viewpoint of the woman he has treated so badly. This is just what an epyllion loves to do: tell a hero's story from an unheroic angle, and showcase the acts (and emotions) of a woman within the heroic world. Like any later poetic composition with its roots in earlier works, the epyllion is dependent on the conventions of and expectations raised by old-style long epic, yet can also oppose and undermine them. In this poem Catullus has combined both of the approaches (the unheroic, the female) usually found separately in earlier epyllia.¹⁰ What is more, even within this single work, the Ariadne ecphrasis could be seen as its own mini-epyllion, issuing a challenge to the 'epic' of Peleus and Thetis which surrounds it, daring to question more directly the reality of heroic values and the possibility of writing a truly heroic epic.¹¹

1. ARIADNE AWAKES: LINES 52–75

As the description of the coverlet begins, we are given a vivid picture of the anger and confusion Ariadne feels on waking to find that Theseus has left her. The whole section is filled with an uneasy tension between passion and detachment: Ariadne is filled with grief and anger as she looks out to sea, while Theseus is just calm, *immemor* ('forgetful', 58), and moving steadily further and further

⁹ Cf. Curran (1969), *passim*, esp. 174–5.

¹⁰ An analogous complication for the modern division into 'epic' and 'epyllion' can be found in one of the most prominent intertexts for Catullus 64, Apollonius' *Argonautica*. While its length allies it more with traditional epic, it does contain many of the elements that come to be prominent in the epyllion. The hero Jason is not particularly brave, and it is Medea who dominates and provides the driving force in the third and fourth books.

¹¹ Which is not to deny, of course, that the Peleus and Thetis sections carry on their own brand of questioning and epic inversion. Dark undertones have been seen here at least from Bramble (1970) on.

away from his lover. A similar distance necessarily exists between the figure of Ariadne within the text, and the analysis of the narrator, who sets her story in context and contains the flow of her grief in his closely structured description. There is some obvious poetic artifice at work here, and even some Callimachean intellectual diversion. The choice of the Homeric name Dia (52) for the island on which the heroine is deserted reflects an Alexandrian debate about whether the place was in fact Dia or Naxos, and whether Dia was just an old name for Naxos or indeed a different island.¹² Again, the epithet *Erycina* (72) used of Venus is self-consciously out of place, pointing to the worship of the goddess in Eryx on Sicily (and perhaps also to her temple on the Capitol in Rome).¹³ On further examination, though, the epithet is revealed to be appropriate on the level of a learned pun: the adjective *ericius*, linked to the hedgehog, *echinus*, means ‘spiny’, thus creating a play within the line, *spinosa Erycina serens in pectore curas* (‘the Spiny goddess sowing thorny cares in her breast’, 72).¹⁴ As Ariadne slowly loses her clothes, the structure of the lines is carefully measured (*non... | non... | non... | omnia*, 63–6), and this very restraint seems to fight against the image of Ariadne’s distress, threatening to render it artificial were the power of her *indomitos... furores* (‘uncontrollable passions’, 54) not so great as to seem to transcend, even overwhelm, the poet’s control. For all his careful structuring of the scene, and for all his impassive intellectual games, even the manipulating author/artist appears at times to be captivated by Ariadne’s misery, and is driven twice in this part of the poem to an exclamation of pity and sympathy: *prospicit, eheu* (‘she looks out, alas!’, 61) and *a! misera* (‘ah, poor girl!’, 71).¹⁵

¹² Callimachus, fr. 601 Pf.: ἐν Δίῃ· τὸ γὰρ ἔσκε παλαιότερον ὄνομα Νάξω (‘in Dia, which is the older name for Naxos’). Apollonius Rhodius also gives the island the name of Dia at Arg. 4.425. Against the identification of Dia with Naxos is the fact that there is a small island off the coast north of Cnossus called Dia, which would have been on Theseus’ route to Athens. It is possible that the strong links of Dionysus with Naxos encouraged the relocation of Ariadne’s desertion there.

¹³ Or maybe—but this suggestion is tentative—it is appropriate after all: Crete had close links with Sicily both in mythology (via the story of Minos’ death in Camicus) and history (in the form of Cretan foundations on the island). Crete and Rome are linked, in tortuous Alexandrian fashion, via Sicily.

¹⁴ Cf. O’Hara (1990b).

¹⁵ As ever, though, the poet is not absolutely committing himself to this sympathy: the exclamation *a!* is something of a neoteric catchword. Cf. Calvus, *la, a! uirgo*

As an ecphrasis, before we have even got to the digressions and the direct speech, these lines are already rather unusual. The introductory *haec uestis... indicat arte* ('this coverlet... illustrates with skill', 50–1) are the only lines until *at parte ex alia* ('but from the other side', 251) which draw direct attention to the fact that this is a description of a work of art. General ecphrastic convention is less subtle than this and likes to emphasize the fact that the scene described is not real even as it professes wonder at how realistic it seems.¹⁶ In more indirect ways, though, this section of the poem actually makes great use of the paradox of visual art depicting sound, action, and emotion. The very first words of the description, *namque fluentis sono prospectans litore Diae* ('for looking out from the wave-resounding shore of Dia', 52), greet us with a seductive illogicality, as the first adjective used in this visual description refers not to a visible quality, but to the *sound* of waves breaking on the shore. The sense of paradox is then reawakened by the simile comparing Ariadne to a (static) statue of a (raving) Bacchant:¹⁷

quem procul ex alga maestis Minois ocellis,
saxea ut effigies bacchantis, prospicit, eheu,
prospicit et magnis curarum fluctuat undis,
non flauo retinens subtilem uertice mitram,
non contacta leui uelatum pectus amictu,
non tereti strophio lactentis uincta papillas,

infelix, and Vergil's appropriation of it in *Ecl.* 6.47 and 52 and 10.47 and 4, discussed in Ch. 4, sect. 1. On the other hand, frequency of use need not necessarily rob a word of its impact.

¹⁶ For example, Theocritus, *Id.* 1.55–6, παντᾷ δ' ἀμφὶ δέπας περιπέπταται ὕγρὸς ἄκανθος | αἰολίχον θάλαμα· τέρας κέ τιν' θυμὸν ἀτύξαι ('supple acanthus winds all round the cup, a variegated wonder, a marvellous work which will amaze your heart'); Vergil, *Aen.* 5.254, *anhelanti similis* ('as if breathing') and 8.649–50, *illum indignanti similem similemque minanti | aspiceret* ('you could see him as if angry, as if threatening'). Note also the tendency to emphasize the actions and importance of the artisan, both by naming him and by frequent use of verbs of making, crafting, adding, etc. Cf. Laird (1993), 25–8 and Gaisser (1995), 580 n. 2.

¹⁷ Of course, visual art is not the only thing on Catullus' mind at this point: the bacchant simile also recalls Andromache in *Iliad* 22: ὥς φασμένη μεγάροιο διέσσυτο μαινάδι ἴση, | παλλομένη κροαδίην ('so saying, she rushed out of the house like a maenad, her heart racing', 460–1). The effect of this reminiscence is to intensify the desperation felt by Ariadne, having lost the man she regarded as her husband. For more on women compared to Bacchantes, cf. Ch. 2, Sect. 6.

omnia quae toto delapsa e corpore passim
 ipsius ante pedes fluctus salis alludebant.

(Catullus 64.60–7)

Far away, on the weed-strewn shore Minos' daughter looks out at him with sad eyes, like a stone statue of a Bacchant, alas! she looks out at him and is tossed on great waves of sadness, not keeping the delicate headband on her golden hair, nor keeping her chest veiled with a light gown, nor keeping her milky white breasts bound with a smooth band; all these had slipped down everywhere from her whole body and were playing before her feet in the waves of the salt sea.

The image expresses with vivid economy the external stillness of the heroine and her internal frenzy, but also self-consciously points us again to the fact that this Ariadne is a figure encased within an art object. Like a statue of a Bacchant, which communicates movement although it does not move, Ariadne's picture oozes emotion even though she is not real. Gaisser (1995), 594 comments that the image of Ariadne which follows the simile, standing bare-breasted and wild-haired, has more in common with standard artistic representations of a Maenad than of the frequently languid, rather passive, depictions of Ariadne, and so links back to the simile to confirm it again. Tatham's (1990) observation that the *mitra* (63) has Bacchic associations adds to this picture. The temptation to see Bacchic elements filtering into the text beyond the simile may be further supported by the fact that the sections of the poem which bring out Ariadne's links with Bacchus most (here and lines 251–66) are also the only parts which make explicit (or strong implicit) assertions that the subject here is a work of art, a tapestry.

In keeping with the emphasis on art, these lines bring out an interest in ideas of watching and seeing which again complicate interpretation. The presence of the artist (who goes conspicuously unmentioned) is felt both through his measured composition and his emotional interjections, and a consciousness is created that this coverlet, this poem, is an artefact to be studied and admired.¹⁸ This therefore places Ariadne very firmly in the category of an object to be

¹⁸ Again this is left more or less implicit until the end of the Ariadne section, where the coverlet's original audience is revealed: *quae postquam cupide spectando Thessala pubes | expleta est* ('after the young Thessalian men had been satisfied by their eager perusal of these scenes', 267–8).

seen. Yet she is the one who does the watching: *prospectans* (52), *tuetur* (53), *uisit uisere* (55), *prospicit* (61, 62).¹⁹ Even in her most frozen, objectified state, as the stone statue of the simile, she is still looking out to sea, looking for Theseus. This intensifies and problematizes our sense that there is some sexual titillation going on here: as we watch this deserted heroine at her most vulnerable point, out of her mind with grief, she slowly drops all her clothes in a kind of absent-minded striptease. But as we look at her, naked and alone on the shore, she is looking right back—as she scans the horizon for her lover’s ship, we are in a way fixed in the path of her gaze. The reader who looks at the tapestry, for all his presumed or at least potential sympathy for Ariadne is detached from her, and even opposed to her, constructed by the sensuality of the text as an excited observer. And in this respect the reader comes to be assimilated with other watchers later represented within the text: Bacchus, for whom the sight of Ariadne naked on the beach is enough to prompt a marriage proposal, and the young Thessalian men at Peleus and Thetis’ wedding who look at the tapestry with a gaze which does not seem entirely pure, as they drink in the scenes *cupide* (‘eagerly’, ‘desirously’, 267). Compare Bacchus himself at 253: *te quaerens, Ariadna, tuoque incensus amore* (‘seeking you, Ariadne, and aflame with love for you’).²⁰ Yet Ariadne herself also knows what it is to look at someone this way, as this is how she fell in love with the handsome stranger Theseus: *hunc simul ac cupido conspexit lumine uirgo | regia* (‘as soon as the royal maiden had caught sight of him with desiring eyes’, 86–7). Ariadne, the naked object to be watched, is herself a watcher filled with longing and desire.

2. THESEUS’ CRETAN EXPLOITS: LINES 76–115

Switching away from Ariadne on the beach to an earlier time when Theseus first arrived on Crete and stole the princess’s heart, we are temporarily moved away from the arena of Ariadne’s emotion and

¹⁹ And this is picked up in the refrain at 249, *prospectans*.

²⁰ This line is itself an echo of Peleus falling in love with Thetis, *tum Thetidis Peleus incensus fertur amore* (‘then it is said that Peleus was inflamed with love for Thetis’, 19), after his mortal eyes have fixed on the nymph’s naked body (16–18).

into the story of her lover's heroism. The move is incomplete, however: the 'epic' tale of Theseus' self-sacrifice on behalf of the Athenians, and his subsequent victory over the Minotaur and escape from the Labyrinth is interrupted by another description of Ariadne's passion, this time the burning love she feels for the handsome stranger when first she sees him. Epic expectations are again frustrated, and the reader is encouraged to think of the emotional effects of Theseus' actions rather than simply marvel at his strength and courage.

Although many are moved by the story of Theseus' desertion of Ariadne to find fault with the hero, it may be worth remarking that not every critic has formed the same opinion. Kinsey (1965) takes a pragmatic, unsentimental angle on the subject:

When all is said and done, Ariadne is the daughter of Minos, who was sending Theseus to his death. If Theseus had not made use of her, he would have been killed. It might be said that he ought to have been kinder to one who saved his life, but can he be accused of being much more than *immemor*? It is arguable whether under the circumstances he can be blamed for not keeping his promise to Ariadne (p. 919).

I would debate the assumption that being forgetful, *immemor*, is not quite as serious a crime for the poet as it is for Ariadne. The word suggests a culpable, despicable disregard for the requirements of friendship: compare Catullus' use of the word in condemnation of the fickle Alfenus in poem 30.²¹ It is useful, nonetheless, at least to accept the possibility of viewing Theseus in a more positive light when reading this section of the poem which tells in condensed form the heroic tale of his bravery in Crete.

The picture is of a young Athenian prince who dares to fight against the ferocity and arrogance of the stronger state of Crete, the monstrous Minotaur, and the proud King Minos. Even here, though, the account is not completely one-sided, and no attempt is made to lessen the seriousness of the crime of Androgeus' murder even whilst at the same time the tragic loss of the youth of Athens is openly lamented:

²¹ Compare too the anger towards the faithless in 60 and 76. For a fuller discussion of this aspect, cf. Ch. 1, Sect. 2.1.

nam perhibent olim crudeli peste coactam
 Androgeoneae poenas exsoluere caedis
 electos iuuenes simul et decus innuptarum
 Cecropiam solitam esse dapem dare Minotauro.
 (Catullus 64.76–9)

For they say that once, forced by a terrible plague to make amends for the murder of Androgeus, Cecrops' land used to make a dinner for the Minotaur of chosen youths together with the pride of the unmarried girls.

It is as a model of virtuous self-sacrifice, then, that Theseus first appears to Ariadne, and perhaps it is not surprising that the innocent young princess should fall for such a man. The swiftness of the onset of her passion combines convincing psychology with a generic contribution borrowed from love poetry, the trope of love at first sight.²² Moreover, the echoes of the imagery of marriage which pervade much of the poem (appropriately enough) are at their strongest here,²³ beginning with the description of the young Athenians sent to feed the Minotaur (78). These handsome young men and unmarried girls might bring to mind the *iuuenes* and *innuptae* of Catullus' own marriage poem 62. Ariadne too possesses the bloom and innocence of the virgin:

hunc simul ac cupido conspexit lumine uirgo
 regia, quam suavis expirans castus odores
 lectulus in molli complexu matris alebat,
 quales Eurotae praecingunt flumina myrtus
 aurae distinctos educit uerna colores,
 non prius ex illo flagrantia declinauit
 lumina, quam cuncto concepit corpore flammam
 funditus atque imis exarsit tota medullis.
 (Catullus 64.86–93)

²² Cf. Sappho 31.7–8, translated at Catullus 51.6–7; it is a trope already used in different genres before Catullus. For epic, cf. Apollonius, *Arg.* 3.287–98, and for pastoral, cf. Theocritus, *Id.* 2.82, *χῶς ἴδον, ὥς ἐμάνην* ('and when I saw, how I lost my mind'); this is developed at Vergil, *Ecl.* 8.41 to *ut uidi, ut perii* ('when I saw, I perished').

²³ It is interesting to note, by contrast, how understated the conventional formulae of marriage songs are in the Peleus and Thetis narrative. Thetis' mother, Tethys, is mentioned (28–30), but the frequently used trope of maternal reluctance to let her daughter go mixed with pride that she is now getting married is reduced to the statement that she sanctioned the marriage—there is no tearful embrace between mother and daughter. Even the epithalamium proper (323–81) makes little of the actual marriage, concentrating instead on Achilles, the product of that marriage.

As soon as the royal maiden had caught sight of him with desiring eyes (the girl whom her chaste little bed used to rear in her mother's soft embrace, breathing sweet scents like the myrtle trees which fringe the river Eurotas or when the spring breeze coaxes forth bright colours), she did not lower her love-enflamed gaze from him before she had conceived a fire deep down all over her body and was utterly ablaze from the very marrow of her bones.

The picture of Ariadne's chaste bed with its scent like spring flowers and the young girl's closeness to her mother owe a great deal to conventional hymeneal imagery,²⁴ and again find echoes in Catullus' marriage poetry.²⁵ For example, the bride Junia in poem 61, is compared to Venus and to the goddess's sacred plant, myrtle:

floridis uelut enitens
myrtus Asia ramulis
quos Hamadryades deae
ludicrum sibi roscido
nutriuntur honore.²⁶
(Catullus 61.21–5)

Like the Asian myrtle shining with flowery sprays, which the Hamadryads nourish with the offering of dew as a plaything for themselves.

The myrtle flowers are at once representative of pure beauty and, via their connection with Venus, awakening sexuality.

Just as there is a feeling in many marriage songs that the loss of the bride's virginity is not an unalloyed good, so for Ariadne (and more so) there is a sense of foreboding latent in the romantic image of the girl still nursed by her mother in innocence. The fates of the unmarried Athenians fed to the Minotaur cast a shadow from the start, and the mention of Ariadne's mother in the context of passion cannot be wholly untainted.²⁷ More disturbing still, perhaps, are the reminiscences of Medea to be found here. Like Ariadne, she is the daughter of a proud and savage king who is determined to put the handsome

²⁴ This being Catullus, I have Sappho in particular in mind (104a, 105a, 105c). But perhaps also cf. Theocritus 18.23 for a mention of Eurotas in the context of a marriage song (there appearing naturally, since the song is for Spartan Helen).

²⁵ For the mother's embrace, cf. Catullus 61.56–60; 62.20–3.

²⁶ Reading *nutriuntur honore* with Goold, preferred to the MS *nutriunt umore* on metrical grounds.

²⁷ As noted, e.g. by Harmon (1973), 322, who sees it as an indication that Ariadne's passion, like Pasiphae's, will be all-enveloping.

hero in the path of death. Like Ariadne, Medea falls in love with Jason from the moment she sets eyes on him, pierced by Eros' darts:

αὐτὸς δ' ὑψορόφοιο παλιμπετὲς ἐκ μεγάροιο
καγχαλῶν ἤϊξε, βέλους δ' ἐνεδαίετο κούρη
νέρθεν ὑπὸ κραδίῃ φλογὶ εἴκελον. ἀντία δ' αἰεὶ
βάλλον ἐπ' Αἰσονίδην ἀμαργύματα, καὶ οἱ ἄηντο
στηθέων ἐκ πυκιναῖ καμάτῳ φρένες, οὐδέ τιν' ἄλλην
μνηστὴν ἔχεν, γλυκερῇ δὲ κατείβετο θυμὸν ἀνίῃ
(Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica* 3.285–90)

He flew back from the high-roofed hall and darted out, laughing, and kindled his arrow beneath the girl's heart like a flame. She kept sparkling at Jason opposite her, and the strong wits in her breast sighed with effort; she had no thought for anything else, and her heart overflowed with her sweet undoing.

Catullus' address to Venus and Cupid, upbraiding them for the troubles that they cause mortals follows immediately the description of the first fires of love kindled in Ariadne:

heu misere exagitans immiti corde furores
sancte puer, curis hominum qui gaudia misces,
quaeque regis Golgos atque Idalium frondosum,
qualibus incensam iactastis mente puellam
fluctibus, in flauo saepe hospite suspirantem!
(Catullus 64.94–8)

Alas, holy boy, wretchedly stirring up frenzy with your cruel heart, you who mix men's joys with cares, and you, goddess, who rule Golgi and leafy Idalium, on what waves you tossed the girl, her mind on fire, often sighing after her golden-haired guest.

This passage also finds a precursor in Apollonius, placed after Medea has plotted the deception and murder of her own brother, Apsyrtus, with Jason.²⁸

σχέτλι' Ἐρως, μέγα πῆμα, μέγα στύγος ἀνθρώποισιν,
ἐκ σέθεν οὐλόμεναί τ' ἔριδες στοναχαί τε γόοι τε,
ἀλγέα τ' ἄλλ' ἐπὶ τοῖσιν ἀπείρονα τετρήχασιν

²⁸ See also my earlier discussion of the correspondences between these passages in Ch. 1 Sect. 1.2.

δυσμενέων ἐπὶ παισὶ κορύσσειο δαῖμον ἀερθεῖς
οἷος Μηδείῃ στυγερὴν φρεσὶν ἔμβαλες ἄτην,
(Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica* 4.445–9)

Wicked Eros, great bane, great abomination for men, from you come destructive strife and groans and grief, and the other limitless pains which fall on the troubled. Arm yourself against the sons of our enemies with your power aroused as when you cast hateful folly into Medea's heart.

By placing next to each other two sections influenced by passages in Apollonius which are separated by hundreds of lines in the original, Catullus condenses the Medea story and makes Ariadne's love seem both doomed and problematic from an even earlier stage than that of her counterpart in the *Argonautica*. A reader who recognizes the Apollonian influence on lines 94–8 will not be able to ignore the connection between the reproach towards Eros and Medea's betrayal of her brother.

The intimations of fratricide subside for the moment, although Theseus' killing of the Minotaur is not without its discordant elements.²⁹ The hymeneal and erotic influences perceptible in the preceding lines also fade away here, and Theseus is presented not as a future bridegroom, but as a conquering hero. As seems appropriate for a bold adventurer, but not without a good deal of irony, Theseus' lust is for glory and victory rather than for the sighing heroine: *cum saeuum cupiens contra contendere monstrum | aut mortem appeteret Theseus aut praemia laudis* ('when in his desire to fight against the fierce monster Theseus sought either death or the reward of praise', 101–2). Again, these lines can be seen as referring back to the *Argonautica*, apparently functioning as standard terms of heroic self-presentation: at *Arg.* 3.428–9³⁰ Jason's response to the seemingly impossible task that Aeetes has set him is that he will try to complete the heroic struggle even if it means his death, and at 4.204–5³¹ he invokes similar sentiments—they can bring either grief or glory to Greece

²⁹ Cf. Ch. 2, Sect. 4 for ideas of sympathy for the Minotaur and his links with Ariadne.

³⁰ τῷ καὶ ἐγὼ τὸν ἄεθλον ὑπερφιάλόν περ ἔόντα | τλήσομαι, εἰ καὶ μοι θανέειν μόρος ('so I shall undergo this challenge, over-formidable though it is, even if it is my fate to die').

³¹ ἡμετέρῃ δ' ἐπ' εἰδέεται Ἑλλὰς ἐφορμῇ | ἥ ἐκατηφείην ἢ καὶ μέγα κῦδος ἀρῆσθαι ('Hellas depends on our expedition, to gain either sorrow or great glory').

through their actions—when urging on the Argonauts to escape from Aeetes' wrath with all due haste. It might be worth noting that earlier in this speech Jason has acknowledged the invaluable help that Medea has given him and announced his intention to take her home with him and marry her. One cannot help but contrast Theseus' seeming lack of ability to recognize Ariadne's part in his success, which is reflected by the strange side-lining of the Cretan princess in the narrative here. Some emphasis is placed on the anguish and fear she feels for her beloved's safety when he goes off to fight the Minotaur (100), but the extent of her help is limited to prayers to the gods rather than the more active and ingenious present of the ball of wool familiar from other versions:

non ingrata tamen frustra munuscula diuis
promittens tacito suscepit uota labello.
(Catullus 64.103–4)

But not in vain or unwelcome were the little gifts she pledged to the gods, promising with silent lips.

Theseus, it seems, finds his way out of the Labyrinth on his own, following the thread without noticing who gave it to him. Or is this just the way he would like us to see it?

3. LEAVING CRETE, LEAVING ARIADNE: LINES 116–123

As Theseus emerges from the Labyrinth, poetic self-consciousness surfaces once again and Catullus feigns an apology of sorts for his digression in order to run quickly through the events after the conquest of the Minotaur.³² These are emotionally important events, though—the loss and leaving of a family, the abandoning of a lover—and the compression does not necessarily lessen their impact.

³² The juxtaposition of *sed quid ego a primo digressus carmine* ('but why should I digress from my first song', 116) and the *inobseruabilis error* ('untraceable mistake', 115) of the Labyrinth adds another level of self-reflexivity to the poem, which it appears has been in danger of getting lost in its own maze. Cf. Ch. 3, Sect. 2.2.

Ariadne's relationship with her family is depicted as a close one to emphasize the sacrifice she makes and the injury they feel:

sed quid ego a primo digressus carmine plura
commemorem, ut linquens genitoris filia uultum,
ut consanguineae complexum, ut denique matris,
quae misera in gnata deperdita laeta(batur),³³
omnibus his Thesei dulcem praeoptarit amorem.
(Catullus 64.116–20)

But why should I say more, deviating from my first song, how the daughter left her father's sight, the embrace of her sister, and, finally, of her mother, who rejoiced to distraction in her poor daughter; to all these she preferred the sweet love of Theseus.

But beneath the veneer of a loving family lurk the problems and complications of this particular Cretan household. The mention of a sister presumably points to Phaedra, and as such is quite unusual. Whilst Phaedra frequently remembers the fate of her elder sister when she herself is married to Theseus, Ariadne rarely makes any mention of Phaedra.³⁴ Thomson (1997) *ad* 118 points out that according to Pausanias (10.29.3) a painting at Delphi showed the sisters together, and perhaps some artistic influence is at work here. At any rate, the subtle reminder of the unhappy future of Ariadne's sister as Theseus' wife serves to enhance the sense of impending misery. Pasiphae's love for Ariadne is tinged with similar sadness: she loves her daughter to distraction and, so it is implied, will be hurt all the more by her departure. It is interesting to see Pasiphae here continuing (albeit in a shadowy way) to act the part of wife and mother long after the birth of the Minotaur, the point of the story where she usually fades from view or even dies.

³³ Reading *laetabatur* with Lachmann (OGR, *leta*). There is no direct parallel for this sentiment, but it seems to me that Pasiphae rejoices in her daughter in a Catullan way (*deperdita*): cf. *ni te perdit amo* ('unless I love you to distraction', Catullus 45.3); *illum deperit impotente amore* ('loves him to distraction with an uncontrollable love', 35.12). Conington's conjecture *lamentatast* is supported, e.g. by Clausen (1977), 221–3, who sees in this episode evidence of the kind of reconciliation between Minos and Theseus that Jason claims took place. Such hints, of course, are later contradicted by Ariadne's speech, where she represents her departure from Crete as a betrayal.

³⁴ Indeed, Gantz (1993), 270, 285–6, discusses the difficulty of knowing whether Ariadne and Phaedra were always regarded as sisters in the mythical tradition.

Nevertheless, as I mentioned in connection with line 88, any reference to Pasiphae in a context that plays at happy families has to strike a discordant note.

Kinsey (1965), 917 argues that Ariadne in a sense deserves to be abandoned because she chose to desert her family in favour of helping Theseus, and the decision was not forced upon her: *omnibus his Thesei dulcem praeoptarit amorem* ('to all these, she preferred the sweet love of Theseus', 120). That she made the decision freely (or as freely as is possible for someone desperately in love) is true, but the line is also an echo of Theseus' earlier and unquestionably honourable decision to risk his own life in an attempt to put a stop to the Minotaur's devouring of young Athenians:

ipse suum Theseus pro caris corpus Athenis
proicere optavit potius quam talia Cretam
funera Cecropiae nec funera portentur.
(Catullus 64.81–3)

Theseus himself chose to sacrifice his own body for the sake of his dear Athenians, rather than that such corpses which were not corpses should be carried to Crete from Cecrops' land.

I do not wish to deny that Ariadne's desertion of her family could be regarded as a betrayal, and that there is certainly a symmetry in Theseus' subsequent abandonment of her, but her painful realization that she now has nowhere to turn seems punishment enough in itself, and her reasons for leaving Crete, if misguided, were at least generous and passionate, rather than purely thoughtless. Moreover, the implication that the only disapproval of Theseus' actions comes from Ariadne herself is, I think, plainly wrong. What of the narrator's account at lines 122–3?

ut eam deuinctam lumina somno
liquerit immemori discedens pectore coniunx.

When her husband abandoned her, her eyes bound by sleep, leaving with his forgetful heart.

Not only does the narrator call Theseus *immemor*, but he is also Ariadne's *coniunx*. All the wedding imagery in earlier lines must also back up this interpretation of the serious nature of their relationship, and the gravity of Theseus' betrayal.

4. ARIADNE'S SPEECH: LINES 124–201

Catullus' account has now circled back to where it began, with Ariadne deserted and disorientated on the beach. Yet the comfort a reader may gain from feeling that the narrative is back on track is undermined by the realization that, although we have returned to the setting of the ecphrasis, we have not returned to ecphrasis proper. The move here is rather to reported narrative once more, to another turn in the maze from which the poet had claimed to want to escape (116–17). The use of the referential *perhibent* ('they say') has a distancing effect which works as both a variation on and a parallel to the ecphrasis with its watcher's perspective. Accordingly, while the scene is more or less the same, the stillness of the earlier description of the heroine as a statue with its silence and concentration on looking gives way to more vociferous passion and to motion.³⁵ She shouts in fury, she climbs the steep mountains to catch sight of Theseus' ship, she hitches up her dress to run into the waves to cry and shout after him:

saepe illam perhibent ardenti corde furentem
 clarisonas imo fudisse e pectore uoces,
 ac tum praeruptos tristem conscendere montes,
 unde aciem in pelagi uastos protenderet aestus,
 tum tremuli salis aduersas procurrare in undas
 mollia nudatae tollentem tegmina surae,
 atque haec extremis maestam dixisse querellis,
 frigidulos udo singultus ore cientem.

(Catullus 64.124–31)

They say that often, frenzied with her heart on fire, she howled out piercing cries from the depths of her lungs, then sadly scaled the steep hills from where she could cast her gaze out over the huge swell of the sea, then ran out

³⁵ Or perhaps the relationship between ecphrasis and reported narrative here can be seen as more adversarial: the reported narrative is set up as a challenger to the earlier ecphrastic description. Thus the continuity error (noted with discomfort by Thomson (1997), *ad* 129) that Ariadne here has some clothes on, though she had earlier been memorably described losing them, could be interpreted as a sign that this narrative is not a simple continuation of the ecphrasis, but an alternative to it.

into the waves of rippling salt water that pushed against her, lifting her soft clothes away from her bare legs, and, wretched, she spoke these words in her last complaint, heaving chilly sobs from her tear-wet face.

As I discussed earlier,³⁶ Ariadne's eruption into such a long and impassioned speech comes as a surprise within the ecphrasis, and the impact of her words is maximized by the sheer energy of the grief and fury which fuel them. The echoes of both Euripides' and Apollonius' Medeas are particularly strong here,³⁷ as Ariadne reproaches Theseus for forgetting his promises to her, and reflects with increasing desperation on the loneliness of her position, cursing him for his thoughtlessness. An important difference between Ariadne and Medea, though, is that Ariadne has to deliver her speech to the wind and waves whilst Medea reviles Jason to his face. Medea's power to influence the situation is accordingly much greater, as she goes on to demonstrate in Euripides' play, becoming the instrument of her own vengeance. Even in her younger incarnation in the *Argonautica*, the threat of her anger is enough to send Jason scuttling into apology and reparation:

τοῖα δ' Ἰήσων
μειλιχίοις ἐπέεσσιν ὑποδδείσας προσέειπεν·
“Ἰσχεο, δαϊμονίη· τὰ μὲν ἀνδάνει οὐδ' ἐμοὶ αὐτῷ”
(Apollonius, *Argonautica* 4.393–5)

Frightened by this, Jason spoke with honeyed words. ‘Wait, good lady! I’m not happy about this myself...’

Ariadne cannot hear whatever excuses Theseus might come up with, and, more importantly, she cannot have the satisfaction of knowing at least that he has had to hear her view of his conduct. In exasperation as well as fear she cries,

sed quid ego ignaris nequiquam conquerar auris,
exsternata malo, quae nullis sensibus auctae
nec missas audire queunt nec reddere uoces?
(Catullus 64.164–6)

³⁶ Ch. 3, Sect. 3.2.

³⁷ Cf. Euripides, *Med.* 465–519; Apollonius Rhodius, *Arg.* 4.355–90. See Ch. 1, Sect. 1.2.

But why, beside myself with woe, do I complain in vain to the unknowing breezes, which are blessed with no senses and cannot hear the words I say nor give any in return?

For all its passion, however, Ariadne's speech has something of the air of a studied courtroom oration, making much of the idea that Theseus has broken a kind of contract with her. Alongside the emotionally charged references to her lover as *perfide* ('faithless', 132, 133), *immemor* ('forgetful', 135), *crudelis mentis* ('cruel-minded', 136), and *immite pectus* ('hard-hearted', 138) come strong accusations of impiety and general untrustworthiness. Theseus has left her, *neglecto numine diuum* ('disregarding the gods' will', 134), and she complains:

at non haec quondam blanda promissa dedisti
uoce mihi, non haec miseram sperare iubebas,
sed conubia laeta, sed optatos hymenaeos,
quae cuncta aerii discernunt irrita uenti.

(Catullus 64.139–42)

But these are not the promises you once gave me with your charming voice, you did not tell me to hope for this, poor wretch, but for a happy marriage, the wedding I longed for, all promises which the airy breezes have scattered unfulfilled.

The picture she paints here of Theseus contrasts wildly with the earlier, more misty, account of his self-sacrifice and success in Crete. Some view Ariadne's complaint as hysterical, and consider her argument undermined by her generalizing statement on the untrustworthiness of all men:

nunc iam nulla uiro iuranti femina credat,
nulla uiri speret sermones esse fideles;
quis dum aliquid cupiens animus praegestit apisci,
nil metuunt iurare, nihil promittere parcut:
sed simul ac cupidae mentis satiata libido est,
dicta nihil meminere,³⁸ nihil periuria curant.

(Catullus 64.143–8)

³⁸ Reading with Julius Czwalina, rather than OGR's *metuere*, no doubt influenced by *metuunt* at 146.

Now let no woman believe what a man swears, let none hope that a man's words will be in good faith; while their desirous heart has its sights set on something, they aren't scared to swear any oath, they spare no promises: but once the lust of their desiring mind has been satisfied, they remember nothing they have said, and care not at all if they perjure themselves.

Thomson (1997) quotes Achilles Statius on Aristotle at this point,³⁹ saying that universal statements which in fact contain no universal truth are appropriate to abusive speech in particular.⁴⁰ This is no doubt the case. However, for a jilted woman to be moved to a statement along the lines of 'all men are bastards' does not strike one as unusual or even as carefully planned rhetoric, but rather as psychologically convincing. It emphasizes most effectively the absolute disillusionment Ariadne feels now that this man whom she loved and trusted above all others has shown himself to be a sweet-talking, faithless opportunist. Ariadne's claim that Theseus has reneged on promises he made is a persuasive one, and her assertion that the hero had pledged to marry her appears to be borne out by the narrator's use of the word *coniunx* (husband) to describe Theseus at line 123.⁴¹ Nevertheless, just because Ariadne says (in a psychologically convincing outburst) that all men are untrustworthy, it does not mean that they *are*; similarly, it remains a possibility that Theseus regarded whatever amorous rhetoric he used on the Cretan princess in a very different light. Later, Vergil highlights more directly the problem that in a love affair the same words and actions can be interpreted in starkly different ways by the two parties in a parallel situation, whose details are to a great extent based on this poem: so Dido believes herself to be Aeneas' wife, and Aeneas thinks he is a free agent.⁴² Even though Ariadne's claim is believable, and even though at times the narrative appears to uphold her view, perhaps it is still necessary to put up some resistance to the pull of her words, to be aware of the human tendency to exaggerate.

³⁹ Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 2.21.

⁴⁰ It is worth noting, too, that this sort of generalized statement reappears at the end of the poem, with 64.398, *iustitiamque omnes cupida de mente fugarunt* ('all banished justice from their desirous hearts'), in particular seeming to echo lines 147–8 here.

⁴¹ Although it could, of course, be argued that this does not represent a definitive statement of fact from the narrator, but is focalized through Ariadne.

⁴² *Aen.* 4.166–72, 266, 316, 338–9. Cf. Rudd (1976), 40–2; Khan (1986).

The underplaying of Ariadne's part in Theseus' exploits back on Crete, which I mentioned earlier, is compensated for here as the heroine emphatically states that *she* is the one who saved Theseus from death (though once again the details are hazy):

certe ego te in medio uersantem turbine leti
eripui, et potius germanum amittere creui,
quam tibi fallaci supremo in tempore dessem.

(Catullus 64.149–51)

Surely I rescued you when you were turning in the middle of death's whirlwind, and I thought it better to lose a brother than to let you down, false one, in your hour of need.

The figure of Medea is, once again, much in evidence here. Compare her speech to Jason where she outlines exactly how much of his heroic glory he in fact owes to her:

ἔσωσά σ', ὥς ἴσασιν Ἑλλήνων ὅσοι
ταῦτόν συνεισέβησαν Ἀργῶιον σκάφος,
πεμφθέντα ταύρων πυρπνῶν ἐπιστάτην
ζεύγλαισι καὶ σπεροῦντα θανάσιμον γύνῃ·
δράκοντά θ', ὃς πάγχρυσον ἀμπέχων δέξας
σπείρῃς ἔσωζε πολυπλόκοις ἄπνους ὦν,
κτείνασ' ἀνέσχον σοι φάος σωτήριον.
αὐτὴ δὲ πατέρα καὶ δόμους προδοῦσ' ἑμούς
τὴν Πηλιῶτιν εἰς Ἰωλκὸν ἰκόμην
σὺν σοί, πρόθυμος μᾶλλον ἢ σοφωτέρα·
Πελίαν τ' ἀπέκτειν', ὥσπερ ἄλγιστον θανεῖν,
παίδων ὕπ' αὐτοῦ, πάντα τ' ἐξεῖλον δόμον.

(Euripides, *Medea* 476–87)

I saved you, as all the Greeks know who sailed with you on the ship *Argo*, when you had been sent to stand near the fire-breathing bulls with yokes, and to sow the deadly field. And the serpent, which guarded the golden fleece, encircling it with its thick-wreathed coils, unsleeping, it was I who killed it and was your saving light. I myself betrayed my father and home and came with you to Iolcus by Mount Pelion, well meaning rather than wise, and I killed Pelias by the most painful of deaths, at his own daughter's hands, and ruined the whole house.

So in many ways (and as I have repeatedly discussed), it seems that Ariadne is a Medea. Interestingly, however, she sometimes takes on

aspects which in Medea represent dissembling, even lack of self-knowledge, and transforms them into something more direct and innocent, more heartfelt. Medea, aware that her earlier passionate outbursts are likely to push her former husband to banish her at once, disingenuously tells Jason how she should have reacted to the news of his new bride, lulling him with the sense that she has now calmed down and can see his point of view. Ariadne's fantasy about serving Theseus as a slave clearly echoes Medea's speech, but has a more genuine air to it, even if it clearly bears the hallmarks of romantic exaggeration:

νῦν οὖν ἐπαινῶ σωφρονεῖν τέ μοι δοκεῖς
 κῆδος τόδ' ἡμῖν προσλαβόν, ἐγὼ δ' ἄφρων,
 ἧ χρεὼν μετεῖναι τῶνδε τῶν βουλευμάτων
 καὶ ξυμπεραίνειν καὶ παρεστάναι λέχει
 νύμφην τε κηδεύουσιν ἥδεσθαι σέθεν.
 (Euripides, *Medea* 884–8)

Now I praise you, and you seem sensible to me, taking care of us, and I seem stupid, when I ought to have shared in these plans and joined in accomplishing them and stood by the bed and rejoiced that your bride was marrying you.

si tibi non cordi fuerant conubia nostra,
 saeua quod horrebas prisci praecepta parentis,
 attamen in uestras potuisti ducere sedes,
 quae tibi iucundo famularer serua labore,
 candida permulcens liquidis uestigia lymphis,
 purpureae tuum consternens ueste cubile.
 (Catullus 64.158–63)

If our marriage was not dear to you, because you were afraid of the harsh instructions of your old father, at least you could have taken me to your home; I could have served you as a slave and been delighted with my work, soothing your pale feet with running water or spreading your bed with a purple coverlet.

Here, Ariadne's reminiscence of the passage in the *Medea* is softened, and complicated, by allusion to other, more genuine, expressions of the willingness to serve one's beloved. In particular, compare Andromeda in Euripides fr. 132 N²: ἄγου δέ μ', ὦ ξέν', εἴτε πρόσπολον θέλεις | εἴτ' ἀλοχον εἴτε δμωίδα ('take me, stranger, whether you

want a handmaid or a wife or a slave').⁴³ Glenn (1980–1) emphasizes the sexual symbolism contained within this daydream, claiming that *iucundo... labore* ('delightful work', 161) recalls Catullus' use of *iucundus* in amorous contexts.⁴⁴ The picture of Ariadne spreading a purple covering over Theseus' bed is another hint of the erotic, perhaps implying that she would still be willing to serve him sexually in that bed, but it is also, of course, a buried reference back to the purple coverlet on which she herself is portrayed.⁴⁵

From her wistful dream of what could have been, Ariadne quickly snaps back into awareness of her present wretched state, left without listeners, with nowhere to turn (164–70). Once again, her temper is roused, and she cries out:

Iuppiter omnipotens, utinam ne tempore primo
Gnosia Cecropiae tetigissent litora puppes,
indomito nec dira ferens stipendia tauro
perfidus in Cretam religasset nauita funem,
nec malus hic celans dulci crudelia forma
consilia in nostris requiesset sedibus hospes!

(Catullus 64.171–6)

All powerful Jupiter, would that the Athenian ships had not reached the shores of Cnossus in the first place, and the faithless sailor bringing the terrible tribute to the unconquered bull had never tied his rope to the Cretan quay, nor had this wicked man, hiding his cruel plans behind a beautiful appearance, stayed as a guest in our home!

⁴³ Commentators also cite *Il.* 3.409–11: *εἰς ὃ κέ σ' ἢ ἄλοχον ποιήσεται, ἢ ὃ γε δούλην* ('so he can either make you his wife or his slave'), and remark on the similarity of Nonnus, *Dion.* 47.390–5.

⁴⁴ This seems convincing, and certainly the idea of playfulness found in the verbs *iocare* and *ludere* can have a distinctly erotic edge, but I am not sure that *iucundus* can necessarily be counted as fully erotic. Sometimes Catullus uses it to mean something lighter—flirtatious and friendly, but not suffused with sexual desire: e.g. 9.9, 14.2, 50.16. However, at 64.215 the word refers to Aegeus' love for his son, and at 64.284 it refers to the delightful smell of Chiron's gift of mountain flowers. The instance at 67.1 may appear within a poem full of sex, but is used to illustrate the fact that the door is well loved by father and husband for (theoretically) preventing illicit liaisons in the house. 68.16 talks of Catullus' happy youth, as contrasted with his grief now his brother has died, and at 68.93 it refers to life lost.

⁴⁵ Cf. O'Connell (1977) for a discussion of the importance of the colours white and purple within the poem.

Medea appears yet again with this clear reminiscence of the ‘would that the *Argo* had never sailed’ topos found in the opening lines of the *Medea* plays of both Euripides and Ennius. It may be worth noting that in this reminiscence, Ariadne is actually taking the words of the Nurse, not Medea, for her own—the voice of an involved observer able to step back from the events far enough to see the pattern emerging.

The fear which she felt earlier, bitterly framed as her reward from Theseus for the service she rendered him (*pro quo dilaceranda feris dabor alitibusque | praeda, neque iniecta tumulabor mortua terra*—‘for this I will be given to the beasts as prey to be torn apart, and when dead I shall not be buried under heaped-up earth’, 152–3),⁴⁶ resurfaces in the desperate series of questions: where can she turn now? Her situation, again, is Medea’s, faced with exile once Jason has deserted her,⁴⁷ but it is also more desperate, more poignant. Ariadne is already *in* exile, not just facing the possibility; there is no plan she can make to remedy the situation, no revenge she can work against the man who left her so alone, no escape from the silence of desertion, nor from certain death:

nulla fugae ratio, nulla spes: omnia muta,
omnia sunt deserta, ostentant omnia letum.
(Catullus 64.186–7)

I have no plan for escape, no hope: everything is silent, everything abandoned, everything intimates death.

It is within this context of enforced, desperate passivity that Ariadne comes to curse Theseus. Medea’s calls to the gods to help her in revenge and escape⁴⁸ appear as expressions of her righteous indignation, but also fall in with plans she can see unfolding before her. Ariadne, in no position to act along with the gods to bring about Theseus’ downfall, can only hope that the justice of her claim will be recognized. Whilst we are privileged with the knowledge that

⁴⁶ This is a very epic fear. The motif, or threat, of leaving enemy bodies to be torn apart by animals is common from Homer onwards (e.g. *Il.* 1.4–5; 4.237; 8.379–80; 11.161–2). Once more, Theseus’ roles as hero and lover become elided, and his lover Ariadne envisages for herself a fate more appropriate to a conquered foe.

⁴⁷ Euripides, *Med.* 502–8.

⁴⁸ e.g. Euripides, *Med.* 160–5; 332; 764–7. Contrast Jason’s call for divine vengeance (1405–14), left emphatically unanswered at the end of the play. For more on Ariadne’s curse, see Ch. 1, Sect. 2.1.

Theseus does in fact come home to mourning rather than triumph, when the hero sails home and Aegeus commits suicide, Ariadne is left just to watch from the shore (249–50). For her, all these events are far out of sight, and in a future she is convinced she will not live to see.

That the heroine feels sure she is facing death is a point which I must stress again. As far as Ariadne knows, not only has Theseus treated her shamefully, broken the sacred bonds of trust, and left her without her family or any friends, but he has effectively caused her death. Note the emphasis on death in Ariadne's speech: at 149–50, she says she preferred her brother's murder to Theseus' demise; at 153, she will lie dead and unburied; at 181, the Minotaur's death is mentioned again; at 187, everything suggests death; then at 188–91, before she dies, she wants justice. Just as he killed the Minotaur, and just as he will bring about Aegeus' death, so, it appears, Theseus has left the woman he should rather have married, the woman who saved his life, to die.⁴⁹ Aegeus, in a different situation, though also about to be left by Theseus as he sails away, shows a similar preoccupation with death, anticipating his terrible grief if the son he found so late in life should not return from his heroic mission to Crete by mourning him before he even departs (223–7). The force of Ariadne's call to the Eumenides to ensure that the wrong done to her does not go unpunished rests, I think, on these ideas of death:

quare facta uirum multantes uindice poena
 Eumenides, quibus anguino redimita capillo
 frons expirantis praeportat pectoris iras,
 huc huc aduentate, meas audite querellas,
 quas ego, uae misera, extremis proferre medullis⁵⁰
 cogor inops, ardens, amenti caeca furore.
 quae quoniam uerae nascuntur pectore ab imo,

⁴⁹ Whilst the moral justifications and even the level of Theseus' responsibility for the deaths of the Minotaur and Aegeus and the projected death of Ariadne differ, the links between them are clearly made, both within Ariadne's speech and in the narrative. Cf. Ch. 1, Sect. 2.1.

⁵⁰ This is the reading given by Mynors, though Thomson (1970) prefers, *quas ego, uae miserae, imis proferre medullis*, which thereby directly echoes *imis... medullis* at 93. However, if we keep *extremis*, while its usage is a little odd here, it does fit in with the general sense that Ariadne sees this as the end. A similar use of the adjective can be found in Ovid, *Her.* 4.70, *acer in extremis ossibus haesit amor*, and perhaps in Propertius 1.11.6, *in extremo pectore restat amor* (following Heimreich).

uos nolite pati nostrum uanescere luctum,
sed quali solam Theseus me mente reliquit,
tali mente, deae, funestet seque suosque.

(Catullus 64.192–201)

So, Eumenides, who exact punishing retribution for the deeds of men, whose faces, fringed by snake hair, proclaim the anger breathing from your breasts, come here, here and hear my lament, which I (ah, poor me!) am forced to bring out from the very marrow of my bones, helpless, ablaze, blind with mad anger. Since they are genuine and born from the depths of my heart, do not allow my grief to be for nothing, but by the same frame of mind in which Theseus left me alone, let him, goddesses, bring doom to himself and his loved ones.

Ariadne addresses the Furies as Eumenides, a title which perhaps brings to mind the goddesses' Athenian affiliations: the heroine's prayer is directed to upholders of justice under the name associated with the offender's home city. Moreover, these goddesses have a role in upholding promises, but they are also, more famously, employed to pursue murderers.⁵¹ It is almost as if Ariadne is dead already, and her ghost, like Clytemnestra's, is calling on the goddesses not to allow her demise to go unnoticed.

5. THESEUS AND AEGEUS: LINES 202–250

In the first five lines of this section where the narrative resumes after Ariadne's speech, the gravity of tone places the poem, for the moment, firmly within the epic register.

has postquam maesto profudit pectore uoces,
supplicium saeuīs exposcens anxia factis,
annuit inuicto caelestum numine rector;
quo motu tellus atque horrida contremuerunt
aequora concussitque micantia sidera mundus.

(Catullus 64.202–6)

⁵¹ So, for example, in the *Oresteia*, these goddesses appear to uphold the old laws of hospitality (Ag. 59, 749), but also to avenge the death of Agamemnon (*Choeph.* 402, 577, 651; at 269–96 they will punish Orestes for failing to take vengeance for his father's death) as well as that of Clytemnestra (*Eum.*, *passim*).

After she had poured these words from her sad heart, in her distress demanding vengeance for these savage deeds, the ruler of the celestial gods with his invincible power nodded assent; at this movement, the earth and the bristling seas trembled and the heavens shook the glittering stars.

The description of Jupiter's assent is equivalent to the Homeric convention: e.g. *Il.* 1.528–30, *νεῦσε Κρονίων... μέγαν δ' ἐλέλιξεν Ὀλυμπον* ('the son of Cronus nodded... and shook great Olympus').⁵² Indeed, the great god's nod might even class as hyper-epic, resulting as it does in the shaking not just of Olympus but of the entire world.⁵³ This intensification of the epic tone corresponds neatly with the return to a description of the deeds of Theseus, left off after lines 76–115.

The cloud of forgetfulness that the god, bowing to Ariadne's pleas for revenge, sends over Theseus makes the hero forget his father's instructions to him, which, it seems, he would never normally have forgotten:

ipse autem caeca mentem caligine Theseus
consitus oblito dimisit pectore cuncta,
quae mandata prius constanti mente tenebat
(Catullus 64.207–9)

But Theseus himself, his mind sown with blind fog, banished from his forgetful heart all the instructions which before he held fixed in his mind.

haec mandata prius constanti mente tenentem
Thesea ceu pulsae uentorum flamine nubes
aereum niuei montis liquere cacumen.
(Catullus 64.238–40)

These instructions, which before he held fixed in his mind, left Theseus as clouds, driven by a gust of wind, leave the airy top of a snowy mountain.

The language here recalls that used of Theseus leaving Ariadne, such as at line 123, *liquerit immemori discedens pectore coniunx* ('leaving with his forgetful heart, he had abandoned his wife'), which of course points out the fitting, symmetrical nature of the hero's punishment

⁵² Thomson (1997), *ad* 204 discusses the etymological wordplay between *annuit* and *numine*.

⁵³ Ovid uses the trope in a similar, if slightly more compressed, way at *Met.* 1.177–80.

for his selfishness. However, this very symmetry leads us to wonder just how similar these two instances of forgetfulness are: if Theseus forgets Aegeus' precepts as a result of divine intervention, might some act of the gods also lie behind his desertion of Ariadne? Certainly, there was a tradition which claimed that one of the gods (usually Dionysus) caused Theseus to forget Ariadne as she lay sleeping on the island, leaving the way open for her forthcoming divine marriage.⁵⁴ There is no real hint given of this outside of the Theseus–Aegeus section of the poem, but neither can the possibility be ruled out.

The narrative takes another of its twists back in time with the characteristic signpost at the turning, *namque ferunt olim* ('for they say that once', 212), to show the old man Aegeus anxiously fussing over his son before he sets out on the heroic mission which will eventually, indirectly mean his own death. It seems clear that Callimachus' *Hecale* influences this section of the poem,⁵⁵ although the fragments of the Greek which remain only yield a couple of points of contact. The basic story, known from Plutarch, *Theseus* 14 and from the *Diegesis*, also belongs to the hero's younger days and deals with his expedition to defeat the Marathonian bull, and his relationship with the old woman, Hecale, who puts him up in her humble home. In Catullus 64, Aegeus explicitly states that he has only recently been united with his son: *reddite in extrema nuper mihi fine senectae* ('recently returned to me in the last years of my old age', 217). Whilst we do not hear what Theseus has said to his father,⁵⁶ it seems plausible that the emphasis the narrator places on Aegeus' age and on the short time that he has been able to enjoy his son should be imagined as coming in response to an assurance from Theseus along the lines of, τῷ <ῥα>, πάτερ, μεθίει με, σόον δέ κεν αὖθι δέχοιο ('so let me go, father, so you may receive me safe again', *Hecale* fr. 17.4 Hollis = *SH* 281). Similarly, as Skinner (1994) points out, once the *Hecale* is in our minds as we read Catullus, we are likely to see the ironic contrast between Theseus' dutiful remembrance of his father

⁵⁴ Cf. Philostratus, *Imag.* 1.15.1; schol. Theocritus, *Id.* 2.46. See also Webster (1966), 26.

⁵⁵ Cf. Hollis (1990), 32, 151–2; Skinner (1994).

⁵⁶ In fact, we never hear what Theseus says, except very indirectly through Ariadne's account of the promises he has broken (139–42).

when he has conquered the Marathonian bull (cf. fr. 69.5–9 Hollis = SH 288.5–9) and his forgetfulness after defeating the bull-man of Crete.

Despite the obvious contrast to be seen between the worried old father Aegeus and the disappointed young Ariadne,⁵⁷ there are also clear similarities between them. Both are linked by their sense (whether rightly or wrongly held) of the proximity of death. The old man's emotional dependence on Theseus also reflects Ariadne's need for him now that she has left her country and family behind to follow him. Both are victims of Theseus' heroic urges,⁵⁸ destroyed by his blighted memory. Both are left helpless and unable to do much more than to grieve and to watch Theseus' ship out at sea. The emphasis on eyes and seeing found in the opening description of Ariadne resurfaces here with Aegeus. His old eyes have not yet had their fill of gazing at his newfound heir: *cui languida*⁵⁹ *nondum | lumina sunt gnati cara saturata figura* ('his weak eyes had not yet had their fill of the dear image of his son', Catullus 64.219–20). As he watches anxiously from the citadel for his son, Aegeus mirrors Ariadne watching from the other shore (60–2; 249–50), but the description also recalls the young princess falling in love when she catches sight of the Athenian hero:

at pater, ut summa prospectum ex arce petebat,
anxia in assiduos absumens lumina fletus,
cum primum infecti conspexit linthea ueli,
praecipitem sese scopulorum e uertice iecit,
amissum credens immiti Thesea fato.

(Catullus 64.241–5)

But his father, as he scanned the view from the top of the citadel, consuming his worried eyes with endless weeping, when first he saw the cloth of the dyed sail, threw himself head first from the top of the cliffs, believing Theseus lost to a harsh fate.

⁵⁷ Of course, Aegeus has a different Cretan counterpart in Minos, another father who loses his child. (Or, indeed, in Minos' case, two children: Androgeus and Ariadne.)

⁵⁸ As Aegeus states directly: *quandoquidem fortuna mea ac tua feruida uirtus | eripit inuito mihi te* ('since my fortune and your hot-headed courage tear you from me, unwilling', 218–19).

⁵⁹ Another verbal link with Ariadne: cf. *quantos illa tulit languenti corde timores* ('she bore such great fears in her fainting heart', 99).

Compare Ariadne, troubled by *assiduis . . . luctibus* ('unending grief', 71), and her love, which flames up all at once, *hunc simul ac cupido conspexit lumine uirgo* ('as soon as the maiden had caught sight of him with her desiring eyes', 86).

The narrator's summing up of the hero's grief-stricken instead of triumphant return shows clearly how Ariadne's curse has borne fruit:

sic funesta domus ingressus tecta paterna
morte ferox Theseus, qualem Minoidi⁶⁰ luctum
obtulerat mente immemori, talem ipse recepit.
(Catullus 64.246–8)

So fierce Theseus entered his house in mourning for his father's death, and himself received such grief as he had brought upon the daughter of Minos with his forgetful mind.

With this epigrammatic statement, a tag partially repeated from the heroine's own curse at 200–1, it would seem that the picture is wrapped up neatly. Then the narrative finally returns at 249–50 to Ariadne, now fixed in the pose in which we first discovered her on the coverlet, back at lines 52–4.

All this tying up of loose ends is a little misleading, though; the careful structuring of the whole description and the sense we are given at lines 246–8 that the final word has been spoken on the guilt of Theseus could be seen to offer to make sense of the confusion created within the text, yet we leave the maze possibly more unsure about which version of the myth we should regard as canonical than when we started. The numerous references within the poem which double back on themselves and which bring in the works of other authors create a picture which is beautiful, intricate, but uncommitted to any single view of the characters trapped within its threads. Is Ariadne a Medea who gets her just deserts, or a tragically romantic heroine mistreated by the man who owes the most to her? Is Theseus a ruthless opportunist, fiercer than the beasts he kills, or a virtuous patriot who runs into difficulties when his honourable quest crosses paths with the desires of the gods? For all the details and embellishments of the story, Catullus leaves us without any answers, or, rather,

⁶⁰ The use of this name for Ariadne, as well as emphasizing the importance of the father–child link in this story, is another element in the framing of the ecphrasis: she is *Minois* also at line 60, towards the beginning of the description.

with too many answers. And then we find that the story isn't even over yet: *at parte ex alia*... ('but from the other side...', 251).

6. BACCHUS ARRIVES: LINES 251–266

The appearance of Bacchus and his entourage brings us back into the realm of ecphrasis proper, with the introductory *at parte ex alia* (251) a timely reminder that this is, at least nominally, a description of a work of art. The contrast with the earlier explicitly descriptive section (50–75) is marked: a band of wild, bizarre creatures dances onto the island which earlier appeared to be occupied only by the lonely figure of Ariadne. Yet again, the poet plays with the expectations and possibilities of ecphrasis, developing from the more subtle hints of sound and movement in the first part of the description an unabashedly vibrant, loud, and fluid picture which seems to reach far beyond the limits of visual art. Nevertheless, in the silent, anguished scene two hundred lines before were sown the seeds of this finale, and the imagery of the heroine as Bacchant⁶¹ feeds into this picture of actual Maenads marked by their external rather than internal frenzy:

cui Thyades passim lymphata mente furebant
 euhoe bacchantes, euhoe capita inflectentes.
 harum pars tecta quatiebant cuspidē thyrsos,
 pars e diuolso iactabant membra iuuenco,
 pars sese tortis serpentibus incingebant,
 pars obscura cauis celebrabant orgia cistis,
 orgia quae frustra cupiunt audire profani;
 plangebant aliae proceris tympana palmis,
 aut tereti tenuis tinnitus aere ciebant;
 multis raucisonos efflabant cornua bombos
 barbaraque horribili stridebat tibia cantu.

(Catullus 64.254–64)

For him the Maenads raged all around with their crazy minds, crying 'Evoe!' as they raved, 'Evoe!' as they tossed their heads. Some of these shook thyrsi

⁶¹ Remember, too, Ariadne's future career as leader of Bacchus' female followers: see Ch. 2, Sect. 6.

with their points hidden, some threw about limbs from a dismembered bullock, some wreathed themselves with twisting serpents, some celebrated the secret rites with their deep baskets, rites which the uninitiated long in vain to hear; others beat the drums with hands lifted high, or raised thin chimes on polished bronze cymbals; many blew harsh-sounding booms on horns, and made the barbarian flute scream with its raucous song.

As others have noted,⁶² this scene is in many ways similar to the description of the followers of Cybele in Catullus 63.21–6. Although the violent climax of that poem is absent here,⁶³ there is a kindred sense of menace as the god draws near, and Bacchus' intentions towards Ariadne could therefore seem ominous. Although we are given no hint of the heroine's reaction to the god's approach, the procession is at best bizarre, at worst absolutely terrifying.⁶⁴ Given, also, the emphasis Ariadne places in her speech on how alone she is, we are able now to enjoy fully the irony in her exclamation, *ne quisquam apparet uacua mortalis in alga* ('nor does any mortal appear on the empty shore', 168): no mortal may appear to keep her company, but an immortal does. Moreover, for an Ariadne who expects to be torn apart by wild beasts, the sight of the Bacchants ripping a bullock to pieces will be far from comforting. Wiseman (1977 and 1978) sees a hint here of a union between the god and the mortal which is more violent than romantic, citing Pausanias 1.20.3, where a painting is described which shows Dionysus ἦκων ἐς τῆς Ἀριάδνης τὴν ἀρπαγὴν ('coming for the abduction of Ariadne'). It may be that the change in Ariadne's fortunes is not for the better.

However, it must also be remembered that there is another echo to be found in this episode. The author's apostrophe to Ariadne explaining Bacchus' presence on the island, who is *te quaerens, Ariadna, tuoque incensus amore* ('looking for you, Ariadne, and on fire with love for you,' 253) recalls Peleus' love for Thetis back in line 19: *tum Thetidis Peleus incensus fertur amore* ('then it is said that Peleus was fired with love for Thetis'). The opening section of the poem hints that the relationship between Peleus and Thetis could be

⁶² e.g. Wiseman (1977).

⁶³ Or almost absent: Ariadne has earlier (152–3) expressed her fear that she might be torn apart by wild beasts. Attis exits, pursued by a lion, at 63.89–90.

⁶⁴ Compare Ovid's reading of the approach as bound to drive Ariadne wild with fear at *Ars Am.* 1.551–4.

seen, at least superficially, as a romantic ideal as well as an indication of a time when gods looked on mortals with greater favour. Peleus falls instantly in love with his bride, and marriage soon follows. Later, the Fates' epithalamium, though ambivalent about the child of the marriage, Achilles, emphasizes the uniqueness of the union in a way that could also imply a peculiarly strong bond between the two:⁶⁵

nulla domus tales umquam contextit amores,
nullus amor tali coniunxit foedere amantes,
qualis adest Thetidi, qualis concordia Peleo.

(Catullus 64.334–6)

No house ever held such love, no love ever joined lovers with such a bond as the harmony that joined Thetis and Peleus.

But there is yet another complication to consider. In other versions of the myth, the marriage of Peleus and Thetis is not seen as particularly joyous. According to Homer, the goddess was most reluctant to go through with the wedding, *πολλὰ μάλ' οὐκ ἐθέλουσα* (*Il.* 18.434),⁶⁶ and left her husband soon after she had conceived Achilles. Indeed, in a version familiar from the visual arts, Peleus even had to wrestle with Thetis as she changed shape, Proteus-like, in an effort to escape him.⁶⁷ Our awareness of Catullus' suppression of this aspect of the myth casts shadows over the wedding celebrations in the poem, and may also make us wary of accepting too readily the apparent resolution of Ariadne's story. This need not rule out a happy ending, but does leave us wondering again.

As the poem turns back to the account of the wedding of Peleus and Thetis, the link between the ecphrasis and the narrative is made with a brief, but loaded clause, *quae postquam cupide spectando Thessala pubes | expleta est* ('after the Thessalian youth had their fill

⁶⁵ Even so, compare Catullus 87, which uses very similar language to describe Catullus' devotion to Lesbia, but pointedly omits any reference to the love and faith she gave him in return.

⁶⁶ Here compare Catullus 64.20: *tum Thetis humanos non despexit hymenaeos* ('then Thetis did not despise a marriage with a human'). In context this illustrates the closeness between men and gods, but it could perhaps be argued that her enthusiasm is, after all, rather lukewarm compared with Peleus' burning passion. Cf. Nuzzo (2003), 5–12.

⁶⁷ Cf. Ovid, *Met.* 11.241–65. For artistic representations, see Carpenter (1991), 196.

of eagerly gazing at these pictures', 267–8). These words provide a hint of the ideal, eager (not to say erotically aroused) audience of Ariadne's story (discussed above), but also offer a learned, indirect comment on the end of that tale. As Clare (1996), 77 observes, there is a resemblance here to the admiration elicited by a different piece of cloth, the cloak presented to Apsyrtus: οὐ μιν ἀφάσσων|οὔτε κεν εἰσορόων γλυκὺν ἔμενον ἐμπλήσειας ('you could not get your fill of sweet desire touching and looking at it', Apollonius, *Arg.* 4.428–9). This cloak once belonged to Dionysus and Ariadne, and still carries the ambrosial scent of their wedding night (4.430–4). The careful reader of Catullus 64 is thus not only pointed towards a text to which this work frequently, even obsessively, refers, but is also directed to a scene of the nuptial embraces of Bacchus and Ariadne, a scene which is not actually shown in this poem.

This is a deep and complex work which succeeds in combining the cerebral concerns of intertextuality and generic assertion with a delicate evocation of intense emotion, and an exploration of the claims of trust and heroism in a world which sits uneasily on the boundaries of idealized epic and dystopian modernity. Above all it is a poem which does not hesitate to ask questions and expose problems, but does not presume to proffer answers.

Ariadne and Ovid

Ovid gives extended attention to the story of Ariadne in three of his works, following later events along the narrative line in later poems,¹ so that we move from Ariadne freshly deserted in *Heroides* 10, to the approach of Bacchus in *Ars Amatoria* 1, to a later moment when she finds herself deserted once more, this time by her divine husband, in *Fasti* 3.² Although the same, or similar, elements naturally recur in all three episodes, there is a palpable sense of difference and of development which can be perceived in Ariadne's movement from a well-known mythical figure speaking for herself, through an incarnation as didactic exemplum, and into the realization of a future life which, it turns out, cannot escape from its troubled past even whilst theoretical happiness and immortality beckon.

1. LETTER FROM A DESERT ISLAND: *HEROIDES* 10

Although it is too simplistic to characterize Ovid's relationship with his literary predecessors as one purely of rivalry and one-upmanship, neither can the feeling be avoided that he frequently sees in others' work a challenge, and a challenge he is always ready to accept. The *Heroides* themselves are something of a literary coup—the first

¹ This is assuming that *Heroides* 10 pre-dates *Ars Amatoria* 1, as seems most likely. On the dating of Ovid's early works, cf. Hollis (1977), xi–xiii and 150–1; Syme (1978), 1–20; McKeown (1998), 382–403 (on *Am.* 2.18).

² His other narrative of the story of Ariadne, at *Met.* 8.172–82, is pointedly brief, though not without interest (cf. Ch. 1, Sect. 1.3).

collection of letters by mythological women, even if poetic letters themselves were no new genre—and in many ways the tenth is doubly ingenious. After Catullus' surprise turn in allowing a figure in ecphrasis to speak, and at length, Ovid might have found it hard to respond,³ but he hits on an answer by transferring the indignant speech to a written form, a letter, which radically changes both tone and emphasis.

The letter opens abruptly, and perhaps this indicates textual corruption of some sort,⁴ but it could be seen as a fitting start to the heroine's lament that she launches straight into impassioned reproach before, in the third line, acknowledging the new, epistolary, form of her complaint:

Mitius inueni quam te genus omne ferarum;⁵
 credita non ulli quam tibi peius eram.
 (*Heroides* 10.1–2)

I have found the whole family of wild beasts to be more gentle than you; I could not have been trusted to any of them with worse results than to you.

These words immediately conjure up associations with an image commonly used by disappointed lovers who accuse their faithless partner of being harder than rock, or fiercer than a beast, harking back most obviously to Catullus 64.154–7:

quaenam te genuit sola sub rupe leaena,
 quod mare conceptum spumantibus exspuit undis,
 quae Syrtis, quae Scylla rapax, quae uasta Charybdis,
 talia qui reddis pro dulci praemia uita?
 (Catullus 64.154–7)

What lioness bore you under a lonely rock, what sea conceived and spat you from its foaming waves, what Syrtis, what ravening Scylla, what huge Charybdis, you who make such returns for the prize of your sweet life?

³ His abbreviation of the actual seashore speech both here and in *Ars Amatoria* 1, along with the adaptation in *Fasti* 3, indicates that he does not want to mirror Catullus too directly with a lengthy speech from Ariadne addressed to an absent Theseus figure.

⁴ Some earlier lines may have been lost, or it is possible that the first pair of lines should be transposed to a position after 6 (as they appear in G) or later. Cf. P. E. Knox (1995), 235 (who prefers the text as it stands).

⁵ Cf. Michalopoulos (2002) for an argument that *mitius* puns on *μίτος* ('thread'), hinting from the start at Ariadne's assistance of Theseus in the Labyrinth.

The first line of *Heroides* 10 may now be something of a cliché, then, but the second branches off slightly to add another dimension—not only is Theseus as bad as, worse than, a fierce beast, but Ariadne wishes she *had* been left in the trust of a tiger or bear rather than this Athenian ingrate.

The comparison of the hero to a wild beast transmutes during the course of the poem into the expression of Ariadne's fears that she will be attacked by real animals as she languishes on the island (81–8), and she seems only too well aware of the irony of her position, abandoned in a savage land by a savage man. Indeed, shortly after her musings on the threat presented by animals and the mysterious *simulacra deorum* ('images of the gods', 95), Ariadne's train of thought comes full circle to emphasize the equal threat offered by strange men:

destituor rabidis praeda cibusque feris;
sive colunt habitantque uiri, diffidimus illis—
externos didici laesa timere uiros.

(*Heroides* 10.96–8)

I am left as prey and fodder for the ravening beasts; or if men live and farm here, I do not trust them—once hurt, I have learned to fear foreign men.

The *laesa* in line 98 neatly reflects in both sound and position the *praeda* of line 96: she has already, figuratively speaking, been torn and preyed upon by the beast Theseus.⁶ And his ferocity is highlighted yet again a few lines later as Ariadne begins to wish he had never come to her land in the first place, then reflects that the danger she felt the Minotaur presented him back in Crete was never real at all, Theseus being the harder creature.

non equidem miror, si stat uictoria tecum,
strataque Cretaeam belua planxit humum.

⁶ The first line quoted here clearly recalls Catullus' Ariadne: *pro quo dilaceranda feris dabor alitibusque | praeda* ('for this I will be given as prey to be torn apart by wild beasts and birds', 64.152–3). Although the Ovidian Ariadne's feared beasts are still *rabidis* (ravening), there is a sense in which this pentameter line not only compresses but also blunts some of the Catullan fear. Ariadne is not just *praeda*, epic 'prey', but also less elevated *cibus* ('food'). Although Ovid uses the word with some frequency, according to *TLL*, it is *rarius apud poetas elegantiores* ('less frequent among the more elegant poets').

non poterant figi praecordia ferrea cornu;
 ut te non tegeres, pectore tutus eras.
 illic tu silices, illic adamantia tulisti,
 illic, qui silices, Thesea, uincat, habes.
 nec pater est Aegeus, nec tu Pittheidos Aethrae⁷
 filius; auctores saxa fretumque tui.

(*Heroides* 10.105–10; 131–2)

I am not surprised if victory is yours, that the monster howled, prostrated on the Cretan soil. Your iron heart could not be pierced by horn; even if you had not covered yourself, your chest was safe. There you bore flint, there adamant, there, Theseus, you have something harder than flint. And your father is not Aegeus, nor are you the son of Pittheus' daughter Aethra; your parents were the stones and the sea.

In a brief return to the Catullan intertext just mentioned,⁸ Ariadne dwells again on Theseus' inhumanity, whilst also belittling his great heroic achievement in killing the Minotaur. Sharp rhetoric from a defenceless girl.

After the opening two lines, Ariadne goes on to explain the situation further, keeping up the tone of indignation, whilst revealing to the reader that this is a letter, not her usual spoken reproach:

quae legis, ex illo, Theseu, tibi litore mitto
 unde tuam sine me uela tulere ratem,
 in quo me somnusque meus male prodidit et tu,
 per facinus somnis insidiate meis.

(*Heroides* 10.3–6)

What you read, Theseus, I send to you from that very shore from which your ship set sail without me, when my sleep badly betrayed me and so did you, plotting this crime against me as I slept.

In this poem, Ariadne refers only twice, and briefly, to the fact that she is writing a letter to Theseus, but such reference is important, nonetheless. Towards the end, as her despair reaches a crescendo,

⁷ Here I follow Birt's transposition of lines 131–2 to follow 110 (as do Ehwald, Bornecque, and Knox, for example). Whilst the other order is not impossible, the sudden switching of tack required is a little awkward.

⁸ The references to the 'you are like a beast/born of rocks and monsters' trope in both lines 131–2 and the poem's opening couplet are markedly brief. It is as if Ariadne knows her part only too well by now, and does not need to spend too much time recycling each familiar image.

Ariadne wishes that Theseus would at least look back to see her, ragged and wretched on the cliffs. Her body bristles like a wind-blown crop, she says, then, *litteraque articulo pressa tremente labat* ('and the letter I write slips under my trembling fingers', 140). As with line 3 (above), the indication of the epistolary nature of her complaint is made to sit alongside the unlikely situation of its composition: small wonder that Ariadne's writing is blotched and unsteady, since she is writing her letter on a wild shore.⁹ The effect is comical, yet pathetic too. With one hand the poet takes away any possibility of regarding the figure of the writer Ariadne seriously,¹⁰ whilst with the other he gives his character an endearing earnestness, as she perches on a rock to write to her faithless lover. Unlike Phaedra, who is a most convincing author, and who at times seems even to usurp the position of the poet Ovid himself,¹¹ Ariadne often appears to be subordinate to her creator, and is least believable as the author of her own words when she claims to be that author.¹²

To return to the rest of the passage above, the image of the sleeping Ariadne is a familiar one, and it seems a natural enough progression that she should come to view sleep as a co-conspirator in her desertion. The treachery of sleep itself, and the unfair advantage Theseus gains from this, are themes already explored in Catullus 64

⁹ This partially echoes Briseis' apology for blots on her page, caused by her tears (*Her.* 3.3); these in turn look back to the blotched page offered by Propertius' Arethusa to her husband Lycotas at 4.3.3–4. Looking forward in Ovid's career, both excuses for an untidy letter re-emerge in the poet's defence of the tear-stains in *Trist.* 1.1.13–14, and his professed amazement that he has been able to write poetry on a storm-tossed ship (1.11.7–10).

¹⁰ Nonetheless, Ariadne sometimes shows herself to be quite adept at telling a story, at adding narrative touches which, while setting the scene, distance her from her impassioned retelling of how she woke to find herself alone: *tempus erat* ('it was the time when', 7), *luna fuit* ('there was a moon', 17), *mons fuit* ('there was a hill', 25) all elevate the style to one more fitting to hexameter than elegiac. (Cf. P. E. Knox (1995), *ad* 7 on the link made by *tempus erat* to *Aen.* 2.268, along with Spentzou (2003), 69.) Her self-creation as a kind of epic narrator within the elegy could mark Ariadne either as a promising author hampered by generic constraints, or as a self-absorbed diarist with an over-inflated idea of the pathos and grandeur to be seen in her condition.

¹¹ More on this in Ch. 7, Sect. 1.1.

¹² Cf. Kennedy (1984) on the strain that the idea of the heroines writing in the *Heroides* often places on the reader's credulity. Spentzou (2003) takes a slightly different tack, seeing the *Heroides* as a collection where female literary figures attempt 'to (re)write their stories, against the will of the classical authorities' (p. 29).

(*fallaci...somno*—‘deceitful sleep’, 64.56; *aut ut eam deuinctam lumina somno | liquerit immemori discedens pectore coniunx*—‘or how, departing with forgetful heart, her husband left her, her eyes bound in sleep’, 64.122–3), but there Ariadne herself only really sees the winds which blew Theseus away from the island as agents of betrayal. Ovid’s Ariadne is more aware of the part sleep plays in her desertion, accusing Somnus before she even considers the part the winds played in her plight. There is poetic reason enough to exploit this theme¹³—a heroine ruined by an abstract, a hero prepared to leave a woman in her most vulnerable state—but perhaps there is also a reference to the iconographical tradition of Ariadne on the beach which often shows Sleep squatting over the dreaming heroine as Theseus departs.¹⁴ The Ariadne of the *Heroides* also worries about death even more obsessively than the Catullan heroine, and perhaps this is linked. At any rate, the part that sleep and (later) the winds have to play in her downfall becomes a recurring theme for Ariadne in her letter:

inde ego—nam uentis quoque sum crudelibus usa—
uidi praecipiti carbasa tenta Noto.

(*Heroides* 10.29–30)

From there—for I have been cruelly treated by the winds too—I saw the sails stretched out before a headlong wind.

crudeles somni, quid me tenuistis inertem?
aut semel aeterna nocte premenda fui.
uos quoque crudeles, uenti, nimiumque parati
flaminaque in lacrimas officiosa meas.

(*Heroides* 10.111–14)

Cruel sleep, why did you keep me lying there? Or I should have been covered once and for all by everlasting night. And you too are cruel, winds, all too ready, and gusts so obliging in bringing me tears.

¹³ Apart from anything else, there may be an intertextual nod to the sleeping Cynthia, compared to the sleeping Ariadne, in Propertius 1.3.

¹⁴ Cf. McNally (1985). If we were to take this idea a little further, it could be observed that an image which in visual art seems often to excuse Theseus’ actions (whilst Sleep hovers over Ariadne’s head, a god—Athena, or sometimes Dionysus—pushes the reluctant hero towards his ship) is here used to reproach him, and to complain more widely of the interference of a natural (or divine) force in Ariadne’s love life.

in me iurarunt somnus uentusque fidesque;
 prodita sum causis una puella tribus!
 (Heroides 10.117–18)

Sleep and the wind and trust have made a pact against me; I am one girl betrayed by three causes!

The description of Ariadne waking from sleep to find Theseus gone is here given a dose of realism which might even be deemed to render the situation rather humorous. Ovid's portrayal of Ariadne hovers precariously between the melodramatic, even farcical, and the genuinely pathetic:

incertum uigilans ac somno languida moui
 Thesea prensuras semisupina manus—
 nullus erat! referoque manus iterumque retempto,
 perque torum moueo brachia—nullus erat!
 excussere metus somnum; conterrita surgo,
 membraque sunt uiduo praecipitata toro.
 protinus adductis sonuerunt pectora palmis,
 utque erat e somno turbida, rupta coma est.
 (Heroides 10.9–16)

Barely awake and limp with sleep, I moved my hands to clasp Theseus, turned on my side—there was no one there! I move my hands back and try again and run my arms all over the bed—no one there! Fear shook off sleep; in a panic I got up, then threw my limbs prostrate on the widowed bed. At once my chest rang out, beaten by my hands, and, tangled as it was from sleep, my hair was torn.

Certainly, this is a description which has lost its innocence—witness the facetious repetition of *nullus erat* and the self-conscious echo of an appealing feminine pose in *semisupina*.¹⁵ Ovid uses the word *semisupina* in two other places with particular significance: at *Ars Am.* 3.787–8, reclining on the right side is recommended as one of the simplest ways for a woman to look good, while at *Am.* 1.14.19–20, Corinna's charming disarray in the morning is described, *saepe etiam nondum digestis mane capillis | purpureo iacuit semisupina toro* ('often even with hair not yet arranged in the morning, she lay on her side on the purple bed'). The beloved is then compared to a Bacchant with

¹⁵ Accepting Heinsius' correction of the MSS' unmetrical *semisopita*.

her hair all dishevelled, looking just as charming for all that. Ariadne here resembles the elegiac beauty which she herself is so often used to exemplify in elegy.¹⁶ It seems no coincidence either that the poem recalled by the word *semisupina* is also one which describes the destruction of Corinna's hair by her constant fussing over and dyeing of it; here Ariadne's hair is soon looking the worse for wear, and is even falling out by the end of the poem (149). Again, the image of the heroine beating her breast in grief is, of course, powerful, and works as a variation on Catullus' *uariabunt pectora palmis* ('they will bruise their chests with their hands', 64.351),¹⁷ but the *protinus* adds a little irony to the description; it is as if Ariadne is so used to playing the part of the deserted woman that she now gets straight down to the business of mourning her plight without a moment's delay.

Suspensions of the heroine's self-absorption gather weight as the letter progresses. The sympathy of nature for Ariadne's misfortune is, as we might expect from a harsh and inhospitable island, limited, and yet there is an element present of the pathetic fallacy,¹⁸ the cliffs responding with compassion for the young girl's broken heart:

interea toto clamaui in litore 'Theseul':
reddebant nomen concaua saxa tuum,
et quotiens ego te, totiens ipse locus uocabat.
ipse locus miserae ferre uolebat opem.
(*Heroides* 10.21–4)

Meanwhile, I shouted 'Theseus!' all along the shore: the hollow rocks returned your name, and as often as I called you, so often did the place itself. The place itself wanted to help me in my misery.

In her initial panic and distress, all Ariadne can think about is her own pain, which emanates from her, and spreads out to fill the land around her, and it is only later, after she has exhausted herself racing up and down cliffs trying to attract Theseus' attention, that the echoes die away leaving her suddenly aware of silence and desolation: *uacat insula cultu | non hominum uideo non ego facta boum* ('the island is without cultivation, I see no works of men or oxen',

¹⁶ e.g. Propertius 1.3; *Am.* 1.7.15–16.

¹⁷ As P. E. Knox (1995), *ad* 15–16 observes.

¹⁸ Verducci (1985) finds this an example of Ariadne's foolishness, along with her use of the adjective *puellaris* (20) to describe her feet (p. 259).

59–60).¹⁹ Before the truth of her loneliness dawns on her, though, Ariadne proves far more energetic than in any of her other incarnations, and more practically minded. Catullus' Ariadne climbs the hills too and runs along the shore (64.126–9), but the emphasis is far more on her position as static watcher (64.60–70; 249–50) and as speaker (64.132–201). This image of Ariadne furious, incredulous as she catches sight of the sails of Theseus' ship, shouting, waving, leaping up to tie a white cloth to attract attention is, as with so much of this poem, treading a fine line between the ridiculous and the realistic. This is no heroine paralysed into a motionless, picturesque freeze-frame by her grief, but a woman both strong-willed and desperate:

nec languere diu patitur dolor; excitor illo,
excitor et summa Thesea uoce uoco.
(*Heroides* 10.33–4)

My grief did not allow me to lie faint any longer; I am roused by it, I am roused and call Theseus at the top of my voice.

Spurred into action by her grief, Ariadne takes a deep breath to speak—to make *the* speech (Catullus' speech) again, we assume. But what actually comes from her lips is not the expected impassioned eloquence, but something short, harsh, and scolding in tone:

'quo fugis?' exclamo; 'sclerate reuertere Theseu!
flecte ratem! numerum non habet ista suum!'
haec ego.

(*Heroides* 10.35–7)

'Where are you going?' I scream; 'Wicked Theseus, come back here! Turn your ship! It does not have all its crew!' This is what I said.

As with the opening lines of the letter, Ariadne's complaint is compressed,²⁰ and so acquires a different tone from the Catullan lament. The impassioned, but steady, listing of offences in Catullus' poem is

¹⁹ Line 60, as is frequently pointed out, recalls *Od.* 10.98, οὐτε βοῶν οὐτ' ἀνδρῶν φαίνεται ἔργα ('neither the works of oxen nor of men could be seen'), as Odysseus and his companions enter the land of the Laestrygonians; it could be that the reminiscence reflects Ariadne's fear that she might meet some strange deadly race as well.

²⁰ Compare the still more condensed lament found in the description of Ariadne at *Met.* 8.176 as *desertae et multa querenti* ('abandoned and much-lamenting').

replaced by a brief call for the hero to turn around and fetch her from the shore. The Catullan catchwords, *perfidus* and *periurus*, are pointedly absent,²¹ and the speech is pointedly different both in tone and length. This unexpected, humorously haranguing screech fits ill with other more delicate representations of the heroine, and yet there is something attractive about such a down-to-earth response to the sight of Theseus' ship receding into the distance. This Ariadne is perhaps a little too ready to surrender her dignity, but the result can sometimes be an endearing picture of innocence as well as of clueless self-righteousness.

A similar mixture of reactions is provoked by the following lines in which Ariadne describes how she loudly beats her breast and waves her hands to attract Theseus' attention, eventually hoisting a white veil in a tree to remind those in the ship of the passenger they had forgotten:

haec ego; quod uoci deerat, plangore replebam;
 uerbera cum uerbis mixta fuere meis.
 si non audires, ut saltem cernere posses,
 iactatae late signa dedere manus;
 candidaque inposui longae uelamina uirgae—
 scilicet oblitos admonitura mei!

(*Heroides* 10.37–42)

This I said; what my voice lacked, I filled in by beating my chest; blows were mixed with my words. If you couldn't hear, at least you could have seen—my waving hands gave a signal far and wide; and I put my white veil on a long stick—yes to draw the attention of those who had forgotten me!

The image conjured up is instantly amusing, and the typically Ovidian sound play of *uerbera cum uerbis* (38) adds to the lightness of tone, yet there are more complex memories underlying this scene too. That Ariadne removes an article of her clothing in order to attract attention could be seen as an oblique reference back to the scene in Catullus 64 where she (unselfconsciously) drops her clothes

²¹ Theseus is instead addressed as *scelerate*. Cf. Ovid's Phyllis, who uses the word *scelerate* twice in her abuse of Theseus' son Demophoon: *Her.* 2.17, 29. Although *sceleratus* is not uncommon (particularly in Ovid), it may be worth noting that Horace uses it only in the *Satires* (2.3.71, 221), whilst Servius (*ad Aen.* 3.42) remarks that it is the sort of language Plautus uses, *est sermo Plautinus*. Might it be possible to detect a comic element here?

into the waves, creating a sight arresting for the reader, if unnoticed by Theseus. Here Ariadne, driven by practical considerations as well as panic, removes her veil again, but finds that it still fails to attract attention. There is another reason why it is important that Theseus should not see, or not pay heed to, the white cloth fluttering in the breeze: not only is it a reminder of Ariadne whom he wants to forget, but also of the white sails which he should exchange for his black ones before returning to Athens, remembering his father's instructions.²²

This constitutes an important, and relatively rare, allusion to the future in a poem that exploits awareness of the story's end far less than other treatments of the same myth.²³ Here lies the only hint, and one of which Ariadne herself is presumably completely unaware, of the grief which awaits Theseus on his return home, and as such it serves to highlight the absence of a curse from the heroine's reproaches. Verducci (1985), 260 argues that Ariadne is simply too shallow a character even to possess the depth of emotion which in Catullus leads to this curse. I would like to allow her more complexity than this. It is not so much that her love is too superficial, but that at the moment she is unable to think far beyond the present, and is as yet unable to believe that Theseus will not relent and turn back his ship or (better still) suddenly realize with horror that he has unwittingly left his beloved Ariadne on the island and rush back to save her. As Barchiesi (1987), 67 observes, the *Heroides* have in common the idea of the conquering, reconquering, or preserving of love, and Ariadne's letter fits this scheme well. Whilst with Catullus' heroine we are able to observe her from the moment of awakening, moving through disbelief, grief, and anger, Ovid's Ariadne can never quite

²² This observation is also made by P. E. Knox (1995) and by Barchiesi (1993), who points out *ad* 31, which he reads as *aut uidi aut fuerant quae me uidisse putarem*, ('either I saw them, or there was something I thought I saw'), that Theseus' sails are hard to see, despite the moonlight, because they are black.

²³ Indeed, Ariadne shows only minimal interest in either future or past, in marked contrast to Catullus' Ariadne who both recalls the services she did Theseus on Crete and utters a curse to bring to him in the future a painful repetition of his present thoughtlessness. In the *Heroides*, Ariadne's references to the past are brief and linked directly to her present situation, and her thoughts do not stretch far into the future, fearing as she does imminent death and the scattering of her unburied bones on the rocks.

accept that Theseus is not going to come back, or that he could not somehow be persuaded to want her once more. Even much later in the letter, after upbraiding him yet again for his hardness at 131–2, she moves into what could have been a curse, starting *di facerent*, but what actually emerges is another softening, a back-tracking, ‘If only you could have seen me’:

Di facerent, ut me summa de puppe uideres;
mouisset uultus maesta figura tuos!
(*Heroides* 10.133–4)

Would that the gods granted that you could see me from the top of the deck; that my sad shape might have changed your expression!

Ariadne does, perhaps, have rather too sentimental and self-conscious a view of herself, forever imagining how she must appear—appealingly, tactically wild and dishevelled,²⁴—were Theseus ever to look back to the shore to see her. Yet this need not make her a wholly trivial creature; rather, partly knowingly, partly unwittingly, she reveals her innocence and vulnerability over and over again.

Added to her own desire for her rhetoric and self-presentation to succeed, however, the character also has to contend with the author’s own concern to exercise his abundant wit. Ovid puts a great deal of pressure on his creations, often threatening to reveal them as such, rather than as convincing characters within the fiction. One moment when this tension becomes dangerously apparent is when Ariadne compares herself first to a Bacchant, and then to stone:

aut ego diffusis erraui sola capillis,
qualis ab Ogygio concita Baccha deo,
aut mare prospiciens in saxo frigida sedi,
quamque lapis sedes, tam lapis ipsa fui.
(*Heroides* 10.47–50)

Either I wandered alone with my hair all tangled, like a Bacchant stirred up by the Ogygian god, or looking out to the sea I sat cold on a rock, and as stony was I as my stony seat.

²⁴ It is worth recalling again Ariadne’s conformance to the Ovidian/Propertian aesthetic in her various poses: cf. *semisupina* (discussed above), and note too the link with Cynthia and her mythological counterparts in Propertius 1.3.

Such a comparison cannot help but call to mind the Catullan simile of Ariadne as a stone Bacchant (64.61), but here the author has played with the image, separating it into two more logical, but less expressive, components—moving madly like a Bacchant, sitting still like a stone. The effect of this is both to bring into the foreground a game with the famous poetic predecessor, and to make the apparently opposed claim that this is a comparison the character Ariadne is naturally driven to make. Throughout the *Heroides* there is a repeated play with the idea of the heroines themselves as authors of their own letters in partnership or conflict with the overseeing author Ovid, but at times like this the discord is more acute. Is it possible for the illusion of Ariadne as a believable character to survive this clash intact? Well, perhaps it is if we see this as just a momentary dissolution of the boundaries between external and internal authors. Indeed, if we allow Ariadne herself to be in some sense quoting, adapting Catullus, the effect is more delightful than simply the Ovidian author's cleverness: here we are presented with an Ariadne who makes slightly hackneyed comparisons, and is not able to describe herself as well as Catullus did.

At any rate, the next part of Ariadne's description certainly does seem to be intentionally mannered, as she returns to the bed which she and Theseus shared:

saepe torum repeto, qui nos acceperat ambos,
 sed non acceptos exhibiturus erat,
 et tua, quae possum pro te, uestigia tango
 strataque quae membris intepuere tuis.
 incumbo, lacrimisque toro manante profusis,
 'pressimus,' exclamo, 'te duo—redde duos!
 uenimus huc ambo; cur non discedimus ambo?
 perfide, pars nostri, lectule, maior ubi est?'

(*Heroides* 10.51–8)

I often go back to the bed, which received us both, but it was not about to show us together again, and—what I can do—I touch your traces instead of you and the sheets which were warmed by your limbs. I lie there, the bed dripping with my flowing tears, and cry, 'Two of us slept on you—make us two again! We both came here, why did we not both leave? Fickle little bed, where is the greater part of me?'

The literary predecessors of this conceit are both tragic and more light-hearted.²⁵ At Euripides, *Alcestis* 175–88, a slave reports how Alcestis cried on her marriage bed which she could not betray, her sadness outweighing any reproach she might make: οὐ γὰρ ἐχθαίρω σ' ἀπώλεσας δέ με | μόνην.²⁶ προδοῦναι γὰρ σ' ὀκνοῦσα καὶ πόσιν | θνήσκω ('I do not hate you, though you have destroyed me alone, for, shrinking from betraying you and my husband, I die', 179–81). Philodemus also addresses his bed in *Anth. Pal.* 5.4, but in a more laddish tone, as the repository of his sexual secrets about to find out some more: σὺ δ', ὦ φιλεράστια κοίτη, | ἦδη τῆς Παφίης ἔσθι τὰ λειπόμενα ('but you, my bed, the lover's friend, learn now the rest of the Paphian's secrets', 5–6). Within a post-Catullan account of the myth of Ariadne, moreover, any mention of a couch will inevitably carry hints of the wedding bed of Peleus and Thetis,²⁷ and the design woven onto its coverlet. Unlike Alcestis, Ariadne does blame the bed, and even harangues it with an epithet better suited to faithless Theseus, *perfidus* (58). Indeed, although she later refers to the hero as *periuri... uiri* ('perjured man', 76), she never directly uses against him this (Catullan) word of abuse which in her later Ovidian incarnations comes to function as shorthand for her speech of indignation.²⁸ In this letter, Ariadne reveals a tendency to reproach inanimate things for her present grief—the bed, the wind, sleep, faith—not entirely diverting the blame from Theseus, but diffusing it somewhat. This no doubt reflects a rhetorical necessity not present in other versions of her speech, which she delivers alone with nobody to hear. However improbable it might seem that this letter will

²⁵ Spentzou (2003), 72 argues that we should see Ariadne's faithless bed as pointing back to Oenone's idyllic (and soon to be dissolved) union with Paris back at *Her.* 5.13–30.

²⁶ Adopting the reading of the codd.

²⁷ Cf. Landolfi (1997), 141. It should be acknowledged, though, that the bed in Catullus is a *puluinar* (64.47, 266), not a *torus*.

²⁸ Cf. *perfidus ille abiit* ('that traitor has gone away', *Ars Am.* 1.536); *periure et perfide Theseu* ('perjured and faithless Theseus', *Fast.* 3.473). See also Phyllis' complaint that Demophoon models his behaviour on that of his father Theseus: *quod solum excusat, solum miraris in illo; | heredem patriae, perfide, fraudis agis* ('the one thing he had to apologize for is the one thing you admire in him; traitor, you are the heir to your father's deceit', *Her.* 2.77–8). To be called *perfidus* really marks him out as his father's son. Cf. Fulkerson (2002).

actually reach Theseus,²⁹ it is written with a hopeful awareness of the possibility that it might. Although her passion does at times force her to recrimination, she appears to realize that if her words are to persuade as well as condemn, it will be better to channel the latter impulse indirectly.

Such considerations, of course, do not debar the heroine from reproaching her lover at all, and Ovid's Ariadne is able to include an extensive 'Where can I go?' speech, evoking, via Catullus, similar sentiments uttered by Medea in Euripides and Apollonius.³⁰ Indeed, lines 59–110 form something of a Euripidean/Apollonian section with some variation, and plenty of hyperbole. After her wild rushing around the island, her desperate clawing of the bed she and Theseus shared, the fact of her loneliness and isolation suddenly dawns on her, and like her predecessors, she is driven to ask, *quid faciam? quo sola ferar?* ('What shall I do? Where shall I go alone?', 59).³¹ Even if rescue were at hand, she would still have nowhere to go, having betrayed her fatherland:

finge dari comitesque mihi uentosque ratemque—
quid sequar? accessus terra paterna negat.
ut rate felici pacata per aequora labar,
temperet ut uentos Aeolus—exul ero!
non ego te, Crete centum digesta per urbes,
adspiciam, puero cognita terra Ioui,
ut pater et tellus iusto regnata parenti
prodit a sunt facto, nomina cara, meo.

(*Heroides* 10.63–70)

Imagine if I were granted companions and a ship and a sailing wind—where would I go? My father's land offers no haven for me. Though I might glide through peaceful waters on a blessed ship, though Aeolus might keep the

²⁹ She offers no specific plan as to how it will be carried—all she says is, *quae legis, ex illo, Theseu, tibi litore mitto | unde tuam sine me uela tulere ratem* ('what you read, Theseus, I send to you from that shore whence your ship set sail without me', 3–4). Contrast e.g. Penelope, who thrusts a letter for Ulysses into the hands of any traveller who stops off at Ithaca (*Her.* 1.59–62). Cf. Kennedy (1984), 417–18 for a convincing argument that Penelope is about to give *this* letter to Odysseus himself, when he turns up in Ithaca disguised as a beggar.

³⁰ For the 'I saved you/where else can I turn?' speech, cf. Euripides, *Med.* 475–519; Apollonius, *Arg.* 4.355–90; Catullus 64.149–87. See Ch. 1, Sect. 1.2.

³¹ Cf. Catullus 64.177; Euripides, *Med.* 502.

winds in check, I will be an exile! I will not set eyes on you, Crete, divided between a hundred cities, the land known to Jupiter in his boyhood, since my father and the land ruled over by my just parent have been betrayed, dear names, by my deed.

Ariadne's attitude towards her homeland and family is interesting, and a little different from that displayed in other speeches of this type, where an awareness of some personal responsibility for the heroine's exiled state is coupled with, and to an extent tempered by, a fear of the vengeance of those she harmed in the past.³² Crete is not, in her imagination, clamouring for retribution, but is simply a rather romantic land, cradle of the baby Zeus, home to her just father and her well-born mother.³³ Moreover, unlike Catullus' Ariadne, who sees herself, rightly or wrongly, as stained with her brother the Minotaur's blood, here, while she admits she committed a crime, she then says that that crime was only to help Theseus by giving him the thread:

cum tibi, ne uictor tecto morerere recuruo,
 quae regerent passus, pro duce fila dedi,
 tum mihi dicebas: 'per ego ipsa pericula iuro,
 te fore, dum nostrum uiuet uterque, meam.'
 (*Heroides* 10.71–4)

When, lest you the victor should die in the winding house, I gave you for a guide the thread to direct your steps, then you kept saying to me: 'I swear by these very dangers that you will be mine as long as we both shall live.'

The hint offered at 70 of Ariadne's own guilt for having helped and followed Theseus in the first place is quickly overshadowed by her petulant quotation of the hero's promise, which he has now broken. When she does mention the death of the Minotaur, even though she calls him her brother, she reflects not on the idea that she herself helped in his killing,³⁴ but rather uses the memory to frame a

³² Cf. Euripides, *Med.* 502–8; Apollonius, *Arg.* 4.376–81; Catullus 64.177–81; Ovid, *Met.* 8.113–18.

³³ Pasiphae is referred to a little later (91) as *filia Phoebi* (the Sun's daughter), and again in the gentle, morbidly sentimental line 119, *ergo ego nec lacrimas matris moritura uidebo* ('so, about to die, I will not see my mother's tears'). Catullus also depicts an unexpectedly tender relationship between Ariadne and her mother (64.88, 118–19).

³⁴ Indeed, she even subtly distances herself from that responsibility by calling Theseus *uictor* at 71: he has already done the deed before she helps him with the

pathetic wish that Theseus should have killed her with the same weapon:

me quoque, qua fratrem, mactasses, inprobe, claua;
esset, quam dederas, morte soluta fides.

(*Heroides* 10.77–8)

You should have slaughtered me too, cruel one, with the club you used on my brother; the pledge you gave me could have been absolved by death.

For Ariadne, the knowledge that she cannot return home is painful, but, since she refuses to look directly at the part she herself played in barring her father's gates against her, that pain becomes aligned with the despair she feels in her present situation on the wild island. It would appear that this is an immature heroine who would like Theseus to accept the responsibility for her crimes as well as his own.

After voicing her fears about possible lions and tigers on the island,³⁵ Ariadne considers the idea that she may even be taken captive and made a slave. Forever a figure used for generic interplay and intertextual engagement, here, as elsewhere in the letter, she takes on elegy.³⁶ In a general sense, of course, she is purely elegiac all along, reproaching her lover for his infidelity as the male poets so often rebuke their beloved ones, and as the women they love often do in return. The language and images she uses frequently contain reminiscences of Catullan love poetry: *aut semel aeterna nocte premenda fui* ('or I should have been covered once and for all by everlasting night', 112) recalls Catullus 5.5–6, *nobis, cum semel occidit brevis lux, | nox est perpetua una dormienda* ('for us, when once our brief light has set, there is one everlasting night for sleeping'). And, from the same Catullan poem, the equation of living and loving (*uiuamus . . . atque amemus*—'let us live and love', 5.1), finds its echoes in Ariadne's reminder of Theseus' promise to her: *tum mihi dicebas: 'per ego ipsa pericula iuro, | te fore, dum nostrum uiuet uterque, meam.'* | *uiuimus, et*

thread. There is no mention of the sword that she provides in some versions. (That Theseus had a sword is implied by Pherecydes 3 F 148, though it is not stated that Ariadne gave it to him; Palaephatus 2 says she did.) Indeed, Ovid prefers to follow the version where Theseus uses his club to kill the Minotaur (cf. *Her.* 4.115; 10.77).

³⁵ For a discussion of which, cf. Ch. 2, Sect. 5.

³⁶ Cf. Verducci (1985), 246: 'Ovid allows his Ariadne to disfigure, while embodying, the elegiac type.' See also Rosati (1992), 78.

non sum, Theseu, tua... ('then you used to say to me: "I swear by these very dangers that you will be mine as long as we both shall live." We live, Theseus, and I am not yours', 73–5). However, the dramatic situation in which she is placed, and places herself, does not fit quite comfortably enough within elegiac expectations. There are elegiac elements, to be sure. Her bed (12, 51–8), the moon (17), and the general obsession with death might even be deemed to belong to this category, but this, clearly, is no urban adventure, and the wild, empty shore of Naxos serves far more as a parody than an equivalent of the beaches at Baiae. It is unclear whether Ariadne quite wishes to reject the elegiac stereotype, or on the contrary longs to fit into that genre, which is perhaps more comfortable for a heroine than the epic and tragic borders she also walks. On the whole, one might be tempted to go with the latter verdict, but her rejection of slavery (which could stand for *seruitium amoris*, the slavery of love) stands in direct contrast with Catullus' Ariadne, and in opposition to one of the great romantic tenets of elegiac poetry:

tantum ne religer dura captiua catena,
 neue traham serua grandia pensa manu,
 cui pater est Minos, cui mater filia Phoebi,
 quodque magis memini, quae tibi pacta fui!
 (*Heroides* 10.89–92)

Only let me not be kept captive in hard chains, nor let me spin the long task with a slave's hand, I whose father is Minos, whose mother is Pheobus' daughter, and, which I remember more, I who was pledged to you!

Contrast Catullus' Ariadne:

attamen in uestras potuisti ducere sedes,
 quae tibi iucundo famularer serua labore,
 candida permulcens uestigia lymphis,
 purpureaue tuum consternens ueste cubile.
 (Catullus 64.160–3)

At least you could have taken me to your home, for me to be your slave and carry out my delightful work, soothing your pale feet with water, or spreading your bed with a purple coverlet.

Not only is Ovid's Ariadne refusing to countenance such self-debasement even for rhetorical purposes, but she is also rejecting a

well-used image of female piety, the good woman who weaves, like Penelope, or like Cynthia in Propertius 1.3. On the whole it could be argued that the Ariadne of the *Heroides* has less dignity and strength than the heroine of Catullus 64, and her expression of pride in her family background may ring a little hollow given the double-edged reputation of her family, and given the fact that she has just betrayed them. Nevertheless, this small gesture of dignity and independence in her refusal to become a slave is both welcome and rather appealing.

From line 99, however, Ariadne returns to the textbook with a neat mix of elements once more familiar from Catullus and Euripides: *uiueret Androgeos utinam!* ('would that Androgeus were alive!').³⁷ The mention of Androgeus reflects one of the turns of the Catullan narrative, where after describing how Ariadne fell in love with Theseus at first sight, the narrator delves even further back in time to find the first cause of Ariadne's unhappiness, the plague following the Cretan prince's death which drove the Athenians to accept the demand for young lives to atone for the murder (64.76–9).³⁸ So Ariadne wishes that Androgeus had never been slain, that Theseus had not killed the Minotaur, and that she had not handed him that famous thread.³⁹ This wish, which in Catullus leads up to the 'Where can I turn?' speech, instead feeds back into another Catullan motif already discussed, the hardness of Theseus' heart and his fierce nature.

The last thirty or so lines of her letter see Ariadne slipping further into the mire of self-pity, as she dwells yet again on the prospect of her impending death, and wishes Theseus could see her and return to fetch her, or at least her bones, from the island. It is here that the contrast between this Ariadne and Catullus' becomes most marked.

³⁷ Cf. Euripides, *Med.* 1–15, for 'would the *Argo* had never sailed', and Catullus 64.171–6, for 'would that Theseus had never come to Crete'. Cf. Vergil's version at *Aen.* 4.657–8.

³⁸ Vergil also follows this sequence of events at *Aen.* 6.20–30, where Daedalus starts his Cretan story with the death of Androgeus, and ends it with Theseus' escape from the Minotaur, since he cannot depict Icarus' fall.

³⁹ Line 104, *fila per adductas saepe recepta manus* ('the thread often caught up by the hands led by it'), could be read as meta-textual, a reference to the fame of the tradition which the author now picks up again, like the thread. Such references are far from rare where Ariadne is concerned: cf. Ch. 1, Sect. 1.

The older heroine's grief and fear fuel her anger, which reaches a crescendo in the curse which ends her speech (64.188–201); Ovid's Ariadne manages to reproach Theseus, perhaps even insult him, but ends her letter in weak and tearful entreaty.⁴⁰ At times the sheer weight of sentiment in this under-self-critical diary of her emotional state can render the heroine ridiculous, but she usually manages to balance the hysteria with a poignancy that ensures she never quite falls over the brink. Her sadness that her mother will not be able to shed tears over her as she dies is a real sadness, regardless of the fact that it is she who abandoned Pasiphae, especially given the natural feeling of tragedy which accompanies a tale of child dying before parent. Her wish that, when telling the Athenians of his exploits on Crete, Theseus should not forget to make mention of her⁴¹—*me quoque narrato sola tellure relictam!* | *non ego sum titulis subripienda tuis* ('tell them too about me, left on the lonely land! I should not be removed from the record of your exploits', 129–30)—hovers enchantingly between naïve hope and weary sarcasm. She says that to lie unburied is hardly due recompense for the assistance she gave him (123–4), and the least Theseus could do is admit that she did help him, and admit too that he left her on the island. Soon, though, she stops even asking for his gratitude (*non te per meritum, quoniam male cessit, adoro*; | *debita sit facto gratia nulla meo*—'I do not beg you for the sake of what I deserve, since that has turned out badly; let no thanks be owed for what I did', 141–2),⁴² and one wonders if perhaps, for this pale and despairing creature, Theseus' mere remembrance of her once safely home would be enough.⁴³

The Ariadne of the *Heroides* is sometimes endearing, sometimes frustrating; an exaggeratedly feminine figure, she jumps at every noise, is overly concerned about her appearance, and cannot live

⁴⁰ Tears are a prominent feature: cf. 119 (her mother's), 138, 150 (her own).

⁴¹ Here contrast Ariadne's wish in the *Fasti* that no one, and especially not Theseus, should find out about Bacchus' faithlessness (3.489–92).

⁴² Here *facto* . . . *meo* picks up the same words from line 70 where she describes her betrayal of her family.

⁴³ In this respect, compare Hypsipyle in Apollonius' *Argonautica*, who lets Jason leave her without too much fuss, and merely asks for a forwarding address and that he should remember her: *μνῶεο μῆν, ἀπεών περ ὁμῶς καὶ νόστιμος ἦδη*, | *Ύψιπύλης* ('remember Hypsipyle both when you are far away and when you have reached home', 1.896–7).

without her man. Yet she also exhibits sparks of spirit and even practicality which give the lie to her self-presentation as a passive victim, whether showing her to be stronger than she admits, or uncovering the guilt which she attempts to efface. The presence of Catullus 64 throughout the poem colours our expectations, but in the end, despite the many, ostentatiously marked similarities, Ovid's letter-writer is a significantly different heroine from that of her model.

2. IN LOVE AGAIN? *ARS AMATORIA* 1.527–564

Ariadne is left on the beach, hoping for a sign from Theseus, until the next time that she appears in Ovid's works, as one of the many mythological exempla in the *Ars Amatoria*,⁴⁴ finding herself an object once more, no longer speaking for herself.⁴⁵ By contrast with the scared but active and emotional focus of *Heroides* 10, Ariadne now seems fully vulnerable: weak and prone to fainting, she is barely able to speak or to do anything that might assert her autonomy.

As ever, Catullus 64 is an important intertext for Ovid in his treatment of Ariadne, and it is interesting to see how here he manages to combine some remnants of the serious, even tragic, side of the heroine found in his model with a shameless, blatant burlesquing of the Catullan original. The opening description of Ariadne on the beach is a condensed version, full of shorthand references back to Catullus and the tradition he chose to follow, but it is not without its individual beauty which urges the reader, I think, not to view this episode as comic from the start:

⁴⁴ And, as with so many of the mythological digressions it can be hard to see exactly what lessons a lover can learn from this story. A cheeky encouragement to the man to give his sympotic crown to the (married) woman of his dreams, *huic detur capiti missa corona tuo* ('to her should be given the crown taken from your head', 1.582), does link back to Bacchus' gift to Ariadne, though.

⁴⁵ Ariadne appears properly at 527, though she has already been mentioned at 509–10 as an example of a woman who found an unperfumed, unadorned man attractive. When Ariadne turns up 17 lines later, she herself is in a state of charming disarray.

Cnosis in ignotis amens errabat harenis,
 qua brevis aequoreis Dia feritur aquis;
 utque erat e somno, tunica uelata recincta,
 nuda pedem, croceas irreligata comas,
 Thesea crudelem surdas clamabat ad undas,
 indigno teneras imbre gigante genas.

(*Ars Amatoria* 1.527–32)

The Cnossian maiden wandered, out of her mind, on the unfamiliar sands, where small Dia is beaten by the sea's waters; and as she was, just out of sleep, covered by a loose tunic, her feet naked, her saffron hair untied, she called 'cruel Theseus' to the deaf waves, an undeserved rain of tears watering her delicate cheeks.

The setting,⁴⁶ the heroine's appearance,⁴⁷ and even, to an extent, the emotion are Catullan,⁴⁸ yet there is also a good deal of Ovid here. The adjective used of Ariadne's blonde hair, *croceas* (530), is Ovid's (Catullus uses *flauus*),⁴⁹ and later in the *Ars* her disordered coiffure becomes one of the recommended looks for a woman wishing to catch her man.⁵⁰ Ariadne's state, just woken from sleep, at line 529,

⁴⁶ On Dia, rather than Naxos; Catullus' Callimachean loyalties are restated.

⁴⁷ So, *utque erat e somno* ('as she was, just roused from sleep', 529), cf. Catullus 64.56, *tum primum excita somno* ('then first roused from sleep'). Catullus, of course, treats us to a far more languishing description of just how rumpled and exposed Ariadne's body can be.

⁴⁸ Though Ovid leaves the passion rather more understated. So, for example, Ariadne's own cry, *cogor inops, ardens, amenti caeca furore* ('I am harried, hopeless, burning, blind with mindless rage', 64.197) is condensed in the *Ars* into one word used by the narrator, *amens* ('out of her mind', 527).

⁴⁹ Hollis (1977), *ad* 530 says, 'fair-haired like a good epic heroine (cf. Hesiod, *Theog.* 947 ξανθὴν Ἀριάδην)', but perhaps this particular epithet requires a little more comment. Neither Catullus, Tibullus, Horace, nor Propertius use *croceus* at all. (However, *crocinus* appears at Catullus 68.134.) The word occurs 11 times in Vergil, but is never used of hair. Of the 7 occurrences in Ovid, it describes hair only here and at *Am.* 2.4.43. In the *Amores* Ovid is describing Aurora's hair; this seems to me to be a nod to Vergilian usage of the adjective, which describes the bedchamber of Aurora in a line used three times, *Tithoni croceum linquens Aurora cubile* ('Aurora, leaving Tithonus' saffron bed', *Geor.* 1.447; *Aen.* 4.585; 9.460). Indeed, Ovid tends to use the word to refer to Aurora (cf. *Am.* 2.4.43; *Ars Am.* 3.179; *Met.* 3.150; *Fast.* 3.403).

⁵⁰ *et neglecta decet multas coma...ars casum simulet* ('untidy hair suits many girls...let art mimic accident', *Ars Am.* 3.153–5); *talem te Bacchus Satyris clamantibus 'euhoe' | sustulit in currus, Cnosi relictos, suos* ('you were such a one, whom Bacchus carried off in his chariot with the Satyrs shouting "eueo!", abandoned Cnossian', 3.157–8).

while based on Catullus, is a partial repetition of *Heroides* 10.16, *utque erat e somno turbida, rupta coma est* ('and as it was, tousled from sleep, my hair was torn'). Moreover, the second half of that line in the *Ars*, *tunica uelata recincta* ('covered by a loose tunic'), recalls Ovid's vision of Corinna at *Amores* 1.5.9. Catullus' Ariadne is subtly moulded to fit a more Ovidian aesthetic, even down to the detail that her tears become her (533–4).⁵¹ Indeed, perhaps this ought to raise a reader's suspicions that this is no dispassionate narrator talking, but one with more than a passing resemblance to the self-confessed philanderer of the *Amores*.⁵² Another, more disturbing, echo of the violent side of Ovid's lover-persona can be uncovered in the detail of Ariadne *amens* ('out of her mind', 527) and later bloodless (540) and pale (551) at the approach of Bacchus. Compare Ovid's shocked and scared mistress after he has physically attacked her:

adstitit illa amens albo et sine sanguine uultu,
caeduntur Pariis qualia saxa iugis.⁵³
(Ovid, *Amores* 1.7.51–2)

She stood, out of her mind, with her face white and bloodless, like the stones cut from the Parian cliffs.

Earlier in the poem, despite her dishevelled appearance, Ovid still considers his mistress beautiful (an increasingly familiar trope), and compares her in this state to Atalanta, Cassandra, or Ariadne:

talis periuri promissaque uelaeque Thesei
fleuit praecipites Cressa tulisse Notos
(Ovid, *Amores* 1.7.15–16)

Like this the Cretan wept for the promises and the sails of perjured Theseus which the headlong south winds carried off.

⁵¹ Cf. *Am.* 1.7.12, where the *puella's* ruffled hair still becomes her, and *Ars Am.* 1.126, where the terrified Sabine women still look attractive. Here the move is even anti-Catullan: contrast Catullus' complaint that weeping for the dead sparrow has made Lesbia's eyes swollen (3.17–18). For an interesting view on weeping women in elegy as part of the poet-lovers' revenge for the indignities they themselves suffer in love, cf. James (2003).

⁵² For the Ovidian lover's catholic tastes in women, cf. *Am.* 2.4. On the connections between the narrators of the *Amores* and the *Ars Amatoria*, cf. Armstrong (2005), ch. 2.

⁵³ Although comparison to a statue does not always have to bring Catullus' Ariadne-statue to mind, in the light of lines 15–16 it is tempting to see this as part of the range of possible references used by Ovid here.

The ambiguous position of the narrator of the *Ars*, as both external, objective witness, and lecherous (and hence involved) observer serves to emphasize Ariadne's vulnerability on both a literary and literal level. In choosing to depict his creation in a way his readers know to be attractive to his lover-persona, Ovid demonstrates his ability to mould the literary figure of Ariadne as he chooses, whilst exposing the character within the poem to the dangers of being all too attractive.

Ariadne, weeping on the shore for the perfidious, absent Theseus, is no less enchanting (says the narrator) for all her tears and shouting:

clamabat flebatque simul, sed utrumque decebat;
non facta est lacrimis turpior illa suis.

(*Ars Amatoria* 1.533–4)

She shouted and cried at once, but both suited her; she was not made any worse by her tears.

In fact, so entrancing is Ariadne's physical appearance to the narrator that he underplays her speaking role, noting the fact that she is calling to Theseus over the waves without displaying much interest in the content of her complaints, pleas, or lamentations.⁵⁴ When he does come to report what she says, given the brevity of his summary of the Catullan material so far, perhaps we are expecting a certain amount of condensing to have taken place, but in the event one of the greatest ever heroine's speeches is reduced to a rather flat pentameter line, partially repeated in the next hexameter:

‘perfidus ille abiit: quid mihi fiet?’ ait;
‘quid mihi fiet?’ ait

(*Ars Amatoria* 1.536–7)

‘That traitor has gone: what will become of me?’ she said. ‘What will become of me?’

Her cry is not even addressed to Theseus, as if this Ariadne has already accepted that he is out of earshot, that she can do little but accept her pain and his perfidy as fact, and wonder helplessly about

⁵⁴ *Thesea crudelem... clamabat* (‘she shouted cruel Theseus’, 531); *clamabat* (‘she shouted’, 533).

what will happen to her now.⁵⁵ Through his obsession with outward beauty, and the pursuit of woman as a sex object, Ovid has reduced this passionate heroine to an inarticulacy that could almost as well be silence.⁵⁶

Before she has time to say anything more, the sound of Bacchus' approaching retinue can be heard. This is, from one point of view, an amusingly swift answer to her question about what will become of her—*quid mihi fiet?*—but it is also another way of denying Ariadne her voice. The distraught girl on a foreign shore cannot be expected to know that the raucous group approaching will bring her safety and a new husband. Her reaction to the sound of drums and cymbals is to faint with fear:

excidit illa metu rupitque nouissima uerba;
nullus in exanimi corpore sanguis erat.
(*Ars Amatoria* 1.539–40)

She fainted in fear and broke off her last words; there was no blood in her breathless body.

The words here suggest an ending to the episode, even death, and certainly an end to speech; the phrase *nouissima uerba* is used here for the first time by Ovid, but one cannot help recalling the Vergilian usage of these words to mean the last uttered by or for somebody.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ A similar shortening, explicitly commented upon by the poet, can be seen in Phyllis' version of Ariadne's speech in the *Remedia Amoris*. The heroine, abandoned by Theseus' son Demophoon, and, of course, compared to a Bacchant (593–4), wanders alone on the shore, and is able to speak just two words before her weeping cuts her short: '*perfide Demophoon' surdas clamabat ad undas, | ruptaque singultu uerba loquentis erat*' ('she cried "Faithless Demophoon" to the deaf waves, and as she spoke her words were broken off by sobs', 597–8). I have discussed this episode in more detail in Armstrong (2005), 103–5.

⁵⁶ I think that Ovid is well aware of this, too. The description of Ariadne is not at all unsympathetic, but still partial in such a way as to reflect the inadequacy of (or at least to question) the teacher's voice. This self-reflexive irony is perceptible throughout both the *Ars Amatoria* and the *Amores*, and adds greatly to the humour and humanity of the works.

⁵⁷ Cf. *Aen.* 4.650 (Dido's last words), *incubuitque toro dixitque nouissima uerba* ('she lay on the bed and spoke her last words'); *Aen.* 6.23 (Corynaeus' valediction at Misenus' funeral), *lustrauitque uiros dixitque nouissima uerba* ('he purified the men and spoke the last words'). Ovid also uses the phrase five times in the *Metamorphoses* (2.386, 3.361, 11.256, 12.203, 14.717), a poem which has much to make of the adjective *nouus*, and he is there playing on the various connotations of *nouissima* as both new, strange, and last, a complexity which I don't think is present in the *Ars*.

The implications of this are not necessarily simple: of course, it is possible to see this couplet as focalized through Ariadne, who *expects* these words to be her last, having heard the terrifying approach of the Satyrs and Maenads which she assumes means death for her. However, one could also interpret this as a comment from Ovid more directly, in that these are Ariadne's last words because she will never be able to say anything much more than, 'faithless Theseus!' and, 'what will become of me?'

In addition to the hints from external references that this portrait of Ariadne may not be without a voyeuristic bias, there are some internal indications of a similar viewpoint. The mythical women of the first book of the *Ars Amatoria* fall, broadly, into two categories: the actively, even aggressively lustful, who thereby excuse men any excess, and the alluringly passive, designed to inflame a man's lust whatever their own mental state. Ariadne falls (on the whole) into the latter category and into some interesting company. The descriptions of Ariadne's attractive grief (533–4, quoted above) and fear set her alongside the Sabine women as the object of unexpected male attention:⁵⁸

et color et Theseus et uox abiere puellae,
terque fugam petiit terque retenta metu est.
horruit, ut steriles, agitat quas uentus, aristae,⁵⁹
ut leuis in madida canna palude tremit.

(*Ars Amatoria* 1.551–4)

Colour, Theseus, and voice left the girl, and three times she tried to flee and three times she was held back by fear. She bristled, like barren wheat which the wind rustles, like a slender reed trembling in the soggy marsh.

Compare the flight of the Sabine women:

ut fugiunt aquilas, timidissima turba, columbae
utque fugit uisos agna nouella lupos,
sic illae timuere uiros sine lege ruentes;
constitit in nulla qui fuit ante color.

(*Ars Amatoria* 1.117–20)

⁵⁸ Like the Sabines, if in a different sense, Ariadne too is *in ignotis... harenis* ('on unfamiliar sands', 527).

⁵⁹ Reading *aristae* (MS *aristas*) with ω and Goold (1965), 66. I discuss the textual problems in this line below.

As doves, that most frightened flock, flee eagles, as the young lamb flees when it has seen wolves, so they feared the men rushing without order towards them; the colour she had before did not remain in any of them.

And a little later:

ducuntur raptae, genialis praeda, puellae,
et potuit multas ipse decere timor.
(*Ars Amatoria* 1.125–6)

The stolen girls, booty for the marriage bed, were led off, and fear itself suited many of them.

This parallel contentiously sets Bacchus in the same category as Romulus' men, who attempt to atone for rape (or at very least violent abduction) with the same kind of easy platitudes about forthcoming wedded bliss.⁶⁰

Just as Ovid's treatment of the rape of the Sabine women hovers dangerously between the comic and the shocking, so, while it is important not to ignore the violent undertones of Bacchus' encounter with Ariadne,⁶¹ it is hard at the same time not to see the humour in the whole episode. Making their entrance too early on the scene,⁶² the drunken band of Bacchus' followers erupts onto the previously deserted shore with sounds and formation at once reminiscent of Catullus and Lucretius,⁶³ but a tone radically different as Silenus

⁶⁰ The soldier carrying off his *genialis praeda* ('booty for the marriage bed') asks why she ruins her eyes with tears (has he been reading Catullus?), then adds, *quod matri pater est, hoc tibi... ero* ('what your father is to your mother, I will be to you', *Ars Am.* 1.130). Compare Bacchus' similarly cavalier dismissal of Ariadne's fears (and potential protests), *pone metum, Bacchi Cnosias uxor eris* ('fear not, you will be the Cnossian wife of Bacchus', 556).

⁶¹ Wiseman (1977), 179–80 sees the possibility of rape already present in Bacchus' arrival in Catullus 64.

⁶² Too early, that is, in Catullan terms: Ariadne has not made a proper speech yet. Perhaps the use of *ecce* three times (541, 542, 543) represents a desperate attempt to get the reader to focus attention on the coming procession rather than the attractively unconscious Ariadne.

⁶³ Cf. Lucretius, *DRN* 2.600–43 and Catullus 64.251–64. The procession in Catullus is far more bizarre and terrifying than Ovid's: the earlier poet represents the Maenads with snakes in their hair dismembering animals, celebrating hidden rites, whilst Ovid's, having made an auspicious start, granted the (probably Callimachean—cf. Hollis (1977), *ad Ars Am.* 1.541) epithet *Mimallonides*, end up doing nothing more sinister or numinous than flirting with Silenus.

struggles to stay upright on his donkey and the Satyrs and Maenads frolic around him:

ecce, Mimallonides sparsis in terga capillis,
 ecce, leues Satyri, praeuia turba dei.
 ebrius, ecce, senex pando Silenus asello
 uix sedet et pressas continet arte iubas.
 dum sequitur Bacchas, Bacchae fugiuntque petuntque,
 quadrupedem ferula dum malus urget eques,
 in caput aurito cecidit delapsus asello;
 clamarunt Satyri 'surge age, surge, pater.'
 iam deus in curru, quem summum texerat uuis,
 tigribus adiunctis aurea lora dabat.

(*Ars Amatoria* 1.541–50)

Look, the Mimallonides with their hair spread over their backs, look the nimble Satyrs, the god's advance guard! Look, the drunken old man Silenus on his broad-backed ass can hardly sit and holds its mane tight with skill. While he followed the Bacchantes and the Bacchantes fled and ran back to him, while the useless rider urged on his beast with a fennel rod, he slipped and fell off the long-eared ass and onto his head. The Satyrs shouted, 'Get up, father, come on, get up!' Now the god in his chariot, the top of which he'd woven with grape vines, gave golden rein to his yoked tigers.

Silenus, no more Catullus' mysterious and multiple *Nysigeni Sileni* ('Nysa-born Sileni', Cat. 64.252), is simply drunk, as the blunt opening to line 543, *ebrius ecce*, makes abundantly clear.⁶⁴ The scene which follows, as Silenus falls off his donkey, is a great example of Ovidian slapstick, defusing the tension felt when only the drums and cymbals could be heard, frightening enough in themselves to make Ariadne faint. The god, in comparison to the buffoonery going on around him, seems quite dignified and composed, yet, perhaps because of the proximity of Silenus and the others, also more good humoured than Catullus' intense Iacchus, who rushes onto the scene seeking Ariadne, *incensus amore* ('ablaze with love', 64.253). For

⁶⁴ Compare Vergil's description of Silenus on the morning after at *Ecl.* 6.13–17, with a longer, but similarly down-to-earth portrayal of his accustomed state: *inflatum hesterno uenas, ut semper, Iaccho* ('his veins swollen with yesterday's wine, as usual', 15). Catullus does not mention whether his Sileni are drunk or sober, and uses the more exquisite *lymphata mente* ('wine-crazed mind', 64.254) to describe the inebriated Bacchantes.

Ariadne, however, even this more affable deity and his more comical retinue are a source of fear. She trembles and tries to flee, as her colour, her thoughts of Theseus, and her voice desert her. To quote the lines again:

et color et Theseus et uox abiire puellae,
 terque fugam petiit terque retenta metu est.
 horruit, ut steriles, agitat quas uentus, aristae,
 ut leuis in madida canna palude tremit.

(*Ars Amatoria* 1.551–4)

Colour, Theseus, and voice left the girl, and three times she tried to flee and three times she was held back by fear. She bristled, like barren wheat which the wind rustles, like a slender reed trembling in the soggy marsh.

Hollis (1977) reads *fragiles* for *steriles* at line 553, and the emendation has its appeal, since the adjective ‘barren’ is at first glance rather strange, whilst a simile of fragile corn would contribute nicely to the sense of Ariadne’s passivity and vulnerability. Another possibility (mooted by Heinsius) is to read *steriles...aenae*, *steriles* being a common epithet of wild oats, but inappropriate for a cultivated crop. The two lines would then reflect the effect of the wind on two different wild plants, oats and reeds, as would perhaps be fitting in the context of Ariadne looking so wild and unkempt on Dia. However, even though this aspect is appealing, I wonder if any emendation at all is necessary: incongruous though the image of an infertile crop may appear, perhaps the hint is that Ariadne would, as it were, have been a barren crop were it not for Bacchus coming and marrying her. A similar problem is attached to an odd Catullan epithet, *non si densior aridis aristis | sit nostrae seges osculationis* (‘not if the crop of our kisses were thicker than dry ears of corn’, 48.5–6), where dry ears of corn do not seem to be the most obvious counterpart to passionate kisses.⁶⁵ Could the Ovidian adjective even be a nod to Catullus’ strange comparison?

Whatever the details of the simile, however, it is clear that the force is to characterize Ariadne’s reaction to Bacchus’ arrival as pure fear, without any hint of hope or curiosity. It is as if she were caught in

⁶⁵ This suggestion is tentative. There are reasons (in particular, the parallel with Catullus 7) for reading *Africis* for *aridis* here.

earlier versions of herself, expecting the worst, expecting death or at least Catullus' more sinister Bacchant parade. To an extent, the fears she earlier expressed in the *Heroides* have now come true: here are tigers on the island,⁶⁶ and here the narrator describes her terror in a way which echoes the simile she used of herself at *Her.* 10.139: *corpus, ut impulsae segetes aquilonibus, horret* ('my body bristles, like corn blown by the wind'). A little later, when the god leaps down from the chariot to take her into his arms, she offers no resistance, significantly because she *cannot*, not because she doesn't want to: *neque enim pugnare ualebat* ('nor indeed did she have the strength to fight', 561). The verb *ualebat* ('had the strength') is used where *uolebat* ('wanted to') could have fitted the metre just as well. Ariadne has little choice and little power to influence the situation.

By contrast, Bacchus, as no doubt befits a god, fails to see much reason for Ariadne to be afraid, and insists rather that she should take pleasure in her future state as a star shining as a guide to sailors:

cui deus 'en, adsum tibi cura fidelior' inquit;
 'pone metum, Bacchi Cnosias uxor eris.
 munus habe caelum: caelo spectabere sidus;
 saepe reges dubiam Cressa Corona ratem.'⁶⁷
 dixit et e curru, ne tigres illa timeret,
 desilit (imposito cessit harena pede)
 implicitamque sinu, neque enim pugnare ualebat,
 abstulit: in facili est omnia posse deo.
 pars 'Hymenaeae' canunt, pars clamant 'Euhion euhoe';
 sic coeunt sacro nupta deusque toro.

(*Ars Amatoria* 1.555–64)

The god said to her, 'See, here am I, a more faithful love for you; fear not, you will be the Cnossian wife of Bacchus. Take the sky as a gift: in the sky you will be watched as a star; as the Cretan Crown you will often steer a wavering ship.' He spoke and jumped down from the chariot lest his tigers should

⁶⁶ Cf. *Her.* 10.86. In *Heroides* 2, Phyllis gives a picture of an Ariadne who has come to terms with her husband's tigers: *illa—nec inuideo—fruitur meliore marito | inque capistratis tigribus alta sedet* ('she—and I do not envy her—enjoyed a better husband, and sits high on haltered tigers', *Her.* 2.79–80).

⁶⁷ Reading *reges* with *A*ω rather than *Y*'s *reget*. I think this makes more sense, given the *spectabere* of the preceding line. Ovid seems to intend a conflation of the legends of the deification of Ariadne and the catasterism of her crown, and he expands on this in *Fasti* 3. Cf. Appendix 2.

scare her (the sand sank beneath his foot's imprint), and carried her off wrapped in his embrace, neither did she have strength to fight: everything is easy for a god. Some sang 'Hymenaeae', some shouted 'Euhion evoe!'; so the bride and the god joined together on their sacred bed.

He jumps down from his chariot, lest the tigers scare her (far too late!) and sweeps her up in his arms without a chance to assent or to express her (undoubted) joy at her outrageous good fortune. Everything is easy for a god to do, and also rather speedy. The honour of catasterism cannot be discounted, but one does get the impression that this quiet and timid Ariadne might feel rather overwhelmed by this sudden shift in her luck.

3. VARIATIONS ON THE THEME: *FASTI* 3.459–516

Ariadne makes her third full-length Ovidian appearance in the third book of the *Fasti*, where she receives more attention than in the condensed reference of *Met.* 8.172–82, which also culminates in the transformation of her crown. Here Ovid gives flesh to the Cretan character before Romanizing her at the end of the section through her identification with the Roman goddess Libera.

During the night of 8 March, a visible reminder of the myth of Ariadne rises in the sky in the form of the Corona Borealis, a monument to Bacchus' love for his mortal wife. But as he begins the explanation of how the constellation came to be, Ovid briefly recapitulates the story of Theseus' desertion of Ariadne, whilst making it clear that things have moved on since then:

Protinus aspicias uenienti nocte Coronam
 Cnosida: Theseo crimine facta dea est.
 iam bene periuro mutarat coniuge Bacchum,
 quae dedit ingrato fila legenda uiro
 (*Fasti* 3.459–62)

At once when night comes on you will see the Cnossian Crown: she was made a goddess because of Theseus' crime. Now she had happily exchanged Bacchus for her perjured husband, the girl who gave the thread to the ungrateful man to gather.

It seems that Ariadne has pulled off a successful husband-swap. Nevertheless, Theseus continues to define, not to say cast a shadow over, her new relationship. Ovid does not go quite so far as to subscribe to the view that the catasterism formed a reward for helping Theseus,⁶⁸ but he does insidiously link these two parts of Ariadne's life and afterlife.

Since Ariadne ultimately benefited from Theseus' betrayal, we might be encouraged to ask if her famous laments on the subject were not rather otiose. The heroine herself is allowed at least momentarily to reassess her relationship with Theseus now that she sees the pain of his desertion succeeded by the joy of marriage to Bacchus:

sorte tori gaudens 'quid flebam rustica?' dixit
'utiliter nobis perfidus ille fuit.'

(*Fasti* 3.463–4)

Rejoicing in the bed she won, she said, 'Bumpkin, why was I crying? He was usefully unfaithful to me.'

For a while there is resolution here, and for once a direct expression of the happy ending Ariadne finds in her union with the god.⁶⁹ Her exchange of the ungrateful, perfidious Theseus for the god Bacchus, who will make her a goddess too, can only be counted as a good one, and Ariadne (a delightfully realistic touch, this) feels nothing but contempt for her forlorn former self.⁷⁰ However, all too soon she realizes that she will once again have need for those same tears and complaints.

Ariadne's husband Bacchus has been on a successful expedition to conquer the Indians, and, in time-honoured fashion, returns with a train of captive women,⁷¹ among whom is a princess who seems to have caught the god's attention:

⁶⁸ A view put forward by Apollonius' Jason at *Arg.* 3.1001–6.

⁶⁹ Modern scholars often tend to refer to Ariadne's marriage as a happy ending, and whilst this *is* the obvious conclusion to draw, in the ancient texts in general it is usually only implied, not directly stated or dramatized as here.

⁷⁰ And a typically Ovidian contempt: *rusticus* is one of Catullus' adjectives for the dismissal of the foolish, crude, and inelegant, and Ovid readily adopts and expands this usage: cf. Ch. 7, n. 15.

⁷¹ Compare Agamemnon's captured concubine, Cassandra, or Iole, the woman Deianira is led to believe Hercules has decided to keep as his lover after sacking her city, Oechalia.

inter captiuas facie praestante puellas
grata nimis Baccho filia regis erat.
(*Fasti* 3.467–8)

Among the captive girls with lovely faces, there was a king's daughter who was too pleasing to Bacchus.

Ariadne has had all too little time to enjoy her wedded bliss before she finds (or thinks) herself betrayed all over again. But the poet implies that perhaps she was never very well suited to the part of contented wife anyway, since she reverts so quickly to her accustomed pose of dishevelled distress at the seaside.⁷²

flebat amans coniunx spatiaque litore curuo
edidit incultis talia uerba comis
(*Fasti* 3.469–70)

His loving wife was weeping and, pacing on the curved shore, uttered such words with her hair unkempt.

The setting of Ariadne's lament on the beach is a charmingly gratuitous detail, which can only owe its inclusion to the importance of the coast in poetic and artistic accounts of her more frequently attested desertion by Theseus on Dia. It may even function as a disingenuous claim of generic necessity from the author—not only has it become impossible to imagine an Ariadne who doesn't deliver a Catullan rant once abandoned by a man she trusts, but she cannot even deliver that speech anywhere other than on deserted sands.⁷³

In typically perverse and playful fashion, Ovid decides that now is the time to offer the famous 'Ariadne deserted' soliloquy, when, traditionally, the time is past and gone. As I discussed earlier,⁷⁴ there is a good deal of self-conscious literary reference at work here, particularly in the opening lines of the speech, but it is

⁷² For Ariadne's unkempt appearance, cf. Cat. 64.63–7; Ovid, *Her.* 10.16, 47, 137–8, 149; *Ars Am.* 1.529–30.

⁷³ The encounter on the beach motif is repeated later on in this book of the *Fasti*. In the next major mythological episode, Aeneas meets Dido's sister Anna by the seaside in a scene which bears certain similarities to Ariadne's encounter with Bacchus on the shores of Dia. This is Ovid at his best and most complex. Offering a sequel to Vergil's own Dido sequel (her reappearance in the Underworld), Ovid at once structurally mirrors his own Ariadne sequel and plays again on the strong echoes of Ariadne in Vergilian and Ovidian treatments of the original Dido story.

⁷⁴ Ch. 1, Sect. 1.3.

interesting also to examine the effect of these words on a different level, that of character. As a figure of allusion, Ariadne seems to quote Catullus and to be allowed an incongruous awareness of her own status as a literary creation, but as a character in her own right, she is revealed to be genuinely frustrated by the repeating patterns in her life. Her memories, it seems, are fully her own, as well as part of her poetic inheritance:

en iterum, fluctus, similis audite querellas!
 en iterum lacrimas accipe, harena, meas!
 dicebam, memini, 'periure et perfide Theseu!'
 ille abiit; eadem crimina Bacchus habet.
 nunc quoque 'nulla uiro' clamabo 'femina credat!'
 nomine mutato causa relata mea est.

(*Fasti* 3.471–6)

Again, then, waves, listen to the same complaints! Again, then, sand, receive my tears! I remember I used to say, 'Perjured and faithless Theseus!' He has gone; Bacchus has done the same wrong. Now too I shall cry, 'Let no woman trust a man!' With the name changed my circumstance has been repeated.

Ariadne wishes that she could have learned her lesson from Theseus: men are not to be trusted, and it is naïve to hope that one may be different from the next.⁷⁵ She thinks she has uncovered a painful truth, and her sense that she appears to be doomed to repeat such complaints adds a pathetic, human dimension to the poet's clever game of literary reference.

The speech is not purely a recycled Catullan soliloquy, however, and it advertises its difference even through some of its closest similarities. Like Catullus' Ariadne, Ovid's is driven to a morbid despair, but whilst in the epyllion she fears the spectre of death (64.152–3, 186–7), in the *Fasti* she curses her salvation:

o utinam mea sors, qua primum coeperat, isset,
 iamque ego praesenti tempore nulla forem!
 quid me desertis morituram, Liber, harenis
 seruabas? potui dedoluisse semel.

(*Fasti* 3.477–80)

⁷⁵ The narrator does not directly state whether or not Ariadne's fears about her husband's infidelity are justified. The description of the captive Indian as *grata nimis* ('all too attractive', 468) implies they are, but is this line focalized through Ariadne?

Oh would that my fate had stayed as it was at first, and that I no longer existed in this present time! Why, Liber, did you save me from the deserted sands when I was about to die? I could have grieved just once.

Taking phraseology also familiar from Catullus (*utinam ne tempore primo | Cnosia Cecropiae tetigissent litora puppes*—‘would that the Athenian ships had never touched the shores of Cnossus in the first place’, 64.171–2), this Ariadne changes her horizons. No longer can she wish for a return to a time of innocence, a life before she knew the pain of desertion; now the best she can ask for is to return to that first grief, to have died on the shores of Dia rather than be saved by a god who would only betray her. Although she still has much of the passion which marked her out in her earlier incarnations, the heroine has now become older and more jaded: recognizably, unmistakably Ariadne, she is also an Ariadne less familiar in Latin literature, the wife of a god, not the girl deserted by Theseus.

Accordingly, the source of Ariadne’s despair is one more suited to a wife: the fear of another, prettier woman usurping her husband’s affections. Although in some traditions Theseus leaves Ariadne for another girl, this aspect tends to be suppressed by the Latin poets, and it is thus with a smile and a flourish that Ovid can introduce one of his favourite motifs—marital infidelity—into the later part of her story. The wronged wife reproaches Bacchus as *levis* (‘fickle’, 481), and expresses her outrage that he has taken it upon himself to disrupt their harmonious marriage by bringing a new lover onto the scene (483–4). Returning a little later to the subject, Ariadne is baffled, and so driven to bitter sarcasm, by the idea that a dark-skinned woman could have taken her place:

at, puto, praeposita est fuscae mihi candida paelex:
 eueniat nostris hostibus iste color!
 quid tamen hoc refert? uitio tibi gratior ipso est.
 quid facis? amplexus inquinat illa tuos.

(*Fasti* 3.493–6)

Well, I suppose a pale-skinned rival has been preferred to dusky me: may that colour be visited on my enemies! But what does that matter? She is more pleasing to you for that very fault. What are you doing? She is staining your embraces.

Ariadne is, as all good heroines should be, fair-haired—this we know from Catullus and from Ovid himself⁷⁶—so how could it be that, though as a pale blonde she holds the trump card, an Indian now supersedes her?⁷⁷ In her indignation she resembles some other Ovidian heroines: Penelope fears that Odysseus may have found some foreign mistress, whilst Hypsipyle has heard of Jason's affair with the barbarian Medea, and Deianira is fatally jealous of the woman Hercules captured in war.⁷⁸ It might also be important to remember Clytemnestra's savage hatred of Cassandra, brought back by her husband, like Bacchus' princess, from a foreign campaign. Two strands thus feed into Ariadne's reaction, her fear aligning her with the nervous, paranoid women of the *Heroides*, her anger with a more formidable wife like Clytemnestra, or like Lavinia later in this book of the *Fasti* (3.633–8).⁷⁹

Although Ariadne plays the part of jealous wife well, and is convincing in her anger while she allows it rein, she finds after all that it is the role of the abandoned woman that suits her best, and it is to this that she keeps reverting. After her first mention of the *paelex* ('rival', 483), she speaks of her husband's perfidy, and realizes that she is uttering the same complaints she (and Bacchus too) used against Theseus:

heu ubi pacta fides? ubi, quae iurare solebas?
me miseram, quotiens haec ego uerba loquar?
Thesea culpabas fallacemque ipse uocabas:
iudicio peccas turpius ipse tuo.

(*Fasti* 3.485–8)

Alas, where is the faith you pledged? Where are the oaths you used to swear? Alas for me, how often will I speak these words? You used to find fault with

⁷⁶ Cf. Catullus 64.63; Ovid, *Ars Am.* 1.530.

⁷⁷ Although the blonde epitomized a more conventional ideal of feminine beauty, it is worth noting that darker women could be viewed as attractive too: e.g. Ovid, *Am.* 2.4.39–42; Sappho hopes to trade on this at *Her.* 15.35–6, *candida si non sum, placuit Cepheia Perseo* | *Andromede, patriae fusca colore suae* ('if I am not pale, Cepheus' daughter Andromeda pleased Perseus, and she was dusky with the hue of her fatherland').

⁷⁸ *Her.* 1.76–7; 6.81, 149; 9.121–36. See also 2.103; 5.60; 12.173–4; 15.51–6.

⁷⁹ Just as Ariadne has come of age in the *Fasti*, so Lavinia grows from the silent, passive girl of the *Aeneid*, to the jealous wife suspicious of Aeneas' affection for Carthaginian Anna.

Theseus, and yourself called him deceitful: you yourself, by your own verdict, commit a worse sin.

Bacchus is doubly false, having found fault with Theseus for the kind of fickleness he now displays himself, yet his wife still loves him and wants to preserve their marriage. After her second outburst against her rival, and the extraordinarily harsh claim that the Indian girl defiles Bacchus' embrace, she returns to a more submissive tack, emphasizing her own fidelity, begging the god not to leave her:

Bacche, fidem praesta nec praefer amoribus ullam
coniugis. adsueui semper amare uirum.
(*Fasti* 3.497–8)

Bacchus, show your faithfulness and do not set anyone before your loving wife. I am accustomed to love my man forever.

Yet there is something a little incongruous here. By highlighting the similarity between the two unfaithful men in her life, Ariadne not only claims sympathy for herself as a victim of serial betrayal, but also undermines this assertion of everlasting love for Bacchus. She says she has become accustomed to love her *uir* forever, but by this does she mean her husband, or just her 'man'? Has she stopped loving Theseus, who was her first *uir*? And if she no longer loves Theseus, whom she thought she would love forever, is she not just as guilty of a kind of fickleness in love as the men? She may not abandon, it is true, but once abandoned she can transfer her undying affection to another object without too much effort.

Ovid may be happy to allow his heroine's high moral ground to be eroded slightly, whether by her own words, or by the strain of so much poetic gaming, but nonetheless there remains in Ariadne a certain quality of gentle, genuine emotion. The simplicity of her wish that her ability to love deeply should not work against her, *ne noceat quod amo* (501), is touching, and her final words, which hover between regret and reproach, end her soliloquy with an endearing, Catullan sigh:⁸⁰ *illa ego sum, cui tu solitus promittere*

⁸⁰ Cf. *non haec miseram sperare iubebas* ('you did not tell poor me to hope for these things', Catullus 64.139–42). There is another echo here, via *illa ego sum* ('I am she...'), of the indignation of the locked-out lover whose *puella* now prefers a vulgar soldier to him, the great poet, in *Am.* 3.8.23–4.

caelum. | ei mihi, pro caelo qualia dona fero! ('I am she to whom you used to promise the sky. Alas for me, what gifts I get instead of the sky!'; *Fast.* 3.505–6).

The poet has not yet had his fill of literary surprises, though, and has saved up a great one for the end of Ariadne's speech. For the first time here he has attempted a full-length version of the Catullan soliloquy (or at least a far more extended version than those offered in his other works). But now he trumps this with the revelation that it was in fact not a soliloquy at all: *dixerat: audibat iam dudum uerba querentis | Liber* ('she spoke: for a while Liber had been listening to her words as she lamented', 507–8). It is perhaps doubly ironic, then, that for all the attention Bacchus gives the complaints he has overheard, Ariadne might as well have remained silent. He may or may not have been guilty of the adultery of which he is accused: he gives no sign. Instead, in standard divine style, he puts an end to any further discussion or argument by taking immediate action: *occupat amplexu* ('he seized her in his embrace', 509). Although it might be going too far to read violence into the verb here,⁸¹ *occupare* does convey the sense of the god's strength and sudden taking of control over the situation. Gee (2000) talks of the catasterism of the crown as being a downgrading of the Aratean account, from a sign of Bacchus' devotion to his dead wife to a solution to a 'lovers' tiff' (p. 200). I wonder if it might not be possible to go a little further, though, and see this as a prime example of the god's insensitivity. In the light of Bacchus' swift creation of the constellation and redefinition of Ariadne as Libera, it would be quite easy to read Ariadne's last words (quoted above) as a rather sly request for a special kind of present: 'make me immortal and we'll forget about this business with the Indian princess'. However, when read (or, in Bacchus' case, heard) against the preceding lines detailing Ariadne's grief and anger, the exclamation seems rather to be one of recognition of the bitter contrast between the things a man will promise to get his way in love, and the misery he actually delivers. The point Ariadne makes is not so much that she wants to be a goddess, but that she wants to have a man who repays her with love, not betrayal.

⁸¹ Though violence is perhaps not alien to Bacchus' relationship with Ariadne: see the discussion of *Ars Am.* 1.541–64 above.

The identification of Ariadne with the Roman goddess Libera may appear at first glance an innocuous one:⁸² the god Liber had long been identified with the Greek Dionysus, so why should his wife not be associated with his female counterpart Libera? However, on further examination, it is a curious, even provocative identification. First of all, it conflates and confuses the two conflicting strands of tradition—the deification of Ariadne herself, and the catasterism of her crown.⁸³ Moreover, in Roman religion, Liber and Libera belong to a triad presided over by Ceres—their temple was founded in 493 BC at the foot of the Aventine—and are thus naturally associated with the Greek corn divinities Demeter, Dionysus, and Persephone.⁸⁴ In this poem dedicated to Roman customs and religion, Ovid refers to a Roman goddess already seen to be connected with Greece, but makes the wrong Greek connection, identifying Libera with Ariadne, not Persephone.

Cicero⁸⁵ gives a different interpretation of the identities of the divine pair, claiming that Liber and Libera are so called because they are the children (*liberi*) of the earth-goddess. Ovid ignores this argument too. There may possibly be a further complication in this passage. Staples (1998), 88 argues that Liber represents male sexuality specifically connected with marriage. The Liberalia (treated later in this book of the *Fasti*) was by tradition the day on which boys would assume the *toga uirilis*, which marked their eligibility for marriage. At *Fast.* 3.736, Bacchus is said to have discovered honey, which seems to represent chastity within marriage (Staples, 50–1). If this is right, and if it can be assumed that a Roman reading the name Liber would naturally make this connection, there is an additional joke in the marital infidelity of the god. And, to come back more closely to the text, perhaps this irony could be seen as well in Bacchus' account of

⁸² And, as Hardie (2002a), 40, observes, the repeated *iuncta* ('joined') in line 511 'weds physical to nominal union': Ariadne and Bacchus are to be brought so close together by their marriage that even their names are almost identical. All the same, as Hardie allows (in a footnote on the same page), an element of tension is preserved, as the name Libera hints at freedom, but *iuncta* ('joined', or 'yoked') carries echoes of the elegists' famous slavery of love.

⁸³ This is a confusion to which Ovid has drawn attention before: cf. *Ars Am.* 1.558, and the discussion of the catasterism in Appendix 2.

⁸⁴ Cf. Warde Fowler (1911), 255 and Altheim (1938), 268–70.

⁸⁵ Cicero, *De Natura Deorum* 2.62.

the genealogy of the crown, which was originally given to Venus by Vulcan; a constellation supposed to celebrate a harmonious marriage is itself created from an object which carries memories of a union famously marred by infidelity.

The Ovidian Ariadne's journey from Crete to Dia to Rome is one of repetition and variation. The reader is constantly, obsessively reminded of her earlier incarnations, yet cannot reasonably complain of boredom since each apparition is subtly, wittily different from the last. As for Ariadne herself, trapped in a seemingly endless cycle of laments and betrayals, she is, paradoxically, not confined to one time, but is allowed to come of age.

Phaedra from Elegiac Lover to Stoic Anti-Exemplum? *Heroides* 4 and Seneca, *Phaedra*

1. OVID, *HEROIDES* 4

In the *Heroides* Phaedra is a contradictory figure, a character who could be complete in herself, but who also seems to be full of other people's voices, often ostentatiously displaying the different elements of her composition. At times she seems to step straight from love elegy, at others she is more like a virgin bride or a Euripidean nurse. Both in control and heading full-tilt for destruction, she is a victim of her own passion and self-indulgence, yet also moulded by circumstance and inheritance.

1.1. Phaedra the Ovidian Lover

All the letters of the *Heroides* play with the conventions and expectations of elegiac love poetry,¹ giving a voice to female figures who act out different parts from elegy, at times the lover, at times the mistress, but it is Phaedra's which most consistently takes up the challenge (or succumbs to the temptation) to step into the shoes of Ovid-as-love-

¹ Cf. Rosati (1992). He argues that giving women speech reverses the tradition and reclaims elegy as the medium most suited to the female voice: 'Rovesciando i termini del rapporto elegiaco... Ovidio sana perciò l'"anomalia" elegiaca restituendo alla figura maschile il ruolo "forte" e a quella femminile quello di vittima della passione d'amore' (p. 93).

poet.² Unlike so many of the other letters, this is aimed at seduction, not reproach, and it is thus natural that Phaedra should take on the poet-lover's more predatory aspect.³ The implications of this—the shift of gender roles, the self-consciousness of the writing, even the (ill-founded) hope of success—add greatly to the impact of the verse epistle, and forge a fascinating new aspect to the figure of the lovelorn stepmother.

After the introductory lines, which establish writer and recipient,⁴ Phaedra launches into a description of how she tried and failed to write, until Amor himself compelled her to start on this letter:

ter tecum conata loqui ter inutilis haesit
 lingua, ter in primo restitit ore sonus.
 qua licet et sequitur, pudor est miscendus amori;
 dicere quae puduit, scribere iussit amor.
 quidquid Amor iussit, non est contemnere tutum;
 regnat et in dominos ius habet ille deos.
 ille mihi primo dubitanti scribere dixit:
 'scribe! dabit uictas ferreus ille manus.'
 adsit et, ut nostras audio fouet igne medullas,
 figat sic animos in mea uota tuos!

(*Heroides* 4.7–16)

Three times I tried to talk with you, three times my useless tongue stuck fast, three times the sound stopped on my lips. As far as it is permitted and it comes naturally, shame must be mixed with love; what it shamed me to say, love bade me write. Whatever Love commands it is not safe to despise; he reigns and has power even over the gods, our masters. He said to me as at first I was hesitating whether to write: 'Write! That iron-hearted man will hold out his conquered hands to you.' May he be present and, just as he

² Cf. Smith (1994), 264–6. Although it will not always be necessary to differentiate between the generalized 'elegiac poet' and 'Ovid-as-elegiac-poet', the distinction I would make is that in the case of the latter, the lover's persona is more self-controlled and controlling than those in the elegies of Propertius or Tibullus, exhibiting more manipulation, less despair.

³ Phaedra writing this letter could, for example, be aligned with Ovid sending his letter in *Am.* 1.11; if this is so, it adds to the expectation that Hippolytus (as if we didn't already know it) will respond with something along the lines of the 'not tonight' answer of *Am.* 1.12. For a recommendation of the seductive advantages of letter-writing by Ovid as lovers' instructor, cf. *Ars Am.* 1.437–86.

⁴ For a discussion of the ironies of *quid epistula lecta nocebit?* ('what harm will reading a letter do?', 3), see Ch. 3, Sect. 3.1; also Barchiesi (1993), 337–8.

warms my bones with eager fire, so may he transfix your mind in accordance with my prayer!

Phaedra's *pudor*, such as it is, takes the place of the poetic conceit of (epic) writer's block, and the attempt to compose in a genre other than love poetry.⁵ The reluctance she initially felt to give in to her passion, which prevented her from addressing Hippolytus earlier, is analogous to Ovid's alleged intention to write epic before Amor stole a foot of his verse away, and forced him into elegy willy-nilly (*Am.* 1.1).⁶ Much as Ovid wanted to play the great epic bard, so Phaedra wanted to play the virtuous woman, but love makes fools (and elegiac poets) of us all. The image put forward in the *Amores* of the love god both demanding the composition of poem and giving its subject matter⁷ is present in Phaedra's letter too (10, 13–14), and her swift (and advisable) surrender to this powerful divinity, whilst far from unique to love elegy,⁸ does have the flavour of lines like those at *Am.* 1.2.19–22.

All the same, neither situation can be taken entirely at face value, and it would appear that both authors are guilty of being disingenuous. Were Phaedra really the virtuous woman, would she ever have felt this passion, or would she have ever even attempted to speak to Hippolytus? And if Ovid is indeed the amatory novice he claims to be, how is it that he goes on to become so adept at writing love elegy within the space of three or four poems? On one level, both are explaining, even allegorizing, their uncontrollable desire to write in this particular form; on another, both are fully conscious of what they do, and cynically exploit convention as a mask behind which to conceal their own intentions.

⁵ For the poet's intention to write epic transmuted into 'lower' verse forms by a god's intervention, cf. Vergil, *Ecl.* 6.3–5; Horace, *Odes* 4.15.1–4; Propertius 2.13a; 3.3. The Greek roots of this are, of course, primarily in Callimachus, *Aet.* fr. 1.

⁶ An echo of this conceit may be perceived in the fact that Amor's words here are given in a pentameter line (14).

⁷ Cf. *Am.* 1.1.24, '*quod*' *que* '*canas, uates, accipe*' *dixit* '*opus*!'—'Poet, take this work for you to sing', he said, and 2.1.38, *purpureus quae mihi dictat Amor*—'[Songs] which radiant Love dictates to me'.

⁸ Most pertinently for the present case, compare the Nurse's advice at Euripides, *Hipp.* 439–81, and Aphrodite's comment, *τοὺς μὲν σέβοντας τὰμὰ πρᾶσβεύω κράτη, | σφάλλω δ' ὅσοι φρονοῦσιν εἰς ἡμᾶς μέγα* ('I put first those who honour my power, and bring low those who have proud thoughts against me', 4–5).

Phaedra's use of stock (and particularly Ovidian) elegiac imagery to excuse as well as illustrate her current predicament continues even after her claim that Cupid made her write. She goes on to describe herself slowly and painfully growing used to the passion coursing through her veins as a horse becomes accustomed to the bridle and an ox to the yoke (*scilicet ut teneros laedunt iuga prima iuuenos, | frenaque uix patitur de grege captus equus*—‘as, to be sure, the first yokes hurt tender bullocks, and the horse just taken from the herd scarcely tolerates his reins’, 21–2). Here her words recall the love poet Ovid's internal debate over whether or not to yield to his love, presented through much the same imagery, of an ox or colt which refuses the yoke or bit suffering more in the long run (*Am.* 1.2.13–16). Such a picture is conventional, it is true, and the elegiac is not the only stream feeding into the argument here. Given that Phaedra is a young woman, and that she is claiming this love as though it were her first, the most immediate association to be made is with imagery common to hymeneal poetry: the virgin as a young animal to be tamed, the bond of wedlock as a yoke, female sexual initiation as something inevitable and thus best not fought against. Interestingly, nonetheless, even though Phaedra implies her (highly dubious) virginity, she also emphasizes that she has fallen in love late on in life: *uenit amor grauius, quo serius*⁹—*urimur intus; | urimur, et caecum pectora uulnus habent* (‘love comes all the more seriously, since it comes later—I'm on fire inside; I'm on fire, and my breast has received a hidden wound’, 19–20). Might this, amongst other things, place Phaedra in the position not so much now of the elegiac lover, but of one whom the lover warns to yield to passion while young, since it will only be harsher for an older man?¹⁰

Phaedra has, of late, become quite partial to the idea of hunting. Her life takes a strange turn as she finds herself wanting to share Hippolytus' love of woodlands and Diana: *iam quoque—uix credes—ignotas mittor in artes; | est mihi per saeuas impetus ire feras* (‘now too—you'll scarcely believe it—I'm drawn to unfamiliar pursuits; I have an urge to go among the fierce wild beasts’, 37–8). Her adherence to Diana is a thinly veiled manifestation of her devotion

⁹ Kenney (1970) suggests *serior*.

¹⁰ Cf. Propertius 1.7 and 9. Rosati (1984), 120 also makes this connection.

to that other archer-god, Cupid, and the hunt she dreams of is the hunt of love,¹¹ which, as if unconsciously, slips from strenuous pursuit to sensuality as she lies exhausted on the ground (44). When she returns later to the subject of the wild life, she is less shy about making the link with love, as, in good elegiac style, she lists other huntsmen who found love in the forest: Cephalus, Adonis, Meleager (93–100).¹² She is prepared to follow Hippolytus even into frightening places: *ipsa comes ueniam, nec me latebrosa mouebunt | saxa neque obliquo dente timendus aper* ('I'll come myself as your companion, and neither the den-filled rocks nor the fearsome boar with its side-swiping tusk will trouble me', 103–4). This recalls Priapus' advice at Tibullus 1.4.41–2, *neu comes ire neges quamuis uia longa paretur | et Canis arenti torreat arua siti* ('do not refuse to go as his companion no matter how long a journey is planned and however much the Dog Star roasts the fields with parching thirst'): the would-be (male) lover of a boy should be ready to accompany him by sea, on military campaigns, and (most importantly for this context) on hunting trips (49–50). As well as showing Phaedra as a close reader of lovers' handbooks, though, her willingness to follow can also be read as an expression of a more typically feminine devotion: as usual, Phaedra is jumping the gun, now styling herself as the beloved *puella* before Hippolytus has even had a chance to respond. Like a Cynthia ready to drive Propertius to despair, like a Lycoris on the mountainside, she will venture abroad for love;¹³ she is like Tibullus' dream of Delia in the countryside or Ovid's longed-for travelling companion in

¹¹ Cf. Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 1.2.24; Callimachus, *Epig.* 31 Pf.; Plautus, *Epidicus* 215–16; Horace, *Serm.* 1.2.105–8; Ovid, *Am.* 2.9.9; *Ars Am.* 1.89, 253; Phaedrus 4.5.4.

¹² Cf. Propertius' use of Milanion and Atalanta to show the advantage of amatory service and perseverance (1.1.9–16). This motif is probably drawn from Gallus (cf. Ross (1975), 89–91). There is a good deal of the inappropriate (or all too appropriate) in Phaedra's choice of examples. Traditionally, Aurora becomes obsessed with love for Cephalus and abducts him. This affair eventually leads to the hunter's accidental killing of his wife Procris. (Casali (1995b), 6–7 suggests that we may also see here a reference to Procris' place next to Phaedra in the *nekuia* of the *Odyssey*.) Meleager's love for Atalanta results in his destruction at his own mother's hands. Adonis, neatly enough, is the product of an incestuous relationship (this also noted by Casali (1995b), 7) who meets an untimely death while out hunting.

¹³ Propertius 1.8a; Vergil, *Ecl.* 10.22–3, 46–9.

Paelignian country.¹⁴ Indeed, unlike these others, she actually becomes the dream; unlike the dainty urban mistress, she is really prepared to countenance life in the country, in the wild.

This promise of compliance, though, has already been neatly undermined in the preceding line (102). A paid-up member of the Ovidian school of erotics, Phaedra is concerned to banish any hint of rusticity from her envisaged relationship with Hippolytus.¹⁵ Indeed, were it not for passion, a life in the woodlands could be nothing more than contemptibly parochial: *si Venerem tollas, rustica silua tua est* ('if you remove Venus, your woodland is just boorish', 102).¹⁶ Again, Phaedra's enthusiasm for Hippolytus' way of life is unmasked as a sylvan version of her own rather metropolitan fantasies. Later, voicing or using again the concern not to appear boorish and unsophisticated, Phaedra classifies any worries about the propriety of an incestuous relationship as, quite simply, an outmoded prudishness that belongs to the long-gone Saturnian age. Jupiter and Juno themselves brought incest into fashion:¹⁷

ista uetus pietas, aeuo moritura futuro,
rustica Saturno regna tenente fuit.
Iuppiter esse pium statuit, quodcumque iuuaret,
et fas omne facit fratre marita soror.¹⁸

(*Heroides* 4.131–4)

¹⁴ Tibullus 1.5.21–34; Ovid, *Am.* 2.16.

¹⁵ For *rusticus* and *rusticitas* used in the pejorative sense in Ovid, cf. *Am.* 1.8.44; 2.4.13, 19; 2.8.3; 3.1.43; 3.4.37; 3.10.18; *Her.* 1.77; 15.222, 287; 17.12, 13, 186; *Ars Am.* 1.607, 672; 2.369, 566; 3.128, 305; *Rem. Am.* 329; *Fast.* 3.463.

¹⁶ Spentzou (2003), 73–4 offers an interesting discussion of the differences between Phaedra's and Hippolytus' woods.

¹⁷ Phaedra refers to the incestuous marriage of these gods earlier at 35–6: *si mihi concedat Iuno fratremque uirumque, | Hippolytum uideor praepositura Ioui* ('if Juno should give up her brother and her husband to me, I think I would be ready to prefer Hippolytus to Jupiter'). This is a profession of love which is self-undermining, though: the words might well bring to mind Lesbia's claim to prefer Catullus to Jupiter, and how bitterly the poet reflects on that in the light of her infidelity (Catullus 70).

¹⁸ This argument takes a similar form to that of Propertius 2.32, where the poet decides to be lenient towards Cynthia, whom he suspects of holiday infidelities, on the grounds that so many examples of adultery already exist in myth. Compare especially 2.32.52, *hic mos Saturno regna tenente fuit* ('this was the custom when Saturn ruled'), with *Her.* 4.132 above: Ovid's Phaedra goes one better than Propertius, asserting that chastity was actually outmoded even in Saturn's reign.

That old morality, destined to die in the coming age, was countrified even when Saturn was ruling. Jupiter has established that whatever pleases us is right, and the sister married to her brother makes everything acceptable.

The reference to the passing of the Saturnian age taps into the whole Roman discourse on the relative merits of the primitive and modern ages. Indeed, Phaedra's is a provocative stance to take in the Augustan era (in particular) when a return to old-fashioned values was advocated by the *Principes*, tired of the moral decline brought about by self-indulgences like extra-marital affairs.¹⁹ Ovid takes a similarly challenging attitude in *Amores* 1.8, where (although the listening poet is himself, of course, aghast) the bawd Dipsas suggests, in a manner which Phaedra seems to have taken to heart, that a sophisticated girl can make the first move in a relationship: *aut, si rusticitas non uetat, ipsa rogat* ('or, if her country manners do not forbid it, let her proposition him herself', 1.8.44). Later, the love instructor of the *Ars Amatoria* even equates *pudor* with *rusticitas*: *conloquii iam tempus adest: fuge rustice longe | hinc Pudor!* ('now is the time for conversation: away far from here, countrified Modesty', 1.607–8); *ei mihi! rusticitas non pudor ille fuit* ('alas for me! that was coarseness, not modesty', 1.672). Phaedra's use of such rhetoric to promote incest as something perfectly acceptable in the modern world aligns her very closely with her mentor, the Ovidian elegist; but she also, arguably, takes it a step too far. To mock an uptight and outdated morality is one thing, but to advocate amorality is another.

In a way, Phaedra's concern for sophistication contrasts with her appreciation of Hippolytus' artless beauty at 77–8: *te tuus iste rigor positique sine arte capilli | et leuis egregio pulvis in ore decet* ('that severity of yours suits you, your hair artlessly arranged, and the light layer of dust on your fine face'). This has more in common with Propertius' desire that Cynthia should keep her beauty natural and unadorned, as stated in poem 1.2. However, perhaps Phaedra is here for once conforming to gender stereotypes: in the Ovidian world of love, at least, although women should take care over

¹⁹ Ovid often returns to this debate: in particular, see the praise of Rome's modernity at *Ars Am.* 3.113–28. For more on this, see Armstrong (2005), ch. 5.

their appearance, lack of preening suits men. Indeed, it is even stated in the *Ars Amatoria* that it was thus that Hippolytus caught Phaedra's attention: *Hippolytum Phaedra, nec erat bene cultus, amauit* ('Phaedra loved Hippolytus, and he was not well turned out', *Ars Am.* 1.511). In yet another sense, the relationship seems to hang in doubtful space, Phaedra sometimes lusting the way a woman should, sometimes more as a male poet would.

As for what is required of Hippolytus, Phaedra takes care to emphasize how easy his task will be. For him there need be no hard nights camping on her doorstep, no worries that a jealous husband will bar her door to him: their family relationship is not an obstacle, but rather an aid to their romance (137–48). In effect, there is no need for him to play the traditional lover's part, and none for her to be the elusive, enchanting mistress keeping him at arm's length until he is half dead with longing. Within the elegy lies the admission that this is no elegiac love.

Still, Phaedra makes one last return to the position of elegiac lover as she tells Hippolytus how she struggled not to give in to her passion, but it was too strong for her:

et pugnare diu nec me submittere culpae
 certa fui—certi siquid haberet amor;
 uicta precor genibusque tuis regalia tendo
 bracchia. quid deceat, non uidet ullus amans.
 depudui, profugusque pudor sua signa reliquit.
 da ueniam fasce duraque corda doma!

(*Heroides* 4.151–6)

I was sure that I would fight for a long time and not surrender myself to sin—if love could be sure of anything; defeated I pray and stretch my royal arms out to clasp your knees. No lover sees what is fitting. I stopped being ashamed, and as it fled, shame abandoned its standards. Pardon my confession and tame your hard heart!

Almost at the end of her letter, she comes back to the kind of conceit with which it began. Along with lines 7–18, this is the only place where Phaedra makes any direct reference to the attempt she made to preserve her modesty, and as in the earlier passage, her words reflect the classic elegiac pose of the attempt not to fall, followed by total surrender. More specifically, the image of her shame fleeing and

leaving its standards behind recalls the elegist's *militia amoris*,²⁰ though Phaedra is already disarmed and dishonoured at the very moment she decides to march in love's war.

The presentation of Phaedra as elegiac love poet is not constant, nor is it the only attitude she assumes. At times she appears to take the part of a different figure from that same genre, whether the late-starting lover, or the elegiac mistress herself. From the first line, where she defines herself as a *Cressa puella* ('Cretan girl'), she offers hints of the part of mistress she would like to play, yet she never takes on the trappings as eagerly as, say, Penelope with her worries and weaving,²¹ or Oenone, Deianira, Hypsipyle, and Medea with their bitter jealousy of their rivals.²² The elegiac picture Phaedra presents is fragmented, contradictory, moving through modes of seduction and surrender, as she turns in the mirror of her words to find the angle which suits her best, and which is most liable to please a man who doesn't even like women.

1.2. Phaedra's Virginity

When discussing Phaedra's description of herself coming to love like an unbroken colt, I mentioned the affinities with the hymeneal tradition, and this use of marriage imagery continues as Phaedra offers herself to Hippolytus like an apple from the tree or a first rose:

tu noua seruatae capies libamina famae,
et pariter nostrum fiet uterque nocens.
est aliquid, plenis pomaria carpere ramis,
et tenui primam delegere ungue rosam.
(*Heroides* 4.27–30)

²⁰ For *militia amoris* (love's warfare), cf. Lyne (1980), 71–8; McKeown (1995); Gale (1997).

²¹ Cf. *Her.* 1.5–10; the Penelope of mythical tradition is, of course, one of the models for Cynthia's complaint at Propertius 1.3.41–6.

²² Cf. *Her.* 5.67–74, 99–106; 6.79–81; 9.121; 12.175–8. Compare Cynthia's hysterical attack on the girls Propertius has been with at 4.8.51–62. As Rosati (1992), 82 points out, though, the male elegiac lover is himself often plagued by paranoia about a real or potential rival.

You'll enjoy the fresh first offerings of my well-kept reputation, and it will be harmful to us both alike. It is something to pick fruit from the orchard with laden branches, and to pluck the first rose with a delicate fingernail.

As with the wedding poems from which such elements derive, these lines offer a precarious mixture of purity and sexuality: Phaedra is pure, like unpicked fruit or flowers,²³ yet apples and roses are themselves love-gifts, agents of seduction.²⁴ Line 28 neatly, even delicately, hints at the sort of equality and parallelism of the passion of bride and groom common to the more optimistic marriage hymns (such as Catullus 61), yet betrays the destructive nature of the relationship here advocated through the word *nocens*. Phaedra may intend this to be taken ironically—how could such a happy union be harmful?—but the irony is itself double-edged and undermining, just as when she asks, *quid epistula lecta nocebit?* ('what harm will reading a letter do?', 3). Phaedra's claim to maidenhead is disingenuous, sophistic,²⁵ but it also mirrors Hippolytus' real and jealously guarded virginity. The purity she loves in him she wishes to embrace as her own. Once again, though a woman, she falls into the more customarily male position of a sexually experienced lover trying to persuade one less experienced to welcome the joys of love, like a husband waiting to show his young wife the bedroom.²⁶

Underneath the elegiac and hymeneal elements of this section lies a darker thread, which hints at another woman who tried and failed to preserve her virtual virginity: Vergil's Dido. When Phaedra speaks of burning with love, a hidden wound in her heart (20), she brings to mind the sequence of wound and fire imagery from *Aeneid* 4: *At regina graui*

²³ Cf. Sappho 105a, 105c; Catullus 61.21–5, 87–9; 62.39–47 (in particular, compare *tenui... ungui* ('delicate nail', 62.43) with *tenui... ungue* at *Her.* 4.30).

²⁴ e.g. Propertius 1.3.24; the apples in the stories of Acontius and Cydippe, Milanion and Atalanta; the roses around Pyrrha's cave in Horace, *Odes* 1.5. Cf. also Longus, *Daphnis and Chloe* 3.33.4–34.3 for an apple and a 'picked' tree (so at *Her.* 4.29, the literal meaning is to 'pick an orchard with loaded branches').

²⁵ The claim is, of course, part of her broader attempts to argue for her innocence and lack of guile in love: cf. Spentzou (2003), 54–7.

²⁶ This motif is particularly characteristic of lyric poetry: e.g. Anacreon 417; Horace, *Odes* 1.23. It is worth noting that men were not expected to retain their virginity until marriage, and that some sexual experience was expected, although getting married would usher them into a new erotic phase: e.g. Catullus 61.139–41. Cf. Treggiari (1991), 299–309.

iamdudum saucia cura | uulnus alit uenis et caeco carpitur igni ('But the queen, now for a while wounded by heavy anxiety, nourishes the wound in her veins and is consumed by hidden fire', 1–2).²⁷ With Dido in mind, one can read again Phaedra's flippant, *non ego nequitia socialia foedera rumpam; | fama—uelim quaeras—crimine nostra uacat* ('I shall not break my marriage bonds through naughtiness; my reputation—and you may ask—is free from accusation', *Her.* 4.17–18), in the light of Dido's much more serious struggle to keep her vows to Sychaeus, even though he is dead.²⁸ In direct contrast, Phaedra fails to recognize the strength of her husband's claims upon her, and is unable to see the similarity between her own situation and one like Dido's. The setting of her struggle with her conscience in the past tense also obscures it: when she claims, *et pugnare diu nec me submittere culpae | certa fui* ('I was sure that I would fight for a long time and not surrender myself to sin', 151–2), does she mean that she *did* resist for a long time, or that it was merely her (short-lived) intention to do so? Nevertheless, although Ovid's Phaedra is a far more self-indulgent, shallow figure, in many senses not flattered by the comparison with Dido, the reminiscences evoked of the Carthaginian queen can also serve to underscore the elegiac letter with an ominous hint of imminent tragedy. And as Dido herself in some ways resembles earlier incarnations of Phaedra, the system of resemblance turns full circle to add depth and history to the epistle.

1.3. Phaedra the Bawd

It has often been observed that the tone of Phaedra's letter at times has much in common with the speeches of the Nurse in Euripides' *Hippolytus*. The transference of these sophistic attempts at persuasion from the mouth of a lowly figure to that of Phaedra herself naturally has the effect of cheapening her, making a young queen sound more like an old bawd. Her greater directness of approach also carries reminders of the infamous Phaedra who offers herself

²⁷ Which continues at *Aen.* 4.67, 683, 689; 6.450 (wound); 4.23, 54, 66, 68, 101, [167], 300, 364, 376, [384] (fire, moving to the flames of Dido's curse at 605 and 607, and of her pyre at 5.4). Cf. Lyne (1987), 121, 194 n. 62; (1989), 179–81.

²⁸ *Aen.* 4.15–29; compare also her Sychaeus-focused guilt at 4.457–65, 550–2.

shamelessly to Hippolytus, as seen in Euripides' first *Hippolytus* play.²⁹ It is difficult to decide which of the two Euripides plays should be regarded as the primary source here—indeed, it is possible that the Nurse of the second play was given arguments similar to those used by Phaedra in the first—but it is interesting nonetheless to explore the parallels which can be seen between the elegiac letter and the surviving tragedy.

In her opening words, Phaedra comments that the god of love is not to be ignored or underestimated: *quidquid Amor iussit, non est contemnere tutum*; | *regnat et in dominos ius habet ille deos* ('whatever Love commands it is not safe to despise; he reigns and has power even over the gods, our masters', 11–12). I have already quoted these lines in the context of elegiac openings, but they also encapsulate the message of the Nurse's speech in Euripides' tragedy:

Κύπρις γὰρ οὐ φορητὸν ἦν πολλὴ ὄνῃ,
ἢ τὸν μὲν εἴκονθ' ἥσυχῇ μετέρχεται,
ὃν δ' ἂν περισσὸν καὶ φρονοῦνθ' εὖρῃ μέγα,
τοῦτον λαβοῦσα πῶς δοκεῖς καθύβρισεν.

(Euripides, *Hippolytus* 443–6)

Cypris cannot be withstood when she rushes on in full strength, and though she goes gently after one who yields, if she finds someone uncommon and arrogant, she takes him and, what do you think, cuts him down.

ἀλλ' ὅμως ἐν οὐρανῷ
ναίουσι καὶ φεύγουσιν ἐκποδῶν θεούς,
στέργουσι δ', οἶμαι, ξυμφορᾷ νικώμενοι.

(Euripides, *Hippolytus* 456–8)

All the same, they [Cephalus and Aurora] live in heaven, and do not flee out of the way of the gods, but are content, I think, overcome by circumstance.

Phaedra's advice to Hippolytus to allow passion into his life (*Her.* 4.87–92) has much in common with these words too, as well as recalling the (nurse-like) advice of the old attendant to the young hunter at the start of Euripides' play (*Hipp.* 88–107). Again, the Nurse's (rather over-hopeful) claim that husbands often turn a

²⁹ As, it is generally assumed, does the direct approach of Seneca's Phaedra. Cf. Coffey and Mayer (1990), 6.

blind eye to their wives' adultery and set up love-matches for their sons forms the basis of the Ovidian Phaedra's argument that incest is unproblematic and rather ordinary:

πόσους δοκεῖς δὴ κάρτ' ἔχοντας εὖ φρενῶν
 νοσοῦνθ' ὀρῶντας λέκτρα μὴ δοκεῖν ὀρᾶν;
 πόσους δὲ παισὶ πατέρας ἡμαρτηκόσιν
 συνεκκομίζειν Κύπριν; ἐν σοφοῖσι γὰρ
 τόδ' ἐστὶ θνητῶν, λανθάνειν τὰ μὴ καλά.
 (Euripides, *Hippolytus* 462–6)

How many sensible husbands do you think, seeing their marriage in trouble, pretend not to see? And how many fathers help their mistaken sons to gain the object of their love? This is what wise mortals do: ignore what is not pretty.

While Euripides' Nurse hovers just this side of the outrageous, implying the possibility of the relationship between her mistress and Hippolytus, but not openly advocating incest, Phaedra has no such subtlety about her. By being so brazen, coming so quickly to the point, she loses the Nurse's self-characterization as the 'voice of common sense', and moves instead into the realm of unbalanced self-justification.

At 153–4, Phaedra presents herself to Hippolytus as a suppliant: *uicta precor genibusque tuis regalia tendo | braccia! quid deceat, non uidet ullus amans* ('conquered, I pray to you and stretch my royal arms to clasp your knees! No lover sees what is fitting'). There is, as so often with Phaedra, an initial ambiguity here as to *which* action she should feel ashamed about—propositioning her stepson, or lowering her royal self to beg. It soon becomes apparent, however, that it is the latter: Minos' daughter, Jupiter's granddaughter, has come to such a pass that she must now bow to the son of a barbarian warrior woman. Nevertheless, in the picture of Phaedra clasping Hippolytus' knees, there is again an echo of that humbler figure, the Euripidean Nurse. In *Hippolytus*, following her disastrous attempt to persuade the young man to satisfy her mistress's passion, the Nurse begs him to keep silent:

Τρ. ναί, πρὸς σε τῇσδε δεξιᾷς εὐωλένου.
 Ιπ. οὐ μὴ προσοίσεις χεῖρα μηδ' ἄψῃ πέπλων;
 Τρ. ὦ πρὸς σε γονάτων, μηδαμῶς μ' ἐξεργάσῃ.
 (Euripides, *Hippolytus* 605–7)

NU. Please, by this your beautiful right arm!

HIP. Don't stretch out your hand or touch my clothes!

NU. Oh, I beg you, don't destroy me!

It is in response to this appeal that Hippolytus launches into his speech attacking all women as foul creatures who should be kept in isolation, the speech which tips Phaedra further towards suicide and revenge. Between the lines of the Ovidian Phaedra's plea, we can already read Hippolytus' disgust and rejection. Though (necessarily) left unsaid, Hippolytus' words ring out. Whereas with many of the other recipients of the single letters of the *Heroides* we can only assume (if on pretty good grounds) what the reply would be, with Hippolytus there is never any doubt: he has already cursed Phaedra and all womankind.

1.4. The Victims of Circumstance

Although Ovid's Phaedra plays an active and enthusiastic part in her journey towards her own downfall, there is a sense, too, in which she is a victim: her life and love are mapped out by a combination of divine vindictiveness and human neglect. This is a theme more fully developed by Seneca, and I will discuss it at greater length in relation to his play, but there are some preliminary observations to be made about *Heroides* 4.

Taking the cue offered by Euripides' Phaedra (*Hip.* 337–43), who sees that she is the third in line to suffer after Pasiphae and Ariadne (ἐκεῖθεν ἡμεῖς, οὐ νεωστί, δυστυχεῖς—'I was unlucky from then on, not recently', 343), Ovid's heroine, perhaps a little facetiously, extends the line of inherited doom one generation further back, to Europa. She also gives a reason for the inheritance—Venus' wrath:³⁰

³⁰ This explanation is reminiscent of Sosicrates' (*FGrH* 461 F 6), who claims that Aphrodite exacted revenge on the daughters of the Sun for his revelation of her affair with Ares. Europa, however, is not related to the Sun (she is Agenor's daughter and Minos' mother), and the reason for Venus' desire to exact tribute from Phaedra's family therefore becomes obscure again.

Forsitan hunc generis fato reddamus amorem,
 et Venus ex tota gente tributa petat.
 Iuppiter Europen—prima est ea gentis origo—
 dilexit, tauro dissimulante deum.
 Pasiphae mater, decepto subdita tauro,
 enixa est utero crimen onusque suo.
 perfidus Aegides, ducentia fila secutus,
 curua meae fugit tecta sororis ope.
 en, ego nunc, ne forte parum Minoia credar,
 in socias leges ultima gentis eo.
 hoc quoque fatale est: placuit domus una duabus;
 me tua forma capit, capta parente soror.

(*Heroides* 4.53–64)

Perhaps this love is the price I pay for my family's destiny, and Venus takes her tax from the whole line. Jupiter loved Europa—that is the first beginning of our line—with a bull's form disguising the god. My mother Pasiphae, mounted by the bull she deceived, gave birth to her reproach and burden from her own womb. The faithless son of Aegeus, following the guiding thread, escaped the winding house with my sister's help. And look, now I, lest I should be thought not enough the daughter of Minos, am the last to come under the shared laws of my family! This too is fate: one house pleased both of us; your beauty captivates me, and my sister was captivated by your father.

Interestingly, she makes less of the divine excuse than perhaps she could. When Phaedra describes the fateful trip to Eleusis, where she fell in love with Hippolytus (67–70), the reader may recall the account given by Aphrodite herself in Euripides (*Hipp.* 24–33). With this history in mind, and following as it does her suspicions of Venus' involvement in her trouble, Phaedra's account could be interpreted as evidence of divine working, were it not fatally, brilliantly undercut by her admission, *nec non ante placebas* ('nor did you not please me before', 69). This Phaedra, it would appear, needed little encouragement to fall for her stepson. We might even begin to doubt that the love goddess has any such direct influence on her, beyond the standard lovers' metaphor, and a little more weight falls on that initial *forsitan* ('perhaps', 53).

The other impulse which speeds Phaedra along her unlucky path is the awareness of her husband Theseus' indifference to her. Just as she professes interest in the wilds and hunting in order to be able to

claim common ground between herself and Hippolytus, so she emphasizes the ways in which the Athenian hero has failed and deserted both his wife and his son:

tempore abest aberitque diu Neptunius heros;
 illum Pirithoi detinet ora sui.
 praeposuit Theseus—nisi si manifesta negamus—
 Pirithoum Phaedrae Pirithoumque tibi.
 sola nec haec ad nos iniuria uenit ab illo;
 in magnis laesi rebus uterque sumus.
 ossa mei fratris claua perfracta trinodi
 sparsit humi; soror est praeda relicta feris.
 prima securigeras inter uirtute puellas
 te peperit, nati digna uigore parens;
 si quaeras, ubi sit—Theseus latus ense peregit,
 nec tanto mater pignore tuta fuit.
 at ne nupta quidem taedaeque accepta iugali –
 cur, nisi ne caperes regna paterna nothus?
 addidit et fratres ex me tibi, quos tamen omnis
 non ego tollendi causa, sed ille fuit.
 o utinam nocitura tibi, pulcherrime rerum,
 in medio nisu uiscera rupta forent!

(Ovid, *Heroides* 4.109–26)

The hero, Neptune's son, is away at the right time and will be away a long time; the shores of his friend Pirithous keep him. Theseus has put Pirithous—unless we deny the obvious—before Phaedra and Pirithous before you. Nor is this the only wrong which has come to us from him; we are both wounded in terrible ways. He scattered the bones of my brother on the ground, broken by his three-knotted club; my sister was left as prey for the wild beasts. The foremost in bravery of the axe-wielding girls bore you, a parent worthy of her son's strength; if you ask where she is—Theseus pierced her side with his sword, nor was your mother kept safe by such a pledge [as a son like you]. But she was not even his bride or received with the marriage torch—why, except so that you, as a bastard, should not inherit your father's throne? He has given you brothers too, by me, all of whom he, not I, caused to be reared as heirs. Oh would that the womb which was going to harm you, loveliest of creatures, had been torn in the midst of its labour!

As with much of this epistle, Phaedra's argument is not as strong as it could be, so convinced is she that the way to press her point home and persuade Hippolytus is with rhetoric and sophistry rather than

reason, or even straight-talking emotion. A fact which could give substance to a very real grievance for Hippolytus—that his father killed his mother—is distorted into a scarcely concealed attempt to lure her stepson into an alliance to seize Theseus' throne. Phaedra's own pique at being deserted by her husband for Pirithous never attains the intensity of a true complaint: in fact, she seems quite happy that Theseus should be absent, leaving space for her hoped-for liaison with Hippolytus. Her description of her husband's earlier harsh treatment of her brother, the Minotaur, and sister, Ariadne, has some effect, but that could be lessened by the impression that such a complaint could so easily become cliché. It is confined to a neat couplet which itself seems to be a paraphrase of Ariadne's own letter at *Heroides* 10.77–110. Phaedra's dismissal of her sons as dynastic pawns wanted by Theseus, but of no interest to herself is chillingly shallow: she is a wicked stepmother to her own children, plotting to oust them from power in favour of her beloved. Remembering Hippolytus' rejection of the idea of ruling in Euripides (*Hipp.* 1013–20), Phaedra's attempt at political bribery seems doubly empty. For all her passion, she does not know her beloved very well, and of course cannot let herself admit what little she does know,³¹ or her letter could never be written.

1.5. Phaedra on the Couch

I have outlined the divergent influences which make up the Phaedra of the *Heroides*, and while such a dissection and classification can be illuminating, it could also detract from a reading of Phaedra as a properly formed character. Ovid, like all Latin poets, maybe more so, constructs his characters with literary history and traditions in mind, and the strange, even discordant, mix to be found in Phaedra could be seen as contingent, dictated by intellectual, not psychological, concerns. Yet this mixture could, from a more psychoanalytic point

³¹ The closest she ever gets to admitting Hippolytus' misogyny, for example, is *quamuis odisse puellas | diceris* ('although you are said to hate girls', 173–4). The limited truth-value she assigns to the statement is indicated by the fact that as far as she is concerned, it is just a rumour (*diceris*), not fact, that Hippolytus isn't very keen on women.

of view, be interpreted as felicitous. It is appropriate that a woman already clearly, profoundly confused should find herself still more confused on a generic level. Does she belong to elegy, hymeneal, or tragedy? Is she really seductive lover, or tender virgin, or wily *lena*, or victim of divine circumstance? Perhaps in a way she is all of these, and belongs to all these genres.

Aware that her love is unacceptable, this letter is as much (if not more) an attempt at self-persuasion as persuading Hippolytus. If she only occasionally shows direct awareness of this (such as when she relates her scruples about mentioning her love in the first place), we can impute it to her weakness. The breathless accumulation of arguments presented to her beloved, the rather desperate sophistry, the transparently erotic nature of her fantasies about life as a hunter, all these reveal a woman too eager to believe in her own rhetoric. Unlike Euripides' Phaedra, she cannot allow herself the periods of clarity and self-loathing which redeem the tragic heroine.³² She is a flimsier, lonelier character, driven to play by herself the parts of lovesick woman, seductress, adviser, and even (if badly) moralist.³³ The only interlocutor this Phaedra has is Amor (14). She is weak, self-indulgent, self-deceiving, she is so blinded by love she cannot realize its impossibility, she cannot see Hippolytus as he really is, nor see herself for what she is. And yet there is still something more convincing, more engaging about her than the out-and-out shamelessness which the bare bones of the scandalous myth she embodies would seem to allow.

2. SENECA, PHAEDRA

Seneca's *Phaedra* is a powerful work, which offers a picture of the destructive nature of extreme passion, whilst acknowledging the

³² Such periods are allowed to Seneca's Phaedra as well, though her clarity is most marked when it is too late.

³³ The only direct reference Phaedra makes to others around her who could potentially support and advise is the non-specific, *namque mihi referunt, cum se furor ille remisit, | omnia* ('for they report all this to me, when the frenzy has abated', 51–2). (Though a supporter of their love is sublimated in the reference to someone who may see Phaedra and Hippolytus embrace and approve of their closeness, 139–46.)

humanity of its characters and the intractability of a situation that seems overdetermined by so many factors. As an artist with Stoic affiliations, Seneca is concerned to investigate causal chains, the interconnectedness of things.³⁴ And in this myth, he has hit upon a perfect vehicle for exploring his obsession: the causes of Phaedra's love and Hippolytus' destruction emerge as a complicated combination of traits of character, patterns of inheritance, and literary tradition.

2.1. An Unsatisfactory Marriage and Violent Men

Besides the attractiveness and proximity of her stepson, the obvious causes of Phaedra's passion for Hippolytus fall into three (sometimes overlapping) categories: the anger of Venus, the inherited sin of a Cretan woman, and Phaedra's dissatisfaction with her negligent husband. The first two are the more commonly cited and are developed from Euripides onwards,³⁵ but it is in Ovid and Seneca that the motif of Theseus' infidelity towards Phaedra (as opposed to his infidelity towards Ariadne and others) is most fully exploited.

Although Seneca's Phaedra is also guilty at times of the same kind of shameless rhetoric found in Ovid, in general her passion is more persuasive, more believable. Her strange, cold marriage to Theseus functions far more as an explanation than as a flimsy excuse for her behaviour. Phaedra was married to Theseus as part of a political settlement between Crete and Athens, a relationship without love that she was not free to choose. Diodorus Siculus gives the dynastic angle to her story at 4.62.1:

Δευκαλίων ὁ πρεσβύτατος τῶν Μίνως παίδων, δυναστεύων τῆς Κρήτης καὶ ποιησάμενος πρὸς Ἀθηναίους συμμαχίαν, συνῴκισε τὴν ἰδίαν ἀδελφὴν Φαίδραν Θησεῖ.

³⁴ Seneca discusses the Stoic concept of causation at *Ep. Mor.* 65. I do not wish to imply, though, that only a Stoic playwright would have these concerns. Aristotle expresses his approval of causally coherent plots at *Poet.* 1451^b.

³⁵ For brevity's sake, I have here collapsed the two different causes of Venus'/Aphrodite's anger: resentment against the Sun for having betrayed her affair with the war-god, and (as in Euripides) anger at Hippolytus' failure to worship her divinity.

Deucalion, the eldest of Minos' children, while ruling Crete and making an alliance with the Athenians, joined his own sister, Phaedra, in marriage to Theseus.

So, with such historical backing, Seneca has Phaedra lament her lot as a political pawn. In her opening speech, in a variation of the 'would the *Argo* had never sailed' topos, she reproaches Crete for forcing her marriage to the enemy:

O magna uasti Creta dominatrix freti,
cuius per omne litus innumerae rates
tenuere pontum, quidquid Assyria tenuis
tellure Nereus peruium rostris secat,
cur me in penates obsidem inuisos datam
hostique nuptam degere aetatem in malis
lacrimisque cogis?

(*Phaedra* 85–91)

Oh great Crete, mistress of the huge sea, along whose every shore countless ships hold the deep water, wherever Nereus cuts a path for their prows as far as the Assyrian land, why do you force me, a hostage given to a hateful household and married to the enemy, to live out my life in tears and troubles?

She is a lonely woman far from home, and sees her relationship to Theseus as that of a hostage doomed to a life of grief.³⁶ Unlike an Ariadne or a Medea, who may come to lament the loss of their home which they brought upon themselves by their hopes for marriage, she was not the author of the choice to leave Crete for Athens.

To add insult to injury, Theseus is not even interested in this woman forced to lead a lonely life away from her fatherland, but has left her much as he deserted other women before her: *profugus en coniunx abest | praestatque nuptae quam solet Theseus fidem* ('see, my fugitive husband has gone, and Theseus shows his customary fidelity

³⁶ To an extent, Phaedra's life is little better than that of a captive princess like Andromache, married to the son of the man who killed her husband. Although dynastic marriages were a fact of life for high-born women in the ancient world, the plight of free women forced to become wives of former enemies is rarely highlighted in myth. A partial parallel can be found in Euripides' *Ion*, where it is established that Creusa was given as wife to Xuthus in return for his help to Athens in the war with Euboea (289–98); though he was an ally, not an enemy, the queen does not seem overly pleased about being his *δορὸς* . . . *γέρας* ('spear-prize'), 298.

to his bride', 91–2). Unfettered by any sense of shame or fear (96–7), her husband has accompanied his friend Pirithous on a mission to abduct the queen of the Underworld,³⁷ his impious lustfulness ironically contrasting with Hippolytus' fanatical chastity: *stupra et illicitos toros | Acheronte in imo quaerit Hippolyti pater* ('Hippolytus' father seeks rape and forbidden beds in the depths of Acheron', 97–8). The kind of jealousy which Ovid's Phaedra feels for Theseus' close relationship with Pirithous is here overshadowed by a sense of revulsion engendered by her husband's lack of self-control, his overweening lust for other women. The irony that the amorous Phaedra should call Theseus *furoris socius* ('frenzy's ally', 96)³⁸ could undermine her case for being a wronged wife, but it also adds to the atmosphere of shared guilt and frustration which (in part) gives rise to her love for Hippolytus. The estranged pair, Phaedra and Theseus, seem bound closer together by their different passions, and in the end these converge to bring about Hippolytus' destruction. Phaedra herself is partly conscious of the link between her unsatisfying marriage and her love for Hippolytus: the latter is more pressing for her (*sed maior alius incubat maestae dolor*—'but another, greater grief presses on me in my misery', 99), but requires an introduction by the former.

Even though he is away, and Phaedra hopes he will never return from Hades, Theseus continues to exert an oppressive influence on his household. As the Nurse warns her, the king has brute strength or cunning enough to escape from the Underworld, and to offer a violent threat to a wife who fails to fulfil her conjugal duties:

NU. Ne crede Diti. clausurit regnum licet
 canisque diras Stygius obseruet fores:
 solus negatas inuenit Theseus uias.
 PH. Veniam ille amori forsitan nostro dabit.
 NU. Immitis etiam coniugi castae fuit:
 experta saeuam est barbara Antiope manum.
 (Phaedra 222–7)

³⁷ In Sophocles' *Phaedra* too, Theseus returns from the Underworld much to Phaedra's surprise: cf. fr. 686, 687 R.

³⁸ For Phaedra's own *furor*, cf. 112, 178, 184, 248, 263, 268, 363, 584, 641, 824, 1156.

NU. Do not put your trust in Dis. Grant that he has closed off his kingdom and the Stygian dog watches the hellish gates: Theseus alone has uncovered forbidden paths.

PH. Perhaps he will forgive me my love.

NU. He was harsh even to a chaste wife: the barbarian Antiope has felt his savage hand.

Phaedra's ridiculous hope that Theseus might forgive her for her love of Hippolytus is clipped by the Nurse's sharp reminder of the fate Antiope suffered at Theseus' hands. Although fear of her husband's temper is not enough to quench Phaedra's desire, she later, bitterly, recognizes its hallmarks, linking his violence and thoughtlessness with his ill-fated returns from Crete and the Underworld and with the pain brought about by his treatment of Ariadne, Antiope, and herself:

o dure Theseu semper, o numquam tuis
tuto reuerse: natus et genitor nece
reditus tuos luere; peruertis domum
amore semper coniugum aut odio nocens.

(Phaedra 1164–7)

O Theseus, ever harsh, never returning safely to your own family: your son and your father have paid with death for your homecomings. You have overturned your house, always causing harm through love or hatred of your wives.

To compound the sense of Theseus' persistent influence while he is still away and his harsh judgements on his return,³⁹ Phaedra is reminded by her nurse of other male watchers. Even if Theseus himself were to be trapped forever in the Underworld, and thus be unable to revile Phaedra's crime, there are others who will:

quid ille, lato maria qui regno premit
populisque reddit iura centenis, pater?
latere tantum facinus occultum sinet?

³⁹ Theseus does not stop 'judging' after wrongly finding Hippolytus guilty and cursing him: witness his final words over Phaedra's corpse, *istam terra defossam premat, | grauisque tellus impio capiti incubet* ('let the earth press on her where she is buried, and let the soil weigh heavy on her sinful head', 1279–80). He fails to realize his part in Phaedra's downfall, so destroyed is he by Hippolytus'. So many lessons later, he is still unable to learn pity.

sagax parentum est cura. credamus tamen
 astu doloque tegere nos tantum nefas;
 quid ille rebus lumen infundens suum,
 matris parens? quid ille, qui mundum quatit
 uibrans corusca fulmen Aetnaeum manu,
 sator deorum? credis hoc posse effici,
 inter uidentes omnia ut lateas auos?

(*Phaedra* 149–58)

What of your father, who subdues the seas under his wide rule and who gives laws to a hundred cities? Will he allow such a great crime to lie hidden? A parent's care is wise. But let's believe that we can cover up such a sin with cunning and deceit; what of him who pours his light on the world, your mother's father? What of him who shakes the world, brandishing his Aetnean thunderbolt in his glittering hand, the father of the gods? Do you think this can be done in such a way that you might go unseen among your ancestors who see everything?

Her father Minos, stern lawgiver, later to be judge of the dead, is ready to condemn her. Yet even if Phaedra were able to conceal the deed from him,⁴⁰ another watcher stands in line—the all-seeing Sun, Phaedra's maternal grandfather, who has already brought trouble on his daughters through his over-sedulous observation. Jupiter too, her paternal grandfather, is poised to judge, not now appearing as an excuse for incest (contrast *Heroides* 4), but in grim *Georgic* guise,⁴¹ or like the god who blasted Semele.⁴² All three of these figures of male authority have broad areas of power and influence, as well as specific reason to watch over Phaedra's conduct, yet early in the grip of her madness Phaedra tries to discount the strength of male disapproval:

NU. Patris memento.

PH. Meminimus matris simul.

NU. Genus omne profugit.

PH. Paelicis careo metu.

NU. Aderit maritus.

⁴⁰ It is tempting here to compare Pasiphae's attempt to conceal her adultery with the bull and then the baby Minotaur. Minos, of course, discovers the crime, and is harsh in his condemnation.

⁴¹ Compare line 156 with *Geor.* 1.328–30.

⁴² It may be significant that Semele's love and death are told in the Eros ode of Euripides, *Hipp.* 555–62.

PH. Nempe Pirithoi comes.

NU. Aderitque genitor.

PH. Mitis Ariadnae pater.

(*Phaedra* 242–5)

NU. Remember your father.

PH. I remember my mother too.

NU. Hippolytus spurns all our kind.

PH. Then I need not fear a rival.

NU. Your husband will be here.

PH. You mean Pirithous' comrade.

NU. And your father will be here.

PH. Ariadne's gentle father.

Neither the thought of her husband's and father's disapproval, nor the reminder of Hippolytus' hatred of women is enough to steer Phaedra from her course. But when Hippolytus has fled and Theseus returns, she seems to acknowledge male power once more:

Eheu, per tui sceptrum imperi,
magnanime Theseu, perque natorum indolem
tuosque reditus perque iam cineres meos,
permitte mortem.

(*Phaedra* 868–71)

Alas, by the sceptre of your power, great-hearted Theseus, and by the promise of your children, by your return, and soon by my ashes, allow my death.

In response to Theseus' expression of his confusion about the lack of joy over his homecoming in words which perhaps betray a certain fondness for his wife (850–3, 863–8), Phaedra asks to be allowed to die in quite formal language which draws attention to Theseus' regal status and authority. Indeed, the address, *magnanime Theseu*, even contains a reference to the other royal male in Phaedra's life, Minos: cf. Catullus 64.85, *magnanimum* . . . *Minoa* ('great-hearted Minos'). Still, it is of course possible that the respectfulness in her plea reflects nothing of her real opinion, and this interpretation could be borne out by her use of Sol and Jupiter as witnesses to her false accusation of Hippolytus:

Te, te, creator caelitem, testem inuoco,
et te, coruscum lucis aetheriae iubar,

ex cuius ortu nostra dependet domus:
temptata precibus restiti . . .

(Phaedra 888–91)

I call on you to witness, you the creator of the gods, and you, shimmering blaze of heavenly light on whose rising our house depends, assailed by prayers, I resisted . . .

This is marvellous blasphemy, soon to be echoed (if unintentionally) by Theseus' appeal to *his* divine ancestry, when he calls on his father Neptune to strike the rapist Hippolytus down.⁴³

After the news of Hippolytus' destruction has been relayed to the palace, Phaedra's wild grief, guilt, and remorse cause her to revile Theseus for his violent thoughtlessness, but also, before that, in another interesting symmetry, to call Neptune's curse upon herself:

Me, me, profundi saeue dominator freti,
inuade et in me monstra caerulei maris
emitte, quidquid intimo Tethys sinu
extrema gestat, quidquid Oceanus uagis
complexus undis ultimo fluctu tegit.

(Phaedra 1159–63)

Harsh master of the deep sea, make your attack on me, me, and send against me the monsters of the blue-green ocean, whatever distant Tethys cradles in her innermost embrace, whatever Ocean clasps and covers with his wandering waves in his farthest current.

These words mirror those of Theseus' appeal to his father,⁴⁴ but the opening *me, me* also echoes the *te, te* of her false oath before Jupiter and the Sun.⁴⁵ The sentiment has an interesting source of inspiration,

⁴³ It is unclear whether it is to be imagined that Phaedra has left the stage by the time Theseus utters his curse at 941–58. Mayer (in Coffey and Mayer (1990)) thinks it implausible that Phaedra would stand by and allow this, 'since she never suggests that she means to harm Hippolytus' (p. 168); perhaps, though, her own lack of fear when she makes her oath might indicate that she is sceptical (or at least has mixed views) about the likelihood of divine intervention.

⁴⁴ It is interesting also to see the theme of domination of the sea in Phaedra's opening words, addressed to Crete, not Neptune: *O magna uasti Creta dominatrix freti* ('O great Crete, mistress of the huge sea', 85).

⁴⁵ To continue the debate over whether Phaedra was present as Theseus cursed, Mayer's comment on 1159 could well undermine his argument that she was not: '[t]hat Phaedra addresses Neptune shows that she has somehow learned of Theseus' curse too' (p. 188). In some ways it would be simpler to assume her presence at 941.

Nisus' shout at *Aeneid* 9.427, when the Rutulians have killed Euryalus: *me, me adsum qui feci, in me conuertite ferrum* ('I am here, I who did it, turn your swords against me').⁴⁶ It is a bitter, pointed irony that Phaedra too is about to die by the sword in (futile?) reparation for her beloved's death. Moreover, there is perhaps a strange parallel here between Phaedra's unanswered call to the god and her appeal to Hippolytus to consummate her love and end her misery by killing her at 710–12. Despite the ever-present threat of male disapproval, oppression, and aggression, on both occasions when Phaedra tries overtly to call male violence upon herself, she receives no response, and in the end has to do that violence herself (with a man's weapon).

2.2. *Phaedra flam*: Character Self-Creation and the Inevitability of Sin

As poetry becomes increasingly self-conscious, so, accordingly, can its characters. The poet can furnish his creations with a meta-textual awareness of (or ironic betrayal of) their own status as creations. The tradition imposes boundaries which themselves provide a degree of prescience and inevitability. Within the fictions, characters can examine their actions, their history, and perceive patterns which can become aspirations. Each of these sources exerts its own pressure, forcing the character to be the way it seems she always had to be: Phaedra, because of tradition, because of the artist, because of her own sense of identity, will always be Phaedra. An overdeterministic system such as this can easily become stifling, yet sometimes, conversely, it brings with it possibilities for a fascinating examination of the creation of strong characters within the constraints of fiction (and, extending into the realm of philosophy, of the existence of choice and self in any meaningful sense within a deterministic universe).

The author and audience's foreknowledge is, of course, always an important element in tragedy, and hardly exclusive to Seneca, and neither is a character's self-examination and self-recognition, but it is an element which is particularly prominent in his plays, and particularly highly developed. This no doubt has some connection with his

⁴⁶ This also noted by Mayer in Coffey and Mayer (1990).

philosophical interests,⁴⁷ but also with his position as a late poet,⁴⁸ writing after a good century of intensive poetic production at Rome. For Seneca, as for his characters, the weight of literary history is particularly apparent, and it becomes structural for him,⁴⁹ even more so, perhaps, than for Ovid.

One of the most overt and striking examples of an examination of this kind can be found in Seneca's *Medea*. Paradoxically enough, the chilling force of Medea as a fictional character within the tragedy finds its roots in her foregrounded awareness of her own fictional status. From the opening of the play, Medea is acutely conscious of her own potential to be 'Medea'. She launches immediately into a speech which exhibits a level of vengeful ferocity and a consciousness of her inheritance as granddaughter of the Sun that is far more gradually attained by Euripides' tragic heroine. In the guise of meta-textual heroine, she now knows her own character uncannily well: she knows both her real passion, which will be one driving force, and her literary history, which will be the other. She frequently speaks of herself in the third person,⁵⁰ indicating a detachment, a sense of being a (self-)spectator, yet at the same time she is fatally, pathologically incapable of perspective. On the stage spread before her, in her mirror, all she can see is Medea looming large, Medea the child-killer.⁵¹ From *Medea fiam* ('I shall become Medea') at line 171, she moves inexorably to *Medea nunc sum* ('now I am Medea') at 910.

⁴⁷ In Seneca's philosophical works, self-examination and hence self-knowledge are closely linked to self-improvement, a kind of moral self-creation. Cf. e.g. *Naturales Quaestiones* 1.17.4; *Ep. Mor.* 83.1–2; *De Ira* 2.36.1–3; 3.36.2. I owe these references to a lecture by Shadi Bartsch, 'The Mirror of the Self: Seneca, Self-Scrutiny and the Passions', delivered at Corpus Christi College Oxford on 13 Mar. 2000.

⁴⁸ Of course, Seneca does not in fact mark the end of tragedy—indeed, some would say he marks the beginning of the modern genre—but he is post-Republican, post-Augustan.

⁴⁹ Cf. Schiesaro (1997a), *passim* (the focus is on Seneca's *Troades*, *Agamemnon*, and *Oedipus*) and (1997b).

⁵⁰ In particular, *Medea superest* ('Medea is left', 166); *est his maior metus: | Medea* ('there is a greater cause for fear than this: Medea', 516–17); *perge nunc, aude, incipe | quidquid potest Medea, quidquid non potest* ('now follow through, dare, begin whatever Medea can do, whatever she cannot do', 566–7); *Medea nunc sum; creuit ingenium malis* ('now I am Medea; my talent has grown through my troubles', 910).

⁵¹ Braden (1970) holds that it is a common feature of Senecan rhetoric that it shames the speaker into action by erecting a self-image somewhat greater than he is capable of being.

Seneca's Phaedra is also a slave to her passion, but lacks the violent intensity of Medea; she thus preserves a slightly wider world-view while remaining profoundly self-absorbed, and self-creating.⁵² Whilst for Seneca's Medea the determining force is her vision of an *über*-Medea, her resolve to become what she should be, Seneca's Phaedra has her awareness of her family history to push her into action even as she is repelled by the vision before her. Closely linked to the vocabulary of memory familiar from Catullus' and Ovid's Ariadne is the vocabulary of recognition. Looking at her own life from a distance (the creator's distance, the neurotic's distance), Phaedra perceives a pattern which recurs, a cyclical history, tradition even, of sin which afflicts her family:

fatale miserae matris *agnosco* malum:
peccare noster nouit in siluis amor.
(Seneca, *Phaedra* 113–14)

I recognize the fateful misfortune of my mother: our love has learned to sin in the woods.

The idea of recognizing someone's true self recurs elsewhere in Senecan drama: during her final confrontation with Jason, speaking from the dragon-drawn chariot, Medea asks, *coniugem agnoscis tuam?* ('do you recognize your wife?', *Med.* 1021); Atreus asks Thyestes, *natos ecquid agnoscis tuos?* ('so do you recognize your children?'), to which the other replies, *agnosco fratrem* ('I recognize my brother', *Thy.* 1005–6).⁵³ In *Phaedra*, when the queen discovers patterns in her own character and history, she sets in motion a chain of recognition. The first is a false recognition as Theseus 'sees' Hippolytus' crime by identifying a sword (898–900); despite its falsity, part of the attraction, the conviction this revelation carries, comes from an earlier scene in Theseus' life, where he is recognized (just in time to save him from death, not to sentence him to it) by the

⁵² Fitch and McElduff (2002), 32–5, offer a persuasive reading of Seneca's Phaedra as a character who constructs multiple versions of herself—the victim, the slave, the seductress, the respectable woman—but cannot decide which version best suits or defines her.

⁵³ Literal recognition couples with figurative recognition at *Hercules Furens* 624 and 1016, and at *Hercules Oetaeus* 955, 1016, 1234, 1946; Oedipus becomes exemplary at *Phoenissae* 328–38, and at 332 he talks of recognizing his crimes.

sword he carries when he comes to his father's house.⁵⁴ The chain comes to a gory climax as Theseus realizes that his hasty curse has destroyed his innocent son (*crimen agnosco meum*—‘I recognize my offence’, 1249) and as he is then presented with the task of literally reconstructing the real, now dead, Hippolytus: *restituere partes... | hic laeua frenis docta moderandis manus | ponenda: laeui lateris agnosco notas* (‘put the pieces back in place... here his left hand should be put, skilled in managing the reins: I recognize the marks on his left side’, 1258–60).

The idea of inherited sin is one ideally suited to a poetic context, where such intimations will bring with them related ideas of literary inheritance, and it was also a familiar (and peculiarly Roman) idea that vice and virtue could be inherited (particularly among the upper classes).⁵⁵ However, it was not a concept so easily accepted by Stoic philosophers. At *Epistulae Morales* 94.55–6 Seneca states that faults are not born with us, and Nature has made us pure and free at birth. Pratt (1983), 91 argues that, in light of this, Seneca's view must be that Phaedra was unable to extricate herself from the situation imposed on her by her family background (and Hippolytus likewise); had she been a better Stoic, better able to use reason to control her irrational impulses, all the bad family history in the world would not have been enough to knock her off course. It is difficult, though, to accept that Seneca actually does present a unanimously Stoic view of the world in his plays. For example, in *Phaedra*, the *Natura* ode (959–87), rather than giving a standard Stoic picture of Nature, uneasily questions that picture and asks why in fact the Epicurean⁵⁶ view of distant, unconcerned divinity appears to explain better this world where the wicked can go unpunished and the good unrewarded.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Cf. Plutarch, *Thes.* 3.3–4; Apollodorus, *Bibl.* 3.15.7; 16.1.

⁵⁵ Cf. Cicero, *Philippics* 4.13, 14. 34; *Pro Sestio* 21; *Pro Rabirio Postumo* 2–4; *Pro Caelio* 33–4. Cf. Treggiari (2003).

⁵⁶ In particular, cf. 972–7: *sed cur idem qui tanta regis, | sub quo uasti pondera mundi | librata suos ducunt orbes, | hominum nimium securus abes, | non sollicitus prodesse bonis, | nocuisse malis?* (‘but why do you who have such wide rule, under whom the weights of the huge heavens make their orbits in balance, why do you stay so very far away from men, without care, and not concerned to be a help to good men and a harm to bad?’; 972–7). For the Epicurean vision of gods without cares, cf. Lucretius, *DRN* 1.44–9 (and 2.646–51).

⁵⁷ For an analogous example of a possibly Epicurean outburst within a broadly ‘Stoic’ text, cf. Lucan, *Bell. Civ.* 7.445–7 and 454–5, *mortalia nulli | sunt curata deo*

Given such considerations, it might be better to interpret the emphasis given to inherited sin in this play as another example of Seneca's questioning of the Stoic doctrine he elsewhere accepts. Here he dares to offer a picture of just how persuasive such ideas can be, of how one can so easily become the cause of one's own downfall and yet be unable to see how to stop it, blinded by the conviction that it is all inevitable. Phaedra (at least sometimes) knows that she *should* be able to control herself, and knows equally clearly and painfully that she *cannot*: *et ipsa nostrae fata cognosco domus: | fugienda petimus; sed mei non sum potens* ('I too recognize the fates of our house: we seek out what should be shunned; but I have no control over myself', 698–9).

The scene of Phaedra's attempted seduction of Hippolytus is a masterpiece. Although aware of the differences and difficulties involved, Phaedra desperately tries to recast her relationship with Hippolytus as that between Theseus and Ariadne on Crete. This itself is, of course, not the most auspicious of models, and, rather than freeing them from the shadow of incest, the whole affair now becomes more desperately tangled. Phaedra cannot even separate herself from her sister, but is caught up in the erotic fantasy of seeing Hippolytus as handsome stranger rather than forbidden fruit:

Hippolyte, sic est: Thesei uultus amo
 illos priores quos tulit quondam puer,
 cum prima puras barba signarat genas
 monstrique caecam Gnosii uidit domum
 et longa curua fila collegit uia.
 quis tum ille fulsit! presserant uittae comam
 et ora flauus tenera tinguebat pudor;
 inerant lacertis mollibus fortes tori;
 tuaeque Phoebes uultus aut Phoebi mei,
 tuusue potius—talis, en talis fuit
 cum placuit hosti, sic tulit celsum caput:
 in te magis refulget incompertus decor;
 est genitor in te totus et toruae tamen
 pars aliqua matris miscet ex aequo decus:
 in ore Graio Scythicus apparet rigor.
 si cum parente Creticum intrasses fretum,
 tibi fila potius nostra neuisset soror.

(Phaedra, 646–62)

Hippolytus, it is like this: I love Theseus' face, that which he had once before when he was a boy, when his first beard had marked his pure cheeks and he saw the blind house of the Cnossian monster and tracked his winding way with the long thread. What a man he was then—shining! The headbands bound his hair and golden modesty coloured his delicate face; there were strong muscles in his soft arms; his face like that of your Phoebe or my Phoebus, but more like your own—like this, yes, like this he was when he pleased his enemy, thus he held his head high. In you untended beauty shines more. Your whole father is in you, but also some part of your fierce mother mixes in, as great an ornament: in your Greek face appears Scythian stiffness. If you had entered the Cretan sea with your father, my sister would rather have wound her thread for you.

It is here that the problem of recurring sin as self-determining is crystallized most clearly. History not only makes the crime seem unavoidable, but even more attractive. Phaedra virtually falls in love with Theseus again (or for the first time?) through the comparison with Hippolytus; to her own passion for her stepson is added that of Ariadne for a more youthful Theseus.⁵⁸ The vision of one family member in another (sister in sister, father in son) becomes a heady erotic cocktail, culminating in Phaedra's offering of herself as though she were, as Ariadne was, a virgin: *respersa nulla labe et intacta, innocens* | *tibi mutor uni* ('splashed with no blemish and untouched, innocent, I am changed for you alone', 668–9). A conceit borrowed from *Heroides* 4 (cf. 17–18, 31–2) is thus given astonishing intensity. Phaedra's self-examination, her recognition of patterns, has resulted in an extreme form of self-delusion which collapses in on itself in a tangle of paradox: the virginal non-virgin⁵⁹ makes a speech of undisguised erotic passion destined never to be consummated. The description of Theseus as he was in Crete (647–56) is detailed, ardent: did Phaedra herself, as a child, see him like this, or is she, as it were, transported into Ariadne's body by the force of her fantasy? The sisters become entangled again at 661–2 as Phaedra imagines what would have happened if Hippolytus could have come to Crete

('mortal affairs are no concern to any god'). On the destabilizing of Stoicism elsewhere in the *Bellum Civile*, cf. Masters (1992), 63–5 and 71–3.

⁵⁸ So too P. J. Davis (1983), who remarks, 'in falling in love with her stepson Phaedra is falling in love with a more perfect version of her husband' (p. 119).

⁵⁹ It may be possible to see in both Ovid and Seneca's use of the 'Phaedra as a virgin' motif an echo of Vergil's presentation of Pasiphae as *uirgo infelix* in *Eclouge* 6.

along with Theseus: surely Ariadne would rather have fallen in love with the son than the father? Surely Ariadne would have been Phaedra.

The violence of Hippolytus' reaction to and rejection of his step-mother's advances serves to underline just how far Phaedra's thoughts have become derailed. Following her own pattern of family association has led her to what seems to her to be a revelation. Concerned that she may be a Pasiphae, she suddenly notices (with relief?) that she is more like an Ariadne, and so can kill multiple birds with one stone. Whilst she knows she cannot escape from her inheritance, in Ariadne she appears to find a more acceptable fulfilment of her Cretan destiny. By viewing her love for Hippolytus through the lens of Ariadne's for Theseus, she seems to be following a natural progression rather than contemplating an incestuous adultery. Since she sees Hippolytus as Ariadne saw Theseus, she gives herself hope that the process will work both ways, and that Hippolytus will have inherited Theseus' taste for Cretan women. Within her own speech and her own fantasy, however, lurks the flaw: Hippolytus is just as likely to have inherited characteristics from his mother as from his father. What can be heard on Phaedra's lips as desperate innuendo, *in ore Graio Scythicus apparet rigor* ('Scythian stiffness appears in your Greek face', 660), is voiced straightforwardly in Hippolytus' speech of outright disgust and refusal. To put the seal on the process of disabusing Phaedra of her delusion that she might be Ariadne, Hippolytus calls her a Pasiphae,⁶⁰ and worse:

o maius ausa matre monstifera malum,
genetrix peior! illa se tantum stupro
contaminavit, et tamen tacitum diu
crimen biformi partus exhibuit nota,
scelusque matris arguit uultu truci
ambiguus infans—ille te uenter tulit.

(*Phaedra* 688–93)

Oh, you have dared a greater evil than your monster-bearing mother, you are worse than your mother! She only tainted herself by her disgrace, and her crime, though kept quiet for a long time, was revealed by the evidence of her two-formed offspring and the double infant proved its mother's sin with its fierce face—that womb gave birth to you.

⁶⁰ When Hippolytus, transformed into Virbius, tells his story in the *Metamorphoses*, he refers to Phaedra as *Pasiphaeia* (15.500), which might constitute the root of this comparison.

As is hinted by the first and last lines quoted here, Hippolytus' assertion that Pasiphae only contaminated herself by her crime is not wholly true: Phaedra, born from the same womb as the Minotaur, has amply shown herself to have inherited some of her mother's sinfulness.

Hippolytus' destruction of Phaedra's fantasy is completed by his observation that it is far better to have a stepmother who tries to kill you than one who wants to seduce you. He too makes use of his relationship with Theseus to prove this very point: *genitor, inuideo tibi: | Colchide nouerca maius hoc, maius malum est* ('father, I envy you: this is greater, a greater evil than a Colchian stepmother', 696–7). Theseus' stepmother, Medea, plotted his murder, and Hippolytus would have preferred even that to the approach of this indecent Pasiphae-Phaedra. Phaedra sadly concurs in words which recall her first speech of self-recognition (at 113–28): *Et ipsa nostrae fata cognosco domus: | fugienda petimus; sed mei non sum potens* ('I too recognize the fates of our house: we seek what should be shunned; but I have no control over myself', 698–9).

In contrast to the optimism of moral philosophy, where self-knowledge leads to improvement, for Phaedra, self-knowledge is gloomily enervating. In this respect she is unlike Euripides' Phaedra, who has a sense of history but is not obsessed by it to such an extent, and who is therefore able to put up a real struggle, however hopeless. Seneca's Phaedra seems rather half-hearted in her attempts to deny her true nature, and even rather ghoulishly hangs around at the end of the play to ensure that Theseus recognizes that nature too. The irony in the end turns out to be that Phaedra is probably a better person than she thinks she is, that the patterns and repetitions are not as close as the play, on one level, presents them. Is belief in determinism what strengthens its grip on the world?

The Nurse for one refuses to admit the neatness of the parallel between Phaedra and Pasiphae; what happened to the mother, she argues, was an ill-fated horror, what Phaedra contemplates is sin:

quo, misera, pergis? quid domum infamem aggrauas
superasque matrem? maius est monstro nefas:
nam monstra fato, moribus scelera imputes.

(Phaedra 142–4)

Where, wretched one, are you heading? Why do you exacerbate the infamy of your house and outdo your mother? This is a greater horror than the monster: for you can blame monsters on fate, but crimes on morals.

It is true that Phaedra's is a family of ill repute, but the Nurse cannot see that this entails anything inevitable about her charge's sin; rather, it should form a conclusive deterrent. The memory of what happened to her mother should encourage Phaedra to turn away from the impulses now besetting her: *expelle facinus mente castifica horridum | memorque matris metue concubitus novos* ('drive the awful crime from your chaste mind and, mindful of your mother, shy away from strange unions', 169–70). Reaching a crescendo of exasperation, yet again she uses the image of the cycle of sin to argue against it: to allow oneself to slip into the inherited pattern once one has seen it so clearly is surely wilful self-indulgence and weakness, rather than an expression of the inevitable.

prodigia totiens orbis insueta audiet,
natura totiens legibus cedet suis,
quotiens amabit Cressa?

(Phaedra 175–7)

Will the earth so often hear of uncommon monsters, will nature so often relax its own laws, whenever a Cretan woman falls in love?

Unfortunately, unavoidably, the Nurse's common-sense approach is itself unable to withstand Phaedra's subsequent suicide threat. A combination of love (Phaedra's passion, the Nurse's care for her charge) and resignation breaks down the resistance offered by shame and sense, to force *both* women to approach Hippolytus, and *both* to connive in making the false accusation. For all the early strength of her arguments, the Nurse becomes almost absorbed by her mistress, and, as a good tragic nurse should, falls into her own 'pre-ordained' role as the would-be procuress, servant of royal desire.

2.3. The Unkind Divine

Seneca's Phaedra wears both her humanity and her fictionality on her sleeve. At times we are offered a strikingly convincing psychological portrait, at times a markedly literary suture of rhetoric and tradition. The divine element is somewhat sidelined, standing in stark contrast

to Euripides' surviving *Hippolytus*, framed by epiphanies, suffused with the conflict between Aphrodite and Artemis. Stoic philosophy viewed the gods in the guise of anthropomorphic figures in art and poetry as allegories for more complex or abstract intuitions, presented in a form to attract the attention and interest of the masses, bearing little and indirect relation to the true divine, the ultimate principle. Rosenmeyer (1989) argues that this attitude, or something analogous to it, can also be perceived in Seneca's drama: '[i]n drama the gods are endowed with a more formidable, though equally multiform, presence; the publicistic need has become generic necessity' (p. 81). However, I think this undervalues the power that an idea of the gods can still exert over characters within the drama, and the impression often remains that, at least on some level, divine presence and intervention continue to be manifest in a form which goes beyond a simple nod to convention, coming closer to the more traditional⁶¹ construct of the gods as powerful personalities exerting their influence. Lacking the excuse offered by Euripides' Aphrodite, Phaedra offers her own divine explanation:

stirpem perosa Solis inuisi Venus
per nos catenas uindicat Martis sui
suasque, probris omne Phoebeum genus
onerat nefandis: nulla Minois leui
defuncta amore est, iungitur semper nefas.

(*Phaedra* 124–8)

Hating the offspring of the despised Sun, Venus takes revenge through us for her chains and those of her beloved Mars, and loads the whole family of Phoebus with unspeakable disgrace: no daughter of Minos has ever got off lightly in love; sin is always attached.

Complementing her other explanation, inherited sin, Phaedra gives the genetic chain a divine stimulus. This cause, rather different from the Euripidean formulation of Phaedra as innocent instrument of Aphrodite's revenge for Hippolytus' cavalier neglect,⁶² keeps the

⁶¹ Traditional in epic and lyric as well as tragedy. This is not to say that the reality of divine intervention traditionally goes unquestioned, but that it is an acceptable alternative to other acceptable theories of causation.

⁶² This is not to imply that Euripides' was necessarily the more generally accepted version of the myth at the time he wrote his second Hippolytus play. All the same, this play has manifest influence on Seneca's, and it is therefore valid to draw out the contrasts as well as similarities between the two.

focus on the Cretan queen and makes a more difficult mixture of divine vindictiveness and mortal sin. An obvious point, which may still be worth making, is that this account is put in the mouth of a human character—it is not necessarily a fact, but Phaedra's attempt at explanation—and thus it falls into a different category from Euripides' authoritative (though, of course, complicating) statement of divine reasons from the lips of the goddess herself at the very outset of his play.

The reaction of the Nurse makes it clear that other interpretations are possible: although she does not directly reject this tale, she leaves it in no doubt that she regards attempts at divine explanations for human emotions as the mere veils of sin.⁶³

Deum esse amorem turpis et uitio fauens
finxit libido, quoque liberior foret
titulum furori numinis falsi addidit.

(*Phaedra* 195–7)

Shameful lust which supports vice has made up the tale that love is a god, and so that it might be more free, it has given the title of a false divinity to frenzy.

The rich and royal, having too much time on their hands, are always on the lookout for new ways to satisfy their appetites, and blame them on the gods (204–5). Phaedra's claim to divine persecution is contested, if not wholly undermined.

Although the play offers no definitive answer on the question of whether or not passion is divinely caused, the Chorus at least at first seems to concur with Phaedra's view, offering an ode to Venus, presented as a harsh goddess born of the unruly sea, and her son Cupid with his unfailing arrows (274–357).⁶⁴ The lines clearly take as their starting point the Eros ode of Euripides' *Hippolytus* (525–64), but develop in a different direction, drawing examples not so much of destructive love as of times when the gods themselves were subject

⁶³ This sort of argument is seen also in Euripides, *Troades* 983–90, where Hecabe accuses Helen of claiming divine intervention, when in fact what moved her was her own lustfulness. Compare also Ovid, *Met.* 9.624–5, *uel certe non hoc, qui plurimus urget et urit | pectora nostra, deo, sed uicta libidine credar!* ('surely I shall not be believed to have been conquered by this god, who most burdens and burns my breast, but conquered by lust!'), as Byblis, on the brink of incest, says to herself.

⁶⁴ For a fuller discussion of the ode, cf. P. J. Davis (1984), who examines the importance of the transforming power of love.

to the overwhelming force of passion.⁶⁵ The attitude displayed towards the divine agents of love is at best ambivalent, and for the most part openly fearful: *sacer est ignis (credite laesis) | nimiumque potens* ('the fire is holy (believe those who've been wounded) and all too powerful', 330–1). Even within the space of the ode, though, there is a complicating shift in emphasis; from the gods, the argument moves to animals, who are equally at the mercy of sexual desire (338–52). While there is a sense in which the Chorus is merely returning to the idea of the omnipresence of Cupid and his arrows seen at 283–95, the expression is more generalized, and the governing force of the world comes to be called *natura* as well as Amor (*uindicat omnes | natura sibi*, 'nature asserts her power over all', 352–3).⁶⁶ As with the *Natura* ode (discussed briefly above, Sect. 2.2), a Stoic-sounding concept is distorted to make a troubling hybrid form: the implied equation of the natures of man, even god, and beast is not one which fits comfortably into a Stoic scheme, and Nature, far from being a force of divine reason, is now equated with the irresistible and frequently pernicious force of desire—a *furor* (344)—in words strongly reminiscent of Lucretius and Vergil.⁶⁷ The resulting picture neither confirms absolutely Phaedra's conception of a Venus of the mythological type,⁶⁸ nor denies conclusively an outlook that allows divine power more of a symbolic role as the natural, universal force of passion. The existence of the gods as active, anthropomorphic agents is not openly denied, but the merging of the mythical with the philosophical serves only to muddy waters already dark.

⁶⁵ Such examples may even carry a reminder of the rhetorical trope where a suffering lover calls on a god to be kind since he or she too knows what it is to be in love: e.g. *Am.* 1.13.35–40; 3.10; *Her.* 18.37–46; 19.129–40.

⁶⁶ Compare the Nurse's encouragement of Hippolytus to countenance sex, where to enter the city is to follow nature: *proinde uitae sequere naturam ducem: | urbem frequenta, ciuium coetum cole* ('therefore follow nature as your guide in life: go to the city, enjoy the company of the citizens', 481–2).

⁶⁷ With *Phae.* 338–52, compare Vergil, *Geor.* 3.242–83 and, more broadly, Lucretius, *DRN* 1.14–20, 4.1037–1287.

⁶⁸ Further to the clear mythologizing of the opening and central sections of the ode, it is worth noting that the ode's (slightly curious) closing lines, *quid plura canam? | uincit saeuas cura nouercas* ('what more shall I sing? Love's care has overcome cruel stepmothers', 356–7), invite a reading that takes them to refer to Phaedra herself—a stepmother who certainly feels love rather than hate for her stepson—and thus perhaps confirm again the heroine's conception of herself as victim of an irresistible, *external* passion.

As the play progresses, debate on the involvement of the goddess Venus recedes, and it is Neptune who dominates the divine corner in the later scenes. Although his actual involvement is not so uncertain,⁶⁹ nor so comprehensively questioned, his *morality* does fall under a shadow. While, as ever, human responsibility cannot be denied, this god does provide Theseus with the means to destroy his son, and thus it seems not unreasonable that he should go on to become a target for Theseus' reproaches: *non mouent diuos preces; | at, si rogarem scelera, quam proni forent!* ('prayers do not move the gods; but if I were to ask for crimes, how quick they would be to grant my wish!', 1242–3). There is a certain truth in this for Phaedra too, who, unlike Theseus, finds no divine response to her plea for destruction, and, though guilty, has to destroy herself to make some form of atonement. The resulting picture is one potentially even more disturbing than the Epicurean nonchalance feared in the *Natura* ode. It would seem that the gods of this play only stand aloof when good human action is on the cards; when there is havoc to wreak and wrong to be committed, they are only too willing to help the human agents along. With such powerful backing, which at times fades merely into excuse, at times crystallizes into palpable divine presence, both Phaedra and Theseus find themselves set more firmly than ever on the path to destruction.

The tragedy of Phaedra's love for Hippolytus is overdetermined from many angles in Seneca's play. By constant shifts of focus, the poet presents a heroine who is both a psychologically convincing character in her own right and the product of centuries of literary tradition. She falls fatally in love with Hippolytus because she feels herself a vulnerable, lonely, unloved wife, because she is doomed to repeat the sins of her family, because she is too weak to resist the onslaught of Venus' divine force, because she is constrained to act as her myth dictates. There is an obvious and necessary conflict between these different formulations of her reasons, yet, paradoxically, they *can* coexist. It is this tension of partial contradiction, the endless and unperfectable search for coherent explanation that drives the play and creates such a powerful and successful tragedy.

⁶⁹ The bull from the sea which destroys Hippolytus clearly has its symbolic force, but it must also stand as far more concrete evidence of Neptune's intervention than Phaedra's passion can of Venus'.

Conclusion

The aim of this book has been to trace, examine, and interpret the various representations of the myths of Cretan women in Latin poetry, approaching the subject from both broader and narrower angles. Pasiphae, Ariadne, and Phaedra are at once unique and endlessly repeatable, echoed and mirrored again and again, whether as themselves or as aspects of other women. It is this combination of interconnectedness and uniqueness that I have attempted to replicate in the structure of this book. The three thematic chapters on memory, wildness, and vice illustrated the ways in which certain subjects and concerns find a particularly potent outlet in the myths, while also showing how widely the Cretan net spreads: other figures too become incorporated into the Cretan rhetoric, trapped in a Cretan labyrinth of ideas and associations. Just as the web of reference can spread outwards and across texts, though, so it can be seen to function within particular works. Accordingly, the second half of the book was devoted to more in-depth analyses of major Latin treatments of the Cretan myths, which served both to reflect in detail many of the motifs and themes already highlighted and to offer a more rounded portrait of each of the women, and of their relationships with their authors.

Surveys of the treatment of myths in literature tend to concentrate either on one particular character or on one particular text. One of the most fascinating things about myth, however, is its interconnect- edness: figures are drawn together by family ties, friendships, or chance encounters, and one story bleeds into another to form intricate patterns. While it is not possible in a book of this length to explore every single path and turning in the labyrinth of the Cretan

myths, I have attempted here to offer an inclusive reading which revels in the complexities and connections to be found, and which accepts dead ends and paradoxes as readily as neat correspondences.

The idea of Crete stretches far beyond its island shores, and inspires fascination in generation after generation, whether in Greece, Rome, or much of modern Europe.¹ With the Cretan women themselves, a combination of their own genetic inheritance—be it family curse or inbred madness—and the strangeness of the island itself makes their stories particularly powerful, their sins and errors inescapable. We witness Ariadne abandoned over and over again, Phaedra eternally locked in a struggle between conscience and passion, Pasiphae forced to replay her extraordinary union with the bull. Yet for all the repetition, the stories do not lose their power, but rather accrue layer upon layer of meaning. In the Roman context, the complexity of remembrance (both personal and literary) achieves particular importance: the ideas set out in the first chapter find their echoes in the second half of the book as we see Ariadne and Phaedra remembered and remembering in Catullus, Ovid, and Seneca. The Roman fascination with the borders between the wild and the tame, explored in greatest detail in the second chapter, recurs in every version of the Cretan myths. Reflections on vice and virtue, naturally a primary component of these myths from the earliest times, achieve new and different nuances in the Roman age, whether in the generalized contemplation of contemporary social expectations, or in

¹ It is far beyond the scope of this book to examine the reception of the Cretan myths in the post-Classical period. All the same, it is clear that the stories of these women have continued to resonate down the centuries. To take a very few examples: Ariadne and Phaedra appear as rivals for Theseus' love in Chaucer's *House of Fame* (1.405–26) and as co-assistants in his escape from the Labyrinth in *The Legend of Good Women* (1886–2227). Pasiphae's lust for the bull is mentioned by Dante, in both the *Inferno* (12.13) and the *Purgatorio* (26.87). Titian has his *Bacchus and Ariadne*, Racine his *Phèdre*, Strauss his *Ariadne auf Naxos*. Robert Graves wrote a 'Lament for Pasiphae', Thom Gunn a 'Phaedra in the Farmhouse'. I remember being taken as a child to see a highly energetic youth theatre production of the story of Ariadne and Theseus called *Bull of Minos!*

more pointed reference to the Augustan moral reforms. Again, the overt project of the moral rehabilitation of the Cretan women which I undertook in the last section of Chapter 3 is reflected and replayed in fragmented form throughout the book.

Moreover, as the literary tradition develops and the myths are interwoven with other stories, it emerges that being Cretan can be a state of mind. There are plenty of passionate women who are not born on Crete, yet, all the same, many can easily be tarred with the Cretan brush: Europa, who is born Tyrian but later carried to Crete, seems to share something of her future daughter-in-law Pasiphae's taste for bestiality; Scylla of Megara, in love with Minos, comes to resemble his daughter Ariadne; Carthaginian Dido is, perhaps, the most Cretan of all, sharing thoughts and characteristics not only with Ariadne, but also with Phaedra and Pasiphae. Conversely, the mere fact of being Cretan, as in the case of Ovid's Iphis, can induce a woman to infer (perhaps unfairly) that she must be the same as all the others. The pull of Crete and the dye of Crete are strong. The island is indelibly associated with contradiction, deception, and powerful passion: it offers a mythical geography of doubleness and vice.

While to a degree, the reaction among the Latin poets to the Cretan myths is a continuation of the Greek, there is nevertheless a palpable sense that these myths are now fully Roman. They are not borrowed, but absorbed and revived in a new place and time. It seems that the real, contemporary Crete made little impact on the poets. Such realities as are accepted are those which easily shade into cliché: Cretan seafaring, Cretan archery, the many cities of Crete.²

² It is an irony (though perhaps not a surprising one) that, for all the fame of Crete's hundred cities, the poets rarely manage to mention any other than Cnossus, Gortyn, Cydon, and Phaestus (while also making liberal reference to the two famous mountains, Ida and Dicte). Indeed, in a move which would no doubt have horrified the proud and fractious citizens of each city, the Latin poets often use the names interchangeably. So, for example, the Cnossian queen Pasiphae heads back towards Gortynian stables in *Ecl.* 6.60, while Catullus' Ariadne (64.75) greets a Theseus whose ship puts in, apparently, at Gortyn (which, I remind the reader, is on the south coast of Crete; Cnossus is on the north).

The Roman conquest of the island, a notable, if not earth-shatteringly important, event, is rarely commented upon by the poets.³ It is as if Crete had always belonged to them symbolically. It is not through the relatively recent political events that Rome is connected to the island; the roots are much older and deeper than that. Crete is a symbol (and a location) for so much that is fascinating to the Romans: an unjust king famed for his justice, wild and passionate women, law and disorder, respect for religion, promises made to be broken, boundaries there to be crossed. And through it all three figures shine out: Pasiphae, Ariadne, and Phaedra.

³ There are some exceptions to the rule: Horace, *Epod.* 9.29–30 imagines that the defeated Antony might flee to Crete. This is probably, at least in part, a reference to the pact of Brundisium, which included the province of Crete and Cyrene in Antony's eastern share of the empire. I wonder if there may not also be a possible allusion there to the flight of Hannibal and his brief stay on Crete (the war with Carthage is mentioned, as a lesser victory than Actium, at lines 25–6). In any case, I would argue that even this 'historical' Crete maintains something of its literary/stereotypical associations here: where else would someone engaged in a notorious and exotic love affair go but the familiar 'Crete of the hundred cities'? The preservation of the old clichés even when referring to the island in contemporary times is a common trope: when Lucan refers briefly to Metellus' conquest of Crete (*Bell. Civ.* 3.163) it is 'Minoan' Crete he has conquered; those Cretans who join Pompey's cause are, of course, archers, and come from the land of a hundred cities, loved by Jupiter (3.184–6). Martial, talking of Cretan raisin wine, seems compelled to mention Minos (13.106).

APPENDIX 1

Crete in History: Perpetuating the Stereotypes?

During the archaic and classical periods, Crete was something of a backwater, standing outside the mainstream of Greek history.¹ Cretan athletes are not found in lists of the Olympic games until 448 BC. During the Persian Wars, while the rest of Greece looked apprehensively east, Crete turned her attention west, to her foundations in Sicily, which were being menaced by the Carthaginians. Herodotus reports that the Cretans decided not to go to Salamis because the Delphic oracle reminded them of Minos' harsh disapproval of their support of Menelaus at Troy (7.169).² When Cretans did fight in Greece, it was often in their capacity as mercenaries. Back in the late eighth and mid-seventh century, Cretan archers worked for the Spartans in the first and second Messenian Wars, and two hundred years later, during the Peloponnesian War, more were recruited by Nicias for the Sicilian expedition of 415 BC.³

With the Hellenistic age, Crete achieved distinction as the only Greek state which Alexander did not conquer. This independence enabled the islanders to play various dynastic powers off against each other, their strategic position in the south-eastern Mediterranean furnishing easy access to the Middle East, North Africa, the Peloponnese, and Sicily.⁴ This is not to imply that there was any pan-Cretan policy, however.⁵ The island was

¹ For more detailed accounts of the place of Crete in the Greek world, see van Effenterre (1948); Cavanagh and Curtis (1998).

² This claim is not supported by others, though: Ctesias (26) says Cretan archers were there. Cf. van Effenterre (1948), 35–6; Spyridakis (1992), 83–92; G. W. M. Harrison (1993), 7.

³ Messenian Wars: Pausanias 4.8.3; 4.19.4. Sicilian expedition: Thucydides 7.57.9–10. Cf. Bettalli (1995), 85–6 and 136–8.

⁴ Aristotle recognizes the importance of Crete's position, and argues that it was designed by nature for thalassocracy (*Pol.* 1271^b 30–40).

⁵ In Hellenistic times, a loose federation was created between Cretan states, known as the Cretan *Koinon*. The federation had a council made up of delegates from member states and a popular assembly formed by the citizens. However, unlike other Hellenistic federations such as the Achaean League, it seems that the *Koinon* did not have a federal army, federal magistrates, or an idea of Cretan citizenship. Cf. van der Mijnsbrugge (1931); Willetts (1955), 225–34.

frequently racked with strife, as alliances formed, broke, and reformed between the different territories.⁶ Crete was dominated by its greatest cities, Cnossus and Gortyn, and to a lesser degree Cydon. Although Cnossus and Gortyn occasionally worked together, on the whole their relationship was characterized by a rivalry which periodically ripened into conflict.⁷ External alliances were often dictated by internal politics: so (for example), in the Chremonidean War (267/6–261 BC), a number of Cretan states, probably including Gortyn, Itanos, Polyrrhenia, and Lyttos, supported King Areus and the Spartans, while Cnossus, Cydonia, and Praisos were on the side of the Macedonian Antigonos.

It will be evident that between fighting as mercenaries⁸ and fighting each other, the Cretans were a very warlike group. The Cretan lyric poet Hybrias writes of the honour and wealth he gets from fighting (PMG 909),⁹ while Plato asserts that Cretan society and legislation were designed to promote military efficiency (*Laws* 626b). The structure of their society closely resembled that of the Spartans, with whom the Cretans had long-standing links; indeed, it was even argued that the Spartan law code was derived from the Cretan one.¹⁰ In contrast to Polybius' claim that the Cretans were motivated primarily by greed, and that their very laws had been developed so as to promote the acquisition of land and wealth regardless of how it was won (Polybius 6.46), Strabo asserts that the Cretan constitution was arranged so as to *minimize* greed and luxury. The boys were banded into groups of scouts and trained in hard work, marching, gymnastics, and archery, while the grown men ate in public messes so that rich and poor were fed alike (Strabo 10.4.16).¹¹ A clear contrast emerges, therefore, between those who view the Cretans' warlike character as a virtue and those who present it as a vice, and

⁶ Indeed, Polybius breaks off in the middle of describing the start of the troubles that hit the island in 182–181 BC to comment that there never really was a 'start' to civil war in Crete—rather, it was a permanent state (24.3).

⁷ Cf. Strabo 10.4.11: συμπεράττουσαί τε γὰρ ἀλλήλους ἅπαντας ὑπηκόους εἶχον αὐται τοὺς ἄλλους, στασιάσασαί τε διέστησαν τὰ κατὰ τὴν νῆσον ('when they [Cnossus and Gortyn] co-operated with each other, they held all the others under their sway, and when they quarrelled they split the whole island').

⁸ Griffith (1935), 245 argues that Cretans were the most prominent hired Greek soldiers of the Hellenistic world. For Cretan mercenaries in earlier periods, see Willetts (1955), 241–8; Bettalli (1995), 85–6; 120–1; 136–8.

⁹ The author's date (and even his existence) is uncertain. For a discussion of the arguments for accepting this poem as a Cretan work, see Willetts (1962), 317–23.

¹⁰ Cf. Strabo 10.4.17–19.

¹¹ Cf. Willetts (1965), 59–60 (on the relationship between the legal codes of Crete and Sparta); 110–18 (on education). See also Jeanmaire (1939), 421–60; Willetts (1955), 13–17.

between those who regard their society as honourable, even laudably austere, and those who see there only avarice and deceit.

Whether or not one puts a moralizing gloss on the facts, however, it is clear that the Cretans *were* interested in the accumulation of wealth as much as in the hard life of the warrior. Minos' fabled supremacy at sea found an echo in the Cretans' historically documented excellence at sailing, which facilitated their participation in sea-borne commerce as well as the ferrying of bands of mercenaries to their next port of call. Yet Thucydides' characterization of Minos as a clearer of pirates was later reversed as Cretans themselves became renowned as pirates.¹² Indeed, in the Hellenistic era their activities so frustrated Rhodes, a major commercial power reliant on safe passage of goods across the seas, that war broke out around 205 BC.¹³ Although the Cretans were by no means the only pirates of the ancient world, their reputation was enduring.¹⁴ It seems, too, that Crete was a popular trading post for the buying and selling of slaves captured by pirates, whether from Crete or elsewhere.¹⁵ In later years, the Cilicians became more dominant in the world of piracy, and it was against these that Pompey led his famous expedition in 67 BC, but Cretan piracy was still prominent (or

¹² Although it is clear that Cretan pirates were a real, and troublesome, phenomenon, it is possible to see some other elements feeding into the ancient obsession with the islanders' piratical tendencies. In the archaic period, many Greeks regarded sailing as a dangerous and dubious occupation in itself. In Homer, the Phoenicians are famous seamen whose skill is admired to some degree, but their practices are frequently cast in a morally dubious light. Cf. Winter (1995). Homer's Cretans share certain similarities with the Phoenicians, and a similar doubt hangs over their love of sailing. Cf. Sherratt (1996).

¹³ Cf. Diodorus 27.3. Polybius (13.4–5) adds that Philip of Macedon also got involved, stirring up the Cretans to make war on Rhodes. Cf. Brulé (1978), 29–56; De Souza (1999), 80–4. Although Cretan piracy came to a peak in this period, it was an older tradition: over a hundred years before the Cretan War, Alexander the Great attempted to halt piracy around the island, sending his admiral Amphoteros there in 331 BC (Quintus Curtius 4.8.5). No details are known about this mission, however.

¹⁴ Cf. De Souza (1999), ch. 3. Quite how common it was for Cretans to adopt piracy as a career is unclear. Brulé (1978), 173–84 argues that Cretan society itself, with its emphasis on violence and its repeated descent into internal strife, made becoming either a mercenary or a pirate an obvious career choice. Against this, cf. Willetts (1955), 241–8, who points out that Crete was a fertile place, and that the laws allowed a man to have as much land as he could acquire, meaning that agriculture was therefore a real (and much-followed) alternative to life as a pirate or mercenary (or, as often seemed to be the case, a combination of the two).

¹⁵ An inscription at Athens from 217/16 BC (SIG 35) honours a Cretan, Eumarchidas, who ransomed some Athenians captured by an Aitolian pirate and taken to Crete for sale as slaves. Cf. De Souza (1995). On Crete as a centre of such trade and exchanges, cf. Brulé (1978), 16–29; 70–105.

notorious) enough to be cited as a reason for the Roman invasion of the island.¹⁶

Direct Roman involvement in Cretan affairs¹⁷ began around 200 BC, when a Cretan squadron served in the campaigns of the Spartan Nabis against whom Rome had declared war. When Nabis was subdued in 195, the Romans insisted that he should sever his links with Crete, and remove his garrisons from those towns which had voluntarily accepted Rome as overlord.¹⁸ Over the course of the next century, Rome continued to intervene in Cretan affairs from time to time. In 189, Q. Fabius Labeo tried (without much success) to mediate between Cydonia and the short-lived Cnossus–Gortyn alliance, and to secure the release of some Roman and Italian prisoners held on the island.¹⁹ After the defeat of Cnossus by the Gortynians in 184 BC, the victors moved to tighten their hold on the area by strengthening Cnossus' neighbours and encircling their old rival, but Roman diplomatic intervention halted this process, and returned things to the *status quo ante bellum*. Crete had a distinguished history of providing support for Rome's enemies (albeit at a price): in 192–191 Antiochus III sent Euphanes with a thousand Cretan mercenaries to protect Elis,²⁰ and Gortyn briefly offered a haven for Hannibal in 189 after the peace agreed between Rome and Antiochus provided for his surrender.²¹ In 170, the Cretans supplied archers for the Romans against King Perseus of Macedonia,²² but when it

¹⁶ Cf. Diodorus Siculus 40.1.3; Dio 36.23.2; Appian, *Sicilians* 6.1. De Souza (1995), 179 notes that the Romans passed a law in 100 BC, calling on all friends and allies of Rome to co-operate in the suppression of piracy.

¹⁷ For a full-length account of Rome's relations with Crete, see G. W. M. Harrison (1993). Sanders (1982) offers the archaeological perspective.

¹⁸ Livy 34.35. Karafotias (1998) argues that Nabis did not actually possess territory in Crete, only alliances. Cf. also Cartledge and Spawforth (1989), ch. 5 (esp. 72–6); De Souza (1999), 84–6.

¹⁹ Only the Gortynians released theirs. Cf. Livy 37.60.

²⁰ Cf. Polybius 20.3.7; Livy 36.5.3.

²¹ Cf. Nepos, *Hannibal* 9. Nepos relishes the opportunity to rehash the old cliché of the greed and untrustworthiness of the Cretans: fearing that his hosts might steal his gold, Hannibal fills a couple of amphorae with lead and sprinkles a thin layer of gold over the top. Leaving these in the temple of Diana, *simulans se suas fortunas illorum fidei credere* ('pretending to entrust his own fortunes to their good faith', 9.3), he puts his real cash into some bronze statues which he takes away with him. Sure enough, the Gortynians place a close watch over the temple, not so as to guard the gold from others, but so as to keep it from Hannibal himself. And so the wily Carthaginian escapes with his wealth intact.

²² Cretan involvement in the affairs of Perseus is complicated: he used a Cretan negotiator, Telemnastus, to seek an alliance with Antiochus IV against the Romans (Polybius 29.4.8–9), while another Cretan, Cydas of Gortys, was sent to Perseus by Eumenes II of Pergamum offering to mediate between Perseus and the Romans, or to

emerged that they had also provided a larger number for the same Perseus, it was suggested that if Crete wanted to keep Rome as an ally, it should desist from arming Rome's enemies (Livy 43.7.1–4). Livy also recycles the old stereotypes about the Cretans' love of money: they followed Perseus in hopes of cash (*spe pecuniae secuti*), rather than out of any real support for his cause (44.45.13).²³ When Perseus fell on hard times, he rashly trusted himself and his treasures to a Cretan boatman, Oroandes, who promptly sailed off with the treasures, leaving the king and his family behind!²⁴ Crete provided support for yet another Roman enemy, Mithridates (VI) of Pontus, in the Mithridatic Wars, and the Cnossians received a diplomatic warning from L. Licinius Lucullus in 85 bc that they should stop supplying mercenaries.

So Cretan support of Rome's enemies had long been an irritant, and this, coupled with the activities of Cretan pirates, gave the Romans an excuse (or reason) to invade. The first attempt to subdue Crete by force was made in 72 bc when an ill-prepared expedition under the elder M. Antonius (given the cognomen Creticus—with some irony)²⁵ was defeated off Cydonia.²⁶ Realizing that the Romans would not react well to such a defeat, the Cretans later sent an embassy to the Senate, hoping to renew their status as allies of Rome. Although many were persuaded, the tribune Lentulus Spinther opposed the deal put forward and demanded much more stringent conditions, including the surrender of all Cretan ships and the provision of three hundred hostages, including the 'pirate' Lasthenes, who had led the resistance against

grant him an armistice while the Macedonian fought the Romans. Perseus was represented in these negotiations by yet another Cretan, Cheimaros (Polybius 29.6). Cf. G. W. M. Harrison (1993), 12–13.

²³ A verdict shared by Plutarch (*Aemilius* 23.4). Compare the story told by Diodorus Siculus (37.18) of the Cretan who came to L. Iulius Caesar (cos. 90 bc) to ask what recompense he might receive for betraying his people. When offered citizenship, the Cretan laughs and asks for more tangible rewards: *τοξέεσμεν γὰρ ἡμεῖς ἐπὶ τὸ κέρδος, καὶ πᾶν βέλος ἡμῶν χάριν καὶ ἀργυρίου* ('we use our bows for gain, and every arrow is for the sake of ourselves and silver').

²⁴ Livy 45.5. Cf. Plutarch, *Aem.* 26. However, Perseus manages to turn the tables at one point by fooling some Cretans into giving him back his gold and silver with the empty promise of future payment: cf. Plutarch, *Aem.* 23.6, who comments that in this respect Perseus was *κρητίζων πρὸς Κρητῆτας* ('playing the Cretan with Cretans'). For the expression, cf. Polybius 8.18.5. For the general sentiment of gaining satisfaction from deceiving the untrustworthy Cretans, cf. Nepos, *Hann.* 9 (quoted in n. 21).

²⁵ Linderski (1990), while accepting the irony inherent in the application of this title to a man whose efforts achieved nothing, argues that the cognomen was meant to be honorific, not derogatory.

²⁶ Cf. Florus 3.7.2; Appian, *Sic.* 6.1; Dio fr. 108; Diodorus Siculus 40.1. See Ormerod (1924), 225–7; De Souza (1999), 145–8.

Antonius.²⁷ The Cretans refused,²⁸ as Spinther had no doubt intended, and the Senate dispatched Metellus with three legions to accomplish the conquest of the island.²⁹ Metellus, determined to succeed, acted with extreme brutality,³⁰ prompting the Cretans to attempt to surrender to Metellus' great political rival Pompey, who was then fighting the pirates of Cilicia.³¹ Eager to claim the victory as his own, Metellus even attacked those who had managed to come to terms with Pompey. Moreover, he stormed Lappa, where Octavius was staying, and prompted his fellow Roman to use the army of the recently deceased general Cornelius Sisenna in the Cretans' defence. Octavius held out at Hierapytna for a while, but abandoned the city when Metellus himself approached. After this, Metellus conquered the whole island.³² His rivalry with Pompey resulted in a delay between Metellus' subduing of Crete and the triumph he celebrated in Rome (eventually held in 62),³³ and this campaign was never as famous as Pompey's war on the pirates.³⁴

The island was incorporated into the province of Crete-and-Cyrene. Gortyn, not Cnossus, was chosen as the capital, partly, no doubt, because of Cnossus' prominent role in the resistance (Lasthenes himself was a Cnossian), but partly because Gortyn's harbour, Matala, was on the south coast and so well placed for communications with Apollonia, the port of

²⁷ Cf. Diodorus Siculus 40.1.1–3; Dio fr. 111; Appian, *Sic.* 6.1–2.

²⁸ Indeed, Lasthenes went on to play a prominent part in the resistance to Metellus' invasion. He became so celebrated a figure that it was later worth Pompey's while to prevent his inclusion in Metellus' triumph as part of his attempt to downplay his rival's success in Crete.

²⁹ Cf. Dio 36.19.1–2. The size of the force is reported by Phlegon of Tralles 12.12 (*FGrH.* 257). For a brief account of Metellus' Cretan campaigns, cf. De Souza (1999), 157–61.

³⁰ An interesting reflection on the campaign in Crete can be found in Sallust, *Hist.* 4.69, the letter of Mithridates, which warns against the treachery and greed of the Romans (rather than the Cretans, for a change). Mithridates offers two reasons why Rome was determined to conquer him: *quia fama erat diuitem neque seruiturum esse* ('because the rumour was that I was rich and that I would not be enslaved', 4.69.10). Well aware of what lay ahead, Mithridates had warned the Cretans, and now sees that the Romans have sunk their teeth into the island: *Cretenses impugnati semel iam neque finem nisi excidio habituri* ('the Cretans have been attacked once already, and now will not see an end to it except through their destruction', 4.69.12).

³¹ On the rivalry between Metellus and Pompey, cf. Gruen (1974), 128–9. The Cretans presumably chose to surrender to Pompey rather than face Metellus because of the former's reputation for clemency: cf. De Souza (1999), 170–2.

³² Cf. Dio 36.18–19.

³³ Cf. Livy, *Epit.* xcix; Appian, *Sic.* 6; Plutarch, *Pompey* 29; Dio 36.17a–19; 45.1.

³⁴ Metellus receives rather faint praise from Martial too: Crete gave a name to Metellus, but Africa gave a better one to Scipio (Martial 2.2.1).

Cyrene. A colony was established at Cnossus by Octavian after 27 BC, called *Colonia Julia Nobilis Cnossus*, honouring Julius Caesar, and probably carrying out his intentions.³⁵ Crete remained under Roman control until the fourth century AD.

Crete's piratical tendencies and opposition to Rome were apparently not the only prompts to the Roman conquest, however. The island was a good source of wealth, from trade as well as various natural resources. Rich pickings were to be had by those who controlled Crete.³⁶ After the assassination of Julius Caesar, the governorship of Crete was handed to Brutus by the Senate. Mark Antony, however, was given charge of Caesar's will, and claimed that it had been Caesar's intention to give Crete back its independence after Brutus' term in office there ended.³⁷ After the battle of Philippi in 42 BC, Crete was absorbed into Mark Antony's domain in the East, placing it back under a different kind of Roman rule, and in 36 he gave some territory on the island to Cleopatra's children.³⁸ Octavian also promised portions of Crete as a reward to his supporters: he placated his soldiers (who were on the verge of mutiny in Sicily in 36) with land bought from Capua, while Capua was promised land around Cnossus, on the assumption that Octavian would win the war.³⁹ After the war was won, this land brought in over a million sesterces a year for the Capuans (Velleius Paterculus 2.81.2). In a later period Statius mentions the province of Crete and Cyrene as a potential source of wealth for Flavius Ursus.⁴⁰ The elder Pliny often remarks on the high quality associated with certain Cretan products, especially its honey and herbs,⁴¹ and Martial mentions Cretan raisin wine and candied quinces.⁴² Crete was

³⁵ The foundation of the colony is not mentioned in Augustus' *Res Gestae*, perhaps because its creation was Julius' idea, rather than Augustus' initiative. Cf. Paton (1994).

³⁶ For the probable financial motives behind the Roman conquest of Crete, cf. De Souza (1998).

³⁷ A fraudulent claim, since the decision to appoint Brutus as governor was only made *after* Caesar's assassination. Cf. Cicero, *Phil.* 2.38. Note, however, the reservations of Denniston (1926), who finds it hard to believe that Antony would have made a mistake like this.

³⁸ The twins Alexandra and Cleopatra, and Ptolemy Philadelphus. Antony had caused a scandal by recognizing these as his own children. Cf. Dio 49.32.5.

³⁹ Cf. Dio 49.14.5.

⁴⁰ Statius, *Silv.* 2.6.66–7 (published in AD 93 or 94).

⁴¹ e.g. Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* 11.33 (Crete, Cyprus, and Africa famous for their large quantities of honey); 25.94 (Crete the best place for herbs, followed by Mt. Parnassus); 27.99 (the best lithospermum in Crete). Crete's reputation as a good place for finding medicinal herbs is reflected in *Aen.* 12.411–19, when Venus fetches dittany from the slopes of Mt. Ida to cure Aeneas' wound.

⁴² Martial 13.106 (raisin wine); 13.24 (quinces).

also famous for its timber, especially cypress, an expensive material because so slow growing.⁴³

From the political point of view, Crete was regarded as a small, but noticeable, thorn in the side in its earlier encounters with Rome, and then, after its conquest, as a strategically useful island for both military and economic domination of the Mediterranean.⁴⁴ Its reputation as the home of both mercenaries and pirates meant that the old clichés about Cretan greed and untrustworthiness were often recycled. Perhaps Polybius should shoulder some of the blame for the negative views of Crete at Rome: certainly, some of the tales of Cretan vice which he tells with such relish find themselves repeated by Livy.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, some of the island's more positive attributes were also accepted by the Romans. There was a considerable amount of interest in the island's impressive and mysterious mythical past. The Cretan myths were a popular subject in Latin art as well as poetry: Ariadne is one of the most frequently painted mythological figures in Pompeii, while Pasiphae receives far more attention from Roman artists than she did from Greek. Augustan coins from Cnossus bear a labyrinth as the city's symbol, again illustrating the Roman interest in the Cretan past.⁴⁶ As I have already mentioned, the Romans were appreciative of Crete's natural bounties, and there was also respect for the island's history as an early law-bound society⁴⁷ and its reputation for austerity. Cicero mentions

⁴³ Cf. Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* 16.141–2, on Crete's fine cypress trees. Meiggs (1982), 98–9, remarks on the fact that, despite its less thickly wooded state in the modern age, Crete was full of trees in ancient times. He also notes (p. 200) that Crete apparently exported cypress wood to Athens (cf. Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 27 f). It appears, though, that Rome did not need to import cypress from Crete, having plenty in parts of Italy. All the same, a Roman-controlled Crete could benefit from the revenue generated by exports elsewhere.

⁴⁴ G. W. M. Harrison (1998) notes that Crete was certainly not presented as a particularly important province. Strabo (17.3.25) puts it in the third tier of provinces (alongside places like Iberia Ulterior, Gallia Narbonensis, Illyria, and Bithynia), and its governorship was not usually a stepping-stone to the most powerful positions such as the consulate. Nevertheless, as Harrison also points out, the island seems to have been very prosperous during the Roman period, with its theatres and aqueducts apparently built with private money.

⁴⁵ For Polybius' influence on Livy more generally, cf. Tränkle (1977). For Polybius' negative views of Cretans, cf. G. W. M. Harrison (1993) 9–22, but note that van Effenterre (1948), 283–312 argues that we should not overstate his hostility to the islanders. We must also remember that the bad reputation of the Cretans was perceptible in Greek sources long before Polybius.

⁴⁶ It also seems significant that when describing the Troy Game, later revived by Julius Caesar and Augustus, Vergil compares the patterns made in the boys' manoeuvres to the Cretan Labyrinth (*Aen.* 5.588–95).

⁴⁷ Cf. Tacitus, *Dialogus* 40.3; *Annales* 3.26.3.

the asceticism of both Sparta and Crete, which, however, did them no good when it came to facing up to the Roman army.⁴⁸ Interestingly, Livy's account of the Roman conquest of Crete seems to have presented the event as a civilizing act, and Metellus is credited with bringing laws to the island.⁴⁹ Perhaps had the full text survived, we might have seen Livy make more of the apparent irony of the Romans (albeit a famously law-abiding people) bringing laws to the island which was once seen as the cradle of law itself.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ *Pro Mur.* 74. Cicero's argument here necessarily demands that the austerity of Cretans and Spartans should neither be seen as a guarantor of success in itself nor as an example to be followed too closely (as it is by the stern Cato), but it is, on balance, a positive trait. Note, also, that Cicero conveniently omits the awkward fact that the Cretans defeated M. Antonius before Marcellus defeated them, and does not mention the impressive size of the force needed to subdue the island!

⁴⁹ Cf. Livy, *Epit.* 100.3: *Q. Metellus perdomitis Cretensibus liberae in is tempus insulae leges dedit* ('with the Cretans completely tamed, Q. Metellus gave laws to the island which had been free up to that time').

⁵⁰ Strabo (10.4.22) reflects that the imposition of Roman rule on Crete has eroded the old legal system, with most of the administration now carried out by the decrees of the Romans, as with other provinces.

APPENDIX 2

The Catasterism of Ariadne's Crown and the Memory of Love

As a postscript to the discussion in Chapter 1 of the importance of memory in treatments of Ariadne's myth, I offer here a brief outline of the end (and afterlife) of her tale: the placing of her crown among the stars to become the constellation Corona. Poetic treatments of the story of Ariadne, particularly in the Roman period, tend to lavish more detail on her desertion by Theseus than on the happier conclusion to her life, as wife of Bacchus, honoured by the catasterism of her crown. Nonetheless, it is a part of her tale which is often referred to either directly or obliquely. It also provides an interesting counterpart to Theseus' forgetfulness and failure in love, enshrining as it does the god's love for his wife in an everlasting monument among the stars.

Ariadne's crown marks the marriage of the human and the divine. Like the weddings of Peleus and Thetis and of Cadmus and Harmony, hers to Dionysus was sanctioned and attended by all the gods. The crown was made by Hephaestus: 'Ηφαίστου δὲ ἔργον εἶναι φασιν ἐκ χρυσοῦ πυρώδους καὶ λίθων Ἰνδικῶν ('They say it was the work of Hephaestus, made from fiery gold and Indian gems', Eratosthenes, *Catast.* 5). In some versions, it is presented to Ariadne by Aphrodite and the Hours as a wedding gift when she marries Dionysus on Naxos, and it almost always carries with it associations of marriage, even when it is suggested that Theseus gave it to her when they eloped together from Crete. According to Eratosthenes (*Catast.* 5) and Hyginus, Dionysus uses the crown to tempt Ariadne to marry him in the first place:

quo tempore Liber ad Minoa uenit cogitans Ariadnen comprimere, hanc coronam ei munere dedit, qua delectata non recusauit condicionem. (Hyginus, *De Astronomia* 2.5)

When Liber came to the realm of Minos, intending to seduce Ariadne, he gave her this crown as a gift, and she was so delighted by it that she did not refuse his offer.

The crown even takes the place of the ball of wool in enabling Theseus to find his way out of the Labyrinth because its jewels give off light in the darkness. This variant on the story has led Webster (1966), 25–6 to suggest

that Ariadne might have sullied the gift of the god in allowing Theseus to use it as a lamp, an act which symbolizes her greater betrayal of the god for the mortal. This follows on from the Homeric version of the story of Ariadne, Theseus, and Dionysus, in which it seems Ariadne is punished with death for leaving her divine husband for the Athenian hero (*Od.* 11.321–5). Perhaps this is the story, too, which hides behind the reference to the Corona in Aratus:

αὐτοῦ κάκεινος στέφανος, τὸν ἀγαυὸς ἔθηκεν
σῆμ' ἔμμεναι Διόνυσος ἀποικομένης Ἀριάδνης,
νῶτ' ὑποσρέφεται κεκμηότος Εἰδώλοιο.
(Aratus, *Phaenomena* 71–3)

Here too that crown, which noble Dionysus set up to be a memorial to departed Ariadne, turns beneath the back of the work-spent Phantom.

The scholiast on these lines says that the crown is τὸν κίσσινον στέφανον ὃν ἐφόρει μετὰ θάνατον τῆς Ἀριάδνης ('the ivy crown which he used to wear after the death of Ariadne'), rather than the usual construction of gold and jewels. It could be that Dionysus, angered by Ariadne's betrayal, brought about her destruction, but later felt remorse for having killed the woman he loved and so set his own ivy wreath among the stars in her memory.¹ Here, then, the crown is no longer the starry outline of the one the god gave to Ariadne when he wooed her.²

To return to Theseus' connection with the crown we need to look at Bacchylides 17, where in response to Minos' challenge to prove that Poseidon is his father, Theseus dives into the ocean to retrieve a ring which the king has cast in. He is carried by dolphins to the palace of Amphitrite and returns not with the ring, but with something better: the wreath she wore at her own wedding to the hero's father:

εἰδέν τε πατρὸς ἄλοχον φίλαν
σεμνὰν βοῶπιν ἐρατοῖ-

¹ There is a mythical parallel of sorts to such a hypothesis: Apollo, betrayed by Coronis, orders her death, but is later grieved by this and manages to rescue the baby Asclepius from her womb as she lies on her funeral pyre.

² Hyginus tells us one version of the story of the Corona which misses out Ariadne altogether; here it is a symbol of filial rather than uxorial love, placed in the stars as a reminder of Liber's journey to the Underworld to bring back his mother Semele. He leaves the crown in the upper world so as not to taint it with the touch of ghosts, and the place where it rested kept the name Στέφανος from then onwards. This is not as coherent or, arguably, as engaging a story as that which associates the Corona with Ariadne, but it serves to indicate just how easily divinely made objects come to be claimed and desired by different figures.

σιν Ἀμφιτρίταν δόμοις·
 ἃ νιν ἀμφέβαλεν αἰὶνα πορφυρέαν,
 κόμαισί τ' ἐπέθηκεν οὖλαις
 ἀμμεφέα πλόκον,
 τὸν ποτέ οἱ ἐν γάμῳ
 δῶκε δόλιος Ἀφροδίτα ῥόδοις ἔρμενον.
 (Bacchylides 17.109–16)

And he saw his father's dear wife, holy ox-eyed Amphitrite in her lovely home; she put a purple cloak around him, and set on his thick hair a perfect wreath, which cunning Aphrodite once gave her at her wedding, dark with roses.

Is this the crown which he in turn gives to Ariadne? The gift from his father's wife is a suitable present to give to a young man to pass on to his wife, who will then give it to her own son and so on. In accordance with this sort of custom, Cadmus gives Harmony a cloak and the famous necklace (another Hephaestean work) on their wedding day.³

So the crown's origins are unclear, or debated, and a certain (intentional) lack of clarity can sometimes be found in accounts of exactly what is symbolized by the catasterized object. Two elements of Ariadne's story become confused, and Theseus' desertion and not Bacchus' devotion seems to be the memory evoked by the constellation. As I mentioned earlier, in Apollonius, *Argonautica* 3, Jason even comes up with a version of the catasterism of Ariadne's crown where he implies that the gods set it among the stars to reward her for having been brave and wise enough to help the hero Theseus:

τὴν δὲ καὶ αὐτοὶ
 ἀθάνατοι φίλαντο, μέσῳ δέ οἱ αἰθέρι τέκμωρ
 ἀστερόεις στέφανος, τὸν τε κλείουσ' Ἀριάδνης,
 πάννυχος οὐρανίοις ἐνελίσσεται εἰδώλοισιν·
 ὧς καὶ σοὶ θεόθεν χάρις ἔσσεται, εἴ κε σαώσῃς
 τόσσον ἀριστῶν ἀνδρῶν στόλον.

(Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica* 3.1001–6.)

The immortals themselves loved her, and as proof of this in the middle of the sky, a starry crown, they call it Ariadne's, wheels all night among the heavenly signs. So for you too there will be thanks from the gods, if you save such a great expedition of the best of men.

³ However, some say the necklace was first given by Zeus to Europa, and that Aphrodite presented it to the bride. Cf. Diodorus Siculus 4.65.5; 5.49.1; Apollodorus, *Bibl.* 3.4.2 (quoting Pherecydes); Pausanias 9.12.3.

Such obvious manipulation of myth does not escape the notice of the scholiast, who wryly remarks in response to Jason's claims that the crown was a reward for helping Theseus, and that the hero took Ariadne with him all the way to Athens, ὧν οὐδέτερον ἀληθές ('neither of these claims is true'). However ridiculous such claims may seem, though, it is important to remember that Medea is persuaded by them; it does not seem so strange to her that a woman's reward could be dependent on a man's virtue. For Andromeda too, immortality of a kind among the stars comes because of her involvement with Perseus, not because of any independent acts of her own.

Versions of this association persist in Latin literature too: for example, in Manilius' *Astronomica*, the circle of stars making up the Corona is described and then rounded off with the line, *Cnosia desertae fulgent monumenta puellae* ('the Cnossian memorial of the abandoned girl shines', 1.323). Again, at *Fasti* 3.459–60, the link is made between Theseus' desertion and the catasterism of Ariadne's crown: *protinus aspicias uenienti nocte Coronam | Cnosida: Theseo crimine facta dea est*, ('as night comes on you will see at once the Cnossian Corona: she was made a goddess by Theseus' crime'). Indeed, in the *Fasti* the Theseus connection is so strong that we are treated to a virtual replay of his abandonment of his lover as Ariadne fears that her husband Bacchus might also have strayed. The god's setting of her crown (or herself—see below) among the stars thus becomes as much a consolation prize for Ariadne, betrayed once again, as a pledge of eternal faith and love.

Although Hesiod⁴ claims that Ariadne herself was made immortal, for the most part the later sources relate only the placement of the crown in the stars. This discrepancy is noticed at least by Ovid, though, and he plays upon the tension between the ideas that Ariadne actually becomes a goddess (she does become Libera in the *Fasti*) and that she is just represented by the crown set among the stars. A textual problem in the *Ars Amatoria* probably illustrates this best. At line 558, Bacchus says *saepe reget dubiam Cressa Corona ratem*, ('the Cretan Corona will often set a wandering ship on course'), at least in Kenney's Oxford text he does. But some manuscripts read *saepe reges* ('you will often set on course'), which implies a closer identification between Ariadne and the crown: does she herself become the stars set in that pattern? In the *Metamorphoses*, it could be that Ariadne is transformed into the constellation: *utque perenni | sidere clara foret, sumptam de fronte coronam | immisit caelo* ('and that she might be distinguished

⁴ Hesiod, *Theog.* 947–9: χρυσοκόμης δὲ Διώνυσος ξανθὴν Ἀριάδην, | κοῦρην Μίνως, θαλερὴν ποιήσατ' ἄκοιτιν· | τὴν δέ οἱ ἀθάνατον καὶ ἀγήρων θῆκε Κρονίων ('and golden-locked Dionysus made blonde Ariadne, the daughter of Minos, his lovely wife, and the son of Cronos made her undying and ageless').

by/as an everlasting star, he took her crown from her forehead and sent it up to the sky', 8.177–9). She is no goddess here, though, and even when in the *Fasti* she has been deified, a certain amount of ambiguity remains in the final lines which describe the Corona: *dicta facit [Liber] gemmasque nouem transformat in ignes: | aurea per stellas nunc micat illa nouem* ('[Liber] carries out his word and turns the jewels into nine fires: now it shines golden with nine stars', 3.515–16). The *illa* here most immediately refers to the crown, but it is easy enough also to read it as a reference to Ariadne herself.

The constellation Corona, which seems at first glance to act as a monument to Bacchus' love for his mortal wife, turns out to be a more elusive object, and its precise symbolism is shifting and unclear. For all the frustration this might engender in a scholar searching for a definitive account of the catasterism, it is, I think, rather fitting that Ariadne's memorial, the marker which is supposed to ensure that she can never be forgotten, turns out itself to be an object with a debated history, and one which enshrines the memory of Theseus' forgetfulness as much as Bacchus' passion.

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