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Patron: Curley, Dan

Journal Title: Helios ; journal of the Classical Association of the Southwest.

Volume: 30
Issue: 2
Month/Year: 2003
Pages: 101-126

Article Author:
Article Title: Panoussi, V; '« Ego maenas » ; maenadism, marriage, and the construction of female identity in Catullus 63 and 64'

Imprint: Lubbock, Tex. ; The Association

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Helios–ISSN 0160-0923
Spring 2003, Volume 30, Number 2
(published two times a year)

Box 41037
Lubbock, Texas 79409-1037 USA

HELIOS

VOLUME 31 • NUMBERS 1–2 • 2004

A Journal Devoted to Critical and Methodological Studies of Classical Culture, Literature, and Society

TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY PRESS

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HELIOS, vol. 30, no. 2, 2003

EGO MAENAS: MAENADISM, MARRIAGE, AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF FEMALE IDENTITY IN CATULLUS 63 AND 64

Vassiliki Panoussi

Poems 63 and 64 of Catullus not only share marriage as a common thread, but also have common elements in their representation of the figures of Attis and Ariadne, in particular their depiction of the two as helpless creatures entangled in forces beyond their control.[1] More recently, Marilyn Skinner (1993) has linked *c.* 63 to a larger discussion of gender in Roman antiquity, arguing that the poem expresses fluidity in the definition of male identity—a fluidity indicative of a more general anxiety over the stability of sex roles and the integrity of the élite male social self during the civic turmoil of the late Republic. I wish to build on this conceptual framework and propose that Catullus's construction of gender identity in *c.* 63 should also be viewed in conjunction with the theme of marriage as it is deployed in both this poem and *c.* 64, as well as in the other *epithalamia* of the Catullan corpus. Since marriage is the institution that presupposes, affirms, and perpetuates the stability of sex roles within society, the uncertainty in the definition of these roles, and their reversal within the context of marriage, call into question marriage's efficacy not only as guarantor of the boundaries of gender identity but also as a cohesive social force. The problematization of gender identity within the marital relationship can also help us to explore larger issues regarding the nature of Roman socio-political identity. In what follows, I argue that anxieties over the definition of Roman identity and uneasiness in the relationship of the individual vis-à-vis Rome find expression in the negation of both the stability of the institution of marriage and the role the individual is called to play therein. The portrayal of Attis and Ariadne in *cc.* 63 and 64 envisages the individual's inability to achieve any stable gender identity, male or female, within the framework provided by the institution of marriage. This inability in turn stems from a perceived ambiguity surrounding the definition of a gender identity for Rome itself. As a result, Catullus's representation of crisis in the formation of gender identity indicates fear, in the

[1]See Putnam 1961; Forsyth 1970 and 1980; Sandy 1971.

face of an ever fluctuating and inconsistent socio-political reality, of annihilation of the self.

My reading, therefore, offers an extension and amplification of Marilyn Skinner's insightful study on the construction of masculinity in Catullus and falls within the larger discussion of sexuality and gender in Roman literature. In Catullus's *epithalamia* 61 and 62, marriage surfaces as a necessary condition for the fulfillment of the gender roles of a young man and woman; within the framework of marriage, Roman men and women are able to embody the values of *amor*, *fides*, and *pietas*, the culmination of which is to provide legitimate citizens for Rome (61.204-23). Unlike the young men and women in *cc.* 61 and 62, however, Attis and Ariadne in *cc.* 63 and 64 fail to become such members of society as husband and wife respectively. Although the link between the two young heroes' experience has been well established among scholars, I argue that Attis's connection with Ariadne further complicates his already uncertain gender identity by casting him as female. Attis's and Ariadne's failures to achieve adult married status are signaled through their representation as permanently engaged in perverse maenadic behavior: Attis conducts an orgiastic revel rife with maenadic features ending in irreversible servitude to Cybele, while Ariadne's union with Bacchus renders her a maenad forever under the god's control. This perpetual maenadic state, embraced by both characters, prohibits the fulfillment of the social role prescribed for their sex—marriage—and, hence, full integration in the community. Maenadism as a specifically female activity assumes in these two poems the form of negation of the marital transition which results in the individual's exclusion from society and in the destruction of the integrity of the female self.

Such a reading is supported by an examination of the Bacchic ritual element prominent in both poems.[2] The need to reevaluate the function of ritual descriptions in literary texts has long been recognized by Hellenists and, increasingly, by Latinists.[3] Since it "both *represents* and at the same time *constructs* an ideal reality,"[4] ritual is a commentary in itself, which an author in turn takes up and transforms into a new experience subject to further interpretation.[5] Catullus, on his part, manipulates the wealth of

[2]This element has not yet been adequately explained. On the role and function of Dionysus in *c.* 64, see Forsyth 1980; Wiseman 1977: 178-79; Konstan 1977: 60-62; Putnam 1961: 187-88; Klingner 184-88.

[3]Feeney 115-36.

[4]Seaford 1994: xii (original emphases), also quoted by Feeney 119. See also Beard 1995: 169.

[5]Smith 224: "[I]n culture, there is no text, it is all commentary. . . . [R]egardless of whether we are dealing with 'texts' from literate or nonliterate cultures, we are dealing with historical processes of reinterpretation. . . . " Also Feeney 120: "[Ritual] can only be made to say things . . . Furthermore, the form of a ritual may remain constant over very long periods of time while generating or accepting entirely novel interpretations"; see too Seaford 1994: xii-xix.

symbols and meanings that ritual affords, in order to link Attis's orgy in *c.* 63 with Bacchus's revel in 64 and to cast Attis and Ariadne as maenadic females. Bacchic ritual is perceived as peculiar to females, since it exhibits many characteristics of initiation rites—especially marriage rites—and the initiand undergoes the phases of separation, transition, and reintegration.[6] The shared elements in the ritual of Bacchus and Cybele, in particular the portrayal of the initiand as married to the god,[7] serve to depict Attis and Ariadne as failed brides. This is not to say, however, that any representation of Cybele's ritual stands for the Dionysian, but rather in *c.* 63 Catullus exploits the already existing connection between the two deities in myth and cult in order to explore the dangers of a female as she faces the marital transition, the potential threats to the equilibrium between marriage and gender binary, and the integrity of the institution of marriage itself. Viewed in this manner, the poem's ritual element serves to underscore anomaly. In both *cc.* 63 and 64, we are presented not with a benign ritual act that functions as a means to enhance social cohesion,[8] but with a ritual act that condemns the participant to a permanent state of exclusion from society. Ritual representation in *cc.* 63 and 64, therefore, does not simply serve as a means to achieve an exotic atmosphere (although it certainly succeeds in creating a seemingly comforting sense of detachment), but more importantly plays a pivotal role in the deployment of the themes of male and female gender identity and marriage.

My analysis falls into three parts. First, I present evidence that Attis's ritual orgy is brimming with Bacchic and maenadic ritual elements occasioned by their relation to, and significance for, the delineation of the theme of marriage in the poem. As a specifically female activity, the maenadic state into which the hero enters constructs him as a virgin bride along the lines of the other *epithalamia* of the Catullan corpus. Next, I discuss Ariadne's representation as a maenad destined to marry Bacchus in *c.* 64; so married, she may be seen as forced to exist in a state of perpetual madness, in a way similar, though certainly not identical, to that of Attis. Lastly, I explore the implications of this elaborate and complex network of connections in the portrait of marriage and gender identity; I argue that this network presents anxieties over the stability of gender roles and the integrity of the marital bond. This uncertainty in the definition of gender roles serves, in turn, as a vehicle for the problematization of Roman identity.

[6]See Van Gennep 11.

[7]On Attis and Cybele, see Vermaseren, esp. 88-92, 96-124; Roller 237-59; Takács.

[8]On ritual and social cohesion, see Girard, esp. 39-88; Burkert 1983, esp. 1-82; Seaford 1994, esp. 311-18, 363-67.

I. *Ego Maenas*: Attis as a Virgin Bride

A link between the cults of Cybele and Dionysus was firmly established in Greek literature at a very early time.[9] The representation of the two cults in Roman literature and the similarity of official Roman attitudes toward them attest to the close connection between the worship of these two deities in Rome as well. The cult of Magna Mater was introduced into Rome in 204 B.C.E., during the last stages of the second Carthaginian war, and her sanctuary was situated on the Palatine, the religious center of the city.[10] Although the goddess's worship was an important part of Roman religious life, it was forbidden for a Roman to become one of the *galli* (eunuch priests) who castrated themselves in commemoration of the self-castration by the young mortal boy Attis.[11] According to the myth, Attis, under a frenzy inspired by the goddess, committed this unfortunate act, which subsequently led to his death; the goddess, however, eventually brought him back to life and bestowed upon him immortality.[12] Not surprisingly, Attis is not mentioned in any of the accounts detailing the arrival of Magna Mater to Rome, although archaeological evidence confirms that Cybele was introduced along with her castrated consort.[13] Representations of the *galli* in Roman literature condemn their sexual habits and preferences as transgressive of Roman sexual norms.[14] Unique among other priests and religious officials, the *galli* displayed the goddess's power inscribed on their

[9]Evidence of conflation of the orgiastic rites of Cybele and Dionysus dates as early as Pindar (*Dith.* 2.6-11) and Aeschylus (57 *TGF*). In the play *Hedonoi*, Aeschylus dramatizes Lycurgus's rejection of the god Dionysus, a story also preserved by Apollodorus (3.5.1). Much as in the case of Euripides' *Bacchae*, the god inflicts madness upon the impious king, who kills his son and then finds death himself. The fragment in question refers to the arrival of Dionysus and his worshipers (Lloyd-Jones 398), who are seen to be practicing the rites of Mother Rhea; the context, however, is certainly Dionysian. Similarly in the *Bacchae* (55-59, 120-34), Dionysus's retinue, the chorus of the play, consists of Phrygian maenads who celebrate Dionysus with ecstatic rites that also involve the celebration of Cybele. In view of this literary and archaeological evidence, a link between Dionysus and Cybele seems firmly established in the literary tradition, perhaps as early as the sixth century B.C.E. (Carpenter 112-13; see also Burkert 1987: 25). On Dionysus and Cybele, see Vermaseren 64, 78, 80, 82, 119, 135. Dodds 76 posits that early on a divine mother and a divine son were worshipped with dances and *oreibasia* under different names in Asia Minor and in Crete. The mother was Kubele or Dindymene or Zemelo in Asia Minor, Rhea in Crete; the son was Sabazios, Bakkos, Diounsis, or the Cretan "Zeus."

[10]For possible reasons behind the introduction of the cult of Cybele to Rome, see Gruen 5-33; Stehle.

[11]Beard et al. 1998: 96-98 also note the similarity in the attitude of the Roman state to the cult of Cybele and that of Bacchus; see also Burkert 1987: 36.

[12]For a more detailed description of the variants regarding the Attis myth, see Vermaseren 88-92; Roller 237-59.

[13]See Beard 1994: 169-70.

[14]See, e.g., Martial, *Epigr.* 2.45 and 3.81.

bodies. Castrated, dressed in women's clothes, and wearing their hair long, they broke the laws of nature by becoming "women" or "half-men."[15] What appeared most troubling to the Romans, however, was not so much the *galli*'s feminization as their transgression of the gender binary expressed in their defiance of the laws of either sex. The violation of their bodies' integrity negated their identity as males;[16] nevertheless, as is the case of Martial 3.81, they were also depicted as engaging in an active sexual role.[17] This uncertainty regarding their gender identity, and the uneasiness it generated, are registered in a legal case of 77 B.C.E., reported by Valerius Maximus 7.7.6: a *gallus* was ultimately denied an inheritance on the grounds that he was neither man nor woman and therefore was ineligible to inherit under Roman law. Moreover, the *gallus* was not allowed to plead his case in public, lest the court be polluted by his obscene presence and corrupt voice.[18] The *galli*'s indeterminate gender, therefore, denied them a social identity.

In the case of Bacchus, we witness a very similar tension between the beneficial, positive aspects of the cult (with its emphasis on the god's contribution to the prosperity of the community) on the one hand, and its association with all that is foreign and destabilizing on the other. This contradictory attitude towards the cult helps explain the official Roman reaction to the Bacchanalian affair of 186 B.C.E. The senate made no effort to extirpate the cult but did impose restrictions: from then on women alone were allowed to be cult priests, while a male citizen had to request permission in order to become a bacchant.[19] Although the reasons for this law are still the object of speculation among historians,[20] Livy's dramatic account of the consul's speech to the Roman people asserts the pernicious consequences for the morality of men who participated in what was considered a female cult, as well as the threats it posed to their masculinity. The consul argued that the male initiands to the Bacchic mysteries underwent a feminization that was the direct result of their engagement in *stuprum* and affected in particular their ability to perform their role as Roman soldiers.[21]

[15]Beard 1994: 175.

[16]Walters 29-43.

[17]Martial criticizes a *gallus* for engaging in an active sexual role with a female and suggests that his status as eunuch mandates that he perform this act to a male.

[18]See also Beard 1994: 177; Roller 292.

[19]Dumézil 521.

[20]Beard et al. 1998: 95-96; also Gruen 34-78, who argues that the Bacchanalian affair supplied the Roman state with a means to curb individual inclinations toward Hellenism.

[21]See Livy 39.15.9-10, where the consul explains to the people the Bacchic mysteries: *primum igitur mulierum magna pars est, et is fons mali huiusce fuit; deinde simillimi feminis mares, stuprati et constupratores fanatici, vigiliis vino strepitibus clamoribusque nocturnis attoniti*. At 39.15.13-14 the consul explicitly discusses these young men's fitness to serve in

Catullus's inclusion of the Bacchic element in the rites of Cybele may thus be explained as part of this well attested syncretism that forms the ritual décor of the poem. A closer look at the representation of Cybele's rites in the narrative, however, suggests that the inclusion of the Bacchic in the description of the ritual of Cybele was occasioned by its relevance to, and its significance for, the deployment of the major themes of the poem.[22] Maenadic activity typically marked a movement from the civilized space to the world of nature, thereby blurring the distinctions between human and animal, male and female, sanity and madness. This fusion of opposites and the subsequent dissolution of all boundaries were distinctly characteristic of the Bacchic, and Catullus, in fashioning the tale of the castrated Attis, found in this ritual description a medium through which these themes could be brought to the foreground.

What is more, as a primarily female activity the maenadic departure from home to the wild also signaled female negation to male authority.[23] No longer restricted in the confined and controlled space of her *oikos* or *domus*, the woman fled to the mountains where she was liberated. In this respect, maenadic ritual resembled rites of initiation, especially marriage rites where the young bride was envisioned as negating the civilized state of marriage before she effected the transition to her new, marital household. This resistance was related also to the anxiety generated by the bride's imminent separation from her natal family and the prospect of defloration. The young woman was envisaged as a wild animal to be tamed through her entrance into the civilized state of marriage and was often represented in ritual (and literature) as an animal to be subjugated.[24] The loss of virginity incurred by the sexual act was also reflected in ritual by the bride's association with an animal to be sacrificed, often expressed during the process of her transference from the natal to the marital household[25] in the cutting of a lock of hair, as in the Greek wedding ritual, or

the military and represent the community of Romans: *hoc sacramento initiatos iuvenes milites faciendos censetis, Quirites? his ex obsceno sacrario eductis arma committenda? hi cooperti stupris suis alienisque pro pudicitia coniugum ac liberorum vestrorum ferro decernerent?*

[22]Rubino, in a structuralist reading of the poem, argues for the importance of the cult of Cybele as a means through which the polarities between male and female may be explored. This opposition in turn, Rubino argues, includes other polarities: "[T]he conflicts presented in the poem . . . encompass the totality of life's conflicts and are in a sense the terms of a complete *Weltanschauung*" (170).

[23]See Kraemer 72-80; Gruen 61; Seaford 1994: 301-11.

[24]Cf. Horace, *Sat.* 2.7.91-92; Ovid, *Her.* 4.21-22. See also Anacreon 78; *Anth. Pal.* 5.22.1-4.

[25]Burkert 1983: 62: "Even marriage, as initiation, is the product of sacrificial rites"; see also Seaford 1994: 307-10.

in the parting of the bride's hair with a spear, as in the Roman.[26] While maenadism, moreover, constituted in ritual the benign negation of civilization that resulted in the eventual return of the woman to her home, in literature—more specifically, Greek tragedy as Seaford has recently shown—resistance to the male, in the form of the negation of the bridal transition, could occasion maenadic behavior ending in the death of the mate or in disaster for the household. As a result, women who participated in this negation were frequently portrayed as maenads, actual or metaphorical. Thus, according to Seaford, the image of Bacchic frenzy followed by the maenadic departure from home was associated in tragedy with the negation of marriage ritual and the destruction of the household.[27]

Pictorial evidence offers further support for the existence of a link between Bacchus and marriage ritual, a link that Catullus could have manipulated as a conceptual framework. A magnificent fresco at the Villa of the Mysteries in Pompeii, dating from the time of Caesar,[28] has as its centerpiece a representation of Dionysus and his consort, believed to be Ariadne. Although the exact meaning of the series of these paintings will probably remain uncertain,[29] it unmistakably links women with the themes of maenadism and marriage.[30]

In *c.* 63, Catullus adopts and manipulates the shared elements between maenadism and marriage so as to construct his hero as female. The link between Magna Mater and Bacchus, firmly established in myth and literature, permits the presence of Bacchic elements in the representation of the

[26]Treggiari 163; Burkert 1983: 62.

[27]Seaford 1994: 281-311, esp. 301-11, and 329-62.

[28]The primary edition of the Villa is Maiuri 1947: 121-74. See also Maiuri 1953: 50-63 (with color plates); Ling 101-04; Burkert 1987: 95-96; Seaford 1981. On the scene as linking Dionysus and marriage, Kuttner 101.

[29]Maiuri 1953: 51-62 interprets this series of paintings as a narrative sequence. Ling 103-04 advocates a centralized reading, with the god and his consort (identified as Ariadne) as the focus, and argues that the remaining scenes balance the central group of figures. Burkert 1987: 105 and Seaford 1981 subscribe to a narrative reading and propose that the fresco represents initiation into the Dionysian mysteries. Ling 103 posits that it could relate to a real wedding, as preparations to it, or as a precondition for participation to the mysteries of Dionysus. Henderson argues that the art of the frieze self-consciously defies the creation of stable meaning.

[30]Interestingly, the image of a maenad dancing with cymbals forms a pendant to the Dionysus and Ariadne complex and is followed by a painting depicting the adornment of a Roman bride. The painting represents a woman having her hair parted in the Roman bridal fashion and flanked by two erotes, one holding a mirror towards her. Kuttner 101 suggests that the bridal scene points to Aphrodite. The next and last painting in the series appears to be that of a married woman, who is represented as wearing a wedding ring and elaborate clothing and with her head covered with the matronal veil. Maiuri 1953: 53-58 identifies her as the lady of the house who commissioned the frieze, while Ling 104 suggests that she forms a counterpart to the bride of the previous scene. Aside from the god, all activities represented in the fresco involve women, while male figures include boys, satyrs, sileni, and erotes.

cult of Cybele. As in Greek tragedy, Bacchic ritual serves to develop the theme of the bridal transition in *c.* 63, but unlike Greek tragedy, the inclusion of the ritual description is used not to signal the destruction of the household but to examine the fissures in the institution of marriage through the lens of gender identity. By presenting Attis as a maenad, Catullus not only dramatizes his ambivalent gender identity as a *gallus* or a *vir sterilis* (63.69), but also constructs him as female, more specifically as a virgin bride. Attis, it appears, assumes a new gender identity, that of a woman (cf. *ego mulier*, 63.63).

Attis's casting as a maenad occurs early in the poem, immediately after his self-castration. The previously unidentified frenzy that violated the integrity of his body now becomes specifically maenadic: Attis's spatial movement from Greece to Phrygia is accompanied by his internal movement from sanity to frenzy (*vagus animis*, 63.4), a frenzy that denotes his state of ecstasy and possession by the spirit of the goddess. This possession, however, also evokes elements unique to the maenadic experience when Attis, turned into a woman, employs a typically maenadic exhortation in urging his comrades to rush to the mountains. Characteristic too of the Bacchic state is the collective movement from civilization to wilderness which Attis's command implies. Thus, Attis and his companions are envisioned as animals: '*agite ite ad alta, Gallae, Cybeles nemora simul, / simul ite, Dindymenae dominae vaga pecora . . .* ' ("'Come, Gallae, go to the deep forests of Cybele together, / together go, roaming herds of the mistress of Dindymus . . . ,'" 63.12-13).[31] The remainder of Attis's frenzied speech effectively manipulates the kinship between the rites of Bacchus and those of Magna Mater so as to associate maenadism, a primarily female activity, with Attis: *ubi capita Maenades vi iaciunt hederigerae, / ubi sacra sancta acutis ululatibus agitant* ("where the ivy-crowned Maenads toss their heads violently, / where they shake the holy emblems with shrill yells," 63.23-24).

In the ensuing description of the ritual proper, Attis and his companions engage in what appears to be a Bacchic orgy:

> simul haec comitibus Attis cecinit notha mulier,
> *thiasus* repente linguis trepidantibus *ululat*,
> leve *tympanum* remugit, cava *cymbala* recrepant,
> viridem citus adit Idam properante pede chorus.
> *furibunda* simul anhelans vaga vadit animam agens
> comitata tympano Attis per opaca nemora *dux* . . . (63.27-32)

[31]On the animal imagery, see also Sandy 1968.

All Latin quotations are from OCT texts. I have used the following translations: for Catullus, Cornish-Goold; for Ovid, Green; for Vergil, Fairclough-Goold. Translations are occasionally adapted to facilitate points of argument.

> So soon as Attis, woman yet not true one, sang these to her companions,
> the *thiasos* suddenly with quivering tongues *yell aloud*,
> the light *tympanum* rings again, clash again the hollow *cymbals*,
> swiftly to green Ida goes the chorus with hurrying foot.
> Then too *frenzied*, panting, uncertain, gasping for breath,
> attended by the tympanum, Attis their *leader*, through the dark forests wanders . . .

Numerous features of maenadism (noted by italics above) are present: the maenads tossing their ivy-crowned heads correspond to the band of Attis's comrades (*thiasus*); the revelers' cries are described with the verb *ululare*, a word etymologically linked with the Greek verb ὀλολύζω, commonly used to denote Dionysian ritual;[32] and the instruments accompanying the orgy (*tympanum*, *cymbala*) are characteristic of both Cybele and Bacchus.[33] As in other literary Bacchic revels where the afflicted woman is the leader of the orgiastic group—for example, Agave in Euripides' *Bacchae* and Amata in *Aeneid* 7.385-405—Attis is also described as the *dux* of this *thiasos*, his frenzy once again artfully linked with roaming motion (*vaga vadit animam agens*).

The inclusion of the maenadism theme is occasioned, however, by its relation to the marriage theme, which is central to the poem as a whole. As we have seen, maenadism, as a temporary negation of male authority, indicates female resistance to sexual initiation and the bridal transition. Attis, at the climax of his maenadic activity, is likened to a heifer running from the yoke, a Greek and Latin literary topos connected with the theme of marriage:[34] *veluti iuvenca vitans onus indomita iugi; / rapidae ducem sequuntur Gallae properipedem* ("as a heifer unbroken shunning the burden of the yoke; / fast follow the Gallae their swift-footed leader," 63.33-34). Viewed in the maenadic context, this simile provides a link between the young bride's negation of marriage, which was characteristic of her passage from virginity to married status, and Attis's maenadic behavior. Accordingly, Attis's maenadism is more than a literary representation of an initiation rite that depicts an abortive passage from male adolescence to adulthood; as an activity properly linked with representations of females, it also further complicates the hero's gender identity by casting him as a virgin bride.

The common ground between initiatory transition, marriage, and maenadism is put to work to construct Attis as a female as soon as his self-castration occurs. Attis's act falls within a larger pattern typical of rites of

[32]The use of the term at Vergil, *Aen.* 4.667, suggests the same connection.

[33]See, e.g., Ovid, *Ars Am.* 1.537. A maenad dancing with cymbals is also common in art representations; it is found in one of the frescoes of the Villa of the Mysteries (see above, note 30).

[34]Scholars disagree on the meaning of the simile. Shipton believes it is the yoke of madness, while Sandy 1971: 192-94 argues that it is the yoke of marriage (to Cybele). On the image of the yoke, see also Glenn.

initiation in which different forms of mutilation (cutting, tattooing, piercing, etc.) are regularly exercised as the symbolic expression of an individual's permanent separation from one group and his or her incorporation into another. Since the result of the mutilation is permanent, so too the membership to the new group.[35]

> stimulatus ibi furenti rabie, vagus animis,
> devolsit ili acuto sibi pondera silice,
> itaque ut relicta sensit sibi membra sine viro,
> etiam recente terrae sola sanguine maculans,
> *niveis* citata cepit manibus leve typanum . . . (63.4-8)
>
> There, goaded by raging madness, roaming in his mind,
> he cut off with a sharp flint the weights of his groin,
> so when she felt her limbs to have lost their manhood
> still with fresh blood staining the surface of the ground,
> swiftly, with *snowy* hands she seized the light tympanum . . .

Attis's depiction as one of Cybele's worshippers abounds in symbolic associations that intensify the negotiation of his gender identity. Attis's castration symbolically expresses a sexual act that in turn signals his marriage to Cybele, and the loss of the genitals and their dropping to the ground[36] represent a fertilization that accounts for the Great Mother's fecundity, much like Cronus's castration of Uranos that produced Aphrodite from the sea. This symbolic sexual act is at once productive and unmanning, for the castration both indicates the goddess's domination over her husband and stands for the generative powers of the earth. Since the goddess will necessarily dominate her "husband," this marriage violates gender norms, causing Attis to assume the role of the bride. The young hero, thus unmanned, becomes a bride at the moment of consummation of this mystical marriage.

Furthermore, the vivid description of Attis's self-castration with the emphasis on the shedding of fresh blood points at once to ritual sacrifice and the act of defloration.[37] As we have seen above, sacrificial symbolism, a common feature in all initiation rites,[38] is also present in

[35]Van Gennep 71-72.

[36]Wray 122-23 suggests that the use of *pondera* to describe Attis's castrated genitals may also be read as a metaphor for the weights of an upright loom. He argues that the metaphor casts Attis as man and woman simultaneously.

[37]Burkert 1983: 62: "Defloration turns into sacrifice mainly because of the exclusively human phenomenon of shedding blood in first intercourse." On Attis's castration as linked to *taurobolium*, see Takács 378.

[38]In initiation rites the initiand is imagined as an animal to be sacrificed. Seaford 1994: 287: "Like the victim, [the initiand] is adorned, at the centre of attention, isolated, ignorant of what the others know about what will happen to him. And like the victim he must submit to being killed, except that his death is not a real death: rather than being eaten, he becomes part

marriage ceremony and expresses anxieties about the imminent act of defloration, which in turn is assuaged by ritual substitutes.[39] In being prepared for marriage, a girl is imagined as a victim to be sacrificed, her anxiety giving way to joy by the end of the ceremony.

The symbolic link between marriage and sacrifice is rendered explicit in *c.* 64 in the description of Polyxena's death. In order to fulfill her role as Achilles' bride, Polyxena is sacrificed as an offering to Achilles' tomb:[40]

> denique testis erit morti quoque reddita praeda,
> cum teres excelso coacervatum aggere bustum
> excipiet *niveos* perculsae virginis artus.
> . . . . . .
> nam simul ac fessis dederit fors copiam Achivis
> urbis Dardaniae Neptunia solvere vincla,
> alta Polyxenia madefient caede sepulcra;
> quae, velut ancipiti succumbens victima ferro,
> proiciet truncum summisso poplite corpus. (64.362-70)
>
> Lastly witness too shall be the prize assigned to him in death,
> when the rounded barrow heaped up with lofty mound
> shall receive the *snowy* limbs of the slaughtered maiden.
> . . . . . .
> For so soon as Fortune shall give to the weary Achaeans power
> to loose the Neptune-forged circlet of the Dardanian town,
> the high tomb shall be wetted with Polyxena's blood,
> who, like a victim falling under the two-edged steel,
> shall bend her knee and bow her headless trunk.

Several points of contact between Polyxena and Attis indicate the latter's transformation into a virgin bride. In both cases the spilling of blood is paired with a reference to their "snowy" hands/limbs,[41] while the brutal violation of the integrity of their bodies is emphasized by the insistence on what is left: Polyxena's headless trunk (*truncum*) and Attis's limbs devoid of manhood (*relicta . . . membra sine viro*). More importantly, a disturbing sense of anomaly obtains, as in each situation norms have gone awry.

of the group invigorated and united by killing and eating the very animal with which he had been identified."

[39]Burkert 1983: 62 cites as an example of ritual substitution the parting of the Roman bride's hair with a spear that had been used to kill men and spill blood.

[40]Curran 189-90, who also notes that Polyxena, like Ariadne, will be denied the role of motherhood.

[41]Note that in Attis's case, her "snowy" hands seize the tympanum, an instrument associated with the worship of both Cybele and Dionysus. Clarke 170 notes that *niveus* is often used in the context of both cults. On the implications of the uses of *niveus* and *roseus* as adjectives associated with death, violence, and blood, see Clarke 170-73.

Polyxena takes the place of an animal victim in a corrupted form of sacrifice,[42] while Attis's fresh blood stains the earth (*maculans*) in an act of "defloration" that was never supposed to happen. Attis's self-castration, therefore, can be read as signaling his new gender identity as a female.

Bridal anxiety at the prospect of separation from the maternal household is a prominent feature of *epithalamia*, and those of the Catullan corpus are no exception (61.82; 62.59-66; 64.118-19). Attis's realization that separation from his homeland and social milieu is permanent generates a lament that displays, along with the nostalgia for his former life as a male, anxieties peculiar to the status of a young woman about to become a bride: *'egone a mea remota haec ferar in nemora domo? / patria, bonis, amicis, genitoribus abero?'* ("'I, shall I from my home be borne far away into these forests? / Shall I be absent from my fatherland, my possessions, my friends, my parents?'" 63.58-59). Obviously, such anxiety is not typical of the male. In *epithalamia* the young man is represented as too eager, rash, and aggressive, and is contrasted to the delicate "tenderness" of the girl (e.g., 61.3-4, 56-57). Since it falls on the bride to leave her natal household in order to assume a new life in the house of her husband, it is she and her family that experience an important loss, emotional and otherwise.[43] In marriage ritual, the resistance of the losing group is frequently expressed by rites of capture or rape. The bride's forceful separation from her maternal household also survives in the other Catullan *epithalamia*, where it is likened to the capturing of a city by an enemy (e.g., 62.21-24).

Similarly, Attis is forcefully "captured" by the goddess. The theme of permanent maenadism in the form of "marriage" to the goddess comes full circle at the poem's close. Cybele releases one of her lions from the yoke and bids it to attack Attis:

> ibi *iuncta iuga* resolvens Cybele leonibus
> laevumque pecoris hostem stimulans ita loquitur.
> 'agedum,' inquit 'age ferox <i>, fac ut hunc furor <agitet>,
> fac uti furoris ictu reditum in nemora ferat,
> mea libere nimis qui fugere imperia cupit.
> age caede terga cauda, tua verbera patere,
> fac cuncta mugienti fremitu loca retonent,
> rutilam ferox torosa cervice quate iubam.'
> ait haec minax Cybebe religatque *iuga* manu. (63.76-84)
>
> Then Cybele untying the *fastened yoke* from her lions
> and goading that foe of the herd who drew on the left, thus speaks:
> "Come now," she says, "Come, <go> fierce one, let madness <drive> him,
> let him by stroke of madness return to the forests,

[42]The notion of pollution intensifies the sense of anomaly, as the spilling of blood must be ritually controlled in order for the danger of pollution to be averted.

[43]Van Gennep 124-25.

> him who would be too free, and desire to run away from my power.
> Come, lash back with tail, endure your own scourging,
> make all the places around resound with your bellowing roar,
> shake fiercely on brawny neck your ruddy mane."
> Thus says Cybele threatening, and with her hand unbinds the *yoke*.

The yoke as a symbol of subjugation within the framework of marriage readily evokes Attis's previous likening to a heifer. Attis's permanent resistance, however, underscores his negation of the marital transition as he remains arrested in a maenadic state. The vocabulary in this passage indeed echoes Attis's earlier maenadic activity, which is now transferred to the lion. Cybele goads the animal (*stimulans*, 63.77), just as Attis was goaded to self-castration (*stimulatus*, 4); she bids the lion to fill the woodland with its bellowing roar, a sound corresponding to Attis's playing of the tympanum and the cymbals (cf. *retonent*, 82; *sonat* and *reboant*, 21; *remugit* and *recrepant*, 29); the fierce lion is also told to toss violently its mane, much like the maenads' tossing of their ivy-crowned heads (*rutilam ferox torosa cervice quate iubam*, 83).[44] In depicting the lion as assuming the characteristics of the maenadic state, Catullus indicates Attis's resistance to the goddess by reversing a theme frequent in Hellenistic poetry: a *gallus* is rescued from the attentions of a lion thanks to the aid of Cybele. In the extant epigrams, Attis's beating of the tympanum and waving of his wild hair frightens away the attacking lion, and the young man in gratitude enters the service of the goddess.[45] In this passage the contrary occurs: Attis in his sobriety has left the wild and sits by the shore, his spatial movement again corresponding to his internal movement from frenzy to sanity. The goddess, however, desires that Attis should return to the forest and to his previous state of madness. Her speech ends with her untying of the lion's yoke, which, ironically, signals the metaphorical "yoking" of Attis.[46] The lion, obedient, rushes against the youth, its aggressive onslaught (*impetum*, 89) reminiscent of the groom's forceful capture of the bride. Attis, like the virgin brides in the other *epithalamia* who resist their future husbands, is shown as resisting the goddess:[47]

> ferus ipse sese adhortans rapidum incitat animo,
> vadit, fremit, refringit virgulta pede vago.
> at ubi umida albicantis loca litoris adiit,

[44]Also noted by Shipton 269, but as aspects of Cybele's cult.

[45]*Anth. Pal.* 6.217-20, 237, 234. See Roller 229 and 305; Gow.

[46]See also Takács 381, who notes that Catullus here plays with double meanings: the lion is branded an enemy of the flock (*pecus*), while Attis's followers were described earlier as *pecora*. See also above, note 31.

[47]Also noted in a different context by Sandy 1971: 193. Sandy, however, believes that Attis's unwillingness to commit to Cybele is partly due to the fact that the marriage she presents demands "a perverse, constrictive love" (191). Rubino 168 notes that the female is totally victorious in the poem.

teneramque vidit Attin prope marmora pelagi,
facit impetum. *illa demens fugit in nemora fera*;
ibi semper omne vitae spatium famula fuit. (63.85-90)

And the wild lion stirs himself and rouses fury in his heart,
he speeds away, he roars, with roaming foot he breaks the brushwood.
But when he came to the watery stretches of the white-gleaming shore,
and saw tender Attis by the smooth spaces of the sea,
he rushes at her. *And she, frenzied, flees to the wild mountains*;
there evermore she was a servant for all her life's course.

In conclusion, Catullus manipulates the problematic gender identity of the *galli*, as well as the links between maenadism and marriage, in order to bestow Attis with a new, stable gender identity as a virgin bride. Even as a woman, however, Attis fails to complete successfully the marital transition and remains a perpetual maenad, excluded from the social milieu and devoid of a social identity.[48]

II. Married to Bacchus: Ariadne as Maenad

Although one could dismiss the fragility of Attis's female identity as the result of his being a *notha mulier*, the case of Ariadne shows that Attis is not unique in his failure to be integrated into society as a female. Much as we saw with Attis, Ariadne's fate in *c.* 64 brings into sharp relief the fragility of female social identity.

Often viewed as a love story with a happy ending, the embedded narrative of Ariadne in *c.* 64 shares striking similarities with the story of Attis.[49] In what follows, I argue that an important point of contact between these two figures is their failure to effect the marital transition, which in both cases is articulated through their representations as maenads. In Attis's case, as we have seen, the inclusion of the maenadic ritual element serves to complicate his gender identity; in Ariadne's story, on the other hand, it underscores her permanent exclusion from society.[50] Her "marriage" to Bacchus, expressed through her representation as perpetually engaged in a maenadic state, attests to her failure to be successfully reintegrated into society and thus strips her of any social identity. Ariadne's permanent exclusion from a social setting has important implications for the reading of the ecphrasis in which her story belongs. It has often been

[48]Also noted in a different context by Rubino 169.

[49]See primarily Putnam 1961.

[50]Despite their similarities, the two heroes possess also a fundamental difference: Attis, as we have seen, becomes a bride at the moment of his self-castration, thereby signaling the "consummation" of his marriage to Cybele, while it is not Ariadne's gender identity that is negotiated in the poem, but her social identity.

argued that since Theseus ostensibly pays for his "crime" against Ariadne, his punishment attests to the efficacy of a divinely sanctioned system of justice and retribution, which in turn guarantees social stability. Nevertheless, the heroine's subsequent failure to be restored to society by acquiring a new social identity as a wife casts serious doubt on the very social stability that the episode seeks to assert.

Ariadne's reaction when she realizes her new situation is consistently cast in terms of maenadic madness. This madness is rendered explicit in a simile comparing the heroine to a statue of a bacchant:

saxea ut effigies bacchantis, prospicit, eheu,
prospicit et magnis curarum fluctuat undis,
non flavo retinens subtilem vertice mitram,
non contecta levi velatum pectus amictu,
non tereti strophio lactentis vincta papillas,
omnia quae toto delapsa e corpore passim
ipsius ante pedes fluctus salis alludebant.
sed neque tum mitrae neque tum fluitantis amictus
illa vicem curans toto ex pectore, Theseu,
toto animo, tota pendebat perdita mente. (64.61-70)

She looks forth, alas, looks forth, just as a stone image
of a bacchant, tempest-tossed by the great tides of passion,
nor does she still keep the delicate headband on her golden head,
nor has her breast veiled by the covering of her light raiment,
nor her milk-white bosom bound with the smooth girdle;
all these, as they slipped off around her whole body,
before her very feet the salt waves lapped.
She for her headgear then, she for her floating raiment then,
cared not, but on you, Theseus, with all her heart,
with all her soul, with all her mind, lost, was hanging!

This image expresses a paradox the poet invites us to consider: Ariadne is described as a figure carved in stone, while she is the subject of a fury involving violent motion.[51] The simile prefigures her final union with Bacchus,[52] but more importantly it identifies the heroine's state as specifically maenadic. The ensuing details reinforce this reading: her headband

[51]The description of Ariadne as moving also defies the premise of the ecphrasis as description of static images. Laird 21 notes that in the simile "an impression of one form of visual representation is conveyed by actually describing another," and that it "compels us to notice the versatility of poetic as opposed to plastic media." Laird argues that the poem's use of ecphrasis invites comparison between "visual and verbal media" (29). Gaisser 595 remarks that the simile "helps to create an iconographic double image . . . that is the visual counterpart to the effect of the multiple literary allusions in the frame story."

[52]Konstan 1977: 58-59.

has slipped from her golden hair,[53] her body is not covered by her garment, her breasts are not bound by the smooth girdle. These are all characteristics of maenads when presented as transgressing conventions of dress, especially the loosening of hair and the exposure of flesh. In fact, we are uncertain for a while whether the lines describe the image of the statue or Ariadne herself, until we reach line 68 when we are told that the waves are splashing on her clothes.

The incongruity between the image suggested by the simile and the violent state of the heroine (on which the text insists) is sharpened by the presence of further elements normally identified with maenadic behavior: Ariadne in distress, we are told, often climbs the mountains uttering piercing cries and, much like Attis, moves from the mountains back to the sea, a movement that suggests a maenad's symbolic movement from the wild back to civilization:

> saepe illam perhibent ardenti corde furentem
> clarisonas imo fudisse e pectore voces,
> ac tum praeruptos tristem conscendere montes,
> unde aciem <in> pelagi vastos protenderet aestus,
> tum tremuli salis adversas procurrere in undas
> mollia nudatae tollentem tegmina surae . . . (64.124-29)

> Often in the madness of her burning heart they say
> that she uttered piercing cries from her inmost breast;
> and now would she sadly climb the rugged mountains,
> from where she would strain her gaze <over> the waste of ocean-tide;
> now run out to meet the waters of the rippling brine,
> lifting the soft vesture of her bared knee . . .

This incongruity between Ariadne's narrative movement and the immobility in the simile of the statue, I suggest, indicates the permanence of her state as maenad, since Ariadne will never be reintegrated into society.[54] Confirmation of this reading is seen in her subsequent words that are reminiscent of Attis's lament:[55]

> an patris auxilium sperem? quemne ipsa reliqui
> respersum iuvenem fraterna caede secuta?
> coniugis an fido consoler memet amore?
> quine fugit lentos incurvans gurgite remos?
> praeterea nullo colitur sola insula tecto,
> nec patet egressus pelagi cingentibus undis.

[53]Tatham 561 suggests that the term *mitra* had a Bacchic association that "is to be actualized at the end of the story."

[54]I believe that the placement of *saepe* in the phrase suggests that it may be read as modifying either *fudisse* or *perhibent*. If read with the latter, it reinforces the idea of permanence, since it implies continuous repetition of the story.

[55]Putnam 1961: 174.

> nulla fugae ratio, nulla spes: omnia muta,
> omnia sunt deserta, ostentant omnia letum. (64.180-87)

> Shall I hope for the aid of my father I deserted of my own will,
> to follow a young man stained with my brother's blood?
> Or shall I console myself with the faithful love of my spouse?
> Who is flying from me, bending his tough oars in the wave?
> Besides all that, the island is remote, and unfurnished with any dwelling;
> no way to depart opens for me; about me are the waters of the sea;
> no means of flight; no hope; all is dumb,
> all is desolate; all shows me the face of death.

Like Attis in *c.* 63, Ariadne expresses grief over her permanent separation from her home and family. The shifting of a girl's loyalty from her natal family to her new husband is a topos in a wedding context: as we have seen, the loss that her family incurs with her departure is ritually expressed in ceremonies of capture or rape, while the same idea is communicated in literature with the image of the frightened bride resisting the eager and aggressive future husband. While in other *epithalamia* the loss that the bride and her family experience eventually gives way to happiness at the prospect of her new life as a wife, in Ariadne's case the close bond she shared with her kin (87-88) is irrevocably shattered (117-20, 180-81).[56] Ariadne comes to the realization that her permanent separation from her natal family amounts to social—as well as actual—death (152-53; cf. *ostentant omnia letum*, 187).[57] As in the case of Attis, this realization provokes further bouts of madness. Like Attis, Ariadne is permanently condemned to inhabit the wilderness of Dia: the last image of the heroine is of her sadly gazing over the ocean at Theseus's receding ship (249-50).

[56]No one is more responsible for the shattering of this bond than Ariadne herself, although the poem is very selective in the way it provides information on the murder of her brother (the Minotaur) and oscillates between the Minotaur's identity as monster and as Ariadne's brother, carefully avoiding to mention both at the same time. The narrator first describes him as a *saevum monstrum* (101) deserving death; in 150, Ariadne refers to her brother (*potius germanum amittere crevi*) by using the word *germanus*, which underscores the fraternal bond (see DeBrohun 423); in 173, Ariadne, as she exclaims that she wishes Theseus had never come to Crete, mentions the bull (*indomito tauro*) but omits that he is her brother; a few lines later she admits that she killed her brother (*fraterna caede secuta*, 181) and omits that he is the bull. This attitude toward the Minotaur (who is in reality her half-brother and an extraordinary brother at best) seems to relate the problem of Ariadne's betrayal of her natal family with Theseus's guilt and subsequent punishment (200-01). Thomson 56 argues that both Ariadne and Theseus end up bereft of family as appropriate punishment for people who have destroyed their *domus*. On Theseus as demonstrating "monstrous falseness," see DeBrohun 423-24.

[57]The image of Ariadne contemplating life as a slave to Theseus (160-63) may also be explained in this context: even the lowest place in the social hierarchy is preferable to exclusion from all society.

As scholars have noted, the simile comparing Ariadne to a bacchant has prepared the reader for the next and last portion of the tapestry, which depicts Bacchus with his *thiasos* and signals the happy ending of the embedded story. In this scene, the reveling bacchants exhibit behavior similar to that of the abandoned heroine: the piercing sounds of the *tibia* correspond to Ariadne's cries on the mountains of Dia, while the reference to the mysteries unknown to the profane (260) points to her prospective initiation, here taking the form of her "marriage" to the god:

at parte ex alia florens volitabat Iacchus
cum thiaso Satyrorum et Nysigenis Silenis,
te quaerens, Ariadna, tuoque incensus amore.
. . . . . .
quae tum alacres passim lymphata mente furebant
euhoe bacchantes, euhoe capita inflectentes.
harum pars tecta quatiebant cuspide thyrsos,
pars e divolso iactabant membra iuvenco,
pars sese tortis serpentibus incingebant,
pars obscura cavis 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. (251-64)

And in another part [of the tapestry] youthful Bacchus was wandering
with the band of Satyrs and the Nysa-born Sileni,
seeking you, Ariadne, and fired with your love;
. . . . . .
then the swift bacchants here and there were raging with frenzied mind,
euhoe, crying tumultuously, euhoe, shaking their heads.
Some of them were waving thyrsi with shrouded points,
some tossing about the limbs of a mangled bullock,
some girding themselves with writhing serpents:
some bearing in solemn procession dark mysteries enclosed in caskets,
mysteries which the profane desire in vain to hear.
Others beat tympana with uplifted hands,
or raised clear clashings with cymbals of rounded bronze:
many blew horns with harsh-sounding drone,
and the barbarian pipe shrilled with dreadful din.

At the same time, however, the scene, far from offering blissful, life-affirming images,[58] presents a *thiasos* of maenads who, in a state of

[58]As Putnam 1961: 187-88 argues, "A mood bordering almost on death is replaced by life. Bacchus comes with his rowdy throng, seeking the love of Ariadne. Once more all is young, vigorous, full of joy. . . . The arrival of Bacchus changes our mood entirely and prepares us for a return to the initial picture of the poem, the happy circumstances attending the wedding of Peleus and Thetis." See also Klingner 184-88, who argues that the scene points to the contrast between Ariadne's despair and her imminent happiness with Dionysus.

ecstatic possession, perform ritual *sparagmos* and engage in handling snakes. These disturbing activities, removed from everyday cultic practice and belonging rather to the realm of myth, emphasize the foreign and barbaric elements of the cult.[59] The orgiastic rites performed in this scene share striking similarities with the rites of the mad-stricken Theban maenads in Euripides' *Bacchae*. In the Greek play, two sets of Bacchic rites are on display: the benign, controlled, and beneficial rites performed by the play's chorus of Phrygian women (64-167) contrast with those that the Theban women engage in on Mount Cithaeron and that result in the dismemberment and killing of the young king Pentheus and the annihilation of the royal house of Thebes. The shared elements between this *thiasos* and the one in Euripides' tragedy underscore the notion that this particular maenadic state amounts to negation of civilized existence.

Ovid's rendition of the episode in *Ars Amatoria* shares much with Catullus. Focusing on Ariadne's reaction to the arrival of Bacchus, the narrative underscores her fear and resistance to the god:

iam deus in curru, quem summum texerat uvis,
tigribus adiunctis aurea lora dabat.
et color et Theseus et vox abiere puellae,
terque fugam petiit terque retenta metu est.
horruit, ut steriles, agitat quas ventus, aristae,
ut levis in madida canna palude tremit.
cui deus 'en, adsum tibi cura fidelior' inquit;
'pone metum, Bacchi Cnosias uxor eris . . . '
. . . . . .
dixit et e curru, ne tigres illa timeret,
desilit (imposito cessit harena pede)
implicitamque sinu, neque enim pugnare valebat,
abstulit: in facili est omnia posse deo.
pars 'Hymenaee' canunt, pars clamant 'Euhion, euhoe';
sic coeunt sacro nupta deusque toro. (*Ars Am.* 1.549-64)

And then came the god, his chariot grape-clustered,
paired tigers padding on as he shook the golden reins.
Poor girl: lost voice, lost color, lost Theseus;
three times she tried to escape, three times stood frozen with fear,
shivering, like the thin breeze-rustled cornstalk,
or osiers in a marsh.
"I am here for you," the god told her. "*My* love will prove more faithful.
Put your fear aside, daughter of Minos, you'll be Bacchus's wife . . . "
. . . . . .
He spoke and down he sprang from his chariot,
lest the girl take fright at the tigers, set his foot on the shore,

[59]Also Konstan 1977: 61: "Catullus' picture of the arrival of Dionysus on Dia clearly emphasizes the orgiastic and barbarian, that is to say, non-Roman, character of the Dionysian cult." Contrast the image of the maenads playing with Silenus in Ovid, *Ars Am.* 1.545.

then gathered her up in his arms, bore her away;
she had no strength to fight back. No trouble for gods to do as they please.
Some revelers cry "Hymenaeus!"; others, "Euhion, euhoe!"
Bacchus and his bride come together on the sacred marriage bed.

Although the context of the Ovidian passage is very different from the Catullan, to a certain degree it completes the gaps in Catullus's narrative. Ariadne's short lament[60] is almost interrupted by Bacchus's arrival, and grief soon gives way to fear (*excidit illa metu rupitque nouissima uerba; / nullus in exanimi corpore sanguis erat*, 539-40). Bacchus's reassurances that she is to become his wife seem to have the opposite effect, while the image of the god in his chariot emphasizes his powerful divinity just as we see in the final scene of *c.* 63 when Cybele in her chariot unleashes a lion to chase Attis. To be sure, Bacchus appears to be sensitive to the girl's fear and tries to appease her by leaping from the chariot, but the marriage takes place eventually against Ariadne's will. Resistance to marriage, Bacchus, and maenadism are all connected in Ovid's narrative.[61]

The privileging of the uncontrollable, violent, and potentially destructive elements of Bacchic worship gains further resonance through Catullus's self-conscious manipulation of the ecphrastic trope, which forces us to read Ariadne and the *thiasos* as perpetually engaged in maenadic behavior and excluded from the social milieu. In the exposition of the story of Ariadne, the narrative strategies employed consistently defy ecphrastic conventions.[62] Yet the abrupt shift in the narrative subject effected by the appearance of Bacchus and his retinue, and the equally abrupt ending of the ecphrasis, call attention to the process of representation itself. This kind of self-conscious play on the modes of representation is manifest in the simile representing Ariadne as a statue of a bacchant—in the movement from present to past to future and back to the present within the ecphrasis narrative of Ariadne's gaze over the sea and Bacchus's orgiastic revel. This self-conscious play emphasizes the content of the ecphrasis as a series of images arrested in space and time.[63] Deprived of a viable social role, Ariadne never sheds her maenadic identity, thus negating the civilized state and remaining excluded from society. Although Ariadne's gender identity is not in jeopardy as was the case with Attis, the apparent "stability" of biological sex fails to secure for her a viable social identity as wife. Ariadne's social death thus is expressed through her portrayal as engaged in permanent maenadism.

[60]Ariadne's lament was a topos in Hellenistic and Latin poetry; see Hollis 121-22.
[61]Like Catullus, Ovid presents Ariadne comparing herself to a bacchant in *Her.* 10.49-50.
[62]See Laird.
[63]See Krieger 1-28. On ecphrasis as a destabilizing force, see Putnam 1998: 2-3 with bibliography. On ecphrasis and the problems of interpretation, see Fowler.

Social stability largely depends on human relations governed by trust and on society's ability to deal with transgressions of trust by dispensing justice. As scholars have long acknowledged, the theme of transgression, justice, and retribution is paramount in the Ariadne-Theseus narrative: Theseus's ultimate punishment offers the reassurance that the gods oversee human relations and act as guarantors of justice.[64] I would argue, however, that Ariadne's permanent exclusion from society calls into question the stability of this system of justice. Theseus indeed pays for his breach of *fides* to Ariadne by losing his father, but his punishment does not restore Ariadne to society. Her union with Bacchus seemingly elevates her to the divine level, but the narrative detail that represents her as a perpetual maenad emphasizes that she has no viable social role. One could certainly argue that Ariadne's betrayal of her family is the very reason for her exclusion, but it is important to note that the poem appears to free Ariadne from responsibility for the murder of her brother.[65] As a result, Ariadne is portrayed as a victim of a breach of *fides* in a society unable to incorporate her.

III. Married to Rome? The Construction of Gender and Roman Identity

I have argued that *cc.* 63 and 64 employ the theme of ritual maenadism in order to display the fragility of an individual's self-definition as either male or female—a fragility expressed through his or her inability to assume a new and viable social identity with the successful completion of the marital transition. This problematization of self-definition within the context of marriage may well symbolically express problems of self-definition vis-à-vis conceptions of the identity of the city Rome. The institution of marriage and the gender hierarchy it prescribes, then, stand as a metaphor for the state and its social roles, hierarchies, and protocols.

The symbolic linkage between the institution of marriage and the Roman state in Catullus's poems is developed through a careful manipulation of the host of meanings that the realm of ritual affords. Attis's and Ariadne's identities are defined by their engagement in ritual activity, which takes the more specific form of "marriage" to a deity. An important portion of ritual practice in ancient Rome, however, was regulated and controlled by the state. Roman authorities articulated official policies towards the cults of Bacchus and Cybele: the gods were envisaged as fulfilling various symbolic roles for the benefit of the state and its inhabitants.

[64]Konstan 1993: 66 notes that Catullus seems to have been the first to connect the death of Aegeus with the abandonment of Ariadne.
[65]See above, note 56.

More specifically, the importance of the cult of Cybele for Rome was manifested in the conspicuous position it occupied in the Roman religious calendar and public life, as Cybele was the first of the deities honored by the aediles' games.[66] The goddess's contribution to Rome's military successes was evidenced in the belief that she had played an active role in Rome's victories in the Hannibalic and later wars; she came to be associated with Victoria and her temple was given prominence on the Palatine hill.[67] While this connection between Cybele and military power can be glimpsed in the vocabulary that Catullus has the goddess employ to describe Attis's resistance to her (*mea libere nimis qui fugere imperia cupit*, 63.80),[68] it is not until Vergil's *Aeneid* that we meet an explicit equation of Rome and empire on the one hand and the goddess on the other:

> en huius, nate, auspiciis illa incluta Roma
> imperium terris, animos aequabit Olympo,
> septemque una sibi muro circumdabit arces,
> felix prole virum: qualis Berecyntia mater
> invehitur curru Phrygias turrita per urbes
> laeta deum partu, centum complexa nepotes,
> omnis caelicolas, omnis supera alta tenentis. (*Aen.* 6.781-87)
>
> Under his auspices, my son, shall that glorious Rome
> extend her empire to the earth's end, her fame to Olympus,
> and shall embrace seven hills with a single city's wall,
> blessed in a brood of heroes: just as the mother of Berecynthus,
> turret-crowned, rides in her chariot through the Phrygian towns,
> happy in a progeny of gods, embracing a hundred grandsons,
> all of them divine, all of them dwelling the high skies.

Vergil's striking image links Cybele with Rome's expanse and domination: the positive, non-threatening goddess appears as an all-embracing, inclusive mother, while Rome as a mother embraces her citizens throughout the empire both spatially and symbolically. Once confined within the boundaries of the city, the exotic, foreign, orgiastic elements of the cult, which undoubtedly figured prominently in Roman consciousness and attested to the goddess's extraordinary powers, were channeled and controlled for the benefit of Rome and its empire. The Great Mother embodied productivity, prosperity, military success, and the incorporating virtues of Rome.[69]

[66]Wiseman 1984: 119.

[67]Ibid. 127. Wiseman also argues that later on Augustus himself realized that this divinity held a place in Roman consciousness both symbolic and visual, and that although the cult embodied much that the emperor did not approve and did not wish to promote, it had to be reckoned with and so he tried to appropriate it.

[68]Takács 381 argues that for Roman audiences the word *imperia* would have had connotations of military authority.

[69]Stehle 156; Beard 1994: 184-87.

The priests of Magna Mater, however, seriously disturbed Roman sensibilities through their constant display of their otherness. Their appearance and dress confounded accepted gender distinctions, marking both the potency of the goddess they served and their direct connection to her divinity through the medium of ecstasy and possession. At the same time, their difference from the priests of the other civic cults challenged not only the traditional routes that guaranteed access to the divine but also the authority of the Roman élite and the social and cultural norms whose stability it purported to uphold.[70] The marginal position held by the *galli* among the city's religious authorities is attested not only in the hostility of literary texts but also in their spatial confinement to the precinct of the temple of Magna Mater. Yet the position of the temple itself in the symbolic geography of the city of Rome defied the marginality that these restrictions imposed and suggests their "inseparability from the center of Roman political and religious life" (Beard 1994: 181).

The ambiguity of Cybele's identity as simultaneously Roman and non-Roman went hand in hand with the ambiguity surrounding the gender of her priests. As the goddess both represented and challenged what was Roman, so as a mother and bride she both ensured that female powers could be put to work for the good of the city and demolished traditional gender hierarchies by demanding the male potency of her eunuch priests.[71] As Mary Beard argues (1995: 169), religion and its system of rich symbolism reflect social and cultural categories while simultaneously providing a locus par excellence where these categories may be constructed, defined, and negotiated. The cult of Magna Mater and its priests provided such a locus for the debate of what was Roman and what was foreign,[72] but also challenged and confused conceptions of Rome's gender identity: Rome as a mother and bride, and/or Rome as a phallic male?[73]

The realm of religion and ritual provides fruitful ground for the exploration of such questions. Catullus utilizes the shared ritual elements between the cults of Cybele and Bacchus, along with the theme of gender identity and marriage, as a site onto which other cultural categories may be mapped out. Marriage and the gender binary it prescribes serve, therefore, as a means to articulate the individual's relationship to Rome. Yet Catullus complicates this relationship by presenting the deities as invested with ambiguous and competing gendered attributes that, in turn, express the ambiguity surrounding the definition of Romanness; he also employs the context of marriage to express the relationship between Rome and its

[70]Beard 1994: 178.

[71]Stehle 156.

[72]Beard 1994: 187.

[73]The definition of the role of Vestal Virgins vis-à-vis the city was likewise particularly problematic. See Beard 1980 and 1995.

citizens, even as he calls into question the hierarchy of gender roles it implies; and most importantly, through this elaborate network of ritual and marriage, the deities (and especially Cybele) are depicted as foreign, consuming, and destructive, denying the heroes a gendered definition of the self. In this world of ambiguity, the only certainty to emerge is the overwhelming power of these divinities and, by extension, of Rome. Despite their negation of the marital transition, their resistance to the divine, the Catullan heroes remain permanent maenads: their failure to assume a stable social role through the successful completion of the marital transition presents not only the problem of self-definition and anxieties over the disempowerment of Roman élite males,[74] but also the fear of the complete annihilation of the self in the face of an elusive yet overpowering state.[75]

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[74]Skinner 1993.

[75]I wish to thank Marilyn Skinner for her generous encouragement and helpful advice. The editor and anonymous reader of *Helios* offered perceptive comments for which I am grateful. Warm thanks to Antonios Augoustakis, Shilpa Raval, and Angeliki Tzanetou for their suggestions and for listening. A portion of this paper was delivered at the 1998 APA meeting in Washington, D.C.

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HELIOS, vol. 30, no. 2, 2003

MARRIAGE AND EXILE: CICERO'S LETTERS TO TERENTIA

Sabine Grebe

I. Introduction

Exile created an exceptional situation in relationships between spouses in ancient Rome. Unlike modern Western societies, Roman society did not have political parties, teams of non-governmental organizations, or charitable entities that could lend emotional and financial support to a banished person. Family and friends were expected to lend an exile support by representing his interests at home.

Traditional gender roles changed when a Roman husband was in exile, as the wife's tasks became different from her usual role. The wife no longer lived in his shadow; instead, the husband's banishment allowed her to break from her normal domestic role and to act on her own in the public sphere. It was up to the wife to try to protect and defend their property, to advocate her husband's return from exile, and to sort out financial matters.[1] This kind of situation is reflected in the letters that Cicero wrote to his spouse Terentia during his exile. Cicero found himself in the very vulnerable position of having to depend upon his wife for emotional, political, and financial help.[2]

In the following analysis of Terentia's participation in public life, I focus upon Cicero's marriage during his exile from March 58 B.C.E. to September 57 B.C.E. I demonstrate that in the context of marriage and exile, Cicero's letters are important for several reasons. First, they offer very valuable documentation on the celebration of marital love in an early literary period. Second, the late Roman Republic saw several women participating in public life and thereby crossing gender boundaries; Cicero's correspondence gives evidence for this shifting of traditional gender roles, by showing the opportunities presented to a wife upon her husband's absence. Third, the letters praise Terentia's independence while her husband was in exile; in fact, Cicero expected his wife to act publicly on his behalf.

[1]Because these legal, political, and financial tasks usually fell within the male province, they could also be fulfilled by a very close male friend.

[2]Terentia was more affluent and a better manager of money affairs than was Cicero, and so he was dependent upon her in financial matters, even when he was not in exile.