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Vates and Initiates: Augustan Poetic Manipulation of Greek Mystery Cult

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Abstract

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This study argues for the viability of mystery cult as a distinct category of religious experience with a particular presence in the Roman poetic imagination and an especial importance in the Augustan period as locus for contemporary critique. Mystery cult, considered severally as the Bacchic, Orphic, and Eleusinian Mysteries and categorically as an elective religious experience with consistent features and distinct from civic religious engagement, furnished Augustan poets with literary topoi and unique poetic formulae available for generic manipulation, variation, and allusion. The identification of such literary devices works towards establishing a distinct literary language of mystery cult as a broader mode of literary discourse, with an emphasis on a pervasive rhetoric of secrecy and exclusivity. As the literary evidence demonstrates, identification of this discursive mode invites reconsideration of the mechanisms of allusion

through reframing the allusive dynamic between poet and learned, elite audience along the model of the hierophant-initiate relationship and conferring upon Augustan poetry the authority of a *hieros logos*. Mystery cult as literary topos will have political implications as an originally foreign phenomenon whose presence at Rome was to be negotiated during a time of broader social and cultural restructuring enacted alongside larger dialogues around religious thinking.

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DEDICATION

For my parents

INTRODUCTION: CULT IN TEXT, CULT AT ROME

The persistent voice of the ancient bard Orpheus rings out in antiquity, calling to poets and initiates alike. The centrality of written text and oral language to mystery cult engagement, embodied by the most visible bard of cult rites in antiquity, has long been an established feature of these religious phenomena, practiced by the Greeks and imported by the Romans.¹ Mystery cult has much to say about language, and much to say with language, by which the ideology, mythology, and soteriological claims of the mystery cults were transmitted to cult worshippers.

Our understanding of the centrality of language to mystery cult has benefited in recent years from the discovery and publication of archaeological finds containing provocative written material. The publication of such objects as the Derveni Papyrus, containing excerpts of an Orphic theogony,² bone tablets from Olbia displaying Dionysiac riddles,³ and the discovery of Bacchic/Orphic gold lamellae inscribed with fragments of a katabasis poem,⁴ has brought back into the attention of scholars the importance of poetry, sacred language, and *hieroi logoi* to mystery cult ritual and practice; the recent publication of a Teubner edition of Orphica, edited by Alberto Bernabé, has reignited scholarship around the literature associated with cult, now more accessible to modern scholars than ever before.⁵ Such literary evidence has been considered primarily in discussions seeking to elucidate the various aspects of mystery cult as a historical phenomenon

¹ Obbink 2013.

² Anonymous 1982; Betegh 2014; Kouromenos, Parássoglou, and Tsantsanoglou 2006.

³ Zhmud 1992; West 1982.

⁴ Graf and Johnston 2013; Edmonds 2011; Tzifopoulos 2010; Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008; Bernabé 2005; Pugliese Carratelli 2003; Zuntz 1971; Kern 1922.

⁵ Bernabé 2004, 2005, 2007. These volumes will serve as the primary source for all excerpts of Orphic texts, except where otherwise indicated. The standard abbreviation for these volumes is *OF*; to differentiate the edition of Orphic fragments of Bernabé from the *Orphicorum Fragmenta* of Kern (1922), the standard edition up until the publication of the new Teubner, fragments will be cited by fragment number and the letter 'B'.

present in various parts of Greece during various time periods, towards a more concrete understanding of these religious phenomena as they were practiced on the ground.

The study that follows will propose that this body of written material forms part of a broader literary discursive mode more generally grounded in mystery cult engagement with language, available as raw material for the kind of intertextual and allusive relationships scholars of ancient literature have come to expect of a poetic milieu that embraced the production of erudite poetry spanning genre and displaying mastery of various literary corpora. This dissertation will argue for a literary discursive mode grounded in mystery cult, understood categorically as a distinct form of religious practice uniquely associated with a particular kind of engagement with language, and will trace its presence in Roman poetry of the Augustan period, a time of radical negotiation of status and identity not least of all along lines of religious restructuring.

Three categories of cult engagement with language will be considered towards constructing a comprehensive definition of a cultic literary discursive mode. The first category will catalogue written texts and formulations associated with cult as literary and rhetorical topoi available for the kind of allusive engagement, manipulation, and intertextual availability already recognized in the cases of other categories of language, such as Homeric diction or a tragic mode grounded in the plays of the Athenian tragedians. This category includes written material believed to have been used in cult ritual (or which postures itself as such), such as the Orphic theogony of the Derveni papyrus, the Bacchic/Orphic bone tablets from Olbia, the hexametric katabasis poem of the Bacchic/Orphic gold lamellae, and cult formulae such as the *makarismos* formula, the most famous instantiation of which is to be read in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*.⁶ In this category of material, we can include literary mediations of cult language and activity, in texts not precisely cultic but

⁶ The centrality of texts to religious practice in antiquity more broadly has generally been underestimated by scholars; cf. Beard 1991.

which engage heavily with cult themes and language, such as those features of Pindar's epinician odes and Plato's philosophical works which have been recognized by scholars as engaging in cult rhetoric, the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, and the *Bacchae* of Euripides. Such material will be considered available for the close reading of verbal echoes in Augustan poetry.

The second category to be considered concerns attitudes towards language which are pervasively associated with cult. A feature of rhetoric around cult language is the centrality of texts, both oral and written, to worship, as in the often-quoted testimonies of Plato, where the philosopher speaks of the 'hubbub of books of Orpheus and Musaeus' to which Orphics adhere (βίβλων δὲ ὄμαδον παρέχονται Μουσαίου καὶ Ὀρφέως, *R.* 364c-e), and Euripides, where the initiate Hippolytus relies on the 'smoke of Orphic writings' when playing the Bacchant (Ὀρφέα τ' ἄνακτ' ἔχων | βάκχευε πολλῶν γραμμάτων τιμῶν καπνούς, *Ba.* 953-4). Stemming from this centrality of text, cultic attitudes towards language include mandates to secrecy, by which divulgation of cult arcana was prohibited; sacred *symbola*, by which initiates recognized each other and proved their status as initiates; ideas around the soteriological capacity of cult language, as holding the key to the salvation of the initiates in death; and the riddling and enigmatic quality of cult language, comprehensible only to the select group of cult initiates equipped with proper understanding. We may include here the epistemological claims of cult language as being a vehicle for wisdom concerning the gods and the afterlife; a central figure in this account of cult language is the privileged and authoritative voice of the cult speaker, the hierophant, whose most important archetype is Orpheus and who is engaged in a dynamic relationship with the initiate.⁷

⁷ For the different categories of religious figures in the Classical period, see Garland 1990.

The third category will consider the features, figures, and narratives associated with mystery cult as a religious phenomenon with a unique character.⁸ We can extrapolate a definition of mystery cult understood categorically as having certain consistent features: a process of initiation, often frightening or shocking, which fundamentally altered the initiand at the level of ontology, during which an epiphanic encounter with cult divinities was imagined;⁹ an ecstatic or frenzied state of mind in practitioners, at times qualified as *μανία* or *furor*; binary categories distinguishing between initiates and non-initiates, sacred and non-sacred space, cult divinities, such as Bacchus, Demeter, and Persephone, and cult deniers, whose most visible example is the Euripidean Pentheus; maenads, the frenzied female cult worshippers of Dionysus; an interest in eschatological inquiry, with a particular focus on katabasis narratives; and concerns around death and securing a pleasant afterlife. Of course, the literature around mystery cult will include discussion of some of the most visible cults in antiquity, including the Eleusinian Mysteries, Bacchism (and Orphism, insofar as it is distinct from Bacchism), the rites at Samothrace, and the rites of Cybele. If we were to expand our worldview even further, we could list the rites of Isis among these as well.¹⁰ While evidence for cult worship as it was practiced on the ground will be a relevant question for the inquiry to follow, this study will adopt a syncretic approach, which only partially seems to reflect the realities of cult worship in antiquity, but which is pervasive in explicit literary depictions of cult, as the evidence to be considered in what follows plainly demonstrates.¹¹

⁸ Many studies have been produced on mystery cults as practiced religious phenomena in Greece and Rome, from the Classical period to Late Antiquity. Cf. e.g. Nock 1972.

⁹ Investigation of ancient cult initiation has been dominated by an anthropological point of view, as in Eliade 1965. For a summary of the history of the scholarship (and criticism of its shortcomings), see Graf 2003 and Lincoln 2003. A syncretic approach to (or perhaps, confusion concerning) these cults is recorded by Herodotus, who in his history states that Orphics and Bacchics are in fact Egyptians and Pythagoreans (2.81).

¹⁰ This selection overlooks lesser mysteries attested e.g. in the writings of Pausanias. Cf. Graf 2003.

¹¹ The problem of establishing a religious movement that can properly be called Orphism and considered independent from other ancient mystery religions has plagued modern scholarship on mystery cult. Cf. e.g. Burkert 1982; Burkert 1977; Robertson 2003; the most vocal detractor has been Edmonds 2013.

In reviewing aims of methods, some consideration must be given to the source material for this literary discursive mode, which we can see as functioning in various, though not necessarily incompatible, ways. Several layers of engagement with cult will serve as the backdrop against which to consider Roman poetry of the Augustan period. We can begin with the question of cult engagement at Rome during and before this period as a lived experience of Romans, whether at the level of casual observers, as of the rites of Cybele, for instance, participation in which was barred to Roman citizens, but whose priests, the Galloi, had a great amount of visibility at Rome, or as cult participants who underwent initiation, as lists of Roman initiates at Samothrace can attest, for instance. For the Greek cults here considered, the question of Greek religious practice as a historical phenomenon familiar to the Romans will be of considerable importance; Roman literature looking back to Greek cults in light of Greek religious practice on the ground will thus have to engage with a foreign religious experience (and perhaps its relationship to contemporary Roman cult practice). Mediating the relationship between Greek cult and Roman text will be Greek texts engaged with mystery cult, such as the *Bacchae* of Euripides and the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, and we can posit the case in which Roman poets are consciously interacting with these texts for the purposes of the kinds of intertextual games favored by the poets of the period as a demonstration of cleverness and erudition; on this model, those elements of cult that appear in their poetry can be viewed as incidental vestiges of the process of borrowing from their source material.

The most complex view sees these relationships working simultaneously: Roman poets rely on contemporary experience of mystery cult to give their texts enhanced meaning, while consciously signalling back to lived Greek religious experiences of cult familiar to them by cult sites, such as that at Eleusis, to which elite Romans traveled, but ultimately foreign to them as a

Greek phenomenon. Intertextual engagement with Greek written material that deals in cult tropes offers a cult armature from which to draw material; intertextual engagement with this kind of literature works towards various ends, first evoking the source text as a literary model but simultaneously acting as 'window allusions' looking back to the lived experiences of cult in Greece on which the texts depend. It is with this more complex view in mind that the argumentation that follows will proceed, seeing cult experiences and Greek texts dealing in cult as complementary elements of a Roman sensibility for Greek cult experience, whose cachet as literary material depends on a touchstone of Roman cult experience.

These three categories of literary engagement will simultaneously be at play in any given passage of Roman poetry that can be read as working within a distinctly cultic literary mode. In what follows, I aim to demonstrate that, in any given passage activating a cultic voice, these three categories serve as the signposts of cultic activity, by which Roman poets bring cult engagement with language to bear on their poetry, towards varying aims. The chapters that follow will proceed with close readings of texts of the Augustan period, scanning for the features here articulated, the broader purpose of which will be to reflect on the deeper significance of cult engagement to textual aims and methods. Identification of the manipulation of these features in the poetry of the Augustan period will demonstrate the availability of certain kinds of speech to various genres and varying texts, with greater and lesser immediate religious significance. The identification of a cultic literary mode, available to be activated across text and genre, provides us new frameworks to reconsider poetic topoi and will expand the literary corpora that we deem to have been available to poets writing during this period, while at the same time allowing for the recognition of a unique poetic cachet grounded in the particular engagements with language which are unique to cult practice.¹²

¹² An important methodological model for this kind of argumentation is that of Feeney 1988.

Questions of poetic authority, the soteriological capacities of language, and the qualifications of a privileged audience will be argued to have had a presence in the poetry of this period with greater urgency and clarity, modeled on cult dynamics. On such a model, we can begin to expand our thinking about the mechanisms of allusion in antiquity, seeing in the poets of this period hierophants speaking to an erudite audience of potential initiates.¹³

¹³ Editions of classical texts are those of the relevant Teubner editions, except where otherwise noted. Translations are those of the relevant Loeb editions, with minor modifications for textual consistency and simplicity of style, except where otherwise noted.

Chapter 1. RHETORIC OF SILENCE AND EXCLUSIVITY

This chapter will reconsider a literary formula exclusively associated with mystery cult and a motif of cult language beyond their usefulness as evidence for religious practice, regarding them instead as material available to poets and ancient authors for the kind of manipulation, allusion, and intertextual engagement already permitted of other genres and literary corpora by scholars of antiquity. Here, we will examine the codification of these topoi in both Greek and Latin texts through a recording of their Greco-Roman reflexes and a cataloguing of their formulaic features. What we will find is the development of cultic literary signposts available for manipulation in new and interesting ways beyond the boundaries of cult and across disparate genres. Appropriation of cult language at the level of allusion beyond the bounds of texts whose content is explicitly cultic allows any poet to make himself an Orpheus, and to make of any text a *hieros logos*, with the elevated stakes of cult soteriological and didactic claims.

1.1 ‘CLOSE THE DOORS OF YOUR EARS:’ MYSTERY AND SILENCE

Perhaps the most recognized and celebrated Orphic formula, what has been called a *sphragis* of Orphic literature,¹⁴ is the injunction against the participation in the rites by those who are uninitiated. With a succinct hexametric formula of exclusivity, Orpheus is imagined as expelling from the place of the rites those who are impious with what serves as a prolegomenon to a *hieros logos*.¹⁵ As this section will consider, the formula frequently occurs in Greek literature associated with mystery cult and has a long afterlife in Roman literature with cultic overtones, by which authors appropriate for themselves the authority of a hierophant, distinguish between groups of

¹⁴ Bernabé 1996.

¹⁵ This feature of literature is a reflection of such prohibitions attested by inscriptions at cult sites, such as at the cult site of Samothrace; cf. Clinton 2003.

readers along boundaries of accessibility, and claim for themselves and their texts the status of specialized knowledge and expertise, with an especial connection to the divine.

1.1.1 *The Formula (OF 1 F Bernabé)*

The formula is cited in two variants as the earliest opening of an Orphic theogony (*OF 1 F Bernabé*): (A) ἀείσω ξυνετοῖσι· θύρας δ' ἐπίθεσθε, βέβηλοι (“I will sing to those with understanding: close the doors, you who are uninitiated”); (B) φθέγγομαι οἷς θέμις ἐστί· θύρας δ' ἐπίθεσθε, βέβηλοι (“I will speak to those for whom it is permitted: close the doors, you who are uninitiated”).¹⁶ From this formula, we can extrapolate certain consistent features characteristic of this signpost of cultic activity: the distinction between those permitted to participate and those barred, which is mapped onto a physical boundary along space, demarcated here by θύραι, and reiterated by the etymological derivation of βέβηλος from Greek βαίνω (‘to step’);¹⁷ the term βέβηλοι at verse-final position serving as almost a technical term for the uninitiated (whose Latin equivalent we will see is *profani*), to be distinguished from the group to whom participation is permitted, whether by reason of prior understanding or religious mandate; and the production of speech associated with specialized religious knowledge by a speaker with especial authoritative status (here, by the presumption that the speaker is Orpheus, to whom the quote was attributed in antiquity).

Variations on Orphic formula 1 A/B will elaborate upon the phrase θύρας δ' ἐπίθεσθε (‘close the doors’) with the term ὦτα/οὔατα (‘ears’), making of the formula a direct injunction against listening that interprets θύρας metaphorically. The expansion of the original formula may

¹⁶ Cf. *OF 3 F*, 19 F (= *OF 13 Kern*), 74 F (= *OF 59 Kern*), 101 F (= *OF 334 Kern*), 377.1 F (= *OF 245 Kern*), 378.1 F (= *OF 247 Kern*) Bernabé (hereafter cited only by ‘B’). For general discussion, see West 1983:82–84; Bernabé 1996; Bremmer 2011; see Graf 2011 for comparison of the two variants.

¹⁷ Bernabé 1996:13–14, who refers to Chantraine’s etymological dictionary at n. 4.

occur in the Derveni Papyrus, where Tsantsanolgou reconstructs the term ὡσὶν in light of what follows (col. 7.9-10):¹⁸

“Θ]ύρας” γὰρ “ἐπιθέ[σθαι]” κελεύσας “τοῖ[ς]
[ὡσὶ]ν” αὐτ[οὺς οὐτι νομο]θετεῖν φη[σιν τοῖς] πολλοῖς
τῇ]ν ἀκοήν [ἀγνεύο]ντας κατ[ὰ]

For, [Orpheus] having ordered them to “put doors to their ears,” he says that he is not legislating for the many [but addressing himself to those] who are pure in hearing...

Various other sources attest to the expansion, including Aelius Aristides *Or.* 46.129: τῶν δὲ βεβήλων ὀλίγος ὁ λόγος. πάντως οὐδὲν δεῖ πύλας αὐτοὺς ἐπιθέσθαι τοῖς ὡσὶν; Galen *De Usu. Part.* 12.6 [II 196.5 Helmrich]: ὥσπερ οὖν τοῖς ὡσὶν ἐπιθέσθαι θύρας τοὺς βεβήλους κελεύουσιν ἐν τοῖς μυστικοῖς λόγοις, οὕτω κἀγὼ νῦν οὐκ ἀνθρωπίνους νομοθετήμασιν, ἀλλ’ αὐτοῖς τοῖς ἀληθεστάτοις τελῶν μυστηρίοις, θύρας ἐπιθέσθαι κελεύω τοῖς ὡσὶ τοὺς ἀποδεικτικῆς μεθόδου βεβήλους; the scholion of Elias on Aristotle’s *Categories*, κακοφραδέων δὲ βεβήλων | οὕατα λαχνήντα περισκεπέτωσαν ἀράχλαι; and Plato, as we will see in what follows, records the same expansion with ὡσὶν (*Symposium* 218a-b).¹⁹ These citations add to the literal meaning of the Orphic formula a metaphorical interpretation by which ‘doors’ are imagined as applied to ‘ears’

¹⁸ *OF 3 F B* (= Kouromenos, Parássoglou, and Tsantsanoglou 2006:75.). Tsantsanoglou reads οἱ πολλοί as the Derveni author’s rendering of Orphic οἱ βέβηλοι (2006 ad. loc.). This supplement is accepted in Betegh 2004.

¹⁹ Dickie 1998:67–68. Dickie interprets a similar phrase from a poem of Posidippus addressed to the Muses as a cult formulation (*SH* 705.2): καθαροῖς οὕασι ἐκ[ύ]ετε (“you heard with pure ears”). He is aware of the original formulation of Orphic formula 1 A/B from a Jewish imitation of an Orphic *hieros logos*, which he dates to no later than the 2nd century BCE, and the expansion of the formula as it is transmitted in Plato’s *Symposium* (218b5-7). He suggestively writes (67-8): “There is also the possibility that the Muses are imagined as initiates in the mysteries receiving the secret teachings vouchsafed only to those whose ears are pure; that is to say, to those who have undergone the initial ceremony of purification and whose ritual purity can be vouchsafed. There is no direct evidence that the expression καθαροὶ τὰ ὦτα or something akin to it belonged to the body of utterances employed in the ritual of the mysteries. There are, however, indications that point in that direction. Philo Judaeus does on three occasions use the expression κεκαθαρμένοι τὰ ὦτα of initiates in the mysteries (*Cher.* 48, *Gig.* 54, *Mos.* 2.114). One of the instances of the expression is found in a passage in the *De Cherubim* that has been inspired in part by Plato’s *Symposium*. In it Philo gives an allegorical interpretation of *Genesis* 4.1-2 (40-50). He introduces the fuller treatment of the allegory by asking those who are unduly fearful of the divine to block their ears or depart (ἀκοὰς ἐπιφραξάτωσαν οἱ δεισιδαίμονες τὰ ἑαυτῶν ἢ μεταστήσωσαν). His explanation for making that request is that the divine mysteries he is about to teach are worthy only of those initiated in the most holy mysteries.” On these, see Nock 1972.

through the vivid specification of the body part in isolation, and the implicit understanding that the uninitiated, in being barred from the physical space of the rites, are excluded from the audience of an important speech act, the *hieros logos* that is to follow the prolegomenon.

1.1.2 βέβηλοι: *Some Greek Reflexes*

Having considered the features and significance of the formula, we now turn to Greek literary manipulations of Orphic formula 1 A/B, which occur through a wide range of texts and genres, whose context to greater and lesser degrees explicitly concerns itself with descriptions of cult activity. An overview of the variety of corpora in which it occurs demonstrates the vast range of texts and contexts in which the formula seems to have appeared, which include philosophy, tragedy, comedy, bucolic, hymnic, and medical texts.²⁰

It will be unsurprising to realize that Greek literature which engages in depictions of cult practice activates the formula; in each case, however, the author adapts the application of the formula to suit the aims of the genre in which he works.²¹ A parody on Orphic formula 1 A/B is embedded in the *Frogs* of Aristophanes, manipulated, as we might expect in the context of comedy, for the greatest comedic value. The playwright varies from the particular terminology recurring in the formula, but nonetheless, the sentiment expressed is the same, one of exclusion of those who are unfitting to bear witness to secret rites. The chorus of initiates who participate in worship of Dionysus, as if in anticipation of ritual, disbars the unfit from participating in the choral dances (354-70):

εὐφημεῖν χρὴ κάξιστασθαι τοῖς ἡμετέροισι χοροῖσιν,
 ὅστις ἄπειρος τοιῶνδε λόγων ἢ γνώμη μὴ καθαρεύει,
 ἢ γενναίων ὄργια Μουσῶν μὴτ' εἶδεν μὴτ' ἐχόρευσεν,

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²⁰ Cf. Bernabé 1996:15–17, where he offers a list of passage identifications spanning the Hellenistic period to the Byzantine era, including many of the passages to be considered in this section.

²¹ The term βέβηλος is posited as a reconstruction in the Gurob papyrus in an injunction against viewing (col. 12.15). See Bernabé 1996:15–16, and esp. n. 9 for relevant bibliography.

μηδὲ Κρατίνου τοῦ ταυροφάγου γλώττης Βακχεῖ' ἐτελέσθη,
 ἢ βωμολόχοις ἔπεσιν χαίρει μὴ 'ν καιρῷ τοῦτο ποιοῦσιν,
 ἢ στάσιν ἐχθρὰν μὴ καταλύει μὴδ' εὐκόλος ἐστὶ πολίταις,
 ἀλλ' ἀνεγείρει καὶ ῥιπίζει κερδῶν ἰδίων ἐπιθυμῶν, 360
 ἢ τῆς πόλεως χειμαζομένης ἄρχων καταδωροδοκεῖται,
 ἢ προδίδωσιν φρούριον ἢ ναῦς, ἢ τὰ πόρρητ' ἀποπέμπει
 ἐξ Αἰγίνης Θωρυκίων ὧν εἰκοστολόγος κακοδαίμων,
 ἀσκώματα καὶ λῖνα καὶ πίτταν διαπέμπων εἰς Ἐπίδauρον,
 ἢ χρήματα ταῖς τῶν ἀντιπάλων ναυσὶν παρέχειν τινὰ πείθει, 365
 ἢ κατατιλᾷ τῶν Ἑκαταίων κυκλίοισι χοροῖσιν ὑπάδων,
 ἢ τοὺς μισθοὺς τῶν ποιητῶν ῥήτωρ ὧν εἴτ' ἀποτρώγει,
 κωμωδηθεὶς ἐν ταῖς πατρίοις τελεταῖς ταῖς τοῦ Διονύσου·
 τούτοις αὐδῶ καὶ οὖθις ἀπαυδῶ καὶ οὖθις τὸ τρίτον μάλ' ἀπαυδῶ
 ἐξίστασθαι μύσταισι χοροῖς· 370

Let him keep ritual silence and stand aside from our sacred dances, he who has no experience of mystical language, or has not cleansed his mind, who never has seen and never has danced in the rites of the noble Muses, nor ever has been inducted into the Bacchic mysteries of beef-eating Cratinus, or who takes delight in foolish words when doing this is ill-timed, whoever does not eliminate hateful factionalism, and is disagreeable to the citizens, but kindles and fans civil strife, in his thirst for private advantage: whoever takes bribes when guiding the state through the midst of a storm or betrays our forts or our ships, smuggles contraband from Aegina, as Thorycion did, that wretched collector of taxes sending pads and sails and pitch to Epidauros, or persuades anyone to send supplies to the enemies' ships, or defiles Hecate's shrine, while singing dithyrambs, or any politician who bites off the pay of the poets for being ridiculed in the ancestral rites of Dionysus. To these I proclaim, and proclaim again, and thrice proclaim: stand apart from the initiates' dances.

The opening and closing frames are straightforward enough, asking for ritual silence (εὐφημεῖν) and giving an injunction towards exclusion (ἐξίστασθαι); a group of initiates is designated as those who participate in the choral dances (μύσταισι χοροῖς) and distinguished from a group of the uninitiated, the first class of which are designated by the phrase ὅστις ἄπειρος τοιῶνδε λόγων ἢ γνώμη μὴ καθαρεύει. The designation is essentially a paraphrasis of βέβηλοι as a technical term by way of the *makarismos* formula which closes the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* describing the man who has no share in the Eleusinian rites of the goddess Demeter (481-2): ὃς δ' ἀτελὴς ἱερῶν ὃς τ' ἄμμορος, οὐποθ' ὁμοίων αἴσαν ἔχει φθίμενός περ ὑπὸ ζόφῳ ἡερόεντι ("but he who is uninitiated and who has no part in the rites, never has a share of such good things once he is dead and is in the shady gloom"). We may note also that the verb καθαρεύειν, 'to cleanse,' in the *Frogs* resonates as cultic language as well, since the concept of purity is central to the qualification of

the initiate; this concept is articulated by the term καθάρως in the group of gold lamella designated the ‘A formula’ by Zuntz and expanded by Edmonds.²² The frame opening and closing the speech of the chorus thus evokes the basic sense of Orphic formula 1 A/B, mediated by verbal resonance with the *makarismos* formula of the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, whose comic capacity is essentially to build the expectation of a solemn and religious speech act prefaced by an injunction against participation with a list of profane individuals that ultimately reveals itself to contain an absurd set of disqualifications having little, if anything, to do with religious piety.

A fragment of Euripides’ lost play, *Protesilaus*, also preserves Orphic formula 1 B, here in a tragic context, again with some degree of variation. Fragment 648 reads: οὐ γὰρ θέμις βέβηλον ἄπτεσθαι δόμων (“For it is not right for the uninitiated to enter the household”).²³ Without the immediate context, the precise meaning is unclear; the sentiment, nonetheless, by which someone is denied access to a particular space, and the terminology by which this meaning is articulated (θέμις and βέβηλον) undeniably participate in Orphic formula 1 B, adapted for a tragic context in which access to space is frequently a feature to be negotiated by the tragic characters. We may perhaps reconsider in conjunction with fragment 648 the formulation of a different fragment from the same play, again whose context is obscure (fr. 649): πέπονθεν οἷα καὶ σὲ καὶ πάντας μένει (“He has suffered the sorts of things that await both you and everyone”). The sentiment is perfectly at home in the context of a tragedy, where characters are frequently subject to the vicissitudes of the gods and fate, generally to catastrophic ends, but the particular terminology of the formulation may have Orphic origins in the discussions of the experience of initiates, emblemized by an excerpt of the gold leaf tablets, which gives overwhelming emphasis to cognates of πάσχειν: χαῖρε

²² OF 488-491 F B. The formula begins: ἔρχομαι ἐκ καθαρῶν καθαρὰ (“Pure I come from the pure”).

²³ Schol. on Sophocles 10 = Suda B 218. Macías Otero 2011:24–25.

παθὼν τὸ πάθη|μα τὸ δ' οὔπω πρόσθε ἐπεπόνθεις (“Greetings, you who have suffered the painful thing, that which you have never endured before”).²⁴

Walter Burkert discusses the various ways in which the hero cult of Protesilaus acquires “a somewhat Dionysiac complexion,”²⁵ pointing most importantly to the concepts of the sacrificial victim and to the recurring motif of a statue coming to life during worship (he cites stories of such worship for Actaeon, Attis, and Dionysus).²⁶ Burkert’s analysis allows for a recontextualization of the cult language evident in the fragments of Euripides’ play, perhaps explaining the appropriateness of cult language in a play whose central character is associated with Dionysiac cult. Euripides elsewhere demonstrates a familiarity with cult concepts of exclusivity of knowledge articulated between groups with familiarity and those without, when he describes the hero cult of Orpheus (*Rhesus* 973): σεμνὸς τοῖσιν εἰδόσιν θεός (“as a god revered by those who have understanding”). Here, the term εἰδόσιν reads like ‘those with understanding’ (ξυνετοῖσι) mentioned in the Orphic formula 1 A; where this group in the original formula has knowledge of cult divinities which is given to them by the hierophantic Orpheus, Euripides has manipulated the phrase to mean cult knowledge of Orpheus himself, now the object of reverence.

The formula has an important Greek successor in the opening of Callimachus’ *Hymn to Demeter*, to which we will see the scholion to Plato’s *Symposium* refer (1-3):

τῷ καλάθῳ κατιόντος ἐπιφθέγγασθε γυναῖκες
 ‘Δάματερ μέγα χαῖρε πολύτροφε πουλυμέδιμνε’.
 τὸν κάλαθον κατιόντα χαμαὶ θασεῖσθε βέβαλοι.

As the basket comes, greet it, you women, saying ‘Demeter, greatly hail! Lady of much bounty, of many measures of corn.’ As the basket comes, from the ground you shall behold it, you who are uninitiated.

²⁴ *OF* 487 F B, verse 3.

²⁵ Burkert 1983:245.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 243–47, for a full discussion. Cf. *OF* 325 F B.

Callimachus signals the Eleusinian Mysteries by an intertextual relationship to the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, to which all subsequent hymns to Demeter implicitly look back, and by the image of the basket leading the procession, an important image in the iconography of cult, not least of all cult worship at Eleusis. The term βέβαλοι and the injunction against participation evoke the Orphic formula of cultic activity, making of Callimachus' hymn a *hieros logos* and of the singer Callimachus a kind of hierophant on the model of Orpheus. Whereas the profane of the Orphic formula are disbarred from listening, Callimachus' βέβαλοι are to modify their viewing (θασεῖσθε), as essential an act for participation in mystery rites as listening, during which hidden sacred objects were revealed (a category referred to as τὰ δεικνύμενα) to initiates for the first time.

We can catalogue the term ἐπιφθέγγασθε in the opening verse as resonating with Orphic formula 1 B, first, in the resonance of the prefix ἐπι- with the command of the Orphic formula 1 A/B to the uninitiated, ἐπίθεσθε ('close'), and second, in the resonance of -φθέγγασθε with the declaration of the speaker of formula 1 B in preparation for the rites, φθέγγομαι ('I will speak'). The verbal echo is hard to deny, and yet Callimachus has complicated the intertextual engagement by reversing the roles of hierophant and audience. Whereas the term in Orphic formula 1 B signifies the action of the speaker of the *hieros logos* (presumably Orpheus), in Callimachus' text the term, with prefix ἐπι-, signifies the action of those who are expected to participate in the rites, the women (γυναῖκες). The participants become the speakers, in a reversal of the hierophant-initiate relationship.

There is certainly a subtle activation of the *Homeric Hymn* narrative, despite the protestations of the poet, in the discussion of subject matter that shortly follows this Orphic opening (17-21):

μή μὴ ταῦτα λέγωμες ἃ δάκρυον ἄγαγε Διοῖ·

κάλλιον, ὥς πολίεσσιν ἐαδότα τέθμια δῶκε·
 κάλλιον, ὥς καλάμαν τε καὶ ἱερὰ δράγματα πράτα
 ἀσταχύων ἀπέκοψε καὶ ἐν βόας ἦκε πατῆσαι,
 ἀνίκα Τριπτόλεμος ἀγαθὰν ἐδιδάσκετο τέχνην·

20

Let us not speak of that which brought weeping to Deo! Better to tell how she gave to cities pleasing ordinances; better to tell how she was the first to cut straw and holy sheaves of corn-ears and put in oxen to tread them, when Triptolemus was taught the good craft.

The story to which Callimachus alludes at verse 17 is the rape of Persephone, the subject of the *Homeric Hymn* and the myth central to the rites at Eleusis. Callimachus' refusal to recount this myth is first and foremost a clever engagement with his earlier precedent, a pointed allusion that sets his hymn even more vividly in dialogue with it precisely by side-stepping its central narrative; but it also postures at a different level of interpretation as a kind of adherence to silence around cult material, since Callimachus refuses to recount a myth with religious significance for the secret rites at Eleusis. *Praeteritio* as literary device becomes appropriated for religious use beyond merely literary technique, as does the allusion to the *Homeric Hymn*. The reluctance to speak to which Callimachus makes claim can be interpreted as the pious adherence to injunctions of secrecy expected of those who participated in the rites; the implicit understanding of this conceit is that those of Callimachus' readers who had participated in the mysteries at Eleusis, during which the myth was reenacted or retold, would be best equipped to understand the allusion, once again activating the rhetoric of exclusivity in which Orphic formula 1 B participates.

Where the formula in its entirety is not evoked, the term βέβηλος at verse-final position becomes an unequivocal signpost for cultic activity and those who are disbarred from it. Such is the case in the third *Idyll* of Theocritus, when the love-sick goatherd includes Demeter and Iasion in his list of mythological models of successful pairs to which he wishes he and Amaryllis could be likened (50-1): ζαλῶ δέ, φίλα γύναι, Ἰασίωνα, | ὃς τόσσων ἐκύρησεν, ὅς' οὐ πευσεῖσθε, βέβαλοι ("I envy Iasion, dear lady, whose fate was of a kind that you who are uninitiated will

never know”).²⁷ The term is more explicitly connected to rites in *Idyll* 26, where the concept of exclusivity is evoked with respect to the rites of Bacchus (ὄργια Βάκχου, 13), which “are not to be seen by the uninitiated,” (τὰ δ’ οὐχ ὀρέοντι βέβηλοι, 14). Where the formula in its entirety is not evoked, it seems that, by the Hellenistic period, the term βέβηλος had become a kind of shorthand for the formula in its entirety, evoking the concept of exclusivity of the rites and available as a signpost for cultic activity more broadly.

The use of the formula in the passages which we have just reviewed whose content establishes an explicitly cultic context serves to evoke more vividly the cult practices there depicted, and in many cases to apply a clever manipulation of cult engagement that serves literary aims largely determined by genre; as a rhetorical device, it inflects the passages with a sense of their relationship to and status as *hieroi logoi* and, consequently, begins to suggest the status of the poet as a hierophant. The manipulation of the formula by Plato in his *Symposium*, however, forces us to press the ways in which the application of the formula might seek especially ambitious rhetorical ends. Plato will employ the formula in service of his broader project of elevating philosophy as a vehicle for wisdom over and above other genres, including Homeric epic and religious literature, and thereby in the process elevating philosophers as experts in wisdom over and above poets and hierophants. The philosopher depicts Alcibiades addressing the other symposiasts and suggesting that they convene in philosophical discussion (*Smp.* 218a-b):

καὶ ὁρῶν αὖ Φαίδρους, Ἀγάθωνα, Ἐρυξιμάχου, Πausανίας, Ἀριστοδήμους τε καὶ Ἀριστοφάνας· Σωκράτη δὲ αὐτὸν τί δεῖ λέγειν, καὶ ὅσοι ἄλλοι· πάντες γὰρ κεκοινωνήκατε τῆς φιλοσόφου μανίας τε καὶ βακχείας—διὸ πάντες ἀκούσεσθε· συγγνώσεσθε γὰρ τοῖς τε τότε πραχθεῖσι καὶ τοῖς νῦν λεγομένοις. οἱ δὲ οἰκέται, καὶ εἴ τις ἄλλος ἐστὶν βέβηλός τε καὶ ἄγροικος, πύλας πάνυ μεγάλας τοῖς ὥσιν ἐπίθεσθε.

I have only to look around me, and there is a Phaedrus, an Agathon, an Eryximachus, a Pausanias, an Aristodemus, and an Aristophanes – I need not mention Socrates himself – and all the rest of them; every one of you has had his share of philosophic frenzy and ecstasy, so all of you shall hear.

²⁷ For discussion of Theocritus’ manipulation of the myth of Iasion and its cult resonances, cf. Fantuzzi 1995:23–27.

You shall stand up alike for what then was done and for what is spoken. But the servants, and all others profane and boorish, must set the heaviest of doors upon their ears.

By direct comparison with Orphic formula 1 A/B, we may observe the following consistencies, confirming the participation of the passage in the formula: first, the designation of those who are not permitted to participate by the same term as to be found in the Orphic formula, βέβηλος; an image of gates (here, πύλας, performing the function of θύρας); and the imperative ἐπίθεσθε. Here, the expansion by which θύρας in the original formula comes to be associated with ‘ears’ is articulated explicitly by the terms τοῖς ὠσίν. The scholion of Aretha on this passage reconfirms the Orphic resonance of the Platonic adaptation by linking it to the Callimachean *Hymn to Demeter*: for lemma πύλας...ἐπίθεσθε, the scholiast gives ἐντεῦθεν παρώδησεν Καλλίμαχος ἐν ὕμνῳ Δήμητρος καλάθου τὸ “θύρας δ’ ἐπίθεσθε βέβηλοι” (“From this Callimachus writes of the basket in the *Hymn to Demeter* by way of parody on the phrase ‘close the doors, you who are uninitiated’”). Further confirmation is encoded in the pointed irony in Plato’s appropriation of the formula, which relies on the contemporary social milieu: the speaker at this point in the dialogue, Alcibiades, was famously put on trial for having profaned the secrets of the Eleusinian Mysteries.

Plato here appropriates rhetoric of religious knowledge and expertise to mean philosophical knowledge, likening a group of learned philosophers and interlocutors to those who are permitted to hear or who already have had experience in hearing the mysteries.²⁸ He speaks here of the ‘frenzy and ecstasy of philosophy’ (τῆς φιλοσόφου μανίας τε καὶ βακχείας), using terminology whose strictest meaning sets into play the Dionysiac frenzy of the cult worshippers of the divinity; it is those who have a share in this frenzy who are thus permitted to hear what will follow. The subjects to which they can be privy, as formulated by Plato, namely ‘that which has been done’

²⁸ There is a large bibliography tracing elements of mystery cult as a feature of Plato’s philosophical rhetoric. Cf. e.g. Casadesús 2016; Blanco Rodríguez 2016; Santamaría Álvarez 2016; De Castro Caeiro 2016; Gómez Iglesias 2016; Bernabé 2011.

(τοῖς τότε πραχθεῖσι) and ‘that which is being said’ (τοῖς νῦν λεγομένοις), evoke what is revealed during ritual: these phrases echo two categories of revelation in the mysteries, ‘the things done’ (τὰ δρώμενα) and ‘the things said’ (τὰ λεγόμενα). In doing so, he vividly evokes cult practice for a far different context.

Plato’s evocation of the formula and cult practice more broadly subverts the implicit authority of the hierophantic speaker and questions the validity of wisdom believed to be the prerogative of ancient religion. Plato elevates the project of philosophical inquiry to the highest orders of wisdom already recognized by his contemporary society, displacing the latter with the former, and in doing so privileges philosophers over hierophants.²⁹ And in fact, Plato will speak quite disparagingly of those speakers who make exclusive claims to Orphic wisdom, such as Orpheotelests and hierophants, whom the philosopher characterizes as essentially charlatans and snake-oil salesmen.³⁰ Cult claims to exclusive access to knowledge are made a tool in service of Plato’s broader polemics around establishing philosophy as a vehicle for wisdom.

This strategy by which one body of knowledge and expertise is substituted for and ultimately made to supplant cultic knowledge will not have been exclusive to Platonic philosophy; identifications of the Orphic formula in the medical texts of Galen and Hippocrates, by which these authors supplant religious knowledge with scientific expertise and hierophants with doctors, demonstrate that this rhetoric was available to be appropriated to any exclusive body of knowledge and any set of individuals making claims to such knowledge.³¹ The implicit claims of the Orphic formula, namely as a vehicle for a certain kind of wisdom as exclusively available to a specialized

²⁹ Aristophanes parodies the metaphorical use of mystery rites to describe philosophical inquiry in the *Clouds* (140ff.).

³⁰ Cf. *R.* 364b-e, where Plato speaks disparagingly of ἀγύρται καὶ μάντεις who claim religious knowledge on the authority of the poets, including Homer, Musaeus, and Orpheus; see also *Laws* 909b, where Plato suggests that such individuals be imprisoned.

³¹ Lara 2011.

class of speakers for a circumspect audience, become embroiled in larger polemics around what constitutes wisdom, what literary genres and speech acts can encode knowledge, and who exactly has claim to it.

1.1.3 *Profani: Some Latin Reflexes*

Greek literature has demonstrated the adaptation to various genres of Orphic formula 1 A/B, bringing with it a broader sense of cultic language and cult claims around language. We have seen the manipulation of the hierophant-initiate relationship as the poet-audience dynamic, with competing claims to wisdom and authority. Examination of Latin texts will find engagement with Orphic formula 1 with similar literary strategies as the Classical and Hellenistic Greek examples listed above. The examples to be considered will demonstrate that the formula is adapted to Latin language with the preservation of many of the most important and recognizable features of the formula. For trisyllabic verse-final βέβηλοι to signify ‘uninitiated,’ Latin authors will use trisyllabic verse-final *profani*, a term which echoes the Greek original not least of all in the preservation of the metrical pattern,³² and syntax will reflect the imperative force of the speech of a privileged speaker. Latin authors will employ cultic binaries suggested by the formula, including access to and exclusion from the rites, mapped along boundaries in space, and the contrast between the groups of initiated and uninitiated. Latin formulations will make use of the expansion of the Orphic formula that focuses on a body part and reads geographic boundaries metaphorically. Finally, Latin authors will apply the formula to both cultic and non-cultic contexts, adapted to the particular demands of genre, with the same polemics around claims to expertise and wisdom.

³² The complicated etymological significance of terms *profanus* and *profanare* are discussed by Wagenvoort 1980:24–38.

Scholars have noted the presence of the Orphic formula in Latin poetry in two overtly cultic contexts, where the application of the phrase is largely seamless. The first sees the formula in the speech of the Sibyl in Vergil's *Aeneid* in anticipation of the katabasis of Aeneas (*Aen.* 6.258-9): “*procul o, procul este, profani,*” | *conclamat vates, “totoque absistite luco*” (“Away! away! you that are uninitiated!” shrieks the seer, ‘withdraw from all the grove!’”).³³ Here, again, the term *profani*³⁴ signals cultic activity with speech appropriate to the Sibyl as a hierophantic speaker.³⁵ The expulsion of the uninitiated from a physical space which is implicit in the clause θύρας δ’ ἐπίθεσθε of the Orphic formula, is preserved with the phrase *totoque absistite luco*, transferring the geography from a *telesterion* to the natural landscape of Cumae and the Sibyl’s cave with the same sense of physical exclusion. Vergil’s manipulation of Orphic formula 1 A/B rewrites with Orphic language a phrase from the Callimachean *Hymn to Apollo*, which appears to be the most direct antecedent of the Vergilian formulation, in which the profane are warned away from the advent of the Delian god, a fitting allusion in Vergil’s text in the context of the Sibyl as prophetic mouthpiece of Apollo (2.2): ἐκάς, ἐκάς, ὅστις ἀλιτρός (“Away, away, he that is sinful!”);³⁶ Vergil has adopted the syntax of Callimachus’ verse, but rewritten the injunction with Orphic terminology and sensibility. The inclusion of cult language is especially appropriate to the characterization of her mantic ability as a kind of Bacchic frenzy (*bacchatur*, *Aen.* 6.78).³⁷ Vergil’s inclusion of an

³³ Bremmer 2009:3.

³⁴ Commenting on Vergil’s *Aeneid* 6.258, Servius defines *profani* as *qui non estis initiati*, ἀμύητοι, βέβηλοι.

³⁵ For further discussion of the techniques by which Vergil characterizes the speech of the Sibyl as Orphic language, see Ch. 3.1

³⁶ Fabricius supplements Servius’ commentary with a hybrid Callimachean-Orphic formulation: *de Callimacho* ἐκάς ἐκάς ἔστε βέβηλοι (eds. Thilo and Hagen 1881).

³⁷ Plato offers a folk etymology for the conflation of Dionysiac frenzy and prophetic ability, speaking concerning the Sibyl, among other mantic figures (*Phd.* 244a-c): ἢ τε γὰρ δὴ ἐν Δελφοῖς προφητὶς αἴ τ’ ἐν Δωδώνῃ ἱέρειαί μανεῖσαι μὲν πολλὰ δὴ καὶ καλὰ ἰδίᾳ τε καὶ δημοσίᾳ τὴν Ἑλλάδα ἡργάσαντο, σωφρονοῦσαι δὲ βραχεὰ ἢ οὐδέν: καὶ ἐὰν δὴ λέγωμεν Σίβυλλάν τε καὶ ἄλλους, ὅσοι μαντικῇ χρώμενοι ἐνθέω πολλὰ δὴ πολλοῖς προλέγοντες εἰς τὸ μέλλον ὠρθωσαν, μηκύνοιμεν ἂν δὴλα παντὶ λέγοντες. τότε μὴν ἄξιον ἐπιμαρτύρασθαι, ὅτι καὶ τῶν παλαιῶν οἱ τὰ ὀνόματα τιθέμενοι οὐκ αἰσχρὸν ἡγοῦντο οὐδὲ ὄνειδος μανίαν. οὐ γὰρ ἂν τῇ καλλίστῃ τέχνῃ, ἣ τὸ μέλλον κρίνεται, αὐτὸ τοῦτο τοῦνομα ἐμπλέκοντες μανικὴν ἐκάλεσαν. ἀλλ’ ὥς καλοῦ ὄντος, ὅταν θεία μοῖρα γίγνηται, οὕτω

Orphic formula in an episode whose broader context is a divine prophetic possession and one in which the god Apollo is imagined as present reappropriates the Callimachean injunction anticipating the epiphany of Apollo as a cultic prolegomenon befitting the katabasis that is to follow, a katabasis peppered with Orphic resonances.

In conjunction with the direct evocation of the formula in the mouth of the Sibyl prior to the descent into the Underworld, there may be a second, looser engagement of Orphic formula 1 A/B, again uttered by the Sibyl, describing for Aeneas the areas of the Underworld which they explore. As she considers the various areas of the Underworld, in which the souls of the dead are distributed, Aeneas asks after those who are left to eternal punishment, to which inquiry the Sibyl replies (*Aen.* 6.563): *nulli fas casto sceleratum insistere limen* (“no pure soul may tread the accursed threshold”). The formulation by which the Sibyl distinguishes this area of Tartarus indirectly activates the various features of the Orphic formula. The verse sets a demarcation along lines of physical space, here with *limen* performing the function of Greek θύραι. The grammatical construction of *fas* with the infinitive *insistere* encodes an almost imperative injunction barring access, with the religious term *fas* serving as a Latin translation of Greek θέμις, a term familiar from the A variant of Orphic formula 1 and other formulations of cult restrictions. The cult binary of initiate and non-initiate who are given access to the sacred space of the rites underscores the discussion of a group of ‘chaste’ (*casto*) and implicitly their inverse, who are condemned to remain in this area of the Underworld and whose appearance in the Underworld prompts Aeneas’ query.

νομίσαντες ἔθεντο, οἱ δὲ νῦν ἀπειροκάλως τὸ ταῦ ἐπεμβάλλοντες μαντικὴν ἐκάλεσαν (“For the prophetess at Delphi and the priestesses at Dodona when they have been mad have conferred many splendid benefits upon Greece both in private and in public affairs, but few or none when they have been in their right minds; and if we should speak of the Sibyl and all the others who by prophetic inspiration have foretold many things to many persons and thereby made them fortunate afterwards, anyone can see that we should speak a long time. And it is worthwhile to adduce also the fact that those men of old who invented names thought that madness was neither shameful nor disgraceful; otherwise they would not have connected the very word mania with the noblest of arts, that which foretells the future, by calling it the manic art. No, they gave this name thinking that mania, when it comes by gift of the gods, is a noble thing, but nowadays people call prophecy the mantic art, tastelessly inserting a T in the word”).

The ideas at play in Orphic formula 1 A/B are redeployed by Vergil's most visible hierophant in consideration of the Underworld, an important kind of narrative in the context of cult. Orpheus himself had claim to an especially important katabasis narrative, his descent into the Underworld to recover his deceased wife, Eurydice, a journey from which he had a claim to cult knowledge of the Underworld and the gods who reside there. This claim to special knowledge of the Underworld, so important to the authority of Orpheus as a cult singer, is attributed to the Sibyl in the following verse (*Aen.* 6.564-5): *sed me cum lucis Hecate praefecit Avernus, | ipsa deum poenas docuit perque omnia duxit* ("but when Hecate set me over the groves of Avernus, she taught me the gods' penalties and guided me through all"). The imaginary vision of the Underworld imparted to initiates in the soteriological and eschatological program of mystery cult is here literalized as the Underworld which Aeneas and the Sibyl explore in their katabasis, mapped onto the sacred space imagined of the rites implicit in Orphic formula 1 A/B.

A long-recognized cultic manipulation of Orphic formula 1 B appears in the epyllion of Catullus, describing the advent of Bacchus and his retinue of worshippers on the shores of Dia.³⁸ In poem 64, the formula is embedded in a larger description of frenzied Bacchic worship, where the poet includes a catalogue of Bacchic symbols and instruments (256-64):

Harum pars tecta quatiebant cuspidē thyrsos.
 pars ē divulso 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 tenues tinnitus aere ciebant;
 multis raucisonos efflabant cornua bombos
 barbaraque horribili stridebat tibia cantu.

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Some of them were waving thyrsi with shrouded points, some tossing about the limbs of a mangled steer, 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 timbrels with uplifted hands, or raised the shrill ringing of cymbals of rounded bronze: many blew horns with harsh-sounding drone, and the foreign pipe hissed with a dreadful noise.

³⁸ Bremmer 2014:182, n. 17.

Here, we see the same exclusion of those who are not initiates with the verse-final term *profani*; the exclusivity of access encoded in Orphic formula 1 is implied in the term *frustra*; the term *audire* encodes for the aural element of the Orphic expansion which includes discussion of the ears. The formula is well-placed in a discussion of the rites of Bacchus, adding a dimension of initiation ritual to the vivid description of the noisy retinue of worshippers and ritual overtones to the epiphany of the god.³⁹

We can further press the implications of Orphic formula 1 A/B in this context, beyond its appropriateness to a description of Bacchic cult worship, with an eye towards the willingness of the poet to complicate his engagement with cult motifs. The text is not simply a description of cult activity, but rather, a description of the decoration embroidered in a tapestry set on the marriage couch of Peleus and Thetis, as we are told in the verses immediately following those cited above (64.265-6): *talibus amplifice vestis decorata figuris | pulvinar complexa suo velabat amictu* (“Such were the figures that richly adorned the tapestry which embraced and shrouded with its folds the royal couch”). There is an immense irony, one with cultic implications, in Catullus’ discussion of what can and cannot be heard in the context of the description of Bacchic rites, since the rites which he describes, however vivid their aural dimension, are merely an image to be viewed.⁴⁰ The

³⁹ Catullus may use a variation on the formula anticipating the Vergilian adaptation of *OF* 1 A/B in the context of the cult of Cybele in the famed poem 63, in which the poet gives an aetiology for the Galloi, modeled on Attis (63.91-3): *dea, magna dea, Cybebe, dea, domina Dindymi | procul a mea tuus sit furor omnis, era, domo: | alios age incitatos, alios age rabidos* (“Goddess, great goddess, Cybele, goddess, lady of Dindymus, far from my house let all your fury be, O my queen; others may you drive in frenzy, others may you drive to madness”).

⁴⁰ Laird 1993. Laird categorizes the Ariadne epyllion as a ‘disobedient ecphrasis,’ citing the aural elements as one feature of such characterization (19-20); he stops short of connecting the aural elements to cult rhetoric around language. He includes a nuanced discussion of the aural features associated with Ariadne, first in the aural quality of the simile of the statue of the maenad and in Ariadne’s lament at 64.165-7 that her words will be ineffectual, received only by breezes which can neither hear nor respond (28-9). Of the simile of the statue, he says (21): “The verb *bacchari* means to rave, rant, or as Lewis and Short put it, ‘to cry Euhoe in the orgies’ – to make a lot of noise. There is then something interesting about the juxtaposition with *effigies*. We are made to contemplate a plastic image of someone making a sound. This conceit casts light on *eheu* at the end of the verse. *Eheu* could be a live rendition of the frozen Maenad crying ‘Euhoe’, as much as an exclamation of sympathy on the part of the poet.” At p. 21 n. 22, he comments on the use of the phrase *saxea effigies* of a speaking statue in Tacitus, *Annales* 2.61.

narrative frame recontextualizes the vivid image of Bacchic rites, since however much the poet describes what can and cannot be heard, the tapestry necessarily emits no sound.⁴¹

Who is it, then, who can and cannot hear the *orgia* described on the tapestry? In the world embedded within the tapestry, the maenads, satyrs, and Sileni who celebrate the rites are surrounded by the din of the worship; those viewing the tapestry in the internal world of the poem, the guests at the wedding of Peleus and Thetis, merely view the scene, able, at most, to perceive the instruments of worship depicted, such as the cymbals and horns, whose noise is to be supplemented by the imagination of the viewer. The voice of the poet, if we imagine oral performance, reintroduces the aural dimension, thus implicating both poet and audience in the project of participation in the rites. The ability or inability to hear what is described is the feature that distinguishes the profane from the initiated; the image is thus a challenge to the viewer, as to with which group he will find himself associated. By means of the ecphrastic frame, Catullus incorporates the binary of exclusivity set in geographical terms in Orphic formula 1 A/B; the geographical limitations are here instead limitations between levels of poetic framing, and the groups identified at each level (i.e. Catullus' audience, the guests implied in the marriage scene, or the figures woven into the tapestry). Catullus has incorporated the Orphic formula in the perfectly appropriate context of Bacchic rites, but presses the cultic and poetic implications of the formula with the ecphrastic frame in ways that display an engagement with larger cultic concepts around language and with elevated stakes for the viewer or reader.

Horace begins the third book of his *Odes* with language evocative of prolegomena to a *hieros logos*, again hinging on the term *profanus*. Horace styles himself an erudite speaker addressing a circumspect crowd (3.1.1-4):

⁴¹ Ibid. For a robust discussion of innovative features of the Catullan ecphrasis, see esp. p. 24. See also Konstan 1993; Murgatroyd 1997.

Odi profanum vulgus et arceo;
 favete linguis: carmina non prius
 audita Musarum sacerdos
 virginibus puerisque canto.

I hate the profane crowd and I keep them from approaching. Keep ritual silence: songs not heard before do I, priest of the Muses, sing to boys and girls.

Horace has activated all of the elements at play in the Orphic formula: the distinction between a group who are disbarred, using the cultic signpost *profanus*, and a group to whom the speech-acts are addressed (*virginibus puerisque*); expulsion from the physical space by the singer (*arceo*); and the concept of exclusivity in the phrase *carmina non prius audita*, which brings a similar focus to the aural element of cult language which Catullus includes in his formulation at 64.260. Horace here is quite unapologetically explicit in assuming for himself the role of a sacred speaker, calling himself a ‘priest of the Muses’ (*Musarum sacerdos*). Pomponius Porphyryon, commenting on Horace *Ode* 3.1.1, unpacks the metaphor around *profanos*: *Profanos allegoricos indoctos dicit. Ceterum profani proprie dicuntur sacris non initiati. Ergo quasi Musarum profanos dicit* (“He uses ‘the uninitiated’ allegorically to mean unlearned. Of course, the ‘uninitiated’ used in its strictest sense means those who have not been initiated in sacred rites. Therefore, he speaks of ‘the uninitiated’ as if to mean with respect to the Muses”). The phrase *favete linguis* acts as Latin equivalent to Greek εὐφημεῖν, bringing the religious significance to the foreground of the passage and evoking the anticipation of sacred revelation during rites; we may also see in the term *vulgus* a subtle activation of rhetoric around cult secrecy, given the etymological connection of this term to Latin *vulgare* (‘to publish, divulge’).

To this we may compare a locution in the poetry of Propertius, which offers a similar metapoetic manipulation of a phrase that perhaps has its inspiration in features of the Orphic formula 1 A/B. Propertius opens the third book of his poetry with an appeal to the Muses,

combining religious imagery with the concept of the ‘rites of the Muses’ which we have just seen articulated in Horace’s work (3.1.1-4):

Callimachi Manes et Coi sacra Philitae,
in vestrum, quaeso, me sinite ire nemus.
primus ego ingredior puro de fonte sacerdos
Itala per Graios orgia ferre choros.

Shade of Callimachus and rites of Coan Philitas, suffer me, I pray, to come into your grove. I am the first to enter, priest from an unsullied spring, bringing Italy’s mystic emblems in dances of Greece.

The second verse of Propertius’ appeal modifies features of the Orphic formula: here, the poet acts both as hierophant (*sacerdos*) and the focus of the injunction; here, those being addressed are not those who would worship the god, but the gods to be worshipped, in an inversion of a cult dynamic; Propertius has reworked the first-person verb of utterance (ἀείσω and φθέγγομαι) with a first-person verb making a request (*quaeso*) for admittance. Rather than disbaring the physical presence of a group from a sacred space, as in the Orphic formula, the injunction here is for permission to enter a space otherwise reserved for others, preserving the sense of exclusion and liminality, but reversing the direction along lines of deictic focalization. Propertius implies in what follows poetic activity as cultic activity, in the combination of images that include ‘mystic rites of Italy’ (*Itala orgia*) and ‘Greek choruses’ (*Graios choros*).⁴²

Both Horace and Catullus, by amplifying the phrase with *audire*, ‘to listen,’ have syncopated the metaphorical interpretation of the formula that forbids the uninitiated from listening, achieved by means of the expansion of the Orphic formula that includes the term ὦτα, ‘ears.’ An early variant in Latin literature displays a more direct Latin adaption of the expansion which includes the term ‘ears’ quite explicitly.⁴³ In Plautus’ *Pseudolus*, the slave Simo appeals

⁴² Propertius speaks explicitly of the ‘rites of the Muses’ (*orgia Musarum*) at 3.3.29.

⁴³ Firmicus Maternus in the *Mathesis* (Monat 1992) twice bears witness to the image of ‘profane ears.’ The first occurs at 7.1.1: *cum incognitis hominibus Orpheus sacrorum caerimonias <ostenderet>, nihil aliud ab his quos initiabat in primo vestibulo nisi iu<ri>siurandi necessitate [et] cum terribili auctoritate religionis exegit, ne profanis auribus inventae ac compositae religiones proderentur* (“When Orpheus taught sacred rites to unfamiliar men, he

Pseudolus while giving him counsel on a course of action (469-70): *fac sis vocivas Pseudole, aedis aurium, | mea ut migrare dicta possint quo volo* (“Make the chambers of your ears open, Pseudolus, so that my words might be able to go where I want them to go”). The distinctive image of an architectural structure as metaphor for the ears (here, *aedis*, corresponding to Greek θύρα of Orphic formula 1 A/B), is quite suggestive; the imperative force of *fac sis...* gives the phrase the same force as the imperative ἐπίθεσθε. Where the formula deviates most dramatically from the original is in the positive degree of the phrasing – Simo here is giving a command that his audience, Pseudolus, listen, rather than barring a group of those who are not permitted from being present. It would be in keeping with the character of Simo, a ‘clever slave’ typical of Roman comedy who has command over various registers of discourse and whose power as a character comes from an elevated intellect which allows him to manipulate the characters around him, to have command of the highly specialized and exclusive register of Orphic ritual language, as well; by employing this formula, the posturing Simo appropriates for himself the authority of a hierophant as one strategy by which he achieves his aims.

Where Catullus, Vergil, and, to a certain extent, Horace have used the Orphic formula in contexts which are overtly cultic,⁴⁴ Ovid, as might be expected of him, will be ready to adapt the formula to epic, didactic, and amatory purposes, at times in contexts which are not primarily interested in recording cult activity. The poet’s characteristic experimentation across boundaries

drove out everyone but those whom he was initiating in the opening of the entrance, either by necessity of oath-swearing or with an the awful authority of religion, lest the religious activity be discovered and comprehended by profane ears”); the second occurs at 7.1.3: *ne haec veneranda commenta profanis vel imperitis auribus intimentur* (“lest these venerable statements become known to profane or ignorant ears”).

⁴⁴ Apuleius uses the terminology of Latin translations of Orphic formula 1 when discussing the initiation of Lucius into the cult of Isis in the *Metamorphoses* (11.23): *Tum ecce confluent undique turbae sacrorum ritu vetusto variis quisque me muneribus honorantes. Tunc semotis procul profanis omnibus, linteo rudique me contextum amicimine arrepta manu sacerdos deducit ad ipsius sacrarii penetralia* (“Suddenly crowds flowed in from every direction, in accordance with the ancient practice of the mysteries, to honor me with their various gifts. When all the uninitiated were dismissed, I was wrapped in an unused linen robe, and the priest took me by the hand and led me to the innermost part of the sanctuary”). Here especially, consider the phrase *semotis procul profanis omnibus*.

of genre and discursive mode will include appropriation of cultic language, including Orphic formula 1 A/B.

The examples that follow show the variety of strategies by which Ovid manipulates the formula and the remarkable range of his experimentation with cultic language, characteristic of his poetic style more broadly. First, let us observe one application of the formula to a religious context, to be read, unsurprisingly, in the *Fasti*. In his discussion of the Caristia festival, Ovid makes use of the formula, as it has been modified by Vergil (*Fast.* 2.623-4): *innocui veniant: procul hinc, procul impius esto | frater et in partus mater acerba suos* (“Come none but the innocent! Far, far from here be the unnatural brother, and the mother who is harsh to her own offspring”). Ovid sets up a binary between those who may be in attendance (*innocui*) and those expelled (*impius frater, mater acerba*) from the festival, during which family relations were celebrated; the imperative *esto* recalls this feature of the Orphic formula, and especially the Vergilian adaptation *este*, as does the injunctive force of the subjunctive *veniant*; repetition of the term *procul* further triangulates the Orphic formula with its instantiation in Book 6 of Vergil’s *Aeneid*. The insertion of an Orphic formula in a discussion of the Caristia festival is quite fitting, given that the subject of the poem is overtly religious; Ovid sets himself as the didactic mouthpiece of such subject matter, activating the voice of Orpheus as a cult singer.

Ovid applies the formula to an erotic context in the *Ars Amatoria*, in a tongue-in-cheek discussion of the ‘rites’ of Venus which reframes the erotic relationship along binaries of cult worship by means of discussion of mystery cult. Ovid begins his discussion with explicit reference to secrecy surrounding the Eleusinian rites of Ceres and the cult of Samothrace (*Ars* 2.601-12):

quis Cereris ritus ausit vulgare profanis
 magnaue Threicia sacra reperta Samo?
 exigua est virtus praestare silentia rebus;
 at contra gravis est culpa tacenda loqui.
 o bene, quod frustra captatis arbore pomis

garrulus in media Tantalus aret aqua!
 praecipue Cytherea iubet sua sacra taceri;
 admoneo, veniat nequis ad illa loquax.
 condita si non sunt Veneris mysteria cistis
 nec cava vesanis ictibus aera sonant,
 at tamen inter nos medio versantur in usu,
 sed sic, inter nos ut latuisse velint.

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Who would dare to publish to the profane the rites of Ceres, or the great ceremonies devised in Samothrace? Keeping silence is but a small virtue, but to speak what should not be uttered is a heinous crime. Well is it that garrulous Tantalus clutches in vain at the apples on the tree, and parches in the water's midst! Cytherea above all forbids her rites to be told of; I give warning that no talkative person approach them. Even if the mysteries of Venus are not hidden in chests, nor does the hollow bronze resound to frenzied blows, yet are they habitually so practiced in our midst as in our midst to desire concealment.

Here, again, Ovid makes use of formulaic language with verse-final *profanis*, demarcating the group to whom the rites may not be divulged and activating the injunctions to secrecy and exclusivity encoded in the Orphic formula (*Quis Cereris ritus ausit vulgare profanis | magnaue Threïcia sacra reperta Samo?*). The term serves as our clue that the poet will engage in cult language, here correctly applied to those disbarred from participation in the Greek mysteries specified. Ovid's discussion participates in the same kind of language which marks the opening of the Horatian ode discussing the 'profane crowd' (*profanum vulgum*), with the same recourse to discussion of violations of cult secrecy encoded in an etymological play on cognates *vulgus* and *vulgare*, not least of all in the especially pejorative significance of the verb *vulgare* implying proliferation of language.

Ovid has extended the idea of cult silence to the 'rites' of Venus in what is essentially the admonition not to 'kiss-and-tell' (*Ars* 2.607-8): *praecipue Cytherea iubet sua sacra taceri: | admoneo, veniat nequis ad illa loquax* ("Cytherea above all forbids her rites to be told of; I give warning that no talkative person approach them"). The phrase *admoneo, veniat nequis ad illa loquax*, is a reformulation of Orphic formula 1 A/B, including the first-person verb of speaking, *admoneo*, like ἀείσω and φθέγγομαι; and we can document as well the almost imperative appeal to maintain physical distance expressed by *veniat nequis*, supplemented by Ovid's term *tacenda*,

which syncopates mandates to silence concerning cult material, the gerundive giving a kind of imperative force which is made explicit in the command of Venus (*Cytherea iubet*) for silence concerning her rites (*sua sacra taceri*).

Ovid includes the specification of a group of impious, designated here by the ‘talkative’ (*loquax*) who would violate mandates of secrecy and thus profane the rites, and in this way serving as an approximation of βέβηλου/*profani* by way of adaptation. An epigram of Antiphilus recorded in the Palatine Anthology will provide an interesting comparandum for the image of Ovid’s *loquax*, especially with reference to the body parts specified in the Orphic formula expansion (A.P. 9.298):

σκήπων με πρὸς νηὸν ἀνήγαγεν, ὄντα βέβηλον
οὐ μοῦνον τελετῆς, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡλίου·
μύστην δ’ ἀμφοτέρων με Θεαὶ θέσαν· οἶδα δ’ ἐκείνη
νυκτὶ καὶ ὀφθαλμῶν νύκτα καθηράμενος.
ἀσκήπων δ’ εἰς ἄστρ’ ἀπέστιχον, ὄργια Διοῦ
κηρύσσων γλώσσης ὄμμασι τρανότερον.

My staff guided me to the temple uninitiated not only in the mysteries, but in the sunlight. The goddesses initiated me into both, and on that night I knew that my eyes as well as my soul had been purged of night. I went back to Athens without a staff, proclaiming the holiness of the mysteries of Demeter more clearly with my eyes than with my tongue.

Antiphilus has signaled his engagement with Orphic formula 1 with verse-final βέβηλος; the expansion which includes the image of ears has been transferred onto the poet’s eyes, which in the epigram are cured of blindness by Demeter, and onto his tongue, by which he might profane the mysteries.⁴⁵ To this epigram, we might compare a formulation in Euripides’ *Bacchae* describing the wretched fate of the cult profaner, with particular reference to the image of the mouth (386-8):

⁴⁵ In his formulations of cult secrecy, Apuleius will also make reference to various body parts, here the ears and tongue, as the organs of violation of the precepts of secrecy of the mysteries (*Met.* 11.23): *Quaeras forsitan satis anxie, studiose lector, quid deinde dictum, quid factum. Dicerem si dicere liceret, cognoscere si liceret audire. Sed parem noxam contraherent et aures et lingua, ista impiae loquacitatis, illae temerariae curiositatis* (“Perhaps, my zealous reader, you are eager to learn what was said and done next. I would tell if it were permitted to tell; you would learn if it were permitted to hear. But both ears and tongue would incur equal guilt, the latter from its unholy talkativeness, the former from their unbridled curiosity”). Note here the use of *dictum* as an approximation of Greek τὰ λεγόμενα, the ‘things said,’ during the rites and *factum* as an approximation of Greek τὰ δρώμενα, the ‘things done;’ we may consider *audire* as an expansion of the motif in the manner of the references cited in Catullus and Horace.

ἀχαλίνων στομάτων | ἀνόμου τ' ἀφροσύνας | τὸ τέλος δυστυχία (“Tongues that know no bridle and folly that knows no law end in misery”). In the same text, we see the mouth as the central image in a formulation of cult silence (69-70): ἔκτοπος ἔστω | στόμα τ' εὐφημον ἅπας ἐξοσιούσθω (“Let everyone come forth, keeping their tongues mute in holy silence”). The image of the tongue both in the Hellenistic epigram and in these passages of the *Bacchae* allows for a re-definition of the uninitiated in terms which suggest one who profanes the mysteries; this association allows for the conflation of the βέβηλος with the cult profaner, like Ovid’s *loquax*.⁴⁶

At the level of generic polemics, we might consider further the implications of Ovid’s engagement with the formula in the context of a poem with overtly didactic aims. Ovid has told us quite directly in the opening verses of the *Ars Amatoria* that his goal is to teach those who are inexperienced in love.⁴⁷ He justifies his authority for doing so by an appeal to Venus and by citing his own prior experience as a lover.⁴⁸ Ovid’s appropriation of Orphic language in a didactic context harnesses and contends with the didactic power credited to the hierophant. Using the Orphic formula in the *Ars Amatoria*, Ovid is making certain claims to expertise by taking up the role of

⁴⁶ A fragment of Callimachus’ *Aetia* which makes reference to cult secrecy will also include the image of the tongue (fr. 75.5-9 Harder = fr. 75.5-9 Pfeiffer): κύ γ’ αἰείησι καὶ τὰ περ οὐχ ὀσίη· | ὦναο κάρτ’ ἔνεκ’ οὐ τι θεῆς ἴδες ἱερὰ φρικτῆς, | ἐξ ἂν ἐπεὶ καὶ τῶν ἥρυγες ἱστορίην. | ἥ πολυιδρεΐη χαλεπὸν κακόν, ὅστις ἀκαρτεῖ | γλώσσης· (“you will sing even what is against divine law; you are very lucky that you did not see the rites of the fearsome goddess, because otherwise you would have belched out that information too. Truly much knowledge is a difficult evil for whoever is not master of his tongue”).

⁴⁷ Cf. Ovid *Ars* 1.1-2: *siquis in hoc artem populo non novit amandi, | hoc legat et lecto carmine doctus amet* (“If anyone among these people does not know the art of loving, let him read this book and, having learned from this poem having been read, let him love”).

⁴⁸ An extended discursus on the didactic quality of Orphic language can be found in the Derveni Papyrus, giving us a vivid sense for the didactic power believed of Orpheus’ verses (col. 7.3-10): λέγειν δὲ καὶ διδάσκειν τὸ αὐτὸ δύνανται· οὐ γὰρ | οἷόν τε δι[δ]άσκειν ἄνευ τοῦ λέγειν ὅσα διὰ λόγων | διδάσκειται[ι]. νομίζεται δὲ τὸ διδάσκειν ἐν τῷ | λέγειν εἶν[αι]. οὐ τοίνυν τὸ μὲν διδάσκειν ἐκ τοῦ | λέγειν ἐχ[ωρί]σθη τὸ δὲ λέγειν ἐκ τοῦ φωνεῖν, | τὸ δ’ αὐτὸ[ν δύνα]ται φωνεῖν καὶ λέγειν καὶ διδάσκειν. | οὕτως [οὐδὲν κωλ]ύει πανομφεύουσα καὶ πάν[τα] | διδάσκεισαν τὸ αὐτὸ εἶναι (“And ‘to say’ and ‘to teach’ mean the same (or: have the same power): for it is not possible to teach without saying whatever is taught through discourses. Teaching is considered to reside in saying. Accordingly, ‘to teach’ was not distinguished from ‘to say’ on the one hand, and ‘to say’ from ‘to utter’ on the other, but ‘to utter’, ‘to say’ and ‘to teach’ mean the same. Thus nothing prevents ‘all-pronouncing’ and ‘teaching all things’ from being the same thing”). Text and translation those of Betegh 2004.

the learned hierophant, and, in doing so, the poet substitutes one kind of expertise, that of cult religious knowledge, with another, erotic experience. Here, Ovid subtly aligns himself with the learned hierophant, in this context not as an authority on religious knowledge, but as an authority on matters of the heart revealing for an inexperienced audience how to properly navigate erotic relationships. While the hierophant of Orphic formula 1 A/B prepares to sing a *hieros logos*, Ovid, with his characteristic wit and irony, styles himself a hierophant who paradoxically keeps silent, refusing to reveal too much. Ovid will take a similar stance in another erotic appropriation of the Orphic formula, mediated by the Vergilian modification, at the opening of the second Book of his *Amores* (2.1.1-4):

Hoc quoque composui Paelignis natus aquis,
 ille ego nequitiae Naso poeta meae.
 Hoc quoque iussit Amor -- procul hinc, procul este, severae!
 non estis teneris apta theatra modis.

This, too, have I composed, born among the humid Paeligni, I that well-known singer of my trifling compositions. This, too, has Love ordered -- far off from here, far off, you serious women! You are no fit audience for my tender verses.

Here, again, Ovid redefines the group whom he qualifies as cultic *profani* in accordance with his genre and non-cultic subject matter; in the context of amatory poetry, those women who are disinclined to the kind of erotic indulgences which are his erotic program (*severae*) make up the group to be excluded from his audience.

We have already seen that Ovid is not the only writer to rewrite the formula to express expertise in non-religious material. Plato has done as much when he reappropriates the formula in the *Symposium* for his broader project of elevating philosophy as a vehicle for wisdom over and above other genres, including Homeric epic and religious *hieroi logoi*; in the process he makes philosophers experts in wisdom over poets and hierophants, as previously discussed.⁴⁹ A Senecan

⁴⁹ Cf. the discussion of medical texts, medical expertise, and doctors on pp. 18-9. To this we may compare competing claims to religious wisdom mediated through such engagements with cult language in a Hellenistic

appropriation of Orphic terminology similarly mirrors the strategies of Plato, where the philosopher compares initiates in the mysteries to those who are true philosophers at *Ep.* 95.64:

Idem dicere de praeceptis possum: aperta sunt, decreta vero sapientiae in abdito. Sicut sanctiora sacrorum tantum initiati sciunt, ita in philosophia arcana illa admissis receptisque in sacra ostenduntur; at praecepta et alia eiusmodi profanis quoque nota sunt.

And I can say the same thing about precepts: they are manifest, while the doctrines of wisdom are concealed. And as only the initiated know the more hallowed portion of the rites, so in philosophy the hidden truths are revealed only to those who are members and have been admitted to the sacred rites. But precepts and other such matters are familiar even to the uninitiated.

Horace, perhaps serving as a model for Ovid's manipulation of the hierophantic Orpheus, considers questions of cult knowledge and wisdom in the *Ars Poetica* (391-401):

Silvestris homines sacer interpresque deorum caedibus et victu foedo deterruit Orpheus, dictus ob hoc lenire tigris rabidosque leones; dictus et Amphion, Thebae conditor urbis, saxa mouere sono testudinis et prece blanda	395
ducere quo vellet. fuit haec sapientia quondam, publica priuatis secernere, sacra profanis, concubitu prohibere vago, dare iura maritis, oppida moliri, leges incidere ligno. sic honor et nomen divinis vatibus atque carminibus venit.	400

While men still roamed the woods, Orpheus, the holy prophet of the gods, made them shrink from bloodshed and brutal living; hence the fable, that he tamed tigers and ravening lions; hence too the fable that Amphion, builder of Thebes's citadel, moved stones by the sound of his lyre, and led them wherever he desired by his supplicating spell. In days long past, this was wisdom, to draw a line between public and private rights, between things sacred and common, to check vagrant union, to give rules for wedded life, to build towns, and grave laws on tables of wood; and so honor and fame fell to bards and their songs, as divine.

Horace here depicts Orpheus primarily as a hierophantic speaker, signaled not least of all by his ability to discern the sacred (*sacra*) from the profane (*profanis*). This skill he cites as part of his definition of wisdom (*fuit haec sapientia*), alongside such noble tasks as city-foundation and social reform. Such a discussion implicates cult knowledge in broader discussions around wisdom, and

Jewish text. See Dickie, "Poets as Initiates in the Mysteries: Euphorion, Philicus and Posidippus," (69): "The same is true of a passage in the *De gigantibus* in which Philo makes Moses' encounter with God on the mountain into an initiation into the most holy of mysteries; Moses emerges from it not only as an initiate but as a hierophant of the rituals of the mysteries and a teacher of divine matters, which he will explain to those whose ears have been purified (γίνεται οὐ μόνον μύστης, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἱεροφάντης ὀργίων καὶ διδάσκαλος θείων, ἃ τοῖς ὥτα κεκαθαρμένοις ὑφηγήσεται 54)."

identifying those figures who can make claims to wisdom. Competing claims to expertise, the supremacy of certain literary genres as vehicles for wisdom, and the status of different kinds of experts drive much of the engagement with Orphic formula 1,⁵⁰ not least of all in Ovid's discussion of erotic experience as Venusian rites in the *Ars Amatoria*.⁵¹

We can also consider the broader implications of the *Ars Amatoria* passage for a kind of cult amatory poetics by recognizing a refraction of the Orphic formula in a different amatory project of Ovid's, the *Amores*. In *Amores* 1.8, the poet imagines a female figure who advises the object of his desire, a combinatorial character who assumes the role of erotic magic sorceress and slave-woman or nurse whom the lover solicits as co-conspirator. Here, the figure, named Dipsas, reveals to the object of the poet's desire his love for her and goads her to demand ever-more luxurious and expensive gifts, to the ire of the impoverished poet, who overhears their exchange. Dipsas urges the girl to play coy (*Am.* 1.8.77-8): *surda sit oranti tua ianua, laxa ferenti; | audiat exclusi verba receptus amans* ("Let your doors be deaf to prayers, but wide to the giver; let the lover you welcome overhear the words of the one you have kept locked out"). The image of the doors (*ianua*) masterfully reappropriates the elegiac *ianua*, serving as site for *paraklausithyron* and the negotiation of the erotic affair, for the Orphic metaphor which conflates doors (θύραι) and ears (ὠτὰ). The modifier *surda* ('deaf') reveals the true valence of *ianua* as signifying implicitly ears; and we will read a similar locution in an erotic poem of Ovid's which quite explicitly thematizes *paraklausithyron*, in which he describes the door of his *puella*, locked by an unyielding doorkeeper, as *surdae fores* (*Am.* 1.6.54). Ovid has mapped onto the sacred space imagined as the

⁵⁰ Bernabé 1996, sec. 3.5.

⁵¹ Cf. Hardie 2008 for a similar strategy in the didactic aims of Vergil's *Georgics*, where he discusses the appropriation of mystery cult imagery and terminology for philosophical knowledge (167): "Lucretius (with Epicurean precedents) is exploiting the Aristotelian (and common Hellenistic) idea of the contemplation of the universe as analogous to the shows of the mysteries."

site of cult rites in Orphic formula 1 the boundary with the greatest visibility and greatest exclusivity in amatory poetry, the *ianua* of the mistress. Verse 78, following the Orphic elements of 77, further establishes exclusivity along lines of access, demarcating the group of those who are permitted to listen (*receptus amans*) and those expelled from the audience (*exclusus*), again remapping the cultic binary of initiate and non-initiate onto the erotic dynamic of lover and rival. The idea of exclusive access to language is reiterated in the act of over-hearing, framing the lover as one disbarred from participation. The status of our lover who is left snooping outside the door has elevated stakes when reframed on the model of cult limitations of access to language and space and the implicit gains to be won by those who are ultimately granted such access.

Further details may perhaps suggest the engagement with the formula, as when Dipsas is figured as a speaker of profanity, in the opinion of the lover (*Am.* 1.8.19-20): *haec sibi proposuit thalamos temerare pudicos; | nec tamen eloquio lingua nocente caret* (“This woman has set herself to profane a modest union; her tongue is indeed not without baneful eloquence”). Here we may read *temerare* as an approximation of *profanare*, retaining this concept key to the Orphic formula, and see the image of the cult profaner in the tongue (*lingua*) that is all-too-ready to work against the aims of the lover. The closing image of the poem, in which the poet threatens to punish Dipsas for her interference, echoes the imagery of violent Bacchants, when he threatens to set his hands to tear apart (*distraherent*, 1.8.112) the hair, eyes, and cheeks of the slave-woman.⁵²

Peter Knox points to another such erotic appropriation, hinging on the repetition of the term *procul* and an injunction of exclusivity, in Book 10 of the *Metamorphoses*, when Orpheus prefaces with a cultic prolegomenon the epyllion of the incestuous love of Myrrha (*Met.* 10.300):

⁵² For this use of *distrahere*, cf. Plautus *Merc.* 439-440: *Pentheum diripuisse aiunt Bacchas: nugas maxumas fuisse credo, praeut quo pacto ego divorsus distrahor* (“They say that Bacchants tore Pentheus to pieces: I think that was the greatest trifle, compared with how I am being torn apart in different directions”).

dira canam, procul hinc natae, procul este parentes (“A horrible tale I have to tell. Far away may daughters be, far away may fathers be”).⁵³ The application of Orphic formula 1 A/B depends first on the first-person verb of speaking and importantly on the Vergilian formulation of the Sibyl in Book 6 of the *Aeneid*. Ovid has quite cleverly inserted the Orphic formula into the mouth of the very speaker imagined to have originated it, namely Orpheus himself, who serves as the internal narrator of the tenth Book of the *Metamorphoses* and who plays an important metapoetic role as an analogue of Ovid. In the case of Myrrha, Ovid again projects erotic binaries onto amatory behavior in the context of his epic; here, those who should be excluded are those whose love would be perverse, namely the incestuous pairing of fathers and daughters.

For this application of the formula, we may note that Ovid is also appropriating a concept concerning language implicit in the original formula, which saw the *hieroi logoi* as not only benefitting the initiands who were to hear them, but which in fact were able to cause harm to the uninitiated, who might misunderstand them; here, Ovid has similarly included this sense of the destructive capacity of sacred language, since his narrator Orpheus expels from his audience fathers and daughters, fearing that they may find a positive model in the story of Myrrha (despite its tragic end) and be inspired to similar aims. These caveats are included in the prolegomenon, Orpheus making clear the potential for harmful misunderstanding (*Met.* 10.301-3): *aut, mea si vestras mulcebunt carmina mentes, | desit in hac mihi parte fides, nec credite factum, | vel, si credetis, facti quoque credite poenam* (“or, if your minds find pleasure in my songs, do not give credence to this story, and believe that it never happened; or, if you do believe it, believe also in the punishment of the deed”).

⁵³ Knox 1986:54–55.

The passages of Ovid's amatory poetry which we have reviewed participate in an amatory poetics grounded in cult rhetoric, to be discussed further in Chapter 5. For now, it will suffice to observe that here, cult dynamics, such as that between the hierophant and initiate, the pious and impious, and exclusivity of access, have been mapped onto erotic dynamics of teacher in love and student, lover and rival, and the frustrations of failing to win over the *puella*. Erotic experience serves to substitute for the religious expertise of such figures as Orpheotelests and hierophants. Just as in the context of mystery cult, there is the promise that there are great gains to be won by the one who achieves mastery over the material and is ultimately granted access.

Where Ovid in his amatory poetry has substituted erotic expertise for cult expertise, the poet will appropriate Orphic language to a different category of speech, namely magical incantations, in the use of the Orphic formula in book 7 of the *Metamorphoses*. The poet includes Orphic formula 1 in the narrative of the rejuvenation of Aeson, father of Jason, by Medea in the seventh Book of his epic poem. Scholars of ancient magic and religion, such as Dirk Obbink and Christopher Faraone, whose most robust discussion centers around the Getty Hexameters, have demonstrated the overlap in rhetorical technique between magic and cult;⁵⁴ it is thus not entirely surprising that an Orphic cult formula is uttered by the most visible sorceress of ancient literature.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ The conflation of magical and cultic language has long been observed by scholars of Orphic literature. Cf. Faraone and Obbink 2013, 1997; Faraone 2008; Betz 1997; Faraone 2001; Betz 1980; Bernabé 2003, sec. 13. See Faraone 1996 for a discussion of the Bacchic-Orphic gold tablets as participating in the tradition of magical inscriptions. See Kotansky 1991:114–16, for a similar discussion, with especial focus on tablet A5 for the Roman woman, Caecilia Secundina.

⁵⁵ The conflation between the two literary modes can be found already in the poetry of Horace, where he has the sorceress Canidia speak of the *arcana sacra* of Night and Diana (*Epodes* 5.49-54): *o rebus meis | non infidelis arbitra | nunc, nunc adeste, nunc in hostilis domos | iram atque numen vertite!* (“O Night, trusty witness of my deeds, and Diana, who preside over the silent time when mystic rites are performed, now, now I beg you, come to my aid, now turn your anger and power against the houses of my enemies”); and this association is again reiterated in the poetry of Ovid, when Pentheus lists acts of magic among other cultic activity, the king includes magical activity (*Met.* 3.532-7): *aerane tantum aere repulsa valent et adunco tibia cornu | et magicæ fraudes, ut, quos non bellicus ensis, | non tuba terruerit, non strictis agmina telis, | femineae voces et mota insania vino | obscenique greges et inania tympana vincant?* (“Can clashing cymbals, can the pipe of crooked horn, can shallow tricks of magic, women’s shrill cries, wine-heated madness, vulgar throngs and empty drums – can all these vanquish men, for whom real war, with its drawn swords, the blare of trumpets, and lines of glittering spears, had no terrors?”).

We may identify some continuity in making both Dipsas and the maidenly Medea as speakers of the Orphic formula: both women are defined by their skill in magic. In the case of Dipsas, her magical function activates a typical motif in amatory poetry, namely the use of magic by which a frustrated maiden can attract the attention of a man who rebuffs her advances; Dipsas is simultaneously the slave-woman helper of Athenian tragedy who offers advice to female protagonists. The most famous archetype of the maiden who uses magic for amatory ends is the Medea of the *Argonautica* of Apollonius of Rhodes, reappearing in this capacity in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. In both cases, Orphic language is made to serve amatory purposes as one feature of magical language.

Throughout Greek and Roman literature, Medea serves as a kind of proto-maenad; she is not explicitly described as such before her appearance in the *Metamorphoses*, but the frenzied mental state imagined to have afflicted the maiden prior to and during the horrific act of infanticide seems ready to have something of the Bacchic in it. The *Metamorphoses* account is a recapitulation of that presented in the *Argonautica* of Apollonius of Rhodes, both of which, in narrative terms, precede that of Euripides' *Medea*; of interest here is the description of the restoration to youth of Jason's father, Aeson, by the youthful sorceress, a description which overwhelmingly incorporates overtones of cult activity. She begins the somber ritual with libations of milk and honey (*Met.* 7.242-50); the description of the ritual continues (7.251-61):

Quos ubi placavit precibusque et murmure longo, Aesonis effetum proferri corpus ad auras iussit et in plenos resolutum carmine somnos exanimi similem stratis porrexit in herbis. hinc procul Aesoniden, procul hinc iubet ire ministros	255
et monet arcanis oculos removere profanos. diffugiunt iussi; passis Medea capillis bacchantum ritu flagrantis circuit aras multifidasque faces in fossa sanguinis atra tinguit et infectas geminis accendit in aris	260
terque senem flamma, ter aqua, ter sulphure lustrat.	

When she had appeased all these divinities by long, low-muttered prayers, she bade her people bring out under the open sky old Aeson's worn-out body; and having buried him in a deep slumber by her spells, like one dead she stretched him out on a bed of herbs. Far away she ordered Jason to go, far away all the attendants, and warned them not to look with profane eyes upon her secret rites. They retired as she had bidden. Medea, with streaming hair in the manner of the Bacchants, moved around the blazing altars, and dipping many-cleft sticks in the dark pools of blood, she lit the gory sticks at the altar flames. Three times she purified the old man, three times with water, three times with sulphur.

The clause *monet arcanis oculos remove profanos*, by which Medea disbars those who are profane from witnessing the magical ritual of rejuvenation, evokes Orphic formula 1 A/B, most convincingly by *profanos*, which we now know to be a signal in Latin for cultic activity, corresponding to Orphic βέβηλοι. Ovid likens the rituals that the sorceress is going to perform to cult rites with the qualifier *arcanis*, 'secret,' consistent with injunctions to secrecy and exclusivity that characterize mystery cult. The specification that servants (*ministros*) be barred suggests that Ovid was familiar with the formula as it is articulated in the *Symposium*, where the servants (οἱ οἰκέται) are among those to be disbarred from participation.

One other feature may suggest Orphic formula 1 A/B, namely, the specification of a body part, in this case, the eyes (*oculos*). We have already seen, in the discussion of the variant in Plautus' *Pseudolus*, the expansion of the original formula which makes use of the image of ears in Roman literature (*aurēs* in Latin, for Greek ὠτα/οὐατα); the expansion is also an implied feature of those formulations which include forms of the term *audire*, such as can be read in the works of Catullus (64.260) and Horace (*Odes* 3.1.3). We have also seen a focus on the tongue (*lingua*) as an expansion on the formula which conflates the uninitiated with the cult profaner, as in Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* (2.608). Here, it may be pertinent to observe that an aural element has already been introduced into the passage in the prayers (*precibus*) and long murmur (*murmure longo*) of Medea at 251, and the term 'ears' (*auris*) is perhaps available in a pun on *auras* at 252. We have also seen an easy exchange between hearing and seeing in applications of the formula, both essential aspects

of the experience of the rites. Here, *oculos remove* then serves as an approximation of the terms θύρας τοῖς ὤσιν ἐπιθέσθαι, and perhaps even an expansion of this phrase that substitutes the act of viewing for listening in a manner similar to what we have already seen in the Callimachean *Hymn to Demeter*.

Ovid is additionally signaling to the reader the presence of this formula through an intertextual engagement with the Vergilian application of the formula in the sixth Book of the *Aeneid*, discussed above. The phrase *hinc procul Aesoniden, procul hinc iubet ire ministros* at verse 255, followed by the charged term *profanos*, evokes the Vergilian application of Orphic formula 1 A/B, in which the Sibyl bars from her cave at Cumae those who are profane with the repetition of the term *procul*, coming just three verses short of a stichometric allusion (compare *Aen.* 6.258 and *Met.* 7.255).⁵⁶ Completing the picture of the rejuvenation scene is the characterization of Medea as a Bacchant in the verses that follow, with streaming hair (*passis capillis*) and moving in a whirling motion (*circuit*), just as the maenads of Euripides' *Bacchae* are described as 'whirling' (εἰλισσομένας μαινάδας, 569-70), and consistent with the frenzied movement of the Vergilian Sibyl (*bacchatur*, *Aen.* 6.78). Ovid includes a perverted image of the torch-bearing *dadouchos* of the Eleusinian rites, when Medea lights the gore-stained branches in the altar fires. Bacchus himself will have a stake in the proceedings, reiterating the conflation of Medea's magical ritual with cult practice, when we are reminded by Ovid that the god witnesses the rejuvenation of Aeson and appropriates the ritual for his nurses (*Met.* 7.294-6):

Viderat ex alto tanti miracula monstri
Liber et admonitus, iuvenes nutricibus annos
posse suis reddi, capit hoc a Colchide munus.

⁵⁶ Both Vergil and Ovid exploit the primary sense of *OF* 1 A/B B as indicating exclusivity of access to space. A similar application, following these models and again referring to space, can be read in the bucolic poetry of Calpurnius Siculus (2.54-5): *secernamque nemus dicamque*: "*sub arbore numen | hac erit; ite procul -- sacer est locus -- ite profani*" ("Unto him will I hallow a grove and say, 'Beneath this tree a divinity shall dwell. Be gone, you uninitiated, be gone far away, it is holy ground'").

Now Bacchus had witnessed this marvel from his station in the sky, and learning from this that his own nurses might be restored to their youthful years, he obtained this service from the Colchian woman.

The cultic significance of the cauldron as the site of rejuvenation is integrated into this image: the remains of Dionysus, in the myth of his *sparagmos* as the baby Zagreus, were placed in a cauldron at Delphi, from which the god was ultimately revived. The maenadic characterization of the sorceress, whose magical activity is framed in terms of Dionysiac frenzy, further blurs the lines between magical and cultic rhetorical strategies.

Ovid may not be alone in attributing to Medea's magical activity the characteristics of cult: Apollonius of Rhodes includes a similar scene in his *Argonautica* concerning the practice of the secret rites of Hekate, a goddess relevant to the narrative of Medea in her capacity as the goddess of the witchcraft and sorcery in which Medea engages. In the case of Hekate, cult language is especially appropriate, given her important role in the rites at Eleusis as the psychopompic goddess who escorts Persephone out of the Underworld to be reunited with her mother in the myth of her abduction by Hades. As Medea and the Argonauts flee Colchis and journey back to Iolcus by a circuitous route, the maiden bids the heroes land on the Paphlagonian coast, where she performs secret rites to the chthonian goddess and establishes her shrine (*Arg.* 4.246-52):

ἡ γάρ σφ' ἐξαποβάντας ἀρέσσαισθαι θυέεσσιν
 ἠνώγει Ἑκάτην. καὶ δὴ τὰ μέν, ὅσσα θυηλὴν
 κούρη πορσανέουσα τιτύσκετο, μήτε τις ἴστωρ
 εἶη, μήτ' ἐμὲ θυμὸς ἐποτρύνειεν αἰεῖδεν.
 ἄζομαι αὐδῆσαι: τό γε μὴν ἔδος ἐξέτι κείνου,
 ὃ ῥα θεῶν ἥρωες ἐπὶ ῥηγμῖσιν ἔδειμαν,
 ἀνδράσιν ὀψιγόνοισι μένει καὶ τῆμος ἰδέσθαι.

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For Medea ordered them to land and propitiate Hecate with sacrifice. Now all that the maiden prepared for offering the sacrifice no man may know, and may my soul not urge me to sing of it. Awe restrains my lips, yet from that time the altar which the heroes raised on the beach to the goddess remains until now, a sight to men of a later day.

Apollonius contributes to a consistent rhetoric of cult secrecy with language that demarcates separate groups: those who are permitted access to the rites, such as Medea and the Argonauts who

witness her performance of rites, and those who are forbidden, the unspecified ‘knower’ (ἴστωρ) who is barred from participation by a negative injunction (μήτε... εἴη). Ovid’s depiction of Medea as a speaker of cultic arcana expands on such characterization in this important Hellenistic model, rewritten in the *Metamorphoses* with Orphic formula 1 A/B.

The long afterlife of Orphic formula 1 A/B and the cult rhetoric of exclusivity is demonstrated not least by its inclusion in the opening of the *De Raptu Proserpinae*, the unfinished epic of the fourth century poet Claudian.⁵⁷ The poet opens his epic with the Orphic formula (DRP 1.1-4):

Inferni raptoris equos adflataque curru
sidera Taenario caligantesque profundae
Iunonis thalamos audaci promere cantu
mens congesta iubet. gressus removete profani.

My full mind bids me to relate with bold song the horses of the infernal abductor, the stars that felt the blast of the Underworld chariot, and the gloomy chambers of Juno below the earth. O you who are uninitiated, remove your footsteps.

⁵⁷ Statius includes a similar formulation in the *Silvae* in the discussion of funeral rites for a child (3.3.12-7): *adeste | dique hominesque sacris, procul hinc, procul ite nocentes, | si cui corde nefas tacitum fessique senectus | longa patris, si quis pulsatae conscius umquam | matris et inferna rigidum timet Aeaccon urna: | insontes castosque voco* (“Gods and men, come to the rites. Far, far from here you sinners, if any bear a crime unspoken in his heart and thinks his weary parent’s old age too long, if any guilty wretch fear his beaten mother’s snake and stern Aeacus’ infernal urn! I summon the innocent, the pure”). Silius Italicus will include the formula in the mouth of a priest during the episode of the introduction of the cult of Cybele at Rome in the *Punica* (17.26-32): *tum puppe a media magno clamore sacerdos: | “Parcite pollutis contingere uinacula palmis | et procul hinc, moneo, procul hinc, quaecumque profanae, | ferte gradus nec uos casto miscete labori, | dum satis est monuisse deae. quod si qua pudica | mente ualet, si qua inlaesi sibi corporis astat | conscia, uel sola subeat pia munera dextra”* (“Then the priest cried aloud from the center of the ship: ‘Touch not the ropes with guilty hands! Away, away! Far from hence, all you unchaste, I warn you, and take no share in the sacred task; or the goddess may not be content with a mere warning. But if any woman is strong in her chastity, if any who stands here is conscious of a body unstained, let her, even single-handed, undertake the pious duty’”). Apuleius will apply features of Orphic vocabulary in a formulation of cult secrecy in his *Apologia* (55): *Sacrorum pleraque initia in Graecia participavi. Eorum quaedam signa et monumenta tradita mihi a sacerdotibus sedulo conservo. Nihil insolitum, nihil incognitum dico. Vel unius Liberi patris mystae qui adestis scitis, quid domi conditum celetis et absque omnibus profanis tacite veneremini* (“I have been initiated into several sacred Greek rites. I have diligently preserved the various signs and tokens of them handed over to me by the priests. I speak of nothing unusual or unfamiliar. For instance, you initiates of father Liber who are present here know what it is you keep hidden away at home or the worship you perform in silence away from all who are profane”). For the continuing shifting significance of the terms βέβηλος and *profanus* over time, see the discussion of Late Antique usage in Beatrice 2005.

The signal term *profani*, coupled with the imperative *removete*, the suggestion of the feet (*gressus*) as manipulation of body-part imagery (earlier, eyes, *oculi*; the tongue, *lingua*; or ears, *aurēs*), and demarcation along spatial boundaries, makes of Claudian's text a *hieros logos* in the manner of the poetry of Orpheus, anticipating the appearance of the bard in the proem to the second Book of the epic. Claudian's opening verses refer back to the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* and serve as a reminder of the importance of the myth of the rape of Persphone as a *hieros logos* of the Eleusinian Mysteries, established clearly in the synopsis of the subject matter described in the opening verses, and thus fit to be heard only by those who were being initiated, as the Orphic formula suggests.

The manipulations of Orphic formula 1 A/B which we have considered in both Greek and Roman literature demonstrate the complex engagement with the formula as a feature of a cult literary mode available for allusion and intertextual relationships. Both Greek and Roman authors adapt the formula to a variety of genres and contexts, both cultic and non-cultic. Where the content explicitly concerns itself with cultic language, application of Orphic formula 1 adds an immediacy and vividness to the cult worship depicted; where the context veers away from the explicitly cultic, authors adapt the formula to the aims and goals of the particular genre in which they are engaged with an easy malleability. Implied in such engagements is a polemical relationship with religious language and its claims to wisdom; poets appropriate for themselves the power and authority of an Orphic speaker and elevate their texts as vehicles for wisdom, with implications for the status of the audience.

1.2 SPEAKING THE UNSPEAKABLE

Orphic formula 1 A/B serves as an acute manifestation of the broader rhetoric concerning cult secrecy in which it participates. Such mandates to secrecy and the unspeakability of the rites

frequently characterize literary discussions of mystery cult, reflecting cult practice on the ground.⁵⁸ In this section, we will take seriously the availability of literary attitudes associated with mystery cult for poetic manipulation. Expanding on earlier considerations of Orphic formula 1 in the previous section, this section will consider formulations of cult secrecy as a codified feature of a literary discursive mode grounded in cult attitudes to language. We have already seen the poet occupy the role of the hierophant making revelations to a learned audience; here again, the posturing of the poet will be a central issue for consideration, since poets will have had to negotiate a tension between poetic production around cult imagery and a conscious posturing that makes claims to the pious observance of cult secrecy.

1.2.1 *Si fas est mihi cantare: Maintaining Secrecy*

We can observe a related motif concerning secrecy in conjunction with Orphic formula 1 A/B reiterated in cultic passages, for which there is not a fixed formula, but which exhibits certain recurring features and displays a consistency of sentiment. Our discussion of Orphic formula 1 A/B has revealed it to be one particular formulation that speaks more broadly to a rhetoric around cultic exclusivity and the establishment of limits on who can and cannot hear religious utterances. This kind of rhetoric of silence and unspeakability recurs throughout cultic literature, with an emphasis on secrecy surrounding the texts and rituals central to cult practice and on what is and is not permitted of a speaker of a *hieros logos* with regard to whom he may address.

An early instance of this kind of language is embedded at the end of the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, in a discussion of the importance of secrecy concerning the Eleusinian Mysteries (476, 478-9):

δρημοσύνην θ' ἱερῶν καὶ ἐπέφραδεν ὄργια πᾶσι,
σεμνά, τὰ τ' οὕτως ἔστι παρεξίμεν οὔτε πυθέσθαι

⁵⁸ For an etymological argument on the meaning of “mysteries” as encoding secrecy, see Grintser 2008:91–93.

οὐτ' ἀχέειν: μέγα γάρ τι θεῶν σέβας ἰσχάνει αὐδήν.

She revealed the conduct of her rites and taught her Mysteries to all of them, holy rites that are not to be transgressed, nor pried into, nor divulged. For a great awe of the gods stops the voice.

Such injunctions are included throughout Euripides' *Bacchae* when Dionysus speaks in disguise to an incredulous Pentheus, as at 472, ἄρρητ' ἀβακχεύτοισιν εἰδέναι βροτῶν ("They may not be spoken for non-Bacchants to know"); and again at 474, οὐ θέμις ἀκοῦσαί σ', ἔστι δ' ἄξι' εἰδέναι ("It is not lawful for you to hear, but it is worth knowing").⁵⁹ Here, we see discussion of the rites as unspeakable, with formulations toggling between what is not to be said and what is not to be heard, a discussion of the voice of the speaker violating secrecy, and an appeal to what is 'right' (θέμις), as we have already seen in Orphic formula 1 B (οἷς θέμις ἐστί), and 'not right' (οὐ θέμις). ἄρρητος and its synonyms after Euripides' *Bacchae* become almost technical terms for material associated with mystery cult. We may observe that the examples cited from these two texts feature a god of cult as the one who might reveal the mysteries of his cult: in the former, Demeter reveals the Eleusinian Mysteries to Triptolemus, whereas the latter features Dionysus, in disguise, refusing to reveal the details of his mysteries to the impious Pentheus, who denies his divinity.

Such language is preserved beyond the Classical period in Hellenistic discussions of cult, with a shift in focus.⁶⁰ Apollonius of Rhodes, too, will contribute to this rhetoric of cultic terminology around injunctions of silence manifesting themselves most explicitly in the Orphic formula above, when he briefly mentions the rites of the Samothracian Mysteries, in connection

⁵⁹ Macías Otero 2011:25.

⁶⁰ Herodotus in his history will make reference to these same precepts of secrecy in reference to mysteries practiced by the Egyptians and with regard to the Thesmophoria (2.171.1-2): ἐν δὲ τῇ λίμνῃ ταύτῃ τὰ δείκνυται τῶν παθόντων αὐτοῦ νυκτὸς ποιεῖσιν, τὰ καλέουσι μυστήρια Αἰγύπτιοι. περὶ μὲν νυν τούτων εἰδοῖ μοι ἐπὶ πλέον ὥς ἕκαστα αὐτῶν ἔχει, εὖστομα κείσθω. καὶ τῆς Δήμητρος τελετῆς περὶ, τὴν οἱ Ἕλληνας θεσμοφóρια καλέουσι, καὶ ταύτης μοι περὶ εὖστομα κείσθω, πλὴν ὅσον αὐτῆς ὁσίη ἐστὶ λέγειν ("On this lake they enact by night the story of the god's sufferings, a rite which the Egyptians call the Mysteries. I could speak more exactly of these matters, for I know the truth, but I will hold my peace; nor will I say anything concerning the rite of Demeter which the Greeks call the Thesmophoria, except whatever part of it I am not forbidden from mentioning").

with the protection offered to sailors by the Samothracian gods. With reference to these rites, the poet makes a claim to adhere to secrecy (*Arg.* 1.919-21):⁶¹

τῶν μὲν ἔτ' οὐ προτέρω μυθήσομαι: ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτὴ
νῆσος ὁμῶς κεχάροιτο καὶ οἷ λάχον ὄργια κεῖνα
δαίμονες ἐνναέται, τὰ μὲν οὐ θέμις ἄμμιν ἀείδειν.

Of these I will make no further mention; but I bid farewell to the island [of Samothrace] itself and the local deities, to whom belong those mysteries, of which it is not lawful for me to sing.

Here, we see the phrase οὐ θέμις, familiar from Orphic formula 1 B, and the characteristic first-person resistance to speaking what is to be kept secret. Another example, here in a Greek prose text, combines these consistent features with explicit reference to the cult activity of the Eleusinian Mysteries and sacred Orphic literature, in the history of Diodorus Siculus (3.62.7-8):

καθόλου γὰρ ὑπὸ τῶν ἀρχαίων ποιητῶν καὶ μυθογράφων τὴν Δήμητραν γῆν μητέρα
προσαγορεύεσθαι. σύμφωνα δὲ τούτοις εἶναι τὰ τε δηλούμενα διὰ τῶν Ὀρφικῶν ποιημάτων καὶ
τὰ παρεισαγόμενα κατὰ τὰς τελετάς, περὶ ὧν οὐ θέμις τοῖς ἀμυήτοις ἱστορεῖν τὰ κατὰ μέρος.

For in general, the ancient poets and writers of myths spoke of Demeter as Gē Mētēr (Earth Mother). And with these stories the teachings agree which are set forth in the Orphic poems and are introduced into their rites, but it is not lawful to recount them in detail to the uninitiated.

The text here displays first the familiar phrase οὐ θέμις and the explicit articulation of the uninitiated, ἀμύητοι, synonymous with βέβηλοι. These various examples demonstrate a consistent rhetoric of cult secrecy that serves as a *praeteritio* for a discussion of the mysteries that would betray a greater well of knowledge than that offered. Both Apollonius of Rhodes and Diodorus Siculus foreground the question of the poetic speaker, in contrast to the divine speakers considered in the earlier Classical examples: Apollonius displays his refusal to violate the mandates of secrecy which characterize the Samothracian Mysteries, and Diodorus Siculus vaguely mentions the ‘ancient poets and writers of myth’ (τῶν ἀρχαίων ποιητῶν καὶ μυθογράφων) in whose accounts

⁶¹ One scholar is prepared to infer from these lines that the poet himself was an initiate; see Dickie 1998:53.

cult figures are discussed, among whom can perhaps be counted Orpheus himself (τῶν Ὀρφικῶν ποιημάτων).

Such rhetoric concerning cult secrecy, and the complicating factors of the poetic voice and poetic production, will be inherited by Roman poets as well, who must place themselves in the position of an Orpheus as hierophant while refraining from cult violation. Vergil will implicate himself in the project of poetic participation in the rites in Book 6, in a rare moment in which he allows the voice of the poetic narrator to emerge from the text. Shortly following the Orphic declaration of the Sibyl cited above, as the Sibyl and Aeneas are beginning their descent into the Underworld, Vergil breaks from the narrative for a moment to beseech the gods of the Underworld (*Aen.* 6.264-8):

Di, quibus imperium est animarum, umbraeque silentes
et Chaos et Phlegethon, loca nocte tacentia late,
sit mihi fas audita loqui; sit numine vestro
pandere res alta terra et caligine mersas.

You gods, who hold the domain of spirits! You voiceless shades! You, Chaos, and you, Phlegethon, you broad, hushed tracts of night! May it be permitted to me to tell what I have heard; may it be permitted for me by your divine power to unfold secrets buried in the depths and darkness of the earth!

Vergil follows this prayer with the description of the Underworld, beginning with the path on the descent and continuing with a description of the various figures whom the Sibyl and Aeneas encounter there. The phrase *sit mihi fas audita loqui* is most evocative of injunctions in mystery cult towards secrecy, including features of the Orphic formula cited above.⁶² The Latin *fas* serves as equivalent to Greek θέμις, frequently found in such injunctions; *audita* we may again read as an alternative to that which is spoken by the hierophants (and consequently heard by the initiates) during rites of initiation, τὰ λεγόμενα; as in the example cited above of Apollonius of Rhodes, included here is the designation of the person for whom permission is granted to speak,

⁶² Wagenvoort 1956, chap. 10 considers a similar formula for divine epiphany: *fas sit vidisse*.

in contrast to the person for whom permission is granted to listen. The appeal to silence is encoded in what serves as almost a transferred epithet in the term *tacentia*, describing the various areas of the Underworld that are to serve as the subject of the discourse that is to follow; the places themselves are silent, as the Underworld occupied by empty shades is frequently described, but there is the subtle suggestion that the places themselves are to be kept silent about. In the final line of the excerpt cited above, the poet unites himself with the Sibyl, of whom Aeneas requests that she teach him the way into the Underworld (6.109): *doceas iter et sacra ostia pandas* (“show the way and open the hallowed portals!”). His request bears something of a resemblance to the poet’s intentions to reveal the things immersed deep in the earth and in darkness, *pandere res alta terra et caligine mersas* (*Aen.* 6.267), in the mirror of which the poetic narrator of the prayer above is likened to the prophetic hierophant.

The poet positions himself as a kind of priest of the mysteries in the manner of Orpheus. Vergil conflates the image of poetry and sacred rites by imagining himself in sacred procession for the Muses in the *Georgics* (2.475-7): *Me vero primum dulces ante omnia Musae, | quarum sacra fero ingenti percussus amore | accipiant...* (“But as for me - first may the Muses, sweet beyond compare, whose holy emblems, under the spell of a mighty love, I bear, take me to themselves...”). Such language finds a place in Horace’s *Ode* to Bacchus (2.19), where the poet engages from the beginning with metapoetic language; we have already seen him do this very thing at the opening of *Ode* 3.1. The opening stanzas refer to the production of sacred speech, with reference both to privileged speaker and audience (2.19.1-16):

Bacchum in remotis carmina rupibus
 vidi docentem —credite posteri—
 Nymphasque discentis et auris
 capripedum Satyrorum acutas.
 euhoe! recenti mens trepidat metu
 plenoque Bacchi pectore turbidum
 laetatur: euhoe! parce Liber,
 parce gravi metuende thyrsos!

fas pervicacis est mihi Thyiadas	
vinique fontem lactis et uberes	10
cantare rivos atque truncis	
lapsa cavis iterare mella:	
fas et beatae coniugis additum	
stellis honorem tectaque Penthei	
disiecta non leni ruina	15
Thacis et exitium Lycurgi.	

I have seen Bacchus teaching songs on a distant crag (believe me, my future readers!), and the Nymphs learning them and goat-footed Satyrs with their pointed ears pricked. Euhoe! My mind is in a confused ecstasy, still trembling with the fear that just now came over me; my soul is possessed by Bacchus. Euhoe! Have mercy on me, o God of Freedom! Have mercy, dread Lord of the fearsome ivy rod! I am allowed to sing of tireless Bacchants, fountains of wine, and rich rivers of milk, and to tell again the tale of honey oozing from hollow tree trunks. I am allowed to sing of how your consort was beatified and her crown set among the stars, how the palace of Pentheus was blasted apart and collapsed in devastation, and how the Thracian Lycurgus was destroyed.

Horace concerns himself with the production of sacred speech, beginning with the most sacred of speakers of the rites of Bacchus, the god himself. A similar idea can be found in the *Bacchae* of Euripides as well, when Dionysus, in disguise as a foreigner, claims to Pentheus that Dionysus himself teaches the rites (465-6): PEN.: πόθεν δὲ τελετὰς τάσδ' ἄγεις ἐς Ἑλλάδα; | DIO.: Διόνυσος αὐτός μ' εἰσέβης, ὁ τοῦ Διός. ("Pen.: From what source do you bring these initiation rites to Greece? | Dio.: Dionysus himself, son of Zeus, initiated me"). Horace's discussion of the audience of the god – Nymphs and Satyrs – may have subtle reference to the expanded Orphic formula 1 A/B, in the detail of the pricked ears (*auris acutas*) of the Satyrs. The detail of the pricked ears is consistent, to be sure, with the vivid descriptions of grotesque features in literary discussions of Satyrs and in the iconography of Satyrs on pottery (bulbous nose, bald head, shaggy hair, pointed goat ears, grotesquely erect phallus, etc.); here, however, the image may speak to the ideal and privileged audience of sacred rites, whose ears are not barred from listening, but may in fact be imagined to be ready and alert. Here, too, we see articulated along lines of physical space the concept of exclusivity – the suggestion that the crags where Bacchus instructs the rites are remote (*in remotis rupibus*) suggests a difficulty of access, and, thus, a limited audience mapped along space, here demarcated in topographical terms.

Horace contemplates his own role as speaker when stating that the god Bacchus should be honored in this hymnic ode, using the phrase *fas est mihi cantare*. Such phrasing will for us recall Vergil's self-conscious acknowledgment of his role as speaker discussed above in Book 6 of his *Aeneid*, and perhaps looks back to the Callimachean *Hymn to Demeter*, in the *recusatio* which bypasses the subject matter of the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* in favor of the story of Erysichthon. Horace has presented a list of topics which he is permitted to address; implicit in this discussion are topics he would *not* be permitted to discuss, suggesting, as in the case of the Callimachean hymn, a refraction of injunctions towards cult secrecy.

We may contrast Vergil's acknowledgement of his violation of a kind of cult secrecy with the reticence in the following excerpt of Ps.-Tibullus to do just this very thing (3.5.5-8):

at mihi Persephone nigram denuntiat horam.
 immerito iuveni parce nocere, dea.
 non ego temptavi nulli temeranda virorum
 audax laudandae sacra docere deae.

But I have warning from Persephone that the black hour is near. Harm me not, goddess; I am young and have done no wrong. I have not sought in recklessness to make known the rites of the goddess who is to be praised, which no man must profane.

Here, we see the use of *temerare* as a synonym of *profanare* for the violation of cult secrecy and the use of the gerundive to capture the injunctive force of the mandates detected in Greek literature. The poet here adds another expansion to the concept of the uninitiated (βέβηλος) with the terms *audax*. We have now seen the Latin equivalent of the Greek term for the 'uninitiated' as variously *profanus*, implying spatial limitations, Ovid's *loquax*, in a conflation with the cult profaner, and here *audax* (*temptare docere*), a term which seems to denote a profaning hierophant.

Perhaps more predictably, Ovid includes a reformulation of this motif in his recapitulation of the rape of Persephone in the *Fasti*. The context here is the episode in which the goddess Demeter, in disguise as an old woman and housed as a guest at the home of Celeus and Metaneira, takes care of their young son, Triptolemus; by night and in secret, the goddess attempts to make

the boy immortal as a show of gratitude for hospitality. The songs which she uses to immortalize the boy are designated ‘songs not to be rehearsed by mortal tongue’ (*carmina mortali non referenda sono*, *Fast.* 4.552). Here, we see traces of the motif, primarily in the injunctive force of the gerundive, *referenda*, against speech, and the designation of the speaker who is barred from utterance. The application of this phrasing may be exceptionally appropriate, if we read the literary references far enough back: the *carmina* here specified are discussed at greater length in the corresponding moment of the *Homeric Hymn*, where Demeter makes special claims to knowledge (227-30):

θρέψω κοῦ μιν, ἔολπα, κακοφραδίῃσι τιθήνης
οὔτ’ ἄρ’ ἐπηλυσίῃ δηλήσεται οὔθ’ ὑποτάμνον:
οἶδα γὰρ ἀντίτομον μέγα φέρτερον ὑλοτόμοιο,
οἶδα δ’ ἐπηλυσίης πολυπήμονος ἐσθλὸν ἐρυσμόν.

I will rear him, and I do not anticipate that any supernatural visitation or cutter of roots will harm him through any negligence by his nurse. For I know a powerful counter-cut to beat the herb-cutter, and I know a good inhibitor of baneful visitation.

It has been demonstrated by scholars that Demeter’s language at this moment in the *Homeric Hymn* participates in protective magic formulae also found inscribed on lead tablets from the late Classical period;⁶³ this observation ultimately shows that the *carmina* to which Ovid refers represent a category of powerful and specialized language with special claims to knowledge. What is curious here is the reapplication of the motif to a slightly modified context – the goddess herself plays the role of hierophant, with the *carmina* she utters becoming a kind of *hieros logos* by which the salvation by immortalization of the baby Triptolemus is effected. In such a context, it is easier to recast Metaneira, intruding upon the ritual and preventing the immortalization of her son, along the binary of the pious and impious – she now plays the part of the uninitiated who ought to have kept off from the rites, so as not to incur harm. In the figure of the ‘frenzied’ Metaneira (*amens*,

⁶³ Maas 1944; see also the relevant discussion at Faraone 2008:136–38; Faraone 2011; Richardson 1974 ad loc.; and Faraone 1996:87–89.

Fast. 4.555), the mother of Triptolemus, we see a glimpse of the motif of the cult infanticide,⁶⁴ insofar as it is her ‘motherly fear’ that renders the incantations of Ceres ineffectual (*inrita materno sunt mea dona metu*, *Fast.* 4.558), ultimately denying the baby his salvation, with a touch of irony in her characterization as one who is ‘pious’ (*pia mater*, *Fast.* 4.455).

In his *Tristia*, Ovid may begin to reframe the poetic error of his poetry as a transgression of religious stipulations within the overall program of making concessions to the emperor for the fault for which he was exiled. A combination of images are reconfigured in a discussion of mime at *Tr.* 2.503-4, by which Ovid starts to develop a concept of transgressive language: *nec satis incestis temerari vocibus aures; | adsuescunt oculi multa pudenda pati* (“Nor is it enough that the ear is outraged with impure words; the eyes grow accustomed to many shameful sights”). The combination of profane language (*temerari*), the image of ears (*aures*) and eyes (*oculi*), and ‘unchaste’ words (*incestis vocibus*) suggests imagery informed by cult rhetoric on secrecy, violations of language, the voice of the singer and the proper audience. Ovid here has offered considerations of literature that encode religious overtones, making use of motifs to be found in the Latin appropriations of Orphic formula 1 A/B and earlier formulations of mandates to cult secrecy. Poetic language can become a vehicle for transgression along a model of religious, and especially cultic, transgression; and, in such a light, such meditations will naturally reflect back upon the poetry which precipitated Ovid's exile, now to be re-understood in accordance with cultic attitudes towards language. Like Vergil and other poets, who are careful to toe the line between profaning language and poetic production, where an implication of the punishments to be incurred for violating cult secrecy lurk as an unspoken threat, Ovid reflects on the potentially transgressive and profaning nature of language, suggestive as a mirror within which to examine his own poetic

⁶⁴ To be discussed further at Ch. 5.2.

transgressions and the punishment which he has come to suffer as a result of speech recast as impious.

This development of a cohesive catalogue of literary cultic references derived first from Orphic formula 1 A/B and around a broader rhetoric of permissibility of speech and selectivity of audience reaches an apex in a combinatorial allusive *tour de force* in Claudian's *De Bello Gothico*. Claudian describes the expulsion of the Roman enemy from the vicinity of Rome by the forces of Stilicho as follows (DBG 100-104):

procul arceat altus
Iuppiter, ut delubra Numae sedesque Quirini
barbaries oculis saltem temerare profanis
possit et arcanum tanti dependere regni.

May Jove from on high forbid that the barbarian should outrage even with a glance Numa's shrine
or Romulus' temple, or discover anything of the secrets of our empire.

The discussion of shrines and temples (*delubra* and *sedes*) brings a religious context explicitly to the forefront of the passage, against which the other terms can become charged with religious meaning. With this context in mind, Claudian makes use of broader cultic imagery largely mediated through the variations on cultic language included in the Latin authors we have already reviewed. The religious significance of *procul* we may trace to Vergil's *Aeneid* 6.258;⁶⁵ of *arceat*, to Horace's *Odes* 3.1.1; of *temerare*, to Tibullus 3.5.7, Ovid's *Amores* 1.8.19, and Ovid's *Tristia* 2.503. *profanis* again acts as a signpost for cultic language, as we have seen already in various Latin texts. The discussion of eyes (*oculis*) that gaze impiously will recall the discussion of body parts specific to the uninitiated: ears, in many early Greek cases and in Plautus, and in the use by various authors of *audita*, corresponding to Greek τὰ λεγόμενα; and eyes, in the Ovidian discussion of Medea and in the overall significance of sight to the experience of initiation. In

⁶⁵ The codification of the term *procul* and *profanus* to the Latin formulation is reinforced in the injunction to exclusivity in the description of the rites of Isis in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* (11.23): *tunc semotis procul profanis omnibus* ("then all the uninitiated were dismissed").

arcantum, we may see a reference to secrecy and obscurity of cult language. Claudian offers a synthesis of the various features of cult language manifesting the terminology of injunctions to cult secrecy, imbuing an important moment in his epic with deeper religious coloring.

Through these various examples, we have seen the development of a consistent rhetoric around secrecy concerning mystery rites, with its most acute manifestation in Orphic formula 1 A/B. Such rhetoric may be employed in discussions of mystery cult, such as the Eleusinian or Samothracian mysteries, or in discussions unrelated to or only tangentially related to mystery cult, as Ovid's discussion of the erotic relationship in the *Ars Amatoria*. Such rhetoric reframes the dynamic between author and audience across genre, specifying a select group of readers and listeners who are permitted to be privy to the specialized knowledge imagined to be contained in the text by an author who appropriates for himself the authority of a hierophant. By casting themselves in the role of hierophant, the various poets may go so far as to make claims around knowledge, in a sense challenging the primacy of religious knowledge, to be supplanted by their own areas of expertise, and begin to draw boundaries around what is permitted of them as cult speakers (with the negative exemplum of the cult profaner never too far behind). Such engagement necessarily complicates the project of poetic production, as poets must triangulate between revelation of cultic arcana, claims to their own knowledge and access to exclusive material, and robust discussion of the topics at hand.

1.2.2 *Ancient Profaners*

Despite mandates to exclusivity, cult material seems to have been, in a certain sense, the worst kept secret of antiquity. Intimately bound up with the motif of silence around cult activity is the figure of the cult profaner who would violate restrictions of secrecy and make known to those

outside of the circumscribed group of cult participants that material which was to be kept secret. Explorations of such figures thematize cult secrecy in a reflection on cult engagement with language, frequently making use of the terminology reviewed in the previous sections. We have already seen cautious poets express concerns around not profaning secret knowledge, as at Vergil's *Aen.* 6.264-8 and Ps.-Tibullus 3.5.5-8 above, and, in his own cheeky way, Ovid at *Ars* 2.601ff., all of which display an awareness for the stakes involved in excessive divulgence. The figure of the cult profaner, who violates mandates of secrecy, serves as a kind of foil to the hierophant, of whom cult speech is permitted and even expected.

Famous cases of profaners were well known and much discussed in antiquity. The case of the Athenian Alcibiades was notorious in the Classical period, and we have already seen how Plato plays on his reputation as an ancient profaner by including Orphic formula 1 A/B in his speech in the *Symposium*. Besides the politician Alcibiades, there is one group of people whose willingness to profane the mysteries is a persistent motif, whether we believe them to reflect some kind of historical reality or to be part of the mythology around ancient poetics, namely, the accusations made against certain kinds of speakers of profaning the mysteries. Such is what we are told of Aeschylus,⁶⁶ who profaned the Eleusinian Mysteries; Andocides, the Attic orator, also charged with violating the Eleusinian Mysteries;⁶⁷ and the dithyrambic poet Diagoras of Melos, who violated the secrecy of the Eleusinian and Samothracian Mysteries.⁶⁸ There is, of course, an immense irony in such accounts, since the ability to profane is derived from that feature, a special capability with language, which defines such individuals as noteworthy. For poets who are cult

⁶⁶ Aristotle *Nic. Eth.* 1111a8-10. For Aeschylus as an 'Eleusinian poet' in the *Frogs* of Aristophanes, see Lada-Richards 1999, chap. 6, section 6.3.

⁶⁷ Janko 1997:88.

⁶⁸ Aristophanes *Clouds* 282-30, *Frogs* 320; Melanthius *FGH* 326 F 3; Athenagoras of Athens Πρεσβεία πρὸς Χριστιανῶν 4. Cf. *ibid.*, 87-92.

profaners, the very apparatus by which they have renown and power is perverted towards their self-destruction.⁶⁹

This kind of rhetoric is pervasive in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, where the poet chronicles cases of secrecy and profanity associated with rites. Perhaps the example embedded in the most overtly cultic context is the case of Ascalaphus, who figures in the discussion of the rape of Proserpina in Book 5 of the *Metamorphoses*, just one of the poet's explicit engagements with the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*. Ovid will reconsider this figure as a kind of failed initiate whose failure is intimately bound up in the violations of cult secrecy. Ascalaphus, son of Orphne and Acheron, suffers punishment at the hands of the goddess Demeter for revealing the fact that Proserpina has consumed food in the Underworld, thus violating the condition of Proserpina's release (*Met.* 5.538-52):

solusque ex omnibus illud	
Ascalaphus vidit, quem quondam dicitur Orphne,	
inter Avernales haud ignotissima nymphas,	540
ex Acheronte suo silvis peperisse sub atris;	
vidit et indicio reditum crudelis ademit.	
ingemuit regina Erebi testemque profanam	
fecit avem sparsumque caput Phlegethontide lympa	
in rostrum et plumas et grandia lumina vertit.	545
ille sibi ablatus fulvis amicitur in alis	
inque caput crescit longosque reflectitur ungues	
vixque movet natas per inertia bracchia pennas	
foedaque fit volucris, venturi nuntia luctus,	
ignavus bubo, dirum mortalibus omen.	550
Hic tamen indicio poenam linguaue videri	
commeruisse potest.	

The only one who saw the act was Ascalaphus, whom Orphne, not the least famous of the Avernian nymphs, is said to have borne to her own Acheron within the dark groves of the lower-world. The boy saw, and by his cruel tattling thwarted the girl's return to earth. Then was the queen of Erebus enraged, and changed the informer into an ill-omened bird; throwing in his face a handful of water from the Phlegethon, she gave him a beak and feathers and big eyes. Robbed of himself, he is now clothed in yellow wings; he grows into a head and long, hooked claws; but he scarce moves the feathers that sprout all over his sluggish arms. He has become a loathsome bird, prophet of woe, the

⁶⁹ Scholars, perhaps in response to this ancient motif, are quick to speculate on the status of poets as initiates. See Dickie 1998 for the argument for the initiate status of various Hellenistic poets. Apuleius seems to proudly declare his status as an initiate into the Dionsyiac Mysteries, as well as various others which he does not cite specifically, in his *Apologia* (55).

slothful screech-owl, a bird of evil omen to men. He indeed can seem to have deserved his punishment because of his tattling tongue.

The phrase *testem profanam* activates the theme of speech that violates secrecy; the signal term *profanam* aligns Ascalaphus with that group of uninitiated who are barred from participation in rites. In this case, Ascalaphus has seen (*vidit*) what amounts to the fundamental myth of the Eleusinian rites, the rape of Proserpina, and the violation of secrecy (*indicio*) around what he has seen brings about his ruin by metamorphosis. There is an ironic justice in the punishment which he suffers, namely, transformation into a bird whose most characteristic feature relates to language, *venturi nuntia luctus*.

A subtle articulation of the motif of profaning speech pervades Ovid's account of Procne, Philomela, and Tereus in the sixth Book of his *Metamorphoses*, where the poet includes in his account of the myth concerns around speech and revelation of secret deeds, in this case the crime of Tereus' rape of Philomela. The episode as a whole engages with the myth of Orpheus, the Thracian bard, not least of all in its Thracian setting (*Threicius Tereus*, *Met.* 6.424; *gratata est...Thracia*, *Met.* 6.434-5; *Thracius*, *Met.* 6.661); cult engagement is overtly signaled in the Bacchic rites which are celebrated at the apex of the episode (*tempus erat, quo sacra solent trieterica Bacchi | Sithoniae celebrare nurus*, *Met.* 6.587-8). In such a context, secrecy and divulgation become charged with the elevated stakes of cultic resonance.

Various figures in the story engage in a power struggle over language and its ability to reveal what is to be kept secret, as each figure appropriates the power of the iconic poet and cult hierophant, Orpheus. Tereus finds his power in flattering language that wins over his victim, convincing her to sail with him back to Thrace. His desire for her is the fuel for his speech (*Met.* 6.469): *facundum faciebat amor* ("his love made him eloquent"). Philomela, the victim of rape,

appropriates for herself an Orphic power of speech, threatening to make known the terrible crime of Tereus (*Met.* 6.544-8):

ipsa pudore

proiecto tua facta loquar: si copia detur,
in populos veniam; si silvis clausa tenebor,
implebo silvas et conscia saxa movebo;
audiet haec aether et si deus ullus in illo est!

I will myself cast shame aside and proclaim what you have done. If I should have the chance, I would go where people throng and tell it; if I am kept shut up in these woods, I will fill the woods with my story and move the very rocks to pity. The air of heaven shall hear it, and, if there is any god in heaven, he shall hear it too.

The claim by Philomela that with her words she will ‘fill the woods and move the very rocks to pity’ (*implebo silvas et conscia saxa movebo*) rings of that unique power attributed to the song of Orpheus, by which the trees themselves moved, rocks wept, and animals coexisted in harmony with one another, predator and prey.⁷⁰ Control over language and the power of language to sway vacillate between the characters at play from the outset of the narrative, as these various characters appropriate the specialized language of Orpheus, charged in a Thracian context and alongside cult engagement.

Even when deprived of the power of speech following her mutilation by Tereus, Philomela, in the detail of her tongue, displays an affinity with Orpheus, gruesomely depicted, an affinity which suggests that she has some share in his power with language (*Met.* 6.555-60):

ille indignantem et nomen patris usque vocantem	555
luctantemque loqui comprehensam forcipe linguam	
abstulit ense fero. radix micat ultima linguae,	
ipsa iacet terraeque tremens inmurmurat atrae,	
utque salire solet mutilatae cauda colubrae,	
palpitat et moriens dominae vestigia quaerit.	560
hoc quoque post facinus (vix ausim credere) fertur	
saepe sua lacerum repetisse libidine corpus.	

He seized her tongue with pincers, as it protested against the outrage, calling on the name of her father and struggling to speak, and cut it off with his merciless blade. The mangled root quivers, while the severed tongue lies palpitating on the dark earth, faintly murmuring; and, as the severed tail of a mangled snake is wont to writhe, it twitches convulsively, and with its last dying

⁷⁰ Cf. e.g. Ovid *Met.* 10.143ff.

movement it seeks its mistress' feet. Even after this horrid deed – one would scarce believe it—the king is said to have worked his lustful will again and again upon the poor mangled body.

Already, the gruesome severance of Philomela's tongue from her mouth echoes the murder by *sparagmos* of such cult victims as Pentheus and Orpheus, most acutely in the phrase *lacerum corpus* with which she is described at *Met.* 6.562. The severed tongue which continues to murmur (*immurmurat*) even after it has been cut from the body reflects the moment of death of Orpheus, in accounts of which the severed head of the bard continued to sing long after it had been decapitated of the body.⁷¹ The moment likens Philomela to Orpheus and in a certain sense foreshadows the resolution of the story, by which Philomela finds alternative means of communicating with her sister the crime committed by Tereus, namely by means of a woven tapestry (*Met.* 6.576-81), activating a frequent metaphor in antiquity for the production of poetic speech.⁷²

As the narrative continues, a contrast between ability and inability of speech remains the focus of the episode. Procne responds to the woven message of her speechless sister with an inability to speak (*Met.* 583-6):

et (mirum potuisse) silet: dolor ora repressit,
verbaque quaerenti satis indignantia linguae
defuerunt, nec flere vacat, sed fasque nefasque
confusura ruit poenaeque in imagine tota est.

And (a miracle that she could!) she says not a word. Grief chokes the words that rise to her lips, and her questing tongue can find no words strong enough to express her outraged feelings. Here is no room for tears, but she hurries on to confound right and wrong, her whole soul bent on the thought of vengeance.

Procne's speechlessness, the result of a grief that gives way to madness, perversely mirrors the 'mute tongue' (*os mutum*, *Met.* 6.574) of her sister. Philomela's inability to speak fuels the madness by which Procne resolves to murder her son, Itys (*Met.* 6.631-3): '*cur admovet,*' *inquit* |

⁷¹ Cf. *Met.* 11.2ff. On the violence of the scene, see Richlin 1992, esp. 162–65.

⁷² Segal 1992.

‘alter blanditias, rapta silet altera lingua? | quam vocat hic matrem, cur non vocat illa sororem?’ (“‘Why is one able to make soft, pretty speeches, while her ravished tongue dooms the other to silence? Since he calls me mother, why does she not call me sister?’ she says”). At the climax of the episode, when it is revealed to Tereus that the feast he has enjoyed is in fact comprised of his own son, Philomela more than ever wishes for the power of speech, and exchanges one mangled body part (namely, her tongue) for another (the decapitated head of Itys), as if an Orphic *sparagmos* (*Met.* 6.656-60):

quaerenti iterumque vocanti,
sicut erat sparsis furiali caede capillis,
prosiluit Ityosque caput Philomela cruentum
misit in ora patris nec tempore maluit ullo
posse loqui et meritis testavi gaudia dictis.

And then, as he asks and calls again for his son, just as she was, with streaming hair, and all stained with her mad deed of blood, Philomela springs forward and hurls the gory head of Itys straight into his father’s face; nor was there ever any time when she longed more to be able to speak, and to express her joy in fitting words.

Speech and speechlessness mark the most climactic moments of the narrative, in ways which test the limits of profaning and revelatory language in a cultic context. Speech, silence, and cult are here intertwined and framed in tragic armature.

The narrative has its culmination in the death of the boy Itys, marked by tragic imagery with cult overtones. In what follows, we will consider further the importance of the mother-child relationship to cult imagery, not least of all in the figure of the archetypal cult mother, Demeter; and we will consider infanticides as perversions of this motif, whose sons typically suffer death by *sparagmos*, symbolic of a failure of initiation, as in the case of the frenzied Agave and her son, Pentheus, in the *Bacchae* of Euripides. For Ovid’s Procne and Philomela, a Euripidean subtext is at play, fitting to the Bacchic revelry that occurs in the episode and under cover of which Procne recovers her sister from the captivity in which Tereus has placed her. The culmination of a struggle for supremacy in speech is a typically maenadic reactivity, by which

the quasi-maenadic Procne channels the tragic Agave to effect a destruction reserved for cultic contexts.

This chapter has considered a formula associated with mystery cult and its most visible hierophant, the poet Orpheus, as material available for citation and allusion across languages and genres. This formula is an articulation of broader cult ideas concerning language, especially the concept of cult secrecy and restriction of access, articulations of which conform to a traceable, albeit quite malleable, motif, as discussed above. These ideas around language are predicated on the figure of the hierophant as a qualified speaker with specialized knowledge; didactic claims are implicit to cult ideas concerning language, which served the important role of imparting crucial knowledge concerning the divine; appropriations of Orphic formula 1 A/B and the broader motif of silence also considered thus engage in wider polemics about wisdom and expertise, and permissibility with respect to language, either as its speaker or audience. The figure of the hierophant (and conversely, cult profaner) become essential mirrors in which poets can see themselves reflected. And in accordance with this figure, an audience is articulated, whether explicitly or merely implied, who will have stakes in the dynamics expressed and who must negotiate their status as co-participants in cult revelations or as the boorish uninitiated, without a share in the gains to be won from allusive recognition.

Chapter 2. READING INITIATION

The previous chapter has considered one attitude to language associated with and frequently reiterated in discussions of mystery cult, that of maintaining cult secrecy, beginning with an Orphic formula of cult exclusivity that presents binaries around access to space that become extended to access to language. By examination of this formula, we have begun to investigate the availability of cult literary material for allusive engagement and the cultural capital implied in doing so. Such engagements offer models of exclusivity of access, and especially with respect to knowledge of the divine, and contribute to broader polemics around claims to authority and expertise.

This chapter will consider another formula associated with cult and grounded in cult soteriological mechanics, the *makarismos* formula articulating the status of the initiate as one who achieves a pleasant afterlife in the Underworld. Formulations of blessedness deeply encode cult soteriological claims, by which language becomes the means of salvation for those who undergo initiation, first in access to language which provides knowledge essential to navigating the Underworld, and also in the illocutionary capacity of cult formulae, *symbola*, and code words. In conjunction with *makarismos* formulations, I will articulate a related literary motif, that of the initiand whose initiation ultimately fails, the most iconic case of which is the Euripidean Pentheus.⁷³ We will see that the power of language as essential to mystery cult mechanisms is harnessed for application elsewhere, with important consequences for the status of the initiand.

⁷³ For an overview of the aspects of Dionysus and his appearances in Greco-Roman literature, and the especial importance of Euripides' *Bacchae*, see Henrichs 1979.

2.1 *MAKARISMOI AND ἈΤΕΛΕΪΣ*

One of the most innovative features of mystery cult mechanics is the centrality of the individual, personal experience with the divine, focalized in the figure of the initiate who undergoes initiation. Designation of status as an initiate is one feature of the cult rhetoric around exclusivity which we have already considered in the binary established in Orphic formula 1 A/B between those who achieve privileged status, and those who do not, with immediate consequences of access to sacred space and language. This same concept of exclusivity is reiterated in the *makarismos* formula of blessedness that focuses on boundaries of exclusivity resulting from the experience of initiation, both in the moment of utterance but with especial reference to the afterlife. Whereas the Orphic formula emphasizes exclusivity of access to space and language in the immediate present, the *makarismos* formula articulates exclusivity of access to good fortune in the hereafter, and the gains to be won after death by those who have undergone initiation.⁷⁴ Exclusivity is mapped onto cult eschatological claims and reiterated along the soteriological promises entailed in cult participation.

2.1.1 *The Formula (Homeric Hymn to Demeter 480-2)*

The *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* closes with an axiomatic phrase, the *makarismos* formula, that describes the case of those who undergo initiation at Eleusis set in contrast with the unfortunate who fail to enter into the rites. Though the formula in the *Homeric Hymn* has direct reference to the mysteries at Eleusis, the phrase is sufficiently general to describe the status of the initiate understood categorically (480-2):⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Cole 2003.

⁷⁵ A complementary formulation is to be read at 486-9 of the *Hymn*.

ὄλβιος, ὃς τάδ' ὅπωπεν ἐπιχθονίων ἀνθρώπων·
 ὃς δ' ἀτελὴς ἱερῶν ὃς τ' ἄμμορος, οὐ ποθ' ὁμοίων
 αἴσαν ἔχει φθίμενός περ ὑπὸ ζόφῳ εὐρώεντι.

Blessed is he of men on earth who has beheld [the rites], whereas he that is uninitiated in the rites, or he that has had no part in them, never enjoys a similar lot down in the murky darkness when he is dead.

From this presentation of the formula, we can extract certain features that become characteristic of the topos, most importantly the grammatical construction by which the qualifier describing the state of blessedness (ὄλβιος)⁷⁶ or lack of initiation (here, ἀτελὴς and ἄμμορος) is followed by a relative clause indicating participation in mystery cult activity which is rewarded with a pleasant state in the Underworld, while he who is without participation is doomed to an unpleasant fate in death.⁷⁷ As in the Orphic formula 1 A/B, a binary is established between those with certain privileges and those to whom they are denied. Here, qualification as one who is blessed hinges on participation in the rites, with an especial emphasis on vision (ὅπωπεν); implied in the viewing of the rites is the resulting acquisition of special knowledge only shared with those who successfully complete the process of initiation. From the formulation of the one who is not blessed, we can read back onto the case of the blessed the implicit claim that he will receive benefits in the hereafter, since it is quite explicitly articulated that what distinguishes the one who is not blessed from the one who is blessed is a dissimilar lot in the Underworld, a lot which is characterized by suffering. Such a formula encodes cult soteriological and eschatological claims, as well as the cult emphasis on personal experience resulting in a change of ontological status, all negotiated on the basis of knowledge acquisition.

⁷⁶ De Heer 1969:17–19.

⁷⁷ A variation is perhaps to be read in the Getty Hexameters (text and translation Faraone and Obbink, eds., 2013), where cult imagery and magical language are combined (39–40): ὄλβιος ᾧ κε τάδε σκεδαθῇ κατ' ἀμαξιτὸν αἰῶ, | καὶ φρασὶν αὐτὸς ἔχη μακάρων κατ' ἀμαξιτὸν αὐδάν (“Happy is he for whom these words(?) are always(?) spread along the road, who keeps in mind along the road the saying of the blessed gods”).

2.1.2 ὄλβιοι and τρισόλβιοι: *Some Greek Reflexes*

Variations on the formula can be detected in Greek literary contexts both explicitly discussing experience in mystery cult and in unrelated contexts, with expansions that extend the characteristic features of the original formula and its implicit claims around eschatology and knowledge of the divine.⁷⁸ Pindar will include a variation on the formula in a fragment cited by Clement of Alexandria (*OF* 444 V I B): ὄλβιος ὅστις ἰδὼν κεῖν' εἶσ' ὑπὸ χθόν'· οἶδε μὲν βίου τελευτάν, οἶδεν δὲ διόσδοτον ἀρχάν (“Blessed is he who, having seen those things, goes below the earth: for he knows the end of life, and he knows its beginning, god-given”). Here again, we see a consistent characterization by which the blessed state of the initiate is cited (ὄλβιος), here with the same term to be found in the *Homeric Hymn*, followed by a relative clause describing participation in the rites and its rewards. A focus on the act of seeing (compare ἰδὼν here with ὄπωπεν in the *Homeric Hymn* above) recalls consistent language around initiatory experience; a resolution which includes the acquisition of special knowledge (οἶδε... οἶδεν) speaks to the epistemological claims of initiation, as well. Here, Pindar places emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge around the Underworld and afterlife, a feature of the experience of initiation prominent in mystery cult rhetoric.⁷⁹ Pindar will have recourse to the same formula in another fragment, in this case in discussion of the blessed (ὄλβιος) in direct connection with their participation in rites (*OF* 441 V): ὄλβιοι δ' ἅπαντες αἴσα λυσίπονον τελετάν (“Blessed are all who with good fortune [participate] in the rite which releases cares”). Here, the reward to be conferred on those who participate has been syncopated into the adjective λυσίπονος.

⁷⁸ Gladigow 1967.

⁷⁹ Knowledge acquisition is also encoded in Orphic formula 1 A in the term ξυνετός (‘he with understanding’). See Graf 2011:13, where he discusses “the cognitive status of the initiates” of variant A; also Bernabé 1996, sec. 1.6.

The chorus of Euripides' *Bacchae* presents a variation on the formula, in anticipation of the failed state of initiation suffered by Pentheus at the end of the tragedy (72-82):

ὦ μάκαρ, ὅστις εὐδαί-
μων τελετὰς θεῶν εἰ-
δὼς βιοτὰν ἀγιστεύει
καὶ θιασεύεται ψυ- 75
χὰν ἐν ὄρεσσι βακχεύ-
ων ὁσίοις καθαρμοῖσιν,
τά τε ματρὸς μεγάλας ὄρ-
για Κυβέλας θεμιτεύων,
ἀνὰ θύρσον τε τινάσσων, 80
κισσῷ τε στεφανωθείς
Διόνυσον θεραπεύει.

O blessed the man who, happy in knowing the gods' rites, makes his life pure and joins his soul to the worshipful band, performing Bacchic rites upon the mountains, with purifications of which the gods approve: he performs the sacred mysteries of Mother Cybele of the mountains, and shaking the Bacchic wand up and down, his head crowned with ivy, he serves Dionysus.

Here, the *makarismos* formula is applied to worshippers of the cult of Cybele and to the cult worshippers of Dionysus, the Bacchants. Again, the formula begins with a qualifier indicating the blessed state of the initiate (μάκαρ), followed by a relative clause which elaborates upon activity associated with cult worship and, as in the case of the Pindaric examples above, the acquisition of knowledge exclusive to initiates (εἰδὼς). Here as elsewhere, implied by the positive phrase concerning the man who does have experience in the rites is the inverse, namely he who does not have knowledge of the rites and who is consequently doomed to a worse fate. This wretched man is described indirectly at 386-8, with especial reference to the cult profaner: ἀχαλίνων στομάτων | ἀνόμου τ' ἀφροσύνας | τὸ τέλος δυστυχία ("Tongues that know no bridle and folly that knows no law end in misery"). In the narrative of his *sparagmos*, Pentheus himself serves the negative function by his own example at the climax of the play.

Aristophanes, too, includes various parodies of the *makarismos* formula in his *Frogs*, first in a discussion by the chorus of those who are permitted to participate in their sacred dancing (354-5): εὐφημεῖν χρή κάξιστασθαι τοῖς ἡμετέροισι χοροῖσιν, ὅστις ἄπειρος τοιῶνδε λόγων ἢ γνώμην

μὴ καθαρεύει... (“All speak fair, and the following shall stand apart from our dances: whoever is unfamiliar with such utterances as these, or harbors unclean attitudes...”).⁸⁰ Here again, we can identify the consistent features of the topos in the relative clause beginning with ὅστις and in the series of qualifiers compounded with word-initial negation prefix α- indicating a participation or lack of participation in rites, similar to the *Homeric Hymn* formulation (compare ἄπειρος here with ἀτελής and ἄμμορος of the *Homeric Hymn* formulation). The speakers of the formula here, the chorus of initiates of the comedy, are those initiates who have achieved a blessed status, the group of ὄλβιοι; those whom they address are thus to be included among their ranks. Towards the end of the comedy, the chorus again gives a much more straightforward example of the formula, when Aeschylus is to be rewarded by Pluto and Dionysus for victory in his contest against Euripides (1482-3): μακάριός γ’ ἀνὴρ ἔχων | ξύνεσιν ἡκριβωμένην (“Happy the man who has keen intelligence”). The Underworld context of the play serves to contextualize the eschatological implications of the formula; in the case of his character Aeschylus, Aristophanes has adapted the epistemological claims of the formula to indicate not familiarity with the divine, but poetic capability.

Plato includes what appears to be a variation of the formula in the *Phaedo*, in the mouth of Socrates in anticipation of his death (69c): ὃς ἂν ἀμύητος καὶ ἀτέλεστος εἰς Ἄϊδου ἀφίκηται ἐν βορβόρῳ κείσεται, ὁ δὲ κεκαθαρμένος τε καὶ τετελεσμένος ἐκεῖσε ἀφικόμενος μετὰ θεῶν οἰκήσει (“whoever goes uninitiated and unsanctified to the other world will lie in the mire, but he who arrives there initiated and purified will dwell with the gods”). Here again, we see familiar terminology in the designations ἀμύητος and ἀτέλεστος, signalled at the level of language by the

⁸⁰ For a fuller treatment of this passage, see the discussion in Ch. 1.1.2.

alpha-privative prefix; the eschatological consequences of ontological status are described in clear terms. Socrates continues by establishing an additional distinction even among those who are cult adherents,⁸¹ those who merely go through the motions of an initiand and those who achieve true understanding. Identifying himself with the latter, he redefines this group as philosophers, πεφιλοσοφηκότες (69c-d):

εἰσὶν γὰρ δὴ, ὥς φασιν οἱ περὶ τὰς τελετάς, ναρθηκοφόροι μὲν πολλοί, βάκχοι δέ τε παῦροι. οὗτοι δ' εἰσὶν κατὰ τὴν ἐμὴν δόξαν οὐκ ἄλλοι ἢ οἱ πεφιλοσοφηκότες ὀρθῶς. ὧν δὴ καὶ ἐγὼ κατὰ γέ τοι δυνατόν οὐδὲν ἀπέλιπον ἐν τῷ βίῳ ἀλλὰ παντὶ τρόπῳ προουθυμήθην γενέσθαι: εἰ δ' ὀρθῶς προουθυμήθην καὶ τί ἡνύσαμεν, ἐκεῖσε ἐλθόντες τὸ σαφὲς εἰσόμεθα, ἂν θεὸς ἐθέλῃ, ὀλίγον ὕστερον, ὥς ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ.

For as they say in the mysteries, ‘the thyrsus-bearers are many, but the Bacchants few’; and these Bacchants are, I believe, those who have been true philosophers. And I in my life have, so far as I could, left nothing undone, and have striven in every way to make myself one of them. But whether I have striven aright and have met with success, I believe I shall know clearly, when I have arrived there, very soon, if it is God’s will.

Socrates has already taken pains to redefine ritual *katharsis* in accordance with principles of acquisition of knowledge and philosophical learning (69a-b), in preparation for the re-definitions of cult terms which he offers here. Here, the philosopher has transferred cult soteriological claims to the practice of philosophy; knowledge acquisition of the divine exclusive to cult participants has been replaced with philosophical wisdom. The immediacy of the formula is all the more intensified in contemplation of the imminent death of Socrates, an acceleration of the death imagined in the *makarismos* of the cult participant and speculated for an unspecified future time.

Such rhetoric participates in Plato’s broader project of making claims to philosophical inquiry as the most effective vehicle for wisdom. Like Aristophanes in his *Frogs*, Plato has reintegrated cult definitions of blessedness to other areas of expertise and capability beyond those pertaining to cult, just as we have already observed of manipulations of Orphic formula 1 F A/B.⁸²

⁸¹ The additional distinction resonates with cult beliefs about the afterlife. See Graf and Johnston 2013:100–5, for a discussion of a “tripartite structure for the afterlife.”

⁸² For the full discussion, see the discussion in Ch. 1.1.2.

A similar strategy, namely the substitution of philosophical wisdom for knowledge acquired during participation in mystery cult rites, marks the manipulation of the *makarismos* formula by Empedocles (fr. B132 D8): ὄλβιος ὃς θείων πραπίδων ἐκτήσατο πλοῦτον, | δειλὸς δ' ὧ σκοτόεσσα θεῶν πέρι δόξα μέμηλεν (“Happy he who possesses the wealth of divine organs of thought; wretched, he who cares for an obscure doctrine about the gods”). As in the case of Orphic formula 1 A/B, cult knowledge of the divine has been substituted for other categories of wisdom; implicitly, cult hierophants have been supplanted by other categories of speaker, including poets and philosophers; the same rhetoric of exclusivity defines groups who are ‘in-the-know’ against those without access. In the examples we have considered, the same concerns around death which make up the gains and losses written into the *makarismos* formula continue to have relevance for later iterations of the *makarismos* formula, at times included quite explicitly, as in the case of Socrates.

We may observe from these examples that the term ὄλβιος to describe the one who is blessed becomes a marker of the formula and a recurrent feature of descriptions of the successful initiate.⁸³ In addition to the examples mentioned above, the term is frequently included in the Orphic gold tablets to describe the soul of the blessed.⁸⁴ An extension of this identification is the application of the term τρισόλβιος, ‘thrice-blessed,’ a relatively rare term which recurs in Greek literature with cultic overtones in discussions of the successful initiate. The term has a prominent place in the Orphic gold leaf tablet formula discussing the death and rebirth of the initiate, where the term is used in direct address to the soul of the deceased that will navigate the Underworld (*OF*

⁸³ On the complex semantic valence of this term, see Lévêque 1982.

⁸⁴ *OF* 488 F B, verse 9, where it is paired with the term μακαριστός; *OF* 488 F B, verse 3, *OF* 489 F B, verse 3, and *OF* 490 F B, verse 3, for the phrase γένος ὄλβιον, used of those who will be granted access to the pleasant areas of the Underworld; *OF* 485 F B, verse 7, for the group of ὄλβιοι inhabiting the pleasant areas of the Underworld.

485 F B cited here):⁸⁵ νῦν ἔθανες καὶ νῦν ἐγένου, τρισόλβιε, ἅματι τῷδε· | εἶπεῖν Φερσεφόναι σ' ὅτι Β<άκ>χιος αὐτὸς ἔλυσε (“Now you have died, and now you have been born, thrice-blessed one, on this very day. Say to Persephone that Bacchus himself has released you”). A fragment of Sophocles preserves the term, as well, in a reformulation of the *makarismos* formula (OF 444 V II B):

ὥς τρισόλβιοι
κεῖνοι βροτῶν, οἳ ταῦτα δερχθέντες τέλη
μόλωσ' ἐς Ἅιδου· τοῖσδε γὰρ μόνος ἐκεῖ
ζῆν ἔστι, τοῖς δ' ἄλλοισι πάντ' ἔχειν κακά.

Since thrice-blessed are they of mortal men, who make their way to Hades having seen these rites.
For to them alone is there life there, while for others it holds all evils.

The formulation, apparently with reference to initiation into the Eleusinian Mysteries, closely mirrors the *Homeric Hymn* formulation, here with τρισόλβιος substituted for ὀλβιος and with explicit discussion of both groups, those who are and those who are not blessed, and the consequences to be experienced by them in the Underworld. We may perhaps read the use of τρισκακοδαίμων, ‘thrice-cursed,’ in a self-pitying lament of Dionysus at verse 19 of Aristophanes’ *Frogs* in the opening dialogue between the divinity and Xanthias as a parody on τρισόλβιος, appropriate in the cultic and eschatological context of the comedy.

Here, we will consider one final Greek variation on the original formula, which displays a significant departure from the *Homeric Hymn* formulation but which nonetheless maintains certain features of the original formula by which different groups of religious practitioners are distinguished. Theocritus includes what is perhaps a variation on the phrase in his 26th *Idyll*, which deals with the case of the punishment of Pentheus. It would be unsurprising to see this feature of cult rhetoric in the poem, since Pentheus is framed as a failed initiand in Euripides’ *Bacchae*, where

⁸⁵ See also OF 486 F B.

we have already seen a variation on the *makarismos* formula; the Euripidean tragedy surely influenced Theocritus' *Idyll*. At 30-2, the poet expresses his wish for his poetry, distinguishing between a group of blessed and those who remain unblessed:

αὐτὸς δ' εὐαγέοιμι καὶ εὐαγέεσσιν ᾄδοιμι.
ἐκ Διὸς αἰγιόχῳ τιμὰν ἔχει αἰετὸς οὕτως.
εὐσεβέων παίδεσσι τὰ λῶια, δυσσεβέων δ' οὔ.

May I myself act piously, and may my actions please the pious. The eagle gains honor in this way from Zeus who bears the aegis. It is to the children of the pious, not to those of the impious, that good things come.

The distinction between two groups who suffer opposite fates on the basis of worship of the gods reflects distinctions of cult status, by which the group of blessed (here, εὐσεβέων) receive future goods (τὰ λῶια) in contrast to the group who remain unblessed (here, δυσσεβέων), who do not. It is noteworthy that the poet brings his own status into question, expressing the wish that he may be identified with the group of pious, first in a role as a kind of hierophant who acts piously (εὐαγέοιμι) and implicitly as a kind of initiate through an alignment with the group of blessed (εὐσεβεῖς) who receive future goods.⁸⁶

From these various examples, we can begin to codify the features of the *makarismos* formula as having a consistent presentation in Greek literature and consider its cachet for claims around wisdom acquisition and soteriological consequences. We may observe the distinction between those who are blessed (terms for which include ὄλβιος and the expansion τρισόλβιος; μάκαρ and cognate terms; and εὐσεβῆς) and those who are not, whether discussed explicitly or implied by the discussion around those who are blessed; a relative clause expanding upon the qualification; epistemological claims implied by the status of blessedness, usually with reference to the rites and the Underworld, but available for re-application to any kind of specialized and

⁸⁶ Dickie 1998:53–54.

exclusive knowledge; and rewards to be reaped by the blessed, or punishments to be suffered by those who are not. We may further observe that, though the formula will be found in contexts with explicit reference to cult participation, the formula becomes available for manipulation in non-cultic contexts and across a variety of genres, and even participates in metaliterary discussions around the capability of certain kinds of language to encode wisdom and around the role of the poet.⁸⁷

2.1.3 *Beati and felices: Some Latin Reflexes*

Roman manipulation of the *makarismos* formula adapts the formula to an even broader variety of contexts and genres. The examples to be considered here will demonstrate that the experimentation across categories of wisdom in which Greek poets engage is expanded upon by Roman poets, who will be ready to substitute cult knowledge with other forms of expertise, frequently for didactic aims. The eschatological background of the *makarismos* formula will be mapped onto contemporary geography, centered around the great city of Rome, finding an Elysium in the Italian landscape.

Scholars have long recognized the double *makarismos* of Vergil's *Georgics*, a didactic translation into Latin of the Greek formulation. The second Book of the didactic poem includes a striking formulation by which the poet sums up the project of the *Georgics* more broadly (2.490-4):

felix, qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas,
atque metus omnis et inexorabile fatum
subiecit pedibus strepitumque Acherontis avari.
fortunatus et ille, deos qui novit agrestis,
Panaque Silvanumque senem Nymphasque sorores.

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⁸⁷ Herodotus includes a similar formulation, cited as a Delphic oracle (5.92E.2): ὄλβιος οὗτος ἀνὴρ ὃς ἐμὸν δόμον ἐσκαταβαίνει, | Κύψελος Ἡετίδης, βασιλεὺς κλειτοῖο Κορίνθου | αὐτὸς καὶ παῖδες, παίδων γε μὲν οὐκέτι παῖδες (“Happy is the man who comes down to my home, Cypselus Eetides, great king of renowned Corinth, and his sons; yet his son’s sons shall not be happy”).

Blessed is he who has succeeded in learning the laws of nature's working, has cast beneath his feet all fear and fate's implacable decree, and the howl of insatiable Death. But happy too is he who knows the rural gods, Pan and aged Silvanus and the sisterhood of the Nymphs.

Here, we see the codification of the formula as it will be found in Roman poetry. Vergil sets at verse-initial position a term of blessedness (*felix* at 490 and *fortunatus* at 494) followed by a relative clause elaborating upon the qualifier. Here again, the acquisition of knowledge is given primacy of place in the qualification of blessedness, though reframed for the didactic context of Vergil's poem: the knowledge to be acquired is not the religious arcana of any of the mysteries, but the agricultural practices which are (at least nominally) the didactic purpose of the text.⁸⁸

Should we extend the original application of the *makarismos* formula in a cultic and Underworld context, the idyllic state presented in the *Georgics* of the farmer working the land in concert with nature during a kind of Golden Age becomes a kind of lived Elysium, a state of blessedness achieved in the country life of the simple farmer. Horace, too, will see in the life of the farmer the same kind of blessedness in his own application of the *makarismos* formula, in concert with Vergil's *makarismos* (*Epodes* 2.1-8):

beatus ille, qui procul negotiis,
 ut prisca gens mortalium,
 paterna rura bobus exercet suis,
 solutus omni faenore,
 neque excitatur classico miles truci,
 neque horret iratum mare,
 forumque vitat et superba civium
 potentiorum limina.

5

Happy the man who, far from business concerns, works his ancestral acres with his oxen like the men of old, free from every kind of debt; he is not wakened, like a soldier, by the harsh bray of the bugle, and has no fear of the angry sea; he avoids both the city center and the lofty doorways of powerful citizens.

Both Vergil and Horace map onto an idealized Italian landscape a kind of idyllic state in the tranquil life of the farmer in harmony with nature. Implicit in their discussions of the farmer who

⁸⁸ Hardie 2008. Hardie offers a particularly robust discussion of the manipulation of the religious formula for the 'blessed state' of the philosopher (p.168-9).

is blessed (*fortunatus* in Vergil's terminology; *beatus* in Horace's) are claims around Roman virtue in light of the cultural cachet in Roman thinking around the figure of the farmer as in many ways the embodiment of virtuous masculine behavior. Claims around virtues of hard work, frugality, and a simplicity of lifestyle become entwined with ideas around piety and implicated in the soteriological project central to mystery cult engagement. Horace, in an extended elaboration of he who is blessed, redefines the term *beatus* in accordance with acquisition of knowledge around the divine, combining, as we have just seen him do, the *makarismos* with Roman virtues of frugality and hardiness (*Odes* 4.9.45-52):

non possidentem multa vocaveris	45
recte beatum: rectius occupat	
nomen beati, qui deorum	
muneribus sapienter uti	
duramque callet pauperiem pati	
peiusque leto flagitium timet,	50
non ille pro caris amicis	
aut patria timidus perire.	

One would not be right to call happy the man of many possessions; the title of happy is more rightly claimed by the man who has the intelligence to make wise use of the gods' gifts and to put up with the rigors of poverty, who fears disgrace worse than death, and is not afraid to die for his dear friends or his native land.

The emphasis on wisdom placed in the adverb *sapienter* sees in a life of frugality the kind of wisdom achieved by the blessed initiate; here, soteriological claims hinge on knowledge acquisition, an essential feature to the efficacy of cult soteriological mechanisms.

Vergil will continue to map the geographic distinctions of the Underworld implicit in the *makarismos* formula onto his contemporary world through the mediation of the ancestral landscapes to be read in the *Aeneid*, in which the Trojans flee the city that they have lost in search of a final resting place promised to them by the gods. Vergil uses the *makarismos* formula strategically to reconsider various locations as potential future Romes, whose people achieve the peace and prosperity given to those who are blessed in the *makarismos* formula, in anticipation of the Italian settlements that the Trojans will eventually establish. The poet, in describing so many

landscapes in this way, and in anticipating the state of blessedness that will come to Aeneas and the other Trojans once they reach their settlement in Italy, is perhaps responding to the cultic overtones of a different account of Aeneas' wanderings. In the *Alexandra* of Lycophron, Cassandra closes her prophesying of the wanderings of Aeneas with a description of city-foundation (1270-2): τῷ καὶ παρ' ἐχθροῖς εὐσεβέστατος κριθεῖς, | τὴν πλεῖστον ὑμνηθεῖσαν ἐν χάρμας πάτραν | ἐν ὀπιτέκνοις ὀλβίαν δωμήσεται ("Wherefore being judged even by his foes to be most pious, he will found a fatherland of highest renown in battle").⁸⁹ Lycophron has transferred onto the Italian settlements the state of blessedness (ὀλβίαν) reserved in the *makarismos* formula for the blessed initiate who would inhabit such a place, conflating the place with the people who inhabit it; and in the qualification of Aeneas as one 'most pious' (εὐσεβέστατος), we begin to reflect on the status of Aeneas as an initiate, the piety for which he was renowned recast as religious piety in the context of cult.

An early application of the *makarismos* formula in the *Aeneid* imagines Carthage, a city held in tension with Rome in the first four Books of the epic, as a kind of Elysium (*Aen.* 1.437): *o fortunati, quorum iam moenia surgunt!* ("Happy are they whose walls already rise!"). Aeneas gazes upon the bustling activity of the nascent city, a foil for the future Italian settlements, imagining those who inhabit such a place as 'blessed'; from his vantage point, his position as a wandering fugitive by contrast is that of a displaced soul navigating a treacherous landscape that presents death at every turn, either by storm at sea or against hostile foes at war. As Aeneas in the second and third books recounts for his Carthaginian hosts the narrative of the Trojan wanderings, in which various locations, such as Crete and Sicily, are mistaken for the settlements promised to

⁸⁹ Stehle 1991:591–93, connects these lines with terminology familiar from the Samothracian Mysteries; see p. 593 n. 61 where she draws the connection to the terminology of the Eleusinian Mysteries.

the Trojans by fate, the hero remarks upon the blessed state of Andromache and Helenus, who are settled at Buthrotum (*Aen.* 3.493-4): *vivite felices, quibus est fortuna peracta | iam sua; nos alia ex aliis in fata vocamur* (“Live and be happy, as should those whose destiny is now achieved; we are still summoned from fate to fate”).⁹⁰ Aeneas ties the blessed state of Andromache and Helenus to their peaceful settlement in Buthrotum, imagining it as the pleasant state promised to the initiate who is ὀλβιος. Where in the earlier example, the comparison between Carthage and Italy is left implied, here Aeneas contrasts explicitly his own case with the case of the settlers at Buthrotum: they have achieved a status as *felices*, while he and the Trojans must continue to wander in search of their promised homeland. In both cases, Vergil maps ideas around distinctions of location in the Underworld implied in the *makarismos* formula onto the geographic space of the Odyssean half of his epic, where false Romes, including Carthage and Buthrotum, offer empty promise of rest as a living Elysium and where the displacement of the Trojans is framed as a restless wandering of doomed souls.

The fate of Trojan heroes may be described in the *Aeneid* with the *makarismos* formula, keeping consistent with Underworld eschatology that imagines heroes as occupying an idyllic area of the Underworld. Fritz Graf and Sarah Iles Johnston have demonstrated that the Underworld eschatology of the gold leaf tablets codifies the conflation between the blessed initiate and the souls of deceased heroes, where we see ὀλβιοι and ἥρωες grouped together in the idyllic ‘groves and meadows of Persephone’ in the Underworld.⁹¹ In imagining heroic eschatology in the *Aeneid*, similar ideas may be at play in the application of the *makarismos* formula to those who have died. Aeneas’ opening lament in the first Book of the epic, in which he recalls the fate of the Trojans who died at Troy, rings of a *makarismos* formula (*Aen.* 1.94-6): *o terque quaterque beati, | quis*

⁹⁰ For the “gentle irony” of this formulation in light of Aeneas self-pity, see Grimm 1967:161–62.

⁹¹ *OF* 476 F B, verse 11; *OF* 475 F B, verse 2; *OF* 476 F B, verse 11. Graf and Johnston 2013:108, 114–16.

ante ora patrum Troiae sub moenibus altis | contigit oppetere! (“O three and four-times blessed are they whose lot it was to fall at the base of the lofty walls of Troy before the eyes of their fathers!”).⁹² Vergil’s application of the formula follows the conventions already observed, the phrase *terque quaterque beati* a Latin formulation and expansion of the Greek term τρισόλβιος; here, again we see the term for blessed status followed by a relative clause (*quis...*) expanding upon the state of blessedness. In the immediate context, the application seems straightforward, as a wish for the state of heroes after death; where Vergil has most dramatically manipulated the formula is to focus on the state of blessedness conferred not as rewards after death, but manifested in the time and place of death, on the battlefield at Troy. Ovid includes the iconic phrase in his own account of the war in which Ceyx fights in the *Metamorphoses*, again formulated as a *makarismos* formula (*Met.* 11.539): *vocat ille beatos, | funera quos maneant* (“he calls them blessed, whom funeral rites await”). Vergil and Ovid, in the examples cited, apply the *makarismos* formula to conceptions of hero cult, a conflation already present in cult ideas around the attainment of a blessed afterlife.⁹³

Aeneas’ opening lament will of course have its most important antecedent in the speech of Odysseus at *Ody.* 5.306-7, as essentially a Latin translation of the Homeric original, serving to signal Vergil’s engagement with his Greek epic predecessor: τρις μάκαρες Δαναοὶ καὶ τετράκις, οἳ τότε ὄλοντο | Τροίῃ ἐν εὐρείῃ χάριν Ἀτρεΐδῃσι φέροντες (“Thrice blessed those Danaans and four times blessed who perished in those days in the wide land of Troy, doing the pleasure of the sons of Atreus”). A variation on the *makarismos* formula, however, which relies on a metaphor of

⁹² Cf. De Heer 1969:10–11.

⁹³ Odysseus addresses the soul of Achilles in the Underworld with a *makarismos* at *Ody.* 24.36-9: ὀλβιε Πηλῆος υἱέ, θεοῖς ἐπιείκελ’ Ἀχιλλεῦ, | ὃς θάνες ἐν Τροίῃ ἐκάς Ἄργεος· ἀμφὶ δέ σ’ ἄλλοι | κτείνοντο Τρώων καὶ Ἀχαιῶν υἱες ἄριστοι, | μαρνάμενοι περὶ σεῖο (“Fortunate son of Peleus, godlike Achilles, who died at Troy, far from Argos, and about you others fell, the best of the sons of the Trojans and Achaeans, fighting for your body”).

the initiate as storm-tossed may act as intermediary, and thus perhaps resolve the conflicting cases of the two heroes, the one caught in the storm whipped up by Juno in *Aeneid* Book 1, the other moored on the island of Calypso. Such a *makarismos* is included in Euripides' *Bacchae* in the voice of the chorus, framed as salvation from a storm at sea (*Ba.* 902-3): εὐδαίμων μὲν ὃς ἐκ θαλάσσης | ἔφυγε χεῖμα, λιμένα δ' ἔκικεν ("Happy is he who from the sea escapes the storm and finds harbor"). A similar metaphor will be used of initiation in the case of the initiation of Lucius into the cult of Isis in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* (11.15): *multis et variis exanclatis laboribus magnisque Fortunae tempestatibus et maximis actus procellis, ad portum Quietis et aram Misericordiae tandem, Luci, venisti* ("You have endured many different toils and been driven by Fortune's great tempests and mighty stormwinds; but finally, Lucius you have reached the harbor of Peace and the altar of Mercy"). Vergil perhaps draws on the language of the Odyssean original, but mediated over the course of subsequent Greek literature through the cult metaphor of the storm at sea; in Vergil's text, the metaphorical storm at sea with which the experience of initiation is imagined is made a literal storm on the Mediterranean, placing the epic hero in peril. It will be useful to remember here that Odysseus, in some versions of his myth, was an initiate into the Samothracian Mysteries (something he will have in common with the Phrygian Aeneas, according to some sources); these deities were especially important to sailors as gods who protected against shipwreck.

For one Vergilian Trojan warrior in particular, the *makarismos* formula sets his death in context of knowledge acquisition, or more specifically, its lack. The account of Coroebus, the Trojan husband of the prophetic Cassandra, highlights his death at the hands of the Greeks (*Aen.* 2.342-346):

illis ad Troiam forte diebus
venerat insano Cassandrae incensus amore
et gener auxilium Priamo Phrygibusque ferebat,

infelix qui non sponsae praecepta furentis
audierit!

In those days, as it chanced, he had come to Troy, fired with mad love for Cassandra, and as a son-in-law was bringing aid to Priam and the Phrygians -- luckless one, who was not to heed the warning of the inspired woman!

The verse beginning *infelix, qui...* is structured like the negative *makarismos* formula describing the one who is not blessed. The uninitiated status of Coroebus as *infelix* we may analyze as the result of a failure of initiation, in his inability to comprehend the words of his prophetic and ecstatic wife (*sponsae praecepta furentis*). An important component of initiation rituals was the revelation of secret knowledge that ensured the salvation of the initiate after death, after which the initiate was deemed ὄλβιος; the sacred texts associated with mystery cult were described as phrased in riddling or enigmatic language, the interpretation of which was the exclusive ability of one who had undergone initiation. Coroebus is here figured as a failed initiate, one who does not properly understand the words of the frenzied speaker, speaking to him in riddles he fails to comprehend, as is to be expected of the ‘warnings’ (*praecepta*) given by the doomed Cassandra, but which might offer salvation. Complicating the dynamic is the Catullan intertext which figures Coroebus and Cassandra⁹⁴ as Bacchus and Ariadne: the phrase *insano incensus amore* recalls the characterization of Bacchus as one ‘inflamed with love for you, [Ariadne],’ *tuoque incensus amore*, at Catullus 64.253. The allusion is heightened by the Vergilian substitution of *insano* for the Catullan *tuoque*, by which the poet addresses Ariadne directly; the substituted modifier reiterates the disturbed state of mind of Coroebus and brings ecstatic frenzy to bear on the passage. Rather than achieving status as ‘blessed,’ Coroebus is left *infelix* and ultimately doomed to a death

⁹⁴ The figure is frequently qualified as a maenad. Cf. Propertius 3.13.61-2; Ovid *Amores* 1.9.37-8. The characterization has precedent in Athenian tragedy. For references and relevant bibliography, see Hershkowitz 1998: 41, n. 165.

at Troy, the implication being, had he only understood the warnings of his wife, he might have escaped Troy alive.

Ovid's view from exile will reimagine Rome as an idealized location whose inhabitants are blessed. Rhetoric around death and the Underworld pervades Ovid's poetic output in exile, in which the poet characterizes himself as a deceased soul navigating the icy and hostile Underworld landscape that he imagines the Black Sea to be. Ovid's lamenting tone throughout the *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto* indicates that the poet counts himself among those who suffer in the Underworld. This rhetoric is structured with a *makarismos* at *Tr.* 5.1.25-34:

si tamen e vobis aliquis tam multa requiret,	25
unde dolenda canam, multa dolenda tuli.	
non haec ingenio, non haec componimus arte:	
materia est propriis ingeniosa malis.	
et quota fortunae pars est in carmine nostrae?	
felix, qui patitur quae numerare potest!	30
quot frutices silvae, quot flavas Thyrbis harenas,	
mollia quot Martis gramina campus habet,	
tot mala pertulimus, quorum medicina quiesque	
nulla nisi in studio est Pieridumque mora.	

Yet if someone of you asks why I sing so many grievous things – many grievous things have I endured. This verse I compose not by inspiration, not by art; the theme is filled with inspiration by its own evils. And how small a portion of my lot appears in my verse? Happy he who can count his sufferings! As many as the twigs of the forest, as many as the grains of Tiber's yellow sands, as many tender grass-blades as the field of Mars possesses, so many ills have I endured for which there is no cure, no relief save in whiling away my time in devotion to the Pierians.

Ovid manipulates the formula to conflate the state of the blessed with the state of the unblessed: the blessed status indicated by the term *felix* is paradoxically applied to one who is in a state of suffering (*patitur*). The numerical value of blessedness found in the term τρισόλβιος is transferred to the number of sufferings endured (*numerare*); rather than counting how many times over the figure is blessed, here he who is *felix* counts those hardships he is made to endure, and the boon he enjoys is merely that they are finite in number, such that he can count them.

We can press the implications of Ovid's conflation of the *felix* and *infelix* to see just how greatly the poet tests the limits of the strict binary established by the original formulation of

makarismos. The binary of the original formula demands that we simply reverse the cases when comparing, whether explicitly or implicitly, the *felix*/ὄλβιος and the *infelix*, the suffering of the latter proportionally inverse to the blessings of the former. For Ovid, the binary becomes less a case of opposites and more a question of degree. The force of Ovid's declarations, however, is to highlight just how wretched the poet has become; Ovid's frames his lamentations with the hyperbolic statement that his sufferings are so great in number as to be virtually innumerable, comparing them to the canonical images of innumerability of twigs in a forest or grains of sand. For Ovid, the one who is deemed *felix* is he who suffers quantifiable sufferings, and the one properly called *infelix* is in the even more lamentable state of one who suffers countless sufferings. A cultic binary between *felix/infelix*, in the wretched state of exile, becomes an exilic binary between *infelix/infelicio*.⁹⁵

An expression by which the poet wishes to return to Rome phrases his wish along lines of Underworld eschatology which distinguished between those who enjoy blessed areas and those who do not. In the third Book of the *Tristia*, after an extended description of an idyllic Rome made beautiful during the spring thaw, Ovid describes the Romans who inhabit this place as follows (*Tr.* 3.12.25-6): *o quater et quotiens non est numerare beatum, | non interdicta cui licet urbe frui* ("O four times happy, and innumerable times happy, is he, to whom it is permitted to enjoy the unforbidden city!"). Ovid has manipulated the *makarismos* formula with consistent rhetoric: a term of blessedness (here, *beatum*, in lieu of *felicem*) qualified numerically and followed by a relative clause elaborating upon the happy state. Here, cult rhetoric which designates exclusivity around space applies to Rome as well, a city 'forbidden' (*interdicta*) to those who are not blessed, much as those who are uninitiated are barred from sacred spaces where rites occur in life and the pleasant

⁹⁵ Again, we have recourse to a cultic tripartite division of doomed souls. See Graf and Johnston 2013, cited at n. 91 above.

areas of the Underworld in death. Ovid's rhetoric maps onto cult Underworld eschatology the geographical relationship between Rome, framed as the exclusive place where the blessed find themselves, and Tomis, a depressing Underworld landscape where the poet laments his sorry condition.

In what follows, Ovid imagines himself greeting a visitor to Tomis and making various inquiries into his identity (3.12.33-4): *sedulus occurram nautae, dictaque salute, | quid veniat, quaeram, quisve quibusve locis* ("Eagerly I shall run to meet the mariner and when I've greeted him, shall ask why he comes, who and from what place he is"). The phrasing by which Ovid imagines himself making his inquiries perhaps once again recalls Orphic eschatology: a gold tablet formula imagines guardians of the Underworld addressing the soul of the deceased with such questions as 'who are you? where are you from?' (τίς δ' ἐσσί; πῶ δ' ἐσσί;).⁹⁶ Ovid mirrors the gold tablet interaction in posing such questions at the arrival of an unfamiliar individual to a location with Underworld properties; where the guardians in the Underworld eschatology of the gold tablets ask the questions around identity almost aggressively, as a means of determining whether the soul is qualified to enter into the blessed areas of the Underworld, Ovid's questioning presupposes his own sorry state and reiterates a yearning for release, in a sense reversing the original force of the line of questioning but again appropriating cult Underworld eschatology for the contemporary world.

Beyond the bounds of epic, in matters of the heart, as well, Ovid, and the other elegists before him, identify various kinds of blessed lovers by means of the *makarismos* formula. Such application of the formula contributes to a broader rhetoric of cult erotics brought to bear on Ovid's

⁹⁶ *OF* 478 F B, verse 3; *OF* 479 F B, verse 3; *OF* 480 F B, verse 3; *OF* 481 F B, verse 3; *OF* 482 F B, verse 3; *OF* 483 F B, verse 3; *OF* 484 F B, verse 3; *OF* 484a F B, verse 3. On the guardians, cf. also *OF* 474 F B, verses 7-9; *OF* 475 F B, verses 9-11; *OF* 476 F B, verse 5; *OF* 477 F B, verses 5-6; *ibid.*, 111-14.

amatory agenda, to be discussed further in subsequent chapters.⁹⁷ Among the various cases and stages of the erotic relationship which Ovid considers in his *Ars Amatoria* is the case of the lover whose girlfriend feels jealousy, a case which Ovid considers positive for the lover as a way of ensuring her faithfulness to him (*Ars.* 2.445-54):

fac timeat de te, tepidamque recalface mentem:	445
palleat indicio criminis illa tui;	
o quater et quotiens numero comprehendere non est	
felicem, de quo laesa puella dolet;	
quae, simul invitas crimen pervenit ad aures,	
excidit, et miserae voxque colorque fugit.	450
ille ego sim, cuius laniet furiosa capillos:	
ille ego sim, teneras cui petat ungue genas,	
quem videat lacrimans, quem torvis spectet ocellis,	
quo sine non possit vivere, posse velit.	

See that she has fears about you, and fire anew her cooling thoughts; let her grow pale at hearing of your guilt; o four times and unnumbered times happy is he over whom an injured woman grieves; who, as soon as the charge has reached her unwilling ears, faints away, and voice and color leave her unhappy frame. May I be he whose hair she furiously rends! May I be he whose tender cheeks her nails attack! Whom weeping she regards, at whom she glares with angry eyes, without whom she could not live, though she might wish she could.

Suggestive features of Ovid's formulation include the identification of the state of blessedness (*felicem*) numerically qualified (*quater et quotiens numero comprehendere non est*) followed by the relative clause elaborating upon such a state (*de quo...*), a formulation quite similar to that which we have already considered at *Tr.* 3.12.25 and for which this passage perhaps serves as inspiration. In such a light, the violent behavior of the jealous woman takes advantage of the female violence that is characteristically maenadic, perhaps suggested at the level of language in her assault on him by *laniet*; and indeed, elsewhere we see the jealous woman explicitly characterized as a maenad, first in the abstract at *Ars Amatoria* 2.373-84 and also in the particular case of Procris (*Ars.* 3.707-14).⁹⁸ The resolution of such behavior, as described by Ovid, is peaceful reconciliation of the lovers (459-66), the idealized state of the relationship. There is an irony in the application of the

⁹⁷ See relevant discussion in Ch. 5.3. We have already seen such application of Orphic formula 1 A/B (Ch. 1.1.3).

⁹⁸ See more ample discussion in Ch. 5.3.

makarismos here after Ovid's use of the formula in the *Amores* to describe the lover who has no reason to question the faithfulness of his girlfriend (*Am.* 2.5.9): *felix, qui quod amat defendere fortiter audet | cui sua "non feci!" dicere amica potest* ("Happy is he who dares boldly defend that which he loves, to whom his girlfriend can say, 'I did not do it!'"). In matters of love, blessed is he who has no reason to feel jealousy, but rather can evoke a feeling of jealousy in the woman whom he desires.

Horace before him applies the *makarismos* formula to the erotic agenda in what is perhaps the most expected case, that of the lovers who enjoy a constant bond for the entirety of their days (*Odes* 1.13.17-20):

felices ter et amplius
quos irrupta tenet copula nec malis
divulsus querimoniis
suprema citius solvet amor die.

Three times blessed are they and more whom an uninterrupted bond holds and whose love is not torn by vicious wrangling and will not let them part before the final day.

Here, we see, once again, the consistent features of the formula at play: the declaration of blessed status (*felices*) qualified numerically, and specifically by the number three (*ter et amplius*), and expanded by a relative clause detailing the state of blessedness (*quos...*). Horace's discussion of the ideal relationship imagines the lovers who find one another and remain in a constant bond as a kind of paradise on earth. A similar sentiment, with metapoetic implications, is formulated by Propertius in his amatory poetry, conferring a state of blessedness on the love object who finds herself the subject of a book of poetry (3.2.17-8): *fortunata, meo si qua es celebrata libello! | carmina erunt formae tot monumenta tua* ("Happy woman, whoever you be, that are praised in a book of mine! Each poem will be a memorial of your beauty"). The implications of the formula here applied with metapoetic coloring activate ideas around poetry as a vehicle for immortality as a feature of cult soteriology.

Where Horace discusses the blessed lover in the abstract, a different Augustan poet will apply the formula to the particular case of Ariadne, in many ways the idealized initiate of Bacchus whose union with the god results in her catasterisation. The amatory precautions in Ps.-Tibullus 3.6 demonstrate the lover speaking from a position of authority in cultic language around love. The poem, an approximation of a hymn to Bacchus combined with elegiac imagery, opens with an invocation of Liber and immediately introduces the idea of cult practice in the *mystica vitis*, ‘mystical vine,’ which pertains to the god in the first verse. The poem continues with praise of the god’s triumphs and discussion of those mortal figures most closely associated with him, such as Pentheus (23-4) and Ariadne (39-42). In consideration of the case of Ariadne and her betrayal by her faithless lover, Theseus, the poet offers didactic words and a *makarismos* (43-4): *vos ego nunc moneo: felix, quicumque dolore | alterius disces posse cavere tuum* (“And so now I advise you: happy whoever you are who from another’s sorrow learns to avoid your own”). The strong assertion of the poet’s didactic purpose (*moneo*) and the strength of the first-person voice in utterance of a *makarismos* appropriate the force and power of the hierophant; the qualification of the blessed here as one who acquires a particular knowledge (*disces*) appropriates cult epistemological claims for didactic, and here eroto-didactic, purposes.

For Propertius, too, the blessed lover is the one who has achieved a consistent intimacy with a faithful girlfriend, and, barring that, blessed the one who, spurned, redirects his desire to a more amenable target (1.12.15-8):

felix, qui potuit praesenti flere puellae
 (non nihil aspersus gaudet Amor lacrimis),
 aut, si despectus, potuit mutare calores
 (sunt quoque translato gaudia servitio).

Happy is he who is able to weep in the presence of his girlfriend (Love takes great joy in being sprinkled with tears), or, if spurned, has been able to change his passion (there is joy, too, in transferring one’s bondage).

Propertius, like many lovers before him, sees in two opposing situations the potential for a kind of erotic blessedness: either the successful achievement of one's erotic desire, or the cessation of the longing that comes from an unrequited love. In the case of the latter especially, Propertius looks beyond the binary suggested by the *makarismos* formula of *felix*/ὄλβιος and its inverse; we might imagine the one who is *felix* to have won over the erotic object, whereas the one who is *infelix* to have lost that object, but Propertius complicates the erotic dynamic, denying that everyone who has lost the object of desire is *infelix*, but rather only the subset that continues to pine for someone who has spurned erotic advances. There is blessedness to be found in the state of solitude, so long as the spurned lover is able to redirect his passions – the sentiment is a recurring theme in ancient erotic poetry, perhaps most famously in the 11th *Idyll* of Theocritus, in which a lovesick Polyphemus cures himself of his heartache over Galatea, who has rejected his advances, through song. The poet reiterates his complication of the binary implicit in his erotic *makarismos* by unpacking in the verses that follow the case of the one who is *infelix* implied by his earlier definitions of the ones who can be qualified as *felix* (1.12.19-20): *mi neque amare aliam neque ab hac desistere fas est: | Cynthia prima fuit, Cynthia finis erit* (“For me it is not permitted to love another or to break with her: Cynthia was the first, Cynthia shall be the last”). Here, the poet, in describing his own case, has unpacked and applied to himself the case of the *infelix* implicit in the double *makarismos* of 1.12.15-8. Propertius finds himself both spurned by Cynthia and yet unable to transfer his passions to another, what he has earlier implicitly identified as the ultimate case of the erotic *infelix*, an inability he expresses with the terms *neque fas est*, a phrase loaded with religious significance.

In the 13th letter of his *Heroides*, Ovid's Laodamia expresses a similar sentiment for herself, in language which represents another application of the *makarismos* formula. We have already

considered the cultic overtones first of the myth of Protesilaus and especially of Ovid's treatment of Laodamia – once again, we have recourse to cult formulae in analyzing her language.⁹⁹ Unlike Ovid's readers, who are aware of her myth, Laodamia imagines the consequences of the fateful prophecy predicting her husband's death, and laments the case (unknowingly her own) of the wife who will weep for the death of her husband (*Ep.* 13.93-6):

sors quoque nescio quem fato designat iniquo,
 qui primus Danaum Troada tangat humum.
 infelix, quae prima virum lugebit ademptum!
 di faciant, ne tu strenuus esse velis!

There is a prophecy, too, that marks someone for an unjust doom – the first of the Danaäns to touch the soil of Troy. Unhappy is she who first shall weep for her slain lord! The gods keep you from being too eager!

Once again, identifying features of the topos include an adjective describing a state of blessedness (here, the lack of blessedness, *infelix*) followed closely by a relative clause elaborating the qualifier (*quae...*). There are varying senses of irony in Laodamia's self-referential *makarismos* hinging on the original application of the formula along lines of acquisition of knowledge. In earlier examples of the use of the formula, we have seen that the one who is blessed has achieved an exclusive and specialized knowledge of the rites, the gods associated with rites, and especially that which awaits one in death. Laodamia's lack of knowledge here of the person to whom the prophecy applies and of her own myth, is all the more striking, associated with her state as *infelix*. Her lack of knowledge works as a metapoetic device, making all earlier accounts of her myth the kind of *hieros logos* that could almost confer, at least upon Laodamia, the state of blessedness achieved by participation in rites, the qualification of the blessed of the *makarismos* formula. Her inability as a reader of her own myth is set in dialogue with the inability of the initiate to understand cult arcana, as a result

⁹⁹ See discussion at Ch. 1.1.2.

of which poetic learnedness acquires higher stakes in light of cult epistemological and soteriological claims by which acquisition of knowledge becomes crucial to salvation in death.¹⁰⁰

In light of this discussion of a topos around *makarismoi* and their inverse, we may be encouraged to reconsider Vergil's Dido, a figure who in what follows will be shown to participate in cultic activity, much to her detriment. Certain features of Dido's characterization perhaps frame her, in contrast to Aeneas, as one who is denied a blessed state. Though Vergil refrains from applying to Dido the full *makarismos* formula, the poet at various key moments qualifies the Carthaginian queen with the term *infelix*, leading up to her death in Book 4.¹⁰¹ In the case of Dido, we are made to remember the *makarismos* formula uttered by Aeneas in Book 1 (*o terque quaterque beati*, 94) in a moment of heightened emotion and when she is almost maenadic in her frenzy, as the queen, looking out on the shore and seeing the receding ships of Aeneas, realizes that she has been betrayed, a refraction of the Catullan Ariadne (*Aen.* 4.589): *terque quaterque manu pectus percussa decorum* ("three and four times she struck her comely breast with her hand"). A consideration of the terms of the *makarismos*, with its emphasis on those who are blessed (*felix*) and implicitly their inverse (*infelix*), colors the Vergilian discussion of the doomed Dido, whose soteriological consequences are reified in the inescapability of her historically predetermined fate.

From examples ranging across genres, including erotic, didactic, and epic, we can trace the presence in Roman literature of a *makarismos* formula deriving from earlier Greek usage, whose most visible and cultic application occurs in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*. Features of the formula in Latin represent a translation and at times an expansion of earlier Greek features, by

¹⁰⁰ On Ovid's sources, see Fulkerson 2005:110.

¹⁰¹ *Aen.* 1.712, 749; 4.450, 596. For full analysis, cf. Rebert 1928.

which *felix* and, more rarely, *beatus* become signal terms for the state of blessedness associated with the initiate (and, conversely, *infelix* as the one who is not blessed);¹⁰² generally, the term is qualified, at times in creative ways, by terms with numerical value, a Latin reflex of Greek expansion τρισόλβιος ('thrice-blessed'); a relative clause expands upon the state of blessedness, frequently with epistemological claims, though the kind of knowledge to be acquired we have seen manipulated from the exclusive knowledge of rites and gods associated with mystery cult to the didactic purposes of such works as Vergil's *Georgics* and Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*, and entangled with metaliterary engagements around plot and prophecy. The original formula evokes ideas around exclusivity of space, and especially eschatological implications associated with distinct areas of the Underworld and tied to the fates of the various categories of souls; Roman poets transfer these geographical distinctions onto Rome and beyond, finding an Elysium in lived landscapes.

2.2 INITIATE SONS: THE MOTIF OF FAILED INITIATION¹⁰³

Accounts of mystery cult, though shrouded in obscurity, seem to agree that initiation ritual was central to participation in cult. Those accounts which remain have an air of uninformed speculation crafted by outsiders to the religious experience; the nature of the evidence, which is quite limited and of which those accounts which contain the greatest amount of detail seem invariably to have been produced with the greatest temporal remove from the religious practices of which they claim to speak, has understandably been met with the skepticism of modern scholars, precluding the

¹⁰² We might compare use of such terms in a variation on *makarismos* pronounced by the priest of Isis during the initiation of Lucius in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* (11.22.5): *Luci, te felicem, te beatum, quem propitia voluntate numen augustum tantopere dignatur* ("O Lucius, how fortunate you are, how blessed, that the hallowed deity so greatly favors you with her benevolent will").

¹⁰³ For a review of the complex and problematic history of scholarship around the concept of initiation, see Graf 2003.

development of a definitive and agreed upon reconstruction of precisely what occurred during the secret rites of any given cult. Though a definitive account in exact detail seems to have eluded the grasp of both ancient critics and modern scholars, a persistent Greco-Roman fascination with the workings of mystery cult initiation rituals has resulted in their consistent, if oblique, presence in ancient literature; and the obfuscation that has resulted from the insistence on secrecy has made of mystery cult a religious phenomenon ripe for application as literary topos with a great degree of malleability and whose activation can assume a variety of meanings, imposed in accordance with the broader literary strategies of the author.

Lurking behind every application of the *makarismos* formula is the figure of the initiate and the transformative experience of initiation.¹⁰⁴ And indeed, certain initiates *qua* initiates have a particular visibility in ancient literature, such as Hippolytus, the Eleusinian (and/or Orphic) initiate of Euripides' tragedy; the chorus of Dionysiac initiates in Aristophanes' *Frogs*; Attis, consort of Cybele and archetype for the Galloi, who is famously the subject of Catullus 63; and Lucius, an initiate into the cult of Isis of Apuleius' Imperial romance, the *Metamorphoses*. The figure of the initiate,¹⁰⁵ and the transformation he undergoes during the frightful experience of initiation, offers itself as an archetype in literature beyond these figures.¹⁰⁶ The most common literary instantiation of the topos of the initiation motif is that of the initiation gone awry, in which the initiand fails to achieve the proper understanding of arcana containing information crucial to the soteriological project of cult participation. The topos of failed initiation seems to have been the narratological framework behind the plot of Euripides' *Bacchae*, in which the Theban king

¹⁰⁴ For a general discussion of the process of initiation, see Alvar 2008:217–21.

¹⁰⁵ Here, I do not distinguish between different stages of initiation, two grades of which are attested both at Samothrace and at Eleusis (μύσσης and ἐπόπτης). Cf. Clinton 2003. For visual testimony of the stages of initiation from the Classical period, see Bron 1987.

¹⁰⁶ For an anthropological perspective on the experience of the initiate, see MacGaffey 2008.

Pentheus, deeply skeptical concerning the behavior of the maenads, participates in their activities in disguise to appease his curiosity, during the course of which he suffers a gruesome death by *sparagmos* at the hands of the maenads.¹⁰⁷ In this section, we will consider various figures across Latin poetry as failed initiates, who suffer the severe consequences implicated in the soteriological claims of mystery cult and more explicitly referenced in the *makarismos* formula.

2.2.1 *Pentheus*

Ovid's narrative of the death of Pentheus in the *Metamorphoses* will adhere to the narratological framework established by Euripides' *Bacchae*, in which the slow destruction of Pentheus is framed as a failed initiation. The titular theme of the poet's work offers a ready setting for the metaphors of transformation by which initiation was discussed in ancient literature: Bacchus can act as a force for physical transformation across ontological boundaries in his capacity as a cult god with soteriological capabilities, and an essential element of his own characterization is the capacity to assume various forms and to straddle ontological boundaries by embodying opposites.¹⁰⁸ An early literary account of Dionysiac metamorphosis occurs in the *Homeric Hymn to Bacchus*, in which the pirates who take the god hostage are transformed into dolphins (δελφῖνες δ' ἐγένοντο, 53), while their ship is covered in vines and redolent of wine (35-42).¹⁰⁹ The Orphic gold tablets will describe the result of initiation as the transformation of man into god with the phrase 'a god you have become from a mortal' (θεὸς ἐγένου ἐξ ἀνθρώπου).¹¹⁰ Although there is some controversy

¹⁰⁷ Seaford 1996; for criticism of Seaford's approach to the text, see Friedrich 2000; for broader discussion of cultic features of Euripides' tragedy, see Navarro González 2016; and Holzhausen 2008. For the centrality of the psychology of Pentheus to his characterization as an initiand, see Segal 1986, chap. 9 ("Euripides' *Bacchae*: the Language of the Self and the Language of the Mysteries").

¹⁰⁸ On this and other aspects of his characterization in antiquity, see Detienne 1989.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Euripides *Bacchae* 4, where the god effects his own transformation: μορφὴν δ' ἀμείψας ἐκ θεοῦ βροτησίαν ("I have exchanged my divine form for a mortal one").

¹¹⁰ *OF* 487 F B, verse 4; compare θεὸς δ' ἔσσι ἀντὶ βροτοῖο, *OF* 488 F B, verse 9; compare δῖα γεγῶσα, *OF* 491 F B, verse 4.

as to the true significance of the formula, one Orphic gold leaf tablet formula relies heavily on animal imagery, imagery which, according to some scholars, is to be imagined of the initiand, as in the formula ‘a bull, you have fallen into the milk’ (ταῦρος εἰς γάλα ἔθορες).¹¹¹ That initiation was imagined as a transformative experience at the level of fundamental ontology seems clear; the transformative power of cult gods is one of the forces for transformation that informs the metamorphoses which Ovid describes, allowing for the unsuccessful initiand to serve readily as a fitting archetype at home in his work.¹¹²

Dionysiac transformations are scattered throughout the *Metamorphoses*, perhaps each with a subtext of initiation. These include the especially famous case of the pirates, who are transformed into dolphins (3.664-86), to be considered further in what follows; the daughters of Minyas into bats (4.402-415); Bacchus transforming himself into grapes in erotic pursuit of Erigone, as depicted on the tapestry of Ariadne (6.125); a stolen calf, transformed into a deer (7.359-60); and maenads into trees (11.67-84); and the daughters of Anius into birds (13.669-74). Insofar as similes serve as suggestions of transformations that are not entirely carried out, we may add further references, such as when the maenads are likened to birds (*ut aves*, 11.26; *ut...volucris*, 11.74), allusively calling attention to a similar strategy in the *Bacchae* (ὥστ’ ὄρνιθες, 748) and to which is perhaps related the transformation into birds by Juno of the Theban companions of Ino (*Met.* 4.561-2). We may also consider in concert with Dionysiac transformation those transformations effected by Cybele, such as of the Trojan ships in the *Aeneid* (9.77ff.) and in the *Metamorphoses* (14.549ff.). The power of cult deities to effect physical transformation serves as ready material for Ovid's epic theme, and suggests the association of metamorphic imagery with cult changes of ontological status.

¹¹¹ *OF* 485 F B, verses 3-5; *OF* 486 F B, verses 3-4; *OF* 487 F B, verse 4; *OF* 488 F B, verse 10. Cf. Faraone 2011.

¹¹² Cf. Barkan 1986:37–41 for a nuanced discussion of the mechanisms of metamorphosis affected by Bacchus.

The account of Pentheus in Book 3 of the *Metamorphoses* figures the death of the king as ultimately the same failure of initiation which marks his death in Euripides' *Bacchae*, and Ovid employs many of the rhetorical strategies discussed already in informing his reader of the status of the king. The king is called the 'denier of the gods' (*contemptor superum*, 514) and at the opening of his epyllion fails to heed the prophetic words of Tiresias (*praesagaque ridet | verba senis*, 514-5). The blind prophet responds with phrasing that applies to Pentheus the inverse *makarismos* coupled with phrasing that makes of the king the uninitiated of Orphic formula 1 A/B (*Met.* 3.517-8): '*quam felix esses, si tu quoque luminis huius | orbis*' ait '*fieres, ne Bacchica sacra videres!*' ("How fortunate would you be,' he says, 'if you also were bereft of this sight, so that you might not behold the rites of Bacchus!"). As we have seen in the previous section, the term *felix* in a potentially cultic context serves as the signal word for the one who reaps the benefits of proper initiation; here, the term is applied ironically, as would have been evident to the reader familiar with the account of the myth of Pentheus from the *Bacchae* and knowing that Pentheus will not achieve the condition posited here by Tiresias. Here, the qualifying relative clause expanding on the condition of blessedness has been substituted by a conditional clause (*si...*), but the subordinate clause maintains consistency with the *makarismos* formula by commenting on participation in the rites, and especially focusing on the element of sight (*videres*).

Tiresias' application of the *makarismos* subverts the original application of the formula in characteristically clever Ovidian allusive strategies. When Tiresias wishes that Pentheus not look upon the rites, it is first and foremost an injunction against the presence of the uninitiated at the rites, like that displayed in Orphic formula 1F A/B; but strictly speaking, the seer has adapted, and fundamentally reversed, the original formulation of the *makarismos*. According to the *makarismos* which closes the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, the one who is blessed (*felix*/ὄλβιος) is the one who

views the rites, and, in doing so, achieves the knowledge exclusive to the initiate and by which he achieves salvation. Here, it is precisely the viewing of the rites that results in the destruction of the king; though typically the one who does not see the rites would be termed *infelix*, here lack of viewing is precisely the condition by which Pentheus would be *felix*. The manipulation of the *makarismos*, by which the king is made *infelix* by the precise act that should make him *felix*, underscores the sense of inescapability of the king from what is to come. The status of the king as one who is doomed is ultimately resolved by the application of the term *infelix* at the end of the episode, after Pentheus has suffered *sparagmos* at the hands of his mother and the maenads (3.723): *non habet infelix quae matri bracchia tendat* (“The wretched man has not arms which he might extend towards his mother”).

The presence of elements of Orphic formula 1 F A/B reiterates the status of the king as one who is denied the soteriological products of cult engagement. The resumptive moment, in which the king spies upon the maenadic mountaintop rites in which his mother and the other maenads are engaged, reiterates the sentiment expressed by Tiresias above, bringing its ultimate conclusion to fulfillment. At the climax of the epyllion, Pentheus, from the cover of woods, spies on the rites (*Met.* 3.701-11):

perstat Echionides, nec iam iubet ire, sed ipse vadit, ubi electus facienda ad sacra Cithaeron cantibus et clara bacchantum voce sonabat. ut fremit acer equus, cum bellicus aere canoro signa dedit tubicen pugnaeque adsumit amorem,	705
Pentheas sic ictus longis ululatibus aether movit, et audito clamore recanduit ira. monte fere medio est, cingentibus ultima silvis, purus ab arboribus, spectabilis undique, campus: hic oculis illum cernentem sacra profanis	710
prima videt...	

But Pentheus stood fixed in his purpose. He no longer sent messengers, but went himself to where Cithaeron, the chosen seat for the god's sacred rites, was resounding with songs and the shrill cries of worshippers. As a spirited horse snorts when the brazen trumpet with tuneful voice sounds out the battle and his eagerness for the fray reaches a peak, so did the air, pulsing with the long-drawn cries, stir Pentheus, and the wild uproar in his ears heated his wrath white-hot. In approximately the

middle of the mountain, with forest bordering its furthest edges, there was a plain free from trees, visible from all sides: here [his mother] first sees him, looking upon the sacred rites with the eyes of one who is uninitiated...

The passage is an Ovidian syncopation of two separate moments in the Euripidean tragedy: first when messengers, under cover of brush, spy on the activities of the maenads, which they subsequently report to the king (*Ba.* 677-774), and then the climax of the play, when Pentheus dresses like a maenad so that he may be present at the rites (*Ba.* 1043-1152). The term *purus* here colors the space with a sense of the sacred, the concept of purity being central to ideas of religious and cultic space, resonating with geographic boundaries set in Orphic formula 1 F A/B. We have already seen how *profanus* serves as signal term for those who are uninitiated; articulation of a body part, here of the eyes (*oculis*), evokes the expanded version of the formula by which a body part is mentioned with reference to the uninitiated. Here, Pentheus' viewing of the rites violates injunctions against the presence of the uninitiated at the rites along boundaries of geographic space; with the reverse *makarismos* uttered by Tiresias, the poet succeeds in aligning the king with failed initiates.

Returning to the reverse *makarismos* of Tiresias, and considering the Ovidian Pentheus as a figure indebted to various literary predecessors, we may wish to further press the metapoetic implications of the prophetic knowledge of the famed seer. There is an additional pointed irony in the reverse *makarismos* of Tiresias, who foresees the gruesome fate of the king. The hierophantic utterance of the seer serves as a cultic refraction of the metapoetic engagement of the audience, who, like Tiresias, already knows what is to befall the king by the poet's allusive engagement with the earlier accounts of his myth. The familiarity with the fate of Pentheus which qualifies the privileged vantage point of the audience mirrors the prophetic insights of the seer and acts as a foil for the ignorance of Pentheus, which becomes an ignorance first of understanding, and also of poetic precedent. Were Pentheus to understand the knowledge of the prophet, or were he to share

metapoetically in the privileged perspective of Ovid's reader, he might be able to avoid his fate. As it is, his lack of knowledge (and lack of erudition as a reader) denies him his salvation, a salvation here available to be won through cult engagement and/as metapoetic engagement, and vice versa.

It is worth reiterating further how fully Ovid has exploited in his manipulation of an allusive engagement with the *Bacchae* of Euripides questions of cult knowledge loaded in metapoetic sensibility. The epyllion in its entirety triangulates the two Greek models of the *Bacchae* and the *Homeric Hymn to Bacchus*, at once contributing to one another towards a narrative that is all-encompassing of prior models. Nonetheless, a tension between the two creates competing claims to metapoetic primacy.¹¹³ Ovid's engagement with both of these texts that toggles between the two different narratives allows for moments of recognition and misrecognition between competing allusive claims.¹¹⁴ We may consider first the moment when the *Homeric Hymn to Bacchus* intrudes upon the Euripidean narrative, the point when the Theban guards bring before Pentheus the hostage Acoetes, a devotee of Dionysus subject to questioning about the cult and the god (*Met.* 3.572-81):

ecce cruentati redeunt et, Bacchus ubi esset, quaerenti domino Bacchum vidisse negarunt; "hunc" dixere "tamen comitem famulumque sacrorum cepimus" et tradunt manibus post terga ligatis	575
sacra dei quondam Tyrrhena gente secutum. adspicit hunc Pentheus oculis, quos ira tremendos fecerat, et quamquam poenae vix tempora differt, "o periture tuaque aliis documenta dature morte," ait, "ede tuum nomen nomenque parentum et patriam, morisque novi cur sacra frequentes!"	580

But now the slaves come back, all covered with blood, and, when their master asks where Bacchus is, they say that they have not seen him; "but this companion of his," they say, "this priest of his sacred rites, we have taken," and they deliver up, his hands bound behind his back, one of Tyrrhenian

¹¹³ Ovid will also draw upon Roman models here, such as Pacuvius' Pentheus. Cf. Keith 2002:265–66. On the play of genres and models, she writes (266): "[Ovid] thus indulges in two of his favorite compositional strategies, alluding to his Euripidean model both directly and indirectly through the Pacuvian intermediary, and epicizing material drawn from another literary genre, here tragedy."

¹¹⁴ Barchiesi 1999:124.

stock, a votary of Bacchus. Him Pentheus eyes awhile with gaze made terrible by his wrath; and, with difficulty withholding his hand from punishment, he says: "You who are doomed to perish and by your death give to others a warning, tell me your name, and the name of your parents, and your country, and why you devote yourself to the rites of this new cult."

The tale told by Acoetes reveals him to be one of the pirates who take Bacchus hostage, the most famous account of which myth is undoubtedly the *Homeric Hymn to Bacchus*; only by acquiescing to the divinity of the god is the pirate spared the fate of transformation inflicted on the rest of the crew as punishment for their impiety.

Astute readers will recognize that the insertion of Acoetes is a modification from a corresponding moment in the *Bacchae*, when a foreign adherent of Dionysus is brought before Pentheus by the messengers of the king for questioning, similarly detained in bonds (*Bacc.* 434ff.); in the tragedy, however, the audience is aware that the stranger is none other than Dionysus himself, and Pentheus' failure to recognize the god standing before his very eyes becomes the determinative thread that underscores their dialogue and which represents a failure at recognition of a divine epiphany, as imagined to have occurred during initiation. There, the audience of the tragedy recognizes the divinity on stage, identified as such at an earlier point in the tragedy; here, the audience of Ovid's text infers the potential presence of Bacchus by a metapoetic and allusive engagement. Readers are challenged to see here in Ovid's text what the Euripidean Pentheus himself does not see, namely the presence of Bacchus hidden below superficial appearances to the contrary. The indirect question posed at 572, *Bacchus ubi esset*, extends beyond the characters within the episode to the reader as well, activating the same soteriological implications that accompany Pentheus' failure of recognition. Metapoetic engagement allows for a kind of cult epiphany by intertextual evocation; the god, though strictly absent, is made a presence in the text by the allusive shadow of the *Bacchae*. Allusive identification becomes analogous to the recognition by the learned initiate of the gods and myths associated with cult.

One other moment will hinge on a similar intertextual *trompe l'oeil*, again with implications for cult participation. Ovid again deviates from his Euripidean model in what initially appears to be an inconsequential detail of the narrative, in the misidentification of Pentheus by Agave and the other maenads in their ecstatic frenzy (*Met.* 3.711-5):

prima videt, prima est insano concita cursu,
prima suum misso violavit Penthea thyrsos
mater et “o geminae” clamavit “adeste sorores!
ille aper, in nostris errat qui maximus agris,
ille mihi feriendus aper.”

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She, his mother, first sees him; she first rushes upon him with frenzied course; she first attacks her son Pentheus, hurling the thyrsus, and says, “Come, my two sisters, be here! This boar, a massive one which wanders in our fields, this boar I must tear apart.”

In Ovid’s account, Agave, deluded in a state of ecstatic frenzy, sees in place of her son Pentheus a boar and attacks him, thinking he is this fierce creature, largely consistent with the climax of the Euripidean tragedy. Ovid’s description, however, contains an important deviation from his model, where, according to the Euripidean account, his mother mistakes Pentheus for a lion, whose head she sees cradled in her arms after his death (*Ba.* 1278).¹¹⁵ The detail perhaps seems trivial, but Ovid again asks his reader to see by means of intertextual engagement images which are not there, just as Agave and the other maenads are deluded by visions that obfuscate the truth. Where Ovid writes of a boar, the learned reader, by allusive engagement with the tragedy, sees a lion behind the image, which in both cases is in fact the king Pentheus. As readers, our allusive recognition brings about the same delusional vision which is experienced by Agave and the maenads in their ecstatic frenzy in the *Bacchae*: they see a lion in place of a man, while we ‘see’ a lion where there

¹¹⁵ Ovid not only reveals his familiarity with this feature of the myth but also demonstrates that he might have composed the episode in conformity with the standard narrative later in Book 4, when a crazed Athamas imagines his wife Ino to be a lioness with her cubs and summons his companions to attack her (*Met.* 4.512-5): *protinus Aeolides media furibundus in aula | clamat “io, comites, his retia tendite silvis! | hic modo cum gemina visa est mihi prole leaena” | utque ferae sequitur vestigia coniugis amens* (“Straightaway cried Athamas, the son of Aeolus, madly raving in his palace halls: ‘Ho, my comrades, spread the nets here in these woods! I saw here but now a lioness with her two cubs;’ and madly pursued his wife’s tracks as if she were a beast of prey”).

is a vision of a boar in place of a man. By effecting the same delusion in his readers which Agave and the maenads suffer in Euripides' play, Ovid has in some sense likened his readers to the frenzied worshippers of the god whose divinity Pentheus denies, and has enlisted allusive engagement as a mechanism for effecting maenadic cult frenzy.

Even when he is listening, the king suffers from a fundamental lack of understanding, the kind of understanding which was crucial for the initiate to acquire. Upon hearing the story of Acoetes, by which the pirate demonstrates the divinity of the god, whom Pentheus is all too ready to deny, and proclaims his adherence to his cult worship, Pentheus responds without real comprehension, displaying himself to be far from the model 'reader' (*Met.* 3.692-3): '*praebuimus longis*' Pentheus '*ambagibus aures,*' | *inquit 'ut ira mora vires absumere posset.'* ('Pentheus says, "I have offered my ears to this story, long and meandering so that my anger might be able to diminish its strength by delay"). The motif here is as much a metapoetic conceit as it is a characteristic of the stubborn king. Pentheus fails to 'read' the lesson that is encoded in the *Homeric Hymn to Bacchus* and reiterated to him by the autopsy account of Acoetes concerning the consequences of proper worship of Dionysus. The kind of language specified by *ambagibus* is a term we might expect of the kind of riddling and enigmatic language which Tiresias and hierophants might utter; and Ovid perhaps signals most clearly this feature of Orphic language in his depiction of the katabasis of Orpheus in Book 10 of the *Met.*, where the bard vows to speak clearly to the chthonic deities, Hades and Proserpina, in the hope that they might release the shade of his wife Eurydice (*Met.* 10.19-24):

si licet et falsi positus ambagibus oris	
vera loqui sinitis, non huc, ut opaca viderem	20
Tartara, descendi, nec uti villosa colubris	
terna Medusaei vincirem guttura monstri:	
causa viae est coniunx, in quam calcata venenum	
vipera diffudit crescentesque abstulit annos.	

If it is lawful and you permit me to lay aside all false and doubtful speech and tell the simple truth: I have not come down hither to see dark Tartarus, nor yet to bind the three necks of Medusa's monstrous offspring, rough with serpents. The cause of my journey is my wife, into whose body a trodden serpent shot his poison and so snatched away her budding years.

The passage confirms the characterization of Orphic language as *ambages*. For Pentheus, the detail of ears (*aurēs*) perhaps subtly recalls Orphic formula 1 F A/B, in which the ears serve as an important image in the exchange of information occurring between hierophants and initiates. In his inability to process poetic and religious texts, first embedded in the epyllion and available through allusive metapoetic engagement, Pentheus shows himself to be far from the model initiate/reader.

Finally, we may observe that Pentheus suffers *sparagmos*, the gruesome death reserved for other cult figures as well, such as Orpheus and the baby Dionysus Zagreus.¹¹⁶ The fate that the king is to suffer is prophesied by Tiresias in his admonitions to the king (*Met.* 3.521-3): *quem nisi templorum fueris dignatus honore, | mille lacer spargere¹¹⁷ locis et sanguine silvas | foedabis matremque tuam matrisque sorores* ("If you do not worship him as is his due, you will be torn into a thousand pieces and scattered everywhere, and you will with your blood defile the woods and your mother and your mother's sisters"). What is foretold comes to fruition, just as in the closing of the Euripidean account (*Met.* 3.721-31):

illa, quis Actaeon, nescit dextramque precanti abstulit, Inoo lacerata est altera raptu. non habet infelix quae matri bracchia tendat, trunca sed ostendens dereptis vulnera membris 'adspice, mater!' ait. visis ululavit Agaue	725
collaque iactavit movitque per aera crinem avulsumque caput digitis complexa cruentis clamat: 'io comites, opus hoc victoria nostra est!' non citius frondes autumnī frigore tactas iamque male haerentes alta rapit arbore ventus,	730
quam sunt membra viri manibus direpta nefandis.	

¹¹⁶ A brief and vague discussion of Pentheus in the Underworld occurs at *Tr.* 5.3.40: *impia nec poena Pentheos umbra vacet* ("nor may the impious shade of Pentheus be free from punishment").

¹¹⁷ Cf. Keith 2002:267 esp. n. 145, where she observes the punning language and its implied etymological significance.

[Autonoë] knows not who Actaeon is, and tears off the suppliant's right arm; Ino in frenzy rends away his left. And now the wretched man has no arms to stretch out in prayer to this mother; but, showing his mangled stumps where his arms have been torn away, he cries: "O mother, see!" Agave howls madly at the sight and tosses her head with wildly streaming hair. Off she tears his head, and holding it in bloody hands, she yells: "See, comrades, this feat spells victory for us!" Not more quickly are leaves, when touched by the first cold of autumn and now lightly clinging, whirled from the lofty tree by the wind than is Pentheus torn limb from limb by those impious hands.

The image of leaves fallen from the trees will have its most immediate literary precedent in the Sixth Book of Vergil's *Aeneid*, as a metaphor for dead souls in the Underworld landscape which Aeneas traverses with the Sibyl, thus making this closing moment of the epyllion an evocation of a subtly Orphic Underworld (*Aen.* 6.295-336, esp. 309-10). Here, too, Ovid thematizes lack of proper reading as a failure with soteriological consequences, since Ovid's account of the myth of Actaeon is narrated earlier in the same Book of the *Metamorphoses*. Had Autonoë known the story of Actaeon, torn to pieces by his hounds, she might have held off from the destruction of Pentheus, and the king might have escaped the failure of initiation which he ultimately suffers.

2.2.2 *Dido*

Vergil's Carthaginian queen remains one of the most visible frenzied figures of the epic *Aeneid*, and her maenadic flight following the surreptitious departure of Aeneas in Book 4 precedes the apex of her narrative, the suicide which closes the Book. By considering the mechanics of the erotic plot of Book 1 which sets her narrative in motion, we can perhaps see in Dido the model of the failed initiate whose lack of recognition ultimately ensures her destruction. In Book 1, Venus, fearing the maleficence of Juno, beseeches her son, Cupid, to induce an erotic passion in the Carthaginian queen for Aeneas (*donisque furem incendat reginam*, *Aen.* 1.659-60), by which he and the remaining Trojans might find reprieve from their long sufferings (*Aen.* 1.656ff.). Here, we will want to reconsider Cupid's role as a figure who can inspire divine frenzy, a frenzy that is almost maenadic; and we will want to see in Dido a potential initiate who fails to negotiate an encounter with the divine, with disastrous results.

Dido cherishes Cupid, in disguise as the boy Ascanius, in her lap (*gremio fovet*); Vergil encourages his reader to imagine a kind of motherly fondness in her behavior (*Aen.* 1.685-8):

ut, cum te gremio accipiet laetissima Dido
regalis inter mensas laticemque Lyaeum,
cum dabit amplexus atque oscula dulcia figet
occultum inspire ignem fallasque veneno.

When, in the fullness of her joy, amid the royal feast and the flowing wine, Dido takes you to her bosom, embraces you and imprints sweet kisses, you may breathe into her a hidden fire and beguile her with your poison.

This plan is realized precisely according to Venus' initial injunction at the banquet of the Carthaginians and Trojans (*Aen.* 1.717-9): *haec oculis, haec pectore toto | haeret et interdum gremio fovet, inscia Dido, | insidat quantus miserae deus* ("With her eyes, with all her heart she clings to him and repeatedly fondles him in her lap, knowing not, poor Dido, how great a god settles there to her sorrow"). The image may have cult resonance, since the image of a child seated in the lap of a female figure is central to certain features of Dionysiac mythology and to the soteriological metaphors around initiates into Bacchic cult.¹¹⁸ A well-documented feature of the myth of Dionysus and Lycurgus, who threatens the god with bodily harm, involves Dionysus seeking refuge in the lap of the matronly figure, Thetis, as described in the *Iliad* (6.135-7):

Διώνυσος δὲ φοβηθεὶς
δύσεθ' ἄλως κατὰ κῦμα, Θέτις δ' ὑπεδέξατο κόλπῳ
δειδιότα· κρατερὸς γὰρ ἔχε τρόμος ἀνδρὸς ὁμοκλή.

But Dionysus fled, and plunged beneath the wave of the sea, and Thetis received him in her bosom, filled with dread, for mighty terror got hold of him at the man's threatenings.

A similar image is attested on the Bacchic/Orphic gold leaf tablets, in which the soul of the deceased is made to imagine itself seeking refuge in the lap of Persephone: Δεσσοίνας δὲ ὑπὸ κόλπον ἔδυν χθονίας βασιλείας ("I have sunk beneath the breast of the Lady, the Chthonian

¹¹⁸ There may be evidence for child initiates into the Bacchic mysteries. Cf. Nilsson 1985:106–15.

Queen”).¹¹⁹ A similar phrase appears on the papyrus from Gurob: θεὸς διὰ κόλπου.¹²⁰ Descriptions of the immortalization of the baby Demophoön in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, interpreted by scholars as a disrupted initiation, emphasize his position in the arms of the goddess, here κόλπος again, and ἄγκος: ἡδὺ καταπνείουσα καὶ ἐν κόλποισιν ἔχουσα (“she breathed sweetly on him, held close to her breast,” 238); and τιμὴ δ’ ἄφθιτος αἰὲν ἐπέσσεται, οὐνεκα γούνων | ἡμετέρων ἐπέβη καὶ ἐν ἀγκοίνῃσιν ἴαυσεν (“Yet unfailing honor will forever be his, because he lay on my knees and slept in my arms,” 263-4). Aristophanes may be parodying this language by incorporating the image of the ‘lap’ (κόλπος, here translated as ‘folds’) in a description of the blessed areas of the Underworld, usually identified as the meadows and groves of Persephone, in his *Frogs* (372-7):

χώρει νυν πᾶς ἀνδρείως
 ἐς τοὺς εὐανθεῖς κόλπους
 λειμώνων ἐγκρούων
 κάπισκώπτων
 καὶ παίζων καὶ χλευάζων,
 ἡρίσθηται δ’ ἐξαρκούντως.

375

Each one boldly marches to the flowery folds of meadows and glens stamping in time jesting, joking and mocking; we’ve breakfasted enough.

Here again, the term κόλπος brings to mind the physical lap of the maiden. The image of the child seated in the lap of the mother seems to have served as a productive metaphor for successful initiation in the context of mystery cult, where the nurturing qualities of the mother are re-imagined as having soteriological capacities.¹²¹

We can test the validity of this image in the complementary image of matronly behavior perversely displayed which characterizes maenadic behavior elsewhere. For initiations which fail,

¹¹⁹ OF 488 F B. Cf. Graf and Johnston 2013:128–29.

¹²⁰ West 1983:97 and 170-1, interprets this phrase as referring to sexual union.

¹²¹ Sophocles includes a similar concept in his characterization of Demeter and Kore in their capacity as Eleusinian goddesses with the term τιθηνέω (*Oed. Col.* 1049-51): λαμπάσιν ἀκταῖς οὐ Πότνια σεμνὰ τιθηνοῦνται τέλη θνατοῖσιν.

the perversion of motherly affection often accompanies the failure. In the *Bacchae*, Pentheus describes catching sight of the maenads suckling infant animals when he spies on their mountain-top gatherings (699-702):

αἶ δ' ἀγκάλαισι δορκάδ' ἢ σκύμνους λύκων
 ἀγρίου ἔχουσαι λευκὸν ἐδίδοσαν γάλα,
 ὅσαις νεοτόκοις μαστὸς ἦν σπαργῶν ἔτι
 βρέφη λιπούσαις.

Some held in their arms a roe or wild wolf-cubs and gave white milk - those who having recently given birth had, with their breasts still swollen, left their babies.

The image is perversely evoked at the close of the play, when Agave cradles the dismembered head of her son, Pentheus, in her arms using similar terms (φερόμενος ἦξεις ...ἐν χερσὶ μητρός, “You will come carried...in your mother’s arms,” 968-9; τίνος πρόσωπον δῆτ' ἐν ἀγκάλαις ἔχεις, “whose face do you have in your arms?”, 1277).¹²² Both by considering the mother-child image as a refraction of the dynamic between the initiate and cult divinity and its inverse, we can re-analyze the dynamic between Cupid, disguised as Ascanius, and Dido in the *Aeneid*: the image of Cupid clinging to the lap of the queen Dido, who dotes on him in an affectionate manner, only to have the god inspire her with (erotic) frenzy, may call to mind Bacchic rites and the mythology associated with them through a web of allusive references to the mother-child image, both in its unmarked instantiation and when the image is manipulated for perverse ends.

Here, we need to see Cupid as a god who can induce a kind of frenzy that appropriates cultic frenzy; this Vergil achieves by describing Cupid with terms he will also use of the Fury Allecto, inspiring Bacchic frenzy in Amata in Book 7. The mechanism of Cupid’s erotic inspiration anticipates the capacities of one of the most sinister divine forces of maenadic madness in the text

¹²² Segal 1986:309–10.

and the serpent which she flings upon the unsuspecting Latin queen, Amata.¹²³ The similarities are numerous: both are divine agents acting on the injunction of Olympian gods (Juno, in the case of Allecto; Venus, in the case of Cupid); Allecto is a winged creature (*fuscis tristis dea tollitur alis*, 7.408), as is Cupid (*aliger*, 1.663); both figures use poison as their weapon (in the case of Allecto, *Gorgoneis venenis*, 7.341; in the case of Cupid, *veneno*, 1.688); for both Dido and Amata, the effect of frenzied inspiration is the same, a variation on the phrase *ossibus implicere ignem* (in the case of Dido, *ossibus implicet ignem* at 1.659; the effect of the serpent's poison on Amata at 7.355 is the same, *ossibus implicat ignem*). Vergil thus makes his Cupid a divine agent of madness through a similarity of characterization, erotic passion inducing a madness on the order of ecstatic and maenadic frenzy.

The term *inspirare*, used of Cupid's erotic inducement at 1.688, is of limited and noteworthy use in the *Aeneid* and in each case is associated with mania, again connecting Cupid and Allecto; it should also be noted how unusual the image is as the manner by which Cupid inspires erotic desire, typically by means of his traditional bow and arrow. The term *inspirare* is used of the prophetic mania in the case of the Sibyl in Book 6, where Apollo induces mantic utterance that will be made maenadic by the use of the term *bacchari* to describe the violent movement of the seer in the throes of divine possession (*Aen.* 6.11-12): *magnam cui mentem animumque | Delius inspirat uates aperitque futura* ("into whom the Delian seer breathes a mighty mind and soul, revealing the future").¹²⁴ The other occurrence of the term comes in Book 7 of Allecto's serpent, when the Fury infects Amata with maenadic frenzy (*Aen.* 7.350-1): *fallitque*

¹²³ In arguing for the significance of Vergil's Allecto for generic polemics between epic and elegiac, see Ziogas 2010:158–59, where he offers a concise catalogue of the similarities in characterization of Cupid and the Fury. The affinities between Allecto and the scene between Venus and Cupid is noted also at Moskalew 1982:13–27.

¹²⁴ For the motif of "erotic breath as a means of conveying mantic power to women" in Greek and Roman literature, including discussion of Dido's inspiration by Cupid, see Skulsky 1987:60–63.

furentem | *uipeream inspirans animam* (“unseen by the frenzied woman, it breathes into her its vipereous breath”). A consistent characterization of inspiration and divine agents makes of Cupid and Allecto parallel agents of madness, in the case of the former, erotic madness, in the case of the latter, Bacchic madness; both serve as perversions of the frenzied state of the cult worshipper, coming into contact with the divine.

The image of Cupid in the lap of Dido thus perversely affords the Carthaginian queen her own initiatory moment, as the god induces in her one kind of madness - perversely, because it effects not Dido's salvation, as was the hope for initiates undergoing the frenzy of the initiatory rites, but ultimately her death. Like Pentheus, whose gruesome death in the *Bacchae* has been interpreted by scholars as an initiation gone wrong, Dido too will suffer a madness from which she will not recover. That Dido is unaware (*inscia*) of the god who sits in her lap is a telltale indication of the failure of her ‘initiation,’ since the goal of the rites was acquisition of knowledge previously unknown concerning the divinities involved in cult and exclusive to those who had been initiated, by which the initiate achieved a pleasant afterlife. That the distinction between initiates and non-initiates is articulated with a rhetoric of learning (in addition, for instance, to the predictable binary of piety and impiety, with such terms as ἀσέβεια) is evident not least in Euripides' *Bacchae*: δόξει τις ἀμαθεῖ σοφὰ λέγων οὐκ εὖ φρονεῖν (“To an ignorant man one will seem when speaking wise things to have no sense,” 480); and σὲ δ' ἀμαθίας γε κάσεβοῦντ' ἐς τὸν θεόν, (“[You will pay the penalty] for your ignorance and being impious towards the god,” 490). This same motif, namely the failure to recognize a divine epiphany, underscores the irony of the initial exchange in the *Bacchae* between Pentheus and Dionysus, in disguise as a mysterious, long-haired stranger come to Thebes (451-518). Pentheus fails to recognize the god standing before him, even when Dionysus tells the king exactly who he is (498-502):

DIO.: λύσει μ' ὁ δαίμων αὐτός, ὅταν ἐγὼ θέλω.
 PEN.: ὅταν γε καλέσης αὐτὸν ἐν βάκχαις σταθείς.
 DIO.: καὶ νῦν ἂ πάσχω πλησίον παρὼν ὁρᾷ. 500
 PEN.: καὶ ποῦ 'στιν; οὐ γὰρ φανερός ὄμμασιν γ' ἐμοῖς.
 DIO.: παρ' ἐμοί: σὺ δ' ἄσεβής αὐτὸς ὦν οὐκ εἰσορᾷς.

Dio.: The god will free me himself, whenever I wish.
 Pen.: Yes, when you stand among the maenads and call him.
 Dio.: Even now he is close by and sees what I suffer.
 Pen.: And where is he? For he is not visible to *my* eyes.
 Dio.: Where I am. But you being yourself impious do not see him.

The dialogue manipulates narratives of initiation in which the god Dionysus was believed to appear epiphanically to the initiates, as the terminology of sight here reiterates.¹²⁵ Vergil will later liken the queen precisely to this figure, as part of a broader meditation on her tragic nature, but whose subtext is the danger associated with Dionysiac frenzy and with failure to recognize the divinity of the god Dionysus (4.465-73):

	agit ipse furentem	465
in somnis ferus Aeneas, semperque relinqui		
sola sibi, semper longam incommitata videtur		
ire viam et Tyrios deserta quaerere terra,		
Eumenidum veluti demens videt agmina Pentheus		
et solem geminum et duplices se ostendere Thebas,	470	
aut Agamemnonius scaenis agitatus Orestes,		
armatam facibus matrem et serpentibus atris		
cum fugit ultricesque sedent in limine Dirae.		

In her sleep fierce Aeneas himself drives her in her frenzy; and ever she seems to be left lonely, ever wending, companionless, an endless way, and seeking her Tyrians in a land forlorn -- even as raving Pentheus sees the Bacchants' bands, and a double sun and two-fold Thebes rise to view; or as when Agamemnon's son, Orestes, set in a frenzy on the tragic stage, flees from his mother, who is armed with brands and black serpents, while at the doorway crouch avenging Fiends.

Pentheus here is described at the precise moment in Euripides' play when the king is in a climactic state of Dionysiac frenzy.¹²⁶ As in the case of Euripides' Pentheus, Dido's failure to recognize the divinity seated in her lap and to acquire proper knowledge of the god Cupid is ultimately a failure to be properly initiated, ensuring and foreshadowing her inevitable death.

¹²⁵ See Seaford 1996 ad loc.

¹²⁶ For the implications of Pentheus' double vision to his characterization as an initand, see Seaford 1987.

Dido will attempt to recreate the moment, to no better effect, as she descends into love-induced madness. At *Aen.* 4.77-85, Vergil describes the actions of the queen holding Ascanius in her lap, a moment which clearly reiterates the divine visitation of Cupid, in disguise as Ascanius, at the end of Book 1:

nunc eadem labente die convivia quaerit, Iliacosque iterum demens audire labores exposcit pendetque iterum narrantis ab ore. post ubi digressi, lumenque obscura vicissim luna premit suadentque cadentia sidera somnos, sola domo maeret vacua stratisque relictis incubat. illum absens absentem auditque videtque, aut gremio Ascanium genitoris imagine capta detinet, infandum si fallere possit amorem.	80 85
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Now, as day wanes, she seeks that same banquet, again in her madness craves to hear the sorrows of Ilium and again hangs on the speaker's lips. Then when all have gone their ways, and in turn the dim moon sinks her light, and the setting stars invite sleep, alone she mourns in the empty hall, and falls on the couch he has left. Though absent, each from each, she hears him, she sees him, or, captivated by his look of his father, she holds Ascanius on her lap, in case she may beguile a passion beyond all utterance.

As noted by scholars, certain features of this description, particularly the vignette of the love-struck queen lamenting alone in the halls under cover of night, make of Dido the love-struck maiden Medea of the *Argonautica* of Apollonius of Rhodes, just one among the many intertextual heroines who make up Vergil's composite characterization of Dido.¹²⁷ Certain features, however, are best contextualized as refractions of the initiation-gone-wrong motif. Dido here is in the characteristic frenzied state of a worshipper of Bacchus (*demens*), attuning the reader to the potentially Dionysiac subtext. Like initiates, whose experience during the rites is described as characterized by manipulation of light,¹²⁸ vision, and sounds, designed to induce horror and frenzy,¹²⁹ Dido believes she hears and sees a presence which is in fact absent. And the absence of Aeneas, in turn, may be interpreted as the failure of the initiatory god to be present epiphanically

¹²⁷ For an excellent overview of the various literary models for Dido, see Cairns 1989, chap. 6 ("Dido and the Elegiac Tradition"); Henry 1930; for affinities with Apollonius of Rhodes' Medea, see Lyne 1987:123–32.

¹²⁸ Seaford 2010, 2005.

¹²⁹ Seaford 1997, sec. 2 and 3.

during the rites, if we apply to Dido and Aeneas the reasoning of Plato's lover in the *Phaedrus*, who is to worship the beloved like a god deserving of rites.¹³⁰ Where in the First Book of the epic, the god Cupid appears in the lap of the queen and induces her frenzy, here the child in her lap is the true Ascanius,¹³¹ and not capable of inducing in the queen the same frenzy originating in a divinity. A final note of mystery cult may be detected in the nature of the love of the queen, *infandum*, which evokes, but also perverts, ritual silence during initiation and the general mandates of secrecy regarding the mysteries.

Dido's failure at epiphanic recognition which signals her status as a failed initiate is reflected at the level of metapoetics as a failure of proper knowledge, the crucial flaw that ensures Dido's downfall in her narrative. Dido's ultimate end is a foregone conclusion before the epic even begins, as Vergil's audience will know well. As many scholars have commented, Vergil's audience has a privileged knowledge to which Dido has no access - they have lived the historical inevitabilities concerning which Dido can only speculate. The progression of history necessitates that Aeneas leave Carthage and settle in Italy; the Carthaginians must be dominated by the Romans, and most dramatically in the Punic Wars of the Republican period. What is guaranteed in the lived history of Vergil's audience is guaranteed at the level of the narrative by the various prophetic announcements that are included in the epic, prophesying Aeneas' fate. Dido's lack of knowledge of history, of the myths by which Aeneas comes to settle in Italy, and of the prophecies foretold guaranteeing Aeneas' trajectory, ultimately bring about her downfall. For Dido, Aeneas, and the understood audience of the poem, an access to privileged knowledge, considered through the lens of mystery cult, means all the difference between personal salvation or ultimate

¹³⁰ To be discussed further at pp. 167-8; cf. also Ch. 5.3.

¹³¹ *Pace* Ziogas 2010.

destruction. Dido's lack of proper knowledge is thus not an incidental matter, but foreshadows her inevitable fate.¹³²

This triangulation of perspectives and limitations is borne out in Vergil's text. Vergil includes a particularly nuanced engagement with knowledge, its lack, and Dido at *Aen.* 1.299-300. Jupiter has just finished reassuring the concerned Venus that the fate of her son and his people is fixed (*manent immota tuorum | fata tibi*, 1.257-8) and has narrated the course of Roman history as it had progressed down to the time of Augustus. He finishes his speech and dispatches the god Mercury (297-300):

Haec ait, et Maia genitum demittit ab alto,
ut terrae, utque novae pateant Karthaginis arces
hospitio Teucris, ne fati nescia Dido
finibus arceret...

So speaking, he sends the son of Maia down from heaven, that the land and towers of new-built Carthage may open to greet the Teucrians, and Dido, ignorant of fate, might not bar them from her lands...

Here again, Dido is unknowing, *fati nescia*. There may be the question as to whose fate it is of which she is ignorant. The fear expressed by the phrase as it is used in context here is that Aeneas and the Trojans will not receive the aid that they need from Dido and the Carthaginians, but rather that they will be turned away from her shores, left to the precarious vicissitudes of the open sea, or that they will face the hostility of a foreign (and, for Vergil's Roman audience, historically hostile) power. In this case, it is the predetermined fate of the Trojans of which Dido is unaware - the implication being, that she will open her doors to the strangers, in spite of her lack of knowledge of the destiny of the Trojans.

¹³² Ovid's Dido will reverse the characterization, making Aeneas the one with a problematic relationship to the divine by employing the antonym of his epithet, *pious* (*Ep.* 7.129-30): *pone deos et quae tangendo sacra profanas! | non bene caelestis in pia dextra colit* ("Lay down those gods and sacred things; your touch profanes them! It is not well for an impious right hand to worship the dwellers in the sky").

There is a sense of faulty logic in Jupiter's reasoning, however, since the fate of the Trojans is indelibly bound up with the fate of Dido herself. The success of the Trojans necessarily entails the downfall of Carthage and its queen, as Book 4 will show and as Aeneas will subtly reiterate in his speech to the shade of Dido in the Underworld of Book 6. The significance of the phrase *fati nescia* here is that, if Dido were to know of the fate that awaits (for the Trojans), she would admit the Trojans to her shores, since the success of the Trojans and Aeneas is guaranteed by history. It seems a logical necessity, however, that, were she to know the fate that awaits (for her and the Carthaginians), certainly she would recognize the Trojans as enemies and bar them from her shores, thus thwarting the fall of Carthage. It is her status as an unknower that acts as the crucial lynchpin of the phrase, and on which the fate of Trojan and Carthaginian alike depends.

A similar confusion occurs in the words of Anna to her sister, speaking in favor of Dido's marriage to Aeneas, by which the two nations might unite ultimately towards the strengthening of the Carthaginians (4.45-49):

dis equidem auspicibus reor et Iunone secunda
hunc cursum Iliacas vento tenuisse carinas.
quam tu urbem, soror, hanc cernes, quae surgere regna
coniugio tali! Teucrum comitantibus armis
Punica se quantis attollet gloria rebus!

45

I certainly believe that it was with the gods' favour and Juno's aid that the Ilian ships held their course hither with the wind. What a city you will see rise here, my sister, what a realm, by reason of such a marriage! With Teucrian arms beside us, to what heights will Punic glory soar!

Anna's statement concerning the gods and Juno is entirely accurate, so far as the plot of the epic is concerned, and yet quite clearly a gross misinterpretation of divine will. The Trojan landing at Carthage is certainly the result of the machinations of the gods, and Juno in particular as the goddess who appeals to Aeolus in Book 1 to foment the storm at sea which sends the Trojans off course away from Italy and towards North Africa. Anna's ideations, however, about the implications of their arrival for Dido and the Carthaginians are entirely inaccurate - Dido will not

see the city flourish with the new marriage, nor will the Carthaginians reach new heights of Mediterranean supremacy. Here as well Dido and Anna suffer a fatal misunderstanding of divine communication, reflecting a similar lack of knowledge to that which Dido suffers in the presence of Cupid.¹³³

These inaccuracies are confirmed both by the literary narrative, when Aeneas and the Trojans withdraw from Carthage and make for Italy, and by the historical narrative of the Roman state, which comes to fruition and reaches its apex under Augustus. The motifs around lack of knowledge concerning the divine and divinely inspired frenzy here yield to broader programmatic claims around poetry and the figure of the poet of history. The broader model of allusive engagement which the initiate-hierophant relationship offers can allow us to reimagine the relationship between poet and audience, first configuring Dido as a potential reader from within the confines of the text, but also in consideration of the elite Roman audience for whom Vergil writes. There is a metapoetic dimension to this aspect of the text, in that Vergil's poetry is the culmination of that history, in its engagement with the Augustan age, and Vergil positions himself, writing from the vantage point of the very origins of Roman history, as the prophet of that history,¹³⁴ his primary mouthpieces being Jupiter in Book 1, who represents the ultimate command of the universe and is emblematic of the Roman state itself, whose temple held a prominent position in the city of Rome, and Anchises, whose shade in Book 6 describes to Aeneas the pageant of future Romans. Poetic language is precisely the kind of language that the initiate must learn to comprehend as a part of the mysteries, and the enigmatic quality of prophetic language is a well-known feature of the poetic utterances of such hierophantic figures

¹³³ Anna will again suffer a misunderstanding in the request of Dido that precedes her suicide in Book 4. Cf. Casali 2000.

¹³⁴ Newman 1967.

as Orpheus, the Pythia, and the Sibyl. In Vergil's poem, again, Dido's inability as an informed knower, first of the divine epiphany of Cupid inspiring her love for Aeneas at the level of the narrative, and second of poetry which could offer her important information which could be the key to her salvation, marks her as a kind of failed initiate doomed to an unhappy fate.

2.2.3 *Erysichthon*

One final failed initiate to consider will be Erysichthon, who, after the Callimachean *Hymn to Demeter*, becomes an iconic *contemptor* of the goddess Demeter. Aspects of his characterization in his episode in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* participate in the motif of the initiation-gone-awry with many of the signposts already discussed, as appropriate to a figure who violates the divinity of a goddess so iconically associated with mystery cult.

Erysichthon is characterized early in the episode as a *contemptor* of the gods, much like Pentheus in *Met.* 3 before him (*Met.* 8.739-42):

qui numina divum
sperneret et nullos aris adoleret odores;
ille etiam Cereale nemus violasse securi
dicitur et lucos ferro temerasse vetustos.

He was a man who scorned the gods and burnt no sacrifice on their altars. He, so the story goes, once violated the sacred grove of Ceres with the axe and profaned those ancient trees with steel.

The hand with which he wields the axe to strike down the tree sacred to Demeter receives the label 'impious,' *impia manus* (8.761); the mouth with which he utters his challenges to the goddess and which ultimately is the locus for his dreadful punishment is marked with the signal term for the uninitiated, *Erysichthonis ora profani* (8.840). Ovid's Erysichthon displays the qualities we have already seen of mortals who fail to establish proper relationships with cult gods.

The moment of failed initiation is articulated not during the scene in the grove, where Erysichthon displays his most impious behavior, but in the description of his subsequent punishment. The goddess Ceres receives an impassioned appeal from the dryad nymphs who

preside over the wood from which the oak was toppled, a group of goddesses whose characterization evokes a tragic chorus of frenzied maenads, *attonitae* (*Met.* 8.777-9):

attonitae dryades damno nemorumque suoque,
omnes germanae, Cererem cum vestibus atris
maerentes adeunt poenamque Erysichthonis orant.

All the dryad sisters were stupefied at their own and their forest's loss and, mourning, clad in black robes, they went to Ceres and beseeched her to punish Erysichthon.

Ceres, an agent of epic anger in the manner of the Vergilian Juno, orders that Erysichthon be plagued with perpetual hunger, a fulfillment of the threat to deprive humankind of nourishment given in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, should the goddess not recover her daughter (310-12). Fames, the personification of hunger, one of the four personifications of the *Metamorphoses* modelled after the Vergilian Fama, infects the impious man most sinisterly (*Met.* 8.814-20):

dicta Fames Cereris, quamvis contraria semper	
illius est operi, peragit perque aera vento	815
ad iussam delata domum est, et protinus intrat	
sacrilegi thalamos altoque sopore solutum	
(noctis enim tempus) geminis amplexitur ulnis,	
seque viro inspirat, faucesque et pectus et ora	
adflat et in vacuis spargit ieiunia venis.	820

Famine did the bidding of Ceres, although their tasks are ever opposite, and flew through the air on the wings of the wind to the appointed house, and straightaway entered the bedchambers of the impious man, who was sunk in deep slumber (for it was night); there she wrapped her two arms about him and filled him with herself, breathing upon his throat and breast and lips; and in his hollow veins she planted hunger.

The process by which Fames infects her victim with hunger resonates with the images we have already discussed of divine agents of frenzy, and frames the almost erotic embrace of the sleeping Erysichthon by Fames as a failed initiation in light of his violations against Ceres. Particularly suggestive is the image of the embrace of Fames, by which she holds the sleeping Erysichthon in her arms (*geminis amplexitur ulnis*), like the image of the nurturing cult mother: the motherly embrace which should confer a blessed status here sets in motion his destruction. The term *inspirare* here perhaps suggests the same manner of quasi-maenadic frenzy which characterizes use of the term in Vergil's *Aeneid* by Apollo, Cupid, and Allecto. The cultic frenzy which might

be felt by the initiand during the Eleusinian rites in worship of Demeter and Persephone is substituted by a frenzied hunger, framed here as a failure of initiation; the goddess who fills him with frenzy, Fames, is set in direct opposition to these goddesses, who could offer him salvation (*contraria semper illius est operi*).

Erysichthon ultimately suffers the same fate which befalls various doomed cult figures, including Pentheus, namely, *sparagmos*. Perversely, he is the perpetrator of his own laceration in service of his perpetual hunger (*Met.* 8.877-8): *ipse suos artus lacerans divellere morsu | coepit et infelix minuendo corpus alebat* (“the wretched man began to tear his limbs and rend them apart with his teeth and, by consuming his own body, fed himself”). In accordance with the violations that have framed him as a *contemptor* of the gods and an enemy of a goddess of mystery cult, the punishment and death of Erysichthon conform to cult imagery, making of him in his denial of Demeter a kind of failed initiate.

From the unspecified blessed who enjoy the fruits of the rites, to the mythological deniers of divinity, mystery cult offers various productive models for mortal interactions with the divine. The *makarismos* formula (and implicitly its inverse) offers terminology by which such figures can be understood; it reiterates the idea of the rewards to be reaped from proper worship, while also providing a window into cult eschatology that can be mapped onto the contemporary landscape, and soteriological mechanisms that can be appropriated to poetic speech, where they serve to redefine the dynamic between poet and audience on the model of the hierophant and initiate. An ancient fascination with the events of initiatory rites engenders the appropriation of initiation narratives for literature in cases of those who deny the divinity of the gods, especially those associated with cult. Failures of understanding and comprehension can be connected to destruction

and loss on the model of cult epistemological and soteriological claims. Such appropriations offer productive narrative models, and ultimately serve to propose a reformulation of the relationship between text and audience, not least by metaliterary engagements embedded in the texts themselves. The poet becomes a kind of hierophant in control of language with soteriological capacities for initiates who might recognize the wisdom embedded therein; allusive recognition of a learned audience begins to reflect the learned status of the successful initiate.

Chapter 3. GOLDEN LEAVES AND SACRED *SYMBOLA*

Concerns around death and the afterlife were central to the popular appeal of mystery cults, with their implicit promises of securing a pleasant afterlife and allaying fears around death; initiation was narrativized as an initial imagined death in anticipation of and preparation for undergoing a final biological death. Eschatological concerns were an essential feature of mystery cult ideology, with especial interest in narratives of katabasis, embodied no more clearly than by the Bacchic/Orphic gold lamellae.¹³⁵ The tablets, whose archaeological context is consistently funerary, seem to have served as a *Totenpass*, ensuring an easy passage of the deceased into the pleasant areas of the Underworld. The majority of the tablets display inscriptions; the shortest of these displays the name of the deceased or the title 'initiate' (μύστης), a kind of passport identifying the deceased to the chthonic deities to whom the tablet was to be presented. The tablets have been found at various sites throughout the Mediterranean, including Crete and Southern Italy, at Hipponion and Thurii; the majority date from the 4th to the 1st centuries BCE.

The longer of these display fragments of a katabasis poem attributed to Orpheus largely in hexametric verse, believed by many scholars to have been transmitted orally. The poem describes for the deceased the topography of the Underworld and gives instructions for its navigation, along with sacred *symbola* by which the deceased might gain entry into the 'glens and meadows of Persephone.' The tablets are formulaic; Zuntz and Edmonds group the tablets according to formula ('A' group, 'B' group, vel. sim.). The general consistency of some of the formulae has prompted scholars to reconstruct an Ur-poem in which the individual lamellae participate, displaying several complete verses as an excerpt of the complete poem; scholars

¹³⁵ References to the tablets throughout this chapter will follow the classification system of Edmonds 2011; see pp. 49-50 for bibliography on principal editions of individual tablets. His numbering system is an expansion of that of Zuntz 1971.

posit a system of tablet production that relies on oral transmission of the complete Ur-poem, known to itinerant cult priests. The tablets discuss important cultic deities, such as Bacchus and Persephone, by which scholars have concluded that they are important objects for initiates into the rites of these deities.

This chapter will consider seriously the availability of the Bacchic/Orphic gold lamellae as elements in Roman poetry, both at the level of intertextual relationships with the katabasis poem inscribed on the tablets, and with the abstract concept of gold leaves that serve as an Underworld *Totenpass*. Foundational to this goal is confirmation of the availability of the Bacchic/Orphic gold lamellae to poets and readers of the Augustan period. Presently, we have no tablets that can be located at Rome dating to this period; nor do we have explicit or direct literary testimony discussing the gold tablet tradition from this time. While the state of our evidence thus does not allow for definitive confirmation, there may, nonetheless, be enough evidence for plausible speculation that there was familiarity with the cult gold tablet tradition during this period.

Three tablets in particular have enormous implications as evidence for the circumstantial case that the leaves were known to Romans of the Augustan period. The first to consider is tablet A5, whose archaeological context places it at Rome and which was produced for an elite Roman woman, whose name, Caecilia Secundina, is inscribed on the tablet. The tablet, however, dates to the 2nd century CE, setting it after the period we are considering; but, because it displays a formula consistent with the ‘A’ tablets from Southern Italy dating to the 3rd century BCE, we can reasonably posit a continuous tablet tradition spanning the time frame that includes the Augustan period. From this tablet, and the undeniably Roman name it displays, we can speculate about the

independent production of tablets at Rome after the Hellenistic period, suggesting that the tablet tradition flourished among the Romans.

We will also want to consider tablet B1. The tablet itself was produced in Greece, dating to the 4th or 3rd century BCE, but was discovered encased in the pendant of a golden necklace that is Roman, dating to the 1st century CE.¹³⁶ We can deduce from this tablet that Romans, certainly after the first century but perhaps in the span between the original production of the tablet and the dating of the necklace, were aware of the broader Hellenistic tablet tradition and recognized the soteriological value of the tablet, since its function encased in a pendant would have been as a charm to ward off misfortune.¹³⁷ The final tablet to consider is tablet E5, the archaeological context for which was a Roman cemetery; a bronze diabolon depicting Augustus found at the burial site allows for a secure dating between 20 BCE and 40 CE, again suggesting either the same practice of appropriation attested by tablet B1 or a Roman tablet tradition consistent with an earlier Greek tradition, as in the case of A5.¹³⁸ Such evidence gives us the suggestion of a tradition around the tablets among the Romans, who seemed to have understood the tablet texts and ideology established in Greek cults of earlier periods.

The cases that follow will hinge on a system of visual allusion that sees the lamellae as leaves of a tree. Where this identification is available is in the lamellae themselves, insofar as many of them are shaped like leaves, either myrtle, laurel, or ivy. Beyond visual recognition, confirmation of a consistent terminology by which the leaves were described and labelled is admittedly difficult to find. The lamellae are never discussed in ancient literature (perhaps a function of the secrecy of the mystery cults), leaving us without evidence for how and with what

¹³⁶ Smith and Comparetti 1882.

¹³⁷ Kotansky 1991.

¹³⁸ Gavrilaki and Tzifopoulos 1998.

terms the lamellae were conceptualized. Among the lamellae themselves, three almost certainly contain self-referential elements; the texts, however, are extremely difficult to reconstruct and most problematic precisely at these points. A5, the leaf from Rome dating to the 2nd century CE, is without visible lacunae and contains the phrase Μνημοσύνης τόδε δῶρον, ‘this is the gift of Memory.’ B1, the leaf from Petelia dating to the 4th or 3rd century BCE, contains the phrase [Μνημοσύ]νης τόδε [...], ‘this is the ??? of Memory(?)’ and scholars variously supply in the lacuna different terms, including ἔργον (‘work’), νᾶμα (‘spring’), νῆμα (‘thread’), ἱερὸν (‘sacred object’), and δῶρον (‘gift’). Though it is difficult to discern exactly what ‘this’ is, the phrase at the very least indicates a self-referential quality in the lamellae.

A third lamella, B10 from Hipponion, dating to the 5th century BCE, may prove more fruitful, containing the phrase Μναμοσύνας τόδε [...], ‘this is the ??? of Memory.’ Scholars again supply various terms in the lacuna, including ἐρίον (‘wool’), ἡρίον (‘burial mound’), ἔργον (‘work’), ἱρὸν (‘sacred object’), δῶρον (‘gift’), and two terms for ‘leaf,’ θρῖον and σρῖον (Laconian dialect for θρῖον). It is these last two suggestions that may serve us here. If either θρῖον or σρῖον can be read, the tablet would offer evidence that the lamellae were referred to as ‘leaves.’ In all of the cases here suggested, we should not assume that there is need for firm conclusion upon one option of those proposed in supplementing the self-referential lacuna; it seems more likely that various options were available as a part of a multitext system of referents for the lamellae, substituted at the discretion of the epigrapher, of which ‘leaf’ may have been one option among many.

In the absence of direct testimony, an indirect argument may be instructive. Faraone connects the lamellae to a passage from Plato’s *Charmides* (155e) in which Socrates discusses a

remedy for headache: a leaf (φύλλον) over which an incantation had been sung.¹³⁹ Given contemporary evidence for Orphic lamellae, both in the shape of leaves and of other shapes, Faraone reads the passage from Plato as functioning in a tradition of leaf amulets which protect the owner from death, among which he includes the Orphic lamellae.¹⁴⁰ This connection, however indirect, may bolster the argument that the lamellae were understood as leaves, and available to literature beyond the strict limits of religious material.

The argumentation will thus proceed with these basic premises established: that the gold lamellae display sections of a what is ultimately a complete katabasis poem, an Ur-poem that scholars have reconstructed from the various formulae and which was presumably transmitted orally, in addition to being available in sections as inscribed on the lamellae; that the gold lamellae were understood as ‘leaves,’ as if of a tree; and that this category of object was known to Romans of the Augustan period, as was the function of the object as a *Totenpass* with soteriological capacities.

3.1 AENEAS AND THE GOLDEN BOUGH

The Orphic overtones of the katabasis of Aeneas in Book 6 of Vergil’s *Aeneid* have been remarked by scholars since the 18th century thesis of Bishop Warburton; the most vocal proponent has been Eduard Norden in his commentary.¹⁴¹ This section will reconsider the question of Aeneas’ status as a cult initiate through an investigation of allusions to the Orphic katabasis poem displayed on the gold lamellae. Our first line of inquiry will focus on the figure

¹³⁹ Faraone 2009.

¹⁴⁰ Dickie 1998:58–65, argues for intertextual engagement between a poem of Philicus (*SH* 980.1–6) and the katabasis poem of the gold tablets through an unknown common source. At 69–70, he argues for a reference to the gold lamellae in an image from a poem of Posidippus (*SH* 705.5): γραψάμενοι δέλτων ἐν χρυσέαις σελίσι (‘‘writing on the golden columns of tablets’’).

¹⁴¹ Similar investigations include Luck 1973; Knight 1936; Horsfall 1993.

of the Sibyl, who serves as the hierophant and *mystagogos* guiding his way into the Underworld, and will reconsider the famed golden bough as an Orphic *Totenpass*. Aeneas' status as an initiate will reflect his status as an epic hero, and the ontological shift imagined to have occurred in the initiate through participation in the rites reflects the shift in characterization of Aeneas which occurs at the critical turning point of the epic.

3.1.1 *Sibylline Leaves*

Leaves are a recurrent image associated with the prophetic power of the Sibyl. Vergil first introduces the Sibyl in the words of Helenus, who, in the third Book, gives counsel to Aeneas along his journey from Troy. He describes the process by which the Sibyl prophesies, using leaves as a writing material (*Aen.* 3.441-52):

huc ubi delatus Cumaeam accesseris urbem	
divinosque lacus et Averno sonantia silvis,	
insanam vatem aspicias, quae rupe sub ima	
fata canit foliisque notas et nomina mandat.	
quaecumque in foliis descripsit carmina virgo	445
digerit in numerum atque antro seclusa relinquit:	
illa manent immota locis neque ab ordine cedunt.	
verum eadem, verso tenuis cum cardine ventus	
impulit et teneras turbavit ianua frondes,	
numquam deinde cavo volitantia prendere saxo	450
nec revocare situs aut iungere carmina curat:	
inconsulti abeunt sedemque odere Sibyllae.	

And when, having been brought there, you draw near to the town of Cumae, the haunted lakes, and Avernus with its rustling woods, you will see an inspired prophetess, who deep in a rocky cave sings the Fates and entrusts to leaves signs and symbols. Whatever verses the maid has traced on leaves she arranges in order and stores away in the cave. These remain unmoved in their places and do not quit their rank; but when at the turn of a hinge a light breeze has stirred them, and the open door has scattered the tender foliage, never thereafter does she care to catch them, and unite the verses; inquirers depart no wiser than they came, and loathe the Sibyl's seat.

We might consider more closely the content which the Sibyl inscribes on the leaves. Besides the prophetic *carmina*, Helenus says that the Sibyl sets on the leaves 'signs and symbols,' *notas et nomina*. The terms are left somewhat ambiguous, otherwise unelaborated in Vergil's text. We are not told further what kinds of symbols these are, or if the *nomina* that are inscribed may also be

interpreted as the names of individuals. These may, nonetheless, be evocative of the kind of written material found on many of the Bacchic/Orphic gold tablets, formed in the shape of leaves.

The term *notae*, which can signify secret writings, marks, and tokens, in meaning may roughly approximate that of Greek σύμβολα, enigmatic tokens or code words by which identification between members of exclusive secret groups, including mystery cults, could be confirmed. This concept is incorporated in the writing on the gold leaf tablets, themselves a kind of material σύμβολον identifying the deceased as part of the exclusive group of initiates. Tablet D3 contains a list of such code words: σύμβολα· Ἀν<δ>ρικεπαιδόθυρσον. Ἀνδρικεπαιδόθυρσον. Βριμώ. Βριμώ. εἴσιθ<ι> ἱερὸν λειμῶνα ἄποινος γὰρ ὁ μύστης. ΓΑΠΕΔΟΝ. (“Passwords: Man-boy-thyrsos. Man-boy-thyrsos. Brimo. Brimo. Enter the sacred meadow. For the initiate is without penalty”). We have at least one direct reference to mystery cult σύμβολα in Plautus *Miles Gloriosus* 1016: *cedo signum, si harunc Baccharum es* (“Give me the password, if you’re one of those Bacchants”). In the term *notae*, we may see a Latin approximation of the Greek σύμβολα inscribed on the gold leaf tablets, code words by which the initiate demonstrated his status as an initiate.

The term *nomina*, as well, might take its inspiration from the gold leaf tablets, if we take the term to signify proper names or other identifying titles. A large body of gold leaf tablets proclaims the names of the initiate with whom each tablet was buried. The ‘F’ group of tablets may be categorically described as those that display the name of the initiate exclusive of other writing, such as Philoxena (Φιλόξενα, F6), Epigenes (Ἐπιγένης, F12), and Phylomaga (Φυλομάγα, F3). One tablet of this group contains not a name, but merely the title ‘initiate,’ μύστης (F2). Two tablets display both the name of the individual and his status as an initiate:

Δεξίλαος μύστας (“Dexilaos, the initiate,” F4), and Φίλων μύστας (“Philon, the initiate,” F5). In consideration with these might be added those tablets with elaborated inscriptions in which the initiate is named, such as D4, in which the deceased identifies herself as ‘Archeboule, daughter of Antidoros, chaste initiate of Dionysos Bacchios’ (εὐαγῆς ἱερὰ Διονύσου Βακχίου εἰμί Ἀρχέβου[λῆ] ἡ Ἀντιδώρου); and those tablets in which the named initiate gives greetings to Persephone and/or Pluto, of which there are three (E3, E4 and E6).¹⁴² The sole tablet found in Rome includes the name of the deceased Roman woman Caecilia Secundina, transliterated into Greek lettering (Καικιλία Σεκουνδεῖνα, A5). Such tablets may very well serve as Vergil’s source for the image of personal names, *nomina*, inscribed on leaves by a vatic figure.

Additional features of Vergil’s description of the leaves may be suggestive of the body of gold leaf tablets considered as a whole. Beyond the *notae* and *nomina* discussed above, we are told that *carmina* are inscribed on the leaves, as well. In the context of the Sibyl, these *carmina* will have been understood as the versified prophecies of the famed seer, prophecies given in enigmatic rhetoric with hidden meaning to be deciphered. By both of these features, the Sibylline leaves can be likened to the gold leaf tablets and the texts inscribed on them, insofar as those tablets which are not mimetic, believed by some scholars to reproduce the scripts uttered by initiates during the rites, are hexametric and by the katabatic content evocative of this genre of epic poetry; they are enigmatic insofar as they reveal to the initiate the hidden truths concerning the Underworld which were revealed during the rites.

Vergil explains that the leaves are set in order (*digerit in numerum*), which are then scattered by the wind entering the cavern, setting them out of order (*ab origine*). We may press

¹⁴² The full texts are as follows: Φιλίστη Φερσεφόνη χαίρειν (“Philiste to Persephone, hail,” E3); Φερσεφόνη Ποσειδίππος μύστης εὐσεβής (“To Persephone, Poseidippos the pious initiate,” E4); Φιλωτήρα τῷ Δεσπ<ό>τε<ι>{α} χέρε<ν> ΕΙΜΩ (“Philotera to the Mistress, hail,” E6).

the significance of the image for its implications for the Sibyl's leaves. That the leaves have a set order that is then disturbed suggests a continuous text which spans from leaf to leaf, not least of all because the phrase *in ordinem* frequently occurs in Latin proems to indicate that the poet will progress sequentially through his narrative. The implication is that one leaf reads seamlessly into the next, and so on and so forth, confirmed in the phrase *iungere carmina*. Again, we may find the origin for this description, of a continuous poetic text written out on separate leaves which are united or dispersed, in the model of the gold leaf tablets. Various scholars see the different formulae of the gold leaf tablets, some of which describe the thirst of the initiate, others of which describe the topography of the Underworld, among other formulae, as offering complementary narratives of death and the descent into Hades.¹⁴³ Many of these go so far as to set the varying formulae in order as one continuous Ur-text, describing the katabasis of the deceased initiate. In any case, the varying formulae can be read together with a certain measure of internal consistency, suggesting a coherent eschatological system in which they all seem to participate; and in fact, the abbreviated nature of the tablets, due to limitations of space for the inscriptions, relies on an allusive model by which any excerpt of the poem invokes the poem as a whole, thus activating its soteriological force. Though we cannot confirm the content of these leaves in Vergil's epic beyond the somewhat vague term *carmina*, that these are the leaves of the Sibyl may be suggestive of katabatic significance, since she is the figure who will be responsible in Book 6 for guiding Aeneas through the Underworld. If not in content, in conception as complementary verses which in a fixed order display one continuous poem of enigmatic content they share features with the gold leaf tablets as a body.

¹⁴³ Riedweg 2011; Janko 2016.

The final image of the passage incorporates the concept of exclusivity commonplace in rhetoric concerning the mysteries: *inconsulti abeunt sedemque odere Sibyllae* (“inquirers depart no wiser than they came, and loathe the Sibyl’s seat”). The verse describes a group of supplicants who leave the Sibyl without having received the consultation which they originally sought out (*inconsulti*), presumably due to confusion concerning the verses inscribed by the Sibyl on the leaves, whose meaning is obfuscated when disordered by the wind. The term *inconsulti*, and the implication of an opposite group who are able to successfully receive counsel from the Sibyl, may reflect cult binaries across exclusive access to space and language which we have already reviewed, as in the case of the βέβηλο/*profani* of *OF* 1 A/B B and the pair of blessed and unblessed of the *makarismos* formula.

Vergil elsewhere reiterates this concept of exclusivity mapped onto Underworld topography in the words of both the Sibyl and Anchises. The Sibyl tells Aeneas that few are the men who descend from the Underworld and then return (*Aen.* 6.129-31): *pauci, quos aequus amavit | Iuppiter aut ardens evexit ad aethera virtus, | dis geniti potuere* (“Some few, whom kindly Jupiter has loved, or shining worth uplifted to heaven, sons of the gods, have availed”). Anchises uses similar phrasing when distinguishing between those who reach the fields of Elysium in Vergil’s Underworld (*Aen.* 6.744): *pauci laeta arva tenemus* (“a few of us possess the blissful fields”). The Vergilian locutions evoke a famous Orphic phrase cited in Plato’s *Phaedo* (69c-d):¹⁴⁴ νερθηκοφόροι μὲν πολλοί, βάκχοι δέ τε παῦροι (“Many are the thyrsus-bearers, but few are Bacchoi”).¹⁴⁵ And in fact, an articulation of exclusivity of understanding hierophantic

¹⁴⁴ The passage in its entirety has been discussed already on p. 69.

¹⁴⁵ We may consider in conjunction with the rhetoric of exclusivity discussed around the Vergilian Underworld the evidence for burial plots exclusively reserved for initiates, one of which could be found at Cumae. A 5th century inscription reads (Solokowski, *LSCG* Suppl. 120): οὐ θέμις ἐνταῦθα κεωσθαι εἰ μὴ τὸν βεβαχχευμένονω (“No one may be buried here, apart from he who is initiated in the cult of Bacchus”). For a summary, see Dickie 1998:63.

speech is given at various points in the Derveni Papyrus. An extended discursus on participation in cult rites describes the case of those who leave without having attained true knowledge (col.

20.3-12):¹⁴⁶

τέχνημ ποιούμενου τὰ ἱερά, οὔτοι ἄξιοι θαυμάζεσθαι καὶ οἰκτε[ί]ρεσθαι, θαυμάζεσθαι μὲν ὅτι δοκοῦντες πρότερον ἢ ἐπιτελέσθαι εἰδήσειν ἀπέρχονται ἐπι- τελέσαντες πρὶν εἰδέναι οὐδ' ἐπανερόμενοι ὥσπερ ὡς εἰδότες τι ὧν εἶδον ἢ ἤκουσαν ἢ ἔμαθον· [οἰ]κτε<ί>ρεσθαι δὲ ὅτι οὐκ ἄρκεῖ σφιν τὴν δαπάνην προανηλῶσθαι ἀλλὰ καὶ τῆς γνώμης στερόμενοι προσαπέρχονται. πρὶμ μὲν τὰ [ι]ερά ἐπιτελέσαι ἐλπίζον[τε]ς εἰδήσειν ἐπ[ιτελέσ]αντ[ε]ς δὲ στερηθέντες κα[ὶ] τῆς ἐλπί[δος] ἀπέρχονται.	5 10
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But all those who (hope to acquire knowledge?) from someone who makes craft of the holy rites deserve to be wondered at and pitied. Wondered at because, thinking that they will know before they perform the rites, they go away after having performed them before they have attained knowledge, without even asking further questions, as though they knew anything of what they have seen or heard or learned; and pitied because it is not enough for them to have spent their money in advance, but they also go off deprived even of their judgement. Hoping before performing the holy rites that they will attain knowledge, they go away after having performed them deprived of hope too.

The author discusses an intentionality in the obscurity of meaning of Orpheus' verses, which he repeatedly describes as enigmatic and riddling (25.12-3): τὰ δ' ἐπὶ τούτοις ἐπίπροθε π[ο]ιεῖται | [οὐ β]ου[λό]μενο[ς] πάντας γιν[ώ]σκε[ι]ν. ἐν δὲ [τ]ῷδε σημαί[ν]ε[ι]... ("Those (words) which come after these he puts before (as a screen) not wishing all men to understand. In this verse he indicates...");¹⁴⁷ at col. 23.1-3, it is even intimated that a verse has been made 'misleading' and 'unclear' intentionally (τοῦτο τὸ ἔπος πα[ρα]γωγὸν πεπόηται καὶ τοῖς μὲν | πολλοῖς ἄδηλόν ἐστι τοῖς δὲ ὀρθῶς γινώσκουσι | εὐδηλόν ὅτι..., "this verse has been made misleading and it is unclear to the many, but to those who understand correctly it is clear that...").¹⁴⁸ The discussion by the Sibyl of the *inconsulti* reiterates the mystery cult ideology of exclusivity around

¹⁴⁶ Text and translation are those of Betegh 2004:42–43.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 52–53.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 48–49.

understanding of riddling language, distinguishing between those who achieve understanding of *hieroi logoi* and those who do not, a rhetoric of exclusivity which Vergil elsewhere incorporates into his text.¹⁴⁹

We may consider the Sibyl as a prophet of Orphic knowledge by the enigmatic and exclusive content of her prophecies. A closer look at the terminology with which her prophetic language is discussed reveals a theme of uncovering mystic truths in form of enigmatic and riddling language. This theme, as noted earlier, is characteristic of descriptions of Orphic poetry. Consider the following description of the speech of the Sibyl (*Aen.* 6.98-100):

Talibus ex adyto dictis Cumaea Sibylla
horrendas canit ambages antroque remugit,
obscuris vera involvens...

In these words the Cumaean Sibyl chants from the shrine her dread enigmas and booms from the cavern, wrapping truth in darkness...

The terms *horrendas ambages* suggest the kind of awe-inspiring riddling language ascribed to Orphic poetry, most emphatically in the Derveni Papyrus. Throughout the papyrus, various terms are used to characterize Orphic verse in this way: forms of αἰνίζεσθαι describe the actions of Orpheus four times (col. 9.10, 10.11, 13.6, and 17.13), and at col. 7.4-5, his poetry is called ‘something strange and riddling for people’ (ἔστι δὲ ξ[έν]η τις ἡ] πόησις | [κ]αὶ ἀνθρώ[ποις] αἰνι[γμ]ατώδης). The “Great Tablet” from Hipponion (tablet C) serves as an object lesson in precisely this kind of coded language; the tablet, a jumble of letters that are largely incoherent, is believed to have intentionally obscured the names of various cult divinities in a confusing jumble of incoherent sequences of letters (functioning much like a modern-day crossword puzzle).

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 362 n. 36, in reconciling an apparent contradiction noted by Tsantsanoglou (1997, pp. 118-9), nicely considers these formulations in light of Orphic formula 1 A/B: “A possible solution is that, on the author’s interpretation, formal, ritual secrecy is here replaced by another sort of secrecy: Orpheus’ riddling language excludes ‘those who are impure in hearing.’”

In the phrasing of *obscuris vera*, we may see just this kind of enigmatic language at play in the juxtaposition of somewhat dissonant terms.¹⁵⁰ This kind of word-play is evident in the inscribed words on the Orphic tablets of Olbia, where opposing terms are displayed next to one another, including the pair of truth and falsehood: βίος, θάνατος, βίος | ἀλήθεια | Διό[νυσος] Ὀρφικοί (‘Life, death, life | Truth | Dio[nysos] Orphics’, *OF* 463 T B); εἰρήνη πόλεμος | ἀλήθεια ψεῦδος | Διόν[υσος] (‘Peace war | Truth falsehood | Dion[ysos]’, *OF* 464T); Διόν[υσος] | [ψεῦδος] ἀλήθεια | σῶμα ψυχή (‘Dion[ysos] | Falsehood truth | Body soul’, *OF* 466 T B).¹⁵¹ Aeneas has already ascribed to the Sibyl the revelation of *arcana fata* (*Aen.* 6.72); the related phrase *fatorum arcana* is otherwise in the text reserved for the speech of Jupiter in Book 1 and that of Anchises in Book 7. From this evidence, we can generalize the speech of the Sibyl as enigmatic, riddling, and revelatory of what is generally kept secret - in short, akin to Orphic cult language.

The Sibyl participates in a conflation of different kinds of madness by which her vatic frenzy is approximated to Dionysiac frenzy through a system of shared terminology, to be discussed further in the following chapter. Her vatic possession by the god Apollo has a vividly visceral quality generally absent among Vergilian women who experience ecstatic divine possession (*Aen.* 6.46-51):

cui talia fanti
ante fores subito non vultus, non color unus,
non comptae mansere comae; sed pectus anhelum,
et rabie fera corda tument, maiorque videri
nec mortale sonans, adflata est numine quando
iam propiore dei.

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¹⁵⁰ Plato’s *Phaedo* perhaps also testifies to this, when Socrates discusses the language of those who established the mysteries as riddling (69c): καὶ κινδυνεύουσι καὶ οἱ τὰς τελετὰς ἡμῖν οὗτοι καταστήσαντες οὐ φαῦλοί τινες εἶναι, ἀλλὰ τῷ ὄντι πάλαί αἰνίττεσθαι ὅτι... (‘And I fancy that those men who established the mysteries were not unenlightened, but in reality had a hidden meaning when they said...’).

¹⁵¹ Horace includes a similar play on opposites in *Odes* 3.25.18-9: *dulce periculum est, | O Linaee, sequi deum* (‘It is an intoxicating danger, o God of the wine press, to follow your divinity’). Similar rhetoric is incorporated in Euripides’ *Bacchae* (66-7): πόνον ἡδὺν | κάματόν τ’ εὐκάματον (‘sweet toil and weariness happily unweariness’).

As thus she spoke before the doors, suddenly not countenance nor colour was the same, nor stayed her tresses braided; but her bosom heaves her heart swells with wild frenzy, and she is taller to behold, nor has her voice a mortal ring, since now she feels the nearer breath of the deity.

In keeping with the other frenzied women of Vergil's text, the Sibyl is modified with manic terminology, as *furens* at *Aen.* 6.100; and again at *Aen.* 6.262, where it is associated with speech, *tantum effata furens*; and, of the madness that possesses her, the cognate *furor* (*Aen.* 6.102). An earlier description of the Sibyl by Helenus has already established this characterization with the term *insana* at *Aen.* 3.443. The terms activate various types of mania simultaneously, at once Bacchic and vatic. Apollo is said by Vergil to ply her heart with a goad (*stimulus sub pectore vertit Apollo*, "so does Apollo...ply the goad beneath her breast," *Aen.* 6.101). Traditionally, the goad, *stimulus*, is the instrument by which Bacchus inspires maenadic ecstasy, as in Vergil's description of Allecto tormenting Amata (*reginam Allecto stimulis agit undique Bacchi*, "Allecto drives her far and wide with Bacchic goad," *Aen.* 7.405).¹⁵² The Sibyl is one of the few characters in the text whose activity is qualified by the term *bacchari*; the term is otherwise reserved for Fama (Book 4), Allecto (Book 7), and Dido (Book 4). Vergil's use of the term complicates the picture of vatic possession (6.77-80):

At Phoebi nondum patiens, immanis in antro
bacchatur vates, magnum si pectore possit
excussisse deum; tanto magis ille fatigat
os rabidum, fera corda domans, fingitque premendo.

But the prophetess, not yet brooking the sway of Phoebus, storms wildly in the cavern, if so she may shake the mighty god from her breast; so much the more he tires her raving mouth, tames her wild heart, and moulds her by constraint.

Here, the term *bacchari* seems fundamentally set at odds with the divine inspiration of Apollo.

The Sibyl 'raves like a Bacchant' through the cave as a form of resistance to unwilling

¹⁵² For the Furies wielding a 'goad' which induces frenzy likened to Bacchic frenzy, see the discussion of the suppression of the Bacchanalia by Livy (39.15.3): *non illos, qui pravis et externis religionibus captas mentes velut furialibus stimulis ad omne scelus et ad omnem libidinem agerent* ("[our forefathers appointed these gods to be worshipped, and] not those gods who would drive our enthralled minds with depraved and foreign rites, as by the scourges of the Furies, to every crime and every lust").

possession (*nondum patiens*) in an attempt to dislodge (*excussisse*) the god from her mind. One kind of frenzied activity (Dionysiac) is meant to put a stop to a different kind of frenzied activity (prophetic). It seems, however, that the behavior only allows the god increased access to the prophetess (*tanto magis...*), perhaps reaffirming the mutability of the different kinds of mania at play. Here, we see the conflation of the divine possession of Apollo, to vatic ends, and the ecstasy induced by Dionysus, a conflation not without precedent in Greek thought, in that there are early attestations of a connection between the two gods. The site of the most famous oracle of Apollo, Delphi, originally housed an oracle of Dionysus as well, and there is plenty of evidence to suggest worship of both gods at this site at various points in history;¹⁵³ in attestations of the myth of the dismemberment of the baby Dionysus Zagreus by the Titans, the remains of his body were supposed to have been preserved at Delphi.¹⁵⁴

The image of the leaves of the Sibyl which Helenus introduces in Book 3 is confirmed in Book 6, when Aeneas finally arrives at the cave of the Sibyl and requests the assistance of the prophetess (*Aen.* 6.74-6): *foliis tantum ne carmina manda, | ne turbata volent rapidis ludibria ventis; | ipsa canas oro* (“Only trust not your verses to leaves, lest they fly in disorder, the game of rushing winds; I ask that you chant them yourself”). Of this brief recollection of the leaves discussed by Helenus we may at the very least observe that Aeneas ensures that he will *not* be one of the *inconsulti* who leaves the cave of the Sibyl in the same state of ignorance as when he entered. The production *viva voce* of the prophecies of the Sibyl will allow the hero to receive the prophecies with a lesser degree of obfuscation than there would be, were they written on leaves.

¹⁵³ Cf. Dodds, *Euripides. Bacchae* on *Ba.* 298-301. The opposition between Apollo and Dionysus has been overstated by scholars and anthropologists, likely following the example of Nietzsche’s *The Birth of Tragedy*. On this, cf. Henrichs 1993; Detienne 2001.

¹⁵⁴ West 1983:150–52.

These prophetic leaves of the Sibyl are not the only Vergilian engagement with the gold lamellae which Vergil employs. The argument has been proposed that the celebrated and much discussed golden bough of Book 6 almost certainly takes its inspiration from the gold leaf tablets.¹⁵⁵ Scholarship on the golden bough has recontextualized the narrative displayed on the gold leaf tablets in the wider account of Aeneas' katabasis, observing the many points of overlap between the two Underworld accounts at the level of content and language. A brief review of that argumentation will be summarized here, against the backdrop of which my own further argumentation will be added.

Kayachev first points to the “physical resemblance” between the Golden Bough and the gold leaf tablets as items which are made of gold and shaped like leaves; he also analyzes their “analogous functions” as passports into the Underworld granting access to limited areas.¹⁵⁶ In addition, he points to a number of similarities between the two katabases in terms of narrative content. These include the resemblance of the ferryman Charon (*portitor*, *Aen.* 6.298), who acts as a guardian to the Vergilian Underworld entryway, with the guardians (φύλακες) whom the soul of the deceased encounters.¹⁵⁷ We may add that, for Vergil, this figure is a feature of the Orphic Underworld, insofar as he appears in the Underworld of the Orphic katabasis described in the *Georgics* (*portitor Orci*, *G.* 4.502). The guardians of the katabasis displayed on the gold leaf tablets ask the identity and purpose of the initiate coming into the Underworld: Kayachev identifies this feature in the words of Charon, *fare age, quid venias* (“tell me why you come,” *Aen.* 6.389), which he likens to the phrase *ὅτι χρέος εισαφικάνεις* (“by what necessity you have

¹⁵⁵ The scholarship on Vergil's golden bough has enjoyed an incredibly rich history. Cf. e.g. Hejduk 2013; Kayachev 2012; Pârvulescu 2005; Smith 2000; Weber 1995; Molyviati-Toptsis 1994; Clark 1992; Bremmer 1987:110–11; Luck 1973:155.

¹⁵⁶ Kayachev 2012:18.

¹⁵⁷ B1, B2, B10, and B11 (= *OF* 474 F B, verses 7-9; *OF* 475 F B, verses 9-11; *OF* 476 F B, verse 5; *OF* 477 F B, verses 5-6).

come,” B2.6);¹⁵⁸ one might further identify in this vein the opening of Charon’s speech, *quisquis es, armatus qui nostra ad flumina tendis* (“Whoever you are who come to our river in arms,” *Aen.* 6.88), which, though not directly a question, introduces the concept of doubt around the identity of the addressee, as a reflection of the tablet formula in which the guardians are quoted directly asking the deceased initiate his identity and origin, τίς δ’έσσί; πῶ δ’έσσί; (“Who are you? Where are you from?”, B9.3, as exemplary of the group).¹⁵⁹

Molyviati-Toptsis further sees in the divergence of two pathways which lead into areas of the Underworld segregated according to the morality of the dead souls a reflection of the gold leaf tablet formula specifying the location of the spring of Memory as either on the left or the right.¹⁶⁰ The description with which she concerns herself is as follows, spoken by the Sibyl (*Aen.* 6.540-3):

hic locus est, partis ubi se via findit in ambas:
dextera quae Ditis magni sub moenia tendit,
hac iter Elysium nobis; at laeva malorum
exercet poenas et ad impia Tartara mittit.

Here is the place where the road parts: there to the right, as it runs under the walls of great Dis, is our way to Elysium, but the left wreaks the punishment of the wicked, and sends them on to pitiless Tartarus.

Of these lines, she says (37): “In eschatological accounts stemming from Orphic-Pythagorean sources, it is, frequently, attested that the places of reward of the morally superior souls are on the right.”

There is perhaps another insertion of gold tablet eschatology in a different scene with Underworld overtones, which may offer additional argumentation for the intertextual

¹⁵⁸ Cf. also a variant phrase ὃ τι δὲ ἐξερέεις Ἄϊδος σκότος ὀφθέντος (“what you are seeking in the darkness of murky Hades,” B10.9). The formula is reconstructed in the lacuna of tablet B11 at line 11.

¹⁵⁹ B3-9, 12 (= *OF* 478 F B, verse 3; *OF* 479 F B, verse 3; *OF* 480 F B, verse 3; *OF* 481 F B, verse 3; *OF* 482 F B, verse 3; *OF* 483 F B, verse 3; *OF* 484 F B, verse 3; *OF* 484a F B, verse 3).

¹⁶⁰ Molyviati-Toptsis 1994. Cf. tablets B1-12. Torjussen 2008 rejects the argumentation of Molyviati-Toptsis.

relationship identified by Molyviati-Toptsis. The escape from Troy narrated by Aeneas in Book 2 has often been interpreted by scholars as a kind of Underworld scene, in which Aeneas and his wife, Creusa, are mapped onto Orpheus and Eurydice, and in which Aeneas makes his escape, whereas Creusa is lost along the way. In the tumult of the fall of the city, Aeneas suggests to his companions a location where they might make their way and seek refuge (*Aen.* 2.713-6):

est urbe egressis tumulus templumque vetustum
desertae Cereris, iuxtaque antiqua cupressus
religione partum multos servata per annos;
hanc ex diverso sedem veniemus in unam.

As one leaves the city, there is a mound and ancient temple of forlorn Ceres, with an old cypress hard by, saved for many years by the reverence of our fathers. To this one spot we will come from different directions.

The vivid image of the ancient cypress tree adjoining the temple as an important marker of direction has resonance with a similar image in the gold leaf tablets which give directions guiding the initiate away from the waters of Lethe and towards the spring of Memory. Two different formulae mention a cypress tree, each time in connection with a water source, but with conflicting instructions. One set of tablets¹⁶¹ contains the formula urging the initiate to avoid the water source that adjoins the white¹⁶² cypress tree (here, as exemplary of the formula, B1.1-3):

Εὐρήσσεις δ' Αἴδαο δόμων ἐπ' ἀριστερὰ κρήνην, | παρ δ' αὐτῇ λευκὴν ἑστηκυῖαν κυπάρισσον
| ταύτης τῆς κρήνης μηδὲ σχεδὸν ἐμπελάσειας (“You will find to the left of the house of Hades a spring and standing by it a white cypress. Do not even approach this spring!”). A different set of tablets¹⁶³ contains the formula in which the initiate requests to drink from the spring which is next to the cypress tree (here, as exemplary of the formula, B3.1-2): Δίψαι αὖτος ἐγὼ καὶ
ἀπόλλυμαι· ἀλλὰ πιέ<ν> μοι | κράνας αἰειρῶ ἐπὶ δεξιᾷ, τῇ<ι> κυφάρισσος (“I am parched

¹⁶¹ B1-2, 10-11.

¹⁶² Edmonds 2010; Guarducci 1972; Connors 1992.

¹⁶³ B3-9, 12.

with thirst and I perish. But give me to drink from the ever-flowing spring on the right, where the cypress is”).¹⁶⁴ Though the formulae give conflicting instructions, there is, nonetheless, a consistency in the image of the white cypress tree and its importance as a marker of location.¹⁶⁵ Aeneas’ injunction to his companions, hinging on the recognition of the cypress tree, in a context so marked with eschatological overtones,¹⁶⁶ perhaps takes its inspiration from this feature of the gold lamellae; this connection supplements the argumentation of Molyviati-Toptsis for the availability of gold leaf eschatology in Book 6.

In establishing a correspondence between the golden bough and the gold tablets, the question of writing, or at the very least, language, is of some importance. The objects might more easily be mapped onto one another if we had a sense that the golden bough contained writing, or at the very least could be associated with some form of speech, since so many of the gold leaf tablets are inscribed. We have seen already one body of Sibylline leaves which contains writing, though those are organic leaves, and not made of gold foil; and the immediate referent for these leaves will have been the palm leaves on which the Sibyl was said to have written her prophecies. Similarly, it is not clear of those leaves, beyond their use in prophecy, what further significance they might imply, since Vergil does not return to them; certainly, they are not explicitly connected with mystery cult.

On the other hand, the significance of the golden bough for Persephone in her capacity as a chthonic divinity is foregrounded quite directly. At *Aen.* 6.138, the Sibyl says of the golden bough that it is ‘sacred to infernal Juno’ (*Iunoni infernae sacer*); similarly, at *Aen.* 6.142-3: *hoc*

¹⁶⁴ Kayachev 2012:19 connects the cypress tree of the tablet narrative to the dark elm-tree in the Underworld (*ulmus opaca*, *Aen.* 6.283) and the injunction to stay away from the spring of forgetfulness to the approach of Aeneas and the Sibyl to the river Styx (*fluvioque propinquant*, *Aen.* 6.384).

¹⁶⁵ Edmonds 2010.

¹⁶⁶ Horace reiterates the funereal and eschatological significance of cypress trees (*Odes* 2.14.22-4): *neque harum quas colis arborum | te praeter invisas cupressos | ulla brevem dominum sequetur* (“and of all the trees that you cultivate none except the abhorrent cypress will follow you, their short-lived master”).

sibi pulchra suum ferri Proserpina munus | instituit (“This has beautiful Proserpine ordained to be borne to her as her own gift”). At *Aen.* 6.408, the bough is called a ‘venerable gift,’ presumably for Persephone, though this is not immediately specified (*venerabile donum*). That the golden bough is a gift for Persephone may have resonance with the gold leaf tablets, not least of all because in moments of self-referentiality they are called the ‘gifts of memory,’ as discussed above; those leaves which are directed to Persephone and/or Hades are to be interpreted as offerings to these divinities. For those tablets for which ‘gift’ can be read or which are directed as offerings to the chthonic deities, we can reconstruct, by generalization for the gold lamellae understood categorically, a rhetoric of offering to the infernal gods associated with the leaves.

As a relevant comparandum, here we may wish to consider a couplet of Propertius that may offer a model for dedications of poetry to Persephone. The poet imagines his own funeral and the offerings to be presented on the occasion (2.13.25-6): *sat mea, sat magnast, si tres sint pompa libelli | quos ego Persephona maxima dona feram* (“Enough, yes grand enough, will be my funeral train, did it amount to three rolls of verse for me to present to Persephone as my most precious gift”). Though not explicitly evocative of leaves, here again we see the term *dona*, and the motif of written poetic material as a gift offered to Persephone in death. Propertius may have a Hellenistic model in a fragment of Philicus, which may be the first verse of a hymn in honor of Demeter and Persephone (*SH* 676): τῇ χθονίῃ μυστικὰ Δήμητρί τε καὶ Φερσεφώνῃ καὶ Κλυμένῳ τὰ δῶρα (“these mystic gifts to chthonian Demeter and Persephone and Clymenos”).

In the discussion of the golden bough, a pun on *fari* and *fatum* may further suggest the association of speech and/or written material with the golden bough. Returning briefly to *Aen.* 6.408-9, let us reconsider the phrase referring to the bough as it is formulated here: *venerabile*

donum | *fatalis virgae* (“the awesome gift, the fateful branch”). The primary significance of the descriptor *fatalis* specifies the branch as an infernal object, associated with death and the Underworld, certainly fitting in light of its purpose in the context of the katabasis; it may also have implications for the bough as an object associated with destiny and fate, *fatum*, as we might expect from the stipulation of the Sibyl that he who pluck the branch be summoned by fate (*si te fata vocant*, *Aen.* 6.147). We may press the etymology of the term, however, to extract a deeper hidden meaning. We might trace its derivation through *fatum* (‘fate, destiny’) to the verb from which *fatum* is derived, *fari* (‘to speak’). The verb has a marked presence in book 6, where it is used even of the Sibyl’s speech, as at verse 46 (*talìa fanti*) and at verse 53 (*talìa fata*). The valence of the term *fatalis*, then, might be manifold, associating the bough not only with fate and the Underworld, but with speech (and perhaps written material), insofar as what is fated and what is pronounced (and eventually written) are one and the same.

Scholarship on the golden bough has focused on that bough which Aeneas plucks and wields as he enters the Underworld. A novel way of approaching the question of this bough is to ask, however, not of this particular golden bough, that which the Sibyl wields on behalf of Aeneas, but of the possibility of a series of golden boughs to which Vergil seems to allude and its implications for the bough which Aeneas plucks. The Sibyl implicitly opens up the possibility of a tradition of many golden boughs, and potentially many who wield a golden bough, in her description to Aeneas of his task in retrieving it (*Aen.* 6.143-4): *primo avulso non deficit alter | aureus, et simili frondescit virga metallo* (“When the first is torn away, a second fails not, golden too, and the spray bears leaf of the selfsame ore”). We may imagine, then, many golden boughs, plucked one after another, by various people with the credentials which the Sibyl specifies of Aeneas (*si te fata vocant*, *Aen.* 6.147). Should we imagine the bough functioning in this way, this

scenario would make the qualification of Aeneas, then, in plucking the golden bough, not at all singular, but would make the hero one among various select individuals who accomplish this task, a rhetoric by no means of absolute singularity, but of broader exclusivity and special status shared among a circumspect group. A reading which takes the most imaginative approach to Vergil's text, then, might consider how, when we are made to picture Aeneas finally placing the bough at the threshold of Persephone (*ramumque adverso in limine figit*, *Aen.* 6.636), Vergil has allowed for the imaginative possibility that his is not the only bough, but one piled with various others, a possibility which may be suggested in the terms *praecepta dona* in the injunction of the Sibyl immediately prior at *Aen.* 6.631-2: *moenia conspicio atque adverso fornice portas, | haec ubi nos praecepta iubent deponere dona* ("I descry the ramparts reared by the Cyclopean forges and the gates with fronting arch, where they bid us lay the appointed gifts").

Towards this end, special analysis must be made of a striking phrase which is placed in the mouth of the Sibyl concerning the golden bough (6.136-8): *latet arbore opaca | aureus et foliis et lento vimine ramus, | Iunoni infernae dictus sacer* ("There lurks in a shady tree a bough, golden in leaf and pliant stem, held consecrate to nether Juno"). The term *dictus* is of particular interest for its implications in light of cult literary dynamics. Certainly, it is a locution of the type of Alexandrian footnote which gestures towards a larger tradition outside of the immediate context.¹⁶⁷ The term may perhaps contribute to our understanding of this particular golden bough as just one of many such boughs, around which the tradition here alluded to by the Sibyl had developed. In any context, however, in which the rites of Persephone are involved, privileged speech is a marked concept, making the term *dictus* here of charged meaning. That the bough is *dictus* implies both a speaker and an audience, which, in the context of mystery cult, are mapped

¹⁶⁷ Cf. Austin 1986 ad loc.

onto the hierophants who divulge secret knowledge and the initiates privileged enough to hear it. At this moment in Vergil's epic, the Sibyl's description of a religious object sacred to Persephone, whose most important rites mandated secrecy, can be counted among religious arcana revealed to a select group of chosen individuals with marked qualifications. The climactic and dramatic moment in which the Sibyl produces from beneath her garment the golden bough to show the ferryman (*aperit ramum, qui veste latebat, Aen. 6.406*) is perhaps a refraction of the climactic moment of initiation rituals, in which a secret sacred object (according to the late account of Clement of Alexandria, a sheaf of wheat) was revealed to initiates from a hidden source. We may push the interpretation one step further to make the Sibyl here a hierophant and Aeneas an initiate, insofar as the information which she reveals to him concerning the golden bough may be considered otherwise privileged knowledge, the bough itself a composite of gold leaf tablets and sacred object central to the rites of initiation.

The bough is put to use in the persuasion of the ferryman Charon, again with rhetoric that may suggest a series of golden boughs. The Sibyl offers up the golden bough to Charon from under her cloak, saying *at ramum hunc...agnoscas* ("yet know this bough," *Aen. 6.406-7*). The term *agnoscere* may gesture towards an earlier tradition, since it can imply the recognition of something already known. This gift to the goddess presented to Charon Vergil qualifies as *longo post tempore visum* ("so long unseen," *Aen. 6.409*). Austin in his commentary insists on the futility of analyzing the phrase further, claiming "it is pointless to speculate on the existence of some earlier legendary occasion;"¹⁶⁸ despite his protestations, Vergil has already taken pains to set the katabasis of Aeneas in dialogue with earlier katabases through various references to other heroes who perform this same feat. Aeneas sets himself in contrast to these heroes in his appeal

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., ad loc.

to the Sibyl, citing Orpheus, Pollux, Theseus, and Heracles (*Aen.* 6.119-23). Charon will recall many of them as well (*Aen.* 6.392-4): *nec vero Alciden me sum laetatus euntem | accepisse lacu nec Thesea Pirithoumque, | dis quamquam geniti atque invicti viribus essent* (“And in truth it brought me no joy that I took Heracles on his journey over the lake, or Theseus and Pirithoüs, though sons of gods and invincible in valour”). Literary precedent makes Odysseus a relevant figure as well, the Nekyia being one of the most celebrated passages of Homer’s *Odyssey*.

Of course, Aeneas’ is not the first katabasis in Vergilian literature - that distinction belongs to Orpheus in the *Georgics*, as many scholars have already noted. Literary resonances establish the firm connection that the poet makes between these two katabases; for instance, of the return journey to the upper realm, the poet will repeat the phrase *superas ad auras* (*Aen.* 6.128; *G.* 4.486). Scholars have noted the concordance of three verses describing the various spirits gathered in the Underworld (*Aen.* 6.306-8 = *G.* 4.475-7):

matres atque viri defunctaque corpora vita
magnanimum heroum, pueri innuptaeque puellae,
impositique rogis iuvenes ante ora parentum

mothers and men and bodies of high-souled heroes, their life now done, boys and unwedded girls,
and sons placed on the pyre before their fathers’ eyes

The verses make clear that the Underworld which Aeneas finds is an Orphic Underworld; the group of souls amassed at the riverbank which Aeneas sees is the very group which Orpheus in the *Georgics* summons with his music, *cantu commotae* (*G.* 4.471). The striking and unusual resonance of so extended a concordance brings to bear on the passage of the *Aeneid* the power of the song of Orpheus.

Vergil’s text does not support the idea that we seriously regard any of these prior katabases in particular as possibilities for a previous occasion on which Charon saw a golden bough; but in any case, Vergil’s vague gestures towards a larger tradition of golden boughs allows for the possibility that such an object may have been involved in any given one. At the

very least, if we understand the golden bough of Aeneas as an object sacred to Persephone and intimately connected to her mysteries, such a revision of katabases will reintroduce the broader significance of katabasis as associated with mystery cult. Heracles was supposed to have been initiated into the Eleusinian Mysteries while in the Underworld on his katabasis. Odysseus, according to some versions of his myth, was an initiate into the Samothracian Mysteries. And, of course, the Orphic katabasis was a myth which played a central role in mystery cults associated with the bard.¹⁶⁹ By reading the golden bough as an Orphic *Totenpass* and the Sibyl as a *mystagogos* leading Aeneas through a katabasis, we can begin to extend our understanding of this critical moment in the epic through the lens of cult.

3.1.2 *Aeneas, the deceased initiate*

Our discussion of the golden bough and the significance of the katabasis in which it is an essential object has led us naturally to the figure whose status is most in question, namely Aeneas himself. Turning our attention to Vergil's hero, we may probe the implications of his status, and especially his qualifications as a cult initiate, navigating an Underworld landscape programmed along cult binaries between those who have earned a pleasant afterlife and those fated to suffer. In what follows Aeneas' status will be called into question and Vergil's use of cultic, and especially Orphic, terminology in crafting his Underworld, in which Aeneas must negotiate his status as an epic hero, will be examined.

Insofar as Aeneas wields the golden bough, he is like the deceased who is buried with the tablets and whose voice makes the appeal to his privileged status of the initiate granted access to the blessed areas of the Underworld.¹⁷⁰ Various tablets instruct the deceased on what reply is to

¹⁶⁹ For the confluence of hero cult and mystery cult, see Brelich 1958:118–24.

¹⁷⁰ For images of the initiate carrying sprigs of myrtle in procession, cf. Mylonas 1961:216, esp. on fig. 88 (the Ninnion Tablet).

be given to the guardians (φύλακες) of the Underworld who can grant or deny such access. A portion of the tablets includes one such code phrase by which the deceased proves his status as an initiate, the phrase Γῆς παῖς εἰμι καὶ Οὐρανοῦ ἀστερόεντος (“I am the child of Earth and starry Sky”),¹⁷¹ by which the initiate makes a claim to divine lineage. We may see the interest in Aeneas’ divine parentage throughout Book 6 as a reflection of this kind of appeal to privileged status, charged with new meaning in the context of katabasis and the overtones of mystery cult which accompany it.¹⁷² The tablets reiterate the divine status of the initiate who has received the rites; it is by proving this status that he receives admittance into the pleasant areas of the Underworld. Various tablets assert the transformation of the initiate from mortal to god with such phrases as θεὸς ἐγένου ἐξ ἀνθρώπου (“A god you have become from a man”)¹⁷³ and θεὸς δ’ ἔσσι ἀντὶ βροτοῖο (“a god you will be in place of a mortal”);¹⁷⁴ others will make claims for the initiates’ parentage as ‘the blessed race’ (γένος ὀλβιον) of the gods.¹⁷⁵ At two moments in the book, reference is made by the Sibyl to his divine lineage: at *Aen.* 6.125, he is called *sate sanguine divum* (“sprung from blood of the gods”), and at *Aen.* 6.322, *deum certissima proles* (“true offspring of the gods”);¹⁷⁶ these qualifications may reflect rhetoric of cult initiate ontology.

Aeneas himself gives voice to the appeal of the deceased initiate in phrasing which to some extent mirrors the formula cited above, when he requests that the Sibyl guide him into the

¹⁷¹ B1-12. Sacco 2001.

¹⁷² Faraone sees a literary reference to this formula in the characterization of Polyphemus in Euripides’ *Cyclops*. Cf. Faraone 2008:138–39.

¹⁷³ Tablet A4

¹⁷⁴ Tablet A1.

¹⁷⁵ A1, A3, A2. B9 and B11 have γένος οὐράνιον.

¹⁷⁶ Dido, too, will reiterate this aspect of Aeneas’ characterization in similar terminology (*Aen.* 4.10-2): *quis novus hic nostris successit sedibus hospes, | quem sese ore ferens, quam forti pectore et armis! | credo equidem, nec vana fides, genus esse deorum* (“Who is this stranger guest who has entered our home? How noble his mien! How brave in heart and feats of arms! I believe it well -- nor is my confidence vain -- that he is sprung from gods”).

Underworld (*Aen.* 6.103-123). The final argument which Aeneas cites makes an appeal to his divine lineage (123): *et mi genus ab Iove summo* (“I, too, have descent from Jove most high!”). The term *genus* echoes the tablets in another way, as well, in a formulation with a similar meaning to the ‘I am the child of Earth and starry Sky’ formula. As previously discussed, frequent appeals are made to the ‘heavenly race’ (γένος οὐράνιον) of the initiate, as at B9.4: αὐτὰρ ἐμοὶ γένος οὐράνιον (“But my race is heavenly”). In citing his qualifications for entrance into the Underworld in this way, and coupled with the image of Aeneas wielding the golden bough, Aeneas is imagined as an initiate preparing for a descent into the Underworld. It is precisely this kind of information, concerning his lineage, that the Sibyl, in her role as hierophant, will reveal to Aeneas, in his role as deceased initiate. The shade of Anchises, instructing Aeneas to make a visitation to the Sibyl, states at *Aen.* 5.737: *tum genus omne tuum at quae dentur moenia disces* (“and then you will learn of all your race, and what city is given to you”). The term *disces* reiterates the acquisition of knowledge that was characteristic of initiates receiving rites and ensuring a pleasant afterlife, knowledge which the rhetoric of the gold leaf tablets is believed to display.

Beyond the figure of Aeneas as an initiate, and the golden bough as a Bacchic/Orphic lamella, features of the Vergilian katabasis make use of the language and rhetoric of the lamellae and their eschatology. The appeal of the deceased initiate of the gold leaf tablets hinges not only on his self-identification before the guardians as one of the heavenly race of the gods, but also on his qualification as one who is ‘without penalty.’ One set of tablets reiterates that the initiate has paid the penance for unjust deeds previously done (here, taken as exemplary of the group, A3.4): ποινὰν <δ’> ἀνταπέτε<ισ’> ἔργω<ν ἔνεκ’> ο<ὔ>τι δικα<ι>ων (“Recompense I have paid

on account of deeds not just”).¹⁷⁷ Tablet D3 also proclaims the status of the initiate as one without penalty: ἄποινος γὰρ ὁ μύστης (“For the initiate is redeemed”). Scholars have added to these references to the payment of a penalty the additional testimony of the Orphic papyrus found at Gurob, containing at col. I.4¹⁷⁸ the reconstructed phrase ποινὰς πατ[έρων ἀθεμίστων] (‘penalties of ancient deeds’), and a fragment of Pindar (*OF* 443 F B) which discusses in connection with Persephone a ‘penance of ancient suffering’ (ποινὰν παλαιοῦ πένθεος). Scholars have connected these various remarks to the myth of Dionysus Zagreus, in which the baby Dionysus, here the son of Persephone, is dismembered and consumed by the Titans, from the remains of whom, smouldering at the thunderbolt of Zeus, humankind is sprung.¹⁷⁹ The ‘ancient grievance’ alluded to in the fragments cited above in connection with Persephone is her grief over the loss of her son, and the connection of humankind to the Titans implicates the initiate in culpability for this misdeed.

Elements of this rhetoric of paying penalty to the gods are scattered throughout the description of the Vergilian Underworld. A similar rhetoric of ancient misdeeds for which the soul must pay penance may be identified in the words of Anchises, explaining to his son the fate of souls in the Underworld (*Aen.* 6.735-40):

quin et supremo cum lumine vita reliquit,
non tamen omne malum miseris nec funditus omnes
corporeae excedunt pestes, penitusque necesse est
multa diu concreta modis inolescere miris.
ergo exercentur poenis veterumque malorum
supplicia expiunt.

When life has been extinguished with its final day, nonetheless all evil and all the plagues of the body do not entirely depart from the wretched dead; and it must be that, deep within, many of them, long hardened, should in marvelous ways become deeply rooted in their being. Therefore they are made to suffer punishments and pay penance for bygone sins.

¹⁷⁷ Cf. also *A2.4*.

¹⁷⁸ *OF* 578 F Bernabé.

¹⁷⁹ Rose 1943.

Here, Anchises speaks quite vaguely about the souls and their misdeeds, considered in general; to see a specific reference to the death and dismemberment of Dionysus Zagreus hidden in his words certainly overdetermines his meaning. Nonetheless, Vergil's rhetoric seems certainly inspired by the Orphic discussion of penalties and misdeeds at the level of language, Orphism being one of the many sources for the rhetoric of which Anchises' speech is a composite, particularly in the discussion of paying 'penance for bygone sins' (*poenis veterumque malorum*). And, despite absence of explicit reference to the myth, the myth of Dionysus Zagreus is perhaps subtly activated in the inclusion of the Titans among those who are punished in Tartarus (*Aen.* 6.580-1): *hic genus antiquum Terrae, Titania pubes, | fulmine deiecti fundo volvuntur in imo* ("Here the ancient sons of Earth, the Titan's brood, hurled down by the thunderbolt, writhe in the lowest abyss").¹⁸⁰ The broader significance of the ancient wrongdoing of the Titans to Orphic belief is a central element of the Orphic account of anthropogony, by which mankind, born from the ashes of the Titans, who are struck by the thunderbolt of Zeus, inherits the ancient wrongdoing and can make the claim to latent divinity. Anchises' speech, to which the term *pandere* (*pandit*, *Aen.* 6.723) gives the sense of revelation and a *hieros logos*, begins with a cosmogony (*Aen.* 6.724-7) and includes an anthropogony (*Aen.* 6.728-32):

inde hominum pecudumque genus vitaeque volantum
et quae marmoreo fert monstra sub aequore pontus.
igneus est ollis vigor et caelestis origo
seminibus, quantum non noxia corpora tardant
terrenique hebetant artus moribundaque membra.

Thence spring the races of man and beast, the life of winged creatures, and the monsters that ocean bears beneath his marble surface. Fiery is the vigour and divine the source of those seeds of life, so far as harmful bodies clog them not, or earthly limbs and frames born but to die.

The father of Aeneas includes details whose primary significance is Stoic and Lucretian, but whose coloring may allude to the Orphic anthropogony, as *igneus est ollis vigor et caelestis*

¹⁸⁰ Cf. Austin 1986 ad loc., who mentions in connection with these verses the myth of Dionysus Zagreus.

origo | *seminibus*. The ‘fiery vigour’ may reflect the thunderbolt which strikes down the Titans and may evoke the image of smouldering ash from which man is born; the phrase *caelestis origo seminibus* is reminiscent of the tablet phrasing of the ‘heavenly race’ of the initiate (γένος οὐράνιον) discussed in more detail above.

Generally, the issue of divine retribution is of central importance in the description of the Vergilian Underworld, as the Sibyl differentiates between the different areas of the Underworld and Aeneas marvels at the severity of the punishments administered. The Sibyl, demonstrating the various punishments exacted in Tartarus, describes the process by which she learned of the terrors of the Underworld (*Aen.* 6.559-65):

constitit Aeneas strepitumque exterritus hausit. ‘quae scelerum facies? o virgo, effare; quibusve urgentur poenis? quis tantus plangor ad auras?’ tum vates sic orsa loqui: ‘dux inclute Teucrum, nulli fas casto sceleratum insistere limen; sed me cum lucis Hecate praefecit Avernus, ipsa deum poenas docuit perque omnia duxit.	560 565
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Aeneas stopped, and terrified drank in the tumult. “What forms of crime are these? Say, O maiden! With what penalties are they scourged? What is this vast wailing on the wind?” Then the seer thus began to speak: “Famed chieftain of the Teucrians, no pure soul may tread the accursed threshold; but when Hecate set me over the groves of Avernus, she taught me the gods’ penalties and guided me through all.”

The passage brings to the foreground the fear of punishment in the Underworld¹⁸¹ and the mystery cult soteriology by which the initiate came to know what awaited after death. The final verse, in which the Sibyl describes the process by which she came to learn (*docuit*) what Tartarus contains, is reminiscent of the rhetoric of learning characteristic of the initiate and the revelation of sacred arcana by which the initiate attained salvation, which might have included the ancient wrongdoing of the dismemberment of the infant Dionysus Zagreus.

¹⁸¹ Cf. *P.Derveni* col. 5.6, ἐν Ἄιδου δεινὰ.

Recasting Aeneas in the role of deceased initiate allows for a reconsideration of another famous feature of his characterization, which attains heightened meaning in Book 6 in the context of katabasis and mystery cult. A frequent appeal of the initiate on the tablets is to his ‘purity’ (καθαρός),¹⁸² by which he proves himself worthy of access to the pleasant areas of the Underworld. This focus on purity as a distinguishing feature contributes to a rhetoric of exclusivity that sees itself subtly reiterated throughout mystery cult mythology, literature, and eschatology.¹⁸³ Vergil will construct a similar rhetoric of exclusivity based on qualifications of purity and impurity in association with the katabasis. The clearest indication of such occurs at *Aen.* 6.563, when the Sibyl identifies in response to Aeneas’ questioning that area of the Underworld reserved for those doomed to eternal punishment: *nulli fas casto sceleratum insistere limen* (“no pure soul may tread the accursed threshold”).¹⁸⁴ The term *castus* reflects a kind of special status by which different kinds of souls are granted or withheld access. The term is also applied to the Sibyl herself, who is *casta* at 5.735, in a description which involves access into Elysium (*Aen.* 5.733-7):

non me impia namque
Tartara habent, tristes umbrae, sed amoenia piorum
concilia Elysiumque colo. huc casta Sibylla
nigrarum multo pecudum te sanguine ducet.
tum genus omne tuum et quae dentur moenia disces.

For impious Tartarus, with its gloomy shades, holds me not, but I dwell in Elysium amid the sweet assemblies of the blest. Hither, with much blood of black sheep, the pure Sibyl will lead you; and then you will learn of all your race, and what city is given to you.

Here, Anchises in a dream describes the status of his soul to Aeneas as he enjoins him to come to speak to him in the Underworld. His brief eschatological description separates the various areas of the Underworld, demarcating them for certain kinds of souls along lines of religious purity:

¹⁸² A1-5.

¹⁸³ For preliminary remarks, see Molyviati-Toptsis 1994:41.

¹⁸⁴ This verse has been discussed already on pp. 20-1.

the soul associated with Tartarus is *impius* and *tristis*, whereas the soul in Elysium is *pius* (and perhaps *felix*, as the antonym of *tristis*), and *castus* by association with the Sibyl, who attains access as the guide. This rhetoric will be reiterated when Aeneas finally reaches the *sedes beatae* of Elysium in Book 6, in descriptions of various souls he encounters, which include *casti sacerdotes* (“pure priests,” 661) and *pii vates* (“good bards,” 662).¹⁸⁵ It is his *pietas* which the Sibyl offers up as proof of privileged status in conjunction with the golden bough when she and Aeneas encounter the ferryman Charon (6.405-7): *si te nulla movet tantae pietatis imago, at ramum hunc...agnoscas* (“If the picture of such piety in no wise moves you, yet know this bough”).

By examining the cultic strokes by which Vergil colors his description of the Underworld in Book 6 of the *Aeneid*, the cult rhetoric of souls contending with varying fates in the Underworld, and the qualifications of Aeneas, beginning from a reconsideration of the golden bough as a cultic *Totenpass*, we have observed at play in Book 6 the narratives of death and salvation essential to cult soteriological and eschatological claims, bolstering a line of scholarly argumentation that has attempted to establish this pattern in Vergil’s poetry, to varying degrees of success. Vergil has literalized the imagined death central to cult initiatory experience. In doing so, he evokes the figure of Orpheus, beginning with his own literary Orpheus, appearing quite famously in the Fourth Book of the *Georgics*. Vergil relies too on the figure of Orpheus qua cult hierophant, speaking to the initiates about the afterlife. In the context of cult, the ability of Orpheus to instruct the initiates on the Underworld and the deities residing there relied on his autopsy account of this region; his authority to speak on these matters is rooted in his own

¹⁸⁵ It may be of some relevance that Proserpina too is called *casta*, though in the immediate context the term refers to her role as a chaste wife of Dis (*Aen.* 6.402): *casta licet patrui servet Proserpina limen* (“Proserpine may in purity keep within her uncle’s threshold”).

katabasis in pursuit of his wife, Eurydice. Vergil succeeds in recreating the Orphic katabasis so essential to his myth in literature and that qualified that ancient bard as a religious authority in the context of cult. Such imagery, we have seen, determines some of the most iconic moments of the narrative, including the golden bough; at the very least, it offers paradigms by which Vergil can question anew the status of Aeneas as a hero and himself as a poet through a special connection to the hierophantic Orpheus.

3.2 PHYLLIS

Ovid will make the Orphic gold tablets an important model for the second letter of his *Heroides*, in which the abandoned Phyllis addresses her absent lover, Demophoön.¹⁸⁶ Phyllis' appearances in Latin literature are few;¹⁸⁷ it is quite distinctive that Ovid gives her such a prominent voice as the protagonist of her own letter. Ovid's approach to his Phyllis and his engagement here with cult material will be shown to be quite radical and to function by various compatible strategies. In this letter, Ovid incorporates the mythology associated with cult, the lamellae as material objects with a certain aesthetic, and the katabasis poem displayed on the tablets as a text. Like Vergil, Ovid's engagement with the lamellae displays a thorough understanding of all of their features, working in his text simultaneously as a productive model.

The opening of the letter and constant geographic reiterations place us firmly in Thrace, the mythical origin of Orpheus and a seat of mystery cult activity. For Ovid, the bard is intimately connected to the Thracian land and landscape: to cite a few examples, at *Met* 10.11-12, Orpheus is *Rhodopeius vates*; at *Met.* 10.50, *Rhodopeius heros*; and at *Met.* 11.2, *Threicius*

¹⁸⁶ Phyllis is like the Catullan Ariadne, suggesting the presence of the maenadic and Dionysiac. Cf. Fulkerson 2005:32–36. Fulkerson also reiterates her affinities with Dido and Medea. Hers is the latest in various recent studies on the *Heroides*; e.g. Spentzou 2003; Lindheim 2003:89–114, for a Lacanian reading.

¹⁸⁷ Further references to the myth of Phyllis in the Ovidian corpus include: *Rem.* 55; *Am.* 2.18; and *Ars* 2.353.

vates. The identification in the opening verse of the second of the *Heroides*, *Rhodopeia Phyllis*, places us in Thrace and thus brings the bard and his associations to our attention. Various geographic markers and varied references remind the reader throughout the letter of where Phyllis is: *Sithonis unda* (Ep. 2.6), *vada Hebri* (Ep. 2.15), *armiferam Thracen* (Ep. 2.84), the river Haemus (Ep. 2.113), *sacer Hebrus* (Ep. 2.114). The geographical location allows for direct association with the bard and with the religious engagement with which he was associated.

Religious and cultic imagery and language pervade the poem, bringing the religious associations of Thrace to the foreground and making of Phyllis and Demophoön almost practitioners in cultic practices. Verse 114 mentions the “sacred Hebrus river” (*sacer...Hebrus*); though *sacer* is a common epithet for rivers in poetry, nonetheless the qualifier has a particular application in the case of the Hebrus as the location for Bacchic cult worship.¹⁸⁸ Barchiesi notes its connection to Orpheus as well in Vergil’s *Georgics* (4.524).¹⁸⁹ Thus, the ‘sacred Hebrus’ is a location with distinct cult associations.

Thrace is described by eschatological imagery, pervasive in the gold lamellae. A particularly striking image is that of Thrace in lines 113-4: *qua patet umbrosum Rhodope glacialis ad Haemum, | et sacer admissas exigit Hebrus aquas* (“[Thrace], where frigid Rhodope lies visible near the shaded Haemus river and where the sacred Hebrus drives its waters cast headlong”). The adjectives *glacialis* and *umbrosus* place us in a kind of Underworld, frequently characterized as shaded and frigid. Cold springs are a prominent feature of the eschatological imagery depicted on the lamellae, where the souls of the dead must choose to drink from the cool

¹⁸⁸ Knox 1995 ad loc.

¹⁸⁹ Barchiesi 1992 ad loc.

spring of Memory with waters which flow headlong (πρорέον).¹⁹⁰ Thrace becomes a kind of living Underworld.

Elements of the mysteries at Eleusis are present as well, when Demophoön swears ‘by the sacred mystery rites of the torch-bearing goddess’ (*per taediferae mystica sacra deae*, *Ep.* 2. 42) that he will eventually return to Phyllis. These terms make direct reference to Demeter in her guise as the Eleusinian goddess with chthonic associations, since the adjective ‘torch-bearing’ places her in the context of the Persephone myth, the myth in which she searches for her lost daughter and which explains the origins of the Eleusinian mysteries. Knox notes that the adjective is Ovid’s translation of Greek δαιδοφόρος, which is only applied to chthonic deities, such as Hecate and the Furies.¹⁹¹ The term brings the eschatological beliefs of the cult into focus. Allusion to the myth of Demeter and Persephone calls to mind the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, a potent literary source for Ovid, who will make use of the model for the *Metamorphoses* and *Fasti*,¹⁹² and recalls another Demophoön, who in the *Hymn* is the child whom Demeter attempts to make immortal by burning in a fire and who is figured as the founder of the Eleusinian mysteries. Though the two Demophoöns are distinct, nonetheless, it would not be alien to Ovid’s poetic style to play on a conflation of these two figures who share the same name.

Phyllis too engages in religious activity at *Ep.* 2.17-8: *saepe deos supplex, ut tu, scelerate, valeres | cum prece turicremis sum venerata focis* (“Often, as a suppliant I honored the gods with prayers at the incense-burning altars, that you, wicked man, be well”). Knox notes of the apparent redundancy of *cum prece* and *sum venerata* a “tautology of the type common in religious formulae.”¹⁹³ Religious imagery again is associated with Phyllis at verse 115 in the

¹⁹⁰ Cf. tablets B1, B2, and B10. Cf. B3, B4, B6, B7, B9 for a similar image (αλειρώω).

¹⁹¹ Knox 1995 ad loc.

¹⁹² Cf. Hinds 1987.

¹⁹³ Knox 1995 ad loc.

image of *virginitas libata*, ‘virginity offered up.’ The metaphorical application of the term *libare* is striking, since the primary significance of the term is of ritual libations poured in offering to the gods. I refer to Knox: “The sacral imagery is sustained in *avibus...sinistris*, referring to ill omens observed in the flight of birds.”¹⁹⁴ Phyllis, in the references to ritual activity, becomes a kind of cult practitioner engaged in religious activity.

In fact, Ovid has already presented Phyllis in his poetry as a cult worshipper through simile, making of her a Bacchant in keeping with the rhetoric of maenads we have already observed. Ovid gives her story an extended treatment in the *Remedia Amoris*, a cautionary exemplum when he counsels the scorned lover against retreating to solitary places in search of relief (*Rem.* 591-608):

Quid, nisi secretae laeserunt Phyllida silvae?	
Certa necis causa est: incommitata fuit.	
Ibat, ut Edono referens trieterica Baccho	
ire solet fuis barbara turba comis,	
et modo, qua poterat, longum spectabat in aequor,	595
nunc in harenosa lassa iacebat humo.	
“Perfide, Demophoön!” surdas clamabat ad undas,	
ruptaque singultu verba loquentis erant.	
Limes erat tenuis longa subnubilus umbra,	
quo tulit illa suos ad mare saepe pedes.	600
Nona terebatur miserae via: “viderit!” inquit,	
et spectat zonam pallida facta suam,	
aspicit et ramos; dubitat, refugitque quod audit	
et timet, et digitos ad sua colla refert.	
Sithoni, tum certe vellem non sola fuisses:	605
non flectet positus Phyllida silva comis.	
Phyllidis exemplo nimium secreta timete,	
laese vir a domina, laesa puella viro.	

What, save the secret woods, were Phyllis’ bane? The cause of death is sure: she had no companion. She was going, as the barbarian throng is accustomed to go, when it keeps the triennial feast of Edonian Bacchus, with hair disheveled, and now, where she could, she gazed on the far-flung sea, now weary lay on the sandy ground. “Faithless Demophoön!” she cried to the deaf waves, and her sobbing broke the words she uttered. There was a narrow way overcast by the long shadows, by which she often betook herself to the sea. For the ninth time she walked down her hapless path: “Let him see it!” she cries, and turning pale looks at her girdle; she looks at the branches also; she hesitates, and shrinks from what she ventures, and is afraid, and sets her fingers at her neck. Then truly, Sithonian maid, could I wish you had not been alone: the wood had not shed its leaves and wept for Phyllis. By example of Phyllis fear too much secrecy, O lover pained by your mistress, O girl pained by your lover!”

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 133.

Here, Ovid reincorporates maenadic behavior and mania back into the rhetoric of amatory elegy by the mechanism of a conflation of mania that we will see in the next two chapters.¹⁹⁵ The poet, as in so many other cases, brings to bear the literary precedent of the Catullan Ariadne, first in the simile of the Bacchant, and in the image of the mistress abandoned on a shore as her lover departs on the sea: she gazes upon the water, lies upon the shore, and frames her plaint with the term *perfidus*. The connection is one somewhat predetermined mythologically, since Demophoön is the descendent of Theseus, the archetype of the perfidious lover, signaled explicitly by Ovid in the *Ars Amatoria* (3.460), when he designates Demophoön ‘heir to the crimes of Theseus’ (3.457-60):

Parcite, Cecropides, iuranti credere Theseo:
Quos faciet testes, fecit et ante, deos.
Et tibi, Demophoön, Thesei criminis heres,
Phyllide decepta nulla relictæ fides.

Trust not a Theseus, fair Athenian maid, who has so often the attesting gods betrayed. And you, Demophoön, heir to Theseus’ crimes, has lost your credit to all future times.

By Ovid’s own precedent and through an extended engagement with the model of Theseus and Ariadne, Phyllis is already in the *Heroides* a figure primed for Bacchic characterization and ready for cultic participation.

Images of death and funereal imagery are fixed in Phyllis’ imagination, a fitting reflection of cult soteriological preoccupations. Phyllis imagines various modes of death: poison (*venenorum sitis*, *Ep.* 2.139), the sword (*cruenta traiectam gladio morte*, *Ep.* 2.139-40), hanging (*laqueis*, *Ep.* 2.142), casting her body from the cliffs into the ocean below (*suppositas immittere corpus in undas*, *Ep.* 2.133).¹⁹⁶ The fainting spell which she suffers at verse 130 (*linquor et ancillis excipienda cado*) is a kind of death from which she revives; as Knox and Barchiesi point

¹⁹⁵ Michalopoulos 2008.

¹⁹⁶ On this passage, see Kauffman 1986:58.

out in their commentaries, *linquor* is often accompanied by *animo* to depict death, the soul leaving the body behind.¹⁹⁷ The tone of the letter after line 115 becomes markedly dark and mournful, filled with funereal descriptions. Lines 117-21 depict an infernal marriage, in which the Furies Tisiphone and Allecto preside as matrons (both famously agents of Bacchic frenzy, the former in the *Metamorphoses*, the latter in Vergil's *Aeneid*), the wedding hymn is replaced by a lamenting dirge (*maestum carmen*) sung by the ominous owl (*devia avis*) and the Bacchant ululation of Furies (*ululavit*), and the wedding torch is replaced by a sepulchral flame (*sepulcrali face*). Line 57 conjures images of the funeral pyre, when Phyllis laments having heaped up (*cumulasse*) her hospitality in addition to her marriage bed (*lectum iugale*). Knox notes that the phrase *lectum iugale* occurs only once before Ovid, in Vergil's description of Dido's funeral pyre in *Aeneid* Book 4, the most visible model of Bacchic erotic frenzy. Images of death and anxiety around death pervade the letter throughout.

A particularly striking image presents Phyllis after her death (135-8):

ad tua me fluctus proiectam litora portent,
 occurramque oculis intumulata tuis:
 duritia ferrum ut superes adamantaque teque
 'non tibi sic,' dices, 'Phylli, sequendus eram.'

The waves will carry my body cast forth to your shores, and I, unburied, will pass in front of your eyes: though you in your hardness surpass iron, and adamant, and even you yourself, you will say, "You, Phyllis, should not have followed me in this way."

Phyllis imagines her corpse without proper burial in contact with Demophoön, who is imagined as speaking to the dead. The couplets recall anxieties articulated in the lamellae and in cult beliefs more generally. The lamellae act as safeguards, ensuring that the souls of the deceased will have safe passage in the Underworld. The tablets are associated with religious rituals in which death is simulated, so as to prepare the initiate to undergo death a second time, the

¹⁹⁷ Knox 1995 ad loc.; Barchiesi 1992 ad loc.

biological death after an imagined death. These anxieties are reflected in the terms *proiectam*, of which Knox states, “the proper word for a corpse cast out without burial,”¹⁹⁸ and *intumulata*, “unburied.” The image of one’s unburied corpse, without proper funeral rites, is particularly disturbing in the context of cult religious belief, to which proper burial is a central concern.

Phyllis’ corpse, brought before the eyes of Demophoön, achieves almost a kind of dialogue with Demophoön, who speaks to her in death. In this image as well, the lamellae and the beliefs surrounding their application provide a kind of model. The lamellae were believed to speak for the dead in the Underworld, both on behalf of the deceased, in that they offer proof of the status of the deceased as an initiate, and as the deceased himself, since many of the tablets speak in the first person in the voice of the deceased.¹⁹⁹ The lamellae provide a voice to the voiceless in the Underworld, making appeal to Persephone and recreating the dialogue the soul must have with the guardians at the spring of Memory in the Underworld. Phyllis’ imagining her body in dialogue with Demophoön evokes the eschatological beliefs surrounding the lamellae as speaking on behalf of the deceased.

This effect is particularly potent in the context of the myth of Phyllis and in the context of the *Heroides*, a collection of letters. Material objects which speak for those who are absent are a central image to the maiden’s narrative:²⁰⁰ first, in the letter which Phyllis is writing to Demophoön to be sent after him in his absence; second, in the image of the casket given by Phyllis to Demophoön upon his departure for him to open, should he not return, a feature of the Phyllis myth outside the Ovidian tradition but surely known to him; and finally, in the image of Phyllis’ epitaph (*meo sepulcro*, *Ep.* 2.145) which closes the letter, indicting Demophoön of his

¹⁹⁸ Knox 1995 ad loc.

¹⁹⁹ Cf. for instance, A1 (*OF* 488 F B): ἔρχομαι ἐκ καθαρῶ[ν] καθαρὰ (“Pure I come from the pure”); B3 (*OF* 478 F B): δίψαι αὖτος ἐγὼ καὶ ἀπόλλυμαι (“I am parched with thirst and I perish”).

²⁰⁰ Cf. Hardie 2002.

wrongs against Phyllis after her death and serving as a constant record of the narrative of the maiden.

Themes of guilt and expiation, also pervasive in the tablets, can be read in the letter as well. Phyllis displays a concern for her death and for her status in dying a noble death, with particular reference to the myths associated with Orphism. As we have reviewed, the souls of the dead in the lamellae make an appeal to Persephone that they have been expiated of the original sin of *sparagmos* of her son Dionysus. The case of Lycurgus, who resisted the worship of Bacchus, referenced in passing at *Ep.* 2.111, reminds the reader of the punishment that awaits those who dishonor the god and demonstrates that Phyllis is also aware of the consequences of impious behavior.²⁰¹ Phyllis expresses concerns about her own status at death at *Ep.* 2.59-60: *mallem suprema fuisset | nox mihi, dum potui Phyllis honesta mori* (“I would have preferred that that night had been my final night, while I might have been able to die an honest Phyllis”). This particular anxiety is displayed on the ‘A’ tablets, where the soul of the deceased initiate makes a claim to its own purity, a purity which will ensure his salvation, *ἐρχομαι ἐκ καθαρῶν καθαρὰ* (“Pure I come from the pure”).

A particularly potent image in this respect is to be read in line 45: *at laceras etiam puppes furiosa refeci* (“But I even rebuilt in a rage the ships that had been torn apart”). The image evokes an earlier maenadic moment in Latin literature, in the episode discussed previously from Book 5 of Vergil’s *Aeneid* in which the Trojan women, stationed at Sicily, are driven to burn the Trojan ships under spell of Juno and Iris. Ovid here harnesses the destructive force of Vergil’s women for his maenadic *Heroides*. Barchiesi notes that the term *lacerus* is unusually applied to ships here, since the adjective more properly refers to body parts torn to pieces.²⁰²

²⁰¹ Cf. Barchiesi 1992 ad loc.

²⁰² Ibid., ad loc.

Phyllis imagines herself like a Bacchant (*furiosa*), but one who, rather than tearing apart, puts back together disparate parts, as if undoing the original sin of tearing apart the baby Dionysus for which the Bacchic/Orphic initiands must atone.

A literary precedent for her behavior can be detected in the literature associated with cult. The distraught Agave of Euripides' *Bacchae* suggestively asks after the limbs of Pentheus, in what Seaford in his commentary understands to be a gesture towards a complete tradition in which Agave attempts to reassemble the body of her son (1300): ἥ πᾶν ἐν ἄρθροις συγκεκλημένον καλῶς; ("Has it all been fitted together decently in its joints?"). The reassembly of disjointed limbs is a motif attested also in the late Hellenistic accounts of the dismemberment of Dionysus by the Titans. By one account, it is Rhea who rejoins his limbs (*OF* 59 I F B):²⁰³ <τρί>την δὲ τή<ν> ὅτε δι>ασπασθεῖς ὑπὸ τῶν Τιτάνων Ῥέ<ας τὰ> μέλη συνθε<ίσης> ἀνεβίω[ι] ("the third [birth of Dionysus] was the one when, torn limb from limb by the Titans, he regained life, after Rhea put his limbs back together"); by another, Demeter (*OF* 59 III F B):²⁰⁴

...τρίτην γένεσιν, καθ' ἣν φασὶ τὸν θεὸν ἐκ Διὸς καὶ Δήμητρος τεκνωθέντα διασπασθῆναι μὲν ὑπὸ τῶν γηγενῶν καὶ καθεψηθῆναι, πάλιν δ' ὑπὸ τῆς Δήμητρος τῶν μελῶν συναρμοσθέντων ἐξ ἀρχῆς νέον γεννηθῆναι.

...the third birth (of Dionysus), according to which they say that the god, being born from Zeus and Demeter, was torn limb from limb by the Earth-born giants and was boiled, but that when his limbs were fitted together again by Demeter, he was born anew as if from the beginning.

These various testimonia speak to a tradition by which not only is dismemberment or *sparagmos* a literary motif associated with cult in various capacities, but also putting back together again that which has been torn apart.

An Orphic gold leaf intertext may be read at verse 106: *ei mihi, si quae sim Phyllis et unde rogas* ("Woe is me, if you should ask who I, Phyllis, am, and where from").²⁰⁵ Again, we

²⁰³ Philodem. *De Piet.* 44 (p.16.1 Gomp).

²⁰⁴ Diodor. Sic. 3.62.2-8.

²⁰⁵ On deictic markers in this passage, see Spentzou 2003:134.

may think of a similar formula to be found in the ‘B’ group of Orphic gold lamellae, the formula $\tau\acute{\iota}\varsigma\ \delta'\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\sigma\acute{\iota};\ \pi\tilde{\omega}\ \delta'\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\sigma\acute{\iota};$ with almost no variation.²⁰⁶ The phrase signifies “Who are you? Where are you from?” and, in the eschatological scene depicted on the tablets, is the question asked of the deceased initiates as they enter the Underworld by the guardians who watch over its entrance. Should the initiate answer correctly, he proves his worthiness and is granted admittance into the pleasant areas of the Underworld, variously called the fields of Persephone and the resting places of the blessed. Phyllis’ imagined questions mirror the formula present in the lamellae and may point to anxieties about her own fate after death.²⁰⁷ Phyllis’ letter in some way serves as her own gold leaf, as she attempts to negotiate her death after Demophoön’s departure.

Here I will make the most bold suggestion that Ovid's *Heroides* 2 not only evokes an Orphic and cultic ambience through situational references and multiple verbal cues, but in fact participates in the tradition of Bacchic/Orphic lamellae in a striking metatextual play that recognizes the textual mechanisms of cult. A pun on the name of Phyllis may suggest a connection to the gold lamellae, which frequently took the shape of various kinds of leaves, including myrtle, olive, and ivy leaves. The name “Phyllis” is etymologically related to the Greek term φύλλα, meaning “leaf;” the pun is all but confirmed in the aetiology given to the Greek term φύλλα by Hyginus, which he derives from Phyllis’ name.²⁰⁸ The connection points to an alternate myth in which Phyllis is transformed into an almond tree, but one that loses its

²⁰⁶ These include tablets B3 (OF 478 F B); B4 (OF 479 F B); B5 (OF 480 F B); B6 (OF 481 F B); B7 (OF 482 F B); B8 (OF 483 F B); B9 (OF 484 F B); and B12 (OF 484a F B). The lamellae here specified are mostly from Eleutherna (with the exception of B9, possibly from Thessaly, and B12, from Crete) dating to the 2nd-1st cent. BCE. The close repetition of the texts from leaf to leaf, including the phrase here cited, suggests that they were formulaic texts typical of the leaves and not necessarily limited to the particular leaves that are extant; cf. the discussion at the opening of Chapter 3.

²⁰⁷ Knox in his commentary (1995) points to a well known Homeric formula as an intertext. Cf. Graf and Johnston 2013 for Johnston’s discussion of the relationship between the Homeric texts and lamellae.

²⁰⁸ Hyginus *Fab.* 59.2-3: *Phyllis autem ob desiderium Demophoöntis spiritum emisit. Cui parentes cum sepulchrum constituissent, arbores ibi sunt natae quae certo tempore Phyllidis mortem lugent, quo folia arescunt et diffluunt. Cuius ex nomine folia Graece phylla sunt appellata.*

leaves.²⁰⁹ The testimony of Servius, commenting on Vergil's 5th Eclogue, provides the alternate myth, and the commentator even claims that the transformation narrative is included by Ovid in the *Metamorphoses*, though no version of the poem exists which substantiates this claim.²¹⁰

Though the story is nowhere to be found in the *Met.*, references to Phyllis elsewhere in the Ovidian corpus suggest that Ovid was familiar with the variant myth: in the *Remedia Amoris*, Ovid imagines the trees weeping for Phyllis, casting off their leaves (*non flesset positis Phyllida silva comis*, *Rem.* 606), and in the third book of the *Ars Amatoria*, a similar image is depicted (*audi depositis silvas Phyllida flesse comis*, *Ars* 37-8). These brief references to trees losing their leaves in mourning for Phyllis surely show Ovid playing on the mythical tradition associated with the maiden. The evidence, while pointing to an aetiology for the Greek term φύλλα, as Servius suggests, implies the importance of the image of leaves to the myths surrounding Phyllis. The pun on her name, in a context suggestive of Orphism, perhaps gestures towards a visual pun on the shape of the gold lamellae, often crafted to look like leaves.

The gold leaf tablets would be fitting texts to associate with the *Heroides*, in which Ovid displays a fascination with texts, their materials, and the ability of text to speak on behalf of an absent interlocutor. Ovid's generic experimentation, combining epic, elegiac, tragic, and epigrammatic modes, exhibits a fascination with different modes of textual transmission, beginning with letter-writing, but extending far beyond the medium of ink upon paper. In *Heroides* 5, the letter from Oenone to Paris, Ovid depicts the trunk of the beech-tree, carved with

²⁰⁹ Spentzou 2003:xviii records a version of the myth in which Demophoön returns, and, upon embracing the tree, the tree develops "rich foliage."

²¹⁰ Servius, on Vergil *Ecl.* 5.10: "*Phyllidis ignes: Phyllis, Sithonis filia, regina Thracum fuit. Haec Demophoöntem, Thesei filium, regem Atheniensium, redeuntem de Troiano proelio, dilexit et in coniugium suum rogavit. Ille ait, ante se ordinaturum rem suam et sic ad eius nuptias reversurum. Profectus itaque cum tardaret, Phyllis et amoris impatientia et doloris impulse, quod se spretam esse credebat, laqueo vitam finivit et conversa est in arborem amygdalum sine foliis. Postea reversus Demophoön, cognita re, eius amplexus est truncum, qui velut sponsi sentiret adventum, folia emisit; unde etiam φύλλα sunt dicta a Phyllide, quae antea πέταλα dicebantur. Sic Ovidius in metamorphoseon libris.*"

the name of Oenone by her lover Paris, and a poplar tree, on which a song (*carmen*) has been inscribed, with the promise from Paris that he will return.²¹¹ In *Heroides* 13, a statue of Protesilaus made of wax (*cera*) acts as a substitute for Laodamia's absent husband, and the wax material is a medium which recalls the wax writing tablets upon which messages were written. In *Heroides* 20, Acontius asks Cydippe to inscribe a golden apple with their fate in a couplet.²¹² Various letters make use of epigraphic language, as various heroines imagine their own or other's epitaphs (Phyllis in *Ep.* 2 and Dido in *Ep.* 4, for example) in the form of a *titulum*. Phyllis' myth is already in terms of this theme, since, in the myth as it was known to Ovid, Phyllis is imagined as giving to Demophoön a casket with a message enclosed for him to open, should he not return.²¹³ The wide variety of materials and means of transmission included in the texts of the *Heroides* displays a fascination with the materiality of letter-writing and with different modes of communication, among which the inscriptions on the gold lamellae would make for suitable subject matter.

Set in an Orphic landscape and drawing on maenadic precedents, Ovid's Phyllis serves as the embodiment of the tradition of gold lamellae that seeks to address cult soteriological concerns and the preoccupation with salvation. By an intertextual relationship with the katabasis poem displayed on the tablets and hinging on a pun that connects the maiden to the lamellae

²¹¹ *Ep.* 5.20-1, 25-30: *Incisae servant a te mea nomina fagi | et legor Oenone falce notate tua...et quantum trunci, tantum mea nomina crescent. | Crescite et in titulos surgite recta meos! | Popule, vive, precor, quae consita margine ripae | hoc in rugoso cortice carmen habes: | Cum Paris Oenone poterit spirare relictas | ad fontem Xanthi versa recurret aqua* ("The beeches will conserve my name carved on them by you, and I am read there, 'Oenone,' characterized by your blade; and the more the trunks, the greater grows my name. Grow on, rise high and straight to make my honors known! O poplar, ever live, I pray, that are planted by the marge of the stream and has in your seamy bark these verses: 'If Paris' breath shall fail not, once Oenone he does spurn, the waters of the Xanthus to their fount shall backward turn.'").

²¹² *Ep.* 20.237-40: *Aurea ponetur mali felicitis imago | causaque versiculis scripta duobus erit: | Effigie pomi testatur Acontius huius | quae fuerint in eo scripta fuisse rata* ("a golden image of the blessed apple shall be offered up, and the cause of its offering shall be set forth in double verses: 'by this image of the apple does Acontius declare that what once was written on it now has had its fulfillment.'").

²¹³ Cf. Knox 1995 ad loc.

visually and materially, Ovid creates a narrative out of the stages of the initiate who first anticipates his death and then whose soul must navigate the Underworld. Phyllis is both her own gold leaf and the deceased soul, using language in its illocutionary capacity to achieve her own salvation in the face of death.

3.3 A VOICE FROM BEYOND: OVID IN EXILE

Like Phyllis, Ovid will find himself abandoned in an ‘Underworld’ landscape, without recourse in exile on the Black Sea. The previous sections have considered several ‘voices from beyond,’ speaking from the Underworld and attempting to achieve salvation: the voice of the deceased inscribed on the gold lamellae, making an appeal to the chthonic deities; Aeneas navigating the Orphic Underworld of Book 6 of the *Aeneid*; and the leaf-like Phyllis, abandoned in Thrace by her lover Demophoön. This section will briefly consider one more such voice, that of Ovid in exile; we will see that Ovid’s appeals for return to Rome rely on the cultic voice that seeks salvation in an Underworld context.

Ovid activates a sense of frenzy that is at once poetic, prophetic, and maenadic in the persona which he cultivates for himself in a position of exile. Already the landscape which the poet inhabits suggests that he align himself with Orpheus, since he finds himself in Thrace, the birthplace of the ancient bard, in a landscape which recalls the Underworld in its frigid temperature and persistent threat of danger. Ovid locates Orpheus in this landscape, the bard who has made the place famous (*Pont.* 2.9.53): *neve sub hoc tractu vates foret unicus Orpheus* (“beneath this [Thracian] sky Orpheus might not be the only bard”).

The very features of the landscape, in quite an unusual locution, are said by Ovid to ‘rave like a Bacchant’ (*Tr.* 1.2.29): *nunc sicca gelidus Boreas bacchatur ab Arcto* (“now Boreas raves like a Bacchant from the dry pole-star”). Ovid is perhaps capitalizing on Vergil’s use of the term

bacchari to characterize the action of the most insidious divine forces of his epic, such as the fury Allecto and the dread Fama, incorporating into his description of exile a destructive capacity that threatens to overturn nature itself. The subtle presence of Orpheus in the narrative, pervasive in any account that sets itself in Thrace, makes the threat of a maenadic landscape that much more acute. Ovid shows himself to be quite familiar with the account by which Orpheus meets a gruesome end at the hands of maenads, narrated at the opening of *Met.* Book 11; as himself a poet appropriating the Orphic ability to persuade chthonic divinities against death (exile being a kind of death in the Ovidian corpus), the maenadic quality of the landscape will have felt particularly threatening to him.

Ovid appropriates the role of maenad, embracing the destructive capacity, here, however, self-directed, which he acknowledges has led to his condition of exile (*Tr.* 4.1.19-30):

me quoque Musa levat Ponti loca iussa petentem:	
sola comes nostrae perstitit illa fugae;	20
sola nec insidias, Sinti nec militis ensem,	
nec mare nec ventos barbariamque timet.	
scit quoque, cum perii, quis me deceperit error,	
et culpam in facto, non scelus, esse meo,	
scilicet hoc ipso nunc aequa, quod obfuit ante,	25
cum mecum iuncti criminis acta rea est.	
non equidem vellem, quoniam nocitura fuerunt,	
Pieridum sacris imposuisse manum.	
sed nunc quid faciam? vis me tenet ipsa sacrorum,	
et carmen demens carmine laesus amo.	30

Me also the Muse comforted while on my way to the appointed lands of Pontus; she only was the steadfast companion of my flight – the only one who fears neither treachery, nor the brand of the Sintian soldier, nor sea nor winds nor the world of the barbarians. She knows also what mistake led me astray at the time of my ruin, -- that there is fault in my deed, but no crime. Well could I wish, since they were destined to work me harm, that I had never set hand to the holy service of the Pierian ones. But now, what am I to do? The very power of that holy service grips me; madman that I am, though song has injured me, it is still song that I love.

Ovid is most direct in his phrasing at verses 35-6: *nos quoque delectant, quamvis nocuere, libelli* | *quodque mihi telum vulnera fecit amo* (“I also find pleasure in my books though they have injured me, and I love the very weapon that made my wounds”). He goes as far as likening

himself to a Bacchant, making the madness which has caused his destruction a source of relief in the loss of senses he imagines of the state of maenadic ecstasy (*Tr.* 4.1.37-48):

forsitan hoc studium possit furor esse videri,	
sed quiddam furor hic utilitatis habet,	
semper in obtutu mentem vetat esse malorum,	
praesentis casus inmemoremque facit,	40
utque suum Bacche non sentit saucia vulnus,	
dum stupet Idaeis exululata modis,	
sic ubi mota calent viridi mea pectora thyrsos,	
altior humano spiritus ille malo est.	
ille nec exilium, Scythici nec litora ponti,	45
ille nec iratos sentit habere deos.	
utque soporiferae biberem si pocula Lethes,	
temporis adversi sic mihi sensus abest.	

Perchance this passion may seem madness, but this madness has a certain profit: it forbids the mind to be ever gazing at its woes, rendering it forgetful of present mischance. As the stricken Bacchant feels not her wound while in ecstasy she shrieks to the accompaniment of Idaean measures, so when my heart feels the inspiring glow of the green thyrsus, that mood is too exalted for human woe; it realizes neither exile nor the shores of the Scythian sea nor the anger of the gods, and just as it I were drinking slumber-bringing Lethe's draughts, I lose the sense of evil days.

A terminology consistent with different kinds of mania characterizes the passage (*demens*; *furor*). Ovid imagines himself like a Bacchant, but one whose ecstatic state is paradoxically a relief from woes and a source of tranquility, one in a series of paradoxes included in the passage. Ovid's poetry is both the cause of his present suffering, and its relief; the stinging wound which induces Bacchic madness is obscured by the very sensation of ecstasy; death, to be feared by all, and the forgetfulness which is permitted of the soul by the waters of Lethe, would be a relief to the poet in his present condition. Ovid has just likened himself to Orpheus, as well, who consoles himself with song following the loss of Eurydice (*Tr.* 4.1.17-8): *cum traheret silvas Orpheus et dura canendo | saxa, bis amissa coniuge maestus erat* ("While Orpheus was drawing to him the forests and the hard rocks by his singing, he was sorrowing for the wife twice lost to him"). Ovid, in one poem, is both Orpheus and Bacchant, again, to a certain degree paradoxically – at the furthest logical conclusion of the metaphor, the poet is both victim of *sparagmos* and enabler of that very destruction.

This particular characterization has a model in the poetry of Horace, where the poet likens himself to a Bacchant in a conflation of ecstatic frenzy and poetic inspiration.²¹⁴ The poet prepares to sing in praise of Augustus, calling upon Bacchus as a divinity of inspiration (*Odes* 3.25, here cited in full):

quo me, Bacche, rapis tui	
plenum? quae nemora aut quos agor in specus	
velox mente nova? quibus	
antris egregii Caesaris audiar	
aeternum meditans decus	5
stellis inserere et consilio Iovis?	
dicam insigne recens adhuc	
indictum ore alio. non secus in iugis	
exsomnis stupet Euhias	
Hebrum prospiciens et nive candidam	10
Thracen et pede barbaro	
lustratam Rhodopen, ac mihi devio	
rupes et vacuum nemus	
mirari libet. o Naiadum potens	
Baccharumque valentium	15
proceras manibus vertere fraxinos,	
nil parvum aut humili modo,	
nil mortale loquar. dulce periculum est,	
o Linaee, sequi deum	
cingentem viridi tempora pampino.	20

Where are you hurrying me, Bacchus, full as I am of you? Into what woods, what caves, am I being driven at such speed in a strange state of mind? In what grotto shall I be heard as I practice setting the eternal glory of peerless Caesar among the stars and in the council of Jove? I shall sing on a momentous theme, that is modern and has never yet been sung by another's lips. Just as the maenad, unsleeping on the mountaintops, stares in wonder as she looks out on the Hebrus and Thrace white with snow, and Rhodope recently traversed by barbarian feet, so I in this lonely place delight in marveling at the rocks and deserted woods. O lord of the Naiads and of the Bacchae who have strength to uproot tall ash trees with their bare hands, nothing small or in a low style, nothing mortal, shall I sing. It is an intoxicating danger, o god of the wine press, to follow your divinity, wreathing my temples with green vine leaves.

For Ovid, too, an appeal to poetic praise of Augustus is an important feature of cultivating favor with the emperor in a bid for clemency from his position in exile; such is the rhetorical strategy of the *Epistulae Ex Ponto* as a corpus. Ovid will reiterate his adherence to the emperor by imagining himself as a cult worshipper, but one who rejects cult deities in favor of worship of Augustus (*Pont.* 1.1.37-50):

²¹⁴ For the political implications of Horace's application of such imagery, cf. Batinski 1991:372–75.

Ecquis ita est audax ut limine cogat abire
 iactantem Pharia tinnula sinistra manu?
 Ante deum Matrem cornu tibicen adunco
 cum canit, exiguae quis stipis aera negat? 40
 Scimus ab imperio fieri nil tale Dianae;
 unde tamen uiuat uaticinator habet.
 Ipsa mouent animos superiorum numina nostros
 turpe nec est tali credulitate capi.
 En, ego pro sistro Phrygiique foramine buxi 45
 gentis Iuleae nomina sancta fero.
 Vaticinor moneoque: locum date sacra ferenti;
 non mihi, sed magno poscitur ille deo,
 nec, quia uel merui uel sensi principis iram,
 a nobis ipsum nolle putate coli. 50

Is there any so brazen as to force from his door one who shakes the ringing sistra of Pharos in his hand? When before the mother of the gods the piper plays upon his curved horn, who denies him a few coppers? We know this occurs not by order of the goddesses, yet the prophet has the wherewithal to live. The very power of the celestials stirs our hearts and there is nothing disgraceful in yielding to such credulity. Lo, I, in place of sistrum or hollow shaft of Phrygian boxwood, come bearing the holy names of the Iulian race. I am a prophet, an advisor! Give place to one who bears holy objects! Not by me, but by a mighty god that place is claimed. Because I have earned or felt the emperor's wrath, do not suppose that I would not worship the emperor himself.

Ovid here activates a cult rhetoric with political implications in negotiating his position in exile, having offended the emperor with his poetry. His supplicant status in exile is reframed as political allegiance, by which he might curry favor with one who could grant him clemency, much as the cult initiate makes an appeal to the chthonic deities for access to the pleasant areas of the Underworld.

In imagining himself as an initiate in cult rites of the emperor navigating a chthonic landscape, Ovid suggests the mapping of political language onto cult language. In fact, Horace offers one such model, by which cult secrecy is imagined as censorship (*Od.* 3.2.25-32):

est et fideli tuta silentio 25
 merces; vetabo, qui Cereris sacrum
 vulgarit arcanæ, sub isdem
 sit trabibus fragilemque mecum
 solvat phaselon: saepe Diespiter
 neglectus incesto addidit integrum: 30
 raro antecedentem scelestum
 deseruit pede Poena claudo.

There is also a sure reward for loyal silence. I will forbid anyone who has divulged the secrets of mystic Ceres to be under the same roof or to cast off a fragile boat with me on board. When slighted,

Jupiter often lumps the righteous together with the impious; rarely does retribution fail to catch up with the criminal despite her limping gait.

Horace sees in the cult profaner the potential for politically inflammatory speech, which would be met with the severe punishment of ‘Jupiter,’ a frequent poetic formulation for Augustus.

Ovid, in making his appeal to having committed no crime, frames his appeal with cult language of piety and impiety, his poetic transgressions imagined as *verba profana* (Tr. 3.5.45-8):

non mihi quaerenti pessumdare cuncta petitem
 Caesareum caput est, quod caput orbis erat;
 non aliquid dixi, velandave lingua locuta est,
 lapsave sunt nimio verba profana mero.

I have never sought to wreck everything by assailing the life of Caesar, which is the life of the world. I have said nothing, divulged nothing in speech, let slip no impious words by reason of too much wine.

Both Horace and Ovid map cult models of speech onto a political sphere. In the context of such thinking, the poet is a figure who experiences vatic frenzy as ecstatic frenzy; poetic censorship is analogous to cult silence, and the severe punishments associated with violating cult silence mirror punishments inflicted by the emperor against poets who displease him; the emperor himself becomes a deity of cult worship, available as such by the model of the recent innovation of imperial cult in the late Republican and early Augustan period. Such dynamics underscore Ovid’s poetic project of seeking clemency in exile, escaping an Underworld landscape from where the voice of the poets speaks as if from the dead.

This chapter has posited the availability of the Bacchic/Orphic gold lamellae for literary allusion, both for intertextual strategies drawing from the katabasis poem there displayed and as material objects with a unique aesthetic and serving a well-articulated function within cult eschatological and soteriological mechanisms. Nowhere is this kind of engagement more acute than in the case of Vergil’s golden bough in *Aeneid* 6, by which Aeneas gains entry into the Underworld and

proves his special status as a hero, and in the case of Phyllis in the second of Ovid's *Heroides*, serving as her own gold leaf negotiating her fate in the absence of her lover, Demophoön.

Engagement with the gold lamellae maps these narratives onto Underworld landscapes and brings to the narratives concepts of the power of language in a cultic context to give aid to the soul of the deceased and to effect important soteriological aims. This voice from beyond provides a unique mouthpiece for a certain kind of illocutionary force, by which a figure at peril can make a final appeal, as in the case of Ovid, threatened by a hostile landscape and foreign peoples in exile, appropriating cult dynamics for political ends.

Chapter 4. MAENADS IN EPIC, MAENADS AT WAR

A cursory glance across Augustan literary genres finds poetic texts riddled with maenads, the frenzied worshippers of Bacchus with a consistent literary rhetoric in antiquity. Conflation of maenadic mania with martial frenzy, the passion of the erotic relationship, and the divine inspiration of poetic and prophetic production allows the maenad to serve as an archetype for various female figures, playing varying roles defined according to the parameters of genre. This chapter investigates one of these avenues: the varying roles of the maenadic model and cult frenzy in epic poetics, demonstrating the place of the maenad and of maenadic frenzy as an epic generic fixture exemplified by such figures as the Homeric Andromache and the Demeter of the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*. A consideration of these models contributes to the integration of the figures and experiences associated with cult worship into discussions about distinctions of genre established in the poetry of the Hellenistic period and inherited by the Augustan poets.

4.1 CULT MOTHERS AND/AS EPIC MAENADS

Maenadic women in epic have an early and singular model in one of the most celebrated passages of Homer's *Iliad*, the anagnorisis of Andromache, wife of Hector, pictured weaving an elaborately embroidered cloak in a chamber of the Trojan palace during the duel of Hector and Achilles and temporarily unaware of his death (*Il.* 22.437-472). Upon hearing the lamentations of Hecuba and the other Trojan women, Andromache is said to have rushed through the halls of Priam's palace like a maenad, her heart shaken with grief (*Il.* 22.460-1): ὥς φαμένη μεγάροιο διέσσυτο μαινάδι ἴση | παλλομένη κραδίην ("So saying she hastened through the hall with throbbing heart, similar to a Bacchant"). The phrase μαινάδι ἴση ("similar to a Bacchant") introduces to the characterization of Andromache in her aggrieved state the ecstatic frenzy characteristic of a

worshipper of Bacchus and through the mechanics of simile allows for a conflation of different kinds of mania, since the frenzy which Andromache experiences is not actually the divine possession of the god Dionysus during his rites but a frenzy induced by the overwhelming power of grief over the death of a loved one. The description of the fainting spell of Andromache that shortly follows includes the vivid detail of the loss of the diadem that falls to the ground from her head, given to her by Aphrodite on the occasion of her wedding to Hector.²¹⁵ The discussion of this object and the wedding scene which it recalls subtly introduces into the picture of Andromache's frenzy another kind of mania, namely the mania felt by a lover for the object of desire.²¹⁶ The episode thus displays different iterations of mania which seamlessly shift from one to another, in the mania which is the love of a lover for the desired object, the mania of grief, and the mania of the maenad to which Andromache is likened.²¹⁷

A similar conflation of mania is displayed in a later Greek text, Plato's *Phaedrus*, in which Socrates distinguishes between, but ultimately reaffirms the affinity of, different kinds of mania, which are connected in various combinations at various points throughout the dialogue. The most explicit and extended discussion occurs at 244a-245a, in which Socrates, in arguing that madness induced by the gods produces the greatest goods for mankind, connects the mania felt by a lover for the beloved with the mania of such mantic figures as the Pythia and Sibyl, and the mania induced by the Muses. In the discussion of the last of these, Socrates subtly introduces into his discussion the mania of the worshippers of Bacchus when he states that the inspiration of the Muses induces a kind of Bacchic frenzy (ἐκβακχεύουσα, 245a3) in the soul of the poet. A related and

²¹⁵ Seaford 1993, esp. 115-25.

²¹⁶ See Panoussi 2003:106. The simile of the maenad in flight may be evocative of marriage insofar as "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." Panoussi also points to the frescoes of the Villa of the Mysteries in Pompeii, which seems to depict both Dionysiac themes and wedding imagery (107).

²¹⁷ Seaford 1994:330-38.

more succinct discussion is to be found at 265b, where Socrates lists four different kinds of mania and the gods associated with each one: the prophetic (μαντική) with Apollo, the ecstatic (τελεστική) with Dionysus,²¹⁸ the poetic (ποιητική) with the Muses, and the erotic (έρωτική) with Aphrodite.²¹⁹ These various forms of mania find themselves easily conflated and manipulated in Plato's rhetoric: the erotic mania, for instance, is explicitly connected with the ecstatic mania when Socrates claims at 253a that lovers are like Bacchants (ὥσπερ αἱ βάκχαι) and at 252d-e that the lover should worship the beloved as if the beloved were a god whose mystic rites required pious observation (ὥς τιμήσων τε καὶ ὀργιάσων); at 249d, Socrates uses initiation as a metaphor for the acquisition of knowledge by the philosopher, which he later conflates with the erotic mania of the lover; in a related discussion in the *Ion*, Socrates explicitly connects poetic inspiration with Bacchic frenzy (533e-534a). The *Phaedrus*, and its discussions of mania, will have penetrated the Roman literary world especially through the mediation of Cicero in his *De Divinatione*, where the discussion of poetic frenzy is most concrete and where Cicero all but codifies the term *furor* as the Latin equivalent of Greek μανία (1.80.37):

Atque etiam illa concitatio declarat vim in animis esse divinam. negat enim sine furore Democritus quemquam poetam magnum esse posse, quod idem dicit Plato. quem, si placet, appellet furem, dum modo is furor ita laudetur, ut in Phaedro Platonis laudatus est.

And poetic inspiration also proves that there is a divine power within the human soul. Democritus says that no one can be a great poet without being in a state of frenzy, and Plato says the same thing. Let Plato call it 'frenzy' if he will, provided he praises it as it was praised in his *Phaedrus*.

Cicero reaffirms the Platonic discussion of mania, and its Latin equivalent *furor*, as terms with broad semantic valence, applicable to different kinds of divinely induced madness, here with especial reference to poetic mania.

²¹⁸ On this kind of madness, see Linforth 1946.

²¹⁹ For a discussion of the first three of these, see Dodds 1964, chap. 3, "The Blessings of Madness."

The inclusion of the phrase μαινάδι ἴση, “similar to a Bacchant,” in the passage of Homer in fact will have transgressive implications exploited by Vergil and Ovid in the discussions of female frenzy in their epics. Maenadic worship of Bacchus was a phenomenon with a particular rhetoric in antiquity; one feature of this rhetoric emphasized location along a firm binary of within and outside city limits. Maenadic worship consistently occurs on mountain peaks,²²⁰ in forests, glens, and other shadowy and wild places, transferring the women who participate in the rites from the controlled confines of the domestic sphere outside the boundaries of home and city, as is evident in the words of the chorus in Euripides’ *Bacchae* (114-9):

αὐτίκα γὰρ πᾶσα χορεύσει--
 Βρόμιος ὅστις ἄγῃ θιάσους--
 εἰς ὄρος εἰς ὄρος, ἔνθα μένει
 θηλυγενὴς ὄχλος
 ἀφ’ ἱστῶν παρὰ κερκίδων τ’
 οἰστροθεὶς Διονύσῳ.

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Immediately the whole land will dance whenever Bromios leads the thiasoi to the mountain, to the mountain, where there waits the female throng stung to frenzy from their looms and shuttles by Dionysus.

This kind of rhetoric sets in stark opposition maenadic worship and domestic activity, figured by the looms and shuttles of weaving. In light of this opposition, a noteworthy feature of the description of Andromache rushing through the halls of the palace ‘similar to a Bacchant’ is the intrusion of an extradomestic and unregulated activity into an otherwise insulated and predictable space, made all the more poignant by the simple fact of Hector’s death immediately outside the notoriously well-fortified walls of Troy, beyond their safety (οἱ πόσις ἔκτοθι μίμνε πυλάων, ‘her husband remained beyond the walls,’ *Il.* 22.439). The same opposition of activities qualifies both the Homeric and Euripidean passages, in that the raving of the maenads is set in opposition to the traditional female domestic activity of weaving. The effect of Andromache’s description is a

²²⁰ Ibid., 270–82, for archaeological and literary testimony of ὀρειβασία and other maenadic practices.

heightening of a sense of lack of control and the introduction of an uncontrollable female force for violence into an otherwise insulated space, making the moment of Andromache's recognition all the more striking and dramatic.

Ovid will thematize the opposition of transgressive and domestic female behavior reified in the image of weaving and the loom in a brief episode from his epic *Metamorphoses*.²²¹ In Book 4 of his epic, the poet recounts the myth concerning the blasphemous daughters of Minyas, led by the sister Alcithoë, in which the sisters refuse to participate in the rites of the god Dionysus. The episode sequentially follows Ovid's narration of the myth of Pentheus, which has the effect of activating for the episode of the Minyeids not only the myth of the Theban king but also the allusive shadow of Euripides' *Bacchae*,²²² drawing attention to the many shared features of the various accounts.²²³ Like the Theban king, the sisters too deny the divinity and parentage of the god Bacchus and refuse to participate in his rites (*Met.* 4.1-4):

At non Alcithoë Minyeias orgia censet
accipienda dei, sed adhuc temeraria Bacchum
progeniem negat esse Iovis sociasque sorores
inpietatis habet.

But Alcithoë, the daughter of Minyas, denies that the rites of the god must be accepted, but still reckless she denies that Bacchus is the offspring of Jove and her sisters join her in her impiety.

An opposition is set between participation in the rites and domestic activity in the injunction of the priest of Bacchus, instructing the women of Boeotia to take up worship (*Met.* 4.4-10):

festum celebrare sacerdos	
inmunesque operum famulas dominasque suorum	5
pectora pelle tegi, crinales solvere vittas,	
serta coma, manibus frondentis sumere thyrsos	
iusserat et saevam laesi fore numinis iram	
vaticinatus erat: parent matresque nurusque	
telasque calathosque infectaque pensa reponunt.	10

²²¹ For the metapoetic significance of the motif of weaving in the episode, see Rosati 1999:241–48.

²²² For a complete catalogue of tragic sources for the Theban narratives of *Met.* 3 and 4, see Keith 2010.

²²³ The distinctive book opening *at non...* reinforces the distinction between the image of a pious Thebes which closes Book 3 and the narrative of the Minyeids at Book 4; and a clear allusion to the opening of Book 4 of Vergil's *Aeneid*, which also begins distinctively with *at non...* connects the Minyeids to another famously frenzied figure, Dido.

The priest had ordered the observation of the festival, asking for all female servants to be released from work, they and their mistresses to drape animal skins across their breasts, free their headbands, wreath their hair, and carry an ivy-twined thyrsus in their hand. And he prophesied that the god's rage would be fierce if he was angered. The young women and mothers obey, leaving their baskets and looms, and their tasks unfinished.

The domestic implements of baskets (*calathos*) and looms (metonymically invoked by *telas*) are substituted by the iconic appurtenance of maenadic worship, the thyrsus (*thyrsos*). The opposition between weaving, emblemized by the threads, *tela*, of the textile, and maenadic activity is perhaps predetermined by a cross-quantity bilingual pun between Latin *tela* and Greek τέλη, a term for rites; Rosati, in his commentary, sees in the lengthening of the final syllable in *telasque* a “frenetic, Dionysiac rhythm,” perhaps bringing the pun even more vividly to light.²²⁴ A similar strategy may be encoded in the term *calathos*, ‘basket,’ insofar as Callimachus in his *Hymn to Demeter* opens the hymn with the image of the basket brought in sacred procession of Demeter, using the Greek term of which the Latin *calathus* is a loan-word: τῷ καλάθῳ κατιόντος (repeated at verse 3, τὸν καλάθον κατιόντα, and again at the close of the hymn, verse 120, τὸν καλάθον ἄγοντι).²²⁵ Thus *tela* and *calathus* by differing mechanisms across language here serve as code words reflecting cultic engagement in a characteristically witty Ovidian wordplay that brings the image of women's work to the focus of the episode.

Participation in the rites entails a leave-taking of domestic activity so absolute as to extend even to slave women. Only the Minyids continue to pursue their weaving, scorning the worship of the god (*Met.* 4.31-5):

‘Placatus mitisque’ rogant Ismenides ‘adsis,’
iussaque sacra colunt; solae Minyeides intus
intempestiva turbantes festa Minerva
aut ducunt lanas aut stamina pollice versant
aut haerent telae famulasque laboribus urgent.

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²²⁴ Barchiesi and Rosati 2005:246.

²²⁵ Cf. 8/16/2017 5:12:00 AM

The Ismenides pray to Bacchus ‘Be satisfied with us, be gentle’ and they celebrate the rites ordained. Only the daughters of Minyas remain inside, disturbing the festival, with the untimely arts of Minerva, drawing out strands of wool, twisting the threads with their fingers, or staying at their looms, and plying their servants with work.

The image of proper domestic female behavior, generally a signpost for female (and especially wifely) virtue,²²⁶ here becomes recast as a transgressive and impious act against a god, in opposition to the act of worship.²²⁷

The conclusion of the myth, in keeping with the tradition of mythological deniers of the divinity of Dionysus, such as Pentheus and Lycurgus, is the severe punishment of the Minyeids by the scorned divinity, where again Ovid brings to the focus of his narrative the image of the loom. After a series of digressions, told through the mouths of the sisters as a means of entertainment during their toil,²²⁸ the narrative returns to the primary frame with the episode-closing punishment of transformation (*Met.* 4.389-98):

Finis erat dictis, et adhuc Minyeia proles	
urguet opus spernitque deum festumque profanat,	390
tympana cum subito non adparentia raucis	
obstrepere sonis, et adunco tibia cornu	
tinnulaque aera sonant; redolent murraeque crocique,	
resque fide maior, coepere virescere telae	
inque hederæ faciem pendens frondescere vestis;	395
pars abit in vites, et quae modo fila fuerunt,	
palmite mutantur; de stamine pampinus exit;	
purpura fulgorem pictis adcommodat uvis.	

The story was finished, and the daughters of Minyas still pressed on with their work, spurning the god and profaning his festival, when suddenly harsh sounds sprang up from unseen drums, pipes with curved horns sounded, and cymbals clashed. Saffron and myrrh perfumed the air, and unbelievably their looms began to grow like greenwood, the cloth they were weaving put out leaves of hanging ivy, part altered to vines, and what were once threads changed into tendrils: vine shoots came out of the warp, and clusters of dark-colored grapes took on the splendor of the purple fabric.

The term *profanat*, cognate with *profanus* at 4.390, recalls the Latin codification of one of the most recognizable Orphic formulae associated with the participation in secret rites, as we have already

²²⁶ Janan 1994:435–6 esp. n. 20.

²²⁷ Barchiesi and Rosati 2005 ad loc. Rosati sees here a reiteration of the binary between inside the home and worship outside the walls in the chiasmic repetition of syllables: *Minyeides intus* | *intempestiva Minerva*.

²²⁸ For the metapoetic implications of the passage, see Leach 1974:107–11. Scholars have noted the erotic theme in each of the inset narratives.

discussed in full.²²⁹ The term *profanat* applied here to the Minyids thus infuses the scene with the particular rhetoric of Bacchic initiatory rites more broadly, grouping the sisters together with those who are uninitiated and who will not reap the benefits of proper worship of Bacchus.

The transformation scene has overtones of an initiation gone awry.²³⁰ The loom and woven tapestry are the first to be affected by the god's wrath, and, in fact, are transformed into the very image of the god himself: the tendrils of the grapevine, clusters of grapes, and ivy were all plants symbolic of Dionysus and imagined as equivalent to him,²³¹ by extension here in a perverted image of divine epiphany which perhaps simulates the imagined epiphany of the god during the rites of initiation. The punishment of the sisters is signaled first by aural elements, the characteristic instruments of Bacchic revelry, such as the *tympanum*, the pipes (*tibia*), the trumpet (*cornu*), and bronze cymbals (*atera*). The dissonance described by *raucis sonis*, and the unseen quality of the instruments (*non adparentia*) are also evocative of initiatory experience. Accounts of initiation rites speculate that they were characterized by terrible noises and the manipulation of light and darkness, and what is seen and unseen; such features seem reiterated in the sensory details of Ovid's scene. What is said of the rites characterizes them as a disorienting sensory experience all towards the purpose of producing terror or awe in the initiates. In what follows, the daughters of Minyas, like their looms, will undergo transformation: the sisters become bats, echoing rhetoric of initiation which imagines the initiate as dramatically transformed, at times with animal imagery.

Ovid thus participates in a motif of epic maenadic behavior activated in the Homeric Andromache and integrated into the *Bacchae* of Euripides, which sets in opposition wifely virtue

²²⁹ See Ch. 1.1.

²³⁰ Variations on the myth which predate Ovid confirm the cultic overtones of the myth: Nicander (Book 4 in Antoninus Liberalis, *Metamorphoses* 10) and Aelian (*Varia Historia* 3.42) record the version of the myth that ends with the frenzied *sparagmos* of Leucippe's child by the sisters in a Bacchic frenzy.

²³¹ Cf. Eur. *Ba.* 284: οὗτος θεοῖσι σπένδεται θεὸς γεγώς ("He is poured out to the gods, himself a god").

as emblemized ideologically by the domestic sphere and iconographically by the loom and thread over and against a frenzied, uncontrolled expression of emotion manifesting in ecstatic worship of Dionysus.²³² While the maenadic characterization of the Homeric Andromache introduces cultic elements into a not overly cultic episode, Ovid, in his discussion of the Minyeids has brought the domestic sphere to bear on an overtly cultic context, mirroring to some degree this same tension in the *Bacchae* of Euripides.

Besides the weaving Andromache of Homer's *Iliad*, another female figure will offer a complementary model of maenadic frenzied flight in an epic register, in an archaic Greek text whose religious significance is more immediately at the surface and for which mystery cult imagery undeniably serves as literary topos. In the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, the goddess, in her relief over the recovery of her lost daughter and advancing to embrace her, is likened to a maenad rushing down from the mountaintops (385-6): ἦ δὲ ἰδοῦσα | ἦιξ', ἥύτε μαινὰς ὄρος κάτα δάσκιον ὕλην ("and when Demeter saw them, she rushed forth as does a maenad down some thick-wooded mountain"). Where Andromache's maenadic flight is the manifestation of her grief at the loss of Hector, here Demeter's maenadic characterization is the manifestation of her extreme relief at the recovery of her daughter Persephone. Her relief, however, immediately gives way to fear and concern, as her mother questions Persephone and requests that the maiden recount the story of her abduction and time in the Underworld. It is revealed, as Persephone speaks, that Demeter's concern

²³² Scenes of weaving may have had associations with Orphic literature more broadly. According to the testimony of Clement of Alexandria (*OF* 406 T, 407 T Bernabé), the fourth-century BCE writer Epigenes, in a discussion of poems ascribed to Orpheus, denies Orphic attestation of a poem with the title of *Robe*; but he quotes from a different Orphic poem various expressions related to weaving, including κερκίσι καμπυλόχοισι ("shuttle with bent conveyance") and στήμοσι ("warp-threads"). West considers alongside this testimony the episode of Persephone's abduction included in the Orphic *Rhapsodies*, in which the maiden is interrupted while weaving a flowery robe when she is carried off by Pluto; cf. West 1983:9–11. Such is the version of the myth described by Claudian in his *De Raptu Proserphina* (1.244-73), discussed by West at 256-7, where he also records elements of the weaving motif in the *Dionysiaca* of Nonnus, at the moment of the rape of Kore by Zeus in serpent form, the union the result of which is the birth of Dionysus Zagreus.

is not misplaced, since what follows is the lamentable realization by the goddess that her daughter will not be completely recovered. As in the case of Andromache, the force of the simile relies upon a conflation of different kinds of mania, the frenzied state of a Bacchant during the rites serving as analogue for an extreme state of female emotion, ranging from grief in the case of Andromache, to joy, in the case of Demeter.

The manipulation of the frenzy of Demeter along the broad semantic valence of mania that gives it an easy mutability can later be detected in the Callimachean *Hymn to Demeter*, which has an obvious intertextual relationship with the *Homeric Hymn*. Though Callimachus declares his intention to avoid the narrative of the rape of Persephone, a metapoetic rejection of the material of the *Homeric Hymn*, and chooses instead to honor the goddess with the story of her righteous anger against Erysichthon, the imagery of the *Homeric Hymn* is in play throughout the Callimachean *Hymn*. Here, Callimachus describes the grove sacred to Demeter thus (29-30): θεὰ δ' ἐπεμáινετο χώρῳ | ὅσσον Ἐλευσίῃ, Τριόπῳ θ' ὅσσον, ὀκκόσσον Ἐννᾶ (‘‘And the goddess loved the place to madness, even as she loved Eleusis, as she loved Triopum, as she loved Enna’’). The term ἐπεμáινετο (‘‘to be madly in love with’’) is cognate with μαινάς (‘‘maenad’’), and certainly Callimachus’ choice of verb is not without a subtle reference to the simile embedded in the *Homeric Hymn*, where the emotion of the goddess is conflated with Bacchic frenzy. Bringing the allusion even more forcefully to the text is the reference to Eleusis, since the *Homeric Hymn* describes the myth that serves as an aitiology for the mystic rites performed at this sacred site. Here, Callimachus has reconfigured the image of Demeter like a maenad embedded in the *Homeric Hymn*, in what is once again a conflation of different kind of mania, that of grief by means of the intertextual reference back to the *Homeric Hymn*, the ecstatic in the etymological wordplay on μαινάς, and the erotic in the immediate context.

These two female figures, the Homeric Andromache and hymnic Demeter, thus provide a model for female epic frenzy through the lynchpin of the figure of the ecstatic Bacchant and the frenzy associated with the worship of Dionysus. Various iterations of extreme emotional response find themselves conflated with Bacchic frenzy in Vergil's epic, with the same ease of mutability displayed in the Homeric and Platonic texts discussed above. The complementary images of the Homeric Andromache and the Demeter of the *Hymn* are conflated in the description of the grief of the unnamed mother of Euryalus, a young Trojan warrior killed along with his companion Nisus in their famous *aristeia* in Book 9 of the *Aeneid* (9.473-80):²³³

Interea pavidam volitans pennata per urbem nuntia Fama ruit matrisque adlabitur auris Euryali. at subitus miserae calor ossa reliquit, excussi manibus radii revolutaque pensa. evolat infelix et femineo ululatu scissa comam muros amens atque agmina cursu prima petit, non illa virum, non illa periculi telorumque memor, caelum dehinc questibus implet.	475 480
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Meanwhile, winged Fame, flitting through the fearful town, speeds with the news and steals to the ears of Euryalus' mother. Then at once warmth left her hapless frame: the shuttle is dashed from her hands, and the thread unwound. Forth flies the unhappy lady and, with a woman's shrieks and torn tresses, in her madness makes for the walls and the foremost ranks - she is heedless of the men, heedless of peril and of darts; then she fills the sky with her complaints.

Most striking in this description are the otherwise out-of-place details, most notably the image of the shuttle fallen from her hands (*excussi manibus radii*) and the thread which is unwoven (*revoluta pensa*), suggesting a vignette of domestic activity at variance with the martial context of the second half of the epic. Vergil's image closely mimics the Homeric scene of Andromache's anagnorisis, in the context of which these details are best to be understood, and they are not the only details which call to mind the celebrated Homeric passage. We may compare as well the dramatic disruption of weaving by a realization of grief; the description of the aggrieved woman running to the walls (*muros...atque agmina cursu...petit*, *Aen.* 9.478; ἔστη παπτήνας' ἐπὶ τείχεϊ,

²³³ For a sympathetic discussion of the mother of Euryalus, see Babcock 1992; Egan 1980; Pavlock 1985:220–23.

Il. 22.463); the speech of heartfelt lamentation that the mother of Euryalus utters, following the passage cited above (*Aen.* 9.481-97), evocative of the famous lamentation speech of Andromache (*Il.* 22.477-515); and, of course, the details which evoke Bacchic frenzy, such as the ‘feminine ululation’ (*femineo ululatu*),²³⁴ the ‘torn hair’ (*scissa comam*), which, in addition to being a common descriptor of women expressing grief, recalls the typical description of female Bacchantes as having hair that is loose or undone, and her dumbstruck state (*amens*). The mother of Euryalus is a refraction not only of the Homeric Andromache, but also the Vergilian Andromache, who appears in Book 3, acting as an intermediary for the allusion: both the mother of Euryalus and the Vergilian Andromache are characterized with the phrase *calor ossa reliquit* (9.475; 3.308) at verse-final position. The introduction to the episode, with the advent of the insidious Fama, also connects the mother of Euryalus back to another frenzied epic figure, Dido in Book 4, contributing to the development of a consistent Vergilian rhetoric of female frenzy and lamentation.²³⁵

While the description in its details most directly recalls that of Andromache in Book 22 of the *Iliad*, the precedent of the frenzied Demeter in the *Homeric Hymn* is most apt in terms of context and brought to bear as a secondary intertext, since the frenzy displayed by the mother of Euryalus is that of a mother for her lost child, and not of a wife for her husband, as in the case of the Homeric Andromache. It is perhaps pertinent in this capacity to observe that the mother of Euryalus is left unnamed; her role as archetypal *mater*, as she is called at *Aeneid* 9.474, 484, and 486, is precisely a reflection of the goddess Demeter, to the characterization of whom the role of mother is central, reflected in the frequently cited etymological derivation of her name from the

²³⁴ Cf. Hardie 1994 ad loc., where he notes that “the hiatus and quadrisyllabic ending suggest Greek verse technique;” Austin 1986 ad loc., comments on the onomatopoeic quality. In conjunction with this, we may observe the Hellenizing force of *scissa comam*, a retained accusative with a participle with a middle sense of the phrase.

²³⁵ Hardie 1994 ad loc., sees the mother of Euryalus as herself “likewise turned into an agent of Fama.” For a brief discussion of the connections between Fama and maenadic activity, cf. Hardie 2012:102. West 1983.

combination of Greek Γῆ (‘earth’) and Μῆτηρ (‘mother’), both in Greek sources, as in the Derveni Papyrus,²³⁶ and in Cicero’s *De Natura Deorum* (2.67): *nam ab illis quoque Δημήτηρ quasi γῆ μήτηρ nominata est* (“[The Greeks] in similar fashion have named her Dēmētēr, standing for Gē Mētēr”). The Vergilian passage thus relies on a conflation of the two complementary Greek epic models, hinging on the mutability of the varying kinds of mania at play and the availability of maenadic frenzy to epic as a feature fundamental to its depictions of women in heightened states of emotion.

This maternal characterization, however, is complicated by the “repressed Euripidean intertext” identified by Ellen Oliensis,²³⁷ in which the encounter between the mother of Euryalus and the decapitated head of her son (*Aen.* 9.465) evokes the dynamic between Agave and Pentheus at the climax of the *Bacchae*.²³⁸ Particularly useful towards a comprehensive catalogue of cultic aspects of Vergil’s depiction is where Oliensis sees *sparagmos* in the cry of lament of Euryalus’ mother (*Aen.* 9.490-1): *quae nunc artus avulsaque membra | et funus lacerum tellus habet?* (“What land now holds your limbs, your torn-off parts, your mutilated corpse?”).²³⁹ The mother of Euryalus, in her capacity as cultic mother, thus modulates between the two intertexts of the archetypal cultic mother established in Greek literature, the nurturing Demeter of the *Homeric Hymn* and the destructive Agave of Euripides’ *Bacchae*.²⁴⁰

²³⁶ *P.Derveni* col. 22.7 (*OF* 398 F Bernabé): Δήμητερ [Ρ]έα Γῆ Μητερ <τε καὶ> Ἑστία Δηιοῖ (“Demeter, Rhea, Ge, Meter, and Hestia Deio”). Cf. Diod. 1.12.4 (*OF* 399 F Bernabé = *OF* 302 Kern = Hecat. Abd. *FGrHist* 264 F 25): Γῆ μήτηρ πάντων, Δημήτηρ πλουτοδότειρα; also 3.62.7 (*OF* 399 III F Bernabé): καθόλου γὰρ ὑπὸ τῶν ἀρχαίων ποιητῶν καὶ μυθογράφων τὴν Δήμητραν γῆν μητέρα προσαγορεύεσθαι. Cf. Eur. *Ba.* (275-6): Δήμητερ θεά – γῆ δ’ ἐστίν. Cf. Orph. Hymn. 31.1: Γαῖα θεά, μήτερ μακάρων θνητῶν τ’ ἀνθρώπων.

²³⁷ Oliensis 2009:70.

²³⁸ This theme is also discussed briefly in Huyck 2012.

²³⁹ Oliensis 2009:70–72.

²⁴⁰ The two mother archetypes will in fact seem to be intimately dependent on one another, since the image of Agave is a secondary perversion of the primary image of the nurturing mother characteristic of cult and embodied by Demeter as mother of Persephone.

Oliensis imagines the narrative one step further beyond Vergil's text: "If not rhetorical, the question would imply that she is contemplating the labor of gathering up the scattered pieces."²⁴¹ A precedent for the Vergilian mother's implied wish can be detected in the literature associated with cult and would not be out of place as an element in Vergil's text. The distraught Agave of Euripides' *Bacchae* suggestively asks after the limbs of Pentheus, in what Seaford in his commentary understands to be a gesture towards a complete tradition beyond Euripides in which Agave attempts to reassemble the body of her son (Eur. *Ba.* 1300): ἥ πᾶν ἐν ἄρθροις συγκεκλημένον καλῶς; ("Has it all been fitted together decently in its joints?"). The reassembly of disjointed limbs is a motif attested also in the late Hellenistic accounts of the dismemberment of Dionysus Zagreus by the Titans.²⁴² By one account, it is Rhea who rejoins his limbs (*OF* 59 I F Bernabé): <τρί>την δὲ τή<ν ὅτε δι>ασπασθεῖς ὑπὸ τῶν Τιτάνων Ῥέ<ας τὰ> μέλη συνθε<ίσης> ἀνεβίω[ι] ("the third [birth of Dionysus] was the one when, torn limb from limb by the Titans, he regained life, after Rhea put his limbs back together"); by another, Demeter (*OF* 59 III F Bernabé):

...τρίτην γένεσιν, καθ' ἣν φασι τὸν θεὸν ἐκ Διὸς καὶ Δήμητρος τεκνωθέντα διασπασθῆναι μὲν ὑπὸ τῶν γηγενῶν καὶ καθεψηθῆναι, πάλιν δ' ὑπὸ τῆς Δήμητρος τῶν μελῶν συναρμολογήσας ἐξ ἀρχῆς νέον γεννηθῆναι.

...the third birth (of Dionysus), according to which they say that the god, being born from Zeus and Demeter, was torn limb from limb by the Earth-born giants and was boiled, but that when his limbs were fitted together again by Demeter, he was born anew as if from the beginning.

These various testimonia speak to a tradition by which not only was dismemberment or *sparagmos* a literary motif associated with cult in various capacities, but also the reconstitution of disparate

²⁴¹ Oliensis 2009:71. Excerpts of the *Christus Patiens* (1466-72) suggest as much, as well.

²⁴² Cf. Henrichs 2011. In consideration of the earliest extant references to the myth of the *sparagmos* of Dionysus Zagreus by Titans in fragments of Philodemus' *De Pietate* and Diodorus Siculus, he concludes (62): "It follows that this particular myth must be at least as old as the early Hellenistic period, and in all probability much older." The myth may be depicted on an Attic hydria dating from the early 4th century BCE; cf. Smith, "Orphic Myths on Attic Vases." An additional reference to this myth is perhaps discussed by Pausanias (8.37.5): παρὰ δὲ Ὀμήρου Ὀνομάκριτος παραλαβὼν τῶν Τιτάνων τὸ ὄνομα Διονύσω τε συνέθηκεν ὄργια καὶ εἶναι τοὺς Τιτᾶνας τῷ Διονύσῳ τῶν παθημάτων ἐποίησεν αὐτουργούς ("From Homer the name of the Titans was taken by Onomacritus, who in the orgies he composed for Dionysus made the Titans the authors of the god's sufferings").

parts. Vergil infuses this feature of cult myth with greater pathos in the figure of the mother of Euryalus, adapting a cult image of divine rejuvenation as the wish of a mother to revive the corpse of her son, slain in battle.

Vergil's own Andromache will show herself frozen in time at the maenadic moment of her anagnorisis in the *Iliad*, which becomes an important intertext for her brief appearance in the *Aeneid*. Vergil draws on and expands upon her Homeric characterization as the frenzied maenad overwhelmed with grief. Her initial appearance in Vergil's epic places her at the empty tomb of her husband Hector, where she performs rites for the dead (*Aen.* 3.294-305), a stark reminder of the hero's death that instantly recalls the crucial moment of recognition in *Iliad* 22. Andromache's initial encounter with Aeneas recalls the famous Iliadic moment most vividly (3.306-9):

ut me conspexit venientem et Troia circum
arma amens vidit, magnis exterrita monstis
deriguit visu in medio, calor ossa reliquit,
labitur et longo vix tandem tempore fatur.

When she caught sight of me coming, and saw to her amazement the arms of Troy around, awed by these great marvels she stiffened even as she gazed, and the warmth forsook her limbs. She swoons, and at last after a long time speaks.

This Andromache is the same frenzied Iliadic Andromache reacting to the news of the death of her husband, here *amens* and, at 3.313, *furens*.²⁴³ The phrase *magnis exterrita monstis* heightens the sense of maenadic fury in its evocation of initiatory rites, during which the initiates were made to feel fear in response to terrifying images and at the presence of an epiphanic divinity (we might speculate Aeneas cast in this role in his arrival at Buthrotum). As in Book 22 of the *Iliad*, Andromache here too faints (*labitur*), after which she experiences the inability to speak; as in the *Iliad*, her taciturnity will give way to an important speech act, where Vergil will incorporate

²⁴³ Hershkowitz 1991:69, sees in Andromache a figure for the Sibyl: "Andromache may also be placed in the role of the Sibyl, in that it is through her that Aeneas is first exposed to Buthrotum and its reminders of the past." At footnote 4, she refers to Andromache as an "uninspired Sibyl," comparing 3.303-4 with 6.246-7. Bright 1981 reads the Buthrotum episode as a kind of katabasis.

features of her Homeric lament speech into her dialogue with Aeneas: her concern for Ascanius, for instance, at *Aen.* 3.339 is a transference of the concern of the Iliadic Andromache for the orphaned Astyanax in the *Iliad* at 22.490ff.

Vergil's characterization of Andromache combines a compatible intertext in the description of another famous frenzied maenadic figure, not from Greek literature, but from Catullus' celebrated epyllion, poem 64. The phrase *deriguit visu in medio* at *Aeneid* 3.308 recalls the celebrated simile of 64, in which Ariadne is likened to a statue of a Bacchant as she gazes from the shores of Dia at the receding ships of Theseus (61-2): *saxea ut effigies bacchantis prospicit, eheu | prospicit...* ("[Ariadne] like a marble figure of a bacchanal, looks forth, alas! looks forth..."). The verses echo one another in the emotional severity of their protagonists, in the image of rigidity introduced by *deriguit* in the former and the material (*saxea*) of the statue in the latter, and in the emphasis on the moment of looking, effected in the Catullan passage by the repetition of *prospicit*. We may observe that the Vergilian Andromache is a composite of complementary maenadic epic predecessors, the Homeric Andromache at the moment of Hector's death and the Catullan Ariadne realizing her abandonment by Theseus.

Ovid will later reconcile these various maenadic figures in the descriptions of Ceres that occur throughout his poetry. The poet can activate both the connection already established between maenads and Demeter in the *Homeric Hymn*, and the Catullan Ariadne as a maenadic archetype with so strong a presence as an intertext for other maenadic figures that even the slightest suggestion is enough to bring her to bear. The image of the maenad is evoked in no uncertain terms in the abduction narrative of Persephone presented in the *Fasti*, the first of the poet's literary engagements with the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (4.455-8):

attonita est plangore Ceres (modo venerat Hennem)
nec mora, 'me miseram! filia' dixit 'ubi es?'
mentis inops rapitur, quales audire solemus

Threicias fuis maenadas ire comis.

Ceres was startled by their grief (she'd just now come from Enna), and cried instantly 'Ah me! Daughter, where are you?' She rushed about, distracted, as we've heard the Thracian Maenads run with flowing hair.

Here, Ovid has inverted the image of the maenad from its first application in the *Homeric Hymn* to describe the grief of the goddess at the loss of her daughter, facilitated by the activation of the Homeric Andromache, whose maenadic frenzy is a manifestation of grief, whereas the original image in the *Homeric Hymn* characterizes the joy and relief the goddess feels at her initial recovery.

The intertextual engagement is signposted by the poet with the phrase *quales audire solemus*, a kind of Alexandrian footnote evoking poetic tradition by which myths are retold and effectively gesturing back to prior accounts of the myth. Here, the allusion has a particular depth and religious coloring, since the text which is the primary intertext to which the reference looks back is the *Homeric Hymn*, a text whose content has great significance for the Eleusinian Mysteries, the rituals of which might have included a recreation of the rape narrative.²⁴⁴ There is a certain logical implication that can be read as underpinning the allusion, that only those who have undergone the rites at Eleusis will be familiar with the text and thus able to recognize the allusion encoded in the *Fasti* passage; a kind of allusive engagement that has religious overtones will have been especially appropriate to a text such as the *Fasti*, a text the aim of which was to explain and describe religious practice at Rome. The image of the maenads introduced in the *Fasti* allows for a revision of the image immediately preceding this description, in which the cries of the companions of Persephone, perceiving that the maiden has been abducted, echo throughout the mountains (*Fast.* 4.453): *ut clamata silet, montes ululatibus implent* ("silence met their call: they filled the hills with their cries"). Here, the term *ululatibus* strictly connotes cries of grief and

²⁴⁴ Parker 1991; Sourvinou-Inwood 2003.

perhaps fear; but, colored by the maenadic characterization of Ceres two lines later and the general frequency in Latin literature of the semantic valence of the term *ululatio* as the cries of the Bacchants, the echo of maenadic frenzy can be read back into their wailing.

The *Fasti* passage invites comparison with the equivalent moment in Ovid's epic, for which it serves as an intertext; we will find a similarly potent moment in Ovid's version of the abduction narrative in his *Metamorphoses*.²⁴⁵ Here, the poet narrates the loss of the maiden and the search of the goddess for her daughter, whose location is revealed to her by the nymph Arethusa. It should be noted here that the cultic significance of the passage is not entirely lost in this version, since Ovid depicts the torch-bearing goddess wandering in search of her daughter, one of the activities recreated by worshippers at Eleusis,²⁴⁶ and includes consumption of the sacred drink, *kykeon*, discussed in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* and thought to have been consumed during the rites.²⁴⁷

The goddess has a strong emotional reaction to the nymph's words (*Met.* 5.509-13):

Mater ad auditas stupuit ceu saxea voces	
attonitaeque diu similis fuit, utque dolore	510
pulsa gravi gravis est amentia, curribus oras	
exit in aetherias: ibi toto nubila vultu	
ante Iovem passis stetit invidiosa capillis.	

The mother was stunned to hear these words, as if petrified, and was, for a long time, like someone thunderstruck, until the blow of deep amazement became deep indignation. She rose, in her chariot, to the realms of heaven. There, her whole face clouded with hate, she appeared before Jove with disheveled hair.

The description of Ceres, in shock at the discovery of her daughter, relies on a triangulated intertextual relationship with both the Catullan Ariadne and Demeter of the *Homeric Hymn* (in dialogue with the additional allusive layer of the *Fasti*). The designation of the goddess as *mater*

²⁴⁵ The definitive discussion comparing the maenadic descriptions of the two Ovidian Cereres is Hinds 1987 (esp. 72-7).

²⁴⁶ *Met.* 5.441-3: *illa duabus | flammiferas pinus minibus succendit ab Aetna | perque pruinosas tulit inrequieta tenebras* ("She kindles two pine torches in the fires of Aetna, and wanders without rest through the frosty shades of night").

²⁴⁷ *Met.* 5.448-50: *at inde | prodit anus divamque videt lymphamque roganti | dulce dedit, tosta quod texerat ante polenta* ("When she asked for water, she gave her a sweet drink with parched barley floating upon it").

at word-initial position at 509 again reiterates the etymological pun on the name ‘Demeter.’ The simile of *ceu saxea*, ‘as if made of stone,’ however brief, in the context is enough to recall the Catullan Ariadne, likened to the marble effigy of the Bacchant.²⁴⁸ With the image of the maenadic hymnic Demeter in mind, terms such as *stupuit*, *attonitae*, and *amentia* become charged with maenadic resonance, as does the image of the disheveled hair of the goddess, certainly an expression of grief, but also characteristic of maenads in the throes of divine possession.²⁴⁹ Where the conflation of different kinds of mania is left an implicit but unstated premise of other epic maenadic characterizations, Ovid narrates for his audience the transition in the explicit description of the conversion of her grief (*dolore*) into madness (*amentia*), reiterated in the repetition of the adjective *gravis*.

We have thus seen that maenadic frenzy becomes deeply embedded in female epic displays of grief and excessive emotion; the rhetoric of epic maenadic frenzy is exemplified by the Homeric Andromache and the hymnic Demeter, and appears most influentially in Roman poetry as it is applied to the Catullan Ariadne. This trope is perhaps on display in Ovid’s depiction of the Trojan Hecuba, grieving over the death of her son, Polydorus, in the *Metamorphoses*. The Trojan queen, whose status as a mother suggests her likeness to the epic maenadic mothers we have seen thus far, and whose status as part of the Trojan royal family activates the Homeric Andromache, sees

²⁴⁸ Ovid has already in the *Metamorphoses* invoked a similar but more extended engagement with the narrative of Ariadne when discussing the transformation into statues of the Theban women who mourn the drowning of Ino, sister of Agave (*Met.* 4.551-60): *nam quae praecipue fuerat pia, “persequar” inquit | “in freta reginam” saltumque datura moveri | haud usquam potuit scopuloque adfixa cohaesit; | altera, dum solito temptat plangore ferire | pectora, temptatos sensit riguisse lacertos; | illa, manus ut forte tetenderat in maris undas; | saxea facta manus in easdem porrigit undas; | huius, ut arreptum laniabat vertice crinem, | duratos subito digitos in crine videres: | quo quaeque in gestu deprenta est, haesit in illo* (“For she who had been most devoted to the queen cried: ‘I shall follow my queen into the sea;’ and was just about to take the leap when she was unable to move at all, and stood fixed fast to the rock. A second, while she was preparing again to smite her breasts as she had been doing, felt her lifted arms grow stiff. Another had by chance stretched out her hands towards the waters of the sea, but now was a figure of stone that stretched out hands to those same waters. Still another, as if plucking at her hair to tear it out, you might see with suddenly stiffened fingers still in her hair. Each turned to stone and kept the pose in which she was overtaken”).

²⁴⁹ E.g. Euripides *Bacchae* 695.

the corpse of her slain son washed up on the shore, her grey hair disheveled in grief (*albentes lacerata comas*, *Met.* 13.534); a mutability of frenzied emotion is encoded in Hecuba's response, her grief and anger dually expressed, *postquam cum luctu miscuit ira* ("wrath mingling with her grief," *Met.* 13.549). Upon catching sight of his body, Hecuba stands transfixed like stone (*Met.* 13.540-1): *duroque simillima saxo | torpet* ("like a hard rock, immovable she stood"). Here again, we hear the echo of the phrase *saxea ut effigies* which modifies the Catullan Ariadne (64.61), first in Ovid's unpacking of the simile with the term *simillima* and also in the term *saxo*, cognate with *saxea*; the comparison as applied to Hecuba thus participates in the same epic maenadic expression of grief, especially that which is maternal in origin.²⁵⁰

The enjambment of *torpet* calls our attention as in some way emphatic, and, as we will see, does in fact encode for an interesting intertextual relationship with the Catullan Ariadne. It is not at all unusual for something likened to stone (*duroque simillima saxo*) to be still (*torpet*), and yet the literary precedent of the Catullan Ariadne, gazing out from the shore, who is statuesque precisely in her moment of most frenzied and maenadic movement, sets our expectations for Hecuba at verse 540, that she be like a statue that is not fixed firm, but quite the opposite. The contradiction in images set in play by the simile in the description of the Catullan Ariadne is corrected by Ovid, who attributes to stone that behavior which is appropriate to it. We expect Hecuba to be frozen in movement, based on the paradoxical model of the Catullan Ariadne, only to find that she stays still, without the sense of frenetic motion which characterizes the stillness of the maenadic statue of the Catullan Ariadne. This allusive game in the process reiterates Ovid's Hecuba as maenadic, by making the image of the Catullan Ariadne an undeniable presence in the

²⁵⁰ The lament expressed by Hecuba in Euripides' *Hecuba* is characterized a "Bacchic strain," βακχεῖον...νόμον (*Hec.* 686-7).

episode. The frenzied, maenadic nature explicitly denied to Hecuba precisely when she most closely mirrors the Catullan maenadic Ariadne is resolved and becomes an essential feature of her characterization in her final transformation into a hound whose barking is fundamentally maenadic in quality (*Met.* 13.570-1): *veterumque diu memor illa malorum | tum quoque Sithonios ululavit maesta per agros* (“long remembering her ancient ills, she still howled mournfully across the Sithonian plains”).

4.2 FRENZIED AGENTS OF DESTRUCTION

The previous section has provided evidence for one epic maenadic archetype and its variations: the female figure, typically a mother or wife, who is overwhelmed by emotion, usually grief (but in at least one case, relief). The characterization relies on the conflation of various kinds of mania and develops along a familiar rhetoric of socially accepted feminine behavior, signaled most acutely by imagery of weaving. This archetype is not, however, the only archetype of the epic maenad – in what follows, let us now consider the epic maenad whose destructive capacity is activated as martial fury and construed within epic programmatics around anger and rage.²⁵¹

In the *Aeneid*, the inclusion of the image of female maenadic frenzy adds to the sense of lack of control and the destructive forces at work, heightening the overall sense of madness which Vergil infuses into the start of the war (as, for instance, in such phrases as *insani Martis amore* at *Aen.* 7.550).²⁵² Vergil appropriates the rhetoric of female violence and madness in his depictions of the most insidious female forces of the epic, both divine and mortal, who are consistently represented as raging in a Bacchic frenzy when they are at their most destructive.²⁵³ Allecto, the

²⁵¹ Hershkowitz 1998:16–61.

²⁵² Particularly suggestive is the conflation of emotions experienced by Turnus (*Aen.* 12.667-8): *mixtoque insania luctu | et furiis agitates amor* (“madness mingled with grief, and love stung by fury”).

²⁵³ For a discussion of various female figures in Vergil’s epic, see Sullivan 1992.

infernal Fury summoned by Juno to foment conflict between the Trojan and Latin forces, is described in Book 10 as raging like a Bacchant through the Italian cities (41): *Allecto medias Italum bacchata per urbes* (“Allecto raves through the midst of Italian towns”).²⁵⁴ The same term, *bacchari*, is used of Fama after the suicide of Dido in Book 4, not in the celebrated personification at the start of the book, where the figure is described as a monstrous entity, the ‘swiftest of all evils’ (*malum qua non aliud velocius ullum*, *Aen.* 4.174), but towards the end of the book, when the destruction of the Carthaginian queen Dido has come to fruition. The conclusion of the book, with its reference to Fama, spreading the news of the death of the queen, complements the earlier personification which introduces the divine figure into the epic, reiterated by the verbal echo of *Fama per urbes* at 4.173 with *Fama per urbem* at 4.666; this same phrase, *Fama per urbem*, will be repeated after the death of Amata, another frenzied figure, at 12.608.

In a striking passage of grief, Fama reports the death of the Carthaginian queen to the developing city (*Aen.* 4.665-71):

	it clamor ad alta	665
atria: concussam bacchatur Fama per urbem.		
lamentis gemituque et femineo ululatu		
tecta fremunt, resonat magnis plangoribus aether,		
non aliter quam si immissis ruat hostibus omnis		
Karthago aut antiqua Tyros, flammaeque furentes		670
culmina perque hominum volvantur perque deorum.		

A scream rises to the lofty roof; Rumor riots through the stricken city. The palace rings with lamentation, with sobbing and women’s shrieks, and heaven echoes with loud wails -- as though all Carthage or ancient Tyre were falling before the inrushing foe, and fierce flames were rolling on over the roofs of men, over the roofs of gods.

In this passage, not only does Fama act like a Bacchant, but there are echoes of manic occupation in the collective expression of the grief of the city, as well. It is as if the city itself has been brought

²⁵⁴ For the correspondences between Furies and maenads in Greek tragedy, see Seaford 1993:139–41, and Whallon 1964:320–22; for other sources for Vergil’s *Allecto*, see Feeney 1991:163–64.

to a Bacchic frenzy by Fama, while she rages on.²⁵⁵ The descriptor *concussa* recalls other terms that signify divine occupation, such as *attonitus*, making of the city a worshipper of Bacchus in the throes of manic frenzy. A literary precedent for the image of the city in Bacchic frenzy closes the *Bacchae* of Euripides, after the destructive violence of Agave and the maenads reaches its climax in the *sparagmos* of Pentheus. The city of Thebes itself is said to play the Bacchant, an extension of the madness of the women who populate it (*Ba.* 1295): ἐμάνητε, πᾶσά τ' ἐξεβακχεύθη πόλις ("you were mad, the whole *polis* was in a Bacchic frenzy"). The term *fremunt* recalls the roaring which attended the appearance of Bacchus in descriptions of his orgiastic rites and rites of initiation, and the term may have an echo of the cult title of Bacchus which signifies 'roarer,' βρόμιος. A most striking phrase in this regard is the 'female ululation,' *femineo ululatu*, a phrase which will be repeated only once in the epic in the same verse-final metrical position, of the lamentation of the mother of Euryalus, and which recalls the behavior of Bacchantes in worship; the aural quality of maenadic worship and Dionysiac initiation rituals is perhaps encoded in the onomatopoeic quality and unusual metrical pattern of verse-final *femineo ululatu*, which presses Augustan stylistic norms of dactylic hexameter.²⁵⁶ Even the flames, *flammae*, are susceptible to this characterization, in that they are 'frenzied,' *furentes*. Both characterizations, of Allecto and Fama, exploit the inherent threat of female violence which in ancient literature underscores maenadic frenzy.

Such characterizations exploit the violent potential encoded in the tragic stage, where an excess of Bacchic fury threatens to overturn social orders. We might consider in this regard a related episode which occurs in Book 5 of Vergil's epic, in which unspecified Trojan women

²⁵⁵ Cf. Aeschylus *Ag.* 595: ὅλολυγμόν ἄλλος ἄλλοθεν κατὰ πτόλιν ("Throughout the city, they let out a cry, each from his own direction").

²⁵⁶ Again, it will be useful to cite the aural quality of the metrical license, suggestive of Greek verse technique, discussed by Hardie in his commentary (1994) with reference to the same phrase at *Aen.* 9.477.

(*matres*), while stationed at Sicily, are convinced by the goddess Iris, disguised as the Trojan woman Beroë, to set fire to the Trojan ships, thus putting an end to the long sojourn of the Trojan refugees (*Aen.* 5.604-79). Here, the dominant paradigm which Vergil manipulates in his description of the Trojan women is that of maenads engaged in frenzied Bacchic worship, activating a model of female frenzy which emphasizes a specifically female destructive force. The location at Sicily is especially suggestive, as an important location for the worship of the rites of Demeter and Kore and the mythological location, by some accounts, of the abduction of Persephone. The women, as they become convinced by Iris, are described with terminology of divine occupation, as in *arrectae mentes stupefactaque corda | Iliadum* (“startled are the minds of the Trojan women, their wits bewildered”) at *Aen.* 5.643-4, and even with echoes of the psychological effects of the rites on initiates, who are made to feel fear at the sight of horrific apparitions, as in *attonitae monstribus actaeque furore* (“amazed at the marvels and driven by frenzy”) at *Aen.* 5.659. Vergil inserts a kind of dark humor in the bilingual pun on the only Trojan woman of the group who is explicitly named and given a voice, Pyrgo, who recognizes Iris underneath her disguise and attempts to dissuade the Trojan women from the plot which Iris has proposed. Despite the protestations of this figure, her very name is the personification of the destructive force with which the women destroy the ships, flame, Greek πῦρ. There is perhaps here an echo in the focus on fire of the words of Pentheus in Euripides’ *Bacchae*, when he likens the spread of maenadism throughout Greece to the spread of a blazing fire (778-9): ἤδη τόδ’ ἐγγὺς ὥστε πῦρ ὑφάπτεται | ὕβρισμα βακχῶν, ψόγος ἐς Ἑλλήνας μέγας (“Already this insolent violence of the bacchantes is blazing up close like a fire, a great reproach for the Greeks”).

Vocabulary of madness pervades the Sicilian episode, as when fire (evoked symbolically as the god Vulcan) is said to ‘rage’ (*furit... Volcanus*, *Aen.* 5.662) and as the Trojan men react to

the sight of the ships set aflame, emblemized by the climactic question of Ascanius to the women (*Aen.* 5.670): *quis furor iste novus?* (“What strange madness is this?”). What rage, indeed – Orpheus in the fourth Book of Vergil’s *Georgics* has already been asked this very question, of the madness that overtakes him and causes him to turn back to view his Eurydice (*G.* 4.495): *quis tantus furor?* (“What dreadful madness?”). The question in the case of Orpheus obliquely recalls the madness appropriate to a figure so important to cult, with metapoetic overtones that recall tragedy. In light of our discussions on the mutability of mania, the question may be quite genuine – are the Trojan women subject to Dionysiac frenzy?²⁵⁷

The closing image directly evokes maenadic religious practice (*Aen.* 5.676-79):

ast illae diversa metu per litora passim
diffugiunt silvasque et sicubi concava furtim
saxa petunt; piget incepti lucisque, suosque
mutatae agnoscunt, excussaue pectore Iuno est.

But the women scatter in dismay over the shores this way and that, and make stealthily for the woods and the hollow rocks they anywhere can find. They loathe the deed and the light of day; with changed thoughts they know their kin, and Juno is shaken from their hearts.

Zarker²⁵⁸ succinctly reviews the effect of the passage in an article in which he catalogues the role of Trojan women as a collective in the *Aeneid* and connects this group back to the Greek tragic chorus (17): “The women of Troy are similar to the worshippers of Bacchus who partake of the god and become no longer themselves; they are like the *Bacchae* of Euripides, especially Agave late in the play, when the influence of the god is no longer present.” As reiterated in the final line of the passage, Juno is the divinity orchestrating this hindrance to the progression of the Trojans, both here and at the beginning of the episode with her injunctions to Iris, and her own fury is made

²⁵⁷ Such is the interpretation at Oliensis 2009:68–70, where Oliensis argues for a Euripidean intertext.

²⁵⁸ Zarker 1978. Zarker associates the episode with those involving Amata in Book 7 under the broader heading of divine inspiration.

to be reappraised in a broader reflection on the destructive nature of female fury and violence, first on the tragic stage and as it is transferred to epic, as well.

The female madness of Vergil's women in Bacchic revelry, both divine and human, acts as a counterpart to the masculine madness of the Trojans and Latins in what Vergil characterizes as their crazed desire for battle along parallel gendered distinctions of fury characteristic of epic as genre.²⁵⁹ A closer look at maenadic frenzy, however, recontextualizes this gendered opposition and allows for a reappraisal of a masculine martial fury fundamentally related to, and perhaps even rooted in, Dionysiac frenzy.²⁶⁰ As in the passages of Plato's *Phaedrus* cited earlier in this chapter,²⁶¹ the *Bacchae* of Euripides also contains an extended reflection on madness, in the voice of Tiresias, who himself has a share in various forms of mania: vatic, insofar as he is a famed seer, and Dionysiac, as a devoted worshipper of Bacchus in Euripides' play.²⁶² In his discussion, the seer proposes a similarly mutable mania which vacillates between the ecstatic and prophetic; but, unlike the discussions of the Athenian philosopher, Tiresias' includes martial fury as well (298-305):

μάντις δ' ὁ δαίμων ὅδε: τὸ γὰρ βακχεύσιμον	
καὶ τὸ μανιῶδες μαντικὴν πολλὴν ἔχει:	
ὅταν γὰρ ὁ θεὸς ἐς τὸ σῶμ' ἔλθῃ πολὺς,	300
λέγειν τὸ μέλλον τοὺς μεμνηότας ποιεῖ.	
Ἄρεώς τε μοῖραν μεταλαβὼν ἔχει τινά:	
στρατὸν γὰρ ἐν ὅπλοις ὄντα κάπτι τάξεσιν	
φόβος διεπτόησε πρὶν λόγχης θιγεῖν.	
μανία δὲ καὶ τοῦτ' ἐστὶ Διονύσου πάρα.	305

This god is also a prophet: for the Bacchic and manic have much mantic power: for when the god enters abundantly into the body, he makes the maddened speak the future. And he has taken and continues to have a share in Ares: for an army in arms and in battle formation may be scattered in fear before touching a spear. This too is a madness from Dionysus.

²⁵⁹ For a broader discussion of issues of gender in Roman epic, see Keith 2000, esp. Ch. 3 ("Engendering War").

²⁶⁰ On the similarities between maenadic and martial frenzy, see Bocciolini Palagi 2007, chap. 5. Cf. also Schiesaro, 2009:63–64, for a discussion of the feminizing quality of Horace's self-referential characterization as a Bacchant in *Ode* 3.25 as a variation on the play on gender inherent to masculinizing characterization of maenads.

²⁶¹ See pp. 172ff.

²⁶² See Henrichs 1984 on male participants in Dionysiac rites, both in literature and in practice.

Here, the Dionysiac fury felt by the army is specified as a manifestation of fear, not immediately applicable to the terminology of desire and greed for battle which Vergil typically employs;²⁶³ but Tiresias' discussion nonetheless opens the door for meditations on the nature of a masculine martial fury that is fundamentally Dionysiac in nature, and perhaps available for the same mutability which allows for the conflation between different kinds of mania which we have already observed.²⁶⁴ Aeschylus makes the comparison explicit in his *Seven Against Thebes*, when he compares a frenzied male warrior to an ecstatic maenad, the war-cry a martial version of maenadic ululation (497-8): αὐτὸς δ' ἐπηλάλαξεν, ἔνθεος δ' Ἄρει | βακχᾷ πρὸς ἀλκὴν Θυιάς ὥς φόβον βλέπων ("The warrior himself has raised the war-cry and, inspired by Ares he raves for battle like a maenad, with a look to inspire fear").²⁶⁵ The Aeschylean image of the conflation of cultic frenzy and masculine martial fury will have its most direct Augustan epic successors in male priest warriors: for Vergil, this figure is Chloereus, a priest of Cybele, who engages in combat with Camilla in the *Aeneid*;²⁶⁶ for Ovid, this is Ampycus, a priest of Ceres, killed by Phineus in his confrontation with Perseus in the *Metamorphoses*.²⁶⁷

A related conceptualization underscores depictions of the attacks of maenads, whose destructive capacity is a frequent literary theme and who wield their thyrsi like weapons, as in

²⁶³ A similar conflation of Dionysiac frenzy and fear qualifies the Etruscan pirates of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* upon realization that they have taken hostage a hostile Bacchus, the poet's rendering of the *Homeric Hymn to Bacchus* (3.670-1): *exsiluere viri, sive hoc insania fecit | sive timor* ("The men leapt offboard, either compelled by madness or fear").

²⁶⁴ See Hershkovitz 1998:132–47 for a discussion of terms of madness, esp. forms of μαίνομαι, as a feature of Homeric epic, typically applied to male characters.

²⁶⁵ The motif of masculine Dionysiac martial frenzy also manifests as explicit characterization of male heroes as maenads. Cf. examples from the *Argonautica* of Valerius Flaccus and Euripidean tragedy discussed at *ibid.*, 39–41.

²⁶⁶ *Aen.* 11.768-71: *Forte sacer Cybelo Chloereus olimque sacerdos | insignis longe Phrygiis fulgebat in armis | spumantemque agitabat equum, quem pellis aenis | in plumam squamis auro conserta tegebat* ("It chanced that Chloereus, sacred to Cybele, and once a priest, glittered resplendent from far off in his Phrygian armor, and spurred his foaming charger, whose covering was a skin plumed with bronze scales and clasped with gold").

²⁶⁷ *Met.* 5.109-110: *Phinea cecidere manu Cererisque sacerdos | Ampycus albenti velatus tempora vitta* ("They fell by the hand of Phineus, as did the priest of Ceres Ampycus, whose temples were bound by a white fillet").

Euripides' *Bacchae*, where the object is called 'the ivy-covered missile,' κίσσινον βέλος (25), and where the maenads who accompany Agave 'wield the thyrsus like a weapon,' θύρσοις διὰ χερῶν ὥπλισμένοι (733). Dionysus, in the *Bacchae*, makes himself the general at the head of an army of maenads (μαινάσι στρατηλατῶν, 52),²⁶⁸ while his enemy, Pentheus, is said to 'make war against the gods' (θεομαχεῖν, 45), which, in light of his characterization as descended from a Giant (φόνιον δ' ὥστε γίγαντ' ἀντίπαλον θεοῖς, "one of the murderous Giants who opposed the gods," 543), sets the conflict in the context of a body of poetry in the epic register, Gigantomachy and Titanomachy.²⁶⁹ Aeschylus likens the female ululation of the murderous Clytaemnestra to the war-cry, again assimilating maenadic behavior to martial activity (*Aga.* 1236-7): ὥς δ' ἐπωλολύξατο | ἢ παντότολμος, ὥσπερ ἐν μάχης τροπῇ ("How piously she shouted, the all-courageous, as at turn of battle!"). The phrase κίσσινον βέλος is transferred directly into Latin in the phrase *pampinea hasta*, bringing with it the image of maenad as warrior.²⁷⁰ Against this conceptual backdrop, it is clear that Vergil and Ovid exploit for the purposes of epic the implicit connections between martial violence and maenadic behavior already buzzing in earlier literary accounts of maenads.

Ovid in fact seems to parody the supposedly bellicose nature of maenads and the metaphorical sense of *hasta* as thyrsus in his description of the inefficacy of the maenadic attack that confronts Orpheus in Book 11 of the *Metamorphoses*, simultaneously reworking an extended description of maenadic attack included in Euripides' *Bacchae*.²⁷¹ In the Athenian tragedy, a gruesome description of *sparagmos* of livestock and abduction of children is met with the anger

²⁶⁸ We may compare Horace's declaration that the god attends both peace and war (*Odes* 2.19.27-8): *idem | pacis...mediusque belli*.

²⁶⁹ For visual testimony on Classical vase painting of Dionysus and the satyrs dressed as hoplites, see Lissarague 1987.

²⁷⁰ Cf. Vergil *Aen.* 7.396; Ovid *Ep.* 13.33; Ovid *Met.* 3.666.

²⁷¹ For a salient discussion, see Keith 1999.

of the villagers (*Ba.* 734-759), who bring arms (ἐξ ὅπλ' ἐχώρουν, 759) against the maenads. What follows is 'a marvelous sight', τὸ δεινὸν θέαμα (*Ba.* 760-4):

τοῖς μὲν γὰρ οὐχ ἤμασσε λογχωτὸν βέλος, 760
οὐ χαλκός, οὐ σίδηρος <...>
κεῖναι δὲ θύρσους ἐξανιεῖσαι χερῶν
ἐτραυμάτιζον κάπενώτιζον φυγῇ
γυναῖκες ἄνδρας, οὐκ ἄνευ θεῶν τινας.

For the pointed missiles of the men did not draw blood, neither bronze nor iron <...>, whereas the women releasing thyrsi from their hands wounded them and made them turn their backs in flight – women did this to men, not without some god.

Ovid reverses the efficacy of the maenads and ultimately corrects the original Euripidean image, in which one kind of *hasta* (the thyrsus, metaphorically) is set over and against a different kind of *hasta* (weapons of iron and bronze). The first indication of this play on terms occurs at *Met.* 11.7-9, where the duplex meaning of *hasta* is foregrounded: *et hastam | vatis Apollinei vocalia misit in ora, | quae foliis praesuta notam sine vulnere fecit* (“and she hurled her spear [=thyrsus] straight at the tuneful mouth of Apollo’s bard; but this, wreathed in leaves, marked without harming him”); and again at 11.27-8, where the poet characteristically unpacks the metaphor: *fronde virentes | coniciunt thyrsos non haec in munera factos* (“they hurled at him their thyrsos wreathed with green vines, not made for such use as this”). Finally, Ovid’s maenads take up more powerful implements (*Met.* 11.30-8):

neu desint tela furori,
forte boves presso subigebant vomere terram,
nec procul hinc multo fructum sudore parantes
dura lacertosi fodiebant arva coloni,
agmine qui viso fugiunt operisque relinquunt
arma sui, vacuosque iacent dispersa per agros
sarculaque rastrique graves longique ligones;
quae postquam rapuere ferae cornuque minaces
divulsere boves, ad vatis fata recurrunt.

And, that real weapons might not be wanting to their madness, it chanced that oxen, toiling beneath the yoke, were plowing up soil; and not far from these, stout peasants were digging the hard earth and sweating at their work. When these beheld the advancing horde, they fled away and left behind the implements of their toil. Scattered through the deserted fields lay hoes, long mattocks and heavy grubbing-tools. These the savage women caught up and, first tearing in pieces the oxen who threatened them with their horns, they rushed back to slay the bard.

The scene clearly gestures allusively to the extended episode cited above in the *Bacchae*, incorporating the same graphic scene of *sparagmos*, down to the detail of the menacing horns of the bulls that receive the initial charge of the maenadic attack (*cornu minaces* here; ταῦροι ὑβρίζουσι κὰς κέρας θυμούμενοι at line 743 of Euripides' *Bacchae*). Ovid reiterates a martial metaphor when he calls the onslaught of maenads a 'battleline' (*agmen*), but corrects the earlier marvel of the *Bacchae* by the inefficacy of the thyrsi in causing harm, in a sense commenting on the absurdity of the metaphorical application of *hasta* to the flimsy thyrsus.

He complicates, however, this critique of Euripides' *Bacchae* when he applies the term *arma* ('weapons') almost metaphorically to the agricultural tools of the farmers – like the thyrsi of the maenads, the hoes and mattocks are also not made for use as weapons, but they become here the implements of a fatal attack against Orpheus, and in that sense serve as *arma*. We may also see the same reversal highlighted in the *Bacchae* between male and female behavior in Ovid's brief description of the abandonment of the weapons by the farmers, who leave their weapons scattered throughout the fields (*dispersa per agros*), much as we imagine the body parts of victims of *sparagmos* might be found scattered by the maenads through the underbrush. Programming the entire scene is perhaps a cross-quantity bilingual pun on *tela*, 'weapons,' at *Met.* 11.30 with Greek τέλη, a term for rites.²⁷² Ovid may additionally be signaling a conscious discussion of maenadic frenzy as epic female martial fury by the programmatic verse 14: *bella modusque abiit insanaque regnat Erinys* ("their passion knew no bounds; mad fury reigned"); elsewhere in his epic, he has made the Furies more explicitly an agent of Dionysiac frenzy in his depiction of the Fury Tisiphone, who, like the Vergilian Allecto, serves as an epic agent of madness in the episode of

²⁷² We have already seen Ovid use this strategy in the episode of the weaving Minyids, punning on *tela*, 'threads.' Cf. the discussion on p. 176.

Ino, Cadmus, and Athamas in Book 4 of the *Metamorphoses*. In the account of the death of Orpheus, Ovid explicitly frames the confrontation with a term programmatic of epic (*bella*) after Horace and traces the frenzy of the maenads to that of a Fury (*Erinys*), so important a symbol after Vergil's Allecto for epic female maenadic frenzy.²⁷³

A generic opposition along a gender binary underscores the 13th letter of Ovid's *Heroides*, in which Laodamia addresses her absent husband Protesilaus, on expedition to the Trojan War and destined to be the first of the Greeks to die on Trojan soil, a destiny encoded etymologically in his name. In ways emblematic of the project of the *Heroides* as a whole, Ovid plays with generic contrast in the letter, setting amatory poetry side by side with epic, implicating maenadic frenzy in epic generic parameters. That the poet insists on this contrast is at its clearest in Laodamia's comparison of her husband's lot and her own (*Ep.* 13.37-42):

scilicet ipsa geram saturatas murice lanas,
 bella sub Iliacis moenibus ille gerat?
 ipsa comas pectar? galea caput ille premetur?
 ipsa novas vestes, dura vir arma ferat? 40
 qua possum, squalore tuos imitata labores
 dicar et haec belli tempora tristis agam.

Shall I, then, go clad in garments that are saturated with costly purple, while my lord goes warring under the walls of Ilion? Am I to dress my hair, while his head is weighed down by the helmet? Am I to wear new apparel while my lord wears hard and heavy arms? In what I can, they shall say I imitate your toils—in rude attire; and these times of war I will pass in gloom.

Laodamia will implicate herself in female epic conventions in an intertextual relationship with the maenadic Andromache of the *Iliad* in the frenzied manifestation of her love for her husband, which becomes entwined with grief and worry over her husband's well-being and maenadic by the mechanics of simile (*Ep.* 13.29-34):

Ut rediit animus, pariter rediere dolores;
 pectora legitimus casta momordit amor. 30
 nec mihi pectendos cura est praeberere capillos
 nec libet aurata corpora veste tegi.
 ut quas pampinea tetigisse Bicorniger hasta
 creditur, huc illuc, qua furor egit, eo.

²⁷³ Hardie 1993:62–63 records the importance of the Vergilian Allecto to epic poetic production after Vergil.

When consciousness returned, my pain returned as well. The wifely love I bore you has torn at my faithful heart. I care not now to let my hair be dressed, nor does it pleasure me to be arrayed in robes of gold. Like those whom he of the two horns is believed to have touched with his vine-leaved rod, hither and thither I go, where madness drives.

In contrast to the Iliadic Andromache, whose most acute episode of maenadic frenzy comes upon her only after Hector's death, Laodamia's maenadic frenzy, also borne of the love of wife for husband, comes in anticipation of his death; a (futile) hope for the safe return of Protesilaus pervades the rest of the letter, indicating that, unlike the Iliadic Andromache, Laodamia is not yet responding directly to her husband's death. In fact, Laodamia will recall the Iliadic Andromache more directly as the letter progresses (*Ep.* 13.137-48):²⁷⁴

Troasin invideo, quae si lacrimosa suorum funera conspicient, nec procul hostis erit; ipsa suis manibus forti nova nupta marito imponet galeam Dardanaeque arma dabit;	140
arma dabit, dumque arma dabit, simul oscula sumet— hoc genus officii dulce duobus erit— producetque virum dabit et mandata reverti et dicet: “referas ista fac arma Iovi!”	
ille ferens dominae mandata recentia secum pugnabit caute respicietque domum.	145
exuet haec reduci clipeum galeamque resolvet excipietque suo corpora lassa sinu.	

I envy the women who dwell in Troy: even though they see the tearful fates of them they love, with the foe not far away, with her own hand the newly wedded bride will set the helmet upon her valiant husband's head, and give into his hands the Dardanian arms. She will give him his arms, and the while she gives him arms will receive his kisses—a kind of office sweet to both—and will lead her husband forth, and lay on him the command to return, and say: “See that you bring once more those arms to Jove!” He, bearing fresh in mind with him the command of his mistress, will fight with caution, and be mindful of his home. When safe returned, she will strip him of his shield, unloose his helmet, and receive to her embrace his wearied frame.

Of those unspecified women at Troy whom Laodamia imagines, Ovid seems to evoke none more vividly than the Iliadic Andromache. The description of the exchange between husband and wife that precedes his departure for battle, with its especial focus on the helmet that is to be placed on his head, recalls one of the most celebrated exchanges between Andromache and Hector in the

²⁷⁴ Fulkerson 2005:113–14 connects this passage to a programmatic feature of epic rhetoric, the wish by the hero to have died on the battlefield (as of Odysseus in Homer's *Odyssey* and Aeneas in the *Aeneid*).

Iliad, the tearful departure scene of Book 6 (369-493); the image of the helmet in Ovid's letter especially recalls first the hero whose epithet associates him indelibly with this object, κορυθαιόλος, and the detail in the exchange of the baby Astyanax reacting in fear to his reflection in his father's shining helmet. And though the maenadic anagnorisis of Andromache of *Iliad* 22 is the more celebrated instance of Andromache's maenadism, the departure scene of Book 6 also includes her maenadic characterization. When Hector inquires after his wife, in anticipation of their celebrated exchange, he is told by her attendants that she has left for the walls "like one who is frenzied" (*Il.* 6.388-9): ἡ μὲν δὴ πρὸς τεῖχος ἐπειγομένη ἀφικάνει, | μαινομένη ἔικυῖα· φέρει δ' ἄμα παῖδα τιθήνη ("She has gone in haste to the wall, like one beside herself; and with her the nurse is carrying the child"). The departure scene includes the famous verses setting women's and men's work in contrast, signified by weaving and engaging in warfare, respectively. Hector advises Andromache as follows, by allusion to which Ovid subtly reinforces the comparison between Laodamia's suffering and that of her husband (6.490-4):

ἀλλ' εἰς οἶκον ἰοῦσα τὰ σ' αὐτῆς ἔργα κόμιζε
 ἱστόν τ' ἡλακάτην τε, καὶ ἀμφιπόλοισι κέλευε
 ἔργον ἐποιχέσθαι: πόλεμος δ' ἄνδρεσσι μελήσει
 πᾶσι, μάλιστα δ' ἐμοί, τοὶ Ἰλίῳ ἐγγεγάασιν.

But go now into the house and busy yourself with your own tasks, the loom and the distaff, and bid your handmaidens ply their work; but war shall be for men, for all, but most of all for me, of they who dwell in Ilios.

The scene of departure in Book 6 and the anagnorisis in Book 22 are in dialogue with one another, the latter a resolution of the former; both are in play in Laodamia's monologue, where Ovid has collapsed the two maenadic moments which characterize the Iliadic Andromache. For Laodamia, the allusion to the anagnorisis of Book 22 contains a pointed irony, since the allusion functions by imagining an alternative outcome hoped for by Andromache throughout the *Iliad*, but ultimately denied to her in the anagnorisis episode. This disappointed allusion recalls the moment of

realization for which the maenadic Andromache is relevant, setting into play in the letter epic maenadic characterization. Laodamia's maenadic comment comes into play at a point in her narrative which does not directly correspond to the most maenadic moment of Andromache's narrative; thus Laodamia's maenadism is quite pointed in anticipating Andromache's most famous maenadic moment.

Evidence from Euripides' lost play, *Protesilaus*, and the deeper Dionysiac significance of the Protesilaus myth more broadly, causes the maenadic tendencies of Ovid's Laodamia to resonate beyond the formalistic epic maenadism of the Iliadic Andromache. While the maenadism of the Iliadic Andromache represents an insertion of cultic imagery into a non-cultic context, the significance of the Protesilaus myth as a refraction of Dionysiac cult grounds the maenadic characterization of Laodamia, bringing to her letter a kind of cult significance already latent in her myth. By way of explanation, I refer again to the work of Walter Burkert that identifies Dionysiac resonances in the myth of Protesilaus, who functions as a god whose rites are worshipped by means of a statue.²⁷⁵ Hyginus preserves the religious aspects of the myth which are not overtly signaled in Ovid's version (*Fab.* 104.1): *Itaque fecit simulacrum aereum simile Protesilai coniugis et in thalamis posuit, sub simulatione sacrorum, et eum colere coepit* ("And so she made a golden statue resembling her husband Protesilaus and she placed it in the marriage chamber, under pretense of sacred rites, and she began to worship it"). This background is necessary for fully understanding Laodamia's address to Protesilaus after her discussion of the wax statue she has created that closes the letter, in which she declares him 'her god' (*mea numina*, *Ep.* 13.159).²⁷⁶ Against such a backdrop, Laodamia's maenadism and devotion to her husband not only serve as features of a

²⁷⁵ See discussion at p. 12.

²⁷⁶ For evidence on the reference of Greek cult statues by the term θεός, see Burkert 1997.

formal trope available to epic women, but also serve to bring to the surface of her episode the undertones associated with her myth that are rooted in cult religious practice.

These comparisons of masculine and feminine fury can retrospectively be brought to bear on Vergil's martial women, allowing for a broader reappraisal of the role of martial and maenadic women in epic. The description of Penthesileia in the decorative program of the temple of Hera at Carthage, where she is modified with the term *furens* (*Aen.* 1.491), and of course, the martial Camilla of Book 11 (648ff.), a Vergilian refraction of Penthesileia of the Greek Epic Cycle, offer rare models of such figures. The nature of the fury of these women can be considered simultaneously manifold, primarily martial in the context of battle, but, given their female gender and the frequent characterization of female violence as maenadic which we have just reviewed, also a subtle activation of Dionysiac maenadism. Such moments allow the reader to reconsider the madness and desire for war of the female figure ultimately responsible for the events that are set in motion, namely Juno, whose anger drives the plot forward both at the start of the epic in its renowned invocation and again at the start of the second half of the poem, when Juno summons the infernal Fury Allecto to foment discord.²⁷⁷

This reappraisal ripples through epic generic conventions, given the importance of rage and anger to the very definition of the genre. Scholars have long noted that the anger (*ira*, *Aen.* 1.4)²⁷⁸ of Juno in Vergil's epic invocation, whose spurned divinity sets the plot in motion,²⁷⁹ is a reconfiguration of the opening term of Homer's epic *Iliad*, which begins with the anger (μῆνις) of its hero, Achilles;²⁸⁰ the thematic correspondence is even reiterated in a bilingual pun at the

²⁷⁷ Cf. Feeney 1991:129–34, for a discussion of Juno's anger (esp. 132 for tragic overtones). For Juno as an agent of *furor* at the level of epic programmatics, see Hershkowitz 1998:95–105.

²⁷⁸ Much analysis of this term has focused on its philosophical significance. Cf. e.g. Indelli 2004 for considerations of this term and comparison with other terms signifying anger.

²⁷⁹ The programmatic force of Juno is a central theme of Denis Feeney's discussion of Vergilian gods; cf. Feeney 1991, chap. 4, sec. 1.

²⁸⁰ For a nuanced discussion of this transference, see Hershkowitz 1998:153–55.

opening of Juno's speech, *men' incepto desistere* (*Aen.* 1.37).²⁸¹ Scholars have already been established that, after Homer, anger becomes a signpost of epic as a genre, inherited and reconfigured by Latin poets, including Vergil. If we are to reimagine Juno's anger as a kind of Bacchic frenzy (and to see in such a figure as the Iliadic Andromache the codification of a kind of female maenadic frenzy as a feature available to the definition of epic as a genre), how might we reconcile this reconfiguration in terms of epic poetic convention?

Ovid will offer one suggestion in an episode of the *Metamorphoses* that combines epic conventions and maenadic poetics within a Vergilian epic armature. The display of Dionysian power emblemized in the narratives of Pentheus (*Met.* 3) and the Minyids (*Met.* 4) serves as the aetiology for the establishment of cult worship of the god, which ultimately leads to the ire against Ino of Juno, who becomes a prime mover in epic plot conventions after her appearance in Vergil's *Aeneid* (*Met.* 4.416-31):

Tum vero totis Bacchi memorabile Thebis numen erat, magnasque novi matertera vires narrat ubique dei de totque sororibus expers una doloris erat, nisi quem fecere sorores: adspicit hanc natis thalamoque Athamantis habentem	420
sublimes animos et alumno numine Iuno nec tulit et secum: "potuit de paelice natus vertere Maeonios pelagoque inmergere nautas et laceranda suae nati dare viscera matri et triplices operire novis Minyidas alis:	425
nil poterit Iuno nisi inultos flere dolores? idque mihi satis est? haec una potentia nostra est? ipse docet, quid agam (fas est et ab hoste doceri), quidque furor valeat, Penthea caede satisque ac super ostendit: cur non stimuletur eatque per cognata suis exempla furoribus Ino?"	430

Then, truly, was the divinity of Bacchus acknowledged throughout all Thebes, and his mother's sister, Ino, would be telling of the wonderful powers of the new god everywhere. She alone of all her sisters knew naught of grief, except what she felt for them. She, proud of her children, of her husband, Athamas, and proud above all of her divine foster-son, is seen by Juno, who could not bear the sight. "That child of my rival," she said, communing with herself, "had power to change the Maeonian sailors and plunge them in the sea, to cause the flesh of a son to be torn to pieces by his own mother, and to enwrap the three daughters of Minyas with strange wings; and shall naught be given to Juno, save to bemoan her wrongs still unavenged? Does that suffice me? Is this my only

²⁸¹ Levitan 1993:14. Also observed at O'Hara 1996:115–16.

power? But he himself teaches me what to do. It is proper to learn even from any enemy. To what length madness can go he has proved enough and to spare by the slaughter of Pentheus. Why should not Ino be stung to madness too, and, urged by her fury, go where her kinswomen have led the way?"

Various signposts indicate that here Ovid is commenting on epic in (Vergilian) programmatic generic terms.²⁸² The speech of Juno echoes similar complaints about the limits of divine power to be found in Vergilian epic, in particular by Juno herself in the first Book of the *Aeneid*; the phrase *inultos dolores* is a refraction of Vergil's question *quo numine laeso* (*Aen.* 1.8); Ovid will later address Vergil's iconic question about divine anger at *Aen.* 1.11, *tantaene animis caelestibus irae?*, with his own statement explaining the extent of Juno's anger, *tantum odiis iraeque dabat* (*Met.* 4.448). The katabasis that follows and the summoning of the Fury Tisiphone evoke the sixth Book of the *Aeneid* and the opening of the seventh Book, in which Juno, again acting as prime epic mover, summons the Fury Allecto to foment discord by bringing upon Amata, mother of Lavinia, a frenzy that is in *Aeneid* 7 framed as maenadic and all but Dionysiac. Ovid reiterates the connection between maenadic madness and epic plot development suggested by Vergil in most explicit terms when Juno declares that her strategy of bringing madness upon Ino will be an appropriation of Dionysiac frenzy: *ipse docet...quidque furor valeat* ("[Dionysus] himself demonstrates how strong madness can be"). In a manner consistent with Ovid's broader epic strategies, in what again might be evidence that he was 'Vergil's best reader,'²⁸³ the poet has made

²⁸² Gildenhard and Zissos 1999 offer a pleasing complementary interpretation of the role of Juno in this episode. Where my analysis here originates in a reading of the episode as primarily epic with tragic overtones, Gildenhard and Zissos offer a complementary analysis of the episode which privileges its tragic grounding. Of Juno here, they remark on her role as a "veritable stage-director of a tragic script" (174), continuing as follows (176): "The goddess Juno, being herself a figure of intertextual stature, shows a nice awareness of such generic distinctions. She becomes the epic spectator of the tragic Dionysiac spectacle she decided to stage, thus highlighting the difference between her own traditional generic context and the world of Dionysus and the theatre which Athamas and Ino are forced to revisit even in Ovid's epic poem". For similar analysis, see Hardie 1997 (324): "In both Books 1 and 7 Juno, like an attentive theatre-goer, mentally rehearses old plays as examples to imitate in her own behaviour. At 1.39-45 she remembers the death of Oilean Ajax in the version of Accius, while at 7.319-22 she tries to use Ennius' *Alexander* as the script for the future history of the Trojans in Italy. In *Aeneid* Book 1 there is something of an overdetermination of tragic introductions, first through Juno and then through Venus' Euripidean 'prologue' to the history of Dido."

²⁸³ I borrow the term from O'Hara 1996.

literal a motif latent in the *Aeneid*. The quasi-Dionysiac frenzy by which Juno affects Amata here is reconfigured as the Dionysiac frenzy, explicitly identified as such, by which Juno affects Ino, reinforced by the Dionysiac connections of her victim, the sister of Agave, and by the broader tragic overtones of the scene.

The logical conclusion of reimagining epic anger as maenadic, explored in the figure of Ovid's Juno as Dionysiac prime epic mover, is in fact reified in the opening verse of an Orphic account of the rape of Persephone (or perhaps an Orphic *Hymn to Demeter*) attested in two late sources,²⁸⁴ pseudo-Justin Martyr and Tzetzes in his commentary on the *Iliad* (*OF* 386 F Bernabé): μῆνιν ἄειδε, θεά, Δημήτερος ἀγλαοκάρπου ("Sing, goddess, the rage of Demeter, giver of gleaming fruit").²⁸⁵ The verse, which evokes the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* both in its implicit subject matter and in the unusual modifier ἀγλαόκαρπος, listed at verse 4 of the *Hymn*, reconciles anger as epic signpost and female Bacchic frenzy through a combinatorial intertext that activates the iconic opening of Homer's *Iliad*²⁸⁶ and the divine female Bacchic frenzy activated in the maenadic characterization of Demeter in the *Homeric Hymn*; and in fact, μῆνις has already been attributed to Demeter in the *Homeric Hymn* by the cognate modifier μήνιος (350).²⁸⁷ In conjunction with these observations, we may consider as well the suggestion that has been made for the etymological connection between μῆνις ('rage') and μαίνας ('maenad').²⁸⁸ The Orphic epic opener here combines a number of themes already discussed in conjunction with cult epic poetics:

²⁸⁴ This poem is just one of several poems describing the rape of Persephone ascribed to Orpheus. West 1983:24 offers the intriguing conjecture that one such poem was "none other than the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, for in a papyrus of the first century BC (*P. Berol.* 13044; fr. 49 Kern) the story is told in prose with verse quotations from 'Orpheus', and the verses, which are evidently quoted from memory, all occur in the *Homeric Hymn*. The writer seems to have known this poem under Orpheus' name."

²⁸⁵ = *OF* 48 Kern. [Justin] *Coh. ad Gr.* 17.1 (47.1 Marcovich); Tzetzes *Ex. Il.* 26.5 Hermann.

²⁸⁶ Forms and cognates of μαίνεσθαι are exceptionally infrequent in Homeric epic; one notable exception is in the case of Achilles in *Iliad* 24, of his unwillingness to relinquish the corpse of Hector (*Il.* 24.114): φρεσὶ μαινομένησιν.

²⁸⁷ Signore 2010:16. Earlier, Considine 1986:58–59, 1985.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.* 16–7.

Demeter as the archetypal epic mother, maenadic *furor* as a refraction of epic μήνις/*ira*, and epic openings as generic programmatics.²⁸⁹ Though we may be cautious in attributing the late quotation of our Orphic text to an earlier account which might have been available in the Augustan period, a supposition proposed by scholars but not definitively proven, the quotation nonetheless may represent the culmination of a motif that can be brought to bear on the opening of Vergil's *Aeneid* and mediated through the lens of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Vergil thus can be thought to exploit an approximation of masculine martial fury as female maenadic fury to heighten the sense of chaos and madness that characterizes the martial second half of his epic and to deepen his broader meditation therein on the nature of fury, both male and female, human and divine.²⁹⁰

4.3 FOREIGN CULTS, FOREIGN QUEENS

Beyond the divine frenzied forces we have discussed and the maenadic mortal women who participate in the chaos of war, a special category of epic maenadic women emerges from the pages of Latin epic: the frenzied foreign queen. The historiographical dimension of Vergil's *Aeneid*, grounded in the origin story of Rome and culminating in the empire of Augustus, allows for such figures to find a place in the struggle for Rome's past. Vergil frames the struggle for Roman hegemony in the *Aeneid* as the triumph of the Trojan forces against various enemies who resonate

²⁸⁹ There is evidence also for Demeter as the protagonist of a *katabasis* poem, which may be alluded to by Vergil at *G.* 1.38-9 (*quamvis Elysios miretur Graecia campos | nec repetita sequi curet Proserpina matrem*, 'though Greece is enchanted by the Elysian fields, and Proserpine reclaimed cares not to follow her mother'). The story may be alluded to under the heading '*qui licentia parcarum ab infernis redierunt*' by Hyginus (*Ceres Proserpinam filiam suam quarens*, *Fab.* 251), where it is listed with a *katabasis* of Bacchus in search of his mother, Semele, Orpheus in search of Eurydice, and Aeneas in search of his father Anchises, among other *katabases*. Cf. comparanda cited in Harrison and Obbink 1986:62-65 who argue for the dating for such a poem as early as the Hellenistic period, which they speculate is perhaps drawn from an Orphic poem of an earlier date. In connection with this, we may consider also the possibility of early versions of the *katabasis* of Orpheus in which the poet is successful in bringing back Eurydice, and where Eurydice is conflated with Kore; cf. Dronke 1962:200-206.

²⁹⁰ Clément-Tarantino 2016. Of particular interest is the discussion of Juvenal *Sat.* 7.69-71 (264): "Here the Fury [Allecto] has become something more than one ingredient of the epic amongst others, even more than the protagonist of one, remarkable, sequence of the poem: she now represents the epic itself."

with those of Roman Republican military history; these historical confrontations at times are entwined in cultic engagement. And indeed, negotiation of cult as negotiation of national identity will have been rooted in Roman history, since the Roman Republic and the age of Augustus bore witness to several events entailing the importation and reconsideration of foreign cults at Rome.²⁹¹ The Romans tolerated the presence of various foreign cults at Rome, but such presences represented a confrontation with the foreign and unknown, against the backdrop of which the definition of *Romanitas* was necessarily reconsidered, to be, at times, renegotiated, and, at others, reinforced.²⁹² Roman political propaganda has been shown to have involved shifting and sometimes competing identifications by Roman statesmen with particular gods, including Bacchus, indicating the availability of cult imagery to political discourse.²⁹³ Consequently, cult engagement of foreign epic queens will have reflected encounters with the foreign that were seen to potentially threaten the destabilization of Roman identity.²⁹⁴

An early literary model thematizes the threat to nation and identity inherent in the worship of foreign cults, namely, the case of the Scythian king Scyles in the fourth Book of the *Histories* of Herodotus. Scyles, enamored with Greek customs and way of life, attempts to enact

²⁹¹ For a discussion of shifting gender identity in terms of cult status as a reflection of Roman Republican negotiation of socio-political identity, see the discussion of Attis and Ariadne in Panoussi 2003, esp. 121-4 for the negotiation of the cult of Cybele at Rome (cited already at n.216).

²⁹² Beard, North, and Price 1998:61–72, 79–98. For a detailed discussion regarding the cult of Cybele and Catullus 63, see esp. 164-6. It may be pertinent to observe that the role of priestess of naturalized foreign deities at Rome, such as the cult of Ceres on the Palatine, Cybele, and Isis, was one of the few opportunities for women to participate actively in public religion and was often held by foreign women; cf. Scheid 1992:382.

²⁹³ Mac Góráin 2012:198–201. For a consideration of religious issues as propaganda during the Augustan era more broadly, see Gottlieb 1998. Already in the Hellenistic era, Dionysus serves as an important figure in the political propaganda of Hellenistic dynasts; cf. Burkert 1993:261–70.

²⁹⁴ For *furor* as a feature of Augustan propaganda and post-war reconstruction, cf. Rebeggiani 2016; Gowers 2016. Schiesaro 2009:76–77 sees “Bacchus’ taming, civilising function” as a feature of Roman and Augustan characterization in *Aeneid* 6 and Horace *Odes* 3.3, and Bacchus’ victory over the East as a feature of discussions around the Eastern campaign of Alexander the Great. At 77 n. 52, Schiesaro notes the use of the maenadic term *debacchari* at Horace *Odes* 3.3.55 to describe the extension of the Roman empire. For a brief discussion of the transference of Bacchic imagery from Antony to Augustus, with especial reference to Horace *Odes* 3.3.11-5, cf. Batinski 1991:374–75.

a Greek identity by practice of Greek νόμοι: he adopts their mode of dress, acquires a Greek home, and takes a Greek wife. Included among the Greek behaviors which Scyles adopts in asserting a Greek identity is worship of Greek gods in the ways customary to the Greeks (4.78): θεοῖσι ἱρὰ ἐποίηε κατὰ νόμους τοὺς Ἑλλήνων (“and he worshipped the gods according to Greek usage”). Of particular interest to us here, Scyles practices cult worship of Dionysus, which is framed as the incipit of his destruction (4.79): ἐπεῖτε δὲ ἔδεέ οἱ κακῶς γενέσθαι, ἐγένετο ἀπὸ προφάσιος τοιῆσδε. ἐπεθύμησε Διονύσῳ Βακχείῳ τελεσθῆναι (“But when the time came that evil should befall him, this was the cause of it: he conceived a desire to be initiated into the rites of the Bacchic Dionysus”). Herodotus emphatically reiterates cult worship of Dionysus as non-Scythian in character in the fervent disapproval of the Scythians (4.79): Σκύθαι δὲ τοῦ βακχεύειν περὶ Ἑλλήσι ὀνειδίζουσι· οὐ γάρ φασι οἶκός εἶναι θεὸν ἐξευρίσκειν τοῦτον ὅστις μαίνεσθαι ἐνάγει ἀνθρώπους (“Now, the Bacchic rites are one of the aspects of Greek culture of which the Scythians disapprove, on the grounds that it is unreasonable to seek out a god who drives people out of their minds”). His transgressive behavior becomes implicitly a denial of his Scythian identity to the Scythians, who foment rebellion against Scyles and plot his deposition (4.80). Scyles’ mode of death, decapitation (αὐτοῦ ταύτη ἀπέταμε τὴν κεφαλὴν), is a loaded form of death for practitioners in Greek mystery cult, among whom we can count Pentheus and Orpheus. The fate of Scyles resulting from worship of a cult god foreign to him thematizes anxieties around negotiating the presence of foreign cults in new contexts, especially with respect to the importance of religious worship in asserting or reasserting national identity. These kinds of anxieties simultaneously activate the lack of control inherent to frenzied cult worship as potentially destructive to larger societal structures.

Dionysiac frenzy, both in Greek literature, as we have just seen, and as Roman poets incorporate it into their epics, generally connotes an underlying threat of complete loss of control and destructive violence which threatens to destabilize larger structural orders. Scyles' death ultimately signifies the destruction of nation and household. Though not immediately tied to Bacchic frenzy specifically, already there is a sense of total female destructive power in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, in the manifestation of the goddess' grief and anger over the loss of her daughter as the barrenness of the earth, the destruction of crops, and consequent threat of famine for mortal men (310-2):

καί νύ κε πάμπαν ὄλεσσε γένος μερόπων ἀνθρώπων
 λιμοῦ ὑπ' ἀργαλέης, γεράων τ' ἐρικυδέα τιμὴν
 καὶ θυσιῶν ἤμερσεν Ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἔχοντας.

She would have destroyed the whole mortal race by cruel famine and stolen the glorious honor of gifts and sacrifices from those having homes on Olympus.

Here, the rage of Demeter threatens to topple the very order of the cosmos. We can see the same violent cultic force activated towards the destruction of the *polis* and *oikos* in the climactic closing scene of Euripides' celebrated *Bacchae*, in which Agave, in a Bacchic frenzy, perversely cradles in her arms the decapitated head of her son Pentheus, dripping with gore, after he has suffered *sparagmos* at the hands of his deluded mother and the maenads while witnessing their orgiastic rites. The image is especially disturbing for the violation of the mother-child relationship which it embodies, in which one of the most fundamental pillars of the domestic structure has been transgressed. In both of these maenadic examples, we can detect the destructive capacity of the maenad as ultimately effecting the destabilization of fundamental structures of civilization: *oikos*, *polis* and cosmos.²⁹⁵ Such fears seeped into the Roman political psyche as well, as exemplified by the suppression of Bacchic cult worship in Rome in 186 BCE;

²⁹⁵ Seafood 1993. But, for an analysis of Aristophanes' *Frogs* as displaying the reintegration of Dionysus into Athens, see Lada-Richards 1999.

from the testimony of Livy, it is clear from the formulation of the decree that such concerns were politically motivated, and that the cult was feared for its potentially conspiratorial and thus politically destabilizing capacity.²⁹⁶

The maenadic characterization of Vergil's Carthaginian queen, Dido, works first as a feature of first her quality as a tragic heroine, taken from the pages as if of an Athenian tragedy; but it also codes for a sense of epic destructive capacity, one which resonates historiographically in light of her status as a Carthaginian. In no uncertain terms is she like a maenad at the apex of her frenzy (*Aen.* 4.298-303):

eadem impia Fama furenti
detulit armari classem cursumque parari.
saevit inops animi totamque incensa per urbem
bacchatur, qualis commotis excita sacris
Thyias, ubi audito stimulant trieterica Baccho
orgia nocturnusque vocat clamore Cithaeron.

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The same heartless Rumor brought her the maddening news that they are arming the fleet and making ready for sailing. Helpless in mind she rages, and all aflame raves through the city, like some Thyiad startled by the shaken emblems, when she has heard the Bacchic cry: the biennial revels fire her and at night Cithaeron summons her with its din.

The term *bacchari* sets Dido directly in comparison to frenzied divine figures (Allecto in Book 10 and Fama in Book 4) and the Sibyl when she is possessed in prophecy (Book 6).²⁹⁷ Here, as elsewhere, Fama is an agent of fury, whose presence accompanies maenadic frenzy. The particular phrasing of her presence here, *impia Fama furenti detulit*, recalls an earlier locution in the text, in the brief personification of Furor that is included in the speech of Jupiter, relating to Venus the future fate of Rome (*Aen.* 1.294-6): *Furor impius intus | saeva sedens super arma et centum vinctus aënis | post tergum nodis fremet horridus ore cruento* ("within, impious Rage, sitting on savage arms, his hands fast bound behind with a hundred brazen knots, shall roar in the ghastliness of

²⁹⁶ Takács 2000; Scheid 1992:398–400.

²⁹⁷ The term appears otherwise twice in Vergil, where it is applied to place names of famous cult sites of Bacchus: *Taygetus bacchatus* (*G.* 2.487-8) and *Naxos bacchata* (*Aen.* 3.125).

blood-stained lips”). The verbal echoes - *impia* with *impius*, *Furor* with cognate *furenti*, and the alliteration of these terms with *Fama* - are strengthened by a sense of the grotesque characterization of both personifications, since *Fama* is elsewhere a *monstrum horrendum* (*Aen.* 4.181), as *Furor* is *horridus*. The allusion brings to bear the historical supremacy of the Romans over foreigners (and foreign queens especially, through the figure of Cleopatra), an important subtext to the story of Dido and Aeneas more broadly, in that *Furor* sits behind the gates of war (*Belli portae*), whose closing became a prominent feature of Augustus’ legacy as emperor and Roman military supremacy throughout the Mediterranean in the decades following the Battle of Actium in 31 BCE.

The threat of the destructive capacity of maenadic frenzy at the level of political state is reiterated not only in the account of Dido, but in the accounts of other foreign queens, as well. We have already seen maenadic frenzy associated with the destruction of civilization in the account of the Iliadic Andromache, whose maenadic frenzy is at its most potent in response to the death of her husband Hector, whose death codes for the fall of Troy.²⁹⁸ The destructive capacity of maenadic frenzy at the level of nation is signalled in the maenadic frenzy of Dido as well in a passage we have already considered (*Aen.* 4.665-71):

	it clamor ad alta	665
atria: concussam bacchatur Fama per urbem.		
lamentis gemituque et femineo ululatu		
tecta fremunt, resonat magnis plangoribus aether,		
non aliter quam si immissis ruat hostibus omnis		
Karthago aut antiqua Tyros, flammaeque furentes		670
culmina perque hominum volvantur perque deorum.		

A scream rises to the lofty roof; Rumor riots through the stricken city. The palace rings with lamentation, with sobbing and women’s shrieks, and heaven echoes with loud wails -- as though all Carthage or ancient Tyre were falling before the intruding foe, and fierce flames were rolling on over the roofs of men, over the roofs of gods.

Here, the simile introduces the idea of the toppling of political orders, and reiterates the identification of the queen with the city which she has founded. Her death signals the fall of

²⁹⁸ Lyne 1987:19–20 suggests the comparability of Dido and Hector.

Carthage; the simile reifies this connection between maenadic frenzy and destruction of larger political structures.

To this we might compare the maenadic activity of yet another foreign queen, the Spartan Helen, whose maenadic destruction enables her to inspire the frenetic activity of others, towards political ends. In his recounting of the fall of Troy in the Underworld in Book 6, Deiphobus, one of the sons of Priam, when speaking to Aeneas, recalls Helen's perfidious participation (*scelus exitiale Lacaenae*, "the destructive crime of the Spartan woman," *Aen.* 6.511) in the fall of Troy (*Aen.* 6.515-19):

cum fatalis equus saltu super ardua venit	515
Pergama et armatum peditem gravis attulit aluo,	
illa chorum simulans euhantis orgia circum	
ducebat Phrygias; flammam media ipsa tenebat	
ingentem et summa Danaos ex arce vocabat.	

When the fateful horse leapt over the heights of Troy, and brought armed infantry to weight its womb, she feigned a solemn dance and around the city led the Phrygian wives, shrieking in their Bacchic rites; she herself in the midst held a mighty torch and called the Danaans from the castle-height.

Helen's Bacchic revelry has the insidious cast of deception (*simulans*) under cover of which she can aid the Greeks in their plot to bring about the destruction of Troy. It is not the first time that Vergil will imagine Spartan women engaged in Bacchic revelry; in the second book of the *Georgics*, he imagines their worship at Taygetus (487-8): *virginibus bacchata Lacaenis* | *Taygeta* ("Taygetus, where Spartan girls hold Bacchic rites"). Helen herself during this nocturnal ritual is perversely cast as if in the role of *dadouchos*, the official torch-bearer of the Eleusinian Mysteries who led the initiates in the rites, a role manifested in myth in the nocturnal wandering of Demeter in search of her daughter and in iconographic depictions of Hecate as *psychopompos* leading Persephone out of the Underworld; in such cases, both divinities, Demeter and Hecate,

are depicted bearing torches.²⁹⁹ Here, her maenadic behavior enables the fall of Troy, where Vergil has rechanneled the maenadic grief of the Iliadic Andromache into the destructive capacity of the maenads with consequences for political stability.

The details of the description of Helen, including the bearing of the torch, the ritual shout of *euhoē* (*euhantis*), leading the Bacchic rites (*orgia ducebat*), and the crowd of local woman (*Phrygias*), will be reiterated in the description of Amata in Book 7, brought to madness by the Fury Allecto.³⁰⁰ Helen's characterization and its intertextual relationship with the fury of Amata and Allecto may be a Vergilian mediation of Fury and maenad which brings to bear and expands upon an Ennian intertext, in which the poet, in his tragedy *Alexander*, calls Helen *Lacedaemonia mulier Furiarum una* ("Spartan woman, one of the Furies," 49).³⁰¹ Vergil adopts this characterization outright in Aeneas' qualification of the Spartan woman as *Troiae et patriae communis Erinys* ("she, the undoing alike of her motherland and ours," *Aen.* 2.573) during their brief interaction when he flees from Troy. The depiction of Helen is likewise a modification of a verse from Euripides' *Helen*, in which the Spartan queen, confronted by an unfamiliar Menelaus, contemplates running away in flight, like a galloping foal, itself an image of maenadism, as at *Bacchae* 165-6, or a Bacchant (543-4): οὐχ ὥς δρομαία πῶλος ἢ Βάκχη θεοῦ | τάφῳ ξυνάψω κῶλον ("Shall I not, like a young racehorse or a worshipper of Bacchus, reach the tomb?"). Again, it is worth observing that Vergil has manipulated the binary of intra- and extra-domestic activity, in that the Bacchic revelry of Helen and the other Trojan women occurs within the walls of Troy, heightening the sense of threat to a natural order of peace and stability within the city walls, which is enacted to its fullest extent in the destruction of Troy that follows. Again, it will

²⁹⁹ Cf. *Hom. Hymn to Dem.* 61: δαΐδας μετὰ χερσὶν ἔχουσα. See Patera 2010.

³⁰⁰ The similarity is briefly noted in Burke 1976:26 n. 11.

³⁰¹ For Ennian intertexts in the *Aeneid*, see Elliott 2008.

be pertinent to recall the characterization of the Bacchanalia by Livy in his discussion of the *senatus consultum de Bacchanalibus*.³⁰² The much-discussed feature of simulation of Bacchic worship, both of Amata³⁰³ and of Helen, is an exploitation of conspiratorial qualities ascribed to those who participate in Bacchic cult worship, for which reason the decree was brought into effect.

The historically predetermined incompatibility of Trojan Aeneas and Carthaginian Dido for Vergil's audience will have been apparent immediately in the Phrygian status of Aeneas and the Penates and the importance of Cybele as a patron deity to the Trojans.³⁰⁴ As many scholars have noted, Vergil's depiction of the narrative with Dido relies upon a profound engagement with Hannibal and the Punic Wars, signaled by such ominous terminology as the description of Carthage as *bello egregia* (1.444-5).³⁰⁵ The most celebrated moment of this engagement comes in the curse of Dido, prophesying the return of an avenger (*ultor*, 4.625) who will wage war with the descendants of Aeneas: Roman readers of Vergil will have seen in this curse the historical figure of Hannibal, the formidable Carthaginian general.³⁰⁶

As yet unremarked, however, is the role of cult activity in these historical events, and thus in Vergil's text. Cybele occupied a prominent place in the topography of Augustan Rome, her temple set on the Palatine near the Temple of Apollo and Augustus' residence.³⁰⁷ Romans will have remembered the introduction of the cult of Cybele at Rome in 204 BCE, described not least

³⁰² On the implications of the decree for Bacchism as a historically attested phenomenon, see North 1979.

³⁰³ Few issues concerning Amata have been more contested than the authenticity of her Bacchic madness. C.f. e.g. La Penna 1967:315ff.; Fantham 1998:142-45; Lyne 1987:24-6, n. 50; Foster 1977:122-23.

³⁰⁴ Stehle argues for the connection of Aeneas to another cult, the Samothracian Mysteries. Cf. Stehle 1991:599-600, for the discussion of two uses of *Magni Dii* in the *Aeneid* to signify the Penates (3.11-12 and 8.678-9). For archaeological evidence for cult worship at Rome, including the Samothracian Mysteries and the cult of Cybele, among others, see Lawall 2003.

³⁰⁵ Horsfall 1990; Harrison 1984.

³⁰⁶ On this subject, much scholarship has been produced. See e.g. O'Hara 1990:94ff.

³⁰⁷ The definitive account is Wiseman 1984. The importance of Cybele at Rome is reiterated at the level of language in the sixth Book of the *Aeneid*, as identified by West 1990:439.

of all by Livy in his history,³⁰⁸ and with especial attention to the historical circumstances for its introduction.³⁰⁹ The importation of the goddess from Phrygia was by injunction following the consultation of the Sibylline Books in response to the looming threat of Hannibal to Rome during the Second Punic War.³¹⁰ The historically necessitated opposition of Dido and Aeneas in Vergil's text, then, is encoded in cult activity with every reference to the Trojans' Phrygian origins and in the mirror of Rome's historical engagement with Carthage. A fundamental incompatibility thus characterizes Juno's suggestion to Venus that Dido be permitted to 'serve a Phrygian husband' (*liceat Phrygio servire marito*, *Aen.* 4.103), rooted in the religious implications of the Phrygian designation and the historical event tied to the presence of a Phrygian cult at Rome. Vergil reiterates the association between the cult of Cybele and the height of Roman hegemony in the pageant of Roman heroes which Anchises narrates for Aeneas in the Underworld, whose retinue is qualified with a simile of Cybele and her worshippers (*Aen.* 6.781-7):

en huius, nate, auspiciis illa incluta Roma
imperium terris, animos aequabit Olympo,
septemque uma sibi muro circumdabit arces,
felix prole virum: qualis Berecynthia mater
invehitur curru Phrygias turrita per urbes
laeta deum partu, centum complexa nepotes,
omnis caelicolas, omnis supera alta tenentis.

785

Lo, under his auspices, my son, shall that glorious Rome extend her empire to earth's ends, her ambitions to the skies, and shall embrace seven hills with a single city's wall, blessed in a brood of heroes; even as the Berecynthian mother, turret-crowned, rides in her chariot through Phrygian towns, happy in a progeny of gods, clasping a hundred grandsons, all denizens of heaven, all tenants of celestial heights.

³⁰⁸ 29.10.4-11.8, 29.14.5-14, 36.36.3-4. See also Varro *Ling. Lat.* 6.15; Ovid *Fast.* 4.247-90.

³⁰⁹ Burton 1996, esp. n. 1 for a complete list of the ancient sources; for a discussion of the version told in Ovid's *Fasti*, see Bremmer 1987.

³¹⁰ According to Livy (22.9.7-10, 22.10.10, 23.31.9), in response to the threat of Carthage during the Punic Wars and in accordance with a consultation with the Sibylline Books, a temple of Venus Erycina, a deity already worshipped in Sicily, was dedicated on the Capitoline, corresponding to the temple of Cybele on the Palatine; Vergil has Aeneas anticipate this historical moment when he establishes this cult in Sicily in Book 5 (759-61). Cf. Harrison 1984; Stehle 1989. Vergil may have already alluded to the goddess Venus in this cult aspect at *Aen.* 1.716 in the title *Acidalia*; cf. O'Hara 1990.

The success of Rome, which is historically and narratologically predicated on the destruction of Carthage, is indelibly associated with the cult deity who ensures Roman military success and who is so fundamentally linked to the Trojan hero Aeneas.

We may briefly note as well a similar dynamic at play in the frenzy of a different queen in the *Aeneid*, one at odds with Aeneas, the Latin Amata.³¹¹ Now, Amata is hardly, to a Roman reader, a foreign queen. However, in a recent article, Dunstan Lowe has offered a compelling analysis of the imagery of Allecto's maddening of Amata at *Aeneid* 7.346-53.³¹² On the imagery of the snake by which Allecto induces frenzy in Amata, transforming into a golden necklace,³¹³ Lowe offers convincing argumentation of the source of the image in cult worship of a different Phrygian mystery god, Sabazius, whose worship was confused with that of Bacchus by the 1st century CE, due to the similar nature of their rites (nocturnal, ecstatic, noisy, and erotic).³¹⁴ Lowe notes the implications of this feature of Amata's frenzy to the larger plot of the text (87): "With crushing irony, Amata's resistance to the Phrygian Aeneas takes the form of submission to the Phrygian Dionysus." Lowe's observation is bolstered by the inclusion among the recipients of Aeneas' prayers at the opening of Book 7 Cybele, whose Phrygian origins are emphasized in her title (*Aen.* 7.139-40): *Phrygiamque...matrem | invocat* ("he prays to the Phrygian mother"). The association

³¹¹ Fantham 1998.

³¹² The peculiar detail of the simile of the spinning top has attracted significant attention from scholars, who find its significance perplexing. A number of propositions have been suggested to explain this image, some of which find a solution in the imagery of Bacchic worship; cf. e.g. Rabel 1981; Bleisch 1996; Salvatore 1991:397-98. An early proposition by Hirst 1937 connects Vergil's spinning top with votive offerings for the child Dionysus in the shape of tops found in the sanctuary of the Kabiroi at Thebes in Boeotia, citing Clement of Alexandria, who, quoting Orpheus, gives a list of offerings for the god in which tops are included. Particularly compelling is the argumentation of Levaniouk 2007:194-96, connecting the simile of the spinning top to ritual objects associated with Dionysus Zagreus. For similar argumentation, see Bocciolini Palagi 2007, chap. 3. See also West 1990:442-43; Lyne 1987:16, 24-26; Feeney 1991:167.

³¹³ For a reading of this as a scene of Dionysiac initiation, see Bocciolini Palagi 2007, chap. 1.

³¹⁴ Lowe 2012:82. Earlier, Pichon 1912. Feeney 1991:165-68. Of especial interest is his reading of the image as pathologizing madness (168): "...this symbiosis of the concrete and the hallucinatory fantastic catches at something central to the experience of madness. By laying bare the impossibilities of adequately narrating such extremes of behaviour, this technique involved the reader in the recognition of our inability to understand madness in others, or acknowledge it in ourselves."

is perhaps confirmed by Ovid, who incorporates this very image in his *Metamorphoses* in the story of Cadmus and his wife, one among the various myths narrated by the poet which are explicitly associated with the worship of Bacchus (*Met.* 4.595-602): the Theban Cadmus, in the form of a snake, encircles himself around the body of his wife, an image ready to engage intertextually with the Fury Tisiphone as modelled on the Vergilian Allecto wielding her frenzy-inducing snake against Amata, but transferred to the Theban king.³¹⁵ For Amata too, as for Dido, opposition against the Trojans is subtly encoded in the cultic behavior associated with Aeneas as a part of his Phrygian identity.

The religious and mystic associations of another foreign queen and bride, Cleopatra (*Aegyptia coniunx*, *Aen.* 8.688) are brought to bear on the text as well, in a brief reference to the depiction on the shield of Aeneas of the Battle of Actium. Here, attention is given to Augustus' enemies, the perfidious Mark Antony and his famed wife, the Egyptian Cleopatra (*Aen.* 8.696-7): *regina in mediis patrio vocat agmina sistro, | necdum etiam geminos a tergo respicit anguis* ("In the middle the queen calls upon her hosts with their native sistrum; not yet does she cast back a glance at the twin snakes behind"). The brief image of the unnamed Egyptian queen includes a religious symbol of the mysteries of Isis, the sistrum, shortly followed by a description of the dog-headed Egyptian god Anubis engaged in battle against the Roman gods Neptune, Venus, and Minerva.³¹⁶ As scholars have noted, the religious imagery on the shield of Aeneas sets the historic and political conflict in terms of a fundamental religious incompatibility, elevating the human conflict to one of divine supremacy. In this capacity as well, Dido, Amata, and Cleopatra are

³¹⁵ Feeney 1991:239–40; Bocciolini Palagi 2007, chap. 4.

³¹⁶ For an analysis of Dionysiac cult elements applied to Cleopatra in the poetry of Horace, see Feldherr 2010. For the Dido as Cleopatra, see Pease 1927.

comparable, in that their opposition to the Trojans and Romans, an opposition which poses a threat at the level of political structures, extends to their religious and cultic engagement.

These incompatibilities are confirmed both by the literary narrative, when Aeneas and the Trojans withdraw from Carthage and make for Italy, and by the historical narrative of the Roman state, which comes to fruition and reaches its apex under Augustus. Here, the broader model of allusive engagement which the relationship between hierophant and initiate offers can allow us to reimagine the relationship between poet and audience, considering first Dido from within the narrative, and then the elite Roman audience for whom Vergil writes. As many scholars have commented, Vergil's audience has a privileged knowledge to which Dido has no access - they have lived the historical inevitabilities concerning which Dido can only speculate. There is a metapoetic dimension to this dramatic irony, in that Vergil's poetry is the culmination of that history, in its direct engagement with the Augustan age, and Vergil positions himself, writing from the vantage point of the very origins of Roman history, as the prophet of that history,³¹⁷ his primary mouthpieces Jupiter in Book 1, who represents ultimate command of the universe and emblematic of the Roman state itself, in his prominent position in the city of Rome, and Anchises, whose shade in Book 6 describes the pageant of future Romans. We have already seen how a fundamental lack of knowledge characterizes Dido in imagery with cult overtones;³¹⁸ now, we may begin to speculate to what degree the knowledgeable audience of Vergil's epic can reflect on its own status as a kind of privileged cult participant of the 'cult of the Muses' and in response to a hierophantic Vergil.

³¹⁷ The shifting significance and multivalence of the term *vates*, whose semantic value shifts most dramatically in the Augustan period, is a reflection of this dual status. See Newman 1967; O'Hara 1990, chap. 5 ("Vergil as Poet-Prophet of the *Aeneid*"); Winkler 1987, with especial reference to the characterizations of the Sibyl, Orpheus, and Musaeus of *Aeneid* Book 6.

³¹⁸ See Ch. 2.2.2.

Beyond the associations of cult with national identity already articulated, cult motifs provide productive models that serve the characterization of the figures of epic. The interactions between Dido and Aeneas at various moments rely heavily on the figures and motifs associated with mystery cult in a play of shifting referents, setting the two at odds with one another. Like that of Persephone in her role as infernal queen, Dido's implacability is at play in the narrative and is subject to Aeneas' supplication. Whether she will welcome Aeneas and the Trojans to her shores, and whether she will allow the love to blossom between her and the hero, a love necessary to ensuring the success of the Trojan mission, must be negotiated.

There is a sense of religious observance in the mindset with which Dido is manipulated by Mercury to meet the arrival of the foreigners (1.303-4): *in primis regina quietum | accipit in Teucros animum mentemque benignam* ("above all, the queen receives a gentle mind and gracious purpose towards the Teucrians"). The phrase *mens benigna* recalls apotropaic language with which infernal deities are regarded and the fervent wish by supplicants that the gods receive their prayers with a kind temperament, which, in the context of mystery cult, manifests as the wish of the initiates that Persephone receive them kindly at death. The phrase at a certain level foreshadows Dido's later characterization as a frenzied maenad with links to Furor in that it is a near paraphrasis of the euphemistic name for the Furies, *Eumenides* (Εὐμενίδες).

In the context of mystery cult, Persephone is the figure who must be placated and to whom the appeal for a gentle temperament is made. Evidence for such thinking can be found on several Orphic gold leaf tablets, in which Persephone is supplicated as "kindly," *πρόφρων*, where again the connection is made to mind (*φρήν*).³¹⁹ Though late, the Orphic hymns may provide added testimony, insofar as many contain such appeals to the kind-mindedness of the

³¹⁹ *OF* 489 F B; *OF* 490 F B.

divinities beseeched. In Vergil's description of Orpheus' appeal to the infernal deities, it is Persephone who is foregrounded, in that she places the injunction on Orpheus which he will eventually violate (*G.* 4.487): *namque hanc dederat Proserpina legem* ("for that condition had Proserpine imposed"). The implacability of the infernal divinities is a feature of their characterization as well (*G.* 469-70): *Manisque adiit regemque tremendum | nesciaque humanis precibus mansuescere corda* ("and [he] made his way to the land of the dead with its fearful king and hearts no human prayers can soften").

Dido's implacability and Aeneas' singular status as an effective supplicant are brought to bear in her reflections on her growing love for him, in a passage which variously evokes Persephone (*Aen.* 4.22-9):

solus hic inflexit sensus animumque labantem
impulit. agnosco veteris vestigia flammae.
sed mihi vel tellus optem prius ima dehiscat
vel pater omnipotens adigat me fulmine ad umbras,
pallentis umbras Erebo noctemque profundam,
ante, pudor, quam te violo aut tua iura resolvo.
ille meos, primus qui me sibi iunxit, amores
abstulit; ille habeat secum servetque sepulcro.

25

He alone has swayed my will and overthrown my tottering soul. I feel again a spark of that former flame. But rather, I would pray, may earth yawn for me to its depths, or may the Almighty Father hurl me with his bolt to the shades - the pale shades and abysmal night of Erebus - before, Shame, I violate you or break your laws! He who first linked me to himself has taken away my heart; may he keep it with him, and guard it in the grave!

Her implacability is implicit in the phrase *solus hic inflexit sensus* and recalls the frequent characterization of the infernal king and queen as unfeeling and indifferent to human emotion. Here, Dido imagines for herself two forms of death evocative of the figures associated with mystery cult. In the first, she imagines a chasm appearing in the earth, by which she might fall into the Underworld. The image has its most famous representation in literature in the myth of Persephone, when the innocent maiden, plucking flowers in a meadow, is abducted by Pluto through a gaping chasm in the earth, as discussed in the opening verses of the *Homeric Hymn to*

Demeter (16): χάνε δὲ χθὼν εὐρυάγυια (“the earth with its wide pathways gaped open”). Death by lightning bolt is variously associated with many figures important to mystery cult: Semele, prior to the birth of Dionysus (of which there is lengthy discussion in the opening monologue of Euripides’ *Bacchae*); a version of the myth of Orpheus has the bard dying by thunderbolt;³²⁰ three gold leaf tablets from Thurii characterize the initiates as struck by the thunderbolt of Zeus with dialectic variants of ἀστεροπῆτα κεραυνόν;³²¹ in a reformulation of the image, the lightning bolt plays an important role in the myth of Dionysus Zagreus in the Orphic account of anthropogony. Both forms of death, then, which Dido proposes to her sister Anna recall mystery cult imagery.

We have already begun to imagine Aeneas as a kind of cult initiate; it is in light of this characterization that Dido’s final threat to Aeneas as she views his ships departing her harbor appears to have an important Orphic subtext (*Aen.* 4.600-602):

non potui abreptum divellere corpus et undis
spargere? non socios, non ipsum absumere ferro
Ascanium patriisque epulandum ponere mensis?

Could I not have seized him, torn him limb from limb, and scattered the pieces on the waves?
Could I not have put his men to the sword, and Ascanius himself, and served him up as a meal at his father’s table?

Both threats take their origins from tragic plots - the former, the slaughter of Medea’s brother, Absyrtus, the latter, the feast of Thyestes;³²² besides the Euripidean Medea, the Euripidean Agave is a subtle tragic model as well.³²³ The image of torn limbs, however, in the context of the

³²⁰ Cf. various testimonia given at *OF* 1073 T B (e.g. III: Θρήϊκα χρυσολύρην τῇδ’ Ὀρφέα Μοῦσαι ἔθαψαν | ὃν κτάνεν ὑψιμέδων Ζεὺς ψολοέντι βέλει).

³²¹ *OF* 488 F B; *OF* 489 F B; *OF* 490 F B.

³²² Cf. Austin 1986 ad loc. For a Medean intertext for Dido at *Aen.* 4.20-3, hinging on the term *spargere*, see Uhlfelder 1955.

³²³ Hershkowitz 1998:36.

Vergilian corpus, will take its most immediate intertext from a moment in the *Georgics*, in the description of the death of Orpheus at the hands of maenads (4.520-2):

...spretae Ciconum quo munere matres
inter sacra deum nocturnique orgia Bacchi
discerptum latos iuvenem sparsere per agros.

...till the Ciconian women, resenting such devotion, in the midst of their sacred rites and their midnight Bacchic orgies, tore the youth limb from limb and flung him over the far-spread plains.

Sparagmos is a recurrent image in the myths associated with Bacchic rites - Pentheus suffers *sparagmos* in the culmination of Euripides' play and the baby Dionysus suffers *sparagmos* at the hands of the Titans in the myth of Zagreus central to Bacchic belief. In her frenzied state, the maenadic Dido, threatening *sparagmos*, is as much like the maenads of the *Georgics* who tear Orpheus limb from limb as she is a Medea. The threat that the queen represents to the Roman state is thus articulated even at the level of personal injury to the mythological founder of that state, Aeneas, through opposing cult dynamics. Through such references, the interactions between Dido and Aeneas, and the hostility that develops between the two, is framed along cult models of the initiate propitiating a cult goddess, one who is capable of effecting his complete destruction, a particularization of oppositional cult dynamics as associated with national identity more broadly.

Examination of the frenzied figures most iconic to epic, hinging on ancient discussions about the mutability of Dionysiac mania, has allowed for a reappraisal of the role of cult rhetoric in driving epic plots and establishing epic programmatics, focused on the figure of the maenad as the closest feminine approximation of masculine martial energy. A literary trope of maenadic frenzy as the capacity for violence in the context of epic is at its most visible in such figures as the Homeric Andromache, the hymnic Demeter, and the Vergilian Juno, but also comes to qualify such figures as Vergil's Dido and the mother of Euryalus. A taxonomy of the various maenadic

epic archetypes, such as the grieving mother, the maenadic warrior, and the foreign queen, has been established, towards the codification of an epic poetic mode grounded in cult imagery. Roman epic poets who include such figures heighten the sense of martial lack of control and reiterate divine forces behind martial activity. Such engagement can be seen to have historical implications grounded in historical realities of cult worship and to set into play questions inherent to epic as a vehicle for the expression of national identity through the negotiation of cult as a fundamentally foreign presence. Cult models allow for an expression of female political power, and especially that which is foreign and threatening to Rome, working at the level of individual figures such as Dido, framing every interaction as potentially fraught with failure that entails a cosmic destruction.

Chapter 5. TRAGIC MAENADS AND MAENADS IN LOVE

A poetics grounded in cult rhetoric will not only have pervaded the generic conventions of epic; an epic cult poetics will be answered by a non-epic cult poetic reflex. The incorporation of cult rhetoric into epic at the level of generic programmatics will find a mirror image refracted in lesser genres, most visibly in that genre which defines itself against epic, elegy, towards the codification of a kind of cult erotic poetics. The presence of cult features at the level of generic programmatics will in addition enhance the availability of cult to metapoetic cachet, to be incorporated into self-conscious discussions around establishing distinctions of genre. The previous chapter has explored cult imagery and rhetoric as a feature of epic; this chapter will expand on cult as a literary discursive mode by considering adaptations of cult rhetoric to explicit discussions about genre. In doing so, I will identify non-epic poetic features grounded in cult imagery, relying on the same mutability of mania that allowed for Dionysiac frenzy to be reframed as martial fury; here, the identification of Dionysiac mania as vatic frenzy and erotic passion grounds a discourse in and about genres besides epic.

5.1 TESTING THE LIMITS OF GENRE THROUGH CULT

Beyond the conventions of epic, the conflation of different types of frenzied possession becomes a mechanism for metapoetic reflection where poets bring cult activity to bear in their texts as a way of experimenting with and complicating boundaries between genre. Cultic activity becomes folded into Alexandrian oppositions of lighter and heavier genres as signposts of bucolic, elegiac, or epic activity. We may reach back to Vergil's output prior to the *Aeneid* for cultic figures and activity as exemplifying bucolic ideals, starting with the figure of Orpheus, whose first appearance

in extant Latin literature comes in the *Eclogues*.³²⁴ There, the bard becomes the embodiment of bucolic song, his ability to subdue feral nature a reflection of bucolic leisure. The first reference to the singer is a depiction of the bard decorating a cup to be the prize of a contest of poetic composition between the shepherds Damoetas and Menalcas (*Ecl.* 3.46): *Orpheaque in medio posuit silvasque sequentis* (“and in the center he placed Orpheus with the woods following him”). The detail of the woods which follow Orpheus implies that the bard is in the act of singing, enchanting the trees with the power of his song, an image with bucolic overtones in the idyllic setting of the *Eclogues*. Such is the image used in praise of the song contest of Damon and Alpheisiboeus in the invocation of *Eclogue* 8 (1-5):

Pastorum Musam Damonis et Alpheisiboei,
immemor herbarum quos est mirata iuuenca
certantis, quorum stupefactae carmine lynces,
et mutata suos requierunt flumina cursus,
Damonis Musam dicemus et Alpheisiboei.

5

The pastoral Muse of Damon and Alpheisiboeus, at whose rivalry the heifer marveled and forgot to graze, at whose song lynxes stood spellbound, and rivers were changed and stayed their current – the Muse of Damon and Alpheisiboeus I will sing.

Here, the iconic image of Orpheus subduing nature becomes the metaphorical ideal of the poetic output of those shepherds and goatherds imagined as the primary composers of bucolic in an idealized landscape. The conflation becomes complete with the poet’s wish, by which any poet can be an Orpheus, and, implicitly, any poetry ‘Orphic,’ at 55-6: *sit Tityrus Orpheus, | Orpheus in silvis, inter delphinas Arion* (“let Tityrus be an Orpheus – an Orpheus in the woods, an Arion among the dolphins”). Elsewhere, the mythical bard is imagined as a potential rival in song (*Ecl.* 4.55-7): *non me carminibus vincet nec Thracius Orpheus | nec Linus, huic mater quamvis atque huic pater adsit, | Orphei Calliopea, Lino formosus Apollo* (“Then shall neither Thracian Orpheus nor Linus vanquish me in song, though mother give aid to the one and father to the other, Calliope

³²⁴Knox 1986:48ff.

to Orpheus, to Linus fair Apollo”). Orpheus as a culture hero for poetic composition becomes a feature of the bucolic landscape, available as a model for emulation; but lurking behind such descriptions is his important role as a cult singer, as well.

Worship of Bacchus, too, becomes a signpost for various modes of song, enfolded into the idealized bucolic context imagined for Orpheus. Among the laudable deeds enumerated of Daphnis, the shepherd whose death is the subject of the song contest in *Eclogue* 5, Vergil includes his institution of Bacchic rites (30-1): *Daphnis thiasos inducere Bacchi | et foliis lentas intexere mollibus hastas* (“Daphnis it was [that taught men] to lead on the dances of Bacchus and entwine in soft leaves the tough spears”). Here, we may detect an echo of Callimachean vocabulary of opposition at play in the contrast between the softness (*mollis*) of the leaves and roughness (*lentus*) of the spears, mapping onto cultic activity the familiar general vocabulary of generic opposition established in the opening verses of the *Aetia*. Daphnis himself becomes a kind of cult figure who receives annual rites in the manner of cult divinities such as Bacchus and Ceres (*Ecl.* 5.79-80): *ut Baccho Cererique, tibi sic vota quotannis | agricolae facient; damnabis tu quoque votis* (“As to Bacchus and to Ceres, so to you, year after year, shall the husbandmen pay their vows; you, too, shall hold them to their vows”).³²⁵ In the figure of Daphnis, the tropes of poet as religious speaker and as object of religious worship, embodied by the hierophantic Orpheus, seep into the characterization of the bucolic singer as one facet of his poetic profile.

Here too, the praise of the poet looks back to Orpheus as a model, since Orpheus is a singer of cult knowledge. In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Orpheus is the ‘singer of the cult rites of Bacchus’ (*Lyaeus | amissoque dolens sacrorum vate suorum*, *Met.* 11.67-8), who teaches Bacchic rites to King Midas and to the Athenian Eumolpus, who is famous as the founder of the cult rites of

³²⁵ Compare Ovid *Ars* 3.616: *ad mea sacra veni*; *Fast.* 4.452: *Persephone, clamant, ad tua dona veni*.

Demeter and Persephone at Eleusis (*Midan, cui Thracius Orpheus | orgia tradiderat cum Cecropio Eumolpo, Met. 11.92-3*).³²⁶ In fact, the celebrated song of Orpheus that is framed in Book 10 of the *Metamorphoses* subtly rearticulates not only the power of Orpheus as a singer, but the religious significance of his poetry: each of the epyllia recounted by the bard deals in religious imagery or gives an aetiology for cult worship.

Metapoetic discussion of genre embedded in bucolic and connected to cult imagery can be signaled not only by inclusion of material, but pointed exclusion, as well. In the second Book of the *Georgics*, in which Vergil deals most directly with worship of Bacchus (as to be expected of a Book the subject of which is viticulture), Vergil inserts the celebrated, so-called ‘Praise of Italy’ passage, in which Italy is imagined as an idealized landscape of non-epic genres (*G. 2.136-176*). Here, Vergil, among various forms of praise, includes a list of those dangers from which the Italian countryside is blissfully free: no ravening tigers (*rabidae tigres*, 151), no lions (*saeva leonum semina*, 151-2), no aconite (*aconite*, 152), and no scaly snakes (*squameus anguis*, 154), for instance. With such an idealized landscape, whose rhetoric is one of the dangers lacking in the area, Vergil becomes the inspiration for the praise of Italy which Propertius incorporates into his erotic poetry and in which the poet augments the list of dangers with a cultic image (3.22.33): *Pentheia non saevae venantur in arbore Bacchae* (“no cruel Bacchants hunt Pentheus in a tree”).

³²⁶ In Euripides’ *Rhesus*, Orpheus is described as having introduced the Eleusinian rites (943-4): μυστηρίων τε τῶν ἀπορρήτων φανὰς | ἔδειξεν Ὀρφεύς (“it was Orpheus who revealed it to your unutterable mysteries”). He is elsewhere called the ‘spokesman of Bacchus’ (Βάκχου προφήτης, 972). For other testimonia on Orpheus as introducing the Eleusinian rites, see *OF* 510 T, 512 T, 513 T, 514 T, 515 T, 516 T, 517 T, and 518 T Bernabé; for the rites of Ceres and Proserpina, see *OF* 533 T and 534 T; for the Samothracian rites, see *OF* 519 T-523 T. In the *Argonautica* of Apollonius of Rhodes, Orpheus is responsible for the leaping and dancing of worshippers of Cybele (1134-9 [= *OF* 527 T B]): ἄμυδις δὲ νέοι Ὀρφεὺς ἀνωγῆ | σκαίροντες βηταρμόν ἐνόπλιον ὠρχήσαντο, | καὶ σάκεα ξιφέεσσιν ἐπέκτυπον, ὥς κεν ἰωὴ | δύσφημος πλάζοιτο δι’ ἡέρος, ἦν ἔτι λαοὶ | κηδεῖη βασιλῆος ἀνέστενον. ἔνθεν ἔσαιε | ῥόμβω καὶ τυπάνῳ Ῥεῖην Φρύγες ἰλάσκονται (“At the same time, upon Orpheus’ command, the young men leapt as they danced the dance-in-armor and beat their shields with their swords, so that any ill-omened cry of grief, which the people were still sending up in lament for their king, would be lost in the air. Since then, the Phrygians have always propitiated Rhea with rhombus and tambourine”).

The reference is clearly to the closing image of Euripides' *Bacchae*, in which Pentheus is dismembered by the maenads by being tied to a bent tree, the branches of which being slowly released rend the figure limb from limb. Propertius' reference is, once again, a metapoetic statement on genre, in a variety of ways: first, it establishes an opposition between the violence of the frenzied maenads who destroy Pentheus and the idealized elegiac locations of the amatory *locus amoenus* and idyllic bucolic landscape; and second, it metapoetically brings tragedy to bear on the discussion, and in fact, it is unsurprising that Pentheus will not be present in the elegiac poetry of Propertius, since such a figure is better suited to tragedy; the narrative to which Propertius alludes is most famously presented on the Athenian stage as a celebrated tragedy. Propertius' augmented idealized Italy allows for a retrospective re-reading of Vergil's praise of Italy as a landscape free from not only those dangers which threaten mortal inhabitants of the landscape, but also free from the danger posed to Bacchus, in the figure of Pentheus, who throughout the *Bacchae* sets himself as the enemy of the god and whose abiding image in the play is of a menacing wild beast (542-3): ἀγριωπὸν τέρας, οὐ φῶτα βρότειον, | φόνιον δ' ὥστε γίγαντ' ἀντίπαλον θεοῖς ("a monster with visage wild, no man of mortal frame but one of the murderous Giants who opposed the gods").

In the *Aeneid*, references to Bacchic worship reiterate an opposition between religious worship and martial activity along generic lines, as in the speech of the Tyrrhenian leader Tarchon chastising his soldiers and rallying them to enter the tumult of battle against Camilla (*Aen.* 11.732-40):

quis metus, o numquam dolituri, o semper inertes
 Tyrrheni, quae tanta animis ignavia venit?
 femina palantis agit atque haec agmina vertit!
 quo ferrum quidve haec gerimus tela inrita dextris?
 at non in Venerem segnes nocturnaque bella,
 aut ubi curva choros indixit tibia Bacchi.
 exspectate dapes et plenae pocula mensae
 (hic amor, hoc studium) dum sacra secundus haruspex

735

nuntiet ac lucos vocet hostia pinguis in altos!

740

You Tuscans, who will never be stung by shame, sluggards always, what fear, what utter cowardice has fallen on your hearts? Does a woman drive you in disorder and rout your ranks? For what reason do we bear swords, why these idle weapons, in our hands? But you are not laggard for love and nightly frays, or when the curved flute proclaims the Bacchic dance. Wait for the feats and the cups on the loaded board (this is your passion, this your delight!) until the favoring seer announces the sacrifice, and the fat victim calls you to the deep groves!

Here, Bacchic worship is allied with amatory behavior, embodying a leisureliness at odds with martial energy. Vergil makes the opposition most explicit in the tongue-in-cheek phrase *nocturna bella*, ‘nightly frays,’ by which Tarchon means erotic activity. Such language, by which the acts of the lover are framed by rhetoric of warfare in a context where the two are at odds with one another, is an exploitation of the generic opposition in Roman poetry between epic and elegy, represented most acutely in elegiac poetry by the figure of the *miles amans*, the lover who metaphorically wages a war of love for the object of his desire, in lieu of military service fundamentally at odds with the leisure of the languid lover.

Coupled with the image of Bacchic cult worship with which it is paired, the phrase *nocturna bella* certainly would have evoked the sexual activity which Roman rhetoric imagined as occurring during the nocturnal rites of Bacchus. Such language is an exploitation of rhetoric around cultic activity, as in the discussion of the ‘nocturnal rites’ (νυκτέρου τελετῆς, 343) of Dionysus in the *Frogs* of Aristophanes and the ‘sacred nights’ (ἁγίας νύκτας, Arg. 2.908) which Dionysus passes in revelry (ὀργιάσαι, Arg. 2.907) on Mount Nysa mentioned by Apollonius of Rhodes; Sophocles in his *Antigone* identifies the maenads as women who ‘in their frenzy dance all night in honor of their lord Iacchus’ (Θυίαισιν, αἳ σε μαινόμεναι πάννυχτοι χορεύουσι | τὸν ταμίαν Ἰακχον, Ant. 1151-2).³²⁷ In Latin literature, it is reiterated in the discussion of the Bacchanalia by Livy (*crepitibus etiam ululatibusque nocturnis*, 39.15.6; *strepitibus clamoribusque*

³²⁷ For iconographic testimony, see Paleothodoros 2010.

nocturnis attoniti, 39.15.9; *quales primum nocturnos coetus, deinde promiscuous mulierum ac virorum esse creditis?*, 39.15.12); it also finds an expansion in the amatory poetry of Ovid, whose lover is to call upon Bacchus in his aspect as a god of nighttime rites (*Nycteliumque patrem nocturnaue sacra precare*, *Ars* 1.567), to aid him in his amatory exploits, which later the poet will call *mystica furta* (*Ars*. 2.640). And Vergil himself has already exploited such language, first of Dido's maenadic frenzy at *Aen.* 4.302-3 (*audito...Baccho | orgia nocturnusque vocat clamore Cithaeron*) and of the maenads who attack Orpheus at *G.* 4.521 (*nocturnique orgia Bacchi*).³²⁸ Bacchic worship, coupled with erotic behaviour, to which it already had connections in the Roman imagination, becomes one such activity by which the unbellicose man rejects epic generic conventions, especially in the association of Bacchic worship and its nocturnal rites with amatory behavior already set at odds with war, by which Bacchic worship is incorporated into imagery encoding distinctions of genre.

A similar taunt is made by Numanus against Ascanius and his troops, in which martial valor is set in opposition to a softness here deemed to be characteristic of of cult worship (*Aen.* 9.598-620):

non pudet obsidione iterum valloque teneri, bis capti Phryges, et morti praetendere muros? en qui nostra sibi bello conubia poscunt!	600
quis deus Italiam, quae vos dementia adegit? non hic Atridae nec fandi fictor Vlixes: durum a stirpe genus natos ad flumina primum deferimus saevoque gelu duramus et undis;	605
venatu invigilant pueri silvasque fatigant, flectere ludus equos et spicula tendere cornu. at patiens operum parvoque adsueta iuventus aut rastris terram domat aut quatit oppida bello. omne aevum ferro teritur, versaue iuvencum terga fatigamus hasta, nec tarda senectus	610
debilitat viris animi mutatque vigorem: canitiem galea premimus, semperque recentis comportare iuvat praedas et vivere rapto. vobis picta croco et fulgenti murice vestis,	

³²⁸ Servius sees an etymological worldplay on the cult epithet *Nyctelius*. At *Aen.* 4.303, for the lemma *Nocturnusque*, he gives: *nocte celebratus; unde ipsa sacra 'nyctelia' dicebantur*. Cf. O'Hara 1996:259; 1996:155–56.

desidiaē cordi, iuvat indulgere choreis, 615
 et tunicae manicas et habent redimicula mitrae.
 o vere Phrygiae, neque enim Phryges, ite per alta
 Dindyma, ubi adsuetis bifoŕem dat tibia cantum.
 tympana vos buxusque vocat Berecynthia Matris
 Idaeae; sinite arma viris et cedite ferro. 620

Are you not shamed, twice captured Phrygians, again to be cooped inside beleaguered ramparts, and to ward off death with walls? See: these are the men who go to war to claim our brides for themselves! What god, what madness, has driven you to Italy? Here are no sons of Atreus, no fable-forging Ulysses! A race of hardy stock, we first bring our newborn sons to the river, and harden them with the water's cruel cold; as boys they keep vigil for the chase, and tire the forests; their sport is to rein the steed and shoot arrows from the bow; but patient of toil, and inured to want, our youth tames earth with the hoe or shakes cities in battle. All our life is worn down with iron's use; with spear reversed we goad our bullocks' flanks, and sluggish age does not weaken our hearts' strength or change our vigor. Onto white hairs we press the helmet, and we ever delight to drive in fresh booty and live on plunder. But you wear embroidered saffron and gleaming purple; sloth is your joy, your delight is to enjoy the dance; your tunics have sleeves and your turbans ribbons. Phrygian women, indeed! – for Phrygian men you are not – go over the heights of Dindymus, where to accustomed ears the pipe utters music from double mouths! The timbrels call you, and the Berecynthian boxwood of the mother of Ida: leave arms to men, and quit the sword.

Here, cult worship is associated with a softness and luxury which is included in Roman rhetoric of invective against one's enemies. The 'Phrygian women' here who are not 'Phrygian men' make reference to the castrated Galloi who worshipped Cybele, pejoratively called *semiviri* and whose presence at Rome was fraught with anxiety with reference to Roman masculinity and identity; though the presence of the cult was tolerated, Roman citizens, for instance, were not permitted to participate in the displays of worship.³²⁹ Vergil here re-envisioned the religious identity politics at issue in Rome of the Augustan era, fraught with socio-political change frequently enacted through changes to religious practice, as a kind of anxiety around genre and poetic identity.

Ovid too participates in the integration of descriptions of cult activity into debates about definitions of genre in his *Metamorphoses*, an epic which already is designed to test the limits of the genre in a reaction against Vergilian epic conventions. We have already reviewed in the

³²⁹ Iarbas will include a reference to the Galloi, the retinue of Cybele, when he insults Aeneas' Trojan origins in Book 4; the language of the insult is determined more by the literary topos of invective directed at Eastern luxury (*Aen.* 4.215-8): *et nunc ille Paris cum semiviro comitatu, | Maeonia mentum mitra crinemque madentem | subnexus, raptō potitur: nos munera templis | quippe tuis ferimus famamque fovemus inanem* ("And now that Paris with his eunuch train, his chin and perfumed locks bound with a Lydian turban, grasps the spoil; while we bring offerings to your temples, yours indeed, and cherish an idle story").

account of the death of Orpheus in Book 11 of the *Metamorphoses* Ovid's denial of the bellicose potential of the maenads and their thyrsi;³³⁰ but earlier, in Book 3, Ovid offers some meditations on the opposition between martial behavior and Bacchic worship, in the words of the Theban king Pentheus.³³¹ Pentheus upbraids the Theban men for participating in activity that he frames as at odds with their bellicose nature (*Met.* 3.531-42):

'Quis furor, anguigenae, proles Mavortia, vestras
 attonuit mentes?' Pentheus ait; 'aerane tantum
 aere repulsa valent et adunco tibia cornu
 et magicae fraudes, ut, quos non bellicus ensis,
 non tuba terruerit, non strictis agmina telis, 535
 femineae voces et mota insania vino
 obscenique greges et inania tympana vincant?
 vosne, senes, mirer, qui longa per aequora vecti
 hac Tyron, hac profugos posuistis sede penates,
 nunc sinitis sine Marte capi? vosne, acrior aetas, 540
 o iuvenes, propiorque meae, quos arma tenere,
 non thyrsos, galeaque tegi, non fronde decebat?

"What madness, you sons of of the serpent's teeth, you seed of Mars, has dulled your reason?" Pentheus cries. "Can clashing cymbals, can the pipe of crooked horn, can shallow tricks of magic, women's shrill cries, wine-heated madness, vulgar throngs and empty drums – can all these vanquish men, for whom real war, with its drawn swords, the blare of trumpets, and lines of glittering spears, had no terrors? You, you elders, should I give you praise, who sailed the long reaches of the sea and planted here your Tyre, here your wandering Penates, and who now permit them to be taken without a struggle? Or you, you young men of fresher age and nearer to my own, for whom once it was seemly to bear arms and not the thyrsus, to be sheltered by helmets and not garlands?"

The king sees in their would-be enemy, Dionysus, an unworthy adversary with a fundamentally unbellicose nature (3.553-8):

at nunc a puero Thebae capientur inermi,
 quem neque bella iuvant nec tela nec usus equorum,
 sed madidus murra crinis mollesque coronae 555
 purpuraque et pictis intextum vestibus aurum,
 quem quidem ego actutum (modo vos absistite) cogam
 adsumptumque patrem commentaque sacra fateri.

But now our Thebes shall fall before an untried boy, whom neither arts of war assist nor spears nor horsemen, but whose weapons are scented locks, soft garlands, purple and gold inwoven in embroidered robes. But indeed – only do you stand aside – I will force him to confess that his father's name is borrowed and his sacred rites a lie.

³³⁰ See p. 197ff.

³³¹ For the tension between epic and tragic in the episode more broadly, see Keith 2002.

Ovid has the Theban king set martial and cultic behavior at odds, much in the manner that Vergil has before him.³³² Here, by an expansion beyond the immediate context, cult activity participates in questions of genre, already deeply embedded in the overall project of the *Metamorphoses*. Just as amatory behavior and military activity are set at odds in debates around choice of genre, cult worship is implicated in the same oppositions, with the same generic overtones. Adding to the generic experimentation characteristic of so much of Latin epic is the underlying presence of tragedy, which threatens at any moment to overtake the epic text.³³³ For a figure like Pentheus, the threat is especially acute through the intertext of the *Bacchae* of Euripides, by which the account of Pentheus was perhaps best known in antiquity and to which Ovid alludes throughout the epyllion; but we can apply similar reasoning to those passages which play heavily with tragic conventions, in the case, for instance, of Vergil's Dido, or the Catullan Ariadne. The associations of Bacchic worship with the theater and with tragedy as a genre with particular conventions opens the way for cult worship to serve as metapoetic signpost, in competition with epic and aligned with amatory poetry, and always threatening to overtake the text.

We have seen, then, that cult imagery and rhetoric is by no means exclusively assigned to epic, or considered as thoroughly epic in nature. The culture hero Orpheus, valued for the mollifying qualities of his song and whose primary identity is as a singer of cult knowledge, opens the way for poetic self-identification across genre and with religious overtones; cult imagery itself is assimilated to the most fundamental binary of genre distinction of the Augustan period, that between epic and elegy, behind which consistently lurks the shadow of *hieroi logoi* and Dionysian tragedy. The figure of Pentheus in particular has been examined as an especially potent figure for metapoetic discussion, since his characterization as a tragic figure after the *Bacchae* of Euripides

³³² On Vergilian features of Pentheus' speech, see Anderson 1993:114–18, responding to Hardie 1990.

³³³ Keith 2010:192–95.

inescapably interacts with his appearances across genre.³³⁴ In the section that follows, we will continue to explore the cultic overtones of figures with tragic aspects, the most visible such figure being the frenzied infanticide.

5.2 TRAGIC INFANTICIDES

Like Pentheus across genre, any of the frenzied female figures we have seen in epic are painted with tragic strokes, their characterization and speech patterns evoking the most controversial female figures of the tragic stage, such as the Euripidean Medea or Aeschylean Clytemnaestra. Tragedy is frequently an underlying presence for so many frenzied characters precisely because of Dionysus' role as the god of the theater. It is no wonder that, for so many frenzied figures, a literary discursive mode grounded in Athenian tragedy can come into play:³³⁵ for all tragic frenzied figures, regardless of which tragedy in particular is evoked as an intertext, Dionysus and his worship are not far off, given the highly religious performance context of Athenian tragedy, namely the festival of the Greater Dionysia held at the temple and theater of Dionysus located at the base of the Athenian Acropolis. That so many frenzied women in Vergil and Ovid participate in tragic conventions of rhetoric and behavior, and that so many tragic moments in epic involve frenzied women, contribute complementarily to one another as varying manifestations of worship of Dionysus.

³³⁴ Pentheus will even make an appearance in invective poetry; the *sparagmos* which he suffers, along with that of Orpheus (*Ib.* 599-600) is one of the poetntial torments included in the curse which Ovid makes against the unnamed object of his invective poem, *Ibis* (533-4): *aut lacer in silva manibus spargare tuorum, | sparsus ut est Thebis angue creatus avo* ("Or rent asunder may you be strewn in the woods by your own kin, as at Thebes he was strewn who was born of the serpent's son").

³³⁵ It is clear too that Athenian tragedians regularly employ imagery and language from mystery cult in their dramas. Cf. e.g. Seaford 1994.

A natural extension of these generic meditations on tragedy would be to read Dionysus in the role of god of poetic inspiration, playing the role of Apollo or the Muses.³³⁶ We have seen already the conflation of Dionysiac frenzy and poetic inspiration in the texts of Plato, a conflation which effectively mediates the various significances of tragedy as a feature of religious worship and as a genre with a specific rhetoric.³³⁷ In the poetry of Ovid, Bacchus will be invoked to aid the poet's task on two occasions in the *Fasti* with rhetoric reminiscent of more traditional invocations of the Muses.³³⁸ First, he is called upon after a lengthy discussion of the rites of the Cerealia (*Fast.* 3.789-90): *mite caput, pater, huc placataque cornua vertas | et des ingenio vela secunda meo* ("Father god, turn here your horned head, mild and propitious, and to the favoring breezes spread the sails of my poetic art!"); and again at *Fast.* 6.483-4, he is invoked in the discussion of Ino, sister of Agave: *Bacche, racemiferos hedera redimite capillos, | si domus illa tua est, derige vatis opus* ("May you, O Bacchus, whose locks are twined with clustered grapes and ivy, guide the poet's course, if the house of the goddess is also yours"). For Ovid, the conflation of different kinds of mania that allows for maenadic characterization across genre naturally extends to self-reflective and metapoetic discussion of generic opposition and poetic identity, making of Bacchus an inspirational divinity akin to Apollo or the Muses, and of ecstatic mania the inspiration of the gods towards poetic production.³³⁹

The metapoetic capacities of the god are most acutely articulated in the potent image of the thyrsus as associated with a particular kind of poetic production. By extension of a characterization of Bacchus which attributes to him the capacity for poetic inspiration, the Dionysiac madness

³³⁶ Hunter 2006.

³³⁷ The conflations of mania discussed by Plato are projected onto Dionysus in his characterization as μουσόμαντις in a fragment of Aeschylus' *Edoni* (fr. 60 Radt).

³³⁸ For the prominent role of music and the Muses in mystic rituals, see Hardie 2004.

³³⁹ For a discussion of the gender politics at play in maenadic characterizations of inspired poets, see Fowler 2002, esp. 147ff. For *furor* as poetic inspiration, see Hershkowitz 1998:61–67.

which the thyrsus causes is translated into vatic frenzy.³⁴⁰ Imagery of the thyrsus as poetic object appropriates familiar imagery of the poet's staff, perhaps the most celebrated instantiation of which occurs in the invocation of Hesiod's *Theogony* (29-34):

ὥς ἔφασαν κοῦραι μεγάλου Διὸς ἀρτιέπειαι:
καί μοι σκῆπτρον ἔδον δάφνης ἐριθιλέος ὄζον
δρέψασαι, θηητόν: ἐνέπνευσαν δέ μοι αὐδὴν
θέσπιν, ἵνα κλείοιμι τὰ τ' ἐσσόμενα πρό τ' ἐόντα.
καί μ' ἐκέλονθ' ὕμνεῖν μακάρων γένος αἰὲν ἐόντων,
σφᾶς δ' αὐτὰς πρῶτόν τε καὶ ὕστατον αἰὲν αἰεῖδεν.

30

So spoke the ready-voiced maiden daughters of great Zeus, and they plucked and gave to me a staff, a branch of sturdy laurel, a marvelous thing: and they breathed into me a divine voice, so that I might sing of what would be and what had been before. And they commanded me to sing of the race of the blessed gods who live forever, and to sing always of they themselves first and last.

Ovid evokes precisely this imagery of poetic inspiration in the opening poem of the third Book of *Amores*, in which the poet presents personifications of different poetic genres who vie for the poet's attention, Elegia (*Am.* 3.1.7) and Tragoedia (*Am.* 3.1.11). The speech of Tragoedia persuading the poet away from amatory poetry to write tragedy evokes the thyrsus as a symbol of inspiration towards tragic composition (*Am.* 3.1.23-5):

Tempus erat, thyrsos pulsum graviore moveri;
cessatum satis est – incipe maius opus!
Materia premis ingenium. Cane facta virorum.

The time has come for you to change course, struck by a greater thyrsus; enough of leisure – enter upon a greater work! With your subject matter you obscure your brilliance. Sing the deeds of heroes.

Here, Tragoedia has replaced the Heliconian Muses of Hesiod's *Theogony*, the thyrsus which strikes the poet replacing the staff of laurel given to Hesiod as a symbol towards a particular poetic genre (scholars presume that Ovid produced his now lost tragedy, *Medea*, at this stage of his career). The image has a precedent in the poetry of Propertius, where one of the nine Muses is characterized as wielding the thyrsus (3.3.35): *haec hederas legit in thrysos* ("one [of the nine Muses] gathers ivy for the thyrsus-wand"). The 'heavier thyrsus' (*thyrsus gravior*) will reappear

³⁴⁰ A particularly interesting discussion compares vatic inspiration with the experience of initiation. See Lada-Richards 2002:87–91.

again as the closing image of the final poem of Book 3 of the *Amores* in a poetic declaration of generic closure (*Am.* 3.15.17-20):

Corniger increpuit thyrso graviore Lyaeus:
pulsanda est magnis area maior equis.
Inbelles elegi, genialis Musa, valete,
post mea mansurum fata superstes opus!

The horned Lyaeon has dealt me a sounding blow with weightier thyrsus; I must smite the earth with mighty steeds on a mightier course. Unwarlike elegies, congenial Muse, farewell; may you live on, work that is to remain beyond my death!

Both passages of the *Amores* incorporate Callimachean imagery of genre definition (exploited by Vergil as well) in terms of weight and size, such as the modifier *gravior* and the phrase *maius opus*; in the passage immediately cited, the term *increpuit* evokes the ‘thundering’ (βροντᾶν, line 20) and ‘braying’ (ὄγκῆσαιτο, line 31) symbolic of epic at the opening of the *Aetia*. The thyrsus again is employed as the symbol of tragedy, paired with the laurel in a metapoetic discussion of genre (here, those which the addressee of Ovid’s letter decides not to write), in the *Epistulae Ex Ponto* (2.5.67): *thyrsus abest a te gustata et laurea nobis* (“the thyrsus is absent from you, and the laurel once tasted by me”).³⁴¹ By a mutability of mania that conflates Dionysiac frenzy with poetic inspiration, the thyrsus can become a potent symbol of poetic inspiration analogous to the poet’s staff established as a trope in Greco-Roman literature.³⁴²

Having considered the availability of Dionysus for reflections on poetic production associated most obviously with the highly specialized genre of Athenian tragedy, let us consider

³⁴¹ The thyrsus serves a similar function in facilitating poetic inspiration for Lucretius (*DRN* 1.921-7): *Nunc age, quod super est, cognosce et clarius audi. | nec me animi fallit quam sint obscura; sed acri | percussit thyrsos laudis spes magna meum cor | et simul incussit suavem mi in pectus amorem | Musarum, quo nunc instinctus mente vigenti | avia Pieridum peragro loca nullius ante | trita solo* (“Come now, mark and learn what remains, and hear a clearer strain. Nor am I unaware how obscure these matters are; but the high hope of renown has struck my mind sharply with holy wand, and at the same time has struck into my heart sweet love of the Muses, thrilled by which now in lively thought I traverse pathless tracts of the Pierides never yet trodden by any foot”). Ovid may be playing on the competing dichotomy between Bacchic and Apolline aesthetics latent in Augustan literature. Cf. discussion of such manipulation by Horace in Batinski 1991:361–62; Schiesaro 2009:77.

³⁴² Intoxication by wine will also serve as a source of poetic inspiration as madness. Cf. e.g. Horace *Epodes* 1.19.1-4, where the Muses smell of wine (*vina oluerunt Camenae*).

here the maenadic resonances of a figure deeply associated with tragedy, the infanticide. The precedent of the Euripidean infanticide Agave in the *Bacchae*, whose Dionysiac frenzy is converted into a madness directed towards the destruction of her son, becomes the archetype for other quasi-tragic frenzied infanticides, the disturbed mental state of the murderous mother being rooted in Dionysiac loss of control and destructive capacities. The image is set in contrast to and may be considered a perversion of the cult figure of the mother, whose archetype is Demeter, in desperate search for her daughter, Persephone, in the myth of her rape, and, according to cult soteriological ideology, offering salvation to the initiates.³⁴³ Where the nourishing mother figure embodied by Demeter, and later Persephone, plays a central role in the soteriological claims of cult, the opposite image of the destructive maternal figure perverts this dynamic, with the Euripidean Agave setting the precedent for and serving as fundamental archetype of the destructive capacity of the maenad directed towards her own children.³⁴⁴

No infanticide was more visible in antiquity than another Euripidean figure, Medea. In this regard, we are hampered by the lack of extant tragic production at Rome from the Republic and Augustan period, with the exception of scanty fragments; and the deficiency is especially crippling for the loss of Ovid's tragic *Medea*.³⁴⁵ In absence of more direct testimony, we are left to consider tragic interventions beyond tragedy itself, most frequently manifested in circumscribed episodes of epic as interventions within the genre.

Before turning to such examples, we may begin by mining the Greek sources for clues about a potential Dionysiac aspect to ancient conceptions of Medea. Despite the absence generally

³⁴³ See earlier discussion at 103ff.

³⁴⁴ An interesting variation on this motif is the case of Silius Italicus' Imilce, the wife of Hannibal, who displays maenadic behavior when Hanno selects her child to be sacrificed – where typically the maenadic behavior of the mother is turned toward destructive ends resulting in the *sparagmos* of the child, here Imilce's maenadic behavior is figurative for the mother's grief over the impending death of her child (*Pun.* 4.774-7).

³⁴⁵ One of the two surviving fragments of Ovid's tragedy suggests itself as germane to the discussion: *feror huc illuc, vae, plena deo*.

of explicit maenadic characterization in Euripides' *Medea*, the traces of a Medean maenadism may have an early source in the tragedy, which will serve as an important model for subsequent Medeas. Though this characterization is repressed throughout the play, a few clues may open the way for later authors to expand more fully on a maenadic characterization that explains infanticide. We may consider first the description by the chorus in the Euripidean tragedy (433-9):

σύ δ' ἐκ μὲν οἴκων πατρίων ἔπλευσας
 μαινομένα κραδίᾳ διδύμους ὀρίσασα Πόν-
 του πέτρας: ἐπὶ δὲ ξένᾳ
 ναίεις χθονί, τᾷς ἀνάν-
 δρου κοίτας ὀλέσασα λέκτρον,
 τάλαινα, φυγὰς δὲ χώ-
 ρας ἄτιμος ἐλαύνῃ.

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But you sailed from your father's halls, passing with love-maddened heart between the twin rocks of the Euxine. On strange soil you now dwell, you have lost your marriage-bed, your husband's love, poor wretch, and you are being driven from this land an exile without rights.

The phrase μαινομένα κραδίᾳ evokes the image of the maenad, though here the madness which afflicts her is erotic, and not Dionysiac.³⁴⁶ Again, Medea will use the term μαίνομαι to describe her state in a particularly insidious discussion with Jason, in which she disassembles her resentment towards him for marrying his new bride and appears to chastise herself for her anger (873): Σχετλία, τί μαίνομαι ("Wretched woman, why do I rage on?"). Here, we see Medea applying to herself the same term signifying not erotic madness, but a madness borne of anger and cognate with μαινάς, the Greek term for 'maenad'.³⁴⁷

³⁴⁶ We may recall the description of the frenzied Andromache with 'throbbing heart' (460-1): ὥς φαμένη μεγάρῳ διέσσυτο μαινάδι ἴση | παλλομένη κραδίην ("So saying she hastened through the hall with throbbing heart, similar to a Bacchant"). The term is used of Dionysiac frenzy in Homer's *Iliad*, of the god himself (6.132): μαινομένοιο Διωνύσοιο ("maddened Dionysus").

³⁴⁷ Later authors will incorporate more explicit maenadic characterization of Medea. See Valerius Flaccus' *Argo*. 6.755-60 and 8.446-9; Seneca's *Medea* 382-6.

At the end of the play, Medea is explicitly likened to a figure who engages in Bacchic rites, Ino, the sister of Agave and nurse of the baby Dionysus, discussed already in the Ovidian corpus³⁴⁸

(1282-91):

μίαν δὴ κλύω μίαν τῶν πάρος	
γυναῖκ' ἐν φίλοις χέρα βαλεῖν τέκνοις,	
Ἰνῶ μανεῖσαν ἐκ θεῶν, ὅθ' ἡ Διὸς	
δάμαρ νιν ἐξέπεμψε δωμάτων ἄλαις:	1285
πίτνει δ' ἅ τάλαιν' ἐς ἄλμαν φόνῳ τέκνων δυσσεβεῖ,	
ἀκτῆς ὑπερτείνασα ποντίας πόδα,	
δυοῖν τε παῖδιν συνθανοῦσ' ἀπόλλυται.	
τί δῆτ' οὐ γένοιτ' ἂν ἔτι δεινόν; ὦ γυναικῶν λέχος	1290
πολύπονον, ὅσα βροτοῖς ἔρεξας ἤδη κακά.	

One woman, only one, of all that have been, have I heard of who put her hand to her own children: Ino driven mad by the gods when Hera sent her forth to wander in madness from the house. The unhappy woman fell into the sea, impiously murdering her children. Stepping over the sea's edge, she perished with her two children. What possible further horror now remains? O womankind and marriage fraught with pain, how many are the troubles you have already wrought for mortal men!

Ino and Medea are likened in the commonality of infanticide; here, Ino is struck with madness with the same term *μαίνομαι*, here not strictly a Dionysiac frenzy but nonetheless in a heavily Dionysiac context. Varied application of the term *μαίνομαι* in Euripides' play, and the comparison of Medea with a frenzied infanticide, herself the sister of the archetypal frenzied maenadic infanticide Agave, opens the possibility for more explicit maenadic characterization of Medea in subsequent treatments of her myth. Ino finds continued presence in poetic engagement with *sparagmos* in *Idyll* 26 of Theocritus, where she and sister Autonoe have an active role in Pentheus' destruction (26.20-4):

μάτηρ μὲν κεφαλὰν μυκήσατο παιδὸς ἐλοῖσα,	20
ὅσόν περ τοκάδος τελέθει μύκημα λεαίνας:	
Ἰνῶ δ' ἐξέρρηξε σὺν ὠμοπλάτῃ μέγαν ὦμον	
λὰς ἐπὶ γαστέρα βᾶσα, καὶ Αὐτονόας ῥυθμὸς ὠυτός:	
αἱ δ' ἄλλαι τὰ περισσὰ κρεανομέοντο γυναῖκες.	

³⁴⁸ See pg. 236.

The mother gave a roar like a lioness with cubs as she carried off her son's head; Ino tore off his great shoulder, shoulder-blade and all, by setting her foot on his stomach; and Autonoë set to work in the same way.³⁴⁹

After Euripides, and especially Theocritus, Ino becomes just as important an archetype in effecting Dionysiac *sparagmos* as Agave; both women, as maenadic infanticides, are generally available as an archetypal model for other infanticides, such as Medea, with links to cult and with a frenzy rooted in Dionysiac madness.

In addition to the murder of her children, Ovid's Medea³⁵⁰ is like Agave and Ino especially explicitly in the act of *sparagmos*, directed, not at her children, but at her brother. After helping Jason acquire the golden fleece, as Medea flees from her father with the hero, she murders her brother Absyrtus to create a diversion as an aid to their escape. To buy them more time for their flight, she cuts the body of her brother limb from limb and scatters the various pieces onto the sea, delaying the forces of the king, who must recover the different body parts. The gruesome story is included throughout Ovid's literary corpus: first, in the *Heroides*, in the letter of Hypsipyle to Jason, when the maiden upbraids the hero for foregoing marriage with her (*Ep.* 6.129-30): *spargere quae fratris potuit lacerata per agros | corpora, pignoribus parceret illa meis?* ("Would she who could tear her brother limb from limb and strew him over the fields be one to spare my pledges?"); again, in the *Heroides* in the letter which Medea herself sends to Jason (*Ep.* 12.115-6): *quod facere ausa mea est, non audit scribere dextra. | sic ego, sed tecum, dilaceranda fui* ("Of the deed my right hand was bold enough to do, it is not bold enough to write. So I, too, should have been torn limb from limb – but with you!"); and again in his *Tristia* in an aetiological account of the name of the place to which he is exiled, Tomis (*Tr.* 3.9.27-8): *atque ita divellit divulsaque membra per*

³⁴⁹ Theocritus' engagement with this feature of Euripides' *Bacchae* is cleverly manipulated: where in the original play, Agave sees the head of Pentheus in her arms to be the head of a lion, Theocritus has applied the image of the lion to Agave herself, as a lioness.

³⁵⁰ Hershkowitz 1998:39–41.

agros | *dissipat in multis invenienda locis* (“Then she tore him limb from limb, scattering the fragments throughout the fields so that they must be sought in many places”). The lack of *sparagmos* of children typical of cultic infanticides missing from the narrative of Medea is supplemented by the *sparagmos* of her brother, coupled with the knowledge of the murder of her children which is the climax of Euripides’ play, as one further dimension by which Medea resembles cult infanticides.

Ovid will be readier than his Greek predecessors to draw the connection somewhat forcefully.³⁵¹ We will see Medea set in the context of other figures likened to maenads in the Ovidian corpus in the discussion of the jealous woman who is maenadic in her frenzy (*Ars.* 2.373-84).³⁵²

Sed neque fulvus aper media tam saevus in ira est,	
Fulmineo rabidos cum rotat ore canes,	
Nec lea, cum catulis lactentibus ubera praebet,	375
Nec brevis ignaro vipera laesa pede,	
Femina quam socii deprensa paelice lecti:	
Ardet et in vultu pignora mentis habet.	
In ferrum flammasque ruit, positoque decore	
Fertur, ut Aonii cornibus icta dei.	380
Coniugis admissum violataque iura marita est	
Barbara per natos Phasias ulta suos.	
Altera dira parens haec est, quam cernis, hirundo:	
Aspice, signatum sanguine pectus habet.	

But neither is the red boar so savage at his fury’s height, when with lightning jaw he overturns the raging hounds, nor the lioness when she is giving the udder to her unweaned cubs, nor the tiny adder hurt by a careless foot, as is a woman when a rival is taken in the bed she shares; she is aflame and on her face she bears the tokens of her feelings. She rushes to seize fire and steel and, her modesty flung aside, rages as though struck by the horns of the Aonian god. The barbarous Phasian by means of her own children avenged the crime of her spouse and wedlock’s broken law. Another terrible parent is this swallow that you behold: look, her breast is stained with blood.

Here, Medea’s jealousy of the new wife of Jason, one of the motivations for vengeance by means of infanticide, is set in apposition to the Bacchic frenzy of the jealous woman, invoked in the abstract. Here, her maenadism is closely linked to the act of infanticide, the result of her jealousy

³⁵¹ For broader considerations of Medea across Greco-Roman literature and as a meta-poetic figure, cf. *ibid.*

³⁵² See Ch. 5.3.

of the new wife of Jason. Ovid in the *Metamorphoses* will again liken Medea to a Bacchant, though the narratological moment depicts Medea as a young maiden in love, and thus at most can only anticipate the infanticide she will eventually commit (*Met.* 7.257-8): *passis Medea capillis | bacchantum ritu flagrantis circuit aras* (“Medea, with streaming hair after the fashion of the Bacchants, moved around the blazing altars”). Her maenadic characterization, here as she performs the magical activity of the rejuvenation of Aeson, perhaps serves to ground and to foreshadow the violence of which she will later be capable.

Medea is coupled at *Ars* 2.373ff. with another mythological infanticide, Procne, who also appears in the list of figures to whom the jealous woman is likened, to be discussed subsequently. Setting these figures in apposition with a jealous woman who is quite explicitly maenadic will allow for a revision of the crazed states imagined of both Medea and Procne, refracted through the mythological precedent of the infanticide Agave, mother of Pentheus. Here, as elsewhere, Ovid begins to open the way for a conflation of ecstatic frenzy and the destructive pathology imagined of infanticides. Procne, like Medea, will have her infanticide re-characterized as Bacchic frenzy in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. We have already considered the importance of the model of Orphic capability with language and cult secrecy in this account, with especial consideration of Philomela, whose tongue is lacerated from her mouth, rendering the figure incapable of speech. In the context of tragic infanticides, we can now turn our attention to the figure of Procne as a maenadic refraction of the Euripidean Agave, the Euripidean Medea, and the Ovidian Medea.

Procne’s maenadic characterization in the *Metamorphoses* is not immediately connected to the act of infanticide, but activates the various themes around epic and tragic frenzy we have already considered. A central image to the narrative is the woven tapestry by which Philomela conveys to her sister the criminal acts of Tereus. We have already seen the connection (and perhaps

opposition) between weaving and maenadic frenzy, the one a reification of the domestic order and the place of the dutiful wife within it, the other a rupture from acceptable activity, as in the discussions of the Homeric Andromache, the Vergilian mother of Euryalus, and the Ovidian daughters of Minyas. In the narrative of Procne and Philomela, the two are perversely closely connected, insofar as the message displayed on the textile riles the anger, grief, and desire for vengeance of Procne, which will later be masked as Dionysiac frenzy. Tereus, in his rape of his sister-in-law, has already violated the order of the household, anticipating the transgressions of maternal and uxorial roles which Procne will commit;³⁵³ Philomela's weaving, with its disruptive message, is a refraction of this state of affairs.

Procne, in an effort to rescue her sister, disguises her behavior under the cover of maenadic worship (*Met.* 6.587-600):

Tempus erat, quo sacra solent trieterica Bacchi Sithoniae celebrare nurus: (nox conscia sacris, nocte sonat Rhodope tinnitibus aeris acuti) nocte sua est egressa domo regina deque	590
ritibus instruitur furialiaque accipit arma; vite caput tegitur, lateri cervina sinistro vellera dependent, umero levis incubat hasta. concita per silvas turba comitante suarum	
terribilis Procne furiisque agitata doloris, Bacche, tuas simulat: venit ad stabula avia tandem	595
exululatque euhoeque sonat portasque refringit germanamque rapit raptaeque insignia Bacchi induit et vultus hederarum frondibus abdit attonitamque trahens intra sua moenia ducit.	600

It was the time when the Thracian matrons were accustomed to celebrate the biennial festival of Bacchus. Night was in on their secret; by night Mount Rhodope would resound with the shrill clash of brazen cymbals; so by night the queen goes forth from her house, equips herself for the rites of the god and puts on the array of frenzy; her head was wreathed with trailing vines, a deer-skin hung from her left side, a light spear rested on her shoulder. Swift she goes through the woods with an attendant throng of her companions, and driven on by the madness of grief, Procne, terrific in her rage, mimics thy madness, O Bacchus! She comes to the secluded lodge at last, shrieks aloud and cries 'Euhoe!' breaks down the doors, seizes her sister, arrays her in the trappings of a Bacchant, hides her face with ivy-leaves, and, dragging her along in amazement, leads her within her own walls.

³⁵³ Pavlock 1991.

The confluences of emotion that we have already seen finding their expression in maenadic frenzy are all present in this passage, most explicitly articulated in the ‘frenzy of grief’ (*furiis...doloris*). Where maenadic activity has generally signalled the breakdown of orders of *polis* and *oikos*, here the simulated maenadic activity of Procne allows for the enactment of a kind of vengeance more at home in tragedy in reaction against the breakdown of *oikos* already set in motion by Tereus in the rape and mutilation of Philomela. In both this aspect and in the importance of the integration of the act of weaving as a signpost of feminine domestic activity usually at odds with maenadic behavior, Ovid has manipulated conventions of maenadic behavior which we have already seen to a quasi-tragic narrative.

In her machinations for infanticide, Procne echoes the rhetoric of the Euripidean Medea: Procne’s claims to ‘prepare herself for some greater deed, exactly what is still unclear’ (*magnum quodcumque paravi*; | *quid sit, adhuc dubito*, *Met.* 6.618-9) echo the speech of the nurse whose soliloquy opens the Euripidean tragedy anticipating Medea’s violence (“she loathes the children and takes no joy in looking at them. I am afraid that she will hatch some sinister plan,” στυγεῖ δὲ παῖδας οὐδ’ ὀρῶσ’ εὐφραίνεται. | δέδοικα δ’ αὐτὴν μή τι βουλεύσῃ νέον, 36-7; consider also “[she plots for them] some greater suffering,” μείζω συμφορὰν...τινά, 43). The description of the events leading up to the act of infanticide, again a reflection of the Euripidean Medea, highlights the act of infanticide as a perversion of the mother-child relationship, so central to cult soterological ideology (*Met.* 6.624-30):

ut tamen accessit natus matrique salutem attulit et parvis adduxit colla lacertis mixtaque blanditiis puerilibus oscula iunxit, mota quidem est genetrix, infractaque constitit ira invitique oculi lacrimis maduere coactis; sed simul ex nimia mentem pietate labare sensit, ab hoc iterum est ad vultus versa sororis.	625 630
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But when the boy came up to her and greeted his mother, put his little arms around her neck and kissed her in his winsome, boyish way, indeed the mother was moved, her wrath fell away, and

her eyes, though all unwilling, were wet with tears that flowed in spite of her. But when she perceived that her purpose was wavering through excess of love, she turned again from her son to her sister.

Ovid, in the interaction between Itys and Procne, underscores the centrality of the mother-child relationship to the act of infanticide, of which it is a perversion.³⁵⁴ The death of Itys by *sparagmos* again recalls the image of Agave which closes the *Bacchae*, wielding the limbs of her son.

In the figures of Pentheus, Medea, and Procne, tragic interventions in epic texts have allowed us to draw certain conclusions on the application of cult rhetoric to tragic modes, to which the figure of Dionysus as the god of the theater, and to whom a frenzy of poetic tragic production is permitted, is so readily suited. In absence of extant tragic poetic production in Augustan Rome, we have had recourse to tragic figures whose narratives constitute tragic moments within larger contexts. Such imagery is most explicitly incorporated in the figure of the tragic infanticide, whose role as a mother is a perversion of the cult mother of cult mythology. Dionysiac frenzy, appropriate to tragic poetic production, becomes the mechanism by which the frenzy of the infanticide becomes directed as a murderous rage against her children.

5.3 MAENADIC ELEGIAIC *PUELLAE*

The conflation of frenzies, in which maenadic figures participate as worshippers of Dionysus, has allowed for the intrusion of maenadic frenzy into epic texts and literature that participates in Athenian tragedy, not least of all in discussions around that figure most visible in tragedy, the infanticide. We have already seen in our earlier discussions of Platonic sources the conflation of an erotic and Dionysiac mania in these texts; this conflation is exploited in no uncertain terms in the elegiac imagination. The conflation of frenzies that sees the Dionysiac in the erotic pervades

³⁵⁴ For further discussion of this episode along the theme of mothers and children, see Oliensis 2009:77–88.

Roman amatory poetry, where Bacchus aids lovers, the Catullan Ariadne serves as the most acute archetype of the maenad available to the male voyeuristic erotic gaze, and maenadic frenzy becomes equated with such perverse amatory emotions as jealousy and taboo sexual desire directed at inappropriate figures. Just as an epic poetics grounded in cult rhetoric can be detected in epic poetry, we can also identify a cult amatory poetics that sees the familiar tropes of Roman amatory poetry reframed along models of cult practice and conforming with cult attitudes towards language. The dynamics typical of mystery cult - namely, worship of a god with *orgia*, the hierophant/initiate relationship, and mandates to secrecy - are mapped onto erotic rhetoric. This cult amatory poetics, we will see, is an expansion of ideas latent in literary sources such as Plato's *Phaedrus* and Euripides' *Bacchae*, and resonates with what we know about cult practice at Rome and Roman attitudes towards cult.

Bacchus perhaps unsurprisingly serves as an important archetype both as an elegiac lover and as a divinity capable of inspiring erotic desire. For ancient lovers, love and wine went hand in hand, and, by implicit extension, love and Bacchus, as the god of wine. The conflation has an early presence in poetry, as evident by its appearance in a fragment of Anacreon, where the lover, 'drunk with love' (μεθύων ἔρωτι, fr. 376 Campbell), plunges into the sea from the rock of Leukas; a connection between erotic activity and wine is included in the *Bacchae* of Euripides in the plea made of Pentheus that he cease his refutation of the divinity of Dionysus (771-4):

κάκεϊνό φασιν αὐτόν, ὥς ἐγὼ κλύω,
τὴν παυσίλυπον ἄμπελον δοῦναι βροτοῖς.
οἴνου δὲ μηκέτ' ὄντος οὐκ ἔστιν Κύπρις
οὐδ' ἄλλο τερπνὸν οὐδὲν ἀνθρώποις ἔτι.

They say that, as I hear, he has given to mortals the vine that stops suffering. And if wine were no more, then there is no Aphrodite, nor anything else delightful for humankind.

Among the Roman elegists, Propertius understands well the connection of love and drink, in his elegiac homage to Bacchus (3.17.4): *per te iunguntur, per te solvuntur amantes* (“With your aid lovers meet, with your aid lovers part”).³⁵⁵

Vergil foregrounds this conflation of different kinds of frenzy in the figure of Dido, precisely on this equivalence of erotic mania and Dionysiac mania through the conduit of Bacchus and the physical effects of wine. Subtle iterations of this connection are included in the banquet scene in which Dido welcomes Aeneas and the Trojans to Carthage, where the conception of her love reaches its apex (1.799): *infelix Dido longumque bibebat amorem* (“no less did unhappy Dido drink deep draughts of love”). Here, the metaphorical application of *bibebat* plays on the consumption of wine to be imagined at the banquet; the passion of the queen is equated with wine, the latter perhaps facilitating the former. We may thus read here the first indications of the Bacchic frenzy that will manifest itself more explicitly as her drama unfolds. The conflation continues in such verses as *Aen.* 4.68-9, where the metaphor of the flame of love (*uritur*) is combined with the picture of Dionysiac frenzy by the term *furens* and the image of the frenzied woman raving in the streets of the city: *uritur infelix Dido totaque vagatur | urbe furens* (“Unhappy Dido burns [i.e. with love], and through the city wanders in frenzy”). Throughout her characterization, the similarity of the terms *amens* and *amans*, both of which are variously applied to Dido, may subtly reinforce this connection through a kind of wordplay, as at *Aen.* 4.101, *ardet amans Dido traxitque per ossa furorem* (“Dido is on fire with love and has drawn the madness through her veins”), where the line-ending *furor* allows for a retroactive re-reading of the term *amans*.

Ovid will agree with Propertius and Vergil, going so far as to cite Bacchus’ love for Ariadne as a mythological precedent for Bacchus as a potential patron god of lovers (*Ars.* 1.525-

³⁵⁵ Cicero, at *N. D.* 2.61, quotes a line of Terence’s *Eunuch* (732) expressing a similar idea: *sine Cerere et Libero friget Venus* (“Without food and wine love is cold”).

6): *Ecce, suum vatem Liber vocat; hic quoque amantes | adiuvat, et flammae, qua calet ipse, favet* (“Lo! Liber summons his bard; he too helps lovers, and favors the flame wherewith he burns himself”). The maiden Ariadne is called the bride, Bacchus a lover more faithful (*fidelior*, 555) than the perfidious Theseus, and the ritual cry *euhoē* is assimilated to the marriage cry, *hymen* (Ars. 1.562-3): *pars ‘Hymenaeae’ canunt, pars clamant ‘Euhion, euhoē!’ | sic coeunt sacro nupta deusque toro* (“Some chant ‘Hail Hymenaeus!’, some shout ‘Euhoe, Euhion!’ So do the bride and the god meet on the sacred couch”).³⁵⁶ The celebrated myth of Bacchus and his consort Ariadne offers the god as the archetype of the ideal lover, with the added observation that the wine with which he is conflated serves to facilitate erotic encounters.

Arguably, the soteriological significance of Bacchus is also encoded in these depictions of the god as the ideal lover, and the erotic relationship of Ariadne and Bacchus as the only initiation that truly achieves its aims in the apotheosis of the maiden. We have earlier considered the motif of the lap or bosom of the god as the site of salvation in the case of mothers and children, where the maternal instinct to nurture is reworked as the soteriological power of cult gods, especially such maternal figures as the Eleusinian Demeter.³⁵⁷ Martin West records an alternative interpretation of the image of the lap of the god (θεὸς διὰ κόλπου) in the cult of Sabazius, the Phrygian Dionysus, as having sexual undertones, imagining the moment of initiation as erotic consummation with the cult god.³⁵⁸ Such may be the insinuations during the apotheosis of Ariadne, in many ways the ideal initiate in Bacchic rites, who in Ovid’s *Ars Amatoria* is characterized as being ‘entwined in the lap’ of Bacchus at the moment of apotheosis (*implicitamque sinu, Ars*

³⁵⁶ Ovid is perhaps responding to a play on the terms *euhoē* and *eheu* in Catullus 64. Cf. Elsner 2007:22.

³⁵⁷ See pp.102ff.

³⁵⁸ West 1983:97. See also n. 51.

1.561).³⁵⁹ I suggest that the erotic overtones of initiation into the cult of Sabazius, involving the image of the entwining serpent,³⁶⁰ are incorporated in the description of the metamorphosed

Cadmus and his wife in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (4.591-603):

“Cadme, mane teque, infelix, his exue monstis!
 Cadme, quid hoc? ubi pes, ubi sunt umerique manusque
 et color et facies et, dum loquor, omnia? cur non
 me quoque, caelestes, in eandem vertitis anguem?”
 dixerat, ille suae lambebat coniugis ora 595
 inque sinus caros, veluti cognosceret, ibat
 et dabat amplexus adsuetaque colla petebat.
 quisquis adest (aderant comites), terretur; at illa
 lubrica permulcet cristati colla draconis,
 et subito duo sunt iunctoque volumine serpunt, 600
 donec in adpositi nemoris subiere latebras,
 nunc quoque nec fugiunt hominem nec vulnere laedunt
 quidque prius fuerint, placidi meminere dracones.

“O Cadmus, stay, unhappy man, and put off this monstrous form! Cadmus, what does this mean? Where are your feet? Where are your shoulders and your hands, your color, face, and, while I speak, your -- everything? Why, o gods of heaven, do you not change me also into the same serpent form?” She spoke; he licked his wife's face and glided into her dear breasts as if familiar there, embraced her, and sought his usual place around her neck. All who were there -- for they had comrades with them -- were filled with horror. But she only stroked the sleek neck of the crested dragon, and suddenly there were two serpents there with intertwining folds, which after a little while crawled off and hid in the neighboring woods. Now also, as formerly, they neither fear mankind nor wound them, mild creatures, remembering what once they were.

Ovid's description of the moment of transformation takes its model from the Vergilian episode of the frenzy of the Latin queen, Amata, when Allecto induces in the queen a kind of Bacchic frenzy with the image of a golden serpent entwining itself around the body of the queen. The erotic overtones of the image, traceable to the cult image of the 'in the lap of the god' motif in Sabazian rites of initiation, is by Ovid made explicit in the figures of Cadmus and his wife, most concretely in the image of the lap and erotic embrace (*inque sinus caros...ibat; dabat amplexus*).³⁶¹ The terror of the epiphanic encounter during initiation is no longer felt by Harmonia, the would-be initiate,

³⁵⁹ Wiseman 1977 offers an interesting note on this moment of Catullus 64 and considers Ariadne comparable to Attis (Catullus 63); but see Forsyth 1980 for counterargumentation.

³⁶⁰ Lowe 2012.

³⁶¹ To this we may observe as well the myth of the birth of Dionysus Zagreus from Persephone and Zeus, who takes the form of a serpent.

but has been transferred onto the spectators in the very *terretur*. The erotic relationship of Ariadne and Bacchus, and the erotic significance of the ‘in the lap of the god’ motif in the cult of the Phrygian Sabazius, allows for an interpretation of the phrase *implicitam sinu* as an erotic embrace; and as a kind of cult imagery, it conversely allows for the approximation of the erotic embrace as a metaphor for cult initiation.

Bacchus will serve as an ideal erotic match for another maiden, Lavinia in Vergil’s *Aeneid*. Amata will identify Bacchus as the ideal partner for her daughter Lavinia in a rejection of the foreign suitor promised by prophecy and actualized in the figure of Aeneas.³⁶² The queen, in her frenzied shouting, anticipates for Lavinia the outcome finally given to Ariadne, that she be consort only to the god Bacchus (*Aen.* 7.389-91):

euhoë Bacche fremens, solum te virgine dignum
vociferans: etenim mollis tibi sumere thyrsos,
te lustrare choro, sacrum tibi pascere crinem.

“Euhoë, Bacchus!” she shrieks. “You alone,” she shouts, “are worthy of the maiden! It is for you, in truth, she takes up the waving thyrsus, to you she pays honor in the dance, for you she grows her sacred tresses.”

An intertext with the Ariadne of Catullus 64 colors the frenzy of Amata as one that is not only Bacchic, but metapoetic, and refigures Aeneas as the perfidious Theseus, abandoning Ariadne on the shores of Dia. Vergil has perhaps already included a metapoetic *recusatio* of the narrative of Ariadne’s abandonment in his discussion of the naval journey of Aeneas, highlighting those places which the Trojans pass by. Among these locations is Naxos, one of the traditional sites of Ariadne’s abandonment by Theseus (*Aen.* 3.125): *bacchatamque iugis Naxon* (“[We sail past] Naxos with its Bacchic revels on the heights”). In the Roman poetic imagination, the Bacchic revelry discussed here may well be the retinue of Bacchus which encounters the maiden on the shores. Consider the complaint of Amata to Latinus, in which she beseeches him to forego the Trojan

³⁶² Brazouski 1991.

sutor (*Aen.* 7.361-2): *nec matris miseret, quam primo Aquilone relinquet | perfidus alta petens abducta virgine praedo?* (“Have you no pity on her mother, whom with the first North Wind the faithless pirate will desert, steering for the deep with the maid as booty?”). The scenario which Amata imagines, and the terminology with which she frames her complaint, recall Ariadne abandoned on the shores of Dia by Theseus in Catullus 64, where the maiden stands watching his ships on the sea and questioning the receding Theseus, addressing him twice in rapid succession as *perfidus* (64.132-3): *sicine me patriis avectam, perfide, ab aris, | perfide, deserto liquisti in litore, Theseu?* (“Thus then, having borne me afar from my father’s home, thus have you left me, faithless, faithless Theseus, on the lonely shore?”). Ariadne will go on to give a warning to all women everywhere to have mistrust for men, particularly foreigners who promise marriage; Vergil’s Amata seems to have assimilated the message, at least with respect to Aeneas, a foreign hero reminiscent of Theseus, and one who has already been charged with perfidy by Dido (*Aen.* 4.505).³⁶³ In a certain sense, Amata is a refraction of various epic mothers whose conflation is common in ancient literature and whose nexus is the frantic Demeter in search of her daughter in the *Homeric Hymn*;³⁶⁴ the Bacchic frenzy which afflicts her and in which state she imagines the dedication of her daughter to Bacchus serves as a complex image which redirects the destructive force of the Euripidean Agave as erotic energy serving maternal impulses of the cult mother and guided by metapoetic readings of the maiden Ariadne. There is, of course, an unsettling erotic triangulation of mother/daughter/son-in-law at play in Amata’s appropriation of the story of Ariadne’s abandonment by Theseus, an activation of tragic incest narratives such as that of Phaedra, since the points of contact for the allusion seem to shift over the course of the poem: in

³⁶³ La Penna 1967:311; Abel 1962; Kilroy 1969.

³⁶⁴ The suggestion is made at Zarker 1969, esp. 10-2, for the importance of Amata’s role as mother and for a comparison of Amata and the mother of Euryalus (*Aen.* 9).

the passage cited earlier (*Aen.* 7.361-2), Amata conflates herself with her daughter as a referent for Ariadne, whereas in the passage above (*Aen.* 7.389-91), Lavinia exclusively serves as a figure for Ariadne wedded to Bacchus.

In the version of the narrative of Ariadne and Bacchus which the poet includes in the *Fasti*, Ovid will go so far as to even give us an aetiology for amatory poetics whose source is cult imagery in a moment of heightened metapoetic meditation. The poet locates the origin of the metaphor of ‘burning’ used so frequently throughout elegy to describe the sensation of love in the story of the birth of Bacchus and the death of Semele from the thunderbolt of Zeus (*Fast.* 3.501-4):

ne noceat, quod amo; neque enim tibi, Bacche, nocebat,
quod flammis nobis fassus es ipse tuas.
nec, quod nos uris, mirum facis: ortus in igne
diceris et patria raptus ab igne manu.

Let me not suffer for my love; you yourself, Bacchus did not suffer for avowing your flame to me. No wonder that you make me burn [i.e. with love]; they say that you were born in the fire and snatched from the fire by your father’s hand.

Ariadne locates the source of the metaphor of burning as a feature of amatory rhetoric in the lightning bolt of Juppiter which smotes Semele, the mother of Bacchus, resulting in his double-birth first from her womb and then from the thigh of his father. Again, Ovid will see the connection between drink and love, warning against the dangers of imbibing to excess (*Ars.* 1.761-4):

Aptius est, deceatque magis potare puellas:
cum Veneris puero non male, Bacche, facis.
Hoc quoque, qua patiens caput est, animusque pedesque
constant: nec, quae sunt singula, bina vide.

Better suited is drinking, and were more becoming in a woman: not badly do you go, Bacchus, with Venus’ son. This to note, when the head endures, the mind and feet are also firm; do not see double where there is but one.

The closing image, in which the poet warns against drunkenness, suggests an excess of the god Dionysus with imagery characteristic of initiatory experience, and reminiscent of the disorientation which Pentheus experiences at the height of his maenadic frenzy during participation in the Bacchic rites in Euripides’ *Bacchae* (918-9): καὶ μὴν ὁρᾶν μοι δύο μὲν ἡλίους δοκῶ, | δισσὰς δὲ

Θήβας καὶ πόλισμ' ἐπτάστομον (“And indeed I seem to myself to see two suns, and a double Thebes, and seven-mouthed fortress”). A certain amount of intoxication can be helpful to the lover, but ‘too much of Dionysus’ and succumbing to the hallucinatory visions associated with the god subvert the ultimate aims of both lover and initiate.

In an extended passage in which Ovid discusses erotic activity, it seems that the poet has taken seriously the Platonic injunction that lovers are to treat the objects of their desire like gods whose mystic rites are to be worshipped, with a variation upon the image that recasts cultic injunctions towards secrecy.³⁶⁵ He makes of the activity of lovers sacred rites of Venus with a mandate towards secrecy, which he explicitly likens to the Eleusinian and Samothracian mysteries (Ars. 2.601-12):

Quis Cereris ritus ausit vulgare profanis,	
Magnaue Threicia sacra reperta Samo?	
Exigua est virtus praestare silentia rebus:	
At contra gravis est culpa tacenda loqui.	
O bene, quod frustra captatis arbore pomis	605
Garrulus in media Tantalus aret aqua!	
Praecipue Cytherea iubet sua sacra taceri:	
Admoneo, veniat nequis ad illa loquax.	
Condita si non sunt Veneris mysteria cistis,	
Nec cava vesanis ictibus aera sonant,	610
At sic inter nos medio versantur in usu,	
Se tamen inter nos ut latuisse velint.	

Who would dare to publish to the profane the rites of Ceres, or the great ceremonies devised in Samothrace? Keeping silence is but a small virtue, but to speak what should not be uttered is a heinous crime. Well is it that garrulous Tantalus clutches in vain at the apples on the tree, and parches in the water’s midst! Cytherea above all forbids her rites to be told of; I give warning that no talkative person approach them. Even if the mysteries of Venus are not hidden in chests, nor does the hollow bronze resound to frenzied blows, yet are they habitually so practiced in our midst as in our midst to desire concealment.

³⁶⁵ We might consider as well the discussion of Diotima concerning Eros in the closing act of the *Symposium*, in which the priestess uses mystery cult as a metaphor for obtaining knowledge of the erotic (210a): ταῦτα μὲν οὖν τὰ ἐρωτικά ἴσως, ὃ Σώκρατες, κἂν σὺ μυηθεῖς; τὰ δὲ τέλεα καὶ ἐποπτικά, ὧν ἕνεκα καὶ ταῦτα ἔστιν, ἐάν τις ὀρθῶς μετή, οὐκ οἶδ’ εἰ οἶός τ’ ἂν εἴης (“Even you, Socrates, might be initiated into these love-matters; but I doubt if you could approach the rites and revelations to which these, for the properly instructed, are merely the avenue”). On the manipulation of mystery cult imagery in Platonic discussions of *eros* in the *Symposium*, *Phaedrus*, and *Republic*, see Gómez Iglesias 2016.

We have already seen how the particular rhetoric of this passage exploits literary formulae which characterize cult and by which mandates to cult secrecy are transferred to the erotic sphere as a mandate not to ‘kiss-and-tell,’ reiterated most directly by the poet in the conclusion of the discussion (*Ars.* 2.639-40): *nos etiam veros parce profiteamur amores, | tectaque sunt solida mystica furta fide* (“As for me I recount even true amours but sparingly, and a solid secrecy hides my dark intrigues”).³⁶⁶ A different group, but one which commits a different crime of speech, namely deception, has already been accused in cult terminology – Ovid tells us that those who would deceive their lover are ‘for the most part, a profane race’ (*ex magna parte profanum | sunt genus*, *Ars* 1.645). In this discussion, Ovid has recast figures from the erotic dynamic as figures affiliated with cult – a divinity to be worshipped with rites, the supplicant seeking initiation, boundaries of access, with especial interest in violations of speech. And we have already seen this cult amatory poetics in the *Amores* as well, where Ovid maps on to the dynamic of lover and rival the cult binary of initiate and uninitiated.³⁶⁷

Ovid’s playful reinvention of sexual activity as the ‘rites of Venus’ has its origins in discussions around sexual activity in which maenads were supposed to have engaged, such as in Euripides’ *Bacchae*, where a similar concept is reiterated in the suspicions expressed by Pentheus. The king, denying the divinity of Dionysus, suspects that the Theban women feign participation in the orgiastic rites upon the mountain tops and instead engage in all manner of lascivious behavior (215-25):

ἔκδημος ὦν μὲν τῆσδ’ ἐτύγχανον χθονός,	215
κλύω δὲ νεοχμὰ τήνδ’ ἀνὰ πτόλιν κακά,	
γυναῖκας ἡμῖν δώματ’ ἐκλειπέναι	
πλασταῖσι βακχεΐαισιν, ἐν δὲ δασκίοις	
ὄρεσι θαάζειν, τὸν νεωστὶ δαίμονα	
Διόνυσον, ὅστις ἔστι, τιμώσας χοροῖς:	220

³⁶⁶ See Ch. 1.1.3.

³⁶⁷ See pp. 31-36, in the context of my first chapter's the discussion of the *paraklausithyron* as a site of 'cult rites of Venus' and the talkative lover (*loquax*) as a cult profaner.

πλήρεις δὲ θιάσοις ἐν μέσοισιν ἐστάναι
 κρατῆρας, ἄλλην δ' ἄλλοσ' εἰς ἐρημίαν
 πτώσσουσιν εὐναῖς ἀρσένων ὑπηρετεῖν,
 πρόφασιν μὲν ὡς δὴ μαινάδας θυοσκόους,
 τὴν δ' Ἀφροδίτην πρόσθ' ἄγειν τοῦ Βακχίου.

225

I happened to be absent from this land, and hear of the new evils in this city: that our women have left their homes in fake Bacchic revels, and are rushing around on the thick-shaded mountains, honoring the new god Dionysus, whoever he is, with dances, and setting up full mixing-bowls in the middle of the thiasoi, each one slinking off to the wild to serve the lust of males, with the pretext of being maenads sacrificing, but in fact putting Aphrodite before Bacchos.

It is thus somewhat intuitive for Ovid to unpack and exploit this connection between one kind of cult activity, Bacchic worship, and what he frames as another kind of cult activity, sexual activity. We might consider the phrasing of *mystica furta* ('dark intrigues,' *Ars* 2.460) as terminology which plays on phrases which describe the nocturnal rites of Bacchus.³⁶⁸ Ovid is transferring a cult erotic poetics of 'rites of Venus' already present in Hellenistic poetry, as in the case of an epigram of Meleager (*A.P.* 5.191):³⁶⁹

ἄστρο καὶ ἡ φιλέρωσι καλὸν φαίνουσα Σελήνη
 καὶ Νύξ καὶ κώμων σύμπλανον ὄργανιον,
 ἄρά γε τὴν φιλάσωτον ἔτ' ἐν κοίταισιν ἀθρήσω
 ἄγρυπνον, λύχνω πόλλ' ἀποδοαμένην;
 ἢ τιν' ἔχει σύγκοιτον; ἐπὶ προθύροισι μαράνας
 δάκρυσιν ἐκδήσω τοὺς ἱκέτας στεφάνους,
 ἐν τόδ' ἐπιγράψας: Κύπρι, σοὶ Μελέαγρος, ὁ μύστης
 σῶν κώμων, στοργῆς σκύλα τάδ' ἐκρέμασε.

5

O stars, and Moon, lighting well the way for those disposed to love, and Night, and you, my instrument that accompanies my revels – will I gaze upon my wanton one, still awake on her bed, singed often by her lamp? Or does someone share her bed? I will take off my suppliant garland, douse it with tears and fix it on her porch, inscribing on it just this: "Cypris, to you Meleager, the initiate of your revels, hung up these spoils of love."

The epigram engages in a species of cult erotics which we have already considered in the case of Ovid, the *paraklausithyron*, in which the poet, who calls himself the 'initiate of the revels [of

³⁶⁸ See examples already discussed on pp. 227-9.

³⁶⁹ Consider also *A.P.* 6.162: ἀνθεμά σοι Μελέαγρος ἐὼν συμπαίστορα λύχνον, | Κύπρι φίλη, μύστην σῶν θέτο παννυχίδων ("Meleager dedicates to you, dear Cypris, the lamp, his play-fellow, that is initiated into the secrets of your night festival"); and *A.P.* 7.219.5-6: κώμους, καὶ τὰ νέων ζηλώματα, καὶ τὰ ποθεύντων | κνίσματα, καὶ μύστην λύχνον ἀπειπαμένη ("having bid farewell to reveling and young men's rivalries and lovers' torments and the lamp her confidant").

Aphrodite]’ (ὁ μύστης σῶν κώμων) is kept from the company of his maiden by a rival, where again cult binaries are mapped onto erotic binaries.³⁷⁰ Ovid in the case of Venus cleverly makes use of terminology already established in discussions of cult rites of Bacchus in framing the ‘sacred nights’ that are the erotic activity of the lover.³⁷¹

The passage, for all of its playfulness, will have rankled the Roman audience of the poem in inflammatory ways characteristic of the poet. Ovid’s ideations around so-called cult rites of Venus hinge on a similarity of formal features, which for the Roman audience would have been uncomfortably reminiscent of Bacchic rites and the illicit erotic activity that Romans expected occurred at them.³⁷² A hysteria around the possibility of sexual activity occurring during Bacchic rites is a literary motif already present in Greek literature, as is evident in the passage of the *Bacchae* already cited.³⁷³ Anxieties around the sexual licentiousness imagined to have occurred during the nocturnal rites of Bacchus are historically attested at Rome, most famously in the case of the *senatus consultum de Bacchanalibus* of 186 BCE, which attempted to put an end to Bacchic cult worship at Rome, employing in its argumentation suspicion of illicit erotic activity; these events, and Roman anxieties around them, are recorded for the Augustan age in the history

³⁷⁰ See p. 34.

³⁷¹ See pp. 227-9. A similar manipulation characterizes the use of *orgia* in the poetry of Propertius at 2.6.32.

³⁷² The association of ritual with sexual activity seems mostly to have been symbolic and mythical. Cf. Henrichs 1982:147–48.

³⁷³ For the sexual overtones of depictions of maenads in Greek vase painting, cf. Seaford 1994.

of Livy (39.15-6), who speaks of the licentious behavior thought to have occurred with terms such as *libido*³⁷⁴ and *lascivia*.³⁷⁵

If the rites of Bacchus can incorporate the erotic, and if sexual activity becomes ‘rites’ for Venus, and Bacchus himself can serve as the model of the idealized lover, then it will be natural to read the maenad as a participant in erotic poetics. And indeed, the maenad serves as a model for the behavior of the elegiac mistress at varying stages of the erotic relationship. Where epic wields Eastern *cultus* as an insult brought against those who are framed as cowardly or unfit for war, Ovid will appropriate this motif to describe the unadorned beauty of attractive objects of desire. In his advice to women who would be wooed, Ovid relegates *cultus* to cult worshippers of Cybele, preferring the unadorned aesthetics of a naked simplicity (*Ars* 1.505-12):

Sed tibi nec ferro placeat torquere capillos,	505
Nec tua mordaci pumice crura teras.	
Ista iube faciant, quorum Cybeleia mater	
Concinitur Phrygiis exululata modis.	
Forma viros neglecta decet; Minoida Theseus	
Abstulit, a nulla tempora comptus acu.	510
Hippolytum Phaedra, nec erat bene cultus, amavit;	
Cura deae silvis aptus Adonis erat.	

But take no pleasure in curling your hair with the iron, or in scraping your legs with biting pumice-stone. Bid them do that by whom mother Cybele is sung in howling chorus of Phrygian measures. An uncared-for beauty is becoming to men; Theseus carried off Minos’ daughter, though no clasp decked his temples. Phaedra loved Hippolytus, nor yet was he a well-kept; Adonis, born to the woodland, was a goddess’ care.

³⁷⁴ 39.15.3: *non illos, qui pravis et externis religionibus captas mentes velut furialibus stimulis ad omne scelus et ad omnem libidinem agerent* (“[our forefathers appointed these gods to be worshipped, and] not those gods who would drive our enthralled minds with vile and alien rites, as by the scourges of the Furies, to every crime and every lust”); 39.16.2: *quidquid his annis libidine, quidquid fraude, quidquid scelere peccatum est, ex illo uno sacrario scitote ortum esse* (“whatever villainy there has been in recent years due to lust, whatever to fraud, whatever to crime, I tell you, has arisen from this one cult”); 39.16.5: *si quem libido, si furor in illum gurgitem abripuit, illorum eum, cum quibus in omne flagitium et facinus coniuravit, non suum iudicet esse* (“if lust, if madness has carried off anyone into that whirlpool, let each consider that such a person belongs, not to himself, but to those with whom he has conspired to every wickedness and wrong”); 39.16.11: *qui quia suum numen sceleribus libidinibusque contaminari indigne ferebant, ex occultis ea tenebris in lucem extraxerunt, nec patefieri, ut impunita essent, sed ut vindicarentur et opprimerentur, voluerunt* (“they, because they were indignant that their own divinity was being polluted by acts of crime and lust, have dragged these matters from darkness into the light, nor have they willed that they should be discovered in order that they might be unpunished, but that they may be coerced and suppressed”).

³⁷⁵ 39.15.7: *alios concessum ludum et lasciviam credere esse* (“others believe that is is an allowable play and pastime”).

The rhetoric of derision reserved for Easterners, to which Vergil adds the image of worship of Cybele in the case of the Phrygian Trojans, is reworked by Ovid for an amatory context, in which *cultus* becomes symbol not of an unwarlike nature but of a diminishing of masculine and feminine beauty. Infused with immense irony is the poet's discussion shortly thereafter of three figures closely associated with cult as models of unadorned beauty: Ariadne (*Minoida*), the archetypal Bacchant of Catullus 64 who becomes the consort of Bacchus amid a retinue of Satyrs and maenads in the throes of worship; Hippolytus, perhaps the most visible initiate into the Eleusinian Mysteries of Greek literature after his characterization in Euripides' *Hippolytus*, whose lover, Phaedra, throughout the Ovidian corpus is likened to a Bacchant; and Adonis, whose death is commemorated in cult worship at Rome.

A meditation on unadorned beauty, frequently praised in elegy, in Ovid's *Amores* cites the maenad as the model of aesthetic simplicity (*Am.* 1.14.19-22):

saepe etiam nondum digestis mane capillis
 purpureo iacuit semisupina toro.
 tum quoque erat neglecta decens, ut Thracia Bacche,
 cum temere in viridi gramine lassa iacet.

Often too, in early morning when her hair was not yet dressed, she has lain half supine on her purple couch. Even then, in her neglect, she was comely, like a Thracian Bacchant lying careless and wearied on the green turf.

The vignette pictures the maenad at an unusual moment, in a relaxed and leisurely state, and not in the violent and transgressive throes of divine possession. Greek literary precedents for maenads at rest contain the same voyeuristic overtones implied in the scene sketched by Ovid and in the intimacy of viewing a woman in the early morning before her toilette, reclining in a relaxed position typically reserved for private company. Such is the state of the maenads whose activity is reported at length to Pentheus in Euripides' *Bacchae* (677-713):

ἀγελαῖα μὲν βοσκήματ' ἄρτι πρὸς λέπας
 μόσχων ὑπεξήκριζον, ἥνιχ' ἥλιος
 ἀκτῖνας ἐξίησι θερμαίνων χθόνα.

ὀρώ δὲ θιάσους τρεῖς γυναικείων χορῶν, 680
 ὣν ἥρχ' ἐνὸς μὲν Αὐτονόη, τοῦ δευτέρου
 μήτηρ Ἀγαυή σή, τρίτου δ' Ἰνώ χοροῦ.
 ἡὔδον δὲ πᾶσαι σώμασιν παρειμέναι,
 αἵ μὲν πρὸς ἐλάτης νῶτ' ἐρείσασαι φόβην,
 αἵ δ' ἐν δρυὸς φύλλοισι πρὸς πέδῳ κάρα 685
 εἰκῇ βαλοῦσαι σωφρόνως, οὐχ ὥς σὺ φῆς
 ὦνωμένας κρατῆρι καὶ λωτοῦ ψόφῳ
 θηρᾶν καθ' ὕλην Κύπριν ἡρημαμένας.
 ἡ σὴ δὲ μήτηρ ὠλόλυξεν ἐν μέσσαις
 σταθεῖσα βάκχαις, ἐξ ὕπνου κινεῖν δέμας, 690
 μυκήμαθ' ὥς ἤκουσε κεροφόρων βοῶν.
 αἵ δ' ἀποβαλοῦσαι θαλερὸν ὁμμάτων ὕπνον
 ἀνῆξαν ὀρθαί, θαῦμ' ἰδεῖν εὐκοσμίας,
 νέαι παλαιαὶ παρθένοι τ' ἔτ' ἄζυγες.
 καὶ πρῶτα μὲν καθεῖσαν εἰς ὦμους κόμας 695
 νεβρίδας τ' ἀνεστεύλανθ' ὅσαισιν ἀμμάτων
 σύνδεσμ' ἐλέλυτο, καὶ καταστίκτους δορὰς
 ὄφεσι κατεζώσαντο λιχμῶσιν γένυν.
 αἵ δ' ἀγκάλαισι δορκάδ' ἢ σκύμνους λύκων
 ἀγρίους ἔχουσαι λευκὸν ἐδίδοσαν γάλα, 700
 ὅσαις νεοτόκοις μαστὸς ἦν σπαργῶν ἔτι
 βρέφη λιπούσαις· ἐπὶ δ' ἔθεντο κισσίνους
 στεφάνους δρυὸς τε μίλακός τ' ἀνθροφόρου.
 θύρσον δὲ τις λαβοῦσ' ἔπαισεν ἐς πέτραν,
 ὅθεν δροσώδης ὕδατος ἐκπηδᾷ νοτίς· 705
 ἄλλη δὲ νάρθηκ' ἐς πέδον καθῆκε γῆς,
 καὶ τῇδε κρήνην ἐξανῆκ' οἴνου θεός·
 ὅσαις δὲ λευκοῦ πώματος πόθος παρῆν,
 ἄκροισι δακτύλοισι διαμῶσαι χθόνα
 γάλακτος ἐσμὸς εἶχον· ἐκ δὲ κισσίνων 710
 θύρσων γλυκεῖται μέλιτος ἔσταζον ῥοαί.
 ὥστ', εἰ παρῆσθα, τὸν θεὸν τὸν νῦν ψέγεις
 εὐχαῖσιν ἂν μετῆλθες εἰσιδὼν τάδε.

The herds of grazing cattle were just climbing up the hill, at the time when the sun sends forth its rays, warming the earth. I saw three companies of dancing women, one of which Autonoë led, the second your mother Agave, and the third Ino. All were asleep, their bodies relaxed, some resting their backs against pine foliage, others laying their heads at random on the oak leaves, modestly, not as you say drunk with the goblet and the sound of the flute, hunting out Aphrodite through the woods in solitude. Your mother raised a cry, standing up in the midst of the Bacchae, to wake their bodies from sleep, when she heard the lowing of the horned cattle. And they, casting off refreshing sleep from their eyes, sprang upright, a marvel of orderliness to behold, old, young, and still unmarried virgins. First they let their hair loose over their shoulders, and secured their fawn-skins, as many of them as had released the fastenings of their knots, girding the dappled hides with serpents licking their jaws. And some, holding in their arms a gazelle or wild wolf-pup, gave them white milk, as many as had abandoned their new-born infants and had their breasts still swollen. They put on garlands of ivy, and oak, and flowering yew. One took her thyrsus and struck it against a rock, from which a dewy stream of water sprang forth. Another let her thyrsus strike the ground, and there the god sent forth a fountain of wine. All who desired the white drink scratched the earth with the tips of their fingers and obtained streams of milk; and a sweet flow of honey dripped from their ivy-covered thyrsi; so that, had you been present and seen this, you would have approached with prayers the god whom you now blame.

The shepherds who offer this report view the maenads from a hidden vantage point, under cover of foliage (θάμνων δ' ἔλλοχίζομεν φόβαις | κρύψαντες αὐτούς, 722-3); combined with the injunction against male participation in maenadic rites, maenadic behavior both during the rites and also at rest becomes a matter of exclusivity and secrecy from the vantage point of the excluded male gaze, which Ovid reworks as erotic intimacy in the image of the elegiac mistress in an unadorned state, the maenad available to a certain kind of privileged erotic gaze. Here, again, cult binaries of exclusivity of access are recast as erotic intimacy, given only to the lover privileged enough to receive it.

No maenad is more susceptible to being viewed than the Ariadne of Catullus 64; the maiden is herself an image woven into a tapestry to be admired, while the raving Bacchant to which she is likened is only a marble effigy, an art object to be viewed and an embodiment of the tension between the maenad in stillness available to the erotic gaze and in raving ecstasy, threatening destruction. Propertius, too, likens his Cynthia, asleep on the couch, to the sleeping Ariadne and the maenad at rest, in a voyeuristic and prolonged description of viewing (1.3.1-10):

Qualis Thesea iacuit cedente carina	
languida desertis Cnosia litoribus;	
qualis et accubuit primo Cepheia somno	
libera iam duris cotibus Andromede;	
nec minus assiduis Edonis fessa choreis	5
qualis in herboso concidit Apidano:	
talis visa mihi mollem spirare quietem	
Cynthia non certis nixa caput manibus,	
ebria cum multo traherem vestigia Baccho,	
et quaterent sera nocte facem pueri.	10

Like the maiden of Knossos as in a swoon she lay on the deserted shore when Theseus' ship sailed away; like Cepheus' daughter Andromeda as she rested in her first slumber on her release from the rugged cliff; no less like the Thracian bacchant, exhausted after incessant dances, when she collapses on the grassy bank of the Apidanus: even so did Cynthia seem to me to breathe a gentle repose, her head pillowed on a cushion of her hands, when home I came, dragging footsteps unsteadied by much wine and when the slaves were shaking their dying torches in the far-gone night.

There is a pointed irony, of course, in the opposition of the narrator as drunken lover (*ebria cum multo...Baccho*) coming upon the mistress as a kind of Bacchant at rest, free from the possession

of the god, which sets in apposition the maenadic state of frenzy and the state of drunkenness through the shared simile of ‘being full of the god Bacchus,’ a frequent locution describing an ecstatic state.³⁷⁶

The maenad at the height of her frenzy, in addition to the maenad at rest, is an equally potent image for elegiac poetry.³⁷⁷ Propertius offers a model in describing a fight he has had with Cynthia the night before, she ‘drunk with wine’ (*furibunda mero*, 3.8.3); this he takes as an indication of her love for him, since a woman who rages in the way that she has, according to the poet, only does so under the compulsion of love (*nam sine amore gravi femina nulla dolet*, 3.8.10). He likens the frenzied behavior of a woman enraged at her lover to that of the Bacchant (3.8.14): *seu sequitur medias, maenas ut icta, vias* (“or [she] rushes down the street like a possessed bacchant”). This frenzied behavior allows for a re-reading of the violence which opens poem 3.8, in which the lover describes the manner in which Cynthia tears at his cheeks, gauges his eyes, and scratches his chest, as the violence characteristic of the maenads in their frenzy and, in the articulation of distinct body parts, of the *sparagmos* of wild animals that was supposed to accompany maenadic worship.

Similarly, Ovid sees in the woman who has been scorned for a rival the frenzy of the impassioned maenad (*Ars.* 2.373-84):

Sed neque fulvus aper media tam saevus in ira est,	
Fulmineo rabidos cum rotat ore canes,	
Nec lea, cum catulis lactentibus ubera praebebat,	275
Nec brevis ignaro vipera laesa pede,	
Femina quam socii deprensa paelice lecti:	
Ardet et in vultu pignora mentis habet.	
In ferrum flammisque ruit, positoque decore	
Fertur, ut Aonii cornibus icta dei.	280
Coniugis admissum violataque iura marita est	
Barbara per natos Phasias ulta suos.	
Altera dira parens haec est, quam cernis, hirundo:	
Aspice, signatum sanguine pectus habet.	

³⁷⁶ For the debt of this poem to Catullus 64, see Elsner 2007:25–28.

³⁷⁷ For female *furor* as erotic passion in Vergil and Ovid, cf. Fabre-Serris 2016.

But neither is the red boar so savage at his fury's height, when with lightning jaw he overturns the raging hounds, nor the lioness when she is giving the udder to her unweaned cubs, nor the tiny adder hurt by a careless foot, as is a woman when a rival is taken in the bed she shares; she is aflame and on her face she bears the tokens of her feelings. She rushes to seize fire and steel and, her modesty flung aside, rages as though struck by the horns of the Aonian god. The barbarous Phasian by means of her own children avenged the crime of her spouse and wedlock's broken law. Another terrible parent is this swallow that you behold: look, her breast is stained with blood.

A mythological model which Ovid will include later on in his *Ars Amatoria* offers a warning to women against harboring the kind of jealousy of a rival discussed in the passage cited above. That figure is Procris, who will make a second appearance in his *Metamorphoses* (7.661ff.). Though the latter will be devoid of explicit maenadic characterization, Ovid in Book 3 of the *Ars Amatoria* likens Procris in her jealousy of a rival to a maenad, a cautionary mythological tale emblemizing the case discussed in the abstract in Book 2. Procris, under the impression that she has a rival for her husband's affection in a figure named 'Aura' (who is, in fact, truly just the 'breeze'), faints upon hearing of this imagined betrayal; when she regains her senses, her jealousy manifests as maenadic behavior (*Ars* 3.707-14):

Ut rediit animus, tenues a pectore vestes
 rumpit, et indignas sauciat ungue genas;
 nec mora, per medias passis furibunda capillis
 evolat, ut thyrso concita Baccha, vias. 710
 Ut prope perventum, comites in valle relinquit,
 ipsa nemus tacito clam pede fortis init.
 Quid tibi mentis erat, cum sic male sana lateres,
 Procri? Quis adtoniti pectoris ardor erat?

When her spirit returned, she plucked the frail garment from her breast, and marred with her nails her innocent cheeks; and straightaway with streaming hair she flies through the streets in frenzy, like a Bacchant sped by the thyrsus. When she drew near, she left her comrades in the vale, and herself secretly with silent step bravely entered the wood. What were your feelings, Procris, when thus frantic you lurked there? What fire was in your maddened heart?

As in the meditations on madness already considered, Ovid implicitly asks the reader to conflate the kinds of mania at play in a jealousy rooted in love and maenadic in characterization by employing terms and phrases, such as *male sana* and *adtonitum pectus*, whose immediate referent

is her jealousy but which are open to Dionysiac interpretation in the shadow of the simile of the Bacchant which precedes.

Maenadic frenzy becomes the metaphor for pathological desire for those mythological figures which Ovid treats who find their desire directed at unsuitable objects. Ovid's poetry is riddled with female lovers whose desire transgresses taboos of family relations, gender lines, and social stations; for many of these, the Bacchant may serve as a model of transgressive frenzy, at once ecstatic and at any moment erotic. Pasiphaë, wife of Cretan Minos who conceives a desire for a bull by whom she produces the Minotaur, is one such figure (*Ars* 1.307-12):

Crede tamen speculo, quod te negat esse iuvencam.
 Quam cuperes fronti cornua nata tuae!
 Sive placet Minos, nullus quaeratur adulter:
 Sive virum mavis fallere, falle viro!
 In nemus et saltus thalamo regina relicto
 Fertur, ut Aonio concita Baccha deo.

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Just believe your mirror, that denies that you are a heifer. How you might desire for horns to spring from your brow! If Minos please you, may you not seek any adulterer. But if you prefer to deceive your husband, deceive him with a man! The queen bears herself into the grove and glens, her bed-chamber left behind, like a Bacchant struck by the Aonian god.

Here again, Ovid sets in opposition the domestic presence of the virtuous wife and the frenzied behavior of the maenads, who take themselves from the predictable confines of the household and rush to places of wild, unrestrained activity. The poet inserts a touch of irony in the queen's wish to be born with horns, since the god Bacchus can be depicted with horns on the forehead, exemplified by his epithet *corniger* (*Ars* 3.15.17) and *bicorniger* (*Heroides* 13.33);³⁷⁸ such is the vision Pentheus sees of the god at the height of his frenzied participation in the maenadic rites in Euripides' *Bacchae* (920-2):

καὶ ταῦρος ἡμῖν πρόσθεν ἡγεῖσθαι δοκεῖς
 καὶ σὺ κέρατα κρατὶ προσπεφυκέναι

³⁷⁸ Cf. *Met.* 4.19-20, where the poet plays on the image: *tibi, cum sine cornibus adstas, | virgineum caput est* ("Your forehead, when you present yourself without horns, is maidenly"); *Fast.* 3.789: *huc placataque cornua vertas* ("may you turn in this direction your mollified horns"). Cf. also Horace, *Odes* 2.19.27-8: *te vidit...aureo | cornu decorum* ("He saw you, [Bacchus,] beautiful with your golden horns").

ἀλλ' ἢ ποτ' ἦσθα θήρ; τεταύρωσαι γὰρ οὔν.

And you seem to be leading, ahead of me, as a bull, and horns seem to be on your head. Were you a beast before? For you are certainly changed into a bull.

Ovid in fact makes this irony quite explicit in the version of the narrative of Ariadne and Bacchus which he includes in his *Fasti*, in which Ariadne laments that her lover Bacchus, like Theseus, has deserted her, making an appeal to the love of her mother, Pasiphaë, for the bull (3.499-500): *ceperunt matrem formosi cornua tauri, | me tua: at hic laudi est, ille pudendus amor* (“The horns of a handsome bull won my mother’s heart, yours won mine; but my love was cause for praise, hers was shameful”).

Her maenadic characterization will color the scene of sacrifice that follows (*Ars.* 1.317-22):

Dixit, et ingenti iamdudum de grege duci
 lussit et inmeritam sub iuga curva trahi,
 Aut cadere ante aras commentaque sacra coegit,
 Et tenuit laeta paelicis exta manu. 320
 Paelicibus quotiens placavit numina caesis,
 Atque ait, exta tenens ‘ite, placete meo!’

She spoke, and straightaway ordered her to be taken from the mighty herd, and undeserving to be dragged beneath the curving yoke, or forced her to fall before the altar in a feigned sacrifice, and held in exultant hands her rival’s entrails. How often with her rivals’ bodies did she appease the gods, and say, as she held their entrails, “Now go and find favor with my lord!”

The disturbing image of the frenzied queen holding the gory entrails of the heifer in her hands may be evocative of what was believed to have been the practice of maenads during the rites, namely *sparagmos* and *omophagia* of wild animals, bringing to vivid reality the more grotesque features imagined of worship of Dionysus. Here, we see an indication of a kind of paranoia surrounding maenadic rites as an elaborate ruse under cover of which to engage in immoral behavior in the phrase *commenta sacra*, calling into question the legitimacy of the worship described and making of Pasiphaë an even more insidious maenadic figure.

Ovid's Phaedra, who conceives a love for her stepson, Hippolytus, in the fourth of the poet's *Heroides*, will receive maenadic characterization in an expansion of motifs derived from Euripides' *Hippolytus*. Here, she describes her cultic revelry, citing first maenadism and then participation in the cult of Cybele (*Ep.* 4.45-52):

Saepe iuvat versare leves in pulvere currus	45
Torquentem frenis ora fugacis equi;	
Nunc feror, ut Bacchi furiis Eleleides actae,	
Quaeque sub Idaeo tympana colle movent,	
Aut quas semideae Dryades Faunisque bicornes	
Numine contactas attonuere suo.	50
Namque mihi referunt, cum se furor ille remisit,	
Omnia; me tacitam conscius urit amor.	

Often do I delight to whirl the light car in the dust of the course, twisting with the rein the mouth of the flying steed; now again I am carried along, like the daughters of the Bacchic cry driven by the frenzy of their god, and those who shake the timbrel at the foot of Ida's ridge, or those whom Dryad creatures half-diving and Fauns two-horned have touched with their own spirit and driven distraught. For they tell me of all these things when that madness of mine has passed away; and I keep silence, conscious that love burns me.

Ovid makes of her propensity for hunting in Euripides' play the occasion for maenadic activity – her desire to retreat into the woods and to engage in the hunt is manipulated with little resistance into the flight of the Bacchantes into mountain peaks and forests. The multivalence of the concept of mania is deeply encoded in the closing verses, particularly in the phrase *furor ille*, which simultaneously looks backward to the frenzy of the maenads, worshippers of Cybele, and the group of Dryads and Fauns, and forward to her desire, *amor*. Phaedra's silence (*tacitam*), in light of the worship which she cites, may be implicated in her assimilation to participants in cult worship, both with reference to the concept of ritual silence and with reference to the mandates on secrecy imposed upon initiates.

Though Euripides does not indulge in an extended and explicit discussion of Phaedra as a maenad in his *Hippolytus*, it may be possible to detect the seeds of such characterization in his play. The chorus, remarking upon the frenzied behavior of the queen, offers this description (135-50):

τριτάταν δέ νιν κλύω	135
τάνδ' ἄβρωσίᾳ	
στόματος ἀμέραν	
Δάματρος ἀκτᾶς δέμας ἀγνὸν ἴσχειν,	
κρυπτῷ πένθει θανάτου θέλουσαν	
κέλσαι ποτὶ τέρμα δύστανον.	140
†σύ γάρ† ἔνθεος, ὦ κούρα,	
εἴτ' ἐκ Πανὸς εἴθ' Ἑκάτας	
ἢ σεμνῶν Κορυβάντων φοι-	
τᾶς ἢ ματρὸς ὀρείας;	
†σύ δ'† ἀμφὶ τὰν πολύθη-	145
ρον Δίκτυνναν ἀμπλακίαις	
άνιερος ἀθύτων πελάνων τρύχη;	
φοιτᾷ γὰρ καὶ διὰ λί-	
μνας χέρσον θ' ὑπὲρ πελάγους	
δίναις ἐν νοτίαις ἁλμας.	150

I hear that this is the third day that she has kept her body pure of Demeter's grain by starvation, wishing because of a secret trouble to run ashore at the wretched boundary that is death. Are you frenzied, girl, possessed by Pan or Hecate, or the holy Corybantes or the mountain mother? Or are you wasting away because of offenses against Dictynna of many animals, neglecting to make ritual offerings? For she roams also through the meadows and over the sandbar in the wet whirlpools of the salty sea.

Here, the chorus effectively likens Phaedra to a cult worshipper, with imagery that will also evoke perhaps the Demeter of the *Homeric Hymn*, who refrains from eating in grief over her lost daughter (and, if we accept the textual tradition above which reads κούρα at line 141, perhaps a reference to Kore, as well). Halleran, in his commentary, remarks upon the noteworthy absence of Aphrodite as a divinity who can induce madness in the list of deities whom the chorus speculates have set Phaedra in her frenzy.³⁷⁹ A discussion of the powers of Eros by the chorus, lamenting the doomed love of Phaedra, lists the crazed Iole, likened to a maenad, subtly bringing the image to bear on Phaedra as well (545-54):

τὰν μὲν Οἰχαλίᾳ	545
πῶλον ἄζυγα λέκτρων, ἄναν-	
δρον τὸ πρὶν καὶ ἄνυμφον, οἴ-	
κων ζεύξασ' ἀπ' Εὐρυτίων	
δρομάδα ναῖδ' ὅπως τε βάκ-	
χαν σὺν αἵματι, σὺν καπνῷ,	550
φονίοισι νυμφείοις	
Ἀλκμήνας τόκῳ Κύπρις ἐξέδωκεν:	
ὦ τλάμων ὑμεναίων.	

³⁷⁹Halleran 2000:162–63.

The filly in Oechalia, unyoked in marriage, with no man and no wedding previously, Cypris yoked her away from Eurytus' house, like a running Naiad or a Bacchant, with blood, with smoke in a bloody wedding, and gave her away in marriage to Alcmene's son. O wretched in your wedding!

In the final antistrophe of the chorus, the power of the wrath of Aphrodite is exemplified by the myth of Semele and the birth of Bacchus (555-64):

ὦ Θήβας ἱερὸν	555
τεῖχος, ὦ στόμα Δίρκας, συνεί-	
ποιτ' ἂν ἅ Κύπρις οἶον ἔρ-	
πει: βροντᾷ γὰρ ἀμφιπύρῳ	
τοκάδα τὰν διγόνοιο Βάκ-	
χου νυμφευσαμένα πότμῳ	560
φονίῳ κατηύνασεν.	
δεινὰ γὰρ τὰ πάντ' ἐπιπνεῖ, μέλισσα δ'	
οἷα τις πεπόταται.	

Holy wall of Thebes, mouth of Dirce, you could confirm how Cypris is when she comes. For giving the mother of twice-born Bacchus in marriage to a flaming thunderbolt she brought her to sleep in a bloody doom. For terrible, she blows on all there is, and like a bee she flits.

The playwright has recourse to cult imagery throughout his play, punctuating the progression of the action with religious intensity and perhaps informing the imagery of Ovid's account of Phaedra.

In what follows, Phaedra casts herself in the light of two maenadic figures already discussed, implicating her crimes in theirs and seeing in her desire the inheritance of a familial tendency. She first makes reference to her mother Pasiphaë (*Ep.* 4.57-8): *Pasiphaë mater, decepto subdita tauro*, | *enixa est utero crimen onusque suo* ("Pasiphaë my mother, victim of the deluded bull, brought forth in travail her reproach and burden"); shortly thereafter, her sister Ariadne (*Ep.* 4.63-6):

hoc quoque fatale est: placuti domus una duabus;
 me tua forma capit, capta parente soror.
 Thesides Theseusque duas rapuere sorores –
 ponite de nostra bina tropaea domo!

This, too, is fateful, that one house has won us both; your beauty has captured my heart, my sister's heart was captured by your father. Theseus' son and Theseus have been the undoing of two sisters – set up a double trophy from our home!

The familial lines suggest the inheritance not only of a perverse desire but also of the propensity towards maenadic behavior, pathologizing not only the perverse erotic narrative common to all three figures, but also the maenadic characterizations which so frequently accompany their narratives. The references have a direct precedent in the *Hippolytus* of Euripides, where the playwright presents a concise genealogy (337-41):

Φαί.: ὦ τλήμον, οἶον, μήτηρ, ἡράσθης ἔρον.
 Τροφ.: ὄν ἔσχε ταύρου, τέκνον, ἢ τί φῆς τόδε;
 Φαί.: σύ τ', ὦ τάλαιν' ὄμαιμε, Διονύσου δάμαρ.
 Τροφ.: τέκνον, τί πάσχεις; συγγόνους κακορροθεῖς; 340
 Φαί.: τρίτη δ' ἐγὼ δύστηνος ὡς ἀπόλλυμαι.

Phae.: O wretched mother, what a passion you had!
 Nurse: The one she had for the bull, child? Or what is this you're saying?
 Phae.: And you, my poor sister, wife of Dionysus!
 Nurse: Child, what's wrong? Are you reviling your kin?
 Phae.: And I am the third unfortunate one, how I'm dying!

In the passage cited above of Ovid (*Ep.* 4.63-6), the poet's emphasis on imagery of doubling and sets of two (*duabus, duas sorores, bina tropaea*), which marks its major divergence from the Euripidean precedent, is likely a strategy of foregrounding the intertextual relationship between the two accounts, his and that of Euripides, with a kind of Alexandrian footnote.

Ovid includes in his letter the detail of the occasion on which Phaedra conceived her desire for Hippolytus, the Eleusinian Mysteries (*Ep.* 4.67-70):

Tempore quo nobis inita est Cerealis Eleusin,
 Gnosia me vellem detinuisset humus!
 Tunc mihi praecipue (nec non tamen ante placebas)
 Acer in extremis ossibus haesit amor.

That time I went to Eleusis, the city of Ceres, would that the Gnosian land had held me back! It was then most of all (though you had pleased me before) that piercing love lodged in my deepest bones.

Again, we see the conflation of desire and mystic experience, present also in the monologue of Aphrodite which opens the Greek play (*Hipp.* 24-8):

ἐλθόντα γάρ νιν Πιτθέως ποτ' ἐκ δόμων
 σεμνῶν ἐς ὄψιν καὶ τέλη μυστηρίων 25
 Πανδίωνος γῆν πατρὸς εὐγενῆς δάμαρ
 ἰδοῦσα Φαίδρα καρδίαν κατέσχετο

ἔρωτι δεινῷ τοῖς ἐμοῖς βουλευέμασιν.

One day when he came from Pittheus' house to the land of Pandion to see and celebrate the holy mysteries of Demeter, his father's high-born wife Phaedra saw him, and her heart was seized with a dreadful longing by my design.

A similar conflation of desire and mystic experience can be detected here as well in the play on sight: where Hippolytus comes to Eleusis to see the rites (ἐς ὄψιν) and experience initiation, Phaedra sees Hippolytus (ἰδοῦσα), and in seeing him, desires him. Such conflations are the natural extension of the discussions of mania already considered, in which erotic desire and cultic frenzy are assimilated – by the same mechanism, sight, is each kind of frenzy induced; and where Hippolytus conceives of frenzy in response to the cult goddesses, Demeter and Kore, Phaedra conceives of frenzy in response to her own 'cult god,' the youth Hippolytus, in accordance with Plato's injunctions to worship the beloved like a god of mystic rites.

Ovid metapoetically gestures back to the corresponding moment in the *Hippolytus* of Euripides in the phrase *nec non tamen ante placebas*, bringing the intertext more vividly to the foreground with an Alexandrian footnote. The poet may be gesturing toward his source material by inserting here in the phrase *inita est* a pun playing on terminology associated with rites of initiation. The phrase is quite similar to the Latin term *initia*,³⁸⁰ the Latin equivalent of Greek terms for rites, τέλη and τελετή; in the term *inita*, we may hear the echo of *initia*. Such a strategy skirts the problem of accommodating a term metrically prohibited in dactylic meter (*initia* has three short syllables in succession). If we allow in the term *inita* the echo of *initia*, then Ovid seems to be bringing the intertext to bear through a bilingual pun on the Euripidean original: *inita* (*Ep.* 4.67) as echo of *initia*, which leads us to τέλη (*Hipp.* 25). Even without this pun, we may see a reference to

³⁸⁰ For a discussion of the origins of this term, see Wagenvoort 1956, chap. 8.

initiatory language through a different Greek term, here in an exchange in Euripides' *Bacchae* (465-6):

PEN.: πόθεν δὲ τελετὰς τάσδ' ἄγεις ἐς Ἑλλάδα;
DIO.: Διόνυσος αὐτός μ' εἰσέβης, ὁ τοῦ Διός.

Pen.: From what source do you bring these initiation rites to Greece?
Dio.: Dionysus himself, son of Zeus, initiated me.

Seaford in his commentary takes the Greek term εἰσβαίνειν here to signify initiation.³⁸¹ We may see the term *inire* in Ovid's text again as a Latin equivalent of this Greek term with initiatory significance, bringing the idea of rites to bear on the moment at Eleusis encoded at the level of language.³⁸²

Hippolytus is perhaps the most visible initiate explicitly described as such in Greek literature following his appearance in Euripides' *Hippolytus*. Besides the description cited above at *Hipp.* 24-8, Theseus will upbraid his son later in the play as a foolish sycophant of Orpheus, employing syncretic vocabulary which conflates Orphism and Bacchism (952-4):

ἤδη νυν αὔχει καὶ δι' ἀψύχου βορᾶς
σίτοις καπήλευ' Ὀρφέα τ' ἄνακτ' ἔχων
βάκχευε πολλῶν γραμμάτων τιμῶν καπνοῦς.

Now pride yourself and through your vegetarian diet be a huckster with your food, and having Orpheus as your lord play the bacchant, honoring many vaporious writings.

Ovid will manipulate standard imagery of initiates in Phaedra's letter. Ovid continues the account of Phaedra's description of the encounter at Eleusis cited above (*Ep.* 4.67-70) with a description of Hippolytus which sees him clearly in the role of initiate (*Ep.* 4.71-4):

candida vestis erat, praecincti flore capilli,
flava verecundus tinxerat ora rubor,
quemque vocant aliae vultum rigidumque trucemque,
pro rigido Phaedra iudice fortis erat.

³⁸¹Seaford 1996:187-88.

³⁸² Such may be the subtext for the use of *inire* in a fragment of Ennius' *Athamas* which seems to describe participation in Bacchic rites (ed. Jocelyn, *The Tragedies of Ennius*, fr. 52.120-4): *his erat in ore Bromius, his Bacchus pater, | illis Lyaeus vitis inventor sacrae. | tum pariter †euhan euhium† | ignotus iuvenum coetus alterna vice | inibat alacris Bacchico insultans modo.*

Shining white was your raiment, bound round with flowers your locks, the blush of modesty had tinged your sun-browned cheeks, and, what others call a countenance hard and stern, in Phaedra's eye was strong instead of hard.

Phaedra will contrast a pleasing image of an initiate with what she frames as a repugnant image of a different initiate, namely the Galloi, male worshippers of Cybele, whose presence at Rome was a point of controversy (*Ep.* 4.75-8):

sint procul a nobis iuvenes ut femina compti!— 75
 fine coli modico forma virilis amat.
 te tuus iste rigor positique sine arte capilli
 et levis egregio pulvis in ore decet.

Away from me with your young men arrayed like women! – beauty in a man would fain be striven for in measure. That hardness of feature suits you well, those locks that fall without art, and the light dust upon your handsome face.

The phrase *iuvenes ut femina compti* is an expansion of a Latin term of derision frequently levelled against the Galloi, who, due to their castration, are called *semiviri* and *semimares* (*Fast.* 4.183).³⁸³ Phaedra's revulsion at effeminate men thus maps onto rhetoric around one kind of initiate, in a moment in which Ovid taps into the well-attested Roman resistance to the cult of Cybele, perhaps most clearly manifesting in injunctions prohibiting Roman citizens from participating in the rites of the Galloi, despite the tolerance of the presence of the cult at Rome more broadly. An echo of this kind of rhetoric finds a negative example in another lover immortalized in cult worship, Adonis, in Phaedra's wish that Hippolytus be safe from the boar, thwarting the death that Adonis famously suffered (*Ep.* 4.172): *et adversa cuspide fossus aper* ("and may the boar fall pierced in full front by your spear"). Phaedra frames her praise of Hippolytus around images of different kinds of cult worshippers and figures, citing both positive and negative exempla; in doing so, she evokes the rhetoric of Theseus in Euripides' *Bacchae*, but here reversing the force of the comparison: where Theseus uses Hippolytus' status as an initiate to upbraid him, Phaedra reworks the image as rhetoric by which to praise the object of desire.

³⁸³ On the evidence for such practices, see Alvar 2008:246–61.

To the list of Pasiphaë, desirous of the bull, and Phaedra, desirous of her stepson, may be added Byblis, who, in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, conceives a desire for her brother.³⁸⁴ She, too, is frenzied like a maenad, her advances rebuffed by her sibling, who departs from their native city (*Met.* 9.635-44):

Tum vero maestam tota Miletida mente	635
defecisse ferunt, tum vero a pectore vestem	
diripuit planxitque suos furibunda lacertos.	
Iamque palam est demens inconcessamque fatetur	
spem veneris, siquidem patriam invisosque penates	
deserit et profugi sequitur vestigia fratris.	640
Utque tuo motae, proles Semeleia, thyrsos	
Ismariae celebrant repetita triennia bacchae,	
Byblida non aliter latos ululasse per agros	
Bubasides videre nurus.	

Then, they say, the wretched daughter of Miletus lost all control of reason; she tore her garments from her breast, and in mad passion beat her arms. Now before all the world she rages and publicly proclaims her unholy love in that she leaves her land and hated home and follows after her fleeing brother. And just as, crazed by the thyrsus, O son of Semele, your Ismarian worshippers throng your triennial rites, so the women of Bubassus beheld Byblis go shrieking through the broad fields.

Like Phaedra and Pasiphaë before her, Byblis as a lover afflicted by a perverse love, directed towards her brother, will find her erotic frenzy approximated to maenadic frenzy, at once a refraction of the confluences of mania incorporated throughout Roman literature and a combination of elegiac eroticism and the threat of violence to the order of the *polis* and family unit which frequently underscores descriptions of maenadic frenzy.³⁸⁵ The maenadic Byblis expands our conception of the maenad as a potential archetype for any woman afflicted with an erotic desire considered by the Romans to be deeply unnatural, the frenzied state imagined of the maenad serving to explain or at the very least offer a framework for understanding such perverse desires.

³⁸⁴ Ovid's maenadic characterization of Byblis is a departure from other versions of her myth, such as that recorded by Parthenius. Cf. Lightfoot 1999.

³⁸⁵ There may be the suggestion of Dionysiac frenzy in the incestuous love of Myrrha for her father (Ovid, *Met.* 10.311ff.) mediated through the Dionysiac frenzy induced by the Vergilian Allecto. Myrrha's desire is inspired by a Fury wielding a firebrand and snakes (*stipite te Stygio tumidisque adflavit echidnis | e tribus una soror*, "one of the three sisters with firebrand from the Styx and with swollen vipers blasted you," 313-4) in place of Cupid (*ipse negat nocuisse tibi sua tela Cupido*, "Cupid himself avers that his weapons did not harm you," 311). Ziogas 2010:159, n. 31 locates the source of Ovid's image in the frenzied inspiration of Vergil's Amata by Allecto (*Aen.* 7.354-6): "Ovid accurately reads the erotic dimension of Vergil's Allecto."

Across genres and texts, we have seen how Roman authors, exploiting the manipulation of cult imagery in their Greek predecessors, manipulate ecstatic frenzy for complex and varying aims throughout their poetry. The previous chapter considered how maenads become instruments of war and maenadic frenzy a refraction of epic martial anger; this chapter has offered a generic counterpoint by observing how Bacchus serves as an amatory deity, a model of the lover in his erotic engagement with Ariadne and whose thyrsus and wine aid in achieving erotic ends, and how tragic undertones and tragic figures bring to bear upon Latin literature the Dionysiac worship most visible in Classical Athens. In all cases, cult worship becomes the locus for metapoetic discussion, serving in many instances variously as signpost or rejection of genre; poetic self-identity can be negotiated along lines of cult ecstasy. Such discussions bring a vivid dimension to those figures and narratives explicitly associated with cult; in cases where cult interventions intrude upon non-cultic figures, cult models allow for a reappraisal of heightened emotional states, such as erotic desire (especially that which is perverse) and murderous frenzy. Cult models and binaries offer new frameworks for familiar tropes and language, adding a distinct vocabulary to different conceptions of genre. Behind all of these discussions is the figure of the hierophant, whose poetry promises soteriological consequences for those readers who can engage fully in the plays of referents.

CONCLUSION: ROMAN *VATES* AND IMPERIAL INITIATES

The preceding chapters have proposed new interpretations of Roman texts through the lens of mystery cult, associated with particular poetic formulae and motifs, and trading in familiar archetypes, such as the cult divinity, the initiate, and the impious. Many of these motifs and figures have displayed particular views on language, allowing for metapoetic engagement with cult ideas. What we have seen is the availability of such material for translation and intertextual relationships, with a profound understanding on the part of Roman poets of cult soteriological and eschatological aims. That mystery cult occupied a distinct location in the Roman poetic imagination is now abundantly clear, a feature of the poetic toolkit on a par with Homeric epic conventions and a tragic discursive mode codified by the tragedians of Classical Athens.³⁸⁶ In turn, we have explored the malleability of the cult source material to experimentation across language and genre, adapted to different aims and creative expansion in accordance with the brilliance of the poets making use of them.

Throughout this argumentation has been quietly brewing a reconsideration beyond the boundaries of the texts themselves, a speculative reappraisal of the dynamic between the poet and audience, and an expansion of our ideas concerning the mechanisms of allusion in light of cult soteriological strategies that depended upon allusion as a device for transmitting wisdom and conferring salvation. How would the Roman audience of such poems have reacted to cult material embedded in the poetry of the period, assuming they could recognize it, or rather, what cachet might there have been resulting from a conscious engagement with cult?

³⁸⁶ The definitive text on this subject is Hinds 1998.

The literary nature of the cult material we have here considered has been shown to participate in the same purposeful games of erudition and learnedness, as one poetic body available for mastery. Awareness of literary cult material could signal the same Philhellenism and elite status conferred on both poets and audiences working with other traditions. In the context of cult, however, which made use of allusion as a mechanism for soteriological aims, recognition of cult material necessarily entailed a conferral of elevated status, one which encoded authority and access to salvation. What's more, cult dynamics of exclusivity, in which both participants and those excluded were explicitly articulated, maps onto the zero-sum game of Roman social and political power, negotiated by means of literature. And even if it should turn out to be true that, by the Augustan period, cult arcana were so far divulged as to effectively erase boundaries of exclusivity, nevertheless the rhetoric is in place to posit a hypothetical group of excluded, in contrast to which the select group of those with understanding could feel superior. In the zero-sum world of Roman socio-political power, such a mechanism for asserting cultic superiority offered a means of asserting one's social advantages.

As one final point of consideration, let us consider one case study in the mechanism of cult allusion in the works of Ovid to begin to speculate on a cultic reader-response, with reference to a cult title of Bacchus, namely *bimater*. Ovid's account of the severe punishment of the Minyids, deniers of the divinity of Dionysus, contrasts the case of the blasphemous daughters of Minyas with the pious celebrations of the Boeotian women, who call upon the god by his cult names in a listing of epithets that quickly becomes a kind of hymn to Bacchus,³⁸⁷ spoken in the first-person voice of the narrator and with a direct address to the god himself (*Met.* 4.11-30):

turaque dant Bacchumque vocant Bromiumque Lyaeumque
ignigenamque satumque iterum solumque bimatrem;
additur his Nyseus indetonsusque Thyoneus

³⁸⁷ Barchiesi 1999:124; Barkan 1986:38–39.

et cum Lenea genialis consitor uvae
 Nycteliusque Eleleusque parens et Iacchus et Euan, 15
 et quae praeterea per Graias plurima gentes
 nomina, Liber, habes. tibi enim inconsumpta iuventa est,
 tu puer aeternus, tu formosissimus alto
 conspiceris caelo; tibi, cum sine cornibus adstas,
 virgineum caput est; Oriens tibi victus, adusque 20
 decolor extremo qua tingitur India Gange.
 Penthea tu, venerande, bipenniferumque Lycurgum
 sacrilegos mactas, Tyrrhenaque mittis in aequor
 corpora, tu biuugum pictis insignia frenis
 colla premis lyncum. bacchae satyrique sequuntur, 25
 quique senex ferula titubantis ebrius artus
 sustinet et pando non fortiter haeret asello.
 quacumque ingrederis, clamor iuuenalis et una
 femineae voces impulsaque tympana palmis
 concavaque aera sonant longoque foramine buxus. 30

They burn incense, calling on Bacchus, naming him also Bromius, Lyaeus, son of the thunderbolt, twice born, child of two mothers; they hail him as Nyseus also, Thyoneus of the unshorn locks, Leneaeus, planter of the joy-giving vine, Nyctelius, father Eleleus, Iacchus, and Euan, and all the many names besides by which you are known, O Liber, throughout the towns of Greece. For yours is unending youth, eternal boyhood; you are the most lovely in the lofty sky; your face is virgin-seeming, if without horns you stand before us. The Orient owns your sway, even to the bounds where remotest Ganges washes over swarthy India. Pentheus did you destroy, awful god, and Lycurgus, armed with the two-edged battle-axe (impious were they both), and you hurled the Tuscan sailors into the sea. Lynxes, with bright reins harnessed, draw your car; bacchant women and sailors follow you, and that old man who, drunk with wine, supports his staggering limbs on his staff, and clings weakly to his misshapen ass. Wherever you go, glad shouts of youths and cries of women echo round, with drum of tambourine, the cymbals' clash, and the shrill piping of the flute.

Ovid's 'hymn to Bacchus' is a dizzying list of epithets, many of which have cult significance, and follows a standard hymnic pattern that includes citation of those places under the jurisdiction of or subdued by the divinity and a description of the appearance of the god.

The significance of *bimatrem*, 'of two mothers' (*Met.* 4.12), has a standard interpretation consistent with the most traditional story regarding the birth of Dionysus from the mortal woman Semele: the two births suggested by *bimater* are first the birth from the womb of the dying Semele, and second the birth from the thigh of Zeus.³⁸⁸ Ovid even encourages such a reading with terms

³⁸⁸ Barchiesi and Rosati 2005 ad loc.: "per le circostanze della singolare doppia nascita di Bacco, estratto da Giove dal ventre di Semele morente fra le fiamme e cucito nella sua coscia fino al compimento della gestazione, cfr. III 309-22...molto raro anche l'epiteto *bimater*, modellato a sua volta sul greco διμάτωρ/διμήτωρ, mai prima di Ovidio."

such as *ignigena* and *Thyoneus*, both of which can be accommodated to the birth account that speaks of Semele.

A further investigation of Ovid's sources, and the intertextual relationships at play, allows for a rereading of this epithet; the rare adjective *bimater* is almost certainly a Latin translation of an equally rare Greek equivalent, διμάτωρ/διμήτωρ. Our most reliable source for Ovid's term, equivalent to διμήτωρ, is the account of Diodorus Siculus, discussing the god Dionysus as the god of the vine (3.62.5):

διμήτορα δὲ τὸν Διόνυσον ὑπὸ τῶν παλαιῶν ὠνομάσθαι, μιᾶς μὲν καὶ πρώτης γενέσεως ἀριθμουμένης ὅταν τὸ φυτὸν εἰς τὴν γῆν τεθὲν λαμβάνῃ τὴν αὔξησιν, δευτέρας δ' ὅταν βρίθῃ καὶ τοὺς βότρυς πεπαίνῃ, ὥστε τὴν μὲν ἐκ γῆς, τὴν δ' ἐκ τῆς ἀμπέλου γένεσιν τοῦ θεοῦ νομίζεσθαι.

Furthermore, the early men have given Dionysus the name of 'Dimētor,' reckoning it as a single and first birth when the plant is set in the ground and begins to grow, and as a second birth when it becomes laden with fruit and ripens its clusters, the god, therefore, being considered as having been born once from the earth and again from the vine.

The subsequent section recounts the story of the *sparagmos* of the baby Dionysus by the Titans. And we will see that the term *bimater* at another point in Latin literature will bring us back to the myth of Dionysus Zagreus, in Hyginus' *Fabulae* (167):³⁸⁹

Liber Iovis et Proserpinae filius a Titanis est distractus, cuius cor contritum Iovis Semele dedit in potionem. Ex eo praegnans cum esset facta, Iuno in Beroen nutricem Semeles se commutavit et ait, Alumna, pete a Iove ut sic ad te veniat quemadmodum ad Iunonem, ut scias quae voluptas est cum deo concumbere. Illa autem instigata petit ab Iove, et fulmine est icta; ex cuius utero Liberum exiit et Nyso dedit nutriendum, unde Dionysus est appellatus et bimater est dictus.

Liber, the son of Jupiter and Proserpina was torn to pieces by the Titans, and Jupiter gave his heart, collected up, to Semele in a drink. When [Semele] had become pregnant from this, Juno changed herself into Beroë, the nurse of Semele, and said, "My dear, ask of Jove that he come to you just as he does to Juno, so that you may know what pleasure there is in lying with a god." And she, having been instigated thus, asked this of Jove and was struck down by the thunderbolt; from her womb, he extracted Liber and gave him to be reared on Mount Nysa, for which reason he is called 'Dionysus' and he is said to be of two mothers.

The valence of *bimater* here is perhaps open to variant readings. Hyginus gestures most directly to the significance of the adjective for the birth from Semele first and then from the thigh of Zeus,

³⁸⁹ See Porres Caballero 2011 for a discussion of the various myths told of Dionysus' birth; of Hyginus' account, Porres Caballero asserts that it "seems to go back to the Orphic Rhapsodies" (127).

as the account narratologically with the greatest proximity to the qualifier. Nonetheless, the initial identification of Liber as the son of Proserpina, and the account of the impregnation of Semele by the potion containing the heart of Dionysus, allows for an interpretation of *bimater* as birth first from Proserpina, and then from Semele, bringing us back to the cult god, Dionysus Zagreus.

Ovid's likely familiarity with this source material, in the respective traditions represented above by Diodorus Siculus and by Hyginus, suggests a bilingual allusion gesturing towards accounts that include discussion of the birth of Dionysus Zagreus; Ovid himself displays his awareness with the account by which Dionysus in his role as cult god was the son of Jupiter and Proserpina in the briefest of references in his *Metamorphoses*. Ovid's most explicit and lengthiest discussions of the birth of Dionysus, scattered throughout the Ovidian corpus, recount the myth of his birth first from Semele and then from the thigh of Jupiter;³⁹⁰ but included among the transgressive images woven in the tapestry of Arachne in Book 6 of the *Met.* is a reference to the union of Jupiter and Proserpina, one in a list of the many love affairs characteristic of Jupiter's mythology which the maiden weaves into her tapestry in her contest with Minerva (6.114): *Iuppiter implevit fetu...varius Deoida serpens* ("Jupiter made heavy with child...the daughter of Ceres, [Proserpina], as a multi-colored serpent"). Readers attuned to the accounts of the birth of Dionysus Zagreus will supplement the narrative conclusion of this union, clear enough for those familiar with the cult myth despite the fact that Ovid omits the birth of the god. Here we may see an especially attuned wordplay in the term *serpens*, which recalls Proserpina by name, and a subtle activation of cult in the patronymic *Deoida*, recalling Ceres in her cult aspect as Deio, as in the

³⁹⁰ *Am.* 3.3.39-40 (*at si venturo se subduxisset amanti, | non pater in Baccho matris haberet opus*); *Met.* 3.259ff. (the account of Semele, with special attention to *bis geniti...Bacchi* at 317); *Met.* 9.641 (*proles Semeleia*); *Fast.* 3.503-4 (*ortus in igne | diceris et patria raptus ab igne manu*); *Fast.* 3.715-8 (*nec referam Semelen, ad quam nisi fulmina secum | Iuppiter adferret, partus inermis eras; | nec, puer ut posses maturo tempore nasci, | expletum patrio corpore matris opus*); *Fast.* 6.485-6 (*arserat obsequio Semele Iovis: accipit Ino | te, puer, et summa sedula nutrit ope*); *Tr.* 5.3.25-6: *scilicet hanc legem nentes fatalia Parcae | stamina bis genito bis cecinere tibi* ("Such doubtless was the law twice ordained for you by the Parcae who spun the fated threads at your double birth").

Homeric Hymn to Demeter (47) and Derveni Papyrus (col. 22).³⁹¹ Recognition of this allusion allows for a reappraisal of the severe punishment to which Minerva subjects Arachne, whose hubristic intemperance against the gods comes to include the additional violation of the profaning of cult mythology.

Ovid thus encodes in the ‘hymn to Bacchus’ of *Met.* 4 an allusive play that allows for different groups of readers to be distinguished along a rhetoric of exclusivity familiar from mystery cult. For all readers of Ovid’s text, the term *bimater* will resonate with the familiar myth of the birth of Dionysus most familiar to them, namely the birth from Semele first, and then from the thigh of Jupiter; a distinct group of readers, however, namely those readers familiar with the myth of Dionysus Zagreus, whether by initiation into the Bacchic mysteries or by familiarity with the texts discussed above, will distinguish themselves from the first group of readers through the recognition of the dual valence of the qualifier *bimater* as gesturing towards the parentage of Dionysus exclusive to cult mythology. This acute example of cult allusion begins to suggest to us how allusion might have functioned in light of cult engagement with poetics, establishing distinctions of readership that borrows from cult models of exclusivity and special access to language.

We may press our speculation further to the significance of such engagement to the Augustan period especially, since the most important figure of the period, namely Augustus, is supposed to have been initiated into the Eleusinian Mysteries (Suetonius *Aug.* 93; Cassius Dio 51.4.1, 54.9.10). Though his argumentation tends towards the extreme, Georg Luck succinctly explores the socio-political cachet of cult engagement, given this most famous of Roman initiates (151-2).³⁹²

³⁹¹ Cf. Callimachus, *Hymn to Demeter*, verse 17.

³⁹² Luck 1973.

“We know that many distinguished Romans who visited Athens were initiated into the Eleusinian Mysteries. Cicero is a good example, and Augustus -- who took this seriously -- is another. We know that, in principle, every Greek-speaking person, whether Athenian or foreigner, free-born or slave, could be initiated, if he had committed no crime, paid the fees and was properly introduced. One might assume that many Romans underwent this experience out of sheer curiosity, and perhaps this is true. But Cicero, echoing Isocrates, says (*De. leg.* 2.14.36) that Athens has given to mankind nothing more excellent or divine than the Eleusinian Mysteries. When Virgil read Book VI to him, Augustus probably understood the allusions to a marvelously impressive and deeply symbolical ritual, and he may have found in the music of Virgil’s poetry a very special appeal because it brought back to him a profound religious experience.”

While his reconstruction is perhaps overly romanticized and somewhat speculative, Luck succeeds in extending cult engagement beyond the merely poetic to the socio-political milieu of the Augustan period more broadly in ways that achieve some degree of plausibility. We can begin to align those figures who can engage with cult material with the most powerful of Romans, which will bring us to the question of engagement by poets in a poetics with political resonance. Mystery cult engagement at this time may have acquired a new political dimension, since the Augustan period saw the crystallization of the cult of the emperor, likened by Ovid to mystery cult.³⁹³ Taking a step back from these particular speculations, we can at the very least begin to augment our understanding of the figure of the *vates* and add a cultic aspect to the literary strategies we have already recognized by which Hellenophilic Roman poets and audiences made claims to status. We are thus now in a position to begin finding Orpheus in the Rome of Augustus, redefining our term *vates*, and identifying the group of initiates to whom he sings.

³⁹³ See Ch. 3.3.

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