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Ariadne as the *Exemplum* of the *Virtutes* of Heroes in Catullus *Carmen* 64

Thesis submitted to
the Graduate College of
Marshall University

In partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
in Latin

by

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ABSTRACT

Ariadne as the *Exemplum* of the *Virtutes* of Heroes in Catullus *Carmen* 64

by Chad P. Brown

In *Carmen* 64, Catullus establishes Ariadne as an *exemplum* of a new type of hero whose *uirtutes* are motivated by love rather than by the desire for glory that motivated traditional male epic heroes. Catullus utilizes the *ecphrasis*, a literary device which is traditionally a digression from the main narrative, to place Ariadne in this new heroic role. The first chapter reviews the past scholarship of *Carmen* 64. The second chapter examines how Catullus makes Ariadne the *exemplum* of this new type of hero while presenting a negative portrayal of Theseus. The third chapter discusses how the wedding of Peleus and Thetis and the prophecy of Achilles are *exempla* of the praised *amores* and criticized *uirtutes* established in the portrayals of Ariadne and Theseus in the *ecphrasis*.

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Chapter One: Literature Review of *Carmen* 64

I. The Life and Works of Catullus

The Roman poet Catullus was born Gaius Valerius Catullus in the city of Verona, which was in the Roman province of Cisalpine Gaul.¹ Although the exact dates of his birth and death are not known for certain, it is generally believed that he was born in 84 BCE and died in 54 BCE at the age of thirty years old.² He came from a wealthy family and his father was friends with Julius Caesar.³ Catullus lived most of his life in Rome after coming to Rome in about 62 BCE, and little is known for certain about his life except for three events that he writes about in his poetry. The first, and most important event, was his love affair with the woman he calls Lesbia in his poetry, who is "the incarnation of the devastating power of eros, the unquestioned protagonist of Catullus' poetry" (Conte 147). Based on Apuleius (*Apology* 10), the figure of Lesbia is generally agreed to be a pseudonym for Clodia the wife of Q. Caecilius Metellus Celer (*cos.* 60 BCE) and sister of P. Clodius Pulcher, the enemy of Cicero, if she is indeed a real person and not just a literary *persona*. This is the same woman that Cicero attacked in his *Pro Caelio*, referring to her as the "Medea of the Palatine" (*Pro Caelio* 18). In 57 BCE, Catullus went to Bithynia and served on the staff of C. Memmius. During this trip, he visited the grave of his brother near Troy, who had died in 59 BCE, and later composed *Carmen* 101 in memory of this visit. After a year in Bithynia, he returned to Rome where he remained for the rest of his

¹ The following biographical information is compiled from *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (s.v. Catullus) and Conte's *Latin Literature: A History*.

² Jerome (*Chron. Euseb.*) said that Catullus was born in 87 BCE and died at age 30. However, Catullus makes reference to events of 55 BCE in his poetry (Caesar's invasion of Britain and Pompey's second consulship), which consequently requires a revision of Jerome's dates.

³ Suetonius, *Diuus Iulius* 73: "Valerius Catullus had also libeled him in his verses about Mamurra, yet Caesar, while admitting that these were a permanent blot on his name, accepted Catullus' apology and invited him to dinner that same afternoon, and never interrupted his friendship with Catullus' father" (trans. Robert Graves).

life, surrounding himself with such literary friends as Cn. Helvius Cinna, C. Licinius Calvus, Q. Cornificius, Furius Bibaculus, Q. Hortensius, and Cornelius Nepos.

Catullus was part of the circle of poets known by the Greek term *neoteroi* or the Latin term *poetae noui*, both phrases meaning "new poets." These terms, however, should not be viewed as schools of poetry but as a group of poets continuing a tradition that started with Callimachus, whereby "literary activity no longer turns towards epic and tragedy, the genres that speak for the state and its values, but rather towards lyric, towards personal poetry, which is introverted and suitable for embracing and expressing the small events of private life" (Conte 144). His collection of 116 extant poems is generally divided into three sections.⁴ The first group of poems (1-60) is known as *nugae* ("diversions") and consists of sixty poems composed in various meters (*polymetric*). This group contains such poems as love poems, erotic poems, and satires. The second group of poems (61-64) is known as *carmina docta* ("learned poems") and consists of eight longer poems, including two marriage hymns (61 and 62), the *Attis* (63), and the *epyllion* the *Marriage of Peleus and Thetis* (64). Finally, the third group (65-116) is written in the elegiac meter, some of which are elegies and some of which are epigrams. Catullus would have a great influence on later Augustan poets such as Ovid, Vergil, and Martial because of this broad range of his poetry.

Catullus has been called one of the greatest lyric poets of all time along with Sappho and Shelley (*OCD s.v. Catullus*) and it has been said that "No other Latin poet appeals so directly and immediately to most modern readers" (Conte 153). His poems are full of *lepos* ("grace"), *uenustas* ("charm"), and *urbanitas* ("urbanity"), and the subject of love that dominates his poetry makes love "the center of existence and a primary value, the only one able to compensate for the fleetingness of human life" (Conte 147). The sincerity of Catullus has been called his strongest

⁴ Three of his poems (18-20) are considered spurious and are omitted from modern editions.

virtue, whether he is expressing love or hate (*OCD s.v. Catullus*). Stylistically, Catullus uses language that is a combination of "literary language with everyday speech" and one of the strongest features of his language is his use of vulgar language (Conte 151). However, this use of vulgar language "should be traced back to the snobbish pleasure of a cultivated elite that loves to display foul language along with more refined erudition" (Ibid.). Catullus also is fond of using diminutives, which is an "adherence to the esthetic of *lepos*, 'charm,' that unites the circle of Catullus' friends, shapes their mode of expression, and redefines the hierarchy of their ethical values" (Ibid.). Even in his longer poems, "the vitality of the affective language and the intensity of the pathos are not absent" (Ibid.). In this study, I will focus on *Carmen 64*, one of Catullus' *carmina docta* which recounts the myth of the marriage of Peleus and Thetis and has been called one of his greatest achievements (Garrison ix-x).

II. Summary of *Carmen 64*

Carmen 64, often referred to as the *Marriage of Peleus and Thetis*, is generally classified as an *epyllion* or "little epic." It opens with the embarking of the Argo on the quest for the Golden Fleece (1-11). During the voyage, the Nereids come to the surface of the sea and look upon a ship for the first time, which allows Peleus to see Thetis and fall in love with her (12-21). The scene changes to the wedding of Peleus and Thetis along with a brief description of the surrounding countryside of Thessaly and the palace of Peleus (31-49). Catullus then describes the wedding tapestry, which has embroidered upon it the abandonment of Ariadne by Theseus and the subsequent arrival of Bacchus to save her (50-255). Technically, the wedding tapestry only depicts Ariadne standing on the shore looking out at Theseus sailing away from her. However, in a flashback scene (76-115), Catullus tells how Ariadne and Theseus met when Theseus went to Crete to slay the Minotaur. The scene then returns to Ariadne abandoned on the

shore, and she gives a long speech describing her grief and the faithlessness of Theseus (130-201). She ends her speech by calling upon the gods to punish Theseus. Jupiter then grants her request and the scene changes to Theseus forgetting to change the sails on his way home (204-211), the purpose of which is revealed in another flashback scene. In this explanatory flashback scene, Aegeus, the father of Theseus, had told his son when he first set out on his journey to return home with white sails if he still lived and to return home with black sails if he was dead (212-237). The scene then changes back to Theseus forgetting to change the sails and the subsequent suicide of his father because of the grief he feels over his son's supposed death (238-250). Catullus next gives a brief description of the other scene on the wedding tapestry, the arrival of Bacchus (251-264). He describes Bacchus coming to rescue Ariadne followed by a host of worshippers and nature spirits. After this description of the wedding tapestry, Catullus returns to the wedding of Peleus and Thetis and describes the departure of the mortal guests (265-277). After the mortal guests leave, Catullus lists the immortal guests that came to the wedding, singling out Chiron (278-284) and Prometheus (294-297), and he tells how Apollo and Diana were the only two of the gods that did not attend the wedding (298-302). The Fates next sing of the future of Achilles, the son of Peleus and Thetis (305-383). During their song, the Fates tell how Achilles will be a great warrior, how he will kill many warriors, and how he will be a source of happiness for Peleus even though they also sing of the death of Achilles. In the final part of the poem (384-408), which some refer to as the epilogue, Catullus describes how his own age is different from the Heroic Age and how the gods no longer mingle with mortals because of the crimes that his own age commits.

III. Literature Review

In an attempt to determine the meaning of *Carmen* 64, the majority of recent scholarship on the poem (1960's to the present day) has focused on the relationship between the two episodes of Peleus and Thetis and of Ariadne and Theseus, and how the sorrowful *ecphrasis* of the wedding tapestry (as well as the gloomy prophecy of the song of the Fates) relates to the joyous wedding. This focus has led to the study of the conflict of such themes as happiness and sorrow, *amores* and *uirtutes*, and the Heroic Age and Catullus' own age that are present within the poem. The foundation for the study of such themes was established during the 1960's (Kinsey and Curran) as well as the debate of whether the tone of *Carmen* 64 was light-hearted or serious. During the 1970's, there was much important scholarship done on *Carmen* 64 (Bramble, Harmon, Knopp, Daniels, and O'Connell) that expanded upon these themes. Although there was a lapse in scholarship of *Carmen* 64 during the 1980's, the aesthetic importance of the poem was discussed (Duban) as well as the often debated theme of the conflict between the Heroic Age and Catullus' own age (Dee). The 1990's saw a resurgence of scholarship done on *Carmen* 64 that addressed previous issues (Konstan) as well as Catullus' use of the *ecphrasis* (Laird, Faber, and Gaiger) and the nature of heroism that the poem addresses (Warden). More recent scholarship in the past ten years has focused on the relationship between *Carmen* 64 and the genre of epic (Robinson) and the relationship between *Carmen* 64 and Latin elegy (Gardner). The below review of the recent scholarship of *Carmen* 64 discusses how scholars interpret the poem using these themes.

One of the most often debated themes among scholars is the conflict (or lack thereof) between the Heroic Age and Catullus' own time, and whether the tone of *Carmen* 64 should be taken seriously or light-heartedly is often associated with this theme. T.E. Kinsey (1965) noted that there were hints of irony, which culminates in the song of the Fates, and parody which

serves as an injunction to take the poem light-heartedly. According to Kinsey, neither Catullus nor his audience "takes the stories of the Heroic Age seriously" and his attitude is of "the realist ironically retelling a story found in some romantic novel which no one regards as anything except light entertainment" (930). Kinsey also included lines 384-408, which other scholars interpret as the moralizing epilogue of the poem, with the marriage song of the Fates. He asserted that these lines are not a moralizing epilogue and "to give these lines a separate section is to attach too much importance to them...for which there is no parallel in Alexandrian poetry" (913).

In contrast to the light-hearted view that Kinsey saw in *Carmen* 64, Leo Curran (1969) interpreted the poem as possessing a serious tone:

Transcending the fundamental antithesis in the poem, that between the heroic past and the degenerate present, is a vision of a tragic constancy in human nature, stated in mythological terms, which contradicts the antithesis and reveals evil and suffering lurking beneath the surface of the brilliantly enameled picture of the Age of Heroes. Myth becomes a metaphor for the present, an unpleasant present but, as the poem as a whole declares, it was never any better. (191-192)

According to Curran, Catullus forces us to consider the two stories of the poem, the story of Peleus and Thetis and the story of Ariadne, by inserting one within the other. He stated that "the contrast between the two stories, so intimately joined on both the formal and visual levels, gives rise to the tension with the heroic vision itself" (174) and that "insertion thus becomes more than a mere technical device of structure: it creates meaning" (Ibid.). Unlike Kinsey, Curran interpreted lines 384-408 as a moralizing epilogue that Catullus used to compare his own time with the Heroic Age. Like Curran, J.C. Bramble (1970) also argued that "the Heroic Age was not so very different from contemporary times" (41).

In response to Curran's work, later scholars would suggest that Catullus represents the Heroic Age as a better time than his own age. D. P. Harmon (1973) argued that there was a certain nostalgia for the Heroic Age, that the Theseus and Ariadne digression is relevant to the story of Peleus and Thetis, and that the epilogue is integrally related to the larger mythological content of the poem. He argued that Catullus does not say that heroic *uirtutes* are the subject of the tapestry, but that it "reveals" or "gives evidence of" what the *uirtutes* of heroes were like (315), and that the Ariadne and Theseus episode shows how cruel heroic *uirtutes* can be (324). According to Harmon, Peleus will be heroically magnified by the bloody life of his son Achilles, who will not be completely stopped even by death when he demands the sacrifice of Polyxena (318). The merciless Achilles will live out the heroic ideal to the extreme and cast a "glorious" (but in reality a diminishing) reflection upon his father (325). In contrast to Curran, Harmon said that family life had reached such a point that Catullus' age, typified by crimes which violate the closest ties of nature, was far worse than the Heroic Age (327). The Age of Heroes is depicted as a time of possibility, when there was at least some hope that justice, which was unknown in Catullus' Rome, would be served (329). Harmon concluded:

Praise of the heroes is partially ironic; but the basic irony of the poem as a whole lies in its compelling note of earnestness: how much better it would have been, by contrast, to live in the Great Age that, for all its faults, offered at least an approximation of the life for which man's nature yearns. (331)

These two views of whether or not the Heroic Age differs from Catullus' own age will be one aspect of this study.

The nature of heroism is a theme associated with the portrayal of the Heroic Age in *Carmen* 64, and it is one that scholars would debate just as strongly as the conflict between the

Heroic Age and Catullus' age. James Dee (1982), in response to the work done by Curran in 1969, attempted to show that "Catullus does not express any especially strong disapproval of the tales he elaborates in poem 64 and also that it is far from certain that the epilogue is as serious an attack on late Republican *mores* as many have thought it to be" (98). According to Dee, "blood and destruction" were common characteristics of Greek heroes as well as "a fair amount of impiety" (99). Regarding the Polyxena episode, he suggested that the heroic code and warrior *ethos* were not responsible for her death, but rather it was the fault of the poets "who concocted such scenes, following their own or their audiences' tastes for the strikingly melodramatic" (101). He noted that there is confusion about the tone of the Polyxena episode because it is not so much one of condemnation as it is one of *pathos* (102). He also pointed out that most scholars speak about the Heroic Age "as if it were a golden age, even The Golden Age" (103). Finally, he noted how the only reference in the epilogue to Catullus' time is the word *nobis* (406) and that "a Roman reader would not necessarily take Catullus' text as referring to his own time" (105). Dee also realized that his view "accepted the possibility of 'detachment' of an author's personal moral judgment from the subject matter of his writings" which allowed Catullus to freely "develop episodes from the myths without judging them" (107).

The work of David Konstan (1993) focused on the nature of heroism as well, suggesting that "the tapestry not only shows but unmask[s] the things that heroes do" (68). Konstan pointed out that the verb *indicat* (51) can mean simply "to reveal" or "to portray," but can also have the loaded significance of "to expose." Thus, the abandonment of Ariadne by Theseus is the immediate example of heroic deeds (*heroum uirtutes* 52) because it immediately follows, introduced by the word *namque* ("for" or "thus"). Furthermore, the last color term in line 49 is *fucus* and it commonly denotes fraud. Konstan said that "if one listens to the overtones, it may

sound as though the tapestry that exposes the deeds of heroes is 'dipped in rosy deception' (68). He also noted that *uirtus* (singular) connoted ethical goodness and martial courage, but *uirtutes* (plural) means valiant deeds or accomplishments with the emphasis on success rather than on the morality of the means. Thus, Catullus "does signal the surprising move by which a cruel and thoughtless action is cited in illustration of 'the virtues of heroes,' and deliberately undercuts the ideal image of the heroic age evoked in the Proem with an episode revealing the effects of a hero's cold indifference" (69). He also noted that *Carmen* 64 "is thus pivotal in the evolution of multiple and intersecting traditions in the representation of feminine passion and heroic callousness" (70). In the song of the Parcae, "the collocation of [Achilles'] *uirtutes* with *clara facta* makes evident the specifically martial reference of the word 'virtues': they are achievements on the battlefield, irrespective of the pain they bring to aged women" (73). He concluded that *Carmen* 64 has a dual quality, "combining aesthetic self-consciousness with ethical critique" (76) and it is "simultaneously foregrounding its technique as a literary construct by a display of artifice, and problematizing the morality of heroic action through its complex representation of *uirtus*" (Ibid.).

John Warden (1998) also focused on the nature of heroism and how the traditional heroes Theseus and Achilles are the main focus of *Carmen* 64. He interpreted the two main sections of the poem as the episodes involving Theseus (52-250) and Achilles (323-381), noting that "the similarities in language serve to bring out the differences" (407). He observed that the love stories of the two episodes are subsidiary to the main theme of the poem and the place where the structure has been leading towards: the tales of heroism. He concluded that:

In the case of Theseus, the heroism and its failure are distinct. We know where one stops and the other starts. And we have the sense that Theseus could have done otherwise. At a certain point he went wrong. With Achilles there is no such distinction. The

heroic acts are also the horrendous acts. So that in the final analysis we are concerned, not with the particular flaws of an individual hero in a particular relationship, but with the nature of heroism itself. (413)

Warden did note, however, that "detachment and distance" does not necessarily "entail a lack of seriousness" on the part of Catullus. This debate over the nature of heroism will be one of the main points of discussion within my own study.

Another important theme discussed by scholars is the seemingly happy love of Peleus and Theseus contrasted with the unhappy love of Ariadne and Theseus portrayed in *Carmen* 64. J. C. Bramble (1970) noted in his work how Catullus implores both the antithesis of the past and the present and also the antithesis of happy and tragic love in his poem (23). He discussed how the poem digresses from the "pessimistic, premonitory function" (40) of the Peleus and Thetis episode to the Achilles episodes, where the "tone is now so gloomy that the final exhortations of the Parcae can only sound ironic" (Ibid.). In order to achieve this effect, Bramble noted how Catullus "selected, invented, and organized his material for a purpose, that the form which he chose has its own meaning, and that any other form would have had a different meaning," and that "the shape of the poem as we have it is not a mythological inevitability, but was determined by Catullus" (24).

Marion L. Daniels (1972) discussed the theme of love and how it inevitably causes unhappiness. Daniels suggested there is a similar structure to the Lament of Ariadne and the Song of the Fates: a central group of strophes bracketed by two strophes each at the beginning and end. Through the ironic revealing of horror at Achilles' actions rather than praising his heroic virtues, Catullus associates Achilles with Ariadne to reveal the central theme of the poem: the paradoxical nature of love and happiness, which is similar to the *odi et amo* theme in Catullus' other poems. According to Daniels, an unhappy love affair naturally causes pain for

Ariadne, but the Song of the Fates builds upon this so that even from an ideal match grief may follow. Daniels noted that this climaxes in Catullus' epilogue that to be homeless is the most pitiable state of man. Whether the *domus* is destroyed in the heroic age or in the present by the defilement of marriage as stated in the epilogue, the outcome is barrenness, loneliness, and desolation.

Broadening upon this theme of love, Sherron Knopp (1976) argued that the theme of *Carmen* 64 is "not *amores* or *uirtutes*, but the conflict between the two" (207). She suggested that "the marriage of Peleus and Thetis is threatened by it, the story of Theseus and Ariadne illustrates it, and the prophecy about Achilles and Polyxena warns of it" (Ibid.). The story of Theseus and Ariadne illustrates the conflict most clearly, and it reveals both Ariadne and Theseus as characters equally flawed and equally admirable (208). Ariadne's lack of *pietas* does not negate the value of her love any more than Theseus' lack of personal passion negates his heroism. Theseus is lamented and criticized by Ariadne as a *coniunx* and not as a hero, thus revealing the conflict between *amores* and *uirtutes*. She also noted that "although the story on the bedspread contains a sober warning about *amores* and *uirtutes*, its implied resolution of passionate love makes it not inappropriate to grace the marriage bed of Peleus and Thetis" (209-210). Peleus and Thetis have the potential to become another Ariadne and Theseus. Peleus is first mentioned in association with love, and then with heroic deeds, and Catullus reveals the danger heroic deeds can have with love through the story of Ariadne and Theseus. After describing the grisly *magnae uirtutes* of Achilles in the song of the Fates, Catullus returns to Peleus and Thetis, and this has the same effect as at the beginning of the poem when he switched from Peleus and Thetis to Ariadne and Theseus. Peleus and Thetis for the moment lack nothing in their love, but they could end up as Achilles and Polyxena will or as Ariadne and Theseus

have. For Knopp, the "references to *magnae uirtutes* do not undercut the stature of the heroes involved, but explain their actions as lovers" (213). This conflict between *amores* and *uirtutes* will be another important feature of this study.

Rather than focus on these themes of love and heroism, some scholars focus on the aesthetic qualities of *Carmen* 64 and debate whether the poem has a meaning at all. Michael O'Connell (1977) discussed how Catullus used pictorialism as a means of conveying meaning in *Carmen* 64. The Alexandrians often used pictorialism, which can be defined in the following way according to O'Connell:

At certain moments the narrative congeals as the poet focuses on a visual detail such as might be represented in a painting or sculpture. It is as if the poet were issuing a challenge or directive to an artist and at the same time playing with the ability of poetry to approximate in time and through words a representation conceived spatially in paint or stone. (746)

While the pictorialism of the Alexandrians appears decorative and emotionally detached, the Roman poets used pictorialism to heighten an emotional effect. Catullus' pictorialism is an essential element in conveying meaning. The two main colors of the poem are white and shades of red. The white and shades of red at the beginning (meeting of Peleus and Thetis) convey happiness and are detached from emotions. These colors are full of emotional attachments in the *ecphrasis* of Ariadne, white associated with old age, coldness, and death and dark red associated with the *funestam uestem* (234) of Theseus' ship, the means of Ariadne's revenge, and the expression of Aegeus' sorrow and cause of needless death. In the song of the Fates, the two colors achieve their "definitive significance in the poem" (753), white conveying "both the infirmity of old age bereft of the comfort of sons and the bloodless body of a young girl gratuitously slain" (754), while there are hints of dark red in the verbs *tepefaciet* (360) and *madefient* (368), which tells the reader that "the color red may be warm and wet as well as

pictorial" (Ibid.). In the final scene of *Polyxena*, Catullus distances the reader from the *pathos* of the scene, bringing the pictorialism back to the beginning of the poem. O'Connell concluded that "colors are allowed to develop associations in the narrative and the associations grow ever more complex" (755). These various pictorial modes become "the visual correlatives of Catullus' intention to create in the *Peleus and Thetis* a complex world whose only consistent reality is human sorrow and suffering" (756), creating a poem that "is serious and, in its indirect way, ultimately moral in concern" (Ibid.).

Jeffrey Duban (1980) argued that *Carmen* 64 should be appreciated only for its aesthetic qualities and that there is no meaning of the poem. He examined "the use of similar language in the poem, of the verbal links which, in suggesting comparison and contrast between various persons, actions, and states of mind, constantly require the re-evaluation of a given context in light of the associations which those links establish" (779). While Duban made some interesting observations about the language in *Carmen* 64, his conclusion was that the poem "has no 'message' or 'meaning' in the strict sense, aside from the attention that this highly stylized, self-conscious, and subjective 'picture' intends to call to itself" (800). For Duban, *Carmen* 64 was to be appreciated for its aesthetic value because "it is a set-piece, a tableau, with all the finesse and symmetry of an illuminated manuscript" (Ibid.).

Catullus' use of the *ecphrasis* has been an area studied by scholars, especially since the *ecphrasis* dominates so much of the poem. Andrew Laird (1993) discussed how there were two types of *ecphrases*: an obedient *ecphrasis* that "limits itself to the description of what can be consistently visualized" (19), and a disobedient *ecphrasis* that "breaks free from the discipline of the imagined object and offers less opportunity for it to be consistently visualized or translated adequately into an actual work of visual art" (Ibid.). Fictional *ecphrases* (like Homer's

description of the shield of Achilles) usually are in between obedient and disobedient, but Catullus' *ecphrasis* is solely disobedient. He pointed out how direct speech is not to be found in any other ancient *ecphrasis*:

The *ecphrasis* in 64 invites and highlights comparison between verbal and pictorial communication, even more than *ecphrases* usually do. Sound, movement and temporality are characteristically open to verbal narrative, but closed to visual media. These elements, often suppressed in *ecphrasis*, are brought to prominence in Catullus 64. (20)

The diction employed to open and close the Ariadne inset (*uestis uariata figuris* 50 and *uestis decorata figuris* 265) generally evokes vocabulary of speech and rhetoric, although "they only have technical connotations" and "don't need to signify anything particularly coherent on this secondary level" (25). According to Laird, the reader is led to a view of this *uestis* as a spoken text as well as a woven one. Because Catullus skillfully uses the unprecedented narrative in his *ecphrasis* in such a manner, Laird asked the intriguing question: "How can we be sure that the outer scenes of the poem (1-49, 266-408) which recount the marriage of Peleus and Thetis are not describing an artwork as well?" (30).

The work of Riemer Faber (1998) was in response to Laird's interpretation that *uariata* (50) recalls the rhetorical term *uariatio*, and so anticipates the varied nature of the *ecphrasis* that follows the transition in lines 43-51. However, Faber argued that *uariata* preserves traditional elements of poetical tradition, even if it does depart from convention by not limiting itself to what can be visualized (210). He cited that *uario* is the Latin counterpart to the Greek ποίκιλος ("cunningly wrought"), which is used in both archaic and Hellenistic poetic descriptions. The verbal echo alerts the reader to several other features commonly found in archaic and Hellenistic poetic *ecphrases*, which is the transition from narrative to descriptive and serves to place the

ecphrasis of Catullus firmly in the tradition of his literary models (213). The innovations Catullus made with the *ecphrasis* (narrative, simile, and apostrophe) are "made more clear through the contrast offered by the conventional features of the introduction" (Ibid.).

Perhaps the most influential study of Catullus' use of the *ecphrasis* is the work of Julia Haig Gaisser (1995). She noted how the chronology in *Carmen* 64 is "turned inside out" (613) because events overlap one another or some events occur before or after other past or future events. According to Gaiger, the poem as a whole is structured like a labyrinth, leading you this way and that, and ultimately into dead end walls. The *ecphrasis* is not a typical *ecphrasis* because Catullus does not say who made the coverlet or where it came from. Furthermore, the coverlet is really two tapestries in one. The first contains two scenes (Ariadne on the shore and the approach of Bacchus) seen by the wedding guests (internal audience) as well as by us (external audience). The second tapestry, the one we see, is more complicated and it is "interwoven and amplified with digressions, explanations, speech, and excursions into past and future – that is, with narration, which changes the meaning of the embroidered pictures" (600). The scenes in the flashbacks have been narrated to us, but there is no indication that they appear on the coverlet itself. She also noted that the song of the Fates is an innovation by Catullus because Apollo and the Muses sing at the wedding in other versions. The Parcae "quite literally are spinning their song" (611) based on the first occurrence of the refrain *sed uos, quae fata sequuntur / currite ducentes subtegmina, currite fusi* (326-327), the word *fata* having the meaning of both "fate" and "oracular utterance" (611). She argued:

The song of the Parcae is double-spun, a song composed for two voices, and it includes opposing true interpretations of the same events...the threads of the Parcae are as paradoxical as the wedding coverlet, for they lead in opposite directions. They are a part of the

fabric of the labyrinth, not a solution of its baffling structure"
(613).

She concluded that "having traveled in places where opposite voices are true and chronology is turned inside out, we suspect that all ages may be the same" (613). Catullus' use of the *ecphrasis* will be a major feature of this study, especially how it is used to define the nature of heroism as well as the relationship between *amores* and *uirtutes*.

Timothy Robinson (2006) focused his own study on how Catullus recreates epic and how *Carmen* 64 "expresses the futility of attempting to achieve any true νόστος ("return") to the dominating yet foreclosed world of Homeric epic" (29). According to Robinson, "*Carmen* 64 reveals new perspectives in which traditional epic elements are reversed, reordered, or juxtaposed in unexpected ways" (Ibid.), such as the epic uses of the *ecphrasis* and the simile. Robinson noted how the structure of *Carmen* 64 "is layered, not linear, with the images and stories of its μῦθος evolving by accretion about its central *uestis uariata*," (52) the *ecphrasis* of the wedding tapestry. He concludes that "Catullus creates and explores an aesthetic of departure, destruction, and loss which is considered in all the relationships of characters in the poem: Ariadne and Theseus, Theseus and Aegeus, Polyxena and Achilles" (54) and that this context problematizes "the ostensible theme of the poem, the marriage of Thetis and Peleus" (Ibid.).

Scholars have recognized the influence of Catullus on later Latin elegists, but Hunter Gardner (2007) interpreted Ariadne's portrayal in *Carmen* 64 as the precursor to the elegiac *puella*. According to Gardner, Ariadne "represents a disruptive force, and one that confounds the progress of the traditional narratives that shape the epic genre, a force similar to that which the *amatores* of elegy so often attribute to their *puellae*" (147). Just as Ariadne hinders the teleology of the hero Theseus, the elegiac *puella* has the power to "delay her lover and hinder his epic and historical progress" (148). In addition, the qualities that associate Ariadne with the *puella* are

also present in the figure of the poet-lover. Like Ariadne, the poet-lover "occasionally wishes to hinder the progress of his mistress" and sometimes "suffers a lamentable socio-cultural isolation not unlike Catullus's depiction of Ariadne's desertion on the shores of Naxos" (Ibid.). In my own study, I will focus on Ariadne as the figure in *Carmen* 64 who reveals the central idea of the poem.

My own contribution to *Carmen* 64 will build upon the above scholarship, especially the work of Curran, Knopp, Laird, Konstan, Gaisser, Warden, and Robinson. In *Carmen* 64, Catullus uses the digression of the *ecphrasis* of the wedding tapestry to convey the central idea of the poem: Ariadne is the *exemplum* of a new type of hero whose *uirtutes* consist of selfless acts motivated by love. While praising Ariadne, Catullus condemns the traditional hero Theseus for his *uirtutes*, which are driven by a desire for glory. Catullus uses the narration of the wedding of Peleus and Thetis and the prophecy of Achilles in the Song of the Parcae as a means of supporting the main idea of the poem found in the digression of the *ecphrasis*, and as a means to provide extreme examples of the worlds of *amores* and *uirtutes* that Ariadne and Theseus represent. He recreates the myth of Peleus and Thetis to focus solely on love and *amores*, and he embellishes the *uirtutes* of Achilles to focus on the violence and victims of the hero's actions, which are the result of Achilles' pursuit for glory.

Chapter Two: The *Ecphrasis* of the Wedding Tapestry

I. Introduction

Rather than starting with the beginning of *Carmen* 64, I will first discuss the *ecphrasis* of the wedding tapestry because, as I will argue in this chapter, the *ecphrasis* contains the central idea of the poem. An *ecphrasis* can be defined as "a pictorial digression describing a work of art within the framework of a larger narrative" (Garrison 134).⁵ One of the characteristics of an *ecphrasis* is that it does not dominate the overall length of the main narrative and it remains a digression. In contrast to this common characteristic, the *ecphrasis* of the wedding tapestry in *Carmen* 64 consists of 216 lines, comprising more than half of the poem's 408 lines, which makes it unique, therefore, in that the digression of the work of art is longer than the actual narrative of the poem. However, Catullus did not limit himself to only the physical description of the wedding tapestry. The *ecphrasis* is "interwoven and amplified with digressions, explanations, speech, and excursions into past and future – that is, with narration, which changes the meaning of the embroidered picture" (Gaisser 600). For this reason, not only is the length of the *ecphrasis* in *Carmen* 64 unique, but Catullus' use of the *ecphrasis* is unique as well. As I will show in this chapter, Catullus utilizes the *ecphrasis* to make Ariadne an *exemplum* of the heroic *uirtutes* that should be praised. The *exemplum* of Ariadne is in stark contrast to the martial heroic deeds, which are exemplified by Theseus in the *ecphrasis*. These martial heroic deeds had been praised by previous generations as early as Homer. Catullus presents the traditional

⁵ The earliest examples of an *ecphrasis* are from Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and from Hesiod's *Shield of Heracles*. Homer used the *ecphrasis* numerous times, and it could range in length from a few lines, such as the description of Achilles' lyre (*Iliad* IX.187-188), to hundreds of lines, such as the elaborate description of the shield of Achilles (*Iliad* XVIII.484-609). Later Alexandrian poets, although revolting against the conventions of Homeric epic, utilized the *ecphrasis* as well, such as Apollonius of Rhodes' description of the cloak of Jason in the *Argonautica* (I.721-768). Furthermore, the *ecphrasis* was not limited to the genre of epic poetry, and can be found in such genres as tragedy and bucolic poetry (Vessey 41). However, the *ecphrasis* was not a standard feature of the literary form known as the *epyllion*, which *Carmen* 64 is classified as representing. There is no *ecphrasis* in other *epyllia* such as Theocritus' *Idylls* 24 and 25 or the *Ciris* and *Culex*, which are attributed to Vergil (Vessey 40-41).

heroic ideal in a negative light and redefines the *uirtutes* of heroes to focus on love rather than glory as the motivation for heroic action. In the process, Catullus praises the female victim Ariadne and condemns the traditional male hero Theseus. Finally, the *ecphrasis*, in the hands of Catullus, becomes the main narrative of the poem to reveal the central idea rather than just a digression to describe a work of art. In *Carmen* 64, the work of art becomes the didactic *exemplum* of life.⁶

II. The *Virtutes* of Heroes

Although the opening lines of the *ecphrasis* seem to make the claim of praising the *uirtutes* of heroes, they actually expose the *uirtutes* of traditional male heroes such as Theseus in a negative light while elevating the status of the victim Ariadne to that of a newly defined hero. Rather than stating the specific subject of the *ecphrasis* of the wedding tapestry, Catullus first tells what the tapestry shows:

haec uestis priscis hominum uariata figuris
heroum mira uirtutes indicat arte. (50-51)

This covering embroidered with ancient figures of humans shows the *uirtutes* of heroes with amazing skill.

On the surface, these lines would seem to indicate merely that the tapestry will "illustrate the courageous deeds of the Heroic Age" (Quinn 310). However, the choice of words in these two lines suggests that Catullus has an alternative purpose and meaning for the *uirtutes* of heroes that the tapestry shows. The *figurae* embroidered on the tapestry can be translated as "shapes," "figures," "natures," and even "figures of speech that contain allusions" (*OLD* s.v. *figura*). The verb *indico* has the meaning of "to show," but it can also mean "to reveal," "to indicate," and even "to expose" (*OLD* s.v. *indico*). As scholars have noted, the verb *indico*, especially with the

⁶ In the words of Curran, Catullus "forces us to consider the two stories together and to observe the light they cast on each other by inserting one within the other" and "the manner of insertion thus becomes more than a mere technical device of structure: it creates meaning" (174).

loaded significance of "expose," emphasizes how "the tapestry not only shows but unmasks the things that heroes do" (Konstan 68). It is also ambiguous as to whether the tapestry is made with amazing skill or if it reveals the *uirtutes* of heroes with amazing skill. However, the placement of *mira* and *arte* around *uirtutes indicat* supports the latter interpretation. An alternative translation of lines 50-51, which takes into consideration these factors, would be as follows:

This cover embroidered with the ancient allusions of men
exposes with amazing skill the *uirtutes* of heroes.

Translated in this way, the wedding tapestry does not merely purport to show the brave deeds of heroes, but cunningly exposes what the *uirtutes* of heroes entails.⁷

The abandonment of Ariadne by Theseus is the *exemplum* of the *uirtutes* of heroes, which is confirmed because of the placement of this episode immediately after the introduction to the *ecphrasis*:

namque fluentisono prospectans litore Diae,
Thesea cedentem celeri cum classe tuetur
indomitos in corde gerens Ariadna furores,
necdum etiam sese quae uisit uisere credit,
utpote fallaci quae tunc primum excita somno
desertam in sola miseram se cernat harena. (52-57)

For looking out from the wave-resounding shore of Dia,
Ariadne watched Theseus leaving with a swift ship
carrying untamed passions in her heart,
nor yet does she believe that she sees what she sees,
no wonder since having woken up from deceitful sleep
she sees her wretched self deserted on the lonely seashore.

The use of *namque* directly after the introductory line *heroum mira uirtutes indicat arte* (51) reveals the subject matter of the *uirtutes* of heroes because the conjunction *namque* introduces a

⁷ Knopp argues that the *uirtutes* of heroes refers to the deeds of Theseus, but that "although the unexpected portrait of Ariadne's desolation which follows does not make Theseus an admirable figure, her plight reflects on him as a lover, not as a hero" (207-208). I will argue, however, that the motivation for glory of the hero Theseus is what makes him a bad lover.

reason or explanation in close connection with what precedes.⁸ Although Theseus is the subject of the two flashbacks (71-115; 202-237) and also of the fulfillment of Ariadne's curse (238-250), Ariadne is the focus of the *ecphrasis* proper because only she actually appears on the tapestry staring out at the sea after Theseus abandons her. Catullus withholds the subject of Ariadne for three lines, first stating where and what an unnamed woman is looking at and then finally indicating Ariadne as the subject towards the end of line 54, emphasizing in these remaining lines how Ariadne is affected by Theseus abandoning her. The effect of withholding the subject is to paint a picture of how far Theseus, named at the beginning of line 53, is from Ariadne, named at the end of line 54, since he has sailed away and abandoned her. Although the *indomiti furores* (54) of Ariadne could refer to either her "untamed love" for Theseus or her "fierce rage" at his abandonment of her, the phrase increases the *pathos* of the scene regardless of how it is translated. With the focus on Ariadne as the hero and the *exemplum* of the *uirtutes* of heroes rather than the traditional male hero Theseus, lines 50-51 that introduced the *ecphrasis* could be translated in the following manner:

This cover differing from the previous allusions of men
reveals with amazing skill the *uirtutes* of heroes.

Translated in this way, the *ecphrasis* of the wedding tapestry will make known what the *uirtutes* of heroes should entail, which will differ from the previous qualities of traditional heroes praised in epic. The "digressions, explanations, speech, and excursions into past and future" that Gaisser and other scholars have noted are unique to the *ecphrasis* of *Carmen* 64 are the devices Catullus will employ to reveal and praise the *uirtutes* of heroes exemplified by Ariadne.

III. Establishing Ariadne as a Hero

⁸ It is also noteworthy that Catullus chose to begin the *ecphrasis* with *namque* rather than a word or phrase indicating on what part of the tapestry Ariadne appears, as when he begins to describe Bacchus later (*parte ex alia*, 251). From the outset, the part of the tapestry with Ariadne is more of a narration than it is an *ecphrasis* because there is nothing to indicate that Catullus is describing a work of art.

Catullus begins the negative portrayal of Theseus by focusing on the victim Ariadne and how the acts of the traditional male hero affect her:

immemor at iuuenis fugiens pellit uada remis,
irrita uentosae linquens promissa procellae. (58-59)

But the heedless youth fleeing strikes the waves with oars,
leaving useless promises to the windy storm.

Catullus emphasizes Theseus' thoughtlessness for the feelings of Ariadne by placing *immemor* first in line 58, a word which generally has the meaning of "not remembering, forgetful," but can also have the meanings of "not remembering one's obligation" and "not thinking of the consequences" (*OLD s.v. immemor*). A word such as *immemor* often has an accompanying object to complete the thought, but Catullus chose to omit the object of which Theseus is unmindful, emphasizing further how Theseus took no thought of Ariadne.⁹ By using the verb *fugio*, which can have the meanings of "to run away from, flee from," "to disappear from view," and "to avoid" (*OLD s.v. fugio*), Catullus makes Theseus' abandonment of Ariadne an act of cowardice. Ironically, the traditional hero Theseus is afraid to confront Ariadne and the consequences of abandoning her. The insignificance of Theseus' promises to Ariadne are emphasized by the use of the adjective *irrita*, which, when used of promises, vows, hope, or other similar words, has the meanings of "not brought to fulfillment," "empty," and "unrealized" (*OLD s.v. irrita*). Catullus emphasizes line 59 (*irrita uentosae linquens promissa procellae*) by making it a golden line, wherein the line consists of two substantives and two adjectives with a verb placed in the middle.¹⁰ With these two brief lines that deal with Theseus abandoning Ariadne, Catullus paints a negative picture of the hero Theseus.

⁹ As Quinn states, "Theseus is a person "with no thought (*immemor*) except for himself" (327).

¹⁰ According to Garrison, a golden line fulfilled "the Classical expectation that poetry should in every way be a separate thing from everyday language" (132) and "was a much-admired part of poetic craft" (134). The golden line appears five times (129, 163, 172, 235, and 351) in *Carmen* 64.

After these brief but condemning lines about Theseus, Catullus begins to subtly place Ariadne in the role of the hero. Catullus first refers to Ariadne by a patronymic, which is a common device in epic for naming heroes, and he also describes what she is wearing, which is a twist to the arming scenes of warriors in epic, while still focusing on the *pathos* of the scene:

quem procul ex alga maestis Minois ocellis,
saxea ut effigies bacchantis, prospicit, eheu,
prospicit et magnis curarum fluctuat undis,
non flauo retinens subtilem uertice mitram,
non contacta leui uelatum pectus amictu,
non tereti strophio lactentis uincta papillas,
omnia quae toto delapsa e corpore passim
ipsius ante pedes fluctus salis alludebant. (60-67)

The daughter of Minos looks at him far from the sea-weed,
with sad eyes, alas, like a stone Bacchant statue,
she looks out and is tossed about with great waves of anxiety,
not keeping the delicate headdress on her blonde head,
not covering up her clothed chest with a soft cloak,
not binding her milk-white breasts with a smooth band,
all which having fell down from her whole body in every direction
the waves of the sea were playing with before her feet.

One of the traditional features of epic poetry that went back to Homer was the use of patronymics to refer to a hero, such as Peleides (son of Peleus) for Achilles and Atreides (son of Atreus) for Agamemnon. However, Catullus chose to use a patronymic for Ariadne rather than the traditional hero Theseus, referring to Ariadne by the patronymic *Minois*, "daughter of Minos," two times, here in line 60 and later in line 247. By using the patronymic *Minois*, Catullus subtly begins to place Ariadne in the role of the hero rather than the traditional hero Theseus, who is never referred to in the *ecphrasis* by a patronymic. Catullus also reemphasizes how far Theseus has sailed away from Ariadne by placing *quem* first in line 60 and placing *Minois* towards the end of the line, with *Minois* surrounded by *maestis* and *ocellis*, which adds to the *pathos* of the scene. The hopelessness of the scene is further emphasized by the use of

epanalepsis, the repetition of the verb *prospicio* in line 62 after it appeared first in line 61 and then interrupted by the word *eheu* and the line break in 61, and this device also serves to paint a sympathetic portrayal of Ariadne.

Catullus continues to place Ariadne in the role of a hero through an unconventional use of the arming scene, which was another traditional feature of epic poetry whereby the poet would describe a warrior arming himself for battle, such as Agamemnon in the *Iliad* (XII.17-44). In *Carmen* 64, the traditional male hero Theseus is never described arming for battle when he goes to face the Minotaur. However, Catullus takes the *topos* of the arming scene and describes the condition of the attire of Ariadne because of her shock at seeing Theseus abandon her (63-67). Catullus underlines the shock of Ariadne by likening her to the statue of a Bacchant. The *saxea effigies* (61) emphasizes how still Ariadne stands as she looks out at Theseus sailing away, while the use of *bacchantis* stresses the disarray of her clothes. The image of the Bacchant also recalls the *indomiti furores* of Ariadne in line 54, which is further elaborated on with the phrase *magnis curarum fluctuat undis* (62). The irony of this phrase is that Ariadne is more affected by the emotional waves of anxiety than by the physical waves of the sea around her, which Catullus playfully underscores with the verb *alludo*. This focus on the *pathos* of the scene is further emphasized through the use of anaphora with the repetition of *non* in lines 63-65, which draws the reader's attention to Ariadne's disregard for her physical appearance because of the shock she feels at Theseus' abandonment of her.

Catullus uses apostrophe to draw a sympathetic portrait of Ariadne and to emphasize her love for Theseus by addressing both Ariadne and Theseus directly:

sed neque tum mitrae neque tum fluitantis amictus
illa uicem curans toto ex te pectore, Theseu,
toto animo, tota pendebat perdita mente.
a misera, assiduis quam luctibus externauit

spinosas Erycina serens in pectore curas,
illa tempestate, ferox quo ex tempore Theseus
egressus curuis e litoribus Piraei
attigit iniusti regis Gortynia templa. (68-75)

But caring then neither for the plight of the headdress
nor the flowing cloak, you Theseus, with all her heart,
soul, and mind, abandoned, she was absorbed with you.
Ah wretched girl, whom with constant mourning Venus maddened
entwining irritating anxieties in her heart,
ever since that time when fierce Theseus
having set out from the curved shores of Piraeus
arrived at the Cretan region of the unjust king.

In these lines, Catullus first addresses Theseus, who technically does not appear on the tapestry, and then addresses Ariadne, who technically is only a figure woven onto the wedding tapestry. Catullus' address to Theseus, however, centers on Ariadne's complete love for Theseus and the emotional state she is experiencing. Catullus emphasizes Ariadne's shock at Theseus leaving with the verb *pendebat* (70), which can mean "to be in a state of mental uncertainty" or "to be perplexed" when used with *animi* or another similar word, but can also mean "to be dependent upon, rely upon" (*OLD* s.v. *pendeo*) which underlines Ariadne's dependence on Theseus for survival since she left her family for him. Catullus also emphasizes Ariadne's complete love for Theseus with the tricolon *toto pectore, toto animo, and tota mente* (69-70), which increases the *pathos* of the scene by the building of intensity with each phrase and the anaphora of *totus*. By addressing the inanimate figure of Ariadne, Catullus gives her life allowing him to convincingly use the literary devices of narration, flashback, and direct speech that make the *ecphrasis* of *Carmen* 64 unique. Within the apostrophe, Catullus also refers to Theseus by the adjective *ferox* (73), an ambiguous word that could either refer to Theseus' courage or his cruel act of abandoning Ariadne. However, *ferox* most likely is used negatively because the focus has been on Theseus abandoning Ariadne. By the time Catullus begins the flashback scene in the next

section of the *ecphrasis*, he has established Ariadne as a heroic and sympathetic figure, presented Theseus in a negative light, and has successfully transitioned from an *ecphrasis* proper to the narrative devices needed to elaborate upon the main idea of Ariadne as an *exemplum* of the *uirtutes* of heroes.

IV. The "Heroic Deeds" of Theseus

While narrating the "heroic deeds" of Theseus, Catullus cunningly employs such devices as word choice and omission to criticize the motivation of glory for a hero such as Theseus, which is a further elaboration upon the negative picture he had previously painted of Theseus in the first section of the *ecphrasis*. Some scholars argue that the flashback scene of Theseus' killing of the Minotaur portrays him in a positive light.¹¹ Although Catullus admits that the desire for glory was Theseus' motivation in his actions, he condemns this driving force for the actions of warriors in epic as well as the heroic ideal associated with this desire for glory. Catullus relates how "Theseus was seeking either death or the reward of glory!" (*aut mortem appeteret Theseus aut praemia laudis!* 102). This phrase is an echo of the *Argonautica* (IV. 205) when Jason says "either to attain shame or great glory" (Pavlock 121). As Barbara Pavlock has stated about the passage from the *Argonautica*, "there is considerable irony in those words, since he had just acquired possession of the fleece not through his own prowess but rather through Medea's use of magic to charm the serpent guarding it" (Ibid.). The same is true for Theseus because he would not have escaped from the Labyrinth without the aid of Ariadne. The phrase *mortem aut praemia laudis* also encapsulates the heroic ideal as portrayed in Homer and the Latin word *laus* is cognate with the Greek term *kleos*, both coming from the Indo-European root

¹¹ Harmon says "the poet makes a statement about the nature of the heroic ideal, which sustains Peleus' marriage, through the characterization of Theseus, who, in spite of Ariadne's lament, is portrayed in large measure as a praiseworthy man" and that "the emphasis upon the bond between him and Aegeus, recalling the loves of numerous epic warriors for their fathers, furthers the characterization of Theseus as a hero" (318). He goes on to say that "the heroic code, as it is presented in 64, actually encourages extreme cruelty" (320).

*KLEU-, "to hear." In Homer, the word *kleos* literally means "that which is heard," and is used to designate the "fame" or "glory" that a person receives usually through the medium of epic poetry so that their name and actions will be praised and immortalized by future generations. However, Catullus never praises this heroic ideal in this section of the *ecphrasis*, merely stating that this was the choice of Theseus. Through Catullus' use of the verb *appeteret* (102), not only does Theseus "strive after" either death or glory, but this is also what he "desires" in the sense of what he seeks to obtain (*OLD* s.v. *appeto*). This desire of Theseus is in contrast to how Ariadne desires or seeks to obtain Theseus, which is based on a love that Catullus says "in her whole body had completely caught fire / and in her inmost marrow burned completely" (*cuncto conceptit corpore flammam / funditus atque imis exarsit tota medullis* 92-93).

Catullus praises Ariadne's motivation of love when she assisted Theseus in escaping from the Labyrinth, and contrasts her motivation to Theseus' motivation of glory. Although Theseus successfully defeated and killed the Minotaur, he never would have made it out of the Labyrinth without the assistance of Ariadne. However, this fact is omitted in the narration of this episode in the *ecphrasis*:

inde pedem sospes multa cum laude reflexit
errabunda regens tenui uestigia filo,
ne labyrintheis e flexibus egredientem
tecti frustraretur inobseruabilis error. (112-115)

From there unharmed he with much glory turned back his feet
guiding his wandering steps with a fine thread,
lest coming out of the winding Labyrinth
the difficult to trace maze of the building should baffle him.

Theseus' inability to make it out of the Labyrinth without the assistance of Ariadne is stressed by the use of the adjective *errabunda* (113) to describe his feet, the use of the adjective *flexibus* (114) to describe the Labyrinth, and the use of the deponent verb *frustraretur* (115), which can

also have the meanings of "to deceive or to delude" and "to elude" (*OLD s.v. frustror*). Even though Theseus won "much glory" (*multa laude* 112) by killing the Minotaur, he would not have returned from the ordeal without the assistance of Ariadne. Ariadne's choice to help Theseus was one that was based on her love for him rather than any desire to win glory for herself, which is in contrast to Theseus' motivation for his actions.¹²

The simile used to describe the death of the Minotaur would at first appear to be a positive statement about Theseus, but it is in fact a negative statement about Theseus and how Ariadne's role in helping Theseus is repressed. Catullus uses the simile of a tree knocked over by the wind in comparison to Theseus' killing of the Minotaur:

nam uelut in summo quatientem brachia Tauro
quercum aut conigeram sudanti cortice pinum
indomitus turbo contorquens flamine robur,
eruit (illa procul radicitus exturbata
prona cadit, late quaeuis cumque obuia frangens),
sic domito saeuum prostrauit corpore Theseus
nequiquam uanis iactantem cornua uentis. (105-111)

For just as on Taurus' top shaking its branches
an oak-tree or cone-bearing pine with dripping bark
a wild whirlwind swaying the trunk with its blast of wind,
uproots it (the tree removed by the roots at a great distance
falls leaning forward, crushing whatever is in its broad way),
so Theseus struck down the beast with its conquered body
throwing its horns in vain to the empty winds.

The origin for the structure of this epic simile comes from the *Iliad* (XIII. 389-393) when Idomeneus kills Asios (Quinn 318):

He fell, as when an oak goes down or a white poplar
or like a towering pine tree which in the mountains the carpenters
have hewn down with their whetted axes to make a ship timber.
So he lay there felled in front of his horses and chariot,

¹² Theseus' motivation is also to save his city, Athens, from the Minotaur: "Theseus himself chose to lay down his body for dear Athens" (*ipse suum Theseus pro caris corpus Athenis / proicere optauit* 81-82). Harmon says "Theseus is quite reminiscent of an old Roman like those fondly idealized in their literature" (318), such as the Horatii, "who will risk all service to the state" (Ibid).

roaring, and clawed with his hands at the bloody dust.
(Trans. Richmond Lattimore)

But the immediate model comes from the *Argonautica* (IV.1682-1688) when Medea kills Talos (Quinn 318):

But like some gigantic pine, high up in the mountains,
that the woodmen with their keen axes have left half-severed
when they trudge back home from the forest, and first it's shaken
by gales of wind at nightfall, then finally, later,
comes crashing down, snapped at the stump: so Talos awhile,
though swaying, held himself upright on unwearying feet,
but weakening at last, fell prone, with an enormous crash.
(Trans. Peter Green)

Talos was a man made of bronze that guarded the island of Crete. Jason and the Argonauts would not have been able to escape Talos unless Medea had used her magic to kill him. This situation is similar to how Theseus would not have been able to escape the Labyrinth without the assistance of Ariadne. Catullus chose to use a simile that had most recently been used by Apollonius of Rhodes for a woman helping a man escape danger and saving his life, a man that she had been in love with and who had made promises of marriage to her as well. By using this simile, Catullus hints at Ariadne's vital assistance in helping Theseus escape the Labyrinth and undermines the traditional hero Theseus as well.¹³ However, Catullus makes the wind rather than woodcutters the means by which the tree is brought down, which is an echo of how the imagery of the wind is used in comparison to Theseus' broken promises to Ariadne (59 and 142) throughout the *ecphrasis*. There is a further echo through the use of *indomitus* (107) in the simile to describe the tree, which recalls the previous use of *indomitus* (54) to describe the

¹³ Pavlock 122: "As a variation on a typical kind of epic simile, the model refers to a very unheroic act: first, it is Medea, not Jason or any of the other heroes, who slays Talos, and second, she uses the highly dubious method of witchcraft. Catullus's echo of Apollonius' anti-heroic episode helps to remind the reader of the hero's dependence upon a woman whom he merely exploits."

furores of Ariadne at the beginning of the *ecphrasis*. These echoes also make the simile of the tree refer to how the broken promises of Theseus will ruin Ariadne.

Catullus asserts that the *uirtutes* of Ariadne are the central idea of his *ecphrasis* with the transition he uses to return to Ariadne standing on the shore:

sed quid ego a primo digressus carmine plura
commemorem, ut linquens genitoris filia uultum,
ut consanguineae complexum, ut denique matris,
quae misera in gnata deperdita laeta<batur>,
omnibus his Thesei dulcem praeoptarit amorem:
aut ut uecta rati spumosa ad litora Diae
<uenerit,> aut ut eam deuinctam lumina somno
liquerit immemori discedens pectore coniunx? (116-123)

But why having digressed from my first song should I relate more, how the daughter leaving the face of her father, how leaving the embraces of her sister, or even of her mother, who was fond of her unfortunate abandoned daughter, for all these she preferred the sweet love of Theseus: or how carried by ship to the foaming shore of Dia she came, or how with her eyes having been bound by sleep the husband departing with an unmindful heart abandoned her?

The phrase "having digressed from my first song" (*a primo digressus carmine* 116) refers to the digression of the flashback scene to relate the "heroic deeds" of Theseus killing of the Minotaur.¹⁴ By referring to this episode as a digression, Catullus asserts that the purpose of *Carmen* 64 is not to praise the "heroic deeds" of Theseus, but that they are the cause for the abandonment of Ariadne. There is irony in this line because technically speaking the *ecphrasis* as a whole is a digression from the main narrative. Catullus' treatment of the *ecphrasis* thus far has been as a main narrative rather than a digression because of the literary devices it contains and because it contains the main theme of the poem. There is further irony because it was through the medium of song that a warrior's glory was spread, but the song of *Carmen* 64 praises

¹⁴ "The account of Theseus' single act of bravery in the poem, the slaying of the Minotaur (105-15), is expressly identified by the poet as a digression in 116f.: *sed quid ego a primo digressus carmine plura / commemorem?* ('but why should I wander from my original poem to relate additional things?') (Robinson 43).

Ariadne rather than Theseus. Catullus' *primum carmen* is the inner scene of Ariadne, and the adjective *primus* can mean "first," "chief," and even "best" (*OLD* s.v. *primus*) which reiterates the point that Catullus is not concerned with praising Theseus nor does he view the "heroic deeds" of Theseus as his "chief" song.¹⁵ In order to convey the central idea of his *primum carmen*, Catullus will utilize the direct speech of Ariadne, thus giving a voice to a figure that should be inanimate and static because she is technically woven onto the wedding tapestry.

V. Redefining the *Virtutes* of Heroes

The effect of the lament of Ariadne in the *ecphrasis* is more than just having a "figure" on the wedding tapestry actually speak: it allows the *exemplum* of *uirtutes*, Ariadne, to define what the *uirtutes* of heroes should entail. Catullus gives a voice to Ariadne, an abandoned woman who may not have had a voice previously, especially in the genre of epic, and he also allows Theseus to be condemned by the one person that he has harmed the most. Ariadne defines the *uirtutes* of heroes by listing the qualities that make Theseus the antithesis of the newly defined hero. Although she never claims to have these qualities, she does possess these qualities herself and they are sanctioned by the gods because of the fulfillment of her curse on Theseus.

In the first sixteen lines of her speech, Ariadne defines herself as faithful by defining Theseus as faithless, and she uses this concept of *fides* to redefine the *uirtutes* of heroes:

'sicine me patriis auectam, perfide, ab aris,
perfide, deserto liquisti in litore, Theseu?
sicine discedens neglecto numine diuum,
immemor a! deuota domum periuria portas?
nullane res potuit crudelis flectere mentis
consilium? tibi nulla fuit clementia praesto,
immite ut nostri uellet miserescere pectus?
at non haec quondam blanda promissa dedisti
uoce mihi, non haec miserae sperare iubebas,
sed conubia laeta, sed optatos hymenaeos,
quae cuncta aerii discernunt irrita uenti.

¹⁵ Quinn 319: "*a primo...carmine* = 'from where I began my poem' (the inner, not the outer, tale)."

nunc iam nulla uiro iuranti femina credat,
nulla uiri speret sermones esse fideles;
quis dum aliquid cupiens animus praegestit apisci,
nil metuunt iurare, nihil promittere parcunt:
sed simul ac cupidae mentis satiata libido est,
dicta nihil metuere, nihil periuria curant. (132-148)

So, faithless one, having been carried away from my father's altars,
do you, faithless Theseus, leave me on the deserted shore?
Departing with the divine witness of the Gods disregarded,
Ah heedless one! Do you carry home accursed false oaths?
Was there nothing able to turn your cruel mind's
purpose? Was there no compassion present for you,
so that your cruel heart might want to feel pity for me?
These are not the promises you once gave to me with a flattering
voice, you did not entreat wretched me to hope for this,
but a happy marriage, but a desired wedding,
all of which is torn to useless pieces by the high wind.
Now indeed no woman should believe a man swearing,
no woman should hope that the words of a man are true;
while their desirous spirit is eager to obtain something,
they are afraid to swear nothing, refrain from promising nothing:
But once the longing of their desirous mind is satisfied,
they do not fear words, do not worry about false oaths.

Ariadne implicitly defines herself by voicing the lack of *fides* that Theseus possesses. She refers to Theseus as *perfide* twice at the beginning of her speech (132 and 133), which has the meanings of "promise-breaking," "faithless," and "dishonest," and this negative quality is emphasized by the use of epanalepsis. The promise that Theseus broke to Ariadne was the promise of marriage (141), a promise which Theseus had the authority to make, evidenced by the use of the verb *iubebas* (41), despite Ariadne's later statement that Theseus "dreaded the harsh commands of an old-fashioned father" (*saeua quod horrebas prisca praecepta parentis* 159). As Quinn states, "Aegeus, Ariadne suggests, was a father of the old school (*prisca*) who had strong ideas (*saeua...praecepta*) about their sons and foreign women" (323). However, the use of *iubebas* clearly indicates that Theseus had the authority and the power to choose his own wife. While making these promises, Theseus used a *blanda...uoce* (39-40), which is reminiscent of

how an *amator* will coax and flatter a *puella* in Latin love elegy.¹⁶ Theseus also, evidently, took an oath to the Gods that he would marry Ariadne, based on the phrase *neglecto numine Diuum* (134) and Ariadne's use of the word *periuria* (135 and 148).

In her lament, Ariadne also contrasts her love for Theseus to his love of winning glory, which was the cause of his lack of *fides*. She uses sexual language such as *cupiens animus* (145), *cupidae mentis* (147), and *libido* (147) in her generalized statement that women should not believe the promises of men. On the surface, the use of this language would seem to indicate that Theseus desired only sex from Ariadne. However, Ariadne is actually comparing the desire of men to obtain glory to the lust of a man to have sex with a woman. Previously, Catullus hinted at this comparison with the use of *appeto* ("to desire") in the line *aut mortem appeteret Theseus aut praemia laudis* (102). Like all other heroes, Theseus desired to win glory, which for him would be achieved by killing the Minotaur and saving Athens. However, as stated above, Theseus would not have been able to obtain glory without the assistance of Ariadne because she helped him to escape the Labyrinth.

Catullus stresses Ariadne's *fides* and love as the motivation for her *uirtutes* by finally allowing her to voice her role in helping Theseus win glory, and he also emphasizes Theseus' lack of the qualities that Ariadne possesses as his new type of hero:

certe ego te in medio uersantem turbine leti
eripui, et potius germanum amittere creui,
quam tibi fallaci supremo in tempore dessem.
pro quo dilaceranda feris dabor alitibusque
praeda, neque iniacta tumulabor mortua terra. (149-153)

Without doubt you swirling amidst a whirlwind of death
I rescued, and decided to lose by death a brother rather
than abandon deceitful you in your highest moment.
For which I will be given as spoils to the beasts and birds

¹⁶ In *Amores* II.1.21, Ovid says how flattering words and elegy are his weapons (*blanditias elegosque leuis, mea tela, resumpsi*).

to be torn apart, and dead I will not be covered with thrown earth.

Ariadne not only helped Theseus escape the Labyrinth with the thread, but she also snatched him away (*eripui* 150) from a certain and confusing death (*in medio uersantem turbine leti* 149). Ariadne refers to Theseus by the adjective "deceitful" (*fallaci* 151), which refers back to her condemnation of his *fides* in the beginning of her speech. The use of the phrase *supremo in tempore* (151) could refer to either Theseus' most glorious moment when he killed the Minotaur or his most dangerous moment of death by trying to escape the Labyrinth, both of which stress the dependence of Theseus on Ariadne for survival. Having been conquered by the flattering promises of Theseus (*blanda promissa...uoce*, 139-140), Ariadne is abandoned by Theseus as if she were unwanted spoils of war (*praeda* 153) and faced with the certain outcome of death, which is the ironic reward that Ariadne will receive from Theseus for saving his life and for helping him to obtain glory. As the *exemplum* of Catullus' new hero, Ariadne has exhibited *fides* because she kept her promise to Theseus and was motivated by love to help him escape death from the Labyrinth. This is in contrast to Theseus, who is untrustworthy and has broken his promises to Ariadne in order to achieve glory.

Ariadne indirectly commends the motivation of love for her *uirtutes* because the actions of Theseus, motivated by a desire for glory, deserve to be punished:

'quare facta uirum multantes uindice poena
Eumenides, quibus anguino redimita capillo
frons exspirantis praeporat pectoris iras,
huc huc aduentate, meas audite querellas,
quas ego, uae misera, extremis proferre medullis
cogor inops, ardens, amenti caeca furore.
quae quoniam uerae nascuntur pectore ab imo,
uos nolite pati nostrum uanescere luctum,
sed quali solam Theseus me mente reliquit,
tali mente, deae, funestet seque suosque.' (192-201)

"Therefore punishers of mens' deeds with demanded penalty

Eumenides, whose heads wreathed in hair of snakes
carries furies breathed out from your heart,
Come here to this place, listen to my grievances,
which I, alas wretched, am forced to bring forward from my
deepest marrow, helpless, burning, blinded by insane passion.
Since these things are born true from my inmost heart,
do not allow my lamentation to disappear, but with the same mind
that Theseus left me behind alone, with such a mind,
Goddesses, let him pollute himself and his with murder."

Ariadne validates the lack of Theseus' *fides* when she calls upon the Eumenides to avenge her, and she consequently makes Theseus an unsympathetic figure to the external audience of the poem. The Eumenides, "The Well-disposed Ones," were better known as the Furies or the Erinyes, and one of their functions was to punish oath-breakers.¹⁷ In the *Argonautica* (IV.385-390), Medea threatens Jason with the curse of the Furies if he should abandon her:

"The moment you reach your homeland
may my Furies drive you out again, in revenge for all
I've suffered from your stubborn cruelty! No way can my words
fall to earth unfulfilled, for you've broken a mighty oath
in your hard-heartedness: it's not long you'll be mocking me,
not long you'll be left in peace, for all your sworn covenants."
(Trans. Peter Green)

The actions of both Ariadne and Medea were motivated by love when they helped the traditional heroes Theseus and Jason. In both instances, the Furies are the means for exacting punishment when the traditional heroes break their promises of love.¹⁸ The phrase "the actions of men" (*facta uirum* 192) can also ironically be translated as "the deeds of male heroes," which places the Furies in the role as punishers of traditional heroes motivated by a desire for glory. Catullus portrays Theseus as deserving the curse that Ariadne inflicts upon him because he has not only abandoned Ariadne, but he has also broken the oath of marriage that he promised to her in return

¹⁷ In the *Iliad* (XIX.260-281), Agamemnon calls upon the Furies when he swears to Achilles that he has not touched Briseis, saying that "those Furies under the earth who punish / men who've made false oaths" (Trans. Richmond Lattimore).

¹⁸ Commentators have noted how Catullus draws influence from Euripides' and Apollonius of Rhodes' portrayals of Medea in his own portrayal of Ariadne and her curse upon Theseus (Quinn 321).

for her help. Previously in the lament of Ariadne, Catullus had distanced the audience from any sympathy they may have felt for Theseus when he had Ariadne first ask herself why she complains to the winds, "which are not abundant in feelings, nor are able to hear or give back sent voices" (*quae nullis sensibus auctae / nec missas audire queunt nec reddere uoces* 165-166). After Ariadne realized that the winds are the only thing present to hear her complaints against Theseus, which ironically are the same winds that have torn Theseus' promises to nothing (142), she began to refer to Theseus indirectly as just another man, whereas she had previously addressed her lament to him directly using the second person. By referring to Theseus in this way for the remainder of her speech, both Ariadne and the audience are distanced from Theseus even more. When Ariadne curses Theseus with polluting himself and those dear to him with murder (*funestet seque suosque* 201), the audience wants justice to be served upon Theseus for both his abandonment of Ariadne and his breaking of the oath to the Gods to marry her.

Catullus uses the figure of Jupiter to sanction the newly defined *uirtutes* motivated by love rather than a desire for glory because Jupiter punishes Theseus for abandoning Ariadne:

has postquam maesto profudit pectore uoces,
supplicium saeuis exposcens anxia factis,
annuit inuicto caelestum numine rector;
quo motu tellus atque horrida contremuerunt
aequora concussitque micantia sidera mundus. (202-206)

After she had poured out these words from her sad heart,
she troubled demanding punishment for cruel deeds,
the ruler of the heavens nodded assent with his invincible divinity;
at which movement the earth and the wild sea quaked
violently and the heavens violently shook the glittering stars.

Although Ariadne had not called upon Jupiter to exact revenge, he grants it nevertheless.¹⁹ When Agamemnon swears to Achilles that he has not touched Briseis in the *Iliad* (XIX.258-259), he calls first upon Zeus, saying "Let Zeus, the loftiest and finest god, / first witness" (Trans. Richmond Lattimore), and because Jupiter / Zeus was called first to witness oaths, he was, as such, a god of oaths. Jupiter's assent to grant Ariadne's revenge upon Theseus is reminiscent of when Zeus grants the plea of Thetis for Agamemnon to honor Achilles again in the *Iliad* (I.525-530), and the nodding of assent by Jupiter / Zeus is "irrevocable, truthful and certain of fulfillment" (Kirk 108). By having Jupiter assent to punishing Theseus for his oath-breaking without Ariadne appealing to him to do so, Catullus has the gods favor *uirtutes* motivated by love rather than those motivated by a desire for glory.

VI. The Punishment for *Virtutes* Motivated by Glory

In the last section of the *ecphrasis* that deals with Ariadne and Theseus, a comparison is drawn between Aegeus, Theseus' father, and Ariadne in order to ultimately draw a contrast between the two and to establish Ariadne as the *exemplum* of the *uirtutes* of heroes. Catullus first draws a comparison between Aegeus and Ariadne by using some of the same vocabulary with Aegeus that he had previously used with Ariadne. At the beginning of his speech, Aegeus says that he is forced (*cogor* 216) to send forth his son, just as Ariadne said she was forced (*cogor* 197) to voice her complaints to the Furies, complaints which she compares to children to whom she has given birth (*nascuntur* 198). Aegeus' use of *eripit* (219) to describe how Theseus is snatched away from him recalls Ariadne's use of *eripui* (150) when she talked about how she had rescued Theseus from the Labyrinth. The *querellas* (223) that Aegeus will experience if Theseus dies echoes the *querellas* (195) that Ariadne makes to the Furies. When Catullus

¹⁹ Previously in the lament, Ariadne had called upon Jupiter when she wished that Theseus had never come to Crete or into her household (171-176). However, Ariadne did not call upon Jupiter for revenge upon Theseus in that passage.

describes Theseus forgetting to change the sails, he says that the commands of Aegeus "were driven away from Theseus like clouds by a gust of the high winds that leave the summit of a snowy mountain" (*Thesea ceu pulsae uentorum flamine nubes / aereum niuei montis liquere cacumen* 239-240).²⁰ This simile recalls the wind imagery used to describe the broken promises of Theseus (59 and 142) and Ariadne's ineffective complaints to the winds (164-166).²¹ Waiting for Theseus to return, Catullus says that "his father, as he was seeking looking out from the top of the citadel, wasting his troubled eyes in constant weeping" (*at pater, ut summa prospectum ex arce patebat, / anxia in assiduos absumens lumina fletus* 241-242). The verb *prospicio* had been used at the beginning of the *ecphrasis* to describe Ariadne looking out for Theseus (61 and 62), as well as the similar verb *prospecto* used to describe Ariadne looking out from the shore at the beginning (52) and end (249) of the part of the *ecphrasis* that describes Ariadne and Theseus. The adjective *anxius* had also been used to describe Ariadne at the end of her lament (203). All of these verbal echoes draw a comparison between Ariadne and Aegeus, whereby Aegeus is placed in the same predicament as Ariadne because of *immemor* Theseus.

While drawing a comparison between Ariadne and Aegeus, Catullus also makes a contrast between the two, which allows him to further establish Ariadne as the *exemplum* of the *uirtutes* of heroes. Aegeus, placed in a similar plight as Ariadne, chooses to end his life by throwing himself headfirst down from the highest of the rocks (*praecipitem sese scopulorum e uertice iecit* 244). In a similar manner, Ariadne "sometimes climbed up steep mountains in sadness, from where she would extend her sight over the vast tide of the sea" (*ac tum praeruptos*

²⁰ Murgatroyd 78: "The active hero of 105ff., who brings about the glorious death of his enemy and in his pre-eminence is likened to a vigorous wind on a mountain top, becomes here passive, and goes on to cause the inglorious death of his own father."

²¹ Murgatroyd 78: "The dispelling winds here (in connection with his punishment) bring to mind the winds dispelling his promises to Ariadne in 59 and 142." Murgatroyd, however, fails to make this connection when discussing the simile that describes the death of the Minotaur, for which see above.

tristem conscendere montes, / unde aciem <in> pelagi uastos protenderet aestus 126-127).

However, unlike Aegeus, Ariadne contemplates her troubles instead of taking her own life.

Catullus reiterates the negative portrayal of Theseus and the positive portrayal of Ariadne and he reemphasizes how Theseus' lack of *fides* is the cause of his own sorrow when he transitions from the flashback of Aegeus back to the scene woven on the wedding tapestry:

 sic funesta domus ingressus tecta paterna
 morte ferox Theseus, qualem Minoidi luctum
 obtulerat mente immemori, talem ipse recepit.
 quae tum prospectans cedentem maesta carinam
 multiplices animo uolebat saucia curas. (246-250)

Thus fierce Theseus entered the roofs of the house polluted by his father's death, the sort of grief for the daughter of Minos he had caused with his heedless mind, so he received for himself. She at that time looking out sadly on his leaving ship with a wounded heart was turning over her many troubles.

Catullus once again refers to Theseus by the adjective *ferox*, just as he had done in line 73, which, as noted previously, is an ambiguous word that could refer either to the brave deeds of Theseus or his cruel actions against Ariadne. However, Catullus seems to refer to the cruel actions against Ariadne with his use of *ferox* because of the negative portrayal of Theseus throughout the *ecphrasis*.²² Catullus also uses the patronymic *Minois* again to refer to Ariadne, which subtly places her in the role of a hero just as it had previously done in line 60. Catullus returns again to the *ecphrasis* proper with Ariadne looking out at Theseus abandoning her by using ring composition. He uses the participle *prospectans* for Ariadne and the adjective *cedentem* for Theseus just as he did at the beginning of the *ecphrasis* (*prospectans* 52 and *cedentem* 53), which serves the purpose of bringing the reader back to a woven tapestry that adorns the wedding couch of Peleus and Thetis.

²² Knopp would interpret *ferox* as a positive adjective for the hero, but "because as a *ferox* he was unmindful of Ariadne's passion, vengeance destroys things of which he was mindful" (209).

VII. The Reward for *Virtutes* Motivated by Love

The description of the arrival of Bacchus serves the purpose of describing the reward that the newly defined hero Ariadne will receive for her *uirtutes*, which consist of the "heroic deeds" she performed because of her love for Theseus, but her reward is one of love and marriage rather than glory.²³ Catullus introduces this part of the *ecphrasis* with the phrase *parte ex alia* (251). Translated as "upon the other part," the phrase refers to the other part of the tapestry that the Bacchus scene appears in relation to Ariadne. However, if the phrase is translated as "according to a different share," it can refer to Jupiter's reward for Ariadne as an *exemplum* of the *uirtutes* of heroes, whereby she will receive the love and marriage that Theseus had promised but broken. Catullus emphasizes Bacchus' love for Ariadne and how Ariadne desired love through the use of apostrophe. Bacchus is described as "seeking you, Ariadne, and burning with love for you" (*te quaerens, Ariadna, tuoque incensus amore* 253). Most importantly in this line, Ariadne is referred to by her proper name *Ariadna* for the first and only time rather than by the patronymic *Minois*, which places emphasis on her status as a woman rather than a hero when she receives the reward for her *uirtutes*. The reward for the hero Ariadne is love, marriage, and happiness rather than the glory that male heroes such as Theseus desired. This reward is based on Ariadne as an *exemplum* of the *uirtutes* of heroes, but an *exemplum* of *uirtutes* that takes into account love and *fides* rather than the martial deeds of traditional heroes celebrated in the genre of epic.

Catullus uses the description of the wedding tapestry covering the *puluinar* of Thetis as a metaphor for the function of the *ecphrasis* in the narrative containing the central idea of the poem. He ends the *ecphrasis* by once again describing the wedding tapestry spread over the couch:

²³ This other part of the *ecphrasis* proper portrays the coming of Bacchus with a throng of followers to Ariadne, and it differs from the scene of Ariadne because it comprises a mere thirteen lines and contains only a description of actual scene woven onto the wedding tapestry.

talibus amplifice uestis decorata figuris
puluinar complexa suo uelabat amictu. (265-266)

The tapestry splendidly decorated with such figures
embraced and was veiling the nuptial couch with its drapery.

Of interest in these final two lines of the *ecphrasis* is the use of the verb *uelabat* (265), which can be translated as "to veil" or "to cover," but can also be translated as "to hide" and "to conceal" (*OLD* s.v. *uelo*). Apart from the straight forward reading of the tapestry merely covering the *puluinar*, there is another interpretation if *uelabat* is translated as "conceals" or "hides." If these lines are interpreted as referring to poetics, the *ecphrasis* embraces the narrative portion of the wedding of Peleus and Thetis (which it does) and conceals the central idea of the poem. One would naturally think that the central idea of the poem is contained in the main narrative of the marriage of Peleus and Thetis, which could be symbolized by the *puluinar* within the poem, but, as I have argued in this chapter, it is actually contained in the *ecphrasis*, symbolized by the wedding tapestry within the poem.

VIII. Conclusion

As we have seen in this chapter, Catullus not only questions the traditional concept of "hero," but he also condemns the "heroic ideal" glorified in epic poetry. Previous poets had made Theseus, and other traditional male figures like him, the heroes of the genre of epic. But Catullus criticizes *uirtutes* that are motivated out of a desire for glory, and suggests instead that *uirtutes* should be motivated by love. The *exemplum* for this new type of hero is the figure of Ariadne, a woman who was the victim of a traditional hero's pursuit of glory and who was also, consequently, a victim of epic. Catullus, however, finally allows Ariadne to voice her condemnation of the traditional "hero" and "heroic ideal" celebrated in epic. In the process, she is glorified for her *uirtutes* that were motivated by a love for Theseus rather than a desire for

glory, and she is presented as a new type of hero that should be praised. The rewards for these *uirtutes* of Ariadne are happiness, love, and marriage, and these rewards are more important than ensuring that one's fame lasts for future generations.

Catullus utilizes the *ecphrasis* of the wedding tapestry to reveal this central idea of *Carmen* 64. He manipulates the traditional purpose of an *ecphrasis* to serve as a digression to describe a work of art into the means of conveying the central idea of the poem, which consequently makes the narrative proper, the wedding of Peleus and Thetis, technically a digression if the functions are reversed. However, as we shall see in Chapter Three, the wedding of Peleus and Thetis actually serves the purpose of providing *exempla* for Ariadne and Theseus and the worlds of *amores* and *uirtutes* they represent.

Chapter Three: The Narration of the Wedding of Peleus and Thetis

I. Introduction

The narration of the wedding of Peleus and Thetis in *Carmen* 64 (1-46; 267-408) brackets the *ecphrasis* of the wedding tapestry and is smaller in length than the *ecphrasis* (187 lines compared to 216 lines). As I have argued in the previous chapter, the *ecphrasis*, even though it is technically a digression, contains the central idea of the poem: Catullus presents a negative portrayal of Theseus and the heroic ideal that he represents while elevating Ariadne to the status of a hero because the *uirtutes* she demonstrated were motivated by love. In this chapter, I will argue that Catullus uses the narration of the wedding of Peleus and Thetis as a means of presenting two extreme views of the worlds of *amores* and *uirtutes*, represented by Peleus and Thetis (*amores*) and by Achilles (*uirtutes*), which compliment the contrasting motivations of Ariadne and Theseus. However, in both instances, Catullus manipulates the myths in order to provide these two extreme examples of *amores* and *uirtutes*. He recreates the myth of Peleus and Thetis to focus on love, and he embellishes the myth of Achilles to focus on the violence of his acts and the victims of his actions.

II. Recreating the Wedding of Peleus and Thetis

In *Carmen* 64, Catullus recreates the myth of Peleus and Thetis through either the suppression or omission of key episodes of the mythic tradition in order to present a more harmonious union of love between the two. Apollodorus (*The Library* III.13.5) provides all three variants of the myth of Peleus and Thetis and the minor points of difference in the traditions:

Next Peleus married Nereus' daughter Thetis, over whom Zeus and Poseidon had been rivals. But when Themis had predicted that the son of Thetis would be stronger than his father, they bowed out. Some say that, when Zeus was eager to have sex with Thetis,

Prometheus told him that his son by her would take over dominion of the sky. Others say that Thetis was unwilling to have sex with Zeus because she had been reared by Hera, and that Zeus in fury wanted to marry her off to a mortal. At any rate, Cheiron warned Peleus to grab Thetis and hold on while she changed her form; so he watched for his chance and carried her off, and, although, she changed into fire and then water and then a wild animal, he did not release her until he saw that she had returned to her original shape. They were married on Pelion and the gods celebrated the marriage with hymns and a banquet.

(Trans. Sir James Frazer)

Poets used one of these variants of the myth according to which one would go together best with the overall plot or theme of their own work: Pindar (*Isthmian Ode* 8) focused on the tradition involving Zeus and Poseidon as rivals for Thetis, Aeschylus (*Prometheus Bound*) on the tradition involving Prometheus, and Apollonius of Rhodes (*Argonautica*) on the tradition involving Hera. However, none of these variants suited the theme of *Carmen* 64 argued for in Chapter Two. Both tradition and purpose would have forced Catullus to create a new myth of Peleus and Thetis that would focus on *amores* and love. In order to present a harmonious union of love between Peleus and Thetis, Catullus changes how and where Peleus and Thetis first met, he omits how Thetis resisted the advances of Peleus and had to be physically subdued into marrying him, and he suppresses how Jupiter gave Thetis in marriage to Peleus because of a prophecy concerning her son.²⁴

When Catullus first describes the meeting of Peleus and Thetis, he uses anaphora to draw attention to the innovations of his myth and he uses the verb *fertur* to make reference to a supposed mythic tradition in order to add authority to his own recreated myth. After a brief

²⁴ Even in the tradition where Thetis refused the advances of Zeus because she had been reared by Hera, the prophecy of her son is still a dominant factor. In the *Argonautica* by Apollonius of Rhodes, Themis tells the still persistent Zeus that Thetis is destined to give birth to a son greater than the father, and only then "fear made him give over, scared lest some rival oust him / as king of the gods: he wanted to keep his rule forever" (IV.803-804).

introduction about the Argo setting out to obtain the Golden Fleece, Catullus describes Peleus and Thetis falling in love as she rises out of the sea with the other Nereids to look upon the Argo:

emersere freti candenti e gurgite uultus,
aequoreae monstrum Nereides admirantes.
illa, atque <haud> alia, uiderunt luce marinas
mortales oculis nudato corpore Nymphas
nutricum tenuis exstantes e gurgite cano.
tum Thetidis Peleus incensus fertur amore,
tum Thetis humanos non despexit hymenaeos,
tum Thetidi pater ipse iugandum Pelea sensit. (14-21)

In the shining sea faces rose up out of the water,
the Nereids of the sea were astonished at the portent.
On that day, and no other, mortals saw
with their eyes the naked bodies of the Nymphs of the sea
visible up to their breasts out of the foamy sea.
Then Peleus was said to have burned with love for Thetis,
then Thetis did not despise human marriage,
then the father himself realized Peleus must marry Thetis.

In Catullus' version, the meeting of Peleus and Thetis takes place during the voyage of the Argo, a time frame which is unparalleled in any of the other traditions. In all other extant versions, regardless of the circumstances leading to the marriage of Peleus and Thetis, Peleus sees Thetis for the first time when he goes to abduct her.²⁵ Catullus, however, creates a situation of love at first sight between Peleus and Thetis, although the love is stronger for Peleus (*incensus amore* 19) whereas Thetis only did not despise marriage with a mortal (*humanos non despexit hymenaeos* 20). The anaphora of the *tum* clauses (19-21) draws the attention of the audience to how Catullus' recreated myth of Peleus and Thetis differs from the tradition in this new setting. Catullus provides no explanation why Thetis had despised marriage with a mortal (20) or why Jupiter realized Peleus must marry Thetis (21). These lines are echoes, however, of how Thetis resisted Peleus, had to be physically subdued into marrying him, and how Jupiter refrained from

²⁵ Catullus reinforces his created version against the tradition with the phrase *illa atque haud illa luce* (16) because this phrase serves both a narrative function but also, and more importantly, an authoritative function that strengthens the credibility of his created myth.

marrying Thetis because of the prophecy concerning her son contained in other traditions of the myth. Catullus hints at these other mythic traditions, but still maintains that love is the motivation for the marriage of Peleus and Thetis in his recreated myth. Thetis may have at first despised a marriage to Peleus in other traditions, but in Catullus' version she does not despise a marriage supposedly because of her love for Peleus, and her love for Peleus is seemingly so strong that she did not try to resist him by changing into various shapes in order to escape from him. In some traditions, Jupiter may have given Thetis in marriage to Peleus because of the prophecy concerning her son, but now Jupiter realizes that the two must be married because of the love they have for one another. Catullus also uses these mythic echoes to other traditions as a means of incorporating his version into the mythic tradition of Peleus and Thetis because of the drastic changes he makes to the myth of Peleus and Thetis in the process of recreating it.

Catullus resolves the problem of the authenticity of his new myth of Peleus and Thetis through his use of *fertur* (19), employing a literary device used by poets to acknowledge earlier mythic traditions. As scholars have noted, "None of the Greek poets simply versify a given story; all rethink it with their own changes and additions, and in this sense they are themselves mythmakers" (Shapiro 4), and the same can be said of Latin poets.²⁶ However, Catullus' Roman audience may have been surprised or even shocked by the version of the myth of Peleus and Thetis presented in *Carmen* 64 because it differed so drastically from the tradition and especially because Catullus had focused on a harmonious union of love. In order to add authority to his myth, Catullus utilized the same poetic device that he had used at the beginning of his poem:

²⁶ The figure of Helen is an example of the extent to which myth can be changed. In the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, Helen went with Paris (either willingly or unwillingly) to Troy. In another version found in Hesiod, Stesichorus, and Herodotus, Helen never even went to Troy. Euripides would expand upon this second tradition even more in his play *Helen*, saying that a phantom image of Helen went to Troy. In his Introduction to *Helen*, Richmond Lattimore observes how "Despite these precedents, the play which Euripides presented undoubtedly struck most of his audience with a pleasurable thrill of surprise" and that "Although he used the Herodotean variant, he contrived, through the old idol-story, to remove that stain of dishonor which the Egyptian version had re-attached to Helen" (484).

Peliaco quondam prognatae uertice pinus
dicuntur liquidas Neptuni nasse per undas
Phasidos ad fluctus et fines Aeeteos,
cum lecti iuuenes, Argiuae robora pubis,
auratum optantes Colchis auertere pellem
ausi sunt uada salsa cita decurrere puppi,
caerula uerrentes abiegnis aequora palmis. (1-7)

Once pines born on the peak of Mt. Pelion
are said to have sailed the flowing waves of Neptune
to the shore of Phasis and the territory of Aeetes,
when chosen young men, strength of Argive youth,
desiring to steal the golden hide of Colchis
dared to race over salty waves in a swift ship,
sweeping the blue surface with oars of fir-wood.

The use of *dicuntur* (2) makes reference to not only a previous mythic tradition but also to the literary model of Ennius, and commentators have noted how "the first sentence is shot through with reminiscences of Ennius' version of Euripides' *Medea*" (Quinn 299).²⁷ Through this use of *dicuntur*, Catullus acknowledges the imitation of Ennius he employed at the beginning of the poem, but he also grounds his story within a specific mythic tradition. When Catullus describes Peleus and Thetis falling in love, he uses *fertur* (19) in a similar fashion as if to introduce a mythic tradition different from the one used by Ennius. The verb *dicuntur* conveys the sense of something that has already been previously said as in the case of Ennius' *Medea*, while the verb *fertur* implies the sense of something that is brought forth, offered, or produced (*OLD* s.v. *fero*) and used "most frequently of actual assertions" (Cassell s.v. *fero*). There is an ironic use of the verb *fertur* because Catullus is purportedly making reference to a previous mythic tradition, but the referenced previous tradition is his own created myth.²⁸ He adds authority and authenticity to his version of the Peleus and Thetis myth through the use of *fertur* by utilizing the same poetic

²⁷ Quinn (299-301) provides a detailed analysis of the verbal echoes Catullus used in this opening passage.

²⁸ There is always the possibility that Catullus is using a myth that is now lost to us. However, given the use of verbal echoes to other mythic traditions and Catullus' focus on a harmonious union of love, it is more probable that Catullus is recreating the myth to suit the theme of *Carmen* 64.

device that poets would use to recall or draw attention to a mythic tradition. However, at the same time, he concedes that his version is an innovation.

III. Peleus and Thetis in the Song of the Parcae

The *epithalamium* portion of the Song of the Parcae (323-337; 372-381) addresses the mythic tradition that the marriage of Peleus and Thetis was estranged after the birth of Achilles, a tradition which Catullus must change in order to present their marriage as a harmonious union motivated by love.²⁹ In *Carmen* 64, the Fates sing the *epithalamium* and foretell the future of Achilles at the wedding of Peleus and Thetis, while in previous traditions the Muses sang the *epithalamium* (Pindar, *Pythian Ode* 3.85-104) and Apollo prophesied the future of Achilles (Plato, *Republic* II.383) in other traditions. Besides allowing the wedding song to structurally consist of an *epithalamium* and a prophecy about the life of Achilles, the inclusion of the Fates adds authenticity to the innovation of the harmonious marriage that Catullus presents in the poem:

haec tum clarisona pellentes uellera uoce
taliam diuino fuderunt carmine fata,
carmine, perfidiae quod post nulla arguet aetas. (320-322)

Then they, plucking the fleeces, in a clear-sounding voice
poured out such oracles in a prophetic song,
a song which no age after will charge with falsehood.

Catullus uses the authority of the Fates to add authenticity to the untraditional harmonious marriage of Peleus and Thetis presented in the Song of the Parcae, just as he had used the

²⁹ An *epithalamium* (Greek ἐπιθαλάμιον) was "strictly a song sung by young men and maidens before the bridal-chamber" (*OCD* s.v. *epithalamium*, Greek). Catullus employed these traditional participants in *Carmen* 61 when he first addresses the young men with "Vesper approaches, young men, stand up" (*Vesper adest, iuuenes, consurgite* 61.1) and then addresses the maidens with "Do you see, maidens, the young men? Stand up in the opposite direction" (*cernitis, innuptae, iuuenes? consurgite contra* 61.6).

Alexandrian poetic device of referring to a previous literary model with his use of *fertur* (19) to give authenticity to his new myth of Peleus and Thetis.³⁰

Catullus presents Thetis as wanting and accepting the marriage just as willingly as Peleus in his created myth, which differs from the tradition in which she physically resisted the advances of Peleus by changing her shape in order to escape from him.³¹ At the beginning of the *epithalamium*, the Fates tell Peleus:

adueniet tibi iam portans optata maritis
Hesperus, adueniet fausto cum sidere coniunx,
quae tibi flexanimo mentem perfundat amore,
languidulosque paret tecum coniungere somnos,
leuia substernens robusto brachia collo.
currite ducentes subtegmina, currite, fusi. (328-333)

Soon will come to you carrying wishes to a husband
Hesperus, with the favorable star a spouse will come,
who bathes your mind with soul-bending love,
and prepares to join in languid sleep with you,
spreading her smooth arms around your strong neck.
Run spindle leading the threads of the Fates, run.

Catullus refers to Thetis as *coniunx* (329), just as he will later refer to Peleus as *coniunx* (373).

Although the word *coniunx* can refer to either a wife or a husband, the use of *coniunx* for both Peleus and Thetis emphasizes how the two are joined and united in their marriage through love.³²

The use of *flexanimo* to modify *amore* (330) defines their love as one "that turns one's thoughts aside from other things" (Quinn 342), which ironically could refer to the reaction of Catullus'

³⁰ In a sense, Catullus first addresses the problem of authenticity with his use of *fertur* (19), but then dispels any lingering doubt through his use of the voices of the Fates because even Zeus "cannot escape what is fated" (Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound* 518).

³¹ Curran says "Catullus has chosen for his paradigm of harmony between god and man a story in which the heroine was violently opposed to the union and had to be tricked and wrestled into it" (182). He also calls Catullus "a poet who turned Thetis into a willing participant" (183).

³² There is also a verbal echo of *iugandum* (21), which was first used for Peleus and Thetis marrying one another. The verbs *iungo* and *coniungo* differ from other marrying verbs such as *duco* (*in matrimonium*) for a man and *nubo* for a woman because *iungo* and *coniungo* convey a sense of equality (or as much as possible in the ancient world) rather than from the point of view of either the man or the woman. The same could be said of the words for husband (*maritus* or *uir*) and wife (*uxor*) as opposed to spouse (*coniunx*).

audience to his recreated myth. Catullus suppresses how Thetis traditionally opposed a marriage with Peleus and how Peleus had to hold on to her while she changed into the forms of fire, water, and a wild beast in an effort to escape him. Instead, he presents Thetis as a willing participant to the marriage because of the love she shares with Peleus.

Building upon the innovation of the mutual love between Peleus and Thetis, Catullus creates a harmonious union between the two by suppressing the tradition that they had an estranged marriage after the birth of Achilles. Before the Fates begin to sing of the future of Achilles, they praise the love of Peleus and Thetis in terms that are unlike any mythic tradition:

nulla domus tales umquam contexit amores,
nullus amor tali coniunxit foedere amantes,
qualis adest Thetidi, qualis concordia Peleo.
 currite ducentes subtegmina, currite, fusi. (334-337)

No home has ever covered such loves,
no love has joined lovers in such a bond,
as the harmony present with Thetis, as with Peleus.
 Run spindle leading the threads of the Fates, run.

The anaphora of *nullus* (334-335) draws attention to these lines with the focus on love through the repetition of the "love" words *amores* (334), *amor* (335), and *amantes* (335). Catullus endeavors to stress to his audience that love is not only the foundation of the marriage of Peleus and Thetis, but that it is also the driving force behind their continued harmonious marriage. The line "no home has ever covered such loves" (334) contains mythic echoes to the tradition of how Peleus and Thetis did not live together after the birth of Achilles. When Achilles was born, Thetis tried to make her son immortal and was prevented from doing so by Peleus because of the misunderstanding that Peleus thought Thetis was trying to harm their son. Consequently, this episode caused tension between the two and caused the two to live apart (*Argonautica* IV.862-

872).³³ Catullus takes a negative aspect of the traditional marriage of Peleus and Thetis and turns it into a positive statement about their love that he portrays in his new version of the myth. The line *qualis adest Thetidi, qualis concordia Peleo* (336) structurally mirrors the harmonious marriage with the repetition of *qualis* separated from the nouns *Thetidi* and *Peleo* by the words *adest* and *concordia*. Furthermore, the words *foedere* (335) and *concordia* (336) emphasize the union of Peleus and Thetis which becomes free from any strife or estrangement in the hands of Catullus.³⁴

IV. The *Pietas* of Peleus

When Peleus is addressed directly (25-30; 323-327) in the recreated myth of Peleus and Thetis, Catullus preserves the *pietas* of Peleus towards the gods, a quality for which he was honored by Zeus and for which he was chosen to be the husband of Thetis, and Catullus focuses on the amatory rather than martial aspect of the *uirtutes* of Peleus.³⁵ Through the portrayal of Peleus, Catullus makes Peleus an *exemplum* of the hero Ariadne defined in the *ecphrasis*. Catullus builds upon the traditional "heroic deeds" of Peleus, which Hesiod (*Catalogues of Women* Frag. 58) listed as the sacking of the city of Iolkos and the marriage with Thetis:

Peleus the son of Aeacus, dear to the deathless gods, came to Phthia the mother of flocks, bringing great possessions from spacious Iolkos. And all the people envied him in their hearts seeing how he had sacked the well-built city, and accomplished his joyous marriage.

(Trans. Hugh Evelyn-White)

Pindar (*Nemean Ode* 3.30-35) also listed the "heroic deeds" of Peleus as such:

³³ As early as the *Iliad*, Thetis lives in the sea (I.375, XIV.83, and XVIII.35) while Peleus lives in Phthia (XVIII.434).

³⁴ Catullus uses the term *foedus* to describe the relationship between himself and Lesbia in his other poems (*Carmen* 109). As Conte notes, Catullus "never failed to keep the *foedus* of love with Lesbia" (148) and that the pact of love was violated by Lesbia (147).

³⁵ The Roman value of *pietas* was "the typical Roman attitude of dutiful respect toward gods, fatherland, and parents and other kinsmen" (*OCD* s.v. *pietas*).

Lord Peleus rejoiced in deeds of valor,
long ago, when he cut his peerless spear.
He stormed Iolkos alone, without an army,
and pinned down Thetis of the sea,
for all her struggles.

(Trans. Frank Nisetich)

These two events are associated with one another because of the myth that led to Peleus sacking the city of Iolkos. When the Muses sing at the wedding of Peleus and Thetis in Pindar's *Nemean Ode 5*, they recount the myth of how Hippolyta, the wife of Acastos king of Iolkos, falsely accused Peleus of making sexual advances towards her (*Nemean Ode 5.26-36*).³⁶

They began with Zeus and went on to sing
of sacred Thetis and of Peleus –
and how the wanton Hippolyta, daughter of Kretheus,
yearned to entangle him in guile, persuading her husband Akastos,
lord of the Magnetes, to join her in her cunning plans:
for she had framed a false, fabricated story, that Peleus
had attempted to embrace her in Akastos' own wedding bed.
The opposite was the case: repeatedly, with all her will,
she entreated him, but the mere suggestion had roused his anger –
he had spurned her, dreading Zeus' wrath, god of guests.
And the lord of the storm-cloud, king of the immortal gods,
took note of it on high, bending his brows in promise to Peleus
that he would quickly win a Nereid with golden distaff
for his bride.

(Trans. Frank Nisetich)

The sacking of the city of Iolkos was the result of Akastos trying to put Peleus to death based on the false accusations of his wife, and the reward for Peleus' *pietas* was a marriage with the Nereid Thetis. This is similar to how the reward for the *uirtutes* of Ariadne was a marriage with Bacchus.

The first address to Peleus is preceded by an apostrophe to heroes in general, which serves the dual purpose of praising heroes like Ariadne and Peleus for their *amores* and condemning heroes like Theseus and Achilles for their *uirtutes*:

³⁶ In other traditions, Hippolyta is more popularly known as Astydameia.

O nimis optato saeculorum tempore nati
heroes, saluete, deum genus! O bona matrum
progenies, saluete iter<um> . . .
uos ego saepe, meo uos carmine compellabo. (22-25)

Oh ones born in a time of ages too much wished for,
hail, heroes, offspring of the gods! Oh good
progeny of women, hail and hail again!
you, in my song, you I will often address.

Commentators maintain that the apostrophe to heroes praises the Heroic Age (Quinn 304). However, the passage could refer to the type of heroes that Catullus praises in *Carmen* 64, namely heroes whose actions are *amores* rather than *uirtutes* and are motivated by love rather than by glory. This interpretation is especially possible if the phrase *nimis optato saeculorum tempore* (22) is interpreted as referring to a desired age taking place rather than a desired age that has already happened, such as the Heroic Age described in Hesiod's *Work and Days*.³⁷ The verb *compellabo* (25) can also refer to two different types of heroes, depending on how it is translated. The verb *compello* can have the meaning of "to address," but it can also have the meanings of "to reproach," "to rebuke," and "to accuse" (*OLD* s.v. *compello*). If the verb is translated as "to address," it can refer to heroes like Ariadne and Peleus who are praised for their *amores*, but if it is translated as "to reproach" or "to rebuke," it can refer to heroes like Theseus and Achilles who are criticized for their *uirtutes*.

In the first address to Peleus, Catullus praises Peleus for his *pietas* and how Zeus honored him by giving Thetis to him in marriage. After the apostrophe to heroes, Catullus addresses Peleus directly:

teque adeo eximie taedis felicibus aucte,
Thessaliae columen Peleu, fui Iuppiter ipse,
ipse suos diuum genitor concessit amores; (25-27)

³⁷ Quinn (305) translates the phrase *nimis optato* as "too much missed" and as referring to the Heroic Age.

And even you abundantly remarkable with happy bridal torches,
Peleus chief of Thessaly, to whom Jupiter himself,
the father of gods himself relinquished his love.

Peleus is called the "chief of Thessaly" (*Thessaliae columen*, 26), a word which has the original meaning of "column" or "support" and is transferred to people to refer to them as the "head" or "chief" (*OLD s.v. columen*). Despite the strong praise of the phrase *Thessaliae columen*, Peleus is first praised for his *amores* with the phrase "abundantly remarkable with happy bridal torches" (*eximie taedis felicibus aucte* 25). Based on the emphasis of *amores* in this line, the final line most probably refers to how Zeus honored the *pietas* of Peleus by marrying him to Thetis. The phrase "relinquished his love" (*concessit amores* 27) contains verbal echoes to the mythic tradition that Zeus had to relinquish his love for Thetis because of the prophecy concerning her son. However, in the context of Catullus' recreated myth and these lines, both of which focus on *amores*, the phrase makes reference to the *pietas* of Peleus and his reward from Zeus.

In the second address to Peleus, Catullus emphasizes the amatory aspect of his *uirtutes* rather than the martial aspect, and consequently praises Peleus as a hero motivated by love rather than by glory. The Fates address Peleus directly in the Song of the Parcae before they begin their prophecy about Achilles:

o decus eximium magnis uirtutibus augens,
Emathiae tutamen, Opis carissime nato,
accipe, quod laeta tibi pandunt luce Sorores,
ueridicum oraculum: sed uos, quae fata sequuntur,
currere ducentes subtegmina, currere, fusi. (323-327)

Oh increasing exceptional glory with great *uirtutes*,
protector of Emathia, dearest to the son of Ops,
receive what the Sisters spread out for you in happy light,
a truthful oracle: But you, who the fates follow,
run spindle leading the threads of the Fates, run.

Chronologically within the mythic tradition, the sack of Iolkos occurred before the marriage of Peleus and Thetis because Peleus was married to Thetis as a reward for resisting the advances of the wife of Acastos, the king of Iolkos. If the phrase "exceptional glory" (*decus eximium* 323) is interpreted as referring to the sack of Iolkos and the phrase "increasing with great brave deeds" (*magnis uirtutibus augens* 323) is interpreted as referring to Peleus' marriage with Thetis, then Catullus emphasizes the amatory aspects of the *uirtutes* of Peleus.³⁸ Although Peleus sacked the city of Iolkos by himself, it is referred to as a *decus eximium* (323) rather than as *uirtutes*. The noun *decus* also has the meaning of "honor" or "distinction" (*OLD* s.v. *decus*) and could refer to the reward of a marriage with Thetis rather than the actual sacking of the city. This interpretation is even more plausible because Peleus increased (*augens*) that distinction through his marriage with a goddess (*magnis uirtutibus*). However, Catullus changes the normal meaning of *uirtutes* to focus on *amores* rather than "brave deeds" in battle because the emphasis of Peleus in this passage and throughout the recreated myth of his marriage to Thetis has been on love.

V. The Wedding Guests of Peleus and Thetis

When Catullus lists the guests that attended the wedding of Peleus and Thetis, he singles out Chiron and Prometheus, two figures that are strongly connected to the traditional myths of Peleus and Thetis, but whom Catullus disassociates from any roles they may have traditionally had in their marriage. Catullus presents Chiron as a rustic, peace-loving figure rather than as the one that advised Peleus how to force Thetis into marrying him, and he suppresses how

³⁸ There is also the possibility that *decus eximium* refers to the *pietas* of Peleus and *magnis uirtutibus* refers to both the sacking of Iolkos and the marriage with Thetis. However, the key word in this line that favors the interpretation given is *augens* because Peleus increased the glory he already had from sacking the city of Iolkos with the marriage to Thetis rather than increasing his *pietas* with the sacking of Iolkos and the marriage to Thetis.

Prometheus told Zeus the prophecy about the son of Thetis. After the *ecphrasis* of the wedding tapestry, Catullus first singles out Chiron and describes his arrival at the wedding:

quorum post abitum princeps e uertice Pelei
aduenit Chiron portans siluestria dona:
nam quoscumque ferunt campi, quos Thessala magnis
montibus ora creat, quos propter fluminis undas
aura parit flores tepidi fecunda Fauoni,
hos indistinctis plexos tulit ipse corollis,
quo permulsa domus iucundo risit odore. (278-284)

After the departure of these ones, from the top of Mt. Pelion Chiron came first carrying woodland gifts: for whatever the plains bore, which the Thessalian country produced on the great mountains, which near the waves of the river the fruitful breeze of warm Favonius produces, these flowers interwoven in indistinct garlands he carried, delighted by the pleasing scent of which the house laughed.

Chiron was traditionally the teacher of many Greek heroes, including the three heroes Peleus, Theseus, and Achilles who are mentioned in *Carmen* 64, as well as Jason, who is not named in *Carmen* 64 but was the leader of the Argonauts in the quest for the Golden Fleece. Chiron does, therefore, represent the values that produced heroes in the Heroic Age as well as symbolizing the values purported in the genre of epic poetry. Chiron also assisted Peleus during the two episodes that are accounted his "heroic deeds" as related by Hesiod and Pindar. Chiron helped Peleus to submit Thetis into marrying him by advising Peleus to hold on to Thetis while she changed into her many forms to try and escape him (Apollodorus, *The Library* III.13.5). When Acastos took Peleus' sword away from him and left Peleus out in the woods, Chiron also saved Peleus from the Centaurs by returning his sword to him (Apollodorus, *The Library* III.13.3). Catullus, however, makes no mention of these roles played by Chiron, especially because the traditional episode of Peleus forcing Thetis into marrying him is not present in Catullus' recreated myth.

Instead, Catullus transforms Chiron into a rustic, peace-loving figure, especially by changing what gift Chiron brings to the wedding of Peleus and Thetis. Traditionally, at the wedding, Chiron gave to Peleus the great ash spear made from a tree on Mt. Pelion, which is the same spear that Achilles used in the *Iliad* (XVI.140-144). This spear is symbolic of the father-son heroic bond between Peleus and Achilles. With the phrases *e uertice Peli* (278) and *portans siluestria dona* (279), Catullus at first suggests to his audience that Chiron is bringing the Pelian ash spear. But Catullus withholds the subject of what Chiron brings for another three lines, finally revealing that Chiron brings flowers (*flores* 282).³⁹ Catullus not only presents Chiron as a peace-loving and rustic figure, but he also disassociates Peleus and Achilles from any father-son heroic bond that existed between them in other traditions, which allows Catullus to differentiate between the two and emphasize the *amores* of Peleus and criticize the *uirtutes* of Achilles.

Catullus also disassociates the figure of Prometheus from the events leading up to the wedding of Peleus and Thetis, and in the process stresses that his recreated myth is one based on love rather than necessity because of the prophecy involving the son of Thetis:⁴⁰

post hunc consequitur sollerti corde Prometheus,
 extenuata gerens ueteris uestigia poenae,
 quam quondam silici restrictus membra catena
 persoluit pendens e uerticibus praeruptis. (294-297)

After this one Prometheus with the clever mind followed,
 bearing faint traces of the old punishment,
 which formerly with his limbs tied up to a stone by a chain
 he paid by hanging from a steep peak.

³⁹ There is, further, no mention of the other gifts given to Peleus by the immortals that pertained to war, such as the immortal horses Balius and Xanthus given by Poseidon (*Iliad* XVI.380-381) or the arms given by the other gods (*Iliad* XVIII.82-85).

⁴⁰ Catullus had also singled out Ponios (285-293), a river-god of Thessaly, but it is not clear why Catullus singled out this obscure river god, and he may be making a reference to an episode or myth that is now lost to us.

In Greek mythology, Prometheus appears in an oppositional role to Zeus and as a benefactor to early Man, and Catullus' inclusion of Prometheus as a wedding guest appears to be an innovation (Curran 186). In Hesiod's *Theogony* (538-602), Prometheus tricked Zeus into choosing an ox's bones wrapped in fat as the portion of sacrifices for the gods as opposed to the meat hidden inside the stomach. This benefited mortals because they got to keep the meat for themselves. Zeus, in anger, hid fire from mortals, but Prometheus stole it and gave it to mortals. Zeus punished Prometheus by chaining him to a rock where his liver was eaten daily by an eagle (*Argonautica* II.1246-1250). In some traditions of the myth of Peleus and Thetis, Prometheus was released in exchange for telling Zeus that he should not have sex with Thetis because her son would be greater than the father. In Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*, Prometheus tells Io that Zeus "shall make a marriage that shall hurt him" (764) because "she shall bear him a son mightier than his father" (768). After Io asks Prometheus if there is any way for Zeus to escape this downfall, he tells her "None, save through my release from these chains" (770). Towards the end of the play, Hermes comes to Prometheus and tells him "the Father has commanded you to say / what marriage of his is this you brag about / that shall drive him from power" (948-950). Catullus' innovation of including Prometheus as a wedding guest contains mythic echoes to the traditional myths of Peleus and Thetis, just as Catullus inserted other mythic echoes in his recreated myth to emphasize how his myth focused on love. The emphasis in these lines is how Prometheus helped mankind rather than for what reason he was released from his punishment because Catullus only mentions Prometheus "bearing faint traces of the old punishment" (295).

After Catullus lists Chiron and Prometheus, he describes the arrival of the gods, stating that Apollo and Diana are the only immortals that did not attend the wedding of Peleus and

Thetis, an innovation which reinforces the honesty of the prophecy given by the Fates while drawing attention to the falsehood of the tradition involving Apollo.⁴¹

inde pater diuum sancta cum coniuge natisque
aduenit caelo, te solum, Phoebе, relinquens
unigenamque simul cultricem montibus Idri:
Pelea nam tecum pariter soror aspernata est,
nec Thetidis taedas uoluit celebrare iugalis. (298-302)

Then the father of the gods with his sacred wife and children
arrived, leaving only you, Apollo, behind in the heavens
and your twin-sister the inhabitant on the mountains of Idrus:
for equally with you your sister despised Peleus,
and did not want to celebrate the marriage torches of Thetis.

In the traditional versions of the myth, Apollo attends the wedding of Peleus and Thetis (*Iliad* XXIV.58-63) and, along with the Muses, sings the *epithalamium* (Pindar, *Pythian Ode* 3.85-104). However, the focus in the Song of Parcae is on the victims of the *uirtutes* of Achilles rather than on the kind of life he will lead, and this is why Catullus has the Fates rather than Apollo give the prophecy about the life of Achilles. Furthermore, either directly or indirectly, Apollo is the deity that will bring about the death of Achilles.⁴² For this reason, most commentators suggest that this is why Apollo (as well as Artemis) "despised" (*aspernata est* 301) Peleus and did not attend the wedding in *Carmen* 64.⁴³ However, Plato (*Republic* II.383) preserves a fragment from a lost play of Aeschylus in which Thetis rebukes Apollo for the prophecy about her son he gave at her wedding:

⁴¹ As Hadjicosti states when discussing the absence of Apollo, "this absence has no precedent in literature" (27).

⁴² Some traditions state that Apollo himself killed Achilles, based on Thetis' prophecy (*Iliad* XXI.275-278), or that Apollo helped Paris to kill Achilles, based on Hector's prophecy (*Iliad* XXII.358-360).

⁴³ Curran: "In Homer (*Iliad* 24.63) and Pindar (*Nem.* 5.21 ff), Apollo is present at the wedding, but Catullus sees fit to use (or invent) a version in which the god's hostility to Achilles dates back before the hero's birth" (186). Hadjicosti: "However, Catullus insists on Apollo's absence and attributes it to his hatred for Peleus, something that we are unfamiliar with, as Apollo is known to have a special interest in the Argonauts and their expedition and a close relationship to Thetis" (27). Knopp merely says that "the absence of Apollo and Diana reveals that even in this happy moment at least one god, together with his sister, scorned Peleus" (211) without giving a reason why this might be so.

Free from sickness and living long lives,
telling all that the friendship of the gods
would do for my fortunes,
he sang the paean, gladdening my spirit.
And I expected Phoebus' divine mouth
to be free of lie, full with the diviner's art.
And he, he who sang, who was at this feast, who
said this, he is the one who slew my son.
(Trans. Allan Bloom)

Thetis accuses Apollo, the god of truth, of telling lies about her son Achilles. Greek and Roman audiences must have realized the irony of Apollo giving a happy prophecy of the life of Achilles at the wedding of Peleus and Thetis and later bringing about his death. By removing Apollo from the wedding guests and consequently from the role of foretelling the life of Achilles, Catullus stresses to his audience that the prophecy he has the Fates foretell, which focuses on the victims and violence of Achilles' *uirtutes*, will not be a lie as the prophecy of Apollo was in other traditions.

VI. Shifting the Focus of the "Heroic Deeds" of Achilles

In the Song of the Parcae, Catullus presents Achilles as the extreme example of the cruelty of traditional *uirtutes* celebrated in the genre of epic by focusing on both the immediate and consequent victims of the warrior's actions and stressing the violence of his actions. Catullus' embellishment of the prophecy of the Achilles' life has its source in two traditions, both of which emphasize his status as the most celebrated hero in epic. The first tradition focuses on Achilles' *uirtutes* during the Trojan War in Book XXI of the *Iliad*, the *aristeia* of Achilles. An *aristeia* is the term used for an extended description of a warrior's best exploits in battle, and it is significant that Catullus would choose the *aristeia* of perhaps the most celebrated hero in Greek epic. An *aristeia* would be the moment when an epic poet praises a hero and his actions on the battlefield the most, and Catullus takes this device intended for praise and uses it to portray the

greatest actions of the hero in a negative light.⁴⁴ The second tradition focuses on the glory and honor that Achilles demands even after his death through the sacrifice of Polyxena, who was his promised part of the spoils when Troy was sacked. In the Song of the Parcae, Catullus condemns the violence and destruction of war through his portrayal of Achilles, and consequently the genre of epic because Achilles becomes a symbol for epic poetry.

As an introduction to the "heroic deeds" of Achilles, Catullus first establishes what the "heroic ideal" entails and associates it with Achilles by having the Fates foretell of his birth:

nascetur uobis expers terroris Achilles,
 hostibus haud tergo, sed forti pectore notus,
 qui persaepe uago uictor certamine cursus
 flammea praeuertet celeris uestigia ceruae.
 currite ducentes subtegmina, currite, fusi.
 non illi quisquam bello se conferet heros,
 cum Phrygii Teucro manabunt sanguine <campi,>
 Troicaque obsidens longinquo moenia bello,
 periuri Pelopis uastabit tertius heres.
 currite ducentes subtegmina, currite, fusi. (338-347)

Achilles free from fear will be born to you,
 known to the enemy not by his back, but by his brave heart,
 who very often as victor in the wandering contest of running
 will outrun the flashing footsteps of the swift deer.
 Run spindle leading the threads of the Fates, run.
 No other hero will compare himself to that one,
 when the Phrygian plains will flow with Teucrian blood,
 and besieging in a long-lasting war the Trojan walls,
 the third heir of perjured Pelops will lay waste.
 Run spindle leading the threads of the Fates, run.

The qualities of a hero that were praised in epic as early as Homer are enumerated in these lines.

In order to be a "hero," a warrior needed to be "free from fear" (*expers terroris* 338), he needed to have a "brave heart" (*forti pectore* 339) and face his enemy, he should be swift of foot (*uago*

⁴⁴ It is significant that Catullus focuses solely on the victims who suffer from the violence and death of Achilles without mentioning that Achilles is motivated by his anger and grief over the death of Patroclus at the hands of Hector in Book XXI of the *Iliad*. As Hadjicosti states, "Catullus' poetry is anti-heroic and he does not hesitate to destroy the concept of the glorious fighter in order to replace it with the true image of war" (27).

victor certamine cursus 340), and no other warrior should be able to compare to him (*non illi quisquam bello se conferet heros* 343). Catullus presents Achilles as the epitome of this "heroic ideal," and this portrayal is how Achilles was depicted in the *Iliad*.⁴⁵ However, in the final three lines of this passage, Catullus begins to voice the affects of war in a negative manner. War will make the ground "flow with blood" (*manabunt sanguine* 344), can be "long-lasting" (*longinquo* 345), and bring devastation (*uastabit* 347). The situation of war that allows a warrior such as Achilles to obtain the "heroic ideal" has drastic and devastating effects upon others.

Catullus will address and attack these consequences of the "heroic ideal" through the sensitization and the humanization of the effects that the "heroic deeds" of Achilles have on the mothers of the warriors he kills in battle:

illius egregias uirtutes claraque facta
 saepe fatebuntur gnatorum in funere matres,
 cum incultum cano soluent a uertice crinem,
 putridaque infirmis uariabunt pectora palmis.
 currite ducentes subtegmina, currite, fusi.
 namque uelut densas praecerpens messor aristas
 sole sub ardenti flauentia demetit arua,
 Troiugenum infesto prosterneat corpora ferro.
 currite ducentes subtegmina, currite, fusi. (348-356)

The extraordinary *uirtutes* and famous deeds of that one often mothers will confess at the funeral of their sons, when they will loosen unkempt hair from gray heads, and will bruise their withered breasts with weak palms.

Run spindle leading the threads of the Fates, run.
 For just as a reaper gathering the thick grain before its time under the burning sun reaps the golden fields,
 he will strike down Trojan bodies with hostile iron.
 Run spindle leading the threads of the Fates, run.

The use of *uirtutes* (348) has the martial meaning of "brave deeds," especially since it is joined with "famous deeds" (*claraque facta*, 348). Achilles, like other warriors, obtained glory by

⁴⁵ Despite the tragic flaws of Achilles, his prowess in battle is incomparable to any other warrior, but he does, nevertheless, rank below Agamemnon in terms of status, which is the premise for the quarrel between the two in the *Iliad*.

killing warriors in battle, but Catullus voices the affects that these "heroic deeds" have on the mothers of the warriors that Achilles kills in battle. The mothers of the warriors that Achilles kills "confess" (*fatebuntur* 349) his "heroic deeds," and the mothers are the first of three witnesses to the "heroic deeds" of Achilles that Catullus will list in the Song of the Parcae. The verb *fateor* can also mean "to praise" (*OLD s.v. fateor*). Because of this meaning, the mothers, who are the victims of Achilles just like their sons, not only bear witness with their mourning to the warriors that a hero such as Achilles must kill in order to obtain glory, but they also ironically praise Achilles and his "heroic deeds" because their mourning inadvertently gives voice to his glory. The *pathos* of this scene is emphasized when Catullus compares Achilles to a reaper that cuts down grain with the grain metaphorically representing the warriors that Achilles slew before their time and while they were still in the prime of life.

Catullus next describes the overwhelming number of warriors that will be killed by Achilles in order to achieve his "heroic deeds" by calling the Scamander River as witness:

testis erit magnis uirtutibus unda Scamandri,
 quae passim rapido diffunditur Hellesponto,
 cuius iter caesis angustans corporum aceruis
 alta tepefaciet permixta flumina caede.
 currite ducentes subtegmina, currite, fusi. (357-361)

The waves of Scamander will be witness to his great *uirtutes*,
 which extends everywhere in the swift Hellespont,
 whose course choking with the piled slaughter of bodies
 he will make the deep river warm with mixed together blood.
 Run spindle leading the threads of the Fates, run.

This scene is taken from the *Iliad* when the Scamander River, having become angry at the number of bodies in his waters, tells Achilles (XXI.214-226):

"O Achilleus, your strength is greater, your acts more violent
 than all men's; since always the very gods are guarding you.
 If the son of Kronos has given all Trojans to your destruction,
 drive them at least out of me to the plain, and there work your

havoc.
For the loveliness of my waters is crammed with corpses, I cannot
find a channel to cast my waters into the bright sea
since I am congested with the dead men you kill so brutally.
Let me alone, then; lord of the people, I am confounded."
(Trans. Richmond Lattimore)

Achilles and the Scamander River then fight because the river god tries to fend off the destruction of the Trojans (*Iliad*, Book XXI.233-382). However, in *Carmen* 64, the focus is on the number of bodies that pollute the river rather than on the Scamander River and his anger towards Achilles. The scene is also taken out of its context of Achilles' anger and grief over the death of Patroclus and turned into a general statement about the *uirtutes* (357) of Achilles. The adjective *magnis* (357) could just as easily describe the great number of Achilles' victims even though it technically modifies *uirtutes*. The size of the Scamander River, which the bodies pollute, is portrayed by the placement of the verb *diffunditur* between *rapido* and *Hellesponto* (358). Although grammatically the verb *diffunditur* can refer only to the *unda Scamandri*, the *quae* clause could inadvertently make reference to the *uirtutes* of Achilles and how far his glory will extend because *uirtutes* is feminine as well. Catullus emphasizes the number of warriors that Achilles kills through his choice of the phrases "choking" (*angustans* 359), "make warm" (*tepefaciet* 360), and "mixed together with blood" (*permixta caede* 360) to describe the Scamander River. Furthermore, the Scamander River is portrayed in a more concrete manner rather than as a god, which adds to the *pathos* of the scene because the focus is on the victims of Achilles rather than the angry god.

The final witness to the "heroic deeds" of Achilles is the slaughter of Polyxena over the grave of Achilles, which is the final condemning statement directed towards this traditional hero and the death he has caused, and Catullus also presents a positive portrayal of the female victim:

denique testis erit morti quoque reddita praeda,

cum teres excelso coaceruatum aggere bustum
 excipiet niueos percussae uirginis artus.
 currite ducentes subtegmina, currite, fusi.
 nam simul ac fessis dederit Fors copiam Achiuis
 urbis Dardaniae Neptunia soluere uincla,
 alta Polyxenia madefient caede sepulcra;
 quae, uelut ancipiti succumbens uictima ferro,
 proiciet truncum summisso poplite corpus.
 currite ducentes subtegmina, currite, fusi. (362-371)

Finally as witness will be spoils delivered even in death,
 when piled up in a high mound the rounded tomb
 will receive the white body of the maiden struck down.
 Run spindle leading the threads of the Fates, run.
 For as soon as Fortune gives to the wearied Achaeans the means
 to loosen the chain of Neptune from the Dardanian city,
 the high tomb will be drenched with the blood of Polyxena;
 who, just as a sacrificial victim falling down to the two-edged iron,
 will throw forth on lowered knees her headless corpse.
 Run spindle leading the threads of the Fates, run.

Polyxena is Achilles' share of the spoils after the Sack of Troy. In Euripides' *Hecuba*, Odysseus tells Hecuba "your daughter, Polyxena, must die as a victim / and prize of honor for the grave of Achilles" (221-222) after the ghost of Achilles had appeared and "demanded my sister Polyxena as prize, / the blood of the living to sweeten a dead man's grave" (40-41), as the ghost of Polydorus, the brother of Polyxena, relates in the Prologue to the play. In *Carmen* 64, Polyxena is never directly named. Her identity remains unknown in the first six lines, in which she is referred to only as "spoils" (*praeda* 362) and "maiden" (*uirginis* 364). When her identity is finally revealed, Polyxena is referred to by the adjectival form *Polyxenia* to modify *caede* (368) rather than by the genitive form of her proper name, *Polyxenae*. This choice of an adjective rather than a proper noun stresses Polyxena's role as an object in this passage, and this role is further emphasized by the use of the simile that likens her to a sacrificial animal (*uictima* 369).⁴⁶ However, rather than portraying Polyxena as a lamb that has to be led to the slaughter, Catullus

⁴⁶ Quinn 346: "The simile underlines the brutality of the act: Polyxena is treated like a sacrificial animal (*uictima*)."

has Polyxena exhibit courage and acceptance of her fate through his choice of the verb *proiciet* (370).⁴⁷ This transitive verb requires an object to complete its meaning, and Catullus makes Polyxena both the subject and the object of this verb. Technically, the person killing Polyxena should be the subject of *proiciet* because he is the one "throwing forth" her headless corpse upon the grave of Achilles. This is the case in Euripides' *Hecuba*, when the herald tells Hecuba "Achilles' son stood hesitating, and then / slashed her throat with the edge of his sword. The blood / gushed out, and she fell, dying, to the ground" (566-568). But Catullus chose to make the relative pronoun *quae*, which refers to *Polyxenia*, the subject of the verb rather than the person killing Polyxena, and the separation of the subject *quae* from its verb *proiciet* with the simile immediately changes Polyxena from the subject to the object. As Quinn notes, "Polyxena is of course the headless body, but it is poetically effective to represent her as existing apart from it" (346). Catullus portrays Polyxena in the roles of a person and a victim with his choice of the word *corpus* (370) as the object of *proiciet* because he simultaneously makes Polyxena a living person and a lifeless corpse in this clause. Finally, Catullus emphasizes the brutality of the scene with his use of the adjective *truncus* to modify *corpus*, which can have the meanings of "maimed," "mutilated," and even "cut short" (*OLD* s.v. *truncus*). This last meaning can refer to how Polyxena's life was cut short just as Achilles cut short the life of the warriors he killed in the simile of the reaper cutting grain before its time.

VII. Conclusion

As we have seen in this chapter, Catullus uses the narrative as a means of supporting the literary digression of the *ecphrasis*, which contains the main theme of *Carmen* 64. The structural

⁴⁷ In Euripides' *Hecuba*, Polyxena is portrayed in a similar fashion, as when it is reported by the herald of the Greeks to Hecuba that Polyxena said to the Greeks "Let no man touch me. I offer my throat / willingly to the sword. I will not flinch" (548-549). However, in *Carmen* 64, the focus is on the violence and brutality of the scene, whereas in Euripides' *Hecuba*, the focus is on the nobility of Polyxena and how she has a "wedding which is death" (612).

twist of this approach is that the audience does not realize the main theme of the poem until after Catullus has already provided the *exemplum* of the marriage of Peleus and Thetis. The effect upon the audience is that it makes them reevaluate what they have already heard in the recreated myth of Peleus and Thetis in terms of the newly defined hero Ariadne, who is motivated by love and whose *uirtutes* focus on *amores*. By the time the audience hears the Song of the Parcae and the emphasis on the victims of Achilles, they are better able to realize that Catullus focuses on these aspects of the life of Achilles because of the negative portrayal of Theseus in the *ecphrasis*.

Catullus not only shows how myth has the ability to be recreated, but he also shows how myth can at times be one-sided. He recreates the myth of Peleus and Thetis to focus on love, and through his use of mythic echoes of other traditions and devices used to add authenticity and authority to his recreated myth, the audience of *Carmen* 64 must surely find themselves accepting rather than questioning Catullus' version of the marriage of Peleus and Thetis. Just as Catullus gave a voice to the victim Ariadne in the *ecphrasis* of the wedding tapestry, he also gives voices to the victims of heroes like Achilles who can only achieve glory through the number of warriors they kill. Furthermore, like Ariadne, he allows the victims to voice their complaint against his actions, an opportunity they may not have had to do because of the nature of praise poetry.⁴⁸

Carmen 64 not only redefines the concepts of the "hero" and the "heroic ideal," but it also redefines the functions of such literary devices as the narrative proper and the *ecphrasis*. Catullus challenges his audience to reexamine their own perceptions and expectations, but most importantly their principles and values. The genre of epic (and tragedy as well) was the literary means for expressing and educating the values of the state. In order to convey these values of

⁴⁸ One exception would be the lament of Andromache, Hecuba, and Helen over the slain body of Hector in Book XXIV of the *Iliad*. However, these women are performing the traditional role of women as mourners and the emphasis is how the death of Hector affects them rather than the actual death of Hector.

the state, praise poets such as Homer and Pindar often remained silent about or glossed over episodes which they considered not worthy to be included in epic.⁴⁹ As such, epic must resort to lying in order to glorify the values of the state, just as Theseus must lie to Ariadne in order to achieve his own glory. Thus epic, like Theseus, is both *perfidus* ("deceitful") and *immemor* ("unmindful of consequences"). The audience of epic, like Ariadne, becomes victims of the very genre that they should love because it instills in them the values of the state. In *Carmen* 64, Catullus proposes that the genre of epic should not be valued so highly because it also victimizes one of the most basic human emotions: love.

⁴⁹ Concerning the murder of Phocus by Peleus and Telamon, Pindar says "I hesitate to speak of a fateful act, not ventured in justice" (*Nemean Ode* 5.14) and glosses over the subject. Sir James Frazer, in his edition of Apollodorus' *Library*, notes when discussing the quarrel between Thetis and Peleus that "in this, as in many other places, Homer passes over in silence features of popular tradition which he either rejected as incredible or deemed below the dignity of the epic" (70 footnote 1).

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