

Translation 132-51

So then, having carried me away from my father's home, have you abandoned me alone on this shore, faithless, deceiving Theseus? So then, having gone off neglecting divine will, heedless! Do you carry home the curse of perjury? Was nothing able to soften the purpose of your cruel mind? Was nothing available in your madness, for your cruel heart to be willing to show me mercy? These were not the promises you gave unto me with alluring voice; you decreed not to hope for this misery, but for happy marriage and welcome wedlock, which now the towering winds rend all in vain. Hence now, forswear no woman to believe a man, let none trust men's words to be faithful. They, while their spirit desires aught and wishes passionately to obtain it, nothing fear to swear, nothing forbear to promise; but as soon as the lust of their greedy mind is satiated, neither fear their words nor care for their perjuries. Surely, when tossed in the midst of the whirl of death did I rescue you, and decided to lose my own brother rather than you, deceiver, in your time of greatest need.

Commentary 186-201

The most interesting part of this excerpt to me is right at the beginning with the repetition and inversion of *nulla* and *omnia*. We see Ariadne, having just wished to Jupiter that Theseus had never gone to Crete *utinam ne... puppes* and asking "*nam quo... nitor?*", answer her own question: There is **nowhere** to go, hope is **nowhere** to be found, **all** is silent, **all** is deserted, **everywhere** death is displayed. Catullus uses conflicting terminology together in repetition and paints a picture of utter isolation—somewhat ironically, perhaps, as we (and the viewer of the coverlet this scene is describing) know that Ariadne is not truly alone, though Bacchus has yet to take the stage as it were. Another interesting point is the specific use of *Eumenides* for the furies in her invocation. According to the Byzantine lexographer Suidas: "*Apud nos vero usu receptum est, ut Furias per euphemismum Eumenides appellemus.*" While writing much later than Catullus, it is reasonable to consider that he (and by extension, Ariadne in his work) would follow a tradition of avoiding the name of an unpleasant entity via euphemism so as to avoid drawing its attention; much the same as we do today with the various names we have in English for the likes of Satan perhaps. More interesting still, in this particular situation we have a person (Ariadne) who specifically **wants** to grab the attention of the Furies, as she is calling upon them to punish Theseus for his effective murder of her (much as they punish Orestes for his matricide in Aeschylus' *Orestia*; of which the third part carries the name *The Eumenides*). It's unclear why she would avoid naming the Furies directly in this case. Perhaps it is because of her own role in the death

of the Minotaur, which could conceivably be considered fratricide by proxy, especially by the standards of the ancient world.