

**'sicine me patriis auectam, perfide, ab aris,
perfide, deserto liquisti in litore, Theseu?
sicine discedens neglecto numine diuum,
immemor a! deuota domum periuria portas? 135
nullane res potuit crudelis flectere mentis
consilium? tibi nulla fuit dementia praesto,
immitte ut nostri uellet miserescere pectus?
at non haec quondam blanda promissa dedisti
uoce mihi, non haec miserae sperare iubebas, 140
sed conubia laeta, sed optatos hymenaeos,
quae cuncta aerii discerpunt irrita uenti.
nunc iam nulla uiro iuranti femina credat,
nulla uiri speret sermones esse fideles;
quis dum aliquid cupiens animus praegestit apisci, 145
nil metuunt iurare, nihil promittere parcunt:
sed simul ac cupidae mentis satiata libido est,
dicta nihil metuere, nihil periuria curant.
certe ego te in medio uersantem turbine leti
eripui, et potius germanum amittere creui, 150
quam tibi fallaci supremo in tempore dessem.**

Thus have you abandoned me, carried away from the altars of my homeland, wicked one,
have left me on the deserted shore, wicked Theseus?
Thus receding, having neglected the divinity of the gods,
Unmindful. Oh! Do you carry your false oaths home?
Or was nothing able to divert the plan of your wicked mind?
I swear were you not out of your mind,
That your heart could barbarously choose to hurt me?
But these were not the promises you once gave to me with
Flattering voice, this was not what you entreated poor me to hope for
But happy union, but a hoped-for wedding
Which all in vain, the airy winds tear apart.
Henceforth let no woman believe a man swearing an oath
Let no woman hope the words of men to be faithful
Whichever man, while his desiring mind wishes to pursue
There's nothing they fear to swear, there is no promise they won't abstain from
But as soon as the longing of the desiring mind is satiated
They don't fear any of the things they said, they don't care for their perjuries
Certainly I have torn you away from death, you wandering in the middle of a
Whirlpool, and I chose to lose a brother
Rather than fail you, faithless one, in your most urgent time.

**nulla fugae ratio, nulla spes: omnia muta,
omnia sunt deserta, ostendant omnia letum.
non tamen ante mihi languescent lumina morte,
nec prius a fesso secedent corpore sensus,
quam iustam a diuis exposcam prodita multam 190
caelestumque fidem postrema comprecser hora.**

**quare facta uirum multantes uindice poena
Eumenides, quibus anguino redimita capillo
frons exspirantis praeportat pectoris iras,
huc huc aduentate, meas audite querellas, 195
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, 200
tali mente, deae, funestet seque suosque.'**

Ariadne, having found herself abandoned on the shore, believes that she is going to die there and remain unburied. The whole of this extract is part of Ariadne's soliloquy, and towards the middle of the poem.

Ariadne is praying to the Furies to avenge her. The prayer is heard by Jupiter, who assents and this brings about the death of Theseus's father.

The poem tells us that the scene on the bridal coverlet is Ariadne on the shore watching the ship depart (line 52), and Bacchus and his troop arriving (251 onwards). We are also told in lines 50-51 that it is embroidered with figures of ancient people. So the whole episode of Theseus' arrival, Ariadne's abandonment and her rushing over the shore and cliffs, and addressing Theseus are all potentially embellishments by the poet, we are unsure whether they actually appear on the coverlet, or are there for another reason. The poem deliberately confuses us in respect of chronology and subject matter, so this is another way in which Catullus adds to this by leaving it unclear what we and the wedding guests are supposed to actually see.

By including this soliloquy, he is drawing further parallels with Apollonius's Medea in book 4 355-90 of the Argonautica, a text which Catullus alludes to throughout 64, and Euripedes' Medea lines 502 onwards.

Is it ironic that Ariadne is not about to die and is in fact 'rescued' by Bacchus? There is a description of Bacchus' approach, but we do not actually discover how Ariadne felt about this, whether it is violent or appreciated.

The song of the Parcae 'perfidiae quod post nulla arguet aetas' line 322, implies that fates are pre ordained. Why does Jupiter then act on Ariadne's prayer? Again, this is part of the poem's tension. I believe that the poet is asking us to consider the extent to which fate is pre ordained and the control that the protagonists each have over their own destiny.

Ariadne addresses Jupiter in line 171. Medea also addresses Zeus in line 332 of Euripedes' play:

'Zeus, do not forget who has caused all this woe!'

David Kovakas translation from Perseus online [Euripides, Medea, line 1 \(tufts.edu\)](http://www.tufts.edu/~perseus/Euripides/Medea/line1.html)

Ariadne also places the blame for her situation firmly with Theseus and believes that her prayers for revenge are just.

Fates that are yet to pass are frequently alluded to in the poem. The dramatic mid point of the poem seems to be 202-206:

Hās postquam maestō prōfūdīt pectore vōcēs,
supplicium saevīs exposcēns anxia factīs,
annuit invictō caelestum nūmine rēctor;
quō mōtū tellūs atque horrida contremuērunt 205
aequora concussitque micantia sīdera mundus.

The earth and stars are moved by the 'invicto numine' of Jupiter - so again we have tension in the poem between fate being pre ordained and being changed by a prayer

Jason, in his persuasion of Medea in book 3 of the Argonautica, states that Ariadne was beloved of the gods 'tein de kai autoi/ athanatoi philanto' 3. 1001-2 She is, as we shall see, loved by Bacchus, but she also seems to have the power to persuade Jupiter and the fates.

186-187

The lines are heavy with repetition of the contrasting words 'nulla' and 'omnia'. This shows Ariadne's state of mind as one of extremes, lacking reason and balance, and helps to accentuate her emotional state.

'Ostentant omnia letum' seems to be more a reflection of Ariadne's thoughts as we have not been given a description of any of the surrounding scenery suggesting her to be in immediate peril, she cannot escape but the danger does not seem so pressing. It is the force of her emotion that is causing her physical harm.

188-191

Although we are not explicitly told that this is part of the ekphrasis, Ariadne's words make it easy for us to picture her downcast eyes and weak body, as she resigns herself to what she believes is her death.

'Languescent lumina morte' has the same pattern of syllables as the ending of the preceding line. There are three long syllables following the caesura and preceding the final two feet. This pattern continues in lines 189 and 190 and gives a very rhythmic and hypnotic quality to Ariadne's words, as if she is becoming weak and drowsy, or chanting.

Clausen (1983) p 14 criticises this pattern as a fault of Catullus throughout this work:

'The movement of the hexameter is noticeably heavy, with the same rhythmic pattern recurring again and again after the main caesura: *prognatae vertice pinus*. No doubt Catullus managed as best he could, but his skill seems to have been as yet unequal to a composition so relatively large and intricate.'

I do feel that the rhythm seems apt at least for this part of the poem and helps enforce the content.

'Languescent' derives from *languere* and suggests something in the process of growing weak (I do not know the technical term for this type of verb, could you please help me?). This provides a sense of change taking place before our eyes, in contrast to the static image on a cloth.

Comprecer is subjunctive and use of this mood helps to create an idea that this is a prayer or wish.

Iustam - further reinforces the idea that Ariadne believes her anger to be justified

Non, nec, quam - tripartite format building tension for her wish

192 - 194

Alliteration of *v* sounds 'virum' and 'vindice' Garrison (1996) p 137 states that Ariadne stresses Theseus' gender as a way of appealing to the Eumenides as fellow women and the alliteration would draw attention to this.

Enjambment of Eumenides as the addressee in line 193 places them in a position of emphasis. The description of their snaky hair as a representation of the anger within their breasts can also act as an indicator of Ariadne's own state of mind.

194 in particular is a heavily spondaic line, and reduced to five words, with the verb centrally placed, giving a sense of epic grandeur, reinforced by the alliteration.

195 - 197

Dramatic address, with repetition of 'huc' and use of the imperative makes this line seem more urgent, and the dactyls at the start of the line contrast with 194 to add pace and urgency to the prayer/hortation. The switch from subjunctive to imperative also heightens the sense that the speech is reaching a climax, and there is a requirement for more immediate action, reinforced by the fact that there are two verbs in the line. Ariadne moves from a description of the furies to a quicker urging.

Does the use of the repetition and plural imperative also deliberately echo the Parcae's song: 'currite ducentes subtegmina, currite, fusi'?

There are similarities between Ariadne's description of her feelings here, and the episode in lines 91-94 where she the flame of love takes hold of her and burned in her deepest marrow.

nōn prius ex illō flagrantia dēclīnāvit
lūmina quam cūctō concēpit corpore flammam
funditus atque īmīs exarsit tōta medullīs.
Heu miserē exagitāns immītī corde furōrēs,

Ariadne's eyes are now about to close in death. The passion that she feels now is her anger towards Theseus, but she feels the same visceral response. The furies that were first roused are now being invoked.

Catullus also describes Peleus as burning with love for Thetis (line 19), is this to be interpreted as inauspicious? The poet seems to present the marriage as a happy one, and the Parcae's song states that they are in superlative harmony (lines 334-336). Through these repetitions of words and ideas, Catullus introduces elements of doubt and is asking us to question whether they did really belong to a golden, better age.

We can also see the *prius...quam* construction which had also been used in lines 189-90 above

Passive verb - *conor* - Ariadne seems to feel that she is not choosing this but has been forced into her actions by the situation she has been left in. She holds Theseus firmly at fault.

Asyndeton with tricolon '*inops, ardēns, āmentī caeca furōre*' create an almost declamatory style, building to a crescendo.

Line 207 describes Theseus' mind as blind too as he begins to suffer the effects of Ariadne's curse:

Ipse autem caecā mentem cālīgine Thēseus

198

Verae - placed in a position of prominence in the centre of the line - Ariadne seems in no doubt as to her innocence.. '*Ab imo pectore*' again has echoes of 91-94, as well as the rages in the Eumenides' chests, that the snakes symbolise.

199

Imperative, direct address to the Eumenides. *Vos* = emphatic. These three lines are again heavily spondaic, so solemn and slow sounding as Ariadne ends the prayer.

200

Theseus - is named in a prominent position in the centre of the line

Quali - balanced with *Tali* in the following line, and *mente* is repeated. Ariadne prays for Theseus's suffering to mirror her own, and the form of the poem itself also does this through repetition and symmetry of ideas and themes.

This construction also appears in the Parcae's song in lines 334-336 - are we supposed to believe the Parcae here, when they are echoing Ariadne's lament?

201

Funestet - the subjunctive shows that Ariadne wishes for Theseus to suffer and is again highlighted by its position in the centre of the line. It seems to be a fairly rare verb with grim meaning - pollute with murder/ defile with slaughter. This suggests the kind of event that traditionally causes intergenerational angst seen in Greek tragedies, and this idea is further supported by '*seque suosque*' at the end of the line.

The following section of the poem deals with this wish being actualised and the death of Theseus's father.

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