THE INFLUENCE OF PARTHENIUS ON THE NEW POETS

by

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DEDICATION

To my parents, Mr and Mrs K S Gokul, for their support over all these years.

DECLARATION

This dissertation has not been submitted for a degree at any other University.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the influence of Parthenius' doctrine of ***erotika pathemata*** *on the Neoteric epyllion. His influence on Cinna has been readily acknowledged, but except for a few incidental and tentative references, little has been made of his role in determining important features of Neoteric poetry; in fact, many leading scholars in the field fail even to mention him.*

A survey of the evolution of the epyllion in the Hellenistic world shows a radical transformation of the Callimachean type by Euphorion and Parthenius in the late Alexandrian era. It is clearly the late Alexandrian epyllion that became popular with the Neoterics, as the relevant works of Catullus and what can be conjectured about the nature of the lost Neoteric epyllia suggest. There is a marked bias towards tragic love-stories, sensational and bizarre, often metamorphic and with ample scope for emotional analysis and a subjective treatment. These features closely parallel the tenor of Parthenius' summary of 36 love-stories in the ***Erotika Pathemata****, his only wholly extant work.*

While the collection was dedicated to Cornelius Gallus well after most of the Neoteric epyllia were written, it is safe to assume that Parthenius preached his doctrine from the time of his arrival at Rome, as his widely acknowledged influence on Cinna's ***Zmyrna****, perhaps the first Latin epyllion, seems to suggest. This thesis cannot pretend to defend Ross' extravagant claim that "without [Parthenius'] timely arrival there could have been no New Poetry"; but it can attempt to illuminate Parthenius' central role in establishing the nature of the Neoteric epyllion.*

This study has been undertaken, then, in the belief that Parthenius' influence on the Neoterics and on the creation of a new genre at Rome warrants closer scrutiny than has so far been attempted. Thus, it seeks to provide an alternate basis for the analysis of poems like 63 and 64, and heralds a possible shift from the emphasis on the autobiographical approach, which, though undoubtedly valid, has been belaboured in recent years to the point of excess.

Abbreviated title: ***Erotika Pathemata and the Neoteric Epyllion.***

JOURNALS CONSULTED

AJPh	American Journal of Philology, Baltimore.
Antichthon	Antichthon, Journal of the Australian Society for Classical Studies, Sydney.
Arethusa	Arethusa. A Journal of the wellsprings of Western man, Buffalo.
BICS	Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies of the University of London, London.
CJ	The Classical Journal, Athens, Georgia, USA.
CPh	Classical Philology, Chicago.
CQ	Classical Quarterly, Oxford.
CR	Classical Review, Oxford.
CW	Classical World, Pittsburgh.
Eranos	Eranos. Acta Philologica Suecana, Uppsala.
G&R	Greece and Rome, Oxford.
GRBS	Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies, Durham, North Carolina, USA.
Hermes	Hermes. Zeitschrift für klassische Philologie, Wiesbaden.
HSPh	Harvard Studies in Classical Philology, Harvard.
JRS	Journal of Roman Studies, London.
Latomus	Latomus. Revue d'études latines, Bruxelles.
LF	Listy Filologické. Praha, Naklad.

Maia	Maia. Rivista di letterature classiche, Bologna.
Mnemosyne	Mnemosyne. Bibliotheca Classica Batava, Leiden.
PCPS	Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society, Cambridge.
Phoenix	Phoenix. The Journal of the Classical Association of Canada, Toronto.
Ramus	Ramus. Critical studies in Greek and Latin Literature. Clayton, Victoria.
SBAW	Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akad. der Wissenschaften, Phil.-Hist. Klasse, München.
SIFC	Studi Italiani di Filologia Classica, Firenze.
TAPhA	Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association, Cleveland.
WS	Wiener Studien. Zeitschrift für klassische Philologie und Patristik, Wien.
YClS	Yale Classical Studies, New Haven.

TEXTS USED

Catullus	Quinn, K., *Catullus. The Poems*, London, [1970] 1977 (Reprint with corrections).
The *Ciris*	Fairclough, H.R., *Virgil II: Aeneid VII-XII and the Minor Poems*, Loeb Classical Library, London, [1918] 1954.
Parthenius	Gaselee, S., *Parthenius: Love Romances and Poetical Fragments*, Loeb Classical Library, London, [1916] 1955.

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CHAPTER ONE

Alexandrian influence on the New Poetry has long been a leading theme of Neoteric scholarship. In fact, its treatment has been so exhaustive that it may appear unlikely that the horizons of Catullan scholarship would be appreciably broadened by its further investigation. This notwithstanding, I believe that there is an aspect of Hellenistic influence on Neoteric poetry which demands fuller analysis and comment. My thesis will focus, therefore, on this particular development of Hellenistic poetry and assess the nature and extent of its influence on a specific genre of the New Poetry.

A major figure in the culmination of the foregoing development and in its transmission at Rome was Parthenius of Nicaea. Despite this, his influence on the New Poetry has been largely ignored. Wendell Clausen (1964:188) was amongst the first to draw attention to this neglect:

> I do not know why those who have written recently on the New Poetry make so little of him. Quinn in his *The Catullan Revolution* (1959), Wimmel in his *Kallimachos in Rom* (1961), Fordyce in his edition of Catullus (1961), unless I am mistaken, do not mention him.

In the three decades since Clausen's estimate, the situation has hardly changed. There have been incidental references and the occasional, tentative article on the topic, but classical scholarship has still failed to illuminate Parthenius' role.

Doubtless the eschewal of any sustained investigation of Parthenius' influence is due primarily to the paucity of information, both external and internal, on the poet himself; the loss of Neoteric literature - with the exception, of course, of the Catullan corpus and a few Neoteric fragments - has imposed further constraints. Yet sufficient evidence can be gleaned from the relevant poems of Catullus to substantiate reasonable conjectures about the nature and extent of Parthenius' influence.

Sadly, the loss of the latter's *Metamorphosis* precludes the elaboration of these details to an extent that may otherwise have been possible. However, a comparison of the drift of the extant *Erotika Pathemata* with the relevant poems of Catullus and the titles of the lost Neoteric epyllia (in so far as their titles reflect their contents) reveals striking parallels with Parthenius. Despite problems of chronology (Parthenius' work was dedicated to Cornelius Gallus well after Catullus' death), I will attempt to prove that the more sustained poetic endeavours of Catullus and his coterie reveal a conformity with Parthenian doctrine that can hardly be fortuitous. It is very likely that the *Erotika Pathemata* represents the tenor of Parthenius' poetical canon which he expounded to the New Poets from the time of his first appearance at Rome. Although there is no consensus about the date of his arrival, the assumption even of the latest possible date is early enough to suggest that he exerted a formative influence on the New Poets from the very outset of their careers (Pfeiffer:1943:30-1).

In the absence of much of Neoteric literature, it has become traditional to regard Catullus' work as representative of the New Poetry. The validity of conceptualizing the literary precepts of an entire movement on the basis of evidence supplied by a single member (although the leading member, in all likelihood) may justifiably be challenged. Despite the defects of this approach, however, it would be captious to reject in its entirety a stance adopted for centuries on firm ground. For the internal evidence, too, corroborated by sound scholarship, points conclusively to the cohesion and *esprit de corps* which characterized a movement whose members Quinn describes as "sharing like ideas on poetry and life" (1977:xiii).

The leading Neoteric scholars, then, continue to adopt the traditional approach, even though it is not without its detractors. As already intimated, however, this thesis will attempt, as far as possible, to assess Parthenius' influence on some of Catullus' fellow-poets, too, and will also briefly evaluate the *Ciris*, traditionally regarded as Neoteric in conception, in the light of the theme of *erotika pathemata*. Such an approach will serve to counter any charge of quasi-reductivism levelled at a study which attempts to highlight a feature of the New Poets by recourse to the only member whose work still survives. Moreover, it is hoped that the investigation beyond the Catullan oeuvre will give credence to the basic hypothesis of this study.

The thesis, then, will attempt to investigate systematically the available evidence attesting the major role which, I believe, Parthenius assumed in shaping a significant feature of the New Poetry. It is impossible, of course, to defend D.O. Ross' extravagant claim that without Parthenius there could have been no New Poetry (1969:162). But it is hoped that the identification of typically metamorphic, *erotika pathemata* themes in specific poems of Catullus, and conceivably in the lost works of his fellow-poets, too, will help delineate the essential nature and extent of Parthenius' influence. Such an approach, if successful, will bring a fresh perspective to bear upon the somewhat stereotyped attitudes adopted by Alexandrian-Neoteric criticism.

* * *

I now turn to literary theory, to its increasing role in the evaluation of literature, and to its scope (from my very personal perspective) as a tool of classical criticism, in order to illustrate the nature of its influence on this study.

The debate on literary theory has been raging with such vehemence and fervour for the last two decades that it has become difficult (and is perhaps ill-advised) to ignore the impassioned claims of its protagonists.

The dialectic nature of the discipline is its most striking feature; Webster, with the understatement characteristic of many literary theorists, says that it is a

"complex and shifting area, unlike some previous orthodoxies, and characterized more by debate and difference than consensus" (1991:3). One notes with awe, and not without some misgiving, the essentially dynamic nature of the discipline: the relentless burgeoning of schools of thought, some violently challenging received ideas, some flagrantly ideological and having little to do with literary criticism as the term has generally been understood, and yet others adopting attitudes that are uncompromisingly exclusive and anti-humanistic.

The field of discourse, then, is indeed in a vibrant state of flux; this is not to be unexpected in a nascent discipline which aspires, after all, to impose a predominantly scientistic approach upon a field of endeavour whose touchstone, before the advent of the technocratic age, was traditionally regarded as emotion.

Selden (1989:3-4) presents a simplified series of diagrams leading to a helpful schematization of the disposition of the main literary theories within the basic writer-text-reader framework. The first is a modification of Jakobson's diagram of linguistic communication:

	Context	
Writer	Writing	Reader
	Code	

Jakobson attributes a linguistic function to each aspect of the above diagram:

Referential

Emotive Poetic Connotative

Metalinguistic

The main literary theories fit into his scheme as follows:

Marxist

Romantic Formalistic Reader-oriented

Structuralistic

Romantic theories focus on the writer, bringing aspects of his mind, personality and life to bear on the interpretation of his work, whereas reader-orientated theories centre on the reader's response to the text. Marxist theories in general hold that historical, social and political conditions are essential to the evaluation of a text. Formalistic theories, again, emphasize the primacy of the nature of writing, while structuralistic criticism draws attention to the codes employed to construct meaning.

While classicists in general would not be inclined to reject out of hand the relevance of certain literary theories to their discipline, many of them would, I believe, be averse to assigning a predominant position to such theories as the tools of classical literary criticism. This stance may well render such classicists vulnerable to charges of philistinism and obscurantism. The interpretation of ancient texts, however, necessitates a methodology far wider in its compass than the somewhat leptotic approach advocated by individual literary theories.

A structuralist, for instance, may flaunt the catholicity of his school, and the universality of its applicability to literature - or to a menu or a code of dress for that matter - across the bounds of time and culture. Yet it appears to me, from my admittedly limited and perhaps conservatively philological viewpoint, that those theories which have been applied to ancient literature (New Historicism, Structuralism, New Criticism, Semiotics and Narratology are some that come to mind; see the collection of interesting and, at times, illuminating articles in Sullivan and de Jong:1994) are valuable only in as far as each represents a specific focus of interest in literary phenomena. Then, too, there is the problem of mutual exclusivity - if not explicit then certainly implied in many literary theories - and the clear distinction drawn between literary criticism and scholarship, relegating the latter to the outermost verges of the critical enterprise. The nature of their discipline renders such a dichotomy untenable for classicists.

It would be demonstrably false to claim that an ancient text (and I refer here to the text in its original language) could appeal to the literary sensibilities of a modern reader - even those of a trained classicist - with all the immediacy and spontaneity of a contemporary work. An enormous chasm, apart from the one created by time, exists between ancient and modern literature. The primitive cosmological and theological speculations that inform the literature of ancient Greece, for instance, reflect a mode of thought radically opposed to our own. The evolution of thought and the increasing secularization of literature following in the wake of the technocratic age, with its disavowal of the spirit and its adulation

of the rational, the empirical and the scientistic - in conjunction with the changing circumstances of literary production and consumption, and fluctuations in literary foci, together with changes in the conception of the writer's function - all of these factors, combined with a host of others, have led to a radical modulation of the literary ethos. There is indeed an enormous chasm between the literatures of the ancient and the modern world. While it is inevitable that we view ancient texts from our own perspectives, the encounter can perhaps be a more fruitful one if we were to meet these works, in as far as that is possible, on their own terms. A theoretical approach, which, in following the vogue, rejects the recently disparaged "eclectic" stance and slavishly keeps within the confines of a particular dogma, cannot but be uni-directional in its perspective.

To limit the discussion to poetry, much of the surviving poetry of antiquity is at variance with the modern western genre in that it embodies the added dimensions of performance and oral communication, often to the accompaniment of music and dance. The transition from the spoken to the written word is, in itself, a major obstacle to interpretation. The problem posed by committing the word to writing is further exacerbated by the enormous schism, both temporal and contextual, between the circumstances of the production of an ancient work and those of its modern-day reception. While the cultural and linguistic barriers have been surmounted to a great extent by the efforts of classical scholarship, the writer-text-reader relationship remains comparatively tenuous. To an audience immersed in a different sign situation, there is not a significant degree of

"redundancy" in the message; the "noise" or interference in the channel is far too obstructive (see Musurillo:1961:5-6). The loss of the contextual circumstances in the performance of ancient poetry - the song-dance enactment, for example, of Greek choral lyric on festive occasions - allied with the uncertainty of the socio-historical context of its production, as in the *Eclogues* of Vergil, can render the task of interpretation doubly difficult.

The romantic avowal of the timelessness of poetry, of the universality of the language spoken by poets, has implicit in it notions of immediacy and spontaneity of appeal irrespective of the receptive context. The facile assumption that poetry possesses this protean character imposes demands on the art with which it can hardly comply. One could well argue that the notion is an outmoded one, but it has been so pervasive that even modern scholarship at times still bears traces of its baneful influence.

Gordon Williams (1985) has attempted to illustrate the peculiar nature of Roman poetry and the need to meet it on its own terms. We may summarise a few of the points he raises. In the first place, an historical investigation into the varying relationship between poet and society is essential for a fuller appreciation of Roman poetry (Williams:1985:1-20). An important aspect of this relationship is the role that patronage assumed in determining the nature of literary output (see Chapter 2). The inferior social status of the early Roman poets, their reliance on patronage for the exercise of their art, and the constraints that this financial

dependence imposed on the thematic content of their work, resulted in a poetic focus remote from that of the Neoterics, for example. The latter were men of independent means, free from the beck and call of statesmen and society at large. They were not compelled to harness their muse to the chariot of socio-political propaganda and could indulge in a poetry unfettered by the constraints of a tradition moulded by the complex forces of patronage. In short, they were now free to write poetry for poetry's sake, a kind of poetry they themselves espoused. Needless to say, it would be absurd for a literary critic to focus on this circumstantial aspect of literary production (unless, of course, the critic adopts a Marxist approach), but the exegetical value of such information is indubitable.

Then there are poems, many in number, which are not inspired by the personal concerns of the poet, but which appealed to the collective emotions of the Romans as a people. Roman poets often dealt with themes inspired by the traditions and institutions of their countrymen. An exercise of the historical imagination is required to understand the emotional response elicited by these symbols and the way in which the poets who used them sought to express typically Roman sentiments (Williams:1985:71ff). Very often, a phrase would be used to evoke an emotion associated with some act or ceremony or institutional concept from real life. This is particularly noticeable in Roman poetry which deals with the religious and moral ideas associated with the ancient concept of marriage.

Another feature of Roman poetry that is at variance with the modern genre is the tendency of the ancients to assign a moralizing function to poetry (Williams:1985: 125-138). Romans believed that reflections on the morality of human behaviour, motives and actions were a perfectly legitimate activity for a poet. It was not unusual to expect that a poet be the guardian of societal mores, and it was often the business of the ancient literary critic to decide whether or not a poet had met this obligation adequately. Augustan poets in particular found a source of inspiration in reflecting on moral ideals; some of their best poetry springs from it.

Another important aspect of much of ancient poetry was its mythological basis. This feature had its origins in the Homeric tradition and, despite the rebellion by the Alexandrians and the Neoterics against the debased epic cycle, the Homeric canon that myth should be the basis of poetry was a legacy that still persisted as an important element of the poetic construct throughout antiquity. Much has been written about the symbolic value of myth in ancient poetry, and it is obvious that an awareness of the intellectual and religious framework within which the poet treats his work is essential to a sounder interpretation of his poetry. One needs to be circumspect here, however, as not all the poets accepted the ideas and conventional beliefs of their times.

The point has perhaps been laboured, but the evaluation of ancient literature clearly poses obstacles that cannot be surmounted by adherence to any one

particular literary theory. It is beyond the scope of this brief digression and of little avail for the purposes of this thesis, at any rate, to present a critique of the different literary theories. To take just one example, that of New Criticism (outdated, but still persisting, with radical changes, under the banner of Deconstruction), there can be no quarrel with its advocacy of the intrinsic approach to literature. The primary focus of attention in literary criticism should indeed be the text itself: the interaction of structural and formal elements in subserving a specific aesthetic function. For classicists in particular, however, it is only a very bigoted conception of the nature of the critical enterprise that would reject the relevance of the extrinsic approach, recently so harshly berated, to their discipline.

I do not refer here to the literary scholar who in his unbridled enthusiasm assumes the guise of a biographer or psychoanalyst, thereby exposing himself to the charge that he is studying the mind and personality behind the work rather than the work itself. Nor am I defending scholars who, like those above, isolate what they believe is the primary stimulus of literary creation and then impute a decisive influence upon literature to it alone. Thus some scholars see economic, social and political conditions as the *fons et origo* of a literary work; others view the history of ideas or the theological and philosophical trends in this way; and still others regard the *Zeitgeist*, the quintessential spirit of the times pervading all the different arts, as the basis of literary production (cf. Wellek & Warren: 1976:73).

Such rigid application of deterministic causality has doubtless brought the extrinsic approach into disrepute. While acknowledging the primacy of the text, however, I believe that I have sufficiently illustrated the value of judiciously extrapolating aspects of the total contextual background and bringing these to bear on the interpretation of an ancient work. Echoing the New Criticism's general disapprobation of the extrinsic approach, Wellek and Warren say that its use "can never dispose of the critical problems of analysis and evaluation" (1976:73). Is it meant to? The extrinsic approach need not be a window into its own, self-contained world with little relevance to the textuality of the work in question. Many eminent classicists have used the extrinsic approach as an **aid** to decode ancient texts; the unqualified negation of its value as a tool of classical criticism by those unsympathetic to the problems posed by ancient texts is patently unjustified.

In conclusion, the nature of my thesis demands a more holistic approach than that advocated by any individual literary theory. For I am not attempting a purely literary evaluation of selected works of the New Poetry; I am trying, rather, to illustrate the extent to which these works reflect the themes of *erotika pathemata* in terms of Parthenian doctrine. Such an investigation has to be prefaced by an examination of the literary precedents, both Hellenistic and Roman, that culminated in this particular development of the Neoteric revolution. I will therefore focus initially on the changing socio-political milieu in the Hellenistic world and illuminate parallels that existed in Neoteric Rome -

not with the object of offering this as the causative principle of the literature of the time, but rather to illustrate how it might have contributed to shaping Alexandrian and Neoteric poetical doctrines.

Then, while illustrating the adoption of *erotika pathemata* themes in specific poems of Catullus, I will also attempt to show how the choice and treatment of these themes may have been influenced by events in the poet's own life.

Havelock (1939:79-86) is sharply critical of Catullan scholars who evaluate the poet's work against a welter of biographical detail. One can understand Havelock's censure when one notes the excessively biographical, quasi-psychoanalytical stance of scholars like Harkins (1959:102-16), Putnam (1961:165-205) and Whigham (1966:30ff.). Elder, too, warns against the use of the biographical approach, saying that it

> will inhibit our critical appreciation of the poet's imaginative powers...Thus if one were to suggest that both Attis and Catullus through an unworthy form of devotion had unfitted themselves for any other love, and that consequently this theme appealed to Catullus...he [may] actually be underrating the poet's artistic imagination...
>
> (1947: 395-6)

This is a rejection of the biographical approach for the wrong reasons. Poetic imagination, far from being merely the ability to create themes for use in poems,

has its ground, rather, in the adroit and deft adaptation of ideas, whether actual or wholly imaginary, into a work of high art - in short, it is the creative blend of formal, linguistic, structural and other artistic devices that is the measure of poetic brilliance. Many of us have ideas and experiences worthy of the best poetry; yet we can hardly hope to render them as poetry because it is precisely that gift of poetical expression which we lack. The use of biographical details, then, in the evaluation of a poet's work will certainly not "inhibit our critical appreciation of the poet's imaginative powers".

I readily acknowledge that the relationship between the life of a poet and his art is not simply one of cause and effect; a poem is seldom a transcript of personal feelings and experiences, and even if it is, the poet may convey his experiences in terms of artistic conventions already shaped and preconceived. However, we are considering not a poet of "negative capability" here, but one who was among the most personal poets of antiquity. Most of his poems are written in his own *persona*, display "the pageant of his bleeding heart", and read indeed as "fragments of a great confession". It is by no means illegitimate, therefore, to present an exegesis of his poems, when the circumstances warrant such an approach, against the backdrop of what we know about his personal life (cf. Clarke:1976:132-9 and Levi:1992:15).

Finally, the genre that I am focusing on in this thesis is the epyllion. Even though the finished product is highly individualistic, representing a peculiar blend of the

Hellenistic and Roman traditions, Catullus, despite his iconoclastic veneer, had, like most ancient poets, a profound respect for preceding literary conventions and traditions. I will therefore illustrate to what extent his epyllia were shaped by generic conventions, taking care, though, to steer clear of the reductivism of Francis Cairns (1972) who adopts the extreme position that a poem cannot be understood without a generic analysis.

Despite the perceptible - and at times positive - impact of literary theory on the study of Graeco-Roman literature, this study, then, for the reasons mentioned in the foregoing discussion and in view of the broader issues raised by the nature of my thesis, will not focus on any one specific literary theory. An evaluation of my theoretical approach in the following chapters will bear witness to the influence of a variety of literary theories, although their use may be masked by application in their simplest forms, without attention to the protracted dailectics and disputations that have become an inevitable adjunct of their use.

CHAPTER TWO

The cardinal issues relating to the New Poetry have been well established by Neoteric scholarship; I will not, therefore, focus on these. I will, however, in view of their relevance to my theme, consider certain aspects of the circumstantial background that contributed to the advent of the Neoteric revolution.

The first is the issue of literary patronage and the relationship between poet and society. The *primum mobile* behind the radical modulation of poetic focus that is perhaps the most reactionary element of Neoteric poetry was the elevated social status of the New Poets. Their freedom to indulge in a poetry untrammelled by the kind of socio-political constraints that had shaped the prevailing Roman tradition was a natural concomitant of their financial independence. This single factor was to have a momentous impact on the nature of subsequent Roman poetry.

This situation readily evokes a comparison with similar trends in the Greek tradition. Early Greek poetry served a socially compatible function; indeed the relationship between the poet and his society was a mutually inclusive one (see Slings:1989:72-80 for details). Thus the epic poet was an entertainer and the recorder of his society's historical past - however distorted his perspectives - the didactic poet disseminated traditional wisdom; and even the concerns of the lyric poet, the latitude of his themes not withstanding, were often socially directed.

This happy liaison between poet and society existed as a universal and unchallenged axiom of poetry writing in the Greek world at least to the beginning of the fourth century.

With the emergence of changes in the Alexandrian conception of the poet's function, however, the long-standing relationship between poet and society finally ran its course. The demise of the Greek city-state as a cohesive socio-political unit, the proliferation of independent monarchies as the antithesis of the Greek democratic ideal, and the series of mass migrations and political realignments ushered in an era of radical conflicts and fundamental shifts in attitude in all aspects of Greek life. The particularism of life in the city-state now yielded to the ideal of universalism or cosmopolitanism, as the Cynics chose to term it (Diog. Laert. 6.2.63). Driven by the prevailing winds of current philosophical thought, the ship of Hellenistic idealism appeared to be well on course for the once visionary shores of *homonoia* and the brotherhood of man.

The quest for cosmopolitanism in the Hellenistic age was not without cost; it was inconceivable that the provincial outlook of the Greek national character, shaped for generations on the bedrock of the polis and its ideals, should suddenly prove equal to the demands imposed by a cosmopolitan universe. Thus for many Greeks the spectres of estrangement, uncertainty and alienation loomed large in a strange and lonely *oikoumene*.

While adhering to our present theme of the poet's changing role in society, we must now focus more closely on the socio-political uncertainties referred to above. Our perspective will highlight a rampant disaffection with the changing social climate of the times which culminated in a mood of widespread pessimism, despondency and introversion. This trend towards individualism became a pervasive feature of the Hellenistic world and significantly modified the literary relationship between the poet and his society. Hence it provides an informative preface to the Alexandrian literary revolution, the relevant aspects of which are considered later in this thesis. Moreover, certain parallels with the changing Hellenistic socio-political climate and responses to it are to be found, albeit to a lesser extent, in Neoteric Rome. These in turn highlight one of the main reasons for the shift of poetic focus amongst the New Poets. Accordingly, a systematic review of the socio-political upheaval of the Hellenistic world, based on causes and symptoms and including a brief discussion of its impact on artistic, religious and philosophical trends, will now follow.

I turn to the discipline of Sociology, and examine to what extent its theory of alienation, as summarised by Seeman in his classic article in 1959, helps elucidate the response to the changing social milieu in the Hellenistic world. Seeman identifies five main types of alienation, viz. powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, isolation and self-estrangement. I examine the first four of these and see what insights they offer about the psychological reactions of the Greek to the new social trends of the times.

The concept of powerlessness derives from the Marxian view of the worker's condition in a capitalist world. His alienation results from his exclusion from the privilege and decision-making which are vested in the ruling entrepreneurial class. Seeman limits this concept to its applicability to "expectancies that have to do with the individual's sense of influence over socio-political events" (1959:785).

Meaninglessness is a variant of alienation that originates in a society's increasing organization of its members for the most efficient achievement of its ends: "the individual cannot choose appropriately among alternative interpretations... because the increase in functional rationality, with its emphasis on specialization and production, makes such choice impossible (Seeman:1959:786).

Normlessness, also known as anomie, is that aspect of alienation that arises when traditional social norms for the regulation of individual conduct are no longer tenable (see Williams & McShane:1994:87-104 for a succinct summary of anomie theory). The social structure loses its effectiveness in providing a basis for the predictability and regularity of social behaviour, the disciplining effects of collective standards are lost, and the majority "may attribute their difficulties to more mystical and less sociological sources...In such a society people tend to put stress on mysticism: the workings of Fortune, Chance and Luck" (Merton: 1949:149).

Isolation most often describes the particular type of alienation experienced by the intellectual. He becomes disillusioned with the culture of the times which results in his estrangement from society and the culture that it embodies. He engages in a desperate quest for new goals and new ways of achieving them. This alienation from reigning goals and methods of goal-realization results in the phenomenon of the "innovator", or produces the "rebel", both of whom envisage and seek to create new goals and a greatly modified mechanism for their realization.

The relevance of these four variants of the alienation theory to the interpretation of the cultural changes and psychological responses of the Hellenistic age needs little elucidation. The submergence of democratic ideals in the welter of burgeoning private interests in the monarchic cities, and the appropriation by the ruling classes of political privilege which over the centuries had become a prerogative deeply engrained in the Greek consciousness, could well have alienated the general populace thrust into quiescence by the scourge of "powerlessness".

The enormous strides made in science, mathematics, astrology, medicine and geography (see Grant:1990:149-58) and the marked increase in "functional rationality" made possible and encouraged by the patronage of wealthy kings, resulted in increasing professionalism and specialization which are the mark of the Hellenistic world. This, in turn, gave rise to displays of erudition often degenerating into excessive pedantry. Hence the emergence of the intellectual

élitism characteristic of the times which created the ideal circumstances for the alienation of the individual discomfited by *angst* and a sense of "meaninglessness".

The variants of "normlessness" and "isolation", the first evidenced by the increasing sway of mysticism, Fortune and Chance (see below), and the second by the revolt of art and literature against traditional artistic mores and by the quest for individualism and personalism, were also manifestly operative in Hellenistic society.

Alienation, estrangement and isolation, then, were pervasive features of the changing Hellenistic world. The city-state had made man a "creature of the polis", as Aristotle succinctly described its socio-political impact. With Alexander began the idea of man as an individual who was no longer subservient to the ends of the state and who was compelled to formulate unique ideas to regulate his personal life and also his relationship with other individuals and powers in a cosmopolitan universe. The trend towards extreme individualism already begun in the fourth century was thus greatly accelerated.

These developments were reflected in Hellenistic art forms and in religion and philosophy. Sculptors tended to push realism and individualism to its ultimate limits. They abandoned classical restraint and the tendencies of the age are reflected in aspects of their work: a lack of repose, theatricalism, and realism

carried to the point of ugliness. Decadence ultimately set in; Hellenistic sculptors turned to portraying the bizarre and the grotesque. Ugliness, deformity (hunchbacks and dwarfs), agony and old age are common themes (see Fowler:1989:66-78 for details).

There is also a pronounced tendency to depict pathos. Common subjects are the deaths of babies, children, and young women; slaves, working women, widows and orphans. Representative examples are the painted marble Hediste stele from Demetrias (Volos Museum), Woman dying in childbirth (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York), and the Young woman and naked baby (Graeco-Roman Museum, Alexandria; see Fowler:1989:92-103 for details). The preoccupation of art and sculpture, then, with the grotesque, tragic and pathetic is clearly symptomatic of the despondency of the times.

Religion as well is characterised by a gradual disaffection with established practices. While it is true that the unsophisticated continued to pay homage to the traditional deities, in general the syncretic tendencies of the age increasingly relegated the Olympian gods to the periphery of Hellenistic religious thought. Having its roots in the mood of scepticism engendered by the Sophistic movement, the process was given further impetus by expansion into new lands and consequent contact with exotic deities, the awareness of new personal emotional needs in a strange and alien environment, and the response to the uncertainties of a world in which there could be dramatic reversals of fortune. All

these resulted in a confused and kaleidoscopic picture of religious ferment and change (Walbank:1986:209ff.).

The individualism of the times is reflected in the withdrawal from active and co-operative religious worship and in the quest for a personal sanctuary in a restive and uncertain world. There was a vigorous revival of the old Orphic and Dionysiac cults in an attempt to seek solace in personal religious concepts. Near-Eastern mystery religions increasingly penetrated the Greek world following upon the collapse of the belief in indigenous gods. Most popular were the Egyptian cults of Sarapis and of Isis, but others, too, like that of Attis and Cybele, Atargatis and Hadad, Melqart, Astarte, Sabazius, and Adonis found a home in the cosmopolitan cities of the Hellenistic world. Many of these were salvation cults and their popularity lay in their promising votaries communion with the divine or personal survival after death.

The most singular development by far, however, was the pre-eminent role that *Tyche* (Chance, Fortune or Luck) assumed in the Hellenistic world. Doubtless a personification of the *angst* and restlessness of the times, she became a virtual goddess whose caprice and fickleness men feared most. So pervasive was her sway that even philosophy was forced to embrace her in its fold. Thus Theophrastus, in refutation of his master Aristotle's belief in a purposeful universe, declared that many events must be ascribed to the random workings of Chance. Another

Peripatetic, Demetrius of Phaleron, wrote an entire treatise on the operations of Chance.

The poets of the New Comedy dwelt on her ruthlessness, and Menander, more than anyone else, repeatedly emphasized the individual's defencelessness against her whims. A fragment of Menander (fr. 355 K: quoted by Pollit:1986:2) clearly indicates the Hellenistic world's obsession with Chance:

> Fortune observes no rules by which she decides human affairs. Nor is it possible, while still alive, to say, "I will not suffer this fate".

Polybius, too, acutely aware of the sovereignty of *Tyche*, placed her at the heart of the world he was describing (see Grant:1990:216ff. for Polybius' conception and treatment of *Tyche*):

> For fruitful as Fortune is in change, and constantly as she is producing dramas in the life of human beings, yet never assuredly before this did she work such a marvel, or act such a drama, as we have witnessed.
>
> (Polybius 1.4)

Every person was believed to possess his individual *Tyche* or *daimon*. As a logical corollary, every city, too, was ascribed its own *Tyche*, and the associated cults were aimed at appeasing those uncontrollable elements that might assail the community.

Allied with the belief in Chance came the fatalistic doctrine of astrology. Underpinning this acceptance of the role that the heavenly bodies played on the future of mankind was the conviction of the existence of cosmic "sympathy", a notion fostered and encouraged by Stoicism. With this belief in astrology went an equally widespread belief in portents and prodigies, and the acceptance of magic, which sought to alter natural events by recourse to the occult.

However, it was not to the Orphic and Dionysiac cults of early Greece or to the salvation cults of the Near East that the intellectual élite turned but rather to the philosophical tradition that was rapidly being forged by the changing trends of the age. Here again, socio-political forces had the same impact on the different philosophical systems and the outcome, divergent though the details might have been, clearly mirrored the pessimism and despair of the times.

Disinterested speculation now yielded to attempts to find individual solace and security in a world fraught with uncertainty (cf. Bevan:1913:32). The anguish caused by the Peloponnesian wars, it is true, had set the stage for the change of philosophical trends, but it was the undermining of the values of the city-state that gave birth to the Hellenistic philosophical traditions as we know them. It was now that philosophers posed as the prophets of a new morality and as the source of new standards of conduct to replace the old ones which had fallen into obsolescence. In the diaspora following upon the conquests of Alexander, the conventions of the polis were no longer tenable as a system of values to govern

personal conduct. The formulation of a different paradigm became essential, and this challenge was eagerly met by the philosophers (Cary:1978:355).

The Academy and Lyceum had failed to address the problems facing the populace and were thus of little account in the Hellenistic world. The mainstream of Hellenistic philosophy is represented by Scepticism, Cynicism, Stoicism and Epicureanism; a brief survey of these doctrines as products of the peculiar Hellenistic socio-political milieu now follows.

The Sceptics, carrying the relativism of the Sophists a degree further, denied the possibility of any knowledge. Rationalism was taken to its ultimate, self-destructive conclusion and reflected the profound uncertainty of the age. The two main features of Scepticism, the "suspension of judgement" and "freedom from disturbance" (*ataraxia*) are complementary, and Pyrrho's motive in advocating the former was in all likelihood aimed at liberating the individual from conflicting ideas and the uncertainties of the Hellenistic world (Long:1986:78).

The Cynics, too, rebelled against the ancient conventions of the polis. Established conventions had broken down in the wake of Hellenistic imperialism, and as far as the Cynics were concerned, there was no need to find new ones. They demonstrated in eccentric ways their rejection of traditional piety and patriotism, and their contempt for the poor man's delusive quest for wealth and

position in a world where the elusive ideal of universal brotherhood was a mere chimera.

Cynicism, then, with its rejection of all traditional religions and participation in civic life, its advocacy of a return to nature and a cosmopolitan world governed by reason, courage and honesty, is again a diversified symbol of the withdrawal of the Hellenistic individual from the polis into his own individual soul.

A similar withdrawal manifests itself in the religio-ethical systems of the Stoics and the Epicureans. Both recognized the inexorability of external events and emphasized the inculcation of an attitude of mind that would be immune to the vicissitudes of life in the Hellenistic world.

Zeno, who is said to have been influenced by Diogenes the Cynic, is regarded as the founder of Stoicism (see Rist:1978 for details). He repudiated the conventions and accretions of civilized life and placed great store on individual virtue. Only if he embarked on the quest for individual virtue would the Stoic attain the ideal of imperturbability; by rejecting the external world he would establish an impregnable fortress within his own soul. From this doctrine emerged concepts of individualism and cosmopolitanism which encouraged the idea of the polis yielding to a wider Stoic notion of the brotherhood of man (cf. Hollister: 1977:137).

Epicureanism, even more than Stoicism, was a philosophy of withdrawal (see Rist: 1972 for details). It taught that man should seek pleasure rather than virtue - pleasure for the Epicurean being a simple and honest life, learning to endure pain and avoiding needless fears. Epicurus based his philosophy on the teachings of the atomists. He claimed that the universe was not the handiwork of God, but a chance configuration of atoms. The gods, if they existed, did not concern themselves with the affairs of men, who ought not to fear them or the pain and suffering commonly attributed to their will. In short, this was a wise, compassionate doctrine that sought to banish fear, curb passion and dispel illusion, and is again clearly a system forged by the uncertainties of life in the Hellenistic world.

Finally, it remains to evaluate the extent to which the general tenor of Hellenistic literature is consonant with the trends sketched above. With regard to reality and the individual, I briefly consider Theophrastus and Menander, whose works reflect the literary concerns of the times. A preoccupation with realism and the individual is evident in the *Characters* of Theophrastus. Dry, satirical and highly realistic, the author has no moral purpose in mind, but concentrates on stock characters who represent the individual in the growing, non-political categories of Hellenistic society (cf. Grant:1990:159).

Theophrastus' pupil, Menander (c. 342-292 BC), was the most eminent writer of New Comedy. Following remarkable papyrological finds in recent years, it is

possible to assess the nature of his literary concerns. He was profoundly interested in human emotions and their realistic portrayal. The people whom Menander depicts represent a big advance, in terms of realism, upon the stock figures of Aristophanes in the Old Comedy. Menander's personages are detached from political activity, reflecting the ordinary individual who found himself alienated from politics in actual life. It is not surprising that a certain Aristophanes, a scholar from Byzantium (c. 257-180 BC), rhetorically asks "O Menander and Life, which of you imitated the other?" (Syrianus, *Commentaries on Hermogenes of Tarsus* 2.23; Grant:1990:159ff.).

A preoccupation with the pathetic and tragic also becomes a pronounced feature of Hellenistic literature. Children, young women and infants are obvious subjects for pathos and both Theocritus and Callimachus exploit these themes in their epigrams. A few examples will suffice (Fowler:1989:97ff.). In 16 Theocritus tells of a child who died in her seventh year through grief for her dead brother, an infant of 20 months. Callimachus' brief elegy (19) is moving: "Here the father Philippus laid his twelve-year-old son, his great hope, Nicoteles". The next (20) is even more pathetic:

> In the morning we buried Melanippus. As the sun set, the maiden Basilo died by her own hand, for she could not bear to place her brother on the pyre and live. The house of her father Aristippus saw a twofold sorrow, and all Cyrene bowed her head as she saw the house fortunate in its children left desolate[1].

A more detailed account of Hellenistic literary trends will follow in Chapter 3 which deals with the evolution of the epyllion. It will be seen there that while the poets enjoyed the patronage of the royal courts, their poetry in general became increasingly divorced from the politics and society of their day. Their work bears witness to the withdrawal and introspection symptomatic of the age, and focuses increasingly on emotion and on the tragedy of life. With Euphorion and Parthenius we see the culmination of a trend inchoate in Callimachus, and their adoption of grotesque and bizarre themes to highlight the tragedies of love in some way reflects the increasing alienation and bewilderment of the individual in a decadent world on the brink of collapse.

I turn now briefly to the Indian literary tradition to look for parallel developments which may help in illuminating the tendency to focus on the grotesque and tragic evident in the late Alexandrian age.

From early in its history, Indian literature had a well-developed system of aesthetics first formally enunciated by Bharata in his treatise on drama, the *Natyasastra* (c. second-century AD). Subsequent generations saw its evolution and crystallization into the *Navrasa* theory (loosely translated as the "theory of the nine sentiments"), which even now forms the basis of all Indian art forms. Each artistic creation has to have its ground in one or more of these *rasas*[2] (see Chaitanya:1965:1ff for details).

It is interesting that early Indian literature was dominated by those *rasas* expressing joy, hope and optimism. This can be ascribed to the lyrically responsive attitude of Vedic man to the world and his optimistic world-view which, in turn, was reflective of a culture at the peak of its development. Thus the *Atharva Veda* (5.30.1) says that "this world is the most beloved of all", echoed by the *Rig Veda*'s statement (9.84.1) that "there is no waiting for a world to come. We must make merry here and now. Make us today enjoyers of wide room and happiness" (see Chaitanya:1965:242ff.)

In his study of laments in Sanskrit literature, Banerji (1985:9ff.) notes that laments are extremely scarce in early Indian literature. With the decline of the Vedic age, the hardening of eschatological concepts and the emergence of the doctrines of Illusion and *Karma* destroyed this organic optimism, and yielded its bitter harvest of pessimism and world-weariness (Chaitanya:1965:243).

This growing aversion to the phenomenal world resulted in a radical modulation of poetic focus: the literature now abounds in laments, concentrates on the individual, and increasingly focuses on the grotesque and the tragic. In fact, the dominant *rasa* becomes that of *Karuna* (pathos or tragedy).

This brief digression has hopefully highlighted the tendency to become obsessed with the grotesque, the pathetic and the tragic in an age of decadence and

collapse, and will perhaps account for the late Alexandrian epyllion's preoccupation with these features, as will be discussed in Chapter 3.

Returning now to the poet's social obligations in the Roman world, we find the same reciprocity between poet and society characteristic of much of earlier Greek poetry that was the foundation of the early Roman poetic tradition from its recorded beginnings. Much of what is known about early Roman poetry from the fragments and titles that have come down to us is suggestive of an allegiance to society, or, more specifically, to particular members of it. While the poet's general social commitment could well indicate a vibrant Republican ethos that might have prevailed in early Rome, his verse directed at prominent individuals in early Rome was unquestionably the outcome of an obligation forged by the complex forces of literary patronage.

A prospective poet in Rome could hardly have begun to contemplate a poetic career in the absence of financial independence or literary patronage. There were no other avenues open to him, for in general a poet had no access to the resources which support a modern writer (see P. White:1982, for details). There were no means for mass-producing books, and returns from book sales must have been small throughout antiquity. Writing for the stage did a poet's reputation little good; Juvenal's comments (*Sat.*7.82-7) on Statius' efforts in this direction as literary prostitution, although made in an epoch later than that with which we are concerned, could well reflect the attitude prevailing in earlier Rome.

Furthermore, a poet who plied his trade in the hope of direct financial recompense for his verse risked attracting the odium that attached to a *mercenarius*; this was particularly true in as much as he was a practitioner in the liberal arts[3].

The possibility of a poet's self-sufficiency, then, on the basis of his craft alone did not exist at Rome. The inferior social status of many of the early Roman poets made them more vulnerable to the lure of patronage as a means of practising their craft. Livius Andronicus and Terence were slaves, Accius a *libertinus*, and men like Naevius and Ennius did not possess Roman citizenship. Their aspirations to a higher social status or to full Roman citizenship placed them at the mercy of their patrons, and often resulted in encomiastic and celebratory poetry with political themes.

Gnaeus Naevius was among the first of the early Roman poets to fall foul of the intrigues of literary patronage. It seems likely that he was persuaded by his patrons, the Marcelli, to write the *Clastidium*, a *fabula praetexta* (a type of tragedy with Roman history as its theme), with the object of attacking the rival Metelli family from the stage (Williams:1982:4-5). His enforced sallies into the political arena resulted in his imprisonment by a clique of aristocratic families headed by the Metelli. This was presumably a retaliatory measure against the Marcelli through a vulnerable client[4].

Ennius' efforts were more successful. He lauded the famous Scipio in the *Annales* and in *Scipio*, and M. Fulvius Nobilior in both the *Annales* and the *Ambracia*. Ennius' reward came in 185 BC when he was made a full Roman citizen. Pacuvius' *Paullus* in celebration of L. Aemilius Paullus' victory at Pydna in 166 BC, Accius' *Brutus*, and Archias' celebration of Marius' victory over the Cimbri and of Lucullus' military achievements against Mithridates are other examples of works inspired by literary patronage or the quest for it.

The rigours of early literary patronage and the limitations they imposed on the content of the poetry of the time are in stark contrast to the comparatively freer spirit of patronage in the Augustan age, as exemplified by the relationship of Maecenas and Horace. The evidence here to some extent holds true for Maecenas' patronage of Vergil and Propertius (Reckford:1959; Zetzel:1982; Gold:1982). There is little doubt that it was the patronage of Maecenas that gave Horace the degree of financial independence that was the mainspring of his poetic career; he was now able to abandon his job as a quaestor's clerk and enjoy the *otium* necessary for writing poetry. This, allied with the frequent invitations to dinner at which he could socialize with the élite literary circle of Vergil, Plotius, Varius and Quintilius, and the gift of the Sabine farm around 33 BC, would have placed Horace under great material and social obligation to Maecenas. He was forced to fulfil certain social duties, about which he complained, perhaps lightheartedly (*Sat.*1.6), as part payment of his debt.

However, it seems that his obligation ended there. It is unlikely to have imposed any significant limitations on the nature of his poetry. For one thing he was never compelled to write on political themes. When Maecenas suggested that he celebrate Augustus' victories, Horace refused on the grounds that he was a poet of love; Maecenas, he advised, should undertake the task on his own (Carmen 2.12). This was a gentle but firm refusal to apply his poetical talent for the purposes of political propaganda.

Though Horace later treated Roman themes - the Roman odes in Book 3, and the laudatory poems on Drusus, Tiberius and Augustus in Book 4 - it is unlikely that Augustus compelled him to write the odes of Book 4, and his celebration of such themes was more likely the result of gentle persuasion from Maecenas (Reckford:1959:202).

An examination of the effects of patronage in the formative period of Roman poetry and in the Augustan age yields patently different results. Literary patronage in the earlier period imposed palpable constraints on the poetic spirit, whereas the autonomy of the poet in the Augustan age seems to have remained relatively intact despite the pervasiveness of literary patronage.

While the earlier Roman poets realized that they were subservient to society and had to promote its values and interests in verse, the social circumstances of the New Poets had changed significantly enough to buttress a radical modification

of the traditional view of poetic activity and its purpose (Martin:1992:11ff.). In general, Catullus and his fellow-poets were men of independent means, and thus had the wherewithal to pursue their craft with a single-mindedness that refused to countenance the intrusion of society into the scheme of their new poetics.

Whereas in the formative period of Roman literature the scale of the relationship between poet and audience was almost always tilted in favour of the audience and its expectations, the economic and social independence of the New Poets helped them subvert what seemed to be an archaic and outmoded ideal. The poet could now with impunity flout the traditional view of poetry which was deeply rooted in society, both in its concerns and reception; he was free to reject the high-minded view of poetry and, in emulation of the Callimachean creed, to espouse the ideal of art for art's sake.

The New Poets thus became the first modernists of Roman antiquity and wrote a poetry that overtly deviated from the received opinions of the day about what was poetically acceptable. In their revolt against the strictures imposed by an audience nurtured on an erstwhile poetical conservatism, they relegated the expectations of the audience to the periphery of their own poetical concerns. They perhaps understood that the repudiation of societal expectations was fundamental to the genesis of a new aesthetic, even though such a stance might be viewed as a wilful rejection of collective moral values. It was perhaps this realization that prompted Catullus' description of his poetry - presumably his

lighter verse - as *ineptiae* (14b.1) and *nugae* (1.4), a self-deprecatory evaluation consistent with the traditional Roman view.

Catullus' lighter poems do not lend themselves to evaluation in the light of audience expectations since they constitute what may be described as "coterie literature"; whatever their subsequent fate, there is little reason to believe that they were widely circulated initially or composed primarily for that purpose. The longer poems, on the other hand, were certainly directed at a wider audience, and it is the central cycle that conceivably best reflects the influence of the poet's financial independence, at least where his attitude to society was concerned. While the long poems are widely held to be Catullus' more sustained and elevated artistic endeavours, even a cursory reading of them manifests his wilful controversion of the serious and high purpose of traditional Roman poetry.

Poems like 63, 64 and 68 illustrate how Catullus' own poetical concerns influence the formulation of his work. Notwithstanding, for example, the frequent "social" interpretation of Cat. 64 (Konstan:1977), the poems have little or nothing to do with conforming to audience expectations. Such a stance was a natural concomitant of the poet's financial independence; his non-reliance on patronage resulted in the artistic autonomy conducive to the new scheme of poetics. Catullus could thus be bold enough to choose a theme as outlandish as that of the *Attis* - a theme plainly repugnant to traditional Roman sensibilities - and fashion his poem in a manner peculiar to the Neoteric school. His choice and

treatment of this myth (and of Poem 64 to some extent) was influenced by the late Alexandrian epyllia as conceived by Euphorion and presumably given final shape by Parthenius. As will be seen in Chapter 3, these epyllia frequently resorted to morbid and sensational myths to highlight the *erotika pathemata* theme.

Financial independence and freedom from social constraints, then, were important factors that inspired the new direction of poetry. The rejection of society resulted in a poetry consciously dissociating itself from the promotion of societal values and interests. Even in their poems which reflect a more serious level of intent, it is clear that the Neoterics were free to choose themes - bizarre and grotesque, as evident in Catullus' *Attis* and the epyllia of his fellow-poets - that could lend themselves to treatment in the revolutionary Parthenian mould.

I now consider whether the socio-political circumstances contributing to the Alexandrian revolution have any parallels at Neoteric Rome. Although beginning as a polis of sorts, Rome, through her policy of imperialism and expansion, had outstripped the proportions of a city-state early in her history (c. 280 BC); yet she maintained the political institutions of such a state throughout the Republic. By transcending the limits for a normal city-state, Rome had impeded the growth of democracy in the form conceived by classical Greeks. Real political power lay with the aristocratic senate and, in a state as huge as Rome

had become, oligarchy seemed the only practical form of government, given the absence of functional and representative democratic institutions (Brunt:1982:1ff.).

With the gradual decline in the authority of the senate begun by the Gracchan assault on its hegemony, and the increasing prominence of the Roman army as an instrument of personal power, the Republic was on the brink of collapse long before its actual demise. The threat of slave revolts and civil wars, and the ever-looming prospect of monarchy, must certainly have parallelled the situation in the Hellenistic world after the conquests of Alexander (see Wiseman:1988:5-10 for the dangers facing free citizens in the late Republic). While it could not have had the same impact on the individual as democracy had never really been part of the Roman cultural heritage, it is possible that the political uncertainties and moral decadence that beset the late Republic induced a mood of alienation and *angst*, though certainly not to the degree experienced in the Hellenistic era.

Some of the symptoms of alienation observed in the Hellenistic world began to surface at Rome. Except in the countryside, traditional Roman religion had become outmoded, and there was an increasing interest in eastern cults that promised immortality. Among the élite, astrology and neo-Pythagorean mysticism became a virtual obsession; intellectual dabblers sought insights into numerology and revelations in magic (Africa:1991:208).

There is a palpable surge of interest in the individual, attested by the increasing receptiveness to an individually-oriented Hellenistic culture, the growing popularity of individualistic philosophies like Stoicism and Epicureanism, and the emergence of a literature that focused on the individual (Lucilius, Lucretius, and Cicero's letters), culminating in the New Poetry.

Jenkyns (1982:92ff.) has described Neotericism as a literature of "dandyism". The evidence of the poems suggests that Catullus and his friends were just the sort of people who exemplified the decay in moral values lamented by Sallust, Livy and Horace. A definition of dandyism by Blake (1966:78; quoted by Jenkyns:1982:95) explains one of the main reasons for the rise of Neotericism:

> It seems to be characteristic of an era of social flux, when aristocracy is tottering or uncertain, but when radicalism has not yet replaced it with a new set of values. It flourishes in a period when manners are no longer rigidly fixed, but have not yet degenerated into mere anarchy, so that there is still a convention to rebel against, still a world to be shocked and amused by extravagance and eccentricity. The dandy must have a framework in which to operate.

Some suggestive parallels are to be found in first-century Rome, and the New Poetry can be seen in part as a reaction to the collapse of social and moral order in the Roman world. Rejecting the norms of mainstream Roman literature, Catullus and his group wrote with a deliberate refusal to reflect, even in their

serious poetry, the social and political conditions of the time. This accounts for their marked interest in the individual, evident not only in their shorter and lighter verse, but also in the epyllion, their main contribution to Roman literature.

To be sure, the Roman epyllion's interest in the individual was a legacy of the Hellenistic genre and in particular of the focus on the grotesque and sensational found in the late Alexandrian variety. What rendered the epyllion attractive to the Neoterics, however, was its potential as a corrective to the lack of spontaneity, subjectivity and emotionalism which characterized Roman literature (doubtless a result of its subordination to the stringent canons of Greek poetry); it is likely, too, that it was congenial to the Neoteric poetic outlook, the nature of which was shaped by the socio-political circumstances of the times (cf. the fascination with the grotesque, bizarre and tragic in the late Alexandrian age).

The following chapter will show that the Parthenian canon, the culmination of a long tradition beginning, if not with Philetas of Cos, then certainly with Callimachus, and radically modified by Euphorion, advocated a markedly subjective and personal approach in the exposition of bizarre themes of tragic love. The themes offered scope for heightened emotionalism, an examination of psychological states, and a subjective portrayal of character. The epyllion as conceived by Parthenius, then, subserved the Neoteric yearning for an emotional release, hitherto stifled by the nature of the prevailing Roman literary tradition.

Apart from its serving as a palliative for the dispassionate and detached nature of Roman poetry, there were possibly other reasons, too, for the appeal of Parthenius' doctrine. Lyne (1980:1-18) discusses traditional Roman social attitudes towards love and allied developments that occurred in the latter stages of the Republic; I summarize them very briefly and assess their relevance to the present issue.

Traditionally, upper-class marriages seldom allowed for the flowering of mutual love and passion. Such marriages were frequently marriages of convenience, often "dynastic", and the nature of traditional Roman society made it virtually impossible for a man to find complete love with someone of equal status and circumstances within the institution of marriage. Men were permitted, however, to indulge their passion with prostitutes or slave-girls, provided they exercised restraint and due circumspection in such relationships.

The latter half of the second-century BC saw the advent of the elegant and accomplished courtesan (again a Hellenistic influence) who could provide Roman men with passionate and glamorous company - and not necessarily on a temporary basis. Thus the opportunities for a complete love were now available for Roman men (and women); since no precedent existed for solemnizing such affairs, however, the pressures of society very often led to their untimely dissolution.

Catullus' fellow-Neoterics, the evidence of his poems suggests, were part of a raffish and licentious circle, and Catullus' relationship with Lesbia apart, the phenomenon of the sophisticated courtesan was ubiquitous enough to make it likely, given their apparent hedonism, that Catullus' fellow-poets, too, fell under the spell of these *demi-mondaines*.

The opportunities for indulging in passionate love-affairs, paradoxically sanctioned yet frowned upon by contemporary society, were not without their consequences. First, they rekindled and exacerbated the Roman concern that excessive *amor* could make a man lose his sense of proportion, confuse *otium* with *negotium*, and even place a higher value on passion than on life itself. To the Roman this was insanity - *insanus* is the stock epithet of such a lover (cf. Cic. *Tusc.* 4.72ff.; Hor. *Sat.* 1.2.48). Catullus was obviously acutely aware of his vulnerability to such a charge (cf. 51.13-16).

Then there was the issue of the trauma that such affairs could cause. Occasionally they flourished; more often, though, given their nature and the constraints of society, they floundered and left anguish and despair in their wake, as with Catullus. From a literary perspective, the role that the foregoing had in determining the poetic focus, if not of the Neoterics in general, then of Catullus certainly, needs little elucidation.

To what extent did the thrust of Parthenius' doctrine of *erotika pathemata* happen to coincide with that aspect of the Neoteric poetic attitude outlined above? In this regard, for Catullus at least, Lyne's comments are illuminating:

> Catullus had remarkable ideals in love; he was profoundly interested in the strange and conflicting emotions of love. It is natural that he should want to analyse these ideals and feelings in poetry. It is also natural, incidentally, that this desire to analyse should become more acute when reality began more obviously to fall short of ideals. That is simple psychology. It is when ideals are might-have-beens that one is compelled to analyse them; it is the feelings consequent upon failure that one scrutinizes, morbidly and excessively.
>
> (1980:22)

It is in the light of the above that one could perhaps explain Catullus' incorporation of the *erotika pathemata* doctrine in Poems 63 and 64 (see Chapters 4 and 5 below), possibly his two most serious works. It is hazardous indeed to conjecture on the creative impulse in view of its abstract whimsicality; I will, however, on the basis of Lyne's observations, tentatively venture some reasons for the compatibility of Parthenius' canon with Catullus' poetic purposes in Poems 63 and 64.

Aristotle, in his celebrated exposition of the doctrine of catharsis, confines his comments on the "cleansing of emotions" to the tragic hero and the audience in the tragic situation. No mention whatever is made of the emotional impact that

the encounter with the tragic may have on the writer. Let us turn to Sanskrit poetics where a host of scholars from ancient times have examined this aspect of the creative process in detail.

Indian scholars are unanimous in their conviction that the creative process is, *inter alia*, a means of confronting reality from a purely objective focus (see Chaitanya:1965:208ff. for details). Thus a tragic experience in real life, once transmuted into art, enables the creator to distance himself and view that experience from a purely objective point of view, without the heightened emotional reaction that impedes a composed and effective response in the real-life situation; in short, subjectivity wins its emancipation from the causal nexus. The impulse to transform the tragic into an artistic experience is viewed as a positive and affirmative channelling of aesthetic energy which results in catharsis for the writer. Then, as Schopenhaeur (despite his gloomy and pessimistic world-view) believes, "we are for the moment set free from the miserable striving of the Will; we keep the Sabbath of the penal servitude of living; the wheel of Ixion stands still" (quoted by Wellek:1955:309; cf. Cicero *De. Fin.* 2.105).

That confrontation with the tragic is a cathartic process for the writer is substantiated by Donne (quoted by Chaitania:1965:233):

Then as th' earth's inward narrow crooked lanes
Do purge sea water's fretful salt away,
I thought, if I could draw my paines,

Through Rhyme's vexation, I should them allay.
Grief brought to numbers cannot be so fierce,
For, he tames it, that fetters it in verse.

Similarly, Anne Douglas Sedgwick says this about the writing of her novel, *Paths of Judgement* (quoted again by Chaitania:1965:233):

> It was an objectivizing of all my thoughts, all my fears and faiths: holding them all at arm's length, making them visible and really grasping them - or, at least, getting more hold of them than I have done before.

It is possible, then, that an objective confrontation with the tragic through the medium of art can have a profound cathartic effect on the creator. It is not unreasonable to presume that this is one of the reasons why Catullus chose to essay the realm of myth to mirror his ill-fated affair with Lesbia and its devastating effects. While he may have failed to curb and control personal passion, as an artist he exhibits supreme mastery and control over his material, as his poetry clearly suggests.

It is in the light of the above, then, that we may appreciate why Catullus was attracted to the epyllion and its theme of *erotika pathemata* as conceived by Parthenius. In addition to the opportunities it offered for a heightened emotionalism and subjectivism in direct opposition to the Ennian epic tradition, its role in reflecting and reconciling his personal circumstances, which were in

part perhaps the result of the change in attitudes towards love in the late Republic, is an important consideration in his incorporation of Parthenius' doctrine of *erotika pathemata*.

END NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

1. For other examples of pathos in Hellenistic literature, see Apoll. 1.26-75; 3.291-95, 656-63; 4.35-9, 1062-69. See also Asclepiades (*AP.* 13.23); Leonidas of Tarentum (*AP.* 7.726; 7.748). The pathetic fallacy is also a prominent feature of Hellenistic literature: Theoc. *Id.* 1.71-5, *Id.* 7.73-7; Bion's *Lament for Adonis* (18-19); pseudo-Moschus' *Lament for Bion* (1-7); see Fowler:1989:104ff. and Buller J.L., "The Pathetic Fallacy in Hellenistic Pastoral", *Ramus* 10, 1981, 35-52.

2. Very briefly, a *rasa* is an emotion that is evoked during an aesthetic encounter. The main *rasas* are *Karuna* (pathos or tragedy), *Vira* (valour or martial courage), *Bhayanaka* (dread or anxiety), *Santi* (peace or serenity), *Sringara* (love), *Bhakti* (devotion or reverence), *Adbhuta* (surprise or wonder), *Raudra* (anger, retaliation or revenge), *Hasya* (comedy).

3. Cf. the public outcry at the orator's attempt to make his profession a paid one. Under Augustus the old Republican ban on payment for forensic services was reaffirmed. It was only under Claudius that fee-taking became legalized, but even then protests were so bitter that fees were held to a low ceiling (P. White:1982:53).

4. Cf. Pompey's persecution of Aulus Licinius Archias, who was defended by Cicero in 62 BC. Archias had celebrated the military achievements of L. Licinius Lucullus, and petty rivalry between the latter and Pompey led to Pompey's indirect attack on Lucullus through his client Archias (Williams:1982:4).

CHAPTER THREE

From a generic perspective, the New Poetry's signal contribution to Roman literature was the epyllion. Since my thesis asserts that tragic love-myths, in compliance with the later development of the genre in the Hellenistic world, formed the thematic basis of Neoteric epyllia, this chapter will focus briefly on the genesis and evolution of the Hellenistic epyllion. I will first try to prove that the epyllion came to be recognized as a genre distinct from epic; then, I will pay some attention to its acquisition of the traits which, I believe, flowered at Rome, even though such an enterprise is hazardous, given the paucity of information about the nature of the later Alexandrian epyllia. I suggest, however, that a holistic picture of these epyllia can nevertheless be extrapolated from a cautious examination of the available evidence.

The epyllion has not been extensively investigated[1]. It is well known that the term was first used by Haupt in the middle of the nineteenth century to designate a literary genre popular from Callimachus to Ovid (see Reilly:1953:111-14; Fordyce:1990:272). In tracing the evolution of the epyllion, a literary and socio-historical perspective is desirable, since few writers, I believe, if any at all, write in a socio-historical vacuum; their work reflects their contingent experience of socio-historical reality and is subconsciously coloured by it.

Given the long history of the genre, again, such a perspective must encompass some evaluation of the epyllia, not only from within the context of the diverse socio-historical conditions in which they were written, but also as part of the evolution of literature in general.

Perry (1967:4ff.), in his discussion of the ancient Greek romance, postulates a theory about its origins which he believes embraces all literary genres. He rejects entirely the so-called "biological evolution" of literature, and attributes the birth of new genres to what he terms "the willful creations" of individuals. To illustrate the validity of his hypothesis, he refers to the nature of the novel in the modern era, noting the marked individuality of the works in question and the impossibility of tracing a logical line in their development. This he ascribes to the modern era's creative and romantic spirit engendered by its reaction to the strictures of the *ancien régime* and total rejection of established cultural and aesthetic values.

I quote to illustrate the drift of his argument:

> But if the willful creation of a literary form can and must be acknowledged to be humanly possible, and to have actually occurred in the beginning of literature, why should anyone be reluctant to suppose that the same process of spontaneous generation, miraculous though it may seem to be from the biological point of view, has in fact often been repeated, and

> never more frequently and easily than in the open societies of Hellenistic and modern times?
>
> (Perry:1967:14).

One cannot entirely reject this theory, but it is tainted by some glaringly facile assumptions. For one, even though there are similarities between the spirit of the Hellenistic times and the modern era, the concept of the rejection of established values of culture and tradition by our own age cannot simply be super-imposed upon the Hellenistic period without considerable modification.

The Hellenistic era was indeed characterized by violent literary revolution and reaction, at least in as far as the Hellenistic *avant garde* was concerned. As will be seen, however, the literature of the period could not entirely dissociate itself from the literary canons of the past. There is a significant difference between the modern age and antiquity in attitudes towards tradition, which Perry apparently fails to recognize. Amid the radical and revolutionary changes introduced by Callimachus and his adherents, there were certain literary precedents that pervaded the literature of the times, although they were clad perhaps in a striking new vesture.

Perry's postulation of "willful creation" has implicit in it the unheralded and fortuitous advent of literary types; this is surely an over-simplification of a somewhat complex phenomenon. Many of the literary forms that emerged or became prominent in the Hellenistic age had their roots in earlier types. For me,

at least, these genres are in part the result of the natural evolution of literature and (perhaps more so) the outcome, in part again, of a socio-political milieu which necessitated radical modification. The genesis, development and nature of the epyllion, then, have to be evaluated from the perspective of both socio-political conditions as well as the general evolution of literature if we are to arrive at a more realistic conception of the form transmitted at Rome by Parthenius.

A concise definition of the epyllion as a literary type proves merely to be reductive and limiting. Crump (1931:22-4) has attempted such a definition, giving the impression, in Allen's view (1940), that the epyllion was recognized as a distinct literary type in antiquity. Allen was among the first to counter this assertion - in a markedly polemical fashion, it might be added - and there is indeed little direct evidence in the literature of the time to challenge his view.

It serves no purpose, however, given the modern provenance of the term, for Allen to invoke sundry ancient uses of the word to prove that "epyllion" did not mean "little epic" (1940:5, 25-6). Further, despite his admission that "it is almost impossible to analyse literary characteristics with enough exactness to define a genre" (1940:13), Allen proceeds nonetheless to examine the features ascribed to the epyllion, concluding that these were not only shared by other literary types, but were not even characteristic of all epyllia. The first observation is easily explicable, for the crossing of genres, as he himself

intimates, became a prominent feature of poetry-writing in the Hellenistic world (see below). The second observation, again, is the result of the long history of the epyllion during which it was continually adapted to accommodate the intentions of succeeding generations of writers.

Gutzwiller (1981:3ff.) examines ancient systems of literary classification and evaluates the epyllion in the light of these. Embracing Quintilian's entire summary of Greek literature, she categorizes poems on a metrical basis, using a system which doubtless had its origins in the theories of Gorgias. The epyllion and epic, then, would, by their common use of hexameter, belong to the same genre. Further, the epyllia of Theocritus and Callimachus, according to Gutzwiller, reflect both narrative and dramatic techniques, and thus belong to Plato's third group, the *γένος μικτόν*, a type which contains both these elements (*Rep.* 392D-394C) and to which Plato assigns the Homeric epics.

Gutzwiller concludes that whether one uses the metrical or Platonic system of classification, the result is the same: "[T]o the ancient mind Hellenistic epyllia and Homeric epic are identical in genre" (1981:4).

The Hellenistic epyllion, then, must be evaluated in the light of the ancient epic, but as epic written in the leptotic style advocated by Callimachus. For Gutzwiller, epyllia are episodes drawn from epic; the main characters have their source in epic, or are well-known mythological personages. In contrast to the

seriousness of epic, however, in the epyllion there is a general lightening of tone as evident in the genial wit and innocent charm of Callimachus and Theocritus. There is "a subversion of the archaic ideal...the story is told in such a way as to undercut or even mock the conventional heroic interpretation" (Gutzwiller: 1981:5). This betrays the influence of Hellenistic mime and New Comedy, which would account for the crossing of genres referred to above; the *ποικιλία* advanced by Callimachus and his adherents is an attempt at variation which includes a mixing of dialectic forms, embraces epic words as well as neologisms, and seeks its charm and romanticism in the elements of lyric poetry.

Gutzwiller's conclusions, *prima facie*, might appear incontrovertible but should, in my opinion, be accepted with reservation; they do not reflect the features of the epyllion as a literary type shaped by generations of Hellenistic poets. They are confined to the earlier epyllia and neglect entirely the later and very significant period of evolution which determined the ultimate shape of epyllia in the Hellenistic world.

Even within the limited temporal scope of her study, poems which have been widely accepted as epyllia on good authority are omitted from Gutzwiller's investigation - perhaps designedly, since they do not coincide with her generalizations about the epyllion. Moreover, the mutual dependency between Gutzwiller's definition of the epyllion as a literary type and her selection of

particular poems for classification and discussion as epyllia vitiates the authenticity of her findings.

In Gutzwiller's defence, again, one must admit that she could hardly have attempted a literary evaluation of the later non-extant epyllia, although, as I have pointed out and will attempt to show in this chapter, there is sufficient evidence to inspire reasonable conjectures about the nature of these epyllia. This evidence must surely be brought to bear upon any evaluation of the Hellenistic epyllion as a literary type[2].

Formidable problems admittedly arise in establishing the generic status of the epyllion. Even in extent, there is a striking disparity: Callimachus' *Hecale* was around 1000 lines, the *Hermes* of Eratosthenes was probably much longer (Hollis:1990:23-24), whereas Theocritus' *Hylas* was a mere 75 lines[3].

Despite the differences, however, the suggestion that the poems currently designated as epyllia were considered in antiquity as epic is far too evasive and ambivalent. If the resolution of genres is in any way helpful in evaluating a poem - see Griffin (1985:48ff.) for the dangers inherent in a primarily generic approach - and certainly if generic classification is one of the aims of an investigation, as with Gutzwiller's study, there would be little point in begging the issue when the evidence suggests that the epyllion developed into a distinct and autonomous type in the Hellenistic world. To be sure, it was deeply

indebted to epic for many of its features - as were lyric and tragedy for that matter - but it would indeed be remarkable if the Neoterics were not acutely aware that they were inheriting a recognizable and well-established genre from the Alexandrians.

The circumstances prompting the Homeric epics and the Hellenistic epyllia were disparate enough, as a starting point, to suggest significant differences between the two categories. Orality and literacy, especially when the latter is an acutely self-conscious aspect of the poet's self-image as in the Alexandrian age, are diametrically opposed on the compositional scale, and this polarity must surely be reflected in the products of each system.

It is true that in the classical age of Greek literature the pervasiveness of writing had changed the "primary oral culture" into a literate one. This notwithstanding, the indebtedness to Homer and the oral tradition was far too extensive to create a significant rift with the past. Besides, unlike the Hellenistic age, the classical period was not characterized by fundamental disagreement over basic literary issues; the influence of the oral tradition, for instance, went virtually unchallenged by classical poets. Writing was never directly acknowledged; the poets called themselves *ἀοιδοί* (singers) or *ποιηταί* (makers), but never "writers" (Bing:1988:12).

While this orally-determined view of poetic activity persisted throughout the classical era, the spread of literacy had a significant impact on the thought of the time. There was now a more critical approach to life, and while the heroic-mythical view deriving from the Homeric oral tradition continued to inform the poetry of classical Greece, this view was gradually modified by the classical poets. Thus, in the hands of Pindar and Aeschylus, myth was no longer a story told simply and directly, but formed the basis of a lyric and dramatic expression of feelings and ideas which were characterized by an increasing realism, until finally, for Euripides, who was violently anti-mythical, it became incredible and outmoded (cf. Otis:1963:7-8).

Towards the end of the fifth century, the rational investigations of philosophy took precedence over poetry. The best young minds were attracted to Socrates, and Plato is said to have burnt his verse under Socrates' influence. Ong (1982:28) describes Plato's aversion to poetry as a rejection of the "oral-style thinking perpetuated in Homer in favour of the keen analysis...of the world and of thought itself made possible by the interiorization of the alphabet in the Greek psyche".

With the establishment of the museum at Alexandria, poetry for the first time became grounded institutionally in the written word. For classical Greeks, public performance was the primary medium for creating and experiencing verse - the textual dimension of the work was not important to them - but in the

Hellenistic age, reading and writing asserted themselves as the dominant medium of literary communication. This is substantially witnessed by the burgeoning of literary types that encompassed a visual dimension as well: pattern poems, acrostics, and even the epigram, now remote from its original inscribed setting[4].

While it is unlikely that the early Hellenistic writers grasped the dichotomy between orality and literacy to the extent that modern scholarship has elucidated it, yet, the literary polemics of Callimachus seem to provide substantial evidence of a head-on clash between literacy and orality.

Of course, epic in the old style continued in the Hellenistic age, but none has survived except for a few names, titles and some fragments [see e.g. the two anonymous fragments (P.Oxy 2883 = *SH* 846-947) quoted by Bing (1988:51-2) and identified as deriving from the *Messeniaka* of Rhianos]. Despite the rupture that the Alexandrian conquests created in culture and society, there was still an audience who, oblivious of the rift, perhaps sought solace and comfort in a genre perpetuating the traditions and deeds of a heroic past.

The spirit of the age is, however, unquestionably reflected in the attitude of the Hellenistic *avant garde* represented by Callimachus and his adherents. It was doubtless evident to them that the ideals of the polis were no longer tenable in a dislocated and fragmented society. The acute awareness of discontinuity and

isolation, especially for those who moved to cities like Alexandria and severed political, cultural and religious links with their native lands, has already been dealt with in Chapter 2. Poetry, as well, in concert with these socio-political changes, took on a markedly individualistic bias and became more a private act of communication than a public one, the literary community responding to any given text as individual readers in isolation.

If poetry had indeed come upon difficult times as a result of the sophistic movement and the appropriation of the muses by philosophy, then it seemed that the establishment of the great libraries and the increasing prominence of books could provide the means to rescue it. Poets like Callimachus substantially altered their conception of the poet's function, his methods and techniques, and envisaged a new aesthetic which had a significant impact on subsequent poetry, both Greek and Roman.

To those who were conscious of the changing circumstances of the times, epic in its Homeric form was plainly outmoded and anachronistic. For Callimachus and his circle, certainly, its enforced perpetuation by second-rate imitators becomes the main theme of their literary polemics: the epyllion is without doubt directly opposed to the epic.

The Homeric epic, reflecting a world of fantasy and make-believe, was totally alien to the realism that was to become a significant aspect of the Hellenistic

ethos. Further, from a purely technical viewpoint the nature of oral poetry fosters expression that is grandiloquent and discursive, whereas the demands of writing require a lean and spare style. This is no doubt the basis of Callimachean poetics as embodied in his famous dictum, *μέγα βιβλίον μέγα κακόν* (fr. 465).

Then, too, there is the preoccupation of oral poetry with characters whose deeds are heroic and monumental and therefore easily memorable (Ong: 1982:70), whereas Callimachus and his adherents focus either on marginal characters in direct refutation of Aristotle's *Poetics* (see below in the discussion of the *Hecale*) or at times on epic heroes who are reduced to the mundane.

The advent of the book and the different routes it provided for poetry-writing would doubtless have set Callimachean poetics in direct confrontation with the Homeric epic. The epyllion derives from the orality-literacy conflict; to classify the epyllion as epic merely on the basis of metre, and to suggest that the ancients were not aware that they were writing in a genre radically opposed to epic, is to adopt a stance that is far too cautious to be of any help in elucidating the distinctive nature of the epyllion.

The milieu resulting in the genesis of the epyllion, corroborated by evidence from the different stages of its development, points conclusively to the genre as distinct from the epic. Having attempted to establish the basis for this

distinction, I now turn to the evolution of the genre in the Hellenistic world and to its acquisition of those features that became popular with the New Poets.

For convenience, the history of the epyllion may be divided into three stages (cf. Crump:1931:39ff.). The first, represented by the epyllia of Theocritus, is characterized by a profusion of picturesque detail. The second is to be found in Callimachus' *Hecale*; it has a clear, well defined plot and retains to some extent the picturesque method of Theocritus. The third stage is represented by Euphorion and Parthenius. Although no epyllia of this period have survived, reasonable conjectures about their nature can be made from extant fragments and ancient literary references, from the *Erotika Pathemata* of Parthenius, from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and from the *Ciris* of the *Appendix Vergiliana*. The epyllia of Euphorion and Parthenius - at least what can reasonably be assumed about them - differ from the epic idyll by their use of a definite and intricate plot, and from the work of both Theocritus and Callimachus by their almost total elimination of picturesque detail. Their most radical features are the increasing prominence of tragic love-stories, an obsession with the grotesque (both to a much greater degree than already inherent in Hellenistic poetry), and a preoccupation with morbid psychology.

An important figure, if not in the actual creation of the epyllion, then certainly in pioneering the Alexandrian revolution was Philetas of Cos, reportedly the teacher of Hermesianax and Theocritus. Both Callimachus (in his prologue to

the *Aetia*) and Theocritus (*Id.* 7) refer to him as their illustrious predecessor in the domain of short poetry. Although there is no direct evidence for his formal association with the museum at Alexandria, Philetas' position as tutor of Philadelphus, who was to encourage the development of the museum, makes it very likely that he was also actively involved in its affairs (Bulloch:1989:4).

Even though too little of his work survives to warrant any reasonable critical evaluation of its literary merit, Philetas was influential amongst his contemporaries and succeeding generations of writers: he was undoubtedly responsible for determining the fundamental tenets of Hellenistic poetry. He embodied the scholar-poet ethic[5]; Lesky (1966:701) says that in him the "interest of the scholar and the desire of the litterateur (he was called *ποιητὴς ἅμα καὶ κριτικός*) to avoid the ordinary were blended in a manner which remained influential in Alexandrian poetry". Fraser (1972:550), commenting on Philetas' extant fragments, ventures to say that "there appears to be little trace of poetic feeling, and...they do not permit us to assign him a place as a poet in the development of Alexandrian poetry". Yet he concedes that "[Philetas'] influence as teacher and pioneer is assured".

Philetas' status as the likely originator of the epyllion is based on his hexameter poem, the *Hermes*, which dealt with Odysseus' visit to the island of Aeolus and focused on the hero's secret affair with Polymela, a daughter of the king. Odysseus' long conversation with his host resembles Callimachus' *Hecale* in

emphasis while Philetas' treatment of the girl's passion for Odysseus, and her dejected response to his departure, are reminiscent of Medea in Apollonius' *Argonautica*. Although the poem had an influence on later writers and its theme suited the tenor of the epyllion, its classification as an epyllion has at times been challenged.

It must be admitted that the parts of the nine lines of the *Hermes* that survive are too little to prove conclusively that the poem was in fact an epyllion; I therefore focus now on Callimachus' *Hecale* which was clearly the prototype of the epyllion that became popular with the Neoterics.

Callimachus' role as the foremost opponent of the epic school (which made him something of an oracle in literary circles) and the numerous literary allusions to the dialectic between the long and short in poetry, are familiar enough to warrant omission from my discussion. I will also steer clear of the modern controversy surrounding the supposed battle between Callimachus and Apollonius, and of the debate whether the *Hecale* was the outcome of the battle or the stimulus for it. Further, although Theocritus is an important name in the development of the epyllion, the epic idyll which he in all likelihood invented is not relevant to this thesis[6]; I will therefore omit him from my discussion.

For the purposes of this thesis, then, my study of the epyllion begins with Callimachus' *Hecale*, written (as the scholiast to *Hymn* 2.106 says) in response

to criticism that he was incapable of composing a long and continuous narrative poem in hexameters[7]. The Alexandrian's sustained offensive against the epic obviously did not derive from any deprecation of Homer as an artist but rather from his conception of the principle of obsolescence in literature.

The Homeric epics were written when the ideals and beliefs of the heroic age had not yet entirely yielded to those of another (Otis:1963:5ff.). Thus Homer could compose in a simple and objective way about a world in which gods and men mingled freely - a world which the poet and his audience could accept without serious reservations. Post-Homeric poets were bound by an all but unbreakable tradition to the Homeric canon which prescribed a mythical basis for serious poetry. In the circumstances, all they could do was to modify this canon; the changes introduced by writers like Pindar, Aeschylus and Euripides have already been briefly referred to earlier in this chapter.

The political and social milieu of the Hellenistic age, as discussed in Chapter 2, exacerbated the tension (resulting from Homer's legacy of a myth-orientated poetry) to an extent where Callimachus and his adherents were forced to introduce further changes that defined the limits for the evolution of subsequent serious poetry written in Greece. Callimachus' measures were not radical. He did not reject the Homeric canon; instead he attempted to adapt it to a new kind of poetry. His endeavours understandably brought him into

direct conflict with contemporaries espousing the epic tradition, and the acrimony of the debate is evident in the relevant literary allusions[8].

Callimachus' *Hecale* was possibly the real answer to his detractors and formed the model for future epyllia in the Hellenistic world. It was not his first poem, but was written c. 270 BC when his literary principles were well established by published work. It is likely that the earlier *Aetia* had provoked criticism; the *Hecale*, then, could be both a response to that criticism and a manifesto of the new poetics, showing how Callimachus could handle traditional epic subject-matter in the new style (cf. Hollis:1990:3-4; Couat:1931:408).

The *Diegesis* tells us that Theseus unexpectedly returned from the Troezen after escaping the plot of Medea. His father, aware that Theseus wished to subdue the evil bull of Marathon, kept careful guard over him. Theseus, however, secretly escaped before nightfall but a sudden storm forced him to take shelter in the hut of Hecale, who entertained him well despite her poverty. He departed early the next morning, overcame the bull and returned to the hut only to find Hecale dead. He lamented the old woman's fate and rewarded the hospitality accorded him by naming the newly founded deme after her and established a shrine of Zeus Hecalius in her honour. Plutarch (*Thes.* 14) adds that Hecale vowed a sacrifice to Zeus for Theseus' safe return, while the *Priapea* 12.3 records that Theseus actually found her on the pyre (Webster:1964:113).

Recent papyrological finds have significantly increased the number of extant fragments (see Hollis:1990 for a detailed discussion); it is now possible to reconstruct the drift of certain conversations and scenes, and to evaluate Callimachus' aims and, to some extent, his treatment of the main characters (see Webster:1964:114ff.; Gutzwiller:1981:49-62; Hutchinson:1988:56ff.; Hollis: 1990:*passim*).

The poem begins with Hecale and describes her hospitality (frr. 230, 231, 342). It seems likely that Callimachus paid more attention to delineating her character in the long scene where she entertains Theseus. This scene is modelled on *Od.* 14 and 15, where the swineherd Eumaeus plays host to Odysseus who is in the guise of a beggar.

Callimachus seems to have dwelt on the poverty of Hecale and depicted it in sordid and realistic detail. Living in rustic simplicity, she is forced to make do with common implements, rough furniture and coarse fare. Hecale seats Theseus upon "a cheap little bed" (fr. 240); she fetches water in a common earthen pot (fr. 244). Several fragments describe in detail the simple food which Hecale prepares: coarse bread, olives, assorted vegetables (frr. 248, 334, 249, 250, 251). The detailed description of Hecale's humble circumstances runs counter to the elaborate grandeur of the preceding passage dealing with the storm that Theseus encounters and contrasts starkly with the opulence of Homer's heroic world.

It seems that the scene then moved on to a dialogue. Theseus tells Hecale about himself and in turn asks about her. She probably accuses him of waking sleeping tears (fr. 682) before she begins to relate her life-story and how she became poor (cf. Eumaeus' account: *Od.* 15.390ff.). Although Eumaeus reflects on his tragedy with detachment (*Od.* 15.400ff.), Callimachus' depiction of Hecale's misfortunes has a hint of tragedy. She was prosperous and of good family (fr. 254, *SH* 285.7); she married a good husband and bore him two fine sons (*SH* 287.1ff.). A sequence of mishaps then destroyed her entire family and reduced her to poverty. Hecale's misfortunes are intensified by the crow's account of its fall from Athena's favour (*SH* 288) which reinforces the theme of the fall from good fortune. The crow is a parody of Hecale and helps to highlight her plight.

Hecale dies probably knowing that her son killed by Cercyon has been avenged by Theseus, though she is probably ignorant of Theseus' triumph over the Marathonian bull. Her epitaph (fr. 263) echoes her hospitality to travellers described perhaps at the beginning of the poem (fr. 231).

Theseus, on the other hand, is treated in the heroic mould to offset the lowly and pathetic figure of Hecale. His arrival in Athens is presented with dramatic force (frr. 232-6). There is a suggestion of his valour in the scene where he pleads with his father to allow him to fight the bull (fr. 238, *SH* 281); his secret departure in defiance of his father's wishes (*Diegesis* 26ff.; Pfeiffer:1949:227)

reflects his heroic courage. When Theseus appears dragging the conquered bull, people are afraid to look not only on the "huge beast" but also at the *ἄνδρα μέγαν* (*SH* 288.3).

This heroic portrait is complemented by Theseus' humane and dutiful conduct in sending a message to his father after he has overcome the bull "to relieve him from anxiety" (*SH* 288.7), and in his relationship with Hecale. When Theseus returned after his victory, he came upon the men digging Hecale's tomb and lamented in bitter disappointment (fr. 262; *Diegesis* 11; Pfeiffer:1965:227). Hutchinson (1988:63) observes:

> The scene must have exploited the poignant contact between these divergent figures. We can at least see the divergence, and perceive something of how the elevation of Theseus' heroism stands against the lowly element in Hecale's pathos, and goes to make up the tonal structure of the poem.

Although the *Hecale* retained some elements of the idyll, it was undoubtedly the model upon which subsequent Hellenistic epyllia were based. As will be seen in due course, it was radically modified by poets like Euphorion and Parthenius who eliminated its idyllic elements and changed its thematic content to give it the shape which became popular among the New Poets.

The *Hecale* exemplified Callimachus' new approach to mythical narrative which was characterized by a special kind of realism; a familiar tone and personal approach; and a marked brevity and asymmetry (Otis:1963:11). The asymmetrical approach is significant in that it afforded the poet the latitude to accentuate his specific concerns. Thus Callimachus could avoid the myth proper and focus on side-issues relevant to his scheme of poetics. He concentrated primarily on the hospitality of the old and poverty-stricken Hecale, her tender and motherly relationship with Theseus, and the latter's reaction to her death. An elliptical approach to myth and narrative thus enabled Callimachus to choose an incident in the legend of Theseus and treat it in accordance with his envisioned poetics.

The epyllion, as conceived by Callimachus, then, was the result of his new conception of myth presented in a bland, familiar, personal and elliptical narrative form. Though the *Hecale* was ostensibly a poem in the epic mould, its heroic theme was merely an excuse for focusing on what Callimachus regarded as the most important elements: the conversation between Theseus and Hecale which highlighted the latter's tragic fall from felicity, the crow's warning which embraced incidental mythical episodes, the detailed description of simple country life, and Theseus' lament for the dead Hecale. Callimachus writes in a language and form adapted from Homer; the manner, however, is new, the values of epic are reversed, and the poem, as far as can be gauged, reflects the concerns of contemporary Hellenistic society.

The poverty-stricken Hecale, rather than the heroic Theseus, is the main subject of the poem. It is likely that the description of Theseus' conquest of the bull was brief, and what heroic virtues are implicitly ascribed to Theseus, are meant to highlight the rustic simplicity of Hecale and impart an added poignancy to her fate, although it seems that the tragic element was by no means Callimachus' primary concern.

In making Hecale the heroine of the poem, Callimachus deliberately controverted Aristotle's views on the type of hero suitable for high poetry (Brink:1946:11-26; Zanker:1977:68-77). Aristotle considered *οἱ σπουδαῖοι* to be the proper subject of epic and tragedy (*Poet.* 48 a 25-8). As seen above, while Callimachus dealt with the episode of Theseus and the bull, his poem emphasizes Theseus' visit to Hecale's hut and the humble hospitality accorded him. Like most extant Hellenistic epyllia, the poem concentrates on an unheroic, ordinary personage in a well-known myth. This brings Hecale into the foreground and her achievements, not Theseus', are highlighted.

In giving Hecale the central role in the poem, then, Callimachus, in direct refutation of Aristotle, rejected the tradition which confined serious representation in tragedy and epic to "men of significance". Not only did it reflect the Hellenistic interest in the individual in the universe but was also a bold departure from a well-entrenched tradition and created an authoritative

precedent for further transformation of the epyllion in the later Alexandrian age.

The next important figure in the development of the epyllion is Euphorion of Chalcis. Again, the remnants of his poetry are lamentably sparse, and his contribution to the development of the epyllion must be cautiously extrapolated from the evidence.

He was born at Chalcis in Euboea c. 276/5 BC[9]. He is said to have studied philosophy with Lakydes and Prytanis and poetry with Archeboulus. As far as is known, he did not go to Alexandria, making him one of the few contemporary poets who had no relations with the Ptolemaic court. In old age (he was probably 53) he became the head of the library at Antioch during the reign of Antiochus III, where, according to Tertullian (*De An.* 46), he used his poetry for palace propaganda. He is also said to have been the favourite of Nicaia, wife of Alexander, the king of Euboea. It was circumstances such as these, allied with his extremist poetic principles, that made him the subject of much gossip.

It is clear from the remaining fragments of his work (Powell:1933:28-58) that he was a writer of hexameter poems. The fragments show that his poetry was learned, in difficult language, and based on obscure myths; hence Cicero's charge of obscurity against him (*Div.* 2.64). The steady shift of emphasis to side-

issues in his narrative, and the avoidance of the epic manner, show that Euphorion was deliberately attempting to break away from Homer in furtherance of the Callimachean tradition.

Twenty-one titles are ascribed to him; of these at least six are conjectured to be epyllia (Crump:1931:95ff.). They are the *Anius*, the *Apollodorus*, the *Dionysus Κεχηνώς*, the *Hippomedon*, the *Hyacinthus*, and the *Philoctetes*. Vergil (*Aen.* 3.80ff.) mentions Anius who was the king of Delos, and Ovid (*Met.* 13.644ff.) describes the miraculous powers of his daughters and their escape from captivity through the agency of Bacchus who changed them into doves; it is likely that Euphorion's *Anius* was Ovid's source.

The subject of the *Apollodorus* is known from the fragments, from Parthenius' *Erotika Pathemata* (28) and from the scholiast on Apollonius Rhodius (1.1063). The poem dealt with Cyzicus, whose name appears in the two lines of Euphorion quoted by the scholiast on Lycophron (fr. 4). Euphorion evidently did not use Apollonius' version (*Argo.* 1.936-1076) in which Cyzicus, shortly after his marriage to Cleite, attacked Jason and the Argonauts in ignorance of their identities. When Cyzicus was killed in the action Apollonius recounts, his wife embraced his body lying stretched on the ground; that night, out of sight of her servants, she hanged herself from a tree. Euphorion's version, on the other hand, tells that Cyzicus died in battle after having taken Larisa, the daughter of Piasus, as his wife - she had slept with her father before the

marriage. Euphorion's version thus characteristically embodies an unnatural, incestuous love-story.

The subject of the *Hippomedon*, a legend often dealt with in Greek literature, cannot be fixed with certainty; Euphorion probably told the story of the Epidamnian Hippomedon who committed suicide after an unhappy love-affair.

The *Hyacinthus* dealt with the story of the hyacinth that sprang from the blood of Hyacinthus. The three-line fragment (fr. 40) possibly contains the opening line.

A fragment of the *Philoctetes* (fr. 44) refers to the death of Iphimachus who supplied Philoctetes with food while he was stranded on the island of Lemnos. It is likely, then, that the poem dealt with Philoctetes' sufferings on the island.

There is little doubt that these six poems were epyllia, as, probably, were some of the remaining works. Meineke, cited by Crump (1931:93), suggests that the *Γέρανος* told the story of a woman among the Pygmies who was turned into a crane. If this conjecture is correct, then the poem could well have been an epyllion.

The *Thrax* presents considerable difficulties. It is cited by Parthenius as the source of two of his stories in the *Erotika Pathemata*: those of Harpalyce (13) and

Apriate (26). The poem ends with the statement that a murderer will suffer in hell and his victim will become immortal through fame. It has been suggested that it focuses on the theme of justice and crime, and is a series of curses on the murderer of a friend (Webster:1964:226-7). The final section implores Ares to send peace and justice to men. Justice is inescapable, and Euphorion prefaces this statement by mythological examples. One is the story of Apriate, who refused the advances of Trambelus and cursed him with an unhappy marriage, in the manner of mythological examples she quotes. She then leapt into the sea and was probably saved by dolphins, though Trambelus was killed by Achilles.

Earlier in the poem Euphorion had told the story, not surprisingly, of Clymenus' incest with his daughter Harpalyce, her murder of her younger brother, her metamorphosis into a hawk, and of Clymenus' suicide. Also included were the stories of the death of Amphiaraus (fr. 23), Coroebus (fr. 24), the giants killed by Heracles (fr. 25), and the revenge of Heracles on the Hippokoontids for the murder of Oionos (fr. 29).

The *Thrax*, then, characteristically contains bizarre and sensational episodes in the Euphorionic mould. The evidence seems to suggest that the poem was a catalogue rather than an epyllion; but it could well have been an epyllion with considerable digressions.

As far as the epyllion was concerned, both Callimachus and Euphorion displayed a predilection for obscure subjects. The difference between them lay in the manner of treatment and the areas of emphasis. The *Hecale* exhibits a touch of romance as evident in the exploits of Theseus, a sense of realism as depicted in the detailed description of the heroine's rustic simplicity and poverty, and a note of true pathos arising from natural emotion as exemplified by Hecale's account of her fall from good fortune and Theseus' lament at her sudden death.

Euphorion, on the other hand, clearly preferred the bizarre, the sensational and the morbid. While he may not have been responsible for inventing this type of story, he was probably the first to introduce it into the epyllion. He perhaps also led the way in eliminating almost entirely the narrative and picturesque detail that characterized the epic idyll and, to a lesser extent, the *Hecale*. A surviving fragment[10] clearly indicates this: Apriate, being lustfully pursued by Trambelus, delivers a lament, and then, within the space of a single line, hurls herself into the sea. The poet is clearly not so much interested in picturesque detail as in obscure mythical allusion and in the emotional state of his character; the narrative style is abrupt and compressed.

All the evidence points to Euphorion's epyllion being considerably different to any previous type. It differs from the epic idyll in having a complicated plot, but it lacks Callimachus' realistic descriptions of persons and scenes. The epyllion

assumes an increasingly erotic slant; crime, violence, incest and unnatural affection are common themes; it becomes a vehicle for sensationalism and for the study of morbid psychology. This was undoubtedly the kind of epyllion that Parthenius introduced into the Roman world; its adoption by the New Poets was certainly the basis for Cicero's denunciation of them as mere "cantores Euphorionis"[11].

Clausen (1964:191) observes that Euphorion "modelled himself on Callimachus: he had Callimachus' interest in local legends, aetiology, geography, mythology, and more than Callimachus' interest in the epyllion". Commenting on his style, Lyne (1978:185) describes it in the following terms: "The deviousness of his poetry - which included epyllions at least - was virtually unbeatable: deviousness manifesting itself in mannered obscurity of style and highly exotic, off-beat content". If one compares Euphorion with the authors cited as sources in Parthenius' *Erotika Pathemata* (see below), it is clear that he shares with them his obscure language and style, and his interest in aetiology and recondite myths. To this may be added what is certainly the most important element in the context of Parthenius and the Neoteric epyllion: his interest in the bizarre and in the abnormal psychology of love (cf. Stern:1992:107).

Finally, we come to Parthenius of Nicaea. Again, little is known about his life. In view of his centrality to this thesis, and because he is a figure who is generally

obscure, I will present certain facts and reconstructions about his life and works that have been established by scholars.

The *Suda* informs us that Parthenius was the son of Heracleides and Eudora (or Tetha) and was born in Nicaea or Myrlea. He wrote in various metres, and was captured in the Mithridatic war by a certain Cinna and brought to Rome. He was freed on account of his learning and lived until the reign of Tiberius.

The date of his capture and arrival in Rome has been placed between 73 BC (when the Romans conquered Nicaea) and 66 BC (when Mithridates was finally defeated). Susemihl (1891:191) and Lesky (1966:755) place his arrival in 73 BC while Wiseman (1974:47) uses the *Suda*'s statement about the defeat of Mithridates to set the date at 66 BC (cf. Crump:1931:103). Clausen (1987:6) and Crowther (1976:65-6) suggest a date anywhere between the two. The exact date is not crucial; "even if we take the latest possible date for his arrival...this date would be early enough to influence the circle of the "poetae novi" from the very beginning of their careers; none of them seems to have started before 65" (Pfeiffer:1943:30-31).

At the time of his arrival in Rome Parthenius was certainly an adult, having been freed *διὰ παίδευσιν*. It is unlikely, therefore, that he lived until the succession of Tiberius when he would have been more than a hundred years old; the information in the *Suda* is probably confused. Suetonius (*Tiberius* 70.2)

remarks that Tiberius *fecit et Graeca poemata imitatus Euphorionem et Rhianum et Parthenium, quibus poetis admodum delectatus*. This hardly suggests that Parthenius was alive at the time, any more than was Euphorion, who lived in the third century BC (Stern:1992:97).

Again, there is no consensus as to the identity of the Cinna mentioned in the *Suda*. Wiseman (1974:48), in support of his proposition that Cinna was the leading member of the Neoteric circle, writes that "there is no reason at all to suppose that the Cinna in Suidas is not the poet" (cf. Newman:1990:346). While the poet Cinna and Parthenius doubtless met at Rome, the Cinna in question might have been the poet himself, or some relative (cf. Crowther:1976:69; Pfeiffer:1943:30; Clausen:1982:184; Stern:1992:98).

As far as the poetry of Parthenius is concerned, he is said to have written extensively in elegiacs and dactylic hexameters. A. von Blumenthal (1949:1896-8) gives a list of the titles ascribed to Parthenius: *Aphrodite*, *Bias*, *Crinagoras*, *Delos*, *Encomium on Arete*, *Lament for Archelais*, *Lament for Arete*, *Leucadiae*, *Anthippe*, *Eidolophanes*, *Heracles*, *Iphiclus*, *Lament for Auxithemis*, *Metamorphoses*, and *Propempticon*. Of course, except for the *Erotika Pathemata* and a few fragments, Parthenius' works have not survived.

Pfeiffer (1943:23-32) has identified a fragment, erroneously ascribed to Callimachus, as deriving from Parthenius' *Lament for Arete*. These are the only

remains of his early writings. The poem was famous at Rome; it was referred to in an inscription by Hadrian honouring the poet's memory, and both Pfeiffer (1943:32) and Lyne (1978a:178-9) suggest that it may have inspired Calvus' lost lament for his wife Quintilia.

Two reasonably lengthy fragments survive to suggest the nature of at least some of Parthenius' poetry. The first is in the form of a quote by the poet himself in *Erotika Pathemata* 11. It concerns the incestuous relationship between Byblis and Caunus.

ἡ δ᾽ ὅτε δή ῥ᾽ ὀλοοῖο κασιγνήτου νόον ἔγνω,
κλαῖεν ἀηδονίδων θαμινώτερον, αἵ τ᾽ ἐνὶ βήσσῃς
Σιθονίῳ κούρῳ πέρι μυρίον αἰάζουσιν
καί ῥα κατὰ στυφελοῖο σαρωνίδος αὐτίκα μίτρην
ἁψαμένη δειρὴν ἐνεθήκατο, ταὶ δ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἐκείνῃ
βεύδεα παρθενικαὶ Μιλησίδες ἐρρήξαντο.

She learned her angry brother's mind-
Then wept the nightingale's lament, that keens
The youthful Itys in the woods.
On jagged oak she hung her scarf-
And in the loop her neck. Milesian girls
In grief for her their virgin dresses tore.

Translated by Stern (1992:26).

The other fragment (Parth. 22) is quoted by Eustathius from Stephanus of Byzantium. It deals with the transformation of a girl, probably named Comaetho, into a spring near the Cilician town of Glaphyrae:

παρθένος Κιλίκων εἶχεν ἀνακτορίην.
ἀγχίγαμος δ' ἔπελεν, καθαρῷ δ' ἐπεμαίνετο Κύδνῳ
Κύπριδος ἐξ ἀδύτων πυρσὸν ἀναψαμένη,
εἰσόκε μιν Κύπρις πηγὴν θέτο, μῖξε δ' ἔρωτι
Κύδνου καὶ νύμφης ὑδατόεντα γάμον.

The girl who was Cilicia's queen and was
Of an age to wed went mad for crystal Cydnus-
Aflame from Aphrodite's inner shrine-
Until the goddess made the girl a spring, and joined
In love the river Cydnus and his watery bride.
(Lloyd-Jones and Parsons:1983:640)

Both these fragments clearly indicate the kind of poetry espoused by Parthenius following the tradition of Euphorion. There is the same interest in grotesque sexuality, obscurity and metamorphosis; it was this aspect of the Alexandrian tradition which Parthenius transmitted to the Roman world as clearly illustrated by his *Erotika Pathemata.*

It is regrettable that little is known about Parthenius' *Metamorphoses*. Rohde (1914:100ff.) suggests that it was an epic or elegiac poem; but the only record of it is a prose passage which occurs in the *Scholia* on Dionysius Periegetes (5.420;

see Crump:1931:106 for details). The passage may be a summary of certain verses, but it is also possible that it quotes the actual words of Parthenius. If the latter is true, then it was likely to be a collection of stories like the *Erotika Pathemata*, each story dealing with a transformation of the principal character or characters. As will be seen, the epyllia of the New Poets deal with themes that are typically metamorphic, and it is tempting to suggest that Parthenius' lost *Metamorphoses* conceivably had an influence on this trend.

We now turn to Parthenius' *Erotika Pathemata*, his only wholly extant work. It is a collection of 36 love-stories in prose and given in outline, prefaced by a dedicatory letter to Cornelius Gallus indicating its purpose: the provision of basic themes for Gallus to work up into epyllia or elegies. To what extent Gallus used them is impossible to say since his poetry is not extant. Although no specific details are provided, it is possible to infer how he was expected to develop these plots. If one examines, for instance, Ovid's treatment of the story of Scylla in his *Metamorphoses* (8.6ff.) one can conclude, as Perry (1967:252) does, that "Gallus would compose narratives dramatically prolonged with much character analysis and a lively portrayal of the thoughts and emotions of the characters". An occasional touch in Parthenius suggests how Gallus was to analyse psychological states: at times he could do so via speeches of the hero or heroine, at times by personally analysing a state of mind. It seems that Parthenius also expected learned discussions, for he often gives a second version of a story or adds more details from other sources.

Some plots are straight-forward, while others are intricate, but all lend themselves to treatment in the narrative and dramatic style. There is no indication of picturesque or realistic treatment; furthermore, the themes are intended for short poems and are full of incident, hence providing little scope for detailed description. There are indications for the introduction of long speeches as found in the *Attis*, *Peleus and Thetis*, the *Ciris* and in the *Metamorphoses*. In the story of Dimoetes (31), Euopis utters a curse against Thymoetes when the latter informs Troezen, Euopis' father, that she was sleeping with her own brother. In *Alcinoe* (27), Nicandra, who was unfairly driven out of Alcinoe's home without being paid the wages due to her, utters a prayer to Athena to punish Alcinoe. In the same story, when Alcinoe is punished by developing a mad passion for a stranger named Xanthus and sails off with him, leaving her children and husband behind, she suddenly realizes her error and in a lengthy speech invokes her husband and children. In the tale of Polymela (2), her father Aeolus curses Odysseus when he discovers that his daughter developed a mutual passion for Odysseus and was pining at his betrayal of her. Likewise, there are clear indications of speeches in the stories of Hipparinus (7), Polycrite (9), Byblis (11), Calchus (12), Laodice (16), Neaera (18) and Peisidice (21). When there is no indication of a speech, the introduction of a nurse [*Harpalyce* (13); *Peisidice* (21)], tutor [*Pallene* (6)], or other confidante [*Leucippus* (5); *Laodice* (16)] suggests scenes accompanied by long speeches as in the *Ciris* and *Metamorphoses* (cf. Crump:1931:112).

This much can be inferred about Parthenius' suggested treatment of the stories. As for the nature of the plots themselves, all but three (with happy endings) echo the title of the collection. Love in these stories is a negative experience leading to disastrous results, or as Wiseman (1974:55) puts it, the stories "deal with love doomed and tragic - often incestuous, sometimes ending with a metamorphosis". Twenty-five end in the death of one or both of the main characters, while the remaining 11 are characterized by unfaithfulness, violence or treachery. Certain incidents recur: in six instances a girl is deserted by her lover; murder and accidental death occur frequently; there are six examples of the murder of relatives; and suicide occurs on eight occasions. Unnatural affection (mostly incestuous) forms the basis of six stories, and occurs incidentally in three others, while in five the chief motive is the love of a girl for an enemy.

Violence, betrayal and unnatural love, then, are frequently recurring themes, and elements of the bizarre, sensational and morbid characterize the entire collection. Parthenius resorts to sensational stories to highlight the "sufferings due to love".

Furthermore, the plots suggest that Parthenius expected Gallus to reject the tradition in which certain definite cycles of legend are connected with epic poetry. It is not possible to gauge who was first responsible for this departure; but in the extant Hellenistic epyllia, the tendency is nascent in Theocritus'

Hylas and in the *Europa* of Moschus (see Gutzwiller:1981:19ff. and 63ff. for a detailed discussion).

The single surviving ninth-century manuscript of the *Erotika Pathemata* (known as Palatinus 398) identifies in brief marginal notes the sources which Parthenius used for all but eight of his stories. It is difficult to establish whether the citations are by Parthenius himself or were added by a later scholar or editor of the collection. Wiseman (1974:55) suggests that this careful listing of sources reflects Parthenius' scholar-poet ethic, while Stern (1992:106), citing Rohde (1914:122-5), believes that there is reason to doubt that Parthenius himself was responsible for the marginal notations: "[W]e may safely accept Rohde's conclusion that the notations are the work of some later scholar or editor of Parthenius". Whatever the truth, the sources cited are reasonably accurate.

Besides well-known names like Sophocles, Aristotle and Theophrastus, and a small group about whom nothing is known, Parthenius' sources can be grouped into three categories (Stern:1992:107-8):

1) Alexandrian poets of the third and second centuries BC represented by Apollonius, Euphorion, Hermesianax, Licymnius, Moero, Nicaenetus, Nicander, Philetas, and Simmias. They may be characterized as scholar-poets; and it is interesting that Euphorion is cited as the source for three of the stories (13, 26, 28).

2) Classical and Hellenistic historians, viz. Aristocritus, Hegesippus, Hellanicus, Neanthes, Phylarchus, Theagnes, Timaeus, and Xanthus. This accords with the well-known fact that Hellenistic writers of elegies and epyllia often resorted to the large number of prose histories and collections of local legends for their material. Phylarchus, who is known to have written extensively on sagas, legends, and tales of love, is cited three times.

3) Grammarians, scholars and philosophers: Phaenias, Aristodemus and Asclepiades.

Crump (1931:113) sums up the main features of the epyllion as transmitted to Rome by Parthenius as follows:

> It was a short narrative poem, in which the interest centred on the plot and the characters, no prominence being given to picturesque or realistic description. The plot was well defined, often abounding in incident, nearly always sensational, occasionally morbid and usually concluding in tragedy; a happy ending might be allowed, if sufficient sensation was introduced into the story. Love stories were the most popular type of subject, and much psychological analysis was introduced, often, probably, by means of dramatic treatment.

It is unlikely that Parthenius was responsible for the birth of this particular type of epyllion, though one cannot exclude the possibility that he might have made a contribution to its development. In the absence of reliable evidence, one can only conjecture that Euphorion was the inventor of the type. The role of

Parthenius was mainly to bring to Rome the epyllion-form as conceived by Callimachus and developed by Euphorion and possibly modified to some extent by Parthenius himself, and to popularize it and fix it as a model for the Neoteric school.

Parthenius' poetic stance is further evidenced by an epigram (*AP* 7.377) ascribed to Erucius of Cyzicus, who may have been a contemporary. It is now generally agreed that the Parthenius referred to is Parthenius of Nicaea (Seth-Smith:1981:63-71; Giangrande:1983:15-18; Newman:1990:346-7; Stern:1992: 102). Here follows the text and a translation by Seth-Smith (1981:63):

εἰ καὶ ὑπὸ χθονὶ κεῖται, ὅμως ἔτι καὶ κατὰ πίσσαν
τοῦ μιαρογλώσσου χεύατε Παρθενίου,
οὕνεκα Πιερίδεσσιν ἐνήμεσε μυρία κεῖνα
φλέγματα καὶ μυσαρῶν ἀπλυσίην ἐλέγων
ἤλασε καὶ μανίης ἐπὶ δὴ τόσον ὥστ' ἀγορεῦαι
πηλὸν Ὀδυσσείην καὶ βοτὸν Ἰλιάδα.
τοιγὰρ ὑπὸ ζοφίαισιν Ἐρινύσιν ἀμμέσον ἧπται
Κωκυτοῦ κλοιῶι λαιμὸν απαγχόμενος.

Even though he lies beneath the earth,
nevertheless still pour pitch on Parthenius
the foul-mouthed, because he vomited on
the Muses those myriad phlegms and the
staining filth of his abominable elegies; he
even drove to such a point of insanity that
he declared the Odyssey was mud and the

Iliad was craptrack. That is why he is held
by the dark Furies in the middle of
Cocytus, his throat choked by a dog-collar.

The epigram illustrates the radical position of Parthenius as far as the epyllion was concerned. He went beyond Callimachus by attacking not only the imitators of Homer, but the great poet himself.

It would appear that my basic hypothesis is vitiated by a chronological problem that admittedly arises as far as the date of the *Erotika Pathemata* is concerned. The collection was in all likelihood composed, and certainly dedicated to Cornelius Gallus, a late Neoteric, well after Catullus' death. It would seem a futile exercise, therefore, to analyse the collection in detail and to look simplistically for parallels amongst the New Poets and Catullus in particular. That is by no means my intended approach. I have examined the *Erotika Pathemata* in some detail merely to establish the tenor of the Parthenian doctrine. It is my firm conviction that this canon was expounded by Parthenius in his role as a teacher from the very beginning of his arrival in Rome. Crowther (1976:69) and Wiseman (1974:48ff.), for instance, readily acknowledge Parthenius' influence over Cinna's *Zmyrna*. If the statement in Cat. 95 that Cinna laboured for nine years over the *Zmyrna* is true - and there is no reason to doubt this - Cinna's epyllion could safely be ascribed to a period before 60 BC. It is widely accepted that the *Zmyrna* accords with the *erotika pathemata* doctrine and this clearly vindicates my belief that Parthenius disseminated his

teachings from the time of his arrival in Rome. That Catullus and many of his fellow-poets embraced the Parthenian doctrine, at least in as far as their epyllia were concerned, will become evident in the chapters that follow.

I now cite some of those scholars who have incidentally referred to Parthenius' influence on the New Poets. Clausen (1964:187-9) suggests that the technique of Cat. 95 is inspired by Parthenius. D.O. Ross (1969:162), despite Parthenius not being mentioned explicitly in the Catullan corpus, is tempted to interpret the reference to his home town, Nicaea, in *Nicaeaque ager uber aestuosus* (46.5), as complimentary. The rare poetic adjective *aestuosus* is used only once elsewhere by Catullus in a reference to Callimachus - *oraculum Iovis inter aestuosi/et Batti veteris sacrum sepulcrum* (7.5-6). Again, D.O. Ross (1969:162) claims that

> The importance of Parthenius cannot be over-estimated; without his timely arrival there could have been no New Poetry, for it is unlikely that Cinna, Calvus, Catullus and the other Neoterics could by themselves have understood or adopted Callimachean poetry, or by themselves have devised the vocabulary and technique necessary for the creation of a new genre.

Clausen (1987:6) likewise states that "it is doubtful whether a Cinna or a Calvus or a Catullus could have read and appreciated Callimachus without a Parthenius at his elbow".

I have tried in this chapter to establish that the epyllion came to be recognized as a genre in its own right. I have traced the different stages of its evolution down to Parthenius and have attempted to show how it took on those particular features which influenced the epyllia of the Neoteric school. It was manifestly shown how the epyllion, in the later stages of its development, became markedly erotic in its interest, with a preference for unhappy stories of a sensational and morbid kind as exemplified by Parthenius' *Erotika Pathemata*. I now turn to specific works of the New Poets to establish Parthenius' role in determining their character.

NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

1. Apart from incidental references to the epyllion by various scholars, specific works that I have consulted are Jackson, C., "The Latin Epyllion" *HSPh* 24, 1913, 37-50; Allen, W., "The Epyllion: A Chapter in the History of Classical Criticism" *TAPA* 71, 1940, 1-26; Crump, M., *The Epyllion from Theocritus to Ovid*, Oxford, 1931; Vessey, D.W.T.C., "Thoughts on the Epyllion" *CJ* 66, 1970, 38-43; Gutzwiller K.J., *Studies in the Hellenistic Epyllion*, Königstein, 1981.

2. Allen (1940:15) states that "we must also disregard the evidence which is usually drawn from the titles of lost poems or from poems preserved only in fragments, since we cannot be sure of their genre when we lack their text." Hellenistic scholarship, as is well known, is seriously hampered by massive literary losses; were we to take seriously cynical prescriptions such as Allen's, Hellenistic studies, to be sure, would long ago have been moribund. Conjecture - calculated and cautious - must be the wherewithal of the scholar in a field where insufficient evidence could well lead to stagnation. Relevant papyrus finds have indeed proved many scholars wrong, but have vindicated the conjectures of others. To reject implicit findings when titles, fragments and subsidiary evidence concur in suggesting certain trends, is to close the door on scholarly enterprise in areas where further research could prove valuable.

3. Again, Allen (1940:18-23) points to the differences in length to disprove the existence of the genre. He suggests that the Alexandrians were influenced by Aristotle's views on the subject of length, and that there should therefore be uniformity amongst the supposed epyllia. It will be seen, however, that Callimachus, who established the general nature of the epyllion in the Alexandrian world, deliberately flouted the precepts of Aristotle. At any rate, it is a frivolous exercise to determine what the Alexandrians regarded as the "proper" length for the epyllion (Allen arrives at a figure approximating to two

books of Homer), and then to use that as a basis for rejecting the existence of the epyllion as a form.

4. See Snell, B., *Szenen aus griechischen Dramen*, Berlin, 1971, 159-160, 166-168 and Vogt, E., *A&A* 13, 1967, 80-98 (cited by Bing:1988:15) for details.

5. Philetas' contemporaries speak of him wearing himself out through his scholarly exertions; this was later exaggerated into an account of his extreme emaciation which required his feet to be weighted with lead in heavy winds (*Ath.* 401e).

6. Although his influence on Cat. 64 is widely acknowledged (see my discussion of the poem in Chapter 5), my decision not to elaborate upon Theocritus derives from my belief that his conception of the epyllion is not typical of the type that became popular with the New Poets.

Theocritus' epyllia (*Id.* 13, 24 and 25) are of the idyllic type; the poems, while being short, deal with epic subjects presented with picturesque detail. There is barely any attempt at character analysis and the speeches are aimed at variation rather than dramatic effect. The poet presents his scenes in detail without obscure allusions or a parade of learning (Crump:1931:51).

These features may typify his poems which are classified as epyllia, but his poetry in general deals with the "agony of unfulfilled love and the strangely distracting and disorienting effect of love-sickness; Theocritus more than any other Hellenistic writer is the poet of love, but of love as pain rather than lyrical experience" (Bulloch:1989:45). The paucity of evidence makes it hazardous to conjecture what impact this feature of Theocritus' poetry might have had on the themes of the later Hellenistic epyllia which were written in an age when increasing decadence and alienation could well have rendered his themes of "love-sickness" consonant with the prevailing *Zeitgeist*.

7. See Fraser (1972:755ff.) for a detailed discussion of the scholiast's statement. His conclusion that "neither the *Hecale* nor the *Aetia* was composed as an 'answer' to that charge" is perhaps correct, but it is not the view that prevails amongst all modern scholars. I adopt the stance of Hollis (1990:3-4) who dates the *Hecale* at c. 270 BC; his suggestion that the poem was a response to criticism levelled at the earlier *Aetia* seems more plausible in the light of Callimachus' statement that the charge was made "because [he] did not accomplish one single, continuous poem". The *Hecale* was undoubtedly a single, continuous poem, while the *Aetia* was not.

8. Most of these are to be found in the prologue of the *Aetia*. The prologue, presumably written after the four books of the poem were complete and in circulation, violently counters the criticisms of Callimachus' opponents whom he dubs "Telchines". See also *Ep.* 28 Pf; *Hymn to Apollo* 105-12; *Iambus* 1, fr. 191, *Iambus* 2, frr. 192, 215, 393; *Iambus* 13, fr. 203. The lost *Ibis* is also assumed to have been written in polemical vein, attacking, according to one tradition, Apollonius.

Although Theocritus is believed not to have actively participated in the debate, his alignment with Callimachean doctrine is evident in *Id.* 7. 39-48.

9. As is often the case with the chronology of Hellenistic authors, there is uncertainty about the date of Euphorion's birth. The *Suda* mentions the 126th Olympiad; but modern scholars believe that this is an error and place the date at c. 275 BC (see Van Groningen:1977:249).

10. It can be found in *Select Papyri* 111, ed. Page, D.L., Loeb Classical Library, 494-7.

11. See Crowther, N.B., "**ΟΙ ΝΕΩΤΕΡΟΙ**, Poetae Novi, and Cantores Euphorionis", CQ 20, 1974, 322-7 for these much-discussed terms. Newman

(1990:372-8) also discusses the New Poets in the context of Cicero's "Cantores Euphorionis"; he confines himself, however, to linguistic and metrical parallels, and mentions nothing about the Neoteric epyllion's similarity (in thematic content and treatment) with its Euphorionic prototype as a possible basis for Cicero's use of the term. See also Tuplin:1979:258-60 and Watson:1982:93-110.

CHAPTER FOUR

If it is allowed that the main features of the later Hellenistic epyllion, and in particular its thematic basis as transmitted to Rome by Parthenius, have been established, my intention in this and subsequent chapters is to examine some relevant Neoteric works and to evaluate, as far as possible, the extent to which they embrace Parthenius' doctrine of *erotika pathemata.*

I begin with Cat. 63 which is, possibly, the most "Parthenian" poem in the Catullan corpus. Two decades ago, there was comparatively little research on the poem, a failing for which Rubino (1974:152-3) advances three basic reasons:

1) Since the *Attis* was presumably unconnected with the poet's life, it was uncongenial to the romantic proclivities of earlier Catullan scholarship which interpreted his poems as personal documents. (This view proved pervasive enough to dismiss Cat. 63 as a product of the "split Catullus"; but see Harkins:1959; Putnam:1961; and Whigham:1966:43 as prior examples of psychoanalytical interpretations of the poem).

2) The *Attis* was widely thought to be a translation, in part or entirely, of an Alexandrian model (see Willamowitz-Moellendorff:1879:144-99; Weinreich: 1936:463-500; Bardon:1943:29-32; Schuster:1948:2376-7; and Fordyce:1990:262). This theory is, however, generally discredited today (Quinn:1977:283).

3) The tendency to look to the *Attis* as a source of information for the Cybele-Attis cult has inhibited a critical appreciation of the poem.

The situation has since changed dramatically, however, and Cat. 63 is now the focus of increasing attention from scholars and critics. Almost no recent major work on the poet overlooks the poem, which has become among the most controversial in the Catullan corpus with little unanimity emerging as to its rightful status.

No scholar has ventured to view Cat. 63 in the mould of the epyllion popular among the Neoterics. The poem's use of the galliambic is conceivably the reason for this[1]. While there is many a *caveat* against too inflexible and pedantic a set of conventions in establishing the genre of a literary work, the failure to conceive of the *Attis* as an epyllion is another legacy of the reductivism that has long tainted attitudes in classical scholarship.

It is true that the hexameter was the established metre of the genre as transmitted to Rome from the Hellenistic world. The epyllion, however, was new to Neoteric Rome. Untrammelled by native precedent, it offered itself fairly adaptably to a group readily inclined to experimentation in their self-conscious and resolute efforts to formulate a new scheme of poetics.

The galliambic, again, was conventionally associated with the cult of Cybele (see Fordyce:1990:293; Lee:1990:192) and its choice in lieu of the hexameter traditional to the epyllion was patently influenced by the theme of the *Attis*. The galliambic provided the ideal metrical background against which Catullus could establish the mood of the poem and examine the hero's ecstasy and subsequent tragedy (see R.C. Ross:1969 and Loomis:1972:119ff. for Catullus' use of the galliambic).

In addition, the choice of the galliambic satisfied the Neoteric penchant for metrical experimentation and afforded a display of the poet's technical virtuosity and his mastery of a metre difficult to adapt to a language like Latin which lacks the run of short syllables that the metre demands.

Metrical considerations aside, the *Attis* has many features in common with the late Hellenistic epyllion: an asymmetrical approach to the treatment of myth, a highly compressed and rapid narrative with limited use of picturesque detail (in as far as they serve the poet's particular intent), learned allusions, and a subjective and personal tone underscored occasionally by the poet's overt intrusion into the narrative (see Otis:1963:11 for a summary of the Callimachean epyllion).

In addition, the pronounced structural emphasis on speeches which serve as a vehicle for psychological analysis, and the choice of theme - a bizarre love-story

culminating in tragedy and providing abundant scope for pathos and exploration of the human psyche - conform closely with the traditions of the later Alexandrian epyllion. These features, together with a markedly idiosyncratic treatment of the myth and the emphasis on Attis' tragedy as a sequel to a misdirected amorous *furor*, contribute to making the *Attis* a poem cast very much in the Parthenian mould.

I will therefore treat the *Attis* as an epyllion, notwithstanding frequent references to the *Peleus and Thetis* as the only extant Neoteric example of this genre; and I believe it is specifically representative of the type of epyllion popular amongst the New Poets, as I shall demonstrate below.

The *Attis* is among Catullus' latest works. The date of composition is assigned to the period of his sojourn in Bithynia (c. 57-56 BC) or immediately after (Elder:1947:396; Newman:1990:343). If this assumption is correct - as it doubtless is - Catullus produced the poem at the height of his artistic powers and when the Neoteric movement was well established with its tenets entrenched enough to provide a basis for conformity amongst its adherents.

The choice of theme, combined with the maturity, polish and finesse of its treatment, transforms the poem into a conscious and succinct embodiment of the ideals championed by the Neoteric movement. This does not of course suggest that it was simply an epideictic literary exercise; Catullus' poems are too

personal and emotional to reduce the artistic impulse that created any of them to a mere poetic dalliance. Though the lighter poems, again, are charming, emotionally alive, and convey much of the Neoteric ethos, they could hardly be regarded as worthy contributions to the realm of elevated poetry - at least not in the eyes of contemporary Rome - so accounting for the series of long poems, widely held to be the poet's most conscious and serious artistic endeavours (cf. Quinn:1972:258).

The Cybele-Attis myth, as Catullus was to shape it, had all the elements of a bizarrely erotic tragedy that complied with Parthenian doctrine. The theme had the latitude for a detailed analysis of Attis' psyche against the sombre and orgiastic background of the cult. It was this psychological analysis and interest in emotion - a casting into the deepest recesses of the mind to examine the passions that could set the individual on a path of self-destruction or change - that formed the basis of the Euphorionic and Parthenian epyllion. Thus the Cybele-Attis myth, with its potential for the depiction of Attis' ecstatic frenzy, subsequent metamorphosis and agony as a result of his passion for Cybele, was consonant with the type of theme advocated by Parthenius; and it was in the combination of a relatively free genre like the epyllion and the story of Attis' dramatic love that Catullus could bring all his Neoteric resources to bear on the *carmen vigilatum* of a *poeta doctus*, embracing the features that were peculiar to the epyllion at Rome.

An examination of the relevant remains of ancient art illustrates to what extent the Attis myth incorporated the theme of tragic love so dear to the Neoteric school. Vermaseren (1977:95), while discussing the artistic representations of the hermaphroditic nature of Attis in antiquity, writes:

> Again and again they repeat this sad theme which never failed to move the people of antiquity with a profound sense of pity, and at the same time, of awe at the dramatic love that induced him to such a desperate act.

The recognition of Attis' tragedy and its frequent portrayal by the artists of antiquity can be discerned in the relevant monuments and sarcophagi, and especially in the stucco art of the basilica near the Porta Maggiore in Rome (see Vermaseren:1977:76-8 for details). The basilica has numerous representations of a mourning Attis, together with other scenes of unhappy love, viz. Medea and Jason, Ariadne and Theseus, and Sappho's *salto mortale* from the Leucadian rock as a result of her ill-starred love for the poet Alcaeus.

The predominant role of Attis in these representations suggests that his story was seen in antiquity as the classic case of tragic love, for the other representations appear to serve merely as supporting incidents and variations.

Ellis (1889:251-7) lists the various Greek and Roman writers who dealt with or briefly referred to Cybele and Attis. He notes, however, that

> Common as the sight of eunuch priests and of the Great Mother must have been in antiquity and frequent as the allusions to the worship in Greek and Roman writers, it cannot be said to have greatly influenced their poetry.
>
> (Ellis:1889:251).

Catullus, aware of the myth's potential as a tragic love-story, could not have failed to notice that it had not been exploited in the manner he envisaged. The unexplored dramatic possibilities of the myth, in particular its potential to highlight the theme of *erotika pathemata*, was probably a decisive factor in his choice; his version of the poem thus became in many ways a manifesto of the new movement.

I shall now briefly examine typical Roman attitudes towards Cybele and Attis individually, and compare these with Catullus' position as it emerges from Poem 63. I shall then postulate the reasons for the poet's stance.

It was at the behest of the Sibylline books that Cybele was brought to Rome in 204 BC. Alarmed at the prospect of an invasion amid rumours that Hannibal's troops were encamped at the city gates, the senate consulted the Sibylline books which prescribed an *evocatio* (see Basanoff:1947:202-7 for details of this practice), an invitation to the great mother goddess, upon whose advent the invader would be vanquished. A small black stone, representing Cybele, was conveyed to Rome from her Phrygian home in Pessinus.

Cybele was initially installed in the sanctuary of Victory but soon obtained a temple of her own on the Palatine (Livy 29.14.10ff.; Ovid, *Fasti* 4.247ff.). Fortuitously, her installation coincided with Rome's best harvest in years and with Hannibal's subsequent defeat in 202 BC, winning respect and veneration for her influence.

Her rites were celebrated annually at the festival of the Magelesia, or *ludi Megalenses*, with stage performances for six days (4-9 April) and chariot racing or beast hunts in the Circus on the anniversary day itself. Her identification with Aphrodite Ourania, the mother of Aeneas, further contributed to her recognition as the tutelary goddess of civilized Rome and a symbol of the city's increasing power in the Mediterranean world.

In the account of Cybele's arrival at Rome, Attis is not specifically mentioned. Despite the theory that Cybele's consort appeared only in the time of Claudius (Cumont:1929 and Carcopino:1941:74), the references in Lucretius (2.598ff.) and some fragments of Varro (see Cebe:1977) - corroborated by suggestive archaeological evidence from Cybele's temple on the Palatine (see Gasparro: 1986:58) - attest to the simultaneous arrival of Attis' priests. While Catullus' sojourn in Bithynia might have inspired him to write his poem, Rome was unquestionably familiar with the Gallae long before Catullus wrote.

It was specifically Attis who assailed the Roman world with his barbarously repulsive rites which understandably provoked deep aversion in a religiously conservative society. As a result, apart from the processions and the public games, the *pontifex maximus* confined Attis' rites to the precincts of the temple on the Palatine. It was further decreed that only orientals could assume his priesthood (Dion. Hal. 2.19.4-5); Roman citizens were not allowed to serve until the reign of Claudius.

Attis himself, together with his priests, was also the butt of opprobrious invective from a host of Roman writers. The morbidity of the eastern rites, the piercing ululations, wild dances and cacophonous music, which aroused the initiates to a frenzy of self-flagellation and self-mutilation, made the priests of Cybele the scourge of the Roman world.

Their extravagant personal appearance as they went about their rites further contributed to the widespread revulsion felt towards these outlandish *semimares*. On the Day of Blood (*dies sanguinis*) the priest forever abandoned his male attire. Henceforth he wore a long, yellow garment (*stola*); the flowing sleeves and belt made it look strikingly effeminate. On his head was a *mitra*, a kind of turban; or a *tiara*, a cap with flaps which were tied under the chin. He adorned himself with various ornaments, pendants, ear- rings and finger-rings. He also wore his hair long and often had it bleached. On the day of mourning for Attis,

he ran around wildly with dishevelled hair, but normally had his hair dressed and waved like a woman's.

The outlandish Gallae and the grotesque cult of Attis could not have failed to arouse the repugnance of the Roman world. The many literary references and archaeological findings relating to the cult substantially attest to the widespread aversion with which it was regarded.

Cybele herself, on the other hand, as the goddess whose advent at Rome brought good fortune, commanded the respect and veneration of the entire Roman world. Her sway can be gauged from the kindly attitude of the poets of the Golden Age towards her. In the *Aeneid*, for instance, she is frequently associated with the wanderings of Aeneas to emphasize her protection of the Roman people; she aids and supports Aeneas from the start. Her ready acceptance is further evidenced in the religious reforms of Augustus where her cult (excluding Attis) belonged to the ancient heritage.

Catullus' portrayal of Cybele and Attis in Poem 63, as I shall illustrate, is strikingly antithetical to the general Roman attitude of the time. Why has Catullus deliberately chosen to challenge the typical Roman view of the great mother and her detestable eunuch priest? Is his stance a manifestation of his seemingly flagrant repudiation of traditional Roman values, or is there some literary motive underlying his attitude?

One of the reasons for the poet's attitude is that the *Attis* is a poem consciously adapted to the *erotika pathemata* mould. Catullus' choice and treatment of the myth, his attitude towards his characters, his tone in general, his careful omission and emphasis of specific aspects (in fact, his entire formulation) are dictated by a poetical intent very much in accordance with Parthenian doctrine. A logical corollary of the canon would presumably be an attitude of disapproval towards the perpetrator, and of sympathy for the victim, of a tragic love affair, evident not only in the *Attis* but in Cat. 64 as well.

Nowhere in the poem does Catullus describe Attis in terms which even remotely suggest disapproval or aversion. At line 27, Attis is *notha mulier*, but this does not appear to be more than a description of his predicament after emasculation. Nor are there any references to the repulsive appearance of the Gallae as contemporary Romans saw them. The picture of Attis is painted with a few delicate strokes - *niveis manibus* (8), *roseis labellis* (74), *teneris digitis* (10), *teneram Attin* (88). These touches, together with the emotionally evocative Neoteric diminutive *lassulae* (35), conjure up the image of a delicate and tender young man. Given the well-known Catullan predilection for realism, modernization and Romanization, one would expect Catullus to describe Attis in terms with which contemporary Romans were familiar with the Gallae. Such an approach, however, would not be conducive to his intentions.

The total omission of the unpleasant aspects of Attis' appearance is a deliberate attempt not to prejudice the reader against him. His description, its references fleeting and economical, emphasizes his delicacy and is aimed at eliciting the reader's kindly disposition towards one who, in my opinion, is the tragic hero of the poem. Other features, discussed below, make it abundantly clear that Catullus' sympathy lies with Attis. Let the Romans vehemently impugn such barbarous *semiviri*; Catullus himself will present Attis as a figure whose destiny is shaped by powers beyond his control.

Catullus' stance is markedly influenced, as I have said, by his status as a poet of tragic love, at least as far as the epyllion is concerned. In all likelihood, too, his attitude was determined by his tragic affair with Lesbia. A great deal of research on the poem has focused on this issue, and there is no reason to find such an association untenable. For Catullus, painfully aware of his own *furor* and tragic devotion to Lesbia, had himself become something of an Attis in their relationship. It is very likely, then, that his association with Lesbia, and the insight and interest shared by his fellow-poets in the theme of tragic love transmitted to Rome by Parthenius, were determining factors in the ultimate shape and tone of the *Attis*.

It is not inconceivable, then, that Catullus' portrayal of Cybele and Attis was the outcome of his adoption of the doctrine of Parthenius and his resultant stance as a poet of tragic love. Indeed, the *Attis* reads in some ways as an

apology for its misunderstood hero; the Roman world looked askance at the primitive savagery of the priests of Cybele, but Catullus, through his interest in the *erotika pathemata* theme, an interest further sharpened by experience, saw, perhaps, that the perpetration of the ultimate sacrifice was in the case of Attis the outcome of the *furor* of devotion to a goddess who was herself extremely possessive and directly inspired the frenzy leading to his emasculation.

As Catullus views it, Attis is not the architect of his own destiny; he is merely a victim at the mercy of a higher power which is Cybele. This is emphasized by Cybele's response to Attis' rebellion (74-90).

No reasonable interpretation of this part of the poem, as far as I know, has been given. Sandy (1969:389-99) draws attention to words and phrases in the description of the Gallae and Attis which are more appropriately applied to animals. He offers no explanation, however, for Catullus' use of these terms. In my view, Attis and his band are described in such language to emphasize the source of their frenzy, which becomes apparent in this section of the poem.

It is Cybele who has directly inspired the frenzy; and by means of her lion she maintains subservience to her authority. The ferocity and savagery of the lion are evocative of Cybele herself, and accentuate her imperious and vindictive

nature which is so hastily aroused by the slightest indication of infidelity or rebellion in her devotee.

The lion is described as *hostem pecoris* (77); this could be interpreted literally, but is more likely a reference to the lion as an enemy of the Gallae who are called *Dindymenae dominae vaga pecora* (13). *Stimulans* (77) hints at the reason for Attis' frenzy; at line 4 he is described as *stimulatus* and it is now apparent that it is Cybele who has goaded him to madness. The use of *furor* (78) and *furoris ictu* (79) further emphasizes the source of Attis' madness. *Furor* and its derivatives have been used several times to describe Attis and his frenzy; and the origin of that furore now becomes evident. The similarity in the description of the aroused lion (85, *rapidum*; 86, *pede vago*) and the Gallae (2, 25, 30, 34) again underlines Cybele's role in determining the destiny of Attis.

The final three lines of the poem, the censorious and sneering invocation to the goddess, unmistakably indicate Catullus' cynical attitude towards her; the repetition of *dea* (thrice) together with *domina* clearly suggests as much. The mock grandeur of *magna mater* stands out in stark contrast to the baseness of *incitatos* and *rabidos*; the much revered goddess, the great mother, has driven Attis to a frenzy of madness and personal tragedy. The wish that she should keep away her furore from Catullus' home is not a capitulation to her power but an indication of the contempt the poet feels for her actions.

It is clear that Catullus' attitude is diametrically opposed to the traditional Roman view of Cybele and Attis. The poet, despite his iconoclastic façade, was in some ways a conservative traditionalist. Yet he has chosen to challenge the usual view of Cybele, the revered great mother, and of Attis, her detestable consort.

In addition to evoking echoes from Catullus' personal life and psychology, his attitude to Cybele and Attis is, in my view, the outcome of his compliance with Parthenius' doctrine of *erotika pathemata*. His stance conceivably accords with the common Neoteric stock treatment of such themes; a treatment which was a legacy of Parthenian doctrine, a charitable and sympathetic delineation of the victim of tragic love counterbalanced by rebuke and censure for the vehicle of the tragedy.

Having established Catullus' peculiar delineation of Cybele and Attis and the reasons for his manifest repudiation of the traditional Roman attitude towards the goddess and her consort, I now investigate other aspects of his treatment of the poem which are relevant to my theme.

I preface my remarks with an outline of the traditional myths of Cybele and Attis [Paus. 7.17; Arnob. *adv. nat.* 5.5-7; Diod. Sic. 3.56ff.; Ovid *Fasti* 4.221-44; summarized in Vermaseren (1977:90-2, 111ff.)]. It will be clear that Catullus' narrative is not consistent with the legends as they have been transmitted to us;

"he has taken the bare outline of the story and worked it up as his own imagination suggested" (Ellis:1889:260). It will be evident that the poet's formulation of the *Attis* is aimed at emphasizing tragic and pathetic elements in compliance with the doctrine of *erotika pathemata*.

Agdistis, born of Jupiter's grotesque union with Rhea, is a wild and androgynous creature who constantly poses a threat to the gods. Dionysus, in response to entreaties for help, secures the genitals of the sleeping Agdistis to a tree. When the creature awakes his genitals are severed, and from the blood that bespatters the ground there emerges a tree which soon bears fruit. Nana, the king's daughter, comes walking past, and attracted by the beauty of the fruit, picks and places them in her lap. One miraculously disappears, Nana falls pregnant and Attis is born. He grows into an attractive young man whom even the mighty mother goddess cannot resist.

Many variations were added to this legend which was popular in Pessinus, the home of the goddess. Agdistis, crazed by an intense passion for Attis, arrives on his wedding day and drives everyone to despair. The bride kills herself and Attis in a frenzy emasculates himself and dies.

Agdistis, before emasculation, has been identified with Attis and throughout the sequel is Cybele herself. Nana, the king's daughter, is without doubt the Phrygian goddess in the role of Attis' mother.

There is another version which was more widespread. Cybele is in love with the handsome shepherd-boy Attis who is forced to pledge eternal fidelity to her. When he falls under the spell of the nymph Sangaritis, the goddess in a fit of jealousy kills the nymph. Attis becomes insane and with a sharp stone emasculates himself.

Finally, there is another variation of this theme of love between the goddess and Attis. King Maioon, ruler of Phrygia and Lydia, displeased that his wife bore him a daughter, orders the baby girl to be abandoned on Mount Kybelon. Wild animals come to the child's rescue and in time she is adopted and raised by shepherds. She is called Cybele after the mountain where she was found. In her youth she falls in love with Attis and soon expects his child. Maioon discovers that Cybele is his own child, takes her back to the palace, and has Attis and the shepherds killed. Cybele, like Demeter, roams the countryside in her loneliness.

The common thread that runs through the various stories is that of tragic love. In the first two versions, a common theme is that of Attis' emasculation as a result of the madness which the goddess inflicts upon him and of Cybele's vengeance when Attis is unfaithful to her. It is now possible to examine how these themes have been worked into the narrative of Cat. 63, a brief outline of which is given below.

Attis, a Greek youth, is aroused by a call he cannot resist and together with a band of companions reaches the wilds of Phrygia to devote himself to Cybele. In a frenzy he castrates himself. The band, with Attis as leader, hastens to the sanctuary of the goddess on Mount Ida. Sleep dispels Attis' frenzy, and when he awakes the following morning he realizes the horror and irrevocability of his ultimate dedication. He rushes to the sea, and in an extended lament, bewails the loss of his home, parents, friends and admirers and the loneliness and solitude for which he has traded them. Cybele, aroused by his complaint and attempt to escape, unleashes her lion to compel him into submission and obedience; he returns to the forest to spend the rest of his life as a votary of the goddess.

A comparison of the narrative of the poem with the legends outlined earlier makes it plain that Catullus is not interested in the forms of the myth. But the main mythical themes - tragic love, the tragedy of Attis' final dedication brought on by the frenzy inspired by Cybele, the goddess' vengeance when Attis is unfaithful to her - are all central to Catullus' poem and are worked into the narrative in forms different from those of the legends.

The theme of unhappy love and its consequences is presented in Attis' frenzied devotion to the goddess and in the tragic sequel to his inordinate passion. Attis' unfaithfulness to the goddess, presented in the legends in his desire to marry, and in his escapade with the nymph Sangaritis, and the goddess' subsequent

jealousy and vengeance, are portrayed in the *Attis* in a different form. There certainly is a connection with the legend when Catullus has Attis enticed away from the goddess by the recollection of his home, his parents, and the love and admiration showered on him as a Greek youth. These reminiscences, like the attraction that Sangaritis presented to the mythical Attis, threaten to interfere with the relationship between the goddess and her votary. The theme of Cybele's vengeance is depicted in her unleashing of the lion, its arousal to frenzy and its subsequent attack on Attis, and Attis' return to the forests and his final submission to Cybele.

For obvious reasons, Catullus has not followed the versions of the myth where Attis dies after his emasculation. His aim is to dwell on Attis' psyche after his sacrifice and highlight the anguish and torment that follow in the wake of a tragic love-affair. But in a sense, Catullus' Attis is also dead; bereft of joy in his lifelong bondage to the goddess, and smitten by painful recollections of his earlier happiness, Attis must spend the rest of his days in utter misery, dead to all the beauty and allure of a meaningful existence. In fact, according to the Stoics, death was a release from the vicissitudes of life. Attis' tragic circumstances are intensified by the denial of death as an escape from his ordeal.

I now examine specific aspects and techniques of the poet's treatment of the myth which are in all likelihood the result of his intentional compliance with

Parthenian doctrine. Such an examination demands a somewhat tedious formalistic approach - comments on particular words, word collocations, variations of rhythm and rhetorical devices - but I shall confine myself to relevant comments.

Poem 63 begins with the breathtaking speed of the Hellenistic tradition; in five lines the poet dispenses with Attis' journey from Greece, his arrival at the demesne of the goddess, and his self-emasculation in an onset of frenzy. Apart from a brief retrospective reference (62-7) - this at any rate is made to bring into operation the opposition "between civilization and savage nature, between the humanism of the Greek city-state and the excesses of oriental fanaticism" (Fordyce: 1990:262) - Catullus does not bother to say who Attis was, who his companions were, or what happened to them (they are introduced suddenly in line 11 and no mention follows after line 36). Nor are we told when and why they made for the Phrygian shores. Quinn (1977:283) observes:

> If such highly compressed, elliptical narrative was a trick of Hellenistic epyllion...it is also the method of tragedy - a familiar legend is taken over, adjusted to lend it contemporary significance, and used as a framework for exploring an emotional situation.

Even in the introductory lines which conventionally unfold the narrative, Catullus is steadfast in his adherence to the psychoanalytical doctrine. Thus in

the first four lines, which describe Attis' arrival in the domain of the goddess, Catullus is less concerned with picturesque narrative detail than with the eagerness and fanatical frenzy of Attis.

Catullus quantitatively builds upon his description, perhaps obliquely suggesting an increase in Attis' frenzy. Whereas line 1 merely hints at the latter's urgency (*celeri*), line 2 lingers upon it (*citato cupide pede*), while line 4 presents its furious climax (*stimulatus ibi furenti rabie, vagus animis*).

Quinn (1977:285) notes that *Attis* in line 1 is the first of a pattern of repetitions (also 27, 32, 42, 45, and 88) appearing always at the caesura. Elder (1947:401-2) remarks:

> This sort of repetition is not used for liturgical purposes, for the *Attis* is anything but a hymn, nor is the repetition mere ornamentation. Rather its function is to help convey the picture of a unique and morbid state of mind, by returning the reader forcefully and frequently to key themes.

Line 4 is emotionally compact and forceful; the profusion of words with strong emotional overtones is an early intimation of one of the poet's focal themes: his preoccupation with Attis' psychological state; his fanatical frenzy contrasting with his subsequent disillusionment when he perceives the irrevocability of his actions. *Stimulatus* is best taken literally to mean "pricked by the master's goad"

or "goaded" (cf. 77, *stimulans*, which, as I have mentioned, explains the source of Attis' frenzy). The impact of *furenti rabie* (cf. 38, *rabidus furor*; 44, *rapida sine rabie*; 57, *rabie fera carens*) emphasizes the depth of Attis' madness, and the plural in *vagus animis* suggests a variety of conflicting emotions (Ellis:1889:262).

Having established the pitch of Attis' fury, Catullus dispenses with his act of castration in a single prosaic line (5). Within five lines, then, he has compressed Attis' arrival in Phrygia, his entry into the dark demesne of the goddess and his self-castration. In his wish to hasten his narrative, Catullus has placed the Phrygian mountains close to the shore. He is not writing as a geographer, and the distortion is clearly intended to impart speed to his narrative; the omission of picturesque detail and the deep psychoanalytical interest point to an unmistakable compliance with the later Alexandrian epyllion popular with Euphorion and Parthenius.

The subsequent lines continue to probe Attis' emotional state when he becomes aware of the loss of his manhood. The style changes and the overtones become fervid with the description of Attis' self-mutilation and the gory details of his blood spattering the ground. The poet seems to relinquish the restraint of his role as an unobtrusive story-teller. After the disquieting picture of the bleeding victim, Catullus hints at his delicate nature: *niveis manibus* (8). Also significant is the description of Attis with the feminine *citata*; here begin the oscillations of gender which effectively convey Attis' psychological torment. At most places

feminine forms occur, but at significant points there are corresponding masculine forms to describe Attis' pathetic recollection of himself before his emasculation.

The contrast inherent in lines 7 and 8 seems to upset the poet who now abandons his restraint and emerges into the foreground of the narrative, forcefully addressing Cybele at line 9 in a censorious tone. The reprimand is directed at the great mother goddess: it is, after all, her tympanum that the delicate Attis has taken up, her rites that he has celebrated - she is directly responsible for his tragic circumstance described in the previous line. Thus the poet, holding Cybele directly liable for Attis' dramatic transformation, instinctively breaks off into an emotional apostrophe (cf. 64.69).

The alliteration and *teneris digitis* (10) add to the pathos of Attis' tragedy by amplifying the picture of a delicate young man conveyed by *niveis manibus*. *Tremebunda* (11) again emphasizes Attis' frenzy; the word suggests that he is quivering with ecstasy (Fordyce:1990:264).

Lines 12-26 contain the first speech of Attis. Catullus presents him as an assertive leader, frenzied after his emasculation and eager to lead his fellow devotees to the goddess' shrine on Mount Ida. His qualities as a leader, his powers of persuasion, his enthusiasm and zeal stand out in sharp contrast to the pathetic figure that he cuts during his lament.

The alliteration and assonance in *agite ite ad alta* (12) and the homoioteleuton in *agite ite* reinforce the connotations of *tremebunda* (11), while the repetition of imperatives and of *simul* (12-13, *agite ite...simul/simul ite*) stresses Attis' compulsion. The alliteration and homoioteleuton in *Dindymenae dominae*, again, produce a jarring effect which conveys the cruelty of the goddess.

Quinn (1977:288) notes that the rhythm falters on *exules* (14). This is the first of five lines in the poem where the concluding rattle of short syllables is broken (also 35, 73, 76, and 91). Each time the rhythm stutters on a significant word, and here, as in 35 and 73, this helps to heighten the pathetic effect.

Rapidum salum and *truculentaque pelagi* (16) reflect the typical Roman attitude towards the sea (cf. 4.9, *Propontida trucemve*; 64.179, *Ponti truculentum aequor*), and the use of these expressions with *tulistis* hints at the pitch of the devotional *Gallarum furor*; the Gallae have risked the perils of the treacherous seas to dedicate themselves to the goddess. In fact they have unmanned themselves "out of limitless loathing of love" (17). Here *Veneris* (the reference to Venus implies love-making and is thus opposed to Cybele) is flanked by *evirastis* and *nimio odio*; the arrangement emphasizes the overpowering of love by forces inimical to its consummation.

Citatis erroribus (18) describes the maddened wanderings of the devotees and is again a commentary on their psychological condition. After Attis has

persuaded his fellow-devotees to avoid all delay (19), there follow two imperatives in asyndeton (*simul ite*, *sequimini*) which further stress Attis' ardour and agitation.

The use of *domum* and *nemora* (20) is striking in that the *domum* of Cybele is actually the *nemora* of Phrygia. *Nemora* suggests the savagery and ferocity of Cybele herself; the contrast between *domum* and *nemora* juxtaposes the romantic associations of home and the future abode of Attis.

The anaphora of six successive *ubi* clauses (21-5) reinforces the wild abandon peculiar to the cult. It also stresses the frenzy of Attis; his vivid image of the scene at the fane of the goddess is Catullus' attempt to depict his obsession with Cybele and penetrates Attis' psychological state.

The style deployed by Catullus in the speech may serve for mere artistic display of his mastery over nuances of rhythm; but it undeniably enhances Attis' obsession with the goddess. Lines 21-2 are rich in musical vowels and rhythmical effects which create vivid word-pictures of the sounds produced by her different instruments (cf. Quinn:1977:289).

The metrical variations, again, echo the slow music of the curved reed (22) and resonate with the orgiastic abandon of the worshippers (23; Elder:1947:399). The first halves of 21-3 close with monosyllables which heighten the mood of

frenzy (Friedrich:1908:303). Line 24 has the onomatopoeic *ululatibus* and the yells of the Gallae are further evoked by the predominance of *a*'s and *u*'s. Fordyce (1990:306) notes that *volitare* often has the suggestion of bustling or swaggering (cf. 64.251 and *Aen.* 12.126), and its use with *vaga cohors* vividly conveys the devotees stalking in a frenzy as they roam about.

Attis' first speech, then, is primarily a vehicle for psychological analysis. His enthusiasm and compulsion have been emphasized by the imperatives and his obsession with the goddess is apparent in the vivid word-pictures Attis creates in his visualization of the scene that would confront the Gallae at the temple of the great mother. The sounds of the various instruments (21 and 22), the yells of the Gallae (24) and the large number of short syllables all help to create the orgiastic abandon and frenzy of the devotees which is the main theme of the speech. The poet's emphasis on the emotional state of his characters clearly conforms with the late Alexandrian epyllion.

The next passage (lines 27-38) describes the wild rush of the devotees to the sanctuary of the goddess on Mount Ida and ends with Attis and his followers falling asleep. Although the passage primarily serves a narrative purpose, many of its features again point to Catullus' interest in the psychological state of the Gallae. Their frenzied fanaticism will stand out in sharp contrast to Attis' circumstances when he is stripped of his frenzy at the rising of the sun.

Attis is described as *notha mulier* (27) which is linked with his later description of himself as *mei pars, vir sterilis* (69). *Simul* emphasizes his effect on the devotees: their response is immediate. Line 28 conveys their tumultuous and confused cries (Ellis:1889:266)[2]. The atmosphere of frenzy and haste is recreated by *properipedem* and *rapidae* (34). Assonance and alliteration (31) prove effective; the repetition of *a* sounds conveys Attis' gasping as he hastily ascends the mountain; and *vaga vadit* emphasizes his swaggering steps. The *nemora* (32) are again described as *opaca*; this re-emphasizes the tragedy of Attis and recreates the atmosphere of darkness which will be offset by the brilliance of the rising sun a few lines later.

Attis' panting (33) is compared with an unbroken heifer which resists the yoke. The irony lies in Attis' willing acceptance of the yoke which brings about loss of freedom and individuality and total subjection to Cybele. Merrill (1951:124) notes that poets usually applied the comparison to the yoke of love (cf. Cat. 68.118). The simile is appropriate in that the heifer was the animal conventionally sacrificed to Cybele (see Glenn:1973:59-61).

Lassulae (35) warrants some detailed comment. The New Poets' fondness for diminutives is well known (see D.O. Ross:1969:22-6). These forms were essentially a feature of colloquial Latin, used sparingly by the elegiac poets and rarely in epic, but very commonly in satire. Ross notes that Catullus uses 27 diminutives 36 times in the long poems, 45 of them 65 times in the polymetrics,

though only seven are used nine times in the epigrams. While the rarity of the diminutives in the epigrams and their abundance in the polymetrics conform to traditional poetic practice, how can their frequent use in the long poems be explained? Axelson (1945:23) suggests that their introduction into high poetry is in part personal, in part due to the Neoteric *Programm*; the diminutives in the long poems are aimed at enhancing the sentimental, pathetic and romantic aspects of their themes.

For Catullus the diminutives express a whole range of feelings - endearment (12-13, *Veraniolum*); tenderness (17.15, *tenellula*; 61.174-5, *brachiolum...puellulae*; 61.186, *floridulo*; 64.331, *languidulos...somnos*); pathos (2.7, *solaciolum*; 30.2, *dulcis amiculi*; 64.60, *ocellis*; 64.131, *frigidulos*); playfulness (10.3, *scortillum*; 17.3, *ponticuli*; 41.3, *turpiculo*); scorn (25.10, *manus mollicellas*). The diminutive could thus be a useful tool to a group of poets for whom the expression of the various emotions that constitute the human psyche was a prime concern. The Neoterics, however, were not the first to use the diminutive; Laevius had led the way with *hilarula* (fr. 22) and *manu lascivola ac tenellula* (fr. 4). Diminutives were a mark of Neoteric poetry, and after Catullus they pass out of serious poetry and only the more conventional nouns remain[3].

Lassulae (35) is scrupulously chosen to convey a strong sense of pathos and its use betrays the poet's deep compassion and sympathy for the devotees. Quinn (1977:291) notes that the rhythm falters on *lassulae* to heighten the pathos of

the diminutive. One can also sense the utter weariness of the devotees in the close of the line (Elder:1947:291). Quinn (1977:291) notes that lines 37-8 are chiastic so as to end the section with *rabidus furor animi* - the poet's final comment on the first act of Attis' tragedy.

As for *furor* (38), there are seven occurrences of the word or its cognates in Poem 63. They are used in 10 other places in the Catullan collection. Harkins (1959:107-10) examines the contexts in which they are used and concludes that "*furor* and its cognates are chiefly used in an erotic sense...". Catullus uses them in the context of Poem 63 to represent a state of mind delicately poised on the brink of madness in frenzied love and devotion to the goddess.

Lines 39-43 comprise a single sentence describing the peacefulness and beauty of dawn with rich imagery that establishes a break with the previous section. There is a vivid contrast between the brightness of the sun and the atmosphere of darkness that pervades the preceding lines[4].

Sol (39) is significant. It does not merely denote the sun but also the sun god, Apollo, the god of moderation, reason, and enlightenment. The rising of the sun connotes the banishing of excess, frenzy and madness, and the return of sanity and reason. The poet describes *Sol* in vivid detail and in fact personifies it: *oris aurei* and *radiantibus oculis* give it distinct human qualities[5]. *Lustravit* (40) adds to the personification; the verb is significant in that Apollo was also the

god of purification. *Lustrare* is a term of ritual, applied to purificatory ceremonies, and in addition to its primary meaning of "to light up", implies that Attis was "purified" of his frenzy and madness.

Line 41 continues with the personification. *Pepulit* is meaningful; it sustains the personification and also suggests a conflict between the light of reason and the darkness of illusion. *Sol* has "violently driven away/ struck" (*pepulit*) the shades of night with his fresh steeds. The light-dark, reality-illusion oppositions come into direct conflict and the positive aspects temporarily seem to prevail.

As for the learned allusion (42-3), Homer says that Hera promised Pasithea, one of the Graces, in marriage to Sleep (*Il.* 14.276ff.). Catullus, however, makes Pasithea the actual wife of Sleep, in all likelihood to create a contrast between the blissful relationship of Sleep and Pasithea, and the utter desolation and loneliness of Attis. It is a subtle reminder of the kind of relationship that Attis might have enjoyed were it not for the madness inflicted upon him by the mother goddess. This changing of myth is another of the many instances of deliberate distortion for purposes of effect (see the discussion on Poem 64 in Chapter 5).

Somnus is personified as well. *Trepidante sinu* (43) expresses the eager joy of Pasithea at her husband's return and makes more vivid the contrast between the joy of their relationship and the solitude of Attis; the phrase also gives

human qualities to the goddess Pasithea who receives *Somnus* with a quivering and fluttering bosom. The Somnus-Pasithea allusion bears the same, if minor and subtle, relationship to the Attis story as the Peleus-Thetis episode has with the Ariadne story in Poem 64 (see Chapter 5).

With the passing of night and the coming of *Sol*, Attis is purified of his madness; he is now *sine rabie* (44). To convey the return of Attis' reason Catullus accumulates words for "mind" and "intellect" in the next three lines: *pectore* (45), *mente* (46), and *animo* (47)[6]. *Liquida mente* suggests that Attis' mind is now free from the storms of passion which had previously clouded his reason. He now realizes what he has lost (46, *sine quis*) and that he will have to live the rest of his life in the wilds of Phrygia away from home (46, *ubique foret*). *Animo aestuante* (47) is contrasted with *liquida mente*. For a while there was calm and clear mental vision, but this is now succeeded by the torture of the recollection of his deeds.

At the beginning of the poem the frenzied Attis was all haste for leaving the shore and making for the sanctuary of the goddess. Now there is a reversal of intention and action. Attis, his frenzy dispelled, races back to the shore. In lines 48-9 he stands before the sea and with streaming eyes begins his lament.

The sea is described as *vasta* (48); a huge expanse of ocean separates Attis from his homeland.

> The basic implication of *vastus* (a cognate of *vacuus* and *vanus*) is the emptiness or desolation which repels or appals the beholder. It is a favourite word of Virgil, who uses it in a great variety of contexts, always charged with emotional suggestion of awe or horror...
>
> (Fordyce:1990:297)

Catullus' use of *vasta* suggests Attis' horror at the desolate expanse, once a barrier to his beloved goddess but now to his longed-for home. *Maesta* (49) is reinforced by *miseriter* to emphasize the emotional state of Attis after he perceives the finality of his actions.

The section dealing with Attis' awakening, the reflection on his deeds, and the lines preceding the delivery of his lament echo the circumstances of Ariadne (Putnam:1961:169). The similarity begins exactly at the moment of awakening:

ibi **Somnus excitam** fugiens citus abiit (63.42)

utpote fallaci quae tum primum **excita somno** (64.56)

The lines in which Attis becomes fully aware of the implications of his deeds (63.45-47)

simul ipsa **pectore** Attis sua facta recoluit,

liquida **mente** vidit sine quis ubique foret,

animo aestuante rusum reditum ad vada tetulit...

recall the way in which Ariadne yearns for Theseus (64.69-70):

illa vicem curans toto ex te **pectore**, Theseu,

toto **animo**, tota pendebat perdita **mente**.

The lines which precede Attis' lament (63.48-9)

ibi maria vasta visens **lacrimantibus oculis**,

patriam allocuta **maestast** ita voce miseriter,

are not far different from 64.60

quem procul ex alga **maestis** Minois **ocellis**,

or from the description just before Ariadne begins to speak (64.130-1)

atque haec extremis **maestam** dixisse querellis,

frigidulos udo singultus ore cientem.

Each character is *maesta* and each utters words which reveal the full extent of their respective wretchedness.

Again, the theme of the hostility of the sea is common to the story of Attis and to that of Ariadne. As in Poem 63, the shore is the scene of Ariadne's lament, and various references to the sea keep the theme of its hostility alive in the reader's mind (Curran:1969:177-8). In 64.167 it separates Ariadne from Theseus, who cannot hear her cries, and in 174 Theseus is the *perfidus navita*, while in 179 the sea is described as *ponti truculentem/...aequor*. In 154ff. Ariadne, questioning Theseus' humanity, concludes that he could have been born only of the monstrous sea with all its unpleasant manifestations. The sea is also a metaphor for her suffering - *magnis curarum fluctuant undis* (62) - as it is for Attis' - *animo aestuante* - and in 125 and 202 Ariadne **pours forth** her complaints.

The parallels between Catullus' presentation of Attis and Ariadne have led to the belief that the poet is writing about himself under their veil. Indeed, given the self-revealing nature of Catullus' poetry, it is not unlikely that the poems are projections of his personal experience into the world of myth; but one cannot discount the probability that the similarity also arises, too, from both myths being dealt with in terms of the doctrine of *erotika pathemata*. Many of the points of similarity are clearly features of the poet's formulation to evoke sympathy for these victims of tragic love; they are also detailed psychological portraits, according clearly with the tenets of Parthenius and the late Alexandrian epyllion.

Attis begins his lament (50) with an address to his fatherland which is referred to as the actual conceiver and begetter of its children; Catullus maintains this personification for much of the lament. Attis describes himself as *miser* (51); the masculine conforms to his state before his emasculation. Quinn (1977:116) notes that *miser* is

> a word C. is fond of (he uses it 31 times) and the stock description of the unhappy lover. In addition to denoting the lover's dejected state of mind, the word implies that the lover is hard done by.

The simile in *dominos ut erifugae famuli solent* (51-2) is ironical. Attis' actions are like those of fugitive slaves who desert their masters; but Attis has left his fatherland like a runaway slave only to become a slave to Cybele. The double final clauses (52-4) are also ironical statements of Attis' objectives: he has acted

as he has only to be amid the snow and cold dens of wild beasts. *Ferarum stabula* and *latibula* reinforce *nemora Idae*; they are aspects of the Phrygian forests and of the cruel mother goddess, emphasizing the savagery for which Attis has traded the civilization of his *patria*. The use of *furibunda* by Attis to describe himself is a pathetic admission of his madness. Merrill (1951:1) notes that *reor* is a periphrastic expression widely used "to express the imminence of decision in questions implying great anxiety or eagerness".

Quinn (1977:293) suggests that *pupula* (56) is a rare word in verse and that it is used for pathetic effect[7]. The line describes Attis' longing for his fatherland and his desire to direct his line of vision towards it (cf. 64.127). Ellis (1889:271) notes that *carens est* is a periphrasis of *caret* to mark more clearly the duration of the short interval (*breve tempus*) during which the mind is rational.

Next follows a series of three questions (58-60). The juxtaposition of *nemora* and *domo* enhances the contrast between the wild forests of Ida, in which Attis will now be forced to dwell, and his former home with all its attractions which he has abandoned. Lines 59 and 60 summarize in asyndeton what Attis has left behind: his fatherland, possessions, friends, parents and his favourite haunts.

The repetitions in *miser a miser* and *etiam atque etiam* (61) emphasize the pathos of Attis' circumstances. This pathos is further intensified by the predominance of *m* sounds throughout the line. Holland (1979:36) writes that the "Northern

poets exploit the varied possibilities of *m* to imitate the sounds of wind or water, or to express moods especially of sorrow" (see 34.9-12; 76.17-20; 68.89-100 and Poem 101).

The interjection *a* is markedly more pathetic than the *o* of line 50. D.O. Ross (1969:52) notes that "the pathetic *a* was introduced to Latin poetry by the Neoteric poets and continued to be a trademark of their poetry". A is not found in Ennius or Lucretius, in the *Aeneid* or in satire. A fragment of Calvus' *Io* survives to illustrate the Neoteric adoption of the exclamation:

a virgo infelix, herbis pasceris amaris (fr. 9).

Its few uses in Virgil illustrate that it was typically Neoteric[8].

At line 63 begins the repeated use of *ego* and its inflections (19 times in the lament), which stresses Attis' preoccupation with his own state of mind and heightens the tragedy of his situation. With the torturing thought of his present condition (*mulier*) in mind, he enumerates in reverse order the three ages that he has passed. Attis describes himself (64) as the flower of the gymnasium - *gymnasi flos* (cf. 24.1 and 100.2) - and the pride of the *palaestra* (*decus olei*). The acquisition of perfect male form which resulted from these activities accounts for his popularity (65-7). *Tepida* (65) contrasts with *gelida* (53); Attis has left a home, whose threshold was made warm by the frequent throngs of admirers, for the cold solitude and isolation of Ida. *Redimita* (66) echoes its use in line 3;

Attis' *domus* was surrounded (*redimita*) by garlands of flowers but his present *domus*, the *opaca loca deae*, is enclosed by wild woods.

Attis' reminiscences of the joyous past are contrasted with his present situation (68, *nunc*). In his life back at home his admirers were akin to his servants in the way in which they paid court to him; now he himself has become a *ministra*, a *famula* of the implacable mother goddess (68). *Mei pars, vir sterilis* (69) is a pathetic re-echo of *notha mulier* (27) while 70-3 re-echo 53-4 - they contain the same reference to Ida covered with snow and inhabited by wild animals. Quinn (1977:295) notes that line 73 is the shortest and heaviest in the poem. The *iam*'s come like a series of blows leading up to *paenitet* on which the rhythm stutters, emphasizing the pathos of the verb.

It is clear that the lament is carefully structured, both in content and style, to elicit the reader's profound empathy for the irrevocable tragedy of Attis' actions. There is a sad contrast between the spirited frenzy of his first speech and his seemingly resigned yet querulous submission to Cybele in his lament. The obtrusive recurrence of *ego* and its inflections points to a personality abstracted in plaintive self-reflection, imparting a marked psychoanalytical slant to the lament. Attis' reflection on the contrast between the romantic associations of his life back home and the solitude of eternal servility to the unrelenting mother goddess in the wilds of Phrygia is an impassioned evocation

of the poignancy of his situation. Stylistic features, too, referred to in the foregoing discussion, add to the pathos of Attis' tragedy.

The lament, then, is again a vehicle for penetrating psychological analysis, and with its emphasis on pathetic and tragic elements, is clearly consonant with the *erotika pathemata* doctrine.

Lines 74-90 deal with Cybele's reaction to the complaint of Attis and his final capitulation to the sovereignty of the goddess. I have already referred to this section in my discussion of Catullus' deprecatory attitude to Cybele as the active cause of Attis' tragedy; my analysis will therefore be brief.

I have argued that Cybele's reaction highlights Attis' fate as being determined by a higher power - a cruel, possessive and dominating goddess. Attis' escape from his dilemma is thus impossible and the whole section is meant to intensify the reader's sympathy towards the victim of a tragic love-affair inspired by a cruel goddess. The description of Attis and the Gallae in animal-like terms, it was seen, emphasizes the source of their frenzy, which becomes clear only now. Cybele's lion is the instrument which maintains subservience to her rule; Catullus thus stresses that the devotees' savage and animal-like behaviour is a facet of Cybele herself. He subtly exonerates Attis and his band from responsibility for the tragedy that is inflicted upon them; by hinting at the

source of their animal-like behaviour, the poet places the onus of their tragedy directly on Cybele.

Cybele's release of the yoke that joins the lion is ironical, for she is undoing the yoke to bring Attis back into the yoke of bondage. She orders the lion on the left to carry out her command; the left is significant, for to the Romans the left meant sinister, evil, unlucky (but see Fordyce:1990:205).

With regard to Cybele's speech (78ff.) Quinn (1977:218 and 296), commenting on the alliteration of *r*, explains that at an early stage it was regarded by the Romans as the *littera canina*. The *r*-alliteration in Cybele's speech is appropriate in her address to the lion; it suggests her ferocity and the *furor* to which she wished to arouse the lion. The four imperatives (78) convey her dominant nature and the urgency of her request. As already discussed, *furor* (78) and *furoris ictu* (79) reveal the source of Attis' madness since *furor* and its cognates have often been used to describe Attis and his frenzy.

Line 80 further illustrates the possessive nature of the goddess; she demands that Attis be totally subservient to her and any signs of rebellion arouse her to retaliate. This aspect of Cybele's nature echoes the original legends where her jealousy and possessiveness are one of the main themes. When Attis has an affair with the nymph Sangaritis, Cybele immediately responds. The threat that the love-affair posed to her dominance over him is represented by the rising of

Sol and the return of Attis' sanity and reason. The recollection of his fatherland and its associated pleasures threaten to interfere with Attis' subservience to the goddess. In the original legend, when Attis became unfaithful to Cybele, she plagued him with a madness that drove him to self-castration. Here, she exacts retribution through the agency of her lion, which is an extension of her personality and which drives the already emasculated Attis back into her grasp.

In line 82 Cybele urges the lion to rouse itself to frenzy by lashing its flanks with its tail and enduring those lashes. This is exactly the manner in which the Gallae aroused themselves to frenzy. Catullus thus reinforces Cybele's active involvement in bringing madness upon Attis and his band.

Minax (84) again stresses the attitude of Cybele. *Ferus* (85) emphasizes the ferocity of the lion. *Rapidum*, together with asyndeton (86), builds up an atmosphere of speed which also characterizes the description of the frenzied Attis and the Gallae (2, 26, 30, 34). The similarity in the description of the aroused lion and the Gallae yet again emphasizes that it is Cybele who is responsible for the frenzy of Attis.

In line 87 the shore is described as *albicantis* to contrast with the dark forests into which Attis is driven by the lion. Attis is described as *teneram* which again highlights his delicacy and the poet's sympathy for him. The sea is described as *marmora pelagi* so that the calmness of its marble expanse stands out in contrast

to the *nemora fera* of the following line. *Marmora* also hints at the atmosphere of brightness contained in *albicantis*. The immediate change from light to darkness (89) emphasizes that *Sol* has been overcome; the light of sanity, enlightenment and moderation has succumbed to the darkness of Cybele and her savage forests. When the lion attacks, Attis becomes *demens* (89) and flees to the forest where he is forever to be the handmaid of the goddess. The Dionysiac has ultimately prevailed over the Apollonian, and the poem ends on a negative note of human sadness and despondency.

The final three lines have already been discussed. Line 91 is noteworthy for its stuttering rhythm; the normal concluding sequence of shorts is broken by the heavy initial syllable of *Dindymi*. The alliteration of *d* and the repetition of *dea* together with *domina* is not meant to be ritualistic but indicates the poet's attitude of contempt and aversion to Cybele's doings.

The foregoing analysis vindicates my belief that Poem 63 is carefully wrought in the Parthenian mould. For purposes of clarity, I now present a summary of those features of the *Attis* which conceivably have their roots in the late Alexandrian epyllion.

First is the choice of theme. The story, as Catullus fashions it, is precisely of the kind that Parthenius advocates: a tragic love-story, sensational and off-beat, offering abundant scope for pathos and psychological analysis, and one in

which the chief character undergoes a grotesque metamorphosis as a result of capitulation to a passion ordained by the implacable powers of destiny and fate, represented in this poem by the divinity of Cybele.

Second is the attitude of the poet to his characters. I have illustrated how markedly Catullus' treatment of Attis and Cybele is at variance with the traditional Roman view of them. Apart from the influence that his personal life might have played in shaping that attitude, I have argued that the poet's stance derives from his status as a poet of tragic love; hence his sympathy and compassion for Attis, the detestable symbol of oriental fanaticism, and the tone of contempt and disdain towards the revered mother goddess, who in Catullus' poem is directly responsible for the tragedy that befalls the hapless Attis.

Third are the formal aspects of language and style. Catullus' narrative is brief, and picturesque detail almost non-existent. At the beginning of the poem, for instance, the arrival of Attis in Phrygia, his entry into the demesne of the goddess, and his self-emasculation are compressed into a mere five lines. Even in these lines, which serve a narrative purpose, Catullus focuses on the emotional state of Attis, as in the passage describing the ascent of the devotees to the sanctuary of the goddess.

In-depth psychological analysis in conformance with Parthenian doctrine, however, is conducted via the medium of Attis' two speeches. We have seen

how the frenzy and urgency of the corybantic Attis contrasts with the pathos of his lament. Within the lament, too, the structure is antithetical; the romantic associations of Attis' *patria* and his past happiness as the object of the adulation of throngs of admirers are contrasted with the calamity of Attis' present circumstances in a life fated to unremitting servility to the overbearing mother goddess.

The language, too, abounds in rhetorical devices to create specific effects: anaphora, epanelepsis, homoioteleuton, alliteration, assonance and chiasmus (see Fordyce's commentary on Poem 63). Striking are the use of apostrophe (9), which points to personal involvement and subjectivity of the highest form - within the constraints of generic conventions - and the final three lines which encapsulate the poet's aversion to Cybele and her actions.

In fact the *Attis* is a kind of manifesto of the Neoteric movement. The brief and elliptical narrative, the asymmetrical treatment of myth (outlandish and bizarre), a highly personal and subjective tone, the interest in emotions and psychological states - all point to the influence of the late Alexandrian epyllion and to Parthenius and his doctrine of *erotika pathemata* in particular. The *Attis* echoes the drift of Parthenius' *Tragic Love Romances*; Catullus' formulation is a deliberate and conscious attempt to conform to this particular development of the Alexandrian tradition which, through Parthenius in his role as teacher,

became pervasive enough at Rome to become the literary core of the Neoteric movement, as will be further investigated in Chapter 5.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

1. It is interesting that the *Bellum Punicum* of Naevius, although written in the Saturnalian metre, is classified as epic.

2. *Recrepant* is a rare verb and occurs only here and in the *Ciris* (108, *lapis recrepat Cyllenia murmura pulsus*).

3. The author of the *Ciris*, writing in the same manner, has *labellum* (496) and *frigidulos* (251, 438). See Chapter 6 for a detailed account of the diminutives used in the *Ciris*.

4. The contrast between light and darkness is not confined to the *Attis*. In Poem 64 as well, light imagery serves to differentiate the two stories. There are two explicit references to darkness in the Ariadne-story (197, 207, *caecus*). *Lux*, on the other hand, plays a significant role in the Peleus-story, and is used to impart brilliance to the day on which Peleus first saw Thetis (16), the wedding day (31, 325), and the morning after the wedding night (376). In lines 44-6 the splendour of the palace is described in terms of light, and light is the climax of the simile of the sea at dawn (275).

5. Personification is a frequent technique of Catullus. Thus in Poem 31 Sirmio is portrayed as a person of flesh and blood (2, *ocelle*; 12, *venusta*; 14, *cachinnorum*). In Poem 4 the yacht is also personified; it tells its own tale. See Chapter 5 for the personification of the Argo and of the sea in Poem 64.

6. Cf. 64.69-70, *illa vicem curans toto ex te pectore, Theseu,/toto animo, tota pendebat perdita mente.*

7. It is also used by Calvus (fr. 11, *cum gravis ingenti coniuere pupula somno*).

8. When Vergil deals with Pasiphae in a typically Neoteric section of *Ec.* 6, he echoes Calvus' line twice:

a virgo infelix, quae te dementia cepit (47)

a virgo infelix, tu nunc in montibus erras (52)

The Corydon of *Ec.* 2 ends his lament, again in a typically Neoteric context (that of frustrated love), by twice using *a*:

quem fugis, a, demens (60)

a Corydon Corydon, quae te dementia cepit? (109)

Finally in *Ec.* 10, which deals with Gallus, Vergil uses *a* in three successive lines (47-49).

CHAPTER FIVE

Having illustrated the extent to which the *Attis* was conceived in the Parthenian mould (and the closeness of the parallels seems to render the correspondence intentional), I now turn to Poem 64 in the light of my basic hypothesis. The poem may not appear to be as representative as the *Attis* of the type of epyllion favoured by the Neoterics[1]; I believe, however, that the themes and conception of the poem are essentially Parthenian. The influence of Parthenius has not been recognised perhaps because of Catullus' freer adaptation of the *erotika pathemata* doctrine and his allegiance to a far greater variety of Greek elements than in the overtly Parthenian *Attis*[2].

For the purposes of my discussion, the following simplified breakdown of the poem's structure will suffice[3]:

1) The first section of the Peleus-Thetis story (1-49);

2) The ecphrasis which deals with Theseus and Ariadne (50-264);

3) Continuation of the Peleus-Thetis episode (265-383);

4) Epilogue (384-408).

I will argue that the ecphrasis, with a theme that is clearly influenced by the doctrine of *erotika pathemata*, is central to the poem and that the first section of the Peleus-Thetis episode, in an expansive elaboration of the technique of antithesis and contrast that characterizes the Catullan corpus, runs counter to the Theseus-Ariadne theme. The felicity of the marriage of Peleus and Thetis,

presented initially with extravagant splendour, is tempered, however, in the latter part of the poem, reflecting again the influence of Parthenius' canon and its compatibility with the poet's cynical attitude to wedlock; for him, "even in the most fortunate-seeming union lies the potential for unhappiness" (Forehand:1974:88).

Before Klingner's perceptive and sympathetic study in 1956, Catullan criticism was often dismissive of Poem 64 (e.g. Ellis:1889:282; Couat:1875:177; Pasquali:1920:18; Havelock:1939:77; Kroll:1929:142). Recent criticism, however, has generally been more favourable, much of it having acclaimed the poem's literary merit (Jenkyns:1982; Martin:1992:151; Bramble:1970; Harmon:1973; Knopp:1976; Duban:1980; Rees:1994).

Again, as with the *Attis*, there is little unanimity about the poet's intention. Critical appraisal of the poem has focused on four general lines of interpretation, with minor variations: the poem is viewed either as a contrast between happy and unhappy love (Murley:1937; Klingner:1956; Forehand:1974), or as a projection of the poet's personal experience into the realm of myth (Harkins:1959; Putnam:1961; Daniels:1967), or as an ironic commentary on the heroic age and an indictment of Rome's moral decadence (Kinsey:1965; Curran:1969; Bramble:1970; Konstan:1977), or as a *tour de force* vaunting the tenets of the new movement and the poet's own artistic virtuosity (Jenkyns:1982; Martin:1992; Rees:1994).

A detailed analysis of the poem is unnecessary for the purposes of my hypothesis; I simply need to focus briefly on those aspects relevant to my theme. I will first examine the section of the Peleus-Thetis episode which precedes the Theseus-Ariadne story, and the Theseus-Ariadne story itself. I will then conclude with brief comments on the rest of the poem.

I begin by examining and postulating the reasons for some of Catullus' obviously intentional departures from the traditional accounts of the Peleus-Thetis myth.

His is the only extant version in which Peleus first meets Thetis during the Argo's voyage. According to Apollonius (1.558), Peleus had already married Thetis and fathered Achilles when he was an Argonaut, while in Valerius Flaccus the wedding scene of the couple is part of the Argo's decor (1.130), and the young Achilles sees Peleus off on his journey (1.255ff.).

The romantic story of reciprocal love at first sight and of Thetis' willingness as a marriage partner (19-20) is to be found only in Catullus' version. In Homer (*Il.* 18.429ff.) Thetis is visibly dismayed at the prospect of marrying a mortal. In Ovid's version (*Met.* 2.238ff.) and in the one to which Pindar alludes (*Nem.* 3.34ff, 4.62ff.), Peleus has to suffer a series of Protean metamorphoses before he is allowed to take Thetis as his bride (Konstan:1977:3-4; see also Merrill: 1951:132; Lesky:*RE*:1894:19.302.67ff; Bramble:1970:22-41; Fordyce:1990:280-1).

Apart from the cryptic allusiveness of *concessit amores* (27), Catullus chooses not to refer to earlier versions of the myth, where Jupiter was dissuaded from consummating his passion for Thetis through a prophecy, either of Prometheus or Themis, that the son of Thetis would be greater than his father. To perpetuate his own sovereignty, he therefore forbade Thetis from wedding an immortal (Pindar *Isth.* 88.32ff.; Aeschylus *Prometheus Bound* 911ff.; Apollonius 4.791ff.).

These alterations and typically Hellenistic omissions clearly serve a specific poetic effect. Before the Theseus-Ariadne episode, Catullus' stylistic technique is unflaggingly directed at sublimating and idealizing the union of Peleus and Thetis. The markedly picturesque and sensually evocative formulation of the first section (compressed, elliptical and yet an apparent violation of the well-documented Neoteric aversion to descriptive detail) is by no means a casual aberration from established Neoteric practice. The poet's literary technique, influenced perhaps by trends in contemporary Roman art (Martin:1992:154ff.), is vividly graphic, profuse in symbolism and palpably aimed at evoking a beatific vision of the union of Peleus and Thetis, portraying them as the quintessence of conjugal bliss.

Thus in Catullus' poem the marriage of Peleus and Thetis is the result of mutual passion and not the ineluctable sequel to divine intrigue; hence the omission of

any reference to the prophecy and to Jupiter's decree that Thetis should not wed an immortal.

As for the departure from the traditional account where Peleus and Thetis are already married and Achilles is a boy when the Argo is launched, Catullus' variation is fundamental to the train of his plot. He chooses to identify the Argo's launch as the stimulus for the union of Peleus and Thetis. In fact, the Argo is in all likelihood the personification of Peleus as the sea is of Thetis, and when the virgin prow of the Argo "handselled Amphitrite, untried before" (11)[4], the strong sexual imagery in the entire section dealing with the launch of the Argo and man's first vision of the beguiling bare-breasted nymphs, anticipates and serves as a sensual (and at times prurient) prelude to the consummation of Peleus and Thetis' passion (see Konstan:1977:13ff. for a detailed discussion of the sexual symbolism).

Harmon (1973:312) notes that the opening 15 lines, which lead up to the meeting of Peleus and Thetis, echo a passage (208-16) from Ennius' *Medea*. The tone of Ennius' passage is distinctly sombre, but Catullus transforms it to presage an event of unsurpassed happiness. He omits the exclamation *utinam ne* (208) to suggest that there will be no cause to regret the Argo's voyage, at least in as far as the first section of the poem is concerned. Likewise, the Catullan passage contrasts strikingly with Apollonius 4.1161-67, where the circumstances of Jason and Medea's marital consummation are a reminder that mortal joy is

always adulterated by anguish. "The opening lines of 64...imply that 64, in contrast to the tale of Medea, tells of aspirations fulfilled" (Harmon:1973:312).

The epic introduction to the poem sets the tone of grandeur and fantasy that Catullus wishes to sustain throughout the section to embellish the marriage with an aura of ultimate romanticism. *Peliaco* (an adjective instead of a noun) and *prognatae* (1), *liquidas* (2), *pubis* (4) and *vada salsa* (6) are features of the grand epic style, as is the alliteration of each of the opening three lines. These, together with *quondam* (1) and *dicuntur* (2), place the scene Catullus is depicting in the legendary past and create the atmosphere of romance, adventure and marvel with which the poet wishes to preface the marriage of Peleus and Thetis.

The personification and peculiar description of the Argo helps to evoke this sense of wonder and marvel. Thus the Argo is described as "trees swimming" (1-2), the oars are "wooden hands" (7), the ship is a "chariot flying" (9) and an "unprecedented phenomenon" (15; cf. Apollonius 1.540-58, where the Argo is invested with the same aura of the marvellous, and its oaken keel is "divine" and endowed with speech). The personification of the sea parallels the personification of the Argo (2, *Neptuni*; 11, *Amphitriten*). The motion of the sea gradually increases (it is ruffled by the wind and ploughed by the ship's prow; 12), and the waves turn white with the churning of the oars (13) until the sea eventually comes to life by taking on human form (14-18). Marvel confronts

marvel, as the Nereids gaze at the first ship while man for the first time beholds the exquisitely naked nymphs (Curran:1969:176-7).

A strong and emphatic tone, the anaphora and the play on Thetis (19-21) indicate the poet's awe at the mutual passion of Peleus and Thetis and at Jupiter's sanctioning of their union. This happy turn of events evokes a lyrical outburst by the poet (22-33) in the form of a double apostrophe, one saluting the heroes of the past and Peleus in particular (25, *adeo eximie taedis felicibus aucte*), and the other embracing rhetorical questions which again express the poet's disbelief at Peleus' good fortune.

In associating the launch of the Argo with the romance of Peleus and Thetis, the poet's first hint that the gods sanctioned their union is given at 8-10. Catullus overlooks the usual tradition according to which the shipwright Argus constructed the Argo (Apollon. 1.18-19, 111-12). In his poem it is Athena herself who is responsible for its creation; this change, together with Jupiter's sanctioning of the marriage (21), and Tethys' and Oceanus' consent (29-30; 30, interestingly, is modelled on a line attributed to Euphorion, fr. 122 Powell), highlights the cooperation between men and the gods and consecrates Peleus and Thetis' marriage.

To emphasize the felicity of the union further, an atmosphere of dazzling brilliance is maintained throughout the section before the ecphrasis

(Jenkyns:1982:108ff.). Thus we have the image of the gleaming swirl of the sea (14, *freti candenti e gurgite*), and *luce* for *die* (16; cf. 31, *luces*). The atmosphere of radiant splendour climaxes in the description of the palace (43ff.). In this scene there is a plethora of words and phrases suggesting brilliance and joy. The palace is resplendent with shining gold and silver (44, ***fulgenti splendent*** *auro atque argento*), the thrones glow white with ivory and the tables carry gleaming cups (45, ***candet*** *ebur soliis*, ***collucent*** *pocula mensae*) and the house glitters with royal treasure (46, *regali* ***splendida*** *gaza*). So auspicious is the occasion that the entire house rejoices (46, *tota domus gaudet*). The picturesque and elaborate description of the goddess' bridal bed (47-9) presages the consummation of a marriage that transcends mortal joy.

The description of the deserted countryside (35-42), which precedes the palace scene, has been interpreted by critics who view the poem as a commentary on the degeneracy of Catullus' Rome as indicating the neglect of traditional pursuits and as a submission to the allure of affluence and sumptuousness. Jenkyns (1982:108-9) suggests that the description is merely an exaggerated account by the poet to suggest the popularity of Peleus, described as *Thessaliae columen* (26) and to highlight the joy of his subjects and their sharing in the happiness of the occasion. According to Harmon (1973:314) it reflects their brief reprieve from servitude to an occupation which, since the degeneration of the ages, was essential for the maintenance of life. The deserted countryside scene culminating in the description of the scaly rust that spreads over the abandoned

plough (42) has, I believe, a twofold purpose: it provides a strong contrast with the pomp and pageantry of the palace scene that follows, and also subtly foreshadows the depiction of the forsaken Ariadne on the desolate shore of Naxos (52ff.).

This brief analysis of the first section, then, makes it clear how painstakingly Catullus has portrayed the union of Peleus and Thetis as the epitome of marital bliss, an ecstasy which, it will be seen, is tempered in the latter part of the poem.

At 50 begins the Theseus-Ariadne story which occupies more than half the poem. One can hardly miss the intended irony of *hominum heroum virtutes indicat* (50-1) in the context of what follows.

The first section (50-75) is an emphatically pathetic description of the deserted Ariadne gazing in disbelief at Theseus' hasty retreat. Jenkyns (1982:116-8) asserts that the portrayal is too decorative to be tragic. Comparing Catullus' Ariadne with Ovid's presentation of her in *Heroides* (10.15ff.), where she beats her breasts and tears at her hair (a gesture which underlies his belief in the disparity of tone), Jenkyns observes that

> [Catullus] takes pleasure in the pictorial beauty of his damsel in distress, bringing out with loving observation the textures of her clothing against her body; the *yellow* hair escaping from under her

> *finely woven* bonnet, her bosom emerging from its light covering, her milky breasts and the *smooth* stomacher pressing against them. Catullus' eyes travel slowly downwards with sensuous delight; it must be an insensitive reader who does not see that the poet is enjoying Ariadne's body as her clothes slip off her into the sea[5].
>
> (1982:117)

This is surely a perversely voyeuristic interpretation of a description which, while admittedly picturesque and elaborate and an apparent deviation from the Parthenian canon, is aimed at creating a typically Parthenian effect. The despairing picture of Ariadne has little to do with the carnal preoccupations of a *poeta lascivus*, as Jenkyns would have us believe. On the contrary, Catullus' studied formulation would suggest to anyone but the "insensitive reader" (unless, of course, the poem is in fact a chronicle about societal degeneracy and decadence) that the poet is at pains to elicit sympathy for his tragic heroine.

I merely outline the main features of Catullus' treatment. The scene is the desolate shore of Naxos, and the role the sea assumes here contrasts strongly with that of the previous section. An ominous note is immediately struck with *fluentisono litore* (52), with its subtle suggestion of the turbulent sea which intensifies the atmosphere of solitude and horror that enshrouds the forsaken Ariadne. The narrative focuses on her emotional state and emphasizes the pathos of her circumstances: she nurses uncontrollable passions (54, *indomitos gerens furores*; the implications of *furor* have already been dealt with in Chapter 4) and cannot come to terms with what she sees (55, *necdum etiam sese quae visit*

visere credit), she finds herself *desertam* and *miseram in sola harena* (57; again, see Chapter 4 for a detailed discussion of *miser*); she sees with *maestis ocellis* (60; *maestis* intensifies the pathetic diminutive *ocellis*, and recurs as a kind of thematic echo in 130, 202, 210, 249 and 279); and becomes motionless like a statue carved out of rocks (61, *saxea effigies*); the repetition of *prospicit* with the intervening *eheu* (61-2) sustains the tone of pathos. The sea, too, becomes a metaphor for her sufferings (62, *magnis curarum fluctuat undis*; cf. 63.47).

Then follows the picturesque description of Ariadne (63-7). Catullus lingers on her voluptuousness not for the reasons that Jenkyns proposes; he wishes, rather, to emphasize the ironic and pathetic futility of her naked beauty which wastes away on the lonely shores of Naxos. She is clearly an object of desire, as the poet chooses to portray her; having made her minister to his pleasure, Theseus cruelly abandons her, betraying his total disregard for the Catullan concept of mutual faith and reciprocity (discussed below). There is an implicit juxtaposition of Theseus' callousness and the tragic circumstances of the beautiful Ariadne; the tension deriving from the antithesis reinforces the tragedy of her plight.

Further, the disregard for her personal appearance as her garments fall off is not Catullus' attempt to excite the voyeuristic reader, but suggests, rather, Ariadne's distraught emotional state; her appearance which does not become the decorum of her regal status indicates total abstraction in her predicament, again underscoring Catullus' interest in her state of mind.

As in the *Attis* (9ff.), the plight of the young and beautiful Ariadne results in the censorious apostrophe to Theseus (69-70), with the repetition *toto pectore toto animo tota mente* for pathetic effect (cf. 63.44-9). The typically pathetic Neoteric *a misera* introduces the address to Ariadne (71-5); Venus has driven her mad with successive griefs and has sown thorns of suffering in her bosom (see below for further discussion).

On the other hand, Catullus adopts the same attitude towards Theseus which he displays towards Cybele in Poem 63, and for much the same reason; Theseus is responsible for Ariadne's misfortune and the poet's disapproval is evident. Theseus is described as *immemor* (58; also, 123, 135, 248) which, as Fordyce (1990:286) notes, "regularly implies not mere absentmindedness but indifference to one's obligations, ingratitude or treachery" (cf. 30.1). The description of Theseus as *immemor* may thus refer to his disloyalty towards Ariadne, his lack of gratitude for her help in overcoming the Minotaur, and his neglect of the gods in forswearing his oaths.

Catullus, complying with the Neoteric practice of mythical distortion or omission for specific effect, deliberately does not refer to the version where Dionysus actively brings amnesia upon Theseus (scholiast on Theoc. 2.48), or to the version, ascribed to Paion of Amathus, in which Theseus was forced by

a storm to abandon Ariadne, pregnant and seasick, to recover her spirits; he thus holds Theseus directly responsible for her plight.

Theseus' ship is described as *celeri classe* (53) to indicate his haste to get away from Ariadne, and the jerky rhythm of 58, as Quinn (1977:311) notes, suggests the guilt of his hasty retreat[6]. He also leaves behind meaningless promises for the wind to play with (59, *irrita ventosae linquens promissa procellae*; cf. 70.3-4). He is described as *ferox* (73), an epithet which, in addition to implying courage, often connotes insensitivity and callousness, as the context here suggests (cf. Quinn:1977:314).

Despite his deprecatory tone towards Theseus, Catullus does not begrudge him a heroic status at the beginning of the scene which deals (in flashback) with the episode of the Minotaur. After an account of the grim tribute exacted from Athens by Minos and the circumstances surrounding it (76-80), the heroic and patriotic disposition of Theseus is unmistakably depicted in his decision to risk his life for his beloved Athens rather than watch "the living dead" carried off to Crete (81-3).

This heroic portrait, already ambiguous in the light of 50-1, is tempered further by what follows. Lines 86ff. dwell on Ariadne, again emphasizing her beauty in picturesque terms and comparing it with the sweetness of the "myrtles bordering the river Eurotas or the many-coloured petals which the first breath

of spring coaxes to bloom" (89-90). The reference to her protected upbringing under the loving and watchful care of her mother (88, *in molli complexu matris*) is a subtle hint of her virginal innocence and of the strong familial bonds fostered by their intimate relationship. The homely atmosphere - the *concordia domus* - that these lines evoke is soon to be disrupted by the intrusion of Theseus.

She views him *cupido lumine* (86) and turns her gaze away from him, "but not before the flame had caught and spread through her whole body and she blazed with love" (91-3). The poet, foreseeing the outcome of her passion, breaks off into an emotional apostrophe, forcefully addressing Cupid, who callously (94, *immiti corde*) and mercilessly arouses frenzied passions (94, *misere exagitans furores*), mixing the joys of humans with anguish (95, *curis hominum qui gaudia misce*[*t*]; cf. 68.18). The apostrophe continues with an invocation to Venus, highlighting her role in casting Ariadne into the deep seas of passion (96-8), thus maintaining the theme of the hostile sea.

The same aspects of the poet's psychology evident in the *Attis* are clearly operative in his attitude to Theseus and Ariadne. The latter, a victim of a tragic love-affair, is again presented in a manner meant to elicit the sympathy of the reader, while the tone towards Theseus, as suggested by the forcefulness of *immemor* and *ferox*, is clearly censorious. The similarity of attitude in both poems could well be a projection of the poet's experiences with Lesbia, as has

often been suggested; I believe, however, as I have stated before, that the attitude conceivably accords, too, with the stock Neoteric description of victim and perpetrator in terms of the *erotika pathemata* doctrine.

Ariadne's love and concern for Theseus are reinforced by the graphic description of her fear for his safety (99-100), as is her role in Theseus' conquest of the Minotaur: "the prayers she breathed between clenched lips and her gifts to the gods pleased them and were not in vain" (103-4); likewise the allusion to the fine thread she had given to help him find his way out of the maze (112ff.). These references not only detract from the heroic enterprise of Theseus, but also emphasize his ingratitude in callously deserting Ariadne.

After this digression, Catullus intimates an immediate return to what is significantly described as his *prim[um] carm[en]* (116), but not before he indulges in a poignant description of Ariadne "turning away from her father's gaze and the embrace of her sister and of her mother fond to distraction of the wretched lass who prized them all less than her sweet love for Theseus" (117-20). The distressing picture of Ariadne deserting the comfort of her home and her loved ones (this is a parody of a Roman marriage ritual) is maintained by the detailed description that precedes her lament.

Theseus is described again as *immemori pectore*, and as *coniunx*, the latter continuing the irony of the quasi-nuptial ritual of lines 117-20. Ariadne is

ardenti corde furentem (124), and she utters her cries *imo e pectore* (125). The description of Ariadne rushing up the steep cliffs so that she could get a final glimpse of Theseus (126-7) points to Catullus' deep psychological insight; the act is one of desperation and suggests the extremity of her plight. The picture of her stretching her gaze across the vast expanse of the sea (127, *unde aciem in pelagi vastos protenderet aestus*) is emotionally evocative (cf. 63.49; see the discussion of *vastus* in Chapter 4). Ariadne is also described as *tristem* (126) and *maestam* (130); she utters her lament in the "last extremity of misery" (130, *extremis querellis*) and her sobs are qualified by the pathetic diminutive *frigidulos* (131).

It is clear, then, that Catullus painstakingly formulates his description to emphasize the pathos and tragedy of Ariadne's situation. The narrative is again elaborate, and aimed at making her fate cogently antithetical to the lot of the pair, thus far at least, in the Peleus-Thetis story. It also creates an appropriate preface to her lament, a brief discussion of which now follows.

Ariadne's lament, significantly occupying some 70 lines, is delivered when the irrevocability of her circumstances finally dawns upon her. Again, it is carefully formulated as an insightful commentary on her psychological state and indicates the full extent of her grievances against Theseus. She begins by hurling a barrage of reproaches against Theseus (132-63; cf. Medea's lament in

Euripides' *Medea* 165ff., 670ff. and in Apollonius 4.355ff.); then examines her own plight (164-87); and ends with a prayer to the gods for vengeance (188-201).

Sicine (132, 134) suggests her indignation and disillusionment. Theseus is addressed as *perfide* twice (132, 133) to emphasize his treachery; he has enticed her *ab patriis aris* (132) only to abandon her *in deserto litore* (133), the latter echoing *sola harena* (57) and maintaining the theme of desolation. He has disregarded the will of the gods (134; *neglecto numine divum*) and carries home a freight of broken promises (135). He is again described as *immemor* (135), as having a *crudelis men*[s] (136), *nulla clementia* (137) and *immite pectus* (138). She accuses him of having cajoled her with empty promises (139, *blanda promissa*), giving her expectations not of her present nightmare but of *conubia laeta* and *optatos hymenaeos* (141), all of which the winds now tear to shreds (142; *irrita* echoes *irrita promissa* of 59). Then follows the warning to women not to trust the vows of men; once their lust is satisfied they care nothing for their words and broken promises (143-8).

Next is the reminder of Ariadne's help to Theseus, even at the expense of her brother, in return for which her corpse, the prey of carrion birds and beasts, must lie unburied and exposed (149-53). Theseus is again described as *falla*[*x*] (151), maintaining the theme of his treachery and perfidy. The vicious attack on Theseus, questioning the origins of his being (154-7), indicates the full extent of Ariadne's justifiable wrath (cf. Cat. 60).

Her wish that Theseus could have taken her home to be his slave is a pathetic admission of the extremities to which she has been reduced as a result of his treachery. She is prepared to change her status from a princess to a *famula* to be with Theseus, bringing into operation the master-slave opposition that featured in the *Attis*. She then focuses on the predicament of her present circumstances (164ff.). Her loneliness is intensified by the reference to the winds that cannot hear her complaints (164-6), and the deserted seaweed where no mortal makes his appearance (168). Even fortune in its supreme cruelty begrudges her an audience (169-70).

She addresses Jupiter, wishing that Theseus had never set foot on Crete (171 ff.). He is again described as *perfidus* (174) and as *malus hic celans dulci crudelia forma consilia* (175-6). He is also a *hospes* (176); his transgression of the hospitality accorded him further emphasizes his moral deficiency.

She returns to her own plight (177ff.), presented in a series of rhetorical questions which underline her helplessness. She cannot make for the hills of her home as the hostile sea (179, *truculentum aequor*) is a barrier; nor can she look to her father whom she has abandoned for a man *respersum fraterna caede* (181). She cannot be consoled by the love of her husband; he is straining his oars to make his escape (183).

The utter desolation in which she finds herself is brought out in the following lines (184-7):

praeterea nullo colitur sola insula tecto,
nec patet egressus pelagi cingentibus undis.
nulla fugae ratio, nulla spes: omnia muta,
omnia sunt deserta, ostentant omnia letum.

The lament of Ariadne ends with an imprecation to the Furies to bring ruin on Theseus and his loved ones for his brutal desertion of her.

It is self-evident that the lament of Ariadne, as Catullus formulates it, is in the first instance a detailed commentary on her psychological state, complying with the Neoteric and Parthenian interest in emotional analysis. Second, it enhances the pathos and tragedy of Ariadne by highlighting her utter desolation and the impossibility of any escape from her predicament. Third, the reproaches directed at Theseus are not merely the complaints of a woman abjured; her lament is, I believe, a projection of Catullus' own attitude towards Theseus as the perpetrator of the love-suffering inflicted upon Ariadne.

To illuminate Catullus' stance towards his characters, it is necessary to discuss briefly his concept of *virtus*. His attitude towards *virtus* is unquestionably ambiguous, as will be illustrated during the discussion that follows. Earl (1967:83) observes that "the notion of *virtutes* had from the beginning

interrelated aspects: that of moral qualities and that of great deeds". The ambivalence towards the concept of *virtus* is not confined to Catullus; it appears to be a relatively widespread phenomenon of the first-century BC, due in part to the breakdown of the moralistic tradition, in part to the burgeoning of a privatistic individualism (cf. Konstan:1977:41ff.).

For Catullus the heroic aspect of *virtus* counted for little, as his poetry and his preoccupation with the *taeter morbus amoris* that bedeviled his short life seem to suggest. He thus concedes the depiction of Theseus' heroic valour in his conquest of the Minotaur, an episode which is described in the elevated epic style. He also gracefully acknowledges Theseus' civic loyalty in the statement that he was prepared, on behalf of his town, to risk his own life (81-2, *corpus proicere optavit*) to stop payment of the grim tribute to an unjust and tyrannical power (75, *iniusti regis*; 85, *sedes superbas*). It is perhaps significant, however, that this flashback is qualified by *perhibent* (76), which may suggest that the poet is distancing himself from the episode he relates (see Hutchinson:1990:301ff. for a discussion of the conflict between emotional involvement and distancing in Poem 64).

While Theseus may be replete with the heroic aspects of *virtus*, Catullus takes care to portray him as severely lacking in its moral aspects[7]. He is *immemor*, *ferox*, *perfidus*, *immitis*, *crudelis*, lacks *clementia*, makes promises that are *blanda* and *irrita*, and cares nothing for the *numen* of the gods. Theseus' most serious

failing is his wilful disregard for the bond he had established with Ariadne. For Catullus this is an unpardonable trespass, an attitude deriving not only from his status as a poet of tragic love, but also from his peculiar and perhaps paradoxical conception of personal relationships. His bond with Lesbia is described as a *foedus* and as a *sancta amicitia*, a sacred covenant, a kind of contractual obligation based on mutual trust and reciprocity, embracing not only physical passion but, more importantly, spiritual and emotional ties as well (Cat. 72; see also Lyne:1980:24ff. for a discussion of Catullus' use of the "language of social commitment").

Catullus' erotic principles of *fides*, *sancta amicitia* and *foedus* seem, however, to be tainted by ambivalence and paradox in the light of Lesbia's unfaithfulness and betrayal of her husband. Ironically, what makes Catullus' personal world of love possible is the violation of law, piety, sanctity and chastity. As poems like 5, 7 and 11 unequivocally indicate, Catullus explicitly repudiates traditional Roman values; yet to maintain the seriousness of his erotic world he is forced to transfer to it the terms of a system he is rejecting (cf. Rubino:1975:289-99; Greene:1995:80ff.).

Flawed as it may be, this aspect of *virtus* formed the cornerstone of Catullus' morality as he chose to project it. Theseus' heroic exploits are of little avail as he is seriously wanting in those aspects of *virtus* which are essential attributes of the ideal lover in Catullus' visionary erotic world.

Theseus' failure to honour his love-compact with Ariadne results in a double tragedy: her misery and desolation on lonely Naxos, and (indirectly) the death of his father Aegeus. Ariadne's cries for revenge do not go unheeded; although they are directed to the Furies, Jupiter himself, in his role as the avenger of perjury, responds to her imprecations and grants her request, making Theseus oblivious to the instructions Aegeus had given him should he return home successful after his conquest of the Minotaur. Lafaye (1894:175) notes that Catullus was the first to link the death of Aegeus with Theseus' violation of his pact with Ariadne; this is clearly the poet's attempt to intensify the calamities that follow upon a tragic love-affair. Even the gods conspire with the victim to exact retribution, and Theseus' perfidy thus becomes self-destructive.

At 215 begins the speech of Aegeus which is also formulated in the pathetic mould and stirs our anger at Theseus' callousness. He addresses Theseus as his only son, dearer to him than long life (215, *gnate mihi longa iucundior unice vita*), and restored to him only recently when he himself is at death's door (217). He was forced to send Theseus out on a dangerous mission against his will (219, *invito mihi*), before cruel fortune allowed his failing eyes to have their fill of his beloved countenance (218-20).

Aegeus cannot send Theseus with a joyful heart nor allow him to flaunt the white sails which presume success (221-2), but can merely express the deep anguish of his soul (223) and soil his grey hair with the dust of the earth (224).

The masts must be fitted with sails dyed with Spanish ochre to reflect his anguish and the consuming fires of his soul (226, *nostros luctus nostraeque incendia mentis*). Then follow the instructions, should Theseus be successful against the Minotaur: as he comes within sight of Athens the sails should be changed for white ones so that Aegeus would be the first to know of the triumph that brings his son home.

As a result of Ariadne's curses and Jupiter's intervention, Theseus forgets these instructions which were until then faithfully marked *constanti mente* (238). Aegeus, looking out apprehensively from the citadel and *anxia in assiduos absumens lumina fletus* (242), sees Theseus' vessels still fitted with the dark sails; thinking the worst, he hurls himself from the rocky citadel. *Ferox* Theseus enters a home which is saddened by the death of a father, and meets with the same kind of grief which his callousness has brought upon Ariadne (248, *mente immemori*).

The pathos of Aegeus' speech, the deep concern for his only son, the serious misgivings with which he unwillingly sends him out upon a dangerous mission, and the pathetic gesture of soiling his grey hair with the dust of the earth, are meant to elicit sympathy for a character who is soon to become an indirect victim of an *erotikon pathema*. While Ariadne has been avenged and Theseus punished for what from Catullus' perspective is a serious breach, the episode

again ends on a note of human sadness and tragedy, taking a grotesque and somewhat morbid turn which sets the mood for the scene that follows.

Lines 249-50 form a bridge passage in preparation for the presentation of Dionysus and his worshippers (251-64). Many critics assert that the Theseus-Ariadne episode ends happily, pointing to her deliverance by a god (Harmon: 1973:323; Kinsey:1965:920ff.; Knopp:1976:213). Such an interpretation is blatantly at variance with the markedly Parthenian effect that Catullus intends, and successfully creates. The atmosphere that pervades this section is the same one of bacchanal frenzy, wild orgiastic abandon, and primitive savagery that characterized the *Attis*.

The conclusion of the Theseus-Ariadne episode is far from felicitous. In the usual course of the myth Dionysus rescues, marries and makes Ariadne immortal (Hes. *Theog*. 948; Eur. *Hipp*. 339: Ovid *Fast*. 3.5.10; Diod. Sic. 551). Catullus, however, does not show us the meeting of Ariadne and Dionysus and the joy he brings her. His depiction of the scene emphasizes rather the orgiastic and barbaric character of the Dionysian cult (Konstan:1977:61-2). The scene is one of frenzied noise and emotion, brought out through intensive alliteration, onomatopoeic effects, other rhetorical devices, and the choice of particular words and phrases: anaphora on *euhoe* and *pars* (255, 256-9), epanalepsis on *orgia* (259-60), use of the compound *raucisonos* (263), *volitabat* (251) suggesting swaggering and hastening to and fro, *thiaso* (252) used for "a band of frenzied

devotees", *lymphata mente furebant* (254) highlighting the frenzy of the bacchantes, the use of the participle *bacchantes* meaning "in a bacchic frenzy" (255) and the word picture, rich in vowel music, alliteration and rhythmical effects, bringing out the strident sounds of the different instruments (261-4; see Quinn:1977:332-4 for details).

The last line of the scene captures the mood which lingers in the reader's mind: *barbaraque horribili stridebat tibia cantu*; "and the barbarous flute shrieked with its terrible song" (264). Ariadne's intense passion, inspired by the deceitful Theseus, results in her absorption into the wild insanity of the bacchantes. Betrayed by Theseus, her love, like that of Attis in Poem 63, has turned into madness.

The episode, then, ends in typical Parthenian fashion with the wild strains of the bacchantes which evoke the hysterical and destructive frenzy of Poem 63. "This terrifying scene and the picture of the betrayed Ariadne are what linger in the mind, not her deliverance" (Curran:1969:188).

I now summarize the main features of the Theseus-Ariadne episode which is, by the poet's own admission, his *primum carmen*. It has been shown how the picturesque and sensually evocative formulation of the union of Peleus and Thetis was aimed at highlighting its felicity, which in turn served as an effective

contrast for the *erotika pathemata* motifs that pervade the Theseus-Ariadne story.

The story is one of love and betrayal and is clearly in the Parthenian mould. The poet has chosen, in typical Hellenistic fashion, a poignant moment in the myth which best suits his depiction of the tragedy that follows in the wake of a misdirected *amor*.

I now summarize those elements of his treatment of the myth which are conceivably influenced by the doctrine of *erotika pathemata* and his resultant stance as a poet of tragic love.

First is his attitude towards his principal characters. It is clear that they are treated as are the characters in the *Attis*. There is a similar tone of disdain and disapproval for the perpetrator, and of sympathy and commiseration for the victims of tragic love. Thus while Theseus' heroic virtues are acknowledged, Catullus painstakingly portrays him as severely lacking in those moral aspects of *virtus* which the poet prizes above all. Theseus is *immemor* and *ferox* from Catullus' viewpoint; further, the abuse that Ariadne hurls at him in her lament is unquestionably a projection of the poet's own attitude.

It has become a cliché of Catullan criticism to describe the poet as a non-objective teller of tales. To counter the frequent assertion that there is no clear

indication of his aversion to Theseus, it is necessary to repeat that his *persona* always bulks large in what seems to be a plain unfolding of his narrative. Besides disregarding suggestive epithets like *immemor* and *ferox*, certain critics gloss over the character and content of Ariadne's lament. It is conceivable that the complaints at the heart of her grief are very much a reflection of Catullus' own attitude towards Theseus. The latter has violated his compact with Ariadne; his callousness and lack of moral virtue are directly responsible for her tragedy.

Ariadne, as a victim of love-suffering, is treated with compassion and pathos. The elaborate and picturesque detail with which she is presented in the shore scene is evidence of Catullus' personal and independent approach at achieving a typical Parthenian effect: the dramatic portrayal of her emotional anguish. The inclusion throughout the story of mock-epithalamial elements is aimed at ironically and pathetically depicting her as a bride experiencing a perverted marriage (cf. Konstan:1977:75ff.; Duban:1980:780ff.). Her comparison to the myrtles and to the many- coloured petals which the first breath of spring coaxes to bloom (89-90) - the latter suggests her readiness for marriage and the blooming of her joy - is clearly a reminder of the traditional association of flowers with marriage (see Harmon:1973:323, who cites Tufte:1970:171, for Catullan flower- imagery).

Immediately following upon this comparison is the description of Ariadne looking at Theseus and conceiving a (destructive) passion for him (92, *concepit flammam*), and her entire body on fire with love (93; the juxtaposition of delicate flowers and fierce flames is strikingly effective). The theme of the mock-marriage is continued in the depiction of her breaking away from the embrace of her sister and mother (116ff.), the description of Theseus as *coniunx* (123), and of her being carried away from the sacred altars of her home (132, *patriis avectam ab aris*). This culminates in her ironic statement that what she desired was *conubia laeta* and *optatos hymenaeos* (141); instead she finds herself betrayed and forsaken on lonely Dia.

Concipere usually means to conceive, and such conception is the closest Ariadne will come to bearing a child. Catullus thus ironically uses the language of reproduction to make Ariadne undergo "a grotesque travesty of motherhood" (Curran:1969:175). The sterility of her "conceiving" is anticipated by Venus' "sowing of thorny cares in her breast" (72), contrasting again with the flowers of 89-90; this, as Duban (1980:780-1) points out, is an example of the agricultural-sexual dynamics which are part of a sterility leitmotif pervading the poem.

Further, the tragedy of Ariadne is highlighted by the ironic description of her breasts as *lactentis papillas* (65), which emphasises the nurturing role of a mother

after birth and echoes *nutricum tenus* (18; cf. Duban:1980:785; Curran:1969:175, 188; Knopp:1976:210).

Other aspects of the poet's treatment, referred to in the analysis, clearly indicate Catullus' aim to elicit sympathy for his heroine who is the victim of a tragic love-story. Aegeus, too, is treated in similar fashion.

Finally, the Theseus-Ariadne episode unquestionably ends on a note of human tragedy. As has been pointed out, the picture that remains is one of the orgiastic and corybantic frenzy that so disturbingly pervaded the *Attis*, and not a picture of her rescue by a god. Many scholars have drawn attention to Catullus' use of traditional bacchic motifs in Poem 64. Thus in the shore-scene Ariadne is described as *saxea effigies bacchantis* (61). Laird (1993:21) points out that *bacchantis* is not the genitive of a noun, but of the present participle *bacchans*. The verb *bacchare* means to rave, to rant or "to cry Euhoe in the orgies". While *eheu* may be an exclamation of sympathy by the poet, it could also be a rendition of the frozen maenad crying "Euhoe", foreshadowing the *euhoe bacchantes* of line 255 (cf. Putnam:1961:187).

The bacchanal frenzy with which the episode ends is likewise something that the poet has prepared the reader for by the description of Ariadne as *indomitos gerens furores* (54), *ardenti corde furentem* (124) and *ardens amenti caeca furore* (197). Ariadne's vivid and realistic image of the Furies (193-4, *Eumenides*, *quibus*

anguino redimita capillo/frons exspirantis praeportat pectoris iras -The Furies, whose brows wreathed in snaky hair display the wrath breathing from their hearts) foreshadows, I believe, the description of the bacchantes (258, *pars sese tortis serpentibus incingebant*). Tatham (1990:560-1) suggests that Catullus uses *mitra* (68) in the same sense. In both Greek and Latin literature a mitra is worn by Dionysus and his followers (Eur. *Bacc.* 883,929,1115; Prop. 4.2.31, 3.17.29-30, 4.7.61-2; Statius *Ach.* 1.714-17; Soph. *Oed.Tyr.* 209; Sen. *Phaed.* 756, *Oed.* 413; Val. Fl. *Arg.* 2.271).

The bacchanal motifs that subtly pervade the Theseus-Ariadne story climax in the disturbing description of Dionysus and his wild followers in search of Ariadne. What is also important in terms of Parthenian influence is that the story ends in a typical metamorphosis (a fact unnoticed by scholars). Ariadne is transformed into a bacchant and again, as in the *Attis*, a misdirected *amor* has resulted in a tragic and destructive change.

Finally, Laird (1993:18-30), in examining the Theseus-Ariadne episode in the light of ecphrastic techniques, raises an important point: Catullus' ecphrasis is exceptional in classical literature in that it contains and quotes directly the speeches of some characters mentioned in it. The two speeches are long (Ariadne's is some 70 lines, Theseus' 23) and together they make up almost half of this section of the poem. Direct speech is not found in the narrative of any other ancient ecphrasis.

Why this wilful rupture of a well-established precedent? Is it merely a manifestation of Catullus' well-documented literary iconoclasm? If so, this must be qualified by the fact that such iconoclasm was directed primarily at features of the prevailing Roman tradition, and certainly not at Hellenistic practice, which was the predominant source of inspiration for the New Poetry.

There are examples of ecphrases in Hellenistic poetry which do not deviate significantly from previous types: Apollonius describes the embroidery on Jason's cloak at length (1.721-67), Theocritus the carving on the goat-herd's bowl (1.29-55) and Moschus the design on Europa's golden flower-basket (2.44-61). Catullus' repudiation of the presentation peculiar to ecphrases must surely be explained, then, by his adoption of Parthenian doctrine and the effects he wishes to create in the episode.

The emphasis that Parthenius placed on speeches as a medium for psychological analysis has already been discussed. Other stylistic features, too, of Catullus ecphrasis (see Laird:1993:29-30 and Townend:1983:21-30) are idiosyncratic and unprecedented.

Further, unlike previous examples, the Theseus-Ariadne ecphrasis, which is often described as a "digression", is the thematic and structural centrepiece of the poem. Hence the inclusion of features not usually associated with ecphrases. The device undoubtedly conforms to the type that Laird describes as "fictional"

or "disobedient" ecphrasis; Catullus is unquestionably not describing a picture, despite his introduction to the episode (50-1, *haec vestis priscis hominum variata figuris/heroum mira virtutes indicat arte*). Critics like Fordyce (1990:273), Putnam (1961), Pasquali (1920:19), Murley (1937), Harmon (1973:323) and Jenkyns (1982), some of whom point to incongruities in his description, seem to suggest that Catullus' ecphrasis has more to do with visual art than with language and literature, and thus give little credit to the role of poetic imagination in his exposition.

Catullus' statement that he is describing a picture (50-1) is perhaps merely a literary convention associated with ecphrases; the actual treatment belies the assertion and his stylistic technique - the use of apostrophe, rhetorical devices, euphonic effects, and speeches in particular - is a legacy of the late Alexandrian epyllion. Some of the above devices are used to highlight the tragedy of the victims and to underline Catullus' disapproval of Theseus, while the speeches are a medium for deep psychological probing; these features of the poem can safely be ascribed to the influence of Parthenius.

It now remains briefly to consider the rest of Poem 64, which returns to the marriage of Peleus and Thetis.

Catullus again makes some significant changes to the usual tradition of the marriage of Peleus and Thetis. No previous extant account mentions the

presence of Prometheus. Likewise, according to the usual tradition, it was Apollo who first sang in praise of Thetis' maternity (Aesch. fr. 350), then the Muses (Pindar *Pyth.* 3.90-1) directed by Apollo as their choirmaster (*Nem.* 5.22-5). In Catullus' poem, the absence of Apollo (and Diana) is specifically referred to (299-302), and the wedding song is performed by the Parcae.

Prometheus' appearance in the midst of the celebrations *extenuata gerens veteris vestigia poenae* (295) invests the union of Peleus and Thetis with the first palpable hint of gloom; "the traces of old wounds recall that the relationship between gods and men has had a stormy history" (Knopp:1976:211).

Similarly, the absence of Apollo and Diana shows that even at this happy moment, at least one god, together with his sister, scorned Peleus. Catullus omits Apollo from the list of immortal guests possibly because he would be responsible for the death of Achilles[8]. Further, amongst other duties ascribed to him, Apollo was also associated with the high developments of civilization and the inculcation of moral principles. Achilles' lack of the latter, as the song of the Fates implies, would make Apollo's presence inappropriate.

Many reasons have been advanced for Catullus' assigning of the wedding song to the Parcae (see Kinsey:1965:924; Ferguson:1985:203; Bramble:1970:28). It seems that the substitution of the Parcae for the muses gave Catullus a greater opportunity to indulge his Parthenian propensities and revel in the grotesque

(305-22), imparting a gloomy, ominous and darker tone to the marriage. The sordid description of the unsightly Fates, with its emphasis on the contrast between red and white (see Harmon:1973 for the significance of colour imagery in the poem), sets the mood of gloom which characterizes their prophecy.

Their song begins without any sinister implications, extolling the love of Peleus and Thetis (322-37), but then goes on to describe the bloody deeds of Achilles, climaxing in the sacrifice of Polyxena (338-70). The testimony to Achilles' prowess is the destruction of the Trojans, presented in the picture of the fields around Troy flowing with Trojan blood (344). The depiction of the mothers at the gravesides pounding their breasts with weak fists in grief at the slaughter of their sons is a tragic acknowledgement of Achilles' heroic *virtus* (348-51). This climaxes in the grisly picture of the sacrifice of Polyxena: *velut ancipiti succumbens victima ferro/proiciet truncum summisso poplite corpus* - "like a sacrificial animal crouching before the two-edged poleaxe, she will drop headless on crumpled knee, a corpse" (369-70). This grotesque picture is distinctly Parthenian and Polyxena's sacrifice to the unrelenting heroic ideal evokes the catastrophe of Ariadne.

Achilles' heroic exploits, as Catullus depicts them, amount to nothing but ruthless brutality. The union of Peleus and Thetis was presented initially as a paradigm of marital bliss; but it is now clear that the portrait served merely as a backdrop against which the tragedy of the Theseus-Ariadne episode could

stand out in relief. For Catullus, certainly, even the most felicitous union has the potential for unhappiness, as his formulation of the Fates' wedding hymn clearly illustrates. The account of Achilles' heroic accomplishments, with its emphasis on wanton slaughter and carnage, and finally on the sacrifice of the young and innocent Polyxena, as a victim of heroic *virtus*, leaves the reader with very much the same attitude towards Achilles and his victims as the poet was able to elicit for Theseus, Ariadne and Aegeus. Echoing the well-documented Catullan pessimism towards love and marriage, the Peleus-Thetis union thus ends on a sombre note, reminiscent, in a different way of course, of the tragedy of Attis and Ariadne. Catullus' emphasis on the bloody and bizarre deeds of Achilles invests the Peleus-Thetis story, too, with a distinctly Parthenian flavour.

Even Catullus' "moralizing" epilogue, influenced perhaps by *Od.* 7.195-206 and Hesiod's *Works and Days* (174-201; Quinn:1977:348-9), has no reference to the ills of the time. There is no mention, for example, of Sallust's catalogue of evils that plagued Rome. What the epilogue does emphasize is lack of familial *pietas* and sexual misdemeanours: fratricide, children ceasing to mourn for their parents, fathers wishing for a son's death to bed a young daughter-in-law, and vicious mothers seducing innocent sons (399-403). The circumscribed focus of Catullus' assault hardly makes the poem read primarily as a "moral indictment of Rome" (Konstan); nor does his reference to the days when the gods condescended to fraternize with men reflect above all his "nostalgia for the age

of heroes" (Harmon). That it is a projection of his personal experiences into the realm of myth and a reflection of his immediate concerns seem beyond question. Is the poem's ultimate shape - seemingly discordant at times - not determined by the congeniality of Parthenius' doctrine of *erotika pathemata* with the circumstances of Catullus' own life and preoccupations?

It is not surprising that there is little consensus amongst modern scholars about the precise import of Poem 64. It abounds in literary echoes, both Greek and Roman, which bear witness to the scholar-poet ethic that Catullus inherited from his Hellenistic predecessors. While his parade of learning is by no means obtrusive, it seems that the poem's status as a deliberate, conscious and personal artistic creation, embracing a variety of literary precedents, in part accounts for what were wrongly seen in the past as inconsistencies and incongruities which detracted from the integrity of the presentation as a whole.

Despite the various interpretations of Poem 64, most modern scholars agree on its status as a literary masterpiece. The poem's allegiance to a variety of influences invests it with a diversified character; its debt, however, to Parthenian doctrine, at times overt, at times subtle, makes it largely representative of the type of epyllion popular among the New Poets.

END NOTES ON CHAPTER FIVE.

1. Cf. Wiseman (1988:178) who understandably does not mention the *Attis*, but writes that the themes of Poem 64 are "in conspicuous contrast with the tales of incestuous passion and metamorphosis that seem to have attracted his contemporaries".

2. Many scholars have pointed to the influence of the *Medea* of both Ennius and Euripides, Apollonius' *Argonautica*, Moschus' *Europa*, Pindar and Theocritus on Poem 64. Some of these will be referred to in the course of my discussion; see Harmon:1973:312ff., Klingner:1956:*passim* and Clausen: 1982:187ff. for details.

3. See Quinn (1977:298-9) and Martin (1992:156ff.) for a detailed and illuminating analysis of the poem's structure.

4. The basic meaning of *imbuere* is "to wet" and thus refers to the literal moistening of the Argo's prow by the sea. *Imbuere* also means "to break in" and "to do for the first time" and connotes the initiation of the Argo on her maiden voyage. In addition, *imbuere* is sometimes used of the sexual initiation of a young man by a woman. Thus we have here a suggestion of sexual union; the sea, personified as Amphitrite, accepts and initiates the virgin prow of the Argo. See Konstan (1977:16) for details.

5. Such an interpretation will doubtless appeal to a critic like William Fitzgerald who, in his article "Catullus and the Reader: the Erotics of Poetry", *Arethusa* 25, 1992, 419-43, discusses poems like 15 and 16 to prove that an essential aspect of Catullan poetics was its role in sexually stimulating the reader.

6. Theseus' ship is perhaps meant to contrast with the Argo, the one bringing, the other taking away happiness.

7. Knopp (1976:207ff.), for instance, fails to recognize the Catullan concept of *virtus* and *pietas* and their manifold connotations. He thus believes that the poet portrays Theseus as an "admirable" figure whose lack of personal passion does not negate his *virtus*.

8. Apollo (*Il.* 22.359-69) is the cause of Achilles' death and in 24.62-3 is rebuked by Hera for having attended the marriage feast. The rebuke is more intense in Aeschylus (fr. 284a, Mette) as quoted by Plato (*Rep.* 2.383a-b).

CHAPTER SIX

I have shown that the Catullan themes and treatment of Poems 63 and 64 clearly attest to the role of Parthenius and his doctrine of *erotika pathemata* in determining the salient features of the Neoteric epyllion. In propounding my hypothesis I have also given due credit to the markedly individualistic and characteristically Catullan ethos underlying the formulation of these poems. To avoid the misconception, however, that I have portrayed Catullus' incorporation of Parthenian doctrine as slavish and static, I emphasize once more that his interpretation of the doctrine is free and far from dogmatic; despite an unmistakable allegiance to the canon of *erotika pathemata*, the ultimate shape of Poems 63 and 64 is essentially Catullan - bearing testimony to the well-documented idiosyncrasy and originality of Catullus' work and to Newman's postulate of his "modification of the Alexandrian sensibility" (1990). The epyllion, as discussed in Chapter 3, had evidently become well defined during the late Alexandrian age, but the novelty of the type at Rome (where it was unfettered by native precedent) provided the New Poets with the scope to treat it in an individual and distinctive manner in accordance with their new scheme of poetics.

I turn now to the epyllia of Catullus' fellow-Neoterics. As these are non-extant and only their titles have come down to us (with a few fragments), their conformance with the *erotika pathemata* doctrine can merely be conjectured.

Taken individually, each epyllion offers evidence which is inevitably speculative. It will be seen, however, that they concur, each to a different extent, in suggesting similar trends and, in the circumstances, it would be perverse to reject their collective (and at times implicit) reflection of allegiance to the Parthenian doctrine.

Of the various members of the Neoteric school, I focus on Cinna, Calvus, Cato, Cornificius, and Caecilius who, one may assume, were writers of epyllia. There is sufficient evidence in the Catullan corpus to suggest the nature and extent of their allegiance to the ideals of the New Poetry (see Lyne:1978a:169ff. for details).

Calvus, who appears to have been very dear to Catullus and is frequently associated with him by later writers (Hor. *Sat.* 1.10.19; Prop. 2.25.4, 34.87; Ov. *Am.* 3.9.62, *Trist.* 2.427-31, Plin. *Epist.* 1.16.5, 4.27.4; Suet. *DJ* 73; Martial 14.195-6; Gell. *NA* 19. 9.7), is the addressee of Poem 50 which describes their pleasant evening spent together improvising verses; the tone of the poem unequivocally indicates the degree of their intimacy. Poem 96 consoles Calvus on the loss of his Quintilia while Poem 14 is a humorous remonstrance to him for sending Catullus a book of bad verse as a Saturnalian present (Buchheit: 1959:312-13 and Fraenkel:1956:280-81 suggest that the poem is primarily aimed at pillorying publicly a group of *pessimi poetae*).

Cinna's *Zmyrna* is praised in Poem 95; he is also the addressee of Poem 113 and at 10.29 is mentioned as Catullus' *sodalis*. Poem 56 is addressed to a Cato who is probably the famous poet and grammarian Valerius Cato, traditionally regarded as the head of the new movement[1]. Poem 38 concerns Cornificius who is perhaps the poet of the *Glaucus*, while Poem 35 is addressed to a Caecilius who is writing a learned poem about Cybele.

The content and context of the poems suggest that these poets were close friends of Catullus, presupposing a common allegiance to the same poetical ideals. While epigrams and polymetric versicles (erotic, comic, polemic) were of common interest, they were not the poets' sole concerns. Catullus' predecessors (Porcius Licinus, Valerius Aedituus, Lutatius Catulus and Laevius) had apparently written such verse (Quinn:1959:5-18; Ross:1969:13ff.), as had his contemporaries, Memmius (Ov. *Trist.* 2.433; Plin. *Ep.* 5.3.5) and Q. Hortensius Hortalus (Plin. *Ep.* 5.3.5; Gellius 19.9.7).

What was peculiar to the Neoterics, however, was the epyllion; it was their singular contribution to Roman literature, and it is to the epyllion and Parthenius' influence on it (to the extent that the evidence warrants it) that I now turn.

The evidence for Cinna is fairly conclusive (Wiseman:1974:44ff.; see also Watson:1982:93-110 for stylistic and technical similarities between the fragments

of Cinna and those of Euphorion and Parthenius). Wiseman has cogently argued for the identification of the poet Cinna with the tribune of the same name who was killed by a mob after Caesar's assassination (cf. Morgan:1990:558-9 who uses Ovid's *Ibis* 359-540 to support the identification). The role of a Cinna in bringing Parthenius to Rome as a captive c. 70 BC has already been discussed in Chapter 3. Whether it was Cinna himself (as Wiseman maintains) or a relative of the poet is not crucial; there is little doubt that Parthenius and Cinna met at Rome and that the Hellenistic poet was to have a significant influence on Cinna.

Apart from the *Zmyrna*, Cinna's other major work was a *Propempticon* for Asinius Pollio, written in all likelihood for his trip to Cilicia in 56 BC (Wiseman:1974:48). Parthenius, too, had written a *Propempticon*, and the one word that survives (fr. 21) is the name of Corycus, a town in Cilicia. As a verse of Cinna suggests (quoted by Isidorus *Orig.* 6.12.1; fr. 3 Traglia), Cinna had brought back from Bithynia a gift copy of Aratus of Soli, a Cilician poet. Wiseman (*ibid.*) conjectures that Cinna's *Propempticon* was inspired by the poem of Parthenius (cf. Rostagni:1956:56-64; Prescott:1963:13); it was a learned work in the Hellenistic tradition and required a commentary by Julius Hyginus (Charisius in *Gramm. Latini* I 134 Keil).

I now turn to Cinna's *Zmyrna* (see Irving:1992:274-7 for the sources and variations of the Zmyrna story). Zmyrna was the daughter of King Cinyras of

Paphos in Cyprus. One day his wife foolishly boasted that their daughter was more beautiful than Aphrodite herself. Piqued by this insult, the goddess made Zmyrna fall in love with her father and climb into his bed one dark night, when her nurse had made him too drunk to realize what he was doing. Cinyras soon discovered that he was both the father and grandfather of Zmyrna's unborn child. Wild with anger, he seized a sword and pursued her as she tried to escape. He overtook her but Aphrodite hurriedly changed her into a myrrh-tree, which the descending sword split in two. Out tumbled the infant Adonis, and Aphrodite, repentant of the mischief she had caused, concealed him in a chest which she entrusted to Persephone for safekeeping.

Not only is this story of incest and metamorphosis clearly in the Parthenian mould (cf. *Erot. Path.* 11) but Parthenius, too, was interested in the Adonis legend; he refers to the river Satrachus, which featured in it, by the name Aōos, derived from Ao (Adonis) and Aoa (Zmyrna; Parth. fr. 37; cf. Nonnus *Dionys.* 13.458-60 for Aphrodite bathing the son of Zmyrna in the river Satrachus; Wiseman:1974:49). When Catullus extols Cinna's minor epic in Poem 95, it is significant that it is to the Satrachus that he expects the *Zmyrna's* fame to travel (5, *Zmyrna cavas Satrachi penitus mittetur ad undas*; Clausen:1964:191 suggests that this scene of Cat. 95 was borrowed from Parthenius).

Cinna's poem was undoubtedly a creation of extraordinary *doctrina*; its contrast with Volusius' *Annales* (Cat. 95.7) indicates that it was a work of brief compass,

yet it took nine years to write (attested to not only by Cat. 95.2 but also by Quint. 10.4.4 and Servius on Verg. *Ecl.* 9.35) and soon required an explanatory commentary by L. Crassicius (Suet. *Gramm.* 18).

The influence of Parthenius' *Arete* on Calvus has already been noted in Chapter 3 (Pfeiffer:1943:31-2). Wiseman (1974:51 n.35) suggests that Parthenius' epithalamia (fr. 32, *ἵλαος ὦ Ὑμέναιε*) may have influenced those of Calvus (fr. 9-13 Traglia) and also those of Ticida (fr. 1 Traglia).

As for Calvus' *Io*, it is difficult to establish the theme of his epyllion from the few fragments that survive. I shall outline the traditional version of the story (Graves:1958:190-91; see, also, Irving:1992:69-71, 211-16 for earlier versions of the legend) and will attempt, in the light of the Neoteric programme, to infer the nature of the poem, with the *caveat* that my inferences are conjectural.

Io was the daughter of the river-god Inachus and a priestess of Hera at Argo. Iynx, the daughter of Pan and Echo, cast a spell over Zeus which caused the god to fall in love with Io. Hera became aware of his infidelity and turned Iynx into a wryneck as punishment. To conceal Io from Hera, Zeus changed her into a white cow which Hera claimed as hers and entrusted to Argus Panoptes for safekeeping. Zeus ordered Hermes to bring her back and himself led the way disguised as a woodpecker. Hermes, aware that he could not rescue Io without being detected by the hundred-eyed Argus, charmed him to sleep with a flute,

crushed him with a boulder, cut off his head, and released Io. Hera plagued Io with a gadfly which drove her out of the country; after lengthy wanderings and suffering she came to Egypt where she was rescued by Zeus.

Crump (1931:134ff.) has conjectured that Calvus' *Io* was idyllic with no interest in psychology. She bases her conjecture on Ovid's treatment of Io in his *Metamorphoses* (1.583-747). While echoes of Calvus have been found in Ovid's account (fr. 9: *Met.* 1.632; fr. 11: *Met.* 1.713), it is unlikely that the *Io* was idyllic.

As the relevant poems clearly suggest, Catullus, Cinna and Calvus were the closest members of the Neoteric school. When Catullus wishes to express his poetical affiliations, he does so in poems addressed to these fellow-poets, manifesting the espousal of shared poetical ideals. Lyne (1978a:167ff.) raises an important point which underlines the uniformity of poetic practice among the Neoterics. In a letter to Atticus, Cicero composes a hexameter line (*Att.* 7.2.1, *flavit ab Epiro lenissimus Onchesmites*) which is meant to parody a typical Neoteric verse. If Cicero's jibe encompasses more than metrical technique, it is likely that the group has other distinctive and common characteristics as well.

In the light of the above, it is conceivable that Calvus' *Io*, both in terms of treatment and choice of theme, conformed with the epyllia of his *sodales*, which

I have shown were formulated in compliance with Parthenius' doctrine of *erotika pathemata*.

An analysis of the myth demonstrates that it contained elements of pathos, bizarrerie and metamorphosis - features that suited the tenor of the Parthenian epyllion. The well-documented Neoteric tendency, in emulation of late Alexandrian trends, to traverse the byways of myth and incidentals in the saga of heroes and heroines, makes it unlikely that Calvus dealt with the entire myth, as transmitted to us, but rather with an aspect of it which allowed scope for pathos and psychological analysis (cf. Lyne:1978a:173) - possibly the metamorphosis, wanderings and suffering of Io as a result of her love for Zeus.

A surviving fragment[2] (fr. 9, *a virgo infelix herbis pasceris amaris*; cf. Cat. 64.71) suggests the epyllion's theme; the fact that the maid is *infelix* and feeding on *herbis* ***amaris*** suggests the theme of love-suffering. *Herbis pasceris amaris* may be used metaphorically; I believe, however, that *pasceris* could be interpreted literally and therefore applies to Io after she has been transformed into a cow. Further, the emotional apostrophe introduced by the typically pathetic Neoteric *a* indicates the poet's empathy with the tragedy of his heroine.

Sudhaus (1907:482) suggests that a verse of the *Ciris* (184, *fertur et horribli praeceps impellitur oestro* - by destructive frenzy is she carried and driven headlong) comes from the *Io* (cf. Lyne:1978b:177). *Oestrus*, deriving from the

Greek *οἶστρος*, is translated in its figurative sense of inspiration or frenzy; it is interesting, however, that its prime and literal meaning is gadfly. If Sudhaus' conjecture is correct, the line in question could well be from a scene where Io, transformed into a cow by Juno, is being plagued by a gadfly. This would substantiate the conjecture of the *Io*-theme proposed above.

The evidence, then, meagre though it is, suggests that Calvus' epyllion was in the Parthenian mould. First, it is likely that the poem was short, as can be inferred from the context of Poem 14, addressed to Calvus (cf. Poem 22). Second, love-suffering and metamorphosis are evidently fundamental to the plot of the *Io*. Finally, although the lack of evidence does not allow us to comment on the poet's attitude towards the perpetrator of love-suffering, his concern and sympathy for the victim are beyond question. It is conceivable, then, that Calvus' *Io*, too, was influenced by Parthenius' doctrine of *erotika pathemata*.

If the evidence for Cinna and Calvus is sparse, the position for the remaining Neoterics whom I propose to discuss is even worse. In the circumstances, my comments will be brief.

Cornificius[3] is the addressee of Poem 38 in which he is gently chided for not sending Catullus (1, *tuo Catullo*) an *allocutionem* for some severe and increasing distress that the writer is undergoing. It is perhaps significant, in as far as the *Glaucus* is concerned, that Catullus asks for something *maestius lacrimis*

Simonideis (8), which may suggest that Cornificius was capable of writing in the pathetic style of Simonides, renowned for his dirges.

Almost all Neoteric scholars accept that the *Glaucus* was an epyllion. Although there are many stories attached to the name Glaucus, Cornficius' epyllion could well have dealt with the fanciful tale of the fisherman turned merman and his unsuccessful wooing of the nymph, Scylla, who was changed by the jealous Circe into a sea-monster with six fearful heads and twelve feet (cf. Wiseman:1974:55, who gives a useful bibliography; the Glaucus story was told by Hedyle, Hedylus, Alexander of Aetolus and, possibly, Callimachus; see also Webster:1964:52, 130). It is interesting that Macrobius (*Sat.* 5.17.18) reports that *Georg.* 1.437, which refers to the myth, is a line borrowed by Vergil from Parthenius. Further, among the myths that Parthenius dealt with in his *Metamorphoses* were those of Minos (cf. Cato's *Dictynna* below) and Scylla, a character in the version of the Glaucus story discussed above (Parth. fr. 20; see also the reference to Parthenius' *Metamorphoses* at Schol. Dion. Per. 420).

Macrobius (*Sat.* 6.5.13) also quotes a fragment of the *Glaucus*: *centauros foedare bimembres*. Centaurs do not seem to be involved in any story dealing with a Glaucus. It is likely, then, that what we have here is a passing reference, a simile or even a digression on these comparable hybrids, in the manner of Moschus' digression on Io in his epyllion on Europa (cf. Lyne:1978a:174; Rawson:1978: 189).

Even less is known about Valerius Cato's *Lydia* and *Dictynna*. The *Lydia*, judging from the *Appendix Vergiliana*, if it was an epyllion at all, mourned the loss of his beloved (cf. Parthenius' *Arete*). The *Dictynna* (called *Diana* by Suetonius *Gramm.* 11) probably dealt with the aetiology of Britomartis' name, Dictynna. Minos was cursed by Pasiphae for his many infidelities; when he lay with any other woman he discharged, not seed, but noxious serpents, scorpions and millipedes which preyed on her vitals (Antoninus Liberalis *Transformations* 41). Among the many women that Minos coveted was Britomartis of Gortyna, a daughter of Carme, who was pursued by Minos for nine long months. Finally, to escape him she leapt over a cliff into the sea, was caught in a fishing net (hence called *Dictynna* from *δίκτυον*) and escaped into a grove of Artemis.

This morbidly romantic incidental in the legends of Minos suits the tenor of the Neoteric epyllion; it is likely that Cato's poem told of Britomartis and Minos and that it was an epyllion (cf. Lyne:1978a:173). It is interesting to note the similarity between Cinna's praise for Cato's *Dictynna - saecula per maneat nostri Dictynna Catonis* (fr. 9 M) - and Catullus' praise for Cinna's *Zmyrna - Zmyrnam cana diu saecula pervolvent* (95.5).

It has been widely conjectured that the Britomartis story in the *Ciris* (294-309) draws heavily on Cato's *Dictynna* (Herrmann:1949:111-44; Bardon:1952:340; Sudhaus:1907:485; Lyne:1978b:223ff.). At 303-5 Carme alludes to divergent accounts of Britomartis' eventual fate. Her concern about the truth of her

daughter's end, rather pedantically expressed, seems out of place in the midst of her passionate apostrophe. Lyne (1978b:224) conjectures that the oddness of the lines is due to their being pillaged from elsewhere, a common practice by the poet of the *Ciris*. It is possible that the poet echoes a discussion of myth-variants from the introduction of Cato's *Dictynna*, as is found in the *Ciris* itself and which was presumably popular in learned epyllia.

Finally, among the poets referred to in the Catullan corpus, we come now to Caecilius and his *Magna Mater*, the subject of Cat. 35. It is not known whether Caecilius wrote or planned to write in galliambics, or whether he had a version of Attis in mind. It is likely, however, that he envisaged a myth or story connected with Cybele, and not just a description of ritual.

A quick survey of relevant issues raised by Poem 35 helps elucidate the nature of Catullus' relationship with Caecilius and possibly indicates the kind of poem the latter was engaged in (see Copley:1953:149-60; Khan:1974:475-90; Onetti & Maurach:1974:481-4; and especially Fredericksmeyer:1985:213-21 for discussions of Poem 35).

The poem is evidently written to persuade Caecilius to leave his hometown and the alluring embrace of his *candida puella* and to come to Verona in connection with his *Magna Mater* which, though charmingly begun, is still incomplete (13, *incohatam*; 18, *incohata*). The opening line (*poetae tenero, meo sodali*) offers some

useful clues (Fredericksmeyer:1985:215-6). *Tener* suggests delicacy of sentiment and refinement of technique, and is often used of poets of love (cf. Ovid *Rem. Am.* 757, where Callimachus, Philetas, Sappho, Anacreon, Tibullus and Propertius are mentioned; *Ars Am.* 2.273, 3.329-40; *Am.* 2.1.4; Apollinaris Sidonius 23.18); it is applied to Catullus himself by Martial (7.14.3, 12.44.5). *Sodali* suggests that Catullus and Caecilius are friends in the sense that they share common interests and concerns; the context points to poetry. The word often refers to membership of a society sharing the same ideals; this, too, suggests the group of New Poets (cf. *Dig.*47. 1.2.4: *sodales sunt, qui eiusdem colegii sunt, quam Graeci ἑταιρίαν vocant*; the word is used at Cat. 10.29 and 95.9 in this context).

Catullus, then, addresses Caecilius as a love-poet with whom he shares mutual and common poetical interests. Catullus shows concern and even anxiety for Caecilius' unfinished poem, and urges him to come to Verona to share in "certain deeply pondered things - thoughts of a friend [they] both know well" (5-6). *Cogitationes amici* (5,6), the thoughts of a like-minded friend, conceivably have something to do with poetic matters of mutual interest to both Caecilius and Catullus. Who is this learned friend? Is it a fellow-Neoteric, or perhaps Parthenius, in view of his role as teacher and the significant influence he had on Catullus' *Attis* (see Chapter 4)? The question must remain unanswered since the internal evidence provides no clues.

On the basis of Catullus' concern for and interest in Caecilius' work, it is safe to assume that the poem was being undertaken along similar lines to Catullus' and that it was probably an epyllion. This assumption is corroborated by the similarity between Catullus' reference to Caecilius' poem and a line of his own *Attis* (cf 35.14, *Dindymi domina* and 18 *Magna Mater* with 63.91, *dea*, *magna dea*, *Cybele*, *dea domina Dindymi*; Lyne:1978a:175).

It is conceivable, then, that Caecilius was a love-poet (the association of *venuste* at 17 with Venus and love consolidates this view) and that he gave, or planned to give, his version of the legend the love interest, perhaps the suffering on account of love, which was common to his school.

The epyllia of most of the Neoteric poets, then, are concerned with the love element, in plots which presumably allowed for pathos and character analysis. Further, many of the themes are metamorphic; the characters undergo (or have undergone) change, not only in personality but even in physical form as a result of their actions. It is in the light of this feature of the Neoteric epyllion that Parthenius' lost *Metamorphoses* has to be considered.

It is likely that Parthenius dealt with some, if not most, of the stories used by the Neoterics in their epyllia (cf. Parth. frr. 20 and 37 above). If this is admissible, then Parthenius, in view of his importance to the New Poets, probably provided the source for the stories of their epyllia; the treatment, too,

would likely be according to his doctrine of *erotika pathemata*, as is demonstrably the case with Cat. 63 and 64. Parthenius' *Metamorphoses* is an important factor, not, as far as I know, previously considered, in evaluating the nature of the Neoteric epyllion.

The foregoing discussion, though sketchy in places through lack of evidence, points to the theme of *erotika pathemata*, of suffering through love, in compliance with Parthenius' canon, as the basis of the Neoteric epyllion.

I turn now to the *Ciris* of the *Appendix Vergiliana*. Besides the *Attis* and the *Peleus and Thetis*, the *Ciris* is the only extant example of the kind of epyllion favoured by the Neoterics. Its date and authorship have been the subject of persistent debate since the Renaissance (see Fairclough:1954:527-8 and Thomason:1923:239-62, 334-44 for details); while the date of its composition is still uncertain - ranging from c. 45 BC (Frank:1965:35; Prescott:1963:58) to the third-century AD (Lyne:1978b:48ff.) - there is unanimity among modern scholars that the work is not Vergil's.

It is possible that the poem was written by a post-Vergilian poetaster who meant to pass it off as an early effort of the young Vergil. If this assumption is acceptable, let us consider what expedients were available to the writer to help him succeed in his attempt at a Vergilian forgery. He was doubtless aware of the tradition which recorded Parthenius' role as a teacher of Vergil (Macrobius *Sat.*

5.17.18: *versus* [G. 1.437] *est Parthenii, quo grammatico in Graecis Vergilius usus est*), and clearly shrewd enough to realize that the incorporation of Neoteric, Parthenian and Vergilian elements into his poem would impart a degree of authenticity to it. He therefore chose to compose his poem in the mould of the Parthenian epyllion, drawing copiously on the Neoteric epyllia, obviously then still extant, and upon Vergil's works to give his poem a Vergilian flavour. Such a proposition would account for the numerous Neoteric and Vergilian echoes in the *Ciris*. Even if the assumption is incorrect, the poem is at any rate a conscious imitation of the Roman epyllic tradition making it a close prototype of the Neoteric epyllion. Again, my brief analysis will show to what extent the tenets of Parthenius play a role in its conception.

In a lengthy *proemium*, which occupies about a fifth of the poem (1-91), the author, despite his submission to the allure of philosophy, avows to complete his poem in which he wishes to bring to an end his efforts as a poet and lay aside his association with the muses. He would prefer to compose a philosophical poem worthy of his learned young friend, Messala, to whom the poem is dedicated; he is not yet equal to the task and therefore offers this humble work on which he spent the days of his youth. He outlines the theme of his poem, and in typical Alexandrian style, indulges in a lengthy and learned digression (54-91) on the two Scyllas who are often confused in Greek legend: the Scylla of the *Odyssey*, and the Scylla - heroine of the sad tale that is to be the theme of his epyllion.

His Scylla is the daughter of King Nisus of Megara; she develops a frenzied love for Minos, king of Crete, who is waging war with her native city and her father. Nisus' ability to thwart Minos and keep his city intact depends upon a strand of crimson hair conspicuous among his white locks. If he loses this crimson hair, the invincibility promised him by the oracles will be lost. On the verge of madness through her indomitable passion for Minos, she yields to the temptation to shear the strand of crimson hair and to betray her father and city in return for Minos' love, and makes a compact with her "lover" to this effect.

As she timidly gropes her way in the dark to her father's chambers in quest of the charmed lock, her aged nurse, Carme, comes upon the bewildered girl, and expresses her hope that she is not afflicted with the same madness that caused Zmyrna to conceive a lustful passion for her father. After considerable persuasion, she finally succeeds in coaxing Scylla to confess to her love for Minos and her intention to help him subjugate Megara. Carme strives in vain to dissuade the girl, and to calm her promises to help her if all other means fail.

The following day Scylla, after pleading with her father and with the counsellors of state to make peace, tries to bribe the seers, finally resorting to magic. When nothing avails she secures Carme's aid; the lock is cut, the city falls, and the girl is taken by Minos, not to the marriage altar, but to the chains of the galley. Scylla expresses her grief in a long lament.

Finally, Amphitrite transforms the girl into a bird, the *ciris*, which is destined to a life of solitude. Zeus, meanwhile, as a reward for Nisus' pious life, releases and changes him into a bird of prey, the *haliaetos*, which becomes a pronounced enemy of the *ciris* and forever pursues her.

This brief outline of the poem shows that the theme is clearly in the Parthenian mould. The story is one of uncontrollable passion and betrayal, resulting in metamorphosis and tragedy. That Parthenius is in all likelihood the source for the epyllion's theme becomes evident from the scholiast on Dionysius Periegetes 5. 420, quoted and translated below:

> *ὡς Παρθένιος ἐν ταῖς Μεταμορφώσεσι λέγει. ἐπειδὴ Μίνως λαβὼν τὰ Μέγαρα διὰ Σκύλλης τῆς Νίσου θυγατρός, ἐρασθείσης αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀποτεμούσης τῆς κεφαλῆς τοῦ πατρὸς τὸν μόρσιμον πλόκαμον καὶ οὕτως αὐτὸν προδούσης, ἐννοηθεὶς ὡς ἡ πατέρα προδοῦσα οὐδενὸς ἄν ποτε ῥᾳδίως φείσαιτο, προσδήσας αὐτὴν πηδαλίῳ νεὼς ἀφῆκεν ἐπισύρεσθαι τῇ θαλάσσῃ, ἔστ᾽ εἰς ὄρνεον ἡ κόρη μετεβλήθη.*
>
> As Parthenius says in his *Metamorphoses*: Minos took Megara by the help of Scylla the daughter of Nisus; she fell in love with him and cut off her father's fateful lock of hair and thus betrayed him; but Minos thought that one who had betrayed her father would certainly have no pity upon anybody else, so he tied her to the rudder of his ship and let her drag after him through the sea, until the maiden was changed into a bird.
>
> (Gaselee:1955:356-9)

A comparison of the plot as outlined by Parthenius in his *Metamorphoses* with the version used in the *Ciris* clearly points to Parthenius as a basic source (cf. Büchner, *RE* 8 A.1, 1128.35ff. and Ganzenmüller:1894:556 cited by Lyne: 1978b:13n.2), although the poem is by no means a cento, and displays evidence of liberal pillaging from a variety of sources, as will be pointed out briefly later in this chapter.

It is also significant that there were many parallel stories in the Hellenistic age: Comaetho (the girl's father, Pterelaus, has a charmed lock of hair like Nisus'; according to Apollodorus 2.4.7 this story was told by Euphorion), Leucophrye (*Erot. Path.* 5), Pisidice (*Erot. Path.* 21), Nanis (*Erot. Path.* 22), and a variation in Polycrite (*Erot. Path.* 9). This type of story was obviously compatible with the taste of the late Alexandrian epyllion: heroine-centred, tragic and erotically motivated (cf. Lyne:1978b:6-7).

It is conceivable that the treatment, too, would be in accordance with Parthenius' doctrine of *erotika pathemata*. A quick survey of relevant aspects will substantiate this assumption. The poet's primary aim is to elicit sympathy for his heroine and focus on her psychological state. Thus, in the narrative of the poem, action is subordinated to the poet's interest in the emotions of his characters. For instance, Minos' request for the lock of red hair as a precondition for requiting the love of Scylla is dismissed in a single line (187).

The cutting of the lock, the subjugation of Megara, and Minos' treatment of Scylla, although they are central to the story, are dismissed in five lines (387-91). Nor are we told where and how the heroine first saw and fell in love with Minos. The narrative technique is thus typically Alexandrian in its elliptical approach and similar to that of the *Attis* and of Parthenian doctrine as discussed in Chapter 3.

On the other hand, the poet lingers on love frenzy, complying with the Parthenian and Neoteric interest in psychological states. This is clearly illustrated by lines 129ff. Scylla is described as *novo correpta furore* (130), and as *nimium cupidis Minon inhiasset ocellis* (132). After Cupid has punished Scylla for violating the sanctuary of Juno by making her fall in love with Minos (133-62), the poet lingers on the depth of her passion and its consequences.

Echoing the imagery of Cat. 64.92-3, the poet describes Scylla's burning with an amorous *furor* in the following terms: *venis hausit silientibus ignem/et validum penitus concepit in ossa furorem* (163-4, she drank the fire of passion into her thirsty veins, and conceived in the depths of her marrow an all-consuming frenzy (similarly, lines 177-80)). She is *saeva* (165), and like a priestess of Cybele, the *infelix virgo tota bacchatur in urbe* (167).

Again, reminiscent of Catullus' Ariadne on the shores of Naxos and his description of the clothes sliding off her body into the sea, Scylla cares nothing

for her appearance in her distraught state: "No Idaean balsam adorns her sweet-smelling locks, no scarlet sandals of Sicyon cover her delicate feet, no collar of pearls does she wear on her rosy neck" (168-70). She is *perdita* (172) and hastens to and fro *incerto cursu* (172), often returning to climb the city walls and at night watching out from her palace for her love while ablaze with *crebris flammis* (176).

In his description of Scylla's contemplation on committing the dreadful deed, the poet takes care to emphasize that she is under the compulsion of forces over which she has no control (181-86):

> atque ubi **nulla** malis reperit **solacia** tantis
> **tabidulam**que videt labi per viscera **mortem**,
> quo vocat ire **dolor**, **subigunt** quo tendere **fata**,
> fertur et **horribili** praeceps **impellitur oestro**,
> ut patris, a **demens**, crinem de vertice sectum
> furtim atque argute detonsum mitteret hosti.

> And when she finds no solutions to afflictions so overwhelming and beholds slow-consuming death stealing over her frame, (and sees herself) proceeding whither anguish beckons and hastening whither the Fates compel, by a destructive frenzy she is carried and driven headlong to send the sheared lock to the foe after she - poor, crazed girl - had severed it with stealth and cunning from her father's head.

Again, the same attitude towards the victim of love-suffering seen in the *Attis* and the *Peleus and Thetis* is operative here; the poet's sympathy clearly lies with

Scylla. She is the victim of an inexorable fate and the deed she is to perpetrate is the result of a mind crazed (*demens*) by an uncontrollable passion foisted upon it by Juno, through the agency of Cupid, for a trivial offence. "What good man would not believe everything rather than condemn the maid of such a crime?" the poet asks (187-8).

Lines 129-62 give the *αἴτιον* of Scylla's disastrous passion for Minos. The episode does not exist in any other surviving version of the Scylla myth (cf. Knox:1983:309), and while sections may be borrowed from Neoteric epyllia (see below), the poet conceivably inserts it to highlight the baselessness of Scylla's punishment[4]. At some time before the main events of the poem (140, *olim*), Scylla was engaged in the rites of Juno. While playing, she loosened her cumbersome dress to give herself more freedom of movement, and the ball she held slipped out of her hand. She chased after it as it rolled into the divine sanctuary, and in trying to retrieve it she accidentally touched and thus violated Juno's shrine.

Afraid of Juno's wrath, she denied the violation under oath, and was thus guilty of both *periurium* and *violatio*. Juno herself was prepared to let the crime go unpunished, presumably because it would entail the involvement of amorous Jupiter who could well be enthralled by the beauty of Scylla. Cupid, in an unparalleled role as the avenger of perjury (cf. Apollonius 3.1-110, where Hera and Athena are unwilling to solicit Eros directly), took it upon himself to

punish the innocent maiden by making her develop a destructive passion for Minos.

The manner in which the poet formulates this episode is clearly meant to show that Scylla's punishment was unjustified. Her violation of the shrine was committed unwittingly (141, *inscia*), while she frolicked joyfully (142, *lascivit*; 144, *gaudens*). The poet's series of exclamations (150-55) wishing that these mishaps had never occurred, shows his concern for the hapless girl.

The poet makes it clear that Cupid is responsible for Scylla's plight and his tone is correspondingly censorious. Cupid is *malus puer* (133); he is intractable and stubborn in his resolve, neither his mother nor father being able to sway him (133-5). His description by the diminutive *parvulus* (138) is in mocking contrast to his assertive behaviour. It was Cupid who tried to arouse the ire of Juno at Scylla's unwitting trespass (138-9), and he is again described as a fickle god (158, *levis deus*), "by whom the slightest falsehood that lurks in any spoken word is ever sought for punishment" (158-9).

It is clear, then, that the poet holds Cupid directly responsible for the love frenzy afflicting Scylla. *Etsi quis nocuisse tibi periuria credat* (156) expresses his disbelief at her anguish resulting from the god's vindictive penalty for an innocent and unintentional trespass.

Minos, too, who is responsible for the callous betrayal of Scylla, emerges as a heartless character in the mould of Theseus for his failure to honour the compact he had made with the unsuspecting girl. Again, while he is not directly impugned by the poet in his own *persona*, the evident empathy of the writer for Scylla (and Carme) suggests that the words he makes them mouth are strongly eloquent of his own attitude to Minos.

When Scylla confesses to Carme her passion for Minos and her intention to shear the charmed lock of hair, the aged nurse breaks off into a long and bitter apostrophe to the Cretan king (286-92):

> o mihi nunc iterum crudelis reddite Minos,
> o iterum nostrae Minos inimice senectae,
> semper ut aut olim natae te propter eundem
> aut Amor insanae luctum portavit alumnae!
> tene ego tam longe capta atque avecta nequivi,
> tam grave servitium, tam duros passa labores,
> effugere, o bis iam exitium crudele meorum?

> O heartless Minos, now again thrust upon me, O Minos again an adversary in my old age, how truly through you, yes you, has Love brought anguish, either to my daughter in days past, or to my distraught fosterling now! Taken captive and carried off so far, and having endured such grievous servitude, such relentless griefs, have I yet been unable to escape you, O you who are now for the second time the merciless ruin of my loved ones?

Carme then goes on to expand at length on the fate of her daughter, Britomartis (294-309). The digression underlines the pathos of her own suffering and further emphasizes the cruelty of Minos. Scylla's lament, too, reminiscent of Ariadne's in Cat. 64, brings to the fore Minos' callous disregard for his love-compact with her, despite her role in the subjugation of Megara. The portrait of Minos that emerges is of a brutal and unrelenting villain, and this is clearly a projection of the poet's own attitude to the perpetrator of love-suffering in accordance with the *erotika pathemata* doctrine.

As for the poet's interest in the psychology of his characters, I have already discussed his depiction of Scylla's frenzy when she conceives a passion for Minos; I shall therefore refer only briefly to other instances in the poem in which the poet's main focus is on emotions. In the scene where Scylla approaches her father's chambers to shear the fateful lock (206-19), the poet's portrayal of her stealthily groping her way in the dark, poised on tiptoe, faltering, rushing, checking her sobs, terrified at the fluttering of her own heart, suddenly losing her nerve and looking to heaven for help, is an insightful commentary on her bewildered state of mind. So too, Carme's genuine motherly concern for the distraught Scylla (224-49), Scylla's protraction of her story to avoid the final confession (257-82) and finally her extended lament (404-58).

It is clear, then, that the *Ciris* is cast in the Parthenian mould. The poet's central interest is his heroine, her emotions and their outward manifestations. He not only focuses our attention there, but actively attempts to make us empathize with the girl and her crises, reflecting what was very likely the general preference of Neoteric epyllia. Hence the space given, for instance, to "Scylla *furens*" (163-90), the nurse scene (206-385), and to Scylla's lament, the liberal use of speeches underlining the poet's preoccupation with emotion.

The diction and other devices of style also attest to this (Lyne:1978b:25-31). There is a profusion of emotionally expressive Neoteric devices (cf. Poems 63 and 64) such as diminutives (3, *hortalus*; 132 and 138, *ocellus*; 138 and 479, *parvulus*; 151, *areolus*; 182, *tabidulus*; 251 and 348, *frigidulus*; 257 and 277, *nutricula*; 440, *lectulus*; 496, *labellum*), epanalepsis (105ff., 130ff., 237ff., 374ff., 288ff., 518ff.), anaphora (27ff., 146ff., 168-70, 172 and 174, 177-80, 183, 195ff., 259-61, 268-70, 313-14, 335 and 337, 358ff., 387-9, 394 and 397, 407ff., 409 and 411 and 414, 416ff., 428ff.), apostrophe and exclamation (81ff., 132, 150ff., 185, 190, 191ff., 469). He also uses rhetorical questions as a sympathy-evoking device relating to the fate or circumstances of his characters (71, 188ff., 190).

Lyne (1978b:39ff.) also suggests that many sections of the *Ciris* were modelled on or derived from Neoteric epyllia or episodes in them. Catullus' Ariadne plainly inspired the scene of "Scylla *furens*" (169-90); similarly, the lament of Scylla (404-58) has a lot in common with the heroine's lament in Poem 64.

The poet, then, has clearly filled out the narrative of his poem with existing material which does not deal with the Scylla story. As with the episode which explains the cause of Scylla's punishment (129-62), the whole nurse scene (206-385) does not seem to have been dealt with by any poet writing on the Scylla story. The manner of the poet's composition suggests that he must have had some help; yet, there are no external sources that can be cited. Lyne (*ibid.*) conjectures that the helping sources are now lost: 129-62 are modelled substantially on an episode in Calvus' *Io* (cf. Sudhaus:1907:499-500; Ehlers:1954:77-8; Otis:1970:382-4), while 206-385 draw extensively upon a nurse scene of the *Zmyrna*. Similarly, Carme's digression on Britomartis (294-309) is based on Cato's *Dictynna* (for details of all these borrowings, see Lyne's commentary on the relevant verses; cf. too, Sudhaus:1907:*passim*; for Vergilian echoes, see Leo:1902:14-55 and Fairclough:1954:404-47).

Two instances where borrowings are clearly demonstrable are Scylla's long, formal lament (404-58) and the description of Minos' island journey (459-77). Scylla's lament, in view of its length and the circumstances under which it was uttered, has a distinct air of the artificial and theatrical. It must be realized, however, that this was a feature used to evoke sympathy and also to serve as a vehicle for psychological analysis; it is safe to assume that it became standard practice with the later epyllion.

It is possible that if an epyllion on Scylla prior to the *Ciris* existed, it would have included a long and formal lament. But if such a source was available to the poet, he has clearly contaminated it with non-Scyllan material; Scylla's lament has echoes of both Ovid's Scylla and of Ariadne's lament in Cat. 64 (see Lyne:1978b:274ff. for the parallels). As for Minos' island journey, it is also clear that the poet leans heavily on material from other literary journeys, especially in Vergil (again, see Lyne:1978b:288ff. for details).

The *Ciris*, then, as its probable incorporation of material from contemporary sources indicates, is a poem that can hardly lay claim to a place of prominence in Roman literature. The poet was, however, shrewd enough to render the authenticity of Vergilian authorship a contentious issue among generations of scholars. The value of the poem lies not so much in its status as a work of literature *per se*, but rather in the clues that it provides for conjecturing the nature of the lost Latin epyllia. The numerous Neoteric and Vergilian echoes make it evident that the writer was consciously striving to shape an epyllion very much in the Neoteric (and presumably young-Vergilian) mould.

The parallelism in poetic focus between the *Ciris* and the Neoteric epyllia (Catullus', certainly, and what may be assumed about the lost epyllia) is too close to be merely fortuitous. The similarity of theme (tragic love-stories incorporating elements of metamorphosis and the bizarre), the interest in psychological and emotional states, the liberal use of speeches as a medium for

psychological analysis, conscious attempts to elicit sympathy for the victim and disapproval for the perpetrator of love- suffering, the use of parallel linguistic and stylistic techniques to impart a marked emotional slant - all these run like a scarlet thread throughout the narrative fabric of the Neoteric epyllia.

* * *

This thesis set out to investigate Parthenius' role in determining the nature of the Neoteric epyllion. Chapter 1 adduced a brief examination of some basic issues raised by modern literary theories, the most significant of which was the problem of a dogmatic adherence to *a* specific theory, as is the vogue, which would not be conducive to my purposes. My approach was accordingly "eclectic", and the exposition of my hypothesis bears witness to the influence of a variety of literary theories, and perhaps, more significant, my acquaintance - albeit limited - with the broader issues raised by literary theorists has hopefully made me wary of avoiding the pitfalls they warn against.

Chapter 2 examined the issue of literary patronage and the relative financial independence of the New Poets which enabled them to practise their craft without recourse to patronage and its concomitant strictures. This was a vital factor in the radical modulation of their poetic outlook and in their relegation of society to the periphery of their literary concerns. This in turn made it possible for them, in their more sustained endeavours where the epyllion

perhaps held pride of place, to comply with the Parthenian canon and incorporate themes which were plainly repugnant to conservative Roman taste.

The changing socio-political milieu of the Hellenistic world was also examined as a basis for alienation, *angst* and the marked individualism characteristic of Hellenistic society. This not only accounted in part for the Alexandrian literary revolution, but also explained the emergence of the themes peculiar to the late Alexandrian epyllion. Some parallels, however tenuous, were adduced from the ambience of Neoteric Rome, conceivably indicating why the doctrine of Parthenius became popular with the New Poets.

Chapter 3 examined the existence of the epyllion as a genre in its own right, emphasizing that the Romans were acutely aware that they were inheriting a form distinct from epic. The evolution of the form was traced, focusing on its acquisition of the traits which became popular in the Roman world. Callimachus' *Hecale* was briefly examined to establish its influence on the evolution of the epyllion in the Hellenistic world. His emphatic rejection of epic, his disregard for the heroes of the Homeric world, his emphasis on the ordinary person and his emotions, were preoccupations which reflected the individualism of the times and established an authoritative precedent for the future development of the epyllion.

While Euphorion continued in the traditions begun by Callimachus, the available evidence suggested that his was a more radical stance. What could be conjectured about the themes and nature of his epyllia pointed to an obsession with the bizarre, sensational and grotesque, and a preoccupation with morbid psychology - a radical departure from Callimachus who was evidently interested in uncomplicated emotion.

It was Parthenius, I continued in Chapter 3, who conveyed the literary traditions of the late Alexandrian age to Rome and was perhaps solely responsible for the genesis and growth of the Neoteric epyllion. Even if his arrival at Rome was ascribed to the latest possible date, it was early enough for him to have had a significant impact on the Neoterics, since none of them seems to have begun writing before his arrival.

The dedication of Parthenius' *Erotika Pathemata* to Cornelius Gallus, probably well after most of the Neoteric epyllia were written, was no reason to dismiss the hypothesis that his canon determined the nature of the genre; he doubtless began to preach his doctrine from the time of his arrival at Rome, as his widely-accepted influence on Cinna's *Zmyrna*, perhaps the first Neoteric epyllion, clearly indicates.

It is not possible to prove that the *Metamorphoses* was an important source for the themes of certain Neoteric epyllia, but it is virtually conclusive that the

Neoterics shaped their epyllia in close conformance with Parthenius' doctrine of *erotika pathemata*, as my subsequent chapters set out to prove.

In Chapter 4 I examined the *Attis* of Catullus. Except for metre, the choice of which was clearly dictated by the poet's theme, the *Attis* displayed epyllic elements to a degree that made it strikingly representative of the genre at Rome. Catullus' choice of theme, his careful and studied formulation of the poem, his use of emotionally evocative linguistic and stylistic techniques, his in-depth psychological probing by means of speeches, and his markedly subjective portrayal of his characters, suggest that the *Attis* was consciously cast in the late Alexandrian and Parthenian mould.

The theme, an outlandish love-story focusing on metamorphosis and the tragedy that follows upon a misdirected *amor*, contained elements of the bizarre and, while offering abundant scope for the poet to indulge his interest in psychological states, echoed the essence of Parthenius' doctrine of *erotika pathemata* to a remarkable degree.

The poet's sympathy for Attis and his censure of Cybele, I pointed out, was a calculated subversion of the contemporary Roman attitude towards the goddess and her consort. As a poet of tragic love, Catullus painstakingly formulated his poem to emphasize that Attis was the ill-fated victim of a love-frenzy forced upon him by a power he could not resist. That power was Cybele and this

dimension of her divinity, combined with Catullus' portrayal of her as vindictive, possessive and savage, imparted a profound sense of poignancy and inexorability to Attis' fate.

As for narrative technique, Catullus' approach was brief and elliptical, with picturesque detail conspicuously rare. Even in passages which served a distinct narrative purpose, the poet focused on the emotional state of his characters, as in the lines culminating in Attis' self-castration (1-5) and in the passage (27ff.) describing the ascent of the devotees to Cybele's temple.

Speeches, Chapter 4 continued, were the main vehicle for psychological analysis. Attis' first speech, which portrayed his enthusiastic frenzy and assertiveness as leader of his fellow-gallae, stood out in stark contrast to the lament he delivered when he realized the irrevocability of his ultimate dedication. The pathetic obsession with his present circumstances, the loss of his family and friends, and the benefits of civilization which he had traded for a life of eternal servitude to an unrelenting and implacable goddess, added a disturbing note of human tragedy and despondency to the poem which ended with a typical Catullan touch: the censorious apostrophe to Cybele which encapsulated the poet's sympathy for Attis and his contempt for the great mother's role in causing the hero's madness and tragedy.

The *Attis*, then, unmistakably echoed the essence of Parthenius' doctrine; and Catullus' careful and studied formulation of the poem made it read in some ways as a New Poet's epyllic *tour de force*.

Chapter 5 examined Cat. 64 which attested to a far greater variety of influences than the manifestly Parthenian *Attis*. The poem was viewed as a contrast between happy and unhappy love represented by the stories of Peleus and Thetis and Theseus and Ariadne respectively, although the happiness of the former pair was significantly impaired in the latter part of the poem.

The union of Peleus and Thetis was presented initially with extravagant splendour as the quintessence of marital bliss. The suggestive sexual symbolism, and the atmosphere of romance, marvel and brilliant radiance that characterized the poet's portrayal of the episode was aimed at creating an explicit contrast with the barrenness and tragedy of the Theseus-Ariadne story that immediately followed. Although appearing as a "digression", the ecphrasis dealing with Theseus and Ariadne was really the poem's main theme, the *primum carmen* as Catullus himself had intimated.

The same features recurring in the *Attis* characterized the poet's exposition of the Theseus-Ariadne episode. There too, I found emotional involvement in the circumstances of his characters, sympathy for the victims, and censure for the perpetrator of tragic love. Thus, while Catullus gracefully acknowledged the

heroic *virtus* of Theseus, he took care to portray him as lacking in its moral aspects - which was the direct cause of Ariadne's betrayal and tragedy. Theseus was thus *immemor* and *ferox* in Catullus' view; and his portrait was reinforced by the charges that Ariadne levelled at him in her lament, clearly formulated as a reflection of the poet's own attitude.

Ariadne's circumstances, on the other hand, as a victim of Theseus' treachery, were portrayed with compassion and a profound sense of tragedy. While emotional analysis in the *Attis* was conducted primarily through the medium of speeches, an idiosyncrasy of Poem 64 from an epyllic perspective was perhaps the further use of a series of emotionally evocative pictures to achieve the same purpose. Thus, for instance, we had a detailed and elaborate description of Ariadne in the shore scene as she gazed in disbelief at the retreating Theseus.

Catullus was clearly revelling in his flair for extravagant and picturesque description; it turned out upon closer analysis, however, that his expansive and elaborate portrayal served a purpose directly associated with the epyllion: the poet's fixation with the emotional anguish of his heroine. His formulation of the entire section was aimed at a pathetic yet realistic portrayal of the image of Ariadne *furens*, culminating in the depiction of her utter distraction as her garments slid from her body into the sea. The emphasis on her luscious beauty there, as in many other places in the story, was a hint at the pathetic wasting away of her beauty. Further, the inclusion throughout of mock-epithalamial

elements was aimed at ironically depicting her as a bride undergoing a grotesque travesty of marriage.

The poet's concern for and outrage at the tragedy of Ariadne was evident in his censorious apostrophe of Theseus (69-70) and of Cupid and Venus (94-8), highlighting their varying roles in bringing her *furor* upon his heroine.

The element of the grotesque, treated with restraint, Chapter 5 went on, lay latent for the better part of the episode in the form of the subtle bacchanal motifs scattered throughout. These motifs foreshadowed and climaxed in the conclusion to the episode with the description of Bacchus and his rout, and there Catullus gave free rein to the Parthenian predilection for the bizarre and grotesque. The story ended on a distinct note of human tragedy and metamorphosis; Ariadne and her *furor* were assimilated into the wild insanity of the bacchantes. Betrayed by Theseus, her passion, like Attis', culminated, after true Parthenian style, in madness and tragedy.

The final section of the poem, I pointed out, returned to the union of Peleus and Thetis; presented felicitously at the beginning of the poem, it now took on a gloomy and ominous aspect. The deviation from traditional accounts (the presence of Prometheus, the absence of Apollo and the assigning of the wedding song to the sinister Parcae) allowed Catullus to indulge again in the grotesque. The fateful prophecy of the ruthless and bloody deeds of Achilles, culminating

in the senseless sacrifice of the young and innocent Polyxena as a victim of heroic *virtus*, left the reader with much the same attitude towards Achilles and his victims as the poet evoked towards Theseus and Ariadne.

The Peleus-Thetis episode, too, ended on a negative note, reinforced by the sombre epilogue, again attesting to the poet's well-documented pessimism and its compatibility with the *erotika pathemata* doctrine.

The first section of Chapter 6 considered the lost Neoteric epyllia and conjectured the nature of their themes and treatment from the scanty evidence available. As suggested, the clues that each offered individually for substantiating the estimate I formed of the Neoteric epyllia, could not prove especially instructive, though as a whole they were revealing to a significant degree. Further, the evidence they provided was corroborated by the pseudo-Vergilian *Ciris*, the only extant Latin epyllion apart from Catullus'.

The evidence for Parthenius' influence on Cinna, I deduced, was fairly conclusive. Many scholars accepted the role that Parthenius' *Propempticon* played in the conception of Cinna's work of the same name. The *Zmyrna* dealt with a theme of incest and metamorphosis which clearly reflected the drift of Parthenius' *Erotika Pathemata*. Parthenius, too, was interested in aspects of the Zmyrna legend as Parth. fr. 37 indicated. The fact that Cinna spent nine years on his epyllion suggested that it was a work of extraordinary *doctrina*, confirmed

by the appearance of a commentary by L. Crassicius. The nurse scene of the *Ciris*, conjectured to have been largely from Cinna, indicated his interest in psychological states in accordance with the Parthenian doctrine.

As for Calvus, the possible influence of Parthenius on his lament for Quintilia and on his epithalamia was noted. The traditional stories associated with Io have elements of pathos, metamorphosis and the grotesque. It was suggested that Calvus' *Io* dealt with the transformation, and the wanderings and sufferings of the heroine as a result of pursuit by the gadfly of Hera. A fragment (*a virgo infelix herbis pasceris amaris*) showed that the poet apostrophized his heroine in the typical Neoteric manner; it also suggested the theme of love-suffering and that the apostrophe was addressed to Io after her transformation into a cow. Further, the proposed theme of the *Io* was supported by the conjecture that line 184 of the *Ciris* (*fertur et horribile praeceps impellitur oestro*; *oestrus* literally meaning gadfly) came directly from Calvus' *Io*. Here again the theme of metamorphosis and love-suffering reflected the influence of Parthenius' *erotika pathemata* doctrine.

It was also argued in Chapter 6 that the Glaucus of Cornificius was influenced by Parthenius who dealt with the myth (fr. 20) and with Scylla, a character who features in the Glaucus legend. Cornificius' epyllion in all likelihood treated the metamorphosed Glaucus and his unsuccessful wooing of Scylla - again a story of transformation and unhappy love in the Parthenian mould.

Cato's *Lydia*, judging from the pseudo-Vergilian *Lydia* which it possibly influenced, mourned the loss of his beloved (cf. Parthenius' *Arete*). His *Dictynna* probably dealt with the longsuffering Britomartis and her persecution by Minos, as lines 294-309 of the *Ciris* (if the conjecture that this section was influenced by Cato's epyllion is correct) seemed to suggest. Yet again, elements of love-suffering and metamorphosis complied with the doctrine of Parthenius.

The *Magna Mater* of Caecilius, as inferred from Cat. 95, was undertaken along similar lines to Catullus' *Attis*, and Caecilius gave (or planned to give) his epyllion the thematic slant peculiar to the school of New Poets.

My brief analysis in Chapter 6 showed that the lost Neoteric epyllia dealt with tragic love stories, often of a sensational and bizarre kind, and that the element of metamorphosis was fundamental to most of them. My examination of the *Ciris* substantiated these conjectures. Its writer clearly drew upon the epyllia of Catullus and his fellow-Neoterics in an attempt to produce an epyllion in the Neoteric mould.

Again, the fanciful and freakishly bizarre theme of the *Ciris*, the poet's pronounced interest in his heroine and her almost pathological emotional state, the liberal use of protracted speeches for psychological analysis, his empathy and concern for the circumstances of Scylla and derision for the perpetrators of her suffering, the use of specific linguistic and stylistic devices to increase the

emotional content of the poem - all these elements echoed Poems 63 and 64 of Catullus to a remarkable degree, and, in all likelihood, the lost Neoteric epyllia. These features are unquestionably a legacy of Parthenian doctrine.

To be sure, Hellenistic precedents (in the broadest sense of the term) could well be found for most of these features; it would be patently false to claim, however, that they were pervasive enough throughout that age to justify labelling them as typical. As the discussion in Chapter 3 suggested, it was only in the late Alexandrian era that these elements became a manifestly pronounced feature of the epyllion in the hands of poets like Euphorion and Parthenius. The attack on Parthenius by Erucius (see Chapter 3) clearly attests to the radical stance of Parthenius; it would not be unreasonable to assume that, following in the traditions of Euphorion, he was more radical in his principles than Callimachus himself.

While many scholars who care to mention Parthenius often dismiss him as a mere vehicle for the transmission of late Alexandrian principles at Rome (notable exceptions are Wiseman and, to some extent, Lyne), the close and conscious conformity of the Neoteric epyllia with his doctrine of *erotika pathemata* clearly indicates that he played a greater role in the genesis and evolution of the new genre at Rome than has been recognized. In fact it is very likely, the evidence suggests, that Parthenius became something of an oracle in Neoteric literary circles, and established for the epyllion a canon from which,

by virtue of its congeniality with the Neoteric penchant for melodrama and emotionalism, and the reverence with which its protagonist was regarded, the New Poets were loathe to diverge.

END NOTES TO CHAPTER SIX

1. This view, adopted by Traglia (1962:9), Castorina (1968:53-6) and Paratore (1970:77-9), is based on a passage in Suetonius *Gram.*11, where Cato is called *peridoneus praeceptor*, and which quotes an epigram (commonly attributed to Furius Bibaculus) in which Cato is regarded as an authority on poetry: *Cato grammaticus, Latina Siren, qui solus legit ac facit poetas*. See Quinn (1959:47), Wiseman (1974:53) for a rebuttal of this view.

2. Thomas, F. R., "Theocritus, Calvus, and Eclogue 6", *CPh* 74, 1979, 337-9, suggests that Vergil echoes this fragment of Calvus' *Io* in line 47 of his 6th Eclogue. Line 52 repeats *a virgo infelix*, and the end of the line (*tu num in montibus erras*) is an echo again of Calvus, since *pasci* and *errare* are equivalent.

3. See Rawson, E., "The Identity Problems of Q. Cornificius", *CQ* 28, 1978, 188-201 for a detailed account of the career of Cornificius and his possible status as the writer of the *De Etymis Deorum*, a prose work inspired by the request of Cicero.

4. It is safe to assume, in view of the desire of the Neoterics to elicit sympathy for victims of tragic love by portraying their fate as inevitable and not of their own making, that most of the epyllia contained detailed accounts of the cause of their love frenzy. As with the *Ciris*, this is demonstrably the case with the *Attis*, where Cybele is directly responsible, and with Ariadne in Poem 64 where Theseus, Cupid and Venus are censured for their varying roles in bringing madness upon the heroine.

The prevailing accounts of the Zmyrna story contained a vengeful Aphrodite, and it is unlikely that Cinna, in view of the above, would have foregone the opportunity of including a lengthy account of her role in Zmyrna's tragedy. In

fact, Knox (1983:309-311) conjectures that lines 158-162 of the *Ciris* are plundered from Cinna's epyllion; traces are to be found here, he believes, of Cinna's portrayal of Cupid avenging (158, *ad ulciscendum*) the insult to Venus (159, *verborum iniuria*). It is not unlikely that Calvus' *Io* and Cato's *Dictynna* (as can be inferred from Carme's digression on Britomartis) contained similar scenes.

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