

6 Gendered patterns

Constructing time in the communities of Catullus 64

Aaron M. Seider

1 Introduction

Greco-Roman epics typically begin by announcing the main subject of their narratives. Even before their first verses are complete, the *Iliad*, *Odyssey* and *Aeneid* declare that they will be about, respectively, anger; a man; and arms and a man. And, then of course, Homer and Vergil quickly offer more detail. The audience learns that the *Iliad*'s anger belongs to Achilles, the *Odyssey*'s man is one of many turns and the *Aeneid*'s hero and war both tend toward Rome's foundation. Catullus' poem 64 seems to opt for a very different tack.¹ Rather than commencing with an appeal to the Muses and a brief exposition of its narrative, poem 64 offers a description of the voyage of the Argo, the "earliest" vessel to sail the seas. Given that Catullus' poem will proceed to tell the story of Peleus and Thetis' wedding, a narrative that itself frames a lengthy ekphrasis showcasing Ariadne's abandonment at the hands of Theseus, the Argo's story barely seems to relate to the rest of the work. Yet, poem 64 frequently alludes to the epic tradition even while renouncing many of the genre's characteristics, and this is true of its opening verses as well.² If the expectation is that an epic commences with a call to the Muses and a brief treatment of its content, poem 64 looks to and distances itself from epic conventions by obliquely introducing a theme central to Catullus' poem: the intersection of gender and time.

A series of different perspectives in the poem's opening lines announce its interest in how gender and time interact. After ten verses relating how pine trees from Mount Pelion were built into a ship that carried the Argonauts to Colchis, the next eleven lines link this voyage to the start of Peleus and Thetis' love:

That vessel first introduced the inexperienced sea to a ship's course; 11
as soon as it ploughed the windy water with its prow
and, turned by the oars, the waves grew gray with foam,
the sea-nymphs, with wild faces, rose out of the white water
and gazed at the strange thing with wonder. 15
On that day, and not at all on any other, human beings saw sea
nymphs with their own eyes,
standing out from the white water up to their breasts.

Then Peleus is said to have burned with love for Thetis;
 then Thetis did not despise marriage with a mortal; 20
 then the father himself judged³ that Peleus must be married to Thetis.⁴

These verses' focus on the beginning of a new epoch and the different perceptions of that beginning. Line 11, "That vessel first introduced the inexperienced sea to a ship's course" (*illa rudem cursu prima imbuat Amphitriten*) marks the Argonauts' ship as the "first" (*prima*, 11)⁵ seagoing vessel, and this primacy already draws attention to questions of temporality. The Nereids wonder at this "strange thing" (*monstrum*, 15) gliding through their watery realm, while the Argonauts glimpse the naked sea-nymphs, a vision afforded to mortals only this once. This moment contrasts male and female perceptions of a single event: the Nereids are an object of erotic fascination for the Greek heroes, the first and only human beings to see them. The Latin noun *monstrum*, meanwhile, characterizes the sailors as a perplexing new phenomenon in the eyes of the nymphs, one that perhaps offers an omen for the future. The striking use of the verb *imbuat* in line 11 encapsulates the gap between two perspectives. As the translation above shows, the verb here must mean "to give (a person) initial instruction, experience in something,"⁶ and the Argonauts' vessel is the active subject. Yet *imbuat* can also signify "to drench" or "to wet for the first time,"⁷ meanings that could easily apply to how the sea wets a ship for the first time.⁸ What is more, the very link between this moment, captured in differently gendered perspectives, and the main narrative is a temporal one: in Catullus' Latin, lines 19, 20 and 21 all begin with the adverb "then" (*tum*), an anaphora that emphasizes the chronological coincidence between the beginning of the Argonauts' travels and Peleus and Thetis' wedding day.⁹

The temporal link between one new beginning (of a sea voyage) and another (of a marriage), combined with the multiple perspectives on what such beginnings might mean, suggests that time and gender will be a major theme of poem 64. Drawing on Julia Kristeva's writings,¹⁰ I argue that poem 64 destabilizes Roman gender binaries concerning time and agency. Kristeva describes conceptions of time wherein women are associated with cyclical temporal structures that are often opposed to and subsumed by linear temporalities generated by men.¹¹ Kristeva distinguishes "repetition" and "eternity" as "modalities of time" that are "traditionally linked to female subjectivity," while the "conception of linear temporality ... is readily labeled masculine."¹²

As Kristeva remarks, the notion that male time is linear and associated with war and politics as well as historical periodization is found in many traditional societies, and it is not at all alien to Roman culture.¹³ Kristeva's remarks inform my approach to two episodes in poem 64, the ekphrasis of Ariadne and Theseus and the Fates' prophecy of Achilles' future. In each of these episodes, men begin periods of time, but it is women who influence how men will be remembered through the recursive patterns they create. Drawing on Kristeva's ideas, this chapter claims that poem 64 sets up cyclical temporal structures, defined by women, that bound men's deeds and determine their meanings. This vision of the relationship between time and gender opposes the notion that male heroes and the

male poets who record their deeds dominate the depiction of time as a linear movement. Instead, Catullus presents the Fates and Ariadne, the poem's internal female narrators, as recording male actions and dictating their meaning in a cyclical structure.¹⁴ Given his potential identification with the poem's female narrators as well as his emphasis on his role as the poem's author, Catullus shows himself constructing time in a manner typically cultured as feminine.¹⁵ The conclusion of my chapter considers what this portrait of gender and time reveals about the enigmatic final verses of the poem, where Catullus considers whether the political and social actions of his contemporaries might be understood within a cyclical or linear temporal sequence of events.

2 Ariadne and Theseus: circles of revenge

Within the lengthy ekphrasis that occupies more than half of poem 64, cyclical temporal structures encompass and reorient actions that start with a linear impetus. The beginning and end of this inset narrative focus on Ariadne's reaction to Theseus' abandonment of her, and it is her reaction that creates and controls the ekphrasis' narrative arc. The temporal modalities elaborated by Kristeva help to interpret the patterns of time and experience in this ekphrasis. As Kristeva notes, temporal patterns that are repetitive are often associated with female identity and experience, while linear temporal motion is frequently linked with men.¹⁶ In Catullus' ekphrasis, these modes are connected with the genders Kristeva notes, and when these temporal modalities come into conflict with each other, recursive temporal patterns prove to be dominant. When this conflict occurs, Ariadne's hopes for the future are more powerful, and her wishes determine the temporal patterns and commemorative outcomes that mark Theseus' life.

As Catullus relates the setting of Peleus and Thetis' wedding, his attention falls on the coverlet of a couch, "embroidered with ancient figures of people" (*prisca hominum variata figuris*, 64.50). Much of this coverlet is described from Ariadne's perspective. In this rendition, first Theseus' actions stand as the origin of her plight, but later Ariadne breaks this linear movement and imposes a new, cyclical temporal structure on Theseus' deeds.¹⁷ The ekphrasis opens with a description of Ariadne watching Theseus sail off from Naxos, leaving her abandoned.¹⁸ As detailed from Ariadne's perspective on the shore, Theseus' earlier decision to come to Crete led to this moment. As she looks at his departing sails, she remembers when she first saw him on Crete. Theseus himself chose to make the voyage to battle the Minotaur, and desire filled Ariadne's heart as soon as he appeared in her home. Now, as Ariadne stands on Naxos' shore and realizes that she has been left there alone, this description attributes her misery to the moment when Theseus arrived.¹⁹ It was "at that time" (*illa tempestate*, 64.73) that Venus sowed thorny cares in her chest, a moment that is returned to and magnified when the phrase "as soon as" (*simul ac*, 64.86) showcases the speed with which desire for Theseus came over Ariadne.

Later, Ariadne continues to connect her current predicament with Theseus' arrival in Crete and to figure the movement between these two times as linear. In

her recollection, she characterizes his presence as part of a sequence of actions tied back to the initial arrival of Athenian ships.²⁰ She wishes that “Athenian ships had never touched Cretan shores in the first place” (*utinam ne tempore primo / Gnosia Cecropiae tetigissent litora puppes*, 64.171–2) and that Theseus himself had never come to Crete’s harbor or slept in her father’s house. Beginning with the first action in this chain, Ariadne moves from the arrival of Athenian ships to Theseus himself, who concealed his true intentions even as a guest. Ariadne’s conception of these actions fits well with Kristeva’s remarks about some of the characteristics of linear time: “time as project, teleology, linear and prospective unfolding; time as departure, progression, and arrival—in other words, the time of history.”²¹ Ariadne conceptualizes the past as marked by ideas of departure, progression and arrival. And, in Ariadne’s rendition in these verses, linear time leads to pain, as she now is forced to look back on these moments alone and abandoned on Naxos. Moreover, the phrase “in the first place” (*tempore primo*, 64.171) casts its force over Ariadne’s entire wish, as if these events were naturally teleological and their linear progress could only have been halted by removing this first deed.

Yet, even as men’s deeds are characterized as starting a narrative and as shaping time into a linear force, Ariadne stops the movement they initiate. Indeed, as she continues to stand on Naxos’ shore, she moves from remembering a linear past to shaping time into a recursive force and implicating Theseus within that structure. As Ariadne discovers when she awakens on Naxos, she has been abandoned in spite of the help she gave Theseus and the love he professed. Ariadne appeals to the Eumenides.²² These deities, given their connection with retribution for earlier wrongs, are themselves connected with a cyclical conception of time, as they seek to exact punishments equivalent to prior crimes. Ariadne’s opening invocation of the Eumenides makes this connection between past and present apparent. She first claims that “you punish men’s deeds with an avenging penalty” (*facta virum multantes vindice poena*, 64.192), next asks them to “listen to my complaints” (*meas audite querellas*, 64.195) and lastly prays that “Theseus bring death²³ upon himself and his people with such a mind as with which he left me here, alone” (*quali solam Theseus me mente reliquit, / tali mente, deae, funestet seque suosque*, 64.200–1). Invoking female goddesses associated with vengeance, Ariadne seeks to make time cyclical. Her addresses to the goddesses in lines 193 and 201 form a ring structure and thereby accentuate the repetitive temporal structures she calls on the Eumenides to effect.

The specific punishment that Ariadne requests emphasizes Theseus’ loss of temporal control. She asks that the goddesses send Theseus home “with such a mind as with which he left me here, alone” (*quali solam Theseus me mente reliquit, / tali mente*, 64.200–1), a prayer that sets up the future as a repetition of the past not planned by Theseus. Earlier characterizations of Theseus leave no doubt about the particular mental state Ariadne would like to see inflicted upon him. Ariadne herself uses the term “forgetful” (*immemor*, 64.135) to describe him earlier in her speech, while the poem’s narrator terms him the “the forgetful youth” (*immemor ... iuvenis*, 64.58) and remarks that he left Ariadne “with a forgetful breast” (*immemori ... pectore*, 64.123). Now, Ariadne wishes that this

particular mental state return to Theseus once more. These repeated attributions of forgetfulness to Theseus imply that he did not successfully retain information over time. More suggestively, though, this characterization of the hero strips away his agency over time and commemoration, as he has the power neither to remember the past nor to control how, and by whom, he is remembered.

When Theseus' suffering echoes the earlier pain he caused, this reifies the cyclical temporal structure Ariadne called on the Eumenides to create. Having been told by his father Aegeus to raise a white sail to signal his safety when he returns to Athens, Theseus forgets, and Aegeus commits suicide by leaping into the sea. Catullus first reveals that "Theseus let all things slip away, in a state of forgetfulness" (*oblito dimisit pectore cuncta*, 64.208) and then, after describing Aegeus' death, Catullus makes clear just what caused this fatal mistake: "Theseus himself took back such a sorrow as he himself inflicted upon Ariadne with his forgetful mind" (*Theseus, qualem Minoidi luctum / obtulerat mente immemori, talem ipse recepit*, 64.247–8). Time becomes cyclical. According to Ariadne's wish, Theseus suffers the same forgetfulness with which he had left her on Naxos, and he feels the same sort of loss with the death of his father as she felt with the Minotaur's death.²⁴ In Ariadne's earlier recollection of the past, linear time occasioned her own pain, as Theseus' arrival on Crete ineluctably led to her abandonment on Naxos. Now though, as the ekphrasis comes to a close, Ariadne's wish effects a new end to the tale. A few lines later Bacchus will arrive on Naxos and take Ariadne as his bride, yet Theseus' story closes with a deed that repeats the past and gives rise to his own suffering.

3 Weaving the future: repetition and the Fates

Outside the ekphrasis, Catullus' poem offers another instance of women's words and activities encapsulating men's deeds in a cyclical temporal structure. Here also, there is a conflict between linear and repetitive temporal modalities, as the Fates prophesy the future and, in doing so, enclose Achilles' deeds within the temporal structure of their song. At the same time, their prophecy itself emphasizes how the meaning of Achilles' actions are commemorated and defined through women's actions and women's suffering. The Fates use a typically feminine mode of production to structure time. "Throughout Greco-Roman culture, weaving fabric is women's work,"²⁵ and the Fates' song is closely connected with their constant spinning of thread from wool. The time the Fates structure does not exclude men and linear action, but rather enfolds them within a repetitive temporal modality and sets female suffering as one of the prime forces determining the meaning of their deeds.

Soon after the poem's ekphrasis is complete, Catullus' description of the Fates connects their control of time with feminine actions and ideas of repetition. Before they sing their prophecy for the immortal guests at Peleus and Thetis' wedding, Catullus offers a description of the Fates that, like a miniature ekphrasis itself, halts the poem's narrative progress. In eleven lines,²⁶ the poet treats the Fates' manipulation of their wool, threads and spindle. The section ends with a vivid link

between their singing and spinning: “then plucking the fleeces, with a clear voice they poured out such fates in divine song, a song that no age will later convict of dishonesty” (*haec tum clarisona vellentes vellera voce / talia divino fuderunt carmine fata, / carmine, perfidiae quod post nulla arguet aetas*, 64.320–2). This detailed description associates the Fates with a cyclical action that nearly stands outside of time itself and will structure their prophecy of the future. In a certain sense, their actions, even though they are coupled with a prophecy that unrolls future time, belong to what Kristeva terms “a monumental temporality.”²⁷ In addition to repeated time, Kristeva also associates monumental time with the female. “All-encompassing and infinite,” this temporality is “without cleavage or escape ... [and] has so little to do with linear time (which passes) that the very word ‘temporality’ hardly fits.”²⁸ The Fates’ work is termed “an eternal task” (*aeternum ... laborem*, 310), while the eight imperfect verbs used to describe them emphasize the continuous and repetitive nature of their ever-lasting actions.²⁹ At the same time, the mechanics of their spinning are themselves circular and hint at ideas of repetition. When the Fates pull the wool off with their fingers to form it into a thread, they twirl the “spindle” (*fusum*, 64.314), which in turn is weighted down by a “rounded whorl” (*tereti ... turbine*, 64.314) that maintains the spindle’s speed while it spins. For the Fates, this mechanism of prophecy emphasizes the circular nature of time as well and reveals their ability to convert an unordered and inchoate mass (the wool of the distaff, so to speak) into an ordered and legible future (the threads around the spindle).³⁰

The Fates’ song, which centers on Achilles, further develops women’s role in shaping social memory through its repetitive form and persistent focus on female commemoration. On a formal level, their song’s refrain sets a prototypically female activity as the metronome of Achilles’ life. This refrain first occurs near their song’s beginning, when it is folded into their address to their spindles: “but you, run, spindles, drawing out the weft that the fates follow, run” (*sed vos, quae fata sequuntur, / currite ducentes subtegmina, currite, fusi*, 64.326–7). The order in line 327, “Run, spindles, drawing out the weft, run,” will be repeated ten more times in the Fates’ song, with each repetition standing on its own as an independent unit of syntax.³¹ Here, though, in its first use, the Fates’ injunction makes the link between the activity of spinning and fate explicit. The noun “weft” (*subtegmina* 64.327) is the antecedent of the relative pronoun “that” (*quae* 64.326), and the fates follow the thread spun by the Fates. Thus, whenever this verse reappears, whether it be at the end of a description of Achilles’ slain foes or his own grave, there is a connection between this feminine activity and the hero’s life. Indeed, the injunction “Run, spindles, drawing out the weft, run” (*currite ducentes subtegmina, currite, fusi*) places Achilles’ deeds within the rhythm of a quotidian yet impactful female activity, as the repetition of the imperative “run” (*currite*) has an effect of closure.³²

Alongside these images of the Fates’ spinning, instances of female mourning and sacrifice dominate Achilles’ funeral and his foes’ burials, further establishing women as having a determinative role in controlling how men will be remembered. Through the suffering of these women, the commemoration of Achilles’

actions will be given meaning. Death is a moment when a standardized commemoration of an individual may become crystallized, and when the Fates describe the burials of Achilles' foes, the dead men's mothers hold center stage:

Often mothers will sing of his illustrious virtues and bright deeds 348
 at their sons' funerals,
 when they will loosen their unkempt hair from their white heads, 350
 and they will mark their withered chests with weak hands.
 Run, spindles, drawing out the weft, run.³³

For Achilles too, a woman is connected with his tomb. In the final verses that treat his life, the sacrifice of the Trojan princess Polyxena is highlighted. The image of Polyxena, sacrificed on Achilles' tomb, ends the Fates' narrative of his existence,³⁴ and it is a portrait of pitiful loss and bodily disfigurement, not everlasting glory.

While Polyxena's link with the Fates continues to establish that women define the commemorations of men, the activities of the Fates and the mortal women they describe are not completely equivalent. Polyxena and the mothers of Achilles' victims define men's activities through their physical and emotional pain. The concatenation of their losses, first in the sacrifices of their sons and then in Polyxena's sacrifice of her life, create a compounding of trauma that combats the linear movement generated by Achilles' glorious deeds. The Fates, though, fashion temporal structures and meaning without suffering themselves, and, as female internal narrators, they enclose Achilles' life and deeds with the cyclical structure of their song. In terms of the social memory of the lives of Achilles and his conquered foes, namely those memories that are voiced by members of a group and are "relevant to and shared by the group,"³⁵ these commemorations are crafted by women and enshrined in repetitive acts of mourning and weaving rather than in history's linear narrative.

4 Temporal connections

Both the ekphrasis and the main narrative of poem 64 showcase the interactions between linear and repetitive temporal modalities, and in each instance women define cyclical temporal structures that encapsulate men's deeds and their linear movement. While the gendering of linear time as masculine and cyclical time as feminine matches the perspective of Roman gender binaries and Kristeva's analysis of time and gender, the dominance of cyclical over linear time destabilizes these typical associations. Two features of the poem further undermine assumptions about the relationship between gender and time: the couch coverlet that illustrates Ariadne and Theseus' story and the links between Catullus' present day and the poem's narrative time.

Through its status as a woven object, the coverlet is implicitly associated with women, yet the manner in which Catullus narrates the ekphrasis blurs gender boundaries, as he himself takes on the role of artisan. Given the pervasive links

between weaving and women in Greco-Roman culture, the coverlet is gendered as a feminine creation, even though the poem never specifies its creator.³⁶ Along with the cultural associations between women and weaving, earlier literary examples tend toward this same conclusion. In her first appearance in the *Iliad*, Helen weaves a robe that showcases battles from the Trojan War.³⁷ Here, poet and character temporarily merge, as Helen, in her artistry, creates her own record of the war's toll.³⁸ Moreover, Penelope's act of weaving and unweaving associates woven products with female artistry in the *Odyssey*, as does Clytemnestra's work in the *Agamemnon*.

Yet, it is too simple to designate all of the scenes in the ekphrasis as the product of a woman's work and to associate its cyclical mode of temporality with women. As Julia Haig Gaisser points out, Catullus' ekphrasis is unique in that it almost entirely leaves out descriptions of the coverlet as a physical object. In fact "only two of the many scenes in Ariadne's story are actually described as being on the coverlet."³⁹ The poem's internal audience, the human wedding guests who view this coverlet, only see Ariadne standing on Naxos' shore and Bacchus' later arrival, while the poem's external audience, its readers, envision these two scenes along with the actions in Crete, Ariadne's lengthy lament, and Aegeus' subsequent death.⁴⁰ Moreover, as Hunter Gardner notes, the "easy linearity" of the movement from Theseus' departure to Bacchus' appearance is confounded, "since the poet insists on returning to the heroine in her moment of abandonment."⁴¹ This conflict showcases the power of the artist to shape how a story is narrated by a speaker and remembered by its audience. While the repetitive construction of time is typically associated with women, this ekphrasis calls attention to Catullus' role as author and, in so doing, it associates him with this temporal modality as well.⁴²

Moments of temporal discord between different aspects of the poem, along with an emphasis on the ability of the artist to shape the perception of time, further emphasize Catullus' role in constructing the poem and its systems of time. The most blatant temporal discord concerns the question of which ship was the first to sail on the ocean. As discussed above, Catullus unambiguously designates the *Argo* as the first vessel to voyage on the sea,⁴³ a primacy that creates a multiplicity of perspectives between the sailors and Nereids. Yet, the ekphrasis, which shows events that transpired prior to Peleus and Thetis' marriage, unambiguously reveals that another ship had already set sail, as here "Ariadne watches Theseus sailing off with his swift fleet" (*Thesea cedentem celeri cum classe tuetur*, 64.53). Ostentatiously displayed at the ekphrasis' very beginning, Theseus' ship speeds away. In fact, in a move that seems designed to draw the reader's eyes, this vessel is the object of Ariadne's gaze. This difficulty is one of Catullus' own making. Typical accounts of the *Argo* place its voyage prior to the story of Theseus and Ariadne, but Catullus calls attention to his reversal of this chronology.⁴⁴ This discord, just like the discord between the scenes from the coverlet visible to the poem's internal audience and the events Catullus recounts related to these scenes, highlights the role of the artist in constructing systems of time.⁴⁵

5 Conclusion

Through emphasizing his own role as narrator, Catullus links himself with Ariadne and the Fates as well as with the cyclical temporal modalities they construct, and this focus on time raises questions about the temporal modalities of Catullus' own social and political milieu. In the poem's final verses, Catullus places the poem in his present day and points out the discord in the relations between humans and gods. In contrast with earlier times, when the gods would mingle with mortals, the crimes of Catullus' age have polluted the human race to such an extent that the gods no longer visit mortals, nor allow themselves to be seen by them.⁴⁶ The poem's final verses illustrate the distance that separates mortal from immortal. A few lines before the poem's end, Catullus emblemizes the discord that fractures Roman society by describing how brother kills brother, a father yearns to possess his son's bride through his offspring's death, and an impious mother lies with her unknowing child, an act whose impiety stains the Romans' "household gods" (*penates*, 64.404). With the image of these gods marking the poem's close, Catullus directs its concluding words to his own society and the question of whether it might return to an earlier, more just state of existence.

The poem's dominant temporal modes could offer a glimmer of hope, but the end of Catullus' poem emphasizes that a cyclical mode of temporality is impossible for Roman society. The Fates and Ariadne fashion recursive temporal structures that influence how male figures are remembered, and such cyclical temporal patterns could portend the existence of a narrative wherein Roman society returns to its earlier, more pious ways. At the same time, though, as Catullus shows the existence of these patterns, he inscribes them within a poem that emphasizes artists' power to fashion time in a manner of their own choosing. Catullus' own art is studded with temporal inconsistencies and perspectival conflicts: the *Argo* is the earliest ship, but it is preceded by another vessel; and the poem's interior audience sees one story on the couch coverlet, while the poem's readers view a different one in its ekphrasis. From this perspective, Catullus characterizes the cyclical modalities associated with the poem's female narrators and with himself as a conception of time that, like all others, is constructed. At the end of poem 64, this construction is not available to the Romans. Here, no Roman can stand like the unfairly abandoned Ariadne and justly call on the gods for revenge, and the Romans have driven off any goddesses who, like the *Parcae*, might prophesy a return to an earlier, more upright morality. These cyclical modalities are set beyond the reach of a society riven by moral decline and civil war. Instead, even as he still fashions every facet of its last verses, Catullus steps back to allow the Romans to construct their own temporal narrative through their deeds, and, in Catullus' rendition, these deeds lead the Romans themselves and poem 64 down a path that is as bleak as it is linear.

Notes

- 1 As Thomson 1998: 438 notes, there is “an enormous amount of scholarly literature ... gathered around poem 64.” Thomson 1998: 438 and Trimble 2012 offer helpful introductions to this scholarship. My aim here is an engagement with work on the poem directly relevant to the themes discussed in this chapter.
- 2 Catullus’ poem 64 is often termed an *epyllion*. Thomson 1998: 388–9 and Trimble 2012 describe the main features of *epyllia* and how they relate to Catullus 64. Gutzwiller: 1981 and Baumbach and Bär: 2012 discuss the form in greater detail. Robinson 2006: 29 considers the relationship between Catullus’ poem and earlier epic.
- 3 For this translation of *sensit*, see Fordyce 1961: ad loc.
- 4 Cat. 64.11–21. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.
- 5 Latin text from Thomson 1998; see Thomson 1998: ad 64.11 for discussion of the text of this line.
- 6 See *OLD* 4, where this verse is listed.
- 7 See *OLD* 1 and 3, respectively.
- 8 See Thompson 1998: ad loc. on this personification.
- 9 Wills 1996: 402 remarks on the triple anaphora in 64.19–21, where the different forms of *Thetis* show an “Alexandrian virtuosity.” Triple anaphora is relatively rare in Latin (Wills 1996: 403), and these lines’ focus on time would thus be emphasized all the more. Gardner 2007: 170n.54 also notes the high incidence of indications of time in the poem’s first fifty verses.
- 10 Kristeva 1981.
- 11 As part of her consideration of poem 64 and, specifically, Ariadne, Gardner 2007: 149–56 offers an extensive discussion of Kristeva’s writings on time.
- 12 Kristeva 1981: 16–18.
- 13 Gardner 2007 and 2013: 3–4 and 177–80 show how these temporal structures described by Kristeva may be applied productively to Roman culture.
- 14 See Doherty 1995, who analyzes the role of the Sirens as internal narrators within the *Odyssey* and considers specific questions about the frame that encloses them and their potential “power ... to subvert the hierarchy of narrative control” (86).
- 15 On Catullus’ frequent interrogations of gender norms, see Zetzel 1983: 264 and 266; Skinner 1991: 10–11 and 1993: 109; Selden 1992: 498; Janan 1994: 29, 48, 55, 58, 67, 112, and 145; Fitzgerald 1995: 34–5; Greene 1998: xiv, 1, 5, 11, 33, and 49; Wray 2001; Woodman 2002: 58–9; Greene 2006: 50 and 56; Manwell 2007: 125; Clark 2008; Gale 2012: 209–10; Hutchinson 2012: 73–4; and Seider 2016. On performance, masculinity, and the ancient world, see Gunderson 2000 and Jones 2012: 6–12. Manwell 2007: 113–16 and Masterson 2014: 22–8 offer overviews of the study of Roman masculinity.
- 16 See Kristeva 1981: 16–18.
- 17 In her discussion of this section of poem 64, Gardner 2007: 170 likewise notes Theseus’ association with linear time. Regarding Ariadne, Gardner 2007: 170–3 links “Ariadne’s experience of abandonment” with Kristeva’s conception of monumental time. While the repeated focus on the moment of abandonment does create an atmosphere of time “without cleavage or escape” (Kristeva 1981: 16), I argue in this section that the revenge that Ariadne eventually gains creates a cyclical temporal pattern.
- 18 Cat. 64.71–87.
- 19 As Thomson 1998: ad loc. discusses, the text of line 73 is uncertain, and both Ellis 1876: ad loc. and Fordyce 1961: ad loc. advocate *illa tempestate, ferox quo ex tempore Theseus*. Whether the line is printed as in Thomson or as in Ellis and Fordyce, though, there is a pronounced emphasis on the temporal link between Ariadne’s misery and Theseus’ arrival on Crete. Ellis 1876: ad loc. remarks that Catullus returns to this very moment in lines 86 and 171.
- 20 Cat. 64.171–6.
- 21 Kristeva 1981: 17.

- 22 Cat. 64.192–201.
- 23 For this translation of *funestet*, see Ellis 1876: ad loc. and Thomson 1998: ad loc.
- 24 Thomson 1998: ad loc. observes how *luctus* refers to Ariadne’s grief over the Minotaur and implies a similar closeness in affection between Theseus and his father. Gardner 2007: 160 notes how Ariadne “disturbs the heroic progress of Theseus and the paternal order he supports.”
- 25 Trimble 2014: 1379 writes this in the context of a consideration of weaving in Vergil’s poetry. For more discussion of weaving, see Chapter 1 in this volume.
- 26 Cat. 64.309–19.
- 27 Kristeva 1981: 16.
- 28 Kristeva 1981: 16.
- 29 Those eight verbs are “were resting” (*residebant*, 64.309); “were plying” (*carpebant*, 64.310); “was holding back” (*retinebat*, 64.311); “was shaping” (*formabat*, 64.313); “was turning” (*versabat*, 64.314); “was making equal” (*aequabat*, 64.315); “were clinging” (*haerebant*, 64.316); “were guarding” (*custodibant*, 64.319).
- 30 Alfaro 2016: 279–80 considers in detail the symbolism of the different aspects of the Fates’ spinning.
- 31 These repetitions occur in 64.333, 337, 342, 347, 352, 356, 361, 365, 371, 375, and 381.
- 32 See Wills 1996: 97 on the “closural capacity” of this line pattern. Beyers (1960) offers further analysis of the tone of the refrain and its impact on the structure of the Fates’ song.
- 33 Cat. 64. 348–52.
- 34 Thomson 1998: ad 369 notes how the use of *victima* for Polyxena has a “horrific and pathetic effect.” Catullus’ emphasis on how women’s laments enfold men’s lives reflects the situation in the *Iliad*, particularly at its end, where the last five of the six laments for Hector are spoken by women (see the list of laments in the *Iliad* in Tsagalis 2004: 28).
- 35 Seider 2013: 22. For more discussion of and bibliography on social memory, see Fentress and Wickham 1992; Assmann 2010; and Seider 2013: 22n.91.
- 36 Alfaro 2016: 280 comments on the fabrication of such coverlets.
- 37 Hom. *Il.* 3.125–8.
- 38 Robinson 2006: 31 remarks on this scene’s relevance to poem 64 and how “Helen’s tapestry is invested with special significance as a poetic medium itself, as a sign.”
- 39 Gaisser 2012: 155.
- 40 Gaisser 2012: 155–61 considers the ekphrasis of the coverlet and its various audiences.
- 41 Gardner 2007: 168.
- 42 Trimble 2014: 1379 remarks how Catullus, Vergil, and Ovid all link “weaving and poetry,” and this link in Catullus would only encourage the association of the two. Robinson 2006: 31–3 discusses earlier connections between poetry and textiles as well as their potential relationship in poem 64 and shows how in Catullus’ poem “woven cloth and spun thread” are used as “constant symbols of poetic creation” (54).
- 43 Cat. 64.11–21.
- 44 Weber 1983; Gardner 2007: 162n.38 and 170–1; and Gaisser 2012: 154 offer overviews of this temporal contradiction and note various ways in which Catullus calls attention to it. Moreover, as Armstrong 2013: 57 points out, the voyage of the Argo is in many ways presented as metapoetic, an association that would further highlight the poem’s temporal contradiction and Catullus’ agency in creating it. Thomas 1982: 145 writes that the first 18 verses of this poem stand “as Catullus’ major polemical demonstration of his literary affiliations.”
- 45 Doherty 1995: 88–9 explores similar points about multiple potential narrators and different potential focalizations within the *Odyssey*.
- 46 Cat. 64.405–8.

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