

POETIC ARTISTRY AND DYNASTIC POLITICS: OVID AT THE LUDI MEGALENSES (*FASTI* 4. 179–372)

Aetiological poetry tends to be mature poetry in both a literary and a political sense. Interest in antiquarian lore belongs in general to a poet's middle and later years when youthful and audacious quests for what is avant-garde and anti-establishment have yielded to conservatism and a desire to preserve the past. Propertius and Ovid both turned to aetiological poetry after a long apprenticeship in amatory 'nugae' which enabled them, like their predecessor, Callimachus, to embellish their work with a diversity of artistic devices founded on considerable poetic skill and literary experience. With this, a vital ploy to engage the sympathy of a sophisticated audience, went the poise and urbanity with which the aetiological poet found humour in the pose of earnest researcher, in the naivety of primitive cult and in clever literary adaptations. Moreover, dedication to a form of writing essentially nationalist and conservative encouraged a tone of patriotic pride and allusions, even compliments, to the ruling powers. In the light of such considerations we may examine Ovid's account of the 'Ludi Megalenses'.

The 'Megalensia' furnished Ovid with a goddess who had enjoyed fame and even notoriety in the pages of Roman literature.¹ In addition to showing a poetic and neoteric interest in the orgiastic elements of her cult and the alien music of her retinue Roman poetry could reflect too the awe and reverence inspired of old by the Great Mother and expressed in the Greek poets,² whom Lucretius claimed as his sources in his powerfully beautiful excursus on Cybele worship.³ Again, Cybele's importance in Rome had been augmented by her Trojan origins, concerning which a canonical Augustan theology had been established by Vergil in the *Aeneid*.⁴ The majesty of the

¹ Catullus, whose Attis poem (63) sets forth the terrible aspect of the goddess, alludes to a *Magna Mater* composed by his friend Caecilius (35. 13). Varro's Menippean satire *Eumenides* incorporates a few Galliambic lines on Cybele's noisy Phrygian company (fragg. 131 f. Bücheler) and comments on the festival (fragg. 143 f. Bücheler). In the same vein and metre Maecenas invokes Cybele (fragg. 5 f. Morel). Lucretius, ostensibly offering from the Epicurean point of view an explanation for her power and worship (2. 606 ff.), conveys the majesty of Vergil's splendid picture of the Berecynthian Mother enthroned (*Aen.* 6. 784 ff.). Throughout the *Aeneid* Cybele figures as a tutelary goddess of the Trojans; a Trojan goddess with Roman connections since 205 B.C. when she arrived in Rome, she fits nicely into the Troy–Rome historiomythography of the Augustan period.

² See *Hom. Hymn* 14 (to the Great Mother), Sophocles, *Philoct.* 391, Euripides, *Bacch.* 58 ff., *Anth. Pal.* 6. 51. There is also a hymn honouring the Mother of Olympus which was found in the sanctuary of Asclepius at Epidaurus dating from the third century B.C. (*IG* 4. 1. 131). The poet Hermesianax apparently gave the story a somewhat different emphasis in his elegiac poem on the love of Attis and Cybele (Paus. 7. 17. 5).

³ Lucr. 2. 600, 'hanc (sc. Cybelen) veteres Graium docti cecinere poetae'.

⁴ The importance of Cybele in the *Aeneid* is noteworthy. Creusa is taken into the care of the 'magna deum genetrix' (2. 788). Anchises carefully traces Cybele's origin and cult appendages to Crete (3. 104–13). With hymnic solemnity she is invoked by Aeneas as his native goddess on the site of Lanuvium (7. 139) and later (10. 252). It is she who confers with Jupiter, her son, to save the Trojan ships made of wood from the sacred trees of Ida (9. 82 ff.) and later transforms them into nymphs (10. 234). Finally, in a magnificent simile which forms the high point in Anchises' catalogue of Roman heroes, 'incluta Roma' and her sons are compared to none other than 'Berecynthia Mater...centum complexa nepotes' (6. 784–6). For identification of Cybele with Roma see P. Boyancé, 'Cybèle aux Mégalesies', *Latomus* 13 (1954), 339–42.

Mother and her place in the Augustan pantheon were diversely reflected in the plastic arts.⁵ With characteristically ingenious eclecticism Ovid draws on all these disparate threads, weaving a rich tapestry of literary allusion. Less predictably he seems to have provided the whole section with a thematic unity appropriate to the goddess, based on the celebration of 'castitas' and 'pietas', which reaches an apt and artistic culmination in the legend of Claudia Quinta, Rome's celebrated 'matronarum castissima'.⁶

Besides a mere concern for artistic unity Ovid had, we may suspect, ulterior motives for this unexpected slant, for there is good reason to believe that the poet at this date had decided to capitalize on the feast day of Cybele to direct overt compliments to the emperor on his recent handling of matters dynastic and religious. At the turn of the century Ovid was well into middle age and had committed himself to one, if not two, major 'serious' works. Uncomfortably conscious, no doubt, of Augustus' displeasure at the untimely publication of the *Ars* so soon after Julia's disgrace in 2 B.C., the poet was perhaps influenced to make amends by some of his contacts in court circles.⁷

Whilst we have no proof that Ovid worked chronologically through the *Fasti* and every reason to suspect that he adjusted and interpolated sections,⁸ it might still reasonably be suggested that Ovid was working on the fourth book of the *Fasti* in the period A.D. 3–4 and took the opportunity in his delicately allusive Cybele section to celebrate the recent dynastic settlement, being fully conscious of the intricate web of association which linked the Magna Mater with both the Julian and Claudian sides of the imperial family (see below pp. 383–5). If Ovid had felt drawn at this time to address himself to an ideologically sound celebration of 'Caesaris arae' and some of the emperor's favourite virtues with implicit compliments directed at both Julians and Claudians, the moment was indeed apposite. In A.D. 3 a prodigy occurred in the temple

⁵ See especially M. J. Vermaseren, *Cybele and Attis, the myth and the cult* (London, 1977), pp. 71–81.

⁶ Cicero, *de Har. Res.* 27. Cf. *ibid.* 24: 'qui (sc. Ludi Megalenses) sunt...maxime casti, sollemnes, religiosi'.

⁷ A picture of Ovid's relationships with the men around Augustus and their relative warmth is built up in the exile poetry. See especially *Ex Pont.* 1. 2, 3. 3 to Paullus Fabius Maximus, at whose house Ovid was a sometime guest and where he met his third wife; *Tr.* 4. 4, *Ex Pont.* 1. 5, 1. 7, 1. 9, 2. 2, 2. 8, 3. 2, 3. 5, 4. 16 to Messalla's two sons, Messallinus and Cotta Maximus; and, for overtures to the circle of Germanicus, *Tr.* 4. 2, *Ex Pont.* 2. 1, 2. 5, 4. 8. Although Ovid attempts to make capital of family connections with Paullus Fabius Maximus (through his third wife's association with the Fabii and her 'friendship' with Marcia) and P. Suillius Rufus (husband of his third wife's daughter), he cannot disguise the distance that separates him from these friends of Augustus and Germanicus. Real intimacy has to be looked for in his letters to the youthful Cotta Maximus, whose political importance was to come only after Ovid's death and within the faction of Tiberius. Flattering references to Augustus are not wanting in the *Fasti* (e.g. 2. 119–30, 3. 415–28), although to our ears the glib ingenuity of Ovid's compliments occasionally borders on disrespect, as for instance his famous comparison with Romulus (*Fasti* 2. 133–44).

⁸ The dating of the *Fasti* is discussed fully by R. Syme (*History in Ovid* (Oxford, 1978), pp. 21–36), who concludes that the work must have been written between A.D. 1 and 4. It is probable that Ovid continued to work over the six books that he had already composed in the years leading to his banishment in A.D. 8. Whilst technical difficulties would have impeded his 'research' at Tomi, even if he had had the spirit to continue the work, there is clear evidence that he took it with him and rewrote sections (e.g. 1. 1–25, 1. 461–542). That the *Fasti* was intended to appease the emperor is evident both from numerous courtly allusions to the imperial family (e.g. 1. 531–5, 2. 127–44, 3. 709–10, 6. 637–40, 6. 801–10) and from the poet's reproachful statement in his 'Defence to Augustus': 'sex ego Fastorum scripsi totidemque libellos | cumque suo finem mense volumen habet. | idque tuo nuper scriptum sub nomine Caesar, | et tibi sacratum sors mea rupit opus' (*Tr.* 2. 549–52).

of the Magna Mater on the Palatine. A conflagration burnt the temple to the ground destroying everything but the statue of the virtuous Claudia Quinta, which remained firmly on its base.⁹ The emperor rebuilt the temple.¹⁰ One might suspect that he gave the work priority, since the temple, sited directly opposite Augustus' palace, housed a divinity intimately connected with Julians and Claudians. Such a gesture to both sides of his family had especial point in the last months of A.D. 3 and the early part of the following year.

Lucius Caesar was already dead when on 9 September A.D. 3 Gaius Caesar, the second of Augustus' two crown princes and Julia's sons, was mortally wounded at Artagira in Armenia and thereafter until his death in early A.D. 4 desired to retire into private life. Pressure from Livia and the youth and defective character of the remaining Julian,¹¹ the fourteen-year-old Agrippa Postumus, at last drove Augustus to accept a Claudian heir, and on 26 June A.D. 4 he finally adopted Tiberius. Simultaneously he attempted to unite the Julian and Claudian sides of his family by betrothals joining Germanicus and Agrippina, Julia's daughter, and Claudius, the future emperor, and Aemilia Lepida, Julia's granddaughter.¹² Livia had triumphed. We may further surmise that in the rebuilding of the 'aedes Magnae Matris' Augustus had her full support. Her interest and participation in the imperial restoration of the State religion with undertones of dynastic propaganda were tangibly expressed in her own restoration of the temple of Concord as a symbol of the marital harmony of the imperial pair:

te quoque magnifice, Concordia, dedicat aede.

Livia, quam caro praestitit ipsa viro. (*Fasti* 6. 637 f.)

The Julian and Claudian connections with the Great Mother are multiple and complex. In 204 B.C. a black meteorite representing the Great Mother was brought to Rome from the goddess' Phrygian homeland in obedience to a sibylline oracle in the hope of inculcating new confidence in a Rome dispirited by the Hannibalic Wars. The Troy/Rome connection, which had earlier provided a theme for propaganda in the wars with Pyrrhus,¹³ is again apparent, possibly through the analogy that as the Palladium had kept Troy invincible, so the black stone of Pessinus might do the same for a Rome threatened by Hannibal,¹⁴ but also through the designs and beliefs of those aristocratic Roman families who claimed Trojan descent and who welcomed a goddess from the ancestral homeland.¹⁵ The 'Ludi Megalenses', instituted after the goddess' arrival in Rome, were organized by the aristocracy. It was from the outset a patrician

⁹ Valerius Maximus 1. 8. 11.

¹⁰ *Res Gest.* 4. 19.

¹¹ On Agrippa Postumus' character see Suetonius, *Aug.* 65, Velleius Paterculus 2. 112. 7, Dio Cassius 55. 32. 1-2. Cf. too Tacitus, *Ann.* 1. 3. Agrippa Postumus was adopted by Augustus at the same time as Tiberius, but was by virtue of his youth and inexperience the 'junior partner'.

¹² The betrothal of Claudius, Germanicus' younger brother and the future emperor, to Aemilia Lepida did not result in a marriage presumably because of the disgrace in A.D. 8 of Aemilia's parents, the younger Julia and L. Aemilius Paullus.

¹³ This is discussed by J. Perret, *Les origines de la légende troyenne de Rome* (Paris, 1942), on which see A. Momigliano, *JRS* 35 (1945), 99 ff.

¹⁴ Livy 29. 10. 5. Further military involvement of the Magna Mater is discussed by J. O. Lenaghan, *A Commentary on Cicero's Oratio de Haruspicum Responso* (Amsterdam, 1969), pp. 135 f.

¹⁵ See S. Aurigemma, 'La protezione speciale della Gran Madre Idea per la nobiltà romana e la leggenda dell'origine troiana di Roma', *BACR* 37 (1909), 31-65; H. Graillot, *Le culte de Cybèle, mère des dieux, à Rome et dans l'empire romain* (Paris, 1912), pp. 42-4, 93-7; P. Lambrechts, 'Cybèle, divinité étrangère ou nationale', *Bull. Soc. Anthropol. Préhist.* 62 (1952); M. J. Vermaseren, *op. cit.* pp. 38 ff.; O. Henkel, *De Komst van de Mater Magna naar Rome* (Amsterdam, 1979), pp. 119-31.

festival,¹⁶ which Julius Caesar himself was to celebrate with especial pomp, a conscious advertisement perhaps of his own alleged Trojan descent and support of the patriciate. Augustus, supreme advocate through Vergil of Rome's Trojan origins, himself chose to live directly opposite the 'aedes Magnae Matris' on the Palatine and recorded with pride how he had rebuilt the shrine after the fire of A.D. 3. In compliance with such patriotic literary attitudes as these Ovid emphasizes Cybele's Trojan origins and therefore Julian connections: 'in Phrygios Roma refertur avos' (*Fasti* 4. 272).

On the Claudian side the imperial regard for the Phrygian goddess is demonstrated by the identification Livia-Cybele, evident on at least one contemporary cameo which equates quite properly the Empress, later Empress Mother, with the Great Mother of all.¹⁷ Since, as the story of Claudia Quinta attests, Cybele appears to have been especially cultivated by the Claudii no less than by the Julii,¹⁸ Livia may have had a personal interest in the goddess through her twofold Claudian loyalties.¹⁹ On her father's side Livia descended from the senior branch of the Claudii, the Claudii Pulchri, to which Claudia Quinta herself belonged and from which later came several sponsors of the 'Ludi Megalenses'.²⁰ Any doubts that Ovid should deliberately use the legend of Claudia Quinta to pay so delicate a compliment to Livia and the Claudian side of the emperor's family may be dispelled by the following considerations. The Augustan poets, in the manner of the Alexandrians, regularly celebrated the male

¹⁶ The patrician feasts are referred to by Cato (in Cic. *de Sen.* 45) and Gellius 18. 2. 11. See, too, Grailiot, *op. cit.* pp. 57 f. and Boyancé, *op. cit.* pp. 337-42. Augustus had a special interest in the patriciate: 'patriciorum numerum auxi consul iussu populi et senatus' (*Res gest.* 8. 1). On this see E. T. Salmon, 'Augustus the Patrician', in *Essays on Roman Culture* (Toronto, 1976). Lenaghan, *op. cit.* p. 117, suggests that the aristocratic and patrician traditions of the cult were very much alive in 56 B.C. when Clodius occasioned scandal by introducing into the sacred theatricals a band of low-class toughs.

¹⁷ Vermaseren, *op. cit.* p. 75. Lambrechts discusses ('Livie-Cybèle', *La Nouvelle Clío* 4 (1952), 251-60) the representation of Livia on the Vienna onyx with a turreted crown, tympanum and ears of corn. He also sees, on the Gemma Augustea, the woman behind Augustus as Livia, possibly Livia-Cybele. See too Grailiot, *op. cit.* p. 347 and G. Grether, 'Livia and the Roman imperial cult', *AJPh* 67 (1946), 243 f.

¹⁸ Our first historical source for the arrival of Cybele in Italy names a Valeria as the recipient of the divine stranger (*D.S.* 34. 33. 2). Claudia Quinta takes Valeria's place in Cicero (*de Har. Res.* 13. 27) and Livy (29. 14. 12), who first mentions Claudia's bad reputation and does not indicate that she was chosen for her moral excellence. That the Valeria tradition and the tale of Claudia's immorality derive from historians hostile to the Claudii is argued by T. Wiseman, *Clío's Cosmetics* (Leicester, 1979), pp. 98 ff. Ovid's fuller version of the story is followed by Seneca, *de Matr.* fragg. 80 f., Pliny, *HN* 7. 120, Statius, *Silv.* 1. 2. 245-6, Silius Italicus, 17. 1-45, Suetonius, *Tib.* 2. 3, Appian, *Hann.* 56, Herodian 1. 11. 4, Lactantius, *Div. Inst.* 2. 8. 12, Julian, *Or.* 5. 2, *Vir. Ill.* 46. 1 f., Solinus 1. 126, Macrobius, *Sat.* 2. 5. 4. Lambrechts (*op. cit.* p. 258) sees Livia as a supporter of a Claudian Cybele at the expense of the Julian Venus, and emphasizes the Claudian associations of the Cybele cult in the later empire - e.g. the emperor Claudius' organization of the Attis festival (J. Lydus, *De Mens.* 4. 59) and the elevation of Claudius II Gothicus on the 'Day of Blood' (*Vit. Claud. ap. Script. Hist. Aug.* 4. 2: cf. Suet. *Otho* 8).

¹⁹ Livia's first husband, Ti. Claudius Nero, belonged to the less famous branch of the Claudii, the Neronēs, whilst her father, M. Livius Drusus Claudianus, son of Appius Claudius Pulcher, descended from the more illustrious Claudii Pulchri (see B. Levick, *Tiberius the Politician* (London, 1976), pp. 11 and 228, n. 2).

²⁰ Ap. Claudius Pulcher, father of the notorious P. Clodius Pulcher, held the games in 91 B.C. and his brother, C. Claudius Pulcher, even more splendidly in 99 B.C. (Cic., *Verr.* 4. 6. 4. 133, *de Har. Res.* 26). P. Clodius himself was responsible as praetor in 56 B.C., whose 'sacrilegious' behaviour at the Megalensian theatricals Cicero could castigate thus: 'parentum nomen, sacra, memoriam, gentem...obruit' (*de Har. Res.* 57). Clodius' sacrilege is ingeniously linked to Lucretius' description of the Galli as those 'qui violant | Matris et ingrati genitoribus inventi sint' (Lucr. 2. 614 f.) by A. Kirsopp Michels, 'Lucretius, Clodius and the Magna Mater', *Mélanges Jérôme Carcopino* (Paris, 1966), pp. 675-9.

scions and in-laws of the imperial family, extending their praise to loyal and noble friends of the Princeps. As early as 16 B.C. it seems possible to see the beginnings of a trend to celebrate women connected with the dynasty when Propertius lauds the 'castitas' and other female virtues of Augustus' stepdaughter, Cornelia. The *Fasti*, as we have it, ends with an unexpected, uncalled-for and fulsome encomium of Marcia, first cousin of the emperor, that foreshadows Ovid's more extravagant tributes to Livia and Marcia in his exile poetry.²¹ Propertius compares his Cornelia to an antique and virtuous Aemilia (a compliment to Cornelia's husband, Paullus Aemilius Lepidus?) and to our Claudia Quinta,²² who also figures in Ovid's praise of Marcia.²³ Compliments therefore to ladies of the dynasty and their judicious comparison with Claudia Quinta, who was not only an antique model but also an ancestress, would seem to have become conventional. The tale of Claudia Quinta may have had additional family relevance at the time when Ovid was working on the fourth book of the *Fasti* through a further nucleus of dynastic marriages. After the death of Propertius' Cornelia, her husband married Claudia Marcella Minor, daughter of Octavia and niece of Augustus. She in turn later married a son of Appius Claudius Pulcher (*cos.* 38 B.C.)²⁴ whose ancestor, the consul of 212 B.C., was the brother of the celebrated Claudia Quinta herself. The daughter of this marriage, Claudia Pulchra, showing by her name kinship with Livia and the famous Claudia, furthered a political alliance with a young 'amicus Principis', P. Quinctilius Varus, which wedding must have taken place in the early years of the first century, perhaps very shortly before Ovid wrote his tribute to Claudia Quinta.²⁵

The strands which link Cybele to the Julian descendants of Aeneas and through Claudia Quinta, the goddess' first contact on Italian soil, with the Claudii Pulchri, belong to the web of religious and literary propaganda integral to Augustan poetry. Ovid, incorporating these threads at the time of Tiberius' establishment as heir, the triumph of the Claudians and fresh Julio-Claudian alliances, might well visualize the Cybele story as a poetic expression of the historic alliance of Trojan Julian with native Claudian already prefigured in the *Aeneid*, where Claudia Quinta's native ancestor, Clausus,²⁶ is destined to ally with the descendants of Iulus and the 'Aeneadae'.

No less significant is Ovid's attitude to the religious tradition of Cybele worship.

²¹ Conspicuous is *Ex Pont.* 3. 1 where Ovid urges his wife to plead before a Livia 'quae Veneris formam, mores Junonis habendo | sola est caelesti digna reperta toro' (117 f.). Marcia's reputation, he claims, was such that with her approbation even Claudia Quinta could have done without divine proof of her chastity (*Ex Pont.* 1. 2. 137-42).

²² Propertius 4. 11. 51-4.

²³ See note 21 above.

²⁴ M. Valerius Messalla Barbatus Appianus, whose uncle was the notorious P. Clodius Pulcher.

²⁵ P. Quinctilius Varus (*cos.* 13 B.C.) appears by his career, steady advancement and dynastic marriage to have been a loyal supporter of the 'princeps' (see *PIR* Q 27), and had useful connections among the Roman aristocracy (see Syme, *The Roman Revolution* (Oxford, 1939), p. 434). The impact on Augustus of his murder with three legions in the forests of Germany in A.D. 9 is well known (e.g. Suet. *Aug.* 23. 2). It seems perfectly reasonable to set the marriage between Varus and Claudia Pulchra in A.D. 2-4. Claudia Pulchra (*PIR* C 1116) was born probably in 13 or 12 B.C., the year of her father Barbatus' death. An earlier date is impossible since her mother, Claudia Marcella Minor (*PIR* C 1103), had first to pass through a marriage with Paullus Aemilius Lepidus (*PIR* A 373) who was not available until the death of his first wife Cornelia in 16 B.C. Claudia Pulchra must have been eighteen or nineteen in A.D. 6 when Varus left for Germany, an age beyond that at which a Roman imperial princess might expect to be married. It is more likely that she was betrothed and married some three years earlier, perhaps in A.D. 3, a date which would give topical relevance to Ovid's tale of Claudia Quinta.

²⁶ Ovid, *Fasti* 4. 305 (cf. Vergil, *Aen.* 7. 707).

A seal had been set on the Phrygian goddess' acceptance into the Augustan pantheon by Vergil's careful theology, which presented Cybele as the tutelary goddess of the 'Aeneadae' and revered mother of the gods. Since her cult now belonged officially to 'Caesaris arae' it must not be associated, in the manner of Catullus, with disreputable and ungoverned Eastern practices. Clearly if Ovid was to write of Cybele in terms pleasing to Augustus, he must present both goddess and her worship in Roman style.²⁷ Consequently Ovid goes to considerable pains to adapt to the criterion of 'decent' formal Roman religion the contemporary spectacle of Cybele worship, making much of the ritual chastity essential in dealings with the Great Mother in his stories of Attis and of Claudia Quinta. Thus words such as 'pietas' and 'castitas', essential pillars of Roman religion and morality, rediscover their original values in a cult where 'eviratio', a practice repellent in Roman eyes, had originated through a desire for perpetual purity.²⁸ In short, with her associations both Julian and Claudian, her prestigious position in Roman cult and her rich and varied literary tradition, the goddess Cybele offered to the leading poet of his day a theme of no small potential.

The section opens with a poetic calendric notification of the date, which can be identified with 4 April:

ter sine perpetuo caelum versetur in axe
ter iungat Titan terque resolvit equos. (Fasti 4. 179 f.)

The ritual solemnity of the stately triple anaphora *ter...ter...ter* followed by the formal *protinus* fitly leads in the blaring pipes, drums and brasses which attend the image of the Great Mother thronged by 'semimares' and howling devotees. The cacophonous Eastern music was a source of fascination for the Roman poets who diversely attempted to reproduce the noise by alliteration, assonance and onomatopoeia.²⁹ Ovid makes verbal allusion to the orchestration of both Lucretius and Catullus.³⁰ However, his purpose here is to describe not an alien orgiastic Eastern cult but 'tempora... Latium digesta per annum', an annual spectacle on the Roman streets.³¹ Consequently the festival section carries no allusion to Catullus' Attis poem (which finds more appropriate expression elsewhere; see below pp. 389-91) but rather recalls Lucretius' majestic progress of Cybele, where Lucretius is concerned with the aetiology of the cult, the power and majesty of the Great Mother and her equation with Rhea, acknowledged mother of the Graeco-Roman gods.³²

Characteristically the aura of awe and wonder which Cybele evokes in the hexametric poem is replaced in Ovid's version by a more chatty, anecdotal style appropriate to his *mise-en-scène* and to the Callimachean spirit of his aetiological

²⁷ Dion. Hal. (*Ant. Rom.* 2. 19. 3-5) describes how the rites of Cybele were adapted to suit Roman religious convention.

²⁸ At the root of 'eviratio' was undoubtedly the ancient belief that the sacred offices should be performed only by the pure. Eunuchs consecrated to perpetual continence furnished perfect ministers and for this reason figured in the worship of mother and fertility goddesses such as Cybele, Dea Syria, Aphrodite of Aphaca and the Scythian mother goddess. Isidore actually derives the word 'castus' from this permanent achievement of chastity: 'castus primum a castratione dicitur; postea placuit veteribus etiam eos sic nominare qui perpetuam libidinis abstinentiam pollicebantur' (*Orig.* 10. 33; cf. Claudian, *In Eutrop.* 1. 468). A discussion of this may be found in A. D. Nock, 'Eunuchs in Ancient Religion', now conveniently reprinted in *Essays on Religion and the Ancient World* (Oxford, 1972), pp. 7-15.

²⁹ cf. Catullus 63. 9 f., 64. 261 f., Lucretius 2. 618-20, Ovid, *Met.* 4. 29.

³⁰ Ovid's 'tympana tudent' (*Fasti* 4. 183) reflects Lucretius' 'tympana tenta tonant' (2. 618), while Catullus' 'tereti tenuis tinnitus aere' (64. 262) seems to be the source for Ovid's 'aeraque tinnitus aere repulsa' (*Fasti* 4. 184).

³¹ For a description of the Roman festival see Vermaseren, *op. cit.* pp. 124 f.

³² Cybele's official title in Rome was 'Mater Deum Magna Idaea'.

poetry in general. The appearance of Cybele and her retinue mark a Roman holiday to be celebrated in traditional Roman fashion as Ovid outlines with realistic detail:

scaena sonat ludique vocant: spectate, Quirites,
et fora Marte suo litigiosa vacent. (*Fasti* 4. 187 f.)

On festal days Italian country folk and their urban counterparts traditionally demanded dramatic entertainment which apparently ranged from Atellanae and mimes to classical comedy,³³ rivalled by gladiatorial shows, chariot racing, rope-dancing and pugilism.³⁴ The 'Megalensia' was from 191 B.C. traditionally celebrated with theatrical performances which were performed 'in ipso Matris Magnae conspectu',³⁵ shows in the Circus Maximus being relegated to the final day of the Ludi.³⁶ It would seem that dramatic entertainment at Roman festivals provided, as did the medieval mystery plays, a representation of a cult story appropriate to the festal day.³⁷ This is clearly implied by Ovid's final comment on the legend of Claudia Quinta: 'mira sed et scaena testificata loquar' (*Fasti* 4. 326) and is further suggested by such titles among the Atellanae as 'Anna Perenna' and 'Kalendae Martiae' and by the strongly dramatic character of a number of burlesque scenes found in the *Fasti*.³⁸ At all events we may conclude that Ovid deliberately accentuated the flavour of his descriptions of Roman holidays if not by the inclusion of appropriate material from the festal stage at any rate by dramatic colour and stage effects.

Ovid's dramatic *mise-en-scène* for the 'Megalensia' belongs to the tradition of Callimachean aetiological poetry on two counts: first, the fiction of a religious procession at which the poet is present, and second, the application to an appropriate divine source of knowledge for scholarly assistance. Callimachus opens his 'Bath of Pallas' with dramatized ritual preparations and a procession, before which the poet, present at the rites, recounted the aetiological legend of Athene.³⁹ Similarly in the *Aitia* Callimachus not infrequently varies his sources of information with the introduction of Muses and other mythical personnel.⁴⁰ Ovid follows the same technique. Having

³³ The following dates are generally accepted for performances of Terence's comedies at the 'Ludi Megalenses': 166 B.C. (*Andria*), 165 (*Hecyra*), 163 (*Heautontimoroumenos*), 161 (*Eunuchus*).

³⁴ cf. Terence, *Hecyra*, *Prol.* 1. 4, 2. 33.

³⁵ Cicero, *de Har. Res.* 24: 'quos in Palatio nostri maiores arte templum in ipso Magnae Matris conspectu Megalensibus fieri celebrarique voluerunt'. Cf. Arnobius 7. 33. A temporary theatre seems to have been erected in front of the Palatine 'aedes Magnae Matris' with the goddess in the form of her own turreted crown present in a seat of honour (see L. R. Taylor, *CPh* 30 (1935), 22-30 and J. A. Hanson, *Roman Theatre Temples* (Princeton, 1959), pp. 14 f., 24 f., 81-5).

³⁶ For Cybele's traditional association with the Circus Maximus see Vermaseren, *op. cit.* pp. 51-3. Correct formalities and their neglect at the 'Ludi Megalenses' are discussed by T. Wiseman, 'Clodius at the Theatre' in his *Cinna the Poet and other Roman Essays* (Leicester, 1974), pp. 159-69.

³⁷ In the later empire erotic tales of Cybele and Attis were staged to the disgust of the Christian writers Arnobius (4. 35, 7. 33) and Augustine (*Civ. Dei* 2. 4). Lascivious verses evidently graced the 'Floralia' where Ovid suggests that Flora's doings and personality gave occasion for risqué sketches (*Fasti* 5. 331-54).

³⁸ *Fasti* 1. 416-40, 2. 303-58, 3. 675-96, 6. 319-48. Among these the tale of Anna/Mars/Minerva on the feast day of Anna Perenna would appear to have all the necessary ingredients of a mime, whilst the Lupercalia story of Hercules/Omphale/Faunus has affinities with the satyr drama. On the dramatic character of these two pieces see respectively R. J. Littlewood, 'Ovid and the Ides of March' in C. Deroux (ed.), *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History* (Collection Latomus 168, Brussels, 1980), II 316 f.; idem, 'Ovid's Lupercalia', *Latomus* 34 (1975), 1063 f.

³⁹ Callimachus, *Hymn* 5. 1-54.

⁴⁰ For Callimachean appeals to the Muses or other probable sources of information see fragg. 43. 56 f., 114. 4-11, 178. 13-34 Pfeiffer.

brought on stage the procession of Cybele and exhorted his fellow citizens to enjoy the holiday entertainment, the poet, present as a serious antiquarian, is upset by the blare of cymbals and pipes (a humorous allusion to Lucretius' 'raucisonoque minantur cornua cantu', 2. 619?):

quaerere multa libet, sed me sonus aeris acuti
terret et horrendo lotos adunca sono.
'da, dea, quam sciter,' – doctas Cybeleia neptes
vidit et has curae iussit adesse meae.
'pandite, mandati memores, Heliconis alumnae,
gaudeat assiduo cur Dea Magna sono!' (Fasti 4. 189–94)

To the poet's formulaic prayer for help, 'da, dea, quam sciter', Cybele, a friendly and accommodating elegiac version of the remote goddess of Lucretius (Ovid's source for the whole of this passage), obligingly responds by delegating her scholarly granddaughters, the Muses, whom she spots nearby. Allusion to unexpected family connections conveys here, as elsewhere, a humorously incongruous note which evidently appealed to cultured Roman tastes. This type of mental ingenuity probably derives from the schools of Roman rhetoric which set a high value on unexpected turns of thought and phrase. Ovid's grandiose exhortation 'pandite Heliconis alumnae!' is wittily deflated by the bluntness and timely relevance of his question 'why does the goddess enjoy all this noise?' Erato, appropriate representative of Venus' month, proves a ready fount of useful facts and willingly responds with the legend of baby Jupiter and the Curetes.

By using this legend, with which Lucretius concludes his description of the Magna Mater, Ovid forms a further literary allusion to that noble passage.⁴¹ The heroine of the elegiac version is Rhea Iovis Mater, whose identification with Cybele is present in Lucretius and implied by Vergil.⁴² Ovid's narration of this rude and antique legend has all the characteristics of Hellenistic poetry: studied naivety, humorous attention to literal detail, unexpected locutions, exclamations, pathos and a psychological interest in the remote legendary figure of Rhea.

The naively literal description of Saturn's infanticide, 'prolem devorat inmersam visceribusque tenet', is matched by that of the substitution of the stone which lodges 'caelesti gutture'. Meanwhile Rhea, a somewhat bourgeois figure, complains about frustrated motherhood ('questa est totiens fecunda nec umquam mater') until she arrives at an equally bourgeois feminine solution: 'genitor decipiendus'. The birth of Jupiter is greeted with an Ovidian comment so facetiously naive that it recalls notes of sophisticated atheism elsewhere:⁴³

Iuppiter ortus erat – pro magno teste vetustas
creditur, acceptam parce movere fidem! (Fasti 4. 203 f.)

It will be remembered too that Callimachus, commenting on the same momentous event, similarly resorts to persiflage.⁴⁴ The child is sent to Mount Ida in Crete where

⁴¹ This legend is alluded to in the *Aratea* of Germanicus (lines 34–8, Bährens, *PLM* i. 148) to whom Ovid dedicated the *Fasti* after the death of Augustus in A.D. 14 and whose poetry Ovid praises in his allusions to Germanicus in his exile poetry (*Ex Pont.* 2. 9. 65, 4. 8. 67–82). It would be tempting to posit a compliment to the literary prince, were it not that, first, Germanicus' poem with its dedication to his adoptive father, Tiberius, must be dated after A.D. 4 (date of the adoption of Germanicus by Tiberius), by which time this part of the *Fasti* should have been written, and, second, the thematic unity of the whole Cybele section (*Fasti* 4. 179–372) argues against any suggestion that Ovid might have interpolated the legend of Rhea at a later date.

⁴² Lucretius 2. 633 ff., Vergil, *Aen.* 3. 111–13.

⁴³ 'Expedit esse deos, et, ut expedit, esse putemus;...' (Ovid, *A.A.* 1. 637–42: see note ad loc, in edition of A. S. Hollis (Oxford, 1977)).

⁴⁴ Callimachus, *Hymn* 1. 6–8.

his baby cries are drowned by the clashing bronzes of Curetes and Corybantes. Typically Ovid's 'tutus ut infanti vagiat ore puer' has an extended pathos absent from Lucretius' 'Iovis vagitus'. The telling of this tale enabled Ovid, whose initial inquiry appositely concerned the din of the entire Phrygian ensemble, to explain the presence of the Curetes and Corybantes specifically and thereby to allude to the Lucretian aition: 'Dictaeos referent Curetos' (Lucr. 2. 633).

No account of the cult and retinue of Cybele would be complete without reference to the ritual castration practised by the Galli, a custom which appalled and fascinated the uncomprehending Romans.⁴⁵ Ovid, poet par excellence of sexual curiosities, offers, unexpectedly perhaps,⁴⁶ an elegant and delicately allusive passage which is interesting mainly as a study in skilful adaptation. Having exhausted for present purposes his Lucretian source, he now turns to Catullus. Catullus' Attis poem (63) had hitherto apparently defied imitation. Ovid's presentation of a classic adaptation of this (*Fasti* 4. 223–45), dissimilar in tone and style, yet full of conscious verbal allusion and deftly turned parallels, is characteristic of the mature literary artistry of the *Fasti*.

Ovid's Attis, like Catullus' 'gymnasi flos' (63. 64) is a youth of exceptional physical charm, 'facie spectabilis', who undergoes the same sequence of willing devotion to Cybele, regret/lapse and subsequent madness induced by the jealous goddess. However, by adjusting the circumstances Ovid has transformed the tone from harsh realism to a more delicate poignancy helped somewhat by the fact that his tale, an aetiological exegesis, belongs to the legendary past, whereas Catullus' Attis is a citizen of a recognizable and familiar Greek city state.

The opening couplet, a typically neat Ovidian summation of the essential prolegomena to a romantic tale, boldly announces his Catullan model:

Phryx puer in silvis, facie spectabilis, Attis
turrigeram casto vinxit amore deam. (*Fasti* 4. 223 f.)

The striking initial nominative, Phryx, balanced by Attis at the end of the line, forcefully recalls Catullus, who accentuates his alien subject matter by constant repetition of Attis and Phrygius,⁴⁷ a word heavy with unwholesome association.⁴⁸ 'In

⁴⁵ Disinclination among the Romans to practise 'eviratio' in Cybele worship is attested by the fact that not until the time of Domitian was it necessary to legislate against the practice (*Digest*. 48. 8. 4. 2, *Cod. Iust.* 42. 1). Whilst most commonly showing the familiar, hooded Attis figure standing near to the Great Goddess, the plastic arts represented also Attis' self-mutilation or drew attention to his hermaphroditic physique. For descriptions of such art works see Vermaseren, *op. cit.* pp. 93–5. The poets shared an attitude of revulsion for this un-Greek lack of reverence for the male form, tending scornfully to refer to the Galli as 'semimares' (Ov. *Fasti* 4. 183) and 'semiviri' (Min. Fel., *Oct.* 22. 4, Paulinus of Nola, *Carm.* 32. 88) or more damningly to allude to them in the feminine gender (Cat. 63. 8, 11 f. *et passim*). Only a few saw in it a mystic and pure sacrifice as did Julian (*Or.* 8. 5. 9). The bad reputation of the Galli is described by Apuleius (*Met.* 8. 24 ff.), which is appositely quoted by P. Parsons in a discussion of a Greek papyrus (P. Oxy. 3010) which deals with the unsavoury underworld of the Eastern Galli ('A Greek Satyricon?', *Univ. of London, Institute of Class. Stud., Bulletin* 18 (1971), 53–68).

⁴⁶ Cogent argument for the propriety of Ovid's *Fasti* as opposed to the poet's 'umoristico-salaci' (F. Trissoglio, 'Leggendo Ovidio, Fisionomia di un poeta', *RSC* 6 (1958), 123–44) is offered by D. Porte, 'Les Fastes d'Ovide et le sourcil latin', *Latomus* 37 (1978), 851–73.

⁴⁷ Catullus' repetition of 'Attis', 'Phrygius' and other key words is discussed by J. P. Elder, 'Catullus' Attis' in K. Quinn, *Approaches to Catullus* (New York, 1972), pp. 401–3.

⁴⁸ In addition to the two instances in this section of the *Fasti*, the nominative 'Phryx' is found at *Fasti* 6. 475, *Her.* 15. 199, 201, 203 and insultingly at *Ibis* 508. In the *Aeneid* 'Phryx', its oblique cases and the adjective 'Phrygius' tend to take on unflattering suggestions of effeminacy in the mouths of those hostile to the Trojans – e.g. Juno (4. 103, 'liceat Phrygio servire marito'), Turnus (12. 77 f., 'Phrygio mea dicta tyranno [haud placitura refer]', Latin matrons (11. 484), Amata (7. 362) and the Rutulian Numanus (9. 599–620, 'bis capti Phryges... | O vere Phrygiae, neque enim Phryges...').

silvis' too recalls a third Catullan leitmotif, the 'nemora', dark haunt of the engulfing mother goddess. Meanwhile 'casto amore' indicates Ovid's own particular leitmotif for his entire Cybele section and marks from the outset the new slant which Ovid gives to the tale. Unlike his Catullan prototype, this Attis is not an 'exemplum' of a civilized Greek ruined by the excesses of Oriental religion. On the contrary, his violation of 'castitas' is sacrilege, a breach of 'pietas' which brings upon him divine retribution: 'hinc poenas exigit ira deae' (*Fasti* 4. 230).⁴⁹ These are the contractual laws of the Roman state religion. Whereas Catullus' Attis is swept into orgiastic madness 'Phrygium ut nemus citato cupide pede tetigit' (Cat. 63. 2), Ovid's enjoys a chaste tranquillity until he transgresses. The narrative, varied with bursts of colloquial elegiac dialogue characteristic of Ovid's aetiological poetry, moves forward with a facility and grace enhanced by a series of decorous euphemisms:

hunc sibi servari voluit, sua templa tueri,
et dixit 'semper fac puer esse velis.'
ille fidem iussis dedit et 'si mentiar', inquit,
'ultima, qua fallam, sit Venus illa mihi.'
fallit et in nympha Sagaritide desinit esse,
quod fuit; hinc poenas exigit ira deae. (Fasti 4. 225–30)

The enraged goddess wreaks vengeance on the native tree of the nymph, Sangaris, a possible allusion to the importance of trees in the cult of Cybele. Emanating from the same sense of Cybele's mysterious power over vegetation is Vergil's literary association of the Great Mother and the trees of Mount Ida and the magical metamorphosis of Aeneas' ships into nymphs by the power and instigation of Cybele, in whose sacred groves they once grew as trees.⁵⁰ Again one remembers the recurrent 'Phrygia nemora' of Catullus.

The nymph destroyed, Cybele's wrath now falls on Attis. Ovid's simple 'hic furit' recalls Catullus' lengthier description of Cybele mercilessly directing her lions to whip up new madness in her by then disillusioned acolyte:

'agedum,' inquit, 'age ferox (i) fac ut hunc furor (agitet),
fac ut furoris ictu reditum in nemora ferat.' (Cat. 63. 78 f.)

Like Catullus' Attis Ovid's flees to the hills:

effugit et cursu Dindyma summa petit
et modo 'tolle faces!' 'remove,' modo, 'verbera!' clamat.
saepe Palaestinas iurat adesse deas.
ille etiam saxo corpus laniavit acuto,
longaque in immundo pulvere tracta coma est. (Fasti 4. 234–8)

Attis' headlong flight to the heights of Dindyma and his penitential lacerations 'saxo...acuto' must owe their derivation to the ecstatic self-castration 'acuto...silice' of the Catullan Attis before he seeks the mountain groves. Coming events are thus foreshadowed. As often the parallel is enriched by disparate circumstances. Remorse through breach of faith has motivated the Ovidian Attis' lonely agony in the hills. Catullus' Attis, in the arrogance of his first allegiance to Cybele, castrates himself and himself leads the wild host of Galli up the mountain. Behind both versions lies the

⁴⁹ The transgression of Ovid's Attis is exactly that of Lucretius' Galli, who have merited their physical abnormality 'quia numen qui violarint | matris et ingrati genitoribus inventi sunt | significare volunt indignos esse putandos | vivam progeniem, qui in oras luminis edant' (2. 614–17).

⁵⁰ The tale is told in Vergil, *Aen.* 9. 77–122 and Ovid, *Met.* 14. 50 ff. Cybele's bond with Nature is particularly strong in the Ovidian version where the goddess refers to the ships/trees as 'nemorum partes et membra deorum'.

terrible madness of the goddess. Ovid's traditional picture of avenging furies pursuing the guilty⁵¹ derives an added literary zest from its verbal resemblance to a mock-agonized shriek of Tibullus from the irons of 'servitium amoris':

uror, io, remove, saeva puella, faces! (Tib. 2. 4. 6)

Finally Attis' youth and impetuosity are underlined in Ovid's pathetic picture of Attis frenziedly trailing his long hair in the dust, an elegiac variant of the traditional epic expression of anguish by heaping dust on the hair.⁵²

Agony of remorse marks the emotional peak of Catullus' poem. This can no less be absent from Ovid's guilty Attis, although he expresses himself more tersely:

'merui! meritas do sanguine poenas!
ah! pereant partes, quae nocuere mihi!' (Fasti 4. 239 f.)

The punishment which the Ovidian Attis deems fitting is the very cause of remorse to the Catullan. 'Eviratio', the essential horror of both poems, opens the earlier work; from this point Catullus moves inexorably through frenzy and disillusion to inevitable commitment. It was surely design based on conscious adaptation that led Ovid to conclude his inverted sequence of commitment, breach of faith and madness with the final terrible couplet:

'ah! pereant,' dicebat adhuc, onus inguinis aufert,
nullaque sunt subito signa relictia viri. (Fasti 4. 241 f.)

His wording is unmistakably close to Catullus' exultant 'devoluit ile... pondere...' (63.5) and 'relictia sensit sibi membra sine viro' (ibid. 6). Ovid must have relished his ingenious reversal of the Catullan situation in this highly successful imitation of an inimitable poem.

Ovid's next inquiry of Erato whether or not Cybele was a 'dea indigena' gives Erato the opportunity to flesh out the Vergilian theology of Cybele with close references to the Aeneas legend:⁵³

Dindymon et Cybelen et amoenam fontibus Iden
semper et Iliacas Mater amavit opes.
cum Troiam Aeneas Italos portaret in agros,
est dea sacriferas paene secuta rates.
sed nondum fatis Latio sua numina posci
senserat adusuetis substiteratque locis. (Fasti 4. 249-54)

Citation of the goddess' favourite haunts includes the city of Troy. Why, however, was she not included among the gods which Aeneas took to Italy? Cybele's migration

⁵¹ Traditional victims of the Furies were Athamas, Orestes and Alcmaeon, listed by Cicero (*Tusc.* 3. 11, *Pis.* 47, *de Har. Res.* 39) whose madness followed the murder of their mother or (in the case of Athamas) children. Through *lèse-majesté* towards the Great Mother Attis is in a sense associated with Alcmaeon and Orestes, tragedy's famous matricides. Again cf. Lucretius, 2. 614-17.

⁵² cf. Catullus 64. 224 (Aegeus grieving for Theseus: 'canitiem terra atque infuso pulvere foedans'), Vergil, *Aen.* 10. 844 (Evander for Pallas: 'canitiem multo deformat pulvere'), ibid. 12. 611 (Latinus for the destruction of his city: 'canitiem immundo perfusam pulvere turpans'). Homeric antecedents are *Il.* 18. 23-5, 24. 163-5. A particularly apt parallel which Ovid perhaps intended his Roman audience to recall would be Turnus' prayer, 'da sternere corpus | loricaeque manu valida lacerare revulsam | semiviri Phrygis et foedare in pulvere crinis | vibratos calido ferro murræque madentis' (Vergil, *Aen.* 12. 97-100).

⁵³ Whether the black stone came from Pessinus, an independent state at that time (Livy, 39. 10. 7, Strabo 12. 4. 3), or from the Megalensian in Pergamum (Varro, *LL* 6. 15) is discussed with general preference for Varro by L. Bloch, *Phil.* 52 (1893), 580 f., Graillet, op. cit. pp. 46-51, Habel, *RE Suppl.* 5, pp. 626 ff., D. Magie, *Roman Rule in Asia Minor to the end of the Third Century after Christ* (Princeton, 1950), II, pp. 770 ff.

is part of the divine scheme of Rome's destiny to be accomplished at an hour decreed by Fate. A liturgical solemnity initiated by heavy spondees is maintained by the familiar Vergilian phraseology: 'Troiam Aeneas Italos portaret in agros... nondum fatis Latio sua numina posci'. The annunciation of her advent and its manner is discovered at the proper time in 'carminis Euboici fatalia verba' (257). The obscure prophetic language and the vocative, 'Romane', strike an authentic note:

'Mater abest, Matrem iubeo, Romane, requiras.
cum veniet, casta est accipienda manu.' (Fasti 4. 259 f.)

Again, the emphasis that 'castitas' is essential in dealings with the mother goddess.⁵⁴

In their confusion the 'patres' seek a second opinion from Apollo himself, who directs them to Mount Ida. In Ovid's sequence of events Attalus I, ruler of Pergamum, at first refuses to part with the stone, a poetic licence which enables Cybele to show the will of the gods by a divine portent.⁵⁵ The earth trembles and the goddess herself gives utterance from the shrine:

'ipsa peti volui. nec sit mora! mitte volentem!
dignus Roma locus, quo deus omnis eat.' (Fasti 4. 269 f.)⁵⁶

Attalus is instantly won over, reassuring himself with the argument of the Trojan-Roman line of descent:

'nostra eris; in Phrygios Roma refertur avos.' (Fasti 4. 272)

Since the 'proceres' (265) who formed the embassy to Attalus presumably came prepared to transport the Magna Mater in a fleet worthy of their sacred mission, Ovid's description of the felling of trees on Mount Ida and the building of ships in the manner of the fugitive Aeneas is another poetic fiction intended to associate his tale with the theology of the *Aeneid*:

protinus innumerae caedunt pineta secures
illa, quibus fugiens Phryx pius usus erat.
mille manus coeunt, et picta coloribus ustis
caelestum Matrem concava puppis habet. (Fasti 4. 273-6)

'Innumerae secures' and 'mille manus' suggest a scene of epic proportions inappropriate to the present situation, were it not for the fact that the journey of so holy an object as the stone must, like the momentous flight of Aeneas, be accomplished only in ships made from trees sacred to the goddess. The somewhat oddly sounding 'Phryx pius' intentionally recalls the 'Phryx puer... Attis' (223), another local devotee of the Phrygian goddess who also stumbles on the stony path of 'pietas'.

The importance of Cybele's journey to Rome is poetically enhanced by an epic catalogue of places passed between the Troad and Rome, which Ovid evidently selected for their legendary, Homeric or Vergilian associations. Leaving the three famous landmarks of the Troad, Rhoeteum, Sigeum and Tenedos, the fleet passes Andromache's old home, 'veteres Eetionis opes' (280). Past the Cyclades, where a marbled sea ('Carysteis... vadis', 282) evokes a pleasing image, the 'Icarium (mare)' conjures up distant and unhappy legend before the sacred convoy passes between Crete,

⁵⁴ See note 28 above.

⁵⁵ Roman readers might be reminded of another divine portent following the notorious Megalensia of 56 B.C.: 'in agro Latiensi auditus est strepitus cum fremitu' (Cic. *de Har. Res.* 20), which indication of the god's displeasure derived, according to Cicero, from Clodius' recent sacrilege and portended future disaster (*ibid.* 24).

⁵⁶ Ovid was to allude to the holiness of Rome in *Tr.* 1. 5. 70.

another ancient Trojan homeland and associated with Cybele,⁵⁷ and Cythera.⁵⁸ Thence to Sicily, which evokes further Vergilian allusions.⁵⁹ A neat couplet suggestively draws together both the Trojans' terrible night in the lee of the erupting Aetna and Vergil's description of Vulcan's smithy:

hinc mare Trinacrium, candens ubi tingere ferrum
Brontes et Steropes Acmonidesque solent. (*Fasti* 4. 287 f.)

Here the tremendous hissing which results from the Cyclopean immersion of hot metal in the sea creates the effect that the violently erupting volcano provided for Aeneas and his men. Since she follows so closely in the footsteps of the earlier Phrygian travellers, it is reassuring to read that Cybele 'aequora...Afra legit' (289), swiftly arriving at Ostia and the banks of the Tiber. Thus the goddess' odyssey nicely separates the negotiations with Attalus from the scene of her reception in Rome.

The description of Cybele's miraculous reception on Italian soil is given by Ovid with a certain sophisticated relish as he consciously builds up a traditional picture of sturdy Roman civic virtue. The welcome party assembles on the Tiber bank. First, representing every social class, come 'omnis eques mixtaque gravis cum plebe senatus' (293): 'gravis senatus' aptly conveys the stolid dignity of mayor and corporation. In second place Rome's female population, 'matres nataeque nurusque' (295) together with the Vestal Virgins. Ovid's choice of words exudes an aura of 'castitas' and underlines the moral solidarity of family bonds and religion, firm bulwarks of the Roman state. Suddenly there is an embarrassing hitch, the cause of which Ovid states in the conspicuously blunt and basic language which he reserves for his 'scenes of early Rome' in the *Fasti*:

sicca diu fuerat tellus, sitis usserat herbas:
sedit limoso pressa carina vado. (*Fasti* 4. 299 f.)⁶⁰

True to their pristine reputation the practical Romans quickly organize concerted efforts to free the ship, but when all fails they are characteristically overcome by superstitious dread:

attoniti monstro stantque paventque viri. (*Fasti* 4. 304)

The scene is set for our heroine, Claudia Quinta, whom Ovid presents in glowing terms. Her pedigree is impeccable ('genus Clauso referebat ab alto', 305),⁶¹ her beauty matches her lineage ('nec facies impar nobilitate fuit', 306) and her morals, were it not for jealous tongues, would be above reproach ('casta quidem, sed non et credita', 307). The whisper of scandal which had damaged Claudia's reputation is explained

⁵⁷ Vergil, *Aen.* 3. 103–17.

⁵⁸ For the tradition that the Trojans stopped at Cythera on their way from Delos see Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1. 50. 1.

⁵⁹ Vergil, *Aen.* 3. 569 ff., 8. 423 ff. The Cyclopean smiths are, of course, an adaptation of Vergil's 'Brontesque Steropesque et nudus membra Pyragmon' (ibid. 8. 425).

⁶⁰ Ovid alludes to a real problem familiar to his Roman readers, the silting of the Tiber which obliged larger vessels to lie at anchor beyond the Tiber mouth and discharge their cargo by means of small boats (see R. Meiggs, *Roman Ostia*² (Oxford, 1973), p. 52. For factual information on the bend in the Tiber to which Ovid refers in line 329 see ibid. p. 484).

⁶¹ cf. Vergil, *Aen.* 7. 707 for the origins of the Claudian gens. Livy's version of the tale of Claudia Quinta is relatively basic: 'matronae primores civitatis, inter quas unius Claudiae Quintae insigne est nomen, accipere; cui dubia, ut traditur, antea fama clariorem ad posteror tam religioso ministerio pudicitiam fecit' (29. 14. 12). The political implications and faction activity behind the respective choice of P. Scipio Nasica and Claudia Quinta to receive the goddess are fully discussed by T. Koves, *Historia* 12 (1963), 335–47 and T. Wiseman, *Clio's Cosmetics*, pp. 79 ff.

by Ovid with his characteristic sympathy for smart modern girls. Claudia's elegance, stylish coiffure and ready tongue have upset the 'rigidi senes' of her day. Ovid's asseverations are amusingly undermined by a fleeting image of the elegiac 'domina' called to mind by his description of Claudia's toilette: 'ornatis varie prodisse capillis' (309) is very close to the opening line of Propertius' request to Cynthia to moderate her glamour, 'Quid iuvat ornato procedere, vita, capillo...?' (Prop. 1. 2. 1). Given the nastiness of human nature ('nos in vitium credula turba sumus', 312), Claudia is justifiably ill at ease among the throng of 'castae matres' and decides to prove her innocence once and for all. She prefaces her prayer to Cybele with correct Roman religious formalities: a triple purificatory lustration, hands raised in supplication, genuflection and loosened hair. Next she addresses a plea to the goddess to vindicate her 'castitas':

'casta negor: si tu damnas, meruisse fatebor,
morte luam poenas iudice victa dea.' (Fasti 4. 321 f.)

This couplet recalls the story of Attis' violated 'castitas'; the words 'meruisse fatebor' and Claudia's willingness to destroy herself if judged unchaste by the terrible goddess reflect Attis' "'merui! meritas do sanguine poenas'" (239). Unlike Attis, however, Claudia knows herself guiltless and can beseech the goddess 'castas casta sequere manus' (324). The heavy emphasis on 'castitas' and its violation here and in the Attis section serves to underline the importance of ritual purity in the worship of the Magna Mater. When Cicero described the 'Ludi Megalenses' as 'maxime casti' and 'castissimi' and Claudia Quinta as 'matronarum castissima', his words carried a cogency and religious relevance beyond a superficial rhetorical antithesis between the antique Claudia and her sacrilegious descendant, Clodius.

The miracle is described in two graphic couplets noteworthy for their nicely contrasting moods:

dixit et exiguo funem conamine traxit;
mira, sed et scaena testificata loquar:
mota dea est sequiturque ducem laudatque sequendo –
index laetitiae fertur ad astra sonus. (Fasti 4. 325–8)

The hexameters continue the simple retelling of the legend in basic language which is only accentuated by Ovid's naive remark that it must be true since it is shown on the stage. However, a fleeting Vergilian allusion in the second pentameter casts an unexpected radiance on the group beside the Tiber. Their joyful cry, which rings out when the goddess' ship is dislodged, rephrases the rejoicings of Nature when Vergil's Daphnis is received into Heaven:

ipsi laetitia voces ad sidera iactant
intonsi montes. (Ecl. 5. 62 f.)

With a stroke of subtle brilliance Ovid has given the archaic miracle an unlooked-for moment of exaltation and emotion.

The glow fades and a redoubling of prosaic language, detailing the sailors' mundane tasks (329–36), is interposed between the miracle and the next sacrament, the bathing of the image. The bath of the sacred image in the Almo, regularly part of the late March Attis festival, falls naturally into place at this point since the procession passes that way on its journey into the city through the Porta Capena. A detailed adaptation of Callimachus' 'Bath of Pallas' had already provided a literary frame for Ovid's 'Bath of Venus' Statue' (Fasti 4. 135 ff.).⁶² Consequently here Ovid makes but fleeting allusion

⁶² For a detailed examination of the literary adaptation of Callimachus' fifth hymn see C. Floratus, 'Veneralia', *Hermes* 88 (1960), 197–216.

to the Callimachean elements of the image-bathing ceremony: the image, arriving on a wagon,⁶³ is washed with water from a local river,⁶⁴ fresh flowers are scattered⁶⁵ and the customary gathering of chaste maidens and matrons is crowned by Claudia Quinta.⁶⁶ The prayers and propitious words recommended by both Ovid (155) and Callimachus (137–9) are replaced here by a burst of Cybele's favourite music which, coming as it does at the end of the story, recalls in ring fashion the opening procession with which Ovid begins the section (181–4):

exulant comites, furiosaque tibia flatur,
et feriunt molles taurea terga manus. (*Fasti* 4. 341 f.)

The section concludes with a rapid and spirited interchange with Erato noteworthy from a literary point of view only for its movement and variety, although these are considerable.

A word or two may be added on the structure of the Cybele section. Ovid tends to build his major sections of the *Fasti* according to a balanced structure which observes the rules of 'variatio' and chronological sequence. Accordingly here two prehistoric legends of the goddess, of Rhea/Saturn and Cybele/Attis, are naturally followed by the two semi-historical tales from early Rome, Cybele's departure from Pessinus and her reception by Claudia Quinta. Whilst each of the former more exotic tales is based on a famous literary antecedent, the two latter are conspicuous for their simplicity and thus merit being separated one from the other by the small purple patch of Cybele's epic voyage. All other interstices and the overall framework are provided by the dramatic setting of the festival and procession and Ovid's lively exchanges with Erato. Occasional failure to follow his structural pattern exactly gives an impression of asymmetria which Ovid and apparently Callimachus conceived as the right form for aetiological poetry.⁶⁷

Ovid's 'Megalensia' is a triumph of literary artistry, where the poet's occasional moments of frivolity in no way obscure the complex patriotic message. One wonders whether so triumphant a vindication of devotion to the regime did temporarily dissipate the clouds of imperial displeasure hanging over the poet, or whether the urbane brilliance of Ovid's ingenuity met with the same icy disdain that was to greet the brazen compliments which he directed to Augustus and his family from the shores of Tomi.⁶⁸

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⁶³ cf. Callimachus, *Hymn* 5.2, 14.

⁶⁴ Callimachus specifically mentions the Inachus as the place for Athene's bath (*ibid.* 50).

⁶⁵ cf. *ibid.* 49 f. Ovid is more specific: 'nunc alii flores, nunc nova danda rosa est' (*Fasti* 4. 138).

⁶⁶ Callimachus, *ibid.* 33 f. Cf. Ovid who adds, however, 'quis vittae longaue vestis abest' (*ibid.* 134).

⁶⁷ Some remarks on structure in the *Fasti* may be found in Littlewood, *opp. cit.* n. 38, 'Ovid's Lupercalia', 1072, 'Ovid and the Ides of March', 321.

⁶⁸ I am indebted to Professor R. G. M. Nisbet for constructive criticism through the phases of the writing of this article.