

THE INVENTION OF MARRIAGE: HERMAPHRODITUS AND SALMACIS AT HALICARNASSUS AND IN OVID*

The story of Hermaphroditus and Salmacis is well known from Book 4 of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.¹ In Ovid's account, the daughters of Minyas, toiling on their looms while the other women of Boeotia dutifully observe the rites of Dionysus, tell a series of stories about love, including the story of how the rapacious nymph Salmacis tried to seduce the handsome and chaste youth Hermaphroditus. By the end of the story, Hermaphroditus has been transformed into a hermaphrodite and the spring of Salmacis has been given an emasculating power. In 1995, a Greek poetic inscription, dated to the second century B.C.E. and found at the very site of the spring Salmacis in Halicarnassus, revealed a very different account.² Composed in elegiac couplets, this poem about the excellence of Halicarnassus shows, at first glance, little trace of the details of the Hermaphroditus and Salmacis story known from Ovid:

τὸν τ' ἑρατὸν μακάρεσσιν αἰδόμενον παρὰ χεῦμα
Σαλμακίδος γλυκερὸν νασσομένη σκόπελον
νύμφης ἱμερτὸν κατέχει δόμον, ἣ ποτε κούρον
ἡμέτερον τερπναῖς δεξαμένη παλάμαις
Ἑρμαφρόδιτον θρέψε πανέξοχον, ὃς γάμον εἶδεν
ἀνδράσι καὶ λέχεια πρῶτος ἔδρησε νόμῳ
αὐτὴ τε σταγόνων ἱεροῖς ὑπὸ νάμασιν ἄντρον
πρηνεὶ φώτῳ ἀγριόεντα νόον

Halicarnassus settles the lovely hill beside the stream of Salmacis, called dear to the immortals in song, and she occupies the lovely home of the nymph, who once took our boy in her sweet embrace and raised him, Hermaphroditus, to be outstanding, he who discovered marriage and

* Earlier versions of this paper were presented at the University of Chicago, the University of California–Irvine, Boston University and Texas Tech University. I would like to thank those audiences and especially Helma Dik, Chris Faraone, Jonathan Hall and Donald Lavigne for comments on portions of this project in various earlier stages. Above all, greatest thanks are due to the late Mike Jameson who first introduced me to this inscription and in whose seminar the first inklings of this paper were conceived.

¹ *Met.* 4.271–388.

² The initial edition of the text is S. Isager, 'The Pride of Halikarnassos. Editio princeps of an inscription from Salmacis', *ZPE* 123 (1998), 1–23. Study of the inscription has been greatly aided by the recent publication of the text and related articles in S. Isager and P. Pedersen (edd.), *The Salmakis Inscription and Hellenistic Halikarnassos*. Halicarnassian Studies IV (Odense, 2004). R. Merkelbach and J. Stauber, *Steinepigramme aus dem griechischen Osten* (Stuttgart, 1998) prints the text with German translation and brief notes. Discussions of the initial publication in *ZPE* are found in H. Lloyd-Jones, 'The Pride of Halicarnassus', *ZPE* 124 (1999), 1–14 (with further comments in id., 'The Pride of Halicarnassus [*ZPE* 124 (1999) 1–14]: corrigenda and addenda', *ZPE* 127 [1999], 63–5) and C. Austin, 'Notes on the "Pride of Halicarnassus"', *ZPE* 126 (1999), 92. M. Gigante, 'Il nuovo testo epigrafico di Alicarnasso', *A&R* 44.1/2 (1999), 1–8 also provides a useful overview. See also M. Gigante, 'Il poeta di Salmacide e Filodemo di Gadara', *ZPE* 126 (1999), 91–2 and G. Zecchini, 'Nosso di Alicarnasso', *ZPE* 126 (1999), 60–2, with comments useful for understanding the inscription's literary catalogue. In what follows, the text of the inscription is that of Merkelbach and Stauber; all translations of the poem are my own, but owe significant debts to that of Lloyd-Jones.

was the first to bind the marriage bed in law. And she herself [Salmacis] beneath the holy streams dripping in the cave tames the savage mind of men. (15–22)

In the inscription, Hermaphroditus invents the institution of marriage and ‘binds the marriage bed in law’. The spring of Salmacis, on the other hand, does not make men less manly or manufacture hermaphrodites; instead it ‘tames savage minds’.³ A far cry from Ovid’s chaste boy and lustful girl, in the Salmacis inscription, we find Salmacis the nurturing nymph and Hermaphroditus the lawgiver.

How can we make sense of this difference? I argue in what follows that the most telling differences between Ovid and the inscription lie not in the descriptions of Hermaphroditus and Salmacis’ power per se; rather, each poem employs a distinct mode of narration. Investigation of these two distinct modes of myth-making helps bridge the space between the two accounts and reveals that seemingly divergent elements in fact bind the two poems together.

Among the first group of scholars writing on the inscription, Sourvinou-Inwood’s work on the myth and its distance from the Ovidian account is a useful point of departure.⁴ She shows convincingly that the situation in the inscription most likely involves a nymph, Salmacis, who nurtures the young Hermaphroditus (probably already a hermaphrodite) in her cave. In addition, the poem does not indicate any erotic relationship between our two protagonists. Sourvinou-Inwood goes on to suggest that the inscription’s version of the myth reflects concerns about ethnicity and the foundation of Halicarnassus through the mingling of colonizing Greeks and native Carians.⁵ In her analysis, the Halicarnassus inscription preserves a local variant of a myth whose international, and generally more negative, version we see reflected

³ Reference to the pestilential power of the spring is made in numerous sources. Ennius, *Scaen.* 36 = *Trag.* 338 = 347 Jocelyn, quoted at Cic. *Off.* 1.61: *Salmacida spolia sine sudore et sanguine* (for discussion of the form *Salmacida* in this passage see A.R. Dyck, *A Commentary on Cicero, De Officiis* [Ann Arbor, 1996], 186–8 and Lloyd-Jones *ZPE* 124 [n. 2], 6–7); Strabo 14.2.6: καὶ ἡ Σαλμακίς κρήνη, διαβεβλημένη οὐκ οἶδ’ ὁπόθεν ὡς μαλακίζουσα τοὺς πίνοντας ἀπ’ αὐτῆς; Ov. *Met.* 15.319: *cui non audita est obscenae Salmacis undae?* (this is likely to be an internal reference to the version of the story already told in Book 4. Cf. K.S. Myers, *Ovid’s Causes: Cosmogony and Aetiology in the Metamorphoses* [Ann Arbor, 1994], 147–53); Festus 329 L.: *Salmacis ... quam qui bibisset, vitio impudicitiae mollesceret*; Vibius Sequester, *Font.* 152 *qui bibiti mollescit, id est obscenus fit*; Stat. *Silv.* 1.5.19–22: *non vos quae culpa decus infamastis | aquarum sollicitare iuvat; procul hinc et fonte doloso | Salmacis et viduae Cebrenidos arida luctu | flumina et Herculei praedatrix cedat alumni*; Mart. 10.30.10: *nec in Lucrina lota Salmacis vena*; 10.4: *aut qui odit amatrices hermaphroditus aquas*; and 14.174: *Masculus intravit fontis: emersit utrumque: pars est una patris, cetera matris habet.* AP 9.38, an anonymous epigram, may dramatize a similar scene: *Εἰ μὲν ἀνὴρ ἦκεις, ἄρυσαι, ξένε, τῆσδ’ ἀπὸ πηγῆς: | εἰ δὲ φύσει μαλακός, μὴ με πῆς πρόφασιν. | ἄρρεν ἐγὼ ποτὶν εἰμι καὶ ἀνδράσι μόνον ἀρέσκω, | τοῖς δὲ φύσει μαλακοῖς ἡ φύσις ἐστὶν ὕδωρ.* Vitr. 2.8.12 (see below for full text) seems to depart from these wholly negative depictions of the spring’s power and describes how the spring softens barbarian minds by ‘the sweetness of civilization’ (*humanitatis dulcedine*). For all of these sources, see discussion in M. Robinson, ‘Salmacis and Hermaphroditus: when two become one: (Ovid, *Met.* 4.285–388)’, *CQ* 49/1 (1999), 212–23 and G. Ragone, ‘L’iscrizione di Kaplan Kalesi e la leggenda afrodisia di Salmacide’, *Studi ellenistici* 13 (2001), 75–119, especially 87–92.

⁴ C. Sourvinou-Inwood, ‘Hermaphroditos and Salmakis: the voice of Halikarnassos’, in Isager and Pedersen (n. 2), 59–84.

⁵ Sourvinou-Inwood (n. 4), 75: The myth ‘articulates (among other things) representations pertaining to the foundation of Halikarnassos, and to Greek–Karian interaction, in which the relationship between Greeks and Karians is represented as cooperative, the non-Greek element is represented positively, and the civilizing effect of the foundation of a Greek city is *partially* matched by the attribution of a civilizing facet to the local element in the figure of Salmakis.’

in Ovid.⁶ While this analysis exposes the important features of the mythic situation, it fails to account fully for the difference between the inscription and Ovid in two important ways. First, by working at the level of general schema rather than that of specific articulations of the myth, Sourvinou-Inwood constructs the difference as one of story rather than one of narration. That is, she does not acknowledge the effects of the quite different speakers in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and in the inscription, neither of which is straightforward in their enunciation. Consequently, she does not address the distinct ways in which the two poems explain both the nature of Hermaphroditus and the effects of the spring Salmacis. Second, the weight attached to the theme of ethnicity in the inscription is misplaced and occludes other more salient issues which condition and frame the telling of the Salmacis and Hermaphroditus myth in the inscription.⁷ While the mapping of foundational ethnic categories at Halicarnassus to ideas of civilization and barbarism may reflect, in part, the collective sense about the foundation of the city, there is nothing within the text of the poem which marks ethnicity as a primary concern to be elevated above all others.⁸

I aim to show how the difference – and ultimately the distinctiveness – of the Salmacis and Hermaphroditus myth preserved in the Halicarnassus inscription stems primarily from the way it enunciates and elaborates the theme of fertility and generation. First, by examining the cosmogonic frame for the myth and the centrality of Hermaphroditus in that frame, I contest the degree to which we should read the presentation of Hermaphroditus in the inscription as 'local' in relation to a more widespread, and more negative, 'global' depiction. Rather, I argue that the poem's cosmogonic frame and the related prominence of generation, not the theme of ethnicity, conditions the particular form of the myth of Hermaphroditus and Salmacis. I emphasize the centrality of the theme of productive union and fertility in the inscription, a theme whose crucial importance has been underestimated in initial appraisals of the poem.⁹ I then turn to the effects of the spring Salmacis and show

⁶ Ragone (n. 3) comes to a similar conclusion which opposes the apologetic insider version of the myth found in the poem and Vitruvius (n. 3) with the version of outsiders found in other sources.

⁷ The role of ethnicity in the inscription seems to be an overarching concern of many contributors to Isager and Pedersen (n. 2) including Isager herself, D'Alessio, Jameson and Sourvinou-Inwood. As she notes (12), the assumption of an important role for the theme of ethnicity is not shared by some contributors to the volume (including M.S. Jensen, Carstens and Flensted-Jensen). Lloyd-Jones *ZPE* 124 (n. 2), 13 also comments: 'The whole poem is an excellent example of the way in which the Greeks of the Hellenistic and Imperial periods used history and tradition to define and assert their Greek and civic identity.' R. Gagné, 'What is the Pride of Halicarnassus?', *CA* 25.1 (2006), 1–33 tackles similar territory. Gagné's useful review of the evidence and his nuanced argument presents the poem as 'a product of negotiated memory' which was 'able to simultaneously accommodate the different perspectives of different mnemonic communities' (22). Despite numerous advances, this interpretation still imagines a readership for this inscription which is primarily if not exclusively local. In fact, it pushes the notion of identity further than previous studies, arguing that 'the general narrative of civic foundation mirrors the personal narrative of the reader's ritual life' (19).

⁸ As scholars studying ethnicity and identity have shown, self-awareness about ethnic identity comes to the fore at certain moments of migration, change and conflict. See especially J.M. Hall, *Hellenicity: Between Ethnicity and Culture* (Chicago, 2002).

⁹ Isager, in her introduction to Isager and Pedersen (n. 2) remarks that none of the contributors to the volume have questioned her contention that the stress in the poem is on civilizing forces (12). My argument here is not a direct questioning of that contention. I hope to show not that civilizing is without importance in the poem, but rather that the metaphor of civilizing is subordinated in the poem to the larger theme of fertility and productive union. Gagné (n. 7), 6–8 highlights some ways in which the theme of marriage resonates in the inscription, but pursues a line of argument very different from the approach taken here.

how differing ancient accounts for its powers do not describe two incompatible effects of the spring, one positive and one negative, so much as two related perspectives on a single phenomenon associated with the spring's power as an aphrodisiac. The effects of the spring appear maximally divergent in our sources because of the complexities and differences conditioning each enunciation. The Halicarnassus inscription and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* do not record two wholly distinct effects of the spring Salmacis, but instead, I will argue, provide two closely connected elaborations of a single power.

THE COSMOGONIC FRAME

The Halicarnassus inscription supplies an instructive example of how the demarcation of certain myths as 'local' versions often troubles interpretation. The poem elaborates a version of a myth which, on first inspection, appears conspicuously marked because, apart from a similarity to the positive themes of the spring's civilizing effects preserved in Vitruvius, it differs from other previously known versions.¹⁰ The poem praises a particular locale, its style has been called provincial by, among others, Lloyd-Jones and, most damning of all, it was found in a decidedly 'local' context, at the very site of the subject it mythologizes, the spring Salmacis in Halicarnassus.¹¹ While it may be accurate then to describe the poem as local, the more important question is what significance this localness had for readers of the inscription or visitors to the site. Does it demarcate a specific group as its audience or speak primarily to a local audience with a voice intended to be decoded only by those in the immediate vicinity? The answer to both of these questions is very likely no. That its style may be imitative but not the true rival of the high literature of Alexandria tells us nothing about the circulation of its version of the myth. Further, its placement at the site of the spring is just as likely to indicate that the inscription would be on display for visitors to see and, consequently, promulgate abroad. More importantly, the rhetoric of the poem speaks to the importance of Halicarnassus in the widest possible frame – that of the creation of the universe and the races of gods. Such stories may have been a source of pride for the local Halicarnassians, but telling them is a gesture much more suited to consumption by an audience of outsiders, a rhetorical stance which asserts by its form the significance of its subject.

¹⁰ See ancient sources cited above, n. 3.

¹¹ Lloyd-Jones *ZPE* 124 (n. 2). For the site of the inscription see Isager *ZPE* 123 (n. 2), 1–2 as well as P. Pedersen, 'The building remains at the Salmakis fountain I', in Isager and Pedersen (n. 2), 15–30 and B. Poulsen, 'The building remains at the Salmakis fountain II', in Isager and Pedersen (n. 2), 31–42. According to Vitruvius, there was a temple of Aphrodite and Hermes near Salmacis (2.8.11). Lloyd-Jones points to marks of the 'provincial poet' in repetitions or apparently clumsy poetic imitations. For example, a phrase like γαῦρα φηνασσομένη, a borrowing from Meleager, is a substandard way of saying 'proudly boasts' (Lloyd-Jones's translation). This may well be true, but we must still ask what significance these poetic imitations held for the viewers of the inscription. What may seem provincial or inelegant from a later perspective may have had a very different resonance at the time. Similarly, G.B. D'Alessio, 'Some notes on the Salmakis inscription', in Isager and Pedersen (n. 2), 43–7, at 47: 'Verses 15–17 offer a clumsy, and partly ambiguous, accumulation of ornamental adjectives'. In this case, it is equally likely that the massed descriptions were seen to be an important part of hymning the goddess properly. On the other hand, D'Alessio rightly sounds a note of caution in suggesting that the poet was not necessarily 'local' (50): 'Most of the authors of praise ἐπιδείξις did not belong to the praised community.'

We can begin by focussing on the question of form. The form of the poem is an intriguing hybrid, integrating elements of epigram, epic, hymn and, as I will discuss in detail, cosmogony. After posing the overarching question, ‘what is so *τίμιον* about Halicarnassus?’, the poem recounts a story of how the young Zeus was raised by the earthborn men of Halicarnassus. The story of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus leads into a now largely obliterated section on legendary colonizers and the last portion of the poem is a catalogue of Halicarnassus’ literary luminaries. The contents can be divided as follows:

1–2	Invocation of Aphrodite	proem
3–4	Question: ‘What is so esteemed about Halicarnassus’	
5–10	Native, earthborn Halicarnassians hide the baby Zeus from his father Kronus	Zeus’s birth
11–15	Zeus rewards the first generation of Halicarnassians	
15–17	Halicarnassus settled the hill (or expanded) and includes the home of the nymph Salmacis	Salmacis and Hermaphroditus
17–20	Salmacis raised ‘our boy’ Hermaphroditus, who founded marriage	
21–22	Salmacis’ spring ‘tames the savage mind of men’	
23–26	Athena brings colonizer	colonizers
27–28	Cecropidae as colonizers	
29–30	Endymion as colonizer	
31–42	[only ends of lines survive] possible reference to Anthes, founder of Halicarnassus from Troezen by the Antheadae; also, a ‘son of Phoebus’; Ariadne	
43–54	Catalogue of literary figures: Herodotus, Andron, Panyassis, Cyprias, Menestheus, Theaetetus, Dionysius, Zenodotus, Phanostratus, Nossus, Timocrates	literary figures
55–60	There is no end to Halicarnassus’ fame; she received <i>πάντιμον ... γέρας</i> .	conclusion

The metre (elegiac couplets) presents the poem, on its face, as epigram.¹² By the fourth century elegiac couplets overtook hexameters and iambics as the metre of choice for inscribed verse; an inscribed elegiac poem, then, was first and foremost a species of *ἐπίγραμμα*. Although many other Hellenistic poetic genres likewise employed elegiac couplets, the initial orientation of the poem stems from its manipulation of epigrammatic conventions. For example, like many Hellenistic epigrams, the poem draws attention to two relationships: first, that of text and its inscribed location and, second, that of text and reader.¹³

¹² For Hellenistic epigram, see most recently the essays in P. Bing and J. Steffen Bruss (edd.), *Brill’s Companion to Hellenistic Epigram* (Leiden, 2007), especially the contributions on inscribed epigram (J. Day, ‘Poems on stone: the inscribed antecedents of Hellenistic epigram’, 29–47 and A. Bettenworth, ‘The mutual influence of inscribed and literary epigram’, 69–93). For the development of the genre, see especially M. Puelma, ‘*Ἐπίγραμμα*-epigramma: Aspekte einer Wortgeschichte’, *MH* 53 (1996), 123–39 and K. Gutzwiller, *Poetic Garlands: Hellenistic Epigrams in Context* (Berkeley, 1998). See also M.B. Wallace, ‘The metres of early Greek epigrams’, in D. Gerber (ed.), *Greek Poetry and Philosophy: Studies in Honour of Leonard Woodbury* (Chico, 1984), 303–17.

¹³ A.E. Raubitschek, ‘Das Denkmal-Epigramm’, in A. Dihle (ed.), *L’Epigramme grecque* (Vandoeuvres–Geneva, 1968), 3 highlights the importance of an inscription’s relationship to its location. For the manipulation of voice in Hellenistic epigram, P. Bing, ‘The un-read Muse? Inscribed epigram and its readers in antiquity in Hellenistic epigram’, in A. Harder, R.F. Regtuit

Ἐννεπέ μοι, Σχουνίτι, φίλον τιθάσε[υμα μεριμνών]¹⁴
 Κύπρι, μυροπνεύστων ἐμπελάτειρα πό[θων]
 τῆς Ἀλικαρνασσού τί τὸ τίμιον; οὐ γὰρ ἔγωγε
 ἔκλυον ἢ τί θροεῖ γαῦρα φρυασσομένη;

Tell me, Schoinitis, dear tamer¹⁵ of cares, Kypris, bringer of myrrh-scented longings, what about Halicarnassus is so esteemed? I have not heard it; what is she proclaiming with her haughty snorts? (1–4)

The reader of the poem asks Aphrodite ‘what about Halicarnassus is so esteemed?’ It then immediately anticipates the reader’s reaction: ignorance and possibly even disbelief. ‘I never heard of it, what is she proclaiming with her haughty snorts?’ (3–4). The last phrase, γαῦρα φρυασσομένη, evokes the whinny or snorting of horses, capturing the potential contempt of the reader and moreover, capturing the reader’s voice.¹⁶ By framing the contents with this manipulation of voice, the opening allows the rest of the poem to speak both as Aphrodite answering the question, but also as the reader who then participates in enunciating Halicarnassus’ many benefits. The

and G.C. Wakker (edd.), *Hellenistica Groningana* 6 (Leuven, 2002), 39–66 and for talking statues, R. Kassel, ‘Dialogue mit Statuen’, *ZPE* 51 (1983), 1–12. Manipulation of the relationship between text and reader is a common feature of Hellenistic poetry, most notably perhaps in the mimetic hymns of Callimachus. See, for example, A.W. Bulloch, *Callimachus: The Fifth Hymn* (Cambridge, 1985), 6–13 and, more generally, M. Fantuzzi and R. Hunter, *Tradition and Innovation in Hellenistic Poetry* (Cambridge, 2004), 23 and 30–1.

¹⁴ Proposed emendations: τιθάσε[υμα φέρουσα Isager; τιθάσε[υμα μεριμνών Lloyd-Jones; τιθασε[ύτρι Ἑρώτων Merkelbach; τιθασο[ν Austin, τιθάσε[υμα βροτοῖσι D’Alessio. Among alternative readings, Austin (n. 3) suggests some form of τιθασός (‘tame’) instead of τιθάσευμα, reporting that the final letter of the photograph printed in the *editio princeps* (Isager, n. 2) looks more like a rounded *O* than an angular *E*. He rightly avoids speculating further and his reading of a form of τιθασός is attractive. However, after looking at the photo in the original publication and enlarging the image supplied in the electronic version, I am unable to see the roundedness which Austin suggests. In fact, the image shows a light horizontal line (with the characteristic serif) which would indicate the bottom stroke of an epsilon and hence τιθάσευμα.

¹⁵ The translation of τιθάσευμα, if indeed that is the correct reading, is problematic. One expects -μα nouns to refer to objects of the verbal cognate rather than agents (thus ‘thing tamed’ rather than ‘means of taming’); however, the neuter φίλον, unproblematically preserved on the stone, makes it difficult to emend differently (n. 14). Of the two occurrences of the word elsewhere, τιθάσευμα seems in Porphyry barely distinguishable from τιθασειά (‘act of taming, domestication’): προσμηχανωμένων ἐπὶ τῆς ἀλόγου φορᾶς ἐπιθυμίας τιθασεύματα τῶν ἐξ ἀρχῆς τὰ πλήθη διοικησάντων. (Planudes later seems to follow this usage as well.) Lloyd-Jones (n. 2), 3 supports taking τιθάσευμα with a sense of agency on the basis of E. Fraenkel, *Griechische Denominativa in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung und Verbreitung* (Göttingen, 1906). Fraenkel’s list of examples is limited (see 225–30), but a TLG search of nouns in -ευμα and -μα suggests a similar conclusion. Though the usage here would be unusual, it is not without parallels. For example, following LSJ: ἄγρευμα can be both ‘thing caught’ (e.g. Eur. *Bacch.* 1241, Agave referring to Pentheus) and ‘means of catching’ (Aesch. *Cho.* 998, of the net); παίδευμα ‘person taught’, ‘thing taught’, and ‘means of teaching’ (Eur. fr. 54 Kannicht); μνημόνευμα ‘object of remembering’ and ‘means of remembering’. Even if we translate τιθάσευμα as ‘means of taming’, there remains the problem of applying a neuter noun of this type to the goddess. Soph. *OT* 85 may supply a partial parallel to the form in the inscription: ἀναξ, ἐμὸν κήδευμα, παῖ Μενουκίως. Here κήδευμα, typically ‘connection through marriage’ (cognate to κηδεύω ‘contract a marriage’), must be taken as ‘person connected in marriage’. In Euripides’ *Ion*, in a passage that may parody proper forms of address, Ion directly addresses his broom as προπόλευμα, ‘instrument of service’ (113).

¹⁶ The snort of horses is particularly appropriate to Halicarnassus. Gagné (n. 7), 17 interestingly connects this phrase to the appearance of Bellerophon later in the poem (described as ‘tamer of Pegasus’) and to coins of Pegasus at Halicarnassus.

inscription, discovered in its original location, may have stood across from a statue of Aphrodite and thus reading the inscription invites the visitor to enter into dialogue with the goddess.¹⁷ Further, if *γαῦρα* here connotes a coyness or skittishness, as it seems to in the description of Galatea as *μόσχω γαυροπέρα* at Theocritus, *Idyll* 11.22, then the image of Halicarnassus as a coyly whinnying horse evokes perhaps the more specific scenario of erotic poetry or even erotic epigram specifically.¹⁸ The reader is cast as a potential lover in pursuit of a reluctant Halicarnassus, a situation particularly suited to a poem invoking Aphrodite.

Over this epigrammatic base, the opening of the poem recalls as well the structure of a hymn. It begins with an invocation of the goddess Aphrodite and like a hymn, includes a birth story, praise of the hymned figure, and a central sequence of myths; however, our initial expectation is quickly upset, as this turns out to be hymnic praise not for Aphrodite but rather for Halicarnassus.¹⁹ As in Hesiod, hymnic elements support a larger frame of theogony and cosmogony. The most important literary model for the poem is cosmogonic poetry, signalled by the story of Zeus's birth as the first episode in the poem. While the invocation of Zeus at the beginning of a Hellenistic poem or in claims for a city's importance should elicit little surprise,²⁰ the concealment of Zeus at Halicarnassus is a decidedly uncanonical account. Many cities claimed to have been Zeus's birthplace but canonical narratives, well entrenched by the later Hellenistic period, placed his birth on the island of Crete (as was the case in Hesiod's *Theogony*).²¹ Zeus's birth and rearing at Halicarnassus are wholly unknown outside the inscription.

The uniqueness of this Halicarnassian claim to Zeus among the constellation of locales which claimed Zeus's birth should not distract from the importance of the gesture in the immediate context of the poem. First, it establishes the cosmic frame for the ensuing narrative. The birth of Zeus is a central event in the origin and order of the world. Second, in raising Zeus's role in the ordering of the universe, this story recasts the question posed at the beginning of the poem: what is so esteemed (*τίμιον*) about Halicarnassus? The word *τίμιον*, though it has a broad meaning, is connected to the ordering of the universe through Zeus where, in the Hesiodic *Theogony* for

¹⁷ Pedersen (n. 11).

¹⁸ See R. Hunter, *Theocritus: A Selection* (Cambridge, 1999), 230–1.

¹⁹ For hymns to cities see A. Chaniotis, *Historie und Historiker in den griechischen Inschriften* (Stuttgart, 1988), 14–86 and W.D. Furley and J.M. Bremer, *Greek Hymns: Selected Cult Songs from the Archaic to the Hellenistic Period* (Tübingen, 2001). Epic too is signalled in the very first phrase: *Ἐννεπέ μοι*, a familiar way of opening an epic. Thus, M.S. Jensen, 'The *Pride of Halikarnassos* and archaic epic', in Isager and Pedersen (n.2), 85–8 suggests the poem is a mix of epic and elegy.

²⁰ e.g. a century before, Theocritus invoked Zeus at the beginning of his poem in praise of his patron, Ptolemy. Theoc. *Id.* 17.1–3: *ἐκ Διὸς ἀρχώμεσθα καὶ ἐς Δία λήγετε Μοῖσαι ... ἀνδρῶν δ' αὖ Πτολεμαῖος ἐνὶ πρώτοισι λεγέσθω*. For recent discussion of this poem, see R. Hunter, *Encomium of Ptolemy Philadelphus* (Berkeley, 2003). Throughout the poem Theocritus draws out connections between Zeus and Ptolemy, one the king of the gods and the other a king of men, ending with the image of the divine marriage of Zeus and Hera as a model for the similarly incestuous marriage of Ptolemy and his queen.

²¹ Hes. *Theog.* 477–84. Cf. Corinna 654 *PMG*, Eur. *Cretans* fr. 472 N, Callim. *Hymn* 1.51–3. H. Lloyd-Jones *ZPE* 124 (n. 2), 4 cites Paus. 4.33.1. For Zeus's birth, see T. Gantz, *Early Greek Myth: A Guide to Literary and Artistic Sources* (Baltimore, 1993), 41–3. M. Alonge, 'The Palaikastro hymn and the modern myth of the Cretan Zeus', in A.P. Matthaiou and I. Polinskaya (edd.), *Μικρὸς Ἱερομνήμων. Μελέτες εἰς μνήμην Michael H. Jameson* (Athens, 2008), 229–49 discusses and dismantles an important piece of the Cretan evidence for Zeus, the so-called 'hymn of the Kouretes'.

example, Zeus presides over the allotment of honours (τιμαί).²² As Zeus in the *Theogony* distributed honours to the other inhabitants of the early universe, so in the inscription, Halicarnassus also has its honours which, implicitly at least, are similar to the τιμαί distributed as part of the creation of the universe. Halicarnassus, as a place that has received τιμαί, is written into the cosmogonic narrative.

In addition, by relocating the story to Halicarnassus, the poem both claims prestige for the city and radically re-centres the universe at Halicarnassus. This is cosmogony, but cosmogony firmly localized and rooted to the land. The connection to the land is made more explicit with the mention of the earthborn men who take care of the infant Zeus (lines 5–10). This story introduces an important theme in the rest of the poem – nurturing – but also makes a crucial point about Halicarnassus: these earth-born men (ἀνδρ[ῶν] emerge even before Zeus. Halicarnassians are not only born directly from the earth, but have a privileged place among the very first generation.

In the larger context of our inscription, where the central story will involve Hermaphroditus, the inventor of marriage, the story of Zeus's birth is also an important story about marriage. It gives us a glimpse of the failed order of the universe – a time before marriage where the peaceful succession and legitimacy of heirs was not assured. This lack of familial order is highlighted by the implicit construction of family at the end of Zeus's birth story where, in line 11, Zeus receives his proper label as the 'father' whom the 'sons' of earth attend at the place where he was hidden.

The story of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus, immediately following the account of Zeus's concealment, must be viewed with this cosmogonic framing. In such a frame, the invention of marriage and taming the savage mind of men are not incidental. In cosmogonic myth, marriage is often a crucial pivot for the mythic progression from chaos to order and from the divine sphere to the human sphere. To return to the Hesiodic *Theogony*, at a feast of the gods the Titan Prometheus tries to trick Zeus by giving him an unequal portion of the meat. Zeus sees through the trick, punishes Prometheus, and withholds fire from men, setting in motion the sequence of events whereby Prometheus steals fire and finally, as retribution, the gods create women.²³ In the *Theogony*, this story for the origin of human marriage is balanced by the account of Hecate, a goddess from the old order, the generation before Zeus.

γείνατο δ' Ἀστερίην εὐώνυμον, ἣν ποτε Πέρσης
ἡγάγετ' ἐς μέγα δῶμα φίλην κεκληῖσθαι ἄκοιτιν.
ἣ δ' ὑποκυσαμένη Ἑκάτην τέκε, τὴν περὶ πάντων
Ζεὺς Κρονίδης τίμησε·

She [Phoebe] bore famed Asterie, whom Perses led into his great home to be called his dear wedded wife. She conceived and bore Hecate, whom above all others Zeus son of Cronus honoured.
(*Theogony* 409–12)

While human marriage is an affliction and an evil, Hecate's birth is the result of a lawful union among the gods.²⁴ Further, where Prometheus steals his portion, Hecate is granted honours by Zeus. In addition, the *Theogony* mentions the model and

²² Hes. *Theog.* 112, 885; cf. Hom. *Il.* 15.187–93.

²³ Hes. *Theog.* 507–616

²⁴ See J.S. Clay, *Hesiod's Cosmos* (Cambridge, 2003) and M.L. West, *Hesiod Theogony* (Oxford, 1966) on 404–52.

almost idealized sacrifices to Hecate. These contrasting views of sacrifice, marriage and even the feminine itself bookend the story of Zeus's birth. Scholars, including most recently Jenny Strauss Clay, have seen in this narrative arrangement complementary examples of Zeus's mastery of the world, over the old order in the form of Hecate and over the new order (including mortals) in the form of Prometheus.²⁵ Marriage, significantly, signals the transition from the divine sphere to the mortal sphere.

Hermaphroditus' invention of marriage works analogously and perhaps even more transparently as a pivot between the divine and human. The divine world of Zeus which preceded the mention of Hermaphroditus contrasts with the human world of colonizers which immediately follows. However, where in the *Theogony* Zeus is central to the story, in the inscription, as I already suggested, Zeus serves a different purpose by setting up the cosmogonic framework itself.

The importance of the cosmogonic frame extends to other details of the poem as well. Most prominently, the sexual hybridity of Hermaphroditus, itself an ideal but unproductive version of marital union, has an important cosmogonic resonance. In ancient Greek cosmogony, bisexed creatures often stand at the beginning of the universe, creating the first set of gods through self-generation. In Orphic cosmogonies, for example, this first figure is called Protogonos ('firstborn'), Phanes or, in some versions, Eros itself.²⁶ Such self-generation is exactly what Plato parodies through the character of Aristophanes in the *Symposium*.²⁷ There Plato paints a picture of primeval creatures who are twofold, with four hands and four feet, though not just male and female. They are unhappily sundered by Zeus in punishment for their attempt to rival the gods and thus the attractive powers of love are explained as the need to return to one's other half.

One last aspect of the cosmogonic framing is the inscription's use of catalogue, in listing both colonizers and literary figures.²⁸ The catalogue form was well established by the time of the inscription, and the cross-germination with elegy is also familiar from both partly extant (for example, Callimachus' *Aitia* and Hermesianax) and lost or fragmentary catalogue elegies.²⁹ The catalogue in the last section of the inscription

²⁵ Clay (n. 24).

²⁶ T. Kouremenos, G. Parassoglou, K. Tsantsanoglou, *The Derveni Papyrus* (Florence, 2006), especially 23–4. For Protogonos, see text at XVI.3 and commentary 215–17. In general, see M.L. West, *The Orphic Poems* (Oxford, 1983) and G. Betegh, *The Derveni Papyrus: Cosmology, Theology and Interpretation* (Cambridge, 2004), ch. 5. For Orphic texts, see A. Bernabé Pajares and R. Olmos Romera, *Poetarum epicorum Graecorum: testimonia et fragmenta* (Leipzig, 1987), Part II. Also relevant is C. Calame, 'Figures of sexuality and initiatory transition in the Derveni theogony and its commentary', in A. Laks and G. Most (edd.), *Studies on the Derveni Papyrus* (Oxford, 1997), 65–80.

²⁷ Pl. *Symp.* 189C2–D6.

²⁸ It is possible that Ovid's source for the Salmacis and Hermaphroditus myth was in fact one of the Hellenistic catalogue poems no longer extant. In addition to the obvious possibility that a catalogue of metamorphoses would have been the source, it is also possible that catalogues of beautiful boys (e.g. Phanocles) or of local sites would have told the story in some form. Myers (n. 3), 147–53 makes an excellent case that Ovid's source for the Salmacis story may be paradoxographical works on springs and fountains.

²⁹ In addition to Callimachus and Hermesianax, a minimal list of other Hellenistic catalogue poems includes Phanocles' *Erotes*, Nicander's *Heteroionumena*, Boeus' *Ornithogonia*, Nicaenatus' *Catalogue of Women* and Sostratus. Antimachus' *Lyde* is an important forerunner. For a good recent discussion see H. Asquith, 'From genealogy to *Catalogue*: the Hellenistic adaptation of the Hesiodic catalogue form', in R.L. Hunter (ed.), *The Hesiodic Catalogue of Women: Constructions and Reconstructions* (Cambridge, 2005), 266–86.

seems a particularly clear variation on the idea of genealogical catalogue poetry. Instead of a series of couplings, as in the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women*, we have instead the list of offspring of Halicarnassus. The Hellenistic trope of the catalogue of authors has been folded into the productive metaphor. Indeed this section of the poem is an exercise in *variation*, with words of producing and birthing.³⁰

To summarize the argument up to this point, the cosmogonic frame is significant for two reasons. First, it gives credence and weight to the account: Halicarnassus is a city with importance on a truly cosmic scale. Second, it gives Hermaphroditus' invention of marriage prominence as the turning point in the cosmogonic myth.

HERMAPHRODITUS

Colonization has been a major concern in studying the inscription. Scholars have been eager to see Hermaphroditus as the symbol of the union between Greeks and native, notionally barbarian Carians.³¹ However, this reading of Hermaphroditus fails on a number of levels. First, this is to read, in effect, backwards from a missing section of text and to situate the missing section on colonizers as the centrepiece of interpretation. However, there is nothing which marks colonization or the contrast of Greekness and barbarian-ness as particularly salient. More importantly, there is no reason to believe that the inhabitants at this time would have any reason to suspect their own Greekness. As we will see, colonization is not the master narrative but rather a subclass of the overarching narrative about fertility.

This inscription is now the earliest narrative about Hermaphroditus.³² Hence part of the problem in gaining perspective on the character: the only extensive accounts about both Hermaphroditus (as well as Salmacis) are from Ovid's time or later.³³ The

³⁰ *IG* XII 1.145, with which the Salmacis inscription is often connected, is instructive for its deviation from the Salmacis inscription in this regard. Merkelbach and Stauber (n. 2), 38 lines 3–6:

ἀλλ' Ἀνδρωνα οὐκ ἔσχε Νίνου πόλις, οὐδὲ παρ' Ἰνδοῖς
 ῥιζοφυῆς Μουσέων πτόρθος ἐνετρήφετο·
 [κοῦ] μὴν Ἡροδότου γλῦκιον στόμα καὶ Πανύασσιν
 ἡ[δ]υεπὴ Βαβυλῶν ἔτρεφεν ὠγυγίη,

Though there is certainly something striking about the shared constellation of poets mentioned in both epigrams, the presentation of the poets in our poem's catalogue puts emphasis on a theme of generation which is absent in this inscription.

³¹ e.g. Sourvinou-Inwood (n. 4). Also M.H. Jameson, 'Troizen and Halikarnassos in the Hellenistic era', in Isager and Pedersen (n. 2), 93–107. Most recent is Gagné (n. 7), 19–24.

³² See especially A. Ajootian, 'Hermaphroditos', *LIMC* 5 (1990), 268–85, also O. Jessen, 'Hermaphroditos', *RE* (8, 1912), 714–21; M. Delcourt, *Hermaphrodite. Mythes et rites de la bisexualité dans l'Antiquité classique*, tr. J. Nicholson (London, 1961); A. Ajootian, 'Monstrum or daimon: hermaphrodites in ancient art and culture', in B. Berggreen and N. Marinatos (edd.), *Greece and Gender* (Athens, 1995), 93–108; and A. Ajootian, 'The only happy couple: hermaphrodites and gender', in A.O. Koloski-Ostrow and C.L. Lyons (edd.), *Naked Truths: Women, Sexuality and Gender in Classical Art and Archaeology* (London, 1997), 220–42.

³³ Hermaphroditus is mentioned at Hyg. *Fab.* 271, Mart. 14.174, 6.68, 10.4, Lucian 17.2, Alciphron, *Epistulae rusticae* 2.35, Auson. *Epigr.* 102, *Anth. Pal.* 9.783, 9.317, Ps-Lucian, *Philopatr.* 24 (tenth century C.E.). Diodorus 4.6.5, though predating Ovid, is more concerned with describing the form and godhead of Hermaphroditus than with narrating his story. If the author of the *Fabulae* is identified with C. Iulius Hyginus, then this source is contemporaneous with Ovid (addressed in *Tr.* 3.14). On the problems of dating Hyginus, see most recently A. Breen, 'The "Fabulae Hygini" reappraised: a reconsideration of the content and compilation of the work' (Diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1991), 1–19 and C. Desmedt, 'Fabulae Hygini', *RBPh* 48 (1970), 26–35 and 'Fabulae Hygini' *BStudLat* 3 (1973), 26–34. See also

earliest possible reference is from the late fourth century B.C.E. where a character in Theophrastus hangs garlands on Hermaphroditus.³⁴ This particular Hermaphroditus is likely to be a herm and an inscription from the fourth century points to dedications to a Hermaphroditus also likely to be a herm.³⁵ It may even be that it is in herms that we have the origin of Hermaphroditus himself since there are a number of examples of herms with the head of Aphrodite rather than that of Hermes. It is possible as well that such dedications were related to marriage or fertility, but the evidence is too slim to say conclusively. Beyond this, there are two unilluminating lines preserved from a third-century comedy called *Hermaphroditus*.³⁶ As for Hermaphroditus' gender and gender-blending, most sources make no reference to a transformation in the manner of Ovid and we are left with the impression that Hermaphroditus is a god who is a union of male and female from birth. Indeed, Diodorus, writing not long before Ovid, reports an ancient opinion that Hermaphroditus was 'born with a bodily form mixed from male and female' (4.6.5). The process of melding as described by Ovid may be a later addition to the story and Hermaphroditus may always have been a hermaphrodite.

More importantly for understanding the inscription, Hermaphroditus, as the son of Aphrodite and Hermes, is, however he came to be this way, an idealized union of male and female. Aphrodite is of course connected in cult and literature to female reproduction. Hermes' masculinity can be seen both in the phallic herms and even in the literary sources like the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*.³⁷ Nymphs on the other hand are typically connected to bodies of water, usually conferring either prophetic or healing power.³⁸ This is what Roman sources find so abnormal about Salmacis' effect: it is not the healing effect of a clear spring of a nymph that would be expected. More importantly, nymphs are also typical nursemaids and attendants of the gods. In the inscription, the relationship between Salmacis and Hermaphroditus is explicitly marked in terms of nymph as nurse taking care of a young god. She raises him (*θρέψε* in line 19) to become outstanding (*παρέξοχον*).³⁹ The normality of the schema of a nymph raising a young hero or god should not overshadow the abnormality of this particular situation.

We must step back and consider what events might have given rise to this situation. The inscription addresses Aphrodite, presumably Hermaphroditus' mother, marked by her calling him 'our boy' in line 17–18.⁴⁰ But she hasn't raised him; the nymph Salmacis has, begging us to ask why she may have abandoned her son. Thus we may

A. Henrichs, 'Three approaches to Greek mythography' in J. Bremmer (ed.), *Interpretations of Greek Mythology* (London, 1987), 272 n. 47. *Fab.* 271 includes Hermaphroditus in a list of the most beautiful young men but does not narrate his encounter with Salmacis.

³⁴ Theophr. *Char.* 16.11, dated to after 319 B.C.E. See A. Ajootian, 'Hermaphroditos', *LIMC* 5 (1990), 268–85, at 269 for difficulties with this passage as evidence for Hermaphroditus.

³⁵ *MDAI(A)* 62 (1937), 7, no. 5: [Φ]ανὼ 'Ερμαφρω[δ]ίτῳι εὐξαμένη.

³⁶ Poseidippus (3rd cent. B.C.E.), *PCG* VII fr. 12: *υἱὸν τρέφει πᾶς κἂν πένης τις ὦν τύχη, | θυγατέρα δ' ἐκτίθησι κἂν ἥ πλούσιος.*

³⁷ This hymn has recently been read by Sarah Iles-Johnston in terms of rituals associated closely with the activities of young men at the Hermaia festivals. See S.I. Johnston, 'Myth, festival, and poet: the "Homeric Hymn to Hermes" and its performative context', *CPh* 97/2 (2002), 109–32.

³⁸ J. Larson, *Greek Nymphs: Myth, Cult, Lore* (Oxford, 2001).

³⁹ See the excellent discussion of this in Sourvinou-Inwood (n. 4).

⁴⁰ It is interesting to note that the opening invocation of Aphrodite as 'dear' (*φίλον*) is consistent with invocations of nymphs, perhaps highlighting the parity between Aphrodite as mother and Salmacis as nurse.

be able to see another schema at work through a parallel to another nymph-nurturing story. The lame god Hephaestus was kicked out of Olympus, in one account, rejected by his own mother Hera because of his defects.⁴¹ After falling from the heavens into the sea he is raised by the nymphs Eurynome and Thetis. Only when Hephaestus has grown up and there is need of his skill with crafts and, notably, with invention, is he readmitted to the company of gods. Returning to our inscription, it may be that lurking in the background is a similar pattern of a mother, in this case Aphrodite, rejecting her defective son, the male-female hybrid Hermaphroditus. The poem, leaving this unstated, shows us Aphrodite reclaiming her son and his useful invention, marriage.

The central relationship in the poem is not that between Hermaphroditus and his mother, but rather between Hermaphroditus and his nurse, Salmacis. Her actions towards Hermaphroditus are metonymic for the nurturing function of Halicarnassus. Salmacis, the spring at the limits of the city, is the marker for the whole city itself and Salmacis herself nurtures Hermaphroditus as the earthborn Halicarnassians nurtured Zeus. The catalogue of literary figures (lines 43–54) further manipulates the theme of nurturing, with a new word for raising, birthing, rearing and caring for in every line. Halicarnassus produces earthborn men, a situation which adds to the later literary catalogue the sense that these figures too are, in some sense, earthborn. Halicarnassus, through these earthborn men, nurtures first Zeus, and later the generations of colonizers. The poem is consistently gendered in terms of, on the one hand, female production of males and, on the other, female nurturing and embrace of male figures.

Salmacis' actions in relation to mortals in general are similarly metonymic in the poem. Line 23 says that Salmacis tames the savage mind of men. Where nurturing is a quality common to Salmacis and Halicarnassus, taming is more widely distributed in the poem. In the very first line, Aphrodite may be described as a tamer (τιθάσ[ε]ν[μα]). On the other side of the Salmacis/Hermaphroditus episode, the first colonizer is a tamer (δαματῆρα) of Pegasus. These characteristics of Salmacis, nurturing and taming, tie the poem together. Further, her role in the poem as nurturer and tamer is closely tied to the action of Hermaphroditus, inventing marriage and binding the marriage bed with law. They together provide the crucial step in civilization, where Salmacis starts the process, by bridling the men, and Hermaphroditus finishes it, by yoking them together.⁴²

THE POWER OF SALMACIS

We can return to the question of the difference between the frequently negative depiction of Salmacis' power in ancient sources and the seemingly positive depiction in the inscription. Difficulty with all our sources for the spring's power arises once we try to assess the specific effect, described in different cases as 'making those who drink it μαλακός, *mollis*, *impudicus* and *obsceus*.'⁴³ As was the case for Hermaphroditus, Salmacis is elusive in sources predating the inscription.⁴⁴ In Roman sources, the story

⁴¹ Hom. *Il.* 18.395–405, cf. *Hom. Hymn Ap.* 316–20.

⁴² A number of epigrams attest to the placement of Hermaphroditus statues in gymnasia and baths: *AP* 2.1.102–7 and 9.783, Martial 14.174. Given the role of gymnasia and baths as key kouroutrophic sites in the Greco-Roman world, such placement could be taken as further evidence for the appropriateness of a civilizing role carved out for the figure of Hermaphroditus.

⁴³ Robinson (n. 3), 213.

⁴⁴ See above, n. 3.

is usually much like that in Ovid: Salmacis is a pestilential spring which enfeebles men. There is one important exception to this, an account in Vitruvius which, in terms similar to the Halicarnassus inscription, links the spring's powers to the taming of savage men (2.8.12).

is autem falsa opinione putatur venerio morbo implicare eos qui ex eo biberint. sed haec opinio quare per orbem terrae falso rumore sit pervagata non pigebit exponere. non enim quod dicitur molles et in pudicos ex ea aqua fieri, id potest esse, sed est eius fontis potestas perlucida saporque egregious ... ita singillatim decurrentes et ad coetus convenientes e duro feroque more commutati in Graecorum consuetudinem et suavitatem sua voluntate reducebantur. ergo ea aqua non in pudici morbi vitio sed humanitatis dulcedine mollitis animis barbarorum eam famam est adepta.

It is wrongly thought that this spring infects those who drink from it with an amorous affliction. It would be well to explain how by mistaken report this notion spread through the world. It cannot be the case that men become soft and shameless from the water, as it is said; for this spring is outstandingly clear and tasty ... [The native Carians and Lelegans are driven into the hills at the arrival of Greek colonizers. But they come back to enjoy the local tavern near the spring.] ... So they began to come down, one at a time, joining the community, and they were brought back of their own volition, exchanging their harsh and savage customs for the allure of Greek ones. Thus this water acquired its reputation, not through the damage of the shameless affliction, but because the barbarians' minds were softened by the sweetness of civilization.

Scholars have seen in Vitruvius' version the marks of a rationalizing filter countering the negative stories told about the spring. Likewise, initial appraisals of the Halicarnassus inscription have interpreted its positive notion of Salmacis' powers as rationalization. Ragone, for example, argues that both the poem and Vitruvius provide apologetic versions of the story.⁴⁵ The Halicarnassian locals want only to ward off the negative report of most outsiders.

There is an alternative if we look more closely at the metaphor of civilization and the idea of 'taming the savage mind'. To put it simply, being 'savage' is not always a bad thing, particularly in the ancient construction of gender roles. An example from the world of Greek love magic and love potions captures this nuance. Numerous sources point to the everyday reality of Greek women of all periods using love potions to try to get their husbands to love them more.⁴⁶ As Chris Faraone suggests, the goal of this *philia* magic is more often 'docility and amiability' than 'mad, burning passion and torture'.⁴⁷ These potions however have a potential downside: too much love potion and men are so mollified that they cease being real men. Consider the following passage from Plutarch's treatise on marriage (*Coniugalia praecepta* 139A):

Ἡδὲ τῶν φαρμάκων θήρα ταχὺ μὲν αἰρεῖ καὶ λαμβάνει ῥαδίως τὸν ἰχθύν, ἄβρωτον δὲ ποιεῖ καὶ φαῦλον· οὕτως αἱ φίλτρα τινὰ καὶ γοητείας ἐπιτεχνώμεναι τοῖς ἀνδράσι καὶ χειρούμεναι δι' ἡδονῆς αὐτοὺς ἐμπλήκτοις καὶ ἀνοήτοις καὶ διεφθαρμένοις συμβιοῦσιν. οὐδὲ γὰρ τὴν Κίρκην ὤνησαν οἱ καταφαρμακευθέντες, οὐδ' ἐχρήσατο πρὸς οὐδέν αὐτοῖς οὐοὶ καὶ ὄνοις γενομένοις, τὸν δ' Ὀδυσσεύα νοῦν ἔχοντα καὶ συνόντα φρονίμως ὑπερηγάπησεν.

Fishing with drugs is a quick and easy way to catch fish, but it renders them inedible and paltry. In the same way, women who use love potions and sorcery against their husbands, and who gain mastery over them through pleasure, end up living with stunned, senseless, crippled men. The

⁴⁵ Ragone (n. 3). Similarly, Gagné (n. 7), 5–6: 'This poem ... could not fail to present an opposing voice to such widespread negative perception'.

⁴⁶ I owe this suggestion to Chris Faraone. See C.A. Faraone, *Ancient Greek Love Magic* (Cambridge, Mass., 1999), 96–131.

⁴⁷ Faraone (n. 46), 96.

men bewitched by Circe were of no service to her, nor did she have any use at all for them after they had become swine and asses. But Odysseus, who kept his senses and behaved prudently, she loved in excess.

Paradoxically, the danger of using love potions is that they may end up producing the opposite effect of what was intended. They may in fact dull a husband's sexual vigour, leaving him, in effect, unmanned.⁴⁸

Like the potentially debilitating effects of a potion, the softening effects of Salmacis' spring are themselves double-edged. Softening can be positive, if measured in small doses, and consequently enables a form of civilizing and the taming of men necessary for marriage with women; but it can also be negative, if administered in large quantities and, therefore, becomes an assault upon one's manhood. The effects of the spring are not positive *or* negative but potentially both positive *and* negative.

Our ancient sources reflect this.⁴⁹ Vitruvius actually has it right when he refers to the *venerius morbus* thought to be caused by the spring. So too Martial 10.4.5–6 (*aut qui | odit amatrices hermaphroditus aquas*) seems to hint at the fact that the spring's power is one of *amor*. Key terms like *μαλακός*, *mollis*, *impudicus* and *obscenus* are doubly coded. The slippage between these terms results not from fundamental agreement or disagreement about the effects of the spring (such that we can triangulate between them to recover the true effect of the spring) but rather from the complexities of describing the aphrodisiacal effects of the spring: the right amount of potion does one thing but too much can cause the opposite effect. So too, what is beneficial from the perspective of the poem, that is, from the perspective of Aphrodite and fertile Halicarnassus, is (potentially) a debilitating sexual depravity from the perspective of a male recipient of love magic. The language of *mollis* and *impudicus* in many of these sources, far from being precise or transparent, is a form of euphemism, knowingly couching the effect of Salmacis' waters in terms which admit the worst-case scenario – that is, the effects of too much *philia* magic – and thus exaggerate the spring's effects. The distance between the apparently negative appraisal in Roman sources and the seemingly positive appraisal implicit in the Halicarnassus inscription's hymnic praise of Salmacis' effects is built upon this difference and the alternative perspectives it allows.⁵⁰ It should not be surprising, for example, that in Ovid's account, Hermaphroditus is almost drowned in the waters of Salmacis. It is the same spring as that of the Halicarnassus inscription. But where the spring in the inscription describes a situation with the correct dosage, so to speak, Ovid's Salmacis is exposed to an overdose of de-manning. In short, this difference between the Salmacis inscription and Ovid is not located in the myth but rather in the divergent means of expressing a myth about a spring whose effect is itself variable.

We can see this aspect of Salmacis even more clearly if we put the theme of fertility and the role of the spring as an aphrodisiac back at the centre of the poem. Civilization and taming within the poem appear not as the predominant themes in themselves but rather as subspecies of the metaphor of love and union. The first lines of the Salmacis poem may signal the erotic orientation of the poem from the

⁴⁸ Note also Faraone (n. 46), 121 which analyses the *kestos*, a magical amulet described in the first century C.E. *Cyranides* which, used in excess, makes a man a *kinaidos* (see the chart on p. 129).

⁴⁹ See above, n. 3.

⁵⁰ A similar situation might be seen in the Roman misreadings of nympholepsy. Roman sources cast it in a negative light where Greek sources are not nearly so sinister. See Larson (n. 38), 62–3.

beginning. Aphrodite is of course an appropriate goddess for this, but more importantly, her unusual epithet Schoinitis, 'of the reeds', may refer to the fact that reeds were considered an aphrodisiac.⁵¹ She is addressed in the second line as a 'bringer of myrrh-scented desires'⁵² and in addition, if we supplement the text with Lloyd-Jones, she is in the very first line a 'tamer' of desires.⁵³ This image of the tamer, which has been read by scholars thus far primarily in terms of civilizing effects, is also a stock erotic metaphor, applicable to both men and women and well attested from the archaic period onwards.⁵⁴ The object of love is notionally wild and savage; to harness and direct another's love requires in part an act of taming and domestication.

OID'S SALMACIS AND HERMAPHRODITUS

If we return now to Ovid, the end of his account in *Metamorphoses* Book 4 gains a striking resonance. He refers to Salmacis' effects in just these terms, as an aphrodisiac and potion: 'his parents poured into the pool a potion (*medicamine*) that endowed those waters with a pestilential power.'⁵⁵ Recent discussions of the Salmacis inscription seem in agreement that Ovid did not know the inscription's version of the myth.⁵⁶ Before concluding, I would like to challenge this apparent consensus and point to a few features which suggest that Ovid's telling of the story owes a great deal of its effectiveness to manipulation of the myth found in the Halicarnassus inscription.⁵⁷

Scholars have long debated the precise effects of Salmacis' spring, particularly as presented in Ovid's account.⁵⁸ In light of the above analysis of the Halicarnassus poem, if we see an echo of the spring as potion underlying Ovid's manipulation of the myth, then we perhaps have a way of cutting through some of the confusion. What distinguishes the spring's effect as an aphrodisiac is that it neither feminizes men or produces hermaphrodites, but rather makes less barbarous and wild those who enter it.⁵⁹ This is a significant difference, since the goal is to soften men so as to tame them

⁵¹ D'Alessio (n. 11), 45 with reference to schol. Lycophron *Alexandria* 832: Σχωνίδι ὅτι ἡ σχοίνος βοτάνη μασσομένη τοὺς ὀδόντας μὲν καθαίρει, κινεῖ δὲ πρὸς ἀφροδίσια. Ἀρέντα δὲ λέγεται, ὅτι β' ξένους ἀρμόττει πρὸς μίαν συνάφειαν γαμικὴν, Ξένη δὲ, ὅτι φιλοποιεῖ. ἡ δὲ σύνταξις οὕτως·

⁵² πό[θων] ('desires') is a reasonable supplement, preferable to πότων, given the rareness of ἐμπελάτειρα (and the subsequent lack of numerous parallel expressions on which to base the supplement). Peitho (who in some accounts is also born of Aphrodite) is described as 'myrrh-scented' in Meleager (*AP* 12.95 = 77 Gow-Page).

⁵³ See above, n. 15

⁵⁴ See, among many examples, Anacreon *PMG* 417, Ibycus *PMG* 287. Gagné (n. 7), 7–8 similarly connects images of taming in the inscription with marriage through the language used to describe initiation rituals for boys and girls before marriage.

⁵⁵ *Met.* 4.388: ... *et incerto fontem medicamine tinxit*

⁵⁶ See above, n. 3.

⁵⁷ It must be admitted that there is no direct line of imitation which would allow us to connect the inscription with Ovid. It is worth noting however that Strabo's account of the spring (above, n. 3) seems to mirror the tripartite division of the inscription, moving in a short space from discussion of the spring's effects to Anthes and foundation and finally concluding with mention of three members of the literary catalogue (Herodotus, Heraclitus and Dionysius). This suggests that Strabo at least may have been aware of the version as given in the inscription at the site of the spring. Though this evidence is only suggestive, it is possible that anyone travelling to the site could have seen the inscription and thus the story as found in the inscription could have circulated well beyond Halicarnassus.

⁵⁸ See Robinson (n. 3).

⁵⁹ There is an important distinction here in that we may be guilty of overreaching in our focus on ancient gender if we immediately move from the notion of de-manning to the stronger notion

for marriage and union, making them temporarily less manly without necessarily making them something no longer male. Hermaphroditus suffers the consequences of too much love potion and indeed the description of the young man floundering in the water, overwhelmed by Salmacis' advances, seems a particularly striking translation of this idea. That Hermaphroditus' state is permanent is an effect of the overdose rather than the powers of the spring in themselves.

Ovid's account of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus retains further echoes of the inscription's focus on marriage and productive union. The salacious elements of the *Metamorphoses*, the striking inversion of gender roles in the rape, the rigid virginity of the unwilling Hermaphroditus, and the confounding description of the mingling of bodies partially obscure the less striking theme of marriage. Still, scholars have noted marriage imagery during the transformation itself, where the terms for intertwining may echo marriage vows.⁶⁰ The metaphor Ovid has his narrator Alcithoe voice at the point of transformation is one of grafting, an image of productive union and civilization.⁶¹ This also may recall the central themes of the Halicarnassian poem. Such gestures have been viewed as ironic,⁶² since the acts described are so clearly not the proper acts of marriage; but in light of the new evidence provided by the Halicarnassus inscription, we might consider these gestures as an intentionally distorted recollection of that poem's central themes.

As is often the case with Ovid, nothing is as it seems on the surface and we must take care to trace narrative dissembling through multiple layers of voicing. It is of course not Ovid himself but one of the daughters of Minyas, Alcithoe, who gives voice to the story of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus. Like the Salmacis and Hermaphroditus story, the other stories told by the daughters of Minyas are scantily attested.⁶³ The one well-known story in the series, that of Mars and Venus, is conspicuously situated at the centre of the series and is, notably, a story about seduction. It leads directly to the story of another nymph whose unrequited love ends in grief. Read against this build-up of stories, the Salmacis narrative seems to be the capping gesture: where others failed, Salmacis succeeds in mingling with the object of her desire. The central union of the story fulfils the hopes and promises of the previous stories in a concrete way but, more importantly, these stories fit their tellers particularly well. The Minyads tell their tales as they work inside and reject the worship of

of feminizing, with all the ancient baggage of the passive and pathic man. Robinson (n. 3) treats all the sources for the spring's effect together and thus imports ideas of e.g. *impudicus* or *obscenus* (a term found in Ov. *Met.* 15) to the account in Book 4. Within the version given in Book 4, the terms are all related to the idea of *mollis*. While it is true, as Robinson states (214), that the term *mollis* has a much wider meaning than simply 'impotent' or 'castrated', there is no evidence that it must mean more in the context of Ovid's account in Book 4. Further, a similar conflation of evidence leads Robinson to state incorrectly that Hermaphroditus was primarily a female figure (a mistake noted also by Sourvinou-Inwood [n. 4], 80 n. 20).

⁶⁰ According to Dion. Hal. *Antiq. Rom.* 2.25, early marriage law included the absolute indivisibility of possessions. This idea of total union could be part of the ideal marriage, as Musonius suggests (cited in S. Treggiari, *Roman Marriage* [Oxford, 1991], 13, emphasis mine): 'The husband and wife ... should come together for the purpose of making a life in common and of procreating children, and furthermore of regarding all things in common between them, and nothing peculiar or private to one or the other, not even their own bodies.'

⁶¹ The grafting metaphor is the focal point for an old scholarly problem: what happens to Salmacis after the two are intertwined into one figure? Why does she seem to disappear from the story? (See Robinson [n. 3].) If the story is a coded way of talking about marriage the question of why Salmacis seems to disappear becomes less pressing.

⁶² e.g. W.S. Anderson, *Ovid's Metamorphoses. Books 1–5* (Norman, 1997) ad loc.

⁶³ Myers (n. 3), 80.

Dionysus. Ovid marks the Minyads as young women on the verge of marriage who resist the transition to sexual maturity signified by participation with the rest of the women in the city in the rites of Dionysus.⁶⁴ They are much like Salmacis herself, characterized in the opening lines of the *Metamorphoses* account as an aristocratic Roman maiden eager for marriage but also somewhat naïve about how to snare a husband. The story of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus achieves the end which the Minyads explicitly reject. The apparent variation between the Halicarnassus myth and the myth in the *Metamorphoses* depends in part on Alcithoe's marked ignorance. She claims to tell a story which is not well known but it turns out that she herself does not know it particularly well. The young narrator casts the tale in terms familiar to her situation, a young maiden. Her Hermaphroditus overdoses on the aphrodisiacal waters of Salmacis and suffers the logical consequence, an overdose of its effects. Like the inept Simaetha in Theocritus' second *Idyll*, Alcithoe shows little knowledge of love or the effective use of love magic. As an overwhelming demonstration of this point, Ovid puts into the voice of Alcithoe a careful misreading of the myth found in the Halicarnassus inscription. That she gets the story so wrong is Ovid's punchline. So too, some of the most notable differences between the two versions of the myth can be interpreted as marked departures from the Halicarnassian poem which show, to those who know the story of the inscription, just how wide of the mark Alcithoe's story is. For example, Ovid describes the spring itself as particularly clear and free of reeds, a specific contrast to the invocation of Aphrodite 'of the reeds' (*Schoinitis*). Similarly, the characterization of Hermaphroditus as a young man avoiding marriage constructs a figure entirely opposite to the inscription's inventor of marriage, but suspiciously similar to the Minyads themselves.

The opposition between Hermaphroditus the inventor of marriage and Hermaphroditus the victim of rape returns us to the most striking contrast between the inscription and the *Metamorphoses* with which I began. This opposition provides not an indication of a lack of connection between Ovid's account and the Halicarnassian poem, but rather evidence for the nature of Ovid's appropriation. Ovid transforms a story of blissful union into one of rape. There is something particularly Ovidian about this narrative gesture, about casting the tale in terms of rape, a frequent story scene within the *Metamorphoses*. Measured against the succession of other rapes and metamorphoses, Hermaphroditus' rape stands out both for its reversing of roles, making the nymph the aggressor, and for the simple fact that it is at last a rape that ends, in a manner of speaking, with a successful coupling. More broadly however, rape in Roman myth has an important resonance. Ancient accounts of the rape of the Sabine women consistently connect their forced abduction with the origin of marriage.⁶⁵ Specific aspects of Roman wedding ceremony are linked to their mythical antecedents in the Sabine rape story. A post-Hellenistic Halicarnassian makes the connection clear: marriage rites were performed 'just as they are performed down to

⁶⁴ By contrast, in Aelian's account (*VH* 3.42), the Minyads reject Dionysus so as to avoid leaving their husbands, and in Antonius Liberalis 10 they are not maidens (most strikingly, Leucippe's son is torn to pieces before the metamorphosis).

⁶⁵ See especially Livy 1.9–1.13.8. Other accounts in Cic. *Rep.* 2.12–14, Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.30–47, Ov. *Fast.* 3.167–258, Ov. *Ars am.* 1.101, Plut. *Rom.* 14–19. G. Miles, *Livy: Reconstructing Early Rome* (Ithaca, 1995) notes, in his discussion of the various accounts of the rape (p. 180), 'it was closely associated with the foundation of Rome, as one expression of the daring and resourcefulness that characterized Romulus, the city's legendary founder'. Cf. J. Hemker, 'Rape and the founding of Rome', *Helios* 12 (1985), 41–7.

our times'.⁶⁶ In these specifically Roman terms, rape is marriage. Through the distortion to the story caused by the voice of Alcithoe there emerges, perhaps, a glimpse of Ovid's hand at work, blotting out the myth of Hermaphroditus as a source of pride for Halicarnassus while shading in the mythic schema of Rome's foundation.

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⁶⁶ Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.30.6.

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