



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Conquering Ida: An Ecofeminist Reading of Catullus' Poem 63

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(Received 30 January 2021; accepted 15 March 2021)

Abstract

Many have recognised poem 63 as a study in contrasts – light versus darkness, masculine versus feminine, rationality versus madness, animal versus human, culture versus nature. Caught between these polarities is the figure of Attis, removed from everything bright, male, sane, human, and civilised by one impassioned act. The poem suggests that it is partly the nature of the place, its quasi-Hippocratic airs, waters, and places, that emasculates Attis, making him like a *notha mulier*, *iuvenca*, and *famula*. This article will use ecofeminist theory – in particular, Val Plumwood's *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* – to investigate the logic of domination running between the poem's polarities and to show how a foreign 'Eastern' wilderness effeminises Greek Attis. Moreover, it will be shown that the characterisation of Attis and the *galli* as a *dux* and his *comites* associates the story with the Roman imperial endeavour, suggesting that we can read the poem alongside others that portray conquest (11, 29) and the experience of young men abroad on provincial cohorts (10, 28, 47). In this way, Catullus implies that the imperial project is also made weak and feminine by its very contact with foreign places.

Keywords: Attis; Catullus; nature; ecofeminism; Mount Ida; imperialism; gender; environmental determinism

A Greek youth named Attis sails across the sea to Mount Ida, where he and his companions will worship the goddess Cybele. When they reach the mountain's dark groves, Attis castrates himself in a sudden frenzy before rousing his companion *galli* (priests of Cybele) to head still higher towards the goddess' lofty abode.¹ Once there, they fall asleep exhausted. A glaring sun rises in an

¹ The manuscript tradition is unclear concerning Attis' grammatical gender after castration: see, e.g., Nauta (2004) 601–3 and Skinner (2007 [1993]) 461 for discussion. I use masculine pronouns for Attis throughout because, in my opinion, Attis is represented as an effeminised youth of indeterminate gender rather than as a woman.

elaborate montage of rational awakening. In a brief reprieve from Cybele's dark madness, the now lonely youth returns to the shore to deliver a regretful lament in which he contrasts the cold wilderness with the warm thresholds of the city he left behind. Cybele overhears Attis' complaints and is angered by his desire for freedom. She sends a lion to scare him back into her forest and, we are to understand, her psychological control. Though economical in his descriptions of the natural environment throughout this narrative, Catullus evokes shadowy forests and desolate shores, and Attis' movement to and through this place is presented as an integral part of his experience of change. The poet manipulates the literary tradition surrounding Mount Ida to create a snowy environment devoid of the people and pastoral activities for which the mountain was known, but he retains its wild beasts and dense, green forests. By setting his narrative on this storied mountain of the East, Catullus renders this tale of emasculation a potentially Roman one: Trojan Ida was entangled in the Roman national story even in Catullus' time not only through the myth of Aeneas but also through Rome's recent conquest of Asia; Catullus' experience on Memmius' cohort in Bithynia, a province neighbouring Asia, also suggests an analogue to poem 63's narrative of the youth abroad. To draw out these themes, I will take the Idaean environment as my focus, using an ecofeminist approach to understand how Attis is made like a female, an animal, and a slave through his contact with a foreign landscape.

Previous scholarship has examined 'nature' in poem 63 to a limited extent. Some once considered the poem a translation of an Alexandrian original,² but more recent criticism has emphasised that it has meaning as a late Republican artifact³ and that there are links between the characterisation of Attis and the Catullan persona.⁴ Among critics who consider the role of the natural environment in the poem, Janan summarises the uncivilised Otherness of Ida as a 'Dark Continent', echoing Freud's use of the term to describe the mysteries of adult female sexuality: Attis' dislocation into this wild space expresses his disintegration of self in the face of the goddess.⁵ Others have highlighted the contrast between civilisation and nature, connecting it to the other 'opposing ideas' such as male/female, Greek/Phrygian, reason/emotion, and freedom/slavery that form poem 63's conceptual framework.⁶ While also emphasising the importance of this framework, Garrison focuses on the

² For these views and an appraisal of poem 63 as a 'Hellenistic poem', see Harder (2004).

³ E.g., Nauta (2004), Skinner (2007 [1993]), and Latham (2012).

⁴ E.g., Putnam (1961), Skinner (2007 [1993]), and De Villiers (2017). See Harkins (1959) for 'auto-allegory' in poems 63 and 64; Nauta (2004) 598 cautions against excessively autobiographical readings.

⁵ Janan (1994) 105–6. Freud borrowed the metaphor from colonial discourse in which the 'inferiority' of African peoples was proven as much by their failures to exploit their natural environment as by their different cultures. On the development of imagery of darkness in European discourse about Africa, see Brantlinger (1985), especially 186–7 for nineteenth-century commentary on the failure of African peoples to develop the land.

⁶ Fordyce (1961) 262 comments that 'the contrast between civilisation and savage nature, between the humanism of the Greek city-state and the excesses of oriental fanaticism, is at the

physical environment and argues that Catullus' grove was a precursor to a later topos that emerged out of the Roman experience of northern European forests. Connecting the poem to the *horror siluestris* experienced by Caesar's soldiers in Gaul, he suggests that we might see it as a 'translation into fictive narrative of a personal encounter with strange and distant forests' and in this way appreciate the 'subjective feeling of unease that Romans in the service of the empire felt on unfamiliar ground'.⁷ I will follow a similar track, understanding poem 63 in light of the 'unease' of the imperial officer abroad, but I want to pay attention to the specificity – indeed, the reality – of the Idaean landscape in this narrative of transformation.⁸

Ecocriticism has been gaining traction in Classics.⁹ Fundamentally, it is 'the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment. ... [E]cocriticism takes an earth-centred approach to literary studies'.¹⁰ A subset of ecocriticism, ecofeminism links the oppression of women and other marginalised groups to the domination of the nonhuman environment: as Gaard argues, 'the ideology which authorizes oppressions such as those based on race, class, gender, sexuality, physical abilities, and species is the same ideology which sanctions the oppression of nature'.¹¹ Plumwood investigates the nature of this ideology and identifies the possession of reason as the mark of this oppressing master. She argues that rationality underwrites a series of hierarchical dualisms which have run through the Western tradition since at least Plato and Aristotle: culture/nature, male/female, human/nonhuman, free/slave are just a few examples of these.¹² Reason/nature is the fundamental dualism:

The category of nature is a field of multiple exclusion and control, not only of non-humans, but of various groups of humans and aspects of human life which are cast as nature. Thus racism, colonialism and sexism have drawn their conceptual strength from casting sexual, racial and ethnic difference as closer to the animal and the body construed as a sphere of inferiority, as a lesser form of humanity lacking the full measure of rationality or culture.

Plumwood (1993) 4

heart of the poem'. Rubino (1974) 157 makes this series of opposing ideas explicit as male/female, Greek/Phrygian, reason/emotion, freedom/slavery, civilisation/nature.

⁷ Garrison (1992) 110. See, e.g., Caes. *B Gall.* 1.39 where Caesar reports that his soldiers fear the 'narrowness of the path and the size of the forest' (*angustias itineris et magnitudinem siluarum*); the local tribes effectively use the forests and swamps for stealth attacks, e.g., 2.19, 2.28, and 3.28.

⁸ See Garrard (2012) 9–11 on resisting the 'excesses of constructionism': 'The challenge for ecocritics is to keep one eye on the ways in which "nature" is always in some ways culturally constructed, and the other on the fact that nature really exists, both the object, and albeit distantly, the origin of our discourse' (p. 10).

⁹ E.g., Quartarone (2002), Schliephake (2017), and Armstrong (2019), who, however, hesitates to label her work ecocritical (p. 17). Cowan (*forthcoming*) turns the problem of essentialism in ecofeminism into a thought-provoking reading of the nature/woman dualism in Virgil's *Georgics*.

¹⁰ Glotfelty (1996) xviii.

¹¹ Gaard (1993) 1.

¹² Plumwood (1993) 43 details a more complete list.

For Plumwood, the oppression of women is an expression of the same master logic by which the environment is exploited, people are colonised, and non-human animals are reduced to sources of flesh or entertainment. These oppressions take place because women, subjected peoples, animals, and nature itself are seen to lack rationality.

Poem 63 demonstrates the primacy of reason as the legitimising force behind a series of hierarchical dualisms. The poem explores Attis' loss and brief recovery of rationality, and it aligns this concept with manhood, culture (specifically Hellenism and its manifestations in the manmade environment), freedom, and humanity. It is his loss of reason – as much as the loss of his phallus – that results in him becoming feminine, foreign, and slave-like, and akin to a nonhuman animal in the wild. An ecofeminist approach to poem 63 can therefore help us to tease out the connections between Attis' loss of his masculinity and his humanity, and it allows us to map these losses against a landscape that was as mythologically important for the Greeks and Romans as it was exploited for everyday human ends.

Ida, Mother of Wild Animals

A mountain range rather than a single peak, Ida (now called Kaz Daği) was known for its freshwater springs and its forests of pine, oak, and Trojan fir, which were home to brown bears, wolves, and big cats. Homer describes Ida as the 'many-springed mother of wild beasts' (πολυπίδακα μητέρα θηρών, *Hom. Il.* 15.151; cf. *Il.* 8.47, 14.283, 20.59), while for Hesiod, it is windy and many-valleyed (πολυπτύχου ἠνεμοέσσης, *Hes. Theog.* 1010). The author of the Homeric *Hymn to Aphrodite* likewise depicts a landscape of many springs and wild animals (πολυπίδακα, μητέρα θηρών, *Hom. Hymn Aph.* 5.68). Aphrodite is described passing along the mountainside with a train of wolves, lions, bears, and wildcats in her wake (70–2).¹³ It is also clear, even from these early texts alone, that the area was inhabited by humans who worked the natural environment. Aphrodite traverses the mountain to reach a farmstead where the shepherd Anchises plays his kithara (*Hom. Hymn Aph.* 5. 69, 75–80). The mountain's flanks were regarded as suitable places for grazing sheep, goats, and cattle (*Hom. Il.* 11.105–6; 20.91; 21.448–9).¹⁴

Aside from feeding the grazing herds, Mount Ida provided a ready source of timber from its thickly wooded forests. The very name of the mountain range identifies it as 'the wooded hill' (from ἴδη 'timber-tree'). In fact, Theocritus uses forested Ida as a metaphor for the abundance of material before him when he sets out to praise Ptolemy: 'when a woodcutter comes to thickly wooded Ida, he glances about for where to begin among the plenty' ('Ἰδαν ἐξ πολύδενδρον ἀνήρ ὑλατόμος ἐλθὼν / παπταίνει, παρεόντος ἄδην, πόθεν

¹³ Anchises has killed bears and lions on Ida's mountains at *Hom. Hymn Aph.* 5. 158–60.

¹⁴ Euripides portrays Mount Ida as pastured and rustic too: Paris is a shepherd raised 'as a cowherd among the cows' (τὸν ἀμφί / βοῦσι βουκόλον, *IA* 1291–2) who takes Helen 'to the cow stalls of Ida' (πρὸς Ἰδης βοῦσταθμί, *IA* 76; cf. *Eur. Hel.* 24, 29, 357–9); Ida's rustic inhabitants are frightened by the sound of Rhesus' army at *Eur. Rhes.* 2879.

ἄρξεται ἔργου, 17.9–10). These abundant forests fuelled a variety of activities.¹⁵ We might think of the 'high-leaved oaks' (δρῦς ὑψικόμους, Hom. *Il.* 23.118) felled for Patroclus' funeral pyre, but the Greeks, and later the Romans, considered Idaean timber particularly good for shipbuilding (Theophr. *Hist. pl.* 4.5.5), and it was harvested for this purpose during the Peloponnesian War (Thuc. 4.52; Xen. *Hell.* 1.26).¹⁶ Theophrastus implies that this practice may have led to some deforestation when he remarks that timber suitable for shipbuilding can be found in only a few places, including Ida, but that 'it is not abundant' (οὐ πολλήν, *Hist. pl.* 4.5.5). Ida had a reputation for lush forest but also for being a place where people extracted resources and otherwise cultivated the natural environment.¹⁷

Mount Ida was a familiar landscape then, but you would not know it from reading Catullus' poem because all marks of pastoralism, the timber industry, and human habitation have been erased. His Ida is resolutely 'wild', a darkly forested environment populated only by untamed nonhuman animals and the goddess and separate from human culture and reason.¹⁸ This wilderness is sketched only hazily. It is a different environment altogether from the old, decaying forests depicted in dreadful detail by the likes of Seneca and Lucan, but, like the European forests that Garrison argues were the basis for those *loci inamoeni*, and like the real Ida, Catullus' Idaean groves are densely wooded.¹⁹ Catullus does not linger on descriptions of the omnipresent 'grove' (*nemus*, 2, 12, 20, 32, 52, 58, 72, 79, 89).²⁰ It is introduced as 'the goddess' shady places wreathed with forest' (*opaca siluis redimita loca deae*, 3) and our primary impression up until Attis and his companions rush towards the summit of 'green Ida' (*uiridem ... Idam*, 30; and later, *uiridis ... Idae*, 70) is that it is a place of darkness (*opaca nemora*, 32) wrought from this verdant abundance.²¹ This darkness is reinforced when Attis awakes (alone though he had fallen asleep alongside his companions) to the contrast of a dazzling sunrise which reveals further aspects of his new home's desolate environment. The sun surveys the 'white sky, hard ground, wild sea' (*aethera album, sola dura, mare ferum*, 40). Its bright rays bring clarity to Attis' mind after the figurative dark madness of the forest, allowing him to see his surroundings properly (*liquidaque mente uidit sine quis ubique foret*, 46) and this insight prompts him to return to the shore to lament his actions.²²

¹⁵ For the many uses of wood in the ancient world, see Hughes (2014) 69–70, 156–8.

¹⁶ See, e.g., Eur. *Hec.* 631–4 and, later, Verg. *Aen.* 9.80–106 for literary representations of shipbuilding using Ida's timber.

¹⁷ Strabo 13.606 comments that Aspaneus, a town around the mountain range's southern flank, hosted a market for Ida's timber, see Meiggs (1982) 357. Magie (1950) 1.43 and nn. 24 and 25 comments on the use of Idaean timber by Pergamene kings. Mount Ida had other natural resources: it produced Asia's best pitch, which was essential for shipbuilding, see Plin. *HN* 14.128, Verg. *G.* 3.450, 4.41, Theophr. *Hist. pl.* 9.2.5–7, and Magie (1950) 1.43; Eumenes and his successors extracted silver for coinage from the area, see Magie (1950) 1.7.

¹⁸ On the 'wilderness' see Plumwood (1993) 163–4, and Garrard (2012) 66–92.

¹⁹ Cf. Sen. *Oed.* 530–49, *Thy.* 650–82; Luc. 3.399–425; and Garrison (1992) 100–3.

²⁰ Text of Catullus is Thomson (1997). All translations are my own unless otherwise indicated.

²¹ See Clarke (2001) 167–8 and *OLD* s.v. *opacus* 1: 'sheltered from the heat and light of the sun'.

²² On the intense colour and light contrast between lines 39–43 and the earlier part of the poem, see Clarke (2001) 166. Traill (1981) 212–14 regards the passage as pivotal.

When Attis addresses his native home across the sea, he now portrays Mount Ida as a place of snow and wild animals. It is a bleak environment of hidden dangers, and its geography is ill-defined in comparison to the detailed topography of the *patria*:

‘*patria o mei creatrix, patria o mea genetrix,
 ego quam miser relinquens, dominos ut erifugae
 famuli solent, ad Idae tetuli nemora pedem,
 ut apud niuem et ferarum gelida stabula forem,
 et earum operta adirem furibunda latibula,
 ubinam aut quibus locis te positam, patria, reor? 55
 cupit ipsa pupula ad te sibi derigere aciem,
 rabie fera carens dum breue tempus animus est.
 egone a mea remota haec ferar in nemora domo?
 patria, bonis, amicis, genitoribus abero?
 abero foro, palaestra, stadio et guminasiis? 60
 miser a miser, querendum est etiam atque etiam, anime.
 quod enim genus figurae est, ego non quod obierim?
 ego mulier, ego adulescens, ego ephebus, ego puer,
 ego gymnasi fui flos, ego eram decus olei,
 mihi ianuae frequentes, mihi limina tepida, 65
 mihi floridis corollis redimita domus erat,
 linquendum ubi esset orto mihi sole cubiculum.
 ego nunc deum ministra et Cybeles famula ferar?
 ego Maenas, ego mei pars, ego uir sterilis ero?
 ego uiridis algida Idae niue amicta loca colam? 70
 ego uitam agam sub altis Phrygiae columinibus,
 ubi cerua siluicultrix, ubi aper nemoriuagus?
 iam iam dolet quod egi, iam iamque paenitet.’*

Catull. 63.50–73

O fatherland, my mother, o fatherland, my creator,
 which I am wretched for leaving, as slaves running away
 from their masters often are. I have brought my foot to the groves of Ida
 to be in the snow and the icy dens of wild animals,
 and to approach hidden lairs full of madness.
 For where or in what places do I imagine that you are, fatherland?
 My very pupil desires to aim its glance towards you,
 while for a brief time my mind is free from wild frenzy.
 Am I to be brought from my home into these remote groves?
 Am I to be far away from my fatherland, my property, my friends, my
 parents?
 Am I to be apart from the forum, the palaestra, the stadium, the
 gymnasium?
 Ah, wretched, wretched mind, it must be lamented again and again.
 For what kind of shape is there that I have not entered?
 I the woman, I the young man, I the youth, I the boy;

I was the flower of the gymnasium, I was the glory of the olive oil,
 my doors were crowded, my thresholds warm,
 my home was wreathed in flowery garlands,
 where I used to leave my bed when the sun rose.
 Am I now to be called a maid-servant of the gods and Cybele's female
 slave?
 Shall I be a Maenad, I a part of me, I a sterile man?
 Shall I cultivate green Ida's places clothed in cold snow?
 Shall I spend my life under the high peaks of Phrygia,
 where the wood-dwelling deer is, where the grove-wandering boar is?
 Now, now it pains me what I have done, and now, now I am sorry.'

With its terms related to motherhood (*creatrix* and *genetrix*, 50) the lament's first line suggests the generative power of his native land to imbue Attis with form and character, but the repeated address to his 'fatherland' (*patria* appears twice in the line) tempers the image of 'mother earth' with the shaping effects of masculine culture.²³ Attis has left behind a masculine landscape of civic institutions, a constructed environment of forum, palaestra, stadium, and gymnasium (60) – all socialising spaces for the citizen male. A sharp contrast is drawn between the floral garlands that once 'wreathed' (*redimita*, 66) his thresholds and the uncultivated forest, initially portrayed as Cybele's 'dark places wreathed with forest' (*opaca siluis redimita loca*, 3).²⁴ Marooned in this comparatively shapeless wilderness, Attis uses some terms that suggest the civilising hand of man: the dens of wild animals are 'stables' (*stabula*, 53);²⁵ the Idaean landscape is 'clothed' (*amicta*, 70) in snow; and he imagines not only living in this new environment but 'cultivating' (*colo*, 70) it. This bid to transform the wilderness into an approximation of home is understandable from a psychological perspective, but it also sounds like conquest. Whatever colonising activities he imagines here, however, there is an anxious tenor to these lines which suggests that Attis does not have the ability to withstand the cold (or other such hardships) that was one of the traditional proofs of manly virtue (cf. Xen. *Anab.* 3.1.23). It seems that Attis will fail to make his mark on Ida as the mountain has already and will continue to make its mark on him.

Soft Lands, White Hands

In Graeco-Roman discourse about the origins of ethnic identity the land was often figured as a 'mother country', who gives birth to her people and imbues them with certain characteristics.²⁶ According to this theory – now called

²³ For the homeland as mother and father in Classical Athenian discourse, see Lysias' *Epitaphios* 17, Isoc. *Paneg.* 25, and Isaac (2004) 121–2, 125 for discussion.

²⁴ As others have noticed, e.g., Janan (1994) 105–6.

²⁵ Arguing that Virgil (*Aen.* 6.179) echoes the Catullan line, Armstrong (2019) 297 suggests that *stabula* retains some of its primary meaning of a constructed place of shelter.

²⁶ For the 'mother country', see Isaac (2004) 121–2, 125. Plato famously suggests that 'Mother Earth' is a convenient myth to tell his utopia's inhabitants (*Resp.* 414d–e) and posits a 'world soul' in the *Timaeus*, which some have seen as a precursor to the modern 'Living Earth'. Plumwood (1993) 69–103 takes issue with critics who have found proto-feminist and

'environmental determinism' – the natural environment has the potential to influence men in 'good' ways and 'bad'.²⁷ Harsh, rugged lands were thought to produce hard-bodied, masculine virtue while lush, fertile places softened and effeminised.²⁸ The concept was frequently employed to differentiate peoples and, to some extent, to explain why some people rule and others are ruled. From an ecofeminist perspective, we might see ancient environmental determinism as an example of what Plumwood calls 'radical exclusion', a rhetorical move whereby the other is marked out as different from the master in ways that make him or her inferior and legitimise his or her subjugation.²⁹ Although environmental determinism might seem to assign a powerful role to nature, its ideas were inconsistent, highly artificial, and rhetorically motivated; speaking from a healthful centre, proponents looked out at foreign peoples they regarded as inferior and found reasons for this inferiority in the natural environment.³⁰

According to the most famous proponent of environmental determinism, the Hippocratic author of *Airs, Waters, Places*, Asia was a land of abundant growth and poor moral fibre. The region situated at a fecund midpoint between heat and cold is described as,

αὕτη μὲν εὐκαρποτάτη ἐστὶ καὶ εὐδενδροτάτη καὶ εὐδιεστάτη, καὶ ὕδασι καλλίστοισι κέχρηται τοῖσι τε οὐρανίοισι καὶ τοῖσιν ἐκ τῆς γῆς. οὔτε γὰρ ὑπὸ τοῦ θερμοῦ ἐκκέκασται λίην οὔτε ὑπὸ ἀνύχμων καὶ ἀνυδρίας ἀναξηραίνεται οὔτε ὑπὸ φύχειος βεβιασμένη, <οὔτε> νοτίη τε καὶ διάβροχός ἐστιν ὑπὸ τε ὄμβρων πολλῶν καὶ χιόνος.

Hippoc. *Aer.* 12; text from Jouanna (1996)

very fruitful, the most abounding in trees, and very mild, and it enjoys the finest waters, both from the heavens and from the earth. For it is not burned excessively by the heat nor is it dried out by drought and lack of water, it is not constrained by cold nor is it damp and soaked from a lot of storms and snow.

environmentalist ideas in these texts: she argues – rightly in my view – that Plato's 'Mother Earth' myth promotes militarism, not environmentalism, and that Plato depicts female chaos/matter/nature being shaped by male cosmos/logos/culture.

²⁷ For an overview, see Futo Kennedy and Jones-Lewis (2016) 2–3; Isaac (2004) 56–102 treats the topic extensively.

²⁸ E.g., in response to Artembares' suggestion that the Persians leave their 'little and rugged land' (γῆν...ὀλίγην καὶ ταύτην τρηχέαν, Hdt. 9. 122) for a better place, Cyrus the Great is reported to have said that 'soft men tend to be born from soft lands' (φιλέειν γὰρ ἐκ τῶν μαλακῶν χώρων μαλακοὺς γίνεσθαι, Hdt. 9.122). Cf. Odysseus' description of Ithaca as 'a rugged place but a good nurse of boys' (τρηχεῖ', ἀλλ' ἀγαθὴ κουροτρόφος, Hom. *Od.* 9.28).

²⁹ Plumwood (1993) 49–52.

³⁰ See Harman (2016) and Romm (2010) on different ways of valuing the Asian environment; Isaac (2004) 63, 65–8 comments on the Hippocratic author's unrealistic depiction of the Asian climate.

The text goes on to praise the bodies of this region's inhabitants. They are 'well nourished, the finest in physique, the greatest in stature' (εὐτραφέας εἶναι καὶ τὰ εἶδεα καλλίστους καὶ μεγέθει μεγίστους, 12). Their character is a different story: 'Manly courage, hardiness, grit, and spiritedness could not be bred in such an environment, <...> either among natives or immigrants, but pleasure must rule' (τὸ δὲ ἀνδρεῖον καὶ τὸ ταλαίπωρον καὶ τὸ ἔμπονον καὶ τὸ θυμοειδὲς οὐκ ἂν δύναιτο ἐν τοιαύτῃ φύσει ἐγγίνεσθαι <...> μήτε ὁμοφύλου μήτε ἄλλοφύλου, ἀλλὰ τὴν ἡδονὴν ἀνάγκη κρατεῖν, 12). The fertility of Asia's soil and gentleness of its climate thwarts the military spirit.

Although many ancient accounts of environmental determinism concern people who live in their native home, migration to a new climate was thought to change a person – usually for the worse.³¹ The Hippocratic author above, for example, reckons that Asia can enervate even immigrants. The Romans were also concerned about the effects of dislocation.³² In a rallying speech to his troops as they prepared to fight the Galatian Gauls in Asia Minor in 189 BCE, Gnaeus Manlius Vulso says that these 'Gaulish-Greeks' (*Gallograeci*, 38.17.9) are of inferior stock to their ancestors (*degeneres*, Livy 38.17.9) and impure (*mixti*, 38.17.9) because they left their native Gaul. Comparing them to plants, animals, and other displaced peoples, Manlius comments that 'whatever is grown in its own home is of better stock; transplanted to a foreign land, it declines as its nature turns itself towards that by which it is nourished' (*generosius in sua quidquid sede gignitur; insitum alienae terrae in id, quo alitur, natura uertente se degenerat*, 38.17.13). He further warns his troops that they too could be corrupted by the fertility of Asia if they are not careful: 'by its most fertile land, its exceedingly mild climate, the gentle natures of its inhabitants – all that ferocity of theirs was tamed when they came to this place. By Hercules, you should be on your guard, men of Mars, and from the first avoid Asia's delights: to such a degree can these foreign pleasures destroy strength of spirit; contact with the customs and characters of its inhabitants is capable of so much' (*uberrimo agro, mitissimo caelo, clementibus accolarum ingeniis omnis illa cum qua uenerant mansuefacta est feritas. uobis mehercule, Martiis uiris, cauenda ac fugienda quam primum amoenitas est Asiae: tantum hae peregrinae uoluptates ad extinguendum uigorem animorum possunt; tantum contagio disciplinae morisque accolarum ualet*, 38.17.17–19).³³

³¹ On migration's effects, see Isaac (2004) 56, 166–7. Conversely, Futo Kennedy (2016) 11 and n. 10, and Futo Kennedy and Jones-Lewis (2016) 2 stress the importance of the native place in ancient thought.

³² Even in Italy, there were regions of such fertility – like Campania, the 'most fertile land in Italy' (*agrum Italiae uberrimum*, Livy 7.38.6)—that they 'softened the spirits of the soldiers and turned them away from thought of the fatherland' (*delentis militum animos auertit a memoria patriae*, Livy 7.38.5). Evans (2011) 3 connects the soldiers' enervation with the landscape's 'ability to over-produce, with multiple and fantastical harvests'. Cic. *Leg. agr.* 2.95–6 highlights Campania's fertility and the power of nature to shape men's characters: even Hannibal was corrupted by the luxury and pleasure afforded by Campania.

³³ See Irby (2016) 255; Almagor (2016) and Harman (2016) consider similar episodes where the environment affects displaced peoples.

Like Manlius' troops and the Gauls, Catullus' Attis did not come from Asia Minor and his 'transplantation' to this land affects him negatively. Attis was traditionally Phrygian, but Catullus shapes the narrative to characterise the young man as Greek, perhaps even specifically Athenian.³⁴ The shift allows him to depict the story as a moment of corrupting contact between an archetypal figure of Occidental, rational, masculine hegemony and the irrational, feminine, and enslaved East. Physical contact between this exemplar of Western rationality and the fertile but snow-covered Mount Ida is emphasised, and its effects are felt immediately. Attis is twice described touching the grove with his feet (*nemus citato cupide pede tetigit*, 2; *ad Idae tetuli nemora pedem*, 52), and, upon contact, he is 'goaded there with mad frenzy' (*stimulatus ibi furenti rabie*, 4). Although we will learn that Cybele's lion is similarly goaded by the goddess (*stimulans*, 77), the focus upon the grove in these lines and the phrasing of line 4 leave room for the possibility that the natural environment is partially responsible for the changes to self that Attis experiences.

Attis' lament addresses the land that created and shaped him, and it reflects upon how dislocation has affected his identity and his body. Throughout his speech, Attis likens himself to a female slave and suggests that slavery to the goddess will be his permanent fate (51–2, 68; the narrator later confirms that Attis will be a *famula*, 90). Entwined with this repeated concern about his civic status is an anxiety about changes to his gender identity. 'What kind of shape is there that I have not entered?', he asks at line 62 (cf. 63, 68–9), listing male and female forms he has inhabited. His questions indicate a burgeoning likeness to the Idaean environment as he talks of being full of the forest's dark madness (*furibunda*, 54), living like the wild animals (53–4, 71–2), and being like a Maenad whose worship of Bacchus inherently involved roaming the forested mountains (69). Firmer details about Attis' physical appearance after arriving upon Ida's shores are revealed elsewhere by the narrator when he picks out the youth's 'delicate fingers' (*teneris ... digitis*, 10), 'rosy lips' (*roseis ... labellis*, 74), and 'snow-white hands' (*niueis ... manibus*, 63.8) – the last is especially significant considering Attis' description of the landscape as snowy (*niuem*, 53; *algida ... niue*, 70).³⁵ While theories of environmental determinism often explained that cold, snowy landscapes bred courageous fighters,³⁶ the word *niueus* is usually associated with femininity in Catullus: Polyxena has 'snow-white limbs' (*niueos ... artus* 64.364); Laodamia is like a 'snow-white dove' (*niueo ... columbo*, 68b.125); the feminised, bride-like

³⁴ On Catullus' transformation of Attis into a Greek, see Harrison (2004). Clay (1995) 149–50 proposes that the name Attis evokes 'Atthis', literally 'Athenian' or 'from Attica'.

³⁵ Snow does fall upon Ida: e.g., Paris was left as a baby in the 'snow-covered Phrygian glade and peaks of Ida' (νιφόβολον Φρυγῶν νόπος Ἴδας τ' ὄρεα, Eur. *IA* 1284); cf. Sen. *Phoen.* 608–9. Catullus echoes the setting of [Simon.] *HE* 2.1–3 = *Anth. Pal.* 6.217.1–3 where a *gallus* shelters from a 'winter snow-storm' (Χειμερινήν νιφετοῖο ... ὑπὸ σπιλάδα) and wipes snow (νιέτον) from his hair; cf. Antip. Sid. *HE* 64.6 = *Anth. Pal.* 6.219.6.

³⁶ The Scythians are the foremost example, but their barren cold landscape breeds fleshy, moist physiques: there is no distinction between men and women to the extent that men become impotent and take on female identities (Hippoc. *Aer.* 19–22). See Irby (2016); Arist. *Pol.* 1327b and Isaac (2004) 70–72 for discussion.

Hymenaeus comes on 'snow-white foot' (*niueo ... pede*, 61.9–10); and the Parcae bend their 'snow-white heads' (*niueo ... uertice*, 64.309), where white hair could mark gender as well as its primary connotation of age.³⁷ Attis' snow-white hands may be interpreted in light of the widespread Graeco-Roman association between white skin and femininity.³⁸ These are a remarkable attribute for a strapping young lad who, as we learn from his lament, used to spend his time in the palaestra and gymnasium. To become the 'glory of the olive oil', Attis would have stripped naked to exercise, and we must assume that he would have tanned after all those hours of well-oiled exertion.³⁹ Upon contact with an Eastern environment, this athletic Greek youth develops a distinctly feminine, pale complexion.⁴⁰

Masters of the East

As the speech of Manlius Vulso implies, the Romans had a long history of engagement with Asia Minor. A mere sixty kilometres from Troy as the crow flies, Ida was intimately involved in the Trojan, and then Roman, story,⁴¹ but Rome's relationship with the Asian environment and its peoples was not only the stuff of myth and distant history. Attalus III of Pergamum bequeathed the wider region to Rome upon his death in 133 BCE. It was a valuable inheritance, and Rome proceeded to exploit it. When Mithridates IV Eupator took the throne of neighbouring Pontus in 120 BCE, there began a long period of regional unrest as the king sought to add Bithynia and Asia to his territory. The Romans were at war with Mithridates sporadically until his final defeat by Pompey in 65 BCE. To celebrate, Pompey orchestrated a lavish triumphal procession including subjugated peoples and many treasures. Spectators would have seen a square mountain made from gold and encircled

³⁷ More femininity and whiteness in Catullus: a bride's face shines like 'white chamomile' (*alba parthenica*, 61.187); Mamurra is like a 'little white dove or Adonis' (*albulus columbus aut Adoneus*, 29.8), effeminised by his excessive desires; beautiful women are called 'shining (-white) girl' (*candida puella*, 13.4, 35.8, 86.1; her foot at 68b.70).

³⁸ On white as a feminine skin colour, see e.g., Xen. *Hell.* 3.4.19; Ar. *Thes.* 191–2; as well as Ar. *Eccl.* 385–6, 427–8 and Ar. *Lys.* 414–5 with Konstan (2002) esp. n. 2 for discussion. Ovid declares white a 'girly' colour after an extended description of a heifer's shining whiteness (*ll.* 10–14): 'the cow is your girl: that colour is suitable for a girl' (*uacca puella tua est: aptus color ille puellae*, *Am.* 3.5.37; cf. *Ov. Met.* 9.787–8). As the anonymous reviewer comments, any gendering of whiteness was already complicated by Homer when he compared Menelaus' wounded thigh to an ivory cheek-piece stained with red dye (*Hom. Il.* 4.141–7). While Menelaus is arguably a 'manly' warrior, the passage clearly effeminises him through its references to his pallor, 'shapely thighs', and 'lovely ankles': on Menelaus' 'gender distress', see Oliensis (2019) 38.

³⁹ Nauta (2004) 601 n. 21 also makes this point.

⁴⁰ On the placement of *niueus* after the castration scene as an indication of Attis' change, see Clarke (2001) 171 *contra* Quinn (1972) 249–50 who regarded the description as one which would have applied to Attis in his former life.

⁴¹ For Mount Ida's importance in the Trojan story, especially Homer's *Iliad*, see Mackie (2014). Aeneas was conceived and raised on Ida (*Hes. Theog.* 1008–10; *Hom. Hymn Aphr.* 5. 196–99, 255–8, 273–85) and, according to epic tradition since the *Iliupersis*, he escaped there from burning Troy: see Wiseman (1984) 121 and n. 20 for sources. In Virgil's *Aeneid*, Aeneas uses Ida's timber to build his fleet and sail to Italy (3.5–6 and 9.80–9).

by a golden vine with deer and lions among the fruit trees on its slopes (Plin. *HN* 37.14). Ebony trees were led in the procession as though they were prisoners of war (Plin. *HN* 12.120, cf. 111). As Ann Kuttner remarks, Pompey ‘paraded the Asian landscape through Rome’s streets.’⁴² A theatre and temple complex followed, where visitors could admire gardens filled with statues and plants from East.⁴³ Plants became ‘part of the visual and symbolic language of victory’.⁴⁴ Here was a Roman who had dominated the environment of Asia.

Several of Catullus’ polymetric poems are set against just such a world in the throes of Roman expansion. Poem 11 associates the furthest reaches of Roman power – exemplified by Caesar’s exploits across the Alps – with Lesbia’s destructive and all-consuming female sexuality.⁴⁵ Poem 29 similarly blasts Caesar for allowing Mamurra, ‘that fucked-out cock of yours’ (*ista uestra diffututa mentula*, 29.13), to plunder Pontus, Spain, Gaul, and Britain so rapaciously, and marvels that ‘Poofter Romulus’ could allow this to happen (*cinaede Romule, haec uidebis et feres?* 29.5, 9).⁴⁶ Poems 9, 12, 28, and 47 develop a narrative about Catullus’ friends Fabullus and Veranius, following them abroad on Piso’s cohort and back as they return full of travellers’ tales and little else: these young men were out to make money (*ecquidnam in tabulis patet lucelli / expensum*, 28.6–7) but suffered instead cold and hunger (*frigoraque et famem tulistis?* 28.5) while working for a praetor who was either unwilling to let anyone make money (poem 28) or simply nepotistic (poem 47).⁴⁷

Catullus shared their difficulties when he served in Memmius’ cohort in Bithynia and Pontus, a province neighbouring Asia that had been redrawn by Pompey in the aftermath of the Mithridatic wars. Catullus depicts the region as hot and fertile (*Phrygii ... campi / Nicaeaeque ager uber aestuosae*, 46.4–5), but we intuit that this has been an oppressive heat from which the young man is eager to escape.⁴⁸ According to poems 10 and 28, Bithynia was an unprofitable and ultimately humiliating experience. This ‘bad province’ (*mala prouincia*, 10.19) afforded ‘nothing’ for anyone, ‘neither the locals, praetors, nor their cohort’ (*nihil neque ipsis / nec praetoribus esse nec cohorti*, 10.9–10). While success in the province is imagined in terms of effeminate luxury when the *comes* brings back expensive, perfumed oils for the hair (‘why would anyone bring back a slicker hairstyle?’ *cur quisquam caput unctius referret*, 10.11), failure is a far worse emasculation. The praetor is a ‘mouth-fucker, who

⁴² Kuttner (1999) 345. Ostenberg (2009) 184–8 comments on the parallels between living breathing prisoners and trees in Pompey’s procession. Ebony trees came from India and Africa, but they had symbolic significance for Pompey’s power, see Totelin (2012) 132 and Macaulay-Lewis (2008) 208–9.

⁴³ Kuttner (1999) 355–6 and 369.

⁴⁴ Macaulay-Lewis (2008) 217. Totelin (2012) and Pollard (2009) discuss the ‘botanical imperialism’ of early imperial Rome.

⁴⁵ See Putnam (2007 [1974]), Konstan (2000), and Greene (2006).

⁴⁶ I have chosen a modern sexual slur to translate *cinaedus*, but I agree with Williams (2010) that *cinaedus* does not always carry explicit sexual meaning.

⁴⁷ On Catullan attitudes to acquiring wealth in the provinces in poems 9 and 10, see O’Hearn (2021), which also considers representations of being ‘fortunate’ in poems 22 and 23.

⁴⁸ Strabo 12.4.7 says that the area is fertile but not good for one’s health during summer.

didn't rate his cohort at a hair' (*irrumator / praetor, nec faceret pili cohortem*, 10.12–13) and by denying them the opportunity to enrich themselves, he might as well be forcing them to take the receptive role in sex.⁴⁹ Catullus ruefully recalls the situation: 'O Memmius, you fucked my face nice and slow with that whole beam of yours while I was flat on my back a long time' (*O Memmi, bene me ac die supinum / tota ista trabe lentus irrumasti*, 28.9–10). In these accounts, when a Roman man travels abroad, failure to exploit his power there compromises his masculinity.⁵⁰

Echoing his polymetric narratives of young men who travel to foreign climes and risk emasculation, Catullus depicts the *galli* in terms reminiscent of a provincial cohort.⁵¹ After castrating himself, Attis addresses his 'companions' (*comitibus*, 63.11) and urges them to go to Cybele's high grove, following him (*simul ite, sequimini*, 19) just as they have done before: 'you who, like exiles seeking foreign places, have followed my way, with me as leader, as companions to me' (*aliena quae petentes uelut exules loca / sectam meam exsecutae duce me mihi comites*, 63.14–15). The narrator repeats these terms as he describes the group's final push to the summit: *simul haec comitibus Attis cecinit notha mulier*, 27; *comitata tympano Attis per opaca nemora dux*, 32; *ducem sequuntur*, 63.34. It has been argued that *dux* and *comites* were religious titles among the *galli*,⁵² but Attis is using a language of leading, following, and companionship that also appears in accounts of service on provincial cohorts. Catullus, for one, 'followed [his] praetor' (*secutus / praetorem*, 28.7–8) to Bithynia and bid farewell to his 'companions' (*comitum*, 46.9) when he left,⁵³ but these terms appear in other contemporary accounts such as when Cornelius Nepos describes Atticus' refusal to engage in the traditional *cursus honorum* as a refusal to 'follow' a governor: 'He accepted the prefectures offered to him by many consuls and praetors on the condition that he did not follow anyone

⁴⁹ Braund (1996) has suggested that poems 10 and 28 indirectly praise Memmius for being a good governor, but Catullus' criticism is too severe; see Cairns (2012) 110–14.

⁵⁰ However, the hyperphallic exploits of a Mamurra incur just as much criticism as anally receptive behaviour: see Konstan (2000) 223.

⁵¹ The emasculation that Catullus, Veranius and Fabullus experience through their failure to profit – expressed through the metaphor of sexual domination by their *praetors* – is another important aspect connecting these narratives to the story of Attis who castrates himself for a powerful female goddess, but it is outside the scope of this article. See Skinner (2007 [1993]) for an analysis of the themes of political power and sexuality in poem 63 as they relate to Catullus' persona in the Lesbia poems, and see too Lindheim (2021) 39–45, who, in a Lacanian analysis, connects Attis' disintegrating and unstable gender identity when he travels East to the similarly unstable masculinity of the Catullan speaker of poems 10 and 28, who tropes his failure to profit from Roman imperialism on the Bithynia expedition as an experience of sexual subordination.

⁵² Lucretius, e.g., says that the goddess is given 'Phrygian troops as companions' (*Phrygiasque cateruas / comites*, 2.611–12; cf. *comitumque cateruam*, 2.628) and 'armed, they escort the Great Mother' (*Magnam armati Matrem comitantur*, 2.640). See Nauta (2004) 621 and 615 n. 66, for further examples.

⁵³ Cf. Veranius and Fabullus 'the companions of Piso, empty-handed cohort' (*Pisonis comites, cohortis inanis*, 28.1); and Catullus' request that Furius and Aurelius become his 'companions' (*comites Catulli*, 11.1) on a journey that will include the locations of Caesar's recent military campaigns (*ll.* 9–12).

into his province' (*multorum consulum praetorumque praefecturas delatas sic accepit, ut neminem in prouinciam sit secutus*, Att. 6.4).⁵⁴ These parallels are ultimately sharpened by Attis' designation of the *galli* as a 'wandering cohort' (*uaga cohors*, 25) since *cohors* so readily evokes the retinue that followed a provincial governor into his post. While Attis likens his comrades to 'exiles' (l. 14) – perhaps to underscore the permanent and voluntary nature of their divorce from their native land – he also addresses them as though they were his staff on assignment to master Asia.⁵⁵

The Unmanning of Attis

Considering Rome's recent history in Asia and Catullus' depictions of service on provincial cohorts, Attis' journey to Ida may be interpreted through a very Roman lens despite his many Greek attributes. Rome's presence in the East brought great wealth and better access to the rich resources of the Asian landscape, but it also exposed Roman men to a fantastically fertile, effeminising environment. When Attis is transplanted to this landscape at the very beginning of the poem, he is unmanned through his self-castration, but, as we have seen, Catullus' Ida is notable for its absence of human civilisation. In this wilderness where even his companions disappear after they fall asleep on Ida's peak, Attis' unmanning entails a more thorough loss of mastery.

Catullus gives no indication at the outset that his Ida hosts the grazing cattle for which its slopes were known, but animal imagery pervades the poem nonetheless. Sandy has argued that its dominant metaphor is the bovine flock and its leonine predator.⁵⁶ When Attis arrives and touches the grove 'eagerly with hastened foot' (*citato cupide pede*, 2) – as though he were a horse, the animal to which the term 'driven' or 'hastened' (*citatus*) most often applies – animal terms and animalistic language begin to be applied to him and his companions. Line 4, *stimulatus ibi furenti rabie uagus animis*, evokes a series of animals as *stimulatus* suggests oxen and horses, *rabies* connotes dogs, and *uagus*, goats. Attis urges his companions to go to the summit, calling them the goddess' 'wandering herds' (*uaga pecora*, 13) and this is reinforced by the narrator who describes Attis 'wandering' (*uaga*, 31) and compares him to an 'untamed heifer shunning the burden of the yoke' (*iuuenca uitans onus indomita iugi*, 63.33).⁵⁷ Despite the range of animals evoked, our main impression of Attis and the *galli* is that they are like cattle. This extended metaphor of the 'wandering herd' overlaps with that other pattern of imagery used to describe Attis and the *galli* in lines 1–38, the governor and his cohort. The phrases *uaga pecora* (13) and *uaga cohors* (25) occur in the same seat. It is as though the *uaga cohors* become Ida's grazing herd.

⁵⁴ Cf. Cic. *Marcell.* 11; Livy, 29.26.7.

⁵⁵ Dufallo (2021), like Lindheim (2021), appeared too late for me to take his findings fully into account and I have not yet had access to the full text. I am cheered to see that he also finds a connection between Attis' wandering and the Roman imperial endeavour.

⁵⁶ For further evidence, see Sandy (1968), whose extensive analysis of the poem's animalistic language I draw upon in this paragraph.

⁵⁷ Shipton (1986) discusses the poem's *iuuenca* motif.

By portraying them as animals as they rush through the forest towards the summit, Catullus underscores their loss of rationality. Throughout antiquity there was considerable debate about whether nonhuman animals could reason (and if so, which ones possessed this faculty).⁵⁸ The dominant view in the late Republic was that humans were different from other animals because they could reason⁵⁹ – and of course, that some humans were more rational than others.⁶⁰ Aspects of human character that were regarded as negative, especially the appetites, were disparaged as ‘bestial’.⁶¹ The fact that Attis and the *galli* have become irrational beasts mirrors their other losses of masculinity and freedom. This animalistic language continues to describe the group until they reach the summit. Although it is kept in our mind during Attis’ lament when he asks if he will spend his life among wild animals (ll. 53–4, 71–2), in this part of the poem Attis’ rational faculties are highlighted (*reor*, 55; *animus*, 57; *anime*, 61). Attis’ lament is his final moment of freedom, the final moment we can attribute to him anything of Plumwood’s logic of domination.

After Attis’ speech, animalistic language is transferred to Cybele’s lion. Angered by Attis’ desire to flee her control (*mea libere nimis qui fugere imperia cupit*, 80), Cybele releases one of her lions to terrify him back into the ‘wild groves’ (*nemora fera*, 89). This lion reminds us in many ways of Attis earlier in the text. Both are goaded (cf. *stimulatus*, 4 and *stimulans*, 77) and harm themselves for the sake of the goddess: Attis castrates himself, while Cybele urges the lion, ‘slice your back with your tail, suffer your lashes’ (*caede terga cauda, tua uerbera patere*, 81). As the lion prepares to stalk Attis, it is reminiscent of him and the *galli* as they began their ascent of Ida. Concepts like ‘swiftness’ and ‘wandering’ occur in both contexts (‘that beast rouses his mind, urging himself to be swift, / he rushes, he roars, he breaks bushes with his wandering foot’: *ferus ipse sese adhortans rapidum incitat animo / uadit, fremit, refringit uirgulta pede uago*, 85–6; cf. *rapidae ... Gallae*, 34; *uagus*, 4, and *uaga*, 13, 25, 31). The lion is released from his yoke by Cybele (*iuncta iuga resoluens*, 76; *reliquatque iuga manu*, 84) where Attis was like a calf ‘shunning the burden of the yoke’ (*uitans onus... iugi*, 33). Even the shaking of the lion’s russet mane (*rutilam ferox torosa ceruice*

⁵⁸ Sorabji (1993) investigates the opinions of different philosophical schools: some Peripatetics like Theophrastus, the Pythagoreans, and later Platonists including Plutarch and Porphyry argued that animals could reason, while Aristotle, the Stoics, and most Epicureans did not think they could.

⁵⁹ See Foss (2012). Lucretius distinguished between wild and domesticated animals: wild animals who live at their own will (5.855–77, especially *sponte sua*, 872), like the lion, horse, and deer, had *mens* or *animus*.

⁶⁰ Like animals, women and slaves were often excluded from the sphere of rationality in Greek and Roman discourse: e.g., according to Aristotle’s notorious theory of natural slavery (*Pol.* 1.1254b), the domination of the slave by the master, nonhuman animals by human, women by men are all power relationships legitimated by the superior rationality of the free, human male. See Plumwood (1993) 45–7.

⁶¹ For the appetites as ‘the beasts within’, which must be controlled by human rationality, see *Pl. Resp.* 588c–591c, as well as *Arist. Eth. Nic.* 1118a16–26 (where these appetites are also regarded as ‘slavish’ ἀνδραποδώδει; see Foss (2012) 99–100 for these ideas in Sallust and late Republican thought. See Plumwood (1993) 95 for ecofeminist discussion of the Platonic metaphor.

quate *iubam*, 83) may gesture towards the raucous dancing of the traditionally blond *gallus*—though Catullus only partially describes Attis this way.⁶²

By drawing linguistic parallels between Attis and the lion, Catullus underscores the youth's animalistic nature as he wandered to Cybele's high grove,⁶³ but this mirroring also foreshadows their encounter. Earlier literary treatments of encounters between *galli* and lions celebrated the ability of Cybele's devotees to make these ferocious animals harmless. In several Hellenistic epigrams that were undoubtedly important sources for Catullus' poem,⁶⁴ *galli* meet lions and tame them (Alc. Mess. *HE* 21 = *Anth. Pal.* 6.218) or scare them off into the wilderness by playing Cybele's drum (Diosc. *HE* 16 = *Anth. Pal.* 6.220; [Simon.] *HE* 2 = *Anth. Pal.* 6.217; Antip. Sid. *HE* 64 = *Anth. Pal.* 6.219). A fragment from one of Varro's *Menippean Satires*, called 'The Ass [Listens] to the Lyre' (Ὀνος λύρα), records the same kind of interaction. An interlocutor asks, 'Haven't you seen the statue of the lion at Ida in that place where once, as soon as they saw this four-footed beast, the *galli* straight-away made it tame with their drums so that they could touch it with their hands?' (*non uidisti simulacrum leonis ad Idam eo loco ubi quondam subito eum cum uidissent quadrupedem, galli tympanis adeo fecerunt mansuem ut tractarent manibus?* fr. 358 Cèbe = 364 Astbury). The *gallus* overcomes the lion with the power of Cybele's music in these texts, but Catullus offers a darker version where the lion attacks Attis and forces him back into Cybele's grove.⁶⁵ Catullus' wild lion is ultimately the 'enemy of the herd' (*pecoris hostem*, 77) and his supremacy highlights Attis' failure to overcome the Asian environment.

Conclusions: Going Native

Attis is already flawed when he comes to Ida because he has already made the mistake he regrets in his lament: leaving home. As others have shown, this is a youth who did not want to become a fully gendered *uir*.⁶⁶ Nevertheless, once he touches the Phrygian grove, he is progressively stripped of the aspects of the master identity that he does possess – with the loss of his phallus, his rationality, and his freedom, he is made like a *notha mulier*, *iuuenca*, and *famula*. Plumwood's hierarchy of dualisms becomes inverted by the failure of the master to maintain the logic of domination. Unlike a Pompey, Attis fails to conquer the Asian landscape and is instead conquered by it. Like shrubs snaking their

⁶² Attis urges his companions on to the grove 'where the ivy-wearing Maenads forcefully toss their heads' (*ubi capita Maenades ui iaciunt hederigerae*, 23), but there is no mention of blond hair (for which, see Nauta (2004) 608 and e.g. [Simon.] *HE* 2.10 = *Anth. Pal.* 6.217.10). Nauta *ibid.* also adduces the similarity between Lucretius' *galli* 'shaking the terrifying crests on their heads with a nod' (*terrificas capitum quatientes numine cristas*, 2.632) and lions later in the *DRN* 'shaking the terrifying crests on their heads on all sides' (*terrificas capitum quatientes undique cristas*, 5.1315). See also Shipton (1986) 269–70.

⁶³ The parallelism is apparent throughout Sandy's 1968 investigation. See also Clay (1995) 149 for whom the parallelism highlights Attis' 'descent into the savage and the bestial'.

⁶⁴ See Shipton (1987) 144–6; Fantuzzi (2019).

⁶⁵ Fantuzzi (2019).

⁶⁶ Clay (1995) and Skinner (2007 [1993]).

way over bricks, poem 63 represents the power of nature to overwhelm culture.⁶⁷ This is a tale of subversion in which someone who should be a master 'goes native'; a coloniser fails to colonise. The poem inverts the hierarchy of dualisms by telling the story of a cultured, free human male who is enslaved by a wild, female environment. Attis and his companions become the herds of cattle that had long roamed Ida in literature and reality.

The Idaean landscape that accomplishes this is not a cause for concern in the poem. Catullus is no conservationist, and he does not discuss the impact of human activity on the natural environment. Still, Ida was and is a real place and, even in Catullus' time, it had been shaped by people whose attitudes to the natural environment have cast long shadows. It is not certain that lions ever inhabited Ida,⁶⁸ but some fifty years ago local villagers reported seeing badgers, hares, jackals, boar, deer, wild cats 'of some sort', partridges, bears 'in the main massif only', and leopards 'only in the west towards Ayvacık'.⁶⁹ These species remain there today, despite some evidence of indiscriminate hunting,⁷⁰ but their ongoing existence depends upon a healthy habitat. This biodiverse area boasts over eight hundred species of plants, 32 of which are endemic.⁷¹ One of these, the Trojan fir (*Abies nordmanniana* ssp. *equi-trojani*) was the reason that the area was declared a national park in the early nineties.⁷² Despite this protected status, many mining licences have been granted since the early 2000s.⁷³ In 2019 there were large demonstrations against a Canadian gold mining company as it was feared that it was taking far more trees than had initially been permitted and that it was going to use cyanide in the extraction process.⁷⁴ The company has been compelled to halt its activities, but concerns remain about water pollution created by the drilling of

⁶⁷ Ovid's tale of Hermaphroditus offers illuminating parallels. Raised on Mount Ida, this youth (of already ambiguous gender, *Met.* 4.289–91) travels down the coast to Caria, where he is molested by the naiad Salmacis while swimming in a spring; transformed into a hermaphrodite by the gods, the youth curses the spring so that, ever after, young men will be 'softened' by contact with its water (4.383–8). Significantly, in an earlier appraisal of the spring's power, Vitruvius rationalises the story so that colonising Greeks 'soften' the barbarian natives by opening a *taberna* near the spring (*De arch.* 2.8.12). Ovid's tale highlights the power of the natural environment to enervate in a moment, and Vitruvius' account demonstrates how 'nature' can be used in discourse about masculinity and imperial power.

⁶⁸ Woronoff (1989) argues that lions may have inhabited the region, but his evidence is entirely literary.

⁶⁹ According to Cook (1973) 306. Brown (2017) 44 notes that there are still boar, deer, wild cats, foxes, jackals, and bears on Ida.

⁷⁰ Yığıt et al. (2005) discuss a lack of management with respect to the hunting of wild boar and deer.

⁷¹ Uysal (2010) 146; Oztruk et al. (2011) 780.

⁷² Uysal (2010) 141; Ozturk et al. (2011) 779.

⁷³ Alex Macdonald, 'Turkey's Mount Ida: The frontline between mining giants and local people', 9 October 2020, *Middle East Eye*, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/turkey-mount-ida-environment-battleground>

⁷⁴ Macdonald *ibid.*; Miray Gökce and Pelin Ünker, 'Activists fight deforestation in Turkey's Ida mountains', 5 August 2019, *Deutsche Welle*, <https://p.dw.com/p/3NOA5>

another private mining company.⁷⁵ Modern studies in the environmental humanities are often driven by the perception of ecological and climate crisis. Poem 63 may have been driven by fears of a looming political crisis precipitated by powerful individuals greedily taking more money, more land, and more power. When read in concert with poems like 10, 28, 29, and 47, poem 63 emerges as a comment on the folly of imperial forays into the corrupting East.

Acknowledgements. I would like to thank the anonymous reviewers, whose suggestions have greatly improved this article. I am grateful to the participants of the Catullus in the Treehouse conference for their questions and comments on a paper that provided the foundations for this piece. In a conversation made possible by the Australasian Women in Ancient World Studies Mentoring Scheme, Kit Morrell offered expertise on Pompey and the provinces. Rhiannon Evans, Marguerite Johnson, Bob Cowan, and David Konstan read draft versions and offered insightful feedback.

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⁷⁵ Serpil Kurtay, 'Kaz Mountains' water source threatened by yet another drilling project', 25 November 2020, *Duvar English*, <https://www.duvarenglish.com/kaz-mountains-water-source-threatened-by-yet-another-drilling-project-news-55194>

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