

Circles and Landscapes: Ceres' Flight over the Greco-Roman World

Nikoletta Maniotti

University of St Andrews, School of Classics, St Andrews, United Kingdom

nm66@st-andrews.ac.uk

Received: April 2015; accepted: May 2015

Abstract

Ovid's version of Ceres' travels in search for her daughter Proserpina in *Fasti* 4 reflects contemporary geographical views. We note an expansion of horizons that has already happened in Callimachus *Hymn* 6 compared to the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, but is now reaching even further as well as offering more precise information. At the same time Ovid is inspired by Callimachus' pattern of figurative concentric circles (Achelous/Ocean, ever-flowing rivers, well of Callichorus) to create a narrative characterised by figurative and literal circles (one e.g. being Henna, Sicily, the whole world). The *Fasti* version is thus Callimachean without failing to conform to the Roman character of the poem by placing Rome at the climax of the journey, and its world below Ceres' chariot flight.

Keywords

Latin literature – Demeter/Ceres – Ovid's *Fasti* – Callimachus and Ovid – geography in literature

In Ovid's version of the Rape of Proserpina in *Fasti* 4, the goddess Ceres undertakes a worldwide search for her daughter, which includes a flight over the Greco-Roman world.¹ This element of her wanderings is not given much (if any) prominence in earlier extant accounts of the myth such as the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, Callimachus' *Hymn* 6, or even Ovid's other

¹ Translations are by the author with the exception of the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter* (Foley 1994) and Callimachus' *Hymn* 6 (Hopkinson 1984).

narrative in *Metamorphoses* 5. Far from being merely transitional,² or simply serving Ovidian humour,³ Ceres' travels through the air, reflecting as they do contemporary worldviews, are very much at home in the *Fasti*, a poem at once Callimachean and Roman.⁴

In the earliest surviving account of the myth, the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*,⁵ the goddess' travels following the abduction of Persephone are mentioned with minimum detail. At hearing her daughter's cries, 'like a bird' she undertakes a search 'over dry land and sea' (σεύατο δ' ὡστ' οἰωνός, ἐπὶ τραφερὴν τε καὶ ὑγρὴν / μαιομένη, *Hymn Dem.* 43-44); 'for nine days she scours the earth' (ἐννῆμαρ ... κατὰ χθόνα πότνια Δῆω / στρωφᾶτ', 47-48) without eating, drinking or washing (49-50).⁶ She then finds out what happened to Persephone and in her anger she forsakes Olympus to go 'among the cities and fertile fields of men, disguising her beauty for a long time' (ἐπ' ἀνθρώπων πόλιας καὶ πίονα ἔργα / εἶδος ἀμαλδύνουσα πολὺν χρόνον, 93-94).⁷ This second stage of her travels, which eventually leads her to Eleusis (96-97), does not aim at finding her daughter, but comes as a reaction to Zeus' plan for Persephone's marriage to Hades.⁸ In both stages, the emphasis seems to be on time

² Fantham 1998, 174.

³ Murgatroyd 2005, 7; Ceres goes round the whole world not realising that Proserpina is "beneath her feet all the time" (p. 80). Murgatroyd also sees Ovid's display of geographical (and other types of) *doctrina* as serving his wit within the *Fasti* rape narratives (p. 88).

⁴ On Callimachus' *Aetia* and Ovid's *Fasti*, see Hinds 1987; Barchiesi 1997; Knox 2002 (esp. 155-163); Acosta-Hughes 2009, 244-246. On Ovid's reception of Callimachus more generally, see e.g. Tarrant 2002, 21-23; Hunter 2006, 28-40; Acosta-Hughes and Stephens 2012, 257-269.

⁵ Dating to the mid-7th-mid-6th century BC, this is our earliest source for the Eleusinian Mysteries; see Richardson 1974, 12-30, and Foley 1994, 65-71.

⁶ Abstention from food, drink and washing was also undertaken by the initiates to the Eleusinian Mysteries (whether for nine days or not, it is not certain); the idea was "to imitate the sorrow of Demeter" (Richardson 1974, 167). The torches Demeter carries in her search (line 48) were also part of the ritual. On late evidence for a drama re-enacting Persephone's abduction and Demeter's search with torches, see Richardson 1974 *ad* 44ff. and pp. 24-25, 167; Foley 1994, *ad* 90-97.

⁷ Lord 1994, 185 compares Demeter's withdrawal, disfigurement and fasting to that of Homer's Achilles.

⁸ According to Rudhardt 1994, 203, Demeter stops looking for Persephone the moment she finds out that she has been abducted by Hades because she knows that the Underworld is the only place she cannot have access to. See also Foley 1994 *ad* 90-97 and pp. 100-101, on Demeter's reasons for her search.

(έννημαρ; πολὺν χρόνον), as well as on the mortal world (χθόνα; ἐπ’ ἀνθρώπων πόλιος καὶ πίοια ἔργα) to which she withdraws from her divine residence and duties.⁹

In Callimachus’ version, on the other hand,¹⁰ Demeter’s wanderings are specifically aimed at finding Persephone, and they are given in considerably more detail, even though the main theme of *Hymn 6* is the story of Erysichthon (24-115).¹¹ At the start of the poem which is set during a procession in honour of Demeter,¹² the female participants recall the goddess’ search for her daughter, but the narrator decides not to tell the story, as it was one ‘that caused tears to Deo’ (μὴ μὴ ταῦτα λέγωμες ἃ δάκρυον ἄγαγε Δηοῖ, 17).¹³ What he does say in this *praeteritio*, however, is, as expected, more geographically specific than the archaic version.¹⁴

⁹ See Arthur 1994, 223-225; Foley 1994 *ad 22*, pp. 84 and 87-97 on the *Hymn* stressing the Mysteries’ origin in “a unique and complex intersection between mortals and immortals”. On an assessment of recent interpretations of the *Hymn* see Richardson 2011.

¹⁰ Pace Richardson 1974, 69 who sees Callimachus’ hymn as “echo[ing] the Homeric poet’s description of Demeter’s wanderings”; the passages he compares concern her abstention from food, drink and bathing, and the episode at Eleusis, not the travel in search for Persephone. For a detailed comparison of the two texts see Bing 1995, 30-33.

¹¹ As Harder 2012, 90 puts it, Demeter’s wanderings belong to “a picture of a great deal of possible story-space before the narrator settles on [the setting for the Erysichthon tale]”. Acosta-Hughes (2009, 243) points out that the relationship between Ovid’s treatment of Erysichthon in *Met.* 8 and Callimachus’ *Hymn 6* is more striking than that between other Ovidian passages and their counterparts in the *Aetia*. On the two versions see also Murray 2004; Van Tress 2004, 160-190. On Callimachus’ use of Philitas’ elegiac hymn *Demeter* as a model for his *Hymn 6*, see Spanoudakis 2002, 293-299, and Heyworth 2004, 146-153.

¹² The evidence is not sufficient to identify a specific festival or location; according to Hopkinson 1984, 42, it may just be “a purely literary” festival.

¹³ Hinds 1987, 155, n. 28 sees the whole passage as a reference to and dismissal of “the theme of the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* itself”. The motif of Demeter’s tears, which is also present in Ovid’s *Fasti* (4.521-522), is found in Philitas, *Dem.* Fr. 12, but, according to Spanoudakis 2002, 174, the Roman poet “is unlikely to have picked [it] up directly from or through P. [...] when a reference in Call. is at hand”.

¹⁴ Hunter 1992, 10, n.3; perhaps it is not without importance for Callimachus’ interest in geography that Eratosthenes is his younger contemporary and perhaps one of his pupils (Roller 2010, 9). On the treatment of space in Callimachus’ poetry see e.g. Acosta-Hughes and Stephens 2012, 148-203. An intermediate stage in this development, where more detail is given but we still do not have specific place names, is evident in Euripides’ version, sung by the chorus in the *Helen* (1301-1368). Demeter here is said to roam over (unnamed) ‘wooded valleys and rivers’ water streams and the loud-roaring wave of the sea’ (ὕλαεντα νάπη / ποτάμιόν τε χεῦμ’ ὑδάτων / βαρύβρομόν τε κῦμ’ ἄλιον, 1303-1305); she looks

Three references to the goddess' abstention (from drink, 8; from food, drink and washing, 12 and 16) when she was 'going after the traces of her daughter, stolen she knew not whither' (ἀρπαγίμας ὅκ' ἄπυστα μετέστιχεν ἵχνια κώρας, 9) neatly frame two detailed descriptions of her wanderings (10-11 and 13-15). Callimachus' Demeter goes to the West (ἐπι δυθμάς, 10), where also the 'black men' (ἐπι τῶς Μέλανας, 11) and the apples of the Hesperides (τὰ χρύσεια μάλα, 11) are located.¹⁵ She then crosses the 'silver-eddying Achelous' (Ἀχελώιον ἀργυροδῖναν, 13) and each of the 'ever-flowing river[s]' (14) three times, before sitting down (again three times) at the well of Callichorus (ἐπι Καλλιχόρω ... φρητί, 15) which is situated at Eleusis.¹⁶

Like the Homeric *Hymn*, this narrative of wanderings reaches its climax at the most important site in terms of Demeter's cult. We could visualise the wanderings as a series of concentric circles, with Achelous, sometimes considered the most important river,¹⁷ as the outer frame, the other "ever-flowing rivers" of the world forming further inner circles, and the centre taken up by the smallest waterscape which at the same time is the most important to the cult, namely the well of Callichorus.¹⁸ In fact, Achelous could sometimes be identified with the Ocean, the great body of water often imagined as a river, circling the earth, and it would

for Persephone 'after yoking a chariot to a team of wild beasts' (θηρῶν ὄτε ζυγίους / ζευξάσα θεᾶ σατίνας, 1310-1311), together with Artemis and Athena (there is no indication that they were flying, as Ceres does in *Fasti*—see below); and then she ceases her 'pain of swift wanderings' (δρομαῖον ... πολυπλάνητον ... πόνον, 1319-1320) to retire to Mount Ida. Demeter's wanderings appear as the topic of a number of Orphic poems, and feature in our most extensive fragment (*Orph. fr.* 49 Kern); see Richardson 1974, 77-86.

¹⁵ Hopkinson 1984 *ad* 10, *ad* 11; perhaps an indication of southwest and northwest?

¹⁶ The number three and its multiples are used in both the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* and Callimachus' *Hymn* 6 (Henrichs 1993, 139; Van Tress 2004, 169-170); Callimachus' goddess acts more repetitively than her archaic counterpart, which "magnifies the futility of her search as well as the intensity of her grief" (Henrichs, *ibid.*). Heyworth 2004, 153 suggests that this repetition, taken along the refusal to tell the story in line 17, may indicate Callimachus' rejection of three previous accounts of the myth (perhaps the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, Philitas' elegiac, and Philicus' choriambic hymn).

¹⁷ Homer compares the power of Zeus to that of Achelous and Ocean (*Il.* 21.193-197), and fifth century historian Acusilaus says that Achelous was the most honoured of Ocean's offspring (Acusilaus, *FGrHist* 1a. 2. F 1 Jacoby). See D'Alessio 2004 on a discussion of the Homeric passage and its textual problems. Cameron 2012, 153 merely mentions Ocean as having "riverine characteristics" and "in mythology regarded as the father of all rivers".

¹⁸ For a visualisation based on actual linear movement, see Hunter 1992, 10, n. 3.

make more sense in this context to think of Ocean rather than a river in Western Greece.¹⁹ Callimachus' Demeter, therefore, extends her search for her daughter to the edges of the world as they were imagined in Hellenistic times. Whereas Alexander's expedition revealed new territories to the East, the West still largely remained a mysterious land which in people's minds was identified only as the setting of mythical events such as Heracles' retrieval of the golden apples,²⁰ and the Ocean was still the furthest limit (at least in some directions),²¹ uncrossed even by Alexander himself.²² Demeter moves within these boundaries, but as a goddess she is also allowed to cross them—to no avail, as her daughter is not to be found *on* the earth.

Before we turn to Ovid, a couple of brief 1st century versions can be considered which show a further development to Callimachus' way of telling the myth. The accounts of Diodorus and Cicero, modelled on Timaeus (4th-3rd century BC)²³ and produced in a Roman environment, explicitly locate Proserpina's rape in Sicily²⁴ as well as expand on Ceres' wanderings in line with a new, Roman worldview. In Diodorus, Demeter searches for her daughter in 'many parts of the inhabited world' (ἐπὶ πολλὰ μέρη τῆς οἰκουμένης, D.S. 5.4.3); notably, the geographical term *oikoumene* is now used to indicate the setting of the goddess' travels.²⁵ The historian mentions the tragic poet Carcinus as one of his predecessors (and probably our first source for the Sicilian setting);²⁶ in the lines Diodorus quotes from Carcinus,

¹⁹ Hopkinson 1984, *ad* 13 (though he finds the evidence for this identification "not entirely convincing"); D'Alessio 2004, 31.

²⁰ There is second-hand evidence of exploratory trips by the Phoenician Himilco (5th century?) and the Greek Pytheas of Marseille (around 300 BC?) who is said to have sailed around the Iberian Peninsula to the British Isles and beyond. See Romm 1992, 20-23 and 197-198 (on Polybius' and Strabo's questioning of Pytheas' reliability).

²¹ Herodotus dismissed the archaic notion of a river Ocean encircling the whole world, but later authors such as Eratosthenes and Strabo went back to that idea. See the discussion in Romm 1992, 9-44.

²² Alexander was credited with planning to, or even actually penetrating the Ocean in various legends emerging after his death; Romm 1992, 138 cites Luc. 10.36-41 as an example of such plans to explore the West!

²³ Richardson 1974, 77; Hinds 1987, 53.

²⁴ Hunter 1992, 10, n. 3 and 11, n. 4 suggests that Callimachus too places the rape in a Sicilian setting.

²⁵ Herodotus is among the first to use the *oikoumene* as a geographical term that then became widespread, meaning the inhabited and therefore known world, "the space within which empirical investigation [...] can take place, since all of its regions fall within the compass either of travel or of informed report" (Romm 1992, 37).

²⁶ Richardson 1974, 76-77.

Demeter is described as ‘traversing the whole earth’ in search for her daughter (ἐπελθεῖν πᾶσαν ἐν κύκλῳ χθόνα, 5.5.1). Similarly, Cicero’s version describes Ceres as ‘wander[ing] over the whole inhabited world’ (*orbem omnem peragrasse terrarum*, *Verr.* 2.4.106), using *orbis terrarum*, the Latin equivalent to οἰκουμένη. Although neither version gives specific place names, there is in both an unmistakable emphasis on a world-wide search. The myth is essentially the same, but it now reflects the expanded geographical knowledge of the Roman world.

Ovid deals with the myth twice,²⁷ in both cases establishing a dialogue with the Homeric *Hymn*.²⁸ There is however a crucial difference between the two versions as far as the description of Ceres’ travels goes. In the *Metamorphoses* the mother searches for her daughter ‘in all lands, in all seas’ (*omnibus est terris, omni quaesita profundo*, 5.439), and meticulously covers all ground from East to West, not even allowing the fall of darkness to impede her efforts (*Met.* 5.440-445). To stress this comprehensive coverage, Ovid uses references not only to space (439) but also to time (*illam non udis ueniens Aurora capillis / cessantem uidit, non Hesperus*, ‘Neither Aurora, arriving with her wet hair, saw her cease nor did Hesperus’, 440-441; *natam / solis ab occasu solis quaerebat ad ortus*, ‘she was searching for her daughter from sunset to sunrise’, 444-445). What is interestingly missing is any reference to place names other than those pertaining to the scene of the rape, Sicily. Aetna (442) provides fire for her torches, and the Sicilian setting is mentioned again when she comes back from her world-wide search. After wandering over unnamed ‘lands and seas’ (*per terras et ... undas*, 462), the focus narrows from the whole world (*orbis*, 463) to the whole of Sicily (*Sicaniam repetit ... omnia lustrat eundo*, 464) to the specific locality of Cyane’s pool (*uenit et ad Cyanen*, 465). This reminds us of Callimachus’ successive focus from the greatest river Achelous/all-encompassing Ocean to the ‘ever-flowing rivers’ of the world to the Eleusinian well of Callichorus. But unlike Callimachus, Ovid does not tell us where exactly in the world she goes. It is the later poem *Fasti* that provides him with an opportunity to enumerate all the places lying between *solis occasus* and *solis ortus* that in the *Metamorphoses* he so wittily “passed over”.²⁹

In the *Fasti* Ceres first goes round Sicily on foot (*Fast.* 4.461-462, 467-480), thus reversing the order of the *Metamorphoses*. Her itinerary is to a certain extent inspired by

²⁷ As Fantham 2002, 38 puts it, “a myth so significant for cult and so popular that it was told twice by Ovid”; see Hinds 1987, and more recently Murgatroyd 2005, 249-252, for a comparison between the two versions.

²⁸ As Hinds 1987, has shown.

²⁹ Hinds 1987, 82-83 and 155, n. 31.

Aeneas' part-circumnavigation of Sicily in *Aeneid* 3.³⁰ It is a wonderful expansion of her description in the *Metamorphoses* that she 'roamed the whole of Sicily on foot' (5.464), complete with epic catalogues, Hellenistic erudition, and an emphasis on comprehensive coverage once again. It culminates in Ceres' visit to all three corners of Trinacria, the 'three-cornered island' (*iamque Peloriadem Lilybaeaeque, iamque Pachynon / lustrarat, terrae cornua trina suae*, 'And now she had surveyed Pelorias and Lilybaeum, now Pachynos, the three horns of her land', *Fast.* 4.479-480).³¹ She also lights her torches on Aetna (491-494),³² and arrives at a remote cave where she has parked her chariot,³³ to which she yokes her dragons and takes to the skies (495-498).

But so far Demeter/Ceres' search for her daughter had been undertaken on foot (or at least we were not told explicitly of a means of transport). Certainly, gods and heroes flying or riding chariots is a motif we find frequently in Greek epic and tragedy,³⁴ and even more frequently in Ovid where such scenes are almost always accompanied by a description of what they see. In the *Metamorphoses* alone we have 8 instances of gods and heroes flying,³⁵ and as many instances of gods and heroes riding chariots through the air,³⁶ including Ceres.

³⁰ Aeneas sails from the land of the Cyclopes to Drepanum (Fantham 1998 *ad* 467-80).

³¹ Interestingly, Diodorus mentions the three promontories, in this order, immediately before he embarks on the story of Ceres and Proserpina, as part of a section describing the dimensions of the island of Sicily (5.2.2). We could perhaps see Ovid's Ceres almost like a surveyor as she walks her island from end to end, described in both versions with the same verb, *lustrare* (cf. *omnia lustrat eundo*, *Met.* 5.464). A similar role is assigned to Dis who comes out to inspect the damage on Sicily after Typhoeus' demise, and as he walks around the island (*ambibat Siculae cautus fundamina terrae*, *Met.* 5.361), with a little help from Venus he falls in love at first sight with Proserpina.

³² The lighting of the torches, the breaking of her fast in the evening (535-536), and possibly also the drink she prepares for the sick child (547-548) are the only references to ritual in the narrative, and they described Greek practice, as Fantham 2002, 39 and n. 50 points out.

³³ On the cave scene's intertextual link to Virgil's *Georgics* (Proteus' cave) see Murgatroyd 2005, 106-107.

³⁴ Examples in Homer include Aphrodite (borrowing Ares' chariot and horses, *Il.* 5.358-369), Hera and Athena (riding on a chariot together, 5.720-777), Zeus (riding on a chariot, 8.41-50), and Hermes (flying, *Od.* 5.44-58). Medea rides a chariot to escape at the end of Euripides' homonymous play.

³⁵ Mercury (Book 2), Perseus (Book 4), Minerva (Book 5), Boreas (Book 6), Daedalus and Icarus (Book 8), Hymenaeus (Book 10), Apollo, and Morpheus (both in Book 11).

³⁶ Phaethon (Book 2; horse-drawn), Medea (Book 7 twice, dragons), a nameless Oread (Book 8, borrowing Ceres' chariot of dragons), Venus (Book 10, swans, and 14, doves), and Mars (Book 14, horses).

That comes at the end of the narrative in *Metamorphoses* 5, where she is described yoking precisely a chariot of snakes and flying to Athens (642-645).³⁷ On that occasion, however, it was not to search for her daughter, but, after Proserpina was safely found, to teach Triptolemus the art of agriculture. Like Ceres' other travels in the *Metamorphoses*, this too is seriously abbreviated: within a line and a half from take-off she has landed. We are not told very much about her route,³⁸ though it is obvious that it begins in Sicily where she has just finished listening to Arethusa's story. The only indications are her course 'through the air midway between the sky and the earth' (*medium caeli terraeque per aera uecta est*, 644) and her destination, Athens (*Tritonida ... in urbem*, 645).³⁹

Ceres' destination in the *Fasti* is also Athens, and she also reaches it pretty quickly, only four lines later (4.499-502) which might make us expect a similar treatment of the wanderings as that given in the *Metamorphoses*. But this is not the case, as the journey is described in precise geographical and literary detail, and it certainly does not end there. Her arrival in Attica is followed by the Eleusinian episode (503-560) that is well-known from other versions (in particular the Homeric *Hymn*), and then Ceres resumes her flight (561-562) which takes her over various places on the earth (563-572) and finally to heaven (575-576). The expansion in space as well as detail of her geographical coverage is evident, but as expected from Ovid, this is not the end of the story.

The departure from Athens in the second stage of Ceres' worldwide search includes a number of elements that point back to her departure from Sicily, thus creating a kind of circularity in the narrative, which matches other such patterns in the episode. As the goddess leaves Athens, the Peloponnese is described as 'the shore that lies on the right side' (*in dextrum quae iacet ora latus*, 564). This riddle reminds us of an earlier one, again in the context of a departure: one of the maritime dangers that Ceres avoids on leaving Sicily was 'you, Nisaeans dogs, shipwreck-causing monsters' (*et uos, Nisaei, naufraga monstra, canes*, 500); in other words, Scylla. Guessing the reference was easy then, as the line itself evokes

³⁷ Cf. *Fast.* 4.497-498 *frenatos curribus angues / iungit* ('she yokes bridled snakes to her chariot') to *Met.* 5.642-643 *geminos dea fertilis angues / curribus admouit frenisque coercuit ora* ('the plentiful goddess attaches two snakes to her chariot and restrains their mouths with bridles').

³⁸ Unlike other examples of flights in the poem.

³⁹ Not by chance, in a narrative with Minerva as the external audience (the retelling of the song contest between the Muses and the daughters of Pierus, in which the story of Ceres and Proserpina was the winning entry of the former group), the city is designated by its patron goddess' epithet.

not one but both mythical figures with that name,⁴⁰ and, in addition to that, two further dangers are listed (Charybdis and the Syrtes, 499) which often accompany Scylla in Latin poetry.⁴¹ Here the reader needs to know the geography of the Greek world well enough to be able to tell which land is meant by Ovid's riddle which gives no further clues. Similarly demanding is Callimachus' own riddle in the corresponding part of the myth, where Demeter is said to be wandering west 'as far as the black men and where the golden apples grow' (*h.* 6.11).

As in Sicily, now Ceres leaves behind (*linquit, Fast.* 4.564; cf. *effugit*, 499) a number of locations, but the dangers of the Syrtes, Charybdis and Scylla seem to be in direct contrast with the safety of Piraeus' harbour (*Piraeaque tuta recessu*, 563). Yet, this part of the world also has its dangers: the shores of the Saronic Gulf host all the monsters and bandits that Theseus has to face, enumerated in detail by Ovid himself elsewhere.⁴² Sunion (563) is where Aegeus falls to his death, and the mention of the sea named after him immediately afterwards (*Aegaeum*, 565) may encourage this association. In fact, the Aegean is not the only sea mentioned here that was renamed following death; the Icarian (*Icariumque*, 566) bears the name of an unlucky flying traveller, which would perhaps be a bit too poignant in this context were Ceres not a goddess. This is actually explained earlier in the same book of the *Fasti*, in the description of Cybele's journey by boat in the opposite direction.⁴³ Even though the name of the Ionian (*Ioniumque rapax*, 566) does not derive from a similar event, it has a double association with the shores of Sicily, and consequently with the dangers it harbours: its adjective, *rapax*, has been used in Latin poetry, including Ovid's earlier works, to define none

⁴⁰ *Nisaei* points to the Megarean Scylla, daughter of Nisus, while *canes* to the Odyssean monster; the two were identified since Virgil's *Eclogues* (6.74-76). Ovid treats the two myths as separate in the *Metamorphoses*, in Books 8 and 14 respectively.

⁴¹ *quod mare conceptum spumantibus exspuit undis, / quae Syrtis, quae Scylla rapax, quae uasta Charybdis* (Catul. 64.155-156); *quid Syrtes aut Scylla mihi, quid uasta Charybdis / profuit?* (Verg. *A.* 7.302-303); also in Ov. *Am.* 2.11.18-20. The playful nature of the passage is encouraged by the adjective *Zanclaea*, used not only to locate Charybdis on the Sicilian coast near Messina (= Zancle), but also to point to the earlier Sicilian wanderings where precisely Zancle was concealed under 'the place which has the name of the curved sickle' (*qui locus curuae nomina falcis habet*, 474).

⁴² *Met.* 7.433-450.

⁴³ *transit et Icarium, lapsas ubi perdidit alas / Icarus, et uastae nomina fecit aquae* '[Cybele] passed the Icarian sea, where Icarus lost his fallen wings and named the vast waters' (*F.* 4.283-284). Ceres' trip partly reverses Cybele's (Fantham 1998 *ad* 281). For the links between Cybele, Ceres and Venus in *Fasti* 4, see Green 2002.

other than Scylla.⁴⁴ In addition to that, Sicily is sometimes described in Latin texts as washed wholly or in part by the waters of the Ionian Sea.⁴⁵

By means of repetition, both of a riddle and of maritime dangers left behind, the departure from Athens almost restarts Ceres' journey. Unlike the earlier departure, however, the description of the Peloponnese here encourages us to think in terms of direction of travel, which in this case is not as straightforward as when Ceres left Sicily. The goddess is not to be imagined to move in a linear way, or at least the seas in lines 565-566 (*hinc init Aegaeum, quo Cycladas aspicit omnes, / Ioniumque rapax Icariumque legit*, 'From here she enters the Aegean, from where she catches sight of all the Cyclades, and she passes the wild Ionian and the Icarian') are not mentioned in order of access as that would mean double-backing on herself: the Aegean and Icarian are east of Athens⁴⁶ but the Ionian is west. The presence of all three seas could be justified by their associations with the dangers discussed above; and after all as a goddess Ceres could have a synoptic view of all three at once, as easily as she can see 'all of the Cyclades' (565). But I argue that the position of the seas in Ovid's narrative complies with their actual topography as presented in geographic texts of the Early Empire.

The Cyclades provide the solution, at the same time offering by their very nature another circular pattern: the islands that take their name from their arrangement in a circle⁴⁷ are themselves circled in the line by seas: the Aegean (565), the Ionian and the Icarian (566). When Pliny gives the coordinates of the archipelago (together with the Sporades) he specifies that the islands 'lie circled to the east by the Asian coasts of the Icarian Sea ... to the north by the Aegean Sea, to the south by the Cretan and Carpathian Seas' (*Cyclades ... ab oriente litoribus Icaris Asiae ... a septentrione Aegaeo mari, a meridie Cretico et Carpathio inclusae ... iacent*, *Nat.* 4.71.10-13). Earlier, he tells us that 'the Greeks divide the Ionian Sea into the

⁴⁴ Catul. 64.156 (quoted in n. 41 above); Ovid (*Ep.* 12.123, Medea's letter); *Met.* 7.65, Medea's monologue; also in ps.-Verg. *Culex* 331. *rapax* elsewhere describes rivers, seas, fire, and force.

⁴⁵ Wholly: Lucr. 1.717-721; on its east coast: Mela 2.117.1-3. Strabo, on the other hand, describes the Ionian as the lowest part of the Adriatic, with which it shares its mouth in the area between Illyria and Aquileia (2.5.20, 7.5.9). The earliest reference to his unfinished and unpublished *Geography*, however, dates from 120 AD (Dionysius Periegetes; see Diller 1975, 7); the work was not widely read and lay in obscurity until the 6th century AD (Clarke 1999, 194).

⁴⁶ Pace Fantham 1998 ad 283-284 who places the Icarian Sea "west of Crete"; Bömer 1951 ad 4.283 locates it correctly between Samos and Myconos (= Plin. *Nat.* 4.50.11-12: *Icarium, quod est inter Samum et Myconum*).

⁴⁷ As explained e.g. by Mela: *quia in orbem iacent Cyclades dictae* '[they] are called the Cyclades because they lie in a circle' (2.111.5).

Sicilian and the Cretan' (*Graeci et Ionium diuidunt in Siculum ac Creticum*, 4.50.10-11).⁴⁸ If we combine these two notices, the topography matches that of Ceres' flight as she leaves Athens and looks down on the Cyclades in a due east course: the Aegean to the north and to her left, the Ionian (its Cretan part) to the south-west and to her right, and the Icarian to the east, straight ahead as she heads towards Asia Minor, which she reaches in the following line (567).

From here on, the route is 'varied' (*diuersum*, 568) and direction changes from one line to the next. Like Callimachus' Demeter, Ceres' wanderings take her to the edges of the known world: Arabia and India to the east (569), and recently rediscovered Meroe alongside Libya and the Sahara to the south (570),⁴⁹ before her travels bring her closer to (Ovid's) home:⁵⁰ *nunc adit Hesperios Rhenum Rhodanumque Padumque / teque, future parens, Thybri, potentis aquae* ('now she reaches the Hesperian rivers, the Rhine, the Rhone and the Po, and you Tiber, future begetter of powerful waters', 575-576). In fact, her trip reaches its climax in Gaul and Italy in almost the same words as did that of Phaethon in the *Metamorphoses*,⁵¹ but in her case there is no destruction of the earth,⁵² and no impending punishment. The Roman expansion has created a wider worldview than the Hellenistic poet had access to, and this is reflected in Ceres' travels. The West is no longer a land of myth, but one of famous rivers—after all, for the Romans the Hellenistic 'West' is now centre, Hesperia is their home.

Ovid's Ceres comes almost full-circle, back to (roughly) the same part of the world where she began her search, as she reaches the future site of Rome (like Aeneas) at 572. At this climactic moment our poet realises he has to stop: *quo feror?*⁵³ *inmensum est erratas dicere terras: / praeteritus Cereri nullus in orbe locus* ('Where am I carried away? It is immense to

⁴⁸ Strabo calls the sea defined by Sicily to the west and Crete/Peloponnese to the east "Sicilian", and understands the Ionian as part of the Adriatic (2.5.20).

⁴⁹ Fantham 1998 *ad* 570.

⁵⁰ As Green 2002, 89 argues, the alternation of fire and water in the whole episode is also prominent in this section of Ceres' wanderings: from the fire of her torches, as well as the heat of Arabia, India and Africa, to the (cool) fountains of Sicily, the seas of Greece and Asia Minor, and the rivers of Gaul and Italy.

⁵¹ Cf. *Hesperiosque amnes, Rhenum Rhodanumque Padumque / cuique fuit rerum promissa potentia, Thybrin* 'the western rivers as well [were dried up], the Rhine and the Rhone and the Padus; lastly the Tiber, destined one day to be lord of the world' (*Met.* 2.258-259).

⁵² In this version she does not vent her anger with a famine as she does in the *Metamorphoses*.

⁵³ We may find this question surprising, given that the succession of rivers in lines 572-573 can only lead to Rome.

tell of all the wandered lands; no place on earth was left out by Ceres', 573-574). Ovid here repeats himself by stating that it is impossible to tell of all the lands that Ceres has visited; compare his refusal to do so in the *Metamorphoses* (*quas dea per terras et quas errauerit undas, / dicere longa mora est. quaerenti defuit orbis*, 5.462-463), although in that case the claim to *praeteritio* was genuine. *Fasti's* Ceres covered the entire world in her wanderings, and left no place out (4.574) a phrase conveying a feeling similar to the second half of line 463 in the *Metamorphoses* passage, as well as inviting comparison with the actual omission of all details of the journey there. The pun in the use of *praetereo* is well-noted.⁵⁴ As a goddess, Ceres does not leave anything out; the mortal poet cannot compete: *immensum est*, which is crucially different from *longa mora est* as it emphasises not so much time as effort but also space ('immeasurable'). At the same time it is not really a *praeteritio* when he has spent so many lines telling us where she has travelled.

The use of *orbis* to round off the flight section of Ceres' earthly search evokes the earlier summary at the end of the Sicilian search on foot, where the three corners of the island (Pelorias, Lilybaeum, and Pachynus) are mentioned to show its comprehensive coverage. Now that Ceres has travelled the world, *orbis (terrarum)* is the most suitable term in a text so rich in geographic detail. *orbis* is very frequent in Ovid's works,⁵⁵ and occurs earlier in the *Fasti* in a couple of much-quoted lines that convey the idea of Roman universal dominion achieved during the Augustan era, identifying Augustus as *pater orbis*, and Rome with the whole world.⁵⁶ So the *orbis* that Ceres of the *Fasti* flies over is the same Roman world that Ovid's poem is set to memorialise. But *orbis* is also suitable because of the round shape the word evokes, particularly fitting in a narrative full of circular patterns.

Consequently, Callimachus' model operates on many levels, and not just through the *Aetia*. Here *Hymn 6* clearly offers a precedent in terms of the expansion of geographical

⁵⁴ Hinds 1987, 155-156, n. 31. Cf. Ceres' *praeteritio* of Cyane at *Fast.* 4.469 which is Ovid's passing-over of the fountain in the *Fasti* whereas he had his character stop there in the *Metamorphoses* (Hinds 1987, 82-83).

⁵⁵ With the meaning 'earth'/'world' it occurs twenty-four times from the *Amores* to the *Fasti* (and we note similar frequency in Ovid's exile poetry too). Of these *Am.* 1.15.26, *Met.* 15.435, and *Fast.* 5.93 describe Rome as *caput orbis*.

⁵⁶ *tu pater orbis eras*, 'You have long been Father of the World' (*Fast.* 2.130); *Romanae spatium est urbis et orbis idem*, 'Rome's city and the world are the same space' (684); Nicolet, 1991, 43-44, 114; Romm, 1992, 121-122.

coverage on the goddess' search,⁵⁷ which Ovid extends ever further, in line with the knowledge and experience of his own times. The Hellenistic tradition of geographical detail in literature is here appropriated and Romanised, not least through the climactic position of Rome in the narrative, and the links to specifically Roman parts of the poem. The *Hymn's* riddle and repetitive pattern generates more riddles and repeated circularity in the *Fasti*, but Ovid reverses the model as well as amplifying it. Callimachus' brief version of Demeter's travels encompasses the whole world to then narrow down the focus to individual rivers and finally to the well of Callichorus at Eleusis. For her part, Ovid's goddess sets off from Henna, 'the navel of Sicily' as Cicero describes it,⁵⁸ to visit the whole of Sicily, and then soar (literally) over the entire Greco-Roman world.⁵⁹

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⁵⁷ Fantham 1998, 15 argues for an influence from *Hymn* 5 in the wanderings section of the *Fasti*, but I fail to see how a catalogue of places in central Greece that Athena and Chariclo visit on a horse-drawn chariot (5.60-64) can compare to the worldwide search for Proserpina undertaken by Ceres alone, flying through the air on her chariot of dragons.

⁵⁸ *qui locus, quod in media est insula situs, umbilicus Siciliae nominator*, 'a place which, because it is situated in the centre of the island, is called the navel of Sicily' (*Ver.* 2.4.106).

⁵⁹ This paper was first presented at the workshop *Landscape, Language and Metaphor* (St Andrews, 11 March 2015). I am grateful to the participants, as well as to the *Mnemosyne* reviewers, for their comments and suggestions. I am also indebted to the Leverhulme Trust for their generous Early Career Fellowship, the first year of which gave rise to this paper.

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