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Area Maior: The Functions of Venus in Ovid's Fasti IV

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Area Maior: The Functions of Venus in Ovid's Fasti IV

Senior Project Submitted to
The Division of Languages and Literature
of Bard College

by
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Introduction

The stately themes and calendric form of the *Fasti* mark a radical shift in the identity of Ovid, the former love elegist. While much of Ovid's early fame results from his *Amores*, *Ars Amatoria*, and *Remedia Amoris*, the voice of eroticism that characterizes these works has a more complicated role within the moral framework of the *Fasti*. The inspired poet instead chooses to direct his authorial ambitions towards an *area maior* (Ov. Fast. 4.10), poetic territory distinct from his earlier compositions in respect to their objectively 'greater' themes of patriotism, origination, tradition, and legacy¹.

The *Fasti*'s six books are respectively comprised of the first six months of the year, relating astronomical events, and festivals and their rites on the days they occur, along with the mythologies associated with each celebration's origin. *Fasti IV* describes the month of April, designating as the month's patroness Venus, the muse of Ovid's earlier love elegy. It has been attested by the *Fasti* scholar Barchiesi that "there are no great traditions of Venus worship in April, and it could be argued that Ovid has forcibly carved out a place for her in the calendar."² I argue that far more than "carving out a place" for Venus in the *Fasti*, Ovid has intricately woven her into the the book's fabric, so much so that the calendar-poem's primary directive of tracing and relating the origins of Rome's festivals is entirely contingent upon Venus' initial and continued patronage. By presenting April in terms of this new representation of Venus, Ovid aids in understanding the social place and permissibility of sexual themes in Rome towards the end of Augustus' reign³. Love thematically unifies the otherwise disjointed days

¹ Both the translation and analysis are referencing the text of the Loeb *Fasti*, Frazer (1989).

² Barchiesi (1997: 56)

³ The *Fasti* was published in 8 AD, four years before the death of Augustus, Fantham, (1998: 3).

and rites of April in the *Fasti* by assuming the divine form of Venus, who functions as the originative force that ‘opens up’ the natural world. Here, the tendencies of early Roman elegy to shame promiscuity yield to this more refined treatment of love; one that designates a societal role for varied forms of female sexuality with special attention given to rites for mothers, brides, daughters, virgins, and prostitutes.

This attention given to the progenitive force of women throughout *Fasti IV* results in one cohesive image of April’s festivals whose rites and feasts reflect the fertility of the season. Ovid uses Venus as a binding agent for April’s rites, uniting their disconnected aspects under one unifying concept: that love is imperial, and has a place within the context of state and religious affairs. As elegy’s treatment of love matures into this *area maior*, so too do its proponents: in the *Fasti*, author, muse, and content all function in service of the imperial and religious state. Green notes “the fundamental role of exegesis (multiple interpretation) in a religion which has no underlying orthodoxy. As such, it is argued that Roman religion was not something concrete, tangible, and external, to which literature related faithfully or otherwise, but that literature had a central role in articulating the dynamics of the religious experience of the Romans”⁴. The present examination of *Fasti IV* aims to interpret the month of April in terms of themes of origination, love, and maternity as provided by Venus in the book’s proem, and infer ways in which Ovid’s treatment of these themes may define the role of female sexuality within the religious experience of the Romans.

Ovid and Elegy

⁴ Green (2008: 39).

Following the precedents of Callimachus' now-fragmented *Aitia* and Propertius' *Elegies*, among others, Ovid writes his calendar-poem in elegiac couplets despite the themes of his poem being arguably more suited for dactylic hexameter. In his ambitious aim to expand the capability of elegy, Ovid perhaps plays to the expectations of his audience by closely engaging himself with Venus, the spokesgoddess of elegy. The language of the poem, however, contrasts the elegiac genre and plays with the tension of content and form, reminiscent of the introduction to his *Amores* (1.1-4):

*Arma gravi numero violentaque bella parabam
Edere, materia conveniente modis.
Par erat inferior versus – risisse Cupido
Dicitur atque unum surripuisse pedem.*

In a serious rhythm I was preparing to tell of arms and violent wars,
The material harmonizing with the meter.
The lower line was equal - It is Cupid, they say,
That laughed and snatched away a foot!

As evidenced by the *Amores*' introduction, long before the composition of the *Fasti* there existed for Ovid an overt tension between the genres of epic and elegy. It seems, too, that Ovid does not overlook Virgil's monopoly on the themes of epic. Opening the *Amores* with the charged *arma* recalls the militant first words of the *Aeneid*, in whose light most Roman treatments of such a theme would now pale. The poet, though initially raring to try his hand at epic verse, reportedly failed at the whim of elegy's patron. Herbert-Brown notes a major challenge faced by Roman poets after 19 BC: "epic was dead, who would rival Virgil on his own ground?"⁵ If one assumes the *Fasti*'s last six books⁶ to be about the same length as the

⁵ Herbert-Brown (1994: 5).

⁶ There is evidence that the *Fasti* was intended to be twelve books, corresponding to the twelve months of the year, but only six of the potential twelve survive; Newlands (1995: 211-12).

extant six, the estimated 9862 lines of Ovid's calendar poem would be comparable to the 9896 lines of Virgil's iconic *Aeneid*. In contrast to the voice of the *Amores*' Ovid, who failed in the composition of epic either in the futility of Virgil's wake or in accordance with his own identity as a love elegist, the authorial voice in the *Fasti* reveals a poet complying far more with his own directive than being swayed by any rival. His own simultaneous composition of the hexametric *Metamorphoses* adds a further element of complexity to epic's pre-existing tension with his elegiac *Fasti*. Despite this, he both endeavors into new territory with the *Fasti* and explicitly states that he is doing so, with full recognition of elegy's former limitations (2.3):

Nunc primum velis, elegi, maioribus itis.

“Now for the first time, elegiac verses, go with greater sails.”

The evolution of the elegiac genre is no foreign concept to Ovid, and his poetic career has prepared him for, and even propelled the course of, the culmination of elegy and its peripheral themes. With each collection of Ovid's elegies a new potential for the genre is realized; his *Heroides* listed fictitious letters of legendary lovers, his *Amores* charted new depths of describable emotion, and in the *Fasti* his elegy swells with more serious matters of religion and state.

The Proem (lines 1-132)

Ovid grants Venus, the former muse of his love elegy, a seat in the proem of *Fasti IV*, the book of the *Fasti* which describes the festivals of April and the mythologies behind their rites. The initial engagement with the *Fasti*'s Venus can be divided into four steps: 1) Ovid introduces Venus as the conventional goddess of erotic themes (lines 1-8), 2) Ovid denies that the *Fasti* uses such themes (9-10), 3) Ovid reintroduces the 'state' themes of the *Fasti* to the

poem's program (11-12), and 4) Venus' identity is then articulated in respect to these themes (13-18). The first impression of Venus, her invocation, and her epithet, are points of friction within the thematic context of the *Fasti* (4.1-8):

*'Alma, fave', dixi 'geminorum mater Amorum';
 ad vatem voltus rettulit illa suos;
 'quid tibi' ait 'mecum? Certe maiora canebas.
 Num vetus in molli pectore volnus habes?'*
*'scis, dea', respondi 'de volnere.' Risit, et aether
 protinus ex illa parte serenus erat.
 'Saucius an sanus numquid tua signa reliqui?
 Tu mihi propositum, tu mihi semper opus.*

"Favor me," I said, "Nourishing Mother of the twin Loves!"
 She turned her gaze towards the bard
 And asked, "What have you to do with me? Surely you were singing better things?
 Is there some old wound in your tender heart?"
 "Goddess..." I replied, "you know of the wound." She laughed, and the sky
 At once turned serene in her direction.
 Wounded or well, did I ever abandon your standard?
 You were always my proposed work, you were always my burden.

The interchange between the bard and the beauty is a stark contrast to the proem featuring Mars in *Fasti III*, in which Ovid exclusively references the god of war through invocation without any direct dialogue. Venus not only answers to the supplication of Ovid, but enters into a playful conversation with him as well. The tone of the exchange is on Venus' part teasing, and on Ovid's part suppliant. Ovid, however, does not beg her favor from any small position; his request as a *vates* is for the imperial knowledge privy only to the gods, for which he consults his dearest divinity. Venus' first words of the *Fasti* (*quid tibi... mecum*) are coy, but not ignored; if the preexistence of Ovid's personal relationship with the goddess was at all in question, he affirms his devotion to Venus with *tu mihi propositum, tu mihi semper opus*, the emphatic force of which lies in the repetition of the coupled '*tu mihi*,' affectionately answering Venus' original

question. The force of *certe* and *num* are endearingly condescending towards the poet, and, perhaps to draw attention to the matter, Ovid has the goddess direct these jests towards his new poetic endeavors, which are always referred to with (or as) some form of *maiora*. Venus gets in one final tease when referring to Ovid's heart as *mollis*, an emasculating attribute reserved only elsewhere in *Fasti IV* for the Eunuchs of Cybele. Not only does Ovid provide his beloved muse with a role to play in his *Fasti*, he even allots her a recent history - that is, being involved with his own poetry - and a personality that is both saccharine and contagious (*Risit, et aether/ protinus ex illa parte serenus erat*). Her personality is positively charged, her jests are light, and her contribution to the knowledge of April's rites (15-16) is invaluable; Ovid crafts a Venus who can in no way be condemned for conduct, but rather lauded for her character. With the amiability of the *Fasti*'s Venus rapidly established, Ovid just as swiftly dismisses any notions the reader may have of placing her conventional eroticism amidst the high themes of his calendar-poem (4.9-10):

*Quae decuit primis sine crimine lusimus annis;
Nunc teritur nostris area maior equis.*

It was proper when I played innocently in my early years;
Now my horses tread on greater fields.

Primis annis recalls the early life of Ovid and can be interpreted to be an *inferior* time when read in respect to the couplet's second line in which now (*nunc*) his situation appears to be greater (*maior*), which could be taken either as 'serious' (similar to his description of epic as *gravi numero*) or as actually more 'important'. The many manifestations of his poetic ambition – *area maior*, *velis maioribus*, simply *maiora* – that restate his intent to further the elegiac genre

are derived from the *Elegies* of Propertius. In *Elegy 4.1*, Propertius offers a passage to which the patriotism of the *Fasti* owes its inspiration (67-70):

*Roma, fave, tibi surgit opus, date candida cives
Omina, et inceptis dextera cantet avis!
Sacra diesque canam et cognomina prisca locorum:
Has meus ad metas sudet oportet equus.*

Rome, favor me! For you my work surges! Citizens, give clear omens
And let a bird chirp my undertaking from your right hand.
Sacred days and the ancient names of places I shall sing;
Toward these goals must my steeds sweat.

Ovid's poetic prowess (*nostris equis*) reaching some *area maior* is both an homage to and extension of the passage of Propertius. The effect of Propertius invoking the embodiment of Rome as the inspiration for his work, that to which his work *surgit* as if it were a city itself, is that his work transforms from an *opus* into an *officium*, an invocation (composing from divine inspiration) to a glorification (composing on behalf of the city). Ovid claims that the *Fasti* is not being composed for poetic fame, but rather on behalf of Rome itself as a substitution for Ovid's own *militia* (Fast. 2.9-10).

Prior to the mission statement provided in *Fasti IV*'s lines 11-12, the Venus of erotic poetry has so far been presented, and now disregarded, as a muse in favor of Ovid's pursuit of his *area maior*. In this couplet, Ovid reiterates the program of the *Fasti* (4.11-2):

*Tempora cum causis, annalibus eruta priscis,
Lapsaque sub terras orta que signa cano.*

The times and their origins drawn forth from ancient annals,
And of the stars that rise and slip beneath the world, I sing.

This statement is repeated several times throughout the *Fasti*, with each instance differentiated only slightly in phrasing⁷, and signals an address to the reader; in every case, the closest addressee within its context is a Caesar. These moments call the reader's attention back to the broader picture of his work. After briefly restating these themes, Ovid reintegrates Venus back into the *Fasti's* program (4.13-8):

*Venimus ad quartum, quo tu celeberrima mense:
Et vatem et mensem scis, Venus, esse tuos.'*
*Mota Cytheriaca leviter mea tempora myrto
Contigit et 'coeptum perfice' dixit 'opus'.*
*Sensimus, et causae subito patuere dierum:
Dum licet et spirant flamina, navis eat.*

I arrived at the fourth, the month in which you are most celebrated:
And, Venus, you know that the month and its poet are yours.”
Moved, she touched to my temple Cytharean myrtle
And said, “complete the task you have begun.”
I felt her, and at once the origins of the days lay uncovered:
While it is allowed and the winds blow, my ship shall go.

At the proem's opening, Venus' well-developed personality is a welcome change of pace after a long stretch of the *Fasti's* etymologizing, yet her presence does little to drive the *Fasti's* narrative forward until the restatement of Ovid's purpose in lines 11-12. The first half of the following line, *Venimus ad quartum*, reads as though *Fasti IV* were to officially begin here, and the explicit mention of the name 'Venus', as Barchiesi notes, is teased with like-sounding words in the proem's first seven couplets⁸. It is not until the *Fasti's* intent is reestablished that Ovid brings the name of the goddess into context with the poem's themes. The supplicant words of Ovid from his coy encounter with the goddess carry into his voluntary surrender of April and himself to Venus in line 13. She, on the other hand, alters her tone from teasing the author to

⁷ Ov. Fast. 1.1-2, 2.7, 4.11-12

⁸ Barchiesi (1997: 54)

seemingly humbled by his words, and responsively assumes a graver demeanor. While Ovid may have stripped Venus of her initial feistiness, her grace appears unchecked as she touches his brow (*tempora*, which is notably the same word used for the ‘times’ the *Fasti* aims to uncover) *leviter*, and from this erotic touch Ovid is granted calendrical inspiration. As a goddess who is (after line 13) more closely allied with the themes of the Roman state Venus reveals to Ovid the origins of April's festivals and her unique influence on Ovid's patriotic program commences.

The goddess answered to Ovid in her guise as elegy's patroness, yet some combination of their relationship, his supplication, and her affability, enabled her to aid Ovid in the themes of epic as well. Ovid does not grant one distinct epithet to his new treatment of Venus, but rather allows her character to host a slew of imperial identities so as to better encompass the subjects of the epic genre - of origination, tracing legacy, preserving justice, the glory of war, and maintaining tradition -within the *Fasti's* frail, elegiac skeleton. Beneath these bones, Ovid extends the literary functions and potentials of elegy with each alteration to the portrayal of elegy's mascot Venus. By converting aspects of Venus, his source of elegiac inspiration, to the themes and behaviors expected from an epic narrative, the reader of the *Fasti* is faced with the unfamiliar territory of a genre that does not behave in the manner its genre is used to; an *area maior*.

The proem features an intensely programmatic moment by attributing a war-like persona to Venus, a combination with which the Roman public is scarcely accustomed to seeing in elegy (4.119):

Pro Troia, Romane, tua Venus arma ferebat.

On Troy's behalf, Roman, Venus bore your arms.

This image of the militant Venus, most closely resembling (the epithet of) Venus Victrix, establishes a link between the imperial Venus and the glorifying nature of the poetry containing her. The armed Venus is only present in the *Fasti* for two lines, with the line that follows referencing her successful acquisition of the golden apple from Paris, from which her epithet of Victrix derives its origins and finds an elegiac counterpart. This idea of Venus bearing arms is, like the *Fasti's* patriotic imperative, repurposed from Propertius' *Elegies*. As such, Propertius' influence extends far beyond providing the prompt for the *Fasti's* directive to the point of developing certain aspects of Ovid's revolutionary and multifaceted Venus. In a strikingly similar passage from his *Elegies*, Propertius writes (Prop. 4.1.46-7):

*Vexit et ipsa sui Caesaris arma Venus,
Arma resurgentis portans victricia Troiae.*

Even Venus herself bore the arms of Caesar,
Carrying the victorious weapons of resurgent Troy.

In Propertius' vision of the goddess she is glorified in her militancy, encompassing in two short lines of elegy the honor and might of Rome, her Julian lineage, and the famed Trojan tale of both Virgil and Homer's epic narratives. The inclusion of *et ipsa* suggests the peculiarity of Venus bearing arms at all; what is the 'erotic' goddess to do with such themes of epic, and furthermore, what is Ovid himself to do with such material? In the first lines of the *Amores* Ovid blames mischievous Cupid for snatching away a foot from his proposed epic meter in a poem whose first word, *arma*, falsely presupposes its epic content. *Amores 1.9* similarly describes the role of the lover as a soldier who is relegated to the *castra* of Cupid, an image once again handed down from Propertius' *Elegies* (Prop. 4.1a.135-8):

*At tu finge elegos, fallax opus: haec tua castra!
scribat ut exemplo cetera turba tuo.*

*Militiam Veneris blandis patiere sub armis,
et Veneris pueris utilis hostis eris.*

But *you*: compose elegy, a deceitful task (this is your camp!)
So that the rest of the crowd may write by your example.
Under alluring arms you shall endure Venus' campaign
and be a foe fit for Venus' boys.

While credit is largely due to Propertius for the development of the image of the military camp of love, the metaphor cannot be entirely equated with the mythohistorical weaponized Venus that bore arms for Troy or delivered Vulcan's equipment to Aeneas⁹. The analogy that "love is war" is not present at all in the *Fasti*'s rendition of Venus, but rather, and far more appropriately, the wider claim that "love is imperial". Propertius' passage describes the poet enduring a *militia* under Venus' generalship, an elegiac notion that Ovid extends into the patriotic regime of his *Fasti* (2.2-16):

*Nunc primum velis, elegi, maioribus itis:
exiguum, memini, nuper eratis opus.
ipse ego vos habui faciles in amore ministros,
cum lusit numeris prima iuventa suis.
Idem sacra cano signataque tempora fastis:
Ecquis ad haec illinc crederet esse viam?
Haec mea militia est; ferimus quae possumus arma,
dextraque non omni munere nostra vacat.
Si mihi non valido torquentur pila lacerto
Nec bellatoris terga premuntur equi,
Nec galea tegimur, nec acuto cingimur ense
(his habilis telis quilibet esse potest),
at tue prosequimur studioso pectore, Caesar,
nomina, per titulos ingredimurque tuos.*

Now for the first time, elegiac verses, go with greater sails.
In recent past, I recall, your work has been meager.
I held you as ready accomplices in love,
When my early youth tinkered with its meter.
Now I sing of the sacred rites and festival days:
Who would have believed it would come to this?

⁹ Verg. A. 8.370

This is my soldiership: I bear the weapons I can;
 My right hand is not idle for every service.
 If my spears can't be tossed with a strong arm,
 Nor the backs of warhorses be burdened,
 If I cannot be helmeted, nor equip a sharp sword
 (Anyone could be fit with these weapons),
 Still, with a duty-bound heart I describe your name,
 Caesar, and march on through your honors.

Through this introductory passage of *Fasti II*, Ovid reveals that the composition of the *Fasti* is his own substitution for serving in the typical Roman *militia*. He does not deny his roots as a love elegist, nor equate his current service with the soldiership of love, but instead distinguishes his present *militia* from that of his earlier treatment of poetry. Ovid pairs his earlier poetry, presumably (based on both the implementations of *nunc primum* and *nuper*) everything up to the composition of the *Fasti* and *Metamorphoses*, with his youth (*iuventa*). What the addressee, Caesar, is witnessing in the *Fasti* is the maturation of a poet that has up until now considered his own exceptional poetry to be small (*exiguum*). The *militia* of his youthful *Amores*¹⁰ is transformed from its metaphorical use into an actualized application of his poetry; poetry that is done in service to the Roman state. Between the *Amores* and the *Fasti*, Ovid has transitioned from the camp of Cupid to that of Caesar, ‘bearing the only weapons he can’ of elegiac verses. His passive *ministros* have become his active *arma* as the amorous content wanes in the presence of his new material for the state, that which glorifies Rome as an extension of the emperor.

Ovid does not abandon his beloved Venus when exercising this alternative *militia*, but rather develops her character as a foil for his own maturation in respect to how he figures the themes of love into his elegy. In turning to Ovid’s weaponized Venus (*pro Troia, Romane, tua*

¹⁰ Ov. Am. 1.9.9 demonstrates the duty of the lover as a soldier.

Venus arma ferebat.), one sees a deliberate extension of Ovid's own sentiment of *militia*. The phrase *pro Troia* allies Venus, the divine manifestation of love, with the Roman identity. Ovid, an articulator of love himself, very expressly allies himself with the glory of Rome in the *Fasti*. Rome, in a broad sense, is the subject of the *Fasti* in a manner that none of his prior poetry could be defined through. The ambiguous addressee of this passage, *Romane*, extends the scope of the *Fasti*'s intended audience well past the emperor to *any* Roman. It is the Roman addressee's *arma* (indicated by *tua*) that Venus bears, and, when compared to Ovid's *militia* passage from *Fasti II*, she can be understood as bearing the weapons because she is now able to bear them in the context of the *Fasti* and its reapplication of love's function in elegiac poetry. Because Ovid is unable to take up the arms of a Roman soldier, or "equip a sharp sword", or write poems in an epic meter (until the *Metamorphoses*), he "bears the weapons he can". Just as in *Fasti IV*'s opening lines Ovid reassigns the role of Venus in his poetry from being his muse of love poetry to being a muse of state poetry, so here does Ovid retire from being an author of love poetry to being an author of state poetry on behalf of Rome and *pro Troia*.

The *Fasti*'s Venus is hardly limited to this singular militant depiction and is in fact identified even more closely with her epithet 'Venus Genetrix'. Her role as a *genetrix* denotes her function in both the natural world as a wellspring for all forms of life as well as her lot within the Julian ancestry. By placing the ideas of both the natural and the ancestral beneath the same thematic umbrella of parentage, Ovid defines Venus' function within the context of state poetry as an icon for the month's inherent aspects of fertility.

Inspiration for Ovid's lengthy depiction of Venus later in the proem (IV.87-114) is almost certainly drawn from the first book of Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura* in which Venus is

honored as the source of all things. Lucretius introduces his work with *Aeneadum genetrix*, immediately invoking Venus' role as an ancestress of the Romans. The second line describes the goddess as *Alma Venus*. These maternal epithets of Venus, as *alma* and as *genetrix*, differ in their implications and both Lucretius and Ovid extend their presentations of Venus in respect to both terms. Venus as the *genetrix* is the producer, or originator, of all life, and draws upon love as a divine force of nature. The two authors describe at length how Venus, as the manifestation of love, coupled with sex, is the origin of life (Ov. Fast. 4.95-6):

*Illa deos omnes (longum est numerare) creavit:
illa satis causas arboribusque dedit.*

She created all of the gods (there are far too many to list);
She gave the sprouts and trees their origins.

It is through this extension of Venus that her deeper relevance in the *Fasti* becomes more apparent. If in the *Fasti* Ovid endeavors to relate *tempora cum causis* to his audience, then Venus, as the provider of origins, if not the single origin herself, becomes the crux of his work. The term *genetrix* is not entirely sufficient in describing Venus' influence in the world, as it only denotes Venus as the spark-plug for the universe's development without accounting for her continued presence. Both Ovid and Lucretius seem to incorporate *alma* as a means of also describing Venus' perpetual influence over the cycles of life. *Alma* is an epithet not limited to Venus, but applied to many patron deities, and is most closely translated as "nourishing" or "nurturing". There is a dynamic sense to the word *alma*¹¹, as in the sense of a nurse's continual observance or care, contrasting the static connotations of *genetrix*¹². The two terms comprise

¹¹ *Almus*: "nourishing, kind, gracious; bountiful", Traupman (2007: 54)

¹² *Genetrix*: "mother, ancestress"; and *genitor*: "father, creator, source, cause", Traupman (2007: 194)

Ovid and Lucretius' similar depictions of Venus as a *creatrix*; she who both ignites and kindles the fire of the love responsible for all things manifest.

As Ovid unfolds the narrative into the fertility of spring, replete with signs of new and renewed life, the relationship between the goddess and her month becomes increasingly evident. Ovid introduces this relationship by describing the origination of the name 'April' (4.87-90):

*Nam quia ver aperit tunc omnia, densaque cedit
frigoris asperitas, fetaque terra patet,
Aprilem memorant ab aperto tempore dictum,
quem Venus iniecta vindicat alma manu.*

For since spring "opens" (*aperit*) all things - the thick roughness
Of cold is shed, and the fertile earth lies exposed -
They say that *April* is named from an "opening" (*aperto*) time,
Which nurturing Venus claimed, setting her hand upon it.

By beginning the description of spring with its proposed etymology of "opening", Ovid arranges the treatments of origins in successive layers: the origin of the name of April, followed by the origin of Venus laying claim to April, then the originative qualities of the season itself resulting from Venus' own powers of providing origins. If any part of the *Fasti* realizes Ovid's intended themes of *tempora cum causis*, it is within *Fasti IV*'s description of spring. Barchiesi asserts that before poetic treatments of the calendar like the *Fasti*, "there was no suggestion in any type of program of any ideological continuity between the festivals, any sort of syntagmatic plan of the calendar.¹³" Ovid demonstrates this ideological program through the recurrent use of particular imagery.

The variability of both *aperio* and *tempus* aids in the uniting of April's festivals. In *Fasti IV*, *aperire* is chiefly used to denote 'to open' (Ov. Fast. 1.681, 2.227, 4.87, 4.102), as the

¹³ Barchiesi (1997: 71).

proem's usage would seem to suggest, while in other parts of the *Fasti* it suggests a more specific kind of 'opening': 'to excavate' (1.347), 'to uncover/expose' (1.408, 3.15, 4.89, 4.478), 'to disclose' or 'reveal' (1.446), or 'to be accessible' (2.213). *Tempus*, similarly, is so broad in interpretation and so frequent in use that it can not only refer to 'time' generally, but specifically a 'season' (1.496), the 'days of the calendar' (1.1, 1.27), an 'age/generation' (4.157) or 'moment' (4.154). Just as April is an 'opening season' in respect to the renewed fertility of the earth, so too are its festivals and their components representative of this *apertum tempus*, comprised of individual moments of opening, exposure, or revelation, that tie into the single thematic narrative. Ovid evokes the theme of opening in each of April's major narratives. Not only do these narratives revolve around the telling of stories whose truths are gradually 'uncovered', but as the *Fasti* progresses these stories incorporate both etymological origins and reveal origins of the festivals themselves, which, as the successive layers of origination have shown, begin with Venus.

Venus in April's Festivals

From this perspective of multiple forms of 'opening up' or 'exposure', the relationship of the phenomenon of origination to the *Fasti's* longer narratives of discovery can be further explored. April, as the central month of the *Fasti* and featuring in its proem a restatement of the *Fasti's* purpose as well as its elaborate portrait of Venus, functions as a nucleus for the book's originative material. Ovid's Lucretian Venus provides the origins of the natural world (87-132) and from the connection between this *Venus genetrix* and the most prevalent goddesses of *Fasti IV*, April becomes a host month for divine *genetrices*. These maternal figures of Venus, Cybele, and Ceres, are significant for the *Fasti* for their abilities to provide origins within their

narratives and continue Ovid's unifying theme of *causae*, as well as for their respective myths which transition from a state of concealment to a state of exposure. Each myth associated with these mother goddesses involve one of these *aperta tempora*, moments of revelation or exposure, reflecting the tendency of the month to 'reveal'. While April's proem recognizes Venus as the source of origins, April as the month of 'opening', and the month's chief goddesses as types of *genetrices*, or providers of origins, Ovid's very endeavor in composing the *Fasti* is the act of unravelling truth by tracing back its thread. As Ovid himself traces origins of the days and their rites, so he employs the major figures of the *Fasti* to not only produce origins themselves as *genetrices*, but to provide mythohistorical environments in which origins may be uncovered. *Fasti IV*, in particular, in relating the month that draws attention to these 'revealing' moments in its proem and whose rites pertain almost exclusively to goddesses, is perhaps the most revealing book in respect to Ovid's treatment of female sexuality within Rome's contemporary religious state. The goddesses provide both the literary function in the *Fasti* of embodying seasonal fertility (and by extension the originative force of April's patron, Venus), as well as an elegiac environment where Ovid can tease the themes of love, of emotion, and mythologies, among others, inessential to the form of his calendar poem or the requirements of honorific poetry. In doing so, the *Fasti* is providing an image of sexuality's place in an imperial world.

The content demanded by the calendar-form itself, or the form's essential element, is a comprehensive account of festivals with their rites ordered by the day they are set to be observed. In Barchiesi noting the lack of "ideological continuity between the festivals¹⁴" before

¹⁴ Barchiesi (1997: 71)

its literary development in the Augustan age, the essential elements of Ovid's calendar-poem can be read as initially individual and disjointed, and yet the *Fasti* reads as one long, coherent narrative. The elegiac digressions in the longer narratives of each month host Ovid's *causae*, elements of the *Fasti* that are both inessential to the required form of the calendar poem and unifying in their ability to carry themes and motifs. Venus, despite being lavished with attention in April's proem, is largely absent from the narration of festivals with their rites. In this respect Barchiesi is valid in his assertion that "Ovid has forcibly carved out a place for her in the calendar;" that is, if the *Fasti* is to be read as exclusively didactic rather than elegiac. With the two genres taken in tandem, the figure of Venus reveals more than *feta terra* (4.88); Venus's passage is one of many mythologies that Ovid tacks onto the skeletal Roman calendar, and similar inferences to those drawn about Venus can be made in respect to the other months' patrons as well. Venus, however, is distinct from these other deities in that she is ascribed the honorific role as the ancestress of Romans, of the Julian line, and the muse of Ovid's poetry, despite being an inessential component of the calendar-form. Her primal powers as a *creatrix*, an originator of origins, underlie not only her month, but the entire poem in its pursuit of *causae*. The inclusion of the goddess does not make the *Fasti* any more or less of a calendar-poem by virtue of form, but her character greatly influences the depth of the poetry itself by functioning as a hybrid of elegiac and epic, erotic and state, and personal and imperial themes. Venus is a binding agent; the manner in which Ovid draws on her relationship with Mars creates a structure around the *Fasti*'s two central months. Venus' relationship with the Julian line, and that of the Roman people, similarly become bound to Ovid's own relationship with her. Ovid belabors descriptions of her originative qualities so as to unite the *Fasti*'s

multitude of *causae* under one single origin, and mirrors her generative aspects throughout the mythologies of April, thereby placing the month's festivals on the same tutelary and thematic plane. It is the generative and promotional force of love - sex for reproduction, maternal care, fertility - that finds itself among the *Fasti*'s permissible themes written in service of the state. Ovid has carefully incorporated Venus into the state narrative of the *Fasti*, and so much so that the calendar-poem's primary directive of tracing and relating the origins of Rome's festivals is entirely contingent upon Venus' initial (*genetrix*) and continued (*alma*) patronage.

April 1st: The Veneralia (lines 133-164)

Ovid's account of Venus' own celebration, the Veneralia on April 1st, reveals in its first couplet the demographic to whom the rites pertain (4.133-4):

*Rite deam colitis Latiae matresque nurusque
Et vos, quis vittae longaue vestis abest.*

Duly tend to the goddess, Latin mothers and daughters-in-law,
and you, without the ribbons and long robes.

In the programmatic first line of April's festivals, Ovid is immediately drawing attention to the exclusively female demographic of Venus' worshippers in the Veneralia. This immediate attention can be contrasted with the passage just following, which delays the revelation of the statue of Venus in its entirety. As Miller observed¹⁵, in a Callimachean fashion there is much more detail allotted to the ornaments adorning the goddess than the statue herself, with the full visual of the goddess is withheld until the end of Ovid's elegiac digression, his description of the myrtle's *causae* (4.139-44):

*Vos quoque sub viridi myrto iubet ipsa lavari:
Causaque, cur iubeat (discite!), certa subest
Litore siccabat rorantes nuda capillos:*

¹⁵ Miller (1980: 210)

*Viderunt satyri, turba proterva, deam.
Sensit et opposita texit sua corpora myrto:
Tuta fuit facto vosque referre iubet.*

She commands, too, a wash beneath verdant myrtle.
There is a certain reason for her ordering this, lend an ear:
Naked upon the shore, she was drying her dripping hair,
When satyrs, a shameless bunch, beheld the goddess.
She sensed them, and hid her body with intertwined myrtle.
Guarded in having done this, she bids you follow her model.

Withholding the visual of the goddess bears similarities to Venus' name being withheld in the proem until the formulation of the *Fasti*'s program. The mutual effect from such a technique is the *apertum tempus*, a moment of exposure, or revelation, supportive of spring's etymology. The erotic Venus of love elegy, arguably portrayed here in those suggestive terms, responds to an elegiac situation with a didactic answer. Despite a brief digression into the *causae* of the Veneralia's rites, Venus' character promotes a chastity which aligns with imperial conduct. The erotic scene of the naked Venus transitions to a similar scene within a regulated environment (4.145-50):

*Discite nunc, quare Fortunae tura Virili
Detis eo, calida qui locus umet aqua.
Accipit ille locus posito velamine cunctas
Et vitium nudi corporis omne videt;
Ut tegat hoc celetque viros, Fortuna Virilis
Praestat et hoc parvo ture rogata facit.*

Now learn why you offer incense to Fortuna Virilis
In the place that drips with warm water.
All women doff their clothes entering that place,
And it beholds all blemishes of the bare body.
So that she can mask their imperfections and hide them from men,
Fortuna Virilis does this in exchange for a bit of incense.

As part of the rites of the Veneralia, the goddess' female worshippers enter the men's baths and remove their clothes to pray for their bodily blemishes to be undetected by men. The placement

of this ritual just following that of Venus hiding herself from lusty satyrs draws attention to the tension between what is concealed and what is revealed: the attendees of Venus bathe under myrtle as a means of covering themselves, and those of Fortuna Virilis expose their bodies so that they may ultimately be concealed. These two passages promote sexual modesty, and the benefits of such worship at the Veneralia aim to be the heightening of female virtues, particularly of wives and mothers (4.151-6):

*Nec pigeat tritum niveo cum lacte papaver
Sumere et expressis mella liquata favis;
Cum primum cupido Venus est deducta marito,
Hoc bibit: ex illo tempore nupta fuit.
Supplicibus verbis illam placate: sub illa
Et forma et mores et bona fama manet.*

Nor should it pain to eat poppy pounded with snowy milk
And liquid honey squeezed from the honeycomb.
When Venus was first led to her ready groom
She drank this; from that moment she was a bride.
Appease her with suppliant words, for under her
Beauty and morals and good fame endure.

Between the first two origins provided in the Veneralia passage, that of the festival's use of myrtle and that of Venus' wedding drink, the attendees of the Veneralia can be seen as following the examples set by the patron goddess. Her followers aspire to emulate this Venus' female qualities of *forma et mores et bona fama* more than any of her erotic aspects. The entire premise of the Veneralia, withheld until the day's last lines, is a celebration of sexuality as it conforms to the expectations of religion and state (4.157-62):

*Roma pudicitia proavorum tempore lapsa est:
Cymaeam, veteres, consuluistis anum.
Templa iubet fieri Veneri, quibus ordine factis
Inde Venus verso nomina corde tenet.
Semper ad Aeneas placido, pulcherrima, voltu
Respice totque tuas, diva, tuere nurus.*

In the time of our forefathers, Rome had slipped from a state of chastity.
 You, O ancestors, consulted the old Cumaean.
 She directed that a temple be built to Venus, and when it was duly built,
 Venus, with her heart turned, adopted her name (*Verticordia*) from it.
 Fairest of them all, always look upon the children of your Aeneas with calm countenance,
 And, goddess, protect their wives.

This Venus, as an advocate of socially permissible love, is the formulation of Venus that is fit for state poetry. Ovid ascribes particular attention to her daughter-in-law worshippers, using the word *nurus* as the last word in both the festival's first and last lines. This detail given to Venus' demographic of followers aids in the definition of the goddess herself in the *Fasti*'s terms. In addition to their status as *nurus*, these wives are wed to the descendants of Aeneas, a detail which articulates Venus' broader function within the *Fasti* as an ancestress, a title beyond the scope of the Veneralia itself. Torelli notes¹⁶ the division, in about the second century B.C., into a plebeian Venus, with which he associates the cult of Venus Verticordia, and one of the aristocracy, the latter articulated in terms of the Lucretian Venus. While the division is both conceptual and not black-and-white, Ovid is at least aware of this multiplicity of Venuses as he figures both representations into his narrative; one as the patron of the month and originator of the natural world, the other as a figurehead in a cult that aspires to cultural refinement.

April 2nd: The Pleiades Rise (lines 165-178)

Just following this account of Venus as a model for virtuous wives, the course of the narrative describes the counterexample of Merope as a shamed wife (4.175-6):

*Septima mortali Merope tibi, Sisyphæ, nupsit;
 Paenitet, et facti sola pudore latet.*

And Merope, the seventh, was wed to you Sisyphus, a mortal,
 She regrets this and, ashamed of the matter, hides in solace.

¹⁶ Torelli (1992: 9)

The passages of the *Fasti* describing astronomical events are unlike the festival days in that they lack a tutelary divinity by their very nature. They are often shorter than the festival passages as well, tending to favor descriptions of the constellations to relating their mythologies. Despite their concision, Fox argues that “like a *puella* in erotic elegy, the stars are *vaga signa*, “wandering” signs, but also “inconstant” and “fickle.” Heaven’s stars are inherently elegiac.¹⁷” The rising of constellations like the Pleiades surely signify an *apertum tempus*, although this is hardly unique to *Fasti IV*. With this effect of the astrological passages in play, the reader is constantly reminded of the chronological path of the narrative and experiences the year opening up in brief moments before commencing each next major festival.

April 4th: The Megalensia (lines 179-372)

The following passage of the Megalensia on April 4th is divided into three major sections: Jupiter’s birth (195-214), Attis’ castration (221-44), and the immigration of Cybele to Rome (247-348), the latter of which overlaps with the legend of Claudia Quinta. In unifying the isolated characteristics of April’s individual festivals, Ovid, in addition to establishing the maternal Venus archetype, draws upon the broader nature of spring as it was established in the poem. The Megalensia passage opens up in its narrative, reflecting the etymology of opening given to the month’s name. Ovid, though invoking the Magna Mater as early as line 191, does not come into direct dialogue with her at any point. Rather, the goddess answers his prayers for divine inquiry by sending her granddaughter, Erato, to field his questions. Apart from Erato’s filial ties to the Mother Goddess, she possesses no direct connection to Cybele’s story. She was

¹⁷ Fox (2004: 92)

instead called upon solely for her namesake which carries close connotations to the Cytherian, Venus (4.195-6):

*Sic ego. Sic Erato (mensis Cythereius illi
Cessit, quod teneri nomen amoris habet)*

So I spoke, So Erato replied (the Cytherean month fell to her
Since she gets her name from tender love)

Here, Ovid plants a character that links Cybele to Venus as a means of structuring a cohesive narrative for the Megalensia which would be otherwise estranged from the month's neighboring festivals. Erato relates the essential legend of Jupiter's birth and the Corybantes' role as a means of fulfilling the originative themes of the *Fasti*. She presents this tale as the first sequence of the Megalensian narrative, one that transitions from an initial state of concealment and mystery to a complete exposure of truth and origin.

In this first myth, the language of secrecy dominates the passage and Jupiter's survival is contingent on him not being revealed to his devourous father. Saturn tries to avoid his own ill-fated prophecy by eating his children, thereby concealing them in his stomach, only to be outfoxed by a stone concealed in clothes (*veste latens saxum* (4.205)) and the *real* infant Jove concealed by the Corybantes and Curetes (*res latuit* (4.211)). The myth ends with origins of the festival's rites drawn from *res latuit*, celebrating the clamorous success of the Corybantes and the Curetes. The festival itself hardly correlates with the spring Ovid establishes in *Fasti IV*'s proem; the mythohistory to this point has entirely been of a latent nature, in no way 'opening up' any aspect of spring, and has disregarded any mother figures, save Rhea and her fertility checked by Saturn's deviance (4.201-2):

*Saepe Rhea quaesta est, totiens fecunda nec umquam
Mater, et indoluit fertilitate sua.*

So often Rhea protested; So often she bore a child,
Yet never a mother, and she bemoaned her own fertility.

Though brief, this image of Rhea belabors the Megalensia's preexisting sense of a stunted progression. The sequence has not reached its point of exposure yet, the *apertum tempus* at which fertility figures into the evolving narrative of spring.

Littlewood¹⁸ observes Rhea's incorporation into the story as a frustrated mother-goddess to be parallel to Ovid's representation of Cybele, and notes as well the prevalence of 'castitas' and 'pietas' in the entire Megalensian progression. These two virtues figure into the collective presentation of the Megalensia as model qualities of the Magna Mater's followers. The second legend of the Megalensia, that of Attis' castration, provides the counterexample of this ideal chastity. Both of the main actors, Cybele and Attis, don a radically different attitude than their exotic (and erotic) Catullan counterparts. The *Fasti*'s treatment of Attis and Cybele's relationship is far more maternal than sexualized insofar as she desires a chaste and exclusive guardianship over Attis. The Magna Mater makes a very short appearance (224-231) on the matter of preserving Attis in a suspended state as her temple's protector.

*Hunc sibi servari voluit, sua templa tueri,
et dixit 'semper fac puer esse velis.'*

She desired him to serve her, to protect her temple,
And told him: "Will to be a boy forever."

The legend of Attis provides context for the exotic act of the eunuchs' castration as well as a point of perspective for revelers of the Megalensia. In Ovid's elegiac treatment of the tale, there is implied didacticism in the misfortunes of Attis, whereas the Catullan version reads as a more alarmist depiction. Littlewood argues of Attis that "his violation of 'castitas' is sacrilege, a

¹⁸ Littlewood (1981)

breach of *'pietas'* which brings upon him divine retribution: *hinc poenas exigit ira deae* (*Fasti* 4. 230)¹⁹. This *castitas* seems to be the most compelling theme from Ovid's elegiac treatment of Attis (*facie spectabilis* (4.223)) that draws this passage into the larger narrative²⁰.

The legend of Jove's birth traffics in language of concealment, and the following scene with Attis thematically bridges that legend with the Megalensia's final act of Cybele's introduction to Rome. The third tale begins with the Magna Mater similarly concealed from the Roman public (4.251-4):

*Cum Troiam Aeneas Italos portaret in agros,
Est dea sacriferas paene secuta rates,
Sed nondum fatis Latio sua numina posci
Senserat, adsuetis substiteratque locis.*

When Aeneas ferried Troy into the fields of Italy,
The goddess nearly followed his relic-bearing fleet,
But she did not sense from the Fates that her divinity was ready
To be worshipped in Latium, so she remained in her usual haunt.

It is not until five hundred years later, when the Roman Republic has expanded into greater territory, that the Fates call for the revelation of the Magna Mater to the city. Cybele's legend becomes entirely about her progression from a latent figure, not unlike the infant Jove, to a celebrated figure; from concealed to revealed. Nearly every aspect of the goddess is in question from the start (4.259-62):

*"Mater abest: Matrem iubeo, Romane, requiras.
Cum veniet, casta est accipienda manu."
Obscurae sortis patres ambagibus errant,
Quaeve parens absit, quove petenda loco.*

"The Mother is gone - I order you, Roman: find the Mother.
When she arrives, she must be received by chaste hands."

¹⁹ Littlewood (1981: 390)

²⁰ A similar claim regarding the essentiality of observing chastity in the Augustan era is found in the section on Venus Verticordia, in which Ovid shows support for Rome's return to a state of chastity.

The obscurity of the dusky oracle confused the senators
As to who the missing parent was, and the place she would be sought.

The only information the perplexed senators are able to confirm are those marks that string the festivals of April together: her maternity, and a ‘required’ game of hide-and-seek. By means of the ambiguity of the prophecy, the ‘Mother’ becomes the limited identity through which Ovid’s representation of Cybele is then further developed. By the end of Cybele’s episode, Ovid successfully unites the Megalensia, a celebration which until the *Fasti* bore no “ideological continuity”²¹ amongst its neighboring festivals, by building upon the mythological commonality between Venus, Cybele, and Ceres, most prominently. Each of these goddesses possess inherent motherly traits, often portrayed through the employment of an earth-mother’s powers of fertility²², and Ovid couples these mythological traits with the actual tendency of spring to ‘open up’ aspects of the world. In doing so, the discontinuity between the isolated festivals of spring dissolve in light of one continuous narrative leaning on these motifs.

In tracing the progression of Cybele’s passage as it opens up, the answer to the senators’ question of who the mother was and where she might be found (262) is answered in the following couplet: that she is the *divum Matrem* (“Mother of the gods”) and that she is to be found on Mount Ida, as the reader has already known since line 182 in which Ovid prefaces her arrival with her identity as *Idaeae pare[ns]*. While at this point in the narrative, following both Ovid’s foreshadowing and Cybele’s involvement in the story of Attis, it is no question to the

²¹ Barchiesi (1997: 71).

²² While the progenitive qualities of Venus and Ceres are presented both from the maternal perspective (being ancestress of Rome or mythological figures who figure into the Roman scheme) and from the natural (producing a bountiful harvest and embodying the earth’s nutritive faculties), Cybele’s association with the earth’s fertility relies almost exclusively on her clear attributions as a mother goddess and what those attributions imply for these earth powers over the course of April’s narrative. It is possible that a small allusion to her originative control in the natural world is made in the reference to “the importance of trees in the cult of Cybele” (Littlewood (1981: 390)) using her interactions with Sangaris and the trees of Mount Ida.

reader as to whom the oracle referred, and yet the legend unfolds as if the prophecy was as obscure as the senators deemed it. Ovid follows the awareness of the discoverer, Attalus, as the standard for the reader's information, and in doing so pays no heed to the *Fasti*'s prior mentions of Cybele. Upon her discovery, the goddess proclaims that, since Rome was now ready for her arrival, it was her will to be discovered:

*“Ipsa peti voli, nec sit mora, mitte volentem.
 Dignus Roma locus, quo deus omnis eat.”
 Illa soni terrore pavens “Proficiscere,” dixit
 “Nostra eris: In Phrygios Roma refertur avos.”*

“I wished that I be sought! Make no delay - grant my wish!
 Rome is a place deserving of every god.”
 Stricken by fear at her voice, he proclaimed, “Ship off,
 You will be ours. Rome looks back to its Phrygian ancestors.”

With the inclusion of *nec sit mora*, there is a very clear indication that the goddess now senses it is time for herself to be revealed to the Roman public, it is her *apertum tempus*. This conclusion is drawn both from her haste to depart Ida as well as her feeling that Rome was not ready for her five centuries ago (lines 253-4). Her sentiment on line 270 would suggest that her attitude towards her own reception in the city has now changed from twenty lines prior. Cybele as a *genetrix* has been progressing incrementally to this point, beginning with her attribution as *Mater* (259), to the elaboration of her title as *divum Mater* (263) to Attalus' comment in 272 that *in Phrygios Roma refertur avos*, pregnant with the implications of the Magna Mater's influence on Rome's current population. Referring back to Venus' tracing of the Julian ancestry in *Fasti IV*'s proem, Attalus' comment on Cybele recalls and reaffirms Venus' claim that *domus Teucros Iulia tangit avos* (4.40) (“the Julian house meets its Teucrican forefathers”). In this overlap, Ovid establishes a point of continuity between one of April's festivals and its

figurehead Venus, whose presence in the proem functions as the maternal archetype of *genetrix* Cybele begins to take the form of. Moving ahead to Cybele's arrival at Ostia, a further connection between Venus and the Magna Mater is drawn, when those people who approach her ship (4.295-6) bear a close resemblance to the attendees of Venus' festival on April 1st, the Veneralia (4.133-4):

*Procedunt pariter matres nataeque nurusque
Quaeque colunt sanctos virginitate focos.*

Mothers and daughters went forth, and brides,
and the maidenhood which tended the sacred hearth.

*Rite deam colitis Latiae matresque nurusque
et vos, quis vittae longaue vestis abest.*

Duly tend to the goddess, Latin mothers, and daughters-in-law,
and you, without the ribbons and long robes.

While those who welcome Cybele into Rome are not exclusively women, the imagery of the *matresque nurusque* attending to their respective goddesses draws attention to a similar demographic of followers to Venus if not similarities between the goddesses themselves. This particular group of followers bears a close relationship to the renewed and exalted state of chastity in Rome.

Just before Cybele is fully admitted into Rome, Ovid interrupts her narrative with the legend of Claudia Quinta, whose supposed promiscuity distinguishes her explicitly from the nearby *castarum agmine matrum* (line of chaste matrons) (4.313). While Ovid does not dally on the matter, he includes Claudia Quinta's ancestry with Clausus in a similar phrasing to Attalus' Phrygian ancestry: *Claudia Quinta genus Clauso referebat ab alto* (Claudia Quinta claims heritage from lofty Clausus) (4.305). Clausus, as mentioned in *Aeneid VII.706*, aided Aeneas,

who is perhaps the most key figure in the relationship between the Phrygian Cybele and Rome. With the arrival of the Magna Mater into Rome the origination of Rome's ancestry in Phrygia becomes more apparent, with the embodiment of that legacy present at the site of her descendants. This truth becomes increasingly evident with Cybele's physical arrival just as the truth of Claudia Quinta's accusations is revealed. Exposure as a form of April's tendency to open is observable through both the Roman public's introduction to their ancestor in the instance of their own physical exposure to her, and the exposing of Claudia Quinta's truth at line 343:

*Claudia praecedit laeto celeberrima voltu,
Credita vix tandem teste pudica dea.*

With a pleased expression, Claudia stepped before the most celebratory crowd,
Her chastity, scarcely believed, at last attested by the goddess.

For Cybele's tale Ovid does not presuppose knowledge on the part of the reader, but rather relates the senator's quest to find the Magna Mater as it unfolds for its discoverers. In tracking these searches as they progress from complete mystery to full disclosure, Ovid evokes the theme of opening in each of April's major narratives. Not only do these narratives revolve around the telling of stories whose truths are gradually discovered, but as the *Fasti* progresses these stories both incorporate etymologies and explain origins of the festivals in themselves. From this perspective of multiple forms of 'opening up' or 'exposure', the relationship of origination, fertility, and the preservation of chastity to these stories of discovery can be further explored through the various manifestations of the proem's Venus archetype.

April 12th: The Cerealia (lines 393-620)

These themes of spring culminate in the passage dedicated to the origins of the Cerealia. Keller's "reading of the testimonia and archeological data finds that the Mysteries of the mother and daughter goddesses were essentially mysteries of love. Their main purpose was to bring an experience of love to the most important life passages: birth, sexuality, and death/rebirth²³". Ovid addresses these themes in the Cerealia through his presentation of Ceres as a maternal or progenitive figure, of Persephone as the virgin figure, and through Triptolemus as the dying figure who is then reborn. These three prominent figures of the Persephone myth both embody their inherent stages of life, but function alternatively in the *Fasti* so as to reflect the relevant themes of earthly fertility and abundance, and the agricultural cycle.

Featuring the longest elegiac narrative in *Fasti IV*, Ovid heavily draws upon these themes as an extension of his advocacy of virtuous forms of love and sexuality. Ovid divides his attention between these manifestations of love as a generative force, both as it plays out in human morality in the form of chastity and in the form of the earth's fertility.

*Hinc Cereris ludi. Non est opus indice causae;
Sponte deae munus promeritumque patet.*

Next are the games of Ceres. There is no need to declare why -
The service and surplus of the goddess reveal themselves.

(4.393-4)

The elements of chastity's preservation and the earth's fertility, while figuring largely into both the proem and rites of Venus (Verticordia) and Cybele (in respect to her followers), comprise the two most prominent features of the *Fasti's* Cerealia passage as the rape of Persephone has dire consequences for the fertility of the earth. The passage leads with an account (395-416) of Ceres' contribution to agriculture and the abundance of food, presented in

²³ Keller (1988: 28)

a manner reminiscent of Venus' contribution to the world's fertility in the proem. The recurring vocabulary of abundance - *virides, vivax, magnificas opes* - paints a world that is replete with vegetation, resulting from the reproductive forces of Ceres herself. In this sense, Ovid's remark that "*pace Ceres laeta est*" (4.407) may bear a double connotation; that Ceres not only delights in peace, but as a mother of the earth is also flourishing, or fertile, in such times. This not only serves as a promotion of the Pax Romana which defined the Augustan era, but when read in reference to its preceding lines and several lines later concerning her forms of tribute:

*Aes erat in pretio, chalybeia massa latebat:
eheu! perpetuo debuit illa tegi.*

Bronze was valuable - iron deposits yet hid away;
Alas... they ought to have stayed hidden forever.

Parva bonae Cereri, sint modo casta, placent.

Good Ceres is pleased with little, so long as it is pure.

There is clear evidence that here Ovid's narrative presents a more nostalgic Roman history, one that looks back to a simpler state of living and a more refined morality and that is comparable to the state of chastity towards which Venus Verticordia urges the Roman public. While the line regarding Ceres' tribute uses *casta* to refer to the offerings and not sexual abstinence, the word carried such weight in both the Veneralia and legend of Claudia Quinta that to then juxtapose it with the rape of Persephone suggests something broader than merely a description of ingredients. What the line offers is in fact Ceres' attitude as it will be revealed in the upcoming myth; wherein her sole desire is the preservation of her daughter. Following the proper offerings to Ceres, Ovid's authorial voice bridges the reader abruptly to the next passage:

*Exigit ipse locus, raptus ut virginis edam:
plura recognosces, pauce docendus eris.*

The passage arrives that demands I tell of the Virgin's rape.
 You will recall many things; a few must be taught.

This brief address to the reader signifies several things. Stephen Hinds²⁴ notes that *locus* is able to be read not only as the passage of the *Fasti* Ovid has just arrived at, but also the physical environment about to be described in the following passage. Persephone's name is not given in this account; rather, she is referred to as *virginis*, defining her *Fasti* character in terms of its elegiac discourse and its attention to *castitas*, just as Cybele was initially referred to as Mater (259). It can be argued that *plura recognosces* is primarily attracting notice to the same myth's appearance in the *Metamorphoses* in which many details are the same, while some of these details in the *Fasti*, Ovid claims, are new material. Brunner, among others, has observed the most clear difference between the *Metamorphoses'* and *Fasti's* treatments of the myth to be the epic and elegiac styles in which they were written, respectively²⁵. While much of their content is the same, the two passages are distinguished more evidently by their individual reflections of their respective genre's tendencies. The passage from the *Metamorphoses*, appropriately, is more concerned with the language of grandeur and outer conflict, and the *Fasti's* with the language of emotion and internal conflict. It is through this internal conflict that love figures so prominently into Ovid's elegiac digression and further defines Ceres in terms of the maternal and originative archetype put in place by April's Venus. Love is reapplied in this passage from its traditional use in elegy to a self-conscious act of genre-blending, defining Ceres in terms of her maternal concern.

²⁴ Hinds (1982: 477)

²⁵ Brunner (1971: 277)

The actual abduction of Persephone takes place in the short span of 30 lines, made shorter by its placement between the myth's first two explicit mentions of Ceres (4.420-2):

*Terra tribus scopulis vastum procurrit in aequor
Trinacris, a positu nomen adepta loci,
Grata domus Cereri. Multas ea possidet urbes,
In quibus est culto fertilis Henna solo.*

The land jutted forth into the open ocean with its three crags -
Trinacria - which inherits its name from its environment,
The cherished home of Ceres. She presides over many cities,
Among which is fertile Henna with its cultivated soil.

The first mention of Ceres' name does little else than draw attention to her seat of power in Sicily. Arethusa called the mother-goddesses, Ceres and Persephone included, to Henna, where the first events of the myth take place. However, the following inclusion of Henna with this description is peculiar in that it is referenced a second time, with the second mention of Ceres' name, just following Persephone's abduction (4.455-6):

*Attonita est plangore Ceres (modo venerat Hennam)
Nec mora, "me miseram! filia," dixit "ubi es?"*

Amidst the clamorous grieving, Ceres (she only just arrived in Henna)
Without delay cried, "Wretched me! Daughter! *Where are you?*"

The phrasing of *modo venerat Hennam* marks the speed of the entire scene. Despite the reader having been given a lengthy catalogue of flower-picking (425-44), the action of the scene is swift, as evidenced by her sudden reaction. Following the first mention of Henna, Ovid takes care to divide the two groups of women, the mothers and the daughters, into two different spaces (the banquet and the meadows) in two different couplets (4.423-6):

*Frigida caelestum matres Arethusa vocarat:
Venerat ad sacras et dea flava dapes.
Filia, consuetis ut erat comitata puellis,
Errabat nudo per sua prata pede.*

Frigid Arethusa had summoned the mothers of the divine,
 And the blonde goddess arrived at her holy banquet.
 Her daughter, attended by her usual maidens,
 Was wandering barefoot through the meadows.

The two parties are divided into the *caelestum matres*, which includes Ceres, at the sophisticated feast, and the *puellae*, including Persephone, wandering innocently (*nudo pede*) through a field of flowers. At this point, there are two relevant discrepancies between the *Metamorphoses* account of the Persephone myth and the *Fasti*'s that should be brought to light. First, the absence of the *Metamorphoses*' Venus Erycina in the *Fasti*'s account, and second, the *Fasti*'s inclusion of the catalogue of flowers.

The figure of Venus Erycina in the *Metamorphoses* plays a mischievous role, not unlike the playful Venus which teased her author in the first moments of *Fasti IV*'s proem. Her role in Ovid's telling of the narrative is crucial (Ov. Met. 5.359-84):

...Videt hunc Erycina vagantem
 Monte suo residens, natumque amplexa volucrum
 "Arma manusque meae, mea, nate, potentia", dixit,
 "illa, quibus superas omnes, cape tela, Cupido,
 Inque dei pectus celeres molire sagittas,
 Cui triplicis cessit fortuna novissima regni.
 Tu superos ipsumque Iovem tu numina ponti
 Victa domas ipsumque, regit qui numina ponti.
 Tartara quid cessant? Cur non matrisque tuumque
 Imperium profers? Agitur pars tertia mundi.
 Et tamen in caelo, quae iam patientia nostra est,
 Spernimur, ac mecum vires minuuntur Amoris.
 Pallada nonne vides iaculatricemque Dianam
 abscessisse mihi? Cereris quoque filia virgo,
 Si patiemur, erit: nam spes adfecat easdem.
 At tu, pro socio, siqua est ea gratia, regno
 Iunge deam patruo." Dixit Venus. Ille pharetram
 Solvit et arbitrio matris de mille sagittis
 Unam seposuit, sed qua nec acutior ulla
 Nec minus incerta est nec quae magis audiat arcus,
 Oppositoque genu curvavit flexile cornum
 Inque cor hamata percussit harundine Ditem.

preservation of her daughter's chastity. The Venus figure Ovid provides for the *Fasti* is arguably more mature than this trickster goddess. It is through this mature persona of Venus that the mature application of love and the maturation of the poet and his poetry into his *area maior* is evident.

The *Metamorphoses* draws out Persephone's abduction (compared to the *Fasti*'s shorter presentation of the same scene) and emphasizes the symbolism of Persephone's flowers falling as she, the virgin flower, is plucked by Pluto (Ov. Met. 5.391-401):

*...Quo dum Proserpina luco
 Ludit et aut violas aut candida lilia carpit,
 Dumque puellari studio calathosque sinumque
 Implet et aequales certat superare legendo,
 Paene simul visa est dilectaque raptaque Diti:
 Usque adeo est properatus amor. Dea territa maesto
 Et matrem et comites, sed matrem saepius, ore
 Clamat; et, ut summa vestem laniarat ab ora,
 Conlecti flores tunicis cecidere remissis.
 Tantaque simplicitas puerilibus adfuit annis,
 Haec quoque virgineum movit iactura dolorem.*

Proserpina was playing in this grove, gathering
 Violets and bright lilies with girlish enthusiasm,
 Filling her basket and the folds of her dress
 And trying to outdo her friends, when Pluto
 Saw her and wanted her and carried her off
 All in the same moment, so precipitous his love.
 The divine girl cried out plaintively to her mother
 And to her friends, but mostly her mother.
 Since she had torn her dress at the upper edge
 All the flowers came tumbling out, and so young
 And innocent was she that the loss of the flowers
 Aroused her virginal grief.²⁷

The *Fasti*, devoting only five lines (445-450) to the abduction, draws the focus instead to the diversity of flowers (425-44) present before Persephone is carried off. The abundance of

²⁷ Lombardo (2010)

flowers, a hybrid image showing the beauty of both fertility and chastity, reflect the greater themes of the *Fasti IV*. Like Venus' and Cybele's names being withheld for effect, the daughter-goddess' name does not appear until she has been referred to already as *virgo* (4.417), and *filia* (4.425), with her role in the narrative designated by her attributions. More than 'Persephone' in this myth, she is the endangered virgin or daughter figure. While the reader knows the whereabouts of her daughter, Ceres is confounded and the narrative reads as though no prior information were provided. This personal account of the action even though the author wasn't actually present at the event is very much in the style of elegiac aetiological poetry²⁸ and the vast search of Ceres provides the ideal environment for Ovid to exercise the elegiac style within the rigid calendric form. A product of this type of narrative is the epiphanic effect of the story's information at the end of the myth; Sol, the definer of time, creates an *apertum tempus*, revealing the information she has been searching across the world for, the location of her daughter, which quickly evolves into a scene of restored abundance (4.615-8):

*Tum demum voltumque Ceres animumque recepit
Imposuitque suae spicea sarta comae;
Largaque provenit cessatis messis in arvis,
Et vix congestas area cepit opes.*

Then, finally, did Ceres recover in countenance and spirit,
And she placed upon her hair garlanded ears of corn,
And a lavish harvest sprung forth from the resisting ground,
And the field could scarcely hold its congested crop.

The story of the wandering mother transitions in the same manner as Cybele's discovery, from a state of utter mystery to a full revelation of truth. It is through these mother figures and the act of tracing back that origins within *Fasti IV* develop. As the providers of origins themselves, the

²⁸ Littlewood (1981: 387)

maternal figures of Alma Venus (4.1), Alma Cybele (4.319), and Alma Ceres (4.547) provide the ancestry of Rome and the continued fertility of the world. These are the origins that April, and Venus as the imperial force of love, presents in the *Fasti*.

April 15th: The Fordicidia (lines 629-675)

Ovid rests the major themes of April upon the shoulders of the month's mother-goddesses Venus, Cybele, and Ceres. The festivals to which their myths pertain, despite providing the bulk of *Fasti IV* (roughly $\frac{2}{3}$), only take place within the first 12 days of the month. Ovid, then, is left to develop April's themes throughout the month's remaining festivals, festivals whose myths offer no more maternal figures through which his themes of fertility and chastity can be conveyed. Not including the ongoing games of the Cerealia, there are five festivals remaining in April for the poet to explore: the Fordicidia, Parilia, Vinalia, Robigalia, and Floralia. Each of these festivals offer variations on both the Venus archetype and the subjects that archetype perpetuates.

The Fordicidia opens with an etymology that draws on the month's most prominent theme (4.629-34):

*Tertia post Veneris cum lux surrexerit Idus,
Pontifices, forda sacra litate bove.
Forda ferens bos est fecundaque, dicta ferendo:
Hinc etiam fetus nomen habere putant.
Nunc gravidum pecus est, gravae quoque semine terrae:
Telluri plenae victima plena datur.*

After the third light rose following the Ides of Venus,
High priests, offer in sacrifice a pregnant (*forda*) cow.
A cow that is *forda* is *ferrying* her calf and *fertile*, and so named from carrying (*ferendo*).
From this, they also claim to draw the word *fetus*.
Now the cattle are gravid, and gravid too, the ground with seed;
To the plump earth are plump victims given.

Within this scene, even without an earth-mother manifest, the *pontifices* advocate the themes that have been explored in the earlier festivals of fertility and earthly abundance. Ovid draws attention to fertility as a form of origination by providing the origin for a word (*forda*) whose connotations lie in origination. The *nunc* gives the reader a sense that time has passed in the April narrative, at least since the proem which described the receding of winter. The plump earth reflects the Lucretian hymn of April's proem and the introductory lines of the Cerealia, and adds to the now-developed and recurring agricultural rites which pertain specifically to the prosperity of crops, the rural manifestation of imperialized love. This imperialized love in an urban sense (rather than the rural manifestation) consists of the roles for sexuality that can be placed within the social permissibility of the state, as Ovid has presented thus far in *Fasti IV* with recurring attention paid to chastity and maternal care.

The accompanying story of Numa and Faunus transitions the festival's account from a state of concealment to an *apertum tempus* of both realized truth (*expedit errantem... coniunx* (4.669)) and natural fertility (*fecundior annus* (4.671)). The passage begins with the world in its barren state: *fructu non respondente labori* (“(when) the harvest was not answering to labor”) (4.641), a response to the image presented in the proem: *fetaque terra patet* (“and the fertile earth lies exposed”) which serves to contrast April's tendency to open up (4.87-9). Following the ambiguity of Faunus' prophecy, Numa's wife reveals its true meaning (4.679): that the entrails of a pregnant cow are to be offered in sacrifice. While the revelation of truth, as seen in the legend of Claudia Quinta, is a moment of exposure in its own right, the result of Numa's sacrifice is a second *apertum tempus*, in that the previously resistant ground gives yield to better crops: *fecundior annus / provenit* (“the year came forth more bountiful”) (4.671). This instance

of the earth opening up is the same specific attribute assigned to his claim of April's tendencies to put the world into bloom (4.125-8), which is in turn verified by the outcome of the myth.

April 19th: The Cerealia (continued) (lines 679-712)

Just after the Fordicidia on the 15th, the following section in which Ovid explains the origins of burning foxes at the games of Ceres, on April 19th, contributes to the developed thematic narrative by providing a further origin of rites. This passage serves the primary mission of the *Fasti*, to recount the causes for particular rites, far more than it lends itself to the pre-established themes of maternity and imperialized love. This day, like the upcoming Robigalia, articulates its rites in a retributive manner; the burning of a fox is put into effect as a preventative measure for promoting a healthy growing season. In the Robigalia, the goddess Robigo (mildew) is implored to not to attack the growing crops. She is portrayed as a threat to agricultural fertility and is thus appeased so as not to jeopardize that fertility. While seemingly a minor deity, who receives an appropriately minor passage, the goddess presents the antithesis of the earth-mother goddesses, the variations of the Venus-archetype, presented thus far. This portrayal of the counterexample was seen similarly played out in the case of the shamed Merope among the rising Pleiades (4.165-78).

April 21st: The Parilia (lines 721-862)

The Robigalia and the Parilia, the festival that precedes it, possess a common peculiarity that arguably works in favor of the *Fasti IV*'s special attention to women's rites. As Fantham notes²⁹, both of these festivals are dedicated to divinities of uncertain gender. Corbeill concludes that "in the case of Pales, just as the two genders coexist in the same word, so too do the two

²⁹ Fantham (1998: 227, 265)

sexes coexist within the single sphere covered by the deity.³⁰ I draw the same inference in respect to the divinity of Robigo from Fantham's similar observation - that, while some accounts from antiquity offer the god as male, the impersonal *robigo* has observable instances of being used in the feminine, and as such is able to be treated as both genders. For Ovid to recurrently employ this mechanic in favor of the female manifestation of the divinity may suggest either that Ovid was aware of this tension of the sexes and deliberately chose to present both Pales and Robigo as female, or that Ovid was already under the assumption that both divinities were accepted as female. Regardless of Ovid's prior knowledge, the author arranges these goddesses along the growing line of female figures of myth.

In the passage of the Parilia, the presentation of Pales as a goddess is utilized immediately as a parallel to the Venus-archetype by a similar invocation (4.721-6):

*Nox abiit, oriturque Aurora. Parilia poscor:
Non poscor frustra, si favet alma Pales.
Alma Pales, faveas pastoria sacra canenti,
Prosequor officio si tua festa meo.
Certe ego de vitulo cinerem stupulasque fabalis
Saepe tuli plena, februa casta, manu;*

Night flees and Aurora rises. I am asked to sing the Parilia;
I will not sing in vain, if nourishing Pales favors me.
Nourishing Pales, may you favor my singing the pastoral rites
If I may, in my service, describe your festival in detail.
Certainly I've often carried the ashes of a calf and beanstalks
In my full hands; chaste things for purification;

From these introductory lines to the Parilia passage, a number of inferences can be drawn. Pales is invoked as a tutelary deity, though one with a notable connection to nature. This can be attested by the nature of the Parilia's rites (*pastoria*) and the doubled attribution of Pales as

³⁰ Corbeill (2015: 117)

Alma. *Alma* has thus far been reserved for the nourishing or ‘earth-mother’ qualities of April’s mother-goddesses and, even though Pales is not likely known to be maternal, Pales still holds the same power over natural origination and fertility as her preceding mother-goddesses. Pales’ lack of children in the narrative does not seem to compromise her significance either, as Fantham remarks that Ovid’s request for *favor* has not even been used for Cybele or Ceres, but is exclusive to Venus³¹. It is through this treatment of the goddesses Pales and Robigo that Ovid concludes *Fasti IV* - not with the continued focus on maternity, but on what that maternity entails in an agricultural context; namely, the fertility of the earth, the prosperity of crops, and the absence of maladies. Chastity, modesty, and the qualities of the *virgo* seem to evolve toward the end of the month, just like the portrayal of maternity. Through the inclusion of the phrase *februa casta*, the correlation of chastity and purity is not lost, even in the absence of mythological figures to represent them. The following lines expand on this idea (4.731-2):

*I, pete virginea, populus, suffimen ab ara:
Vesta dabit, Vestae munere purus eris.*

Go people, seek the fumigants from the virginal altar;
Vesta will give them - by Vesta’s gift you will be pure.

This passage is merely the didactic author relaying the usual rites of the Parilia, and yet the vocabulary is such that the resulting purification of the festival (*purus*) is tightly wound with the virgin (*virginea*) nature of Vesta’s altar, thereby correlating the otherwise estranged rites with the broader themes of the poem. Despite there being no mother figure in the Parilia mythology, Ovid makes sure to include the virgin as a means of creating this thematic emphasis. Just before

³¹ Fantham (1998: 228)

this mention of Vesta's altar, a further comparison to the proem's Venus is constructed that correlates Pales and Venus even further (4.729-30):

*Mota dea est operique favet: navalibus exit
Puppis, habent ventos iam mea vela suos.*

The goddess is moved and favors my work. From its dock
My ship embarks, my sails now hold the wind.

Compare the goddess, moved by favor, and the embarking ship to the *Fasti IV*'s earliest moments (4.15-8):

*Mota Cytheriaca leviter mea tempora myrto
Contigit et "coeptum perfice" dixit "opus."
Sensimus, et causae subito patuere dierum:
Dum licet et spirant flamina, navis eat.*

Moved, she touched to my temple Cytharean myrtle
and said, "complete the task you have begun."
I felt her, and at once the origins of the days lay uncovered:
So long as it is allowed and the winds blow, my craft shall sail on.

The inclusion of this line marks an arguably intentional correlation between the divinities of Pales and the goddesses' further influence on the scheme of the work. The two passages differ greatly in vocabulary, but are nearly identical in their presentations: that a goddess is first *mota* ("moved"), then grants favor to the poet, and the inspired narrator goes on to sail his creative ship in harmony with both divine will and the metaphorical winds. Just as Venus has been demonstrated in the proem to inspire that creative journey into the *Fasti*'s *area maior*, so here is Pales utilizing 1) the tutelary aspects of a knowledgeable patron deity, 2) the originative forces of a mother goddess, and 3) the forces of fertility that connect mother- and earth-goddesses and inspire April's agrarian rites and mythologies, to expand the *Fasti*, and thus his poetic career, into this greater territory.

The *locus* in the rites of the Cerealia in which Ovid introduces the Persephone myth (*Exigit ipse locus, raptus ut virginis edam* (4.417)) finds a similar passage within the Parilia (4.807-8):

*Ipsē locus causas vati facit. Urbis origo
Venit. Ades factis, magne Quirine, tuis!*

The passage itself provides causes for the *vates*: the origin of the city has come.
Aid me with your deeds, great Quirinus!

What more important *locus* could the *Fasti* present than April 21st, the day on which Rome was founded? Ovid capitalizes on this moment with a huge emphasis on patriotism, reflecting his notion of *militia* in composing the *Fasti* as a glorification to Rome. Though this notion was only previously attested in *Fasti II*, the *ipse locus* of the Parilia offers a reminder of Ovid's service as he speaks to Pales (4.723-4):

*Alma Pales, faveas pastoria sacra canenti,
Prosequor officio si tua festa meo.*

Nourishing Pales, may you favor my singing the pastoral rites
If I may, in my service, describe your festival in detail.

This sense of his poetry as an *officium* is developed in the foundation-myth's concluding lines (4.857-62):

*Urbs oritur (quis tunc hox ullia credere posset?)
Victorem terris impositura pedem.
Cuncta regas et sis magno sub Caesare semper,
Saepe etiam pluris nominis huius habe;
Et quotiens steteris domito sublimis in orbe,
Omnia sint humeris inferiora tuis.*

The city rose (who could have believed this at the time?),
To lay its victorious foot upon the world.
Rule it all, and forever be beneath Great Caesar,
And always have many of this name;

And whenever you shall stand eminent in a conquered world,
May all else be lower than your shoulders.

The identity of Ovid as a state poet culminates in this line, as his endeavor both to glorify Rome and its emperor and to weave a tapestry of origins intersect. This section of the *urbis origo*, though containing no features of *Fasti IV*'s themes of fertility or maternity, offers the evolution of these themes on a broader canvas: prosperity through abundance and reproduction. Through this vision of ultimate prosperity for the city, of which traces may be felt during the *Fasti*'s composition in the *Pax Augusta*, Ovid unites the themes of earthly and sexual fertility, and maternal progenerativity and aetiological origination.

April 23rd: The Vinalia (lines 863-900)

It is with the peculiar presentation of the Vinalia that one might argue for something of a ring structure within the overall narrative of *Fasti IV*, with the correlating passages of the multifaceted Veneralia and Vinalia bookending the structure, and the secondary larger mythologies of Cybele and Pales on either side of the central, longest narrative of Ceres. My term 'multifaceted' refers to Venus Verticordia and Fortuna Virilis both functioning as patron deities in the Veneralia and the same case of Venus Erycina and Jupiter in the Vinalia. The address to *matresque nurusque* in the Veneralia yields to the *volgares puellae* ("prostitutes") (4.865) in the Vinalia; prostitutes identified with their *professarum quaestibus* (lit. "of occupations for profit") (4.866). Here, the imperial function of love is again addressed through the divinity of Venus (4.865-8):

*Numina volgares Veneris celebrate puellae:
Multa professarum quaestibus apta Venus.
Poscite ture dato formam populique favorem,
Poscite blanditias dignaque verba ioco*

Prostitutes, celebrate the divinity of Venus:
 Your plethora of profitable professions suit Venus.
 Pray, with offered incense, for beauty and public favor,
 Pray for charm and sophisticated words in jests

Undoubtedly the treatment of the addressees between the Veneralia (*Rite deam colitis*) and the Vinalia (*Numina... Veneria celebrate*) are meant to invoke a similar circumstance. Fantham notes the further parallel between the rites of Fortuna Virilis and Venus Erycina (including the offering of incense for particular female attributes) with the *forma et mores et bona fama* sought for by the women of the Veneralia being replaced by the *blanditias dignaque verba ioco* of the Vinalia³². Again, Ovid is defining roles for varied female sexuality within Augustan Rome by presenting the socially permissible religious roles these women should play, whether they be mothers, brides, virgins, or prostitutes. By the *Fasti*'s didactic function, the mothers and daughters of the Veneralia *ought* to worship the divinity of Fortuna Virilis so as to achieve the specific female virtues that are in accordance with Ovid's glorified vision of Augustan Rome. Likewise, the Vinalia presents an alternative route of female sexuality in its societally respected context, in that the state recognizes that on the day of the Vinalia the *volgares puellae* should be worshipping Venus Erycina. The month ends with an introduction to the rites of Flora, and, though not known to be a mother, she is invoked in *Fasti V* as *Mater florum* (5.183), drawing attention to part of her function in the narrative being the continuation of *Fasti IV*'s earth-mother themes.

In his composition of the *Fasti*, Ovid defies expectations for his portrayals of love by abandoning the satirical design of his earlier *Ars Amatoria*. In this refinement he posits an uncontroversial treatment of sexuality; one that is culturally recognized and advocated, and one

³² Fantham (1998: 256)

that reflects beautifully the greater perspective of sexuality in its various manifestations of fertility, maternity, origination, love, and ancestry. When read in respect to the recent events of Ovid's life (notably his exile due in part to his *Ars Amatoria*) it is only fitting that the *Fasti* should serve, in part, to correct his controversial treatment of sexuality and to help restore his good standing with the state. In once again finding a place for himself within Rome's cultural order, he is simultaneously finding the same place for his poetry.

In contrast to his earlier days of poetry, in which he plays *sine crimine* ("without crime" or "innocently") (4.9), he is now charged and exiled³³ and he, his themes, and his muse Venus, among other aspects of his poetry, responsively assume their graver demeanors. The erotic Venus which landed him in exile becomes his potential ticket back to Rome by adopting these new themes of state, 'bearing the only weapons she can' of Rome's glory, its Trojan legacy, and becoming an archetype for the maternal figures which appear in the mythologies of her month. Ovid develops maternity as a theme through which female sexuality can be presented in a socially permissible context, as far as it adheres to the religious doctrines of the state. The didactic voice of the *Fasti* both articulates this sexuality not only in societal terms but in natural terms as well, utilizing the Lucretian Venus and Ceres as models for earthly fertility, expanding from the aspects of social sexuality addressed through Venus Verticordia, Venus Erycina, Fortuna Virilis and Cybele.

The description of spring as an *apertum tempus* is a theme that is not confined to *Fasti IV*, but rather a small part of the *Fasti*'s broader tendency to 'open up'³⁴ that is conveyed most

³³ *Fasti* 4.81-2, in which Ovid addresses Germanicus on yearning for his native land of Sulmo from his current position on Scythian land, are evidence that parts of the *Fasti* were revised sometime during Ovid's exile in Tomi.

³⁴ Beginning with Janus (1.63-288), the narrative swings open like a door, progresses through spring's tendency to open up, and ends in the festival of Carna (or *Cardea* (Frazer 1989: 324e)), the goddess of hinges (6.101-96).

prominently through the successive scenes of exposure that April's mythologies offer. None of the themes or tones presented in Book IV of the *Fasti* seem to be exclusive to that book, but rather certain ones are developed more thoroughly in *Fasti IV* when brought into context with the changes of spring, the patronage of Venus and the archetype she provides, and festivals whose rites pertain almost exclusively to women. Ovid uses Venus in Rome's calendar to address and influence the reception of various roles of female sexuality in a more socially permissible manner than his earlier poetry exhibited. *Fasti IV*'s treatment of female sexuality as governable under imperial parameters is a radical development in the identity of Ovid as a love elegist and defines the *area maior* towards which the *Fasti* strives.

Fasti IV

“Favor me,” I said, “Nourishing Mother of the twin Loves!”
 She turned her gaze towards the bard
 And asked, “What have you to do with me? Surely you were singing better things?
 Is there some old wound in your tender heart?”
 “Goddess...” I replied, “you know of the wound.” She laughed, and the sky
 At once turned serene in her direction.
 Wounded or well, did I ever abandon your standard?
 You were always my proposed work, you were always my burden.
 It was proper when I played innocently in my early years;
 [10] Now my horses tread on greater fields.
 The days and their origins drawn forth from ancient annals,
 And of the stars that rise and slip beneath the world, I sing.
 I have arrived at the fourth, the month in which you are most celebrated:
 And, Venus, you know that the month and its poet are yours.”
 Moved, she touched to my temple Cytharean myrtle
 And said, “complete the task you have begun.”
 I felt her, and at once the origins of the days lay uncovered:
 So long as it is allowed and the winds blow, may my craft sail on.
 If there is any part of the *Fasti* that might touch *you*,
 [20] Caesar, in April you will find what you seek.
 This month descends to you along a great lineage,
 And is made yours by your noble adoption.
 The Ilian father, when scrawling out the long year,
 Noticed this link and he himself recorded his ancestors.
 As he allotted feral Mars the first place in line,
 Since his closest connection to birth was through him,
 So he wished that Venus, brought into the family many generations ago,
 be situated in the second month.
 [30] In search of his people’s origin, by turning the wheel of time,
 At long last he arrived at his divine ancestry.
 How could he miss that Electra, Atlas’ daughter, bore Dardanus -
 That Electra had lain with Jove?
 From Dardanus sprung Erichthonius, and from him, Tros.
 He begat Assaracus; Assaracus begat Capys in turn.
 Anchises followed, with whom Venus
 Did not deign to share the title of a parent.
 Sewn from this pairing was Aeneas, the pious sight that bore through flames
 Sacred things and his father, no less sacred, upon his shoulders.
 At last - we arrive at the blessed name of Iulus,
 [40] Whence the Julian house meets its Teucrican forefathers.
 From this union came Postumus, called Silvius among the Latins
 For he was born deep in the forest.
 And he, Latinus, is your father. Alba succeeded Latinus,

And Epytus held a spot next to Alba.
 He gave Capys a name that echoes from Troy,
 And the same man was grandfather to Calpetus.
 After him, when Tiberinus held his father's kingdom,
 It is said that he drowned in the whirling waters of the Tuscan.
 And yet he had still seen the birth of Agrippa and his grandson, Remulus,
 [50] Against whom thunderbolts were cast down.
 Aventinus came after them, from whom the region was named -
 The mountain as well - and after him the kingdom was handed to Proca.
 Numitor followed the brother of stern Amulius.
 Ilia, along with her brother Lausus, were brought forth from Numitor.
 Lausus fell by his uncle's sword; Ilia pleased Mars
 And begat you, Quirinus, with your twin Remus.
 He always claimed Venus and Mars to be his parents,
 And his word merits faith;
 Nor can the next grandchildren turn a blind eye -
 [60] He gave continuous months to his race's gods.
 But I predict that Venus' month is so-called from Greek;
 The goddess is named from the froth of the sea.
 Nor is it a wonder to be called a Greek title,
 For the Italian land is greater Greece:
 Evander arrived with a fleet packed with his people;
 Alcides had also come, both Greek in ethnicity.
 As a club-bearing foreigner he grazed his herds in the Aventine grass,
 As a great god he drank from the Albula.
 Chief Odysseus came as well - behold the Laestrygonas,
 [70] And the shore still bearing Circe's name.
 The walls of Telegonus were already standing,
 And the walls of sopping Tibur; built by Argive hands.
 Driven by the demise of the Atrides, Halesus arrived,
 From whom the Faliscan region assumes its name.
 Add on Antenor, persuader of peace for the Trojans,
 And, Apulian Daunus, your Oenid son-in-law.
 Some time after Antenor, Aeneas brought his gods
 From Trojan flames into our land.
 With him was his comrade from Phrygian Ida, Solymus,
 [80] From whom the walls of Sulmo take their name.
 The icy walls of Sulmo, Germanicus... our homeland.
 Wretched me - how *far* that place is from Scythian soil!
 And so, torn as I am... oh but Muse, stop these complaints,
 Sacred songs on sombre strings are not for you.
 Oh, where does envy not reach? There are those who may yearn,
 Grudgingly, wishing to seize honor from your month, Venus.
 For since spring "opens" (*aperit*) all things - the thick roughness
 Of cold is shed, and the fertile earth lies exposed -

They say that *April* is named from an “opening” (*aperto*) time,
 [90] Which nurturing Venus claimed, setting her hand upon it.
 She reigns over the entire world as the most honorable goddess indeed,
 She holds a kingdom less than no god’s,
 She gives laws to the sky, to the earth, and to her natal waves,
 And through her coming preserves the whole species.
 She created every god (far too many to count),
 She gave the crops and trees their origins.
 She pulled together the unrefined minds of man
 And taught him to join with his mate.
 What, if not sweet desire, could create the entire race of birds?
 [100] Nor could cattle couple if gentle love was far off.
 The savage ram butts at his rival,
 But refuses to mar the brow of his beloved ewe.
 The bull, whom every glade, every forest grove fears,
 Follows his heifer, his savagery disarmed.
 The same power lives beneath the surface of the sea,
 And watches over and fills the waters with innumerable fish.
 The force stripped men of their primal habits,
 And grooming and personal cleanliness came from it.
 [110] At night, denied by locked doors, it is said that
 A wakeful lover was the first to put forth his verses;
 It was eloquence to charm the unfeeling damsel,
 And each man was then eloquent for his own cause.
 This goddess put forth a thousand skills, and the eagerness to please,
 Which yet hid away, now produced a great many inventions.
 Would any man dare to deprive this goddess of the second month’s title?
 Such madness be far from me...
 While at all turns the goddess is forceful and her temples brim with suppliants,
 She possesses even more sway in our city.
 On Troy's behalf, Roman, Venus bore your arms
 [120] As she groaned at her delicate hand, pierced by a javelin.
 By a Trojan judge she bested two divinities
 (Ah, if they hadn’t remembered their defeat!)
 And she is called Assaracus’ daughter-in-law, so, as one knows,
 The Great Caesar would have a Julian forefather.
 There is no time more fit for Venus than spring:
 In spring the earth blooms, in spring the field returns.
 Now eaves of timbers rise, bursting forth from the ground,
 Now the buds launch their shoots with swollen stalks.
 Beautiful Venus is deserving of a beautiful season,
 [130] And, as usual, is joined to her Mars.
 In spring she wills the curved sterns sail her motherly waves,
 No longer dreading the menacing winter.

1 April KALENDS

Duly tend to the goddess, Latin mothers and daughters-in-law,
 And you, without the ribbons and long robes.
 Remove the golden necklace from her marble neck,
 Remove her riches; the whole goddess must be bathed.
 Set the golden necklaces back upon her dried neck.
 Now other flowers, now the freshly-plucked rose,
 She commands, too, a wash beneath verdant myrtle.
 [140] There is a certain reason for her ordering this, lend an ear:
 Naked upon the shore, she was drying her dripping hair,
 When satyrs, a shameless bunch, beheld the goddess.
 She sensed them, and hid her body with intertwined myrtle.
 Guarded in having done this, she bids you follow her model.
 Now learn why you offer incense to Fortuna Virilis
 In the place that drips with warm water.
 All women doff their clothes entering that place,
 And it beholds all blemishes of the bare body.
 So that she can mask their imperfections and hide them from men,
 [150] Fortuna Virilis does this in exchange for a bit of incense.
 Nor should it pain to eat poppy pounded with snowy milk
 And liquid honey squeezed from the honeycomb.
 When Venus was first led to her ready groom
 She drank this; from that moment she was a bride.
 Appease her with suppliant words, for under her
 Beauty and morals and good fame endure.
 In the time of our forefathers, Rome had slipped from a state of chastity.
 You, O ancestors, consulted the old Cumaean.
 She directed that a temple be built to Venus, and when it was duly built,
 [160] Venus, with her heart turned, adopted her name (*Verticordia*) from it.
 Fairest of them all, always look upon the children of your Aeneas with calm countenance,
 And, goddess, protect their wives.

While I speak, with the terror-driving tip of its tail crooked,
 The Scorpion plunges headlong into the green waters.

2 April

When night has come and gone, and the sky has first
 Begun to blush, and the birds bicker, damp with dew,
 The traveler, awake in the night, sets down his half-burnt torch,
 And the farmer sets off on his usual routine,
 The Pleiades begin to lighten their father's shoulders;
 [170] They are said to be seven, but are only six.
 Whether the six were gripped in the embrace of gods
 (For they say that Sterope had lain with Mars,
 Alcyone and you, fine Celæno, with Neptune,

And Maia, Electra, and Taygete with Jove),
 And Merope, the seventh, was wed to you Sisyphus, a mortal,
 She regrets this and, ashamed of the matter, hides in solace;
 Or whether Electra could not bear to watch the fall of Troy,
 And so placed her hand before her eyes.

4 April Megalensia

Let the sky spin thrice on its perpetual pole,
 [180] Let Titan thrice yoke and thrice unyoke his horses;
 At once, the Berecyntian flute with its curved horn will blow
 And the festival of the Idaean parent will have begun.
 Eunuchs will pass and pound their hollow drums
 And bronze struck upon bronze will resound;
 She is carried, sitting atop the effeminate necks of her followers
 With revelry through the mid-streets of the city.
 The stage sounds and the games beckon: observe, Quirites,
 And let the quarrelsome forum be rid of Mars.
 It is pleasing to ask many questions, but the clash of the sharp cymbal
 [190] And the bent lotus with its hair-bristling noise startled me.
 “Lend me, goddess, someone I may question.” The Cybelean saw her
 Wise granddaughters and bade them to address my concerns.
 “Be considerate of her command, children of Helicon, and tell me:
 Why does the Great Goddess revel in a perpetual drone?”
 So I spoke, So Erato replied (the Cytherean month fell to her
 Since she gets her name from tender love):
 “This prophecy was given to Saturn: *Greatest of kings,
 You shall be torn from your scepter by your child.*
 Dreading the oracle, as each of his children were born
 [200] He devoured them and bound them fast in his bowels.
 So often Rhea protested; So often she bore a child,
 Yet never a mother, and she bemoaned her own fertility.
 Then, Jove was born. Antiquity is trusted as a great witness,
 Try not to confuse the general faith.
 A cloaked stone landed in the throat of Heaven,
 And so the Father was to be beguiled by the Fates.
 Long ago, lofty Ida echoed with clattering
 So the boy might safely wail from his infant mouth.
 Some struck their shields, others their hollow helmets with sticks;
 [210] This was the labor of the Curetes and the labor of the Corybantes.
 The fact was concealed, and the ancient affair is still imitated -
 Beating bronze and rough leather,
 They hit cymbals instead of helmets, drums as shields,
 The flute pipes the Phrygian pitch it once put forth.”
 She finished, I began: “Why for her does the fierce race of lions
 Surrender their unwonted manes to her curved yoke?”

I finished, she began: "Their ferocity was allayed,
 It is believed, by her. It is testified by her chariot."
 "But why is her head burdened by a turretted-crown?
 [220] Did she give the first cities their towers?"
 She nodded. "From where," I said,
 "Did the charge come to sever their members?"
 As I quieted, the Pierian spoke thus:
 "A Phrygian lad - Attis - with striking looks,
 Toppled the tower-bearing goddess with his chaste love.
 She desired him to serve her, to protect her temple,
 And told him: "Will to be a boy forever."
 He lent his faith to her bidding, saying: "If I cheat,
 May that love with whom I erred be my very last.
 He erred - and in the nymph Sagaritis he ceased to be
 [230] What he was. The wrath of the goddess wrought vengeance.
 With wounds hacked into the wood, the Naiad fell,
 For the Naiad's fate was the tree.
 He went mad and, thinking the bedroom ceiling to be crashing down,
 Fled and set his course for the summit of Mount Dindymus.
 He shrieked "*Take away the torches!*" here, and there: "*Remove the whips!*"
 All the while swearing the Palaestian goddesses were near.
 He tore, too, his body with a sharp stone,
 And dragging his flowing hair through filthy dust,
 His voice: "*I deserve this! With my blood,*
 [240] *I pay the due penalty - ah - die, my parts,*
My downfall, ah - die!" - he said even still.
 He gouged the burden from his groin,
 And at once there was no trace of his manhood.
 This madness came into practice, and to this day his effeminate followers
 Hack away their vile members while whipping their hair back and forth."
 From the eloquent voice of the Aonian Muse,
 The answer to the question of madness was dealt.
 "Recall this as well, guide of my work, I pray you,
 From where does she hail? or has she always been in our city?"
 "The Mother always loved Dindymus, and Cybele,
 [250] And Ida, delightful with its springs, and the might of Ilium.
 When Aeneas ferried Troy into the fields of Italy,
 The goddess nearly followed his relic-bearing fleet,
 But she did not sense from the Fates that her divinity was ready
 To be worshipped in Latium, so she remained in her usual haunt.
 Afterwards, when mighty Rome had already seen five ages
 And lifted her head above the conquered world,
 The priest observed the fatal words of the Euboean song.
 They say that what he saw went as follows:
 "The Mother is gone - I order you, Roman: find the Mother.

[260] When she arrives, she must be received by chaste hands.”
 The obscurity of the dusky oracle confused the senators
 As to who the missing parent was, and the place she would be sought.
 The Paeon was consulted and said, “Bring the Mother of the gods,
 She shall be found on the peak of Ida.”
 The leading men were deployed. At that time the scepter of Phrygia
 Was gripped by Attalus; To the Ausonian men he denied the matter.
 I sing a marvel - The earth trembled with long grumbles,
 And so the goddess from her shrine spoke:
 “I wished that I be sought! Make no delay - grant my wish!
 [270] Rome is a place deserving of every god.”
 Stricken by fear at her voice, he proclaimed, “Ship off,
 You will be ours. Rome looks back to its Phrygian ancestors.”
 At once, innumerable axes split the pines that
 The pious Phrygian³⁵ used in flight.
 A thousand hands draw together and bear the heavenly Mother
 In a hollow ship, painted in burnt hues.
 She is carried, most securely, across the waters of her son,
 And she meets the long strait of Phrixus’ sister,
 And she sails the swift Rhoeteum, and the Sigeon coasts,
 [280] And Tenedos, and the ancient wealth of Eetion.
 She set out for the Cyclades, turning her back to Lesbos
 And to the wave which shatters on Carystian shoals.
 And she crossed the Icarian, where Icarus ruined
 His dripping wings and the vast sea assumed his name.
 With Crete to her left and the Pelopeides to her right,
 She parted the main and made for Cythera, sacred to Venus.
 From here: the Trinacrian Sea, where Brontes, Steropes, and Acmonides
 Are wont to forge red-hot iron.
 She sailed the African waters, and looked back over the oars on the left
 [290] To the Sardinian kingdoms, and beheld Ausonia.
 She reached Ostia, where Tiberinus forks into the deep,
 And sails with freer expanse.
 Every knight and serious senator, interspersed with commoners,
 Came to the mouth of the Tuscan River.
 Mothers and daughters went forth, and brides,
 And the maidenhood which tended the sacred hearth.
 The men exhausted their eager arms pulling at the rope;
 The foreign ship hardly crossed its contesting current.
 For a long time the earth was parched, the grass was burnt with thirst;
 [300] The ship’s hull rested against the miry shore.
 Each man exerted more than his task demanded
 And rallied their powerful hands with resounding cries.

³⁵ Aeneas

As an island sits squarely in the center of the sea,
 So struck by the portent the men stood and trembled.
 Claudia Quinta claims heritage from lofty Clausus,
 Her beauty not unlike her nobility.
 Certainly chaste, but not believed so:
 Rumor unjust had wounded her and she was accused of a false crime.
 It claimed that she carried herself dolled-up,
 Her hair adorned in various ways,
 [310] And that her tongue was eager for stiff old men.
 Aware of the truth, she laughed at the rumor's falsity
 ...but we in the crowd feel compelled to believe in crime.
 When this woman advanced from the line of chaste matrons
 And took the river's pure water from her hands,
 Thrice she sprinkled it on her head, thrice she lifted her palms into the air
 (Everyone who saw believed that she was losing her mind),
 And with her knees bent, she fixed her gaze upon the image of the goddess,
 And, with her hair cast about, put forth these words:
 "Nourishing, fruitful, ancestress of the gods,
 [320] Accept these prayers of your suppliant under one fixed condition:
 I am not called chaste; If you condemn me, I shall confess to deserve it.
 By death I will pay the price, bested by the judgment of a goddess.
 But, if my crime is missing, give by your action a token for my life
 And, chaste, follow my chaste hands,"
 She spoke, and hauled the rope with little effort.
 (I might speak of a miracle, but it is vouched for by the stage:)
 The goddess was moved, followed her leader, and sang her praise with following;
 Sound bore proof of her delight to the stars.
 They came to a bend in the River (the ancients called it the
 [330] Halls of the Tiber), which flowed off to the left.
 Night approached; they bound fast the rope to an oaken post,
 And gave their bodies to soft sleep after dining.
 Day approached; they loosed the rope from its oaken post -
 Before this, however, they set incense down upon the hearth they had constructed.
 They crowned the ship and sacrificed an undeveloped heifer,
 Free from the blemish of toil or mate.
 There is a place at which the rushing Almo flows into the Tiber,
 And the name loses the smaller river to the larger.
 There, a white-haired priest in his purple robe
 [340] Washed the mistress, and her sacred things, in the Almo's waters.
 Her followers rejoiced, their furious flutes piped,
 And their effeminate hands beat down against bull hide.
 With a pleased expression, Claudia stepped before the most celebratory crowd,
 Her chastity, scarcely believed, at last attested by the goddess.
 The goddess herself, seated in a cart, was received through the Capene Gate;
 Flowers freshly-picked were strewn across the yoked oxen.

Nasica welcomed her. The temple's founder is no longer;

It is now Augustus, before it was Metellus."

At this point, Erato finished. There was a delay

So I resumed my inquiry:

[350] "Tell me," I said, "why she requests her wealth in small tokens?"

"People gathered copper, from which Metellus structured her temples," she said.

"From this, the custom of giving in small coins endures."

"Why at that time," I asked, "did people attend more dinner parties in turns,

And celebrate at invitational banquets?"

"Because: the Bercyntian did well to change her home,

And they hunt for the same portent by alternating homes."

I would have pressed on to ask why the Megalensia are the first games of the year in our city

When the goddess (for she anticipated it) replied:

"She begat the gods: they yielded to their parent

[360] And the Mother holds priority in the giving of honors."

"Why, then, do we use the term 'Galli' for those who castrate themselves,

When the Gallic land is such a distance away from Phrygia?"

"Between," she said, "green Cybele and lofty Celænas,

There is the raving water of the river named Gallus.

He who drinks of it goes mad. Be far from here, who should care

For a sound mind; he who drinks of it goes mad."

"There is no shame," I said, "in having set a plate of herbs on

The mistress' table. Is there an underlying reason?"

"The ancients are said to have used unmixed milk and the herbs

[370] That the earth bore of her own free will.

White cheese is mixed with crushed herbs

So that the ancient goddess may understand the ancient diets."

5 April

When next the stars are stirred - Pallantias shall have shone in the sky

And Luna shall have unharnessed her snowy steeds -

He will be right who claims: "Long ago, on this day, the temple of Public Fortune

Was consecrated on the Hill of Quirinus."

6 April

It was (as I recall) the third day of the games, and this

Peculiar old-timer sitting next to me remarked that:

"This is the day on which Caesar, on Libyan coasts,

[380] Pulverized the faithless forces of noble Juba.

Caesar was my leader, under whom I am proud to have served as tribune;

He was in charge of my service.

I earned this seat in war; you earned yours in peace,

Among the Ten Men who hold this office."

We were about to say more when we were suddenly parted by rain;

The pendulous Libra tipped these celestial waters.

9 April

But, before the final day that will end the spectacle,
Sword-wielding Orion will have sunk into the sea.

10 April

When next Eos will have looked upon Conquering Rome,
[390] And the stars in flight will have given their place to Phoebus,
The Circus will be packed with a parade, a tally of the gods,
And blustery horses will strive for the first palm.

11-12 April Cerealia

Next are the games of Ceres. There is no need to declare why -
The service and surplus of the goddess reveal themselves.
The bread of the first mortals was green with the herbs
The earth unhesitantly bore.

Now they plucked lively greens from the soil,
Now their feasts were a canopy of tender leaves.
After this, an acorn sprung forth. With the acorn now discovered,
[400] It held esteem as a sturdy oak.

Ceres was the first to call men to better nourishment,
And changed acorns into more useful food.
She compelled bulls to submit their necks to the yoke;
Then, for the first time, upturned earth beheld the suns.
Bronze was valuable - iron deposits yet hid away;
Alas... they ought to have stayed hidden forever.
Ceres is happy in times of peace - pray, farmers,
For perpetual peace and a pacific leader.

It is proper that you give spelt to the goddess, the honor of sprinkled salt,
[410] And incense grains into the hearths of old.

If there is a lack of incense, burn the oily pine-torches;
Good Ceres is pleased with little, so long as it is pure.
Attendants with tucked-in garments, take the knife from the ox:
Let the ox plow. Sacrifice the sluggish sow.
The neck fit for the yoke must not be split by the axe;
Let him live, and let him labor often in the tough soil.

The passage arrives that demands I tell of the Virgin's rape.
You will recall many things; a few must be taught:
The land jutted forth into the open ocean with its three crags -
[420] Trinacria - which inherits its name from its environment,
The cherished home of Ceres. She presides over many cities,
Among which is fertile Henna with its cultivated soil.
Frigid Arethusa had summoned the mothers of the divine,
And the blonde goddess arrived at her holy banquet.

Her daughter, attended by her usual maidens,
 Was wandering barefoot through the meadows.
 Beneath a shady hollow there is a place soaked with abundant spray
 From the heights of a cascading waterfall.
 Every color, as many as nature held, was there,
 [430] And the earth glimmered, painted with varied flowers.
 As soon as she saw: "friends, come!" she said,
 "And with me bring back laps brimming with flowers."
 The foolish prize lured their girlish minds,
 And the work was carried out with no attention.
 This girl filled up her basket, bound by clinging twigs,
 This one her lap, that goddess burdened the seams of her lap,
 That one collected marigolds, this one tended the violets,
 That one snipped poppies with her nails.
 These girls, hyacinthe, you grip; you stall, amaranth, those.
 [440] Some love thyme, others rosemary and melilot.
 Many roses were picked and flowers without a name;
 Persephone herself collected delicate crocuses and white lilies.
 Eager for her plucking, little by little, she walked farther,
 And by chance no attendants followed the goddess.
 Her uncle saw her, and he quickly snatched her up when she had been spotted.
 And carried her to his kingdom on his caerulean steeds.
 All the while she was crying out: "Help! Dearest Mother,
 I am being taken!" and she rent the fabric of her robe.
 Meanwhile, the path to Dis opened up, for his horses
 [450] Could scarcely endure the light of unaccustomed day.
 But her chorus of companions, with their baskets heaped with flowers,
 Shouted "Persephone! Come to your gifts!"
 When she was silent to their summons, they filled the mountains with shrieking
 And struck their bare breasts with forlorn fists.
 Struck by the grieving, Ceres (she only just arrived in Henna)
 Without delay cried, "Wretched me! Daughter! *Where are you?*"
 Weak in her mind she rushes forth, in the way we are wont to hear
 The maenads of Thrace race with flowing hair.
 Just as a mother groans with her calf torn from her udder,
 [460] And searches for her child through every grove,
 So too did the goddess not stifle her groans, and she is borne
 On a fleet course beginning at your fields, Henna.
 From there, the girl's tracks were found on plants
 And a recognizable weight pressed into the ground.
 Perhaps that day would have been the last of her wanderings,
 Had pigs not jumbled up the discovered portents.
 And now she passed Leontini and the river Amemanus on her route,
 And your banks, herbiferous Acis.
 She passed Cyane and the springs of mild Anapus,

[470] And you, Gela, with your whirlpools that must not be approached.
 She left behind Ortygia, and Megara, and Pantagias,
 Where the sea receives the Symathean waters,
 And the caves of the Cyclopes, burnt down by the forges set in them,
 And the place which holds its name from the curved sickle,
 And Himera, and Didyme, and Acragas, and Tauromenum,
 And Melas, the bountiful pastures of the holy cattle.
 From here she approached Camerina, and Thapsus, and the Helorian Tempe
 Where Eryx always lies open to Zephyrus.
 And now Pelorias, and Lilybaeum, and now Pachynum
 [480] She circled; the three horns of her land.
 Wherever she set foot, she filled the entire place with woeful lamentation -
 As when the bird bemoans her lost Itys,
 Between both "*Persephone!*" and "*Daughter!*" she called out,
 She called out and cried each name in turn.
 But neither 'Persephone' nor 'Daughter' heard her mother Ceres,
 And each name perished in turn.
 Her one question - had she seen a shepherd working, or a planter - was:
 "Did a girl make her way through here?"
 Now one shadow covers her endeavor, and everything lies hidden in darkness;
 [490] Now the vigilant hounds fell silent.
 High Aetna looms above the mouth of gaping Typhoeus,
 Whose flaring breaths scorch the earth.
 Here she ignited twin pines for torches, and from this act,
 Torches, even now, are issued at the rites of Ceres.
 There exists a cave, jagged with a frame of jutting pumice,
 An area not to be approached by man or beast,
 And as soon as she came to this place, she yoked her tamed serpents to her cart
 And wandered through the seas, parting their surface.
 She fled from the Syrtes, and you, Zanclean Charybdis,
 [500] And you, Nisean hounds, shipwrecking monsters,
 And the Adriatic stretching far, and the double seas of Corinth;
 And so she came to your port, Attic land.
 Here, for the first time, she sat most sorrowfully on a cold stone,
 Which the Cecropids even now call *Triste*.
 She endured under the sky, motionless, for many days,
 Subjected to the moon and pouring rain.
 Fortune herself is met here: what is now called the Cereal Eleusis
 Was then the farm of old Celeus.
 To his home he carried acorns and mulberries harvested from the brambles,
 [510] And dry firewood for the blazing hearth.
 His little daughter drove two she-goats back from the mountain,
 And his tender-aged son was ill in his cradle.
 "Mother!" said the maiden (the goddess was moved by the name of mother),
 "What are you doing, unaccompanied in lonely places?"

The old man both hesitated and, despite being burdened by a load,
Prayed she might walk beneath the roofs of his hut, however insignificant they may be.
She refused. (She assumed the form of an old hag and pressed her hair down with a cap.)

The goddess replied to the urgent man with such words:

“May you always walk safely as a parent! My daughter has been kidnapped.

[520] Alas, by so much is your lot better than mine!”

She spoke, and just like a tear - since gods cannot cry -

A glistening drop fell down onto her warm lap.

The soft spirits wept together, the maiden and the old man,

And from the just old man these words were spoken:

“So may your daughter be safe, whom taken you seek,

Get up, nor despise the roofs of my meager hut.”

The goddess replied to him, “Lead on. You understand how you are able to compel me,”

And she rose from the stone and followed the old man.

The guide told his companion that his son was sick and could not grab hold of sleep,

[530] And would stay awake in his misfortune.

The goddess, about to enter the small household, collected a gentle,

Sleep-bearing poppy from the wild-country ground.

In plucking it, they say she tasted it in forgetfulness,

And unintentionally discharged her body from her long famine.

Since she set aside her fast at night’s outset,

Her initiates hold their mealtime at the appearance of stars.

As she entered the threshold, she saw everyone filled with grief;

Now there was no hope in the boy for salvation.

She greeted the mother (the mother was called Metanira)

[540] And deigned to join the child’s lips to her own.

His pallor fled, and they saw sudden strength in his body;

Such vigor came from the mouth of the divine.

There was delight in the entire house. They were a mother, a father,

And a daughter; those three were the entire household.

They soon set down a feast: curds coagulated in milk,

And apples, and golden honey in its own comb.

For sleep, nourishing Ceres abstained and gave,

Poppy with warm milk for you, boy, to drink.

It was the middle of the night and the silence of placid sleep;

[550] She lifted Triptolemus to her lap,

And thrice stroked him gently with her hand, thrice she cast spells,

Spells not to be repeated by the voice of a mortal,

And in living ashes, she covered the body of the boy in the fire

So that the fire could purge the burden of his humanity.

Stupidly, his dutiful mother was shaken from sleep and insanely:

“*What are you doing?*” she exclaimed, and snatched his body from the fire.

To her the goddess said, “while you are not evil, you acted so.

My gifts are useless against maternal fear.

That child will be the same as mortals, but will be the first to plow,

[560] And sow, and raise a bounty from the cultivated ground.”
 She spoke, and, departing, dragged a cloud behind her,
 Crossed over onto her dragons, and by her winged chariot Ceres was lifted.
 She left Sunium behind, and the safehaven of Piraea,
 And the coast that spans wide on her right.
 Here, she came into the Aegean, where she saw all the Cyclades,
 Scanned the rapacious Ionian and Icarian,
 Scoured the long Hellesponte through the cities of Asia,
 And roamed a path aloft, full of many places.
 Now she looked upon the incense-gathering Arabs, now the Indians,
 [570] Here Libya, and here Meroe and the arid land.
 Now she approached the western Rhine, Rhone, and Po,
 And you, Tiber, future parent of mighty water.
 To where do I endeavor? To relate the lands traversed is an endless task;
 No place on earth was neglected by Ceres.
 She even wandered in the sky and called on those stars
 Near the icy pole, immune from the ocean’s waters:
 “Parrhasian stars - for you are able to know everything,
 Never plunging beneath the waves of the sea -
 Reveal the daughter Persephone to her distraught mother!”
 [580] She spoke. At this, Helice replied with such words:
 “Night is innocent of the crime. Consult Sol about the rapt maiden,
 He sees extensively the deeds done by day.”
 Sol, when approached, said, “that which you seek, lest you toil in vain,
 Is betrothed to the brother of Jove and holds the third kingdom.”
 After lamenting to herself for some time, in such a way was the Thunderer addressed,
 The greatest signs of grieving present on Ceres’ face:
 “If you recall from whom my Persephone was begat,
 She ought to have half of your care.
 Wandering around the world alone I understand the injustice of the deed:
 [590] The captor holds the fruit of his labor.
 But neither was Persephone deserving of a thief in marriage,
 Nor should a son-in-law be provided for us in this manner.
 What more serious issue would I have been dealt if Gyges had been victorious and I was
 captive,
 Than I now endure with you holding the scepter of heaven?
 Let him bear the truth with impunity; we shall endure this matter unavenged.
 Let him return her and amend his earlier deeds with new ones.”
 Jupiter calmed the goddess and pardoned the deed for the sake of love:
 “That shameful man must not be our son-in-law,” he proclaimed.
 “I am no more noble; my kingdom is set in the sky,
 [600] Another is the lord of seas, another the chaotic void.
 But in the chance that your heart is unchangeable
 And maintains to sever the bond of their joined bed,
 Let us try this as well, since it is possible that her fasting is lasting.

If it is not, she will be the wife of her infernal husband.”
 On command, the Staff-Bearer readied his wings, went to Tartarus,
 And returned more swiftly than anticipated, and relayed a peculiar sight:
 “The captive goddess did away with her fast by three grains,
 Which the Punic apple housed in its tough rind.”
 No less did she grieve than if her daughter had just been abducted,
 [610] The miserable parent, and hardly recomposed after a long delay,
 She spoke thus, “I cannot live in heaven;
 Command that I too be received by the Taenearian vale.”
 And she would have, had Jupiter not agreed that
 Persephone be in heaven for twice three months.
 Then, finally, did Ceres recover in countenance and spirit,
 And she placed upon her hair garlanded ears of corn,
 And a lavish harvest sprung forth from the resisting ground,
 And the field could scarcely hold its congested crop.
 White is appropriate for Ceres: don the white robes at the Cerealia;
 [620] Nowadays black wool is out of use.

13 April

Jupiter grips the Ides of April with the title *Victor*;
 There was a temple given to him on this day.
 On this day too, if I’m not mistaken, Liberty
 Began holding a hall most honorable to our people.

14 April

On the following day, sailor, head for a safe harbor:
 The wind from the west will be mixed with hail.
 Even while it is proper that this will be, on this day of hail
 Caesar struck down Mutina’s arms with his soldiers.

15 April

After the third light rose following the Ides of Venus,
 [630] High priests, offer in sacrifice a pregnant (*forda*) cow.
 A cow that is *forda* is *ferrying* her calf and *fertile*, and so named from ‘its carrying’ (*ferendo*).
 From this, they also claim to draw the word *fetus*.
 Now the cattle are gravid, and gravid too, the ground with seed;
 To the plump earth are plump victims given.
 Some are slain in the citadel of Jove; the council receives thirty cows
 And are generously splashed with splattered blood.
 But, when the attendants tore the calves from their wombs
 And gave their severed entrails to the fuming hearth,
 In the fire the highest Virgin burns the calves who were born
 [640] So their ash may cleanse the people on the day of Pales.
 Under King Numa, when the harvest was not answering to labor,
 The prayers of the duped countrymen were useless.

For once the year was dry with icy northwinds;
 Now the fields were reveling in unrelenting water.
 Often the crops were disappointing their master with their first shoots,
 And the fragile reeds were standing in stopped-up soil,
 And the cow was bearing her unripe offspring before their day,
 And the ewe often died birthing her lamb.
 There stood an ancient wood, for a long time untampered by the axe,
 [650] Left sacred to the Maenalian god -
 He gave responses to quiet minds under quiet nights.
 Here King Numa sacrificed twin sheep;
 The first fell to Faunus, another fell to soft Somnus.
 Each fleece was strewn across the hard ground.
 Twice Numa's unshorn head was sprinkled with spring water,
 Twice he decked his forehead with beech leaves.
 He refrained from the act of Love, nor was it ordained to place meat
 On the table, nor would he slip any ring on his finger.
 He placed his body on the new fleece, covered by rustic clothes,
 [660] Having paid worship to the god through his own words.
 Meanwhile, her placid brow wreathed in poppies,
 Night came, and with her trailed sable dreams.
 Faunus arrived and, pressing down his hard hoof on the sheep's fleece,
 Put forth such words from the right of his bed:
 "King, by you the Earth must be appeased with the death of two cows.
 Let one heifer give two souls in sacrifice.
 His rest was shaken by terror; Numa pondered the vision
 With its ambiguity and blind orders.
 His wife, dearest to the grove, loosed his wandering mind
 [670] And said, "you are asked for the innards of a pregnant cow."
 The innards of a pregnant cow were given; the year came forth, more bountiful,
 And the earth and cattle bore their fruit.
 Once, Cytharea ordered this day to hurry
 And bade her galloping horses onward
 So that at the dawn of the next they might give the title of emperor
 To young Augustus for his triumph in war.

April 17th

But when the fourth Light has already turned to see the passing Ides,
 On this night the Hyades inhabit the sea.

April 19th

When the third light will have risen after the withdrawing Hyades,
 [680] The Circus will hold horses, split into stalls.
 The reason, therefore, why foxes are released with torches
 Strapped to their burning backs, I must teach.
 The cold land of Carseoli is not fit for bearing olives,

But the fields are naturally suited for corn.
 Here I sought Peligni, the country of my birth,
 Small, but always wet with unrelenting waters.
 I entered, as I was wont to do, the home of my old host;
 Phoebus had already removed the yoke from his weary horses.
 Indeed, this man was used to telling me many things,
 [690] Things from which my current work is constructed.
 "Here," he said, "in the field," (and he gestured towards the field)
 "A frugal farmer held a small plot with her strong husband.
 He worked on his own soil, whether it needed the plough
 Or a curved sickle or hoe.

Now she was sweeping her stilted hut,
 Now she was giving the eggs, in need of warmth, to their mother's feathers;
 Or she collected green mallows, or white mushrooms,
 Or made warm the humble hearth with a welcome fire.
 Even yet, she tirelessly worked her limbs on the loom
 [700] And prepared weapons against the menace of cold.
 She had a son, mischievous in his early age,
 Who added two to his twice-five years.
 He caught a fox in the far end of a willow grove in a ravine
 Which had snatched off many farmyard birds.
 He wrapped his captive up with straw and hay
 And lit her on fire - and she fled from his burning hands.
 Where she fled, she ignited the fields cloaked with harvest
 And a wind gave strength to the ruinous flames.
 The deed is long gone, its memory remains; for even now
 [710] A certain law of Carseoli prohibits one to harbor a fox;
 And so that the race pays the penalty, one burns in the Cerealia.
 In the same manner the crops perished, she perishes herself.

April 20th

When the saffron mother of Memnon came the next day
 To view the exposed lands on her rosy steeds,
 From the leader of the fleecy flock, which abandoned Helle,
 The sun withdrew; though a greater victim came near him as he fled.
 It might be a cow - or bull - it is not easy to distinguish;
 The front end is visible, the back is hidden.
 However, whether this sign is a bull or a cow,
 [720] It holds the prize of love against disapproving Juno.

April 21st

Night flees and Aurora rises. I am asked to sing the Parilia;
 I will not sing in vain, if nourishing Pales favors me.
 Nourishing Pales, may you favor my singing the pastoral rites
 If I may, in my service, describe your festival in detail.

Certainly I've often carried the ashes of a calf and beanstalks
 In my full hands; chaste things for purification;
 Certainly I've leapt over three flames placed in a line
 And the wet laurels have sent water dripping upon me.
 The goddess is moved and favors my work. From its dock
 [730] My ship embarks, my sails now hold the wind.
 Go people, seek the fumigants from the virginal altar;
 Vesta will give them - by Vesta's gift you will be pure.
 The blood of a horse and ashes of a calf shall be the fumigants,
 The third is the empty stalk of a tough bean.
 Shepherd: purify your fattened flock at the first sight of twilight;
 First sprinkle water and sweep the earth with your twiggy-broom,
 May the sheepfolds be adorned with leaves and affixed boughs,
 And cover the decorated door with a long wreath.
 [740] Let blue smoke rise from pure sulphur
 And, touched by the smoking sulfur, let your sheep bleat.
 Burn male olive-trees and pines and Sabine-grass,
 And let scorched laurel crackle in the center of the hearth.
 And let a wicker-basket of millet follow millet cakes -
 The rustic goddess is particularly pleased with this food.
 Add the food and a pail of milk, and with the food cut,
 Supplicate the sylvan Pales with warm milk. Say:
 "Take equal counsel for the cows and the masters of cows.
 May harm take flight, driven from my stables.
 Or if I grazed my flock in a sacred space, or sat beneath a sacred tree,
 [750] Or if my ignorant sheep foraged for sustenance on a grave,
 If I entered a forbidden copse, or the nymphs and half-goat god flee from my sight,
 If my pruning knife despoiled a holy grove by means of an obscure branch
 From which the basket of leaves for my sick sheep is filled -
 Pardon my fault. Nor, while it violently hails, should it be troublesome
 To shelter my flock beneath a rustic temple,
 Nor should it be harmful to disturb the lakes. Forgive, nymphs,
 The rustling hooves which made your waters murky.
 You, goddess, placate the springs and their deities for us,
 [760] Placate the gods scattered through every grove.
 May we not see Dryads, nor the baths of Diana,
 Nor Faunus, when he lies in the fields at midday.
 Drive sickness far hence; may men and herds be healthy,
 And too, the provident pack, the watchdogs.
 May I drive back my many animals no less than they were in the morning,
 Nor may I groan fetching fleeces snatched by a wolf.
 May unjust famine be absent; May grasses and leaves be in excess
 And the water that washes limbs and is drunk.
 May I milk full udders, may cheese bring bronze back to me,
 [770] May the arranged twigs give a channel to liquid whey.

May the ram be lustful, and may his wife give back the conceived seeds,
And in my stable may there be many lambs.

May the fleece grow itchy no girls
And be soft, fit for hands however tender.

May that which I pray for come about, And may we each year
Make great cakes for Pales, the master of the pastors.”

The goddess can be pleased with these things: speak these words four times
Eastward, and scrub your hands with fresh dew.

Then it is permitted that from a set-down wine-jar, just like a mixing bowl,
[780] You may drink snowy milk and purple wine.
And soon, through burning piles of crackling straw,
You can leap with swift foot and straining limbs.

The custom is revealed, the origin of the custom remains for me to tell.

A great many sources make it unclear and hold back my beginning:
That consuming fire purges everything and melts the defects from metals,

Therefore it purges the sheep with their shepherd?

Or, that because there is an opposite seed to all things,
As are the two gods - fire and water - discordant,

Our fathers joined together the elements and thought it right

[790] To touch the body with fire and splashes of water?

Or, is it because the origin of life is within them - the exile loses them,

A new bride is made by them - that they deem these two things great?

I hardly believe them, yet there are those who think that it refers to
Phaethon and the flooding waters of Deucalion.

Others too, when the shepherds were bringing stone down upon stone,
Maintain that a spark suddenly leapt out;

Indeed the first perished, but the second was snatched up by the straw.

Does this contain the reason for the Parilia's flame?

Or does the piety of Aeneas better establish this custom,

[800] Unmarred in defeat, to whom the fire yielded passage?

Or, however, is it nearer to the truth that, when Rome was founded,

The Lares were brought, as ordered, into their new dwellings,

And while changing homes set fire to the country roofs

And cottages they were about to leave behind,

And through these flames leapt the cattle, and leapt the farmers?

This happens now, as well, on your birthday, Rome.

The passage itself provides causes for the inspired poet: the origin of the city has come.

Be present at your deeds, great Quirinus!

Already the brother of Numitor had undergone his punishment,

[810] And all of the shepherds were beneath the leadership of the twins.

They both agreed to draw together the farmers and set up a city's walls;

It was unclear which of them should found the city.

“There is certainly no need for a contest,” Romulus said,

“There is great faith in the birds, and we shall put the birds to the test.”
 The idea was agreed upon. One came to the rocks of the thicketed Palatine,
 The other scaled the peak of the Aventine in the morning.
 Remus saw six, but Romulus observed six birds twice in a row; the agreement stood,
 And Romulus held his authority over the city.

A day was designated as proper, on which he would designate space for the walls with a plough.

[820] The rites of Pales were closing in; at that time the work was begun.

A trench was dug to the solid ground, and fruits were tossed to its depths
 With earth gathered from neighboring soil.

The ditch was filled with turf, an altar was placed on top,
 And a new hearth was constructed with burning fire.

Then he marked out the walls with a furrow, pressing down upon the plow handle,
 A white cow and a snowy bull bore the yoke.

The voice of the king put forth these words: “The man founding the city -
 Jupiter, Father Mars, and Mother Vesta - be with him.

All gods to whom piety is employed, direct your attention.

[830] Let my work surge beneath your auspices.

Let there be long ages of rule and might of the land,
 And let the East and West be subject to these days.”

While he was praying, Jupiter gave omens with thunder on the left
 And in the leftward axis lightning was cast.

The citizens, content with the augury, laid down the foundations,
 And in no time at all there was a meager wall.

Celer incited this work, whom Romulus himself had named.

“Celer,” he said, “These are to be your concerns:

Prohibit he who comes across the wall or across the ditch carved by the plough;

[840] Give such a daring man to death.”

Remus, unaware, began to hold the humble walls in contempt and asked,
 “*These* will protect your people?”

With no delay, he leapt over them. Celer overtook the bold man with a shovel;
 He pressed against the hard ground, covered with blood.

When the king learned these things, he choked back his brimming tears
 And held the wound closed within his chest.

He was unwilling to cry openly and maintained his strength as an example,
 “Thus,” he said, “shall my enemies cross my walls.”

Despite this, he gave obsequies and could no longer endure to hold back his lament,
 [850] And he revealed his hidden loyalty.

With the bier set down, he gave one final kiss and said,
 “Snatched unwillingly from my brother - farewell.”

He anointed the body before its cremation. As Romulus did, so they,
 Faustulus and Acca, with her sorrowful hair unbound, did the same.

Then the Quirites, though not yet called so, mourned the youth;
 And finally, a flame was set beneath the fire with tears.

The city rose (who could have believed this at the time?),
 To lay its victorious foot upon the world.

Rule it all, and forever be beneath Great Caesar,
 [860] And always have many of this name;
 And whenever you shall stand eminent in a conquered world,
 May all else be lower than your shoulders.

April 23rd

I have spoken of Pales - I shall likewise relate the Vinalia;
 However, there is one day between them.
 Prostitutes, celebrate the divinity of Venus:
 Your plethora of profitable professions suit Venus.
 Pray, with offered incense, for beauty and public favor,
 Pray for charm and sophisticated words in jests,
 And give your mistress myrtle with pleasing mint,
 [870] And chains of rushes covered with gathered roses.
 Now it is right to crowd her temple nearest the Colline gate,
 Which bears its name from the Sicilian hill.
 As Claudius bore off Arethusian Syracuse in battle
 And took you in war as well, Eryx,
 By the prophecy of the tenacious Sybil, Venus was brought over
 And preferred to be honored in the city of her kin.
 Why, then, do they call the Vinalia a festival of Venus,
 You might ask, and in what way might that day be Jupiter's?
 Either Turnus or Aeneas would be son-in-law to Amata -
 [880] There was a war. Turnus sought the aid of the Etruscans.
 Mezentius was famed and fierce in the taking up of arms,
 And as great as he was on horse, even greater was he on foot;
 It was he whom the Rutulians and Turnus attempted to join to their side.
 Thus, in response to these words, the Tuscan leader proclaimed:
 "My virtue does not stand for a small price. Witness my wounds
 And weapons, which often are speckled with my blood.
 You, who ask my help, share with me as prize - nothing grand -
 The next wine from your cellar.
 There shall be no more delay for the service. It is yours to issue, mine to conquer.
 [890] How Aeneas would wish for my refusal!"
 The Rutulians nodded in agreement. Mezentius took up his weapons,
 Aeneas his, and called upon Jove:
 "The enemy has vowed his harvested grapes to the Tyrrhenian king:
 Jupiter, you shall bear wine from Latin vines!"
 The better vows prevailed. Huge Mezentius was slain
 And met the ground with his resentful chest.
 Autumn had come, dirtied by trampled grapes;
 The owed wine was rightfully turned over to Jove.
 The day from this is called Vinalia: Jupiter claims the day
 [900] And rejoices in being present at his own celebration.

April 25th

When April will have six daylights left standing,
 The season of spring will be in the middle of its route,
 And you will seek in vain the ram of Athamantid Helle.
 The rains provide the signs and the Dog Star will rise.
 In the light of this day I was returning to my Rome from Nomentum,
 When a candid-clad crowd stood in the middle of the road.
 A priest was going into the grove of ancient Robigo
 To feed the bowels of a dog, and the bowels of a sheep, to the fire.
 Immediately I approached, lest I would be ignorant of the rites:
 [910] Quirinus, your priest put forth these words:
 “Rough Robigo, refrain from the Cereal herbs,
 And let their soft peaks tremble on the soil’s surface.
 Allow the crops, nourished by the fair stars of heaven, to grow
 Until they are fit for the sickle.
 Your ability is not weak; the crops that you marked
 The sad farmer counts as waste.
 Neither can the winds do such harm to Ceres, nor the rains,
 Nor the crops become pale, burned with marmoreal ice,
 So much as if the Titan had made the wet stalks warm;
 [920] Then it is time, dreaded goddess, for your wrath.
 Spare, I pray, remove your scabby hands from the harvest
 And do not harm the crops. It is enough to be able to harm them.
 Do not hold the crops, but embrace the hard iron;
 Destroy first that which is able to destroy another.
 It is more useful that you should grip swords and harmful spears -
 There is no work for them, the world is acting in leisure.
 Now let shine the hoe and the hard mattock and the curved plowshare;
 The rural artillery. Let stagnation despoil weapons,
 And let he, who in some attempt to draw a sword from its sheathe,
 [930] Feel that it sticks from long lack of use.
 But do not impose on Ceres, and may the farmer always
 Be able to repay his pledge in your absence.”
 He spoke; on his right there was a napkin with a loose tuft,
 With a bowl of unmixed wine and a bin of incense.
 To the hearth - we saw this - he gave incense, and wine, and the bowels of a sheep,
 And the foul entrails of a wretched dog.
 Then, to me the priest said, “you ask why a new victim is given in sacrifice?”
 (For I had asked) “Observe the reason:
 There is a Dog, they call it Icarian, with whose rising amidst the moving stars
 [940] The earth becomes torched and the crops surge prematurely.
 This dog is placed upon the altar in place of the celestial Dog,
 And as to why he perishes, there is no reason beyond its name.

April 28th

With the Tithonian having left the brother of Phrygian Assaracus,
And thrice raised her light into the vast world,
A goddess arrives adorned with a crown of a thousand varied flowers
And she stage holds its custom for a more liberal joy.
The rites of the Floralia even stretch into the Kalends of May;
Then I shall readdress this, but now a grander work urges me on.
Take up this day, Vesta! Vesta is taken up in the threshold of her family;
[950] In the manner that the ancient fathers have established by law.
Phoebus holds part, the other falls to Vesta;
That which remains between them is held by the third himself.
May the laurels of the Palatine long endure, and the house woven with oak;
One home holds three eternal gods.

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