Journal of Literature and Art Studies, April 2020, Vol. 10, No. 4, 339-371
doi: 10.17265/2159-5836/2020.04.011

Evelyn Pickering De Morgan's *Ariadne at Naxos:* A Pagan Martyr

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This short essay focuses on just one of the mythological paintings of Evelyn Pickering De Morgan, *Ariadne at Naxos* of 1877 at The De Morgan Foundation (Figure 1).[1] It consists of an iconographical and iconological analysis of the ancient legend of Ariadne and Theseus, demonstrating Evelyn's classical erudition and artistic mastery in visualizing a moment in the narrative, the desertion of Ariadne by Theseus on the beach at Naxos.

Keywords: classical mythology, Ariadne, The De Morgan Foundation, Evelyn Pickering De Morgan, Pre-Raphaelites, spiritualism, symbolism of love, labrys, seashells, cross, ball of thread, patience, pompeian frescoes, and Christian martyrs

"Art is eternal, but life is short – I will make up for it now, I have not a moment to lose."

(17th Birthday, Evelyn Pickering De Morgan's *Dairy*)

Introduction

Evelyn Pickering De Morgan (1815-1919) was a female British painter of the Pre-Raphaelite Movement and the British Aesthetic Movement, and later in life became involved with English Spiritualism. There are three significant historical sources that assist in recreating her life and career as well as understanding her artistic conceits: her personal diary and sketch book of 1872-80;[2] the biographical study and narrative account of her life by her sister Wilhelmina Pickering Stirling, *William De Morgan and his Wife* of 1922;[3] and, in particular, a personal book, *The Result of an Experiment*, published anonymously in 1909 by Evelyn De Morgan and her husband William.[4] There are two recently published books that provide the most succinct information about this painter's art and life:

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* My special gratitude is extended to Sarah Hardy, Curator of The De Morgan Foundation, Prof. Elise Lawton Smith, and Kathleen White for their invaluable assistance and suggestions. An aspect of this study was presented at the Female Artists Series at the University of Bologna, Italy, on November 14, 2019. I extend my gratitude to Prof. Vera Fortunati, University of Bologna, for this special invitation and the opportunity to discuss some of the mythological paintings by Evelyn Pickering De Morgan.
[1] See entry in The De Morgan Foundation, Evelyn de Morgan Paintings, Object No PEDEM.0003. Painting is in oil on canvas, size H598 x W1012 mm. Frame H9004 x W1328 x D50 mm. The painting is signed and dated: *EP 1877*. https://www.demorgan.org.uk/collection/ariadne-in-naxos/ (accessed October 15, 2019).
[2] Located at The De Morgan Foundation Archives.
[3] A. M. W. Stirling, *William De Morgan and His Wife* (New York: Henry Holt & Company, 1922).
[4] See E. and W. De Morgan, *The Result of an Experiment* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Hunt & Co., 1909). This book focused on the meaning of some of her paintings in relation to spiritualism and the mysticism of Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772), a Swedish scientist, philosopher and spiritualist who published in London his Christian views and mystical visions in *Divine Love*.

Elise Lawton Smith's *Evelyn Pickering De Morgan and the Allegorical Body* of 2002 and Catherine Gordon's *Evelyn De Morgan Oil Paintings* of 1996.[5] There are studies by Sarah Hardy, Curator of The De Morgan Foundation;[6] a long article on Evelyn's alchemical paintings by Corinna Gannon, "Evelyn De Morgan's Female Alchemist in *The Love Potion*;"[7] and an unpublished doctoral dissertation of 2001 by Lois Jane Drawmer, *The Impact of Science and Spiritualism in the Works of Evelyn De Morgan, 1870-1919*.[8]

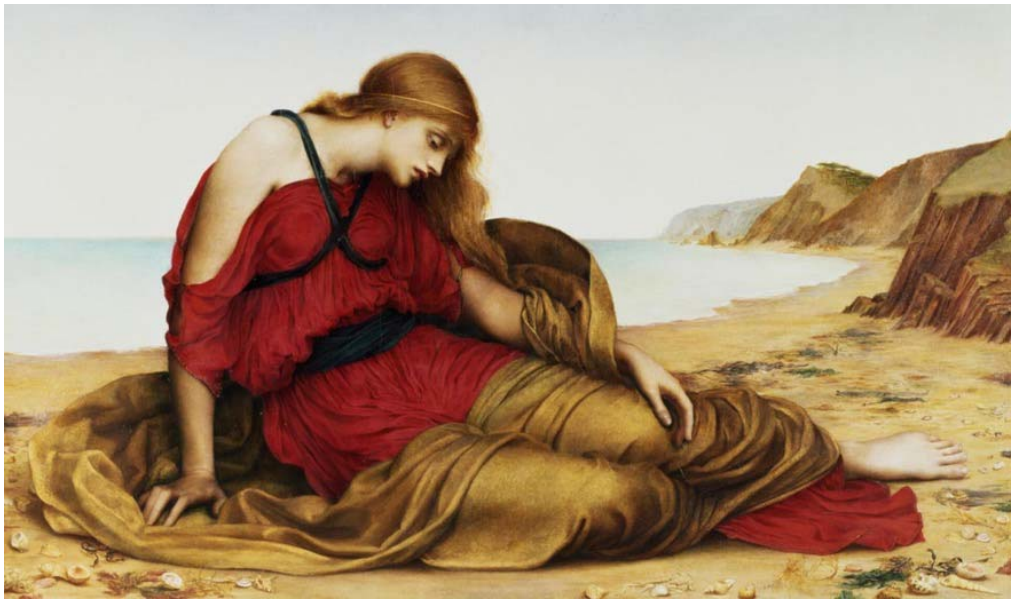

Figure 1. Evelyn Pickering De Morgan, *Ariadne at Naxos*, 1877. The De Morgan Foundation, UK.

©De Morgan Collection, courtesy of The De Morgan Foundation www.demorgan.org.uk

Photo credit: commons.wikimedia.org

During her lifetime, Wilhelmina Pickering Stirling, Evelyn's sister, collected and purchased most of her works in order to preserve Evelyn's art and create a museum in her memory. In 1958, Wilhelmina instituted The De Morgan Foundation in honor of her sister, which contained approximately 100 paintings—56 in oil paintings—and a large collection of her preparatory drawings and sketches.[9] Unfortunately, in 1991, a fire at the foundation destroyed several of Evelyn's paintings. The Foundation's collection also included the ceramic works of Evelyn's husband, William Frend De Morgan (1839-1917), and some of her uncle's paintings, John Roddam Spencer-Stanhope (1829-1908).

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[5] Elise Lawton Smith, *Evelyn Pickering De Morgan and the Allegorical Body* (London: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2002); and Catherine Gordon, *Evelyn De Morgan Oil Paintings* (London: The De Morgan Foundation, 1996); Elise Lawton Smith, "The Art of Evelyn De Morgan," *Woman's Art Journal*, 18 (Fall/Winter 1997/98): 3-11.

[6] See https://www.demorgan.org.uk/why-evelyn-de-morgan-is-not-a-pre-raphaelite-painter-by-sarah-hardy/ (accessed December 15, 2019). This author claims that Evelyn is not a Pre-Raphaelite Painter.
See also http://preraphaelitesisterhood.com/evelyn-demorgan-centenary-symposium/ (accessed December 15, 2019).

[7] *University of Toronto Journal* (Spring 2018), 55-78.

[8] Ph.D. dissertation from Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College, UK, near Oxford University.

[9] See Smith, *Evelyn De Morgan*, 13-14.

Some general information about Evelyn's life can assist in understanding aspects of her creative mind.[10] Mary Evelyn Pickering De Morgan was born on August 30, 1855 at 6 Grosvenor Street in London and died on May 2, 1919; she was laid to rest at Brookwood Cemetery near Woking in Surrey, alongside her husband's grave.[11] Evelyn was born into a cultured middle-class family. Her mother, Anna Maria Wilhelmina Spencer Stanhope (1824-1901), was an amateur painter and the sister of the well-established painter John Roddam Spencer Stanhope. Evelyn's father, Percival Pickering, was a Queen's Counsel and a Recorder (Notary) at Pontefract in England.

In *William De Morgan and his Wife*, her sister wrote about Evelyn's personality, relating that she was a gentle person, energetic, and very humorous. As a young child, she enjoyed playing jokes on people. As an adult, she kept her sense of humor but most of all she became a cultivated woman, learning and studying several languages and cultures, including Greek, Latin, French, German, and Italian, and training as an artist. From a young age, she studied classical literature and mythology, and early in her childhood, her mother taught her art. She loved to draw and paint, which caused havoc in the household, since her parents wanted her to be well educated and suited for a proper marriage–not for a professional artistic career. However, as supportive parents, they enrolled her in 1872 in South Kensington National Art School, today called the Royal College of Art. A year later, in 1873, she transferred to the prestigious Slade School of Art. Here, she studied drawing and painting with Edward Poynter (1836-1919), an established painter who later became the President of the Royal Academy and Director of the National Gallery of Art in London.[12] He is best known for his historical and mythological paintings, such as *Andromeda* of 1869 (Sotheby's London, May 17, 2011).[13]

Evelyn's technical mastery of drawing is shown in *Hand with a Brush* of 1875, an original life drawing where she demonstrates "careful observation and rendition of the natural form" (Figure 2).[14] The conceit of this image, a solo hand pointing with the index figure while holding a painter's brush, refers to the creative aspects of a painter. The hand, as a vehicle of the mind, guides the mechanical process in a drawing as well with a brush in a painting. Thus, the painter, using the artist's art tools of pencil and a brush, is able to transfer an imaginary conceit into an actual image applied to a physical surface, paper or canvas, in order to create a drawing or a painting.[15]

During her academic training, Evelyn explored her fascination with Antiquity and composed drawings and studies from classical sculpture and Renaissance drawings, as well as drawing from life using models. One example is her *Discus Thrower* of 1874 at The De Morgan Foundation, a drawing inspired by the Roman copy in marble of Townley's *Discobolus* (DiscusThrower) of 200 CE, now at the British Museum but originally found in the Villa Adriana near Tivoli. This Roman copy, with an incorrect placement and restoration of the head, is a

[10] In order not to confuse Evelyn's last name with her husband, I have chosen to use her first name throughout this essay. In my short observations about Evelyn I have relied on the sources mentioned above.
[11] See https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/37349528/william-frend-de_morgan#view-photo=17909130 (accessed December 15, 2019).
[12] See *Ten Lectures on Art by Edward J. Poynter* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1880).
[13] For the image, see https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1869_Edward_Poynter_-_Andromeda.jpg (accessed January 7, 2020).
[14] See Smith, *Evelyn De Morgan*, 23.
[15] See Colin Cruise, *Pre-Raphaelite Drawing* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2011), Chapters 1, 2 and 4.

copy of the fifth century BCE Greek bronze sculpture *Discobolus* by Myron, since lost but known by its many Roman copies.[16]

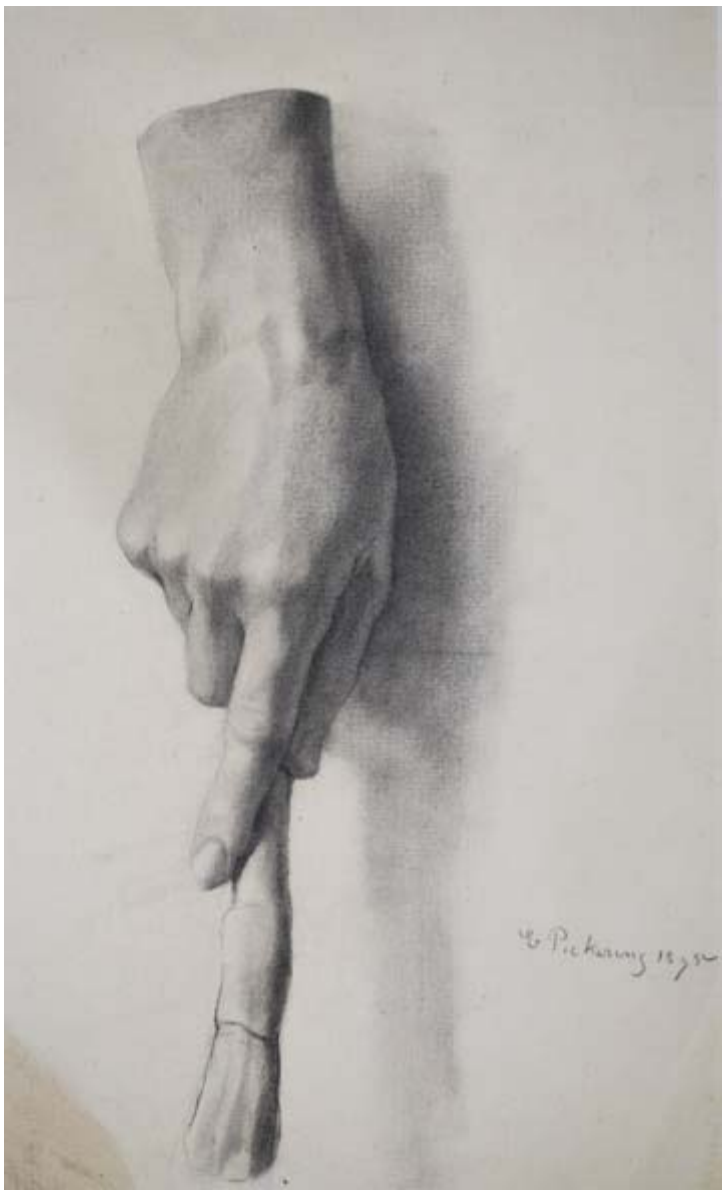

Figure 2. Evelyn Pickering De Morgan, *The Hand and the Brush*, 1875. The De Morgan Foundation, UK.
Photo credit: ©De Morgan Collection, courtesy of The De Morgan Foundation www.demorgan.org.uk

In 1875, Evelyn won a medal of honor from the Slade School of Art for her excellence in drawing. After received the artistic award, Evelyn substituted her first Christian name, Mary, with her second name, Evelyn—a less popular female appellation—to validate her artistic accomplishment as a female painter. Her uncle, John Stanhope, had been a permanent Florentine resident from 1873, and this allowed Evelyn to make frequent visits

[16] See https://research.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=8760&partId=1– (accessed January 7, 2020).

to Florence to see him. Under his artistic encouragement and influence, Evelyn carefully studied the works of the Florentine Renaissance masters, in particular Botticelli and Michelangelo. Her sojourns at her uncle's Villa Nuti became indispensable for her incorporation of classical and Renaissance art imagery into her mythological paintings. While in London, under the guidance of her art instructor, Poynter, she learned to admire and observe the classical sculptures of Phidias in the friezes, metopes, and pediments of the Parthenon displayed at the British Museum, and also the painting of Botticelli's *Mars and Venus*, 1485, acquired by the National Gallery of London in 1857.

Ariadne at Naxos

The iconography and connotations of Evelyn Pickering De Morgan's *Ariadne at Naxos* are complex (Figure 1). Evelyn embedded and intertwined Ariadne's ancient legend with traditional mythical symbolism and her own personal allegorical conceits. Evelyn's interpretation of the mythical imagery derived from her knowledge of classical literature (Hesiod's *Theogony*, Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and *Heroides*, and Catullus's *Poem 64*);[17] the visual imagery of classical and Florentine Renaissance art (in particular Botticelli and Michelangelo); and imagery from artists of the British Aesthetic Movement, including her uncle, John Stanhope, William Morris (1834-1896), and Edward Burne-Jones (1833-1898). Most significantly, her allegorical conceits are fused with an abstract moral signification–a Platonic notion of Beauty, Love, and the Good–moral or ethical virtues.[18]

Evelyn's painting of *Ariadne at Naxos* was her first exhibited work at the Dudley Gallery in London in 1877 (Figure 1).[19] The painting was immediately well received and purchased at the Private View by Lord Henry Somerset (1849-1932), a British composer of popular music, a Conservative politician, and Comptroller of the Household under Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli. This positive reception to her art prompted an invitation to exhibit at the prestigious Grosvenor Gallery in London.

This powerful mythological painting further demonstrates Evelyn's fascination with classical literature and her assimilation of the Pre-Raphaelite Movement's aesthetics. For the saga of Ariadne and Theseus, Evelyn probably consulted several ancient literary sources, such as Homer's *Odyssey*, Hesiod's *Theogony*, Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and *Heroides*, and Catullus's *Poem 64*. In a British 1870 edition of the *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology*, William Smith, in the entry on Ariadne, explained the various sources for her saga from Homer to Plutarch.[20] In her painting, Evelyn did not abide with the Homeric interpretation where

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[17] For Hesiod's *Theogony*, line 938, on Ariadne, see http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:abo:tlg,0020,001:940 (accessed December 15, 2019); for Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Book VIII, line 152, see https://ovid.lib.virginia.edu/trans/Metamorph8.htm#482327660 (accessed December 15, 2019); and Ovid's *Heroides*, Book VIII-X, see https://www.theoi.com/Text/OvidHeroides2.html (accessed December 15, 2019); and on Catullus, see J. B. Debrohun, "Ariadne and the whirlwind of fate: figure of confusion in Catullus 64:149–57," *Classical Philology*, 94, 4 (1999): 419-30.

[18] Raphael Demos, "Plato's Idea of the Good," *The Philosophical Review*, 46, 3 (May 1937), 245-75, noted in the *Republic* VI and VII, *Philebus* and *Timaeu*s. See also Walter Pater's *Plato and Platonism* (London: Macmillan and Co, 1893), a collection of lectures on this topic. The De Morgans and Walter Pater were good friends, probably sharing philosophical and artistic notions. See Violet Page, *Lee's Letters* (London: Privately printed, 1937), 80; and Drawmer, *The Impact of Science and Spiritualism on the Works of Evelyn De Morgan, 1870-1919*, 111-25, on Evelyn's symbolism of light in connection to Plato's cave; and 200-1, on Evelyn's spiritualism and Plato's Theory of Forms.

[19] See Smith, *Evelyn De Morgan*, 68-9.

[20] See William Smith, *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology* (London: John Murray, 1870), Entry for Ariadne, 92. There were several version published since 1842 published in USA and England.

Ariadne, after Theseus deserts her on an island, is killed by Artemis because she violated the trust of her father and made love to a foreigner. Instead, she appropriated the traditional passages in Hesiod and Ovid where Ariadne, future Queen of Crete, falls in love with Theseus, who abandons her.[21] Influenced as well by the Roman poet Gaius Valerius Catullus's (84-54 BCE) epic and romantic poem, Evelyn selected the passage in the stanzas when Ariadne is agonizing over the experience of desertion by Theseus (Cat. *Poem* 64:49-57). Catullus commented in his poem that, when Theseus left Ariadne at the shore of an island, she found herself abandoned and helpless.[22] Catullus's lyrical and titillating poems were well known in Pre-Raphaelite artistic and literary circles (Algernon Charles Swinburne, William Holman Hunt, Christina Rossetti, and Tennyson) as well as to her and her husband.[23]

In particular, Evelyn relied on Ovid. In his *Metamorphoses* (Book VII, 152-182), Ovid recounts how Ariadne, daughter of King Minos of Crete, assisted Theseus in overcoming the Minotaur and escaping from the magic Labyrinth. Ungrateful and cowardly, Theseus abandons Ariadne as she lays asleep in the island of Naxos. When she is awakened by the accidental arrival of Dionysus (Bacchus) to the island, she realizes Theseus's perfidy, but good fortune surrounds Ariadne and she eventually marries Dionysus. The anguish of her abandonment is best narrated in these lines from Ovid's *Heroides* (Book X: 37 and 59): "Alone, with hair loose flying… What I am to do, I am alone and the isle untitled… on every side the land is girt by sea."[24] Evelyn visualized these poetical sentiments of agony in *Ariadne at Naxos*.

No doubt, Evelyn relied on the other sources as well for the visualization of the theme. This romantic legendary saga had been depicted many times in the history of art from antiquity through the Renaissance and during the Victorian period. While visiting the museums in London—the British Museum and the National Gallery—Evelyn observed and studied the detached wall fresco of *Ariadne at Naxos* that had entered into the collection of the British Museum in 1867 (No. 1867.0508.1358, Figure 3). This Herculaneum fresco of the first century BCE represents Ariadne awakening on the shores of Naxos. She sits on a remnant of their shipwrecked red boat, while another section of the boat serves as back support. Her semi-nude body is partially covered, below her hips, with a chiton, a Greek veil. She is fancifully decorated with a golden earing and a red coral necklace[25]—a symbol of passion—and two armlets, a device of royalty as well as a symbol of belonging to a lover, similar to a wedding ring.[26] Ariadne, with a panicked expression on her face, raises her hand to call out to Theseus, who is rapidly fleeing away from her in a sailboat.[27]

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[21] See Robert Eisner, "Some Anomalies in the Myth of Ariadne," *The Classical World* 71, 3 (November, 1977): 175-77; and J. Kestner, *Mythology and Misogyny* in *the Nineteenth Century: the Social Discourse of Subject Painting* (London/New York: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989).

[22] See Debrohun, "Ariadne and the whirlwind of fate", 419-30.

[23] See Kathryn Ledbetter, *Tennyson and Victorian Periodicals: Commodities in Context* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 97.

[24] See Ovid's *Heroides*, Book VIII-X, https://www.theoi.com/Text/OvidHeroides2.html (accessed December 15, 2019).

[25] The coral, a sea tree, is associated with the Mother Goddess and fertility of the sea. In Classical antiquity it was considered an amulet against the evil eye. See Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis Historia*, Book XXII, section 24; and Jean Chevalier and Alain Gheerbrant, *A Dictionary of Symbols* (London: Blackwell, 1994), 235.

[26] Chevalier and Gheerbrant, *A Dictionary of Symbols*, 805.

[27] A gift from Louis Duc de Blacas d'Aulps to the British Museum in 1867.

Figure 3. *Ariadne at Naxos,* first century BCE, Herculaneum fresco. British Museum, London, UK (Museum acquisition in 1867).

During her museum visits at the National Gallery of London, undoubtedly Evelyn saw Titian's *Bacchus and Ariadne* of 1522 (Figure 4). This Venetian painting was acquired by the museum in 1826. Unlike the ancient fresco, the Venetian Renaissance master depicted a positive outlook from a later passage of the saga: the arrival of Dionysus (Bacchus), who rescues Ariadne from the shores of Naxos. Titian's painting once belonged to the Camerino d'Alabastro, a mythological cycle designed for Alfonso d'Este, Duke of Ferrara.[28] In this painting, in the distance, at sea, Titian depicted Theseus's ship sailing away, while onshore the god Dionysus (Bacchus) arrives in a chariot pulled by cheetahs[29] and accompanied by his frenzied entourage to rescue the abandoned Ariadne. To prove his love, Dionysus throws her royal crown up into the sky, transforming the mortal Ariadne into a divine being. Her earthly crown becomes the celestial constellation of Corona Borealis (Northern Crown), and thus Ariadne's being becomes eternal.[30]

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[28] Stephen J. Campbell, *The Cabinet of Eros: Renaissance Mythological Paintings and the Studiolo of Isabella d'Este* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004); Charles Hope, "The Camerini d'Alabastro of Alfonzo d'Este I," *The Burlington Magazine* 113, 824 (November 1917): 641-50; and Charles Hope, "The Camerini d'Alabastro of Alfonzo d'Este II," *The Burlington Magazine*113, 825 (December 1971): 712-21.

[29] See Warren Tresidder, "The Cheetahs in Titian's *Bacchus and Ariadne*," *The Burlington Magazine* 123, 941 (August, 1981): 481-85. Although leopards, tigers or panthers are a traditional attribute to Bacchus, Titian used cheetahs to validate the reference visually that Bacchus had returned from India.

[30] See Giuseppe Maria Sesti, *The Glorious Constellations: History and Mythology* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1991), 309-12.

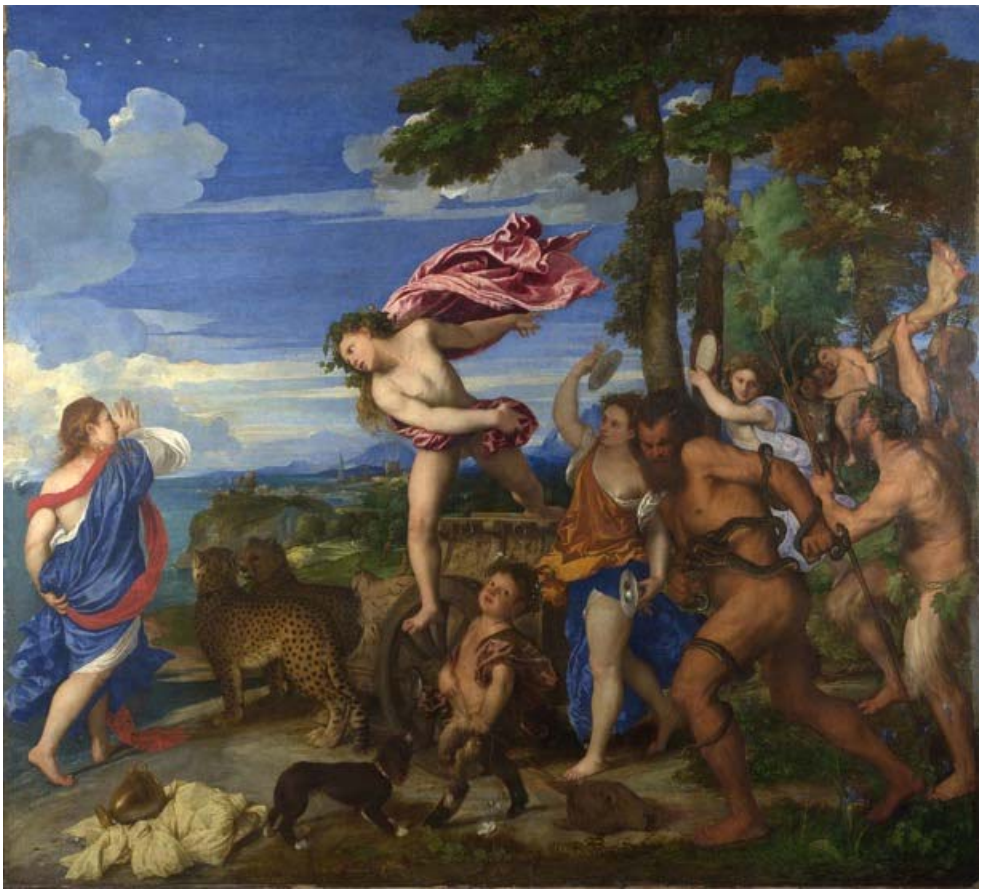

Figure 4. Titian, *Bacchus and Ariadne*, 1522. National Gallery, London, UK (Museum acquisition in 1826).

Photo credit: commons.wikimedia.org

The Victorian painter, Fredric Leighton (1830-1896), in his early version of the depiction of this theme in 1868 (Figures 5 and 6),[31] included a long title for the painting and imagery of death: *Ariadne abandoned by Theseus: Ariadne watches for his return; Artemis releases her by death.*[32] For his early version of 1868, he composed a pencil drawing now located at the Royal Academy of the Arts. On a quadriculated (square-traced) drawing sheet, the figure of Ariadne is depicted in a state of slumber. The proportioned drawing shows Leighton's mastery of design. At the bottom of the drawing sheet, he inscribed the title and date of his drawing: *Ariadne Abandoned by Theseus, 1868*. The painting, with his original classical and gilded frame, was collected by Nawab Mir Yousuf Ali Khan Bahadur (Salar Jung III) and is now located at the Salar Jung Museum in Hyderabad, India. The painting shows Ariadne's ivory body covered by a Greek chiton on the rocky shores of Naxos. The treatment of the wet drapery motif reveals Ariadne's beautiful sculptural body. Leighton, always

[31] https://thoughtsinandout.wordpress.com/2015/04/15/miryalaguda-and-hyderabad-a-journey-that-will-last-a-lifetime/ (accessed March 15, 2020), and https://www.indiastudychannel.com/india/cities/photos/59910-a-view-of-painting-gallery-as-seen-in-salar-jung-museum-hyderabad (accessed March 15, 2020).

[32] See Smith, *Evelyn De Morgan*, 69, n. 17; and Stephen Jones et al., *Frederic Leighton: Eminent Victorian Artist* (New York: Harry N. Abrams/London: Royal Academy of Art, 1996), 79, and Fig. 54 (Salar Jung Museum at Hyderabad, India).

fascinated with classical sculpture, appropriated Phidias's reclining deity in theEastpediment of the Parthenon, 447 BCE, at the British Museum in London for Ariadne's dramatic pose (Figure 7). Her reclining body on a large green himation or cloak shows her state of dormancy or, perhaps, oblivion. Next to her, the placement of a cluster of pincushion flowers (*Scabiosa atropurpurea*), also known as the mourning bride plant, alludes to Ariadne's slumbering state as a rejected bride. The background depicts a remarkable natural seascape—calm waters and a beautiful sunset—contrasting with the foreground where a human emotional trauma partakes of moral and spiritual significations.

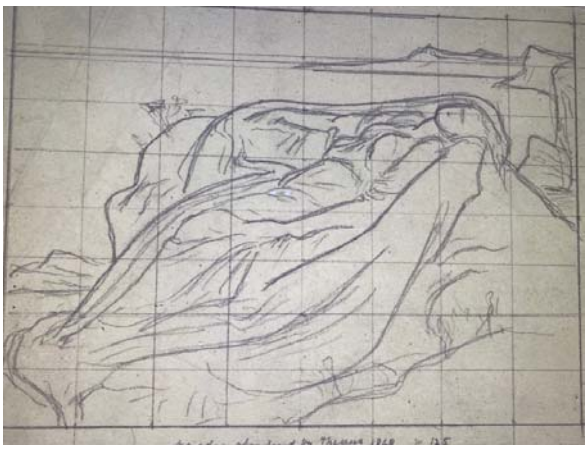

Figure 5. Frederic Leighton, *Ariadne Abandoned by Theseus*, 1868, drawing. Royal Academy of the Arts, London, UK. Photo credit: ©Royal Academy of the Arts, London, UK.

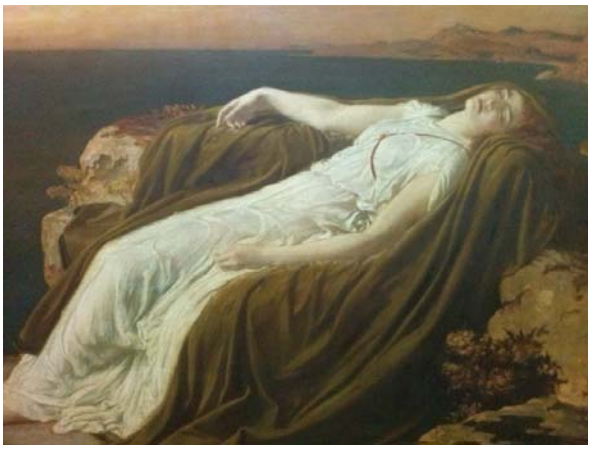

Figure 6. Frederic Leighton, *Ariadne Abandoned by Theseus*, 1868. Salar Jung Museum in Hyderabad, India Photo credit: ©Courtesy of Salar Jung Museum in Hyderabad, India.

Another British painter, George Frederic Watts (1817-1908), depicted several versions of the saga.[33] In his *Ariadne at Naxos* of 1875, now at the Guildhall Gallery in London (Figure 8), the imagery depicts a grieving Ariadne, but she is not depicted alone—her female companion points warmly to the arrival of Bacchus while two leopards, his sacred animals, are depicted next to Ariadne, announcing his arrival. Distraught and mentally broken, Ariadne only sees Theseus's ship sailing away at sea. She holds in her hand a ball of red thread. Earlier, this unraveling ball had assisted Theseus to escape from the Minotaur's labyrinth. Both painters, Titian and Watts, depicted a hopeful outcome for Ariadne–her being rescued by Bacchus—unlike in the Pompeian fresco, while Leighton and Evelyn focused on the moment of the abandonment and the emotional response to this experience.

[33] Among the several versions: Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool of 1875, Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City of 1894) (Acc. No. 05.39.1); and Harvard Museums of 1888-1890 (Acc. No. 1943.213). A photo of 1888 by Donovan & Sons, St. James Street, Brighton, part of the Watts Gallery Trust, shows Watts depicting the painting now at Harvard. See Mark Bills and Barbara Bryant, *G. F. Watts* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009).

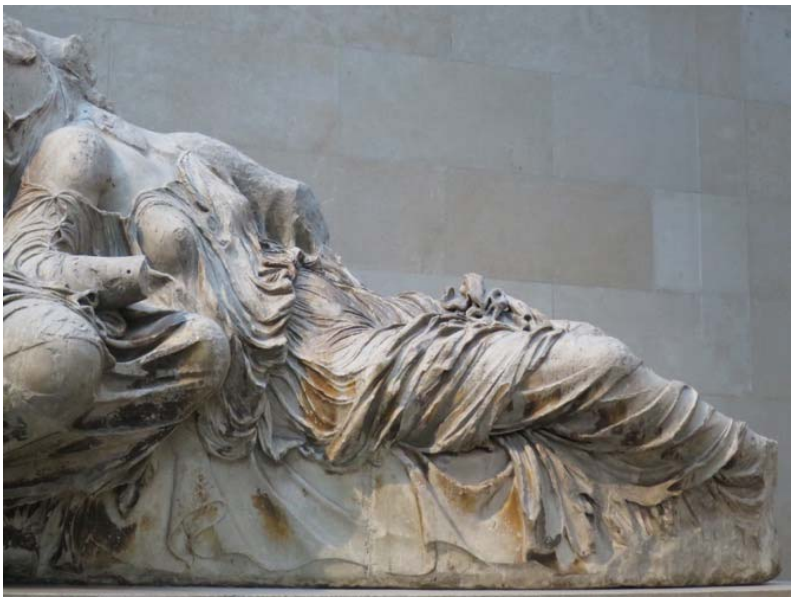

Figure 7. Phidias, *Deity*, 447 BCE, East Pediment, Parthenon. British Museum, London, UK.
©The Trustees of the British Museum, London, UK. Photo credit: Liana De Girolami Cheney.

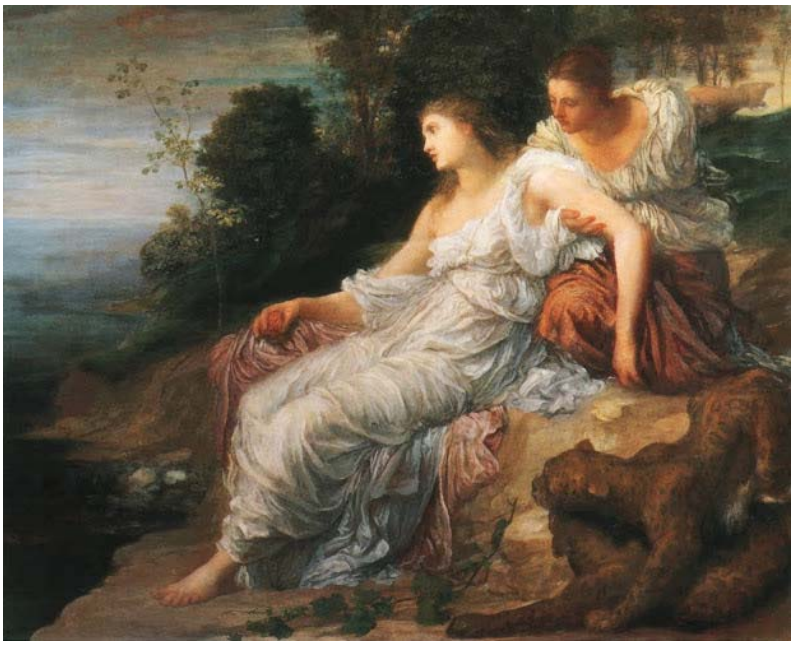

Figure 8. George Frederic Watts, *Ariadne at Naxos*, 1875. Guildhall Art Gallery, London, UK.
Photo credit: commons.wikimedia.org

In *Ariadne at Naxos*, Evelyn selected an unusual moment in the myth: the moment when Ariadne awakens to realize that her lover Theseus has left her and she is alone on the beach.[34] In the early nineteenth century, there

[34] See Smith, *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology*, 92; Eisner, "Some Anomalies in the Myth of Ariadne,"175-77; Debrohun, "Ariadne and the whirlwind of fate," 419-30; and Jas Elsner, "Viewing Ariadne: From Ekphrasis to Wall Painting in the Roman World," *Classical Philology* 102, 1 (January 2007): 20-44.

was a great enthusiasm in literary and artistic circle about the major discoveries and excavations of Roman villas in Pompeii and Herculaneum. These Roman summer homes were decorated *al fresco* and illustrated with ancient mythological legends, including the story of Ariadne and Theseus.[35] Focusing on this Greek saga, Pompeian frescoes mainly represent four versions of the legend of this romantic interlude. The first, which is most rarely found, is the depiction of Ariadne, the daughter of King Minos of Crete, gifting Theseus with a magic ball of thread to escape from the labyrinth of Knossos and kill the Minotaur (Figure 9). Hence, the beginning of the romantic saga between Ariadne and Theseus.[36]

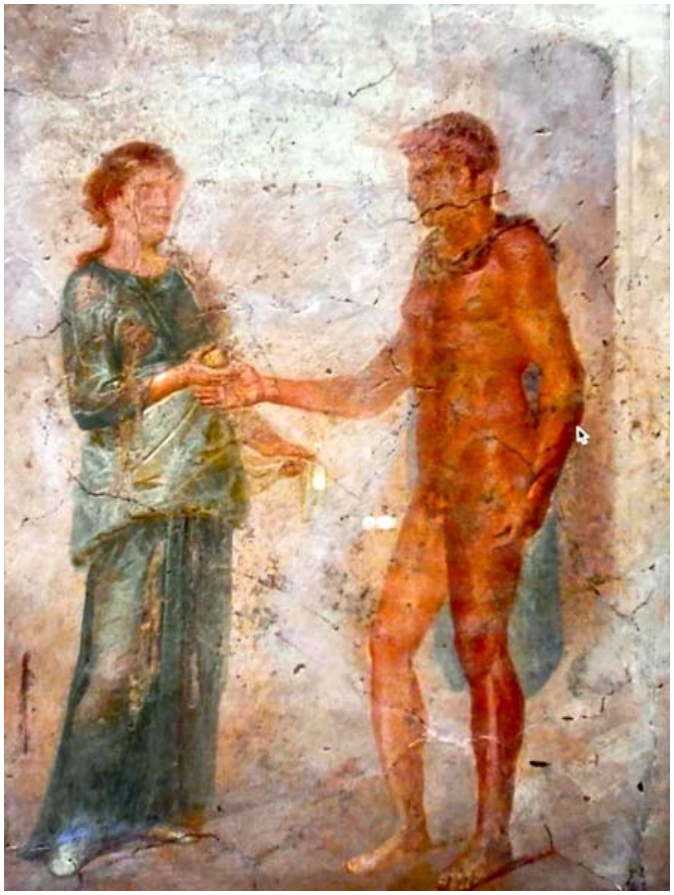

Figure 9. Ariadne giving Theseus a Ball of Thread, before 79 CE. Pompeian, Room 11 (VII.4.48). National Archeological Museum, Naples (Inv. 9048). Photo credit: commons.wikimedia.org

The second version, which selects the moment in the legend when Theseus abandons Ariadne on the island of Naxos and sails away, was often interpreted and visualized. Some versions depict her asleep, unaware of the desertion, while other frescoes show her awake and seeing him sailing away. This tragic event is the result of their romantic elopement and escape from Crete to Athens but being shipwrecked in a storm and having to take refuge

[35] Shelley Hales and Joanna Paul, eds, *Pompeii in the Public Imagination, from Rediscovery to Today* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[36] See Pompeian Room 11 (VII.4.48), *Ariadne giving Theseus a Ball of Thread*, before 79 CE, now in the National Archeological Museum in Naples (Inv. 9048). For image see: https://pompeiiinpictures.com/pompeiiinpictures/R7/7%2004%2048%20p2.htm (accessed January 7, 2020).

at the shore of Naxos, as seen in the Pompeian fresco of *Ariadne at Naxos* at the British Museum (Figure 3),[37] and often depicted by Watts in his Pre-Raphaelite paintings.

The third version on the theme is as rarely depicted as the first. This version depicts the moving moment when Ariadne weeps because Theseus is sailing away, as illustrated in the Pompeian House of Meleager (Figure 10).[38] On the shore, seated on a bed of seaweed, the semi-nude Ariadne weeps. A winged Amorino (Revenge) points out Theseus's ship, sailing away in the distance. Turning away from that scene, Ariadne pulls her chiton toward her face to dry her tears. Standing next to her, a young winged Amorino (Cupid) holding an arrow cries as well. Cupid or Amor, the God of Desire and Erotic Love, parallels Ariadne's action and sentiment. Other variants on this theme portray Ariadne looking at Theseus's sailing ship in the distance.[39] The Roman poet Catullus referred to Ariadne shedding tears as "sad eyes" (Cat. 64:60) and her dilemma as "waves of emotion" (Cat. 64:62).[40] Perhaps Ariadne's weeping may relate as well as to her state of emotional confusion about her promised marriage and the moral dilemma of having betrayed her family for her passion and error in judgment.

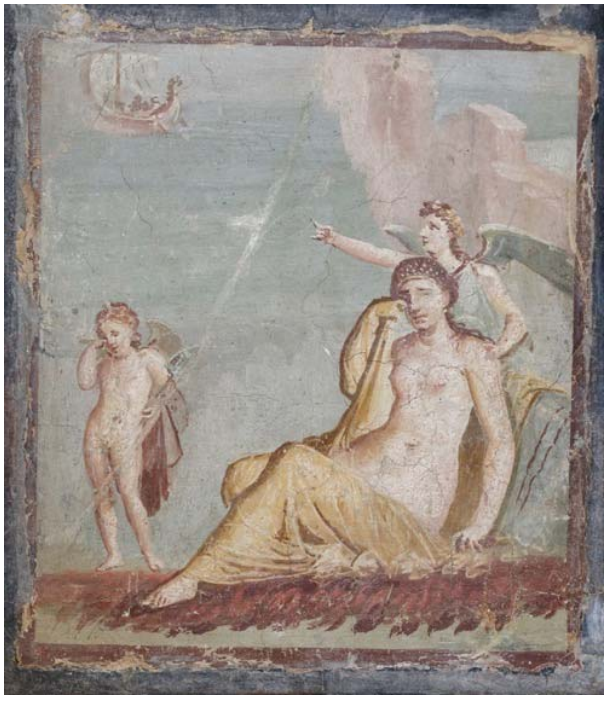

Figure 10. Ariadne Weeping, before 79 CE. Pompeian fresco from the House of Meleager (Pompeii VI.9.2). National Archeological Museum, Naples (Inv. 9051). Photo credit: commons.wikimedia.org

[37] Other variations are Theseus fleeing from the island while Ariadne is still asleep on a bed of seaweed, as in *Ariadne and Theseus*, 35-45 CE, from the Pompeian House of Lucius Caecilius Jucundus (Pompeii V. 1. 26), now at the National Archeological Museum of Naples. For image see: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Teseo_e_Arianna,_Pompei.jpg (accessed January 7, 2020). Other examples dated before 79 CE are found from Pompeian excavations of 1824 in the sites of the House of the Tragic Poet (Pompeii VI. 8. 3-5) and the House of the Colored Capitals (Pompeii VII. 3-51), both detached frescoes are now at the National Archeological Museum of Naples.

[38] The Pompeian fresco was discovered in 1830, *Ariadne Weeping*, before 79 CE, from the House of Meleager (Pompeii VI.9.2), now in the National Archeological Museum of Naples (Inv. 9051).

[39] See Jas Elsner, *Roman Eyes: Visuality and Subjectivity in Art and Text* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 91-8, addressing Ariadne's weeping as a dilemma instead of her gazing out at sea where Theseus's ship has sailed.

[40] See Elsner, *Roman Eyes*, 95, citing Catullus's passages.

The fourth version is often visualized, like the second version. This type of scene represents Dionysus (Bacchus), surrounded by his *thiasus* or entourage, discovering Ariadne asleep and unattended on the shore of Naxos and rescuing her. This representation of a heroic act is visualized in Antiquity in the Pompeian frescoes[41] and in the Italian Renaissance in Titian's *Bacchus and Ariadne* (Figure 4).

Although it is unclear how much specific information on the Pompeian excavations was available, it is certain that Evelyn was aware of them in view of some examples at the British Museum and the published literature about the excavations of some of the sites.[42] In *Ariadne at Naxos*, Evelyn, like Leighton, seems to have selected the moment where Ariadne is alone and feels completely abandoned. Unlike other Pre-Raphaelite painters, Evelyn placed her heroine completely alone on the beach—no sign of a living person is seen. The painter depicted a beautiful young female on a desolate beach. This view of the shore is dismal. On a hot summer day, Ariadne lays among seaweed, seashells and broken seashells. In the distance, the blue sky merges with the waters of the sea. The mountain cliffs are sparse and empty of living creatures. Only a few sea pine trees are visible.

In *Ariadne at Naxos*, the colors selected for Ariadne's mantle are golden browns, similar to the color of the cliffs. The deep ruby red for her chemise symbolizes her passion for the runaway Theseus and her pain at his betrayal. The dark green and blueish crisscross pattern on her bodice and waist sash reveal and conceal her beautiful breast line. The future Queen of Crete, Ariadne, is depicted resigned to her fate. Wearing only a golden crown and no other jewelry, she bends her head down to let her flowing golden tresses partially cover the tears rolling down her face—"sad eyes" (Cat. 64:60). A pencil and charcoal drawing of a female head sketched by Evelyn, recently sold by Sotheby's London, captures the sadness of the abandoned Ariadne (compare Figures 1 and 11).[43]

Evelyn followed the Italian Renaissance and Pre-Raphaelite painters' quest for observing forms, colors, and constructs in the natural world—the physical realm—in order to depict them in their paintings. In *Ariadne at Naxos*, the sporadic color of green in the seaweed complements the values of blues in the sea and sky, demonstrating Evelyn's careful observation of nature as well as her rich color palette for interpreting sentiments in a dramatic narrative scene. Perhaps Evelyn visited the beach on the island of Naxos or similar beaches because of the close accuracy in her representation of the seashore, rocky reddish colored cliffs, and exoskeletons of marine mollusks. In her diary, she noted the time that she spent on the morning of August 2, 1871, drawing shells from 11 till 12: "I [drew] shells on the beach."[44]

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[41] See Pompeian fresco, *Dionysus discovering Ariadne next to Hypnos*, before 79 CE, from the House of the Colored Capitals (Pompeii VII.4.31-51), now at the National Archeological Museum of Naples (Inv. 9278). See Sheila McNally, "Ariadne and Others: Images of Sleep in Greek and Early Roman Art," *Classical Antiquity* 4, 2 (October, 1985):152-92.

[42] Robert Fowler, et al., *Life and Death in Pompeii and Herculaneum* (London: British Museum, 2013); Eric Moormann, "The Appreciation of Pompeii's Architectural Remains in the Late 18th and Early 19th Century," *Architectural Histories* 6, 1 (December 2018): 24-30; and C. C. Parslow, *Rediscovering Antiquity: Karl Weber and the Excavation of Herculaneum, Pompeii, and Stabiae* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

[43] See https://www.mutualart.com/Artwork/STUDY-FOR-MOONBEAMS-DIPPING-INTO-THE-OCE/BB89CEF11A80CF92 (accessed December 15, 2019). The drawing was sold on July 1, 2004. I think that the study was also for the painting of Ariadne.

[44] E. De Morgan, *Diary*, 2 August 1871, The De Morgan Foundation.

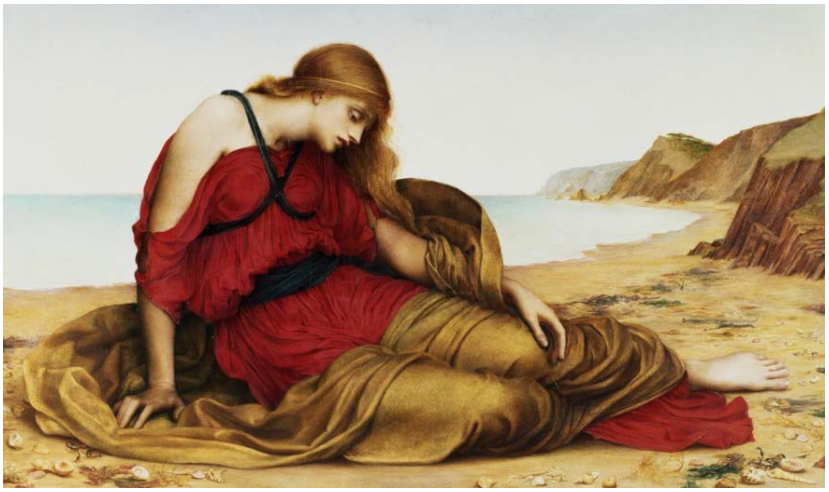

Figure 1. Evelyn Pickering De Morgan, *Ariadne at Naxos*, 1877. The De Morgan Foundation, UK. ©De Morgan Collection, courtesy of The De Morgan Foundation www.demorgan.org.uk Photo credit: commons.wikimedia.org

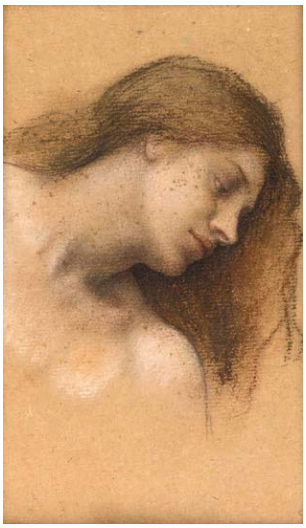

Figure 11. Evelyn Pickering de Morgan, *Study of a Female Head (Ariadne)*, 1875. Sotheby's London, July 1, 2004, Lot 282. Photo credit: commons.wikimedia.org

Evelyn depicted many objects found on this desolate beach. Metaphorically, when walking on the beach and around the area where Ariadne pines for Theseus, there are numerous sea objects that provide clavis interpretandi (hidden clues) to the meaning of the narrative. For example, the discarded golden earing at Ariadne's feet, the seaweed formation of disentangled love-knots, the scattered seashells, and the empty seashells that are composed into the symbolic design of a rebus .

On the beach in *Ariadne at Naxos*, one sees several types of seashells–auger, conical, ear, elliptical, and spiral–scattered throughout the sand. Seashells are dead marine mollusks that are now empty shells washed up on the shore, similar to Ariadne's predicament, who has been washed ashore by a shipwreck.[45] She is surrounded by empty seashells, a symbol of death,[46] referring to her unrequited love and her state of desolation and emptiness. Between her right hand on her himation and three large empty seashells on the sand, there is an unraveled knot of seaweed. The love knot is an ancient symbol of love and friendship, a marriage symbol associated with Hercules's ninth labor of obtaining the magic girdle worn by Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons, as a protective amulet or a token of love.[47] In emblematic books, the bond between a man and a woman was illustrated with this motif, as seen in Barthélemy Aneau's *Picta Poesis* emblem on *Matrimoii Typus*. The *motto* (title) of this emblem

[45] G. Repetto, I. Bianco and G. Ciccimarra, *Mediterranean Seashells. Dictionary of the Scientific Names* (Harxheim, Germany: Conch Books, 2010). Introduction; and Drawmer, *The Impact of Science and Spiritualism on the Works of Evelyn De Morgan, 1870-1919*, 217, noting the association with collecting fossils and shells to display at the London's Natural History Museum.

[46] See Chevalier and Gheerbrant, *A Dictionary of Symbols*, 871; M. Eliade, *Images and Symbols: Studies in Religion Symbolism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), 125. For Drawmer, *The Impact of Science and Spiritualism on the Works of Evelyn De Morgan, 1870-1919*, 222-23, and 225, Evelyn's interest in marine landscape—depicting shells and pools of water—was associated with female sexuality, potency, and fecundity.

[47] Hans Biedermann, *Dictionary of Symbolism: Cultural Icons and the Meanings Behind Them* (New York: Meridian Books, 1994), 197-8, for an explanation of the "love knot" symbol of engagement or casting a love spell toward the desired lover.

is a *Figure of Matrimony*, and the *pictura* (image) represents two young lovers tied with a rope to a tree, where other dangling ropes unify the lovers with several forming love knots. Their love is evidenced in the *subscription* (text) of the emblem, which reads: "[The rope] entangles them, the two lovers in a voluntary bond."[48] In *Ariadne at Naxos*, these *clavis interpretandi* attest to Ariadne's desolated state: the motif of the detangled love knot is associated with Theseus's rejection of Ariadne's love, his false matrimonial promises to her, and his cowardly choice to run away from her.

Figure 12. Cross commissa, *Labry*s, and *Bull Head*, 1100 BCE.

Palace of Knossos, Heraklion, Crete. Photo credit: commons.wikimedia.org

Another dramatic composition with a seashell design is located to the side of Ariadne's bare foot. Two circular conch shells are placed between a vertical spiral shell to form the design of a *cross commissa* in the shape of the ancient Greek letter Tau or a labrys (double-axe) design from Crete.[49] The *cross commissa* was used as a supplication prayer. This type of cross is visible in the Palace of Knossos in Heraklion, Crete (Figure 12). The palace is known as a labyrinth palace because a princely family with the insignia of the two-sided axe, known as the House of Labrys, resided in the palace.[50] In the palace, the religious cult was dedicated to the Minoan Mother

[48] See Barthélemy Aneau, Emblem *Matrimonii Typus* (A Figure of Matrimony) in *Pictura poesis* (Lyons: Macé Bonhomme, 1552). For image see https://www.emblems.arts.gla.ac.uk/french/picturae.php?id=FANa007 (accessed December 15, 2019); and Jacopo Boschio, *Symbolographia, sive, De arte symbolica: sermones septem* (Ausburg: Augustae Vindelicorum & Dilingae: Joannen Casparum Bencard, 1701/1702), designed by J.C. Schalck and engraved by Wolffgang and Jacob Müller. See Section III, Emblem 138, on the Love Knot. For the image, see https://archive.org/details/sivedeartesymbol00bosc/page/n197/mode/2up (accessed December 15, 2019).

[49] See M. Gonzalez-Wippler, *The Complete Book of Amulets and Talismans* (St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publication, 2003), 182, on the Tau cross as a symbol of salvation (Ezekiel 9:4).

[50] J. C. Cooper, *An Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Traditional Symbols* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978), 16 and 92, on the symbolism of axes and labyrinths.

Goddess, whose icon was the labrys.[51] The placement of this symbol next to Ariadne refers to her royal origins in Crete, as does the discarded golden earring, adjacent. In this dismal depiction, the *cross commissa* is an ambiguous symbol, and may signify death or hope, as a symbol of the Mother Goddess.

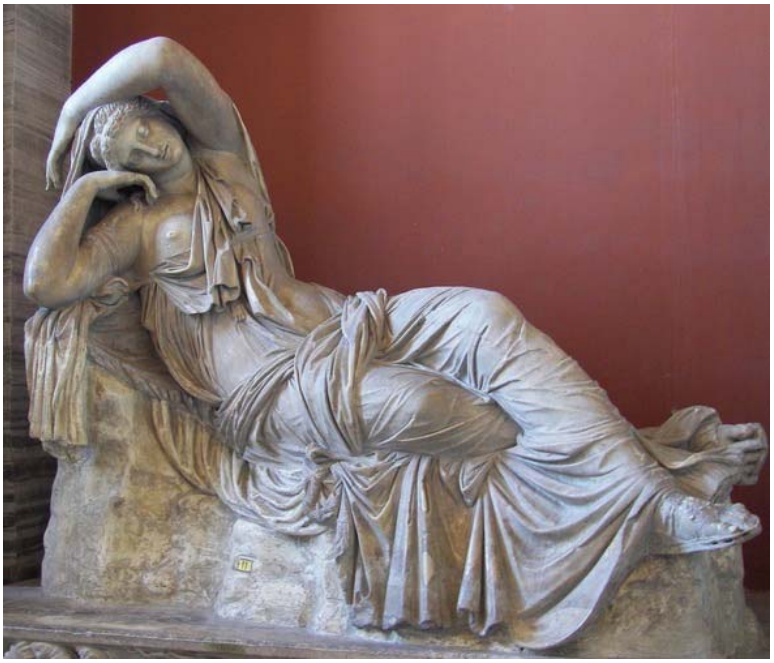

Figure 13. *Sleeping Ariadne* or *Cleopatra*, second century BCE. Hellenistic or Roman marble copy (flipped image for comparison) Pio Clementino Museum, Vatican, Italy. Photo credit: en.wikipedia.org

Compositionally, like Leighton, Evelyn assimilated the classical tradition of depicting reclining figures and the treatment of wet drapery motif for the attire, as seen in Phidias's *Deity* of 447 BCE from the East Pediment of the Parthenon at the British Museum (Figure 7) and the Hellenistic or Roman copy of *Sleeping Ariadne* or *Cleopatra* of the second century BCE, acquired by Pope Julius II in 1512 for his Cortile delle Statue at the Vatican. Today this sculpture is located in the Pio Clementino Museo at the Vatican (Figure 13). Influenced by Italian Renaissance imagery during her many sojourns in Florence, Evelyn also appropriated the slumbering pose of Michelangelo's *Notte* (Night) of 1531 from the tomb of Giuliano di Lorenzo de' Medici in the New Sacristy of San Lorenzo (Figure 14). She not only had seen these classical and Renaissance images in England and Italy but she had also studied carefully Botticelli's *Mars and Venus* of 1485 at the National Gallery in London (Figure 15). When comparing the two paintings, the viewer observes similarities in the treatment of the folds and the crisscross decoration emphasizing her covered breasts; in addition, her extended hand resting on her legrecalls the reclining pose and composition of Venus in Botticelli's *Mars and Venu*s. Evelyn's reclining Ariadne also recalls the influence of her uncle Stanhope's *Love and the Maiden* of 1877, now at the Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, California (Figure 16).[52]

[51] Jeremy B. Rutter, *Minoan Religion* (2017), 11-29, noting that in Roman Crete, the labrys was associated as well with the Amazons, see http://www.dartmouth.edu/~prehistory/aegean/?page_id=720 (accessed January 7, 2020).

[52] L. F. Orr and Stephen Calloway, eds., *The Cult of Beauty: The Victorian Avant-Garde 1860-1900* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 2012); and Simon Poë, "Mythology and Symbolism in Two Works of John Roddam Spencer Stanhope's Maturity," *Journal of the Pre-Raphaelite Studies* 12 (2003): 35-61.

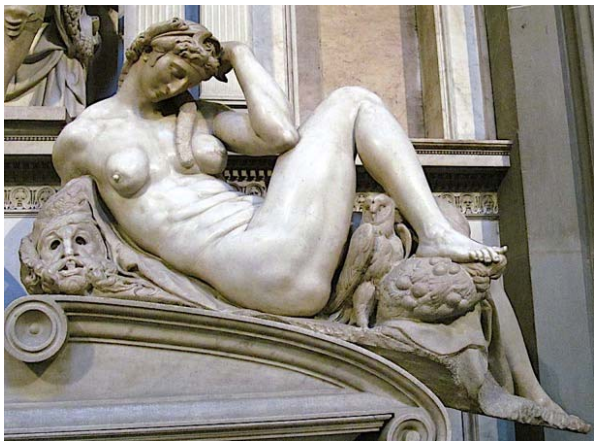

Figure 14. Michelangelo, *The Night,* 1531 (flipped image for comparison). Tomb of Giuliano di Lorenzo de' Medici. New Sacristy, San Lorenzo, Florence, Italy. Photo credit: Liana De Girolami Cheney.

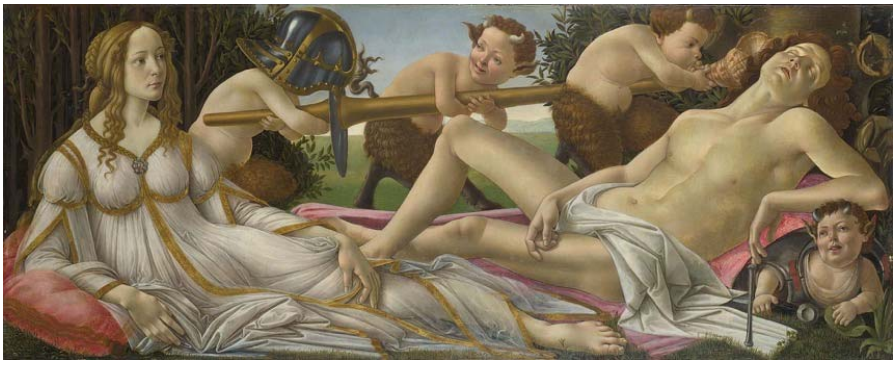

Figure 15. Botticelli, *Mars and Venus,* 1485. National Gallery, London, UK (Museum acquisition in 1857). Photo credit: en.wikipedia.org

Figure 16. J. R. Spencer Stanhope, *Love and the Maiden,* 1877. Fine Arts Museum, San Francisco, California. Photo credit: en.wikipedia.org

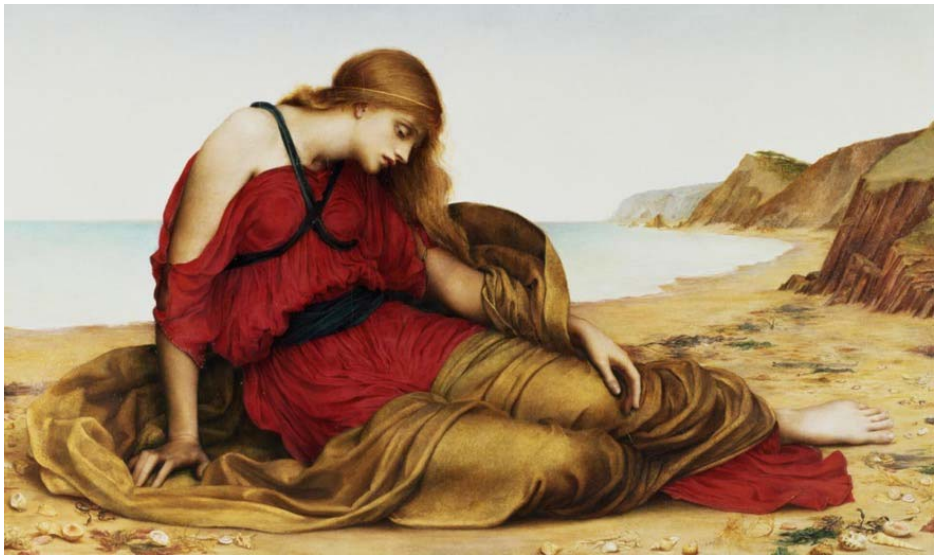

Figure 1. Evelyn Pickering De Morgan, *Ariadne at Naxos*, 1877. The De Morgan Foundation, UK. ©De Morgan Collection, courtesy of The De Morgan Foundation www.demorgan.

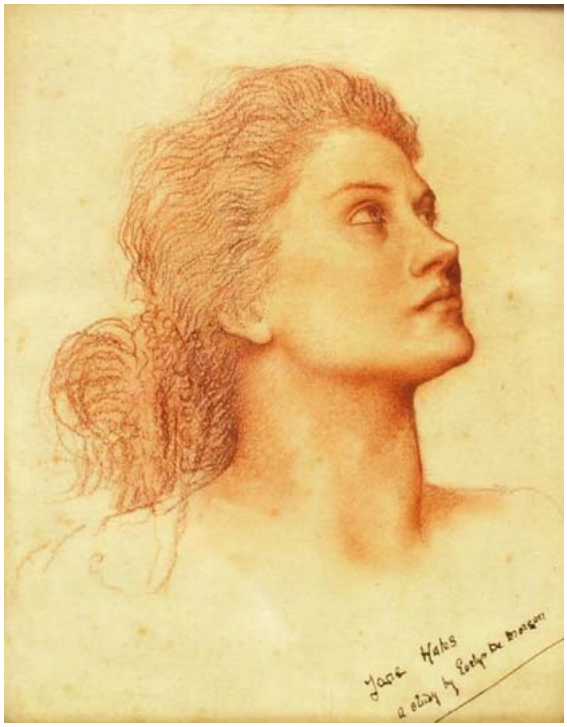

Figure 17. Evelyn Pickering De Morgan, *Mary Jane Hales*, 1885, drawing. The De Morgan Foundation, UK. Photo credit: ©De Morgan Collection, courtesy of The De Morgan Foundation www.demorgan.org.uk.

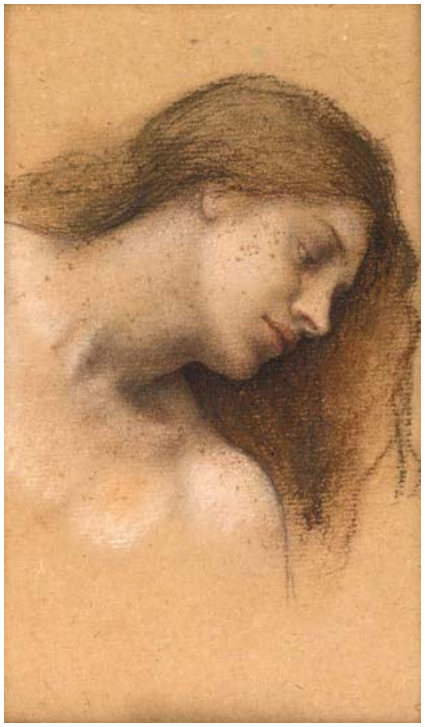

Figure 11. Evelyn Pickering de Morgan, *Study of a Female Head (Ariadne),* 1875. Sotheby's London, July 1, 2004, Lot 282. Photo credit: commons.wikimedia.org

Evelyn's desire to be true to nature extended to the figures she depicted in her paintings. She was as careful in the representation of the human form as she was with the execution of details in her landscapes and seascapes.

Hence, in *Ariadne at Naxos*, Evelyn used as her model her dear companion and family friend Mary Jane Hales, who was born in 1851 to John and Maria Hales of Leverington in Cambridgeshire. Her father was an agricultural laborer. Jane attended grammar school but soon was put to work. In 1866, at the age of 15, Jane joined the Pickering household as nanny and tutor to look after Evelyn's sister Wilhelmina, who was a toddler. Jane became a dedicated companion and a talented model for Evelyn for the rest of her life. She was a poised, beautiful woman with classical features, a proportionate body, and elegant manners. Her warm and easy personality was agreeable for Evelyn's temperament, and she modelled well for Evelyn's classical heroines, including Ariadne (Figure 17).[53]

Furthermore, Evelyn's desire to create beauty and sensuality void of moral or social codes in art—thus honoring the artist's self-expression—evokes the aims of the British Aesthetic Movement, "art for art's sake." This movement was visualized by Edward Burne-Jones's *Sleeping Princess* of 1870-80, at the Manchester Art Gallery in the UK, and expressed in his writings about art, and echoed in Oscar Wilde's literature. Burne-Jones stated: [My aim is] "To love beauty." "Only this is true, that beauty is very beautiful and softens, and comforts, and inspires, and rouses, and lifts up, and never fails."[54] Oscar Wilde, in a similar vein, noted in his *The Picture of Dorian Gray*: "Beauty is a form of Genius–is higher, indeed, than Genius, as it needs no explanation. It is one of the great facts of the world, like sunlight, or springtime, or the reflection in the dark waters of that silver shell we call the moon. It cannot be questioned. It has divine right of sovereignty. It makes princes of those who have it."[55] Correspondingly, Evelyn's *Ariadne at Naxos* is a painting on the reflection of beauty.

The Christian Martyr

But with Evelyn Pickering De Morgan there is always another hidden level to consider. The beautiful image of Ariadne as a tragic heroine also references a sacrificial image, a martyr. Between 1880 and 1882, Evelyn painted *The Christian Martyr*, exhibited at the Grosvenor Gallery in 1882 and now in the Southwark Art Gallery in London (Figure 18).[56]

The viewer may wonder, what martyr is this?[57] A provocative, sensual, and beautiful image of a female figure on a deserted beach tied up and enchained to a tree in an area where trees do not grow? Once again, Evelyn created a symbolic image, an image of aesthetic beauty: "art for art's sake." Or is this figure another aspect of Ariadne–bound to a cross in a physical parallel to her emotional pain, her abandonment on the shore of Naxos?

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[53] The De Morgan Foundation Archives with miscellaneous letters and unpublished photographs, including Jane Hales.

[54] Georgiana Burne-Jones, *Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones*, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan & Co., 1904), 2: 125.

[55] Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (New York: Dover Publication, 1993), Chapter 2.

[56] *The Spectator* of June 24, 1882, critically commented on the painting: "This is Miss Eveleen [sic] Pickering's "Christian Martyr": a girl tied to a stake to drown with the rising tide. This young lady in red drapery is less like a living, breathing being, than one of Cimabue's virgins; she is pure with the purity of an ascetic and we cannot help feeling that her proper place would be in a stained-glass window of some chapel dedicated to "Our Lady of Seven Sorrows." See Drawmer, *The Impact of Science and Spiritualism on the Works of Evelyn De Morgan, 1870-1919*, 145.

[57] In *The Impact of Science and Spiritualism on the Works of Evelyn De Morgan, 1870-1919*, 137-43, Drawmer suggested the influence for this type of female martyr came from the writings of the feminist art historian Anna Jameson. Her book series Sacred and Legendary Art consisted of *The Poetry of Sacred and Legendary Art*, published in 1848, *Legends of the Monastic Orders, as represented in Fine Arts*, 1850, *Legends of the Madonna, as represented in Fine Arts*, 1852, and *The History of Our Lord, as Exemplified in Works of Art*, 1864.

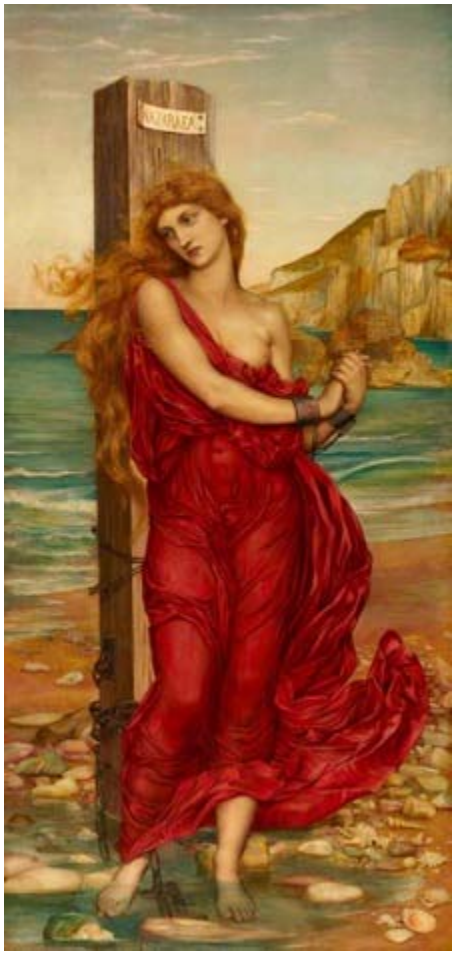

Figure 18. Evelyn Pickering De Morgan, *The Christian Martyr*, 1880-1882. Southwark Art Collection London, UK.

Photo credit: WikiArt (January 18, 2019) and https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/the-martyr-nazuraea-193254

In her analysis of *The Christian Martyr*, Smith wrote that the crucified image had been traditionally associated with a Scottish female martyr Margaret Wilson of Wigtownshire (1667-85).[58] Wilson vehemently followed the Scottish Reform movement of the Covenanter, opposed to the religious beliefs held by the royal crown of England, James II of England, and the Episcopalian Church. Her actions were considered to be high treason against the Monarchy and the Church of England. Hence, she was tried, convicted, and condemned to death in the following manner: [to be] "tied to palisades fixed in sand, within the floodmark of the sea, and there to stand till the flood would overflown [her]."[59] Moved by this tragic death, the Pre-Raphaelite painter, John Everett Millais (1829-96) not only painted a scene of *The Martyr of Solway* in 1871, now at the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool, UK, but also composed a wood engraving representing Margaret Wilson tied to a stake on the Solway coast. This illustration was published in *Once a Week*, in July 1862, on page 42. This magazine's caption read: "Murdered for owning Christ supreme / Head of his Church, and no more crime / But her not

[58] See Smith, *Evelyn Pickering De Morgan and the Allegorical Body*, 79.
[59] See Herbert Maxwell, *A History of Dumfries and Galloway* (London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1900), 282.

owning Prelacy, / And not abjuring Presbytery; / Within the sea, tied to a stake, / She suffered for Christ Jesus's sake" (Figure 19).

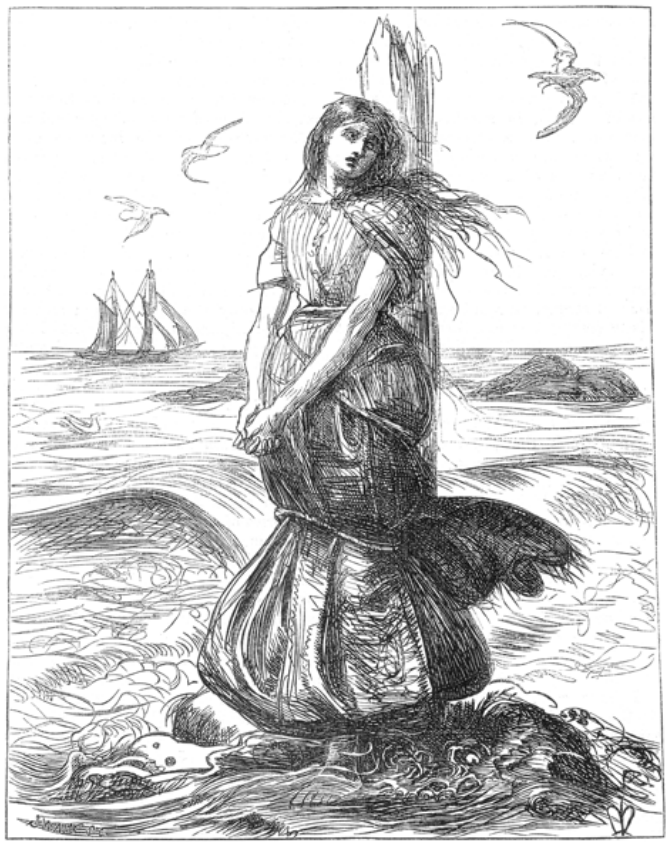

Figure 19. John Everett Millais, *The Martyr of Solway*, 1871. Walker, At Gallery, Liverpool UK.

Photo credit: commons.wikimedia.org

With her cultural background, Evelyn combined the Christian visual tradition with the historical events of the time, as indicated by her studies as seen in the preparatory drawing for the nude figure is located at The De Morgan Foundation (D_EDM_0122) along with a composition design (D_EDM_9178) (Figures 20 and 21).[60] In *The Christian Martyr*, Evelyn employed the same type of seascape composition and coloration seen in her earlier painting,*Ariadne at Naxos* (compare Figures 1 and 18). These two significant drawings at The De Morgan collection assist in understanding Evelyn's artistic process. One sheet contains a single pencil drawing of a study of a nude female; the head and legs are missing but the treatment of the rest of the female body is extraordinary in terms of anatomical accuracy and handling of the hatching and cross-hatching of the line to achieve volume and weight in the form (Figure 20). This drawing recalls Evelyn's successful training in life drawing at the Slade School of Art. The other sheet of drawings contains several studies in pencil and charcoals (Figure 21). There are

[60] See https://www.demorgan.org.uk/collection/study-of-female-nude-for-the-christian-martyr/ for the study; and https://www.demorgan.org.uk/collection/compositional-study-for-the-christian-martyr-draped-female-figure-next-to-cross (accessed December 15, 2019), for the compositional design. In the lower left corner there is a note saying: "The Christian Martyr," by E. De Morgan, who afterward painted the picture."

other sketches of forms and crosses which are unclear. The two studies of the female figure at a cross again show Evelyn's technical and artistic ability in drawing as well as her skill in the compositional construction of the design. These studies differ from the painting in the selection of the type of cross; in the drawing there is a Latin cross while the painting has a Tau cross. The placement of the cross in relation to the figure differs as well. In the painting, the cross is placed on the right side of the body while in the drawing it is on the left. The treatment of the hair changes in flow and movement from the drawing to the painting, while the wet drapery motif is handled dramatically in both media.

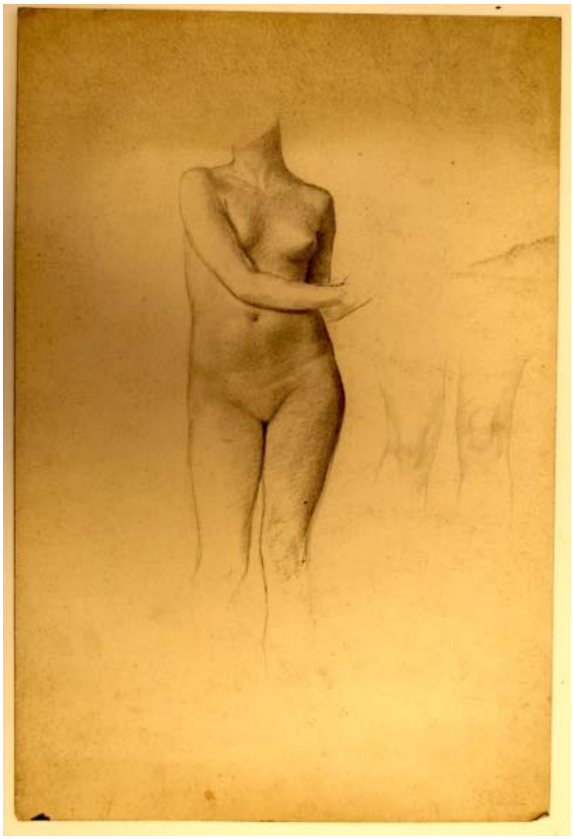

Figure 20. Evelyn Pickering De Morgan, *Study for The Christian Martyr, 1880-1882).*
De Morgan Foundation (D_EDM_0122), UK.
Photo credit: ©De Morgan Collection, courtesy of The De Morgan Foundation www.demorgan.org.uk

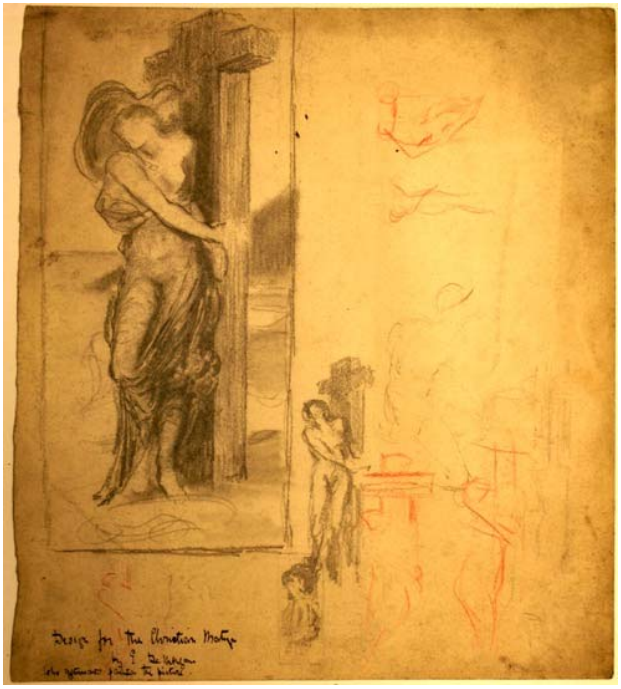

Figure 21. Evelyn Pickering De Morgan, *Study for The Christian Martyr, 1880-1882).*
De Morgan Foundation (D_EDM_9178), UK.
Photo credit: ©De Morgan Collection, courtesy of The De Morgan Foundation www.demorgan.org.uk

The Christian Martyr is an unusual representation of a female martyr. Set in an abandoned seascape, a female figure with a languid expression is enchained to a tree surrounded by shells, creating compositionally a fusion between pagan and religious iconography as well as referring to mythological and historical personages.[61]

[61] See note 57 above.

At this time, Evelyn was intellectually and visually merging in her imagery the De Morgan's family interest in spiritualism with their study of the natural sciences.[62]

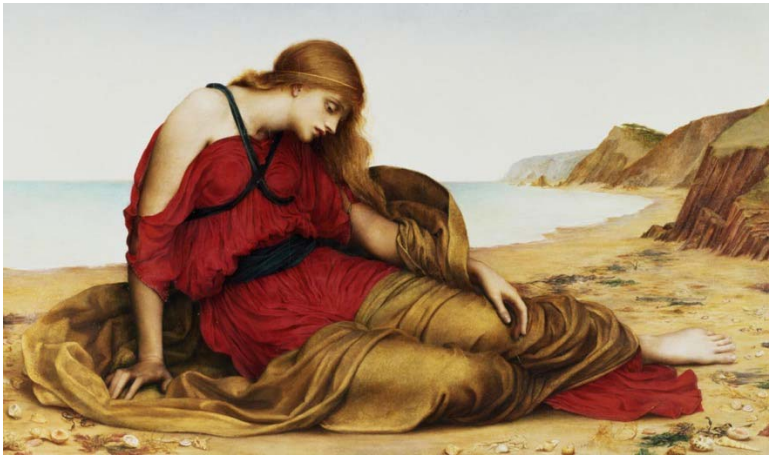

Figure 1. Evelyn Pickering De Morgan, *Ariadne at Naxos*, 1877, The De Morgan Foundation, UK. ©De Morgan Collection, courtesy of The De Morgan Foundation www.demorgan.org.uk Photo credit: commons.wikimedia.org

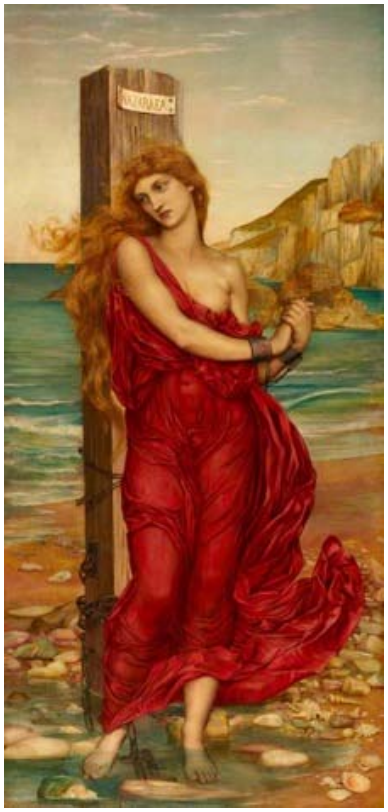

Figure 18. Evelyn Pickering De Morgan, *The Christian Martyr*, 1880-1882. Southwark Art Collection London, UK. Photo credit: WikiArt (January 18, 2019) and https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/the-martyr-nazuraea-193254

The usual depiction of a female enchained is associated with the legend of Perseus liberating Andromeda from being chained to a rock and guarded by a dragon.[63] Her uncle Stanhope composed several paintings on this theme, e.g., *Andromeda* of 1873-80, recently sold at Sotheby's on December 13, 2018 (compare Figures 18 and 22). In comparing both paintings, one sees the similar composition of employing a tree trunk to enchain their figures and placing them near seashore. However, Evelyn replaced her uncle's discarded roses at the foot of the

[62] Her mother-in-law, Sophia De Morgan, became a great influence in Evelyn's depiction of mythological paintings, inserting into them mysticism and spirituality. See Sophia De Morgan, *From Matter to Spirit. Ten Years' Experience in Spirit Manifestation* (London: Longman, Green and Co., 1863); A. R. Wallace, *On Miracles and Modern Spiritualism, Three Essays* (London: Trubner and Co., 1881); J. Oberhausen, "Evelyn Pickering De Morgan and Spiritualism: an Interpretive Link," *Journal of the Pre-Raphaelite Studies* 3 (Spring 1994): 1-19; and Evelyn and her husband's book on *The Result of an Experiment*.

[63] See A. Auslander Munich, *Andromeda's Chains. Gender and Interpretation in Victorian Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 8-38.

tree with seashells. She also eliminated the representation of a crawling reptile on the tree, emphasizing the bondage with chains. Her depiction of the seashells is not in a form of a rebus as in her *Ariadne at Naxos*, rather they are just clustered in the sand around the standing figure. In *The Christian Martyr*, the figure, like the stake, stands in a pool of seawater and sand, indicating the frailty of the situation. The female martyr is placed next to the seashore, not reclining on the sand of the seashore as Ariadne. Evelyn constructed a symbolic composition in which both females have drifted ashore like discarded seashells and are in a precarious state of existence. They are both alone on a desolate beach: Ariadne is psychologically bound to her desertion and the female martyr is physically bound to a pole. The martyr's distant and melancholic gaze, the fluttering wind-blown attire, the long golden tresses, and contrapposto stance also remind the viewer of Botticelli's *Pallas and the Centaur* of 1482 and *Birth of Venus* of 1485, both at the Galleria degli Uffizi in Florence.

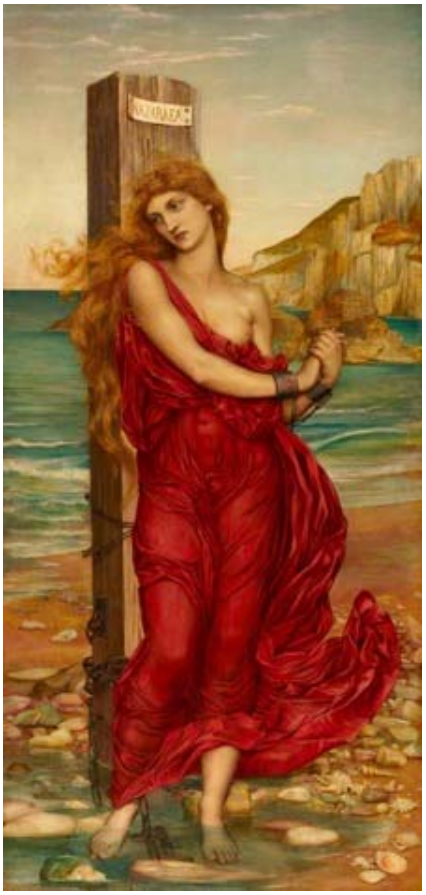

Figure 18. Evelyn Pickering De Morgan, *The Christian Martyr,* 1880-1882. Southwark Art Collection London, UK.
Photo credit: WikiArt (January 18, 2019) and https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/the-martyr-nazuraea-193254

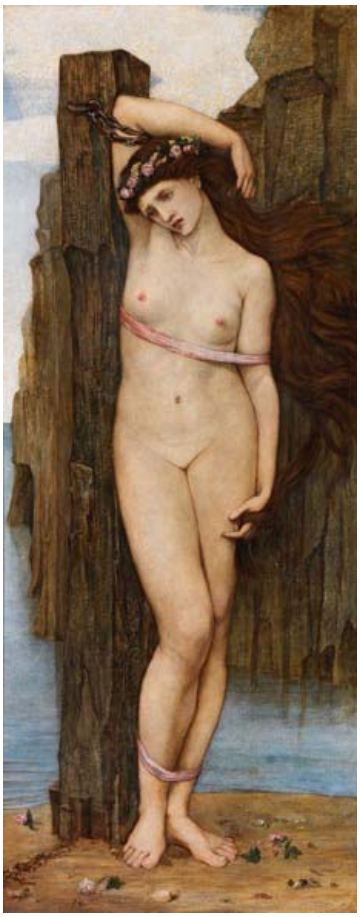

Figure 22. J. R. Spencer Stanhope, *Andromeda,* 1873-1880.
Sotheby's London, December 13, 2018
Photo credit: ©Sotheby's London, UK

In Christian iconography, the female figure in *The Christian Martyr*—with the motifs of one foot chained to a rock or both wrists shackled to a rock—allude to the representation of the moral virtue of Patience—a fruit and gift of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). The Florentine Mannerist Giorgio Vasari, for example, in his *Allegory*

of Patience of 1550 (Figure 23), now at the Galleria Palatina in Palazzo Pitti in Florence, depicted a female figure with a foot chained to a rock while watching the slow dripping of drops of water from a water clock, which symbolized the requirement of endurance and resignation needed through the vicissitudes of life and time.[64] For the depiction of manacled wrists, Evelyn appropriated the gesture from the Florentine Baroque Carlo Dolci's *Allegory of Patience* of 1677 (Figure 24), now in private collection, representing the personification of Patience with her wrists shackled and chained to a massive rock, indicating that her movements must be tempered and cautious in all circumstances.[65]

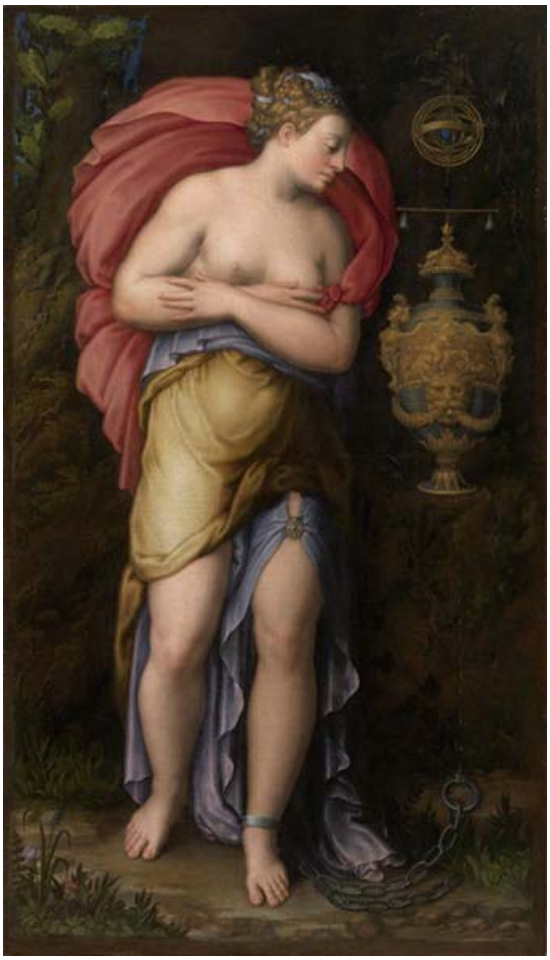

Figure 23. Giorgio Vasari, *Allegory of Patience*, 1550.

Galleria Palatina, Pitti Palace, Florence, Italy. Photo credit: Liana De Girolami Cheney

[64] See Liana De Girolami Cheney, "Giorgio Vasari's *Patience*: Astronomical Symbol of Time," in *The Inspiration of Astronomical Phenomena*," ed. Raymond E. White, *Memorie: Journal of the Italian Astronomical Society* (2001-2002): 112-21.
[65] Rudolph Wittkower in "Patience and Chance: the Story of a Political Emblem," in Rudolph Wittkower, ed., *Allegory and the Migration of Symbols* (London: Thames and Hudson 1987), 107-12.

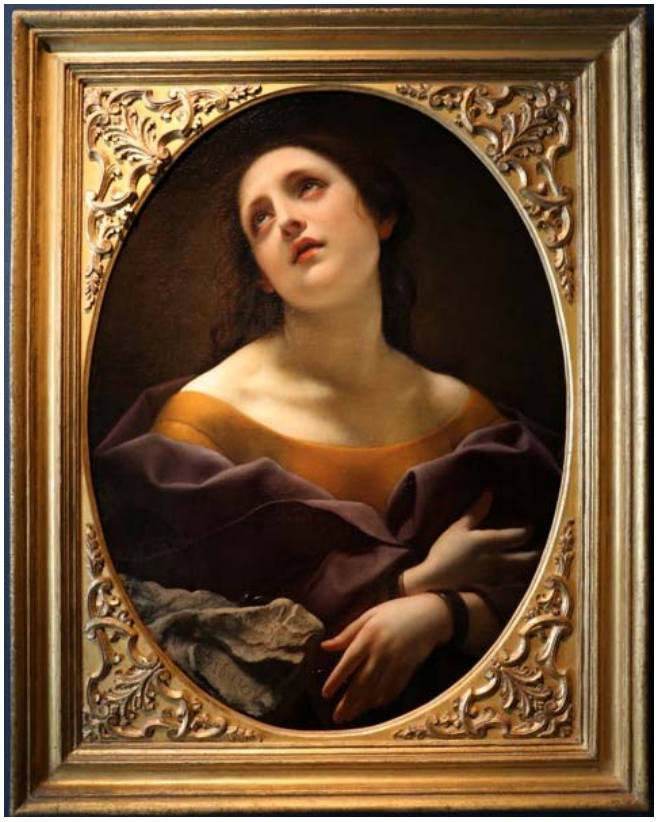

Figure 24. Carlo Dolci, *Allegory of Patience*, 1677. Private Collection, Italy.

Photo credit: ©Spencer Alley@Spencer Alley

In *The Christian Martyr*, the inscription above the female's head, *Nazarea*, is reminiscent of the Hebrew, Latin, and Greek inscription *INRI* (*Iesus Nazarenus, Rex ludaeorum*—Jesus of Nazarene, King of the Jews—John 19:20) on Christ's cross at the time of the Crucifixion. Evelyn's term Nazarea derives from Nazarene, the area where Christ grew up, while Nazarene refers to a Christian follower of Christ (Acts 24:5). In this case, Evelyn is referring to female follower of Christ, a Nazarea.[66]

Leighton and Evelyn were both influenced by the German Nazarene Movement, which was assimilated and expanded on by the Pre-Raphaelites in England.[67] The enchained woman tied up to a tree slab, for example, recalls the popular theme of the German Nazarene and Romantic painter Hermann Anton Stilke (1803-1860): the French heroine Joan of Arc (1412-31). During the Hundred Year's War between the French and the English, she was accused of witchcraft and heresy. On May 30, 1431, she was burned at the stake in Rouen by English guards. Stilke depicted a dramatic painting of the moment in the right-wing panel of a triptych on Joan of Arc, *Joan of*

[66] See A. P. Sinnett, *The Occult World* (London: Trubner, 1883), 112-3, where the term *Nazarea* is defined as "seer" or "mystical healer." In *The Impact of Science and Spiritualism on the Works of Evelyn De Morgan, 1870-1919*, 142-48, esp. 145, Drawmer considered the term to mean a mystic/martyr. She also discussed the historical reception of the painting at the time, and its association to the suffragettes' movement in the nineteenth century. Interestingly, the caption in Evelyn's *The Christian Martyr* recalls the sentiment expressed in the inscription for Margaret Wilson's caption.

[67] See Neil MacMillan, *Victorian Romantics* (Vancouver: MacMillan & Perrin, 1979), Introduction, 1; Henri Dorra, *Symbolist Art Theories: A Critical Anthology* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995), 17; and Mitchell B. Frank, *Romantic Painting Redefined: Nazarene Tradition and the Narratives of Romanticism* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001).

Arc's Death at the Stake of 1843 at the State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, where Joan of Arc is enchained to a tree while burning at the stake (Figure 25). Joan of Arc's ordeal by fire contrasts with Margaret Wilson's ordeal by water; however, both heroines were accused of crimes not committed and cruelly put to death (compare Figures 25 and 19).

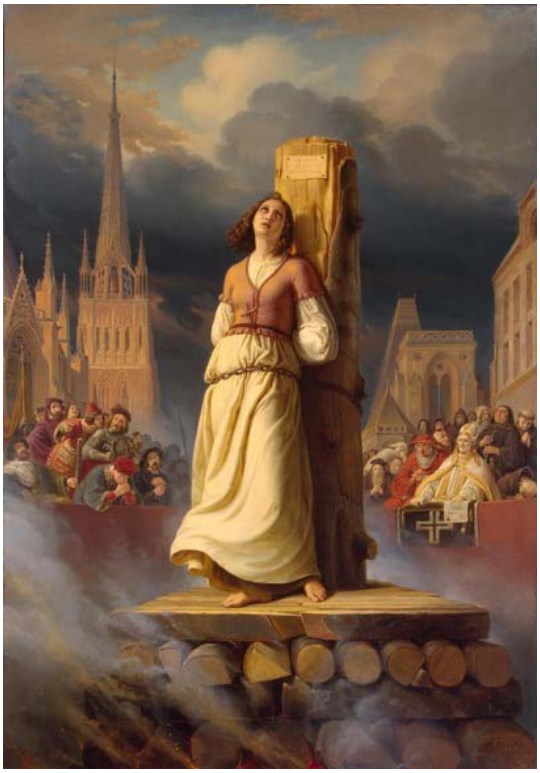

Figure 25. Hermann Anton Stilke, *Joan of Arc's Death at the Stake*, 1843. State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg. Photo credit: commons.wikimedia.org

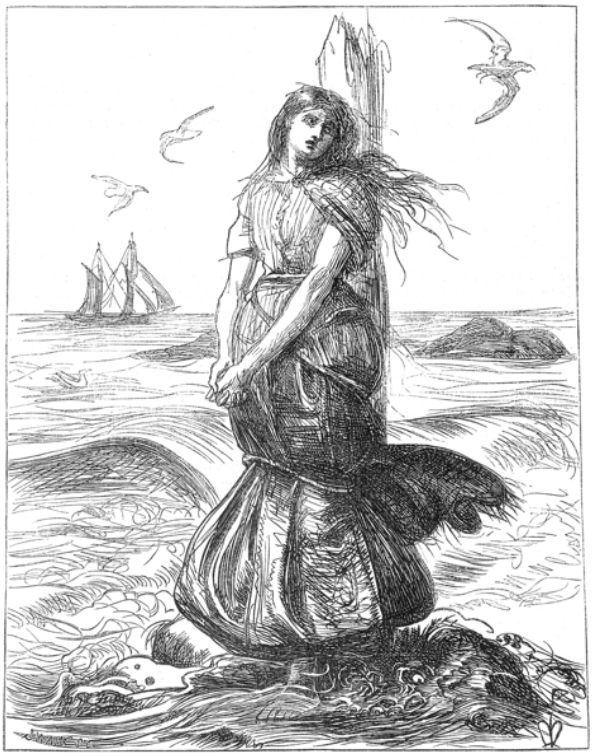

Figure 19. John Everett Millais, *The Martyr of Solway*, 1871. Walker, At Gallery, Liverpool, UK. Photo credit: commons.wikimedia.org

In her study sheet (D_EDM_9178) at The De Morgan Foundation, Evelyn followed another artistic inspiration in the composition of a figure holding a cross and in the design of the cross. She drew attention to Michelangelo's marble sculpture for the second version of *The Risen Christ* of 1521 for the Maria Porcari Chapel in Santa Maria sopra Minerva in Rome (compare Figures 18 and 26).[68] Michelangelo's Christ firmly stands on a rocky surface, as Mount Calvary (Golgotha), embracing his martyrdom cross and holding the instruments of his Passion, a sponge and a lance. He carved Christ with his head turning and looking away from them, a dramatic sign for indicating a past event, his Crucifixion, and his body in a victorious stance, a reference to his present triumph, Resurrection. Evelyn appropriated not only the traditional Christian symbolism of Christ's martyrdom

[68] Michelangelo's first version of 1515 was left unfinished because of a faulty coloration in the marble. He gifted the marble sculpture to the eminent art historian and artist Giorgio Vasari, and later the sculpture was reworked by Gian Lorenzo Bernini. Now it is located in the Monastery of San Vincenzo Martire in Bassano Romano (Viterbo). See https://www.wga.hu/html_m/m/michelan/1sculptu/2/4christ3.html (accessed January 7, 2020).

but also the artistic qualities of Michelangelo's contrapposto stance in the figure of Christ, the turning of the head, and the gesture of folded arms.

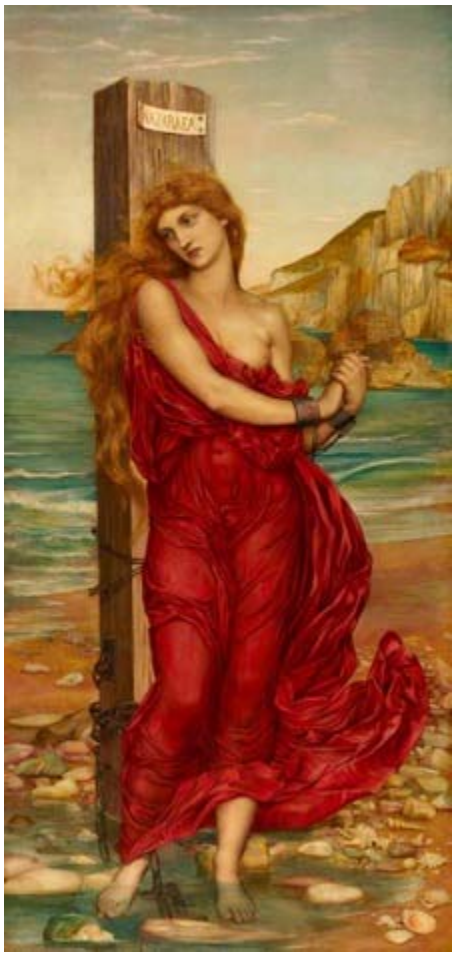

Figure 18. Evelyn Pickering De Morgan, *The Christian Martyr*, 1880-1882. Southwark Art Collection London, UK. Photo credit: WikiArt (January 18, 2019) and https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/the-martyr-nazuraea-193254

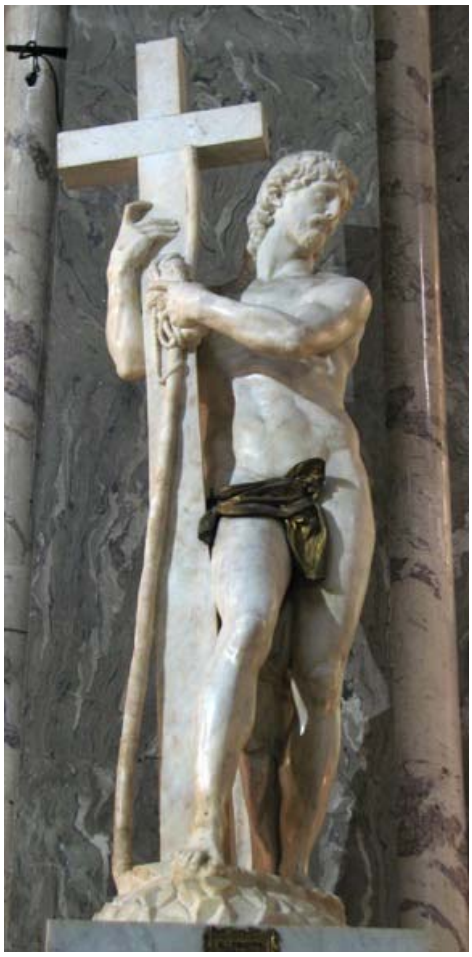

Figure 26. Michelangelo, *The Risen Christ, 1521.* The Maria Porcari Chapel, Santa Maria sopra Minerva, Rome, Italy. Photo credit: en.wikipedia.org

Moreover, Evelyn's red color for the attire of the female martyr, in addition to referring symbolically to passion, pain, and suffering, recalls the imagery of a crucified saint in Hieronymus Bosch's *Altarpiece of Saint Julia* of 1500 at the Ducal Palace in Venice (Figure 27).[69] She probably saw this painting during her trips to Italy. Saint Julia was Carthaginian young woman who lived in 425. She was transported on a cargo ship as a slave to

[69] See Franca Varallo, *Bosch* (Milan: Skira, 2004). The attribution of the painting to Bosch has never been questioned, there is signature in the lower section of the central panel of the triptych. However, the identification of the saint is still uncertain, maybe it is a depiction of Saint Liberata or Saint Wilgefortis (*Virgo fortis* or Courageous Virgin), confusing it with Saint Julia, since these three saints have similar accounts and their names are used interchangeably. In the Chapel of Henry VII at Westminster Abbey in London, there is a small statue in one of the niches of Saint Wilgefortis; she is bearded, holding on to a cross and reading a book. Evelyn probably knew about this imagery.

Corsica. There, on the beach of Cape Corso, she was dismembered and crucified because she would not worship the pagan gods. Her cult became popular during the Renaissance.[70] Evelyn's interest in this historical religious event—like Joan of Arc and Margaret Wilson—is because it indirectly parallels the female suffering in the pagan saga of Ariadne.

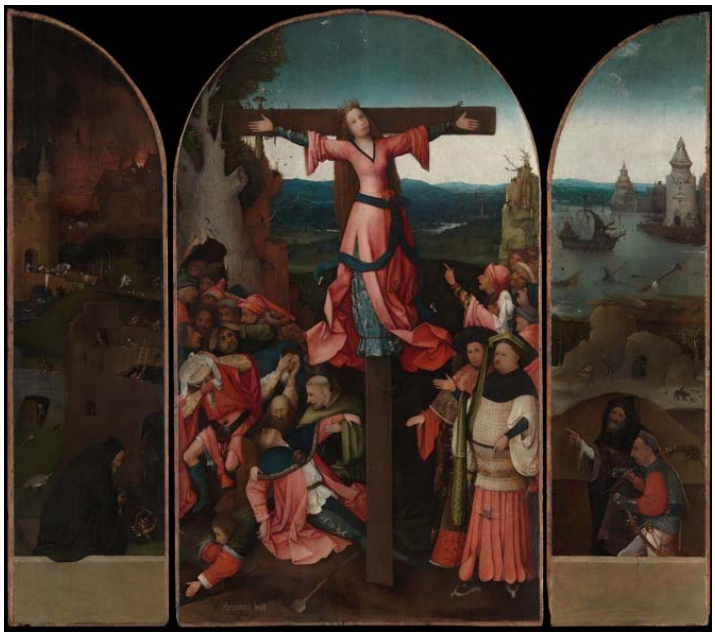

Figure 27. Hieronymus Bosch, *Altarpiece of Saint Julia*, 1500.
Ducal Palace, Venice, Italy. Photo credit: en.wikipedia.org

Evelyn's *The Christian Martyr*, a sacrificial image of a Christian martyr, evolved from the beautiful imagery of Ariadne, the tragic pagan heroine. *Ariadne of Naxos* reveals Evelyn's masterful artistic ability to visually capture her love for nature and life and to inventively adapt an old mythological tale, as well as to arouse in the viewer consciousness about sentiments on physical and spiritual beauty surmounting physical pain. As she wrote on her husband's grave: "Tristezza è solo in terra, Goia è la vita dello spirito" ("Sadness exists only on Earth, Happiness is the life of the soul"). Hence, the art of painting elevates the spirit to a heavenly realm, a Platonic ascension from a physical realm of art to a metaphysical realm of beauty.

Coda

During the Neo-classical movement in England and Paris, painters delighted in the depiction of this Greek saga. Of note is Angelica Kauffmann (1741-1807), a Swiss painter transplanted to London. She became one of the only two female Founder Members of the Royal Academy in London. The other was Mary Moser. In 1768, Kauffmann painted a series of images associated with Ariadne and Bacchus, a fitting thematic subject on personal unrequited love. Her painting, *Ariadne Abandoned by Theseus* of 1774, now at the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston (A gift of Mr. and Mrs. Harris Masterson III in memory of Neill Turner Masterson, Jr., Figure 28),

[70] On Saint Julia's life, see Victor Vitensis (2006). "Commentarius Historicus De Persecutione Vandalica [Th Ruinarti]" in 1010_Conspectus_Omnium_Rerum_Alphabeticus_Littera_V.html (accessed January 7, 2020).

depicts a beautiful maiden on a bed in a landscape on the shore of an island, realizing her lover has left on a boat. Dressed in an embroidered ivory and gold veil, Ariadne rests on her red mantel atop a fancy bed. Her gestures of despair points to the sailing boat. Behind her, a large rock formation parallels her sentiment of calamity. Her elegant hairdo is designed with braided tresses and a small crown: she is the future Queen of Crete. With sadness she looks down at the jewelry box next to her bed, where among her necklace and jewels is the ball of string that helped Theseus escape from the magic Labyrinth of the Minotaur. Her bare feet and sandals on the ground further indicate her emotional exposure to earthly separation.

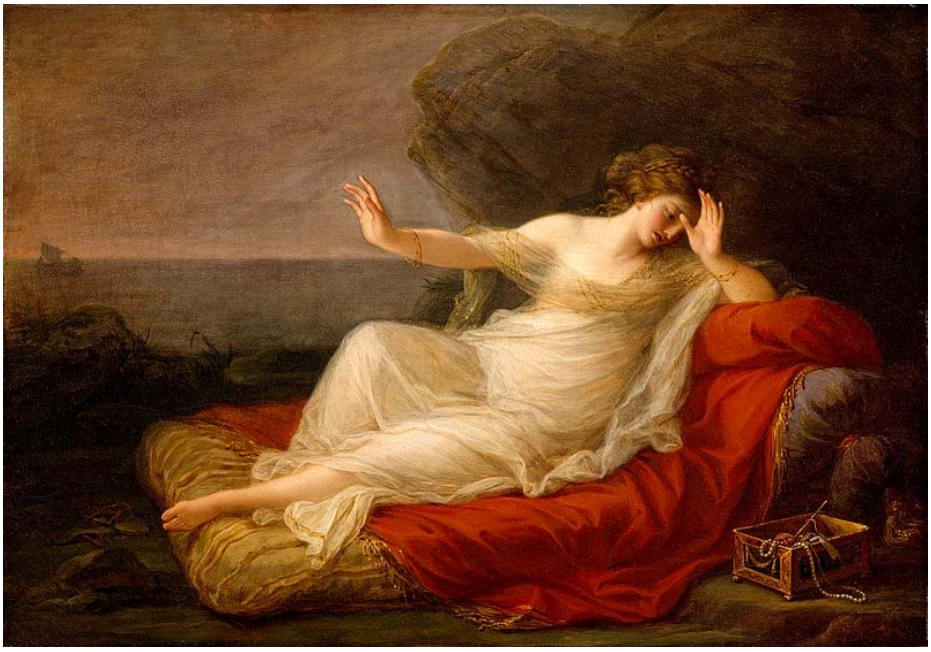

Figure 28. Angelica Kauffmann, *Ariadne Abandoned by Theseus*, 1774. Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas.
©A gift of Mr. and Mrs. Harris Masterson III in memory of Neill Turner Masterson, Jr.
Photo credit: commons.wikimedia.org

Evelyn and Kauffmann both depicted a clothed Ariadne, beautifully attired and residing in a natural setting. Living in London, both painters visited the British Museum and appropriated the classical imagery of Phidias's reclining sculpture of a divinity for the representation of Ariadne's body. Both female painters captured and visualized with delicacy and intense sensitivity Ariadne's feeling of abandonment. Probably, Evelyn had seen Kauffmann's painting at the Royal Academy in London and admired the exquisite female interpretation of the Greek legend—this imagery being an art historical bond between these two female painters dealing with the same heroine, Ariadne.

The other Neoclassical painter was the American artist, John Vanderlyn (1775-1882), who moved from New York to Paris to study painting at the Académie de Peinture at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. He, like Evelyn, created an original interpretation of this legendary female. His masterpiece, *Ariadne Asleep on the Island of Naxos*, was painted and exhibited in Paris at the Salon of 1812, now in The Pennsylvania Academy of the Arts

(Accession No.1878.1.11) in Philadelphia, (Figure 29).[71] Years later, when the painting was exhibited in New York in 1815, it was considered one of the most daring paintings since it was one of the first nudes ever exhibited. Vanderlyn was disappointed with the American puritanical response. In his portrayal of the narrative scene, Vanderlyn combined the Parisian Neoclassical style of handling the sensual female body with the American Hudson River School style of treatment of a luscious landscape. On soft green grass near the banks of a river, the nude Ariadne lays in a state of dormancy. The sculptural treatment of her bodyand the erotic pose of crossed legs and arms raised to her head is contrasted with the pastoral landscape. Ariadne's ivory bodyrests on her red mantle and white garment. Part of her garment functions as a sheet that covers her pudendum. Vanderlyn depicted an early morning scene, with the sun rising to bathe the milky white body of Ariadne with light. She is not aware that, in the distance, below the hill grounds, Theseus has taken his leave on a sailboat. The luminosity of the light and the atmosphere parallel the sensualism in the treatment of the nude form. Evelyn's interpretation of the scene is different, the sensualism and erotic allusion to the amorous interlude is missing. Perhaps this is because the moment Evelyn selected is after Ariadne awakes to realize that she has been abandoned—unlike Vanderlyn, but similar to Kauffmann.

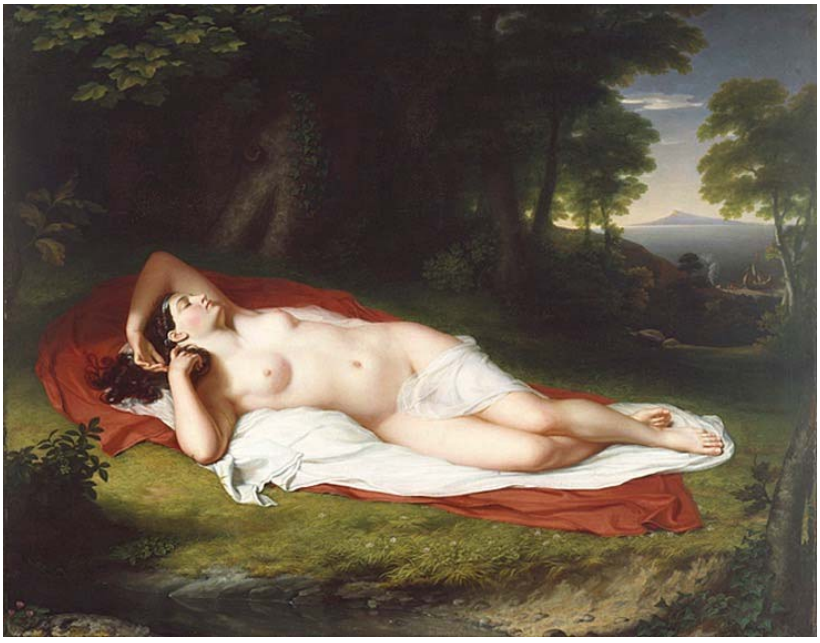

Figure 29. John Vanderlyn, *Ariadne Asleep on the Island of Naxos,* 1809-1812.

The Pennsylvania Academy of the Arts, Philadelphia, PA.

[71] In Paris, he composed a series of nude paintings. Inspired by viewing Correggio's *Jupiter, Antiope and Eros* of 1524, now at the Louvre, Vanderlyn made a copy of the Italian painting in 1810 as well as composing *Ariadne*. He also made studies in watercolor (Yale University Access No. 1952.42.1) and a charcoal drawing (private collection in New York). See Susan E. Stickler, *American Traditions in Watercolor: The Worcester Art Museum Collection* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1987), 82a. 34 and 247.

During the Pre-Raphaelite and Victorian movements, other artists beside Leighton and Watts continued to depict this legend but never with the simplicity, elegance, and sentiment expressed in *Ariadne at Naxos* by Evelyn Pickering De Morgan.

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