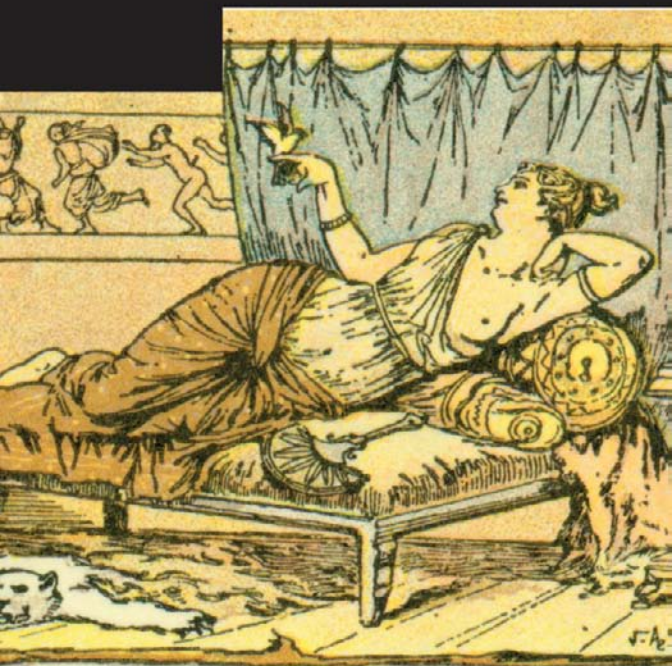


*Edited by*  
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Catullus



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# Catullus

*Edited by*

JULIA HAIG GAISSER

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## Preface

This volume includes 25 readings on Catullus from the last half century and three very short excerpts from the Renaissance. My first criterion for selection was intrinsic interest and importance. I looked for pieces that were thought-provoking (and in some cases provocative) and that would challenge readers to look at Catullus in different ways. I also wanted to show something of the history of Catullan interpretation over the last half century and to cover as many poems as possible. In order to insure variety, I decided to select no more than one piece by any author – a principle I have violated only once. (The volume includes two readings by T. P. Wiseman.) I also tried to avoid pieces reprinted in the two previous Catullan collections: Kenneth Quinn's *Approaches to Catullus* (1972) and Rolf Heine's *Catull* (1975). (There is one duplication: the piece by Eduard Fraenkel, which appeared in both.) Most of the readings appear in their original form; some have been lightly revised by their authors or contain bibliographical additions.

The collection is intended to be of interest to several constituencies: undergraduate and graduate students of Catullus, school and university Latin teachers (including non-specialists), and specialists in Roman poetry. In order to make the readings accessible to the widest possible audience, English translations have been provided for the Latin and Greek, as well as for quotations in other languages. Only the short piece by J. N. Adams is printed without translations.

It is a pleasure to thank the contributors to this volume, both for permitting their work to be reprinted and for their great cooperation in checking my translations and providing their own. I owe special thanks to Giuseppe Gilberto Biondi and Gian Biagio Conte for their kind attention to the English translations of their articles and to Leofranc Holford-Strevens for his translations. The selections in the volume are my own, but I benefited from the suggestions of both the anonymous readers for the press and several valued colleagues: Joseph Farrell, Brendon Reay, Marilyn Skinner, and James Zetzel. I

am also most grateful to Hilary O'Shea and Jenny Wagstaffe of Oxford University Press, who provided encouragement and support to this project from the beginning.

*Bryn Mawr College*

*July 2006*

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# Introduction: Themes in Catullan Criticism (c.1950–2000)

*Julia Haig Gaisser*

This volume includes 25 readings that represent a sampling of the most interesting and important work on Catullus from around 1950 to 2000, together with three very short pieces from the Renaissance. The pieces are grouped in several broad categories in order to demonstrate a range of treatments of similar topics over time, but the authors' interests are not so easily pinned down. Several articles could be placed in more than one category.

The readings demonstrate a number of approaches—stylistic, historical, literary-historical, New Critical, and theoretical (of several flavors)—and it is likely that in some cases their authors would have little intellectual common ground except for an enthusiasm for Catullus' poetry and a desire to interpret it. Such hermeneutic diversity could be duplicated in the criticism of any Latin poet in the last fifty years, but it is especially appropriate in the case of Catullus, whose *œuvre* is famously—some might say notoriously—varied in length, genre, tone, and subject matter. Catullus' variety has often been the despair of critics, who have tried to explain it (or rather, to explain it away) by identifying one or two of his qualities as those of 'the real' or 'the essential' Catullus and overlooking or denigrating the rest. Thus, different critics have insisted that he is above all a lyricist or a satirist, an Alexandrian, or an epigrammatist, and—at least at the beginning of our period—that some of his poetry is more worth reading than the

rest or that he put more work into some poems and much less into others, with corresponding effects on their quality. Such pigeonholing is a mistake. The fact is that Catullus' genius and variety are greater than those of individual critics or schools. We do best to look at him in as many ways as possible.

The last fifty years have seen many hundreds of publications on Catullus.<sup>1</sup> In this introduction I will not present a survey or try to demonstrate a development or progress in Catullan studies as if all earlier efforts at interpretation were merely a preamble to our own enlightened reading. Instead I will consider views of Catullus at several critical moments from the middle of the twentieth century to the present, looking at what has interested his readers and how they have approached his poetry. We will be looking at Catullan criticism from a historical and thematic perspective—not a teleological one.

## THE MID-CENTURY CATULLUS

For Catullus, as for most classical poets, twentieth-century scholarship breaks neatly at around the half-century mark. The first half is summed up accurately if pessimistically in *Fifty Years of Classical Scholarship* (1954) by R. G. C. Levens, who introduces his discussion with this comment: 'a survey of work published in the last half-century yields only a very limited sense of achievement and progress'.<sup>2</sup> Levens goes on to survey Catullan scholarship from 1900 to 1950 under six headings: 1. Editions; 2. Translations; 3. Biography; 4. Literary History and Criticism; 5. MSS and Text; 6. Language, Metre, and Style. The survey speaks volumes both about what resources were available

<sup>1</sup> *L'Année Philologique* Online lists over two thousand between 1959 and 2003. The most recent survey of Catullan scholarship is nearly twenty years old: Ferguson (1988). Other important surveys include Leon (1959–60), Thomson (1971), Quinn (1973b), Harrauer (1979), and Granarolo (1973–4) and (1987). Holoka (1985) lists works on Catullus published between 1878 and 1981. Thomson (1997) includes bibliography up to about 1993 for each poem. Martindale's preface in Quinn (1999) discusses some twentieth-century trends in Catullan criticism.

<sup>2</sup> Levens (1954: 284). Levens' survey was printed unchanged in *Fifty Years and Twelve of Classical Scholarship* (1966).

to mid-century Catullan scholars and what they considered interesting and important about his poetry.

In 1954 the most recent text was the Teubner of Mauriz Schuster (1949), which like its predecessors still did not make full use of the important fourteenth-century manuscript R (Vatican library, Ottob.1829) discovered by William Gardner Hale in 1896.<sup>3</sup> The most recent commentaries in English were those of Robinson Ellis (1889) and E. T. Merrill (1893, reissued 1951). More recent and more useful were the German commentary of Wilhelm Kroll (1923) and the Italian commentary of Massimo Lenchantin de Gubernatis (1928). As Levens' categories indicate, research on Catullus was largely directed to historical, technical, and textual matters. Nine of his twenty pages are taken up with discussion of editions, manuscripts, and the text, while fewer than two (four shortish paragraphs in all) treat the category of literary history and criticism. The lack of literary treatment is even more extreme than it sounds: only two of the four paragraphs discuss works of literary interpretation or analysis. The others treat scholarship on Catullus' Alexandrian models and his influence on English poetry. The most literary of the few books Levens mentions as works of 'general criticism of the poetry of Catullus' is E. A. Havelock's *The Lyric Genius of Catullus* (1939),<sup>4</sup> which he says 'swept like a gust of fresh air through the stuffy corridors of Catullan criticism' (293). But the dearth of literary studies is not surprising, for in general serious classicists in the first half of the twentieth century did not go in much for literary criticism, which remained

<sup>3</sup> The discovery was announced in Hale (1896) and described at greater length in Hale (1897: 33–9), Hale's report on his year as the first director of the American School in Rome (predecessor of the American Academy). The importance of R was challenged by German champions of M (Venice, Biblioteca Marciana lat. 12.80 [4167]) and D (Berlin, Deutsche Staatsbibliothek Diez. B. Sant. 37), and Hale embarked on a vast collation of Catullus manuscripts in the effort to reconstruct the entire textual tradition and vindicate his discovery. He never finished his work. 'In 1928 Hale died at his desk, his collations of the codices deteriores lying open before him' (Thomson [1973: 115]). For more on Hale's discovery and its aftermath see especially Thomson (121–8) and Levens (1954: 294–5).

<sup>4</sup> The others were D. A. Slater, *The Poetry of Catullus* (1912); Tenney Frank, *Catullus and Horace* (1928); S. Gaetani, *La poesia di Catullo* (1934); and F. A. Wright, *Three Roman Poets* (1938). A. L. Wheeler's *Catullus and the Traditions of Ancient Poetry* (1934) is mentioned in the paragraph on works treating Catullus' Greek models.

suspect in many quarters—especially in Britain—well into the 1970s.<sup>5</sup> The lack is still less surprising in the case of Catullus since scholars believed that his poetry presented few difficulties. Contrasting Catullus with Lucretius, for example, Levens comments: ‘To read Lucretius at all requires some study; but all that is most vital in Catullus can be read by anyone with a basic knowledge of Latin’ (284). As twenty-first-century readers we are inclined to bristle a little at the phrase ‘all that is most vital’, and well we should, for it means ‘all that is worth reading’ in the eyes of Levens and his intended readers, and implies that there are things in Catullus that are ‘less vital’ and less worth reading. Dismissal of portions of the poetry from consideration is a recurrent theme in Catullan criticism, as we shall see presently.

Levens’ review provides a fascinating snapshot of the mid-twentieth century Catullus at the critical moment when everything in the picture was about to change. Let us pause for a moment to study the image more closely. Mostly we see background, the underbrush, we might say, of historical and philological scholarship, but lacking essential current texts and commentaries that would incorporate the progress of the previous half century. The poet himself—that is, Catullus the literary artist—takes up only a small portion of the picture, fittingly enough, since he was considered so transparent. This Catullus, in the portrait painted by Havelock and accepted by Levens and his contemporaries, is, above all, ‘modern’ in sensibility and hence congenial to twentieth-century readers. For Havelock, Catullus is more suited to the ‘modern’ temper than he had been to the taste of his fellow Romans:

Catullus paid the price to Roman posterity of defying the unromantic Roman temper. He wrote love lyrics which his countrymen proved incompetent to classify and enjoy as modern taste may enjoy them. We

<sup>5</sup> Havelock, for example, is careful to note in his preface: ‘This book...makes none of the claims proper to a severe work of scholarship’; a few lines later he calls it ‘a labour of love rather than learning’ and continues: ‘the discovery of the charms of Catullan lyric has been my diversion ever since my schooldays’. As for attitudes towards literary criticism in the 1970s, anyone in the audience of the Cambridge Philological Society in 1969–70 will remember the dismay verging on outrage with which several senior (and not so senior) scholars greeted J. C. Bramble’s paper on Catullus 64, now regarded as a classic (Bramble 1970).

have cleared a dignified space in literature for sexual passion. That is the difference.<sup>6</sup>

Levens is more moderate. His Catullus is merely 'more congenial to the taste of the twentieth century than to that of the nineteenth'.<sup>7</sup> Modern sensibility, he feels, is in tune with Catullus: it exalts poets like John Donne and Dylan Thomas, judging poetry more by its 'energy' than 'the polish of its surface,' so that it 'is naturally drawn to a poet whose sense of form was the servant of his urge to express emotion'.<sup>8</sup> The 'emotion' that Levens' Catullus expresses, however, is not the 'sexual passion' valued by Havelock but rather a kind of social and political disenchantment that speaks to Levens and his generation:

The present age is all the more at home with Catullus because the feelings he expressed were those of an individualist clinging, in a disintegrating society, to the one standard which he could feel was secure, that of personal integrity.<sup>9</sup>

The mid-century Catullus was a poet of feeling even if scholars disagreed about what those feelings were, and for Havelock at least the expression of feeling was his chief, not to say his only, excellence. Writing in reaction to a view that saw essentially two Catulluses (a lyricist and a learned Alexandrian), he argued instead for a single poet, whose great talent was the 'lyric genius' of his title.

Catullus...should be interpreted first and last as a lyricist. Even in his longer compositions, his writing becomes significant and important only in so far as it is lyrical. He is *par excellence* the poet of intense moods, expressed either singly or in rapid succession. This it is true requires poetic organization, but the organization is of the emotions pure and simple. Let him pause to reflect, to marshal ideas or situations which call for an effort of abstraction, and his muse fails.<sup>10</sup>

Catullus' muse fails a great deal in Havelock's view, and most conspicuously in the long poems. Poems 66 and 67 have 'no poetic significance at all' (p. 76); 65, 68a, and 68b each have some fine passages, but 'each... considered as a whole is a complete failure' (p. 77); 62 'reads like a fairly close imitation of some Greek original,

<sup>6</sup> Havelock (1939: 92).

<sup>7</sup> Levens (1954: 284).

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Havelock (1939: 78).



though it has some pretty passages' (p. 77); 64 has appealing 'emotional episodes and semi-lyrical passages', but these 'are strung together with a minimum of hasty narrative into an ill-assorted series' (p. 77). Only 61 and 63 are 'indubitable successes'; they succeed because 'they are simply long sustained lyrics' (pp. 77–8). Havelock knows what he likes: 'lyric genius' requires intense emotion (primarily love) with a particular kind of originality not too far behind:

Of all his emotions it was his love that crowned his verse.... The originality of Catullus lay in making love completely tender and completely serious.<sup>11</sup>

One can see how exciting Havelock's work, with its emphasis on emotion, sexual passion, and originality, must have seemed in 'the stuffy corridors of Catullian criticism' of the first part of the twentieth century. But his purely lyrical Catullus has been achieved at great cost. The procrustean bed of lyric he has constructed is too small for Catullus; to make him fit, Havelock must lop off a third of his poetry.<sup>12</sup>

#### THE CATULLAN REVOLUTION 1958–1970

Levens wrote his survey in 1954 on the eve of what it is hardly excessive to call a revolution. In the late 1950s and throughout the 1960s Catullan scholarship experienced both a burst of activity and a sea change in its nature and direction.

Traditional scholarship was a conspicuous beneficiary of the heightened interest. Within a decade of Levens' review, several major works from the first half of the century had been reissued and made available to a new generation of readers. Kroll's commentary was reprinted in 1959 and appeared in a new edition in 1960. The 1912

<sup>11</sup> Havelock (1939: 90). As for 'originality', we should also note that his very faint praise of 62 seems related to his suspicion that it has a Greek original. Poem 66, translating Callimachus' *Lock of Berenice*, 'is a piece of hack-work written to order' (77), a poetic exercise 'in a quite different category' from 51, his 'creative imitation' of Sappho (185 n. 5).

<sup>12</sup> The text of Catullus as we have it consists of about 2300 verses. Poems 62, 64, 65, 66, 67 and 68 alone comprise about 800, but there are other poems Havelock would probably dismiss from consideration: he notes that 'the total is very uneven in quality' (73).

*Index verborum Catullianus* of M. N. Wetmore was reprinted in 1961. A. L. Wheeler's *Catullus and the Traditions of Ancient Poetry* (1934) was reprinted in 1964, Havelock's *Lyric Genius of Catullus* in 1967. But entirely new texts and commentaries also appeared, providing material and impetus for increased literary study. In 1958 R. A. B. Mynors published his Oxford Classical Text, the first edition of Catullus to make serious use of the important manuscript R discovered by Hale over sixty years earlier. As G. P. Goold noted in his review:

The first problem in the textual criticism of our author is to isolate and classify all mss independently derived from V. Mynors' edition solves this problem once and for all by providing enough ms readings to prove Hale's hitherto unsubstantiated claim (*TAPA* 53 [1922] 111) that 'all the manuscripts except OGR are derived from these three, and...we may and must cut off the whole web below the manuscripts OGR'.<sup>13</sup>

Goold predicted that Mynors' text would foster the study and appreciation of Catullus (114), and so it has. For the last fifty years it has been the text of choice, at least in the English-speaking world. Although other texts have appeared since, some better in various ways than Mynors',<sup>14</sup> the overall excellence of his edition and the prestige and wide distribution of the OCT have carried the day. In 1961 C. J. Fordyce published a commentary on Mynors' text—the first commentary on Catullus in English since Merrill (1893). His work, which was 'intended to meet the need for an English commentary for general school and university use', omitted what he described as 'a few poems which do not lend themselves to comment in English'.<sup>15</sup> The 'few poems' in fact numbered 32, roughly a quarter of the 116 printed in modern editions. Fordyce was sharply criticized at the time for his omissions and has been ridiculed since, but omitting the poems seems to have been the decision of the press, which hoped to market the edition to schools.<sup>16</sup> The decision was probably

<sup>13</sup> Goold (1958: 95). Goold's detailed review is important reading for anyone interested in the Renaissance history of the text since he presents a census of corrections and their sources culled from Mynors' apparatus.

<sup>14</sup> Notably Goold (1983) and Thomson (1978) and Thomson (1997).

<sup>15</sup> Fordyce (1961: [p. v]).

<sup>16</sup> See especially Fraenkel's review (1962). Thomson (1997: 59 n. 79) points out that the first printing contained references to notes missing in the commentary and says

a commercial mistake as well as an intellectual one. Whatever its success in Britain, Fordyce's commentary was not much used as a teaching text in the USA: in the 1960s American colleges and universities still generally relied on the long-outdated Merrill; in 1970 both Merrill and Fordyce were superseded by the commentary of Kenneth Quinn, which dominated the American college market for the next twenty years.<sup>17</sup> Quinn printed and commented on all the poems, and his notes provided more help to students than Fordyce's. The commentaries of both Fordyce and Quinn, however, had scholarly merit, and both were a great advance over existing commentaries—with the exception of Kroll's, which is still well worth consulting.

The works of Mynors, Fordyce, and Quinn appeared in quick succession between 1958 and 1970. But in the same period editions and commentaries were also being published in continental Europe, most notably: Schuster's 1949 Teubner revised by W. Eisenhut in 1958 (the year of Mynors' OCT), Viktor Pöschl's *Catull* with German translation (Heidelberg, 1960), Giovanni Battista Pighi's *Catullo Veronese* in three sumptuous volumes with essays, illustrations, and an Italian translation (Verona, 1961),<sup>18</sup> a new edition of Ignazio Cazzaniga's 1941 *Catulli Veronensis Liber* (Turin, 1966), and Henri Bardon's *Catulli Carmina* with French translation and notes (Brussels, 1970). Reviewers were severe on several of these works,<sup>19</sup> but their publication, like that of the English editions, was part of the new explosion of interest in both Catullus and Latin poetry in general. In the long run the philological deficiencies justly

that Fordyce told him that Oxford omitted the poems on the advice of a group of headmasters and headmistresses who had been consulted about the usefulness of the work as a school text.

<sup>17</sup> Quinn (1970), like Fordyce, intended his commentary for students (p. ix), but he also hoped for 'a fairly broad spectrum of consultants' (pp. ix–x). He used the 1967 edition of Mynors' OCT, deviating from it in around sixty places (pp. xxv–xxvii).

<sup>18</sup> Pighi's work, printed as an act of local *pietas* by a bank in Verona, was not intended for sale.

<sup>19</sup> Thomson (1971: 116) kindly labels Pöschl's text as 'workmanlike', and less kindly (1965: 325) describes Pighi's as 'a coffee-table Catullus'. Bardon, arguing against a unitary transmission of the text, still supported the claims of D, and was castigated severely by reviewers like E. J. Kenney in *CR* 22 (1972) 212–13 ('What has this edition to offer that is both new and valuable? My answer, regretfully, is not much') and David Ross in *AJP* 93 (1972) 630–2.

emphasized by reviewers were less important than the simple fact that Catullus was now available in new national editions to readers all over Europe.

The publication of new texts and editions between 1958 and 1970 put Catullus on a sounder philological footing than he had been at any time in his history. But even as the philologists were working along their traditional lines, a new generation of scholars was looking at Catullus in untraditional and even subversive ways—as poetry subject to literary, rather than historical analysis. This is not to say that literary criticism of Catullus began in 1958. Havelock's work was literary and generated a thrill of excitement in its period, as we have seen.<sup>20</sup> Levens' survey also gives an incomplete picture of the literary studies of the 1940s and 1950s: he omitted some non-Anglophone books on literary topics, and the format of his review forced him to leave out articles and shorter studies, where most of the literary work was being done.<sup>21</sup> One article is included in this volume as a representative of this early work: Frank Copley's short paper from 1951 on poem 1.

But these early efforts were few and sporadic, and literary criticism of ancient poetry first became widespread in the late 1950s. It was then that classicists, a little belatedly, began to take notice of the ways in which critics were approaching English literature and discovered what was called New Criticism, by this time no longer very new. New Criticism, like other -isms, whether political or literary/theoretical, including those practiced today, took an extreme stance. As Charles Martindale describes it:

The focus of attention was the individual poem, conceived as an elaborate verbal structure, rather than matters biographical, historical, or ideological; the 'words on the page,' text not context.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup> By the 1960s, however, its moment was long past. When it was reissued in 1967 it seems not to have attracted a single review.

<sup>21</sup> For an idea of the literary criticism of Catullus before 1958 it is instructive to work through Leon (1959–60: 112, 141–80) and Holoka (1985: 115–26, 145–54, 159–269). Both studies are organized chronologically, and both include purely historical and textual studies in the listing of individual poems. Some of the most 'literary' studies appear in the anthologies of Quinn (1972) and Heine (1975). Papers by J. P. Elder, Frank Copley, and Eduard Fraenkel are heavily represented in both volumes. One of the most important literary studies of the period is Friedrich Klingner's long article on poem 64: Klingner (1956).

<sup>22</sup> Martindale (1999: p. viii).

To the New Critics, the poem itself was what mattered, and within it was provided everything that one needed in order to understand it. Traditionalists of the 1950s and 1960s were appalled, and twenty-first-century critics, steeped in new historicism and cultural studies, are equally outraged, if for different reasons, at the idea of wresting a work from its historical context—and above all from its social context—to interpret it. But New Criticism was wonderfully liberating to classicists in the 1950s, smothered as they were by a huge apparatus of scholarship that seemed to take an interest in everything *except* the individual poem. Scholars like Havelock had already pointed out the folly of reconstructing Catullus' biography from his poems and applying the results to the interpretation of his poetry.<sup>23</sup> But in the early 1950s the studies not devoted to textual arguments on minute points were still generally given over to biographical and other 'factual' details. In 1948 Mauriz Schuster devoted a full column in *Pauly-Wissowa* to the identification of Catullus' sparrow. This is potentially very exciting, we might imagine, thinking of the interesting allegory proposed in the fifteenth century and alternately embraced and spurned ever since. But Schuster was thinking of *real* birds. As Quinn reports:

After considering a number of possibilities (*Sperling*, *Stieglitz*, *Blaudrossel* [*auch Blauamsel oder Blaumerle genannt*], *Feldsperling*), he comes down in favour of the *Blaumerle*.<sup>24</sup>

There was also a large bibliography on the precise specifications of Catullus' *phaselus*, and whether he had sailed in it from Bithynia all the way to Lago di Garda and Sirmio.<sup>25</sup> Frank Copley disposed of these questions in a typically New Critical way in 1958:

But a poem is itself. It presents its own world to its readers and demands that they accept it as true for the purposes of the poem and not for anything else. . . . The incident, the ship, the lake, the whole story may be completely fictitious or made up of a combination of fact and fiction. For the world of

<sup>23</sup> Havelock (1934: 79–85), and see Levens (1954: 288–92).

<sup>24</sup> Quinn (1973b: 381). Quinn points out that the identification of the sparrow is one of the three typical problems of interpretation listed by Schuster. The others are the interpretation of 84 and Catullus' attitude (friendly or hostile) to some of his addressees.

<sup>25</sup> See Holoka (1985: 166–7); Leon (1959–60: 142).

the poem it is all real; and since it contains neither follies nor impossibilities, we are required to accept it and to see in it what our author has put there for us to see.<sup>26</sup>

Most of the early New Critical interpretations of Catullus were written in the USA, but it was a New Zealander, Kenneth Quinn, who became the standard-bearer of the movement. In 1959 Quinn published the book whose title I have borrowed for this section: *The Catullan Revolution*, the first book on Catullus in English since Havelock's *Lyric Genius of Catullus*, twenty years earlier.<sup>27</sup> Quinn's book is a New Critical manifesto.<sup>28</sup> It begins mildly enough: 'The relevance of background to a poet's work can be exaggerated.'<sup>29</sup> By page 3, however, he is quoting T. S. Eliot, the high priest of New Criticism:

In my own experience of the appreciation of poetry, I have always found that the less I knew about the poet and his work, before I began to read it, the better. ... An elaborate preparation of historical and biographical knowledge has always been to me a barrier.<sup>30</sup>

But the book is paradoxical. Quinn espouses New Critical principles, but his subject is essentially literary history.<sup>31</sup> The revolution of his title is that of Catullus and his friends, the 'new poets' of the 60s and 50s BC, with Catullus at the center. Quinn treats Catullus' literary innovations, his relation to his predecessors and society, and the nature and quality of his poetry, and concludes with a chapter entitled 'The Beginnings of Modern Lyric'.

Paradoxical or not, however, *The Catullan Revolution* was influential on both counts—both in promoting New Criticism as the way to read Catullus and in integrating literary history with literary criticism. Its literariness inspired some and infuriated others.<sup>32</sup> Like most

<sup>26</sup> Copley (1958: 9 and 11), quoted from Quinn (1972: 129 and 131).

<sup>27</sup> In a period of 12 years the book was printed on three continents: first in Australia by the University of Melbourne (1959), then in England by Heffers in Cambridge (1969), and finally in the USA by the University of Michigan Press (1971). It was reprinted in 1999 by Bristol Classical Paperbacks.

<sup>28</sup> For Quinn's work and its importance see Martindale (1999).

<sup>29</sup> Quinn (1969: 1). <sup>30</sup> T. S. Eliot, 'Dante', in *Selected Essays* (1932) 237.

<sup>31</sup> See Martindale (1999: p. x).

<sup>32</sup> Martindale (1999: p. vii) notes that when he went to Oxford in 1968, he felt that 'it was one of the few books that seemed...to offer a future of bright promise for the study of Latin literature'. Shackleton Bailey, by contrast, was so outraged that he

classical New Critics, Quinn does not use the term New Criticism, but *newness* is nonetheless the theme and constitutes much of the appeal of his book. Quinn says that what he calls the ‘up-to-dateness’ (3) of Catullus speaks to modern taste. He argues for major similarities between the New Poetry and its modern counterpart (95–6): the conception of the poet as independent of his public, the endeavor ‘to record the actual process of his thought’, and the concern with poetic technique. His subtext is that the New Poets’ break with the past finds a counterpart in the efforts of the New Critics to tear free of traditional critical methods. As Martindale (p. xi) puts it:

The word ‘revolution’ also suggests excitement, mould-breaking, youth, sexual freedom, the whole liberated world that was to climax in *les événements* in Paris in 1968.

For Quinn, as for Havelock and Levens before him, Catullus is a poet of modern sensibility, but the modern sensibility is now that of 1959, not 1939 or even 1954. Havelock’s Catullus was modern in his sexual openness, Levens’ in his disenchantment with a disintegrating society, Quinn’s in his rejection of tradition and thirst for novelty.

*The Catullan Revolution* did not bring New Criticism to Catullus (it was already there), but it was the right book at the right time, voicing what many were already thinking, and legitimating the study of poetry as a thing in itself. Among the many important New Critical studies of the period are: Niall Rudd, ‘Colonia and her Bridge’ (1959); Michael Putnam, ‘The Art of Catullus 64’ (1961); Steele Commager, ‘Notes on Some Poems of Catullus’ (1965); and Charles Segal, ‘Catullan “Otiosi”: The Lover and the Poet’ (1970), included in this volume. Quinn himself continued to practice what he preached. His commentary (1970), subsequent book (*Catullus: An Interpretation*, 1972), and anthology of readings (*Approaches to Catullus*, 1973) are all largely New Critical. But not all literary studies of the time were New Critical in inspiration: witness Eduard Fraenkel’s classic article (1961), which uses background and ‘facts’—the Roman custom of *flagitatio*—to elucidate poem 42 (the discussion is included in this volume).

wrote not a review but an incoherent and spiteful rant on Quinn’s Latinity: *Gnomon* 32 (1960) 775–6.

Quinn was largely in tune with the critical *Zeitgeist*, but a major argument in his book found little support at the time and has been derided since. This is the idea of ‘levels of intent’ that he used to explain what he perceived as qualitative differences in the poetry.

The internal evidence of the poems alone seems to point clearly to different kinds of writing, involving different degrees of poetic endeavour, envisaging different kinds of audiences.<sup>33</sup>

Quinn places Catullus’ poetry along a continuum of levels of intent. Predictably, those on the lowest level are obscene—‘vituperative trifles (one in five, perhaps of the total)’;<sup>34</sup> but obscenity is not his criterion. He ranks the poems according to their use of poetic language and imagery, urgent expression of feeling, and the effort he perceives on the part of the poet. By these (highly subjective) standards the Lesbia poems have a high level of intent. So does 31. Poem 50, oddly enough, shows a low level of effort and intent: it ‘must have been written in an hour or so’ (31). The long poems (63–68) ‘represent Catullus’ most sustained poetic endeavours’ (38). Quinn differs from Havelock in the high value he places on the long poems, but both his method and his results are similar. Confronted with the variety of Catullus and determined to see him as a poet of a single predominant nature, he has defined that nature (‘the underlying unity in Catullus’ poetry is the personal involvement of the poet’, 50) and disregarded the poems where he considers the poet not ‘involved’. By Quinn’s standard only a small fraction of the poems would stand on the highest level. The others would be strewn down the levels below, with the ‘vituperative trifles’ lying in a miserable heap at the bottom.

Quinn used literary history to account for the genesis and nature of neoteric poetry—emphasizing what he saw as its essential Roman-ness as a corrective to Wheeler (1934) and Havelock, who had stressed its heavy dependence on Greek models. But the details of Quinn’s argument were less important than his interest in using literary history as a way to understand the poetry. Interest in Catullus’ models was nothing new, but it was in the 1960s that scholars began to study them for predominantly *literary* purposes. Wendell Clausen’s famous article

<sup>33</sup> Quinn (1969: 32).

<sup>34</sup> Quinn (1969: 34).



'Callimachus and Roman Poetry' appeared in 1965, Herman Tränkle's 'Neoterische Kleinigkeiten' in 1967, David O. Ross's *Style and Tradition in Catullus* in 1969 (pages 115–37 are included in this volume). For these scholars, as for Quinn, style is an essential part of literary history; all three focus closely on small details to trace the technical aspects of the neoteric program, demonstrating their value not only in themselves but for literary analysis. The literary importance of stylistic analysis for the arrangement of Catullus' poems was demonstrated by another important article from 1969: Otto Skutsch's 'Metrical Variations and Some Textual Problems in Catullus' (included in this volume). It is not clear whether Quinn's work was the impetus for any of these studies, but it is tempting to see his influence on one questionable assertion made by both Clausen and Ross: that poets like Lutatius Catulus, Valerius Aedituus, and Porcius Licinus played little role in the development of Catullus and his friends: a 'gulf separat[es] the early trifles from the front-rank poetry of the school of Catullus' (Quinn, 23). For Quinn, 'the early trifles' lack Catullan emotion; for Clausen and Ross they lack engagement with Callimachean poetics, so essential for the development of neoteric poetry.<sup>35</sup> Clausen himself promulgated another questionable idea that enjoyed a long run in Catullan studies: that Alexandrian poetics was single-handedly brought to Rome by Parthenius of Nicaea.<sup>36</sup>

The years from 1958 to 1970 changed everything, in Catullan studies as in the greater world. New philological works made Catullus available, and a new generation of scholars was using them to interpret his works. By 1970 New Criticism was well established in many quarters of the English-speaking world, though it was more respectable in North America than in Britain.<sup>37</sup> Its virtues were (and are) great: attention to the poem as an entity, close reading

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Clausen (1965: 187): 'Lutatius Catulus rendered one of Callimachus' epigrams (41) into Latin; but this, the diversion of an idle hour, should not be taken as evidence of any serious interest in Callimachus' major poetry or in his esthetic views.'

<sup>36</sup> Clausen (1964: 187–8). The idea had been advanced earlier by Rostagni (1932–3, reprinted 1956), not mentioned by Clausen. It was accepted by Ross (1969: 162); Wiseman (1974: 44–58), and Ferguson (1988: 16–20), *inter alios*. Lyne (1978) limited Parthenius' influence to Cinna and Calvus.

<sup>37</sup> For a telling contemporary analysis of the state of literary studies in classics circa 1970 see Rudd (1972: pp. vii–xvii).

with attention to details of imagery, structure, and style, and above all a belief that poetry is valuable in itself, not only as a means of understanding history, text-criticism, metrics, and prosopography. For the most part classicists were saved from its excesses. Most, like Quinn, well understood that they could not become New Critical 'fundamentalists', devoted only to words and eschewing all factual and historical details of the poetry. Context was still important, and in the decades that followed, it slipped more and more into the new way of reading. T. P. Wiseman was an important advocate of context from the 1960s on.<sup>38</sup> In 1969 he published *Catullan Questions*, a book of essays combining literary and historical analysis. The 'questions' Wiseman posed and sought to answer were to become major themes in Catullan criticism: the ordering of the poems and the relation of real events to Catullus' art. The questions had been asked and answered before, but the new direction in critical analysis made it possible to address them differently.

#### CLOSE READING (1970—c.1989)

New Criticism was congenial to classicists because it encouraged them to do what classicists had always done: to look closely—very closely—at the words of their texts. But it also encouraged them to do something new: to look at those words in a *literary* way. As Martindale says:

It brought into being, throughout the Anglo-Saxon world, a manner of talking in detail about poetic texts which was very different from the modes of criticism common in earlier centuries; above all it privileged *literary criticism*...<sup>39</sup>

In the 1970s classicists used their new-found literary freedom and the method of close reading to study the imagery and patterns of thought of individual poems, but also to shed new light on traditional questions. Events in their own 'real world' also encouraged them to look outside the magic circle of the strictly New Critical preoccupation

<sup>38</sup> His books on the topic include: Wiseman 1969a, 1974, 1979a, and 1985.

<sup>39</sup> Martindale (1999: p. ix).

with form and content. The sexual revolution of the 1960s legitimated study of Catullan obscenity; contemporary social upheavals drew increasing attention to Catullus' historical and social context. Recurrent themes in the criticism of the 1970s and 1980s include: the structure of both individual poems and the collection, the neoteric movement, Catullus' use of his predecessors (the term 'intertextuality' was not yet in general use), obscenity, and the intersection of literature and politics.

Interest in structure is a natural consequence of close reading. Structural studies of individual poems began early in the New Critical period (e.g. Steele Commager's 1964 article 'The Structure of Catullus 5') and blossomed in the 1970s and 1980s—always on the principle that structure and meaning were intertwined. Notable essays in the period include Copley on poem 51 (1974), Commager on 62 (1983), Skinner on 68a (1972), and Bright on 68 (1976).<sup>40</sup> Michael Putnam's 1974 article, 'Catullus 11: The Ironies of Integrity', included in this volume, treats structure somewhat differently, seeking not structural patterns, but the 'internal unity' of a famous poem.

Scholars also turned their literary interests to the old question of the structure of the collection as a whole—a question that had most often been treated in an earlier period as a problem turning on 'facts': the length of ancient papyrus rolls on the one hand, and Catullus' probable premature death on the other. What we know of ancient book production makes it virtually certain that the roughly 2300 verses in our present collection were not accommodated on a single roll.<sup>41</sup> The corollary is that poem 1 introduced not the 116 extant poems, but only a portion of them. What is known of Catullus' biography makes it likely that his poetry was written in a very short period (some would make it as short as three years) and suggests (but does not prove) that his poems might have been 'published' (and arranged) by an 'editor' after his death.<sup>42</sup>

As early as Wilamowitz, however, scholars had argued that some or all of the poems were arranged in an artistic order by Catullus

<sup>40</sup> In *Cinna the Poet* (1974: 59–76) Wiseman discusses several kinds of structural patterning used by Catullus. See also Granarolo (1987: 88–94) on 'Les structures' and the structural analyses in Ferguson (1988: 24–39).

<sup>41</sup> For a detailed discussion with earlier bibliography see Gaisser (1993: 5).

<sup>42</sup> See Quinn (1973b: 383–5) for a succinct account with earlier bibliography.

himself.<sup>43</sup> German scholars took the lead in arguing for structural patterns in the arrangement of some or all of the poems: notable are Barwick (1958), Weinreich (1959 and 1960), Schmidt (1973), and Offermann (1977). Wiseman in 1969 analysed ‘the three main divisions of the collection as we have it (1–60; 61–8; 69–115/116)’, arguing that each showed ‘an internally coherent and consistent arrangement which can hardly be the work of anyone but the poet himself’ (39).<sup>44</sup> Many more studies followed, several of them making use of Skutsch’s demonstration (1969) that poem 1 followed Catullus’ later metrical practice and hence was intended to introduce at least the hendecasyllabic poems from 2 through 58.<sup>45</sup> In 1976 Wendell Clausen argued for the posthumous publication of the poems in three rolls: ‘*Catulli Veronensis Liber*’ (included in this volume). In 1979 Wiseman returned to the question in *Clio’s Cosmetics*, this time positing publication in three volumes (1–60, 61–64, 65–116) arranged by Catullus himself and linked by internal cross-references; his chapter on ‘The Collection’ is included in this volume.<sup>46</sup> Other important treatments include: Glenn Most, ‘On the Arrangement of Catullus’ *Carmina Maiora*’ (1981), Marilyn Skinner, *Catullus’ Passer: The Arrangement of the Book of Polymetric Poems* (1981), and Joy King, ‘Catullus Callimachean *carmina*, cc. 65–116’ (1988).<sup>47</sup> Interest in the arrangement of the collection has continued to the present,<sup>48</sup> but it was at its height from about 1968 to 1990, a period when students of Latin poetry in general were developing the idea that collections or books of poems, as much as their constituent poems, constituted carefully fashioned works of art.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Wilamowitz’s dictum is invoked by both Wiseman (1969: 1) and Quinn (1972: 1): ‘he arranged his book of poems with the most careful reflection (if anyone can’t see it, *tant pis pour lui*)’; Wilamowitz (1913: 292), quoted from Wiseman.

<sup>44</sup> Segal (1968a) had already argued that poems 2 to 11 showed an artistic arrangement.

<sup>45</sup> See Skutsch (1969) in this volume and the discussion by Quinn (1972: 386–7).

<sup>46</sup> In *Catullus and his World* (1985) Wiseman argues for patterns of arrangement in the epigrams (164–75).

<sup>47</sup> See also Ferguson (1988: 12–16).

<sup>48</sup> See especially Skinner (2003: pp. xxii–xxviii) with earlier bibliography. J. L. Butrica (forthcoming), however, argues strenuously against arrangement by Catullus himself.

<sup>49</sup> See, for example, the special issue of *Arethusa* (13.1 for 1980), on ‘The Augustan Poetry Book’.

Catullan scholars had long been interested in the poet's style, and Havelock (1939) had pointed out some of its literary effects in a fine chapter he called 'Doctus Catullus—The Master of Form'. But critics in the late 1960s and 1970s were drawn still more to the study of Catullan style as a feature of neoteric poetics. For them Catullus was *doctus* in a particular way: as a careful student of Alexandrian (and particularly Callimachean) technique and as a partisan in the neoteric movement. Studies before around 1960 had often presented Catullus (and other Roman poets) as essentially passive recipients and imitators of Greek poetry, but the emphasis now was on the active artistry of the poet and his appropriation of Greek elements for his own and often quite different purposes. The works of Clausen (1965) and Ross (1969) mentioned in the previous section were followed in the 1970s by several important studies on the neoterics and neoteric style.<sup>50</sup> Two are included in this volume. R. O. A. M. Lyne's 'The Neoteric Poets' (1978) is a general discussion of the movement. C. W. Macleod's 'Catullus 116' (1973) points out both the Callimachean allusions and the un-neoteric style of the last poem in our collection, arguing that with them 'Catullus shows himself as a Callimachean poet driven into vulgar invective' by the unspeakable Gellius.

Philological zeal had led generations of scholars to the collection of verbal parallels and borrowings from other poets, but now readers were beginning to look at such borrowings in a new light: as allusions imparting meaning in their new context. Macleod's article is exemplary in this respect. But the most important work was being done in Italy. The seminal work was a little article entitled 'Arte allusiva' written in 1942 by Giorgio Pasquali.<sup>51</sup> Pasquali argued that allusion and imitation function as an essential element of meaning whereby the context of the imitated passage is evoked and made present in the later work. In 1971 Gian Biagio Conte built on (and alluded to) Pasquali's work in an article entitled 'Memoria dei poeti e arte allusiva (a proposito di un verso di Catullo e di uno di Virgilio)' (included in this volume with the title 'Poetic Memory and the Art of Allusion').

<sup>50</sup> For studies up to 1981 see Holoka (1985: 12–13). See also the discussion and edition of Granarolo (1973).

<sup>51</sup> *L'Italia che scrive* 25 (1942) 185–7. Reprinted in 1951 and again in Pasquali (1968).

Conte demonstrated that the first line of poem 101 (*Multas per gentes, et multa per aequora vectus*: 'borne through many peoples and many seas') alludes to the opening of the *Odyssey* and that Anchises' greeting to Aeneas in *Aeneid* 6. 692–3 invokes both the Odyssean journey of Aeneas and the funeral context of Catullus. Conte's work is very different in orientation from the Anglophone works we have considered so far, for even at this early period he was drawing not only on the classicist Pasquali, but also on the hermeneutic ideas of contemporary French theorists like Saussure and Genette. A few years later (1974) he included the article with other essays in a more explicitly theoretical book, *Memoria dei poeti e sistema letterario*. Here he argued for concentrating 'on the text rather than on the author, on the relation between texts (intertextuality) rather than on imitation'.<sup>52</sup> In 1976 Giuseppe Gilberto Biondi built on the connections Conte had established between the *Odyssey*, Catullus, and *Aeneid* 6, arguing that in poem 101 Catullus has written 'a palinode of Homer's *nekyia*'. His article 'Il carme 101 di Catullo' is included in this volume with the title 'Poem 101'.

American and British classicists, however, took little notice of Conte's ground-breaking book. *L'Année philologique* lists not a single review of it in English. It had little influence in America or Britain until 1986, when it appeared (together with his *Il genere e i suoi confini*, 1980) in English as *The Rhetoric of Imitation*.<sup>53</sup> In the meantime, Anglophone classicists were working along different lines. In 1982 Richard Thomas published 'Catullus and the Polemics of Poetic Reference', in which he argued that Catullus used allusion in the opening verses of poem 64 polemically, to demonstrate his own poetic superiority, especially to Ennius. In 1983 James Zetzel countered with 'Catullus, Ennius, and the Poetics of Allusion', arguing that Catullus' allusions had not merely polemical, but *literary* force, providing 'an intertextual guide to the interpretation of the poem'; the article is included in this volume.

Attention to structure, neoteric poetics, and allusion was a natural consequence of literary close reading, but so was an interest in

<sup>52</sup> I quote from the English translation (Conte (1986: 27).

<sup>53</sup> See Charles Segal's helpful foreword (7–17) and the perceptive review by Michael Putnam (*AJP* 108 [1987] 787–93), who hails it as 'one of the most significant works on Latin literature to be published since the Second World War' (793).

obscenity—long the ‘elephant in the room’ in Catullan studies.<sup>54</sup> Fordyce (1961) had omitted 32 poems deemed too indecent for English commentary. Merrill (1893) had included them, but with very prudent (and prudish) commentary. (His introduction to 32, on *Ip-sithilla*, conveys his tone: ‘Contents, execrable. Date, indeterminable. Metre, Phalaecean’.) Quinn (1970) included and glossed everything, if sometimes only in Latin.<sup>55</sup> Now, however, readers were eager to probe both the literal meanings of obscenities (which had often been glossed in old students’ dictionaries with phrases like ‘to perform an indecent act’) and their literary use in individual poems. The relatively open sexual climate of the times also encouraged scholars to compare the meanings of sexual roles and sexual acts in contemporary and ancient society. Three important studies along these lines are included in this volume: Donald Lateiner’s article ‘Obscenity in Catullus’ (1977); part of a chapter of Amy Richlin’s *The Garden of Priapus* (1992, first published 1983), here with the title ‘Catullus and the Art of Crudity’; and the first chapter of T. P. Wiseman’s *Catullus and his World* (1985), ‘A World Not Ours’.

As early as the fifteenth century, however, scholars had explored the possibility that not all of Catullus’ obscenity depended on obscene language. The most famous such reading is Angelo Poliziano’s obscene interpretation of Catullus’ sparrow in *Miscellanea* 1.6 (1489).<sup>56</sup> The idea was controversial at the time and remains so, although many (perhaps most) scholars today accept it. Poliziano’s chapter is included in this volume, along with refutations by Jacopo Sannazaro (c.1490) and Pierio Valeriano (1521), some pages here entitled ‘Animal Imagery and the Sparrow’ from J. N. Adams’ *The Latin Sexual Vocabulary* (1982), and Richard Hooper’s 1985 paper ‘In Defence of Catullus’ Dirty Sparrow’.<sup>57</sup>

Contemporary political events also resonated in the interpretations of many scholars who saw Catullus as an anti-establishment figure, critical of Roman social and political life. David Konstan

<sup>54</sup> See Granarolo (1987: 95–8) for an evaluative overview.

<sup>55</sup> Thus on 16.1: ‘Literally, *pedicare* = *mentulam in podicem inserere* and *irrumare* = *mentulam in os inserere*’.

<sup>56</sup> See Gaisser (1993: 75–8).

<sup>57</sup> For a strenuous modern argument against the interpretation, see Jocelyn (1980).

presents one of the most explicitly political readings in his book *Catullus' Indictment of Rome: The Meaning of Catullus 64* (1977). But the theme is widespread: cf. Bramble's negative reading of Catullus' treatment of the Golden Age in 64 (1970), as well as the studies of Segal (1970), Putnam (1974), and Zetzel (1983) in this volume.

#### NEW PARADIGMS (c.1990– )

Periodization, although convenient in discussing matters like the history of Catullan criticism, is always dangerous: the borders of periods are porous and zigzag just when firm straight boundaries would be most useful. New Criticism was edging into Catullan studies even as Levens was lauding Havelock in 1954, and even in the heyday of New Criticism in the 1970s the reading of classical texts was starting to evolve in new directions under the influence of what Anglophone classicists nervously called 'French theory'. Latinists in Britain and the United States lagged behind their Hellenist colleagues in embracing the new hermeneutics, but they soon began to make forays of their own.<sup>58</sup> The translation of Conte's works in 1986 made intertextuality available and exciting to English readers, and other theoretical models were not far behind. From at least the mid-1980s on, what was by now traditional (New Critical) close reading of Catullus was coexisting—somewhat uncomfortably—with structuralism, intertextualism, narratology, feminist theory, deconstruction, and cultural studies.

This is not the place to describe each of the new approaches.<sup>59</sup> The important thing is to note what they have in common that distinguishes them from traditional interpretation. The New Critics looked for unity, believed in the universality of human emotion, and thought that they could find *the* interpretation of a poem. Their assumptions are presented as 'theses' by Kenneth Quinn in 'The Commentator's Task' (1968).<sup>60</sup>

<sup>58</sup> An early example is the structuralist study of poem 63 by Rubino (1974).

<sup>59</sup> Discussions and criticisms of several critical models appear in Galinsky (1992), De Jong and Sullivan (1994), and Harrison (2001). See also the article by Don and Peta Fowler on 'Literary theory and classical studies' in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 871–5.

<sup>60</sup> Quinn (1968), reprinted in Quinn (1972: 98–110).



My *first thesis* is that a Catullan poem is always *about some one thing*. To work as a poem, it must have some kind of unity. (119)

My *second thesis* is that the data on which a poem rests must be discoverable, incorporated somehow in the text, or deducible from it as a plausible, necessary deduction ... any competently constructed poem... [has the] ability to stand on its own feet, independent of the circumstances in which it originally came into existence, and thus make sense (to the extent the poet chooses) to other people than its original addressee. (121)

My *third thesis*... is that the primary task of a commentator is *to reconstruct the hypothesis of the poem*. It is my argument, first, that he must do this; second that, if the poem is any good, he may do it quite objectively. (124)

Each of these assumptions has been successfully challenged by the new hermeneutics, whose practitioners (of whatever theoretical flavor) argue that objectivity is a chimaera, that both our reality (or rather realities) and those of the ancients are constructs, and that the critic's ideology (whether acknowledged or not) influences interpretation of the text. Proponents of the 'New Latin', to borrow a convenient term used by Don Fowler,<sup>61</sup> also tend to resist the necessity of unity, whether in individual poems or in the collection as a whole. They are in general attuned to social and political context (their own and that of the ancient author) in a way that the New Critics would not have understood. At the same time, however, many have one fundamental point in common with the New Critics: the basic method of very close reading and interrogation of the text.

The new ways of reading are here to stay, although some would fight a rearguard action against them. Several important books published beginning in the mid-1990s demonstrate their authors' different theoretical approaches to Catullus.<sup>62</sup> In *When the Lamp is Shattered* (1994) Micaela Janan subjects Catullus' poetry to Lacanian analysis. In *Catullan Provocations* (1995) William Fitzgerald treats Catullus' poetry as a 'drama of position' of both the poet and his reader/s, drawing on insights from (*inter alia*) cultural studies and gender theory. David Wray in *Catullus and The Poetics of Roman Manhood* (2001) presents an aggressive post-modern Catullus whose poetry

<sup>61</sup> Fowler (1995: *passim*).

<sup>62</sup> Chapters are also devoted to Catullus in two books by Paul Allen Miller (1994) and (2004).

constitutes a 'performance of manhood'. In *Catullus in Verona* (2003) Marilyn Skinner returns to the question of Catullus' arrangement of his poems, this time in a study of poems 65 to 116, using ideas from a number of theoretical perspectives, including cultural studies.

The volume includes several theoretically informed articles published between 1992 and 2000. They are diverse in focus and approach, and I have grouped them accordingly. In 'Threads in the Labyrinth: Competing Views and Voices in Catullus 64' (1995), Julia Gaisser draws on the ideas of narratology to explore the conflicting intertextual messages conveyed in the epyllion. This paper is placed with the other papers treating allusion and intertextuality. The papers of W. Jeffrey Tatum and Andrew Feldherr have points in common with others dealing with what I have called 'Roman realities'. Tatum (1997) combines traditional historical analysis with the insights of cultural studies and New Historicism in 'Friendship, Politics, and Literature in Catullus: Poems: 65 and 66, 116'. Feldherr (2000) reads poem 101 'through the optic' of Roman funeral ritual and explores its use of multiple audiences and speakers.

The collection concludes with four papers that are explicitly theoretical. Denis Feeney's '“Shall I Compare Thee. . . ?” Catullus 68B and the Limits of Analogy' (1992) discusses the slippages between tensors and vehicles in a poem that is almost all similes. Marilyn Skinner (1993) draws on feminist theory and cultural studies in her reading of Catullus 63: 'Ego mulier: The Construction of Male Sexuality in Catullus'. Paul Allen Miller (1993) uses Bakhtin to elucidate the generic differences between orally performed and written lyric in 'Sappho and Catullus 51: The Dialogism of Lyric'. In 'Caveat lector: Catullus and the Rhetoric of Performance' Daniel Selden (1992) treats several poems as 'site[s] of opposition between two irreconcilable facets of the poet's speech'.

#### WHAT'S NEXT?

No one has a crystal ball powerful enough to predict what will be most interesting to Catullus' readers in the next generation or even in the next decade, or to foresee what approaches they will find most

fruitful. It is safe to suggest, however, that Catullus' own variety, in combination with an ever-increasing panoply of theoretical methods, will produce an equally diverse array of new insights—some transitory, others more enduring—into this most emotional, intellectual, and obscene Roman poet.

## Part I

### Catullus and his Books

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# 1

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## Catullus, c. 1

*Frank O. Copley*

Although the editors, in the comment appended to this poem, have given us much factual information about it, they have rarely, if ever, succeeded in elucidating its nature, explaining its purpose and point, and showing its relation to Catullus' works as a whole. Hesitating, apparently, to indulge in speculation, they have limited themselves to a literal reading of Catullus' words; the result has been to make the poem seem pleasant but pointless, a bit of graceful but not very convincing flattery.

Yet it should have been clear that, of all the Roman poets, Catullus was the least likely to have wasted time and effort on amiable but aimless verse. Poetry, to him, was a serious business—witness his impatience with Volusius and Suffenus, who regarded it as a mere matter of tossing off lines that would more or less scan. A proper interpretation of c. 1 should show that, like any good introductory poem, it truly 'introduced' the reader to the volume to come, gave him some hint of its character, and some indication of the poet's aims, ideals, and standards.

As a first step toward interpreting the poem, let us consider in outline what it says. 'Here,' declares the poet, 'is a volume of my poems, as neat and charming and fresh as you like. Who's to get it? Why, Cornelius, of course—who else? I owe him at least that much for his sympathy and encouragement, which have been the more striking because his own work is so very different from mine. Well, here it is! It may not amount to much, to be sure, and there may be those who

reserve judgment about its worth, but I'm inclined to think it's sound poetry and will make its mark.'

Starting with this 'story', if I may so call it, let us now proceed to a closer examination of the poem. In the first two lines the volume of poems is described as *lepidus* and *novus* ('charming' and 'new'), the latter of these two adjectives being augmented by specific detail—*arido modo pumice expolitum* ('just now polished with dry pumice'). The most recent scholarship has insisted that these lines must be taken quite literally,<sup>1</sup> and that Catullus is telling us nothing but that his book is 'just off the press'. Yet it is a truism that Roman poets tend to put first things first, to strike the eye of the reader first with that one idea which most aptly characterizes or most pointedly summarizes the whole of their work.<sup>2</sup> Granted that this is only a tendency and not a rule, why should Catullus have made such a point of the mere physical newness of his book? Surely he would not have sent any but a new copy of his volume to the friend to whom it was dedicated? And it is not only *novus*, but *lepidus*. This adjective, too, we are told, is to be taken literally: it is a 'pretty, new book', what the book-sellers call a 'crisp, clean copy'—that and nothing more.

Perhaps it was this very phrase, so familiar to all readers of book-catalogs, that led the editors astray here, and made them forget that the adjective *lepidus* refers primarily to qualities of character and personality, and to external appearances only insofar as these reflect character.<sup>3</sup> Thus when Catullus calls his book *lepidus*, he is thinking of

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Kroll's note *ad loc.*

<sup>2</sup> Besides such obvious examples as Vergil's *Tityre, tu patulae recubans sub tegmine fagi* ('You, Tityrus, reclining under the protection of the spreading beech', *Ecl.* 1.1), *quid faciat laetas segetes, quo sidere terram vertere* ('what makes the fields fertile, under what star to turn the earth', *G.* 1.1 f.), and *arma uirumque cano* ('I sing of arms and the man', *A.* 1.1), we may set Propertius' *Cynthia prima suis miserum me cepit ocellis* ('Cynthia first captivated poor me with her eyes', 1.1) and Tibullus' *divitias alius fulvo sibi congerat auro* ('let another man heap up riches of tawny gold for himself', 1.1).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Cat.* 78.1–2, *Gallus habet fratres, quorum est lepidissima coniunx/alterius, lepidus filius alterius* ('Gallus has brothers, of whom one has a most charming wife, the other a charming son'), where the biting sarcasm of the lines is utterly lost if the adjectives are made to refer merely to the appearance of the individuals involved. The meaning of *lepidus* is attested by a host of passages (see the *dict. s.v.*); Terence's *O lepidum patrem* ('O charming father!', *And.* 948) will stand for them all. Kroll has quite misunderstood Plautus *Poenulus* 27, *lepidis litteris, lepidis tabellis, lepida conscriptis manu* ('charming letters, charming tablets, written by a charming hand'), where *lepidus*

the fact that its looks reflect its character, not merely of its handsome appearance.<sup>4</sup> As for the meaning of *lepidus*, it is a word from the popular vocabulary, used to describe the compound of good humor and human warmth that is to be seen in those whose capacity for giving affection is matched by their readiness to receive it. It belongs in the sphere of everyday, ordinary life and behavior, and its relative rarity in 'high' or 'classical' Latin is an indication of the fact that the writers of that dialect considered the ordinary and everyday unsuitable for their purposes and antipathetic to their literary aims and ideals.<sup>5</sup> Catullus' choice of the adjective was no accident; he used it with the express purpose of revealing himself a writer, not only of the amusing, agreeable, amiable, and charming, but of these qualities in their popular guise, expressed in the language of the people.

It is in this respect, too, that he calls his volume 'new',<sup>6</sup> not so much to proclaim it the first of its kind (although it may have been), as to indicate that he is writing in a manner different from that of his predecessors. Upon meeting Catullus' phrase for the first time, the casual reader probably attached no special significance to it. However, after he had read the whole volume he would have seen what the poet meant, and would have realized that in proclaiming his book a *lepidus novus libellus* he had accurately and neatly forewarned us of its character.

This book, then, having been proclaimed as new in subject matter, language, and manner, is to be dedicated to Cornelius Nepos.<sup>7</sup> And

is transferred from the girl to her handwriting, which is thus described as 'charming', not as 'pretty'.

<sup>4</sup> Baehrens (1885: *ad loc.*) recognizes this fact: *hoc enim 'lepidum', etsi et ipsum possit aliqua ex parte referre ad habitum externum iucundum . . . multo magis internas designat virtutes: plenum salis et facetiarum* ('this "lepidum", although it could to some extent refer to a pleasing external appearance, designates internal qualities much more: full of wit and jests').

<sup>5</sup> When Cicero, for example, uses the term, it is with a sneer: *hi pueri tam lepidi ac delicati* ('these boys so charming and refined', *Catil.* 2.10.23).

<sup>6</sup> Baehrens (1885: *ad loc.*): *Itaque 'novum' praeterea indicare videtur librum, qualem antea non tulerunt litterae latinae, in suo genere primum* ('And so 'new' seems to indicate a book of the kind that Latin letters have not produced before—the first of its kind').

<sup>7</sup> About the identity of Catullus' Cornelius with Cornelius Nepos there is certainly no doubt. In point of fact, the identification is of no more than casual interest, for the poem itself adequately explains the reason for the dedication, and it does not matter in the least who 'Cornelius' was.



why? Because Cornelius had encouraged Catullus in his attempt to write a new kind of poetry; although the general opinion had been that his poems were mere ‘stuff’ (*nugae*), Cornelius had kept insisting (*solebas putare*) that they were ‘not bad at all’ (*esse aliquid*). About these lines two points need to be noted. In the first place, they are written in the popular idiom; *esse aliquid* is a colloquial expression and *nugae* very close to slang.<sup>8</sup> Thus Catullus carries on and enforces the point he had made in using the adjective *lepidus*: he will write the lyric in a light vein, and in the speech of the people. The choice of words was no accident and no affectation; neither was it a mere bit of pointless banter. Instead it is a deliberate proclamation of intent and an illustration of a poetic theory.

The second point has to do with the underlying significance of these lines, for like the phrase *lepidus novus libellus* they convey more than a literal meaning. This, I believe, would have been clear if the editors had not misunderstood *nugas*. Almost without exception, they have declared it to be a technical term, a name or designation for light verse,<sup>9</sup> although they should have noted that they could cite no plausible parallels for this usage before Horace, and no certain parallels before Martial.<sup>10</sup> There is no indication that *nugae* meant to Catullus anything different from what it meant to Plautus, namely, ‘stuff’.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Cic. *Fam.* 6.18.4: *ego quoque aliquid sum* (‘I’m worth something, too’); *Att.* 4.2.2: *si unquam in dicendo fuimus aliquid* (‘if we were ever worth anything in speaking’). For other examples see *TLL* 1.1614.49–59. As for *nugae*, it never finds a place in ‘high’ Latin, except as a quotation from the popular idiom, used for purposes of humor, ridicule, or some other rhetorical color: see the examples in the *dict.* s.v.

<sup>9</sup> See Baehrens (1885) and Merrill (1893), *ad loc.* Kroll avoids this error, but falls into one even worse: *nugas* nennt C, seine Arbeiten im Gegensatz zu der wissenschaftlichen Leistung des Freundes, etc.’ (‘Catullus calls his works ‘nugae’ in contrast to the learned achievement of his friend, etc.’) This, in a prosy manner quite unlike Catullus, anticipates and takes the edge off the contrast between Catullus’ and Cornelius’ work which is brought out in lines 5–7.

<sup>10</sup> Horace’s *nescioquid meditans nugarum* (‘mulling over some trifles’, *S.* 1.9.2) is a highly doubtful parallel, as is *nugis addere pondus* (‘to add weight to trifles’, *Ep.* 1.19.42), for the context in both cases indicates that Horace is thinking primarily of the frivolity or dubious worth of such efforts, and not of their form. Porphyrio’s comment on *S.* 1.9.2, *sic verecunde poetae nugas et lusus solent appellare versiculos suos* (‘so poets are accustomed to call their verses ‘nugae’ and ‘lusus’ in modesty’) sounds to me like a deduction drawn from the usage of the poets themselves rather than a conclusion based on independent evidence. The Martial parallels (2.86.9; 4.10.1) are somewhat stronger—but in the meantime nearly 150 years have passed!

'bunk', 'junk', 'tripe'—a contemptuous and completely undignified expression for anything foolish, stupid, and worthless.<sup>11</sup> This of course does not represent Catullus' own opinion of his poems; to take it so would be to place Cornelius in the odd position of attributing merit to work which its own author had dismissed as worthless. The whole point is that Cornelius had consistently encouraged Catullus, in the face of what others had said. It is these others, Catullus' critics, who have called his poems *nugae*, while Cornelius has courageously stood by his young, radical friend, shown him sympathy and understanding, and given him the heart to go on with his new venture in the field of lyric poetry.<sup>12</sup> Viewed in this light, the next three lines (vss. 5–7) can be seen to be a warm compliment to Cornelius. His sympathy and understanding, his encouragement of the young poet whom others scorned, had been truly amazing in view of the fact that his own work was so very different from Catullus'. The patient, scholarly historian, who had concentrated 'all history' within the brief compass of three papyrus rolls, might have been expected to see little merit in any kind of lyric poetry, and least of all in a lyric which chose for its vehicle, not the dignified language of the great classical lyricists, but the speech of the streets and taverns of Rome. Yet he had been sympathetic; he had taken time from his endless, toilsome research to offer a hand to his young friend; probably in the face of severe criticism from those who looked on Catullus as a crude vulgarian, a blasphemer of the holy name of the Muses, in short, a writer of 'stuff'.

Nor is this the full measure of Catullus' gratitude to Cornelius. Vs. 7 has traditionally been taken as a simple expression of awe on the poet's part at the learning and labor that Cornelius had expended upon his historical writings. It is at once more and less than that. Catullus had been impressed by Cornelius' scholarliness and industry, to be sure, and his gratitude for Cornelius' encouragement had been the greater because this man, of preoccupations and interests so very different from his own, had taken the time and trouble to

<sup>11</sup> Good examples may be found in the dict., *s.v.* Particularly telling are Plaut. *Men.* 54–5, 86, 620–5.

<sup>12</sup> One is reminded of the encouragement given by Robert Bridges to Gerard Manley Hopkins: see Bridges' introduction to his edition of Hopkins' poems.

be to him an *amicus certus in re incerta* ('a friend in need'). Now we see that Catullus felt an even greater debt to Cornelius because he (Catullus) could not reciprocate by an honest admiration and liking for Cornelius' work. For, pressed now to say something nice about the book of the man who had so graciously praised his poems, Catullus, who was constitutionally unable to be dishonest, could come up with nothing more than a *doctus* and a *laboriosus*: 'The learning that went into these books—Jupiter!—the work!' Very likely Catullus hoped that his compliment would pass muster, and that Cornelius would realize that the poet was doing his best to be appreciative; nevertheless, he is saying quite clearly that his obligation is the greater because he cannot match Cornelius' enthusiasm for his poetry with anything like an equal enthusiasm for the other's histories.

It is perhaps for this very reason that the concluding lines of the poem (vss. 8–10) exhibit such an unusual degree of modesty: Catullus speaks of this 'bit of a book',<sup>13</sup> suggests that there is 'not much to it',<sup>14</sup> and that it 'may not be too good',<sup>15</sup> hoping thereby to soften the blow struck by his forced compliment on the character of Cornelius' works. Catullus, however, is thinking not of his own opinion of his poetry, which can hardly have been so humble, but rather of the impression which he fears it must make on Cornelius: 'Compared to your own works, it probably won't seem like much'. In *qualecumque* we may see a similar reflection of the general opinion of Catullus' poems; there has been considerable doubt expressed of their worth, and for that reason, too, they may seem to Cornelius to be a very slight return for his kindness.

Having been thus modest and restrained, Catullus could scarcely have ended his poem with a bold assertion that his works would live for all time; to have done so would not only have disrupted the unity of the thought; it would have been crude and grotesque, an example of the *ineptum* and the *invenustum* which he detested above

<sup>13</sup> *Hoc libelli*: see Baehrens (1885), *ad loc.*

<sup>14</sup> *Quicquid*: cf. Verg. A. 1.78, *quodcumque hoc regni*.

<sup>15</sup> *Qualecumque*. The extremely colloquial nature of both vocabulary and syntax in these lines is of course intentional, and continues the idea already expressed by *lepidis, nugae*, and *Juppiter!* above.

all things.<sup>16</sup> Instead, he continues the self-effacing tone of the poem, and ends with a prayer that, through divine grace, his book may 'last forever' and not be a mere creature of the age. The modesty of his request is accented by the fact that it is addressed to no deity by name, but only to a *patrona virgo* ('patron virgin') who may be either the Muse, as most editors now assume, or Pallas Athena-Minerva, as Guarinus long ago conjectured. It is as if the poet, having so misprized his work, felt that it would be presumptuous to mention any deity by name, and preferred a mere joggling of the divine elbow, as if a gentle bid for attention might gain him a more sympathetic hearing.<sup>17</sup> Once again we may be certain that Catullus' own opinion of his work was scarcely as humble as this; his modesty here is dictated partly by the desire for poetic concinnity and consistency, and partly because he is well aware of the storm of criticism which his works are bound to evoke.<sup>18</sup> He will make neither himself nor Cornelius look foolish by a bold prediction of immortality for poetry that has already been dismissed as *nugae* by the critics; instead, by his quiet prayer, he will let his readers know that he is convinced of the soundness of his poetic theory, and ask that they give his work the benefit of dispassionate judgment.

This poem then must not be regarded as a mere introductory flourish, nor need we wonder why Catullus chose to dedicate his lively, graceful poetry to the dull and pedantic scholar, Cornelius Nepos.<sup>19</sup> Rather, it is to be thought of as the poem of an innovator, a radical, a rebel against traditionalism,<sup>20</sup> whose works have been under heavy fire from his contemporaries, and who here expresses in graceful and gracious manner his gratitude for the sympathy and encouragement of a man so unlike himself. Besides that, it proclaims the poet's own theory of the lyric, decisively, although without fanfare: that it can be

<sup>16</sup> See Havelock (1939: 105).

<sup>17</sup> See Munro (1905: 3).

<sup>18</sup> See Lafaye (1894: 103–8).

<sup>19</sup> We are told, of course, that Nepos wrote erotic verse himself, and the histories of literature (e.g., Schanz-Hosius) sometimes accord him a place among the *novi poetae* ('new poets'), but his biographies may justly cause us to feel some doubt of his poetic fire.

<sup>20</sup> The fact that Catullus had Greek models for at least some of his 'radical' poetry (e.g., Archilochus: see Lafaye [1894: 21–3]) in no way detracts from its novelty as a literary venture in Rome.

written about the ordinary circumstances of life and in the language of the people, and that poetry written in this vein and manner deserves serious consideration by the critic and student of literature. Finally, in its language, its style, and its sentiment, it is an accurate representation of the book of poems itself, and thus performs the function of any good introduction: to prepare and forewarn the reader of what is to come.

## 2

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### Catullus 116

C. W. Macleod<sup>1</sup>

Saepe tibi studioso animo venante requirens  
carmina uti possem mittere Battiadae,  
qui te lenirem nobis, neu conarere  
tela infesta <meum> mittere in usque caput,  
hunc video mihi nunc frustra sumptum esse laborem, 5  
Gelli, nec nostras hinc<sup>2</sup> valuisse preces.  
contra nos tela ista tua evitamus amictu:<sup>3</sup>  
at fixus nostris tu dabis supplicium.

Often I sought with mind eagerly hunting,  
that I might be able to dedicate songs of Battus' son to you  
in order to win you over, and that you might  
not attempt to shoot deadly shafts straight against my head.  
Now I see that I undertook this labor in vain,  
Gellius, and that it did not make my prayers effective.  
In return I evade those shafts of yours with my cloak;  
But you will be pierced by mine and pay the penalty.

<sup>1</sup> [Editor's note. I have included the additions and corrections in the appendix of Macleod's posthumously printed *Collected Essays* (1983: 341–2), showing them in brackets.]

<sup>2</sup> The manuscripts' *hinc* should never have been questioned. It is equivalent to *ex hoc labore*, and the sense is: 'all this effort was in vain and did not help make my prayers effective'; cf. Friedrich (1908: ad loc).

<sup>3</sup> I have accepted, without complete certainty, this old conjecture for the manuscripts' *evitabimus* † *amitha*. I take *contra* as adverbial; the antithesis it implies is: 'I was not able to deter you from insulting me, but I can avoid the shafts of your invective.'

If Catullus' poems as we have them faithfully reproduce their order in the original roll or rolls, and if that order reflects a design of the poet's, then the last piece in our manuscripts naturally merits close attention. But even one who has vigorously upheld these hypotheses writes: 'it is tempting to suppose that the poem is a spurious addition attached after the publication of the collection; Catullus may indeed have written it, but not wanted to include so *illepidus* ['charmless'] a piece of versification in his published works'.<sup>4</sup> Nor has the poem attracted much interest in its own right; it seems to be generally considered just another slice of biography, and as such hardly susceptible of a poetic meaning. The remarks which follow try to show that it has one, and perhaps also a significant position.

Its opening words have been variously understood. Kroll supposes that Catullus has been looking for books by Callimachus; Fordyce, like Riese and Ellis, that he has been trying to translate him. The latter seems nearer the truth. As Fordyce observes, *carmina uti possem mittere* suggests the dedication of something the writer has composed himself; and the whole phrase *studioso animo venante requirens* is most apt of mental activity. The 'searching', then, is of the sort that leads to εὕρεσις or *inventio*, to literary creation; the image recurs in Plautus (*Pseud.* 401 f.):

sed quasi poeta, tabulas cum cepit sibi,  
quaerit quod nusquamst gentium, reperit tamen ...

But just as a poet when he takes up his tablets,  
seeks what does not exist, yet finds it ...

and in Propertius (1.7.5 f.):

nos, ut consuemus, nostros agitamus amores  
atque aliquid duram quaerimus in dominam.<sup>5</sup>

As usual, I am busy with my love songs  
and seeking something to use on a hard-hearted mistress.

<sup>4</sup> Wiseman (1969a: 27).

<sup>5</sup> Enk (1946: 2.71) correctly paraphrases: 'aliquid excogitamus quo dominae durtiem leniamus' ('I am thinking out something by which to soften the harshness of my mistress'); but the context strongly suggests that this implies writing love-poetry. Compare also Lucr. 1.143 cited below. [Add Lucr. 3.419.]

What is more, the vocabulary of lines 1–3 is designed to characterize Catullus as a follower of Callimachus and his circle. *Laborem* refers to the effort he, like them, has spent in lending erudition and polish to his work;<sup>6</sup> *studioso* suggests that he is a true φιλόλογος<sup>7</sup> and the image of hunting in *uenante* is often associated with the quest for choice or abstruse expression. For this last feature Ellis assembles a number of parallels;<sup>8</sup> particularly relevant is Philip, *A.P.* 11.321.5 (συνδέσμων λυγρῶν θηρήτορες [‘hunters of sorry conjunctions’]), because that epigram is directed against the ‘troopers of Callimachus’. What Catullus is supposed to have been trying to write is not made completely clear. *Carmina ... Battiadae* might mean simply ‘poems by Callimachus’, in other words a translation (cf. 65.16); but equally it could be used of poems in the manner of Callimachus, just as *cantores Euphorionis* (‘singers of Euphorion’; Cic. *Tusc.* 3.45) are ‘Euphorionists’, writers who work in his style. [Cf. Call. epig. 27 Pf. Ἡσιόδου τὸ ἄεισμα.] In either case Catullus has been trying to produce Callimachean poems; and that tells the reader something about what kind of poet he is.

Beside this type of writing Catullus sets the poetry of insult or imprecation, which is indicated, as often, by the metaphor of weapons and battle.<sup>9</sup> The juxtaposition of Callimachean and vituperative writing is not a casual one; rather the two are deliberately contrasted alternatives. On the one hand there is the elegant and cultivated ‘Alexandrian’ author; on the other, the purveyor of blunt, even coarse, invective. Propertius makes much the same contrast in addressing his mistress’s door (1.16.37 ff.):

te non ulla meae laesit petulantia linguae  
 quae solet irato dicere †tota loco,

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Kroll (1924: 38 ff.); Puelma Piwonka (1949: 116–37); Cairns (1969: 154); Cameron (1972: 169).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. esp. Enn. *Ann.* 216 Vahlen: *nec dicti studiosus quisquam erat ante hunc* (‘nor was anyone a student of language before this man’).

<sup>8</sup> Cf. also Liban. *Or.* 18.17: ἐπηύξησε μὲν τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν ἣν εἶχε περὶ τοῦς λόγους, ἐπηύξησε δὲ τοὺς πόνους οἷς ἐχρῆτο περὶ τὴν τούτων θήραν (‘he increased the enthusiasm that he had for learning, and he increased the efforts he used in pursuing it’). The words ἐπιθυμίαν and πόνους are analogous to *studioso animo* and *laborem* in Catullus.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Ov. *Ibis* 2, 10, 54, 644 and La Penna (1957: ad loc.). *Mittere in usque caput* is a phrase which also belongs in such a context (cf. *Ibis* 50).



ut me tam longa raucum patiare querela  
 sollicitas trivio pervigilare moras.  
 at tibi saepe novo deduxi carmina versu  
 osculaque impressis nixa dedi gradibus.

No rudeness of my tongue has harmed you—  
 which is accustomed to say †everything in an angry situation—  
 so that you might let me grow hoarse with long complaint  
 and stand watch for anxious stretches of waiting on the street corner.  
 But I have often spun songs for you in new verse  
 and given straining kisses to the steps she has walked on.

Here Propertius contrasts an angry and diffamatory *komos*<sup>10</sup> (song at the beloved's door) with one which is described in the language of Callimachus' aesthetics. For *novo*<sup>11</sup> puts in a nutshell the essence of Call. *Aet.* 1.25–8:

πρὸς δέ σε] καὶ τόδ' ἄνωγα, τὰ μὴ πατέουσιν ἄμαξαι  
 τὰ στείβε\_ιν, ἐτέρων ἵχνια μὴ καθ' ὁμά  
 δίφρον ἐλ]ῆν μῆδ' οἶμον ἀνά πλατύν, ἀλλὰ κελεύθους  
 ἀτρίπτο]υς, εἰ καὶ στε\_ι\_νοτέρῃν ἐλάσεις.

And in addition I also give you this command: tread whatever places the wagons do not trample; do not drive your chariot in the common tracks of others nor along the broad road, but on unworn paths, even though your course be more narrow.

while *deduxi*<sup>12</sup> recalls Virgil's *deductum...carmen* ('spun song', *Ecl.* 6.5) in a context which virtually translates the *Aetia* prologue (cf. esp. *Aet.* 1.23 f.). Further, as Rothstein observes, *osculaque impressis nixa dedi gradibus* echoes an epigram by Callimachus (42.5f.).<sup>13</sup> Again, Horace in *Sat.* 1.10.16–19 sharply distinguishes

<sup>10</sup> On this form, sometimes called *paraklausithyron*, see Copley (1956: esp. 40–2); Cairns (1972: Index s.v. *komos*).

<sup>11</sup> Cf. further Hor. *Od.* 1.26.10 and Nisbet and Hubbard (1970: ad loc.).

<sup>12</sup> *Deducere*, a metaphor from spinning, can be used of poetic composition in general (cf. *T.L.L.* v [1] 282. 55 ff.); but in some other contexts too it is associated with 'fine-spun' writing like the Neoterics' (cf. Cornificius frg. 1 Morel; Hor. *Ep.* 2.1.225). [Cf. W. Eisenhut in *Properz*, ed. Eisenhut (*Wege der Forschung* 237), 1975; bibliography in D. Flach, *Das literarische Verhältnis von Horaz und Properz* (1967), 79; cf. also F. Quadlbauer, *Philol* 112 (1968) 96ff.]

<sup>13</sup> Rothstein (1895: 1.106).

satire and comedy, genres also rich in invective, from imitations of Calvus and Catullus, whom he is conceiving simply as 'neoteric' poets. Now we are accustomed to thinking of Catullus as a follower of Callimachus: but this poem implies that his work is not a mere descendant of his Hellenistic predecessor's. His inspiration is fed not only on *belles-lettres*, but on hate; and so too in 68.9–40 he indicates how his poetry depends at the same time on the Muses (books) and on Venus (love). Likewise Propertius in 3.1–3 contrasts his love-poetry and his 'Alexandrian' ambitions (cf. esp. 2.1 f.);<sup>14</sup> but he overcomes the distinction by having, like Callimachus in *Aetia* 2, a dream, where the Muse Calliope both tells him to write of love and sprinkles his mouth with 'Philetean water' (3.3.37–52).<sup>15</sup> Or again in 4.1 Propertius sets his own ambition to compose aetiological elegies like Callimachus' against Horus' injunction to keep to love-poetry; the book which follows in effect unites both kinds of writing.

Now just as Propertius in these contexts takes no account of Callimachus as a love-poet (*Epig.* 28–32, 41–6, 52),<sup>16</sup> so Catullus chooses to ignore his famous hate-poem, the *Ibis*. This might seem surprising, but it is natural enough in a Latin elegist. For the figure of Callimachus in the work of his Roman followers represents above all a poetic programme; and the qualities of learning and refinement he championed are easy to contrast with forms of writing which are more impassioned or closer to common life and speech. In poem 116 Catullus, like Propertius in 1.16, goes on to connect these qualities of the poet with peaceable and civilized behaviour in the man. And there is some further encouragement to thinking of Callimachus as a 'man of peace' in his first *Iambus*. There he is working in a genre associated with violent invective; but the whole poem is designed to settle the quarrels of *φιλόλογοι*, and he begins, even as he acknowledges his debt to Hipponax, by clearly distinguishing his own treatment of the iambus:

<sup>14</sup> Love is seen as positively inimical to learned poetry in *Cat.* 35; *A. P.* 12.98 (Posidippus), 99 (Anon.).

<sup>15</sup> *Philita* in 3.3.52 echoes 3.1.1 and is equivalent to *Callimachea atque Philita*; for where a pair of words needs repeating, one may do duty for both: cf. [*Iliad* 15.660–3]; *Hes. Op.* 182; *Hdt.* 1.32.6; *Eur. H.F.* 1374–81; *Soph. O.C.* 1335; *Ar. Av.* 78 f.; *Hor. Od.* 4.4.29; *Juv.* 14.70f.

<sup>16</sup> Perhaps also *Iamb.* 3, 4, 5, 9 and fr. 226: see Puelma (1949: 248–84).

Ἄκουασθ' Ἰππώνακτος· ἴσθ' γὰρ ἄλλ' ἦκω  
 ...  
 φέρων ἱαμβον οὐ μάχην ἀείδοντα  
 τὴν Βοῦπαλαλεῖον.

(*Iambus* 1. 1–4)

Listen to Hipponax. For indeed I have come ...  
 bearing an iambic not singing the quarrel with Boupalos.

So too even the more satirical pieces among the *Iambi* (2–5) all score their hits in a devious and urbane manner.<sup>17</sup> The *Ibis* was also notorious for its learned obscurity (Ov. *Ibis* 59). But Catullus' invective, for all its wit and subtlety, is not as a whole characterized either by restraint or by a show of erudition; the difference between the two authors could be illustrated by contrasting Cat. 16 with Call. *Iamb.* 13 (or *Aetia* 1), poems where they reply to critics of their own work.<sup>18</sup> So if Catullus is here distinguishing two styles of his own, the vituperative and the Callimachean, that is both understandable and substantially accurate.

If this contrast is a significant one in Catullus 116, that may help to understand the two curious metrical features of this poem: the wholly spondaic line 3 and the elided *s* in line 8. The former has parallels in Homer (*Od.* 15.334) and Ennius (*Ann.* 33, 623 f. Vahlen), but none elsewhere; nor can it be described, like the σπονδειαῖζων, as 'an Alexandrian device',<sup>19</sup> for Callimachus has several σπονδειαῖζοντες but no *holospondiacus*, and the two phenomena are anyway clearly distinct. Of the latter we know that it was offensive to *novi poetae* at the time of Cicero's *Orator* and that Cicero himself would have found it *subrusticum* ('rather uncouth') in a contemporary writer (*Or.* 161).<sup>20</sup> It occurs still in the archaizing Lucretius, but not thereafter, and only here in Catullus. So both features are decidedly

<sup>17</sup> See further Puelma (1949: 206–17, 236–41). [Add Bühler, *Entretiens Hardt* X (1964), 231ff.; also Kassel, *RM* 101 (1958), 235ff. on the relation and contrast between Hipponax 118 W and Callimachus, *Iamb.* 5.]

<sup>18</sup> For the contrast between Catullus and Callimachus, see further Puelma (1949: 263, 277).

<sup>19</sup> West (1957: 101).

<sup>20</sup> [See further W. Belardi, *RCCM* 7 (1965), 126 n. 39.]

curious.<sup>21</sup> But if the poet is deliberately opposing his present purpose and his Callimachean background, it is fitting that he should express himself in as un-Callimachean way as possible and that he should even border on the uncouth. The metrical oddities would then be rather like his use of multiple elision, a harshness designed to convey strong feeling.<sup>22</sup> It may rather be, however, that Catullus is purposely expressing himself in his enemy's manner;<sup>23</sup> for his own Callimachean writing is also carefully contrasted with Gellius' insults. He stresses this contrast by using *mittere* in two different senses, a peaceable one ('dedicate') and a hostile one ('shoot'); and *conarere* echoes *requirere* in order to indicate how Gellius' 'trying' is a sign of incompetence, Catullus' of seriousness. It is also a feature of literary polemic to mimic sarcastically the other man's style: thus Loukillios in *A.P.* 11.134 (cf. *ibid.* 138, 148):

Ἀρχόμεθ', Ἡλιόδωρε; ποιήματα παίζομεν οὕτω  
 ταῦτα πρὸς ἀλλήλους; Ἡλιόδωρε, θέλεις;  
 "Ἄσσον ἴθ' ὡς κεν θᾶσσον ὀλέθρου ..." καὶ γὰρ ἔμ' ὄψει  
 μακροφλυαρήτην Ἡλιοδωρότερον.

Shall we begin, Heliodorus? Shall we play thus at these poems  
 against each other? Heliodorus, do you wish?  
 "Come closer so that more swiftly [you might come to the door] of  
 destruction." And you will see me a babbler, more Heliodorian  
 [than you are].

In that case the metrical curiosities of the poem suggest malice and mockery rather than the heat of anger, and the abandonment of the Callimachean manner is more of a pose than anything else. At all events, Catullus does somewhat tone down the contrast of his two personae, the aesthete and the mud-slinger; for he presents himself, as

<sup>21</sup> *Uti* and *qui* seem also to be archaic; cf. Heusch (1954: 98 f., 133–5). The same may be true of *dabis supplicium*. Heinze (1908: 99 = 1960: 36f.) argued plausibly that this phrase must have here its ancient sense, 'beg for mercy with expiatory offerings', because Gellius would then be presented as doing what Catullus was doing in lines 1–3; the poet thus deftly turns the tables on his opponent. [Timparano (1978: 177 n. 42) suggests this is a parody of Ennius *Ann.* 100 V.]

<sup>22</sup> Cf. West (1957: 102).

<sup>23</sup> B. Schmidt (1887: p. lxvi) suggested that Catullus in the last line is actually quoting a phrase of Gellius'.

vituperative writers sometimes do, as provoked by his adversary into adopting this genre.<sup>24</sup> So Ovid at the opening of the *Ibis* protests that he has never embarked on such a poem before, that he is writing it

oblitus moris iudicique mei (60)

forgetful of my custom and judgment

and that his unnamed victim

cogit inadsuetas sumere tela manus (10)

forces my unaccustomed hands to take up arms.

Catullus, moreover, has made positive efforts towards a reconciliation. By saying these things the insulter gives himself a more attractive character in the reader's eyes; and Catullus also contrives to insinuate that he is still a Callimachean poet, even when his tongue is sharpest and his style ugliest.

But perhaps the most difficult thing about Cat. 116 is its position; for since it seems to explain why Catullus has taken up the pen against Gellius, it has all the air of being a prelude to the other poems directed at him (74, 80, 88–91), and yet it follows them at some distance. Now the poem is of a type that could well begin a whole collection; for it is an inverted dedication. Catullus, like other dedicators, speaks of the thought and effort he has expended for his addressee's benefit;<sup>25</sup> but here it has all been wasted. Dedicators often profess that their work has been written to honour<sup>26</sup> or to acquire<sup>27</sup> a friendship; but Catullus' was meant first to pacify an enemy and now delivers a threat. Set in this context *studioso animo* takes on a further implication; for it sarcastically echoes phrases such as Lucretius' *mea dona tibi studio*

<sup>24</sup> Cf. further Archil. fr. 223 West; Cat. 40; Hor. *Epod.* 6, though here the writers are avowedly specialists in insult. Closer again to our passage is Hor. *Epod.* 5.83–6: there it is another speaker who finally breaks into curses; but he thereby does duty for the epode-poet, who deals in ἀρσάι ('curses'). In oratory, cf. e.g. Antiphon, *Tetral.* 2. γ 1f.; Dem. 44.1, 53.1; Cic. *Phil.* 2.1. [Cf. Hor. *Sat.* 2.1.39ff.; Cic. *De Or.* 2.230; Dem. 18.256.]

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Cic. *De Inv.* 1.1: *saepe et multum hoc mecum cogitavi* ('I have pondered this much and often'); *De Or.* 1.1: *cogitanti mihi saepenumero* ('often to me as I pondered...'); Lucr. 1.140 ff.; [Virg.] *Ciris* 46.

<sup>26</sup> Cat. 1; Cic. *Or.* 1; Stat. *Silv.* 2 *praef.*; Quintil. 1 *praef.* 6.

<sup>27</sup> Lucr. 1.140 ff.; Stat. *Silv.* 5 *praef.*

*disposta fideli* ('my gifts laid out for you with faithful zeal', 1.52);<sup>28</sup> and the whole piece turns upside down a dedication like that of the *De rerum natura*. (1.140 ff.):

sed tua me virtus tamen et sperata voluptas  
 dulcis amicitiae quemvis efferre laborem  
 suadet et inducit noctes vigilare serenas  
 quaerentem dictis quibus et quo carmine demum  
 clara tuae possim praepandere lumina menti  
 res quibus occultas penitus convisere possis.

but your virtue and the hoped for pleasure  
 of sweet friendship encourages me to put forth any labor  
 and leads me to stay awake through the calm nights  
 seeking with what words and with what song  
 I might at last spread bright light before your mind  
 by which you might be able to see deeply into hidden things.

Consequently its position is also reversed: instead of opening a book it concludes one.<sup>29</sup>

Further, the train of thought in the whole poem corresponds, *in malam partem*, to a kind of *recusatio* common in dedications: 'I would have liked to send you such-and-such a kind of poem, but now I can only send you a different one';<sup>30</sup> and we have seen that this form of expression, here as elsewhere, tells us something about the writer's poetic aims and character. The poem thus has, like Cat. 1, a programmatic quality.<sup>31</sup> But precisely in virtue of that it is suitable to end a volume, as it would be to begin one; for Callimachus (*Iamb.* 13), Horace (*Sat.* 1.10), and Propertius (2.34b) all end books with poems that discuss and defend their own poetry. So although it is to be

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Ov. *F.* 2.15, Auson. *Technop.* 5.2. This may also be how *studium* is meant (i.e. 'zeal' for a person) in Lucil. 612 Marx: *veterem historiam studio inductus scribis ad amores tuos* ('led on by your zeal you are writing an old story to your dear friend'). Here too there is presumably an allusion to a dedication. [Add Cic. *Orat.* 33.]

<sup>29</sup> In general on the technique of 'inversion' see Cairns (1972: 127–37).

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Cat. 65, 68.1–40 (where line 41 begins the 'substitute' poem); Virg. *G.* 3.1–48; *Ciris* 1–53. More loosely comparable are Prop. 2.1.17 ff, 3.8.47 ff.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Copley (1951: reprinted in this volume, 27–34); Elder (1966); Cairns (1969). As emerges from Cairns's discussion, here too there is a contrast and a balance between two aspects of the poet, as a writer of *nugae* and as one who appreciates the value of *doctrina* and *labor*.

imagined as earlier in time than the other Gellius poems, it is in substance an apt conclusion. More specifically, it might further be compared with Virgil's tenth *Eclogue* or Horace's seventeenth *Epode*. Virgil presents a poet, Gallus, who starts with ambitions of imitating Euphorion (50); then, as love takes a hold on him, he descends to the lower genre of Theocritean pastoral (50–9), until at last he yields altogether to his passion (60–9). Horace appears as the victim of a love-philtre,<sup>32</sup> so that the poet of insult and imitator of Archilochus is seen addressing a tame appeal for mercy to the whore (20) and witch, Canidia. In both cases the book ends with a 'comedown' imposed by the irresistible power of love.<sup>33</sup> In a similar way Catullus shows himself as a Callimachean poet driven into vulgar invective by the anger and frustration Gellius has caused in him. He takes up the challenge with some relish; and of course many of his pieces up to this point have been poems of vituperation. So too there are love-poems earlier on in Horace's (*Epod.* 12, 14)<sup>34</sup> and Virgil's (esp. *Ecl.* 2, 8) volumes, just as love plays an important part in their models, Theocritus and Archilochus or Hipponax.<sup>35,36</sup> But such an ending serves to present dramatically the contrast between the poet's different ambitions or sources of inspiration and to finish the book on a note of farewell, whether serious or feigned, pathetic or ironical.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>32</sup> ['a love philtre': corrected to 'magic' in Macleod's addenda.]

<sup>33</sup> ['by the irresistible power of love': corrected to 'by an irresistible power' in Macleod's addenda.]

<sup>34</sup> Already in these poems we see the epode-poet struggling helplessly against love.

<sup>35</sup> See Grassmann (1966: 1–12); Hipponax frs. 14, 16, 17, 84 Masson, West.

<sup>36</sup> [In his addenda Macleod would delete notes 34 and 35 and replace this sentence with the following: 'So too there are love-poems earlier on in Virgil's volume (esp. *Ecl.* 2, 8), just as love plays an important part in his model, Theocritus']

<sup>37</sup> I am much indebted to Mr. Francis Cairns and Professor R. G. M. Nisbet for their comments on an earlier draft of this article; it is not to be assumed that they agree with all of its conclusions.

## Metrical Variations and Some Textual Problems in Catullus

Otto Skutsch

Catullus is fairly free in his treatment of aeolic bases, and the distribution of their different forms can be instructive. In the glyconic wedding song, 61, the first 21 stanzas or 105 lines have trochee bases only; the last 26 stanzas or 130 lines have 14 spondee bases (109; 127; 129; 133; 134; 136; [141 probably a trochee]; 142; 176; 182; 205, 208; 209; 216; 235). A fifteenth, in 147, is to be added; see below, pp. 49–50. It looks as though, in the process of composing, the poet had relaxed his technique.

The same would seem to apply to the whole first section of the book, poems 1 to 60. If we use the shape of the phalaecean base as a criterion, that section falls into two clearly distinguished parts.<sup>1</sup> Omitting the dedicatory poem, the first part, from 2 to 26, contains 263 phalaecean lines, the second part, from 27 to 60, contains 279. In the first part, 260 out of 263 lines have a spondee base; three have an iambic base,<sup>2</sup> and there is no trochee base.<sup>3</sup> In the second part, 279 lines produce 33 iambic and 30 trochee bases.<sup>4</sup> The introductory poem,

<sup>1</sup> The view of Barwick (1958: 315) that a cycle of poems ends at 26 is confirmed.

<sup>2</sup> 2.4; 3.17; 7.2. In 12.9 the correct reading is *differtus*, not *disertus*; see Fordyce *ad loc.*

<sup>3</sup> In 3.12 the correct reading is *illuc*, not *illud*; see below.

<sup>4</sup> I omit all doubtful instances. 27.6 *migrate*: the first syllable is more likely to be short than long, but there is no certainty. 33.2 *Vibenni*: the name appears to have a short *i* (Schulze, *Lat. Eigenn.* 102), but the spelling *Viuennius* is used very early, in fact by the Emperor Claudius (Schulze, *ibid.*), which to my mind points to false



with one iambic and three trochee bases in 10 lines, clearly goes with the second half and brings the figures up to 34 iambic and 33 trochee bases in 289 lines.

M. Zicàri, in his very impressive but ultimately unsuccessful defence of *illud* in 3.12, is the only scholar to have inquired in any detail into the distribution of the light phalaecean bases.<sup>5</sup> According to him they mostly belong to poems 1, 27, 32, 35, 36, 38, 40, 41, 42, 45, 49, 54, all, with the exception of the introductory and programmatic poem, somewhat 'unbridled' in tone. The degree of '*sbrigliatezza*' ('unbridled conduct') may be arguable here and there, and I do not see much bridle e.g. in 16; but Zicàri's theory certainly fails to explain why the dedication should be unbridled, nor can it account for the fact that of the 18 phalaecean poems between 2 and 26 as many as 15, or 5 out of 6, have spondee bases throughout, whereas among the 24 poems of the second half there are, even if we scan Vībenni and Māmurrae, no more than 6, or 1 in 4, which have spondee bases only. A change in technique explains the facts far better, since the dedication, written last, may be expected to agree with the second half. The arrangement of the phalaecean poems would thus seem to be roughly chronological; but obviously the matter must not be pressed. Poem 46 was certainly written before poem 10; perhaps it is no accident that it is one of the few poems in the second half which conforms to the technique of the first. On the other hand, the Cicero poem, 49, with four light bases in seven lines, is likely to be late, and the subject matter certainly does not disagree with that dating. Matters are different with the

etymological connexion with *uiuere* and thus to long *i*. 57.2 *Mamurrae*: the first syllable is probably short as in 29.3; but since it is long in Hor. *Sat.* 1.5.37 and Mart. 9.59.1 (cf. Prop. 4.2.61; Ovid *Fast.* 3.260 etc.) I make no decision. In 55.10, on the other hand, *Camerium*, though it poses an intricate problem, must be counted as a light base. The *a* is undoubtedly short as in 58b.7, and Schulze 549 ought not to have assumed metrical lengthening. The choice is between Cāmērium and Cāmēriūm (accented on the *e* or on the *a*). This is one of the two poems in which Catullus uses contraction of the hendecasyllable, and he may therefore have admitted resolution. I count *Camerium* as an instance of iambic base.

<sup>5</sup> Zicàri (1957: 250ff.). E. Norden must have winced to see his youthful comment (1895) on the phalaecean bases cited by Schanz-Hosius. To ascribe the absence of light bases from the 22 hendecasyllables of poem 55 to Varronian influence and say nothing of their absence from the 190 hendecasyllables of poems 9 to 26 was obviously wrong even before R. Heinze, *Ber. Sächs. Akad.* 70.4 (1918), exploded the myth of the Varroian 'theory of derivation' and its influence upon the versification of Horace.

non-phalaecean poems. Inserted for the sake of metrical variety, six in the first half, eleven in the second (one third of all the lines in the first half, just under two fifths in the second), they cannot be expected to show any chronological order.

3.12 is nunc it per iter tenebricosum  
illud unde negant redire quemquam. (3.11–12)

It now goes along that shadowy road  
from which they say that no one returns.

*illud* sounds somewhat unnatural, and *illuc*, conjectured in the Renaissance, was soon accepted by all editors. Their confidence seemed justified because *illuc* is written in the margin of *O*; a quotation in the *Apocolocyntosis* beginning at *unde* is preceded by a seemingly redundant and awkwardly placed *a caelo*, instead of which Beatus Rhennanus and others read *illuc*; *illuc unde* is the opening of a phalaecean in 14.22; and the base of a phalaecean is not very often a trochee. Nevertheless *illud* found champions in Baehrens, Birt, Lundström and Weinreich, and the latest defence by Zicàri (see above) was so effective that Mynors introduced *illud* in the second printing (1960; first printed in 1958) of his Oxford text. Of the arguments set out above the first two are convincingly dismissed by Zicàri: *illuc* in the margin of *O* is a Renaissance conjecture and has no transmissional value, and Seneca, who in fact was called upon as a witness both for and against *illud*, never quotes slavishly and, whether or not he wrote *illuc*,<sup>6</sup> proves nothing at all. The third argument needs no refutation, since obviously 14.22 can, at best, add only a very slight degree of probability to the reading *illuc*. The metrical argument, on the other hand, now appears very much stronger than when Zicàri rejected it: there is not a single other trochee base in this section of the book.<sup>7</sup> Now Zicàri rightly

<sup>6</sup> *Apocol.* xi.6 *Cyllenius illum collo obtorto trahit ad inferos a caelo, unde negant redire quemquam*. For the latest discussion of the passage see Haffter (1967: 124 n.l). Adopting the interpretation first given in C. F. Russo's commentary (1948), Haffter points out how well the jest, which applies the quotation to heaven instead of the underworld, suits not only the situation but the whole spirit of the *Apocolocyntosis*.

<sup>7</sup> See p. 45. The argument is less strong but still, I believe, valid if the Lesbia poems 2, 3, 5, 7, (8, 11), which contain both the doubtful trochee and the three iambs, are with Barwick (1958: 312 ff.), seen as a separate cycle. 2, 3, 5 and 7 could fall chronologically between the hendecasyllables of 9–26 and those of 27–58.

shows that there seems to be no distinction between iambic and trochee bases where both are admitted, and he will therefore argue that a single trochee should not on account of its isolation be suspected in a section which contains no more than three iambs. This may be sound, but as an empirical fact the absence of other trochees remains, and it is conceivable that, before he changed to the freer technique, Catullus was on occasion prepared to admit an iamb, but never a trochee. Moreover, why, when admittedly avoiding light bases, should he have preferred *illud* to *illuc*, which, without loss of sense, he could have used, as he does in 14.22? I cannot explain *et acres* in 2.4, except that *atque acres* would not have made a very nice noise; but it is easy to see that in 3.17 and 7.2 the attraction of emphatic *tua(e)* made him set aside his metrical preference.

I have no quarrel with the enjambement of *illud*, but I believe that Zicàri is wrong in explaining it by a supposed emphasis and comparing 16.5–6.

nam castum esse decet pium poetam  
ipsum, uersiculos nihil necesse est.

For it is right for the true poet to be chaste  
himself, but not necessary for his verses to be so.

Here *ipsum* is strongly emphasized, but in 3.11–12 *iter* is sufficiently characterized by *tenebricosum* as referring to the underworld (*tenebrae Orci* 13/14) and needs no identification, nor indeed description. Semantically *illuc* is better, because *redire ex itinere* makes sense only if *iter* includes the end of the journey, a meaning here ruled out by *per*, or the return is made from a journey not as yet accomplished, a meaning here ruled out by the general sense. Admittedly Catullus need not have expressed himself with strict logic, and if Baehrens is right in positing that the *iter tenebricosum* denotes the journey in Hades only and not that from the world of the living into the realm of death, the slip would be fairly easy. But why should we, against metrical and linguistic indications, accept the evidence of the Veronensis for *illud* when we know that that manuscript has a morbid tendency to introduce false agreement? Because of *iter tenebricosum* it has turned *illuc* into *illud*, just as in 61.147 (below) it has turned *soli* into *sola* because of *licent... cognita*. I give a list of such corruptions, adding in parentheses the word responsible: 11.11 *horribilesque (ultimosque)*;

14.5 *malis* (*poetis*); 31.4 *libente* (*te*); 13 *gaudete* (*salve, ridete*); 34.17 *menstrua* (*dea*); 35.4 *Comimeniam* (3 *Veronam*); 18 *Caecilia* (*magna*); 39.21 *lotus* (*praedictet*); 44.21 *legit* (*uocat*); 45.9 *approbatione* (*dextra*); 18 *dextram* (*approbationem*); 50.10 *somnos* (*ocellos*); 53.3 *meos* (*Calvōs!*); 61.55 *maritos* (*nouōs!*); 201 *remorata* (202 *bona*); 224 *suam* (*pudicitiam*); 63.28 *thiasis* (*linguis*); 38 *mollis* (*rabidus*); 43 *Pasitheo* (*sinu*); 79 *ictum* (*reditum*); 64.11 *primam* (*Amphitriten*); 23 *mater* (*bona*); 31 *optato* (*finito tempore*); 66 *delapso* (*corpore*); 122 *deuincta* (*lumina*); 126 *tristes* (*montes*); 200 *sola* (*mente*); 215 *longa* (*uita*); 229 *has* (*sedes*); 233 *haec* (*lumina*); 366 *hanc* (*copiam*); etc., etc., until 113.4 *singulum* (*unum, fecundum*).

To sum up: the change of one letter removes the only trochee in 263 hendecasyllables; it restores normal diction instead of somewhat stilted and improbable phrasing; and we know a propensity of the Veronensis which made that single letter liable to be corrupted. The odds against *illud* are at least 10 to 1.

61.147 scimus haec tibi quae licent  
sola cognita, sed marito  
ista non eadem licent. (61.146–8)

We know that only those things  
which are permitted are known to you,  
but to a husband, these things are not permitted.

*sola* would appear to make no sense, but the commentaries are silent. What we must look for is not ‘you know only what is permitted’—*fescennina iocatio* (‘Fescennine jesting’) indeed!—, but ‘you are familiar with what is permitted to a single man (i.e., *consuetudo glabrorum*, ‘sexual intimacy with beardless boys’), but to a married man the same thing is not permitted’. Therefore read *quae licent soli* (‘which are permitted to a single man’):<sup>8</sup> false concord, here bringing *soli* into line with *quae licent* and *cognita*, has just been shown to be a very common fault of the Veronensis. I cannot parallel *solus* in the sense of ‘unmarried’, but both *caelebs* (*in lecto caelibe* 68.6) and *uiduus* (*uiduas iacere noctes* 6.6; *uiduas dormire puellas* Prop. 2.33.17) are used as synonyms

<sup>8</sup> *soli* was conjectured by Achilles Statius and adopted by Heinsius. It was considered also by Passerat, who found *caelibi soli* (for *quae licent sola*) in Par. Lat. 8233, written at Florence in 1465. I owe this information, which modern editors ought to supply, to the kindness of Dr Zicari. See also note 13.

of *solus* in poetical language, and *solus* may therefore be expected on occasion to substitute for either. The direct contrast to *marito* would make it immediately intelligible.

*solī* is heavily emphasized, and heavy emphasis explains a great many exceptions to the rule excluding spondee words from the first foot of the hexameter (Norden, *Aen. Buch* VI, p. 436). The only other initial spondee word in our poem is *illi* (176), and again, forms of *ille* account for many of the cases of a spondee word opening the hexameter (Norden, *loc. cit.* 435).

### 61.178

The last two stanzas addressed to the bride in the *fescennina iocatio* draw her attention to the eager impatience of the groom:

aspice intus ut accubans  
uir tuus Tyrio in toro  
totus immineat tibi.  
io etc. (61.171–5/164–8)

See how your husband,  
reclining inside on his purple couch  
is intent only on you.  
Hail, etc.

illi non minus ac tibi  
pectore uritur intimo  
flamma, sed penite magis.  
io etc. (61.176–80/169–73)

For him no less than for you  
a flame burns in the inmost heart,  
but more deeply.  
Hail, etc.

*penite* is unexampled,<sup>9</sup> but the sense calls for emendation (Skutsch, 1963: 246) even more urgently than word usage: no commentator

<sup>9</sup> *antique* in 34.22 ff. *Romulique/antique ut solita es bona/sospites ope gentem* could perhaps be adduced as a parallel, but it should not be allowed to stand. The balance is tilted against it and in favour of *Ancique* by the fact that Ancus, who added the Aventine to the city, is appropriately linked with Romulus in a hymn addressed to Diana of the Aventine; by the appearance of both Ancus and Romulus on coins struck

explains how the statement that the groom is tortured no less than the bride by the flame ‘deep inside’, can be followed by ‘but more deeply inside him’ or ‘but more so, deep inside him’. Friedrich’s reference to Tib. 3.11.17 *optat idem iuuenis quod nos, sed tectius optat* (‘the youth desires the same thing we do, but he desires it more covertly’) is most inapposite. The plight of the groom, I believe, is pointed out to the bride, as by *aspice* in 171, so by *en* in 178,<sup>10</sup> and it is described in 173 by *immineat* and in 178 by *perit*. He is visibly ‘dying with love’. Both *pereo* and *depereo* are, in accordance with popular idiom, used by Catullus for ‘being desperately in love’: 35.12; 45.5; 100.2. That *perit en* (‘see! he’s dying of love’) should have become *penite* will appear to all those who have listed the many hundred corruptions of the Veronensis as a characteristic peccadillo of that wretched manuscript.

66.77–8 quicum ego, dum uirgo quondam fuit omnibus expers  
unguentis, una milia multa bibi. (66.77–8)

along with whom, while she was formerly a virgin  
free of all perfumes, I drank many thousands.

Callim. Aet. 110.77–8.

ἦς ἄπο, παρθενίη, μὲν ὅτ’ ἦν ἔτι, πολλὰ πέπωκα  
λιτά, γυναικείων δ’ οὐκ ἀπέλαυσα μύρων.

from which, when she was still a maiden, I drank many  
inexpensive scents, but did not enjoy womens’ myrrh.

*uilia* (‘inexpensive, modest’) for *milia* (Lobel), suggested and indeed enforced by Callimachus, restores part of the sense of the original. Morel’s *nuptae* for *una* tries to restore the missing part. *nuptae*, however, is not acceptable, because it is no very close rendering of *γυναικείων*, because the singular is odd (why not *nuptarum unguentis?*), and because it offends against Catullan practice in placing the

in Catullus’ day (Sydenham, *Coinage of the Roman Republic*, 153, nos. 919 and 921); and by the reflection that few proper names have escaped being disfigured in the Veronensis. Nor should it be argued that ‘of old’ is a necessary addition: the αἰ ποτα κἀτέρωτα idea is sufficiently expressed by *ut solita* es.

<sup>10</sup> *en*, normally at the beginning of a sentence, follows a verb first in Sallust, or. Cott. 10 *adsum en*, later often in Ovid, e.g. *epist.* 5.124 *possidet en saltus*; *Pont.* 3.7.33 *torqueor en*. In our poem it occurs also at 156.

syntactical breaks: it transfers the break from the first half of the line, where it is normal, to the diaeresis, where it is avoided. The 59 pentameters of poems 65 and 66 show no example of a clause ending at the diaeresis.<sup>11</sup> The 104 pentameters of poems 67 and 68 are built a little more freely than those of 65 and 66: they admit elision at the diaeresis (67.44; 68.56, 82, 90), and they have two examples of clause ending at the diaeresis, 67.14 and 68.40. Neither, however, is exactly comparable to 66.78 as reconstructed by Morel, since the second half of 67.14 is a quotation, and that of 68.40 contains the object of the verb in the first half.<sup>12</sup> If *nuptae* were transmitted we should, since the negative evidence is not overwhelming, have to retain it; but to introduce it in defiance of Catullan usage is clearly not permissible. In fact, *una* is shown to be indispensable, because it would seem to be the one and only word enabling the *quicum* clause to resume not at but before the diaeresis. With emendation ruled out here, the word translating *γυναικείων* must be found in the hexameter, and it can be no other than *muliebribus*, hiding in *fuit omnibus*. Depriving the *dum* clause of its verb may seem a drastic remedy, especially in view of the change of subject; and in order to recover a verb we should have to write *quidem erat* instead of *quondam*. This would in fact correspond very closely to *μὲν ... ἦν*, whereas *quondam* has no equivalent in Callimachus. Deliberate alteration has certainly occurred to produce *fuit omnibus*, and it seems probable that it was caused by the harshness of the ellipse; but whether the ellipse itself, somewhat against the poet's own practice, and perhaps not sufficiently paralleled by the examples listed at *Th.L.L. s.v. dum*, col. 2230 f., was authentic or due to corruption must remain uncertain. The disappearance of the bucolic diaeresis, generally retained in Catullus' translation, is to be regretted. But it should now be beyond dispute that the hexameter must have contained the contrast to *uirgo* and the translation of *γυναικείων*. *muliebribus* is not only the literal translation, but the only translation which can be accommodated in the line.

<sup>11</sup> In 65.2 *sevocat a doctis, Hortale, uirginibus* and 66.18 *non, ita me diui, uera gemunt, iuuerint* the clauses are continued in the second half of the line. Similarly 68.138 *saepe etiam Iuno, maxima caelicolum, coniugis ... contudit iram*.

<sup>12</sup> 67.14 *ad me omnes clamant: 'ianua, culpa tua est'*; 68.40 *ultra ego deferrem, copia siqua foret*.

## 73.6

Desine de quoquam quicquam bene uelle mereri  
 aut aliquem fieri posse putare pium.  
 omnia sunt ingrata, nihil fecisse benigne  
 prodest, immo etiam taedet obstetque magis;  
 ut mihi, quem nemo grauius neque acerbius urget  
 quam modo qui me unum atque unicum amicum habuit. (73)

Stop wanting to earn gratitude from anyone  
 or thinking that someone can be true.  
 Everything is unappreciated; it's no use to do  
 a kindness. On the contrary, it's even tiresome and harmful instead,  
 as in my case; and no one grieves me more deeply or bitterly  
 than the one who just now had me as a single and only friend.

A moving expression of despair. There are other poems in which Catullus laments the loss of friendship in somewhat extravagant terms, notably 30 and 77. 30, with its *nec facta impia ... caelicolis placent* ('nor do unfaithful acts please the gods', 4), *eheu, quid faciant, dic, homines cuiue habeant fidem* ('alas! say what men should do or whom they should trust', 6), and *si tu oblitus es, at di meminere, meminit fides* ('if you have forgotten, the gods at least remember, honor remembers', 11), agrees with 73 in some motives not unnatural in such contexts; but it is set poles apart from that poem by the flicker of playfulness in *iam te nil miseret, dure, tui dulcis amicali* ('now, heart-hearted one, you have no pity for your affectionate friend', 2), by the absence of despair, and by the impression very strongly conveyed that Catullus is making a mountain of a molehill ('*der etwas geschraubte Ton ... lässt ihn wohl ein wenig übertreiben*'—'the rather stilted tone allowed him to exaggerate a little'—Kroll). 77, on the other hand, belongs to the desperate and deeply pessimistic world of the Lesbia poems 72, 75 and 76:

Rufe, mihi frustra ac nequiquam credite amice  
 (frustra? immo magno cum pretio atque malo),  
 sicine subrepsti mi atque intestina perurens  
 ei misero eripuisti omnia nostra bona?  
 eripuisti, eheu, nostrae crudele uenenum  
 uitae, eheu, nostrae pestis amicitiae. (77)

Rufus, in vain and for nothing trusted as my friend  
 —for nothing? on the contrary, at great price and pain—,



Is that how you sneaked up on me and burning my guts  
 snatched away all my blessings from me—poor devil?  
 You snatched them away, alas, you cruel poison of my life,  
 alas, you bane of my friendship.

Kroll and Fordyce incline to see in the *amicitia* of 6 the friendship of Catullus and Rufus rather than the love of Catullus and Lesbia (109.6). I am not sure that they are right: the anaphora of *eheu, nostrae* makes it rather difficult to refer the pronoun in the first instance to Catullus only and in the second instance to Catullus and Rufus. However that may be, the repeated *eripuisti* makes it clear that the true cause of the poet's grief is not the loss of Rufus's friendship but the loss of Lesbia.

73 is perhaps the most pessimistic of Catullus' poems, and to explain its mood the suggestion has been made that the friend who showed no gratitude either was identical with Rufus of 77 or, like him, became Lesbia's lover. How strange, then, that here we have nothing to correspond to the *eripuisti* of 77, and that all the pathos and grief is centred on being betrayed by the person whose 'one and only friend' the poet had been assured he was. D. A. West, CQ 7 (1957) 102, hears in the unusual number of elisions in 6 the sob of agony, and L. P. Wilkinson, *Golden Latin Artistry*, 55, agrees. They may well be right; but even without such symbolism the line suffices to show that the lament is not for something lost through mistaken belief in friendship, but for the loss of that friendship itself—a friendship which, unlike those of 30 and 77, meant everything to Catullus. The 'one and only friend': and how does the preceding poem, 72, begin? *Dicebas quondam solum te nosse Catullum* ('you said once that you knew Catullus alone'). All we have to do is write *quae* for *qui*,<sup>13</sup> and the friend who has betrayed the poet is Lesbia,

modo quae me unum atque unicum amicum habuit.

the woman who just now had me as a single and only friend.

<sup>13</sup> The merest trifle, especially in dealing with the Veronensis. The most conservative editors assume it, albeit wrongly, at 64.254. (After writing this note I discover that *quae* was proposed by Th. Birt in *Philol.* 63 (1904) 469 and supported by reference to 72.1 and 75. May I plead with editors not to condemn to oblivion conjectures which have a reasonable chance of being right? Avantius's *ac* for *hic* at 68.63 was excluded from the apparatus of the Oxford edition in 1958; in 1960 it found its proper place—in the text.

Thus everything falls into place, and the closest relationship is established to the prayer begging release from that disastrous love. The first distich, '*pietas* does not beget *pietas*', is echoed in 76.1–2:

Siqua recordanti benefacta priora uoluptas  
est homini, cum se cogitat esse pium,  
[multa ... manent ... ex hoc ingrato gaudia amore].

If a man has any pleasure as he recalls  
past kindnesses, when he thinks that he is true,  
[many joys remain from this ungrateful love].

The second distich has its equivalent in 7–9:

nam quaecumque homines bene cuiquam aut dicere possunt  
aut facere, haec a te dictaque factaque sunt,  
omniaque ingratae perierunt credita menti.

For whatever men can say or do well for anyone,  
these things have been said and done by you,  
and they have all perished, entrusted to an ungrateful heart.

Perhaps it might be questioned whether Catullus would say of Lesbia that *nemo grauius neque acerbius urget* ('no one grieves me more deeply or bitterly'): the answer again is in poem 76, line 20: *eripite hanc pestem perniciemque mihi* ('snatch away from me this disease and destruction').

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## *Catulli Veronensis Liber*

*Wendell Clausen*

Cui dono lepidum novum libellum 1  
arida modo pumice exolitum?  
Corneli, tibi; namque tu solebas  
meas esse aliquid putare nugas  
iam tum, cum ausus es unus Italarum 5  
omne aevum tribus explicare cartis  
doctis, Iuppiter, et laboriosis.  
quare habe tibi quidquid hoc libelli,  
qualecumque quod, o patrona uirgo,  
plus uno maneat perenne saeclo. 10

To whom shall I give this pretty new book,  
just polished with dry pumice-stone?  
Cornelius, to you; for you thought  
my trifles worth something  
even then, when you dared, alone of Italians,  
to unfold all the world's history in three volumes—  
learned volumes! and laborious!.  
So have this for yours, this little book;  
and such as it is, may it, o patron Muse,  
last more than one age.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Editor's note. The translations from Catullus, Meleager, and Martial 4.14.13–14 are taken from Clausen (1983: 19–23).

With this brief and unobtrusive poem, for which almost no precedent exists, Catullus introduces himself and his book. Commentators cite Meleager:

Μοῦσα φίλα, τίνι τάνδε φέρεις πάγκαρπον αἰοδάν,  
ἢ τίς ὁ καὶ τεύξας ὕμνοθετᾶν στέφανον;  
ἄνυσε μὲν Μελέαγρος, ἀριζάλῳ δὲ Διοκλεῖ  
μναμόσυνον ταύταν ἐξεπόνησε χάριν.

(*Anth. Pal.* 4.1.1–4)

Dear Muse, to whom do you bring this rich harvest of song,  
or who was it arranged this garland of poets?  
It was Meleager, and he fashioned this present  
as a keepsake for glorious Diocles.

The Muse and a receptive friend: there is a similarity, apparent and superficial. Catullus knew Meleager's poem, and perhaps was even aware of it as he composed his own; but what has the studied simplicity of Catullus to do with Meleager's long and intricate conceit? Catullus' poem is personal and Roman. Publication of Nepos' *Chronica* offered the pretext; not that Catullus feigned a gratitude he did not feel, rather that his gratitude cannot have been altogether literary. Cornelius Nepos was a fellow Transpadane, considerably older, with important friends in Rome (Atticus, Cicero...); and, being a man of letters, he had bestowed some words of praise or encouragement. It is not likely that Catullus set a high value on Nepos' work or his literary judgment. Years later Nepos maintained that L. Julius Calidus (it is suggestive that Nepos gives the name in full) was by far the most elegant poet the age had produced after the death of Lucretius and Catullus: 'L. Iulium Calidum, quem post Lucretii Catullique mortem multo elegantissimum poetam nostram tulisse aetatem uere uideor posse contendere'.<sup>2</sup> It was not then to his patron that Catullus

<sup>2</sup> *Att.* 12.4, begun about 35 and finished after Atticus' death at the end of March in 32. Had Nepos forgotten Catullus' friends, Calvus and Cinna? Was he too old, or temperamentally disinclined, to appreciate Cornelius Gallus and Virgil's *Eclogues*? Only one conclusion is plausible (the essay of C. Cichorius, *Römische Studien* [Leipzig, 1922], 88–91, to transform *l. iulium calidum* into *licinium caluum* may be disregarded): like his friend Cicero, Nepos did not care for the *cantores Euphorionis* ('praisers of Euphorion'). A fit recipient therefore of a book containing short poems

looked for protection through the years: it was to his patron Muse,<sup>3</sup> and by implication his readers.

Was this *libellus*—a papyrus roll—substantially the same as the *liber*—a codex or book in the modern sense—that miraculously appeared in Verona toward the end of the thirteenth century, the collection of poems as it now is? There may be a delicate irony in the contrast between Catullus' poems—odd, pretty sorts of things—and the regular history of Nepos; but no *libellus* would contain so many lines of poetry, nor could the long poems be described, even playfully, as *nugae* ('trifles'), in particular not the epyllion, which must originally have formed a *libellus* by itself, like the *Culex* (of about the same length), or the *Ciris* (somewhat longer), or the *Smyrna*, or the *Io*. Catullus' *libellus* does not therefore correspond to the *liber* of Catullus.

in which there is little or nothing overtly neoteric—poems such as he and other dabblers would attempt from time to time—but hardly of a book containing (say) *Pellico quondam* [Cat. 64]. It is absurd to suppose that Catullus praises the *Chronica* 'as a work conforming to the canons of that school and possessing the standard Alexandrian virtues', or that Nepos had written 'a neoteric historical work' (whatever that might be): so Cairns (1969: 153, 154) in an otherwise useful article. Cf. Jacoby (1902: 34; quoted by Fraenkel [1962: 259]): 'Nepos in seinen 3 büchern chronik eigentlich nichts weiter gethan [hat] als für die griechische geschichte getreulich, wenn auch nicht ohne grosse und leichte versehen, Apollodor übersetzt' ('In his three books of Chronicles Nepos really did nothing more than to translate Apollodorus—faithfully, but not without errors large and small'); and what remains of Nepos, *passim*. L. Julius Calidus was a rich landowner in Africa proscribed *in absentia* by Antony's chief of staff, P. Volumnius, and saved by Atticus, who had previously sheltered Volumnius from Antony's enemies—a friend of Atticus, and presumably of Nepos. Of Atticus' interest in poetry Nepos remarks (18.5): 'attigit poeticon quoque. credimus, ne eius expers esset suavitatis'. ('He also took up poetry. We suppose, so that he might not be without that charm'.) Subconscious autobiography?

<sup>3</sup> She may require some further defense, since Bergk's uncouth conjecture ('die abscheuliche Konjektur *qualecumque quidem est, patroni ut ergo*'. Fraenkel [1962: 259]) is cited by Mynors (1958) in his spare *apparatus criticus* and strongly advocated by Fordyce (1961). The evidence against Bergk—see *TLL*, 5.2:759—is clear and damning. The genitive (usually an abstract noun) with *ergo* occurs in the Twelve Tables, in Cato *De agricultura*, Cicero *De legibus*, Livy, and a very few other prose writers, and in only three poets: Lucretius 3.78 and 5.1246, Virgil *Aen.* 6.670, and Silius Italicus 6.134. In every instance but one *ergo* follows immediately on the genitive. The solitary exception is Arnobius (*Adu. nat.* 7.30: *honoris eis ergo*), on whose penchant for distorting idiomatic word order see Spindler (1901: 63–73).

Contrary opinion exists.<sup>4</sup> But any effort, however subtle or elaborate, to show that the *Book of Catullus of Verona* is an artistic whole, arranged and published by the poet himself, founders on an obvious hard fact: the physical limitation of the ancient papyrus roll. And for Catullus, as for those before and after him, the papyrus roll was the only 'book'. Too much is now known about the Greek roll, and too much can be inferred about the Latin, to leave room for doubt or special pleading. Book 5 of Lucretius, though shorter than Catullus' putative book<sup>5</sup> by a thousand lines or so, is still extraordinarily long (1457 lines). An ordinary roll would contain a book of Virgil's *Aeneid*, of Ovid's *Amores* or *Ars amatoria*, of Statius' *Thebaid*, of Juvenal, of Martial: a roll containing, on average, between 700 and 900 lines.<sup>6</sup>

What, then, did the *libellus* dedicated to Nepos contain? No precise answer is possible; but a poem by Martial, a constant imitator of Catullus, and the dedicatory poem itself indicate an answer.

'Tis the season to be jolly, the Saturnalia. Martial invites Silius Italicus to relax a bit and read the poetry he has sent him, books of it steeped with racy jests:

nec torua lege fronte, sed remissa  
 lasciuus madidos iocis libellos.  
 sic forsan tener ausus est Catullus  
 magno mittere Passerem Maroni.  
 (4.14.11–14)

and don't read my little books steeped in racy jests  
 with a stern face but with an indulgent one.  
 So mayhap sweet Catullus dared to send  
 His 'Sparrow' book to Virgil, his great friend.

So mayhap sweet Catullus. . . . An agreeable fancy. It is clear from the context that Martial refers to a book like his own<sup>7</sup> and not to one

<sup>4</sup> See Wiseman (1969a: 1–31); Schmidt (1973); and also Quinn (1972: 9–20). My conclusions largely coincide with those of Wheeler (1934: 4–52).

<sup>5</sup> Which would contain some 2480 lines by the 'moderate computation' of Ellis (1889: 1 n.1).

<sup>6</sup> For exact figures see Birt (1882: 292–3); Birt's discussion of Catullus (401–13) is still valuable.

<sup>7</sup> A *libellus* of 680 lines, not allowing for interstices. [Editor's note: Clausen (1983: 22 n.2) gives the number as 772 lines.]

or two poems; and that he does so, after the fashion of antiquity, by quoting the first word of the first poem.<sup>8</sup>

In meter and manner Catullus' dedicatory poem is consonant with the poems that follow, 2–60, or more exactly, fifty-seven poems and two fragments.<sup>9</sup> Of these poems, forty-three and the two fragments are in hendecasyllables: a pretty verse (6.17 *lepido* ... *uersu*) in a pretty book, and much favored by the New Poets.<sup>10</sup> In this part of the collection artistic design is discernible. Thus two similar poems will be separated by a poem dissimilar in subject or meter: 2 and 3, Lesbia's sparrow, by 2<sup>b</sup> (the other fragment); 5 and 7, Lesbia's kisses, by 6; 34 and 36, a hymn and a parody of the hymnic style (lines 11–16 of 36), by 35; 37 and 39, Egnatius and his gleaming teeth, by 38; 41 and 43, an ugly whore, by 42. The arrangement of 37, 38, 39 and 41, 42, 43 seems especially careful. 37 and 39 are longer poems of almost the same length (20 and 21 lines) in choliambics separated by a short poem (8 lines) in hendecasyllables, and each ends with a word of the same meaning: *urina* and *loti*. Conversely, 41 and 43 are short poems of the same length (8 lines) in hendecasyllables separated by a longer poem (24 lines) in the same meter. Such evidence is not sufficient to prove that the *libellus* contained all the polymetric poems, but probable cause for thinking that it contained most of them, and in their present order.

If Catullus did not edit his 'collected poems', who did, and when? A member of his circle, a close friend perhaps—in any case, a *homo*

<sup>8</sup> The first after the dedicatory poem, which he may have regarded as belonging to the whole collection. In any case, *Cui dono* would not do; cf. Kenney (1970).

<sup>9</sup> 14b is rather puzzling: 'Si qui forte mearum ineptiarum / lectores eritis manusque uestras / non horrebitis admouere nobis' ['If perhaps you are readers of my nonsense and do not shrink from laying your hands on us']. An apology for the unpleasant poems that follow? It can hardly be an 'interior dedication' of the sort found in Martial; see White (1974: 47–8 and 56–7).

<sup>10</sup> Calvus, Cinna, Cornificius, and Furius Bibaculus all used it and made it stylish; though Laevius and Varro had experimented with it. On the character and history of the hendecasyllable see Plin. *Ep.* 4.14; Ellis (1889: pp. xxiv–xxv); von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1921: 137–53). To account for so sudden an interest in an unusual Greek meter Wilamowitz postulated the influence of some teacher of metric (140): 'metrici cuiusdam doctoris auctoritatem circumspicimus, quae effecerit, ut multi simul id peterent, quod felici cursu Catullus assecutus est'. ['We look around for the authority of some metrical teacher that caused many people at the same time to seek what Catullus attained with happy rapidity?'] Parthenius?

*uenustus* like himself, and shortly after his death when it would still be possible to do so. The editor (so call him) retrieved all the poems he could: poems in Catullus' papers whether at Rome or Verona, poems in the hands of friends, poems . . . . How did he go about putting these together? To begin with he had the *libellus*: to it he could add any unpublished polymetric poems, an easy, mechanical decision that would not disturb the already published order. If the *libellus* ended with 50<sup>11</sup> (and 50 would be, for several reasons, the perfect ending), then the position of 51, which should precede 11, as 2 precedes 3 and 5 precedes 7, or should at least stand closer to it, is explicable. 51 is commonly taken to be Catullus' first poem to Lesbia. It is indeed a first poem, the first Latin poem in Sapphic stanzas: a bold and not altogether successful literary exercise.<sup>12</sup> The fourth stanza is somehow unsatisfactory, and no amount of interpretation will make it seem otherwise. 'The ode ends, and always ended, with *lumina nocte*'. Landor was right, in a sense; the experience of generations of readers cannot quite be dismissed. May it not be that this 'famed poem of passion'<sup>13</sup> did not finally satisfy its author? That he left it out of his *libellus*;<sup>14</sup> and the editor, connecting the first line of 50 (*otiosi*) with the last stanza of 51 (*otium, otio, otium*), added it? 53 and 56 are amusing squibs, 52 and 59 less so; 57 is as obscene and elegant as 29; and 58 extremely moving. Catullus may have omitted these few poems (reasons why can be invented), or he may have written them after he had published his *libellus*. It need not be assumed that he died immediately thereafter or that he gave up writing in these congenial meters. Very little can be made of 54; 55 reads like a failed metrical experiment;<sup>15</sup> 58b must be unfinished; and 60 is a scrap. Would Catullus end his pretty book of poems with such? No, but the editor, more concerned to preserve than to present, would.

<sup>11</sup> A *libellus* of 772 lines, not allowing for the lacuna in 2b or 14b or for interstices.

<sup>12</sup> This unromantic aspect of the poem has been neglected; but see Ferrari (1938).

<sup>13</sup> 'Catullus berühmteste Gedicht der Leidenschaft', Schmidt (1973: 242), who offers a fanciful explanation of its place in the *libellus* (226).

<sup>14</sup> Lesbia no more wanted explaining than did Cynthia or Delia or the others; besides, the reader has already met her in a different meter (5.1): 'Viuamus, mea Lesbia, atque amemus' ['let us live, my Lesbia, and let us love']. And if Catullus wished the reader to hear an 'echo' in *identidem* (51.3; 11.19), he would have placed 51 before 11.

<sup>15</sup> 'Minus felici novatione' ['an unsuccessful innovation'], Wilamowitz (1921: 140).



The second *libellus*, the editor's, begins with 61, an epithalamium, for a simple reason: it is in virtually the same meter<sup>16</sup> as most of the poems of Catullus' *libellus*. Next to it the editor put 62, the other epithalamium. To the epyllion he gave pride of place at the end. The odd poem out, the 'Attis' in galliambics, he put between the epithalamia and the epyllion so that it divides the two poems in hexameters. And where else was he to put it? For at some point he had decided to keep all the elegiac poems of whatever length together—again an easy, mechanical decision. (The editor must not, however, be imagined as a man devoid of taste; an occasional artfulness of arrangement may be owing to him.) The third *libellus* begins with a suitably long elegiac poem, 65–66;<sup>17</sup> perhaps the editor thought it especially appropriate because of the reference to the Muses in the opening lines:

Etsi me adsiduo confectum cura dolore  
 seuocat a doctis, Hortale, uirginibus,  
 nec potis est dulcis Musarum expromere fetus  
 mens animi ...

(65.1–4)

Although I am so wearied with constant sorrow,  
 Hortalus, that grief keeps me away from the learned maids,  
 and my inmost soul is unable to produce  
 the sweet fruits of the Muses ...

Three rolls, *tres libelli*:<sup>18</sup> the first containing poems 1–60, or 863 lines, not allowing for the lacuna in 2b or 14b or for interstices; the second, poems 61–64, or 802 lines, allowing for the lacuna in 61 but not for that in 62 or 64 or for interstices; the third, poems 65–116, or 644 lines, not allowing for the lacuna in 68 (after 141) or 78b or for interstices.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Glyconic (x x – u u – u –), of which the hendecasyllable is merely an extension: x x – u u – u – u – u – . On the variable base of these meters and the significance of Catullus' change of technique see Skutsch (1969a), reprinted in this volume 45–55).

<sup>17</sup> 65 and 66 are copied as a single poem in O, G, and R (V), and can hardly be separated; cf. Clausen (1970: 85 and 93–4).

<sup>18</sup> Traces of these *libelli* may have been preserved in the *liber Veronensis* (V); see Ullman (1910: 73–5; = 1955: 102–4).

<sup>19</sup> The first three books of Horace's *Odes* were published together, *tres libelli*: the first contained 876 lines, the second 572 lines, the third 1004 lines—or 2452 lines in all, not allowing for interstices.

Another consequence of the size of the roll is that collected editions of an author's work could not exist, except in the sense that the rolls containing them could be kept in the same bucket. . . . Volumes containing the whole corpus of an author's work only became possible after the invention of the codex, and especially of the vellum codex.<sup>20</sup>

In late antiquity, probably in the fourth century, these three rolls, or rather rolls copied from them, were translated into a codex with the first poem now serving as a dedication to the whole collection. From such a codex, by a long and hazardous route, comes the *Book of Catullus of Verona*.

#### APPENDIX A: BENZO OF ALESSANDRIA

The name of one of the first scholars who examined the newly 'returned' Catullus in the Cathedral Library at Verona is not to be found in any edition of Catullus. During the last decade of the thirteenth century Benzo of Alessandria<sup>21</sup> visited many cities in northern Italy gathering information for a vast history he planned 'a principio mundi usque ad aduentum Xristi' ['from the beginning of the world to the coming of Christ']: his *Cronica* in three parts, of which only the first is extant (Ambros. B. 24 inf., saec. xiv). At Verona Benzo transcribed Catullus 35.1–4: 'Dicit preterea Catullus poeta ueronensis ad amicum Aurelium scribens sic: Poete tenero meo sodali uelim occilio papire dicas ueronam ueniat noui relinquens domi menia lariumque litus' ['Besides, the Veronese Catullus, writing to his friend Aurelius, says: Papyrus, please tell my friend, the love poet *occilio*, to come to Verona, leaving the walls of his new *house* and the Larian shore'].<sup>22</sup> The corrupt *occilio* is particularly significant, for it also appears in O, a faithful copy of V. The fact that Benzo, a half century or so before O, and O both have *occilio* shows that it was the reading of V. Mynors' note—'cecilio V (occilio O)'—begs the question; *cecilio* must be the correction of X. The correction *menia* seems to be Benzo's; X has *meniam*, O *ueniam*. Why did Benzo transcribe these lines and no others? Sabbadini<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Kenyon (1951: 65).

<sup>21</sup> Sabbadini (1914: 2.128–49). I rely entirely on Sabbadini's account.

<sup>22</sup> Sabbadini (1914: 2.145).

<sup>23</sup> Sabbadini (1914: 2.145).

suggests that a Veronese reader had already marked this place in the book because Catullus first mentions his native city here. Possibly; but another reason may be suggested. This is the only place where Catullus mentions Como. When he began to compose his *Cronica*, Benzo was serving as notary to the bishop of Como; and he was fond of the city: ‘Et uere libenter urbis illius insisterem laudibus, cum in ea gratum et quietum sim domicilium nactus ad compilandum presens opus et maiora alia exacto iam fere septennio’ [‘And truly I would gladly dwell on the praises of this city since for around the last seven years I have found in it a pleasant and quiet home to compile the present work and other greater ones’].<sup>24</sup> Sabbadini describes Benzo’s *domi* for *Comi* (V) as ‘errore materiale di scrittura’ [‘a clerical error in transcription’]<sup>25</sup>; perhaps Benzo’s error was psychological rather than visual.

#### APPENDIX B: THE INTERNAL HISTORY OF THE TEXT

A medieval scribe ordinarily reproduced errors in the MS he was copying from, and inadvertently made others of his own. Thus errors of more than one generation will be present in a single MS; and will, if properly interpreted, tell something of the ancestry of the text in that MS. For example, Catullus 36.14: *golgos* Hermolaus Barbarus: *alcos* V. How did this error come to be? *GOLGOS* was corrupted to *COLCOS* in late antiquity,<sup>26</sup> *COLCOS* transcribed as *colcos* about 800, and *colcos* misread as *alcos* early in the ninth century by a scribe familiar with the *cc* form of *a*.<sup>27</sup> The external history of the text of Catullus has been thoroughly discussed by B. L. Ullman:<sup>28</sup> ‘not only the history of the manuscripts in so far as it can be established from the style of writing, the names of owners, etc., but also the *testimonia*, that is, the

<sup>24</sup> Written in 1319 according to Sabbadini (1914: 2.131).

<sup>25</sup> Sabbadini (1914: 2.145).

<sup>26</sup> Cf. 64.96: *golgos* Hermolaus Barbarus, Petrus Bembus: *cholcos* O: *colchos* X.

<sup>27</sup> I owe the following to Professor Virginia Brown: ‘It is my impression that one does not see the *cc* form much later than the first quarter of the ninth century; for example, Paris lat. 5763 (saec. ix<sup>1</sup>; Caesar) contains both forms of *a*, while Amsterdam 81 (saec. ix<sup>2</sup>; Caesar) only has the uncial *a*’.

<sup>28</sup> Ullman (1960).

references to and quotations from the author in mediaeval writers and catalogues.<sup>29</sup> The internal history (as it may be called) has been rather neglected. L. Schwabe<sup>30</sup> sorted out as best he could most of the errors in V, and H. A. J. Munro<sup>31</sup> commented on a few; but both scholars were hampered by lack of knowledge (the science of paleography scarcely existed) and neither attempted to delineate the process of error. For example, 25.3: *araneoso*] *arancoroso* X: *anracoroso* O. *ARANEOSO* was transcribed as *araneoso*, *araneoso* misread as *arancoro*—such confusions are frequent in Caroline minuscule—and corrected thus:

so

arancoro;

the correction was misunderstood and incorporated into the word:<sup>32</sup> *arancoroso* V, *anracoroso* being a peculiar error of O. There is evidence then that the text of Catullus was copied several times in the ninth century, but no evidence—at least no necessary evidence—that it was copied later. Ullman detects ‘signs of descent from a manuscript in Gothic script’.<sup>33</sup> He cites eleven errors as evidence and asserts: ‘Only in Gothic script are such errors common.’<sup>34</sup> Not so: all but one of them are common in Caroline script; and the corruption of so unusual a word as *pinnipes* (55.24: *primipes* V) might occur in any script. It is not improbable that Catullus’ ‘compatriot’ discovered a ninth-century MS in that distant place; and happily brought it (or a copy of it) home to Verona.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Ullman (1960: 1027).

<sup>30</sup> Schwabe (1865: 16–18).

<sup>31</sup> Munro (1878: 96): ‘for I observe that some original of all our MSS often put *co* for *a*: thus in 48.4 we find ‘inde cor’ for ‘uidear’; 64.212 ‘moenico’; for ‘moenia’; 67.42 ‘concilliis’ for ‘ancillis’; 75.3 ‘uelleque tot’ for ‘uelle queat’ ....’; *co* is merely a corruption of the *cc* form.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. 4.11: *cytorio* η: *citeorio* X: *citeono* O; 11.5: *arabasue* O: *arabaesque* G: *arabesque* R; 38.1: *malest* Lachmann (*male est iam* Calphurnius): *male est si* V; 66. 91: *siris* Lachmann (*siueris iam* Scaliger): *uestris* V.

<sup>33</sup> Ullman (1960: 1037).

<sup>34</sup> Ullman (1960: 1037).

<sup>35</sup> The old and popular notion that V was discovered in the Cathedral Library at Verona has been quashed by Skutsch (1969b).

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## The Collection

T. P. Wiseman

There is no escaping the question, what the work *was* that the dedication poem introduced. The Callimachean echoes must mean that the *libellus*, as the diminutive form implies, was not a big book<sup>1</sup>—particularly if Roman readers were to pick up the connotation of *lepidus* as λέπτος. The first poem is characteristic of the 1–60 collection,<sup>2</sup> but its informality makes it hard to believe that it was ever meant to introduce the whole corpus as we have it, including the ambitious and highly-wrought poems 63, 64 and 68b. The simplest hypothesis is that the *libellus* dedicated to Nepos was a volume of about 850 lines containing what we call poems 1–60.

However, the very fact that Catullus draws such conspicuous parallels between Nepos' work and his own may help us to see a further subtlety. Kenneth Quinn has brilliantly suggested that *tribus cartis* ('three sheets [of papyrus]') in line 6 may be another parallel: 'size is in that case one of the things that Cornelius' History and Catullus' Collected Poems have in common—both three volumes'.<sup>3</sup> As he points out, the collection as it stands falls into three conveniently *volumen*-sized sections: 1–60 (848 lines), 61–4 (795 lines) and the

<sup>1</sup> Athen. 3.72A: Καλλίμαχος ὁ γραμματικὸς τὸ μέγα βιβλίον ἴσον ἔλεγεν εἶναι τῷ μεγάλῳ κακῷ ('Callimachus the grammarian said that a big book was like a great evil'; Call. fr. 465Pf), no doubt with the same ambiguity between physical size and 'slenderness' of content as in Cat. 1.1–2 (cf. 95.9–10). Cf. Granarolo (1973–4: 57) for the possibility (remote, I think) that Catullus did *not* follow Callimachus' line on this.

<sup>2</sup> Wiseman (1979: 167–74).

<sup>3</sup> Quinn (1972: 19).

elegiac poems 65–116 (646 lines).<sup>4</sup> Though proof is out of the question, there are, I think, good reasons for accepting this idea.

One of the very few overtly programmatic statements in Catullus is 65.12, addressed to his brother: 'I shall always sing songs that are sad because of your death'. Since 65 is the first poem in the metre of *flebilis Elegeia*, it is natural to take this as an announcement of the metrical change in the collection.<sup>5</sup> Is it, in fact, the introductory poem to a *volumen* of elegiacs? That was clearly not its original function, since presumably it was written to go with poem 66, the Callimachus translation, as a present to Hortalus. But the Muses in lines 2–3 might well have suggested to Catullus a 'programmatic' use of the poem in his collection, possibly even with lines 9–14 written in to make it more explicit.<sup>6</sup>

What makes this idea attractive is the reference to *carmina Battidae* ('poems of Callimachus') both in poem 65 and in the final elegiac poem, 116.<sup>7</sup> As Macleod has recently shown, poem 116 contains many

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 12, 16. In *Catullan Questions*, I assumed a break between 68 and 69—wrongly, I now think; the present discussion therefore supersedes Wiseman (1969a: 29–31). The same assumption by Ross (1969: 1, 6 and *passim*) is more important, in that it involves his controversial separation, as stemming from separate traditions, of the 'neoteric distichs' (65–8) and the 'epigrams' proper (69–116); cf. Ross (115–37), reprinted in this volume 141–64. On this point I share the reservations of Quinn (1971: 83f.) in his admirably balanced review; but even accepting Ross's view for the sake of argument, we should still not have to abandon the idea of a *volumen* containing both types of elegiac poem, since Ross himself admits 'neoteric experiments' among the 69–116 epigrams: Ross pp. 24, 48, 58, 63, 103, 105, 110f., 131, 137 (on poems 69, 78, 80, 86, 88, 95, 99, 100, 116).

<sup>5</sup> Schaefer (1966: 46–8); Wiseman (1969a: 14f. and 17f.). *Flebilis Elegeia*: Ovid *Am.* 3.9.3, cf. *Her.* 15.7, *Hor. Odes* 1.33.3.

<sup>6</sup> Naturally this can only be a guess, but I see no reason to rule out this sort of re-writing on *a priori* grounds: see the sensible remarks of Quinn (1973: 387).

The same hypothesis may explain the problem of poem 51: it is tempting to take it as the 'original' Lesbia-poem, and even to end it at *lumina nocte* in the form Lesbia first read it, but the idea of a loose Sapphic stanza beginning 'otium Catulle ...' getting accidentally attached to it is surely too high a price to pay for the idea. Suppose, however, that Catullus wanted to use it for a different purpose in his collection, e.g. to mark a transition from *otium* to *negotia*, poem 50 to poem 52: the addition of the last stanza would achieve that, and turn the innocent Sappho translation into the bitter poem we now have. That too is a guess, and there are arguments that could be brought against it (cf. Kenney [1976: 29]); but it would be arbitrary to dismiss the very possibility out of hand.

<sup>7</sup> 65.16, 116.2; cf. Schmidt (1973: 233), Forsyth (1977). For the Callimachean subtlety and erudition of 65, cf. Wiseman (1969a: 18–20) on the allusion in line 14; and

features appropriate to a dedication,<sup>8</sup> and the last poem in a *volumen* was regularly as programmatic as the first.<sup>9</sup> The content of poem 116, juxtaposing erudition and vituperation, shows Catullus ‘as a Callimachean poet driven into vulgar invective by the anger and frustration Gellius has caused in him’<sup>10</sup>—which would be an appropriate way of closing a *libellus* that contained the Callimachus translation (66) and a poem as highly wrought as 68b, followed by the scurrilous invective of the epigrams.

Assuming three parts to the collection, we find the Muses clearly present at the beginning of the first (1.9) and of the third (65.2–3). But they are also there at the beginning of the second, in poem 61, where Hymenaeus’ descent from Urania (another Callimachean reference) and his home on Helicon near the Muses’ spring of Aganippe are emphasized at the beginning and end of the ὕμνος κλητικὸς (‘hymn summoning the god’) with which the poem opens.<sup>11</sup> Here too, moreover, the opening and closing passages of the putative *libellus* (61–4) make a distinct artistic pattern. Hymenaeus is summoned from his legendary haunts in Boeotia to come to a Roman marriage—a conventional enough idea, but the presence of the god at the wedding of Manlius and Vibia<sup>12</sup> (who are named as the purpose of his journey at line 16) contrasts sharply with the epilogue of poem 64, on the refusal of the gods to appear on earth in modern times when *pietas* is held in contempt. If 61–4 do form a *volumen* on their own,<sup>13</sup> then the gods’ relationship with men might be seen as one of its unifying themes.

it is possible that the closing simile is meant to remind the reader of Callimachus’ *Acontius and Cydippe* (so Daly [1952: 98f.]).

<sup>8</sup> Macleod (1973: esp. 308); reprinted in this volume, pp. 35–44. I am glad to retract my suggestion (Wiseman [1969a: 27]) that 116 may be a later addition: Macleod (*ibid.* 307) has solved the difficulties which forced me to this view.

<sup>9</sup> e.g. Meleager (cf. Wiseman [1979: 170]), and the end of Callimachus’ *Aetia*.

<sup>10</sup> Macleod (1973: 309); cf. 305f.

<sup>11</sup> 61.2, 27–30; Fedeli (1972: ch.2). Compare Posidippus’ summons of the Muses (λιμπάνετε σκοπιᾶς, Ἐλικωνίδες, etc.: ‘leave the peaks, daughters of Helicon’); see Lloyd-Jones (1963), 80 (text) and 83–6. See also Callimachus: *Aetia* I fr. 2a.42–3Pf (in the *addenda* of Pfeiffer’s second volume), cf. lines 16 and 30 for ‘Aonian Aganippe’.

<sup>12</sup> For the name, cf. Syme *ap.* Neudling (1955: 185), rightly accepted by Della Corte (1976: 87f.).

<sup>13</sup> Here again, the fact that an elegant copy of 61 was no doubt sent to Manlius, like the possibility (for which there is no evidence) that 63 and 64 may once have been circulated as independent poems, does not affect the issue of how Catullus saw fit to

On the other hand, the instinct to put all the 'long poems' (61–8) together as a coherent unit can apparently be justified by appeal to a more conspicuous unifying theme, that of marriage. 'The ideas set out in the *epithalamia* are developed through the ambiguous auguries of the Parcae in 64, the plea for fidelity in 66 and the unfaithful reality of 67, into the quasi-marital celebration in 68b of the poet's own love, adulterous and doomed'.<sup>14</sup> Certainly the ideas on marriage, fidelity and adultery planted by Catullus in the reader's mind by the earlier poems are made to bear a rich poetic harvest in 68b, where Catullus' application of them to his own situation is most movingly developed.<sup>15</sup> But the theme does not end with 68b: the very first Lesbia-poem in the epigrams sequence is on the possibility of her marrying Catullus (70.1), and the ideas of *fides* and *foedus* which are so important in the 69–116 poems have already been used as part of the marriage theme in poem 64.<sup>16</sup> So the existence of the marriage theme does not necessarily prove that poems 61–8, as opposed to poems 61–4, form a unit complete in itself.

What it *does* prove, I think, is that the collection as we have it was designed as a whole; that Quinn's three *libelli*, each introduced by the Muses and with a Callimachean allusion,<sup>17</sup> were the component parts of a greater unity. The closing poem of the first part, combining the themes of 1–60 as the very last poem combines those

include them in a 'collected poems' edition. The poems were individual works of art, but so was the collection they made together, and it was the poet's juxtaposition of them that made it so.

<sup>14</sup> Wiseman (1969a: 20–5); quotation from p.24. The development of the theme from 61 to 62 (where the girls are given a good case to plead *against* marriage), and within 64 from the first joy of Peleus' marriage to the gloomy foreboding at the end, is also to be noted. Sandy (1971b) and Forsyth (1970) would include 63 in the theme as well; and I suspect 68a may be relevant, if the addressee is the bridegroom of poem 61 (Wiseman [1974: 103]). But Schmidt (1973: 236) sees a difference between the treatment of the theme in 61–4 and that in 65–8.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Wiseman (1974: 72f. and 114–7).

<sup>16</sup> 64.132f., 144, 174, 182 (*perfidus, fidelis, fides*), cf. 76.3, 87.3 (also 91.1, 102.1); 64.335, 373 (*foedus*), cf. 87.3, 109.6.

<sup>17</sup> 1.1 and 10: Wiseman (1979: 169, 174). 61.1f. and 27–30: see n.11 above. 65.16: see n.7 above. Cf. Gigante (1954: 72) on Catullus as 'l'autentico Callimaco romano'. The Callimacheanism of Catullus and his contemporaries is well discussed by Lyne (1978a: 180–4), reprinted in this volume, pp. 109–40.



of 65–116,<sup>18</sup> also looks ahead to the treatment of them in mythological dress in the long poems—as the reader will realize in retrospect when he reaches Ariadne’s speech in poem 64.<sup>19</sup> The number of such cross-references between the long poems and the 1–60 and 69–116 sequences is striking.<sup>20</sup> Some are no doubt haphazard, but it would be absurd to insist that they all must be; the natural inference is that Catullus was inviting his readers to compare his treatment of mythological themes with that of his personal experience (or what passes for it in the short poems), which in turn implies that the reader is expected to have all three parts of the work to hand.

I conclude, then, that the apparent contradiction involved in Quinn’s hypothesis, that poem 1 introduces a single *volumen* but refers to three, is not really a contradiction at all. What Nepos held in his hand was a ‘λέπτουζ *libellus*’ (‘subtle book’) of short poems in various metres, our 1–60 sequence; but at the same time he was given allusively to understand that Catullus’ work, like his own, was in three books. What we can never know is whether Nepos’ ‘presentation copy’ was just the 1–60 *libellus* or a *capsula* (‘small book box’) containing all three.<sup>21</sup> But I think we may be sure that the ‘collected works’ which Catullus’ *scribae* wrote out for him, and which he wanted the Roman reading public to find in the shelves of the booksellers,<sup>22</sup> were in three rolls, to be read in order. Four generations later, when the *codex* technique enabled the contents of more than one roll to be contained in one book, the *liber Catulli Veronensis* could be made in the form we have it now.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Wiseman (1969a: 16) on poem 60: love, bitterness and erudition (note the Graecism in line 1, the first known use of λέαινα (‘lioness’) as a Latin word).

<sup>19</sup> 64.154–6. As Ross (1969: 29f.) points out, poems 60 and 64 are also linked by their allusion to Ennius’ *Medea* (64.1–8).

<sup>20</sup> e.g. 61.199–201 with 7.2–8; 64.1f. and 7 with 4.3f; 64.29f. with 88.5f.; 64.96 with 36.12–14; 64.100 with 81.4; 64.132–5 (cf. 56–9) with 30.1–5; 64.139–42 with 70.1–4; 64.142 with 30.10; 64.191 with 76.18; 64.218 with 101.5; 68.46 with 78b.4; 68.92 with 101.6; 68.148 with 107.6; 68.158 with 77.4; 68.159 with 58.3. Cf. Wiseman (1977: 177f.).

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Crinagoras *Anth. Pal.* 9.239: five rolls of Anacreon in one box.

<sup>22</sup> Cat. 14.17f., *librariorum scrinia*.

<sup>23</sup> So Quinn (1972: 13). For the transfer of boxed *volumina* to *codex* form, cf. Haslam (1976) (on the MSS of Demosthenes).

It would be pleasant to be able to leave it at that. But so deeply rooted are the beliefs that (a) Catullus did not live to arrange his own poems for publication, and (b) the collection as we have it is the work of a posthumous editor, that some account must be taken of them. Let us look briefly at each of these ideas in turn.

(a) We do not know when Catullus died. All his dateable poems belong to 56–54 BC; Jerome gives his age at death as 30, which may well be a correct transcription from Suetonius, though the dates given (87–57) are impossible. It is often assumed that he lived from 84 to 54—partly on a very weak argument from the names of the consuls of 87 and 84 BC,<sup>24</sup> mainly (I suspect) because that is the smallest alteration possible to account for the dateable poems. But to argue from that to the idea that the poems of 54 BC were written very soon before his death is simply circular.

Now it is possible that, despite his youth, he knew he was going to die and therefore made an almost complete collection of his poems. But is it not more likely that he left behind a few published *libelli* and some odd poems which a compiler subsequently put together in the unique *liber* we have?<sup>25</sup>

This apparently attractive argument is also based on a fallacy, the confusion of ‘collected poems’ and ‘complete poems’. There is not the slightest reason to assume that Catullus had to know that he was going to die before he could think of putting his poems together in a collection.<sup>26</sup> It would not, after all, prevent him from writing further poetry afterwards—for instance the Theocritean *φάρμακεύτρια* mentioned by Pliny or the Priapean poems quoted by the grammarians.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Munro (1878: 73). The names are: Cn. Octavius Cn.f.Cn.n., L. Cornelius L.f.L.n. Cinna (87); Cn. Papius Cn.f.C.n. Carbo II, L. Cornelius L.f.L.n. Cinna IIII (84). The order of names (Degrassi [1947: 482] for the evidence) militates against the easy confusion of the two dates because of Cinna’s consulships; besides, Jerome’s other blunders, on the dates of Lucilius, Messalla Corvinus and Livy, admit of no such simple explanation, and were no doubt due only to the fact that, as he admits (*tumultuarium opus*, in his preface), Jerome wrote in a hurry.

<sup>25</sup> Wilkinson (1974: 85); the same argument in Goold (1974b: 8f.). Both accept 54 as the date of death: ‘it is generally thought...’ (Wilkinson), ‘the consensus of opinion...’ (Goold).

<sup>26</sup> Though poem 38 is no longer cited as an intimation of mortality, poem 52 seems to have taken its place: Della Corte (1976: 245).

<sup>27</sup> Pliny *NH* 28.9; Nonius 200L, *Gramm. Lat.* 6.151, 260, 406K.

Since we are dealing only with probabilities, let me offer (purely *exempli gratia*) an alternative order of events. Some time in 54, after the Lesbia affair had more or less blown itself out, Catullus heard the news of his brother's death and retired to his home at Verona.<sup>28</sup> He had already written a substantial collection of poems long and short, and at this milestone in his life he thought of collecting them into a corpus with a certain thematic unity. The brother's death was to be a *Leitmotiv* in the elegiac collection; what little writing he did, in response to requests from friends, was composed with this in mind (65, 68a), and a poem written (101) or rewritten (68.91–100)<sup>29</sup> was enough to create the new theme. He then returned to Rome, published his collection, wrote more poetry which is lost to us, and died there at some unspecified time before 32 BC.<sup>30</sup> I repeat—one cannot be too careful—that this is not offered as what *must* have happened, but as what *may* have happened. It is consistent with the data that we have.

(b) As for the 'posthumous editor' so dear to Catullan scholars,<sup>31</sup> his shadowy existence derives merely from the 'multiplication of hypotheses beyond necessity', and should therefore be cut short with Ockham's Razor. Other things being equal, a collection of poems by Catullus, especially one beginning with a dedication-poem, ought to be Catullus' work:<sup>32</sup> the onus of proof is on those who declare it to be impossible. It is hard to find any statement *why* it should be impossible, beyond appeals to the placing of poem 51 after poem 11,<sup>33</sup> but that may not be inexplicable if we bear in mind the difference

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Wiseman (1969a: 37): the themes of the brother's death and the trip to Bithynia are kept so conspicuously separate in the collection that there is *no* reason to date the former event to 57 BC; and the comparative scarcity of references to it surely suggests that it took place quite soon before the collection was made.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Wiseman (1974: 73–6).

<sup>30</sup> The place is given by Jerome, the *terminus ante quem* by Nepos (*Att.* 12.4, cf. 19.1); Ovid (*Am.* 3.9.61) implies that he died young.

<sup>31</sup> Della Corte (1951: 15–20) and (1976: 43f.) even believes that the posthumous editor was Nepos himself: cf. Fronto *ad M. Caes.* 1.7.4.

<sup>32</sup> Rightly emphasized by Schmidt (1973: 238–42).

<sup>33</sup> e.g. Tyrrell (1895: 91). Most recently in Wilkinson (1974: 84), Goold (1974b: 9); Clausen (1976: 40), reprinted in this volume, pp. 56–65; Kenney (1976: 29). For Lyne, it is axiomatic that 'our collection could not possibly have been produced by Catullus himself' (1978a: 185 n.64), following Wheeler (1934: 22ff. and 39f.).

between the purpose of a poem as first written and the use made of it as a unit in the collection.<sup>34</sup>

It is sometimes said in more general terms that the order of poems is simply 'chaotic'<sup>35</sup>—a subjective judgment certainly worth no more in itself than the opinion of those, from Wilamowitz downwards, who have been conscious of deliberate and artistic arrangement.<sup>36</sup> More often scholars try to have it both ways, the odd 'purposed sequences' they can detect being attributed to hypothetical earlier Catullan collections, or to the hand of a posthumous editor to whom 'an occasional artfulness of arrangement may be owing'—even though, *ex hypothesi*, he was incapable of producing a collection that was an artistic whole.<sup>37</sup> The orthodox view is that the edition was put together in the second or third century AD,<sup>38</sup> but it has been rightly said of this idea that it is

a strangely late date for a collected edition of so important a poet. Had Virgil read the *epyllion* only in a 'monobiblos', or did Martial know Catullus only from a collection of polymetric pieces?<sup>39</sup>

So far as I know, that objection has never been answered.

There is, in short, no reason to conjure Anonymus Postumus up from limbo, and every reason to believe that what presents itself as Catullus' book is in fact Catullus' work. For why should we expect his design to be immediately apparent to us? Just because he was capable

<sup>34</sup> See Quinn (1972: 56–60, esp. 59) and n.6 above. Schmidt (1973: 226) supposes a 'chiastic' positioning of the first *Lesbia*-poem in the last quarter of the 1–60 sequence, and the last in the first.

<sup>35</sup> e.g. Schmidt (1914: 278). *Contra* Weinreich (1959: 90): 'Chaos? Kosmos!'

<sup>36</sup> Wilamowitz (1913: 292), without argument; Quinn (1972: 9–20), cf. Williams (1968: 469f.). Attempts at detailed explanation by Heck (1950), Weinreich (1960: 163–70), Tränkle (1967: 100–3), Wiseman (1969a: 1–31), Schmidt (1973), Offermann (1977). The fact that these analyses differ among themselves does not, of course, mean that none of them can be right: the point is that patterns can be detected, and therefore the anonymous editor is not the only possible explanation: Granarolo (1973–4: 59–62).

<sup>37</sup> Quotation from Clausen (1976: 40): that so good a scholar can hold this view is a tribute to the tenacity of the *communis opinio*, but not (alas) to its truth. Others admit much more blatant self-contradictions: cf. Wiseman (1976: 271), on the views of B. Coppel. 'Purposed sequences': Wheeler (1934: 26–9), following Ellis (1878: pp. xlvi–1).

<sup>38</sup> Wheeler (1934: 32); accepted by (e.g.) Wilkinson (1974: 84).

<sup>39</sup> Ross (1969: 8 n.8).

of writing individual poems of such direct simplicity that they still speak to us face to face after two millennia, it does not follow that he was always simple, much less that his tastes and attitudes necessarily coincide with ours.

Catullus and his friends wrote for a small and intelligent audience, and we must work hard to reconstruct the intellectual climate they inhabited and the standards of sensibility they took for granted. Otherwise we have no chance of properly understanding either the arrangement of his collected works or the full meaning of the poem in which he introduced them to his friend and fellow-Transpadane Cornelius Nepos. No doubt Nepos understood both perfectly well for, though he was a historian and Catullus a poet, in the literary world of Hellenistic Rome that distinction did not mean as much as it does to us. One was a great artist, the other not, but their intellectual heritage was the same.

## Part II

# New Criticism and Catullus' Sapphics

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## Catullan *Otiosi*: The Lover and the Poet

Charles Segal

Discussions of *otium* ('leisure', 'ease') in Catullus concentrate, naturally enough, on poem 51. The role of *otium* in poem 50 has, in consequence, been neglected.<sup>1</sup> It is the point of this paper to show that 50 is far more than an amusing *Gelegenheitsgedicht* ('occasional poem') and that 50 and 51, whether or not intended by Catullus to stand in this order, shed light on one another through a complementary conception of *otium*.<sup>2</sup>

*Otiosi* ('at leisure') in the first line of poem 50 is, I suggest, a key word in the poem. It does not just fill out a vividly glimpsed scene in Catullus' life. Within its context it creates an antithesis to public life and suggests an elevation of the realm of the private, of personal mood and experience, to a new significance. In implicit opposition to the 'serious' work of law, politics, or business, it dwells upon the deliberately inconsequential activities, the frivolous—one might almost

<sup>1</sup> An important exception is Pucci (1961: esp. 254–5 on *otium*). (I was able to consult this excellent study unfortunately only after I had essentially written my essay.) On *otium* in general and in connection with 51 see Fraenkel (1957: 211–14); Woodman (1966); André (1966), which I have not seen, with the summary and discussion by Fontaine (1966); Laidlaw (1968), who has a brief discussion of 51 (p. 47), but no mention of 50.

<sup>2</sup> A connection between 50 and 51 has apparently been proposed by Ferrero (1955: 63–9) which I have been unable to consult: see Leon (1959: 146). A different connection between the two poems is broached by Lavency (1965), who regards 50 as the poetic epistle accompanying 51, as 65 accompanies 66. But 50, even line 16, offers no concrete evidence for such a view and certainly no indications as clear as line 15 of 65.



say, defiantly frivolous—pursuits of a privileged class of young men held together by common interests and tastes, and especially by common tastes in literature.<sup>3</sup> The word, then, adumbrates both a mode of life and (indirectly) an aesthetic.

To appreciate the tone of defiance and the distinctive, ‘non-conformist’ attitude,<sup>4</sup> one must realize that *otium* in this period has unfavourable, even ‘disreputable’ associations.<sup>5</sup> Catullus, however, gives no hint of anything apologetic. Cicero, at the opposite pole, considers *otium* and *solitudo* to be *duae res quae languorem adferunt ceteris* (‘two things that prompt others to idleness’), and sets it down to the credit of the elder Scipio Africanus that *et in otio de negotiis cogitare* (‘even at leisure [he] thought about business’).<sup>6</sup>

*Otiosi* is followed by *lusimus*, *delicatos* (‘we played’, ‘pleasure lovers’), the diminutive *versiculos*, *ludebat*, *iocum atque vinum*, *lepore*

<sup>3</sup> See Pucci (1961: 254), who speaks of the neoterics’ ‘assunzione di moduli etico-letterari sconvenienti, provocatori e, come diremmo noi, anticonformisti’ (‘assumption of ethical-literary models that were improper, provocative, and, as we might say, anticonformist’).

<sup>4</sup> See the preceding note.

<sup>5</sup> See Laidlaw (1968: *passim* and esp. 42–3 and 47): ‘In fact, the word *otium* from the time of Comedy may have a connotation of reprobate life’. *Otium* could, of course, have positive implications too, like Cicero’s *honestum* or *cum dignitate otium* (‘honorable leisure’)—though the very fact that the word needs to be qualified is significant—but certainly not in the context of the *voluptates* (‘pleasures’) of 50: see Pucci (1961: 255) and Balsdon (1960: esp. 47–50). Cicero, *Pro Sestio*, 66.138–9, illustrates the conventional attitude: ‘... sed mihi omnis oratio est cum virtute non cum desidia, cum dignitate non cum voluptate, cum iis qui se patriae, qui suis civibus, qui laudi, qui gloriae, non qui somno et conviviis et delectationi natos arbitrantur. Nam si qui voluptatibus ducuntur et se vitiorum inlecebris et cupiditatum lenociniis dederunt, missos faciant honores, ne attingant rem publicam, patientur virorum fortium labore se otio suo perfrui. Qui autem bonam famam bonorum, quae sola vere gloria nominari potest, expetunt, aliis otium quaerere debent et voluptates, non sibi.’ (‘But my whole oration is addressed to virtue not to sloth, to honor not to pleasure, to those who consider themselves born for their country, for their citizens, for praise, for glory, not to those who think themselves born for sleep and banquets and enjoyment. For if any are led by pleasures and have devoted themselves to the enticements of vice and the panderings of lust, let them renounce office, let them not touch public life, let them allow themselves to enjoy the toil of brave men at their ease. Those who seek the good opinion of good men, which is the only true definition of glory, ought to seek leisure and pleasures for others, not for themselves.’)

<sup>6</sup> Cic. *De Off.* iii. 1.1. See Laidlaw (1968: 44–5): Cicero ‘prided himself on being occupied, claimed never to be *otiosus*’ and ‘seems always to feel the need of some sort of apology for leisure’.

(‘scraps of verse’, ‘played’, ‘jest and wine’, ‘charm’; lines 2–7). Pucci, in his excellent study of 50, has noted the affinity of many of these words (and also *iucunde*, ‘good friend’; line 16) with Roman comedy.<sup>7</sup> This connection, of course, increases the distance between the poem and the conventional morality of Catullus’ respectable fellow citizens.

Many of these words, however, occur elsewhere in Catullus to suggest precisely the atmosphere of refined, playful poetry, looking back to Callimachus and his successors, which underlies 50: its personal mood, its eschewing of ‘great themes’ or public concerns, and its concentration upon an aesthetic experience. J. P. Elder has recently called attention to the programmatic character of poem 1.<sup>8</sup> *Lepore* in line 7 of our poem recalls that first poem—in fact, the very first line of the collection, where Catullus announces his book as a *lepidum libellum* (‘charming little book’; 1.1).<sup>9</sup> The repeated *ludere* (‘play’) of 50 (lines 2 and 5) also corresponds to the idea of *nugae* (‘trifles’) in 1 (line 4).<sup>10</sup> *Ludere* occurs in another light poem, 2, to describe a deliberately ‘frivolous’ amorous situation (lines 2 and 9; cf. too *iocum* (‘jest’; 50.6), and *iocari* (‘to frolic’; 2.6)). We may note also the correspondence of the conventional language of passion in 2 (*dolor*, *gravis ardor*, *tristis curas* [‘pain’, ‘fierce passion’, ‘sad cares’], 2.7–10) with the language of the second part of 50: *incensus*, *miserum*, *indomitus furore*, *cupiens*, *defessa*, *semimortua*, *dolorem*, etc (‘on fire’; ‘wretched’; ‘with uncontrollable ecstasy’, ‘longing’, ‘exhausted’, ‘half-dead’, ‘pain’; 50.8–21).

This last observation brings me to my second point. It is clear, as a number of scholars have pointed out, that the second part of 50 carefully and self-consciously exploits the language of love to describe this literary experience.<sup>11</sup> To those interested in reconstructing the ‘real’ events ‘behind’ the poem, this language may suggest that the kind of *versiculi* which Calvus and Catullus exchanged on that extraordinary day were love-poems, perhaps of the type represented by 2 or 3 or

<sup>7</sup> Pucci (1961: 252).

<sup>8</sup> Elder (1966); also Copley (1951; reprinted in this volume, pp. 27–34).

<sup>9</sup> On *lepidus* and *lepos* see Pucci (1961: 251–2, with 252, n. 3); Copley (1951: 201–2); Buchheit (1959: 319–21).

<sup>10</sup> On *ludere*, especially in connection with poetry, see Kroll (1929) on 50.2, who cites 61.232 and Virgil *Ecl.* 6.1; add also Horace, *Odes* 1.32.2 and 4.9.9; *Culex* 1–5, See also Fraenkel (1957: 172–5).

<sup>11</sup> See Kroll (1929) on 50.8 ff.; Lavency (1965: 180–1); Quinn (1959: 56).

even 51. This issue, however, is irrelevant to the present discussion. More to the point is the unquestionably exaggerated tone and the playful irony informing the erotic vocabulary, recently noted by Eduard Fraenkel.<sup>12</sup> The irony further contributes to the light and frivolous atmosphere of the poem. Yet behind the irony there is a seriousness too. The amatory language reveals a man who feels his literary experience as something sensual.<sup>13</sup> For Catullus (or for the Catullus presented in this poem) the life of art has an intensity which approaches the life of passion. Art and sensual passion become, in this case, virtually inextricable. It is interesting that where Catullus uses *otiosus* elsewhere the situation not only stresses the frivolous leisure shared by a group of young men but also has a strong erotic component in the background, as in 10 (lines 1–4):

Varus me meus ad suos amores  
visum duxerat e foro otiosum,  
scortillum, ut mihi tum repente visum est,  
non sane illepidum neque invenustum.

My friend Varus had taken me from the forum  
to see his girl friend when I had nothing to do—  
a little tart, as she seemed to me at once,  
but not without wit or charm.

This fusion of literary interests and passion in 50 is central to the meaning of that poem. *Otiosi* in line 1 concentrates that meaning in a single word.<sup>14</sup> It is opposed to the *negotium* ('busy-ness', 'activity') of more 'serious' and more traditionally 'Roman' concerns. It may be more than accident or anecdotal realism that Varus leads the *otiosum Catullum* of 10 *e foro*. Such an *otiosus* not only leads a life which has its centre far from the forum and is discrepant with its occupations;

<sup>12</sup> Fraenkel (1956: 282): '... mit ganz leichter Übertreibung, ganz leisem Lächeln; über sich selbst' ('with very slight exaggeration, a very gentle smile, at himself'). See also Pucci (1961: 255).

<sup>13</sup> Quinn (1959: 56) speaks of this language as conveying 'an intellectual or artistic excitement that is as acute as sensual excitement'.

<sup>14</sup> Pucci (1961: 255) notes in *otiosus* the 'sottile ambivalenza che s'insinua nell'aggettivo, poiché s'adatta alla condizione di poeta che a quella di amante' ('the subtle ambivalence insinuated in the adjective since it is suited to the condition of both lover and poet').

he also devotes his energies to analysing, savouring, recording these 'unforensic' experiences.

This defiance of Roman busy-ness for a life of love and poetry is implicit in much (though not all) of the Catullan corpus<sup>15</sup> and helps prepare the way for the private world of the Augustan elegists. It is implicit too in the very terms which Catullus applies to his own work: *nugae*, *ludere* ('trifles', 'play'). The famous *vivamus, mea Lesbia*, is perhaps the poet's strongest challenge to conventional Roman *negotium*: youth and love (*vivamus, amemus*: 'let us live, let us love') throw down the gauntlet to age (*senum*), seriousness (*severiorum*), and the accepted conditions of Wall Street success (hence the often-noted irony in the numerical and financial terms of lines 3, 10, 11).<sup>16</sup> In 5 that challenge comes from love. In 50 it comes from poetry, which, however, is inseparably fused with love and indeed, through the erotic terminology of 50.8–21, is experienced in terms of a lover's passion. It is *otium* which bridges both sides, unites love and poetry, for *otium* is indispensable to both; and it is 50 which brings home that connection in the characteristically subtle, anecdotal, understated, and ostensibly 'nugatory' manner of the *novi poetae* and their Hellenistic predecessors.

This connection of poetry and *otium* can perhaps be traced back to Lucretius (the high valuation of *otium* suggests an Epicurean note), where man's newly learned art of song is diffused over forests, groves, and places of quietude (5.1384–7):

inde minutatim dulcis didicere querelas,  
tibia quas fundit digitis pulsata canentum,  
avia per nemora ac silvas saltusque reperta,  
per loca pastorum deserta atque otia dia.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Cf. poems like 44, 52, 53, and perhaps 49, which have a political background, and also the Caesar poems. Catullus was no *Epicuri de grege porcus* ('pig from the herd of Epicurus'), although, as Horace too realized, the legacy of Epicurus could be both subtler and nobler than a private, quietistic hedonism.

<sup>16</sup> See, for example, Kroll (1929) and Fordyce (1961) on *conturbabimus* and *fecerimus*, 5.10–11; also the translation of the latter part of 5 by Quinn (1959: 52), with his note 21 on p. 109; Grimm (1963–4: esp. 19–21); Commager (1963–4); and Segal (1968b: 289–92).

<sup>17</sup> *Otia* here may refer to 'places of leisure' rather than 'leisure' itself: see Bailey (1947: ad loc.); also Laidlaw (1968: 46).

Then little by little they learned sweet laments,  
 which the flute pours out, stuck by the fingers of the performers,  
 the flute, discovered among the pathless woods and forests and glades,  
 among the lonely places of shepherds and their inspired leisure.

Catullus' immediate successors can then assume that *otium* not only is a prerequisite for poetry, but also reflects the mood and the essential tonality which such poetry will have. One may recall the *otium* of Virgil's first *Eclogue* (*deus nobis haec otia fecit*, line 6: 'a god created this leisure for us') which consists explicitly in poetry and in part love-poetry: Tityrus' meditations on the forest muse and the songs about the lovely Amaryllis with which, *lentus in umbra* ('at ease in the shade'), he makes the woods resound.<sup>18</sup> And at the end of the *Georgics* (4.559–66) Virgil not only associates the *Eclogues* once more with *otium*, but contrasts that life of poetic *otium* (*dulcis alebat/Parthenope studiis florentem ignobilis oti* 'pleasant Parthenope nurtured me, pre-eminent in the studies of inglorious leisure') with the 'serious' martial *negotia* of Augustus Caesar (*magnus ad altum/fulminat Euphraten ...*; 'the great man thundered near the deep Euphrates').

The *otium poeticum* is also a Horatian *topos*: *si quid vacui sub umbra/lusimus tecum* ('if I have composed anything with you, free from care in the shade'; *Odes* 1.32.1–2);<sup>19</sup> but it is Ovid who, naturally enough, makes the fullest use of *otium* to project his poetical 'persona'.<sup>20</sup> He can, of course, relish without reservations the *otium* which Catullus has so defiantly (yet uneasily) espoused. He even frames gnomically that interdependence of *otium* and poetry which is implied by Catullus, Virgil, and Horace:

<sup>18</sup> For the ramifications of this *otium* in connection with the view of poetry in the *Eclogues* see Smith (1965).

<sup>19</sup> See the discussion of this passage in Fraenkel (1957: 173–5). He aptly cites *Epist.* 1.7.44–5:

mihi iam non regia Roma,  
 sed vacuum Tibur placet aut imbelles Tarentum  
 'not royal Rome, but quiet Tibur or unwarlike Tarentum pleases me',

where one may note the implied antithesis between *regia* and *vacuum* and the parallel between *vacuum* and *imbelles*.

<sup>20</sup> For *otium* in Ovid's view of his poetry I am much indebted to the discussion in Laidlaw (1968: 47–8).

carmina secessum scribentis et otia quaerunt.

(*Trist.* 1.1.41)

poems demand the writer's seclusion and ease.

*Otium*, Ovid admits confessionally, has been an important factor in his disposition toward poetry and his artistic development:

ipse ego segnis eram discinctaque in otia natus:  
mollierant animos lectus et umbra meos.

(*Amores* 1.9.41–2)

I had been born idle and for easy-going leisure;  
the couch and the shade had made my spirits mild.

nec patiens corpus, nec mens fuit apta labori,  
sollicitaeque fugax ambitionis eram,  
et petere Aoniae suadebant tuta sorores  
otia, iudicio semper amata meo.

(*Trist.* 4.10.37–40)<sup>21</sup>

my body had no endurance and my mind was unfitted for toil,  
and I was in the habit of avoiding careworn ambition,  
and the Aonian sisters urged me to seek  
secure leisure, always dear to my taste.

It is an interesting link with the two aspects of *otium* in 50 that for Ovid too *otium* is a prerequisite not only for poetry, but for love as well:

otia si tollas, periere Cupidinis arcus,  
contemptaeque iacent et sine luce faces.  
quam platanus vino gaudet, quam populus unda,  
et quam limosa canna palustris humo,  
tam Venus otia amat: qui finem quaeris amoris  
(cedit amor rebus) res age; tutus eris.

(*Remed. Am.* 139–43)

If you take away leisure, Cupid's arrows are dead  
and his torches lie disregarded and without their light.  
As the plane tree delights in wine, as the poplar in water,

<sup>21</sup> See also *Trist.* 3.2.9–10 and 4.8.7–8; also Laidlaw (1968: 48).

and the marshy canna in muddy ground,  
 so Venus loves leisure: you who wish an end of love  
 (love gives way to business), be busy; you will be safe.

The significant *otiosi* of the first line of 50, then, alerts the reader to a union of love and poetry in a special aesthetic attitude; and the poem will itself effect this union through its juxtaposition of literary terminology in the first part (*ludere, versiculi, lepos*) with erotic language in the second. (It should be remembered, however, that words like *ludere, iocus, delicati, lepos* in the first part have erotic as well as literary associations,<sup>22</sup> so that the fusion of poetry and love is not confined to the second part alone; it is only more striking there.)

When compared with 50, the controversial last stanza of 51<sup>23</sup> seems to be a recantation, a return to the scruples of Roman seriousness, and has often been so understood. There is no doubt that Catullus is critical of this *otium*; it is irritating and painful (*molestum*, 51.13) and brings excessive agitation: *otio exsultas nimiumque gestis* ('in ease you are too restless and unrestrained'; 51.14).<sup>24</sup> But the fact is that Catullus writes this criticism of *otium* in the elaborate and artificial Sapphic stanza and (in all probability) appends it to his fine translation of a famous work of a great poetess. Thus his disavowal of at least the 'poetic' *otium* is by no means complete. The tone of hesitation and doubt indicates, of course, that Catullus recognizes this *otium* as no easy possession. It has its dangers. But, just because it is dangerous or even harmful (*molestum*), it is not necessarily repudiated. Those scholars who would separate the *otium* stanza from the rest of the poem seem to read a total rejection of *otium* into what is in fact a realistic personal appraisal (in lines 13–14) of what it costs to live such *otium*. The path of *negotium*, with its tangible, approved rewards from the *severiores*, is in many ways easier.

Both 50 and 51, then, present the dangers of *otium*, but from different points of view. 50 depicts the cost of *otium* indirectly in a narrative situation and with a touch of humorous irony. In a

<sup>22</sup> Noted by Pucci (1961: 249–50).

<sup>23</sup> For the problems of the last stanza of 51 see Woodman (1966); Fraenkel (1957: 211 with n. 4); Leon (1959: 146–7). Recent discussion and bibliography in Fredricksmeier (1965).

<sup>24</sup> For *gestire* and *exsultare* see Woodman (1966: 222).

different mood Catullus might have summed up the agitation described in 50.8–21 with the judgement of 51.14: *otio exsultas nimiumque gestis*. But 50 neither judges nor stands back from the experience, as 51 does. Its personal monologue, despite the obvious colouring (partly ironical) of pathos that accompanies the love-plaint, is remarkably ‘objective’ (cf. the factual listing of the symptoms in lines 9–10, 14–15); and it is the delicate touch of wit and irony which creates this objectivity. In 51 the irony and humour are gone; but Catullus does not, for that reason, suggest that the cost of *otium* is too high. The superb first three stanzas illustrate what his *otium* can produce; and the last stanza, along with poems like 8, shows what can emerge from his struggle with *otium*. The transition from the first three stanzas to the self-address of lines 13–16 (contrast *mihi*, 6, with *Catulle, tibi*, 13) is undoubtedly harsh.<sup>25</sup> But 50 helps us to understand that harshness: in poetry as in love, pain and joy are commingled, and the poet suffers from the very intensity of his involvement in an experience which has brought him such delight. Even the literary pleasures described in 50 have a *dolor* (line 17) which is not altogether playful; and the dominant mood of that poem is restlessness rather than unalloyed joy and contentment.

Emotional paradoxes of the sort described in the preceding paragraph were familiar enough to ancient thinkers (one need only remember Plato’s *Phaedo* and *Philebus*), but one need not go beyond Catullus himself. Complex and contradictory psychological states are no surprise in the poet of *odi et amo*.

In a sense, then, the translation—or, rather, creative adaptation—of Sappho in lines 1–12 of 51 already contains in itself an implicit answer to Catullus’ doubts about his *otium*. That *otium*, on the view of 50 propounded here, implies a whole way of life and art. Hence the questioning of the final stanza of 51 goes deeper than the immediate situation. It is a brief, introspective examination of Catullus’ *bios* (‘way of life’) as poet-lover, as the *homo otiosus* of 10 or 50. Yet, taken together, 50 and 51 recreate and imaginatively affirm that mode of life—but without denying the pain and restlessness which may arise from its intensity and the self-doubt which may follow from its boldly

<sup>25</sup> The harshness is greatly stressed in the uncompromisingly ‘separatist’ view of Fordyce (1961: 219). See *contra* Fredricksmeyer (1965: 154 ff.).



asserted independence and its freedom from accepted terms of success, *negotium*.

50 deals primarily with the literary or 'poetic' side of *otium*; 51 with the amatory side; but the two strands of *otium* are intertwined. Thus 50 uses the language of amorous passion to describe a literary experience, while 51 uses a literary experience—a creative encounter with a poem half a millennium in the past—to describe an amorous passion. In both cases the transformation of the present experience, and indeed the experience itself, depend upon *otium*. One must be *otiosus* (in the pregnant sense here defined) not only to write *versiculi*, but also to write another poem on the experience of writing and sharing these *versiculi*; and, though most men, *otiosi* or not, fall in love, only the *otiosi* ponder and analyse their experience and transmute it into art. And only the *otiosi* possess both the need and the talent to search out the experience of the past and remake it in their own terms.

## Catullus 11: The Ironies of Integrity

*Michael C. J. Putnam*

Furi et Aureli, comites Catulli,  
 sive in extremos penetrabit Indos,  
 litus ut longe resonante Eoa  
     tunditur unda,

sive in Hyrcanos Arabasve molles, 5  
 seu Sagas sagittiferosve Parthos,  
 sive quae septemgeminus colorat  
     aequora Nilus,

sive trans altas gradietur Alpes, 10  
 Caesaris visens monimenta magni,  
 Gallicum Rhenum horribile aequor ulti-  
     mosque Britannos,

omnia haec, quaecumque feret voluntas  
 caelitum, temptare simul parati,  
 pauca nuntiate meae puellae 15  
     non bona dicta.

cum suis vivat valeatque moechis,  
 quos simul complexa tenet trecentos,  
 nullum amans vere, sed identidem omnium  
     ilia rumpens; 20

nec meum respectet, ut ante, amorem,  
 qui illius culpa cecidit velut prati  
 ultimi flos, praetereunte postquam  
     tactus aratro est.

Furius and Aurelius, companions of Catullus, whether he will make his way into the farthest Indi, where the shore is beaten by the far-resounding eastern wave, or into the Hyrcani or the soft Arabians, whether to the Sagae or arrow-bearing Parthians, whether into the waters which sevenfold Nile dyes, whether he will cross over the lofty Alps, viewing the memorials of mighty Caesar, the Gallic Rhine, bristling water and remotest Britons—all these things, prepared to test together whatever the will of the gods shall bring: announce a few words to my girl, words not pleasant. Let her live and flourish with her adulterers, whom three hundred at once she holds in her embrace, loving no one of them truly, but again and again breaking the strength of all. And let her not look for my love, as before, which by her fault has fallen like a flower of the remotest meadow after it has been touched by a passing plough.

A first encounter with Catullus' great lyric of dismissal often raises the question of internal unity. What elements besides meter assure continuity to an apparently tripartite poem that begins with its author posing as explorer of the farthest Indi and concludes with a comparison of himself to a flower in the remotest meadow? And in between we have a brisk vignette of his mistress' open degradation.

The intention of the initial apostrophe is itself open to doubt. Elsewhere in his verse Catullus treats Furius and Aurelius with patent scorn. Here they are apparently envisioned, at the start, as dutiful friends, willing to join the poet in experiencing the varied reaches of the universe—east and west, rivers and mountains, peoples luxurious and bellicose, the accomplishments of a Caesar. The stance is one of power and the epic richness of the language complements the subject. Catullus had himself once been a *comes* ('aide', 46.9) on the staff of Gaius Memmius and he sympathizes with his friends Veranius and Fabullus for their misfortunes as *Pisonis comites* ('aides of Piso', 28.1). This role, as 'governor' of his world, Catullus now plays for a moment, securing the allegiance of his supposed friends and giving them commands. He is to be an enterprising observer of varied reality, absorbing an existence noteworthy for spatial vividness and sensual breadth.

The tone of these opening stanzas is very Roman, a rich clustering of realms to be explored, named and conquered by a Caesar or described and chronicled by a Nepos in his labored pages, of energies to be channelled, of tribes and places to be turned into *monimenta*—'warnings' to the memory of an imposing presence. Figures of speech liberally enrich this catalogue and metrical niceties abound.

The onomatopoeic *tunditur unda* caught Tibullus' ear (*cautes... / naufraga quam vasti tunderet unda maris*, 'the rock... on which beats the ship-wrecking wave of the immense sea', 2.4.9–10).<sup>1</sup> The 't' sounds are linked with the beginning of the phrase (*litus ut*) while assonance reverberates through *longe resonante Eoa* (resonance echoes, both literally and figuratively, through the ordered reiteration of the vowels from *resonante* to *Eoa*). Brisk dentals conspire with deeper nasal sounds to plot the sea in sound, striking and echoing.

Twice (lines 2 and 9) the principal caesura comes before verbs of importance—*penetrabit* and *gradietur*—which by their parallelism seem to divide the catalogue as a whole into two parts. In each instance the verbs separate adjectives from their nouns to offer a precis of novelty's impact—exciting attribute, verb as effort, noun as result. Twice (lines 6 and 7) lack of principal caesura accents epic vocabulary, a metrical feature which links these verses with line 23, for reasons apparent only then. At line 9 the hypnotic repetition of *sive* in anaphora comes to a stop as we turn from eastern diversity to concentrate specifically on Caesar whose accomplishments lines 11 and 12 rush to exhibit. (Asyndeton and division of a word between lines enhance the poet's purpose. But—to anticipate again—only after making an association with the hypermetric lines 19 and 22 will this purpose be fully apparent.)

The break in the catalogue is marked by a change from *penetrabit* to *gradietur*, the first verb marked by commitment and energy, the second forthright but less colorful. Emotional focus in fact shifts from the adventuring poet and his *comites* to Caesar. The same diversions into peoples and bodies of water are still operative. *Indi* and the Eoan wave, *Hyr cani* and the Nile find their counterparts in Rhine, bristling channel and *Britanni*. Only mountains, the lofty Alps measuring vertical as well as horizontal distance, are new, crossed by Caesar whose deed the poet mimics. Perhaps something of a soldier's dull duty is to be sensed in *gradietur*, a word which notably lacks the sexual

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the alliteration and onomatopoeia (if such is the correct term) at 32.11 and 59.5. The phrase also charmed Horace. At *C.* 2.6.4, a poem in Sapphics which also begins with a similar theme, he has the phrase *aestuat unda*, paralleling Catullus in metrical position and, partially, in sound and sense. For an interpretation of the echo see Segal (1969: 246).

overtones of *penetrabit*. In any case the poem is now dominated by mighty Caesar whose capsulated performance depersonalizes, turning rivers and peoples into *monimenta*, symbols of a dictator's special feats of boldness.<sup>2</sup> Geography's variety is reduced to the status of token of public achievement.

The epic flavor of these opening lines, beginning when *longe resonante* echoes the Homeric *poluphloisbos*, was sensed and recaptured by Virgil in two passages outlining the vast extent of Roman domination under Augustus. The first, looking directly to the newer Caesar, speaks of a golden age of might extended over Garamantes and Indi (*Aen.* 6.798–800):

huius in adventum iam nunc et Caspia regna  
 responsis horrent divum et Maeotia tellus,  
 et septemgemini turbant trepida ostia Nili.<sup>3</sup>

... Against whose arrival even now both the Caspian realms and Maeotian land shudder from the oracles of the gods, and the trembling mouths of sevenfold Nile are in turmoil.

Other humbled tribes Vulcan engraves into Augustus' Roman triumph (*Aen.* 8.724–28):

hic Nomadum genus et discinctos Mulciber Afros,  
 his Lelegas Carasque sagittiferosque Gelonos  
 finxerat; Euphrates ibat iam mollior undis  
 extremique hominum Morini, Rhenusque bicornis  
 indomitique Dahae, et pontem indignatus Araxes.

<sup>2</sup> A Roman of the 50s BC would have associated the adjective *magnus* automatically with Pompey, not Caesar (as we see from 55.6, Cic. *ad Att.* 33 [=II.13]). See Shackleton Bailey on *ad Att.* 161B (= VIII.11B) and cf. Calvus' epigram beginning *Magnus quem metuunt omnes* ('Magnus whom all fear', frag. 18 *FPL* Morel). For the history and further examples of the attribute see Ellis on Cat. 55.6. It is not out of the question to see in Catullus' usage an attempt to undercut the pretensions of 'great' Caesar which, in the present view, the context fully complements. The problem of Catullus' relationship with Caesar has recently been reconsidered by Wiseman (1969a: 35ff.) who feels that the reference in poem 11 implies a reconciliation.

<sup>3</sup> Catullus seems to have initiated in Latin the association of seven with the mouths of the Nile. Ovid varies a similar designation (*septemfluvius*: *M.* 1.422, 15.753; *septemplex*: *M.* 5.187). Cf. Moschus 2.51.

Here Mulciber had fashioned the race of Nomads and Afri with flowing garments, here the Lelegae and Carae and arrow-bearing Geloni; now the Euphrates went more softened with its waves, and the Morini, farthest of men, and two-horned Rhine, unconquered Dahae, and the Araxes chafing at its bridge.

For Catullus as well as Virgil epic diction enriches epic description of Roman Catullus' putative or Augustus' more tangible accomplishments. Yet all the time running counter to the grander swell is the lyric limitation of Sappho's meter. This tells us always, by inner beat if not exterior sense, that we must be prepared for a series of reversals, that we are concerned with an emotion both personal and private whose piercing clarity will ultimately help condense the expansive and superficial notes of this opening boast into the simplicity of despair. The surprising progress whereby Catullus, assured explorer of geography's known bounds, becomes a fallen flower, is instructive.<sup>4</sup>

Hence, viewing the opening stanzas in retrospect, what at first seems epic power now appears mere ostentation, while the exaggerated description suggests rather a parody than an imitation of epic—a step in fact beyond Sappho's undoubtedly honorific use of Homer.<sup>5</sup> And the very Romanness of these lines smacks of irony coming from the imagination of a poet who regularly satirizes parallel pretensions in a Caesar or a Pompey.<sup>6</sup> After we survey what intervenes between

<sup>4</sup> In an important but different reading Commager (1965) stresses the romantic coloring of these opening stanzas ('a mood of splendid and exotic romance', 100; '... the romantic possibilities of Catullus' and Lesbia's love', 101; 'the romantic journey that Catullus repudiates', *ibid.*; and, of the final stanza, 'Like 58, it conjures up a romantic ideal only to shatter it', *ibid.*).

For another interpretation of the poem that treats both the beginning and the end as essentially light and, in part, humorous, see Kinsey (1965a). Specific reasons for the presence of Furius and Aurelius are offered by Richardson (1963).

There is yet another possibility, suggested to me by Professor Christopher Dawson: the presence of irony is so intense and pervasive that the poem should be viewed primarily as a *jeu d'artifice*. The point is well taken, but we also need no longer treat the union of poetic craft and emotional impulse in Catullus as an unholy alliance. Rather poem 11 is a notable example of their power when joined.

<sup>5</sup> The relationship is discussed among many others, by Page (1955: 65ff., 72ff.); Harvey (1957).

<sup>6</sup> One need only refer to poem 29 for Catullus' commentary on the inter-relationship of politics and erotic behavior. For Catullus' linking of 'motion' and sexuality see

vocative (*Furi et Aureli*) and verb (*nuntiate*), the language, for its context, parades too topically, suggesting through hyperbole that the commitment offered by the addressees was itself too excessive. Even if we examine his verbal usage alone Catullus seems to call into question the false epic *fides* ('loyalty') of his putative *comites*. It is perhaps the very insouciant brazenness of their presumption, the hypocrisy of one huge 'preparedness' (*omnia temptare*, 'to test everything'—a nice *cohors!*), that Catullus wishes to emphasize as he orders them into a very different campaign. *Pauca* ('a few things') will be hard enough for them to accomplish, let alone *omnia* ('everything').

The metamorphosis of *omnia* into *pauca* begins in the magnificent limiting stanza of lines 13–16, as their assertion of unconfined loyalty, to experience life with mutual fidelity, suffers narrowing to a role as message bearer (with further diminution of their implied *fides*). The decisive test of daring given to Furius and Aurelius is to approach not a distant place or exotic tribe but one person, a woman whom the poet never names (by contrast to the previous hyperbolic nominalizing), whom he calls 'mine' but cannot even face himself, as the beauty of past possession is perversely twisted into the most negative rejection. Verbal action literally halts in another way. Furius and Aurelius were to be *comites*. If we may follow the thrust of etymology, they were prepared to be joint voyagers, pursuing adventure in this world of action—ranging, observing, crossing, testing. But their first exploit is not to be mutually shared (*simul*)<sup>7</sup> with the poet but a labor undertaken by the *comites* alone, and to consist of an announcement only, of words not deeds, of words not handsomely descriptive but evil. They are the bearers of a curse.

But once again through an ironic incongruity of meter our expectations are wrongly aroused. The meters which Catullus uses for invective vary. Two of the three poems in virtually straight iambic

29.7 (*perambulabit*, 'make the rounds') and 6.11 (*inambulatio*, 'back and forth'). This is perhaps a secondary reason why, given the context at 55.6, the portico of Pompey's theatre is called *Magni ambulatio* ('Magnus' promenade').

<sup>7</sup> But does *simul*, by hinting that the thoughts of joint enterprise occurred only once, also prepare for the supposedly sudden reversal of the next line?

verse are vituperative (poems 29 and 52), but when he says of Caesar (54.6–7),

irascere iterum meis iambis  
immerentibus, unice imperator ...

You will be angry again at my innocent iambs, you one and only general,

or wonders why Ravidus hurled himself so unwisely *in meos iambos* ('onto my iambs', 40.2), he is probably thinking of hendecasyllabics as well.<sup>8</sup> These words which follow in poem 11 then, in quite a different lyric meter, are the most polished curse, using an exacting rhythm named for one of the perfectionists of ancient poetry—and a woman—against another woman whose name now, were it to be uttered, could be seen as the wryest form of jest. Lesbia's nomenclature should be familiarly at ease with the stanza of Sappho whose scrupulous style is characterized by clarity, limpidity and grace. Sappho's gift was the ability to transform the intense, personal moment into permanence through the brief, quintessential verbal gesture. The true curse lies not so much in explicit revelation as in using Lesbia against herself. It illustrates, as the preceding epic diction had hinted and the subsequent portrait would prove, that far from being a brilliant combination of poetess and lover, able to transmute intense emotion into rigorous word—to combine felicitously elegance of mind and body—she is in reality one of the most notoriously vulgar and degraded women of Roman history. More like Caesar than Sappho, her interests are only in the physical, in sex as conquest and commerce. And the power of lyric limitation remains through to the end, as Catullus himself replaces Sappho, surviving both his own imagined heroic pretensions and his vivid revelation of Lesbia's accomplished promiscuity to conclude with one final, careful poetic bow.

The epic deed, the courage to face this monster more terrifying than Parthians or Britons, who holds three hundred adulterers at once in her grasp, is suggested to Furius and Aurelius, not to Catullus himself.

<sup>8</sup> See also 36.5 and frag. 3, quoted from Porphyrius on Hor. *C.* 1.16.22: *denique et Catullus, cum maledicta minaretur, sic ait 'at non effugies meos iambos'* ('And finally, Catullus, when he threatened insults, spoke thus: "but you will not escape my iambs"').



All that could have been said and done ‘well’, *benefacta priora*, the poet has already performed (76.7–8):

nam quaecumque homines bene cuiquam aut dicere possunt  
aut facere, haec a te dictaque factaque sunt.

For whatever people can either say or do in kindly fashion toward anyone, this has been said and done by you.

Catullus is reduced to words only, evil words. The deed of delivery is left to *comites* who are to expose her actions—embracing, holding, bursting. *Omnia haec* (‘all these things’), the experiences the gods propose, center now on the *omnium ilia* (‘the strength of all’) that her avidity ruptures; mutual agreement to make trial of the world together (*simul*) is transformed into Lesbia’s undoubted ability to clasp at once, time and again, a multitude of lovers (*simul*). And it is not so far, factually or linguistically, from *temptare* (‘to test’) to *tenet* (‘holds’). Reasons for wishing the occasion and its possible results on his ‘friends’ can be any reader’s guess, but Catullus washes his hands both of Lesbia and of any such restored intimacy on his part—even of one final confrontation—by the bitter change from *meae puellae* (‘my girl’)—though it is now a time when his possession is utterly impossible—to *suis moechis* (‘her adulterers’). And the associated image of holding and embracing makes her present possession of others provocatively clear.

In the poem’s ordering *omnia* first gives place to *pauca*, the few words that are the last sign of involvement. But for Lesbia life, like epic adventure, is a matter of extremes, of *omnium* or *nullum* (‘of all or none’).<sup>9</sup> There is no real truth to her affections but her physical lust is overpowering. The actual words of farewell bring to the surface the disparity in Lesbia between appearance and reality, the failure to combine physical beauty and spiritual perfection whose union was, to Catullus, a necessity for true *amor*. In another poem addressed to Lesbia where he can cry *vale puella* (‘farewell, girl’, 8.12), impermanent adieu still lacks the full ambiguity of *valeat* (‘let her flourish’) in exposing Lesbia’s continued thriving which ironically destroys others. Catullus could then describe his girl as (8.5):

<sup>9</sup> This tension, as well as others, is pointed out by Commager (1965:102).

amata nobis quantum amabitur nulla.

... Loved by me as much as no one will be loved.

And in another poem where the formulation grows more complex, there is a common emphasis on the truth of the poet's affection (87.1–2):

nulla potest mulier tantum se dicere amatam  
vere, quantum a me Lesbia amata mea est.

No woman can say that she was truly loved as much  
as my Lesbia by me.

True *amor* (what Lesbia, *nullum amans vere*, 'loving none of them truly', blatantly lacks) consists not only of legal abstractions such as *fides* and *foedus* ('loyalty' and 'alliance') but of a certain unanalyzable purity and *castitas* ('chastity'), the emotional bond that links a father with sons-in-law as well as sons, where even blood ties, not to speak of any sexual longing, are absent.

The height of the adventure, then, surpassing the wildest explorations, is to imagine watching the extensive domination of this monster—monster physically, who embraces three hundred lovers at once, monster psychically, who has no truth to her affections. It is a spectacular moment, focussing the previous detachment and bringing initial mental vagaries to a sudden central standstill. We are brought unexpectedly out of any freeing thoughts of exotic escape into the present reality of a creature who grips and rends. As the mood of the opening stanza collapses, the hyperbole switches from Catullus to *puella* and leads, with further irony, to disappointment, not accomplishment, to Lesbia's degradation, not the poet's fulfillment.

Catullus curses with exact figuration a woman whose thousands of kisses he once hesitated to count lest he draw on them both the evil eye. That was in a poem which began with an exhortation (5.1)—

vivamus, mea Lesbia, atque amemus

Let us live, my Lesbia, and let us love—

uttered at a moment (imagined or otherwise) when a wish for unity was feasible, by a poet who still supposed that living and loving were synonymous. The realities of Lesbia's present amatory life preclude such a hope.

Catullus probably means us to compare another lyric, poem 51, also addressed to Lesbia in Sapphic meter (perhaps earlier, but chronology is unimportant). Attention is usually called to the verbal parallels (the repetition of *identidem*, ‘again and again’, is the most striking) as if the two poems, though the (apparent) temporal order is reversed in the manuscripts, signalled the beginning and the end of the affair (51.1–7):

ille mi par esse deo videtur,  
 ille, si fas est, superare divos,  
 qui sedens adversus identidem te  
 spectat et audit

dulce ridentem, misero quod omnis  
 eripit sensus mihi: nam simul te,  
 Lesbia, aspexi, nihil est super mi ...

That man seems to me equal to a god, that man (if it is right to say) seems to surpass the gods who, sitting opposite, looks at you again and again and hears you laughing sweetly—which takes all sensation from me in my suffering: for as soon as I have gazed at you, Lesbia, I have nothing left ...

The poet imagines his physical reaction to sitting in Lesbia’s presence, as he hears and above all sees her (*spectat, aspexi*). In poem 51 Catullus continually watches Lesbia; in 11 Lesbia, in a world apart from the poet, ruptures her lovers. There is no physical contact whatsoever here; not even the act of looking is possible for Catullus. This has been transferred to the exotic catalogue of possible places to be visited, an apparently non-sexual existence away from Lesbia but leading hyperbolically toward her, in which the last action, conveyed through the participle *visens*, is one of viewing. Yet to Catullus remains one possession which Lesbia lacks (and we now know can never again possess), *meum amorem*, the poet’s true love, an abstraction to which Catullus, with assured brilliance, attaches a verb of ‘seeing’, itself become abstract, *respectet*, for to see is to know. Lesbia cannot again look for his love as she had before. For him physically to behold and for her truly to see are alike impossible.

The habitual ‘action’ of the past on Lesbia’s part would seem to be infidelity leading to forgiveness from Catullus. She could look back to find Catullus and *amor* steadfast, to a time when *meum amorem*

meant Lesbia and mutual concord instead of simply the poet's own awareness of his love's meaning. But with a careful stroke of distancing by grammar, *meum amorem* succumbs to *illius culpa*, the fault of that person never named. This leads directly into the topographical remoteness of the simile: his love is like a flower of the remotest meadow which her aggression, like a plough, still manages to pass by and 'touch', to clip and kill. Before (*ante*) there was forgiveness; now after (*postquam*) her final metamorphosis, forgiveness is impossible.

The simile is remarkable, helping us escape past the monster into a paradigm of nature destroyed. It is in a literary tradition which begins with Homer and Sappho (and reasons for Catullus' special involvement will be given shortly). Virgil knew it well. He imitates it openly when describing the moment of Euryalus' dying (*Aen.* 9.433–37):

volvitur Euryalus leto, pulchrosque per artus  
 it cruor inque umeros cervix conlapsa recumbit:  
 purpureus veluti cum flos succisus aratro  
 languescit moriens, lassove papavera collo  
 demisere caput pluvia cum forte gravantur.

Euryalus rolls over in death, blood flows along his beautiful limbs and his neck leans fallen on his shoulders: as when a purple flower cut by a plough withers as it dies, or poppies have drooped their head on weary neck, when weighed down by a chance shower.

Pallas on his bier is also compared to a wilting flower (*Aen.* 11.68–69):

qualem virgineo demessum pollice florem  
 seu mollis violae seu languentis hyacinthi.<sup>10</sup>

Like a flower culled by a girl's finger, the flower of a soft violet or drooping hyacinth.

In the first simile Virgil arouses our special sympathy by stressing the flower's beauty at the actual moment of death. But Catullus is dealing with an abstraction, not a person, and puts his emphasis more starkly,

<sup>10</sup> The irony here, of course, is that the flower, which ordinarily stands for the maiden, falls victim to her finger.

and finally, on the setting (the farthest meadow) and on the action of the plough, passing by and touching.<sup>11</sup>

First, the setting. The correspondence between *prati ultimi* ('remotest meadow') and the beginning and end of the exotic catalogue which opened the poem—*extremos Indos* ('farthest Indi') and *ultimos Britannos* ('remotest Britons')—is remarkable. Yet now we are in a world beyond names, beholding an object both generic and universal, though fragile and far-removed. And the poet, instead of initiating and executing this vibrant journey to the extremes of the known world, becomes himself an 'extreme' to be seen, incapable of motion, not a strange tribe but something less noteworthy, perhaps, yet infinitely more precious.

The reader is now forced to redefine still further the character of the initial catalogue from an iterated, even exalted pronouncement of power to a prayer for escape from the inescapable. It was a dream of submission to observed sensory immediacies, a dream in which hearing, touch and sight played their part. The stark reality is a flower which neither receives nor needs a descriptive attribute.

It is logical to compare the simile in Catullus' second *epithalamium* where the unmarried girl is likewise associated with a flower (62.39–40)—

ut flos in saeptis secretus nascitur hortis,  
ignotus pecori, nullo convulsus aratro ...

Like a flower that grows up apart in a garden hedged about, unknown to the flock, torn up by no plough ... —

beloved by boys and girls alike until it is culled (*tenui carptus defloruit ungui*, 'it has faded, plucked by a slender nail', 43). But Catullus, paradoxically, places the flower that is his love in a meadow, not in a cultivated garden or a ploughed field. The image is pastoral. In the *Eclogues*, for instance, meadows (*prata*) 'drink in' the shepherd-singers' songs (3.111); form a locale for a magic ram to change his colors

<sup>11</sup> It is also possible that Catullus means *flos ultimus* ('remotest flower'), by hypallage, or even a series of meadows, one spoiled after another. In each case the effect of distancing is important.

(4.43); offer soft enticement for Lycoris to join Gallus, momentarily masquerading as a pastoral bard (10.42).<sup>12</sup>

Virgil, of course, also regularly associates ploughs with *arva*, ploughlands, not *prata*. Save for superficial connection through the 'natural' world, plough and meadow have nothing in common. Their meeting here brings into collision the intellectual spheres of pastoral and georgic, often antonymous. Other lesser oppositions—metal and plant, inanimate and alive, motion and stillness, hard and soft, heavy and light—enhance the distinction between the two objects. The plough (and we imagine an object going coldly about its utilitarian task with heedless unconcern) comes into passing contact with a living object, immovable, feeble and vulnerable. Seclusion is no defense against vulgarity while, paradoxically, experience for the poet brings a realization of past innocence.

Where plough and flower do meet, however, is on the level of poetic symbolism. In ancient literature, at least as early as Pindar, the plough is a sign for the male, and there is no more universal symbol than a flower for a woman, especially unmarried.<sup>13</sup> We have noted above an example from poem 62. From Catullus' first *epithalamium* alone there are four instances where *flos* or *floridus* is applied to the bride. Ariadne, while still a *virgo* ('maiden'), is associated with myrtle or spring flowers (64.89–90):

quales Eurotae praecingunt flumina myrtus  
aurave distinctos educit verna colores.

Like myrtles which gird about the streams of the Eurotas, or the many-colored flowers which the spring breeze draws out.

Any reader following the continuity of poem 11 against the background of Catullus' total body of verse would certainly think of the figure of Attis, exhorting his *comites* toward the frenzied devotion of Cybele, yet emasculating himself *Veneris nimio odio* ('from too great a

<sup>12</sup> See also *Vir. Geo.* 1.289, 3.521; *Aen.* 6.707. The 'pastoral' (as opposed to 'georgic') sense of *prata* is well illustrated by Lucretius at 5.785 (*florida... viridanti prata colore*, 'flowering meadows with verdant color').

<sup>13</sup> Pindar *P.* 4.254. Cf. Theognis 582; *Aes. Sept.* 753; *Soph. O. T.* 1496; Plautus *Asin.* 874; *Lucr.* 4.1107 (and cf. 4.1272–3). For Catullus himself as a 'flower' in his youth, see 68.16.

hatred of Love', 63.17). In the past, before robbing himself of his virility, he also was a 'flower' (63.64–66):

ego gymnasi fui flos, ego eram decus olei:  
mihi ianuae frequentes, mihi limina tepida,  
mihi floridis corollis redimita domus erat...

I was the flower of the gymnasium, I was the glory of the palaestra: my doorways were thronged, my threshold warm, my house was crowned by garlands of flowers...

Masculine Cybele deflowers and gelds, inspiring a double madness.

Similar energies are imputed to Lesbia who causes loins to burst and 'touches' flowers.<sup>14</sup> It is Lesbia to whom all force is imputed at the poem's conclusion.<sup>15</sup> In the adventurous dream that opened the lyric the power of 'going' is allotted to *comites* who with their patron are prepared to 'try' (*temptare*) this brave world. Now it is given to Lesbia, the plough *praetereunte*. And though it is not so far etymologically from *temptare* to *tenet* and *tactus est*, their very similarity points up the revolutionary course the poem has taken, imputing the momentum Catullus would wish for himself to Lesbia, twisting verbal force, outlined in the courage needed to view the farthest Britons, into nominal passivity.<sup>16</sup> The ultimate in projected experience suffers metamorphosis into the finality of assured innocence.

Epic poetry surveys an heroic progress through extent of time. Lyric verse inclines to gaze intently and analytically on the vital, immediate moment. In terms of poem 11, the literal level of temporal action befits a Caesar and a Lesbia. The symbolic time structure the poet rears for himself leads away from any hypothetical, grandiloquent deeds to a stable emblem of fragility, almost out of time. The dialectic turns inward, away from explicit epic fact to analogical, lyric symbol.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> The very difference between *convulsus* ('torn up', 62.40), *carptus* ('plucked', 62.43) and *tactus est* ('was touched') points up the distinctiveness of the latter's use.

<sup>15</sup> On Catullus' fascination with this creature, 'his simultaneous alienation and involvement', see the important article by Bagg (1965: esp. 63 ff.).

<sup>16</sup> At the same time the erotic implications of *temptare* also play their part, even at line 14. For further uses of the verb in a sexual sense see Tib. 1.2.17, 1.3.73.

<sup>17</sup> An examination of the poem's course specifically in terms of its verbs shows a parallel mutation from future to past via present reality. *Penetrabit* ('he will make his way') and *gradietur* ('he will cross', hypothetical future, the imagined desire of

It is in such an intellectual context that the verb *tactus est* ('it has been touched') gains its special strength. A plough need only graze to kill. Lesbia's touch, far from being tantalizing, is lethal. But erotic irony does not stop there. Masculine prowess is imputed to Lesbia to whom Catullus grants a verb which has associations with sexual intercourse of varied character. Catullus threatens Aurelius *tangam te irrumatione* ('I'll touch you and stuff your mouth', 21.8) and Horace's Sallustius can claim *matronam nullam ego tango* ('I touch no married woman', *Sat.* 1.2.54).<sup>18</sup> But the context at the end of poem 11 leaves little doubt that Catullus is imagining himself in the role of a girl still 'untouched' (cf. *intacta*, 62.45 and 56; *integra*, 61.36), to appeal once again to the language of the *epithalamia*. But this act of deflowering which Lesbia performs is applied to an abstraction not a person. It is seen by the poet primarily as a mental, not a physical notion. It has only the slightest connection with the emasculating effect Lesbia has on her lovers, however intensely the elegiacs lead in that direction or however closely runs the parallel with Attis. In the elegiacs, as Catullus agonizes over the tension between loving and hating in his life with Lesbia, he gradually frames and expands a distinction between mere sex and a deeper metaphysical relationship in which love and respect form a necessary combination. Sometimes the search for terminology alone was impressive, as at the end of 72 when the poet imagines Lesbia asking how Catullus can both burn with love for her and yet consider her cheap (72.7–8):

qui potis est, inquis? quod amantem iniuria talis  
cogit amare magis, sed bene velle minus.

Catullus mocked by Furius and Aurelius) are summarized in *feret* ('will bring', hyperbolic, mock epic cause). *Nuntiate* ('announce'), the lyric present, absorbs all from the start and leads to *vivat* ('let her live') and *valeat* ('let her flourish'), which deflect the command of *nuntiate* into optative and distance the reader by changing from a Furius and Aurelius near at hand to a Lesbia apart. *Feret* maintains the absolute present while *respectet* ('let her look for') turns toward the lyric impulse as it had arisen in the past (*ut ante*). *Cecidit* ('has fallen') and *tactus* ('touched') are the present now frozen with finality into the past definite. The future is impossible, the present equally so. Only the past held love and yet, again ironically, only past tenses can now signal love's demise.

<sup>18</sup> See also 89.5, Hor. C. 3.11.10 etc. At 15.4 Catullus asks Aurelius to preserve Iuvenius *castum et integellum* ('chaste and untouched').



How can that be, you say? Because such an injury  
compels a lover to love more but to respect less.

Though on the one hand *amare* ('to love') balances and contrasts with *bene velle* ('to respect'), Catullus, *amantem* ('lover'), suffers and expounds both feelings.

This is the *amor* at the end of poem 11 which draws to itself the virginal image of the flower. It is virginal not because their relationship lacked passion (at 75.4 Catullus observes that her ability to attract continues no matter what she does, *omnia si facias*) but because now, in what is perhaps his final lyric portrait of their intimacy, he can symbolize his love as transcending previous categorization to become in its essence chaste and pure, beautiful in its fineness, nearly abstracted from reality. And yet on another level of irony the flower is tangible and can be touched no matter how remote. Lesbia's action affects the vulnerable flower in a physical manner. But this masculine potency does not create a marriage or foster the personal *fides* and *foedus* with which Catullus, in his union with Lesbia, sought to replace the usual Roman legal nuptial bonds. This plough does not prepare for planting but for devastation, as it invades for a minute a world it cannot comprehend and should not share.<sup>19</sup>

And the ultimate thought—this is a poem of ultimates—returns appropriately to Sappho as with final irony Catullus acknowledges her *epithalamia* to conclude, not commence, his connection with Lesbia. A virgin bride to Sappho may be an apple on a lofty branch or a hyacinth trampled under foot by shepherds. Sung by a chorus of girls who feign sadness over their companion's fate, the image hides joy beneath a veneer of grief. For Catullus only the opposite can be said.

At three moments in poem 64, Catullus' most influential and intellectual poem, he addresses himself to similar concerns which may serve as commentary on poem 11. One analogy is straightforward, the others are more complex.

<sup>19</sup> For Catullus' tendency to take upon himself feminine roles, see Putnam (1961: 167ff.); Bagg (1965: 78ff.); Van Sickle (1968: 499). Of more general bearing is Devereux (1970).

At the very end of the poem, after the Fates have sung the exploits of Achilles, redoubtable product of Peleus and Thetis whose marriage the poem celebrates, he contrasts the age of heroes when houses were chaste, *pietas* was still cultivated, and the gods appeared before men, with the present day.<sup>20</sup> One instance of contemporary decadence which the poet counterpoises finds a father desirous of his son's death in order freely to possess his unwed step-mother (64.401–2):

optavit genitor primaevi funera nati,  
liber ut innuptae poteretur flore novercae.<sup>21</sup>

A father desired the death of his young son that he might enjoy in freedom the love of his unwed step-mother.

But matters were not unambiguous in his version of the heroic era and Catullus earlier in the poem eases us more subtly from this realm to the present deterioration of morality, leaving some doubt on the former's idealism.<sup>22</sup> I refer first to a still puzzling moment in the wedding ceremony after the human guests have left and while the gods are assembling before the Fates sing. Five divinities are mentioned: Chiron, Peneios, Prometheus, Apollo and Diana. I suspect that Catullus ordered both them and their gifts with the greatest care. For three of this quintet a connection with Achilles has been found, but since the presence of Peneios and Diana leaves learned commentators still guessing, a new suggestion may be offered.<sup>23</sup> Chiron comes from the top of Pelion (*e vertice Pelei*, 278), bringing flowers (280–84):

nam quoscumque ferunt campi, quos Thessala magnis  
montibus ora creat, quos propter fluminis undas  
aura parit flores tepidi fecunda Favoni,  
hos indistinctis plexos tulit ipse corollis,  
quo permulsa domus iucundo risit odore.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Catullus' allusions to his own *pietas* at 76.26.

<sup>21</sup> Both text and interpretation of this passage are still much in doubt. See Fordyce (1961) and Quinn (1970) *ad loc.*

<sup>22</sup> For more detailed treatment of the negative aspects of the wedding ceremony see Curran (1969: esp. 186ff.). See also Leach (1971: esp. 173ff.).

<sup>23</sup> One simple connection of the Peneios and Achilles is to be found in the territory of Thessaly through which the river flowed and over which Peleus ruled.

For whichever flowers the plains bear, which the region of Thessaly creates on its mighty mountains, which the fecund breath of warming Favonius begets near the stream's waves, these he brought himself woven in a mass of garlands. The house smiles, soothed by the sweet smell.

The picture mirrors other moments of perfection in Catullus—the laughter of Sirmio's waves (31.14), the garlands adorning Attis' doorpost (63.66), the warming spring breezes that signal the poet's departure for home (46.1–3). But flowers—they need not be named—especially engage the senses to convey the essence of innocent loveliness. The river god Peneios, on the other hand, dwelling in the valley of Tempe, brings the festal green of trees, decorative like flowers but this time named and analyzed—lofty beeches, straight laurels, bending plane and supple alder (called purposefully sister of Phaethon, the ambitious over-reacher). The explicit scrutiny is upsetting because, in the context of the poem, what was once growth on the summit of Pelion became the Argo, symbol of progress but also decline, the ship made of pine, its oars of fir, its crew like heart of oak.<sup>24</sup> We have moved from innocence to experience, from pastoral to a georgic/heroic existence when woods are cut for lumber and, if we may follow Virgil, alders prove useful in ship-building (*Geo.* 1.136), cypresses for construction of houses (*Geo.* 2.443), beeches for a plough's handle (*Geo.* 2.173).<sup>25</sup>

Next arrives Prometheus carrying not cheering gifts but wounds as evidence that further help to mankind on the road of progress does not pay. Finally we learn that Apollo and his sister do not come at all. If we may work back from the evidence Horace and Tibullus supply some thirty years later, Apollo and Diana were the chief divinities celebrated during the secular games on the occasion when the ages

<sup>24</sup> The wood of the Argo is also specified at 64.10. Catullus makes the transition from trees in a mountain's crest to the manufacturing of the *phaselus* of some importance in poem 4, and we remember that Diana, who does not attend the wedding, is styled *cultricem montibus Idri* ('dweller on the heights of Idrus', 300). For a more detailed discussion of the reasons behind the presence (or absence) of the divinities mentioned see now Bramble (1970: esp. 29ff.).

<sup>25</sup> Wood was of course used for the construction of the Argo. Cf. Virgil's verses devoted to the heroic age at *Ecl.* 4.31ff. (*pauca tamen suberunt priscae vestigia fraudis/ quae temptare Thetim ratibus*, 'yet a few traces of the primal error will remain, prompting to try the sea with ships').

come full circle and are renewed. Virgil, writing a few years earlier than Horace's *Carmen saeculare* of 17 BC, claims for Augustus Caesar that he will refound the golden age (*aurea condet saecula*, *Aen.* 6.792–3). Catullus felt far otherwise toward the latter's great uncle whose accomplishments, in poem 11, anticipate those of Lesbia and her plough.

Certainly there is no golden age for Apollo and Diana to foresee in Catullus 64. The symbol of heroism's final degradation into vulgarity is Achilles whose conduct elicits from the poet another explicit instance where georgic challenges and overwhelms pastoral as innocence and purity succumb to brutality. Achilles' outstanding courage and famous deeds mothers confess at the funeral of their sons. He is like a reaper (64.353–5):

namque velut densas praecerpens messor aristas  
sole sub ardenti flaventia demetit arva,  
Troiuenum infesto prosternet corpora ferro.

For just as a reaper, cutting the thick ears of grain,  
mows down the tawny fields under a burning sun, so  
he will lay low the bodies of the Trojans with his hostile sword.

And, with portrait and metaphor expanding together, the wave of the Scamander bears witness to his prowess as its channel is narrowed by slaughtered heaps of corpses (*caesis corporum acervis*, 359), making the natural unnatural.<sup>26</sup> The final triumph is Achilles' heaped-up funeral pyre, *coacervatum bustum* (363), which receives the snowy limbs of the virginal Polyxena whom the dead Achilles demands as symbolic bride-victim.

We may indulge a parallel between Achilles, the hero as reaper who, though not even physically present, demands chaste beauty as the ultimate sacrifice, and Lesbia whose valor consists in holding three hundred lovers in one embrace, the non-human plough that automatically fells flowers. Each is an extension through symbol of a coarseness the exacting poet loathed, whether it be discovered in the property-devouring politician or the versifier who overwrites. It may be seen in the inelegant thief who mistakes the superficial value of a

<sup>26</sup> Cf. the contexts of *flumen* at 89 and 281.

piece of linen for its inner worth to the poet as a symbol of friendship, or in the swarthy Spaniard who believes that a dark beard and teeth brushed in urine somehow make one *bonus*. But it is Lesbia whose inability to merge sex with spiritual feeling, superficial charm with a sense of deeper values who most hurts the poet's devotion to integrity. Anticipating Mozart's vision of Tamino and Pamina, Catullus would have hoped to combine the sensual-carnal with perfected allegiance to an interior humaneness based on truth and fidelity. Poem 11 expands the ironies of his failure.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>27</sup> I owe thanks to Professors J. P. Elder and J. Van Sickle for their careful criticisms.

## Part III

### Neoteric Poetics

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## The Neoteric Poets

R. O. A. M. Lyne

### I

In 50 BC Cicero writes to Atticus as follows (*Att.* 7.2.1): ‘Brundisium uenimus VII Kalend. Decembr. usi tua felicitate nauigandi; ita belle nobis *flauit ab Epiro lenissimus Onchesmites*. hunc σπονδειαζοντα si cui uoles τῶν νεωτέρων pro tuo uendito’ (‘We came to Brundisium on 25 November, having enjoyed your good luck in sailing; so prettily blew for us from Epirus the gentlest *Onchesmites*. You may pass off this spondaic line as your own to any neoteric you like.’) The anonomasia, the euphonic sibilance, and the mannered rhythm (the five-word line with fourth foot homodyne; the spondaic fifth foot) are all prominent in Cicero’s hexameter. The line is a humorously concocted example of affected and Grecizing narrative. But it is also a line which, Atticus is to suppose, οἱ νεώτεροι would value; presumably therefore it is meant to hit off characteristics of their style. Cicero must in fact be *parodying* what he regards as a *typical* ‘neoteric’ line, and the significance of this simple fact has perhaps been underestimated.

To parody a group presupposes that one has in mind a group with common characteristics; indeed (it seems to me) if anyone thinks he can hit off a group of poets in a single line, he must regard that group as highly mannered and distinct. And Cicero obviously thinks he can do just that. So he at any rate seems to have in mind a clearly cohering group of νεώτεροι; or, not to beat about the bush, a school. It seems



likely that they are the same or the same sort of poets as those whom in 45 BC he refers to as *cantores Euphorionis* ('parroters of Euphorion', *Tusc.* 3.45); poets who, he implies, despised the grandiose style of Ennius.<sup>1</sup> The prima-facie plausibility of this will be substantiated as we proceed. And when Cicero refers in 46 BC (*Orat.* 161) to the practice of *poetae noui* ('new poets') in avoiding elided *s*, he may again have the same group in mind but the expression there is too general to provide positive support for the notion of a cohering school.

The idea of a school of νεώτεροι has been much questioned and debated in recent years.<sup>2</sup> I think the implications of Cicero's remarks (anyway at *Att.* 7.2.1) are clear—and if he thought in terms of a school, there probably was a school. It is the purpose of this paper to try to clarify the picture: to try to identify some or all of the school's members and then to define what precisely their shared characteristics or interests were. Further assistance from Cicero will be limited: he names no names and his comments are chiefly or exclusively in reaction to 'neoteric' style. We shall have to work our way beyond him to establish who belonged to the 'neoteric' school and what genres or subject matter it liked.

First, a word on the meaning of νεώτεροι.

<sup>1</sup> On the meaning of *cantores Euphorionis* see note 26 below. Of course Cicero means to imply through this reference other peculiarities besides a warped sense of style. But style is clearly his main preoccupation, here as at *Att.* 7.2.1. At *Att.* 7.2.1 he hits at poets who cultivate an abstruse stylistic preciousness: at *Tusc.* 3.45 he stresses the corollary, the scorn of affected stylists for classical Ennian grandeur.

<sup>2</sup> Note the cautious or sceptical views of Crowther (1970), and of Bramble (1974: 180 ff.). Quinn (1959: 44–8) is fairly cautious too and refers to articles which forthrightly attack the notion of a school. Bardon (1952: 358–67) sees the neoterics as a rather vague and general movement (*not* a school) and includes poets and types of poetry which must be excluded. Similarly, Schanz-Hosius (1927: 285–6). Wiseman (1974: 44–58) holds a rather different view from mine as to who the neoterics were and what it was they did that was neoteric. Ross (1969: 11) writes: 'There is no question that Catullus was a neoteric poet' and his book seeks among other things to arrive at a definition of what constituted neoteric poetry. But again his conclusions are rather different from mine, although at times our paths interestingly converge. (It should be noted that my views on neotericism have changed since *CR* 22 (1972) 37—my review of Ross.) Some of the most useful remarks to date on the neoterics are in Wheeler (1934: 77–86).

## II

Professor Alan Cameron has contributed some timely comments on the sense of νεώτεροι and 'neoteric'.<sup>3</sup> The term continually occurs in grammarians and commentators, Greek and Roman. If (for example) Aristarchus wants to distinguish between genuine Homeric usage and what was not found till later writers, these later writers are οἱ νεώτεροι; when Vergil has established the classical Latin canon, the Latin grammarians may then use *neoterici* of what we might call the Silver Poets. The term is therefore essentially general and relative: 'newer writers'—often with depreciatory tone. Possibly<sup>4</sup> Cicero himself—given that a hexameter is in question, and given his and Atticus' familiarity with Aristarchus—meant more specifically 'newer *epic* writers'; but the term is not in itself as restricted as Wiseman maintains. This, the essentially general nature of the term, might weigh heavy with those who do not believe in a school of 'neoteric' poets.

Cicero, however, writes a line intended to be typical of the 'newer writers' which is highly idiosyncratic. He must therefore be thinking of very idiosyncratic 'newer writers', *particular* 'newer writers'; he must be thinking of a school of 'newer writers', even if he does not say quite as much. And of course he does say 'newer writers' in a rather particular way. He says it in Greek; he writes σπονδειαζοντα in Greek too. Perhaps a notable part of the particularity of these poets had to do with Grecizing.

And perhaps Cicero did feel their particularity predominantly or only in epic. But that would not mean that other particular interests could not be shared by such an idiosyncratic group.

In conclusion, therefore, one should well doubt that the poets in question ever called themselves νεώτεροι (it is ironic that 'neoteric' is the term we shall use for them):<sup>5</sup> it seems quite clear that Cicero meant some of the customary depreciatory tone to attach to the particular poets he had in mind. One may in fact agree with Professor

<sup>3</sup> In a forthcoming work on *Poetae Novelli*.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Wiseman (1974: 51).

<sup>5</sup> But what else? *poetae novi* or 'new poets' is unsuitable for the reason implied above. As for *cantores Euphorionis*, we still require confirmation that the term refers to the same group. Anyway it too is uncomplimentary. We will use the term that derives from the most significant and useful of Cicero's references—confident that the poets themselves would appreciate the irony.

Cameron, with some qualification, that Cicero used the term because he thought they were mere *epigoni*. On the other hand there is nothing to change one's conclusion that Cicero had in mind a cohering school—whose programme is yet to be established; and whatever Cicero thought, the poets themselves may well have considered that they were prophets of a 'new poetry'.<sup>6</sup>

### III

Cicero's *flauit ab Epiro lenissimus Onchesmites* is intended to be *typical*, in a parodying vein, of a fashion of writing. Does it resemble, hit off, any surviving literature? One poem obviously suggests itself. The mannered antonomasia, alliteration, and rhythms of Cicero's line are all striking features of the style of Catullus 64: cf. *Peliaco quondam prognatae uertice pinus* (1), *tene Thetis tenuit pulcherrima Nereine* (28), *a misera, assiduis quam luctibus externauit / spinosas Erycina serens in pectore curas* (71–2), *incola Itoni* (228), *Emathiae tutamen, Opis carissime nato* (325), etc., etc.<sup>7</sup> Cicero's line could in fact be a parody of Catullus' style in poem 64, the 'Peleus and Thetis'. It is, actually, unlikely to be: Catullus is most probably dead in 50 BC.<sup>8</sup> and οἱ νεώτεροι whom Cicero has in mind, are presumably alive. This makes the resemblance the more dramatic. If Cicero parodies a group *without* having Catullus specifically in mind and yet *still* reminds us strongly of him, not only (we might infer) must Catullus have been a member of the group but the characteristics hit off must have been prominently and regularly displayed by all members. And the fashion of writing must have been in operation for a number of years.

We have now established the likelihood of a neoteric school, and that Catullus had probably been (as it were) a member. It also seems likely that the mannered miniature *epos*, which we conveniently call

<sup>6</sup> Professor Cameron (see note 3 above) writes: 'It is in this sense [i.e. the general, relative sense] ... that Cicero ... used the term of certain contemporary writers, not because they were prophets of a 'new poetry', but precisely because (in his opinion) they were *epigoni*'.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Fordyce (1961: 274–6), Quinn (1959: 44–6), Quinn (1973: 299ff.), Wilkinson (1963: 129 f.).

<sup>8</sup> For Catullus' dates see conveniently Quinn (1973: pp. xii–xv).

epyllion, was a (if not the) typical genre of the school. But the question of what forms the neoterics typically wrote in I am leaving for a moment; it ought anyway to be said that Cicero at *Att.* 7.2.1 could have had in mind narrative *elegy*—an affinity between his parody and lines of Catullus 68 might easily have been demonstrated. I continue now on the track of other members of the school; and it is an obvious move to look among Catullus' own contemporaries and confrères, for whom we have a little information.

We look in the Catullan corpus to see if there are any poets for whom Catullus expresses particular affection; more especially we look for poets with whom he shares a definite literary sympathy or interest. Given Catullus' apparent membership of the school these too will be likely candidates—though only as yet candidates.

Catullus addresses poem 35 to a Caecilius, *poetae tenero meo sodali* ('my friend, the sensitive poet'); he expresses interest, even anxiety,<sup>9</sup> about the progress of a 'learned' (*doctus*) poem of Caecilius' which is called or concerns the *Dindymi domina*, the *magna mater* ('the mistress of Dindymos', the 'great mother'), i. e., Cybele. In poem 50 Catullus writes to Licinius, who is clearly the orator and poet Licinius Calvus (cf. poem 14 mentioned below, also 53 and 96, all to or about Calvus): the poem comprises Catullus' passionate recollection of, and response to, an evening spent with Calvus experimenting in polymetric *uersiculi*.<sup>10</sup> Poem 95 is a celebration of Helvius Cinna's abstruse epyllion *Zmyrna*, which he contrasts with the rubbishy and lengthy *annales* of Volusius (Caius Cinna is mentioned as Catullus' *sodalis* at 10.29 f.; cf. too 113.1). As well as these places, where Catullus speaks to or about fellow-poets and explicitly mentions their literature, we should note the following places where he shows affection for people who are probably poets, but where literature is not mentioned: poem 38 is addressed to a Cornificius who is probably the poet of an epyllion *Glaucus*; and poem 56 is addressed to a Cato who seems likely to be the famous poet and grammarian Valerius

<sup>9</sup> Catullus heavily emphasizes that the poem has been well *begun*; cf. Quinn (1973: 194–5). I think the implication is that too much attention to the *candida puella* is holding up Caecilius' literary progress.

<sup>10</sup> Catullus seems to have been particularly close to Calvus. Certainly later writers closely associated them—like a kind of double act: cf. Hor. *Serm.* 1.10.18 f., etc.; Wiseman (1974: 52 n.43).

Cato. These then are poets whom we may suspect—some or all of them—to have belonged to the self-conscious school whose existence we have inferred and to which Catullus seemed to belong. For all of them, except Caecilius, fragments and/or allusions survive to provide further valuable information.<sup>11</sup>

Another fact should now be brought into play which strengthens one's impression of a cohesive group of poets around Catullus. This is the phenomenon of a literary polemic. An attitude of Us against Them presupposes a strong bond of interest among Us. Poem 95, referred to above, reads as follows;

Zmyrna mei Cinnae nonam post denique messem  
 quam coepta est nonamque edita post hiemem,  
 milia cum interea quingenta Hortensius uno

.....

Zmyrna cauas Satrachi penitus mittetur ad undas,  
 Zmyrnam cana diu saecula peruoluent.  
 at Volusi annales Paduam morientur ad ipsam  
 et laxas scombris saepe dabunt tunicas.

The *Zmyrna* of my friend Cinna has been published at last the ninth harvest and the ninth winter after it was begun, although in the meantime Hortensius ... five hundred thousands in one

.....

*Zmyrna* will be sent all the way to the deep-flowing waters of Satrachus; white-haired generations will long unroll the *Zmyrna*. But the *Annals* of Volusius will die right by the Po and they will often supply loose wraps for mackerel.

Callimachus' battle of the books has been transplanted; the allusions and stance are unmistakable.<sup>12</sup> Catullus' poem 36, 'annales Volusi cacata carta' ('*Annals* of Volusius, soiled sheets of papyrus'), involves

<sup>11</sup> The fragments are collected in Morel (1927). On Calvus see conveniently Schanz-Hosius (1927: 289 f.); Bardon (1952: 341–4). Cinna: Schanz-Hosius, 307 f.; Bardon, 344–7; and now Wiseman (1974: 44–58); Wiseman has in fact pertinent things to say about most of these poets. Valerius Cato: Schanz-Hosius, 287 f.; Bardon, 337–41; Robinson (1923); Crowther (1971). Cornificius: Schanz-Hosius, 309 f.; Bardon, 355–6; Rawson (1978).

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Call. *Epigr.* 27 and 28 Pf.; *Aetia praef.* (frg. 1 Pf.); Kroll (1960: 266 f.); Clausen (1964: 188 f.). Catullus 95b ('at populus tumido gaudeat Antimacho' ['but let the crowd take pleasure in swollen Antimachus']) repeats Callimachean polemic: cf. Call.

another blow in the campaign against the wretched Volusius. Note too poem 14, comprising in-jokes with Calvus on how terrible other poets are; it is interesting to read 14 in conjunction with 50. Catullus therefore associates himself, at least with Cinna and Calvus, 'against the rest'; and with Cinna in strident Callimachean fashion on the particular and traditional topic of *epos*. Disagreement about *epos* may be at the root of another Catullan quarrel.<sup>13</sup>

In fact the polemic suggests an identifiably *Callimachean* faction of Catullus, Cinna, and I think Calvus. We should recall now Catullus' own explicit demonstrations of Callimachean indebtedness: poems 65, 66, and 116.<sup>14</sup> We should recall indeed that Catullus is in very real ways a genuinely Callimachean poet: lavishing care and attention on forms and subjects that would not traditionally have been deemed worthy of such care and attention; a poet to be judged (in much of his work at least) solely according to the canons of art and delight.<sup>15</sup>

frg. 398 Pf. Λύδη καὶ παχὺ γράμμα καὶ οὐ τορόν ('Lyde, a writing both thick and unpolished').

<sup>13</sup> I think it quite possible (given the situation with Volusius) that the Furius who has attacked Catullus on literary grounds (poem 16) and who is in turn subjected to banter or abuse by Catullus (poems 16, 23, and 26; and the address in poem 11 is surely ironical) is in fact the disastrous epic poet Furius ('Alpinus') parodied by Horace (see *Serm.* 2.5.40, with Porph. ad loc., *Serm.* 1.10.36 with Wickham ad loc., and Rudd below), and that at least part of the reason for Catullus' enmity towards him is literary. I am inclined to believe too that Furius 'Alpinus' is one and the same as Furius Bibaculus (those ancient sources who specify do in fact identify the epic Furius with Bibaculus). The main arguments in favour of supposing Furius 'Alpinus' and Furius Bibaculus to be two different people are usefully set out by Rudd (1966: 289 f.), together with many more useful references to their (or his) work. On Bibaculus see too Schanz-Hosius (1927: 290–2). A main point for Rudd in favour of separating them is that a 'Neoteric' is hardly likely to have written an historical epic. But there is no reason to suppose Furius Bibaculus to have been a 'Neoteric' or even a poet in sympathy with the Catullan coterie (though this is the usual view: cf. Quinn [1959: 44], Bardon [1952: 347 ff.]). The only Furius that Catullus acknowledges is, as we have seen, no great chum; and Furius Bibaculus' poems on Val. Cato (frgs. 1 and 2 Morel) strike me as far from unequivocally admiring or friendly. All that Furius Bibaculus has in common with Catullus is the not very striking phenomenon of a taste for abusive verses; cf. Quint. 10.1.96, Tac. *Ann.* 4.34. In short (though there are problems of chronology which can be argued to and fro) I think there is probably only one Furius in play. I certainly feel there is no cause to divorce Bibaculus from 'Alpinus'.

<sup>14</sup> Poem 116 is very usefully explained by Macleod (1973a; reprinted in this volume, pp. 35–44).

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Lyne (1975: 1–5). On Callimachus' aesthetics cf. usefully Brink (1946: 16–19); Pfeiffer (1968: 137–8); Reitzenstein (1931).

The polemic not only confirms the cohesion of three candidates for the neoteric school; it may be some guide to the nature of its programme.

## IV

A group of sympathetic poets seems to be identifiable around Catullus; and Catullus seems likely to have belonged to the school to which Cicero refers slightly as οἱ νεώτεροι. Our next step is to look closely at what this group of poets wrote. If they share idiosyncratic interests, this will further confirm their identity as a group—and start to fix their programme; if they all share or could share the characteristics of style which Cicero parodies this will confirm that the group is indeed the neoteric group or school. It will be prudent to note interests that they do *not* share.

Epigrams and polymetric versicles of an erotic, humorous, insulting, and indeed multifarious occasional nature were a common interest among them.<sup>16</sup> But such versicles were by no means confined to them. And, however exquisitely they penned their own efforts (I return to this point), it seems hardly likely that they could be distinguished as

The fact is perhaps underestimated that Callimachus will, to an extent, be misrepresenting critics in the preface to the *Aetia*—that of course is in the nature of polemic. No one would really maintain that we should judge poetry by its length (ἀὐθι δὲ τέχνη / κρίνετε, μὴ σχοίνῳ Περσίδι τὴν σοφίην. [‘Measure art by skill, not by the Persian chain’]). The real alternative to the yardstick of τέχνη (‘skill’) is, I suppose, worth or seriousness of content; cf. Aristotle’s μίμησις σπουδαίων ἢ πράξεως σπουδαίας (‘representation of serious matters’ or ‘of a serious action’; *Poetics* 1449<sup>b</sup>) etc. (Brink, 18). Callimachus is in many respects close to *l’art pour l’art*.

<sup>16</sup> Catullus: *passim*. Calvus: Suet. *Jul.* 73 ‘famosa epigrammata’ (‘well-known epigrams’; against Caesar: cf. *Cat.* 29 etc.), frgs. 1–3, 17–19 Morel (18 is on Pompey: cf. *Cat.* 29), Sen., *Con.* 7.4.7, Ov., *Trist.* 2.431 f. ‘par fuit exigui similisque licentia Calui / detexit uariis qui sua furta modis’ (‘equal in degree and of the same kind was the licence of little Calvus who revealed his clandestine love affairs in various meters’). Cinna: frgs. 9–14 Morel, Ov. *Trist.* 2.435 ‘Cinna quoque his [sc. ‘explicitly erotic poets’] comes est, Cinnaque procacior Anser’ (‘Cinna was also a companion to these, and Anser bolder than Cinna’). Cato and Cornificius: Ov. *Trist.* 2.436 ‘Cinna quoque his comes est. . . , et leue Cornifici parque Catonis opus’ (‘Cinna was also a companion to these, and the light work of Cornificius and the similar work of Cato’); for Cornificius cf. too frg. 1 Morel (hendecasyllabic)—and Catullus seems to think him capable of some sort of Simonidean threnody: *Cat.* 38.6–8.

a school on this score alone. One thinks back to the precedents: Porcius Licinus, Valerius Aedituus, Lutatius Catulus, Laevius.<sup>17</sup> Or one thinks of Catullus' contemporaries. There is Memmius, governor of Bithynia in 58 BC. For his erotic verses, cf. Ov. *Trist.* 2.433 'quid referam Tigidiae quid Memmi carmen, apud quos / rebus adest nomen nominibusque pudor?' ('why should I mention the song of Tigidas or Memmius, in whose works things have a name, and the names have no shame?') And Pliny (*Ep.* 5.3.5) records that he wrote 'uersiculos seueros parum' ('none too serious verses'): comparing Cat. 16.3–4 'qui me ex uersiculis meis putastis / quod sunt molliculi parum pudicum' ('you who have thought me unchaste from my verses, because they are a little soft') we might infer that he wrote in lyric metres. He had Greek literary taste too: cf. Cic. *Brut.* 247; cf. further Owen's note on Ovid *Trist.* 2.433. Now although Memmius numbered Catullus among his cortège in Bithynia, there is not the slightest evidence that Catullus regarded him as a literary brother-in-arms and dramatic evidence for Catullus' enmity on other scores (poems 10 and 28).

Or there is (for example) the orator Q. Hortensius Hortalus addressed by Catullus in poem 65 but criticized for his literature in the polemical poem 95 (see Section III above). The 'milia' of 95.3 may refer to *uersiculi* or perhaps rather to epic *annales*.<sup>18</sup> But Hortensius certainly wrote erotic poetry: cf. Ov. *Trist.* 2.441 'nec minus Hortensi nec sunt minus improba Serui / carmina' ('nor less wanton are the verses of Hortensius or the verses of Servius'); he too is one to whom Pliny attributes 'uersiculi seueri parum' at *Ep.* 5.3.5;<sup>19</sup> and Gellius records an interesting opinion of his and other contemporaries' lyric (so it appears) *erotica*, uttered by 'Graeci plusculi ... homines amoeni et nostras quoque litteras haut incuriose docti' ('several Greeks ... refined men and with no negligent understanding of our literature', 19.9.7):

saepeque eum [sc. Iulianum rhetorem] percontabantur, quid de Anacreonte ceterisque id genus poetis sentiret et ecquis nostrorum poetarum tam fluentes

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Quinn (1959: 5–18), Ross (1969: 137 ff.).

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Vell. 2.16.3 and Münzer (1914: 196–205), as well as Quinn (1973: 432); contrast Fordyce (1961: 384).

<sup>19</sup> Pliny in fact invokes as precedent for his filthy verses M. Tullius, C. Calvus, Asinius Pollio, M. Messalla, Q. Hortensius, M. Brutus, L. Sulla, Q. Catulus, and many other worthies ('doctissimi, grauissimi, sanctissimi') including four emperors.



carminum delicias fecisset, 'nisi Catullus' inquit 'forte pauca et Caluus itidem pauca. Nam Laevius implicata et Hortensius inuenusta et Cinna inlepidata et Memmius dura ac deinceps omnes rudia fecerunt atque absona.'

and they often asked him what he thought of Anacreon and other poets of that sort and if any of our poets had written such flowing and delightful poems—'unless perhaps Catullus had composed a few,' they said, 'and Calvus also a few. For Laevius wrote involved poems and Hortensius inelegant ones and Cinna poems without charm and Memmius harsh ones, and in short they all wrote poems unpolished and displeasing.'

But an idiosyncratic interest which our poets do share is epyllion, that brief, highly wrought *epos* which more or less ostentatiously dissociated itself from traditional *epos*: concentrating on unheroic incidents in the sagas of heroes, or on heroines as opposed to heroes, or on otherwise off-beat subject matter; employing a narrative technique that was often wilfully individual and selective; and yet largely maintaining epic language, metre, and style.<sup>20</sup>

For Calvus and Cinna, as well as Catullus, our information is relatively good. Catullus, of course, writes the 'Peleus and Thetis' which seems at first to be an epic of the Argonauts, switches unexpectedly to the love of Peleus and Thetis, switches to Theseus, to Ariadne, and so on. Calvus writes an *Io*, a potentially off-beat story offering possibilities of humour, pathos, divine indignity—as Ovid, who imitated Calvus, shows (*Met.* 1.568 ff.).<sup>21</sup> Frgs. 9–14 Morel are from the poem; frg. 9 'a uirgo infelix herbis pasceris amaris' ('unhappy girl, you will feed on bitter grass') shows us that Calvus not only emotionally apostrophized his heroine but also anticipated his own plot—both features of the wilful Catullan narrative. The *Zmyrna* of Cinna we have already mentioned (Section III above). This must have been a work of extraordinary *doctrina*: the contrast with Volusius' *annales* shows that it was an epyllion of brief compass, yet it took nine years to write—and soon required an explanatory commentary.<sup>22</sup> The story,

<sup>20</sup> On the epyllion see Crump (1931), I am in the process of completing my own monograph on the nature and history of the epyllion. For further comment which bears on epyllion's subject matter see Section VII below.

<sup>21</sup> Calvus frg. 9 Morel: *Met.* 1.632 (Calvus frg. 9 is also echoed by Vergil at *Ecl.* 6.47—which is where Servius quotes it); frg. 11: *Met.* 1.713.

<sup>22</sup> Quint 10.4.4 and Serv. on Verg. *Ecl.* 9.35 repeat or corroborate Catullus' evidence on the time taken in composition. Suet. *gramm.* 18 reports that an explanatory

revolving around a heroine who fell in love with her father, would make a splendidly off-beat *epos*—as Ovid (who imitated Cinna too) again shows.<sup>23</sup> Three lines are preserved (frgs. 6 and 7 Morel), which include an emotional apostrophe: ‘te matutinus flentem conspexit Eous . . .’ (‘the morning dawn saw you weeping’).

As for Valerius Cato there is no proof that his *Diana* was an epyllion. But a poem which Suetonius (*gramm.* 11) calls *Diana* and Cinna calls *Dictynna* (frg. 14 Morel; see below) seems likely to have told of the aetiology of Diana’s name Dictynna, i. e., the story of Britomartis who was pursued by Minos and leapt off a cliff. And this, a romantic incidental in the legends of Minos, suits the tenor of epyllion. It is interesting, too, to note how Cinna’s praise of Cato’s *Dictynna* ‘saecula permaneat nostri Dictynna Catonis’ (‘may the *Dictynna* of our Cato last through the ages’) resembles Catullus’ praise of Cinna’s own masterpiece epyllion *Zmyrna*:. 95.6 ‘Zmyrnam cana diu saecula peruoluent’ (‘white-haired generations will long unroll the *Zmyrna*’). I am fairly confident that Cato’s poem told of Britomartis and Minos and that it was an epyllion—though a strong possibility remains that in form it was a narrative *hymn* (on which more anon).<sup>24</sup>

Finally Cornificius: Macr. *Sat.* 6.5.13 (Vergil’s borrowings are being illustrated):

‘tu nubigenas inuicte bimembres’. Cornificius in Glaucos: ‘centauros foedare bimembres’.

‘you, unconquered one [slew] the cloud-born beings of double-shape’ [*Aen.* 8.293]. Cornificius in *Glaucos*: ‘to mutilate the double-shaped centaurs’.

I think it would be perverse to doubt that the *Glaucus* was an epyllion; and its subject will have been the fanciful tale, popular with Hellenistic writers, of Glaucus the sea-god, half human and half fish in form, who fell in love with the nymph Scylla (told by Ovid

commentary was written by L. Crassicius. This commentary was celebrated in a clever little epigram (parodying Catullus) which Suet. quotes.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Otis (1970: 420 f.).

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Sudhaus (1907: 485 n.3), Bardon (1952: 340). I think in fact that we can learn much more about Cato’s *Diana*, and about Calvus’ *Io* and Cinna’s *Zmyrna*, from a study of the *Ciris* which most probably borrowed from all of them. See my forthcoming edition of *Ciris* (Lyne: 1978b).

at *Met.* 13.898 ff.).<sup>25</sup> What of ‘centauros foedare bimembres’? One is tempted to posit a substantial digression on these comparable hybrids, in the manner of Moschus’ digression on Io, in his epyllion on Europa.

It is hard to find sure signs of Latin epyllion apart from these poets, particularly before them. The Roman adaptation of the genre seems their achievement. It is in short an idiosyncrasy of the group, and the community of the group is thereby confirmed. It is, too, precisely the genre that is likely to offer the sort of line Cicero parodies; and this confirms our impression that the group around Catullus is associable with the school referred to as οἱ νεώτεροι by Cicero. It is also worth reflecting at this point that poets of this ilk (perhaps particularly the exceedingly abstruse Cinna himself) might well have offered justification for the slighting tag ‘parroters of Euphorion’ (‘cantores Euphronis’);<sup>26</sup> they might well have been, or seemed to be, addicts of that ἐπιποιός whose ἔπη presumably comprised what we call epyllions, who wrote ‘learned poetry in difficult language’—‘nimis obscurus’ (‘too obscure’) Cicero called him at *Div.* 2.132—and whose hexameters show studied artistry of style (‘alliteration, assonance, internal rhyme and the like to a degree which can hardly be fortuitous’) and of metre (‘a marked preference for certain types of line, particularly lines with spondaic ending and lines composed of a small number of long words’);<sup>27</sup> cf. the references to the Catullan hexameter in Section III above—and we can now add that Catullus affects not only five-word but four-word hexameters (64.15, 77, 115, and 319). (I resume the question of ‘hi cantores Euphorionis’, and whom Cicero may particularly have had in mind at that time, in Section VIII.)

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Wiseman (1974: 55), with useful bibliography. The Glaucus story was told by Hedyle, Hedyllus, Alexander of Aetolus, and, it seems, Callimachus: cf. Webster (1964: 52 and 130), and the *Suda*, s. v. Callimachus.

<sup>26</sup> The meaning of ‘cantor’ here is often missed or blurred (and some nuances may indeed escape us); cf. of course Hor. *Serm.* 1.10.19 ‘nil praeter Caluum et doctus cantare Catullum’ (‘taught nothing except to recite Calvus and Catullus’). The basic sense in both cases must simply be ‘chant’, ‘recite’. Devotees are being referred to who can only, or only want to, chant or recite the verses of their favoured poet. But the implication in ‘cantores Euphorionis’ (at least) is probably that the devotees also chanted verses of their own, in the style of their idol. Cf. Allen (1972: especially p. 13).

<sup>27</sup> On Euphorion see conveniently Webster (1964: 221–7) with bibliography. The quotations are from pp. 223–5.

## V

Now we shall turn to see whether some or all of these poets share any *other* striking literary interests: interests remarkable enough to assist in distinguishing them collectively from other poets. We should not of course necessarily expect to find all members of a school adopting all its typical forms or topics; and in the case of the neoterics (given the fragmentary state of our knowledge) we could be in ignorance of such consistency even if and when it occurred. What I think we should watch for is when two or more of the poets jointly write the same sort of idiosyncratic thing—idiosyncratic in form or subject; and we should then look to see if the forms or subjects that we discover show any characteristics or motivation in common among themselves—and in common with the already established neoteric genre, *epyllion*. Here would be confirmation of the school and clarification of its programme. Finally we can see if any striking form or subject treated by single members associates itself with the common characteristics or motivation identified. For this, too, would then be assignable to the neoteric programme.

Catullus writes two *epithalamia*—to use the term very loosely. Poem 62, in hexameters, is totally fictional, a drama staged at a wedding feast, complete with song contest and developing action.<sup>28</sup> Poem 61, in stanzas of glyconics and a pherecratean, seems to have been written with a real Roman wedding in mind; yet it too is a complex imaginative enactment rather than an actual *hymenaeal* or *epithalamion*: an enactment of a song to Hymen, of addresses and asides to participants in the course of a procession. Poem 62 especially is something surprising. Why should Catullus write it? There was hardly much precedent in Rome for a fictional, dramatized wedding scene with song. It is hardly the most obvious way to occupy one's pen in any circumstances. But one of Catullus' immediate confrères probably did much the same. Calvus writes, to our knowledge, two *epithalamia*: one apparently in the same lyric stanzas as Catullus and one in hexameters (frgs. 4 and 5 Morel). We may infer that the hexameter poem at least was comparably dramatic.

<sup>28</sup> The poem is excellently discussed by Fraenkel (1955).

What other shared interests strike one? Caecilius' occupation with Cybele is very remarkable, the 'Magna Mater' or the 'Dindymi domina' (see Section III above): for perhaps Catullus' most striking and unexpected poem also concerns Cybele, namely his 'Attis', poem 63. Whether Caecilius wrote or meditated writing in galliambics, whether he had a version of Attis in particular in mind we cannot know. But presumably he was occupied with a myth or story connected with Cybele—and not just a description of ritual, which would hardly in itself make an interesting poem. And that Caecilius was doing something similar to Catullus is indicated by the similarity between Catullus' reference to his work and a line of his own 'Attis': cf. 35.14 'Dindymi domina' and 18 'Magna ... Mater' with 63.91 'dea, magna dea, Cybele, dea domina Dindymi'.<sup>29</sup> Now this again is something extraordinary for Latin literature. Lucretius had had reason to explain the religion and rituals of Cybele, and in the process vividly described it (2.600–60). Varro of Reate too had touched on the topic in the course of his medley of Menippean *saturae*, and (typically for the genre) he switched to the appropriate metre (galliambics) for the occasion.<sup>30</sup> But neither of these—descriptions of current rites known at Rome—is a parallel for choosing an associated myth (or myths) and making a narrative poem out of it, self-sufficient in itself: as Catullus did and as Caecilius, it seems, was in the process of doing.

It begins to look as if some or all of Catullus' 'longer poems' (61–8) are distinctively neoteric. But that is jumping the gun. We still need to discover what, if any, are the common characteristics or motivations shared by the idiosyncratic subjects and forms noticed in this section—besides extraordinariness. However, before doing this, it will be useful further to clarify what in Catullus is *not* typically neoteric. Our sights will in fact then be set more firmly and confidently on (some of) the 'longer poems'.

<sup>29</sup> Wiseman (1974: 56) conjectures that Caecilius' story was aetiological, something like Hermesianax's account, for which see Paus. 7.17.5, frg. 8 (Powell).

<sup>30</sup> Quinn (1973: 284 f.) gives some information on the very rare galliambic metre and quotes Varro's lines (*Men.* 79, 131, 132, 275). On galliambics see further below, Section VII.

## VI

I have already shown that polymetric and elegiac occasional versicles, though common to the neoteric poets, were as a genre far from exclusively neoteric; and I ought to stress that however exquisite the *style* of the neoterics' own production was, it can hardly have been so different from other people's that one could reckon membership of the school on that score alone.<sup>31</sup> But there is one feature of Catullus' polymetrics and epigrams, or rather of some of them, which would indeed have lifted them out of any crowd. It is in fact arguably the most individual, characteristic, and important feature of his poetry; and I mean, in a word, *Lesbia*. No ancient poet, so far as one can tell, had ever before written a series of poems dealing in depth, in all manner of moods, with one relationship with a single enthralling lover. Of course (for example) Meleager had tied successions of epigrams to Heliodora and Myiscus. But Catullus explores and displays the nature of his love for Lesbia profoundly, obsessively—pursuing its ramifications: he shows the interplay of their personalities and the power of his love to shape his vision of the beloved; he shows the effects of disaster. All this in related and mutually dependent, mutually deepening poems. Catullus and Lesbia, Catullus' intense involvement with Lesbia, Catullus' psychological perception of his feelings for Lesbia, all emerge vividly—from a related cycle of what in other hands would be *uersiculi*.

Here then, in *content*, is a respect in which Catullus' *uersiculi* must by past form have been distinctive, extraordinary, even shocking. If

<sup>31</sup> Ross maintains that Catullus displays an artistry, an originality, and sophistication of style in his polymetrics and 'longer poems' that he does not display in his epigrams—and there is truth in this (cf. my review *CR* N.S. 22 (1972), 34–7). Ross also calls this artistry of style *neoteric* artistry, which may also (with qualifications) be justifiable. But we could not then say (not that Ross in so many words does) that such precious polymetrics would be sufficient on their own to distinguish a neoteric poet. It is hard to imagine that the *uersiculi* of Memmius and Hortensius were so very different from (e.g.) Catullus' (except in one respect which I am coming to). We may note that the 'Graeci plusculi' in Gellius (see Section IV above) thought that Catullus and Calvus did stand out somewhat in the matter of lyric poetry; but they lumped Cinna with Laevius, Hortensius, and Memmius, considering them all, for much the same reasons, pretty hopeless.

Catullus' other poetical confrères wrote similarly—and if no other contemporary did—then here ought to be a characteristic of their school. 'Lesbia' poetry—poetry to and about the commanding, agonizing, wonderful mistress—would have to be considered a highly distinctive part of their programme. (We might, however, have to reassess whether this school was indeed the school which Cicero had in mind at *Att.* 7.2.1.)

But the evidence is that this is simply not so: Cinna and the rest did not, in all probability, write poetry remotely like Catullus' Lesbia poetry. They wrote occasional erotic versicles, polymetrics and epigrams about *furta* ('clandestine love affairs'). But not 'Lesbia' poetry. This is a fact of considerable importance, too little noticed. The poetry which we probably regard as most typical of Catullus, the poetry indeed which immediately succeeding generations of Latin poets probably regarded as most typical of Catullus, is *untypical* of the school of poets with which he is intimately connected.<sup>32</sup>

The evidence is basically evidence from silence but I think it is conclusive. It boils down to this: no neoteric poet apart from Catullus is connected with any paramount, commanding mistress; and without a Lesbia there can be no 'Lesbia' poetry. But it is not just that no such girl is mentioned: the silence is at times deafening. For the fashion for Catullan 'Lesbia' poetry caught on after Catullus and caught on dramatically (behind this was no doubt the process of life imitating art as well as art imitating art); and a kind of canon of lover-poets and

<sup>32</sup> Much of the 'Catullan Revolution' was therefore very particularly a *Catullan* revolution. Quinn (1959: 26), when defining the revolution, talks of the poet becoming 'an independent personality who forces his personality into his poetry' and of the unit becoming 'the short poem, intensely personal...' But is it not particularly Catullus' *Lesbia* poetry that this suits? And yet on p.24 Quinn talks of 'The revolution that the *poetae novi* represent'.

Wiseman (1974: 52), referring to the 'beginnings of personal poetry' and noting how most scholars attribute these beginnings to the 'neoteric movement', is himself more circumspect: 'For that, the "Catullan revolution"...we can certainly give the credit to Catullus himself and perhaps also to Calvus...'; later in the paragraph he says that 'Cinna himself wrote love poetry'. But 'personal poetry' and 'love poetry' are terms that must be very clearly defined. There is a world of difference between the 'personal poetry' of Catullus and that of say Anacreon, or Sappho, or Meleager; and there was probably a world of difference between Catullus' and Calvus'.

Other scholars, like Schanz-Hosius (1927: 235–6), tend simply to assume or imply that Catullus was completely typical of the neoteric school.

their mistresses developed, to be listed on various occasions and for various motives. Now sometimes there were obvious or understandable reasons for selectivity and allusiveness of reference.<sup>33</sup> On other occasions there were not, and the silences or variations in one or two such lists are clear in their implications. A case in point is *Ov. Trist.* 2.427 ff. But in order to draw the available conclusions thence one must first deal with tricky textual and interpretative problems; and there is unfortunately no space for this in the present article. I shall consider *Prop.* 2.34.81 ff.

At 2.25.4 Propertius seems to claim that his *libelli* have more power to bestow fame on Cynthia than the works of Catullus and Calvus had had in a comparable situation: ‘ista meis fiet notissima forma libellis / Calue, tua uenia, pace, Catulle, tua’ (‘that beauty will become most celebrated in my books, Calvus, with your indulgence, with all due respect to you, Catullus’). This might suggest a girl for Calvus, to correspond to Catullus’ Lesbia and Propertius’ Cynthia. But if we look at *Prop.* 2.34.81 ff. we see what Propertius must actually have in mind.

non tamen haec ulli uenient ingrata legenti	81
siue in amore rudis siue peritus erit,	
nec minor hic animis, ut sit minor ore, canorus	
anseris indocto carmine cessit olor.	
haec quoque perfecto ludebat Iasone Varro,	85
Varro Leucadiae maxima flamma suae;	
haec quoque lasciui cantarunt scripta Catulli,	
Lesbia quis ipsa notior est Helena;	
haec etiam docti confessa est pagina Calui,	
cum caneret miserae funera Quintiliae.	90
et modo formosa quam multa Lycoride Gallus	
mortuus inferna uulnera lauit aqua!	
Cynthia quin uiuet uersu laudata Properti,	
hos inter si me ponere Fama uolet.	

Yet these things will not come unwelcome to any reader,  
 whether he is a novice or experienced in love,  
 and here too the tuneful swan though he is less noisy  
 triumphs in inspiration over the unskilled song of the goose.

<sup>33</sup> e.g. at *Ov. Am.* 1.15.27 ff., and *Apul. Apol.* 10.



Varro too wrote these playful verses when Jason was finished,  
 Varro, the greatest flame of his Leucadia;  
 the writings of playful Catullus also sang these things,  
 through which Lesbia is more famous than Helen.  
 The page of learned Calvus also confessed these things,  
 when he sang the death of poor Quintilia.  
 And just now how many wounds from fair Lycoris  
 has dead Gallus washed in the infernal stream!  
 Indeed Cynthia will live, praised in Propertius' verse,  
 if Fame wishes to place me among these.

Propertius is here justifying his sort of love poetry after praising Vergil. It is possible that his praise of Vergil (particularly of Vergil's epic) was not totally unequivocal. He certainly now intends that his love poetry should appear at least arguably on a par. It too, says Propertius, gives pleasure (81–2); and it is better—because more artistic—than some more ambitious but crude productions (something like this I take to be the implication of 83 f.). And it has by now good authority and precedent: that is the purpose of citing this list (85 ff.). Propertius is showing his literary pedigree, he is demonstrating that the poetry of the immortalizing lover-poet devoted to one woman has become a genre in its own right with worthy exponents. In these circumstances he is unlikely to leave out any obvious name.

Varro of Atax,<sup>34</sup> born in 82 BC (and thus a contemporary of Catullus and Calvus), wrote an Ennianizing *Bellum Sequanicum*, presumably about Caesar's campaign in 58 BC—when he himself therefore was a young man. Subsequently, it seems, he turned to mythological epic (besides other works)—an *Argonautae*, possibly stimulated by Caesar's journey to Britain. After the *Argonautae*, as Propertius expressly tells us ('perfecto ... Iasone'), he turned to love poetry, about a girl he called Leucadia. The timing clearly suggests that Varro, who is not associated with the Catullan coterie in our sources, was one of those who imitated particularly Catullus—and wrote his own version of 'Lesbia' poetry, finding or fancying himself in a comparably enthralling situation.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Schanz-Hosius (1927: 312f.). On the chronology of Varro's works cf. too Hofmann (1927/28: 170–6).

I imagine that Varro is mentioned by Propertius before Catullus because he combined in his person both epic and love poetry, moving from the one to the other; and therefore, in the context, provided a particularly pertinent authority for the genre. After Varro comes Catullus and Lesbia—here too (possibly) a slight hit at epic is contrived: from one point of view Catullus was a more powerful poet than Homer. Then before Gallus, who, with his Lycoris, was the clear and immediate predecessor of Propertius, there is Calvus and Quintilia—or rather there is Calvus who sang of the *funera Quintiliae*; and that is something rather different. But at least Calvus gets a mention. What of the neoterics Caecilius, Cornificius, Cinna, and Cato? The last three of these we know wrote erotic verses (see Section IV).

Propertius is contriving so far as he can a canon of poets *like himself*, lover-poets devoted to and celebrating one woman. A woman's name *was* intimately connected with Calvus, and he was renowned for celebrating her; but the situation was a very particular one and Propertius' wording responds accordingly. Calvus in fact composed a well-known *epicedion* for his Quintilia. It forms the background to Catullus' poem 96, and Calvus frgs. 15 and 16 Morel are probably from it.<sup>35</sup> In the course of this *epicedion*—which may have been lengthy—Calvus seems to have regretted his acts of unfaithfulness to Quintilia: that seems definitely to be the implication of Catullus' 'atque olim missas flemus amicitias' ('and we weep for the affection once thrown away', 96.4);<sup>36</sup> and (it seems to me) Propertius' 'haec etiam docti confessa est pagina Calui / cum caneret...' may also refer to affairs confessed *in the course* of the *epicedion*. As for Quintilia herself, it seems most likely that she was Calvus' wife—and that Calvus composed an *epicedion* for her partly under the stimulus of

<sup>35</sup> On Calvus' *epicedion* and Catullus 96 see Fraenkel (1956); cf. too the next note.

<sup>36</sup> Note the text is 'missas' not 'amissas'. Cf. Fraenkel (1956: 285–8). (Bringmann [1973] has an ingenious alternative explanation of the couplet 3–4—that it refers to a *mythological* section in Calvus' *epicedion*, to mythological *exempla* which Calvus adduced as a mirror and comfort for his suffering. The existence of such a mythological section in Calvus is highly likely—as B. shows; but B.'s interpretation of Catullus seems to me to founder—chiefly on 'quo desiderio'. 'desiderium' is particularly the yearning one feels—it is the *vox propria*—for something personally dear that is parted from one or lost for always.)

the epicedion composed by the influential Parthenius for his wife Arete.<sup>37</sup>

So: we know that Calvus was an erotic poet—‘detexit uariis ... sua furta modis’ (Ov. *Trist.* 2.432); we infer that he mentioned or alluded to these ‘furta’ in his epicedion; and his epicedion possibly included amorous allusions to his relations with Quintilia.<sup>38</sup> But his fame as a celebrator of one beloved woman rests on the epicedion, his commemoration of the death of, in all probability, his wife. Now we see what Propertius must have had in mind at 2.25.4. Calvus therefore fits into the canon of lover-poets of Propertian type at 2.34.81 ff. only with difficulty. If Propertius could have drawn a clearer analogy, pointing to a single woman immortalized in life by a devoted and singing Calvus, he surely would have done so. In fact Propertius slips him in rather speciously—to swell the ranks, to add the lustre of this famous name to the poetry of erotic devotion.

And why no mention of Caecilius, Cornificius, Cinna, or Cato?—Cinna at least was a famous poet, worthy to grace any pedigree.<sup>39</sup> The answer I think is simple. No name at all consistently or prominently features in their love poetry.<sup>40</sup> By no stretch of the imagination

<sup>37</sup> On Calvus’ and Parthenius’ epicedia see conveniently and interestingly Pfeiffer (1943); further bibliography at Wiseman (1974: 50 n.33). I am prepared now to reconsider my sceptical attitude to Parthenius’ influence on the neoterics (CR N.S. 22 [1972] 36 n.4)—with qualifications however: see Section IX below. Pfeiffer’s remarks in this connection (30–1) are cogent; so too are Wiseman’s (47 ff.). See also the useful and cautious article of Crowther (1976).

I should have thought that the fact that no pseudonym (apparently) is used for Quintilia points to her status as wife rather than mistress. Certainly it seems that the poets in the ‘Lesbia’ tradition almost invariably used pseudonyms for lovers whether they were freed women or not (Camps on Prop. 2.34.39 suggests Quintilia might be a freedwoman of the Quintilii). It is certainly a very risqué act, to be specially remarked, when later on a married woman is celebrated under her real name (Ov. *Trist.* 2.437–8). (The assumption that Quintilia was Calvus’ wife is also attacked by Tränkle [1967: 93–9].)

<sup>38</sup> Parthenius’ epicedion for Arete possibly did: Pfeiffer (1943: 32).

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Verg. *Ecl.* 9.35 ‘nam neque adhuc Varius uideor nec dicere Cinna/digna’ (‘and indeed I don’t seem to utter things worthy of either Varius or Cinna’); Valgius Rufus praises a fellow-poet by equating him with Cinna (Schol. Veron. on Verg. *Ecl.* 7.22). The commentaries on Cinna’s works (mentioned in Sections IV and IX) testify to his continuing fame. Wiseman (1974: 53–8) argues for the primacy of Cinna among the neoterics (as he defines them).

<sup>40</sup> What (the question ought to be faced) of Valerius Cato and ‘Lydia’? Suet. *gramm.* 11 writes that Cato wrote ‘praeter grammaticos libellos etiam poemata ex quibus

could they be represented as 'Lesbia' poets and therefore they had no place in the Propertian canon. In so far as they were love poets they must have been poets of the erotic idle hour, producing precious *uersiculi* like (we may infer) Catullus' delightful poems to Ipsitilla, Aemeana, and Juventius. Catullus the poet of Lesbia was unique in his time.

## VII

The impression we gathered above (Section V) that it must be some or all of Catullus' 'longer poems' which represent his distinctly neoteric poetry has been confirmed. Not only are polymetric and elegiac versicles in general far from being an exclusively neoteric domain: the one really idiosyncratic, original, and striking feature of Catullus' own production was, at the time, uniquely his—not neoteric at all. We must now examine those 'longer poems' of Catullus which seemed to have parallels in other neoterics' *oeuvres* (poems 61–4; see above, Sections IV and V) to see what, if any, common motivations or other characteristics they share. In this way the nature of the neoteric programme should clarify itself. We must see, too, if any of the other extraordinary 'longer poems' of Catullus, which the niggardly remains of neoteric poetry do not happen to parallel, could also fit into the picture. Let us begin by looking at Catullus' unparalleled longer poems.

There appears to be no parallel for poems 66 (with 65), 67, and 68 in the neoteric fragments. At this point some stylistic features noted by Ross (1969: 115–37; reprinted in this volume, pp. 141–64) are interesting.

praecipue probantur Lydia et Diana. Lydiae Ticide meminit "Lydia doctorum maxima cura liber" (in addition to grammatical tracts, also poems of which Lydia and Diana are especially praised. Of Lydia Ticide says "the book Lydia is the greatest beloved of learned men".) But this hardly sounds like a book of love poetry to a Lesbia-figure called Lydia. Perhaps the *liber* was more like Antimachus' *Lyde*: narrative elegiacs for, or in memory of, a girl; or perhaps Lydia in Asia Minor is meant (cf. Euphoriion's *Thrax*?) At all events I imagine that the work was abstruse and mythological: there is a nice humour in calling such a book the 'cura' ('the beloved') of 'docti'. It is the sort of joke that was made about Cinna's *Zmyrna* and the 'doctus' Crassicius in the epigram reported by Suetonius (*gramm.* 18). Cato's *Lydia* was, incidentally, certainly not the *Lydia* of the *Appendix Vergiliana*, which is patently influenced by the Augustan Elegists.

He argues that what he calls the 'neoteric elegiacs' (that, is, poems 65–8) differ in technique, are more consciously and sophisticatedly wrought, than the distichs of the epigrams. There is a lot of truth in this; but it is some exceptions noted by Ross which are particularly interesting. Among other metrical laxities (so to call them) offered by poem 68, line 49 neglects Hermann's Bridge—the only example in the 'neoteric elegiacs' (against four examples in the epigrams), and not a rhythm that we should expect in highly wrought Grecizing poetry at this stage of Latin literary history.<sup>41</sup> More noticeable is poem 67: Ross remarks that Catullus employs twelve  $\sigma\pi\omicron\nu\delta\epsilon\iota\acute{\alpha}\zeta\omicron\nu\tau\epsilon\varsigma$  in his distichs and that all but three of these occur in the 'neoteric elegiacs'. To be more precise they occur in 65, 66, and 68 and not in 67.<sup>42</sup> Poem 67 too has considerably less artistic word-patterning than 65, 66, and 68 (and of course 64, where it is rife).<sup>43</sup> In short these two poems 67 and 68, in particular 67, seem to *neglect* niceties of neoteric style (according to Ross's own definition)—as well as being unparalleled from the point of view of form or subject in the other neoterics' *oeuvres*. Let us therefore leave them out of consideration for the moment.

Poem 66 (with its introduction) is by definition a Callimachean poem. I suggested earlier (see Section III) that the neoteric programme might in some way be 'Callimachean'.<sup>44</sup> Could poems 61–6, i.e. the poems paralleled in other neoterics plus 66 (with its introduction 65), present a common front as being in some way all 'Callimachean'? Is a common motivation to be found here?

I think so. Let us note that all these poems are in their own way *narratives*; they all rather extraordinarily or deviously convey an account of a more or less fictional incident or incidents. Poems 63 and 64 do so more obviously than 62, 66, and especially 61. Perhaps 61 ought to be left aside for the moment. The rest<sup>45</sup> do, in their own way, manage to communicate a fictional story or drama. And perhaps we could put it this way: they are the sort of poems an ancient poet might produce (given certain availabilities and certain circumscriptions) who

<sup>41</sup> Ross (1969: 129–30).

<sup>42</sup> Ross (1969: 130–1).

<sup>43</sup> Ross (1969: 135).

<sup>44</sup> Hardly a revolutionary thesis of course: but my view of what direction the neoterics' Callimacheanism took is more defined and specific than, say, that of Clausen (1964: 187 ff.).

<sup>45</sup> On poem 62 as a narrative see Section V and note 28 above.

wanted to tell a story but found the conventional way of doing so uncongenial. The conventional way of telling a story was in epic or (as a second runner) in narrative elegy, like Antimachus' *Lyde*. And this of course takes us back to Callimachus.

On aesthetic grounds, as we know, Callimachus eschewed the continuation of epic (see Section III above); he found Antimachus' *Lyde* *παχὺ γράμμα καὶ οὐ τορόν* ('a writing both thick and unpolished'; frg. 398 Pf.).<sup>46</sup> This left him, and poets of his aesthetic persuasion, an obvious problem. How then was one to tell stories, a main wish of most ancient poets? In what forms was Callimachus to communicate his delightfully idiosyncratic versions of myth? With considerable ingenuity Callimachus evolved *alternatives* to epic, alternative ways of telling stories. He popularized if not concocted the perversely ingenious alternative *epos* itself, the epyllion; he revived the naturally narrative Homeric Hymn; he revamped didactic and included allusive little narratives in it (e.g. 'Acontius and Cydippe' in the *Aetia*: frgs. 67–75 Pf.). And it was probably Callimachus, too, who took up the idea of telling a story from the orgiastic myth of the east (Cybele) in its own orgiastic metre, galliambics. It is a devious thought, worthy of an original scholar-poet casting about for alternatives to conventional forms of Greek narrative; and there is some (small) objective evidence pointing this way.<sup>47</sup> It is also worth noting that the bizarre shape

<sup>46</sup> I take it that Callimachus considered efforts to write long, consistent, and continuous narrative in elegiacs just as disastrous as efforts to write traditional epic—for much the same reasons. And all such efforts—not just Antimachus'. We should remember that there are good grounds for supposing that Callimachus criticized the long narrative elegies of even Philitas and Mimnermus (*Aetia praef.* 10 ff.; see conveniently Trypanis [Loeb, edn.] ad loc., Lesky [1966: 710 f.]; Lesky is against this view, but he cites the evidence). Callimachus' own discontinuous, capriciously apportioned narrative episodes in elegiacs (e.g. in the *Aetia*) will have been as different from Antimachus' *Lyde* (and perhaps from Philitas' longer elegy and Mimnermus' *Nanno*) as his *Hecale* is from Apollonius' *Argonautica*—which is a lot, but not quite as much (perhaps) as Callimachus thought or would have us think. On Antimachus see further Lesky, 638, Wilamowitz (1924: 1.101–3), also (though I disagree with the article in some quite important respects) Vessey (1971).

<sup>47</sup> Hephaestion 12.3 tells us that the very rare galliambic metre was particularly associated with the 'magna mater'; he quotes two 'famous' lines (reminiscent of parts of Cat. 63): *Γαλλαὶ μητρὸς ὀρείης φιλόθυρσοι δρομάδες/αἴς ἔντεα παταγείται καὶ χάλκεια κρόταλα* ('the Gallai of the mountain mother are frantic devotees of the thyrsis whose instruments and bronze castanets clash'); and the scholiast on this passage tells us that 'Callimachus also used the metre'. Cf. Elder (1947: 394 n.2, 397 n.9).

which Catullus' own Attis story<sup>48</sup> takes could plausibly derive from the ironical and occasionally black-humoured Callimachus; Catullus is certainly I think following *some* Alexandrian source, at times closely, in poem 63.<sup>49</sup> But whatever the details of the matter, it seems to me certain that Callimachus or some Callimachean poet nurtured the idea of galliambic versions of the Cybele myth as a novel and striking alternative to *epos*.

And another Callimachean poet demonstrated yet another attractive method of narrative entertainment which did not involve one of the conventional, tedious forms. Theocritus' Callimacheanism is (virtually) expressly stated in *Idyll* 7.43 ff.: he too had written his own epyllion (*Id.* 13). And as well as producing the *Bucolics* (rustic tales in *recherché* language for the *litterati*) as one fine way of alternative story-telling, he revived the idea of a fictional epithalamion. He may have done this most immediately under the stimulus of Sappho; for Sappho's narrative poem on the nuptials of Hector and Andromache (as it seems to be)<sup>50</sup> was probably partnered by other fictional, mythical epithalamia.<sup>51</sup> Anyway, in an epithalamion for Menelaus and Helen (*Id.* 18), Theocritus gives us a delightfully individual glimpse into heroic myth—though the general strategy and ethos of the poem is interestingly and significantly Callimachean.<sup>52</sup> We have in fact little or no evidence for other fictional epithalamia in the 'high' Alexandrian period,<sup>53</sup> but I think we are entitled to guess that such an attractive

<sup>48</sup> Is the Attis of Cat. 63 supposed to recall and 'correct' the image of the original mythical lover of Cybele (for whom see Graillot (1912: e.g. 12)? Or is he meant just to be an (idiosyncratically Greek and repentant) eunuch priest (priests of Cybele were named eponymously Attis: cf. *Anth. Pal.* 6.220, Graillot e.g. p.19)? I rather infer the former; Wilamowitz (1924: 2.292) seems to be on the side of the latter.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Wilamowitz (1924: 2.291–5, Fordyce (1961: 262) . Elder (1947: 398) remarks on the 'Callimachean' narrative technique of the poem.

<sup>50</sup> Frg. 44 L-P, There is some doubt about the ascription as well as the nature of this poem: cf. Bowra (1961: 227–31).

<sup>51</sup> Cf. *RE* iA 2371 f. (We should note that Crusius, *RE* i.1569.13 ff. detects reminiscences in Theoc. *Id.* 18 of Alcman—who was called by Leonidas [*Anth. Pal.* 7.19] τὸν ὕμνητῆρ' ὕμεναίων ('the singer of wedding songs').

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Maas in *RE* ix.133.15 ff.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. *RE* ix.133.4–38: the reported ἐπιθαλάμιον of Eratosthenes may have been for an actual wedding; those that Philodemus has in mind certainly are.

idea had other exponents.<sup>54</sup> And Parthenius, whose influence we have noticed (Section VI), probably wrote an epithalamion—but whether fictional or not we cannot tell.<sup>55</sup>

Some concluding comments on these ‘Callimachean’ narrative alternatives are necessary before we return to the neoterics. First we must observe that there is a certain common tendency in *content*. The oddly weighted *Hecale* of Callimachus, Erysichthon with his bourgeois-souled parents in *Hymn* 6, Menelaus familiarly addressed in his bridal bedroom, Heracles and Hylas in *Id.* 13—all suit an alternative narrative, reacting to a convention of epic and orthodox heroes behaving heroically. The Callimachean poets explored byways of myth or probed unexpected corners in well-known myths. The sex-lives of heroes were congenial. If the plots of later or more extreme Callimacheans became more erotic or more off-beat, that should not surprise us. More extreme or diverse tactics are still serving the same strategy: the cultivation of the unexpected and the unconventional, often with an eye directly on affronting conventional expectations. It could be fun, for example, to make epics with heroines instead of heroes—and monstrous heroines at that.<sup>56</sup>

Secondly, though the common concentration of these poets on exquisiteness of *style* (more or less for style’s sake) is well known, it ought to be stressed that it—and their allusive, often wilfully capricious method of unfolding events—serves the same ultimate strategy as the common tendency in *content*. All are part of one front of unorthodoxy—ranged against the ordered telling of an expected story in a consistent and standard idiom.

We look back now to the longer poems of Catullus, and first to those paralleled in the neoteric fragments. What emerges immediately

<sup>54</sup> The Alexandrians collected Sappho’s epithalamia into a special book—while the rest of her poetry was organized according to metre (*RE* ix. 132.24 ff.). This may betoken an especial popularity for the particular genre; it was surely likely to encourage imitation.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Reitzenstein (1912: 3); also Wilamowitz (1924: 2.279 n.l.). But note Crowther (1976: 67 f.)

<sup>56</sup> The tendency of later epyllion’s subject matter is probably fairly enough represented by Parthenius’ collection of ἐρωτικὰ παθήματα, written for Cornelius Gallus to draw upon and put εἰς ἔπη (presumably what we should call epyllions) καὶ ἐλεγείας. Many of the stories derive from Euphron. On Gallus and Euphron see Section VIII below.



is that Cat. 63 and 64, the epyllions of Calvus, Cinna, and Cato (or Cato's hymn if that is what his *Diana* was; see Section IV above), Caecilius' inchoate 'magna mater', all have this in common: they are all versions of what one might call 'Callimachean' alternatives to conventional narrative. Of course, Catullus' epyllion is very different in impact to Callimachus'; but the *genus*, the ultimate strategy of the poem, is demonstrably the same. Likewise (we can take it) with the epyllions of Calvus and the rest.

Catullus' poem 62 should be seen in the same way. The epithalamial form takes us unexpectedly into a *story*, allusively and exquisitely told. This is Catullus' version of the 'Callimachean' alternative genre epithalamion. It is very much Catullus' *version*: the tactics—but not the strategy—are, especially in respect of content, very different from Theocritus'. Catullus has so far reacted to traditional narrative that he has fled beyond even a mythical domesticity and arrived in a domesticity of fiction. And we should I think consider Catullus' other epithalamion (poem 61) in the same context. It is essentially dramatic—things *happen* in the course of the poem—so that in its effect, or for part of its effect, it is a *narrative*—much of it Grecizing fancy.<sup>57</sup> But this poem Catullus seems to have composed with a definite marriage in mind and adapted it accordingly. One or other of Calvus' epithalamia (the lyric?) may have been comparable: an essentially literary and narrative epithalamion given particular relevance.

And poem 66, of course, also slots into place. By definition, as a translation of a narrative episode of Callimachus' *Aetia* (a brilliant and witty piece of instant myth), it is a version of a Callimachean alternative to conventional narrative. We should note that plenty of lines in it could remind one of Cicero's parody in *Att.* 7.2.1—and poems 61, 63, and (to a lesser extent) 62 also offer example after example of comparably contrived and superb artifice. Whether or not other neoterics imitated or translated episodes of the *Aetia* we cannot say, but the relation of poem 66 itself to the neoteric programme is clear. And so, in its own very particular way, is the relation of poem 68.

But first let me sum up (for it is now possible) what the neoteric programme was; or, to be most exact, I shall describe what the neoterics

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Fordyce (1961: 236–8).

did which distinguished them from other writers and united them among themselves—and which I rather assume they consciously regarded as their programme. In one way or another they affected the typically and ostentatiously ‘Callimachean’ forms, forms evolved by Callimachus and likeminded poets to provide the means for a more or less provocatively alternative narrative literature. Cicero at *Att.* 7.2.1 seems to have had affectation of style particularly in mind. But the neoterics were aiming at idiosyncrasy of style *and* content, for they were imitating genres that imposed both. They were imitating genres evolved by the Callimacheans to suit both new emphases in subject matter and a new (and concomitant) concentration on stylistic exquisiteness; and in taking upon themselves the genres, the neoterics took upon themselves the whole strategy. If their content varied in the tactics or degree of its contrived unorthodoxy, that is what we should expect from our observations above about the Greek Callimacheans.<sup>58</sup> Similarly with their style: that too could be more or less *recherché* according to the tactical wishes of the poet. But the common ground—the common strategy—is clear.

Now back to poem 68, or rather 68b. The allusive and individual account of Laodamia and Protesilaus (73 ff. and 105 ff.) which we find there could easily be a Catullan version of the sort of whimsically told mythological narrative which Callimachus fitted into the *Aetia*. And that I think is what, in essence, it is. The tenderly unheroic concentration of the Laodamia story suits the tenor of later ‘alternative’ narrative’s subject matter;<sup>59</sup> and its style (and the style of the rest of the poem) displays all the features which we have associated (since analysing Cicero’s parody) with the neoterics<sup>60</sup>—the few metrical licences noted by Ross discussed earlier in this section are comfortably outweighed, and explicable besides, in view of the poem’s unique

<sup>58</sup> Wiseman therefore (1974: 54) makes too much of the difference between Catullus’ subject matter in poem 64 and that of the other neoterics’ epyllions. The tactics of unorthodoxy seem to be fairly different in all of them, but the strategy, and the orthodoxy being played against, is common to all.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Moschus’ *Europa* and e.g. Parthenius’ ἐρωτ. παρθ. 4 (Oenone and Paris); for Parthenius’ work see n.56 above.

<sup>60</sup> See conveniently Fordyce (1961: 344). As well as noting a plenitude of five-word hexameters, we should note three-word pentameters at 74 and 112. The extensive hypotaxis which Fordyce points to disapprovingly was probably intended by Catullus to be appreciated as mannered and contrived *ars*.

personal endeavour. For what Catullus has done is (I submit) to put a neoteric narrative to personal service:<sup>61</sup> he has used it to adumbrate and amplify the complex and tragic ambivalences of his own current feelings. And he has then worked the whole into an amazing, elaborately structured ring-composition.<sup>62</sup> The result is something original and fascinating: a neoteric form consciously adapted to a particular and untypical, *personal* end. In its idea and execution the poem is the work of genius. It has the characteristics of genius too—at times touching the stars, at times falling flat on its face.

To conclude this section: we have now hazarded a description of the neoteric programme and located Catullus' particularly neoteric production in his longer poems. But we have not *identified* his longer poems with his neoteric production. 68a may introduce 68b or be as it were Part I of the same poem as many believe.<sup>63</sup> This would, either way, associate it with neoteric poetry; but it would not *be* neoteric poetry. It would have even less claim than the mannered poem 65 which introduces 66. And if in truth it has no relation to 68b at all,<sup>64</sup> then it has no relation to neoteric poetry either. And what of poem 67? This (as we saw earlier in this section) lacked conspicuously neoteric features of style; its only allusiveness is the allusiveness of defamatory innuendo. It is not a version of a 'Callimachean' alternative narrative; it is not a fictional narrative at all. It employs a motif of epigram, the dialogue with a house-door, to indulge at length in a medley of provincial scandal. It is in fact an overblown, occasional, delightful, brilliant epigram—nothing to do with neoteric poetry at all.

But this may seem curious; that Catullus should group completely unneoteric occasional poetry with ostentatiously neoteric poems. I think it would be curious. But I do not think he did. I think it likely that 67 and possibly 68a were grouped with other 'longer poems'

<sup>61</sup> Cf. how he has probably adapted a neoteric form to his particular use with poem 61; but the poetic achievement is not remotely comparable.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Kroll (1960: 219).

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Williams (1968: 229 ff.).

<sup>64</sup> This has been argued most recently by Wiseman (1974: 88–103). One does not have to accept the suggestion that Manlius had his eye on *sharing* Catullus' mistress (I imagine he simply wants Catullus to organize a girl for him) to appreciate the coyness of some of Wiseman's points.

by an editor, probably for no other reason than that they too were 'longer'.<sup>65</sup>

### VIII

We have now identified a school of poets behind Cicero's remarks on οἱ νεώτεροι and established its programme. Does Cicero have in mind the same poets when he talks in 45 BC of 'hi cantores Euphorionis' (*Tusc.* 3.45)? Or rather (since individual poetic stars wax and wane in five years) does he have in mind the same sort of poets?

Probably. It has already seemed likely (see Sections I and IV above). And now we have recognized precisely how important Callimachus was for the neoteric programme, and in what ways. A neoteric's Callimacheanism should or could have endeared him to Euphorion.

Although the directness of the relation between Callimachus and Euphorion is debatable, it is clear that the latter's aesthetic sympathies would have been with Callimachus; and his poetic practice was consonant. Indeed in many ways—ways that should have appealed to a neoteric—he seems like a kind of extreme version of Callimachus.<sup>66</sup> The deviousness of his poetry—which included epyllions at least—was virtually unbeatable: deviousness manifesting itself in mannered obscurity of style *and* highly exotic, off-beat content. A devoted neoteric might well therefore have reason to study Euphorion. A fanatic might have reason to be an addict, a 'cantor'.

Perhaps some neoterics were more fanatical than others. Perhaps there were more fanatics among them when Cicero wrote 'hi cantores Euphorionis' than when he wrote about οἱ νεώτεροι five years earlier. We cannot say. But it seems likely that, although the school Cicero describes in 50 BC and then in 45 may be dynamic and evolving, it is substantially the same school. And perhaps there is no significance in

<sup>65</sup> Our collection could not possibly have been produced by Catullus himself, and the degree to which the present order of poems still reflects any of his original wishes is largely speculation. Several factors suggest that the ordering of the 'longer poems' in particular is not his. Such are the unassailable conclusions to be drawn from Wheeler (1934: 1–32, especially 22 ff.; also 39 f.).

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Webster (1964: 221 ff., especially 221–3), Clausen (1964: 191 f.), Crowther (1970: 325–6).

the change of reference at all; it simply pleased Cicero to use a different slighting and exaggerative appellation on a different occasion. He may have had several. He may at times have referred to the school as simply the 'poetae noui'.

What of Cornelius Gallus? It is possible that Cicero had him, among others, in mind at *Tusc.* 3.45:<sup>67</sup> by 45 BC or even earlier Gallus (a waxing star) could have been associated with 'cantores Euphorionis'—and with what we have established as the neoteric school. We have explicit information that he wrote (somehow) in the manner of Euphorion (cf. Verg. *Ecl.* 10.50 with Servius and pseudo-Probus *ad loc.*; cf. too Serv. on *Ecl.* 6.72 discussed below). It is to him, too, that Parthenius dedicates for use εἰς ἔπη (presumably epyllions) καὶ ἐλεγείας his collection of sometimes Euphorionic ἐρωτικὰ παθήματα. And it appears from Verg. *Ecl.* 6.64–73 that Gallus wrote or was meditating an ambitious 'Hesiodic' poem—an epyllion presumably—on the origin of the 'Grynean Grove': 'his tibi Grynei nemoris dicatur origo' ('with these [pipes] let the origin of the Grynean Grove be told', *Ecl.* 6.72)—and Euphorion had apparently told one story connected with that grove, the contest of Calchas and Mopsus (Serv. on *Ecl.* 6.72).<sup>68</sup>

The whole question of Gallus is, of course, too complex to raise here and so I confine myself to two qualifying observations.

(1) Gallus' subsequent fame was almost exclusively as a love poet of the stamp of Catullus and Propertius. There is, for example, no discernible sign that any poem by Gallus on the 'Grynean Grove' influenced poets of succeeding generations.

(2) If Gallus did complete such a poem, I doubt that its plot was the contest of Calchas and Mopsus, as Serv. at *Ecl.* 6.72 may imply<sup>69</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Crowther (1970: 326–7), Bramble (1974: 181).

<sup>68</sup> See next note.

<sup>69</sup> But Servius' note is vaguer than many admit. The crucial words are as follows: 'in quo <luco> aliquando Calchas et Mopsus dicuntur de peritia diuinandi inter se habuisse certamen ... hoc autem Euphorionis continent carmina, quae Gallus transtulit in sermonem latinum ...' ('in this grove once Calchas and Mopsus are said to have had a contest of skill between themselves ... this is contained in the poems of Euphorion that Gallus translated into the Latin language'). This seems to me to imply Servius' knowledge of, or belief in, two separate facts: (1) that somewhere in his works Euphorion had told of or referred to the story of Calchas and Mopsus' contest; (2) that Gallus 'translated' (one knows incidentally how loosely *transfere* is used by Servius) Euphorionic poetry. Nothing preciser. He may wish to imply that Gallus 'translated' a poem by Euphorion about Calchas and Mopsus, i.e. that the two facts should be put together;

and as most modern scholars assume; nor will Vergil have had this story in mind. It would hardly provide the *aetiological* slant we expect (note 'origo' in 72); and it is not the sort of story that particularly suits epyllion—or the tenor of the stories in *Ecl.* 6. Much more plausible is the story which we infer from Serv. *auct.*, commenting on 'Gryneus Apollo' at *Aen.* 4.345: 'Clazomenae ciuitas est Asiae ... iuxta hanc nemus est Gryneum, ubi Apollo colitur, qui traditur ibi Grynem Amazonem stuprasse ...' ('Clazomenae is a city in Asia ... next to it is the Grynean grove, where is worshipped Apollo, who is said to have raped the Amazon Gryne there'). That sounds potentially aetiological; it could also make a very good, and indeed more typically, Euphori-  
onic epyllion; and it fits the tenor of the other stories in *Ecl.* 6. The story's provenance may, interestingly, be Parthenius himself: we note that Vergil's 'Gryneus Apollo' at *Aen.* 4.345, where the story is cited, seems an echo of Parthenius' poem *Delos*.<sup>70</sup>

## IX

We have fitted two apparently individual Catullan poems (66 and 68b) into the neoteric programme. What of two individual and idiosyncratic poems that we know by other neoterics, namely Cinna's propempticon for Asinius Pollio (frgs. 1–5 Morel) and Calvus' epicedion for Quintilia (mentioned above in Section VI)? I have suggested that Calvus' epicedion was probably written under the influence of Parthenius. And we have reason to believe that Cinna's propempticon (which, like his *Zmyrna*, subsequently merited a commentary) was also stimulated by an example of Parthenius.<sup>71</sup> So: two poems written (presumably) along formal Greek lines, and under the stimulus of a Greek poet who we gather strongly influenced neoteric poets; and the surviving fragments of Cinna's poem offer obvious instances of neoteric *ars*. Are these not to be counted neoteric poems? How are they to be fitted into the programme?

but he certainly does not commit himself to saying so. I think, in fact, it is clear that he knows *at first hand* no poem by either Gallus or Euphorion on Calchas and Mopsus, or for that matter any poem at all by them connected with the Grynean Grove.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. Clausen (1964: 192).

<sup>71</sup> Cf. Wiseman (1974: 48), with references.

I would make the following points. First, there is actually no evidence for Parthenius' influence over *all* the neoteric poets. In particular it is slim for Catullus,<sup>72</sup> who explicitly recognizes only Callimachus as a Greek influence. In this connection it is worth noting that the neoteric poets seem more prone to complimenting *each other* as a coterie of equal talent than to acknowledging any one as master; I have the impression of a group of poets who fed each other ideas, took and gave advice where they could or wanted, and formed their own programme.<sup>73</sup> We might indeed provisionally conclude that Parthenius' influence among the neoterics—apart from Gallus—was particularly or only upon Cinna (for an obvious reason)<sup>74</sup> and Calvus. Second, the two poems, though idiosyncratic and Grecizing, do not fit into the general definition comfortably and honestly arrived at above (Section VII) of the neoteric programme; and they are, also, very obviously special cases—in that they are written for specific and special occasions not likely to be too frequently repeated. I would therefore (at risk of seeming to draw too fine a distinction) class them as specially occasioned *tours de force* written by neoteric poets rather than poetry of the neoteric programme.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>72</sup> Cazzaniga (1961) compares some fragmentary lines of Parthenius with Cat. 68.94–100.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. Cat. 14, 35, 50 etc. (above Section III), Cinna frg. 14. The idea of Valerius Cato as the 'Leader' of the school has once more (it should not have been necessary) been exposed by Wiseman (1974: 53 f.).

<sup>74</sup> Wiseman (1974: 47) cogently supports the notion that it was 'Cinna the Poet' who captured Parthenius, brought him to Rome, and then freed him on account of his learning.

<sup>75</sup> My thanks are due to P. G. McC. Brown for kindly reading and acutely criticizing a first draft.

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## The Roman Poetic Traditions: The Neoteric Elegiacs and the Epigrams Proper

*David O. Ross, Jr.*

### METER

There are several questions fundamental for an understanding of Catullus' work which are seldom raised or, if raised, are a source of embarrassment and disagreement among scholars. One such question concerns his metrics. No one doubts the refinement of meter evident in his polymetrics,<sup>1</sup> an ease and naturalness difficult to understand when one considers that Catullus was among the first to experiment with these meters in Latin. On the other hand, his pentameter couplets have been almost universally criticized for their metrical roughness and lack of elegance. Wheeler summed up this condemnation and suggested a reason for it:

The position of the Catullian distich in the development of that metre at Rome is the only feature of his elegiac work about which there is substantial agreement. It is recognized that he was less successful in this metre than in any other. He was consciously endeavoring to transplant the Greek distich, but the result did not commend itself, in all respects, to the ears of those who succeeded him in the next generation. The distich was a form which required

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Sedgwick (1950: 64): 'Here the keynote is metrical polish and refinement'. P. 65: 'No poet gives a stronger impression of complete ease, and mastery of verse-technique, from the simplest hendecasyllables to the galliambics of 63 and the sustained artistry of 61—to many the very summit of Latin lyric.'



time and the touch of many poets before the best results could be achieved. Catullus stood too near its beginnings ...<sup>2</sup>

If Catullus' apparent failure with the distich is to be explained by the difficulty of transplanting a Greek meter into Latin, why, it may be asked, was he more successful in the polymetric forms, in which Latin poetry was far less experienced? And did Catullus really stand 'too near its beginnings', or is the simple fact of the matter not rather that the distich, being an Ennian introduction, is equally as old as the hexameter? How then is it possible that Catullus appears so accomplished and so fluent in his hexameters, a meter long established at Rome, when his pentameter couplets are so rough? Norden raised this embarrassing question, but apparently found no difficulty worth discussing:

die Hexameter in Catulls c. 62 sind die melodösesten in lateinischer Sprache, während seine Pentameter noch viele Härten zeigen, die erst die folgende Generation beseitigte (z.B. 91, 2 *in misero hoc nostro hoc perduto amore fore* mit den vielen schweren Synaloephen, 110, 4 *quod nec das nec fers, saepe facis facinus* mit den fünf Monosyllaba in den ersten, dem mehrsilbigen Wortschluss in der zweiten Hälfte).<sup>3</sup>

The hexameters in Catullus' poem 62 are the most melodious in the Latin language, while his pentameters still show many rough qualities that were abolished only in the next generation (for example, 91.2 *in misero hoc nostro hoc perduto amore fore* with several difficult elisions, 110.4 *quod nec das nec fers, saepe facis facinus* with five monosyllables in the first half of the line and a word of several syllables ending the second half.

Attempts have been made to explain away or excuse the metrical rudeness of the pentameter couplets, but never has the fundamental question been fairly faced. If no less of a critic than Norden, sensitive to style and meter as he was, could see the hexameters of c. 62 as the most melodic in the Latin language, and yet balk at the quality of the distichs, surely we must try to find an explanation which does not excuse the distichs on the grounds of their (supposed) early place in

<sup>2</sup> Wheeler (1915: 160; for other recent comments of this nature, see Sedgwick (1950: 65 n. 2) and West (1957: 102 and nn. 7 and 8).

<sup>3</sup> Gercke-Norden (1927: I. 4. 28).

the history of that meter in Latin or of the difficulty Catullus presumably felt in trying to transplant the Greek distich.

W. B. Sedgwick is perhaps the only scholar to have posed the question as one demanding an answer from the literary tradition rather than as one to be explained away; he finds that Catullus, in his lyrics, was an innovator, but that in his distichs he stands:

not at the beginning but at the end of a period. . . . The lyric tradition exemplified in Catullus seems to have been started by Laevius, *ca.* 90 B.C., who, without great poetical merit, seems to have had considerable metrical facility; no doubt Catullus' work differed little in kind from that of his contemporaries. In the bulk of their work Catullus and his school must have been regarded as innovators (Cicero's *νεώτεροι*): but in the *shorter* elegy at least this was far from the case. Here Catullus followed a tradition, but a different one, which went back a century, with an established technique based on the metrical practice of the second century, starting from Ennius' *saturnae* (including his epitaphs in elegiacs).<sup>4</sup>

This suggestion represents a considerable advance in our understanding of the problem: it first takes account of the obvious fact that the distich was not a recent immigrant to Rome (a fact so often ignored by those who strangely want to excuse Catullus on these grounds and who even more strangely ignore his success with the novel lyric meters); secondly it discards an assumption often made, but lacking visible means of support, that Catullus was trying to transplant the Greek couplet. We will be justified, then, in our attempt to carry this line of reasoning further, first examining certain of the rough features of the meter of the distichs, then contrasting the distichs with the hexameter poems, trying to understand such differences as are obvious and to explain them in the dim light of the tradition.

Before we can begin with the metrical details of the distichs, another question must be posed to clarify and test Sedgwick's hypothesis. If, as he says, Catullus represents an earlier tradition in his distichs (one in which he was a follower), but in his lyric poems he stands as an innovator (one of the *νεώτεροι*), then we are faced with a paradox: Catullus' neoteric poetry, by common agreement, includes four

<sup>4</sup> Sedgwick (1950: 66).

poems in distichs,<sup>5</sup> three of which at least (65, 66, 68) are neoteric productions *par excellence*. The only solution to this paradox is that there must be an obvious difference between the meter of these neoteric distichs and that of the epigrams themselves (cc. 69–116), because it would not seem possible that Catullus was an innovator in his neoteric distichs in all respects but meter. If it can be shown clearly that in important and indicative features Catullus' epigrams differ in meter from his neoteric distichs, then Sedgwick's hypothesis may stand as proved. Statistics for each group may be compared without conversion: the neoteric elegiacs have 325 lines, the epigrams proper 319 lines.

It seems strange that such differences as appear so obvious between the epigrams themselves and the longer neoteric distichs have not been previously observed: but no studies of Catullus' metrics or of the development of the distich in Latin poetry take account of the possibility that these two groups of poems might belong to two different traditions and therefore show different characteristics. All such metrical studies present figures and statistics for the distichs as a whole, and often the hexameter poems (cc. 62 and 64) are also included. It has therefore been necessary to restudy the whole matter and to compile new sets of statistics.

The excessive number and harsh quality of the elisions in the distichs are most often pointed out to show Catullus' deficiency in this meter. D. A. West, who has most recently acted the apologist for the elegiacs, concludes that '... this feature is felt by Catullus to be particularly appropriate in passages where he is discussing some intense emotion of his own',<sup>6</sup> and there is much to be said for this view. West cites the well-known line *quam modo qui me unum atque unicum amicum habuit* ('than the one who just now regarded me as his one and only friend', 73.6) as an example of an emotionally intense final pentameter; he mentions too the large number of elisions found in another highly charged personal poem, c. 76, and that

<sup>5</sup> In the following pages, c. 67 will be considered as a proper member of this group of neoteric elegies, for the present without further discussion.

<sup>6</sup> West (1957: 102).

When, in poem 68, five strange elisions occur in one couplet [*Troia (nefas!) commune sepulcrum Asiae Europaeque, Troia virum et virtutum omnium acerba cinis*, 'Troy—unspeakable!— the common tomb of Asia and Europe, Troy, the bitter ash of all men and virtues', 89–90] after thirty lines which have offered only nine elisions, either this is the work of chance, which is unlikely, or else this couplet with its four Greek proper names and its five elisions is in rhythm as in sense a link between the declamatory poetry of mythology, that precedes, and the plain poetry of personal sorrow that follows.

Examples of such emotional elision may easily be multiplied from the distichs, but, as one further case worthy of note, three lines from the hexameter epyllion c. 64 may be quoted, from Ariadne's emotional speech:

certe ego te in medio versantem turbine leti  
eripui, et potius germanum amittere crevi,  
quam tibi fallaci supremo in tempore dessem. (149–51)

'Surely I snatched you up when you were floundering  
in the middle of a whirlpool of destruction, and I decided to  
give up my brother rather than to fail you—traitorous—  
in your time of need.'

In a poem which contains an average of only one elision every 3.1 lines, the five elisions, including the irregular *cert(ē) ěgo*,<sup>7</sup> must be due to the sudden release of Ariadne's emotions in a situation which perhaps is closely paralleled in Catullus' own personal life.<sup>8</sup>

West rightly refers to a remark by Sedgwick to support his argument, a remark which may be amplified:

In his frequent elisions, which are not at all characteristic of his other poetry, he represents the actual pronunciation of the day; the avoidance of it is a

<sup>7</sup> The elision *-(ē) ě-* is rare. According to Platnauer (1951: 74), *quare ego* occurs in *Corp. Tib.* 3.4.49, *te ego* in Prop. 2.20.11, Ovid *Am.* 2.10.3; *certe ego*, however, in Ovid some dozen times.

<sup>8</sup> It is interesting to speculate on the possible significance of Ariadne's reference to her *germanum* here together with her wish not to desert her lover; while it is impossible, of course, to reconstruct the facts of Catullus' life at the time of his brother's death and his later (?) break with Lesbia, or to be sure when c. 64 was written, the many seemingly personal elements in the story of Ariadne can be developed into a convincing parallel. In any case, it seems clear that the elisions in these lines serve to emphasize sudden emotional release.

deliberate poetical artifice. The most extreme cases can be paralleled from lines in Plautus and Terence, written for stage presentation, which would have been intolerable if they had not reflected actual pronunciation ... It is really the Ovidian practice which is divorced from nature.<sup>9</sup>

If, as seems most likely, elision does represent actual pronunciation, then Catullus may be seen to have followed a tradition in his distichs which was to some degree removed from what at any rate came to be the poetic practice (hence the more realistic personal emotion which can be conveyed by excessive elision). What this poetic practice was at the time when Catullus himself was writing can be seen only by comparing certain figures for elision in his own work and in the work of other poets, but in any such comparisons we cannot speak of Catullus' elegiacs to include all the poems 65–116 (as even West does): the epigrams proper must be compared with the neoteric elegiacs (65–8) and also with the neoteric hexameters of c. 64; each in turn must be separately studied in the different traditions of Roman poetry to which they may belong.

Figures for the total number of elisions per 100 lines are given for representative poets by E. H. Sturtevant and R. G. Kent,<sup>10</sup> from which a selection will serve to sketch a background for Catullus' practice. Plautus and Terence represent what may have been close to the normal colloquial practice with 150 elisions per 100 lines; Lucilius likewise has 133. Ennius,<sup>11</sup> however, is remarkable for limiting his elisions to only 22: 'From this it seems that elision was a phenomenon of the popular speech which did not find immediate acceptance to its fullest extent in the dignified style of the epic.'<sup>12</sup> How remarkable Ennius' restriction was can be seen from Lucretius' (48 per 100 lines in Bk. I) and Virgil's practice (28 in *Ecl.* 1–6, but 46 in *G.* I, 48 in *Aen.* I, and 56 in *Aen.* XII). Horace's *Satires* show a far higher proportion of elisions (43 per 100 lines in I, 46 in II) than do his *Epistles* (19 in I, 20 in II) and must be regarded in this respect too as the more colloquial

<sup>9</sup> Sedgwick (1950: 67–8).

<sup>10</sup> Sturtevant and Kent (1915: 148). The figures include prodelision of *est* and *es*, which has also been included for purposes of comparison in my figures for Catullus.

<sup>11</sup> In reference to both Lucilius and Ennius, 'The figures cover all fragments amounting to two complete dactylic hexameter verses ...' Sturtevant and Kent (1915: 148).

<sup>12</sup> Sturtevant and Kent (1915: 149).

(Virgil's similar proportion in the *Georgics* and *Aeneid* cannot of course be attributed to the same reason). The Augustan elegists have from 14 elisions per 100 lines (Tib. I) to 24 (Prop. I–II, 9).<sup>13</sup>

In this setting Catullus must be seen. Sturtevant and Kent give 47 elisions per 100 lines, but this figure represents all the hexameter verses of the elegiac distichs and for our purposes is misleading. The epigrams proper (69–116) have 75.7 elisions per 100 lines, far higher than even Lucretius or Horace in his *Satires*. The neoteric elegiacs (65–8), however, contrast strikingly: 44.8 elisions per 100 lines. This still represents something of a compromise, because the hexameter epyllion c. 64, the neoteric masterwork, shows only 33.3.<sup>14</sup> The picture given by these totals finds further support in the analysis of the individual neoteric elegiacs. Excluding now prodelision with *est* or *es*<sup>15</sup> and calculating on the basis of the number of lines per elision, we find that in the epigrams proper there is one elision every 1.5 lines; c. 76, noted often for its numerous elisions, has 27 in its 26 lines, slightly less than one elision per line. At the other end of the scale, the epyllion has only one elision every 3.1 lines.<sup>16</sup> Of the neoteric distichs, c. 66, the translation of Callimachus' *Coma*, exactly reproduces this proportion (3.1), and the poem which accompanied it, c. 65, has one elision every four lines. C. 67 has one elision every 2.5 lines, and c. 68 is similar (2.4). Within c. 68, however, a clear stylistic difference must be noted in the matter of elision (a difference which, taken with others, supports the assumption that originally at least c. 68 represents two separate poems): in lines 1–40 there are 22 elisions, or one every 1.8 lines; in lines 41–160, however, there are only 44 elisions, or one every 2.7 lines. 68.1–40 thus agrees with the epigrams proper (nothing surprising in view of its colloquial epistolary style),

<sup>13</sup> I have not seen it observed that, in the hexameters of the *Apocolocyntosis* (a total of 49 lines), not a single elision occurs: these verses are a brilliant parody of mannered epic style, a *tour de force* not sufficiently appreciated as such.

<sup>14</sup> It should be noted that c. 62 (the hexameters which Norden called 'die melodiösten in lateinischer Sprache') has a very high proportion, 68.4 elisions per 100 lines, an indication of the natural and native quality of the song sung by the two choruses at the wedding banquet. The refrain has been ignored in this count.

<sup>15</sup> Prodelision in the distichs remains fairly constant: there are 33 in 69–116 (319 lines) and 25 in 65–8 (325 lines); on the other hand, c. 64 (408 lines) has only six instances of prodelision, while c. 62 (57 lines without the refrain) has nine.

<sup>16</sup> C. 62 has one elision every 1.9 lines.

while the second part of the poem (or the second of the two original poems) agrees closely with the average for the neoteric distichs (65–8), 2.7 lines per elision.

This same relative frequency can be observed in certain types of elision. The epigrams proper show 78 elisions of final long vowels, a proportion of one every four lines (c. 76 has nine final long vowels elided, or one every three lines); in cc. 65–8 there are only 30 instances (one every 11 lines) and in the epyllion only 25 (one every 16 lines). Similarly, the elision of a final long vowel before an initial short vowel is far more freely allowed in the epigrams (ten instances) than in the neoteric distichs (only one example: 66.25, *tē ěgo*, where, incidentally, *te* has been supplied in the text) or in the epyllion (three instances).<sup>17</sup> Elision of a short vowel at the end of a dactylic word before an initial short vowel is rare, though legitimate, in Augustan elegy:<sup>18</sup> there are only five cases in Catullus' neoteric elegiacs (and 7 in c. 64), but thirteen in the epigrams.

From these figures certain general conclusions may be drawn before a more difficult point is considered. West apologizes for Catullus on two grounds: '... in many details his metre resembles that of the Augustan Elegists,' and '... some of the points in which Catullus differs from the Augustans are signs not of incompetence or indifference but of a deliberate adjustment of metre to content'.<sup>19</sup> While the first point is true for certain aspects of Catullus' meter, it would be rash and almost impossible to extend such an apology very far: the figures given above for different types of elisions are enough to show that, while in his neoteric productions Catullus approaches Augustan usage, it is only an approach—albeit a particularly relevant one when compared to the difference of the epigrams proper from Augustan usage. In every aspect there is still a gap between the neoteric elegiacs and the Augustan rigidity in the matter of elision. West's second point

<sup>17</sup> The three instances in the epyllion are all in passages of an emotional nature: 70, where Catullus addresses Theseus directly by name, *illa ... toto ex te pectore, Theseu, / tot(ō) ānimo, tota pendebat perdita mente* ('she with her whole heart hung on you, Theseus, with her whole soul, with her whole mind, lovelorn'); 149, *cert(ē) ěgo*, in a passage discussed above, one of five elisions in a space of three lines; 372, *quar(ē) āgite*, a colloquial phrase used by the Parcae to continue again suddenly with the *optatos amores* ('longed-for love') immediately following the dire prediction of the end of Troy.

<sup>18</sup> See Platnauer (1951: 73).

<sup>19</sup> West (1957: 98).

is also true; but, besides being a matter of subjective interpretation, it fails to take any account of the tradition Catullus may have been following. We may agree with Sedgwick (as West does) when he writes: 'But how can we suppose that Catullus, a master of every other sort of verse, was in elegiacs a complete failure? The fault must surely lie in the critics: the verses must be excellent of their kind.'<sup>20</sup> It only remains to ask what was their kind? The answer, suggested by Sedgwick himself, sees Catullus at the end of a tradition of Roman epigram, which may be called pre-neoteric epigram. The study of Catullus' elisions, however, indicates that this is true only for the epigrams proper: the neoteric elegiacs agree closely on all important points, both in total number of elisions and in specific types, with the hexameters of the neoteric epyllion. The outlines of so much are clear: there are, of course, notable exceptions, both in Catullus' use in the neoteric elegiacs of elements more fitting to the epigrams, and in neoteric restrictions appearing in the epigrams. It may be assumed that Catullus found it somewhat difficult to break away from the tradition of pre-neoteric epigram even in his neoteric distichs, but it is obvious from the study of elisions that he did so, just as it is obvious that he was occasionally able to introduce neoteric refinements into the epigrams. A full discussion of the tradition must be postponed until other stylistic features have been examined; it is sufficient here only to suggest the lines along which our study is tending.

One final aspect of elision in Catullus must be examined, that of elision at the halfway point in the pentameter. Of this only two examples are to be found in the Augustan elegists, both in Propertius;<sup>21</sup> in Catullus, however, there are four certain instances in c. 68 and eleven in the epigrams,<sup>22</sup> to which may be added 67.44 and two more in the epigrams (97.2, 99.8) where the readings are in dispute. Not only are these disputed readings important (removal of the elision only adds to the number of even more disputable cases of hiatus at the halfway point in the line), but the question of Catullus' precedents in this practice is debatable. The most thorough discussion of these

<sup>20</sup> Sedgwick (1950: 65).

<sup>21</sup> Platnauer (1951: 88) finds only Prop. 1.5.32 and 3.22.10, both discussed below.

<sup>22</sup> 68.10, 56, 82, 90; 71.6; 73.6; 75.4; 77.4; 88.6; 90.4; 91.10; 95.2; 99.12; 101.4; 104.4.



elisions is by M. Zicàri,<sup>23</sup> who finds them ‘so characteristic of Catullus’ technique’ and says: ‘At least for the epigrams ... it is hazardous to speak of imperfect technique and not rather of conscious adherence to a *particular* technique.’<sup>24</sup> This technique Zicàri argues to be that of pre-Hellenistic elegy:<sup>25</sup> he had noted that ‘in point of fact, elision at the diaeresis of the pentameter is far from rare in Alexandrian epigram’, but since Callimachus, ‘who himself also employs elision at the diaeresis of the pentameter in his epigrams (30.6 and 42.6 Pf.), does not do this elsewhere’, and since ‘the regrettably scanty fragments of Alexandrian elegy confirm this difference in the handling of the pentameter in the two genres’, he concludes rightly that Alexandrian verse cannot be the source of Catullus’ practice. The theory that pre-Hellenistic elegy was Catullus’ precedent has the obvious disadvantage of all such explanations, that of seizing upon a distant tradition whose influence on the poet’s work can hardly be called pervasive. Then, too, as Zicàri seems to realize, there are only a few cases of this elision where a Greek influence can be inferred in Catullus:<sup>26</sup> the rest of the pentameters with elision at the halfway point are far removed from Greek sense or style. A precedent which is more pertinent and far more extensive can be suggested after an examination of the cases.

Zicàri’s argument that ‘Catullus keeps before his mind’s eye the elegiac couplet as it was composed by the early Greek elegists’ seems based primarily on the cases of elision of *-que* (68.56, 95.2, 99.12) and *atque* (68.82, 73.6), which he finds identical to junctures of the same sort found after the *penthemimeres* in the hexameter poets:<sup>27</sup> ‘Such hexameters, though common enough in Lucretius,

<sup>23</sup> Zicàri (1964: esp. 194–7).

<sup>24</sup> Zicàri (1964: 194). Zicàri would remove the elisions from 67.44, 97.2, and 99.8, and, though I do not agree (the resulting hiatus is more difficult than the elision), I cannot defend the elisions: but the following discussion may help the case for their propriety.

<sup>25</sup> Zicàri (1964: 195) notes that in Theognis elision at the diaeresis occurs in twenty-five per cent of the first 500 pentameters.

<sup>26</sup> Zicàri’s eagerness to press ‘Grecizing’ in the matter of these elisions may be due to his similar explanation of hiatus in Catullus, where he may be on firmer ground.

<sup>27</sup> He cites as examples Ovid *Met.* 2.400, *saevit enim natumque obiectat et imputat illis*, and Virg. *Aen.* 6.394, *dis quamquam geniti atque invicti viribus essent*.

Virgil, and the post-Augustan epic writers, are however excessively rare, or rather could be said to disappear completely, in the elegy'. His choice of a precedent for Catullus seems based on a tenuous connection:

It is not surprising that this type can be matched in hexameters belonging to the epic tradition, inasmuch as the epigrammatists and the early Greek elegists, who are followed here by Catullus, in treating the pentameter (from this point of view) as the hemiepes, are themselves connected with this same tradition, which means that such verses are ultimately affiliated to the Homeric hexameter.

That Catullus has five instances of elision of *-que* and *atque* at the halfway point of the pentameter is a fact; Zicari's observation that this elision was common at the end of the first hemiepes in Latin epic hexameters is a good one. But it is far simpler and less far-fetched to dismiss Greek hexameter and elegy, and to see Catullus' elision at the halfway point in the pentameter (when compared to elision at the hemiepes of the Latin epic hexameter) as representing a stage of stylistic development before the pentameter had developed strict rules of its own. The situation with the Homeric hexameter and the early Greek elegists is a parallel phenomenon, but there is no need or reason to see Catullus as a follower of the early Greek elegists. It is important to recognize the clear fact that Augustan elegy shunned this elision, and to view this as a peculiar refinement paralleled by Callimachus' avoidance of it in his non-epigrammatic distichs: Catullus too avoided it in cc. 65 and 66, which must have been conscious and intended. Therefore it may be argued that Catullus allows elision at the halfway point of the pentameter when he follows a Roman tradition, one which had good precedent by analogy with hexameter practice and which could easily have been common in pre-neoteric epigram as well, whereas his avoidance of this elision elsewhere is an intentional refinement, due perhaps to Callimachean influence, and one observed almost without exception by the Augustan elegists. There is no need to force the early Greek elegists onto the stage at this point. If further examination supports this argument, and if such a hypothesis succeeds in explaining more of the cases of this elision than does the one which keeps the early Greek elegists before Catullus' mind's eye, then it may stand as the simpler explanation and find its place among other

pieces of evidence which together explain and illustrate the various traditions in which Catullus wrote.

Since it is proposed to explain elision at the halfway point in the pentameter as entirely Roman, representing a pre-neoteric stage in the development of the distich, it is necessary first to discuss the four instances of this elision in c. 68: it is with these instances that Zicàri begins his analysis of this elision, and these lead him to the supposition that Catullus followed early Greek elegiac technique. He argues that Callimachus has this elision only in his epigrams; that no instance occurs in Alexandrian elegy; but, though c. 68 comes close to epigram in other respects, it is still basically an Alexandrian elegy; thus this device must be due to the pre-Hellenistic elegists. The basic points of this argument are sound and can be retained; the conclusion may easily be altered.

The four instances in c. 68 are:

muneraque et Musarum hinc petis et Veneris (10)

cessarent tristique imbre madere genae (56)

quam veniens una atque altera rursus hiems (82)

Troia virum et virtutum omnia acerba cinis (90)

Two of the lines make the elision with *-que* and *atque*, a category assumed by Zicàri without explanation (so also, in the epigrams, 73.6, 95.2, 99.12). W. Meyer has shown that *-que*, when occurring as the syllable following what must be regarded as a necessary caesura, could be regarded by late poets as an independent particle (not as an attached enclitic).<sup>28</sup> This license, which must have its ultimate explanation in the nature of the spoken language, is to be assumed here: the halfway point in these two pentameters occurs before the *-que*

<sup>28</sup> Meyer (1884: 1045–6); see also Norden (1957: 176 and 428 n.l.). Meyer cites the rule that in the developed Latin hexameter a third-foot feminine caesura must be accompanied by masculine caesurae in the second and fourth feet, and shows that where one or both of the accompanying caesurae are neglected (in 8,060 verses of Lucan, in Manilius IV, Stat. *Silv.* V, Columella, Val. Fl. IV–V, and Claudian), the third foot trochee is formed with *-que* as the short syllable in every case but one (Man. 4.470, *ad decumam nec quarta nec octava utilis umquam*, involving intractable numbers)—also ist que als selbständiges Wort zu behandeln und in diesen ... Versen männliche Caesur anzunehmen' ('therefore, one is to treat *que* as an independent word and assume masculine caesurae in these verses').

(*tristi/qu(e) imbre* and *una at/qu(e) altera*)—there is, in fact, no ‘elision’ at this point. Propertius, in one of the only two instances of this elision in all Augustan elegy, makes the elision with *-que*: *Herculis Antaeique Hesperidumque choros* (3.22.10). The explanation of the license is the same.

68.10 occurs in the epistolary part of the poem (1–40), in which the higher frequency of other pre-neoteric elisions has been noted above. The elision of the final syllable of a first declension genitive plural (*Musarum*) occurs also at this point of the pentameter in 88.6 (*Nympharum*) and 90.4 (*Persarum*), both Gellius epigrams: all three are proper names.<sup>29</sup> The first three occurrences of this elision in c. 68 may hardly be called irregular or regarded as impossible if they were found in Augustan elegy; nothing points to early Greek elegy, but rather to the character of the Latin language and to a verse technique natively Latin.

The elision at the halfway point in the pentameter at 68.90 may be considered the only unusual example of this phenomenon in the neoteric elegiacs 65–8: yet its poetic purpose is obvious. The line was cited above in connection with its three elisions (with two others in the preceding hexameter) as an example of the emotional quality conveyed by prosaic elisions; the unusual elision of a dactylic word before a short vowel (*ōmnī(ā) ācerba*) is called by Platnauer ‘though quite legitimate, rare.’<sup>30</sup> It is significant that both these irregular elisions occur again in a line notorious for its elisions, *quam modo qui me unum atque ūnīc(ūm) āmicum habuit* (73.6),<sup>31</sup> a line, furthermore, often taken to show the emotional quality of Catullus’ excessive elisions and therefore natural and natively Roman.

<sup>29</sup> The actual pronunciation of *-arum* (*-orum*) might have been closer to contraction than to elision (this, along with the whole question of elision ‘blurring’ a caesura in Latin verse, still needs thorough study): it may well be incorrect to speak of elision at all in these three instances. The blurring of the main caesura by the elision of *-orum* at 64.252 can be compared: *cum thiaso Satyrorum et Nysigenis Silenis*, certainly a properly elegant neoteric line.

<sup>30</sup> Platnauer (1951: 73). As noted above, there are only five examples of this elision in the neoteric elegiacs (none in 65, one in 66, 3 in 68), seven in c. 64 (the same proportion as the neoteric elegiacs), but thirteen in the epigrams proper.

<sup>31</sup> Platnauer (1951: 73): ‘Cretics in *-m* are not elided before an initial short vowel except for ‘*huic ego, vae, demens narrabam flūmīn(um) āmores*’ (Ov. Am. III. 6.101)—a unique instance’.

In the epigrams proper the great majority of lines with this elision are found in poems clearly a part of Roman epigrammatic tradition. C. 104, for instance, ends with the line *sed tu cum Tappone omnia monstra facis*, which would be a fine example for those wishing to illustrate the rudeness (both literal and stylistic) of Catullus' distichs: in addition to the elision, the first half begins with three monosyllabic words and is entirely spondaic; the previous line had ended *perdit(ē) āmarem* (one of the ten instances of a final long vowel elided before an initial short syllable in the epigrams—only one such elision occurs in the neoteric elegiacs).<sup>32</sup> The elision occurs again in the final line of the invective epigram 71, *illam affligit odore, ipse perit podagra*, where the perfectly balanced word order demanded it. Again, the elision occurs in 101.4 (*et mutam nequiquam alloquerer cinerem*), the one line for which Zicari finds no explanation. No further discussion, however, is necessary when one realizes that this poem is a literary development of Roman funeral epigram, and thus, to have been successful, should have contained stylistic elements in no way foreign to such epigram. One need only recall that it is written *prisco... more parentum* (7).<sup>33</sup>

<sup>32</sup> *Pērditē* itself is not found in Virg., Tib., Prop., Ovid, no doubt because of the necessity of eliding it before a short vowel. But it is notable that such a common and useful word as *perditus* in the erotic vocabulary of Plautus and Terence is found only once in Prop. (1.13.17), Tib. (2.6.51), and Ovid (*Am.* 3.6.80); in Virgil only *Ecl.* 2.59, 8.88, and once, significantly, used by Dido of herself in direct address (*Aen.* 4.541); Catullus uses it twice of Ariadne in c. 64 (70, 177). The word *perditus* may have been too colloquial for the poets.

<sup>33</sup> The only other elision at the halfway point in the pentameter in Augustan elegy (Prop. 1.5.32) may be explained in the tradition of pre-neoteric epigram: *quare, quid possit mea Cynthia, desine, Galle./quaerere: non impune illa rogata venit. Quare* is an unpoetic word in elegy (though possible but rare in epic and didactic verse) as is shown by its avoidance by Tibullus (though Lygd. 3.4.49, where it is elided with a following short syllable, *quar(ē) ēgo*); in Ovid once each in *Am.*, *Ars Am.*, *Pont.*, though five in *Met.*, 10 *Fast.*, 4 *Tr.* (in the *Her.* once in III, once in XVI, twice in XX !); in Hor. only *Sat.* (six times) and *Epist.* (once); Virgil has it only once in *G.*, 4 times in *Aen.* (never in *Ecl.*). It is a model unpoetic word. Prop. has it seven times, six of which occur at the beginning of the hexameter, four of which are the final couplets of poems. It may be said to be a favorite Catullan word (it is, of course, equally common in Lucr. and satire), occurring in all groups of his poems, 26 times altogether. In addition, the hexameter of Propertius' couplet begins *spondee spondee dactyl dactyl*, the least frequent sequence (only 1.3% of his hexameters—in Tibullus only two examples, 0.5%: see Platnauer (1951: 36–7)). Augustan readers may have been reminded of Catullus'

It is not necessary to cite additional lines which contain elision at the halfway point of the pentameter: it should be clear that if a source or precedent is to be found for this elision in Catullus' distichs, it is likely that we need look no further than to the Roman epigram existing and fully developed by the time Catullus wrote. Of the nature of this epigram, as far as it can be known, more will be said later; it must be sufficient for the present simply to suggest the different character of the two groups of Catullus' distichs. Catullus' use of elision points to two separate traditions; and certain types of elision, such as the elisions at the halfway point of the pentameter, suggest an explanation of the double tradition, but one which must be illustrated and tested further. Thus far the emphasis has been on the epigrams proper and on types of elision which can most easily be assumed to have been a part of the pre-neoteric tradition of epigram.

We may now consider two metrical features which Catullus undoubtedly acquired from Callimachus and which therefore emphasize the neoteric tradition of cc. 65–8. The first of these is now well known and needs little comment here. Hermann's Bridge—the avoidance of caesura after the fourth trochee—has an important history in both Greek and Latin hexameter verse. Homer violated this bridge once in every 1000 lines, but Callimachus invariably respects it.<sup>34</sup> The Latin poets, however, with some notable exceptions, are indifferent to it, though a strong stop or sense break was avoided at this point in the line. As Norden points out, Cicero in the *Aratea* has the weak caesura in the fourth foot only twice, Catullus in the epyllion never, and Tibullus in his first book only once; Virgil, on the other hand, has it once every 28 lines in the *Eclogues*, every 32 lines in the *Georgics*, and every 31 lines in the *Aeneid*.<sup>35</sup> Tibullus' attitude toward this

epigrams (or of older Latin epigram in general), and were certainly aware of the lack of Augustan polish and stylistic formality of this final couplet.

<sup>34</sup> Maas (1962: 60, 62).

<sup>35</sup> Norden (1957: 427): 'Dagegen hat Vergil, gemäss seiner schönen Vermittlung zwischen archaischer Freiheit und moderner Strenge, diese Nebencaesur zwar nicht mehr so oft wie Ennius und Lucrez, aber doch auch nicht so selten wie Catull und Tibull. ...' ('By contrast, Virgil, in conformity with his fine mediation between archaic freedom and modern rigidity, no longer has this secondary caesura so often as Ennius and Lucretius, but still not so rarely as Catullus and Tibullus'). For complete percentages of this caesura in the Augustan elegists, see Platnauer (1951: 10).

caesura is clearly implied in his only use of it in Book I, *hanc tibi fallaci resolutus | amore Tibullus/dedicat et grata sis, dea, mente rogat* ('released [*resolutus*] from treacherous love, Tibullus dedicates this to you and asks, goddess, that you be of kindly intent', 1.9.83–84), on which Norden (1957: 428) comments, 'wo der weichliche Rhythmus des Verses ἀνειμένως, *resolutus* ist, wie es der Dichter selbst zu sein vorgibt' ('where the weak rhythm of the verse is loosed, released, as the poet himself claims to be'). It is equally important, however, to note that the single instance of this caesura occurs in a dedicatory couplet, which, if it was to be stylistically convincing, must reproduce the style of actual dedicatory epigrams, a style which differed from the refined and artificial distichs of the literary elegists. It is no coincidence, then, that a parallel for this caesura is to be found in a similar dedicatory couplet of Propertius: *has pono ante tuas tibi, diva, | Propertius aedis/exuvias, tota nocte receptus amans* ('I Propertius place these arms before your shrine, goddess, a lover received for a whole night', 2.14.27–8). It is beyond question that Catullus, in observing Hermann's Bridge completely in c. 64, was following Callimachus:<sup>36</sup> it must then follow that the neoteric elegiacs will show the same observance, whereas the epigrams proper will conform to the pre-neoteric tradition of epigram in disregarding the bridge (as in the dedicatory epigrams of Tibullus and Propertius just mentioned). This is indeed the case: Hermann's Bridge is neglected but once in the neoteric elegiacs (68.49), but four times in the epigrams proper (73.5, 76.1, 84.5, 101.1).<sup>37</sup> The neglect in c. 68 causes no trouble: we have observed other elements of meter in c. 68 which belong to the epigrams proper. The other four occurrences are indicative. 73.5 (*ut mihi, quem nemo gravius nec | acerbis urget*) precedes the notorious final line *quam modo qui me unum*

<sup>36</sup> How Catullus was made aware of Callimachus' regard of Hermann's Bridge is not clear, but there are two possibilities: either he made the observation himself (consciously or even unconsciously, by ear), or Parthenius pointed it out to him. Cicero's surprising regard of the bridge in his *Aratea* (only two violations) can have nothing to do with Parthenius, but may well have been an (unconscious) aural imitation of Aratus, who has only five violations (four with a postpositive monosyllable, one with an elision—see Maas, (1962: 62)). Aural imitation of Callimachus is therefore entirely possible for Catullus, but it would seem more likely that Parthenius instructed him on this point: as is clear from Virgil's practice, there was no inherent metrical reason to observe this bridge in Latin.

<sup>37</sup> See Zicàri (1964: 194–5).

*atque unicum amicum habuit* (with its excessive elisions including the two irregular ones discussed above). C. 76, with its 30 instances of elision, begins with a violation of Hermann's Bridge, as does c. 101, a literary version of Roman epitaph. The latter, because of this violation, even leads Norden to comment: 'Dass Catull die Phrase *multa per aequora vectus* nicht geprägt hat, ergibt sich mit Wahrscheinlichkeit aus der für seine Praxis höchst seltenen trochäischen Caesur im 4. Füß' ('That Catullus did not coin the phrase *multa per aequora vectus* probably follows from the trochaic fourth-foot caesura, which is extremely rare for him').<sup>38</sup> However this may be, there can be no doubt that the strict observance of Hermann's Bridge in the epyllion and the neoteric elegiacs, and its neglect in the epigrams proper show the marked difference between these two groups of poems in the same meter, and furthermore that the contexts of the instances in the epigrams, together with the implications suggested by the dedicatory couplets of Tibullus and Propertius cited above, point clearly to the pre-neoteric tradition of the epigrams proper.

The spondaic line is another metrical feature exploited by the neoterics from the example of Callimachus and the Alexandrians, and one which also requires little comment here. Cicero's verdict (*Ad Att.* 7.2.1) connecting spondaic endings with the neoterics is often cited, and the frequency of such lines in the epyllion c. 64 is a sign of the neoteric masterwork. The Augustan elegists either avoid such endings entirely (Tibullus) or used them sparingly and only under certain conditions (either with Greek proper names or with Greek hiatus) to emphasize their Greek origin:<sup>39</sup> doubtless they felt such lines to have no place in distichs, but Catullus, under the spell of neoteric novelty, felt no such qualms. Twelve spondaic lines occur in his distichs, and for this too he had the precedent of Callimachus.<sup>40</sup> D. A. West has pointed out that all but three of the twelve spondaic lines in the distichs of Catullus occur in the neoteric elegiacs: 1 at 65.23, 4 in 66 (3, 41, 57,

<sup>38</sup> Norden (1957: 228), on *Aen.* 6.335, *ventosa per aequora vectus* (see also similar phrases at *G.* 1.206, *Aen.* 1.376, 6.692, 7.228).

<sup>39</sup> For the occurrences in Prop. and Ovid, see Platnauer (1951: 38–9).

<sup>40</sup> See Pfeiffer (1959) on fr. 303: 9 spondaic lines occur in the *Aetia*, and they are, of course, far more frequent in the *Hecale*.



61), 4 in 68 (65, 87, 89, 109).<sup>41</sup> It should be noted that Catullus offers no apology for the five in the translation of Callimachus (66) and in the poem accompanying it (65): none of these occur in contexts with Greek proper names. In c. 68, however, he seems to have felt it necessary to do what the Augustan elegists came to do: the first spondaic line occurs in a line with the names of Castor and Pollux, the others all consist of a proper name (*Argivorum, Europaeque, Cyllenaem*). Of the three occurring in the epigrams proper, one (116.3) may be regarded as a marked neoteric intrusion (occurring in the line following a mention of Callimachus, *carmina uti possem mittere Battiadae*), and another may be taken in a similar way (*Caelius Aufillenum et Quintius Aufillenam*, 100.1, where the proper names either necessitated, or perhaps gave Catullus the excuse to play with, a neoteric device); the last (76.15), it seems to me, cannot be understood in this way at all, but must rather have been allowed solely for its sonorous and unrelenting effect (*una salus haec est, hoc est tibi pervincendum*, 'this is your only salvation, you must win this battle'). It is perfectly clear once again how great a difference in traditions exists between 65–8 and 69–116. It is true that Catullus could, on occasion, experiment with neoteric metrical devices in the epigrams proper, just as on occasion he introduced into them neoteric vocabulary in an experimental way, but it was seldom that such experiments were tried, and the epigrams remained firmly in the older Roman tradition.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>41</sup> West (1957: 101).

<sup>42</sup> It is worth adding one more metrical point, which occurred to me as an independent proof of the validity of the preceding discussion (Ross [1967: 219]). In Augustan elegy a monosyllable before the halfway point in a pentameter line must be preceded by either a long monosyllable or a pyrrhic word; see Platnauer (1951: 23). Catullus observes this rule in 65–68, but in the epigrams proper violates it five times (76.26, 91.6, 92.2, 93.2, 109.2). There is no clearer indication of the different stylistic natures of these two groups of poems.

Cupaiuolo (1965: 51–2)—his book unfortunately was available to me too late to be of any use in this study—notes that Catullus was the first to have restricted the use of a monosyllable before the third-foot caesura in the hexameter; he is wrong in attributing this restriction to the example of Homer (it is inevitable in the development of accent/ictus in the Latin hexameter), and his explanations of the five occurrences of this hexameter in c. 64 are unnecessary—in each case the monosyllable is preceded by a long monosyllable or a pyrrhic word.

## WORD ORDER

One last technical feature must be discussed. Recent studies of poetic word order have left no doubt about the innovations in traditional patterns which were due to the neoterics: it is now possible, with absolute certainty, to identify certain arrangements of attribute and substantive within a line as neoteric; and these can be used as a final test of the hypothesis developed above. If the neoteric elegiacs belong to a different tradition from that of the epigrams proper, then neoteric word order will predominate in the first group, while the second will show only those patterns that had been employed to some extent before the neoterics.

Three studies may be singled out as the most important for the Latin poets, those of Norden,<sup>43</sup> Patzer,<sup>44</sup> and Conrad,<sup>45</sup> the last two being the most comprehensive. From all the types of attribute and substantive collocation examined in these studies, only a few—those most indicative of neoteric innovation—need be discussed here. Two clarifications must be made at the outset, necessitated by the fact that the rules of the game have not been clearly established. First, we will adopt here Patzer's system of classifying the different types of word order, but will use our own symbols: thus, for example, ... A/ ... S will represent a line in which the attribute precedes the caesura (for simplicity's sake always taken to be the penthemimeral) and the substantive stands at the end, and ... A/... S... represents a line in which the attribute precedes the caesura (penthemimeral) and the substantive stands in the second main position after that (always, for the present purpose at least, immediately after the bucolic diaeresis).<sup>46</sup> The second difficulty arises from the obvious fact that

<sup>43</sup> Norden (1957: Abhang III, 391–8). Norden discusses only two of the types of word order dealt with here: a verse enclosed by attribute and substantive, and the disposition of two attributes and two substantives in one verse.

<sup>44</sup> Patzer (1955).

<sup>45</sup> Conrad (1965). This, being the most recent, contains useful bibliography. It is also by far the most systematic, thorough, and imaginative examination of the subject.

<sup>46</sup> Conrad's system is not only more complete than Patzer's, but also offers the clearer historical explanation for the different patterns of word order. It has not been adopted here, however, because Patzer's notation is simpler, and for the few types of

certain lines may be counted under several headings. Thus, *flavus quam molli praecurrit flumine Mella* (67.33) may be counted either as an example of A ... / ... S, or of ... A / ... S ..., or of the concentric type *abBA*. As a result of this difficulty, Patzer, who is not concerned with the type *abAB* and who therefore counts such lines only as examples of the ... A / ... S type, finds 94 such lines in Catullus 64, whereas Conrad, who counts the *abAB* type separately, states that there are only 76 examples of the ... A / ... S type in the same poem. It is important here only that our figures be internally consistent: we will, however, count first the total number of lines in which significant word order appears (thus, a line which may illustrate three separate types will only count as one) and then discuss certain types, in which one line may appear and be counted three different times. Other minor difficulties pass without mention: the results will remain substantially the same nevertheless.<sup>47</sup>

Six types of word order have been selected as those most frequent in Catullus' neoteric epyllion. In Table I the frequency of these types in Catullus' epyllion is compared with Ennius, Cicero's *Aratea*, Lucretius, and Virgil. The difficulty of exact count may be seen in the varying figures given for Catullus by Norden, Patzer, and Conrad; unless otherwise noted, the figures for the other poets are taken directly from Conrad's work. The significance of the figures for each type will be discussed below, but it is immediately obvious that Catullus made far greater use of each type than Ennius or Lucretius. Cicero's *Aratea* comes closest to Catullus' epyllion: whatever the orator may have thought of the νεώτεροι in his later life, he somehow anticipated, to a certain extent, the neoterics' discoveries of the expressive possibilities of word collocation.<sup>48</sup>

word order considered here this simplicity does not imply distortion of the essential facts.

<sup>47</sup> For instance, should the line *uvidulam a fluctu cedentem ad templa deum me* (66.63) be taken primarily as type A ... / ... S or type ... / A ... S? Often, particularly with the help of Conrad's perspective, the poet's intention can be distinguished from accident or metrical necessity; sometimes, however, it cannot, but the few doubtful cases have been either counted or omitted so as not to affect the proportions.

<sup>48</sup> Cicero's position in the history of Latin poetry needs a thorough re-examination. The *Phaenomena* cannot be later than 85 BC. (written by Cicero *admodum adolescentulo*, ['at a very early age'], *Nat. D.* 2.104), and it is now thought by some that the

Table I

Type	Catullus 64			Ennius	Cicero's <i>Aratea</i>	Lucr. III	<i>Aen.</i> VIII
	(Norden)	(Patzner)	(Conrad)				
...A/...S	—	94	76	9	47	30	92
.../A...S	—	70	71	27	55	82	110
...A/...S...	—	50	36	1	36	25	17
A.../...S	21	25	24	4	24	12	13
Norden gives:							
			Ennius:	0			
abAB	58		Lucr. I:	8		(1 every 140 lines)	
<i>and</i>	(1 every		Lucr. VI:	9			
abBA	7 lines)		Virg. <i>Ecl.</i> :	39		(1 every 21 lines)	
			<i>Geo.</i> I & IV:	66		(1 every 16 lines)	
			<i>Aen.</i> I & VI:	38		(1 every 43 lines)	

A general impression of the marked difference between the neoteric distichs and the epigrams proper can be had by comparing the total number of lines with indicative patterns of word order in each group. Of the 161 hexameters of cc. 65–8, 69 show one (or more) of the six patterns (42.8%). On the other hand, the epigrams 69–116 (165 hexameters) contain only 25 lines with any of these types (15.1%). Three of the four neoteric elegiacs show a common high percentage (in c. 65, 54%; in c. 66, 45%; in c. 68, 44%); whereas c. 67 is decidedly lower (only 29%), but still closer to the other three poems in its group than to the epigrams. The difference between the two groups of poems in distichs, however, is even greater than these percentages show, as an analysis of each type of word order will make clear.

In Table II I give the frequency of each type of word order in the neoteric distichs and in the epigrams; in these figures one line may

*Prognostica* must have been written at the same time, not in 60 BC (see K. Büchner, *RE* (2) 7, 1237, supported by Shackleton Bailey (1965: at *Ad Att.* 2.1.11)); however, see also Traglia (1950: 10–14). How he came to anticipate certain stylistic developments of the neoterics is not clear; but how far he was from understanding the poetic possibilities of, for instance, expressive word order, Conrad (*passim*) demonstrates time and again.

Table II

	...A/...S	.../A...S	...A/...S...	A.../...S	abAB	abBA
cc. 65–8	32	15	13	7	11	8
cc. 69–116	10	10	4	1	1	0

have been counted several times. It will be clear immediately that the patterns *abAB* (interlocking) and *abBA* (concentric), which were particularly exploited, if not invented, by the neoterics (see Table I), are together used 19 times in the neoteric elegiacs, but only once (100.7, *cum vesana meas torreret flamma medullas*) in the epigrams.<sup>49</sup> The only genuine golden line in these poems occurs at 68.29 (*frigida deserto tepefactet membra cubili*). The type A.../...S is likewise a neoteric innovation (or exploitation),<sup>50</sup> of which the only example found in the hexameters of the epigrams proper is *iucundum, mea vita, mihi proponis amorem* (109.1). The type ...A/...S... is found only once in Ennius, though it is more common in Lucretius; there are three times as many in the neoteric elegiacs as in the epigrams. If these four types, all of which are neoteric, are taken together, 39 examples are to be found in cc. 65–8, but only six in cc. 69–116.

The remaining two patterns of word order are those which are most common in the epyllion, but nevertheless they cannot be called neoteric: they had been a feature of the oldest Latin hexameter. Thus, 27 examples of the type .../A...S are found by Conrad in Ennius, and 82 in Lucretius III:<sup>51</sup> 'This feature of Homeric style which had become

<sup>49</sup> The rarity of the types *abAB* and *abBA* in Hellenistic poetry led Norden (1957: 395–6) to suppose the influence of rhetoric on the neoterics here. This supposition was not accepted by Patzer (1955: 87–9), who examines in further detail some Hellenistic distichs (esp. Euphorion, fr. 9.10–15 (Powell) and Hermesianax fr. 7.21–26 P.). See, however, Conrad (1965: 239): 'The two patterns of interlocked word order which have been discussed are constructed on patterns of distribution of substantive and attribute that we have already seen in our earlier discussion.'

<sup>50</sup> Norden (1957: 391): 'Diese Wortsymmetrie gehörte zu den wohlherwogenen Kunstmitteln, durch welche die Neoteriker die Eleganz ihrer Verse erhöhten.' ('This word symmetry was part of the well thought out artistic methods through which the neoterics increased the elegance of their verse'.) Norden finds only three examples in the first 900 lines of *Lucr. I*; the figure 12, given by Conrad (1965) for *Lucr. III*, may be reduced to ten for the present comparison, as he includes two examples of *noun.../...gen*.

<sup>51</sup> Conrad (1965: 203–7) compares Ennius, fr. 1, *Musae quae pedibus magnum pulsatis Olympum*, with Homer, *Il. I.530*, ... μέγαν δ' ἐλέλιξεν Ὀλυμπον and 8.443,

a distinguishing feature of epic style by the Alexandrian age, was carried over by Ennius into Roman epic, along with the hexameter itself. The pattern remained a standard feature of Latin epic style.<sup>52</sup> It may be argued that it remained rather a feature of the Latin hexameter: the attribute, coming immediately after what was most often the main 'sense' caesura of the line, neatly framed the last half of the line with its substantive at the end, a feature whose usefulness was not confined to epic. It is therefore no surprise to find this pattern ten times in the epigrams, and only a little more often (15 times) in the neoteric distichs. Almost exactly comparable are the figures for the type ... A/... S: this appears less frequently in Ennius (nine times) and Lucretius III (30 times) than the previous pattern, which the ratio in Catullus' distichs (ten times in 69–116, 32 times in 65–8) reflects.<sup>53</sup>

A brief note may be added here on one type of word order in the pentameter. In the neoteric elegiacs, the attribute stands as the last word in the first half of the line and the substantive at the end of the line (... A/... S, as above) 57 times (35%), but in the epigrams only 29 times (18%).<sup>54</sup> This observation, besides supporting the figures presented for the hexameters of the distichs, is important for what it shows about certain of the epigrams: in only five of these does this type of word order occur in more than one line, and these five poems are all ones in which neoteric vocabulary has been found. Two of these

ἔξετο, τῷ δ' ὑπὸ ποσσὶ μέγας πελεμίζετ' Ὀλυμπος; in Homer, 'this pattern of separation is by far the most frequent of all, ... appears even more frequently in the *Argonautica* of Apollonius of Rhodes, ... [and] had in fact become such a standard feature of epic hexameter style that Theocritus employed it with a notably greater frequency in those Idylls and parts of Idylls where dialect and other factors indicate that he was writing in the epic tradition' (p. 204).

<sup>52</sup> Conrad (1965: 206).

<sup>53</sup> Shackleton Bailey (1956: 57 n. 1) notes that 44% of the hexameters in Prop. I take the form ... A/... S, and 30% in IV; Tibullus I had 13% of its hexameters of this type, Ovid *Ars Am.* I 12%. Catullus' neoteric elegiacs thus stand mid-way between these two extremes with almost 20%, while his epigrams have a percentage of this type decidedly less than even Ovid with 6.25%. The figures for the individual neoteric elegiacs may be noted, however, for comparison with Propertius: 65, 45.5%; 66, 23.4%; 68, almost 20%; 67, only 5%.

<sup>54</sup> For the neoteric elegiacs the figures are: 65, 6 (50%); 66, 14 (29.8%); 67, 8 (33.3%); 68, 29 (36%). It should be noted that type ... A/... S occurs in only one of the 20 hexameters of the first part of c. 68 (lines 1–40) and in only one of the pentameters of this part.

poems are Gellius epigrams (in c. 80, three of the four pentameter lines have this pattern, and in c. 88, two of the four), one is the Iuvenius epigram c. 99 (six of the eight pentameters), another is the epigram on Cinna's *Zmyrna* (c. 95, two of the four pentameters), and the last is the Rufus epigram c. 69 (two of the five).

It has been established, then, that in representative points of technique there is a marked difference between the two groups of distichs, and that in every case cc. 65–8 agree with Catullus' technique in his epyllion and with what can be said with certainty to have been neoteric practice; the epigrams proper, on the other hand, with the exception of certain poems which must be regarded as experimental, agree with an older tradition, one which sometimes seems similar to Ennius' practice (as in the case of the two types of word order ...A/...S and .../A...S), but which often is strikingly different (as in the case of elisions). It seems likely, therefore, that Sedgwick's hypothesis, when qualified, is correct, and that the epigrams proper represent a tradition of Roman, pre-neoteric epigram, in following which Catullus was its last representative among serious poets.

## Part IV

### Allusion and Intertext



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## Poetic Memory and the Art of Allusion (On a verse of Catullus and one of Virgil)\*

*Gian Biagio Conte*

... non subripiendi causa, sed palam mutuandi, hoc animo ut vellet agnosci

Seneca the Elder, *Suasoriae* 3.7

... not for the sake of stealing, but of open borrowing, for the purpose of having it recognized.

‘Recognitions While Reading’ (*Agnizioni di lettura*) is the title of a little article by Giovanni Nencioni written not long ago for *Strumenti critici*.<sup>1</sup> The title is striking enough; but one is immediately impressed by the tone of cheerful satisfaction (which for me makes the example valuable) that the involvement of the author and his emotions all but compels the philologist to adopt as he works: ‘I confess that I felt a definite enjoyment when, at an advanced age, I noticed, as if by an unexpected revelation, that a passage of Pinocchio that had given me simple delight as a boy had been taken over from *I Promessi Sposi*.’<sup>2</sup> And the author gives reasons for that enjoyment, demonstrates its complexity, and takes care that we understand exactly what his title means; the theatrical term ‘recognition’

\* A shorter form of this article appeared as chapter 1 of Conte’s *Rhetoric of Imitation*, translated by Charles Segal et al. under Conte’s supervision. Leofranc Holford-Strevens has expanded and revised the translation.

<sup>1</sup> Nencioni (1967).

<sup>2</sup> [Editor’s note: *I Promessi Sposi* (*The Betrothed*), by Alessandro Manzoni, published in 1827, is one of the great classics of Italian literature. It is generally considered the first modern Italian novel.]

is the right word 'given the gratuitous manner in which these encounters of recognition take place and the emotion that accompanies them'.<sup>3</sup>

Precisely this emotion, which is kindled by induction in the scholarly reader when the two parallels are placed side by side, brings on the pleasure of a deeper form of knowledge that at once bursts through the tough carapace of the text as it presents itself, compact and static, to become an almost genetic knowledge; a knowledge that retraces the formative movement, the very act of composition. But it often happens that emotion and enjoyment are foreseen and sought after by the poet himself in conscious artistry; in this case (as opposed to those considered by Nencioni, in which they are not stimulated by textual intentionality but result from the scholar's acumen without being integral to the composition's poetic existence as essential components of the artistic mechanism) we should speak of the 'art of allusion'. Later on we shall see how this occurs in practice; let us first consider a line by Catullus which has not yet been 'recognized'. It is line 1 of poem 101, the celebrated elegy for his brother: *Multas per gentes et multa per aequora vectus* ('Borne through many peoples and many seas').

The still unvisited tomb of his brother lies near Troy, far from home—'not near the family ashes' (Catullus, *Carmina* 68.98). To make the painful encounter possible, Catullus must become a navigator. But the 'many peoples' and 'many seas' that will mark out his long voyage belong to Homer's Odysseus. The *Odyssey* begins:

ὅς μάλα πολλὰ  
πλάγχθη, ἐπεὶ Τροίης ἱερὸν πτολίεθρον ἔπερσε.  
πολλῶν δ' ἀνθρώπων ἴδεν ἄστεα καὶ νόον ἔγνω,  
πολλὰ δ' ὅ γ' ἐν πόντῳ πάθεν ἄλγεα ὄν κατὰ θυμόν.

*Odyssey* 1.1–4

who was greatly buffeted about after destroying the great citadel of Troy; he saw the cities of many peoples and learned their ways and on the sea suffered many sorrows in his heart.

The essential features of Homer's opening, with its evocation of

<sup>3</sup> Nencioni (1967: 192n.).

Odysseus's long wanderings, all appear in Catullus's line. The only appreciable variation is *vectus* ('borne [sailing]'), a slight transformation of  $\pi\lambda\acute{\alpha}\gamma\chi\theta\eta$ , 'was buffeted about'. Everything in Catullus melts into a soft, misty, melancholy mood created by the slow, lax—almost weary—rhythm. This effect owes much to the secondary trochaic caesura in the fourth foot:

Multas per gentes | et multa | per aequora vectus.<sup>4</sup>

The movement quietly follows the line's extremely simple syntax. After the primary (penthemimeral) caesura, the coincidence between metrical beat and word accent (*et | mŭlta per | aēquora | véctus*) creates an effect of relaxation. The metrical and rhythmic foregrounding of *multa* between two caesuras conveys semantically the enormous distance between Catullus and his brother's tomb.

Catullus thus gives his line a hidden reserve of literary energy whose full potential is released when the two texts are brought together. Catullus offered all his readers this extra power, but Virgil made the most of it. In Book 6 of the *Aeneid*, at the watershed between its Odyssean and Iliadic halves, Anchises, now in the Kingdom of the Dead, greets his son, Aeneas, who has finally come to the end of his 'wanderings'. Anchises utters a happy cry of satisfied expectation:

Venisti tandem, tuaque expectata parenti  
vicit iter durum pietas?

*Aeneid* 6.687–8

Have you come at last, and has the devotion that your father looked for overcome the arduous road?

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Virgil, *Aeneid* 1.749 (again providing a sense of languor): *infelix Dido | longumque | bibebat amorem* ('unhappy Dido continued to drink deep draughts of love'); *Aeneid* 6.523: *dulcis et alta quies | placidaeque | simillima mortis* ('sweet, deep silence, the very image of peaceful death'); and *Aeneid* 6.702: *par levibus ventis | volucrique | simillima somno* ('like light winds and most like a winged dream'). See the comments of Norden (1957: 428–30) in which he notes the rarity and, above all, the archaic nature of the metrical structure used here (trochaic caesura in the fourth foot) and examines the refined effects it yielded in the *poetae novi* and in Augustan poetry.

This first expression of emotion is followed—with a change in tone—by regretful sympathy for the difficulties overcome by his long-exiled son (*Aeneid* 6.692–3): *Quas ego te terras et quanta per aequora vectum/accipio* ('I receive you, borne through what lands, and over how many seas').

Catullus's line has gone into the making of Virgil's first line here.<sup>5</sup> There is hardly any difference in meaning between *terras* ('lands') and *gentes* ('peoples')—Aeneas is defined less by his having met many different 'peoples' than by his having sought, among many different 'lands', the fatherland assigned to him by fate—or between *multas ... multa* ('many [peoples] ... many [seas]') and *quas ... quanta* ('what [lands] ... how many [seas]'). The shift is compulsory, because Virgil's line is part of an exclamation.

Virgil had already had recourse to Homer's opening when, at the very beginning of the *Aeneid*, he displayed his wanderer, Aeneas, as a reflection of another wanderer, Odysseus (*Aeneid* 1.2–5):

Laviniaque venit  
litora, multum ille et terris iactatus et alto  
...  
multa quoque et bello passus.

and he came to the Lavinian shores, tossed much on land and sea ... and having suffered much in war also.

At the point of transition in Book 6, Virgil must close the narrative arc that has been opened in this way. Symmetry makes Anchises greet Aeneas as a new Odysseus, and Catullus's fine line has helped Virgil to achieve it. But Catullus was not enough. Homer had to

<sup>5</sup> It would be surprising that even Norden (1957) of all people did not notice this in his monumental commentary, if we did not bear in mind that, precisely because he had definitively established the decisive importance of Ennius as Virgil's model, he was not expecting Catullus's intervention here. The archaic nature of the secondary trochaic caesura in the fourth foot (n. 4 above) took Norden back to Ennius, and his comparison of Virgil's line and Catullus's *per aequora vectus* ('borne across seas') was restricted to the second (archaic) half of the line (pp. 227–8, and 304). The very first word Anchises uses in greeting his son, *venisti* ('you have come'), recalls the verb (used in a perfective sense) in Catullus's introductory movement: *Multas per gentes ... Iad-venio has miseris, frater, ad inferias* ('Through many peoples ... I am come, brother, to these sad rites'; 101.1–2).

underwrite Virgil's operation personally. The threefold anaphora,<sup>6</sup> *πολλά ... πολλῶν ... πολλά* ('[who was] *greatly* [buffeted] ... [of] *many* [men] ... [who suffered] *many* [sorrows]'), and the energy of *πλάγθῃ* ('buffeted') had to be recreated. Hence the second line:

*Quas ego te terras et quanta per aequora vectum  
accipio, quantis iactatum, nate, periclis!*

(*Aeneid* 6.692–3)

I receive you, my son, borne through what lands and over  
how many seas, tossed about by how many dangers!

I have already referred to the art of allusion in my title. This phrase is the famous title of a short essay by Giorgio Pasquali, and I do not believe that the conception people have of the subject can be divorced from those celebrated pages.<sup>7</sup> What is truly remarkable in Pasquali's famous article on 'arte allusiva' in 1942 is his ability to bring together its essentially unitary nature in its various manifestations, including poetry, music, painting, sculpture, and architecture. The philological conception that also sustains his investigation easily leads to this: that no interpretation of any form of art is possible unless one recovers and reconstructs its specific cultural identity and exact cultural context in all its historical density. Culture, in fact, acts as the common source of all the arts—a culture that springs from the artist's will to create and from the difficulty of the artist's critical task—the necessity of rejecting one thing and adopting something else:

<sup>6</sup> The threefold anaphora is also found in the proem to the *Aeneid*, where it is partly transposed into an ancillary three-membered polysyndeton: *multum ille ... et terris ... et alto ... multa quoque et bello* ('much he ... and on land ... and on sea ... and in war, much also'). The persistence of *multum ... multa* ('much [tossed about] ... [having suffered] much') assured the presence of a characteristic feature of the epic defined as an 'artform ... always calculated for continuation' by Fränkel (1969: 15ff. = 1975: 13–14).

<sup>7</sup> Pasquali (1968), but the article goes back to 1942. Of the earlier critical literature, it is enough to mention Kroll (1924: 139–84). See Konrat Ziegler's useful article 'Plagiat', in *RE* 20.2 (1950), cols. 1956–97.

La Penna (1960: 233–4) notes that some years earlier (unbeknownst to Pasquali) English and American scholars had arrived at similar conclusions. He mentions Kellett (1933: 17 ff.); Rand (1931: 10–12 and 269–72); Edwards (1933: 45–75). All these were utilized by Jackson Knight as early as 1949; see now Jackson Knight (1971: 99–102).

In reading cultured, learned poetry, I look for what I have for years stopped calling reminiscences, and now call allusions, and would call evocations, and in some cases quotations. The poet may not be aware of reminiscences, and he may hope that his imitations escape his public's notice; but allusions do not produce the desired effect if the reader does not clearly remember the text to which they refer.<sup>8</sup>

The personal passion of Pasquali the critic, as is well known, was learned poetry, and hence Hellenistic poetry. In *Orazio lirico*,<sup>9</sup> Pasquali interprets two odes of Horace, analyzing the poet's 'epigraph' technique—that is, his use of a quotation from another poet to begin a poem whose development includes that initial poetic retrieval but subordinates it to its own purposes, including deliberate contrast. What is recalled is extraneous to the new poem because it is irrevocably embedded in the other poetic situation. But the previous poetic context necessarily carries over into the new. The new text therefore tends to become a visible 'sign' of the old.<sup>10</sup>

At this point the discussion calls for an attentive examination. We will make it by looking at an actual example. Homer's opening has a high degree of memorability for Catullus, as has Catullus's for Virgil (however different the effects), thanks to the prominence given by

<sup>8</sup> Pasquali (1968: 275): 'In poesia culta, dotta io ricerco quelle che da qualche anno in qua non chiamo più reminiscenze ma allusioni, e volentieri direi evocazioni e in certi casi citazioni. Le reminiscenze possono essere inconsapevoli; le imitazioni, il poeta può desiderare che sfuggano al pubblico; le allusioni non producono l'effetto voluto se non su un lettore che si ricordi chiaramente del testo cui si riferiscono.' See also Löfstedt (1949), although it is unsatisfactory for our purposes.

<sup>9</sup> The book appeared in 1920, but it had already been conceived and was almost ready around 1915. It was reprinted in 1964 with an introduction by Antonio La Penna that is relevant to the present discussion.

<sup>10</sup> In this case Pasquali accepted the formula chosen by Norden (1909: 1.504) to define Horace's use of the technique (the concept of epigraph technique and the idea of its function are both Norden's), but he disagreed sharply with him on the question of originality: Norden, still cloaked by the romantic prejudice of the Unbedingtheit ('absolute nature') of poetry, also conceded too much to the deniers of originality. A remark by Eugenio Montale, whose poetry relies a great deal on cultured allusion, is appropriate here: 'L'originalità buona... non è quella che non somiglia ad alcuno; è ciò che resta irriducibile alle somiglianze e che è da esse garantito e condizionato' ('True originality... is not originality which resembles nothing else; it consists of what cannot be reduced to similarities and is "guaranteed" and conditioned by them'). [Montale's essay ('Intenzioni: intervista immaginaria'), written in 1946, is now available in Montale (1976).]

initial position. We might say that rhythmic-compositional recall is preferentially oriented toward the openings of other poems.<sup>11</sup>

Before the allusion can have the desired effect on the reader, it must first exert that effect on the poet. The more easily the original can be recognized—the more ‘quotable’ (because memorable) it is—the more intense and immediate its effect will be. The reader’s collaboration is indispensable to the poet if the active phase of allusion is to take effect. Thus allusion will occur as a literary act if a sympathetic vibration can be set up between the poet’s and the reader’s memories when these are directed to a source already stored in both.<sup>12</sup>

But the process may entail more than simple recall. The allusion may involve an attempt to compete with the tradition recalled. In this case the allusion aims to focus attention sharply on a restricted area of that tradition in order to heighten a contrast. A known poetic form or formula is conjured up, not simply to revive it by finding it a place in a new context but also to allow it to become the weaker member of a pair (‘old’ versus ‘new’) joined by a relationship of opposition or differentiation or a relationship merely of variation.<sup>13</sup> Pasquali fails to distinguish between allusion and emulation. Many of his instances (certainly those found in the last two pages of his essay) are examples of emulative allusion.<sup>14</sup> Such a dynamic use of language is

<sup>11</sup> Especially in the archaic period of Greek literature, the ‘incipit’ of poems and even prose (as in Herodotus) had all the importance of a title or a heading; its function was that of the author’s ‘signature’. The well-chosen examples given by Rossi (1968: 159–61) may be cited here. The first line of the fourth (and last) book of Apollonius of Rhodes’s *Argonautica* recalls the incipit of the *Iliad*, and its second line recalls that of the *Odyssey*, with a clear attempt at *aemulatio* (‘emulation’); similarly, using a ‘frame’ technique, the last line of the *Argonautica* is modeled on what, for the Alexandrian poets, was the last line of the *Odyssey*, 23.296. The cyclic poem *Thebais*, written in an earlier period, already clearly displays the features of mosaic work. The first half of the first line is modeled on the first half of the *Iliad*’s first line, and the second half of the same line is modeled on the second half of the *Odyssey*’s first line.

<sup>12</sup> Reference should be made to a poetic *setting* rather than to individual *lines*. A single word in the new poem will often be enough to condense a whole poetic situation and to revive its mood. I have discussed one such example (Conte [1966: 347–8]). On the other hand, a lengthy periphrastic expansion may be needed to sound the resonances contained in a single word or phrase in the original—resonances the new poet wishes to make explicit.

<sup>13</sup> Koenraad Kuiper’s definition ‘*oppositio in imitando*’ is appropriate here. See Kuiper (1896: 114). Something may also be learned from Reiff (1959), but it tends to be pedestrian.

<sup>14</sup> Pasquali (1968: 281–2).



characteristic of learned poetry (that written by the Alexandrian poets, the 'neoterici', and—but with a preference for selective recall over variation—by the Augustans). In any event, the relationship between *aemulatio* and allusion is asymmetrical. Emulation (at least in its most direct form) cannot exist without allusion, whereas allusion has no necessary connection with emulation. Catullus alludes to Homer but simply to make Odysseus's mythical journey well up through his words.<sup>15</sup> He certainly has no intention of competing with Homer.

With Virgil the situation is different. We have already seen how many different threads have been woven into his lines. Homer's words and Catullus's are intertwined there, but their functions differ. Virgil admires Catullus as a man of letters and wishes to show that he has grasped the intention of his allusion. Virgil's motive in using Catullus's line and in deciphering its relation to Homer is not emulation but a desire to pay tribute to the methods of a poetic he values and wishes to be identified with.<sup>16</sup>

I have already touched on Virgil's need for greater closeness to Homer's text than the reworking of Catullus alone would have permitted. The relationship between Virgil's allusion to Homer and Homer himself is clearly one of emulation, as is fully explained by the majestic authority that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* enjoyed. Homer's authority derives from his twofold value as *monumentum* ('monument'). On the one hand he is still 'alive' (able to teach and arouse interest, to commemorate and to move); on the other, he possesses a definitive canonical character that makes him irreplaceable—and thus

<sup>15</sup> The possibility cannot be excluded that Catullus's allusion to Odysseus may be connected with a desire to present his brother as a hero who, like Homer's warriors, had died near Troy. Line 6 reads: *heu miser indigne frater adempte mihi* ('ah, poor brother, undeservedly taken from me'), recalling *Carmina* 68.92, *ei misero frater adempte mihi* ('O brother, taken from wretched me'), which was written when Catullus was still in the grip of grief, soon after his brother's death. On that occasion his strong hatred for Troy, which had just robbed him of his brother (*Carmina* 68.99), *Troia obscena, Troia infelice sepultum* ('buried in hateful Troy, ill-omened Troy'), led him to treat the legendary heroes who had died at Troy as young men ruined by bad fortune, like his own brother (the name of Protesilaos stands for all, as in other examples of elegiac poetry). But now, the harshness of his grief soothed by time, Catullus, before the tomb of the brother buried in the land of myth, can discover—in order to pay honor to his own dead—the memory of those heroes with whom he would now wish him merged.

<sup>16</sup> Pasquali (1968: 278) chooses the fine term 'compliment' (*complimento*), for this attitude. On the need to recover and display the whole artistic pedigree behind each new poetic experiment, especially in the case of emulative translation from Greek models, see Conte (1970: 137 n. 12).

‘quotable’.<sup>17</sup> Virgil wishes to acquire this prerogative himself—to become a Latin Homer; this is his ζήλος ‘Ομηρικός (‘Homeric rivalry’), and as in a duel, Homer, the challenged contender, chooses the place and weapons.

On *aemulatio* (already more studied and better known in its particular manifestations) I do not intend to linger here. I wish only to make a collateral observation on the problem. When we speak of *imitatio-aemulatio*—terms that in the expressive dimension of classical art tend in practice to be identified—it will not be enough to underline so much the wish for a competitive comparison that drives the poets as it will be necessary instead to record the indispensable but essentially neutral moment represented by what is usually called ‘tradition’, which is both the conditioning and the aid to speech. A more rigorous definition of this tradition may perhaps be given by calling it a poetic *langue*.<sup>18</sup> If this concept and its critical implications are absorbed by the philologist, it will become possible to avoid positing the relationship between *traditio* and *aemulatio* as a diametrical opposition that must then be treated as an invariable key to interpretation. There will no longer be a linguistic compulsion to believe that every later poet must feel a competitive ambition to outdo all predecessors. (Such mental routines may be a legacy left by people who have supposed that language exists only as a means to creativity.)<sup>19</sup>

When a past text is summoned up allusively and its latent vitality spreads through a new poem, allusion works as an extension of the other weapons in the poet’s armory. Allusion, in fact, exploits a device well known to classical rhetoric, *figurae elocutionis* (tropes). If a poem uses ‘golden scythe’ to denote ‘moon’, rhetoric teaches me that this is a figure—more precisely, a metaphor. The *verbum proprium* ‘moon’

<sup>17</sup> See Contini’s view of the *Aeneid* as a source of ‘nourishment’ for Dante’s *Commedia* (Contini [1970: 374]).

<sup>18</sup> There is a hint in Nencioni (1967: 193). [Editor’s note: Conte (1986: 37) defines *langue* thus: ‘a system of literary conventions, motifs, ideas, and expressions, with its laws and constraints, that each “speaker” (writer) will use in his or her own way’.]

<sup>19</sup> Pasquali (1968: 278), although laying too much stress here as elsewhere on emulative allusion, wisely remarked that ‘the language of Greek poetry... is, on the whole, derived not from contemporary usage but from Homer’ (‘la lingua della poesia greca... è per la parte maggiore non dedotta dall’uso contemporaneo ma da Omero’). Some very instructive examples of ways of reconstructing late Latin texts are found in Mariotti (1969: 385).

and the figurative expression 'golden scythe' denote exactly the same object, but the difference in functions is crucial. By substituting a metaphorical use of language for a nonmetaphorical use the poet sets up a tension. A gap is created between the letter (the literal meaning of the sign) and the sense (the meaning), and this gap has its own form, which we may term a 'figure'.<sup>20</sup> Thus allusion works in just the same way, and in the same semantic area, as a rhetorical figure. The gap in figurative language that opens between 'letter' and 'sense' is also created in allusion between that which is said (as it first appears), a letter, and the thought evoked, the sense. And just as no figure exists until the reader becomes aware of the twofold nature of figurative language, so too allusion only comes into being when the reader grasps that there is a gap between the immediate meaning ('after *I* have sailed through many peoples and on many seas') and the image that is its corollary ('as *Odysseus* sailed'). In the art of allusion, as in every rhetorical figure, the poetry lies in the simultaneous presence of two different realities that try to indicate a single reality. The single reality can perhaps never be defined directly, but it is specific and is known to the poet. The poetry lies in the area carved out between the letter and the sense. It exists by refusing to be only one or the other. This still unknown area, this tension between meanings, can be described only by referring to the two known limits that demarcate it.

The analogy of functions between rhetorical figures and allusion has a general validity for the specifically literary character of poetics. Allusion has every right to a recognized position within rhetoric and within the wider system of compositional poetics.<sup>21</sup>

#### *Bibliographical note*

To the essential bibliography on poem 101 we must now add the article by F. Bellandi: 'Ad inferias. Il c. 101 di Catullo fra Melagro e Foscolo'. *MD* 51 (2003) 65–134.

<sup>20</sup> The clarity and essentiality of Gérard Genette's analysis (1969: 189f. = 1966: 207) make it preferable to comparable studies; another advantage for our purposes is Genette's constant focus on textual examples from classical rhetoric. I am well aware of the complexities involved in the concept of 'figure'; see Dubois et al. (1970) for some fine analyses of this problem, especially in the excellent first chapter (pp. 30–48).

<sup>21</sup> I have had several fruitful discussions about the ideas in these pages with my friend Edoardo Vineis. I gratefully acknowledge our fine conversations here.

## Poem 101

*Giuseppe Gilberto Biondi*

Translated by Leofranc Holford-Strevens

Often it is not even possible to distinguish precisely what in a work is derived from reality from what is derived from literary tradition.

(Mukařovský)

## I

During his travels in Bithynia Catullus arrives in the Troad, where his brother is buried. He had died there several years earlier, and his tomb had not yet been visited by any member of the family. This is the occasion of poem 101:<sup>1</sup>

Multas per gentes et multa per aequora uectus  
aduenio has miseram frater ad inferias, 1

<sup>1</sup> This work, published in 1976, is more than thirty years old. Updating it, however necessary, would involve a kind of rewriting. In lieu of that I refer any interested reader to the brilliant discussion of F. Bellandi, 'Ad Inferias. Il c. 101 di Catullo fra Meleagro e Foscolo', *MD* 51 (2003) 65–134.

My paper, originally entitled 'Il carme 101 di Catullo', was my first printed work, and I expected that it should also be my last. That it was not is because two teachers at the University of Bologna, **Alfredo Ghiselli** and **Alfonso Traina**, warmly and kindly encouraged me to continue my classical studies. Therefore I dedicate this edition of my first work to them.

ut te postremo donarem munere mortis  
 et mutam nequiquam alloquerer cinerem,  
 quandoquidem fortuna mihi tete abstulit ipsum, 5  
 heu miser indigne frater adempte mihi.  
 Nunc tamen interea haec, prisco quae more parentum  
 tradita sunt tristi munere ad inferias,  
 accipe, fraterno multum manantia fletu,  
 atque in perpetuum frater aue atque uale. 10

Having traveled through many nations and through many seas,  
 I come, brother, to these sad funeral rites,  
 so that I might present you with the final tribute of death  
 and speak in vain to your silent ashes  
 since fortune has taken you yourself away from me—  
 alas, poor brother undeservedly stolen from me.  
 But now, as things are, take these gifts that have been handed down  
 by the ancient custom of our fathers as the grim tribute at the funeral rites.  
 Take them, dripping with a brother's tears,  
 and for ever, brother, hail and farewell.

An indefinite time coinciding with the length of the journey, emphasized by the anaphora *multas per ... multa per*, precedes the brothers' brief meeting: an infinite time follows it (*in perpetuum*). Chronos, like the sea around an island, surrounds the *καρπός* of the *inferiae* ('moment of the funeral rites'). The protagonist of the poem, then, is death itself. The brother's death is the motive for the journey, the funeral ritual its purpose, the final farewell the conclusion. Past (*uectus ... ut donarem*), present (*aduenio ... nunc ... accipe*), and future (*atque in perpetuum*) are stamped with the seal of death. That, I maintain, will become more obvious if we compare Catullus' poem with the meeting between Aeneas and Anchises in the sixth book of the *Aeneid* (*Aen.* 6.687–9). Here too, as in Catullus, the 'appointment' between kinsmen is preceded and will be followed by a very long journey: but whereas Catullus' *pietas* shows itself helpless before his brother's tomb (*et mutam nequiquam alloquerer cinerem*), that of Aeneas prevails: *uicit iter durum pietas? datur ora tueri/ ... et notas audire et reddere uoces?* ('Did your piety win out over the hard journey? Is it allowed to look at faces ... and hear and return well known voices?'). Catullus invites his brother, *accipe ... haec ... prisco ... more parentum*; Anchises receives Aeneas in person (*ego te ... accipio*). Aeneas'

journey to the shades, moreover, falls within a mission that so far from being individual is not even solely human, and father and son now find themselves linked not only by a most tender family affection, but by a shared hope and a common destiny transcending their earthly existence that creates its ultimate value and definitive meaning: eschatological value and significance entirely absent from Catullus' poem, whose pathos arises precisely from the disproportion between the length of the journey, which attests the heroic fraternal *pietas*, and the *miseriae inferiae* confined to the briefest space and time. Granted that the *inferiae* are being performed according to the ancient tradition of the forefathers, they nevertheless cannot give a voice to the brother's ashes and restore him to life from the moment that fortune has snatched away the living person: *fortuna mihi tete abstulit ipsum*. *Fortuna* (and it is not *fatum* but *fortuna* that has robbed the poet of his brother) is at the structural centre of the poem. The *inferiae* are its dialectical opposite and reveal their total powerlessness in relation to it.

This interpretation is not adopted by all Catullus' editors and commentators, presupposing as it does the linking of the third couplet to the first two, and hence punctuating after *adempte mihi* and not after *cinerem*. Punctuation after v. 4 is adopted by Ellis, Mynors, Fordyce, and Quinn,<sup>2</sup> after v. 6 by Lachmann, Baehrens, Friedrich, Kroll, Lafaye, Lenchantin De Gubernatis, and Bardon.<sup>3</sup> The problem has been discussed by Robinson,<sup>4</sup> who convincingly argues for joining the third couplet with the first two and the resulting overall structure 1–6, 7–10, which Quinn, by contrast, calls 'more logical' than his own preferred 1–4, 5–10 but 'flat'.<sup>5</sup> To understand this judgement,<sup>6</sup> we must bear in mind Quinn's own interpretation of the poem in his *Latin Explorations*:<sup>7</sup> in poem 101 two levels of thought coexist, one the poet's awareness that the ritual is both necessary and inadequate, the other

<sup>2</sup> Ellis (1876); Mynors (1958); Fordyce (1961); Quinn (1970).

<sup>3</sup> Lachmann (1874); Baehrens (1885); Friedrich (1908); Kroll (1929); Lafaye (1949); Lenchantin De Gubernatis (1945); Bardon (1943: 53) and (1970a).

<sup>4</sup> Robinson (1965: 62–3). <sup>5</sup> Quinn (1970: 441).

<sup>6</sup> It is strange that neither Robinson nor Quinn refers to Catullan scholars such as Kroll and Bardon who punctuate after v. 6.

<sup>7</sup> Quinn (1963: 80 ff.).

entertaining 'some possibility of communication transcending normal experience'. Clearly this interpretation is suggested by, or rather tied to, punctuation after *cinerem*: 'since fate has deprived me of you, my poor brother unjustly taken from me, now all the same receive these things ...'. On the other side, Robinson observes that if *quandoquidem abstulit* were linked to the following *nunc tamen interea ... accipe*, we should be faced with a Catullus who simultaneously denies and believes in life after death. Now not only does Catullus seem to be addressing not so much the silent ashes as himself as if speaking aloud in order to conjure up a presence: even at Quinn's level we may object that, though poetic language is naturally 'ambiguous', ambiguity has nothing to do with illogicality. From a strictly linguistic standpoint, punctuation after the second couplet is a disruptive factor and breaks the thread of the discourse. Indeed, the reduplicated pronoun *tete*, strengthened by *ipsum* (which, in emphatic position at the end of a line, has maximum contrastive effect) has a function within the economy of the poem only if it is opposed to the *mutam cinerem* of v. 4. As Robinson observes, 'in the *quandoquidem* clause the full realization of his loss comes to explain and at the same time to deepen the disillusion of which *nequiquam* gave the first hint'.<sup>8</sup> I therefore cannot see on what basis Quinn can call this structure 'flat'; the word 'flat' seems more appropriate for the argument he advances in favour of his thesis, that 'in 64.218 (a similar context) *quandoquidem fortuna* introduces a subordinate clause that precedes its principal clause'.<sup>9</sup>

In a poetic text like ours a problem of punctuation becomes a problem of interpretation, requiring us to study the architecture of the poem, the intimate oppositions and relations, in a word to explain the text on the basis of the text itself. That *quandoquidem* in 64.218 precedes the main clause, as Quinn points out, is a detail that does not actually help us solve our problem, both because in 64.218 *quandoquidem* does not begin a period, whereas here on Quinn's reading it would effect the transition from the first part of the poem to the second, and because Catullus normally assigns this task precisely to *nunc* and *interea* (cf. 3.11 *qui nunc it per iter tenebricosum*; 3.17 *tua nunc opera*; 8.16 *quis nunc te adibit*; 25.9 *quae nunc tuis ab unguibus*;

<sup>8</sup> Robinson (1965: 63).

<sup>9</sup> Quinn, ed. (1970: 441).

75.5 *nunc te cognoui*; 116.5 *nunc uideo mihi nunc frustra sumptum esse laborem*; 14.11 *uos hinc interea ualete*; 36.18 *at uos interea uenite in ignem*).

I therefore believe that Bardon's proposed structure, 6(4+2)+4, must be accepted.<sup>10</sup>

The first part, vv. 1–6, is marked by an increase in dramatic intensity; Catullus' grief, barely kept under control in the first two couplets, in the third bursts out as if in revolt: the hexameter, by juxtaposing the pronouns *mihi tete* between *fortuna* and *abstulit*, emphasizes the wrenching loss caused by death, and the pentameter, by its final *adempte mihi*, which amplifies the meaning of the preceding *mihi abstulit*, repeats and hammers home its doleful reality. This moment of greatest tension is prepared by the first four verses through a series of stylistic devices we shall attempt to elucidate. The first couplet is formed by an antithesis of opposed terms in perfect balance. Verse 1, a subordinate participial clause, is opposed to v. 2, a main clause, on various levels, one laid above the other. On that of semantic reference, *multas per gentes et multa per aequora* expressing distance and indeterminacy reinforced by the anaphora *multas per ... multa per*, is countered by *has miseras frater ad inferias*, in which the demonstrative *has* limits and locates the action in a brief space and time. The phonetic opposition between /u/ in *multas, multa* and /a/ in *aduenio has, miseras, frater, inferias* (all under the ictus) did not escape Herescu,<sup>11</sup> who indeed speaks of structural opposition. The point of transition from the tone of the hexameter *multas per gentes et multa per aequora uectus* to that of the pentameter *aduenio has miseras frater ad inferias* is created by the juxtaposition of *uctus* at the end of the line and *aduenio* at the beginning. This juxtaposition, phonetically reinforced by the alliteration *uctus aduenio*, acts as the keystone of the arch formed by the couplet, bringing out the syntactic and semantic opposition of the two verbs: *uctus* as medio-passive past participle captures the reality of the journey as a prolonged event passed and moved through almost in an instant, whereas *aduenio*, in the active voice, the present tense, and the momentary and terminative aspect, marks the same journey's end in time and space.

<sup>10</sup> Bardon (1943: 53).

<sup>11</sup> Herescu (1960: 120 ff.).



In relation to the hexameter the pentameter, which as we have seen counters it on several levels, also constitutes a 'frustrated expectation' in that after the very long journey we should expect something to happen to make up for the associated toils and tribulations. Yet Catullus fails not only to attain a happy ending, but even to reach a specific place such as his brother's tomb: he does not arrive 'at' a place, but 'for' a ritual (*ad inferias* means *ad inferias ferendas*, 'to perform the funeral rites'). At the end of the first couplet the journey, materially at an end, is psychologically in its central, culminating phase and now, at the very moment when the ritual is about to take place, the action is interrupted, rebounds as if back to the past, returns to the time of the journey. This is the effect of the imperfects *donarem* and *alloquerer*, which, depending syntactically and logically on the present *aduenio* but psychologically on *uectus*, felicitously both breach the sequence of tenses<sup>12</sup> and once again frustrate our expectation.<sup>13</sup> The second couplet thus represents a break in continuity of the action and movement described in the first two lines; Catullus, having come to the place where his brother is buried in order to carry out the funerary ritual, is pulled up by the desolating reality before him that impedes the ritual's execution. The poet is physically present for the *inferiae* (*aduenio* has), but their constituent acts, the *munus mortis* and the *nouissima uerba*, reveal themselves as so disproportionately small, so inadequate and impotent in the face of death, that the ritual shrinks from a present gesture to a past intention. But even when the intention (*et mutam nequiquam alloquerer cinerem*) collides with the contradiction of death,<sup>14</sup> Catullus' grief explodes, as we have noted, in

<sup>12</sup> Traina and Bertotti (1973: 3.44).

<sup>13</sup> The past force of *aduenio* is not 'unquestionable' as asserted by Robinson (1965: 62) and the majority of Catullus' commentators: it has perfective aspect, but its temporal force is that of a real present, and remains present despite the perfectivizing prefix *ad*. Not only are *ut donarem... et... alloquerer* semantic amplifications of the implied finale *has ad inferias*, where *has* retains its full function of a substitute for a hand-gesture (the gifts he has in his hands here and now) and the *inferiae* presuppose the two phases, the *actus parentandi* ('performance of the funeral offering') and the *nouissima uerba* ('final words'), which are made explicit by vv. 3, 4, 7–10. For the rite see Ernout–Meillet and *RE* s.v. *inferiae* and Pascoli (1895: 74).

<sup>14</sup> We may note how the very rare elision at the caesura between *nequiquam* and *alloquerer* creates a sound-picture of a sob. See too Bignone (1945: 2. 371): 'L'elisione fra *nequiquam* e *alloquerer*, in cesura di pentametro... dà, in un certo modo, una

an uprising of rebellion, and his present anguish is traced back to the event that caused it (*quandoquidem fortuna mihi tete abstulit ipsum*).

The height of tension is reached by the pentameter of the third couplet, *heu miser indigne frater adempte mihi*, not only by virtue of its components, whose intrinsic meanings make them intensely dramatic in themselves, but also as a consequence of a further connotation that the line takes on as a *retractatio* ('repetition')<sup>15</sup> with slight variations of 68.20 *o misero frater adempte mihi* and 68.92 *ei misero frater adempte mihi*, passages in which the phrase *frater adempte mihi* marks the beginning of the poet's lament for his state of grief and despair resulting from his brother's very recent death (*Tecum una totast sepulta domus ...*, 'with you the whole house is buried'). The third pentameter of poem 101 evokes those lamentations of grief and despair that nevertheless are here suppressed and checked: thus the verse is followed by a void, a silence, a moment of suspense. This accounts for the slow and measured start of the second part of the poem and its difference in structure from the first.

The accumulation of adverbs, *nunc tamen interea*, serves to bring the poet's thought and feeling back to the present reality, in contrast to the movement back to the past in the preceding lines (*nunc* takes up *aduenio*, *tamen* the antithesis *mutam cinerem/tete ipsum*, *interea* emphasizes the momentary nature of *accipe haec* in relation to the indeterminate time preceding and following). But on the other hand it delays the actual performance of the ritual, almost as if Catullus were endeavouring to re-establish his own feelings and his awareness of his journey's purpose, or wished, at least for a little while, to put

maggior risonanza e un doloroso prolungamento delle dolenti parole *nequiquam* e *alloquerer* che indicano la sconvolta vanità di quel saluto. E non a torto Plinio il Giovane in una sua lettera (1, 16, 5) ammirerà particolarmente quei versi *duriusculi*, sgorgati con tanta spontaneità e aderenza al sentimento dell'anima nella poesia di Catullo, che i posteriori si sforzeranno invano di imitare' ['The elision between *nequiquam* and *alloquerer* at the caesura of the pentameter ... in a way gives a greater resonance and a sad prolongation of the grieving words *nequiquam* and *alloquerer*, marking the confused pointlessness of this greeting. Pliny the Younger, in ep. 1.16.5, would rightly bestow particular admiration on those "rather harsh" verses, poured forth with so much spontaneity and fidelity to the soul's feelings in Catullus' poetry, that later writers would struggle to imitate in vain']. Cf. the similar effect of the hiatus in 3.16: *o factum male o miselle passer*.

<sup>15</sup> On *retractatio* and its function in allusive art see Figna (1975: 127 ff.)

off the final farewell of the closing verse; the verb *accipe* stands at the beginning of v. 9, very far from the adverbs that modify it. The extended hyperbaton separating *accipe* from the adverbs and its object *haec* sets up in turn a backward enjambment between vv. 7 and 8–9 and a forward enjambment between the entire fourth couplet and v. 9, a procedure that not only runs counter to the first part of the poem (vv. 1–6), in which each verse comprises a syntactically and logically complete clause, but sets itself apart from the normal usage of the elegiac measure in which the pentameter generally concludes a complete thought.<sup>16</sup>

This is Catullus' solution to the problem of at once making the essentials of the ritual stand out (*haec* before the caesura and *accipe* at the start of the verse are in emphatic position) and of making good their lack of liturgical and religious power with moral and affective values and contents. That end is served both by the long relative clause *prisco quae more parentum/tradita sunt tristi munere ad inferias* and the addition after *accipe* of *fraterno multum manantia fletu*; these two clauses come to dominate *accipe haec*. There is a great disproportion between the short monosyllabic pronoun *haec* and the long, protracted phrases qualifying it: it is the disproportion between what the ritual is in itself and everything else that it wishes to be but fails to be.

The poem, then, has more movement and complexity than appears at first sight: the opposition between the first two verses, the breach of sequence in *aduenio ut donarem*, the *retractatio* of v. 5, the particular metrical and syntactical structure of the second part, and all the other details we have attempted to illuminate create within it a field of force, a locus of interactions and tensions that build up, remain in suspense, and then abate to the point of extinction and peaceful annihilation in the final ritual pentameter *atque in perpetuum frater aue atque uale*.

Certainly the poem has always struck readers for the tone of 'gentle and veiled sadness',<sup>17</sup> of 'heartfelt grief',<sup>18</sup> that pervades it; Quinn<sup>19</sup> speaks of a 'delicate balance'; Ugo Foscolo was roused by it to

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Havet (1930: 66).

<sup>17</sup> Conte (1974: 6): 'molle e velata mestizia'.

<sup>18</sup> Lenchantin De Gubernatis (1945: 259): 'accorata tristezza'.

<sup>19</sup> Quinn (1970: 440).

compose his famous sonnet on the theme of tomb and death as bringers of lasting peace ('In morte del fratello Giovanni', in *Sonetti*). I think that this effect of peaceful resignation is above all created by the 'signifier' which, although at times it succeeds in reinforcing the 'signified'—as in the case of the elision between *nequiquam* and *alloquerer* at the diaeresis in v. 4 or the the metrical stress that falls five times on the phoneme /a/ in v. 2 in opposition to the repeated stress on /u/ in v. 1—, nevertheless for the most part takes on an autonomy of its own and creates new 'signifieds' that, without ever reaching tragic levels, provide the structural framework and balancing force of the poem. This balancing force is entrusted to sound-figures (alliterations, homoeoteleuta, assonances, etc.) that, repeated, act on the 'signified' like chords of music, thus bringing the poem closer to the non-literary genre of *neniae* ('dirges').<sup>20</sup> The sound MU at the beginning of a word occurs six times, of which four coincide with the metrical stress; UM appears four times, twice at line-end and twice coinciding with the metrical stress. ER is repeated fifteen times; U recurs thirty-one times, M<sup>21</sup> twenty-four. Every verse is dense with figures of the signifier that 'tend to reduce to unity the diversity of the signifieds'.<sup>22</sup> We may note the most obvious besides those already mentioned: in v. 3 the alliteration *Munere MOrtis*, which resumes in the beginning of *MOrtis* the final syllable, at the metrical stress, of *postreMO*; in v. 4 the homoeoteleuton between *mutAM* and *nequiquAM*, the assonances in *alloqueRER* and *cinERem*, and the repeated Q in *neQuiQuam* and *alloQuerer* and in *QuandoQuidem* in the next verse, creating a kind of 'enjambement in sound'—the same procedure as in *adUEnio* of v. 2, which resumes in particular the UE of *UEctus* and more generally the U that phonetically dominates

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Cic. *Leg.* 2.62: 'Honoratorum uirorum laudes in contione memorentur easque etiam ut cantus ad tibicinem prosequatur, cui nomen *neniae*, quo uocabulo etiam apud Graecos lugubres nominantur' ('The praises of men honored by the state should be pronounced in the assembly and a song to the playing of the flute should follow them. This song is called a dirge, and songs of mourning are also called by this word among the Greeks.') At other times Catullus apparently wishes to echo these *neniae*: see La Penna (1956: 147).

<sup>21</sup> *Littera mugiens* ('the moaning letter'), Quintilian calls it (12.10.31); cf. Marouzeau, (1962: 29).

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Beccaria (1975: 15 n. 43).

the entire hexameter and returns in v. 6 *heu* (an interjection rarer in Catullus than *o*, *hei*, and *ei*),<sup>23</sup> which echoes the dominant U sound of the previous line *qUandoqUidem fortUna mihi tete abstUlit ipsUm*. The adverb cluster *NuNc tameN iNTerea* is phonetically reinforced by the nasal N; still in v. 7, the NT of *iNTerea* returns in *pareNTum*. We meet other alliterations in v. 8 *TRadita TRisti* and v. 9 *Multum Manantia*. Verse 10 is a veritable orchestration of sound: *ATQUE in PERPeUUm frATER AUE ATQUE UALE*.

The signifier, then, is marked by an accumulation of repetitive sound figures that act as a braking force, tending to reunite the multiple feelings expressed in the poem and to conceal, so to speak, the labour that underpins and generates it.

Nevertheless, the task of interweaving and consolidating the first and second parts and all the various ‘moments’ of the poem is entrusted, not only to the strictly poetic function of the signifier, but to the attempt at communication centred on the vocative *frater* repeated, always in the same metrical position, in vv. 2, 6, and 10, and to the referential function centred on the repetition of *inferias* (vv. 2, 10) and *munere* (vv. 3, 8) that accompanies and counteracts it. The memory and evocation of Catullus’ brother (*frater ... frater ... frater*) and the present reality (*inferias ... inferias; munere ... munere; has ... haec*) run, so to speak, on parallel tracks throughout the poem, meeting only for a moment in the poet’s ‘prayer’ and offering (*haec accipe*), thereafter to separate for ever.

## II

The journey, with Catullus’ visit to his brother’s tomb, was a real journey: but at the moment when the poet chooses to ‘sing’ of the contingent event, it is transformed into a literary product that can be read and understood only on the basis of the author’s ‘intention’: in this case, that of Catullus, *poeta doctus* and at the same time poet of *Bildungserlebnis* (‘formative experience’). If, to quote Jiménez, perfection in art is ‘the spontaneity of a cultivated mind’,<sup>24</sup> it becomes indispensable in

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Wetmore (1961).

<sup>24</sup> Juan Ramón Jiménez, prefatory letter to *Segunda antología* [his spelling] *poética* (Madrid, 1920): ‘la perfección, en arte, es la espontaneidad, la sencillez [‘simplicity’] de un espíritu cultivado’. Cf. Ghiselli (1961: 159).

this poem, so ‘personal and intimate’,<sup>25</sup> to determine its cultural density and the literary ‘horizon’<sup>26</sup> that it presupposes and by which it is expressed.

Before Conte<sup>27</sup> recognized a Homeric allusion in the opening line, Catullan scholars were agreed that the literary precedent and model for poem 101 was Meleager’s famous epigram for Heliodora (A. P. 7.476):

Δάκρυά σοι καὶ νέρθε διὰ χθονός, Ἡλιοδώρα,  
 δωροῦμαι, στοργᾶς λείψανον εἰς Ἄϊδαν,  
 δάκρυα δυσδάκρυτα· πολυκλαύτῳ δ’ ἐπὶ τύμβῳ  
 σπένδω μνάμα πόθων, μνάμα φιλοφροσύνας.  
 οἰκτρὰ γὰρ οἰκτρὰ φίλαν σε καὶ ἐν φθιμένοις Μελέαγρος 5  
 αἰάζω, κενεᾶν εἰς Ἀχέροντα χάριν.  
 αἰαί, ποῦ τὸ ποθεινὸν ἐμοὶ θάλος; ἄρπασεν Ἄϊδας,  
 ἄρπασεν, ἀκμαῖον δ’ ἄνθος ἔφυρε κόνις.  
 ἀλλὰ σε γουνούμαι, Γᾶ παντρόφε, τὰν πανόδουρον  
 ἡρέμα σοῖς κόλποις, μάτερ, ἐναγκάλισαι. 10

Tears even down through the earth, Heliodora,  
 into Hades, I give to you—the last gift of my affection—  
 hard-wept tears. And at your much lamented tomb  
 I pour out the memory of longing, the memory of affection.  
 Piteously, piteously, I, Meleager, lament you, dear even among the dead,  
 giving an empty tribute to Acheron.  
 Alas! Where is my darling child? Hades snatched her.  
 He snatched her. Dust has defiled the flower in its bloom.  
 But I beseech you, all nourishing Earth, mother,  
 gently clasp to your bosom the one much grieved for.

Now even if we acknowledge in Catullus’ poem a greater lyric intensity<sup>28</sup> and a different literary and existential nature,<sup>29</sup> no one to my knowledge has detected in comparing the two texts a fundamental divergence: the next world, which under the name of Hades or Acheron returns three times in Meleager, even if with the frigidity of

<sup>25</sup> Fordyce (1961: 388).

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Hirsch (1960), at 464–70: ‘The Two Horizons of Textual Meaning’.

<sup>27</sup> Conte (1974: 6 ff.), and see Conte (1971), reprinted in this volume (pp. 167–76).

<sup>28</sup> Hezel (1932: 31); Fordyce (1961: 388).

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Williams (1968: 186).

a topos frequent in the Anthology, is conspicuous by its absence in poem 101.<sup>30</sup>

In Catullus, despite the laborious journey, the gates that divide the living from the dead remain not only materially closed but even deliberately ignored: the ritual taking place on this uncrossable threshold cannot break down the wall of silence that divides him from his brother—the very wall whose collapse Homer had brought about in the *Odyssey* in the myth concerning the evocation of the dead. In book 11 the ritual displays all its liturgical and religious power, and is capable of satisfying an eternal human need: communication of the living with the dead. Once Odysseus has obtained Tiresias' prophecy, mother and son may at last talk and break the silence of death: τέκνον ἐμόν...μητέρα ἐμή ('my child'... 'my mother').<sup>31</sup> That this very episode enters the literary horizon of poem 101 and influences it according to the dynamics of the art of allusion seems quite probable to me. Both in the Homeric episode and in Catullus' poem three points succeed each other: the journey, the ritual, the brief encounter. Odysseus reaches the Underworld only after a long journey and only after performing the sacrifices; his mother's first words emphasize precisely the length and difficulty of the journey:

χαλεπὸν δὲ τὰδε ζωῶσιν ὁρᾶσθαι.  
 μέσσω γὰρ μεγάλοι ποταμοὶ καὶ δεινὰ ῥέεθρα,  
 Ὠκεανὸς μὲν πρῶτα... (Od. 11.156–8)

It is hard for the living to see these things.  
 For there are great rivers and terrible streams,  
 first Ocean...

The 'miracle' of the meeting is the reward for the labour that has overcome the long distance. Catullus repeats the basic elements of the Homeric episode in a stylized form, except for the meeting between kin, whose very absence is the distinguishing feature of his composition. I am therefore inclined to say that the watermark, so to speak, of v. 1 and the whole poem is not Odysseus' journey in general, but

<sup>30</sup> Lafaye (1894: 224) and Paratore (1963: 556), though they note in poem 101 Catullus' disbelief in life after death, fail to recognize the 'intentionality' of his silence about the next world and its poetic function in the context of the epigram.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Hom. *Od.* 11.155, 164.

a particular point within it: the journey to the kingdom of the dead. The proof is afforded by Virgil in the underworld encounter of Aeneas and Anchises, in which he picks up the very first line of Catullus' poem: *quas ego te terras et quanta per aequora uectum* ('[I welcome] you, having sailed through what lands and great seas', *Aen.* 6.692). Virgil had therefore understood to what point of Odysseus' long journey Catullus was alluding. I would therefore rule out what Conte, for all that he has the merit of having paid the poem the tribute of recognizing its parentage, seems inclined to think, namely that 'here the reminiscence of Odysseus may be linked for Catullus with a "heroization" of his brother, who had died in the Troad like Homer's warriors'.<sup>32</sup> It is more likely that for Catullus the reminiscence of Odysseus is connected with the long journey that, amidst so many adventures, offers a living person the possibility of crossing the threshold of death: an experience that now, at the end of *his* journey, seems denied to the Latin poet.

Poem 101 thus takes the shape, from this standpoint, as a palinode of Homer's *Nekyia*.

### III

Once we have ruled out the notion that the poem represents the epitaph inscribed by Catullus on his brother's tomb and established its literary nature,<sup>33</sup> it remains to determine to what genre it belongs: funerary epigram or elegy? The question is not a mere academic pastime if we bear in mind the renewed importance that the study of literary genres has assumed from the Russian formalists down to the present [1976] for a truer understanding and evaluation of a poetical text.<sup>34</sup> We could sum up Catullan critics' judgements on the genre of poem 101 in Braga's words: 'it is governed by a pathos so vividly

<sup>32</sup> Conte (1974: 11 n. 18): 'Non escluderei che qui il ricordo di Ulisse possa essere legato per Catullo ad una "eroizzazione" del fratello, morto nella Troade come i guerrieri di Omero.' See Conte, n. 15 in this volume.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Hezel (1932: 28); Williams (1968: 186 ff.); Fordyce (1961: 388).

<sup>34</sup> I refer especially to the recent formulation of the problem by Rossi (1971: 70–1, 88 n. 9). See also Cairns (1972).



depicted in its few couplets that the name “elegy” would suit it just as well as “epigram”.<sup>35</sup> All the most authoritative commentators have detected in it ‘something’<sup>36</sup> that distances it not only from Meleager’s lament for Heliodora, which as we have said is its closest model, but even from the genre of epigram itself, so that, as Wilamowitz put it, only brevity marks this poem (like poem 99) as an epigram rather than an elegy.<sup>37</sup>

With that we touch on one of the most debated problems in ancient literature, the distinction between elegy and epigram, a problem bound up with the origin of Latin elegy. It is not our purpose here to broach the by now age-old question of the origins of the two genres and their possible genetic relationship, but rather, using a synchronic cross-section of the literary culture of Catullus’ age or that of his closest models, to test for the existence or not of an identity for elegy or epigram. From the material we have at our disposal we may say with Wheeler<sup>38</sup> that ‘ordinarily there is no difficulty in distinguishing an elegy from an epigram’ and that ‘the difference was one of *length* and especially of *treatment*’.<sup>39</sup> Between elegy and epigram, then, there were objective distinctions of form and content, such as respectively length or brevity and the presence or absence of the ‘objective’ myth, so that the two genres, while connected by the elegiac couplet, each had complete autonomy. As time passed, it appears that the barriers of ‘length’

<sup>35</sup> Braga (1950: 211): ‘lo domina un pathos così vivamente rappresentato nei pochi distici, che il nome di elegia gli conviene altrettanto bene che quello di epigramma’.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Fedeli (1974: 39): ‘Catullo ... aveva ripreso e ampliato—e non solo nelle *nugae*—motivi dell’epigramma ellenistico ... e il procedimento è ancor più chiaro nel c. 101, l’estremo saluto alla tomba del fratello, in cui il motivo è tipicamente epigrammatico e riecheggiano gli accenti di un epigramma di Meleagro, in «Anth. Pal.», 7, 476; ma è evidente il superamento della tecnica dell’epigramma sepolcrale, perché Catullo ha creato un qualcosa di profondamente intimo e personale, tanto che il Wilamowitz parlava a ragione di breve elegia’ [‘Catullus had adopted and expanded, not only in his *nugae*, themes of Hellenistic epigram ... and the procedure is even clearer in poem 101, the last greeting at his brother’s tomb, in which the theme is typical of epigram and we hear the echoes of an epigram by Meleager, AP 7. 476; but the technique of funeral epigram has been manifestly left behind, for Catullus has created something deeply intimate and personal, so much so that Wilamowitz rightly spoke of a brief elegy’].

<sup>37</sup> Wilamowitz (1924: 234): ‘... nur die Kürze unterscheidet diese “Epigramme” (101; 99) von der Elegie’.

<sup>38</sup> Wheeler (1934: 159, 169). See also La Penna (1970: introduction, p. xxi).

<sup>39</sup> My emphasis.

and 'treatment' that divided epigram from elegy crumbled, so that the two genres came to overlap: this indeed happened in Catullus' case in those two stupendous hybrids, poems 76 and 101. Both appear subject to the clash of two forces: one centripetal, typical of epigram, directed to what is individual and real and striving to attract it into its brief compass, impressing on it an intensity and force that culminate in the close; the other centrifugal, proper to elegy, tending to expansion, to transfiguration, to transcription of the existential datum onto the level of archetypical myth. The overlapping of the two different genres was bound to provoke what Fraenkel, discussing Propertius 1.3, calls a 'Monumentalisierung'<sup>40</sup> of the epigram itself. Now, if the function of—I repeat literally—'monumentalization' in poem 76 is chiefly entrusted to 'length' (26 lines), in 101 it is the 'treatment' that affects its epigrammatic nature and brings to it that 'something' Fedeli speaks of. The new treatment manifests itself and 'crystallizes' in exemplary fashion, in the initial hexameter *multas per gentes et multa per aequora uectus*. This line is not only marked by the thematic and stylistic elements proper to archaic epic that put their decisive stamp on it (the anaphora *multas per ... multa per*, the secondary caesura after the fourth trochee, the segment *per aequora uectus* with an Ennian colouring, as Norden suggests), but, regenerated and transfigured by allusion, it lives in the poem as a mythic narrative. Thematic, rhetorical, stylistic, and metrical elements belonging to the literary genre, the 'institution' of epic, have succeeded in becoming integral parts of another genre or institution,<sup>41</sup> the funerary epigram. If we compare the genres to constellations, each of which has its own gravitational field, we may say, in the case of poem 101, that the constellation of the epigram, normally small and not very complex, has expanded and invaded the field of epic, but without displacing its own centre of gravity: by this new conquest of poetic territory the poem comes close to elegy, but by retaining its centre of gravity it remains epigrammatic. Between epic and lyric a bridge has been built.

The coexistence of centripetal and centrifugal forces in poem 101 brings about movement in a highly elliptical orbit whose apogees, very far apart, are represented by the indeterminate time before the

<sup>40</sup> Cit. Fedeli (1971: 444).

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Segre (1969: 76 ff.).

*inferiae* and the infinite time (*atque in perpetuum*) after them, and whose perigees coincide with the here and now of the *inferiae* themselves, which have two phases: one of intent (vv. 2–6) and one of effect (vv. 7–10).

The interaction of the forces and movements underlying the poem and giving it the complex genetic and structural identity we have been attempting to analyse is also to be perceived at the stylistic level. The style of poem 101, as is not new in Catullus and Alexandrian-inspired poetry in general, is a composite: juxtaposed (to put it thus for the moment) to a prevailing elevated and archaic stylistic finish, we find elements of *Umgangssprache* ('everyday speech'). The style of v. 1, as we have seen, is archaic and solemn.<sup>42</sup> *alloquerer* in v. 4 has an elevated tone, at least according to Quinn, who probably expands on the TLL's comment;<sup>43</sup> *quandoquidem* in v. 5 is an archaism of the spoken

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Norden (1957: 228). The 'Ennian colouring' perceived by Norden in the phrase *per aequora uectus* but obscure to Wigodsky (1972: 115) consists, I think, in the fact that *aequora*, used poetically for the sea, appears before Catullus only in Ennius (sc. 367 Vahlen<sup>2</sup>: *aequora salsa ueges ingentibus uentis*; Ann. 478 Vahlen<sup>2</sup>: *labitur uncta carina per aequora cana celocis*), and that in Catullus both *aequora* and *uctus* are always used in grand contexts. See 64.206–7: *horrida contremuerunt/aequora concussitque micantia sidera mundus* ('the ruffled waters trembled and the heaven shook its twinkling stars'), where Lenchantin De Gubernatis (1928: 163) comments, '*mundus* col significato di cielo è costante nel latino arcaico' [*'mundus* meaning "heaven" is constantly found in Archaic Latin']; 11.7–8: *siue quae septemgeminus colorat / aequora Nilus* ('or the waters which the seven-mouthed Nile dyes'), where the tone is ironically elevated (cf. Ronconi [1971: 175]); 64.7 *caerulea uerrentes abiegnis aequora palmis* ('sweeping the blue seas with palms of fir'), on which see Lenchantin De Gubernatis, 142: 'L'immagine espressiva dello strisciare dei remi a guisa di scopa sulla superficie dell'acqua è tolta da Ennio *ann. 384 uerrunt... placidum mare*' ['The expressive image of the oars sweeping the waves like a broom on the surface of the water is taken from Ennius, *Ann. 384 uerrunt... placidum mare*']; 63.1 *super alta uectus Attis celerei rate maria* ('Attis, carried over the deep seas in a swift ship'), where Lenchantin de Gubernatis p. 130 notes: '*celerei* con la desinenza arcaica che si intravede in *celere* di V, sostituita con la desinenza normale da Terenziano e Vittorino che citano il verso' [*'celerei* with the archaic termination discernible in V's *celere*, replaced with the normal ending in Terentianus' and Victorinus' quotations of the line']; 64.121 *aut ut uecta rati spumosa ad litora Diae* ('or how carried in a ship [she came] to the foaming shores of Dia').

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Quinn (1970: 441): 'Irony, rather than emotional incitement; *alloqui* is used of any formal speech, including the speech made by one character to another in high-style poetry, e.g. Virgil, A. 4.8 *adloquitur sororem* ["she addressed her sister"]. The *Thesaurus* assigns *alloquerer* to the technical use of rhetorical *exclamatio* (TLL i. 1696, 34 ff.), but I should not rule out the general sense of 'address', 'speak to'; this must

language, or at least must have been so felt,<sup>44</sup> and by its length seems to anticipate the sense of the irreparable; the use of *cinis* (v. 4) as a feminine in the neoterics is the 'fruit of a marriage between a popular element and a literary element of the highest refinement';<sup>45</sup> there is an archaic flavour (archaism of the spoken language?) in the piled-up adverbs *Nunc tamen interea*<sup>46</sup> and the collocation *more parentum* for the more usual *more maiorum*;<sup>47</sup> in the last line *aue atque uale* is solemn because ritual,<sup>48</sup> and the repeated *atque* has an elevated tone.<sup>49</sup>

Close to everyday speech, by contrast, are, probably, *aduenio ad* with final meaning,<sup>50</sup> the exclamatory particle *heu*,<sup>51</sup> and the intensive *multum* before a participle.<sup>52</sup> Once again, then, we are face to face with the phenomenon, so frequent in Catullus, that goes by the name of stylistic *poikilia* ('variation'). However, this term seems inadequate to describe the procedure, the psychological and cultural humus in which the style of the poem is grown: it is merely an anatomical description (so to speak), rather than a physiological one of a stylistically complex poetic text, reducing the combination of styles to a superficial and static structure, not the deep and dynamic structure closest to Ungaretti's 'buried harbour' from which the poet begins his journey towards poetry.<sup>53</sup> For this reason, I should prefer to speak, not of *poikilia*, but of stylistic orchestration, a definition that allows us to capture the functioning and effects the relation and combination of the stylistic levels create within the poetic text as each fulfils its role. The orchestration, to be sure, does not possess an unambiguous direction. The tension that builds up between the stylistic levels may generate such force as to create something like a 'transplant rejection'

pertain to the *Umgangssprache*, given its superabundant use in comedy (see *TLL* s.v. *alloquor*).

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Hofmann and Szantyr (1964: 609) and Kroll (1929: 275).

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Lunelli (1969: 91 ff., 175–6). <sup>46</sup> Cf. Bignone (1945: 2. 37).

<sup>47</sup> Norden (1957: 196); Leumann (1974: 154, 155). The objections to Norden by Wigodsky (1972: 117) do not strike me as conclusive.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Wigodsky (1972: 126). <sup>49</sup> Ross (1969: 32–3).

<sup>50</sup> Two examples can be found before Catullus in comedy, Plaut. *Amph.* 669, *Men.* 287.

<sup>51</sup> Hofmann (1951: 14). <sup>52</sup> *Ibid.* 77.

<sup>53</sup> Giuseppe Ungaretti, 'Il porto sepolto', in his collection *L'allegria*. [Editor's note: see Hart, trans. (1990).]

in one level with respect to another.<sup>54</sup> That happens when the dominant register is able to effect the marginalization within the poetic text of a particular level and its psychological or thematic referent. In this situation I should speak of a stylistic 'clash'; that is the case in those of Catullus' poems that are ironical or sarcastic in tone.<sup>55</sup>

Contrariwise, the tension may be, if not abated, at least channelled into a common direction and support a kind of interdependence between the stylistic levels. In that case I should speak of a stylistic 'meeting' or 'symbiosis' and recognize that situation in all the *nugae* and *carmina docta* whose tone comes from the convergence and co-operation of elevated style and *sermo familiaris*.<sup>56</sup> Lastly, the stylistic tension may remain in suspense and the dialectical relation transformed into one of dialogue: then I should speak of stylistic 'coexistence'. The poet, in such cases, not only refuses to privilege any one level but does not even think of fusing them together. With no force either joining or disjoining them, the stylistic levels support each other on the only line of tangible meeting: the referent, the content of the poem, which operates as their catalyst and represents the path of the intended poetic effect. It is just this last procedure that Catullus adopts in poem 101: in it, the difference in stylistic potential between elevated, archaic stylistic devices and those from everyday language is not discharged at a single pole, so that, if not in quantity at least in quality, their force, within the poetic text, is in equilibrium. The components, for example, that delimit and sharply characterize the first verse as epic can neither marginalize the colloquial colouring nor fuse with it; the latter, for its part, cannot create a fault-line in the epic colouring and thus mark it as a parody. The coexistence in the poem of elements of consumable and reusable speech<sup>57</sup> reveals

<sup>54</sup> Conte (1974: 65 ff.).

<sup>55</sup> Ronconi (1971: 173 ff.).

<sup>56</sup> Lunelli (1969: 166 ff.).

<sup>57</sup> Lausberg (1963: 17–18): 'Die Verbrauchsrede ... ist eine Rede, die in einer aktuellen Situation ... vom Redenden mit der Intention der Änderung der Situation einmalig gehalten wird und ihre Funktion entsprechend der Intention (*voluntas*) des Redenden in dieser Situation völlig verbraucht ... Die Wiedergebrauchsrede ... ist eine Rede, die in typischen, sich periodisch oder unperiodisch wiederholenden [Feier-]Situationen von demselben Redner oder von jeweils wechselnden Rednern gehalten wird und ihre Brauchbarkeit zur Bewältigung dieser typischen Situationen ein für allemal (innerhalb einer konstant angenommenen sozialen Ordnung) behält' ['Consumable speech ... is speech that is uttered once only by the speaker in a current situation ... with the intention of changing that situation and completely exhausts its function in this situation

two different existential attitudes in the poet: Catullus, while on the one hand respecting all that is traditional, objective, and 'canonical' in the ritual, at the same time observes its inadequacy and in the last analysis its emptiness; an emptiness he attempts to fill with the gift of his own grief and love, of all that is most personal, subjective, and intimate in him. His twofold attitude to his brother's death leans on a twofold literary support: the elevated language (the language of the 'poetic fathers') accompanies the need to overcome death, supported by tradition (*mos parentum*) and inherited myth (Odysseus in the kingdom of the dead); on the other hand, the everyday language reflects the poet's brotherly grief in the face of the ineluctable, so that feeling alone remains as the single point of contact between the living and the dead. From this viewpoint poem 101 is 'philosophically' close to 96, on Calvus and Quintilia: *certe non tanto mors immatura dolorist / Quintiliae, quantum gaudet amore tuo* ('Certainly Quintilia's untimely death does not grieve her as much as she rejoices in your love.'). But the two poems are separated by a different literary and cultural horizon. Poem 96 is dominated by the sentiment of love that has the power, as it were, to restore the dead to the living: in 101, by contrast, Catullus is at once the exponent and the denier of a liturgical and religious tradition, accepted in everything that it offers as a possible remedy for death, but denounced as not being the counter-measure bringing freedom from the ultimate evil. Catullus, in short, in poem 101 wishes to make a desperate attempt to recover the traditional faith, but everything then crumbles in his hands: myths, traditions, rites avail nothing against death.

Catullus, before fortune robbed him of his brother, had already halted on the edge of the abyss, but passion had suddenly torn him away with its overmastering power:

nobis cum semel occidit brevis lux  
 nox est perpetua una dormienda  
 Da mi basia mille ... (Cat. 5.5–7)

in accordance with the speaker's intention (*voluntas*) ... Reusable speech ... is speech that is uttered in typical (ceremonial) situations, be their return regular or irregular, whether by the same public speaker or a different one each time, and retains its utility for mastering these typical situations once for all (within a social order presumed to remain constant)].

We, when once our brief light has set,  
 must sleep for a single everlasting night.  
 Give me a thousand kisses ...

Now that he finds himself drowning in the waves of fortune (cf. 68.13 *quis merser fortunae fluctibus ipse* ['by what waves of fortune I myself am overwhelmed']), when neither Lesbia's kisses nor any other value in the world can restore to him his lost brother, Catullus sees himself obliged to confront the ultimate enemy; and he seeks his armour not in Hellenistic philosophy but in Homeric mythology. He does not attempt to exorcize the anguishing reality of death by philosophical means, in accordance with the practice or teaching of his great contemporaries Cicero and Lucretius; his only travelling companion to the other world is myth, the myth of the man who in a long journey through peoples and seas brought down the 'wall of shadow' between living and dead. But too many centuries of speculation and human shrewdness separate the Latin poet's real journey from the mythical journey of Odysseus; for too long human wisdom has been built on the divorce of myth and reason; the 'fall of the gods' has taught (or compelled) people to live and die without beliefs and hopes, so that now not only the educated but even the sensible man cannot go on believing that death is not the end of all or hoping that at least for a moment ritual restores feelings and words to the dead.

Catullus was a man of education and sense. In this disbelief in the other life<sup>58</sup> he is in line with the literary and philosophical culture of the time, but what distances him from the culture of his generation (whether behind it or ahead), so that for that reason too it is legitimate to ask 'Did Catullus really exist?';<sup>59</sup> is his attitude towards the objective fact of death: neither Socrates' cock for Asclepius nor Epicurus' pronouncement *ὁ θάνατος οὐδὲν πρὸς ἡμᾶς* ('death is nothing to us') touched the strings of Catullus' soul and his poetry. For Catullus' generation, living in the morally most tormented age of Roman history, of transition from one political and cultural system to another, for this borderline generation dramatically aware of its religious, moral, and political void, the only anchor of salvation

<sup>58</sup> See Traina (1975: 93 ff.) and above all Boissier (1884: 47 ff.).

<sup>59</sup> Canali (1974) = Canali (1976).

was a myth: that of Lucretian wisdom and *ratio*. Of this citadel of human consciousness Catullus refused to make himself a citizen. He was content to fight the war of the contradictions of his time with the traditional, even primitive weapons, of the inherited human need for the love of the beauty of the divine: his instruments were everyday life and myth. But tradition was his ally to an extent not normally supposed. For Catullus literary tradition is not only a linguistic and rhetorical inheritance 'to be drawn on and used without prejudice' perhaps 'in a vein of parody',<sup>60</sup> or a system of values and ideals that in a new political and human order needed a minus sign before it: tradition, with its laws of poetics and its themes, language, and style, rather than representing for Catullus a world different from his own and in dialectical opposition to it, is a locus of encounter, an opportunity to listen with deep and living attention to the past.

<sup>60</sup> Lunelli (1969: 173 ff.).



## Catullus, Ennius, and the Poetics of Allusion

*James E. G. Zetzel*

It is this backward motion toward the source,  
Against the stream, that most we see ourselves in,  
The tribute of the current to the source.

Robert Frost, *West-Running Brook*

Almost since Catullus' own lifetime, it has been axiomatic to any discussion of the so-called new poetry that one of the primary aspects of its novelty lies in its rejection of earlier Roman poetry.<sup>1</sup> The new poets, we are told, turned away from the clumsy style and heroic subjects of earlier Latin literature; they adopted instead the manner and the matter of Alexandrian poetry, particularly of Callimachus. They wrote urbane short poems and recondite epyllia; they made use of Greek words in transliteration and of learned allusions after the manner of the Alexandrians; they polished the hexameter to such a degree that Catullus, in poem 64, shows not a single violation of Hermann's Bridge. In short, it would seem, the poetry of the neoterics is Greek in all but its use of the Latin language.

<sup>1</sup> In keeping with the original form of this paper as a lecture, I have added relatively little annotation. The main changes have been occasioned by the appearance, since I delivered the oral version, of Thomas (1982), whose examination of Ennian influence on Catullus 64.1–18 is more detailed than my own, but with whose approach (as will be seen) I disagree. I am grateful to my wife, Susanna Stambler, for her improvements of this article, and to the other speakers and audience at the University of Minnesota for their helpful comments.

To some degree, this description of neoteric style is exaggerated; but it is salutary to remember that there are still reputable scholars who look on Catullus 64 as a translation of a lost Greek original, and Giangrande has tried to identify the model as a product of the school of Rhianus Cretensis.<sup>2</sup> Few indeed would go so far as that, but the possibility of any extensive debt of Catullus, at least in his longer poems, to the masterpieces of early Roman literature is one that leaves many critics profoundly uneasy. Of the use of Ennius in Catullus 64, Fordyce remarked that 'Alexandrian artifices are imposed on the traditional style of the Latin hexameter as it had come down from Ennius.'<sup>3</sup> In other words, in this interpretation Catullus was influenced by Ennius only in so far as such influence was the unavoidable result of their shared use of the Latin language and the dactylic hexameter. What is significant in Catullus' style is thus the Alexandrian artifice; the Ennian elements are only there because they had to be.

It would be perverse to suggest that Catullus or any of his fellow-neoterics nursed a deep and abiding admiration for archaic Roman literature, but it would be equally foolish to ignore what use is made in Catullus both of archaic diction and of reminiscences of specific passages of Ennius' poetry. It is clearly not the case that Catullus wished to emulate the forms or the style of Ennian epic. The neoterics preferred to compose epigrams, lyrics and epyllia, not epic.<sup>4</sup> Annals, the form most closely associated with Ennius, were the object of neoteric scorn, deemed suitable for fish-wrappings in poem 95, described as *cacata charta* in poem 36. As a follower of Callimachean theory, Catullus rejected epic, both in terms of its style and in terms of its subject, and no collection of Ennian allusions should be taken to suggest anything else. The goal of this paper is to suggest, however, that Catullus was not totally scornful of archaic Roman poetry. In the first place, Ennius provided a Roman equivalent for the Alexandrians' use of Homeric diction.<sup>5</sup> And, in the second place, allusions to specific

<sup>2</sup> Giangrande (1972). The assumption of a Greek model is made explicit on p. 146; the discussion of Rhianus' alleged influence appears on pp. 139 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Fordyce (1961: 275); so also Kinsey (1965b: 912).

<sup>4</sup> For a recent discussion with bibliography of the nature of neotericism, see Lyne (1978a), reprinted in this volume (pp. 109–40).

<sup>5</sup> See Clausen (1983b: 14), quoted below at note 10.

passages of Ennius, like allusions to other authors, are an instrument for conveying poetic meaning. As for the Alexandrians, an imitation of a specific earlier text was often meant to draw the reader's attention to the similarities or differences between the two works, to provide a subtext of allusions which might reflect on the surface argument of a poem.<sup>6</sup>

The interpretation of literary allusions is not easy, and not all critics agree on their significance. Richard Thomas, in the most recent discussion of poetic references in Catullus 64, sees the allusions to Ennius, as to other poetic predecessors both Latin and Greek, as polemical in nature: '... A great deal of the intent of the New Poetry is to modify, conflate and incorporate prior treatments. Through this method the poet rejects, corrects or pays homage to his antecedents, and—the ultimate purpose—presents his own and superior version.'<sup>7</sup> In other words, the purpose of literary allusions in Catullus is, quite simply, to demonstrate the ability to make literary allusions. The goal of the learned poet is no more than to demonstrate his learning.

No one would deny that the *poeta doctus* was interested in displaying his erudition, or that at least a part of the pleasure of writing and reading such poetry was to feel the warm glow of superiority to less learned poets and readers. But a poetry that existed primarily for the purpose of displaying learning would be remarkably sterile; and while it may be an apt characterization of, for example, Lycophron or Nicander, it seems scarcely adequate to Catullus 64 or to Callimachus himself. While such poets were, to an extraordinary degree, self-conscious in their deliberate manipulation of the details of language and meter, this technical mastery was not an end in itself, for either the Alexandrians or their Roman imitators.

Although the main purpose of this article is to indicate some of the ways in which allusions contribute to the larger goals of Catullus' poetry, it may be useful to point out that even technical details are manipulated in Catullus 64 in the service of larger goals. We tend to think, following Cicero, that the spondaic hexameter was the hallmark of neoteric style; indeed, Catullus 64 shows the highest proportion

<sup>6</sup> An excellent example of the importance of allusion for the interpretation of Alexandrian poetry will be found in Bulloch (1977).

<sup>7</sup> Thomas (1982: 163).

of such verses in Latin poetry, having, on the average, one every 14 lines. But even such a deliberate mannerism is by no means evenly distributed.<sup>8</sup> There is not a single spondaic verse in the 70 lines of Ariadne's speech, and only one (and that a Greek proper name) in any speech in the poem. On the other hand, there are seven in the 25 lines of the initial description of Ariadne, three in the 14 lines describing the appearance of Dionysus, and seven in the 38 lines concerning the arrival of the divine wedding-guests. In other words, the mannerism is manipulated, and was felt to have certain distinct purposes: no matter how fond Catullus may have been of spondaic verses, he thought them appropriate for descriptive passages, but not for direct speech.

Other stylistic features have a similarly uneven distribution. R. O. A. M. Lyne has analyzed the use of verses with a main trochaic caesura in the third foot, and notes their tendency to cluster to create an effect. He also points out Catullus' tendency to give sequences of 'emphatically fourth-foot-homodyned lines' to similar effect. And linguistic archaisms show similar groupings: they cluster at the beginning of the poem, in the initial description of the coverlet, and in Ariadne's lament. As Lyne well remarks, 'Catullus deploys archaisms as part of a general stylistic plan, as well as to achieve local and individual effect with each instance.'<sup>9</sup>

What is perhaps most relevant to our purpose here, however, is to note one curious feature of Catullus' use of marked stylistic mannerisms, that the passages which show the highest concentrations of archaic diction also show a high incidence of those features which we more customarily identify as neoteric. This combination is in fact a logical consequence of Catullus' Alexandrianism. Just as Callimachus joined Homeric language with his own coinages, so Catullus combined archaic and modern features. As Clausen remarks in connection with the opening verses of Catullus 64: 'All this—and these three lines are typical of the poem throughout—might seem but an absurd confusion of Hellenistic artifice, with Ennius doubling for Homer; yet the voice of Catullus does emerge, powerfully if obliquely.'<sup>10</sup> It will be suggested below that Catullus' reminiscences of

<sup>8</sup> On this feature, see Bramble (1970: 24, n.2).

<sup>9</sup> On these features, see Lyne (1978b: 18–23, 27 ff.). The quotation is from p. 28.

<sup>10</sup> Clausen (1983b: 14).

Ennius, like Callimachus' allusions to early Greek poetry, can refer as much to context and content as to diction alone.

Stylistic mannerisms, however skilfully deployed, can only impart a general tone to a passage or poem; specific allusions have a much more pointed effect. Consider, for example, Catullus' poem on his brother's grave (101):

Multas per gentes et multa per aequora uectus  
aduenio has miseras, frater, ad inferias. . .

After traveling through many nations and many seas,  
I come, brother, to these sad funeral rites.

It is not mere adornment or polemic that leads Catullus to mark the description of his voyage to Troy by a clear allusion to the opening lines of the *Odyssey*, nor is it coincidental that an allusion to both these passages is found in Anchises' words to Aeneas in the underworld (*Aen.* VI. 692–93):<sup>11</sup>

Quas ego te terras et quanta per aequora uectum  
accipio! quantis iactatum, nate, periclis!

Through what lands and what great seas you have traveled!  
I welcome you. By what great dangers you have been tossed, my son!

It is eminently appropriate to Catullus' linking of his brother's death with the death of *uirtus* and his vision of the Trojan War as the death, not the apex, of the heroic age (68. 89 ff.) that he portray his eastern voyage as a backward *Odyssey*, an anti-*nostos*. And it is equally appropriate that Virgil not only include an allusion to the opening of the *Odyssey* at the end of the Odyssean half of his poem but also reverse Catullus' poem by having the dead speak to the living, not the living to the dead, in Homer's words.<sup>12</sup>

Not all allusions to previous literature have a function beyond their immediate context, even if we are able to recognize them. When Catullus alludes to the opening lines of the *Iliad* at 64.152 ff., there does not seem to be any particular resonance;<sup>13</sup> when he translates the

<sup>11</sup> On these passages see Conte (1971), reprinted in this volume (pp. 167–76).

<sup>12</sup> On beginnings and ends, see below, note 28.

<sup>13</sup> On this passage, see Zetzel (1978). There have been three replies to this note, by Renehan (1979), Thomas (1979), and Dee (1981). Of these, only that of Thomas

verse of an unknown Hellenistic poet at 64.111 we have no idea why he does so. Even when he alludes to identifiable lines of Ennius in the opening of poem 64, there is no clear reason for us, or for the poet, to connect the sailing of the *Argo* to the departure of the Roman fleet in 190 BC.<sup>14</sup> But when he alludes to the opening of the *Odyssey* in poem 101, as mentioned above, or when he alludes to one of Sappho's epithalamia in 11.22 ff., he clearly intended the learned reader to compare the context in the source with his own adaptation and to use the original to enhance the appreciation and understanding of Catullus' poem, not just to admire his *doctrina*.

The same effort of comparison and comprehension is demanded of the reader by most of Catullus' identifiable allusions to Ennius, in both the epigrams and poem 64. Two epigrams allude to identifiable fragments of the *Annales*, and the technique of allusion is the same as that described above with reference to poem 101.<sup>15</sup> The first of these is generally recognized by commentators on both poets. Catullus concludes poem 115, an ironic praise of Mamurra for his extensive properties, with the couplet (115.7–8):

omnia magna haec sunt, tamen ipsest maximus ultro,  
non homo, sed uero mentula magna minax.

All these things are great, but actually he himself is the greatest,  
not a man, but truly (!) a great threatening cock.

The alliteration of the final words alone would lead one to suspect parody, and the source survives in a verse of the *Annales* (621 V):

Machina multa minax minatur maxima muris.

Many a great threatening siege machine threatened the walls.

seems to me at all cogent; but rather than reply in detail, I will simply point out that his suggestion that Catullus 64.152ff. is a commonplace rather than an allusion to *Iliad* 1.4ff. seems to be refuted, according to his own methods [Thomas (1982)], by Virgil's double imitation of the lines of both Homer and Catullus in *Aen.* IX.485ff. According to the same method, Ovid *Her.* 10.96 shows that he at least recognized an allusion to Zenodotus' text of Homer in glossing *praeda* with *cibus*. Dee's suggestion that the allusion is unlikely because neither Callimachus nor Catullus was interested in Homer is both absurd and a misreading of the articles of Thomas and Lyne which he cites in justification.

<sup>14</sup> On this passage, see below.

<sup>15</sup> Both passages are discussed by Timpanaro (1978: 177, n. 42).

Ennius is speaking of a siege engine, and Catullus of something rather smaller; but the recognition of the parody clearly enhances one's appreciation of Catullus' epigram.<sup>16</sup>

The other example of the use of the *Annales* in Catullus' epigrams is less familiar. The last example in Latin poetry, and the only one in Catullus, of the dropping of final *s* occurs in the last line of the corpus of Catullus, in a poem to Gellius. Catullus states that he has in the past tried to soften Gellius' attacks on him by seeking to send him poems of Callimachus; now, seeing that that is futile, he will protect himself and reply in kind (116. 7–8):

contra nos tela ista tua euitabimus †amitha  
at fixus nostris tu dabi' supplicium.

We'll dodge those darts of yours against us  
But you'll pay for it, skewered by ours.

This is not the only stylistic peculiarity in poem 116; the same epigram also contains the only purely spondaic hexameter in classical Latin poetry. The archaisms, like the alliteration in poem 115, lead one to suspect parody, especially since the reference to Callimachus suggests that the poem is likely to be concerned with literary polemics.<sup>17</sup> Once more Ennius supplies a plausible model (99–100 V):<sup>18</sup>

nec pol homo quisquam faciet impune animatus  
hoc nec tu: nam mi calido dabis sanguine poenas.

Neither shall any man alive, by Pollux, do this and get away with it,  
Nor shall you. For you will pay me for it with your life's blood.

Here the parody has a deeper purpose than in the preceding poem: Catullus is ceasing to send Gellius poems of Callimachus as signs of friendship, and is instead sending him weapons, weapons which are, in fact, Ennius. That opposition alone has an obvious literary significance, but it is also important to recognize the Ennian context: Romulus' words to Remus before killing him are transferred to Catullus' attack on one of his rivals.

<sup>16</sup> Vahlen *ad loc.* suggested that the context of Ennius' line was Marcellus' siege of Syracuse, but no certainty is possible.

<sup>17</sup> On this poem, see Macleod (1973a), reprinted in this volume (pp. 35–44).

<sup>18</sup> I read *nec* rather than *nisi* in line 100 following Baehrens and Valmaggi and *dabis* rather than *das* following Servius Auctus, Valmaggi and Timpanaro.

A short poem does not provide scope for an elaborate set of allusions. In each of these cases, a single line in Catullus makes use of an Ennian reminiscence to add point to a joke, and the original context, whether it is the siege of Syracuse in the first case or the murder of Remus in the second, cannot be said to add more than a slight twist to the epigram and to permit the learned reader to savor his erudition. In the second case, of course, there is something more, because the fact that it is Ennius who is recalled is a deliberate foil to the mention of Callimachus in the second verse. What may be significant, however, in the larger context of the relationship of Catullus to Ennius, is that Catullus can expect his readers to be familiar with Ennius. The style of the earlier poet may be parodied or rejected, but knowledge of the text is a necessity.

It is possible to say rather more about the allusions to Ennius in Catullus 64 than about those in the shorter poems. Not only are there more allusions, but the majority of them seem to form a significant pattern, forcing the reader to recall the Ennian text and use it in interpreting Catullus' poem. Of the five recognizable allusions to Ennius in poem 64, four are to a single work, the *Medea Exul*, one to the *Annales*. The last, most recently discussed by Thomas, is of a different, and simpler, type than the others. As Thomas has pointed out,<sup>19</sup> 64.6–7:

ausi sunt uada salsa cita decurrere puppi,  
caerula uerrentes abiegnis aequora palmis.

They dared to run down the salt sea in a swift ship,  
sweeping the blue-green expanse with oars of fir.

alludes to two adjacent fragments of the *Annales* (384–6 V):

uerrunt extemplo placide mare marmore flauo;  
caeruleum spumat sale conferta rate pulsum.  
labitur uncta carina, uolat super impetus undas.

At once they calmly sweep the sea of yellow marble;  
the salt sea foams blue green, struck by the crowded ships.  
The smooth keel glides, its rush flies over the waves.

<sup>19</sup> Thomas (1982: 156 ff.).



The similarities between Catullus and Ennius here are in diction, not in word order or phraseology. As Thomas' table of parallels suggests, Catullus chose to use these lines of Ennius not because of any contextual similarity between the sailing of the Roman fleet and the departure of the Argo, but because of his desire to use archaic language to evoke a mood.

Before attempting to draw any wide-reaching conclusions from the reminiscences of the *Medea Exul* in Catullus 64, it would be just as well to set them out in detail. The first is in the opening lines of the poem:

Peliaco quondam prognatae uertice pinus  
dicuntur liquidas Neptuni nasse per undas. ...

The pine trees once born on the Pelian peak  
are said to have swum through Neptune's clear waves.

As has long been known, the first lines of poem 64 recall the opening of Ennius' play (246 ff. V = 208 ff. J):

Utinam ne in nemore Pelio securibus  
caesa accidisset abiegna ad terram trabes. ...

Would that the beam of fir had not been cut with axes  
and fallen to earth in the Pelian grove.

Wilamowitz, stating as an obvious fact that Catullus was borrowing from Ennius, pointed out that the order of events in Catullus' proem was not that of Euripides, who began from the passage through the Symplegades and then went back to the cutting of trees on Mt. Pelion, but that of Ennius, who related the events in strictly chronological order.<sup>20</sup> There are several verbal reminiscences of Ennius in the opening lines: *Argiuae robora pubis* ('the might of Argive youth') recalls Ennius' *Argiui ... delecti uiri* ('chosen Argive men'), a phrase not found in Euripides' prologue, and *auratam optantes Colchis auertere pellem* ('hoping to carry off the golden fleece from the Colchians') is, as Klingner notes, extremely close to Ennius' *uecti petebant pellem inauratam arietis* ('sailing they sought the ram's fleece of gold').<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1973: II.300). The archaisms and Ennian borrowings of the proem have been sufficiently discussed elsewhere; see, in particular, Klingner (1964: 156–61), Bramble (1970: 35 ff.), and Thomas (1982), *passim*.

<sup>21</sup> Klingner (1964: 159).

As Thomas has shown in detail, this passage displays a wide range of allusions, not only to Ennius, but to Apollonius, Euripides, and perhaps others as well.

The other three allusions to the *Medea Exul* occur quite close to one another, in Ariadne's speech and the accompanying description. The first comes at 64.171–2:

Iuppiter omnipotens, utinam ne tempore primo  
Cnosia Cecropiae tetigissent litora puppes. . . .

All-powerful Jupiter, would that in the beginning  
the Cecropian ships had never touched the Cnosian shores.

Although this passage also alludes to Euripides and Apollonius, there can be little doubt that it was meant to recall the first line of the *Medea Exul* cited above. The same fragment of Ennius is also the source of a line in Catullus' description of Ariadne, 64. 250:

multiplies animo uoluebat saucia curas,  
wounded in her heart, she turned over many cares,

which is clearly drawn from the last line of the opening fragment of the *Medea Exul* (254 V = 216 J):

Medea animo aegro amore saeuo saucia.  
Medea, heart-sick, wounded by cruel love.

A different fragment of the play is the source for the final, and perhaps the most obvious, allusion to Ennius in Catullus 64, at lines 177–81:

Nam quo me referam? quali spe perdita nitar?  
Idaeosne petam montes? at gurgite lato  
discernens ponti truculentum diuidit aequor.  
an patris auxilium sperem? quemne ipsa reliqui  
respersum iuuenem fraterna caede secuta?

For where shall I betake myself? Lost, what hope shall I rely on?  
Should I seek the Idaean mountains? But with a wide gulf  
the fierce expanse of the sea separates and cuts [me] off.  
Or should I hope for my father's aid? Whom I left of my own accord,  
following a young man spattered with my brother's gore?

These lines are obviously modelled on Medea's similar despair (276–7 V = 217–18 J):

Quo nunc me uortam, quod iter incipiam ingredi?  
 Domum paternamne anne ad Peliae filias?

Where shall I turn now? What road shall I make my way on?  
 To my father's house or to the daughters of Pelias?

A collection of allusions such as this poses obvious questions of interpretation, and the solution of 'allusion for allusion's sake' will not go far to help us. Thomas suggests that Catullus chose to start his tale of the wedding of Peleus and Thetis from the sailing of the *Argo*, a legend with which the marriage was not traditionally connected, because the multiplicity of versions of the story of the *Argo* lent itself to a display of massive erudition suitable for the *poeta doctus*.<sup>22</sup> But if that is so, why does the proem of the *Medea Exul* appear not only at the opening of poem 64, but twice more in the ecphrasis describing Ariadne? Surely it would be better, even without considering the content of the poem, to believe at the very least that the use of the same model in both parts of the poem would assist in binding the narrative and the ecphrasis together.<sup>23</sup>

If we set aside for the moment the question of why Catullus chose to allude specifically to Ennius' treatment of the story of Medea, there are a number of reasons for which Catullus may have chosen to open his poem with the story of the *Argo*. Thomas is certainly right to stress that, prior to Catullus, the connection of Peleus and Thetis with the *Argo* is unimportant; but the connection of the voyage of the *Argo* with the story of Theseus and Ariadne has significant precedent in Apollonius. Clausen has pointed out that the story given by Catullus of Ariadne's departure from Crete with the knowledge, if not the blessings, of her family is found before him in Apollonius III.997 ff., where Jason is being highly misleading in his wooing of Medea.<sup>24</sup> It is also significant that the marvelous garment given in book I of the *Argonautica* by Hypsipyle to Jason, the cloak on which the marriage of her grandparents Dionysus and Ariadne had been consummated, is used by Medea in book IV to lure her brother Apsyrtus to his death.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Thomas (1982: 163 ff.).

<sup>23</sup> So Bramble (1970: 37ff.).

<sup>24</sup> Clausen (1977: 220); so more briefly Kinsey (1965b: 914, n. 2).

<sup>25</sup> The cloak is described and identified at *Arg.* IV. 423–34; on this see also Clausen (1983b: 17–18). For my understanding of the importance of Ariadne in Apollonius

The weddings of Peleus and Thetis in Catullus and of Jason and Medea in Apollonius have more in common than the shared presence of the bridegrooms on the Argo and the shared references to the tale of Theseus and Ariadne. Peleus and Thetis were not the only couple to have a remarkable coverlet on their wedding bed: Jason and Medea (*Arg.* IV.1141 ff.) consummated their marriage on the golden fleece itself. Unusual wedding songs were performed on both occasions, by the Parcae for Peleus and Thetis, by Orpheus for Jason and Medea. And, of course, the reversal of the traditional mythic chronology in Catullus 64 makes both marriages the direct result of the voyage of the Argo.<sup>26</sup>

If we return then to the extraordinary concatenation of allusions to earlier treatments of the Argo at the opening of Catullus 64, it becomes quite clear that Catullus did not alter the traditional tales merely in order to be able to make learned allusions to previous versions, but that the allusions themselves provide an intertextual guide to the interpretation of the poem; the reader is meant to see the parallels between Peleus and Thetis on the one hand and Jason and Medea on the other. At the end of the proem, after he has described Thetis' falling in love with Jason at first sight, Catullus delivers an apostrophe to the heroes of the Argo (64.22–5):

O nimis optato saeculorum tempore nati  
 heroes, saluete, deum genus! o bona matrum  
 progenies, saluete iter<um ...  
 uos ego saepe meo, uos carmine compellabo.

O, born in the greatly longed-for time of the ages,  
 hail, heroes, race of gods! O good offspring  
 of mothers, hail again ...

I will call upon you, often upon you, in my song.

These verses constitute a reversal of hymnic convention, because the salutation and promise of future song belong to the end, not the

and its relevance to Catullus 64 I owe much to an unpublished lecture of A. Bulloch and an unpublished article of Clifford Weber [now Weber (1983)].

<sup>26</sup> There is no need here to repeat the well-known alterations which Catullus made to the traditional tale of Peleus and Thetis; see Fordyce on 64.19 for a brief summary.

beginning, of a hymn.<sup>27</sup> And the specific model for this passage exists, at the very end of the *Argonautica* (IV. 1773–5):

Ἰλατ' ἀριστῆες, μακάρων γένος, αἶδε δ' αἰοιδαί  
εἰς ἔτος ἔξ ἔτεος γλυκερώτεραι εἰεν αἰείδειν  
ἀνθρώποις...

Be favorable, heroes, race of the gods, and may these songs  
be sweeter for men to sing from year to year.

There are two possible reasons for the allusion to the end of the *Argonautica* at the beginning of Catullus' poem. One is formal: that it seems to be a convention of Alexandrian and neoteric poetry to reverse beginnings and ends.<sup>28</sup> But the other is thematic: the story of Peleus and Thetis, as presented by Catullus, is the sequel to the voyage of the Argo. And every reader would know that, in the traditional versions of Greek mythology, the usual sequel to the voyage of the Argo was not the wedding of Peleus and Thetis, but the tragedy of Medea.

That it is Medea and the *Medea* that are present in the opening lines of Catullus 64 is evident; Catullus begins by the obvious allusion to Ennius' play. What is less frequently emphasized in discussions of the proem, however, is Catullus' deliberate delay in mentioning his real subject. The putative first reader, coming to this poem without preconceptions and without the title which modern editors have supplied, would immediately assume, from the allusion and from the narrative, that the subject of the poem *was* Medea.<sup>29</sup> It is not until line 19 that Catullus makes clear that it is Peleus and Thetis, not Jason and Medea, about whom he is writing, and then he does so emphatically, by repeating Thetis' name in three successive lines. The point of

<sup>27</sup> On the use of hymnic convention see Fordyce and Kroll *ad loc.* and Klingner (1964: 167 ff.).

<sup>28</sup> This characteristic does not seem to have been sufficiently recognized; but note that Catullus ends poem 64 with an allusion to the opening of Hesiod's *Eoëae* (fr. 1 M-W), and that the first major episode of Callimachus' *Aetia* (fr. 7.19–21 Pf) is an episode from the end of the voyage of the Argo, while the last episode (fr. 108–9 Pf) before the *Coma* comes from the beginning of the voyage.

<sup>29</sup> So Kinsey (1965b: 915 ff.); Curran (1969: 185). Harmon (1973: 312) finds in the absence of Ennius' *utinam ne* from the opening of poem 64 a significant and deliberate reversal.

that emphasis should be obvious: the poet intended to surprise the reader.

The importance of Medea in the proem to Catullus 64 was rightly stressed more than 25 years ago by Friedrich Klingner, who saw the alterations of the tale as positive and optimistic in tone.<sup>30</sup> Catullus, in his view, rewrote the story of Peleus and Thetis in such a way as to remove all unpleasant aspects of the tale: there is nothing here of Thetis' unwillingness to wed Peleus, nothing of her subsequent abandonment of him. It is a romantic tale of love at first sight, of the highest peak of mortal happiness, to be contrasted with the unspeakable present adumbrated in the closing lines of the poem. In this view, the importance of Medea is that she is *not* there, that she functions as an unmentioned tragic foil to the bliss of the tale Catullus tells. More recent critics have paid less attention to the allusions, more to the contradictions and antitheses present in the poem itself: between the use of the word *uirtus* and the unheroic deeds of both Theseus and Achilles which it is used to denote, between the surface brightness of the wedding song and the horrible human sacrifice and bloodthirstiness which it describes, between the happiness of Peleus and Thetis in the poem and the various disturbing elements which Catullus mentions or which were well known to readers from other versions of the tale.<sup>31</sup> The allusions to the story of Medea seem to offer strong support to the latter version, since from the opening words of the poem Catullus makes certain that the reader has her in mind, and that can scarcely be supposed to portend a happy tale.

None of the references to the story of Medea as a whole, however, explains Catullus' choice of the *Medea Exul* of Ennius as the specific source for his opening lines or for the later allusions in the Ariadne episode. But a number of reasons may be advanced. There is, in the first place, a generic argument, which applies to Catullus' use of both

<sup>30</sup> Klingner (1964: 156–61).

<sup>31</sup> The most important of these interpretations are those of Curran (1969), Bramble (1970) and Konstan (1977), with further bibliography. The attacks on such interpretations by Giangrande (1972) and Dee (1982) are unconvincing for reasons too numerous to list here. They rely on a cross-examination of individual words and lines without any attention to context, on an unwillingness to read Catullus 64 as a poem rather than a logical treatise, on ignoring all literary allusions, and on a failure to recognize that Roman poetry is different from Greek in more than language.

Euripides and Ennius. It is obvious that Hellenistic poetry was highly indebted to Euripidean psychology and female characterization and that even Apollonius' *Medea* was highly indebted to Euripides'. Furthermore, it is worth pointing out that the epyllion form in particular owes much to tragedy. Although it is formally a variety of epic, it is in many of its techniques a version of tragedy: the extensive use of direct speech, the eclipse of narrative, the emphasis on emotion and psychology are all characteristic of drama rather than of classical epic, and of Euripidean tragedy in particular. Nor is it coincidental that the fragments of the *Hecale*, Callimachus' epyllion, show according to Pfeiffer significant linguistic affinities to Attic drama.<sup>32</sup> If epyllion's genre is epos, its mode is tragic, and it is only reasonable for a poet as learned as Catullus to demonstrate his understanding of his genre through the allusions employed.

As for the choice of Ennius over Euripides, several explanations are possible. In the first place, it is worth remembering that Ennius' play had represented a development from Euripides' along the lines suggested by Alexandrian poetry. Where Euripides described his *Medea* as ἔρωτι θυμὸν ἐκπλαγῆσ' Ἰάσονος ('smitten in her heart with love of Jason'), Ennius' is *animo aegro amore saeuo saucia* ('heart-sick, wounded by cruel love'). The emphasis on female passion is a clear example of Ennius' debt to Hellenistic poetry, and it is a feature of Ennius' style which Catullus obviously recognized.<sup>33</sup> It is certainly not impossible that Catullus wished to demonstrate his knowledge that early Roman poetry, like his own (although to a much smaller degree), was indebted to Alexandrian poetry.

Another explanation, already mentioned, deserves further consideration, that, as Clausen observes, Ennius serves Catullus in some respects as an equivalent to Homer. But the debt of Catullus to Ennius is more than his use of the earlier poet as a source of archaisms with which to reproduce the Alexandrian taste for exquisite Homeric

<sup>32</sup> See Pfeiffer (1959) on fr. 233.

<sup>33</sup> Bramble (1970: 35 ff.) emphasizes the greater moralism and solemnity of Ennius relative to Euripides as an influence on Catullus. For the language, see Jocelyn's note (1967: 356). On the debt of archaic Roman poets to Hellenistic literature, see most recently Sheets (1981).

diction. The Alexandrian poets made Homer and other early poets the foils against which to operate: they explored their own peculiar desire to reshape the Homeric world by emphasizing poverty, domesticity, and the various unheroic qualities exemplified by Apollonius' Jason while couching their new approaches in Homeric language. Catullus used Ennius in the same way, as a representative of early Roman poetry and life rather than as the author of a specific text. Catullus, and presumably his fellow neoterics, desired to naturalize the techniques of Alexandrianism, to interpret and adapt the Roman past and poetic traditions. The large moral and historical themes of Catullus involve a questioning of the values and meaning of the Roman, not the Greek tradition: not merely the use of *annales* as a poetic foil, not merely the explicit contrast of mythic past to Roman present at the end of poem 64, but consistently, through the questioning of the language of Roman public life in the epigrams, through the double-edged references to Caesar in poem 11 and to Cicero in poem 49, through the portraits of Acme and Septimius in poem 45.<sup>34</sup> In order to anchor the myths of Greece in the Roman tradition, Catullus uses Ennius as a point of reference, as a source of archaic diction, as a conveyer of traditional ideas of heroism, and as a Roman.

All this may seem extremely subjective and impressionistic, but there is at least one piece of evidence that suggests the larger reasons for which Catullus turned to Ennius as a source of allusion, and to the *Medea Exul* in particular. In this connection it is worth citing again a few of the lines from Ariadne's lament quoted above:

nam quo me referam? quali spe perdita nitar ...  
 an patris auxilium sperem? quemne ipsa reliqui  
 respersum iuuenem fraterna caede secuta?

For where shall I betake myself? Lost, what hope shall I rely on?

...

<sup>34</sup> On this topic in general, see Ross (1975: 9–15); for poem 11, see Putnam (1974), reprinted in this volume (pp. 87–106); for poem 45, see Ross (1965). The fullest exposition (not entirely convincing) of a 'Roman' interpretation of poem 64 is that of Konstan (1977); I have stated my own views more fully, but without annotation, in Zetzel (1982a).



Or should I hope for my father's aid? Whom I left of my own accord,  
following a young man spattered with my brother's gore?

It has long been recognized that, in this context, the reference to a brother's blood is rather strange: Ariadne's brother (more precisely, half-brother) was none other than the Minotaur, a sibling whose death she can scarcely have regretted to any great extent. In the context of the story of Medea, the reference to a brother's death makes more sense: Medea had been responsible for the murder of Apsyrtus.<sup>35</sup> What is significant, however, is that the passages of Ennius and Euripides in question make no mention of that unfortunate event; Catullus must have added it on his own. Some interpreters explain this passage by connecting it with the circumstances of Catullus' own life, the intimate relationship of his feelings for Lesbia with his grief for his brother; and that explanation, while it cannot be pressed too far, has much to commend it.<sup>36</sup> But there is also a literary explanation of some interest. Catullus was not the first Roman to add a reference to a brother's death to an imitation of these lines of Ennius; it had been done some 70 years earlier, in the last speech of Gaius Gracchus before his murder in 121 BC (fr. 61 ORF<sup>2</sup>):

quo me miser conferam? quo uortam? in Capitoliumne? at fratris sanguine  
redundat. an domum? matremne ut miseram lamentantem uideam et abiectam?

Where shall I take myself in my misery? Where shall I turn? To the Capitoline? But it is drenched with my brother's blood. Home? To see my poor mother lamenting and abject?

That Gracchus was imitating Ennius is obvious, and that Catullus was writing with full awareness of both passages ought to be.<sup>37</sup> Where Ennius has *quo nunc me uortam?* and Gracchus has *quo me miser*

<sup>35</sup> On the peculiarity of Catullus' reference, see, for example, Kroll on 64.150; Konstan (1977: 68).

<sup>36</sup> Konstan (1977: 73, n.157) rejects it as 'grotesque', and it is obvious that there is no consistent metaphor employed. For the autobiographical interpretation of poem 64 see Putnam (1961), reprinted in Putnam (1982: 45–85).

<sup>37</sup> Of recent commentators on Catullus only Quinn, to my knowledge, even cites the fragment of Gracchus, but he does not see the consequences. Jocelyn (1967: 357) notes both allusions to Ennius, but does not connect them.

*conferam? quo uortam?*, Catullus has *nam quo me referam?*, changing the prefix of Gracchus' verb in typically learned fashion.<sup>38</sup>

It would not do to press the precise significance of this allusion too much. Gracchus, unlike the mythical heroines, had not caused his brother's death, nor had Catullus. And one should not suggest that Catullus used Ennius' *Medea* because Gracchus too had used it; it is used with far too many overtones to be explained so simply. Nevertheless, it was certainly a convenient coincidence, linking the great past of Roman literature with the beginning of social upheavals at Rome and thus with the decay of Roman values that is so important a motif for Catullus. Even if Ennius' greatest work, the *Annales*, was not a text which could supply a model for Catullus either in its techniques or in its values, he remained, through his dramatic works, a poetic ancestor to be recognized and acknowledged. To recreate a true Alexandrianism at Rome, it was not enough to imitate the Greek poets slavishly. Cicero, in the *Tusculan Disputations* (3.45), interrupted his quotation from Ennius' *Andromacha* to address the poet:<sup>39</sup>

O poetam egregium! quamquam ab his cantoribus Euphorionis contemnitur.

O excellent poet! although he is scorned by these people singing the praises of Euphorion.

If by 'scorn' Cicero meant only the absence of uncritical admiration, he was of course right; but the neoterics were not mere *cantores Euphorionis* ('singers of Euphorion's praises'), and their poetry was Roman in more than language alone. Catullus, and presumably his friends as well, knew that it was necessary to do more than import Greek techniques to create a new poetry at Rome, that it had to be anchored in some way in their own heritage. They had the sense to understand that the rude origins of Latin literature had much to commend them, and that by acknowledging Ennius they could acquire a past on which to build.

<sup>38</sup> On Alexandrian alterations of prefixes and suffixes, see Giangrande (1967: 85): = Giangrande (1980: 11). Note also Varro Atacinus' alteration of Catullus' *deperdita* to *experdita*: see Clausen (1977: 222 ff.).

<sup>39</sup> On this passage see, most recently, Lyne (1978a: 167, 174: pp. 110, 120 in this volume) with further references.

This paper has concentrated on the interpretation of a small group of allusions to Ennius in Catullus, but has also involved some brief consideration of a number of larger questions about the nature of Alexandrianism and neotericism as a whole. And perhaps some final observations on that subject will not be out of place. Literary allusion is only part of the larger continuum of relationships between the poet and his past. Catullus may use an archaic word, he may imitate a passage of archaic poetry, he may talk about the relationship of historic or mythic past to the political or poetic present. The important fact, however, is that all these techniques are connected, and they are all significant. The new poet, like the Alexandrian, was concerned with the technical renewal of language, the recovery and renovation of old words. But the interest in old words is directly parallel to his attitude to old poems, and to old ideas. None is to be rejected out of hand, but all have, in one way or another, become stale, trite, or empty. Catullus, like Callimachus, wished to create a different poetics in a different world. Just as the super-human heroes of the Homeric poems had little place in Alexandria and were consequently revised on a smaller scale, so Catullus and his contemporaries rejected the stale words and ideas of Roman politics and military heroism in favor of more private worlds. But in neither the Greek nor the Roman case was that rejection unconditional; both the old poetry and the world of which it had been a part had once been glorious and still remained worthy of respect. If the new poets turned away from Ennius, they did not forget him.

## Threads in the Labyrinth: Competing Views and Voices in Catullus 64

*Julia Haig Gaisser*

ut quondam Creta fertur Labyrinthus in alta  
parietibus textum caecis iter ancipitemque  
mille viis habuisse dolum, qua signa sequendi  
frangeret indepremsus et inremeabilis error ...

(Vergil, *Aeneid* 5. 588–91)

Alexandrian poetry is notoriously preoccupied with the pedigree and reliability of its fictions. ‘Who sees?’ Who speaks?’ And with what authority? The poets both emphasize and question the certainty of their utterance by presenting it through multiple and sometimes contradictory voices and points of view. They use the voices of their characters, to be sure, but they also invoke other views and voices by citing or alluding to previous authorities and texts, by quoting the songs of real or imaginary singers, and by describing the scenes depicted on works of art.<sup>1</sup>

Like its Alexandrian forebears, Catullus 64 is also a poem of many views and voices—of the narrator, of the maker of the wedding

<sup>1</sup> For a good discussion of these issues in Alexandrian poetry see Goldhill (1986: 29): ‘there is in Callimachus, and, I shall argue, in Hellenistic poetry in general, an ironic and deliberately ambiguous attitude to the assertion of truth and to the status of poet as teller of truth ...’. And again (29–30): ‘in general, we see in Hellenistic poetry a deliberate fragmentation of any divinely inspired, proclamatory, didactic status of the poet’s voice into a multiplicity of citations, different levels of enunciation and conflicting or ambiguous attitudes’.

coverlet, of Ariadne, Theseus, and Aegeus, of the Parcae, and of the previous texts cited in its numerous allusions. These are set in a complex structure—a narrative containing two framed songs (an ecphrasis and a reported song broken by a refrain) and complicated by digressions, reported speech, flashbacks and flashforwards. In what follows I propose to examine the voices and points of view in the epyllion and to follow them through the structure Catullus has placed them in, even when (and especially when) they are confusing and contradictory. I will argue that the poem is a work of competing perspectives whose authority is repeatedly called into question and that within it Catullus has created a space separate from the logic and chronology of the external world where different stories come together to become the same story and all times exist at the same time. My discussion acknowledges and explores three central paradoxes: the irreconcilable chronologies of the frame story and the ecphrasis; the separate and contradictory visions of the Ariadne story revealed in the ecphrasis to the wedding guests and the reader; and the two true and mutually exclusive interpretations of Achilles' career sung by the Parcae. A poem of twists and turns, blind alleys, and internal and external contradictions, Catullus' masterpiece is both a web and a labyrinth.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> For the importance of weaving and textiles in Cat. 64 see Laird (1993: 25–8 and especially n.58). Rees (1994: 86) argues that, 'textiles provide a theme and structure for the poem'. The association of weaving and song is well established in ancient poetry. See Brink (1982) *ad* Horace *Ars Poetica* 15–16 and *The Letter to Augustus* 224–5; Snyder (1981); Lyne (1978b) *ad* *Ciris* 21ff. Lyne notes that 'πέπλος seems once or twice actually to have been used as the title of a literary work'. Petronius uses *vestis* of a literary work: *praeterea curandum est, ne sententiae emineant extra corpus orationis expressae, sed intexto vestibus colore niteant* ('Besides, one must be careful that ideas not stand out, forced out of the body of the speech, but that they shine with their color woven into the fabric'; Petron. 118). It is possible that Catullus is hinting at a similar sense in 50 and 265. For the argument that Catullus' contemporary, Lucretius, pictured both the universe and his poem as webs see Snyder (1983).

For labyrinths and literary works structured as labyrinths see Doob (1990: especially 1–91). Doob omits Cat. 64 as irrelevant to the medieval tradition in which she is primarily interested, but her general description of literary labyrinths is apposite (54): 'one essential labyrinthine characteristic ... is the path's circuitousness, its digressiveness, its detours, delays, and diversions'. And again (46): 'The essence of the maze experience is confusion, doubt, and frustration as one ambiguity succeeds another'.

## ENTERING THE LABYRINTH

The much-studied opening lines draw the reader into a text that is both artful and confusing:

Peliaco quondam prognatae vertice pinus  
dicuntur liquidas Neptuni nasse per undas  
Phasidos ad fluctus et fines Aeeteos,  
cum lecti iuvenes, Argivae robora pubis,  
auratam optantes Colchis avertere pellem  
ausi sunt vada salsa cita decurrere puppi,  
caerula verrentes abiegnis aequora palmis.

(Cat. 64.1–7)

Long ago the pines born on Pelion's peak  
are said to have swum through Neptune's clear waves  
to the flood of Phasis and the domain of Aeetes,  
when chosen youths, the cream of Argive manpower,  
longing to carry off the golden fleece from the Colchians,  
dared to run down the salt sea in their swift ship,  
sweeping the dark waters with oar blades of fir.

The work in which we find ourselves is recognizably (indeed, conspicuously) neoteric and allusive,<sup>3</sup> but its subject is less obvious. We seem to be in a poem about the Argonauts, and one, moreover, with Medea as its protagonist, for the allusive signposts at the entrance cite both Euripides' *Medea* and the *Medea Exsul* of Ennius.<sup>4</sup> The impression is allowed to stand until the poem's true subject is revealed—or seems to be—in the elegant and arresting threefold polyptoton of 19–21:<sup>5</sup>

tum Thetidis Peleus incensus fertur amore,  
tum Thetis humanos non despexit hymenaeos,  
tum Thetidi pater ipse iugandum Pelea sensit.

<sup>3</sup> Kroll (1960) *ad loc.* See also Thomas (1982: 145–56); Clausen (1983b: 13–14); Jenkyns (1982: 98–105).

<sup>4</sup> See Klingner (1964: 156–9); Thomas (1982: 145–56); Zetzel (1983: 257–8; pp. 205–7 in this volume).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Zetzel (1983: 261; pp. 210–11 in this volume): 'The point of that emphasis should be obvious: the poet intended to surprise the reader.'

Then with Thetis' love Peleus is said to have been set on fire,  
 then did Thetis not disdain marriage with a mortal,  
 then to Thetis the father felt Peleus must be joined.

'It's not about Medea after all', we say to ourselves in some surprise as we turn aside from our hermeneutic dead end, 'but the wedding of Peleus and Thetis'. Before we go off in this new direction, however, we should retrace our steps and reflect a bit on our experience.

The poet misled us by carefully posting signs for 'Medea' in a work that we must call (for now, at least) 'Peleus and Thetis'—practising a deception much like that of the English villagers in World War II who are said to have reversed or mislabeled the signs at their crossroads in order to trick potential German invaders into marching off for Weston-super-Mare or the like under the delusion that they were on their way to London. But the analogy is imperfect. The villagers' strategy would misdirect any newcomer who could spell out the word, 'London', on a sign. Catullus' trick, however, confuses only a particular kind of interpreter, the 'neoteric reader', as I shall call him/her, who is trained to look for allusive clues in the text and is both knowledgeable enough to recognize them and subtle enough to construe their meaning. Only the neoteric reader would have identified Catullus' references to Euripides and Ennius. No one else would have known enough to decipher the sign labelled 'Medea' and follow it off into the wrong direction. But *is* it the wrong direction? To believe so is to assume that the poet's only purpose is to deceive and that the legend on his sign is purely arbitrary—as our villagers, for example, might have put up signs for Liverpool instead of London on the road to Weston-super-Mare. It is too soon to say, of course, but although we have been directed down another path for now, we might wonder if we will find ourselves arriving at Medea in the end.

In the meantime we must look more closely at our first sign—Catullus' allusion to Ennius' *Medea Exsul* in the opening verses of the epyllion. Here is Ennius:

Utinam ne in nemore Pelio securibus,  
 caesa accidisset abiegnā ad terram trabes...  
 (Ennius, 208–9 J)<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> For the text of Ennius see Jocelyn (1967).

Would that the beam of fir had not been cut with axes  
and fallen to earth in the Pelian grove.

For the wish of Ennius, and Euripides before him ('if only the timber had not fallen... in the Pelian grove...'), Catullus has substituted a different, and ostentatiously neoteric, formulation:<sup>7</sup>

Peliaco quondam prognatae vertice pinus  
dicuntur ...

(Cat. 64.1–2)

Not a wish, then, but a statement—or rather, an *indirect* statement, introduced by *dicuntur*. The device, whether with *dicere* or another verb, is common enough in neoteric poetry, and frequent indeed in Cat. 64.<sup>8</sup> We are generally told by modern scholars that it is an appeal to authority and a claim of authenticity, as in Callimachus' famous dictum: 'I sing nothing unattested (Fr. 612 Pf.)'.<sup>9</sup> Perhaps so. I would prefer to put it another way, that although the device, which I shall call the 'authority formula', raises the issues of authority and truth, it does not necessarily vouch for them.<sup>10</sup> Here, I suggest, *dicuntur* acknowledges less the fame of the *Argo* legend than its status as a fiction. The story has many authors, and we shall hear their competing versions in the following verses.

Sometimes Catullus alludes to conflicting accounts and chooses between them. Thus, in lines 1–10, as Thomas has shown, he follows Euripides and Apollonius instead of Ennius in asserting that the *Argo* was made of pine, while its oars were of fir.<sup>11</sup> But the function of allusion

<sup>7</sup> But we shall see Ennius' *utinam ne* at 64.171. See below.

<sup>8</sup> Thus: *fertur*, 19; *nam perhibent*, 76; *perhibent*, 124; *ferunt*, 212.

<sup>9</sup> Thus Clausen (1983b: 14): 'Callimachus never tires of reminding his reader that whatever he tells him is true, that it can be found (he means) somewhere in a book...'. Ross (1975: 78) calls it an 'Alexandrian footnote'. In an unpublished 1993 paper, 'Reflexive Annotation in Poetic Allusion', and now in Hinds (1998: 2), Stephen Hinds treats the device as a marker of allusion: 'the hinted "footnote" underlines the allusiveness of the verses, and intensifies their demand to be interpreted as a system of allusions'.

<sup>10</sup> For a similar view see Jenkyns (1982: 99) on the use of *dicuntur*, etc. '[to remind] us of the distant and perhaps fictional nature of his story'. When authority alone is the issue, the poets are certainly capable of citing their sources, as Callimachus cites Xenomedes in the story of Acontius and Cydippe in the *Aitia* (fr. 75. 54 Pf.)

<sup>11</sup> Thomas (1982: 146–8). Cf. Cat. 64.1 and Ennius 209 J.



is not primarily to demonstrate the poet's knowledge of previous versions or to assert the superiority of one over the rest.<sup>12</sup> It is also to reveal the complexity and mystery of the past and the contradictory nature of its sources. Thus, Catullus sometimes allusively points to a conflict in the authorities and leaves it unresolved. The etymology of 'Argo' is a case in point, for even though he never mentions the word 'Argo', Catullus alludes to three different derivations of the name.<sup>13</sup> Apollonius derived it from Argus, who built the ship under the guidance of Athena:

αὐτὴ γὰρ καὶ νῆα θοὴν κάμε, σὺν δὲ οἱ Ἄργος  
τεύξευ Ἀρεστορίδης κείνης ὑποθημοσύνησι.

(A.R. 1.111–12)<sup>14</sup>

For she herself built the swift ship, and with her Argos  
the son of Arestor fashioned it with her instructions.

Catullus alludes to this passage in 8–10 (the translation and quotation of Apollonius' αὐτῆ by *ipsa* signals the allusion, as commentators have noted<sup>15</sup>):

diva quibus retinens in summis urbibus arces  
ipsa levi fecit volitantem flamine currum,  
pineae coniungens inflexae texta carinae.

(Cat. 64.8–10)

The goddess who holds the citadels on city tops  
herself made for them the chariot flying with the light breeze,  
joining woven pine to the curved keel.

He recalls the derivation from Argus by alluding to Apollonius, but at the same time rejects it, suppressing all reference to Argus himself and emphatically crediting the whole project to Athena. Catullus hints at,

<sup>12</sup> Here I differ from Thomas (1982: 146), whose starting point is that: 'reference to earlier poetry is potentially far from casual ... , but has a specifically polemical function: to demonstrate the importance of the poet's models, and often to indicate the superiority of his own treatment'.

<sup>13</sup> See Thomas (1982: 148): 'In good Alexandrian fashion, Catullus refrained from mentioning the Argo by name'.

<sup>14</sup> For the name see also A.R. 1.18–19.

<sup>15</sup> See Kroll (1960) *ad* Cat. 64.8; Traina (1972: 104), and Thomas (1982: 149).

but does not choose between the other two explanations. Perhaps the ship was named from the nationality of its crew, as Ennius had suggested:

...quae nunc nominatur nomine  
Argo, quia Argivi in ea delecti viri  
vecti petebant pellem inauratam...

(Ennius, 211–13 J)

which is now called *Argo* by name,  
because chosen Argive men carried in it  
sought the golden fleece ...

For that is the point of the Ennian citation in line 4: *cum lecti iuvenes, Argivae robora pubis*.<sup>16</sup> Or it may be that it was named *Argo* from the adjective ἀργός, ‘swift’, as Catullus’ punning reference in line 6 suggests: *ausi sunt vada salsa cita decurrere puppi*.<sup>17</sup>

Small points, these—but enough to disorient and to give warning that the poet’s sources have different stories to tell, and that even as he chooses one version, others will compete for our attention. In an allusion to Ennius he may suppress Ennius’ identification of the *Argo*’s timbers, but the allusion whispers, ‘fir’, at the very moment when the poet announces, ‘pine’. However firmly he asserts that Athena herself built the ship, we remember Apollonius’ claims for Argus as its eponymous builder—even as we try to reconcile the conflicting explanations that the ship was named for its Argive crew or for its own swift nature.

Not all of Catullus’ versions are attested in other sources. Indeed, he places some in direct conflict with almost universal ancient authority. Thus—though our neoteric reader knows that Thetis resisted Peleus by changing herself into a lion and raging fire—Catullus asserts her

<sup>16</sup> Pace Thomas (1982: 150), who argues that Catullus has ‘removed’ Ennius’ etymological gloss. Catullus does not say explicitly that the ship was named after the Argives, as Ennius does, for he never refers directly to the naming of the ship.

<sup>17</sup> Catullus’ pun was noticed by the Renaissance commentators. Thus Parthenius (1485) glossed 64.6: ‘*Puppi cita*: navi argo, quam teste Diodoro quidam putarunt dictam argon ab eius celeritate. Nam [ἀργός] significat velocem’ (*Puppi cita*: the ship *Argo*, which according to Diodorus some thought was called ‘Argo’ from its speed. For ‘argos’ means swift’). For an excellent modern discussion see Traina (1972: 100–3). See also Thomas (1982: 150).

willingness if not her enthusiasm (*tum Thetis humanos non despexit hymenaeos*, 64.20), and even presents her father as forwarding the match.<sup>18</sup> Perhaps more important, he reverses the chronology of the wedding and the launching of the *Argo*, for in other versions, the voyage begins after the wedding and indeed after the birth of Achilles.<sup>19</sup> The unprecedented reversal, like the otherwise unattested assertion of Thetis' willingness, is presented in the same emphatic polyptoton (19–21) that turned us away from Medea and announced the story of Peleus and Thetis. And, although (or perhaps because) it lacks authority, it is introduced with another occurrence of the authority formula:

*tum Thetidis Peleus incensus fertur* amore (64. 19).

‘it was *then* that Peleus is said . . . , *then* Thetis . . . , *then* . . . the father . . .’. But emphasis, repetition, and appeal to authority do not make it so. We sense that the time and story are out of joint, but it is too soon to understand the reason why. For now we can only note that we have been brought up short a second time by verses 19–21 and pause again to take our bearings: where are we, and what time is it?

A consequence (though not an explanation) of Catullus' reversal of the order of the two stories is that now one is dependent on the other, for (as he tells it) the romance of Peleus and Thetis has become an episode within the *Argo* story. In fact, it has become *the* episode within the *Argo* story, for immediately after our notorious polyptoton the poet addresses the Argonauts in an apostrophe that recalls the conclusion of Apollonius' *Argonautica*:<sup>20</sup>

o nimis optato saeculorum tempore nati  
 heroes, salvete, deum genus! o bona matrum  
 progenies, salvete iter<um> . . .  
 vos ego saepe, meo vos carmine compellabo. (64.21–4)

<sup>18</sup> For the famous wrestling match in which Peleus captured Thetis see Pindar *Nem.* 3.35, and esp. 4.65. Bramble (1970: 35) calls Catullus' treatment 'a private version'. For the argument that *pater ipse* in 21 refers to Nereus see Mayer (1980: 16–19).

<sup>19</sup> In Apollonius Chiron's wife brings the baby Achilles for Peleus to see as the *Argo* sails (A.R. 1.557–8). See also A.R. 4.790–809.

<sup>20</sup> Ἰλατ' ἀριστῆρες, μακάρων γένος, αἶδε δ' ἄοιδαί/ εἰς ἔτος ἐξ ἔτους γλυκερώτεραι εἶεν ἀείδειν/ ἀνθρώποις ('Be gracious, heroes, progeny of gods, and may my songs be sweeter for men to sing from year to year'; A.R. 4.1773–5). See Zetzel (1983: 260–1; pp. 209–10 in this volume) and Klingner (1964: 167–8).

O heroes born in the much longed-for time of the ages,  
 hail, progeny of gods! O good offspring of mothers,  
 hail again ...  
 You, you I shall often invoke in my song.

Catullus has thus rewritten the *Argonautica* as a miniature epyllion with the meeting of Peleus and Thetis as the insert, and he has done so at the beginning of a long epyllion in which the marriage of Peleus and Thetis will provide the frame for another insert.

Yet the apostrophe to the Argonauts is ambiguous—an apparent valediction, but phrased as a salutation (*heroes, salvete*, 22). Thus, although the address marks the end of Catullus' miniature epyllion (and perhaps also sets off the first chamber of his labyrinth), it is not a real conclusion, but only a temporary stopping place very near the beginning of the poem. It is thus formally anomalous—an end and a beginning at the same time, or rather an end at the beginning. The anomaly is doubly emphasized since Catullus' verses not only evoke the end of the *Argonautica* but also imitate the valedictory formula of a Callimachean or Homeric Hymn.<sup>21</sup> Modern scholars have noted the inversion. Thus Zetzel: 'These verses constitute a reversal of hymnic convention, because the salutation and promise of future song belong to the end, not the beginning, of a hymn.'<sup>22</sup> Zetzel goes on to note that reversing ends and beginnings seems to be an Alexandrian and neoteric trick, and that Cat. 64, in fact, ends with an allusion to the beginning of the *Eoiae* of Hesiod.<sup>23</sup> His observation is important: Catullus has thus switched an ending for a beginning not once but twice. The double reversal creates an effect of circularity and ceaseless movement; ending and beginning are the same, and we go round and round.

The Argonauts, whom Catullus (mendaciously) promises to celebrate often in his song, belong to the Age of Heroes (... *optato saeculorum tempore nati/heroes*... 64.22–3), and their adventures

<sup>21</sup> As Klingner (1964: 168) observed: 'Es handelt sich von Haus aus um Schlussformen von Hymnen, um den Abschiedsgruss des Dichters' ('it is fundamentally a matter of the ending formula of hymns, the poet's valediction'). See also 167–8. See also Kroll (1960) and Fordyce (1961) *ad* 22.

<sup>22</sup> Zetzel (1983: 261; pp. 209–10 in this volume).

<sup>23</sup> Zetzel (1983: 261, n. 29; p. 210, n. 28 in this volume).

naturally follow the end of the Golden Age, traditionally marked by the invention of *Argo*, the first ship.<sup>24</sup> But as we proceed to the wedding of Peleus and Thetis, it seems that the sequence of ages has doubled back on itself.<sup>25</sup>

rura colit nemo, mollescunt colla iuvenis,  
 non humilis curvis purgatur vinea rastris,  
 non glebam pronò convellit vomere taurus,  
 non falx attenuat frondatorum arboris umbram,  
 squalida desertis rubigo infertur aratris. (64.38–42)

No one cultivates the fields, the bullocks' necks grow soft,  
 the trailing vine is not cleared with curved rakes,  
 the bull does not pull up the sod with down-turned plowshare,  
 the hook of the vinedresser does not thin out the tree's shade,  
 scaly rust creeps over the deserted plows.

The suspension of labor suits the holiday and the desertion of the countryside by the wedding guests, but the language is that of the Golden Age—with two important differences. One has been noted by Bramble: Catullus omits the requisite detail of nature's spontaneous bounty in the pre-agricultural world, substituting instead a description of the man-made luxury of Peleus' house at Pharsalus in verses 43–8.<sup>26</sup> The other difference appears in line 42 (*squalida desertis rubigo infertur aratris*), which in addition to undercutting the notion that the description merely depicts holiday idleness (surely it takes longer than a single day, however festive, for the plows to rust) suggests not

<sup>24</sup> See Smith (1913: 245–7); Bramble (1970: 35–7).

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Janan (1994: 109): 'Time begins to flow backward to parody the Golden Age'. See also 107–12 for a discussion of temporal dislocation in the epyllion. The Golden Age imagery in 38–42 seems to have been noticed first by Pasquali (1920: 17): '... si accorge subito donde quei versi derivano: da una descrizione del ritorno dell' età dell' oro' ('one immediately becomes aware of the source of these verses: a description of the return of the golden age'). Bramble (1970), Konstan (1977: 31–8), and Janan (1994) interpret the imagery as sinister and Catullus' treatment of the succeeding Age of Heroes as ironic and condemnatory. See Harmon (1973) for a more optimistic view.

<sup>26</sup> Bramble (1970: 38–9). Bramble aptly contrasts the similar description in Tib. 1.3.41–6, which includes the idea omitted by Catullus. Note especially: *Ipsae mella dabant quercus, ultroque ferebant / Obvia securis ubera lactis oves* ('The oaks of themselves gave honey, and the ewes of their own accord brought udders full of milk to meet the carefree people'; Tib. 1.3.45–6).

so much the Golden Age as the reversal or undoing of the Age of Iron, as if we were going backwards in time. The absence of plows, rakes, and pruning hooks belongs to the Golden Age, to be sure, but their decay can take place only after their invention—that is, in the later Age of Iron.

But the undoing of the Iron Age lasts only a moment, for the ostentatious luxury of Peleus' house places us firmly in a time after *Argo*. Its gleaming gold and silver, according to poetic convention, were surely wrested by technological violence from the earth.<sup>27</sup> The ivory (*Indo...dente*, 48) and purple of the marriage bed must have been brought in ships—and so soon after the invention of seafaring, too.

It seems that we still do not know what time it is, although we are becoming familiar with some of its bewildering characteristics: in this text time is circular, reversible, and even elastic. But perhaps we do know where we are. Our direction has been steadily inward—from the sea to the Thessalian countryside, and into the house of Peleus with its deeply receding chambers (*... sedes, quacumque opulenta recessit/regia, fulgenti splendent auro atque argento*: 'his dwelling, as far as the opulent palace stretched back, shone with gleaming gold and silver'; 64.43–4), to the inmost part (*sedibus in mediis*, 64.48), where we find, as if in the atrium of a Roman house,<sup>28</sup> the wonderful marriage bed of the goddess. Our inward movement has brought us to a strange and baffling place, a Roman atrium in the Thessalian countryside—and a glamorous wedding whose trappings (guests, gifts, and bed) evoke the wedding of Jason and Medea in the *Argonautica*.<sup>29</sup> We are about to be drawn into the next bend of the labyrinth.

<sup>27</sup> Mining is among the arts claimed by Aeschylus' Prometheus (*Pr.* 500–3). Cf. Ovid's account of the Iron Age:

nec tantum segetes alimenta que debita dives  
poscebatur humus, sed itumst in viscera terrae  
quasque recondiderat Stygiisque admoverat umbris  
effodiuntur opes, inritamenta malorum. (*Met.* 1.137–40)

('Not only was the rich soil dunned for the crops and food she owed, but they went into the guts of the earth and the riches she had hidden and brought to the Stygian shades were dug out—incitements of evil.')

<sup>28</sup> Klingner (1964: 173). See also Pasquali (1920: 8–17), as well as Ellis (1889), Kroll (1960), and Fordyce (1961) *ad* 47.

<sup>29</sup> A.R. 4.1139–98. See Klinger (1964: 176).

## TREADING THE MAZE

As we turn the corner we find ourselves in another story, for on the marriage bed is a coverlet:

haec vestis priscis hominum variata figuris  
 heroum mira virtutes indicat arte.  
 namque fluentisono prospectans litore Diae,  
 Thesea cedentem celeri cum classe tuetur  
 indomitos in corde gerens Ariadna furores,  
 necdum etiam sese quae visit visere credit,  
 utpote fallaci quae tum primum excita somno  
 desertam in sola miseram se cernat harena. (64. 50–7)

This cloth adorned with the figures of men of old  
 shows forth with wondrous art the manly deeds of heroes.  
 For looking out from the wave-sounding shore of Dia  
 Ariadne watches Theseus going away with his swift ship  
 as she bears uncontrollable passion in her heart.  
 And she does not yet believe she sees what she sees—  
 no wonder, since just now wakened from treacherous sleep  
 she perceives herself wretched, deserted on a solitary shore.

‘Aha!’ says our neoteric reader. ‘An ecphrasis.’ And well she might say so, for the description of scenes on physical objects, though as ancient as Homer, is another favorite device of Alexandrian and neoteric poetry.<sup>30</sup> Goldhill has shown the uses of framed song (the story within a story) to present multiple voices and perspectives and to demonstrate ‘the variegated nature of reality as perceived by Hellenistic poets.’<sup>31</sup> Ecphrasis, which is a type of framed song, serves the same Alexandrian and neoteric interests, but adds a further level of self-conscious distance and complexity, since the poet purports not merely to be singing another’s song, but to be transposing from one *medium* of representation into another.

But before we descend into the embroidered story, let us pause a while at the brink, for even in its first scene (52–70)<sup>32</sup> there is something

<sup>30</sup> See Becker (1992) with bibliography. See also Fowler (1991). For the ecphrasis in 64 see O’Connell (1977), Deroux (1986), Laird (1993), and Rees (1994).

<sup>31</sup> Goldhill (1986: 32).

<sup>32</sup> My division of episodes generally follows Quinn’s (1973a: 298–9).

strange and opaque about this wedding coverlet. It withholds several essential pieces of information, for it refuses (or omits) to tell us: where it came from or how it got here; what relation or connection it has with Peleus and Thetis (indeed, even if we could look to the end, we would find no sign that they ever saw it); how we are to imagine it as a physical object; and who made it. These are all strange omissions in an ecphrasis, but the last two are strangest by far.

In other ecphraseis the reader is frequently and explicitly reminded of the physical object being described—of its material, of the positioning of scenes on its surface, of the fact that the figures are of stone or wood or metal.<sup>33</sup> Catullus, however, in all his long ecphrasis (217 verses) makes only three explicit references to the physical object—two framing the description (50–1 and 265–6) and one referring to the placement of a scene: *at parte ex alia florens volitabat Iacchus* ('but from the other side was hastening youthful Iacchus'; 251). In most other ecphraseis we are told the identity of the work's creator or designer; in some the poet describes the scenes as they come to life under the artist's hand.<sup>34</sup> Typically, then, the poet not only emphasizes the physical qualities of the work he describes, but also calls attention to its authority and pedigree: Jason's cloak was made by Athena, Achilles' shield, Europa's basket, and the shield of Heracles by Hephaistos. The creator of the wedding coverlet is anonymous. Since the poet does not reveal who made the coverlet and arrayed its scenes any more than he has explained how it came to be in the house of Peleus, its source and authority are equally unattested.

We can get a further measure of the strangeness of the coverlet if we ask who is supposed to see and interpret it. Certainly, we are. As readers or hearers we would be the 'audience' Becker refers to in his recent account of the workings of ecphrasis in the *Shield of Heracles*—an account that fits most ecphraseis from Homer to the neoterics and beyond equally well:

<sup>33</sup> Deroux (1986: 251). For the positioning of scenes in other ecphraseis see Thomas (1983), especially 175–7.

<sup>34</sup> The cup in Theocritus 1 is an exception. But although its carver is not identified, it does have a pedigree and a context: its owner, the goatherd, describes it to Thyrsis (29–56), tells us that it is brand new (28, 59–60), where he got it (and what he paid for it, 57–8), and gives it to Thyrsis as an appropriate reward for his song (23–8, 143, 149–50).



The *Shield of Heracles* draws explicit attention to a set of relationships between the audience and the describer, the describer and the language of description, the description and the visual representation, and finally the visual representation and its referent [the world represented by the pictures].<sup>35</sup>

This is the audience the poets both invite to marvel with them with such phrases as ‘wonderful’, ‘a great marvel’, ‘a wonderful thing to see’, ‘inexpressible’ (as Catullus entices the reader with the phrase *mira... arte*, 51), and encourage to succumb to the realism of the described object, as in Apollonius’ description of Phrixus and his ram on Jason’s cloak: ‘as you looked, you would keep silent... expecting to hear their words.’<sup>36</sup> This audience is external, outside the text and its fictions, and drawn into it by the poet’s appeals. But there is also an internal audience, the character or characters within the story who view the object and respond to it either explicitly as Achilles and the Myrmidons respond to the shield in the *Iliad* (*Il.* 19.14–18) or implicitly, as Jason accepts the message inscribed on his cloak and Europa the destiny imaged by her basket, when they accept the objects themselves.<sup>37</sup> There are as many potential internal audiences and interpreters as there are characters—witness the manifold interpretations of Ahab’s doubloon by the crew of the *Pequod* in *Moby Dick*, or Fowler’s facetious observation on focalisers:

... of any element in a description we can ask whether the focalization is that of the artist who made the original work of art, or his audience, or the

<sup>35</sup> Becker (1992: 19).

<sup>36</sup> Marvel: *θηητόν, μέγα θαῦμα* (‘wondrous, a great marvel’; Mosch. 2.38); *θαῦμα ιδέσθαι* (‘a marvel to see’; Hes. Sc. 140, 224); *θαῦμα ιδεῖν, καὶ Ζηνὶ βαρυκτύπῳ* (‘a marvel to see, even for loud-thundering Zeus’; Hes. Sc. 318). See Becker (1992: 17–19). On *θαῦμα* (Becker (1992) aptly quotes the comment of Cook (1937: 205) on the Hesiodic Shield: ‘The author lets the reader know what his emotions should be.’

Realism: *κείνους κ’ εἰσορόων ἀκέοις ψεύδοιό τε θυμόν, ἐλπόμενος πυκινὴν τιν’ ἀπὸ σφείων ἑσακοῦσαι/βάζειν, ὃ καὶ δηρὸν περιπορπίδα θηήσαιο* (‘And looking at them, you would keep silent and deceive your heart, expecting to hear some wise saying from them, and you would gaze at the cloak for a long time’; A.R. 1.765–7).

<sup>37</sup> A.R. 1.721–2; Mosch. 2.37. Or it might be better to say that they have already accepted the objects’ messages, for Jason pins on his cloak and Europa takes up her basket *before* the ecphrasis.

observer, or his audience, or the author, or his audience: and we have still not brought in the observer's brother-in-law whom chapter four will reveal to be the hero of the novel.<sup>38</sup>

The views of the internal and external audiences may simply coexist, or diverge, or actually clash; but they are sometimes conflated—as in Theocritus 1, where the goatherd describes his bowl to Thyrsis using the same appeals to marvel and realism that we have seen poets using to the reader: 'the marvel would astonish your heart', 'you would say that he [the old fisherman pictured in the cup] was fishing with all his might'.<sup>39</sup>

We are the external audience, then—but who is the internal audience? Who of the characters in the text sees the coverlet and interprets or claims its meaning? Not Peleus and Thetis, as we have seen. That leaves only the wedding guests whose arrival and departure frame the ephrasis (31–7 and 267–77)—an undifferentiated host (*tota ... Thessalia*, 'all Thessaly'; 32–3) whom we will see flowing from Peleus' house first like laughing waves stirred by Zephyr and then in a gleaming tide (269–75). The wedding guests certainly see the coverlet, as we will learn at the end of the ephrasis:

quae postquam cupide spectando Thessala pubes  
expleta est, sanctis coepit decedere divis. (267–8)

And after the Thessalian youth were satisfied with looking eagerly  
at these things, they began to make way for the holy gods.

Indeed, that might almost have been their reason for coming, for they have obviously looked at it long and eagerly, and they depart when they have looked enough. But we never learn what they thought of it, for their response is entirely suppressed. We might also wonder exactly what they saw, but that is a question we must take up when we have seen more of the coverlet ourselves.

For now, the omissions and blind spots in Catullus' ephrasis should make us wary as we are drawn into the story on the coverlet

<sup>38</sup> Ahab's doubloon: Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*, Chapter 99, 'The Doubloon'. Focalisers: Fowler (1991: 31).

<sup>39</sup> Marvel: τέρας κέ τυ θυμὸν ἀτύξαι (Theoc. 1.56). Realism: φαίης κα γυίων νιν ὅσον σθένος ἐλλοπιεύειν (Theoc. 1.42).

draped ominously, as some say,<sup>40</sup> over the marriage bed of Peleus and Thetis. For by leaving out (or leaving open) its author and by all but leaving out its audience he has insistently drawn our attention to the two most urgent questions we must confront if we are to interpret his textile: ‘who speaks?’ and ‘who sees?’

But we have lingered long enough on the edge of our coverlet. It is time to descend at last into its first scene (52–70). As soon as we enter it, however, we find ourselves in difficulties. The ecphrasis, we recall, began with an announcement of its subject:

haec vestis priscis hominum variata figuris  
heroum mira virtutes indicat arte. (50–1)

This signpost, however, appears as confusing as the one that pointed to Medea at the opening, for its promise of a tapestry embroidered with ‘the manly deeds of heroes’<sup>41</sup> is immediately contradicted in the next verses, which show Ariadne abandoned on the shore of Dia watching Theseus sail away in his swift ship. Scholars have made much of this contrast, generally focussing on the ironic distance between ‘manly deeds of heroes’ and Theseus’ cruel desertion.<sup>42</sup> The contradiction, however, seems a matter not merely of morals, but of facts: the scene of Ariadne on the shore implies both a different story and a different *kind* of story from the one suggested by *heroum... virtutes*—a tale of tragic love with a woman at its center, not a heroic epic of manly deeds.

<sup>40</sup> Thus Curran (1969: 181): ‘It would be difficult to imagine a worse omen for the success of the marriage than the fact that the couch is thus literally enshrouded in a covering of such sinister import.’

<sup>41</sup> The commentators are agreed on the sense of *virtutes*: ‘valorous deeds’ (Ellis 1889); ‘*Heldentaten*’ (‘deeds of heroes’; Kroll 1960); ‘deeds of prowess’ (Fordyce 1961); ‘courageous deeds’ (Quinn 1973a—who adds, however, that ‘C’s statement is no doubt ironical...’). ‘Deeds’ is surely right, as opposed to Laird’s (1993: 24) recent translation of *heroum... virtutes* as ‘qualities of heroes’. Konstan (1977: 41) suggests that *virtutes* may be used in a double sense (‘deeds’ and ‘moral qualities’) and that the two meanings give Catullus ‘the opportunity to exploit possible oppositions or contradictions between acts of heroism and moral ideals’.

<sup>42</sup> Thus, Fuscus (1496: d5) glossed *heroum... virtutes* with the single word, ‘ironia’. Konstan (1977: 40) commented at greater length: ‘Catullus’ use of the scene on Dia to illustrate the *heroum virtutes* can be nothing other than an ironic and rather bitter judgment on such “virtues”.’ He goes on to argue that *indicat* (51) means ‘expose’ or ‘unmask’: ‘The tapestry, that is, is said to expose *virtutes*, not merely to represent them.’ The same points are made in Konstan (1993: 67–9). See also Bramble (1970: 34).

The coverlet promises *virtutes*; we are shown *amores* instead.<sup>43</sup> Our hermeneutic alternatives seem to be irony on the one hand or false advertising on the other, but perhaps—if we keep our eyes open—we may find another way out of the difficulty.

And what about that ship (53)? Theseus belonged to the distant past in comparison to Peleus and Thetis; this much is suggested both by Catullus' language (*priscis hominum... figuris*, 50) and by the hero's appearance as a well-known figure embroidered on their wedding coverlet. If it was really the *Argo* that first sailed the sea, as Catullus assured us (*illa rudem cursu prima imbuit Amphitriten*, 'that [ship] first initiated inexperienced Amphitrite in sailing'; 11), where did Theseus get his ship?<sup>44</sup> Worse still, the difficulty seems to have been of Catullus' own making, for, rejecting the traditional chronology that placed Theseus and Ariadne after *Argo*, Catullus has chosen instead to follow Apollonius' idiosyncratic reversal of the established order.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, Alexandrian that he is, he has also followed Apollonius in alerting the reader to what he has done; for with *priscis* he signals 'the perversity of his chronology' and his debt to Apollonius, as Weber has noted.<sup>46</sup> Apollonius had good reason for his innovation: inverting the chronology allowed him to have Jason invoke Theseus and Ariadne (albeit deceitfully) as a model for his own happy future with Medea.<sup>47</sup> It is too soon to understand Catullus' purpose; at this point we can see only the irreconcilable contradiction he has produced by insisting on the priority of both *Argo* and the story of Theseus.<sup>48</sup> In the chronology of this poem Theseus' ship is a logical impossibility.

<sup>43</sup> The terms of the opposition are those of Knopp (1976), who argues that for Cat. 64 as a whole: 'the theme is not *amores* or *virtutes*, but the conflict between the two' (207).

<sup>44</sup> Weber (1983: 263) has collected the large bibliography on this chronological contradiction.

<sup>45</sup> For the traditional chronology see Weber (1983: 264–6). Wilamowitz (1924: 2.299) seems to have been the first to notice that Catullus was following Apollonius; see Weber 267–9, with bibliography.

<sup>46</sup> 'Apollonius had challenged his reader's alertness with *δῆ ποτε* ['once upon a time'] in 3.997' (Weber [1983: 269]). Weber continues: 'The recognition of an Apollonian precedent for his skewed chronology was another delight that Catullus held in reserve for the special enjoyment of the sophisticated reader.'

<sup>47</sup> A.R. 3.997–1004, 1074–6, 1096–1101, 1105–8. At 4.430–4 Jason gives Apsyrtus the garment on which Dionysus had lain with Ariadne. See Weber (1983: 267–8).

<sup>48</sup> The contradiction is not present in Apollonius, since he does not advertise *Argo* as the first ship.

We have been brought up against a blank wall. In order to continue, we can only turn back and look for another path, reflecting as we go that this is not the first time that Catullus has reversed the chronology of his myths. In the frame story through which we entered this labyrinth he inverted the order of the launching of the *Argo* and the marriage of Peleus and Thetis, so that the meeting of the hero and the sea nymph became an inset in the story of the Argonauts. Might he have done something similar here, turning his stories inside out in order to bring the voyage of *Argo*, or some part of it, into the tale of Theseus and Ariadne?

But, look, here is Ariadne herself, or her embroidered image, looking out to sea. Our neoteric reader is pleased to recognize the scene, for he has seen it many times before in works of art.<sup>49</sup> The picture (Ariadne, the shore, the sea, and Theseus' ship moving away in the distance) is as familiar to our reader as that other favorite scene from the Ariadne myth, the arrival of Bacchus and his train in search of the heroine. And yet this Ariadne is different. She is naked to the waist like her sisters in wall paintings (vv. 64–7); but whereas the painted Ariadnes sit or recline, pensive or sad in their awareness of Theseus' departure, this Ariadne seems to stand tense and erect,<sup>50</sup> frantic with grief, totally absorbed in her sight of the departing Theseus:

illa ... toto ex te pectore, Theseu,  
toto animo, tota pendebat perdita mente. (69–70)

she ... hung on you, Theseus, with all her heart,  
with all her soul, with all her mind—lost.

<sup>49</sup> See 'Ariadne' in *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae (LIMC)* III. 1 (1050–70). The scene is frequent in Pompeian wall paintings (*LIMC*, 'Ariadne', items 55–66, 75–90, 97) but also has antecedents in Attic and Apulian vases (*LIMC*, 'Ariadne', items 54, 94–6). See also Klingner (1964: 177–88), Webster (1966), and Richardson (1979). Richardson suggests (190–1) that an early fourth-century BC Apulian stamnos (*LIMC* 54) or its original is the iconographic source for many of the Pompeian wall paintings. See also the important discussion of Gallo (1988), which presupposes Alexandrian models for the scene. (I am indebted to Eleanor Leach for this reference.)

<sup>50</sup> Catullus does not explicitly say that Ariadne stands, but the movement of the description from her head to her feet, the description of her fallen clothing, and her urgency imply it.

Indeed, iconographically speaking, this standing, frantic Ariadne seems hardly an Ariadne at all, but a visual allusion to another iconographic type altogether, that of the Maenad.<sup>51</sup> Catullus artfully points to the allusion with the simile at 61–2:

saxea ut effigies bacchantis, prospicit, eheu,  
prospicit ...

like a stone statue of a bacchant she looks out, alas,  
she looks out ...

This brief simile accomplishes much. It conveys Ariadne's intense emotions and physical immobility.<sup>52</sup> It anticipates her 'assumption by Bacchus'.<sup>53</sup> It draws attention to itself in a metaliterary way with the paradoxical comparison of the tapestry figure to a marble statue, as Laird has noted: 'an impression of one form of visual representation is conveyed by actually describing another'.<sup>54</sup> But that is not all. By

<sup>51</sup> See Boucher (1936: 200): 'À l'image d'Ariane dans la peine, à celle d'Ariane en Ménade, se superpose un souvenir plastique, l'image d'une statue de Bacchante' ('On the image of Ariadne in distress, on that of Ariadne as a Maenad is superimposed a sculptural reference, the image of a statue of a Bacchante'). Boucher suggests that Catullus has in mind a Maenad like that of Skopas (200–1).

<sup>52</sup> As Muret (1554: 92r) was the first to notice: 'Summa vis est in hac comparatione. Primum enim quod bacchanti Ariadnen comparat, significat eam et vultu et totius corporis gestu ravidum quandam concitatae mentis ardorem prae se tulisse. Quod autem addit saxeam effigiem, tantam vim doloris fuisse indicat, ut diu neque movere se potuerit, neque in ullam vocem erumpere. Omnis enim immodica affectio et eripere vocis usuram, et omnium corporis partium functiones impedire ad tempus solet. Atque hoc nimirum est, quod Nioben poetae, cum filios suos Apollinis et Dianae sagittis confossos videret, obriguisset in lapidem fabulantur' ('There is great power in this comparison. For first the comparison of Ariadne to a Bacchant indicates that both in her expression and in the carriage of her whole body she displayed a certain frenzied passion of a disturbed mind. The addition of the stone statue shows that the violence of her grief was so great that for a long time she could neither move nor break into speech. Indeed, every excessive emotion for a time generally snatches away the power of speech and hinders the functions of all parts of the body. And this is evidently the reason that poets tell the story that Niobe, seeing her children pierced by the arrows of Apollo and Diana, hardened into stone').

<sup>53</sup> The phrase is Laird's (1993: 20).

<sup>54</sup> Laird (1993: 20). Feeney (1991: 70) has noted a similar but more elaborate metaliterary play in the scene in Apollonius' description of Jason's cloak that shows Aphrodite looking at her reflection mirrored in Ares' shield: 'And it is a representation in words of a representation in cloth of a representation in marble of a goddess—and her reflection.'

reinforcing the visual allusion to a bacchant the simile helps to create an iconographic double image (a potentially explosive Maenad superimposed upon a seated, pensive Ariadne) that is the visual counterpart to the effect of the multiple literary allusions in the frame story. There we heard the disparate voices of literary sources; now we see that iconographical sources, too, project competing images.

Ariadne and the Maenad, then, are both present in the picture; but if we look carefully we might make out another, fainter image, a reflection, perhaps, of something we have seen before. A woman, bare-breasted, gazing at a ship—can it be Thetis and the *Argo* (14–18)? Perhaps not. If we were to step back into the frame story to look again, we would see that not just Thetis, but all the Nereids, rose out of the sea to admire the *Argo*, and that their gaze, unlike Ariadne's, was returned:

illa, atque <haud> alia, viderunt luce marinas  
 mortales oculis nudato corpore Nymphas  
 nutricum tenus exstantes e gurgite cano. (16–18)

On that day and no other mortals saw  
 with their eyes the ocean nymphs naked  
 down to their breasts standing out of the white sea-eddy.

Indeed, it seems to have been through the power of that mutual gaze (of admiring nymphs and staring Argonauts) that Peleus and Thetis fell in love (or so we gather from the emphatic polyptoton of 19–21). Even so, the likeness of Thetis to our Ariadne, if too partial and fleeting to convince, still lingers in the mind.

It was in looking at a ship that Ariadne made us think of Thetis. Looking, gazing, watching—*seeing*—is Ariadne's most characteristic activity. The poet uses as many words for seeing in almost as many lines:

namque fluentisono *prospectans* litore Diae,  
 Thesea cedentem celeri cum classe *tuetur*  
 ...  
 necdum etiam sese quae *visit visere* credit,  
 ...  
 desertam in sola miseram se *cernat* harena. (52–7)

If we ask ourselves at this point, 'who sees?', the answer must be: 'Ariadne'. Or to be precise: we (the external audience) see the scene

through Ariadne's eyes. Ariadne sees herself deserted (57), but mostly she sees Theseus. She sees him departing in his swift ship (53), and she sees him (for surely she is the focaliser of 58–9)<sup>55</sup> as forgetting her and casting his promises to the winds:

immemor at iuvenis fugiens pellit vada remis,  
irrita ventosae linquens promissa procellae.

But the forgetful youth in his flight struck the sea with his oars,  
leaving his unfulfilled promises to the blustering wind.

Theseus' forgetfulness, however, is in the eye of Ariadne. It is still further removed from us than the tapestry girl herself, for the poet does not vouch for it, and it cannot be pictured on the coverlet.

And yet there is authority for Theseus' forgetting. Theocritus knew that Theseus forgot Ariadne (Th. 2.45–6), and the scholia *ad loc.* explain that 'he suffered forgetfulness in accordance with the will of Dionysus and left her as she slept'.<sup>56</sup> This version makes Theseus' behavior involuntary and so exonerates him, as Muret saw: '... his leaving her was brought about only by forgetfulness (which was sent upon him by divine power), and not by an ungrateful heart'.<sup>57</sup> Our tapestry Ariadne, however, knowing nothing of Dionysus' plans, condemns Theseus for unfaithfulness. Should we condemn him, too? Only if we believe in what Ariadne sees—and only in what she sees: a forgetful Theseus who has cast his promises to the winds. Paradoxically, however, what Ariadne sees also alludes to, and so makes us see, a different picture: a Theseus made forgetful to serve the ends of Bacchus.

Guilty or innocent? Perhaps we can see things more clearly if we leave Ariadne on the shore of Dia and move to the next scene (76–115). A short bridge passage<sup>58</sup> will take us there:

a misera, assiduis quam luctibus externavit  
spinosas Erycina serens in pectore curas,

<sup>55</sup> For the term and essential bibliography see Fowler, (1990: 42–3). Strictly speaking, 58–9 are an example of "implicit embedded focalisation", where there are no explicit signals in the text' (Fowler 43).

<sup>56</sup> Wendel 1967: *Scholia in Theocritum vetera*, 280.

<sup>57</sup> 'Itaque, quod eam reliquerit, oblivione tantum, eaque divinitus immissa, non ingrato animo, effectum'. Muret (1554: 92v). See Gaisser (1993: 161–2, 364).

<sup>58</sup> The term is Quinn's (1973a: 298).



illa tempestate, ferox quo ex tempore Theseus  
 egressus curvis e litoribus Piraei  
 attigit iniusti regis Gortynia templa. (71–5)

Ah, wretched girl, whom Erycina maddened  
 with constant grief, sowing thorny cares in her heart,  
 at that time, from the time when fierce Theseus,  
 having departed from the curved shores of Piraeus,  
 reached the Cretan palace of the unjust king.

On one side a last view (for now) of Ariadne and her grief; on the other Theseus and his Cretan mission. In exact mid-span the ambiguous adjective *ferox* (73) points both ways—back to Ariadne’s view of Theseus (‘savagely, violent’) and ahead to a more heroic conception (‘fierce, high-spirited’). By the end, however, we are seeing things all Theseus’ way, for only Theseus (or the narrator, taking his side) can be the focaliser of *iniusti regis* in 75.

Let us stay on the bridge a moment and survey the new space before us. It is a flashback containing not one scene but three: Theseus’ arrival in Crete (76–85), Ariadne falling in love with Theseus (86–99), Theseus killing the Minotaur and escaping from the labyrinth (100–15).

In the first the focaliser is still Theseus, his eyes all on himself and his mission. He sees his tiny city in thrall to a cruel plague and a bold and haughty king,<sup>59</sup> and pictures himself as a self-sacrificing rescuer:

ipse suum Theseus pro caris corpus Athenis  
 proicere optavit potius quam talia Cretam  
 funera Cecropiae nec funera portarentur. (82–4)

Theseus himself chose to sacrifice his body  
 for dear Athens to keep such living corpses  
 of Athens from being carried to Crete.

Here at last, as Knopp has noted, are the *heroum... virtutes* promised at the opening of the ecphrasis (51).<sup>60</sup>

In the second scene it is Ariadne who sees; and, as before, what she sees is Theseus:

<sup>59</sup> Cf. *crudeli peste* (‘cruel destruction’, 76), *angusta... moenia* (‘narrow walls’, 80), *magnanimum... Minoa, sedesque superbas* (‘arrogant Minos’, ‘haughty palace’, 85).

<sup>60</sup> Knopp (1976: 208).

hunc simul ac cupido conspexit lumine virgo  
regia... (86–7)

as soon as the royal maiden saw him with desiring eye...

This time, however, she seems to see Theseus as he sees himself, for *hunc* ('him') in the first line of the scene points back to the immediately preceding picture. The sight inflames her, and by the time she lowers her burning eyes, her whole body is on fire with passion (91–3). Love at first sight 'is *de rigueur* in hellenistic poetry',<sup>61</sup> but, remembering that the poem began with allusions to Apollonius and the voyage of *Argo*, our neoteric reader recognizes this particular scene at once. A handsome stranger arriving at the court of a dangerous king, and a virginal princess instantly on fire with love—it must be Apollonius' Jason and the young Medea at Colchis (A.R. 3.275–98).<sup>62</sup> And Eros (or Cupid, rather) is to blame here, too, though all hint of his role is postponed until his cameo appearance with Venus at the end of the scene:

sancte puer, curis hominum qui gaudia misces,  
quaeque regis Golgos quaeque Idalium frondosum  
qualibus incensam iactastis mente puellam  
fluctibus, in flavo saepe hospite suspirantem! (95–8)<sup>63</sup>

sacred boy, who mingle human joys and sorrows,  
and you, queen of Golgi and leafy Idalium,  
in what waves you tossed the girl with her mind on fire,  
as she often sighed for the fair-haired stranger!

But what are Jason and Medea doing here? Their story has not happened yet—or has it? Somehow we have wandered back to the same blank wall we met in the case of Theseus' ship: in the chronology of this poem Medea cannot be a model for Ariadne nor yet Ariadne for Medea. They can exist together only in a space where time has been turned inside out. A space like a labyrinth.

<sup>61</sup> So Fordyce (1961) *ad* 86, following Kroll (1960) *ad loc.*

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Ellis (1889) *ad* 92 and Konstan (1977: 56–8).

<sup>63</sup> The clause *curis hominum qui gaudia misces* (95) recalls the effect of Eros' arrow on Medea: γλυκερῆ δὲ κατείβετο θυμὸν ἀνίη ('she was flooded in her heart with sweet pain'; A.R. 3.290). Cf. Konstan (1977: 58).

In the third scene the perspectives are shifting and sometimes unclear—not surprisingly, since we are looking down at the very heart of the Cretan maze. The scene opens with Ariadne still looking at Theseus looking at himself and his mission:

quanto saepe magis fulgore expalluit auri,  
cum saevum cupiens contra contendere monstrum  
aut mortem appeteret Theseus aut praemia laudis!  
non ingrata tamen frustra munuscula divis  
promittens tacito suscepit vota labello. (100–4)

How much paler she often grew than the gleam of gold,  
when Theseus, desiring to fight against the savage monster,  
sought either death or the rewards of praise!  
Still, promising not unwelcome gifts to the gods in vain,  
she undertook vows with silent lips.

That is, Theseus is the focaliser of 101–2, and Ariadne has adopted his view as her own. We cannot hear her prayers in 103–4 (they are silent, after all), but the next verses (105–11) show their fulfillment and what she prayed for: the death of the Minotaur. The event is described with Alexandrian indirectness, as the monster falls with a satisfying crash (109) in a simile whose epic antecedents draw attention to Theseus' heroic image ('for just as an ungovernable whirlwind uproots an oak or cone-bearing pine shaking its limbs on Taurus' peak ...').<sup>64</sup> In this passage the monster, like *Argo* in the frame story, is unnamed—identified only by the punning reference to the mountain (*Tauro*, 105) at the beginning of the simile and the mention of horns at the end:

nequiquam vanis iactantem cornua ventis. (111).

in vain tossing his horns to the empty winds.

Here, at the moment of truth (as bullfighters say), time is more circular and confused than ever. The monster's death recalls (unless it anticipates) Jason's killing of Apsyrtus (felled like 'a huge bull with

<sup>64</sup> Cf. *Il.* 5.560 and 13.389–91 and see Fordyce (1961) *ad loc.*

mighty horns', A.R. 4.468).<sup>65</sup> But—if scholars are correct to ascribe the Greek original of 111 to the *Hecale* of Callimachus—it perhaps also looks back to Theseus' earlier killing of the bull of Marathon, another chronological impossibility, as we shall see below.<sup>66</sup> Time has turned in on itself in the violent center, but Theseus, heroic, safely threads his way out of the maze:

inde pedem sospes multa cum laude reflexit  
errabunda regens tenui vestigia filo,  
ne labyrinthis e flexibus egredientem  
tecti frustraretur inobservabilis error. (112–15)

Then, safe, he gloriously retraced his step,  
guiding his errant footsteps with the slender thread  
lest the untraceable maze of the building baffle him  
as he tried to get out of the twisting labyrinth.

But where is Ariadne during all this? We may wonder if she sees or visualizes Theseus' heroic deed, and if so, how she sees it. Does she see Theseus through his eyes killing a monster, or through her own—killing her brother? Perhaps, like Medea during the murder of Apsyrtus (A.R. 4.465–7), she averts her eyes and tries not to see at all.<sup>67</sup>

Our survey from the bridge has shown us, up to the climactic moment at least, how Theseus once looked to Ariadne (and to himself), just as the scene of Ariadne on the shore shows how she sees him now. Curiously enough, however, we did not learn in the flashback how Theseus treated Ariadne or how she looked to him; indeed, there was no sign in the text that Theseus saw Ariadne at all.

We have been standing on our bridge for some time now, and should be moving on; but some niggling doubt keeps us here looking

<sup>65</sup> τὸν δ' ὄγε, βουτύπος ὥστε μέγαν κερεαλκία ταῦρον, / πλῆξεν (A.R. 4.468–9). See Clausen (1977: 220, n. 5).

<sup>66</sup> πολλὰ μάτην κεράεσσιν ἐς ἠέρα θυμήναντα ('in vain raging many times with his horns into the air') fr. 732 Pf.; fr. 165 inc. auct. Hollis). Cicero quoted the verse without indicating its source (*Att.* 8.5.1). In the nineteenth century it was suggested that it belonged to the *Hecale*, and as Hollis (1990) says, 'most (but not all) later scholars have approved'. Pfeiffer (1959) *ad loc.* judged the verse 'worthy of Callimachus', and Hollis (323–4) seems inclined to accept the attribution.

<sup>67</sup> But Apollonius' Medea cannot avoid being tainted by the murder. Apsyrtus reddens her veil and peplos with his blood, and the pitiless fury looks askance (A.R. 4.471–6).

down at the scenes of the flashback. They seem clear enough, to be sure, but still different somehow from the tapestry picture of Ariadne on the shore—perhaps more insubstantial. The flashback might seem more concrete to us if the poet had pinpointed its location on the coverlet with one of those epiphastic phrases like ‘over there was’, or ‘next to it was’, or ‘in the center they saw’. But there is nothing of the kind. Instead, the flashback opens with *nam perhibent* (‘for they say’, 76), an authority formula like those we noticed in the frame story—a formula, that is, of narration rather than of description.<sup>68</sup> The scenes in the flashback have been narrated to us, but there is no sign that they were pictured on the coverlet at all. Indeed, if we could look to the end of the Ariadne story (264), we would see that of all its scenes or episodes, only two, Ariadne on the shore (52–71) and the arrival of Bacchus (251–64), are said to appear on the coverlet.<sup>69</sup> The rest, as we shall find, are introduced with the authority formula and other narrative expressions, and, like the flashback, belong to another medium. But if these episodes are not on the coverlet, we must wonder where they came from, remembering as we do that the authority formula raises the question of authority but does not necessarily answer it. We must also wonder who sees them. Certainly, we do (as we have just seen the scenes in the flashback). But the wedding guests, the internal audience, cannot see what is not on the coverlet; and their perception of the story must be very different from ours.<sup>70</sup> Or, it might be better to put the matter in a different way, that the poet has woven narration with description to present two coverlets in one: the first for the wedding guests to see, embroidered with two standard scenes from the Ariadne myth, the other for us, interwoven and amplified with digressions, explanations, speech, and excursions into past and future—that is, with narration, which changes the meaning of the embroidered pictures.

<sup>68</sup> Konstan (1993: 65) says that Catullus here and at 212 ‘[has replaced] the conventional epiphastic tags with formulas of verbal report’, and calls the phenomenon ‘a cross between media’.

<sup>69</sup> Among modern scholars Deroux (1986: 250) and Forsyth (1980: 100–1) assume two scenes. Laird (1993: 19), in an otherwise perceptive article, dismisses the question of what is actually shown on the tapestry as pedantic and deriving ‘from a confusion between factual and fictional epiphraasis’.

<sup>70</sup> The point is well made by Forsyth (1980: 101).

The poet acknowledges that we have been and will continue to be in the medium of narrative at the beginning of the next bridge—which leads us back to Ariadne on the shore of Dia:

sed quid ego a primo digressus carmine plura  
 commemorem, ut linquens genitoris filia vultum,  
 ut consanguineae complexum, ut denique matris,  
 quae misera in gnata deperdita laeta<batur>,  
 omnibus his Thesei dulcem praeoptarit amorem:  
 aut ut vecta rati spumosa ad litora Diae  
 <venerit,> aut ut eam devinctam lumina somno  
 liquerit immemori discedens pectore coniunx? (116–23)

But why should I digress from my first song  
 and tell more—how the girl left the face of her father,  
 how she left the embrace of her sister, how finally that of her mother,  
 who, desolate, took joy in her unhappy daughter,  
 and how to all these she preferred the sweet love of Theseus;  
 or how carried in the ship she came to the foaming shores  
 of Dia, or how when her eyes were bound in sleep  
 her husband left her, departing with forgetful heart?

Each of the phrases or clauses introduced with *ut* might be visualized as a separate picture, and indeed, the last, Theseus stealing away from a sleeping Ariadne, was often depicted on works of art.<sup>71</sup> But the whole bridge is a *praeteritio*, marked as a digression in a *narrative* by the phrase *a primo digressus carmina plura*, and it employs narrative formulas (*commemorem ut... ut, ... ut... aut ut... aut ut*) rather than those of ecphrasis.

We are now back on Dia, and the scene opens with the authority formula (*perhibent*: ‘they say’; 124), although there seems to be no authority for what we are about to see—a frantic Ariadne lamenting, climbing the sheer rocks to look over the sea, rushing down again into the surf, and reproaching and cursing her absent lover.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>71</sup> See *LIMC*, ‘Ariadne’, items 52–64.

<sup>72</sup> Thus Kroll (1960) *ad loc.*: ‘man könnte sich darüber wundern, dass C. sich gerade für Züge, die Gegenstand der freien Erfindung sein müssen, auf die *fama* beruft. Aber es soll alles als überliefert gelten’ (‘It might seem surprising that Catullus invokes *fama* precisely for details that must be a matter of free invention. But it shall all pass for traditional’).

The Maenad latent in our first sight of Ariadne seems to have come alive while we were gone. But the authority formula is not empty; rather, it is performing its common functions. It places a formal distance or barrier before the events it introduces (Ariadne and her lament seem very far away, and very deeply embedded in the narrative, presented as they are in indirect statement in a digression in an ephrasis). More important, the formula makes us question the story's pedigree and seek out its source. And we have not far to seek, for Ariadne's lament, or most of it, has been uttered before—by the Medeas of Euripides, Apollonius, and Ennius.<sup>73</sup> Ariadne as Medea, or Medea in Ariadne: the chronology is impossible, as we have seen before, and the blank wall stands before us. But in a digression woven in a labyrinth the laws of time are contravened. Jason told the young Medea in Apollonius that by helping him she could be as happy as Ariadne, and so she is. In the flashback Catullus' Ariadne, like the young Medea, fell in love and assisted at the murder of her brother; here she stands, and we see what comes of going off with strangers.

But it is not only time that is turned inside out. The story is, as well, for parts of the frame have been pulled through into the center. In the first scene of Ariadne on the shore we thought we caught a glimpse of the naked Thetis gazing at the *Argo*. Now we see her purple-covered bed, or one quite like it, which Ariadne says she would make up for Theseus (and perhaps also for his bride): *purpureave tuum consternens veste cubile* ('spreading your bed with a purple cover'; 163). Ariadne's Doppelgänger Medea was present in the frame as well. Her wedding and its trappings (including her remarkable wedding couch) were the model for those of Thetis.<sup>74</sup> We must remember, too, that we were directed to Medea and her story (deceptively, as we thought then) by the allusive signposts at the beginning of the frame. Indeed, Ariadne now alludes to the same passage of Ennius that we saw cited in the opening verses, so linking (or superimposing) the chronologically impossible ships of Theseus and the *Argo*:

<sup>73</sup> For a good discussion of the parallels with Euripides and Apollonius see Klingner (1964: 192–4). For Ennius see Zetzel (1983: 258–63; pp. 206–12 in this volume).

<sup>74</sup> See note 29 above.

Iuppiter omnipotens, utinam ne tempore primo  
Cnosia Cecropiae tetigissent litora puppes. (171–2)<sup>75</sup>

Omnipotent Jupiter, if only in the beginning  
the Athenian ships had not touched the Cretan shores.

In this episode there is no need to ask ‘who sees?’ Ariadne sees it all. She sees an ungrateful, forgetful Theseus (*immemor a!* 135), and as we recall Catullus’ phrase *immemori... pectore* (123) in the bridge passage, this time we might think her clearly vindicated—until we turn back and see that the poet might equally be alluding to the version that exonerates him. She sees promises unkept, of a wedding like that of Peleus and Thetis, perhaps (cf. *conubia laeta, ... optatos hymenaeos*, 141 and *humanos... hymenaeos*, 20; *optatae... luces*, 31); and this time the poet’s word (*coniunx*: ‘husband’, 123) bears her out. In the flashback we could not be sure how she saw the Minotaur’s death, but now her view is clear: he was her brother, and she helped Theseus murder him (150–1, 181). And at last she sees that (unlike Theseus) she has no way out—or, as we might be tempted to say, no escape from her labyrinth:

nec patet egressus pelagi cingentibus undis.  
nulla fugae ratio, nulla spes: omnia muta,  
omnia sunt deserta, ostentant omnia letum. (185–7)

No exit is open with the sea’s waves encircling.  
I have no means of flight, no hope: all is silent,  
all is deserted, all things point to death.

All that remains in what she believes is her last hour is to call on the Eumenides for vengeance:

sed quali solam Theseus me mente reliquit,  
tali mente, deae, funestet seque suosque. (200–1)

But with the same state of mind in which Theseus left me alone,  
goddesses, let him pollute himself and his kin with death.

<sup>75</sup> For the allusion see Fordyce (1961) *ad loc.* and Zetzel (1983: 258–9; pp. 206–7 in this volume). The two ships were already identified by the description of Theseus’ ship as *swift (celeri cum classe, 53)*.



Her prayer is answered as we step on to the next bridge (202–11).<sup>76</sup> Jupiter nods his assent, and Theseus duly forgets to hoist the white sails that would signal his safe return to Athens. Our neoteric reader knows what will happen next. Aegeus will misread the unchanged black sails as the sign of Theseus' death and throw himself from the cliff in grief. Ariadne's curse will be fulfilled, and her view of Theseus as deliberately negligent and faithless will be vindicated by the judgment of Jupiter himself<sup>77</sup>—or will it?

Before we rush off to Athens, however, we should pause to consider Ariadne's curse and its implications more carefully: 'O goddesses, with the same state of mind in which Theseus left me alone let him pollute himself and his kin with death.' Ariadne thinks that Theseus has abandoned her out of culpable negligence because he is ungrateful, and she prays that in the same state of mind he will bring the pollution of death on his family. But that is not exactly what she says, and it is not what happens.<sup>78</sup> Theseus brings death on his house, to be sure, but his forgetfulness about the sails is not the culpable negligence that Ariadne has in mind, but rather sheer forgetfulness induced by the gods. Jupiter's nod answers Ariadne's prayer (and brings grief on Theseus), but also (paradoxically) alludes to the version of Theseus' forgetting her that gives him a 'supernatural alibi'.<sup>79</sup> Not the spirit, but the letter, of her curse is fulfilled.

Catullus seems to have been the first to make Theseus' tragic return to Athens the result of his treatment of Ariadne<sup>80</sup>—or, to put it another way, the first to make Ariadne the cause of Aegeus' death. Ariadne has not only been left by Theseus, she has been left *alone* (*solam*, 200)—alone because she is on an uninhabited island, but still more because she is bereft of all her kin, having left father, mother, and sister to follow her brother's murderer (117–20, 180–1). In order to have satisfaction for the grief (*luctum*, 199) she feels not only for

<sup>76</sup> Quinn (1973a: 298) extends the bridge to 214, but the Aegeus flashback begins at 212.

<sup>77</sup> For the argument that Jupiter's nod vindicates Ariadne, see Wiseman (1978: 21–2).

<sup>78</sup> For an excellent discussion of the difference between what Ariadne means by forgetfulness and what happens to Theseus in 207–9 see Klingner (1964: 199–200).

<sup>79</sup> The phrase is Wiseman's (1978: 22).

<sup>80</sup> See Klingner (1964: 200) and Konstan (1993: 66).

herself but for her lost family, she wants Theseus similarly bereft (*funestet seque suosque* (201); and she gets her wish.<sup>81</sup> The Medea in her now is no longer young, but mature and deadly like the Medea of Euripides.<sup>82</sup> And this Medea, too, can kill at a distance.

But here we are in Athens, all ready to hear the instructions of Aegeus, which Theseus has just forgotten; and once again the scene begins with an authority formula: *namque ferunt olim* ('for they say that once'). Aegeus' words, like Ariadne's, are several times removed, presented, like hers, in indirect statement in a digression in an ecphrasis.<sup>83</sup> His words, too (a few of them, at least), seem to have been uttered before, for 217 (*reddite in extrema nuper mihi fine senectae*: 'given back to me just now at the very end of my old age') cites the sole surviving fragment from the speech of Aegeus in Callimachus' *Hecale*: *παρὲκ νόον εἰλήλουθα* ('you have come beyond expectation'; fr. 234 Pf., fr. 8 Hollis).<sup>84</sup> The scene in Callimachus was much better known to sophisticated Roman readers than it is to us.<sup>85</sup> Theseus has arrived unexpectedly from Troezen, has escaped Medea's attempt to poison him, and is now being addressed by Aegeus, his new-found father; presently he will set off to catch the bull of Marathon.<sup>86</sup> His next exploit will be the Minotaur. Pleased by her learning, our neoteric reader smiles happily and remarks how neatly Catullus has linked Theseus' two adventures with bulls.

But we have just turned the corner into another blank wall. In the chronology of this poem Aegeus' speech, like Theseus' whole

<sup>81</sup> Thomson (1961: 55) notes that Catullus uses *luctus* (defined by the lexicographers as *dolor externus*, 'grief for someone else') especially for the loss of a family member.

<sup>82</sup> For the allusion to Medea see also Konstan (1993: 66).

<sup>83</sup> See Jenkyns (1982: 29–30): 'Aegeus... in a sense is even further distanced from immediacy [than the embroidered Ariadne], since he is merely a digression within the description of the embroidery.' And again: 'Catullus has taken care to distance him from the reader: we are told not that Aegeus said these words but that he is said to have said them...'

<sup>84</sup> For the echo see Weber (1983: 265). He goes on to speculate: 'If the Callimachean speech of Aegeus to Theseus is ever recovered, it is likely to prove the model of Catullus 64.215–37.' This may be going too far, for surely the instructions about the sails belong to the story of the Minotaur rather than to that of the bull of Marathon.

<sup>85</sup> 'For Roman poets the *Hecale* may have had a special position as one of the earliest, finest, and most substantial specimens of the epyllion.' Hollis (1990: 32). And see also Hollis 26–35.

<sup>86</sup> For the context see Hollis (1990) *ad loc.*

expedition, is a logical impossibility.<sup>87</sup> In mythological tradition the first meeting of Aegeus and Theseus in Athens occurs *after* Aegeus' marriage to Medea, hence after Medea has killed her children and long after the *Argo* sailed for the golden fleece. So much is consistent with the tradition of *Argo* as the first ship that Catullus insists on in the frame story; but it is flatly contradicted by the priority of Theseus' ship and the Ariadne story that he presents in the ecphrasis. By alluding to Callimachus' well-known scene Catullus—with neoteric coyness—draws our attention to the contradiction he has manufactured. We are in another loop of time where stories come together. In the last we found Medea in Ariadne railing at her faithless lover, and here too Medea lurks between the lines; for she is present in the intertext,<sup>88</sup> and she is indispensable to the reunion of Aegeus and Theseus. Although she goes unmentioned here, we recognized her only a moment ago in Ariadne's curse—already responsible for a death in Athens.

The doomed Aegeus, all intent on his love and fear for Theseus, is the one 'who sees' in this scene. Like his formal and emotional counterpart, Ariadne,<sup>89</sup> he only has eyes for Theseus; but things look quite different through his eyes. Theseus once again seems heroic (cf. *tua fervida virtus*: 'your burning courage'; 218) and the Minotaur all monster; for Aegeus' picture of his mission explicitly contradicts Ariadne's. Aegeus hopes that Theseus will slaughter a bull (*ut tauri respergas sanguine dextram*: 'so that you might spatter your right hand with the bull's blood', 230); but Ariadne, we remember, sees him as the murderer of her brother (*respersum iuvenem fraterna caede*: 'the youth spattered with my brother's blood' 181). Aegeus is also the counterpart of the internal and external viewers of the coverlet, for in looking at the deceptive sail he too is trying to read the message inscribed in a woven fabric. Although the message is of his own devising, his misreading of it is inevitable; for through Ariadne's curse and Theseus' forgetfulness the sail no longer has the meaning he assigned to it. Cruelly deceived, he despairs and plunges to his death.

<sup>87</sup> See Weber (1983: 264–6).

<sup>88</sup> See Hollis (1990: 139–45).

<sup>89</sup> For the parallels between Ariadne and Aegeus see Putnam (1961: 185–6); Duban (1980: 793–5).

After he has done so, we see Ariadne on the short bridge to the final section (249–50)—still on her shore, still unconsoled, still (in defiance of time and logic) watching Theseus' ship:

quae tum prospectans cedentem maesta carinam  
multiplices animo volvebat saucia curas. (249–50)

And then looking out sadly at the ship moving away,  
wounded, she was turning over manifold cares in her mind.

Seeing her thus, we have the eerie sense that from their separate cliffs she and Aegeus were both looking at Theseus' ship at the same time, and that she, perhaps, stood on Dia and watched the operation of her curse.

This bridge, of course, has led us back to Dia and the arrival of Bacchus:

at parte ex alia florens volitabat Iacchus  
cum thiaso Satyrorum et Nysigenis Silenis,  
te quaerens, Ariadna, tuoque incensus amore. (251–3)

But from the other side was hastening youthful Iacchus  
with his band of Satyrs and Nysa-born Silens,  
seeking you, Ariadne, on fire with love of you.

We note at once that the bridge has also led us back at last out of the narrative flashbacks and digressions of the previous sections (76–248), for with the phrase *at parte ex alia* we are firmly set down again in the embroidered world of the coverlet. Here is Bacchus with his Satyrs and Silens, but overshadowed by a frenzied mob of howling Maenads with their flutes and tambourines—all in search of Ariadne. Here, some say, is Ariadne's happy ending, a joyous marriage with the god, and eventual immortality. Iconography is on their side, for in ancient art Ariadne's union with Bacchus is the natural sequel to our scene.<sup>90</sup> Catullus' language, too, argues for Bacchus' honorable intentions; for he is *incensus amore*, as Peleus is said to have been

<sup>90</sup> See 'Dionysos' in *LIMC* III. 1 (482–8), items 713–79 and 'Dionysos/Fufluns', *LIMC* III.1 (535–6), items 53–74. Bacchus' discovery of Ariadne is also shown in Pompeian frescoes; see 'Dionysos/Bacchus', *LIMC* III.1 (554), items 180–92.

at the sight of Thetis (*incensus fertur amore*, 19).<sup>91</sup> But others looking at the same picture see only prolongation of her woe: the god has come to rape her, perhaps; or else, like Cybele's lion come to Attis (also lonely on a shore), he will drive her into madness.<sup>92</sup> She was only *like* a Maenad in the beginning; now she will become one. Yet who can say what the god will do? There are no more scenes to tell us, and on this coverlet we never see a meeting of Bacchus and Ariadne.

Suddenly the ephrasis is over, and we come out of it as we went in—back to the wedding couch of Peleus and Thetis:

talibus amplifice vestis decorata figuris  
pulvinar complexa suo velabat amictu (265–6; cf. 50–1)

The cloth lavishly decorated with such figures  
embraced and clothed the couch with its covering.

*Vestis decorata figuris*—is that all? We feel both deflated and superior suddenly, not unlike Alice at the end of Wonderland ('Who cares for *you*?' said Alice (she had grown up to her full size by this time). 'You're nothing but a pack of cards!'). The wedding guests are already leaving, having seen their fill at last (267–77), and a new phase of the wedding party is about to start. Before it does, let us look back at the coverlet and reflect on where we have been so far—for our journey is not yet over.

The coverlet, as we have decided, is really two tapestries in one. The wedding guests have seen the two scenes embroidered on it; we have seen those, as well as three narrative episodes amplifying and embellishing them. The coverlet seen by the wedding guests is appropriate in every way to the wedding of Peleus and Thetis, as Forsyth has shown.<sup>93</sup> One scene shows Ariadne on the shore and Theseus sailing away; the other the arrival of Bacchus, which signals the beginning of a happy marriage of god and mortal and provides the best of omens for the marriage of Peleus and Thetis. The coverlet

<sup>91</sup> See Forsyth (1980: 102): 'Peleus (we know) is about to wed Thetis, *ergo* Dionysus is about to wed Ariadne, just as the traditional form of the myth would demand.' But the repetition of *incensus amore* may not settle the issue, since Ariadne was *incensa*, too (97).

<sup>92</sup> Wiseman (1977: 178–9).

<sup>93</sup> Forsyth (1980: 101).

for us is more complicated. It shows a second story not visible on the first; for the story of Medea—first in love, then betrayed, and finally destructive—runs through the narrative episodes as a disturbing counterpoint to that of Ariadne. On our coverlet, too, are conflicting and unresolved voices and points of view hardly visible (or not visible at all) to the wedding guests. Seeing Theseus rowing off in the first scene (*immemor at iuvenis fugiens pellit vada remis*, 58) and the arrival of Bacchus in the second, the wedding guests would surely think his forgetfulness was caused by the god. It is only we, the external audience, who see the narrative episodes and start to wonder. And then there is the Minotaur deep in the labyrinth and not shown at all in the embroidered pictures. Theseus and Aegeus see him as a monster or a bull; legend would agree (76–89). Is Ariadne perverse to call him brother (150, 181)? The voices and views contradict each other, and the poet does not intervene in his own voice to help us decide.

At the heart of the ecphrasis, for both us and the wedding guests, lies a glaring impossibility caused by the chronological contradiction between the frame story (which operates—mostly—on the chronology set in train by *Argo* as the first ship) and the ecphrasis (which insists on the priority of Theseus and Ariadne). In the strange world of the ecphrasis the laws of time and space established in the frame are compressed and contravened. Only in such a labyrinth could the story of Medea (which has not happened yet) run parallel with that of Ariadne as its subtext and paradigm.

The hall is empty now, for the wedding guests have all gone home, still thinking, perhaps, of Theseus and Ariadne and Bacchus and the Maenads. But now gods are coming to the wedding—we are about to turn the corner into the last chambers of the labyrinth.

#### THE THREADS OF THE PARCAE

As the gods come in one by one (278–302), we see that Catullus has drawn up a guest list that both contradicts and evokes the stories told in other versions. First comes Chiron the centaur and close behind him Penios the river god—the one a standard guest at this wedding (and sometimes singer of the wedding song), the other making his

first appearance.<sup>94</sup> But it is their gifts that draw our attention. Chiron has brought, not the Pelian ash spear (cf. *Il.* 16.143), but masses of flowers from all Thessaly twined into fragrant garlands (278–84), while Penios carries in whole trees uprooted from Tempe and makes the house into a leafy bower:

haec circum sedes late contexta locavit,  
vestibulum ut molli velatum fronde vireret (292–3).

He wove them together and placed them far and wide around the palace,  
so that the fore-court was verdant, covered with soft foliage.

Turning Thessaly inside out—or we should say outside in—the gods have brought the outdoors into the house of Peleus, decking it for a wedding feast,<sup>95</sup> but also creating an artificial pastoral landscape. They have woven a *locus amoenus* ('pleasant place') of trees and flowers to create a space for the coming wedding song.<sup>96</sup>

Next Prometheus, another newcomer to this feast, still bearing scars from being chained to the cliffs of Caucasus by Jupiter (294–7). We could say that his scars remind us of why his presence is appropriate. He made the wedding possible, for it was by revealing Thetis' destiny to bear a child more powerful than his father that he won his reconciliation with Jupiter. But the scars point even more to the fact of his imprisonment, and to its reason: Prometheus gave man fire and crafts and, as he says in *Prometheus Bound*:

θαλασσοπλαγκτα δ' οὔτις ἄλλος ἀντ' ἐμοῦ  
λινόπτερ' ἤῤυρε ναυτίλων ὀχήματα. (*Pr.* 483–4)

It was I and none other who discovered ships,  
the sail-driven wagons that the sea buffets.<sup>97</sup>

<sup>94</sup> For Chiron see Kroll (1960) *ad* 278. He sings the wedding song at Euripides *IA* 1062–75.

<sup>95</sup> See Harmon (1973: 323–4).

<sup>96</sup> Cf. *plexos* (283) and *contexta* (292). For weaving a shady space see especially Theoc. 7.7–9: ταῖ δὲ παρ' αὐτὰν/αἴγειροι πετέλαι τε εὐσκιον ἄλσος ὕφαινον/χλωροῖσιν πετάλοισι κατηρεφέες κομόωσαι ('around it the poplars and elms wove a shady grove, forming a roof with their rich foliage of green leaves'). Cf. Verg. *Ecl.* 9. 42: *lentae texunt umbracula vites* ('the pliant vines wove a shady retreat').

<sup>97</sup> Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound* 483–4, David Grene trans. Moreover, Prometheus' epithet *sollerti corde* ('with clever mind'; 294), as Fordyce (1961) notes *ad loc.*,

The presence of Prometheus and his scars contradicts the initial assertion that *Argo* was the first ship and that Athena made it. Indeed, it may be that the very verse crediting Athena (*ipsa levi fecit volitantem flamine currum*, 9) alludes to *Pr.* 484 and Prometheus as the inventor of seafaring, especially since *currus* (= ὄχημα) is not used elsewhere of a ship.<sup>98</sup> But Prometheus' presence also points to a different version of human history from that implied in the frame—not the pessimistic Golden Age myth with its insistence on an irreversible decline set in train by *Argo*, but a more ambiguous model altogether, since Prometheus' gifts can be invoked not only as the cause of degeneration and woe (as in Hesiod) but as the source of progress and accomplishment (as in *Prometheus Bound*). Is humanity getting better or getting worse? We have not considered this question yet, caught up as we were in the fate of our embroidered heroine, but if we had, the Golden Age hints in the frame would have persuaded us that it was growing worse. Now we have to wonder.

But here come all the Olympians—with a disturbing exception. Apollo and Diana have refused to come, disdaining Peleus and unwilling to celebrate Thetis' wedding (299–302). The gods take their places, the tables are heaped with food, and the Parcae begin to sing. It is strange that we did not see them come in, for they are conspicuous enough—trembling with age, covered from head to foot by their white garments with a purple stripe at the hem, wearing rosy fillets in their snowy hair, and forever spinning from the baskets of fleece that sit before their feet. But their work is eternal and unending, and perhaps, like the marriage bed and its purple coverlet, they were here all along.

Yet why are they here at all? Our neoteric reader knows that in other versions it was Chiron or Apollo or the Muses who sang at Peleus' wedding.<sup>99</sup> The Parcae have been on the guest list before, to

'corresponds to the Greek compound adjectives πολύμητις, ποικιλόβουλος ('of many counsels', 'wily') which are applied to Prometheus as inventor of the arts'.

<sup>98</sup> According to *TLL* *currus* is used for 'ship' only here and at *Ciris* 26, but *Ciris* 26 refers to the *currus* of the Panathenaic procession, which was made to look like a ship. ὄχος and ὄχημα are used for 'ship' more frequently (e.g., ὄχος at Aesch. *Supp.* 33, ὄχημα at Soph. *Tr.* 656).

<sup>99</sup> For earlier versions see Fordyce (1961) *ad* 299; Klingner (1964: 169–70); Bramble (1970: 27).



be sure, for they (or rather their Greek counterparts, the Moirai) are shown with the other gods on the François vase; and they have been prominent at other important weddings.<sup>100</sup> But there is no authority for their singing at *this* wedding, and even as he introduces their song (*carmine, perfidiae quod post nulla arguet aetas*, ‘a song which no age afterwards will charge with bad faith’; 322), Catullus slyly reminds us of his innovation, for the reference to *perfidia* alludes to the version in which Apollo sang and was later charged with bad faith by Thetis.<sup>101</sup> Nevertheless, although the fact of their singing is patently without authority, the Parcae themselves are authoritative singers, and their song is true. The poet vouches for its truth both in 322 and in his first mention of the song (*veridicos... cantus*, ‘truly prophetic... song’; 306); the Parcae themselves assure Peleus that they are producing a *veridicum oraclum* (‘truthful prophecy’; 326); and a series of unimpeachable witnesses will testify presently to the accomplishments of Achilles and hence to the veracity of the song. All these guarantees should make us nervous. No other element in the poem has been advertised as true. Why the song of the Parcae?

Perhaps things will become clearer if we consider our original questions: ‘Who sees? Who speaks? And with what authority?’ Let us begin with ‘who speaks?’. The Parcae are the primary speakers, although we shall also hear snippets from the witnesses invoked within their song. As speakers they are the counterparts of the maker of the coverlet, and their framed song is a formal parallel to his (or hers). Both speakers (the weaver and the Parcae) are linked thematically as well in this epyllion of many threads and textiles:<sup>102</sup> one weaves, the others spin. As for authority—paradoxically, as we have seen, the song of the Parcae has both no authority at all (only Catullus makes them sing) and all the authority in the world (they sing truly). The ultimate authority of the Parcae, however, lies in their

<sup>100</sup> As when they brought Zeus and Hera to their marriage bed to the accompaniment of the wedding song in Aristophanes’ *Birds* (cf. *Av.* 1731–6).

<sup>101</sup> See Aesch. fr. 284 Mette. Thetis was angry because Apollo had sung a wedding song prophesying health and long life for Achilles, even though he was to slay him.

<sup>102</sup> For the theme see note 2.

spinning. The Parcae are not merely prophetic; they actually spin the future into existence.<sup>103</sup> As they begin to sing, let us see how they do it:

Haec tum clarisona vellentes vellera voce  
talia divino fuderunt carmine fata. (320–1)

Then as they plucked the fleece, with clear-sounding voice  
they poured out these fates in prophetic song.

And again, in the first occurrence of the refrain:

... sed vos, quae fata sequuntur,  
currite ducentes subtegmina, currite fusi. (326–7)

But run, spindles, run, leading the threads  
that the *fata* follow.

In the first case they pluck the fleece and pour out *fata* in a divinely inspired song. The second deserves a closer look: ‘Run spindles, run, leading the threads that the *fata* follow.’ *Fata*, (that is, both ‘fate’ and ‘oracular utterance’) are brought into existence by the threads of the Parcae.<sup>104</sup> The Parcae, quite literally, are spinning their song.

We have saved the most complicated question for last: ‘who sees?’ That is, both who is the audience or interpreter of the song, and through whose eyes do we perceive its events? As before, we are the external audience. The divine guests and Peleus (for Thetis is never addressed directly) are the internal audience. But as we listen to the song we note that the response of Peleus and the gods is entirely suppressed; indeed, we will find no sign that they heard it at all. Just like the wedding coverlet, we think: Peleus and Thetis never seemed to see it, and the wedding guests, who did, went off without telling

<sup>103</sup> As Rees (1994: 86) notes: ‘[the Parcae] can sing of the future; but they can also spin the future, just as the coverlet weaves the past’. Cf. Kroll (1960) *ad* 321: ‘Das Lied der Parzen is immer wahr, weil sie das Schicksal, das sie verkündigen, selbst schaffen’ (‘The song of the Parcae is always true, because they themselves create the fate that they proclaim’).

<sup>104</sup> Both Kroll (1960) and Fordyce (1961) *ad loc.* take *fata* as utterance (‘Schicksalsprüche’, ‘words of destiny’) at 321, but as ‘fate’ at 326. It is better to take the word in its double sense in both verses.

us what they thought. Yet there is an important difference: we are not shown how Peleus and the gods respond, but we are told how the Parcae expect them to respond, for they not only sing the future, but interpret its meaning—especially its meaning to Peleus. All is to be unmitigated joy for the happy couple. The wedding day is *laeta* ('joyful', 325), Thetis will come to Peleus' bed under a lucky star (*fausto... sidere*, 329), their love and harmony are unprecedented (334–6), and their son Achilles will commit glorious deeds (*egregias virtutes claraque facta*, 348). This is the interpretation (we might almost say the stage directions) presented by the Parcae. Perhaps Peleus and the gods obediently rejoice—though we might judge that talk of Achilles' tomb, however honored (361–70), would give his father little joy. We, the external audience, however, find ourselves resisting the directions of the Parcae, and principally because of the testimony of the very witnesses who vouch for the glory of Achilles and the truth of the prophetic song.

The three witnesses both speak (they are witnesses, after all) and present a point of view. The first to testify are mothers at the funerals of their sons who will acknowledge (*fatebuntur*) the *egregias virtutes* of their killer Achilles (348–51). Then Scamander (*testis erit magnis virtutibus unda Scamander*: 'Scamander will be a witness to his great deeds', 357), his blood-warm waters choked with corpses (357–60). And finally, the dead Achilles' share of the booty (*denique testis erit morti quoque reddita praeda*, 362), Polyxena, butchered like a sacrificial animal over his tomb (362–70). Their testimony, each more terrible than the last, does not challenge the *veridicos cantus* of the Parcae nor yet the valor of Achilles. The witnesses attest to the deeds prophesied by the Parcae but pronounce them horrible.

The coverlet, we recall, was double-woven, two tapestries in one, displaying two competing visions of the past to its different audiences (ourselves and the wedding guests). The outlines of the story were clear, but the scenes added in the plane of narrative made its interpretation and meaning ambiguous. The tapestry, like a hologram, changed its appearance with the view and perspective of the beholder. Because it was anonymous and its source and origin were unexpressed, its fictions lacked the external validation of a divine creator or legendary artist. The Song of the Parcae, in contrast, is true and authoritative. The dissonance in its meaning (which is available to

both internal and external audiences) is caused by the competing visions of the Parcae and the witnesses. And yet it is essential to remember that the witnesses and their point of view are also part of the song; for they too, no less than the deeds of Achilles, have been sung and spun into existence by the Parcae. The witnesses and their interpretation, then, are also fated; and their perspective, like that of the Parcae, is true. The song of the Parcae is double-spun, a song composed for two voices, and it includes opposing true interpretations of the same events. In spite of their authority, however, the threads of the Parcae are as paradoxical as the wedding coverlet, for they lead in opposite directions. They are part of the fabric of the labyrinth, not a solution of its baffling structure.

## EPILOGUE

The Parcae have finished their song, but no one applauds, perhaps because at this moment, as some say, Eris appears with her apple and disrupts the feast.<sup>105</sup> Suddenly we find ourselves transported someplace else, far from Thessaly, and listening in some surprise to what seems to be a contemporary voice, telling us how mankind has declined since the Age of Heroes and how the gods who once graced mortal activities have withdrawn long since, repelled by human wickedness. The voice is urgent and persuasive as it recites its litany of crime—brothers slaying brothers, mothers lying with their sons, justice put to flight from lustful hearts, etc. (397–405). Yet its assertion of humanity's decline over time is problematic. Justice, as our neoteric reader knows from Aratus, left the earth well before the Age of Heroes.<sup>106</sup> And as for those crimes that blight the present age, we have seen deeds not unlike them depicted or implied in the coverlet and wedding song—that is, in documents of the Heroic Age.<sup>107</sup> The world is an evil place these

<sup>105</sup> Townend (1983: 26–9); Skinner (1984: 138–9).

<sup>106</sup> See Arat. 96–135. Aratus' Δίκη (cf. *justitiam*, Cat. 64. 398) leaves earth in the Bronze Age (Arat. 129–36), the last in his sequence of ages. In Hesiod (*Op.* 109–201) the Bronze Age is succeeded by the Age of Heroes and the Iron Age.

<sup>107</sup> See Bramble (1970: 41 n. 1).

days, to be sure, but was it ever any better?<sup>108</sup> We wonder. Indeed, having traveled in places where opposite voices are true and chronology is turned inside out, we suspect that all ages may be the same. In a labyrinth it is hard to see which way time is going.<sup>109</sup>

<sup>108</sup> Compare Curran (1969: 191–2): ‘it was never any better.’

<sup>109</sup> I would like to thank Susan Dean, Judith Fletcher, Richard Hamilton, Sharon James, and especially Joseph Farrell for their helpful comments and suggestions on an earlier draft of this paper.

## Part V

# Obscenity and Invective

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## Obscenity in Catullus

*Donald Lateiner*

For the artist, obscenity is an aesthetic, not a legal, problem. I wish to analyze the uses to which Catullus puts obscenity and comment on the nature of obscenity in poetry. Catullus comments on his obscene subject matter in three poems. These furnish a starting point for an anatomy of the obscenity of Catullus. Poem 50 describes an afternoon of light verse composition (*versiculi*) with a friend.<sup>1</sup> 'We played around a lot, each toying in verse' (*lusimus, ludebat*), suggests competition, also banter and ridicule (cf. Cic. *de Orat.* 1.12.50). *Lepor* in speech is wit more than charm or pleasantness (Cic. *Brut.* 38. 143; also, *iocum* and *facetiae*). No doubt, then as today, a fine insult or obscenity was more immediately appreciated than a magnificent simile or compliment. No mention is made of versifying obscenity in 50, but we learn of Catullus' attitude towards writing light, and probably passionate, poetry. It is fun (*lusimus*), it is metrically exciting (*numero modo hoc modo illoc*, 'now in this metre, now in that'), it is competitive (*tuo lepore/incensus*, 'aroused by your charm'), it encourages audacity (*audax*), and it can leave one physically aroused.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Calvus, Catullus' witty (50.6–8), passionate (96; cf. Aulus Gellius 19.9) friend, also wrote lively, probably obscene verse; see Kinsey (1966: 106). Catullus' language concerning Calvus is hardly different from that for Lesbia—cf. Havelock (1939: 114–15); and see 14.1 and 104.2; 14.2 and 109.1; 53.3 and 5.1; 50.6 and 109.2; 50.8–9 and 76.19, 51.5, 72.5; 50.11 and 76.25; 50.11–13 and 107; 50.15 and 76.18, 85.2; 50.18 and 76.17–20.

<sup>2</sup> Kinsey (1966: 106) on 50.7–13 and 16.8–11. Kinsey points out the many words in both poems which suggest sexual considerations. The poem comments on genres and styles as well as on subject matter.



In poem 104, Catullus claims to have been unable to insult (*maledicere*) his love. To ensure that no one might think him unable to write nasty, obscene poems, the fourth line insults the unknown addressee: *Sed tu cum Tappone omnia monstra facis* ('But you perform every monstrosity with Bozo').

Most relevant is 16, a poem almost programmatic in content. Catullus, whether or not he practised what he preached, is notable for his preaching to himself.<sup>3</sup> Poem 16 presents a declaration:

Nam castum esse decet pium poetam  
Ipsam, versiculos nihil necesse est.<sup>4</sup>

It suits a proper poet to be clean  
Himself, but no such necessity for his little poems.

Catullus asserts that he is *pious* and *castus* and even *pudicus* ('reverent', 'sexually loyal', 'modest'). This is paradoxical in a poem whose first and last line reads: *Pedicabo ego vos et irrumabo* ('I'll fuck you up your ass and down your throat'), but Merrill says, 'The verbs are here not to be understood in the literal sense, but only as conveying vague threats, in the gross language of that day'.<sup>5</sup> He claims less wisely, 'Virulence of language in invective, especially in the use of terms applied to sexual impurity, was by no means accompanied among the ancients by corresponding intensity of feeling, and is often to be understood as formal and not literal.' Even if the threat is not literally meant, there is intensity of feeling; formality inhibits power no more here than in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*. When Catullus writes about poetry, either the medium becomes the message—talk of insult is insult (14, 36), talk of admiration is admiration (49, 50)—or the *persona* denies his ability to do what the poet in fact has done (paradox, as here). Poem 50, *versiculi, poema*, declares in tight, charming verses that Catullus can write no poetry at all. Catullus 16 intends to prove that a *pudicus poeta* can pen obscenities without harming his nature or stature. The verses which frame the poem are an example of the poem's message.

<sup>3</sup> 73.1–4, 76, 8.1: *Miser Catulle, desinas ineptire* ('Poor Catullus, cease your foolery').

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Ovid *Tr.* 2.354; Martial 1.4.8. There is no reason to think this is but a *topos*, at least in Catullus. How does a serious statement become a commonplace and when?

<sup>5</sup> Merrill (1893: *ad loc.*); *contra*, Whatmough (1956: 52).

Obscenity, we discover, is a legitimate poetic device, not evidence of a degraded personality.

This poem is the earliest protest we have against the biographical fallacy, the confusion of the poet and his poetry's *persona*. The poet and his work are separate, so separate that a 'poetic' threat to vent sexually his aggression on his critics is no more than four lines away from a claim to purity of life. The threat is not so much vague as unconnected with literal physical action. In fact, we have not a threat, but a statement of fact about the future, because every time a reader sees these lines, Aurelius and Furius actually *will be* assaulted. The gross insult was made good as soon as the public had these lines. Catullus' wrath, directed against stupidity and gross Philistinism,<sup>6</sup> can find suitable expression only in obscenity. He fights fire with fire.<sup>7</sup> His critics seem to have implied that poetry and *basia* ('kisses') were a pastime of the effeminate: *male me marem putatis* ('you think me not much of a man'); the particular obscenity chosen neatly refutes this charge, and the epithets applied to his critics even reverse the situation.<sup>8</sup>

Catullus intends to reprove and instruct, perhaps to reject his acquaintance. The instruction, from our point of view, is that verses which talk of love or are *molliculi*, *parum pudici* ('sensuous', 'explicit') are no less poetic or proper as long as they have *saem ac leporem* ('some elegant pungency'). Catullus' verses fulfill his critical demands.

Catullus manipulates three basic varieties of obscenity: the sexual, the scatological, the jolting juxtaposition. Sexual obscenity is most

<sup>6</sup> *Vos quod milia multa basiorum/Legistis, male me marem putatis?* ('You, because you have read "thousands of kisses"/Do you think me not much of a man?').

<sup>7</sup> I cannot explain *Et quod pruriat incitare possunt* ('And they can excite that which lusts'), since the extant corpus of Catullus, however obscene it is, is not prurient, not pornographic—as Kinsey (1966) admits. Perhaps in his anger Catullus generalizes his defence of poetry. If he writes for *pilosis/Qui duros nequeunt movere lumbos* ('old, hairy men/who are not able to move their creaking crotches'), he claims prurience, but the extant Catullus writes for adults interested in poetry, not children or old men looking for sexual thrills. But if Calvus' *versiculi* ('little poems') aroused Catullus (50.7–15), perhaps Catullus' *nugae* ('tidbits') had the same effect on others. The imagery of the lover in 50, however, is used for a special effect: as women affect most men, so Calvus' poetry affects Catullus.

<sup>8</sup> Calvus and Catullus had agreed to act *like* voluptuaries or decadents (*delicati*, 50.3); they are not actually such.

common. Scatological obscenity is little less common. Catullus' scatology is more playful than his sexual obscenity; his most intense obscenities are sexual, his most baroque performances scatological. Jolting juxtaposition extends the term 'obscenity' to include a specific (verbal) technique as well as source material. It generally draws force from an appealing picture being succeeded by a foul one. Obscenity is used *intellectually* to play with the reader's mind. Obscenity is used *humorously* to approach the forbidden and the uncomfortable. Obscenity can lead to *linguistic virtuosity*, by fitting common talk to elegant structure, and by charging ordinary words with unusual intensity. Obscenity is an *outlet for aggression*. Obscenity in Catullus is *never* simply vulgarity; no poet has complained more bitterly of poor taste in life and verse.<sup>9</sup>

The intellectual aspect of obscenity employs prosaic thoughts for an unusual metaphor, image or structure. Catullus is fond of saving his obscenity, or his most powerful obscenity, for the last line where it shocks by its unexpectedness and by its vividness. Catullus 58 begins with three lines, a stunned, sing-song chanting litany of Lesbia's name—which directs us to an emotional end we never reach. The fourth line brings her down to the backstreets of Rome, and the final one flashes love, hatred, sickness.

Caeli, Lesbia nostra, Lesbia illa,  
 Illa Lesbia quam Catullus unam  
 Plus quam se atque suos amavit omnes,  
 Nunc in quadriuiis et angiportis  
 Glubit magnanimi Remi nepotes.<sup>10</sup>

Caelius, our Lesbia, the famous Lesbia,  
 That Lesbia whom alone Catullus—  
 More than himself and all his own—has loved,  
 Now, in crossroads and narrow alleys,  
 Jerks off the offspring of big-hearted Remus.

<sup>9</sup> See 6.2; 8.1; 10.4; 12.4–5; 14; 16; 22.2, 10, 14; 36.19–20; 39; 43.8; 84. For a study of Greek comic obscenity, see Henderson (1975). The first chapter, despite some tired Freudianism, makes valuable distinctions between pornography and obscenity (p. 7), and between Greek and Roman attitudes.

<sup>10</sup> The first two verses 'artlessly' employ *geminatio* (cf. Cic. *De orat.* 3.54.206), *variatio*, and *chiasmus* to achieve their effect. On the translation of *glubit* as an act of masturbating another, see most recently Penella (1976), in support of Lenz (1963: 62ff.).

Philologists argued for centuries about which obscene act *glubit* denotes. The point lies elsewhere. The word was chosen for its obscene sound and follows the ponderous polysyllabic words of the previous line with a lightning force (cf. 11.19–20). The bitter obscenity of *glubit* is not redeemed, but it produces the power of the poem. Poem 59 develops the method:

Bononiensis Rufa Rifulum fellat,  
 Uxor Meneni, saepe quam in sepulcretis  
 Vidistis ipso rapere de rogo cenam,  
 Cum devolutum ex igne prosequens panem  
 Ab semiraso tunderetur ustore.

Rufa of Bologna sucks Rifulus,  
 The wife of Menenus, whom among the tombs often  
 You've seen snatching a banquet from the flame itself;  
 When pursuing a loaf fallen from the fire,  
 She is pierced by the scruffy corpse-burner.

The first verse closely parallels graffiti<sup>11</sup> and seems sufficiently obscene. But no, hard on the panting dog of line 1 follows a collocation of Rufa's shamelessness and the dead. But while we see her steal from the dead, Catullus suddenly brings on a half-shaven slave whose rape of Rufa is fitting punishment.<sup>12</sup> The effect is not in the metre or the vocabulary, but it is none the less a poetic effect achieved by fitting sound to sense, by quickly juxtaposing different images, by making the active person passive, and by creating a tiny universe of just retribution.

Poem 88, one of the Gellius series, is similarly artful. Varieties of incest dominate the poem after we are asked what Gellius does. Verses 5–7 mark a hiatus in which mythological reference and geographical vastness let our troubled minds pause. Gellius' crime is worse than anything imaginable, but Catullus imagines the worst: *Non si demisso se ipse voret capite* ('Not even if, dropping his head down, he should eat himself').<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Cf. *Nachträge* to Kroll (1968) *ad loc.* and *CIL* IV. 4185, 1427, 2175, 2193, 2246, 2273, and *infra*, n. 43. For the sexual overtones of *tundo* ('pierce'), cf. 32.11, Lucilius fr. 1035 (Loeb) and *battuo* ('pound').

<sup>12</sup> A punishment also employed in 16, 21, 37, 56, 74.

<sup>13</sup> Kroll (1968) is wrong to call this an *adynaton*; cf. W. B. Pomeroy in *Sexual Behaviour* 1.9 (1971) 12.

The following examples are playful; an oblique approach, not head-on shock, characterizes them. A poet by writing poetry relieves not only pain but tedium too. In 23 Catullus is 'carried away' by his subject: the poverty of Furius. Some lines of this poem remind one of the secure happiness of the philosopher:

nihil timetis,  
 Non incendia, non graves ruinas,  
 Non facta inopia, non dolos veneni,  
 Non casus alios periculorum. . . (23.8–11)  
 Haec tu commoda tam beata, Furi,  
 Noli spernere nec putare parvi . . .  
 . . . nam sat es beatus.<sup>14</sup> (23.24–26)

. . . you fear nothing,  
 Not fire, not heavy losses,  
 Not wicked deeds, not poison plots,  
 Not any other chance of danger . . .  
 This, your blessed good fortune, Furius,  
 Do not spurn nor think meagre . . .  
 . . . for indeed you are blessed.

Furius' family is in great condition (1. 7) as well they should be with *corpore sicciora cornu* ('bodies drier than a bone', 12). This fact leads Catullus to certain conclusions which begin mildly but terminate and concentrate on the feces of poor, hungry Furius:

A te sudor abest, abest saliva,  
 Mucusque et mala pituita nasi.  
 Hanc ad munditiam adde mundio rem,  
 Quod culus tibi purior salillo est,  
 Nec toto decies cacas in anno,  
 Atque id durius est faba et lapillis;  
 Quod tu si manibus teras fricesque,  
 Non umquam digitum inquinare posses. (23.16–23)

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Lucr. 2.23ff. The ancient world, less haunted by cries for social justice, saw more humour in disease and poverty than we do; cf. Juv. 3.147–53: *nil habet infelix paupertas durius in se/quam quod ridiculos homines facit* ('Wretched poverty has nothing worse in it/than that it makes men preposterous'). Thinkers elevated poverty into a positive good; cf. Cic. *Par. Stoic.* 49, etc.; Seneca, *Thyestes*, 446ff.

No sweat's in you, no spit,  
 No phlegm nor foul snot in your nose.  
 Add this more elegant elegance:  
 Your asshole is cleaner than a whistle.  
 And you don't shit ten times in a whole year;  
 And it's harder than beans and pebbles.  
 If in your hands you'd rub and grind it,  
 Never could you dirty a finger.

Furius' excreta are listed in an ascending degree of obscenity, and the ultimate, his feces, are harder than little rocks. To ensure that Furius and his readers squirm, Catullus gratuitously adds that their hardness prevents a man from dirtying himself even if he were to rub them between his hands. These lines—like the final lines of 88 and 13—are meant to carry the reader from hyperbole to sheer fantasy. The reader's will to accept information (of the sort usually conveyed in prose) is broken. The message is merely 'do not ask me for a loan since blessed are the poor'; the elaboration can only be called poetic.<sup>15</sup> It conveys not only Catullus' annoyance at being asked for money, but also the lack of true anger in his refusal. For here the obscenity is not directed at Furius; rather, it comes from Furius and Catullus is amused by it.

Aurelius is subjected to sexual rather than scatological obscenity in Catullus 21. Catullus threatens *Tangam te prior irrumatione* ('I'll make you suck my cock first', 8). Again, forceful sexual abuse of a person is deemed a fitting punishment for 'crime', especially sexual crime. But the threat to abuse someone sexually which sexually involves the speaker can only be understood playfully.<sup>16</sup> Where *irrumare* ('to make someone suck cock') is used with a first person subject, the point is playful; where it has a first person object, the point is outraged complaint. Kroll's comment that *irrumator* means 'kaum mehr als "Schweinhund"' ('hardly more than "filthy swine"') misses the emotional effect of sexual invective.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> T. S. Eliot paraphrased Paul Valéry on poetry thus: 'Poetry: Prose :: Dancing: Walking (or Running).'

<sup>16</sup> Catullus 15.18–19, in which Aurelius is threatened with *raphanidōsis* ('radish up the anus'), avoids this pitfall, but the poem seems antiquarian; cf. Aristoph. *Clouds*, 1083.

<sup>17</sup> Subject: 16, 21, 37.8; object: 10.12–13, 28.9–10. The playful element is also prominent in 56, 59 (already discussed) and in 74 where Gellius assures his safety from his

Poems 69 and 71 reflect on foul-smelling men (or a man). The point in itself is dull, so Catullus combines it with sex, which brings out human smells and the reader's recollection of the same. The artistic problem is to involve the reader's interest in an essentially repulsive condition; sexual obscenity is an efficient means.

Another Gellius epigram, 90, repeats the incest charge (cf. 74, 88, 89, 91.5), but rather than leaving it as such, Catullus damns it further by jocularly suggesting a religious purpose. Not mere pleasure but a desire for a priest of the Persian type prompted Gellius and his mother. The mockery is obvious in the word play of l. 3 and in *si vera est Persarum impia religio* ('if the foul superstition of the Persians has truth'). Catullus wishes to publish Gellius' crime; he gains in credibility if momentarily he seems to sympathize with Gellius. The child melting his offering in the flame is ridiculous. We are forced to think back to the original charge: incest.

The Mentula epigrams (94, 105, 114, 115) are most successful when they depend on the associations of the name (94, 115; cf. 29.13). The effect is improved if Mamurra assumed the name himself rather than having been saddled with it by Catullus. Catullus 94, even if the humour is 'low', is abundantly poetic.

Mentula moechatur. Moechatur mentula; certe  
Hoc est, quod dicunt, ipsa olera olla legit.

The Man-Tool screws 'em. He screws 'em, does Man-Tool. Yes!  
That's what they say: There's a lid for every pot.

The alliteration of the admiring 'm' sounds in the first line, the derision of the 'c' and 't' sounds until the break in the pentameter, the shift to the unctuous liquid 'l' in the second half of the pentameter show careful attention to sound. The first line has the magical spell quality of a child's song or curse, but the *geminatio* and *chiasmus* assure

uncle's censure by seducing his aunt. This is wit enough, but playfulness demands the gratuitous insult upon injury: *quamvis irrumet ipsum/Nunc patruum, verbum non faciet patruus* ('although he might make suck cock/now his uncle himself, his uncle will not leak a word'). Need we note that speech for the uncle is physically as well as morally impossible? His mouth is full. (Cicero, *Fam.* 9.22.4 vouches for the obscene associations of *depsit* which is compounded here: *perdepsuit*, 'worked over'.) Housman (1931: 408, n. 1) points out the philological and rhetorical inadequacy of Kroll's view.

poetic intention; it is the 'way of saying' that can make a two-line poem succeed. Bald statement, repeated backwards, is followed by a proverb sign-post, but more importantly, these words enforce a pause while the shock of the preceding words sinks in and the reader (or hearer) wonders what can follow such a two-word obscenity. A four-word proverb follows, but, like the original statement, it is pronounced as two words, thus: *ipsolerolla legit*, and has but one more syllable.<sup>18</sup> By making their acoustic expression nearly equivalent, Catullus reinforces his assertion that the actions are equivalent. This is high art, however low or mean the thought. In such a poem the art—the poetry—is the only point. The thought may be part of a crude tradition, but the form, 'the way of saying,' shows great craftsmanship.

Poem 32, a *billet*, belongs to a known genre.<sup>19</sup> Its obscenity consists in the new word *fututiones* ('fuckatories'), the image of the man's erection, and the idea of poetry aiding sexual desire. The last hardly needs defence in Western poetry; Catullus does emphasize his physical need more than his love, but that is not inherently less poetic.<sup>20</sup> The neologism creates a tension between the simple, basic act denoted and the polysyllabic humour of the word itself. Words are magical and obscenities doubly so. The poem is an insult asking a favour. The first sentence, eight lines long, finds its expression only in the last word, *fututiones*; the new word validates itself and the sentence's length by providing an intellectual twist. The word comes from the world of sex for sale familiar from the Pompeian graffiti.<sup>21</sup> Lines 10–11 neatly contrast the horizontal images of intransitive *iaceo* and *supinus* ('lie' and 'on my back')<sup>22</sup> and the sleepy 's' sounds to the pert and lively plosives 'p', 't', 'd' and 'c' and the active transitive verb *perundo* ('perforate'). The playful malice of the poem is immediately indicated by the varied but repetitive address to the girl: *mea dulcis Ipsithilla/Meae deliciae*,

<sup>18</sup> Commager (1965: 93) points out the same effect in 85. La Penna (1956: 146) reminds us that alliteration is part of the Roman poetic tradition as well as part of the linguistic vehicle for proverbs; cf. Cat. 115.8 and Ennius 621 V.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Alciphron 1.37.2; 3.62.2.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. W. B. Yeats, 'A Last Confession', 5–12, and 'Leda and the Swan'. *Fututiones* is a learned polysyllabic like *basiationes* ('kissifications', 7.1; cf. Quinn's (1973a) *ad loc.*). Neither word appears elsewhere except in Martial.

<sup>21</sup> *CIL* IV. 5213, 4196.

<sup>22</sup> Are *supinus* and *satur* puns on *penis* and *satyrus*?



*mei lepores* ('my sweet Miss Muffin/my doll, my delights'). The words describe the poem as much as the girl.

The piling up of clichés can put the reader off guard, as we see in 80.<sup>23</sup> Cliché can be varied by *double entendre*. The element of surprise is part of a dramatic flair in Catullus. Sometimes he only delays his potent line; sometimes he will talk around a subject before letting his reader in on the secret.<sup>24</sup>

The most effective variety of this technique is the euphemistic ellipsis which hints at a meaning only to be fully grasped at the end.<sup>25</sup> This technique Curran termed 'increasing explicitness'. Poem 115 explodes the Mentula cycle by using the name as a common, not a proper, noun. Poems 33 and 97 begin obscenely but manage to become more obscene by the specificity of the images. Poem 28, a political squib, is remarkable for the detail lavished on *irrumatio*. It is the accuracy of the obscenity here, Catullus' unwillingness to leave anything to the imagination, which makes him cram down *our* throat the poem, which leaves us exhausted.

Obscenity is humorous in Catullus' poetry. Many examples already given show this. The poet manipulates sexual anxiety in order to gain the reader's emotional energy for his point.

In poem 97, Aemilius is so disgusting that it makes no difference *utrum os an culum olfacerem* ('whether I should smell his mouth or his ass'). 'An exceedingly coarse epigram', but the art is noteworthy. We have pentameters which do not, as commonly in Latin poetry, complete the meaning of the hexameter, but rather proceed in a new direction, sometimes opposite to the hexameter. The statement of 1.1 is entirely undercut by the striking juxtaposition of 1.2; the balanced antithesis of 1.3 is exactly contradicted by 1.4; the proud claims of Aemilius in 1.9 are said to deserve the worst slave's punishment in 1.10; finally, the woman who will touch Aemilius (11) ought to be thought of as committing an obscenity (12). The poem says only that Aemilius is disgusting, but it employs the following modes of expression: comparison (2), evaluation (3–4), accusation of monstrosity (5), further

<sup>23</sup> Especially lines 1–2; cf. Curran (1966) for an excellent analysis. Clichés mislead us in 56, 58, and 115 also.

<sup>24</sup> Especially 36; also 11, 23, 26, 49, etc.

<sup>25</sup> Irony, see 16, 56, 57, 69, 80, 112; cf. Curran (1966).

comparisons (6, 8),<sup>26</sup> allegations of vanity (9), condemnation (10), insult (*aegrotus carnifex*, ‘pus-covered hangman’, 12). Catullus resented few things more than a fool thinking himself *venustus* (‘refined’),<sup>27</sup> and the more elegant a fool thought himself the coarser the treatment Catullus metes out. The mentions of a *ploxenus* (‘wagon-box’—a Padovan word according to Quintilian 1.5.8), a mule, and a grist-mill contribute to the suggestion of the opposite of sophistication (*urbanitas*): *rusticitas*, the barnyard.<sup>28</sup> To prove his right to belabour his victim, Catullus must show that he is *venustus*. The commonness of the thought is counterbalanced by the elegance of the insult. The implied question, hesitation over choice, decision for a reason which brings further insult on Aemilius (cf. 80) all merit a comparison of Catullus to the Cicero of the *pro Caelio* who ‘confuses’ Clodia’s brother with her husband. This poem musters fecal, urinal, and sexual obscenity, and then ends with an image which combines all with additional elements of blood and slaughter:

Quem siqua attingit, non illam posse putemus  
Aegroti culum lingere carnificis?

If any girl touches him, should we not think her able  
To lick the ass of a scabietic hangman?

The reader swims in obscenity; the only possible reaction is laughter. More gently does 105 arouse our amusement;

Mentula conatur Pipleum scandere montem:  
Musae furcillis praecipitem eiciunt.

Man-Tool tries to climb the Muses’ mountain:  
With bushy brooms, they hurl him headlong down.

The humour is in the upward motion of the hexameter and the downward fall of the pentameter, a rhythm also sustained by Mentula’s ostensible rise and fall on the ‘mountain’ and his metaphorical—but unachieved—sexual assault. Mentula, here and in 94, stands not only for the name of some individual, but also for the idea of obscene

<sup>26</sup> The former comparison is to a sewage disposal system, if the derivation of *ploxenum* given by Whatmough (1956: 48–9) is right.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. 12.4; 22.17; 39.8; 43.4; 86.3.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Curran (1966); Quintilian 6.3.17; and Cat. 36.19; 22.14.

poetry. Here, Catullus' new poetry is repulsed while scaling the Muses' heights; there, the vague 'they' of *dicunt* ('they say') consider offensive subject matter to demean all that which comes into contact with it: guilt by association (cf. 16). The poem illustrates Coleridge's translation of Schiller's definition of the elegiac couplet:<sup>29</sup>

In the hexameter rises the fountain's silvery column,  
In the pentameter, aye falling in melody back.

Poem 56 narrates a story for the sake of a laugh (*iocosam, cachinno, ride*). Catullus has caught an adolescent masturbating.<sup>30</sup> The young man is punished by Catullus for his sin—he rapes him. The laugh lies in the surprise and the surprise lies in the obscenity. The poetry is in the mode of relation, the mock serious tone, the 'poetic' justice.

Linguistic virtuosity helps obscenity contribute to poetry. Catullus probably considered his work paradigmatic for the neoterics; thus his metrical variety, his thematic variety, and a remarkable willingness to restructure genres. This last includes his transformation of elegy seen in poems 68 and 76, his adaptation of common obscene impulses to elegant poetic exercises, and his unparalleled intensity in love lyric in the modern sense. His essays in vocabulary include coining diminutives, compounding nouns, and introducing obscenity into poetry. The fashionable slang, the neologisms, the coaxing endearments of Catullus soon disappeared, nor did the Augustans imitate Catullus.

Catullus 33 contains one sentence of which four lines are an address (with justification) and four lines an indignant question (with justification).

O furum optime balneariorum,  
Vibenni pater, et cinaede fili  
(Nam dextra pater inquinatore,  
Culo filius est voraciore),  
Cur non exilium malasque in oras  
Itis, quandoquidem patris rapinae

5

<sup>29</sup> Also noted by Weinreich (1926: 29). Note the rhyme in the second half of the pentameter here and in 94. The second half of the pentameter conveys a sound like that of something bouncing down a steep hillside.

<sup>30</sup> Kroll's philological explanation of lines 4–5, accepted by Housman (1931: 402), is more convincing than that offered by the commentaries of Ellis (1889) and Quinn (1973a).

Notae sunt populo, et natis pilosas,  
Fili, non potes asse venditare.

O best of bath-room thieves,  
Papa Vibennius and sodomite son,  
(Father with the filthier hand,  
Son with the more grasping asshole),  
Why don't you go away and  
Get lost, since father's raping thefts  
Are known to all, and your hairy ass,  
Son, you can't sell it for a cent.

The first line refers indifferently both to father and son, the second to both, the third to the father, the fourth to the son, the fifth (*itis*) to both, six and the first half of seven to the father, the second half of seven and eight to the son. Formal balance is the principle of the entire poem. The dignity of the grammatical and acoustical balance is completely undercut by the content. Prosaic thought would imagine that *voracior* applies to *dextra* (*manus*) and *inquinatior* applies to *culus*; Catullus' hypallage results in both characteristics being applied to both organs of both men. Two destinations are given, surely both for both, so that the principle of duality is maintained (cf. 16.1–2). 'P', 't', 'f' and 'c' sounds are used to effect, but the particular excellence of 33 is the fit of sense, vocabulary, and message to the *nugae* ('trifles') form. Catullus puts his trifle into a one-sentence, spitting poem which specifies the names, the crimes, and the worthlessness and proper punishment for its addressees. Fancy talk in a snarl of distaste would be a poetic disaster. If lyric poetry is, as Valéry said, 'le développement d'une exclamation', or the explosion of an emotion, this is true lyric.

Egnatius, one of Lesbia's lovers (37.17ff.), who smiles all the time because he has good teeth, is the subject of poem 39. He is an enemy of Catullus and a boor: *neque elegantem, ut arbitror, neque urbanum* ('neither elegant, I think, nor sophisticated'). He smiles most inopportunistly, and to Catullus' mind *risu inepto res ineptior nulla est* ('nothing's more inept than an inept laugh'). Not until l. 14 have we any idea where the poem is going; until then we observe the repetition of *renidet ille* ('he beams again') and the appalling examples of where and when he smiles. Then comes the catalogue of extractions, none of which Egnatius can aspire to. Their ranging sonority is balanced by their geographical limitation: they all are in Italy. Egnatius is from

distant Spain, and in 1. 18 we learn that those folk are said to brush their teeth with urine. Catullus acknowledges the special brightness of Egnatius' teeth in order to conclude: *Hoc te amplius bibisse praedicet loti* ('This might proclaim you to have drunk so much more piss'). The information is trivial; the point is witty but not less trivial. Catullus makes poetry out of the situation, however, by employing an obscenity. To quote Valéry again: 'The effect swallows up the cause, the end absorbs the means.' What sort of an obscenity could bear the weight of the elaborate introduction? The need at 1.18 was for an elegant capstone: the one chosen shows Egnatius to be a barbarian fool, a man who prides himself on what he should be ashamed of (cf. 97.7ff.).

Obscenity of vocabulary at times is no more than a device to devalue the object. Clearly this is the case in 10.12, 25.1–3, 28.9–10, less clearly in 6.13. This devaluation applies to the pseudonym 'Mentula' and to Volusius' *cacata charta* ('shitty pieces of paper', 36). The refrain, opening and closing the poem, introduces and summarizes the *Annales*; it implies that anything else said of them is otiose. The image based on a word in 53 is clever, if *salaputium* means no more than dwarf or shrimp, but it is more effective if it means *salax mentula* ('lecherous cock').<sup>31</sup> In this case, small Calvus (Sen. *Contr.* 7.4.7) is a large *mentula*. The joke is in the paradoxical obscenity.

Vocabulary used for verbal shock is noteworthy in two other obscene poems of Catullus, 112 and 113.

Multus homo es Naso, neque tecum multus homo <est qui>  
 Descendit: Naso, multus es et pathicus. (112)

You're a *big* talker, Nosey, and so not a *big* crowd of men  
 Go down [-town] with you. Nosey, you're very *big*, and fucked, too.

I understand the first *multus* as 'wordy' and the second as a collective singular 'many a man' (following Kroll). The repetition creates a riddle which is only solved by the last word of the couplet, *pathicus*. The second line adumbrates the first *multus* to mean 'large'<sup>32</sup> and *descendit* to mean our colloquial 'go down' (cf. Juv. 11.164).

<sup>31</sup> As Bickel (1953) argues.

<sup>32</sup> In an obscene sense, cf. 115.8: *mentula magna*, and Lewis and Short's *Latin Dictionary* s.v. *multus*, I. A *ad finem*.

Consule Pompeio primum duo, Cinna, solebant  
 Maeciliam: facto consule nunc iterum  
 Manserunt duo, sed creverunt milia in unum  
 Singula. Fecundum semen adulterio. (113)

When Pompey was consul first, two men, Cinna, used to  
 frequent Maecilia. Consul now a second time  
 The Two remain, but multiplied a thousand men for each one.  
 The seed of secret sex is potent.

This poem (113) seems abstract for Catullus' type of invective. Wit here has felt little need for obscenity, or perhaps, Catullus wanted to avoid the intense force of explicit obscenity and wanted merely to have fun at Maecilia's expense. The aposiopesis with *solebant* halts the mind long enough to draw its attention to the act (or acts) suggested. The obscene point is reserved for the last line. Until then we are kept in a numerological daze. Every line has at least one numerical concept. Numbers contribute to that vertigo Catullus consciously induces in some of his love poems.<sup>33</sup>

Obscenity is an outlet for Catullus' aggressive impulses. Every poem considered in this paper served to release hostility.<sup>34</sup> The therapeutic value of writing poetry, endorsed by many poets, is as applicable to invective as to erotic verse. Invective poetry is a means for coming to terms with a strong emotion. Obscenity is therapeutic because it clarifies Catullus' feelings and grants relief from acute discomfort.

Aggression, coated with wit or some other form of humour, creates a distance between the poet and his reader and the obscenity described. The poet finds solace or perhaps momentary pleasure in

<sup>33</sup> Esp. 5 and 7. Catullus' skill at suiting common talk to poetic expression appears in 67.20–2. The 'door' says of the young wife's husband:

Languidior tenera cui pendens sicula beta  
 Numquam se mediam sustulit ad tunicam.

Whose little curved dirk hanging down, more droopy than a flaccid beet,  
 Never yet raised itself to the horizontal.

The expression sounds colloquial, but it fits this odd lament.

<sup>34</sup> Many of Catullus' love lyrics possess hostile undertones: to say *Quaeris quot mihi basiationes/Tuae, Lesbia, sint satis superque* ('You ask how many of your kisses for me,/ Lesbia, are enough and more') is to show frustration and annoyance, and the answer, however beautiful, is a way of rejecting the question. The hostility is clear in the poems where Catullus feels rejected (70, 72, 75, 76).

picturing Lesbia's degradation (58). Just so, the lover pictures his unfaithful woman in another's arms, or three hundred others' arms (cf. 11.18, 37.7–8). Two lines of vague instruction come after the fourteen-line epic introduction to poem 11. A four-line stanza follows in which images and vocabulary become clearer and more obscene until the hardly bearable *Ilia rumpens* ('busting their balls'). This sexual climax is followed by one of the quietest passages in the corpus of Catullus. The greatness of the poem does not lie in the daring use of Sapphics for invective nor in the obscenity, but the obscenity is an element of the greatness. It is requisite for the power of the crescendo, and it highlights the pathetic beauty of the final stanza.

The obscene literary criticism poems (e.g., 16, 36) and the obscene attacks on obnoxious individuals (e.g., 97, 98) also separate the victim from Catullus and his reader. Poem 98 is a caricature, a grotesque, which makes fatuous Victus nothing but tongue, a foul tongue.<sup>35</sup> The wit is weakened at the start by calling him *putide* ('putrid') rather than something like the ambiguous *optime* of 33.1. The obscenity is loosed in l. 4, and we must limp through two more verses. The epigram's faults as poetry, we might imagine, betray a genesis from haste and anger. It develops the conceit, but the verses are badly timed and have no tension.

In 28.9–13, Catullus and friends are, remarkably, the victims.

'O Memmi, bene me ac diu supinum  
Tota ista trabe lentus irrumasti.  
Sed, quantum video, pari fuistis  
Casu: nam nihilo minore verpa  
Farti estis.

'Calm Memmius, all too well you made me, long on my back,  
Deep downing all that mighty ram, suck cock.'  
But, as far as I can see, you fellows are in the same  
Position. For you with no less a prick  
Are stuffed full.

Their submission to oafs is objectified, literally or not, by a gross sexual act.<sup>36</sup> Rather than the manly, indignant *irrumabo*, we have the

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Fabullus the nose, 13.14; Mentula the *mentula*, 115.8

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Lucilius' praetor, fr. 501–2 (Loeb).

lament *me irrumasti*. The shame is heightened by *bene, diu, supinum, tota, lentus* and the mighty image of *trabe*. The hyperbolic exaggeration indeed is intended to lessen the shame, for eventually the disgrace consequent to being taken advantage of yields to the fact of having been totally powerless and therefore guiltless. The poem says no more than *At vobis mala multa* ('Well, screw you') but that theme is reinforced by images, metaphor, rhetorical devices, proverb, and structure. The obscenity salves Catullus' memory and permits him to spend his hostility. The same is true of 41, *Ameana puella defututa* ('Ameana, the fucked-out female').

Catullus 43 also treats the girl-friend of the Formian spendthrift and again assures her that her charms are minimal. But whereas the former hendecasyllabic poem is structurally loose, the latter effectively makes every line a complete clause.<sup>37</sup> Catullus effectively employs anaphora, not only of words (*nec* and *te*) but also of entire clausulae. Furthermore, each of the five descriptive ablative phrases has only an adjective until the final one which adds two verbs to its climax. Catullus' indignation passes from disbelief at the provinciality of the Province to a condemnation of the age: *O saeculum insapiens et infacetum* ('What a witless world, so tasteless!').

Catullus 37 contains an insult in nearly every line (except the section on Lesbia, lines 10–14).<sup>38</sup> The first verse personifies the *taberna* and gives it a status equal to that of the lovers within. Catullus meditates a double obscene punishment: sexual assault for the patrons and a pictorial assault for the front of the *taberna*. Both will be accomplished by the male sexual organ, pictured or actual. The poet resents his rivals' assumption that they are elegant (1. 5, and see the discussion above of *venustus* in poem 97) as much as their sexual boasting. He will abuse them in their hundreds. Like all rejected lovers, Catullus lays the blame on his amatory rivals and not on the woman who obviously enjoys associating with 'lechers in the alley' (1.16).

<sup>37</sup> Structure: salutation, descriptive statement (four times), close of salutation, question (twice), exclamation.

<sup>38</sup> *Cuniculosae* (1. 18) is a word for rabbit, to be sure, but Catullus the punster (cf. lines 1, 2: *taberna/contubernales, pileatis/pila*) would be aware that the word could recall both *cunus* and *culus* ('cunt' and 'asshole'). See also *supinum* in its obscene context, 28.9–10.



This poem clearly demonstrates the aggressive quality of obscenity combined with its intellectual playfulness, humour, and linguistic versatility. The changes in direction reflect the agitation of Catullus' mind: hate and vengeance dominate the first ten lines, then love appears, and then recollection of Lesbia's present location and of her companions returns and, with it, hatred and scurrility.

Obscenity seems to partake of the criminal and reprehensible as well as the sexual. Its power is magical. The laughter it arouses is a release of anxiety. The poet, consciously or unconsciously, seeks to control this source of emotion. The poet employs sexual imagery for a non-sexual end. Obscenity is not proven by physical reaction, but requires a stimulus which the reader finds not beautiful, or not only beautiful, but also distancing. That is, obscenity is defined not merely by subject matter or language but depends largely on the relation between creator and audience and the social context the two are found in. Love (in a wide sense) and anger are the subjects of Catullus' poetry (cf. *odi et amo*, 'I hate and love'); a vocabulary of neologisms and unusually common, coarse, and strange words distinguishes it. Catullus favours a wit daring in its images whether obscene or not. Obscenity is not necessary to poetry, but it has made a significant contribution to the work of Catullus. Obscenity is this poet's tool for devaluing and denigrating that which he hates. The emotions of hate and love find rhetorical and poetic expression in *laudatio* and *detractatio*, *vituperatio* ('praise' and 'censure').

Obscenities were inscribed on Roman walls, sometimes in verse.<sup>39</sup> Cato Maior, the Roman moralist par excellence, could be made to say that it was better for young men to visit whores than to seduce others' wives.<sup>40</sup> The story illustrates the Roman combination of conventional morality and sexual licence. Cicero was very sensitive to verbal obscenity<sup>41</sup> although obscene innuendo was, in other contexts, a

<sup>39</sup> Cf. *CIL* IV. 4185, 1427, etc.

<sup>40</sup> *Hor. Sat.* 1.2.28–36; Acro *ad loc.*; cf. Plautus *Curc.* 37–8.

<sup>41</sup> In a letter to L. Papirius Paetus, *Fam.* 9.22, he explains which phrases one should avoid. All are innocent—as Cicero is at pains to show—but can be maliciously misunderstood; e.g., *cum* (adv.) *nos* or *cum nobis* ('when we' or 'with us') suggests *cunnos* or *cunnis* ('cunts'); *bini* ('two') suggests Gk. *binei* ('fuck'); *intercapedo* ('respite') suggests Gk. *perdomai* ('fart'), etc. 'I preserve and will preserve... the diffidence of Plato.

standard Ciceronian device.<sup>42</sup> Obscenity was common in political attacks, and Caesar was unusual in his forgiveness for the obscene insults of Memmius, Calvus, and Catullus himself (Suet. *Div. Jul.* 73). The obscenity of Pompeian graffiti often shocks but seldom is witty;<sup>43</sup> the rare exception, such as

Miximus in lecto fateor peccavimus hospes  
Si dices quare, nulla matella fuit

We peed in bed, I confess we sinned, my host.  
If you'll ask me why—there was no pot

seems almost inspired by Catullus.<sup>44</sup>

Obscenity for the Romans was not necessarily artless or vulgar. We should hesitate to judge Catullus' obscene poetry by crude standards as 'basically unpoetic' or 'coarse'. It can be, and in Martial not infrequently is, merely versified insult. But although obscenity in poetry is a device of limited emotional range, it presents unlimited verbal possibilities, and sound and form and style and expression are poetry's province.

D. O. Ross says of Catullus' epigrams<sup>45</sup> (poems 69–116) that they are part of a 'relatively artless' tradition, limited and confined. 'Catullus' invective epigrams, differing ... in poetic quality ... from his polymetric invectives, may be seen to represent this tradition [amateur, occasional, invective poetry] ... which he could not change.'<sup>46</sup> Catullus, in his epigrams, 'wilfully ignored what technical and stylistic features he and the other *poetae novi* had developed'.<sup>47</sup> Although the polymetrics (poems 1–60) do contain more colloquialisms, metaphors, diminutives, compound adjectives, and *hapax legomena*,<sup>48</sup> Catullus handles the same subjects in both polymetrics and epigrams,<sup>49</sup> and both varieties are subject to the same aesthetic of obscenity. Therefore,

And so I have written all this to you in covert language, things which the Stoics say as openly as possible<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. *pro Caelio* 32; Nisbet (1961: 192–7): 'The *in Pisonem* as an Invective'.

<sup>43</sup> e.g. *hic ego puellas multas futui* ('here I fucked many girls', *CIL* IV. 2175); *Murtis bene fellas* ('Myrtis, you suck well', *ibid.*, 2273).

<sup>44</sup> *CIL* IV. 4957; cf. Cat. 80.1. Catullus' lines sometimes evoke memories of the graffiti, but this vocabulary sets the 'crude' emotional tone which contrasts to the elegant poetic development of the thought. Cf. La Penna (1956: 151–3).

<sup>45</sup> Ross (1969: 171).

<sup>46</sup> Ross (1969: 155).

<sup>47</sup> Ross (1969: 147).

<sup>48</sup> Elder (1951: 111–12).

<sup>49</sup> Commager (1965: 93).

although it may be true that the epigrams are sometimes more coarse and direct than the witty and sophisticated polymetrics,<sup>50</sup> there is no lack of directness in the latter and no lack of sophistication in the former. That is to say, Ross's linguistic distinction between the polymetrics and the epigrams, a useful corrective to Wheeler's simplistic view of the unity of the 'shorter poems',<sup>51</sup> is often not applicable to problems of literary criticism. It does not apply, for instance, to themes, to tone, to imagery, nor to willingness to employ obscenity.

Ross notes that the epigrams are part of a tradition which has often been called 'unpoetic'.<sup>52</sup> Kenneth Quinn, a critic generally sympathetic to Catullus, remarks,<sup>53</sup> after a discussion of 59 and a mention of the Gellius epigrams: 'In these poems Catullus' poetic intent was at its lowest level.... The poems ... have qualities that can make us glad they have been preserved: intensity, ... telling use of language, and a lively imaginativeness in their obscenity. But to suppose Catullus intended them to be taken as poetry ... is surely absurd.' This confinement of poetry is absurd. Not only are the lines in verse, but some of them are choliambic and hendecasyllabic, therefore part of Ross's 'new serious poetry' of Rome, written in short verse forms and possessing a special vocabulary, technique, creed; it is part of the polymetric poetry which was to rival Greek poetry.<sup>54</sup>

Dr Johnson thought that brief poems can only possess elegance and neatness. Catullus would claim more, and his *oeuvre* stands opposed to Dr Johnson's strictures on diction, strictures adopted by the Roman Augustan poets: 'Words too familiar, or too remote, defeat the purpose of a poet. From these sounds which we hear on small or on coarse occasions, we do not easily receive strong impressions, or delightful images.'<sup>55</sup> This concept was not new in Catullus' day, but

<sup>50</sup> Ross (1969: 171). La Penna (1956: 148) decries 'superstizione delle forme'.

<sup>51</sup> Wheeler (1934: 218–41). <sup>52</sup> Ross (1969: 174).

<sup>53</sup> Quinn (1969: 33–4).

<sup>54</sup> To paraphrase Ross (1969: 160–1). There is the additional historical problem of judging Catullus' conversational poetry by the classicism of metre, diction, and genre we find in Vergil and Horace. Horace's obscene epodes, 8 and 12, are the unsuccessful efforts of a poet attempting an alien genre. Their obscenity is flaccid.

<sup>55</sup> *Life of Dryden* quoted by T. S. Eliot, 'Johnson as Critic and Poet' (first publ. 1944), in Eliot (1957: 213).

he defied it by deploying both the familiar and the remote to give us strong and delightful impressions. Where Catullus seems vulgar in any sense, he accuses more than he reflects his age.<sup>56</sup> Charm and taste are the touchstone of Catullus' poetry as of his preferences in love and friendship.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Charles Baudelaire's prefaces to *Les fleurs du mal*: 'La France traverse une phase de vulgarité... On m'a attribué tous les crimes que je racontais...'

<sup>57</sup> Havelock (1939: 114). I thank John Herington and Gregson Davis for reading this paper and improving it.

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## Catullus and the Art of Crudity

*Amy Richlin*

That invective can be an art form is evident from the number of great Roman writers who chose to write some.<sup>1</sup> For the satirists, invective was a basic tool, one that provided the genre with not only content but structure—attacker, victim, audience. But an even more elemental strain in invective, the Priapic threat to rape interlopers and the desire to degrade, provided material for a highly individualistic poet who cannot be classified as a satirist: Catullus. Indeed, it is hard to classify him at all; but sexual themes were important for him, he made invective a major part of his poetic art, and he in turn served as a model for many who came after him.

Catullus stands at the height of an era, a creator of highly sophisticated personal verse in an age that valued individualism. Yet his Alexandrianism was something of a fad, something he shared with a select erudite few; he can give the impression of being *lepidus* always, polished and witty. It is difficult to find a poem of his that is not constructed with perfect elegance; then again, the poems ring with vitality, and a great many depend on ideas or images that are not elegant at all. Out of all the polymetrics and epigrams, sixty-two—well over half—include invective or sexual material, some of the coarsest in

<sup>1</sup> Publications on Roman sexuality, real and literary, have greatly multiplied since this essay first appeared as a chapter in Richlin 1983. I have added brief references to major work on obscenity in Catullus and apologize for any omissions. Many thanks to Julia Gaisser for her patience and help.

Latin verse. Quintilian was accurate in describing Catullus as a poet in the iambic manner (10.1.96).<sup>2</sup>

The first thing that stands out in Catullus' invective and sexual poems is how many are concerned with theft and are framed as threats against a person who has stolen or might steal something of Catullus'. Of approximately forty invective poems, ten excoriate thieves of one sort or another,<sup>3</sup> while several others threaten sexual rivals of the poet or people who have been unfaithful to their lovers.<sup>4</sup> Some of the poems complain of the theft of quite commonplace things—money, table napkins, notebooks. Most of these are similar in tone to the poems against thieves of love: the girl who has taken Catullus' notebooks is a *putida moecha* ('stinking adulteress', 42), while the faithless Lesbia is reduced to the activities of a street whore (58); the man who has taken Catullus' bric-a-brac is a *cinaedus* ('faggot') of hyperbolic effeminacy (25) whom Catullus will 'scrawl' with lashes, while he will punish Lesbia's lovers by irrumating them (orally raping them, making *cinaedi* of them) and scrawling all over the housefront (37).

<sup>2</sup> Much that has been written on Catullus touches on aspects to be considered here; the following list can only be a selection. The most relevant general studies are: Arkins (1982), Bardon (1970b: 65–74); Fitzgerald (1995: 34–86), Granarolo (1967: 160–99); Janan (1994, on the erotic), Lateiner (1977; reprinted in this volume, pp. 261–81); Macleod (1973b); Skinner (1993; reprinted in this volume, pp. 447–75), (2003); and on the sources of Catullus' invective, Hezel (1932: 39–42); Montero Cartelle (1975), following closely Cèbe (1965). Cf. also Skinner (1982), an in-depth study of the relation between sexual and political invective in Catullus. Of the studies on one or a few poems, the following represent critical principles productive of valid analysis of Catullus' sexual imagery: on c. 2, Miller (1994: 66–9); on 13, Gowers (1993: 229–44), Witke (1980); on 16, Fehling (1974), Buchheit (1976a); on 17, Khan (1969a); on 29, Scott (1971), Minyard (1971), and Skinner (1979a); on 37, Nappa (2001: 59–84); on 42, in the first study to emphasize *Volksjustiz* imagery in Catullus, Fraenkel (1961; partially reprinted in this volume, pp. 356–68); and on Catullan invective against women, Skinner (1979b). Cf. also Richlin (1981).

Useful studies of poems containing sexual imagery: Jocelyn (1980), Morgan (1977), Bertman (1978), Cairns (1973), Richardson (1963), Sandy (1971a), Winter (1973), Konstan (1979), Cameron (1976), Gratwick (1967), Tanner (1972), Curran (1966), Whatmough (1956 [on 17 and 97]), Khan (1967), Gnilka (1973) and (1975, *contra* Lenz 1963), Morgan (1979), Khan (1969b), Macleod (1973a; reprinted in this volume, pp. 35–44), Forsyth (1977), Housman (1931: 402). The commentary of Ellis (1889) is by far the soundest on questions involving sexual material.

<sup>3</sup> Cat. 25, 28, 29, 33, 42, 47, 59, 103, 110; cf. 12, 30.

<sup>4</sup> His rivals for Lesbia, Cat. 11, 37, 39, 58, 71, 79, 91; his rivals for Juventius, 15, 21, ?40, 81, ?82; other adulterers, 57, 67.19–48, 113.

The similarity between this attitude and that of the god in the Priapic poems is evident and close. Most significant in this regard are Catullus' threats to irrumate Lesbia's lovers, combined with other suggestions that their virility is questionable or will be forced to submit to his own (cf. 74); his threats to irrumate or otherwise rape men who would take his boy; and the sort of insults he directs against women, as being whorish or physically repulsive. All these poses are characteristic of the persona of Priapus, who is particularly concerned to keep thieves out of his garden and who does so by means of rape, or threats of rape. In addition, the bipolar perception of women as either beloved or ugly and slutish is typical of Priapic invective against women and seems to reflect the options of the potentially aroused male, to accept or reject a woman as sexually worthy.<sup>5</sup>

Yet Catullus bases another group of poems on the reverse of this attitude; in them he decries others who adopt a Priapic pose. Sometimes he sneers at a Priapic figure, like the domineering and niggardly commander Piso (*verpus... Priapus*, 'circumcised... Priapus', 47.4); sometimes the poet himself is the victim, as when he describes his irrumation by Memmius (28.9–10).<sup>6</sup> In the famous poem against Caesar and Pompey (29), they are both protectors and dupes of Mamurra; they are addressed successively with the words *cinaede Romule, haec videbis et feres* ('faggot Romulus, will you see these things and endure them?'),<sup>7</sup> while Mamurra = *mentula* ('prick', 29.13). Catullus' anti-Priapic stance produces the whole series of poems against Mamurra under the name of Mentula (94, 105, 114, 115; cf. 57)<sup>8</sup> as well as less specifically antiphallic epigrams against sexual profligacy, especially the series against 'Gellius' (80, 88, 89, 90, 91), although the description of Gellius' penchant for fellatio in 80 amounts to an irrumation of him by the poet. Catullus portrays himself as victim less often than as

<sup>5</sup> For Catullus' invective against women and its relation to conventional invective against women, cf. Skinner (1979b).

<sup>6</sup> For a putative parallel in real life, cf. Vanggaard (1972: 107), who quotes T. E. Lawrence on abuse of soldiers in the Turkish army.

<sup>7</sup> Cat. 29.5, 9. The addressees of 29 have been identified variously as: Caesar, Pompey, and the Roman people (Scott [1971]; Young [1969]); Caesar, Pompey, and Crassus (Minyard [1971]); and Caesar and Pompey (Cameron [1976]). All agree on the sexual implications of the poem.

<sup>8</sup> These seem to have been the poems that offended Caesar, cf. Suet. *Iul.* 73.

master, but he finds the counter-Priapic stance useful for showing his enemies as brutes; he adopts a similar pose when depicting himself as brutally injured by Lesbia, for example, at the end of 11, when he compares himself to a flower (normally associated with brides) cut down by a plow (normally a phallic image) at the meadow's edge.<sup>9</sup>

Thus Catullus' two poses: in one he espouses the brutal, violent attitude of Priapus toward a world composed of his own garden and of thieves subject to rape; in the reverse, Catullus finds it useful to decry the Priapism of others. Mamurra, for instance, nicknamed Mentula, is typified by lust for money (29), land (114–15), other men's wives (57, 94), and poetic fame (105), all of which are goods defended by Catullus when he himself plays the part of Priapus. Nowhere is the ambivalence of this schema, and Catullus' consciousness of it, clearer than in 16, a poem that explains his attitude toward all his sexual poetry.

Pedicabo ego vos et irrumabo,  
 Aureli pathice et cinaede Furi,  
 qui me ex versiculis meis putastis,  
 quod sunt molliculi, parum pudicum.  
 nam castum esse decet pium poetam 5  
 ipsum, versiculos nihil necesse est;  
 qui tum denique habent salem ac leporem,  
 si sunt molliculi ac parum pudici,  
 et quod pruriant incitare possunt,  
 non dico pueris, sed his pilosis 10  
 qui duros nequeunt movere lumbos.  
 vos, quod milia multa basiorum  
 legistis, male me marem putatis?  
 pedicabo ego vos et irrumabo.

I will bugger you and I will fuck your mouths,  
 Aurelius, you queer, and you faggot, Furius,  
 who have thought me, from my little verses,  
 because they are a little delicate, to be not quite straight.  
 For it is proper for a pious poet to be chaste  
 himself, but there is no need for his little verses to be so;

<sup>9</sup> For the imagery of the last stanza of 11, cf. Richardson (1963: 106). On Catullus' pose as victim, see Fitzgerald (1995: 169–84); Nappa (2001: 85–105); Skinner (1997).



which only then have wit and charm,  
 if they are a little delicate and not too clean,  
 and can arouse a lewd itching,  
 I don't mean in boys, but in these hairy men  
 who can't move a hard groin.  
 You, because you have read 'many thousands  
 of kisses', think me not quite a man?  
 I will bugger you and I will fuck your mouths.

His verses themselves are *molliculi* (lines 4, 8); like *cinaedi*, they (as it were) waggle their asses at the reader (*parum pudici*, line 8; cf. Catullus' own *libellus*, smooth and pretty, 1.1–2) and cause the reader to become aroused (lines 9–11). And like agile dancing girls (cf. *Pr.* 19.4–5, *Mart.* 6.71, 14.203), they can arouse even the impotent; they appeal even to males usually sexually passive—'hairy men' who are not sexually able (cf. Martial's Stoic/pathics). On the other hand, the meretricious nature of his lines (a joke) and, what is more serious, the vulnerability of his proclamations of love (lines 12–13) do not imply that he himself is not fully virile (*parum pudicum*, line 4; *male ... marem*, line 13); and so he threatens his putative critics with both the rape Priapus reserves for youths and the rape he reserves for older men (lines 1, 14) and calls them *pathice* and *cinaede* (line 2). His direct address to Aurelius and Furius both shows the humorous intent of the whole poem and recalls the appearance of Furius and Aurelius as companions of the poet in his most vulnerable moment (11).<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Cat. 16 has been the subject of endless discussion, stemming from several problems: (a) the 'reality' of the threat in 1 and 14; (b) the nature of the situation that prompted Catullus to reply to Furius and Aurelius; (c) the identity of the *versiculi* (3, 6); (d) the meaning of *molliculi* (4, 8), *parum pudicum* (4, 8), *castum* (5), *non dico* (10), *his pilosis* (10), *qui ... lumbos* (11), *male ... marem* (13); (e) the referent of *milia multa basiorum* ('many thousands of kisses')—Cat. 5, 7, or 48, or all three? Problem (a) has been haunted by a red herring, the 'slang' meaning of *irrumare* (cf. Richlin [1981]), and by arguments attempting to exclude the direct sexual image from consideration. Problems (b), (c), and (e) are similar to each other and not pertinent to the present discussion. Problem (c) has sidetracked several analyses, e.g., Sandy (1971a) and esp. Kinsey (1966). Fehling (1974) and Buchheit (1976a) surmount most of these obstacles; although Buchheit attacks Fehling (346–7), the two essays together (each with modifications) constitute a complete reading of the poem. Fehling correctly adduces the theme of punitive rape and the idea of friendly insult; Buchheit, besides providing a lengthy catalog of the critical literature on 16, argues that the poem is a sort of literary allegory, all the sexual elements representing ways of writing and reading poetry. Both

Catullus' direct address to Furius and Aurelius in 16 is also typical of his invective poetry as a whole. The invective poems tend to fall into verbal patterns, most common of which is the beginning with direct address of the victim by name, often introducing a question or series of questions. Two closely related techniques are the satiric dialogue, as in the two dialogues with prostitutes (10, 42; cf. 55), and the use of rhetorical questions. This pattern helps to make the poem lively, especially since the reader finds himself in the position of the victim; the reader is simultaneously confronted with the vocative case, which identifies him with the victim, and reassured by the naming of a specific other person who is the 'real' victim. As a literary technique this has many relatives in other genres.<sup>11</sup> But its liveliness surely derives from one of its less respectable family connections, as will be seen (for example) from the following, the beginning of 88:

Quid facit is, Gelli, qui cum matre atque sorore  
 prurit et abiectis pervigilat tunicis?  
 quid facit is, patrum qui non sinit esse maritum?

arguments are valid, and they are certainly not mutually exclusive. One correction: tempting as it is to compare 10–11 with Persius 1.19–21 (so Buchheit, 342–6), it is not possible to take the *pilosis* ('hairy men') as anally penetrated by the *versiculi*. Although poems act as aggressive phalli elsewhere and Cat. 16 itself constitutes the verbal equivalent of the threat in 1 and 14, Catullus is saying that his *versiculi* have wit only if they can arouse *quod prurit... his pilosis... qui duros nequeunt movere lumbos* ('an itching in these hairy men who cannot move a hard groin'). The *versiculi* are described like *cinaedi, molliculi ac parum pudici* ('a little delicate and not quite straight'); *quod prurit* ('an itching') should be active rather than pathic, on the analogy of 88.1–2, *qui... prurit* (of Gellius with his female relations); *his pilosis* is contrasted with *pueris* and, in its context (8–9), must represent subjects difficult to arouse; thus *qui... lumbos* is epexegetic of *quod... possunt*, i. e., 'even when they can't ...', while *duros... lumbos* is an attribute of full-grown men (cf. Juv. 6.377); finally, even if *movere lumbos* can = *movere nates* ('move the buttocks'), it is a great strain to take *duros movere lumbos* ('move a hard groin') = *movere nates*. (As it is, of the parallels cited by Buchheit, Pers. 1.20 *lumbum* means only 'genital area' = *podex* ['anus'] by extension [a distortion typical of Persius]; Petron. Sat. 140.6 *lumborum solutorum* = 'weakened groin' and in context implies impotence; and Pr. 19.4, *fluctuante lumbo* ['undulating groin'], describes a dancer, so that *lumbo* cannot be specifically assigned to her *nates*. Lucil. 278 and 330 Marx make a useful comparison [Richlin (1992a: 166)].) See now especially Arkins (1982: 105–6); Fitzgerald (1995: 34–58); Nappa (2001: 45–57); Selden (1992: 477–89 = this volume, pp. 514–44).

<sup>11</sup> For a comprehensive list and discussion of the kinds of questions used by Catullus, cf. Granarolo (1967: 310–24, 344–5).

What does a man do, Gellius, who itches with lust with his mother  
and sister, and stays up all night with underwear cast aside?  
What does a man do, who doesn't let his uncle be a husband?

The pattern of damaging question and obvious answer (unspoken by the poet) is the same as that adopted by the claqueurs who were Catullus' contemporaries, in fact, by the hateful Clodius himself.<sup>12</sup> Cicero provides an eyewitness account of the taunts with which Clodius vexed Pompey (*Q. fr.* 2.3.2):

versus denique obscenissimi in Clodium et Clodiam dicerentur. Ille furens et exsanguis interrogabat suos in clamore ipso quis esset qui plebem fame necaret. Respondebant operae: 'Pompeius'. Quis Alexandriam ire cuperet. Respondebant: 'Pompeius'. Quem ire vellent. Respondebant: 'Crassum'.

finally, the most obscene verses against Clodius and Clodia were recited. So he, raving and pale, put questions to his own supporters, in the midst of this uproar: 'Who was it who was killing the people by starvation?' The claque answered: 'Pompey!' 'Who wanted to go to Alexandria?' They answered: 'Pompey!' 'Whom did they want to go?' They answered: 'Crassus!'

According to Plutarch (*Life of Pompey* 48.7), the catechism was not always so political in its subject matter, but made insinuations about Pompey's effeminacy. The technique of forcing the audience into participation in an obscene dialogue is also similar to the workings of graffiti, in which the passerby is forced to see invective addressed either to another victim or to any passerby. The crudest type of invective in Catullus' poetry, name calling (e.g., 25), resembles verbal abuse even more than it resembles graffiti and is closely related to the sort of face-to-face confrontation or billingsgate which was so common a political event in Catullus' Rome.

In turn, it seems possible that the false names assigned by Catullus to some of his addressees evolve out of a sophistication of this

<sup>12</sup> The essays on Cat. 29 by Cameron (1976), Minyard (1971), Scott (1971), and Skinner (1979a) have all recognized this connection and developed the comparison more or less; cf. esp. the list of parallels in Minyard, 177–8, and Scott, 20–2, on the technique of questioning. Fraenkel (1961 = this volume, pp. 356–68) discusses Cat. 42 as *flagitatio* ('insulting public demand'), a connection of Catullan matter with actual public displays of violence extended by Gnlika (1973). Quinn (1972: 267–77) includes a more general treatment of political poetry. On Cat. 42, see now Nappa (2001: 142–7); Selden (1992: 482–4 = pp. 524–7).

penchant for name calling, that is, renaming the victim. The pleasure derived from this name substitution is the same as that derived from riddles, where the addressee has to identify a person or object by several absurdly connected attributes, and the technique was one of which colloquial Latin was fond.<sup>13</sup> The substitution of ‘Mentula’, ‘Prick’, for the name ‘Mamurra’ is the prime example in Catullus, and he makes the name/thing/name connection explicitly in 115.8, *non homo sed vero mentula magna minax*—‘Not a man, but truly a big bad prick’. Such riddles and word games can be found in Priapic poetry (7, 54, 67) and in epigram (e.g., Martial’s identification of Philaenis with a phallus, 2.33).<sup>14</sup> (In contrast, the poet’s own name recurs again and again, undistorted, insistent, and downstage.) The other famous name substitution in Catullus is that of Lesbia for Clodia, with its literary and Hellenizing resonances; but the substitution of Lesbius for Clodius (79) can hardly have been meant to be complimentary. Considering the scabrous nature of most of Catullus’ invective, it is only surprising that more of his victims are not addressed by obviously fictitious names; presumably a man who felt no inhibitions in castigating Caesar and Pompey was not hindered by other social scruples.

Other characteristics of Catullus’ invective poetry are not peculiar to him. With all writers of Latin invective he shares a preoccupation with smell and disgusting physical details, and a loathing of *cinaedi*, prostitutes, oral sex (he barely mentions cunnilingus [?frag. 2]), and excrement, especially feces. In his descriptions of prostitutes and sordid sexual intercourse he does return to one special image, that of the streets and alleyways: Lesbia’s lovers are *semitarii moechi*, ‘back-street adulterers’ (37.16), while she debases herself *in quadriviis et angiportis*, ‘in the crossroads and alleyways’ (58.4), and other prostitutes are encountered in the city streets (10, ?42.7–9, 55.6–7).

But in combining food, sex, excreta, money, and literary fame<sup>15</sup> into a series of connected, reverberant images, Catullus puts his own

<sup>13</sup> Collected by Ellis (1889) *ad* 115: *non homo sed piper*, etc. The technique remains a part of oral humor, as with the parodic names of the Princeton eating clubs and the Yale secret societies: Cap and Gown = ‘Clap in Groin’ or ‘Crap and Drown’, Key and Seal = ‘Pee and Squeal’, Snake and Book = ‘Shake and Bake’.

<sup>14</sup> On the personification of the phallus see Richlin (1992a: 67, 115–19, 135).

<sup>15</sup> Parts of this complex have been discussed by critics of single poems or small groups of poems: notably, Skinner (1979a: 140–1), on irrumation = stuffing in Cat.

stamp on one of the main complexes of Latin invective. The relation between eating and depravity is general in Roman culture as reflected in literature, as for example in the distaste for the *popina* (e.g., Lucil. 11 Marx; Hor. *Epist.* 1.14.21; Juv. 8.171–82), a sort of lower-class restaurant, and in the normal association of dinner parties and feasting with sexual activity. And the hungry parasite is a constant figure of fun in Roman comedy, who hopes for a meal as his patron hopes for a girl, and who occasionally has a quasi-sexual name, like Peniculus in the *Menaechmi*. On this simplest level, Catullus connects his good feeling of satiety with readiness for violent, active penetration in the Ipsitilla poem (32.7–11): the poet describes himself as both *pransus*, ‘having eaten’, and *satur*, ‘full’, while his penis is aggressively erect (line 11). The same sort of sexual and material gluttony is what the poet deplores in his enemies, as in 29, where Mamurra commits infinite adulteries (lines 6–8) and steals infinite amounts of money (lines 14, 17–20, 22); Catullus combines the three ideas of money, sex, and food throughout poem 29, as in lines 13–14:

ut ista vestra diffututa mentula  
ducenties comesset aut trecenties.

so that that fucked-out prick of yours  
may eat up two or three hundred thou.

Mamurra (with those who tolerate him) is *impudicus* (‘promiscuous’), *vorax* (‘hungry’; cf. *devorare patrimonia*, line 22; *vorax adulter*, 57.8), and *aleo* (‘a gambler’); that is, they all have excessive appetites for sex, food, and money. Conversely, lack of money equals unsatisfied hunger, as in 28 (*famem*, line 5) and 47, where Catullus attacks Porcius, Socraton, and Piso (*fames mundi*, line 2; *verpus... Priapus*,

28, and on hunger and thievery in Cat. 47; Minyard (1971: 179), on the connection between feasting and sexual depravity; Khan (1969a: 95–6), on the connection between ‘gastric and sexual hunger’; Konstan (1979), on *satur/irrumatus* (‘full/irrumated’) in Cat. 21; Whatmough (1956: 46–7), on the recurrence of the connection between *meiere/mingere* (‘urinating’) and *dentes* (‘teeth’); Khan (1967: 613), on the connection between kisses and food; Cairns (1973: 21–2), on parallels for the enumeration of kisses; Bertman (1978), on the relationship between kisses and verbal imagery. See now Fitzgerald (1995: 64–72), on irrumation and silencing; Richlin (1988), on food in Catullus; and especially Gowers (1993), on food in Roman comic genres in general. On *the parasite* and the *scurra*, see Corbett (1986).

line 4), who unjustly have ‘elegant feasts’ (*convivia lauta*, line 5), while Catullus’ friends Veranius and Fabullus are outside *in trivio*, ‘at the fork in the road’ (line 7), the place of the outcast.

At the same time, the abuse of enemies is both sexual and oral. This is carried to an extreme in 108, where Cominius, his ‘old age befouled by unclean morals’ (an insinuation of sexual perversion, oral [cf. 99.10] or anal), will be torn apart by the mob and the various parts of his body given as food to wild animals—first of all, his ‘tongue, enemy of good men’ (*inimica bonorum/lingua*, lines 3–4). Memmius irrumates Catullus (28.9–10), who is here *supinus* as he was in 32; likewise the master of Veranius and Fabullus abuses them by ‘stuffing’ them (*farti estis*, 28.13) with his penis (insultingly specified as a circumcised one [*verpa*], line 12). Similarly, when Aurelius seduces Catullus’ *puer*, Catullus calls Aurelius *pater esuritionum*, ‘father of hungers’ (21.1; cf. Furius in 23) and complains he not only wants to ‘bugger’ the boy (*pedicare*, line 4) but is teaching the boy to ‘be hungry and thirsty’ (*esurire/. . . et sitire*, lines 10–11). The sexual dimension of this brings in Catullus, who says he will irrumate Aurelius (line 8), that is, will fill his mouth for him (emphasizing the sexual element in the anal/oral ‘hunger’ Aurelius was teaching the boy); if Aurelius were *satur*, ‘full’, Catullus ‘would be silent’ (*tacerem*), line 9.

Irrumation, logically, forces the victims to be silent as well, as in the absurd double entendre in 74 (lines 5–6, *quamvis irrumet ipsum/nunc patrum, verbum non faciet patruus*, ‘though he should fuck his uncle’s own mouth, his uncle wouldn’t say a word’—naturally). Hence the special applicability of Catullus’ threat to irrumate his critics in 16. The sexual/oral/verbal threat is most fully worked out in 116, which has been recognized as programmatic.<sup>16</sup> Here Catullus says he has tried to ‘soften’ (*lenirem*, line 3) Gellius, so that he would not ‘send hostile missiles against my head’ (*tela infesta <meum> mittere in usque caput*, line 4); *tela* = poems, but *tela . . . mittere . . . in . . . caput* is also a recognizable double entendre for *irrumare*, as in the claim attributed to Julius Caesar (Suet. *Iul.* 22), *insultaturum omnium capitibus*, ‘that he would abuse the heads of all’. Catullus concludes 116 by

<sup>16</sup> Most cogently by Macleod (1973a; this volume, pp. 35–44); Forsyth (1977) adds that the connection of 116 with 65 is reinforced by the reference to Callimachus in both poems.

warning Gellius that punishment in kind awaits him, *at fixus nostris tu dabis supplicium*, ‘but pierced by mine you will undergo your punishment’ (line 8)—strongly recalling the structure of the threat in 21 (lines 7–13) and the wording of 15, which also threatens Aurelius:

ut nostrum insidiis caput laccasas 16

...

quem attractis pedibus patente porta 18  
percurrent raphanique mugilesque.

that you should beat me about the head with your ambushades

...

[you] whom, with your door open and your feet drawn up under you,  
horseradishes and mullets will run through and through.

As Catullus threatens to ‘scrawl’ a beating on the effeminate Thallus (25) and to draw phalli on Lesbia’s house (37.10), so in 116.8 *nostris* = weapons = poems = phallus.

This identification in turn may help to explain another facet of Catullus’ oral imagery: his focus on the mouths of his beloved and of his enemies, and the way he degrades those of his enemies. Catullus’ best-known poems are those in which he counts the kisses of his lovers, both Lesbia (5, 7) and Juventius (48; cf. 99); even here he contrasts these sweet things with the *mala lingua*, ‘bad tongue’, of the world (7.12). Juventius’ kisses are compared with food: honey (48.1), wheat (48.5), ambrosia (99.2). But in his invective Catullus consistently insults enemies and rivals by assimilating their mouths to excretory orifices. The objectionable Egnatius, a frequenter of Lesbia’s house in 37, brushes his teeth with urine (37.20), specified as his own at 39.18–19; but Catullus takes this further, saying Egnatius’ white teeth show *hoc te amplius bibisse... loti*, ‘how much more piss you’ve drunk’. In other words, Egnatius not only deliberately washes out his mouth with urine, he ingests urine. This, foul enough in itself, also connotes oral-genital contact, as in 99, where Juventius wipes off Catullus’ kiss ‘as if [it were] the foul saliva of a pissed-on whore’ (*tamquam commictae spurca saliva lupae*, line 10)—a phrase which here implies that the woman’s mouth is tainted because she performs fellatio. It seems probable, on this basis, that at least for Catullus, the foulness of the *os impurum* (‘foul mouth’) stems from the contact between mouth and penis as outlet for urine.

Similarly, in 97.2 Catullus says there is no difference between Aemilius' mouth (*os*) and buttocks (*culum*; here = *podex*); the mouth looks and smells like a *ploxenum* (possibly a basket used to carry manure,<sup>17</sup> lines 5–6), or like the vagina of a mule in heat urinating (lines 7–8). Catullus derides Aemilius' plentiful intercourse with women (line 9) and claims that any woman who would have sexual intercourse with him would be willing to 'lick the ass of a sick hangman' (*aegroti culum lingere carnificis*, line 12). Again, Catullus creates an image of a thoroughly revolting mouth, but by likening the mouth to excretory orifices also used sexually (*culus, cunnus*—here made to stand for the whole crotch), he suggests this function for Aemilius' mouth as well. An image that supports this connection, and unites it with the sex/hunger/property complex discussed earlier, is the description (33.4) of the thief 'Vibennius filius' as *culo... voraciore*, 'with a hungrier ass'. A similar case is that of 'Rufa' in 59, who is not only a *fellatrix* (line 1) but frequents graveyards (line 2), like the lowest prostitutes (cf. Mart. 1.34, Juv. 6. O.15–16), and eats bread she steals from funeral offerings (lines 3–4), for which she is beaten or raped by the (untouchable) undertaker's man (line 5). The things stolen from Catullus (money, tableware, notebooks) now seem significantly connected.

In this respect as well, the verbal function of the mouth connects with the derided function: Victius (98), one of the 'wordy and stupid' (*verbosis... et fatuis*, line 2), could 'lick asses and rawhide workboots with that tongue of yours' (*ista cum lingua... culos et crepidas lingere carpatinas*, line 4). The soiled mouth is like the irrumated mouth: mouth (speaker/eater) = anus = receptacle for the Priapic phallus. This in turn suggests that the epithet of the famous *cacata carta* ('shitty papers') of 36 denotes not only their worthlessness but the anal/oral receptivity of their author. Conversely, in 16 Catullus selects *milia multa basiorum* to represent all the poetry he wishes to defend.

<sup>17</sup> Whatmough (1956) is responsible for this interpretation of *ploxenum*. Although the bulk of his essay concerns itself with various disputes on linguistic theory, his analysis of 97 *en passant* is remarkably vivid and imaginative. See now Skinner (2003: 118–19, 123–4).



Catullus' sexual and invective poems can be divided into several categories, some overlapping.<sup>18</sup> One group of lighthearted poems might be labeled 'sympotic', since all have to do with dinner parties or friendly meetings. In these poems the element of threat is minimal, and the sexuality is usually jolly. Most innocuous is 45, the Acmen and Septimius poem, redeemed from Hellenistic saccharinity by its tongue-in-cheek air. Likewise 13, the invitation to a nonexistent feast, makes no threat worse than that of forcing the guest to provide the food, while the poet's loving mistress provides perfume; the essential kindness of such a poem is exemplified by the positioning of a similar one in the choral resolution of *Lysistrata*.<sup>19</sup> Poems 6 and 55 both address a friend suspected of a secret liaison; 6 adduces the evidence of Flavius' groaning and spavined bed,<sup>20</sup> while 55 describes a search through the city during which the poet had to interview the girls on the street in order to find his friend. In these poems the suggestion of sexuality is coarse but jocular; Catullus creates a similar tone in 10, in which he has a long conversation with a woman. While she flatters him, his estimation of her goes up; when she shows him up as a liar, he begins to think of her as a whore. Here the poet's interaction with the woman becomes that of an adversary, so that he is in a position to threaten her. The most threatening poem in this sympotic context is

<sup>18</sup> Lateiner (1977 = this volume, pp. 261–81) finds three varieties of obscenity in Catullus: sexual, scatological, and 'jolting juxtaposition' (i.e., an appealing picture succeeded by a foul one)—a form of staining.

<sup>19</sup> The image that concludes Cat. 13, although it certainly brings into the poem a sensuality not present earlier (cf. the construction of 32), is surely literal and not a metaphor for Lesbia's *secreta muliebria* ('female secretions'), as has been suggested (Littman [1977]; Hallett [1978]). Catullus does not elsewhere show any inclination to share his mistress (surely these critics do not believe he was offering to act as intermediary and smear his friend with Lesbia's juices, or that all at the dinner party were going to snuffle ecstatically in her direction), and the Romans had a general horror of female genitalia and their secretions and smells (Richlin [1992a: 26, 67–9, 113–19, 122–3]; cf. esp. *Appendix Virgiliana* 'Quid Hoc Novi Est', 26–37, Mart. 11.21, and the concept of the *os impurum*), so that it is extremely unlikely that the promise of such an *unguentum* would be offered as an inducement. Catullus barely hints of cunnilingus elsewhere, and never mentions either fellatio or female genitalia without disgust. For full discussion, see Witke (1980), who includes salutary, if acid, strictures on maintaining the integrity of the context of a poem. See now Fitzgerald (1995: 97–100); Gowers (1993: 229–44); Nappa (2001: 107–20); Richlin (1988). For an imaginative analysis of a possible negative picture of female genitalia in Catullus, cf. Khan (1969a: 95–6).

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Morgan (1977) for the identification of Flavius with his bed.

32, to Ipsitilla, in which the poet begins by flattering and cajoling the girl to come to him, and ends with a violent image of sexual readiness, similar to the wording of several Priapic poems:

sed domi maneas paresque nobis 7  
novem continuas fututiones

...

nam pransus iaceo et satur supinus 10  
pertundo tunicamque palliumque.

But stay home and prepare for me  
nine fuckings in a row

...

For I lie here, having dined, and full, flat on my back,  
I'm poking through my tunic and my cloak.

The invective poems against Lesbia (11, 37, [39], 58, [79]) share the double attitude of 32, in which the poet first pleads and then threatens. In 11 and 58 the poet appeals to his friends, in 11 with beautiful imagery, in 58 with touching *geminatio* ('repetition') of Lesbia's name; then he blasts Lesbia for acting like the cheapest sort of prostitute.<sup>21</sup> In 11 he concludes with a sad image of himself struck down by her. Poem 37 consists entirely of castigation of Lesbia as a whore and threats to irrumate her myriad lovers; the staining of Egnatius' mouth in 39 is only a refinement of this. Catullus' attitude here is considerably different from that in the noninvective poems in the Lesbia cycle, in which he views Lesbia's personality and his own reactions to her on many different levels.

The Juventius poems and the invective associated with them demonstrate an important difference from the cycle about Lesbia.<sup>22</sup> It is

<sup>21</sup> So her station in the back streets tells us, as perhaps also her use of manual stimulation (cf. Mart. 11.29, of an old woman). On *glubere*, cf. Fitzgerald (1995: 75–9), Penella (1976), Skutsch (1980), Randall (1980).

<sup>22</sup> The poems on Juventius have excited an endless controversy of their own; it seems to have settled on the idea that Juventius must be as real as Lesbia. The poems are simply part of the tradition of poems to *pueri* (Richlin [1992a: 34–44, 56]), who are as real (and only as real) as any beloved ever is. Arguments that go beyond this point lapse into biography, viz. Richardson (1963), who chronicles Catullus' argument with Furius and Aurelius over the 'corrupt' Juventius. There is no need to say that pederasty was 'fashionable' (Richardson, 94) or even that such poems were Hellenistic in spirit, though they certainly were (Williams [1968: 549–57]); pederasty was just normal, and

not so much that the feelings Catullus expresses for Juventius (24, 48, 81, 99) cover a narrower range than those in the poems about Lesbia. True, Catullus shows few sides of Juventius' personality, and Juventius is like the boys of epigram—pretty, coy, and fickle; but still, Juventius, like Lesbia, is beloved. The difference lies in the invective poems: there are many threats against those who would seduce Juventius (15, 21; perhaps 40), but these poems never blame Juventius or suggest that he is sluttish for going off with these men. The only poems that show any malice toward a *puer* are 106<sup>23</sup> and the enigmatic 56. In comparison with the Juventius poems, it seems best to understand the *puer* of 56 as the male equivalent of Ipsitilla, since the tone of jolly savagery is the same as in 32; Catullus does not write of Lesbia as he does of Ipsitilla, likewise the *puer* in 56 is not likely to have been conceived to be Juventius.<sup>24</sup>

An enormous list remains of poems that seemingly have little in common but their invective. These fall into several groups; perhaps only because of our lack of information, some of the poems seem less 'real' than others, seem to be attacking types or effigies rather than victims with individual personalities. Some poems against men—69 on Rufus' smell, 71 against an unnamed rival, 78 on Gallus, 97 on Aemilius' smell, 98 on Victius', and 112 on Naso's perversion—demonstrate this quality. The victims are described in

taken for granted as such by all the poets here surveyed (Richlin [1992a: 220–6]). See now Arkins (1982: 104–17); Richlin (1993); Skinner (2003: 118–23); Williams (1999); Wray (2001b: 64–5).

<sup>23</sup> Perhaps a slur against Clodius; cf. 79.1 *Lesbius est pulcher* ('Lesbius is handsome') with 106.1 *Cum puero bello* ... ('with a pretty boy ...').

<sup>24</sup> Cat. 56 has also provoked lengthy controversy as to what the boy found by Catullus is doing when found, and what Catullus then does to him. The latter (line 7) is almost certainly anal rape; for *rigida*, cf. *Pr.* 4.1, 45.1, *Petron. Sat.* 134.11, *Mart.* 6.49.2, 11.16.5, 12.42.1, and esp. 9.47.6. The former depends on the construction of *puellae/trusantem* (lines 5–6); is *puellae* genitive or dative? The dative certainly packs the poem with participants, and this construction supports Tanner (1972), a startling but conceivable interpretation of the end of the poem as a triplex series. But Tanner's analogy between *puellae/trusantem* and Giton as *in promulside* (*Petron. Sat.* 24.7) is difficult to accept (better *Sat.* 113.5–8?), and the theory that *puellae* is genitive and *trusantem* = 'masturbating' is supported by the close similarity between 56 and *AP* 12.13, in which Strato, having found some boys *τρίβοντες* (here a double entendre = *masturbantes*), uses this to lever them into submitting to him. See now Fitzgerald (1995: 77–9).

the filthiest terms—tongue identified with anus, mouth identified with the vagina of a urinating mule, mouth identified with the anus of a diseased hangman—but they have no other identity, at least in Catullus' poems. Although attempts have been made to identify them, and although all have common Roman names, it is possible that all the names are false; some, like 'Rufus' (cf. 59; also Catullus' friend Caelius), 'Gallus' (= 'eunuch'), and 'Naso' (= 'Nose-man'), have the ring of *redender Namen* ('speaking names'). If these were real people against whom Catullus was expressing his hate, they are unidentifiable. The same is true of the poems against guests who have acted as thieves (25, 33). The old man of Colonia (17)<sup>25</sup> and the incestuous family behind the talking door (67) are laden with concrete but nonspecific details, and several women remain mysterious. Is the Aemeana attacked in 41 and 43 really Mamurra's mistress? Who is the Rufa attacked so violently in 59, immediately after the worst attack on Lesbia? Are the pimp Silo (103) and the girl Aufillena, attacked in 110 and 111, stereotypical sexual figures like Ipsitilla in 32? All these figures have in common the poet's hatred and contempt for them, and his feeling that they have cheated him or someone else. They are attacked occasionally for things they have done outside the context of the poem, but the circumstances are usually so trivial as to do little to reinforce the victim's personality (what made the girl in 42 keep, or take, Catullus' *codicilli*, and what exactly were they?). It is as if the poet is writing only for those who know the daily history of his life. Some of the victims, especially the men, are attacked in such primitive invective that they and their crimes fade into the background: such are the list invectives in 23 (against one of Catullus' close friends) and 25, and the scatological/homosexual taunts of 33, 69, 71, 97, 98, and 112. The content of some of these poems amounts to a stream of vituperation and primary obscenities, beautifully structured.

<sup>25</sup> Khan (1969a) interprets the poem as using sexual-religious imagery in which the swamp represents (a) the foul genitalia of an old prostitute (adducing the Priapic from the *Virgilian Appendix*) and (b) hell. This connection, especially Khan's development of the religious aspect, strongly recalls Bakhtin's analysis of the Rabelaisian cosmos; cf. Richlin (1992a: 70–2).

The impression of deliberate obscurity presented by these poems is the more marked in comparison with the other invective poems, which attack famous people by name, with scurrilous details. The most noted, and the ones that caused the greatest furor at the time, were the poems against Mamurra,<sup>26</sup> both the cycle in which he is labeled Mentula (94, 105, 114, 115) and the poems linking him to Caesar and Pompey (29, 57). Caesar and Pompey are further ridiculed in 54 and 113; other victims include the historian Volusius (36), the politician Cominius (108), and the military leaders Memmius and Piso (28, 47). Not only are these men attacked for specific vices and crimes closely tied to their public activities; they are all the same kind of men—important politicians and generals who abuse their wealth and power. In return for this Catullus paints them as, at one and the same time, pederasts, cuckolds, adulterers, rapists, fags, effeminate, boors, gluttons, and good-for-nothings, a sublime exchange between poetry and politics. The freedom that was allowed to him by these men, and that he allowed to himself, stands in startling contrast to the practices of later satirists.

The high topicality of these poems and of the Lesbia poems that touch so closely on the notorious Clodia and Clodius seems to extend to the cycle against Gellius (74, 80, 88–91), another member of the Roman nobility being excoriated for his sins against Catullus.<sup>27</sup> The whole phenomenon recalls E. F. Benson's depiction of society caricature:

He was working hard, he had told her, to finish his little gallery of caricatures with which he annually regaled London, and which was to open in a fortnight. He was a licensed satirist, and all London always flocked to his show to observe with glee what he made of them all, and what witty and pungent little remarks he affixed to their monstrous effigies. It was a distinct cachet, too, to be caricatured by him, a sign that you attracted attention and were a notable figure. He might (in fact, he always did) make you a perfect guy, and his captions invariably made fun of something characteristic, but it gave you

<sup>26</sup> For Mamurra in Catullus cf. especially Scott (1971: 18–20); Skinner (1979a: 144–7); Skinner (1979b: 110–11); Skinner (2003: *passim*).

<sup>27</sup> But the similarity of the grounds for attack against personal and political enemies can be seen in many cases, e.g., Cat. 112 (Naso = *pathicus*), discussed by Morgan (1979), and 80 (Gellius = *fellator*), for which Curran (1966) gives a complete analysis of the poem's dynamics, content, and structure.

publicity. She wondered whether he would take a commission: she wondered whether he might be induced to do a caricature of Peppino or herself or of them both, at a handsome price, with the proviso that it was to be on view at his exhibition.<sup>28</sup>

There are many shades of sophistication and relation to real circumstances in Catullus' invective; this is not to say that the more elemental invective is worse poetry. On the contrary, it is among the best constructed and most vivid poetry Catullus wrote, with its air of magical incantation; for example, 25 has a grotesque beauty which the more specific poems lose by their very circumstantiality:

Cinaede Thalle, mollior cuniculi capillo  
 vel anseris medullula vel imula oricilla  
 vel pene languido senis situque araneoso  
 idemque, Thalle, turbida rapacior procella,  
 cum diva †mulier aries † ostendit oscitantes,  
 remitte pallium mihi meum quod involasti,  
 sudariumque Saetabum catagraphosque Thynos,  
 inepte, quae palam soles habere tamquam avita.  
 quae nunc tuis ab unguibus reglutina et remitte,  
 ne laneum latusculum manusque mollicellas  
 inusta turpiter tibi flagella conscribillent  
 et insolenter aestues, velut minuta magno  
 deprensa navis in mari, vesaniente vento.

Faggot Thallus, softer than bunny hairs,  
 or than downmost goose, or than earlobe tiplet,  
 or than the cock of an old man, drooping and cobwebby with filth,  
 likewise, Thallus, more thieving than a turbulent whirlwind,  
 when the holy [woman] points out gaping [rams],  
 give me back my cloak, which you pilfered,  
 and my Spanish handkerchief and my painted-up Bithynians,  
 you fool, which you like to have openly as if they were your heirlooms.  
 Now unglue these from your fingernails and give them back,  
 lest the branding whip foully scribble over  
 your woolly little flanks, your soft little hands,  
 and you bob as you are not used to, like a little  
 ship caught in a big sea, when the wind goes crazy.

<sup>28</sup> Benson, *Lucia in London*, chapter 6.

The poem is remarkable for both structure and imagery.<sup>29</sup> It begins with a five-line section on Thallus' (= 'Fleur') effeminacy and thievishness; Catullus, as in so many other poems, addresses the victim directly in the first two words and spends several lines describing him. The next section (lines 6–8) completes the first sentence with an imperative, demanding that Thallus return what he has stolen—again, a common pattern. The final section of five lines balances the first section; in it, Catullus threatens to beat Thallus if the things are not returned—also a common pattern, the ending with a threat. The three sections have several verbal links, especially *mollior* (line 1) and *mollicellas* (line 10); *turbida... procella* (line 4) and *velut... vento* (lines 12–13). Thus the first section and the last are tied together by images both of effeminacy and of storms, opposed images. The middle section is tied syntactically to the first and verbally to the second: *remitte* (line 6)—*remitte* (line 9); *soles* (line 8)—*insolenter* (line 12). The lines are loosely tied together by a series of end rhymes or near rhymes: *capillo* (line 1)—*oricilla* (line 2)—*procella* (line 4); *oscitantes* (line 5)—*involasti* (line 6); *avita* (line 8)—*remitte* (line 9); *mollicellas* (line 10)—*conscribillent* (line 11); *magno* (line 12)—*vento* (line 13). There is a great deal of alliteration throughout the poem, most notably in the interlocking *velut... vesaniente vento/minuta magno... mari* (lines 12–13); in addition, the name *Thalle* in the first line is repeated in the same metrical position in line 4.

All these devices are obvious, if not childish, but they suit the content. The initial listing of disgusting objects to which the victim is compared is like a charm or chant, as in the folk form known as verbal dueling, where teams, usually of young men, take turns insulting each other, usually following a format with prescribed meter and content.<sup>30</sup> The series of animal similes is characteristic of all Latin invective, although here Catullus contrives disgust through association of things usually innocuous or attractive (rabbit fur, goose down, spiderweb; cf. 13.8) with repulsive people and things (*a cinaedus*, mold). The two startling physiological human similes show a similar absurd

<sup>29</sup> The study of Cat. 25 by Bianco (1967) concerns itself mostly with finding another Catullan target with whom to identify Thallus. (Bianco settles on Egnatius.) See now Fitzgerald (1995: 101–3).

<sup>30</sup> See Richlin (1992a: 65, 74–6, 86–7).

and uncomfortable juxtaposition—the harmless earlobe and the old man's genitals, a subject for mockery in invective against old men and of pious shame in epic poetry. The final threat picks up on the images of softness, especially the unusual images of downy things, in line 10, and goes on to promise a beating: Catullus will scrawl Thallus' sides over with whips, a peculiarly vivid picture in which we see the curving red weals (cf. 37.10). At the same time, the idea that Catullus will write weals on the body of his victim is an expression of what the poem itself does. The conclusion shows Thallus as a skiff tossed about in a sea of blows, whereas before he had himself been likened to a whirlwind; now Catullus is the whirlwind, *vesani-ente vento*—*vesanus* being a word he applies to himself elsewhere, as at 7.10.

Thus the poem is made with language and sound effects suitable to its content, with some sophistication in the shifting of the storm image from Thallus to Catullus. It also exhibits two features common in Priapic poetry: it threatens a man characterized as effeminate with a beating for theft, and it identifies the threatened punishment with the poem itself, through the use of the word *conscribillent*. It may not offer the insight into Roman politics that forms such a feature of poems like 29, but it is a strong poem and in itself represents what Catullus was doing with invective poetry.

Catullus also sometimes combined mock epic with Priapic invective in personal, political, and literary attacks. Yet on the grand scale, as invective is the evil twin of epic, so, when Catullus deals in mock epic, he opposes himself, his victims, and his poetry to heroic Rome and the bards of heroes. The Priapic pose allowed him to jeer at his enemies, arrogating to himself virility or innocence as it suited him and setting his sexually depraved enemies in contexts of degraded epic: *glubit magnanimi Remi nepotes* (58), 'she peels back the grandsons of greathearted Remus'; *salax taberna.../a pilleatis nona fratribus pila* (37), 'randy hangout.../the ninth doorpost from the brothers in the pillbox hats'. Priapic political mockery feminized the Roman hero (29): *cinaede Romule, haec videbis et feres?* 'faggot Romulus, you see this and bear with it?' And the literary Priapus pimps his book, *pumice expolitum*, 'clean-shaven' (1.2); threatens his critics with rape (16); and, conversely, pooh-poohs the literary efforts of the boor Mamurra:



Mentula conatur Pipleium scandere montem:  
Musae furcillis praecipitem eiciunt. (Cat. 105)

Mr. Prick is trying to climb up the mount of poetry;  
the Muses push him out headfirst with their pitchforks.

non homo, sed vero mentula magna minax. (Cat. 115.8)

not a man, but truly a big bad prick.

In the first poem the Priapic figure opposes the Muses, and in this case is ignominiously rejected by them; as the Muses eject the would-be poet, so their *furcillae* push out the *Mentula*. In the second poem Catullus lifts a line from Ennius (*Annales* 264 Ernout), *machina multa minax minitatur maxima muris* (in Warmington's Loeb translation: 'a most mighty menacing machine menaces much the muniments'). Surely the application of the *mentula* to epic poetry is, in literal terms, the rape of epic poetry. Yet not the rape but the poet is the important thing here: Catullus' art is a domain as much his as the garden is Priapus'.

## Part VI

# Debating the Sparrow

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## How the Sparrow of Catullus is to be Understood, and a Passage Pointed Out in Martial

*Angelo Poliziano (1454–94)*

### INTRODUCTION

Angelo Poliziano began to study Catullus as a very young man.<sup>1</sup> At the age of only seventeen he began to enter his ideas and corrections on the text into his copy of the first edition (1472), which is still preserved.<sup>2</sup> He probably had thoughts of publishing his own edition and commentary: an edition founded on his corrections would have provided a text better than any available before the first Aldine (1502), and his notes were detailed enough to provide at least the basis for a commentary. One of his most important accomplishments was to separate many of the poems that had been transmitted in blocks in the manuscripts—although, interestingly enough, he did not seem to notice that poems 2 and 3 were not a single poem.<sup>3</sup> But Poliziano never published most of his work on Catullus. Instead, he devoted himself to a magnum opus of a different kind, short discussions of interesting

<sup>1</sup> For Poliziano and Catullus see Gaisser (1993: 42–7, 67–78).

<sup>2</sup> Rome, Biblioteca Corsiniana 50 F 37. Poliziano's notes on poem 84 are shown in Gaisser (1993: plate 4).

<sup>3</sup> They were transmitted in V as a single poem and appear in the first edition under the title *Fletus passeris Lesbie*. The first editor to separate them was Girolamo Avanzi in the first Aldine.

textual and interpretative questions that allowed him to showcase his best ideas without the tedium of line-by-line commentary.

This work, the first ‘century’ (or hundred chapters) of his *Miscellanea*, was published in 1489. Seven of its chapters were on Catullus, and five of the seven are clearly based on his early marginalia. Two, however, are of more recent vintage, apparently arising from his study of the famous Codex Farnesianus of Festus, which he had the opportunity to study in 1485. From a gloss on poem 17.19 (Festus 396L) he derived the argument of *Misc* i.73 that *separata* in the manuscripts should be corrected to *expornata* (the correct reading is *suppernata*).<sup>4</sup> From Festus’ gloss on ‘the sparrow’ (Festus 410L) he probably derived the confirmation if not the inspiration for the subject of *Misc*. i. 6: an obscene allegorical reading of Catullus’ sparrow. Here is Festus:

In mimes especially they call the obscene male member ‘the sparrow’ [*strutheum*], evidently from the salaciousness of the sparrow, which is called στρουθός in Greek.<sup>5</sup>

Poliziano does not ascribe his interpretation to Festus, and he may already have known of the idea from an explicitly sexual poem written by Giovanni Gioviano Pontano nearly forty years earlier,<sup>6</sup> but the timing of his reading of Festus is suggestive, as is a marginal gloss in his own transcription of Festus.<sup>7</sup> Next to Festus’ note on the sparrow appear the words ‘passer Catulli’ (‘the sparrow of Catullus’), probably in the hand of Poliziano himself.<sup>8</sup>

Poliziano based his argument, however, not on Festus, but on Martial 11.6.14–16.

#### *Miscellanea 1.6*

*In what sense the sparrow of Catullus is to be understood,  
and a passage pointed out in Martial.*

<sup>4</sup> What remains of the Codex Farnesianus is now in Naples (Biblioteca nazionale IV.A.3).

<sup>5</sup> ‘Strutheum in mimis praecipue vocant obscenam partem virilem, <a> salacitate videlicet passeris, qui Graece στρουθός dicitur’ (Festus 410L).

<sup>6</sup> Pontano, *Amores* 1.5, originally in Pontano’s 1449 collection *Pruritus*. See Ludwig (1989: 175–6) and Gaisser (1993: 242–3).

<sup>7</sup> Poliziano’s transcription is partially preserved (Vatican Library, Vat. lat 3368).

<sup>8</sup> Vat. lat. 3368, fol. 11v. I am indebted to the late Albinia de la Mare for confirmation that the hand of the note is probably that of Poliziano.

That sparrow of Catullus in my opinion allegorically conceals a certain more obscene meaning which I cannot explain with my modesty intact. Martial persuades me to believe this in that epigram of which these are the last verses:

Give me kisses, but Catullan style.  
And if they be as many as he said,  
I will give you the sparrow of Catullus.

For he would be too inept as a poet (which it is wrong to believe) if he said he would give the sparrow of Catullus, and not the other thing I suspect, to the boy after the kisses. What this is, for the modesty of my pen, I leave to each reader to conjecture from the native salaciousness of the sparrow.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Quo intellectu Catullianus passer accipiendus, locusque etiam apud Martialem indicatus.

Passer ille Catullianus allegoricôs, ut arbitror, obscoeniorem quempiam celat intellectum, quam salva verecundia, nequimus enunciare. Quod ut credam, Martialis epigrammate illo persuadet, cuius hi sunt extremi versiculi:

Da mihi basia, sed Catulliana:  
Quae si tot fuerint, quot ille dixit,  
Donabo tibi passerem Catulli. [Mart. 11.6.14–17]

Nimis enim foret insubidus poeta (quod nefas credere) si Catulli passerem denique ac non aliud quidpiam, quod suspicor, magis donaturum se puero post oscula diceret. Hoc quid sit, equidem pro styli pudore suae cuiusque coniecturae, de passeris nativa salacitate relinquo. (Poliziano, *Miscellanea* 1.6, in Poliziano (1971: 1.230–1.)

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## The Flea and the Sparrow

*Jacopo Sannazaro (1458–1530)*

### INTRODUCTION

Poliziano's interpretation immediately provoked a storm of protest—not so much because it was obscene (Renaissance commentators explained all kinds of Catullan obscenity with a freedom unknown until the late twentieth century)—as because of sentimental attachment to Catullus' sparrow on the one hand and general dislike for Poliziano on the other.<sup>1</sup> An early attack was made by the Neapolitan poet Jacopo Sannazaro, whose outrage is disingenuous. Sannazaro was a protégé of Giovanni Gioviano Pontano and undoubtedly knew of an obscene reading of Catullus' sparrow long before Poliziano's *Miscellanea*, and he built on it in an epigram of his own.<sup>2</sup> Sannazaro wrote other attacks on Poliziano, and *Misc.* i.6 was a useful and obvious target.

Sannazaro probably wrote *Epigram* 1.61 not long after the publication of the *Miscellanea*. He uses Catullan hendecasyllabics—naturally—first to restate and parody Poliziano's argument and then to refute it with an obscene allegation of his own, using Martial (4.14.13) to impugne Poliziano just as Poliziano had used Martial (11.6) to slander

<sup>1</sup> Some reactions to Poliziano's interpretation are discussed in Gaiser (1993: 56, 243–5).

<sup>2</sup> Sannazaro *Epigram* 1.6 *Ad Ninam*. Conveniently available in Nichols (1979: 310–13).

the sparrow. He calls Poliziano ‘Pulicianus’ (not Politianus) so that he can claim that he is only a flea (*pulex*).

Sannazaro, *Epigram* 1.61<sup>3</sup>

Ait nescio quis Pulicianus	1
Ni pulex mage sit vocandus hic, qui	
Unus grammaticus, sed his minutis	
Vel longe inferior, minutiorque est;	
Divinum sibi passerem Catulli	5
Haudquaquam bene passerem sonare;	
Nec iam id esse, quod autument legentes,	
Sed quod versiculis parum pudicis	
Ludens innuat ipse Martialis:	
Da mi basia, sed Catulliana:	10
Quae si tot fuerint quot ille dixit;	
Donabo tibi passerem Catulli:	
Ut sit, quod puero poeta possit	
Post longas dare basiationes	
Quod salvo nequeat pudore dici.	15

Proh dii, quam vafer es Puliciane;	
Solus qui bene calleas poetas.	
Nimirum, et quod ab omnibus probetur	
Mutandum quoque suspicaris illud,	
Quod nunc illepidumque et infacetum	20
Mendosis epigrammaton libellis	
Insulse legit imperita turba:	
Sic forsán tener ausus est Catullus	
Magno mittere passerem Maroni:	
Cum sit simplicius rectiusque,	25
Mitti, dicere, mentulam Maroni.	
Sed quid vos Aganippides puellae	
Ridetis? meus hic Pulicianus	
Tam bellum sibi passerem Catulli	
Intra viscera habere concupiscit.	30

A certain Pulicianus says (unless he should be called a flea instead, who is a unique *grammaticus*, but far worse and smaller than these

<sup>3</sup> The text is from Sannazaro (1535: 44r–v).



insignificant creatures) that the divine sparrow of Catullus does not sound like a sparrow to him, and isn't what its readers think, but what Martial hints playfully in his naughty verses: 'Give me kisses, but Catullan-style, and if these will be as many as he said, I'll give you the sparrow of Catullus'. Thus it is what the poet can give to the boy after long kissings, a thing which he cannot name and preserve his modesty.

O gods! how clever you are Pulicianus, since you're the only one who understands poets. Indeed, and what is approved by everyone, you suspect should be changed—the now inelegant and stupid thing the ignorant crowd reads in its unsophisticated fashion in the faulty books of epigrams. Thus, I suppose, 'delicate Catullus ventured to send a sparrow to great Vergil', although it would be simpler and more correct to say, a penis is sent to Vergil. But why are you laughing, Muses? My friend Pulicianus longs to have the pretty sparrow of Catullus within his own flesh.

*O factum male! O miselle passer!**Pierio Valeriano (1477–1558)*

## INTRODUCTION

In 1521–2 Pierio Valeriano gave a series of lectures on Catullus at the University of Rome.<sup>1</sup> His lectures were never published, but a large portion of the manuscript containing them is preserved.<sup>2</sup> Valeriano was a well known Roman humanist and Neo-Latin poet, and his lectures seem to have attracted not only students but also many of his fellow humanists. By this time, over thirty years after the publication of the *Miscellanea*, the sparrow controversy had become something of a topos, and Valeriano—who clearly liked playing to an audience—made his discussion of it a high point in his lectures. His avowed aim throughout his lectures was both to amuse and instruct, and he seems to have succeeded, for he had twice as many students in the audience for the lecture on poem 3 as for poem 2.

Like many humanists, Valeriano finds Poliziano's allegory repellent and unnecessary, but his main objection is that it is impossible. If Poliziano is right, he argues, the allegory must be applied to both poems 2 and 3—that is, to the dead sparrow as well as to the living one, and surely the dead sparrow could not be referring to

<sup>1</sup> Valeriano's lectures are discussed in Gaisser (1993: 109–45). For more on the historical context see Gaisser (1999: 1–78).

<sup>2</sup> Vatican Library, Vat. lat. 5215.

impotence... Valeriano refers to the sparrow only at the end of his lecture on poem 3, clearly for the amusement of his audience.

Valeriano on Catullus 2 (exerpts)

...you will find no manuscript that is not corrupt, no interpreter who has the same opinion as another—so much do they distort both the language and the meaning to suit their whims. But it would have been better (and less wicked) if they had mutilated the sense, reversed the words, mixed up the structure, and pulled it apart this way and that—if only they had spared the meaning and not thought up an unchaste interpretation and so basely served up to Catullus filth that is found nowhere in such a refined poem. Good god! Had his body not been treated cruelly enough without their planning to quench his spirit? ... We know that sparrows are so salacious that they mate seven times an hour; we know from medical writings that eating sparrows (or even their eggs) has an aphrodisiac effect. We know what filth the term *strouthoi* (that is, ‘sparrows’) signifies in mimes; ... we know from the writings of the Egyptian priests that human lust is symbolized by the picture of a sparrow. ... We know these things, I say, but we neither know nor wish to know that in Catullus or perhaps even in Martial the male genitals (if you’ll pardon the expression) ought to be understood under the word ‘sparrow.’<sup>3</sup>

...

<sup>3</sup> ... nullum pene codicem invenias, qui non in damno sit, nullum interpretem qui idem cum altero sentiat, usque adeo omnes tam verba quam sensa pro animi sui libidine detorquent. Sed enim minus incommode actum esset, immo minus improbe, si contextum tantum arbitrio unusquisque suo lacinasset, vocabula invertisset, structuram implicasset, et modo in hanc modo in illam partem abstraxisset, si modo sententiae pepercissent, neque impudicum intellectum excogitassent ac tam prave Catullo turpitudinem, quae nusquam in tam mundo epigrammate reperitur oggessissent. Bone Deus, an non satis in corpus saevitum erat, nisi animum ipsum etiam extinguere cogitassent? ... (fol. 45r/45 v) ... At scimus quidem nos passeris adeo salaces esse, ut vel septies una hora saliant. Scimus quid medicorum dictatis passeribus in cibo datis, vel eorum ovis, venerem concitari. Scimus quid turpitudinis in mimis significet τῶν στρουθῶν hoc est passerum nomen. ... Scimus (fol. 45 v/46r) ex sacerdotum Aegyptiorum commentationibus per passeris picturam prolificam hominis salacitatem significari ... Haec inquam scimus, sed quod apud Catullum, forte etiam apud Martialem, pudenda pace vestrarum aurium dixerim, virilia sub nomine passeris intelligi debeant, neque scimus, neque scire volumus. Vat. lat. 5215, fols. 45r–46r.

Surely he is not talking about something base in one poem, and about a real sparrow in the other! Indeed, I would not have believed that anyone would be stupid enough not to admit that there is a single meaning for both epigrams.<sup>4</sup>

...

But if they wish to understand by the dead sparrow that his ardor has cooled and that with these veiled words Catullus wants to show that he is no longer capable of sex, the idea is far-fetched and over-elaborate, since Catullus wrote this poem when he was in the very flower of youth ...<sup>5</sup>

Valerianus on Catullus 3 (excerpt)

Now I will add one thing as a corollary, which we can apply to these rites of a dead sparrow. For they can both amuse you in the listening and benefit you greatly by their example. The life of a sparrow is very short. For, as those who write of these matters tell us, the males can live no more than a year, and they say that the reason is unrestrained lust—which also wears out so many men before their time and hands them over to old age. The crow, on the other hand, is very long-lived, since it copulates most seldom. Wherefore, young men, if the sweetness of life delights you, nothing will be more useful to you than to reject Venus and the goads of blind passion.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> ... numquid in uno de (fol. 46r/46 v) re turpi, in altero de vero passere loquitur? Atqui neminem tam stupidum esse crediderim, qui unum utriusque epigrammatis intellectum non fateatur'. Vat. lat. 5215, fol. 46r-v.

<sup>5</sup> 'Quod si volunt hi per mortuum passerem refrigeratum libidinis ardorem intellegere, et Catullum voluisse hoc verborum involucro se ad rem veneream non amplius idoneum ostendere, longe accersitum et ingeniosum nimis erit, quum praesertim Catullus haec in flore ipso iuventutis scripserit'. Vat. lat. 5215, fol. 46 v.

<sup>6</sup> 'Nunc unum addam pro corollario, quod ad has extincti passeris inferias conferamus. Nam et vos delectare possunt audiendo et exemplo plurimum iuvare. Passeribus vitae brevitatis angustissima. Eorum enim mares anno diutius durare non posse tradunt, qui rerum huiusmodi historias conscribere; cuius rei causam esse aiunt, incontinentissimam salacitatem; quae tot hominum etiam ante diem effoetos tradit senectuti. Contra vero corvinum genus, quia rarissime coit vivacissimum. Quare si vos vitae dulcedo capit adolescentes nihil vobis magis praestiterit quam venerem et caeci stimulos avertere amoris ...'. Vat. lat. 5215, fol. 63r.

## Animal Imagery and the Sparrow

J. N. Adams

The penis is often treated as having a personality and life of its own, and partly for this reason it tends to be identified with various animals or birds. Visual symbolism may also lie behind such metaphors. Certain animals (e.g. the snake) have an obvious similarity to the organ.

Personification of the penis is widespread in Latin (for Greek see, e.g. Aristoph. *Thesm.* 1187 and below). The graffito *CIL* IV.1938 *mentula tua iubet* shows the popular character of such personifications. Similar personification to this is found in Martial (e.g. 9.2.2 *queritur de te mentula sola nihil*, 11.58.11f. *lota mentula lana/λαϊκάζειν cupidae dicet auaritia*; cf. 1.58.3),<sup>1</sup> and in various other writers (e.g. Hor. *Serm.* 1.2.68 *huic si muttonis uerbis mala tanta uidenti/diceret haec animus...*, *Priap.* 83.21 *o sceleste penis... licet querare*). The phraseology at Petron. 132.8 (*[mentula] confugerat in uiscera*), is comparable with that at *Mul. Chir.* 681 (*ne refugiat [ueretrum]*), *ibid.* (*statim fugiet sibi*) and 731 (*ne praecisus intus refugiat*). Both writers no doubt used popular language with an implicit personification. At Ovid *Am.* 3.7.69, Petron. 132.9f., *Priap.* 83.19, 38 and Maxim. *Eleg.* 5.87ff. a *mentula* is rebuked;<sup>2</sup> one might compare the address of the penis at Strato, *A.P.* 12.216 and Scythinus, *A.P.* 12.232. The organ can be said to have a head (e.g. Petron. 132.8, Mart. 11.46.4, *Priap.* 83.5) or

<sup>1</sup> For further personifications in Martial, see 9.37.9f., 11.78.2.

<sup>2</sup> The personification in *Priap.* 83 is remarkably protracted (19ff.). For a similarly extended personification at a much later period, see William of Blois, *Alda* 499ff.

an eye (Mart. 9.37.10, Auson. *Cent. Nupt.* 108, p. 216 P.);<sup>3</sup> it can drink (Auson. *Cent. Nupt.* 118, p. 217 P.; for the πέος eating in Greek, see Artem. 5.62, where a dream is reported in which a man fed his penis with bread and cheese as if it were an animal), weep (=‘ejaculate’, Lucil. 307 *at laeua lacrimas muttoni absterget amica*, *Hist. Apoll. Tyr.* 34 *non potest melius: usque ad lacrimas...*, Scythinus, *AP* 12.232.5),<sup>4</sup> stand or sit (Mart. 3.73.2, Maxim. *Eleg.* 5.96, Apul. *Met.* 9.16 *desidia*),<sup>5</sup> and die (of impotence: Ovid *Am.* 3.7.65, Petron. 20.2, 129.1, Mart. 3.75.6, Maxim. *Eleg.* 5.83).

In Greek various animal metaphors are attested. In Strato the penis is a snake (ὄφις) at *A.P.* 11.22.2, and a number of times a lizard (σαύρα: 11.21.1, 12.3.5, 12.207.1; cf. *CGL* II.185.9 *sira σαύρα τὸ αἰδοῖον*, and Isid. *Etym.* 12.4.34, 37 for *saura* in Latin). For κύων = πέος, see, e.g. Aristoph. *Lys.* 158, Argentarius, *A.P.* 5.105.4, Strato, 12.225.2, for ταῦρος in the same sense, see *Suda*, s.v. ταῦρος· τὸ αἰδοῖον τοῦ ἀνδρός, and for ἵππος, see Hesych. s.v. ἵππον· τὸ μόριον καὶ τὸ τῆς γυναικὸς καὶ τοῦ ἀνδρός.

The snake was felt to have phallic significance by Latin speakers (see Suet. *Aug.* 94.4, Firm. Mat. *De Errore* 10), but there is no certain example of the metaphor in Latin. At *Priap.* 83.33 a *mentula languida* is compared to an *anguis*: *licebit aeger angue lentior cubes. Natrix* (lit. ‘water snake’) is taken in the sense ‘penis’ by Marx at Lucil. 72 (*si nati-bus natricem inpressit crassam et capitatam*), and this interpretation is certainly possible;<sup>6</sup> note in particular *capitatam*, and cf. Adams (1982: 72) on *caput*. But it is at least as likely that the word indicated a type of whip. For whips of this sort, see Isid. *Etym.* 5.27.15 *anguilla est qua coercentur in scolis pueri, quae uolgo scotica dicitur* (cf. Plin. *Nat.* 9.77). A snake-name used metaphorically of the penis might be expected to refer to a *mentula languida* (see *Priap.* 83.33). If *natrrix* does have a

<sup>3</sup> For the ‘one-eyed’ penis in Greek art, see Dover (1978: 132).

<sup>4</sup> For possible ‘sobbing’ of the *mentula* in Medieval Latin, see Vitalis of Blois, *Geta* 347 *sed sic dum crebro singultu colligit iram/ad curtum muto tenditur usque genu*, William of Blois, *Alda* 468 *crebros in fine salientis senserat Alda/uirge singultus*. Probably, however, *singultus* has here been used in the transferred sense ‘throbbing’: cf. Pers. 6.72 *cum morosa uago singultiet inguine uena*, which may be the source of the medieval usage.

<sup>5</sup> For ‘sitting’, see also William of Blois, *Alda* 509 *tunc sedet ille tumor*.

<sup>6</sup> For the same interpretation, see Heraeus (1902: 265f., note).

sexual sense in our passage, it would have to indicate a *mentula rigida*, to judge by the limited context. And it is slightly more plausible to see in *natibus* a reference to the site of a beating than of a sexual assault (though *nates* occasionally comes close to the sense *culus*: Mart. 12.75.3, *CIL* X.4483). Frassinetti (1967: 106) interprets Pompon. 113 (118 Ribbeck) (*mirum ni haec Marsa est: in colubras callet cantiunculam*) as a description of an *erectio penis* ('she knows a charm for the snakes'), on the grounds that snakes are a common phallic symbol. There is nothing in the context, or in the use of snake terminology in Latin, to make this view certain. The gloss *CGL* II.185.9 quoted above, in which *sira* is equated with  $\sigma\acute{\alpha}\upsilon\rho\alpha = \alpha\lambda\delta\omicron\lambda\omicron\nu$ , is poor evidence for the currency of *saura* (*sira*) in a sexual sense in Latin, although it is taken as such by Heraeus (*loc. cit.*). One can only deduce that *sira* had entered Latin (= 'lizard'), and that the glossator was familiar with the use of  $\sigma\acute{\alpha}\upsilon\rho\alpha = \alpha\lambda\delta\omicron\lambda\omicron\nu$  in Greek.

Various bird-names are recorded with the metaphorical sense 'penis' in Latin. According to Festus (p. 410) *strutheum* (neuter not masculine: see below) was in use in mime with this meaning: *strutheum in mimis praecipue uocant obscenam partem uirilem, <a> salacitate uidelicet passeris, qui Graece στρουθός dicitur*. This form must represent the diminutive of  $\sigma\tau\rho\upsilon\theta\acute{o}\varsigma$ ,  $\sigma\tau\rho\upsilon\theta\iota\omicron\nu$ , with the typical vulgar uncertainty concerning the aperture of the vowel in hiatus. *Strutheum* is one of the few loan-words for a sexual organ in Latin. But in lower-class speech the influence of Greek, imposed by slaves and freedmen, was strong (witness the *Cena Trimalchionis* of Petronius), and Greek would no doubt have left its mark on the language of popular mime. Even in the fragments of Laberius there are a few words of Greek origin which are scarcely found in Latin but were presumably current in the low social circles to which numerous Greeks belonged. *Eugium* = *cunnus* (Adams [1982: 83]) is especially worthy of mention alongside *strutheum*. Both words look like lower-class slang terms of the type which rarely found their way into the literary remains of the language. They may have been introduced by Greek prostitutes (cf. *calo*, Adams 173).

It is implied by *Schol. Pers.* 1.20 that *titus* ('dove') could be used of the penis (*ingentes . . . Titos dicit aut generaliter Romanos senatores a Tito Tatío Sabinorum rege, aut certe a membri uirilis magnitudine dicti titi*), and the word has reflexes with this meaning in the Romance

languages.<sup>7</sup> The evidence of Romance is important in this case as corroborating inadequate Latin evidence.

*Turtur* is also quoted with this meaning by a gloss (*cod. Vatic.* 1469): *turturilla loci in quibus corruptelae fiebant, dicti quod ibi turturi opera daretur, id est peni* (see CGL, Index, s.v. for this gloss and its variants). *Turturilla* may have been soldiers' slang for a brothel: see CGL V.524.30 *purpurilla* [sic] *dicitur locus in castris extra uallum in quo scorta prostant*.<sup>8</sup> A pun has sometimes been found in *turturem* at Plaut. *Bacch.* 68 (*ubi ego capiam pro machaera turturem*),<sup>9</sup> but this interpretation is not compelling. For *turtures* at symposia, see *Most.* 46.

I am also unconvinced by the view<sup>10</sup> that *passer* in Catull. *cc.* 2–3 and *passerem Catulli* at Mart. 11.6.16 were intended in a double meaning. Lines 6f. in Catull. 3 (*suamque norat/ipsam tam bene quam puella matrem*) tell strongly against the presence of a double entendre in the poem. Verbs of knowing in Latin could be used of carnal knowledge (see Adams, 190). If the rest of the poem is covertly sexual, *norat* too would have to be given an obscene sense. But if it were, the comparison *quam puella matrem* would become grotesquely inappropriate. That *passero* and *passera* in modern Italian are said to be capable of an obscene meaning is irrelevant to Catullus, unless it could be shown by late or Vulgar Latin evidence that there was continuity in this respect between Republican Latin and modern Romance. The slang of the modern languages is full of innovations. Mart. 11.6.16 is too obscure to assist in the interpretation of *passer* in Catullus.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>7</sup> W. von Wartburg, *Französisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, XIII.362.

<sup>8</sup> See Heraeus (1902: 266).

<sup>9</sup> See Bücheler (1885: 117) = Bücheler (1915–30: 3.76f.), Ernout (1935: 17).

<sup>10</sup> See most recently Genovese (1974), Giangrande (1975).

<sup>11</sup> See further Jocelyn (1980). I mention here the notion of Giangrande, reported by Howell (1980: 122), that 'Stella used *columba* as the equivalent ... of Catullus' *passer*, i.e. *mentula*' (see Mart. 1.7).



## In Defence of Catullus' Dirty Sparrow

*Richard W. Hooper*

Poliziano's theory that the sparrow of Lesbia in Catullus 2 and 3 is none other than the phallus of the poet has not fared well in recent years.<sup>1</sup> H. D. Jocelyn has mounted a spirited attack against it, taking most effective aim against the arguments of E. N. Genovese and G. Giangrande, whose articles, as he points out, 'seem to have no nineteenth or twentieth-century predecessors'.<sup>2</sup> This attack has been facilitated by the tendency of both Genovese and Giangrande to dilute their arguments with extravagant claims. Thus Genovese would have the *passer* stand not only for the poet's phallus, but for an actual pet of Lesbia, a *fascinum* charm around her neck (with bells on it!), and a human rival, possibly named *Passer*, as well.<sup>3</sup> Similarly,

<sup>1</sup> See Gaisser (1982: 102–3), where the relevant sixth chapter of Poliziano's *Miscellanea* (1489) is quoted and discussed. *Miscellanea* 1.6 is reprinted in this volume, pp. 306–7.

<sup>2</sup> Jocelyn (1980); Genovese (1974); Giangrande (1975). Jocelyn (422–6) provides a useful summary of scholarly interpretations of Catullus' bird, to which should be added the generally sympathetic remarks of Howell (1980), to which Giangrande has contributed two pages of commentary (122–3), considerably less extravagant in their claims than Giangrande (1975). Quinn (1972: 85) has called the obscene interpretation of these poems 'a persistent minority opinion', but goes on to say: 'One cannot rule that component of meaning out entirely; Catullus, perhaps, was not displeased if it added a hint of mockery to two complex poems. But I doubt if it is an important component: Poems 2 and 3 were hardly written to perpetrate a double entendre.' Such a statement differs only in degree from the position of this paper. As an indication of the popularity of Poliziano's theory throughout the Renaissance I can also point out George Gascoigne's lyric 'Philip My Sparrow' set to music in 1606 by the Elizabethan lutenist John Bartlet. See Greenberg (1955: 10).

<sup>3</sup> Genovese (1974: 123–5).

Giangrande spends too much of his time attempting to attach poem 2b to 2 by means of a tortuous interpretation of the Atalanta myth, just as he develops a convoluted argument about the tension between topoi of *Totenklage um Tiere* ('laments for dead animals') and impotence at the end of 3.<sup>4</sup> Even Jocelyn gets too far away from the poems themselves with detailed examinations of masturbation and fellatio among the ancients (pp. 429–33) and a careful footnote on the missionary position (433 n. 65).

There are only two ways to establish the probability of an obscene allegorical interpretation of Catullus 2 and 3: to examine the usage of *passer* in the poems themselves, and to see whether Catullus' imitators in antiquity—especially Martial<sup>5</sup>—were aware of and exploited Catullus' double entendre. In defending Poliziano's theory, this paper will argue these two points in more detail than they have been accorded in the past.

In considering Catullus 2 and 3 commentators have ignored what should be an important fact: these are the first poems preserved in antiquity specifically about a sparrow. Certainly laments over dead pets had become a Hellenistic topos,<sup>6</sup> but those preserved are about locusts, grasshoppers, rabbits, nightingales, partridges, and other pets—but never about sparrows, nor indeed have any actual inscriptions to birds or insects been found. Eric Havelock seems to have sensed something amiss with the picture of a sparrow as a pet, dead or otherwise, when he said, '... that grubby little bird belongs to the backyard, not to the boudoir. Lesbia's playmate was both tender, precious and pathetic.' C. J. Fordyce similarly called the sparrow 'not only notoriously dowdy and stiff-feathered' but also 'practically untrainable', having 'none of the qualities of a pet.'<sup>7</sup> I know of no

<sup>4</sup> Giangrande (1975: 145–6 and 140–4). Jocelyn (1980: 430–3) disposes of Giangrande's interpretation of the Atalanta myth quite effectively.

<sup>5</sup> A comparison with Martial 11.6 is the only evidence offered by Poliziano. See Gaiser (1982).

<sup>6</sup> These were collected in the seventh book of the *Anthology* (189–216). The standard study is Herrlinger (1930: esp. 39–51).

<sup>7</sup> Havelock (1939: 147); Fordyce (1961: 88). Fordyce prefers to think of the *passer* in the poem as the blue rock-thrush, *Monticola solitarius*, which he said is still commonly called *passero* in Italy. Jocelyn (1980) lets that remark pass without comment, though Giangrande's remark (1975: 137) that *passero* and *pipere* have obscene connotations in modern Italian brings the stinging remark (426) that 'Native English

evidence prior to Catullus that the Romans or anyone else tried keeping these wild birds as pets.<sup>8</sup> Even assuming this is a real sparrow, it acts in a particularly un-sparrow-like way. The picture at 2.2–4 is, for instance, most strange:

quicum ludere, quem in sinu tenere,  
cui primum digitum dare adpetenti  
et acris solet incitare morsus.

whom she likes to play with and hold in her lap  
to whom she likes to offer her finger tip as he reaches out,  
whose sharp nibbles she likes to provoke.

E. T. Merrill (1893) in his commentary gives the only possible literal interpretation of these lines:

pressing the sparrow to her bosom with one hand, she holds him confined while teasing him with, and provoking him to peck at the extended forefinger of the other hand.


I have myself enjoyed the company of a pet parrot named Epaminondas for thirteen years, and I can assure the reader that although he is far more intelligent than any small-brained, wild field bird, and considerably more used to humans, he would never put up with being hugged to my bosom as I bopped him playfully on the beak. Furthermore, at 3.8–10 we are told that the sparrow simultaneously stays on his mistress' lap and leaps about hither and thither, peeping all the way. Apparently Lesbia's lap was as ample as her hospitality.

The inevitable response to such nit-picking as this is to say that, of course, a poem is not meant to be a photograph, and that Catullus is

speakers could cite similar and similarly irrelevant items from the coarser registers of their language'.

<sup>8</sup> Frequently cited is Apuleius *Met.* 8.15 which describes the moving of a household: *gerebamus infantulos et mulieres, gerebamus pullos, passeris, aedos, catellos...* ('we were carrying babies and women, we were carrying chicks, sparrows, kids, puppies...'). Given its late, post-Catullan date, however, such a passage should be thought of as life imitating art. In a similar fashion countless Americans were willing to invest thousands of dollars in a sulphur-crested cockatoo after the success of Robert Blake's 'Baretta' series on television. The animals in the *Anthology*, unlike sparrows (and like cockatoos, by the way), do make delightful pets. That is even true of caged crickets which, one is reminded, were kept by the Okinawans in John Patrick's play *The Tea-house of the August Moon* (New York, 1952) 45–6.

aiming at images and symbols of his deep affection for Lesbia, not at realism. Even so, if Catullus has chosen to paint a real picture, then why has he settled upon the specific and unusual image of a sparrow? Why not a nightingale, or a locust, or a lap-dog? If the only answer is that Catullus wrote about a sparrow because Clodia owned one, then criticism has a right to ask why the details in the poems are not as realistic as the motivation.

The connotations of 'sparrow' are well known. Even in ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics the determinative for 'little, evil, bad' was  *šerāu*, the sparrow.<sup>9</sup> It is of course sparrows who pull Aphrodite's chariot in Sappho 191 (Page), 9–10, where they are called *κάλου* ('beautiful') with seeming incongruity by the poetess. This picture was so familiar that Apuleius could burlesque it at *Met.* 6.6, where the chariot is borne this time by four doves (*columbae*) and followed by a crowd of chattering *passeres* who 'frolic' (*lasciuiunt*) behind the chariot. Sparrows and doves were frequently associated, as, for instance, at Pliny *Nat. Hist.* 10.52.107: *columbae et turtures octonis annis vivunt. contra passeris minimum vitae, cui salacitas par* ('doves and turtle-doves each live eight years, but the life of the sparrow, whose salaciousness is equal to theirs, is very short'). In addition to such circumstantial evidence for the general salaciousness of sparrows, Festus (p. 410 Lindsay) provides straightforward testimony for the sparrow's connection with the meaning phallus: *strutheum in mimis praecipue vocant obscenam partem virilem, a salacitate videlicet passeris, qui Graece στρουθός dicitur* ('especially in mimes they call the obscene male part 'stroutheum', evidently from the sexual appetite of the sparrow, which is called *strouthos* in Greek').<sup>10</sup>

The fact that these poems could function as allegories—or at least have an allegorical level—should not be thought of as an isolated case. Niall Rudd has demonstrated that the bridge at Colonia in Catullus 17 has been strangely personified—he calls it an 'oddly human bridge'—in order to bring unity to the poem by connecting the personalities of the rickety bridge and the stupid *municeps* Catullus

<sup>9</sup> Watterson (1981: 70); Budge (1975: 34 [number 24] and 67 [number 80]).

<sup>10</sup> The Festus quote was noted as early as Voss (1691: 6), and is also cited by Genovese (1974: 121–2). Jocelyn (1980: 426 n. 33) passes it over without any real consideration, merely remarking (427) that 'there is no Latin evidence at all of the alleged usage'.

would like to throw off it. L. Richardson has suggested, even more apropos, that the mullets in Catullus 15.18–19 are actually euphemisms for the phallus of the poet. P. G. Maxwell-Stuart similarly interprets the book roll fondled by Straton's boyfriend in *Anth. Pal.* 12.208.<sup>11</sup> Within the sparrow poems themselves, and still denying any special significance for *passer*, even Jocelyn admits the sexually charged atmosphere of such words as *sinus*, *noscere*, and *devorare* ('lap', 'know', and 'eat'), to which of course should be added Catullus' own use of *gremium* ('lap') at 45.1–2 and especially 67.30.<sup>12</sup>

Having established the fact that *passer* did have sexual overtones and could take on the meaning of phallus, and that a poem—especially one by Catullus—that allowed its vocabulary to function allegorically would not be an oddity, we have still to see how an obscene interpretation of *passer* would operate within poems 2 and 3. It is, however, at precisely this point that a value judgment becomes necessary. Are we to join the traditionalists and speak of 'the exquisite grace of the two sparrow-songs of Catullus' and say that 'equal artlessness of spirit marks his grief over the sparrow, lamented because it was her pet, but also because he felt the pitifulness of beauty dead', or do we ask instead,

Quid denique frigidius eo *Tecum ludere sicut ipse possem* et quae sequuntur si haec simpliciter et ad litteram, ut loquuntur, intelligi debeant?<sup>13</sup>

What, finally, is more frigid than *tecum ludere sicut ipse possem* and the following if these words must be understood naïvely and to the letter, as they say?

<sup>11</sup> Rudd (1959); Richardson (1963: 101), concerning which point Rosivach (1978: 214 n. 57) remarked: 'Richardson does not prove his case, but to my mind he does present enough evidence that the possibility must be left open.' On Maxwell-Stuart (1972: 222), see the remarks in Buffière (1980: 316–17 n. 95). Buffière sounds much like Jocelyn in rejecting Maxwell-Stuart's theory—'Libre à chacun de donner des poètes un exégèse "allégorique"' ('anyone is free to give poets an "allegorical" interpretation')—but with more justification, for book rolls lack the literary tradition of 'salaciousness' long associated with sparrows. For a modern, properly neutral translation, see Hine (2001: 97–9).

<sup>12</sup> Jocelyn (1980: 427–8). In making this citation I fulfill Jocelyn's fear that he may be 'supplying ammunition for untrustworthy hands'.

<sup>13</sup> The first two are by Merrill (1893: p. xxvii) and Duff (1960: 236); the next by Voss (1691: 6).

I naturally tend towards the second view and feel that the poems, if taken literally, offer a skillful but rather tired arrangement of traditional Hellenistic themes, made mildly amusing by an ironic sense of exaggeration.<sup>14</sup> What new meaning, then, do the poems take on if the *passer* can also stand for the poet's phallus?

Starting with 2, we find that the obscene allegory renders the poem's imagery more complex, amusing, and sophisticated, and that its otherwise irritating inconsistencies begin to make sense. While the sexual picture which thus emerges from 2.2–4 never approaches vulgarity (for it is never openly expressed), the connection between 3–4 and 9–10 is now obvious and, to anticipate a bit, the seeming inconsistency of movement in place at 3.8–10 is removed. The poem becomes an intimate metaphor rather than a precious conceit.

What Catullus is getting at in 2.9–13 requires special attention. The basic meaning has to be that he wished masturbation were as pleasant as sexual intercourse with Lesbia. That interpretation has been a bit too rough for most commentators to handle,<sup>15</sup> and the strange shift in mood from *possem* to *est* as well as the seemingly pointless reference to the Atalanta myth has caused serious problems. Indeed, the mood change does not work grammatically, and the reference to Atalanta, who after all supposedly did not want to lose the footrace and thus would not have welcomed the golden apples, seems to go against the

<sup>14</sup> The always perceptive Dorothy Parker offers an interesting corroboration of Voss's viewpoint in the following lines written, as far as I know, without knowledge of Poliziano's theory:

That thing he wrote, the time the sparrow died—  
 (Oh, most unpleasant—gloomy, tedious words!)  
 I called it sweet, and made believe I cried;  
 That stupid fool! I've always hated birds...

<sup>15</sup> From a Letter From Lesbia, Parker (1944: 452).

<sup>15</sup> Most keep silent about the possibility, which is the least embarrassing solution. Of those that deal with the problem, we have already seen Voss's reaction to the traditional, literalist interpretation that would have Catullus consoling himself over Lesbia's heartlessness by playing with a pet sparrow. Lenchantin de Gubernatis (1928) at least takes the bull by the horns when he says, 'Non mette conto di ricordare che il Poliziano ed altri umanisti nel *passer* volevano trovare un'allusione che il v. 9 sg. esclude' ('there is no point recalling that Poliziano and other humanists wanted to find in the *passer* an allusion excluded by 9f.'). Giangrande (1975: 144–5) counters by saying that, on the contrary, it is these very lines which make his interpretation work.

context of the passage. It certainly does not make sense to say, 'Would that I could play with the sparrow just as Lesbia does! That's as welcome as the hateful apples were to Atalanta!'

The easiest way to get rid of both the mood change and the difficult allusion to Atalanta is to print lines 11–13 as a separate poem.<sup>16</sup> I would prefer to accept Voss's emendation at 2.9 of *posse* for *possem*, which Kenneth Quinn called 'a brilliant effort to weld 1–10 to 11–13', but 'rather too good to be true'.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, the sense of the Atalanta reference should cause no particular problem if we follow Merrill in recalling the interesting psychological twist which Ovid put on the Atalanta story in *Met.* 10.560–680. In that version the maiden is depicted as falling in love with Hippomenes against her will, and thus secretly wishing his victory:

o quotiens, cum iam posset transire, morata est  
spectatosque diu vultus invita reliquit! (661–2)

o how often, when she was already about to pass him, she delayed,  
and unwillingly left behind his long admired countenance!

It fits the ironic tone of the whole poem for Catullus to imply that Atalanta wanted to be caught and that she welcomed the sight of the tricky apples.<sup>18</sup> The passage would then mean: 'To be able to play with myself as skillfully as Lesbia does is an idea as welcome to me as, in reality (this, I take it, being the sense of *ferunt*), Hippomenes' golden apple was to Atalanta.' I would agree with Jocelyn that Voss went too far in further proposing an obscene sense to *malum*.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>16</sup> See Jocelyn (1980: 422 n. 5), who attributes this solution to Alessandro Guarini (Venice, 1520). It has been followed most recently by Thomson (1978) and was also taken up by Kroll (1923), Mynors (1958), and Fordyce (1961). Merrill (1893) and Ellis (1904) indicate a lacuna after 2.10. Baehrens (1876) followed the manuscripts in printing 2 as a unit.

<sup>17</sup> Voss (1691: 7); Quinn (1970: 95).

<sup>18</sup> This is certainly preferable to the tortuous double negative developed by Giangrande (1975: 145–6): 'I wish I could, but I cannot (*possem*) indulge in masturbation: I cannot, because such a practice is just as agreeable to me (*tam gratumst*) as was the apple to Atalanta, which caused her to lose the race, wherefore she had to abandon her beloved unnatural practices and endure the *fututiones* which she hated.' This interpretation has been most effectively dismantled by Jocelyn (1980: 430–3).

<sup>19</sup> Voss (1691: 7) and Jocelyn (1980: 426 n. 34 and 427). The emendation *bracchica mala* at *Priap.* 72.4 offered as evidence for the obscene sense of *malum* is clearly weak: the edition of the *Priapea* of Bücheler-Heraeus (1912) does not include it; that of

The third poem of Catullus must be thought of as a particularly sophisticated combination of two genre poems: the lament over a dead pet, and the lament over impotence.<sup>20</sup> There is a similar joke in the *Satyricon* of Petronius 137.1–2 when the priestess Oenothea upbraids Encolpius for having killed the sacred goose of Priapus:

at illa complosis manibus ‘scelerate’ inquit ‘etiam loqueris? nescis quam magnum flagitium admiseris: occidisti Priapi delicias, anserem omnibus matronis acceptissimum ...’

But beating her hands together she said, ‘Will you speak, too, villain? You don’t know how great a crime you have committed. You’ve killed Priapus’ darling, the goose most pleasing to all married women ...

The double entendre here is obvious, since that part of Priapus which is also *matronis acceptissimum* is well known. In the case of Catullus 3, the mood is immediately set in the first two verses:

Lugete, o Veneres Cupidinesque  
et quantum est hominum venustiorum!

Grieve, o Venuses and Cupids  
and all ye beautiful people!

Clairmont (1983) rejects it for the manuscripts’ *braccia macra*, which is clearly meant to balance *grandia mala*.

<sup>20</sup> Thus Giangrande (1975: 140), with which cf. Jocelyn (1980: 434 n. 71). Voss (1691: 8) was the first openly to state this sexual interpretation of Catullus 3: ‘Nihilominus flagitiosum est hoc carmen quam praecedens. Non me fugit viros eruditos longe aliter sentire, et credere nihil hic esse quod non castissimae matronae mitti possit, sed vero si existimemus Catullum confectum et exhaustum lucta venerea et funerata, ut cum Petronio loquar, ea parte quae virum facit, Lesbiae suae hoc epigramma scripsisse, tanto utique plus leporis hos versiculos habituros existimo, quanto fuerint nequiores. Et sane quid passeri cum gremio puellae, si nihil dictu turpe hic subintelligi debeat?’ (‘This poem is no less scandalous than the preceding. It does not escape me that learned men think otherwise, and believe that there is nothing here that could not be sent to the chastest matron, but indeed if we should think that Catullus, worn out and exhausted by amorous wrestling and—to speak with Petronius [129.1] “with that part of him done in that makes a man a man”—wrote this epigram to Lesbia, I think these verses will gain more in charm than they previously suffered from iniquity. Indeed, what would a sparrow have to do with a girl’s lap unless a base subtext were to be understood here?’) For parallels with the lament over a dead pet, see Herrlinger (1930). Both Jocelyn and Giangrande give several parallels for lamented impotence, from which lists Ovid *Am.* 3.7 and *Priap.* 83 should especially be stressed.



Havelock expressed well the feeling created by these opening lines when he wrote: 'The lines reflect that urban, sophisticated idiom which composed such an important ingredient in the Catullan temper.'<sup>21</sup> The clue, as David O. Ross, Jr. has pointed out,<sup>22</sup> is in the word *venustus*, which belongs especially to the *urbanitas* of the polymetrics. There was a whole vocabulary used by the country club set to which Catullus and his friends aspired, and it is in the polymetrics that they are most consistently employed. The most famous example is *basium*,<sup>23</sup> the special word employed by this jet set for kiss, and it is within this overcharged atmosphere that we should expect the double meaning of *passer* to be appreciated. Such word plays would be unsuitable to the epigrams, which stem from traditional Roman origins, and in the longer poems, which aspire to the technical polish of the neoterics; in the polymetrics, however, sophisticated, urbane style was the thing, even in poems of real sorrow like 11, with its learned geographical excursus, or 30, with the characteristic diminutive *amiculus* in the second line and the trope of winds blowing away words and oaths at lines 9–10. It is in this context as well that the reference to masturbation, so troubling to Giangrande and Jocelyn, must be interpreted. Investigations into the masturbatory practices of the ancients are out of place here; Catullus is making a risqué reference to masturbation with the same self-deprecating shrug as the god Priapus in *Priap.* 33.5–6, and with as little concern for public scandal as the Cynic Diogenes in the famous story in Diogenes Laertius 6.46. Most jokes are, after all, more appropriate at a cocktail party than in the market place. Besides, the whole point of *posse* (or for that matter, *possem*) at 2.9 is that the poet's wish cannot be fulfilled. In sexual technique Lesbia *ipsa* is without peer.

It is in the same context that the unusual double diminutive *turgiduli ... ocelli* ('swollen eyes', 18) is to be understood. As Hermann Tränkle has pointed out, diminutives were especially characteristic of the

<sup>21</sup> Havelock (1939: 20). Giangrande's interpretation of *hominum venustiorum* as 'men luckier in love than Catullus' (1975: 141–5) is strange and forced, and has been well disposed of by Jocelyn (1980: 434–9).

<sup>22</sup> Ross (1969: 106). Ross (104–12) discusses 'Urbanitas and the vocabulary of the Polymetrics' at length.

<sup>23</sup> Ross (1969: 105).

neoterics, and are consequently used most heavily by Propertius and Ovid in those earlier works—the first two books of Propertius and the *Amores* of Ovid—which are still under neoteric influence. Tränkle especially picks out *ocellus* as ‘geradezu ein Kennwort der Liebeselegie’ (‘a veritable earmark of love elegy’). Concerning diminutives in general, he remarks: ‘Die poetae novi haben diese Ausdrücke, die in die Sprache der Liebenden gehören und Zärtlichkeit offenbaren, aus der lebendigen Umgangssprache übernommen, als sie Liebende in ihren Werken reden liessen.’ (‘these expressions, which belong in the language of lovers and reveal tenderness, the new poets took over from lively everyday speech when they let lovers speak in their works’)<sup>24</sup> The double use of diminutive for both adjective and noun occurs only again at 25.2 *imula auricilla*, where it is meant to produce an effete, homosexual atmosphere, and in the great neoteric epyllion at 64.316 *aridulis labellis*, referring to the Parcae sisters. The use of diminutives at 3.18 re-emphasizes the rarified atmosphere of the upper-class, over-educated soirée, the haunt of the *venustiores*, where Catullus’ sophisticated witticisms would form part of the stylish banter of the day.

Jocelyn has trouble with the *tua* of 3.17 because the sparrow, who is dead, is blamed, rather than the fates (see pp. 440–1). He feels that Scaliger’s defence of the manuscript reading *tua* does not work, and that *vestra* would be better supported by his parallel of Juvenal 6.7–8: *Cynthia ... cuius turbavit nitidos extinctus passer ocellos* (‘Cynthia ... whose dead sparrow dimmed shining eyes’). Giangrande seems to share the problem (pp. 143–4), and he removes it by saying that a reproach is never addressed to the dead pet in the Hellenistic topos ‘Totenklage um Tiere’, but that it is typical in poems on the ‘death’ of a *mentula* (‘penis’). Both of these solutions are, I think, made unnecessary by G. P. Goold’s reading of *quod* at 3.16.<sup>25</sup>

Goold properly calls this poem a ‘mock elegy’. In exploding the corrupt reading of 3.16 with its irritating hiatus—*o factum male o miselle passer*—he points out (p. 200) that *o factum male* is not meant as a lament over the sparrow’s death, but rather as a lament over Lesbia’s sorrow. Since that is the point of the poem, a ‘signpost’, as he puts it, is

<sup>24</sup> Tränkle (1960: 28–9).

<sup>25</sup> Goold (1969).

needed between *o factum male* and *tua nunc opera*, which he supplies by conjecturing *quod* for the second exclamation *o*:

o factum male, quod, miselle passer  
 tua nunc opera meae puellae  
 flendo turgiduli rubent ocelli!  
 ah cruel event, that through your doing,  
 hapless sparrow, my sweetheart's eyes  
 are red and swollen with weeping)

[translation: Goold (1983).]

The sense therefore becomes, 'O calamity that the sparrow made my sweetheart weep!'<sup>26</sup> This is a very pretty poetic conceit, which works particularly well with the double meaning of *passer*. The outburst against *malae tenebrae Orci* ('evil shades of Orcus') at 13–14 no longer disrupts the forward movement of the poem, but returns to its proper place as a momentary, ironic exaggeration, while Lesbia's

<sup>26</sup> The manuscripts read *bonum factum male bonus ille passer*, which was corrected to *o factum male o miselle passer* under the influence of Cicero, *Att.* 15.1.1: *o factum male de Alexione*... Among the commentators, Kroll, Fordyce, Mynors, and Thomson print *o factum male! o miselle passer!* although Thomson does mention Goold's emendation (1969) in his appendix. Baehrens and Merrill adopt Lachmann's emendation *o factum male! io miselle passer*, while Ellis goes out on a limb with *vae factum male! vae miselle passer!* The double *o* is almost universally admired, and indeed Skutsch (1974: 126–7) in his review of Goold's edition of Catullus says the proposed reading '... seems to me to deflate the pathos of the passage'. In support of the favourite reading I can cite *Priap.* 83.19, in a context virtually identical to the one we are suggesting for Catullus 3: *at o sceleste penis, o meum malum* ('o wicked penis, o my woe'). I can also point out a similar passage in Tymnes' lament for his dead songbird (*AP* 7.199.1–2):

ὄρνεον ὦ Χάρισιν μεμελήμενον, ὦ παρόμοιον  
 ἀλκίουςιν τὸν σὸν φθόγγον ἰσωσάμενον.

'O bird dear to the Graces, o like the halcyons in your voice tuned to theirs'.

For the first half of his article Goold attacks the possibility of a hiatus in Catullus such as the proposed line contains; he then demonstrates most skillfully that the two *o*'s usually proposed at Catullus 3.16 do not present a balance, as can indeed be found in the two parallels I have suggested above, but rather prevent one, for the two halves in the Catullan line are not equal. The corrupt text would translate, 'O calamity, o sparrow, you have made me weep', which wrongly separates the sense of *sparrow* and *you*. Goold's final citation of *Carm. Epig.* 1512 Büch., a real inscription and an obvious imitation of Catullus 3, with its line *o factum male, Myia, quod peristi* ('ah, cruel event, Myia, that you have perished') is, I think, conclusive, despite Skutsch's objection that the proposed vocative after *quod* is not paralleled.

sorrow emerges as the final point of the poem and the only real tragedy attendant upon the poet's (we assume temporary) impotence.

If we can therefore assume, at least temporarily, that Catullus' sparrow poems were composed as an obscene allegory, we should naturally expect to see that fact reflected in subsequent poems inspired by them. The most important of these imitations are Ovid *Am.* 2.6, Statius *Silv.* 2.4, and Martial 1.7, 109; 4.14; 7.14; and 11.6. Of these Ovid's poem is perhaps the most interesting since it is not only the earliest variation on Catullus' poem we have, but also goes out of its way in the first verse to show its dependence: *Psittacus, Eois imitatrix ales ab Indis* ('parrot, winged imitator from the eastern Indies'). Ovid started his poem with the word *psittacus* just as Catullus began his first sparrow poem with the word *passer*, and then underscored his reference with the phrase *Eois... ab Indis*. By Ovid's time this had already become a commonplace in elegy,<sup>27</sup> but it began with Cat. 11.2–4:

sive in extremos penetrabit Indos,  
litus ut longe resonante Eoa  
[tunditur unda.]

or whether he will make his way into the farthest Indi, where the shore is beaten by the far-resounding eastern wave. [translation: Putnam (this volume: p. 88)]

It would, however, be unreasonable to look for obvious confirmation of the allegorical level of Catullus' poem in Ovid's, for the Augustan poet is deliberately burlesquing the surface imagery of the sparrow poems. He is, in effect, taking the literal interpretation of the *passer* poems and exaggerating it *ad absurdum*. The Venuses, Cupids, and beautiful people who are told by Catullus to come and mourn are transformed by Ovid into a flock of the parrot's feathered friends and lovers (2–16), and the sparrow's journey down the dark road whence none return is changed into an exaggerated picture of a bird's paradise (49–62) peopled, or perhaps we should say birded, with noble *aves* of the past. Corinna is not the centre of Ovid's poem as Lesbia was of Catullus', however, for the catalogue of virtues at the centre of the poem focuses our attention on the parrot;

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Tib. 2.2.15–16, Prop. 3.13.5–15, and pseudo-Tib. 3.8.20.

we briefly see Corinna praying for her pet (43), but our emotions—such as they are—go out to the loyal little fellow whose last words are *Corinna, vale!* (48). We should also not forget that this was apparently the first epitaph ever written for a parrot, a choice prompted no doubt not only because of the opportunities it offered for rhetorical expansion, but also because of the exaggerated and humorous contrast in sound between *passer*, *deliciae*, and *psittacus imitatrix*. There may, however, have been one more joke implied by this choice.

Stattius' elegy to Atedius Melior's parrot is similarly unsuitable as a test case, for it was obviously inspired more by Ovid's elegy than by Catullus' lament and can thus only be considered an imitation of an imitation. Fordyce rightly called it 'an orgy of erudition'.<sup>28</sup> If there is to be proof that the ancients recognized this secondary level of meaning, it must therefore come from Martial, and indeed it was his poem 11.6 which first suggested the obscene symbolism to Poliziano.<sup>29</sup>

In this poem, which is set on the Saturnalia (3–4), Martial addresses his cup-bearer Dindymus:

misce dimidios, puer, trientes,  
 quales Pythagoras dabat Neroni,  
 misce, Dindyme, sed frequentiores:  
 possum nil ego sobrius; bibenti  
 succurrent mihi quindecim poetae.  
 da nunc basia, sed Catulliana:  
 quae si tot fuerint quot ille dixit,  
 donabo tibi Passerem Catulli.

Mix the measures by halves, boy,  
 like those Pythagoras gave to Nero.  
 Mix them, Dindymos, but more frequent.  
 I can do nothing sober, but when I drink  
 fifteen poets will come to my aid.  
 Give kisses now, but Catullan-style.  
 And if these be as many as he said,  
 I will give you the sparrow of Catullus.

[translation: Gaisser (1993: 239).]

<sup>28</sup> Fordyce (1961: 92).

<sup>29</sup> See Gaisser (1982: 102–3).

The only possible alternative to an obscene interpretation for the last line is that a collection of Catullus' poems, beginning with and therefore called the *Passer* after our number 2, is meant as the present which Martial will give his cup-bearer.<sup>30</sup> There is certainly nothing wrong with this theory, but there is no need for us to go into it any further, nor to consider the question whether or not the supposed *Passer* collection was the one we have now, or a shorter collection, or indeed in what form the poems of Catullus were most probably published,<sup>31</sup> for the most that any ancillary meaning of *passer* could do for the poem of Martial is to turn it from a double into a triple entendre. There is certainly a play on words, but however extensive it is the basic obscenity of the joke is painfully obvious.

Indeed, the obscenity is not only obvious, it is very carefully prepared. We are deliberately placed in the Saturnalia, a festival of acknowledged licence. Martial's cup-bearer is named Dindymus after Mt. Dindymus, the Phrygian mountain sacred to the goddess Cybele, whose influence on the young priest Attis of Catullus 63 was and is famous. Indeed, Catullus twice (at 35.14 and 63.91) calls Cybele *domina Dindymi* ('mistress of Dindymus'). Martial calls for more wine. He compares his cup-bearer with Pythagoras, the infamous cup-bearer of Nero. Lest there be any misunderstanding about what the reference to Pythagoras implied, here is the information which Tacitus supplies about him at *Ann.* 15.37.4:

ipse per licita atque inlicita foedatus nihil flagitii reliquerat, quo corruptior ageret, nisi paucos post dies uni ex illo contaminatorum grege (nomen Pythagorae fuit) in modum sollemnium coniugiorum denupsisset. inditum imperatori flammeum, missi auspices; dos et genialis torus et fasces nuptiales, cuncta denique spectata, quae etiam in femina nox operit.

He himself, depraved by lusts natural and unnatural, had left untried no atrocity that could add to his corruption except that a few days later (as a

<sup>30</sup> For the popular theory that a collection of poems by Catullus called the *Passer* was in circulation, see Wheeler (1964: 19–20, 21, and 251 n. 24); Havelock (1939: 185 n. 3 and 187 n. 28); Quinn (1972: 13); Voss (1691: 5–6), who traces the theory to Parthenius and suggests its popularity is due to the fact that it offers the only alternative to an obscene interpretation of the lines under discussion! See also Jocelyn (1980: 424), who cites Birt (1882: 407).

<sup>31</sup> For a convenient discussion of these problems, see Fordyce (1961: 409–10).

bride) he had married one of that crowd of degenerates (Pythagoras was his name) in the manner of a solemn wedding ceremony. A yellow wedding veil was placed on the emperor, the auspices were taken, there was a dowry and a wedding couch and marriage torches—in short, everything was seen which night conceals even in the case of a female bride.

This Pythagoras may be the same as the 'spear-chucker' Doryphorus whose marriage to Nero is also mentioned at Suetonius *Nero* 29, where further scandalous details about their relationship are listed. The boy is then told to give Catullan kisses, a line which obviously refers to Cat. 5.7.<sup>32</sup> To sum up, then, Martial says: 'It's Saturnalia! Boy, mix the wine and get me drunker than Pythagoras got his "wife" Nero. Then give me a thousand kisses, and then a hundred, then another thousand, then a second hundred, then another thousand, then a hundred and I'll give you—' What? A book of poetry? A pet bird in a gilded cage? If that's all the boy can expect then the seduction is certainly working backwards.

Jocelyn objects (pp. 423–4) that 'the pretty boys of Antiquity did not welcome anal penetration'. That is not at all surprising, but then the pederasts of antiquity were no more concerned with their victims' consent than was Ballio with the complaints of his little catamite (Plautus, *Pseud.* 3.1). That sodomy was the preferred activity is evident enough from such passages as Juvenal 2.10–13 and 9.43–4, *Priap.* (pseudo-Tib.) 83.21–3, Apul. *Met.* 9.28, or Petronius, *Sat.* 23.3. Jocelyn also says, 'One has only to put the alleged second meaning of vv. 14–16 into plain Latin, e.g. *si multa mihi milia basiorum dederis, te paedicabo* ("if you give me many thousands of kisses, I will bugger you"), for its absurdity to become manifest'—apparently without realizing that he has composed a perfectly respectable *carmen priapeum*, with which one could compare *Priap.* 38.3–4:

pedicare volo, tu vis decerpere poma;  
quod peto, si dederis, quod petis accipies.

<sup>32</sup> Poliziano obviously thought so as well, for in *Misc.* 6 he misquotes Martial to read 'Da *mihi* basia, sed Catulliana', which of course, intentionally or unintentionally, makes the connection with Catullus 5.7 more obvious. See Gaisser (1982: 102 n. 52).

I want your ass, you want to pluck my fruit;  
if I get what I want, you'll get your loot.

[translation: Hooper (1999: 72).]

Closely related to 11.6 is Martial's 4.14, a poem addressed to Martial's friend the epic poet Silius Italicus, asking him to put aside his serious themes of Hannibal and the Punic Wars and listen instead to Martial's *lascivis madidos iocis libellos* ('little books dripping with playful jests', 12). As in 11.6, we are celebrating the Saturnalia (7–9), and the last line clearly refers to the *passer* of Catullus:

sic forsán tener ausus est Catullus  
magno mittere Passerem Maroni.  
so perhaps tender Catullus ventured  
to send the *Passer* to great Vergil.

[translation: Gaiser (1993: 8).]

This certainly increases the probability that a collection of Catullus' poems called the *Passer* existed, for the *libellos* of Martial are deliberately compared with the *Passerem* of Catullus. At the end of the poem, however, comes a seeming contradiction, or perhaps even a mistake on Martial's part. Catullus, it has been noted,<sup>33</sup> could not have sent Virgil a copy of his poem, for Virgil was only 15 or 16 years old at the probable time of Catullus' death. To blame this situation on confusion, however, overlooks two important considerations. First of all, by equating Silius Italicus with Virgil and himself with Catullus, Martial has managed to pay himself and his friend a great compliment.<sup>34</sup> Second, by linking up Virgil and Catullus at the time of Virgil's adolescence, Martial has been able to use Virgil's unfortunate reputation in antiquity<sup>35</sup> as an opportunity once again to exploit the double meaning of *passer*. If this seems forced, perhaps a modern parallel will make it clearer. Assuming that Hemingway had been as addicted to the cock pit as he was to the bull ring and that instead of *The Sun Also Rises* he had called his novel *The Cock and the Bull*, could we read with a straight face a later author's dedication which stated:

<sup>33</sup> See Quinn (1972: 284 n. 17) and Isaac (1933: 1.255 n. 5).

<sup>34</sup> Thus Wheeler (1964: 19–20).

<sup>35</sup> Donatus Vita 9: *libidinis in pueros pronioris* ('more sexually inclined to boys').



'Dear friend, I send you this novel just as Hemingway sent his *Cock* to the great F. Scott Fitzgerald'? At any rate, in the case of this poem we must decide if Martial settled for a compliment that was clumsy and forced because of an historical falsification, or else wrote a sophisticated, literary joke.

If it is to be objected to the above interpretation that the same intimacy is implied between Martial and Silius Italicus as is implied for Catullus and the young Virgil, then the bantering nature of the humour in these epigrams has been misunderstood. This becomes especially clear from the two poems, 1.7 and 7.14, which are linked both to Catullus' *passer* poems and to Martial's patron L. Arruntius Stella.

It is, first of all, obvious that Stella wrote a poem about the death of his wife's dove in imitation of Catullus 3. This is stated in the first three lines of Martial 1.7:

Stellae delictum mei columba  
Verona licet audiente dicam,  
vicit, Maxime, passerem Catulli.

The pet dove of my friend Stella—  
although I say so in Verona's hearing—  
beats, Maximus, the sparrow of Catullus.

—an obvious parody of the opening of the first *passer* poem. The fact is stated again in 7.14, wherein Martial sings of a woman of his acquaintance who has lost *delicias* not of the paltry type over which lamented Catullus' Lesbia,

vel Stellae cantata meo quas flevit Ianthis,  
cuius in Elysio nigra columba volat ...

or like the one Ianthis, sung by my Stella,  
wept, whose black dove flies in Elysium,

Ianthis being Martial's name for Violentilla, the wife of his patron. That Stella should have transferred Catullus' theme from a sparrow to a dove is not at all surprising, for we have seen the two birds linked together both by Pliny the Elder (*Nat. Hist.* 10.52.107) and by Apuleius (*Met.* 6.6). Indeed Pliny's nephew referred to his own *lusus and ineptiae* ('games and nonsense') as *passerculi et columbuli* ('little sparrows and doves'; 9.25.2 and 3), their bantering nature

being quite evident from the sample he supplies at 7.4.6. We do not have to agree with Wheeler's contention that these proposed titles were suggested by the respective poetry books of Catullus and Stella<sup>36</sup> to recognize the natural association of these love birds and the erotic nature of this kind of poetry.

That Stella meant the same thing by his *columba* as Catullus had meant by his sparrow follows inevitably from the argument of 7.14. Howell remarks *ad loc.* that this conclusion 'looks too good to be true, in view of the final joke', a qualification resulting, I think, from failing to see the logical progression of the poem. Picking up the poem where we left off above, Martial continues:

lux mea non capitur nugis neque moribus istis  
 nec dominae pectus talia damna movent:  
 bis senos puerum numerantem perdidit annos,  
 mentula cui nondum sesquipedalis erat.

My darling is not taken by trifles or by such humours,  
 and losses like these don't move the heart of my mistress.  
 She has lost a 12-year-old slave boy,  
 whose penis was not yet a foot and a half long.

[translation: Gaiser (1993: 239)]

Martial's girl, he says, does not waste tears over the loss of something as inconsequential as a sparrow or a dove, but rather—and here we would expect as a conclusion to see her dearly departed slave boy put in opposition to the two silly pets. Instead of that, however, Martial goes on to show that the dearly departed is the slave boy's *mentula* which had not yet reached its allotted length of one and a half feet! The progression has not been from sparrow to dove to human being, but rather from 5 inches to 10 inches to 18 inches! And that, of course, is precisely the same point made at the conclusion of 1.7:

tanto Stella meus tuo Catullo  
 quanto passere maior est columba.

My Stella is as much greater than your Catullus as his dove is bigger than Catullus' sparrow.

<sup>36</sup> Wheeler (1964: 53–4 and 255 n. 29). See also Howell (1980: 123), who believes that the two terms refer to Catullus' and Stella's poems.

Once having recognized this interpretation we return inevitably to the uncomfortable feeling, already mentioned in relation to 4.14, that we are watching these poets air their scandalous linen in public. Martial seems to be joking about sodomizing Silius Italicus while Stella, if he wrote a poem about his wife's grief at the death of her dove, has admitted publicly his own impotence! Rather than attempt to argue this difficulty away, we should accept it as an inevitable ingredient of this kind of poetry. It does seem to have bothered Pliny the Prude, who saw fit to quote Catullus 16.5–8 in a letter to a relative about his *hendecasyllabi*, just as he attempted to exculpate himself from the opprobrium of indulging in his *versiculos severos parum* ('insufficiently serious verses') by ticking off a long list of illustrious predecessors (5.3.5). In the poem to which we referred above Pliny traces his inspiration to the great Cicero himself, who wrote an epigram about stealing kisses from the faithful Tiro. 'Cur post haec,' sings Pliny, 'nostros celamus amores...?' ('After this, why should we conceal our loves?'; 7.4.6 line 10)—a sentiment which both Catullus and Stella apparently shared. As Peter Howell remarks,

If Stella had composed jocular epigrams on the size and decline of his own *mentula*, just as Catullus had done, there was no reason why Martial should have deemed it necessary to keep quiet about them ... such epigrams were intended for public circulation as jocular pieces.<sup>37</sup>

In the case of Martial 1.109 we have the advantage of a 'scientific control'—Carm-Epig. 1512 Büch.: a real epitaph from the Roman equivalent of a Beverly Hills Pet Cemetery about a real dog named Myia. It has already been mentioned in connection with the text of Catullus 3.16:

quam dulcis fuit ista, quam benigna  
 quae cum viveret in sinu iacebat  
 somni conscia semper et cubilis.  
 o factum male, Myia, quod peristi.  
 latrares modo, si quis ad cubaret  
 rivalis dominae, licentiosa:  
 o factum male, Myia, quod peristi.  
 altum iam tenet insciam sepulcrum,  
 nec saevire putes nec insilire,  
 nec blandis mihi morsibus renides.

<sup>37</sup> Howell (1980: 127).

How dear she was, how affectionate.  
 When she was alive she would lie in one's lap  
 always sharing sleep and bed.  
 Ah, cruel event, Myia, that you have perished.  
 You would bark only if some rival  
 lay next to your mistress, wanton one.  
 Ah, cruel event, Myia, that you have perished.  
 Now the deep grave holds you, unaware,  
 nor can you growl or jump up  
 or beam happily at me with soft nibbles.

This is a particularly useful control, for the dependence on Catullus is obvious. The *in sinu iacebat* occupies the same position in the line as Catullus' *in sinu tenere* (2.2) and the *blandis... morsibus* of the last line owes as much to the *acris... morsus* of Cat. 2.4 as to Myia's temperament. Nonetheless the picture which emerges is completely consistent. Although sparrows do not snuggle up to bosoms, lap-dogs do; they also bark, nibble, and act jealous of their mistresses. When we turn to the more sophisticated world of Martial, however, no such realistically consistent picture emerges. Martial reminds us of Catullus in the first line: *Issa est passere nequior Catulli* ('Issa is naughtier than Catullus' sparrow') and of Stella in the second: *Issa est purior osculo columbae* ('Issa is purer than the kiss of a dove'), but his poem suffers from inconsistency as the result of this *contaminatio*. How can the dog be naughtier than one and purer than the other? Are we supposed to take an average? Further on the *purior* image is strangely developed:

castae tantus inest pudor catellae,  
 ignorat Venerem; nec invenimus  
 dignum tam tenera virum puella.

Such great modesty is in this chaste puppy;  
 she is ignorant of Venus, nor did we find  
 a husband worthy of such a tender girl.

First of all, *castus* is never applied to an animal except, of course, to sacrificial victims.<sup>38</sup> Even the exemplary Myia was not said to be ignorant of Venus—a most unusual compliment for a bitch; and the

<sup>38</sup> Citroni (1975: 339).

sudden anthropomorphism of *catella* into *puella* and of her intended *catellus* into *vir* comes as a complete surprise.

I am sure the reader has anticipated my solution to these problems, but let us look a bit further before stating it. At 2.57.3 Martial refers again to his friend Publius—this time in terms that make it clear the fellow was a fop. Furthermore in epigram 10.98 Martial is irritated that Publius' *minister* ('steward') is *Idaeo resolutior cinaedo* ('more willowy than the Idaeian catamite'), more elegant indeed than Publius' wife, daughter, mother, and sister combined. As he warns his friend at the end of the poem:

Perdet te dolor hic: habere, Publi,  
mores non potes hos et hos ministros.

This pain will destroy you. You can't have  
such a temperament *and* such servants.

Publius seems a lot like his little dog Issa. The implied relationship with his *minister/cinaedus* shows that he is *passere nequior Catulli* while, at least as far as women are concerned, he is *purior osculo columbae*. Assuming, as is often the case, that his wife and daughter are so much window dressing, Publius undoubtedly is as ignorant of Aphrodite as he is familiar with Eros.

Mario Citroni has already sensed something going on behind the picture of Issa:

Marziale ha sentito l'allusività erotica dei giochi del passero catulliano (colombi, passeri, ecc., rientravano comunemente in un gioco di simbologia erotica...): Issa non è da meno.<sup>39</sup>

Martial sensed the erotic allusiveness of the games of Catullus' sparrow (doves, sparrows, etc., generally take part in an erotic symbolic system...): Issa is no less.

It is, however, necessary to state openly what Citroni seems only to hint at: in writing 1.109 Martial has not only imitated the theme of Cat. 2, he has also adapted its double entendre by having the dog Issa stand for the phallus of Publius. There are, of course, differences. For the first time the animal does not stand for the phallus of the poet,

<sup>39</sup> Citroni (1975: 336).

and the allegory is not maintained throughout the poem. The dog Issa certainly existed—the dog's name, a form *ipsa* implying 'mistress',<sup>40</sup> is perfect, and the dog is referred to again at 7.87—and the double entendre is most effective in lines 1–4, where the identity of Issa is tantalizingly withheld.

In Greek κύων ('dog') could of course take on the extended meaning 'phallus', just as κύνα ἀνασπᾶν meant 'to have an erection'. Theodor Hopfner links the obscene meaning of both sparrow and dog, saying that they arise 'wegen der bekannten Geilheit dieser Tiere' ('because of the well known wantonness of these animals').<sup>41</sup> Besides the entry in Hesychius, the clearest evidence of *dog's* secondary meaning is Marcus Argentarius' unflattering portrait of the whore Menophile, *A.P.* 5.105, where the last line makes an obvious reference to *fellatio*:

Ἄλλος ὁ Μηνοφίλας λέγεται παρὰ μαχλάσι κόσμος,  
 ἄλλος, ἐπεὶ πάσης γεύεται ἀκρασίης.  
 ἀλλ' ἔτε Χαλδαῖοι, κείνης πέλας. ἦ γὰρ ὁ ταύτης  
 οὐρανὸς ἐντὸς ἔχει καὶ κύνα καὶ διδύμους.

Menophile's cosmetics are different, according to her fellow wantons, different, since she tastes of every incontinence. But approach her, Chaldaeans. For her 'cosmos' keeps hidden both the 'dog' and the 'twins'.

Vinzenz Buchheit has furthermore seized upon this double meaning of κύων as an explanation for the inclusion of the otherwise uncharacteristically bucolic poem 62 among the *Priapea*:

Securi dormite, canes: custodiet hortum  
 cum sibi dilecta Sirius Erigone.<sup>42</sup>

Sleep soundly dogs: the Dog Star and the Maid,  
 his well beloved, keep watch here unafraid.

[translation: Hooper (1999: 86).]

As a further instance of *dog* symbolizing phallus we have an amazing tintinnabulum found in Pompeii. It depicts a gladiator hacking away

<sup>40</sup> Howell (1980: 333). I would not suggest anything beyond coincidence between this usage and *Cat.* 2.9.

<sup>41</sup> Hopfner (1938: 1.104). See also 21 and 162.

<sup>42</sup> Buchheit (1962: 124–7). Buchheit also cites *AP* 12.225 and the riddle poem 14.43. Kytzler (1978: 219) concurs with Buchheit's interpretation.

at his own huge phallus, the head of which snarls back at him in the shape of a dog.<sup>43</sup>

By this time a consistency of double meaning has emerged both in the sparrow poems of Catullus and in the cycle of their imitations by Martial. Indeed, Martial has so expanded on the double meaning that its original force can no longer, I think, seriously be doubted. For the *venustiores*, the people 'in the know', *passer* meant phallus just as surely as *basium* meant kiss, and for Catullus the use of a double entendre was as stylish as diminutives or compound adjectives. This sophisticated badinage seems to have gone over the head of Statius, and it certainly made no impression upon Myia's amateur panegyrist. In the case of Ovid, however, we should not be so sure and in retrospect may even suggest that he anticipated the joke of Martial 1.7. Compared with the sparrow the parrot is, after all, a considerably bigger bird.

<sup>43</sup> RP, Inv. no. 27853. For an illustration, see Grant (1975: 143).

## Part VII

### Roman Realities



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## A World Not Ours

*T. P. Wiseman*

I wondered, and I still wonder, what it was like to be there.

Keith Hopkins, *Death and Renewal* (1983) 203.

### 1. EVIDENCE AND PRECONCEPTIONS

Of all the Latin poets, Catullus is the one who seems to speak most directly to us. And of all the periods of Roman history, the late Republic, in which he lived, is the one for which we have the best contemporary evidence. So Catullus and his world should be well known and unproblematical, hardly in need of substantial reinterpretation. But that is not the case: the familiar story of the poet's love for the wife of Metellus Celer, and his jealousy of Caelius Rufus, depends on a nineteenth-century reconstruction, learned and ingenious but essentially hypothetical,<sup>1</sup> while matters of more central interest, such as the poet's own background and the nature and circumstances of his literary output, have not been given the attention they deserve. I think we have been too easily satisfied with an illusory Catullus; to get to grips with the real one, we need to look hard at the evidence, and not take anything on trust.

It is true that we are comparatively well informed about the late Republic—but only comparatively. The information we have is very

<sup>1</sup> Schwabe (1862); see Wiseman (1985: 217) for the context.

limited, very patchy, and needs careful interpretation. In particular, three common pitfalls in the use of evidence need to be recognised and avoided.

First, the tacit assumption that ‘conspicuous’ source material is somehow privileged. The works of Cicero and Catullus himself are of fundamental importance for understanding late-Republican Rome, but what they tell us is not the only source of information. There is also what may be inferred from what they do not tell us, or allude to only in passing; and there is the humbler and more haphazard testimony of artefacts—coins, inscriptions, works of art—and of the ‘fragments’ of literary works now lost except for quotations in later authors. All that is just as important, if we can interpret it properly.

For instance, the identification of Piso in Catullus 28 and 47 is hindered rather than helped by concentrating on Cicero’s brilliantly malicious portrait of L. Piso Caesoninus in the *in Pisonem*. That Piso was proconsul in Macedonia, Catullus’ Piso evidently in Spain. But the glamour of the ‘conspicuous source’ seems to force the identification of the two, as if there were no other Pisones in Rome. In fact, a coin inscription allows us to infer the existence of a L. Piso Frugi of about the right age, who could well be the proconsul of Spain to whom Catullus refers.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, ‘Lesbia’ herself is commonly identified with Clodia Metelli rather than either of her sisters (despite the chronological problems involved) because her notoriety is more conspicuous for us than that of Clodia Luculli; but if, instead of Cicero’s speech in defence of Caelius, we happened to possess the text of L. Lentulus’ speech prosecuting Clodius in 61 BC, precisely the reverse would be the case.<sup>3</sup>

This fallacy also has its effect on a grander scale. Much of what we know about the late Republic is about politics. That is inevitable, given the nature of our main sources. Politics was a subject of absorbing interest, at one particular social level. But it was not the only one, and for most of the population of Rome probably not the most interesting. What mainly obsessed the populace at large was *ludi*,

<sup>2</sup> Wiseman (1969a: 38–40), (1979b: 162f.); Crawford (1974: 435): C. Piso L. f. Frugi, implying an elder brother L.

<sup>3</sup> Cic. *Mil.* 73, Plut. *Caes.* 10.5, *Cic.* 29.3f.; Wiseman (1969a: 52–5). Lentulus: Cic. *Har. resp.* 37, Val. Max. 4.2.5, Schol. Bob. 85 and 89 St.

entertainments—plays and shows in the theatre, chariot-racing and wild-beast hunts in the Circus, gladiators in the Forum. These things did not interest Cicero, who mentions them only dismissively,<sup>4</sup> and for that reason, among others, the picture of late-Republican society that we see through his eyes is an untypical one. Suppose that instead of Caesar's *Commentaries* and the letters of Cicero, what had survived was Varro's *Menippean Satires* and the plays of Laberius.<sup>5</sup> We should have a very different picture in that case—and perhaps one which would be more helpful for understanding Catullus and the literary life of his time. We shall find, in fact, that theatrical shows and performances are relevant to Catullus and his world in various unexpected ways.

The second pitfall to be avoided is a chronological one—the assumption that everything changed with the end of the Republic. In political terms, of course, the existence of the *princeps* made a fundamental difference; for social history, however, the transition from Republic to Principate is much less significant. From the late second century BC to the late first century AD—that is, in the last two generations of the Republic and the first two of the Principate—there is a recognisable continuity in the *mores* of the Roman elite. The 'Julio-Claudians' were actually Iulii Caesares and Claudii Nerones, wealthy aristocrats who behaved as such; the only difference their 'imperial' status made was in the scale of resources they could deploy on what wealthy aristocrats liked to do. Their lifestyle was formed by the hellenisation of Roman society in the second century BC, the results of which could be seen equally in the luxury and sophistication of their pleasures and in the respect—whether genuine or assumed—they paid to literary culture and the arts.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> e.g. Cic. *Mur.* 38–40 (*populum ac vulgus imperitorum ludis magno opere delectari*: 'the populace and the ignorant rabble are delighted by the games'), *Fam.* 2.8.1 (Cicero doesn't want to hear about *gladiatorum compositiones*, 'matching of gladiators'); of the two passages where he discusses *ludi* at length, *Sest.* 115–27 is forensic special pleading (cf. the apology to the *iudices* at 115), and *Fam.* 7.1 the response to a request by his correspondent.

<sup>5</sup> For the importance of drama (of various types) in Varro's *Satires*, see fr. 304B (*hic modus scaenatilis*), 348–69B (ὄνομα λύρα), and references passim to comedy, tragedy, music and dance.

<sup>6</sup> See now Wallace-Hadrill (1983: 186–8), cf. 156, 169, 178f., 181f. On the tastes and pleasures of the hellenised élite, see for instance Griffin (1976); Stewart (1977: esp. 78f.); Lyne (1980: 8–17 and 192–8).

Here too we may be misled by the accident of what evidence survives. The 'Ciceronian' age would look very different through the eyes of Petronius or Martial. And just as Juvenal's sneer about bread and circuses would apply in much the same way to the Roman populace of the first century BC, so too the glimpses we get from Suetonius of the tastes and habits of the early emperors can be used, with due caution, to illustrate the tastes and habits of the late-Republican aristocracy.<sup>7</sup> We learn an enormous amount from Cicero, but it is no use asking him for an authentic insight into the pleasures of the patrician Claudii. Yet that is what we need, if we are to understand an important part of Catullus' experience.

The third pitfall is the most important, and the most insidious. Because we find some parts of the late-Republican scene immediately intelligible and accessible (notably Cicero in his letters, Catullus in his love poems), it is easy to treat their world as if it were in general familiar to us, and to assume that their values were essentially similar to our own. I think we shall get closer to understanding the ancient world if we make the opposite assumption, always looking for, and trying to come to terms with, the alien and the unfamiliar. That is particularly important for Catullus: if his sentiments are indeed easily recognisable to us, that in itself may be something striking and unusual.

Studying ancient Rome should be like visiting some teeming capital in a dangerous and ill-governed foreign country; nothing can be relied on, most of what you see is squalid, sinister or unintelligible, and you are disproportionately grateful when you find something you can recognise as familiar.<sup>8</sup> Two particular examples of alien values are worth looking at in detail; and since they involve (in the clichés of our time) gratuitous violence and explicit sex, the rest of this chapter is not for the squeamish.

<sup>7</sup> As a crude example, compare Suet. *Gaius* 24.1 with Cic. *Sest.* 16, *Har. resp.* 59, etc.: whether the allegations of incest were true or slanderous (and I see no reason to disbelieve them *a priori*), P. Clodius Pulcher and C. Caesar Augustus Germanicus were two of a kind—arrogant young patricians who did what they fancied.

<sup>8</sup> It was, after all, a city where a dog might pick up a human hand in the street (Suet. *Vesp.* 5.4).

## 2. CRUELTY

Catullus was a good hater. Those who offended him would suffer for it—and the imagery of their suffering is vivid and brutal. Aurelius will have radishes and mullets forced into his fundament; Thallus will be branded with the stripes of the lash, and writhe like a small boat in a rough sea; Cominius will be lynched by the mob, his tongue and eyes torn out as food for carrion birds.<sup>9</sup> What lies behind these sadistic imaginings is the Roman idea of punishment, for that is what Catullus wants to exact.<sup>10</sup>

It is striking that throughout Roman literature, from Plautus to Prudentius, we find instruments of torture referred to as something familiar.

Verbera carnifices robur pix lammina taedae . . .

Scourgings, executioners, the rack, pitch, the metal plate, torches . . .

Lucretius' list of the punishments of crime—which make men think they will be tortured in the afterlife—can be paralleled in many other authors, referring either to slaves or to condemned prisoners or to the victims of tyranny.<sup>11</sup> From these passages a grim typology may be drawn up, of floggings, rackings and burnings.

The lash (*flagellum*) was more than just a whip; it was designed to make deep wounds, so the thongs were armed with metal, like a goad or spur.<sup>12</sup> The victim could be hung up to receive it, his feet weighted, or made to stand with his outstretched arms fastened to a beam

<sup>9</sup> Cat. 15.18f., 25.10–14, 108; also 37.10, branding (cf. Sen. *de Ira* 3.6, Macr. *Sat.* 3.19, Quint. 7.4.12); 97.10, put to the mill (cf. Cic. *de Orat.* 1.46, Plaut. *Bacch.* 781, *Epid.* 121).

<sup>10</sup> Cat. 40.8 *longa poena* (cf. Plaut. *Mil.* 502f., Cyprian *de Lapsis* 13), 116.8 *supplicium*; cf. Wiseman (1985: 198f.): crucifixion? For all this section, see also the first chapter of Hopkins (1983), on the 'murderous games'.

<sup>11</sup> Lucr. 3.1017 (trans. C. Bailey), cf. Ovid *Ibis* 183–8 for the Furies in Hades; Plaut. *Asin.* 548f., Cic. *Verr.* 5.14, 163, Sen. *Contr.* 2.5.5–6, Val. Max. 6.8.1, Sen. *de Ira* 3.6, 19.1, *Ep.* 14.5, 78.19, Cyprian *de Lapsis* 13, Prudent. *Perist.* 5.61f., etc.

<sup>12</sup> Hor. *Sat.* 1.3.119 (distinguishing it from the *scutica*, a simple thong), Juv. 6.479; Plaut. *Most.* 56f., *Men.* 951, *Curc.* 131 (*fodere* or *forare stimulis*); Prudent. *Perist.* 10; 116f., 122 (loaded); Eusebius *HE* 3.8.9, 4.15.4, 8.6.3 etc. (to the bone).

across his shoulders.<sup>13</sup> The ‘little horse’ (*eculeus*) and the ‘lyre-strings’ (*fidiculae*) were forms of rack, apparently vertical rather than horizontal but with the same purpose of disjuncting the limbs;<sup>14</sup> painful distortion could also be achieved by confining the victim in a yoke for neck and feet (that was probably what Catullus had in mind for Aurelius).<sup>15</sup> As for burning, Lucretius’ *pix lammina taedae* sums it up: boiling pitch, plates of red-hot metal, or simply flaming torches applied directly to the body.<sup>16</sup>

It is important to remember that all these things happened in public. The horrors that modern police states practise in secret cells were carried out openly, as an exemplary warning or a public entertainment. Rome was a city with a huge slave population; ‘only by fear can you keep such scum under control’. So slaves were punished with the maximum publicity—flogged through the streets, or in the public *atrium* of the house, with the doors open.<sup>17</sup> Judicial torture was also done in public: at the entrance to the Subura the bloody scourges hung ready for use, and any passer-by in the Forum might see, and hear, the dreadful *carnifices* (‘executioners’) in their red caps (to mark them out as men beyond the pale) inflicting agony on some criminal before his execution.<sup>18</sup> It was a spectacle to enjoy: the populace could

<sup>13</sup> *Pendens* (‘hanging’): Plaut. *Asin.* 301–5 (weights), *Men.* 951, *Most.* 1167 etc.; Prop. 4.7.45 (by the hair); cf. Eusebius *HE* 8.6.2, 8.10.5. *Patibulum* (‘yoke’): Plaut. *Most.* 56f., *Mil.* 360, Dion. Hal. 7.69.2 (Val. Max. 1.7.4 *sub furca*: ‘under the fork’).

<sup>14</sup> *Eculeus*: Cic. *Mil.* 57, *Deiot.* 3, *de Fin.* 5.84, Sen. *Contr.* 9.6.18, Sen. *Ep.* 67.3, etc.; Prudent. *Perist.* 10.109f. (*pendere*). *Fidiculae*: Quint. *Decl.* 19.12, Isid. *Orig.* 5.27.20, etc.; Sen. *Cons. Marc.* 20.3 (aggravated form of crucifixion?). *Talaria* (Sen. *Ep.* 53.6, *de Ira* 3.19.1) were probably another variant.

<sup>15</sup> Non. 210L (*numellae*, wooden); Festus 162L, Plaut. *Curc.* 689f. (*nervus*, metal); Cat. 15.18 (*tractis pedibus patente porta*); cf. also Festus (Paulus) 32L, Plaut. *Asin.* 549, Isid. *Orig.* 5.27.12 (*boiae*, wooden or metal, details unknown). Eusebius refers to extendable stocks, similarly on the borderline between restraint and torture (*HE* 5.1.27, 6.39.5, 8.10.8).

<sup>16</sup> Cic. *Verr.* 5.163, Val. Max. 6.8.1, Sen. *Ep.* 78.19, Eusebius *HE* 6.1.21, etc. Variations: Prop. 4.7.38 (hot brick), *AE* 1971 88.2.12 (wax, candles), Prudent. *Perist.* 229f. (hot fat), Eusebius *HE* 8.12.6 (boiling lead). For the torch used in conjunction with flogging and pincers (cf. the *ungulae* so prominent in the Christian martyr-stories), see the Beldame Painter’s playful satyrs: Haspels (1936: 170, plates 49–51).

<sup>17</sup> Plaut. *Most.* 56 (*per vias*), Suet. *Aug.* 45.4 (*atrium*, also *per trina theatra*); Livy 2.36.1, Dion. Hal. 7.69.1, Val. Max. 1.7.4 (*medio circo*, Forum etc.). Quotation from Tac. *Ann.* 14.44.5 (C. Cassius’ speech).

<sup>18</sup> Mart. 2.17.2 (Subura); *AE* 1971 88.2.3–14 (*carnifices*); Cic. *Verr.* 5.163 (*in foro*, Messana), Prudent. *Perist.* 10.709 (*corona plebium*: ‘in a circle of common people’),

‘feast their eyes and satisfy their souls’ at the torture and death of a notorious malefactor. The fate of Vitellius gives us an idea of the scene:<sup>19</sup>

...having his hands pinioned fast at his back, a halter cast about his neck, and his apparel torn from his body, he was haled half-naked into the Forum. Among many scornful indignities offered unto him both in deed and word throughout the spacious street Sacra Via from one end to the other, whiles they drew his head backward by the bush of his hair (as condemned malefactors are wont to be served) and set a sword’s point under his chin, and all to the end he might show his face and not hold it down, whiles some pelted him with dung and dirty mire, others called him with open mouth incendiary and patinarium [glutton], and some of the common sort twitted him also with faults and deformities of his body... At the last upon the stairs Gemoniae with many a small stroke all to-mangled he was and killed in the end, and so from thence drawn with a drag into the river Tiber.

The corpse might be maltreated (as Catullus imagines for Cominius) before the executioner’s hook dragged it off amid the applause of the crowd.<sup>20</sup>

The main work of the *carnifices* was ‘outside the gate’, for they were employed by funeral contractors for the burial or cremation of the dead. Just to the left as you emerged from the Esquiline Gate on the road to Tibur there was a noisome area, part cemetery, part rubbish tip, where official notices vainly tried to limit the dumping of dung and carrion.<sup>21</sup> There they plied both parts of their trade; it was where the stake was unfastened from the shoulders of the beaten slave to be set upright for his crucifixion—or even more horribly, for his

Antioch). Public torture for evidence or a confession was normal in the late Empire (Dionisotti [1982: 105]), an everyday sight for a schoolboy, but probably not in the first century BC (Cic. *Mil.* 60, slaves evidently not tortured in public)

<sup>19</sup> Suet. *Vit.* 17 (translation by Philemon Holland, 1606); quotation from Cic. *Verr.* 5.65.

<sup>20</sup> e.g. Dio 58.11.5 (Sejanus); Ovid *Ibis* 165 (*populo plaudente*); Cat. 108 (*populi arbitrio*).

<sup>21</sup> *CIL* 6. 31577, 31615 (cf. also 31614 from outside the Porta Viminalis); Varro *LL* 5.25, Festus 240–1L (rotting corpses), Hor. *Sat.* 1.8.8–13 (whitened bones); Lanciani (1888: 64–7); M. Albertoni, in *L’archeologia in Roma capitale tra sterro e scavo* (Venice 1983) 148f. *Extra portam*: Plaut. *Mil.* 359f. (slave punishment), *Cas.* 354 (cremation), Festus 240L (*puticuli*: ‘paupers’ field’).



impalement—and where they flogged him at a charge to his master of 4 sesterces for the whole operation.<sup>22</sup>

Naturally, free citizens could not be treated in this way; but how strong was the protection of the law? The Roman citizen who witnessed the agony of slaves or criminals could imagine it inflicted on himself, and sometimes his fears came true. The emperors could torture whomever they liked ('let him feel he's dying', said Caligula), for there was no one who could invoke the law against them. In the Republic, the same applied in the provinces under a brutal governor, or anywhere, if one fell into the hands of a sufficiently powerful enemy.<sup>23</sup>

The law connived at summary vengeance exacted by the injured party (most notoriously on adulterers, who if caught in the act might be flogged, raped or even castrated), and this concession could all too easily be extended to the indulgence of private pique. A passing rustic makes an untimely joke? A humble neighbour's dog keeps you awake? Out with the whips, and have the culprit beaten—if he dies, too bad.<sup>24</sup> In a city without a police force, where self-help was basic to the operation of the law, the humble citizen needed a powerful friend for his protection, and the great men of the time went about with armed escorts as a matter of course.<sup>25</sup> When Clodius and his men attacked him on the Sacra Via in November 57, Cicero was well equipped to resist; his escort, he says, could have killed Clodius, which clearly implies that the cudgels and swords were not all on one side.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>22</sup> AE 1971 88 and 89 (88.2.10 for the 4 HS). Impalement: Sen. *Ep.* 101.11f., *Cons. Marc.* 20.3, Dio 49.12.5, etc.

<sup>23</sup> Emperors: e.g. Suet. *Gaius* 27–33 (quotation from 30.1); P. A. Brunt, *ZSS* 97 (1980) 259f. Provincial governors: e.g. Cic. *Verr.* 5.163f., *Fam.* 10.32.3. Private *inimicitiae*: Sall. *Hist.* 1.44M, whence Val. Max. 9.2.1, Sen. *de Ira* 3.18.1 etc. (Sulla and M. Marius); Cic. *Phil.* 11.5–7 (Dolabella and Trebonius); Plut. *Cic.* 49.2 (Pomponia and Q. Tullius Philologus).

<sup>24</sup> C. Gracchus *ap.* Gell. *NA* 10.3.5, Juv. 6.413–18. *Deprensus adulter* ('adulterer caught in the act'): Ter. *Eun.* 955–7, Hor. *Sat.* 1.2.41–6, Val. Max. 6.1.13, Juv. 10.316f.

<sup>25</sup> Cic. *Mil.* 10 (*quid comitatus nostri, quid gladii volunt?*: 'what do our escorts signify? what do our swords?'); late-Republican examples collected in Lintott (1968: 83–5). Self-help: Kelly (1966), esp. the first three chapters; Lintott, 22–34. The *locus classicus* for the poor man's defencelessness is Juv. 3.278–301.

<sup>26</sup> Cic. *Att.* 4.3.3: *clamor, lapides, fustes, gladii... Qui erant mecum facile operas aditu prohibuerunt. Ipse occidi potuit* ('shouting, stones, clubs, swords... Those who were with me easily kept his thugs from entering. He himself could have been killed').

These violent scenes were the result of a value system that regarded honour (*fama, dignitas, existimatio*) as the supreme good, and pursued it competitively in feuds that could be savagely brutal. The inscription on Sulla's tomb in the Campus Martius boasted that no friend excelled him in doing good, no enemy in doing harm—and that harm included the most horrific physical torture.<sup>27</sup> If your enemy's honour required your total humiliation, you had better keep out of his way. The danger was real: Cicero would not risk going to Octavian to beg for mercy in 43, in case he should be tortured. When an Augustan rhetorician imagined a client of Clodius carrying out the triumvirs' sentence by torturing Cicero to death, that reflected a real situation; long after his enemy was dead, Cicero would not use the Via Aurelia that led past Clodius' estates.<sup>28</sup>

No doubt it was not yet as bad in the late Republic as it was for Seneca, who dwelt on the awful apparatus of the *carnifex* as one of the hazards of public life.<sup>29</sup> The political change had made that difference. But the novelty was not the cruelty itself, only the emperors' total freedom to indulge it.<sup>30</sup> The state of mind that made them want to do so was already a familiar part of the world of Catullus.

### 3. SEXUAL MORES

The question 'Was Catullus homosexual?' could not have been asked by his contemporaries, because their terminology—and therefore also, we assume, their conceptual framework—was quite different from that of the twentieth century. The words 'homosexual' and 'heterosexual' were unknown even in the English language before Krafft-Ebing and

<sup>27</sup> Plut. *Sulla* 38.4; see n. 23 above for his treatment of M. Marius Gratidianus.

<sup>28</sup> Plut. *Cic.* 47.4, Sen. *Contr.* 7.2.13 (Varius Geminus), Cic. *Phil.* 12.23f. L. Cestius Pius evidently dwelt with pleasure on the *contumeliae insultantium Ciceroni et verbera et tormenta* ('insults, blows and tortures of those mocking Cicero'): Sen. *Suas.* 6.10 (cf. 7.12f. for his grudge).

<sup>29</sup> e.g. Sen. *Ep.* 14.4–6, *de Ira* 3.19f.

<sup>30</sup> The invention of *tormenta* and other punishments was attributed to the archetypal tyrant Tarquinius Superbus: see Mommsen *Chronica Minora* 1.145 (the 'Chronographer of AD 354'). Eusebius *Chron.* 2.96 Schoene (ann. Abr. 1470), Isid. *Orig.* 5.27.23, Lydus *de Mens.* 4.29, Suda s.v. Σούπερβος; Suetonius' *de Regibus* (Auson. *Ep.* 23, p. 267 Peiper) is a likely source.

Havelock Ellis; their etymology is 'barbarously hybrid', as Ellis himself observed in 1897, and the concepts they express are neither Greek nor Roman.<sup>31</sup> The ancients evidently did not find it helpful to categorise sexual activity according to the sex of the person with whom it is performed. What mattered to them was the question of active or passive, of penetrating or being penetrated.

That distinction is basic to the understanding of Roman sexual vocabulary and sexual *mores*. The Latin verbs for sexual intercourse vary according to the three possible modes of penetration—*futuere* (vaginal), *pedicare* (anal), *irrumare* (oral). All three verbs are active, both grammatically and conceptually; their passive forms, of course, refer to being penetrated in each of those ways, and may be subsumed under the general phrase *muliebria pati*, roughly 'to submit to the woman's role'.<sup>32</sup> However, *irrumari* (passive) had a grammatically active metaphorical synonym, *fellare* ('to suck', properly of an infant at the breast), perhaps because that mode of intercourse seemed to require a greater degree of participation by the 'passive' partner.<sup>33</sup>

It was A. E. Housman who observed, in the elegant Latin he employed to discuss these matters, that those brought up in the Judaeo-Christian tradition do not find it easy to grasp the distinction that mattered crucially to the Romans, between the act of *pedicatio* or *irrumatio*, which was not in itself disgraceful, and submission to either form, which certainly was.<sup>34</sup> That is, a male who willingly allowed penetration by another was treated with contempt, and one who was compelled to allow it was thereby humiliated. But the penetrator himself was neither demeaned nor disgraced; on the contrary, he had demonstrated his superiority and his masculinity by making another serve his pleasure. The question of degradation was most acute where the oral mode was involved; thus *fellator*—or *fellatrix*, of a woman—was the most contemptuous of insults, and *irrumare*

<sup>31</sup> *OED Supplement* (1933) 460, 473, quoting Ellis' *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*.

<sup>32</sup> Sall. *Cat.* 13.3, Tac. *Ann.* 11.36.5, Petr. *Sat.* 9.6, Ulp. *Dig.* 3.1.1.6.

<sup>33</sup> See Adams (1982: 130–4) on *fellare*.

<sup>34</sup> Housman (1931: 408 n. 1) = (1972: 3.1180 n.2): 'Scilicet non facile qui Pauli Tarsensis et Iudaeorum norma uti a pueris adsueverunt opinionem mentibus comprehendunt quae, ut Catullo et Martiali, ita nunc cuivis de plebe Siciliensi vel Neapolitana penitus a natura insita est, obscaenos fellatores et cinaedos, pedicones et irrumatores non obscaenos esse.'

came to have also the more general meaning of ‘to get the better of someone regardless of his wishes.’<sup>35</sup> That is what Catullus means when he calls Memmius an *irrumator*: he is not literally complimenting him on his virility, but complaining about the thoroughness with which he cheated his staff (it was a very obscene way of saying it, which Catullus emphasised by his vivid development of the imagery).<sup>36</sup> But when he threatens Aurelius and Furius with *pedicatio* and *irrumatio* for imputing effeminacy to him (on the strength of the kiss poems), or Aurelius alone with *irrumatio* for making passes at a boy Catullus feels responsible for, he probably means it in the literal sense.

Sexual assault as a punishment was a familiar idea to the Romans; if you were caught on another man’s property, or with his wife, it might well feature—at his hands or those of his slaves—among the summary vengeance he could inflict.<sup>37</sup> As with flogging, so with rape—the ‘legitimate’ chastisement of a malefactor caught red-handed, who had thereby put himself into the power of the offended party, merged imperceptibly into private vengeance, a way for affronted dignity to get its own back or teach the insolent a lesson.<sup>38</sup> Again, the danger could be real: in a society with little effective control of casual violence, an aggrieved enemy and his clients might be as hard to resist as a gang of randy youths.<sup>39</sup>

The purpose of the exercise was humiliation, to express dominance and treat the victim like a slave (here too the parallel with corporal punishment is close). To submit to another’s sexual demands was a disgrace in a freeborn citizen, but a slave had no choice in the matter, and even a freedman might find that obliging his ex-master in this way was one of his residual duties.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Baehrens (1885: 117); Housman (1931: 408f.); Adams (1982: 129f.); *TLL* 7.2.444.

<sup>36</sup> Cat. 10.12f., 28.9–13; Adams (1982: 130). Cf. Suet. *Jul.* 22.2 for the same play of metaphor (*insultare capitibus*).

<sup>37</sup> Trespassers: *Priapea* passim, esp. 52.6–8 (slaves), 56.5f. (master). Adultery: Val. Max. 6.1.13 (slaves), Apul. *Met.* 9.28 (master), Hor. *Sat.* 1.2.133 (cf. n.24 above).

<sup>38</sup> e.g. Sen. *Suas.* 7.13 (*flagra*), Cic. *Cael.* 71 (*stuprum*); cf. Diod. Sic. 16.93.3–7 (Attalus’ vengeance on Pausanias).

<sup>39</sup> For *iuvenes petulantes*, see for instance Cic. *Planc.* 30 (mime-actress), Fest. 439L (boys and girls at fountain), Alciphron 3.37 (young widow).

<sup>40</sup> See Treggiari (1969: 68–81) on freedmen’s duties in general. Slaves: Hor. *Sat.* 1.2.115–18, Petr. *Sat.* 75.11, etc.

That tripartite formulation—shame for the freeborn, necessity for the slave, duty for the freedman—was coined by an Augustan orator defending a freedman. But the epigram backfired.<sup>41</sup>

Res in iocos abiit: 'non facis mihi officium', et 'multum ille huic in officiis versatur'. Ex eo in pudici et obsceni aliquamdiu officiosi vocitati sunt.

The idea became a handle for jokes, like 'you aren't doing your duty by me' and 'he gets in a lot of duty for him'. As a result the unchaste and obscene got called 'dutiful' for some while afterwards.

The jokes warn us not to be too schematic. There is often a dissonance between the generally accepted values of a society, and what every one knows actually goes on. The 'unchaste and obscene' might be persons of rank and fashion, who just enjoyed the passive role; the hellenisation of Roman society in the late Republic afforded them plenty of scope for their preferences, even if the traditional morality of Rome continued to condemn them.<sup>42</sup> So Catullus can abuse his enemies as *pathici* and *cinaedi*, but in another mood he and Calvus can play at being *delicati*, which means the same without the pejorative overtones.<sup>43</sup> The Juventius poems betray a similar ambiguity: Catullus pretends that his readers will shrink from touching them, but he clearly expects them to go on reading.<sup>44</sup>

Apologies to the reader can be revealing. Those in Martial's epigrams, for instance, show firstly that respectable women were not supposed to read poems on explicitly erotic themes, and secondly that they would if they got the chance. He uses the image of a well brought up girl putting her hand to her eyes as she passes Priapus' ithyphallic statue in the garden—but looking all the same.<sup>45</sup> Martial justifies his

<sup>41</sup> Q. Haterius *ap. Sen. Contr.* 4 pref. 10 (*impudicitia in ingenuo crimen est, in servo necessitas, in liberto officium*); translation by M. Winterbottom.

<sup>42</sup> See MacMullen (1982) on 'Greek love' and Roman attitudes to it. *Impudici* who affected an old-fashioned guise were a favourite target of satirists: Mart. 2.36.5f., 12.42.1, Juv. 2.11–13, 41.

<sup>43</sup> *Pathicus*: 16.2 (Aurelius), 57.2 (Caesar), 112.2 (Naso). *Cinaedus*: 16.2 (Furius), 25.1 (Thallus), 29.5 and 9 (Pompey?), 33.2 (Vibennius *filius*), 57.1 and 10 (Caesar and Mamurra). *Ut convenerat esse delicatos*: 50.3, cf. TLL 5. 444f.

<sup>44</sup> Cat. 14b; Wiseman (1969a: 7). I assume that what they are expected to be shocked at is the citizen—and aristocratic—status of Juventius; cf. Wiseman (1985: 130f.).

<sup>45</sup> Mart. 3.68, 86; 11.16.9f. Priapus: 3.68.9f., cf. *Priapea* 66.1f.

material by comparing it with the performances everyone saw in the theatre; women certainly enjoyed the mimes, licentious scenes and all, and according to the sardonic Juvenal sighed and squealed at the star pantomime-dancers as if in an erotic climax.<sup>46</sup> For his 'Saturnalia' book (11), where the obscenities are most frequent, Martial openly admits his aim to be erotically stimulating, like a belly-dancer from Gades. What is interesting is that he hopes to excite female readers as well as males; in fact the girls from Gades performed not only for male audiences but in the presence of women too, though naturally it was not the women they aimed to arouse.<sup>47</sup>

Cultured Rome was full of erotic images, from Priapus' grotesque erection in the ornamental garden<sup>48</sup> to old-master paintings of mythological copulation on the walls inside.<sup>49</sup> Out in the streets, prostitutes plied for hire practically naked,<sup>50</sup> and every April at the Floralia the girls who played the mimes were stripped for the audience's enjoyment, to a flourish of trumpets.<sup>51</sup> Of course old-fashioned moralists disapproved, but what they had to shut their eyes to was ubiquitous at every level of society. What makes one person blush may make another laugh. The world of Catullus was made up of individuals, and there is a limit to how far one can generalise about it. Male or female, slave or free, rich or poor, straight-laced or luxurious, cultured or ignorant—the permutations of those categories and others naturally resulted in a kaleidoscopic variety of values and attitudes. This chapter has been merely a reminder not to imagine them in too familiar a world.

<sup>46</sup> Mart. 1 *pref.*, 4.5f., 35.8f.; 8 *pref.* (*mimica licentia*); 2.41.15–18, 3.86.3f., Juv. 6.63–5.

<sup>47</sup> Mart. 11.16.5–8; for *uda* in line 8, cf. Juv. 10.318. Saturnalia: 11.2.5, 11.15.12. *Gaditanae*: 11.16.4, cf. 5.78.26–8, 6.71.1f., 14.203, Juv. 11.162–76 (wives watching at line 165), *Priapea* 27.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. *Priapea* 47, evidently an outdoor triclinium (cf. Varro *RR* 3.13.2).

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Suet. *Tib.* 44.2, Parrhasius' painting in *qua Meleagro Atalanta ore morigeratur* ('in which Atalanta gratifies Meleager with her mouth'); no doubt she obliged him in this way (a very special favour, cf. Mart. 9.40) because he gave her the spoils of the Calydonian hunt (Ovid *Met.* 8.425ff.).

<sup>50</sup> Prop. 2.22.8; Ovid *Trist.* 2.309–12, Tac. *Ann.* 15.37.3; cf. Cat. 55.11f., an unsolicited display.

<sup>51</sup> Val. Max. 2.10.8, Sen. *Ep.* 97.8; cf. Mart. 1 *pref.*, 35.8f. etc. Trumpets: Juv. 6.250, cf. Pliny *Ep.* 2.7.1.

## Catullus XLII\*

*Eduard Fraenkel**To Miss M. V. Taylor  
on her eightieth birthday*

Adeste, hendecasyllabi, quot estis  
 omnes undique, quotquot estis omnes.  
 iocum me putat esse moecha turpis  
 et negat mihi vestra reddituram  
 pugillaria, si pati potestis. 5  
 persequamur eam et reflagitemus.  
 quae sit, quaeritis? illa, quam videtis  
 turpe incedere, mimice ac moleste  
 ridentem catuli ore Gallicani.  
 circumssistite eam, et reflagitate. 10  
 'moecha putida, redde codicillos,  
 redde, putida moecha, codicillos'.  
 non assis facis? o lutum, lupanar,  
 aut si perditius potest quid esse.  
 sed non est tamen hoc satis putandum. 15  
 quod si non aliud potest, ruborem  
 ferreo canis exprimamus ore.  
 conclamate iterum altiore voce.  
 'moecha putida, redde codicillos,  
 redde, putida moecha, codicillos'. 20  
 sed nil proficimus, nihil movetur.  
 mutanda est ratio modusque vobis,

\* Originally entitled 'Two Poems of Catullus.' Fraenkel's discussion of the second poem (Cat. 8) has been omitted.

si quid proficere amplius potestis.  
 ‘pudica et proba, redde codicillos.’

To my aid, little poems, every one, all of you  
 from everywhere, every single one of you, all!  
 A foul harlot thinks I am a laughing stock  
 and says she won't give back  
 your writing tablets, if you please. 5  
 Let's go after her and demand them back.  
 Who is she, you ask? That one you see  
 strutting shamelessly, laughing like a chorus girl,  
 disagreeably, with the mouth of a Gallic hound.  
 Surround her and keep after her with your demands. 10  
 ‘Filthy harlot, return the tablets,  
 return the tablets, filthy harlot!’  
 Don't you care a bit? O filth! brothel!  
 Or if anything can be more depraved than that.  
 But still we must not think this is enough. 15  
 If nothing else, let's force a blush  
 from the dog's brazen face.  
 Shout again with a louder voice:  
 ‘Filthy harlot, return the tablets,  
 return the tablets, filthy harlot!’ 20  
 But we're getting nowhere. She isn't moved.  
 You must change your method and your plan  
 to see if you can accomplish something more.  
 ‘Chaste and virtuous one, return the tablets!’

The poem begins with a passionate cry. ‘To my aid, little poems, every one, all of you from everywhere, every single one of you, all!’ When Catullus says *adeste, hendecasyllabi*, he is not of course summoning representatives of one metrical genre only. Since by far the greater part of those short poems which now make up the first section of his book (I–LX) has as its metre the hendecasyllable (*phalaeceus*), he can readily use this name for his short poems in general without excluding an occasional iambic or choliambic piece. Catullus has to summon his poems *undique*, for they are scattered over a wide area, which proves, if proof were needed, that, like other poets in antiquity, he was in the habit of sending first, before publication, individual poems to individual addressees.



After the second line we have to imagine a brief pause: the *hendecasyllabi* are rushing in. When they have gathered the poet can tell them why he has summoned them. But he is so angry that, to unburden his mind, he first bursts into bad language and only then comes to the point,

et negat mihi vestra reddituram  
pugillaria, si pati potestis. (4–5)

The reading of the only manuscript that reached the early humanists, *vestra*, has in many editions, from the sixteenth century on, been changed to *nostra*. But *vestra* is certainly what Catullus wrote. Not only does it go much better with the following *si pati potestis*, where the anger at an intolerable indignity is marked by the alliteration (as at 29.1, *quis potest pati*), but it is required by the legal or quasi-legal fiction on which the whole poem is based. The poems are themselves considered the legitimate owners of the *codicilli*, the *pugillaria*, or, as they more commonly are called, the *pugillares*, the little writing-tablets, note-books, which you can hold in your closed hand. These note-books, being a mere instrument for jotting down the poems, are subordinate to the poems; it is the poems who are their masters and owners. *vestra pugillaria* unmistakably denotes the ownership for in the terminology of Roman law *meum est* means ‘I am the owner’.<sup>1</sup> Unless we bear this in mind we shall miss the note of burning indignation in the words of the wronged farmer (Virgil, *Ecl.* 9.2ff.):

O Lycida, vivi pervenimus, advena *nostri*,  
quod numquam veriti sumus, ut possessor *agelli*  
diceret ‘haec mea sunt; veteres migrate coloni’.

O Lycidas, we have lived to come to this, that a newcomer –  
a thing we never feared— a newcomer, the possessor of *our farm*,  
would say, ‘These things are mine. Go elsewhere, old farmers’.

‘I, I am the owner of this piece of land’ he cries—the strong emphasis is brought out by the hyperbaton *nostri ... agelli*<sup>2</sup>—and yet the usurper is shameless enough to claim the ownership for himself,

<sup>1</sup> Schultz (1951: 339).

<sup>2</sup> An equally emphatic hyperbaton of the same type occurs at Eur., *Alc.* 1072-4, where σὴν ... γυναῖκα (‘your ... wife’) is separated by a whole trimeter; for the implications see my note on Aesch., *Ag.* 13 f.

*haec mea sunt*, just as he might say in front of the praetor *hunc ego agrum ex iure Quiritium meum esse aio* ('I say that this field is mine in accordance with the right of citizens'). But to return to the *hendecasyllabi*. If they went to court, they would appeal to the praetor, *in iure* ('in court'), for the *actio in rem* ('action in the case of property') known as *rei vindicatio* ('claim of ownership'), and they would have a fair chance of winning afterwards, *apud iudicem* ('before the judge'), their case: *ubi enim probavi rem meam esse necesse habebit possessor restituere, qui non obiecit aliquam exceptionem* ('when I have shown that the property is mine, the possessor who has not interposed a defence must return it').<sup>3</sup> However, the *hendecasyllabi* do not go to court but, as we shall see, resort to a more drastic and less tedious expedient. But even so they act as the legitimate owners and it is in this quality that they perform the *flagitatio* ('dunning' or 'abusive public demand').

It is all very well for Catullus to say *persequamur eam et reflagitemus* (6), but how are the *hendecasyllabi* to do that if they have been given no clue by which they might recognize the woman? They therefore ask for fuller information. Now in a poem like this, only the poet himself can speak directly to his readers. There existed, however, a device, invented by some tragic poet and adopted by several comic playwrights, through which it became possible to acquaint the audience or the reader in an indirect way with what non-speaking persons are saying. It is this device that Catullus uses here:<sup>4</sup> *quae sit, quaeritis* (7). In answer to the question the *hendecasyllabi* and we, the readers, receive a most unflattering description of the woman and of her behaviour in public:

illa, quam videtis  
turpe incedere, mimice ac moleste  
ridentem catuli ore Gallicani. (7-9)

*turpe incedere*: it is the way she walks that more than anything else betrays her. In Petronius 126.2, a beau is rebuked for his affected gait, *quo incessus arte<sup>5</sup> compositus et ne vestigia quidem pedum extra mensuram aberrantia, nisi quod formam prostituis?* ('why is your gait

<sup>3</sup> Ulpian, *Dig.* 6.1.9.

<sup>4</sup> And afterwards, for instance Horace, *Epodes* 7.15 f.

<sup>5</sup> *arte* Dousa: *tute* trad. For other possible corrections see Konrad Müller's recent edition.

artfully adjusted and not even your footprints wander out of bounds, unless because you are prostituting your beauty?') and then the speaker adds: *ex vultibus ... hominum mores colligo, et cum spatiantem vidi, quid cogitet scio* ('from people's faces I infer their characters, and when I see a man walking I know what he's thinking'). Perhaps even more significant, on account of its exemplary conciseness, is the characterization of a noble *matrona* in the loveliest epitaph that has come down to us from the Republican age,<sup>6</sup> *sermone lepido,<sup>7</sup> tum autem incessu commodo* ('of charming speech, likewise with a pleasant way of walking'). People in the south of Europe may more easily be aware of the importance of the *incessus* as revealing the character of a man or woman, but such a symptom is no less obvious to the attentive eye of an observant northerner. In a poem by Goethe, written at the age of twenty-six, *Erklärung eines alten Holzschnittes, vorstellend Hans Sachsens poetische Sendung* ('Interpretation of an old woodcut representing Hans Sachs' poetic mission'), a figure which represents at the same time Honesty, unspoiled Nature and healthy Poetry, is described thus:

Da tritt herein ein junges Weib,  
Mit voller Brust und rundem Leib,  
Kräftig sie auf den Füßen steht,  
Grad, edel vor sich hin sie geht,  
Ohne mit Schlepp und Steiss zu schwänzen,  
Noch mit 'n Augen 'rum zu scharlenzen.

And now a maiden enter'd there  
with swelling breast and body fair  
and footing firm she took her place

<sup>6</sup> *Carm. lat. epigr.* 52.7.

<sup>7</sup> This recalls the famous remark of the great orator L. Licinius Crassus in Cicero's dialogue *De oratore*, 3.45, *cum audio socrum meam Laeliam* (for her *sermo* and that of some other ladies of the contemporary aristocracy see also Cic., *Brut.* 211) ... *eam sic audio ut Plautum mihi aut Naevium videar audire* ('when I hear my mother-in-law Laelia, ... I listen to her with the feeling that I am listening to Plautus or Naevius'). The sentence by which the remark on Laelia's speech is interrupted, *facilium enim mulieres incorruptam antiquitatem conservant* ('women more easily preserve antiquity unspoiled') etc., is a rendering of Plato, *Crat.* 418c: αἱ γυναικες αἴπερ μάλιστα τὴν ἀρχαίαν φωνὴν σφύζουσι ('it is women who most preserve ancient speech'), a point not noticed in the commentaries of Piderit-Harnecker and of Wilkins).

and moved with stately, noble grace.  
 She did not walk in wanton mood  
 Nor look around with glances lewd.

[translation: Edgar Bowring, 1853]

This young woman is the very opposite of the one *quam videtis turpe incedere, mimice ac moleste ridentem* (7–9).

*mimice ac moleste*: if we press our lips tightly together to produce the threefold m-sound, we shall not remain deaf to the contempt in this half-line. The connotations of the word *mima* ('actress') are well known.

*ridentem catuli ore* (9): when she is grinning she looks like an angry dog showing his teeth. The ancients seem to have been impressed by this similarity of look. In the *Captivi* of Plautus the parasite complains that when he is making his usual jokes no one laughs any more, and then he goes on (485 f.):

ne canem quidem irritatam voluit quisquam imitarier:  
 saltem, si non arriderent, dentes ut restringerent.

no one was even willing to imitate an angry dog,  
 if they weren't smiling, at least by baring their teeth.

The careful description of the woman puts the *hendecasyllabi* on the right track. After a short pursuit they succeed in hunting her out. Therefore the poet need no longer say *persequamur eam et reflagitemus*, but can change his command: *circumsistite eam et reflagitate* (10). And now the action proceeds with increasing speed. The crowd of the little poems surround their victim, and with the gusto of Italian youngsters who relish such a game they shout at her:

moecha putida, redde codicillos,  
 redde, putida moecha, codicillos. (11–12)

When I read these lines aloud I am careful not to lose the effect of the double liquid in the last word and also to give the full volume to this momentous quadrisyllable. The word-order of the first line, *moecha putida, redde*, is reversed in the second line, *redde, putida moecha*. We may call this a stylistic device of popular eloquence. It serves in a simple yet effective manner to

express strong emotion. In one of the most moving scenes of Menander the young officer who has maltreated his girl so that she has run away from him implores the old gentleman Pataecus to help him (*Peric.* 256 f.):

Γλυκέρα με καταλέλοιπε, καταλέλοιπέ με  
Γλυκέρα, Πάταικε.

Glycera has left me, has left me—Glycera has—Pataecus.

Here we are listening to the cry of a distressed soul. At the other end of the scale we find, in the German nursery rhyme, the naughty boy who obstinately refuses to eat his porridge, yelling:

Ich esse meine Suppe nicht, nein, meine Suppe ess' ich nicht.

I do not eat my soup. No. My soup I do not eat.

In the case of the *flagitatio*, the reversal of the word-order, as we shall see, belonged to a very old popular custom as a means of intensifying the demand.

At 1.13, once more, we are made to perceive in an indirect way the reaction of a partner, this time of the woman herself: *non assis facis?* We see her standing in the middle of the excited crowd, smiling, motionless, quite unruffled. That is the limit. The poet, wild with rage, pours out a welter of abuse. He begins with a choice alliterating pair, *o lutum, lupanar*, and ends with the comprehensive formula *aut si perditius potest<sup>8</sup> quid esse* (14). In the face of her impudence no weakening must be permitted; the attack has to be renewed in a more powerful fashion:

quod si non aliud potest, ruborem  
ferreo canis exprimamus ore. (16–17)

If we want to recite these lines properly, the soft backsound of the English R will not do; we have to round our tongue and produce unashamedly a series of rolling and sustained Italian Rs. It is this sound above all that here suggests the ugliness of the dog. To the Roman ear

<sup>8</sup> I feel no qualms in accepting the old emendation *potest* (*potes* the Veronensis), which makes the expression much more forceful and idiomatic.

the snarling of a dog was disagreeable;<sup>9</sup> at an early stage they called R the *littera canina* ('canine letter').<sup>10</sup>

After this preparation the poet repeats and amplifies his injunction:

conclamate iterum altiore voce  
 'moecha putida, redde codicillos,  
 redde, putida moecha, codicillos!' (18–20)

This time the unholy chant begins 'forte' and swells in a steady crescendo to the drawn-out final fortissimo. There follows a long pause, a suspense of hopeful expectation. *Sed nil proficimus, nihil movetur* (21). So the poet, frustrated, orders a complete change of tactics.<sup>11</sup> After the ear-splitting shouts we now hear the voice of humble supplication, piano, pianissimo:

pudica et proba, redde codicillos. (24)

We are not told with what measure of success this palinode meets.

Students of ancient literature who are inclined to regard most of their work as an auxiliary branch of prosopography, and who, moreover, have a passion for solving puzzles thought up for the purpose, have long been busy asking the question 'who is the lady (if that is the right word to use) in Catullus' poem xlii?' I cannot join them, for I try never to ask a question when I see that the poet is determined not to answer it. Things which a poet worth the name does not mention are always wholly irrelevant to the understanding of his poem. Therefore, instead of indulging in misplaced curiosity, I now turn to a different aspect of the poem, one for which some genuine learning, though none of my own, is essential.

That eminent scholar who threw so much fresh light on large areas of ancient thought, religion, and folklore, Hermann Usener,

<sup>9</sup> In his *Roman Elegies* Goethe wrote: 'Manche Töne sind mir Verdruss, doch bleibt am meisten Hundegebell mir verhasst; kläffend zerreisst es mein Ohr.' ('Many sounds annoy me. Nevertheless the barking of a dog is the most odious to me—yelping, it lacerates my ear'.)

<sup>10</sup> See Lucilius 2 and 377 with Marx's comments and notice especially Persius 1.109f.

<sup>11</sup> An attentive fifteenth-century scholar saw that at line 22 the *nobis* of the Veronensis must be changed to *vobis*.

published a few years before his death an article on popular justice in ancient Italy.<sup>12</sup> I must not attempt here to summarize that immensely fruitful article, but shall content myself with reproducing in a very simplified form only those observations which have a direct bearing on Catullus' poem.

In Italy, as in many other parts of the world, there existed certain procedures of popular justice which dated from the time before state-controlled jurisdiction had established its authority. But even after this, people, for obvious reasons, might often prefer to take the law into their own hands. Here we are concerned only with the particular case in which someone who has failed to obtain what is due to him (the most typical instance is that of a debt not repaid), instead of appealing to the praetor for an *actio*, brings a different kind of pressure to bear upon the person who has not fulfilled his obligation. He gathers a boisterous crowd either in front of the housedown of his adversary or in the market square or some other public place. The crowd is instructed to shout against the guilty man demanding that he should do what so far he has been unwilling to do. The shouting, in the most unflattering language, is performed in concise, roughly rhythmical phrases, the kind of delivery for which the Romans use the word *carmina* ('chanting'). If the man happens to be indoors, his attackers will shout against the house-front (*occentare*); otherwise, they must waylay him in the street or the market square, surround him, deafen his ears with their incriminations and, in doing so, attract the curiosity of the neighbours and any passer-by. The fear of defamation—a formidable threat in a relatively small community—is more likely than not to induce the offender to yield to the accuser's demand. The procedure, however riotous, runs on strictly conventional lines and therefore acquires an almost formal character. The essential element of the whole action is the insistent demand, the *flagitare*, for the immediate fulfilment of the obligation. This *flagitare* may, of course, in certain cases be performed not by a crowd but by a few persons or even by one only. In an exhilarating scene of the *Mostellaria* of Plautus (532 ff.) the money-lender, to whom the juvenile 'hero' owes a large sum, appears in front of the young man's

<sup>12</sup> Usener (1900).

house at the most awkward moment, just when the father of the spendthrift has returned from a journey abroad. He first attempts to obtain his money by amicable means, but, when that has proved unsuccessful, he not unnaturally resorts to the customary device of popular justice. His impressive *flagitatio* culminates in these shouts (603 ff.):

cedo faenus, redde faenus, faenus reddite.  
 daturin estis faenus actutum mihi?  
 datur faenus mihi?

pay the interest, return the interest, the interest return!  
 are you going to give me the interest right away?  
 is the interest being given to me?

The sequence of *redde faenus, faenus reddite* shows the—in this context apparently traditional—inversion which we have noticed in *redde, putida moecha... moecha putida, redde*.

*conclamate... altiore voce* (18) is the command given by Catullus to his *hendecasyllabi*. This *convicium* ('abuse'),<sup>13</sup> produced in the most clamorous manner, is indispensable to the proper conduct of a *flagitatio*. In the Plautine *Pseudolus* (555 f.) the slave challenges his master:

namque edepol, si non dabis,  
 clamore magno et multum<sup>14</sup> flagitabere,  
 'for, by Pollux, if you don't give it,  
 you'll be dunned much and with a great din.'

and similar expressions are not uncommon.

We have a glorious representation of a full-sized *flagitatio* in the scene of the *Pseudolus* which first directed Usener's attention to the problem discussed in his article.<sup>15</sup> In enjoying this scene we must

<sup>13</sup> Usener (1912–13: 373), and Wackernagel, *Kleine Schriften* 1284, following an ancient etymology, derive *convicium* from *vicus*, but J. B. Hofmann's argumentation (Walde-Hofmann, *Lat. etymol. Wörterbuch* I.269f.) has convinced me that a connection with *vox, vocare* is far more likely.

<sup>14</sup> I follow Lindsay in accepting what is to all intents and purposes the reading of the *παράδοσις*, *multum*. Goetz-Schöll (ed. min.), Leo and Ernout accept Scaliger's *multo*, but I see no valid reason for the change.

<sup>15</sup> On its first page Usener speaks of his 'Beschäftigung mit der Erscheinungen der sogenannten Volksjustiz, zu welcher mich zeitig eine Stelle des Plautinischen



not, of course, forget how much it owes to the genius of Plautus,<sup>16</sup> who here and elsewhere knows how to blend the *Italium acetum* ('Italian sharp wit') with Falstaffian self-mockery. But neither should we forget that, quite apart from the rich ornamentation by the comic poet, it is the very nature of this particular act of popular justice to move every now and then on the verge of buffoonery.

Since in the scene of the *Pseudolus* the attackers are only two, the young man and his slave, the *flagitatio* cannot be performed by a full choir, but only by two soloists. We have seen that in many cases the victim will be waylaid in the street or some public square. To prevent his escape, his pursuers have to surround him, *circumsistere*. That is what the crowd of Catullus' *hendecasyllabi* most efficiently achieves. In the Plautine play Calidorus and Pseudolus have to be satisfied with a more modest version. Being only two, they cannot effect the traditional *circumsistere*. Consequently Calidorus gives the order (357): *Pseudole, adsiste altrim secus atque onera hunc maledictis* ('Pseudolus, stand by on the other side and load him up with insults'). And now we see them standing in a row, the pimp in the centre and Calidorus and his slave on either side of him. What the two attackers lack in numbers, they try to make up for by vocal strength. They shout at him a cataract of breathless abuse, without pause, *prestissimo*. But after a while they run short of abuse and have to resort to such ordinary names as *impure* ('degenerate') and *leno* ('pimp') [366]. There follows

*Pseudolus* (v. 357 ff) veranlasste' ('concern with the phenomena of so-called "Folk Justice", to which a place in Plautus' *Pseudolus* opportunely brought my attention'). Had Usener been a Hellenist in the now only too common sense of the word, he would never have been the Usener we know and admire.

<sup>16</sup> In all probability Plautus, and not an Attic playwright. The features common to this scene and to Ar. *Clouds* 909ff. disturb me now even less than when I dealt with this point in Fraenkel (1922: 401, n. 3). An observation made by Lejay (1925: 68 n.1), published posthumously, may be as helpful to others as it has been to me: 'On a comparé Aristophane, *Nuées* 909 suiv. Le point commun est dans les réponses, ici, du leno, là, de l'Injuste. L'idée de ces impudences narquoises a pu venir séparément à deux auteurs comiques, comme on peut les trouver tous les jours dans des querelles populaires. Quoi qu'il en soit, la scène elle-même d'insultes appartient à un tradition nationale, nettement italique.' ('A comparison has been made with Aristophanes' *Clouds*, 909 f. The point in common is the response—here of the pimp, there of the Unjust Argument. The idea of these sneering acts of impudence could have occurred independently to two comic poets, as one can always find them in vulgar brawls. In any case the insult scene itself belongs to a national tradition, clearly Italic.')

a last effort, a big insulting phrase, *verberavisti patrem atque matrem* ('you beat up your father and your mother'), but the pimp is able to cap it: *atque occidi quoque potius quam cibum praehiberem: num peccavi quippiam?* ('and I killed them too rather than provide their food. I didn't do anything wrong, did I?') That silences them; the game is up. They, too, like the attackers of the *moecha putida*, have to admit 'sed nil proficimus, nihil movetur' (21) or, as Pseudolus puts it (369), 'we are doing the job of the Danaids in Hades'. The wonderful Ballio<sup>17</sup> who, firm as a rock amidst the raging seas, has all the time kept his central position, grinning, applauding, acknowledging the insults, has won the day.

The process of *flagitatio*, which modern learning has had to recover from a few echoes in literature, was familiar to every Roman child. Catullus knows that all his readers will gladly follow him when he transfers this process from the sphere of everyday life into the sphere of poetry by masking his little poems as *flagitantes*. With the help of this unusual chorus he builds up, on a small scale, an enchanting comedy around a dramatic plot, ending in the poet's failure.

The good grace with which Catullus accepts defeat here, as in the equally accomplished poem x, is part of his inimitable *χάρις* ('charm'). And here as elsewhere he makes happy use of popular customs. In his lyric epithalamium (LXI) all the colourful rites of a Roman wedding come to life, the procession with its torches, the *flammeum* ('flame-colored veil') of the bride, the *pronubae* ('bridal attendants'),<sup>18</sup> the *praetextatus* ('young male attendant'),<sup>19</sup> the lifting of the bride across the threshold, the throwing of nuts to the guests, the *Fescennina iocatio* with its somewhat coarse jests at the expense of the bridegroom, the solemn *collocatio* ('placing') of the bride in her husband's house. These wedding rites were as familiar to everybody as the characteristic features of a *flagitatio*, and perhaps

<sup>17</sup> It was not for nothing that the greatest actor of the Ciceronian time chose this part for himself (Cic., *p. Rosc. com.* 20).

<sup>18</sup> 61.179f., *bonae senibus viris cognitae bene feminae* ('good women honorably wed to aged husbands') for which see Festus p. 244 (282 Lindsay), *pronubae adhibentur nuptis, quae semel nupserunt* ('attendants who have married once are provided for brides').

<sup>19</sup> Festus p. 245 M. (282 Linds.), 'patrimi et matrimi pueri praetextati tres nubentem deducunt,' etc. ('three boys wearing the *toga praetexta* whose parents are both alive escort the bride').

even more so. But on another occasion, in poem XVII, *O Colonia*, Catullus introduces his Roman readers to the strange ceremony which as a small boy he had watched with delight in the neighbourhood of his birthplace Verona. That ceremony had once been part of a serious religious ritual, but, as happens in this world, in course of time it had changed its character to that of a carnivalesque pastime. But whether picturing a well-known and common ceremony or one remote and rare, Catullus always applies to it the care and the skill of a great artist. He makes use of those customs not because he, like a scholarly poet or an antiquarian, is interested in folklore for its own sake. His approach differs widely from that of Callimachus and those other Alexandrian poets who were constantly on the look-out for something refined and recondite. It is not impossible that their example may have encouraged Catullus to treat similar themes. But if so, he did it in a spirit of his own. What primarily seems to have attracted him in what we call folklore was its wealth of realistic and picturesque detail. He was most sensitive to the exuberant vitality in those homely popular customs. So it is certainly not in the identification of the woman, but rather in the happy conception of the *hendecasyllabi flagitantes* that the poet's chief interest lay and the chief interest of a sympathetic reader should lie.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> I am very grateful to Mr. Frederick Wells for improving the style of this article.

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## Friendship, Politics, and Literature in Catullus: Poems 1, 65 and 66, 116

*W. Jeffrey Tatum*

### I

To the extent that one subscribes to the proposition, by now a virtual principle of criticism (at least in some circles), that literary texts constitute sites for the negotiation, often vigorous, of power relations within a society, the reader of Catullus can hardly avoid some consideration of the poet's attitude toward contemporary political matters.<sup>1</sup> It is a subject on which two principal lines of thought can be traced. Mommsen argued that Catullus responded to the enormities that followed the reinvigoration of the First Triumvirate at the conference of Luca in 56 by occupying a thoroughly optimate position.<sup>2</sup> Wilamowitz, on the other hand, insisted that Catullus' lyrics reflect only moments of the author's individual experience, amongst which expressions of personal distaste for certain public figures naturally appear but nothing which can appropriately be taken as indications of a political stance.<sup>3</sup> The approach of Wilamowitz has proved more influential, followed in spirit if not in specifics by

<sup>1</sup> The idea is, of course, a tenet of New Historicism (though it can hardly be said to be completely foreign to all 'old' historicism); cf. Veenser, ed. (1989), where extensive bibliography can conveniently be found.

<sup>2</sup> Mommsen (1904: 3.332–4).

<sup>3</sup> Wilamowitz (1924: 2.305–10).

numerous commentators. To the degree that Catullus has been assimilated to the Augustan elegists, whose poems have been deemed by a scholar of the stature of Veyne to be anti-political in nature, it has been all the easier to reject the idea that Catullus adopts a political position, an assessment strongly maintained in a recent study by Paul Allen Miller, for whom the rejection of all political engagement is the *sine qua non* of true lyric poetry.<sup>4</sup> Mommsen's optimate Catullus has lately found his champion, however, in a careful article by H. R. Syndikus.<sup>5</sup> Although Miller and Syndikus, like Wilamowitz and Mommsen, draw diametrically opposed conclusions concerning politics in Catullus' poetry, they are agreed nevertheless that politics can be regarded as a relatively straightforward term: it refers to statecraft, matters of government, and party strife. Other readers, however, have been more self-conscious in their theoretical concerns, a salutary consequence of which has been a shift by some to a less narrow conception of the field of reference appropriate to discussions of 'the political' in Latin literature. To mention only one eminent example, Marilyn Skinner, in a series of distinguished articles, has brought to bear on Catullus' poetry a Foucauldian understanding of politics and a thorough grasp of modern feminist criticism, on the basis of which she perceives in Catullus 'elite despair over real decreases in personal autonomy and diminished capacity for meaningful public action during the agonized final years of the Roman Republic.'<sup>6</sup> It is unnecessary to adopt Skinner's specific theoretical approach (or to accept her argument for so withering an estimation of the political scene on Catullus' part) in order to acknowledge the advantages that accrue from her more capacious notion of what *constitutes* the political scene in Rome: Skinner looks at a bigger picture able to accommodate the personal aspects of Roman political life as well as the serious

<sup>4</sup> Kroll (1959: e.g. 53); Fordyce (1961: e.g. 160); Knoche (1958); Williams (1968: 557); Deroux (1970); Miller (1994: esp. 120–40); cf. now Miller (2004: 27f.). For Augustan elegists as anti-political see Veyne (1988: 101–15).

<sup>5</sup> Syndikus (1986).

<sup>6</sup> Skinner (1993: 117), reprinted in this volume, pp. 447–75; cf. also Skinner (1991), (1989), (2003). A more comprehensive consideration of 'the political' in Latin poetry can be found in Kennedy (1993: 34–9). Mere theoretical awareness will not suffice to broaden one's concept of politics, however, as a reading either of Miller (1994) or Platter (1995) reveals.

moral matters that affected first-century Rome without limiting all considerations to conflicts obtaining more or less exclusively within the senatorial order. Politics, if one takes Skinner's line, can—and should—include broad cultural concerns. Which brings us back to the view, advanced at the start, of literary texts as locations for the contesting and negotiation of societal dynamics.

It is an apt perspective for one proper appreciation of Roman politics. 'Virtus, for the Republican noble, consisted in the winning of personal pre-eminence and glory by the commission of great deeds in the service of the state'.<sup>7</sup> This constituted one conception of Roman politics, an ideal that in practice translated into competition for power and prestige that was fierce and incessant in a community of aristocrats devoted to concord but in recognized reality suffused with strife. Again turning to Earl's formulation, 'to the Roman noble the pursuit of power and glory, position and prestige was paramount. It was this that he equated with the Roman Republic'.<sup>8</sup> The lofty goal of preserving and enhancing the *res publica* was worked out in elections, legislative assemblies, meetings of the senate, public trials, and in the exercise of friendship and patronage, pageants of personal interaction, each of which always mattered but few of which could reasonably be deemed episodes of glorious proportions. Politicians (unsurprisingly) acted as individuals seeking to promote their own interests, a task which required them to accommodate their own goals with those of colleagues and supporters; always endeavouring to sustain the demands of their own *dignitas* as well as the values sanctioned by tradition.<sup>9</sup> Which is why, though one should not avoid conceding the tendency of many Roman politicians to persist in their loyalty to particular principles, one must nevertheless recognize their habit of converging into *ad hoc* formations which frequently changed as the issues under contest changed, what Christian Meier has described as the *Gegenstandsabhängigkeit* ('issue-dependency') of Roman political behaviour. Hence the emphasis rightly placed by Roman historians on the personal and social nature of Roman politics and of (much) political discourse.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Earl (1967: 21).

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. 16.

<sup>9</sup> Meier (1966: 162–200); Earl (1967: 11–43); Brunt (1988: 351–502).

<sup>10</sup> Taylor (1949: 1–24); Meier (1966: pp. xxxii–xliii, 163–90).

In Roman political behaviour, personal concerns were often fused—and confused—with matters of genuine principle. A single instance will suffice to make the point: as I have tried to show elsewhere, the political struggle over the appropriateness of establishing a special tribunal to try Publius Clodius for his participation in the *Bona Dea* scandal—a political event the personal dimensions of which were long ago recognized by J. P. V. D. Balsdon—quickly took the shape of an argument over the limits of *senatus auctoritas* ('senatorial authority'), a controversy which in 60 was recognized by all involved to be embodied in the consular career of Cicero.<sup>11</sup> Consequently there were many registers of engagement: one could debate the correct composition and enrolment of juries; one could question or defend the prestige of the senate; one could revisit the integrity and legality of Cicero's conduct in quashing the Catilinarian conspiracy. In the event, the acknowledged symbolism of Cicero introduced *ad hominem* attacks on the man—and on his oratorical style—even as it inspired *laudationes* which the orator was all too willing to relish in absolutely personal terms.<sup>12</sup> Each register spoke to the same political issue, but registers varied considerably in their configuration and in their reception. The fact that patently political discourse could accommodate so many contests at such different levels ought to be an unmistakable indication that, when turning to poetry, one can hardly expect expressions of political concern invariably to take the shape of explicit disquisitions on policy or specific summonses to arms. Catullus' poetry, one must observe, is conspicuously unfurnished with straightforward and obvious political formulations. Yet in the light of the discussion so far, one can hardly fail to recognize Catullus' invective against Caesar and Pompey, the infamous *socer generque* ('father-in-law and son-in-law', 29.24), as a political attack, even if the poet's specific objections to the consequences of the two men's conduct need not be assumed to correspond very precisely with the impulses lying behind the denunciations contained in Calpurnius Bibulus' hostile and celebrated edicts.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, apart from the

<sup>11</sup> Balsdon (1966); Tatum (1990b: 204ff.); see further Tatum (1999: 71ff.).

<sup>12</sup> Cic. *Att.* 1.14.1–5; cf. *Att.* 1.18.2.

<sup>13</sup> Catullus and Caesar: Suet. *Iul.* 73; Bibulus' edicts: Cic, *Att.* 2.19.2, 2.20.4, 2.21.3–5; Suet. *Iul.* 9.2. 49.2; Plut. *Pomp.* 48.4.

hyperbolically comprehensive *perdidistis omnia* ('you have destroyed everything', 29.24), Catullus' extant complaints against Pompey and Caesar tend to focus on the personal *luxuria* of Caesar's *praefectus fabrum* ('aide-de-camp'), Mamurra.<sup>14</sup>

It should occasion little surprise that Catullus' political interests transcend exclusively senatorial affairs, nor is it accidental that his criticism of Caesar and Pompey in Poem 29 is constructed around the perverted aspects (social and sexual) of the former's relationship with an Italian equestrian.<sup>15</sup> Friendship and politics, while not identical, were inextricable in republican Rome, and, for Catullus, friendship's proper expression and realization serve as topics inviting political and social commentary. Which brings us to the subject of this paper, in which I should like to consider once more the issue of *amicitia* in Catullus' poetry—especially *amicitia* obtaining amongst unequals—and the distinctly equestrian and Italian perspective from which Catullus elects to view it. The significance of friendship in Catullus, however, does not consist solely in its value as a vehicle for political polemic. Because he is a poet, literary composition constitutes for Catullus a crucial factor in establishing and sustaining *amicitiae*, one consequence of which is that the very act of literary composition in the service of friendship becomes an important theme in Catullan poetry. It is to these matters that we now turn. Not every dimension of Catullan *amicitia* can be dealt with here, however, and the reader who anticipates finding a reappraisal of the poet's delineation of his affair with Lesbia will be disappointed (though what follows is not, in my view, entirely irrelevant to appreciating Catullus' use of *amicitia* in the representation of his relationship with his beloved).<sup>16</sup> Instead, I shall focus my attention on three pieces of likely structural importance to the collection as a whole, each of which involves poetic gift-giving as a means (not always successful) for signalling, establishing, and sustaining *amicitia*, and each of which has social and (therefore) political implications; consequently, I shall limit my examination to Poems 1, 65 and 66, and 116, though,

<sup>14</sup> Cat. 29 and 57; cf. Suet. *Iul.* 73; Plin. *N. H.* 36.48.

<sup>15</sup> Mamurra: Plin. *N.H.* 36.48; Hor. *Sat.* 1.7.37; Cic. *Att.* 7.7.6.

<sup>16</sup> See R. K. Gibson (1995).



predictably enough, other Catullan pieces will make at least brief appearances.<sup>17</sup>

## II

The programmatic character of Poem 1 is too familiar to require elaboration here. I wish instead to focus on two particulars: Cornelius Nepos and line 9. As has often been observed, the qualities attributed to Nepos' historical composition (brevity, innovation, learning, and *labor*) tend to reinforce the poet's recognition that Nepos is his ideal reader; furthermore, they represent literary virtues which the poet would want ascribed to his own art.<sup>18</sup> The literary and aesthetic identification between Nepos and Catullus is combined in Poem 1 with a correspondence of a more purely sociological nature: Nepos is explicitly praised for being the only Italian (*unus Italorum*) bold enough to compose a universal history. The attribution of boldness is not without point: although Roman historiography was not a genre exclusively restricted to senators, they dominated the field none the less, to the extent that, even in the particular category of universal history, the intrusion of a municipal author was remarkable.<sup>19</sup> Nepos, like Catullus, was a Transpadane.<sup>20</sup> The poet's origins are made clear in his

<sup>17</sup> The relationship between the present arrangement of the Catullan collection and the designs of the poet remains controversial. This paper assumes that, despite (at least some) later editorial interference, it is appropriate to include the arrangement of the poems in their interpretation; cf. Hutchinson (2003) and Most (1981), each with ample bibliography. In what follows, Poem 1 is regarded as programmatic in the larger sense of informing a proper reception of poems outside the polymetra. On the likely structural significance of Poems 65 and 116, see King (1988) and Macleod (1973a = 1983, reprinted in this volume pp. 35–44).

<sup>18</sup> Wiseman (1979a: 167ff, esp. 171), with further bibliography. Zetzel (1982b: 100f.), by contrast, detects in Poem 1 a rejection of Nepos' literary values (wrongly, in my view). Janan (1994: 39f.) posits without justification a gap between Nepos' literary values and their execution in his *Chronica* as an issue in the proper understanding of Poem 1. A stronger (but still, to my mind, unconvincing) case for an ironic reading of Poem 1 is made by B. J. Gibson (1995). The best discussion of Nepos' situation in the intellectual and literary world of the first century remains Wiseman (1979a: 154–66); see also Millar (1988) and Dionisotti (1988). A different estimation of Nepos can be found in Horsfall (1989: pp. xv–xxi).

<sup>19</sup> Wiseman (1987: 248ff.).

<sup>20</sup> On the significance of the connection, see Wiseman (1987: 331).

collection, the full background to which has been described in careful detail (not eschewing some speculation) by Peter Wiseman.<sup>21</sup> In our poet's day, the Valerii Catulli, simply put, were *domi nobiles* ('nobles at home') who had not yet arrived on the Roman political scene. But by the reign of Tiberius, the family had ascended to the consulship.<sup>22</sup> Like the historian Nepos, then, Catullus was (or so his other poems imply) a man poised to stride into new territory, into the domain, social and cultural, of the senatorial class. The totality of these correspondences tends strongly to configure Nepos as the poet's *alter ego*.

As he projects his own identity through Nepos—through his ideal reader—Catullus emerges as Alexandrian in literary sensibilities and Italian in origin. Too often, perhaps, it is only the first of these features that attracts critical attention. But the latter one, by dint of the stress it receives in the opening poem, is also integral to the poet's literary personality and poetic programme. The medium which configures Catullus' drift toward consubstantiation with Nepos is, obviously enough, the poem, the gift that at once heralds and contextualizes their relationship, and, in the very explication of their equivalence, the poem provides the terms of their individuation. In Catullus (like other poets) the identity of the addressee matters, for several reasons to be sure, but especially for his contribution to the poet's definition of himself.

What is the nature of the relationship between Catullus and his ideal reader? A philological obstacle impedes our finding a satisfactory answer. Still, even if the correct reading of line 9 must always remain a matter of opinion, there is no mistaking the poet's adoption of a client's posture. There is absolutely no question, it is hardly necessary to say, of Catullus' requiring an actual patron in the strong sense of the word; despite his protestations of poverty and thrift, reflexes of the iambic genre,<sup>23</sup> Catullus was a wealthy man. Which of course isolates the fictional possibilities inherent in his employment of the designation 'patron', a potentially problematic ambiguity to which we shall return more than once. In poem 1, however, the client's pose does not appear designed to reflect any difficulty in Catullus' position or in his relationship to Nepos. If we retain *patrona virgo* in line 9,

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. 335ff.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. 343ff.

<sup>23</sup> Gentili (1988: 107).

Catullus appears in his poem both as *amicus* (to Nepos) and as client (to the muse).<sup>24</sup> If, on the other hand, we adopt Bergk's emendation (*patroni ut ergo*), then Catullus addresses his *alter ego*, his perfect peer, with the extraordinarily courteous designation, *patron*.<sup>25</sup> The warmth that such a gesture could inspire is made plain by the tide of emotion with which Cicero, in his correspondence, reacts to such consideration when he is referred to as *omnium patronus* by the equestrian A. Caecina<sup>26</sup> and especially when he is addressed as *patrone mi* by Manius Curius, a man famous for his *urbanitas*.<sup>27</sup> In Cicero's view, the grandees of Rome 'clientes appellari mortis instar putant' ('consider it tantamount to death to be called clients'; *Off.* 2.69), hardly surprising in a society one of whose popular bromides equated the acceptance of a favour with the selling of one's *libertas*.<sup>28</sup> The aversion on the part of élite Romans to expressions of client-like deference made such gestures remarkable, and, paradoxically perhaps, under the right circumstances they underscored the depth of the *amicitia* existing between the men involved.<sup>29</sup> All of which highlights the compliment paid in Poem 1 to Catullus' perfect peer. At the same time, however, it incorporates into the poem the potential confluence of *amicitia* and patronage.<sup>30</sup> Granted that it is important not to conflate the two,<sup>31</sup> it is equally important to recognize their similarities. Both relationships were based on *fides*, *gratia*, and *officium*, the crucial differences between them being the putative affection implicit in *amicitia* (and by no means obligatory in patronage) and the relative *dignitas* of the parties involved. Even here, however, one must keep in abeyance any impulse to define a rigid and invariable typology based on specific

<sup>24</sup> Williams (1968: 41); Wiseman (1979a: 172–4); Mayer (1982).

<sup>25</sup> Goold (1974a); Skutsch (1982); Radke (1995: 253). The relationship between Nepos and Catullus remains essentially the same if one accepts the (attractive) reading advanced by Gratwick (2002), who also provides a detailed history of the problem.

<sup>26</sup> Cic. *Fam.* 6.7.4 (hardly 'the most groveling and desperate among Cicero's correspondents', as maintained by White [1993: 282]); cf. *Fam.* 6.5.4, 6.6.2, 6.9.1.

<sup>27</sup> Cic. *Fam.* 7.29.2; cf. *Fam.* 18.17.1; his *urbanitas*: Cic. *Att.* 7.2.3.

<sup>28</sup> Publilius Syrus 61 (Loeb edition): 'beneficium accipere libertatem est vendere.'

<sup>29</sup> For other examples from the late republic of what might be called the polite use of *patronus*, see Saller (1989: 53); the courteous use of *patronus* amongst equals can be found in imperial inscriptions, cf. Saller, 54f.

<sup>30</sup> Saller (1982: 11ff.) and (1989: 57ff.); White (1993: 31).

<sup>31</sup> Konstan (1995); see further Konstan (1997: 122ff.).

differentials of prestige. At modest levels of society, the *patronus* might relish his appropriate appellation even from the wife who had once been his slave.<sup>32</sup> More to our purpose, the *domi nobilis*, for all his local clout, would often find himself in a subordinate position in his dealings with the great houses of Rome; none the less, the language of *necessarius*, *hospes*, and *amicus* tends to prevail in such circumstances.<sup>33</sup> For obvious reasons, then, the blurring of friendship and *clientela* was more often for the purpose of politely disguising one party's social inferiority than it was for making the sort of warm adumbration of equality one perhaps finds in Poem 1. However line 9 is to be read, then, and this is the point, the poet has so designed his opening poem that in it he is simultaneously friend and 'client', a state of affairs that raises absolutely no problem whatsoever—within, that is, the limits of Poem 1. But the difficulties in sorting out the reciprocities appropriate to friendship and to patronage, and the proper appreciation of those reciprocities, make up a recurrent theme in the ensemble of Catullus' poetry, a theme related to the problem of Catullus' self-definition and the extent to which that definition is grounded in his Italian identity, and it is toward these difficulties that we must direct our further attentions.

Controversy continues to attend the efforts by scholars to arrive at a proper appreciation of *amicitia* in the late Roman republic, but unnecessarily. Until the publication in 1965 of Peter Brunt's magisterial paper, historians concentrated too exclusively on the patently hypocritical alliances deployed under the guise of friendship by at least some aristocrats in their struggles for political advantage. Hence Syme's insistence that '*amicitia* was a weapon of politics, not a sentiment based on congeniality', a sense of the word that could hardly have obtained in normal circles.<sup>34</sup> And, as Brunt demonstrated in abundant detail, the idea that *amicitia* primarily denoted political association is at odds with Cicero's extensive exposition in *De Amicitia* as well

<sup>32</sup> *ILS* 7413; 8219. Cf. Bradley (1987: 78).

<sup>33</sup> Brunt (1988: 394). The language of friendship used in poetry to 'cover over' discrepancies in status: recent discussions include Konstan (1995: 340f.); White (1993: 14); Konstan (1997: 135ff.).

<sup>34</sup> Syme (1939: 12). Cf. e.g. Taylor (1949: 7ff.). Spielvogel (1993) perpetuates this line of thought.

as the word's actual usage in undeniably unphilosophical contexts.<sup>35</sup> Few expostulations of *amicitia*, to take one extreme example, can have been more transparently ungentle than those exchanged in 51 between Cicero and Ap. Claudius Pulcher.<sup>36</sup> Yet, even in maintaining so unsavoury a relationship, the orator includes in his catalogue of the bonds uniting the pair in friendship certain ties that transcend mere mutual utility (*Fam.* 3.10.9): *studiorum similitudo, suavitas consuetudinis, delectatio vitae atque victus, sermonis societas, litterae interiores* ('similar interests, the pleasure of association, the enjoyment of a way of life, the companionship of conversation, serious literature'). This is by no means the only instance in the late republic in which protestations of personal affection make up part of an expression of political support (or a request for such support), and, in view of the Romans' remarkable frankness in describing their motives when they are blatantly self-interested,<sup>37</sup> the invocation of *amicitia* in terms so personal (and so reminiscent of our own notions of friendship) cannot legitimately be ignored. As Jonathan Powell has succinctly and rightly put it: 'The feelings so expressed might be sincere or they might not, but the language of friendship would not have served as it did to induce help and support, if it had been seen in the purely cynical way encouraged by some modern historians.'<sup>38</sup> To be sure, Romans could debate whether friendship was to be valued purely for its own sake or *propter utilitatem* ('on account of utility'; e.g. *Cic. Inv.* 167), but the implications of such a controversy remain a far cry from the hollow *amicitia* bereft of sentiment asseverated by Syme and others. The vocabulary of friendship, it should by now be clear, was not a jargon employed by the Romans principally to describe political affiliations.<sup>39</sup>

The point is relevant to Catullan studies. Catullus' frequent resort to the discourse of friendship and the clear importance of friendship

<sup>35</sup> Brunt (1965), revised in Brunt (1988: 351–81). See also White (1993: 13ff.); Powell (1995); Konstan (1995), (1997: 122ff.).

<sup>36</sup> See Mitchell (1991: 220–2) for the circumstances.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. the explicit appeal to the demands of *dignitas* by Catiline (*Sall. Cat.* 35.3) or Caesar (*B.C.* 1.7.7) or Cicero's frank explanation to Atticus of his defence in the senate of equestrian interests (*Att.* 2.1.8).

<sup>38</sup> Powell (1995: 43–4).

<sup>39</sup> This is obviously not to deny the personal nature of Roman political associations; see the discussion above.

in the programmatic opening of the collection combine to underscore how vital it is to attempt to understand the various ways in which Catullus explores and exploits the idea of *amicitia* in his poetry. The topic can hardly be described as overlooked. Yet it remains all too commonplace for critics to accept without question or qualification the theory of Reizenstein and Ross that the word *amicitia* and its related terms (*fides*, *pietas*, *officium*, and *gratia*) are fundamentally and primarily political vocabulary (by which it is meant that these terms constitute a technical political vocabulary) when they appear in Catullus' poetry.<sup>40</sup> Although objections have been lodged,<sup>41</sup> even a summary glance at recent work on Catullus will discover that the Reizenstein-Ross proposition tends to be treated as if it were an irrefutable fact—even in Micaela Janan's Lacanian reading of the poet.<sup>42</sup> But, in the face of Brunt's exposition of *amicitia* in late republican society, the Reizenstein-Ross thesis, for all its neatness, simply collapses. A different tack is required.

### III

In Poem 65 Catullus responds to a literary request from Hortalus by protesting that he is so sorely afflicted by grief for his dead brother that poetic composition lies beyond his capacities, an assertion obviously contradicted in the very medium of its expression and in any case contravened completely by the following poem, which represents Hortalus' literary present. The topos of the *carmen iussum* ('requested poem'), common enough in Latin literature so as not to present any difficulties to the reader, signals friendship between author and addressee.<sup>43</sup> One may compare Catullus' answer to the unfortunate recipient of Poem 68A, who has also sought a poem as friendship's

<sup>40</sup> Reizenstein (1912); Ross (1969: 80–95).

<sup>41</sup> Lyne (1980: 24ff.); Tatum (1993: 36f.). See also Newman (1990: 318ff.); R. K. Gibson (1995).

<sup>42</sup> See, for example, Skinner (1993: 118f. = this volume: pp. 469–71); Skinner (2003: 69 ff.); Miller (1994: 128 ff.); Janan (1994: 80, 92ff.)—though it must be observed that, in Janan's view, even Catullus' so-called political vocabulary 'never intrinsically meant anything at all' (p. 80); Platter (1995: 216f.); Krostenko (2001: 240).

<sup>43</sup> White (1993: 72ff.).

due.<sup>44</sup> The friendship implicit in the literary figure of the *carmen iussum* is punctuated in Poem 65 by the severity of the impediment overcome by the poet in order to satisfy Hortalus' request and by the extravagantly tender imagery that concludes the poem.<sup>45</sup> As in the dedication poem, so in Poem 65, a literary gift indicates and sustains the poet's *amicitia*.

But an obvious difference obtrudes. The poetic identity of Hortalus, *amicus* and literary admirer of Catullus, cannot be completely severed from the historical Hortensius Hortalus, to whom this poem makes reference. But there are two possibilities. The likelier addressee is the great orator: consul in 69, son-in-law to Q. Lutatius Catulus. Hortensius dominated the law courts during the 70s and, though he was ultimately excelled by Cicero, none the less remained a leader even amongst the *principes* of the senate. The other candidate is his son, not yet a senator until the latter part of the 50s and destined to fall, with the sons of Cato and Lucullus, at Philippi. Even if our Hortalus were the son, whose age was more nearly Catullus' own, the enormity of the gap separating the municipal poet from his distinguished Roman acquaintance cannot be ignored, even if the rhetoric of friendship functions to mask the division between the two.<sup>46</sup> Whereas in the

<sup>44</sup> Cf. 68A. 9–10, 31–2, 39–40. Neither the philological problems attending the name of this poem's recipient nor the question of 68A's relationship with 68B need detain us here: cf. (with further references) Syndikus (1990: 2. 239ff.).

<sup>45</sup> The final simile has been felt to be 'Hellenistic' (and therefore preparatory for Poem 66), a further signal of the poem's 'artificiality'; cf. (recently) Hutchinson (1988: 299ff); Syndikus (1990: 2: 197ff.).

<sup>46</sup> Hortensius Hortalus (cos. 69): F. Von der Mühl *RE* 8.2.2470ff. Whether Hortensius was actually *nobilis* remains uncertain; cf. Badian (1990: 393). The other, though less likely, possibility is the orator's son: so Syme (1939: 63)— without argument; Shackleton Bailey (1988: 55f.); Broughton, *MRR* 3.103; on the son, see F. Münzer, *RE* 8.2.2468f. Despite Shackleton Bailey's asseverations, it is hardly the 'common sense' conclusion. The catalogue of poets and poetasters in *Ov Trist.* 2.441f. is not all that relevant; nevertheless, the Hortensius there mentioned is probably the orator: *nec minus Hortensius, nec sunt minus improba Servi/carmina. quis dubitet nomina tanta sequi?* ('Nor less indecent are the poems of Hortensius or those of Servius. Who would hesitate to follow such great names?') Hortensius and Sulpicius Servius are also linked as poets by Pliny (*Ep.* 5.3.5), where, *pace* Wiseman (1974: 190), there is no reason to think that Pliny is referring to the younger Hortensius but yet the older Sulpicius (Hortensius the poet also makes an appearance at *Gell.* 19.9). However, it is as a reader and not a fellow poet that Hortalus is configured here; consequently, these lists are not really germane to Catullus' selection of an addressee. More to the point is the orator's

dedication poem Catullus addressed a fellow Transpadane in whom the poet detected literary respect for himself (unrelated to any explicit formal demands), in Poem 65, to the degree that one is distracted by the elevated status of the addressee, even the least cynical of readers must at least ponder the more self-serving purposes potentially underlying a poet's resort in such circumstances to the rhetoric of the *carmen iussum*.<sup>47</sup> The pose cannot be assumed to be everywhere genuine; in a later age, the younger Pliny devoted an entire letter to a disastrous literary recitation given by the unlucky Passenus Paulus, who commenced a poem addressed to his close friend Iavolenus Priscus with the words *Prisce, iubes* ('Priscus, you command'); before he could continue, however, the (apparently unstable) Priscus shouted out *ego vero non iubeo* ('indeed, I do not command'), which brought down the house. It is worth noting that Pliny considered Priscus' behaviour attributable to his *dubia sanitas* and *deliratum*, and the whole event was to be regarded as *ridiculum et notabile*, though plainly not for the artificiality of Paulus' address but rather owing to the bizarre literalness of Paulus' addressee.<sup>48</sup> If the reader of Poem 65 is overwhelmed by its affect-laden language, possibilities of a cynical ilk must remain very distant.<sup>49</sup> But if not? Interference to Poem 65 once thought to be caused by Poem 95 may now safely be discounted, if we follow Goold in following Housman in following Munro: it is as a *reader* and not as a fellow poet that Catullus addresses Hortensius.<sup>50</sup> The orator's reception of this poem, then, constitutes both a rhetorical purpose for the piece and an element of its meaning as it stands in the poet's public collection.

well-known fondness for Greek culture (charmingly illustrated by Gell.1.5.2–3) and the fact that, apart from the poem *sub iudice*, the younger Hortensius is nowhere referred to as Hortalus (admittedly, the father is called Hortalus by Cicero only twice; cf. Shackleton Bailey, 55). Certainty eludes, but probability favours the consul of 69. In any case, the social dynamics which are the focus of our critical concern here obtain whichever Hortensius it is whom our poet addresses.

<sup>47</sup> White (1993: 20).

<sup>48</sup> Plin. *Ep.* 6.15. Priscus was an eminent jurist; cf. Sherwin-White (1966: 370).

<sup>49</sup> White (1993: 14). A cynical reading of Horace's self-representation is offered in Lyne (1995: 14ff.). On the conflict between disinterested and self-interested gift-giving in Rome, see Dixon (1993).

<sup>50</sup> Solodow (1987).



Poem 65 is not the promised verse, the *carmina Battiadae* ('poetry of Battus' descendent') mentioned in line 16. That comes in the next piece, which is a translation of Callimachus' *Coma Berenices*. In presenting Poems 65 and 66 as a set, Catullus has incorporated the epigrammatic *apophoreton* ('description of a gift') into his literary designs for Poem 65, an appropriately Hellenistic ingredient in a poem to be paired with his translation of Callimachus, and a subgenre patently relevant to the offering of gifts, literary or otherwise.<sup>51</sup> Catullus' precise choice of subject for translation is not entirely explained by his own literary proclivities or by those of Hortensius, though these are undeniably important factors. Nor will it suffice to construct with J. K. Newman an invariable contrast between the 'human and sensitive' qualities of Callimachean verse over against the 'tub-thumping certainties of official propaganda' in order to find in Poem 66 a neo-teric polemic meant somehow to raise Hortensius' literary consciousness.<sup>52</sup> But Newman is clearly correct to regard Poem 66 as something more than a mere display piece, as if to recognize the poem as the promised translation were to have done with any requirement to form an estimation of its contribution to the poetic diptych which the poet has presented to Hortensius. Consequently, it can hardly be inappropriate to take notice of the actual content of Catullus' literary translation of Callimachus.<sup>53</sup>

In his famous celebration of the catasterism of Berenice's lock, Callimachus charmingly, even humorously, involves several important themes of the Ptolemaic court.<sup>54</sup> Callimachus' poem (like Conon's 'discovery' of his new constellation) responds to what was an actual political issue during the reign of Ptolemy Euergetes, to wit, the question of whether or when the monarch should join himself and Berenice II to the cult of Alexander and the Gods Adelphoi. In so doing, the poem engages with a concept vital to sustaining the royal house. Although the idea of divine kingship was integral to Hellenistic

<sup>51</sup> Sullivan (1991: 12ff., 82f.) provides a recent treatment of the *apophoreton*. On the epigrammatic qualities of Poem 65, see King (1988).

<sup>52</sup> Newman (1990: 226).

<sup>53</sup> The nature and effect of the particular changes in Callimachus' poem introduced by Catullus are not my particular concern here, though they remain important. Cf. Syndikus, (1990: 2.202f.); Hutchinson (1988: 232f.); Hollis (1992).

<sup>54</sup> For what follows, see Koenen (1993: esp. 89ff.), with abundant references.

monarchy throughout the Mediterranean, for powerful parochial reasons this was especially the case in Ptolemaic Egypt. Yet, by putting these matters in the mouth of the heavenly lock and by suffusing the lock's monologue with a spirit of friendship and of love (love was likewise a hallmark of Ptolemaic political ideology),<sup>55</sup> Callimachus is able to deflate, or one might better say, to humanize, his monarch without trivializing the institution of monarchy.<sup>56</sup> Whatever the precise details of the composition of the *Aetia*, the importance of Berenice to the formal strategies of this work cannot be underestimated. The second half of the *Aetia* is framed by tributes to the Ptolemaic queen; the first poem of Book Three is the *Victoria Berenices* and the final action of Book Four is the *Coma*.<sup>57</sup> That any of this should have been lost on an ardent adherent of Alexandrianism seems unlikely.

Still, whatever else Callimachus' poem was to readers of his *Aetia*, the *Coma Berenices* remained a consummate specimen of the courtier's art, a fact which imposes uncertainties in the literary delineation of Catullus' *amicitia* with Hortensius when the poet bestows upon his friend a Latin version of Callimachus' piece: to what degree is Poem 65 implicated in the 'proper' reading of Poem 66—or vice versa? What consequences ensue from one's answer to that question? Callimachus' *Coma* is unmistakably a political poem in the traditional sense of the term. When it is imported from the Alexandrian court to the Roman republic, from the *Aetia* to Catullus' corpus, does its new environment transform its political significance?

<sup>55</sup> Ibid. 112f.

<sup>56</sup> On this see *ibid.* 89. Cameron (1995: 3–23) convincingly refutes the belief, persistent in some quarters, that Callimachus was a jumped-up school teacher (and therefore Ptolemy's toady). However, Cameron's insistence that Callimachus' status was that of 'a friend rather than a client' (p. 23) simply raises in another context the issue under investigation here. Nor need one accept without major qualification Cameron's argument that Hellenistic kings 'were remarkably tolerant of frankness' (p. 16), an assertion the best evidence for which (though still uneven) consists of anecdotes illustrating the occasional bonhomie of the Antigonids. That poets could and did sometimes engage in humanizing banter to the amusement of their divine monarchs hardly seems remarkable. Romans, in any case, were unlikely to imagine the Egyptian court as a centre for anything like open deliberation, poetical or otherwise; cf. Sonnabend (1986). On the complex matter of the establishment and development of the Antigonid (and Hellenistic regal) court, see Weber (1995) with further bibliography.

<sup>57</sup> Parsons (1977); see also Cameron (1995: 105ff.).

By Catullus' day, the courts of kings were, for the most part, things of the past. In Wiseman's accurate summation: 'for all practical purposes, the centre of patronage was inevitably Rome'.<sup>58</sup> Still, living exemplars of Callimachus' reality, *mutatis mutandis*, could easily be (and frequently were) pointed out in Roman society.<sup>59</sup> The pointing out was easy not simply because client intellectuals were commonplace in Roman high society but more especially because these intellectuals, even when they held Roman citizenship, were conspicuous aliens. One need mention only Archias or Philodemus of the myriad *Graeculi* who attended upon their Roman 'friends'.<sup>60</sup> Their status as dependents, a condition 'inherent in their very Greekness', was unmistakable.<sup>61</sup>

At the same time, it cannot pass unobserved that the social status of a Latin poet, i.e. of a writer whose poetic activities were not merely a pastime (however exquisite the product) but something approaching a profitable profession, was by no means necessarily elevated. Alien and low-born authors populate the republican canon, and though they barely emerge to our notice from their meagre and murky traces,<sup>62</sup> the membership of the *collegium scribarum histrionumque* ('college of scribes and actors') mentioned by Festus were hardly a socially distinguished company.<sup>63</sup> Even if by the late first century the actors had been jettisoned, the *collegium scribarum poetarum* ('college of scribes and poets') which continued to be associated with drama, was obliged to look in awe at its senatorial patrons, a point made clear by the fact that Valerius Maximus deemed it worth recording, under the rubric of remarkable self-assurance, that the poet Accius never (*numquam*) stood when Iulius Caesar, presumably Iulius Caesar Strabo, himself an amateur composer of tragedies, entered a meeting of the *collegium*, this despite it being the case that *magno spatio divisus est a senatu ad poetam Accium transitus* ('it is a long way from the senate to the poet

<sup>58</sup> Wiseman (1979a: 155).

<sup>59</sup> Treggiari (1977); Laresen (1993).

<sup>60</sup> Wiseman (1982: 31ff.).

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.* 34.

<sup>62</sup> As Lyne (1995: 12) rightly points out. White's treatment of the social status of Latin poets (1993: 5ff., 211ff.) is skewed by its restriction to poets whose work survives.

<sup>63</sup> Festus, 446–8 (Lindsay). The *collegium poetarum*: Crowther (1973); Horsfall (1976); Panciera (1986: esp. 39ff.).

Accius').<sup>64</sup> Only by a species of special pleading—making it a question of *volumina* instead of *imagines* ['volumes instead of ancestral portraits']—could Accius avoid the charge of *insolentia*. Scribes, some of whom rose high in the census and the collective of whom wielded considerable political clout, and perhaps even other *apparitores* ('functionaries') as well, mingled freely with professional composers in the *collegium*.<sup>65</sup> And the presence of equestrians in certain venerable *collegia* was not unknown.<sup>66</sup> But our nearly complete ignorance of this *collegium* derives from the organization's being beneath the notice of the tonier *litterati* of the late republic and Augustan periods, and it is these poets whose works constitute the crucial canon of the period. The sole possible exception is Horace, whose own status as *scriba quaestorius* may have heightened his awareness of such matters even as it sharpened his sensibilities concerning opportunistic poets and pesky patrons.<sup>67</sup> Not long after Catullus' day, if he was not actually a rough contemporary, Cornelius Sura, a freedman and *praeco ab aerario ex tribus decuriis* ('public auctioneer'), was elected *magister* of the *collegium scribarum poetarum*. He need not have been but presumably was a poet, of some variety at least. An inscription describes him as *accensus consulis et censoris*, his crowning attainments: here was a poet from whom there could be little confusion between *amicitia* and *clientela*.<sup>68</sup>

But let us return to *Graeculi*. A particularly relevant example is Crinagoras of Mytilene, from the generation following Catullus. A member of his city's élite, Crinagoras was also an epigrammist whose subjects included prominent Romans and members of the Augustan household, a literary record which, in combination with the poet's status in Mytilene, justifies the conclusion that Crinagoras

<sup>64</sup> Val. Max. 3.7.11. The proper sense of *numquam* in this passage: Badian (1972: 190). Accius (who derived from a freedman father): Conte (1994: 105ff.). Strabo's tragedies: E. Diehl, *RE* 10, 1.431.

<sup>65</sup> Purcell (1983: 129ff.); Badian (1989).

<sup>66</sup> Cic. *Frat.* 2.5.3. Cf. Nicolet (1974: 2.891ff.).

<sup>67</sup> Horace's status: Suet. *Vita Hor.*; cf. Armstrong (1986). Opportunistic poets: Hor. *Sat.* 1.9; pesky patrons: *Epist.* 1.7.

<sup>68</sup> See Panciera (1986).

was 'acceptable in the highest society at Rome'.<sup>69</sup> It is worth contrasting with Poem 65 Crinagoras' poem to the ill-starred M. Claudius Marcellus, an epigram commemorating the Greek poet's gift to the Roman prince of a copy of Callimachus' *Hecale* (*Anth. Pal.* 9.545):

Καλλιμάχου τὸ τορευτὸν ἔπος τόδε· δὴ γὰρ ἐπ' αὐτῷ  
 ὦνῆρ τοὺς Μουσέων πάντας ἔσεισε κάλως·  
 αἰεῖδει δ' Ἐκάλῃς τε φιλοξείνοιο καλιήν  
 καὶ Θησεὶ Μαραθῶν οὐς ἐπέθηκε πόνους.  
 τοῦ σοι καὶ νεαρὸν χειρῶν σθένος εἶη ἀρέσθαι,  
 Μάρκελλε, κλεινοῦ τ' αἶνον ἴσον βιότου.

Here is the highly wrought poem of Callimachus. In it he let out all the sails of the Muses. He sings of the hut of hospitable Hecale and of the labors that Marathon imposed on Theseus. May it be yours to win the youthful strength of his hands, Marcellus, and equal praise for a glorious life.

The tone of this poem could not be further removed from that of Poem 65. Yet the poetic circumstances are remarkably similar: a friend of distinguished but undeniably inferior position sends a Callimachean present to a grand (if youthful) Roman. More to the point, Crinagoras exhorts young Marcellus to undertake a didactic reading of Callimachus' epyllion, to construct an identity of sorts between himself and the youthful Greek hero whose exploits represent Callimachus' subject. There is a link, then, between the addressee of Crinagoras' poem and the actual contents of the poem which he receives as a literary gift, and one responsibility of the addressee is to find the right strategy for reading himself into his poetic present. One wonders whether this principle is operative in Catullus 65 and 66.

An awareness of the original settings of Callimachus' *Coma* as well as of the poem's inescapable propaganda aspects tends to approximate

<sup>69</sup> Gow and Page (1968: 212). This does not justify the conclusion that from the Roman perspective 'he must have been recognized more or less as *par inter primos*' (*ibid.*). Sullivan (1991: 85) more accurately describes him as 'a court poet who might well be taken as a model' by the aspiring Martial.

the situation of the poem's translator to that of its original author. On the one hand, the claim to be a Roman Callimachus constitutes a powerful and empowering poetic polemic;<sup>70</sup> on the other hand, however, the *domi nobilis*, in his literary friendship to the Roman grandee and in so far as he is identified with the courtier, runs the risk of being reduced to the position of erudite *Graeculus esuriens* ('hungry Greekling'). The latter equation is, of course, only potential, but it is none the less present. One may compare the obvious anxiety with which Vitruvius, in his work on architecture, advertises his *doctrina* yet 'distances himself from those Greek-trained architects of servile origin who were common in his day'.<sup>71</sup> The goal is to avoid being thoroughly absorbed into the Greek paradigm. The senior consular could by no stretch be judged a genuine social equal of Catullus, and it is this fact of life which imposes a potential concern: to what extent is the reality of the *amicus inferior*, inscribed here in poetic gifts making unmistakable allusion to the political poetry offered by Callimachus to his monarch, being assimilated to the position of *cliens*? The tender expressions of *amicitia* in Poem 65 are certainly liable to clash with the courtly poetry of 66, depending, one must add, on the reading of 66 entertained by Hortensius. Will he perceive the humanity of Callimachus' original? And, even if he does, will he appreciate the problematic correspondences between the flesh-and-bone Transpadane and his Cyrenian model mapped out in the compositional relationship obtaining between 65 and 66? The tension between 65 and 66 creates for their various levels of readership (Hortensius and the readers of the collection) a set of interpretative questions, the answers to which, at some point, require an actual or an assumed response to the diptych by its senatorial recipient. Whereas later poets openly proclaim their great friends as *praesidia* of their interests, thereby configuring a relationship the purported parameters of which are not difficult to grasp,<sup>72</sup> Catullus manufactures an indeterminate gap<sup>73</sup>—to be

<sup>70</sup> Thomas (1982) and (1999: 12ff.).

<sup>71</sup> Vitr. 6. *Praef.* 4ff.; cf. Wallace-Hadrill (1994: 10).

<sup>72</sup> e.g. Hor. *Carm.* 1.1.2; Ovid *Pont.* 1.6.13f.; *Laus Pisonis* 244f.; *Juv.* 7.22f. Cf. discussion in White (1993: 17f.).

<sup>73</sup> It is unnecessary to dilate on the theoretical prepossessions of the expression: cf. Iser, (1978: 165ff.).

filled, one wants to assume, by a friendly reading which welcomes an urbane and Alexandrian tip of the hat. Yet the very lack of explicitness in Catullus' poems leaves open the possibility of a less hospitable interpretation.<sup>74</sup> In Catullus' diptych, then, the implicit reader of Poem 66, delineated in Poem 65, requires in the interpretation of the pair a willingness to consider a multiplicity of responses on the part of Catullus' Hortalus.

The theme of the *amicus inferior* is an earnest one, especially in view of Catullus' position as a member of the municipal élite, a connection made clear in Poem 68's (to recur to that specimen of the *carmen iussum*) uncertain positioning of our poet: because he is in Verona, the poet recognizes, a composition of the sort Manlius requires cannot be supplied, for the poet is most emphatically an inhabitant of the city (lines 33–6):

nam, quod scriptorum non magnast copia apud me,  
hoc fit, quod Romae vivimus: illa domus,  
illa mihi sedes, illic mea carpitur aetas:  
huc una ex multis capsula me sequitur.

As to the fact that I have no supply of writings with me,  
this happens because I live at Rome. That is my home,  
that is my seat, there my life is spent:  
only one little box out of many accompanies me here.

It is a matter of some consequence that Manlius acknowledge that Catullus is Roman,<sup>75</sup> for Manlius' assent to that proposition appears crucial to the success of their *amicitia*. Catullus, the Transpadane poet in Rome, remains always insider and outsider at once. To those Romans who love him, the poet is an insider, a criterion of Catullan *amicitia* made explicit in Poem 44 (lines 1–4):

O fundus noster, seu Sabine seu Tiburs,  
(nam te esse Tiburtem autumant, quibus non est  
cordi Catullum laedere: at quibus cordist,  
quovis Sabinum pignore esse contendunt)...

<sup>74</sup> One may contrast the more explicit style in which Horace delineates the good and the bad *potens amicus* in *Epist.* 1.7; cf. Lyne (1995: 150ff.).

<sup>75</sup> The significance of the *domus* to one's social identity: Wallace-Hadrill (1988).

O farm of mine, whether Sabine or Tiburtine,  
 (for those who don't like to wound Catullus  
 maintain that you are Tiburtine: but those who do  
 argue at any price that you're Sabine)

As D. B. George has recently and rightly insisted, the opening lines of Poem 44 have not often enough been integrated into its overall interpretation.<sup>76</sup> In this poem, too, Catullus' status is indeterminate. The poet had hoped to be a dinner guest of Publius Sestius, the morose and violent tribune of 57, who, by 54, had risen to the praetorship.<sup>77</sup> Yet, for all Sestius' celebrated status, Catullus might reasonably have expected an invitation: the Sestii were businessmen from Cosa only recently admitted to the senate.<sup>78</sup> L. Sestius, Publius' father, had risen no higher than the tribunate; though granted he was returned first in the polls *inter homines nobilissimos* (Cic. *Sest.* 6), he thereafter lapsed into obscurity. Like the Valerii Catulli, the Sestii would have to wait for the principate before attaining nobility (though they arrived somewhat sooner: Sestius' son was suffect consul in 23).<sup>79</sup> As is the case in Poems 68 and 65, the medium by which Catullus hopes to engage a distinguished Roman is literature, though in Poem 44 the circumstances are altered. This time it is Catullus who does the reading, taking up Sestius' *Oratio in Antium*, a wretched work (Cicero privately disliked Sestius' style<sup>80</sup>) which (humorously) inflicts an illness upon our poet. Why should Catullus study up his Sestius, simply for a dinner party? No answer can be definitive, but instead of seeing simple courtesy (or simply literary polemic) in Catullus' action, one may well join George in recognizing that in Poem 44 the poet is willing to consider the pose of the flattering dinner guest—the learned parasite—an imposture that makes sense in view of Catullus' ambiguous status in the poem's opening lines. But he recognizes his plan as an error (*meum ... peccatum*: 'my ... mistake'). And so his *gratia* is owed, not to Sestius, but to his own *fundus*, for all its indeterminate situation.

The dangerous circumstances of the *amicus inferior* receive notoriously graphic illustration in Poem 28. There Catullus commiserates

<sup>76</sup> George (1991).      <sup>77</sup> *MRR* 2.620.      <sup>78</sup> D'Arms (1981: 55ff.).

<sup>79</sup> F. Münzer, *RE* 2A. 1885.      <sup>80</sup> Cic. *Att.* 7.17.2; *Fam.* 7.32.1.



with his friends Veranius and Fabullus, who have served under Piso as unprofitably as he has served in Bithynia under C. Memmius. It is vital that one recognize the thoroughly self-serving quality of Catullus' complaint: the poet feels abused because he was denied his share of the *baksheesh* to which members of a provincial governor's staff apparently felt entitled. But this poem is not primarily about sleaze: it is about ingratitude and exploitation, the exploitation felt by the municipal companion who has fulfilled his part of the bargain of *amicitia*. Hence the bitter refrain, *pete nobiles amicos!* ('seek noble friends!'). But this worst-case scenario only serves to reinforce the necessity for delicacy and the pervasive incertitude that must affect all relations with social superiors.<sup>81</sup>

Splendid and illustrious, members of the equestrian order enjoyed privilege and conspicuous social distinction. Most formidable of all, even if the extent of their influence has been overestimated by some, were the *publicani* ('public contractors'), rich champions of the original *quango* state whose interests and sensibilities, so Cicero regularly stressed, required consideration—even when nothing could be more shameful.<sup>82</sup> Not all equestrians could claim equal dignity, and, in fact, they were far from constituting a homogeneous and well-defined group. The very expression *eques Romanus* was, during the first century at least, somewhat imprecise.<sup>83</sup> *Equites equo publico* ('knights in possession of a public horse') were the 'real' equestrians. But other wealthy citizens usurped the accoutrements and the designation, an infiltration abetted by informal usage and by the continual failure of the senate between 70 and 50 to conduct a proper census.<sup>84</sup> The effort made at clarifying matters by the *Lex Aurelia* of 70, which lent articulation to the specific judiciary privileges of *tribuni aerarii* (a poorly understood subgroup of the financial élite), was not entirely satisfactory and was undone by Caesar in 46.<sup>85</sup> The point for us is that in Catullus' day the social configuration of the *equites* was by no means

<sup>81</sup> Further illustrated in the case of Catullus by Poem 10 (especially) and also by Poem 47.

<sup>82</sup> Overestimation of influence: Brunt (1988: 180ff.). Ciceronian consideration: e.g. *Att.* 2.1.8.

<sup>83</sup> For the controversies, ancient and modern, see Wiseman (1987: 57ff.); Brunt (1988: 144ff.).

<sup>84</sup> Astin (1985).

<sup>85</sup> *Lex Aurelia*: MRR 2.126. Caesar: see Henderson (1963).

securely defined: borders and therefore barriers were at the very least potentially ambiguous.<sup>86</sup>

One must, in the end, concede the inferiority of the equestrian order over against the irresistible political power of the senate. The equestrian pursuit of *honestum otium* ('honorable leisure'), discussed so daintily and respectfully in Ciceronian oratory and philosophizing, granted the knight freedom from certain legal and societal restrictions;<sup>87</sup> at the same time, however, it left him ultimately dependent on and therefore vulnerable to the senatorial order. This is made sufficiently clear by the inability of the *publicani* to secure from the senate a satisfactory renegotiation of their Asian contract, an issue first raised in 61, despite the support of figures of the stature of M. Crassus and Cicero, until the year 59, when Caesar as consul took the exceptionally *popularis* tack of bypassing the senate altogether.<sup>88</sup> The discrepancy between senators and equestrians can also be indicated by a more brutal calculus: according to Appian (*B. Civ.* 1.95), Sulla's first proscription list included 40 senators but 1600 knights.<sup>89</sup>

But let us shift our attention to the municipal élites. It is not untrue to say with Peter Brunt that 'Senators, equites, and the municipal oligarchs formed a single class',<sup>90</sup> yet it would be a mistake none the less to ignore the crucial divisions that existed within this single class. From the perspective of the masses and in terms of the contest between the masses and the wealthy, the common cause of these élite elements is undeniable. But not even within the senate do we find monolithic unity: *pedarii* ('senators of lower rank') as a general rule were more vulnerable (say, at the moment of a critical *lectio senatus*) than were *consulares* ('former consuls').<sup>91</sup> And, generally speaking, the non-political élite, or rather, the élite not engaged in political life at Rome, were dependent upon the justice meted out by the senatorial order. The political figures of the city as well as their constituencies were, from the Italian point of view, too often insufficiently sensitive

<sup>86</sup> And subject to rhetorical exploitation; cf. Syme (1939: 150f.).

<sup>87</sup> See D'Arms (1981: 20–71).

<sup>88</sup> *Cic. Att.* 1.17.9; *Planc.* 34–5; *Schol. Bob.* 157–8.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. Hinard (1985: 116ff.).

<sup>90</sup> Brunt (1988: 9).

<sup>91</sup> Tatum (1990a: 40f.).

to Italian claims to just treatment, a notorious instance being the unhappiness of the municipal élite whenever public land, to whose use they felt entitled, emerged as an item of *popularis* legislation.<sup>92</sup>

The world of Catullus reverberated with recent reminders of equestrian and municipal inferiority. The quashing of the Catilinarian conspiracy, so effectual in demonstrating the righteous might which derived from *concordia ordinum*, could also be construed as a victory for *senatus auctoritas* at the expense of *libertas*.<sup>93</sup> As Roberta Stewart has lately argued, much of the senate's perception of Italian unrest in the years 63–60 may well be attributed to that body's disposition of mind whereby any sort of resistance to senatorial policy was constructed as bordering on treason.<sup>94</sup> In any event, *aequitas* and *integritas* were not always hallmarks of Roman justice. One must wonder how typical was the case of P. Tullius, an Italian part of whose Thurian lands were seized by the armed gangs of P. Fabius. Fabius was perhaps a senator. He was certainly well-connected, having served in Asia with Sulla and having acquired his estate from the senator C. Claudius. The case was tried in 71, by which time rural violence of the sort confronting Tullius had become so frequent that a special *iudicium* had been established to deal with such matters. Fortunately for Tullius he was able to secure the ambitious and more than ordinarily courageous Cicero as his advocate. Still, the Italian's dependency on a sympathetic senatorial *patronus* and the danger ensuing from litigation against a senator (or friend of senators) requires no elaboration.<sup>95</sup>

It was just this state of affairs that necessitated the *Lex Cornelia* of 67, legislation that required *praetors* to announce at the outset of their tenure the legal standards by which they would act and that forbade *praetors* any divergence from their own edicts.<sup>96</sup> Hitherto *praetors* had not scrupled to dispense justice on the basis of their friendship with or hostility toward the parties of suits.<sup>97</sup> The senate

<sup>92</sup> During the first century, *domi nobiles* did not represent the principal constituency of *popularis* politicians: cf. Syme (1939: 285); C. Meier, *RE* Suppl. 10.580ff.

<sup>93</sup> For example Cic. *Att.* 1.16.10; *Sull.* 21, 25; *Dom.* 75, 94; *Sest.* 109; Plut. *Cic.* 23.3; [Sall.] *In Cic.* 5.

<sup>94</sup> Stewart (1995).

<sup>95</sup> Sources cited and discussion in Stewart (1995: 74f.) and Frier (1985: 52ff.).

<sup>96</sup> Asc. 59C; Dio 36.40.1–2; cf. Frier (1985: 75).

<sup>97</sup> Frier (1985: 73).

did not approve of this corrective measure, since the undispassionate execution of praetorian responsibility had served as a valuable source of *gratia* (Asc. 59C), but the law was very appealing to *equites* and to municipals.<sup>98</sup> Indeed, Bruce Frier has proposed that one factor in the emergence of the Roman jurists, who were mostly of equestrian origins, was the desire to achieve a rule-oriented approach to litigation that would lessen the advantages held by the senatorial grandee in the *ad hominem* dispensation of justice to which too many magistrates had been inclined.<sup>99</sup>

If one keeps in mind the potential for unlevel confrontation that constantly subtends the common fellowship of senatorial and municipal élites during the late republic—and, even in the midst of so much actual strife, it is the *potential* for conflict and not its steady persistence that I have in mind to stress here—one can appreciate more fully Catullus' interest in drawing attention to the uncertainties involved in the relationship between municipal poet and senatorial *amicus*. This anxiety must surely inform Catullus' criticism of objectionable political alliances or of arrogant and insensitive nobles, whose insolence posed perhaps the most formidable threat to the poet's status. At this point, then, I should like to turn to one final figure in the Catullan corpus, the abominable Gellius.

#### IV

In the final poem of the collection, Catullus reminds his addressee, Gellius, of his frequent past propitiatory efforts, to wit, his repeated attempts to send to Gellius *carmina Battiadae* which might soften his enmity, all of which have failed owing to Gellius' stubborn refusal to relent from his hostilities, his *tela infesta* ('hostile spears') aimed against Catullus. Now, our poet threatens, Gellius will pay the price: *at fixus nostris tu dabi' supplicium* ('but pierced by our [spears] you will pay the penalty').

Catullus' complaint against Gellius seems odd at first in view of the preceding epigrams (Poems 74, 80, 88–91), which savage

<sup>98</sup> Ibid. 261f.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid. 256–65.

Gellius with lacerating vituperation.<sup>100</sup> Now these pieces hardly constitute conciliatory gestures, nor can any or the totality of these poems, despite certain reminiscences of Callimachean epigram which have been detected,<sup>101</sup> be deemed the *carmina Battiadae* of line 2. Catullus' invective sequence attacking Gellius must instead be thought of as the *supplicium* threatened in line 8, an observation that requires Poem 116 to be read, in logical terms, as the prelude of the Gellian epigrams. Furthermore Catullus' final poem incorporates the programmatic language normally attributed to Roman Alexandrianism, set here in conspicuous contrast to the poem's self-consciously curious (and *subrusticum*: 'rather uncouth') prosody and to the unmistakable allusion to Ennius in the poem's last line. Hence the interpretation of 116 as an 'inverted dedication' advanced by Colin Macleod in a justly celebrated paper and as an apt conclusion to the contumelious epigrams which, in a sense, it ought to introduce.<sup>102</sup>

Yet the relationship between Poem 116 and its Gellian predecessors is far from uncomplicated.<sup>103</sup> The *tela infesta* of line 4, reprised in line 7, are most naturally understood as insults.<sup>104</sup> However, we learn from Poem 91 that Gellius' offence was his successful seduction of Lesbia, an amatory theft carried out in violation of the long-standing *amicitia* that had existed between Gellius and the poet. No other specific action is even hinted at, and no clue as to Gellius' *scelus* (or even that Gellius has committed any wrong apart from his general hostility toward the poet or his spurning of Catullus' kind offices) can be located in Poem 116. Which places in some doubt the determination that Poem 116 serves as a more natural introduction to the Gellius poems than does Poem 91. In other words, it is 91 and no other poem which actually defines Catullus' anterior relationship with Gellius and which explains the origin of their enmity. Consequently, the Gellian sequence may be divided into three elements:

<sup>100</sup> There is no reason to take seriously the proposal of Rieks (1986) that throughout these poems Gellius is a corruption of Caelius.

<sup>101</sup> King (1988); Syndikus (1987: 3.41f.).

<sup>102</sup> Macleod (1973a = 1983 = this volume: pp. 35–44). (The expression 'inverted dedication' occurs in Macleod's penultimate paragraph.)

<sup>103</sup> A different approach is taken by Forsyth (1972/73).

<sup>104</sup> Cf. Prop. 2.8.15f. On the text of Poem 116, see Syndikus (1987: 3.142f.).

- (A) Poems 74, 80, and 88–90, which comprise attacks on Gellius.
- (B) Poem 91, which indicates the *scelus* that ruptured the *amicitia* between Gellius and Catullus.
- (C) Poem 116, which recollects Catullus' failure to pacify Gellius and which advances the poet's own threat of retaliation.

It is actually rather difficult to locate the beginning or the end of this sequence, at least in logical or poetical terms (obviously they are in a definite sequence as they currently stand in the corpus). The only secure point seems to be that the onslaught on Gellius, element (A) in the above scheme, can be rendered equally intelligible either by Poem 91 or by Poem 116—or (perplexingly) by both.<sup>105</sup>

But first one must ask: how are we to understand Catullus' references to Gellius' attacks or to the poet's vain attempts to repair their friendship? I should like to propose that Poem 116 collapses two stages in the quarrel between Catullus and Gellius. Their friendship was sundered by Gellius' treacherous theft of Lesbia, an action equated with incest, a vice to which Gellius was apparently inclined, as we learn from the epigrams preceding Poem 91. These vilifying poems, element (A), seem to occupy multiple poetic time zones, a condition which gives rise to a convoluted set of relationships amongst all the Gellius poems; the poems of element (A) constitute the necessary background to the insults contained in Poem 91 and they provide the wicked motive attributed in the same poem to Gellius' stealing of Catullus' beloved. But in the same instant, as attacks on Gellius' reputation, they must result from and not be antecedents to Gellius' unfriendly behaviour, which must be identified either as the seduction of Lesbia or as the refusal to lay aside his *tela infesta*. Yet in Poem 116 the tone is far from the righteous indignation of Poem 91. In the former, the poet describes himself as the one menaced by Gellius' assaults, attacks he has laboured mightily to halt. Part of the explanation for this change in tone must lie in the parallel, already observed, between Poem 116 and Poem 65.<sup>106</sup> Both poems stipulate *carmina Battiadae* as the poet's contribution to *amicitia*. In Poem 65, as we

<sup>105</sup> It is of course possible to avoid the idea of a sequence altogether: one may simply regard the Gellius poems as a demonstration of a range of possible iambic attacks; cf. Syndikus (1987: 3.147).

<sup>106</sup> Macleod (1973a= 1983 = this volume: pp. 35–44).

saw, the Callimachean gift amounted to an *officium*, a response to a friendly request, a gesture designed to strengthen the bond between Catullus and Hortensius (even as it subjected that bond to complicating poetic scrutiny). In Poem 116, on the other hand, the proffered *carmina* must be counted as a peace offering: it is the mending of a ruptured friendship which motivates the poet, and he is willing to do his Alexandrian act to be restored to Gellius' good graces. But still the question nags: whence Gellius' wrath? After all, he *got* the girl. If we are permitted to read the Gellius poems in the present sequence, there is an obvious answer: Gellius is angry in Poem 116 because of Poems 74, 80 and 88–90, and even Poem 91, the ensemble of which devastates his reputation. No less than betrayal, after all, character assassination could doom a Roman friendship beyond salvaging,<sup>107</sup> and, intriguingly, it is the offended Gellius and not the betrayed Catullus who remains the implacable foe in Poem 116. In summation, then, we find included within Poem 116 an apologetic Catullus employing the medium of poetic gift exchange that served him so well with Nepos and (less certainly) with Hortensius, all in order to be reconciled with the Gellius who is attacking him in retaliation for the epigrams precipitated by Gellius' own wicked seduction of Lesbia, epigrams which at the same moment represent the punishment with which Gellius is threatened for his rejection of Catullus' *carmina Battiadae*.

Catullus' apologetic posture, recollected in lines 1–6, still requires explanation. After all, it is Catullus who is originally and (one might suppose) more grievously wronged in this quarrel. If one continues (after Macleod) to compare Poem 116 with Poem 65, the possibility presents itself that, once again, Catullus finds himself an *amicus inferior*, an inference that receives bolstering from Wiseman's identification of Catullus' false friend with L. Gellius Publicola, the consul of 36.<sup>108</sup> Young Publicola was the grandson of L. Gellius, consul of 72 and censor in 70, and was stepson of the consular M. Valerius Messala. In short, he was indisputably and formidably *nobilis*. Furthermore, he stemmed from a family which, as Wiseman observes, was

<sup>107</sup> Epstein (1987: 37f.).

<sup>108</sup> Wiseman (1974: 119ff.); cf. Syndikus (1987: 3.16).

keen to maintain through the generations its traditional affinities,<sup>109</sup> thus providing a notional connection between the *scelus* of incest and a social posture to which Catullus objects elsewhere, most clearly in Poem 79, in which epigram Lesbia's sexual preference for Lesbius over Catullus creates a crisis in which our poet exploits the topos of incest to mount an attack on the aristocratic exclusivity of the patrician Claudii.<sup>110</sup> Like Lesbius, Gellius represents the noble whose presumed prerogatives shunt aside Catullus' claims to Lesbia's affections and do so in an atmosphere heavy with intimidation. And, like the Lesbius of 79, Gellius possesses the rank and the station to inflict harm on Catullus, however legitimate our poet's complaints. Worse than Lesbius, however, Gellius posed as Catullus' friend—or perhaps one should rather say that, in the scenario constructed by Catullus, the poet failed until the end to comprehend the perilous circumstances of his role as *amicus inferior*.

I do not mean to imply in this discussion that the purely literary programmatic qualities of Poem 116, so ably discussed by Macleod, are somehow of a lower order than the issues on which I concentrate here. But nor would I concede their priority. As was the case with the sociological and the literary themes in Poem 1, the problematic of the *amicus inferior* in Poem 116 coexists in poetic amalgamation with Catullus' literary polemic. And it must be admitted that the self-conscious literariness of Poem 116 palliates somewhat the intensity of the Gellian invectives when taken in their totality. Even the threat of the poem's last line, though dramatic, remains susceptible to interpretations that vary in tone from the serious to the pathetic to the ironic.<sup>111</sup> This final line echoes Romulus' fatal last words to Remus in the *Annales*, after the latter had transgressed the city's new wall. In this way Catullus assumes the role of Rome's violent founder, thereby consigning Gellius to play the part of the twin who made himself the ultimate outsider.<sup>112</sup> The switch in status is part of the sting.

<sup>109</sup> Wiseman (1974: 125f.).

<sup>110</sup> Tatum (1993: 31ff.).

<sup>111</sup> Macleod (1973a = 1983 = this volume: pp. 35–44), conclusion.

<sup>112</sup> *Enn. Ann.* 1.95 (Skutsch). That the death of Remus constituted 'an embarrassment for the patriotic' susceptible of various responses and interpretations is a theme of Wiseman (1995).



## V

‘In the Revolution’, as Syme has put it, ‘the power of the old governing class was broken, its composition transformed. Italy and the non-political orders in society triumphed over Rome and the Roman aristocracy.’<sup>113</sup> The violent transformation of Rome’s élite which established the Augustan principate was not the product of a single man’s political genius. There is, after all, a discernible affinity of motivation linking the Social War, the analysis of Roman friendship by the philosophising *novus homo* Cicero, the manufacture of the science of jurisprudence by intellectual equestrians, and the rallying cry of *tota Italia*.<sup>114</sup> Catullus’ decision to incorporate issues of municipal status and of *amicitia* into his literary programme is, broadly speaking, merely one more aspect of the determined if tentative rise of the Italian élite. They found their leader and their chance in Caesar’s heir, and one suspects one knows how Catullus would have responded had he known that the clever literary twist with which he closed his collection would one day find its historical realization. But speculations may be left aside: there can be no denying that in the Catullan corpus itself social issues are so intimately united with the poet’s aesthetic programme that they constitute an unavoidable dimension of interpretation. I do not mean to suggest—and it would be foolish to do so—that Catullus’ poetry is primarily devoted to mapping out the conflicting potentialities inherent in various species of *amicitiae*. But the theme is pervasive—and earnest, for all the humour and elegance of its configuration. Caesar deemed it worthwhile to take seriously what Catullus had to say. And whatever else he was, Caesar was perceptive.<sup>115</sup>

<sup>113</sup> Syme (1939: 8).

<sup>114</sup> Tension existed between Romans and Italians even down to Actium: Syme (1939: 286ff.).

<sup>115</sup> An earlier version of this paper was read to the Leeds Latin Seminar; I am grateful to the audience on that occasion and especially to Roy Gibson for patience and advice. Thanks are also due to Hans-Friedrich Mueller and to S. J. Heyworth.

## *Non inter nota sepulcra: Catullus 101 and Roman Funerary Ritual*

*Andrew Feldherr*

Catullus' epigram on the death of his brother emphatically situates its audiences at the performance of a ritual act.<sup>1</sup> 'Borne through many lands and many seas, I come, brother, to these sad rites' (*advenio has miseras, frater, ad inferias*, 101.2). Both the demonstrative *has* and the tense of the main verb *advenio*<sup>2</sup> create the impression that the reader is actually present at the moment when the poet makes the final offerings to his brother. But how are we to understand the relationship between the words the poet addresses to his brother—and simultaneously to the audience that hears or reads the poem as a text—and the ritual performance that provides its dramatic setting? One strategy, which has laid the groundwork for several influential readings of the poem, treats the ritual largely as a foil for the more meaningful communication that is the poem itself. As Quinn puts it, 'the poem's strength is due in great part to the delicate balance between the sad, resigned irony with which the poet both accepts and detaches himself from the formal valediction it is his obligation to pronounce ... and the confident assumption of an understanding between the brothers

<sup>1</sup> I am grateful to my anonymous referees and to the editors of *Classical Antiquity* for their suggestions and criticisms and to my colleague, Robert Kaster. The flaws that remain are my own responsibility.

<sup>2</sup> So Biondi (1976: 413n. 22 = this volume: p. 182 n. 13), *contra* Robinson (1965: 62).

transcending the inadequacies of the ceremony.<sup>3</sup> Here I want to explore the possibility that the funerary rites to which these lines allude can provide a more positive model for how Catullus' poem communicates. Rather than stress the opposition between the expression of private emotion and the 'inadequacies' of the formal procedures prescribed by past traditions, I will argue that the logic of Roman funerary practices both informs the sequence of thought within the poem and helps explain its complex rhetorical strategies—its multiplicity of audiences and of speakers. Reading the poem through rather than against the optic of Roman ritual will also shed light on the larger issue of how Catullus' poetry positions itself within the shifting matrix of actual Roman social practices in the Late Republic.

A recognition of the impact of funerary ritual on the language of the poem and the sentiments it expresses is in itself nothing new, and it will be useful to begin by differentiating my position from earlier readings that have also emphasized the poem's 'authentic' Roman character. When Quinn opposes the emotional content of the poem to its ritual form, he is in fact reversing older critical assumptions that it was precisely the traditional, liturgical elements of the work that gave the most sincere expression to the poet's sentiments.<sup>4</sup> The Roman Catullus who demonstrates his *pietas* by obediently performing these ancestral rites provided both a complement, and perhaps a comforting alternative, to the lover of Lesbia. Thus Paratore begins his masterly demonstration of the influence of Hellenistic epigram on the poem's form with an ironic apology to those 'accustomed to go into ecstasy every time they catch the scent of native *terroir* in a Latin poet'.<sup>5</sup> Other critics have detected traces of ritual formulae in the very language of the poem. For Syndikus, for example, the threefold repetition of the word *frater* recalls the formal *conclamatio* in which the Romans called

<sup>3</sup> Quinn (1973a: 440), followed by Fitzgerald (1995: 187): 'The moment and the place of this poem are full of contradictions, condensed into the final "hail and farewell", words that both accompany the ceremony and gesture toward a communication that transcends its inadequate formulae.' Fitzgerald later suggests that the poem presents its ritual language as merely 'provisional', again a substitute for another form of contact necessarily deferred by the brother's death. Cf. also Biondi (1976: 410 = this volume: p. 179).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Wiseman (1969b), Syndikus (1987: 3:106–7).

<sup>5</sup> Paratore (1963: 563).

the newly dead corpse by name.<sup>6</sup> So too the final phrase *'ave atque vale'* repeats the farewell to the dead that marked the end of the funeral service and also appears in funerary inscriptions. Yet consideration of how we are to interpret the poem's echoes of funerary ritual varies between two poles. On the one hand, such liturgical reminiscences have been treated as purely literary devices; their contribution consists above all in the solemn and dignified 'tone' they give the poet's expression of his grief—a tone that provides an effective contrast to the subjectivity of the work's Hellenistic antecedents.<sup>7</sup> On the other, these reminiscences of ritual practice have been used to transfer the poem from the realm of the merely literary to that of the real: the poem does not just recall or allude to funerary language, it was itself a material part of the rites for Catullus' brother, a ritual lament (*nenia*) or an inscription actually to be carved on his tombstone.<sup>8</sup>

This last idea is of course unprovable. Surviving inscriptions form too vast, and too varied, a body of material either to exclude the possibility or to substantiate it. In any case, whatever else the lines might have been, they were also a poem that could be read and performed in the same format as the others that appear in the collection. Thus whether or not the poem 'really' formed a part of some ritual or commemorative gesture, its significance as text is not limited to that original context, and the approach I propose to take here does

<sup>6</sup> Syndikus (1987: 3:107).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. above all Paratore's discussion of how the poet suffuses the form of Meleager's epigram on the death of his beloved Heliodora (*AP* 7.476) with the 'somber tone of Roman ritual'. Wilamowitz (1924: 1.234) sees the poet's representation of himself actually performing ritual activities as a significant transformation of the 'stylized' Hellenistic genre of the epitumbion.

<sup>8</sup> The idea that Catullus' poem was written for inscription is a very old one, going back to Parthenius' fifteenth-century commentary (though Parthenius argues that the lines were written not for the brother's actual tomb in Troy, but rather for a cenotaph erected by the poet on his return to Italy; see Ellis [1889: 480]). The suggestion was accepted by Ellis, but is routinely denied by modern commentators, e.g., Fordyce (1961: 388: 'Catullus' poem is not an epitaph') and Thomson (1997: 536: 'it is highly personal, and the emotion within it expands and develops in a way that goes far beyond the conventions of the funerary epigram'). The observation of Gelzer (1992: 26–7) that the poem omits the specific information about the deceased contained in actual epitaphs is addressed below. For the poem as a *nenia* see Biondi (1976: 415 = this volume: pp. 184–5), although he is speaking of a literary allusion to this non-literary genre rather than arguing that the poem was in fact used in a ritual capacity.

not presuppose locating Catullus' lines within an actual ritual performance. (Indeed in the second half of this paper I will be suggesting that, irrespective of whatever other uses it may have been put to, the poem as a text, performed or circulating in writing among the society of Catullus' friends, functions in ways analogous to an inscribed epitaph.) But while I will be treating the ritual elements of the poem as literary phenomena, that is as meaningful to an audience not present at a funeral or tombstone, I will be arguing that their impact on the poem's reception extends beyond questions of tone. I want to raise the possibility that the funerary rites it alludes to allow us to re-think what Catullus' poem does, not just how it does it. The Roman funeral was more than a context for expressing grief in a manner invested with solemnity and ritual *gravitas*; it was a dynamic procedure that effected important transformations in the status of those who participated in it and in the relationships between living and dead. By constructing his poem as a performance of such rites, Catullus invites its reader to imagine the poetic performance itself as enacting similar transformations. Thus by examining the social functions of funerary ritual we will gain an important new context for understanding not just the elements that have been taken to derive from such rites, but the structural dynamics and thematic preoccupations of the poem as a whole.

John Scheid, in a synthetic analysis of all the ritual practices involved in the Roman treatment of the dead, identifies two basic 'movements' in a Roman funeral. Death dislocates not only the deceased but also those who mourn them from their fixed place in the social structure.<sup>9</sup> The corpse has left the world of the living but is still present among them. The dead man has neither become one of the *di manes*, nor is he who he once was. His family too are excluded from participation in the life of the community. Forbidden to take part in sacrifices, weddings, public festivals or Senate meetings, they display their distance from the rest of the citizen body by a number of reversals, most importantly in their dress. The crucial distinctions in status marked by differences in costume all disappear as the male members of the family don the

<sup>9</sup> Scheid (1984a: esp. 118–19) and Maurin (1984).

dark toga of the mourner. Other badges of rank are also removed during the period of the funeral: thus the knights after the death of Augustus offered to replace their gold rings with iron ones.<sup>10</sup> But if one consequence of the inversions of the norm that mark Roman funerary ritual is to show that the survivors, like the deceased, have come to occupy a liminal state that places them apart from established social categories, other aspects of the ceremony prepare for their reintegration by re-establishing an opposition between living and dead. The two antithetical separations that the Roman funeral signifies—the separation of the mourners from the living through contact with death, and the complementary re-establishment of the boundaries between living and dead—manifest themselves especially at the moment when the offerings are made to the spirits of the deceased. After the sacrifice of the *porca praesentanea*, the pig offered to Ceres, which is slain after the burial of the remains, milk, blood, and olive oil are offered to the dead while a banquet is celebrated among the living.<sup>11</sup> Such practices define a new context for exchange between the dead and the living but do so while simultaneously re-enforcing the boundaries between the two worlds.<sup>12</sup> Every sacrifice can be read as a communal act in its most

<sup>10</sup> See Scheid (1984a: 119ff., esp. 126), for testimonia and for the larger argument that the function of mourning rituals was precisely to designate the difference between the family of the deceased and the rest of the citizen body. On the knights, see Suet. *Aug.* 100.

<sup>11</sup> It is unclear whether the living themselves participated in consuming the remains of the victim. Donatus ad *Ter. Ad.* 587 suggests that it was considered a pollution to eat or drink anything that was offered to the dead. (Although there is a slight problem here: Donatus presents this information as one of two possible etymologies for the word *silicernium*—so called ‘because those who perform the ritual only behold (*cernant*) the offerings, they do not taste them’—but if the offerings themselves constitute only a part of the feast [as Scheid suggests, blood and milk] the remainder of the victims would never have been offered to the dead and therefore bring no pollution to those who eat them.) On the other hand, Festus 394L derives *silicernium* from a type of food ‘by which the living are purified from their mourning’, which seems to imply that the living do participate in the banquet, and Latte (1967: 102) treats the rite as a feast for the living as well. As Scheid (1984a: 130f.) shows in his discussion, whether the banquet is only for the dead, or whether the dead eat only certain elements of the meal, the ritual puts in play crucial dietary differences that demarcate the living from the dead.

<sup>12</sup> See especially the interpretation of Maurin (1984: 204–5) of this ritual as a ‘rite du passage’.

radical sense, an act that constitutes a community.<sup>13</sup> As in the case of divine sacrifices, where the gods too partake in the death of the victim—but in a radically different way from the human community—so here the dead receive their share of the offerings, but both the portion they receive and the way they consume it separate them from the living. They get the blood rather than the flesh and eat from the ground rather than at a table. As this last rite also suggests, the two processes of identification and separation between the living and the dead cannot be completely disentangled chronologically. It is not simply a question of a final purification that breaks the mourners' ties to the dead and restores them to the world of the living—although purification is an important element in funerary ritual—rather, in the sacrifice and banquet at the tomb both of these complementary functions are in play.

Funerals were not the only context for instantiating this ambiguous relationship between the living and the dead. Scheid shows that the *Parentalia*, the nine-day complex of rituals performed in February to honor the dead, reveal the same tension between separation and identification as the funeral itself.<sup>14</sup> Here too events move from a banquet shared with the dead, the *Feralia*, which Scheid compares to the *silicernium*, to explicitly purificatory rituals, the 'sweeping out' and 'sulfuring' of the house, and conclude with another banquet, the *cara cognatio*, which this time includes only the living family members.<sup>15</sup> This last event marks the re-composition of the family, now decisively marked off from contact with the dead. The rites at the tomb itself, the *Feralia*, in particular reveal the tendency of Roman funerary practices to punctuate moments of communion between dead and living with emphatic reminders of difference. The offerings made to the dead—salt, cereals, beans, wine, milk, and violets—are again deposited on the ground, or on a tile or stone, while the living by contrast

<sup>13</sup> See esp. Scheid 1984b for the communal functions of sacrifice in Roman culture.

<sup>14</sup> By contrast, the complementary festival for the dead, the *Lemuria*, about which much less is known, seems to have had an exclusively purificatory function. The *paterfamilias* wards off the wandering spirits of the dead by tossing some black beans on the ground, another form of banquet, Scheid (1984a: 134–6) suggests, but this time one in which the living emphatically do not participate.

<sup>15</sup> See Scheid (1984a: 132–4), citing Danka (1976).

take part in a human banquet reclining at a table.<sup>16</sup> Similar rites, apparently including offerings to the dead, banquets, and prayers, were performed both at other points in the public religious calendar—the *Rosalia*, or festival of roses, for example—and also on occasions of a purely familial significance like the birthday of the deceased or the anniversary of his death.<sup>17</sup>

With this background in mind, let us look again at how Catullus describes his responses to his brother's death and the interaction between them as it plays out over the course of the poem. I want to begin, not with poem 101 itself but with the allusions Catullus makes to his brother's death in the longer poems 65 and 68A and B, which give a fuller description of the effects of Catullus' bereavement. In both 65.1–14 and 68A.11–26, the speaker proclaims his inability to write the poems his friends request because he is too profoundly afflicted by the death of his brother. To be sure, the poet conveys the consequences of this event in terms that focus on his own emotional state: his joys have perished, and sorrow has ended his ability to engage in the 'play' that for Catullus defines poetic composition. But these subjective portraits of his grief occur in passages that draw particular attention to the social context in which his poetry was produced and to the important role poetry itself plays in maintaining the bonds of *amicitia*. The poems Catullus is unable to write are above all poems requested by friends as part of an exchange of favors. Thus when Catullus' sorrow shuts him off from this kind of communication—as is graphically illustrated in each case when the poet breaks off his addresses to Hortalus and Mallius in order to apostrophize his irrevocably absent brother—the psychological aspects of the poet's suffering are emphatically juxtaposed with social ones.<sup>18</sup> The rhetorical device of the apostrophe facilitates a doubling of perspective through which

<sup>16</sup> Nothing explicitly indicates that sacrifice was performed on these occasions though scholars have suggested that the red color of the wine, and specifically of the roses and violets that are particularly common in offerings to the dead, recalls the blood of the sacrificial victim (so Scheid 1984a: 134 and n.75). This is in fact the interpretation offered by Servius *ad Aen.* 5.79: *PURPUREOS SPARGIT FLORES ad sanguinis imitationem.*

<sup>17</sup> See De Marchi (1896: 1.199–208).

<sup>18</sup> For another analysis of how the loss of the brother functions as an impediment to poetic activity, see Janan (1994: 115–19).



the reader can at once see the event as a purely personal phenomenon affecting primarily the emotions of the poet, and at the same time observe how the poet's very involvement in his own sorrow also cuts him off from participation in social rituals.<sup>19</sup> This is precisely what happens in the case of the afflicted members of a Roman family, who are barred from the kinds of exchange that define their place in the larger order, such as religious rites, political events like Senate meetings, and marriage ceremonies. In fact the specific activities from which Catullus' grief banishes him present a characteristic transposition of the actual taboos that surrounded the family of the deceased. As they are ritually barred from religious ceremonies and weddings, so Catullus' grief cuts him off from the rites of the Muses<sup>20</sup> and erotic liaisons.<sup>21</sup>

The first line of poem 101 itself reinforces just such an impression of the poet's isolation. As the dead are physically separated from the city of the living by being buried outside the *pomerium*, so here the poet emphasizes the distance that separates the space he shares with his brother from the place he has come from. The much-studied allusion to the *Odyssey* with which the poem begins contributes to this effect. For, as Biondi points out, the most obvious point of contact between Catullus' poem and the adventures of Odysseus comes in the hero's visit to the land of the dead, cut off as it is by 'great rivers and terrible straits'—not perhaps in the reference to Troy itself, which

<sup>19</sup> Seneca's comparison of Octavia's and Livia's different reactions to their sons' deaths (*Cons. ad Marc.* 2.3–3.2) offers a clear example of how proper mourning rituals were essential to defining the status of both living and dead. Octavia never ceased to mourn Marcellus, continuing to wear the dark clothing of the bereaved for the rest of her life. Thus she cuts herself off from the rest of society, becoming a *familiaris* only to 'shadows and solitude' and deeming herself *orba* even when surrounded by her descendants. At the same time her perpetual mourning hinders the memorialization of the dead Marcellus: she will allow no portraits of him and will not hear his name mentioned. Livia, by contrast appropriately ends her mourning at the funeral and becomes an active participant in preserving the memory of the deceased by having him depicted privately and publicly. As Seneca says: *cum memoria illius vixit* ('she lived with his memory').

<sup>20</sup> Cf. *sevocat a doctis... virginibus* ('calls away from the learned maidens', 65.2) and *muneraque et Musarum... et Veneris* ('gifts of the Muses and Venus', 68A.10).

<sup>21</sup> At 68A.15 Catullus identifies the time when he began to write poetry as the moment when he first received the *vestis pura* ('white garment'; 68A.15). While the primary reference of this image is to Catullus' coming of age, it provides yet another reminder of the actual practices that differentiated those in mourning from the rest of the community: they wore dark garments to show their contamination by death.

would only have meaning for those who knew from Catullus' other poetry that that was where his brother was buried.<sup>22</sup>

From this beginning the poem's elaborate ten-line structure throws into almost graphic relief the progression from one kind of separation to another that the Roman funeral was designed to enact: it moves from the isolation of the mourner, contaminated by death, to the final separation from the dead that returns the speaking poet to the world of the living, after passing through a moment of unrestricted mourning where the impact of the loss of the deceased on the living is most clearly revealed. As the first couplet focuses on separation in space, with the poet moving towards the tomb of his brother, the final two lines by contrast emphasize separation in time, with the dead brother moving away from the speaker towards eternity (*in perpetuum*). The brothers literally come nearest one another at almost the precise center of the poem, across the strong caesura in the fourth foot of the fifth line, a juxtaposition that maps out the content of the line itself, *quandoquidem fortuna mihi tete abstulit ipsum* ('since fortune has taken you away from me'). At the same time, the poem itself reinforces the ritual implications of this pattern by alluding to actual components of a Roman funeral. The anguished apostrophe that interrupts the flow of the poem, and at the same time forms its center, seems to enact the ritual mourning at the funeral itself.<sup>23</sup> So too the words that mark the final separation between living and dead reproduce the *novissima verba*, the last words with which the funeral ends and the mourners take their leave.

But like the rituals we have described, the poem does more than mark a simple progress from one kind of differentiation to another—the final distinction between living and dead that prepares for the mourner's reintegration into the world of society. As in the case of the *silicernium*, where both of the ceremony's larger tendencies, toward communion with and separation from the dead, are operative, so within the course of the poem the oppositions between Catullus' identification with his brother and radical assertions of difference constantly recur. Let us take for example the line upon which Quinn

<sup>22</sup> Biondi (1976: 418 = this volume: pp. 188–9), *contra* Conte (1974: 11n. 18 = 1986: 36n. 8; this volume, p. 174 n. 15).

<sup>23</sup> Lamentation at the Roman funeral is attested both at the home of the deceased and at the gravesite; see Latte (1967: 101n. 3).

bases his demonstration of the poet's ironic detachment from the ritual he performs: *et mutam nequiquam alloquerer cinerem* ('and that I might address your mute ash in vain'). As Quinn interprets the line, the pompous communication implied by the verb *alloquerer*, which he takes as connoting 'any formal speech, including the speech made by one character to another in high-style poetry',<sup>24</sup> is emphatically presented as pointless and vain by the emphasis on the unresponsiveness of the brother's ashes. The line, as I propose to read it, is indeed full of paradoxes; but its contradictory meanings reflect the tensions enacted within the rites Catullus performs rather than suggesting any irony in the poet's attitude towards them. When Catullus refers to his brother as 'silent ash' he highlights precisely qualities that reinforce the finality of his brother's passage from the living to the dead. He is no longer the corpse he was in the confusing liminal state before the funeral was completed, but ash.<sup>25</sup> And in becoming mute, he has taken on one of the defining characteristics of the Roman dead, who could in fact be referred to simply as 'the silent ones', *silentes*.<sup>26</sup> Catullus' role as subject of *alloquerer* both designates him as a speaking body, thus pointing the contrast with the dead, and also—for those readers who know Catullus' depiction of his grief in the longer poems—signals that Catullus has re-emerged as a speaker; he has recovered from the silence that, he claimed in 68A, his brother's death imposed on him. The word *alloquerer*, however, is also the locus within the phrase for the contradictory assertion that Catullus' recovered eloquence serves only to bind him more closely to the dead.<sup>27</sup> For Quinn's note, as the

<sup>24</sup> Quinn (1973a: 441).

<sup>25</sup> For the importance of 'fixing' the dead in such an unchangeable state in funerary ritual in a variety of cultures, particularly implicit in the practice of a secondary burial, see Humphreys (1981: 268).

<sup>26</sup> See *OLD* s.v. *silens* § 3 for references.

<sup>27</sup> In its context *nequiquam*, asserting as it does the inaccessibility of the very brother whom Catullus addresses, reinforces a similar tension between figuring the dead as cut off from the living and as present to them. This tension I propose to read as intrinsic to the ritual act that is being performed.

Some recognition of the impossibility of reciprocity also figures in Vergilian descriptions of *inferiae*: the gifts the Trojans offer to the *cineri ingrato* ('ungrateful ash') of Misenus (*Aen.* 6.213) and Aeneas' address to the *recepti nequiquam cineres* ('ashes recovered in vain') of his father (*Aen.* 5.80–1), a very vexed phrase. Williams (1960: 58) offers the possibility of taking *recepti* here to mean 'found again', 'restored to me', in which case the substance of the passage comes very close indeed to that of Catullus

OLD entry for the word makes clear, provides too limited a picture of the uses of *alloqui*. Far from being restricted to formal speeches, or acting as a generic marker of high-style poetry, *alloqui* can designate any kind of address, including the most intimate kinds of speech, and it occurs across the stylistic spectrum from Plautus to Vergil. Thus the very word that marks the distance between Catullus and his brother acts also to remind the reader that the poem itself can be read not only as a public proclamation to be overheard by its poetic audience, but also as a private utterance intended only for the ears of the deceased. As a communication of the first type, the poem makes plain the separation between the speaker and the dead and shows him recovering his ability to address a living audience; the second possibility however suggests that Catullus has indeed entered the world of the dead.

The concept of speech implicit in the word *alloquerer* itself points to a more fundamental way in which Catullus' poem comes to question the finality of the separation promised by its 'narrative': it is when the dimension of speech is added, that is when the poem ceases to be simply a literary artifact spread out on the page and actually emerges from the spoken voice, that it most dramatically blurs the boundaries between living and dead. As a written text, the poem was inextricably bound up in the economy of personal relationships that so much of Catullus' work celebrates. As tokens of friendship, the material existence of his poems was as instrumental in cementing and substantiating *amicitiae* as their content; conversely, as Raymond

101, before rejecting it as putting too much strain on the meaning of *recipere*. However, he himself cites several parallels for this sense of the verb, *Aen.* 1.553, 1.583, and *Hor. C.* 2.7.27–8. Imitation of Catullus may explain the recurrence of the motif in these passages (on the scope of Vergil's debt to the poem, see Monteleone [1976]). On the other hand, it may be that, far from representing Catullus' idiosyncratic recognition of the vanity of ritual performance, an assertion of the unreachability of the dead in fact becomes a significant element in precisely those acts that function to establish a new bond with them.

Another word that has sometimes been read as a sign of Catullus' belief in the futility of *inferiae* is the adversative *interea* in line 7. As Thomson (1997: 537) points out, *interea* does not serve to contrast the present ceremony to some more adequate communication in the future; rather it stresses that the rites will take place even though *fortuna* has removed the brother himself. Taken in this way, the word again emphasizes the separation from the dead rather than the impotence of ancestral ritual.

Starr has shown, this same set of personal connections provided the system through which literary texts like Catullus circulated.<sup>28</sup> Thus the very existence of Catullus' poem as a text signifies Catullus' participation in the network of personal bonds from which he had claimed in poems 65 and 68A and B his grief excluded him. To be aware of the context in which the poem presents itself to its public, whether as a recitation at a banquet or as a written text, was therefore to recognize Catullus' participation in the community of the living. On the other hand, to hear the poem as an utterance delivered not at the *convivium*, but at the tomb of his brother, reverses these implications. In this case Catullus is indeed speaking only to the dead.

When we start to listen to the words of the poem in this second way, to hear it in isolation from its actual performance context, we can detect yet another respect in which the poet's words confuse the categories of living and dead. Because of the form of address used in the poem—its threefold repetition of *frater*—a certain ambiguity comes to surround the identity of its speaking subject. Unlike any other terms for family relationships, the words used for same-sex siblings are inherently reflexive. A man is a son to his father and a father to his son, but to his brother he can only be a brother. Thus for all that the lines seem to enact a separation between the living and the dead, their language makes it increasingly difficult to tell the living Catullus from his dead brother. Since the word *inferias* in funerary inscriptions can be used to designate the tomb itself as well as the rites performed there,<sup>29</sup> the first person narrative contained in the poem's opening line describes the journey of Catullus' brother as well as of Catullus himself.<sup>30</sup> He traveled over many lands and many seas only to obtain a tomb.<sup>31</sup> Indeed in actual funerary epigrams that contain the

<sup>28</sup> Starr (1987: 213–15).

<sup>29</sup> OLD s.v. *inferiae* § C, citing CIL 1.1732.2 and 6.14786.4.

<sup>30</sup> Indeed a specialized meaning of *alloquor* as 'console' (See OLD s.v. *alloquor* § 3, and esp. Varro *Ling.* 6.57) further hints at the reversal of roles described here: Catullus in 'consoling' his brother addresses to the dead the form of discourses usually directed to the living survivors.

<sup>31</sup> The *Odyssey* allusion also contributes to the indeterminacy surrounding the status of the speaker as living or dead. Not only was Odysseus renowned for making offerings to the dead; he was also mourned by his household as though dead, and forced

journey motif, some of which use language almost identical to Catullus,' it is always the dead who have undertaken the journey.<sup>32</sup> Even the farewell of the final lines, if heard in these two voices simultaneously, reiterates that Catullus' brother is never so present as when the poet mourns his absence.<sup>33</sup>

I want now to broaden this argument by suggesting that the 'ventriloquism' that renders Catullus' insistence on his separation from his dead brother so problematic itself features in another crucial medium through which the Roman funeral was re-enacted—the inscription on the tomb. Joseph Day has recently argued that one of the functions of certain Greek epigrams is to take the reader at the tomb through the stages of the funeral itself, allowing him or her to relive the lamentations with which the dead were buried.<sup>34</sup> I suggest that Latin funerary inscriptions can offer an analogous kind of re-enactment, not through describing or reproducing the liturgies of the funeral itself, as Day proposes Greek inscriptions do, but rather in the way they blur the boundaries between living and dead. In engaging the attention of the reader, in forcing him to articulate the words it prescribes, the inscription sometimes envisions itself as allowing the dead to take possession of the living. One epigram makes this possession explicit in chilling fashion:

Vivere post obitum vatem vis nosse, viator?  
Quod legis, ecce loquor; vox tua nempe mea est.<sup>35</sup>

to live through a facsimile of his own burial in his return from Phaeacia. See Hunter (1992: 121).

<sup>32</sup> Cugusi (1985: 200–17) collects examples of the motif of the journey to the place of death and subsequently makes the suggestion (215–16), admittedly unprovable, that the prevalence of the theme does not simply reflect the influence of this poem but rather that the poem itself reworks a traditional topos.

In several of these cases the journey that separated the dead from their native lands was motivated by pious obligations to husbands (and in one case [CE 1845] of a nurse to her ward).

<sup>33</sup> Janan (1994: 127) also suggests that the dead brother comes to figure as an image for the poet in her reading of poem 68.

<sup>34</sup> Day (1989).

<sup>35</sup> *Anth.* 721, attributed in Possidius *Vita Aug.* 31 to *Secularium quidam poetarum*. A fragment of an inscription from Ostia, *CIL* 14.356 = *CE* 1450, contains the last two words of the first line (replacing *nosse* with *scire*) and the final four words of the

Do you want to know that a poet lives after death, wayfarer? What you are reading,—look!—I am saying; your voice is mine.

The claim made here provides a new slant on a topos of poetic immortality familiar to us from the alleged epitaphs of other *vates* who, like Ennius, promise ‘to flit living through the lips of men’; but its relevance is not restricted to the type of remembrance won by poets. The same phenomenon of living by taking possession of the voice of the reader applies also to the many epitaphs where the dead accost a living ‘passerby’ in the first person. When the *viator*’s eye rests on the tombstone, when he speaks the words he reads there, he has become a conduit for articulating the identity, indeed for reproducing the ‘voice’ of the dead. The formulaic expression of farewell that sends the wayfarer on his way breaks this contact, returning the reader to himself. Indeed a phrase like *dixi abi* (‘I have spoken, go away’),<sup>36</sup> explicitly pairs the release of the wayfarer with the end of the utterance of the dead. Sometimes too the very substance of the communication articulated by the dead through the living reader acts to assert the identity of living and dead in a different way. The common topos of the *memento mori*, as pithily presented in expressions like *quod tu es, ego fui, quod nunc sum, et tu eris* (‘what you are, I was; what I am now, you too will be’),<sup>37</sup> forces the reader to identify with the dead by confronting him with their shared mortality. Varro (*L.* 6.49) in fact sees such reminders as the defining function of funerary ‘*monumenta*’; they are called *monumenta* not because they preserve the memory of the dead but because they remind or admonish the living that they too will die.<sup>38</sup>

The final farewell that marks the end of contact between the living and the dead, whether as the last line of a funerary inscription, or as the *novissima verba* of the actual funeral, itself recapitulates many

second. For the idea of the reader’s voice as the living presence of the dead, cf. also *CE* 513 and *CE* 1278.

<sup>36</sup> *CE* 52.8.      <sup>37</sup> *CIL* 11.6243; for the topos, see Lattimore (1962: 256–8).

<sup>38</sup> One reader suggests that these parallels are deliberately ruled out by Catullus’ insistence in line 4 that his brother’s ashes are mute, but precisely this paradox is stressed in such speaking inscriptions. It is only through the voice of the reader, dictated by the letters of the inscription, that the dead are able to speak. Cf. *voce tua vivet, quisque leges titulos* (‘he will live through your voice, whoever reads the inscription’, *CE* 1278.6) and esp. *hic ego qui sine voce loquor de marmore caeso* (‘here [am] I who speak without a voice from incised marble’, *CE* 1255.1). For this procedure, see Haüsle (1980: 61–3).

of the ambiguities present in other ritual practices concerning the dead. First there is simply the question of who speaks the farewell and to whom. When Servius glosses the phrase *novissima verba* used by Vergil of the 'last words' that conclude the burial of Misenus, he differentiates between two ritual expressions: *ilicet*, which he claims is the appropriate word to be used in this context, and *vale*, to be spoken 'after the ritual at the tomb is complete'.<sup>39</sup> The first term *ilicet* means simply 'it is permitted to go' and seems addressed primarily to the mourners whose obligations are finished and whose purification marks their separation from the dead. The phrase *vale* though is more ambiguous; seemingly marking a final farewell to the dead, it could also be addressed to the celebrants. In funeral inscriptions as well, the apparently simple gesture of the final 'farewell' takes an extraordinary variety of forms. Most frequently the stationary corpse, or its *monumentum*, addresses a farewell to the passing wayfarer. In first-person inscriptions that represent the dedicator of the monument or some relative of the deceased as speaker, however, the last words are addressed to the dead. Perhaps the most interesting treatment of the formula occurs when the monument speaks in the character of the dead but then explicitly commands the living reader to articulate the final farewell to the corpse, as in CE 489.9, *sis felix quicumque leges, te numina servant/et pia voce cane 'Aelia Sabina vale'* ('may you be fortunate, whoever reads this, may the divine powers preserve you; and with pious voice chant, "Aelia Sabina, farewell"'). Each of the many forms taken by the last farewell undercuts the finality of the encounter in various ways. If the dead continue to speak, their words demonstrate a living presence that survives or belies death. Even if the words are addressed to the dead, they signify that, at least, there is something there to address. Nor can either the funeral or the inscription in itself be regarded as final. Funerals provide the blueprint

<sup>39</sup> *NOVISSIMA VERBA id est 'ilicet': nam 'vale' dicebatur post tumuli quoque peracta sollemnia, ad Aen. 6.231*. Servius' reliability has been questioned here by Fordyce (1961: 390), who would like to make Catullus' *vale* the actual 'last word' of a Roman funeral. But the distinction Servius makes is perfectly justified by the text he quotes. Vergil's account of the funeral rites for Misenus sharply separates the funeral itself from the consecration of the tomb. It is only when the mourning is finished, the corpse buried, and the mourners purified that Aeneas himself intervenes to adorn the tomb that will preserve Misenus' memory (6.232–5).



for a variety of ritual practices designed to be repeated annually, from the public festival of the *Parentalia* to private rites. So too in the case of inscriptions, while each individual reading is a single diachronic event moving irreversibly from 'hello' to 'good-bye', the text itself is infinitely re-readable. There is always a new *viator* to offer his voice to the dead; indeed the same reader can repeat the experience himself.

The complex play between text and voice, especially as it appears in the last of the funerary inscriptions we looked at, returns us to the particular kind of open-endedness Catullus' poem offers. Here too, as the final *vale* marks the end of the text, as the abbreviated motion from *ave* to *vale* recapitulates the poem's brief but irreversible trajectory,<sup>40</sup> the ghostly echo of the voice of the other *frater* resists final relegation to the status of mute shade. And when we consider the text as a script for performance capable of being repeated not just by Catullus himself but by another reader, the overlapping voices become even harder to disentangle, and the text's ability to represent the dead stands forth in greater relief. Fitzgerald has suggested that Catullus' inability to communicate with his brother has become a sign for the inaccessibility of the author himself, a kind of *mise-en-abyme* figuring the reader's relationship to the poem's 'I'. The model, however, works as well in a positive as in a negative sense. As the living poet becomes the spokesman for the dead brother, so the reader takes on not only the role of the grieving Catullus, but through this first level of impersonation, experiences the same mixture of detachment from and possession by the dead as the participant in the rites the poem describes.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Howe (1974: 276).

<sup>41</sup> In its use of the poet as an intermediary allowing the reader to appreciate the worth of the dead by sympathizing with a relative who mourns his loss, the poem again recalls the strategies employed in surviving epitaphs. In the epigram for the freedwoman Tinuleia (*Ann. Epigr.* 1946: 208), for example, the monument describes to the passerby the lavish funeral her *patronus* had given for her and the tears he shed when she died. As a result, the dead woman is made *felix* 'because all men will say that I pleased my patron':

Si voce superum gaudent qui a luce abierunt  
placuisse me patrono monumentum indicat  
quo funere amplo per frequentem gratiam

The first part of this paper argued that the structure and manipulation of voice in Catullus 101, far from highlighting any inadequacy of ritual, reproduce the negotiations Roman funerary rites enacted between mourners, the deceased, and the society of the living. I also compared the way the poem articulates the simultaneous presence and absence of the brother to the effect of actual funerary epigrams that similarly conjure up the ambiguities of the funeral by having the living speak for the dead. In this second section, the focus will shift more fully from message to medium. Starting with an examination of a second function of Roman funerary ritual, the representation in the here and now of those separated in time and space, I will consider how Catullus' text can act as a replacement for the actual physical *monumenta* erected for the dead.

The representation of the consecutive synchronically was the attribute of aristocratic Roman funerary practice most striking to ancient as well as modern observers.<sup>42</sup> At each aristocratic funeral, an entire sequence of ancestors appears in the present in the form of *imagines*, which, as Dupont stresses,<sup>43</sup> were not so much representations as physical remnants of the dead. As the parade of *imagines* made it possible to bridge the gap between present and past so too, in cases where

die supremo lacrumans me amissam intulit  
in quo hoc efficit me felicem mortuam  
ut dicant omnes quod patrono placuerim.

'If those who have departed the light rejoice in the voice of those above this monument showed that I pleased my patron, whither, on my last day, after losing me, he bare me with tears in a generous funeral by reasons of his abundant kindness, in which this makes me happy, though a dead woman, that all say that I pleased my patron.'

So too in *CE* 1048, the monument is designed to convey the message at the center of Catullus' poem, namely, how unworthily the dead has been bereft of life:

Tu qui praeteriens legis hoc mortis monumentum,  
aspice quam indigne sit data vita mihi.

'You who read this monument of death as you pass by, / see how unworthily life was given to me.'

See the discussion of Haütle (1980: 62f.).

<sup>42</sup> For a somewhat different account of the structuring of time at a Roman funeral, see Bettini (1991: 176ff.). Bettini too speaks of the funeral as an occasion on which the entire set of ancestors is present, but devotes more space to analyzing how the linear procession of ancestors gives a spatial expression to concepts of temporal succession.

<sup>43</sup> Dupont (1987).

the deceased died far from home, the funeral could literally cross vast spatial distances. Long processions like that with which Tiberius accompanied the corpse of his brother Drusus back from Gaul take the form of enormous funerals. In the case of Drusus, civic officials in mourning accompanied the bier along the route and the emperor himself met the entourage at Ticinum.<sup>44</sup>

Inscriptions too can offer a means to transcend both spatial and temporal distance. Despite the notorious skepticism of Simonides (*PMG* 581), the funerary monument and its inscription provide perhaps the single most common ancient technology for preserving a present image of the dead. The effect of the famous streets of tombs, where the images and inscriptions of the dead crowded around the traveler, suggests the throng of dead ancestors present at funerals. All the more evocative must have been the tombs of families like the Scipios, where the simultaneous presence of inscriptions and memorials recording the deeds of the same sequence of ancestors whose *imagines* accompanied each corpse in the *pompa funebris* makes the monument nothing less than a funeral in stone.<sup>45</sup> Funerary inscriptions offer devices for overcoming the spatial separation between the dead and living as they do for the deceased's absence from the 'present'. One way of accomplishing this feat relies again on the voice of the traveler, who not only articulates the praises of the dead in the presence of the tomb but also carries this message back to the community of the living. The most famous example of an inscription explicitly enjoining its reader to become such a messenger is of course Simonides' epitaph for the Spartan dead at Thermopylae (*FGE* XXIIb = *Hdt.* 7.228), 'tell them in Lacedaemon'. This motif can also occur in Roman inscriptions like the epitaph of M. Furius Herennus, a native of Baetica who died in Africa, which includes the line *ite mei, sine me ad meos ite* ('go, my friends, without me go to my people').<sup>46</sup> More commonly, as in the memorial complexes constructed by the Roman

<sup>44</sup> See esp. Tac. *Ann.* 3.5 and Dio 55.2, also Flower (1996: 232–3). So too the corpse of Augustus who died at Nola was carried by the leading citizens of each town on his way back to Rome (Dio 56.32.2).

<sup>45</sup> See Flower (1996: 159–84) on the tomb of the Scipios.

<sup>46</sup> *CE* 479.7.

upper classes on their country estates, the monument itself seems to take the place of the absent corpse.<sup>47</sup>

The funerary monument's functions of allowing the dead to obtrude upon the present and of overcoming the distance that separates the physical remains of the deceased from the living community of his friends, relations, and co-citizens do not emerge only from the content of the inscription, or even from the tombstone's capacity to stand in and speak for the dead. The very characteristics of the monument, its own fixity and permanence, reinforce the oppositions between the here and now and the vaster continuums of time and space. Thus the topos of the address to the *viator* itself continually points up the contrast between the mobility of the reader and the rootedness of the dead. This contrast becomes all the more pointed when we remember that the most common location for funeral monuments in the Roman world was on major roads just outside of the *pomerium*—the boundary that demarcated the place where the dead could be buried legitimately from the city of the living.<sup>48</sup> The *viator* was free to cross the *pomerium* in either direction; the dead never could. So too the brevity of the epigram, its insistence that it will not detain the reader for long, opposes the transient moment of reading to the eternal presence of the inscribed text, as well as reminding the readers that their own lives unfold within the flow of changing time from which the monument, like the deceased, has now been removed.

<sup>47</sup> On the importance of such villa monuments, see Bodel (1997: 20ff.), who also points out that villa monuments could be erected even for those whose physical remains were buried elsewhere. Cf. also the second-century inscription from a cenotaph which one M. Caerellius Smaragdianus set up for his slave Domesticus (*CE* 1185). In the inscription, the dead Domesticus claims that the cenotaph was built 'in order that I might look from nearby upon the roofs of his villa, and that he might often strew flowers and pour wine with his own hands, and pour out his tears, which is worth more to me'. The cenotaph thus facilitates precisely the same kind of offering that poem 101 shows Catullus making at the tomb of his brother. (Bodel [1997: 23] suggests that 'the notion that the monument could stand as a suitable surrogate for the deceased' may be an 'idiosyncrasy', but cf. *Aen.* 3.303–5, where Andromache similarly makes offerings to a cenotaph, an action described as 'giving libations to ashes' [*libabat cineri*]).

For a Roman example of a request for the reader to act as a messenger to the living, in this case offering consolation, see *CE* 1212.13.

<sup>48</sup> Though cf. Bodel (1997: 20): 'Many, perhaps most Romans, however ... were buried in the fields, away from the major thoroughfares.'

Catullus' poem shares a similar obsession with the effects of spatial and temporal distance. And while a recognition of the transience of the moment of parting *sub specie aeternitatis* may seem an unsurprising theme in such a context, it is important to note in how many ways the contrast between the irreversible flow of time and the present instant governs the poem's content. No poem of its size is as relentlessly, or as intricately, plotted as Catullus 101: the lines take us from a description of the speaker's intentions in the past—as we are reminded by the secondary tenses of the subjunctive in lines three and four—to his realization of these in the present—*nunc, accipe* ('now, take')—to the final lines' glance at the eternal future. This motion from past to future itself provides an analogue to the brother's irrevocable passage from life to death. Indeed, as we have seen, the two journeys overlap spatially—both brothers have come to Troy—and the ambiguities of the poem's first line render it unclear which voyage the words describe. References to ancestral traditions (*prisco...more parentum*) and, as Fitzgerald and Zetzel suggest,<sup>49</sup> to the Trojan ancestry of Rome itself, balance the personal experience of time's passage in the poem against the longer perspective provided by familial and historical continuities. But for all the poem's references to past and future, its action is firmly anchored in the present. It is from a single point in time that the poet glances back to the past—hence the strongly perfect flavor of the poem's first lines (having traveled I am present)—and forward to the future. So too in terms of family chronology, the emphasis on linear succession from ancestors to progeny serves to highlight the fact that Catullus is neither the ancestor nor the descendant of the deceased: both brothers occupy the same cross-sectional plane in the graph of family relations.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Fitzgerald (1995: 188-9), Zetzel (1982a: 665).

<sup>50</sup> In this respect, it is interesting to compare Catullus' poem with the epitaph of Cn. Cornelius Hispanus, the latest in date of the inscriptions found in the tomb of the Scipios and the only one in elegiac couplets (*CE* 958). The first couplet places the deceased in a 'vertical' sequence of descent: *progeniem genui. facta patris petii* ('I bore offspring. I emulated the deeds of my father'). The poem's ending, by contrast, tends to locate all the members of Scipio's *gens* in the same present: *maiorum optinui laudem ut sibi me esse creatum/laetentur* ('I have won the praise of my ancestors so that they rejoice that I was born for them'). The present tense of *laetentur*, the enjambment of which is made all the more dramatic after the emphatic correlation between metrical and syntactical units in the first couplet, suddenly changes the temporal frame of

The thematic opposition between the synchronic and diachronic developed by the content of the poem also applies to its form, especially to its dual status as a mimesis of a single utterance and as a stable and unchanging text. To read the poem from entirely within its dramatic context would be to assume that its only addressee is indeed the deceased and that it is a record of a single event located in the past, whose passing away is relived at each performance. But while the vigor of the poem's rhetoric and the pathos it reveals may tend to absorb readers into the scene that unfolds before them, other elements of the poem, in particular its meticulously balanced structure and its allusions to texts like the *Odyssey*, act as reminders that this image emerges from a formally unchanging literary work designed to be recited to, or read by, a wider public. I have already connected the contrast between these two modes of reception with the poem's 'ritual' function as a locus for acting out the opposition between the living Catullus communicating with the wider world and the speaker so locked in dialogue with the dead that even his final farewell seems to reinforce the link to his deceased brother. Now we can see yet another way in which this dichotomy relates Catullus' lines to the ritual procedures they invoke. As we saw before, none of the ritual acts that surround the burial of the dead is complete in itself. The funeral looks forward to an endless sequence of instaurations at public and private festivals, and each of these repetitions requires that the lines between living and dead be re-drawn by repeating a ritual process. As a composed artifact the poem gains the reproducibility—the eternal 'presence'—that the regularity of the calendar gives to ritual acts and that the grave monument gives to the words inscribed on it. By contrast the recorded utterance, the speech that is re-performed at each

reference, presenting the collectivity of Scipio's ancestors as inhabiting the same 'now'. The poem's 'I' seems to speak to us from an eternal present, but where is this present, and what allows the speaker to participate in it? I would suggest that one way of understanding the shift is to see it as enacting a contrast between time as viewed from the perspective of the living and as viewed from the perspective of the dead. Each family member during the course of his life occupies a precise and unchangeable place in the family structure. But the dead, like the ancestors at a funeral, are both all there and always there. Cf. Pliny *HN* 35.6, *semperque defuncto aliquo totus aderat familiae eius qui unquam fuerat populus* ('and always when anyone died the whole company of his house that had ever existed was present'), cited by Bettini (1991: 176).

reading, acts as a reminder of the relentless diachronic processes that surrounded the original event, and so reiterates the importance of its commemoration.<sup>51</sup>

The tension between an awareness of the poem as something repeatable and enduring, and the transient scene it portrays represents one way in which Catullus' epigram appropriates the functions and thematic preoccupations of an entire funeral monument. And while writing of course facilitates permanence and reproducibility, the effect that I have been describing is by no means restricted to those who experience the work as a written text. It requires no material substrate to lend physical presence to the poem's expression. In one sense this independence constitutes one of the great advantages of a purely literary construction, making the poem truly *perennius aere* ('more lasting than bronze') and immune from the ravages of *edax vetustas* ('devouring time'), in the words of two later poetic monument builders at Rome.<sup>52</sup> But it was more than just durability that the monumental support gave the words of an actual funeral inscription. The monument lends the text it bears both the prominence and the context on which its memorializing function depends. Not only does the monumental base attract the eye of the viewer, instantiating the process of reading and recognition, but the physical qualities of the tomb, its position, quality, and size, and above all its sculptural decoration, provide information that helps locate the dead within the community by revealing, for example, their occupation, wealth, and status.<sup>53</sup> Some striking examples of how monument and inscription supplement one another simply in identifying the dead include the

<sup>51</sup> A similar play between two levels of audience features again in funeral inscriptions, which, I have argued, themselves offered an important context for 're-enacting' the dynamics of the funeral itself. There too we often find texts that simultaneously address themselves to two divergent audiences. Dialogues between the living and the dead or apostrophes to the deceased from the dedicator of the monument create the fiction that the inscribed text records an utterance meant only for the ears of the dead. But the very fact that this utterance is inscribed on a monument that addresses itself to living travelers can leave no doubt that the words are meant for a wider audience and that the expressions of devotion they contain serve precisely the same memorializing function as the simple designation that a deceased wife, for example, was *cara* or *pia*.

<sup>52</sup> Horace *C.* 3.30.1 and Ovid *Met.* 15.872.

<sup>53</sup> See especially Woolf (1996: 27–8), Koortbojian (1996), and for the Greek material Svenbro (1988: 3–32). For the possible relationships between monument and inscription in Latin epigrams, see Häusle (1980: 55).

Hadrianic tomb of T. Statilius Aper, which portrays a man standing next to a stricken boar (*aper*).<sup>54</sup> In opting for the imperishability of writing, does Catullus sacrifice these qualities of an actual monument? Or, looking at the question another way, we may remember that, for all its potential autonomy, in practice Catullus' poem would not really have been an immaterial word. Whether the poem was performed by its author, repeated by one of his *amici*, or read from a written copy, a variety of physical presences could provide a vehicle for its reception. Could the relationship between the poem and any of these media reproduce the symbiosis between word and monument to be found in actual funerary inscriptions?

My suggestion about how Catullus uses the material realities of performance to complete and contextualize his epigram involves a crucial element, almost universal in funerary inscriptions, whose absence would seem to rule out any equivalence between Catullus' poem and an actual epitaph: the name of the dead. At first this omission may seem to make the lines inaccessible to any external addressee, to suggest, that is, that the poem's function as text is co-extensive with its function as utterance. But of course Catullus' readers both ancient and modern do know the identity of the figure whose death is mourned even though they do not learn it from the poem itself. For those who heard Catullus reciting his composition, the person of the poet reveals the identity of the deceased '*frater*'. For those who received the poem as a text it would be the manuscript, which, whether it circulated individually or as part of a collection, would have contained some indication of the author's identity, that revealed the family connections and *nomen* of the dead.<sup>55</sup> Indeed the written text itself, as an item of exchange circulating throughout circles of

<sup>54</sup> See Koortbojian (1996: 229–31) for an interesting reading of how the symbolism in the relief plays against the imagery in the funerary inscription on this monument.

<sup>55</sup> I remain agnostic about whether Catullus himself was responsible for any arrangement that has yielded the position poem 101 now occupies in his corpus (for a recent survey of the material evidence suggesting that the current order of the poems might be Catullus', see Minyard (1988) and Thomson (1997: 6–11)). My argument here is by no means predicated on the poem's publication in such a *liber*; on the contrary it assumes a variety of audiences that would have experienced the poem in different contexts, from oral reception to the collection we have today.



*amici*, could have provided a physical link between the author and his reader, not only giving a name to the dead but publishing his death through precisely the social group within which his commemoration was most meaningful.<sup>56</sup> Finally those who, like us, know the poet's other works possess a final tool, perhaps less substantial but even more informative, for construing the significance of Catullus' brother's death. Echoes of other Catullan texts, like the entire sixth line, *heu miser indigne frater adempte mihi* ('alas, poor brother, unworthily taken from me'), which appears in almost identical form in poem 68A, line 20, and poem 68B, line 92,<sup>57</sup> construct the poet's oeuvre as a monument supplementing the epigraph.<sup>58</sup> In support of this notion, let me clarify that although the name of the deceased is practically always inscribed on the funerary monument it is not invariably a part of the epitaph. Often the names of deceased and dedicator appear in a *titulus* that precedes the verse inscription itself or are inscribed elsewhere on the monument.<sup>59</sup> Such a separation between *titulus* and epitaph, in fact, demonstrates precisely how inscription and monument complete one another in memorializing the dead. It is also only through the same process of allusion that another piece of information commonly provided by a funerary monument—whether explicitly on the inscription, or through its very location—would be made available to the audience of 101, namely the place where Catullus' brother died. As I have mentioned, even if the hearer recognizes the first line of the poem as a quotation from the *Odyssey*, there is no reason

<sup>56</sup> Starr (1987).

<sup>57</sup> I assume here that these are two separate poems; see the most recent arguments in Thomson (1997: 472–4).

<sup>58</sup> Compare the poet's comment at 65.12 that his poetry will be marked by sorrow for his brother's death: *semper maesta tua carmina morte canam*.

Cf. the thesis of Miller (1994: esp. 1–2, 55–7) that the written collection of Catullus' poetry makes the emergence of a truly 'lyric' voice possible for the first time precisely because it locates each poem within a whole whose parts continually shift in relation to one another.

<sup>59</sup> Häusle (1980: 105n. 212) cites Bruns' (1950: 9f.) discussion of the three places the name could occur in relation to the epigram: (1) as an element in the epigram itself (the most difficult solution technically because of the metrical problems it raises), (2) in a separate prose *titulus*, and (3) in both the epigram and a prose *titulus*.

to make the connection with Troy without the two passages line 6 recalls.<sup>60</sup>

This allusion to the *Odyssey* brings us to a final example of how the potentialities of literature allow poem 101 to fulfill the functions of a monument by at once characterizing the deceased and making the written record that preserves his memory conspicuous.<sup>61</sup> The Odyssean intertext foregrounds the learning of both brothers as well as (ironically?) superimposing their experiences on the epic record of the heroic age.<sup>62</sup> But more importantly, it also 'inscribes' the brother's epitaph in one of the most universally known passages of Greek literature (and the originary text of Latin epic), by allowing for its audience to be continually reminded of Catullus' poem and the experiences it records every time they begin the *Odyssey*. One striking example of this recall, which in turn perpetuates the memory of poem 101, comes when Vergil transparently cites *Odyssey* 1.3–4 through its Catullan echo in the scene where Anchises receives Aeneas in the underworld (*Aen.* 6.692–3).<sup>63</sup> Cugusi has also detected reminiscences of the first line of 101 in several actual funerary inscriptions, including that of the Saxon king Ceadual who came to Rome to be converted at the end of the seventh century.<sup>64</sup> To whatever extent these later allusions overwrite, revise, or ignore Catullus, they inevitably come to provide prompts for Catullus' readers to hear again the voice of the *frater*.<sup>65</sup>

In the first section of this paper I argued that Catullus 101 locates its readers at a ritual performance, the *inferiae* celebrated at the tomb of the poet's brother; in the second section I suggested how the poem

<sup>60</sup> Williams (1968: 186–7) also notes how the poem takes on greater significance for readers equipped with the knowledge provided by Catullus' other mentions of his brother's death.

<sup>61</sup> I owe the point developed in this paragraph to the suggestions of an anonymous referee.

<sup>62</sup> Conte (1986: 36n. 8 = this volume: p. 174 n. 15).

<sup>63</sup> See Conte (1986: 32–9; see this volume pp. 167–76). Monteleone (1976) points out that this is but one of a series of reflections of Catullus 101.1, which together give structural and thematic unity to the 'Odyssean' *Aeneid*.

<sup>64</sup> Cugusi (1985: 214–5), citing *CE* 257A (fragmentary), 1265, 1394 (Ceadual), 1845, 2163, and a further inscription from Salona published by M. Abrami in *Bull. Arch. Hist. Dalm.* 50 (1928–9): 57.

<sup>65</sup> For Catullus' own preoccupations with the potential instability of the written word, subject as it is to 'misinterpretation' and 'bad faith', see Miller (1988: 131).

itself constructs the 'site' of this performance, the monument that provides the context and script for the *inferiae*. I want to conclude by reformulating one of the assumptions that underlies my understanding of the nature and function of Roman funerary inscriptions in a way that will clarify how Catullus' erection of a poetic monument to his brother relates to a larger set of issues in his poetry, those of distance and separation.<sup>66</sup> The memorialization offered by epitaphs involves far more than recording the name of the deceased in a relatively permanent medium; rather, as the tomb itself provides a location for memorial acts that reproduce the initial ritual separation of dead from living, so the reading of the inscription makes possible an analogous re-enactment. The reader in taking on the role of mourner, or even of the deceased, participates in a drama where the social relationships recorded in the text are re-performed. Mary Depew has demonstrated a similar process at work in Greek votive inscriptions as each reader proclaims anew the name and status of the dedicator for the same divine audience.<sup>67</sup> The distinctively Roman passion for commemoration, in particular for recording the act of commemoration itself by naming the commemorator in the funerary inscription, makes it particularly attractive to imagine a similar performative aspect in the case of these texts.<sup>68</sup> Elizabeth Meyer points out that in Roman culture providing for the funeral and memorial of the deceased was an especially important obligation, which fell predominantly upon the heir but could also be based on affective ties, and that conspicuously honoring this obligation would in turn become an important way of demonstrating Romanness. Thus, in preserving the name of the dead, the commemorator was also making a double claim about himself, advertising both his relationship to the deceased as well as his adherence to the norms of an encompassing social group—again,

<sup>66</sup> For the importance of these motifs in the longer poems, see esp. Janan (1994: 130).

<sup>67</sup> Depew (1997).

<sup>68</sup> Meyer (1990: 75): 'Although the Athenians in particular had been erecting tombstones in admirable numbers for centuries longer than the Romans, to indicate the commemorator was not itself an Athenian custom. . . . Roman tombstones from the Republican period, on the other hand, clearly display a strong if not exclusive (58.4 %) tradition of the deceased-commemorator pattern. . . .'

the precise burden of Catullus 101.<sup>69</sup> The role of *sacra* in composing social groups also receives emphasis from another perspective in a well-known passage in which Cicero highlights funerary observances, with particular attention both to *sacra* and *sepulcra*, as the institutions essential for generating the bonds that link the individual to his *patria naturae*, his native community.<sup>70</sup>

This community building function provides the best perspective for locating Catullus 101 in the larger context of the poet's work. The figures whom Catullus addresses or refers to are often treated as making up a circle, but if so it was a very strange circle, widely extended and with many centers. Its members come from different native places, Verona, Como, Chieti, and are as likely to be there as at Rome. And like many young Italian *equites* of the period, they spend extended periods of time in the provinces pursuing their military or business careers. Thus, far from simply portraying a network of friendships, Catullus' poetry is itself instrumental in forging and maintaining that network.<sup>71</sup> The poetry creates its own social group, and it is from this group that the death of Catullus' brother removes both the deceased and the poet himself. To be buried in a distant land, far from friends and family, was to be cut off from those ritual performances that, as we have seen, gave the deceased a place in the continuing life of his society; it offered an irremediable image of isolation and exile running absolutely counter to the cohesive impetus of so much of

<sup>69</sup> Cicero's explanation of the reason why responsibility for *sacra* fell upon the heir suggests an even more intimate connection between these commemorative functions: 'for there is no person who comes nearer to the place of the one who has departed from life' (*nulla est enim persona quae ad vicem eius qui e vita emigrarit propius accedat*, *De Leg.* 2.48). The heir himself comes to occupy the position of the deceased among the living; both depend on one another to define and preserve their position. Correspondingly, the reader's assumption of the role of dedicatee in first-person inscriptions recording the commemorator thus opens up a chain of substitutions further linking each observer with the dead.

<sup>70</sup> *De Off.* 1.54–5, *Sanguinis autem coniunctio et benivolentia devincit homines <et> caritate. Magnum est enim eadem habere monumenta maiorum, eisdem uti sacris, sepulcra habere communia* ('The tie of blood binds men with both good will and affection. For it is a great thing to have the same ancestral monuments, to use the same rites, to have tombs in common!')

<sup>71</sup> For the role of *amicitia* in Catullus' poetry, and how the very rhetoric of the poetry subtly defines and enacts the relationship between the poet and his addressees, see now Tatum (1997; reprinted in this volume, pp. 369–98).

Catullus' work.<sup>72</sup> So too, just as any death sets the bereaved apart from the rest of the community, the poet claims that his grief renders him unable to engage in the poetic exchanges that define his community of *amici*.<sup>73</sup> It is within the constructed space of this social network, I suggest, rather than at any physical site at Rome, Troy, or Verona, that Catullus locates his brother's *monumentum* and provides for the perpetuation of his *sacra*.

<sup>72</sup> See Granarolo (1967: 27–8). Catullus himself singles out the location of his brother's tomb, *non inter nota sepulcra/nec prope cognatos... cineres* ('not among familiar tombs or near the ashes of kin', 68.97–8), as a particular cause for grief. So too, for example, Tibullus (1.3.5) would use the image of his own distant burial at Corcyra as the ultimate expression of his isolation both from the society of his friends and from the object of his love. For the Younger Pliny, the fact that no one had bothered to erect a funeral monument for so great a man as Verginius Rufus testified to the rarity of *fides* in *amicitia* (*Ep.* 6.10.5), a central preoccupation of Catullan poetry. See Woolf (1996: 25f.)

<sup>73</sup> These expressions of alienating grief themselves form part of poetic compositions that, by their very existence, contradict the poet's presentation of himself as unable to write. But it is precisely by dramatizing this tension with its own content that Catullus' poetry most strikingly draws attention to the effects of its material existence.

## Part VIII

### The Lens of Theory

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## ‘Shall I Compare Thee ...?’ Catullus 68B and the Limits of Analogy

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‘Probably the most extraordinary poem in Latin’, as Lyne describes it,<sup>1</sup> this audacious piece of brilliance has attracted legions of critics.<sup>2</sup> Here no attempt will be made to address each contested individual issue in the hallowed catalogue of notorious problems contained in the scholarly register on ‘Catullus 68’; nor will I chase the chimaera of a ‘full’ reading. Rather, I propose to adopt a partial and oblique approach to this most oblique of poems, taking as my lead the obliquity embodied in the poem’s most striking technical feature, obsessively deployed throughout—the simile.<sup>3</sup>

Similes, and the wider system of analogy-making of which they are the most overt example, saturate this poem.<sup>4</sup> One may, in the first

<sup>1</sup> Lyne (1980: 52); I would differ only in removing the ‘probably’.

<sup>2</sup> The topos of apology for adding to the bibliography is therefore a heartfelt one. Readers will find a way into the labyrinth in Harrauer (1979: 95–8) and Holoka (1985: 228–35). For my present purposes, I have found the following studies particularly stimulating or helpful: Macleod (1974: 82–8); Lyne (1980: 52–60); Williams (1980: 50–61); Tuplin (1981); Hubbard (1984).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Tuplin (1981: 135), on the significance of the *barathrum* (‘abyss’) simile: ‘But, granted that it is oblique, is not that the manner of the whole poem?’

<sup>4</sup> ‘It is remarkable that similes occupy no less than 64 of the 120 lines of LXVIII B’; Lee (1990: 174). (The total will vary according to one’s definitions.) On the links between simile and analogy, see Quint. 5.11.34, with McCall (1969: 210). One of McCall’s most interesting findings is to show that the ancient critics did not have our preoccupation with the *formal* distinctions between simile and other forms of comparison: ‘in purpose, in sphere and method of use, and in content simile differs



instance, refer the main example of the figure, the comparison between the beloved and Laodamia, to the analogical form of much Roman love-poetry, in which one sees a compulsive mapping of lover and beloved onto the famous pairs of the (mythical or historical) past:<sup>5</sup> Propertius and Cynthia become Milanion and Atalanta (1.1.9–16); they become Varro and Leucadia, Catullus and Lesbia, Calvus and Quintilia, Gallus and Lycoris (2.34.85–94), Paris and Helen (2.15.13–14). Commonly only the beloved is thus analogised (with the reader often being prompted to fill in the missing half of the equation):<sup>6</sup> Cynthia is Ariadne or Andromeda (1.3.1–4); Ovid's Corinna is Semiramis and Lais (*Amores* 1.5.11–12), she is Helen, Leda, Amymone (*Amores* 1.10.1–8).<sup>7</sup> Such *exempla* have more in common with the figure of simile than may at first appear; they are themselves often classed with similes under the general heading of comparison by the ancient critics.<sup>8</sup>

If analogy-construction is a lover's itch, it is likewise intimately linked with the wedding-song, a form exploited elsewhere by Catullus himself (61 and 62), and one which lurks behind the epiphany of the beloved at the threshold of Allius' house, *coniugis ut quondam ...* ('as once of her husband ...', 68.73).<sup>9</sup> Comparison is the cardinal trope of hymenaeal, with mythic, or divine, models proposed for bride and

not at all from other figures of comparison', McCall (1969: 259). Some modern critics concur: see Booth (1979: 53).

<sup>5</sup> I thank D. F. Kennedy for giving me this lead, and for referring me to Barthes' lugubrious meditations on the lover's bent for constructing analogies: 'Le sujet s'identifie douloureusement à n'importe quelle personne (ou n'importe quel personnage) qui occupe dans la structure amoureuse la même position que lui' ('the subject painfully identifies himself with some person [or character] who occupies the same position as himself in the amorous structure'), Barthes (1977: 153 and 1978: 129). A line of Ovid provides a motto for this gambit: *omnibus historiis se meus aptat amor* ('my love adapts itself to all stories', *Am.* 2.4.44).

<sup>6</sup> Williams (1980: 62–94).

<sup>7</sup> See McKeown (1987: ad loc.). Note how Ovid reveals the essential passivity of the beloved's role in this process when he explodes the analogies in *Am.* 1.10: 'You were like Helen, Leda, Amymone, but not any more. Why have I changed, you ask? (*cur sim mutatus, quaeris?*)'. Not 'Why have you changed ...?'

<sup>8</sup> Quint. 5.11.1–2, with Lausberg (1960: 232), McCall (1969: 187–90).

<sup>9</sup> Few will follow Heath (1988) when (after a dismayingly reductive 'demonstration' that Catullus is not really married to his beloved) he declares 'I can see no reason to believe ... that Catullus assimilates his relationship to Lesbia to marriage at any point in this poem' (118). More on this below.

groom,<sup>10</sup> and with analogies from the world of nature.<sup>11</sup> In Catullus' own wedding-songs we see Sapphic similes from nature (61.21–5, 34–5, 87–9, 102–5, 186–8; 62.39–58), and from myth (61.221–3), while the first simile of 61 says that Junia is coming to Manlius as Venus came to Paris in the beauty-contest on Mt Ida (61.16–20). In 68, Catullus' beloved *is* a goddess as she arrives (*mea... candida diua* ['my shining goddess', 70], without a simile marker), and this hyperbole is straight away given a purchase in the forms of hymenaeal as her arrival is compared to the arrival of a bride, a moment which Catullus' own epithalamium, as we have just seen, compares to epiphany.<sup>12</sup>

Love-poetry's analogical bent, with a tangential input from wedding-song, provides, then, some kind of backdrop for the flood of similes which overtakes the poem as the beloved arrives at the house of Allius. No generic framework, however, can possibly be considered to account sufficiently for the strangeness and the pervasiveness of the analogies in this poem, since the rush of similes begins over twenty lines before the beloved arrives. The sheer volume of similes in 68 is something without comparison in ancient literature. A brief paraphrase may convey how little of the poem is outside the context of simile and analogy. I give 68B, indenting and italicising the similes, with a *further* indentation for the similes *within* the main simile, which compares the beloved's arrival to that of Laodamia:

I cannot be silent, Muses, about Allius' help. I will tell you about it, and you will tell future generations (41–50).

For you know how Venus scorched me, when

<sup>10</sup> In Sappho's hymenaeals the groom is compared to Achilles and Ares (fr. 105 (b), 111 Lobel-Page), bride and groom (possibly) to Andromache and Hector (fr. 44): see Page (1955: 71–4); Lieberg (1962: 19); Burnett (1983: 219–20); and, generally on such comparisons in hymenaeal, Costa (1973) on *Sen. Med.* 75 ff.

<sup>11</sup> Sappho fr. 105(a) and (c), and especially 115, where the need to make comparison is explicitly invoked ('To what, dear bridegroom, may I well compare you? To a slender sapling I compare you above all', tr. Page [1955: 123]). See Seaford (1986: 52–3).

<sup>12</sup> I hope that my use of 'beloved' rather than 'Lesbia' is not irritating; I aim to show further on why we should not glide over the anonymity of the *candida diua*.

*I burnt as much as the Sicilian volcano and the springs at Thermopylae, and I kept weeping (51–6).*

*Like a stream that comes down the hill to refresh the traveller,<sup>13</sup> like the arrival of Castor and Pollux in a storm, that's what Allius' help was like.*

He made it possible for us to make love, providing a house and a housekeeper (57–69). My goddess arrived

*like Laodamia arriving at the house of Protesilaus. The loss of her husband taught her the penalty of neglecting sacrifice before she could sate her love (70–84). The Fates knew he would die if he went to Troy. Troy was then summoning all the leaders of Greece to avenge the rape of Helen—Troy, where my brother died (85–92). Alas, my brother, whose death has been a catastrophe for our house and for me. He is buried in Troy, where all the Greeks were then going (92–104). Because of this, Laodamia, you lost your marriage, sweeter than life and soul, so great was the eddy with which love's tide had sucked you into a barathrum ('abyss'),*

*like the one the Greeks say was made by Hercules at Pheneus, at the time he was performing the labours that would win him divinity and an immortal bride. But your love was deeper than that barathrum (105–18).*

*The late-born grandson is not as dear to the grandfather who can now rid himself of the threat posed by the distant relative who was going to inherit; nor does any dove delight as much in her mate, the dove who kisses more wantonly than the most promiscuous woman. You outdid those passions (119–30).*

Yielding to her not at all, or hardly at all, was my love when she came to me with Cupid in attendance (131–4). Although she has other lovers, I will not be a bore about it.

*Even Juno put up with Jupiter's amours.*

But it is not fit that men should be compared with gods. And she was not even married to me anyway; it is enough for me if I'm her favourite (135–48).

This poem is my thanks to you, Allius, to keep your family name alive; may you and your love be blessed, and house and housekeeper, and the source of all these good things, and, above all, my light (149–60).

<sup>13</sup> I return below to the problem of the reference of this simile.

Overpowering in their bulk, with the Laodamia analogy governing the main run of the poem, these similes are, many of them, also extremely strange. The *barathrum*-simile is easily the most extraordinary, but the gleeful grandfather and the wantonly faithful dove are not far behind. Even from a poet with a keen zest for the striking simile, these examples are indeed remarkable.<sup>14</sup> This dense and bizarre barrage of analogy leaves one with the sensation that similes are no added ornament to the poem, something additional to what the poem is saying. They *are* the poem, they *are* what the poem is saying, just as (*uelut*) the digressions of 64 are not movements away from the reality of the poem, but rather its very point. What actually *happens* in 68? A man provides a house, a woman arrives—the rest is analogy and reflection, nested within the expression of thanks to Allius. The poem confronts us urgently with the problem of what similes are, what kind of significance they construct.

A brief consideration of the nature of simile is in order.<sup>15</sup> Critics ancient and modern have tended to concentrate on the similitude involved in comparison, and the results are often powerful vindications of the figure's ability to synthesise emotional and intellectual apprehension of a point, as it forces the reader to strain after the correspondence between often disparate forms of experience or language.<sup>16</sup> No one has demonstrated the illustrative and explanatory power of similes more cogently than the scholar whom we honour in this volume.<sup>17</sup> In the analogical world of Lucretius' atomistic poem, in particular, the sheer intellectual power of the visions of similitude is overwhelming, and no one who has read David West on this poem

<sup>14</sup> Poem 17 is perhaps the most exuberant example outside 68; the flower at the end of 11 will head most readers' list of memorable Catullan similes. Those with the stomach for it may look again at 97.7–8.

<sup>15</sup> Similes are virtually always discussed with metaphor rather than alone, and the following introductory bibliography therefore tends to concentrate on metaphor: Shibles (1971); Silk (1974); Ricoeur (1978); Sacks (1979); Cooper (1986); Kittay (1987). The debate over the relationship between metaphor and simile is one which I may skirt here, since analogies of one kind or another are at issue all the way through this poem.

<sup>16</sup> So Ruthven (1969: 9) on the 'intimation of unsuspected harmony on the far side of disparity'.

<sup>17</sup> Not only in his articles on similes themselves (West [1969b] and [1970]), but in his work on Horace (1967), and Lucretius (1969a) and (1975).

can be in any doubt as to the enlightening force which this figure can command.

None the less, critics ancient and modern have likewise concentrated on the *dissimilarity* which is inherent in simile. The ancient critics could divide simile into *totum simile*, *impar*, *dissimile*, and *contrarium*, recognising that rhetorical force may be gained from comparing, through contrast and inversion, like and unlike.<sup>18</sup> The enquiries of modern critics have revealed the paradox (which is only initially so) that the fundamental nature of simile is itself rooted in the unlike. John Kerrigan's acute discussion of Shakespeare's use of comparison in the *Sonnets* takes as its starting-point the recognition that

similitude depends on difference; for without difference there is identity, not similitude. 'Identity', writes Wallace Stevens, 'is the vanishing point of resemblance.' Burns's 'love' was 'like a red, red rose' because in most respects she wasn't. Everywhere in the *Sonnets*, Shakespeare writes with a keen sense of the difference in similitude.<sup>19</sup>

M. S. Silk, similarly, has denied that

the logical basis, or pretext, for a literary image is necessarily to be equated with the interest or 'point' of the image. As has been repeatedly demonstrated, this interest characteristically derives from the unlikeness as much as from the likeness; and indeed without a sufficient unlikeness, all 'point' in the true sense tends to disappear ...<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Lausberg (1960: 230–4).

<sup>19</sup> Kerrigan (1986: 23). When Lausberg (1960: 231), commenting on Quintilian's categories of *simile/dissimile* (5.11.7), says 'Jedes *simile* hat (wegen des Mangels völliger Identität) auch ein *dissimile* in sich' ('every simile has—because of its lack of complete identity—also a dissimilarity in itself'), he is saying more, so far as I discover, than any ancient critic actually claimed.

<sup>20</sup> Silk (1974: 5); he goes on to quote Johnson on a passage of Dryden: 'there is so much likeness in the initial comparison that there is no illustration.' Perhaps the first systematic discussion of this feature of simile is to be found in Richards (1936: 120–7); the enigmatic collocation of 'same' and 'different' forms the main basis of the analysis of metaphor given by Ricoeur (1978): 'in metaphor, resemblance can be construed as the site of the clash between sameness and difference' (196). The most extreme statement of the weakness of seeing only the similar in simile comes from Cooper (1986: 143): 'To say that a simile states a similarity or asserts a likeness is misleading to the point of outright falsity. Similes, in fact, are

Silk's first example is an Iliadic simile, where the dying Gorgythion is compared to a poppy drooping its head (8.306–8).<sup>21</sup> Indeed, a great many of the similes of the *Iliad* 'derive their power', as Taplin puts it, 'from an actual *contrast* with the world of war which they are compared to ... Again and again pain and destruction and violent death are compared to fertile agriculture, creative craftsmanship, useful objects and tasks, scenes of peace and innocent delight.'<sup>22</sup> If the dissimilarity between the things compared is often the point of the *Iliad*'s similes, cumulatively constructing a disjunction between two realms of experience, the poet of the *Odyssey*, in a number of extraordinary passages, goes even further, and creates a complete inversion of similitude.<sup>23</sup> His most striking venture is the simile with which he marks the moment when Odysseus and Telemachus embrace in the recognition-scene in Book 16. They cried shrilly, says the poet, and he shows the inadequacy of his simile to meet the surge of the human emotion by moving into the comparison in the comparative, saying that they wept *more* copiously than birds—birds, he goes on to say, who have had their young snatched away from them before their feathers have grown (16.216–18)—who have suffered, in other words, the exact opposite of Odysseus.<sup>24</sup> Again, when Odysseus has heard Demodocus' song of the sack of Troy, he weeps like one of his

non-literal utterances, indulgence in which requires as much explanation as does that in metaphor.'

<sup>21</sup> Silk (1974: 5): 'Plainly, the point of similarity (the tilt of the man's head and the poppy's head) makes possible a fine sensory effect. But equally plainly, that single point is outweighed in interest by the points of dissimilarity, the contrast. The poppy is alive and flourishing in a peaceful garden; Gorgythion is dead on the battlefield.'

<sup>22</sup> Taplin (1980: 15); cf. Porter (1972); Macleod (1982: 48–9); and the preliminary remarks on contrast in Fränkel (1921: 105–6). Ricks (1963: 127–31) has an interesting discussion of some similes in *Paradise Lost* where Milton 'uses an unlikeness between the things compared'.

<sup>23</sup> Moulton (1977: 128–34); Foley (1978). The *Iliad* has only one simile quite like this, when Priam's arrival to supplicate Achilles for the corpse of his son is compared to that of a man who has killed someone and runs for refuge to the house of a rich man (24.480–4): see Macleod (1982: ad loc.).

<sup>24</sup> Macleod (1982: 149): 'The simile intensifies the joy of the moment by pointing to what might have been instead.' A discussion of this simile with students in a Classical Studies seminar at Bristol led to a further conclusion concerning the dimension of loss captured at this moment of recognition: twenty years of filial and parental experience have indeed been lost.

own victims, like a woman falling on the corpse of her husband, who has died trying to defend his city and people, as the victors bash her on the back with their spears to drive her off to slavery (8.523–31).<sup>25</sup> Finally, when Odysseus and Penelope at last acknowledge each other and embrace, Odysseus weeps (23.231–2). As glad a sight as land is to men whom Poseidon has wrecked at sea, of whom only a few step on to the land—that for *her* is how glad the sight of her husband was (233–9).<sup>26</sup>

The slippage between tenor and vehicle is, then, often more to the point than the match.<sup>27</sup> In our poem, the radical slippage between tenor and vehicle in the base analogy has been often discussed: it is the discrepancy, as much as the fit, between Catullus/beloved and Protesilaus/Laodamia which generates the energy of the central portion of the poem.<sup>28</sup> I will have something to say about the tussle between discrepancy and fit in this main analogy later on, but I would like to open up the problem by setting it in the wider context of the difficulty of analogy, following the invitation of the poem's manifold similes to reflect upon their paradoxical way of generating significance.

The self-consciousness with which the similes draw attention to their mode of operation appears to intensify as the poem goes on. The first occurrence of simile is a doublet, which compares the heat of Catullus' passion, and also, perhaps, the flow of his tears, to two things which emit hot liquid: the volcano of Aetna, and the hot springs of Thermopylae (passion 52–4, tears 55–6). Only after reading on and seeing the importance of Hercules later in the poem is the reader

<sup>25</sup> This moment of unanalysable power is acknowledged by Virgil, when he has Aeneas say that not even the soldier of harsh Ulysses would be able to refrain from weeping if he heard the story of the sack of Troy (*Aen.* 2.6–8).

<sup>26</sup> On this magnificent moment, see Moulton (1977: 129–30), Foley (1978: 24–6) and, especially, Winkler (1990: 161). Those who enjoy Apollonius Rhodius' wit will find much to relish in his deadpan version of the contrast-simile (4.1337–43).

<sup>27</sup> 'Tenor' and 'vehicle' are the terms coined by Richards (1936) to describe, respectively, the thing compared and the thing to which it is compared. His usage is, in fact, rather inconsistent; for some criticisms, see Kittay (1987: 16–17, 24–6).

<sup>28</sup> On this discrepancy, see, e.g., Macleod (1974: 83–8); Lyne (1980: 59–60); Williams (1980: 50–61); Tuplin (1981: 117–18); Hubbard (1984: 34). Heath (1988), in his dogged insistence that 'Lesbia is not a bride', and that Catullus never imagined he was married to her, misses the point so entirely that one is at a loss how to begin countering him; would he maintain as stoutly that Gorgythion was not a poppy?

likely to be in a position to catch the inversion involved in Catullus' comparison of his passion to the hot springs of Thermopylae: in Catullus' case, the springs are an illustration of the heat of his affliction before the relief of Allius came, whereas for Hercules the springs were themselves a relief, provided by Athene for him to bathe in after one of his toils.<sup>29</sup> Many more contrasts with Hercules are to follow.<sup>30</sup>

After this two-line double simile, and two lines on Catullus' weeping, we have another two similes back to back, this time taking up nine lines (57–65). Like a stream coming down a hill, begins the first one, to relieve a parched traveler ...; and at this point we confront the problem of what the tenor is to this simile's vehicle.<sup>31</sup> Some take it to refer to what precedes, so as to illustrate Catullus' tears, and the relief which they bring; some take it to go together with the second simile, so as to refer to the help which Allius gave the afflicted lover; some take it to refer to both. Certainly some Homeric similes change their reference as the reader moves through them, and it has been suggested that the same thing happens here: the reader at first assumes that the water of the simile corresponds to the tears, but then readjusts as the second simile picks up.<sup>32</sup> Catullus' technique is radically more strange than this, however, since we are not dealing simply with a change of focus, but with an apparent fusion of opposites: the simile appears to be susceptible of referring *either* to the distress *or* to the relief of the distress. How may the identical words refer to two opposites? Yet it appears that they may indeed do so, for, in the division of opinion on the simile's reference, each group has grounds for its opinion.<sup>33</sup> Even those readers who decide that the relief brought by the water cannot be the relief of weeping, since Catullus has stressed that he was only relieved by Allius, will have been, many of them, caught out by a first reading; for four lines (57–60) they will have been taking the simile to be referring to the opposite of what they finally decide it to be

<sup>29</sup> Peisander fr. 9A Davies. Robson (1972) would read *Trachinia* for *Trinacria* in line 53, thus making another Herculean link, but it is difficult to see what the heat of the Trachinian crag would be.

<sup>30</sup> Tuplin (1981: 133–6).

<sup>31</sup> Shipton (1983: 872 n. 11) collects the many discussions on the problem.

<sup>32</sup> So Sarkissian (1983: 49 n. 36), citing such Iliadic similes as 17.722–34.

<sup>33</sup> Sarkissian, *ibid.*: 'None of the arguments advanced on either side of the question prevent our understanding the simile to modify both the tears and the *auxilium*.'



referring to; at the very least, they will have been uncertain as to what the simile was going to be revealed as meaning.

The difficulty which a reader faces in deciding on the reference of this particular simile is not an isolated scholarly problem, but a difficulty which will recur constantly in the analogies of this poem. At this stage of the poem, the difficulty which readers face over this simile reinforces, in a different way, the point made by the opposing energies involved in the Thermopylae simile, where something which relieved Hercules was used to illustrate the nature of Catullus' pain *before* he received relief. The simile of the water coming down the hillside may do two quite different things, such is the dissembling power of simile, such is the dissimilitude at its core.

The obliquity of simile's reference which Catullus highlights here is further accentuated if we reflect upon the fact that he has used two similes to refer to the same experience; once again, the brief first use of simile is a pointer to later complications, for the first use of simile occurs in a doublet (Catullus' pain is like Aetna *and* the springs of Thermopylae). The use of two similes to illustrate the same phenomenon is a device which one finds already in Homer, but it is markedly sporadic in later literature.<sup>34</sup> In Homer, the use of double similes is often a matter of focalising, with the two similes offering us perspectives available to two different participants, as when the retreating Aias is first compared to a lion beset by herdsmen, and then to a donkey belaboured by boys in a wheatfield (*Iliad* 11.548–65).<sup>35</sup> In Catullus' poem, where we move from one double simile to another, and finally to a culminating pair at the end of the Laodamia analogy (119–28), the reader is being alerted to the distancing and distorting power of simile: if the same thing can be compared to two different

<sup>34</sup> Homer: Moulton (1977: 19–27); note that Homer does not have similes back to back, but moves from one to the other with some connecting material. Rarity in later literature: Williams (1980: 52). I do not find any examples in Apollonius or Virgil; note *Sil. It.* 1.461–72, 5.384–400, 7.139–45; *Stat. Theb.* 6.596–601.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. *Il.* 17.53–69, where the first simile for Euphorbus' death gives us what his father might feel (a young olive has been carefully nurtured by a man, only to be uprooted in a storm), and the second gives us the point of view of Menelaus, his killer: a lion breaks a bull's neck and laps up its blood and its guts. Horace has a similar movement in his paired similes at the beginning of *Odes* 4.4: Williams (1968: 752–3).

things, does this bring us closer to, or further from, does it clarify or obscure, the 'thing'? We return below to the major destabilisation of reference which is created by the final pair of similes (119–30), a destabilisation which is anticipated in a minor key by the difficulties encountered here, in the poem's first two pairs of similes, where we have been shown that one vehicle may have two tenors and one tenor may have two vehicles.

Allius' help is now described: *is clausum lato patefecit limite campum* ('he opened a fenced field with a broad path', 67). As his *candida diua* arrives, and pauses on the threshold, Catullus launches into the prime comparison of his poem, comparing this arrival to that of the bride Laodamia at the doomed house of her husband, Protesilaus, juxtaposing the cognate names of the mythical pair (*Protesilaeam Laodamia domum*, 74) as he had juxtaposed the names of the Roman couple in his epithalamium, *Iunia Manlio* (61.16).<sup>36</sup> The *diua* remains poised on this threshold for sixty lines, while the analogy embarks upon its obscurely illuminating course, generating its own clusters of similitude and analogy as it goes.

As the reader moves through these sixty lines, and their sequel, the dissimilitude of analogical language makes its power increasingly felt, for the discordance between the tenor and vehicle claims our attention as much as the match.<sup>37</sup> The beloved is like and (finally) not like a bride, she is like and (finally) not like a goddess; the adulterous relationship between her and Catullus is like and (finally) not like a marriage:

There is a contrast between Laodamia, deeply in love, and Lesbia, something less than faithful, as between Laodamia the wife and Lesbia the mistress... In so far as Catullus can liken Lesbia to Laodamia, he thinks of her, or thought of her, as virtually a bride; but in so far as he faces reality, he plainly denies

<sup>36</sup> The juxtaposition appears to look at the title of the *Protesilaodamia* of Catullus' predecessor, Laevius, a poem which, one suspects, lurks behind much of this section: that poem had a doorkeeper (fr. 16 Morel), some jokes and laughter which it is very tempting to read as the Fescennines of a marriage-procession (fr. 15), and anxious meditations from Laodamia about the possible infidelity of her absent husband (fr. 18).

<sup>37</sup> I may be curt here, since this discordance has been well analysed, from various different angles, in the discussions cited in n. 28 above.

that there is any hint of a marriage between them: there is only the loose association of two polished and sophisticated people.<sup>38</sup>

Further, the obliquity of analogy asserts itself here, as it had earlier with the water simile which may refer at once to Catullus' tears and to the relief of Allius, for the Laodamia analogy likewise, but on a much greater scale, points to two referents, to the beloved, and to Catullus: 'the pining Laodamia is in many ways more apposite as a paradigm for the speaker himself; he is the lover truly characterized by passion and desire ... Moreover, Laodamia's loss of her husband at Troy evokes the speaker's loss of his brother there.'<sup>39</sup> The 'explanatory' and 'illustrative' myth is susceptible to the same slippages and dissimilitude as simile itself. This is true not simply in the terms used by the ancient rhetoricians, for whom *exempla* and *simile* belong together in the larger category of *comparatio*,<sup>40</sup> but also in terms of the more general link suggested by Burkert between metaphor and myth:

metaphor is a basic trick of language to cover the unfamiliar with familiar words on account of partial similarity; in this sense, myth can be defined as a metaphor at tale level. The effect of metaphor is to widen the scope of the vocabulary, to keep the sign-system finite by a kind of generalization, to provide a context by analogy, while remaining conscious of the fact that this reference by metaphor is somewhat twisted, preliminary, tentative, one-sided. One could say as much about myth.<sup>41</sup>

One might add that reference by simile, signposted as it is with its overt words of analogy ('like', 'as', *sicut*, etc.), is even more openly 'twisted, preliminary, tentative, one-sided' than metaphor.

Through the loss of Laodamia's husband at Troy we move to the loss of Catullus' brother there (89–100), and through Troy we come back to Laodamia (101–5). The depth of her passion introduces another simile, with yet another mythic analogy embedded within it, as we are told of the great eddy with which love's tide has sucked her into a *barathrum*, like the one the Greeks say was made by Hercules at

<sup>38</sup> Macleod (1974: 85–6).

<sup>39</sup> Hubbard (1984: 34); cf. Macleod (1974: 83–4); Williams (1980: 55, 59); Tuplin (1981: 118, 135–6); Sarkissian (1983: 16, 30), though I cannot accept Sarkissian's interpretation of *cui* in 131.

<sup>40</sup> Above, n. 8.

<sup>41</sup> Burkert (1979: 28).

Pheneus, at the time he was performing the labours that would win him divinity and an immortal bride (105–16).<sup>42</sup> The bizarre pedantry of the simile, marshalled ostensibly to illustrate the most intense and poignant *comparandum*, the power of Laodamia's passion, shows the emotional distance between tenor and vehicle at its most extreme, while the learned detail, the concatenation of data, come to be almost a parody of the capacity of similes to take off on their own tangent as they create their own autonomous energy; this parodic quality refers back to the way in which the Laodamia analogy as a whole has itself taken off on precisely this kind of tangent. In a move which is characteristic of the similes at the end of the Laodamia analogy, where the failure of language to establish similitude is much more self-consciously marked than in the similes before the mythical *exemplum*, Catullus goes on to note the inadequacy of the simile he has provided for our 'enlightenment': the 'depth' of Laodamia's love and of the *barathrum* had appeared to be the only sure point of comparison, but even that is taken away from us at the conclusion by Catullus: *sed tuus altus amor barathro fuit altior illo*, 'but your deep love was deeper than that abyss' (117).<sup>43</sup>

The baffled reader is immediately enmeshed in another attempt to illustrate the love of Laodamia by analogy, in two dense juxtaposed similes, a doublet which picks up and accentuates the doubleness of the poem's first two simile pairs (Aetna and Thermopylae; the river coming downhill and the advent of Castor and Pollux). Two radically different areas of comparison are introduced side by side, human and animal, legalistic and natural, familial and sexual, as we are told that the late-born grandson is not as dear to the grandfather who can now rid himself of the threat posed by the distant relative who was going to inherit; nor does any dove delight as much in her mate, the dove who kisses more wantonly than the most promiscuous woman (119–28). The great difficulty which readers encounter in trying to

<sup>42</sup> On this simile, and on the importance of the oblique analogies manufactured by the startling figure of Hercules, see the discussion of Tuplin (1981).

<sup>43</sup> Williams (1980: 56). Compare the way in which Virgil, at *Aen.* 2.496, uses *non sic* ('not thus') 'when a comparison is made with something that is inadequate to give the full force of the thing illustrated', as Austin (1964: ad loc.) puts it, giving further examples.

harmonise these two similes into one reference is deftly caught by Catullus at the end, with his reminder that Laodamia *alone* is the one point of comparison for the two disparate analogies: *sed tu horum magnos uicisti sola furores* ('but you alone surpassed the great passions of these', 129).<sup>44</sup>

The yoking of the gleeful grandfather to the passion of Laodamia is sometimes referred to the simile which Catullus uses in Poem 72, where he catches the disinterested, equal, 'masculine' nature of his previous regard for Lesbia by saying that he loved her *non tantum ut uulgus amicam, sed pater ut gnatos diligit et generos* ('not just as the mob loves its girlfriend, but as a father loves his sons and his sons-in-law', 3–4).<sup>45</sup> In Poem 72, however, the simile, while certainly startling, is at least congruent with the new area of concern created by the poem and its companions; here in 68B, the slippage is much more radical, especially in the light of the simile's collocation with the dove who immediately follows. This wantonly faithful dove is a very odd creature, and the problematic nature of her worth as a comparison is highlighted by the word which Catullus chooses to describe her 'married' status, a word which alludes self-referentially to her very status as a point of comparison. *compar* he calls her (126), which as a noun is used to denote 'one of a pair', hence 'husband/wife/mate'; but the word is primarily an adjective, the base of *comparatio*, meaning 'similar, alike, resembling; matching, corresponding'.<sup>46</sup> *compar*, then, within the simile, to her mate, and *compar* without, to Laodamia.

What kind of comparison is she? Commentators note the proverbial fidelity of doves,<sup>47</sup> yet the apparently natural direction of the simile towards marital fidelity is put oddly off-track when Catullus describes the dove as a more shameless kisser than the most wanton of women. This derailment of the simile has provoked some perplexed

<sup>44</sup> I have much sympathy with attempts to blend the two similes into a composite picture of 'intense physical passion and deep spiritual unity and constancy' (Sarkissian (1983: 30); cf. Williams (1980: 57). I wish to stress, however, how very difficult Catullus is making it for us to achieve this blending—a difficulty accentuated by the fact that one may also see reference to Catullus' feeling for his brother leaking into (or out of) the grandfather simile: Williams, *ibid.* Love in this poem is, after all, double (*duplex*, 51).

<sup>45</sup> Reference to Poem 72 in, e.g., Sarkissian (1983: 30).

<sup>46</sup> The definitions are those of *OLD*.

<sup>47</sup> Prop. 2.15.27–8; Plin. *NH* 10.104.

responses,<sup>48</sup> yet it seems to catch at some of the dubiety which has built up concerning the orthodoxy of Laodamia's passion throughout the analogy;<sup>49</sup> the effect is not only to anticipate the flaws in the assumed passion of Catullus' beloved, but also to capitalise upon the ambivalence which may flicker in hymenaeal's pictures of the sexual passion and attraction of the chaste, devout, virginal bride.<sup>50</sup> The oddity is capped at the conclusion, when Catullus once more undoes the referential power of his simile by saying that Laodamia *outdid* these passions (129); the sum is weirdly self-contradictory, for we have, in the end, been told that the dove does not have as much passion as Laodamia, despite the fact that it is more shameless in its kissing than the most wanton woman.

At the end of over twenty lines of attempts to find analogies for Laodamia's love, we are brought back to the realisation that Laodamia is *herself* 'only' an analogy for the *candida diua: aut nihil aut paulo cui tum concedere digna | lux mea se nostrum contulit in gremium* ('worthy then to yield to her either not at all or only a little bit, my light brought herself into my embrace', 131–2). Note that bald phrase *aut nihil aut paulo*, 'a curiously prosaic phrase, and a curiously unromantic notion', 'a curious modification'.<sup>51</sup> Here Catullus once more highlights the dilemmas in which he has caught the scrupulous reader, as he deftly mocks (or gently sympathises with) the weighing and judging

<sup>48</sup> Macleod (1974: 86): 'Perhaps it is because its passion is truer that it seeks kisses more shamelessly than a woman of easy morals'; Williams (1980: 57–8): 'But in the second comparison a note is struck by (128) *multiuola*, which recalls the various allusions to adultery and unfaithfulness; that has, however, nothing to do with Laodamia (who was *uniuira* not *multiuola*), and it seems for the moment to be something that just naturally slipped off the poet's tongue.'

<sup>49</sup> Van Sickle (1980); Tuplin (1981: 131–2); Sarkissian (1983: 18); Allen (1986).

<sup>50</sup> The clearest example of such dubiety is in 66.15–22, where Catullus' and Callimachus' lock speculates pruriently about the tears of the newly-wed. See Burnett (1983: 216–19) on the preparation for marriage in Sappho's circle: 'One had to be both pure and desirable, and the balance was not easy to keep, for chastity was provocative' (216). The larger issue of the ambivalence of the mythical paradigm in hymenaeal is also relevant in this context. Burnett (1983: 220 n. 6) disagrees with interpretations of Sapphic hymenaeal which seek to find a cloud in comparisons of the groom to Hector or Achilles; however we decide to read these passages, it seems hard to deny that Catullus will have found the uncontrollability of such analogies a fruitful starting-point for his paradigms of Protesilaus and Laodamia.

<sup>51</sup> Fordyce (1961) and Ellis (1889) ad loc.

in which we have become involved in trying to descry the degrees and shades of similitude: 'my light was just like that ... or just a little bit less ...'<sup>52</sup> And in what respect was the beloved like the analogy? At this point we note the studiously uncommitted language which connects the beloved and Laodamia: she was 'worthy to yield to her not at all or only a little bit'. What is the point of comparison?

Only the actual arrival, strictly speaking, is the point of comparison, both at the beginning (73) and the end (131–2) of the comparison with Laodamia, while everything else we construct about the beloved is association, inference, analogy. Not even her passion, strictly speaking, is made the point of comparison: the Muses, and through them the readers, know all about Catullus' love (*scitis*, 52), but the beloved's is not related. The beloved herself is a gap, a vacancy to be filled with analogies; this is one of the reasons why I have followed Catullus in refusing so much as to give her a name, to label her 'Lesbia' (which is, after all, not her name anyway). Just as individual similes take off on their own path, so the basic analogy of the poem generates such an excess of power that it becomes overly adequate, smothering and supplanting the 'thing' it describes. The event is left in silence; although the whole poem is written so that Allius' *studium* ('kindness') will not be covered by a *caeca nox* ('concealing night', 44), the event of Catullus' wondrous *nox* with his beloved will be left in silence (*muta nocte*, 'mute night', 145).<sup>53</sup> To repeat a question I asked earlier, what actually *happens* in 68? What does the beloved actually do? She arrives, and she affords the basis for comparison; and in the last verb used of her action on that night, Catullus collapses these two together. Three verbs only are used to describe the beloved's action in the portion of the poem which describes the night itself: she arrived, *se ... intulit* (70–1); she checked her foot, *plantam ... constituit*

<sup>52</sup> This adroit touch anticipates the more comprehensive undermining of the reader's analogical interpretations after the final analogy of the poem, where Catullus blandly tells us that it is, after all, not right for men to be compared to gods (*atqui nec diuis homines componier aequum est*, 141).

<sup>53</sup> If, that is, one accepts, as most editors do, Heyse's *muta* for the transmitted *mira*; for a discussion, see Streuli (1969: 80–5)—who himself decides for *mira*. Contrast the legitimate marriage of Manlius and Iunia, *quoniam palam/quod cupis cupis, et bonum/non abscondis amorem* ('since you desire what you desire openly, and you do not hide your good love', 61.196–8).

(71–2); and she *se... contulit* (132): ‘brought herself’, but also, fleetingly, ‘compared herself’.<sup>54</sup>

In this way, the poem’s minute insistence on the difficulty of simile as a figure carries through into more comprehensive reflections on the difficulty of catching experience in the mesh of words. The similes of the poem, in calling attention to their capacity to defer reference, provide the ground for questioning the referential power of the poet’s description, in which the event itself remains resolutely undescribed. Metaphors have been defined as being potentially ‘weapons directed against reality, instruments to break the referentiality of language’,<sup>55</sup> and this potential is even more powerful in the dissembling world of simile. Telling is not sufficient or adequate in this poem, and the poet is driven to create analogies, which themselves generate yet more analogies for their own ‘explanation’; the experience is refracted into obliquity by poetry, by the very attempt to find analogies which will make it meaningful.<sup>56</sup>

This distancing effect of similitudinous language has its analogue in the densely allusive character of the poem, with its references to Homer, Callimachus, Euripides, Pindar.<sup>57</sup> Conte, in his discussion of what he calls ‘reflective allusion’, speaks of how ‘two items are juxtaposed and compared’, and observes that ‘the rhetorical figure that corresponds to it is the simile’.<sup>58</sup> As he says, in the case both of simile and of reflective allusion the reader is involved in an analytical, intellectual operation which ‘attracts the reader’s attention to the literary nature of the reading matter’.<sup>59</sup> Part of this same phenomenon, we

<sup>54</sup> For this sense of *confero*, see *OLD* s.v. 14.

<sup>55</sup> Harries (1979: 78).

<sup>56</sup> An interesting parallel to these conclusions is to be found in Colin MacCabe’s discussion of the passage in which Milton describes Satan’s movements in Hell (*Paradise Lost*, 1.283–312): ‘The entire sequence produces a continual changing of perspective, common to Milton’s description of Hell in which metaphor and simile follow one another so quickly that there is no question of a basic description which the equivalences or comparisons elaborate. Instead the description simply becomes the passage through these comparisons and equivalences, *a transport*, to give metaphor its original force, of language’: MacCabe (1988: 437).

<sup>57</sup> And, it may be, Laevius, and Euphorion: Tuplin (1981).

<sup>58</sup> Conte (1986: 67).

<sup>59</sup> Conte (1986: 68). Cf. Williams (1980: 62) on the extreme rarity of Catullan extended similes in Propertius and Tibullus: ‘The figure of extended simile was too heavy and ornate, too distracting, to be used in love-poetry that purported to be personal statement.’



may observe in passing, is the clash between different stylistic levels and registers which one sees throughout the poem, especially in the similes themselves (Homeric, Alexandrian, Roman, neoteric); note the generic displacement brought about when Catullus speaks of Troy as the site of his elegiacally mourned brother's burial, *non inter nota sepulcra* ('not among well known tombs', 97)—the graves of Hector, and Achilles? Catullus' most spectacular demonstration of the strange emotionally distancing effects of allusion comes at the point in the poem which many readers would wish to acknowledge as the most painful and heartfelt (just as his most spectacular demonstration of simile's distancing effect comes at the most poignant moment in the Laodamia analogy, with the *barathrum* simile). When he comes to his brother's death he alludes to, indeed quotes, *himself*, repeating, with only one word and one line altered, the verses he gives in 68A (20–4, 92–6).<sup>60</sup> Moments like this are compelling testimony to the mystery in the power—artificial and distancing, emotional and immediate—of poetic language.<sup>61</sup>

The reader's baffled experience in trying to follow the poet's words becomes a mirror of the poet's own baffled experience in trying to discover words which will be adequate. The distance between our experience and his remains vast, as he had told us it would be (although readers will always try to bridge it): we are, after all, not addressed by Catullus, nor even by the Muses; we are addressed, as Catullus prophesied we would be, by a *carta anus* ('an ancient page'):

sed dicam uobis, uos porro dicite multis  
milibus et facite haec carta loquatur anus. (45–6)

But I will tell you, and you in turn tell many  
thousands, and make this page speak when it is old.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>60</sup> Sarkissian (1983: 23): 'It is disconcerting that what should be a passionate, almost involuntary outburst on Catullus' part is largely mere repetition of what we have already heard.' See Sarkissian's n. 67 for references to the desperate expedient of excision adopted by so many scholars. I realise that this way of looking at the repetition implies a view about the relationship of 68A and B, but this is no place to enter into that maze.

<sup>61</sup> I see in a positive light, then, the qualities of the poem which lead Lyne (1980: 52) to speak of 'laboured artificiality vying with sublimity'.

<sup>62</sup> For their comments, criticisms, and suggestions, I gladly thank T. B. McKiernan, C. A. Martindale, and A. J. Woodman.

## *Ego Mulier: The Construction of Male Sexuality in Catullus*

*Marilyn B. Skinner*

In memory of Jack Winkler

Among the various approaches collectively embraced under the rubric of contemporary literary theory, feminist criticism is distinguished by its attempt to locate poetic and narrative discourse within a patriarchal thought system. Conservative in its insistence that the text, far from being purely self-referential, does mirror and even shape external realities, it is radical in maintaining that those realities are grounded in a fundamental social asymmetry between the sexes, which literature is not infrequently called upon to justify. As an hermeneutic undertaking, feminist criticism is eclectic in its procedures, adopting for its own purposes a wide range of traditional and innovative strategies.<sup>1</sup> Whatever the investigative methods favored by an individual practitioner, though, the goals of her inquiry remain engaged and political.<sup>2</sup> Having identified the ways in which language reinforces the operations of inequitable sex/gender systems, she strives to 'break

<sup>1</sup> Useful surveys of present directions in feminist criticism include: de Lauretis, ed., (1986); Draine (1989); Greene and Kahn (1985); Moi (1985); Todd (1988). The variety of critical tools deployed in the present essay illustrates the diversity of a feminist approach.

<sup>2</sup> My choice of pronoun is intended to recognize the invention and development of feminist criticism as a project of women scholars without necessarily excluding men from the collective enterprise. On male participation in the new research on women, see the essays contained in Jardine and Smith (1987).

such sex/gender systems, using language as weapon and tool, as a first step toward reconstituting history, society, and culture.<sup>3</sup>

To some extent, feminist research is already well established in classical studies: within the subfield of 'women in antiquity', this approach informs most specialized work on literary texts. But the very name of that subfield, designating as it does a site of *compensatory* scholarship, directs students to fix all their attention upon 'woman' herself, either as subject of recoverable historical data or as object of fictive representation.<sup>4</sup> While a woman-centered analysis is meant to neutralize pre-existing sex bias, it has, as Jane Flax observes, one unforeseen result: ironically, it 'privileges the man as unproblematic or exempted from determination by gender relations'.<sup>5</sup> As an extension of its project, then, feminist criticism must interrogate 'masculinity', the set of culturally prized values upon which 'femininity' is adversely predicated.<sup>6</sup> In aspiring to piece together a more balanced and comprehensive account of ancient society than has heretofore been available, a feminist approach to antiquity will consequently address the entire spectrum of Greco-Roman gender assumptions, not excluding men's image of themselves as males.

As her share in the enterprise, the literary critic will strive to produce a detailed and methodologically sophisticated explanation of such assumptions insofar as they can be extracted from texts. Generally, this involves unpacking the symbolic meanings assigned in literature to a biologically-based gender identity.<sup>7</sup> Such meanings are usually

<sup>3</sup> The quotation is taken from Stimpson (1988: 116).

<sup>4</sup> The present impassioned argument over the place of male-authored texts in feminist classical scholarship is a product of the hidden assumption that 'women's studies' must be synonymous with 'the study of women'. But the two phrases are not equivalent. For this debate, see the timely collection of essays in *Helios* 17.2 (1990), featuring Culham (1990) and numerous responses to it.

<sup>5</sup> Flax (1987: 629).

<sup>6</sup> Structures of masculinity have been a target of investigation for feminist theory ever since the publication of de Beauvoir (1953), in which, for the first time, 'woman' was identified as the 'Other', i.e., the negation of a male-ordered universal. As D. Fredrick reminds me, feminist film theory has produced particularly sophisticated inquiries into modes of male consciousness, largely in response to the pioneering analysis of Mulvey (1975). For a collection of recent work on this topic, see the special issue 'Male Subjectivity', *differences* 1.3 (1989).

<sup>7</sup> Showalter (1989: 1–13). Cf. the illustrative essays collected in Spector (1986). For a theoretical approach to gender as a category of historical research, see Scott (1988: 28–50).

encapsulated in cultic and mythic prescriptions enjoining sex-specific forms of conduct. The ongoing theoretical examination of Greek gender roles undertaken by Jean-Pierre Vernant and other members of the French structuralist school provides a conceptual framework and a point of departure for many recent studies of this kind.<sup>8</sup>

Lately, one subset of gender relations, sexual ideology, has come under intense scrutiny. In the belief that sexual ideas and their accompanying behaviors are culturally constructed, feminist scholars have repeatedly brought tools of semiotic analysis to bear on them.<sup>9</sup> Sexual conduct, they have discovered, is infused with meanings that resonate to a profound degree with other, nominally ungendered, arrangements, most notably prestige and power systems.<sup>10</sup> The aggregate of values and practices embraced under the term 'sexuality' turns out to be a highly inflected code for the covert expression of social tensions, above all those bound up with rank, status, and authority.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> A good introduction to the work of four representatives of this school—Marcel Detienne, Louis Gernet, Jean-Pierre Vernant, and Pierre Vidal-Naquet—is provided by Buxton (1981: pp. ix–xvii). See also Segal (1982a). Arthur (1982) uses Vernant's conclusions to initiate a feminist inquiry into Hesiodic concepts of gender. Other illustrative samples of feminist criticism based on French structuralist theory include Arthur (1983); Bergren (1983); Zeitlin (1981); Zeitlin (1985). Reciprocally, American feminist theory has now impacted the work of French structuralists: see Loraux (1987). At least one feminist classical scholar, however, has called the basic assumptions of structuralism into question. Blok (1987: 40–1) challenges its validity precisely because it posits 'male' and 'female' as equal and opposite categories; in doing so, it 'begs the question' and 'masks implicit hierarchies'. Proper use of this method must therefore correct for situations in which one gender category is automatically privileged over the other.

<sup>9</sup> The examination of sexual protocols as products of cultural systems is a standard technique of feminist anthropology: see especially Ortner and Whitehead (1981) and Caplan (1987). In the contemporary poststructuralist domain, the classic theoretical work is, of course, Foucault (1976). Inquiries into sexual behaviors in discrete historical milieux are assembled by Ariès and A. Béjin (1985) and by Bremner (1989).

<sup>10</sup> See de Lauretis (1987: 5): 'Although the meanings vary with each culture, a sex-gender system is always intimately interconnected with political and economic factors in each society.' Cf. the overview provided by Ortner and Whitehead (1981: 1–27). Foucault (1976, trans. 1980: 103) remarks that sexuality is 'an especially dense transfer point for relations of power'.

<sup>11</sup> For the purposes of this essay, I adopt the general definition of 'sexuality' advanced by Halperin, Winkler, and Zeitlin (1990: 3): sexuality 'refers to the cultural interpretation of the human body's erogenous zones and sexual capacities'. As a subset of gender relations, 'male sexuality' therefore designates a set of cultural assumptions about the sexual conduct expected of human males in a given social context, regardless of whether or not all biological males in that particular context do in fact respond in the prescribed way. I put to one side, as irrelevant to my investigation, the secondary

Broad anthropological observations of this kind are now being applied specifically to antiquity.

During the past decade, the widespread attention given to several pioneering treatments of ancient sexuality by classicists—lexical surveys of obscenity by Henderson and Adams and extended discussions of sexual mores by Dover and Richlin—signaled an awakening of interest in this area. But it was the publication in English translation of the second and third volumes of Michel Foucault's *Histoire de la sexualité* (Paris 1984) that sparked off heated discussion of the topic.<sup>12</sup> The galvanizing impact of Foucault's inquiry into Greco-Roman sexual ethics is apparent in three recently published book-length essay collections and a special journal issue on ancient sexuality, all of which feature studies that attempt to extend his cognitive paradigm.<sup>13</sup> However, several new or forthcoming works by feminist classical scholars protest his indifference to larger gender issues and his apparent blindness to the phallogocentric dynamics of sexual oppression.<sup>14</sup> Further scholarship incorporating Foucault's theories will need to correct for male bias by also taking woman-centered analyses of sex and gender into account.

Though ancient sexuality is an inviting field of research, it contains at least one hidden methodological trap. Since ancient literary texts normally address an exclusive audience of élite males, their

(and, according to Foucault, strictly modern) concept of a personal, individualized 'sexuality' that constitutes the inmost core of the realized self: for explanations of the latter notion, see Davidson (1987) and Halperin, Winkler, and Zeitlin (1990: 5–7).

<sup>12</sup> Henderson (1975); Dover (1978); Adams (1982); Richlin (1983); Foucault (1986a and 1986b). Two shorter discussions of Greek sexual mores that appeared during the same time period deserve mention here: Bremmer (1980) and Golden (1984).

<sup>13</sup> Halperin (1990); Halperin, Winkler, and Zeitlin (1990); Winkler (1990); and Konstan and Nussbaum (1990). An important new contribution to the debate is Cohen (1991), who takes issue with the Foucauldians on several key points.

<sup>14</sup> See Dean-Jones (1992); Richlin (1991); and Richlin's introduction to the second edition of *The Garden of Priapus* (1992a). Several of the chapters in Richlin (1992c) address the neglect of pertinent iconographic and literary evidence for the sexual exploitation of women and boys as a marked defect in the Foucauldian reconstruction of ancient sexual ideology. Lastly, a collection of feminist essays currently in preparation by Hallett and Skinner [*editor's note*: see Hallett and Skinner (1997)] is intended to counter the excessively Hellenic slant of Foucault's paradigm. De Lauretis (1987) is deeply skeptical about the ultimate value of Foucault's contribution; yet her observation that his thinking 'excludes, though it does not preclude, the consideration of gender' (3) leaves room for attempts to repair his most significant omissions.

underlying concepts of gender and sexuality—concepts shared by the entire reading community—need not be expressly articulated. Erotic poetry is a partial exception to that rule. Yet there the rhetorical tactic of inviting the reader to identify emotively with the first-person speaker can tempt contemporary audiences to inscribe modern authorial expectations into ancient texts—particularly those that seem candid and spontaneous, and therefore immediately accessible to us.<sup>15</sup> But if erotic behaviors are socially conditioned, instead of being manifestations of universal psychosexual tendencies, we cannot take it for granted that our own subjective responses are the same as those expected of the ancient reader. It is better, then, to employ as investigative material a text that bewilders or shocks us: as the cultural historian Robert Darnton has observed, researchers can more easily gain insight into past symbolic worlds by ‘picking at the document where it is most opaque’, and so most expressive of an unfamiliar point of view.<sup>16</sup>

Catullus 63 surely fits Darnton’s criterion of an ‘opaque’ document. Its sensational narrative of Attis, a Greek youth who castrates himself out of devotion to the goddess Cybele, simultaneously fascinates and repels contemporary readers, who possess no cultural analogue for Attis’ act or motivations. When approached as a source of information about ancient gender attitudes, this poem accordingly sheds clarifying light on a very alien construction of male sexuality, illuminating the studied employment of gender dissonance at other places in the Catullan corpus and finally calling into question the ostensibly unproblematic scheme of heterosexual relations inscribed into the Lesbia poems. Consequently, the following tentative inquiry into the representation of male sexuality in Catullus can serve as an example of how a feminist critic addresses such issues. At the same time, it will demonstrate a pressing need for further research into the semiotic interplay of sexuality and power found in Catullus’ love

<sup>15</sup> On psychological identification with the adult male speaker as the basis of ancient reader response, see Richlin (1992a: 32–56), who contends that it is an understood precondition for the enjoyment of both Roman love poetry and its antithesis, satire. Gutzwiller and Michelini (1991) point out a tendency on the part of modern male scholars to translate the relationship between elegiac lover and mistress ‘into forms acceptable to the scholar’s own sexual ethos’ (77).

<sup>16</sup> Darnton (1985: 5).

poetry—and, by extension, in many other forms of Latin literature as well.

Ever since Havelock first observed ‘a strong dash of the feminine’ in Catullus’ personality, scholars have been intrigued by the curious bisexuality of the author’s poetic voice.<sup>17</sup> Though fanciful adoption of transvestite roles is not uncommon in Roman culture, Catullus takes the practice to extremes—most notably in poem 51, where he assimilates his desiring gaze to that of Sappho and applies her well-known catalogue of physical sensations to himself.<sup>18</sup> Mythic heroines often serve as fictive illustrations of his own state of mind: Atalanta in poem 2b, Callimachus’ Cydippe in 65, Berenice and her devoted Lock in 66. The sense of personal violation he experiences when confronted with a gross betrayal of faith is expressed in the same language in which the seduced and abandoned Ariadne mourns her loss of virginity in her great aria at 64.132–201.<sup>19</sup> In poem 68, his romantic memories of a tryst with Lesbia are inextricably fused with the tale of Laodamia’s tragic union with Protesilaus: the overlay ‘entails that the more passive and suffering part in love, normally thought of as feminine and here embodied in Laodamia, is transferred on to Catullus.’<sup>20</sup> In a long series of epigrams, culminating in poem 76, the speaker confesses to an unmanly weakness of will as he sinks deeper into obsessive lust. Finally, in the last two stanzas of poem 11, he denounces Lesbia as a degenerate monster who unmans her lovers and concludes by comparing his doomed love to a flower cut down by a plough, an image that harshly inverts the hallowed epithalamic associations between ploughman and bridegroom, flower and virgin bride. As

<sup>17</sup> Havelock (1939: 118).

<sup>18</sup> Catullus’ assumption of the Sapphic persona does not reclaim control of the erotic scene for the male (*pace* DeJean [1989: 35–6], who misreads *nihil est super me [sic]* [‘I have nothing left’] as a boast of domination). Rather, it feminizes the speaker, who finally breaks off his ventriloquistic performance to confess a sense of *aporia*. Blurring of gender distinctions is commonplace in later Roman culture: one thinks immediately of Ovid’s imitations of suffering heroines, or of male pantomime dancers enacting tragic female roles. For a detailed analysis of the connection between Ovid’s assumption of a pathetic female subjectivity and the oscillation of gender roles in pantomime, see Richlin (1992b: pp. 158–79). In an important new study Newman (1990: 343–66) contends that pantomimic influence can already be discerned in poem 63, most notably in the ‘atavistic play with the feminine’ (365).

<sup>19</sup> Adler (1981: 143–52).

<sup>20</sup> Macleod (1974: 83).

commentators have observed, this transposition of sex roles amounts to nothing less than a symbolic castration.<sup>21</sup> Little wonder, then, that the Attis of poem 63 is often thought to be a surrogate for Catullus himself—an assumption that converts the encounter of mortal youth and goddess into a mythic template for the Lesbia affair.<sup>22</sup> That ‘autoallegorical’ approach in turn opens the door to untrammelled biographical speculation.

To explain these repeated reversals of gender, Catullan critics habitually resort to psychoanalytic methods, even to the point of fabricating biographical scenarios as a way of accounting for the poet’s putative Oedipal difficulties.<sup>23</sup> If sexuality is a cultural construct, however, infantile eroticism—the linchpin of orthodox Freudian doctrine—must necessarily assume divergent forms from one society to another, depending upon family configurations. In the Roman world, where the social organization of the household, including children’s relationships to parents and primary caretakers, was in no way comparable to that found in the modern Western European nuclear family, the plot of the so-called ‘Oedipal romance’, if it obtained at all, would have been structured quite differently.<sup>24</sup> Thus the

<sup>21</sup> Both Bagg (1965) and Putnam (1974), reprinted in this volume (pp. 87–106), discuss the imagery of lines 21–4 at length, connecting the speaker’s fate with the literal self-mutilation of Attis. That cumulative re-enactment of the same scenario on the mythic as well as the quasi-autobiographic plane militates against the claim of Fredricksmeier (1993) that individual Catullan poems are to be read strictly as autonomous and self-contained texts.

<sup>22</sup> Harkins (1959); Genovese (1970); Forsyth (1976); and Sienkewicz (1981). Although Wiseman (1985: 198–206) believes that poem 63 was probably a hymn commissioned for the Megalesia, he is also convinced that ‘the experience of Catullus the lover is acted out on the opera-stage of myth and legend’ (182) and that the poet may therefore have had ‘his own reasons for accepting the commission’ (206).

<sup>23</sup> The standard example of this approach is Rankin (1962). See also Mulroy (1977–8).

<sup>24</sup> On the unique pattern of Roman family organization, see Bradley (1991). For the purposes of my argument, I will simply point out that the role of primary caretaker was normally assigned not to the mother but to a child minder of servile status, who probably supplied whatever basic emotional stability was available to the child. Mothers as well as fathers seem to have been distanced from their children, and mother-child relationships were in any case frequently disrupted by physical separation, divorce or death. Cf. Dixon (1988: 13–40, 104–67), although Dixon (1991) also calls attention to a sentimental ideal of family life comparable with our own. While the anecdotal evidence of upper-class nurslings insists upon the slave nurse’s devotion to her charge, it is likely that the paradoxical relations of domination implicit in such caretaking



presupposition that a psychoanalytic approach can be transhistorically applied to Roman literature is in itself dubious.<sup>25</sup> Any psychoanalytic reading tends, moreover, to devalue the text semantically by reducing complex encoding elements such as tropes and images to transparent symptoms of private neurosis. As an interpretive strategy, contextualizing Catullan gender dissonance in historical terms ought to prove more productive. One way in which that contextualizing can be achieved is by bringing the configuration of masculinity in the paradigmatic poem 63 into conjunction with certain ancient assumptions about male sexuality.

The contemporary Western European sex/gender system posits 'woman' as the reciprocal negation of 'man'. Ostensibly the position of each sex vis-à-vis the other is formally symmetrical. As Page duBois demonstrates, though, woman's actual place in that system is biologically subordinate to man's; in the orthodox Freudian creed institutionalized within our culture, absence of the male sex organ is deemed an ontological lack.<sup>26</sup> Belief in woman's biological inferiority can be traced back to fourth-century BCE Greek philosophic thought: Aristotle's notion of the female as 'deformed male' and mere passive recipient of semen is the undeniable precursor of later Western views.<sup>27</sup> Yet mythic narrative and ritual preserve elements of another primordial sex/gender system in which the female is regarded as ontologically prior to the male. In that alternative scheme, an omnipotent fertility goddess gives birth to a son who, upon attaining sexual maturity, becomes her consort but survives only long enough to inseminate

arrangements imbued their emotional texture with a certain ambivalence: so Joshel (1986). But the psychological tensions Joshel reconstructs, involving class differentials, bear no resemblance to the classic Oedipal drama in which the son competes with the father for the mother's love. It is obvious that a sexual subjectivity formed in such an emotional atmosphere would be fundamentally different in kind from that developed in the present-day nuclear family.

<sup>25</sup> For further arguments against applying Freudian theory uncritically to Greek and Roman culture, see Price (1990) and duBois (1988: 7–24).

<sup>26</sup> DuBois (1988: 10–17).

<sup>27</sup> For Greek constructions of biological difference that privilege the male, see duBois (1988: 169–83); cf. duBois (1982: 129–46) and Halperin (1990: 113–51 = Halperin, Winkler, and Zeitlin [1990: 257–308]). On Aristotle and female biology, consult Horowitz (1976); Morsink (1979); and Lloyd (1983: 94–105). For Aristotle's subsequent influence on Western patriarchal thinking, see further Lerner (1986: 205–9).

her, thus insuring the succession of the next generation. Since the goddess' doomed partner represents both the individual as opposed to the species and the principle of masculinity itself, the ramifications of the myth, though admittedly complex, include a reflection upon the male's relatively limited role in the reproductive process.<sup>28</sup>

Each of these two sex/gender systems is the product of intense cultural elaboration of selected biological data; together, they furnish opposed but complementary descriptions of human procreative activity. In classical Greece, it seems, the two systems were in force concurrently, invoked for various social and religious purposes by different groups. The tale of the goddess and her son-consort may have been chiefly associated with women's rituals; in any case, it enters the mainstream literary tradition only in a distorted form, with the male partner reduced to a mortal lover.<sup>29</sup> While the Asiatic cult of Cybele had already spread to Athens by the fifth century BCE, her companion Attis does not turn up in Greek literary or archaeological records until the Hellenistic period.<sup>30</sup> The silence of earlier sources may be explained by the harsh intransigence of this sacred tale: compared with the fates of his mythic counterparts Endymion, Tithonus, Phaon, and Adonis, Attis' tragedy exhibits most forcefully the fragility of male sexual potency, here put entirely at the service of the female reproductive drive.

Current sexual ideology prescribes that children develop a core gender identity soon after their earliest recognition of biological difference between the sexes; already fully stabilized in early childhood, that identity thereafter remains constant throughout life. Ancient gender identities seem to have been more fluid, at least in the case of men. 'Masculinity in the ancient world', Maud Gleason remarks, 'was

<sup>28</sup> Burkert (1983: 81); cf. the fuller discussion of this mythic pattern in Burkert (1979: 99–122).

<sup>29</sup> On the mythic pattern itself, see Boedeker (1974: 64–84); for Sappho's poetic use of it, consult Stehle (1990: 88–125) in Konstan and Nussbaum (1990). Winkler (1990: 188–209) cautiously proposes that Greek women's ritual practices at sexually exclusive festivals such as the Adonia and the Thesmophoria imply that they may have possessed an 'alternative consciousness' regarding the cultural meanings of gender and procreation, which would have been encapsulated in such tales.

<sup>30</sup> Burkert (1979: 102–5); cf. Burkert (1985: 179). On the early archaeological evidence for Cybele as archetype of the Asiatic fertility goddess, see further Vermaseren (1977: 13–37).

an achieved state, radically underdetermined by anatomical sex.<sup>31</sup> The uncertainty surrounding 'maleness' as a descriptive category springs from its inherent conceptual ties to hegemony. As Foucault has famously shown, Greco-Roman sexual relations were organized as patterns of dominance-submission behaviors that ideally replicate and even confirm social superiority or inferiority.<sup>32</sup> True masculinity, the sexual posture of the dominant erotic agent or penetrator, is attained only at maturity, after an adolescent has passed through the stage of erotic passivity and objectification (i.e., feminization) triggered by the onset of puberty. Male status, the prerogative of the citizen and head of household, is a function of age as well as of sex, hinging upon control—control over wife and children, over slaves, over extrinsic political and economic affairs and, above all, over self. To maintain that status, constant physiological and psychological vigilance is required. Any loss of physical vigor due to old age, infirmity, or overindulgence in carnal pleasure, any analogous lapse of moral resolve, or any diminution of social standing, can weaken the bulwarks of masculinity and cause reversion to a passive 'womanish' condition.<sup>33</sup> Ancient masculinity is thus intrinsically unstable and always at risk, but never so much as in the presence of the sexually experienced female, whose erotic energies are presumed to be boundless and whose erotic demands are correspondingly insatiable.<sup>34</sup>

Though invested with a contrary set of cultural expectations, the sexuality of adolescent boys is no less problematic. From the perspective of an adult Greco-Roman male, boys are legitimate objects of

<sup>31</sup> Gleason (1990: 391).

<sup>32</sup> Foucault (1986a: 46–7); cf. the explanation of the oneirocritic code of Artemidoros in Foucault (1986b: 4–36). The close metaphoric alliance between representations of male sexual dominance and assertions of social and political control were simultaneously noted, on this side of the Atlantic, by Skinner (1979a: 142) and Richlin (1983: *passim*).

<sup>33</sup> Foucault (1986a: 82–6); Giacomelli (1980). In the fifth century CE, the African physician Caelius Aurelianus testifies to a widespread belief that boys and old men are equally inclined toward passive anal sex (*De morb. chron.* 4.9.137): *hinc denique coniciunt plurimi etiam pueros hac passione iactari. similiter enim senibus virili indigent officio, quod in ipsis nondum et illos deseruit.* ('In fact, many infer that this is the reason why boys too are victims of this affliction. For, like old men, they do not possess virile powers; that is, they have not yet attained those powers which have already deserted the aged'.) The text and translation are those of Drabkin (1950: 904–5).

<sup>34</sup> Carson (1990).

sexual pleasure. Yet the freeborn youth's future responsibilities as a member of the civic community preclude his identifying with the passive role.<sup>35</sup> Roman society attempted to surmount this dilemma by forbidding relations with *ingenui* ('freeborn males'); thus the literary *puer delicatus* ('effeminate youth') is normally a slave or ex-slave, often of foreign extraction.<sup>36</sup> In classical Greek pederastic literature, conversely, the beloved is a youth of good family; but he is stereotyped as emotionally and physically impassive, initially unmoved by the pleas of his admirer and finally compliant out of gratitude, not desire.<sup>37</sup> Modest in demeanor, he displays the same shame and anxiety about sexual matters evinced by the well-brought-up maiden, a conflation of gender roles reinforced, in turn, by the ascription of secondary sex characteristics that assimilate him physiologically to a girl. One effect of that romantic stereotype may have been to make a real-life boy's metamorphosis from feminine passivity to fully active male sexuality psychologically difficult—more difficult, at least, than the comparable passage from boyhood to adult manhood experienced in our own culture. The intense social hostility discharged against the figure of the effeminate *kinaidos* or pathic supports that conjecture, for phobic revulsion at superannuated *erômenoî* may have been a cultural mechanism for compelling grown youths to abandon the passive role and take up the privileges and burdens of adult masculinity.<sup>38</sup> Whatever the emotions actually felt by young men (emotions no

<sup>35</sup> For the 'problematization' of the love of boys in classical Athenian society, see Foucault (1986a: 215–25).

<sup>36</sup> General discussions of Roman attitudes to pederasty include: Verstraete (1980); MacMullen (1982); Lilja (1983); Richlin (1992a: 220–6); and Veyne (1985). All observe the marked distinction in Roman culture between 'normal and acceptable' sexual intercourse with young slave boys and 'deplorable and illegal' sexual intercourse with freeborn boys (Richlin 225). Boswell (1980: 61–87) takes the extreme, and ultimately indefensible, position that Roman society did not impose any prohibitions or taboos on homoerotic relations.

<sup>37</sup> For the deportment expected of an Athenian *erômenos*, see Dover (1978: 52–3) and Foucault (1986a: 223–5); cf. Cohen (1991: 195–6).

<sup>38</sup> For the *kinaidos* as the countermodel of deviant masculinity, see Winkler (1990: 45–70 = Halperin, Winkler, and Zeitlin [1990: 171–209]). In the Athenian polis, Winkler contends, sexual surveillance was applied only to politically active elite males. In contrast, Gleason (1990: 389–415) demonstrates that in the second century CE any individual, male or female, was liable to scrutiny for signs of gender deviance. See further Richlin (1993).

historian, of course, can ever recover), Greek sources regularly depict male adolescence as a liminal stage characterized by sexual ambiguity and portray the passage from youth to adulthood, the ‘ephebic transition’, as fraught with potential for psychological misadventure, especially for those who were once renowned beauties.<sup>39</sup> Roman writers, though more intent upon the moral dangers besetting young men, are no less worried about this time of life.<sup>40</sup>

How do those ancient protocols of manhood help to explain Attis? In poem 63 the frame of reference is Greek throughout, a circumstance that must strongly color a Roman audience’s attitude toward its protagonist.<sup>41</sup> In his own homeland, Attis had been the conventional *pais kalos* (‘beautiful boy’)—the toast of the gymnasium, acclaimed by komasts who thronged his doors and decked his house with garlands. His great central soliloquy poignantly juxtaposes shocked awareness of present circumstances with nostalgia for a glorious but now sadly vanished past (62–73):

quod enim genus figuraest, ego non quod obierim?  
 ego mulier, ego adolescens, ego ephebus, ego puer,  
 ego gymnasi fui flos, ego eram decus olei:  
 mihi ianuae frequentes, mihi limina tepida,  
 mihi floridis corollis redimita domus erat,  
 linquendum ubi esset orto mihi sole cubiculum.

<sup>39</sup> On the liminality of Greek male adolescence, embodied in the mythic hunter Melanion (Aristophanes, *Lys.* 781–96), see especially Vidal-Naquet (1986: 106–28); cf. Winkler (1985). For the place of pederastic relationships within this liminal framework, see Golden (1984: 318–19). For the passive partner, such relationships are not without risk: Aristotle, *Eth. Nic.* 7.5 (1148b.27–31), notes that those who have suffered sexual penetration from boyhood (*tois hubrizomenois ek paidôn*) may through habit develop a taste for it and become lifelong pathics, and the author of the Aristotelian *Problemata* 4.26 warns that an inclination to passivity can arise from repeated penetration ‘not before *hêbê* (‘sexual maturity’) but around the time of *hêbê*’.

<sup>40</sup> To cite just one famous example, Cicero (*Cael.* 10) makes a strong appeal to public moral sentiment when he describes Roman adolescence as *illud tempus aetatis quod ipsum sua sponte infirmum, aliorum autem libidine infestum est* (‘that time of life which is inherently weak, and also threatened by the lust of others’); the danger implied is that of same-sex seduction. Nugent (1990) analyses elements of vulnerability and sexual indeterminateness in Ovid’s portrayal of Hermaphroditus.

<sup>41</sup> On the pervasive Greek tone of Catullus 63, see Syndikus (1990: II: 76–80). But Wilamowitz’ contention that it is an actual translation of a poem by Callimachus now appears mistaken: Mulroy (1976).

ego nunc deum ministra et Cybeles famula ferar?  
 ego Maenas, ego mei pars, ego vir sterilis ero?  
 ego viridis algida Idae nive amicta loca colam?  
 ego vitam agam sub altis Phrygiae columinibus,  
 ubi cerva silvicultrix, ubi aper nemorivagus?  
 iam iam dolet quod egi, iam iamque paenitet.

For what kind of form is there that I have not taken on?  
 I a woman, a youth, an adolescent, a boy—  
 I have been the flower of the gymnasium,  
 I was the glory of the wrestling ring:  
 my doors were crowded, my thresholds were warm,  
 my house was wreathed with floral garlands  
 whenever I had to leave my room with the sunrise.  
 Shall I now be called an attendant of the gods and a girl-slave of Cybele?  
 Shall I be a Maenad, I be a part of myself, I be a sterile man?  
 Shall I inhabit the regions of leafy Ida covered with icy snow?  
 Shall I spend my life beneath the lofty peaks of Phrygia,  
 where the deer lives in the woods, where the boar wanders the forest?  
 Now, now I am sorry for what I have done, and now, now I regret it.

Consequently, it seems appropriate to recall a suggestion advanced by Kenneth Quinn twenty years ago but unaccountably ignored in subsequent critical discussions. Quinn read Catullus 63 as a character study of a young man who found that he ‘could not make the transition society demanded from the role of *puer delicatus* to that of husband’.<sup>42</sup> Given the maturational scheme of Greco-Roman masculinity outlined above, that insight seems intuitively correct, for it offers a rationale for the protagonist’s act that would in fact conform to the mental world of a Roman audience.

Two passages in the text provide strong support for Quinn’s interpretation. After castrating himself, Attis exhorts his comrades to proceed to Cybele’s shrine, reminding them of their common motive for self-emasculation: *et corpus evirastis Veneris nimio odio* (17): ‘and you have unmanned your bodies out of too great hatred of Venus’. *Odium* is a striking word, connoting a decided antipathy to sex; and the qualifying adjective *nimius*, though glossed as the mere equivalent of a superlative by commentators, may contain an authorial intimation that

<sup>42</sup> Quinn (1972: 249–51).

pre-adult asexuality has exceeded its chronological limits.<sup>43</sup> Again, as we have already seen, the monologue of the repentant protagonist looks back, with somewhat disquieting vanity, to his earlier career as a celebrated *erōmenos*: *ego gymnasi fui flos, ego eram decus olei* (64). Here his language betrays a narcissistic fascination with one's own desirability culturally imputed to youths as passive sexual objects.<sup>44</sup> These touches characterize Attis as fastidiously averse to the active sexual role. Through his self-mutilation, then, he attempts to remain fixed at the passive stage, in defiance of biological impulses to growth and development. By such drastic means he hopes to avoid the painful struggle for psychosexual autonomy required to effect transformation into a fully functioning adult male.<sup>45</sup>

Thus poem 63 is preoccupied with the personal and social consequences of an aborted ephēbic transition.<sup>46</sup> Attis' failure is overdetermined, taking place simultaneously on two distinct planes, each informed by its own logic of causality. On the mythic level the outcome is preordained, for in a female-oriented cosmos manhood is by definition ephemeral. On the dramatic plane, the results of misguided human choice confirm the warnings encapsulated in psychosexual ideology. Attis is there presented as a handsome Greek boy whose head has been turned by too much praise. Wishing to remain a passive object of admiration, he sacrifices his burgeoning manhood to the female life-principle, only to discover that, through this repudiation of biological necessity, his short-lived personal identity will be swallowed up in the morass of the undifferentiated. The two narrative trajectories interface, each reinforcing the other. If sexual ideology

<sup>43</sup> Fordyce (1961) glosses *nimio* as *maximo*. Kroll (5th ed., 1968) comments 'wohl einfach = *magno*' ('certainly simply means 'great'); but cites Hippolytus' fanatic rejection of Aphrodite as a parallel for Attis' state of mind. Baehrens (1885) remarks that this use of *nimius* 'accedit ad notionem eius quod modum iam excedit' ('approaches the idea of something excessive').

<sup>44</sup> The salient example is Ovid's Narcissus (*Met.* 3.339–510). Like Attis, he too is repulsed by sexual contact: *sed fuit in tenera tam dura superbia forma, nulli illum iuvenes, nullae tetigere puellae*, 354–5 ('but there was such harsh arrogance in his delicate form; no youths touched him, and no girls'); note the reminiscence of *Cat.* 62.44.

<sup>45</sup> Observed by Quinn (1972: 296): 'What is beyond doubt is that the act of emasculation symbolizes the renunciation of an active role.'

<sup>46</sup> My thanks to D. Fredrick for his incisive comments on an earlier draft of this essay, which helped to clarify and strengthen much of what follows.

regards the status of the male penetrator as constantly endangered by the female, it is precisely because myth, which operates at a greater psychic depth than prescriptive mandates, employs the inescapable, all-embracing womb of the sinister goddess-mother to figure the abyss of personal annihilation.

Through Attis' rash act the conceptual category of the masculine is destabilized. Its weakening is signalled most conspicuously on the lexical level, where syntactical gender distinctions merge into the epicene. Attis castrates himself in the poem's fifth line. In the ensuing narrative, s/he is morphologically marked as 'woman', stigmatized as a *notha mulier* ('counterfeit woman', 27) by feminine grammatical constructions.<sup>47</sup> Throughout the protagonist's central monologue, self-referential terms vacillate wildly between grammatical genders—contrast, for example, *miser* (51) with *furibunda* (54). If at the poem's climax Attis is restored to masculine endings, it is but to emphasize that s/he is no longer an authentic male: in awarding her apostate the courtesy of his/her former sex (*hunc*, 78; *qui*, 80), Cybele is being viciously sardonic. Arrested in its progress, the normal progress from youth to maturity, from quasi-femininity to male autonomy, terminates in a collapse of gender structures. *Ego mulier* ('I a woman', 63) is both a mythic and a psychosexual oxymoron.<sup>48</sup>

Obliteration of masculinity entails the concomitant loss of a broad array of related cultural values. Scholars have long been aware that the semiotic field of Catullus 63 is aligned around gender polarities, with the prime dichotomy of 'male' and 'female' subsuming other elementary antitheses, those of culture and nature, human and animal, rationality and madness, freedom and slavery. The most comprehensive survey of this gender-based taxonomy is provided by Carl A. Rubino, who schematizes the symbolic oppositions he uncovers in the poem according to classic structuralist principles.<sup>49</sup> Unfortunately, Rubino's

<sup>47</sup> On this exceptional use of feminine forms in Catullus 63, see Fordyce (1961) and Quinn (1970: 286–7). Several feminine agreements, like *adorta* (11) and *allocuta* (49), are metrically guaranteed. Mynors' OCT text, followed by Fordyce, accepts Guarinus' substitution of the feminine for *ipse* in the manuscripts (45) and Lachmann's corrections *excitam* (42), *teneramque* (88), and *illa* (89).

<sup>48</sup> An observation made by A. Richlin in private correspondence to me.

<sup>49</sup> Rubino (1974). Fordyce (1961: 262) briefly notes this pattern of oppositions. For other discussions, see Sandy (1968) and Shipton (1987).



corollary effort to arrive at an *explication de texte* via that approach is unsuccessful, because poem 63 does not provide for the eventual mediation of contradictions organic to the structuralist method. In Catullus' version of the Attis story, the male, being only mortal, is disadvantaged from the outset, while the 'awesome divine power of the female' (designated by Rubino, tellingly, as the 'negative' pole) dominates the narrative throughout, making a balanced resolution of its tensions impossible.<sup>50</sup>

The anomaly in Catullus' formal treatment of the doomed god/failed ephebe paradigm is readily perceived when we compare it with the more symmetrical articulation of the same pattern found in archaic and classical Greek culture. For the Greeks, too, gender polarity serves as a basic axiological framework for organizing a complex array of social values analogically—values encoded in artistic and literary renditions of myth, in a liturgy of seasonal rituals, and in accompanying ensembles of folk customs and beliefs.<sup>51</sup> In that androcentric cosmos, man is predictably designated the avatar of the rational, civilized public order and woman is identified with the chaotic domain of nature, those messy private aspects of human existence tied to recurrent biological processes. Yet any reductionist arrangement in which masculinity is made to stand for whatever is positive in human life and femininity for its negation seems inevitably to break down, proving a mere temporary alignment on the metonymic grid: within the comprehensive Greek symbolic scheme, as the French structuralists and their followers have repeatedly shown, antithetical categories interpenetrate and mutually reinforce each other, thereby stabilizing the social fabric. Consequently, the premature death of an Adonis or the misfortunes of such ephebic types as Melanion and Pentheus turn out to be liminal aberrations that ultimately serve the larger purpose of re-establishing cultural equilibrium.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Rubino (1974: 170).

<sup>51</sup> For the early Greek tendency to conceptualize difference as polar opposition and the place of sexual difference within that cognitive system, see Lloyd (1966: 15–85). On the literary and artistic employment of gender polarity as a metonymic paradigm for other forms of social difference, consult duBois (1982: *passim*).

<sup>52</sup> The structuralist analysis of Adonis by Detienne (1977), is well-known; for criticisms of Detienne's approach as male-biased and overly restrictive, see, however, Winkler (1990: 198–202) and Stehle (1990: 94–100). On Melanion, see Vidal-Naquet

Catullus, on the other hand, transforms Attis' rejection of his prescribed adult sexual role into an irrevocable abdication of male cultural responsibility. In surrendering to passivity, the protagonist leagues himself with all that is painfully excluded from the household, the marketplace, the assembly of freely deliberating citizens—in short, with everything bestial and slavish.<sup>53</sup> As a result, human community is expunged from the world of the poem, for Attis' companions soon disappear, leaving him alone and defenseless against the primal forces embodied in Cybele's lion. Furthermore, the very betrayal of civilization inherent in his act of self-mutilation is presented as a product of crazed impulse, from which any element of intentional choice is summarily excluded. In the opening lines of the text, at the moment he sets foot on Phrygian soil, Attis is already gripped by the frenzy that impels him to his fatal act (2–5):

Phrygium ut nemus citato cupide pede tetigit  
adiitque opaca silvis redimita loca deae,  
stimulatus ibi furenti rabie, vagus animis,  
devolsit ili acuto sibi pondera silice.

When he eagerly touched the Phrygian woods with hurrying foot  
and approached the shady regions of the goddess surrounded by forests,  
there, stimulated by raging madness, wandering in his wits,  
he dashed away the weights of his loins with a sharp flint.

Reason, like masculinity, like the social order itself, is tenuous. Cybele inflicts her madness where she will, and the narrator, in the end, can only beg her to dispatch it elsewhere (92–3):

procul a mea tuos sit furor omnis, era, domo;  
alios age incitatos, alios age rabidos.

Far from my house, mistress, be all your fury;  
drive others to frenzy, drive others mad.

Inherently hostile to the transitory accidents of culture, intellect, and male consciousness, nature reasserts itself as an overpowering urge to

(1986: 39); for Pentheus, Hippolytus, and other tragic manifestations of the 'failed ephebe', consult Segal (1982b: 164–8).

<sup>53</sup> Newman (1990: 217) observes that Attis 'has deeply offended the code which guards civilization itself'.

give up the ongoing daily battle for rational autonomy, to slide back down into an inert state of permanent enslavement to the life force. The mythic motif of the 'failed ephebe' has thus lost its earlier capacity to mediate between cultural polarities and become instead a mechanism for expressing anxiety over a perceived loss of control, both internal and external.

Now, if one line of critical comment on 63 tends to bind the poet too intimately to his fictive creation Attis, a contrary school insists upon distancing the text from its author and categorizing it as little more than a showcase for artistic dexterity.<sup>54</sup> Those critics ignore the disturbing impact such a work would have made on a contemporary reader. If ancient male identity was as brittle as I contend it was, any member of Catullus' Roman audience might have seen himself limned in Attis, might have been caught up vicariously in this compelling account of sexual slippage. Alliteration, assonance, hypnotic repetition, above all the pounding galliambic rhythm—such verbal and metrical effects must have evoked, perhaps even induced, something of the frenzied delirium infecting Cybele's followers. A reader's sense of estrangement would have been intensified by Attis' foreign origins and desolate surroundings. As a Greek isolated in wild Asiatic terrain, in a region brought under Roman sway only a few years before poem 63 was composed, the protagonist is a specimen of the supposedly decadent and subjugated oriental. A Roman male's emotive affinity with Attis would induce him to sense himself feminized and colonized, reduced at once to a sexual and an ethnic Other.<sup>55</sup> Thus an examination of the poem as ideological product, as the reflex of a set of gender assumptions common to the ancient Mediterranean world, leads us

<sup>54</sup> The wish to divorce Catullus from the emotional implications of his text seems to inform the surmise of Elder (1947: 396) that he composed it to 'indulge his own virtuosity' and to underlie the claim of Hutchinson (1988: 313) to find 'an exhaustive Ovidian ingenuity in the exploration of the paradoxical calamity'.

<sup>55</sup> Once more I am obligated to A. Richlin for drawing my attention to the fact that 'Attis' very Greekness, as well as his self-castration, makes him 'the embodiment of what any Roman male would fear for himself' (private communication). For the Roman tendency to associate pederasty, and male homoerotic relations generally, with Greece and the Greek East, see MacMullen (1982) and Hallett (1988: 2:1272). To discredit hostile Greek witnesses from Asia Minor, Cicero in his speech *pro Flacco* baldly appeals to Roman prejudice against the 'effete oriental': see especially 51, where the *leitmotiv* of perjury is skillfully intertwined with insinuations of sexual corruption.

to see it as symptomatic of some general malaise: Catullus' antihero is meant to be archetypal, incorporating in his maimed body a broad complex of cultural insecurities.<sup>56</sup> And if Anglo-American critics occasionally press for a grotesque, theatrical, even absurd, strain in 63, they may be distancing the poem too far, not only from its author and first readers, but also from themselves: modern masculinity, its radically different protocols notwithstanding, is still not quite as stable as modern man would like it to be.

The anxieties obliquely touched upon in Catullus' version of the Attis story are not limited strictly to matters of sex. Rather, the sexual ideology sketched out above expressly favors the conversion of discourses nominally concerned with erotic behavior, actual or fantasized, into a matrix for addressing larger power issues. Because the varieties of sexual practice are so drastically reduced to a single master plot, an active/passive confrontation in which the submissive partner is automatically feminized, sex itself can function as a primary symbolic counter—the most privileged application of those gender categories commonly used to encode Greco-Roman political relations.<sup>57</sup> A reciprocal synecdochic bond between sex and power therefore permitted Romans writing during the troubled first century BCE to express their perceptions of social turmoil by ringing changes on the arresting theme of gender anarchy, allegorizing political crisis as a jarring disruption of natural gender roles.<sup>58</sup> Since transpositions of sex and power are in themselves so central to the Attis myth, we may be justified in reading Catullus 63 as a literary

<sup>56</sup> Anxiety over the male body itself emerges as a dominant theme in later Roman medical writings: see Rousselle (1988: 5–23). Cf. the observation of Brown (1988: 10): 'In the Roman world, the physical appearance and the reputed character of eunuchs acted as constant reminders that the male body was a fearsomely plastic thing.' My thanks to J. R. Pinault for this reference.

<sup>57</sup> For constructions of masculinity and femininity as vehicles of social meaning in Greek popular thought, see now MacAlister (1992). Stehle (1989a: 115–18) points out that Roman authors' symbolic manipulations of gender differ appreciably from those of the Greeks. An élite Roman tendency to impute masculine characteristics to valued women, as opposed to Greek insistence upon strict conceptual dichotomy, may explain this culturally-specific application of gender categories: see Hallett (1989).

<sup>58</sup> A conspicuous use of sexual/political synecdoche occurs in the early works of Horace: see Fitzgerald (1988) and Oliensis (1991). In demonstrating that '[c]ivil war and the war between the sexes are inextricably linked', Oliensis (126) identifies the Cleopatra of *Epod.* 9.11–16 and *O.* 1.37 as a crux of gender confusion.

response to contemporary political conditions. Let us investigate that hypothesis.

At the time Catullus composed his *Attis* poem, fascination with the cult of Cybele, under her Roman name of 'Magna Mater', was running high.<sup>59</sup> Approximately ten years earlier, M. Terentius Varro had published the Menippean satire *Eumenides*, which contained a scene, apparently set in the goddess' temple, involving an encounter between the narrator and her eunuch priests. That satire, strongly topical in its religious and social comment, must have made a vivid impression on Catullus, for the language of frag. 142C (= 133B), *apage in diirectum a domo nostra istam insanitatem* ('let this insanity of yours be away from our house'), is patently recalled at 63.92, *procul a mea tuos sit furor omnis, era, domo* ('may all your madness, lady, be far from my house').<sup>60</sup> Varro also took a scholarly interest in Cybele. Augustine (*C. D.* 7.24) summarizes his description and elucidation of the symbolism attached to her image, though we are explicitly told that the Republican polymath did not mention *Attis*. Lucretius' famous description of a procession in her honor at *DRN* 2.600–60, equally learned in tone, seems to enter polemically into an intellectual debate raging among the writer's peers.<sup>61</sup> In Catullus 35, an otherwise unknown Caecilius is encouraged to complete an epyllion entitled 'Magna Mater'.<sup>62</sup> A generation later we find Maecenas trying his hand at galliambic verses on Cybele (frags. 5 and 6 M).<sup>63</sup> Finally, Ovid, *Fast.* 4.179–372, provides

<sup>59</sup> Popular attitudes toward Cybele in first century BCE. Rome are examined by Wiseman (1984). Archaeological evidence for her Roman cult is provided by Vermaseren (1977: 38–60). Stehle (1989b) attempts to associate public Roman worship of Cybele with prescriptive discourses on female chastity. My concern here, however, is with those refractory attributes of the Asiatic goddess that escaped this legitimating framework.

<sup>60</sup> For a commentary on frag. 142, including its relation to Catullus 63.92, see Cèbe (1977: 4.653–8); cf. the remarks of Courtney (1985: 90–1) and Wiseman (1985: 204–5).

<sup>61</sup> A digest of the learning displayed in this passage is provided by Bailey (1947: 898–909).

<sup>62</sup> On the title and genre of Caecilius' poem, consult Fredricksmeyer (1985).

<sup>63</sup> Maecenas was notorious for his alleged pathic proclivities and his stylistic eccentricities. In his famous capsule sketch (*Ep.* 114), Seneca attributes the *mollitia* of Maecenas' writing to a dissolute life style (*Ep.* 114.4): *quid ergo? non oratio eius aequa soluta est quam ipse discinctus?* ('what then? isn't his style as unbridled as he was?'). It is possible that the literary interest in *Attis* and *galli* evidenced by these two fragments

readers with what was surely the most exhaustive aetiological treatment of her rites. This widespread fixation upon a divine figure so intimately associated with religious emasculation, monstrous sex-role transformation, and orgiastic frenzy indicates that for Romans of this period the myth and cult of Magna Mater must have possessed profound symbolic meanings.

Now, the isomorphism of ancient social and sexual relations induces Foucault to posit a causal connection between changes in Roman political conditions and new modes of subjectivity.<sup>64</sup> Tighter restrictions on freedom of action in the public sphere and graver risks for both large and small players in the political game resulted, he argues, in a more intense absorption with oneself as ethical subject, which ultimately led to shifts in sexual values and practices. This trend emerges 'starting from the moment when new conditions of political life modified the relations between status, functions, powers, and duties' at the beginning of the imperial epoch.<sup>65</sup> If we follow Foucault in assuming a necessary linkage between the Roman public world and private consciousness, we in turn can postulate that the perilous realities of political life in the decades preceding Augustus' consolidation of authority—decades of civil disturbance, brutal power struggles between dynasts, and occasional bloody proscriptions—surely also affected personal subjectivity, and in a far less nuanced way.<sup>66</sup>

may have contributed to the author's reputation for effeminacy. See Richlin (1992a: 91–2).

<sup>64</sup> Foucault (1986b: 81–95). The impact of public life on Roman familial and sexual attitudes is also discussed by Veyne (1978) and Boswell (1980: 119–24).

<sup>65</sup> Foucault (1986b: 85).

<sup>66</sup> Silverman (1990) argues that societies generate 'dominant fictions' to protect themselves from the pressure of external events. 'History', or what disturbs the social order, makes its mark in the cultural domain as a 'trauma' of signification, i.e., a force that 'disrupts the equilibrium of the dominant fiction, generating temporary irregularities and sometimes even radical change within textual practice' (118). Though I do not subscribe to Silverman's Lacanian model, I believe she correctly traces a progression from historical change 'outside discourse' to global modifications in subjectivity, and thence to changes in discourse itself. (My thanks to D. Fredrick for calling this study to my attention.) Similarly, Barton (1989) ascribes an increased Roman preoccupation with the gladiator as cultural icon in the late Republic and early Empire to a growing sense that 'the price exacted for political, social, and economic status (indeed for life) had become self-abasement, and that honor and dishonor had become

I submit, then, that the gender inversion represented by the asymmetrical dyad of *minax Cybele* ('threatening Cybele') and her emasculate *famula* ('girl-slave') Attis reflects elite despair over real decreases in personal autonomy and diminished capacity for meaningful public action during the agonized final years of the Roman Republic. It hints, furthermore, at large-scale terror in the face of historical changes that, as a practical consequence, were repeatedly exposing upper-class men, their property, and their families to the haphazard evils of civil war and domestic tumult. Attis' tragedy is the triumph of chaos, in which male civic virtue, exhibited in the ordered activities of *foro, palaestra, stadio et gymnasiis*, 60 ('forum, wrestling ring, stadium, and gymnasium'), is swept away into the *furor* seething outside the civilized enclave. As the piteous victim of such furor, the Greek youth becomes a surrogate for Catullus' own intended readers—enterprising young men born, like the poet himself, to influential Italian and Transpadane families, highly educated, talented, groomed for success at Rome, yet abruptly marginalized by social disruption. Fears for personal safety, coupled with the shame and frustration of political disappointment, could readily be subsumed under Attis' horrified repudiation of adult sexuality. Thus in Catullus 63 a contemporary narrative of political impotence is retold mythically as a tale of self-destructive estrangement from the male body.<sup>67</sup>

Cybele's literary popularity is largely coextensive with that of the elegiac *puella domina* ('girl-and-mistress')—another instance of the poetic transfer of erotic sovereignty to the female side, and one now expressly identified as political metaphor. Roman elegy has in recent years been read as a polemic critique of prevailing social mores, as a fantasy vehicle in which masculinity is imaginatively displaced from its nexus of societal obligations, or, most pointedly, as a veiled attack

synonymous' (11). The gladiator's struggle in the arena, conversely, 'reconstructed the traditional conditions of honor' (13), allowing audiences to participate vicariously in his transcendence.

<sup>67</sup> In later generations of Latin authors, physical impotence becomes an explicit topos: cf. Horace, *Epod.* 8 and 12; Tibullus 1.5.39–44; Ovid, *Am.* 3.7; the Priapean poem 'Quid hoc novi est?' (*App. Verg.*, pp. 151–3 OCT = 83 Bücheler); and Petronius, *Sat.* 132. Though all of the above passages deal frankly with sexual dysfunction, the real issue at stake is clearly not the speaker's loss of virility itself (as a Freudian approach would maintain) but the humiliating proof it gives of the body's capacity to refuse the demands of the will. For the theme as a priapic motif, see Richlin (1992a: 116–20).

on Augustan moral legislation.<sup>68</sup> The elegiac narrator's sentimental extravagance underscores his unfitness for civic duties: wholly at the mercy of his mistress' caprice, he can assert himself, ineptly, only through an instance of fancied or enacted violence (Propertius 1.3; Ovid, *Am.* 1.7) that inevitably ends in morbid remorse. Thus he serves as parodic counterexample to edifying Augustan propaganda aimed at reinstating a civic virtue grounded in judicious self-mastery.<sup>69</sup> Given the homology of sex and power frankly realized in the ancient dominance-submission model of sexual relations, the presence of latent political overtones in ostensibly confessional erotic discourse is hardly surprising.

Anticipating the female-dominant scenarios of later Roman elegy, Catullus' Lesbia cycle replicates the experience of Attis in quasi-autobiographical form. In those poems, sexual and political idioms again interface with one another, but in a more overt way. Ever since Reitzenstein's conclusive demonstration of a 'language of party politics' in the love epigrams, commentators have been puzzled by the seemingly incongruous connotations of such recurrent expressions as *fides*, *foedus*, *officium*, *pietas* ('loyalty', 'alliance', 'service', 'duty') and especially *amicitia* ('political friendship')—the speaker's own term for his association with Lesbia, disconcertingly redolent of pragmatic Roman power alliances.<sup>70</sup> Ross subjects that political terminology to searching philological analysis.<sup>71</sup> Catullus, he contends, employs it to draw a tacit analogy between his own adulterous liaison and the moral breakdown precipitated by the crooked dealings of the Roman ruling class. The eroticized metaphor of *amicitia* or political friendship is an evocative means of speaking about 'more universal, more characteristically Roman concerns' in relation to a particular set of events in the poet's own life.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>68</sup> Hallett (1973); Wyke (1989); Wallace-Hadrill (1985); Stahl (1985).

<sup>69</sup> For elegy's circumlocutory pronouncements on real political issues, see further Griffin (1985: 32–47).

<sup>70</sup> Reitzenstein (1912). One example of critical bewilderment is Lyne (1980: 21–42), whose unwillingness to concede the presence of a specifically political element in the Lesbia epigrams forces him to dismiss them in the end as unsuccessful literary experiments.

<sup>71</sup> Ross (1969: 80–95) and Ross (1975: 8–15).

<sup>72</sup> Ross (1975: 15). For a provocative extension of his argument, see now Vinson (1989). Wiseman (1985: 101–15) rightly calls attention to Catullus' conservative background and moral outlook.



In a brief heuristic experiment, let us observe what happens when the tenor and the vehicle of Ross' metaphor are interchanged. If we consider the Lesbia epigrams primarily as political documents, they cease to commemorate a real love affair later appropriated, almost incidentally, as a device for speaking obliquely about unjust administrative practices. Approached now from the warp side, they instead appear preoccupied with those practices themselves, practices troped as elements of a disastrous love affair. The slipperiness of erotic language and the gap between declaration and hidden intent on the part of the beloved seem tokens of a rhetoric generally debased.<sup>73</sup> Organized around the establishment of a binding erotic *foedus* through an act of adultery—ethically, a palpable contradiction in terms—the plot of Catullus' romance exposes the moral confusion necessarily engendered by an arbitrary repudiation of ancestral *fides* and *pietas*.<sup>74</sup> Since the unchaste wife and finally unfaithful mistress is a highborn Roman *materfamilias* (68.143–6, 79.1–2), while her paramour is but a provincial *domi nobilis*, the affair is tantamount to a relationship of *clientela*, with Lesbia playing the *de facto* role of patron and Catullus occupying the subordinate place of lesser *amicus*.<sup>75</sup> Owing to this inherent power asymmetry, her betrayal of his love involves a breach of patronage relations: the code governing dealings between the ruling class and its municipal clients and encapsulated in the language of political alliance is subverted to further the selfish aims of Lesbia, the more advantaged partner.<sup>76</sup> Accordingly, one thematic objective of the poems might be to connect the frustration of ambition among Catullus' own peers with élite

<sup>73</sup> On the ambiguity of language as a preoccupation of the Catullan speaker, see the mutually enlightening readings of poem 70 by Pedrick (1986) and by Miller (1988).

<sup>74</sup> The moral absurdity inscribed into the notion of the adulterous *foedus* is noted by Rubino (1975).

<sup>75</sup> That a patronage relationship between a noblewoman and a man of lesser rank was permissible in Roman society is indicated by the case of Sex. Roscius, who, threatened with a prosecution for parricide, appeals to Caecilia Metella as his hereditary protector (Cicero, *Rosc. Am.* 27). On this and other instances of élite female patronage, see Dixon (1983).

<sup>76</sup> In opposing Ross' view that *foedus*, when used of political alliances, 'always refers to a relationship of *amicitia* between equals' (Ross 1969: 85), Vinson (1992) establishes that such alliances, though ostensibly egalitarian, normally contain hidden power imbalances, and that a corresponding asymmetry is likewise inscribed into Catullus' romantic *foedus amicitiae* ('alliance of friendship').

corruption by allegorizing the nobility's exploitative manipulations of the patronage system as a noblewoman's depraved pursuit of sexual satisfaction.

Nevertheless, we should resist the temptation to sink the erotic entirely into the allegorical. It is, after all, the lover's surrender of male authority, his willing submission to his imperious mistress, that reduces him to abject enslavement. In celebrating the psychic gratification derived from capitulating, like Attis, to the will of another, Catullan erotic discourse obliquely invites the very exploitation it denounces as it purports to elicit sympathy for a victim who revels in his own mortification by boasting of a heart ruined through devotion: *mens . . . se officio perdidit ipsa suo* ('my mind . . . has ruined itself by its own devotion', 75.1–2).<sup>77</sup> With an emotional conviction no later elegiac imitator could ever achieve, a tangled skein of longing for the lost beloved as a crucial supplement to the incomplete self, spliced with a paradoxical blend of self-loathing and martyred bravado, presents itself to us from a bizarre perspective. 'Bizarre', because that oddly familiar nexus of sentiments, here inscribed into a male subjectivity, is labeled elsewhere as quintessentially feminine: it is, in fact, the posture of the 'abandoned woman', one of the most enduring and semiotically dense icons of Western literature. In his definitive study of this literary construct, Lawrence Lipking remarks that abandonment 'cannot be set apart from politics'.<sup>78</sup> As a poetic heroine—Theocritus' Simaetha, Catullus' own Ariadne, Ovid's collection of anguished letter writers—the abandoned woman laments not only for herself but for injured humanity everywhere; her song 'flourishes wherever those who hear it are reminded of their own subjection and alienation, of everything that is missing from their lives.' Tightly implicated in that tradition of melodramatic complaint, the reproaches of the Catullan speaker can accordingly be understood as poetic evocations of political/erotic self-abnegation.

<sup>77</sup> The political propriety of an erotics of self-surrender has become a controversial issue in contemporary feminist theory. See, for example, two collections of essays: Snitow, Stansell, and Thompson (1983) and Vance (1984).

<sup>78</sup> Lipking (1988: 11–14). In his introduction, Lipking remarks that the lot of abandonment is so stereotypically assigned to a female voice 'that an abandoned man may begin to feel his sexual identity waver' (p. xviii).

Once we have privileged it, this convoluted subtext ought not to disappear when we return to reading the *Lesbia* poems in a more conventional fashion. Henceforth we must remember that in Catullus the status of victim is always sexualized, that their very vulnerability imbues his grieving characters—Ariadne, the *Lock*, ‘Catullus’ himself—with a poignant glamour. Yet these victim figures are presented to the reader not as titillating objects of lust, as would be the case in present-day pornography, but as alternative subject positions permitting scope for voluptuous emotive fantasy.<sup>79</sup> Although their helplessness is gendered as ‘feminine’, men are expected to engage with it vicariously—to identify with their sense of powerless yearning and capitulate, as they do, to tumultuous passion. The craving to undergo such a disorienting emotional experience, if only temporarily and artificially, was, I believe, a basic component in the construction of ancient male sexuality.

In the Greco-Roman world, as we have seen, power was openly eroticized—so openly and so thoroughly as to undermine biological gender identity. If the abstract mechanics of social superiority and inferiority are concretely expressed in terms of gender relations, a male consciousness aware of social disadvantage will be at liberty to immerse itself, if only provisionally, in a synthetic ‘female’ sensibility. Ostensibly the assumption of such a passive feminized posture might seem acutely degrading. Paradoxically, however, it may also have been a channel for imaginative escape. This was, after all, the sole means vouchsafed to ancient men for voicing a forbidden sense of dependency. Beyond that, identification with emotionally prodigal figures, such as neoteric damsels in distress and feckless lovers, must have afforded a fleeting relaxation of stringent psychic controls, a luxurious but relatively harmless foray into sentimental self-indulgence.

When we read the *Lesbia* poems in that light, we observe at once how skilled Catullus was at articulating a paralyzing conflict within Roman male subjectivity. His texts bear witness to the existence of a pathetic (one might well call it ‘pathic’) inadequacy behind the

<sup>79</sup> Here I expressly differ from Richlin (1992b), who, while allowing for possible momentary reader identification with Ovid’s raped heroines, ultimately defines them as objectified pornographic targets.

standard cultural pose of priapic aggression.<sup>80</sup> Total integration of sexual and social dominance made psychic virility sensitive to the slightest lapse of public *auctoritas* but at the same time marked feelings of weakness and victimization with the stigma of effeminacy. Insecurities engendered by the political upheavals of the first century BCE could therefore be vented only through 'playing the other', to use Zeitlin's phrase—through recourse to the device of erotic or mythic fantasy in which the author grieves in a counterfeit 'feminine' persona and the reader participates imaginatively in his simulated despair.<sup>81</sup> In their candid exposure of the traits Roman culture chose to expel from the male psyche, and the subtle literary strategies it then developed to reintegrate such traits clandestinely, Catullus' poems, though hardly unique, are singular in their intensity and so mirror the strained conditions under which they were composed.

My investigation has disclosed that a considerable part of the poet's corpus, over and above his 'Attis', rests on sexual protocols foreign to those of our own culture. In contrast to ancient ideology, our modern Western sex/gender system insists upon mystifying the connections between personal life and the public realm in order to cloak the mutually accessory operations of sexuality and hegemony. As a result, feminists and gay activists have had difficulty convincing others of the real political content of supposedly 'private' sexual acts. In a corollary gesture, modern scholarship has refused to recognize a topical side to Catullus, pigeonholing him as the naive poet-lover oblivious to all but Lesbia and magisterially dismissing as inconclusive a considerable

<sup>80</sup> Reviewing Richlin (1983), I suggested (Skinner, 1986) that Roman literature preserves evidence of severe cultural ambivalence about phallogocentric masculinity: the type of the impotent antihero, such as Petronius' Encolpius, is a marker of competitive anxieties. The present reading of Catullus is, in large part, a development of ideas first sketched out there. See further Skinner (1991).

<sup>81</sup> See Zeitlin (1985: esp. 80–1). Other feminist critics of Greek and Roman literature also appeal to modes of androgyny and tactics for appropriating a woman's voice in order to locate a positive space for the female within the male-authored text. However, Richlin (1992b: 178) finds 'no exit from gender hierarchy' in Roman cross-sex identification with brutalized heroines: because the female remains the 'site of violence', the fantasy in effect reinforces male claims to domination. I agree that ancient authors do not reconfigure asymmetrical gender polarities in the process of creating their transvestite plots. Given the overall conceptual scheme we have traced out here, that would in fact be far too much to hope for, as Nugent (1990: 178–81) remarks. Our vastly different sex/gender system, on the other hand, allows for more hopeful possibilities.

body of evidence for his lively interest in political issues.<sup>82</sup> As I intimated above, critics have perhaps found his incisive glimpses into the politics of eroticism, and the eroticism of politics, too disturbing to be confronted directly. Simplistic or distancing views of his texts may well be one way of neutralizing their troubling implications.

We have much to gain, however, from looking at this poet through eyes newly sensitized to such concerns. The erotic stances his speaker adopts are reflexes of the same alien construction of masculinity discernible in his rendering of the Attis myth. While much of what it meant to be a Roman man—to be Catullus or a member of his immediate audience—will forever escape us, the emotive responses programmed into his texts can still be dimly inferred if, guided by current discoveries about ancient sexuality, we jettison our late-twentieth-century notions of manhood and project ourselves as far as we can into a Roman consciousness. Reading Catullus' poetry within the framework of its own ideological expectations drives home the point that modes of sexuality and gender relations are not human universals but pure cultural artifacts. Furthermore, the Roman compulsion to reappropriate the outlawed 'feminine', however spuriously, offers crucial insights into the destructive effects on the male personality, first, of polarized gender roles and, second, of conflating sexuality and power. Thus an informed feminist study of Catullus generates hope that contemporary males, likewise products of a society in rapid flux, may prove less inhibited in raising the 'woman' submerged in themselves to the surface, so that our ideas of masculinity can eventually be not just deconstructed—which is, alas, all one can do with ancient gender protocols—but, with patience, reconstructed into a more satisfying humanity.

#### ADDENDUM

Since the publication of the original version of this essay in 1993 many important studies have appeared bearing on the representation

<sup>82</sup> Thus Deroux (1970) describes the poet's interest in public life as 'feeble' and pronounces his political views 'superficial'. But a contrary position is emerging: see Syndikus (1986), Väisänen (1988), and Newman (1990: 41–2).

of masculinity in Catullus, and specifically in poem 63. I am glad to be able to acknowledge this subsequent bibliography. Space limitations dictate that I do so selectively.

For background information on the Asiatic rituals of Cybele and the forms they took in Rome, see Roller (1999) and the contributors to Lane (1996). Three new monographs have explored features of the Catullan male self: Janan (1994), Nappa (2001), and Wray (2001b). I was happy to find my interpretation of Attis as 'failed ephebe' independently confirmed, applying Greek evidence, by Clay (1995). It was also gratifying to see my thinking expanded and advanced by Panoussi (2003). Wray (2001a) establishes a metaphor in *pondera* (63.5) drawn from weaving: Attis' act resembles that of cutting the threads supporting the loom weights from the finished textile; the argument has powerful gender implications. I must disagree firmly with Holzberg's proposal (2002: 126–32) that Catullus 63 is a comic exercise. That seems counterintuitive. O'Hara (1996) makes the intriguing speculation that Sostratus *Suppl. Hell.* 733 ('on the six sex changes of Tiresias'), known only from a notice in the Byzantine Homeric commentator Eustathius, may have prompted Catullus to undertake his own explorations of gender instability. And finally, the 2004 special issue of *Mnemosyne* edited by Nauta and Harder, containing papers on Cat. 63 delivered at a 2003 Groningen Symposium was recently republished as *Catullus' Poem on Attis: Texts and Contexts*.

## Sappho 31 and Catullus 51: The Dialogism of Lyric

*Paul Allen Miller*

Mikhail Bakhtin, in 'Discourse in the Novel', formulates what seems an ironclad distinction between poetic and novelistic discourse. Poetry, he argues, is essentially 'monologic' and strives for a unity of discourse, 'so that the finished work may rise as unitary speech, one co-extensive with its object.' The novel, on the other hand, is 'dialogic', representing a multiplicity of voices, not only through its characters, but also in its style, ideology, and representation of society.<sup>1</sup> This distinction, while provisionally useful for establishing what is unique to novelistic discourse, offers an ultimately unsatisfying account of dialogism's role in literature as a whole, and poetry in particular. To remedy this problem and thereby deploy the considerable power of Bakhtin's theoretical insights for a more satisfying account of the poetic as well as the novelistic, this paper will propose that a further distinction be made between primary and secondary dialogism. Such a distinction, as Caryl Emerson and Gary Saul Morson have pointed out, is implicit in Bakhtin from the beginning, though never made explicit.<sup>2</sup> This failure on Bakhtin's part to distinguish between the

<sup>1</sup> Bakhtin (1981: 278, 284–8, 300, 325–31). The importance of this distinction as well as its controversial nature has been pointed out by more than one critic. See Morson and Emerson (1989: 53–4); de Man (1989: 111); Roberts (1989: 133); and Todorov (1984: 64–7).

<sup>2</sup> Morson and Emerson (1989: 52–3). See Morson and Emerson's attempt (1990: 49–62) to separate out the different senses of dialogism from a different point of view.

various but related ways in which he uses the terms *dialogue*, *dialogism*, and *dialogic* has, in turn, become the source of no small amount of confusion.

From this perspective, the term *primary dialogism* refers to that interplay of voices and concepts which is found in realist fiction and daily life. It designates that set of relations which governs the exchange of complete 'utterances' between individuals, social groups, and/or their fictional representatives: the utterance being, as Bakhtin defines it, the basic unit of speech, delimited not by the sentence, the proposition or the paragraph, but by the completion of one speech act by one speaker and the beginning of a second by another.<sup>3</sup> Primary dialogism, thus, represents that font of social and linguistic interaction from which the larger and more abstract phenomenon of secondary dialogism springs.

This latter phenomenon, which results from the speaker's simultaneous response to past and anticipation of future utterances, every time (s)he speaks, represents that more subtle level of dialogical interaction that occurs not only within utterances, but even within individual words. For every word we use carries with it the sights, sounds, and smells, the social and rhetorical contexts of its previous uses.<sup>4</sup> Thus as Bakhtin points out in his Dostoevsky book, even soliloquies are in essence dialogic. Clearly, this latter form of dialogism can

<sup>3</sup> Bakhtin (1981: 274–6; 282, 326, 332–3) and Morson and Emerson (1989: 53). On the utterance as a complete verbal performance by one speaker which expects a reply from another, see Bakhtin (1986a: 71–3, 82, 92–3); Todorov (1984: p. x and 43–4), and Volosinov (1986: 94–6).

There is still considerable dispute over whether the texts originally published under the names of Volosinov and Medvedev were a) in reality written by Bakhtin; b) heavily influenced by him; or c) rejoinders in a dialogue in which he was influenced by the others as much as he influenced them. All commentators agree, however, that there are numerous and striking similarities between the works of the members of the Bakhtin circle. Thus I shall consider the various works of the Bakhtin circle as all part of the same discourse, even if they were not all written by the same author. In my citations, I use the names under which the texts were published in English. For more views on this debate, see Morson and Emerson (1990: 11, 77, 102, 104, 106–7, 111, 118–19, 124–5; 161–2, 479, notes 6–7); Holquist (1990: 8); Todorov (1984: 11); Bakhtin/Medvedev (1985: pp. vii and ix).

<sup>4</sup> Bakhtin (1981: 276–7, 279–80, 282, 293; 1984: 73); Todorov (1984: 48–9); and Volosinov (1986: 19, 23). On the internal dialogism of individual words, see Bakhtin (1981: 279) and Morson and Emerson (1990: 138–9).



be found in poetry as well as prose.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, Bakhtin admits as much in a later essay, 'The Problem of the Text in Linguistics, Philology, and the Human Sciences':

Is not any writer (even the pure lyricist) always a 'dramaturge' in the sense that he directs all words to others' voices, including to the image of the author (and to other authorial masks)? Perhaps any literal, single-voiced word is naive and unsuitable for authentic creativity. Any truly creative voice can only be the second voice in the discourse. Only the second voice—pure relationship—can be completely objectless and not cast a figural shadow.<sup>6</sup>

My argument is that we can use this concept of secondary dialogism to help clarify the differences between a lyric designed for oral performance and a lyric of the book, that the concept of dialogism in its broadest form can make us see that these are in fact two very different genres of composition. To illustrate this thesis I will examine the work of two representative poets, Sappho and Catullus, and will take as a basis of comparison Sappho 31 and its translation, Catullus 51. By looking at these two poems, which are in some ways practically identical but were produced in and for radically different dialogical situations, I hope to demonstrate the validity of this distinction between the two forms of dialogism and its usefulness in making generic discriminations. The crucial determinant in this investigation will be the establishment of the radically different contexts of utterance which characterize these two texts.

We can begin by imagining the setting for which Sappho's poetry was first intended. It is now widely accepted that the primary mode of diffusion, if not composition, for Sappho's poetry was oral performance, inasmuch as there was virtually no book trade in Greece

<sup>5</sup> Bakhtin (1984: 120; 1986a: 93); Morson and Emerson (1990: 49, 131, 143, 146).

<sup>6</sup> Bakhtin (1986b: 110). On the importance of this passage, see Roberts (1989: 133–4) and Todorov (1984: 68). On Bakhtin's wavering on the possibility of dialogism in lyric, see Morson and Emerson (1989: 6 and 54–5). Tavis (1988: 75 and 77) has argued that Bakhtin in his early work, 'Toward a Philosophy of the Act', employs a dialogic method in his analysis of Pushkin's 'For the Shores of Your Distant Country'. Thus at the beginning and at the end of his career Bakhtin was more liberal in his granting of dialogic status to poetry than he was in the middle period of his work. Bakhtin's reading of the Pushkin poem can be found in Bakhtin (1990: 208–31).

until the late fifth century.<sup>7</sup> Such performances imply, in turn, a certain anticipation of how the poem's addressees would have received it. For utterances are always other-directed, and this is particularly so in the case of public artistic performances where the audience is immediately present. Such poems are of necessity communal events, rather than closeted confessions. Each new performance is a separate utterance, indissolubly linked to the moment of enunciation and so forever reinforcing the radically occasional nature of archaic lyric.<sup>8</sup>

Moreover, as Bakhtin points out, the ways these anticipations of an audience's response structure a text, and ultimately its interpretation, constitute the dialogic situation staged by that text and serve to distinguish one literary genre from another.<sup>9</sup> Thus, to understand a poem such as Sappho 31, the reader must begin by asking what sort of performative context would have been required for such a work to have had a public meaning on the island of Lesbos; that is to say, on what sort of occasion could such a poem have been appropriately sung to a public which was well acquainted with the poet, and indeed constituted her friends, neighbors, and potential political allies and enemies in this small island community?<sup>10</sup> This is very different from the question posed by the traditional romantic understanding of lyric: what is the poet trying to express? In a dialogic analysis, it is the relation of 'responsive understanding' between poet and public which is foregrounded.<sup>11</sup>

The most obvious performative context which comes to mind for Sappho 31 is a song performed for a wedding, since it is difficult to

<sup>7</sup> See Snyder (1989: 17); Griffith (1989: 60); Gentili (1984: 3, 41, 75, 204–5); Hallett (1979: 461–4); Segal (1974: 139–40, 153); Russo (1973–4: 709); Havelock (1982: 17–20, 189; 1963: 37–9, 43). On the lack of a substantial book trade in the sixth and seventh centuries, thus eliminating the only alternative mode by which Sappho's poetry could have been widely diffused, see Harris (1989: 92–3, as well as 84–7).

<sup>8</sup> Gentili (1984: 52); Zumthor (1983: 48, 56, 234); Winkler (1981: 65); Finnegan (1977: 129); Adkins (1972: 5); Havelock (1963: 46, 121, 182–3). On the unrepeatability of utterances, see Bakhtin (1986b: 108) and Morson and Emerson (1990: 126).

<sup>9</sup> Bakhtin (1986a: 60–5, 95–6); Bakhtin/Medvedev (1985: 11, 130–1); Morson and Emerson (1990: 129, 290); Todorov (1984: 82).

<sup>10</sup> Lasserre (1989: 147). On Sappho's possible political problems, see the reference to her exile during the reign of the tyrant Pittacus, *Marm. Par. Ep. 36* (p. 12 Jacoby), reprinted in Campbell (1982: 8–9); on oral poetry's audience as a small, relatively homogeneous social group, see Zumthor (1983: 40).

<sup>11</sup> Bakhtin (1986a: 95–6; 1984: 87–8); Morson and Emerson (1990: 129–30).

imagine many other occasions when a man and woman would be publicly seated together in close converse, in Lesbos' sexually segregated society. Indeed 31 is the sole text in Sappho's corpus to show a woman and a man in an intimate conversation.<sup>12</sup> This interpretation of the poem was, of course, standard up until the mid-fifties, having been first advanced by Wilamowitz and later vigorously defended by Snell.<sup>13</sup> In 1955, it was to many people's minds decisively refuted by Page, who termed it a 'theory...based on nothing but a preconceived notion about Sappho's moral character'. Kirkwood, thus, refers to Page's having 'demolished' a view which could only appeal to the 'sentimentally inclined', and which was designed to repress Sappho's homoeroticism.<sup>14</sup> Yet such an indictment is little more than an *ad hominem* attack, and in this reader's case it is applicable neither on the count of sentimentality nor of homophobia. More importantly, McEvelley has persuasively shown that both Snell's and Wilamowitz's major theses were more correct than even they realized. He makes three major points: first, the term *aner* ('man') in Sappho always refers to a husband; second, the direct comparison with a god occurs only in marriage poems; and third, Lesbos in all the surviving literature would appear to have been so sexually segregated as not to have allowed the sort of public interaction between a man and woman portrayed in the poem, except in the context of marriage.<sup>15</sup> Ruth Neuberger-Donath has also demonstrated, by using comparative evidence gathered from the Homeric poems, that any time a man and woman are shown to be sitting *enantios* to one another, they are necessarily *philos* to one another. It can thus be assumed, she concludes, that the couple celebrated in Sappho's poem were in fact man and wife, and probably recently so.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Griffith (1989: 50). Race's statement (1989: 31) that the situation presented at the beginning of 31 is 'ordinary' is anachronistic in its assumption of routinized commerce between unrelated members of the opposite sex.

<sup>13</sup> Wilamowitz (1913/1966): 5; Snell (1931: 71–90).

<sup>14</sup> Page (1955: 30–3); Kirkwood (1974: 121–2); see also Snyder (1989: 20).

<sup>15</sup> McEvelley (1978: 1–9). Lasserre (1989: 150–1) argues persuasively against McEvelley's suggestion that the wedding scene evoked by the poem might be imaginary.

<sup>16</sup> Neuberger-Donath (1977: 199–200). Wiseman (1985: 153) also accepts the Wilamowitz thesis, finding support for it in Catullus. For further corroborating views, see Griffith (1989: 59–61); Lasserre (1989: 149–52); Winkler (1981: 173); Fränkel (1975: 176); and Treu (1954: 178–9).

This reading is also a tempting solution because Sappho wrote numerous epithalamia and, as Judith Hallett has noted, the social function of her verse would appear to have been that of preparing the young women of Lesbos for their communally sanctioned roles.<sup>17</sup> Likewise Gregory Nagy has recently argued that Sappho's role as a singer was that of a *khoregos*, a publicly sanctioned poet/educator comparable to Alcman in his 'Partheneia':

To say that Sappho is an 'educator' is a prosaic way of saying that her assumed role, through her lyric poetry, is that of *khoregos*, 'chorus leader', speaking both to and about members of an aggregate of female characters who are bound together by ties that correspond to the ties that bind a chorus together.

Her expression and probable practice of homoerotic love was thus, like that of her male counterparts, a form of *paideia*, not the public expression of a private desire.<sup>18</sup>

It is, of course, impossible to prove whether this poem was actually sung at a wedding(s) or not, but the attempt to formulate a response to the question of the poem's performative context goes a long way towards elucidating the concrete nature of its dialogical situation. For it makes clear the radically different nature of Sappho's poetry from the vastly more privatized verse which is read and written today. Moreover, as of yet, there have been no other satisfactory performative contexts envisioned, and those who have opposed this interpretation have generally chosen to ignore the question altogether, leading to anachronistic interpretations in which Sappho is read more as an

<sup>17</sup> Hallett (1979: 450, 456, and 461–4). See also Gentili (1984: 102–8); Calame (1977: 396); and Segal (1974: 141 and 153).

<sup>18</sup> Nagy (1990: 435 and 370–1), especially: 'It should be clear that I understand the monodic form not to be antithetical to the choral but rather predicated on it. A figure like Sappho speaks as a choral personality, even though elements of dancing and the very presence of a choral group are evidently missing from her compositions. Still, these compositions presuppose or represent an interaction, offstage, as it were with a choral aggregate.' This is another way of saying the performance implies an immediate and formalized dialogic relationship with the listening public. For more on Sappho's relation to Alcman and *paideia*, see Calame (1977: 88, 126–7, 369, 421–34); Hallett (1979: 463–4); Dover (1979: 181); Lefkowitz (1981: 51–2); Stigers (1981: 45).

author composing books of poetry, than as an archaic singer performing orally before her peers.<sup>19</sup>

At all events, the poem can hardly have been intended to be heard by the citizens of Lesbos as a purely personal confession. Its focus is not the *moi*, but the *toi* and the *kenos* [not the 'me' but the 'you' and the 'he'].<sup>20</sup> The initial naming complex concentrates not on the speaking voice's ego, but on that of the addressees: 'This man seems equal to the gods, that sits opposite you and listens close by to your sweet voice.' Likewise the feelings of the speaking subject are only present to the extent that they can be directly expressed in an objectified and externalizing catalogue of symptoms.<sup>21</sup> In fact the poetic ego, through its enactment of a universalizing symptomology, functions as an analogue to the central mythic section of a Pindaric ode. It renders public and understandable a unique experience which otherwise would be purely personal and thus meaningless to the public at large. As Kirkwood says, 'Sappho used herself as the illustrative equivalent of a simile or myth.'<sup>22</sup> We find out next to nothing about the poet herself, or the persona she wishes to project; instead, we are invited to marvel at the devastating effect of the woman's beauty, even as this unnamed, godlike man sits before her, seemingly unfazed. What we have is a poem of praise, directed in the first instance to the young woman and in the second to the man sitting across from her.<sup>23</sup>

If, however, we examine Catullus' translation of this same poem, the dialogical relation has changed. First, Catullus no longer thinks in terms of communal occasions, but in terms of private readers or intimate friends.<sup>24</sup> Second, the poem now not only gains its meaning from its relation to its audience, but also from its relation to other poems in the corpus. These poems provide the primary context in

<sup>19</sup> Thus Race (1983: 92–3) argues that while Wilamowitz's wedding hypothesis solves the historical problem of the performative context it 'creates a literary one', since the word *marriage* is never mentioned. But the dichotomy is false. Literary problems are always simultaneously historical ones, inasmuch as works of literature are profoundly dialogized utterances which presume a relation of responsive understanding between themselves and their audiences or reading publics. Literary questions are thus inevitably social and historical questions as well.

<sup>20</sup> Snell (1953: 52). <sup>21</sup> Page (1955: 26–7); Fränkel (1975: 176).

<sup>22</sup> Kirkwood (1974: 122); West (1970: 314–15).

<sup>23</sup> Burnett (1983: 236); Lasserre (1989: 157). <sup>24</sup> Wiseman (1982: 38–9).

which the individual poem is to be understood. Our vision of *Lesbia* and *Catullus* is unalterably modified by our knowledge of these other poems, and thus the poem itself is in constant dialogue not only with its readers, but with the other poems of the collection. It is, in fact, this intertextual quality of *Catullus*' work that gives it that sense of intimacy which all readers perceive. We seem ever to be eavesdropping on the poet in dialogue with himself, but that dialogue is infinite because it is always being reshaped and remodelled by our own reading of the corpus.<sup>25</sup>

Aside from the final stanza of *Catullus* 51, it and its Sapphic model appear to be substantially alike, except for the seemingly minor difference that *Catullus* names his addressee *Lesbia*.<sup>26</sup> Now, there is no great mystery as to whom the name *Lesbia* referred. *Apuleius* tells us (*Apology* 10) that it was a woman named *Clodia*, who is generally thought to have been either *Clodia Metelli* or one of her sisters. A more important question, though, is: what is the poetic significance of this particular pseudonym? The answer is twofold. First, and most obviously, *Lesbia* is the metrical equivalent of *Clodia*, so that if *Catullus* chose to circulate a private manuscript, the actual name could have been easily substituted. Second, and more important for our purposes, *Lesbia* is also the Latin adjective denoting a woman from *Lesbos*, in this context obviously *Sappho*.<sup>27</sup> In *Sappho*'s original, however, she is the one

<sup>25</sup> There remains disagreement over how much of *Catullus*' corpus was arranged by the author himself. Although there is more and more reason to believe *Catullus* arranged the collection as a whole, there is at minimum widespread belief that he arranged at least poems 1–51. My argument does not depend upon accepting any one scheme of arrangement, but rather on the notion that we read the poems in terms of one another, and that the numerous cross-references between the poems and the use of repeated motifs show that they were meant to be read as a group, whether they were originally placed in the order we now have them or not.

On the consensus that at least part of the present collection was arranged by the author, see *Skinner* (1988: 337). Among those who believe the collection as a whole is the work of the poet are *Ellis* (1889/1979: 1–5), with some minor rearranging of 61–8; *Wiseman* (1985: 136–7; 1969: 30); *Quinn* (1972: 9–20 and 38–50); *Skinner* (1988: 338, n. 2), where she revises her claim (in 1981: *passim*) that only 1–51 were arranged by the author; *Ferguson* (1986: 2); *Minyard* (1988: 343–53); *Dettmer* (1988: 371–81); and *Arkins* (1987: 847–8).

<sup>26</sup> For a recent discussion of the close relations between the two texts, see *Vine* (1992) and *Wiseman* (1985: 152–3).

<sup>27</sup> *Fredricksmeier* (1983: 69).

who is tongue-tied. Likewise she is the singer of the poem, not its recipient. Yet in Catullus' version, the woman named with an adjective which alludes to Sappho is in the opposite position. She is now the object, not the subject. She is the woman sung about, not the singer.<sup>28</sup> There has been an inversion of roles, which as we shall see will have reverberations throughout the collection, and which necessarily calls the poet's double relation to both his reading public and his predecessors into question. For each of these relations is now mediated by the other and can only be understood from within the other's perspective. The poem is neither a simple presentation of an event to the reading public, nor a univocal reproduction of Sappho's original, but a complex mixture of both, situated within the larger context of Catullus' portrayal of the affair as a whole. The point is a somewhat obvious one, though it has yet to be fully considered. For, in the very act of self-consciousness this alteration supposes, Catullus' poem comes to transcend the moment of its enunciation and enters into a new and more complex series of dialogic relations which ultimately center around the multi-voiced and often conflicting intentions of the Catullan poetic ego as they are revealed in poem 51's relations with the other poems in the collection.<sup>29</sup> There is, then, in this one name, *Lesbia*, a measure of conscious reflexivity, which is utterly alien to Sappho's original. This seemingly innocent substitution of *Lesbia* for *Clodia* opens a whole range of questions about artistic intent and self-conscious intertextuality which would be unimaginable in Sappho's predominantly oral culture.

Are we for example to assume, given the use of the name *Lesbia* in the context of a poem by Sappho, that there is a reciprocity of symptoms between Catullus and his beloved, so that not only Catullus is

<sup>28</sup> Skinner (1981: 88).

<sup>29</sup> Thus Fredricksmeyer (1983: 66–8) has noted Catullus' use of the word *identidem* ('again and again, habitually') as one of the parallels linking poems 11 and 51. It has no analogue in Sappho's original and changes what was a particular occasion in the original into a constantly recurring one. Professor Charles Platter has pointed out to me that this adverb may also be making reference to the common recurrence of the adverb *deute* in archaic lyric. See Kirkwood (1974: 112, 249, n. 23 and Sappho 1).

Note also Commager's interesting observation (1965: 87): 'where [Sappho 31] has two verbs to describe the action of the girl and one for the spectator, Catullus reverses the emphasis, also adding the adjective *misero*. The alterations, admittedly minor, suggest that the poem will be even more self-centered than Sappho's.'

Sappho, but also the woman who bears the Sapphic epithet? Or has there been a mere inversion of roles? From the beginning we are in a quandary as to what precise roles Catullus and Lesbia/Clodia/Sappho are going to play, and as to what levels of conscious intent the triple-faceted object of Catullus' desire corresponds. Moreover, what does it mean to send Lesbia/Sappho a re-inscription of her own poem into another language, another alphabet, especially when this Lesbia/Sappho is only Sappho and not Clodia through a trick of orthography, through a private code made possible by writing? No simple answers can be supplied to these questions. But what is interesting is the fact that we have now entered into a new genre of poetry whose radically different context of enunciation makes those questions not only possible, but necessary. For they show we are now in a complex and sophisticated world of literary allusions, artistic self-consciousness, and psychological ambiguity, a cosmopolitan and Hellenistic world alien to the predominantly oral culture of archaic Lesbos.

Nonetheless, this reading of 51 has only scratched the surface of the complexities and circuitous routes of responsive understanding this poem contains. For, in this same alteration of Sappho's original can also be seen still another motif of Catullus' poetry, which can be tracked throughout the collection, and which constitutes one of the primary thematic elements organizing it as a whole: that of sex-role reversal.<sup>30</sup> A precise parallel to Catullus' intertextual alteration of expected sex-roles in 51 can thus also be seen in poem 70's relation to its original, Callimachus' eleventh epigram, wherein the passive and active roles played by Catullus and Lesbia respectively in 70 are reversed in Callimachus' original.<sup>31</sup> There the man, Callinotus, is active, and the girl, Ionis, is passive. Likewise, in poem 68, Catullus compares his own need to overlook Lesbia's infidelities with that of Juno's ignoring the *omnivoli plurima furta Jovis* ['numerous affairs of all-lustful Jove'].<sup>32</sup> And this thematic element of the collection, in turn, can be seen as adding yet another ironic level to Catullus' use of the name Lesbia for Clodia, inasmuch as it was widely thought in antiquity (probably correctly) that Sappho was a Lesbian in both senses of the word. As such, she could have easily been thought of as usurping the masculine role

<sup>30</sup> Rubino (1975: 294).

<sup>31</sup> Page (1975: 93).

<sup>32</sup> For a fuller examination of these issues, see Miller (1988: 127–32).



(did not Horace refer to her as *mascula Saffo?*), and hence within the binary logic of conventional Roman sexual relations: if Catullus was on the receiving end of Lesbia's infidelities, he would thus naturally be in the woman's or at least the effeminate position.<sup>33</sup>

Given the recurrent nature of this motif of sex-role reversal in the Catullan collection, it is perhaps not accidental that another important example of this same phenomenon can be found in the final strophe of poem 11, the only other poem in the collection written in Sapphic stanzas: 'And let her not look for my love which has perished through her blame, just as a flower at the edge of the meadow when touched by the passing plough.' And, as it turns out, the particular sex-role reversal found in the poem appears to be a direct imitation of still another fragment attributed to Sappho (105c), thus seeming to confirm the thesis that 11 and 51 are to be read as a diptych.<sup>34</sup> Yet there is more to this stanza than a simple imitation of Sappho, or another example of sex-role reversal. Indeed, by means of its brutal imagery, the reader gains admittance into a realm of associations, which lead him or her into the darkest and least conscious depths of the Catullan poetic ego, into images of mutilation and disease such as Attis' self-castration in 63, or 76's reference to the Lesbia affair as *pestis* and *pernicies* ['plague' and 'destruction'].<sup>35</sup> At the same time, however, through this double image of the flower destroyed by the plough, the collection demands still another even more complex reading, linking all these poems in a further set of associations which ultimately produce an image of artistic self-consciousness and deliberate inter- and intratextuality unimaginable in an oral context; with the result that the reader has simultaneously a sense of being let into the secret reaches of the Catullan soul, even as (s)he recognizes that it is through that soul's conscious will to artistry that this very insight is possible.

<sup>33</sup> Horace, *Ep.* 1.19.28. See also Porphyrio's commentary on this passage, reprinted in Campbell (1982: 18–19). On the binary logic of conventional Roman sexual relations, see Wiseman (1985: 10–14).

<sup>34</sup> Quinn (1972: 163); Duclos (1976: 86).

<sup>35</sup> For 76 as 'a sort of summary and model for the entire elegiac and erotic segment of the Catullan oeuvre', including specific reminiscences of poem 51, see Rubino (1975: 289); see also Wiseman (1985: 170–1); Quinn (1972: 102); Commager (1965: 97–8).

The plough of poem 11's final stanza was of course a common symbol in ancient literature for the masculine phallus while the flower often signified an unmarried woman. Thus in Catullus' first epithalamium, for example, the bride is referred to as *flos* or *floridus* four separate times. Hence Catullus, in at least a figurative sense, portrays himself here as deflowered by the phallus of *mascula Lesbia*. Moreover, this same conjunction of images, the flower and the plough, is also found in Catullus' second epithalamium, where it is made unmistakably clear that the flower represents the still virgin bride-to-be, and the plough the ravishing male.<sup>36</sup> In addition, it will also be recalled that Sappho's poem 31, the original for Catullus 51, was itself probably created for a wedding, so that if Catullus could count on his readers recognizing the wedding background of Sappho's original, then the creation of an ironic contrast between 51 and 11, as poems of marriage and divorce, would have been evident. Thus Sappho herself, through her poetry and its various erotic themes, becomes the unifying subtext, uniting what have often been read as the first and last poems of the affair into a complex dialogical unity in which each poem's meaning is relativized by the reading of the other and by the way in which both of these poems are read by other texts in the collection, such as the epithalamia, the Attis, and poem 76's reflections on the affair as *pestis* and *pernicies*.<sup>37</sup> Yet the ironic relation obtaining between 11 and 51 is raised to an even higher power when it is seen that poem 11's imitation of Sappho (105c), which in 62 functions as a symbol of intact virginity, here is transformed into an image of Lesbia's insatiable lust.<sup>38</sup> Taken as a totality, this set of poems (11, 51, 61, 62, 63, 76) and their Sapphic recollections allude to the full range

<sup>36</sup> Ferguson (1985: 44); Fredricksmeyer (1983: 73); Putnam (1974: 79–80; reprinted in this volume, pp. 87–106). Poem 62. 39–47: *Ut flos in saeptis secretus nascitur hortis, / ignotus pecori, nullo convolsus aratro, / ... sic virgo, dum intacta manet, dum cara suis est; / cum castum amisit polluto corpore florem, / nec pueris iucunda manet, nec cara puelis*. 'As a solitary flower which has been born in a walled garden, unnoticed by the herd, and yet to be plucked by the plough ... so the young maid, while she remains untouched, is dear to her family; yet once she has lost the chaste flower and her body is befouled, she remains neither a joy to the boys, nor dear to the girls.'

<sup>37</sup> Ferguson (1988: 14); Wiseman (1985: 153); Duclos (1976: 78); Quinn (1972: 56).

<sup>38</sup> Quinn (1972: 162).

of Catullus' emotions, ranging from dumbstruck awe, to fear, loathing, and obsessive images of defloration and castration.

This complex set of both inter- and intratextual dialogical relations, in which Catullus 51 necessarily becomes embedded because of its role within the Catullan collection, would be unimaginable for its Sapphic original. Rather than illustrating the linear temporal movement of a performance which must first and foremost be construed in its immediate communal and cultural context, the Catullan poem becomes part of a complex dialogue which moves forward and backward within the Catullan collection itself, as well as back and forth between its literary sources. It is only from within this complex textual network that the individual poem then starts to refer to the larger world of Roman and Hellenistic culture in which it was produced. Each individual moment of the Catullan ego as presented within the collection becomes a dialogical nexus which communicates with all the others. In the Catullan corpus, the reader always participates in a multi-faceted dialogue constituted first by the poems themselves and only secondarily by its reading public. Yet the limits of that dialogue can never be fully mapped, never completely exhausted. The process of rereading and interpretation within its bounds is ultimately infinite.<sup>39</sup> For a poetry of oral performance the process of interpretation is also, properly speaking, infinite, but the hermeneutic circle it describes is not in the first instance the internal dialogue of the poet, but his or her dialogue with both the (oral) poetic tradition and the collective ideological and social world in which it is performed.

Bakhtin's work, then, allows us to understand the difference between orally performed and written lyric more completely than previous theories have. For the concept of dialogism allows us to see that the primary focus of a work is its relation to its context, both performative and textual, and that written and orally performed texts must necessarily conceive of their contexts in radically different ways. Moreover, by distinguishing between primary and secondary dialogism, we have been able to maintain Bakhtin's concept of the

<sup>39</sup> For an excellent reading of the temporal complexity of Catullus' poetry and how each new reading both builds on and surpasses all past readings, with particular reference to poem 11, see Sweet (1987: 514, 522–3, and 526). Rereading is of course something available only in a literate poetic tradition.

unique nature of novelistic discourse—as allowing multiple, separate linguistic consciousnesses to come together in an ongoing, serious but relativizing play—while at the same time making use of Bakhtin’s broader theoretical insights into the inherently dialogical nature of all language, genres, and consciousness, without being forced to see these phenomena as precursors of the novel.<sup>40</sup> Consequently, the concept of secondary dialogism allows the full range of Bakhtin’s theoretical insights to be applied to ancient texts, rather than seeing them as primarily useful for the study of prose from Rabelais and the sixteenth century onward. Finally, this reading has shown that not only *can* we apply Bakhtin’s concepts to ancient literature, but through them we are also able to make fine distinctions that allow us to see those texts in a new light. Therefore works that on the surface may appear to be closely related can be shown to pertain to radically different dialogical situations and thus to be different types of utterances. Hence, through the concept of secondary dialogism, we have been able to show that the poems of Sappho and Catullus, even when their semantic contents are all but identical, represent two quite separate genres of composition.

<sup>40</sup> Morson and Emerson (1990: 9, 131, 155, 236–40, 307, 319–25, 328–30); Bakhtin (1984: 87–8).

*Ceveat lector: Catullus and the Rhetoric  
of Performance*

*Daniel L. Selden*

‘fur es’ ait Pedio. Pedius quid? crimina rasis  
librat in antithetis, doctas posuisse figuras  
laudatur: ‘bellum hoc’. hoc bellum? an, Romule, ceves?

Persius

I

‘All lyric poets are hard to understand’, writes Gilbert Highet, ‘but Catullus is almost impossible.’<sup>1</sup> In one form or another, an anxiety of apprehension has dominated C. Valerius’ reception since antiquity. Ovid, for example, invokes his predecessor in the *Tristia* both as the type of the writer who divulged his love affairs and got away with it (*ipse suum fassus adulterium est*: ‘he himself confessed his adultery’)

Julia Gaisser’s invitation to reprint this essay allows me to present it in a fuller version, which more closely approximates its original form, albeit with some abbreviation of the notes. Page limitations imposed on its initial publication required cutting portions of the argument in Part II, whose excision, predictably enough, has caused some confusion in the subsequent reception of the paper. It has been a pleasure to acknowledge the many colleagues whose work has extended, modified, or taken issue with the views presented here. I have updated the bibliography selectively, but made no attempt to be comprehensive. The peculiar objectives of the volume in which the paper initially appeared dictated its form; nothing that has come to my attention in the meantime has led me to alter the argument in any substantial way.

<sup>1</sup> Highet (1957: 5).

and as a model for the moral separation of life from art (*mores distant a carmine nostro*: ‘my character is different from my poetry’).<sup>2</sup> Apuleius similarly identifies the poet’s mistress for us as if it were a well-known fact (*Lesbiam pro Clodia nomina[v]it*: ‘he called her Lesbia instead of Clodia’), though he simultaneously insists *pro se de magia* that erotic allegations of this type are a literary jest (*profiteri et promulgare ludentis est*: ‘confession and publication are characteristic of [the poet] at play’).<sup>3</sup> With the redissemination of Catullus in the fourteenth century, the major difficulty facing readers was the garbled condition of the text. Antonio Partenio, the first modern commentator on his work, laments that ‘no writer in Greek or Latin is more corrupt or mutilated than Catullus’. In his magisterial edition of 1485, he laments that earlier humanists had not endeavored ‘to restore the poet to his limbs, which have lain for so long severed and lifeless in the dark (*disiectum et exanimem*)’; had they done so, he alleges, ‘we would have have [his person] once more among us living, stalwart, and triumphant (*vividum robustum nitidum exultantem*)’.<sup>4</sup> Partenio’s false modesty, however, does not conceal his confidence in his own accomplishments—an assurance not shared by Angelo Poliziano, who criticized his project a decade later in his *Miscellanea*, which stress the disjointure that nonetheless remains in our intelligence of Catullus’ work (*inscitia nostra nunc quoque corruptum*: ‘now corrupt also through our ignorance’).<sup>5</sup> In a typically Catullan trope,<sup>6</sup> the physical deterioration of Poliziano’s manuscripts (*praerosum a muribus... [cum] reliquiis literarum male cohaerentibus*: ‘chewed by mice ... with the remains of letters hardly sticking together’), stands metonymically for a more pervasive epistemological uncertainty (*quod nunc tradituri sumus fortasse a nonnullis ut incertum et vacillans... deridebitur et exhibilabitur*: ‘what we are about to relate perhaps will be derided and booted by some as

<sup>2</sup> *Tristia* 2.427–30 and 2.353–4. For the latter, see Winter (1973).

<sup>3</sup> Apuleius, *Apologia* 10–11. [Editor’s note. *Pro se de magia* (‘In self-defense, concerning the charge of magic’) is probably the original title of the *Apology*.]

<sup>4</sup> Antonius Parthenius Lacisius, ‘Proemium’, *Catulli Carmina* (Brescia, 1485).

<sup>5</sup> The formulation occurs already in a remark from 1473 that Poliziano appended to his copy of the *editio princeps*: Rome, Biblioteca Corsiniana 50.F.37, p. 37. For the connection between Partenio and Poliziano, see Gaisser (1993: 66–108).

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Catullus, c. 1 (*cui dono lepidum novum libellus | arida modo pumice expolitur?*) and c. 22.1–7.

uncertain and unsound').<sup>7</sup> For Poliziano, the exemplary figure of the poet is less Hippolytus, restored to life by the critic's Aesculapian force, than Orpheus, whose head and lyre, floating down the Hebrus, continue their music, after his members have been scattered across the fields of Thrace.<sup>8</sup>

Modern philology has elaborated this tension along rather different lines. The revolution in classical studies effected by Lachmann and his followers in Germany at the beginning of the nineteenth century promoted not only a scientific establishment of texts. The systematic collation of historical evidence made it possible to reconstruct periods such as the late Republic with a degree of precision hitherto unattempted.<sup>9</sup> By 1862, Ludwig Schwabe had succeeded in working out a basic chronology for Catullus' life and for his affair with Lesbia in particular.<sup>10</sup> At the same time, however, the scrupulous plotting Schwabe offered as a solution to 'Catullan questions' of this type released the floodgates for totalizing fantasies about the poet and his circle, 'the extravagance of which', his colleague Robinson Ellis noted, 'at times reaches romance.'<sup>11</sup> The rift that historicism opened up in modern studies of Catullus has been stressed by Richard Thomas, and his formulation of the problem is worth quoting at some length.

Critics of the nineteenth century, and some of the twentieth, knew what they wanted from the poetry of Catullus ... ; culturally rooted in Romanticism ... , the criticism of this age was simultaneously fascinated and repelled by the vastly more liberal attitudes to which the elegiac and lyric poets of Rome expressed their allegiance. Fascination naturally brought with it fantasy, as detailed calendars and diaries were created ... , [and] critics confidently named girlfriends and rivals, plotted dates and places for the beginnings and ends of affairs, and in general created a battery of 'facts' that still inhabit our handbooks and works of criticism.

The advance of philological standards in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries ... brought a change. The works of Reitzenstein, Leo, Norden, Skutsch, Fraenkel, and others produced a climate wherein language, style, technique, metaphor, and the traditions behind Latin poetry were considered the business of the critic; in short, approaches dealing more with verbal artifacts than with personality provided a critical alternative. The legacy

<sup>7</sup> Poliziano (1971: 1:284).

<sup>8</sup> See Greene (1982: 147–70).

<sup>9</sup> See Wiseman (1985: 211–45).

<sup>10</sup> Schwabe (1862).

<sup>11</sup> Ellis (1889: p. x).

of such critics cannot be overestimated, and the methods and approaches they established are in general those that have generated and still generate the most important criticism of Latin poetry. But excess and overinterpretation are the exclusive property of no critical mode, and there now abound articles and books that are no more satisfactory than the Romanticists' works to which they largely react, as they deny the existence not only of Lesbia, but almost of Clodia Metelli.<sup>12</sup>

In fact, Thomas has projected into temporal sequence two antithetical impulses in Catullan criticism that have developed in the post-Romantic period side by side. One of the curious features about the history of Catullus' reception is that the most fanciful reconstructions of the poet's life are exactly contemporary with those investigations into the linguistic and generic composition of his texts which display the greatest rigor.<sup>13</sup> Potboilers, like Jack Lindsay's *Despoiling Venus* (1935) or Kenneth Benton's *Death on the Appian Way* (1974), do not as a genre predate the 1890s, but they begin to appear with some regularity during precisely the same years that have yielded our fundamental studies of language, style, and tradition in Catullus. R. Y. Tyrrell's edition of Cicero's correspondence, which appeared from 1885, explicitly encouraged writers to give imaginative life to the infidelities of Clodia, her wild revels on the Palatine, or yachting parties by the shore,<sup>14</sup> and, in fact, many of the authors of popular plays and novels about Catullus' circle in this century have also been respected scholars of the classics.<sup>15</sup> Textual science, then, by no means replaces historical fancy in our era. To paraphrase Adorno from a related context: they stand as torn halves of an integral intelligence, which do not, however, quite add up to make a whole.<sup>16</sup>

I would like for a moment to consider this discrepancy in and of itself, as an undeniable and recurrent fact of history, without regard for its legitimacy or error, or for its heuristic value as critically productive or pernicious. It is apparent that this sort of tension arises, over and over again, in appreciations of Catullus. Whether it is within a

<sup>12</sup> Thomas (1988: 54–5).

<sup>13</sup> See Wiseman (1975).

<sup>14</sup> Tyrrell and Purser, eds. (1890: 3. p. xliii).

<sup>15</sup> See, for example, H. Macnaghten, *Virgil's Secret and other Plays* (London: 1927), or A. C. E. Allinson [=Anne Emery], *Roads from Rome* (New York, 1913).

<sup>16</sup> T. Adorno, letter to W. Benjamin, March 18, 1936, in Adorno and Benjamin (1999: 129–30).



single text, or as debate between two scholars, or through the historical interaction of competing schools of criticism, no recuperation of the poet's life or thought is allowed to stand unchallenged as unwarranted, fallacious, imperfect, or naive. By the same token, however, this resistance is reciprocal, and no science of the text, however accurate or enriching its analytic power, ever manages to allay entirely the sense of its own inadequacy or reduction. Thomas, along with many others, derives this counterpoint from personal temperament or critical excess, but it is not difficult to locate the conflict within the poetry itself. On the one hand, the semantic dimensions of Catullus' work are unusually candid and direct, and the texts seem to convey a virtually unmediated impression of the poet. Both speaker and addressee are, in general, conspicuously marked, and the compositions purport to facilitate a frank exchange of experience between them: *hoc, iucunde, tibi poema feci, ex quo perspiceres meum dolorem* ('I have made this poem for you, good friend, that from it you might perceive my pain'; c. 50.16–17). On the other hand, it proves to be impossible to receive Catullus' work merely as a unit of referential meaning that can be decoded without leaving a residue. The syntax, rhetoric, and generic organization of his pieces is unusually enigmatic and complex, and these features tend to attract a significant amount of attention to themselves. A structural moment of concentration on language for its own sake can hardly be avoided, and this turns out to be, for Catullus, primarily a matter of discontinuity, preciosity, and play: *scribens versiculos uterque nostrum/ludebat numero modo hoc modo illoc* ('each of us writing little verses played now with this meter, now with that'; c. 50.4–5). This volatile coupling of immense referential pressure with a medium so palpably self-conscious and opaque is bound to polarize the reception of the poet's work, though the disparity is such that it seems simultaneously to hold out the possibility of resolution. Both facets of the writing, referential and tectonic, are stated explicitly within the same text (c. 50), and this inevitably tempts the reader to construe them in a relation of dialectical support.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, Charles Segal argued eloquently that '[i]t is precisely Catullus' extraordinary intensity of feeling which moves him to a corresponding intensity of

<sup>17</sup> For c. 50 as a programmatic scene of composition, see, in particular, Pucci (1961); Segal (1970; reprinted in this volume pp. 77–86); and Buchheit (1976b).

form'.<sup>18</sup> The suggestion has proved particularly attractive to Anglo-American scholars working under the impress of the New Criticism, and it comes as no surprise that so imminent a synthesis of feeling and form should have sparked a renewal of interest in Catullus since the early 1960s. Accommodation is, in fact, a major preoccupation of the poet's work (*mutuis animis amant amantur* ['they love one another with mutual feelings'; c. 45.20]), though the most persistent story that Catullus has to tell is of reciprocity envisioned, but un-gained: *di magni, facite ... lute liceat nobis tota perducere vita/aeternum hoc sanctae foedus amicitiae* ('great gods, grant ... that we may extend this eternal bond of awful friendship through our entire life'; c. 109).<sup>19</sup> 'The attraction of reconciliation', warns Paul de Man, 'is the elective breeding-ground of false models and metaphors',<sup>20</sup> and in Catullus' case, one cannot help but wonder why the bifurcated history of his reception perennially fails to bear the promise of such mediation out.

An exemplary text, both historically concrete and elegant in its concision, is Catullus' equivocal address to Cicero, which numbers 49 in the standard editions of his work. The composition is a single sentence, chiasmically arranged and set into phalaceans:

Disertissime Romule nepotum,  
 quot sunt quotque fuere, Marce Tulli,  
 quotque post aliis erunt in annis,  
 gratias tibi maximas Catullus  
 agit, pessimus omnium poeta,  
 tanto pessimus omnium poeta,  
 quanto tu optimus omnium patronus.

Most eloquent of the descendants of Romulus that are or that have been, Marcus Tullius, or of those that will be in years to come, Catullus thanks you heartily, he who is the worst poet of all, as much indeed the worst poet of all as you are the best advocate of all.

<sup>18</sup> Segal (1968b: 285).

<sup>19</sup> The tension is dramatized most fully in c. 64 where the Ariadne episode (ll. 116ff.) is set against the wedding of Peleus and Thetis. On the sense of *sanctus*, see Ernout-Meillet (1994: s.v.); Benveniste (1969: 2.179–207).

<sup>20</sup> See, in general, de Man (1979: 4–5), whose formulation of the problem I have drawn on here.

It is one of the scandals of Catullan criticism that this poem persistently generates two antithetical readings. In the first place, the piece presents itself as a genuine expression of gratitude and thanks. The exchange of courtesy could not be more direct (*gratias tibi maximas Catullus agit*), and there is no difficulty in construing the lines as the urbane compliment of a young writer, a self-described dabbler in trifles (*nugae*), to the leading statesman and literary figure of his day. As George Goold puts it: ‘When a man who represents himself as a poet sends thanks to someone he describes as the most eloquent of patrons, we are told all we need to know: Marcus Tullius has paid some compliment to Catullus . . . and this was the poet’s acknowledgement . . . [T]he thanks are real.’<sup>21</sup> At the same time, however, the reply has all the trappings of rhetorical bad faith. Sustained hyperbole, deliberate self-depreciation, flagrant catering to the intended addressee—these devices readily insinuate that more (or less) is being said here than the truth,<sup>22</sup> and it would be equally plausible for a writer as politically disillusioned as Catullus to mock the self-opinionated and censorious ex-consul. Stressing the linguistic mannerisms of the text, George Goold, in a later publication, arrives at a conclusion that is wholly contradictory to the first:

The grandiose apostrophe, the formal style of the vocative, and the exaggerated portraits of the poet and the orator show that . . . Catullus is writing tongue in cheek. And there is a sting in the tail of the poem, where *optimus omnium patronus* can mean not only ‘the best of all advocates[’], but also ‘the best advocate-of-all’, i.e. the greatest unprincipled advocate. Since Cicero after attacking the villainous Vatinius in 56 defended him two years later, he was certainly vulnerable to such a taunt.<sup>23</sup>

In this way, then, depending whether he decides to stress the central statement of the text or its linguistic structure, Goold develops two

<sup>21</sup> Goold (1974a: 263).

<sup>22</sup> See, for example, *Rhetorica ad Herennium* 4.67: ‘*significatio est res quae plus in suspitione relinquit quam positum est in oratione. ea fit . . . per exsuperationem cum plus est dictum quam patitur veritas, augendae suspitionis causa . . . , per ambiguam cum verbum potest in duas pluresve sententias accipi*’ (‘Signification [*< signum facere*] is the figure that leaves more to be suspected than has been stated in a speech. It comes into being through hyperbole when more is said than the truth allows, for the sake of increasing suspicion . . . through ambiguity, when a word can be taken in two or more senses.’)

<sup>23</sup> Goold (1983: 245).

independent readings of the lines, which are not simply divergent, but diametrically opposed. Catullus' note to Cicero might be sincere and eulogistic, or it might well be ironical and taunting, but clearly it could not simultaneously be both. As the two men moved in the same social set at Rome, occasions readily suggest themselves that would account for either case: thanks for being introduced to Clodia or for the defence *pro Caelio*; a sarcastic comment on one of Cicero's own poems, or a rejoinder to his criticism of Catullus' work.<sup>24</sup> Generations of commentators have been of two minds about the tenor and circumstances of the poem, without successfully resolving its interpretation.

Goold's revisionary reading of the text hinges on a syntactical ambiguity in the final line, and it is worth returning to that point. The difficulty is with the phrase *optimus omnium patronus*, in which the genitive can be construed alternatively in two ways, either as partitive with *optimus* ('best of all'), or objective with *patronus* ('advocate of all'). The grammatical parallels with the preceding verses, in which *omnium* depends unequivocally on *pessimus*, urge the reader to take the genitive with *optimus* as well. However, the phrase *omnium patronus* is well attested in contemporary Latin, and the fact that it occurs elsewhere specifically in connection with Cicero's professional activities suggests that the Roman reader would have felt equally comfortable with this construction too.<sup>25</sup> Essentially, then, Catullus has composed a sentence in which a grammatical incongruity in the final clause generates the possibility of double, but contradictory meaning, and this ambivalence extends retrospectively to the sentence as a whole. Taken at face value, every phrase in the formulation is flattering and builds logically towards the assertion *tu optimus omnium*, which would both complete and confirm the complimentary sense. On the other hand,

<sup>24</sup> These are respectively the suggestions of Baehrens (1893), Westphal (1870), Gugel (1967), and Schmidt (1914). For an overview of the history and merit of the diverse readings of *c.* 49, see Fredricksmeier (1973).

<sup>25</sup> A. Caecina in Cicero, *Ad familiares* 6.7.4: *ubi hoc omnium patronus facit, quid me, veterem tuum, nunc omnium clientem, sentire oportet?* ('when the advocate of all does this, what am I to think, your old client, now client of all?') For the negative connotations, compare, for the construction, Cicero's characterization of Clodia at *pro Caelio* 32; for the sense, *pro Plancio* 34, *ad familiares* 7.2, *ad Quintum fratrem* 3.5ff., *Philippicae* 7.6.16, *Brutus* 97.

if the reader makes it to this point and takes *omnium* as dependent on the noun instead, she or he is compelled to go back and re-evaluate the statement for its potentially ironic or disparaging intent. As it turns out, every word and phrase in the poem, even those that are apparently most deferential, such as *dissertissime* or *optimus*, figures in the writings of Cicero and his circle with connotations that are pejorative or may in other contexts have a less than laudatory sense.<sup>26</sup> Either construction of the final clause, then, produces an entirely coherent reading of the poem that is able to account fully, though disparately, for the lexical and thematic details of the text. Like the isometric rendering of a solid, which can be seen as alternately projecting or receding from the plane, Catullus' address to Cicero vacillates between two equally cogent, though mutually exclusive, points of view.

In his double essay on Plato and Mallarmé, Jacques Derrida speaks of 'the irreducible excess of the syntactic over the semantic',<sup>27</sup> and this describes precisely the nature of the complication here. The formalized and repetitive patterning of Catullus' grammar obtrudes not only as an operation independent of whatever content it conveys;<sup>28</sup> however one construes the sentence, its syntax leaves a remainder which, far from being exhausted in the meaning, undoes the possibility of determining the sense. What counts here is not the lexical richness of the statement, the polysemic lucre of a cultivated word or phrase, but the mutual interference between syntax and semantics by which it becomes impossible for either of two fundamentally incompatible understandings to prevail. In the philosophical tradition that runs from Plato and Aristotle through the Stoa, grammar stands in the service of logic, which, in turn, allows for the passage to empirical knowledge of the world.<sup>29</sup> In Catullus' poetry, however, parsing produces the effect of an unresolved semantic fluctuation, and this inevitably vitiates the

<sup>26</sup> The best summary of the lexicon remains Schulze (1880: 380–5). For a more recent, balanced overview of the problem in English, see Basson (1980).

<sup>27</sup> Derrida (1972: 250).

<sup>28</sup> The most economical exposition of the general autonomy of syntax and semantics remains Chomsky (1971).

<sup>29</sup> On this point, see de Man (1986: 14). For the relationship of grammar to epistemology in Hellenistic philosophy, see the sources and commentary in Long and Sedley (1987: 1.183–236). For a more detailed treatment of the problem see Frede (1978) and Graeser (1978). Full documentation is now available in Hülser (1987–88: Nr. 255–1035).

project of delineating anything about its subject that is certain. In fact, the sentence radicalizes here a well-known form of lexical bivalence that had troubled formal logic since its inception, what ancient writers generally refer to as *amphibolia*. Galen, in fact, distinguishes eight such types of ambiguity, among which figures the particular syntactic dislocation exploited by the poet: ἡ μὴ δηλοῦσα τί μετὰ τίνος τέτακται σημαντικὸν μόριον ('that which does not make it clear which significant constituent part goes with which').<sup>30</sup> Cicero himself, in a letter dated to the later 50s, cites this ruse as among those most appealing (*venustum*) to contemporary wits at Rome, and the letter's list of fashionable wordplays reads virtually as a rhetorical index to Catullus' poem: *amphibolia*, *hyperbolē*, para grammata, para prosdokian.<sup>31</sup> It is instructive for the present context that Cicero both identifies such ploys as the mainstay of his own distinctive brand of humor and elsewhere relegates them to the relatively marginal field of *genera ridiculi*, that is one form of oratorical embellishment among others intended primarily to advance the speaker's presentation of his case.<sup>32</sup> Catullus has evidently turned this trick back on the politician, but in so doing, it would seem, he has not only recentered *amphibolia* as a rhetorical device, but pushed it to the limit where it wholly disarticulates his point. As the grammar polarizes meaning into antithetical extremes, the alternatives are so disposed as to resist the possibility of mediation: they cannot be related as literal to figurative; one neither cancels nor subordinates the other, nor can their difference be exceeded or dialecticized in any way. As such, the syntax of the poem not only frustrates its stated communicational intent; the reader's inability to adjudicate by grammatical or other linguistic means between alternatives effectively throws the questions of authenticity, verification, experience, candor, personality, and persona permanently into suspense. Insofar as no amount of erudition will ever determine whether *omnium* is to be taken with *optimus* or with *patronus*, the statement of the poem is not simply ambiguous: ultimately, it is undecidable.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Galen, *De sophismatis* 4.

<sup>31</sup> Cicero, *Ad familiares* 7.32.2.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.* 9.22 and *De oratore* 2.216–90.

<sup>33</sup> For the distinction between ambiguity and undecidability, see Warminski (1987: 208–9, n. 37). The existence of undecidable propositions within even the simplest of logics was proved by Gödel (1931).

This entire matter, it might seem, would be immediately resolved by the intervention or recovery of an extratextual intent. The problem was common in the lawcourts, and Cicero himself lays down procedures for the handling of documents that are ambivalent: ‘When a written statement admits two or more meanings . . . , then the author’s sentiment has to be gathered from his other writings, acts, words, disposition, and manner of life.’<sup>34</sup> Thus, in the case of *c.* 49, D. E. W. Wormell bemoans the loss of evidence that would settle the determination of the sense: ‘It [is] impossible to give a verdict either way *without knowledge of the context*.’<sup>35</sup> This not only supposes that the original occasion of the exchange with Cicero would have made Catullus’ tone and message clear; it suggests that our ignorance of those details is an accident of history, potentially recuperable, but without intrinsic bearing on the putatively univocal originary meaning of the poem. Before we complicate the question in this way by hypostatizing a set of mitigating circumstances, or what in effect amounts to projecting a context of context for the poem, it would be well to note that the suppression of occasion is a gesture that is characteristic of this poet’s work. Kenneth Quinn, for instance, identifies the ‘Catullan Revolution’ with the invention of an ‘intensely personal’ or ‘meditative lyric’ in which ‘the poet abandons the service of the community for a more esoteric, more purely poetic kind of poetry’.<sup>36</sup> This liberation from context is most fully realized in the lapidary and self-referential epigrams, though the principle is worked out thematically in the famous *renuntiatio amoris*, which is poem 8:

Miser Catulle, desinas ineptire,  
 et quod vides perisse perditum ducas.  
 fulsere quondam candidi tibi soles,  
 cum ventitabas quo puella ducebat,  
 amata nobis quantum amabitur nulla. 5  
 ibi illa multa tum iocosa fiebant,  
 quae tu volebas nec puella nolebat.  
 fulsere vere candidi tibi soles.  
 nunc iam illa non vult: tu quoque, impote<ns, noli>,  
 nec quae fugit sectare, nec miser vive, 10

<sup>34</sup> Cicero, *De inventione* 2.116–17; see, further, *De partitione oratoria* 132.

<sup>35</sup> Wormell (1963: 59). Italics added.

<sup>36</sup> Quinn (1969: 26).

sed obstinata mente perfer, obdura.  
 vale, puella, iam Catullus obdurat,  
 nec te requiret nec rogabit invitam.  
 at tu dolebis, cum rogaberis nulla.  
 scelestas, vae tibi! quae tibi manet vita?  
 quis nunc te adibit? cui videberis bella?  
 quem nunc amabis? cuius esse diceris?  
 quem basiabis? cui labella mordebis?  
 at tu, Catulle, destinatus obdura!

15

Poor Catullus, you must stop being silly and count as lost what you see is lost. Once the sun shone brightly for you, when you would go where your sweetheart led, she you loved as no woman will ever be loved again. Then there would take place all those fun things, the things you wanted, though she was not unwilling. Truly, the sun shone brightly for you. Now she doesn't want you anymore: so you too, wild one, stop desiring her. Don't chase a girl who runs away, or live in misery, but harden your heart and bear it: stand firm. Goodbye, sweetheart. Catullus is holding out. He will not look for you or court you against your will, and you'll be sorry when there are no invitations. Wretch, I pity you. What life is left for you? Who'll come to you now? Who'll think you pretty? Whom will you love now? Whose will they say you are? Whom will you kiss? Whose lips will you bite? But you, Catullus, be resolute in your decision. You must be firm.

The impact of this monologue is linked directly to the fact that it is excised from its context. Gordon Williams stresses that the poem is voided of any concrete setting in time or space,<sup>37</sup> though it is equally apparent that the soliloquy defines itself within an historical unfolding. Between an absolute past (*perisse*) of pure joy and a hypothetical future (*adibit*) of unmitigated sorrow, the poet's reflection takes place in an iterative mode that emphasizes above all its own persistence in the present (*obdurat*). An entire series of events involving Catullus and his girlfriend is made to bear on our understanding of the poem, though, like Herodas' second mime, the monologue itself represents only a single moment in that story that has been isolated from the progression.

By freeing the composition from its occasion in this way, Catullus actually allows for two entirely divergent reconstructions of the

<sup>37</sup> Williams (1968: 461).



context. In the opening line, the lover suggests that he is both pitiable (*miser*) and a little silly (*ineptus*), and either of these directions can be followed up to construe a coherent plot line for the poem. In the first place, the device of pathetic self-address has generic antecedents in archaic lyric and Greek tragedy. In Euripides, for instance, Medea and Hecuba address themselves by name at moments of high crisis when they are actively engaged in self-debate or torn in two directions, agonized with indecision.<sup>38</sup> These women find themselves in hopeless situations, and Catullus' adaptation of their form of mental self-address suggests the anguish of his own less violent, though perhaps equally desperate, straits. C. J. Fordyce, for example, by locating the soliloquy between the ecstatic poems on kissing Lesbia and those that castigate her as a libertine, reads the monologue as a record of the tragic turning point in their affair.

[T]he emotion is the poet's own and the utter simplicity of the words, only a hairsbreadth removed from conversational prose, is a guarantee of their sincerity. Lesbia has turned away from him and he is in despair. There is no suggestion that he has a rival; he thinks of what has happened as a disaster for both of them and pathetically turns from his own feelings to speak of what he has meant to her and what she has lost.<sup>39</sup>

Fordyce has been much chastised for noting that this is 'one of the poems that Macaulay said he could not read without tears', though the remark is obviously of interest to a history of the work's reception. It not only establishes an unimpeachable tradition of reading the monologue in a tragic vein. Macaulay and Fordyce testify to the pathetic potential that this erotic drama holds for even the most learned readers of the poem.<sup>40</sup>

At the same time, however, Catullus chooses to realize his predicament by means of *topoi* taken from the comic stage.<sup>41</sup> The Latin *miser* not only strikes a note of personal misfortune. In *sermo amatorius*

<sup>38</sup> So, for example, *Medea* 401ff., *Troades* 99ff., *Hecuba* 736ff. See Williams (1968: 461–3).

<sup>39</sup> Fordyce (1961: 110).

<sup>40</sup> See Fitzgerald's insightful discussion of homosociality in this line of Catullan reception: (1995: 222–35 ['Between Men']).

<sup>41</sup> The basic discussion, which has been refined but never superseded, is Morris (1909).

(‘the language of love’) from Lucretius on, the word describes a lover whose will and reason have been senselessly subjected to his passion,<sup>42</sup> and much of the distinctive vocabulary of Catullus’ piece (*rogare, sectari, adire, obstinatus, obdurare, destinatus*) derives from comic contexts which portray infatuations of this type.<sup>43</sup> In fact, the mercurial persona projected by the poet has its closest parallels with the Plautine *adulescens* who meets the inconstancy of his mistress by an alternately angry and nostalgic acquiescence to her dismissal.<sup>44</sup> When the hero of the *Bacchides*, for instance, is told that his best friend has been cheating on him with the girl he loves, the ensuing monologue gives voice to a series of conflicting intentions and emotions: Mnesilochus regrets the past, strives to be firm, is conscious of his weakness, bids the girl farewell, and predicts for her a life of misery. The moment is preposterous within the context of the plot not only because the girl is a prostitute and so ‘by nature’ inappropriate for emotional investments of this type; when his suspicions ultimately turn out to be unfounded, the protagonist comes off looking like a credulous and quick-tempered scatterbrain who is completely at the mercy of the Bacchis sisters’ mercenary wiles.<sup>45</sup> Such moments are a stock feature of Roman comedy and, by invoking the topos of the irresolute *amator*, Catullus seems to offer a sardonic comment on the inherent folly of his own love. As Marilyn Skinner puts it:

The comic *persona* projects the discrepancy between the idealized and the real nature of Catullus’ relationship with his mistress. By his very presence in the poem, this quasi-Plautine speaker superimposes upon the poet’s vision of love that superficially erotic type of liaison characteristic of ancient comedy. There are strong implications, therefore, that in Lesbia’s eyes, and in the eyes of the world, the affair could only have been regarded as the latter kind of attachment. ... [Catullus’] misfortune is not simply the result of mistaken identity or intention but arises from an even more fundamental error—the attempt to impose permanent values upon an essentially transient and shallow involvement. Because Lesbia is the living embodiment of the archetypal comic *meretrix*, his relationship with her was predestined to failure on any

<sup>42</sup> See Allen (1950: 259).

<sup>43</sup> See, in particular, Gugel (1967).

<sup>44</sup> For a source in Greek New Comedy, see Thomas (1984).

<sup>45</sup> Plautus, *Bacchides* 500ff. Compare *Asinaria* 127–52, *Truculentus* 761–7, or Terence, *Eunuchus* 46–9.

level other than the specifically sexual. Moreover, it is implied, he himself, caught up in this fixed pattern, was foreordained to end as the stage *amator*, helplessly torn between love and hate, disgust and desire.<sup>46</sup>

Implicit in Catullus' employment of this persona is the awareness that his desperate condition may well be a matter more for laughter than for tears. The outbursts of anger or despair are funny in the Plautine *adulescens* precisely because he alone takes them seriously, while the audience knows that his predicament is hardly hopeless. Similarly, Catullus appears to cast doubt on his own negative appraisal of his position by implying that his anguish may turn out to be highly self-indulgent and overstated after all.

In this way, then, a superfluity of formal articulation overruns the meaning once again to engender two equally coherent, yet simultaneously incompatible understandings of the poem. While Catullus' monologue requires the reader to construe a context for the composition, its language is so organized as to dovetail generically with two divergent patterns of events. Either a routine tragic or a routine comic logic will position the speech meaningfully within an amatory plot, though the implications for the personality and perspective of the poet are radically different in each case. Catullus may be genuinely distressed about the ruin of a love that he thinks both righteous and unique, or he may be detached and ironic, satirizing the blind infatuation of an otherwise trivial romance, but these options do not allow him to be both. Since the pathos of the first reading is precisely the sentimental error that is the target of the second, the two possibilities have to engage each other in direct confrontation. As exegetical alternatives they are not just polysemically opposed, but mutually parasitic in a way that enables one construction of the poem always to denounce the other. Is the piece attempting in an unprecedented way to dignify an affection (*amor*) which Roman culture traditionally scorned as superficial, or does it deliberately savage the deluded pretensions of the undisciplined and mawkish lover? To decide the issue one would have to know the context for the composition, but the context is precisely what the composition makes it impossible for us to deduce. We wind up, then, as with the note to Cicero, in a

<sup>46</sup> Skinner (1971: 305).

state of empirical suspense, pivoting between two irreconcilable positions whose resolution the soliloquy per se will not allow.

This complication in the reading may require more attention to the details of generic composition than many readers feel they have license to supply. ‘When listening to the beat of another man’s heart’, writes Eduard Fraenkel, ‘we may allow the skill of the poet to recede into the background of our consciousness.’<sup>47</sup> It remains to be pointed out that this too is a Catullan trope and, as such, cannot be read back unproblematically onto the poet as a critical program for the reception of his work. A tension between pathos and poetics has been implicit in all the pieces that we have examined up to this point, though the dichotomy is formulated most precisely in the brief elegy to Q. Hortensius Hortalus that traditionally numbers 65. Catullus here apologizes to the orator for sending him a mere translation from Callimachus when the great man—so he implies—had requested a more original piece of work. The note is a single, run-on sentence which explains how Catullus is so overcome by anguish that he is unable at the moment to write a proper poem.

Etsi me assiduo defectum cura dolore	1
sevocat a doctis, Ortale, virginibus,	
nec potis est dulcis Musarum expromere fetus	
mens animi, tantis fluctuat ipsa malis	
(namque mei nuper Lethaeo gurgite fratris	5
pallidulum manans alluit unda pedem,	
Troia Rhoeteo quem subter litore tellus	
ereptum nostris obterit ex oculis;	
[alloquar, audiero numquam tua <facta> loquentem,]	
numquam ego te, vita frater amabilior,	10
aspiciam posthac, at certe semper amabo,	
semper maesta tua carmina morte tegam,	
qualia sub densis ramorum concinit umbris	
Daulias absumpti fata gemens Iylei),	
sed tamen in tantis maeroribus, Ortale, mitto	15
haec expressa tibi carmina Battiadae,	
ne tua dicta vagis nequiquam credita ventis	
effluxisse meo forte putes animo,	
ut missum sponsi furtivo munere malum	

<sup>47</sup> Fraenkel (1961: 53).

20

procurrit casto virginis e gremio,  
 quod miserae oblitae molli sub veste locatum,  
 dum adventu matris prosilit, excutitur;  
 atque illud prono praeceps agitur decursu,  
 huic manat tristi conscius ore rubor.<sup>48</sup>

Though the pain of the grief that has wasted me keeps me from the poetic maidens, Hortalus, and the thought of my mind can create no sweet children of the Muses, such storms of misery does it suffer (for not long ago the waves on the tide of Lethe washed over my poor brother's pale foot and the land of Troy lies heavy on him by the Rhoetean shore where he was snatched from my sight. Shall I never [console you or have heard you recounting your deeds?] Shall I never see you again, brother dearer to me than life? Yet certainly I will always love you and cover over my songs saddened with your death, such songs as the Daulian bird sings beneath the dense shadows of the foliage, as it grieves for the fate of Itylus stolen from it), but even in such depths of bereavement I send you, Hortalus, this translation of a poem of Battus' offspring, to prevent your thinking that your words, vainly entrusted to the unstable breezes, slipped right out of my mind, as an apple, sent as a furtive gift from her betrothed, jumps out of the virgin bosom of a girl; tucked away in her soft clothing and—poor girl!—forgotten, it is spilled out as she leaps up at her mother's coming, and it falls down and down irretrievably, while a blush of guilt spreads over her sorry face.

Thematically, the intensity of Catullus' feeling here is not only accorded precedence over his vocation as a writer; the eschewal of poetry is the very mark of his emotion and, in this spirit, the elegy has been received as an unmediated testimony to his despair. Catullus' grief is stated with the starkest simplicity and candor (*me assiduo defectum dolore*), and elsewhere he confirms that the death of his brother 'has completely banished from [his] mind all intellectual pleasures and pursuits' (c. 68.25–6). The poet's personal misfortune more than justifies his disinclination at the time to write, and even the pathos of his apology itself seems to effectively transcend any obstacle of form. The following commentary on the poem is typical in locating its achievement in the emotional transparency of the text.

<sup>48</sup> Line 9 is a Humanistic supplement for a lacuna in the manuscripts; for the textual history, see Thomson (1997: 449). In line 12, I have retained V's reading *tegam*, against the modern editorial consensus, as not only *lectio difficilior*, but exegetically defensible; see below, p. 510.

[I]n ... lamenting his brother's death, Catullus is speaking from the sad experiences of his own heart. It is an intensely personal grief that speaks. Others have used elegy to speculate on some philosophical or theological truth or to utter invective, perhaps, but Catullus mourns too deeply for that. Moreover he used a meter that fitted his theme. The simplicity of his utterances of grief is clear. He employs no pastoral convention or other device, but writes from his heart. Nor is there any difficulty in understanding Catullus. Others have written in elaborate measure and have almost covered up the feeling of grief; but the message from Catullus' heart flies straight to the heart of the reader. He speaks a language that all can understand.<sup>49</sup>

In fact, these remarks do little more than elaborate Catullus' own claims for the privilege of emotion over text, though in the process, their emphasis on perspicuity helps to prepare the way for a historical reception of his work. Catullus' elegy, it would seem, bears direct witness not only to the affective fabric of his heart; more specifically, it attests to the importance of his attachment to his brother and the decisive nature of his reaction at his death. Filling out the poem with details from related contexts, one of Catullus' more faithful biographers recapitulates the facts as follows:

There were three important events in [the poet's] life. The first was the death of his elder brother ... [who] died while Catullus himself was young, gay, and thoughtless. ...

[This misfortune] aged Catullus suddenly. Their father was alive, and was an important figure in Verona; but Catullus writes as though he had never existed. It had been to his elder brother that Catullus turned for sympathy, and even for indulgence. It was his elder brother who, as Catullus gratefully acknowledges, 'let him play' after he was grown up. At his death, the weight of responsibility and the gloom of maturity fell upon Catullus—and he was unable to endure them.

He was recalled from Rome to Verona. Apparently he was told that his duty was to take life seriously. ... He spent some miserably lonely months in the northern city. He threw off ... some highly-wrought modernistic poems, inspired by certain masterpieces of Callimachus, Sappho, and other Greek writers, but filled with poignant personal touches of remorse and aspiration. At last, when he was about thirty, he left Italy for Asia Minor as an aide to the governor.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Barnds (1937: 98).

<sup>50</sup> Hight (1957: 7–9).

Once again, this narrative is essentially a paraphrase of what is already stated by Catullus: not only the fact of the brother's death and the depth of the poet's sorrow, but the conflict-ridden parenting and melancholy imitation of Greek models are all figures that have been read directly out of Catullus' poem. Our historian simply literalizes these events, though he does not thereby exactly violate the spirit of the text. Oddly enough, he fulfils its thematic program, for his biographical account entirely eschews whatever in the composition may have been poetic.

At the same time, however, *c.* 65 remains one of the most compressed and complex pieces of writing by Catullus that survives. The hypotactic structure of the sentence is so tortuous that it first seems a virtual embodiment of the poet's undulating mind, though on closer inspection the artful symmetry of its arrangement becomes apparent. The piece is divided between a concessive and a main clause (*etsi... sed tamen*), to each of which has been appended an explanatory statement (*namque mei... ne tua*) followed by an intricate comparison (*qualia Daulias... ut malum*). Within this architecture, moreover, Catullus unburdens himself in a wash of shifting images which are not only formulated in highly elevated diction, but thick with intertextual allusion. Charles Witke goes so far to say that the poem is 'total metaphor',<sup>51</sup> though a full list of tropes would have to include at least metonymy, prosopopeia, chiasmus, and enallage as well. A recent handbook on Roman poetry observes,

The technique of [rhetorical composition] seems to have particularly interested Catullus. ... In [poem 65, for example,] the alternation of primary and secondary language (similar to that of Horace *Odes* 1.24) permits the linking of two totally disparate subjects: the deeply felt grief at his brother's death and the apology for an inadequate poem. The continuous movement between the two levels leaves the poet totally in control and, paradoxically, creates the sense of an intensely personal form of expression that flows forth as an impromptu performance.<sup>52</sup>

According to this line of reasoning, then, the elegy is not only a classic instance of Latin literary composition; it is a poetic *tour de force* in which 'the *illusion* of grief continually breaking through the bonds

<sup>51</sup> Witke (1968: 13).

<sup>52</sup> Williams (1980: 48).

of rational restraint is an *effect of art*.<sup>53</sup> This achievement has been praised as a product of ‘Latin genius at its best’,<sup>54</sup> and the poem figures in all modern surveys of Republican literature as a landmark in the assimilation of Alexandrian literary ideas at Rome. Catullus’ prosody, his word order, the figural disposition and handling of mythology not only betray the influence of Callimachus; they look forward to the refinements of Augustan writers and, as such, this piece has even been credited with the invention of Latin love elegy as a genre.<sup>55</sup>

To what history, then, does poem 65 belong? Is it one occasional document among others from Catullus’ private life, or is it part of the cultivation and development of ‘golden Latin artistry’ at Rome? To put the question more precisely: how is it that when one sets out to say that one is psychologically unable to write poetry, one winds up writing not only an exemplary piece of verse, but one of the germinal literary texts in the language? The complication can be localized in lines 3–4: *nec potis est dulcis Musarum expromere fetus/mens animi*. Catullus’ unequivocal avowal that it is impossible for him to produce a poem (*nec potis est*) is made by means of a metaphor (*Musarum expromere fetus*) which, at least since Aristotle, has been the linguistic marker of poetic production par excellence in the Greco-Roman literary tradition.<sup>56</sup> Catullus’ language, then, conspicuously belies his point: the formulation embodies an irreducible discrepancy between the meaning of the statement and the rhetorical mode of its assertion, and this linguistic contradiction is played out over the elegy as a whole. We can take seriously the semantic register of the text only to the extent that we suppress or subordinate its literariness and, by the same token, as soon as we decide to stress the diction we are forced to neglect or otherwise disqualify the statement. As such, the poem not only makes it impossible for us to privilege feeling *a priori* over literary form; the rhetoric of the piece ultimately puts the status of its pathos into question. If Catullus is not a reliable witness as to whether he is or is not at this moment composing verse, there are at least

<sup>53</sup> Quinn (1973a: 352), emphasis added.

<sup>54</sup> Ferguson (1985: 211).

<sup>55</sup> See Salvatore (1966: 28f.).

<sup>56</sup> Aristotle, *Poetics* 1459a5: ‘The most important thing [for a poet] is to be good at metaphor. This is the only part of the job that cannot be learned from others; on the contrary, it is a sign of innate talent.’



reasonable grounds for suspicion that he is no more trustworthy when it comes to the remoter circumstances of his brother's death or elusive states of feeling. In fact, the poet states quite clearly that he will simply cover over or conceal his writing with his brother's death (*carmina morte tegam*), and it is possible to read this theme as only one of a number of disposable figures developed in the *carmina maiora* which link existential loss to the production of poetic voice: castration, exile, abandonment, death, deracination.<sup>57</sup> As such, the pathos of the elegy can be made to serve the project of poetics as much as the various rhetorical resources of the piece can be shown to reinforce the expression of the poet's grief.<sup>58</sup> These two readings of the poem will never coincide and, to the extent that the rift within Catullus' language is irreducible, one will always be available to neutralize the other.

We return, then, to our point of departure in c. 50 with the thematized dissociation of referential from tectonic, though it should by now be clear that this is simply one statement of a complex process of polarity that pervades Catullus' work. If we ask what a text is for Catullus, we find that it is principally a site for the intersection of two irreconcilable systems of meaning. The examples I have chosen to discuss are all well-known, and the bifurcated histories of their reception are not in doubt.<sup>59</sup> They reveal, however, a common pattern of

<sup>57</sup> The situation is formally equivalent, for instance, to the fictive scenario of Ariadne's lament, c. 64.130ff.:

atque haec extremis maestam dixisse querellis,  
frigidulos udo singultus ore cientem:  
'sicine me patriis auctam, perfide, ab aris,  
perfide, deserto liquisti in litore, Theseu? ...'

[They say] that the sorrowful woman spoke these words with her last laments, her face tear-stained, and heaving shivering sobs:  
'Is this how you have carried me away from my father's altars, false one, and left me, Theseus—false one!—on a deserted shore?'

Wiseman (1969a: 17) remarks that '[t]he twelfth line of [poem 65] is the only passage in our collection of Catullus' poems with an apparently explicit programmatic content'. Elsewhere I have discussed the Callimachean origins of this program: Selden (1998).

<sup>58</sup> For the latter possibility, see Van Sickle (1968).

<sup>59</sup> The reception of the 'Sparrow poems' (cc. 2–3) presents a similar intersection of irreconcilable systems of meaning: since the Renaissance, they have been taken both

contradiction that cuts across all three of the major preoccupations of Catullus' verse (political, personal, poetic). It turns up in both lyrics and elegiacs and, if the sample were extended a little further, we would find it in the *carmina maiora* too. In each case, Catullus' text not only generates two equally plausible, yet contradictory understandings of the poet's circumstances, heart, and mind (grateful/belligerent, pathetic/ridiculous, distraught kinsman or calculating poet); the piece is so constructed as to make it effectively impossible for the reader to decide between them. In each case, moreover, this embarrassment arises from an asymmetrical interference between the formal elements of Catullus' language (grammar, rhetoric, generic topoi) and the semantic features of his text. Whether this complication is 'internal' to the poem, combining under one yoke two inconsistent senses, or whether it is 'external', dependent on the codes in which the text is made to function, the language systematically throws its subject matter into doubt. This pattern is sufficiently widespread to be considered definitive for Catullus' work, and it explains why the cognitive and technical criticisms of his poetry are always fated to diverge. A rigorous description of the verbal resources of the poems reveals not only that they fail to reinforce or dovetail univocally with meaning: by hypermimetically promulgating two irreconcilable emotions, the language strategically suspends the question of what state of mind, if any, the author was trying to convey.<sup>60</sup> Any reading that attempts to recuperate the poet's life and times on the basis of his work will have to do so ultimately at the cost of philological precision, and any critical examination of the poet's words is bound to expose such readings as naive, incompetent, or blind. In Poliziano's terms, Catullus remains *inscitia nostra nunc quoque corruptus*. To the extent, however, that this dissolution is a fundamental product of the text, it leaves us with a

for sentimental love poems (*passer* = [literally] 'sparrow'), and as bawdy allegories on masturbation and impotence respectively (*passer* = Roman slang for 'penis'). The debate still rages unresolved; see, e.g., Jocelyn (1980) vs. Giangrande (1975), Thomas (1993). [Editor's note. For more on the subject, see the section 'Debating the Sparrow' in this volume.]

<sup>60</sup> This is what distinguishes Catullus' poetic project from the literary phenomena that Mikhail Bakhtin refers to as *dialogism*, which always presuppose some form of psychic agency; see Bakhtin (1981: esp. 427–8). W. Batstone (2002) has argued otherwise.

series of lacunae which archeological imperatives can readily recover, but lack the power to repair.

## II

'No ancient', observes Paul Veyne, 'not even the poets, is capable of talking about himself. Nothing is more misleading than the use of "I" in Greco-Roman poetry. When an ancient poet says "I'm jealous, I love, I hate", he sounds more like a modern pop singer ... and makes no claim that the public should be interested in his own personal [condition].'<sup>61</sup> In the case of Catullus what is striking is not his recourse to contradictory characterological constructions, but the consistency with which the personae he creates seem to mystify his readers. Whereas one would expect the technical criticism of his poetry to have long since displaced biographical concerns, historically this does not turn out to be the case. Empirical demonstrations of the pieces' first-person artifice, whatever the degree of their disruption, never succeed entirely in dislodging the impression of 'an independent [individual] who forces his personality into his poetry'.<sup>62</sup> A popular rhetorical tradition, from Plato through Cicero and beyond, equates the writer ethically with his speech: *qualis autem homo ipse esset, talem eius esse orationem* ('as the man himself was, so was his speech'),<sup>63</sup> so that in the *Brutus*, for example, Q. Catulus is said 'to have possessed a graciousness not only in his life and nature, but even in his style' (*summa non vitae solum atque naturae, sed orationis etiam comitas*).<sup>64</sup> Catullus clearly likes to flirt with this connection, and the same set of adjectives that he employs to portray his private life (*lepidus, facetus, salsus, elegans*—'charming, clever, witty, elegant') also constitutes the

<sup>61</sup> Veyne (1987–91: 1.231), translation modified.

<sup>62</sup> Quinn (1969: 26).

<sup>63</sup> Cicero, *Tusculanae Disputationes* 5.47. The principal passages are collected by Sandy (1971a: 54–5); Buchheit (1976a: 334–6); Adamik (1977–8: 120–2). See, especially, Plato's proposition in the *Republic* (400d6–7): 'what about the manner (*tropos*) of speech ... and the utterance? Does it not follow the nature (*ēthos*) of the soul?' For a contemporary defence of the position, see Rudd (1964).

<sup>64</sup> Cicero, *Brutus* 132. Q. Aelius Tubero illustrates the opposite correlation: *ut vita sic oratione durus incultus horridus* ('as in his life so in his speech, harsh, uncultivated, rough'; 117).

principal stylistic features that he attributes to his verse.<sup>65</sup> A similar consistency between character and composition is suggested in poem 22, where the polish and sophistication of Suffenus (*venustus et dicax et urbanus*—‘charming and sharp and urbane’) match the elegant appearance of his published books (*cartae regiae, ... /directa plumbo et pumice omnia aequata*—‘royal sheets... ruled with lead and all evened up with pumice’). In this case, however, the poem goes on to discover not only a disparity between the man’s habitual refinement and the coarseness of his work, but a discontinuity so great that one would think the writer issued from a wholly different social world or class:

haec cum legas, tum bellus ille et urbanus  
Suffenus unus caprimulgus aut fossor  
rursus videtur: tantum abhorret ac mutat

(c. 22.9–11)

when you read these things, then that pretty and urbane  
Suffenus seems a goat-milker or a ditch-digger instead,  
so much does he become unlike himself and change.

Catullus punctuates this realization with a good deal of surprise (*hoc quid putemus esse?* ‘what should we think of this?’), though significantly he does not lambaste Suffenus as a literary aberration. Unexpectedly, he turns the tables on himself and concludes that all authors, in one respect or another, are implicated in this model error:

idem omnes fallimur, neque est quisquam  
quem non in aliqua re videre Suffenum possis.

(c. 22.18–20)

we all make the same mistake, and there is no one  
you could not see as a Suffenus in something.

Since ‘Suffenus’ here stands principally as a figure for the rift between the poet and the persona projected by his work, the generalization ought unequivocally to cast suspicion on any deduction of Catullus’

<sup>65</sup> See Buchheit (1976a: 337–40).

own circumstances from his verse. It is curious, then, that *c.* 22 continues to be received not only ‘as a historical document’,<sup>66</sup> but as a testimonial which, as one recent reader puts it, ‘reveal[s the author’s] fundamental philosophy of life.’<sup>67</sup> Why allegations of this type persist, despite explicit warning from the poet, is by no means clear, nor can they be readily derived from the patterns of semantic interference that we have studied up to this point. Rupture in Catullus’ work is genuinely aporetic, though, as the cycle of poems addressed to Lesbia thematically suggests, recognition of this rift may well be only one facet of a more complex opposition between conflicting orders of response: *amantem iniuria talis/cogit amare magis, sed bene velle minus* (‘such an injury forces the lover to love more but to respect less’; *c.* 72.7–8).

In this connection, the key text is *c.* 16, which since antiquity has been recognized as programmatic for Catullus’ work. The poem takes up the same error in reading diagnosed in *c.* 22 and, in blunt and rather roguish terms, it excoriates two readers who have fallen prey to this misprision:

Pedicabo ego vos et irrumabo, Aureli pathice et cinaede Furi, qui me ex versiculis meis putastis, quod sunt molliculi, parum pudicum. nam castum esse decet pium poetam	5
ipsum, versiculos nihil necesse est; qui tum denique habent salem ac leporem, si sunt molliculi ac parum pudici et quod pruriat incitare possunt, non dico pueris, sed his pilosis	10
qui duros nequeunt movere lumbos. vos, qui milia multa basiorum legistis, male me marem putatis? pedicabo ego vos et irrumabo.	

I’ll fuck you in the ass and fuck you in the face, Aurelius, you queer and you faggot, Furius, who have thought me, from my little verses, because they are

<sup>66</sup> Quinn (1973a: 156).

<sup>67</sup> Ferguson (1985: 69). The error is all the more telling in that Ferguson is one of the few contemporary readers who recognizes *c.* 22 as ‘one of Catullus’s finest poems’.

a little delicate, not to be quite decent. It is proper for the faithful poet to be chaste himself, but there's no reason that his little verses need to be so; which only then have salt and charm, if they are a little delicate and not quite decent and can arouse a lewd itching, I don't mean in boys, but in those hairy men who can't move their hard groins. You, who have read many thousands of kisses, you think I'm not sufficiently a man? I'll fuck you in the ass and fuck you in the face.<sup>68</sup>

The salt here is seasoned with a paradox. On the one hand, Catullus exonerates himself from the charge of impropriety, which he attributes to a metonymical confusion between the writer and his work (*me ex versiculis meis putastis*):<sup>69</sup> however lascivious a poet's compositions, he may be personally dutiful (*pium*) and free from taint (*castum*). At the same time, however, Catullus not only maligns the two men who have impugned his morals (*pathice et cinaede*),<sup>70</sup> but threatens them with rape.<sup>71</sup> Forcible violation of this type fell within the range of crimes that the Romans generally called *stuprum*,<sup>72</sup> and was by no stretch of the imagination compatible with either *pietas* or *castitudo*.<sup>73</sup> 'In the language of political alliance', writes David Ross, 'he is *pious* who has fulfilled his obligations by *officia* and *benevolentia*, who is guilty of no

<sup>68</sup> The text is from Kroll (1929), the translation modified from Richlin (1992a: 146). [Editor's note: Richlin (1992a: 144–56) is reprinted in this volume, pp. 282–302.] Recent discussions of the poem that have extended the reading proposed here include Batstone (1993); Pedrick (1993); Fitzgerald (1995: 49ff.); Krostenko (2001: 277–82).

<sup>69</sup> The verb *putare* here means not only 'reckon' or 'suppose', but more literally 'to refine' or 'prune', as if the poet's character could, with a modicum of effort, be distilled or disencumbered from his verse. See, Paulus Diaconus, *Epitoma Festi* 216M and Benveniste (1969: 1.153–4).

<sup>70</sup> Allegations of 'pathic' homosexual behavior are a standard slur in political invective of the period; the relevant passages from Cicero and Suetonius are collected by Opelt (1965: 154–7).

<sup>71</sup> Generically, the text is closely related to the *Priapea*, in which the ithyphallic figure of Priapus threatens to rape interlopers in his garden by raping them in the vagina, mouth, or anus; see Richlin (1992a: 57–63, 116–27, and 144–63). Extant examples of the type, however, seem to postdate Catullus.

<sup>72</sup> *Digesta* 48.5.35(34).1: *stuprum* is defined *in vidua vel virgine vel puero* ('in the case of a widow or virgin or boy'); cf. Justinian, *Institutiones* 4.18.4. See further, Treggiari (1991: 262–319); Williams (1999: 96–124).

<sup>73</sup> See Adams (1982: 198–201). From Plautus through Augustine, rape of whatever type is consistently described by verbs of corruption or defilement: *corrumpo*, *temero*, *inquino*, *polluo*, *contamino*. For *irrumatio*, in particular, see Suetonius, *Nero* 35.4 (*conspurco*); for *paedicatio*, Martial 9.63.2 (*homo non purus*).

*iniuria* against his political *amicus*.<sup>74</sup> Since, elsewhere, Aurelius and Furius are identified as *comites Catulli*,<sup>75</sup> that is fellow members of a *cohors amicorum*,<sup>76</sup> rape is a direct perversion of the *beneficia* they might reasonably expect.<sup>77</sup> It is, moreover, entirely at odds with the ideal of *castitudo*, which essentially entails abstinence, particularly from sexual relations.<sup>78</sup> At Rome, *pedicatio* ('anal penetration') with freeborn men (*ingenui*) not only brought disgrace,<sup>79</sup> but was probably illegal;<sup>80</sup> and oral sex is uniformly represented in the culture as

<sup>74</sup> Ross (1969: 87). The best discussion of *pietas* remains Hellegouarc'h (1972: 276–9).

<sup>75</sup> See c. 11.1. Lines 16.11–12 (*milia multa basiorum/legistis*) indicate that both the Lesbia and Iuventius poems are conceptually prior to c. 16, whatever the order of their composition. For the social standing of the *gens Aurelia* in this period, see Neudling (1955: 19–21); Neudling accepts the identification of Furius with the poet M. Furius Bibaculus (ibid. 71–3).

<sup>76</sup> For the ties of *fides* obligating members of a cohort, see Hellegouarc'h (1972: 56–62).

<sup>77</sup> In the Memmius and Mamurra poems, *irrumatio* figures as the breach of *fides* par excellence (see cc. 28–29), and already in New Comedy, the rapist is regularly *homo impius*; see Opelt (1965: 202–3). The elder Seneca describes a man who raped two girls as *publicus pudicitiae hostis* ('an enemy of the people's virtue'; *Controversiae* 1.5.1); for a homoerotic analogue, see *Controversiae* 5.6: *adulescens speciosus sponsionem fecit muliebri veste se exiturum in publicum. processit; raptus est ab adolescentibus decem. Accusavit illos de vi et damnavit* ('a handsome youth made a bet to go out in public in women's clothes. He went out, and was raped by ten youths. He accused them of violence and got them convicted').

<sup>78</sup> Etymologically, *castus* < *careo*, 'to lack' or 'be without'; see Ernout and Meillet (1994: sv) Note the distinction drawn by Cicero, *In Verrem* 2.4.102: *Ac minime mirum, quae sacra per summam castimoniam virorum ac mulierum fiant, eadem per istius stuprum ac flagitium esse violata* ('and it is not at all strange that the same things that are made sacred through the highest restraint of men and women have been violated through the rape and outrageous conduct of this man').

<sup>79</sup> It is worth noting that Cornelius Nepos, to whom Catullus' poems are dedicated (c. 1), ranks homoerotic relations among foreign practices that are obnoxious to Roman morals: *quae omnia apud nos partim infamia, partim humilia atque ab honestate remota ponuntur* ('with us all these things are classified either as disgraceful or as low and far from decency'; *De excellentibus ducibus exterarum gentium*, praef. 4).

<sup>80</sup> Most revealing are the series of anecdotes collected by Valerius Maximus under the rubric *De pudicitia* in *Factorum et dictorum memorabilia* 6.1, especially nn. 5, 7, 9–12; other evidence is collected by MacMullan (1982). For the notoriously elusive *lex Scantinia* and its social context, see Richlin (1992a: 220–6, 287–91) and Lilja (1983: 112–21). Boswell stresses that the issue was not the homosexuality of the act per se, but protecting freeborn adolescents from abuse and violence (Boswell 1980: 63ff.).

polluting.<sup>81</sup> In one of the *controversiae* recorded by the elder Seneca, a citizen is held to be unchaste for simply kissing inappropriate companions (*conservarum osculis inquinatur*: 'she is sullied by the kisses of her fellow slaves'),<sup>82</sup> and Artemidorus stigmatizes oral copulation unequivocally as an unutterable act of vice (*arrhētopoiein*).<sup>83</sup> Logically, then, the authorial defence here is self-negating: if the poet is actually virtuous and chaste, he will never carry out the rape, and, if he carries out the rape, he substantiates the claims against his morals. The imminence of the threat to punish Aurelius and Furius for failing to distinguish the decorous writer from his dissolute persona is, thus, maddeningly predicated on the validity of their (mis)reading.

This impasse at the opening of *c.* 16 effectively unsettles any referential understanding of the poem and, as such, succinctly thematizes the undecidability that structures the Catullan corpus elsewhere. The piece not only warns its readers off of any access to the author through his text, but is specifically set up to block that passage. At this point, however, the piece goes on to distinguish between the information that the text conveys about the author's character (*castum esse decet pium poetam*), the appeal of the verses (*habent salem ac leporem*), and the effect they have upon the reader (*quod pruriat incitare possunt*). The three features of his writing that Catullus singles out here reiterate a set of *topoi* central to the theory of rhetoric as elaborated

The most balanced short overview of the issue is Veyne (1981); the study of reference, however, is now Williams (1999).

<sup>81</sup> For example, Varro, *Menippeae* frag. 282 (*buccam offendere*, 'to offend the mouth'), or Martial 3.75.5 (*buccam corrumpere* 'to corrupt the mouth'). For a general discussion of the problem, see Foucault (1984: 36–7) and Richlin (1992a: 26–30).

<sup>82</sup> Seneca the Elder, *Controversiae* 1.2.10. The context is a virgin (*virgo*) who seeks a priesthood after she had been captured by pirates, sold into prostitution, but subsequently returned to her family; P. Asprenas speaks against her candidacy not only because, among other outrages that she has had to suffer, *someone* has violated her with kisses (*contrectata es[t] ... alicuius osculo*), but on the grounds that 'no woman is chaste enough if an inquiry is being held about her' (*nulla satis pudica est de qua quaeritur*).

<sup>83</sup> In the *Oneirokritika*, Artemidorus mentions a man who lost his penis after dreaming about oral copulation, about which the author comments: 'it was reasonable for him to be punished in the part of the body with which he sinned' (1.79). For the normative value of Artemidorus' material 'both in Greece and in Asia and in Italy' (1. praef.), see Winkler (1990: 17–44). Parallels are collected by Krenkel (1980), and Krenkel (1981).



concurrently at Rome. Aristotle had recognized three means for procuring an audience's good faith (τῶν δὲ διὰ τοῦ λόγου ποριζομένων πίστεων τρία εἶδη),<sup>84</sup> and Cicero reworked this triad to define the enterprise of rhetoric in general.<sup>85</sup> 'The supreme orator', he argues, 'is the one whose speech instructs (*docet*), delights (*delectat*), and moves (*permovet*) the minds of his listeners: to instruct is his obligation, to delight a premium (*honorarium*), and to move a necessity.'<sup>86</sup> For the senator, these three methods of appeal represent less a series of options for the orator, than mutual reinforcements engaged in common cause: teaching and persuasion will enter into strict alliance (*mirificam societatem*),<sup>87</sup> and, suffused with charm, the entire disquisition ought to operate as an organic whole. Thus, in the dialogue *de oratore*, M. Antonius remarks, 'There are three ways of bringing people round to our opinion—instruction, gratification, and arousal. The first of these must be openly put forward (*prae nobis est ferenda*) so that we seem to wish solely to impart instruction, but the other two should be infused throughout the whole of each speech like the blood that is in our bodies.'<sup>88</sup> Good oratory, then, aims at a synergic *docere–delectare–movere*. While each of these functions may make separate demands and entails its own agenda, the skillful speaker is conscientiously at pains to minimize their difference. In the ideal composition, he will not only see to it that they co-operate; the three will fuse into a complex knot which no opponent, however dexterous, will be able to unravel or succeed in cutting through.

Catullus adopts this canonical triad of functions, in their customary order, as the formal framework for *c.* 16, though, as the poem unfolds, it renders the relationship between the terms increasingly more problematic. In the first place, where the text takes up the issue of instruction, it does so only to inform us that it conveys no information about its subject. This is, of course, a possibility that Cicero envisions

<sup>84</sup> Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1356a2–4.

<sup>85</sup> For Cicero's dependence on Peripatetic tradition, see Douglas (1966: p. xxv ff.).

<sup>86</sup> Cicero, *De optimo genere oratorum* 3. The formulation is ubiquitous in Cicero's oratorical writings; see, for example, *De oratore* 2.115, *Brutus* 185, *Orator* 69. In various forms, he attributes the cliché to both M. Antonius and L. Crassus.

<sup>87</sup> Cicero, *De oratore* 3.73.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.* 2.310.

(*concessum est rhetoribus ementiri in historiis*: ‘orators are allowed to distort history’),<sup>89</sup> but one whose consequences he depreciates and is always anxious to contain. ‘It is from factual perception,’ he insists, ‘that oratory has to blossom and to thrive, for unless it is grounded in fact (*nisi subest res*), ... there is something empty and almost childish about the utterance.’<sup>90</sup> Whereas an orator of any reasonable competence would at least pretend to communicate the truth (*satis id est magnum, quod potes praestare, ut ... vere dicere videaris*),<sup>91</sup> Catullus mischievously parades before his audience the inauthenticity of his own claims. Secondly, and this is somewhat more disturbing, the abrogation of instruction here yields no apparent consequences for either the appeal of the poetry or its ability to arouse the reader. If Catullus’ work deliberately frustrates biographical certitude, it nonetheless (*tum denique*) possesses charm and proves palpably effective as a source of stimulation. This is, again, a possibility that Cicero admits (*magis affectis animis iudicum quam doctis ... est a nobis tum accusatio victa*: ‘on that occasion the accusation was refuted more by arousing the minds of the jury than by instructing them’),<sup>92</sup> though he is quick to brand such a dissociation as aberrant. ‘The faculty of eloquence,’ he argues, ‘after compassing a knowledge of the facts (*scientiam complexa rerum*), will express the perceptions and resolutions of the mind in such a way that it is able to propel the audience whithersoever it applies its force (*ut eos qui audiant quocumque incubuerit possit impellere*).’<sup>93</sup> Whereas the senator desires to insure instruction as the principal condition of public response, in *c.* 16 this link is pointedly dissolved: to teach and to affect are, for Catullus, not only independent functions; the poet claims the power to delight and move his readers even as his text surrenders any pretense to supply them determinate fact. Third and finally, moreover, what is most untoward here is the reification of arousal that this discontinuity allows (*duros movere lumbos*). Cicero’s own language is often rife with figures of

<sup>89</sup> Cicero, *Brutus* 42. It is by no means my intention here in playing Cicero’s rhetorical theory off against Catullus’ ironization of his precepts to suggest that Cicero was in any way linguistically naïve—quite to the contrary: see below, Part III.

<sup>90</sup> Cicero, *De oratore* 1.20. <sup>91</sup> *Ibid.* 1.44.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.* 2.201. M. Antonius is speaking to Sulpicius.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.* 3.55; cf. the discussion of Cicero, *Ad familiares* 9.2 in Richlin (1992a: 18–26).

seduction (*neque vero mihi quidquam... praestabilius videtur, quam posse dicendo tenere hominum coetus, mentes allicere, voluntates impellere quo velit*: 'nor does anything seem more excellent to me than the power to hold sway over assemblies of men by speaking, to entice their minds, to direct their desires where one wishes'),<sup>94</sup> though his discussion inevitably plays down the erotic connotations of his terms. 'Obscenity', he urges, 'is not only degrading in the forum; it is hardly to be suffered at a dinner party of free men.'<sup>95</sup> While the orator has scrupulously to banish all such crudity from court, the avowed intention of Catullus' work is prurient. The *voluntates* that his poetry excites are sexual and, as such, divert the senator's *coetus hominum* quite literally to coition.<sup>96</sup> As a whole, then, *c.* 16 is a puckish travesty of orthodox rhetorical prescriptions. The poem not only cuts the knot that binds oratorical instruction (*docere*) to arousal (*movere*); it develops their capacities to unexpected ends, without in the least diminishing the composition's charm (*delectare*).

Within the framework of rhetorical teaching at Rome, however, Catullus' insistence that we distinguish the information from the outcome of his work also constitutes a serious challenge to the dominant critical position. 'It is one thing (*aliud*)', Cicero concedes, 'to set forth empirical events..., but another (*aliud*) to stir up the hearer',<sup>97</sup> and *c.* 16 proceeds to press the nature of that difference. By denying authorial indecency at the same time that it claims to incite illicit desire, the poem plays off the referential value of its statements (*esse*) against their predicative power (*posse*). In our own day, it is John L. Austin and his students who have helped us to understand this distinction. To begin with, Austin stresses, it is essential to demystify the illusion, promoted generally in the philosophical tradition, that the only thing at stake in language is the 'truth' or 'falsity' of a proposition.<sup>98</sup> While

<sup>94</sup> Cicero, *De oratore* 1.30.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.* 2.252.

<sup>96</sup> For the variant orthography *coetus/coitus* and the overlapping senses of these terms, see Lewis and Short, *A Latin Dictionary*, s.v. *coitus*. The entry under II.B. notes, 'Sexual intercourse, coition (not in Cic.)'. See, further, Adams (1982: 178–9 and 189).

<sup>97</sup> Cicero, *De optimo genere oratorum* 15. The distinction is common in his work; cf. *De oratore* 3.111–12, *Brutus* 89, *Orator* 128.

<sup>98</sup> Austin (1975). The discussion of Austin's work that I find most useful is Felman (1980), whose summary of the lectures I have drawn on here. See, also, the materials collected in Derrida (1988).

such criteria are indeed applicable to the types of utterances that Austin calls ‘constative’, that is, to descriptive sentences that set forth matters of fact, truth and falsehood have no bearing on a second category of expressions, for which Austin introduced the term ‘performative’ into linguistics: utterances whose function is not to inform or to describe, but to carry out an operation, to accomplish something through the very process of their enunciation. Austin’s chief example here is the verbal act that consummates the Anglican ‘Blessing of a Civil Marriage’. When, after public proclamation of the facts (‘Diana, you have taken Charles to be your husband’), the bride responds in the affirmative to the ritual—and ultimately legal—question (‘Do you promise to love him, comfort him, honor and keep him, in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all others, to be faithful to him as long as you both shall live?’),<sup>99</sup> it is clear that the bride is not describing a state of affairs that already obtains, but executes a deed, for in uttering the words ‘I do’, she pledges herself to conjugal fidelity and thereby seals the marriage bond.<sup>100</sup> In the same way, Austin notes, to say ‘I swear’, ‘I apologize’, ‘I bet’ does not describe an operation, but performs one: by pronouncing the words, the speaker literally produces the event he designates, the act of swearing, apologizing, betting, or what have you. As such, the performative has no referent beyond itself; it does not record something that exists outside of speech and prior to it, but engenders or transforms a situation *that it alone effects*.<sup>101</sup> Its language is oriented neither toward the unveiling of a fact, nor the adequation of a judicative statement to the thing itself, and it is thereby liberated from the authority of truth value: insofar as the performative constitutes an objective force or action, its utterance can logically be neither true nor false, only ‘felicitous’ or ‘infelicitous’ in accomplishing its designated ends. In place, therefore, of the veridical

<sup>99</sup> On the specifically ritual dimension of performative language, see the *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* 4:2 [‘Special Issue: Ritual’, ed. M. Bax] (2002), 159–326.

<sup>100</sup> I cite the most recent revision of *The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments & Other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church, according to the use of the Church of England, together with the Form and Manner of Making, Ordaining, and Consecrating of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons; the Book of 1662 with Permissive Additions & Deviations approved in 1927* (London, 1927), whose language differs slightly from what Austin actually quotes in his lecture. For the Roman antecedents, see Treggiari (1991: 161–80).

<sup>101</sup> On this point, see Benveniste (1966–74: 1.267–76).

standards essential to constative language, Austin substitutes, in the case of the performative, the criterion of the success or failure of the enterprise in question. The whole point of a speech act, as Marx succinctly put it, is neither to expound nor clarify the world (*esse*), but to change it (*posse*).<sup>102</sup>

‘How can we be sure’, Austin goes on to ask, ‘whether any utterance is to be classed as a performative or not?’<sup>103</sup> Grammatically, in Latin as well as English, the main criterion is the asymmetry that occurs in certain verbs between the first person of the present indicative, active voice, and its other persons, moods, and tenses. Whereas an individual, by uttering the verb in the first person present tense, effectively accomplishes the act he names (‘I promise’, ‘I guarantee’, ‘I bid you welcome’, ‘*dari spondes? spondeo*’, ‘*vos precor, veneror, veniam peto*’ = ‘do you pledge it will be given? I so pledge’; ‘I beseech, implore you, beg your pardon’), the remaining verb forms are descriptive, and report or simply state a fact (‘she promised’, ‘I bid him welcome’, ‘*veniam a vobis petebat*’ = ‘he begged your pardon’).<sup>104</sup> In the long run, however, this criterion proves to be insufficient, for it fails to account exhaustively for all the different cases of speech acts. There are many utterances, Austin notes, that do not exploit this grammatical asymmetry, yet still belong to the category of the performative, in that they carry out an operation and lie beyond the pale of the truth/falsity distinction. For example, the impersonal ‘You are hereby authorized to represent me’ is readily rephrased in standard form (‘I authorize you to represent me’), just as the imperative ‘*cave canem*’ (‘beware of the dog’) can be seen as an ellipsis of the indicative (‘*monemus te a cane cavere*’: ‘we advise you to beware of the dog’). Performative language, then, is by no means always explicit but, as often as not, has been transposed or is only implied.<sup>105</sup> This generalization of the rule is crucial and makes it possible to see that the majority of Catullus’ writing is actually performative and not constative.<sup>106</sup> Whereas the principal

<sup>102</sup> Cf. the eleventh thesis on Feuerbach, Marx-Engels (1962: 3.7).

<sup>103</sup> Austin (1979: 241). <sup>104</sup> See Gaius, *Institutionum Commentarii* 3.88ff.

<sup>105</sup> See Austin (1975), Lectures V–VII.

<sup>106</sup> Austin frequently dismisses poetry from his analyses as ‘non-serious’; for example, Austin (1979: 241): ‘We could be issuing any of these utterances, as we can issue an utterance of any kind whatsoever, in the course, for example, of acting a play or making a joke or writing a poem—in which case of course it would not be seriously

burden of his contemporaries' compositions—Lucretius, Cicero, Varro Atacinus—tends to be descriptive, that is to record *res gestae* or explain the phenomena of nature,<sup>107</sup> Catullus' texts are for the most part incidental and almost always have a specific act in view. The individual poems function less to communicate factual information than as agents of some pragmatic force, so that the collection as a whole reads virtually as a catalogue of disparate discursive operations: dedication (c. 1), censure (c. 39), advice (c. 69), condolence (c. 96), warning (c. 21), request (c. 27), repudiation (c. 11), greeting (c. 31), apology (c. 65), blessing (c. 61), invitation (c. 35), and so forth. Even pieces that are generally considered in the literature as descriptions of an affective state turn out, on critical inspection, to be technically performative in thrust. Thus, the famous lyrical address to the pet sparrow (c. 2), though it clearly calls to witness bits of fact (*acris solet incitare morsus*, etc.: 'she likes to provoke sharp bites'; c. 2.4), is formally a high-style hymn in which the poet prays to be released from care (*tecum ludere sicut ipsa possem/et tristis animi levare curas*: 'if only I could play with you as she does and lighten the sad cares of my heart'; c. 2.9–10).<sup>108</sup> In a similar way, the multipartite c. 68 centers on particulars about the poet's mistress (*furtiva dedit mira munuscula nocte, ipsius ex ipso dempta viri gremio*: 'she gave stolen gifts on that wonderful night, taken from the very embrace of her husband'; c. 68.145–6) and about his brother (*Troia infelice sepultum/detinet extremo terra aliena solo*: 'an alien land holds him buried in ill-fated Troy, in a distant soil'; c. 68.99–100), but the passages that frame these statements explain their motivation as an act of *pietas*: the poem repays Catullus' debt to Allius through the commemoration of his benefactor's good grace (*confectum carmine munus/pro multis ... redditur officiis*: 'a gift made up of song is given in return ... for many kindnesses'; c. 68.149–50).

meant and we shall not be able to say that we seriously performed the act concerned. If the poet says "Go and catch a falling star" or whatever it may be, he doesn't seriously issue an order'. For a definitive critique of this gesture, see Johnson (1980: 53–66), who shows that, far from excluding poetry, the 'serious' performative is by nature a category of the fictional.

<sup>107</sup> Note the titles of the major poetic projects of Catullus' generation: *De rerum natura*, *De consulato suo*, *De temporibus suis*, *Marius*, *Pragmatia Belli Gallici*, *Chorographia*, *Bellum Sequanicum*: see Morel (1982: 79–129); cf. Cicero, *Pro Archia poeta* 104.

<sup>108</sup> See Williams (1968: 140–3).

This memento is itself, moreover, prefaced by a verse epistle which offers the whole of the ensuing elegy to Manlius in consolation for his old friend's grief (*neu me odisse putes hospitis officium, / accipe*: 'listen, lest you think I shun the duty of a friend'; c. 68.12–13).<sup>109</sup> As such, the descriptive kernel of the poem is not only imbricated structurally within two different layers of speech acts;<sup>110</sup> constative language here stands entirely in the service of these performatives, so that c. 68 asks ultimately to be appreciated not for whatever biographical details it may convey, but for the manner in which it realizes its compensatory and assuasive aims.<sup>111</sup>

That Catullus both acknowledges a basic distinction of this nature and regards it as central to his work is evident from c. 42. As is well known, this poem is based on a conventional form of popular Italic justice, whereby an individual denied his due, instead of resorting to legal proceedings, called his friends together, accosted the offending party in a public place, and gave a loud and abusive account of his offence, in the hope of shaming him into compliance. The traditional term for this procedure was *flagitatio*, and it is by this process that Catullus playfully enlists his lyric verses to help secure the restitution of his writing tablets from an uncooperative girl.<sup>112</sup>

<sup>109</sup> For the structure of the poem, see Gould (1983: 177–87).

<sup>110</sup> Whether or not Manlius and Allius are the same person, as most critics today suggest, the difference in the manuscripts is irreducible and serves to mark the two different registers of speech acts. See, further, Janan (1994: 112–42).

<sup>111</sup> The identification of an utterance as performative *per se* should not be confused with the fact that the formulation may commit the speaker to a set of other propositions about the world. Any performative inevitably entails, implies, or presupposes the truth or falsity of certain other statements of a referential nature. For example, the warning *cave canem* presupposes that there is a dog in the vicinity. The veracity of this assertion may affect the success or failure of the performative (if I know the dog just died, the warning will be ineffectual), but it does not alter its basic force. In the case of Catullus, critics almost invariably displace from the performatives to endless debates over the various propositions that they might entail; so Quinn (1972: 82–3) on c. 2: 'Formally it is a poem about Lesbia's sparrow; in fact the subject of the poem is Lesbia herself—how she feels about Catullus, and how he feels about her.' For the complication and the importance of maintaining the distinction, see Austin (1975), Lecture IV.

<sup>112</sup> The basic study is still Usener (1912–13: 4.356–82). For Catullus' adaptation of the folk tradition, see Fraenkel (1961: 46–51), reprinted in this volume, pp. 356–68; and Williams (1968: 196–9).

Adeste hendecasyllabi, quot estis  
 omnes undique, quotquot estis omnes.  
 iocum me putat esse moecha turpis,  
 et negat mihi vestra reddituram  
 pugillaria, si pati potestis. 5  
 persequamur eam et reflagitemus.  
 quae sit, quaeritis? illa, quam videtis  
 turpe incedere, mimice ac moleste  
 ridentem catuli ore Gallicani.  
 circumsiste eam, et reflagitate, 10  
 ‘moecha putida, redde codicillos,  
 redde, putida moecha, codicillos!’  
 non assis facis? o lutum, o lupanar,  
 aut si perditius potes quid esse.  
 sed non est tamen hoc satis putandum. 15  
 quod si non aliud potest, ruborem  
 ferreo canis exprimamus ore.  
 conclamate iterum altiore voce,  
 ‘moecha putida, redde codicillos,  
 redde, putida moecha, codicillos!’ 20  
 sed nil proficimus, nihil movetur.  
 mutanda est ratio modusque nobis,  
 siquid proficere amplius potestis:  
 ‘pudica et proba, redde codicillos.’

Help me, hendecasyllables, every one of you from everywhere, as many of you as there are. A foul slut thinks that I'm a joke and says she won't return your writing tablets. Are you willing to put up with that? Let's go after her and demand them back. So, you want to know which one she is, then? There, you can see her strutting shamelessly, laughing like a cheap comedian with the noisome yap of a Gallic hound. Crowd around her and demand them back: 'Filthy slut, return the tablets, return the tablets, filthy slut!' You don't care a bit, do you? You piece of dirt, you walking brothel, you anything that could possibly be worse. But we mustn't let her get off at that. If nothing else, let's wring a blush out of the bitch's brazen face. Call out again, this time in a louder voice: 'Filthy slut, return the tablets, return the tablets, filthy slut!' We're getting nowhere; she isn't moved at all. We'll have to change our method and approach; see if you have any more success: 'Chaste and honorable lady, return the tablets!'

Both the drama and the humor of this piece hinge on a pragmatic analysis of the language of vituperation. To the Roman mind, insults



of this type were not a trifling matter, but explicitly forbidden and policed by law. Under the XII Tables, slander was punishable by death,<sup>113</sup> and intermittent prosecution impressed upon the populace the gravity of the offense.<sup>114</sup> By the end of the Republic, calumny had been subsumed within the general edict for *iniuriae*,<sup>115</sup> and this made defamation technically equivalent to bodily assault. Labeo, for instance, recognized *iniuria verbis* ('injury in words') alongside *iniuria re* ('injury in fact'),<sup>116</sup> and their connection is explained in the *Sentences of Paul* as follows: *iniuriam patimur aut in corpus aut extra corpus: in corpus verberibus et illatione stupri, extra corpus conviciis et famosis libellis* ('we suffer injury either on our body or outside it: on the body with blows and the affliction of rape, outside it with abuse and libelous pamphlets').<sup>117</sup> These passages attest to the extraordinary efficacy that was attributed to speech at Rome, where the power of a word was thought to be every bit as forceful as the impact of a blow.<sup>118</sup> The point of departure for Catullus' composition is a double fault within the structure and authority of these speech acts. First, his invective capitalizes on the insight that the potency of language is not only distinct from, but operatively independent of its referential value. The insult (or flattery) that the poet levels at the girl packs its punch regardless of the truth or falsehood of his claims. Thus, the poet does not hesitate to offer contradictory assessments of the girl's morals in order to exert the type of verbal pressure that contingencies require. The performatives simply exploit constative language here, even to

<sup>113</sup> Cicero, *De republica* 4.10.11, quoted by Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 2.9: *nostrae contra duodecim tabulae cum perpaucae res capite sanxissent, in his hanc quoque sancendam putaverunt, si quis occentavisset sive carmen condidisset, quod infamiam faceret flagitiumve alteri* ('Our twelve tables by contrast, although they prescribed capital punishment for very few things, considered that it should be prescribed in these cases: if anyone chanted or composed a song that created ill repute or disgrace for another'). A gloss in Festus 181 M clarifies the type of defamation that is at issue here: *occen-tassint antiqui dicebant quod nunc convicium fecerint dicimus, quod id clare et cum quodam canore fit ut procul exaudiri possit* ('Ancient writers used to say they "chanted a pasquinade", while today we simply say "they clamored", because the raillery is sharp and canorous, so that it can be clearly heard from far away').

<sup>114</sup> Significantly, the famous cases involved poets: Naevius, Accius, Lucilius.

<sup>115</sup> See Daube (1948). <sup>116</sup> *Digesta* 47.10.1.1.

<sup>117</sup> *Pauli Sententiae* 5.4.1. Many other similar formulations are collected by Daube.

<sup>118</sup> In fact, in early law, the penalties for *convicium* ('abuse') were more severe than for bodily injury; see Fraenkel (1925).

the point of shattering descriptive logic and coherence. Secondly, the dramatic conflict in the piece develops out of a discrepancy between what Austin calls the ‘illocutionary’ force of the utterance and its ‘perlocutionary’ effect:<sup>119</sup> the act performed *in* saying something (insult, compliment) is not to be confused with the result achieved *by* saying it (recovering the books). While the illocutionary operations here are all exemplarily performed,<sup>120</sup> they fail quite conspicuously as perlocutions, since, despite the poet’s verbal efforts, the girl remains unmoved. As a whole, then, Catullus’ composition is organized around the discontinuity and tensions between these different registers of speech: meaning vs. force, force vs. effect. The resulting drama not only offers a wry critique of *flagitatio* as a judicial institution; as a poem about the usages of poetry, the piece implicitly locates Catullus’ work within the larger field of diction. Considered programmatically, the scenario in *c.* 42 distinguishes the poet’s enterprise from both the truth and consequences of his propositions (constatement/perlocution), whereas it aligns his verse directly with the agency and impress of the voice (illocution): *adeste hendecasyllabi . . . , circumsiste . . . , conclamate*.<sup>121</sup>

In *c.* 16, Catullus not only confirms the opposition of performative to constative language, but designates their mutual resistance as the generative principle of his work. The first section of the poem, as we have seen, takes up the constative dimension of the poet’s speech and openly denies its heuristic value altogether. The poet’s complaint to literal-minded readers (*me ex versiculis meis putastis, / quod sunt molliculi, parum pudicum* [vv. 3–4]) implicitly repudiates authenticity or candor as criteria appropriate to his reception and thereby situates the achievement of his writing outside the pale of knowledge—as Kenneth Quinn puts it: ‘the poet’s confessions mustn’t be taken as *true confessions*’.<sup>122</sup> It is against this cognitive suspension that, in the second section of the piece, Catullus asserts the performative power

<sup>119</sup> Austin (1975), Lecture VIII.

<sup>120</sup> For the paradigmatic character of Catullus’ diction, see the material collected in Opelt (1965) and Koster (1980).

<sup>121</sup> Note that the initial term Catullus uses to designate his writing tablets is *pugilaria*, which is not only a metonymy for what is held in the hand, but also for power (i.e., of the fist); cf. *pugil*, ‘boxer’.

<sup>122</sup> Quinn (1972: 247); emphasis added.

of his compositions, shifting critical attention from what his work reveals to what it does. In this case, it is no longer an occasional speech act, such as adulation or condolence, that is the issue, but the extent to which his poetry operates as a captation, a seductive force or lure that emerges in the act of reading:

qui tum denique habent salem ac leporem,  
 si sunt molliculi ac parum pudici  
 et quod pruriant incitare possunt,  
 non dico pueris, sed his pilosis 10  
 qui duros nequeunt movere lumbos.  
 vos, qui milia multa basiorum  
 legistis, male me marem putatis?  
 pedicabo ego vos et irrumabo.

The basis for this effect, as these lines present it, is the make-up of the poems themselves (*sunt molliculi ac parum pudici*);<sup>123</sup> the compositions are inherently provocative (*habent salem ac leporem*) and, as such, entail the ability to arouse desire even in the most intractable of readers (*quod pruriant incitare possunt*). The hankering inspired by the poet's words, moreover, turns out to be a rather special type of itch. The phrase *duros movere lumbos* is ambiguous, but it strongly suggests passive homoerotic behavior, that is, *cevere*,<sup>124</sup> and the surrounding sexual vocabulary uniformly converges on this sense: *pedicabo*, *pathice*, *cinaede*, *molliculi*, and so forth. To be penetrated, the poem submits, is what Catullus' readers really want, and the final lines here are set up as a tease to gratify that fancy.<sup>125</sup> The erotic subject matter of the pieces (*milia multa basiorum*) not only puts the reader into heat,

<sup>123</sup> In Roman rhetoric, *mollities* and *pudicitia* are popular terms for style that may describe either the form or content of a work; cf. Cicero, *De oratore* 2.59, *Brutus* 38, *Orator* 40; Petronius, *Satyricon* 2.6.

<sup>124</sup> See Sandy (1971a: 57) and Rankin (1976: 91). For the semantic range of *lumbus*, see Adams (1982: 48). Unlike their contemporary heirs, Romans distinguished the kinetics of a 'pathic' male actively engaged in anal intercourse as a special kind of movement, which they designated by the verb *cevere*; for the meaning of the term and its history, see Mussehl (1919: 387–408) and Fraenkel (1920). Williams (1999: 161–2) reproduces my own schematization of the semantics.

<sup>125</sup> Cf. Fitzgerald (1995: 34) on this passage: 'Catullus tells us ... that the success of his poetry can be measured by whether it sexually excites hairy old men ... [though s]cholars have not been quick to hail this as the key to Catullan poetics.'

but tantalizes him with the picture of a virile and sexually aggressive poet: *male me marem putatis?* The possibility is correctly formulated as a question since, from the first part of the poem, we know that conclusions of this type—about the writer from his work—can never amount to more than a suspicion. Despite this caveat, however, in the climactic verse, the virility that was at first posed only in potential has suddenly materialized as imminently real. In direct response to his readers' fantasmatic wishes, the poet promises to satisfy them by performing precisely those sexual services that he has got them to desire: *pedicabo ego vos et irrumabo*. As a whole, then, the progression in this passage is from the properties intrinsic to the poet's verse (*versiculos esse*) through a moment of reading (*legistis*) to the point where the poet begins to take on a life and character independent of his poems (*ego*). This is an operation that the *auctor ad Herennium* calls *conformatio*:<sup>126</sup> 'the figure represents (*confingitur*) an absent person as if present, or makes a mute or formless thing articulate (*res muta aut informis fit eloquens*), attributing to it a shape and speech (*et forma ei et oratio adtribuitur*) or some behavior (*actio*) that is appropriate to its disposition'.<sup>127</sup> In this case, the transference unfolds as a metaleptic reversal in which specific textual components and their determinate effects give rise to an animated trope that is subsequently retrojected as the source or author of the composition.<sup>128</sup> This

<sup>126</sup> The more common term is *prosopopoeia* (cf. Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* 1.8.3, etc.) or, in modern French and English, 'personification'.

<sup>127</sup> *Ad Herennium* 4.66; cf. Cicero, *De oratore* 3.204–5: *morum ac vitae imitatio vel in personis vel sine illis, magnum quoddam ornamentum orationis et aptum ad animos conciliandos vel maxime, saepe autem etiam ad commovendos; personarum ficta inductio vel gravissimum lumen augendi*. ('Imitation of manners and behavior, either presented in character or not, is a great ornament of style and well suited to win over minds or even to excite them; impersonation is an extremely important highlight of amplification'). Although *prosopopoeia* is regularly included among the basic figures of speech in rhetorical treatises of the period, Cicero also expresses some reservations about its exorbitance and suggests the public speaker might do well to avoid it; see *Orator* 25.85.

<sup>128</sup> Like Cicero on *prosopopoeia*, Quintilian includes *metalepsis* among the standard tropes, but considers its usage to be bad style; cf. *Institutio oratoria* 8.6.38: *est enim haec in metalepsi natura, ut inter id quod transfertur et in quod transfertur sit medius quidam gradus, nihil ipse significans sed praebens transitum; quem tropum magis adfectamus, ut habere videamur, quam ullo in loco desideramus... nihil enim usus admodum video nisi, ut dixi, in comoediis* ('it is in the nature of *metalepsis* to be a kind of intermediate step between the term transferred and the thing into which it is transferred, signifying

anthropomorphism,<sup>129</sup> the passage suggests, arises at the direct incitement of the verse, which concomitantly elicits in the reader both a desire for that image, as well as an historical investment in the figural exchange. Insofar, then, as the entire movement is set up as a calculated illocution, what the poetry effectively produces is an ‘author’ for its text.<sup>130</sup>

One of the implications of the performative poetics outlined in *c.* 16 is that Catullus’ writing is not so much a record or reflection, as the introduction of a new referent into the world. The persona projected by the text has no exterior or prior origin, though insofar as the peculiar burden of the effect is to advance itself as cause, the lyric’s argument eventually comes round full circle: from an initial assertion of the poet’s presence to his readers (*ego vos* [v. 1]), the piece proceeds to undermine the referential bases of this assumption by stressing the ethical autonomy of the poet’s text; having reached a zero grade of textuality, however, the poem goes on to trace the reader’s reconstruction of the authorial persona it has just dismantled, culminating in the same supposition of identity from which the composition issued (*ego vos* [v. 14]). This reassertion of the poet’s presence is now subject

nothing itself, but providing a transition; we claim this trope in order to appear to know it more than we need it in any situation . . . I see no use for it unless, as I have said, in comedy’)

<sup>129</sup> The term is suggested by Nietzsche (1989: 250). On this passage, P. de Man (1984: 241) notes: ‘“anthropomorphism” is not just a trope but an identification on the level of substance. It takes one entity for another and thus implies the constitution of specific entities prior to their confusion, the *taking* of something for something else that can be assumed as *given*. Anthropomorphism freezes the infinite chain of tropological transformations and propositions into one single assertion or essence which, as such, excludes all others. It is no longer a proposition but a proper name, as when the metamorphosis in Ovid’s stories culminates and halts in the singleness of a proper name, Narcissus or Daphne or whatever. Far from being the same, tropes such as metaphor (or metonymy) and anthropomorphisms are mutually exclusive.’

<sup>130</sup> In this connection, it is worth recalling the etymological significance of the meta-language that Catullus uses here: *poeta* is from the Greek *poiein*, which means not only ‘do’, but ‘make’, ‘cause’, ‘bring into existence’, ‘postulate’, ‘procure’—the connotations are entirely creative and have nothing to do with judgement, reflection, portrayal, or description; by the same token, *versiculus* < *versus* is a by-form of *vertere*, which essentially means ‘turn’ (in the sense of the Greek *tropein*), but also ‘transfer’, ‘apply to another purpose’, ‘cause to pass from one state or form into another’, ‘substitute’, ‘render from one language into another language’. A *poeta versuum*, then, is quite literally one who brings into play a set of verbal substitutions.

to demystification in its turn and, as the reader reverts back to the opening of the lyric, the cycle repeats itself anew. The ambit of the poem seems at face value to suggest a pattern of reception in which the biographical appreciation of the poet's work is perpetually destined to be replaced by textual understanding, and vice versa. Philologically, however, it would be naive to take the sequential manner of the lyric's exposition for a series of diachronic or historical events. The order of response described here conforms to the commonplace figurative scheme that Cicero refers to as *conversio* and Hermogenes calls *khiasmos*: the specular inversion of four terms of which the first is reiterated by the last and the second by the third (PQQP).<sup>131</sup> The handbooks stress the conceptual challenge of this figure (*difficile inventu*), and it can hardly be coincidental that the majority of their examples have to do with cognitive language or with poetics: *quae de illo dici possunt non dicuntur, quae dicuntur dici non possunt. item: poema loquens pictura, pictura tacitum poema debet esse. item: si stultus es, ea re taceas, non tamen si taceas, ea re stultus es* ('what can be said about that man is not being said, while what is being said cannot be said; or, a poem should be a speaking painting, a painting a silent poem; or if you are a fool for that reason you should keep quiet, if however you keep quiet, you are not for that reason a fool').<sup>132</sup> These model propositions make it clear that what their chiasmic crossing spatializes is not a sequence but a synchronic tension, and it is this basic paradigm that supplies Catullus with the logic for his lyric: the reduction of the authorial persona to the text is matched simultaneously by the textual production of the same persona. What allows this contradiction to arise is that the two sides of the equation, far from being complementary, are not in fact symmetric. On the one hand, Catullus' poetry can in all honesty point out that its significance does not reside in an objective entity or consciousness which the verse is

<sup>131</sup> Cicero, *De oratore* 3.207 (*conversio*); Hermogenes, *On Invention* 4.3 (*khiasmos*). In classical Latin, the term *chiasmus* occurs only in the *corpus agrimensorum* in connection with laying the groundplan of a city.

<sup>132</sup> *Ad Herennium* 4.39. The examples are introduced with the prefatory comment: 'Reciprocal change occurs when two contradictory thoughts are expressed by transposition in such a way that the latter follows from the former although contrary to it' (*commutatio est cum duae sententiae inter se discrepantes ex transiectione ita efferuntur ut a priore posterior contraria priori proficiscatur*).

trying to reflect.<sup>133</sup> On the other, it is free to posit such a referent in complete good faith: as a speech act, the personification of the poet does not record the temper of a subject that exists prior to the moment of reception, but generates a character of which it predicates rational anteriority.<sup>134</sup> These two operations can occur side by side in the same text without one ever interfering with the other, since the first is grounded on the principle of verity, the second that of force. Insofar as the juridical, descriptive use of language lacks the authority to disable or arrest its illocutionary power, Catullus' poetry can continue to perform the very speech act that cognitively it discredits. What is controversial about *c.* 16, then, is not simply that it drives a wedge between 'the character of the poet and that of his poetry';<sup>135</sup> more problematically, the persona that the text demystifies turns out to be a subject which, in the very process of unmasking, it nonetheless propounds. The order of knowledge and the order of action unfold here entirely at cross-purposes and, as a more extended analysis of the text would demonstrate, it proves impossible at any moment to privilege either one.<sup>136</sup>

<sup>133</sup> The pressure to disclose the truth is thematized throughout Catullus' work in a variety of ways, summed up in the formula: *nunc te cognovi* ('now I know you'; 72.5). In the erotic poems, this appears as an anxiety over what Lesbia might actually be up to and, in the invectives, as the unmasking of pretention, misrepresentation, or fraud, often of a linguistic or literary nature; see, for example, *cc.* 14, 22, 36, 39, 49, 53, 83, 105.

<sup>134</sup> The production of 'reference as a speech act' is analyzed by Searle (1969: 72–96).

<sup>135</sup> Sandy (1971a: 54).

<sup>136</sup> A succinct example of how the language of *c.* 16 itself palpably evokes this contradiction can be provided by returning to the paradox from which our reading of the lyric issued. Commentators have often pointed out that the self-negating logic of the opening can be resolved or superseded if we take the poem's initial proposition (*pedicabo ego vos et irrumabo*) not as a descriptive statement of the author's will, but as a threat or gesture of intimidation. Parallel passages in Catullus, as well as Martial, suggest that *irrumare* and its derivatives were a colloquial challenge or token of contempt (e.g., Housman [1931: 407–9]) while forms of *pedicare* appear regularly in the *corpus Priapeorum* 'not [as] literal expressions of [actual] intent but terms of verbal abuse and attack' (Parker (1988: 50). Inasmuch as they are speech acts, then, these obscenities are purely functional and reveal nothing about the speaker's ethics or coital aims, which may, for all the addressee knows, be dutiful and free from taint. The formulaic nature of the illocutions automatically fictionalizes the utterer by turning him into the mouthpiece of a prescribed attitude in a conventional discursive situation (see Austin, [1975], Lecture III). The circumstance is complicated only by the fact that the threat

Most remarkable of all, perhaps, is that the conflict of information (*docere*) with enterprise (*movere*) here is realized entirely within the realm of pleasure (*delectare*). Just as Austin's fundamental contribution to modern logic was to substitute, in the case of the performative, the criterion of 'satisfaction' for the criterion of truth,<sup>137</sup> so Catullus represents the personification of the poet here as a prospect of sexual fulfilment. 'A crucial feature of [promisory speech]', John Searle notes, 'seems to be that the promisee wishes (needs, desires, etc.) that something be done, and the promisor is aware of this wish (need, desire, etc.).'<sup>138</sup> This is staged quite literally in c. 16 where the illocutionary animation of the poet plays directly to the erotic wishes of the reader. The construction of the author's persona (*conformatio*) transpires across the critic's exchange of intellect for affect, and it is the sexual nature of this conversion that explains the link between prosopopoeia and chiasmus in Catullus' lyric. As Michael Riffaterre observes:

or menacement, to put across its force, requires the assumption that the poet is actually prepared to carry out the rape. As Searle stresses (1969: 60 and 65): 'The distinction between sincere and insincere promises is that, in the case of sincere promises, the speaker intends to do the act promised... Wherever there is a psychological state specified in the sincerity condition, the performance of the act counts as an *expression* of that psychological state. This law holds whether... the speaker actually has the specified psychological state or not. Thus to assert, affirm or state (that *p*) counts as an *expression of belief* (that *p*). To request, ask, order, entreat, enjoin, pray, or command (that *A* be done) counts as an *expression of a wish or desire* (that *A* be done). To promise, vow, threaten or pledge (that *A*) counts as an *expression of intention* (to do *A*). To thank, welcome or congratulate counts as an *expression of gratitude, pleasure* (at *H*'s arrival), or *pleasure* (at *H*'s good fortune)' (emphasis original). The important point is that 'intent' here is formally a product of the speech act which guarantees the felicity of its performance, but in no way verifies its cause. To be effective as a threat, then, the assertion *pedicabo ego vos et irrumabo* has to be counted as a signal that the poet is determined to embark on sexual assault; such an inference directly contradicts the collateral pretense to *pietas* and *castitudo*, but it lacks the epistemological authority to disconfirm that claim. The proposition is, thus, able to override its undecidability as description and, by virtue of its force, continues to induce the very referential supposition that the passage otherwise suspends.

<sup>137</sup> Austin (1979: 237): 'These performative utterances are not true or false, then. But they do suffer from certain disabilities of their own. They can fail to *come off* in special ways, and that is what I want to consider next. The various ways in which a performative utterance may be *unsatisfactory* we call, for the sake of a name, the *infelicities*; and an *infelicity* arises—that is to say, the utterance is *unhappy*—if certain rules, transparently simple rules are broken' (emphasis added).

<sup>138</sup> Searle (1969: 58).



[We can posit] a corollary to prosopopeia: the address calls for a reply of the addressee, the gaze that perceives animation invites gazing back from the animated object to the subject daydreaming a Narcissistic reflection of itself in things. This corollary is chiasmus, the transfer or crisscrossing exchange between subject and object, a most striking example of which [occurs] in Milton's epitaph of Shakespeare: the living overwhelmed by the voice from the grave, by Shakespeare's ever living verse, his true monument, are literally petrified ('... thou our fancy of itself bereaving/Dost make us Marble with too much conceiving'). Chiasmus, the symmetrical structure of prosopopeia, entails that, by making the dead speak, the living are struck dumb—they too become the monument. Prosopopeia thus stakes out a figural space for the chiasmic interpretation: either the subject will take over the object, or it will be penetrated by the object.<sup>139</sup>

The prosopopeia in poem 16 sets a similar series of reversals into play,<sup>140</sup> though the terms of the transference are not in this case life and death, but hard and soft, active and passive sexual positions.<sup>141</sup> If the reader can (re)animate the poet from his compositions, then the character that he constructs can in turn objectify the reader.<sup>142</sup> Thus, the poet's verse, which is said to be intrinsically *mollis* (soft, pliant, effeminate, immoral), gives rise to a persona that is, by contrast,

<sup>139</sup> Riffaterre (1985: 112). Riffaterre's remarks come from a memorial volume to Paul de Man; in fact, Riffaterre is commenting on de Man's discussion of Wordsworth's *Essay on Epitaphs* which, as it turns out, centers on a reading of Milton's early poem 'On Shakespeare'. Milton's poem alludes to several epitaphic contexts in Shakespeare, but the piece is, in the main, an ingenious rewriting of Horace, *Odes* 3.30: *Exegi monumentum aere perennius* ('I have built a monument more enduring than bronze'). This lyric, as is well known, depends in turn directly on Catullus: *quidquid hoc libelli... plus uno maneat perenne saeculo* ('whatever sort of book [this is] ... may it remain enduringly for more than a single age'; c. 1.8–10). Unexpectedly, then, there would appear to be a direct line of descent from Catullus down to de Man and Riffaterre.

<sup>140</sup> The influence of the sepulchral epigram on Catullus' work is well known; see Havelock (1939: 134–44).

<sup>141</sup> Note how the opening of the lyric embeds the prosopopeia in chiasmic syntax to introduce the theme of penetration: *pedicabo ego vos et irrumabo/Aureli pathice et cinaede Furi* (vv. 1–2).

<sup>142</sup> The peculiar nature of the personification here also entails a chiasmic exchange between speech and silence; as Amy Richlin notes (1992a: 149): 'Irrumation, logically, forces the victims to be silent as well, as in the absurd double entendre in 74 (lines 5–6, 'quamvis irrumet ipsum/nunc patrum, verbum non faciet patruus', 'though he should fuck his uncle's own mouth, his uncle wouldn't say a word'—naturally). Hence the special applicability of Catullus' threat to irrumate his critics in 16'; cf. Fitzgerald (1995: 59–86).

*durus* (hard, stiff, masculine, austere), while Aurelius and Furius, at first described as *durus*, imagine sexually submitting to this figure in a manner that is *mollis*.<sup>143</sup> In keeping with the self-reflexive logic of the lyric, the erotic roles staked out for the poet and his friends (*irrumatio*, *pedicare*) do not function as indices to authentic acts of copulation, but serve as placemarkers in an exchange of objective relations to the text.<sup>144</sup> That is why the terms of the scenario are homosexual: though elsewhere women figure prominently among the audience envisioned for Catullus' work, the match here is a contest between equals in which the shift from top to bottom, active to passive, dramatizes a scandalous, yet ultimately satisfying capitulation to poetical

<sup>143</sup> Cf. Cicero, *Tusculanae Disputationes* 2.27: *videsne poetae quid mali adferant? lamentantes inducunt fortissimos viros, molliunt animos nostros, ita sunt deinde dulces, ut non legantur modo, sed etiam ediscantur. sic ad malam domesticam disciplinam vitamque umbratilem et delicatam cum accesserunt etiam poetae, nervos omnes virtutis elidunt* ('Do you see what evil poets introduce? They bring in strong men weeping; they weaken our spirits; then they are so pleasant that they are not only read but learned by heart. Thus when poets are combined with bad domestic discipline and a secluded and luxurious life, they crush all the sinews of manhood'). The pairing of *mollis* and *durus* as antonyms is commonplace—cf. Seneca, *Phaedra* 918–21: *o vita fallax, ... / pudor impudentem celat, audacem quies, pietas nefandum; vera fallaces probant| simulantque molles dura* ('o two-faced life ... shame conceals the shameless, meekness daring, piety unspeakable crime; false men approve truth, the soft feign austerity'). To the Roman mind, these terms were closely connected with notions of virility; thus, a man who lacks sexual potency or prowess is described as *mollis* (Catullus, c. 25: *Cinaede Thalle, mollior ... pene languido*: 'queer Thallus, softer than a drooping penis'; Horace, *Epodes* 12.16), while an adolescent, on reaching sexual maturity, is said to become *durus*, 'hard' (Juvenal, *Satires* 6.377 and Arnobius, *Adversus nationes* 5.25; cf. Celsus, *De medicina* 4.19.3: *corpus durum et virile*, 'a hard and manly body'). The adjective generally applied to the erect penis is *rigidus* (see Adams [1982: 103]), though *durus* is a common synonym for *rigidus* and is sometimes used to suggest erection; see, for example, Martial, *Epigrams* 7.58 where Galla looks to replace her impotent 'husband' (*mollem maritum*) with a more potent and aggressive partner (*dura rusticitate trucem*). Gregory the Great, in his *Moralia*, sums up a long line of thinking when he remarks: *molle est ... quod penetrari potest, durum quod penetrari non potest* ('the soft is ... what can be penetrated, the hard what cannot be penetrated'; 16.51). See further Williams' discussion of 'Effeminacy and Masculinity'; Williams (1999: 125–59).

<sup>144</sup> Kinsey (1966: 105): who, like most commentators, takes c. 16 as Catullus' defence of his own virility and sexual dominance ('Is he perhaps rejecting advances from Furius and Aurelius?'), is at least aware that this requires ignoring the poet's explicit admonitions: 'Did Catullus ever play the rôle of a *pathicus*? When answering this question we may appear to be doing what Catullus in Poem 16 said we must not do, namely using his verse as evidence for his way of life, but ... [t]he fact that Catullus says that his verse is not good evidence for his life does not necessarily mean that it is not.'

effect.<sup>145</sup> The pair of slurs that the lyric levels against its addressees (*pathice et cinaede*) are not simply gratuitous insults, but accurately describe the reader's submission—not to the poet's person, but—to the personified pressure of his text. Under the impact of the writer's illocutions, the reader is passively subject to the coercion of external force (*pathicus*)<sup>146</sup> and, by conceding to this textual aggression, 'he'

<sup>145</sup> To represent the reader in this context as a woman would, to the Roman mind, already mark her as subservient. This also explains the qualification *non dico pueris, sed his pilosis* (v. 10): while youths might be fair targets for socio-sexual domination, mature men (*pilosi*: typically in contrast to the 'effeminate' smoothness of boys—on this point see, e.g., Novius, frag. 19 Ribbeck; Statyllius Flaccus, *A.P.* 12.25; Boswell (1980: 76 n. 72); Gleason (1995: 55–81), particularly citizens, were theoretically off limits. The summary of the protocols at classical Athens in Halperin (1990: 30–1) applies in general to popular morality at Rome as well: 'Sex [here] is not only polarizing...; it is also hierarchical. For the insertive partner is construed as a sexual agent, whose phallic penetration of another person's body expresses sexual "activity", whereas the receptive partner is construed as a sexual patient, whose submission to phallic penetration expresses sexual "passivity". Sexual "activity", moreover, is thematized as domination: the relation between the "active" and "passive" sexual partner is thought of as the same kind of relation as that obtaining between social superior and social inferior. "Active" and "passive" sexual roles are therefore necessarily isomorphic with superordinate and subordinate social status; hence, an adult, male citizen... can have legitimate sexual relations only with statutory minors (his inferiors not in age but in social and political status): the proper targets of his sexual desire include, specifically, women, boys, foreigners, and slaves—all of them persons who do not enjoy the same legal and political rights and privileges that he does. Furthermore, what a citizen does in bed reflects the differential in status that distinguishes him from his sexual partner: the citizen's superior prestige and authority express themselves in his sexual precedence—in his power to initiate a sexual act, his right to obtain pleasure from it, and his assumption of an insertive rather than a receptive sexual role.' For the Roman data, see Williams (1999: esp. 77–92), 'Mature Males as Sexual Objects'. Both the gender assigned to Catullus' readers, then, and their (imagined) sexual positions are coded to connote unexpected, if not illicit, acts of domination and submission. In this context, the detail *duros nequeunt movere lumbos* (v. 11) might suggest either 'stiff from age' (Quinn [1973a: 145]) and, by extension already impotent, or virile and erect but unable to find satisfaction in sexual 'activity'.

<sup>146</sup> The adjective *pathicus*, which does not occur before Catullus, is evidently derived from an unattested Greek form \**pathikos* < *pathos/pathein* (*paskhō*); see Walde (1938–56), 2:264. The basic meaning of *paskhō* is 'to have something done to one' and, though occasionally used in a sexual sense, it refers generally to the impress of any outside force. The most common adjectival form is *pathētikos* whose regular antonym, is, significantly enough, *poiētikos*; so, for example, Aristotle, *On Generation and Corruption* 324a5–9. In later Greek, *pathētikos* is sometimes used to refer to the passive role in intercourse (see, for example, Vettius Valens, *Astrology* 113.24), though the Latin by-form *pathicus* almost always has erotic connotations. There is nothing specifically

compliantly sets ‘himself’ in the position of receptor (*cinaedus*).<sup>147</sup> Whether in performance or off the written page, the addressee not only cooperates with this reversal; ‘he’ derives considerable pleasure from ‘his’ surrender to a stance that could, in this case, quite properly be called ‘aesthetic’. This critical insight would take us a long way towards understanding the psychopathology of literary institutions, which turn out to involve a good deal more masochism than is generally supposed.<sup>148</sup> In the present context, however, it will be enough to note that the poet’s public remains directly invested not only in the project of prosopopoeia, but in the personal subjection that this inevitably entails. Aurelius and Furius stand for all future readers of Caullus’ work who, at the very moment they think that they have gained some descriptive or evaluative control over the poet, discover that they have simply been ‘fucked over’ by his text.

Like the other poems that we have looked at, then, *c.* 16 is constituted as a site of opposition between two irreconcilable facets of

homoerotic implied in the term, which is equally applicable to women and to men; see, for example, *Priapea* 25.3: *pathicae puellae*.

<sup>147</sup> Like *pathicus*, the term *cinaedus* is taken over directly from the Greek (*kinaidos*); its basic sense is ‘dancer’—cf. G. Goetz, *Corpus Glossariorum Latinorum* (Leipzig and Berlin, 1888–1923), 5:654: *cynedi qui publicae clunem agitant id est saltatores vel pantomimi* (‘cinaedi: those who shake their buttocks in public, that is, dancers and pantomimes’); see W. Kroll, ‘Kinaidos’, *RE* 11:1:459–62 and Courtney (1980: *ad* 6.O19). By analogy with their gyrations, the term was commonly transferred to men who prefer to play the receptive role in anal intercourse. In contrast to the wholly passive connotations of *pathicus*, however, *cinaedus* implies active cooperation in producing sex; in fact, the form was popularly etymologized as a contraction of *κινεῖν τὸ αἰδοῖον* (‘to move the private parts’). Occasionally, therefore, *cinaedus* was also used to designate the agent of sexual penetration, as is noted by the scholiast to Lucian: *κίναιδος ὁ τε ποιῶν ὁ τε πάσχων παρὰ τὸ τὴν αἰδὼ κινεῖν* (‘the *cinaedus* is both the one acting and the one experiencing during the motion of the private parts’; 211, 3 Rabe). Under the Empire, at least, *cinaedus* was a common term for male prostitutes available for penetration, and seems to have connoted promiscuity and debauchery in general; see Boswell (1980: 76 and 79 n. 87); cf. Richlin (1993). For further discussion in Greek and Roman contexts respectively, see Winkler (1990: 45ff.), and Williams (1999: 160–224).

<sup>148</sup> Albeit in a different vocabulary, the dialectic of desire indicated here finds its sufficient gloss in Freud, whose pivotal essay ‘A Child is Being Beaten’ (1919) traces from its origin (*Anregung*) in reading the popular fantasy of male homoerotic abuse; see Freud (1919: 12.197–226), to be read in conjunction with ‘Triebe und Triebchicksale’ (Freud: 1915: 10.210–32), and ‘Das ökonomische Problem des Masochismus’ (Freud 1924: 13.371–91), and the invaluable commentary of Lacan (1966: 315–22), etc.

the poet's speech. Whereas in more basic texts the autonomy of syntax, rhetoric, or genre from semantics gives rise to mutually resistant meanings, the problem that Catullus tackles here is the surplus of the performative over the constative, the ability that language has to overrun even a crux or paretis of understanding. In this case, moreover, Catullus' explication of the principle is metacritical and alludes conspicuously to his corpus as a whole: the piece is not only an invective about the reading of erotic poetry; its reminder *milia multa basiorum/legistis* [vv. 11–12] refers us synecdochically to both the Lesbia and Iuventius lyrics,<sup>149</sup> the two main cycles of amatory verse, hetero- and homoerotic, that make up the collection; and the entire set of literary issues brought into play here arises out of competing claims to civil rectitude (*pietas*), so that the personal and the poetic are ultimately inscribed within the horizon of the political. As an epitome of Catullus' writing across the board, then, *c.* 16 explains why a technical criticism of the poet's work is never able to displace biographical concerns. No matter how directly Catullus' verses elicit contradiction, no matter how lucidly they name this impasse or excoriate readers inattentive to its structure, the illocutionary force of his statements ultimately outscripts their descriptive function and introduces a nexus of effects that is fundamentally at odds with the poems' expository intent. No amount of understanding of the poet's craftsmanship will entirely undo the rhetorical production of his persona, just as, however forceful, this impression ultimately lacks the power to efface the knowledge of its own linguistic means. Considered as constative, the poems' assertions short-circuit the effect of their performance, but when taken as performatives, they literally escape the hold of truth. Catullus' poetry is set up both to exploit and to expose this friction and, to the extent that the two features of the text prove incompatible, they cannot help but rupture the appreciation of his work. Thus, on the one hand, the compositions readily afford a self-reflexive science

<sup>149</sup> See *cc.* 5 (Lesbia: *da mi basia mille*: 'give me a thousand kisses') and 48 (Iuventius: *usque ad milia basiam trecenta*: 'I would kiss up to three-hundred thousand kisses'). It is fitting here that *basium* is a word that Catullus introduced into Latin poetry; on its distribution in his work, see Ross (1969: 104–5). Critics have often argued that the allusion is exclusively to one set of poems or the other; the necessity to stake the claim is evidence enough that any knowledgeable reader is inevitably reminded of both.

of aesthetic composition, while, on the other, they persist in fostering a sense of unmediated access to the poet's heart and mind, but these two perceptions of his writing are fated never to converge. Perennially bifurcated in this way, then, the critical tradition does not so much master Catullus' literary achievement as play out a series of responses that is already predicated and predicted by his work. Like the lover who must face the fact that his mistress's assurances are no necessary guarantee of their declarative truth value, the critic is forever trying to reconcile the text's ability to promise with the surety of knowledge, and forever destined to record his failure: *di magni, facite ut vere promittere possit, / atque id sincere dicat et ex animo* ('great gods, grant that she be able to promise truly, and say this sincerely and from the heart'; c. 109.3–4).<sup>150</sup> The contest between constative and performative language is what both propels and paralyzes the interpretation of Catullus and lends to his reception the appearance of a history.<sup>151</sup> As Isaac Voss observed some time ago, 'The more fault-ridden the poet's verses (*quanto nequiores*), the greater their appeal (*tanto plus leporis*)',<sup>152</sup> and it is this constituent logic which simultaneously disillusiones the reader and perpetually renews his faith that, despite the present fracture of his knowledge, he is poised on the brink of reclaiming Catullus for his own.

For C. Valerius, however, there remains one further twist to this poetical screw. No matter how exasperating readers may find Catullus' work, or how jovially, by a flip of the critical coin, they may embrace Micaela Janan's insight that 'we are accounting for an agent entirely produced by language (the "words on a page" and our reading of them)',<sup>153</sup> there is nothing fundamentally disruptive about Catullus' literary program, so long as his admirers continue to assume that their *leporum disertus puer* ultimately winds up on top, that in the end he perseveres as master of 'a distinctive diction that *establishes*

<sup>150</sup> On 'the performative structure of the text in general as promise', see Derrida (1989: 87–153).

<sup>151</sup> A specific instance of a more general rhetorical phenomenon theorized by Nietzsche in a number of the late fragments included in the *Will to Power*, and discussed by de Man (1979: 119–31), whose formulation of the issue I have drawn on here. For Nietzsche's dependence on Roman rhetoric in general and Cicero in particular, see Blair and Gilman (1989: pp. ix–xxi).

<sup>152</sup> Voss (1684: 8).

<sup>153</sup> Janan (1994: 6).

particular relations between poet and reader', by means of which '[h]e performs ... his control of discourse through a series of aggressive manoeuvres'.<sup>154</sup> Brian Krostenko gives us just such reassurance: 'Catullus [deploys] the language of social performance to summon to mind the cultural rules with which it was standardly associated, so as to use them for his own purposes'. More specifically, Krostenko comments, 'Catullus writes c. 16 as a corrective on misinterpretations of his project: to have a "soft" poetic voice is, in Catullus' case, a deliberate construction of someone fully in control of himself, who at will can dally like Adonis or rise up like Priapus'.<sup>155</sup> From the preceding discussion, however, it should be clear that such a 'Catullus'—that is, an *auctor* fully cognizant of the disparity between constative and performative language, who plays one systematically off against the other for his own poetic aims—amounts to no more than a *figure* of capable imagination, not the provenance of such a performance, but its discursively induced effect.<sup>156</sup> Whereas texts such as c. 42 do represent the poet as marshalling a set of illocutionary speech acts in order to obtain the result that he desires (*redde codicillos*), elsewhere the poems portray 'Catullus' as a victim not just of circumstance, but of the very speech acts that in c. 42 he appears so blithely to control. The final trap that c. 16 sets for the unwary reader is that 'he' take the poem as constative of the interference between constative and performative language in Catullus' work. Only that reader will overstep this pitfall who recognizes, as Austin stresses at the conclusion of his lectures, that 'to describe', 'to represent', and 'to portray' are, in the end, just so many 'expositive' illocutionary acts.<sup>157</sup>

This is the issue at stake in one of the briefest, though most advanced of Catullus' compositions, the justly famous distich that numbers 85 in contemporary collections:

Odi et amo. quare id faciam, fortasse requiris.  
nescio, sed fieri sentio et excrucior.<sup>158</sup>

<sup>154</sup> Fitzgerald (1995: 63 and 114); emphasis added.

<sup>155</sup> Krostenko (2001: 257 and 280); emphasis added.

<sup>156</sup> On the Roman notion of *auctoritas*, see below n. 210. On poets of 'capable imagination', see Bloom (1997: 5).

<sup>157</sup> Austin (1975: 161–4).

<sup>158</sup> I reproduce the text as printed by Thomson (1978: 183).

I hate and I love. How I can do this, perhaps you ask.  
I don't know, but I feel it happen and I am crucified.

The epigram is in many ways complementary to *c.* 16. Whereas in the lyric, the poet excoriates those readers who mistake action for knowledge, here the matter turns, conversely, on the knowledge of action (*quare id faciam*), and it is the reader whom the poem portrays as interrogating the poet. The words *odi* and *amo*, which are all too hastily referred to a moment of ambivalence in the Lesbia affair,<sup>159</sup> serve metonymically 'as captions for the two largest groups of [Catullus'] poems, the invective and the erotic'.<sup>160</sup> What the question asks the writer, then, is not simply to account for these personal passions, but to stand back and explain the genesis of his literary work.<sup>161</sup> Contrary to what we might expect, however, the poet responds that 'hate' and 'love' are not something that he does (*facere*), that is, an expressive vocabulary over which he has some measure of control, but rather impulses that arise independently (*feri*) and of which he merely experiences the sensation (*sentio*). With respect to the emotions that he represents, then, Catullus finds that he is less a master than a subject who, far from manipulating circumstances, involuntarily suffers the expression of their force. What sets the reversal into play here is the poet's own projection of the reader and, once again, the personification unfolds in the form

<sup>159</sup> Goold (1983: 260), for example, annotates *c.* 85: 'The culmination of LXX, LXII, LXXIII, and LXXV'. Against this tendency, see Bishop (1971: 633): 'In poem 85 ... Lesbia is not mentioned, nor the *mea puella* of poem 2. Nor is the love-hate topos handled as if part of an erotic poem. Indeed the two emotions of love and hate, beyond being rhetorical items, are also part of ethical philosophy'.

<sup>160</sup> Wheeler (1934: 44). Dettmer (1997: 191) has discerned what I would characterize as the political horizons that are also implicit in the poem: 'Cc. 85 and 93 are two "of the best known of the epigrams" of Catullus. The poems, each consisting of a single couplet, are joined by the opposing themes of passion for Lesbia and indifference toward Caesar'.

<sup>161</sup> The Latin *facere*, like the Greek *poiein*, is used regularly to mean 'portray' or 'represent in language'; so, for example, Cicero, *Brutus* 218 (*in eo libro, ... se exeuntem e senatu et cum Pansa nostro et cum Curione filio colloquentem facit*: 'in that book ... he represents himself going out of the senate and talking with my friend Pansa and with his son Curio'), or *Orator* 85 (*non faciet rem publicam loquentem*: 'he will not represent the state as speaking'). Elsewhere, Catullus employs the term in connection both with literary composition (*c.* 22.3: *plurimos facit versus* 'he composes many verses') and with self-representation (*c.* 97.9: *se facit esse venustum* 'he presents himself as charming'). After the statement *odi et amo*, the question is not *quem*, but *quare*.



of a chiasmus—of the text's eight verbs, the four in the first line are active, matched by four in the second which are complementary, but passive—if not morphologically, at least in sense:

odi	amo	faciam	requiris		nescio	feri	sentio	excrucior
D	C	B	A		A	B	C	D

The burden of this scheme is to expose *odium* and *amor*, attitudes that require an active investment of emotion, as *cruciatu*s and *sensus* respectively, that is, passive states of feeling that have no actual object as their aim. The term on which this demystification pivots, however, is *nescio*:<sup>162</sup> despite the clarity of the pattern, Catullus disavows any comprehension of its operation, not precisely unawareness, but a lack of exact knowledge and rational authority over either the antitheses themselves or the process of their exchange. The problem hinges on the couplet's final word which, in typical fashion, generates two possible readings of the poem. Figuratively, *excrucior* designates the poet's mental torment, the violent pull between conflicting sentiments which, however inexplicable, the text ostensibly is trying to convey. As Gordon Williams puts it, 'Catullus searches for language to express his ambiguous emotion.'<sup>163</sup> The literal meaning is more difficult and calls this understanding into question. What is excruciated here is not the poet's flesh and blood, but the chiastic figure of his syntax, so that the predicament that the verb denominates is neither affective nor somatic, but most literally linguistic. Among the entities that the text exchanges are not only subject and object, active and passive, question and answer, but, at the precise center of the sequence, second and first person: *requiris/nescio*. As such, the 'I' does not stand outside this chain of substitutions, but emerges as one component among others of a complex figurative scheme. In this connection, Williams goes on to note that Catullus' 'words [come], as it were, unbidden and *they* are a paradox that he can ... not explain.'<sup>164</sup> What is at stake in the autonomy of language that Williams here calls to our attention? If we

<sup>162</sup> Minarini (1983: 100, n. 31) offers a slightly different correlation of the verbs, pairing *excrucior* with the phrase *odi et amo* as a whole and giving greater prominence to *nescio* as the central proposition.

<sup>163</sup> Williams (1968: 509).

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, emphasis added. Fitzgerald (1995: 136) comments: '[here] the poet abdicates his position of control'—which is not quite the same thing.

are to take the proposition seriously, it implies that both the poet's *ego* and its 'paradoxical' emotions are not antecedent to representation but, in fact, entirely coincident with their expression. It is instructive, in this context, to recall Emile Benveniste's well known observation that the reality to which the 'I' refers is an exclusively discursive effect. 'It is in language,' writes Benveniste,

that man constitutes himself as subject; for it is language alone which in reality—in *its* reality, which is that of being—establishes the concept of 'ego'.

The 'subjectivity' at issue here is the capacity of the speaker to posit himself as 'subject'. It is defined not by the sentiment that each individual has of being himself (this sentiment, to the extent that it can be taken into account, is only a reflex), but by the psychic unity which transcends the totality of lived experiences it has amassed and which assures the permanence of consciousness. Now, this 'subjectivity', whether considered from a phenomenological or a psychological point of view, is nothing, we maintain, but the emergence into being of a fundamental property of language. That [entity] is 'ego' who *says* 'ego' (*Est 'ego' qui dit 'ego'*). It is here that we find the foundation of 'subjectivity', which determines itself by the linguistic status of the 'person'.<sup>165</sup>

To put it another way, the utterance *ego* is not, in the first place, constative, but rather performative, an illocutionary speech act that 'provokes the emergence of subjectivity' through the very instance of its enunciation.<sup>166</sup> In the case of Catullus, this event is only the first of a series of specular exchanges, beginning with I/thou, but extending to the farthest reaches of emotional experience, around which the subject articulates itself.<sup>167</sup> This *ego* would at no point stand in a transcendent relationship to its own language, since the process unfolds according to determinate grammatical and rhetorical devices, verbal effects which, as it were, occur autonomically or, in Williams' formulation, come 'unbidden'. By nature, such a series of linguistic operations can afford no veridical or adjudicative knowledge of the subject, only an awareness of the progressive realization of their force. As Jacques Lacan warns us in a celebrated pun: *les non-dupes errent*—the material inscription of the signifier, without which no 'I' could possibly come into being, is always the occasion of an original and henceforth

<sup>165</sup> Benveniste (1966–74: 1.259–60). Emphasis original.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.* 1:263.

<sup>167</sup> Benveniste goes on to stress that it is only possible for the 'I' to emerge in specular relationship to a 'you' (1966–74: 1. 260).

irrecoverable misrecognition.<sup>168</sup> This predicament, Catullus acknowledges, is hardly benign, and the rending of *excrucior* recalls all the different instances of subjective incoherence that we have looked at in his work: in each case, the paradox arises from an interplay between linguistic factors which cannot *a priori* be psychologized, but necessarily precede the definition of the self.<sup>169</sup> While the poet's position in this process differs structurally from that of his readers, qualitatively, c. 85 makes clear, his relationship to its discursive mechanisms remains in the last analysis the same.

There is one further point to be made about the final line. Modern editors, for the most part, punctuate the pentameter with a pause after the first foot, so that *fieri* is immediately dependent on *sentio*: *nescio, sed fieri sentio*. The two verbs, however, are separated by the caesura; elsewhere in Catullus *sed* is syntactically postpositive,<sup>170</sup> and this makes it equally feasible to construe *fieri* with *nescio* instead: *quare id faciam requiris. nescio sed fieri: sentio et excrucior*.<sup>171</sup> J. D. Bishop translates, 'Why would I do that, you ask; but I don't know that it is happening; I have the feeling and am thoroughly upset'.<sup>172</sup> Once again, if the poet is not even certain *whether* he is being moved or not, it is doubtful that he can know precisely *what* is taking place, much less control it 'for his own purposes' or have anything to communicate veridically about its force. Active and passive are, after all, part and parcel of the figurative movement that brings this subject into play: the undecidability of reference makes Catullus' writing difficult enough to understand, but 'our' inability to determine what, in fact, 'his' compositions might actually be up to renders that prospect virtually 'impossible' in the end.

<sup>168</sup> J. Lacan, *Le Séminaire XXI* (1973–4: "Les Non-dupes errent"); an unpublished transcript is available online: <http://perso.wanadoo.fr/espace.freud/topos/psych/psyssem/nondup/nondup.htm>. The pun is triple: *les noms du père* ['the name(s)-of-the-father'], *les 'nons' du père* ['the interdictions of the father'], *les non-dupes errent* ['those who are not duped nevertheless err']. While there is no substitute for reading the texts of Lacan themselves—in this case, particularly 'L'instance de la lettre dans l'inconscient, ou la raison depuis Freud', (*Écrits* 493–528)—some guidance here is provided by Ragland-Sullivan (1987: 130–266). See also Janan (2001).

<sup>169</sup> Cf. de Man (1996).

<sup>170</sup> See, for example, cc. 51.9, 61.102.

<sup>171</sup> Note the textual variant in O: "nescio si fieri".

<sup>172</sup> Bishop (1971: 633).

## III

‘If poetry is not, after all, concealed biography’, asks Jasper Griffin, ‘then what can it be?’<sup>173</sup> One of the features that we have observed repeatedly about Catullus’ work is that it moves along the margins of *ars oratoria*, the theory and practice of rhetoric, as it flourished in the late Republic. Cicero himself liked to describe the poet as a close kinsman to the orator (*finitimus oratori poeta ... ac paene par*),<sup>174</sup> an ally (*socius*) who, though not a full citizen of the demesne of rhetoric, shares similar objectives and is subject to the same disciplinary code. At the same time, however, he was obviously troubled by their difference. ‘Even if his life were doubled’, Seneca recalls, ‘Cicero stated that he would not have time to read the lyric poets.’<sup>175</sup> In his recurrent comparisons of the two enterprises, what the senator refers to is not just the poets’ stricter use of meter, but a greater licence—or immoderation—in the exercise of language (*verborum licentia liberior*),<sup>176</sup> particularly with regard to figures of speech (*in [materia] liberiores poetae, nam ... transferunt verba cum creberius tum etiam audacius*: ‘in [material] poets are freer for ... they use metaphors both more frequently and more boldly’).<sup>177</sup> This is, as we have seen, the very factor by which Catullus’ work diverges from the dominant rhetorical agenda.<sup>178</sup> While the poet’s compositions are regularly organized around a commonplace schema or trope—metaphor, metonymy, amphibolia, prosopopeia, metalepsis, chiasmus—all of which feature prominently in the treatises of the period, they invariably push this figuration to

<sup>173</sup> Griffin (1985: 49).

<sup>174</sup> Cicero, *De oratore* 1.70.

<sup>175</sup> Seneca, *Epistulae morales* 49.5.

<sup>176</sup> Cicero, *De oratore* 1.70.

<sup>177</sup> Cicero, *Orator* 202.

<sup>178</sup> Cicero was actually responsible himself for turning Aristotelian rhetoric, which focused for the most part on invention, increasingly towards matters of style (*elocutio*). His treatises introduce exhaustive lists of figures and tropes and, as Tacitus points out, the same heightening of diction is evident in the speeches themselves; *Dialogus de oratoribus* 22.2: *ad Ciceronem venio ... nec ulla re magis eiusdem aetatis oratores praecurrit quam iudicio. primus enim excoluit orationem, primus et verbis delectum adhibuit et compositioni artem* (‘I come to Cicero ... and it is in judgment more than in any other quality that he surpassed the orators of his time. For he was the first to cultivate oratory, and he was the first to apply selection to words and art to composition’). In practice, however, Cicero is careful to reduce such turns of phrase to ‘ornaments’ whose sole function is ‘to illuminate the speech’ (*Orator* 134). For Cicero’s role in the realignment of rhetoric from Aristotle to Quintilian, see Todorov (1977: chap. 2).

the point where it compromises the standards of perspicuity or decorum that it is the purpose of the handbooks to insure.<sup>179</sup> Thus, in the short lyric addressed to M. Tullius himself, the grammatical trick (*facetiae*) in the final line makes it unclear whether the poet is thanking the orator or lampooning him. As such, the piece provides no insight into C. Valerius' personal dealings with the ex-consul, though it does specify with remarkable precision the relationship between Catullus' poetry and the public discourse of which Cicero—*disertissimus Romuli nepotum*—was the principal exemplar of their era. Catullus is deeply indebted to Ciceronian rhetoric at the same time that he subverts its most basic principles, and the duplicity of his address to the senator has to be understood in this connection. 'Amicitia', Ronald Syme reminds us, 'was a weapon of politics, not a sentiment based on congeniality',<sup>180</sup> and in a social order structured around the ritualized exchange of favor (*gratia*),<sup>181</sup> it was particularly important that statements of support or opposition be clearcut.<sup>182</sup> To pen a note whose *parti pris* is genuinely undecidable paralyzes the entire system. What c. 49 records, then, is not any specific act of kindness or disservice, but the mutual relation between two antithetical discursive enterprises. *Tanto pessimus poeta, quanto optimus patronus*: no absolute value is ascribed to either one vocation or the other, only a graduated ratio in which their relative positions are proportionately inverse.<sup>183</sup>

<sup>179</sup> Cf. Cicero, *De oratore* 3.37: *quinam igitur dicendi est modus melior—nam de actione post videro—quam ut Latine, ut plane, ut ornate, ut ad id quodcumque agetur apte congruenterque dicamus?* ('what style of expression is better—for I shall come back to delivery later—than for us to speak correct Latin, lucidly, with ornament, suitably and fittingly for whatever case is being tried?'); see further, Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 3.7 and Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* 8.2; Bloomer (1997) and Kaster (1997).

<sup>180</sup> Syme (1939: 12). But see the qualifications of Schmidt (1985).

<sup>181</sup> For the system of *amicitia* in general, the best discussion is still Taylor (1949).

<sup>182</sup> Note, for example, Cicero's rhetorical question *de amicitia* 59: *quonam enim modo quisquam amicus esse poterit ei, cui se putabit inimicum esse posse?* ('how in the world will it be possible for anyone to be a friend to someone to whom he thinks he can be unfriendly?') The elaborate vocabulary of *amicitia* and *inimicitia* that developed in the late Republic is surveyed by Hellegouarc'h (1972: 116–37 and 171–201).

<sup>183</sup> The categorical distinction between rhetoric and poetics is set by Aristotle; cf. *Poetics* 1456a34–5 and *Rhetoric* 1405a2–6. The most explicit statement of the opposition between *oratio oratorum* and *oratio poetarum* is Tacitus, *Dialogus* 4–14. For a history of this antithesis as fundamental to the discipline of rhetoric, see Barthes (1970).

Given the centrality of oratory to Roman society of the first century BCE, Catullus' engagement with the prevailing *ratio loquendi* as the point of departure for his work comes as no surprise.<sup>184</sup> Against considerable resistance, the old forms of legal apprenticeship (*tirocinium fori*) had in the previous generation been largely replaced by schools of grammar and rhetoric organized along Greek lines.<sup>185</sup> Above the primary level, Roman education was based almost exclusively on instruction in the rules of elocution.<sup>186</sup> Under the tutelage of the *grammaticus*, boys studied grammar, stylistics, and interpretation, for which the canonical Greek and Roman poets served them as a primer.<sup>187</sup> Each piece was subjected to an exhaustive technical analysis, which focused predominantly on the proper parsing of the lines, generic identification, and the taxonomy of figures and tropes.<sup>188</sup> This formal scrutiny was preparatory to the recitation of the passage (*lectio*) and led directly to its mythological, historical, or philosophic exposition (*enarratio*).<sup>189</sup> Having mastered the basic principles of textual exegesis, pupils were then handed over to the *rhetor*, who led them through a series of graded assignments in prose composition (*exercitationes*).<sup>190</sup> These drills taught the students to manipulate the verbal skills they had acquired around a set of stock

<sup>184</sup> Catullus' debt to contemporary rhetoric has been stressed, in different ways, by Cairns (1972) and Williams (1980: 45–61).

<sup>185</sup> See Schmidt (1975) and Booth (1978), both now largely superseded by Bittner (1999). See also Gruen (1990: chapters 3 and 5).

<sup>186</sup> See Marrou (1964: Part III) and, at greater length, Bonner (1977). Most of our information about the operation of the schools dates from the Imperial period; however, Tacitus notes that the schools came on the scene 'a little before the time of Cicero' (*Dialogus* 35.1), and the remaining evidence suggests that system was substantially in place by the middle of the 1st century BCE—see Bonner (1949: 1–50).

<sup>187</sup> Under the Republic, the Latin syllabus included at least Livius Andronicus, Naevius, Ennius, Pacuvius, Accius, and Terence. According to Suetonius, *De grammaticis et rhetoribus* 16.3, the study of 'Virgil and other modern poets' was first introduced into the curriculum by Q. Caecilius Epirota around 26 BCE.

<sup>188</sup> See Bonner (1977: 212–49). Instruction in mythology and history was concurrent. For a late example of the method, cf. Priscian, *Partitiones duodecim versuum Aeneidos principalium*, available in Keil (1859: 3.455–515).

<sup>189</sup> This bipartite division of the subject is specified by Varro, fr. 236, ed. Funaioli (1907).

<sup>190</sup> For the stock curriculum, see Bonner (1977: 250–76).

themes, for the most part fictional in nature,<sup>191</sup> which were deemed appropriate to the training of future orators and poets alike.<sup>192</sup> Modern critics tend to dismiss this academic program as ‘excessively scholastic’ or a form of drudgery that was ‘anything but exciting to the student of literature’,<sup>193</sup> but it is clear that cultivated Romans took a lively interest in the materiality of language. Questions of grammar and rhetoric permeated every aspect of intellectual activity in the Republic<sup>194</sup> and commanded the attention not just of gentlemen and scholars, like C. Lucilius or L. Aelius Stilo, but statesmen of the caliber of Julius Caesar, Asinius Pollio, and Messalla Corvinus.<sup>195</sup> It is indicative that the three great works of his generation which Vitruvius declares will go down to posterity are Varro’s *De lingua latina*, Cicero’s *De oratore*, and Lucretius’ *De rerum natura*,<sup>196</sup> the last a philosophic treatise in which the atomization of language lays the groundwork for epistemology.<sup>197</sup> Catullus wrote, then, for an audience which was both highly trained in the formal analysis of speech and sensitive to its pragmatic, as well as theoretical implications. Romans learned to read poetry by carefully observing all features of grammar, syntax, and figuration before proceeding to interpretation, and many of Catullus’ texts are, in fact, clever complications of this method. The influential grammarian Dionysius of Thrace, for instance, enjoins his students that oral recitation has to suit the genre of the composition: tragedy requires heroic tones, comedy those of everyday life, and

<sup>191</sup> In the middle of the next century, Petronius stresses the entirely literary character of the material, even when the topics are ostensibly legal or historical; see *Satyricon* 1.

<sup>192</sup> So, for example, Aelius Theon, *Progymnasmata* 2: ‘the practice of the rhetorical exercises (*tōn gymnasmatōn askēsis*) is altogether necessary not only for those who are going to be orators (*rhētořeuein*) but also if anyone wishes to command the power of poets (*poiētōn dunamīn*) or writers of prose (*logopoiōn*) or of some other words. Horace stresses the technical nature of his own education (*Satires* 1.6.76ff.), as does Juvenal, *Satires*. 1.15–16: *et nos ergo manum ferulae subduximus, et nos/consilium dedimus Sullae* (‘well, I too have pulled my hand from under the cane, and I have given advice to Sulla’).

<sup>193</sup> Both phrases are taken from Bonner’s editorializing: Bonner (1977: 231 and 232).

<sup>194</sup> The evidence is surveyed by Rawson (1985: 117–55).

<sup>195</sup> The evidence is collected in Funaioli (1907).

<sup>196</sup> Vitruvius, *De architectura* 9, praef. 17.

<sup>197</sup> For Lucretius’ place in the history of linguistics, see Kristeva (1981: 122–5).

so forth.<sup>198</sup> Catullus 8, however, is effectively constructed so as to render such a choice impossible. If the type of literature to which the piece belongs cannot be determined, there is no sure way to read it off the page, much less expound it. This is in part a schoolboy prank, but one which begins to seriously put into question the linguistic and aesthetic assumptions underpinning the curriculum. It can surely be no accident that, under the Empire, Catullus' work fails to figure among the school texts that were commended for general use.<sup>199</sup>

The traditional cornerstone of rhetoric was the skill of characterization (*ethos*). Aristotle defined the field as one branch of ethical studies among others<sup>200</sup> and argued that the rhetorician's character, to the extent that it is credible (*epieikēs*), constitutes the most effective means of persuasion at his disposal.<sup>201</sup> The personality in question here has nothing to do with the orator as an individual per se, but stems wholly from the content of his address: 'it should come about', Aristotle stresses, 'from what the speaker says, not from what people think about him before he begins to speak'.<sup>202</sup> In practice, characterization in Greek oratory remained relatively undeveloped,<sup>203</sup> but at Rome the role of *ethos* sustained considerable elaboration.<sup>204</sup> Thus, in preparation for the lawcourts, students had to progress through a sequence of increasingly more difficult exercises in impersonation: short character sketches based on incidents drawn from their readings (*ethologia*); soliloquies representing an historical or mythic personage at some critical juncture in his life (*ethopoeia*); orations offering advice to a famous figure from the past, or to a body of people, faced with a dilemma (*suasoria*); speeches in the persona of a litigant arguing before a jury in a fictive case (*controversia*).<sup>205</sup> What was

<sup>198</sup> Dionysius Thrax, *Ars Grammatica*, ed. G. Uhlig (Leipzig: Teubner, 1883), p. 6. Dionysius' account of recitation confirms prosopopeia as the basic figure of close reading.

<sup>199</sup> Bonner (1977: 216–17). On the social stakes of Roman rhetorical education, see now Bloomer (1997: 1–72).

<sup>200</sup> Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1356a25.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.* 1356a13.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.* 1356a8–10.

<sup>203</sup> The major exception is the orations of Lysias; see Kennedy (1963: 91–3 *et passim*).

<sup>204</sup> For the development of this trend, with examples, see Kennedy (1972: 3–102).

<sup>205</sup> For fuller description and references to all these forms, see Bonner (1977: 250–327); for their development under the Republic and the shifting terminology, see Bonner (1949: 1–50).



challenging about these exercises was that in each instance the students had both to imagine the thoughts, speech, social circumstances, and demeanor of the character assigned and to reproduce them; thus, as Quintilian informs us, 'they would become in turn sons, parents, rich men, old men, gentle or harsh in temperament, misers, dupes, cowards, and deriders.'<sup>206</sup> By the time a young advocate got into court, he was prepared to tailor his self-presentation to the needs of any client, and the cases there were, in fact, largely dependent on this ability.<sup>207</sup> 'All those who want to win their suit', Cicero declares, 'must look to the desire (*voluntatem*) of their auditors and shape themselves completely (*totos se fingunt*) in accordance with the audience's will.'<sup>208</sup> To this end, he notes, the orator has not only to paint a suitable character in speech (*exprimere mores oratione*); just the right emotion—hatred, indignation, grief, what have you—must appear to be impressed upon his person (*omnes illi motus in ipso oratore impressesse atque iniusti videbuntur*).<sup>209</sup> M. Antonius, in the dialogue *de oratore*, makes the obvious comparison between the public speaker and an actor on the stage, with the exception that the advocate in court has no stake in imitation. 'When pleading a case', he observes, 'I am not concerned to represent or reproduce the bygone misfortunes and legendary sufferings of heroes, nor do I play another character, but am the agent of my own (*neque actor [sum] alienae personae, sed auctor meae*).'<sup>210</sup> The key term here is *auctor*, the *nomen agentis* of *augeo* which means, in its most basic sense, not merely 'to augment' or 'increase' that which is already in existence, but 'to introduce something new into the world'.<sup>211</sup> As *auctor personae*, then, the orator actually produces his character in the act of speaking: *tantum ... efficitur sensu quodam et ratione dicendi, ut quasi mores oratoris effingat oratio* ('so much is accomplished by a good taste and style in speaking that the speech almost fashions the character of the speaker').<sup>212</sup>

<sup>206</sup> Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* 3.8.51.

<sup>207</sup> For the role that ethos plays in Cicero's own speeches, see May (1988).

<sup>208</sup> Cicero, *Orator* 24. For Cicero's assimilation of ethos to the function of *movere*, see Fantham (1973).

<sup>209</sup> Cicero, *De oratore* 2.184 and 189.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.* 2.194.

<sup>211</sup> Benveniste (1969: 2:148–51); see also, Dumézil (1980: 79–102).

<sup>212</sup> Cicero, *De oratore* 2.184; cf. Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1408a30: ἐάν οὖν καὶ τὰ ὀνόματα οἰκεία λέγῃ τῇ ἕξει, ποιήσει τὸ ἥθος ('if then anyone uses the language appropriate to the state of mind, he will represent the character'). Note also

Catullus was a master of this type of characterization,<sup>213</sup> and many of his pieces are, in fact, virtuoso displays of his skill in *ethopoeia*—Ariadne's lament in *c.* 64, the ecstasy and disillusionment of Attis (*c.* 63), the garrulous patter of an old yacht (*c.* 4).<sup>214</sup> What is striking about these passages, however, beyond their technical proficiency, is that each of the subjects selected by the poet seems to have been conventionally inappropriate for rhetorical elaboration. Schoolboys might pen soliloquies for desperate heroines,<sup>215</sup> but women and 'depraved' men were forbidden to speak *in propria persona* ('in their own person') either in the *controversiae* or in court;<sup>216</sup> orations by commodities, of course, can only have parodic value.<sup>217</sup> Few graduates of the *schola rhetoris*, moreover, would have failed to appreciate the mischievous satire of the method that, for example, colors *c.* 65, the poet's note to the great orator of the preceding generation, Q. Hortensius Hortalus. In the *Brutus*, Cicero describes his onetime rival's language as 'Asiatic', combining 'a rapid flow of speech with an ornate choice of words' and 'elaborate symmetry of phrase',<sup>218</sup> but criticizes it for failing to sustain the consular persona that he needed to project. 'His manner of speaking', Cicero observes, 'lacked cogency (*genus illud dicendi auctoritatis habebat parum*)' and 'failed to suit his needs (*nec decebat*)', while 'his gestures were a bit too studied for an orator (*plus artis habebat quam erat oratori satis*)'.<sup>219</sup> What Catullus picks up on in poem 65 is both Hortensius' highfalutin' style and its ethical defects.<sup>220</sup> Thus, the piece consists of a single intricate, but beautifully balanced, period which is packed with florid diction and distended by

the relation of the speaker to his own discourse that Cicero specifies at *De oratore* 2.191: *ipsa enim natura orationis eius, quae suscipitur ad aliorum animos permovendos, oratorem ipsum magis etiam quam quemquam eorum, qui audiunt, permovet* ('the very nature of the language used to move the minds of others moves the orator himself more than any of the listeners').

<sup>213</sup> As a point of departure, see Macleod (1973b).

<sup>214</sup> The fact that each of these monologues can be derived from a strictly literary tradition (see Wilamowitz [1924: 2.291–304]) by no means precludes their simultaneous articulation with the contemporary Roman vogue for ethical composition.

<sup>215</sup> Cf. the model lament for Niobe in Aphthonius, *Progymnasmata* 11.

<sup>216</sup> See Bonner (1949: 52–53) and Ps.-Quintilian, *Minor Declamations* 260.

<sup>217</sup> Significantly, each of these impersonations has been read as autobiographical of Catullus; see Young (1976) and Putnam (1962).

<sup>218</sup> Cicero, *Brutus* 325.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.* 327 and 303.

<sup>220</sup> Hortensius was also a poet in his own right, and Ovid mentions his *improba carmina* ('shameless poems') in connection with Catullus (*Tristia* 2.441); Pliny, however,

multiple figures of speech.<sup>221</sup> These embellishments, however, albeit polished and impressive, are altogether unsuited to the ethos of the distracted poet that the speaker is trying to present, so that the medium of the assertion and its message ultimately cancel one another out. The elegy is, thus, not only a characterological *tour de force* which impersonates Hortensius' habitual flaws of impersonation; in turning the protocols of the rhetorician's craft back upon themselves, Catullus effectively evacuates the logic of contemporary ethopoetics.

The intense interest of writers of the late Republic in problems of characterization was part and parcel of the cult of personality that saturated Roman social thinking at every level. Other Indo-European peoples—Indic, Iranian, Germanic, Greek—tended to encode traditional politico-religious values in fantastic narratives about the cosmos, heroes, and the gods. In Italy, however, the Latin tribes projected this common heritage onto the plane of civic history, which transpired largely as a sequence of exemplary individuals. Georges Dumézil, in particular, has shown that official accounts of the early Latin leaders and their constitution of the city served Rome as a type of *mythologie humaine*: "The Roman annalists indicate that the character and actions of the legendary kings ... are *functional* in value. The stories present themselves as "history" but have, nevertheless, the same traits that we find in all bodies of myth, that is, a coherently articulated structure, systematic design, the pretensions to justify by illustrious precedent or solemn foundation all of the *categories* by which the society thinks of the world and understands itself."<sup>222</sup> Divine agency plays a relatively restricted role in these tales, which unfold entirely on a human plane among leaders who provide positive, though credible and realistic, direction to the city. Thus, when Livy enjoins his readers

ranks his erotic poetry along with that of Cicero and other statesmen (*Epistles* 5.3.5), and in c. 95 Catullus suggests that Hortensius' verse was as prolix as his prose.

<sup>221</sup> It is striking that both Cicero and Catullus use the same metaphors of composition in connection with Hortensius: *flumine orationis: dicta ... effluxisse* ('in a flood of speech'; *Brutus* 325: 'that your words flowed out'; cf. c. 65.18), *vestitu orationis: carmina tegam* ('with the covering of speech'; *Brutus* 327: 'I will cover over my poems'; c. 65.12). Whether this is accidental, whether one is dependent on the other, or whether both derive from a common source remains unclear.

<sup>222</sup> Dumézil (1943: 116–17); emphasis original. The most succinct summary of Dumézil's argument is Dumézil (1949).

to 'pay close attention to the life and morals, to the kind of men and manners by which the empire was won' he reiterates a received idea that vests the power and well-being of the state directly in the prestige of the person.<sup>223</sup>

In this same spirit, each new generation of leaders under the Republic was fixed in the collective mind with verbal as well as plastic tokens of commemoration.<sup>224</sup> At the death of a senior magistrate,<sup>225</sup> the citizenry assembled in the forum, where the great man's son or other relatives eulogized his lineage, character, rank, and public deeds *pro contione* ('before the assembly').<sup>226</sup> As the funeral proceeded, an actor, fitted with a likeness of the deceased, parodied his characteristic gestures and patterns of speech,<sup>227</sup> and this image was preserved by his descendants for use in future civic functions.<sup>228</sup> 'On occasions of public sacrifice,' Polybius reports,

relatives display these masks and decorate them with extraordinary care, and when any distinguished member of the family dies, they take the images to the funeral and put them on men whom they consider to bear the closest resemblance to the original in height and general bearing. These impersonators are dressed in robes according to the rank of the deceased: a toga with a purple border if he was a consul or a praetor, a garment of whole purple if he was a censor, one embroidered with gold if he had celebrated a triumph or achieved anything similar. They all ride in chariots preceded by the fasces, axes, and other insignia appropriate to the dignity of the offices of state which the dead man held during his lifetime, and when they arrive at the Rostra, they are all seated on ivory chairs. . . . Moreover, when the speaker has finished his tribute to the deceased, he recounts the successes and exploits of

<sup>223</sup> Livy, *Ab urbe condita* praef. 9–10.

<sup>224</sup> Dionysius of Halicarnassus stresses the extent to which the custom of memorializing individuals was uniquely Roman; see *Roman Antiquities* 5.17.

<sup>225</sup> Eulogies for prominent women seem to become regularized only in the last century of the Republic; see Durry (1950: pp. xx–xxi).

<sup>226</sup> For the content and structure of the funeral oration, see Kierdorf (1980: 49–93). According to tradition (Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 5.17), the institution dates from the first year of the Republic.

<sup>227</sup> Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca* 31.25.2; cf. Suetonius, *Vespasian* 19: *in funere Favor archimimus personam eius ferens imitansque, ut est mos, facta ac dicta viri* ('at the funeral the archmime Favor, wearing his mask and imitating the man's deeds and words, as is the custom').

<sup>228</sup> See K. Schneider and H. Meyer, 'Imagines maiorum,' *RE* 9:1:1097–104; Bethe, (1935); Gruen (1992:152–82); Flower (1996).

all the other men whose images are displayed there, beginning with the most ancient.<sup>229</sup>

What Polybius stresses is not the religious ramifications of this rite, but its didactic purpose, observing that ‘it would be difficult to imagine a more impressive scene for a young man who aspires to fame and virtue. Who could remain unmoved’, he asks, ‘at the sight of the images of all these men, renowned for excellence in their time, now gathered together as if alive and breathing?’<sup>230</sup> Each member of a *gens* had the right to display likenesses of distinguished kin in his own household so that, as Pliny the elder notes, the leading families were constantly surrounded by icons of their *maiores*. ‘Other portraits’, he adds, ‘were positioned on the outside of the house or around the doorways, with spoils taken from the enemy fixed to them which even one who bought the property was not permitted to remove; the mansions themselves, thus, celebrated a triumph for all time, even though they changed their masters.’<sup>231</sup> Images were also set up on public monuments,<sup>232</sup> and in this way the association of *res publica* with character was continuously reinforced.

By the middle of the third century BCE, families had begun to publish laudations of their dead in book form,<sup>233</sup> and from here, Tacitus points out, it was only a short step for citizens to circulate records of their own achievements in their lifetime.<sup>234</sup> In the Greek world, statesmen had long exploited the political memoir for purposes of self-promotion and, in the last two generations of the Republic, the genre came increasingly into vogue.<sup>235</sup> C. Gracchus, Lutatius Catulus, Marius, Sulla, Caesar, Agrippa, and Augustus—to name only the most famous—all issued autobiographical accounts,

<sup>229</sup> Polybius, *Histories* 6.53.6–9.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.* 6.53.10.

<sup>231</sup> Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* 35.2.7. This passage also stresses the didactic force: *erat haec stimulatio ingens, exprobrantibus tectis cotidie inbellem dominum intrare in alienum triumphum* (‘this was a great stimulus to action, when every day the walls reproached the unwarlike owner with intruding into someone else’s triumph’).

<sup>232</sup> e.g., *ibid.* 35.12.

<sup>233</sup> Vollmer (1892: 466–7).

<sup>234</sup> Tacitus, *Agricola* 1: *clarorum virorum facta moresque posteris tradere, antiquitus usitatum. ... ac plerique suam ipsi vitam narrare fiduciam potius morum quam adrogantiam arbitrati sunt* (‘it was the custom of old to hand down the deeds and character of famous men to posterity...and many men considered relating their life to be a matter of self-confidence rather than presumption’).

<sup>235</sup> See the excellent survey of Misch (1951: 1.177–338).

and Cicero penned no less than half a dozen works memorializing his own statecraft and persona. Of these perhaps the most revealing is the *Brutus*, which retells the history of rhetoric at Rome as a sequence of exemplary orators, culminating in the perfection of the discipline by Cicero himself. Since M. Tullius' contemporaries also witnessed the emergence of Latin literary biography,<sup>236</sup> as well as the rise of veristic portrait sculpture,<sup>237</sup> it is clear that citizens of the late Republic were encompassed on all sides by diverse forms of character portrayal, verbal as well as imagistic. This general intensification of interest in depicting personality is matched in the political arena, moreover, by the increasing concentration of power into the hands of a few charismatic individuals. The evolution of the civic government from an oligarchy, through the triumvirates, to a dictatorship over the course of the first century BCE is, in this respect, only one logical consequence of a deeply ingrained Roman way of thinking about the commonweal. Augustus stresses this when, at the end of the *Res gestae*, he credits his success not to competent administration or superior control, but entirely to ethical impression. 'I had not one prerogative of office greater in scope than any of my colleagues in the magistracy', he boasts; 'rather, the element that has accorded me the supreme position is the dignity of my person (*auctoritate omnibus praestiti*).'<sup>238</sup>

Within the history and politics of character at Rome, Catullus' poetry occupies a precise position.<sup>239</sup> Modern critics still by and large credit his literary achievement to an unprecedented preoccupation with personality: 'Catullus...made unique use of an

<sup>236</sup> Leo (1901). For a discussion of Roman biography as a development from the *laudatio funebris*, see Stuart (1928: chs. 7 and 8).

<sup>237</sup> The basic chronology is set by Schweitzer (1948). For the connection between the *imagines maiorum* and portrait sculpture, see Jackson (1987).

<sup>238</sup> Augustus, *Res gestae* 34; my translation follows Misch (1951: 1.284). In a personal communication Gary Miles reminds me of the increasing tendency in the first century BCE of Roman political figures to identify themselves with heroes and to claim divine descent. He comments: 'Catullus belongs to an age when in Roman terms the whole tradition of self-representation was being pushed to its limits, or perhaps beyond them.'

<sup>239</sup> For a convergent assessment of Catullus' place in the history of Latin literature issuing from somewhat different premises, see the central chapters of Habinek (1998: 34–121).

autobiographical mode of composition which set a trend for later poets but which was never closely imitated.<sup>240</sup> If self-characterization is arguably the central problem in Catullus' work, far from being an anomaly, this interest is specifically what makes C. Valerius a typical exponent of his era. Catullus' publications take their place among the proliferation of *imagines* and first-person narratives in the late Republic, and it is in relation to this tradition that they derive their critical significance and value. As usual, it is not Catullus who articulates the rationale and general philosophy of individuation for the period, but Cicero, the elder statesman and poet's archfoil. Writing *de officiis*, the senator both lays out the theoretical groundwork for a literature a self-expression and betrays a residual anxiety over the legitimacy of such portrayals:

There are countless dissimilarities in nature and character (*naturae morumque*), and these are not to be criticized in the least. Rather, each must hold resolutely to his own individual traits to the extent that they are personal (*propria*), but not vicious. . . . We must act so that, while safeguarding universal law, we pursue what is specifically our own and, even if other undertakings should be nobler or more dignified, we may still regulate our actions by the standard of our nature. . . . Thus, it is each man's duty to weigh well what he has that's his (*expendere oportebit quid quisque habeat sui*), to dispose of it, and not to wish to try how another man's appurtenances might suit him (*nec velle experiri quam se aliena deceant*). The more particularly a man's character is his own, the better it befits him (*id enim maxime quemque decet, quod est cuiusque maxime suum*).<sup>241</sup>

Over the course of this passage, the vocabulary of essence (*natura*) gradually yields to the language of property (*habere*)<sup>242</sup> and, as he pursues this line of thought, Cicero returns to the metaphor of theater and compares the individual's embodiment of character to an actor who astutely chooses those roles that he finds most favorable to his talent and career (*illi enim [scaenici] non optimas, sed sibi*

<sup>240</sup> Williams (1968: 471); cf. Quinn (1969: 26) or Lyne (1980: 60).

<sup>241</sup> Cicero, *De officiis* 1.109–10 and 113. The passage may date from after Catullus' death, though the doctrine itself is credited to Panaetius and would have been in circulation for some time.

<sup>242</sup> Elsewhere, Cicero uses *propria* and *aliena* to refer to possessions; see, for example, the speech *pro S. Roscio Amerino* 21 and 93.

*accommodatissimas fabulas eligunt*).<sup>243</sup> The word *fabula* is cognate both with *fama* and *fari*, ‘to speak’ or ‘talk’, and what it implies is not only a prescribed persona, but the framework of a discursive plot. Despite the argument’s appeal to authenticity, then, Cicero’s paradigms for individuation turn out to be commercial and linguistic, and this discreetly introduces questions about the authenticity of the ethos that a *homo privatus* might find it expedient to project. A similar suspicion arises *a fortiori* with regard to the characterization of others and, in the historical survey of the *Brutus*, Cicero feels called upon to warn his readers that testimonials like the traditional *laudatio funebris* may strategically misrepresent the person:

Some of these speeches are indeed still extant, which the families themselves have preserved as a sort of mark of honor and a record, ... both as a memorial to the glories of the house and as a proof of their high birth. By these eulogies, however, our history has become quite distorted. In fact, much that is written in them simply never happened—false triumphs, an exaggerated number of consulships, false genealogies too and transfers to the plebs fabricated so as to blend men of humbler birth into families of the same name; as if I should say that I was descended from M. Tullius the patrician, who was consul with Ser. Sulpicius ten years after the expulsion of the kings.<sup>244</sup>

The allegations that aspiring citizens make about their forebears may be faulty (*mendosior*), but it is not to raise so banal a point that Cicero stresses the issue. Rather, what disturbs the ex-consul is that such accounts manage to insinuate themselves into official history and, as such, have pragmatic consequences for politics and for the future of the state. In a society as heavily invested in the prestige of personality as the late Republic, claims regarding individual character could not help but bear enormous weight, both on the plane of civic ideology and in government administration. To trace descent from M. Tullius, the patrician, was not at Rome simply a matter of antiquarian interest or personal esteem, and Cicero is quick to brand pretensions of this type as a political abuse. The senator was hardly naïve about the mechanisms and motives for impersonation, but officially he remains committed to a notion of the proper which, both privately and publicly, he finds it necessary to police.

<sup>243</sup> *De officiis* 1.114.

<sup>244</sup> Cicero, *Brutus* 62; see further Vollmer (1892: 467).



It is just at this point of containment, however, that Catullus intervenes. In the first place, the poet shows how the devices of rhetorical characterization being institutionalized by Cicero and his colleagues in contemporary Rome ultimately come into conflict with their own documentary and judicative aims. The grammar, syntax, and figuration of his pieces, far from being auxiliary or merely ornamental, fail to be exhausted in their meaning, leaving instead a verbal residue which not only ruffles the assertion, but fractures and dislocates the entire picture. Contrary, then, to what the orators and manuals like to maintain, the problem here has less to do with the truth or falsehood of the image than with the criterion of accuracy per se, which essentially diverts attention from the more disruptive, though germinal discursive issues. Secondly, Catullus takes up the authority that profiles and impersonations of this sort possess. If character portrayal is not only a matter of literary interest, but an unavoidably political concern, this is due, he shows us, to the fact that, regardless of its validity, ethical description introduces irreversible effects. A testimonial is not simply or even necessarily a record of personal achievement, but constitutes a kind of imposition or writing on the real, a dynamic force which literally makes history in ways that no citizen can ever fully appreciate or entirely control. The limit or test case would be a confession that explicitly denies the referential legitimacy of its own first-person statements, yet manages to reinforce its audience's confidence in that persona all the same, and this is precisely what takes place in *c.* 16. Catullus' poetry is provocative, then, not because it severs the connection to its originary context by generating mutually exclusive understandings of the same piece of language, but, in fact, just the reverse: that a set of propositions, however self-critical or self-undermining, is part and parcel of a historical reality that it does not cease to modify in decisive ways. Reciprocally, the poet observes, the citizen neither resists nor repudiates this ethical impression, but cheerfully complies with a capitulation from which he manages to derive a good deal of satisfaction of his own. It is for this reason, then, that personifications like *c.* 16 tend to revolve around competing claims to *pietas* or related civic virtues, which set the standards for public conduct within the Roman state. That the deeds and characters of illustrious men (*clarorum virorum facta moresque*) do not, in the end, provide a rational structure for history is one of the ironic lessons of

Catullus' work, though, in the contest for Empire to which the poet was such an incisive, if apostate witness, the power and spoils riding on this misprision were enormous.

The deconstruction of identity is a perennial gesture of first-person literature, which in each case acquires its significance from the technologies and discourses of character that are proper to its constitutive society and era. In this respect, the contemporary reception of Catullus is little more than a displaced index to the historical position that his work occupies within the horizons of Roman culture per se. From the first century BCE on, the new schools of grammar and rhetoric worked to codify and regulate the ways in which Latin speakers, a people traditionally invested in the authority of the persona, impressed character on public consciousness. By redirecting critical attention from questions of personal circumstance to the logic of self-presentation, the poet gets at the very heart of this politico-discursive system. It would be naive, of course, to conclude that Catullus stands either for or against the new ethopoetics. If his work exposes the contradictions within and between the theory and practice of impersonation, it is the same technologies of language that have assured the enduring fascination of Catullus' *roman d'amour* with its virile, but ultimately disillusioned lover. In Catullus' hands, poetry becomes the place where social, political, and historical issues are submitted to the most exacting kinds of questions, and this stakes out for literature a role that is authentically progressive. The writer's commemoration, Cicero argued defending Archias, accrues to the aggrandizement of the state,<sup>245</sup> but in Catullus' work this convergence of knowledge with power is shown to be delusive. If poetry remains the least reliable of languages, it is nonetheless among the most efficient, and it is with that dark insight that the golden age of Latin literature is born.

<sup>245</sup> The premise of the speech (*pro Archia* 4) is programmatic: *perficiam profecto ut hunc A. Licinium [poetam] non modo non segregandum, cum sit civis, a numero civium, verum etiam, si non esset, putetis asciscendum fuisse* ('I will surely make you think that this man, Aulus Licinius [the poet] must not only not be separated from the number of the citizens, since he is a citizen, but even, if he were not, that he should have been enrolled among them').

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