VI *PLUS UNO SAECLO*: CATULLAN RECEPTION

At the end of his dedicatory poem, Catullus, with somewhat affected modesty, expresses the hope that his poetry will last 'for more than one generation' (1.10). As it turned out, this aspiration was to be amply fulfilled. By the early Augustan period, he had achieved a canonical status which he was to retain at least until the turn of the first and second centuries AD, when Pliny the Younger refers to his fellow-Transpadane in terms that take for granted the high regard in which the poet was held among the cultivated elite that formed Pliny's social circle.[1] Thereafter, Catullus' reception history becomes somewhat more patchy;[2] but, following the rediscovery of the text around the turn of the fourteenth century (see below), he was adopted with enthusiasm by the scholar-poets of the Renaissance, as both literary model and object of study; and the poems continued to be read and studied right through the early modern and modern periods.

The field of Catullan reception is thus potentially limitless, and my survey will of necessity be very selective, focusing primarily on antiquity. At the same time, the selectivity of the receiving authors has itself been something of a recurring theme in recent treatments, and is accordingly emphasized here. As we have seen, Catullus writes across a broad range of genres, and his corpus ranges in style from the (cultivated) directness of the invectives to the artful rhetorical balance of the epigrams to the more elevated diction and high formal polish of the *carmina maiora*. The poet's self-depiction, too, fluctuates between aggression and vulnerability, between a profound conviction of his own supremacy in the literary and social spheres and a sense of marginality and exclusion.[3]

[1] Pliny's uncle, Pliny the Elder, refers to Catullus in the Preface to the *Natural History* as his *conterraneus* ('fellow-countryman'). For Catullus' canonical status, see esp. Nep. *Att.* 12.4 (where he is paired with Lucretius as 'the most elegant' poets of their age); Vell. Pat. 2.36.2 (paired with Varro and Lucretius); Quint. 10.1.96 (see n. 30 below); Jer. *Ep.* 53.8.17 (mentioned alongside Horace, Septimius Serenus, and Greek lyric poets). See also Ov. *Am.* 3.15.7 and Mart. 1.61, 14.195, where he appears in lists of poets whose celebrity has brought reflected glory to their place of birth.

[2] See Gaisser 1993: 12–15, 2009: 174–5. But Gaisser exaggerates the 'disappearance' of Catullus after the end of the second century, particularly in her more recent publication: he is quoted in the fourth and fifth centuries by Ausonius and Macrobius, as well as the Virgilian commentators Servius and Donatus and other grammarians (for references, see Wiseman's catalogue of 'References to Catullus in Ancient Authors' [Wiseman 1985: 246–62]); and there seems no strong reason to believe that *all* the quotations were derived at second hand from intermediary sources.

[3] Compare Du Quesnay 2021: 167, 'a collection of unparalleled diversity'.

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Rather than seek to imitate the dazzling variety of Catullus' oeuvre, later writers typically pursue one thread from this intricate weave, refashioning their model as a precursor of their own themes and stylistic choices. In this respect, as in others, Catullan reception reflects Catullus' own handling of earlier writers: as we saw in the previous chapter, recent scholarship has drawn attention to the ways in which he reframes Callimachus (and, by the same token, Sappho, Meleager, Apollonius, and others) in such a way as to suit his own literary values and thematic concerns.

1. Catullus and the Augustans[4]

Unsurprisingly, the love elegists of the next generation, Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid, take Catullus the lover of Lesbia as their shared archetype. Name-checked as a predecessor by both Propertius and Ovid[5] – the latter of whom links him with the recently dead Tibullus – Catullus is also echoed more or less closely in a number of places by all three elegists.[6] But arguably more important than specific intertextual connections is Catullus' role as 'code model'[7] for elegiac poetry: a turbulent relationship between a dominant, magnetic but unfaithful woman and her hopelessly devoted lover constitutes *the* governing paradigm of the genre, taking its point of departure from Catullus' Lesbia cycle. More specifically, the lover's intermittent willingness to surrender his own masculinity and take the subordinate role in the affair – to 'follow wherever the girl leads', as Catullus puts it (8.4) – is central to elegy's ambivalent gender discourse.

[4] For a fuller discussion of material covered in this section, see Gale 2021, with further bibliography at 241.

[5] Prop. 2.25.3–4, 2.34.87–8; Ov. *Am.* 3.9.61–2; cf. [Tib.] 3.6.39–42.

[6] In Propertius, see most obviously 1.19, where the poet claims that Protesilaus' love for Laodamia lasted even beyond death, whereas Catullus emphasizes the depth of her love for him (compare esp. 1.19.10: *antiquam uenerat umbra domum*, 'he had come as a ghost to his former home', with Catull. 68.73–4: *flagrans aduenit amore /. . . Laodamia domum*, 'Laodamia arrived at her [new] home, burning with love'; and 1.19.26: *non satis est ullo tempore longus amor*, 'however much time is granted, love is not long enough', with Catull. 68.81–3: *ante . . . quam . . . auidum saturasset amorem*, 'before she could satisfy her eager love'; see also Lyne 1998: 209–12). In Tibullus, see 1.4.21–4, where the erotodidactic advice *nec iurare time: Veneris periuria uenti/inrita per terras et freta summa ferunt* ('don't be afraid to swear: love's perjuries are brought to nothing and carried off by the winds over land and sea') ironically recalls Ariadne's condemnation of Theseus' *periuria* in Catull. 64, esp. 142: *cuncta aerii discerpunt irrita uenti* ('the airy winds have torn apart all his promises and brought them to nothing'), 146: *nil metuunt iurare* ('[men in general] do not shrink from oaths'), and 148: *nihil periuria curant* ('they care nothing for their perjuries'). Ovid, in *Am.* 3.11b, offers a typically flippant take on the *odi et amo* theme of Catullus 85; for further Catullan echoes in Ovid, see Ferguson 1960.

[7] For the terminology, see Chapter 1, p. 24 and n. 74, above.

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The oscillation considered in Chapter 2 between this self-abasing pose and the macho, 'Priapic' stance has its counterpart in elegy's alternation between self-deprecating acceptance of the labels *mollis* ('soft', 'effeminate') and *iners* ('idle', 'inactive') as descriptors both of the genre and of the poet-lover himself, and provocative assertion of its own superiority to conventionally valorized lifestyles and literary forms. Typically slippery is the emblematic figure of *militia amoris* – 'the warfare of love' – which serves simultaneously to diminish the lover (as too feeble for real warfare or martial poetry) and to aggrandize him (as a quasi-epic warrior on the figurative battlefield of love).[8]

Importantly, too, the elegists follow Catullus in adopting the comic *adulescens* as role model; and other comic archetypes and scenarios are if anything more fully exploited in elegy.[9] The wealthy rival, for example, something of an elegiac stock-type, is clearly calqued on the comic *miles gloriosus* or 'braggart soldier', and the *lena* or brothel-keeper (a character who barely registers in the Catullan corpus[10]) is another standard figure in elegy's cast of characters. But, while the use of these stereotypes has its distinctive differences from Catullus' less systematic appeal to comic models, the intertextual relationship between elegy and comedy is mediated in important ways by Catullan precedents. The fuzzy status of the elegiac beloved, whose role (especially in Propertius) seems to slide between that of *meretrix* (prostitute or courtesan) and that of *matrona* (married woman),[11] is in part a function of this dual heritage: like her comic counterpart, she is financially demanding and reluctant (or unable) to commit herself exclusively to her lover; but the intermittent appearance of a *uir* ('man', 'husband') constraining her movements points to the possibility that she should be thought of, like Lesbia, as married to another, lending the poems a frisson of the illicit. Elegy, too, confronts its reader with questions of role-playing and 'sincerity' (what does it mean for a first-person writer to take on the role of comic *adulescens*?) similar to those posed by Catullus, but differently framed and perhaps inviting different answers.

In contrast to the elegists' overt appeal to Catullus as an important precursor, Horace's only explicit reference, at *Satires* 1.10.17–19, is

[8] Prominent examples include Prop. 2.7; Tib. 1.1.73–9; Ov. *Am.* 1.9. For discussion, see Gale 1997; Drinkwater 2013. For the argument that the trope is anticipated by Catullus, see Gale 2018: 1600–3.

[9] See pp. 27–8 above. On elegy and comedy, see esp. James 2003 (esp. 21–8, 35–41), 2012; Polt 2021:174–88.

[10] Poem 103, which denounces Silo as a *leno* (the *lena*'s male counterpart), is the sole example.

[11] See e.g. Wyke 2002: 29–30.

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distinctly hostile, though his acrimony is aimed more directly at Catullus' admirers and imitators than at the poet himself. In practice, as Michael Putnam's important study of Catullan intertextuality in the *Odes* thoroughly demonstrates, Horace invokes Catullan precedents relatively frequently, but most often as a foil for his own self-presentation, particularly in the erotic sphere.[12] Here, Catullus figures again as the poet of passion, the *uesanus Catullus* ('crazy Catullus') of poem 7, representing a mode of behaviour rejected by the Epicurean-influenced Horace. *Odes* 1.22, for example, recalls and inverts elements of both Catullus 11 and 51: the poem is closed out with a declaration of love for Lalage, who, with her sweet laughter and sweet speech (*dulce ridentem . . . dulce loquentem*), recalls both the Lesbia of poem 51 and her Sapphic model.[13] But, whereas Catullus' love has perished like a flower 'touched/grazed by the plough' (*tactus aratro*; 11.24), Horace claims that he will maintain his integrity (*integer*, literally 'untouched'; 1.22.1) and his love for Lalage, wherever in the world he may find himself (1.22.5–8, 17–22, with echoes of Catullus 11.2–12).[14] Horace's love odes in general can usefully be read as an 'anti-romantic reaction' to Catullan love poetry,[15] and the Augustan poet's unruffled persona is thrown into relief by his engagement with both the contemporary elegists and their predecessor.

In the earlier *Epodes*, however, the reader experiences both a different Horace and (accordingly) a different kind of relation to Catullan models. Here, Catullan echoes typically surface in the more truculent and aggressive invectives: Archilochean *iambus* is mediated through Catullus, much as the elegists' comic models are viewed through a Catullan filter. This is perhaps clearest in *Epode* 6, where the speaker pictures himself as a watchdog, who will 'bite back' if attacked, and invokes Archilochus and Hipponax as precedents (*Epode* 6.13–14): the indignant rhetorical questions with which the poem opens are reminiscent of Catullus at his most Archilochean, in the opening lines of poem 40.[16] So, too, the whip-scarred social climber attacked in *Epode* 4 has traits of both Catullus' Mamurra (poem 29) and his Thallus

[12] Putnam 2006.

[13] Ostentatiously so: Horace reinserts Sappho's phrase ἄδυ φωνείσας ('sweetly speaking', fr. 31.3–4), omitted by Catullus.

[14] On Catullan echoes in 1.22 and other love odes, see (in addition to Putnam 2006) Commager 1962: 129–59; Hubbard 2000; Sutherland 2005.

[15] Lyne 1980: 203.

[16] See Chapter 4, p. 73, above.

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(poem 25).[17] Yet, as recent criticism has emphasized, Horace's invective manner fluctuates between virulent aggression and the pose of weak and powerless underdog – and here, too, we can see Catullan precedents, as Horace rolls together the 'Priapic' and 'anti-Priapic' postures characteristic of Catullus' poetry. If at times Horace poses as the fierce watchdog of the community, elsewhere in the collection he characterizes himself as 'unwarlike and unmanly' (*imbellis ac firmus parum*; 1.16), and appears both sexually and politically impotent; oscillation between these two poles seems as characteristic of Horace's self-representation in this collection as of Catullus'.[18]

In contrast, for Virgil, and for the Ovid of the *Metamorphoses*, it is the *carmina maiora* that offer the greatest scope for intertextual engagement.[19] Traces can be found in both poets of careful reading of Catullus 64, in the context of the poems that surround it in our modern collection. Virgil's Dido and Ovid's Scylla (*Met.* 8.6–151), for example, are each modelled in part on the abandoned Ariadne, but both poets also echo Catullus 66 in this connection, in a way that tends to confirm the thematic links between the two Catullan poems discussed in the previous chapter. In the much-discussed encounter between Aeneas and Dido in the Underworld of Book 6, the hero appropriates the words of the Catullan Lock, *inuita, o regina, tuo de uertice cessi* ('unwillingly, o queen, did I depart from your head'; Catull. 66.39) – pointing perhaps to a reading of poem 66 as more serious and more evocative of profound emotion than modern

[17] Compare Catullus 25.10–11: *ne laneum latusculum manusque mollicellas / inusta . . . flagella conscribillent*, 'or whips will scrawl on your fleecy flank and soft paws and brand them', with *Epod.* 4.3: *peruste funibus latus*, 'branded on your flanks by the lash', and 4.11: *flagellis*, 'whips'; and Catullus 29.6–7: *superbus et superfluens / perambulabit*, 'will that arrogant spendthrift strut around?', with *Epod.* 4.5: *licet superbus ambules pecunia*, 'though you strut around, arrogant in your wealth'. Compare also the fate wished on 'stinking Mevius', whose shipwrecked corpse will provide 'rich pickings' for seagulls (*Epod.* 10.21–2) with that of Catullus' Cominius in poem 108, briefly discussed above (p. 73).

[18] See esp. Fitzgerald 1988; Oliensis 1998: 64–101; Gowers 2016. Also relevant here is the interplay between Archilochean and (the self-consciously milder style of) Callimachean *iambus*, which has been seen as underlying both Catullus' and Horace's self-fashioning. For Horace, see esp. Harrison 2001; Watson 2003: 4–17. For Catullus, see Wray 2001: 167–203 and Chapter 4, pp. 70–4, above.

[19] For Virgil's reception of Catullus, see esp. Putnam 1996; Petrini 1997; Nappa 2007; Hardie 2012. For Ovid, see Wray 2009; Myers 2012. Earlier discussions by Westendorp Boerma (1958) and Ferguson (1960, 1971–2) remain useful for detailed cataloguing of parallels. Constraints of space preclude discussion of the *Heroides*, for which Catullus' Ariadne is an important archetype – and not only in Ariadne's own letter, *Heroides* 10: she figures also in the *Ars Amatoria* (1.527–64) and the *Fasti* (3.459–516, on which see Conte's influential discussion, 1986: 60–2). On Ovid's Ariadne, see further Foulon 2005; Armstrong 2006: 221–60.

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criticism has generally been willing to allow.[20] Ovid's juxtaposition in *Metamorphoses* 8 of Scylla's cutting of her father's lock with the catasterism of Ariadne's crown indicates a similar perception of thematic interconnection between poems 64 and 66. The two Augustan poets, too, are much concerned in different ways with temporality: the chronological complexity and ambiguity of Catullus 64 (discussed in Chapter 5) has arguably left its mark on the *Aeneid* and *Metamorphoses*. Virgil's 'history in the future tense' and problematic juxtaposition of linear and cyclical models of cultural development, and Ovid's apparently deliberate chronological inconsistencies, are suggestive of a broader concern with temporal patterns and problems inaugurated – or at least given new impetus – by Catullus' epyllion.[21]

While both Ovid and Virgil can be seen to read the *carmina maiora* as modelling sophisticated inter- and intratextual play, in combination with narrative and chronological complexity, Virgil's Catullus is above all a poet of grief and lamentation. Poem 101, together with 65 and the references to the brother's death in 68, is crucial here; but so too is the theme of loss and separation that emerges in various ways throughout the *carmina maiora*. As Philip Hardie shows, the anxieties of the girls' chorus of poem 62 are transposed by Virgil to mark the *end* of a marriage, with the loss of Creusa in the flight from Troy; the cut flower image of 62.39–47 (and its counterpart at the end of poem 11), on the other hand, assimilates the *ephebic* youths Euryalus and Pallas – who, like Catullus' Attis, will never achieve full manhood – to the virginal brides of the epithalamia.[22] Again, too, Aeneas' final separation from his

[20] Virgil substitutes *litore*, 'shore', for the Catullan *uertice*. Also relevant in this connection is the cutting of Dido's lock by Iris at the end of Book 4: see J. Tatum 1984: 444; Lyne 1994: 190–1; Wills 1998; Hardie 2012: 233–4. For further discussion of Dido and Catullus' *Coma*, see also Griffith 1995 (with a helpful review of earlier scholarship at 48–50); Pelliccia 2011.

[21] 'History in the future tense': W. H. Auden, 'Secondary Epic'. For further discussion and bibliography, see Myers 2012: 249–54 (Ovid); Gale 2021: 238–9 (Virgil). Also relevant here is Virgil's reworking of poem 64 in *Eclogue* 4, with its inversion of the Catullan pattern of decline from the Age of Heroes to the grim present: see esp. Du Quesnay 1977: 68–75; Van Sickle 1992: 37–64; Hubbard 1998: 78–85 (with full bibliography at 78 n. 65, to which add Fernandelli 2012: 328–38; Trimble 2013).

[22] *Aen.* 2.746: *aut quid in euersa uidi crudelius urbe*? ('what crueller sight did I see in the overthrown city?'), echoing Catullus 62.24: *quid faciunt hostes capta crudelius urbe?* ('what crueller deed does the enemy commit in a captured city?'). Euryalus and Pallas are compared to drooping flowers (with close echoes of Catullus) at *Aen.* 9.433–7 and 11.67–71 respectively. As Hardie 2012: 225–35 demonstrates, these echoes intersect with a complex of allusions to poems 63 and 66 which foreground the themes of severance and separation. I have argued elsewhere (Gale 2021: 236–7) that the Catullan theme of familial and intergenerational continuity, examined above (pp. 92–3), is also an important thematic intertext for Virgil's epic.

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father Anchises in the Underworld is marked by Catullan echoes, of which the most striking is Anchises' near-quotation of the opening line of poem 101, *quas ego te terras et quanta per aequora uectum / accipio* ('after how long a journey over land and sea do I greet you!', *Aen.* 6.692–3; cf. Catullus 101.1–2: *multas per gentes et multa per aequora uectus / aduenio*, 'after journeying through many peoples and over many seas I have come . . . '). While Aeneas' situation here in some ways inverts its model (unlike Catullus at his brother's grave, Aeneas *is* granted one final chance to converse with his father, and Anchises' role here is, of course, as much that of the spokesman of public, Roman values as the voice of personal grief and loss), the pathos of the impending separation is nevertheless foregrounded by invocation of the Catullan intertext.[23]

2. Pliny and Martial: Catullus in Flavian Rome

It is perhaps a little startling to find so prosaic – and so emphatically establishment – a figure as Pliny the Younger expressing a sense of affinity with *Catullus meus* ('my Catullus', as the poet is denoted both by Pliny himself [*Ep.* 1.16.5] and in a passage quoted in *Letter* 4.27 from a poem by a younger friend, Sentius Augurinus).[24] It is telling, however, that these two letters, as well as the third in which Catullus is mentioned by name (*Ep.* 4.14), are either devoted to the expression of admiration for a friend's compositions or aim to solicit comment on Pliny's own: here, we can see a notable similarity to the poetics of literary exchange that characterizes Catullus' collection.[25] The circulation of praise for literary endeavours between Pliny and his friends and correspondents is perhaps best compared with Catullus' dedication to Cornelius Nepos in poem 1, where both the mock-modest tone and the symmetry between poet and dedicatee bear similarities to Pliny's – rather less subtle – self-promotion; but more generally we might think of poems such as 14, 22, 35, and 95, where Catullus passes (not always positive) comment on fellow-writers.

[23] Compare, too, 6.689 with Catullus 64.166: unlike Ariadne, Anchises is given one last chance to 'hear and reply to [Aeneas'] familiar voice'. For further Catullan (and Homeric) intertexts, see Conte 1986: 32–9; Putnam 1996: 93–9; Hardie 2012: 222–3.

[24] On Pliny's poetry and reception of Catullus, see esp. M. Roller 1998; Marchesi 2008: 53–96; Newlands 2021: 245–7.

[25] For a stimulating discussion of epistolary exchange in Catullus and Pliny, see Gunderson 1997; for Catullus' thematization of literary exchange, see pp. 11–13 and 54–5 above.

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In these and other letters where Pliny comments on his own poetry, what is most striking is the connection with *otium* or leisure: poetic composition for Pliny is not only a leisure activity but one to be fitted into the odd moments when more serious pursuits are impossible – when travelling, or suffering from insomnia, or otherwise at an unavoidably loose end (see esp. *Ep.* 4.14.2, 7.4.3–5). The apologetic note struck, for example, in *Letter* 7.4 is no doubt partly disingenuous (notably, it offers Pliny the opportunity to compare himself with his favoured role model, Cicero, allegedly the author of an epigram addressed to Tiro), but it also reflects a perception, apparently common to Pliny and his circle of acquaintance, that the writing of *uersiculi* ('little verses', a somewhat dismissive term he applies to his own compositions as well as to those of friends) is an activity that ranks low on the scale of priorities proper for a member of the senatorial elite. The productive use of *otium* is a recurrent theme in Pliny's letters: in this context, the writing and recitation of poetry offers a vehicle for display of one's mastery of and versatility in a broad literary culture; at the same time, however, Pliny is insistent that his verses cost him no great effort – they are playful amusements, tossed off at high speed[26] – although this does not preclude the hope that they will win the approval of posterity, as of his equally cultivated contemporaries (*Ep.* 7.4.10, 7.9.10, 9.25.2).

The version of Catullus that Pliny offers us is tailored to suit this model of cultivated aristocratic leisure. The terminology of neoteric poetics – *uersiculi*, *lusus*, *ioci* – and the ideal of polished wit – *urbanitas*, *lepos*, *facetiae* – is readily assimilated to this new context, as is the connection between poetry and *otium* most clearly suggested in poem 50 (*hesterno, Licini, die* otiosi, 'Yesterday, Licinius, *at our leisure* . . . ').[27] But Catullus' provocative *privileging* of *otium*, and the dedication to poetic *labor* epitomized in Cinna's nine years' work on the *Smyrna* (celebrated

[26] A recurrent theme also in Statius, for whom, as Newlands 2021: 255–6 points out, rapidity of composition is associated with virtuoso improvisation, in another marked inversion of Catullan poetics (contrast Catullus' animadversions against Suffenus and Volusius [?] in poems 22 and 95). For Statius' engagement with Catullus more generally, see Newlands 2021: 253–61.

[27] For *uersiculi* ('little verses', 'light verse'), compare Plin. *Ep.* 3.21.3–4 (of Martial's epigrams), 4.27.4, 5.3.1–2, 9.16.2, with Catull. 16.3, 16.6, 50.4. For *lusus/ludere* ('play', 'playful poetry'), compare Plin. *Ep.* 4.14.3, 4.27.3, 7.9.10, 8.21.2, 9.22.2, 9.25.1, with Catull. 50.2, 50.5, 68.17. For *ioci/iocare* ('joke[s]'), compare Plin. *Ep.* 4.14.3, 5.3.2, 8.21.2, with Catull. 50.6 (and cf. 12.2, 36.10, 56.1, 4). For *lepos* ('charm'), compare Plin. *Ep.* 1.16.5, 6.21.5, 7.4.6, with Catull. 16.7, 50.7. For *urbanus* and *facetus* in Catullus, see pp. 13 and 54 above. M. Roller 1998: 287 notes that Pliny, in contrast to Catullus, confines this terminology to the literary sphere: for the *in*appropriateness of *urbanitas* in the context of a meeting of the Senate, see *Ep.* 4.25 (where the distance from Catullus' value-system is marked by the echo of Catullus 22.2 and 9, *in senatu dicax et urbanus et bellus est*, 'who is [inappropriately] witty, urbane and smart in the Senate'; 4.25.3).

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in poem 95), are in strong contrast to Pliny's self-conscious dilettantism. By the same token, there is no hint here of the anguished lover of the Lesbia poems (we can surmise that the *amores* or 'loves' of which Pliny claims to have written at *Ep.* 7.4.6 [cf. 4.14.3, 4.27.4, 7.9.13] were sufficiently playful and generic in character not to compromise the characterization of his poetry as 'light' verse), or of the aggression and obscenity of the invectives – despite references to 'anger' (*Ep.* 4.14.3, 7.9.13) and 'bile' (*Ep.* 4.27.2; cf. 1.16.5, 3.21.1), and the celebration of *variatio* in poetic output, both his own and that of others. Pliny's Catullus is a poet of the stylish, witty epigram: perhaps a little risqué and sometimes rather 'too harsh' (*Ep.* 1.16.5: *duriusculus*[28]) for good taste, but nevertheless an apt model for the playful *vers de société* appropriate for a man of Pliny's rank and public profile.

The toning down of Catullus' invective virulence which we have observed in Pliny is also characteristic of his contemporary and beneficiary, Martial.[29] Indeed, as has often been pointed out, it is symptomatic of the shift from the aristocratic *libertas dicendi* ('freedom of speech') of the Late Republic to the more regulated and guarded discourse of the Imperial period that many of Martial's targets are (apparently) fictive, or at least otherwise unknown, in contrast to the prominent contemporaries (Julius Caesar, Mamurra) attacked by Catullus.[30] It is important, too, that Martial writes from a different perspective from either Catullus or Pliny, both of whom were members of the social elite, making no secret of his dependence on patronage and his status as a 'professional' poet. As the poet of the streets and *hoi polloi* who frequent them, Martial self-consciously distances himself from the rarefied codes of literary and social performance that are so central to Catullus' poetry. *Epigram* 11.52, for example, begins with a quotation from Catullus 13, *cenabis belle, Iuli Cerialis, apud me* ('you'll get a good dinner at my place, Julius Cerialis'; cf. Catullus 13.1: *cenabis bene, mi Fabulle, apud me*), but substitutes a full menu for the mysterious perfume

[28] The diminutive is both Catullan in style and characteristic of Pliny in its mildness: as Newlands 2021: 245 observes, Pliny is self-consciously much gentler in his criticism of Saturninus, and his models, Catullus and Calvus, than Catullus himself in his own critique of contemporary poets.

[29] For Pliny's relationship with Martial, see *Ep.* 3.21. My discussion of Martial's Catullan reception is particularly indebted to Fitzgerald 2007: 167–86 and Newlands 2021: 247–53. See also Newman 1990: 75–103; Swann 1994: 10–81 and 1998; Lorenz 2007; Gaisser 2009: 168–74.

[30] Quintilian (who seems to have regarded Catullus primarily as an invective poet – he is listed under the heading of *iambus* in the reading list of *Inst.* 10 [10.1.96; other Catullan poems quoted or referenced in the treatise are 29, 62, 84, 86, and 97]) opines that overt attacks on powerful individuals such as Catullus 93 are tantamount to *insania* (*Inst.* 11.1.38).

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that is all Catullus can offer his guest. Whereas Catullus promises Fabullus *meros amores* (love, or love poetry, as we saw in Chapter 1), Martial promises *not* to recite – or, rather, to leave this privilege for his guest: the poem ends with a graceful compliment to its addressee (16–18). The *unguentum* or perfume crops up in a different guise in 3.12, where Martial signals his Catullan intertext by calling his dinner host Fabullus. Here, the guest talks back: what good is it to smell nice and go hungry (*res salsa est bene olere et esurire*)? One might as well be dead (*qui non cenat et unguitur, Fabulle, / hic uere mihi mortuus uidetur*, 'one who is perfumed and eats nothing is – I'd say – a corpse'; 3.12.4–5).

These two poems exemplify what Fitzgerald has called the 'banalization' of Catullus in Martial's hands:[31] the intangible subtleties of Catullan poetics and erotics are replaced by concrete objects of desire and distaste in all their physicality – in this respect, Martial seems closer to Juvenal than to Catullus, though without the former's aggressive moralizing. At the same time, Martial's Catullus (like Pliny's) is above all the poet of *nugae*, *lusus*, and *ioci* – playful, witty, risqué, but stripped of the provocativeness and venom that typify the polymetrics and epigrams (the *carmina maiora*, again, barely figure in Martial's reception of Catullus).[32] Here, too, Catullan models – along with those of his fellow-epigrammatists Domitius Marsus, Albinovanus Pedo, and Gaetulicus – license the use of obscene language and content:[33] the preface to Book 1 draws attention to its *lasciua uerborum ueritas* ('risqué plain-speaking') even while purporting to apologize for it, and the theme of obscenity recurs elsewhere.

Catullus is consistently represented by Martial – often by name[34] – as an important forerunner in the epigrammatic tradition, sometimes implicitly as an object of rivalry. Twice, for example, Martial echoes the kiss poems, 5, 7, and 48, in a way that suggests a certain one-upmanship:

[31] Fitzgerald 2007: 167–86. For the 'grotesque body' in Martial (and Catullus), see Swann 1994: 71–5.

[32] For Martial's use of this vocabulary, see Swann 1994: 47–64.

[33] Pliny is, unsurprisingly, more coy about this, claiming to eschew the use of *nuda uerba* ('unvarnished language'; *Ep.* 4.14.4–5) even while pronouncing it acceptable under the 'law of the genre' (*huius opusculi . . . uerissimam legem*) that he extracts from Catullus 16.5–8. For Catullus as authorizing figure in Martial, see Newlands 2021: 247–8. Catullus' name is linked with those of Marsus, Pedo, and/or Gaetulicus at *Ep.* 1 *praef.*, 2.71.3, 5.5.6, and 7.99.7.

[34] At least twenty times: see Swann 1994: 33–4 for a full list. On two occasions, Martial refers to Catullus the mimographer (identified by Wiseman 1985: 183–98, 2023: 42–6 with our Catullus; but Wiseman's argument has not won wide acceptance). Three further references are apparently to a contemporary, though see Fitzgerald 2007: 168–9 for a persuasive metapoetic reading of one of these (Mart. 12.73).

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Basia da nobis, Diadumene, pressa. 'Quot?' inquis.
Oceani fluctus me numerare iubes
et maris Aegaei sparsas per litora conchas
et quae Cecropio monte uagantur apes,
quaeque sonant pleno uocesque manusque theatro,
cum populus subiti Caesaris ora uidet.
nolo quot arguto dedit exorata Catullo
Lesbia: pauca cupit, qui numerare potest. (Martial 6.34)

Give me kisses, Diadumenus – tightly pressed ones. 'How many?' you ask. You bid me count the waves of Ocean and the shells strewn on the shores of the Aegean Sea, the bees that roam the Cecropian mount and the applause and shouts that resound through the packed theatre when the crowd suddenly glimpses Caesar's face. I don't want just as many kisses as Lesbia gave when witty Catullus begged her: he who can count them wants but few kisses.

Tantum dat tibi Roma basiorum
post annos modo quindecim reverso,
quantum Lesbia non dedit Catullo. (Martial 12.59.1–3)[35]

Rome is giving you more kisses on your return after fifteen years than Lesbia ever gave Catullus.

In the oft-quoted 11.6, the *basia Catulliana* recur, this time neatly combined with a knowingly suggestive reference to the *passer* of poems 2 and 3: typically, Martial makes much more obvious play of the double meaning only hinted at by Catullus.[36]

da nunc basia, sed Catulliana:
quae si tot fuerint quot ille dixit,
donabo tibi Passerem Catulli.

Now give me kisses – Catullan ones: if there are as many as he said, I'll give you Catullus' *passer*.[37]

Lesbia, too, is a recurrent character in Martial's epigrams, sometimes appearing explicitly as the Lesbia of Catullus, sometimes apparently as a

[35] The punchline of this second poem both inverts its Catullan model and plays on the idea of the 'impure mouth', prominent elsewhere in Catullus (and combined with the kiss motif at 78b, 99): the kisses that the returning traveller has to endure are so far from desirable, including as they do those of a *fellator* and a *recens cunnilingus* (10), that it would be better not to have returned at all. The first poem, of course, deliberately misreads Catullus, who ultimately wants *not* to keep count (5.11–13). For Diadumenus' kisses, see also 3.65, where Martial riffs on the 'kisses as food' theme of Catullus 48; and 5.46, which reverses the self-abasing acquiescence of Catullus 99, normalizing the *erastēs–erōmenos* relationship as one between master and slave. See also 11.6, quoted in the main text below.

[36] See above, p. 25.

[37] Catullus' *passer*/*Passer* is also referenced at Mart. 1.7.3, 1.109.1, 4.14.13–14, 7.14.3–4. On the *double*/*triple entendre*, see esp. Gaisser 1993: 236–42.

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contemporary. In the former instances, she figures as a generic elegiac *puella*, the 'girlfriend' (*amica*) of Catullus, listed alongside Propertius' Cynthia, Ovid's Corinna, and others.[38] More striking are the poems on the contemporary Lesbia, who may be seen as a kind of deformation or travesty of Catullus' idealized beloved: hypersexual, grossly physical, even ugly, and – in particular – a *fellatrix* ('cocksucker'; 2.50), she owes something to the monstrously insatiable Lesbia of Catullus 11, but also makes explicit the submerged associations of the name.[39]

In general, critics have rightly seen Martial as 'turning down the emotional heat' in his handling of Catullan intertexts: for all his repeated citation of poem 16, the epigrammatist aims to amuse and entertain rather than excite his reader or rouse our emotions or indignation.[40] Symptomatic is his rejection of the invective poem as weapon at 7.12.5–8: here, Martial contrasts his own, inoffensive verse – which the emperor may read with 'serene brow', and which causes no one to blush (1–4) – with the violence of Archilochean invective ('weapons that drip with the blood of Lycambes'; 6).[41] Martial's epigrammatic Catullus, then, is not only a forebear to be emulated and even surpassed (by, as Gaisser nicely puts it, 'taking Catullus' poems apart, putting a witty spin on their ideas, and reassembling them in new and surprising combinations'[42]) but also one to be self-consciously toned down, to suit the more circumspect sensibility of Domitianic Rome.

[38] Mart. 8.73.8, 12.44.5. For *amica Catulli*, see 7.14.3–4; for *dilecta Catullo*, see 14.77 (in the last two instances, she weeps for her pet bird, with reference to Catullus 3).

[39] See p. 41 above. The contemporary Lesbia also appears in *Ep.* 1.34, 5.68, 6.23, 10.39, 11.62, and 11.99. On these poems, see Newlands 2021: 249–53.

[40] Fitzgerald 2007: 175 (with reference to echoes of poem 72 in *Ep.* 2.55: 'the emotional heat of Catullus's world is turned down a notch or two'). For echoes of Catullus 16.5–6: *nam castum esse decet pium poetam / ipsum, uersiculos nihil necesse est* ('it's right for a devoted poet to be virtuous himself, but his verses don't have to be'), see Mart. 1.4.8 and 11.15.13; and compare Catullus 16.7–9: *qui* [sc. *uersiculi*] *. . . habent salem ac leporem / si . . . / . . . quod pruriat incitare possunt* ('poetry has piquancy and charm if it can stir up an itch'), with Mart. 1.35 (esp. 11: *ne possint, nisi pruriant, iuuare*, '[epigrams] cannot please unless they rouse an itch') and 11.16.

[41] For the poem as weapon, see esp. Catullus 116 and pp. 71–2 above. As Lorenz 2007: 430–3 points out, however, the apologetic note that Martial strikes in 7.12 is qualified by other epigrams (6.64, 10.5, 12.61) in which the poet threatens his addressee with infamy, under provocation. But, again, we can see a self-conscious toning down here of (e.g.) Catullus 40 and 108. Mart. 12.61 offers a particularly neat paradox in response to Catullus' attack on Ravidus: Martial *refuses* to write invective against Ligurra, on the grounds that the latter is worthy only of toilet graffiti (in the process, of course, making him the target of an invective poem). Mart. 10.5 is – again somewhat paradoxically – an invective attack on an invective poet who targets those who should be above criticism: here, while steering clear of the gruesome relish with which Catullus imagines the dismemberment of Cominius in poem 108, Martial nevertheless ups the ante by having his victim's sufferings prolonged into the afterlife.

[42] Gaisser 2009: 170.

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3. Catullan renaissance

It is something of a cliché to say that Catullus almost did not survive antiquity. From the early fifth century AD, references become increasingly sporadic and finally disappear altogether: we can assume that manuscripts of the poems ceased to circulate, and that medieval authors before the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century had no access to Catullus' text and knew of him only through references and quotations in other ancient authors.[43]

At some time around the year 1300, however, a manuscript of the poems was discovered in (or brought to?) Verona and copied at least once. This momentous event was celebrated in a riddling Latin epigram by Benvenuto Campesani (d. 1323), transmitted in two of the earliest surviving manuscripts, where it precedes or follows Catullus' text. The epigram is entitled 'Verses of Master Benvenuto Campesani of Vincenza on the resurrection of the poet Catullus of Verona' and describes Catullus' text as having returned home from distant exile, and as having been 'hidden under a bushel'.[44] This concluding phrase has generated romantic fantasies of the discovery of the manuscript literally in a storeroom or wine cellar; more probably, it alludes to the biblical phrase 'hiding one's light under a bushel', with a pun on the word *papirus* (which in medieval usage could refer either to paper or to the wick of a lamp).

The rediscovered, though subsequently lost, manuscript celebrated in Benvenuto's epigram is generally identified with the archetype from which all our surviving manuscripts – with the exception of the *Codex Thuaneus* (T) – descend;[45] it is known as the *Veronensis* (V). The oldest of the descendants, designated O, G, and R, are probably not direct copies of V: a further lost manuscript (usually designated A) is now thought to have intervened between V and O, while, on the basis of shared errors

[43] Or almost no access: along with a handful of disputed echoes (on which see Butrica 2007: 26; Oakley 2021: 271; and – in more detail – Kiss 2016), we have the testimony of Bishop Rather of Verona, who claims to have read Catullus in *c.* 966, referring to the poet, significantly, as 'never before read' (*numquam antea lectum*). In addition, a manuscript written in the mid-ninth century in northern France contains poem 62, along with selections from Martial, Juvenal, and others: this is the *Codex Thuaneus*, now in the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris, our oldest surviving manuscript of Catullus. For further evidence of the availability of Catullan manuscripts in the Middle Ages, see Kiss 2015a, 2016, who argues that the poems were more widely known than the scholarly consensus suggests.

[44] The epigram is reproduced in full by, e.g., Butrica 2007: 27; Oakley 2021: 266. For discussion and a *historia quaestionis*, see most recently Kiss 2015b.

[45] Strictly, it would be the pre-archetype, if manuscripts O and X are not direct copies (see below). On the *Codex Thuaneus* (T), see n. 43 above.

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present in G and R but absent in O, it can be deduced that the former were copied from a common source (X, no longer extant); this will have been a second, independently made copy of A, and thus a 'sibling' of O. A copy of R, the *Codex Marcianus* or M, was made some time around 1400 for the proto-humanist Coluccio Salutati (1331–1406).[46] Together, these four manuscripts, O, G, R, and M, can be used to reconstruct the readings of V, as well as representing the earliest phase of scholarly work on the text of the poems: Salutati made numerous corrections in R (designated R^2), both by comparing the manuscript with its exemplar and by proposing emendations of his own, and there are some indications that Petrarch may already have added marginal notes in the lost manuscript A.[47]

Such emendations were sorely needed: it is clear that the archetype, V, and indeed the more distant ancestor (Ω) from which both V and T ultimately descend, was marred by very extensive textual corruption. The scribe of G appends an apology for his text's poor quality, perhaps copied from X or even A; and, as Oakley notes, Roger Mynors' Oxford Classical Text, though relatively conservative, accepts over 800 conjectural readings into the approximately 2,300 lines of the corpus, without which much of the Latin would be nonsensical, unmetrical, or both.[48] The great majority of these are due to the humanist scholars of the Renaissance, to whom we owe the fundamental basis of our modern editions. Many cruces and disputed readings remain, and textual critics continue to propose new conjectures. However, though modern editors may differ widely on matters of detail, the texts that we read nowadays are at least legible, in a way that was scarcely true of the fourteenth-century manuscripts, or even the *editio princeps* (first printed edition) of 1472.[49]

[46] For a stemma of the earliest manuscripts, see Oakley 2021: 272. Oakley also includes a full list of extant manuscripts written before *c.* 1500, with their current locations (2021: 287–90), based on that of Thomson 1997: 72–89. The manuscripts mentioned above are Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 8071 (T); Oxford, Bodleian Library, Canon. class. lat. 30 (O); Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 14137 (G); Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Ottob. lat. 1829 (R); and Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, lat. XII.80 (M). For a clear and readable account of the early textual history, see Butrica 2007. For more detail on these, as well as the fifteenth-century manuscripts (the *recentiores*) and the interrelationships between them, see Thomson 1997: 22–43; Kiss 2015a; Oakley 2021. There is broad agreement among scholars that the great majority of the *recentiores* descend from R (a theory first adumbrated by W. G. Hale in 1897, and more fully elaborated in Hale 1899: 140–4), and have independent value only as sources of conjectural readings; it is highly probable, though not certain, that all descend from either R or G.

[47] So Thomson 1997: 28.

[48] Oakley 2021: 275; the figure is taken from Goold's important review of Mynors' text (Goold 1958).

[49] For modern editions and textual criticism, see below, Appendix, pp. 144–6.

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A major advance came with the Aldine editions of 1502 and 1515, printed in Venice by the renowned publisher Aldo Manuzio in collaboration with the Veronese scholar Girolamo Avanzi (Avantius).[50] With its greatly improved text and large print run, the Aldine edition made Catullus much more accessible, and – importantly – comprehensible to a more general readership.

As readable texts became more widely available through the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the poems began to have an impact on literary as well as scholarly production. A central figure in this regard is the Neapolitan humanist Giovanni Gioviano Pontano (1426–1503), whose three collections of Latin poetry (the *Pruritus* or 'titillation', the *Parthenopaeus* or *Amores*, and the *Hendecasyllabi* or *Baiae*) helped to establish a type of Neo-Catullan verse that would dominate the poet's Renaissance reception. As Gaisser persuasively argues, Pontano and his contemporaries approached Catullus through Martial, reading him as a poet of the senses rather than the emotions, and focusing selectively on a small number of the polymetrics, to the virtual exclusion of the *carmina maiora* and (to a lesser extent) the epigrams.[51] Pontano – like Pliny and Martial – advances the *lex Catulliana* of poem 16 in mitigation of the frank sensuality and (particularly in the first collection) sexual explicitness of his verse. From Martial, too, he presumably derives the 'obscene' reading of the *passer* poems, 2 and 3, which is conflated in *Parthenopaeus* 1.5 with the dedication of poem 1 and the kiss poems, 5 and 7 (as well as more circumscribed echoes of several other poems).[52] Pontano initially considers offering his 'dove' to the *mali cinaedi* ('wicked catamites'), before settling on his girlfriend, in whose lap it 'happily plays'. The poem concludes:

> *Impune hoc facies, uolente diua,*
> *ut, cum te roseo ore suauiatur*
> *rostrum purpureis premens labellis,*
> *mellitam rapias iocosa linguam,*
> *et tot basia totque basiabis,*
> *donec nectarei fluant liquores.*

You will do this without penalty, by the goddess' grace: when she kisses you with rosy mouth, pressing your beak with her crimson lips, you will playfully seize her honey-sweet tongue and give her so many kisses – so many – until the liquid nectar flows.

[50] On the Aldine and other early printed editions, see Gaisser 1993: 24–65; Kiss 2021: 292–8.
[51] Gaisser 1993: 220–33; the same argument is summarized at Gaisser 2007b: 440–5, 2009: 177–84.
[52] Renaissance controversy and polemic in relation to the 'obscene' interpretation of poems 2 and 3 is discussed in detail by Gaisser 1993: 75–8.

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While the sexual suggestiveness of Pontano's poetry is often toned down by his successors, the kiss poems and the *passer* continue to be a focus in Neo-Latin poetry throughout the Renaissance, ultimately spawning an entire (sub-)genre, the *basium*. At the same time, Pontano developed a characteristically Neo-Catullan style, which was to prove equally influential: typified by verbal patterning (especially repetition and rhetorical parallelism), diminutives, and what Alex Wong refers to as 'erotic babytalk', this self-consciously voluptuous manner is both reminiscent of its Catullan models and yet distinctively different from that of either Martial or Catullus himself.[53]

4. Catullus and the moderns

Catullan reception in the English vernacular arguably begins with Skelton's 'Philip Sparrow' (*c.* 1505), an extended lament for a pet bird put in the mouth of a young woman, Jane Scrope, and very loosely based on Catullus 3.[54] Through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the first half of the eighteenth, the sparrow and kiss poems remained predictably popular, as did the epithalamia, 61 and 62;[55] but, alongside the appearance of the first complete – if often euphemistic – translations, the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries saw something of a shift away from the perception of Catullus primarily as a poet of love and marriage. Henry Stead argues that the 'Cockney School' around the liberal poet and essayist Leigh Hunt (1784–1859) co-opted Catullus as a voice of social protest, while Catullan parody might serve equally as a stick with which to beat the radicals.[56] More generally, the epigrams and non-amatory polymetrics receive much more attention in this period

[53] See Wong 2021 (quoted phrase at 326) and (in more detail) 2017: esp. 25–40, 54–87. On Pontano and his successors, see also Gaisser 1993: 220–54, 2009: 176–90.

[54] On Skelton and Catullus, see McPeek 1939: 57–61. Echoes of Catullus in Skelton's poem are not close and may be indirect; but compare lines 120–6 with Catull. 2.2 and 3.8, and lines 159–60 with Catull. 3.9. There are hints of the eroticism more explicitly present in the Neo-Latin sparrow poems, esp. in lines 159–78 and 341–62.

[55] For sixteenth- and seventeenth-century versions and adaptations into English, see Gaisser 2001: 3–42; the surveys in Harrington 1924: 143–87 and McPeek 1939 remain useful. For Catullus 61, 62, and 64 as the 'salient template' for Renaissance epithalamia, see R. Greene 2015: 329–33.

[56] Stead 2016: esp. 223–68, 210–22 for parodies of poems 31 and 45. See also Stead 2016: 33–98 for the translations of John Nott (1795) and George Lamb (1821). The history of Catullan translation is a subject that merits full treatment in its own right, though constraints of space have allowed no more than the briefest of mentions here. The versions assembled by Gaisser 2001 give a good sense of the range of strategies that translators have adopted for dealing with the problems involved in rendering Catullus into English, notably colloquialism and obscenity, patterned language, wordplay, and variation in register. See also Vandiver 2007; D. H. Roberts 2008; Venuti 2008: 68–82, 186–94; Bassnett 2014: 92–101.

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than previously; and poem 64 inspired both translations and engagement of a more allusive kind.[57]

Another, perhaps surprising, favourite of the Romantics and post-Romantics is poem 63.[58] Hunt framed his translation as an attack on 'religious enthusiasm': it was first published in 1811 under the title 'Atys, the Enthusiast' – a heading which would readily have pointed contemporary readers to the 'ranting' and 'enthusiasm' associated by its detractors with Primitive Methodism.[59] But he also drew on Attis a second time in an 1825 poem, 'From Velluti to his Revilers'. Here, Hunt takes on the persona of the celebrated castrato Giovanni Battista Velluti, whose recent performance in London had attracted critical hostility: 'Velluti', in turn, identifies with the mourning Attis as he laments his irrevocable alienation from home and recognized social roles:

> *To the sea-shore he [Attis] came, and look'd across,*
> *Mourning his native land and miserable loss. –*
> *Oh worse than wits that never must return,*
> *To act with madness and with reason mourn!*
> *I see him, hear him: I myself am he.*
> *Cut off from thy sweet shores, Humanity!*[60]

Whereas Hunt exploits Catullus in a bid to win sympathy for the alien figure of the castrato, the exoticism of the poem's themes and its unusual, hypnotic metre exerted their own fascination. Both Tennyson and Meredith imitated the galliambic metre in 'Boadicea' (described by Tennyson as 'a far-off echo of the *Attis* of Catullus') and 'Phaethon' respectively. Landor closes his 1842 essay 'The Writings of Catullus' with a remarkable peroration contrasting Catullus' sublimity with 'the

[57] For the versions of poem 64 by Frank Sayers (1803) and Charles Abraham Elton (1814), see Stead 2016: 101–22; the latter is included in Gaisser 2001: 96–105. Stead also discusses allusions in Leigh Hunt, Thomas Love Peacock, and Keats. The epyllion was admired by Landor, who observed (of the simile at 269–75) that 'a more beautiful description, or one in which every verse is better adapted to its peculiar office, is neither to be found nor conceived' (quoted in Gaisser 2001: 87).

[58] Perhaps due in part to Gibbon's admiration for the poem, as Gaisser 2009: 199–200 suggests.

[59] See Stead 2016: 257–65. Hunt's translation is available in Gaisser 2001: 112–16.

[60] Lines 147–52, quoted by Stead 2016: 266–7: cf. Catullus 63.47–9. On Hunt's poem and its historical context, see further Stead 2016: 265–8. Unsurprisingly, the homoerotic overtones of lines 64–7 (*ego gymnasi fui flos*, 'I was the flower of the gymnasium', etc.) are suppressed in both 'Velluti to His Revilers' and Hunt's translation of poem 63, where lines 64–5 are rendered 'I was the charm of life, the social spring,/first in the race, and brightest in the ring'. A similar sleight of hand can be remarked in Hunt's and Elton's translations of poem 45, where Acme is domesticated as Septimius' 'bride', as well as the more general tendency to de-emphasize (or even switch!) Juventius' gender, for which see Stead 2016: 81–2; Gaisser 2009: 205–6.

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catarrhal songsters of goose-grazed commons', whose devotees will be 'loth and ill-fitted to mount up with Catullus to the highest steeps in the forests of Ida, and will shudder at the music of the Corybantes in the temple of the Great Mother of the Gods'.[61] More remarkable still is Swinburne's scandalous sadomasochistic fantasy 'Dolores', in which the vampiric anti-Madonna Dolores personifies the abandoned sexuality and 'violent delights' associated by Swinburne with the lost classical past.[62] Represented by Swinburne as the daughter of Priapus and the Roman funerary goddess Libitina, Dolores is opposed both to the Virgin Mary and to (Catullus') Cybele, whose cold purity is portrayed as a castrating force pitted against the perverse sexuality of 'Our Lady of Pain':

Cry aloud; for the old world is broken:
Cry out; for the Phrygian is priest,
And rears not the bountiful token
And spreads not the fatherly feast.
From the midmost of Ida, from shady
Recesses that murmur at morn,
They have brought and baptized her, Our Lady,
A goddess new-born.

And the chaplets of old are above us,
And the oyster-bed[63] *teems out of reach;*
Old poets outsing and outlove us,
And Catullus makes mouths at our speech.
Who shall kiss, in thy father's own city,
With such lips as he sang with, again?
Intercede for us all of thy pity,
Our Lady of Pain. ('Dolores' 329–44)

At the opposite extreme from Swinburne's mocking Catullus is the 'tender Catullus' of Tennyson's 'Frater Ave atque Vale' (1880), which combines direct quotation of the homecoming poem, 31 (another nineteenth-century favourite), with the 'hopeless woe' of 101. Tennyson identifies with Catullus, as a fellow-poet but more specifically as a poet of mourning and lament (Tennyson had lost his own brother, Charles, just a few months before his visit to Sirmione):

[61] Landor 1842: 369. On Landor and Catullus, see A. Roberts 2015: 375–8; Stead 2016: 154–65.

[62] 'These violent delights have violent ends', quoted by Swinburne (from *Romeo and Juliet*, Act ii, Scene 6), in his defence of 'Dolores' in the 1866 pamphlet *Notes on Poems and Reviews*. On Catullan echoes in 'Dolores', see Wiseman 1985: 214–15; Boulet 2009.

[63] An allusion to the *Priapeum* formerly included in the collection as poem 18 (see Chapter 1, n. 11, above), now generally referred to as fragment 1. Lines 3–4 refer to the worship of Priapus at Lampsacus, 'more abundant in oysters than other shores' (*ceteris ostriosior oris*).

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Row us out from Desenzano, to your Sirmione row!
So they row'd, and there we landed – 'O venusta Sirmio!'
There to me through all the groves of olive in the summer glow,
There beneath the Roman ruin where the purple flowers grow,
Came that 'Ave atque Vale' of the Poet's hopeless woe,
Tenderest of Roman poets nineteen-hundred years ago,
'Frater Ave atque Vale' – as we wandered to and fro
Gazing at the Lydian laughter of the Garda Lake below
Sweet Catullus's all-but-island, olive-silvery Sirmio!

As 'Frater Ave atque Vale' suggests, the tenderness that Tennyson and his contemporaries find in Catullus is manifested not so much in the love poems as in the elegiac laments, 65, 96 (a poem of consolation to his fellow-poet Calvus), and especially 101.[64] Translations and echoes of these poems often point to a sense of community with Catullus as a poet of loss and longing: picking up on the homosocial aspect of Catullus' poetry discussed in Chapter 3, the nineteenth-century writers insert themselves into the network of *amici* whose literary and personal friendships the collection both constructs and celebrates.[65] The symbolic brotherhood of poets implicit in Tennyson is similarly invoked by Swinburne, both in 'Ave atque Vale: In Memory of Charles Baudelaire' and in 'To Catullus', where the Roman poet is directly invoked as 'My brother, my Valerius'. More teasingly, Aubrey Beardsley suggests a direct identification with Catullus through the illustration accompanying his translation of poem 101 for *The Savoy* magazine of 1896: the imaginary portrait of Catullus is at the same time a portrait of Beardsley himself, whose striking profile, with its beak-like nose, can be discerned in the outline of the black drapery framing the figure's torso.

Nineteenth-century Catullus is a poet of extremes, both exotic and domesticable, distant yet intimate, whose 'uncleanly wit' is to be deplored (where not passed over in silence), yet who can be claimed as a literary 'brother', as much by the laureate Tennyson as by the self-consciously counter-cultural Swinburne and Beardsley.[66] Though rather differently framed, this dichotomy can usefully be compared with the opposition between 'Priapic' and 'anti-Priapic' personae

[64] On Tennyson's Catullus, see Vance 1997: 119, 124–7; Markley 2015: 542–4 and (in more detail) 2004: 66–7, 76–8, 97–8, 114–20. Poem 101 is also echoed in section 57 of 'In Memoriam': 'Eternal greetings to the dead; / And "Ave, Ave, Ave," said, / "Adieu, adieu," for evermore'.

[65] On the importance of the homosocial in nineteenth- and twentieth-century imitations and reworkings of Catullus (and the misogynistic undercurrents which often accompany it), see Fitzgerald 1995: 212–35.

[66] The phrase 'uncleanly wit' is taken from Landor's 'On Catullus'; for similar sentiments, see his 'Lines Written in a Catullus' (both printed in Gaisser 2001: 276).

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discussed in Chapter 2: late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century scholarship, while somewhat more suspicious in its reading of Catullan self-representation, offers an analogue for Tennyson's 'tender' poet in the feminized, self-abasing aspect that complements and contrasts with the assertive and hyper-masculine speaker of the invectives.

A different kind of dichotomy is suggested in what is perhaps the best-known modern response to Catullus and Catullan scholarship, Yeats's 'The Scholars' (1929):

> *Bald heads forgetful of their sins,*
> *Old, learned, respectable bald heads*
> *Edit and annotate the lines*
> *That young men, tossing on their beds,*
> *Rhymed out in love's despair*
> *To flatter beauty's ignorant ear.*
> *All shuffle there; all cough in ink;*
> *All wear the carpet with their shoes;*
> *All think what other people think;*
> *All know the man their neighbour knows.*
> *Lord, what would they say*
> *Did their Catullus walk that way?*[67]

Yeats's satirical antithesis between the 'old, learned, respectable bald heads' of Catullus' modern editors and the despairing young lover who 'rhymed out' the poems 'to flatter beauty's ignorant ear' is commonly supposed to be directed primarily at the commentary of Robinson Ellis, first published in 1876.[68] Ironically enough, however, Yeats' romanticized image of Catullus tossing on his bed[69] is equally in tune with an increasingly prominent strand in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Catullan scholarship, inaugurated by Schwabe's *Quaestiones Catullianae*, which had appeared more than a decade before Ellis' commentary, in 1862. As we saw in Chapter 2, Schwabe's methodology – the novelistic reconstruction of Catullus' biography on the basis of the poems – was to exert a crucial influence in the academic sphere for the next several decades; at the same time, and perhaps not coincidentally, biographical approaches, particularly narrativization of the Lesbia affair, become popular in both poetic and prose receptions of Catullus in the twentieth century.

[67] This is the revised version of the original text published in *The Wild Swans at Coole* (1919), incorporating changes to lines 7–10.

[68] So e.g. Harrison 2021: 349.

[69] The contrast itself nods to Catullus' rejection of the *rumores . . . senum seueriorum* ('censure of stern old men') in poem 5, as well as the image of the poet 'tossing on [his] bed' in poem 50 – though here, of course, his restlessness is attributed to the homosocial and literary excitement generated by the previous evening spent with Licinius Calvus, rather than the demands of 'beauty's ignorant ear'.

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As Gaisser points out, novelization of Catullus' life and poetry was not new, and can be traced back to the late seventeenth century, when Jean de la Chapelle published his *Les Amours de Catulle*.[70] Twentieth-century writers, however, adopted the novelistic approach to a much greater extent than their predecessors. Fitzgerald shows how a series of male poets (James Baxter, John Cotton, and others) take the ups and downs of the affair with Lesbia, and particularly her 'victimization' of the poet, as models for their own sexual relationships: the brotherhood of poetry and loss fantasized by the Victorian poets mutates into a distinctly misogynistic sense of male–male solidarity in the face of the castrating female.[71] A feeling of intimacy – of kinship with 'the person imagined behind the poetry', as Theodore Ziolkowski puts it[72] – persists as a connecting thread through modern receptions of the poems, considerably outlasting the biographical fashion in Catullan criticism, in tandem with which it originated.

Both poets and prose writers generally took (and continue to take) the identification of Lesbia with Clodia Metelli for granted: the novelists – like Schwabe himself – draw freely on the ancient sources for the lives of Clodia and her contemporaries to fill out the exiguous biographical detail supplied by the poems themselves and the sparse ancient testimonia.[73] Something of an exception, however, is the most highly regarded and certainly the most imaginative of the Catullus novels, Thornton's Wilder's *The Ides of March* (1948). Wilder's existentialist-influenced 'fantasia' on the last days of Caesar's dictatorship is explicitly ahistorical in its willingness to play fast and loose with chronology and the relationships between characters, for all the *effet de réel* created by its documentary format (a variation on the epistolary novel, it consists entirely of a series of mostly fictive 'documents', with accompanying 'editorial' glossing).[74] Catullus plays a secondary role in the novel, serving primarily as a kind of foil to Caesar, who greatly admires Catullus' poetry but is

[70] Originally published 1680; an English translation appeared in 1707. As Gaisser notes, La Chapelle, like Yeats, was keen to 'rescue Catullus from the pedantry of scholars' (Gaisser 2009: 201–3; quoted phrase at 202).

[71] Fitzgerald 1995: 212–35, esp. 213–15, 222–7.

[72] Ziolkowski 2007: 416.

[73] For twentieth- and early twenty-first-century novelizations of Catullus' life, see esp. Wiseman 1975 (now reprinted, with a postscript briefly covering more recent novelists, at Wiseman 2023: 142–58); Ziolkowski 2007: 416–29; Theodorakopoulos 2013. See also Fitzgerald 1995: 221–2 on Benita Kane Jaro's *The Key* (1988).

[74] See Wilder's prefatory note to the novel (2003: xv–xvi; page references in the main text and notes below are to this edition). For discussion of the interplay between verisimilitude and self-conscious fictionality in Wilder's novel, see Scourfield 2024.

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perplexed, as are others, by his obsessive devotion to Clodia. What is particularly striking in Wilder's portrayal of Catullus – in the context of contemporary scholarship – is his depiction as, at bottom, oddly innocent and strait-laced: Cornelius Nepos characterizes him as being 'as severe [to his peers] as their fathers, and, although extremely licentious in conversation, . . . little short of austere in his life and attempts to inculcate "the Old Roman Way" in them also' (49–50; see also 55–6). Clodia, while sympathetically treated by Wilder, destroys her lover out of a generalized hatred of 'everything and everyone about her' (60, a letter from Asinius Pollio to Caesar), motivated by a kind of existential angst and (it transpires) by the childhood trauma of having been raped by her uncle at the age of twelve.[75]

If Wilder's Catullus is strikingly different from our modern image of the urbane and often aggressively masculine poet, his characterization is very much of a piece with that of Schwabe and late nineteenth- and earlier twentieth-century scholarship in general. Schwabe, as noted in Chapter 2, represents Catullus as the innocent victim of Lesbia's perfidy: his 'candid and open heart' was naturally vulnerable to her 'meretricious arts', and, while unduly prone to both love and hatred, he can be forgiven the 'madness' of passion on account of his fundamental purity of mind, pious worship of the gods, and devotion to his brother.[76] Wilder has discarded Schwabe's sententious moralizing; but we can nevertheless trace the outlines of the 'pure' Catullus, found elsewhere in both the scholarship and the literary receptions of the period, and presumably derived ultimately from an over-literal reading of the assertions of *pietas* in poems 16 and 76 and the prayer for salvation at the end of the latter, along with a pervasive tendency to gloss over or entirely ignore the invectives.[77]

[75] Hinted at in Caesar's 'journal-letter' to the fictional Lucius Mamilius Turrinus (14), and later made explicit by Clodia in a letter to Catullus (57). Caesar refers to Clodia as 'one of those innumerable persons who trail behind them a shipwrecked life' (14) and 'this woman who has lost intelligible meaning to herself and lives only to impress the chaos of her soul on all that surrounds her' (32).

[76] Schwabe 1862: 69–70, my translation. For similar characterizations, see e.g. Baehrens 1885: 40–1; Harrington 1924: 3–44; and J. C. Squire's poem 'To a Roman' (1923; in Duckett 1925: 63–5), discussed by Wiseman 1985: 224–5 and Fitzgerald 1995: 225–7. Even in the mid-1980s, vestiges of this notion of Catullan 'purity' lingered: Wiseman 1985: 224 sees 'some historical justification' in the 'conflict of moral innocence and corrupt sophistication' central to such narratives; his own Catullus is essentially a rather traditionally minded provincial, an *ingénu* in 'the corrupt and cynical world of Roman high society' (92–129; quoted phrase at 122).

[77] Wilder's novel does refer on a number of occasions to the invectives against Caesar, which are represented as arising from a personal animosity (partly political; partly, it appears, a reaction to unjustified sexual jealousy); but, as noted above, the crude language of these poems is contrasted with the austerity of the poet's life – a contrast which must derive ultimately from poem 16.

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Alongside this penchant for the novelization of Catullus' life, twentieth-century poets admired him for his perceived counter-cultural individualism and for the combination of technical brilliance with emotive power. For Louis MacNeice, he represents 'the Individual', who 'went down young, gave place to those who were born old / . . . and were not even jealous / of his wild life and lyrics' ('Epitaph for Liberal Poets' [1942]). Pound had a high regard for the metrical range and precision of his verse, as well as his lyrical intensity, and Frost, somewhat similarly, adopts him as a model for the interdependence of 'feeling' and 'thought'.[78]

Perhaps the most marked tendency in poetic receptions of recent decades has been the appropriation of a Catullan voice by women poets, a trend which can (again) be aligned with feminist-influenced scholarship and increased interest in constructions of gender in academic criticism of the poet.[79] As early as 1928, Dorothy Parker sought to imagine Lesbia's perspective on the affair, in a characteristically acerbic response to poems 2 and 3 ('From a Letter from Lesbia'):

> *. . . So, praise the gods, Catullus is away!*
> *And let me tend you this advice, my dear:*
> *Take any lover that you will, or may,*
> *Except a poet. All of them are queer.*
>
> *It's just the same – a quarrel or a kiss*
> *Is but a tune to play upon his pipe.*
> *He's always hymning that or wailing this;*
> *Myself, I much prefer the business type.*
>
> *That thing he wrote, the time the sparrow died –*
> *(Oh, most unpleasant – gloomy, tedious words!)*
> *I called it sweet, and made believe I cried;*
> *The stupid fool! I've always hated birds . . .*

Almost a century later, the New Zealand poet Anna Jackson, who has engaged extensively with Catullus' poetry, adopted a similar strategy in her collection *I, Clodia, and Other Portraits* (2014), 'writing back' from

[78] 'Poetry is the thoughts of the heart. I'm sure that's what Catullus meant by *mens animi*. Poetry is hyphenated, like so many British names. It's a thought-felt thing' (quoted by Putnam 1983: 247). For discussion of Pound's reception of Catullus, see Arkins 2007: 466–70. For Frost and Catullus, see Putnam 1983. On twentieth-century poetic receptions more generally, see Ziolkowski 2007: 409–16; Harrison 2021: 349–54.

[79] The latest translations, too, reflect these scholarly trends: Uzzi and Thomson (2015), for example, seek to bring out the element of aggression and competitive masculinity emphasized by Wray (2001) and others (Uzzi in her introduction compares the poet to the rap musician Eminem), while Isobel Williams' quirky *Catullus: Shibari Carmina* (2021) emphasizes Catullus' characteristic gender inversions, with an eye both to recent scholarship on the poet's self-representation and to the concern of our contemporary moment with sexual and gender fluidity.

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Clodia's perspective as a sexually liberated woman with demands and desires of her own to match those of her lover.

Other women poets have adopted a more ambiguously Catullan voice, appropriating and re-gendering the subject position of the poet himself. In her 2011 collection *Catulla et Al*, for instance, Tiffany Atkinson presents herself as a kind of updated female counterpart of the Roman poet, in a series of more or less direct responses to specific Catullan models. In *Chasing Catullus* (2004), Josephine Balmer tropes the role of translator as that of lover, rejecting the 'subordinate' role that has traditionally been assigned to the former, in (perhaps) self-consciously gendered terms:

> *It's the rule of attraction, the corruption of texts,*
> *the way his corpus tastes of skin and sweat,*
> *that taint of decay, scent of cheated death.*
> . . .
> *Yet sleep with the dead and you'll wake*
> *with the worms – stripped down, compressed,*
> *a little accusative, slightly stressed – to find*
> *the code you crack, the clause that breaks,*
> *is no longer subordinate, it's now your own.*

The series of loose translations incorporated in Anne Carson's collection *Men in the Off Hours* (2000) again relocates Catullus to a modern setting: albeit less explicitly so than in Atkinson's poems, this tactic tends to create a kind of palimpsest, in which Carson's voice is overlaid on that of her source-text. Although each poem is preceded by a descriptive heading explicitly identifying the speaker as Catullus ('Catullus observes his love and her pet at play', 'Catullus sings a dirge', etc.), it is difficult to resist the sense that the translator is appropriating the Latin text as a vehicle for her own voice, particularly in the case of poem 50, self-reflexively concerned as it is with poetic composition and the response of one poet to another.

This palimpsestic voice is still more clearly present in Carson's *Nox* (2010), certainly the most strikingly original instantiation of Catullan reception in recent decades. The work – 'poem' does not seem quite the *mot juste* – is a fusion of translation, scholarly commentary on and reimagining of Catullus 101, and at the same time a kind of family album, memorializing Carson's estranged and subsequently deceased brother. It seems appropriate to close this brief survey of modern receptions with this indefinable work, which transcends the Yeatsian opposition between emotion and scholarship: for Carson, the commentary itself appears to provide a means to express and work

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through the grief of separation and loss. Still more than Carson's translations, *Nox* offers the reader a complex layering of voices, in which the interplay of her own, present grief with that of the ancient poet doubles the interplay between Catullus' own sense of displacement and that of the Homeric Odysseus (as briefly discussed in Chapter 3 above). At the same time, the fragmentation of Catullus' poem, on which Carson provides a painstaking philological commentary in the form of lexical entries documenting the range of possible meanings of each word, and the open-endedness of the translation that she eventually offers – 'I never arrived at the translation I would have liked to do of poem 101', she writes; 'I guess it [the process of translation] never ends' – hint at an analogy between the ancient poem, or its poet, and the brother she mourns. Like Carson's estranged brother, the past can never be known completely, however intimate and personal our connections to it: but the work of philology parallels the work of memory, in its (never fully completed) attempt to assemble the fragments into a coherent whole.[80]

[80] See Fredricksen 2021 on Carson's 'philology of grief'.

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