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CLODIUS THE *PULCHER* IN CATULLUS AND CICERO

I

The structure of Catullus 79 shows that its interpretation depends upon the meaning of the significantly repeated word *pulcher*:

> Lesbius est pulcher: quidni, quem Lesbia malit
> Quam te cum tota gente, Catulle, tua?
> Sed tamen hic pulcher uendat cum gente Catullum—
> Si tria notorum sauia reppererit.

A rough translation that preserves the ambiguity might go: 'Lesbius is *pulcher*—as would be expected in someone that Lesbia likes more than you, Catullus, along with your whole clan. But let this *pulcher* sell Catullus along with his clan—if he finds three kisses from those he knows', that is, if he can find three acquaintances willing to extend or to accept the social kiss normally exchanged by upper-class Roman males. Being *pulcher* is paradoxical, and so is Lesbia's preference: she likes 'Lesbius' more than Catullus because he is *pulcher*, yet everyone else who knows him shuns 'this *pulcher*' like a pariah.

Scholars have long regarded the first *pulcher* as combining two references, of which one identifies 'Lesbius' as P. Clodius Pulcher (the brother of the woman who lies behind the pseudonym Lesbia), the other as a man who is 'pretty'. The latter perhaps comports an element of derision; for 'prettiness' as an alluring quality in a man, cf. Pl. *Mil.* 58–9, *amant ted omnes mulieres, neque iniuria, / qui sis tam pulcher*, spoken by Artotrogus to the vain Pyrgopolynices, who is repeatedly flattered as 'pretty' in the play and is the only man so designated in Roman comedy. In any case, this attractiveness seems to be adduced ironically (in what the Renaissance commentator Antonius Parthenius called an *inuita et amara concessio*) as the reason why Lesbia somehow 'prefers' him to Catullus. The second *pulcher* is generally regarded as having this same double reference, though that is hardly the most effective use one could imagine for it, especially when the choice of the same *sedes* seems to draw special attention to it; in fact, the repetition itself compels the reader to construct and reconstruct the epigrammatist's intention in the light of it. In the first couplet, the seemingly appropriate meanings—'pretty', 'Pulcher'—are found retrospectively, in the light of the following causal relative clause expressing Lesbia's 'preference'. Seeing *pulcher* again in 3, the reader naturally assumes that the same meanings still prevail—until the *si*-clause in 4 shows otherwise, there being no logical reason why a 'pretty' man *qua* 'pretty' man or a Clodius Pulcher *qua* Clodius Pulcher would be refused an ordinary social courtesy. And so the reader must find a fresh meaning of *pulcher* that will explain why Clodius' kiss is shunned and thus allow not just the second couplet but the entire epigram to make sense.

But understanding *pulcher* and thus the 'point' of the epigram has been hindered to a considerable extent by the all but universal judgement that Lesbia's 'preference' alludes to her alleged incestous relationship with her brother. This is always assumed and never argued; but however natural and even inevitable it seems to the modern scholar, it is not supported by the evidence of the text. From a literary perspective, a

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prominent reference to incest here in the opening couplet suggests that incest will be relevant to the eventual 'point', but that expectation seems to be disappointed by the second couplet (see below). As to the language, *malle* is far too tepid to suit either incestuous lust or its denunciation. After all, it is only *magis uelle*, and of all the Latin verbs that can mean 'want' or 'desire', *uelle* is easily the least passionate, often meaning little more than 'like' when construed (as here) with an object in the accusative. Perhaps it will be suggested that *malle* comports an effective understatement or euphemism; but euphemistic understatement is at odds with what appears to be the poem's biting sarcasm—and how could the subject of incest be raised *except* in a hostile context to which the strongest possible language is appropriate?

Rather than sexual, the real point of the comparison between Clodius and Catullus—or rather Catullus lumped together with his entire clan (*cum tota gente, Catulle, tua / cum gente Catullum*, the other significant repetition)—seems to be social. If sexual jealousy were the sole or primary issue, the contrast would surely be between Clodius and Catullus alone, not Clodius and the entire *gens Valeria*. Indeed, there is something deeply unsettling about this contrast *if* the subject is incest: Catullus would be saying that, as her sexual partner, Lesbia prefers her brother over Catullus *and every other single member of his family* (and the *gens*, of course, does not exclude women).[1] Instead, the fact that a single man is contrasted with an entire family suggests an expression of relative *social* value that would be quite characteristically Roman: his family background makes Catullus so comparatively worthless in Lesbia's eyes that he and every member of his clan put together will still not match Clodius in her esteem—an exaggerated, even bathetic expression of how rejected he feels. (Of course the fact that Clodius' stock is also her own adds a highly individual dimension to this esteem.) Given the emphasis on family, we might even consider that the primary sense of the first *pulcher* is not 'pretty' and/or 'Pulcher' but '*a* Pulcher'—Lesbia prefers Clodius because he is a Clodius Pulcher, representative of the distinguished line that began with the admiral of the First Punic War who notoriously defied the sacred chickens to his cost.

The theme of social superiority apparently continues in line 3, where Catullus perversely seems to accept Clodius' superiority by expressing a willingness to let him 'sell' Catullus and his whole clan, presumably as if they were Clodius' own slaves (we will see in the last line, however, that he makes this contingent upon an impossible condition). I say 'apparently' because *uendat* has caused scholars so much difficulty (and has led to such diverse interpretations[2]) that one is entitled to suspect the reading. It has perhaps been the easier for English-speaking scholars to accept because it recalls a common English idiom expressive of economic superiority (for example, 'I can buy and sell you ten times over'), but nothing comparable has ever been detected in Latin; some scholars have invoked other occurrences of *uendere* in reference to Clodius, many of them reflexive and none exactly comparable to the present case.[3] If the reading is genuine, the only reasonable interpretation is that Catullus is (if only ironically) accepting the most extreme social contrast possible, between himself (and every

[1] W. J. Tatum, 'C. 79: Personal invective or political discourse?', *PLLS* 7 (1993), 31–45 remarks perceptively (if euphemistically), 'for if the poem's *malit* must be understood exclusively or even principally in sexual terms, then the implications of the linkage of Catullus with his entire clan as the object of Lesbia's (sexual) rejection become flabbergasting to say the least ' (33).

[2] For example, some commentators (R. Ellis [Oxford, 1889], for example) have maintained that 'Catullus' here somehow stands for 'Catullus' property'.

[3] M. Skinner, 'Pretty Lesbius', *TAPA* 112 (1982), 197–208, at 202–4.

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member of his family) as slave and Clodius as owner; but if correction is necessary after all, perhaps Catullus wrote *uincat*, 'let Clodius surpass Catullus with all his clan [in Lesbia's estimation]'. A fictive context not involving allegations of incest between Lesbia and her brother is available in the epigrams where Catullus indicates that she has spoken to him harshly (83.1 *Lesbia mi praesente uiro mala plurima dicit;* 92.1 *Lesbia mi dicit semper male*); her expression of preference could be a specific example of this abuse,[4] or he might simply be jealous because she spends more time with her brother.

However one deals with *uendat*, the final couplet, with its suggestion that Clodius is somehow a social pariah, certainly seems to continue the theme of relative social value. 'I'll be Clodius' slave', says Catullus, 'if three people who know him will share a social kiss with this *pulcher*'; and, of course, if no one will kiss Clodius the *pulcher*, then it is really Catullus who is superior. Ever since the Renaissance, scholars have seen that Clodius is stigmatized here as a possessor of *os impurum*, an imputation made most often against practitioners of oral sex, whose kisses were accordingly shunned.[5] Nevertheless, all modern scholars misunderstand to some extent the connection between this observation and the interpretation of this couplet. Quinn, for example,[6] thought that finding three acquaintances willing to exchange the kiss was so easy as to be of no value; Skinner suggests that Clodius receives kisses as a *puer delicatus*,[7] while for Tatum 'Pulcher . . . cannot lay claim to even a trivial number of acquaintances'.[8] But the point is not that Clodius has few friends; it is that, out of all the people who know him—and, as a prominent member of an important ancient family with a presumably vast *clientela*, he would have many acquaintances—he can not find three who will permit the casual intimacy of this oral contact, and his status as *pulcher* is the cause.

In other words, when the epigram's 'point' arrives in the second couplet, it appears to attack a practitioner of oral sex rather than either participant in sibling incest. Some have thought therefore that the 'point' involves 'incestuous' oral sex performed by Clodius on his sister (assuming that oral sex can constitute incest);[9] but there is nothing witty or epigrammatic in saying that, while Lesbia shows an incestuous interest in her brother, everybody else shuns him because of that incest—not to mention that a charge of incest seems perfectly self-sufficient for a satirical epigram, and its practitioners do not need blackening with further charges of something substantially less scandalous like oral sex.

[4] For a woman asserting social superiority over a sexual partner, compare the way that Augustus' daughter Julia 'scorned as not an equal' her new husband Tiberius (Tac. *Ann*. 1.53.2, *spreueratque ut imparem*).

[5] For modern references see Tatum (n. 1), n. 25; the ancient *locus classicus* is Martial 7.95, which shows incidentally that suspicion of performing oral sex was not the only possible motive for avoiding someone's social kisses. That the kiss was exchanged by élite males among themselves, and was not extended to women, slaves, or the lower-class free population, emerges from Pliny's discussion of an ailment transmitted through kissing that arrived in Rome during the reign of Tiberius (*HN* 26.3, *nec sensere id malum feminae aut seruitia plebesque humilis aut media, sed proceres ueloci transitu osculi maxime*).

[6] K. Quinn, *Catullus. The Poems* (London and Basingstoke, 1973[2]), ad loc.; he also thinks that the line shows that Clodius is someone who 'will do anything to get his way'.

[7] Skinner (n. 3), 199. [8] Tatum (n. 1), 33.

[9] Skinner (n. 3) 198 'the man's foul breath indicates that he practices *cunnilingus*, and upon his own sister, at that', but nothing in the text shows that Catullus is thinking of cunnilinctus rather than fellatio, a notion that Skinner rejects without valid argument in n. 8. Given the perceived connection between *fellatio* and *women* from Lesbos (cf. K. J. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* [Cambridge, MA, 1978], 182), it seems surprising that no one has suggested that Lesbius is stigmatized through his name as a *fellator*.

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As if apparent attacks over both incest and oral sex were not enough, Skinner detects still more sexual implications. That Clodius practices cunnilingus is supposed to imply that he is impotent, though the linkage between the phenomena is not nearly as absolute as Skinner suggests.[10] On the other hand, she has come very close to the mark in suggesting that *pulcher* identifies Clodius as a *puer delicatus*, a 'pretty boy' who is the object of sexual attentions from adult males and is therefore penetrated by them, whether anally or orally.[11] But this apparently unfocused jumble—the supposed reference to incest in *malit*, the pederastic element in *pulcher*, an imputation of oral sex and supposedly one of impotence as well—does not reflect the concentration one expects of a satirical epigram; the targets are too numerous, and the key word *pulcher* hardly seems relevant. No wonder that Skinner and Tatum have sought meanings beyond mere sexual invective.[12]

But there is indeed sexual invective here, with the single focus that we expect of an epigram; and that focus lies precisely where the structure leads us to expect it, in the meanings of *pulcher*. The particular sense to which Catullus alludes in the second couplet has been missed not only by commentators on Catullus but by modern lexicographers as well. It is attested as a feature of what we would call 'Republican' Latin in Servius' commentary on *A*. 3.119:

> et quidam 'pulcher Apollo' epitheton datum Apollini reprehendunt, pulchros enim a ueteribus exoletos dictos; nam et apud Lucilium Apollo pulcher dici non uult.
>
> Also, some criticize 'pretty Apollo', the epithet given to Apollo, on the grounds that *exoleti* were called *pulchri* by ancient writers: in Lucilius too in fact Apollo is unwilling to be called pretty.

In other words, Virgil was criticized for calling Apollo 'pretty' because in earlier Latin *pulcher* could be a synonym of the later term *exoletus* (Servius' allusion to Lucilius seems to be the only other example, however). The innuendo of Catullus' last line forces the reader to ask what kind of *pulcher* would have *os impurum* imputed to him, and Servius provides the answer: Catullus is now calling Clodius neither pretty nor a Pulcher but what a later writer would have called an *exoletus*.

In origin *exoletus* is a participle meaning 'out-grown', and it was not infrequently used in the sense 'obsolete'. But it was also used as a noun, and there is no doubt that considerable opprobrium attached to it; from Cicero to the *Historia Augusta*, *exoleti* are the constant companions of the depraved, so distasteful that Alexander Severus supposedly considered banishing them all (or actually did, and drowned a few for good measure, depending on which part of the biography one believes). Nevertheless, its precise meaning remains disputed.[13] Williams has recently offered a definition of surprising specificity:

[10] Skinner (n. 3), 198–9, n. 5.

[11] Ibid., 199–200; see below.

[12] Ibid., 200 'the allegations . . . are really political metaphors'; Tatum (n. 1) appears to disagree with Skinner chiefly over the extent to which apparent sexual attacks may be political.

[13] Lewis and Short offer the seemingly contradictory (but, as we will see, largely correct) definition 'an abandoned youth of ripe age', the *OLD* 'A male prostitute'; the *TLL*, more comprehensively, reports (5.1543.2–5) 'de adulescente qui alienae libidini inservit, prostituitur sim. (subst. fere i. q. παιδικά. haud raro c. nota delicati, mollis, corrupti, turpis sim.)'. E. Cantarella, *Bisexuality in the Ancient World*, trans. C. Ó. Cuilleanáin (New Haven and London, 1992) defines *exoleti* as 'passive homosexuals' (156) but also says that 'the *exoleti* were . . . the male prostitutes—although this term is sometimes used to indicate adult passive homosexuals' (173).

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[it] denoted a male prostitute past the age of adolescence, who might well be called upon to play the insertive role in penetrative acts with his male clients, but who might just as well also play the receptive role. His distinctive feature was not his sexual speciality, but rather his age, although sometimes even that was not a definitive characteristic, as the word seems in some contexts to refer to a male prostitute of any age.[14]

His position on the sexual adaptability of the *exoletus* is taken in opposition to other authorities such as Cantarella who have equated him with the *cinaedus* and the *pathicus* as an adult 'passive homosexual',[15] but his definition is highly suspect in that it relies heavily on the assumption that the 'Naevolus' of Juvenal 9 is an *exoletus*, though Juvenal does not say so.[16]

In fact, most references to *exoleti* reveal nothing specific about their identity or their sexual practices. Although they are often mentioned together with pimps and with female prostitutes, the only passage in which they seem to be identified explicitly as professionals occurs in the life of Alexander Severus contained in the *Historia Augusta*, a work of questionable historical value.[17] According to a companion biography, Elagabalus addressed Rome's *exoleti* 'dressed like the boys who are prostituted'—which might be taken as evidence that *exoleti* were boy prostitutes, if we could trust the *Historia Augusta*.[18] Fortunately, we have earlier and more reliable witnesses in the form of the Augustan declaimer T. Labienus as quoted by Seneca the Elder and the first-century writers Seneca the Younger and Martial. Sexually, the language used by Labienus and Seneca associates the *exoleti* with *pathici* and thus suggests that they did indeed tend to be objects of anal penetration (though additional sexual acts are also implied euphemistically): Labienus alludes to *patientia impudicitiae*,[19] while Seneca the Younger describes an *exoletus* who is *omnia pati doctus*.[20] Moreover, the fact that the first of these passages refers to a '*longer* endurance of immodesty' implies that *exoleti* began to receive these sexual attentions in their childhood. As to their profession, other passages show beyond a doubt that *exoleti* functioned not as prostitutes but as household slaves, and were associated with wealth and ostentation: in Martial 3.82.8–9 one of them stands by at a banquet to hand

[14] C. A. Williams, *Roman Homosexuality: Ideologies of Masculinity in Classical Antiquity* (New York and Oxford, 1999), 84.

[15] The only passage known to me in which *exoleti* might be sexual penetrators (of women, however, rather than of men) is one in which Suetonius says that Caligula used to prostitute some of his sisters to his *exoleti* (*Cal*. 24.3); but this emperor's capricious sense of humour makes it difficult to feel certain about the significance of the gesture—he might, for example, have 'prostituted' them to men he knew would have no sexual use for them.

[16] Nor could he have done so, of course, since *exoletus* will not scan in dactylic hexameters; but Naevolus has nothing obvious in common with other men designated *exoleti*, and it seems methodologically faulty to rely so heavily for a definition on a work where the word *exoletus* does not even appear.

[17] *Alex. Sev*. 24.3 states that this moral emperor (elsewhere described as so sexually pure that he had no contact at all with *exoleti*) refused to accept tax revenues from *exoleti*, *lenones*, and *meretrices* into the 'sacred' treasury. For strong arguments against taking the passage as factual, see T. J. McGinn, *Prostitution, Sexuality, and the Law in Ancient Rome* (Oxford, 1998), 270–2.

[18] *Elag*. 26.5 *habitu puerorum qui prostituuntur*; here the *exoleti* are associated with prostitutes, pimps, and *luxuriosissimi pueruli*. An earlier section (12.4) says that this same emperor liked being touched by *exoleti* while banqueting. Since the majority of references to *exoleti* in the *SHA* are concentrated in the lives of Elagabalus and Alexander Severus, it is tempting to suggest that the author is making a purely rhetorical contrast (inspired by Suetonian precedent) between the vicious Elagabalus, who loved their company, and the virtuous Severus, who loathed them.

[19] *C*. 10.4.1 *exoletos suos, ut ad longiorem patientiam impudicitiae idonei sint, amputant*.

[20] *Dial.* 1.3.13 *exoletus omnia pati doctus exsectae uirilitatis aut dubiae suspensam auro niuem diluit*.

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feathers and toothpicks to diners; at *Ep*. 66.54 Seneca asks indignantly, 'Should I wish rather to extend my joints to my *exoleti* for massage?', while at *Dial*. 10.12.5 he lists 'how carefully people gird the tunics of their *exoleti*' among trivial cares, and at *Ep*. 95.24 his enumeration of 'pleasures coveted beyond measure' includes, along with *pistores* and *ministrati*, the absolute *agmina* of *exoleti* owned by upper-class Romans, arranged in matching groups according to nationality or hair-type.[21] Their servile status receives further confirmation from the passages quoted here in notes 19 and 20, which show that their owners could choose to have them castrated. Since *exoleti* evidently pass from childhood to adulthood within a single household, and since they functioned as slaves in that household, the likeliest hypothesis is that they were *(pueri) exoleti*, most probably grown-up *pueri delicati*—slave boys, in other words, who continued in adulthood the sexual relations with their masters that had begun in childhood.[22] Their castration was eventually stopped by Domitian, but the practice no doubt explains why, especially in Oriental contexts, an *exoletus* is sometimes a eunuch.[23]

The ideology of Roman sexuality naturally regarded the *exoletus* as a 'feminized' male, and we can expect that he was imagined to share with the *pathicus* and the *cinaedus* such stereotypical qualities as effeminacy in dress and in comportment, an insatiable sexual appetite, and a general 'shamelessness' (*impudicitia*) associated with allowing his body to be penetrated through one or more orifices.[24] Our generally vague references to *exoleti* offer few explicit attestations of these qualities, though Seneca the Younger (cited above, n. 16) does refer to effeminacy (*uirilitatis dubiae*). As a grown-up *puer delicatus*, the *exoletus* naturally shares qualities with his younger version, but he is the more shameful in being, like the *cinaedus* and the *pathicus*, not a child without choice but an adult who actively seeks penetration; and among adult males who are penetrated, the *exoletus* has the lowest status of all because of his servile condition. Any of the qualities described so far would surely disqualify an *exoletus* for the social kiss of an élite Roman, but if we need a motive associated specifically with oral sex, one is at hand in the passages that euphemistically associate *exoleti* with fellatio as well as with anal intercourse.[25]

Catullus 79, then, has nothing to do with rumours of incest or even with oral sex *per*

[21] Mart. 3.82.8–9 *stat exoletus suggeritque ructanti | pinnas rubentes cuspidesque lentisci*; Sen. *Ep*. 66.54 *an potius optem ut malaxandos articulos exoletis meis porrigam?*; *Dial*. 10.12.5 *quam diligenter exoletorum suorum tunicas succingant*; *Ep*. 95.24 *transeo agmina exoletorum per nationes coloresque discripta ut eadem omnibus leuitas sit, eadem primae mensura lanuginis, eadem species capillorum, ne quis cui rectior est coma crispulis misceatur*.

[22] Sen. *Ep*. 95.24 (already cited) also mentions *puerorum infelicium greges quos post transacta conuiuia aliae cubiculi contumeliae expectant*. According to Suetonius, Julius Caesar was criticized for having put his *exoletus* Rufio, the son of one of his freedmen, in charge of three legions at Alexandria (*Jul*. 77.1). While a sexual relationship is not attested explicitly here, a love-triangle involving an *exoletus* who was desired by both a fellow-slave and his master was one of the alleged motives in the murder of the urban prefect Pedanius Secundus (Tac. *Ann*. 14.42 *praefectum urbis Pedanium Secundum seruus ipsius interfecit, seu negata libertate cui pretium pepigerat, siue amore exoleti incensus et dominum aemulum non tolerans*).

[23] So already in Sen. *Ep*. 12.8 (Syria) and probably Suet. *Jul*. 49.2 (Bithynia); other eunuchs called *exoleti* include Nicomachus (Curt. 6.7.2ff.) and the companions of Sardanapalus (Amp. 11.4).

[24] For the qualities attributed to the feminized male, see (for example) Williams (n. 14), chs. 4 and 5; D. Dalla, *«Ubi Venus Mutatur»: omosessualità e diritto nel mondo romano* (Milan, 1987), 13–29.

[25] Cf. Sen. *Dial*. 1.3.13 (quoted above, n. 20) ***omnia*** *pati doctus*, Firm. Mat. 8.20.2 *exoleti, ad* ***omne*** *uitium impuritatis applicati*.

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se; instead, it attacks P. Clodius Pulcher by punning on his *cognomen*[26] to suggest that all who know him regard him as an *exoletus* and therefore shun him, while it also implicitly criticizes Lesbia for preferring this *exoletus* over Catullus.[27] Of course, since Clodius was born free, he was an *exoletus* only figuratively, not literally; this is simply a typical charge of Roman invective and political rhetoric, entirely comparable to the application of the label *cinaedi* to Julius Caesar and Memmius in 57.[28]

II

Section I argued that modern scholars reading Catullus 79 have wrongly imported a reference to rumours of incest between Clodius and his sister. This section is concerned with Cicero's earliest attack against Clodius, the lost speech composed in 61 B.C. to denounce his infiltration of the rites of the Bona Dea.[29] (Clodius was still Claudius at the time, but I will use the plebeian form of his name for convenience.) Here too modern scholars have claimed references to incest, but when one examines the specific aspects of Clodius' character and conduct that Cicero attacked, it emerges that his main theme was Clodius as an *exoletus*, whether or not he punned on *pulcher* as Catullus did.

Later, in the *Pro Milone*, Cicero would blacken Clodius' reputation by casting him as a user of *exoleti*, alleging that, in the fatal encounter, Milo was accompanied by a retinue of his wife's maids and choirboys, Clodius by his usual companions, *exoleti*, *scorta*, and *lupae* (55); but in the Bona Dea affair Clodius himself was cast as an *exoletus*. Two of the scholars who believe that Catullus 79 attacked Clodius as incestuous claim that Cicero did the same: Skinner writes (though citing no source) that 'At the Bona Dea trial . . . a charge of incest proved a convenient means of blackening Clodius' reputation',[30] while Tatum cites a single modern source for the assertion that 'Clodius was smothered in this infamy during his trial in 61':[31] but there is no evidence that incest was even suggested.

[26] Another member of this *gens* with a similarly unfortunate *cognomen* is the Clodius Glaber mentioned at Flor. *Epit*. 2.8: males designated *glabri* have much in common with *exoleti*—cf. Catul. 61.135, Phaed. 4.5.22, Sen. *Ep*. 47.7, Hyg. *Fab*. 274, and especially Sen. *Dial*. 10.12.5.

[27] The Renaissance commentator Parthenius apparently knew from Servius that *pulcher* could mean *exoletus*, and knew from Suetonius or Seneca that an *exoletus* could be a eunuch; I can think of no other reason why he should have suggested that Catullus is criticizing Lesbia for choosing 'a lover unwarlike for sex and sterile' (*ea* [sc. Lesbia] *puchritudine decepta amatorem ad rem Venereamimbellem ac sterilem elegerit excluso Catul[lo]*).

[28] Such charges were so commonplace that in the apocryphal *Invectives* supposedly exchanged by Sallust and Cicero each man makes them against the other; see, for example, [Sal.] *Cic*. 1.2 *an non ita a pueritia uixisti ut nihil flagitiosum corpori tuo putares quod alicui collibuisset? aut scilicet istam inmoderatam eloquentiam apud M. Pisonem non pudicitiae iactura perdidisti*, and [Cic.] *Sal*. 5.13 *facile intellegetur quam petulanti pueritia tam impudicus et procax adoleueris. postea quam . . . aetas tua iam ad ea patienda quae alteri facere collibuisset exoleuerat, cupiditatibus infinitis efferebaris, ut quae ipse corpori tuo turpia non duxisses in aliis experireris*.

[29] For the fragments and discussion of them, see K. A. Geffcken, *Comedy in the Pro Caelio. With an appendix on the In Clodium et Curionem*. *Mnemos.* Suppl. 300 (Leiden, 1973), 57–89; J. W. Crawford, *M. Tullius Cicero: The Fragmentary Speeches. An Edition with Commentary*. APA American Classical Studies 37 (Atlanta, 1994^2), 227–63. Many of these fragments fortunately survive together with a series of scholia on them preserved in a palimpsest at Bobbio (I cite the fragments and the scholia from G. Puccioni, *M. Tulli Ciceronis Orationum Deperditarum Fragmenta* [Val di Pesa, 1963]); these enable us sometimes to understand the context of words cited in other sources, and may occasionally preserve words or phrases used by Cicero that do not survive elsewhere in the fragments.

[30] Skinner (n. 3), 205. [31] Tatum (n. 1), 34.

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According to Σ Bob. 91.5, Cicero's phrase *stupro scelerato* (= fr. 27b) 'seems to indicate the *incestus* whose infamy was widespread around his sister Clodia' (*uidetur incestum significare, cuius infamia circa sororem Clodiam peruolgabatur*), but there is no particular reason to regard this as an allusion to incest. For one thing, since we do not know the context of Cicero's words, we cannot be certain that the scholiast is not mistaken in importing the notion of incest (assuming for the moment that that is what *incestus* means here). The phrase might, for example, refer to the bribery of jurors that is supposed eventually to have bought Clodius' acquittal: at *Att*. 1.18.2 Cicero describes the verdict in the words *empto constupratoque iudicio*, probably because he believed that the bribes had included sexual favours (cf. *Att*. 1.16.5). For another, the scholia refer not to a fact but to a perception (*uidetur*), one which was perhaps contrasted elsewhere with a reality. Most importantly of all, however, when *incestus* (whether adjective or noun) is used elsewhere in these scholia, it refers either to the profanation in general or to Clodius' alleged adultery with Caesar's wife Pompeia,[32] and so the *stuprum* whose infamy attached to Clodia was perhaps not incest but adultery; this would explain why this *infamia* is said to have circulated around her, not both her and her brother, as might be expected in a case of incest—had she perhaps been used to bribe a juror, or was Cicero simply suggesting guilt through association?

On the other hand, there is no difficulty finding evidence that Cicero depicted Clodius as a 'feminized' and immoral man exhibiting traits thought typical of an *exoletus*;[33] the charge of *incestus* involved sexual impurity, and so the perpetrator himself became, in Cicero's rhetoric, a man of sexual impurity.

By far the most prominent among those traits is femininity. Of course, Clodius' transvestism provided abundant material for this theme (so, most obviously, in frs. 21–4), but Cicero did not stop at ridiculing the incongruity of a man in a woman's clothes: he also pretended to expose an inherent femininity in Clodius' character. For example, the scene of Clodius inspecting himself in the mirror (fr. 24) revealed his 'womanly character' (*feminei mores*), according to the scholiast.[34] In fr. 21, Cicero most obviously mocks his cross-dressing but also imputes an essential femininity to him when he says that Clodius is capable of 'feminizing' his face, thinning his voice, and smoothing his body (*effeminare uultum, attenuare uocem, leuare corpus potes*), and even more so when he says that a woman's adornment and a dancer's stride are 'becoming' to him (*quem decet muliebris ornatus, incessus psaltriae*). Cicero even raised the question of whether Clodius was a man at all: in fr. 5 (*sin esset iudicatum non uideri uirum uenisse, quo iste uenisset*), he played upon the wording of the law under which Clodius had been charged, but according to the scholiast these words were presented 'as though they were pronounced by those who acquitted him, not to say that they could not be convinced of the *incestus* but to deny that he was a "man" '.[35]

[32] Σ Bob. 89.17 informs us that the Senate decided to treat the case as one of *incestus* ('sexual impurity', *OLD*); see also 86.7 *quamuis absolutus sit Clodius, tamen incestum uere commisisse adhuc adseuerat*; 86.14 *suspicio . . . incesti*; 86.23 *non ut incestum sibi probari non potuisse dicerent*; 87.20 *ut incestum significaret*; 88.31 *resculpit infamiam illius incesti quod fecisse . . . uidebatur*; 89.13 *ut incestum sub hac fraude committeret*; 90.17 *ut pars iudicum damnarit incestum*; 91.8 *ostendit prope eandem portionem fuisse quae damnarit incestum*.

[33] For Clodius as feminized man in Ciceronian invective, see, in general, Williams (n. 14), 145, with notes 79–84, and, most recently, E. W. Leach, 'Gendering Clodius', *CW* 94 (2001), 335–59.

[34] Σ Bob. 89.29 *mores femineos in speculi contemplatione detexit*.

[35] Σ Bob. 86.23 *quasi hoc pronuntiauerint qui eum sententiis liberauerunt, non ut incestum sibi probari non potuisse dicerent, sed ut ipsum 'uirum' negarent*.

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Cicero's Clodius also exhibited *impudicitia*. The scholiast says in the context of fr. 5 that the orator sharply attacked his *impudici mores*,[36] and notes in the context of fr. 21 that he contrasted his own 'sober manhood' (*sobriae uirtutis*) with Clodius' *indicia foeditatis et dedecora*.[37] This was an especially sensitive part of the speech for Cicero (described also in *Att*. 1.16), since he had been forced to parry Clodius' suggestion that, if spending time near Baiae was immoral, Cicero's ownership of property in the area left him open to suspicion, and the scholiast tells us that Cicero had to avoid seeming either *superbus* or *nimium delicatus*. One part of Clodius' immodesty is an allegedly far-reaching sexual appetite. On fr. 19, the scholiast—perhaps echoing or even citing Cicero's own words—characterizes him as *omnium libidinum cupiditatibus deditus* (*Σ* Bob. 88.13), no doubt a euphemistic reference like those quoted above in note 25.

There is another possible reference to sexual misconduct in *Σ* Bob. 98.29, where the scholiast, paraphrasing the orator's general intent, says that in Cicero's depiction Clodius *inliberalem figuram probro dedit*.[38] Unfortunately, the grammar of *probro* is uncertain here and the meaning of the word itself too broad to determine whether Cicero meant that Clodius 'presented an ignoble appearance *by his depravity*' or 'presented an ignoble appearance *for criticism*'. In either case, *inliberalem* evidently alludes to degradation in social class, as would be appropriate in any comparison between the aristocrat Clodius and a servile *exoletus*; Clodius had disgraced his entire family, and not least the Claudii Pulchri, through his conduct—as the scholiast put it, Cicero *nobilitatem generis infamatam . . . detexit*.

Cicero's diatribe and Catullus 79 both attacked Clodius as a feminized male who had brought social disgrace upon himself. Whether Cicero made the same pun on *pulcher* that Catullus made will necessarily remain uncertain, but it is difficult to believe that he resisted the opportunity, above all in what was obviously an extended depiction of Clodius 'prettifying' himself as he assumed his feminine disguise. In fact, there is a single remnant of wordplay, from precisely this section of the speech, in fr. 24, where Cicero wrote, *sed, credo, postquam tibi speculum adlatum est, longe te a pulchris abesse sensisti*. The scholiast was surely right to connect *pulchris* with the Pulchri: Clodius, seeing himself in the mirror dressed as a woman, realized that he was 'far from the Pulchri', that is far from the standards of the ancestors that he was now disgracing. Perhaps the word-play went no further than this, but the parenthetical *credo*—often used ironically—may be a clue to something more extended, perhaps even a suggestion that the disguised Clodius was 'far from the *Pulchri*' but not 'far from the *pulchri*'.

In short, Cicero's diatribe spelled out in substantial detail all the elements of sexual irregularity and social disgrace that Catullus 79 suggested through the single word *pulcher*, and neither author alluded to rumours of sibling incest. Earlier scholars have noted similarities between Cicero's attacks on Clodius and Catullus 79; Geffcken, for example, has written that 'Catul. 79 contains some of the same themes which occur in Cicero's invective against Clodius: his relation to his family, to both sister Clodia and

[36] *Σ* Bob. 86.23 *amaritudo stomachi est in hac sententia: qua perstringit mores P. Clodi, scilicet impudicos ita dicendo* [= fr. 5].

[37] *Σ* Bob. 89.8 *Definit enim 'rusticos et urbanos' ita ut in se ingenium sobriae uirtutis, in Clodio indicia foeditatis et dedecora proscribat*.

[38] *Σ* Bob. 89.29 *festiuissime . . . nobilitatem generis infamatam . . . detexit. . . . Ergo et inliberalem figuram probro dedit et maiorum suorum dissimillimum contestatus est. Nam fuit hoc Claudiae familiae cognomen inlustre* [followed by the story of the admiral of the First Punic War, the first Claudius to be called Pulcher].

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the whole *gens*, his avarice, and innuendoes about his sexual vagaries',[39] but this formulation requires some modification and chronological refinement.

It is in the nature of rumours that they arise at a particular moment in time. Since there are no allusions to incest in Catullus 79 or in the invective that Cicero composed in 61 B.C., while there are very broad hints about it in *Pro Caelio* and some extremely blunt accusations in *De haruspicum responso*, both composed in 56 B.C., it would seem that the charge of sibling incest is a later escalation in Cicero's anti-Clodian rhetoric (and that Catullus 79 was probably written closer to 61 B.C. than to 56). We should also consider the possibility that all the charges of effeminacy and sexual irregularity, both in the Bona Dea invective and in *De haruspicum responso*,[40] were suggested not by some specific behaviour exhibited in Clodius' personal life but by the unfortunate combination of a crime committed in women's clothing and a perpetrator whose *cognomen* conveyed implications of feminized sexuality.[41]

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[39] Geffcken (n. 23), 80, n. 4.

[40] Cf. especially *Har*. 59, *Quis minus umquam pepercit hostium castris quam ille omnibus corporis sui partibus? quae nauis umquam in flumine publico tam uulgata omnibus quam istius aetas fuit?*

[41] One might suggest as a modern analogy a case in which a man with the surname Gay was caught robbing a bank in drag.

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