A STUDY OF THE EPITHALAMIUMS, ELEGIES AND EPYLLION OF GAIUS VALERIUS CATULLUS

THESIS

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The purpose of this thesis is to determine the limits of evidence concerning the biography of the Roman poet Catullus, the texts of his poems, and the earlier poetic influence on his longer works and to compare scholarly opinions about those topics. To attain those objectives, both classical authors and modern scholars were used as sources.

This work has five chapters. The first outlines the problems of Catullan scholia. The second and third discuss his life and texts. The fourth and fifth concern Catullus' poetic creed and his borrowings from earlier poets and poetic traditions. This paper's conclusion is that, although no full assessment of the poet can be made without additional evidence, Catullus remains a major poetic figure deserving of additional study.
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CHAPTER I

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM OF CATULLAN SCHOLARSHIP

As is the case with the many Greek and Roman poets and prosodists, the chief difficulty encountered in the study of Gaius Valerius Catullus is the relative scarcity of germane facts and external sources. That paucity of information, which was brought about by such catastrophes as the destruction of the Greek libraries at Alexandria and Pergamum and which occurred in the latter stages of the Roman Empire has greatly clouded the knowledge of the poet and likewise, has complicated to no small degree the efforts of Catullan scholars.¹

Catullus' biography is the most apparent example of the complexities caused by the loss of external evidence. Owing to the fact that the main biographical source is what Catullus says of himself in his poems—and he relates a great deal—there is an abundance of testimony as to the poet's friends, enemies, feelings, thoughts, and deeds. However, because of three unrelated circumstances, his biography has yet to be

definitively written. First, his poems are in no semblance of a chronological order, and they have resisted all attempts to put them into one. Second, the sole Roman account of Catullus' life has been lost. Third, the sophisticated subtlety of Catullus' poems occasionally defies certain biographical interpretation. As the result of that triad of facts, scholars have treated Catullus' biography either thematically, topically, or synoptically.

In contrast to research into the poet's biography, the study of the extant texts of Catullus is much more rewarding. This is almost wholly due to the gargantuan efforts of Catullan scholars, who have spent some 650 years in purifying and restoring what Catullus wrote. Among the problems which they confronted and slowly resolved were the loss of the original manuscript, the assessment of its copies, the inclusion of falsely attributed poems in the texts, and the numerous errors of scribal transmission. Though not all of the manuscript difficulties have been solved, solutions have been found for most major problems, and the texts have benefited accordingly.

4 Ellis, A Commentary, p. 169.
5 Ellis, A Commentary, p. vii.
The scholarly legacy, however, is deficient in the study of the influence of earlier poets and poetic traditions upon the poetry of Catullus. The basic reason is again simply the lack of necessary evidence. The works of the Greek iambic poets and lyricists—notably Sappho—whom Catullus admired and imitated have been mostly lost. The Alexandrian scholar-poets who influenced Catullus' epyllion, seemingly his elegies and epithalamiums, and presumably his poetic creed, survive in only a small portion of their works. Also, there is little left of early Roman poetry, whose poets helped to mold the accented Latin language into the patterns and forms of unaccented Greek poetry.

The poems which have suffered most severely on account of those losses are Catullus' shorter works, his lyrical pieces and epigrams. Scholars have attempted to overcome this dilemma in various manners. In the nineteenth century and earlier, it was common practice to attribute line by line much of what Catullus had written to a number of known,

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earlier literary figures both of Greece and Rome. However, that method has been disproven by subsequent Catullan scholars on the bases of common usage and limitations of evidence.\(^9\)

In the twentieth century, two different answers have been broached, the earlier by Arthur L. Wheeler and the later by David O. Ross.

Wheeler thought that Catullus in writing most of his shorter poems borrowed from the past only in the most general sense. Those which earlier scholars felt were attributable lines, techniques and forms were merely the tools of Catullus' trade--taken from the common pool of Greek and Roman poetic traditions of his day. Going a scholarly step farther, Wheeler organized poems of similar subject and technique and showed them to be the products of certain earlier stock types of poetry. However, in his zeal to confirm Catullus' originality and reinforce his ideas as to the poet's usage of tradition in the shorter poems, Wheeler included both the lyrical poems and epigrams under the same topical and technical headings.\(^10\)

To Ross, writing some twenty-five years later, the idea that Catullus considered the lyrical poems and epigrams as essentially alike in tradition was untenable. In direct response to Wheeler, he performed a close linguistic analysis

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based on the frequency and use of certain word groups in Catullus' poems. He concluded that since the lyrical poems and epigrams could be shown to differ drastically under close analysis, Catullus knew them as two separate genres. Having thus invalidated Wheeler's thesis to his own satisfaction, Ross attempted to reinterpret the force of tradition in Catullus' epigrams. In this, he achieved only a partial success. He opened the possibility of Catullus' knowledge and use of an older Roman epigrammatical tradition, but owing to the poor state of early Roman poetry, he failed to produce sufficient evidence to really verify its effects upon Catullus.

Thanks to Catullus' longer poems, however, there is some indication of his borrowings from earlier poets and traditions. In his epyllion or shorter epic ("The Marriage of Peleus and Thetis," poem 64) are definite signs of Alexandrian and Sapphic influence. His epithalamiums, though limited by the quality of earlier wedding poetry, are also easily traceable to the currents of ancient literature and custom. On

12Ross, Style and Tradition, pp. 137-151.
13Wheeler, Catullus, p. 120.
the other hand, the origins of his elegies are generally more obscure, but two out of five—one a translation of Callimachus' "Lock of Berenice"\(^{16}\) and the other a puzzling poem, now theorized to be a wedding song\(^{17}\)—also help illustrate his attention to earlier forms of poetry. The only longer work that poses an insurmountable problem is Catullus' bizarre Galliambic poem ("Attis Poem," poem 63). There is indication that he might have borrowed the meter from Callimachus and the subject—the castration rites of the Cybelean cult\(^{18}\)—from Caecilius, a contemporary poet,\(^{19}\) but nothing like it before or after has survived from classical literature.

Closely connected to the three preceding phases of Catullan studies are two additional aspects: the evaluation of the poet's genius and originality and of his influence on later poetry. Because the former depends heavily on perspective and subjectivity, this paper, a summarized study of the biography, manuscripts and earlier poetic influence on the epithalamiums, epyllion, and elegies of Catullus, only gives the problem consideration en passant.

\(^{16}\)Wheeler, Catullus, pp. 174-178.


\(^{18}\)Ellis, A Commentary, p. 251.

treatment has been employed in the discussion of Catullus' influence on later poetry, because of its complexity and extent. One might comment here, however, to assuage (or perhaps pique) the student's curiosity, that Catullus' influence has been found in such diverse poets as Chaucer, Skelton, Wyatt, Surrey, Googe, Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, Byron, Tennyson, and (least likely of all) e. e. cummings.

Thus, some explanation having been offered for the exclusion of the aforementioned two topics from this thesis, what remains is to discuss its methodology and its conclusions. The method used is extremely simple. Each of the subsequent chapters has been divided, though not strictly, into externally oriented evidence and problems and into matters which are more internal in nature. Such an arrangement not only helps the reader form his own conclusions as to the validity of the evidence and its interpretation, but also aids in showing the limitations of external evidence at the outset of the discussion.

Owing to the vast number of translations and the excellent commentary which have appeared within the last ten years, recommendations for further attempts in these areas

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22 At least seven within the last ten years.

23 Ross, *Style and Tradition*, pp. vii-188.
are made only with some caution. There are, however, some specialized areas of Catullan scholia that need some exploration. The first is the field of Catullus' humor. Although the poet is sarcastic, satiric, and humorous, no book or article has been written on the subject. A second topic, one which is desperately needed, is the history of Catullan scholarship since its beginnings in the fourteenth century. The sole accessible works which deal with this subject, Robinson Ellis' Commentary on Catullus and Sir John E. Sandys' History of Classical Scholarship, do not cover it fully or deeply.

Besides what these two specialized works can provide, the only other suggestion that might be made to those who study Catullus from academic compulsion, from addiction, or from sheer love of poetic truth and beauty is to keep one eye on the world while doing so. Catullus was an intellectual and a poet, but he also lived life to the hilt and filled his poems with large morsels of it. Thus, to understand him requires not only the knowledge provided by books, but the certain sympathy developed only through experience. It was largely for the reason of experiential empathy that poets such as Petrarch, Du Bellay, and Goethe admired and imitated him; and it was also for this reason that the present work was written.

24 Harrington, Catullus and His Influence, pp. 94-130.
CHAPTER II

THE BIOGRAPHY OF CATULLUS

Aside from what is implied in the contents of his poems, very little is known about the life of Catullus. In a reference to Suetonius' biography of the poet (now lost), St. Jerome assigned the dates of Catullus' birth and demise to the years 87 and 57 B.C.\(^1\) However, Catullan scholars proved on the basis of internal evidence that Catullus lived beyond 57 and died possibly as late as 54 B.C.\(^2\) They reasoned that Jerome's latter date was an error caused by Catullus' allusions to later events in poems 113, 55, 11, 29 and 45.

In poem 113 Catullus mentioned the second consulship of Pompey, which began in 55 B.C.:

When Pompey was consul, Cinna, there were two
That had Maecilia's favors: now he is consul again.\(^3\)

Also, Catullus alluded to Pompey's portico in poem 55, a structure that was built during the great general's second consulship:

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I have looked for you in the lesser campus, in the Circus, in all the booksellers' shops in the hallowed temple of Great Jove. And when I was in Pompey's portico, I stopped all the women there. . . .

From Catullus' references to Caesar's invasion of Britain in poem 11, it is also evident that he lived to a later date than 57 B.C.:

. . . or whether he will tramp across the high Alps, to visit the memorials of Great Caesar, the Gaulish Rhine, the formidable Britons remotest of men.

Catullus again referred to Caesar's invasion of Britain in poem 29:

Who can look upon this, who can suffer this, except he be lost to all shame and voracious and a gambler, that Mamurra should have what Gallia Comata and furthest Britain had once?

In verse 45, there is also an indication of Catullus' knowledge of Caesar's invasion, though it is not directly stated:

Poor Septimius prefers Acme to whole Syrias and Britains.

Additional external references to Catullus are incidental; yet some of them are biographically germane. Suetonius mentioned Catullus to illustrate Caesar's magnanimity: "Valerius Catullus, as Caesar himself did not hesitate to say, inflicted a lasting stain on his name by his verses about

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Mamurra; yet when he apologized Caesar invited the poet to
dinner that very same day and continued his usual friendly
relations with Catullus' father." Tacitus seemingly supported
Suetonius' statement in his record of the trial of Cremetius
Cordus, a historian who had the misfortune of writing an
unpopular history. In the course of his defense, Cordus
asserted that "The poems which we read of Bibaculus are crammed
with invectives on the Caesars. Yet the divine Julius, the
Divine Augustus bore all this and let it pass. . . ."9

Aside from the information provided by Suetonius and
Tacitus, Ovid and Apuleius supplied another insight into
Catullus' biography. Ovid, in his apology for his poetry's
frivolous nature, wrote that

Roman books also contain much that is frivolous . . .
wanton Catullus sang oft of her
who was falsely called Lesbia. . . . 10

Apuleius, in the defense of his use of pseudonyms, revealed
the praenomen of Lesbia as Clodia. Thus, Apuleius partially
substantiated the current scholarly opinions that Catullus'
Lesbia was the notorious Clodia Pulcher, wife of the Roman
general and consul Q. Metellus Celer. 11

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Alfred E. Church and William J. Bodribb (New York: Random
House, 1942), p. 163.
11 Ellis, A Commentary, pp. lxiii-lxv.
With the dates of Catullus' birth and death and the probable identity of Lesbia thus established, the remainder of the poet's biography rests on internal evidence. The quality of that evidence, however, is not as good as could be wished for. Magnifying the internal biographical dilemmas is the lack of chronology in the texts of Catullus. As has been commented upon by numerous scholars, the poems were arranged generically in the extant manuscripts.\textsuperscript{12}

There is, nonetheless, an outline of Catullus' life available from his occasional references to datable events. It seems that poem 108 was probably written in 66 or 65 B.C. because of Catullus' referral to P. Cominius, who, according to Ellis, prosecuted the poet's friend C. Cornelius on the charge of treason.\textsuperscript{13} Poem 35, because of Catullus' reference to his fellow poet Caecilius, is dated sometime after 59 B.C. That was the year, as Ellis noted, when "Caesar, in accordance with the Vatinian law, took out 5000 new colonists to Novum Comum."\textsuperscript{14}

Poem 101, Catullus' lament over the grave of his brother who died in the Troad, has been ascribed to the year 57 B.C.; this was the time when Catullus was traveling by way of Troy

\textsuperscript{12}Ellis, \textit{A Commentary}, pp. xlv-1.
\textsuperscript{13}Ellis, \textit{A Commentary}, pp. 487-488.
\textsuperscript{14}Ellis, \textit{A Commentary}, pp. 120-121.
to Bithynia. Poems 31, 4 and 46 have been placed in the year 56 B.C. It is probable that all three of those lyrical poems, whose subjects concern Catullus returning homeward, were penned near the time that the described events actually took place. The date of poem 52, an invective directed at Nonius Struma and Vatinius, has been debated. The most reasonable date to Ellis and Mommsen seemed to lie between the years 56 and 54 B.C. Ellis chose the latter date, for, to him, the poet seemed to imply his impending death in the last lines of the poem: "What is it Catullus/Why do you not/make haste to die?" Mommsen suggested that Catullus' allusion to Vatinius' consulship did not refer to the actual attainment of it in 47 B.C. but to his anticipation of it in the coming years. Thus he asserted that the poem could possibly have been written as early as 56 B.C. Poems 11, 29, 45, 55 and 113 were Catullus' last datable poems. Ellis thought that they were most likely written in 56, 55 or 54 B.C.

Very little can be surmised about Catullus' childhood, his family, or his education. It is known that he was born in or near Verona, then a semi-barbaric town located on the

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15 Ellis, A Commentary, p. li.
16 Ellis, A Commentary, pp. 1-li.
18 Ellis, A Commentary, p. 178.
19 Ellis, A Commentary, pp. xlv-lii.
common border of Gallia Cisalpina and Venetia. Concerning his family he wrote only about the death of his brother, whom Catullus did not name. It may be assumed, however, that Catullus' father was of the merchant class and probably well off. As Suetonius recorded, he was on friendly terms with Julius Caesar. He could also afford a villa on the picturesque, wave-laved southern peninsula of Lake Benacus (Sirmio) and probably was able to aid his son Catullus in the purchase of a town house on the outskirts of Rome.

The exact extent of Catullus' education is unknown. Considering that such grammarians as Octavius Teucher, Opes Chares and Sescennius Iuchehus taught in Cisalpine Gaul at that time, it may be inferred that Catullus learned under the tutelage of either one of those grammarians or of some unknown teacher. Cisalpine Gaul produced, besides Catullus, the annalist L. Cornelius Nepos--to whom Catullus addressed poem 1--and the epigrammist Furius Bibaculus.

The reader's first substantial insights into Catullus' biography come by way of his poems dating from his entry into Rome around 61 B.C. Though his life was extremely varied

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20 Ellis, A Commentary, p. liv.
22 Ellis, A Commentary, p. liv.
23 Ellis, A Commentary, p. lxiii.
24 Ellis, A Commentary, pp. lv-lxxii.
there, three main intertwined events dominated this part of his biography: his love for his mistress Lesbia, the death of his brother in the Troad, and his one-year sojourn in Bithynia. His love for Lesbia began possibly a year or two after his entry into Rome. Where he met her and how he gained her intimacy are unknown. Judging from the contents of poem 11, the poet fell in love with her and was later spurned. If that was indeed the pattern of their bittersweet relationship, then the masterful lyrical poems 2, 3, 5 and 7 were probably written near its commencement. As Catullus wrote in poem 5,

Let us live my Lesbia, and love and value at one farthing all the talk of crabbed old men. 
Suns may set and rise again. For us when the short light has once set, remains to be slept the sleep of one unbroken night. 
Give me a thousand kisses, then a hundred, then another thousand, then a second hundred, then yet another thousand, then a hundred. Then, when we have made up many thousands, we will confuse our counting, that we may not know the reckoning, nor any malicious person blight them with evil eye, when he knows that our kisses are so many.

Their relationship, however, was far from being ideal. The poet apparently nourished the ambition of having sole rights to her affections, but she would not have it so. As Catullus' invectives toward her paramours prove, Lesbia had many male friends. In poem 37, in a fit of jealousy, he inveighed against both his mistress and her lovers:

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Baboon companions of that nasty inn
Nine posts down from the temple of the twin
Brothers who wear skull-caps, do you think
That you're the only real men? That we stink,
The rest of us, like goats? That only you
Have the prerogative and the tools to screw
The girls in Rome? Because a hundred strong,
Or two hundred, you sit there in a long
Half-witted row, do you think I wouldn't dare
To bugger the whole lot of you in one chair?
Think what you like; for I intend to scrawl
Obscenities all over your front wall.
For Lesbia, who has broken from my clutch
(And no girl ever will be loved as much
As I loved her), whom I fought other men
Such long hard battles for, has made your den
Her home. Owners of wealth or good name,
You're all her lovers now, and, double shame
So is each half-baked lecher, every randy
Alley cat, at the head of them that dandy
Egnatius, Prince of the long-haired crew,
That son of rabbit-ridden Spain--yes, you
With the two points that make you so alluring:
Thick beard and teeth scrubbed with Spanish urine. 27

Catullus' estimation of Lesbia in the preceding poem has met with contrasting opinions among Catullan scholars. The earlier commentators Ellis and H. A. J. Munro more or less accepted Catullus' description of Lesbia at face value. They based their judgments, however, not only on Catullus' poems on this subject, but also on one of Cicero's law suits, Pro Caelio. It seems that Caelius Rufus was accused of a series of crimes by the woman most often identified as Catullus' Lesbia, Clodia Pulcher. In a brilliant piece of character assassination, the orator Cicero not only freed his client but proclaimed by innuendo the plaintiff's debased nature.

She was an adulteress and ("it was rumoured") had committed incest with her notorious brother Clodius. Thus Cicero labeled Clodia for posterity to laugh or frown at and gave such Catullan scholars as Ellis and Munro a substantive corroborating portrait of Catullus' probable mistress.

The standard evaluation of Clodia's character, however, has been questioned by at least one modern scholar. To Peter Whigham, Clodia (if she was Lesbia) was not a wanton woman but an emancipated female, a type that Roman men had difficulty in understanding. The reasons for Catullus' misery, according to Whigham, were of his own making. It was Catullus' projection of his male ideas and ideals upon her highly resistant character that brought about his misery and probably their separation.

Concerning Cicero's portrait of Clodia in Pro Caelio, the dissenter Whigham's opinion of her is seemingly substantiated by Quintilian, who asked what Cicero intended besides making the "case seem far more trivial than had been

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29 Ellis, A Commentary, p. lxvii.


anticipated." Noteworthy too are Cicero's hidden motives for the distortion of facts in his oration. Clodia was the sister of Cicero's archenemy Clodius, who had expedited Cicero's exile from Rome some years before. Doubtless Cicero harbored no little animosity for Clodia's brother and relished the opportunity for revenge. Thus Cicero's depiction of Clodia's character might safely be considered as tinged with hyperbole.

The remainder of Catullus' twenty-five Lesbia poems show a striking diversity of mood and intent. His love and hatred of her, his sense of exhilaration and despair, are spread throughout his epigrams and lyrics and creep even into his elegies, poems 68 and 76. In poem 68, the poet described his mistress' arrival at their trysting place, Allius' house:

Thither my fair goddess delicately stepped, and set
The sole of her shining foot on the smooth threshold
As she pressed on her slender sandal: even as once
Laodamia came burning with love to the house of
Protesilaus. . . .

Reduced to despair by Lesbia's unfaithfulness, he recorded his feelings for her in poem 76.

It is difficult
suddenly to lay aside a long-cherished love. It is difficult; but you should accomplish it, one way or another . . .

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Ah me! What a lethargy creeps into my inmost joints, and has cast out all joys from my heart!\textsuperscript{35}

The end of their relationship came with Catullus' final rejection of Lesbia in 54 B.C., possibly the last year of the poet's life. In the ending lines of poem 11, he bade his compatriots Furius and Aurelius to

\begin{quote}
... take a little message, not a kind message to my mistress. Bid her live and be happy with her paramours, three hundred of whom she holds at once in her embrace ... And let her not look to find my love, as before; my love, which by her fault has dropped, like a flower on the meadow's edge, when it has been touched by the plough passing by.\textsuperscript{36}
\end{quote}

In addition to his love affair with Lesbia, there are two other major datable events in the chronology of Catullus' life: his trip to Bithynia (57-56 B.C.) and the death of his brother on the plains of Troy (58 B.C.).\textsuperscript{37} How Catullus managed to enlist himself in the cohort of C. Memmius is unknown. Cicero possibly provides an answer in his description of Memmius: "Gaius Memmius, a son of Lucias, highly trained in letters, but only Greek, for he scorned Latin, was an orator of subtle ingenious type with pleasing diction. ..."\textsuperscript{38} Memmius, following then what was common


\textsuperscript{37}Ellis, A Commentary, pp. liv-lv.

practice, probably attached the young poet to his household (as he did the poet Helvius Cinna in the same year). 39

Catullus left no record of his journey to Asia Minor. As Wheeler noted, "Nothing is known of the route followed on this outward journey, but the customary one by way of Brundisium, the Adriatic, and Macedonia would have afforded Catullus a good opportunity to visit the Troad, which was close to the western border of Bithynia." 40 Seemingly under those circumstances he wrote poem 101, a record of the last rites at his brother's grave:

Wandering through many countries and over many Seas I come, my brother, to these sorrowful obsequies, to present to you with the last guerdon of death, and speak, though in vain, to your silent ashes, since fortune has taken your own self away from me—alas, my brother, so cruelly torn from me! Yet now meanwhile take these offerings, which by the custom of our fathers have been handed down—a sorrowful tribute—for a funerary sacrifice; take them, wet with many tears of a brother, and for ever, 0 my brother, hail and farewell! 41

As Catullus commemorated in poem 46, he left Bithynia and departed homeward in the following spring; the major part of his journey was made in a small yacht ("phasellus"). The traditional account of his passage to Italy is that he sailed from the Pontic town, Amastris, where the "phasellus" previously had been built, and that he "passed through the

39 Ellis, A Commentary, p. lix.
40 Wheeler, Catullus, p. 96.
Propontis and Hellespont down the coast of Asia Minor to Rhodes, there across the Aegean to the Cyclades, where he probably visited Delos, then probably over the Isthmus of Corinth into the Adriatic and so to the mouth of the Po and finally to Sirmio." 42

The last leg of Catullus' voyage, however, has caused some scholarly discussion. Merril observed that to sail "up the Po and little Mincius into the Garda lake, even to the shores of Sirmio itself . . . was well-nigh impossible." 43 In response to this dilemma, Wheeler offered the alternative that Catullus probably sailed up the Adige River and had the yacht transported some 170 feet over a divide which separated the river and lake. 44

The homecoming to Sirmio was an occasion of great jubilation for Catullus—as he related in poem 31:

Apple of islands, Sirmio, and bright peninsulas, set in our soft flowing lakes or in the folds of ocean, with what delight delivered, safe and sound from Thynia from Bithynia you flash incredibly on the darling eye. What happier thought than to dissolve the mind of cares the limbs from sojourning, and to accept the down of one's own bed under one's own roof held so long at heart and that one moment paying for all the rest. So Sirmio, with a woman's loveliness, gladly echoing Garda's rippling lake-laughter,

42 Ellis, A Commentary, p. lviii.


and, laughing there, Catullus' house
catching the brilliant echoes!\textsuperscript{45}

After Catullus' return to Sirmio, the events in his life
become somewhat more obscure. It is known that he returned
to Rome and that he eventually renounced Lesbia. Also, poem
29 reveals that at least one of his attacks upon the
triumvirate dates from this later period in his life.\textsuperscript{46} Yet,
in spite of the hints provided by various poems, the chro-
nology of his life effectively ends after his return from
Bithynia.


\textsuperscript{46}Ellis, \textit{A Commentary}, p. 95.
 CHAPTER III

THE MANUSCRIPTS OF CATULLUS

As Robinson Ellis remarked concerning Catullus' manuscripts, "It is not often that so great a poet as Catullus has risked extinction and been preserved almost by a miracle. All our MSS are derived from a single imperfect copy discovered we do not know where at the beginning of the XIVth century; no complete poem, with the exception of LXII which is included in the Thuanean Anthology of the Paris Library, and the quatrain to Tenentiuss Maurus . . . has come down to us in any other collection." ¹

Though the early history of the manuscript is decidedly obscure, a wealth of theories have been proposed as to the name of its discoverer and its original location. ² Those theories are based partly on the poem attached to the earliest manuscript, written by Benvenuto de Campexanis de Vicencia and dated 1375:

Ad patriam venio longis a finibus exul,
Causa mei reditus compartiota fuit,
Sic uerum a calamis tribuit cui Francia nomen
Quice notat turbae preatereuntis iter,

¹Ellis, A Commentary, p. xix.
²Robinson Ellis, Catullus in the Fourteenth Century (London, Henry Frowde), pp. 4-6.
Quo licet ingemio uestrum celebrate Catullum,  
Cuius sub modo clausa papyrus erat.  

From Francia, Lorenzo Pignoria derived the name Francesco.  
"A calamis" was held to have been a surname by Joseph Justus Scaliger, Gotthold E. Lessing and Benjamin Jowett. Ellis also added the possibility of the official title, "notary." Francesco Petrarcha, the great Italian humanist, has also been credited with the discovery. The phrase "a calamis" could possibly be an obscure allusion to Avignon, and Francesco of Avignon could be none other than Petrarch himself.  

The exact place of the discovery of the manuscript is less clear than the name of its discoverer. From the attached epigram, it is known that it was discovered "sub modia," "from beneath a bushel." The location of the bushel in question is not known. All that can be said with any certainty was that the manuscript was brought to Verona--thus deriving its name, Codex Veronensis--sometime before the epigram attached to it was written and that it was later lost or destroyed.  

The reference to "papyrus" in the last line of de Campexanis' epigram has led to some conjecture. Ellis observed that a long-legged bird which often appears in the

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3 Ellis, Catullus in the Fourteenth Century, p. 3.  
4 Ellis, Catullus in the Fourteenth Century, p. 4.  
5 Ellis, Catullus in the Fourteenth Century, p. 4.  
6 Wheeler, Catullus, p. 8.
Canonici manuscript (0) may indicate that it originated from a papyrus archetype. He found a similar long-legged fowl in the papyrus remains of Timotheus the Milesian. Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, the editor of Timotheus' manuscript, suggested that the bird might have been employed as a "coronis" ("decoration") in the original.

As regards the value of the manuscripts derived from the presently lost Codex Veronensis (or a copy of it which William Gardner Hale named "alpha"), most scholars concur that there were three direct copies: the Codex Oxoniensis or Canonicianus (0), the Codex Sangermanensis (G) and the Codex Romanus (R). As commented upon by Hale, who rediscovered the Codex Romanus, with the exception of the Thuanean Anthology (T), "all other MSS . . . are descended from O, G, and R, principally from R, with a certain crossing from O and G, and a great deal of crossing to and fro in the sub-families descended from R." In his collations of the manuscripts, Hale counted 120 secondary texts (excluding Florigela and extracts) and openly admitted the possibility of others. His account surpassed the older tally of Theodor Heyse (1855), who mentioned 50 manuscripts and stated that some 70 existed.

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8Ellis, *Catullus in the Fourteenth Century*, p. 6.


Hale's collation of Catullus' manuscripts has resulted in a more complete understanding of the texts than was previously possessed by scholars, but there remain some difficult internal problems. First, poems 18, 19, and 20 are excluded from most Catullus texts and translations. They were not originally included in the Codex Veronensis, but were incorporated by the French scholar Marc-Antoine Muret or "Muretus" in the sixteenth century. The German scholar Lachmann later complained of these inclusions, and they were thereafter deleted. One of these three Priapean poems is, however, still present as a fragment. Secondly, poems 2 and 2A, 51 and 51A and 68, and 68A have been variously unified or separated by scholars.

Ellis thought 2 and 2A to have been one poem. Fordyce, on the other hand, took them to be separate poems, the latter being a fragment of another lyric. As Fordyce commented, "These three lines follow on poem 2 without a break in the manuscripts and various attempts have been made to provide a connexion . . . but the comparison is extremely inappropriate in the context . . . Catullus uses a long and elaborate simile which does not convince one that Catullus could have said, 'I should like playing with Lesbia's bird as much as Atalanta liked the apple which meant the end to her maidenhood.'"

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12 Ellis, A Commentary, pp. 7-10.
13 Fordyce, A Commentary, p. 91.
Likewise poems 51 and 51A have caused some conjecture.

There is a violent change of meaning in the last quatrain of the unified poem which does not correspond to Sappho's ode (poem 2), which Catullus was translating. Attempts to join the seemingly disparate lines (13-16) to the main body (1-12) were made by Rudolf Westphal, J. Suss (Suess), and Eugene Benoist. However, the violence of such a connection led Ellis and Fordyce to question its validity. As Ellis stated, "there is a disproportion between the three strophes of love symptoms and the single strophe of virtuous soliloquy."

Fordyce concurred with Ellis' view and added that "It is far more easy to believe that some accident, such as has happened elsewhere in the text of Catullus . . . has at this point removed along with the end of the version of Sappho (if he translated more) the beginning of an original poem."

Poems 68 and 68B have also been the cause of some scholarly perplexity. Munro and Ellis concluded that the poem fell into two parts, lines 1 through 40 and 41 through 160, each being written at a different time. Fordyce agreed that they might well have been separated poems, but he also suggested one possibility for treating them as one work: "At

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14 Ellis, A Commentary, p. 175.
16 Munro, Criticisms and Elucidations, pp. 168-194.
17 Ellis, A Commentary, pp. 400-401.
first sight we seem to have a formal poem enclosed for trans-
mission between a preface and an epilogue. . . . the apparent
inconsistency, if the two parts belong together, we must
explain by the assumption that having excused himself from
doing what is asked of him, [Catullus] finds himself moved,
by the remembrance of the past and of his debt to his friend
to go on to write some lines expressive of his gratitude which
turn into a formal elegiac poem."\(^{18}\)

The arrangement of Catullus' poems has been much debated
by scholars. Some have felt that the poems, at least in part,
were arranged chronologically;\(^{19}\) others, that they were
arranged on some other principle by the author near the time
of his death.\(^{20}\) The question of chronological order was dis-
cussed by Ellis in the late nineteenth century. As he sum-
marized, "The poems of Catullus fall at once into three major
divisions, the shorter lyrical poems I-LX, the long poems
LXI-LXVIII, the Epigrams. . . . As this arrangement is obviously
metrical, it is 'a priori' improbable that the poems as a
whole follow a chronological order."\(^{21}\) Ellis' summary is
substantiated by the inconsistent sequence of the datable
poems. Poem 4 was composed most probably sometime after

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\(^{18}\) Fordyce, A Commentary, pp. 341-342.

\(^{19}\) Ellis, A Commentary, p. xlvi.


\(^{21}\) Ellis, A Commentary, p. xlv.
Catullus' voyage to Bithynia. Poems 65 and 68 are dated immediately before Catullus' journey. In poems 11 and 37, Lesbia had many "moechi" ("paramours"), while in poem 51 Catullus' love was in its beginnings. In addition, poems 113, 55, 29 and 45 were all written near the time of Catullus' death.22

Pertaining to the chronological order of the individual metrical division, Ellis saw only one possible chronological ordering in poems 65 through 68. "Omitting LXVII which is without note of time, the three remaining poems seem to have been written as follows: LXVIII. 1-40 at Verona when Catullus was at the height of his grief for the death of his brother; LXV. when the first transports of sorrow were subsiding. On the other hand LXVIII. 41-160 was composed when the reviving love for Lesbia led the poet to new thoughts and perhaps suggested a return to Rome."23

Whether or not Catullus arranged the poems himself is a much more difficult matter. Wheeler attempted to answer this question by a reconstruction of the history of the manuscripts.24 To facilitate his arguments against the poet's arrangement of his own verse, he divided the history of the poems into three times spans: from 61-54 B.C. (when the poet

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22 Ellis, A Commentary, pp. xlv-xlvi.
23 Ellis, A Commentary, pp. xlvi-xlvii.
24 Wheeler, Catullus, pp. 4-32.
was actually writing) to 102-104 A.D. (the approximate date of Martial's death); from 102-104 A.D. to 636 A.D. (the date of the death of Isidore of Seville, the last ancient author to have thoroughly known Catullus' work); from 636 to 1300 A.D., the approximate date of the rediscovery of the Codex Veronensis.  

Working backward from the latest to the earliest dates, Wheeler found that there was no real evidence of any other collection of Catullus' poems after 635 A.D. Thus the date of the compilation of the manuscripts was probably earlier than Isidore's death. During this second period, many authors cited or alluded to one third of the poems found in the manuscript. Only in two instances was the word "liber" ("book") used by any of these authors; in the second century Aulus Gellius and Terentius Maurus hinted respectively at Catullus' "books" and "book." There also existed in this time poems not found in the manuscripts, as is proved by the fragments attributed to Catullus by later scholars (six lines from a Priapean poem or possibly two poems): Servius' fourth century commentary on Virgil's Georgics, wherein he stated Catullus' criticism of the bitterness of Rhaetian grapes, and the Elder Pliny's allusion to one of Catullus' poems.

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Leaving his discussion of the second period with the confirmation that there existed poems other than those found in the manuscript, Wheeler ventured into an examination of the first period of the history of the poems. From the length of the extant codices, he deduced that it would have been extremely unusual for Catullus to have published all of his poems on one roll. The "volumen" ("scroll") would then have been twice as long as the typical manuscript of the day, some thirty-eight feet in length and thus quite unwieldy. Wheeler therefore concluded that there were several rolls published by Catullus.\textsuperscript{27}

Exactly how many books the poet published is unknown. Wheeler hypothesized that Catullus possibly published one volume of "nugae" ("light verse," literally "trifles") and probably issued his epyllion, poem 64, as an entire book. Thus Wheeler asserted that at the time of Catullus' death there existed at least two books of poetry and probably some scattered poems that he never published. From these books and fragments the Codex Veronensis, or its predecessor, was compiled. The process was probably slow and ended some 250 to 400 years after the poet's death when the rolls, "volumen," were transferred to book form.\textsuperscript{28}


The major opposition to Wheeler's theory of the history of the manuscripts has come from one of the most recent and possibly most important works to date: Timothy Wiseman's *Catullan Questions*. Unlike Wheeler, Wiseman asserted that Catullus did arrange his poems late in his life and did so on aesthetic grounds which are traceable to certain Alexandrian poems, notably Callimachus' "Iambics."^{29}

From his close analyses and comparisons of the contents and metrics of the texts and the identification of programme poems with which Catullus meant to introduce specific sections of his work, Wiseman concluded that Catullus made three general divisions within his "liber" of poetry.^{30} The first section, poems 1 through 60, contained three cycles and, at the end, an accumulation of poems of the polymetric type which could not easily be fitted into the sequences. The first cycle, dedicated to Lesbia, included poems 2, 3, 5, 7, 8 and 11. The first poems in that cycle give the beginnings of love; the last two show its outcome. Likewise in the second of the cycles, Catullus uses the art of contrast. In two triptiches, the poet shows his fondness for his young ward, Juventius, at the same time warning his friends, Furius and Aurelius, to keep hands off. In his third cycle, he celebrates the

^{29}Wiseman, *Catullan Questions*, p. 2.

^{30}Wiseman, *Catullan Questions*, p. 29.
homecoming of his friends Veranius and Fabullus, who had been traveling in Spain in the cohort of Piso.\(^{31}\)

After the three cycles of poems come a mixed series which, according to Wiseman, fitted into the patterns of relationships previously described. Following these came the wedding poems and elegies, which Wiseman connected on the basis of the programmistic contents of line 12 in poem 65 and the adulterous theme of poem 67. After the elegies, there is a break in subject matter, from a poem on friendship, love, and sorrow to epigrams on fickle Lesbia and a man with malodorous armpits. Wiseman views this topical change as the beginning of a third section in Catullus' poetry.\(^{32}\)

This third section is divided somewhat less neatly than the first series of polymetric poems, but a design is apparent in the poems 69 through 92, where Catullus concerns himself with the depiction of Lesbia with other men. As was the case with the earlier series, the latter parts of this section are mixed in subject matter. Again Wiseman reconciled this mixture by asserting that Catullus relegated the latter part of his arrangement to poems that could not be effectively placed elsewhere. In poem 93, a criticism of Caesar, he sees a possible introductory poem, but the related epigrams are so

\(^{31}\)Wiseman, *Catullan Questions*, pp. 7-16.

obscure that the persons to whom Catullus was referring cannot be identified.\textsuperscript{33}

One of the most convincing arguments that Wheeler offered against the theory that Catullus arranged his own poems was the unlikelihood that Catullus would publish all of his poems in one roll because of its unusual length.\textsuperscript{34} Wiseman replied to Wheeler's hypothesis that the book could possibly have been divided into three parts by Catullus; but, since there were no numbers included in the manuscripts, it would seem just as likely that he would publish them in one "volumen." As he stated on the question, "At this comparatively early stage of the Roman book-trade, perhaps a 'liber' of over twenty-three hundred lines was not out of the question."\textsuperscript{35}

\textsuperscript{34}Wheeler, \textit{Catullus}, p. 15.
\textsuperscript{35}Wiseman, \textit{Catullan Questions}, p. 31.
CHAPTER IV

THE POETIC CREED OF CATULLUS AND THE MEASURABLE INFLUENCE OF EARLIER POETS UPON HIS POETRY

Catullus: The New Poet

Before entering into the discussion of Catullus' debt to tradition, it is important to emphasize that he wrote a new type of Roman verse. His poetry, in fact, marks a major shift, a new maturity in Roman poetics—from the less sophisticated and older epic, tragic, and didactic traditions to an urbane, polished, and learned poetry that placed more emphasis upon language and its subtleties than on story-telling or morals.¹

One aspect of this new direction can be seen by contrast through the literary ideals expressed by Cicero, the champion of the older and more conventional Graeco-Roman literary traditions. He made his affinity for the older types quite clear in his famous oration "Defense of the Poet Archias." Cicero's final statement is enough to illustrate the orator's views on poetry:

We therefore, beseech you judges... to accord to this man our protection, so that he appear exalted by your generous understanding...

Surely, this is due of a man who has always celebrated the deeds of your field commanders and the achievements of the Roman people, who is now preparing to enhance, with the undying testimony of artistic glory, the events surrounding the recent domestic crisis in political affairs, which you and I saw through to a successful conclusion, and a man, who, by his profession as an artist, is held in esteem and awe in the minds of all men.  

As Gordon Williams summarized concerning the literary view expressed by Cicero in this trial, "What is surprising here is the seriousness with which poetry is treated; its task is the greatest conceivable--to immortalize Roman history."  

The poetry of Catullus was, of course, far different both in form and intent from that lauded by Cicero. Rather than epic or didactic poems, he wrote in the shorter forms: the epyllion, the epithalamium, the elegy, the lyric and the epigram. The only historical achievements that the poet celebrated were the bunglings of the triumvirate, and his loftiest themes concerned his love for Lesbia and the institution of marriage. From what might be inferred from his poems, he considered that the role of the poet was to entertain and little else.

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4 Williams, Tradition and Originality, p. 40.
And if Catullus thought of poetry chiefly as a means of entertainment, it was entertainment on many diverse levels. In his satiric verse and invectives he variously ridiculed the profligates of Rome. The rich, the self-deceived, the prostitutes, the thieves, and boors were all made fun of and at times bitterly denounced. Yet, Catullus was no Juvenal. In his love lyrics, especially the renowned sparrow poems and "basia" poems, he depicted the most amorous scenes with an artist's deftness and a lover's tact. In another vein, he wrote a lament for his dead brother (poem 101)—a memorial seldom equalled by earlier or later poets. Catullus was also capable of composing poetry for its own sake; to this end his hymn to Diana (poem 34) and his epyllion, "The Marriage of Peleus and Thetis" (poem 64), bear direct evidence.  

Scholars have attempted to explain this great literary shift, or as Kenneth Quinn named it, "revolution," in Roman poetry. Some, such as Wheeler, have emphasized the influence of previous poetic traditions, and others, like Eric Havelock, the lyric genius of the poet. Doubtless many additional factors contributed to the startling break. One might also include such variables as the maturation of the Roman literary

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5Wheeler, Catullus, p. 207.

6Quinn, The Catullan Revolution, p. 44.
audience, the influence of Valerius Cato, who taught and wrote poetry in the Alexandrian style, and the possibility of a circle of poets to which Catullus belonged.

The latter theory is perhaps the most tantalizing, for it ties Catullus to many of the contemporary poets whom he mentions in his poems. It is apparent, for instance, that Catullus was not alone in his efforts to write shorter forms of verse. As existing fragments and commentary prove, C. Licinius Calvus, C. Helvius Cinna, Cornificius, Ticidas, Furius Bibaculus, and Caecilius shared common poetic interests and practices with Catullus. Calvus, Cinna, Cornificus, and Caecilius composed epyllions. Calvus and Ticidas wrote wedding songs. Calvus also composed epigrams. Concerning the metrics used by these poets, Cinna and Calvus employed the scazon ("limping" verse), and all whose works survive employed the hendecasyllable.

Though very little is left of the aforementioned writers, their relationship with Catullus, partly personal, partly literary, is a matter of fact. To Calvus, Catullus wrote poem 14 in response to some rather poor gifts of poetry sent to him on the holiday of the Saturnalia:

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If I did not love you more than my own eyes, my dearest Calvus, I should hate you, as we all hate Vatinius, because of this gift of yours; for what have I done, or what have I said, that you should bring destruction upon me with all these poets? May the gods send down all the plagues upon the client of yours who sent you such a set of sinners. But if, as I suspect, this new and choice present is given you by Sulla, the schoolmaster, then I am not vexed, but well and happy, because your labours are not lost. Great gods! What a portentous and accursed book! And this was the book which you sent your Catullus, to kill him off at once on the very day of the Saturnalia, best of days. No, no you rogue, this shall not end so for you. For let the morning only come—I will be off to the shelves of the booksellers, sweep together Caesii, Aquini, Suffenus, and the such poisonous stuff, and with these penalties will I pay you back for your gift. You poets, meantime, farewell, away with you, back to that ill place whence you brought your cursed feet, you burdens of our age, you worst of poets.  

Concerning the work of the poet Cinna, Catullus wrote the literary encomium (poem 95):

My friend Cinna's "Smyrna," published at last nine harvest-tides and nine winters after it was begun, whilst Hortensius (has brought out) five hundred thousand (verses) in one (year). "Smyrna" will travel as far as the deep-channelled streams of Satrachus, the centuries will grow grey in long perusal of "Smyrna." But the Annals of Volusius will die by the river Padua where they were born, and will often furnish a loose wrapper for mackerels. Let the modest memorials of my friend be dear to me, and let the vulgar rejoice in their windy Antimachus.  

Likewise, about Caecilius, Catullus composed his poem 35. It is in the form of a letter and possibly points to the source of his bizarre work in Galliambics (poem 63):  


I ask you, papyrus page, to tell the gentle poet, my friend Caecilius, to come to Verona, leaving the walls of Novum Comum and the shore of Larius, for I wish him to receive certain thoughts of a friend of his and mine. Wherefore if he is wise he will devour the way with haste, though his fair lady should call him back a thousand times, and throwing both her arms round his neck beg him to delay. She now, if a true tale is brought to me, dotes on him with passionate love. For since she read the beginnings of his "Lady of Dindymus," ever since then, poor girl, the fires have been wasting her inmost marrow. I can feel for you, maiden more scholarly than the Sapphic Muse; for Caecilius has indeed made a lovely beginning to his "Magna Mater."¹³

The similarity of Catullus' verse to that of the previously mentioned poets and his direct address of three of their number have led logically to the speculation that Catullus was a member if not the leader of a circle of poets perhaps akin to the earlier Scipionic circle.¹⁴ The proof of such a poetic alliance is bolstered too by Cicero's referral to the "Singers of Euphorion,"¹⁵ alias "the new poets."¹⁶ However, the inclusion of Catullus in any group based upon that evidence has been questioned by scholars, notably Ellis, who cautioned that "The Tusculan Disputations did not appear until 710/44, probably nine or ten years after the death of


Catullus: Catullus therefore can hardly be included in Cicero's expression. 17

Nevertheless, member of a group or not, Catullus is the only surviving poet whose work is complete enough to assess the traits of a new poetry that sprung up like a wild-flower amidst the infertile, politically tumultuous beginnings of the "Age of Caesar." 18 Judging from Catullus' poetry, it was a vibrant, often realistic poetry chock-full of art, innuendo, belly-laughs, criticism, and heart-felt emotion; yet, as can be seen in the following pages, bound up inextricably like vine and tree to earlier techniques and traditions--making something very new out of something very old.

The Measurable Influence of Earlier Poets

The influence of earlier Greek, Alexandrian, and Roman poets upon Catullus' verse can be only partially measured. There are essentially two reasons for this fact: much of what those earlier poets wrote has been lost, and many of Catullus' borrowings from their poetry were not direct but came from his general training and studies in rhetoric and poetry. 19 However, it is certain that Catullus borrowed from the Greek lyricist Sappho and the Alexandrian poet Callimachus

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17 Ellis, A Commentary, p. xxxiii.
18 Duff, A Literary History of Rome, p. 222.
and highly probable that he imitated the Greek iambic poetry of Archilochus.

Sappho's direct influence is readily apparent in Catullus' poem 55, which he composed in the Sapphic hendecasyllable:

He seems to me to be equal to a god, he, if it may be, seems to surpass the very gods, who sitting opposite you again and again gazes at you and hears you sweetly laughing. Such a thing takes away all my senses, alas! for whenever I see you, Lesbia, at once no sound of voice remains within my mouth, but my tongue falters, a subtle flame steals down through my limbs, my ears ring with inward humming, my eyes are shrouded in two-fold night.

Idleness, Catullus, does you harm, you rot in your idleness and wanton too much. Idleness ere not has ruined both kings and wealthy cities.20

In this poem Catullus loosely translated one of Sappho's odes.21 With the exception of Catullus' fourth strophe, they are very similar in style and content, as these lines from Sappho reveal:

It is to be a God, me thinks, to sit before you and listen close by to the sweet accents and winning laughter which have made the heart in my breast beat fast, I warrant you. When I look on you Brochaeo, my speech comes short or fails me quite I am tongue-tied; in a moment a delicate fire has overrun my flesh, my eyes grow dim and my ears sing, the sweat runs down me and trembling takes me altogether, till I am as green and pale as the grass, and death itself seems not very far away, but now that I am poor, I must fain be content.22

There are two opposing opinions about Catullus' fourth strophe in this poem. Wheeler considered it to be part of

21Wheeler, Catullus, p. 185.
the original poem, but Francis Cornish and Fordyce separated it from the main body as a fragment. As Wheeler argued, "Catullus omits at least two of Sappho's stanzas, substitutes a stanza of his own, and adapts the rest to his own situation. He intended to honor Sappho . . . and at the same time produce a poem of his own." However, considering the possibility of a hiatus in the text between the third and fourth strophes of Catullus' poem, the poet's intention--aside from translation--is not at all certain.

The second indication of Sapphic influence upon Catullus' verse is in his epyllion "The Marriage of Peleus and Thetis" (poem 64). This poem shows some resemblance of detail to Sappho's longest fragment, "The Marriage of Andromache." Both poems have a nautical beginning, and both are in epic style. Sappho commenced her poem as follows:

[From] Cyrus [there] came a herald sped by the might of his swift legs beginning speedily these fair tidings unto the people of Ida . . . and throughout the rest of Asia these tidings won a fame that never died: 'Hector and his comrades bring from the sacred Thebe and fair-flowing Placia, by ship upon the briny sea, the dainty Andromache of the glancing eye.

25 Wheeler, Catullus, p. 112.
27 Connely, "Imprints of Sappho on Catullus," pp. 408-413.
Rather than a myth of ancient Troy, Catullus began his poem with the tale of Jason and the Argonauts, but the similarity of his style to Sappho's is obvious:

Pine trees of old, born on top of Pelion, are said to have swum through the clear waters of Neptune to the waves of Phasis and the realms of Aeetes, when the chosen youths, the flower of Argive strength, desiring to bear away from the Colchians the golden fleece, dared to course over the salt seas with swift ship, sweeping the blue expanse with fir-wood blades.29

In Sappho's poem there are numerous details which appear in Catullus' poem 64. The gifts that Andromache were promised by the herald were used by Catullus in his description of Peleus' palace. In Sappho are found the lines:

and many are the golden bracelets and the purple robes which the wind is bringing, indeed a richly-varied bride-gift; and without number also are the silver goblets and ornaments of ivory.30

Employing Sapphic details, Catullus described the interior of Peleus' palace:

But Peleus' own abode, so far as inward stretched the wealthy palace with glittering gold and silver shine. White gleams the ivory of the throne, bright are the cups on the table; the whole house is gay and gorgeous with royal treasure.31

Also in both poems are wedding pageants. Sappho placed the women celebrants in muledrawn wagons and the men in chariots:

Straightway the children of Ilius harnessed the mules of wheeled cars, and whole throng mounted

therein, the daughters of Priam riding apart; and the men did harness horses to the chariots, and the young men went with them one and all; till a mighty people moved mightily along, and the drivers drove their boss-bedizened steeds out of [the city]. . . . 32

In lieu of mortals in the procession, Catullus used divine celebrants:

After their departure, from the top of Pelion came Chiron leading the way, bearing woodland gifts . . .

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

. . . Forthwith Peneus is there . . .

Him follows Prometheus wise of heart, bearing the faded scars of ancient penalty . . .

then came the Father of the Gods with his divine wife and sons. . . . 33

In each of the poems there is a hymn of praise for the nuptials. In the Sappic version,

Meanwhile the elder women roared a loud cry, and all the men shouted amain a delightful song of Thanksgiving unto the Far Darting God of the lyre and hymned the praise of god-like Hector and Andromache. 34

Catullus' hymn was chanted not by the Gods but by the Fates, who prophesied the arrival of the great Achilles from the union of Peleus and Thetis:

Witness of his great deeds of valor shall be the wave of Scamander which pours itself forth abroad in the current of Hellespont, whose channel he shall choke with heaps of slain corpses . . .

Come then, unite the loves which your souls desire: let the husband receive in happy bonds the goddess, let the bride be given up--nay now! to threads ye spindles run.35

Aside from Sappho, the next certain source of Catullus' borrowing is from the poetry of Callimachus. The influence of Callimachus' verse is most apparent in Catullus' translation of the Alexandrian poet's "Berenices Plokomos," known to most Catullan scholars as "The Tress of Berenice." About Catullus' translation of Callimachus' poem, Wheeler observed that "'The Tress of Berenice' affords the best opportunity of studying Catullus' work as a translator. In contrast with his purpose in the fifty-first poem, he is here single-mindedly bent on presenting Callimachus in Latin verse with due respect for the Greek author's thought and art." The quality of the translation, which was unknown until the rediscovery of a large portion of the Greek original in the Oxyrhynchus Papyri, is at times extremely accurate. Catullus sometimes used the syntactical and lexical oddities of the original, while in other instances his translation was free.

The subject of Callimachus' poem is extremely interesting because of its elaborate structure and its learned obscurities. As the unknown author of the Diegesis summarized, "He [Callimachus] says that Conon set the lock of Berenice among the stars, which she had promised to dedicate to the gods on

Berenice, Queen of Ptolemy I, supposedly made this pledge during the Third Syrian War, which lasted from 247 to 246 B.C. She pledged her lock of hair in the temple of Arsinoe Aphrodite at Zephyrium, whence the lock mysteriously disappeared. The court astronomer, Conon, feigned an identification of the lock with a group of stars thereafter recognized as the "Coma Berenices." Callimachus described the deification in glowing terms:

Having examined all the charted sky, and where [the stars] move . . . Conon saw me also in the air, the lock of Berenice, which she dedicated to all the gods . . . I took an oath by your head and by your life . . . the bright descendant of Theia is carried over . . . the obelisk of Arsinoe your mother, and through the middle of Athos the destructive ships of the Persians sailed. What can we do, locks of hair, when such mountains succumb to the iron? Oh that the whole race of the Chalybes would perish, who first brought it to light, an evil plant rising from the earth, and who taught men the work of the hammer! When [I] was newly shorn my sister-locks were mourning for me. At once the brother of Memnon the Aethiopian, the gentle breeze, the steed of Locrian Arsinoe of the violet girdle, moving his swift wings in circles dashed and seized me with his breath, and carrying me through the mid air he placed me . . . in the lap of Cypris. Aphrodite Zephyritis who dwells on the shore of Canopus [chose] him herself . . . for that purpose. And so that not only the . . . of the Minoan bride . . . should cast its light on men, but I too, the beautiful lock of Berenice in the waters of the ocean, and rising close to the immortals, Cypris set me to a new star among the ancient ones . . . Proceeding to the Ocean . . . late autumn . . . The joy of these honours cannot outweigh


40 Trypanis, trans., Callimachus, p. 80, fn. a.
the distress which I feel that I no longer shall touch that head, from which when [Berenice was] still a maiden I drank so many frugal scents but did not enjoy the myrrh of the married woman's [hair].

Catullus' motives for translating this obviously recondite elegy are unknown. Wheeler surmised, however, that Catullus was attracted both by its learnedness and its theme of love. Catullus was known as the "doctus" or learned poet to many of those who followed him, and his translation of Callimachus' elegy no doubt aided in earning him that epithet. More important than learned bits of knowledge which he included in his poems, however, were Catullus' borrowings of Callimachus' technique in this manner of writing. He learned to make an allusion to a myth or well-known tale and let the reader fill in the remaining parts. Concerning Catullus' attraction to Callimachus' theme of love, it is quite apparent, judging from his Lesbia poems, that he had an affinity for amorous verse. Here too he was attracted by Callimachus' technique. Like the later Roman elegiac poets Propertius and Ovid, he used Callimachus' material, but his chief debt was in craftsmanship. As Wheeler stated, "In this [type of poetry] Catullus made a good beginning."

44 Wheeler, *Catullus*, p. 239.
An additional indication of Callimachus' direct poetic influence is evident in Catullus' verse. This borrowing is found in his epigram on the uncertainty of lovers' promises, poem 70:

The woman I love says that there is no one whom she would rather marry than me, not if Jupiter himself were to woo her. Says; but what a woman says to her ardent lover should be written on wind and running water.\(^4\)

It is likely that Catullus had in mind the following lines of Callimachus:

Callignotus wrote to Ionis that he would never hold man or woman dearer than her. He swore: but what they say is true—that lovers' oaths enter not the ears of the immortals. And now his flame is a man, while of poor Ionis there is . . . 'nor count nor reckoning.'\(^4\)

Though Catullus and Callimachus approached their subjects differently, the themes of the poems are essentially the same. In addition to the similarity of theme, there is also a likeness of technique. Catullus repeated "dicit" ("says") three times in his epigram, and Callimachus reiterated "omose" ("swore") twice. In both poems that repetition is in the same order.\(^4\)

The influence of Archilochus upon Catullus is seen, as might be expected, in the Roman poet's invective verse, since

\(^4\)Wheeler, Catullus, p. 231.
Archilochus is one of the best-known Greek poets who composed in that scurrilous vein.\(^{48}\) From what is related by his extant fragments, Catullus possibly borrowed from him in poems 40 and 56. Poem 40 was written to one Ravidius (otherwise unknown)\(^{49}\) who had become the paramour of Catullus' mistress:

> What infatuation, my poor Ravidius, drives you headlong in the way of my iambics? What god invoked by you amiss is going to stir up a senseless quarrel? Is it that you wish to be talked about? What do you want? Would you be known, no matter how? So you shall since you have chosen to love my lady. --and long shall you rue it.\(^{50}\)

The proof of Archilochus' influence on Catullus' poem 40 is only probable, for it depends upon a hypothetical reconstruction of the Archilochean original. George L. Hendrickson restored the poem by uniting three of Archilochus' fragments (94, 95 and 143), a paraphrase from Lucian, and the ending lines of Catullus' poem 40.\(^{51}\) The attribution of the various parts is quite evident from Hendrickson's translation:

> What is this that you say, father Lycambes? Who has robbed you of the reason on which you lean so securely? But now in truth you are become a laughing stock to your fellow-townsmen [94]. What god pray, or in anger at

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\(^{49}\) Ellis, *A Commentary*, p. 143.

\(^{50}\) Catullus, "Poem 40," trans. Cornish, pp. 47 & 49.

what[95], has kindled you to stir
up a creature garrulous like me, looking for
nothing better than themes
for his iambics [Lucian]. You have seized in fact a
cicada by the wing [143 from Lucian] which shrills by
nature and without oc-
casion and when touched shrills the louder [Lucian].
What do you mean? Do
you desire to become notorious at any cost? You
shall pay for your rashness
with a penalty that shall endure for long [Catullus].52

As Hendrickson pointed out, Catullus reproduced Archilochus'
language in at least five instances. As for the ending of
Catullus' poem, "There is nothing in Lucian to suggest its
presence in Archilochus, though the conceit of paying for
rashness with long-enduring penalty may easily have been
derived from the same source."53

Catullus' poem 56 was also a probable imitation of
Archilochus.54 Catullus addressed this poem to Cato, whose
identity is doubtful.55

A matter of mirth Cato and a smile
worth your attention, you'll laugh
you'll laugh as you love your Catullus, Cato
listen—a matter for more than a smile!
Just now I found a young boy
stuffing his girl
I rose, naturally, and
(with a nod to Venus)

54 Wheeler, Catullus, p. 239.
55 Ellis, A Commentary, p. 196.
fell and transfixed him there
with a good stiff prick
like his own.56

Though Archilochus exists only in a fragment, his poem shows
a close similarity to the commencement of Catullus' poem:

Charilaus son of Erasmon, I'll tell thee a droll thing,
thou much the dearest of my comrades, and the hearing
of it shall delight thee . . . 57

It is obvious that Catullus' knowledge and use of Greek
poetry was considerable. But, although he undoubtedly bor-
rowed much from earlier Greek poets, Catullus was for this
very reason--among others--a Roman poet in spirit ind fact.
The paradox here is only apparent. Catullus' poetry was
influenced to a great degree both in form and diction by
earlier Roman poets, whose debt to Greece was no less than
his.58 As Wheeler commented, "The poetry of Catullus and his
contemporaries would have been impossible if the way had not
been prepared for it by a long line of predecessors. When
Catullus began to write . . . Roman poetry for a century and
a half had been serving that apprenticeship to the Greeks
which was initiated by the Greek slave and Roman freedman,
Livius Andronicus."59

57 Archilochus, "Fragment 79," in Elegy and Iambus: The
Remains of All the Greek Elegiac and Iambic Poets from
Callinus to Crates with the Anacreontea, trans. J. M. Edmonds,
II, 139.
58 Wheeler, Catullus, p. 61.
59 Wheeler, Catullus, p. 61.
Although there is no indication of Catullus' direct borrowing from any Roman poet, there are hints provided by five earlier erotic epigrams that his shorter verse had distinct precidents in Latin literature: two amorous poems by Valerius Aedituus, two by Quintus Catulus, and one by Porcius Licinius. Aedituus' wrote the following passionate words:

My Pamphilia, when I would tell the secret of my heart
The yearning that I feel for thee
no words my lips will part,
My breast is damp with sudden sweat,
and passion stills my breath.
So wordless, shamed, I seem to feel in love, the touch of death.\(^{60}\)

Quintus Catulus wrote also of his love:

My soul is fled, tis gone, methinks to Theotimus' fold
Tis so in truth, for there it has a refuge as of old.
And yet I command him to shut out the runaway
I fear to go questing lest I myself betray.
I stand in doubt. What should I do?
Dear Venus, point the way.\(^{61}\)

In his poem, Licinius described the flames of passion:

Ye guardians of the soft sheep's tender young
With but a finger's touch I'll fire the grove.\(^{62}\)
The flock's all flame—all things whereon I gaze.

Pertaining to what these epigrams reveal about the poetic traditions that Catullus followed, there has been some debate.

\(^{60}\)Wheeler, Catullus, p. 68.

\(^{61}\)Wheeler, Catullus, p. 68.

\(^{62}\)Wheeler, Catullus, p. 68.
Wheeler thought that they pointed to an early Roman attempt to bring the Alexandrian erotic epigram into Latin verse. Nevertheless, Ross felt differently about the poems. He saw them as experiments which did not continue on and did not influence Catullus. The epigrammatic tradition that Catullus followed seemed to Ross not to have come from the Alexandrians, but from the earlier Roman poet, Ennius, whose works, lamentably, are lost.

With the exception of the epigrams of Aedituus, Licinius and Catulus, very little in earlier Roman poetry shows a resemblance to what Catullus wrote. Yet, the fact that no poetry of this type exists does not preclude the real and possible effects that earlier Latin poetry had upon Catullus. As shown in the following chapter, in all three of his longer types of poetry, there are strong Roman characteristics. The meter in the epyllion is the Ennian hexameter; the wedding customs in poem 61 are direct imitations of Roman practices; and the language and customs in his elegies, poems 67 and 76, are completely Latin in their origins. Thus even with Catullus' use of Greek myth, and of Alexandrian techniques and devices, he was first and last a Roman poet.

63 Wheeler, *Catullus*, p. 70.
CHAPTER V

THE INFLUENCE OF EARLIER POETIC TRADITIONS
UPON CATULLUS' LONGER POEMS AND ELEGIES

The Epyllion

Catullus' poem 64, "The Marriage of Peleus and Thetis," is the most complex of his works on the levels of content, technique and traditions. In it are lodged not only a tale within a tale but a mixture of Alexandrian, Roman, and Greek techniques, literary traditions, and subjective observations which border on moralizing. The first tale and the ostensible subject of the poem is the marriage of the Argonaut Peleus to the sea-nymph Thetis. The poet begins by a swift, deft retelling of their meeting and quickly sets the stage for the impending wedding ceremony that day by describing the preparation for the ritual and the inward appearance of the palace wherein they are to be wed. His interest quickly falls upon the coverlet of the wedding couch, which is embroidered with ancient, mythical figures.

Using the coverlet as a point of departure, Catullus then tells of the narrative captured in the cloth, the story of Theseus' desertion of Ariadne after having used her as a means of escaping the labyrinth and killing her half-brother the Minotaur. The first picture in the coverlet is that of
Ariadne standing on the lonely island shore of Naxos, peering off to sea and casting a baleful eye at the receding figure of Theseus' vessel:

There on the seaweed fringe the weeping princess
Stares seaward like a maenad carved in stone,
While her heart heaves and swells across the distance.\(^1\)

After an account of the deeds of Theseus and Ariadne's love for him, and a sympathetic picture of the dying Minotaur, the poet launched his betrayed heroine into a seventy-line soliloquy recounting her woes and ending with a curse upon Theseus. The poet continued this tale by recounting the fulfillment of her curse in the death of Theseus' father. Theseus, having completed his mission, was to lift a white sail if he were alive and successful; his followers were to raise a black sheet if he were dead. According to Catullus, Ariadne's curse made Theseus forget his promise to his father and fly the dark sail, thus causing the despairing Aegeus to fling himself over the cliffs that border Athens' seaport.

Completing the tale, Catullus made Ariadne's plight a comic one. In another sadly fragmented section of the poem, she is wed to Bacchus. From that transition, Catullus moved from the Ariadne myth to the wedding originally described. The gods were arriving at the palace, and the merriment was soon to begin. First came Chiron, god of the woodlands;

\(^1\)Catullus, "Poem 64," trans. Michie, p. 135.
second, Peneus, the river god; then the Titan Prometheus, still bearing faint scars; next Jupiter and Juno; and finally the Fates, who sang of the future progeny of the matched pair, namely Achilles. The Fates' song is not an especially bright one. They recount the bravery and ability of Achilles, but Catullus placed in their words some bitter notes also. He was to be a killer of men:

... mothers at gravesides with grey hair unbound
And uncombed will acknowledge his renowned
Heroic exploits ...
... And witness, too, will be the honor done
After his death, the prize with which the mound
Of his smooth, towering barrow will be crowned--
The white limbs of the sacrificial maid
Polyxena ...
... Her blood will soak
The high tomb: like a beast,
She'll take the stroke
Of the two-edged pole-ax ...
A trunk without a head.  

The final passages of the poem are moralizing in their nature.

The poet despairs of the present days where

Brothers plunged hands in the blood of brothers, children
Ceased mourning for their parents, fathers hankered
For a son's death, more freely to enjoy
Some fresh young blossom as a second wife
And vicious mothers seduced innocent boys
In blasphemous outrage of the household gods,
Till, right and wrong, virtue and vice, all weltering
In mad perversity, we so estranged
And horrified the minds of the good gods
That they no longer condescend to join
Men's feasts and festivals or care to endure
The touch of our too glaring light of day.  

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Understandably, the meaning of this poem has left many scholars puzzled. Although it deals with well-known myths, it is a highly personal version of the two tales and is difficult to interpret. Its numerous antitheses on the level of content—the comic ending to the tragic story of Ariadne, the seemingly happy beginning of the marriage of Peleus to Thetis, which brings to life a warrior-beast such as Achilles, to say nothing of the moral commentary at the end—beg more questions than can be definitely answered. The recent theory proposed by Leo C. Curran, that Catullus was essentially attempting to show that the past was not any better than his present, is an interesting one, but fails to include reasons as to why Catullus chose the particular myths that he did, why he ended them in such contrasting manners, and why he assumed a religious attitude toward the end.

The best that scholars have been able to accomplish in explicating this poem is to sort out the mixtures of traditions in this complex of tales. As has been recorded, both of the myths used by Catullus were popular in classical times. The marriage of Peleus to Thetis had long been a subject of older poems. Pindar, Euripides, Apollonius and Homer related the myth. Also there are a few extant fragments from the works of Agamemster of Pharsalus which allude to it and a brief commentary by Dionysius of Halicarnassus. The second

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story, Theseus' desertion of Ariadne, although shown by the
scholiasts to have been a familiar one, is not well-preserved
in the literature. Xenophon alone is known to have recounted
an event in which there was a pantomime of it.\footnote{Ellis, A Commentary, p. 279.}

The art of the Greeks and Romans proves further that
both tales had a great deal of popular regard. Valerius
Flaccus referred to the procession of Thetis to the chamber of
Peleus in a number of tableaux, and there are many bas-
reliefs and vase paintings on the myth. Concerning the latter
legend, two Pompeian paintings testify to its popular cur-
rency.\footnote{Ellis, A Commentary, pp. 279-280.}

Though there are myriad sources from which Catullus
could possibly have taken the basic mythical content of his
poem, it is evident that he did not directly imitate any work
now known to us. In both tales he varied the traditional
content to his own purpose. Examples of this modernizing
tendency in Catullus are many; however, it is only necessary
to note three of his major changes. Concerning the relation-
ship of Peleus and Thetis, he modified Thetis' traditional
disgust for her mortal husband into love. In the Theseus and
Ariadne myth, Catullus gave much more emphasis to Ariadne's
lament than did previous accounts. The poet also connected
the death of King Aegeus (Theseus' father) with Ariadne's curse upon Theseus.  

The content of the poem is undeniably classical Greek in origin, but its technique, with the exception of meter, was Alexandrian. The poem is short (408 lines) in its telling of two such large topics. There is a copiousness of detail and much subjectivity in its reflections and apostrophes. This special style was developed by the Alexandrians some two centuries previous to Catullus when they, notably Callimachus, rebelled against the lengthy, quasi-Homeric epic and condensed it into the little epic or "epyllion." 

The hexameter of this poem, however, had a different origin. In thirty instances Catullus imposed spondees on his hexameters in the style of the Alexandrians, but basically it was predominantly Roman, of the Ennian tradition. Thus is seen the many contrasts between the older epic diction and new techniques and mannerisms such as exclamation, the interjected question, and anaphora. To the Ennian influence belonged such words as "pubes" ("adult"), "flamen" ("priest"), "tempestas" ("tempest"), and such compounds as "fluentidonus" ("resounding with waves").

7 Wheeler, Catullus, p. 130.
8 Fordyce, A Commentary, p. 275.
9 Wheeler, Catullus, pp. 120-121.
10 Fordyce, A Commentary, p. 275.
The Epithalamiums

One of the clearer examples of Catullus' genius for utilizing traditions to his best advantage is in his use of the epithalamium. He composed two poems in this genre, yet they strongly contrast in style and content. Poem 61 is almost purely Roman; its metrical form and a few basic techniques alone are Greek. Poem 62, however, is a product of the poetry of Greece.11 Though the exact purpose of the latter wedding song is seemingly autotelic,12 poem 61 was written for the purpose of honoring the marriage of Manlius Torquatus and his bride Junia Aurunculeia.13

The first of Catullus' dissimilar, though generic, twins is in actuality not a complete portrait of a Roman wedding which involved an entire day, but only one part of it, the "deductio" ("the leading of the bride from her father's house to her new home and the waiting groom").14 Unlike Catullus' previously discussed epyllion, this poem is extremely simple in both theme and technique. At its center is the act of love's consummation and its reward—a child. Its technique is artful though imitative, describing the climactic event in the ritual and involving only a short span of time.

11 Ellis, A Commentary, p. 209.
12 Ellis, A Commentary, p. 240.
13 Wheeler, Catullus, p. 191.
Catullus' management of the detail and action of the poem is superb. It begins at the door of the bride's house. She has yet to show herself; and the crowd, presumably with the poet leading them, beckons her exit. The poet invokes the god of marriage, Hymen, directs the group to sing and dance, and begs her to hurry. At her reluctance the poet then offers a series of reasons why the bride should come out. Her father needs heirs; the bridegroom is anxious; the state is supported by her fruitful love. "What god is there that dare/Himself with you compare?" he adds.

After additional, playful encouragement, the bride appears and the festival march begins. Jokes flow, walnuts are tossed to the young boys, and the groom, presumably in absentia, is abused for his amorous affairs previous to his marriage. At last her new home is reached. On gold shoes she walks to its threshold and, in Roman fashion, is lifted across. The ceremony is thus completed, and the poet wishes the new pair a happy marriage and an heir: "Two tender hands to hug/his father, while he half-/Parts his lips in a laugh." The poem then ends with the attendant virgins closing the house doors.

In contrast to the preceding wedding song, Catullus presents poem 62 in the form of a contest between opposing groups

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of young men and maidens. Their purpose, as Catullus relates in his poem, is to sing for the bride.\textsuperscript{17} By way of their voices, Catullus not only gains a method to celebrate his favorite ritual, but also achieves an effective, often humorous, separation of male and female perspectives of the institution itself. The result of this dualistic poem is, of course, no great insight into Roman attitudes; rather it seems to be an almost real presentation of the charming naivete' found in the attitudes of youths and maidens toward a very serious business.

Catullus began his poem with a chorus of young men. Through their first chant, he showed them to be sitting at the banquet tables. When the evening star, Hesperus (the representative of Venus) appears, they rise and prepare for the impending contest. The girls, at dinner too, rise to meet their introductory chorus:

\begin{quote}
Look at the boys, girls! To your feet to meet them
With a counter-song! Hesperus hoists his light
Over Mount Oeta . . .
Did you notice how they leapt up as one man?
That wasn't done by accident
... it's our own duty to defeat them.\textsuperscript{18}
\end{quote}

At that challenge, the young men reply in unison that it seems from the girl's own song that they have practiced their parts and could possibly win. Thus they advise one another that

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{17}]Catullus, "Poem 62," trans. Michie, p. 117.
\item[\textsuperscript{18}]Catullus, "Poem 62," trans. Michie, p. 117.
\end{itemize}
victory's wooed and won by taking pains
then pay attention to the task before us;
they'll sing and we must answer with a chorus.19

The epithalamium begins, thereafter, in formal fashion. First
the maidens complain of being taken from their parents. They
denounce Hesperus as being cruel for doing so. Their opinion
is reversed by the young men who acclaim the goddess as the
best friend to men, for she seals marriages. The girls then
lament that one of them has been stolen. The boys retort by
jokingly praising Hesperus once more for keeping a watch over
the morals of the youths. They accuse the girls of feigning
hatred of her when in their hearts they yearn for marriage.

The maidens quickly retort and liken their maidenhoods
to a garden flower in a palisade:

\[
\ldots \text{as long as she's untouched}
\text{Her family cherishes her; but once she loses}
\text{Her fresh bloom her body becomes smutched.} \ldots \text{20}
\]

The final chorus belongs to the young men. They compare the
girl's virginity to a vine in a bare field; it will wilt and
bear no good fruit. As the vine needs a tree, so too does a
woman need a man, for without love's support, she will wither.
Catullus then ends his poem with a suggestion that the girls
obey their parents in their selection of her mate:

\[
\text{Your virgin treasure doesn't all belong}
\text{To you; your parents own a share—one-third}
\text{Belongs to each, you only have the other.} \text{21}
\]

Turning to the literary traditions that influenced Catullus' epithalamiums, scholars have found little that can be stated with any certainty of his borrowings from specific authors. Aside from Theocritus' "Epithalamy of Helen," Catullus' poems are the only early examples of this literary type that have escaped destruction. Sappho exists in only a few fragments, and the remaining authors, Homer, Hesiod, Euripides, Aristophanes and Plautus, who included wedding songs in their longer works, reveal only enough to sketch a crude, if not distorted, outline of the genre's development. With the exceptions of Sappho and Theocritus, those authors stand at variance with Catullus both in style and purpose. A brief review of their wedding songs will amply illustrate those differences.

Homer wrote of a wedding feast in his famous description of the shield of Achilles:

On it he Hephaistos wrought in all their beauty
two cities of mortal men. And there were marriages in one and festivals.
They were leading the brides along the city from their maiden chambers
under the flaring of torches, and the loud bride song was arising.
The young men followed the circles of dance, and among them
the flutes and lyres kept up their clamor as in the meantime
the women standing each at the door of her court admired them. 23

22 Wheeler, Catullus, p. 183.
Hesiod's description of the Greek ceremony is extremely similar to Homer's. In his poem "The Shield of Hercules,"
incused upon the shield was

a city of men well walled
and golden were the seven gates
that were filled
with lintels, and the people in it,
with merry-making and dances
held festival, for some,
in a smooth-running mule-carriage,
were bringing the bride to the groom and the loud bride
song was arising.
Far away there flared the light
of the torches blazing
in the hands of the serving maids, and they,
festive in the occasion,
ran on ahead, and the choruses
came after them, playing;
the men, to accompaniment of the clear pipes
were singing ... 
while the girls to the music of lyres,
led on the lovely chorus. ... 24

Homer and Hesiod wrote in the epic style, and this accounts for their essentially descriptive, nonparticipatory,
and impersonal renditions of the ceremony. The wedding song
to them was but a decorative part of a larger work dominated
by greater themes and characters. Unlike Catullus' poems,
which sweep his reader up into the ritual, very little life
is found in the earlier descriptions of the scenes incused
upon the two mythical shields.

Closer to Catullus, yet again differing from him in style and purpose, are the Greek playwrights Euripides and

Aristophanes. From Euripides’ tragedy Daughters of Troy comes a very personal but bizarre version of the wedding song. Cassandra in a monologue chants her own ironic hymn of marriage:

Up with the torch—give it to me—let me render worship to Phoebus! Lo, lo how I fling Wide through his temple the flash of its splendour—Hymen! O marriage-god, Hymen my king! Happy the bridegroom who waiteth to meet me; Happy am I for the couch that shall greet me; Royal espousals to Argos I bring! Bridal king, Hymen, thy glory I sing! Mother, thou lingerest long at thy weeping, Aye makest moan for thy sire who hath died, Mournest our country with sorrow unsleeping Therefore my self for mine own marriage-tie Kindle the firebrands. . . .

Cassandra's monologue, although itself atypical of the epithalamium, does reflect in its content some of the normal characteristics of the genre. The few details that Euripides employed—the burning torch, the refrains to Hymen, the "longing" of the bride for the groom—fit quite readily into the literary schema. However, there is something more to be learned from this monologue.

Unlike the songs of Homer and Hesiod and even later poets, Euripides employed human drama in his production. This drama is not only tinged with the pathos of a Trojan princess forced to marry her city's conqueror, Agamemnon, but is drenched in the irony that the bride, who is a prophetess, knows that she

and her husband will be murdered upon their landing in Greece. Combined with the knowledge that Euripides' audience had of the myth, from such sources as Aeschylus' *Tragedy of Agamemnon* and popular tales, this play comprises drama at its highest level of intensity.

How much of an effect this specific work had upon Catullus is unknown. Catullus employed monologues of a less intense quality in his epyllion, and more fervently in his "Attis" poem (poem 63), but in his epithalamiums very little serious drama and no dramatic monologues are present. Rather, Catullus preferred to amuse his audience in his wedding songs—the tone and content being accordingly comic and pleasant.

In a more formal and satyric vein, Aristophanes concluded his plays *Peace* and *The Birds* with wedding verses. In the former he assumed a bawdy tone:

Leader of the chorus (singing)

Oh! Thrice happy man, who so well deserved your good fortune! Oh!
Hymen! Oh Hymenaeus!

Chorus (singing)

Oh! Hymen! Oh Hymenaeus!

Trygaeus (singing)

What shall we do with her?

Chorus (singing)

What shall we do with her?

Trygaeus (singing)

We will gather her kisses. . . .
Chorus Leader (singing)

But come comrades, we who are in the first row, let us pick up the bridegroom and carry him in triumph. Oh Hymen! Oh Hymenaeus! Oh Hymen! Oh Hymenaeus!

Chorus Leader (singing)

The bridegroom's fig is great and thick;
The bride's very soft and tender. . . .

The concluding passage of The Birds is a less abusive marriage chant. Rather than the chorus joking with the bridegroom, it praises the beauty of the bride in very high terms:

Oh thou golden flash of lightning! Oh, ye divine shafts of flame, that Zeus has hither to shot forth! Oh ye rolling thunders, that bring down the rain! Tis by the order of our king that ye shall now dagger the earth! Oh Hymen tis through thee that he commands the universe and that he makes Basilea who he has robbed from Zeus, take her seat at his side. Oh Hymen, Oh Hymenaeus!

The singing of the chorus and players and the strophaic structure of Aristophanes' finales were most probably very close to wedding customs in Greece, and in this respect both plays bear resemblances to Catullus' epithalamiums, especially to poem 62, an almost Greek poem. Nevertheless, Aristophanes' wedding verses differ from the Roman poet's in two major ways. First, in both instances the Greek playwright's finales were

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meant to be sung and have some kind of musical accompaniment. Catullus' epithalamiums were meant strictly to be read. Secondly, Aristophanes employed his wedding verse to end his plays on a note of realism, to tie his fanciful satires to a common ground of experience with his audience. Catullus had no such aim. His poems depicted popular customs; he had only to add the art.

In the early days of Rome, as of Greece, wedding songs and verse were an integral part of the culture; yet the only extant evidence of them before Catullus is found in Plautus' farce, *Casina*. As did Aristophanes, Plautus utilized the custom to further his comic ends but for a different reason and with a different result. To understand the following excerpt, it is necessary only to know that the bride is a man in disguise and that Pardalisea is the instigator of this shrewish plot to teach the two gulls, Olympio and Lysidamus, a lesson not too soon to be forgotten:

Olympio: (to the flutist gaily) Come on, piper until they bring out my blushing bride, let's have a nice song let's flood the whole street with my wedding march!

Olympio and Lysidamus: (who joins in) Here comes the bride, Here comes the bride!

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Lysidamus: (heartily) How're you doing saviour?

Olympio: (abruptly stopping his gaiety, peevishly)
I need saving--I'm damned hungry.

Lysidamus: How about me, I'm lovesick.
(song)

Pardalisea: (tenderly as she guides the bride over the threshold)
Step over the threshold with care, blushing bride
Start such steps safe and sound, so you're sure
To stand over your husband
To be stronger and never give in,
To defeat him so
Be his conquering heroine! Let your voice, your authority rule everywhere,
Let him load you with clothes while you strip him bare,
Pull the wool oe'r his eyes night and day--
Never, never forget this I pray.

Olympio: (gesturing towards Pardalisea)
Why that bitch there will make her a bitch of a witch.

Pardalisea: (to Olympio, handing the bride to him and intoning solemnly)
Now Olympio since you wish to be wed,
Please accept from our hands this bride for your bed.31

As a writer of farces, the chief end of Plautus was to entertain. He did so in many ways, but one of his fortes and primary techniques was to take an ordinary situation and contort it to the comic. Who can forget such hilarious effects as the set of twins being mistaken for each other in The

Brothers Menaechmus or his comic use of the talking house door in the Mostellaria? It was in the same spirit that Plautus used the wedding ceremony: to provide a few laughs and little else. He had not Aristophanes' worries over realism or the artful concern of Catullus about marriage traditions. Rather the ritual to him was like the people, institutions, superstitions and customs of Rome: grist for his farcical mill, a means to the end of merriment.

The wedding song, as a literary form unto itself, was an early innovation. The Greek lyric poets Sappho and Alcman and the later Alexandrian poets Theocritus, Eratosthenes, Callimachus and Parthenius composed in this type of verse. However, most of their works are in such battered, fragmented condition that only two of the above-mentioned sestet prove enlightening in any sense.

The first is Sappho. Some forty-six fragments survive from an entire book of epithalamiums which she is known to have composed. Nonetheless, all but three are extremely short. The remaining fragments which vary from six to ten lines survive only through the works of later commentators. Athenaeus, a writer of miscellanies, cited one part of a Sapphic epithalamium:

There stood a mixing bowl
of ambrosia ready mixed, and Heres took the wine

\[32\] Wheeler, Catullus, p. 186.

\[33\] Sappho, in Lyra Graeca, I, 283-307.
jug to pour out for the Gods. And then they all took up the beakers and pouring a libation wished all manner of good luck to the bridegroom. 34

Also in the "Epithalamy of Severus" of Himerius, the rhetorician, there was a strong indication—though not positive—of Sappho's hand:

Bride thou teemest with rosy desires, bride the fairest ornament of the Queen of Paphos, hie thee to be, hie thee to the couch whereon thou must sweetly sport in gentlewise with the bridegroom. And may the star of Eve lead thee full willingly to the place where thou shalt marvel at the silver throned Lady of Wedlock. 35

The third lengthy Sapphic fragment was included in On Style by Demetrius, the rhetorician:

Up with the rafters high, Ho for the wedding! Raise them ye joiners, Ho for the wedding! The Bridegroom's as tall as Ares, Ho for the wedding! Towering as the Lesbian poet, Ho for the wedding! Over the poets of other lands, Ho for the wedding! 36

The Sapphic influence upon Catullus' epithalamiums, unlike that upon his epyllion, has not been defined by scholars, nor is it likely to be until more evidence is uncovered. However, some important similarities do stand out

34 Sappho, "Fragment 146," in Lyra Graeca, I, 283.
35 Sappho, "Fragment 147," in Lyra Graeca, I, 283.
in limited evidence. First, it is apparent that Sappho entered into the marriage chant as did Catullus in poem 61. The last fragment quoted shows her to be extolling humorously her poetic virtuosity. Also, she says nothing that cannot be directly applied to the ceremony. The first fragment mentioned could very well have been part of her description of the wedding banquet or "repotia." The second, if it was indeed Sappho's, could possibly have made up part of a chorus in something similar to the Roman "deductio" or a chant at or near the "repotia." The last fragment could of course be placed almost anywhere in the ceremony. Aside from the common techniques that Sappho shared with Catullus and her fidelity to wedding customs, further similarities can be seen in the lesser details of the Sapphic fragments. The "star of Eve," Hesperus--the representative of Venus--was employed by Catullus in poem 62. The delights of love are promised in Catullus' poem 61 as they were in the fragment quoted by Himerius. Also the marriage refrain "Ho for the wedding" bears some resemblance of use to Catullus' refrain "Io Hymen, Hymenaeus" in poem 61.

The next evidence of the epithalamium as a form unto itself is seen in the work of Theocritus, who wrote some 325 years after Sappho. From his "Epithalamy of Helen," the

37 Sappho, in Lyra Graeca, I, 143, fn. J.
only complete Alexandrian wedding song and the only wholly extant chant written in Greek, there is an apparent movement away from the dancing and music toward the purely literary form:

It seems that once upon a time at the house of flaxen-haired Menelaus in Sparta, the first twelve maidens of the town, fine pieces of Laconian womanhood came crowned with fresh-flowering luces, and before a new-painted chamber took up the dance, when the younger child of Atreus shut the wedding door upon the girl of his wooing, upon the daughter of Tyndareus, to wit the loving Helen. There with pretty feet crosscrossing all to the time of one tune they sang till the palace rang again with the echoes of this wedding song:

What bridegroom! Dear bridegroom! Thus early abed and asleep? Wast born a man of sluggard ye, Or is thy pillow sweet to thee, Or ere thou canst to be maybe Didst drink a little deep? If thou wert so fain to sleep betimes, 'twere better sleep alone And leave a maid with maids to play By a fond mother's side till dawn of day Sith for the morrow and its morn, For this and all the years unborn This sweet bride is thine own. . . .

The proof of the direct influence of Theocritus upon Catullus' poems 61 or 62 is lacking. Theocritus' poem does, however, suggest a trend of poetry that Catullus followed. As did Theocritus, Catullus wrote his epithalamiums to be read, not sung or danced to. This trend is also evident in

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38 Wheeler, Catullus, p. 183.
the fundamental technical aspects of Catullus' epithalamiums. There he raised Roman and Greek nuptial rites to the level of art by framing them in Greek meter and priming his poetic canvas with the Alexandrian techniques of compression and allusion.41

The Elegies

The literary traditions that Catullus employed become a bit more obscure in his elegies. Of the five poems which the poet composed in this genre, it is only poem 66 that is positively known to have been Alexandrian in its origins. As previously stated, that elegy was a translation of Callimachus' "Coma Berenices."42 Regarding the remaining four poems, with one major exception, poem 67, scholars have not found any specific sources.

The first elegy in the manuscripts, poem 65, has been generally described in combination with poem 66.43 It is in fact an epistolary poem addressed to Catullus' friend Q. Hortensius Hortalus, and it accompanied a promised translation of the "Lock of Berenice." In it Catullus performs three tasks at once. He tells his friend of the grief that he feels over the death of his brother. He promises his brother's memory will be preserved by him in his poetry:

43Ellis, A Commentary, p. 350.
"Green in my poetry, as the Daulian bird/The nightingale . . .
grieves in the loss of Itylus, her son." He presents the
poem to Hortalus, begging his forgiveness for his tardiness in sending the translation.

Although the presentation of poem 65 in the form of a letter is unusual, the actual object of this elegy, a dedication of the translation of Callimachus, does not at all reside outside the bounds of tradition. As early as the fifth century B.C. the Greek Dionysius Chalcus employed it, and its use continued through to Catullus' day as shown in the Garland of Meleager and in Catullus' other example of the type, poem 1.

On the other hand, Catullus' poem 67 is technically and traditionally more intricate and much more difficult to interpret. As Ellis commented, "The obscurities which surround this poem are so considerable that it seems hopeless to do more than sketch in outline the story which it contains, leaving the subordinate points undecided." An even better illustration of the enigmas involved in the interpretation of the poem is Fordyce's complete omission of it from his commentary. Likewise, Wheeler by-passes this bush of scholarly thorns by remarking that "The sixty-seventh poem, the tale of

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45 Wheeler, Catullus, pp. 221-222.
46 Ellis, A Commentary, p. 387.
a bit of Veronese scandal, lies so far outside the general course of the elegy that I need not dwell upon it." 47

The usual scholarly description of the poem was rendered by Ellis:

A house, probably in Verona (34) had belonged for sometime to an old man named Balbus, who seems to have been unmarried. . . . During his death it was free from scandal. . . . On his death it came into the possession of a newly married couple, and soon grew scandalous. The chief of these was that the wife had committed incest with her husband's father . . . she had not been a virgin at the time when she entered the house as a bride, but had previously committed incest with her husband's father at Brixia. Brixia was also the scene of several other adulteries, with a Posthumius, a Cornelius and a tall man whose name is suppressed, but who has been attacked in the law-court on a question of supposed pregnancy. 48

Until recently scholars have not varied a great deal in their assessments of the traditions which Catullus followed in this elegy. It seemed to them basically a Roman poem with such interesting details as dramatic dialogue and the talking door which were common enough in earlier poetry. 49 The possibility that the poem was a type of "paraclausithyron" ("lover's song at the door of his beloved") was also considered. 50 However, the radical interpretation by Leon J. Richardson has done much to reverse opinions on the poem and clarify what was once somewhat a mystery.

48 Ellis, A Commentary, p. 387.
50 Ellis, A Commentary, p. 389.
In his interpretation of the poem, Richardson saw this elegy not as a piece of Veronese scandal but instead as "a Fescennine playlet at the climactic moment of the wedding procession, in which the bride-groom, Caecilius, is indirectly attacked for bringing his bride to a house with a murky past, and the house defends itself." The speaker in the poem is not the poet but the bride or a female representative of the bride. In the customary manner, she greets the door reverently and then demands to know the door's part in the earlier scandal. In a halting manner, the door explains that it was innocent of the crimes that took place within. The female speaker, however, forces it to continue, and in its next speech the portal recounts the obscene tale.

Richardson's interpretation of the poem improved upon earlier theories in two ways. First, it clarified the relationship of the persons in the poem, a point which Ellis himself thought confusing. Secondly, it proved the poem to be in a much more direct line of poetic traditions than had been previously supposed. That the poem is not a "paraclausithyron" is proved by Richardson on the grounds that "there is no serenade, no lament, no suggestion that it is late at night, no suggestion that the door is barred; most

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53 Ellis, A Commentary, p. 387.
important of all the people who are attacked in this poem no longer live in the building."\textsuperscript{54} Rather, Richardson connected the poem traditionally to Catullus' earlier wedding poetry, notably poem 61.

Catullus' poem 68, an elegy of some 160 lines, has been, as previously discussed,\textsuperscript{55} the subject of textual conjecture. Ellis thought that the poem was a whole, with lines 1 through 40 being written at an earlier time than 41 through 160.\textsuperscript{56} However, the theory that the poem is in actuality two poems is maintained by Schwabe, Munro, Bahrens,\textsuperscript{57} and Fordyce. As the latest scholar Fordyce summarized, "At first sight we seem to have a formal poem enclosed for transmission between a preface and an epilogue in much the same way in which 66 is accompanied by the explanatory preface of poem 65. But the relation between the parts is not so simple as that between 65 and 66."\textsuperscript{58} To Fordyce the chief difficulties in unifying the poem are Catullus' use of different names in the first and second parts and their contrasting contents.\textsuperscript{59}

\textsuperscript{54} Richardson, "Catullus 67," p. 425.
\textsuperscript{55} See Chapter III of this thesis.
\textsuperscript{56} Ellis, A Commentary, p. 402.
\textsuperscript{57} Ellis, A Commentary, p. 400.
\textsuperscript{58} Fordyce, A Commentary, p. 341.
\textsuperscript{59} Fordyce, A Commentary, p. 343.
The first section is an epistolary reply to Manlius' request for verses of comfort on the loss of his wife and a report on Lesbia's activities in Rome. Catullus, then in Verona, answered that he too was in mourning for the loss of his brother and was thus in no mood to compose poems. As for Lesbia, he wrote,

'Shame on you lurking in Verona! Here in Rome,' you write, 'every cavalier Warms himself with her in the bed you've quitted,' Shame, Manlius? Aren't I rather to be pitied?60

The second section, however, is markedly different from the first. Written to Allius, who provided a trysting place in Rome for Lesbia and Catullus, the poem reveals, as Wheeler noted, "... three main themes: friendship, love, sorrow. He works through the friendship to the love and so to the sorrow and then back again in reverse order: sorrow, love, friendship..."61 In the first thirty-two lines of the poem, Catullus praised Allius' friendship, promised him immortality through this poem, and commented upon the effects that Lesbia's love had upon him:

For you know how much suffering I was dealt
By treacherous Venus, what fire I felt--
Hotter than Sicily's volcano, hotter
Than Cetean Thermopylae's spring water--
How, permanently drizzling, my eyes kept
My cheeks damp, how I wasted, how I wept.62

61Wheeler, Catullus, pp. 171-172.
He ended with a description of the happiness that he had found with Lesbia in their meeting place:

... Love's consummation. Visiting me there,
My white-skinned goddess, tiptoeing, would put
Her bright sole on the smooth-worn threshold, foot
Poised on creaking sandal.63

With that image in mind, he then turned to a comparison of their love to that of Laodamia and Protesilaus. He extended the mythical metaphor even farther, however, and told of Protesilaus' death at Troy:

The Fates had known it all, known he would fall
The instant he attacked the Trojan wall. . . .64

At the mention of Troy, he was reminded of his brother's death on the Trojan plains and subsequently plunged into his theme of sorrow:

'Troy.' Europe and Asia's common gravel
Troy, the untimely pyre of all those brave
Men and their bravery! My brother's grim
Murderer too, for Troy robbed me of him
and him of pleasant daylight—0 brother whom
Our whole house lies buried with in the tomb . . . 65

He retrieved himself from the mood of lamentation by referring to the fruitlessness of the war and the fact that Laodamia lost her husband,

Who was more than breath
Itself to her 'due to' Paris the adulterer . . .
To gloat in bed over his sluttish treasure.66

He followed his description of Laodamia's plight with mythical allusions to Hercules' tasks and his marriage to Hebe and then returned to Laodamia, comparing her love most favorably to that of Lesbia:

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\text{Compared with you even my darling must yield her place,}
\text{Who came so eagerly to my embrace,}
\text{While in his saffron cloak the god of love}
\text{Played round her, shining in her every move,}
\text{Although she's not content with me alone,}
\text{I shan't nag as fools do...} \text{67}
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Upon this reminder of Lesbia's unfaithfulness, Catullus ended his poem as it began, with a promise of immortality to his kind host and a word of thanks for his generosity:

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\text{A joy to you and the one you love.}
\text{God bless the house where she and I found room}
\text{To please ourselves, God bless the man through whom}
\text{We met... And blessed above all of them, God bless}
\text{My darling Lesbia...} \text{68}
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From the perspective of poetic traditions, poem 68 is a mixture. The first section bears little resemblance to earlier poetry and thus is usually considered as strictly Catullan. Like poem 65, it is a prose poem, an epistle in elegiac meter. Judging from the colloquial style of the first part, Ross concluded that it was closer to the epigrams than the majority of Catullus' elegies. \text{69}

\text{67} \text{Catullus, "Poem 68 B," trans. Michie, p. 183.}
\text{68} \text{Catullus, "Poem 68 B," trans. Michie, p. 183.}
\text{69} \text{Ross, Style and Traditions, p. 121.}
In the second section of the poem, however, there are definite traces of earlier poetic traditions. Ellis saw a resemblance to Isocrates. Wheeler attributed the structure of the poem to Pindar or some other Greek poet. Fordyce also observed that the poem followed the practice of the Alexandrian doctrine: romantic allusion to history and legend filled the entire poem, but underneath all the artifice and embellishment, there is a core of intense emotion.

Poem 67 differs from the preceding elegies in two respects: it is very rough in style and it directly appeals to the emotions. In Ellis's summary, "In this poem Catullus takes a retrospective of his passion for Lesbia, and reflecting upon his own fidelity and the now incurable vices of his mistress, resolves to break off the connexion." Concerning the poem's style, Ross felt that this elegy closely resembled Catullus' epigrams. There are many words in it that may be deemed unpoetical. Its closeness in style to the epigram is also evident in his use of elision. He used twenty-seven elisions in twenty-six lines, a far greater number than in any of the other elegies, with the exception of the first forty lines of poem 68.

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70 Ellis, A Commentary, pp. 402-403.
71 Wheeler, Catullus, p. 172.
72 Fordyce, A Commentary, p. 344.
73 Ellis, A Commentary, p. 446.
74 Ross, Style and Tradition, p. 121.
Wheeler concluded that this elegy was in fact an expanded epigram. His evidence came from a similarity of theme and content of the poem with poems 85 and 75. Poem 85 expressed Catullus' essential feelings:

I hate and love. Why I do so, perhaps you ask?
I know not but I feel it and I am in torment.

In poem 75 the poet further expanded upon the same emotion:

To this point is my mind reduced by your fault, my Lesbia and has so ruined itself by its own devotion, That now it can neither wish you well though you should become the best of women, nor cease to love you though do the worst that can be done.

According to Wheeler, Catullus began to ponder his relationship with Lesbia in the epigrams and his reflection brought about poem 76, a subjective erotic elegy:

If a man can take any pleasure in recalling the thoughts of kindness done, when he thinks that he has been a true friend; and that he has not broken sacred faith, nor in any compact has used the majesty of the gods in order to deceive men, then there are many joys in a long life for you, Catullus earned from this thankless love. For whatever kindness man can show to man by word or deed has been said and done by you. All this was entrusted to an ungrateful heart, and is lost: Why do you not settle your mind firmly, and draw back, and cease to be miserable, in despite of the gods? It is difficult to lay aside a long cherished love . . . Ah me! What a lethargy creeps into my inmost joints, and has cast out all joys from my heart! No longer is my prayer, that she should love me in return for that is impossible that she should consent to

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75 Wheeler, *Catullus*, pp. 120-121.
be chaste. I would myself be well again and put away this baleful sickness. O ye gods, grant me this in return for my piety.78

Though it might be inferred from its contents that this poem is solely Roman in its origins, its closeness to the literary prayer, a form developed by the Greeks, prevents such an interpretation. There is no specific mention of a cult or a deity, but the bare outline, the mechanism of such a prayer is apparent in Catullus' appeal to the unnamed gods.79

The other features of the poem are, however, strictly Roman. Notably, Catullus employed the vocabulary of political alliance to provide the central image of the poem. In Rome marriage and friendship meant more than the bonds of love or comradship; it denoted a web of political alliances and social obligations. Such words as "amicitia," "fides," and "foedere" emphasized Catullus' bond with Lesbia. "Amicitia" was not friendship in the modern sense but more akin to our term "alliance." "Fœdus" usually denoted the obligation of alliance, "a league." "Fides" or faithfulness described the bond of a client-patron relationship. In this poem Catullus constructed an image of a rational relationship and reduced it in the withering light of reality. The prayer to the unnamed gods was his last effort to alter his dilemma.80

79 Ross, Style and Tradition, p. 172.
Catullus: A Conclusion

The poetic genius of Catullus has been variously described by scholars, but it is apparent from his use of earlier poets and traditions in his epyllion, epithalamiums, and elegies that the very heart of his achievement lies in his brilliant synthesis of everyday experience and highly technical Greek metrics into a poetry uniquely his own. His poems, whether coldly calculated or richly spontaneous, share the common bond of Catullus' high level of consciousness, his sensitivity to the human dilemma, and his acute awareness of the literary landscape of his day.

However, what may be said of his originality is another matter. Too much has been lost of earlier and contemporary poetry to affirm or negate Catullus' creation of new variations or even new genres. Yet, in a negative sense, his originality can be seen in the fact that he was no slavish imitator of deterministic literary forces. As is the case with nearly all great poets, Catullus used previous traditions much like tools, to aid in increasing the cultural depth and breadth of his poems and to expand the dimensions of language and thought in his country's literature.

Throughout his poems are allusions to earlier myths and a constant use of traditional forms and techniques, but they

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82 Quinn, The Catullan Revolution, p. 4.
are mixed with serious and comic descriptions of Roman life at every level, such new words as "basia," and a far more developed conception of love than is found in any earlier extant Roman poetry. That these and other Catullan innovations brought about lasting changes in Western poetry is seen not only in the poets who closely followed him, but in his Renaissance and post-Renaissance imitators, borrowers and admirers.

The elegists Tibullus, Propertius and Ovid used both his themes and techniques in their works. Just as Catullus wrote of his mistress Lesbia, Tibullus composed poems on Delia and Nemesis, Propertius on Cynthia, and Ovid on Corinna. Though they differed from Catullus in their use of the elegiac couplet, these three poets adopted the earlier poet's techniques, such as those found in his sparrow poems. The most famous example of such indebtedness is Ovid's poem on Corinna's parrot, which is a clear imitation of Catullus' poetry.

Virgil was also a great admirer of Catullus. He read him as a youth and composed several Priapean poems in direct imitation of Catullus. However, Catullus' influence has been seen also in his later work, the Aeneid. The star-crossed love affair between Aeneas and Dido closely resembles

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83 Ellis, A Commentary, p. 19.
84 Wheeler, Catullus, pp. 61-71.
85 Harrington, Catullus, pp. 67-93.
Catullus' rendition of the Theseus and Ariadne myth in his epyllion "The Marriage of Peleus and Thetis" (poem 64). Nonetheless, the most pervasive signs of Catullus' influence are seen in the epigrams of Martial, who considered Catullus his master in that short form. As the literary historian J. Wight Duff commented, "The influence of Catullus... is strongly marked on Martial. In the Spectacula and fourteen other books, out of 1561 epigrams 1235 are in elegiac meter, 238 in hendecasyllables, 77 in choliambic and a few are in iambics and hexameters. It is on Catullus chiefly that the hendecasyllables and choliambics are based."

Though Catullus' influence waned in the Middle Ages, his followers soon multiplied after the rediscovery of the Codex Veronensis. Petrarch, the great humanist, was partly influenced by Catullus in his "Laura Poems," and as the Renaissance crept through northern Italy into France, such poets as Marot, Ronsard, and Baif began imitating and borrowing from him. English poetry too was influenced by Catullus. The earliest signs are in the works of Chaucer, and they continue through the works of such poets as the laureate John Skelton, Thomas Wyatt, Henry Surrey, and Barnaby Googe, and are even seen--though probably only indirectly--in the "Dark Lady" sonnets of Shakespeare.

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87 Harrington, Catullus, p. 80.
89 Harrington, Catullus, pp. 123-218.
In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, there are several additional examples of the poet's influence. Goethe, the most renowned German poet, not only borrowed from Catullus but visited his home, Sirmio, on Lake Garda (Benacus).\(^{90}\) Byron, although he did not visit Sirmio in his travels in Italy (because it was raining heavily when he passed it in his carriage),\(^{91}\) referred to the Roman poet many times in his poetry.\(^{92}\) However, the clearest indication of admiration and imitation comes from the poet Tennyson, who both visited Sirmio\(^{93}\) and commemorated his visit in his poem "Frater Ave Atque Vale":

Row us out from Desenzano, to your Sirmione row!  
So they row'd, and there we landed—"O venusta Sirmiol!"  
There to me thro' 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 wander'd to and fro  
Gazing at the Lydian laughter of the Garda Lake below  
Sweet Catullus's all-but-island, olive-silvery Sirmio!\(^{94}\)

The influence of Catullus, of course, can be seen in the works of many other poets than the ones mentioned, but the

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\(^{92}\)Harrington, Catullus, pp. 197-199.

\(^{93}\)Stoddard, Stoddard's Lectures, XIII, 232.

influence of Catullus is not one of the major questions of Catullan scholarship. The main queries are simply, who was the poet and what were his independent achievements as an artist? Though much is known about him, compared to what we know of his contemporaries, he continues to remain something of an enigma. The time-battered manuscripts of Sappho, Callimachus, and Archilochus, the missing biography written by Suetonius, and the few extant remains of earlier poets and those contemporary with Catullus have, so to speak, bound scholars' hands. The paucity of evidence is the key problem in Catullan scholia; because of it, Catullus will remain the shadowy figure that he is until the sands of Egypt and the hills of Rome reveal more biographical and literary information.
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