INTRODUCTION

LIFE AND BACKGROUND

We know very little for certain about Catullus himself, and most of that has to be extrapolated from his own work, always a risky procedure, and nowadays with the full weight of critical opinion against it (though this is always mutable, and there are signs of change in the air). On the other hand, we know a great deal about the last century of the Roman Republic, in which his short but intense life was spent, and about many of the public figures, both literary and political, whom he counted among his friends and enemies. Like Byron, whom in ways he resembled, he moved in fashionable circles, was radical without being constructively political, and wrote poetry that gives the overwhelming impression of being generated by the public affairs, literary fashions, and aristocratic private scandals of the day.

How far all these were fictionalized in his poetry we shall never know, but that they were pure invention is unlikely in the extreme: what need to make up stories when there was so much splendid material to hand? Obviously we can't take what Catullus writes about Caesar or Mamurra at face value, any more than we can Byron's portraits of George III and Southey in "The Vision of Judgement," or Dryden's of James II and the Duke of Buckingham in "Absalom and Achitophel." Yet it would be hard to deny that in every case the poetic version contained more than a grain of truth. If we treat Catullus's character-gallery of friends, enemies, and lovers (as opposed to his excursions into myth) as creative variations on an underlying basic actuality, we probably won't be too far from the truth.

So, first, dates. St. Jerome records Catullus's birth in Verona under the year 87 B.C.E., and his death in Rome either at the age of thirty or in his thirtieth year, in 57. His age at death is likely to be at least roughly correct: Ovid (*Am.* 3.9.61) also refers to his youth in this connection, and, as Fordyce (1961, ix) reminds us, "the age at which a man died was often recorded on his tombstone." On the other hand,

Jerome's date of 57 is demonstrably mistaken: in poems 11, 12, 29, 45, 55, and 113, Catullus refers to known events which show conclusively that he was alive as late as 54 (Skinner 2003, xx and 186 n. 4; Thomson's arguments [1997, 3–5] for 53/2 remain speculative). Nepos (*Att.* 12.4) notes that Catullus was dead by thirty-two, but gives no indication of the exact date. This has encouraged speculation. The generally accepted, and convincing, solution to this problem is that Jerome or his source confused the year of L. Cornelius Cinna's first consulship (87) with that of his fourth (84), and that Catullus's life can be dated 84–54. This makes him a couple of years older than his great friend and fellow poet, Calvus, and—if we accept the identification of "Lesbia" offered by Apuleius (*Apol.* 10)—ten years younger than his *inamorata* Clodia Metelli. It also makes him the contemporary of Lucretius, Cornelius Gallus, and just about every major protagonist, cultural or political, of Roman society during the fraught years of the late Republic.

Many of these leading figures he knew personally, and we catch tantalizing glimpses of them in his verse. During the winter intervals between his Gallic campaigns, probably from 58/7 onwards, Caesar was a regular guest of Catullus's father in Verona (Suet. *Div. Jul.* 73); the relationship survived Catullus's acidulous attacks (see 29, 54, 57, 93, with notes). This hints at disagreements between father and son; also, unless he had released his son from paternal control by a fictitious bill of sale *(emancipatio)*, Catullus's father still held him *in potestate*, so that Catullus would have been living in Rome on an allowance (Skinner 2003, xxi). That the family entertained Caesar, and (it would appear from 31) owned much if not all of the Sirmio peninsula, indicates very substantial assets.

Catullus's friends and acquaintances are such as we would expect from his background. Asinius Pollio (12), some eight years younger than Catullus, was to become a distinguished Augustan historian, like Quintilius Varus the friend of Virgil and Horace, and the builder of Rome's first public library. Catullus's dedicatee Cornelius Nepos was a prominent biographer. M. Caelius Rufus, quite apart from his role in *l'affaire* Lesbia, was one of Cicero's more entertaining correspondents. L. Calpurnius Piso (28, 47) may have been the original owner of the House of the Papyri in Herculaneum, with its collection of texts by Philodemus. Catullus's close friend Licinius Calvus was a prominent lawyer as well as a poet. The poet's relationship to Cicero remains enigmatic, largely on account of 49: how ironic was he being there? The relentlessly savaged Mamurra (29, 41, 57, 94, 105, 114, 115), labelled by Catullus "The Prick," was Caesar's very efficient chief supply officer in Gaul. How well Catullus knew Pompey is uncertain, but they must have been at least on speaking terms. L. Manlius Torquatus, whose epithalamium (wedding hymn) Catullus wrote,

belonged to one of the oldest and most distinguished families in Rome. The cast of characters in the Catullan corpus may be embellished, but is certainly not invented.

Catullus's own family was provincial and, in all likelihood, equestrian: upper-class but not really aristocratic, well off through business connections but not wealthy by Roman standards, and certainly not part of the intensely political group, with a consular tradition going back several centuries, to which Clodia and her siblings belonged. (She was always a cut above Catullus socially, and at least until 56 had far more political clout.) In 57 Catullus went to Bithynia on the staff of C. Memmius (see 10.28), visiting en route the grave of his prematurely deceased and much-loved brother in the Troad (65, 68a and b, 101). He returned from this attachment in the spring of 56. Shortly before his death (? 54) he seems to have been contemplating another such posting, either with Caesar in Gaul or with the millionaire Crassus on his ill-fated Eastern campaign. Bearing in mind the brief lives of both brothers, the hacking cough to which Catullus seems to have been a martyr (44), his references—not necessarily or exclusively metaphorical—to a chronic and unpleasant malaise (76, ?38), his febrile intensity (50), and, not least, his intense and debilitating erotic preoccupations, it seems distinctly possible that tuberculosis (one of the great silent scourges of antiquity) ran in the family, and was the cause of his death.

The old Chinese curse, "May you live in interesting times," certainly applies to the thirty-odd years of Catullus's existence. His first conscious years witnessed the civil war in Italy that left Sulla as dictator. Spartacus's slave revolt, not to mention the trial of Verres for gross abuse of office in Sicily, took place during his early adolescence. He probably arrived in Rome (which as an adult he regarded as his true home, 68a.33–36) when he was a little over twenty (63 B.C.E.), about the time of the Catilinarian conspiracy suppressed by Cicero. Shortly afterwards came the scandal caused by Clodius Pulcher's gate-crashing the women-only rites of the Bona Dea in Caesar's town house—about the same time as Catullus first made the acquaintance of the gate-crasher's already notorious sister.

In 60 came the formation of the first alliance between Caesar, Pompey, and the millionaire Crassus, and the beginning both of the Civil War (in Asinius Pollio's reasonable view, Hor. *Odes* 2.1.1–2) and of Caesar's inexorable climb to near-absolute power, a progress watched by Catullus and his friends with mounting alarm. (And Catullus had the chance to observe the great man at close quarters: it was now that Caesar's winter visits to the poet's father in Verona took place.) While Caesar campaigned in Gaul, Clodius and Milo organized rival street-gangs in the capital: Catullus's intermittent love-affair with the gangster-tribune's sibling (and reputed bedfellow) could never be really clear of politics.

Despite his protestations, he may not have been entirely sorry to leave for Bithynia in 57; Caelius Rufus had become Clodia's chief lover the year before. However, he dumped her during Catullus's absence abroad. Catullus returned to Rome soon after Caelius's trial, notable for Cicero's lethal exposure of Clodia (who had instigated the charges largely out of pique) to public ridicule of the worst kind. Catullus's own attitude to her seems to have vacillated. The year of his death saw renewed, violent rioting in Rome. One way and another, Britain or Syria may well have looked preferable at the time. *Dis aliter visum:* the gods and, probably, illness decided otherwise. Mulroy's suggestion (2002, xxvii) that Caesar could have had Catullus done away with makes no sense; had this happened, it would have been a scandal more notorious than Ovid's subsequent exile, and would have furnished Caesar's many enemies with some highly damaging propaganda against him, of which there is no trace.

LESBIA/CLODIA

Apuleius (*Apol.* 10) professed to identify, not only Catullus's "Lesbia," but also several other cryptonymic *inamorate* of the Augustan elegists (e.g., the "Cynthia" of Propertius). Where he obtained this information (perhaps from the literary section of Suetonius's *De Viris Illustribus*) is unknown. He claimed that Lesbia's real name was Clodia, but unfortunately failed to say which Clodia. It might, however, be argued that in the context this implied an obvious identification, much as the mention of Salamis in connection with the Greco-Persian Wars does not need a caveat explaining that the reference is not to the city on Cyprus. Certainly this is how it has been taken by most scholars from the Renaissance onwards: the assumption is that Catullus's lover was that notorious aristocratic lady Clodia Metelli, married until 59 to her cousin Q. Metellus Celer (see glossary s.v. Caecilius III), the target of Cicero's scathing and often ribald invective in his speech for Caelius. The cumulative evidence for this identification is in fact a good deal solider than that for many other firmly held beliefs about the ancient world.

The form "Clodia" rather than "Claudia" at once points to Clodia Metelli and her two sisters, who, when their firebrand brother P. Clodius Pulcher was trying to get himself adopted into a plebeian *gens*, likewise "went plebeian" by adopting the "populist" spelling of the family name. (Clodia Metelli was engaged in what Cicero termed a "civil war" against her conservative husband over this move: naturally Metellus opposed it [Cic. *Att.* 2.1.4–5].) The identity of "Lesbius" with Clodius (79 and note), and hence of "Lesbia" with Clodia, is virtually certain. From

68b.145–46, 83, and elsewhere we know that "Lesbia" was still married and living with her husband when her affair with Catullus began. Clodia Metelli's two sisters do not fit the bill: L. Lucullus had divorced one (for adultery) as early as 66/5; Q. Marcius Rex, the husband of the other (known as Tertia, and thus the youngest of the three) was dead before 61.

Moreover, as Quinn says (1972, 135), "the Clodia painted by Cicero in his speech in defence of Caelius is Lesbia to the life." Catullus himself, in that savagely bitter attack, 58 (one of several poems where Caelius is the addressee), speaks of *"our* Lesbia" *(Lesbia nostra)*, the woman who by then had been the lover of both, abandoning one only to be herself discarded by the other. (It is, incidentally, surprising—as Quinn [1972, 142–43] noted—how often scholars have, consciously or unconsciously, assumed, with middle-class romantic *pudeur,* that even a high-living aristocrat like Clodia would only indulge in *one relationship at a time*, that Caelius "replaced" Catullus, or vice versa, even though Catullus himself hints clearly enough at the simultaneity of her affairs, hoping, when depressed, for no more than to lead the pack: 68b.135ª.) She was one of the many things they had in common: his relationship with Caelius was an *odi et amo* one too. And Caelius Rufus did (often an argument against the identification of the character in 69) suffer from gout—in antiquity, because of wine drunk from lead-lined containers, a disease just as liable to affect young men as old (Mulroy 2002, xiv).

The development of a thesis rejecting the identification of Lesbia as Clodia Metelli has been, I suspect, primarily encouraged by attacks on the "biographical fallacy," and by a general determination—whether via "persona theory" (all apparent real-life details to be dismissed as fictional projections involving rhetorical topoi) or through amassing historical, and in particular chronological, objections—to relegate the declared love-life of Roman poets to the safer area of the literary imagination. The first of these techniques can safely be left for readers to adjust with the aid of common sense: the element of truth in it relates to the obvious and well-known fact that any writer, in any age, will embellish and fantasize on the basis of experience, and that this applies to Rome as much as any other society. Further, one of the instantly observable phenomena of Greek and Roman culture is that original invention, out of whole cloth as it were, in both cases came late and with difficulty. The tendency was always—certainly was still in Catullus's day—to work from life. A great deal—too much, I would argue—has been made of Catullus's declaration, in 16, that his poems (daring) bear no relation to his life (simon-pure). He was being attacked for his (often discernible) "feminine" qualities, and was defending himself, rather self-consciously, by making a loud macho noise in the best aggressive

male tradition, determined to pose as a bigger hotshot penetrator than any of them. This strikes me as a rather weak platform on which to build a literary theory.

I am not impressed by the thesis, based on Catullus's metrical treatment of the first two syllables of the hendecasyllabic line (first adumbrated by Skutsch [1969], and well set out by Lee [1990, xxi–xxii]), according to which Catullus started by keeping to a strict spondaic base, but gradually began to admit trochaic and iambic bases as he went on. This depends on the fact that in 2–26 we find only four such resolutions—as many as in the ten lines of 1, the late dedication to Nepos—but in 28–60 no fewer than sixty-three. The trouble here, of course, is that the poems are in no sort of chronological order. Inevitably, efforts have been made to prove the theory by redating some of them to accommodate it, a circular argument which I find less than persuasive. There is also the fact that no poem can *irrefutably* be dated, on internal evidence, earlier than 56, while the fourteen which *are* securely datable all fall within the short period 56–54. Wiseman would like to down-date Catullus's relationship with Lesbia to that period also, which would mean discarding the identification of Lesbia as Clodia Metelli. I suspect this to be one of the theory's main attractions. But as Mulroy has demonstrated (2002, xiv–xvii), Wiseman's claim that 36 (datable to a point after Catullus's return from Bithynia in 56) proves his affair to have begun only in that year doesn't make sense. If "Lesbia" is making a vow in gratitude for Catullus's safe return from abroad, the clear implication is that the relationship had indeed begun *before* his departure.

I therefore accept, in broad outline, what is in fact the old and traditional account of Catullus's famous, intense, and (despite its brief moments of happiness) essentially ill-starred infatuation, together with its long-accepted chronology (with some variations, Schwabe's version [1862, 358–61]; for recent criticisms and corrections see Holzberg 2002, 19–21; Skinner 2003, xix–xxii). His *inamorata* was Clodia, second (?) daughter of Appius Claudius Pulcher, the wife of Q. Metellus Celer. They probably met for the first time in 62/1, during her husband's tour of duty as propraetor of Cisalpine Gaul. Clodia was then about thirty-three. We do not know how long she and Metellus had been married, but it may have been as much as fifteen years (her one child, her daughter Metella, could by then have been nearly nubile). Catullus was probably twenty-two or twenty-three—a good decade younger. Where did the meeting take place? Verona is a possibility. Even if governors' wives normally stayed in Rome, a woman like Clodia made her own rules, and as Caesar later stayed with Catullus's father when *en poste*, it is very likely that Metellus did so too.

On the other hand, we know from Cicero's correspondence that Clodia was in Rome for at least part of her husband's absence in the north: partly because of the

somewhat scandalous reputation she was acquiring, but more specifically because Cicero himself was cultivating her as a useful political go-between. Metellus had taken to Gaul the army allotted to Cicero after his consulship in 63. His brother, Q. Metellus Nepos, was also making trouble for Cicero, who regularly wrote and visited Clodia at this time. (He also appealed to Pompey's wife Mucia.) We know that his main aim was to get Nepos off his back (Cic. *Fam.* 5.2.6), but he probably also found her a valuable source of political gossip. Amusingly, by the time Plutarch came to write his *Life* of Cicero, their relationship had been fantasized into a ploy by Clodia to marry the orator, with Cicero's wife Terentia worried by the frequent visits, and Cicero being driven in self-defense to turn against Clodius at the time of his trial in 61. Since Cicero was not only a good deal more *arriviste* than Catullus, but also a middle-class prude with a professed lack of interest in sex (Wiseman 1985, 43–44), this is improbable, to say the least. But the circumstances make it more than possible that Catullus's own relationship with Clodia began in Rome during this period, before Metellus's return to the capital late in 61. This would make sense of knowing epigrams such as 83 and 92.

It was in 59, as we have seen—nearly two years later—that Caelius made his own play for Clodia's favors. At some point during this period Catullus was also prostrated by the death of his brother, with which neglect by his lover seems in some odd psychological way to have become confused. In 57 he left for Bithynia, returning soon after Caelius's trial in 56 to a temporary reunion solicited (107, 109) by the now much-ridiculed and politically ineffectual (though still wealthy) Clodia. Two years later, after further bitter recriminations (e.g., 72, 75), the lady was forty and the poet was dead. We are left with the memory of a passionate dancer, a brilliant-eyed, intellectually dazzling *femme fatale*, who, if Caelius can be believed—and the remark does have the ring of truth about it—may have been sophisticatedly seductive in the salon, but was a provincial prude in bed (Quintil. 8.6.52). Though the tradition concerning her was, we need not doubt, exaggerated and distorted for political and personal ends, we are not therefore entitled to assume, as some have done, that it amounted to nothing but a collection of stale and stereotyped literary topoi with no basis in reality.

This should not be interpreted as meaning that I have not taken note of, and (I hope) made due allowance for what Maria Wyke well summarizes as the recent tendency to draw attention to "Lesbia's depiction in Catullan poetry as an instance of the instability of Roman concepts of femininity," as well as to "the troubled masculinity of the authorial narrator and its grounding in late republican culture." What we have here are indeed "not women but representations shaped by . . . most fre-

quently, literary texts" (Wyke 2002, 2–3, 36). True enough; but also true as regards just about everything and everybody, male or female, retrieved for our scrutiny from the ancient world. There are no special exceptions.

One last note about the social mores of the case, on which Lyne (1980, chap. 1) is fundamental. By the time of the late Republic, theory and practice, as regards both marriage and extra-marital affairs, had become widely divergent, a problem that was soon to exercise Augustus and his advisers, to Ovid's ultimate discomfort. Theory, based on the ancient *mos maiorum*, the moral code of a nation of simple landowning farmers, regarded a virtuous wife as one who "kept house and span wool" *(domum seruauit, lanam fecit)*, whose skirt covered her ankles, and who showed nothing but her face in public. But—again in theory—Roman law allowed potentially for equality between husband and wife. The relationship, in law, was secular. Divorce, technically, was easy. A wife retained her property—that famous town house on the Palatine belonged to Clodia, not Metellus—and was not required to take her husband's name. In practice, however, marriage among upper-class, and especially among political, families tended to be dynastic, arranged by parental fiat, often when the principals were still children. Political and economic advantage, not passion, formed its guiding principle. Divorce was chiefly handy for the cynical rearrangement of alliances.

Inevitably, this system tended to promote the familiar double standard by which young men sought an outlet for their more unruly passions—and often for intellectual or artistic companionship as well—not in the home (though domestic slaves were always available there), but from the world of call-girls and *demi-mondaines* which, as always, was not slow to spring up in response to a steady demand. At the lowest level, Marcus Cato (second century B.C.E.) approved of youths working off their urges legitimately (but not, of course, too often: moderation in all things) by visits to the local whorehouse (Porph. and Ps.-Acron on Hor. *Sat.* 1.2.31–32). Eastern campaigns from then on imported exotic attractions in the form of Greek-educated musicians, dancers, and high-class literary call-girls whose sexual favors—at a price— were packaged with cultural trimmings, and who often entered into long-term relationships with their clients: Sulla's Nicopolis and Pompey's Flora are nice cases in point (Plut. *Sull.* 2.4, *Pomp.* 2.3–4). They could also wield political power; Cicero gives a startling account of one Chelidon's activities during Verres' praetorship (Cic. *1 Verr.* 104, 135ff.).

How did the legitimate wife, the respectable *materfamilias*, respond to all this? At first, clearly, by taking steps to differentiate herself as far as possible from the socially disreputable *fille de joie* who met those of her husband's demands that she herself had

been brought up to regard as not falling within a decent woman's province. Hence the whorehouse. But when the competition became more sophisticated and intelligent, from the late second century B.C.E. onwards, we can see a very different reaction developing. "As the Hellenizing life of pleasure grew and prospered, some ladies started to want their cut" (Lyne 1980, 13). They became witty and well read; they discovered that they, too, had sexual instincts and needs. When Clodia was in her late teens she had the remarkable example of Sempronia to encourage her. In 77 this scion of the Gracchi, and wife of the consul D. Iunius Brutus, had a reputation as an elegant and learned conversationalist, who could compose poetry as well as discuss it, was a skilled lyre-player and danced, as Sallust put it, "more elegantly than was necessary for a virtuous woman" (Sall. *Cat.* 25). Anything the *demi-mondaines* could do, she could do better. This included sex. She wanted so much of it, Sallust says, that she approached men more often than they did her. The tradition of the smart, adulterous wife was well established by the time Clodia entered the arena.

THE LITERARY CONTEXT

A generation after Catullus, Horace addressed a long literary epistle (*Epist.* 2.1) to Augustus, of which probably the best-remembered apothegm is "Captive Greece captured her fierce conqueror, and brought the arts to rustic Latium" *(Graecia capta ferum uictorem cepit et artis / intulit agresti Latio)*. Elsewhere (*AP* 268–69) he advises the would-be poet to study Greek models day and night. As he makes clear by demeaning it, a strong native mid-Italic tradition in fact already existed: hymns, possibly lays, and especially satire, *ad hominem*, biting, often obscene (*Epist.* 2.1.86–89, 145–55). Indeed, it was not till after the Punic wars, as he admits (i.e., about the mid-second century B.C.E.), that Rome began to take note of "what Sophocles and Thespis and Aeschylus could contribute" (162–63)—about the same time as Greek imports of another sort (see the previous section) were likewise beginning to make inroads on traditional Roman values. But it was Greece, he insists, that primarily dictated both genre and style to subsequent Latin literature. Ennius became the "second Homer" (50ff.), while Livius Andronicus translated the *Odyssey* into Roman Saturnians, lines scoffed at by Horace (158–60) and defined by stress rather than meter: "the King was in his countinghouse, counting out his money" is a rough equivalent. Both Ennius and Livius tried their hands at plays, as did Accius and Pacuvius. Despite the Hellenic inspiration, what emerged tended towards crude nationalistic propaganda. Naevius wrote—again in Saturnians—an epic, the *Carmen Belli Poenici,* on

the First Punic War (264–241 B.C.E.). Ennius's *Annales,* in hexameters, annexed the Trojan War as a charter myth for the origins of the Roman people, thus creating a model for Virgil. Livius's *Odyssey* Romanized its original in many ways, not least in substituting local Latin deities for Homer's Greek ones, an innovation with a long and regrettable history. (It was still going strong, along with the general Latinization of Greek names, as recently as the nineteenth century.) These early literary efforts were already beginning to cause concern before Horace noted how embarrassing in many ways they were to the more sophisticated public of his day.

Nothing, it is safe to say, did more to bring about the fundamental changes in taste which Horace's attitude assumes than the group of poets now known, very loosely, as the Neoterics, who lived and wrote in the mid-first century B.C.E., during the final years of the Republic, and whose best-known and most representative members were perhaps Licinius Calvus (14, 50, 53, 96), Helvius Cinna (10, 95, 113), and Catullus himself. Their reaction to the tradition, sketched above, which they had inherited was a complex one. To begin with, they were all highly erudite and well read —not for nothing did Catullus attract the epithet *doctus*—and virtually bilingual in Greek. In one area, that of satirical epigram, they looked back to their own, old, outspoken native tradition, sharpening it with stylish Greek invective (ψόγος) borrowed from the iambographer Hipponax and his successors. For the most part, however, their Greek models were neither archaic nor classical, but rather the scholar-poets of the Hellenistic mid-third century B.C.E., above all Callimachus. It was from them that the Neoterics acquired their learned allusiveness; their distaste for long, sprawling, pompous and cliché-ridden poetry (epic in particular, which they modified into the shorter, offbeat version known to us as the epyllion, of which 64 is a splendid example); their obsession with brevity, originality, and aptness of phrase; their personal rather than public preoccupation; and their re-examination of traditional myths for unusual (and often pathological or aberrant sexual) features hitherto ignored, in particular as these related to the origins or causes *(aitia)* of traditional customs and practices.

In so doing they also took over some of the social elements implicit in this Hellenistic revolution, of course. It is a nice question to what extent they did so consciously, and how far, if at all, the conditions motivating Ptolemaic court poets— in particular the reversion to authoritarian government, and the disillusion with the heroic ethos generated by an increasing reliance on mercenaries for the conduct of wars—applied to these upper-class Roman intellectuals two centuries later, as they watched the old Republican senatorial regime sliding relentlessly towards a showdown between rival warlords backed by what were becoming, in effect, private

armies. It is in this light that we need to consider such poems of Catullus's as 29, 52, 54, 57, or 93—while at the same time always bearing in mind that, even during the worst of public events, life goes on, often cheerfully enough despite everything, as the greater part of Catullus's collection makes abundantly clear. (Theophrastus's *Characters*, so bubbling over with the minutiae of Athenian daily life and business, was written c. 319, when the city was enduring a Macedonian occupation.) Gossip, dinner parties, love-affairs, literary rivalries, libellous *feuilletons*, passionate moments of self-dramatization: all are here. It is one of Catullus's great skills to make his reader, almost without realizing it, an invisible eavesdropper on this intensely alive social picture of a mere two millennia ago.

It was their older contemporary Cicero who described this group of young poets as "Neoterics" (οἱ νεώτεροι, "the younger ones" or "the innovators"), or "the new poets" *(poetae noui)*. He did not mean the label as a compliment (*Orat.* 161; *Tusc.* 3.45): certainly they never so described themselves. Clearly he thought of them as in some sense a school or a movement (Lyne 1978, 167–68). In 50 he sent Atticus a parody of a Neoteric hexameter, with its heavy spondaic fifth foot (see below, p. ∞∞) involving an obscure quadrisyllabic name (*Att.* 7.2.1). He also referred slightingly to these "praise-singers of Euphorion" for writing off Ennius. Euphorion was a slightly later contemporary of Callimachus, with the same interest in recherché material and stylistic innovation (affected obscurity included), who strongly influenced Catullus's friend Cinna, as the latter's epyllion *Smyrna* suggests (95, with notes). Here was the Alexandrian answer to old-style epic, and Catullus's own *Marriage of Peleus and Thetis* (64, with notes), tells an identical story. It is worth noting that as far as genre and subject matter went, the Neoterics' Alexandrianism was largely confined to the epyllion, or mini-epic, and related forms (i.e., in Catullus's work, essentially the long poems, 61–66 and 68). But the influence of Callimachus (the one such Hellenistic mentor whom Catullus acknowledges by name) in matters of style, diction, erudite allusiveness, and structure (e.g., sophisticated ring composition), is apparent throughout Catullus's work, and clearly also permeated that of his friends, as even their few surviving fragments suggest.

In about 64, Cinna bought the Greek poet Parthenios of Nicaea, who had been captured and enslaved during the Third Mithridatic War, made him his family tutor, and freed him in honor of his formidable literary achievements. (He subsequently became Virgil's Greek tutor [Macrob. *Sat.* 5.17.18].) Parthenios must have been a powerful influence on the group, though in what precise way is still debated. Certainly he was a Callimachean; he also owed something to Euphorion. It is more than likely that he was directly responsible for importing the collected works of both po-

ets to Rome. Perhaps more important for our assessment of Catullus, he took a strong interest in something which left Callimachus himself completely cold (Clausen 1982, 186–87): the celebration of heterosexual love. It is often claimed for Catullus that his intensely personal and uncomfortably acute cycle of poems on and to Lesbia are without precedent in the history of ancient literature. If we possessed Parthenios's three-book hexameter *Encomium* on his wife Arete (as we do his prose summaries of a wide range of exotic love stories culled from past literature, the *Erotika Pathemata*), that judgment might well need modification.

The Lesbia cycle is a natural consequence, if not a direct product, of a steadily more self-regarding and psychologically analytical trend in ancient literature, which we can see developing as early as Euripides, and which acquires nearly pathological dimensions at times among the Alexandrians. A direct line runs from Phaedra and Medea to Lesbia; our trouble lies in lacking too many of the intervening links. This is not to deny for one moment Catullus's original brilliance, merely to try and set it in historical context. Those somewhat clumsy amatory epigrams—plainly Hellenistic in derivation—written a generation or two before the Neoterics by poetasters such as Lutatius Catulus (consul in 102), or the lyric erotica of Laevius (in a variety of meters, with sometimes bizarrely innovative diction), both reveal the on-going influence of Alexandria—exercised through anthologies of epigram such as the *Garland* of Meleager no less than by Callimachus and his epigoni—and demonstrate, by contrast, the measure of Catullus's independent genius in transmuting such material.

It is also surely not a coincidence that Catullus himself and a number of his acquaintances, Cinna, Cornelius Nepos, Furius, Valerius Cato among others, were (like Virgil after them), though Roman citizens—and thus entitled to an equestrian or even a senatorial career—still natives of Cisalpine Gaul, "that remote, self-conscious, and highly developed province" (Fordyce 1961, xix) in what is now northern Italy: a region close enough to Rome to participate in its cultural traditions, yet distant enough to have its own native vocabulary and customs (some of Catullus's words, most famously *basium* for "a kiss," were Cisalpine imports), and to bring a robustly independent attitude to urban literary fashions. Verona in particular, at the junction of two important trade routes, had grown to great prosperity, and had attracted an infusion of highly placed settlers from the south (it is possible that Catullus's family was amongst them). Such immigrants were Janus-like: they looked north for wealth, south for political and social advancement (Wiseman 1985, 108ff.; Thomson 1997, 11), and tended to make their own rules. Skinner (2003, xii) suggests, persuasively, a divisive polarity between Catullus's Roman and Cisalpine selves, with Rome embodying all his poetic individualism, while Verona stood for family responsibilities

and local tradition. On Catullus's "sense that the responsibilities of family and communal life were matters to be taken seriously," see also Wiseman (1987, 370).

But this independence also is in evidence when we look at the way Catullus and his Neoteric friends handled the Alexandrian, and more specifically the Callimachean, tradition which they used to mark themselves off from the post-Ennian traditionalists. The Greek hendecasyllabic line (cf. below, p. ∞∞) was refashioned, in Catullus's and, later, Martial's hands, into a wonderful instrument for light, conversational *vers d'occasion*, reflecting to an uncanny degree the rhythms and casual oral rhetoric of Italian speech. Even in an erudite display of counter-epic principles such as 64, Catullus still remains everywhere in debt to the phraseology, verbal usages, and stylistic habits (such as alliteration) of the tradition he is so aggressively rejecting (cf. Fordyce 1961, xxi): what he concentrates on is the avoidance, at all costs, of long-windedness, heroic platitudes, and predictable mythic narrative. Homer (as Callimachus had seen) was supreme and inimitable; but the Homeric age had long ago vanished, and what had to be eradicated were the feeble and anachronistic efforts of Homer's latter-day imitators to revive it artificially.

The process of assimilation and recreation was a complex one, and I have here only touched on some of its salient points. To explore it further, and get a sense of an ancient literary movement in action, complete with feuds, manifestos, and polemic, the reader should turn to Catullus's own poems, in all their kaleidoscopic variety, aided by the material available in the glossary and explanatory notes. Beyond these, again, lies the world of scholarship and literary theory, both of which have been busy with Catullus's slim volume of poetry at least since the Renaissance, and which I have made accessible, via the bibliography, to anyone eager to pursue this aspect of the Catullan phenomenon further. What follows in the next section is the briefest possible account of Catullus's textual transmission, and the vicissitudes of interpretation he has undergone down the centuries—what Germans pithily label *Rezeptionsgeschichte*—for those who lack the time or inclination to embark on what can seem an endless, and often maddening, quest: "that imbroglio of problems," as Sir Ronald Syme once wrote (*C&M* 17 [1956], 131, cited by Quinn 1970, xii), "where dogma and ingenuity have their habitation, where argument moves in circles, and no new passage is in or out."

THE TEXT: ARRANGEMENT AND TRANSMISSION

In the period immediately following his death, Catullus's literary impact was enormous, and it is clear that he and Calvus (with whom he is almost invariably brack-

eted by ancient writers) were regarded as the best of the Neoterics (Fordyce 1961, xxii ff.; for those with Latin, Wiseman 1985, 246–62 offers an exhaustive appendix of all references to Catullus in ancient authors). Both Virgil and Horace show his influence again and again. Virgil picks up lines and uses them with only minimal changes: a nice example is Ariadne's dream of a happy marriage at 64.141—*sed conubia laeta, sed optatos hymenaeos*—which reappears in the *Aeneid* (4.316) as part of Dido's tirade, in not dissimilar circumstances, addressed to the departing Aeneas: *per conubia nostra, per inceptos hymenaeos*. Horace alludes contemptuously (*Sat.* 1.10.18–19) to "the ape whose only achievement is parroting Calvus and Catullus," but nevertheless proves adept at the game himself: his "sweetly laughing" *(dulce ridentem)* Lalage (*Odes* 1.22.23) comes straight from Catullus's Lesbia (51.5). Our great predecessors, as T. S. Eliot well knew, help those who help themselves. The surest mark of familiarity is parody: someone up in the Province seized on 4, Catullus's tribute to his cutter, and turned it into a very funny take-off (Ps.-Virg. *Cat.* 10) attacking an ex-muleteer with pretensions.

By the first century C.E., the chief interest in Catullus's poetry had become concentrated on the "polymetric" group, in particular on his light and witty hendecasyllables, though for Quintilian it was 84 and the over-aspirated Arrius which won most admiration (a *nobile epigramma*, he called it, *Inst. Orat.* 1.5.20). Martial, whose ideal was to rank second after Catullus (7.99, 10.78.14–16), and for whom Verona owed as much to Catullus as Mantua did to Virgil (14.195: no mean tribute), especially fancied 2, 3, 5, and 7, the kiss and sparrow poems, thus setting a fashion that is still with us today. "Give me kisses," he said, "but let them be Catullan: / If they turn out as many as he reckoned / I'll present you with the *Sparrow* of Catullus" (11.6.14–16). The double entendre is clear: was it borrowed? (see note to 2). Certainly Martial used Catullus as a precedent for outspokenness (1 *epist* 10–13). By way of contrast, he imposed a stricter spondaic rule (cf. p. ∞) on the opening foot of the hendecasyllabic line. Indeed the elder Pliny, in the dedicatory epistle of his *Natural History* to Vespasian, citing 1.3–4 of Catullus's own dedication to Nepos, actually rearranged the wording of line 3 (writing *nugas esse aliquid meas putare* rather than *meas esse aliquid putare nugas*), in order, as he put it, to avoid the "somewhat harsh" *(duriusculum)* Catullan usage.

This popularity was not to last. It persisted into the second century—it was, of course, Apuleius to whom we owe the identification of Lesbia as Clodia Metelli—but thereafter the evidence rapidly dries up. Catullus was not, for obvious reasons, a school author; the "thirty headmasters and headmistresses" on whose solemn ad-

vice Fordyce's publishers persuaded him to omit no fewer than thirty-two poems in 1961 (Thomson 1997, 59 n. 79) can be seen as the epigoni of a well-established tradition. Even as early as Aulus Gellius's lifetime (born c. 125 C.E.), Catullus's text was in difficulties (Aul. Gell. 6.20.6 on 27.4; cf. Fordyce 1961, 158–59; Holford-Strevens 1988, 138). We are witnessing here the early stages of that disintegrating process so brilliantly described by Tom Stoppard in *The Invention of Love* (24–25):

> [A]nyone with a secretary knows that what Catullus really wrote was already corrupt by the time it was copied twice, which was about the time of the first Roman invasion of Britain: and the earliest copy that has come down to *us* was written about 1,500 years after that. Think of all those secretaries!—corruption breeding corruption from papyrus to papyrus, and from the last disintegrating scrolls to the first new-fangled parchment books, with a thousand years of copying-out still to come, running the gauntlet of changing forms of script and spelling, and absence of punctuation—not to mention mildew and rats and fire and flood and Christian disapproval to the brink of extinction as what Catullus really wrote passed from scribe to scribe, this one drunk, that one sleepy, another without scruple, and of those sober, wide-awake and scrupulous, some ignorant of Latin and some, even worse, fancying themselves better Latinists than Catullus—until!—finally and at long last—mangled and tattered like a dog that has fought its way home, there falls across the threshold of the Italian Renaissance the sole surviving witness to thirty generations of carelessness and stupidity: the *Verona Codex* of Catullus; which was almost immediately lost again, but not before being copied with one last opportunity for error. And there you have the foundation of the poems of Catullus as they went to the printer for the first time, in Venice 400 years ago.

There are occasional sightings during the Dark Ages. Catullus's epithalamium 62 shows up in a ninth century anthology, the *Codex Thuaneus (T)*, and thus becomes our oldest surviving text. About the same time, there are echoes of Catullus in verses by a monk of Brescia, Hildemar. A century later, in 965, Bishop Rather of Verona refers to his perusal of the "previously unread Catullus" (Fordyce 1961, xxvi). It has been conjectured that this was the one manscript (now known as *V,* the *Codex Veronensis*) which, unknown for the next three hundred years, mysteriously and briefly, resurfaced c. 1290, again in Verona (under a barrel, if we can trust an epigram attached to the text) , only to be lost again, seemingly for ever, but not before a copy, *A,* had been made of it. *A,* too, was lost; but it was copied twice before vanishing, and one of these copies, *O,* the *Codex Oxoniensis* or "Oxford MS," made c. 1370, survives in the Bodleian Library at Oxford. The second copy, *X,* owned by

Petrarch and also now lost, was itself copied twice. These copies—*G*, the *Codex Sangermanensis* of 1375, and *R*, the *Codex Vaticanus Ottobonianus*, also fourteenth century—survive, and with *O* form the basis of our modern texts. (*T* and *V* are close enough to posit a common source.) Stoppard's rhetorical strictures are all too well justified; Goold (1989, 11) calculated that *V* contained at least a thousand scribal errors. But he also pays an amply justified tribute to the "enthusiasm and genius" of Italian Renaissance scholarship, which eliminated nearly seven hundred of them. By today, as he says, "we are approaching the limit of what we can hope to accomplish" (13). But as he admits, "in the matter of interpretation there is no end."

This is particularly true when we come to consider the vexed problem of the poems' ordering and arrangement. What we have, in our surviving manuscripts, is a rough categorization by meter and genre: (a) the "polymetrics," 1–60; (b) the somewhat mixed bag of the long poems 61–68, though 65–68 are in elegiacs, and must (see below) belong rather with (c), the elegies and epigrams (69–116). Such an arrangement is characteristic of the methods employed by Hellenistic scholars in Alexandria; it also reminds us of the standard edition of the satirist Lucilius in antiquity (Rudd 1986, 82), similarly arranged by meter and also, as it happens, in three books (papyrus rolls). It certainly dislocates anything we know about the chronology of individual poems. Was this deliberate or accidental? Above all, to what extent, if at all, does the sequence as it has come down to us represent Catullus's own choice? He died young: did he anticipate his own death? If, as I believe (above, p. 000), he was consumptive, and knew it, nevertheless in the last year of his life he would seem to have been planning another semi-official trip abroad as part of a governor's staff (see note to 11), and may well have died suddenly and unexpectedly, leaving much unfinished business behind. (This would cast doubts on Skinner's thesis [2003, xiii] that the elegiac *libellus* might have been "released to the public after Catullus's return to Verona, as a valedictory to his public and a retrospective pronouncement upon his completed body of work.") The dedicatory verses to Cornelius Nepos (1) would appear—though this has been challenged—to apply to the polymetric collection only (1–60), known in antiquity as "Catullus's *Passer* [Sparrow]" (Mart. 4.14.13–14; Skinner 1981), but we cannot even be certain that it included all of them; some were *vers d'occasion* which could have been assembled by a posthumous editor, and 58b, similarly, looks very much like an unfinished scrap harvested from the poet's papers after his death.

As Wray (2001, 53) rightly says, this "Catullan question" is "still with us and not likely to disappear soon." Earlier advocates of overall authorial disposition include that major dogmatist Wilamowitz (Quinn 1972, 284 n. 12); recent supporters range

from Wiseman (1969, revised 1979) by way of Quinn (1972), Most (1981), Skinner (1988), Lee (1990), Martin (1992) to Dettmer (1997), whose study is by far the most thoroughgoing and elaborate to date. The most commonly advanced argument involves perceived significant correspondence (what German scholars so vividly term *Einklang*) between anything from individual words to lines, themes, concepts, whole poems, or even groups of poems, the symmetry being created by either ring composition or chiasmus (earlier and later elements balanced in the first, interlocking like an *X* in the second). A variant on this is the "triplet argument," noting cases where a pair of poems consonant in tone sandwich a violently contrasting one (see Jocelyn 1999 on 10–12 for a striking example), the argument being that only the poet himself could or would make such an arrangement. There is also the metrical argument referred to above (see p. 000), according to which Catullus relaxed his strictness over the first foot of his hendecasyllables as he went on, so that 27–58 and 1 are demonstrably later than 2–26. Quinn (1972, 16) even gets round the presence of evident fragments in the corpus by the highly modernist argument that the "illusion of work unfinished" could have been deliberate.

None of these claims, most of which remain, by the nature of the evidence, necessarily subjective, can be regarded as irrefutable. On the other hand, they have cumulatively succeeded in establishing the sensible position that Catullus was responsible for organizing at least *some* of his collected work before his death. Perhaps their most useful achievement is to make us consider (Skinner 2003, xxvi) "the visual and tactile experience of manipulating an ancient scroll and its effect upon cognitive apprehension of the emerging content." But how far this "would have created and sustained a linear dimension against which temporal reversions and fluctuations played in counterpoint" is debatable. Few would now argue (I certainly would not) for a posthumous editor sorting out an inchoate mass of material virtually from scratch. What is more, such evidence as there is points clearly to the polymetric group, 1–60, as most unambiguously displaying signs of authorial control and pattern making. As Thomson shrewdly remarks (1997, 6), the further one proceeds beyond this point, the less persuasive the theories become (see, e.g., Martin 1992, 36, for the supposed chiastic symmetry of 61–68) , inducing in the reader a "feeling of *decrescendo*," ending, for some, in pure chaos. The more elaborate patterns invariably demand some rearrangement or textual emendation; they also (as Quinn 1972, 9 conceded) "require an interest in puzzle-solving that no sensible poet expects of his readers." Thus what has emerged is a counter-theory claiming no more than partial arrangement by Catullus himself (generally restricted to all or some of the polymetrics), plus posthumous editorial work. Ellis (1876, 1–3) and Wheeler in

the first of his Sather Lectures (1934, 4–32) were followed by (among others) Fordyce (1961, 409–10), Giardina (1974), Clausen (1976 and 1982, 193–97), Skinner (1981), Hubbard (1983), Goold (1989) and Thomson (1997, 6–11). With this group I find myself in substantial agreement. The Alexandrian aesthetic notion of *poikilia*, seemingly haphazard *variatio*, can only explain just so much.

Among the more substantial and useful arguments raised, one of the most help-ful is the idea that the archetype, *V*, derived ultimately from three separate *libelli*, put together at a time, probably not before the second century C.E., when the pa-pyrus roll was being replaced by the vellum codex, the ancestor of the modern book (Fordyce 1961, 410; Thomson 1997, 6–8). These *libelli* will have been (a) 1–60 (848 lines), (b) 61–64 (795 lines), and (c) 65–116 (646 lines). It is possible that they were labelled *hendecasyllabi*, *epithalamia*, and *epigrammata* respectively. While no one would deny that Catullus shows a passion for *internal* "structure and the com-plex interplay of symmetry and asymmetry" (Wray 2001, 53), how far he can be held, given his premature death, to have applied that passion *externally*, to the col-lection as a whole, must remain in serious doubt—though one regularly applied ar-gument, that at 2,400-odd lines the Catullan corpus is too long for a single roll, has been convincingly challenged by modern paleographers (evidence collected by Skin-ner 2003, 187 n. 14). The heterogeneity and kaleidoscopic diversity of arrangement can be paralleled in no other Latin author.

Even in the polymetric collection it has been argued, with some plausibility, that 54, 55, 58b, and 60 are more likely to have been added by a posthumous editor than to have formed part of the original "Sparrow" collection dedicated to Nepos. It is, interestingly, a theoretical literary critic who has the last word here (though conceivably not quite in the way she meant), pointing out that "the poems offer just enough similarity to suggest patterns, and just enough anomaly to refuse any definite pattern" (Janan 1994, 143). She goes on, "The corpus lacks definitive context or de-tails that clearly indicate a dominant order; whatever order there is to be, *we, the readers, must provide it*" (my emphasis). Precisely. In today's critical climate, as Skin-ner concedes (2003, xxvii), "interpretive premises can be classified as heuristic fictions, textual meanings be proclaimed dizzyingly indeterminate, discursive clo-sure thought an impossibility, and the death of the author kept from his poems only through a conspiracy of silence."

In the next section I sketch, briefly, how those readers have read and reacted to Catullus's poetry since the Renaissance.

The brief surfacing of *V,* and its dissemination through *O, G,* and *R,* marked the end of Catullus's long flirtation with near-total oblivion. During the century between then and the first printed edition of 1472 (which also included the texts of Tibullus, Propertius, and the *Silvae* of Statius), manuscripts multiplied at the average rate of one a year. During this time various Italian humanists removed over four hundred of the more egregious textual errors that had accumulated during the collection's journey from antiquity through the Dark and Middle Ages. But it was with the advent of printing that Catullus's fame really took off; as Goold says (1989, 13), "The last five centuries have responded to him a good deal more than did ancient Rome."

This is significant. Catullus's is one of those classical texts that reached us, not by way of use in schools (which ensured regular copying, and was predicated on orthodoxy), but by luck and accident, through the back door. It thus joins such works as Petronius's *Satyricon,* or those puzzling extracanonical plays of Euripides (with Greek titles initially ranging between *E* and *I*), still with us today because just one volume of a collected edition happened to survive against odds. What unites all these survivals is their oddness, their unpredictability, their deviation from the norm—which suggests that if our literary heritage from the ancient world were more complete, our view of it might be radically different. Catullus in his own day was always a *recherché* taste: despite his cheerful obscenities, the walls of Pompeii and Herculaneum—so rich in other poetic tags, infallible indexes of literary popularity—have not yet yielded a single Catullan quotation.

Thus Catullus's true fame has been entirely posthumous, and this at once raises the question of how far, and in what ways, subsequent generations—as invariably happens—have reinvented him in their own image. Wray (2001, 3) argues, I think rightly, that the process has already begun in the Latin biographical notice composed in Venice for Wendelin von Speyer's 1472 *editio princeps* by a humanist hack with the enchanting name (Gaisser 1993, 26) of Geralamo Squarzafico:

> Valerius Catullus, lyric writer, was born at Verona during the 163rd *[sic]* Olympiad, the year before the birth of Sallustius Crispus [i.e., 87 B.C.E.], in the terrible times of Marius and Sulla, on the day that Plotinus *[sic]* first began the teaching of Latin rhetoric in Rome. He loved an aristocratic girl *[puellam primariam]*, Clodia, whom he calls Lesbia in his poetry. He was somewhat lascivious *[lasciviusculus]*. During his lifetime he had few equals in metrical expression *[frenata oratione]*, and none who were superior. He showed especial charm in his light verse, but considerable gravity on serious

topics. He wrote love poems, and an epithalamium for Manlius. He died at Rome in his 30th year, and there was public mourning at his funeral.

There are obvious careless slips (the 163rd Olympiad for the 173rd, CLXIII rather than CLXXIII, and Plotinus for Plotius), while the detail about public grief at his funeral, otherwise unattested, might (if not just an imaginative addition) have been drawn from a Paduan manuscript, afterwards lost, of Suetonius's *De Poetis* (Wiseman 1985, 208). But the rest is lifted straight from St. Jerome's version of Eusebius's *Chronicle* (which it echoes verbally), reinforced with Apuleius's identification of Lesbia and judgments based on the poems themselves. What is striking is the germ of the modern Catullus we already glimpse here: Wray (2001, 4) hardly exaggerates when he speaks of "'our Catullus', intact and entire, 'biographical fallacy and all': life privileged over work, and the Lesbia poems . . . over the rest of the collection." Less than a century later (1552), Marc-Antoine de Muret, Montaigne's tutor, identified Lesbia as the sister of P. Clodius Pulcher. All the modern ingredients were thus already in place.

In a sense this is not surprising. Catullus's life and work, like those of all his contemporaries in the late Republic, *were* inextricably intertwined, and it would never have occurred to him to think otherwise—any more than he would refrain from embroidering the truth when dealing with the personal relationships which fill his pages. (Compare the instructive case of Byron.) The Lesbia poems *do* excite our biographical interest, and only a dishonest casuist would pretend otherwise. Yet for three centuries and more, the main result of Catullus's rediscovery was not the "Lesbia story" as such, which aroused virtually no interest, but rather the pilfering of his corpus (whether through translation or simple borrowings, sometimes hard to distinguish) by an extraordinarily wide range of poets. To look no further than the English-speaking world, these ranged from Wyatt to Walter Savage Landor, from Herrick to Swift, from Ben Jonson to Pope. All, it is worth noting (for reasons to be discussed later), have no interest whatsoever in conveying the *unfamiliarity* of this Roman poet (thus, it might be argued, confirming Janan's dictum, p. ooo), but blithely transpose Catullus's themes, diction, and metrics wholeheartedly into those of their own day.

John Skelton, about 1505, took the two short sparrow poems (2 and 3), and turned them into a 1382-line extravaganza, the "Lament for Philip Sparrow," framed by the Catholic Mass for the Dead. The seventeenth century had a field day with the more light-hearted love poems: 5 was tackled by, among others, Crashaw, Thomas Campion, and Ben Jonson, who also tried his hand at 7; countless kisses were back in

fashion with a vengeance, and no longer a sign of effeminacy (cf. 16 and note). But their addressee remained simply a name, and the name (perhaps because of its less than decorous associations) was not even a popular one (Wiseman 1985, 212). Phyllis, Chloris and Celia became all the rage with these poets. Abraham Cowley (whose titles, ranging from "Inconstancy" to "Love's Ingratitude" show an amorous depression almost as intense as Catullus's own) tackled 45, setting Acme at Septimius in jaunty rhyme: "Twice (and twice would scarce suffice) / She kist his drunken, rowling eyes . . . " (Poole and Maule, 1995, 271–72). The Augustan age which followed shows a shift in interest. Nicholas Amhurst's replacement for Lesbia, Cloe *(sic)*, in his imitation of 58, "turns up to ev'ry puppy in the town / and claps the *Temple* rake for half a crown." Pope borrowed a good deal more than the idea from 66 for his famous *jeu d'esprit*, "The Rape of the Lock," while in 1798 poem 45 was recast as a slashing, and very funny, anti-Whig parody which would have delighted the author of 29 and 57 (Poole and Maule 272–73). Romantic sex was out; politics, satire, and literary artifice were in.

Like all literary fashions, this one too was transient, a symptom merely of the society that produced it. By the close of the eighteenth century, populist nationalism was in the air; revolutions in France, America and Greece encouraged Promethean dreams of tyrannicide, subversion of authority, aspirations towards freedom. Old and new merged giddily in Byron, the quintessential rebel aristocrat, who combined Augustan wit, Gothic romanticism, radical politics, and a large appetite for forbidden fruits, mostly sexual. After several centuries of unquestioned dominance, Roman imperial authority was out, and—largely as a result of George Grote's hugely influential, and Whiggish, *History of Greece*—Athenian democracy, long spurned by Tory oligarchs as disruptive of all proper institutions, was very much in. The new fashion in literature was, not surprisingly, for high romanticism, from Keats, Shelley, and Coleridge on down to Tennyson. It followed that those Roman authors who were subversive, individualistic, antiauthoritarian, and (in the widest sense) romantic would now achieve the greatest, the most fashionable, popularity.

Who, one might ask, better fulfilled these conditions than the passionate young poet from Verona, whose soul-searching was of a sort with which romantics born two millennia later could (or felt they could) identify, whose life and work were defined by his ill-starred *grande passion* for a scornful aristocratic *femme fatale*, and who died, tragically young, possibly of what was coming to be viewed as the romantic disease *par excellence?* A nice hint of what was in the air can be gained from the youthful poems of W. S. Landor, published just after the French Revolution, in which he remarks on Rome's luck in having had a poet like Catullus to offset her

"Caesars and civil wars." Landor's "rebellious republicanism" (Wiseman 1985, 213) found a kindred spirit in Catullus. On the other hand, his very typical middle-class *pudeur* (another new characteristic of the age that marked a change from the Augustans and Byron) had a lot of trouble with Catullus's obscenity (Fitzgerald 1995, 60), a difficulty that was to continue throughout the nineteenth century and for the greater part of the twentieth, though in the end this fashion, too, proved itself transient. (I am reminded of all the pundits who during this period assured us, with great confidence and solemnity, that certain passages in Pepys's *Diary* could never, ever, be published.) Tennyson's "tenderest of Roman poets" was as much the product of selectivity, tacit censorship, and *parti pris* argument as any other version.

Catullus's evolution also depended to a very great degree (Wiseman 1985, 217–18, Wray 2001, 2, 18) on the new scholarship developed in Germany by Karl Lachmann and others during the nineteenth century, which not only put textual criticism on a scientific basis but revolutionized the study of ancient history, making it possible, as Wiseman says, "to reconstruct periods like the late Republic with a degree of sophistication hitherto unattempted." Swinburne (and Landor later in life) had picked on 63, the terrible Attis poem, as significant for the new age (an early hint here of *fin de siècle* perversion), while for Tennyson (not least in his *In Memoriam* mood) what mattered was the ultrafraternal passion of loss expressed by 101; but there can be little doubt that what chiefly shaped the course of public reaction to Catullus for over a century was the careful reconstruction of his biography, and *grande affaire*, by Ludwig Schwabe in *Quaestiones Catullianae* (1862), in particular the long section, "De Amoribus Catulli" (53–157), and the chronological table (358–61) embodying his findings.

Schwabe's central assumptions—that "Lesbia" was Clodia Metelli, and that her relationship with Catullus began in the late 60s—have come under sustained attack, from Wiseman and others. However, reexamination of the evidence, together with the findings of recent research (e.g., Mulroy 2002, xi ff.), has convinced me that in essence Schwabe was right, even if overdetailed schematization such as that of Stoessl (1977, modified 1983) remains untenable. I also suspect that a great deal of the impetus against Schwabe's construction (which in fact was better documented than many propositions in ancient history that have gone unchallenged) is due to an ingrained academic distaste (cf. Yale classicists' reactions to Erich Segal's fiction) for what that construction presents—a highly personal, and undeniably romantic, love story. The so-called biographical fallacy was called into being as a badly needed corrective for the various excesses of ad hominem biographical interpretations, sentimental, moralizing, or anachronistic (Wiseman 1985, 218ff., has some awful, and

hilarious, examples) which tended to hold the field for about a century from 1870. The mistake—now in process of adjustment—was to confuse excess with definitional error, a process only encouraged by the general current trend that seeks to cut literature free from life altogether, and treat it as a self-generated exercise in the rhetoric of the imagination. This fashion, too, will pass.

It has become virtually *de rigueur* to bring in Yeats's famous poem, "The Scholars," when attempting to update Catullus for the modern era. Yeats dramatized the contrast between a young, love-sick poet and the bald, otherworldly, shuffling, elderly academics who presumed to judge and explain him ("Lord, what would they say / did their Catullus walk that way?"); his picture satirizes the appropriation of the passionate by the sexless. That was in 1919, when poets of the modernist movement, such as Pound, were beginning to turn their attention to the Roman elegists, and of course part of Yeats's satire is aimed at the middle-class, professional prudishness that still insisted on bowdlerizing Catullus's relatively mild obscenities. Amusingly, after half a century's complete freedom of expression (which translators exploited with sometimes misleadingly excessive gusto), scholars who tackle this aspect of Catullus's work (Fitzgerald 1995, 59–86 is a nice example) tend to exaggerate its importance, and betray their own residual embarrassment, by treating it with a portentous technical solemnity quite alien to the culture that produced it. It is, in fact, a characteristic upper-class Mediterranean phenomenon, exploited with aggressive and youthful panache, and singular only in its oral obsession. It shocked people like Cicero, and was meant to. Since Yeats's scholars shared many of Cicero's bourgeois pretensions, Catullus would probably be tickled to find that he had shocked them too. Personally, I rather enjoy it, and (I hope) in the same casual way that it was thrown off. With luck, that reaction will come through in my translation.

Both Wiseman (1985) and Wray (2001), the second in particular, provide an excellent survey of those changes in the academic reception of Catullus that have, over the past half century, steered Catullan criticism away from the personal, biographical concept of a romantic lyric poet ("rather like Keats in a toga," as one friend remarked to me), first to the modernist—but still essentially neo-Romantic—version pioneered by Kenneth Quinn (1959), and thereafter to the possibility of what Wray terms a "postmodern Catullus" (Wray 2001, 36ff.). Fascinating though I find this transitional process, and however skillfully it is deployed (Wray's analysis is a brilliant *tour de force*), it is not my concern here. What it reveals is, simply put, the latest of a series of cultural appropriations, earlier examples of which I have tried to sketch here as a way of placing Catullus in perspective against his historical *Nachleben*. The process is not one (as it is sometimes made out) of working towards a

final true perception of Catullus, which involves rejecting all past theories as erroneous, but rather a hit-and-miss series of partial insights that light up now one, now another aspect of their subject, and in so doing emphasize its, his, in every sense classical complexity, depth, and variety. Far from hoping to present my readers with a new, and compelling, *appropriation* of Catullus, I want to set out this profoundly alien ancient poet, as far as I can, without modern accruals—with just historical background information, and a single step from English to Latin text—and let the reader make up his or her own mind. I am under no delusion that I have entirely escaped the appropriation process myself—an impossible endeavor—but at least I have striven to do so to the very best of my ability.

TRANSLATION AND ITS PROBLEMS

Appropriation brings me to the problem of translation, since this, historically considered, presents endless examples of appropriation in its most naked and unmistakable form. I have set out my general conclusions on this topic elsewhere (Green 1960, 1987, 1989) and do not need to repeat them here. But some points are worth stressing. To look no further than the English-speaking world, translations not only of Catullus but of all classical poets, Greek or Roman, have, from the Renaissance on (see Bolgar 1954, app. 2, 506–41, for a pre-1600 checklist) regularly evoked the idiom, verse forms, social prejudices, and moral flavor of the age translating them rather than those of their originals. In the preface on translation prefixed to his *Second Miscellany,* Dryden (Saintsbury ed., 1685, 281–82)—picking up an earlier suggestion of Denham's—justified his extensive anglicization of whatever ancient poet he tackled on the grounds that "my own [version] is of a piece with his, and that *if he were living, and an Englishman,* they are such as he would probably have written" (my emphasis). In the dedication to his *Aeneid* (1697), he repeated the principle. This encouraging license will explain just about everything, from Herrick's rhyming quatrains by way of Pope's stopped couplets to Jack Lindsay's 1929 version of 63, the Attis poem, in the stanza form employed by Swinburne for *Dolores.* Leaf through the *Oxford Book of Greek Verse in Translation* (1938), and you will find Ibycus done in the even more idiosyncratic stanza used by Andrew Marvell for his "Ode on the return of Cromwell from Ireland," and a truly bizarre *Odyssey,* by J. W. Mackail, entirely in the AABA quatrains best known from Edward Fitzgerald's *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam.*

Dryden's formula, and the various examples of homegrown pastiche to which it

gave some sort of theoretical sanction, at once raise the crucial question of just who the putative readers might be that these versions were supposedly aimed at: of why, in the last resort, the translations were being made at all. As early as the Elizabethan age, Roger Ascham in *The Scholemaster* (1568/70) conceded that "even the best translation is for mere necessitie but an evill imped wing to flie withall, or a hevie stompe leg of wood to go withall." In other words, a *pis aller* for those unable to read Latin or Greek. Yet the vast majority of translations (and this is as true of Catullus as of any other ancient author) seem aimed at convincing the reader, against all the evidence, that he is dealing with a range of comforting native familiarities. Why? One major reason is surely the fact that, from the Renaissance to comparatively recent times, literary (as opposed to informational) translations have almost always had as their target other scholars and men of letters *who knew the original language*, and who would thus appreciate elegant pastiche.

This trend was constantly encouraged and enhanced by the educational practice of having students turn, say, Shakespearian soliloquies into Sophoclean-style Greek iambics, or Herrick and Crashaw into the light elegiac couplets perfected by Ovid. Granted such a discipline, the converse process would seem only logical. When, in 1966, Peter Whigham produced a version of 63 that reads like one of Pound's earlier *Cantos*, he was, *mutatis mutandis*, operating in the same centuries-old, restricted-access tradition (for his arguments in favor of this see Radice-Reynolds 1987, 216ff.). Opposition existed—for example, in 1856 F. W. Newman argued that the translator should attempt "to retain every peculiarity of the original so far as he is able, with the greater care, the more foreign it may happen to be" (cited by Savory 1968, 65)—but found, as always, few supporters. Today, however, Ascham's warning, so long neglected, is more apposite than ever: translations now are almost entirely for those who lack the original, so that the translator, like it or not—and many, anxious to show off their native skills, don't—bears an extra responsibility for conveying both the sense and the form of that original, however alien, to the very best of his or her ability.

As most translators are only too well aware, this, in poetry especially, is an uphill struggle all the way. But the impossibility of achieving perfection in such a task cannot serve as an excuse for abandoning it altogether. We may ultimately be reduced to compromise "equivalents" in most areas, but that is where we should end, not (see most recently Mulroy 2002, xxxiii ff.) the point from which we begin—an option which, however tempting for those after an easy fix, is in essence no more than a dilution of the Dryden principle. It is surprising how often scholars and translators back away from the challenge simply on account of its perceived difficulties.

When Patrick Wilkinson complained that there was no easy way of reproducing the Alcaic stanza in English, he evoked a stinging rebuke from J. B. Leishman (1956, 53; cf. Green 1960, 190) which is well worth repeating here:

> There certainly is not, for it was by no easy way that Horace produced it; nevertheless, I am convinced that no translator can hope to achieve even moderate success unless he attempts to reproduce it as closely as his language will permit, and refuses to deceive himself and others with vain notions of being able to invent 'some stanza that recalls the movement of the original'. For his business is not to 'recall' its movement to those who already know the original, and do not require to have it recalled, but to communicate it to those who cannot read the original for themselves . . . And I will insist that the syllabic pattern of the lines . . . can be reproduced exactly, and the movement of them very much more closely than has commonly (and, perhaps I may add, lazily) been supposed.

That has always been my guiding principle and inspiration throughout a long, sometimes frustrating, but always exhilarating run-in with the Catullan collection.

The temptation to pastiche (not least for a classicist!) is, of course, more than understandable. To convey the subtleties of meaning presents a tough enough challenge in itself. To find adequate parallel idioms is still harder: an alien tongue produces alien thought patterns. *L'esprit de l'escalier* is not the spirit of the staircase, and a Greek who announces *"perà vréchei"* wants you to know, not that "It's raining over there," but that *he's* all right, Jack, and couldn't care less. Moreover words, as T. S. Eliot knew too well, "slip, slide, perish, / decay with imprecision, will not stay in place, / will not stay still." Poetry here offers especial difficulties. As L. W. Tancock reminds us, "the poet uses words differently from the prose-writer; words for him are colours, units in mosaics of sound," so that "a *similar* pattern or song may be produced which may have a similar effect," but will not be identical, "any more than a passage written for oboe will be the same when played on a harpsichord, though the notes may be the same" (Booth et al., 1958, 49). Indeed, to attempt a phonemic reproduction of the physical sound of a poem can lead (in Catullus's case) to the absurd grotesqueries of Celia and Louis Zukofsky's version of 78.9–10: "Worm with no impunity for aye, name to how many a cycle / nose can't—wait queer, Sis Fame'll liquidate your anus." In Catullus's case, on top of all these problems, the translator constantly has to deal with the kind of in-group, topical allusions, both public and private, endemic to a group of highly educated and politically conscious littérateurs.

All these difficulties—compounded for anyone trying to give readers a true sense of Catullus's original poetry, rather than using his work, in effect, as a springboard

for native literary exercises—are grounded in language. There remains, however, one major area, central to any poet's creativity, which, for all its built-in hazards, does, like music, transcend language's crippling national restrictions: and that is the poem's rhythmic pattern, its metrical form. Paradoxically, in an era when monoglot readers are devouring classical translations in greater numbers than ever before, and thus need (cf. Leishman above) as close an approximation to the original texts as ingenuity can devise, this aspect of translation is almost universally neglected. The last, and so far as I can determine, the *only* previous complete English-language version of Catullus with every poem done, as near as could be managed, in an equivalent of its original meter was that by Robinson Ellis (1871). Yet the rhythm, the beat, of a poem constitutes its essential musical core. To take Catullus's dancing, jaunty hendecasyllables and transpose them, on the Dryden principle, into rhymed ballad stanzas or imagist free verse (more literary exercises for the *cognoscenti*) is to vitiate his originality and offer the reader a wholly misleading image.

Something, inevitably, must always be lost in the process of transposition; something, inevitably, of the translator's own literary context will cling to his version, however hard he may try to eliminate it (Ellis, for instance, like most littérateurs in the later nineteenth century, was clearly—and admittedly—under the spell of Swinburne). But must the loss always be so great? Current fashion, which systematically depreciates the author (sometimes virtually denying his—less often her—existence) in favor of those who interpret the author's work, whether as critics, translators, or readers at large, would probably (borrowing a trope from Stanley Fish) reply, "Yes, and a good thing too." My flat opposition to such a principle, coupled with the love I have maintained for the Catullan corpus ever since adolescence, and a desire to make the delights of that corpus as widely available as possible, must serve as the excuse both for producing yet another version of Catullus, and for the particular form it has taken.

Anyone even superficially acquainted with Latin or Greek is aware of the fundamental distinction between these languages and (among other modern tongues) English, when it comes to poetry: the former have both stress and meter, the latter stress only. In other words, Latin and Greek vowels possess fixed quantities, long or short, either by nature or by position (e.g., a short vowel lengthening before two juxtaposed consonants), and this creates a metrical schema independent of, and indeed contrapuntal to, accentual stress and ictus. In English, on the other hand, which has no fixed vowel quantities, and thus *only* accentual stress to work with, any attempt to reproduce classical meters is bound to suffer from two serious drawbacks: (a) the sole guide to both accentual stress and metrical schema will be the transla-

tor's ingenuity in shaping the line so that the reader instinctively emphasizes the right words; and (b) since this means that more often than not schema and stress pattern will be made to coincide, the contrapuntal effect that forms so attractive a feature of Latin or Greek verse is always in danger of being lost.

Unfortunately, this hazard particularly applies in the two most frequently encountered classical meters, the hexameter and the elegiac couplet (for a detailed discussion of these and all other meters employed by Catullus the reader should consult the following section). Why this should be so is virtually never discussed; but the reason—a very simple one—in fact constitutes the main challenge to any would-be metrical translator. In both hexameter and pentameter, the two main metrical building blocks, the dactyl (— ∪ ∪) and the spondee (— —), both have a long initial syllable. This produces a fast, naturally *falling* line, and directly militates against the inbuilt rhythmic pattern of English, which has a firm determination to climb uphill, always with short initial syllables, and most often in an iambic (∪ —) pattern, wherever possible: the lasting popularity of the blank verse line is no accident. Saintsbury (1906, vol. 3, 414, 417) saw the danger for an anglicized hexameter: "Good dactylic movements in English tip themselves up and become anapestic [i.e., — ∪ ∪ to ∪ ∪ —]," with extra syllables at the beginning of the line and partial suppression at the end. This tendency both produced too many short syllables (English has few naturally spondaic [— —] words), and led to a constant identification of metrical schema and stress pattern, thus eliminating the contrapuntal tension between them.

The notorious flatness of the English accentual or stress hexameter and pentameter is directly due to this accident of language, as Tennyson knew when he wrote a spoof in which meter and stress *were*, grotesquely, at odds: "These lame hexametérs, the strong-winged music of Homer . . . When did a frog coarsér croak upon our Helicón?" When indeed? Actually, quite often, and as early as the Elizabethan age, which saw a vigorous investigation into the possibility of acclimatizing classical meters to English. Sir Philip Sidney, in his *Arcadia,* experimented not only with hexameters and elegiacs, but also with hendecasyllables, sapphics, anacreontics, and asclepiads (cf. p. ∞). The main advocates of the English hexameter were Gabriel Harvey and William Webbe, in his *Discourse of English Poetrie* (1586), and what they wanted to do, among other things, was, incredibly, to treat accentual English *as though it was* metrical Latin, and amenable to the same prosodic rules of length and positioning. If their hope was to restore contrapuntal tension to the line, they were disappointed. Only someone already conversant with the metrical rules of Virgil

would understand what Richard Stanyhurst (1582) was after when he translated *Aen.* 4.304–8 thus:

> Át lást sh(e) Aénéás thús, nót próvóked, asaúlteth.
> Ánd thóghst thów, fáythlésse cóystrél, só smoóthlye to sháddow
> Thy páckíng práctíse? fróm my sóyle prívilie slíncking?
> Shál nót my lykíng, ne yet earst fayth plighted in handclaspe,
> Nór Dídóes buriál from this crosse iournye withóld the?

Neither the numerous spondees (— —) in place of dactyls (— ∪ ∪), nor the elision of *she* in the first line, come naturally to the uninitiated reader looking for natural stress, and the result is merely grotesque: sequential stressed syllables simply do not come naturally in English. The same applies *a fortiori* to the pentameter. When Sidney attempted 70, his version of the last two lines was: "These be her woordes, but a womans wordes to a love that is eger / ín wyndes ór wátérs | strémes do require to be wrít."

This determination to make English, against all the odds, behave like Latin had a long history: it was still the guiding principle behind Ellis's 1871 translation, and his preface (vii–xx) gives the most detailed theoretical outline of the system known to me. Yet even for classicists it remains no more than a perverse curiosity—apart from anything else, Latin is an inflected language, so that since object, subject, verb part and so on all are identifiably labelled, it can play hopscotch with word order in a way English can't—and has surely been one of the major factors militating against *any* attempt to convey an impression of Catullus's actual rhythmic patterns. On top of everything else, Ellis went in for coy archaisms, old-fashioned inversions, and obfuscatory bowdlerization: small wonder that no one tried matching the meters again after him.

Yet clearly this is a problem that any translator of Catullus has to solve somehow, since about one-third of his surviving work is in either elegiacs or hexameters. In my case, fortunately, I came to the task with a solution that I had been able to develop through extended work on both the hexameter (Juvenal, Apollonius Rhodius), and the elegiac couplet (Ovid). In the first case this meant building on the insights of Richmond Lattimore and Cecil Day Lewis, who, to quote my earlier formulation (Green 1987, 99):

> saw that the way to produce some real stress equivalent to the hexameter was to go
> for the beat, the ictus, since this was native to English, and let the metre, within lim-

its, take care of itself. They worked out a loose, flexible line (but varied on occasion with one stress or more) and a variable, predominantly feminine ending, that could take easy overrun, moved swiftly, and to a great extent countered the determination of the English language to climb uphill . . . This line at least catches the precipitate striding movement of the hexameter, while preserving its basic structure, including the caesura. What is sacrificed is the linguistically unattainable ideal of true metrical equivalence.

How well this device worked at its best can be seen in Lattimore's *Iliad* and Day Lewis's *Aeneid*, and I have been refining and developing it ever since.

The elegiac couplet poses some different problems in addition, while somewhat restricting the scope of one's resources for dealing with the hexameter alone (e.g., in the use of sweeping run-overs and enjambment). To get the contrast between hexameter and pentameter is the easiest part: keep the pentameter at least one stress shorter than the hexameter, and give it a masculine ending by setting a sharp emphasis on the final syllable, while always making sure the hexameter has a feminine, dissyllabic, ending. Even so, it becomes difficult to avoid a sense, in accentual English, of repetitive monotony, seeing that so many Greek or Latin elegiac couplets, like an English stanza, form self-contained sentences.

At the same time, the strongly marked, rocking-horse rhythm of the pentameter (analyzed p. **ooo** below) tends, in English, to overstress the metrical schema. Thus the greatest danger in stress elegiacs comes from precisely what gives the metrical version of the genre such plangent grace: a series of unvarying stopped couplets, each rhythmically identical to the last. To avoid this I use overrun and enjambment far more than a Latin poet would, and also exploit rhythmic contrasts between the two lines of the couplet to the uttermost. This sometimes involves reducing the pentameter to three or, exceptionally, even two stresses, while extending the hexameter with an extra stress in override, so to speak, and occasionally cutting it back to a five-beat line. These are my only "equivalents," and in each case I have brought them as near the original as the mutual incompatibilities of Latin and English will allow.

When we turn to the so-called polymetric poems, most of the difficulties encountered above vanish, since the accentual patterns here are predominantly iambic ($\cup$ —) or anapestic ($\cup \cup$ —), and where a long initial syllable does predominate, at the beginning of the hendecasyllable, it can quite easily be arranged so that the reader stresses it instinctively. The secret, of course, is that the translator, working in a medium with no fixed quantities, must as far as possible create natural stresses in his prosody which mimic the required metrical schema, letting readers shape the

line without assistance. (I count it as a kind of failure when I need to nudge the reader, as is sometimes unavoidable, with diacritical signs: an accent to indicate unanticipated stress, a vertical divider showing a break in the rhythm, caesura or diaeresis.) This process is helped by the polymetric meters, where there exists a far closer, less contrapuntal relationship between the metrical and the accentual schema (see next section). In addition, accentual English can on occasion absorb the extra light syllable that would not pass in strict meter; I have availed myself of this privilege as sparingly as possible, but on occasion it has proved invaluable. As Saintsbury remarked (1906, vol. 3, 392), "Prosody, like the excellent woman's children in George Eliot, 'can do with an extry bit.'"

Selver (1966, 68) was thus quite wrong when he described the alcaic stanza as "far less adapted to English" than the hexameter or elegiac: as Tennyson knew and demonstrated, it can produce an English version of great power and beauty. This adaptability is also true, *a fortiori*, of the hendecasyllables in which a majority of Catullus's polymetrics were composed. Sidney's *Arcadia*, again, has some interesting early specimens, with only the occasional quantitative counterstress obtruding:

> Reason tell me thy minde, if here be reason,
> In this strange violénce, to make resistance,
> Where sweet graces erect the stately banner.

But it is Tennyson's hendecasyllabic *jeu d'esprit* that truly catches the light, witty, buoyant nature of the line:

> O you chorus of indolent reviewers,
> Irresponsible, indolent reviewers,
> Look, I come to the test, a tiny poem
> All composed in a metre of Catullus,
> All in quantity, careful of my motion,
> Like the skater on ice that hardly bears him,
> Lest I fall unawares before the people,
> Waking laughter in indolent reviewers . . .

It was also Tennyson who (a fact less widely known) worked out, in "Boadicea," a stress equivalent for the extraordinary galliambic meter of 63 (see p. ooo), which, for once, demanded at least as much virtuosity from its Roman composer (who had to use a language with a surprising lack of short syllables) as it does from its English translator.

These have told us all their anger in miraculous utterances,
Thunder, a flying fire in heaven, a murmur heard aërially,
Phantom sound of blows descending, moan of an enemy massacred,
Phantom wail of women and children, multitudinous agonies . . .

Without this experiment of Tennyson's to guide me I might, I suspect, have given up on the Attis poem, the one complete surviving galliambic poem from the ancient world. The iambic-based poems, on the other hand, presented few problems in a language solidly based on the blank verse line and the alexandrine: the one real difficulty I had to face (again because of serial long syllables) lay in the line endings of the choliambic or scazon (p. ∞), and even here the challenge was far less demanding than in the elegiacs. So, now my task is completed, I feel I can at least say, with Tennyson,

Should I flounder awhile without a tumble
Thro' this metrification of Catullus
They should speak to me not without a welcome,
All that chorus of indolent reviewers . . .

Well, I've always been an optimist.

THE CATULLAN METERS

I. HENDECASYLLABLES (HEND)

An aeolic form (i.e., one with a central choriambic nucleus: — ∪ ∪ —), sometimes known as "Phalaecian" after the fourth century B.C.E. Greek poet Phalaecus, the hendecasyllabic line is not common in Greek lyric, though it does occur in tragic choral odes, and also in Attic drinking songs *(skolia)*. Nor is it found in surviving Roman literature till the last century of the Republic: it was Catullus and Calvus who popularized it. Forty-three of the first sixty poems in Catullus's corpus, the so-called polymetric group, are composed in this meter: its dancing, perky rhythm (as Tennyson saw) is ideal for witty squibs and *vers d'occasion*.

Normally (as its name implies) the hendecasyllable is a line of eleven syllables, but in 55 and 58b Catullus sometimes collapses the two central short syllables of the choriamb (— ∪ ∪ —) into one long one, thus producing a decasyllabic line. The basic structure is as follows (— = long syllable, ∪ = short syllable, / = stress):

[Extract at p. 52] / / / / /
—— | — ∪ ∪ — | ∪ — | ∪ — | —
— ∪ | — | | | ∪
∪ — |
∪ ∪ ∪ | [only at 55.10]

Thus the main building block is an aeolic choriamb, prefaced by either a spondee (— —) or, less commonly, a trochee (— ∪) or iamb (∪ —), and followed by two iambs plus a single variable-length syllable. Interestingly, Horace never employs this catchy, rhythmically haunting meter (see above, p. ooo), but it proved extremely popular later with Martial and Statius, and is also found in Petronius. "Its insistent iambic second half gives it a colloquial, vernacular quality that evokes the comic stage and the rhythms of street language" (Garrison 1991, 174).

2. CHOLIAMBICS (CHOL)

The second most popular form in the polymetric group (used by Catullus for 8, 22, 31, 37, 39, 44, 59 and 60), this oddly graceless meter, the name of which means "lame iambics" (also known as *scazons*, or "limpers"), is a variant on the *iambic trimeter* or *senarius* (q.v. below), in which the final foot, reversing normal metrical stress, is a spondee or trochee rather than an iamb, thus creating an emphatic dull thud at closure. When, as in 8, all lines are end-stopped, the effect on the reader is of being mentally and emotionally jack-hammered. The form was traditionally ascribed to the late sixth century Greek iambic poet Hipponax, and regarded (Quinn 1970, xxxiii) as "a deformed or mutilated version of the ordinary iambic line," deliberately so, in order to mirror in symbolically appropriate fashion the vices and crippled perversions of mankind. Once again, it was Catullus and his friend Calvus who popularized the form in Roman literature. Consciously learned, *docti*, they discarded the varieties of scansion adopted by Hipponax himself (and followed, at Rome, by Varro). The line they constituted was a trimeter (an iambic *metron* consisted of two feet, which is why the line is known as a trimeter rather than a hexameter, containing as it does three *metra* rather than six) with a *caesura* (rhythmical break, ||, between words but in mid-foot) in either the third or fourth foot, and sometimes in both (Ellis 1876, xxv):

[Extract at p. 53] 1 2 3 4 5 6
/ / / / / / /

∪ — ∪ — | ∪ || — ∪ || —| ∪ — — ∪
— ∪∪∪ | — || — || | —
— ∪∪ | — || ∪∪

Martial loosens up the line still further by allowing an anapest (∪ ∪ —) in the fourth
foot, and a tribrach (∪ ∪ ∪) in the third. Ellis (1876) doubts, probably with good
reason, whether Catullus would have allowed these resolutions.

3. IAMBIC TRIMETER AND SENARIUS (ITRIM, ISEN)

The iambic trimeter is the basic iambic line employed by Archilochus, and subse-
quently by the Greek tragedians in non-lyric dialogue. It consists (see above) of three
iambic *metra*, again with a caesura splitting the third and/or the fourth foot, and with
spondees regularly allowed in place of iambs in the first and third feet. Though it is
regularly represented in English by the blank verse line, its actual accentual equiv-
alent is the alexandrine (e.g., Dryden's "with necks in thunder clothed, and long-
resounding pace"), and I have used a flexible alexandrine for my versions of 4, 29,
and 52. Catullus's trimeters are in fact stricter than much of Greek tragic practice,
and far stricter than the trimeters both of Old Comedy and, in Latin, of the corre-
sponding metrics of Seneca and Petronius, where resolutions of long syllables into
anapests, dactyls, and tribrachs proliferate (cf. Raven 1965, 58). The schema is found
in Catullus only at 52:

[Extract at p. 54]1 2 3 4 5 6
/ / / / / /
∪ — ∪ — | ∪ || — ∪ || —| ∪ — ∪ —
—| — || ∪

The *senarius* (4, 29) is even stricter, keeping to the basic iambic pattern throughout.

4. IAMBIC TETRAMETER CATALECTIC (ITETCAT)

This was originally a "dialogue" meter, most notably in Greek Old Comedy (e.g.,
Aristoph. *Frogs* 905–70, the debate between Aeschylus and Euripides), and also
found—with free resolutions of vowel quantities—in Roman comedy, where it is
known as the *septenarius*. Tennyson—again—borrowed its catchy rhythmic pattern
for *Locksley Hall:*

> In the Spring a livelier iris changes on the burnish'd dove;
> In the Spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love.

Catullus uses it once only, for 25, and again tends to keep to the strict form, allowing variation only in the first and fifth feet. The line consists of four iambic *metra* (hence "tetrameter"), of which the last is catalectic (i.e., short of a final syllable). There is a natural break *(diaeresis)* between the second and third *metra*:

[Extract at p. 55]1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
/ / / / / / /
∪ — ∪ — | ∪ — ∪ — || ∪ — ∪ — | ∪ — ∪ — || — —

The Latin *septenarius* regards the line as consisting of seven iambic feet plus an "overspill" (Lee 1990, 191).

5. GLYCONIC/PHERECRATEAN (GLYCPHER)

There are several other forms of aeolic verse with which Catullus experimented in addition to hendecasyllables (see section 1 above), though these remained out and away his favorite. All of them are structured round the central, rhythmically powerful building block ("Under the bridge, over the hill") of the choriamb (— ∪ ∪ —). In Greek lyric poetry, the most common form aeolic verse took was the *glyconic* line, in combination with its catalectic (shortened by one syllable) form, the *pherecratean:*

[Extract at p. 56]/ / /
— ∪ | — ∪ ∪ — | ∪ — (glyconic)
∪ — |
— — |
/ / /
— ∪ | — ∪ ∪ — | —   (pherecratean)
∪ — ∪

Catullus uses this metrical combination twice, both times in strophe form. Poem 34, the hymn to Diana, has three glyconic lines followed by a pherecratean; 61, the long epithalamium for Manlius and Aurunculeia, follows the same pattern except that here we find four glyconic lines rather than three. At 61.25, uniquely, the

short syllables of the choriamb in the pherecratean are resolved into one long syllable: *nutriunt umore*, — ∪ | — — — | — , the last syllable of *umore* being lengthened by position in relation to the first word *(quare)* of the next line. Similarly, in both poems the scansion is occasionally hypermetric (i.e., a final vowel of one line is elided with an opening vowel in the next: at 34.11 and 22, and at 61.115, 135, 140, and 227).

6. PRIAPEAN (PRIAP)

This meter is so named, not from any supposed erotic quality in its rhythm, but because during the Hellenistic period it was the recognized medium for hymns addressed to the ithyphallic garden god, Priapus. Catullus uses it once only, for 17: it simply consists of a long, slightly lumbering line—appropriate for dealing with a tottering bridge—formed from a glyconic followed by a pherecratean, with a strong natural break *(diaeresis)* between them:

[First extract at p. 57]— ∪ | — ∪ ∪ — | ∪ — || — ∪ | — ∪ ∪ — | ∪
— | || — | | —

7. GREATER (OR SECOND) ASCLEPIAD (GRASCLEP)

The asclepiad is found as early as Sappho (who reportedly wrote the whole of her third book in greater asclepiads) and Alcaeus, but derives its name from the early Hellenistic epigrammatist Asclepiades of Samos (fl. 300–270). It is formed by inserting extra choriambic *metra* into a glyconic base: one for the "lesser" (or "first"), two for the "greater" (or "second"), with no substitutes or resolutions, and strong pauses *(diaereses)* both before and after the second choriamb:

[Second extract at p. 57]/ / / / / / /
— — | — ∪ ∪ — || — ∪ ∪ — || — ∪ ∪ — | ∪ —

Catullus, who uses this meter only for 30, keeps the strict spondaic base, but—unlike Horace later (e.g., at *Odes* 1.11 and 18)—does not always observe the pauses (see, e.g., lines 11–12). The final syllable is often naturally short, but always lengthens positionally, in relation to the first word of the following line. This slow, syncopated, repetitive, drumbeat line is as hypnotic as the not dissimilar pattern of Ravel's *Bolero* (try it in von Karajan's classic blues-influenced version).

8. SAPPHIC STROPHE (SAPPH)

Catullus composed two poems in this meter, 11 and 51, the chronological book-ends, as it were, to his relationship with Lesbia (see notes ad loc. and introduction p. 000). Poem 51, an actual translation from some of Sappho's original Greek stanzas, closely follows her metrical usages and licenses (Ellis 1876, xxxvi), and we may assume that 11 does the same; whereas we later find Horace imposing stricter rules (cf. Raven 1965, 144). The Sapphic quatrain as Catullus reproduces it consists of three lines built, as always with aeolic verse, round a central choriamb (— ∪ ∪ —), and followed, for closure, by a shorter line known as an *adonean* or *adonic:*

```
[Extract at p. 58] / / / / /
— ∪ — ∪ | — ∪ ∪ — | ∪ — —
— | ∪ (3 x)
/ /
— ∪ ∪ — | ∪ (adonean)
| —
```

The adonean, as Garrison (1991, 175) reminds us, "gives the stanza a sense of closure because it is the normal rhythm at the end of a hexameter." (See section 10 below.)

The danger in creating an English equivalent is that of ignoring the contrapuntal choriambic rhythms, and thus producing a metrically quite different, briskly jaunty effect, as George Canning did in his famous political squib:

> Needy Knife-grinder! whither are you going?
> Rough is the road, your wheel is out of order—
> Bleak blows the blast;—your hat has got a hole in't.
>   So have your breeches.

Swinburne, on the other hand, caught the line's subtle syncopations and counter-stresses as well as anyone writing in an uninflected language could ever hope to do, as his poem, "Sapphics," from *Poems and Ballads* (1866) demonstrates:

> So the goddess fled from her place, with awful
> Sound of feet and thunder of wings around her;
> While behind a clamour of singing women
>   Severed the twilight.

Swinburne is not a poet much in favor these days, but he was a master metrist, and I am glad to acknowledge what I have learned from him.

9. GALLIAMBICS (GALL)

This extraordinary meter, used by Catullus only for that *tour de force*, poem 63, was in fact specially designed to accompany the ecstatic ritual of Cybele's acolytes, and its hammering rhythms, with their rat-a-tat line ending —Latin, with so many fewer short quantities than Greek, was a difficult language to adapt to its use—were peculiarly appropriate for the purpose. (For Tennyson's galliambic experiment in "Boadicea," see above, p. ∞∞.) Just how the line breaks down in metrical terms has been the subject of much debate. The most useful discussions are now those of Thomson (1997, 375–77) and Morisi (1999, 49–56). Thomson accepts the ancient metrician Hephaestion's explanation of the line as being, in essence, ionic: that is, based on the variants ∪∪ — — and — — ∪∪ (sometimes viewed as trisyllabic longs with resolution of the first or last syllable).

By the time Catullus came to use the form, variation from the basic first ionic *(a minore,* ∪∪ — —) had taken place by the process known as *anaclasis,* involving the reversal of the last syllable of one foot and the first of the next, so that in the first half of the line the original ionic pattern ∪∪ — — | ∪∪ — — had become ∪ ∪ — ∪ | — ∪ — —.

The basic form of Catullus's galliambic, then, is as follows:

[Extract at p. 59]∪∪ — ∪ | — ∪ — — | | ∪∪ — ∪ | ∪∪∪ —
∪∪ | ∪∪

This accounts for the majority of the lines in 63, the top line representing about two-thirds of the whole, while the resolutions indicated in the second line are the most common variants, based on the general license either to resolve any one long syllable into two shorts, or, vice versa, to contract any two shorts into one long. Wherever possible, the machine-gun rattle of short syllables in the final catalectic *metron* is preserved. But the line can also be weighted and slowed down, for dramatic effect, with a plethora of long syllables, as at 73:

iam, iam dolet quod egi: iam, iamque paenitet:
[Extract 1 at p. 60]— — ∪ | — ∪ — — | | — — ∪ | — ∪ —

Nevertheless, the most common variation goes in the other direction, with an expansion into short syllables, and a flutter of elided words, as at 63:

Ego mulier, eg(o) adulescens, eg(o) ephebus, ego puer
[Extract 2 at p. 60]∪ ∪ ∪ ∪ ∪ | ∪ ∪ ∪ — — || ∪ ∪ — ∪ | ∪ ∪ ∪ —

Again, the final syllable of the line, though often short by nature, is lengthened positionally against the opening syllable of the following line, hinting at the enjambed speed of the whole sequence. As Godwin (1995, 19) says, "a virtuoso performance . . . without loss of either sense or poetic feeling."

10. DACTYLIC HEXAMETER (HEX)
AND THE ELEGIAC COUPLET (ELEG)

Catullus employs the dactylic hexameter for two of his long poems, 62 and 64, the latter by far the longest poem in the entire corpus, and the elegiac couplet (hexameter plus pentameter) for all poems after 64 (i.e., 65–116). The first is the meter employed by all epic poets from Homer onwards (e.g., at Rome, Virgil and Lucan), and satirists (e.g., Persius and Juvenal), while the second is that of every elegist (e.g., Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid). Thus for many readers today there is a familiarity about the structure and form of the poems in the second half of Catullus's canon which they are not so liable to feel when confronted by the poems in the polymetric group.

The dactylic hexameter remained virtually unchanged from Homer's day. It had been introduced into Latin literature early, by Q. Ennius (239–169 B.C.E.), who used it for his *Annals*. Since it was also the accepted meter for didactic poetry (used, e.g., by Hesiod and Aratus), it was likewise employed by Catullus's exact contemporary Lucretius (?97–?51) for his versified exposition of Epicurean philosophy, the *De Rerum Natura*. As its name implies, it is a six-foot line, consisting almost entirely of dactyls ("fingers," — ∪ ∪ , so named from the one long and two short joints of the index finger), with the final sixth foot a spondee or trochee (— — or — ∪), and all feet—except, normally, the fifth—resolvable into spondees:

[Extract at p. 61]1 2 3 4 5 6
/ / / / / /
— ∪ ∪ | — ∪ ∪ | — || ∪ || ∪ | — || ∪ || ∪ | — ∪ ∪ | — ∪
— — — — [—]—

Latin being richer in long syllables than Greek (cf. above, section 9 ad init.), resolution into spondees is more frequent among Roman poets: in particular, resolution of the fifth foot, generally avoided by Greek writers, is a marked feature (as Cicero noted) of Neoteric, and in particular of Catullus's, metrics (see, e.g., 64.78–80 for three in a row; the resolution is occasionally found later as well, as in one of the most beautiful lines of all Latin literature, Propertius's *sunt apud infernos tot milia formosarum* [2.28.49]: "so many thousand beauties there are among the dead"). Before such a spondaic fifth foot, the fourth is nearly always dactylic; there is also a tendency, as the usage evolves, to have *only* a dissyllabic or trisyllabic word at the end of the line.

The springy counterpoint of the dactylic hexameter (notoriously absent when the strict form is reproduced in English), is achieved by a constant tension between natural stress and meter. The most notable aspect of this is the *caesura*, a natural rhythmic break in the line, always *between* words but *within* a metrical foot. Normally the caesura is located in either the third or the fourth foot of the hexamater, and sometimes in both. It most often falls after the first long syllable, when it is known as a "strong" caesura; when it occurs between the two short syllables of a dactyl (see schema above) it is termed a "weak," and sometimes, especially in the fourth foot, a "bucolic" caesura. It is interesting that in the metrics of the hexameter Catullus shows a marked advance in sophistication over his contemporary Lucretius: the hexameter as he handles it is virtually indistinguishable from that subsequently employed by Virgil and his fellow Augustans (cf. Raven 1965, 90–103).

The dactylic hexameter is also employed as the first line in the so-called elegiac couplet, the second being the (misleadingly named) pentameter, a pairing that, again, has a long Greek history going back to archaic poets such as Archilochus and Solon, and developed by Hellenistic epigrammatists. The pentameter is characterized by two peculiar features: a rigid central break in the rhythm between metra *(diaeresis)*, and inflexible dactylic restriction in the second half of the line. The result is a form which, rather than consisting of five feet in any normally recognized sense, consists of two sections, each containing two and a half feet:

[Extract at p. 62] / / / / / /
— ∪ ∪ | — ∪ ∪ | — || — ∪ ∪ | — ∪ ∪ | ∪
— | — | | —

The result is to give a neat sense of rhythmic closure to the couplet. Looked at another way, the pentameter consists of two *hemiepes* (i.e., the opening of the hexam-

eter as far as a strong caesura in the third foot: e.g., *arma uirumque cano*). The sense of the hexameter frequently runs on into the pentameter, by the process known as enjambment; the pentameter, by contrast, almost never continues into the next hexameter, but is end-stopped (however, see 65.10–11 for an interesting exception).

In elegiac couplets, the central caesura of the hexameter tends to be stricter than in running hexameters, the strong third-foot variety predominating. The two- or three-syllable-word ending is likewise the general rule. Since the elegiac couplet was adapted for Roman usage rather later than the hexameter, we are faced with the intriguing paradox that, while Catullus's hexameters (see above) are extremely sophisticated and well fitted to the special characteristics of the Latin language, his pentameters, through adhering more closely to their Greek models, can seem, on occasion, remarkably crude when compared to those of, say, Ovid or Propertius. Catullus can stumble into a whole plethora of awkward elisions: see, for example, 73.6, where we find *quam modo qui m(e) un(um) atqu(e) unic(um) amic(um) habuit*, the elisions even (as at 77.4) extending over the central diaeresis, a practice sedulously avoided by the Augustans.

The most noticeable difference between Catullus's pentameters and those of his successors is his partiality for ending the line with words of anything between two and five syllables (for the latter see, e.g., *sodalicium* at 100.4). He once actually manages to do the entire second half of the line in a single seven-syllable word: 68.112, *Amphitryoniades*, a splendid Hellenistic conceit. He also once (76.8) produced a monosyllabic ending, *dictaque factaque sunt*. One has only to read this aloud to understand why it was outlawed by later elegists. By Ovid's day, a dissyllabic final word had become the rule. Catullus had in fact already begun to move in this direction since almost two-fifths of his pentameters do, in fact, have dissyllabic endings (Raven 1965, 106).