HAPTIC POETICS*

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> *Sigma* is an unattractive, disagreeable letter, very offensive when used to excess. A hiss seems a sound more suited to a brute beast than to a rational being.
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> Dionysius of Halicarnassus[1]

Catullus 4 is a poem about a retired boat. It does not employ erotic, grotesque, or invective imagery: no Lesbia, no Gellius, no dread Mother Goddess, no befouled orifices, no stolen napkins, and not even any food. It is similarly apolitical—no Cicero, Mamurra, or Caesar. As content in Catullus goes, the yacht's story is less than titillating. At the same time, the poem displays an extraordinarily dense acoustic texture, which makes it seem truly a *nuga*, an illustration of what the poet can do technically to embellish uninteresting, or at least benign, subject matter. Consequently, poem 4 appears irrelevant to the central issues in Catullus like love, politics, gender, and power, especially compared to the Lesbia cycle, the Attis poem, or *pedicabo et irrumabo*, "I will fuck you anally and orally . . ." But even in this apparently marginal poem, Catullus' use of sound is important programmatically, as is the theme of reminiscence itself. The long poems, the Lesbia poems, and the obscene poems all display in various ways a preoccupation with corporeal integrity and violation, and the voice is the place where poetry, through its acoustic qualities, intersects materially the reader's own body.

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1 *De Comp.* 14, translated by Rhys Roberts.

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Reading aloud, one takes into one's mouth the language of the poems. If the content is obscene, then the *os impurum* becomes at least temporarily one's own.[2] At the same time, themes of violation and abandonment can be generalized beyond poems with specifically erotic or obscene content to include a "Callimachean" poem like 4. I will argue that the retirement of the *phaselus* is a metaphor for poetics in the face of cultural transformation and, in this capacity, it resonates with other lost figures in Catullus such as Ariadne, Attis, Catullus' brother, and the Catullan *ego*. An examination of acoustic technique in Catullus 4 suggests fundamental links, in content and aural aesthetics, between it and poems 63 and 64, major poems that any interpretation of Catullus must consider. Finally, the issues of erotic representation and acoustic pleasure in Catullus must be situated in the physical context of Roman poetic performance.

The intricate sound-patterns of Catullan verse, throughout the corpus, shape the voice as if it were a physical medium like stone or paint, rather than an optional addition to the reader's eyes and the words on the page. But the voice, as a form of "cultural plastic," is inseparable from, and internal to, the body.[3] This raises the question of oral versus written performance for Catullus and subsequent Latin poets. On the one hand, Catullus' text demands visual study. Close, repeated reading is required to trace both intratextual patterns shared between poems and equally complex intertextual strategies of allusion to prior texts and poetic models. Catullus' self-conscious association of his own poetry with Callimachus certainly suggests that the techniques of writing are much more important than the requirements of oral performance.[4] On the other hand, if Catullus' lyric consciousness demands a collected, written text, there is no denying the performance qualities of his work, qualities it obviously shares with much of Latin literature. As Starr has put it (1991.338):

> Roman literature, then, might more accurately be described as "aural" rather than as "oral." Literature was

2 Cf. Fitzgerald 1995.63–72.

3 See Bordo 1991.107 for this phrase, which she applies to the representation of the female body in contemporary culture.

4 As Miller 1994.51 argues, "Such a collection and the projection of so complex and internally articulated a consciousness would have been impossible in the performative situation necessary to oral lyric. Consequently . . . the poetry of Catullus could only appear in a culture of writing."

> appreciated primarily through the ears rather than the eyes. When Pliny compliments the *voce suavissima* of Piso . . . or Juvenal complains about the epic poet Cordus, whom he calls *raucus*, a word Ovid applies to the sounds of frogs and asses . . . the voice and the poetry are not easily separable: the experience of the poem was also the experience of the reader's voice.

It is worth asking, then, not only how lyric consciousness is written and experienced as text in late Republican and Augustan Rome, but where it is performed and what it sounds like. Catullus' manipulations of the voice cannot be subordinated, in a simple way, to meaning, like ornaments to be congratulated when they help the sense along or censured for indulgence when they get in its way. Nor do they automatically make Catullus an oral poet rather than a Callimachean devoted to the *libellus scriptus*. His treatment of sound must be considered in the light of his relation to Callimachus, in the context of erotic representation and the gaze in his work, and from the standpoint of the most likely venues for performance, written or oral.

ORAL PERFORMANCE AND THE *SCRIPTA PUELLA*

In order to explore these issues, it is necessary to reconsider specific readings of Catullus 4 as well as (briefly) the treatment of sound and text in Hellenistic and Latin studies. The most obvious explanation of the poem's acoustic dimension is onomatopoeia. Marilyn Skinner suggests that, "performed as a dramatic monologue, the work becomes an onomatopoetic *tour de force* . . . the regularity of its pure iambic trimeters simulates the monotonous creaking and rocking of a ship, while the dominant sibilants . . . mimic the whistling of the wind and the hiss of the waves."[5] This is partly true, but it allows one aspect of the poem's acoustic repertoire to define the whole. Many of its quasi-formal structures of sound (aural anagrams, palindromes, rhymes, and half-rhymes) cannot be sufficiently characterized as onomatopoetic. Moreover, if onomatopoeia were a sufficient explanation, it would tie these techniques intrinsically to the poem's content—the sea and ships—bracketing off their use here from the

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5 Skinner 1993a.63; cf. Richardson 1972.

rest of the corpus.[6] Catullus' entire output is an acoustic *tour de force*, but it remains to be shown how onomatopoeia, or, much more broadly, aural technique, is crucial to his poetics—that is, what its relationship is to referential meaning and the circumstances of performance.[7] Although it is a content-specific explanation of acoustic technique, Skinner uses onomatopoeia in poem 4 to suggest a general theory about Catullan oral performance.

In this theory, Catullus would have presented poems like 4 at elite *convivia* as a means toward literary and political advancement in the competition for patronage between young and ambitious Roman men. The more clever and convincing the performance of a character like the *phaselus* the better: "the *phaselus*, then, would not be the only speaker advertising its qualifications" (Skinner 1993a.64). The transparency of onomatopoeia as an explanation of the poem's sound matches this clarity of social purpose in performance. Catullus seems unlikely to succeed at advertising his qualifications if he questions his culture very profoundly, by suggesting, for instance, that the elite males around him on the dining couches are being forced into a position of passive reminiscence and idle pleasure rather than competitive achievement.[8] Many other poems by

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6 As Wilkinson points out, the argument over the definition and poetic worth of onomatopoeia is an old one: "People who disparage 'onomatopoeia' in literature probably have in mind instances so obvious as to seem childish, or so obtrusive as to distract attention from the matter in hand to the writer's exhibitionism" (1963.51). Wilkinson's work remains useful, but he does not contextualize, in terms of the gendered politics of style in late Republican and Augustan Rome, an "exhibitionist" interest in verbal surface at the expense of "the matter in hand." Instead, privileging surface over referential meaning is simply an aesthetic mistake, a mark of immaturity, then and now.

7 Wilkinson claims, remarkably, that "Catullus' short poems . . . strike one only occasionally as expressive . . . in his long epyllion he had plenty of opportunities, but he gives a Keatsian impression of being more intent on richness and beauty" (1963.84).

8 This raises the question of how the Romans viewed dining, politically and morally. Skinner reasonably suggests (1993a.62–63) that amateur performances at dinner parties of a poem like Catullus 4 could be a way of demonstrating one's talents and building political ties. She then later argues (1993a.65–66) that literature was a privileged escape valve for the repressed emotions of the male elite: "By submerging himself in the fictive subjectivity of the *amator*, a male listener could participate vicariously in that voluptuously romantic experience without suffering the disgrace attached to such sentimental excesses in real life." Granted that the dinner party is the site of both types of poetic performance, it coincides with a host of behaviors and pleasures that are corporeal as well as fictive; in this environment, the "sentimental excesses" of literature overlap with the real excesses and moral anxiety that define the triclinium—the diners are not vicariously tasting, hearing, smelling, or seeing. See Edwards 1993, Corbeill 1997, and Fredrick 1995.

Catullus, with equally pronounced performance qualities, would not have commended his political skills. If Catullus, Propertius, and Ovid are any indication, poetic success in the late Republican and Augustan periods did not demand conformity to traditional elite values and qualifications; by the same token, onomatopoeia, despite its straightforward relation between sound and meaning, need not be the key to acoustic technique in poem 4 or elsewhere. Nonetheless, Skinner's emphasis on performance is correct, and the most likely venues are the highly decorated interiors of aristocratic Roman houses, their *triclinia* and *cubicula*.[9] The question of how Catullus is heard thus becomes at least partly a question of how these spaces are decorated and experienced and how they contribute to or undermine the ethos of elite masculine competition.

Meanwhile, the poem's subject, the dedicated object's recollection of its past life, comes directly out of Hellenistic epigram. As Bing has shown, this genre is not founded on cultural self-confidence or traditional oral performance. He argues that Callimachus and other Hellenistic poets used the techniques of writing and the library (allusions, acrostics, oblique narrative, ekphrasis, rare words, and myths) to express their sense of separation from the cultural past and from the immediacy of oral performance in the classical polis.[10] Hellenistic poetry took a visual turn from the ear to the page; the epigram, because of its origin in inscriptions, became a

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9 Cf. Starr 1991.341, "*Lectores* also handled the readings at dinner parties, one of the most popular and simplest dinner-party entertainments among the aristocracy. Readings were the sole entertainment only at comparatively informal parties, since as the formality of the meal increased, so did the elaborateness of the entertainment. Atticus apparently had no other entertainments than readings at any dinners he gave . . . Nepos thought Atticus' practice was delightful, but he implies that it was extreme."

10 Bing 1988.1–48; cf. Levitan 1979, Lombardo 1989, Lombardo and Rayor 1988. See Cameron 1995 for additional bibliography and arguments against this interpretation of Hellenistic poetry. In the face of Cameron's detailed, and sometimes very helpful, arguments for the importance of performance during the Hellenistic period, I would simply point out that, for example, while sections of the *Aetia* could be performed orally, it was clearly intended to be appreciated as a book, beyond the public performance of any of its parts. There is no traditional performance venue, public or private, for the book, and, as Cameron himself notes (103), poets before the Hellenistic period did not edit, arrange, and publish them. Cameron regards this as a relatively minor change in poetic practice, but Callimachus does emphasize those aspects of his poetry most accessible through textual, rather than oral, performance, and, if elegy is any indication, Roman poets did associate this with a sense of cultural discontinuity. Miller 1994 argues that the emergence of the poetry book in the Hellenistic period was a necessary precondition for Catullus' creation of lyric consciousness.

favorite genre. While Catullus is not writing primarily for silent readers, this literary background should not be disregarded in the interest of treating "all Greco-Roman poetry as fundamentally oral and performative in nature."[11] Catullus and subsequent Latin poets explicitly adopted Callimachean poetics as a way of acknowledging instabilities and incoherences in their culture, and, like Callimachus, they problematize performance by introducing a host of techniques that disrupt linear progress through the text. This process parallels the use of erotic and obscene content to encode political anxiety: the disruption of narrative through Hellenistic literary technique matches the destabilization of active/passive positions in erotic content.[12] The question is, then, why would Catullus give such an elaborate performance texture to a poem with such a clearly Hellenistic theme?

The relation of acoustic performance qualities to the visual emphasis characteristic of Hellenistic poetry is central to the construction of gender in Catullus. However, the acoustic qualities of Catullus and of Augustan verse have been overlooked in this regard because treatments of gender construction in Latin poetry, using a variety of methodologies, have tended to match the visual emphasis of Hellenistic poetry. Through theories of film, pornography, psychoanalysis, and reader response, critics have explored the depiction of *puella* or *puer* as an object of the gaze, while the reader has been treated as a spectator who assumes various positions conceived visually.[13] In Wyke's influential work on elegy, one reads female flesh, but one does not hear it. The *puella*, as the erotic/aesthetic object of

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11 Skinner 1993a.61. Gavrilov 1997 argues that silent reading was known, and evidently fairly common, in antiquity. However, this does not reduce the importance of oral performance for literary works, especially poetry. As Gavrilov concludes (69), "They [ancient Greeks and Romans] appreciated both the advantages of silent reading, in terms of concentration, speed, and absorption of material, and the artistic demands of reading aloud."

12 Cf. Skinner 1991.4, "In Roman love lyric and elegy, conventional norms of masculinity are inverted: proclaiming his subjection to the whim of an imperious mistress or *puer*, the erotic hero casts aside all restraint and abandons himself to *mollitia*, emotional self-indulgence." This erotic *mollitia* is matched by a poetic *mollitia*, Callimacheanism. See Gutzwiller and Michelini 1991, Wyke 1987 and 1989.

13 For various approaches to the gaze, its textual/erotic objects, and the gendered position of the poet in Latin erotic poetry, see Fitzgerald 1995.141–68, Fredrick 1997, Gold 1993, Segal 1994, Sharrock 1991. Fitzgerald 1995.144–48, using psychoanalytic film theory, compares the treatment of Ariadne's body in Catullus 64 with the depiction of female bodies in Roman wall painting; for a similar analysis, especially of paintings of Ariadne, see Fredrick 1992 and 1995.

the gaze, is a metaphor for the poem as a written text. Her desirable attributes—fair skin, shining eyes, slenderness, blush—represent the desirable qualities of elegy as Callimachean text, and, in his static fascination with the *puella*/text, the elegiac poet is alienated from traditional epic poetry and from traditional Roman modes of action.[14] Presumably, Roman readers of elegy identified with this alienated position, an identification founded upon a written poetics and a visual relation to the text.

For an elite Roman male, however, as writer or reader, a strictly visual relation to words would be unusual, since one's speaking style was felt to have a physical correspondence to the constitution of one's own body. In a culture where oratory "aerated the flesh," it would be surprising to find a literary genre whose acoustic texture, in performance, was not both important and invested with corporeal significance.[15] Moreover, the oral performance of oratory and poetry is represented as having a profound effect on the body of the listener (Cicero *De Orat.* 3.51):

> nihil est autem tam cognatum mentibus nostris quam numeri atque voces; quibus et excitamur et incendimur et lenimur et languescimus et ad hilaritatem et ad tristitiam saepe deducimur; quorum illa summa vis carminibus est aptior et cantibus . . .
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> Nothing, however, is so native to our minds as rhythmical patterns and harmonious voices, by which we are aroused and inflamed, calmed and made languid, and to cheerfulness or sorrow often moved; the most exquisite power of which is best suited to poetry and to songs . . .

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14 Wyke 1989 and 1987. Cf. Keith 1994.40, "the metaphorical discussion of literary style in terms of female beauty is well attested among Roman poets espousing the Callimachean aesthetic in the first century BCE."

15 Gleason 1995.82–130; for Catullus' engagement with the techniques, terms, and stylistic debates of oratory, see Batstone 1998 and Selden 1992. Crassus' remarks on gesture in Cicero's *De Orat.* 3.59 indicate the involvement of the body in the performance of oratory:

> Omnis autem hos motus subsequi debet gestus, non hic verba exprimens scaenicus, sed universam rem et sententiam non demonstratione, sed significatione declarans, laterum inflexione hac forti ac virili, non ab scaena et histrionibus, sed ab armis aut etiam a palaestra; manus autem minus arguta, digitis subsequens verba, non exprimens, bracchium procerius proiectum quasi quoddam telum orationis; supplosio pedis in contentionibus aut incipiendis aut finiendis.

Catullus and the elegiac poets do seem preoccupied with the female body as visual object and aesthetic metaphor, but they also construct a body of sound no less connected with issues of gender. A sense of cultural loss produces, in Hellenistic poetry, a visual and textual turn with significant implications for gender; this sense of loss is translated back into acoustic texture by Catullus and the Augustan poets. It is consequently difficult to attribute the interest of these poets in acoustic technique directly either to Callimachean principles or to traditional oral performance. Until recently, it also seemed outside the scope of the gaze as a critical approach concerned with "womanufacture" or the fetishism of the *puella*'s body.[16] But the contribution of sound to the construction of gender in film has recently received some much needed attention, especially in Kaja Silverman's *The Acoustic Mirror*. Her work can be used to shed light on the interplay of aural and visual fascination that surrounds the body of the erotic object/poem in Catullus and other Roman poets. At the same time, the plastic use of the alphabet in the most visual (and literally unperformable) Alexandrian genre of all provides a good place to begin retheorizing acoustic technique in Catullus 4 in the light of Hellenistic textuality.

PHASELUS AND THE FIELD OF LATIN VERSE

The shift from orality to the eye in Hellenistic poetry is represented most concretely by *technopaegnia*, whose texts reproduce the shape of the objects on which they pretend to be inscribed. Here is an example by the Rhodian poet Simmias (fourth century B.C.E.), on the wings of a bearded Eros.[17]

Λεῦσσέ με τὸν Γᾶς τε βαθυστέρνου ἄνακτ',Ἀκμονίδαν τ' ἄλλυδις ἐδράσαντα,
μηδὲ τρέσῃς, εἰ τόσος ὢν δάσκια βέβριθα λάχνᾳ γένεια.
τᾶμος ἐγὼ γὰρ γενόμαν, ἀνίκ' ἔκραιν' Ἀνάγκα,
πάντα δὲ Γᾶς εἶκε φραδαῖσι λυγραῖς
ἑρπετά, †πάνθ' ὅσ' ἔρπει
δι' αἴθρας.

16 "Womanufacture" is a term coined by Sharrock 1991 for the plastic treatment of the female body as erotic object; this phenomenon is discussed by Fredrick 1997 specifically in the terms provided by feminist film theory, scopophilia, and voyeurism.

17 Cameron 1995.34–37 paradoxically argues that this poem was intended for actual inscription on the wings of a statue of Eros, but does not reproduce wings in its visual appearance: it was inscribed on wings, but it does not outline their shape.

Χάους δέ,
οὔτι γε Κύπριδος παῖς
ὠκυπέτας οὐδ᾽ Ἄρεος καλεῦμαι·
οὔτι γὰρ ἔκρανα βίᾳ, πραϋλόγῳ δὲ πειθοῖ·
εἴκε δέ μοι γαῖα, θαλάσσας τε μυχοί, χάλκεος οὐρανός τε·
τῶν δ᾽ ἐγὼ ἐκνοσφισάμαν ὠγύγιον σκᾶπτρον, ἔκρινον δὲ θεοῖς θέμιστας.

Regard me: master of deep-bosomed Earth, I enthroned Thunderbolt's son,
Nor shudder at the beard shagging the chin of one so small.
For I was born when Necessity was still queen
And all kept aloof in dismal mood,
All that crept or flew
Through thin air.
Child of Chaos,
No son of Cypris nor
Wingswift boy of her and Ares am I,
Nor got I rule by force but by mild persuasion.
Yet Earth yielded to me, and Sea's nooks and Sky's brass dome.
And I went off with their primordial scepter, and made laws for gods.[18]

This poem illustrates the conspicuous demands placed on the poet by both the requirements of its visual form and the metrical legacy of oral poetry. In Greek, each line is composed of a diminishing, then increasing, number of choriambs, so that the poem not only makes sense and looks like wings, it also scans. But despite these technical demands, the poem's effect is something like a pun. The more powerful referential capacity of written words is subordinated to the very limited ability of their graphic characters to reproduce the appearance of wings. A pun similarly emphasizes a crude aural likeness between words at the expense of reference—and onomatopoeia privileges a similarly "crude" likeness between the sounds of words and natural sounds.[19] This type of subordination, however, is not trivial for Hellenistic or later Roman poetry, because *technopaegnia* give material expression to a problem implicit in the Hellenistic practices of allusion and ekphrasis. As *technopaegnia* place the synchronic, depictive arrangement of letters ahead of their potential for diachronic, semantic reference, allusion puts the capacity of a text to reflect other texts ahead of linear,

18 Translation adapted from Lombardo 1989.
19 "'Onomatopoeia,' says Cocteau, 'reduces us to the level of a parrot'" (Wilkinson 1963.51).

referential narrative. Ekphrasis, meanwhile, pretends to suspend linear narrative in order to reproduce the effect of a temporally arrested work of visual art in stone or paint. As Andrew Laird puts it, "as language draws attention to the medium of the artwork, it also draws attention to *itself* as a medium."[20] *Technopaegnia*, which turn letters into pictures (a radical realization of *ut pictura poesis*), similarly arrest the linear flow of language in favor of a static visual form.

Allusions, *technopaegnia* and ekphrases are tropes of the same problem, a new self-consciousness about language, especially written text, as a medium at the expense of traditional oral forms. The attempt to read Hellenistic allusions philologically—if you could only look them all up and correctly assess the significance of each one, you would understand what they all mean—is fundamentally misdirected from this perspective. Certainly allusions are used to construct complex patterns suggestive of meaning, but they cannot be reduced to meaning as traditional narrative yields it. It is not surprising, then, that Lombardo's explanation for the Alexandrian fascination with the visual appearance of texts matches Bing's explanation of Alexandrian allusiveness. First, their poetry demands to be read and studied in the company of other texts, as well as being listened to at festivals or across the dining couches. Second, *technopaegnia* and acrostics offered, like oblique allusions and rare words, the opportunity for small-scale virtuosity at the expense of narrative continuity. As a minor, but technically demanding genre, *technopaegnia* appealed to "an age that . . . cultivated the exquisite and the difficult as compensation for its lost epic, civic, and tragic grandeur."[21] Latin poets influenced by the Alexandrians—Catullus, Propertius, Virgil, Ovid—adopted many of their characteristics: the preference for minor genres in opposition to epic, conspicuous learning and complex allusions, frequent ekphrases, oblique rather than linear narrative, erotic subjects, and polished technique. When these poets do produce epic, the tentative and complex narrative that results has a strongly Hellenistic inflection. However, these same Roman poets have not left us

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20 Laird 1996.86; italics in the original. See also Baxandall 1985.3, "Again, there is an awkwardness, at least, about dealing with a simultaneously available field—which is what a picture is—in a medium as temporally linear as language: for instance, it is difficult to avoid tendentious reordering of the picture simply by mentioning one thing before another."

21 Lombardo 1989.204; cf. Bing 1988.17, "The coherent fabric of the polis-community had disintegrated, supplanted by the remote, dislocated mass of the Oikoumene. Poetry, in concert with this change, became a private act of communication, no longer a public one."

any visual *technopaegnia*, nor do they appear to privilege the visual appearance of the text over its sound.

There is abundant evidence that the work of these Roman poets was performed orally, either aloud to their friends or in more elaborate public renditions.[22] The skill they display in constructing the sound of their poems continues to spur modern readers to recreate it. Nevertheless, William Levitan (1985) has argued that these poets set Latin poetry on the path toward an aesthetic that subordinated verbal mimesis to the plastic manipulation of a fixed set of lexical and metrical resources. The exploration of infinite recombinations in a finite field, where the meaning of the words is secondary, would eventually produce the visually dazzling, if semantically disappointing, poems of Optatian Porfyry. For these, one picture is certainly worth a thousand words (see next page).

Levitan situates these mandalas at the endpoint of a coherent literary evolution, suggesting that the "history of classical Latin verse may well be the history of progressive closure, progressive limitation, progressive capitulation of mimesis to design."[23] But if Latin poetry is bracketed, on the one hand, by the Hellenistic interest in the visual, non- (or less) verbally referential capacity of the text as represented by allusions, ekphrases, acrostics, and *technopaegnia*, and, on the other, by Optatian's extravagant realization of this capacity, what does the use of sound in Catullus and the Augustan poets mean within such a frame, which strongly suggests a poetics of the eye rather than the ear?

Perhaps the issue is the same although the medium has changed. The capitulation of semantic mimesis and linearity to plastic design and synchronous reference—or at least the struggle between them—may be as

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22 E.g., Catullus 50, Ovid *Tristia* 2.519–20, *Tristia* 3.14.39–40, *Tristia* 4.1.89–90, *Tristia* 4.10.41–58; *Ep. ex Ponto* 4.17–38 (a description of Ovid's recitation of a poem in Getic, but it certainly plays off normal performance practices in Rome); for poetic performance in the Flavian period, see Persius 1.13–21, Juvenal 7.82–87 (concerning Statius reading his *Thebaid* to an enthralled public). Quinn 1982 and Gamel 1998 provide excellent overviews of the conditions of Roman oral performance; Gamel notes (82), "Writers performed their compositions, prose and verse, in various venues—ranging from small gatherings of friends to more formal occasions such as appearances at court and large public occasions including the theater, where poems were sometimes performed with musical and choreographic accompaniment."

23 Levitan 1985.269; cf. Malamud 1993.156, "[there was] a real tendency in late antique epic to emphasize the allusive and the secondary and to reject any attempt at naturalism or realism, at the construction of a coherent subject. The text is, for these writers, a highly artificial product."

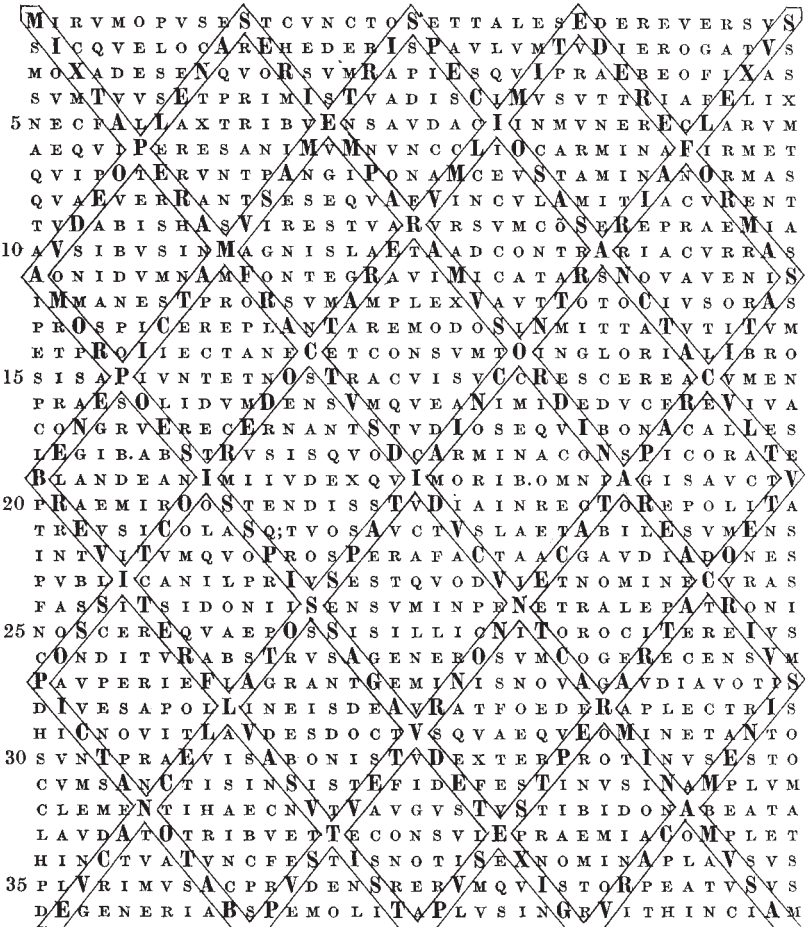

Plate 1: Optatian Porfyry, *carmen* 22, reproduced from Iohannes Polara's edition (Turin: G. B. Paravia, 1973), p. 86, by permission of the publisher.

significant for Catullus' use of sound as it is for the treatment of the text as a visual object in Hellenistic *technopaegnia* and Porfyry. This would suggest that onomatopoeia, an explanation that subordinates sound to meaning in the interest of traditional oral performance, misses an essential, programmatic point of conflict in Catullus 4.[24] Taken as an acoustic

24 Kenney argues (1990.31–32) that the assonantal and alliterative capabilities of Latin, "though not suppressed completely, were in the 'higher' genres of literary composition

technopaegnion, the poem's aural texture is no longer about sounding as much as possible like the sea, any more than the point of Simmias' "Wings" is simply to look like wings. Rather, it represents an elaboration of a non-, or para-, referential technique closely tied to the notion of compensation put forward by Lombardo and Bing. Put another way, this would be the expression in sound of the essential problem of allusion and ekphrasis, underscoring the separation from the "original" object (the prior author, the dedicated object, the visual art work) and the failure of reminiscence to make it present.

SOUND GAMES, TWINS

> How charmingly his phrases are combined! Like little tiles
> skilfully set in pavement and intertwined mosaics . . .[25]

Phaselus ille, quem videtis, hospites,
ait fuisse navium celerrimus,
neque ullius natantis impetum trabis
nequisse praeterire, sive palmulis
opus foret volare sive linteo.
et hoc negat minacis Hadriatici
negare litus insulasve Cycladas
Rhodumque nobilem horridamque Thraciam
Propontida trucemve Ponticum sinum,
ubi iste post phaselus antea fuit
comata silva; nam Cytorio in iugo
loquente saepe sibilum edidit coma.

Amastri Pontica et Cytore buxifer,
tibi haec fuisse et esse cognitissima
ait phaselus: ultima ex origine
tuo stetisse dicit in cacumine,
tuo imbuisse palmulas in aequore,
et inde tot per impotentia freta

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disciplined and restrained by the Alexandrianizing and purist attitudes of Caesar, Cicero, and the Augustan poets . . ." I would suggest that acoustic technique was not suppressed and restrained in favor of meaning in Catullus or the Augustan poets, but rather became less obvious and much more complex, elaborate, and seductive in its own right. That is what makes it "Alexandrian."

25 Cicero *De Orat*. 3.43.

erum tulisse, laeva sive dextera
vocaret aura, sive utrumque Iuppiter
simul secundus incidisset in pedem;
neque ulla vota litoralibus deis
sibi esse facta, cum veniret a mari
novissimo hunc ad usque limpidum lacum.

sed haec prius fuere: nunc recondita
senet quiete seque dedicat tibi,
gemelle Castor et gemelle Castoris.

Guests, that old boat you see, he
vows he was the swiftest once.
There was no beam afloat whose reach
he could not outrun, with oars beat or
sails spread before the wind. He
defies these to deny it—Adriatic
reefs, Cyclades in seaswept circles,
proud Rhodes or rolling Hellespont,
rough and wild Black Sea bay, where
his sea-worn husk was young then,
saplings on the shoulders of Cytorus
shivered, every leaf turned verse.

Pontic town, mountain boxwoods,
your knowledge of this is intimate.
On your peak he stirred from seed,
was cut to measure, deck and hands
to beat the waterline across your bay.
From there he bore his master home
through all the sea's empty rage,
whether port or starboard wind would
rise, or Jove dead on across the stern.
No prayers needed to shoreline gods
until he came at last from the sea's
rim to this lake like glass.

But that was all before. Hidden now
he mellows to quiet age, a gift to you,
twin Castor and Castor's twin.

Catullus 4 is about the *phaselus*' past life and the attempt to recall it. Appropriately, then, the poem is constructed as a kind of mirror or echo. Lines 1–24 are divided into balanced halves, 12 lines in length.[26] Lines 1–12 trace the boat's journey backward geographically and temporally from the Adriatic coast past the Cyclades, Rhodes, and Propontis to the Black Sea, where it was once a forest. Lines 13–24 replay the journey forward, from the slopes of Cytorus and the bay of Amastris all the way to the *limpidum lacum*, which several editors speculate is Lake Garda. This assumes that the *phaselus* actually transported Catullus from Bithynia to his villa at Sirmio, and, while this assumption may unnecessarily limit the poem's meaning to the real, it does make sense, given its structural symmetry, for the lake to be at least fictionally in Italy.[27] The final three lines return to the present, describing the *phaselus*' old age, dedicated to Castor and Castor's twin, Pollux.

In its movement in time and space backward to the boat's origin and then forward again to its self-reflective retirement, the poem mirrors itself. Its syntax often relies on conjunctive or contrastive pairs: *sive palmulis . . . sive linteo* (4–5); *horridamque Thraciam Propontida trucemve Ponticum sinum* (8–9); *post phaselus antea* (10); *Amastri Pontice et Cytore buxifer* (13); *fuisse et esse* (14); *in cacumine . . . in aequore* (16–17); *laeva sive dextera* (19); *a mari novissimo . . . ad . . . limpidum lacum* (23–24); *prius fuere nunc* (25). Each of these pairs plays movement or difference in meaning against repetition and reflexivity in construction, e.g., in lines 8–9 the narrative moves from Propontis to the Black Sea, but the construction, grammatically, stays put: adjective + adjective + noun = adjective + adjective + noun. This places a peculiar stress on connectives like *et*, *que*, *ve*, and *sive*, deployed like a series of double-sided mirrors on either side of which constructions are often strictly parallel.

The poem's acoustic texture resonates with its thematic, structural, and grammatical reflexivity. Repetitions and near-repetitions of words are frequent, ensuring at least one verbal echo from line to line: *neque*, *nequisse*, and *neque* (3, 4, 22); *sive* (4, 5, 19, 20); *negat* and *negare* (6, 7); *Propontida*, *Ponticum*, and *Pontica* (9, 13); *comata* and *coma* (11, 12);

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26 As Courtney 1997.115 notes.

27 See Courtney 1997 for a realist reading of the poem that attempts to fix the date of the *phaselus*' voyage from Asia Minor and of its dedication. Forsyth 1986.115 points out that "the poem may well be a pure poetic fiction."

Cytorio and *Cytore* (11, 13); *tuo* (16, 17). The repetition of sounds through assonance and alliteration is even more pervasive, as a brief analysis of lines 3–5 shows.

> neque ullius natantis impetum trabis
> nequisse praeterire sive palmulis
> opus foret volare sive linteo.

The repeated *t* sounds in line 3 are interwoven with *n*, *m*, and *s*, while, in line 4, *s* predominates with *p*, *r*, and *l*. Line 5 collects and restates these consonants. Vowel sounds are also repeated within and between lines (*a* in line 3, *i* and *e* in 4, *o* and *e* in 5). Obviously, syllabic groupings and patterns also echo each other: *palmulis* uses different consonants, but essentially repeats the pattern of *natantis*. In doing this, it draws upon the *p* and *m* sounds of *impetum* and the *ul* in *ullius*; it also repeats the *is* of *nequisse* and *trabis*. This reverses palindromically the *si* at the beginning of *sive*, so that the pattern *trabIS nequISSe . . . SIve palmulIS . . . SIve* is recognizable. The phrase *sive palmulis* might be called an aural anagram; compare *vidETIS hospITES* in line 1, *praeterire* in line 4, or *litus insulasve* in line 7.

The duplication of sounds in complex patterns is assisted by the markers shared between grammatical forms, most obviously the repeated infinitives and superlative in lines 14–19. In addition to the *esse/isse* alternation created by the infinitives, these lines match 3–5 in the density of exact, palindromic, or anagrammatic echoes (*ex origine . . . dicit in cacumine, tot per impotentia, freta . . . dextera*). The meter, pure iambic trimeter without resolutions or spondees, also contributes to the effect, ordering the poem at a basic level into strict sets of paired syllables. Word divisions impose additional patterns that themselves can be reflexive. For instance, amphibrachs (short-long-short) are frequently echoed by their inversion, cretics (long-short-long): *phaselus . . . hospites*, *natantis . . . impetum*, *nequisse . . . palmulis*, *Amastri . . . buxifer*, *vocaret . . . Iuppiter*.

The final line of the poem, *gemelle Castor et gemelle Castoris*, addresses the divine twins with an almost precise doubling of words. This summarizes the aesthetic of reflexivity that has governed the entire poem from its content (reminiscence), to its thematic structure (the journey back, the journey forward), to the predominance of syntactic pairs, to, perhaps most importantly, its manipulation of sound. The line verges on exact semantic repetition around the central *et*, betrayed by the genitive marker

-is on *Castoris*. However, if *et* is taken with *Castor* the line does repeat itself exactly metrically: amphibrach + cretic / amphibrach + cretic. The "extra" syllable itself is the last iteration of one of the poem's most prominent sounds, *is/si*, and the pairing of *et* against *-is* around the exact repetition of *gemelle Castor* may recall the alternation of *vidETIS* with *hospITES* in the opening line.

Castor and Pollux are constant companions conceptually, but their myth ends with them always apart physically, spending alternate days in the underworld and on Olympus.[28] They share the same fate, a partial immortality, but never the same space. Because of their association with navigation and St. Elmo's fire, it is appropriate that the *phaselus* dedicate itself to them. But their own relation to each other suggests a timeless, symbiotic identity that is nonetheless violated by separation and death. The immortal twins are never together, and this glosses the problem of the mirror/echo, the failure of recollection that structures the entire poem. This is the key to its acoustic texture, which appropriates onomatopoeia in order to translate a fundamental Hellenistic theme from the page back into sound. As it drifts apart from linear meaning, Alexandrian play with sound threatens to become perverse: a synchronic (or atemporal) shuffling of doublets and echoes, artful babble in which acoustic pleasure becomes an end in itself, obliterating the subject/object positions normally guaranteed by sense. This might be called acoustic narcissism or incest.

In several of the obscene poems, twinning indeed becomes a figure for physical and poetic perversity. In poem 57, Caesar and Mamurra are "diseased equally, both twins, in one little bed both such learned little men, this one no more voracious an adulterer than that one, and both allied rivals of little girls."[29] Fitzgerald notes that in "calling the two men *gemelli*, Catullus not only claims that they are twins but also that they are 'double in form.' . . . The poem creates an endlessly adaptable pair, whose similarity in no way prevents them from a form of intercourse that is usually predicated on difference."[30] Slightly emended, this remark could describe the use of

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28 I am indebted to Sharon James for her observations on the significance of Castor and Pollux.

29 57.6–9: *morbosi pariter, gemelli utrique, / uno in lecticulo erudituli ambo, / non hic quam ille magis vorax adulter, / rivales socii puellularum*.

30 Fitzgerald 1995.85. On p. 85, n. 78, he notes that "Catullus' poetry is full of pairs. . . . Often this pairing implies a certain smugness on the part of the couple, but the obsessive doubling of poems like c. 31 . . . suggests that it is a stylistic idiom of Catullus."

sound in Catullus 4: "endlessly adaptable pairs, whose similarity *does* undermine a form of discourse (linguistic signification) usually predicated on difference." Acoustic reversibility as a poetic practice matches the sexual reversibility of pairs like Caesar and Mamurra; in either case, fundamental distinctions of subject and object are perversely obscured.

But difference always reasserts itself: one sound can never simply repeat another. Catullus 4 does not cross the barrier completely over into pure aural pleasure, since the echo of syllables that came before is always flawed, betrayed by differences that point to the inevitable requirements of time and sense. The memories of the *phaselus* cannot make present its life before, just as the divine twins Castor and Pollux can never be identical, joined together in the same place at the same time. Their separation by the barrier of death ties poem 4 together with another significant pair in the corpus, Catullus and his *frater*. In poem 101, Catullus points out the utter inability of the traditional funeral rites to make good his brother's loss. His death leaves Catullus, "carried through many peoples and many seas," no home to return to.[31] Faced with this gap, this poem, like poem 4, attempts to submerge linguistic difference in the play of sound: *atque in perpetuum, frater, ave atque vale*—just what Castor might say to Pollux. Thematically, and in terms of acoustic technique, this is a restatement of *gemelle Castor et gemelle Castoris*.

PHASELUS AND NAUTILUS

Despite the emphasis on the written text usually associated with Callimacheanism, this use of sound is related to Hellenistic precedents. Fordyce remarks that Catullus 4 "has something in common with a regular Hellenistic type of literary epigram, the ex-voto inscription written to accompany the dedication to a god of the tools of a man's trade that have served their day" (1961.96). He suggests several epigrams specifically on ships (e.g., *A.P.* 9.34 and 36) as parallels for Catullus 4, but, because it utilizes the same metaphor for poetry (past voyaging, retirement, reminiscence), perhaps the best thematic parallel is Callimachus' epigram on the nautilus.[32]

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31 Cf. Catullus 68.22, "with you our entire house has been buried," *tecum una tota est nostra sepulta domus*.

32 See also Courtney 1997.117 for verbal and thematic similarities between the two poems.

Κόγχος ἐγὼ, Ζεφυρῖτι, πάλαι τέρας· ἀλλὰ σὺ νῦν με,
Κύπρι, Σεληναίης ἄνθεμα πρῶτον ἔχεις,
ναυτίλος ὃς πελάγεσσιν ἐπέπλεον, εἰ μὲν ἀῆται,
τείνας οἰκείων λαῖφος ἀπὸ προτόνων,
εἰ δὲ Γαληναίη, λιπαρὴ θεός, οὖλος ἐρέσσων
ποσσὶν †ἵν᾽ ὡσπ† ἔργῳ τοὔνομα συμφέρεται,
ἔστ᾽ ἔπεσον παρὰ θῖνας Ἰουλίδας, ὄφρα γένωμαι
σοὶ τὸ περίσκεπτον παίγνιον, Ἀρσινόη,
μηδέ μοι ἐν θαλάμῃσιν ἔθ᾽ ὡς πάρος (εἰμὶ γὰρ ἄπνους)
τίκτηται νοτερῆς ὤεον ἀλκυόνος.
Κλεινίου ἀλλὰ θυγατρὶ δίδου χάριν· οἶδε γὰρ ἐσθλά
ῥέζειν καὶ Σμύρνης ἐστὶν ἀπ᾽ Αἰολίδος.

I am a conch shell, O Lady of Zephyrium, an ancient wonder. But now
you hold me, Aphrodite, Selenaia's first offering.
As a nautilus I sailed on the seas; if the wind would blow, spreading
the sail from the stays of my vessel, also my home,
if calm prevailed, that sleek Goddess, rowing fast with my feet—
you can see how properly named I was—
until I fell aground on the shores of Ioulis, so that I might become,
Arsinoe, your much-admired plaything,
and carry no longer in my chambers, as before—for I am becalmed—
the eggs of the sea-drenched halcyon.
But give favor to the daughter of Kleinios: she is properly
behaved, and she comes from Aeolian Smyrna.

Like Catullus 4, this poem is focused thematically on the contrast between past life (πάλαι τέρας) and present dedication (νῦν), in this case of the nautilus' shell to Arsinoe/Aphrodite of Zephyrium. This contrast produces a similarly complex, reflexive structure. On the one hand, the dedicatory "frame" (lines 1–2, 11–12) is balanced against an eight-line "inset" that describes the nautilus' earlier life; on the other, the epigram

falls into six-line halves, marked by the beaching of the nautilus at the beginning of line 7 (ἔστ᾽ ἔπεσον). This produces a brief return to the "present" of the poem, the conch as περίσκεπτον παίγνιον in line 8, contrasted with its past service as the incubator of the halcyon's eggs. The structure of lines 7–12, present-past-present, thus repeats the movement of the entire poem from frame to inset and back to the frame—perhaps a subtle, technopaegnic reflection of the whorls of the shell itself. As in Catullus 4, there are syntactic doublets that reinforce the thematic balance between past and present: εἰ μὲν ἀῆται (3) and εἰ δὲ Γαληναίη (5); ὄφρα γένωμαι (7) and μηδέ μοι . . . τίκτηται (9–10). There are also metrical and aural echoes. For instance, lines 1–2 and 11–12 share a similar pattern of caesurae, with similar word-endings (Ζεφυρῖτι and θυγατρὶ, Σεληναίης and Σμύρνης, κόγχος and Αἰολίδος).

Prescott correctly saw that the nautilus and the halcyon are brought together by a substitution of the former's shell for the latter's nest.[33] However, this substitution is not pedantic but metaphoric. The halcyon is known for its rareness and delicate coloration, and carries with it general associations with song and poetry, especially lyric. It has a specific, metamorphic relationship with the lyric poet Alcman, who prays for transformation into the male halcyon, the cerylos.[34] The halcyon's woven

33 Prescott 1921. Gow and Page 1965 assume that the poem, if not actually inscribed on a shell, commemorates a real dedication by a real girl and that its unusual length is caused by Callimachus' desire to display his quasi-scientific lore. Gutzwiller 1992 retains the realist approach, but demonstrates convincingly that the nautilus and the halcyon have links with sexuality and marriage that make the inset relevant. This reading is intended to complement Gutzwiller's; Selenaia's implicit request for a calm and stable union throws into relief the poem's metaphorical treatment of the rupture between cultural past and present.

34 Alcman fr. 26. Our source for the passage, Antigonus of Carystus, reports that the cerylos was carried in old age on the back of its mate. Two references to the halcyon are found in Aristotle, who corroborates his descriptions of the bird's behavior with accounts from the lyric poets. In *Hist. Anim.* 5.9.542b, he states, "It is the rarest thing to see a halcyon. It is hardly ever seen except at the time of the setting of the Pleiades and at the solstice. And where ships are lying at anchor, it hovers around a boat for a while, and then suddenly disappears. Stesichorus mentions this habit of the bird's" (trans. Peck). In *Hist. Anim.* 5.8.542b4, he quotes the fragment of Simonides that gives us our first mention of the Halcyon days, fourteen days of calm surrounding the winter solstice, the ἱερὰν παιδοτρόφον ποικίλας ἀλκυόνος. Ibycus implicitly confirms the rarity of the bird (Athenaeus 9.388E), placing the "slender-winged" halcyon "on the extreme tips of the branches" together with exotically colored ducks. The final appearance of the halcyon in pre-Hellenistic poetry is a fragment of Hedyle's elegiac narrative *Scylla*, in which Glaucus offers Scylla "playthings" (ἀθύρματα), either the "gifts of the conch" or "children of the halcyon still wingless."

nest, for which the shell substitutes, suggests the widespread use of spinning and weaving as metaphors for poetic composition.[35] Moreover, the association of both animals with the sea may recall Callimachus' programmatic comparison of the sea (Homer), the muddy Assyrian River (contemporary epic), and the trickling stream (his own poetry) in the *Hymn to Apollo* 105–13. If the relation between nautilus and halcyon is a metaphor for oral poetry, the "before," the conch's inscribed surface represents the "now": written, Callimachean poetry. The use of the nautilus' life and dedication as a metaphor for oral versus written poetry explains the set of thematic oppositions developed by the poem's otherwise puzzling inset.

oral : written
nautilus : conch
past : present
mobile : fixed
sea (fluid) : land (dry)
living : inanimate
internal : external
full : hollow
with breath : without breath (ἄπνους)

The poem ends with an allusion to Mimnermus (Σμύρνης . . . Αἰολίδος; Aeolian Smyrna no longer existed in Callimachus' time), an apt illustration of poetry's new technique and a gauge of its distance from the past.[36] The nautilus comes ashore at Ioulis, on Ceos; this was the birthplace of both Simonides and his younger kinsman, Bacchylides. Simonides, besides being a lyric poet, was the inventor of a new system of mnemonics

35 The interwoven, watertight nest mentioned by Ovid (*Met*. 11.415–748) is described in great detail by Aristotle (*Hist. Anim*. 616a), Aelian (*Nat. Anim*. 9.17), and Plutarch (*Mor*. 494A).

36 Aeolian Smyrna ceased to exist in the Archaic period. The new city of Smyrna was built by Lysimachus (onetime husband of Arsinoe), apparently according to the intentions of Alexander. This city, Strabo reports, was excellent in all respects save an inadequate sewer system. Twenty stades separated the new city from the remains of its namesake. Gow and Page note that the new city could be called Aeolian "only by a stretch of the imagination," and they suggest that Callimachus borrowed the phrase from Mimnermus fr. 9 or *Epigr. Hom.* 4.6. Since the phrase occupies the same metrical position in the Mimnermus fragment as it does here, it is perhaps the more probable candidate.

and an improved alphabet, intellectual activities that directly anticipated Callimachus' own cultural position.[37]

A similar set of oppositions runs through Catullus 4: present versus past, mobile versus fixed, full versus empty, with wind versus becalmed, and living versus dedicated (inanimate). In this light, both poems are programmatic. But while Callimachus presents his text as a visual object, a περίσκεπτον παίγνιον that represents the shift from oral poetry with πνοή to seen poetry ἄπνους, Catullus produces an emphatically voiced text, an acoustic *technopaegnion*. This is a crucial recasting of the thematics of allusion and ekphrasis. Catullus 4 converts allusion, as an issue of cultural memory and reflection, to aural technique, where it can address a fundamental problem of language itself: its inability, as a signifying system founded on difference, to make fully present the phenomenal objects to which it refers.

VISION AND SOUND IN NARRATIVE STASIS

Kaja Silverman remarks that "the voice is the site of perhaps the most radical of all subjective divisions—the division between meaning and materiality" (1988.44). Catullus 4, through the intensity of its acoustic technique, calls attention to this division within the subject; at the same time, its thematic affiliation with Hellenistic epigram recalls that genre's self-conscious awareness of a cultural division. It is not possible, then, to place Catullus 4 within an unbroken Greco-Roman tradition of performative poetry, as if the Hellenistic period had never happened. Its patterns of sound are so intricately constructed that they appear poised to overwhelm referential content and stand apart as an aesthetic field unto themselves—except that the content is precisely about this, the loss of the *phaselus*' prior life and its replacement by reminiscence, by signs inadequate to restore the loss. What seems like onomatopoeia consequently does not confirm a "natural" relation between signifiers and signified where content would come first and determine sound. It emphasizes the opposite, the artificial patterning of signifiers as content fades from view.

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37 Carson 1992 argues that Simonides' poetry reacts against the reduction of the world to visible appearances, either in painting or in verbal mimesis, by suggesting truths beyond the reach of mimesis. However, his involvement with these issues anticipates cultural developments that would lead to the creation of poems as primarily visual objects.

Temporally, the *phaselus* is at the limit of its life, facing a dissolution into elementary fragments that mirror its origin as leaves and trees on the slopes of Cytorus. It is liminal geographically, sheltered at the edge of Lake Garda far from the adventure and danger of the open sea—Garda is home for Catullus, but it situates him peripherally with respect to Roman political and social life, as it removes the *phaselus* from the realm in which he was the fastest of ships. Narratively, it is becalmed, capable only of recollection. This parallels the position of other figures in Catullus whose gender construction has drawn more critical attention, Ariadne and Attis in particular. Ariadne speaks in isolation and abandonment from the shores of Dia, seemingly at the end of her life; Attis speaks from the shore of Asia Minor, utterly cut off from the community s/he knew before, and condemned to a life without further history or development. Neither the marginal position of the *phaselus* nor the intricacy of its acoustic technique are unique to poem 4. In each of these cases, Catullus constructs hypercomplex patterns of sound around (or on the surface of) spatio-temporal "pockets" characterized by temporal, spatial, and narrative isolation. In the instances of Ariadne and Attis, acoustic technique bears comparison with the visual presentation of the body, significantly connected, in poem 64, with ekphrasis.

Ariadne is presented through the description of the tapestry on Thetis' bridal couch, set within the description of Peleus' house arrayed for the wedding, set, in turn, within the initial "frame," the voyage of the Argo. The wedding interrupts the voyage, and the ekphrasis of the tapestry defers the wedding.[38] The reader is invited to look upon this scene through the eyes of "all Thessaly" (*tota Thessalia*, 32–33), satiated, in line 267, "by gazing eagerly" (*cupide spectando*). This suggests that visual fascination is the appropriate reaction to the text; moreover, the object of the gaze shifts from an aesthetic object, the tapestry, already tinged erotically by its placement on the wedding couch, to the body of Ariadne (64.60–67):

> quem procul ex alga maestis Minois ocellis,
> saxea ut effigies bacchantis, prospicit, eheu,
> prospicit et magnis curarum fluctuat undis,

38 As Fitzgerald (1995.142) notes, "For Catullan criticism, the poem has been something of an embarrassment; precious and mannerist in style and bizarre in form, it offers us a feast for the senses while apparently denying us the kind of formal synopsis and thematic coherence that would allow us to fix our minds on higher things."

non flavo retinens subtilem vertice mitram,
non contecta levi velatum pectus amictu,
non tereti strophio lactentis vincta papillas,
omnia quae toto delapsa e corpore passim
ipsius ante pedes fluctus salis alludebant.

From the beach and seaweed, sad-eyed, she
watches him, far away, gazes like a bacchant
made of stone, and the storm-wave of sorrow sweeps
her up—her golden hair comes undone, the delicate
tunic slips down her torso, her milk-white breasts
are left unbound, and all the clothes that slide off
her body waves wash all around her feet.

She is fixed like a statue and her clothing falls away; the description moves down her body, from blond hair, to torso, to breasts, to the waves playing around her feet. The nudity of her entire body is thus suggested, but specific details are omitted between nipples and toes. This way of representing Ariadne's body, which suggests but conceals its sexual difference, agrees well with Mulvey's definition of the scopophilic representation of the female body in film.[39] Scopophilia splits the female body into fragments that are aesthetically and erotically overvalued—fetishes—in order to delay the explicit revelation of genital difference.

Mulvey observes of the fetishized woman, "her visual presence tends to work against the development of a story-line, to freeze the flow of action in moments of erotic contemplation" (1989.19). She notes a similar effect on space: "One part of a fragmented body destroys the Renaissance space, the illusion of depth demanded by the narrative; it gives flatness, the quality of a cut-out or icon, rather than verisimilitude, to the screen" (1989.20). The description of Ariadne in 60–67 arrests the narrative in favor of static, erotic contemplation; the description of her entrancement at the

39 Mulvey 1989. Mulvey's approach to the gaze and visual representations of women has been widely used in film theory, literary studies, art history, and classics. See Fredrick 1995.269, n.12 and 270, n.13 for bibliography; see also now Petersen 1997 for an application of film theory to the representation of women on Greek vases. Burgin 1992 notes the danger of simplifying Mulvey's complex, if brief, account of visual pleasure. See Fredrick 1992 and Fitzgerald 1995.144–49 for similar discussions of Catullus' depiction of Ariadne in terms of film theory, with comparisons to wall paintings; see Fredrick 1997 for the prominence of scopophilia and voyeurism in the representation of the *puella* in elegy.

sight of Theseus (86–102) has a similar effect, as does the second description of her in isolation on the beach after the departure of Theseus (121–31). Ariadne's body appears as a collection of aesthetically perfected fragments, and this metaphorizes the way the poem itself is constructed: a series of arrests in time and space, each with a polished, self-contained, iconic quality. The entire account of Ariadne appears as an inset, with only tangential connections to the outer frame; this is also true of the story of Aegeus' grief, recessed within the Ariadne section, and the song of the Parcae that follows it.

"The illusion of depth demanded by the narrative" is consistently lost in 64, in the deflection of spatio-temporal progress through the major sections of the poem. This fetishism, however, is not only visual. It also operates at the level of word order and acoustic technique, line after line. For instance, lines 63–65 offer a concentrated set of variations on interlocking adjectives and nouns.

> non *flavo* retinens **subtilem** *vertice* **mitram**,
> non contecta *levi* **velatum pectus** *amictu*,
> non *tereti strophio* **lactentis** vincta **papillas** . . .

The changes are rung on noun-adjective placement: in 63, adjective a, adjective b, noun a, noun b; in 64, adjective a, adjective b, noun b, noun a; in 65, adjective a, noun a, adjective b, noun b. The placement of the participle modifying Ariadne varies in each line: in between adjectives a and b in 63, outside the adjective-noun bundle in 64, in between adjective b and noun b in 65.

A lifetime of training teaches us to unscramble such arrangements to arrive at a meaning in the linear progression of a sentence—but Catullus' practice throughout 64 significantly deflects expectations for word order even in Latin poetry. According to Fordyce's numbers, 58 of the 408 lines in the poem, or 1 in 7, show a parallel or chiastic arrangement of two nouns and two adjectives, compared to the average of 1 line out of 43 in Virgil's *Aeneid*. The most striking instances of this play with interlocking word order are the so-called "golden lines," which feature the interlocked arrangement of two nouns and two adjectives across a centrally placed verb or participle; e.g., *irrita ventosae linquens promissa procellae* (59). There are 27 golden lines in poem 64, an average of about 1 every 15 lines—an extremely high percentage. In addition, there are 13 lines of the pattern displayed in line 63, *non flavo retinens subtilem vertice mitram*, in which

the verb or participle is displaced by one position from the center. A fascination with patterns of sound coincides with these intricacies of word order. To choose only one example, in line 64 the repeated sound *-ect-* ties together the words *contecta* and *pectus*, bracketing the pair *levi velatum* with its aural palindrome "levivel." At the same time, the *a* of *amictu* picks up the *a* at the end of *contecta* and the middle of *velatum*; the *-ct-* of *amictu* picks up the *-ct-* in *contecta* and *pectus*, while the *u* at the end echoes the *-um* at the end of *velatum*. Thus *amictu* comes close to condensing in a single word the patterns of sound distributed across the line.

Just as in Catullus 4, these techniques of word order and sound, while certainly artful, are not "disciplined and restrained" in that they do not have a clearly subordinate relation to reference, to the linear accumulation of meaning. Rather, they impede progress through the line, much as the pattern of insets in the poem deflects motion toward a coherent story or plot, "freezing the flow" of poetic language in fragments—patterns for static contemplation that, given the model of Ariadne's body, are both aesthetic and erotic. As Sharrock observes of Myrrha's transformation in *Met*. 10.489–502, "Ovid's vocabulary confuses tree and woman, fusing the two halves of the metamorphosis into a distilled drop of synchronic representation that plays against the linear progression of the narrative" (1996.120).

Catullus' acoustic technique is elaborated around loci of temporal and spatial stasis—the *phaselus* in retirement, Catullus at his brother's tomb, Ariadne on the beach, the lock of Berenice fixed in the stars. These pockets are often connected with reminiscence and inset structures, making narrative more reflexive than progressive. This, in turn, suggests a model for sound as a recursive aesthetic pattern rather than a support for sense. This can be connected with the theme of gender slippage so pronounced in Catullus and the elegiac poets. Kaja Silverman argues that the female voice in film (and film theory) typically appears as patterned and rhythmic, but not fully coherent. It is an "acoustic mirror" that first surrounds the child as a kind of nurturing womb, but is subsequently rejected as a trap, an "umbilical net" impeding progress toward mastery of the symbolic (Silverman 1988.81):

> Whereas the mother's voice initially functions as the acoustic mirror in which the child discovers its identity and voice, it later functions as the acoustic mirror in which the male subject hears all the repudiated elements

> of his infantile babble. However, the very reversibility which facilitates these introjections and projections also threatens to undermine them—to reappropriate from the male subject what he has incorporated, or to return to him what he has thrown away.

The maternal voice as acoustic mirror involves a departure from normal time and space in narrative much like that suggested for visual perspective in Mulvey's account of scopophilia. It gives flatness, making of sound a patterned surface seemingly infinite and timeless, without the depth provided by the recognition of linear meaning. As the passage from Silverman indicates, this use of sound is both profoundly appealing, offering a symbiotic loss of self in prelinguistic noise, and profoundly threatening because it suggests the loss of the self.

Catullus 64 hovers on the cusp of the Golden Age. It looks back to the time when gods and men coexisted, before agriculture, navigation, and war, and it looks forward, in the song of the Parcae, to the savage career of Achilles and the desolation of contemporary Rome. It hovers across a similar boundary in its visual and acoustic technique, where the disavowal of sexual difference in the treatment of Ariadne's body is matched by a disavowal of narrative progress in the pursuit of complex patterns of sound and word order. But the poem nonetheless cannot remain at a narrative stop because of the epic plots that impinge constantly on its margins: the departure of Theseus, the arrival of Dionysus, the birth of Achilles, and the slaughter of the Trojan War. In the same way, its visual/acoustic fascination is broken by the eventual, unstoppable recognition of meaning, line after line.

An erotic body, that of the "counterfeit woman" Attis, is crucial to the way the perspective is constructed in poem 63, as the representation of Ariadne's body is in poem 64. Attis is cast into a no-man's-land of opaque forest, mountains, and snow, a changeless and timeless topography that is essentially the body of Cybele. By the poem's end, Attis becomes virtually an appendage of this landscape; as she puts it in line 69, *ego mei pars*, "I, a part of myself." Attis' body, like Ariadne's, is subject to dissolution into pieces: "limbs without the man," "hands white as snow," "delicate fingers," "rosy lips" (*membra sine viro, 6; niveis manibus*, 8; *teneris digitis*, 10; *roseis labellis*, 74). Poem 63 displays the same complex acoustic techniques as 4 and 64, but harnessed to the galliambic meter. With its sequence of strongly stressed iambs, a fixed caesura, and the quick succession of

syllables at its end, this meter asserts the materiality of language almost violently. For instance, lines 6–11 are so dense with interwoven word order and patterns of sound that they overwhelm the impetus to resolve them into meaningful signifiers.

> itaque ut relicta sensit sibi membra sine viro,
> etiam recente terrae sola sanguine maculans,
> niveis citata cepit manibus leve tympanum,
> tympanum tuum, Cybebe, tua, mater, initia.
> quatiensque terga tauri teneris cava digitis
> canere haec suis adorta est tremebunda comitibus.

In poem 63, visual and acoustic fetishism together constitute Attis' castrated body. This does not automatically mean "unpleasure," as Mulvey's argument would suggest. Silverman emphasizes that castration involves not just the organ itself, but the loss of subjectivity, pleasurable in its suggestion of a return to symbiosis, but threatening in its intimation of death. This ambiguity is particularly concentrated around the female voice as the embodiment of prelinguistic but nonetheless patterned sound. Pre-phallic enclosure in the female voice is depicted as both blissful and entrapping, a "music of the spheres" and a "uterine night," an ambiguity that corresponds well with the mixture of pleasure and terror in Catullus 63.[40]

While its content is not explicitly erotic, Catullus 4 realizes in theme and aural texture the same ambiguous loss of identity as the castration of Attis and his service to the *Magna Mater*. Skinner has suggested (1993b.120) that victims in Catullus (the sparrow, Attis, Ariadne, Berenice's lock, Catullus as fallen flower) are always sexualized; I would suggest further that poetic language in Catullus is itself sexualized around the outcast position of these victims. It is broken up into complex patterns that are erotic because of their quality as surface, as envelope, beyond or prior to the recognition of meaning. These patterns seduce the eye, the tongue, and, ultimately, the body, precisely by offering it the mirror of its own fragmentation.

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40 The phrase "music of the spheres" is used to describe the female voice by Rosolato 1974.81, translated by Silverman 1988.85; the phrase "uterine night" comes from Chion 1982.57, translated by Silverman 1988.74.

PERFORMANCE SPACE

Catullus' fetishization of spatio-temporal arrest, both visually and acoustically, is important for our understanding of its most probable performance context. A particularly interesting point of comparison is offered by the painted decoration of domestic space, the bedrooms and dining rooms where, as Skinner suggests, his poetry was performed. Bettina Bergmann (1996) has recently analyzed room E in the House of Jason (IX.5.18) in Pompeii. The room contains central paintings of Phaedra, Medea, and Helen, each frozen at a "pregnant moment" of private, emotional stress: Phaedra wonders if she should seduce Hippolytus, Medea if she can and should kill her children, and Helen if she should abandon Menelaus for Paris. As Bergmann points out, each woman is captured at the point of transgressing the bounds that frame her architecturally and constrain her socially. She suggests that Ovid's *Heroides*, as emotional monologues by women similarly frozen in time and space, offer a useful literary comparison with the heroines in the House of Jason and that the paintings are an invitation to supply words from literary texts—Ovid, Roman or Greek tragedians—to give voice to these arrested images (Bergmann 1996.212):

> Recounting the characters' words only enhances the protracted moments, which appear frozen, like the tableaux created in performances by a sudden interruption—here perhaps that of the viewer. Visual stasis blocks narrative progression . . . resulting in a "dilatory space" of retard and postponement. The viewer experiences no catharsis that a performance might provide, as three critical moments, like cliff-hangers, perpetually charge the space with anticipation.[41]

Many characters in Catullus—Ariadne, Attis, Berenice's lock, the *phaselus*—similarly occupy a "dilatory space," set off, like Ovid's heroines, by abandonment and recollection. It is significant in this regard that Ariadne's presentation in Catullus is matched by the fetishized, scopophilic treatment of her body in many domestic wall paintings. Whether she is

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41 The phrase "dilatory space" is taken from Barthes 1977.

abandoned by Theseus or discovered by Dionysus, her body is the object of an arrested gaze, manipulated and displayed to the viewer so that breasts and buttocks are revealed, but her genitals remain concealed.[42] It is not simply that Ariadne is popular on Pompeian walls: these techniques define the representation of women in Third and Fourth Style painting, and they share fundamental affinities with contemporary poetic practices. The "dilatory space" in the paintings is played out across the surface of the female body and, if the viewer supplies Catullus' words while viewing the paintings, they provide an acoustic technique to match the fragmented visual treatment.

The words of Catullus, Propertius, Ovid, and other Latin poets would not only be supplied mentally by the viewers of such paintings: there is no question that their works were customarily "performed" in the dining rooms and *cubicula* of the elite—read aloud by the poets themselves, by trained slave readers, or by the elite household owners, who might also study them textually. Simply put, the most common Roman environment for the reading and study of poetry was, undoubtedly, these decorated domestic rooms. Here, then, the central problems and practices of Callimachean poetry stop being recondite literary issues and become part of Roman material culture. The experience of "dilatory space" is not just a matter of *looking* at the pictures or *imagining* the words, but of the physical texture of poetic language in performance, as a pleasure (and a danger) in its own right, operating side by side with the ambiguous pleasures of food, dancing, clothing, and perfume. This brings narrative stasis, the pregnant moment, into the viewer's own voice, "feminized" not only in its imaginative or referential content, but in its very structure and physical resonance. This seems to offer an essential contrast with the use of words in oratory in Roman public space—law courts, *fora*, the senate.

As Gleason demonstrates, making sense in oratory is a fundamental part of making men: the surface of art must never seem to dominate the substance of meaning, and the language of the body, like one's verbal language, ought to appear to be no language—no art—at all (Gleason 1995.103):

> The correct use of the voice touches on all three of these factors: the voice is the physical instrument through which the orator's natural endowment finds expression, it can be

42 See Fredrick 1995.272–73 for analysis and illustrations of specific examples.

> enhanced or corrupted by training, and it also functions as
> a sign in the symbolic language of masculine identity.

The performance of Catullus and subsequent Latin poets must carry equally important messages about the voice and masculinity. That is, by calling attention to the artifice of its sounds, and by refusing to respect the "natural" primacy of meaning over acoustic pleasure, Catullus' poetry exposes the constructed nature of the voice, and hence the body. The Callimachean emphasis on language as medium (rather than on its referential capacity) inevitably calls attention to the body as cultural medium, rather than natural given. This seems a manifestly incorrect use of the voice, and a highly improper, if compelling, message about gender for Roman culture.

> scilicet haec populo pexusque togaque recenti
> et natalicia tandem cum sardonyche albus
> sede leges celsa, liquido cum plasmate guttur
> mobile conlueris, patranti fractus ocello.
> tunc neque more probo videas nec voce serena
> ingentis trepidare Titos, cum carmina lumbum
> intrant et tremulo scalpuntur ubi intima versu.
>
> Certainly you'll read it to the public, in fresh toga
> and coiffure, from a high seat, all white with a
> birthday sardonyx, once you've lubricated your
> fluent throat with a liquid wash, batting your
> lascivious eyes. Then you'll see Titus' mighty
> Romans trembling in disgusting fashion, voices
> hardly calm, as the poems enter their loins and
> their insides are tickled by the trembling verse.

So Persius to his interlocutor on the effect of contemporary poetic performances (*Sat.* 1.15–21). Satire exaggerates, but what Persius describes—the erotic, gender-undermining effect of poetry when heard—is surely not beside the point for our understanding of Catullan acoustic technique, or the overall experience of the Roman *triclinium.* Gender slippage here is more than adopting the "feminine" imaginatively, as a kind of intellectual play, or putting it on like a hat one can then take off. It has a physical aspect because the voice, after all, does intersect the body, a connection all the more apparent in Roman culture, where vocal training

was routinely associated with physical regimen and gendered appearance. Catullan poetic discourse can, in this regard, be viewed as more haptic then representational in that it often "jams" meaning by emphasizing the tactile qualities of verse.[43]

We might wonder whether Catullus' acoustic technique, and the interplay it offers with theater and visual representation, constitutes a temporary self-indulgence for poet and audience or a more fundamental disjuncture in their culture. We might also question where and how this elaboration of "dilatory space" is balanced—in Catullus, elegy, and other forms of representation—against more traditional structures of narrative space, gender, and time.

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43 Richlin 1992.178 suggests a broad division between "open" discourses ("theory, mathematics, nonrepresentational art, music") and "closed" discourses ("humor, fantasy, narratives, film, and representational art"), arguing that "escape from hierarchy" is only possible in the former. The haptic qualities of Catullus and the Augustan poets make it difficult to put them entirely on the representational side and this complicates the assessment of their frequently violent sexual content.

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