

## CATULLI VERONENSIS LIBER

WENDELL CLAUSEN

Cui dono lepidum nouum libellum  
arida modo pumice expolitum?  
Corneli, tibi; namque tu solebas  
meas esse aliquid putare nugas  
iam tum, cum ausus es unus Italorum  
omne aeuum tribus explicare cartis  
doctis, Iuppiter, et laboriosis.  
quare habe tibi quidquid hoc libelli,  
qualecumque quod, o patrona uirgo,  
plus uno maneat perenne saeclo.

WITH this brief and unobtrusive poem, for which almost no precedent exists, Catullus introduces himself and his book. Commentators cite Meleager:

Μούσα φίλα, τίνι τάνδε φέρεις πάγκαρπον ἀοιδάν,  
ἢ τίς ὁ καὶ τεύξας ὕμνοθετᾶν στέφανον;  
ἄνυσε μὲν Μελέαγρος, ἀριζᾶλψ δὲ Διοκλεῖ  
μναμόσυνον ταύταν ἐξεπόνθησε χάριν.

[*Anth. Pal.* 4. 1. 1–4]

The Muse and a receptive friend: there is a similarity, apparent and superficial. Catullus knew Meleager's poem, and perhaps was even aware of it as he composed his own; but what has the studied simplicity of Catullus to do with Meleager's long and intricate conceit? Catullus' poem is personal and Roman. Publication of Nepos' *Chronica* offered the pretext; not that Catullus feigned a gratitude he did not feel, rather that his gratitude cannot have been altogether literary. Cornelius Nepos was a fellow Transpadane, considerably older, with important friends in Rome (Atticus, Cicero . . .); and, being a man of letters, he had bestowed some words of praise or encouragement. It is not likely that Catullus set a high value on Nepos' work or his literary judgment. Years later Nepos maintained that L. Julius Calidus (it is suggestive that Nepos gives the name in full) was by far the most elegant poet the age had produced after the death of Lucretius and Catullus: "L. Iulium Calidum, quem post Lucretii Catullique mortem multo elegantissimum poetam nostram tulisse aetatem uere uideor posse contendere."<sup>1</sup> It was not then to his patron that Catullus looked for pro-

1. *Att.* 12. 4, begun about 35 and finished after Atticus' death at the end of March in 32. Had Nepos forgotten Catullus' friends Calvus and Cinna? Was he too old, or temperamentally disinclined, to appreciate Cornelius Gallus and Virgil's *Eclogues*? Only one conclusion is plausible (the essay of C. Cichorius, *Römische Studien* [Leipzig, 1922], pp. 88–91, to transform *l. iulium calidum* into *licinium caluam* may be disregarded): like his friend Cicero, Nepos did not care for the *cantores Euphronis*. A fit recipient therefore of a book containing short poems in which there is little or nothing overtly neoteric—poems such as he and other dabblers would attempt from time to time—but hardly of a book containing (say) *Peliaco quondam*. It is absurd to suppose that Catullus praises the *Chronica* "as a work conforming to the canons of that school and possessing the standard Alex-

tection through the years: it was to his patron Muse,<sup>2</sup> and by implication his readers.

Was this *libellus*—a papyrus roll—substantially the same as the *liber*—a codex or book in the modern sense—that miraculously appeared in Verona toward the end of the thirteenth century, the collection of poems as it now is? There may be a delicate irony in the contrast between Catullus' poems—odd, pretty sorts of things—and the regular history of Nepos; but no *libellus* would contain so many lines of poetry, nor could the long poems be described, even playfully, as *nugae*, in particular not the epyllion, which must originally have formed a *libellus* by itself, like the *Culex* (of about the same length), or the *Ciris* (somewhat longer), or the *Smyrna*, or the *Io*. Catullus' *libellus* does not therefore correspond to the *liber* of Catullus.

Contrary opinion exists.<sup>3</sup> But any effort, however subtle or elaborate, to show that the *Book of Catullus of Verona* is an artistic whole, arranged and published by the poet himself, founders on an obvious hard fact: the physical limitation of the ancient papyrus roll. And for Catullus, as for those before and after him, the papyrus roll was the only "book." Too much is now known about the Greek roll, and too much can be inferred about the Latin, to leave room for doubt or special pleading. Book 5 of Lucretius, though shorter than Catullus' putative book<sup>4</sup> by a thousand lines or so, is still extraordinarily long (1457 lines). An ordinary roll would contain a book of Virgil's *Aeneid*, of Ovid's *Amores* or *Ars amatoria*, of Statius' *Thebaid*, of Juvenal, of Martial: a roll containing, on average, between 700 and 900 lines.<sup>5</sup>

What, then, did the *libellus* dedicated to Nepos contain? No precise

---

andrian virtues," or that Nepos had written "a neoteric historical work" (whatever that might be): so F. Cairns, *Mnemosyne* 22 (1969): 153 and 154, in an otherwise useful article. Cf. F. Jacoby, *Apollodors Chronik*, Philologische Untersuchungen, vol. 16 (Berlin, 1902), p. 34: "Nepos in seinen 3 büchern chronik eigentlich nichts weiter gethan [hat], als für die griechische geschichte getreulich, wenn auch nicht ohne grobe und leichte versehen, Apollodor übersetzt" (quoted by E. Fraenkel, *Gnomon* 34 [1962]: 259) and what remains of Nepos, *passim*. L. Julius Calidus was a rich landowner in Africa, proscribed *in absentia* by Antony's chief of staff, P. Volumnius, and saved by Atticus, who had previously sheltered Volumnius from Antony's enemies—a friend of Atticus, and presumably of Nepos. Of Atticus' interest in poetry Nepos remarks (18. 5): "attigit poeticon quoque, credimus, ne eius expers esset suauitatis." Subconscious autobiography?

2. She may require some further defense, since Bergk's uncouth conjecture ("die abscheuliche Konjektur *qualecumque quidem est, patroni ut ergo*," Fraenkel, *Gnomon* 34 [1962]: 259) is cited by R. A. B. Mynors in his spare apparatus criticus (Oxford, 1958) and strongly advocated by C. J. Fordyce in his commentary (Oxford, 1961). The evidence against Bergk—see *TLL*, 5.2: 759—is clear and damning. The genitive (usually an abstract noun) with *ergo* occurs in the Twelve Tables, in Cato *De agricultura*, Cicero *De legibus*, Livy, and a very few other prose writers, and in only three poets: Lucretius 3. 78 and 5. 1246, Virgil *Aen.* 6. 670, and Silius Italicus 6. 134. In every instance but one *ergo* follows immediately on the genitive. The solitary exception is Arnobius (*Adu. nat.* 7. 30: *honoris eis ergo*), on whose penchant for distorting idiomatic word order see P. Spindler, *De Arnobii genere dicendi* (Diss. Strassburg, 1901), pp. 63–73.

3. See T. P. Wiseman, *Catullan Questions* (Leicester, 1969), pp. 1–31; E. A. Schmidt, "Catullus Anordnung seiner Gedichte," *Philologus* 117 (1973): 215–42; and also K. Quinn, *Catullus: An Interpretation* (New York, 1973), pp. 9–20. My conclusions largely coincide with those of A. L. Wheeler, *Catullus and the Traditions of Ancient Poetry* (Berkeley, 1934), pp. 4–32.

4. Which would contain some 2480 lines by the "moderate computation" of R. Ellis, *A Commentary on Catullus*<sup>2</sup> (Oxford, 1889), p. 1, n. 1.

5. For exact figures see T. Birt, *Das antike Buchwesen* (Berlin, 1882), pp. 292–93; Birt's discussion of Catullus (pp. 401–413) is still valuable.

answer is possible; but a poem by Martial, a constant imitator of Catullus, and the dedicatory poem itself indicate an answer.

'Tis the season to be jolly, the Saturnalia. Martial invites Silius Italicus to relax a bit and read the poetry he has sent him, books of it steeped with racy jests:

nec torua lege fronte, sed remissa  
lasciuis madidos iocis libellos.  
sic forsán tener ausus est Catullus  
magno mittere Passerem Maroni.

[4. 14. 11-14]

So mayhap sweet Catullus. . . . An agreeable fancy. It is clear from the context that Martial refers to a book like his own<sup>6</sup> and not to one or two poems; and that he does so, after the fashion of antiquity, by quoting the first word of the first poem.<sup>7</sup>

In meter and manner Catullus' dedicatory poem is consonant with the poems that follow, 2-60, or more exactly, fifty-seven poems and two fragments.<sup>8</sup> Of these poems, forty-three and the two fragments are in hendecasyllables: a pretty verse (6. 17 *lepido* . . . *uersu*) in a pretty book, and much favored by the New Poets.<sup>9</sup> In this part of the collection artistic design is discernible. Thus two similar poems will be separated by a poem dissimilar in subject or meter: 2 and 3, Lesbia's sparrow, by 2<sup>b</sup> (the other fragment); 5 and 7, Lesbia's kisses, by 6; 34 and 36, a hymn and a parody of the hymnic style (lines 11-16 of 36), by 35; 37 and 39, Egnatius and his gleaming teeth, by 38; 41 and 43, an ugly whore, by 42. The arrangement of 37, 38, 39 and 41, 42, 43 seems especially careful. 37 and 39 are longer poems of almost the same length (20 and 21 lines) in choliambics separated by a short poem (8 lines) in hendecasyllables, and each ends with a word of the same meaning: *urina* and *loti*. Conversely, 41 and 43 are short poems of the same length (8 lines) in hendecasyllables separated by a longer poem (24 lines) in the same meter. Such evidence is not sufficient to prove that the *libellus* contained all the polymetric poems, but probable cause for thinking that it contained most of them, and in their present order.

If Catullus did not edit his "collected poems," who did, and when? A member of his circle, a close friend perhaps—in any case, a *homo uenustus* like himself, and shortly after his death when it would still be possible to do

6. A *libellus* of 680 lines, not allowing for interstices.

7. The first after the dedicatory poem, which he may have regarded as belonging to the whole collection. In any case, *Cui dono* would not do; cf. E. J. Kenney, "That Incomparable Poem the *Ille ego*," *CR*, n.s. 20 (1970): 290.

8. 14<sup>b</sup> is rather puzzling: "Si qui forte mearum ineptiarum / lectores eritis manusque uestras / non horrebitis admouere nobis." An apology for the unpleasant poems that follow? It can hardly be an "interior dedication" of the sort found in Martial; see P. White, *JRS* 64 (1974): 47-48 and 56-57.

9. Calvus, Cinna, Cornificius, and Furius Bibaculus all used it and made it stylish; though Laevius and Varro had experimented with it. On the character and history of the hendecasyllable see Pliny *Epist.* 4. 14; Ellis, *Commentary*, pp. xxiv-xxv; U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Griechische Verskunst* (Berlin, 1921), pp. 137-53. To account for so sudden an interest in an unusual Greek meter Wilamowitz postulated the influence of some teacher of metric (p. 140): "metrici cuiusdam doctoris auctoritatem circumspicimus, quae effecerit, ut multi simul id peterent, quod felici cursu Catullus assecutus est." Parthenius?

so. The editor (so call him) retrieved all the poems he could: poems in Catullus' papers whether at Rome or Verona, poems in the hands of friends, poems. . . . How did he go about putting these together? To begin with he had the *libellus*: to it he could add any unpublished polymetric poems. An easy, mechanical decision that would not disturb the already published order. If the *libellus* ended with 50<sup>10</sup> (and 50 would be, for several reasons, the perfect ending), then the position of 51, which should precede 11, as 2 precedes 3 and 5 precedes 7, or should at least stand closer to it, is explicable. 51 is commonly taken to be Catullus' first poem to Lesbia. It is indeed a first poem, the first Latin poem in Sapphic stanzas: a bold and not altogether successful literary exercise.<sup>11</sup> The fourth stanza is somehow unsatisfactory, and no amount of interpretation will make it seem otherwise. "The ode ends, and always ended, with *lumina nocte*." Landor was right, in a sense; the experience of generations of readers cannot quite be dismissed. May it not be that this famed poem of passion<sup>12</sup> did not finally satisfy its author? That he left it out of his *libellus*?<sup>13</sup> and the editor, connecting the first line of 50 (*otiosi*) with the last stanza of 51 (*otium, otio, otium*), added it? 53 and 56 are amusing squibs, 52 and 59 less so; 57 is as obscene and elegant as 29; and 58 extremely moving. Catullus may have omitted these few poems (reasons why can be invented), or he may have written them after he had published his *libellus*. It need not be assumed that he died immediately thereafter or that he gave up writing in these congenial meters. Very little can be made of 54; 55 reads like a failed metrical experiment;<sup>14</sup> 58<sup>b</sup> must be unfinished; and 60 is a scrap. Would Catullus end his pretty book of poems with such? No; but the editor, more concerned to preserve than to present, would.

The second *libellus*, the editor's, begins with 61, an epithalamium, for a simple reason: it is in virtually the same meter<sup>15</sup> as most of the poems of Catullus' *libellus*. Next to it the editor put 62, the other epithalamium. To the epyllion he gave pride of place at the end. The odd poem out, the "Attis" in galliambics, he put between the epithalamia and the epyllion so that it divides the two poems in hexameters. And where else was he to put it? For at some point he had decided to keep all the elegiac poems of whatever length together. Again an easy, mechanical decision. (The editor must not, however, be imagined as a man devoid of taste; an occasional artfulness of arrangement may be owing to him.) The third *libellus* begins with a suitably

10. A *libellus* of 772 lines, not allowing for the lacuna in 2<sup>b</sup> or 14<sup>b</sup> or for interstices.

11. This unromantic aspect of the poem has been neglected; but see W. Ferrari, *ASNP* 7 (1938): 59-72.

12. "Catulls berühmteste Gedicht der Leidenschaft," Schmidt, "Catulls Anordnung," p. 242, who offers (p. 226) a fanciful explanation of its place in the *libellus*.

13. Lesbia no more wanted explaining than did Cynthia or Delia or the others; besides, the reader has already met her in a different meter (5. 1): "Viuiamus, mea Lesbia, atque amemus." And if Catullus wished the reader to hear an "echo" in *identidem* (51. 3; 11. 19), he would have placed 51 before 11.

14. "Minus felici novatione," Wilamowitz, *Griechische Verskunst*, p. 140.

15. Glyconic (— — — — —), of which the hendecasyllable is merely an extension: — — — — — — — — — —. On the variable base of these meters and the significance of Catullus' change of technique see O. Skutsch, *BICS* 16 (1969): 38.

long elegiac poem, 65–66;<sup>16</sup> perhaps the editor thought it especially appropriate because of the reference to the Muses in the opening lines:

Etsi me adsiduo confectum cura dolore  
seuocat a doctis, Hortale, uirginibus,  
nec potis est dulcis Musarum expromere fetus  
mens animi. . . .

[65. 1–4]

Three rolls, *tres libelli*:<sup>17</sup> the first containing poems 1–60, or 863 lines, not allowing for the lacuna in 2<sup>b</sup> or 14<sup>b</sup> or for interstices; the second, poems 61–64, or 802 lines, allowing for the lacuna in 61 but not for that in 62 or 64 or for interstices; the third, poems 65–116, or 644 lines, not allowing for the lacuna in 68 (after 141) or 78<sup>b</sup> or for interstices.<sup>18</sup>

“Another consequence of the size of the roll is that collected editions of an author’s work could not exist, except in the sense that the rolls containing them could be kept in the same bucket. . . . Volumes containing the whole corpus of an author’s work only became possible after the invention of the codex, and especially of the vellum codex.”<sup>19</sup> In late antiquity, probably in the fourth century, these three rolls, or rather rolls copied from them, were translated into a codex with the first poem now serving as a dedication to the whole collection. From such a codex, by a long and hazardous route, comes the *Book of Catullus of Verona*.

### Appendix A

#### *Benzo of Alessandria*

The name of one of the first scholars who examined the newly “returned” Catullus in the Cathedral Library at Verona is not to be found in any edition of Catullus. During the last decade of the thirteenth century Benzo of Alessandria<sup>20</sup> visited many cities in northern Italy gathering information for a vast history he planned “a principio mundi usque ad aduentum Xristi”: his *Cronica* in three parts, of which only the first is extant (Ambros. B. 24 inf., saec. xiv). At Verona Benzo transcribed Catullus 35. 1–4: “Dicit preterea Catullus poeta ueronensis ad amicum Aurelium scribens sic: Poete tenero meo sodali uelim occilio papire dicas ueronam ueniat noui relinquens domi menia lariumque litus.”<sup>21</sup> The corrupt *occilio* is particularly significant, for it also appears in O, a faithful copy of V. The fact that Benzo, a half century or so before O, and O both have *occilio* shows that it was the reading of V. Mynors’ note—“cecilio V (occilio O)” —begs the

16. 65 and 66 are copied as a single poem in O, G, and R (V), and can hardly be separated; cf. my remarks in *HSCP* 74 (1968): 85 and 93–94.

17. Traces of these *libelli* may have been preserved in the *liber Veronensis* (V); see B. L. Ullman, *Studies in the Italian Renaissance* (Rome, 1955), pp. 102–4 = *CP* 10 (1910): 73–75.

18. The first three books of Horace’s *Odes* were published together, *tres libelli*: the first contained 876 lines, the second 572 lines, the third 1004 lines—or 2452 lines in all, not allowing for interstices.

19. F. G. Kenyon, *Books and Readers in Ancient Greece and Rome*<sup>2</sup> (Oxford, 1951), p. 65.

20. R. Sabbadini, *Le scoperte dei codici latini e greci ne’ secoli XIV e XV*, vol. 2 (Florence, 1914), pp. 128–49. I rely entirely on Sabbadini’s account.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 145.

question; *cecilio* must be the correction of X. The correction *menia* seems to be Benzo's; X has *meniam*, O *ueniam*. Why did Benzo transcribe these lines and no others? Sabbadini<sup>22</sup> suggests that a Veronese reader had already marked this place in the book because Catullus first mentions his native city here. Possibly; but another reason may be suggested. This is the only place where Catullus mentions Como. When he began to compose his *Cronica*, Benzo was serving as notary to the bishop of Como; and he was fond of the city: "Et uere libenter urbis illius insisterem laudibus, cum in ea gratum et quietum sim domicilium nactus ad compilandum presens opus et maiora alia exacto iam fere septennio."<sup>23</sup> Sabbadini describes Benzo's *domi* for *Comi* (V) as "errore materiale di scrittura":<sup>24</sup> perhaps Benzo's error was psychological rather than visual.

### Appendix B

#### *The Internal History of the Text*

A medieval scribe ordinarily reproduced errors in the MS he was copying from, and inadvertently made others of his own. Thus errors of more than one generation will be present in a single MS; and will, if properly interpreted, tell something of the ancestry of the text in that MS. For example, Catullus 36. 14: *golgos* Hermolaus Barbarus: *alcos* V. How did this error come to be? *GOLGOS* was corrupted to *COLCOS* in late antiquity,<sup>25</sup> *COLCOS* transcribed as *colcos* about 800, and *colcos* misread as *alcos* early in the ninth century by a scribe familiar with the *cc* form of *a*.<sup>26</sup> The external history of the text of Catullus has been thoroughly discussed by B. L. Ullman:<sup>27</sup> "... not only the history of the manuscripts in so far as it can be established from the style of writing, the names of owners, etc., but also the *testimonia*, that is, the references to and quotations from the author in mediaeval writers and catalogues."<sup>28</sup> The internal history (as it may be called) has been rather neglected. L. Schwabe<sup>29</sup> sorted out as best he could most of the errors in V, and H. A. J. Munro<sup>30</sup> commented on a few; but both scholars were hampered by lack of knowledge (the science of paleography scarcely existed) and neither attempted to delineate the process of error. For example, 25. 3: *araneoso*] *arancoroso* X: *anracoroso* O. *ARANEOSO* was

22. Ibid.

23. Written in 1319 according to Sabbadini, *ibid.*, p. 131.

24. Ibid., p. 145.

25. Cf. 64. 96: *golgos* Hermolaus Barbarus, Petrus Bembus: *cholcos* O: *colchos* X.

26. I owe the following to Professor Virginia Brown: "It is my impression that one does not see the *cc* form much later than the first quarter of the ninth century; for example, Paris lat. 5763 (saec. ix<sup>1</sup>; Caesar) contains both forms of *a*, while Amsterdam 81 (saec. ix<sup>2</sup>; Caesar) only has the uncial *a*."

27. "The Transmission of the Text of Catullus," *Studi in onore di Luigi Castiglioni* (Florence, 1960), pp. 1027-57.

28. Ibid., p. 1027.

29. "De codicibus archetypo et Veronensi Catullianis," *Indices Scholarum* (Dorpat, 1865), pp. 16-18.

30. *Criticisms and Elucidations of Catullus* (Cambridge, 1878), p. 96: "for I observe that some original of all our MSS often put *co* for *a*: thus in 48 4 we find 'inde cor' for 'uidear'; 64 212 'moenico' for 'moenia'; 67 42 'conciliis' for 'ancillis'; 75 3: 'uelleque tot' for 'uelle queat' . . ."; *co* is merely a corruption of the *cc* form.

transcribed as *araneoso*, *araneoso* misread as *arancoro*—such confusions are frequent in Caroline minuscule—and corrected thus: *arancoro*<sup>31</sup>; the correction was misunderstood and incorporated into the word:<sup>31</sup> *arancoroso* V, *anra-coroso* being a peculiar error of O. There is evidence then that the text of Catullus was copied several times in the ninth century, but no evidence—at least no necessary evidence—that it was copied later. Ullman detects “signs of descent from a manuscript in Gothic script.”<sup>32</sup> He cites eleven errors as evidence and asserts: “Only in Gothic script are such errors common.”<sup>33</sup> Not so: all but one of them are common in Caroline script; and the corruption of so unusual a word as *pinnipes* (55. 24: *primipes* V) might occur in any script. It is not improbable that Catullus’ “compatriot” discovered a ninth-century MS in that distant place; and happily brought it (or a copy of it) home to Verona.<sup>34</sup>

*Harvard University*

31. Cf. 4. 11: *cytorio* η: *citeorio* X: *citeono* O; 11. 5: *arabasue* O: *arabaesque* G: *arabesque* R; 38. 1: *malest* Lachmann (*male est iam* Calphurnius): *male est si* V; 66. 91: *siris* Lachmann (*siueris iam* Scaliger): *uestris* V.

32. *Studi Castiglioni*, p. 1037.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 1037.

34. The old and popular notion that V was discovered in the Cathedral Library at Verona has been quashed by O. Skutsch, “The Book under the Bushel,” *BICS* 16 (1969): 148.