

INDEBTEDNESS, *SCURRILITAS*, AND COMPOSITION IN CATULLUS (CAT. 44, 1, 68)*

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THE AIM of this paper is to recover the details of the kinds of pre-publication activities so amply illustrated for the Imperial period by Pliny but in short supply for the middle of the first century B.C. Each of the three parts of the paper analyses a facet of the place of indebtedness in the circumstances of the composition and publication of poems 44, 1 (together with 22 and 14), and 68.¹

I

Despite Catullus' reputation as a man of independent views (see, e.g., poems 52 and 93), he appears to have been agreeable on at least one occasion, if his apology to Caesar was connected as closely with his invitation to dine with him as Suetonius implies (*Jul.* 73). Initially, poem 44 offers little encouragement that the relationship of Catullus and Sestius is any more noble than the picture of fawning guest and inept poet-host made familiar at a later period by Horace, Martial, and Juvenal. The poem represents Catullus as a former guest at Sestius' house, to which the price of admission, as it were, has been agreement to read his speech against Antius:²

*Nam, Sestianus dum volo esse conviva,
orationem in Antium petitorem
plenam veneni et pestilentiae legi* (10-12),

and, [*Sestius*]/*qui tunc vocat me, cum librum legi* (21). The last line quoted is translated by Fordyce as "who invites me only when I have read his nasty book."³ After the event, Catullus contrives a joke that depends on

*I am greatly indebted to Professor Kenneth Quinn for help and encouragement and to Professor Douglas Thomson for a great amount of patient counsel.

¹For similar glimpses into the craftsman's workshop see D. F. S. Thomson, *CW* 60 (1967) 225-230 (on poems 49, 50, and 51), and J. M. Fisher, *CP* 66 (1971) 1-5 (on poem 35). P. White, *JRS* 64 (1974) 50-61, provides a useful analysis of Imperial practices (N.B., in n. 17 read 'Plin. *Epist.* 3.13' for '3.63').

²The practice of distributing speeches for "vetting" in advance of delivery is well-documented in Pliny and Cicero; see below, nn. 12 and 13.

³C. J. Fordyce, *Catullus: A Commentary* (Oxford 1961) 202. Interpretation of the type represented by Fordyce (and favoured by me) has been challenged by T. J. Haarhoff, *CP* 29 (1934) 255-256, who proposes that *vocat* be regarded as "equivalent to *vocavit*, aorist." I have accepted Lachmann's now "vulgate" *legi* in line 21 for the paradosis *legit*.

the punning use of *frigidus* to describe exposure both to Sestius' "frigid" bombast and to a cold-producing draught at his house.⁴ The phrases *plenam veneni* (line 12) and *nefaria scripta* (line 18) link Catullus' intentions in poem 44 to his more explicit literary concerns in poem 14 (lines 19, 12, 20 and 23).⁵

Lines 9–12 and 21 leave no doubt that Catullus has agreed to read Sestius' speech in his desire for a sumptuous meal and a place at his table. In Plautine terms, Catullus has performed an *officium parasiticum*; in the abusive account of the consequence of performing his *officium*, he adopts the role of the malicious *scurra*. The roles as represented in Latin literature remained separate until the time of Horace. Poem 44, then, like poem 13 (see below, n. 18), provides important evidence that they were still distinct as late as only a generation before Horace.⁶

As *scurra*, Catullus can be aptly compared with Fannius, described by Horace (*Serm.* 1.10.80) as an *ineptus conviva* of Hermogenes Tigellius, whose literary judgement Horace does not value. Like Fannius, Catullus is a back-biter. Horace explains elsewhere (*Epist.* 1.19.37–38) that his *Odes* and *Epodes* are admired in the privacy of the reader's home but scorned in public because he has not curried favour. To paraphrase Horace, he has not courted the fickle crowd with gifts of second-hand clothing and free meals. Horace's mode of expression is not in fact so clear as my paraphrase represents it, but my representation is substantiated in the *Ars Poetica*, 419–437, where the wealthy poet-host encourages approval of his literary efforts by holding out to the *adsentatores* expectations of hospitality, financial pledges, and legal aid, all very much the conventional *officia* of patrons.⁷

The basic situation in poem 44 represents the early Roman nucleus of what became at a later date the separate components of literary table-talk, sympotiac recitations, and "the visit to a patron's villa."⁸ For this

⁴On *frigidus* as a technical term of literary criticism see *Phoenix* 25 (1971) 56, n. 18.

⁵See part II, *ibid.*, 54–56; and Buchheit, *op. cit.* (below, n. 21) and *Festschrift K. Büchner*, ed. W. Wimmel (Wiesbaden 1970) 44, for additional details.

⁶For the distinction between the *parasitus* and the *scurra* in Plautus see P. Corbett, *Erano* 66 (1968) 118–131, which he describes as "between the young men about Town of good social standing . . . and the parasite funny-man" (121). For the "career" of *scurrae* see Hug, *RE* s.v. "*scurra*," 911, lines 57–62: "Der *S.* . . . kommt in der Kaiserzeit dem Parasiten gleich." The *locus classicus* for the malicious *scurra sine causa lacessens* is Cic. *De Orat.* 2.246.

⁷Cf. Pet. *Sat.* 10.2, Pers. 1.54, Mart. 8.76, and Juv. 7.43–44. It is worth adding that not all Romans were so cynical: cf. Mart. 12 *praef.* 9–10 and Plin. *Epist.* 5.12.1. *Quod contra*, Cicero, *Att.* 16.3.1, jokingly urges Atticus to read the freshly revised *De Senectute* to well-fed *convivae* so that hostility meant for the host will not redound to the discredit of the writer. See further J. C. Bramble, *Persius and the Programmatic Satire* (Cambridge 1974) 106–115, and, on Hor. *Epist.* 1.19, R. Kilpatrick, *Phoenix* 29 (1975) 123–124.

⁸For bibliographical guidance on the vast topic of Greek and Roman sympotiac activities see *TAPA* 101 (1970) 471, n. 15. The quoted phrase is White's, *op. cit.* (above,

reason the poem is very important evidence for a type of "literary activity [applied by Romans of the Republic] to their carouses."⁹

If I understand him correctly, White is misleading when he states that "insofar as Romans applied any literary activity to their carouses, it was probably expressed in epigrammatic form."¹⁰ Cicero, *Tusc.* 1.2, reports that Cato in his *Origines* describes *convivae* singing to a musical accompaniment about the virtues of illustrious men. From Cicero's added statement that Cato disapproved of M. Nobilior's taking poets to the provinces and from his recording as an independent fact that Nobilior took Ennius with him to Aetolia we may infer that the convivial eulogists are dependent guests, that is, clients, like Ennius, performing services for their patrons.¹¹ The account represents, I believe, the earliest example of what may be called prandial patronage, a variation of which is seen in Catullus 44.

It is not until the time of Horace that we are provided with substantial information about the circumstances of poetic composition and publication, and for this reason Catullus' poem is a valuable document in Latin literary history. To put the occasion into perspective, one should think in terms of Pliny's well-documented practice of circulating speeches for "vetting" in advance of publication.¹² This is clearly what Sestius has

n. 1) 42, who avers that impromptu verses were presented to patrons at the moment they were uttered, principally at "the dinner party and the visit to a patron's villa." Note that White's evidence for the statement quoted is less substantial than at first glance it appears to be: of the references collected in his n. 9, only one, Mart. 3.45, deals with impromptu symposiac composition.

⁹White, *ibid.*

¹⁰*Ibid.*

¹¹*Quamquam est in Originibus solitos esse in epulis canere convivae ad tibicinem de clarorum hominum virtutibus, honorem tamen huic generi non fuisse declarat oratio Catonis, in qua obiecit ut probum M. Nobiliori, quod is in provinciam poetas duxisset. Duxerat autem consul ille in Aetoliam, ut scimus, Ennium.* The other, more jejune references to the tradition tell us nothing at all about the status of the eulogists (Cic. *Tusc.* 4.3, *Brut.* 75; Varro *apud* Nonius s.v. "assa voce"; Val. Max. 2.1.10). It is nonetheless clear from Cicero's report that Nobilior's son arranged to have Ennius provided with citizenship (*Brut.* 80) and a plot of land (cf. *De Senec.* 5.14) and, from the tradition that he glorified Nobilior in the *Annals* (Aur. Vict. *Vir. Ill.* 52), that he benefited from the family's patronage and responded accordingly, the *quid pro quo* being glorification of Nobilior. Cicero appears to have been ignorant of the son's *praenomen* (see E. Badian, "Ennius and His Friends," in *Ennius*, ed. O. Skutsch [Geneva 1972] 183-186), but there is no reason to doubt the main lines of the story. Note also the passage from Cato's *Carmen de Moribus* (*apud* Aul. Gell. 11.2.5), *Poeticae artis honos non erat. Si quis in ea re studebat aut sese ad convivia adplicabat, "crassator" vocabatur.* Mention of the tantalising hints of early Roman "ballads" would not be complete without reference to the fascinating article of A. Momigliano, *JRS* 47 (1957) 104-114.

¹²White, *op. cit.* (above, n. 1), provides a wealth of evidence; for Pliny, specifically: *Epist.* 1.2, 1.8, 2.5, 3.13, 4.14 (poetry), 5.12, 8.19; cf. Mart. 12 *praef.* 9-10. See, in addition, T. Janson, *Latin Prose Prefaces* (Stockholm 1964) 107-109.

done, and one is reminded of Pliny's covering letter to Tacitus (*Epist.* 7.20), which accompanied the *liber* that Pliny had criticised for his friend. In it, Pliny avers that it is his custom to speak the truth and Tacitus' to welcome it: one suspects that Sestius got more truth than he bargained for.

Cicero's correspondence attests that literary figures of Catullus' era circulated their endeavours among respected friends for advice before publication.¹³ The much-discussed characterisation of Valerius Cato as the *Latina Siren/qui solus legit ac facit poetas* (*FPL*², ed. W. Morel, No. 17 s.v. "Bibaculus" = Suet. *Gram.* 11) may mean nothing more than that he appraised associates' poetic efforts and offered particularly helpful advice.¹⁴ In any case, Hendrickson's view that *facit* means "'making' reputations by the authority of the critic's readings" seems strained.¹⁵ In the context (*P. Valerius Cato . . . docuit multos et nobiles, visusque est peridoneus praeceptor, maxime ad poeticam tendentibus, ut quidem apparere vel his versiculis potest: "Cato . . . Siren/ . . . poetas"*) the meaning must be that Cato as *praeceptor* evaluates poets, that is, he reads first versions and on the basis of his assessment offers advice that makes true poets of budding talents (*ad poeticam tendentibus*; cf. Cicero's nurturing of poetic talents, above, n. 14).

Martial provides a most apposite illustration of the procedure when he modestly states that the criticisms of his poems made at pre-publication recitations are responsible for whatever merits his published verse has: *Si quid est enim quod in libellis meis placeat, dictavit auditor* (12 *praef.*). (Asinius Pollio's establishment of the *recitatio* ca 40 B.C. presumably accounts for the change from *lector* [*legit*] to *auditor*).¹⁶

To return to Cat. 44, let us suppose for the moment that the solemnity and affectation of language in lines 1–5 are a pastiche of Sestius' "frigid" bombast (there is no other apparent reason for the fustian phrasing or for the choice of a word like *autumant*). What we have essentially is the first-

¹³Thomson, *op. cit.* (above, n. 1) 228, n. 17a, cites examples of Cicero's requests for criticism of his literary efforts: *Fam.* 1.9.23; *Q.F.* 2.15.5; *Att.* 2.1.11, 13.19.2, 15.2.4, 15.27.2, 16.3.1, 16.11.1.

¹⁴According to Pliny, *Epist.* 3.15.1, Cicero nurtured (*fovisse*) poetic talents (*ingenia*).

¹⁵G. L. Hendrickson, *CP* 12 (1917) 331. R. P. Robinson, *TAPA* 54 (1923) 103, n. 13, states that "*legit* is used for *praelegit*, and refers to the teacher's reading of the poets to his classes with his commentaries on the passages read." For N. Terzaghi, *Latomus* 2 (1938) 84–91, *facit* means "expliquer, déclarer." I should like to be able to agree with T. Birt, *Kritik und Hermeneutik nebst Abriss des antiken Buchwesens* (Munich 1913) 313, that *legi* at Plin. *Epist.* 5.10.3 means "to be corrected," but he is able to cite no parallels and in the circumstances it seems safest to accept the verdict of A. N. Sherwin-White, *The Letters of Pliny* (Oxford 1966) *ad loc.*, that the proposal is gratuitous.

¹⁶The issue is not, of course, as simple as I have represented it: see A. Dalzell, "C. Asinius Pollio and the Early History of Public Recitations at Rome," *Hermathena* 86 (1955) 20–28.

stage in the kind of events that lead to poem 16. In that poem Catullus responds sharply to Furius and Aurelius, who, we must suppose, have had an opportunity to read or hear poems that induce them to accuse the poet of being *parum pudicus*.¹⁷ As in poems 14, 36, 44, and 105, Catullus has cleverly combined direct attack with an oblique statement of poetic doctrine. The great difference between poems 16 and 44 is, of course, that we do not have Sestius' response, whereas Catullus' *apologia* has become enshrined.

There is no explicit evidence that Furius and Aurelius have criticised Catullus' poetry (and morals) after enjoying his hospitality; that, in other words, like Catullus in poem 44, they have bitten the hand that fed them. There is, however, some circumstantial but inconclusive support for the idea: in poem 21 Aurelius is addressed with mock-solemnity as *pater esuritionum* "father of appetites," the appetites being as much sexual as gastronomic; in poems 23 and 24 Furius is "down and out," though he, too, like the Fabullus in poem 13 who is invited to dine with Catullus, moves in smart society—*homo bellus* (24.7–8; cf. 13.6 and 81.2).¹⁸

If I have put the pieces of the puzzle together correctly, a behind-the-scenes picture of the circumstances of literary composition and "publication" emerges. Poem 44 is, in effect, an "open letter" addressed to Catullus' *fundus Sabinus sive Tiburs* but reporting to the world at large on Sestius' speech, much as poem 35 is addressed to the papyrus on which it is written but simultaneously to Caecilius and to the general public. Unfortunately, Sestius' reaction to it is not available. If the shoe were on the other foot, however, we could anticipate something in the vein of poem 16, for Catullus was not, like Pope's critic, "willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike,/just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike."

The hypothesis that I have just formulated finds support in the account of Calvus and Catullus composing verse in a symposiac setting (poem 50). The key passage for our purposes occurs at the end of the poem, where Catullus expresses his concern that Calvus will despise his poetic composition, the other end of the stick with which he beats Sestius.

The interpretation just presented requires a word of justification, since all the commentators conclude that the *preces* of line 18 refer to Catullus'

¹⁷My view, *op. cit.* (above, n. 4) 51, n. 2, is that poem 48 provoked the charge; T. P. Wiseman, *Liverpool Classical Monthly* 1 (1976) 14–17, has recently argued, however, that the offending poems are 5 and 7.

¹⁸For the "social connotation" of *bellus* see Fordyce, *op. cit.* (above, n. 3) at 22.9. Except by D. W. T. C. Vessey, *Latomus* 30 (1971) 46, the irony in poem 13 of the host as *inverse-parasitus* has not been fully appreciated: he demands that the guest provide not only the food and the drink but also the kind of entertainment (*sal* and *cachinni* = the *logi ridiculi* and *cavillationes* of the parasite Gelasimus in Plaut. *St.* 227–228) that the hanger-on Ergasilus reckons to be worth a month's free meals (Plaut. *Capt.* 482–483).

unexpressed prayer to have another meeting with Calvus.¹⁹ Catullus says rather that he longs to see the day in order to be with Calvus:

. . . *cupiens videre lucem,*
ut tecum loquerer simulque ut essem (12–13).

The *preces* appear instead to be the subject, possibly the opening words (without *que*, of course, which the metre could not accommodate), of the poem (*hoc poema*) composed for Calvus by Catullus in his sleeplessness, poem 50 being the covering letter, along the lines of poems 36 and 68.²⁰ Poem 14 is in every way a still better analogy, first, because it is addressed to Calvus, who is supposed to have sent Vatinius' *horribilis et sacer libellus* to Catullus; more significantly, because it illustrates that the *Catulli Veronensis liber* can, to appropriate Quinn's phrasing, develop a drama round a poem not included in the Catullan corpus.

II

The *Catulli Veronensis liber* provides us to a degree unparalleled elsewhere in the literature of classical antiquity with a sketch of friends engaged in the constructive criticism of one another's literary efforts and in frontal attacks on styles alien to that of their own coterie.²¹ It has not been observed that poems 1, 14, and 22 represent a related segment of the sketch within the framework of *scurrilitas* and indebtedness.

The "occasional" character of poem 22 disguises the Callimachean pronouncement against prolific writing, [*Suffenus*] *longe plurimos facit versus* (22.3; cf. 95b). In all other respects, Suffenus is judged a worthy recipient of Catullus' favourite terms of commendation: *venustus*, *dicax*, and *urbanus* (22.2).²² He is, in addition, a *scurra*. Now it may be startling to anyone steeped in the literature of the Augustan age and the Empire to be told that the term "*scurra*" does not convey outright condemnation. Instead, one is likely to think of someone like Maenius, described by

¹⁹The line of reasoning is most visible in the commentaries of W. Kroll (3rd ed. 1959) and K. Quinn (2nd ed. 1973) *ad loc.*: "*preces*, deren Inhalt nicht ganz klar ist," writes Kroll and adds that they must refer to the desired meeting; Quinn states that "no formal request is made, but one is clearly implied in line 13." Both R. Ellis (1876) and Fordyce, *op. cit.* (above, n. 3), speak of Catullus' petition, but I cannot see that he has made one.

²⁰As Quinn, *ibid.* 373, describes poem 68, it "affects the form of an open letter, which becomes a poem, without ever quite ceasing to be a letter." Of poem 36 he writes that it, "like Poem 14, began as a covering letter—and then became a little drama." See A. L. Wheeler, *Catullus and the Traditions of Ancient Poetry* (Berkeley 1934) 19, on the practice of referring to a literary work by quoting its opening words.

²¹V. Buchheit, *Hermes* 87 (1959) 309–327, remains the most comprehensive study of the subject. It has been augmented by the articles of Thomson and Fisher (above, n. 1) and Sandy (above, n. 4). Additional bibliography is cited in Sandy, 56, n. 16.

²²Add *bellus*, line 9, and see above, n. 18.

Horace (*Epist.* 1.15.26) as a *scurra vagus* . . . *impransus*, a scandalmonger of no fixed address and no expectation of the next meal who, having squandered his inheritance, tries by taking sides with his malicious tongue to earn a meal. In fact, however, in addition to the evidence of Plautus (*Trin.* 199–212), there is that of Cicero, who twice links Clodius to well-to-do *scurrae*—wealthy, sophisticated, and idle hedonists.²³ The use of “*scurra*” as a synonym for “*parasitus*” does not appear to occur until the time of Horace.²⁴

Suffenus is linked to “that band of scribblers,” the Caesii, Aquini, and Sulla *litterator* in poem 14. The formal occasion of the poem consists of Catullus’ inference that Calvus as *patronus* has received an anthology of poems for services rendered to a client:

. . . *cur me tot male perderes poetis?*
Isti di mala multa dent clienti . . . (14.5–6).

Hellegouarc’h cites a number of passages where *gratia*, in this instance a gift of poems, as in the epistolary frame of poem 68, is defined as acknowledgement of the *officiosi labores* provided by a *patronus*-advocate on behalf of a client.²⁵ Note the phrase *tui labores* in line 11, which provides the information needed by the reader to piece together the “occasion” of the poem.

I have not seen it noted in any of the commentaries that Catullus’ *gratia* to Cornelius Nepos as expressed in poem 1 corresponds to the client Sulla’s expression of gratitude to his patron Calvus in poem 14.²⁶ The

²³Cic. *Sest.* 39 and *De Har. Res.* 42. See Corbett, *op. cit.* (above, n. 6), for full details.

²⁴E.g., Hor. *Epist.* 1.18.4. In Horace, the *scurra-parasitus* is frequently a “yes-man,” *adsentator*; see, for instance, *Ars P.* 420; also Cic. *Pis.* 70 and Gelasimus’ *adsentatiunculae parasiticae* (Plaut. *St.* 228–229). Suffenus is also a *scurra/aut si quid hac re scitius videbatur* (22.12–13); cf. Plaut. *Trin.* 205–209:

[*Scurrae*] *qui omnia se simulant scire neque quicquam sciunt.*
Quod quisque in animo habet aut habiturust sciunt,
sciunt id quod in aurem rex reginae dixerit,
sciunt quod Iuno fabulatast cum Iove;
quae neque futura neque sunt, tamen illi sciunt.

The accumulation of *scire* and *sciunt* underscores the appropriateness of L. Müller’s conjectured *scitius* for the paradoxis *tristius* at Cat. 22.13.

²⁵See J. Hellegouarc’h, *Le vocabulaire latin des relations et des partis politiques sous la République* (Paris 1963) 202. Cf. Cat. 68.9–10, 32, 149, and 150. When I speak of the “epistolary frame of poem 68” I do not mean to imply that the poem is a unified “picture.” In part III I argue that 68.1–40 and 41–160 constitute two distinct poems.

²⁶T. P. Wiseman, *Cinna the Poet and Other Roman Essays* (Leicester 1974) 60, n. 8, compares 14.8–9 with 1.1 and notes the use of *saeculum* in the last line of each poem. Birt, *op. cit.* (above, n. 15) 310–311, discusses poem 14 in the context of contemporary anthologies.

similar pattern or sequence of cause and effect will be evident in a schematic comparison:

Cui dono lepidum novum libellum
?
Corneli, tibi: namque tu solebas
meas esse aliquid putare nugas (1.1–4)²⁷

with

... *hoc novum ac repertum*
munus dat tibi Sulla litterator,

quod non dispereunt tui labores (14.8–12),

and

cartis/doctis, Iuppiter, et laboriosis (1.6–7)

with

di magni, horribilem et sacrum libellum (14.12),

and

quare habe tibi quidquid hoc libelli (1.8)

with

nam ...

 ... *te his suppliciis remunerabor* (14.17–20),

and

qualecumque quidem est, patroni ut ergo
plus uno maneat perenne saeclo (1.9–10)

with

vos hinc interea valete abite,

saecli incommoda, pessimi poetae (14.21–21).

A possible inference is that Catullus, like Sulla *litterator* in poem 14, rewards Cornelius Nepos with a fancy-dress “presentation” copy of his poems, presumably in gratitude for a favourable notice in Nepos’ *Chronica*. Though fraught with grave textual uncertainties that render

²⁷The following quotation of a letter from T. S. Eliot to Bertrand Russell (*Autobiography* II, 173) will be of sufficient interest to students of Catullus to warrant its inclusion:

I must tell you that eighteen months ago, before it [i.e., The Wasteland] was published anywhere, Vivien wanted me to send you the MS. to read, because she was sure that you were one of the very few persons who might possibly see anything in it.

Is it, after all, inconceivable that *nugae* and *aliquid* in the dedicatory poem could apply to a *libellus* containing such full-scale masterpieces as poems 63 and 64 if we suppose simply that Catullus, as becomes one who is indebted, is striking an affectedly modest pose, as Eliot does and as Catullus himself does in poem 68? Cf. also the modest *carta* at 68.46 with Suffenus’ *cartae regiae* (22.6).

its evidence problematical at the very best, the epistolary frame of poem 68 appears to provide a Catullan parallel for the practice of presenting poetry in gratitude for favours. In any case, poem 1 and the occasion of poem 14 display enough common features to be defined, in the words applied by White to Mart. 12.4, as "unique" copies, "not duplicated for the public at large."²⁸

It is probably apparent that I have not been discussing the Catullus 1 that appears in the OCT or in other critical editions but as it should appear once Bergk's conjectural emendation of the corrupt line 9 has been adopted, especially the last three words, *patroni ut ergo*, "on account of its patron," as G. P. Goold translates them.²⁹ When interpreted in this way, the poem closely approximates Statius' epistolary preface to Book 2 of the *Silvae*:

Haec qualiacumque sunt, Melior carissime, si tibi non displicuerint, a te publicum accipiant; si minus, ad me revertantur.

The common Imperial fiction that a literary work is not ready for publication without the *imprimatur* of a valued friend of good taste has not quite been duplicated. It is nonetheless clear from poems 1 and 14 that already in Catullus' time publication is closely linked to manifestations of good will and benefaction.

²⁸White, *op. cit.* (above, n. 1) 45. Birt, *op. cit.* (above, n. 15) 311, proposes that Atticus, at Nepos' suggestion, saw to the publication of Catullus' collected works. It seems more likely that the evidence adduced by Birt on p. 313 (Mart. 3.2.2, Stat. *Sil.* 2 *praef.* and Luxorius, *Anthol. Lat.* 287, ed. Buecheler and Riese) that a patron undertook the publication and distribution of his client's poetry, when joined with Fronto's notice (*Ad Marc.* p. 15, ed. van den Hout) that Nepos was a publisher, justifies supposing that Nepos himself attended to the details of publishing Catullus' corpus. Cf., however, White, 44, n. 15.

²⁹T. Bergk, *Philologus* 12 (1857) 581. See further H. A. J. Munro, *Criticisms and Elucidations of Catullus* (Cambridge 1878) 1-5 (with palaeographical support); Fordyce, *op. cit.* (above, n. 3) *ad loc.* (with contextual and aesthetic justification); G. P. Goold, "O Patrona Virgo," in *Polis and Imperium: Studies in Honour of Edward Togo Salmon*, ed. J. A. S. Evans (Toronto 1974) 253-264 (with aesthetic, grammatical, and prosodic justification). The objection of W. Clausen, *CP* 71 (1976) 38, n. 2, that "in every instance but one *ergo* follows immediately on the genitive" is satisfied by appreciating that what in fact is at issue is postponement of *ut*, for which there is ample evidence in Catullus and elsewhere (Goold 260-261). Nor can I agree with Clausen (37-38) that Catullus could not have viewed Nepos as a benefactor or well-wisher, since he ranked Catullus (with Lucretius) second to L. Julius Calidus: it is not as though Nepos dismissed him as *pessimus poeta*. F. Cairns, *Mnemosyne* 22 (1969) 155-158, has adduced evidence that dedication of a collection of poems to the Muse is in order but graciously acknowledges that the pattern is not invariable (156). Like Clausen (37, n. 1), however, I am puzzled by Cairns' description of the (lost) *Chronica* as "possessing all the standard Alexandrian virtues" (153); furthermore, it is disingenuous to imply that line 9 is without textual corruption (155); finally, there are the stylistic and prosodic objections to the 'vulgate' conjectured reconstruction raised by Goold (254-256).

III

In the following pages I apply what has been discovered of the elements of indebtedness, composition, and circulation in parts I and II to "the problem" of poem 68. I have intentionally restricted the point of view as much as possible in order to focus sharply on what appears to me to be a major obstacle to viewing the poem as a single composition. By doing so, I hope to put certain much-discussed aspects of the poem into a new perspective.

There is the evidence of poem 14 that in the time of Catullus a collection of poems could be presented as a token of gratitude and that adduced recently by White to show that Roman writers of the Flavian period circulated excerpts and anthologies in a fashion that lent itself to exploitation by indebted poets who could assemble a fancy-dress, pre-publication *libellus* in which the patron's name appeared prominently. I believe that a combination of these separate phenomena appears in Catullus in a form declared by White to be inconceivable in Martial: "It is inconceivable that on the occasion of a friend's bereavement Martial would have offered a *consolatio* that trailed after it an assortment of other epigrams."³⁰ It is worth testing the hypothesis that the grave difficulties in poem 68 stem from Catullus' (or a later editor's) foolish and tasteless decision to attempt the inconceivable.

Unless we accept Schöll's conjectural emendation of *mi Alli* in place of *Malli* at lines 11 and 30, which editors have for good reasons been loath to do, we are faced with a poem addressed to Mallius but celebrating Allius.³¹ Now Mallius may not be bereaved, but he has suffered the "loss" of either his wife or mistress (lines 5-6), and this brings us to what Quinn (381) calls the "chief difficulty": how could Catullus have been so callous as to send a poem containing line 155 (*Sitis felices et tu simul et tua vita*:

³⁰White, *op. cit.* (above, n. 1) 44; see further 40 and 49.

³¹Wiseman, *op. cit.* (above, n. 26) 88-89, provides a clear résumé of the textual problems related to Mallius, Manlius, Manius, and Allius and together with M. B. Skinner, *TAPA* 103 (1972) 493-512, a reasonably comprehensive survey of what Wiseman, with justifiable despair, labels "all the permutations of opinion." Wiseman's view (90, n. 15), based on line 10, that "Manlius" has asked Catullus for both a gift of poems and a sexual partner depends on the relatively infrequent use of *nam* (line 33) in the sense of "furthermore" (likewise, H. W. Prescott, *TAPA* 71 [1940] 485, n. 20); that is, if, as I believe, *nam* carries its usual meaning "for," then the clause *haec tibi non tribuo munera, cum nequeo* (32) is explained by line 33: Catullus does not have a supply of poetry available (it is not likely that he even contemplated *sending* ["he would have sent them of his own accord if he had been able," p. 91] a sexual partner). Moreover, I cannot find in line 9 a hint of "Catullus' polite surprise at Manlius' claim to friendship" (p. 102), a proposal previously advanced without evidence by T. E. Kinsey, *Latomus* 26 (1967) 37; n. 1.

"Bless both you and your beloved") to someone who has just asked to be rescued after running aground on the rocks of love?

While looking at the poem within the framework of indebtedness, I have become conscious of a feature of it denied by Fordyce and left unexplored by others, namely, that Catullus is in fact 'conscious of . . . [a] debt to "Manius."' ³² He says to Mallius, "I should not like you to think that I despise the duty I owe to you as my host" (12). The *officium hospitii* is a well-documented item in the Roman system of reciprocal obligations, ³³ and the choice of words in lines 9–10 (*gratum, amicum, munera, petis*) is a virtual lexicon of the terminology of Roman patronage: "I am gratified that you consider me your 'ally' and that as a consequence of this relationship (*hinc*) you request as a pledge of it poems of all sorts, including love poems." ³⁴ Cicero's definition of *gratia* provides the best commentary possible on 68.9–10: *Gratiam [eam appellant] quae in memoria et remuneratione officiorum et honoris et amicitiarum observantiam teneat* (*Inv.* 2.66; cf. 2.161). ³⁵ The verb *petere* (and its cognate *petitio*) denotes the idea of reclaiming what has been conferred by the exercise of active ("ingratiating") *gratia*, in the case of poem 68 the demand for poems made against an earlier grant of *hospitium privatum*. ³⁶ In political contexts it is not unusual to find *amicitia* and *hospitium* (*amicus* and *hospes*) linked. ³⁷

The purpose of this excursus has been to establish that Catullus acknowledges a deep sense of obligation to Mallius in the epistolary prologue of poem 68. His debt to Allius is equally dominant in the development of the poem(s): "I cannot, Muses, remain silent about the aid and sense of duty that Allius has shown to me" (41–42). His sense of duty (*officium*) was as great as that shown by Castor and Pollux to a

³²Fordyce, *op. cit.* (above, n. 3) 343. But cf. Quinn, *op. cit.* (above, n. 19) at line 12; Wiseman, *ibid.* 92; and Prescott, *ibid.* 479, none of whom, however, considers the implications extensively or in detail.

³³It is first attested at Plaut. *Amph.* 161. See further Hellegouarc'h, *op. cit.* (above, n. 25) 154 and 52–53.

³⁴The *utriusque* of line 39 must mean that Mallius has asked for both love-poems and other kinds of poems. My "must" reveals that I am indulging in one more "permutation of opinions," one dismissed as "ridiculous" by Ellis, *op. cit.* (above, n. 19) at line 10; *quod contra*, see C. W. MacLeod, *CQ* 24 (1974) 85, n. 5. For want of a better word I have translated *amicum* as "ally" to suggest a relationship that presupposes the right to make demands, rather than to convey any sense of political alliance ("beneficiary" seems to preclude that right). For *hinc* = "as a consequence of this relationship," that is, *hac ex re* instead of *ex me*, as it were, see *ThLL* s. v., p. 2801, lines 41–78. For *petis* = "you request as a pledge of it" see below, n. 35 and related text.

³⁵See further Hellegouarc'h, *op. cit.* (above, n. 25) 204 (cf. 202–211).

³⁶*Ibid.* 211. For the "active" force of *gratia* (*gratus*), "the manifestation of favour," see M. Gelzer, *The Roman Nobility*, trans. R. Seager (Oxford 1969) 75.

³⁷Hellegouarc'h, *ibid.* 50. On *munus* (*munera*) see p. 153. See also Gelzer, *ibid.* 65–66.

storm-tossed sailor (63–66), and he provided a refuge for Catullus and his mistress (67–69). In return for Allius' many expressions of his sense of duty (*officiis*) Catullus has rewarded him with a gift (*munus*) in the form of a poem.

Thus in the epistolary prologue Catullus states that he cannot repay Mallius with a gift of poetry (*munera . . . et Musarum . . . et Veneris*, 10 and cf. 39) in return for *hospitiis officium* (12); in lines 41 ff. Catullus discharges to the best of his ability his sense of obligation to Allius with a *confectum carmine munus* (149) *pro multis . . . officiis* (150), which appear to have taken the form of a kind of *hospitium privatum* (67–69). Catullus is unable to comply with Mallius' request because he does not have his reference-books (or a selection of his own poems or those of other writers) with him (33–40)³⁸ and because the death of his brother has made him indifferent to matters of the heart, even, apparently, to Lesbia's unfaithfulness (11–32). For Allius, on the other hand, he prays that his roll (*carta*) will speak loudly and clearly and make Allius' sense of duty known to thousands (41–46).³⁹

When viewed within the circumscribed frame of indebtedness, poem 68 falls into two distinct sections, which can be explained in at least two ways: 1. An early editor saw the idea of *officium* as common to what had been two separate poems and in therefore placing them side by side in Catullus' collected works was responsible for their subsequent fusion.⁴⁰

2. Catullus foolishly attempted to discharge two debts with one poem and in consequence was guilty of an affront to Mallius' sensibilities.

Evidence for the first possibility cannot be expected. I know of no exact parallel for the alternative, but White's recent article has brought to my attention a related literary phenomenon, namely, Martial's epistolary introduction to Book 9, where he explains to Toranius, to whom, it appears, he has previously sent the pre-publication Book 9, that the book now opens with a poem *extra ordinem paginarum* occasioned by Avitius'

³⁸Lines 7–8 and 33–36 may mean that an anthology of other writers' verses was judged by Catullus to be a suitable token of his *gratia* to Mallius. This possibility and the alternative supposition, for which Hor. *Epist.* 1.3.15–20 is the best parallel, that the *doctus poeta* is expected to base his gift of verse on Greek models (Fordyce, *op. cit.* [above, n. 3] at 68.33) require that the *scriptorum* of line 33 be the genitive plural of *scriptor*. Quinn, *op. cit.* (above, n. 19) *ad loc.*, proposes, however, that the unoblique form is the neuter plural *scripta*, arguing that Catullus is denying that he has a bundle of completed and nearly completed poems at hand, and the proposal has merit, as I explain at the end of my discussion of poem 68.

³⁹On *carta* = roll see E. Turner, *Greek Papyri* (Oxford 1968) 4; C. H. Roberts, "The Codex," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 40 (1954) 181; and, most appropriately, Cat. 1.6 and 36.1 and 20, which neither papyrologist cites.

⁴⁰Whatever the cause, the consequence is a familiar phenomenon in Catullus: see Wiseman, *op. cit.* (above, n. 26) 89–90.

desire to place in his library a bust of the poet, for which Martial has composed the label that now stands as the first poem in the book.⁴¹

Likewise, what now appear as the first forty lines of poem 68 may represent a separate, versified epistle explaining to Mallius that, being unable to compose poetry of any kind because of grief, the poet can provide only what is already available in the *una capsula* (36) that he has with him; and, acutely conscious that it is totally inappropriate in Mallius' circumstance, he adds that he would not want Mallius to take the lapse in taste as a sign of malicious intent (*mente maligna*, 37) or meanness (*animo non satis ingenuo*, 38).⁴² This interpretation, incidentally, agrees with Quinn's proposal (above, n. 38) that the *scriptorum* of line 33 is the genitive plural of *scripta*, "writings," rather than of *scriptores*.

⁴¹White, *op. cit.* (above, n. 1) 58. We must not overlook the help available closer at hand: Cat. 65 and 66, in the former of which Catullus assures (H)ortalus that he has not neglected his request (lines 15–18) but that he is so overcome by grief at the loss of his brother that in lieu of an original effort intended for (H)ortalus (lines 1–4) he can provide only a translation of Callimachus.

⁴²Kinsey, *op. cit.* (above, n. 31) 36–37, objects that we should expect Catullus in 68a (i.e., lines 1–40) to explain the presence of 68b (i.e., lines 41 ff.). If my paraphrase is accurate, explanation is precisely the purpose of 68a; or, as F. Copley, *CP* 52 (1957) 30, put it, "68b was written earlier than 68a, and was now picked up by the poet and sent, as better than nothing, to the grief-stricken Manlius," adding that poems 65 and 66 are "a good parallel."

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