

# CATULLUS 107: REMOVING THE HIATUS AND OTHER TEXTUAL SUGGESTIONS

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THE OXFORD TEXT<sup>1</sup> prints this poem as follows:

*si quicquam cupido optantique optigit umquam  
insperanti, hoc est gratum animo proprie.  
quare hoc est gratum †nobis quoque† carius auro  
quod te restituis, Lesbia, mi cupido.  
restituis cupido atque insperanti, ipsa refers te  
nobis. o lucem candidiore nota!  
quis me uno vivit felicior, aut magis †hac est  
†optandus vita dicere quis poterit?*

In the first couplet *quicquam* is a fifteenth-century conjecture for the *quid quid* or *quicquid* of the tradition, and Ribbeck suggested *quoi quid*; *cupidoque* is a conjecture of the Aldine of 1502; O offers *optigit*, GR offer *obtigit*; Heinsius suggested *insperati*. In the second couplet there are various conjectures including Haupt's *nobisque est*. In the last couplet the tradition offers *hac* or *me*; there are numerous conjectures including Lachmann's *hac res optandas* and Guarinus' *hac quid optandum*.

That the surviving mss of Catullus depend on a single grossly corrupt archetype is notorious;<sup>2</sup> the text of 107 is particularly bad and proportionately lacking in authority to persuade us of anomalies.<sup>3</sup> The anomaly in line 1 is of course the purported hiatus between *cupido* and *optanti*. Proper consideration of the admissibility of this or of any other hiatus must begin with the plain fact that there is a *rule* against hiatus in Latin verse; the onus of proof, therefore, lies on those who would justify any individual exception or any class of exceptions to that rule. Catullus was not an Augustan elegist, but he was (in part) an elegist, and was not far removed from the Augustan era; if caesural hiatus was acceptable to the Augustans, it would admittedly strengthen the case for caesural hiatus in Catullus. Platnauer (1951: 57–58) lists three classes of hiatus in the Augustan elegists: (1) after the interjections *o*, *heu*, and *a*; (2) "Greek hiatus" before a quadrisyllabic word at the end of a hexameter, for example, in *Maenalia* | *Atalanta*; (3) at the caesura. So far as the first two classes of exception are

<sup>1</sup>Mynors 1958.

<sup>2</sup>Goold (1969: 194) observes that "Mynors, a judicious editor, accepts into his text over eight hundred emendations." Where so many readings are manifestly false, it is certain that there will be some false readings whose falsehood will not be so manifest that they find no defenders.

<sup>3</sup>For the evidence properly required in such matters, cf. Housman 1972 on the alleged lengthening of short final vowels.

concerned, the burden of proof is fully discharged; they are clearly defined and convincingly attested. Of the third class Platnauer writes: "Instances of caesural hiatus are almost always confused by textual considerations. The reading of some MSS shows hiatus, that of others shows none." He lists seven possible examples, one from Tibullus, four from Propertius, and two from Ovid; thus it appears that purported caesural hiatus occurs approximately once in 10,000 lines in the respectable MSS of Ovid, and approximately once in 1,000 lines in the far less reliable MSS of Tibullus and Propertius. This discrepancy creates the presumption that the scribes—rather than the authors—are responsible.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, if our MSS are capable of providing unambiguous evidence for two classes of hiatus, why do they fail to do so for the third? Why does caesural hiatus tend to occur where it can be easily removed?—*a priori* one would expect poets to be readier to employ so rare a licence when they had no convenient alternative. Finally, if the licence existed at all, why was it so rare? The task of writing elegiac verse would be greatly facilitated, if caesural hiatus were permitted.<sup>6</sup> The only possible answer to these questions is that the supposed class of caesural hiatus in Augustan elegiac poetry does not exist.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> See Housman 1972: 1123: "The MSS of Propertius and Tibullus are late and bad . . . . Such MSS cannot furnish strong evidence of anything; their readings, even when faultless, are often false."

<sup>6</sup> Why were the poets "thus sparing and thus capricious in resorting to a licence which, if they indeed possessed it, must have been so very convenient and seductive" (Housman 1972: 1126)?

<sup>7</sup> Seven disparate examples, averaging one every 3,500 lines or so, would in any event be insufficient to demonstrate the existence of a *class* of exceptions; in fact grave doubt can be thrown on each of them, which is enough to deprive them of any evidential value, granted that the onus of proof lies on the supporters of hiatus. Goold deals with them (1969: 192–193), and I shall report the arguments briefly unless I have anything further to add.

In about 1,200 lines of Tibullus there is only one possible example: 1.5.33–34: *et tantum venerata virum, | hunc sedula curet, / huic paret atque epulas ipsa ministra gerat*. The text is certainly open to doubt; Withof suggested *cui . . . cui for hunc . . . huic* (cf. Luck 1988: *ad loc.*). Goold writes, "the awkward because tautologous *virum, hunc* is sufficient to demonstrate the presence of corruption" and accepts Postgate's *decus, hunc*. Murgatroyd (1980: 310) discusses the passage at length and concludes that *hunc . . . huic* "is just defensible"; even if this is true, it is insufficient to provide positive evidence for the hiatus. My own solution would be to delete the couplet as an interpolation; not merely is it metrically and stylistically dubious, it is also incongruous. Messalla is to be imagined making a visit to Delia and Tibullus as they lead "the simple life"; he comes as an intimate and unassuming friend, *Messalla meus*, not as the object of "veneration," and it will be Delia's task to look pretty and make entertaining conversation, not to cook and serve the dinner. Furthermore, we know that Delia is the *domina* of a *garrulus verna*, from which we may deduce the presence of at least two adult slaves, and we may be sure that the slaves will be doing all the real work. The interpolation is due to one who pursued hiatus with an enthusiasm which would have found more frequent expression. Tibullus has left the rest to our imaginations. It might be added that using *b* to "make position" is standard medieval practice: cf. Lindsay 1916.

Propertius produces four purported examples from about 4,000 lines:

(i) 2.15.1: *o me felicem! | o nox mihi candida! et o tu*; if Propertius wrote *o nox* instead of *nox o*, he pursued hiatus with an enthusiasm which would have found more frequent expression.

(ii) 2.32.45: *haec eadem ante illam | impune et Lesbia fecit*; to insert *iam* after *illam* is good for the sense as well as for the sound.

So far as Catullus himself is concerned, the admissibility of hiatus has been asserted by M. Zicàri, W. Kroll, and D. F. S. Thomson.<sup>8</sup> It has been denied by Goold (1958: 110), who concludes that: "There is no certain instance of hiatus in Catullus, as is hardly surprising when we consider that elision occurs nearly a thousand times in his poems and in nearly every conceivable position." It would be superfluous to repeat Goold's arguments at length;<sup>9</sup> in

(iii) 3.7.29–30: *ite rates curvae, | et leti texite causas / ista per humanas mors venit acta manus*; the subject of *texite* is human, therefore either Passerat's *curvas* or (better) Lendrum's *curvate* is necessary.

(iv) 3.7.49: *sed Chio [?] thalamo | aut Oricia terebintho*; nobody would claim to be sure of what Propertius wrote in this passage, so the hiatus must be viewed as uncertain; even if it were certain, its justification would be not the caesura as such but the Greek polysyllables and imitation of Vergil's *inclusum buxo | aut Oricia terebintho* (*Aen.* 10.136).

There are only two supposed examples from about 20,000 elegiac lines of Ovid; Goold (1969: 193) merely observes that they were both rejected by Palmer (1898); some more detail may be desirable:

(i) *Her.* 8.71: *Castori Amyclaeo | et Amyclaeo Polluci*; the hexameter of a couplet which is regarded as spurious by Palmer 1898: *ad loc.* However, Maas (1957: 223–224) regards it as one of four hexameters in which "licentiae prosodicae peculiari quodam modo accumuluntur" (the other three are Verg. *Ecl.* 7.53: *stant et iuniperi et castaneae hirsutae*; *Aen.* 3.74 = *Ciris* 474: *Nereidum matri et Neptuno Aegaeo*; *Ciris* 434: *curalio fragili et lacrimoso electro*). Maas says of the elision of the final *i* of the dative *Castori*: "haec elisio nec latinae prosodiae nec graecae convenit; audaciter hoc novavit Ovidius iuvenis." Either the line is spurious or else it is deliberately irregular in prosody; in neither case can it be evidence that caesural hiatus is prosodically regular.

(ii) *Her.* 9.131: *forsitan et pulsa Aetolide Deianira; Aetolide*, which occurs nowhere else, may be the consequence of the natural gloss, *Aetola*, being written over *Calydonide*, which is used of Deianira at *Met.* 9.122; cf. Palmer 1898: *ad loc.* and 509. Even if the hiatus is genuine—and there is nothing else like it in Ovid—its justification is to be sought in the Greek polysyllables rather than in the caesura.

<sup>8</sup>Zicàri 1964: 193–195, dealing with dactylic poetry rather than with the polymetrics; Kroll 1968: *ad* 107.1; Thomson 1997: *ad loc.*

<sup>9</sup>Goold 1958 and 1969. The hiatuses presented by V are as follows (again a brief resumé will suffice, as the onus of proof lies on the supporters of hiatus; it will be easily seen that there is not a single compelling example):

(i) 3.16: *o factum male, | o miselle passer*; Goold's *quod* for *o* (Goold 1969) is as certain as any emendation can be; if editors reject it, it is presumably only from force of habit. If the *o factum male, Myia, quod peristi* (*Anth. Lat.* 2.2.1512) inscription had been dug up 400 years earlier, and if Goold's other arguments (admitted to be "plausible" by Thomson [1997: *ad loc.*] and "tempting" by Quinn [1973: *ad loc.*]) had occurred to the editor of the 1473 Parma edition, to whom we owe the received text, all editions from that day to this would have had *male, quod*, and it would never have occurred to anybody to suggest that Catullus wrote *male, o* in defiance of style and idiom and metre—and yet the evidence and arguments would be the same under those circumstances as they are now. It should be noted that Fordyce (1973: 412) accepts *quod*.

(ii) 11.11: *horribilesque | ultimosque Britannos*; notoriously corrupt.

(iii) 38.2: *malest me hercule | et laboriose*; insert *est* (Sillig); alternatively treat the final *-e* of *hercule* as long (cf. OLD for the fifth declension characteristics of *Hercules*) and shortened before the following vowel; cf. 97.1: *non, ita me di ament*.

(iv) 66.11: *novo | auctus hymenaeo*; the quadrisyllabic ending requires a preceding molossus; read *auctatus* (Goold 1969).

(v) 66.48: *chalybum | omne*; if Catullus went out of his way to render Callimachus' χαλύβων as *Chalybum* (printed by Kroll among others), he too had a passion for hiatus which he would have indulged more frequently; the tradition offers *celitum* and *celerum* and could have corrupted the ending

any event it is irrational to reject his conclusion on the basis of hiatuses which can be easily removed or which occur in corrupt passages; if hiatus were an ordinary part of Catullan versification, our evidence for it would not be so extraordinarily unconvincing. It should, therefore, be axiomatic that hiatus should not be accepted in Catullus, without at least seeking a satisfactory alternative.

At 107.1 Goold and Lyne<sup>10</sup> accept the Aldine's *cupidoque*, which, though unobjectionable, is distinctly uninspiring; if Catullus wrote *cupidoque*, he did so with no more exalted motive than that of avoiding the hiatus. Furthermore, Ross shows that the only certain example of *-que . . . que* in the epigrams is 76.8; otherwise it is confined "to the polymetrics and longer poems, where its use as a neoteric poeticism is obvious."<sup>11</sup> The hiatus can be removed in a far more satisfactory manner, if we transfer our attention to one word which has been almost entirely ignored, because there is nothing obtrusively wrong with it. While *obtingo* can be used indifferently of events both welcome and unwelcome, *contingo*, when employed intransitively with the dative, is regularly employed for those that

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at least as easily as the stem.

(vi) 67.44: *sperent nec linguam | esse nec auriculam*; sense and metre demand *speraret* (Calphurnius).

(vii) 68.157–158: *et qui principio terram nobis dedit aufert / a quo sunt primo | omnia nata bona*; as it stands the couplet is too corrupt to be evidence for anything. We do, however, have assistance from Agius, the ninth-century monk of Corvey, whose *Epicedium Hathumodae* (in Traube 1896: 3.372–388) gives ground for the belief that he had access to a purer text of 68; cf. Nisbet 1978: 92–115. What appears to be Agius's adaptation runs: *in qua sunt una perdita tanta bona* (58). In view of the difficulty of finding a satisfactory solution with *nata*, it may be that *tanta* represents what Catullus wrote. One might suggest as at least a reasonable possibility the following: *a quo sunt primo condita tanta bona*, in which only *con-* is not in V or Agius or both. *tanta* could easily be corrupted to *nata*, and a scribe might then eliminate the wrong participle. Incidentally Agius may well have had access to a complete text of Catullus; compare 39–40: *parcatis ocellis / quos nimium flendo perditis omnimodo*, with 3.18: *flendo turgiduli rubent ocelli*; and 77: *quo desiderio suscepit advenientem*, with 96.3: *quo desiderio veteres renovamus amores*. He also calls women *femellae* (417), a word whose only other literary occurrence is at 55.7. This could of course be derived from a glossary; cf. Ullman 1961; but Agius's style seems literary rather than glossarial.

(viii) 76.10: *quare cur te iam | amplius excrucies*; read *tete* (Baehrens).

(ix) 97.2: *utrum | os an culum*; read *utrumne* (Avantius).

(x) 99.8: *guttis abstersti | omnibus articulis*; read *abstersisti* (Avantius); again if Catullus was so enamoured of hiatus that he went out of his way to include one when he could so easily have avoided it, why are there no unquestionable examples in his work?

(xi) 107.1 (with which we deal).

(xii) 114.5–6: *quare concedo sit dives, dum omnia desint. / saltum laudemus, dum modo | ipse egeat*; obelised by Mynors (1958); Goold (1958: 109) accepts Lachmann's *dum domo*, which is doubtful; cf. Fordyce (1973: *ad loc.*); "alii alia" as Mynors says. Best in my view, in the light of *dum omnia* in the hexameter, would be *dum omnibus* in the pentameter. As the relevant abbreviations include *omb* and *mdo*, the conjecture is not a violent one.

<sup>10</sup> Lyne 1985: 498–500.

<sup>11</sup> Ross 1969: 65. Ross also shows (120) that elision is much more common in the epigrams (69–116) than in the rest of his poems or "even than in Lucretius or Horace in his *Satires*"; the more acceptable is elision, the less we should expect hiatus.

are welcome.<sup>12</sup> As Catullus is stressing the welcomeness of the event, we should at least test the hypothesis that he used the most appropriate word available to him. Replace *optigit* with *contigit*,<sup>13</sup> the lines will then rewrite themselves as follows:

*si quoi quid<sup>14</sup> cupido atque optanti contigit umquam  
insperanti, hoc est gratum animo proprie.*

Thus the insertion of the best word removes the hiatus and at the same time adds a rhythmical repetition to the poem's many verbal repetitions; four lines on we read: *restituis cupido atque insperanti, ipsa refers te*. The apparent hiatus is nothing more than a clumsy scribal attempt to restore metre after the alteration, unremarkable in so corrupt a tradition, of *contigit* to *optigit* under the influence of *optanti*.

However, the hiatus is not the only problem with the received text; we should also try to deal with the lack of connection between *optanti* and *insperanti* coupled with the inelegant dependence of three datives on *contigit*. Heinsius's *insperati* was an attempt to cure this, but *insperanti* in line 2 is supported by *insperanti* in line 5; as has already been said, this is a poem deliberately filled with repetitions. There is a simpler solution, which in no way transgresses the authority, such as it is, of the mss, and that is to transfer the comma from behind *insperanti* to behind *umquam*.<sup>15</sup> This gives a proper emphasis to *insperanti* and to *proprie*; we may paraphrase as follows: "If anything welcome ever happens to one who desires

<sup>12</sup>The association of *contingo* with welcome events was noted by ancient grammarians: e.g., Caper *Gramm.* 7.98.8: *accidere aliquid adversi dicito, contingere aliquid pulchri*; cf. *ThLL* s.v. *contingo*, where there is ample confirmation of the connection with good news, although there is one archaic exception: cf. *Enn. Scen.* 360. This intransitive use of *contingo* with the dative is to be found at *OLD* s.v. *contingo* 8, where (after *malum* in the example from Ennius) the subjects are *id quod vis, gaudia, virtus perfecta, tantum otii, exitus quem optamus, regia coniunx, vita longior, eloquentiam, crura videnda*, which does seem to demonstrate that *contingo* and welcome events go together. Catullus elsewhere uses *contingo* in the literal spatial sense (62.52; 64.408; 66.65) but the usage here suggested is an ordinary one, and there is no difficulty in supposing that Catullus employed it; incidentally he nowhere else employs *obtingo*. It is of course not suggested that *obtingo* could not be employed here, merely that it would not be so appropriate; for *obtingo* with unwelcome events, cf. *Plaut. Aul.* 732 (where its subject is *tanta mala maestitudoque*); *Men.* 899 (*hic dies pervorsus atque advorsus*); *Cic. Pis.* 95 (*damnatio ista*); *Hor. Epod.* 4.1 (*discordia*); *Cic. Catil.* 4.3 (*si quid obtigerit, aequo animo paratogue moriar*).

<sup>13</sup>It should be stated that as far back as 1495 Avantius restored metre by writing *cupido optantique et contigit*, thereby rendering the line so inharmonious (not to mention retaining the superfluous *et* of the then vulgate) that *contigit* has hitherto been robbed of its merited success.

<sup>14</sup>Fordyce (1973: *ad loc.*) remarks that Ribbeck's *quoi quid* "eases the construction by providing a substantive for *cupido* and *optanti*," but that "the old correction *quicquam*" can be supported by 96.1, 102.1, and 15.3. A respectable case can thus be made for either conjecture; therefore, *quoi quid* should be preferred as being closer to the tradition.

<sup>15</sup>It might be added, though hardly as a decisive consideration, that a heavy elision at an enjambement in a pentameter is hard to parallel in Catullus. I count fifty-two enjambements in 322 pentameters, and there are only three elisions among them: there are light elisions at 66.40 (*invita: adiuro*) and 76.8 (*aut facere, haec*), and a heavy elision at 77.6 (*vitae, heu heu*), where the exclamation very likely accounts for the peculiarity.

and longs for it, then it is gratifying (*gratum animo*) in the true sense of the word (*proprie*) for one who had no reason to expect it (*insperanti*).” We can now write the first couplet as follows:

*si quoi quid cupido atque optanti contigit umquam,  
insperanti hoc est gratum animo proprie.*

So far as line 3 is concerned, we must agree with Fordyce that “Haupt’s *nobisque est* and Statius’ *nobisque hoc* both have the effect of attaching *nobis* to the second clause only and suggesting a contrast which does not exist”; it might be added that they both contain cacophonous consonant clusters. Lyne (1985) conjectures *quoque, carior auro / quod te restituis*, but *gratum* by itself is too flat; it is Lesbia’s restoration that is being celebrated in this poem, and the tradition rightly attributes the laudatory epithets to the fact of that restoration. Heyworth (1984: 137) proposed *et* for *quoque*, suggesting that *et* was corrupted to *-que* and that metre was restored by altering *-que* to *quoque*. This is not impossible, but sense and metre could have been restored simultaneously by altering *-que* back to *et*; besides *quoque* provides useful emphasis.<sup>17</sup> Here too we must look beyond the apparently corrupt to the apparently sound; if we do so, we will find that the line can be restored by a very slight change in word order. At first sight *hoc est gratum* in line 3 may seem to be supported by *hoc est gratum* in line 2; but (1) although Catullus marks this poem with verbal repetition, he does not repeat phrases; thus he repeats *cupido* and *insperanti* in the first and third couplets, but alters the relationship between them; (2) to postpone *gratum* would enable Catullus immediately and emphatically to outbid himself with *carius auro*; (3) to bring forward *nobis quoque* would provide suitable emphasis—“Wherefore for me too this is welcome and indeed more precious than gold.” Therefore, we should write:

*quare hoc est nobis quoque gratum <ac><sup>18</sup> carius auro  
quod te restituis, Lesbia, mi cupido,<sup>19</sup>*

The postulated corruption is again an easy one in such a tradition—a scribe with *hoc est gratum* still in his head from the line above would be only too likely to alter *hoc est . . . gratum* to *hoc est gratum* in the line below; *ac* was then expelled to restore the metre.

In the last couplet Catullus appears to be asking two questions: (1) who has a happier life than mine? (2) who will be able to tell of a happier life than mine? The second question is textually corrupt. Furthermore, it has little point, as

<sup>17</sup> Lyne (1985: 498) rightly remarks that “Catullus applies the opening *sententia* to his own case (*nobis quoque*).”

<sup>18</sup> *ac* is particularly appropriate when there is a more emphatic term to be connected: cf. *OLD* s.v. *ac* 1 and 2; the asyndeton, *gratum, carius auro*, would be very harsh.

<sup>19</sup> Kroll (1968) and Fordyce (1973) rightly print a comma here, which saves Catullus from inelegantly employing *restituis* in a subordinate clause and immediately afterwards in a main clause; cf. Lyne 1985: 498.

Catullus is primarily concerned with what will be done rather than with what can be said. What Catullus should ask is: (1) who has a happier life than mine? (2) who will ever have a happier life than mine?<sup>20</sup> To bring this about we must follow Lyne (1985) and accept Munro's change of *dicere* to *ducere*.<sup>21</sup> Apart from being more appropriate in the context, *ducere* has the further advantage of making perfect sense with *vitam* as its direct object, whereas *dicere* is uncharacteristically ambiguous; either it is a weak way to express "to tell of," for which *narrare* would be more appropriate, whereas *dicere* means simply "to mention"; or it is to be taken as introducing an accusative and infinitive with ellipse of *esse*, meaning "to say *that* there is a happier life than mine," but this has far less point than "to say that somebody else has a happier life than mine," for which there is insufficient space. Lyne deals with the rest of the corruption by writing:

*quis me uno vivit felicior, aut magis umquam  
optandam vitam ducere quis poterit?*

This is a great improvement on previous suggestions, which are well disposed of by Fordyce *ad loc.* There are, however, various considerations which may lead us to believe that the couplet can be improved still further: (1) it seems inelegant to have three successive words ending in the same sound, especially when only two are in agreement; (2) both the sense and *me uno* in the first half of the verse make it appear that an ablative of comparison is required, a role which *hac* appears to be designed to fulfil; (3) in view of *nobis*, *mi*, *nobis*, and *me* above, some personal pronoun seems required to emphasise that the life concerned is that which Catullus will be enjoying with Lesbia; (4) *umquam*, as Lyne acknowledges, is contrary to the *ductus litterarum*; Lyne hypothesises that a scribe was so confused by the repetitions that he wrote *hoc est* (from lines 3 and 4) for *umquam*; this is of course entirely possible, but a more clearly motivated solution would be preferable if one can be found.

Experiment shows that it is impossible to realise all the objectives listed above and at the same time to find a sixth foot beginning with a vowel. To enable the sixth foot to begin with the necessary consonant, we must suppose that Catullus wrote *mage*.<sup>22</sup> The text can then be restored as follows: *aut mage vitam / hac nostra*

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Lyne 1985: 499–500. For Catullus' fondness for such sweeping assertions, cf. the initial lines of 21, 24, and 49.

<sup>21</sup> Munro's recommendation (1880: 185; 1905: 219) is *aut magis aevum / optandum hac vita ducere quis poterit?*, which is close to what is required in sense and rhythm, though, as Lyne remarks, as Latin it is unacceptable. For this use, cf. *OLD* s.v. *duco* 14, especially *Lucr.* 2.997: *dulcem ducunt vitam prolemque propagant*; the Latin expression is less hackneyed than the English "to lead a life," and has a stronger sense of an enduring state, which is of course appropriate in this context.

<sup>22</sup> As did *Lucretius* (4.81, 343, 756; 5.1203), *Propertius* (1.11.9; 3.14.2; 4.8.16), *Vergil* (*Aen.* 10.481: *aspice num mage sit nostrum penetrabile telum*). *Servius* (*ad loc.*) reports the existence of an alternative reading (motivated no doubt by the unfamiliarity of *mage*): *nunc magis est* for *num mage sit*; if the tradition of *Vergil* were as corrupt as that of *Catullus*, the worse reading might be the only survivor. There is no problem with the separation of *magis* from its adjective: cf., e.g., 61.46: *quis deus*

*optandam ducere quis poterit.* There is no difficulty in supposing that *mage* was altered, either by accident or design, to the much more common *magis*; this left no room for *vitam*, which was transferred to the next line, whence it expelled *nostra*; *hac* or *me* and *est*,<sup>23</sup> were employed, regardless of sense, to fill up the defective hexameter.

We can now write the whole poem as follows:

*si quoi quid cupido atque optanti contigit umquam,  
insperanti hoc est gratum animo proprie.  
quare hoc est nobis quoque gratum <ac> carius auro  
quod te restituis, Lesbia, mi cupido,  
restituis cupido atque insperanti, ipsa refers te  
nobis. o lucem candidiore nota!  
quis me uno vivit felicior? aut mage vitam  
hac <nostra> optandam ducere quis poterit?*

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*magis est amatis petendus amantibus*; Verg. *Aen.* 2.200: *aliud maius multoque tremendum obicitur magis*; Lucr. 6.773–774: *et magis esse aliis alias animantibus aptas / res*; Lucr. 2.1035: *quid magis his rebus poterat mirabile dici*; Ov. *Ars am.* 1.475: *quid magis est saxo durum, quid mollius unda*; in the last two examples we see that it is idiomatic to sandwich the ablative of comparison. The suggestion that Catullus wrote *mage* can be somewhat fortified by *tu dabis supplicium* at 116.8; note also 44.17, where Catullus, who is addressing his *fundus*, must have written *ultus peccatum* (Muretus); naturally the scribes "restored metre" by corrupting this to *ulta peccatum*, although he is not addressing his *villa*; cf. Quinn 1973: *ad loc.* It seems at least possible that Catullus also employed ecthipsis of final *s* at 66.15–16: *estne novis nuptis odio Venus? anne parentum / frustrantur falsis gaudia lacrimulis . . .*? Here *anne* is an old and widely accepted correction of V's *atque*. However there is no motive for the postulated corruption, and there seems no parallel for the use of *anne* to add a question expecting the answer "yes" to one expecting the answer "no." I incline, therefore, to the view that Catullus wrote *nonne*, which is appropriate to the context and which would have made the corruption almost inevitable. Also attractive (after the initial shock has worn off) is Fröhlich's *postquam est porrecto factus maritus sene* at 67.6.

<sup>23</sup> *hac* of course derives from the line below, and most likely *me* was recruited from the beginning of this line; *est* may simply be the first monosyllable that came into the scribe's head; in any event it would suggest the need for a nominative, which could explain the ending of *optandus* in the MSS; cf. Lyne 1985: 498; besides final *-m* and *-s* are often confused in the tradition of Catullus; cf. Munro 1905: 219.



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