

this point in the race would easily evolve. The poet introduces the significant events in the chariot race with this traditional designation, overlooking for the moment that both events actually take place as the contestants are rounding the turn, before they enter the return leg.

The general vagueness of the description of Antilochus' overtaking Menelaus may be explained with reference to the dispute which arises between them later (566–613). Though Antilochus may be thought to confess to foul play when Menelaus later challenges his prize, he does not in fact admit this charge. He ignores the oath offered by Menelaus and with abundant deference says that he is young and headstrong and that Menelaus is the better man. He then offers to give Menelaus the prize "which I won" (592), as well as anything else he wishes, but in the end Menelaus lets him keep the prize. From Menelaus' point of view Antilochus cheated, but the more objective view is that he used skill to compensate for his slower horses (515), just as Nestor had advised him. The vagueness of the description of the actual events allows the poet to suggest that both sides may have some justification for their positions and to preserve the dignity and honor of all involved.

In sum, the assumption that a formulaic line has been used imprecisely to heighten the tension allows us to attain a more satisfactory interpretation of Antilochus' strategy. Nestor's advice does not go unheeded but rather gives Antilochus just the information he needs to make use of his greater skill and beat Menelaus despite his slower horses.²¹

MICHAEL GAGARIN
University of Texas

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ON CATULLUS 11

The several interpretations offered by scholars of the unity of Catullus 11 do not entirely account for the apparent awkwardness of the transition from the invocation/excursus of lines 1–14 to the invective of lines 17–20.¹ The tendency has been to argue either for oddity or for the preparation of a brutal surprise by the poet,² but Ross has shown how the handling of geographical allusion by Catullus here, as frequently, combines the stuff of Hellenistic and Roman practice to achieve an epic effect.³ Certainly that is the practical force of the references

1. The basic bibliography includes L. Richardson, Jr., "Furi et Aureli, Comites Catulli," *CP* 58 (1963): 93–106; T. E. Kinsey, "Catullus 11," *Latomus* 24 (1965): 537–44; D. O. Ross, *Style and Tradition in Catullus* (Harvard, 1969), esp. pp. 173–74; M. C. J. Putnam, "Catullus 11: The Ironies of Integrity," *Ramus* 3 (1974): 70–86; G. S. Duclos, "Catullus 11: Atque in Perpetuum, Lesbia, Ave Atque Vale," *Arethusa* 9 (1976): 77–89; D. Mulroy, "An Interpretation of Catullus 11," *CW* 71 (1977–78): 237–47; A. J. Woodman, "Catullus 11 and 51," *LCM* 3 (1978): 77–79.

2. See, e.g., Kinsey, "Catullus 11," pp. 538–42, who points out that the comparison of the first part of the poem with Hor. *Odes* 2. 6 "only serves to reveal the oddity of Catullus' logic." If the comparison were apt, one might have expected Catullus to ask Furius and Aurelius to meet him somewhere, as Horace was prepared to ask of Septimius. See also K. Quinn, *Catullus: The Poems* (London and Basingstoke, 1970), pp. 125–26.

3. Ross, *Style and Tradition*, pp. 95–98. See also Putnam, "Catullus 11," pp. 70–73; Duclos, "Catullus 11," pp. 84–85; Mulroy, "An Interpretation," p. 243.

to Ocean and the ends of the earth, East and West, in the opening section. These are the domains peculiar to heroes, beginning with Heracles and Odysseus and including that most famous of the Hellenistic wanderers, Alexander the Great, who focuses the compliment to Caesar in line 10.⁴

Challenge and danger are of course important aspects of epic adventure, and these associations are operative in the transition from the excursus proper to the stanza on Lesbia: the challenge the poet lays before his would-be companions Furius and Aurelius is to face her.⁵ One need not, I think, wonder here whether the poet contemplated a real odyssey of his own by joining the staffs of Crassus or Caesar.⁶ Critics have generally favored reading any possible journey by Catullus as one of the spirit in which he clearly distances himself emotionally from his *puella*.⁷ Poetically, however, the sense of odyssey is palpable in the opening section, and I would hold deliberately so, intended to provide the context for the description of Lesbia which follows.

As regards language, the invective stanza has extraordinarily little invective in it. One might well have expected curses to follow *non bona dicta*, but such expectation is hardly fulfilled by the formula of line 17. *Moechis* aside, there is nothing about the style or diction of the stanza at variance with the epic tone of what precedes it.⁸ Catullus in these few lines describes his *puella* as an epic

4. On the ends of the earth, see, e.g., R. M. Ogilvie and I. Richmond, *Tacitus: "Agricola"* (Oxford, 1967), pp. 32–33. For Hercules and Odysseus in the West beyond Italy, cf., e.g., *Germ.* 4. 34; Virg. *Aen.* 8. 185. On the reference to Caesar, cf. Putnam, "Catullus 11," p. 85, n. 2, and Woodman, "Catullus 11 and 51," p. 77.

5. Kinsey, "Catullus 11," p. 542: "There may also be here a touch of humour at Catullus' own expense; he is willing to face the dangers of foreign travel but not his *puella* with this message." But see Putnam, "Catullus 11," pp. 74–76, and Woodman, "Catullus 11 and 51," pp. 77–78.

6. The possibility is raised hypothetically by Quinn, *Catullus*, pp. 125–26; against: Mulroy, "An Interpretation," pp. 238–40.

7. Thus Richardson, "Furi et Aureli," p. 103, seconded by Ross, *Style and Tradition*, p. 173. Putnam has argued at length the place of irony in Catullus' dismissal of Lesbia. One item in his brief, however, does not quite fit: his characterization, "Catullus 11," p. 73, of the effect in the poem of the Sapphic meter. "Yet all the time running counter to the grander swell is the lyric limitation of Sappho's meter. This tells us always by inner beat if not exterior sense, that we must be prepared for a series of reversals. . . ." The characterization is no less lively than that offered by J. Ferguson, who in "Catullus and Horace," *AJP* 77 (1956): 7–10, compared the Sapphic pattern in Catullus to a country dancer, "stepping in and going back to position." But neither effect is demonstrable. J. Loomis, *Studies in Catullan Verse* (Leyden, 1972), pp. 14–35, has shown that Catullus' close imitations of the Lesbian Sapphic pattern could practically convey to his audience only an archaic and foreign flavor (already noted in passing by E. A. Havelock, *The Lyric Genius of Catullus* [Oxford, 1939], p. 134), which well suits the contents of poem 11.

8. The impression might perhaps be different were more work of the Hellenistic iambographers preserved. Putnam, "Catullus 11," p. 74, describes the stanza as a "most polished curse"; see also Richardson, "Furi et Aureli," p. 105. There is some difficulty about the interpretation of the concluding words *ilia rumpens*, an ambiguous expression which not a few readers of Catullus take to be unequivocally obscene. The basis for such a reading is 80. 8, where by metonymy the *rupta ilia* of the unfortunate Victor refer to male genitals abused by fellatio, as the preceding and following verses clearly state. But the meaning is exceptional and it is quite another matter to import its context in 80 en bloc to the stanza in 11. There is on the other hand nothing unusual or obscene about Virgil's "invidia rumpantur ut ilia Codri" at the outset of the amoebaeon competition between Corydon and Thyrsis in *Ecl.* 7. 26. It is a homely image drawn from the animal world, as T. E. Page long ago perceived: one may compare the frog swelling to bursting in Hor. *Sat.* 2. 3. 313–19. While Servius ad loc. probably thought the expression inelegant, the figure is rustic rather than obscene. In the *Aeneid* and post-Virgilian epic, *ilia* remains a respectable dactylic word for the lower abdomen which turns up frequently in descriptions of mortal wounds being inflicted in combat. See, e.g., *Aen.* 10. 778 "egregium Antorens latus inter et ilia figit"; other examples in *TLL.* 7. 1. 325. Consequently I think it may be fairly said of *ilia rumpens* in Catull. 11 that the expression is not at odds with epic vocabulary or rhythm; and, inasmuch as it suits the

monster, the ultimate source for which is Homer's Scylla, who snatched up six of Odysseus' shipmates, crushing their midsections with her huge hands, and then devoured them.⁹ Notwithstanding Catullus' numerical hyperbole, the Lesbia who is described as taking and destroying three hundred lovers is as visually incomplete as Homer's Scylla, which makes the comparison more striking than it would have been if for his description he had had recourse to the Classical and Hellenistic iconography of the Scylla with which he was also acquainted.¹⁰

But there is far more to Catullus' monster in this stanza than a pointed evocation of a Homeric beast whose lair was in Italy,¹¹ for with the passage of time (beginning perhaps with Stesichorus¹²) a whole series of tales was fashioned about Scylla by Greek authors. One development was the conflation of Homer's Scylla with Scylla the daughter of Nisus and another the introduction of pronounced erotic elements, including sexual wantonness, into her story.¹³ The various permutations are reviewed at length by the author of the *Ciris* at the beginning of his work (11. 54–91); and, despite manifold difficulties in the transmitted text, tales based on what may be called the theme of *vitium inguinis* are prominent therein.¹⁴ One depends upon Scylla as prostitute.¹⁵

Thus, it seems to me, Catullus drew on the fluid tradition concerning Scylla to shape the imagery and invective of his message for Lesbia. His picture deftly combines throughout the primordial, epic beast and the later, sexually wanton woman: "quos simul complexa tenet trecentos / nullum amans vere, sed identidem omnium / ilia rumpens."¹⁶ And the accomplishment involves no appreciable sacrifice of the elevated tone of the previous stanzas, something which in its turn facilitates the shift from an epic frame of reference to that of the Sapphic lyric

destructive actions both of Homer's Scylla (n. 9 below) and Lesbia, it is not to be taken as exclusively obscene. The possible anatomical equivocation of *ilia* would rather seem to suit the poet's purpose of combining the physical and erotic aspects of destruction which the stanza contains.

9. *Od.* 12. 85 (partial description of Scylla), 12. 245–50 (the encounter).

10. On the iconography of the Scylla, East and West, from the early fifth century on, see K. Tuchelt, "Skylia. Zu einem neugefundenen Tonmodell aus Didyma," *Ist. Mitt.* 17 (1967): 173. In poem 60 Catullus represents Scylla in the dominant image of Hellenistic literature and art. Cf. Virg. *Ecl.* 6. 74–77. T. P. Wiseman, *Catullan Questions* (Leicester, 1969), p. 16, suggests the reference in poem 60 would have put the reader in mind "of the insultingly physical way in which the poet describes Lesbia's activities" in poem 11. But see n. 16 below.

11. On the location of the fantastic geography of the odyssey in the West, see, e.g., Apollonius 4. 827; Virg. *Aen.* 3. 381–431. The location of Scylla in Italy does ease geographically the transition to the invective-stanza from the opening excursus in poem 11, which moves from West to East and back to the West.

12. On Stesichorus, see, e.g., A. Lesky, *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur*² (Bern, 1963), p. 177.

13. For the conflation, see Virg. *Ecl.* 6. 74–77. R. Pfeiffer associated two lines of Callimachus' *Hecale* (frag. 288) to show both developments: Σκύλλα γυνή κατακάσα καὶ οὐ ψύθος οὐνόμε' ἔχονσα / πορφύρεην ἤμηρε κρέκα.

14. See now the commentary ad loc. by R. O. A. M. Lyne, "*Ciris*": *A Poem Attributed to Vergil* (Cambridge, 1978). On the text, see further Lyne in "*Ciris* 85–6," *CR* 21 (1971): 323. Catullus' sense of the *vitium inguinis* motif may be evident in poem 60 as well: "aut Scylla latrans infima inguinum parte" (2). Cf. Wiseman, *Catullan Questions*, p. 16.

15. See, e.g., Lyne's reference; E. K. Borthwick, "A 'Femme Fatale' in Asclepiades," *CR* 17 (1967): 251, with bibliography. Heracl. *Περὶ ἀπίστων* II (pp. 73–74 Festa) has the story of Homer's Scylla being a prostitute.

16. In the context of the stanza *ilia rumpens* has perforce a sexual reference even as it completes the picture of the Homeric Scylla's crushing seizure of Odysseus' companions. But I do not agree with Wiseman, *Catullan Questions*, p. 16, that the language is on its face as "insultingly physical" as that in 58. 4–5, which he groups under that heading with 11. 20 and 37. 14.

with which the poem closes.¹⁷ The transition would have been far more difficult had Catullus employed the style of more traditional invective.

Current scholarly belief holds that the eleventh poem shows its readers a clear-headed and purposeful Catullus reviewing the claims on himself of a love affair and poetry alike, with the opening excursus and closing lyric components elegantly illustrating his distance and detachment from Lesbia, after the harm she has done him, and the curative power of his art.¹⁸ It is hoped that the foregoing discussion of the *puella*-stanza which they frame may bolster that belief.¹⁹

R. T. SCOTT

Bryn Mawr College

17. The continuity of language has fostered the impression that the flower simile of the last stanza is almost Homeric. See Richardson's discussion, "Furi et Aureli," p. 106, and note that the cut flower appears in *Aen.* 9, 435–37 along with drooping flowers, a close imitation of *Il.* 8, 306. For an apposite image from Sappho, the trampled hyacinth, see 105 c LP with Quinn, *Catullus*, p. 129, and Putnam, "Catullus 11," p. 78. For interpretations of the Catullan figure, see Mulroy, "An Interpretation," p. 243.

18. Discussions cited in n. 1. Only Kinsey, "Catullus 11," p. 544, regards 11 as nothing more than "a rebuff to Lesbia." But this ignores both the concluding stanza and the fact that 11 and 51 must be taken together. On the question of placement of the two poems, see now Wiseman, *Catullan Questions*, pp. 33–35. If one does not expect Catullus to have ordered his Lesbia poems in strict accord with a presumed chronological account of the love affair, there is no apparent difficulty about the position of 11 and 51 in the collection.

19. I am grateful to the anonymous referee of *CP* for bibliographical and other advice.

CATULLUS 51 AND 68. 51–56: AN OBSERVATION

The question whether the fourth stanza of poem 51 was in fact composed by Catullus as part of the poem and, if so, what function it has in the context of the whole poses one of the more intriguing problems in Catullan criticism. In 1965 I published an interpretation of the poem as a four-stanza unit which, at least in its main conclusions, has been accepted by some scholars and rejected by others.¹ I now wish to draw attention to a passage in Catullus 68. 51–56 which supports my interpretation. For this purpose I shall first summarize this interpretation, while for substantiation and details the reader must be referred to the article itself.

In his first poem to Lesbia Catullus contrasts the divine bliss of another man with his own unhappiness (5 *misero*). The other man habitually (3 *identidem*) enjoys the charming company of Lesbia, which implies that he is her accepted lover and friend, and thereby he is rendered divinely happy. Catullus in contrast has seen Lesbia perhaps only once (6–7 *simul te . . . aspexi*), and her very appearance causes or has caused him to swoon (6–12). He is not now and perhaps cannot realistically aspire ever to be the recipient of her love. In short, he is desperately, unhappily in love. Meanwhile, since first meeting Lesbia and losing his heart to her, in his obsession with her, he has ignored and neglected all other activities and responsibilities. In a word, he has "dropped out." This condition

1. E. A. Fredricksmeyer, "On the Unity of Catullus 51," *TAPA* 96 (1965): 153–63. The interpretation has been accepted by, e.g., F. Frank, "*Otium* versus *Virtus*," *TAPA* 99 (1968): 233; V. Lejnieks, "*Otium Catullanum* Reconsidered," *CJ* 63 (1968): 262; F. Copley, "The Structure of Catullus C. 51 and the Problem of the *Otium*-Strophe," *GB* 2 (1974): 25, rejects it.