

THE NEOTERIC POETS¹

The following works will be referred to by author or by the indicated abbreviation alone:

- H. Bardon, *La Littérature latine inconnue*, i (Paris, 1952);
 W. V. Clausen, 'Callimachus and Roman Poetry', *GRBS* 5 (1964), 181–96;
 N. B. Crowther, 'ΟΙ ΝΕΩΤΕΡΟΙ, Poetae Novi, and Cantores Euphorionis', *CQ* N.S. 20 (1970), 322–7;
 C. J. Fordyce, *Catullus, A Commentary* (Oxford, 1961);
 K. Quinn, *The Catullan Revolution* (Melbourne, 1959) = Quinn I;
 K. Quinn, *Catullus, The Poems* (Macmillan, London, 2nd edn. 1973) = Quinn II;
 D. O. Ross, *Style and Tradition in Catullus* (Harvard University Press, 1969);
 M. Schanz and C. Hosius, *Geschichte der römischen Literatur*, Pt. I (Munich, 1927);
 T. B. L. Webster, *Hellenistic Poetry and Art* (Methuen, London, 1964);
 T. P. Wiseman, *Cinna the Poet, and Other Roman Essays* (Leicester, 1974).

I

In 50 B.C. Cicero writes to Atticus as follows (*Att.* 7.2.1): 'Brundisium uenimus VII Kalend. Decembr. usi tua felicitate nauigandi; ita belle nobis *flauit ab Epiro lenissimus Onchesmites*. hunc σπονδεύζοντα si cui uoles τῶν νεωτέρων pro tuo uendito.' The antonomasia, the euphonic sibilance, and the mannered rhythm (the five-word line with fourth foot homodyne; the spondaic fifth foot) are all prominent in Cicero's hexameter. The line is a humorously concocted example of affected and Grecizing narrative. But it is also a line which, Atticus is to suppose, οἱ νεώτεροι would value; presumably therefore it is meant to hit off characteristics of their style. Cicero must in fact be *parodying* what he regards as a *typical* 'neoteric' line, and the significance of this simple fact has perhaps been underestimated.

To parody a group presupposes that one has in mind a group with common characteristics; indeed (it seems to me) if anyone thinks he can hit off a group of poets in a single line, he must regard that group as highly mannered and distinct. And Cicero obviously thinks he can do just that. So he at any rate seems to have in mind a clearly cohering group of νεώτεροι; or, not to beat about the bush, a school. It seems likely that they are the same or the same sort of poets as those whom in 45 B.C. he refers to as 'cantores Euphorionis' (*Tusc.* 3.45); poets who, he implies, despised the grandiose style of Ennius.² The prima-facie plausibility of this will be substantiated as we proceed. And when Cicero refers in 46 B.C. (*Orat.* 161) to the practice of 'poetae noui' in avoiding elided s, he may again have the same group in mind but the expression there is too general to provide positive support for the notion of a cohering school.

The idea of a school of νεώτεροι has been much questioned and debated in recent years.³ I think the implications of Cicero's remarks (anyway at *Att.* 7.2.1)

¹ My thanks are due to P. G. McC. Brown for kindly reading and acutely criticizing a first draft.

² On the meaning of 'cantores Euphorionis' see n.25 below. Of course Cicero means to imply through this reference other peculiarities besides a warped sense of style. But style is clearly

his main preoccupation, here as at *Att.* 7.2.1. At *Att.* 7.2.1. he hits at poets who cultivate an abstruse stylistic preciosity; at *Tusc.* 3.45 he stresses the corollary, the scorn of affected stylists for classical Ennian grandeur.

³ Note the cautious or sceptical views of Crowther, and of J. C. Bramble, *Persius*

are clear—and if he thought in terms of a school, there probably was a school. It is the purpose of this paper to try to clarify the picture: to try to identify some or all of the school's members and then to define what precisely their shared characteristics or interests were. Further assistance from Cicero will be limited: he names no names and his comments are chiefly or exclusively in reaction to 'neoteric' *style*. We shall have to work our way beyond him to establish who belonged to the 'neoteric' school and what genres or subject matter it liked.

First, a word on the meaning of *νεώτεροι*.

II

Professor Alan Cameron has contributed some timely comments on the sense of *νεώτεροι* and 'neoterici'.⁴ The term continually occurs in grammarians and commentators, Greek and Roman. If (for example) Aristarchus wants to distinguish between genuine Homeric usage and what was not found till later writers, these later writers are *οἱ νεώτεροι*; when Vergil has established the classical Latin canon, the Latin grammarians may then use 'neoterici' of what we might call the Silver Poets. The term is therefore essentially general and relative: 'newer writers'—often with depreciatory tone. Possibly⁵ Cicero himself—given that a hexameter is in question, and given his and Atticus' familiarity with Aristarchus—meant more specifically 'newer *epic* writers'; but the term is not in itself as restricted as Wiseman maintains. This, the essentially general nature of the term, might weigh heavy with those who do not believe in a school of 'neoteric' poets.

Cicero however writes a line intended to be typical of the 'newer writers' which is highly idiosyncratic. He must therefore be thinking of very idiosyncratic 'newer writers', *particular* 'newer writers'; he must be thinking of a school of 'newer writers', even if he does not say quite as much. And of course he does say 'newer writers' in a rather particular way. He says it in Greek; he writes *σπονδεῖάζοντα* in Greek too. Perhaps a notable part of the particularity of these poets had to do with Grecizing.

And perhaps Cicero did feel their particularity predominantly or only in epic. But that would not mean that *other* particular interests could not be shared by such an idiosyncratic group.

In conclusion, therefore, one should well doubt that the poets in question ever called themselves *νεώτεροι* (it is ironic that 'neoteric' is the term we shall use for them):⁶ it seems quite clear that Cicero meant some of the customary depreciatory

and the Programmatic Satire (Cambridge, 1974), pp.180 ff. Quinn is fairly cautious too (I.44–8) and refers to articles which forthrightly attack the notion of a school. Bardon (358–67) sees the neoterics as a rather vague and general movement (*not* a school) and includes poets and types of poetry which must be excluded. Similarly, Schanz–Hosius, 285–6. Wiseman, 44–58, holds a rather different view from mine as to who the neoterics were and what it was they did that was neoteric. Ross writes (p.11) 'There is no question that Catullus was a neoteric poet' and his book seeks among other things to arrive at a definition of what constituted neoteric poetry. But

again his conclusions are rather different from mine, although at times our paths interestingly converge. (It should be noted that my views on neotericism have changed since *CR* 22 (1972), 37—my review of Ross.) Some of the most useful remarks to date on the neoterics are in A. L. Wheeler, *Catullus and the Traditions of Ancient Poetry* (California, 1934), pp.77–86.

⁴ In a forthcoming work on *Poetae Novelli*.

⁵ Cf. Wiseman, 51.

⁶ But what else? 'poetae novi' or 'new poets' is unsuitable for the reason implied above. As for 'cantores Euphorionis', we still require confirmation that the term refers to

tone to attach to the particular poets he had in mind. One may in fact agree with Professor Cameron, with some qualification, that Cicero used the term because he thought they were mere *epigoni*. On the other hand there is nothing to change one's conclusion that Cicero had in mind a cohering school—whose programme is yet to be established; and whatever Cicero thought, the poets themselves may well have considered that they were prophets of a 'new poetry'.⁷

III

Cicero's 'flaut ab Epiro lenissimus Onchesmites' is intended to be *typical*, in a parodying vein, of a fashion of writing. Does it resemble, hit off, any surviving literature? One poem obviously suggests itself. The mannered antonomasia, alliteration, and rhythms of Cicero's line are all striking features of the style of Catullus 64: cf. 'Peliaco quondam prognatae uertice pinus' (1), 'tene Thetis tenuit pulcherrima Nereine' (28), 'a misera, assiduis quam luctibus externauit / spinosas Erycina serens in pectore curas' (71–2), 'incola Itoni' (228), 'Emathiae tutamen, Opis carissime nato' (325), etc., etc.: cf. Fordyce, 274–6, Quinn I.44–6, Quinn II.299 f., L. P. Wilkinson, *Golden Latin Artistry* (Cambridge, 1963), pp.129 f. Cicero's line could in fact be a parody of Catullus' style in poem 64, the 'Peleus and Thetis'. It is, actually, unlikely to be: Catullus is most probably dead in 50 B.C.⁸ and *οἱ νεώτεροι* whom Cicero has in mind are presumably alive. This makes the resemblance the more dramatic. If Cicero parodies a group *without* having Catullus specifically in mind and yet *still* reminds us strongly of him, not only (we might infer) must Catullus have been a member of the group but the characteristics hit off must have been prominently and regularly displayed by all members. And the fashion of writing must have been in operation for a number of years.

We have now established the likelihood of a neoteric school, and that Catullus had probably been (as it were) a member. It also seems likely that the mannered miniature *epos*, which we conveniently call *epyllion*, was a (if not the) typical genre of the school. But the question of what forms the neoterics typically wrote in I am leaving for a moment; it ought anyway to be said that Cicero at *Att.* 7.2.1 could have had in mind narrative *elegy*—an affinity between his parody and lines of Catullus 68 might easily have been demonstrated. I continue now on the track of other members of the school; and it is an obvious move to look among Catullus' own contemporaries and confrères, for whom we have a little information.

We look in the Catullan corpus to see if there are any poets for whom Catullus expresses particular affection; more especially we look for poets with whom he shares a definite literary sympathy or interest. Given Catullus' apparent membership of the school these too will be likely candidates—though only as yet candidates.

Catullus addresses poem 35 to a Caecilius, 'poetae tenero meo sodali'; he

the same group. Anyway it too is uncomplimentary. We will use the term that derives from the most significant and useful of Cicero's references—confident that the poets themselves would appreciate the irony.

⁷ Professor Cameron, *op. cit.*, writes: 'It is in this sense [i.e. the general, relative

sense] . . . that Cicero . . . used the term of certain contemporary writers; *not* because they were prophets of a 'new poetry', but precisely because (in his opinion) they were *epigoni*.'

⁸ For Catullus' dates see conveniently Quinn II.xii–xv.

expresses interest, even anxiety,⁹ about the progress of a 'learned' ('doctus') poem of Caecilius' which is called or concerns the 'Dindymi domina', the 'magna mater', i.e. Cybele. In poem 50 Catullus writes to Licinius, who is clearly the orator and poet Licinius Calvus (cf. poem 14 mentioned below, also 53 and 96, all to or about Calvus): the poem comprises Catullus' passionate recollection of, and response to, an evening spent with Calvus experimenting in polymetric *uersiculi*.¹⁰ Poem 95 is a celebration of Helvius Cinna's abstruse epyllion *Zmyrna*, which he contrasts with the rubbishy and lengthy 'annales' of Volusius (Caius Cinna is mentioned as Catullus' 'sodalis' at 10.29 f.; cf. too 113.1). As well as these places, where Catullus speaks to or about fellow-poets and explicitly mentions their literature, we should note the following places where he shows affection for people who are probably poets, but where literature is not mentioned: poem 38 is addressed to a Cornificius who is probably the poet of an epyllion *Glaucus*; and poem 56 is addressed to a Cato who seems likely to be the famous poet and grammarian Valerius Cato. These then are poets whom we may suspect—some or all of them—to have belonged to the self-conscious school whose existence we have inferred and to which Catullus seemed to belong. For all of them, except Caecilius, fragments and/or allusions survive to provide further valuable information.¹¹

Another fact should now be brought into play which strengthens one's impression of a cohesive group of poets around Catullus. This is the phenomenon of a literary polemic. An attitude of Us against Them presupposes a strong bond of interest among Us. Poem 95 referred to above reads as follows:

Zmyrna mei Cinnae nonam post denique messem
quam coepta est nonamque edita post hiemem,
milia cum interea quingenta Hortensius uno

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Zmyrna cauas Satrachi penitus mittetur ad undas,
Zmyrnam cana diu saecula peruoluent.
at Volusi annales Paduam morientur ad ipsam
et laxas scombris saepe dabunt tunicas.

Callimachus' battle of the books has been transplanted; the allusions and stance are unmistakable.¹² Catullus' poem 36 'annales Volusi cacata carta . . .' involves another blow in the campaign against the wretched Volusius. Note too poem 14, comprising in-jokes with Calvus on how terrible other poets are; it is interesting to read 14 in conjunction with 50. Catullus therefore associates himself, at least with Cinna and Calvus, 'against the rest'; and with Cinna in strident

⁹ Catullus heavily emphasizes that the poem has been well *begun*: cf. Quinn II.194–5. I think the implication is that too much attention to the *candida puella* is holding up Caecilius' literary progress.

¹⁰ Catullus seems to have been particularly close to Calvus. Certainly later writers closely associated them—like a kind of double act: cf. Hor. *Serm.* 1.10.18 f., etc.; Wiseman, 52 n.43.

¹¹ The fragments are collected in W. Morel, *Fragmenta Poetarum Latinorum* (2nd edn. Leipzig, 1927). On Calvus see conveniently Schanz–Hosius, 289 f., Bardon, 341–4. Cinna: Schanz–Hosius, 307 f., Bardon, 344–7 and now Wiseman,

44–58; Wiseman has in fact pertinent things to say about most of these poets. Valerius Cato: Schanz–Hosius, 287 f., Bardon, 337–41, R. P. Robinson, *TAPA* 54 (1923), 98–116, N. B. Crowther, *CP* 66 (1971), 108–9. Cornificius: Schanz–Hosius, 309 f., Bardon, 355–6, E. Rawson, this volume of *CQ*, 188–201.

¹² Cf. Call. *Epigr.* 27 and 28 Pf., *Aetia praef.* (frg. 1 Pf.), W. Kroll, *C. Valerius Catullus* (4th edn. Stuttgart, 1960), pp.266 f., Clausen, 188 f. Catull. 95b ('at populus tumido gaudeat Antimacho') repeats Callimachean polemic: cf. Call. frg. 398 Pf. Λύδη καὶ παχὺ γράμμα καὶ οὐ τορὸν.

Callimachean fashion on the particular and traditional topic of *epos*. Disagreement about *epos* may be at the root of another Catullan quarrel.¹³

In fact the polemic suggests an identifiably *Callimachean* faction of Catullus, Cinna, and I think Calvus. We should recall now Catullus' own explicit demonstrations of Callimachean indebtedness: poems 65, 66, and 116.¹⁴ We should recall indeed that Catullus is in very real ways a genuinely Callimachean poet: lavishing care and attention on forms and subjects that would not traditionally have been deemed worthy of such care and attention; a poet to be judged (in much of his work at least) solely according to the canons of art and delight.¹⁵ The polemic not only confirms the cohesion of three candidates for the neoteric school; it may be some guide to the nature of its programme.

IV

A group of sympathetic poets seems to be identifiable around Catullus; and Catullus seems likely to have belonged to the school to which Cicero refers slightly as *οἱ νεώτεροι*. Our next step is to look closely at what this group of poets wrote. If they share idiosyncratic interests, this will further confirm their identity as a group—and start to fix their programme; if they all share or could share the characteristics of style which Cicero parodies this will confirm that

¹³ I think it quite possible (given the situation with Volusius) that the Furius who has attacked Catullus on literary grounds (poem 16) and who is in turn subjected to banter or abuse by Catullus (poems 16, 23, and 26; and the address in poem 11 is surely ironical) is in fact the disastrous epic poet Furius ('Alpinus') parodied by Horace (see *Serm.* 2.5.40, with Porph. ad loc., *Serm.* 1.10.36 with Wickham ad loc., and Rudd below), and that at least part of the reason for Catullus' enmity towards him is literary. I am inclined to believe too that Furius 'Alpinus' is one and the same as Furius Bibaculus (those ancient sources who specify do in fact identify the epic Furius with Bibaculus). The main arguments in favour of supposing Furius 'Alpinus' and Furius Bibaculus to be two different people are usefully set out by Niall Rudd (*The Satires of Horace* (Cambridge, 1966), pp.289 f.), together with many more useful references to their (or his) work. On Bibaculus see too Schanz-Hosius, 290–2. A main point for Rudd in favour of separating them is that a 'Neoteric' is hardly likely to have written an historical epic. But there is no reason to suppose Furius Bibaculus to have been a 'Neoteric' or even a poet in sympathy with the Catullan coterie (though this is the usual view: cf. Quinn I.44, Bardon, 347 ff.). The only Furius that Catullus acknowledges is, as we have seen, no great chum; and Furius Bibaculus' poems on Val. Cato (frgs. 1 and 2 M) strike me as far from

unequivocally admiring or friendly. All that Furius Bibaculus has in common with Catullus is the not very striking phenomenon of a taste for abusive versicles; cf. Quint. 10.1.96, Tac. *Ann.* 4.34. In short (though there are problems of chronology which can be argued to and fro) I think there is probably only one Furius in play. I certainly feel there is no cause to divorce Bibaculus from 'Alpinus'.

¹⁴ Poem 116 is very usefully explained by C. W. Macleod, *CQ* N.S. 23 (1973), 304–9.

¹⁵ Cf. my *Catullus, Handbook* (Cambridge, 1975), pp.1–5. On Callimachus' aesthetics cf. usefully K. O. Brink, *CQ* 40 (1946), 11–26, especially 16–19, R. Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship* (Oxford, 1968), pp.137–8, E. Reitzenstein, 'Zur Stiltheorie des Kallimachos' in *Festschrift Richard Reitzenstein* (Leipzig/Berlin, 1931), pp.23–69.

The fact is perhaps underestimated that Callimachus will, to an extent, be misrepresenting critics in the preface to the *Aetia*—that of course is in the nature of polemic. No one would really maintain that we should judge poetry by its length (*αὐθι δὲ τέχνη | κρῖνere, μὴ σχοίνω Περσίδι τὴν σοφίην*). The real alternative to the yardstick of *τέχνη* is, I suppose, worth or seriousness of content: cf. Aristotle's *μῦμησις σπουδαίων* or *πράξεως σπουδαίας* (*Poetics* 1449^b) etc. (Brink, p.18). Callimachus is in many respects close to *l'art pour l'art*.

the group is indeed the neoteric group or school. It will be prudent to note interests that they do *not* share.

Epigrams and polymetric versicles of erotic, humorous, insulting, and indeed multifarious occasional nature were a common interest among them. Catullus: *passim*. Calvus: Suet. *Jul.* 73 'famosa epigrammata' (against Caesar: cf. Catull. 29 etc.), frgs. 1–3, 17–19 M (18 is on Pompey: cf. Catull. 29), Sen. *Con.* 7.4.7, Ov. *Trist.* 2.431 f. 'par fuit exigui similisque licentia Calui/detexit uariis qui sua furta modis'. Cinna: frgs. 9–14 M, Ov. *Trist.* 2.435 'Cinna quoque his [sc. 'explicitly erotic poets'] comes est, Cinnaque procacior Anser'. Cato and Cornificius: Ov. *Trist.* 2.436 'Cinna quoque his comes est . . . et leue Cornifici parque Catonis opus'; for Cornificius cf. too frg. 1 M (hendecasyllabic)—and Catullus seems to think him capable of some sort of Simonidean threnody: Catull. 38.6–8.

Such occasional versicles were a common interest among them. But it was an interest by no means confined to them. And, however exquisitely they penned their own efforts (I return to this point), it seems hardly likely that they could be distinguished as a school on this score alone. One thinks back to the precedents: Porcius Licinus, Valerius Aedituus, Lutatius Catulus, Laevius.¹⁶ Or one thinks of Catullus' contemporaries. There is Memmius, governor of Bithynia in 58 B.C. For his erotic verses, cf. Ov. *Trist.* 2.433 'quid referam Tigidiae quid Memmi carmen, apud quos/rebus adest nomen nominibusque pudor?' And Plin. (*Ep.* 5.3.5) records that he wrote 'uersiculos seueros parum': comparing Catull. 16.3–4 'qui me ex uersiculis meis putastis/quod sunt molliculi parum pudicum' we might infer that he wrote in lyric metres. He had Greek literary taste too: cf. Cic. *Brut.* 247; cf. further Owen's note on Ov. *Trist.* 2.433. Now although Memmius numbered Catullus among his cortège in Bithynia, there is not the slightest evidence that Catullus regarded him as a literary brother-in-arms and dramatic evidence for Catullus' enmity on other scores (poems 10 and 28).

Or there is (for example) the orator Q. Hortensius Hortalus addressed by Catullus in poem 65 but criticized for his literature in the polemical poem 95 (see above, p.170). The 'milia' of line 3 may refer to *uersiculi* or perhaps rather to epic *annales*.¹⁷ But Hortensius certainly wrote erotic poetry: cf. Ov. *Trist.* 2.441 'nec minus Hortensi nec sunt minus improba Serui/carmina'; he too is one to whom Pliny attributes 'uersiculi seueri parum' at *Ep.* 5.3.5;¹⁸ and Gellius records an interesting opinion of his and other contemporaries' lyric (so it appears) *erotica*, uttered by 'Graeci plusculi . . . homines amoeni et nostras quoque litteras haut incuriose docti' (19.9.7):

saepeque eum [sc. Iulianum rhetorem] percontabantur, quid de Anacreonte ceterisque id genus poetis sentiret et ecquis nostrorum poetarum tam fluentes carminum delicias fecisset, 'nisi Catullus' inquit 'forte pauca et Caluus itidem pauca. Nam Laeuus implicata et Hortensius inuenusta et Cinna inlepidi et Memmius dura ac deinceps omnes rudia fecerunt atque absona.'

But an idiosyncratic interest which our poets do share is epyllion, that brief, highly wrought *epos* which more or less ostentatiously dissociated itself from

¹⁶ Cf. Quinn I.5–18, Ross, 137 ff.

¹⁷ Cf. Vell. 2.16.3 and F. Münzer, *Hermes* 49 (1914), 196–205 (and Quinn II.432); contrast Fordyce, 384.

¹⁸ Pliny in fact invokes as precedent

for his filthy verses M. Tullius, C. Calvus, Asinius Pollio, M. Messalla, Q. Hortensius, M. Brutus, L. Sulla, Q. Catulus, and many other worthies ('doctissimi, grauissimi, sanctissimi') including four emperors.

traditional *epos*: concentrating on unheroic incidentals in the sagas of heroes, or on heroines as opposed to heroes, or on otherwise off-beat subject matter; employing a narrative technique that was often wilfully individual and selective; and yet largely maintaining epic language, metre, and style.¹⁹

For Calvus and Cinna, as well as Catullus, our information is relatively good. Catullus, of course, writes the 'Peleus and Thetis' which seems at first to be an epic of the Argonauts, switches unexpectedly to the love of Peleus and Thetis, switches to Theseus, to Ariadne, and so on. Calvus writes an *Io*, a potentially off-beat story offering possibilities of humour, pathos, divine indignity—as Ovid, who imitated Calvus, shows (*Met.* 1.568 ff.).²⁰ Frgs. 9–14 M are from the poem; frg. 9 'a uirgo infelix herbis pascereis amaris' shows us that Calvus not only emotionally apostrophized his heroine but also anticipated his own plot—both features of the wilful Catullan narrative. The *Zmyrna* of Cinna we have already mentioned (above, p.170). This must have been a work of extraordinary *doctrina*: the contrast with Volusius' *annales* shows that it was an epyllion of brief compass, yet it took nine years to write—and soon required an explanatory commentary.²¹ The story, revolving around a heroine who fell in love with her father, would make a splendidly off-beat *epos*—as Ovid (who imitated Cinna too) again shows.²² Three lines are preserved (frgs. 6 and 7 M), which include an emotional apostrophe: 'te matutinus flentem conspexit Eous . . .'

As for Valerius Cato there is no proof that his *Diana* was an epyllion. But a poem which Suetonius (*gramm.* 11) calls *Diana* and Cinna calls *Dictynna* (frg. 14 M: see below) seems likely to have told of the aetiology of Diana's name Dictynna, i.e. the story of Britomartis who was pursued by Minos and leapt off a cliff. And this, a romantic incidental in the legends of Minos, suits the tenor of epyllion. It is interesting too to note how Cinna's praise of Cato's *Dictynna* 'saecula per maneat nostri Dictynna Catonis' resembles Catullus' praise of Cinna's own masterpiece epyllion *Zmyrna*: 95.6 'Zmyrnam cana diu saecula peruoluent'. I am fairly confident that Cato's poem told of Britomartis and Minos and that it was an epyllion—though a strong possibility remains that in form it was a narrative *hymn* (on which more anon).²³

Finally Cornificius: *Macr. Sat.* 6.5.13 (Vergil's borrowings are being illustrated): '“tu nubigenas inuicte bimembres” [*Aen.* 8.293]. Cornificius in Glaucos: centauros foedare bimembres.' I think it would be perverse to doubt that the *Glaucus* was an epyllion; and its subject will have been the fanciful tale, popular with Hellenistic writers, of Glaucus the sea-god, half human and half fish in form,

¹⁹ On the epyllion see M. M. Crump, *The Epyllion from Theocritus to Ovid* (Oxford, 1931). I am in the process of completing my own monograph on the nature and history of the epyllion. For further comment which bears on epyllion's subject matter see below, pp. 182, 184.

²⁰ Calvus frg. 9 M: *Met.* 1.632 (Calvus frg. 9 is also echoed by Vergil at *Ecl.* 6.47—which is where Servius quotes it); frg. 11: *Met.* 1.713.

²¹ Quint 10.4.4 and Serv. on Verg. *Ecl.* 9.35 repeat or corroborate Catullus' evidence on the time taken in composition. Suet. *gramm.* 18 reports that an explanatory

commentary was written by L. Crassicius. This commentary was celebrated in a clever little epigram (parodying Catullus) which Suet. quotes.

²² Cf. B. Otis, *Ovid as an Epic Poet* (2nd edn. Cambridge, 1970), pp.420 f.

²³ Cf. S. Sudhaus, *Hermes* 42 (1907), 485 n.3, Bardon, 340. I think in fact that we can learn much more about Cato's *Diana*, and about Calvus' *Io* and Cinna's *Zmyrna*, from a study of the *Ciris* which most probably borrowed from all of them. See my forthcoming edition of *Ciris* (C. U. P.).

who fell in love with the nymph Scylla (told by Ovid at *Met.* 13.898 ff.).²⁴ What of 'centauros foedare bimembres'? One is tempted to posit a substantial digression on these comparable hybrids, in the manner of Moschus' digression on Io, in his epyllion on Europa.

It is hard to find sure signs of Latin epyllion apart from these poets, particularly before them. The Roman adaptation of the genre seems their achievement. It is in short an idiosyncrasy of the group, and the community of the group is thereby confirmed. It is, too, precisely the genre that is likely to offer the sort of line Cicero parodies; and this confirms our impression that the group around Catullus is associable with the school referred to as *οἱ νεώτεροι* by Cicero. It is also worth reflecting at this point that poets of this ilk (perhaps particularly the exceedingly abstruse Cinna himself) might well have offered justification for the slighting tag 'parroters of Euphorion' ('cantores Euphorionis');²⁵ they might well have been, or seemed to be, addicts of that *ἐποποιός* whose *ἔπη* presumably comprised what we call epyllions, who wrote 'learned poetry in difficult language'—'nimis obscurus' Cicero called him at *Div.* 2.132—and whose hexameters show studied artistry of style ('alliteration, assonance, internal rhyme and the like to a degree which can hardly be fortuitous') and of metre ('a marked preference for certain types of line, particularly lines with spondaic ending and lines composed of a small number of long words');²⁶ cf. the references to the Catullan hexameter above, p.169—and we can now add that Catullus affects not only five-word but four-word hexameters (64.15, 77, 115, and 319). (I resume the question of 'hi cantores Euphorionis', and whom Cicero may particularly have in mind at that time, in §VIII.)

V

Now we shall turn to see whether some or all of these poets share any *other* striking literary interests: interests remarkable enough to assist in distinguishing them collectively from other poets. We should not of course necessarily expect to find all members of a school adopting all its typical forms or topics; and in the case of the neoterics (given the fragmentary state of our knowledge) we could be in ignorance of such consistency even if and when it occurred. What I think we should watch for is when two or more of the poets jointly write the same sort of idiosyncratic thing—idiosyncratic in form or subject; and we should then look to see if the forms or subjects that we discover show any characteristics or motivation in common among themselves—and in common with the already established neoteric genre, epyllion. Here would be confirmation of the school and clarification of its programme. Finally we can see if any striking form

²⁴ Cf. Wiseman, 55, with useful bibliography. The Glaucus story was told by Hedyle, Hedylus, Alexander of Aetolus, and, it seems, Callimachus: cf. Webster, 52 and 130, and the Suda, s.v. Callimachus.

²⁵ The meaning of 'cantor' here is often missed or blurred (and some nuances may indeed escape us); cf. of course Hor. *Serm.* 1.10.1 'nil praeter Caluum et doctus cantare Catullum'. The basic sense in both cases must simply be 'chant', 'recite'. Devotees are being referred to who can

only, or only want to, chant or recite the verses of their favoured poet. But the implication in 'cantores Euphorionis' (at least) is probably that the devotees also chanted verses of their own, in the style of their idol. Cf. W. Allen, ' "Cantare" and "Cantores Euphorionis" ', *TAPA* 103 (1972), 1–14, especially p.13.

²⁶ On Euphorion see conveniently Webster, 221–7 with bibliography. The quotations are from pp.223–5.

or subject treated by *single* members associates itself with the common characteristics or motivation identified. For this, too, would then be assignable to the neoteric programme.

Catullus writes two epithalamia—to use the term very loosely. Poem 62, in hexameters, is totally fictional, a drama staged at a wedding feast, complete with song contest and developing action.²⁷ Poem 61, in stanzas of glyconics and a pherecratean, seems to have been written with a real Roman wedding in mind; yet it too is a complex imaginative enactment rather than an actual hymenaeal or epithalamion: an enactment of a song to Hymen, of addresses and asides to participants in the course of a procession. Poem 62 especially is something surprising. Why should Catullus write it? There was hardly much precedent in Rome for a fictional, dramatized wedding scene with song. It is hardly the most obvious way to occupy one's pen in any circumstances. But one of Catullus' immediate confrères probably did much the same. Calvus writes, to our knowledge, two epithalamia: one apparently in the same lyric stanzas as Catullus and one in hexameters (frgs. 4 and 5 M). We may infer that the hexameter poem at least was comparably dramatic.

What other shared interests strike one? Caecilius' occupation with Cybele is very remarkable, the 'Magna Mater' or the 'Dindymi domina' (above, p.170): for perhaps Catullus' most striking and unexpected poem also concerns Cybele, namely his 'Attis', poem 63. Whether Caecilius wrote or meditated writing in galliambics, whether he had a version of Attis in particular in mind we cannot know. But presumably he was occupied with a myth or story connected with Cybele—and not just a description of ritual, which would hardly in itself make an interesting poem. And that Caecilius was doing something similar to Catullus is indicated by the similarity between Catullus' reference to his work and a line of his own 'Attis': cf. 35. 14 'Dindymi domina' and 18 'Magna . . . Mater' with 63.91 'dea, magna dea, Cybele, dea domina Dindymi'.²⁸ Now this again is something extraordinary for Latin literature. Lucretius had had reason to explain the religion and rituals of Cybele, and in the process vividly described it (2.600–60). Varro of Reate too had touched on the topic in the course of his medley of Menippean *saturae*; and (typically for the genre) he switched to the appropriate metre (galliambics) for the occasion.²⁹ But neither of these—descriptions of current rites known at Rome—is a parallel for choosing an associated myth (or myths) and making a narrative poem out of it, self-sufficient in itself: as Catullus did and as Caecilius, it seems, was in the process of doing.

It begins to look as if some or all of Catullus' 'longer poems' (61–8) are distinctively neoteric. But that is jumping the gun. We still need to discover what, if any, are the common characteristics or motivations shared by the idiosyncratic subjects and forms noticed in this section—besides extraordinariness. However before doing this, it will be useful further to clarify what in Catullus is *not* typically neoteric. Our sights will in fact then be set more firmly and confidently on (some of) the 'longer poems'.

²⁷ The poem is excellently discussed by E. Fraenkel, *JRS* 45 (1958), 1–8.

²⁸ Wiseman (56) conjectures that Caecilius' story was aetiological, something like Hermesianax's account (for which see Paus. 7.17.5, frg. 8 Powell).

²⁹ Quinn II.284 f. gives some information on the very rare galliambic metre and quotes Varro's lines (*Men.* 79, 131, 132, 275). On galliambics see further below, p.181.

VI

I have already shown that polymetric and elegiac occasional versicles, though common to the neoteric poets, were as a genre far from exclusively neoteric; and I ought to stress that however exquisite the *style* of the neoterics' own production was, it can hardly have been so different from other people's that one could reckon membership of the school on that score alone.³⁰ But there is one feature of *Catullus'* polymetrics and epigrams, or rather of some of them, which would indeed have lifted them out of any crowd. It is in fact arguably the most individual, characteristic, and important feature of his poetry; and I mean, in a word, *Lesbia*. No ancient poet, so far as one can tell, had ever before written a series of poems dealing in depth, in all manner of moods, with one relationship with a single enthralling lover. Of course (for example) Meleager had tied successions of epigrams to Heliodora and Myiscus. But Catullus explores and displays the nature of his love for Lesbia profoundly, obsessively—pursuing its ramifications: he shows the interplay of their personalities and the power of his love to shape his vision of the beloved; he shows the effects of disaster. All this in related and mutually dependent, mutually deepening poems. Catullus and Lesbia, Catullus' intense involvement with Lesbia, Catullus' psychological perception of his feelings for Lesbia, all emerge vividly—from a related cycle of what in other hands would be *uersiculi*.

Here then, in *content*, is a respect in which Catullus' *uersiculi* must by past form have been distinctive, extraordinary, even shocking. If Catullus' other poetical confrères wrote similarly—and if no other contemporary did—then here ought to be a characteristic of their school. 'Lesbia' poetry—poetry to and about the commanding, agonizing, wonderful mistress—would have to be considered a highly distinctive part of their programme. (We might however have to reassess whether this school was indeed the school which Cicero had in mind at *Att.* 7.2.1.)

But the evidence is that this is simply not so: Cinna and the rest did not, in all probability, write poetry remotely like Catullus' Lesbia poetry. They wrote occasional erotic versicles, polymetrics and epigrams about *furta*. But not 'Lesbia' poetry. This is a fact of considerable importance, too little noticed. The poetry which we probably regard as most typical of Catullus, the poetry indeed which immediately succeeding generations of Latin poets probably regarded as most typical of Catullus, is *untypical* of the school of poets with which he is intimately connected.³¹

³⁰ Ross maintains that Catullus displays an artistry, an originality, and sophistication of style in his polymetrics and 'longer poems' that he does not display in his epigrams—and there is truth in this (cf. my review *CR* N.S. 22 (1972), 34–7). Ross also calls this artistry of style *neoteric* artistry, which may also (with qualifications) be justifiable. But we could not then say (not that Ross in so many words does) that such precious polymetrics would be sufficient on their own to distinguish a neoteric poet. It is hard to imagine that the *uersiculi* of Memmius and Hortensius were so very different from (e.g.) Catullus' (except in one respect which I am coming to). We

may note that the 'Graeci plusculi' in Gellius (above, p.172) thought that Catullus and Calvus did stand out somewhat in the matter of lyric poetry; but they lumped Cinna with Laevius, Hortensius, and Memmius, considering them all, for much the same reasons, pretty hopelessly.

³¹ Much of the 'Catullan Revolution' was therefore very particularly a *Catullan* revolution. Quinn (I.26), when defining the revolution, talks of the poet becoming 'an independent personality who forces his personality into his poetry' and of the unit becoming 'the short poem, intensely personal . . .' But is it not particularly Catullus' *Lesbia* poetry that this suits? And

The evidence is basically evidence from silence but I think it is conclusive. It boils down to this: no neoteric poet apart from Catullus is connected with any paramount, commanding mistress; and without a Lesbia there can be no 'Lesbia' poetry. But it is not just that no such girl is mentioned: the silence is at times deafening. For the fashion for Catullan 'Lesbia' poetry caught on after Catullus and caught on dramatically (behind this was no doubt the process of life imitating art as well as art imitating art); and a kind of canon of lover-poets and their mistresses developed, to be listed on various occasions and for various motives. Now sometimes there were obvious or understandable reasons for selectivity and allusiveness of reference.³² On other occasions there were not, and the silences or variations in one or two such lists are clear in their implications. A case in point is *Ov. Trist.* 2.427 ff. But in order to draw the available conclusions thence one must first deal with tricky textual and interpretative problems; and there is unfortunately no space for this in the present article. I shall consider *Prop.* 2.34.81 ff.

At 2.25.4 Propertius seems to claim that his *libelli* have more power to bestow fame on Cynthia than the works of Catullus and Calvus had had in a comparable situation: 'ista meis fiet notissima forma libellis/Calue, tua uenia, pace, Catulle, tua'. This might suggest a girl for Calvus, to correspond to Catullus' Lesbia and Propertius' Cynthia. But if we look at *Prop.* 2.34.81 ff. we see what Propertius must actually have in mind.

non tamen haec ulli uenient ingrata legenti
 siue in amore rudis siue peritus erit.
 nec minor hic animis, ut sit minor ore, canorus
 anseris indocto carmine cessit olor.
 haec quoque perfecto ludebat Iasone Varro,
 Varro Leucadiae maxima flamma suae;
 haec quoque lasciui cantarunt scripta Catulli,
 Lesbia quis ipsa notior est Helena;
 haec etiam docti confessa est pagina Calui,
 cum caneret miserae funera Quintiliae.
 et modo formosa quam multa Lycoride Gallus
 mortuus inferna uulnera lauit aqua!
 Cynthia quin uiuet uersu laudata Properti,
 hos inter si me ponere Fama uolet.

Propertius is here justifying his sort of love poetry after praising Vergil. It is possible that his praise of Vergil (particularly of Vergil's epic) was not totally unequivocal. He certainly now intends that his love poetry should appear at least arguably on a par. It too, says Propertius, gives pleasure (81–2); and it is better—because more artistic—than some more ambitious but crude productions (something like this I take to be the implication of 83 f.). And it has by now

yet on p.24 Quinn talks of 'The revolution that the *poetae novi* represent'.

Wiseman (52), referring to the 'beginnings of personal poetry' and noting how most scholars attribute these beginnings to the 'neoteric movement', is himself more circumspect: 'For that, the "Catullan revolution" . . . we can certainly give the credit to Catullus himself and perhaps also to Calvus . . .'; later in the paragraph he says that 'Cinna himself wrote love poetry'. But 'personal poetry' and 'love poetry' are

terms that must be very clearly defined.

There is a world of difference between the 'personal poetry' of Catullus and that of say Anacreon, or Sappho, or Meleager; and there was probably a world of difference between Catullus' and Calvus'.

Other scholars, like Schanz-Hosius, 285–6, tend simply to assume or imply that Catullus was completely typical of the neoteric school.

³² e.g. at *Ov. Am.* 1.15.27 ff., and *Apul. Apol.* 10.

good authority and precedent: that is the purpose of citing this list (85 ff.). Propertius is showing his literary pedigree, he is demonstrating that the poetry of the immortalizing lover-poet devoted to one woman has become a genre in its own right with worthy exponents. In these circumstances he is unlikely to leave out any obvious name.

Varro of Atax,³³ born in 82 B.C. (and thus a contemporary of Catullus and Calvus), wrote an Ennianizing *Bellum Sequanicum*, presumably about Caesar's campaign in 58 B.C.—when he himself therefore was a young man. Subsequently, it seems, he turned to mythological epic (besides other works)—an *Argonautae*, possibly stimulated by Caesar's journey to Britain. After the *Argonautae*, as Propertius expressly tells us ('perfecto . . . Iasone') he turned to love poetry, about a girl he called Leucadia. The timing clearly suggests that Varro, who is not associated with the Catullan coterie in our sources, was one of those who imitated particularly *Catullus*—and wrote his own version of 'Lesbia' poetry, finding or fancying himself in a comparably enthralling situation.

I imagine that Varro is mentioned by Propertius before Catullus because he combined in his person both epic and love poetry, moving from the one to the other; and therefore, in the context, provided a particularly pertinent authority for the genre. After Varro comes Catullus and Lesbia—here too (possibly) a slight hit at epic is contrived: from one point of view Catullus was a more powerful poet than Homer. Then before Gallus, who, with his Lycoris, was the clear and immediate predecessor of Propertius, there is Calvus and Quintilia—or rather there is Calvus who sang of the *funera Quintiliae*; and that is something rather different. But at least Calvus gets a mention. What of the neoterics Caecilius, Cornificius, Cinna, and Cato? The last three of these we know wrote erotic verses (§IV).

Propertius is contriving so far as he can a canon of poets *like himself*, lover-poets devoted to and celebrating one woman. A woman's name *was* intimately connected with Calvus, and he was renowned for celebrating her; but the situation was a very particular one and Propertius' wording responds accordingly. Calvus in fact composed a well-known *epicedion* for his Quintilia. It forms the background to Catullus' poem 96, and Calvus frgs. 15 and 16 M are probably from it.³⁴ In the course of this epicedion—which may have been lengthy—Calvus seems to have regretted his acts of unfaithfulness to Quintilia: that seems definitely to be the implication of Catullus' 'atque olim missas flemus amicitias' (96.4);³⁵ and (it seems to me) Propertius' 'haec etiam docti confessa est pagina Calui/cum caneret . . .' may also refer to affairs confessed *in the course* of the epicedion. As for Quintilia herself, it seems most likely that she was Calvus' wife—and that Calvus composed an epicedion for her partly under the

³³ Cf. Schanz-Hosius, 312 f. On the chronology of Varro's works cf. too E. Hofmann, *WS* 46 (1927/28), 170–6.

³⁴ On Calvus' epicedion and Catullus 96 see E. Fraenkel 'Catull's Trostgedicht für Calvus', *WS* 69 (1956), 278–88 (cf. too the next note).

³⁵ Note the text is 'missas' not 'amissas'. Cf. Fraenkel, *op. cit.*, pp. 285–8. (K. Bringmann has an ingenious alternative explanation of the couplet 3–4—that it refers to a *mythological* section in Calvus'

epicedion, to mythical *exempla* which Calvus adduced as a mirror and comfort for his suffering: cf. *MH* 30 (1973), 25–31.

The existence of such a mythological section in Calvus is highly likely—as B. shows; but B.'s interpretation of Catullus seems to me to founder—chiefly on 'quo desiderio'. 'desiderium' is particularly the yearning one feels—it is the *vox propria*—for something personally dear that is parted from one or lost for always.)

stimulus of the epicedion composed by the influential Parthenius for his wife Arete.³⁶

So: we know that Calvus was an erotic poet—‘detexit uariis . . . sua furta modis’ (Ov. *Trist.* 2.432); we infer that he mentioned or alluded to these ‘furta’ in his epicedion; and his epicedion possibly included amorous allusions to his relations with Quintilia.³⁷ But his fame as a celebrator of one beloved woman rests on the epicedion, his commemoration of the death of, in all probability, his wife. Now we see what Propertius must have had in mind at 2.25.4. Calvus therefore fits into the canon of lover-poets of Propertian type at 2.34.81 ff. only with difficulty. If Propertius could have drawn a clearer analogy, pointing to a single woman immortalized in life by a devoted and singing Calvus, he surely would have done so. In fact Propertius slips him in rather speciously—to swell the ranks, to add the lustre of this famous name to the poetry of erotic devotion.

And why no mention of Caecilius, Cornificius, Cinna, or Cato?—Cinna at least was a famous poet, worthy to grace any pedigree.³⁸ The answer I think is simple. No name at all consistently or prominently features in their love poetry.³⁹ By no stretch of the imagination could they be represented as ‘Lesbia’ poets and therefore they had no place in the Propertian canon. In so far as they were love poets they must have been poets of the erotic idle hour, producing precious *uersiculi* like (we may infer) Catullus’ delightful poems to Ipsitilla, Ameana, and Juventius. Catullus the poet of Lesbia was unique in his time.

³⁶ On Calvus’ and Parthenius’ epicedia see conveniently and interestingly R. Pfeiffer, ‘A Fragment of Parthenios’ *Arete*’, *CQ* 37 (1943), 23–32; further bibliography at Wiseman, 50 n.33. I am prepared now to reconsider my sceptical attitude (*CR N.S.* 22 (1972), 36 n.4) to Parthenius’ influence on the neoterics—with qualifications however: see § IX. Pfeiffer’s remarks in this connection (op. cit., pp.30–1) are cogent; so too are Wiseman’s, 47 ff. See also the useful and cautious article of N. B. Crowther, ‘Parthenius and Roman Poetry’, *Mnemosyne* 29 (1976), 66–71.

I should have thought that the fact that no pseudonym (apparently) is used for Quintilia points to her status as wife rather than mistress. Certainly it seems that the poets in the ‘Lesbia’ tradition almost invariably used pseudonyms for lovers whether they were freedwomen or not (Camps on Prop. 2.34.89 suggests Quintilia might be a freedwoman of the Quintilii). It is certainly a very risqué act, to be specially remarked, when later on a married woman is celebrated under her real name (Ov. *Trist.* 2.437–8). (The assumption that Quintilia was Calvus’ wife is also attacked by H. Tränkle in ‘Neoterische Kleinigkeiten’, *MH* 24 (1967), 93–9.)

³⁷ Parthenius’ epicedion for Arete possibly did: Pfeiffer, op. cit., p.32.

³⁸ Cf. Verg. *Ecl.* 9.35 ‘nam neque adhuc Vario uideor nec dicere Cinna/digna’; Valgius Rufus praises a fellow-poet by equating him with Cinna (Schol. Veron. on Verg. *Ecl.* 7.22). The commentaries on Cinna’s works, mentioned on pp.173 and 186, testify to his continuing fame. Wiseman (53–8) argues for the primacy of Cinna among the neoterics (as he defines them).

³⁹ What (the question ought to be faced) of Valerius Cato and ‘Lydia’? Suet. *gramm.* 11 writes that Cato wrote ‘praeter grammaticos libellos etiam poemata ex quibus praecipue probantur Lydia et Diana. Lydiae Ticidea meminit “Lydia doctorum maxima cura liber”.’ But this hardly sounds like a book of love poetry to a Lesbia-figure called Lydia. Perhaps the *liber* was more like Antimachus’ *Lyde*: narrative elegiacs for, or in memory of, a girl; or perhaps Lydia in Asia Minor is meant (cf. Euphorion’s *Thrax*?). At all events I imagine that the work was abstruse and mythological: there is a nice humour in calling such a book the ‘cura’ (‘the beloved’) of ‘docti’. It is the sort of joke that was made about Cinna’s *Zmyrna* and the ‘doctus’ Crassicius in the epigram reported by Suetonius (*gramm.* 18). Cato’s *Lydia* was, incidentally, certainly not the *Lydia* of the *Appendix Vergiliana*, which is patently influenced by the Augustan Elegists.

VII

The impression we gathered above (p.175) that it must be some or all of Catullus' 'longer poems' which represent his distinctly neoteric poetry has been confirmed. Not only are polymetric and elegiac versicles in general far from being an exclusively neoteric domain: the one really idiosyncratic, original, and striking feature of Catullus' own production was, at the time, uniquely his—not neoteric at all. We must now examine those 'longer poems' of Catullus which seemed to have parallels in other neoterics' *oeuvres* (poems 61–4; see above, §§ IV and V) to see what, if any, common motivations or other characteristics they share. In this way the nature of the neoteric programme should clarify itself. We must see too if any of the other extraordinary 'longer poems' of Catullus, which the niggardly remains of neoteric poetry do not happen to parallel, could also fit into the picture. Let us begin by looking at Catullus' unparalleled longer poems.

There appears to be no parallel for poems 66 (with 65), 67, and 68 in the neoteric fragments. At this point some stylistic features noted by Ross (115–37) are interesting. He argues that what he calls the 'neoteric elegiacs' (that is, poems 65–8) differ in technique, are more consciously and sophisticatedly wrought, than the distichs of the epigrams. There is a lot of truth in this; but it is some exceptions noted by Ross which are particularly interesting. Among other metrical laxities (so to call them) offered by poem 68, line 49 neglects Hermann's Bridge—the only example in the 'neoteric elegiacs' (against four examples in the epigrams), and not a rhythm that we should expect in highly wrought Grecizing poetry at this stage of Latin literary history.⁴⁰ More noticeable is poem 67: Ross remarks that Catullus employs twelve *σπονδειαῖοντες* in his distichs and that all but three of these occur in the 'neoteric elegiacs'. To be more precise they occur in 65, 66, and 68 and not in 67.⁴¹ Poem 67 too has considerably less artistic word-patterning than 65, 66, and 68 (and of course 64, where it is rife).⁴² In short these two poems 67 and 68, in particular 67, seem to *neglect* niceties of neoteric style (according to Ross's own definition)—as well as being unparalleled from the point of view of form or subject in the other neoterics' *oeuvres*. Let us therefore leave them out of consideration for the moment.

Poem 66 (with its introduction) is by definition a Callimachean poem. I suggested earlier (above, p.171) that the neoteric programme might in some way be 'Callimachean'.⁴³ Could poems 61–6, i.e. the poems paralleled in other neoterics plus 66 (with its introduction 65), present a common front as being in some way all 'Callimachean'? Is a common motivation to be found here?

I think so. Let us note that all these poems are in their own way *narratives*; they all rather extraordinarily or deviously convey an account of a more or less fictional incident or incidents. Poems 63 and 64 do so more obviously than 62, 66, and especially 61. Perhaps 61 ought to be left aside for the moment. The rest⁴⁴ do, in their own way, manage to communicate a fictional story or drama. And perhaps we could put it this way: they are the sort of poems an ancient poet might produce (given certain availabilities and certain circumscriptions) who wanted to tell a story but found the conventional way of doing so

⁴⁰ Ross, 129–30.

⁴¹ Ross, 130–1.

⁴² Ross, 135.

⁴³ Hardly a revolutionary thesis of course: but my view of what direction the

neoterics' Callimacheanism took is much more defined and specific than, say, Clausen's (187 ff.).

⁴⁴ On poem 62 as a narrative see above p.175, referring to Fraenkel's article.

uncongenial. The conventional way of telling a story was in epic or (as a second runner) in narrative elegy, like Antimachus' *Lyde*. And this of course takes us back to Callimachus.

On aesthetic grounds, as we know, Callimachus eschewed the continuation of epic (above, p.170); he found Antimachus' *Lyde* *παχὺ γράμμα καὶ οὐ τορὸν* (frg. 398 Pf.).⁴⁵ This left him, and poets of his aesthetic persuasion, an obvious problem. How then was one to tell stories, a main wish of most ancient poets? In what forms was Callimachus to communicate his delightfully idiosyncratic versions of myth? With considerable ingenuity Callimachus evolved *alternatives* to epic, alternative ways of telling stories. He popularized if not concocted the perversely ingenious alternative *epos* itself, the epyllion; he revived the naturally narrative Homeric Hymn; he revamped didactic and included allusive little narratives in it (e.g. 'Acontius and Cydippe' in the *Aetia*: frgs. 67–75 Pf.). And it was probably Callimachus, too, who took up the idea of telling a story from the orgiastic myth of the east (Cybele) in its own orgiastic metre, galliambics. It is a devious thought, worthy of an original scholar-poet casting about for alternatives to conventional forms of Greek narrative; and there is some (small) objective evidence pointing this way.⁴⁶ It is also worth noting that the bizarre shape which Catullus' own Attis story⁴⁷ takes could plausibly derive from the ironical and occasionally black-humoured Callimachus; Catullus is certainly I think following *some* Alexandrian source, at times closely, in poem 63.⁴⁸ But whatever the details of the matter, it seems to me certain that Callimachus or some Callimachean poet nurtured the idea of galliambic versions of Cybele myth as a novel and striking alternative to *epos*.

⁴⁵ I take it that Callimachus considered efforts to write long, consistent, and continuous narrative in elegiacs just as disastrous as efforts to write traditional epic—for much the same reasons. And all such efforts—not just Antimachus'. We should remember that there are good grounds for supposing that Callimachus criticized the long narrative elegies of even Philotas and Mimnermus (*Aetia* *praef.* 10 ff.: see conveniently Trypanis (Loeb. edn.) ad loc., A. Lesky, *A History of Greek Literature* (English transl. 1966) pp.710 f.; Lesky is against this view, but he cites the evidence). Callimachus' own discontinuous, capriciously apportioned narrative episodes in elegiacs (e.g. in the *Aetia*) will have been as different from Antimachus' *Lyde* (and perhaps from Philotas' longer elegy and Mimnermus' *Nanno*) as his *Hecale* is from Apollonius' *Argonautica*—which is a lot, but not quite as much (perhaps) as Callimachus thought or would have us think. On Antimachus see further Lesky, op. cit., p.638, U. von Wilamowitz, *Hellenistische Dichtung* (Berlin, 1924), i.101–3, also (though I disagree with the article in some quite important respects) D. W. T. C. Vessey, 'The Reputation of

Antimachus of Colophon', *Hermes* 99 (1971), 1–10.

⁴⁶ Hephaestion 12.3 tells us that the very rare galliambic metre was particularly associated with the 'magna mater'; he quotes two 'famous' lines (reminiscent of parts of Catull. 63): *Γαλλαὶ μητρὸς ὀρείης φιλόθυρσοι δρομάδες | αἷς ἔντεα παταγείται καὶ χάλκεα κρόταλα*; and the scholiast on this passage tells us that 'Callimachus also used the metre.' Cf. J. P. Elder, *AJPh* 68 (1947), 394 n.2, 397 n.9.

⁴⁷ Is the Attis of Catull. 63 supposed to recall and 'correct' the image of the original mythical lover of Cybele (for whom see P. Graillot, *Le Culte de Cybèle* (Paris, 1912), e.g. p.12)? Or is he meant just to be an (idiosyncratically Greek and repentant) eunuch priest (priests of Cybele were named eponymously Attis: cf. *Anth. Pal.* 6.220, Graillot e.g. p.19)? I rather infer the former; Wilamowitz, op. cit. ii.292 seems to be on the side of the latter.

⁴⁸ Cf. Wilamowitz, op. cit. ii.291–5, Fordyce, 262. Elder, op. cit., p.398, remarks on the 'Callimachean' narrative technique of the poem.

And another Callimachean poet demonstrated yet another attractive method of narrative entertainment which did not involve one of the conventional, tedious forms. Theocritus' Callimacheanism is (virtually) expressly stated in *Idyll* 7.43 ff.; he too had written his own epyllion (*Id.* 13). And as well as producing the *Bucolics* (rustic tales in *recherché* language for the *litterati*) as one fine way of alternative story-telling, he revived the idea of a fictional epithalamion. He may have done this most immediately under the stimulus of Sappho; for Sappho's narrative poem on the nuptials of Hector and Andromache (as it seems to be)⁴⁹ was probably partnered by other fictional, mythical epithalamia.⁵⁰ Anyway, in an epithalamion for Menelaus and Helen (*Id.* 18), Theocritus gives us a delightfully individual glimpse into heroic myth—though the general strategy and ethos of the poem is interestingly and significantly Callimachean.⁵¹ We have in fact little or no evidence for other fictional epithalamia in the 'high' Alexandrian period,⁵² but I think we are entitled to guess that such an attractive idea had other exponents.⁵³ And Parthenius, whose influence we have noticed (above, p.179) probably wrote an epithalamion—but whether fictional or not we cannot tell.⁵⁴

Some concluding comments on these 'Callimachean' narrative alternatives are necessary before we return to the neoterics. First we must observe that there is a certain common tendency in *content*. The oddly weighted *Hecale* of Callimachus, Erysichthon with his bourgeois-souled parents in *Hymn* 6, Menelaus familiarly addressed in his bridal bedroom, Heracles and Hylas in *Id.* 13—all suit an alternative narrative, reacting to a convention of epic and orthodox heroes behaving heroically. The Callimachean poets explored byways of myth or probed unexpected corners in well-known myths. The sex-lives of heroes were congenial. If the plots of later or more extreme Callimacheans became more erotic or more off-beat, that should not surprise us. Extremes or diverser tactics are still serving the same strategy: the cultivation of the unexpected and the unconventional, often with an eye directly on affronting conventional expectations. It could be fun, for example, to make epics with heroines instead of heroes—and monstrous heroines at that.⁵⁵

Secondly, though the common concentration of these poets on exquisiteness of *style* (more or less for style's sake) is well known, it ought to be stressed that it—and their allusive, often wilfully capricious method of unfolding events—serves the same ultimate strategy as the common tendency in *content*. All are

⁴⁹ Frg. 44 L-P. There is some doubt about the ascription as well as the nature of this poem: cf. C. M. Bowra, *Greek Lyric Poetry*² (Oxford, 1961), pp.227–31.

⁵⁰ Cf. *RE* iA 2371 f. (We should note that Crusius, *RE* i.1569.13 ff. detects reminiscences in Theoc. *Id.* 18 of Alcman—who was called by Leonidas (*Anth. Pal.* 7.19) τὸν ὕμνητῆρ' ὕμεναίων).

⁵¹ Cf. Maas in *RE* ix.133.15 ff.

⁵² Cf. *RE* ix.133.4–38: the reported ἐπιθαλάμιον of Eratosthenes may have been for an actual wedding; those that Philodemus has in mind certainly are.

⁵³ The Alexandrians collected Sappho's epithalamia into a special book—while the rest of her poetry was organized according to metre (*RE* ix.132.24 ff.). This may

betoken an especial popularity for the particular genre; it was surely likely to encourage imitation.

⁵⁴ Cf. R. Reitzenstein, *Zur Sprache der lateinische Erotik* (Heidelberg, 1912), p.3; also Wilamowitz, *op. cit.* ii.279 n.1. But note N. B. Crowther, *Mnemosyne* 29 (1976), 67 f.

⁵⁵ The tendency of later epyllion's subject matter is probably fairly enough represented by Parthenius' collection of ἐρωτικά παθήματα, written for Cornelius Gallus to draw upon and put εἰς ἔπη (presumably what we should call epyllions) καὶ ἐλεγείας. Many of the stories derive from Euphorion. On Gallus and Euphorion see below, § VIII.

part of one front of unorthodoxy—ranged against the ordered telling of an expected story in a consistent and standard idiom.

We look back now to the longer poems of Catullus, and first to those paralleled in the neoteric fragments. What emerges immediately is that Catull. 63 and 64, the epyllions of Calvus, Cinna, and Cato (or Cato's Hymn if that is what his *Diana* was: above, p.173), Caecilius' inchoate 'magna mater', all have this in common: they are all versions of what one might call 'Callimachean' alternatives to conventional narrative. Of course Catullus' epyllion is very different in impact to Callimachus'; but the *genus*, the ultimate strategy of the poem is demonstrably the same. Likewise (we can take it) with the epyllions of Calvus and the rest.

Catullus' poem 62 should be seen in the same way. The epithalamial form takes us unexpectedly into a *story*, allusively and exquisitely told. This is Catullus' version of the 'Callimachean' alternative genre epithalamion. It is very much Catullus' *version*: the tactics—but not the strategy—are, especially in respect of content, very different from Theocritus'. Catullus has so far reacted to traditional narrative that he has fled beyond even a mythical domesticity and arrived in a domesticity of fiction. And we should I think consider Catullus' other epithalamion (poem 61) in the same context. It is essentially dramatic—things *happen* in the course of the poem—so that in its effect, or for part of its effect, it is a *narrative*—much of it Grecizing fancy.⁵⁶ But this poem Catullus seems to have composed with a definite marriage in mind and adapted it accordingly. One or other of Calvus' epithalamia (the lyric?) may have been comparable: an essentially literary and narrative epithalamion given particular relevance.

And poem 66 of course also slots into place. By definition, as a translation of a narrative episode of Callimachus' *Aetia* (a brilliant and witty piece of instant myth), it is a version of a Callimachean alternative to conventional narrative. We should note that plenty of lines in it could remind one of Cicero's parody in *Att.* 7.2.1—and poems 61, 63, and (to a lesser extent) 62 also offer example after example of comparably contrived and superb artifice. Whether or not other neoterics imitated or translated episodes of the *Aetia* we cannot say, but the relation of poem 66 itself to the neoteric programme is clear. And so, in its own very particular way, is the relation of poem 68.

But first let me sum up (for it is now possible) what the neoteric programme was; or, to be most exact, I shall describe what the neoterics did which distinguished them from other writers and united them among themselves—and which I rather assume they consciously regarded as their programme. In one way or another they affected the typically and ostentatiously 'Callimachean' forms, forms evolved by Callimachus and likeminded poets to provide the means for a more or less provocatively alternative narrative literature. Cicero at *Att.* 7.2.1 seems to have had affectation of style particularly in mind. But the neoterics were aiming at idiosyncrasy of style *and* content, for they were imitating genres that imposed both. They were imitating genres evolved by the Callimacheans to suit both new emphases in subject matter and a new (and concomitant) concentration on stylistic exquisiteness; and taking upon themselves the genres, the neoterics took upon themselves the whole strategy. If their content varied in the tactics or degree of its contrived unorthodoxy, that is what we should expect from our observations above (p.182) about the Greek

⁵⁶ Cf. Fordyce, 236–8.

Callimacheans.⁵⁷ Similarly with their style: that too could be more or less *recherché* according to the tactical wishes of the poet. But the common ground—the common strategy—is clear.

Now back to poem 68, or rather 68b. The allusive and individual account of Laodamia and Protesilaus (73 ff. and 105 ff.) which we find there could easily be a Catullan version of the sort of whimsically told mythological narrative which Callimachus fitted into the *Aetia*. And that I think is what, in essence, it is. The tenderly unheroic concentration of the Laodamia story suits the tenor of later 'alternative' narrative's subject matter;⁵⁸ and its style (and the style of the rest of the poem) displays all the features which we have associated (since analysing Cicero's parody) with the neoterics⁵⁹—the few metrical licences noted by Ross (above, p.180) are comfortably outweighed, and explicable besides, in view of the poem's unique personal endeavour. For what Catullus has done is (I submit) to put a neoteric narrative to personal service:⁶⁰ he has used it to adumbrate and amplify the complex and tragic ambivalences of his own current feelings. And he has then worked the whole into an amazing, elaborately structured ring-composition.⁶¹ The result is something original and fascinating: a neoteric form consciously adapted to a particular and untypical, *personal* end. In its idea and execution the poem is the work of genius. It has the characteristics of genius too—at times touching the stars, at times falling flat on its face.

To conclude this section: we have now hazarded a description of the neoteric programme and located Catullus' particularly neoteric production in his longer poems. But we have not *identified* his longer poems with his neoteric production. 68a may introduce 68b or be as it were Part I of the same poem as many believe.⁶² This would, either way, associate it with neoteric poetry; but it would not *be* neoteric poetry. It would have even less claim than the mannered poem 65 which introduces 66. And if in truth it has no relation to 68b at all,⁶³ then it has no relation to neoteric poetry either. And what of poem 67? This we saw lacked conspicuously neoteric features of style (above, p.180); and its only allusiveness is the allusiveness of defamatory innuendo. It is not a version of a 'Callimachean' alternative narrative; it is not a fictional narrative at all. It employs a motif of epigram, the dialogue with a house-door, to indulge at length a medley of provincial scandal. It is in fact an overblown, occasional, delightful, brilliant epigram—nothing to do with neoteric poetry at all.

⁵⁷ Wiseman therefore (54) makes too much of the difference between Catullus' subject matter in poem 64 and that of the other neoterics' epyllions. The tactics of unorthodoxy seem to be fairly different in all of them, but the strategy, and the orthodoxy being played against, is common to all.

⁵⁸ Cf. Moschus' *Europa* and e.g. Parthen. ἐρωτ. παθ. (cf. n.55 above) 4 (Oenone and Paris).

⁵⁹ See conveniently Fordyce, 344. As well as noting a plenitude of five-word hexameters, we should note three-word pentameters at 74 and 112. The extensive hypotaxis which Fordyce points to disapprovingly was probably intended by Catullus to be appreciated as mannered and

contrived *ars*.

⁶⁰ Cf. how he has probably adapted a neoteric form to his particular use with poem 61; but the poetic achievement is not remotely comparable.

⁶¹ Cf. W. Kroll, *C. Valerius Catullus*⁴ (Stuttgart, 1960), p.219.

⁶² Cf. G. Williams, *Tradition and Originality in Roman Poetry* (Oxford, 1968), pp.229 ff.

⁶³ This has been argued most recently by Wiseman, 88–103. One does not have to accept the suggestion that Manlius had his eye on *sharing* Catullus' mistress (I imagine he simply wants Catullus to organize a girl for him) to appreciate the cogency of some of Wiseman's points.

But this may seem curious: that Catullus should group completely unneoteric occasional poetry with ostentatiously neoteric poems. I think it would be curious. But I do not think he did. I think it likely that 67 and possibly 68a were grouped with other 'longer poems' by an editor, probably for no other reason than that they too were 'longer'.⁶⁴

VIII

We have now identified a school of poets behind Cicero's remarks on *οἱ νεώτεροι* and established its programme. Does Cicero have in mind the same poets when he talks in 45 B.C. of 'hi cantores Euphorionis' (*Tusc.* 3.45)? Or rather (since individual poetic stars wax and wane in five years) does he have in mind the same sort of poets?

Probably. It has already seemed likely (above, pp.167 and 174). And now we have recognized precisely how important Callimachus was for the neoteric programme, and in what ways. A neoteric's Callimacheanism should or could have endeared him to Euphorion.

Although the directness of the relation between Callimachus and Euphorion is debatable, it is clear that the latter's aesthetic sympathies would have been with Callimachus; and his poetic practice was consonant. Indeed in many ways—ways that should have appealed to a neoteric—he seems like a kind of extreme version of Callimachus.⁶⁵ The deviousness of his poetry—which included epyllions at least—was virtually unbeatable: deviousness manifesting itself in mannered obscurity of style *and* highly exotic, off-beat content. A devoted neoteric might well therefore have reason to study Euphorion. A fanatic might have reason to be an addict, a 'cantor'.

Perhaps some neoterics were more fanatical than others. Perhaps there were more fanatics among them when Cicero wrote 'hi cantores Euphorionis' than when he wrote about *οἱ νεώτεροι* five years earlier. We cannot say. But it seems likely that, although the school Cicero describes in 50 B.C. and then in 45 may be dynamic and evolving, it is substantially the same school. And perhaps there is no significance in the change of reference at all: it simply pleased Cicero to use a different slighting and exaggerative appellation on a different occasion. He may have had several. He may at times have referred to the school as simply the 'poetae noui'.

What of Cornelius Gallus? It is possible that Cicero had him, among others, in mind at *Tusc.* 3.45:⁶⁶ by 45 B.C. or even earlier Gallus (a waxing star) could have been associated with 'cantores Euphorionis'—and with what we have established as the neoteric school. We have explicit information that he wrote (somehow) in the manner of Euphorion (cf. Verg. *Ecl.* 10.50 with Servius and pseudo-Probos *ad loc.*; cf. too Serv. on *Ecl.* 6.72 discussed below). It is, too, to him that Parthenius dedicates for use *εἰς ἔπη* (presumably epyllions) *καὶ ἐλεγείας* his collection of sometimes Euphorionic *ἐρωτικὰ παθήματα*. And it appears from

⁶⁴ Our collection could not possibly have been produced by Catullus himself, and the degree to which the present order of poems still reflects any of his original wishes is largely speculation. Several factors suggest that the ordering of the 'longer poems' in particular is not his. Such are the unassailable conclusions to

be drawn from A. L. Wheeler, *Catullus and the Traditions of Ancient Poetry* (California, 1934), pp.1–32, especially 22 ff.; also 39 f.

⁶⁵ Cf. Webster, 221 ff., especially 221–3, Clausen, 191 f.; Crowther, 325–6.

⁶⁶ Cf. Crowther, 326–7, J. C. Bramble (n.3), p.181.

Verg. *Ecl.* 6.64–73 that Gallus wrote or was meditating an ambitious ‘Hesiodic’ poem—an epyllion presumably—on the origin of the ‘Grynean Grove’ (line 72: ‘his tibi Grynei nemoris dicatur origo’)—and Euphoriion had apparently told one story connected with that grove, the contest of Calchas and Mopsus (Serv. on *Ecl.* 6.72).⁶⁷

The whole question of Gallus is of course too complex to raise here and so I confine myself to two qualifying observations.

(1) Gallus’ subsequent fame was almost exclusively as a love poet of the stamp of Catullus and Propertius. There is for example no discernible sign that any poem by Gallus on the ‘Grynean Grove’ influenced poets of succeeding generations.

(2) If Gallus did complete such a poem, I doubt that its plot was the contest of Calchas and Mopsus, as Serv. at *Ecl.* 6.72 may imply⁶⁸ and as most modern scholars assume; nor will Vergil have had this story in mind. It would hardly provide the *aetiological* slant we expect (note ‘origo’ in 72); and it is not the sort of story that particularly suits epyllion—or the tenor of the stories in *Ecl.* 6. Much more plausible is the story which we infer from Serv. *auct.*, commenting on ‘Gryneus Apollo’ at *Aen.* 4.345: ‘Clazomenae ciuitas est Asiae . . . iuxta hanc nemus est Gryneum, ubi Apollo colitur, qui traditur ibi Grynem Amazonem stuprasse . . .’ That sounds potentially aetiological; it could too make a very good, and indeed more typically, Euphorionic epyllion; and it fits the tenor of the other stories in *Ecl.* 6. The story’s provenance may, interestingly, be Parthenius himself: we note that Vergil’s ‘Gryneus Apollo’ at *Aen.* 4.345, where the story is cited, seems an echo of Parthenius’ poem *Delos*.⁶⁹

IX

We have fitted two apparently individual Catullan poems (66 and 68b) into the neoteric programme. What of two individual and idiosyncratic poems that we know by other neoterics, namely Cinna’s propempticon for Asinius Pollio (frgs. 1–5 M) and Calvus’ epicedion for Quintilia (mentioned above, p.178)? I have already suggested that Calvus’ epicedion was probably written under the influence of Parthenius (p.179). And we have reason to believe that Cinna’s propempticon (which, like his *Zmyrna*, subsequently merited a commentary) was also stimulated by an example of Parthenius.⁷⁰ So: two poems written (presumably) along formal Greek lines, and under the stimulus of a Greek poet who we gather strongly influenced neoteric poets (above, p.179); and the surviving fragments of Cinna’s poem offer obvious instances of neoteric *ars*.

⁶⁷ Cf. the following footnote.

⁶⁸ But Servius’ note is vaguer than many admit. The crucial words are as follows: ‘in quo <luco> aliquando Calchas et Mopsus dicuntur de peritia diuinandi inter se habuisse certamen . . . hoc autem Euphoriionis continent carmina, quae Gallus transtulit in sermonem latinum . . .’ This seems to me to imply Servius’ knowledge of, or belief in, two separate facts: (1) that somewhere in his works Euphoriion had told of or referred to the story of Calchas’ and Mopsus’ contest; (2) that Gallus ‘translated’ (one knows incidentally how

loosely *transfere* is used by Servius) Euphorionic poetry. Nothing preciser. He may wish to imply that Gallus ‘translated’ a poem by Euphoriion about Calchas and Mopsus, i.e. that the two facts should be put together; but he certainly does not commit himself to saying so. I think, in fact, it is clear that he knows *at first hand* no poem by either Gallus or Euphoriion on Calchas and Mopsus, or for that matter any poem at all by them connected with the Grynean Grove.

⁶⁹ Cf. Clausen, 192.

⁷⁰ Cf. Wiseman, 48, with references.

Are these not to be counted neoteric poems? How are they to be fitted into the programme?

I would make the following points. First, there is actually no evidence for Parthenius' influence over *all* the neoteric poets. In particular it is slim for Catullus,⁷¹ who explicitly recognizes only Callimachus as a Greek influence. In this connection it is worth noting that the neoteric poets seem more prone to complimenting *each other* as a coterie of equal talent than to acknowledging any one as master; I have the impression of a group of poets who fed each other ideas, took and gave advice where they could or wanted, and formed their own programme.⁷² We might indeed provisionally conclude that Parthenius' influence among the neoterics—apart from Gallus—was particularly or only upon Cinna (for an obvious reason)⁷³ and Calvus. Secondly, the two poems, though idiosyncratic and Grecizing, do not fit into the general definition comfortably and honestly arrived at above (§ VII) of the neoteric programme; and they are, also, very obviously *special* cases—in that they are written for specific and special occasions not likely to be too frequently repeated. I would therefore (at risk of seeming to draw too fine a distinction) class them as specially occasioned *tours de force* written by neoteric poets rather than poetry of the neoteric programme.

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⁷¹ I. Cazzaniga compares some fragmentary lines of Parthenius with Catull. 68.94–100 at *Parola del Passato* 16 (1961), 124–6.

⁷² Cf. Catull. 14, 35, 50 etc. (above, § III), Cinna frg. 14. The idea of Valerius Cato as the 'Leader' of the school has once

more (it should not have been necessary) been exposed by Wiseman, 53 f.

⁷³ Wiseman, 47, cogently supports the notion that it was 'Cinna the Poet' who captured Parthenius, brought him to Rome, and then freed him on account of his learning.