

## FRIENDSHIP, POLITICS, AND LITERATURE IN CATULLUS: POEMS 1, 65 AND 66, 116

### I

To the extent that one subscribes to the proposition, by now a virtual principle of criticism (at least in some circles), that literary texts constitute sites for the negotiation, often vigorous, of power relations within a society, the reader of Catullus can hardly avoid some consideration of the poet's attitude toward contemporary political matters.<sup>1</sup> It is a subject on which two principal lines of thought can be traced. Mommsen argued that Catullus responded to the enormities that followed the reinvigoration of the First Triumvirate at the conference of Luca in 56 by occupying a thoroughly optimate position.<sup>2</sup> Wilamowitz, on the other hand, insisted that Catullus' lyrics reflect only moments of the author's individual experience, amongst which expressions of personal distaste for certain public figures naturally appear but nothing which can appropriately be taken as indications of a political stance.<sup>3</sup> The approach of Wilamowitz has proved more influential, followed in spirit if not in specifics by numerous commentators. To the degree that Catullus has been assimilated to the Augustan elegists, whose poems have been deemed by a scholar of the stature of Veyne to be anti-political in nature, it has been all the easier to reject the idea that Catullus adopts a political position, an assessment strongly maintained in a recent study by Paul Allen Miller, for whom the rejection of all political engagement is the *sine qua non* of true lyric poetry.<sup>4</sup> Mommsen's optimate Catullus has lately found his champion, however, in a careful article by H. P. Syndikus.<sup>5</sup> Although Miller and Syndikus, like Wilamowitz and Mommsen, draw diametrically opposed conclusions concerning politics in Catullus' poetry, they are agreed nevertheless that politics can be regarded as a relatively straightforward term: it refers to statecraft, matters of government, and party strife. Other readers, however, have been more self-conscious in their theoretical concerns, a salutary consequence of which has been a shift by some to a less narrow conception of the field of reference appropriate to discussions of 'the political' in Latin literature. To mention only one eminent example, Marilyn Skinner, in a series of distinguished articles, has brought to bear on Catullus' poetry a Foucauldian understanding of politics and a thorough grasp of modern feminist criticism, on the basis of which she perceives in Catullus 'elite despair over real decreases in personal autonomy and diminished capacity for meaningful public action during the agonized final years of

<sup>1</sup> The idea is, of course, a tenet of New Historicism (though it can hardly be said to be completely foreign to all 'old' historicism); cf. H. A. Veeger (ed.), *The New Historicism* (London, 1989), where extensive bibliography can conveniently be found.

<sup>2</sup> T. Mommsen, *Römische Geschichte*, vol. 3 (Berlin,<sup>9</sup> 1904), pp. 332–4.

<sup>3</sup> U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Hellenistische Dichtung*, vol. 2 (Berlin, 1924), pp. 305–10.

<sup>4</sup> W. Kroll, *C. Valerius Catullus*, (Stuttgart,<sup>3</sup> 1959), e.g. p. 53; C. J. Fordyce, *Catullus: A Commentary* (Oxford, 1961), e.g. p. 160; U. Knoche, *Gymnasium* 65 (1958), 146–58; G. Williams, *Tradition and Originality in Roman Poetry* (Oxford, 1968), p. 557; C. Deroux, *Latomus* 29 (1970), 608–31; P. A. Miller, *Lyric Texts and Lyric Consciousness: The Birth of a Genre from Archaic Greece to Augustan Rome* (London and New York, 1994), esp. pp. 120–40. Augustan elegists anti-political: P. Veyne, *Roman Erotic Elegy: Love, Poetry, and the West*, trans. D. Pellauer (Chicago, 1988), pp. 101–15.

<sup>5</sup> 'Catull und die Politik', *Gymnasium* 93 (1986), 34–47.

the Roman Republic'.<sup>6</sup> It is unnecessary to adopt Skinner's specific theoretical approach (or to accept her argument for so withering an estimation of the political scene on Catullus' part) in order to acknowledge the advantages that accrue from her more capacious notion of what *constitutes* the political scene in Rome: Skinner looks at a bigger picture able to accommodate the personal aspects of Roman political life as well as the serious moral matters that affected first-century Rome without limiting all considerations to conflicts obtaining more or less exclusively within the senatorial order. Politics, if one takes Skinner's line, can—and should—include broad cultural concerns. Which brings us back to the view, advanced at the start, of literary texts as locations for the contesting and negotiation of societal dynamics.

It is an apt perspective for one proper appreciation of Roman politics. '*Virtus*, for the Republican noble, consisted in the winning of personal preeminence and glory by the commission of great deeds in the service of the state.'<sup>7</sup> This constituted one conception of Roman politics, an ideal that in practice translated into competition for power and prestige that was fierce and incessant in a community of aristocrats devoted to concord but in recognized reality suffused with strife. Again turning to Earl's formulation, 'to the Roman noble the pursuit of power and glory, position and prestige was paramount. It was this that he equated with the Roman Republic.'<sup>8</sup> The lofty goal of preserving and enhancing the *res publica* was worked out in elections, legislative assemblies, meetings of the senate, public trials, and in the exercise of friendship and patronage, pageants of personal interaction, each of which always mattered but few of which could reasonably be deemed episodes of glorious proportions. Politicians (unsurprisingly) acted as individuals seeking to promote their own interests, a task which required them to accommodate their own goals with those of colleagues and supporters, always endeavouring to sustain the demands of their own *dignitas* as well as the values sanctioned by tradition.<sup>9</sup> Which is why, though one should not avoid conceding the tendency of many Roman politicians to persist in their loyalty to particular principles, one must nevertheless recognize their habit of converging into *ad hoc* formations which frequently changed as the issues under contest changed, what Christian Meier has described as the *Gegenstandsbhängigkeit* of Roman political behaviour. Hence the emphasis rightly placed by Roman historians on the personal and social nature of Roman politics and of (much) political discourse.<sup>10</sup>

In Roman political behaviour, personal concerns were often fused—and confused—with matters of genuine principle. A single instance will suffice to make the point: as I have tried to show elsewhere, the political struggle over the appropriateness of establishing a special tribunal to try Publius Clodius for his participation in the *Bona Dea* scandal—a political event the personal dimensions of which were long ago recognized by J. P. V. D. Balsdon—quickly took the shape of an argument over the

<sup>6</sup> M. Skinner, *Helios* 20 (1993), 117; cf. also Skinner, *SyllClass* 3 (1991), 1ff.; *Helios* 16 (1989), 7ff. A more comprehensive consideration of 'the political' in Latin poetry can be found in D. F. Kennedy, *The Arts of Love: Five Studies in the Discourse of Roman Love Elegy* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 34–9. Mere theoretical awareness will not suffice to broaden one's concept of politics, however, as a reading either of Miller, *Lyric Texts*, or C. L. Platter, *CPh* 90 (1995), 211–24 reveals.

<sup>7</sup> D. C. Earl, *The Moral and Political Tradition of Rome* (Ithaca, 1967), p. 21.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>9</sup> C. Meier, *Res Publica Amissa* (Wiesbaden, 1966), pp. 162–200; Earl, *The Moral and Political Tradition of Rome*, pp. 11–43; Brunt, *Fall of the Roman Republic and Related Essays* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 351–502.

<sup>10</sup> L. R. Taylor, *Party Politics in the Age of Caesar* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1948), pp. 1–24; Meier, *Res Publica Amissa*, pp. xxxii–xliii, 163–90.

limits of *senatus auctoritas*, a controversy which in 60 was recognized by all involved to be embodied in the consular career of Cicero.<sup>11</sup> Consequently there were many registers of engagement: one could debate the correct composition and enrolment of juries; one could question or defend the prestige of the senate, one could revisit the integrity and legality of Cicero's conduct in quashing the Catilinarian conspiracy. In the event, the acknowledged symbolism of Cicero introduced *ad hominem* attacks on the man—and on his oratorical style—even as it inspired *laudationes* which the orator was all too willing to relish in absolutely personal terms.<sup>12</sup> Each register spoke to the same political issue, but registers varied considerably in their configuration and in their reception. The fact that patently political discourse could accommodate so many contests at such different levels ought to be an unmistakable indication that, when turning to poetry, one can hardly expect expressions of political concern invariably to take the shape of explicit disquisitions on policy or specific summonses to arms. Catullus' poetry, one must observe, is conspicuously unfurnished with straightforward and obvious political formulations. Yet in the light of the discussion so far, one can hardly fail to recognize Catullus' invective against Caesar and Pompey, the infamous *socer generque* (29.24), as a political attack, even if the poet's specific objections to the consequences of the two men's conduct need not be assumed to correspond very precisely with the impulses lying behind the denunciations contained in Calpurnius Bibulus' hostile and celebrated edicts.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, apart from the hyperbolically comprehensive *perdidistis omnia* (29.24), Catullus' extant complaints against Pompey and Caesar tend to focus on the personal *luxuria* of Caesar's *praefectus fabrum*, Mamurra.<sup>14</sup>

It should occasion little surprise that Catullus' political interests transcend exclusively senatorial affairs, nor is it accidental that his criticism of Caesar and Pompey in Poem 29 is constructed around the perverted aspects (social and sexual) of the former's relationship with an Italian equestrian.<sup>15</sup> Friendship and politics, while not identical, were inextricable in republican Rome, and, for Catullus, friendship's proper expression and realization serve as topics inviting political and social commentary. Which brings us to the subject of this paper, in which I should like to consider once more the issue of *amicitia* in Catullus' poetry—especially *amicitia* obtaining amongst unequals—and the distinctly equestrian and Italian perspective from which Catullus elects to view it. The significance of friendship in Catullus, however, does not consist solely in its value as a vehicle for political polemic. Because he is a poet, literary composition constitutes for Catullus a crucial factor in establishing and sustaining *amicitiae*, one consequence of which is that the very act of literary composition in the service of friendship becomes an important theme in Catullan poetry. It is to these matters that we now turn. Not every dimension of Catullan *amicitia* can be dealt with here, however, and the reader who anticipates finding a reappraisal of the poet's delineation of his affair with Lesbia will be disappointed (though what follows is not, in my view, entirely irrelevant to appreciating Catullus' use of *amicitia* in the representation of his relationship with his beloved).<sup>16</sup> Instead, I shall focus my attention on three pieces of likely structural

<sup>11</sup> Balsdon, *Historia* 15 (1966), 65ff.; Tatum, *CPh* 85 (1990), 204ff.

<sup>12</sup> Cic. *Att.* 1.14.1–5; cf. *Att.* 1.18.2.

<sup>13</sup> Catullus and Caesar: Suet. *Iul.* 73; Bibulus' edicts: Cic. *Att.* 2.19.2, 2.20.4, 2.21.3–5; Suet. *Iul.* 9.2, 49.2; Plut. *Pomp.* 48.4.

<sup>14</sup> Cat. 29 and 57; cf. Suet. *Iul.* 73; Plin. *N.H.* 36.48.

<sup>15</sup> Mamurra: Plin. *N.H.* 36.48; Hor. *Sat.* 1.7.37; Cic. *Att.* 7.7.6.

<sup>16</sup> See R. K. Gibson, *PCPhS* 41 (1995), 62ff.

importance to the collection as a whole, each of which involves poetic gift-giving as a means (not always successful) for signalling, establishing, and sustaining *amicitia*, and each of which has social and (therefore) political implications; consequently, I shall limit my examination to Poems 1, 65 and 66, and 116, though, predictably enough, other Catullan pieces will make at least brief appearances.<sup>17</sup>

## II

The programmatic character of Poem 1 is too familiar to require elaboration here. I wish instead to focus on two particulars: Cornelius Nepos and line 9. As has often been observed, the qualities attributed to Nepos' historical composition (brevity, innovation, learning, and *labor*) tend to reinforce the poet's recognition that Nepos is his ideal reader; furthermore, they represent literary virtues which the poet would want ascribed to his own art.<sup>18</sup> The literary and aesthetic identification between Nepos and Catullus is combined in Poem 1 with a correspondence of a more purely sociological nature: Nepos is explicitly praised for being the only Italian (*unus Italorum*) bold enough to compose a universal history. The attribution of boldness is not without point: although Roman historiography was not a genre exclusively restricted to senators, they dominated the field none the less, to the extent that, even in the particular category of universal history, the intrusion of a municipal author was remarkable.<sup>19</sup> Nepos, like Catullus, was a Transpadane.<sup>20</sup> The poet's origins are made clear in his collection, the full background to which has been described in careful detail (not eschewing some speculation) by Peter Wiseman.<sup>21</sup> In our poet's day, the Valerii Catulli, simply put, were *domi nobiles* who had not yet arrived on the Roman political scene. But by the reign of Tiberius, the family had ascended to the consulship.<sup>22</sup> Like the historian Nepos, then, Catullus was (or so his other poems imply) a man poised to stride into new territory, into the domain, social and cultural, of the senatorial class. The totality of these correspondences tends strongly to configure Nepos as the poet's *alter ego*.

As he projects his own identity through Nepos—through his ideal reader—Catullus emerges as Alexandrian in literary sensibilities and Italian in origin. Too often,

<sup>17</sup> It is necessary for me to make clear at this point that I now incline to the view (rejected at *TAPhA* 118 [1988], 179) that the present arrangement of poems in the Catullan collection reflects the poet's own design; cf. G. W. Most, *Philologus* 125 (1981), 109ff. and literature cited there. The matter can hardly be regarded as settled, however, nor is this premise vital for every aspect of what follows. It is, however, important to my argument that Poem 1 be regarded as programmatic to the collection as a whole (or at least to poems outside the polymetra). On the likely structural significance of Poems 65 and 116, see J. King, *CW* 81 (1987/88), 383ff. and C. Macleod, *Collected Essays* (Oxford, 1983), pp. 181ff.

<sup>18</sup> T. P. Wiseman, *Clio's Cosmetics* (Leicester, 1979), pp. 167ff., esp. p. 171, with further bibliography. J. E. G. Zetzel, 'The Poetics of Patronage in the Late First Century B.C.', in B. K. Gold (ed.), *Literary and Artistic Patronage in Ancient Rome* (Austin, 1982), pp. 100f., by contrast, detects in Poem 1 a rejection of Nepos' literary values (wrongly, in my view). M. Janan, *When the Lamp is Shattered: Desire and Narrative in Catullus* (Carbondale, 1994), pp. 39f. posits without justification a gap between Nepos' literary values and their execution in his *Chronica* as an issue in the proper understanding of Poem 1. A stronger (but still, to my mind, unconvincing) case for an ironic reading of Poem 1 is made by B. J. Gibson, *CQ* 45 (1995), 569ff. The best discussion of Nepos' situation in the intellectual and literary world of the first century remains Wiseman, *Clio's Cosmetics*, pp. 154–66; see also F. Millar, *G&R* 35 (1988), 40–55 and A. C. Dionisotti, *JRS* 78 (1988), 35–49. A different estimation of Nepos can be found in N. Horsfall, *Cornelius Nepos: A Selection, including the Lives of Cato and Atticus* (Oxford, 1989), pp. xv–xxi.

<sup>19</sup> T. P. Wiseman, *Roman Studies: Literary and Historical* (Liverpool, 1987), pp. 248ff.

<sup>20</sup> On the significance of the connection, see Wiseman, *Clio's Cosmetics*, p. 331.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 335ff.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 343ff.

perhaps, it is only the first of these features that attracts critical attention. But the latter one, by dint of the stress it receives in the opening poem, is also integral to the poet's literary personality and poetic programme. The medium which configures Catullus' drift toward consubstantiation with Nepos is, obviously enough, the poem, the gift that at once heralds and contextualizes their relationship, and, in the very explication of their equivalence, the poem provides the terms of their individuation. In Catullus (like other poets) the identity of the addressee matters, for several reasons to be sure, but especially for his contribution to the poet's definition of himself.

What is the nature of the relationship between Catullus and his ideal reader? A philological obstacle impedes our finding a satisfactory answer. Still, even if the correct reading of line 9 must always remain a matter of opinion, there is no mistaking the poet's adoption of a client's posture. There is absolutely no question, it is hardly necessary to say, of Catullus' requiring an actual patron in the strong sense of the word; despite his protestations of poverty and thrift, reflexes of the iambic genre,<sup>23</sup> Catullus was a wealthy man. Which of course isolates the fictional possibilities inherent in his employment of the designation 'patron', a potentially problematic ambiguity to which we shall return more than once. In Poem 1, however, the client's pose does not appear designed to reflect any difficulty in Catullus' position or in his relationship to Nepos. If we retain *patrona virgo* in line 9, Catullus appears in his poem both as *amicus* (to Nepos) and as client (to the muse).<sup>24</sup> If, on the other hand, we adopt Bergk's emendation (*patroni ut ergo*), then Catullus addresses his *alter ego*, his perfect peer, with the extraordinarily courteous designation, patron.<sup>25</sup> The warmth that such a gesture could inspire is made plain by the tide of emotion with which Cicero, in his correspondence, reacts to such consideration when he is referred to as *omnium patronus* by the equestrian A. Caecina<sup>26</sup> and especially when he is addressed as *patrone mi* by Manius Curius, a man famous for his *urbanitas*.<sup>27</sup> In Cicero's view, the grandees of Rome 'clientes appellari mortis instar putant' (*Off.* 2.69), hardly surprising in a society one of whose popular bromides equated the acceptance of a favour with the selling of one's *libertas*.<sup>28</sup> The aversion on the part of élite Romans to expressions of client-like deference made such gestures remarkable, and, paradoxically perhaps, under the right circumstances they underscored the depth of the *amicitia* existing between the men involved.<sup>29</sup> All of which highlights the compliment paid in Poem 1 to Catullus' perfect peer. At the same time, however, it incorporates into the poem the potential confluence of *amicitia* and patronage.<sup>30</sup> Granted that it is

<sup>23</sup> B. Gentili, *Poetry and its Public in Ancient Greece from Homer to the Fifth Century*, trans. A. T. Cole (Baltimore, 1988), p. 107.

<sup>24</sup> G. Williams, *Tradition and Originality in Roman Poetry* (Oxford, 1968), p. 41; Wiseman, *Clio's Cosmetics*, pp. 172–4; R. Mayer, *LCM* 7 (1982), 73–4.

<sup>25</sup> G. P. Goold, 'O Patrona Virgo', in J. A. S. Evans (ed.), *Polis and Imperium: Studies in Honour of Edward Togo Salmon* (Toronto, 1974), pp. 253–64; O. Skutsch, *LCM* 7 (1982), 90; A. E. Radke, *Hermes* 123 (1995), 253.

<sup>26</sup> Cic. *Fam.* 6.7.4 (hardly 'the most groveling and desperate among Cicero's correspondents', as maintained by P. White, *Promised Verse: Poets in the Society of Augustan Rome* [Cambridge, MA, 1993], p. 282); cf. *Fam.* 6.5.4, 6.6.2, 6.9.1.

<sup>27</sup> Cic. *Fam.* 7.29.2; cf. *Fam.* 18.17.1; his *urbanitas*: Cic. *Att.* 7.2.3.

<sup>28</sup> Publilius Syrus 61 (Loeb edition): 'beneficium accipere libertatem est vendere'.

<sup>29</sup> For other examples from the late republic of what might be called the polite use of *patronus*, see R. Saller, 'Patronage and Friendship in Early Imperial Rome: Drawing the Distinction', in A. Wallace-Hadrill (ed.), *Patronage in Ancient Society* (London, 1989), pp. 49–62 at p. 53; the courteous use of *patronus* amongst equals can be found in imperial inscriptions, cf. pp. 54f.

<sup>30</sup> R. Saller, *Personal Patronage under the Early Empire* (Cambridge, 1982), 11ff. and 'Patronage and Friendship', 57ff.; White, *Promised Verse*, p. 31.

important not to conflate the two,<sup>31</sup> it is equally important to recognize their similarities. Both relationships were based on *fides*, *gratia*, and *officium*, the crucial differences between them being the putative affection implicit in *amicitia* (and by no means obligatory in patronage) and the relative *dignitas* of the parties involved. Even here, however, one must keep in abeyance any impulse to define a rigid and invariable typology based on specific differentials of prestige. At modest levels of society, the *patronus* might relish his appropriate appellation even from the wife who had once been his slave.<sup>32</sup> More to our purpose, the *domi nobilis*, for all his local clout, would often find himself in a subordinate position in his dealings with the great houses of Rome; none the less, the language of *necessarius*, *hospes*, and *amicus* tends to prevail in such circumstances.<sup>33</sup> For obvious reasons, then, the blurring of friendship and *clientela* was more often for the purpose of politely disguising one party's social inferiority than it was for making the sort of warm adumbration of equality one perhaps finds in Poem 1. However line 9 is to be read, then, and this is the point, the poet has so designed his opening poem that in it he is simultaneously friend and 'client', a state of affairs that raises absolutely no problem whatsoever—within, that is, the limits of Poem 1. But the difficulties in sorting out the reciprocities appropriate to friendship and to patronage, and the proper appreciation of those reciprocities, make up a recurrent theme in the ensemble of Catullus' poetry, a theme related to the problem of Catullus' self-definition and the extent to which that definition is grounded in his Italian identity, and it is toward these difficulties that we must direct our further attentions.

Controversy continues to attend the efforts by scholars to arrive at a proper appreciation of *amicitia* in the late Roman republic, but unnecessarily. Until the publication in 1965 of Peter Brunt's magisterial paper, historians concentrated too exclusively on the patently hypocritical alliances deployed under the guise of friendship by at least some aristocrats in their struggles for political advantage. Hence Syme's insistence that '*amicitia* was a weapon of politics, not a sentiment based on congeniality', a sense of the word that could hardly have obtained in normal circles.<sup>34</sup> And, as Brunt demonstrated in abundant detail, the idea that *amicitia* primarily denoted political association is at odds with Cicero's extensive exposition in *De Amicitia* as well as the word's actual usage in undeniably unphilosophical contexts.<sup>35</sup> Few expostulations of *amicitia*, to take one extreme example, can have been more transparently ungentle than those exchanged in 51 between Cicero and Ap. Claudius Pulcher.<sup>36</sup> Yet, even in maintaining so unsavoury a relationship, the orator includes in his catalogue of the bonds uniting the pair in friendship certain ties that transcend mere mutual utility (*Fam.* 3.10.9): *studiorum similitudo*, *suavitas consuetudinis*,

<sup>31</sup> D. Konstan, *CPh* 90 (1995), 328–42.

<sup>32</sup> *ILS* 7413; 8219. Cf. K. R. Bradley, *Slaves and Masters in the Roman Empire: A Study in Social Control* (Oxford, 1987), p. 78.

<sup>33</sup> Brunt, *Fall of the Roman Republic*, p. 394. The language of friendship used in poetry to 'cover over' discrepancies in status: recent discussions include Konstan, *CPh* 90 (1995), 340f.; White, *Promised Verse*, p. 14.

<sup>34</sup> R. Syme, *The Roman Revolution* (Oxford, 1939), p. 12. Cf. e.g. Taylor, *Party Politics*, pp. 7ff. J. Spielvogel, *Amicitia und res publica* (Stuttgart, 1993) perpetuates this line of thought.

<sup>35</sup> P. Brunt, *PCPhS* 191 (1965), 1–20, revised in *The Fall of the Roman Republic and Related Essays* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 351–81. See also White, *Promised Verse*, pp. 13ff.; J. Powell, 'Friendship and its Problems in Greek and Roman Thought', in D. Innes, H. Hine and C. Pelling (edd.), *Ethics and Rhetoric: Classical Essays for Donald Russell on his Seventy-Fifth Birthday* (Oxford, 1995), pp. 31–45; Konstan, *CPh* 90 (1995).

<sup>36</sup> See T. N. Mitchell, *Cicero: The Senior Statesman* (New Haven, 1991), pp. 220–2 for the circumstances.

*delectatio vitae atque victus, sermonis societas, litterae interiores*. This is by no means the only instance in the late republic in which protestations of personal affection make up part of an expression of political support (or a request for such support), and, in view of the Romans' remarkable frankness in describing their motives when they are blatantly self-interested,<sup>37</sup> the invocation of *amicitia* in terms so personal (and so reminiscent of our own notions of friendship) cannot legitimately be ignored. As Jonathan Powell has succinctly and rightly put it: 'The feelings so expressed might be sincere or they might not; but the language of friendship would not have served as it did to induce help and support, if it had been seen in the purely cynical way encouraged by some modern historians.'<sup>38</sup> To be sure, Romans could debate whether friendship was to be valued purely for its own sake or *propter utilitatem* (e.g. Cic. *Inv.* 167), but the implications of such a controversy remain a far cry from the hollow *amicitia* bereft of sentiment asseverated by Syme and others. The vocabulary of friendship, it should by now be clear, was not a jargon employed by the Romans principally to describe political affiliations.<sup>39</sup>

The point is relevant to Catullan studies. Catullus' frequent resort to the discourse of friendship and the clear importance of friendship in the programmatic opening of the collection combine to underscore how vital it is to attempt to understand the various ways in which Catullus explores and exploits the idea of *amicitia* in his poetry. The topic can hardly be described as overlooked. Yet it remains all too commonplace for critics to accept without question or qualification the theory of Reitzenstein and Ross that the word *amicitia* and its related terms (*fides*, *pietas*, *officium*, and *gratia*) are fundamentally and primarily political vocabulary (by which it is meant that these terms constitute a technical political vocabulary) when they appear in Catullus' poetry.<sup>40</sup> Although objections have been lodged,<sup>41</sup> even a summary glance at recent work on Catullus will discover that the Reitzenstein–Ross proposition tends to be treated as if it were an irrefutable fact—even in Micaela Janan's Lacanian reading of the poet.<sup>42</sup> But, in the face of Brunt's exposition of *amicitia* in late republican society, the Reitzenstein–Ross thesis, for all its neatness, simply collapses. A different tack is required.

### III

In Poem 65 Catullus responds to a literary request from Hortalus by protesting that he is so sorely afflicted by grief for his dead brother that poetic composition lies beyond his capacities, an assertion obviously contradicted in the very medium of its expression and in any case contravened completely by the following poem, which

<sup>37</sup> Cf. the explicit appeal to the demands of *dignitas* by Catiline (Sall. *Cat.* 35.3) or Caesar (*B.C.* 1.7.7) or Cicero's frank explanation to Atticus of his defence in the senate of equestrian interests (*Att.* 2.1.8).

<sup>38</sup> Powell, 'Friendship and its Problems', 43–4.

<sup>39</sup> This is obviously not to deny the personal nature of Roman political associations; see the discussion above.

<sup>40</sup> R. Reitzenstein, *Sitzunber. der Heidelb. Ak. der Wiss.* 12 (1912), 9–36; D. O. Ross, *Style and Tradition in Catullus* (Cambridge, MA, 1969), pp. 80–95.

<sup>41</sup> R. O. A. M. Lyne, *The Latin Love Poets* (Oxford, 1980), pp. 24ff.; Tatum, *PLLS* 7 (1993), 36f. See also J. K. Newman, *Roman Catullus and the Modification of the Alexandrian Sensibility* (Hildesheim, 1990), pp. 318ff.; Gibson, *PCPhS* 41 (1995), 61ff.

<sup>42</sup> See, for example, M. B. Skinner, *Helios* 20 (1993), 118f.; Miller, *Lyric Texts*, pp. 128ff.; Janan, *When the Lamp is Shattered*, pp. 80, 92ff. (though it must be observed that, in Janan's view, even Catullus' so-called political vocabulary 'never intrinsically meant anything at all' [p. 80]); Platter, *CPh* 90 (1995), 216f.

represents Hortalus' literary present. The topos of the *carmen iussum*, common enough in Latin literature so as not to present any difficulties to the reader, signals friendship between author and addressee.<sup>43</sup> One may compare Catullus' answer to the unfortunate recipient of Poem 68A, who has also sought a poem as friendship's due.<sup>44</sup> The friendship implicit in the literary figure of the *carmen iussum* is punctuated in Poem 65 by the severity of the impediment overcome by the poet in order to satisfy Hortalus' request and by the extravagantly tender imagery that concludes the poem.<sup>45</sup> As in the dedication poem, so in Poem 65, a literary gift indicates and sustains the poet's *amicitia*.

But an obvious difference obtrudes. The poetic identity of Hortalus, *amicus* and literary admirer of Catullus, cannot be completely severed from the historical Hortensius Hortalus, to whom this poem makes reference. But there are two possibilities. The likelier addressee is the great orator: consul in 69, son-in-law to Q. Lutatius Catulus, Hortensius dominated the law courts during the 70s and, though he was ultimately excelled by Cicero, none the less remained a leader even amongst the *principes* of the senate. The other candidate is his son, not yet a senator until the latter part of the 50s and destined to fall, with the sons of Cato and Lucullus, at Philippi. Even if our Hortalus were the son, whose age was more nearly Catullus' own, the enormity of the gap separating the municipal poet from his distinguished Roman acquaintance cannot be ignored, even if the rhetoric of friendship functions to mask the division between the two.<sup>46</sup> Whereas in the dedication poem Catullus addressed a fellow Transpadane in whom the poet detected literary respect for himself (unrelated to any explicit formal demands), in Poem 65, to the degree that one is distracted by the elevated status of the addressee, even the least cynical of readers must at least ponder the more self-serving purposes potentially underlying a poet's resort in such circumstances to the rhetoric of the *carmen iussum*.<sup>47</sup> The pose cannot be assumed to be everywhere genuine: in a later age, the younger Pliny devoted an entire letter to a

<sup>43</sup> White, *Promised Verse*, pp. 72ff.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. 68A. 9–10, 31–32, 39–40. Neither the philological problems attending the name of this poem's recipient nor the question of 68A's relationship with 68B need detain us here: cf. (with further references) H. P. Syndikus, *Catull: Eine Interpretation*, vol. 2 (Darmstadt, 1990), pp. 239ff.

<sup>45</sup> The final simile has been felt to be 'Hellenistic' (and therefore preparatory for Poem 66), a further signal of the poem's 'artificiality'; cf. (recently) G. O. Hutchinson, *Hellenistic Poetry* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 299ff.; Syndikus, *Catull*, pp. 197f.

<sup>46</sup> Hortensius Hortalus (cos. 69): F. Vonder Mühl, *RE* 8, 2.2470ff. Whether Hortensius was actually *nobilis* remains uncertain; cf. E. Badian, *Chiron* 20 (1990), 393. The other, though less likely, possibility is the orator's son: so Syme, *Roman Revolution*, p. 63 (without argument); D. R. Shackleton Bailey, *Onomasticon to Cicero's Speeches* (Norman, 1988), pp. 55f.; Broughton, *MRR* 3.103; on the son, see F. Münzer, *RE* 8, 2.2468f. Despite Shackleton Bailey's asseverations, it is hardly the 'common sense' conclusion. The catalogue of poets and poetasters in Ov. *Trist.* 2.441f. is not all that relevant; nevertheless, the Hortensius there mentioned is probably the orator ('nec minus Hortensi, nec sunt minus improba Servi carmina. quis dubitet nomina tanta sequi?'). Hortensius and Sulpicius Servius are also linked as poets by Pliny (*Ep.* 5.3.5), where, *pace* Wiseman, *Cinna the Poet and other Roman Essays* (Leicester, 1974), p. 190, there is no reason to think that Pliny is referring to the younger Hortensius but yet the older Sulpicius (Hortensius the poet also makes an appearance at Gell. 19.9). However, it is as a reader and not a fellow poet that Hortalus is configured here; consequently, these lists are not really germane to Catullus' selection of an addressee. More to the point is the orator's well-known fondness for Greek culture (charmingly illustrated by Gell. 1.5.2–3) and the fact that, apart from the poem *sub iudice*, the younger Hortensius is nowhere referred to as Hortalus (admittedly, the father is called Hortalus by Cicero only twice; cf. Shackleton Bailey, p. 55). Certainty eludes, but probability favours the consul of 69. In any case, the social dynamics which are the focus of our critical concern here obtain whichever Hortensius it is whom our poet addresses.

<sup>47</sup> White, *Promised Verse*, p. 20.



disastrous literary recitation given by the unlucky Passennus Paulus, who commenced a poem addressed to his close friend Iavolenus Priscus with the words 'Prisce, iubes'; before he could continue, however, the (apparently unstable) Priscus shouted out 'ego vero non iubeo', which brought down the house. It is worth noting that Pliny considered Priscus' behaviour attributable to his *dubia sanitas* and *deliratum*, and the whole event was to be regarded as 'ridiculum et notabile', though plainly not for the artificiality of Paulus' address but rather owing to the bizarre literalness of Paulus' addressee.<sup>48</sup> If the reader of Poem 65 is overwhelmed by its affect-laden language, possibilities of a cynical ilk must remain very distant.<sup>49</sup> But if not? Interference to Poem 65 once thought to be caused by Poem 95 may now safely be discounted, if we follow Goold in following Housman in following Munro: it is as a *reader* and not as a fellow poet that Catullus addresses Hortensius.<sup>50</sup> The orator's reception of this poem, then, constitutes both a rhetorical purpose for the piece and an element of its meaning as it stands in the poet's public collection.

Poem 65 is not the promised verse, the *carmina Battiadae* mentioned in line 16. That comes in the next piece, which is a translation of Callimachus' *Coma Berenices*. In presenting Poems 65 and 66 as a set, Catullus has incorporated the epigrammatic *apophoreton* into his literary designs for Poem 65, an appropriately Hellenistic ingredient in a poem to be paired with his translation of Callimachus, and a subgenre patently relevant to the offering of gifts, literary or otherwise.<sup>51</sup> Catullus' precise choice of subject for translation is not entirely explained by his own literary proclivities or by those of Hortensius, though these are undeniably important factors. Nor will it suffice to construct with J. K. Newman an invariable contrast between the 'human and sensitive' qualities of Callimachean verse over against the 'tub-thumping certainties of official propaganda' in order to find in Poem 66 a neoteric polemic meant somehow to raise Hortensius' literary consciousness.<sup>52</sup> But Newman is clearly correct to regard Poem 66 as something more than a mere display piece, as if to recognize the poem as the promised translation were to have done with any requirement to form an estimation of its contribution to the poetic diptych which the poet has presented to Hortensius. Consequently, it can hardly be inappropriate to take notice of the actual content of Catullus' literary translation of Callimachus.<sup>53</sup>

In his famous celebration of the catasterism of Berenice's lock, Callimachus charmingly, even humorously, involves several important themes of the Ptolemaic court.<sup>54</sup> Callimachus' poem (like Conon's 'discovery' of his new constellation) responds to what was an actual political issue during the reign of Ptolemy Euergetes,

<sup>48</sup> Plin. *Ep.* 6.15. Priscus was an eminent jurist; cf. A. N. Sherwin-White, *The Letters of Pliny* (Oxford, 1966), p. 370.

<sup>49</sup> White, *Promised Verse*, p. 14. A cynical reading of Horace's self-representation is offered in R. O. A. M. Lyne, *Horace: Behind the Public Poetry* (New Haven, 1995), pp. 14ff. On the conflict between disinterested and self-interested gift-giving in Rome, see S. Dixon, *EMC* 37 (1993), 451–64.

<sup>50</sup> J. P. Solodow, *CPh* 82 (1987), 141ff.

<sup>51</sup> J. P. Sullivan, *Martial: The Unexpected Classic* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 12ff., 82f. provides a recent treatment of the *apophoreton*. On the epigrammatic qualities of Poem 65, see J. King, *CW* 81 (1987/88), 384f.

<sup>52</sup> Newman, *Roman Catullus*, p. 226.

<sup>53</sup> The nature and effect of the particular changes in Callimachus' poem introduced by Catullus are not my particular concern here, though they remain important. Cf. Syndikus, *Catull*, pp. 202f.; Hutchinson, *Hellenistic Poetry*, pp. 232f.; A. S. Hollis, *ZPE* 91 (1992), 21–8.

<sup>54</sup> For what follows, see L. Koenen, 'The Ptolemaic King as a Religious Figure', in A. W. Bulloch *et al.* (edd.), *Images and Ideology: Self-definition in the Hellenistic World* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1993), pp. 25–115, but esp. pp. 89ff. (with abundant references).

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 112f.

to wit, the question of whether or when the monarch should join himself and Berenice II to the cult of Alexander and the Gods Adelphoi. In so doing, the poem engages with a concept vital to sustaining the royal house. Although the idea of divine kingship was integral to Hellenistic monarchy throughout the Mediterranean, for powerful parochial reasons this was especially the case in Ptolemaic Egypt. Yet, by putting these matters in the mouth of the heavenly lock and by suffusing the lock's monologue with a spirit of friendship and of love (love was likewise a hallmark of Ptolemaic political ideology),<sup>55</sup> Callimachus is able to deflate, or one might better say, to humanize, his monarch without trivializing the institution of monarchy.<sup>56</sup> Whatever the precise details of the composition of the *Aetia*, the importance of Berenice to the formal strategies of this work cannot be underestimated. The second half of the *Aetia* is framed by tributes to the Ptolemaic queen: the first poem of Book Three is the *Victoria Berenices* and the final action of Book Four is the *Coma*.<sup>57</sup> That any of this should have been lost on an ardent adherent of Alexandrianism seems unlikely.

Still, whatever else Callimachus' poem was to readers of his *Aetia*, the *Coma Berenices* remained a consummate specimen of the courtier's art, a fact which imposes uncertainties in the literary delineation of Catullus' *amicitia* with Hortensius when the poet bestows upon his friend a Latin version of Callimachus' piece: to what degree is Poem 65 implicated in the 'proper' reading of Poem 66—or vice versa? what consequences ensue from one's answer to that question? Callimachus' *Coma* is unmistakably a political poem in the traditional sense of the term. When it is imported from the Alexandrian court to the Roman republic, from the *Aetia* to Catullus' corpus, does its new environment transform its political significance?

By Catullus' day, the courts of kings were, for the most part, things of the past. In Wiseman's accurate summation: 'for all practical purposes, the centre of patronage was inevitably Rome'.<sup>58</sup> Still, living exemplars of Callimachus' reality, *mutatis mutandis*, could easily be (and frequently were) pointed out in Roman society.<sup>59</sup> The pointing out was easy not simply because client intellectuals were commonplace in Roman high society but more especially because these intellectuals, even when they held Roman citizenship, were conspicuous aliens. One need mention only Archias or Philodemus of the myriad *Graeculi* who attended upon their Roman 'friends'.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>56</sup> On this see *ibid.*, p. 89. A. Cameron, *Callimachus and his Critics* (Princeton, 1995), pp. 3–23, convincingly refutes the belief, persistent in some quarters, that Callimachus was a jumped-up school teacher (and therefore Ptolemy's toady). However, Cameron's insistence that Callimachus' status was that of 'a friend rather than a client' (p. 23) simply raises in another context the issue under investigation here. Nor need one accept without major qualification Cameron's argument that Hellenistic kings 'were remarkably tolerant of frankness' (p. 16), an assertion the best evidence for which (though still uneven) consists of anecdotes illustrating the occasional bonhomie of the Antigonids. That poets could and did sometimes engage in humanizing banter to the amusement of their divine monarchs hardly seems remarkable. Romans, in any case, were unlikely to imagine the Egyptian court as a centre for anything like open deliberation, poetical or otherwise; cf. H. Sonnabend, *Fremdenbild und Politik: Vorstellungen der Römer von Ägypten und dem Partherreich in der späten Republik und frühen Kaiserzeit* (Frankfurt, 1986). On the complex matter of the establishment and development of the Antigonid (and Hellenistic regal) court, see G. Weber, *Historia* 44 (1995), 283–316 (with further bibliography).

<sup>57</sup> P. J. Parsons, *ZPE* 25 (1977), 1–50; see most recently Cameron, *Callimachus*, pp. 105ff.

<sup>58</sup> Wiseman, *Clio's Cosmetics*, p. 155.

<sup>59</sup> S. M. Treggiari, *EMC* 21 (1977), 24ff.; S. Laresen, 'Greek Intellectuals in Rome—Some Examples', in P. G. Bilde, I. Nielsen, and M. Nielsen (edd.), *Aspects of Hellenism in Italy: Towards a Cultural Unity?* Acta Hyperborea 5 (1993), pp. 191–212.

<sup>60</sup> T. P. Wiseman, 'Pete nobiles amicos: Poets and Patrons in Late Republican Rome', in B. K. Gold (ed.), *Literary and Artistic Patronage in Ancient Rome* (Austin, 1982), pp. 31ff.

Their status as dependents, a condition 'inherent in their very Greekness', was unmistakable.<sup>61</sup>

At the same time, it cannot pass unobserved that the social status of a Latin poet, i.e. of a writer whose poetic activities were not merely a pastime (however exquisite the product) but something approaching a profitable profession, was by no means necessarily elevated. Alien and low-born authors populate the republican canon, and though they barely emerge to our notice from their meagre and murky traces,<sup>62</sup> the membership of the *collegium scribarum histrionumque* mentioned by Festus were hardly a socially distinguished company.<sup>63</sup> Even if by the late first century the actors had been jettisoned, the *collegium scribarum poetarum*, which continued to be associated with drama, was obliged to look in awe at its senatorial patrons, a point made clear by the fact that Valerius Maximus deemed it worth recording, under the rubric of remarkable self-assurance, that the poet Accius never (*numquam*) stood when Iulius Caesar, presumably Iulius Caesar Strabo, himself an amateur composer of tragedies, entered a meeting of the *collegium*, this despite it being the case that 'magno spatio divisus est a senatu ad poetam Accium transitus'.<sup>64</sup> Only by a species of special pleading—making it a question of *volumina* instead of *imagines*—could Accius avoid the charge of *insolentia*. Scribes, some of whom rose high in the census and the collective of whom wielded considerable political clout, and perhaps even other *apparitores* as well, mingled freely with professional composers in the *collegium*.<sup>65</sup> And the presence of equestrians in certain venerable *collegia* was not unknown.<sup>66</sup> But our nearly complete ignorance of this *collegium* derives from the organization's being beneath the notice of the tonier *litterati* of the late republic and Augustan periods, and it is these poets whose works constitute the crucial canon of the period. The sole possible exception is Horace, whose own status as *scriba quaestorius* may have heightened his awareness of such matters even as it sharpened his sensibilities concerning opportunistic poets and pesky patrons.<sup>67</sup> Not long after Catullus' day, if he was not actually a rough contemporary, Cornelius Sura, a freedman and *praeco ab aerario ex tribus decurieis*, was elected *magister* of the *collegium scribarum poetarum*. He need not have been but presumably was a poet, of some variety at least. An inscription describes him as *accensus consulis et censoris*, his crowning attainments: here was a poet from whom there could be little confusion between *amicitia* and *clientela*.<sup>68</sup>

But let us return to *Graeculi*. A particularly relevant example is Crinagoras of Mytilene, from the generation following Catullus. A member of his city's élite, Crinagoras was also an epigrammist whose subjects included prominent Romans and

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>62</sup> As Lyne, *Horace*, p. 12, rightly points out, White's treatment of the social status of Latin poets (White, *Promised Verse*, pp. 5ff., 211ff.) is skewed by its restriction to poets whose work survives.

<sup>63</sup> Festus, pp. 446–8 (Lindsay). The *collegium poetarum*: N. B. Crowther, *Latomus* 32 (1973), 575–80; N. Horsfall, *BICS* 23 (1976), 79–95; S. Panciera, *BCAR* 91 (1986), 35–44, esp. 39ff.

<sup>64</sup> Val. Max. 3.7.11. The proper sense of *numquam* in this passage: E. Badian, 'Ennius and his Friends', in O. Skutsch (ed.), *Ennius*. Hardt Entretiens 17 (Geneva, 1972), pp. 149–99 at p. 190. Accius (who derived from a freedman father): G. B. Conte, *Latin Literature: A History* (Baltimore, 1994), pp. 105ff. Strabo's tragedies: E. Diehl, *RE* 10, 1.431.

<sup>65</sup> N. Purcell, *PBSR* 51 (1983), 129ff.; E. Badian, *Klio* 71 (1989), 582ff.

<sup>66</sup> Cic. *Frat.* 2.5.3. Cf. C. Nicolet, *L'Ordre équestre à l'époque républicaine (312–43 av. J.-C.)*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1974), pp. 891f.

<sup>67</sup> Horace's status: Suet. *Vita Hor.*; cf. D. Armstrong, *TAPhA* 116 (1986), 255ff. Opportunistic poets: Hor. *Sat.* 1.9; pesky patrons: *Epist.* 1.7.

<sup>68</sup> See Panciera, *BCAR* 91 (1986), 35–4.

members of the Augustan household, a literary record which, in combination with the poet's status in Mytilene, justifies the conclusion that Crinagoras was 'acceptable in the highest society at Rome'.<sup>69</sup> It is worth contrasting with Poem 65 Crinagoras' poem to the ill-starred M. Claudius Marcellus, an epigram commemorating the Greek poet's gift to the Roman prince of a copy of Callimachus' *Hecale* (*Anth. Pal.* 9.545):

Καλλιμάχου τὸ τορευτὸν ἔπος τόδε· δὴ γὰρ ἐπ' αὐτῷ  
 ὦνῆρ τοὺς Μουσέων πάντας ἔσεισε κάλως·  
 ἀεῖδει δ' Ἐκάλῃς τε φιλοξείνοιο καλήν  
 καὶ Θησεῖ Μαραθῶν οὓς ἐρέθηκε πόνους.  
 τοῦ σοι καὶ νεαρὸν χειρῶν σθένος εἴη ἀρέσθαι,  
 Μάρκελλε, κλεινοῦ τ' αἶνον ἴσον βιότου.

The tone of this poem could not be further removed from that of Poem 65. Yet the poetic circumstances are remarkably similar: a friend, of distinguished but undeniably inferior position, sends a Callimachean present to a grand (if youthful) Roman. More to the point, Crinagoras exhorts young Marcellus to undertake a didactic reading of Callimachus' epyllion, to construct an identity of sorts between himself and the youthful Greek hero whose exploits represent Callimachus' subject. There is a link, then, between the addressee of Crinagoras' poem and the actual contents of the poem which he receives as a literary gift, and one responsibility of the addressee is to find the right strategy for reading himself into his poetic present. One wonders whether this principle is operative in Catullus 65 and 66.

An awareness of the original settings of Callimachus' *Coma* as well as of the poem's inescapable propaganda aspects tends to approximate the situation of the poem's translator to that of its original author. On the one hand, the claim to be a Roman Callimachus constitutes a powerful and empowering poetic polemic;<sup>70</sup> on the other hand, however, the *domi nobilis*, in his literary friendship to the Roman grandee and in so far as he is identified with the courtier, runs the risk of being reduced to the position of erudite *Graeculus esuriens*. The latter equation is, of course, only potential, but it is none the less present. One may compare the obvious anxiety with which Vitruvius, in his work on architecture, advertises his *doctrina* yet 'distances himself from those Greek-trained architects of servile origin who were common in his day'.<sup>71</sup> The goal is to avoid being thoroughly absorbed into the Greek paradigm. The senior consular could by no stretch be judged a genuine social equal of Catullus, and it is this fact of life which imposes a potential concern: to what extent is the reality of the *amicus inferior*, inscribed here in poetic gifts making unmistakable allusion to the political poetry offered by Callimachus to his monarch, being assimilated to the position of *cliens*? The tender expressions of *amicitia* in Poem 65 are certainly liable to clash with the courtly poetry of 66, depending, one must add, on the reading of 66 entertained by Hortensius. Will he perceive the humanity of Callimachus' original? And, even if he does, will he appreciate the problematic correspondences between the flesh-and-bone Transpadane and his Cyrenian model mapped out in the compositional

<sup>69</sup> A. S. F. Gow and D. L. Page, *The Greek Anthology: Garland of Philip*, vol. 2 (Cambridge, 1968), p. 212. This does not justify the conclusion that from the Roman perspective 'he must have been recognized more or less as *par inter primos*' (ibid.). Sullivan, *Martial*, p. 85, more accurately describes him as 'a court poet who might well be taken as a model' by the aspiring Martial.

<sup>70</sup> R. F. Thomas, *AJPh* 103 (1982), 144ff.

<sup>71</sup> Vit. 6. *Praef.* 4ff.; cf. A. Wallace-Hadrill, *Houses and Society in Pompeii and Herculaneum* (Princeton, 1994), p. 10.

relationship obtaining between 65 and 66? The tension between 65 and 66 creates for their various levels of readership (Hortensius and the readers of the collection) a set of interpretative questions, the answers to which, at some point, require an actual or an assumed response to the diptych by its senatorial recipient. Whereas later poets openly proclaim their great friends as *praesidia* of their interests, thereby configuring a relationship the purported parameters of which are not difficult to grasp,<sup>72</sup> Catullus manufactures an indeterminate gap—to be filled, one wants to assume, by a friendly reading which welcomes an urbane and Alexandrian tip of the hat.<sup>73</sup> Yet the very lack of explicitness in Catullus' poems leaves open the possibility of a less hospitable interpretation.<sup>74</sup> In Catullus' diptych, then, the implicit reader of Poem 66, delineated in Poem 65, requires in the interpretation of the pair a willingness to consider a multiplicity of responses on the part of Catullus' Hortalus.

The theme of the *amicus inferior* is an earnest one, especially in view of Catullus' position as a member of the municipal élite, a connection made clear in Poem 68's (to recur to that specimen of the *carmen iussum*) uncertain positioning of our poet: because he is in Verona, the poet recognizes, a composition of the sort Manlius requires cannot be supplied, for the poet is most emphatically an inhabitant of the city (lines 33–6):

nam, quod scriptorum non magnast copia apud me,  
hoc fit, quod Romae vivimus: illa domus,  
illa mihi sedes, illic mea carpitur aetas:  
huc una ex multis capsula me sequitur.

It is a matter of some consequence that Manlius acknowledges that Catullus is Roman,<sup>75</sup> for Manlius' assent to that proposition appears crucial to the success of their *amicitia*. Catullus, the Transpadane poet in Rome, remains always insider and outsider at once. To those Romans who love him, the poet is an insider, a criterion of Catullan *amicitia* made explicit in Poem 44 (lines 1–4):

O funde noster, seu Sabine seu Tiburs,  
(nam te esse Tiburtem autumant, quibus non est  
cordi Catullum laedere: at quibus cordist,  
quovis Sabinum pignore esse contendunt) . . .

As D. B. George has recently and rightly insisted, the opening lines of Poem 44 have not often enough been integrated into its overall interpretation.<sup>76</sup> In this poem, too, Catullus' status is indeterminate. The poet had hoped to be a dinner guest of Publius Sestius, the morose and violent tribune of 57, who, by 54, had risen to the praetorship.<sup>77</sup> Yet, for all Sestius' celebrated status, Catullus might reasonably have expected an invitation: the Sestii were businessmen from Cosa only recently admitted to the senate.<sup>78</sup> L. Sestius, Publius' father, had risen no higher than the tribunate;

<sup>72</sup> E.g. Hor. *Carm.* 1.1.2; Ovid *Pont.* 1.6.13f.; *Laus Pisonis* 244f.; Juv. 7.22f. Cf. discussion in White, *Promised Verse*, pp. 17f.

<sup>73</sup> It is unnecessary to dilate on the theoretical prepossessions of the expression: cf. W. Iser, *The Act of Reading* (Baltimore, 1978), pp. 165ff.

<sup>74</sup> One may contrast the more explicit style in which Horace delineates the good and the bad *potens amicus* in *Epist.* 1.7; cf. Lyne, *Horace*, pp. 150ff.

<sup>75</sup> The significance of the *domus* to one's social identity: A. Wallace-Hadrill, *PBSR* 56 (1988), 43ff.

<sup>76</sup> *AJPh* 112 (1991), 247–50.

<sup>77</sup> *MRR* 2. 620.

<sup>78</sup> J. H. D'Arms, *Commerce and Social Standing in Ancient Rome* (Cambridge, MA, 1981), pp. 55ff.

though granted he was returned first in the polls *inter homines nobilissimos* (Cic. *Sest.* 6), he thereafter lapsed into obscurity. Like the Valerii Catulli, the Sestii would have to wait for the principate before attaining nobility (though they arrived somewhat sooner: Sestius' son was suffect consul in 23).<sup>79</sup> As is the case in Poems 68 and 65, the medium by which Catullus hopes to engage a distinguished Roman is literature, though in Poem 44 the circumstances are altered. This time it is Catullus who does the reading, taking up Sestius' *Oratio in Antium*, a wretched work (Cicero privately disliked Sestius' style<sup>80</sup>) which (humorously) inflicts an illness upon our poet. Why should Catullus study up his Sestius, simply for a dinner party? No answer can be definitive, but instead of seeing simple courtesy (or simply literary polemic) in Catullus' action, one may well join George in recognizing that in Poem 44 the poet is willing to consider the pose of the flattering dinner guest—the learned parasite—an imposture that makes sense in view of Catullus' ambiguous status in the poem's opening lines. But he recognizes his plan as an error (*meum . . . peccatum*). And so his *gratia* is owed, not to Sestius, but to his own *fundus*, for all its indeterminate situation.

The dangerous circumstances of the *amicus inferior* receive notoriously graphic illustration in Poem 28. There Catullus commiserates with his friends Veranius and Fabullus, who have served under Piso as unprofitably as he has served in Bithynia under C. Memmius. It is vital that one recognize the thoroughly self-serving quality of Catullus' complaint: the poet feels abused because he was denied his share of the baksheesh to which members of a provincial governor's staff apparently felt entitled. But this poem is not primarily about sleaze: it is about ingratitude and exploitation, the exploitation felt by the municipal companion who has fulfilled his part of the bargain of *amicitia*. Hence the bitter refrain, *pete nobiles amicos!* But this worst-case scenario only serves to reinforce the necessity for delicacy and the pervasive incertitude that must affect all relations with social superiors.<sup>81</sup>

Splendid and illustrious, members of the equestrian order enjoyed privilege and conspicuous social distinction. Most formidable of all, even if the extent of their influence has been overestimated by some, were the *publicani*, rich champions of the original quango state whose interests and sensibilities, so Cicero regularly stressed, required consideration—even when nothing could be more shameful.<sup>82</sup> Not all equestrians could claim equal dignity, and, in fact, they were far from constituting a homogeneous and well-defined group. The very expression *eques Romanus* was, during the first century at least, somewhat imprecise.<sup>83</sup> *Equites equo publico* were the 'real' equestrians. But other wealthy citizens usurped the accoutrements and the designation, an infiltration abetted by informal usage and by the continual failure of the senate between 70 and 50 to conduct a proper census.<sup>84</sup> The effort made at clarifying matters by the *Lex Aurelia* of 70, which lent articulation to the specific judiciary privileges of *tribuni aerarii*, was not entirely satisfactory and was undone by Caesar in 46.<sup>85</sup> The point for us is that in Catullus' day the social configuration of the *equites* was by no means securely defined: borders and therefore barriers were at the very least potentially ambiguous.<sup>86</sup>

<sup>79</sup> F. Münzer, *RE* 2A. 1885.

<sup>80</sup> Cic. *Att.* 7.17.2; *Fam.* 7.32.1.

<sup>81</sup> Further illustrated in the case of Catullus by Poem 10 (especially) and also by Poem 47.

<sup>82</sup> Overestimation of influence: Brunt, *Fall of the Roman Republic*, pp. 180ff. Ciceronian consideration: e.g. *Att.* 2.1.8.

<sup>83</sup> For the controversies, ancient and modern, see Wiseman, *Roman Studies*, pp. 57ff.; Brunt, *Fall of the Roman Republic*, pp. 144ff.

<sup>84</sup> A. E. Astin, *Historia* 34 (1985), 175–90.

<sup>85</sup> *Lex Aurelia*: *MRR* 2.126. Caesar: see M. I. Henderson, *JRS* 53 (1963), 61–72.

<sup>86</sup> And subject to rhetorical exploitation, cf. Syme, *Roman Revolution*, pp. 150f.

One must, in the end, concede the inferiority of the equestrian order over against the irresistible political power of the senate. The equestrian pursuit of *honestum otium*, discussed so daintily and respectfully in Ciceronian oratory and philosophizing, granted the knight freedom from certain legal and societal restrictions;<sup>87</sup> at the same time, however, it left him ultimately dependent on and therefore vulnerable to the senatorial order. This is made sufficiently clear by the inability of the *publicani* to secure from the senate a satisfactory renegotiation of their Asian contract, an issue first raised in 61, despite the support of figures of the stature of M. Crassus and Cicero, until the year 59, when Caesar as consul took the exceptionably *popularis* tack of bypassing the senate altogether.<sup>88</sup> The discrepancy between senators and equestrians can also be indicated by a more brutal calculus: according to Appian (*B. Civ.* 1.95), Sulla's first proscription list included 40 senators but 1600 knights.<sup>89</sup>

But let us shift our attention to the municipal élites. It is not untrue to say with Peter Brunt that 'Senators, Equites, and the municipal oligarchs formed a single class',<sup>90</sup> yet it would be a mistake none the less to ignore the crucial divisions that existed within this single class. From the perspective of the masses and in terms of the contest between the masses and the wealthy, the common cause of these élite elements is undeniable. But not even within the senate do we find monolithic unity: *pedarii* as a general rule were more vulnerable (say, at the moment of a critical *lectio senatus*) than were *consularii*.<sup>91</sup> And, generally speaking, the non-political élite, or rather, the élite not engaged in political life at Rome, were dependent upon the justice meted out by the senatorial order. The political figures of the city as well as their constituencies were, from the Italian point of view, too often insufficiently sensitive to Italian claims to just treatment, a notorious instance being the unhappiness of the municipal élite whenever public land, to whose use they felt entitled, emerged as an item of *popularis* legislation.<sup>92</sup>

The world of Catullus reverberated with recent reminders of equestrian and municipal inferiority. The quashing of the Catilinarian conspiracy, so effectual in demonstrating the righteous might which derived from *concordia ordinum*, could also be construed as a victory for *senatus auctoritas* at the expense of *libertas*.<sup>93</sup> As Roberta Stewart has lately argued, much of the senate's perception of Italian unrest in the years 63–60 may well be attributed to that body's disposition of mind whereby any sort of resistance to senatorial policy was constructed as bordering on treason.<sup>94</sup> In any event, *aequitas* and *integritas* were not always hallmarks of Roman justice. One must wonder how typical was the case of P. Tullius, an Italian part of whose Thurian lands were seized by the armed gangs of P. Fabius. Fabius was perhaps a senator. He was certainly well-connected, having served in Asia with Sulla and having acquired his estate from the senator C. Claudius. The case was tried in 71, by which time rural violence of the sort confronting Tullius had become so frequent that a special *iudicium* had been established to deal with such matters. Fortunately for Tullius he was able to

<sup>87</sup> See D'Arms, *Commerce and Social Standing*, pp. 20–71.

<sup>88</sup> Cic. *Att.* 1.17.9; *Planc.* 34–5; Schol. Bob. 157–8.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. F. Hinard, *Les proscriptions de la Rome républicaine* (Paris and Rome, 1985), pp. 116ff.

<sup>90</sup> Brunt, *Fall of the Roman Republic*, p. 9.

<sup>91</sup> Tatum, *CPh* 85 (1990), 40f.

<sup>92</sup> During the first century, *domi nobiles* did not represent the principal constituency of *popularis* politicians: cf. Syme, *Roman Revolution*, p. 285; C. Meier, *RE Suppl.* 10.580ff.

<sup>93</sup> For example Cic. *Att.* 1.16.10; *Sull.* 21, 25; *Dom.* 75, 94; *Sest.* 109; Plut. *Cic.* 23.3; [Sall.] *In Cic.* 5.

<sup>94</sup> *Latomus* 54 (1995), 62–78.

secure the ambitious and more than ordinarily courageous Cicero as his advocate. Still, the Italian's dependency on a sympathetic senatorial *patronus* and the danger ensuing from litigation against a senator (or friend of senators) requires no elaboration.<sup>95</sup>

It was just this state of affairs that necessitated the *Lex Cornelia* of 67, legislation that required *praetors* to announce at the outset of their tenure the legal standards by which they would act and that forbade *praetors* any divergence from their own edicts.<sup>96</sup> Hitherto *praetors* had not scrupled to dispense justice on the basis of their friendship with or hostility toward the parties of suits.<sup>97</sup> The senate did not approve of this corrective measure, since the undispassionate execution of praetorian responsibility had served as a valuable source of *gratia* (Asc. 59C), but the law was very appealing to *equites* and to municipals.<sup>98</sup> Indeed, Bruce Frier has proposed that one factor in the emergence of the Roman jurists, who were mostly of equestrian origins, was the desire to achieve a rule-oriented approach to litigation that would lessen the advantages held by the senatorial grandee in the *ad hominem* dispensation of justice to which too many magistrates had been inclined.<sup>99</sup>

If one keeps in mind the potential for unlevel confrontation that constantly subtends the common fellowship of senatorials and municipal élites during the late republic—and, even in the midst of so much actual strife, it is the the *potential* for conflict and not its steady persistence that I have in mind to stress here—one can appreciate more fully Catullus' interest in drawing attention to the uncertainties involved in the relationship between municipal poet and senatorial *amicus*. This anxiety must surely inform Catullus' criticism of objectionable political alliances or of arrogant and insensitive nobles, whose insolence posed perhaps the most formidable threat to the poet's status. At this point, then, I should like to turn to one final figure in the Catullan corpus, the abominable Gellius.

#### IV

In the final poem of the collection, Catullus reminds his addressee, Gellius, of his frequent past propitiatory efforts, to wit, his repeated attempts to send to Gellius *carmina Battiadae* which might soften his enmity, all of which have failed owing to Gellius' stubborn refusal to relent from his hostilities, his *tela infesta*, aimed against Catullus. Now, our poet threatens, Gellius will pay the price: *at fixus nostris tu dabi' supplicium*.

Catullus' complaint against Gellius seems odd at first in view of the preceding epigrams (Poems 74, 80, 88–91), which savage Gellius with lacerating vituperation.<sup>100</sup> Now these pieces hardly constitute conciliatory gestures, nor can any or the totality of these poems, despite certain reminiscences of Callimachean epigram which have been detected,<sup>101</sup> be deemed the *carmina Battiadae* of line 2. Catullus' invective sequence attacking Gellius must instead be thought of as the *supplicium* threatened in line 8, an observation that requires Poem 116 to be read, in logical terms, as the prelude of the

<sup>95</sup> Sources cited and discussion in Stewart, *ibid.*, 74f. and B. W. Frier, *The Rise of the Roman Jurists* (Princeton, 1985), pp. 52ff.

<sup>96</sup> Asc. 59C; Dio 36.40.1–2; cf. Frier, *Rise of the Roman Jurists*, p. 75.

<sup>97</sup> Frier, *Rise of the Roman Jurists*, p. 73.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 261f.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 256–65.

<sup>100</sup> There is no reason to take seriously the proposal of R. Rieks, *Poetica* 18 (1986), 249ff., that throughout these poems Gellius is a corruption of Caelius.

<sup>101</sup> King, *CW* 81 (1987/88), 383ff.; Syndikus, *Catull: eine Interpretation*, vol. 3 (Darmstadt, 1987), pp. 41f.



Gellian epigrams. Furthermore, Catullus' final poem incorporates the programmatic language normally attributed to Roman Alexandrianism, set here in conspicuous contrast to the poem's self-consciously curious (and *subrusticum*) prosody and to the unmistakable allusion to Ennius in the poem's last line. Hence the interpretation of 116 as an 'inverted dedication' advanced by Colin Macleod in a justly celebrated paper and as an apt conclusion to the contumelious epigrams which, in a sense, it ought to introduce.<sup>102</sup>

Yet the relationship between Poem 116 and its Gellian predecessors is far from uncomplicated.<sup>103</sup> The *tela infesta* of line 4, reprised in line 7, are most naturally understood as insults.<sup>104</sup> However, we learn from Poem 91 that Gellius' offence was his successful seduction of Lesbia, an amatory theft carried out in violation of the long-standing *amicitia* that had existed between Gellius and the poet. No other specific action is even hinted at, and no clue as to Gellius' *scelus* (or even that Gellius has committed any wrong apart from his general hostility toward the poet or his spurning of Catullus' kind offices) can be located in Poem 116. Which places in some doubt the determination that Poem 116 serves as a more natural introduction to the Gellius poems than does Poem 91. In other words, it is 91 and no other poem which actually defines Catullus' anterior relationship with Gellius and which explains the origin of their enmity. Consequently, the Gellian sequence may be divided into three elements:

- (A) Poems 74, 80, and 88–90, which comprise attacks on Gellius.
- (B) Poem 91, which indicates the *scelus* that ruptured the *amicitia* between Gellius and Catullus.
- (C) Poem 116, which recollects Catullus' failure to pacify Gellius and which advances the poet's own threat of retaliation.

It is actually rather difficult to locate the beginning or the end of this sequence, at least in logical or poetical terms (obviously they are in a definite sequence as they currently stand in the corpus). The only secure point seems to be that the onslaught on Gellius, element (A) in the above scheme, can be rendered equally intelligible either by Poem 91 or by Poem 116—or (perplexingly) by both.<sup>105</sup>

But first one must ask: how are we to understand Catullus' references to Gellius' attacks or to the poet's vain attempts to repair their friendship? I should like to propose that Poem 116 collapses two stages in the quarrel between Catullus and Gellius. Their friendship was sundered by Gellius' treacherous theft of Lesbia, an action equated with incest, a vice to which Gellius was apparently inclined, as we learn from the epigrams preceding Poem 91. These vilifying poems, element (A), seem to occupy multiple poetic time zones, a condition which gives rise to a convoluted set of relationships amongst all the Gellius poems: the poems of element (A) constitute the necessary background to the insults contained in Poem 91 and they provide the wicked motive attributed in the same poem to Gellius' stealing of Catullus' beloved. But in the same instant, as attacks on Gellius' reputation, they must result from and not be antecedents to Gellius' unfriendly behaviour, which must be identified either as the

<sup>102</sup> Macleod, *Collected Essays*, pp. 181ff. (the expression 'inverted dedication' occurs on p. 185).

<sup>103</sup> A different approach is taken by P. Y. Forsyth, *CJ* 68 (1972/73), 175ff.

<sup>104</sup> Cf. Prop. 2. 8. 15f. On the text of Poem 116, see Syndikus, *Catullus*, vol. 3, pp. 142f.

<sup>105</sup> It is of course possible to avoid the idea of a sequence altogether: one may simply regard

seduction of Lesbia or as the refusal to lay aside his *tela infesta*. Yet in Poem 116 the tone is far from the righteous indignation of Poem 91. In the former, the poet describes himself as the one menaced by Gellius' assaults, attacks he has laboured mightily to halt. Part of the explanation for this change in tone must lie in the parallel, already observed, between Poem 116 and Poem 65.<sup>106</sup> Both poems stipulate *carmina Battiadae* as the poet's contribution to *amicitia*. In Poem 65, as we saw, the Callimachean gift amounted to an *officium*, a response to a friendly request, a gesture designed to strengthen the bond between Catullus and Hortensius (even as it subjected that bond to complicating poetic scrutiny). In Poem 116, on the other hand, the proffered *carmina* must be counted as a peace offering: it is the mending of a ruptured friendship which motivates the poet, and he is willing to do his Alexandrian act to be restored to Gellius' good graces. But still the question nags: whence Gellius' wrath? After all, he *got* the girl. If we are permitted to read the Gellius poems in the present sequence, there is an obvious answer: Gellius is angry in Poem 116 because of Poems 74, 80 and 88–90, and even Poem 91, the ensemble of which devastates his reputation. No less than betrayal, after all, character assassination could doom a Roman friendship beyond salvaging,<sup>107</sup> and, intriguingly, it is the offended Gellius and not the betrayed Catullus who remains the implacable foe in Poem 116. In summation, then, we find included within Poem 116 an apologetic Catullus employing the medium of poetic gift exchange that served him so well with Nepos and (less certainly) with Hortensius, all in order to be reconciled with the Gellius who is attacking him in retaliation for the epigrams precipitated by Gellius' own wicked seduction of Lesbia, epigrams which at the same moment represent the punishment with which Gellius is threatened for his rejection of Catullus' *carmina Battiadae*.

Catullus' apologetic posture, recollected in lines 1–6, still requires explanation. After all, it is Catullus who is originally and (one might suppose) more grievously wronged in this quarrel. If one continues (after Macleod) to compare Poem 116 with Poem 65, the possibility presents itself that, once again, Catullus finds himself an *amicus inferior*, an inference that receives bolstering from Wiseman's identification of Catullus' false friend with L. Gellius Publicola, the consul of 36.<sup>108</sup> Young Publicola was the grandson of L. Gellius, consul of 72 and censor in 70, and was stepson of the consular M. Valerius Messala. In short, he was indisputably and formidably *nobilis*. Furthermore, he stemmed from a family which, as Wiseman observes, was keen to maintain through the generations its traditional affinities,<sup>109</sup> thus providing a notional connection between the *scelus* of incest and a social posture to which Catullus objects elsewhere, most clearly in Poem 79, in which epigram Lesbia's sexual preference for Lesbius over Catullus creates a crisis in which our poet exploits the topos of incest to mount an attack on the aristocratic exclusivity of the patrician Claudii.<sup>110</sup> Like Lesbius, Gellius represents the noble whose presumed prerogatives shunt aside Catullus' claims to Lesbia's affections and do so in an atmosphere heavy with intimidation. And, like the Lesbius of 79, Gellius possesses the rank and the station to inflict harm on Catullus, however legitimate our poet's complaints. Worse than Lesbius, however, Gellius posed as Catullus' friend—or perhaps one should rather say that, in the scenario constructed by Catullus, the poet failed until the end to comprehend the perilous circumstances of his role as *amicus inferior*.

the Gellius poems as a demonstration of a range of possible iambic attacks; cf. Syndikus, *Catull*, vol. 3, p. 147.

<sup>106</sup> Macleod, *Collected Essays*, p. 185.

<sup>107</sup> D. F. Epstein, *Personal Enmity in Roman Politics 218–43 B.C.* (London and New York, 1987), pp. 37f.

I do not mean to imply in this discussion that the purely literary programmatic qualities of Poem 116, so ably discussed by Macleod, are somehow of a lower order than the issues on which I concentrate here. But nor would I concede their priority. As was the case with the sociological and the literary themes in Poem 1, the problematic of the *amicus inferior* in Poem 116 coexists in poetic amalgamation with Catullus' literary polemic. And it must be admitted that the self-conscious literariness of Poem 116 palliates somewhat the intensity of the Gellian invectives when taken in their totality. Even the threat of the poem's last line, though dramatic, remains susceptible to interpretations that vary in tone from the serious to the pathetic to the ironic.<sup>111</sup> This final line echoes Romulus' fatal last words to Remus in the *Annales*, after the latter had transgressed the city's new wall. In this way Catullus assumes the role of Rome's violent founder, thereby consigning Gellius to play the part of the twin who made himself the ultimate outsider.<sup>112</sup> The switch in status is part of the sting.

## V

'In the Revolution', as Syme has put it, 'the power of the old governing class was broken, its composition transformed. Italy and the non-political orders in society triumphed over Rome and the Roman aristocracy.'<sup>113</sup> The violent transformation of Rome's élite which established the Augustan principate was not the product of a single man's political genius. There is, after all, a discernible affinity of motivation linking the Social War, the analysis of Roman friendship by the philosophizing *novus homo* Cicero, the manufacture of the science of jurisprudence by intellectual equestrians, and the rallying cry of *tota Italia*.<sup>114</sup> Catullus' decision to incorporate issues of municipal status and of *amicitia* into his literary programme is, broadly speaking, merely one more aspect of the determined if tentative rise of the Italian élite. They found their leader and their chance in Caesar's heir, and one suspects one knows how Catullus would have responded had he known that the clever literary twist with which he closed his collection would one day find its historical realization. But speculations may be left aside: there can be no denying that in the Catullan corpus itself social issues are so intimately united with the poet's aesthetic programme that they constitute an unavoidable dimension of interpretation. I do not mean to suggest—and it would be foolish to do so—that Catullus' poetry is primarily devoted to mapping out the conflicting potentialities inherent in various species of *amicitiae*. But the theme is pervasive—and earnest, for all the humour and elegance of its configuration. Caesar deemed it worthwhile to take seriously what Catullus had to say. And whatever else he was, Caesar was perceptive.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Wiseman, *Cinna the Poet*, pp. 119ff; cf. Syndikus, *Catull*, vol. 3, p. 16.

<sup>109</sup> Wiseman, *Cinna the Poet*, pp. 125f.

<sup>110</sup> Tatum, *PLLS* 7 (1993), pp. 31ff.

<sup>111</sup> Macleod, *Collected Essays*, p. 186.

<sup>112</sup> Enn. *Ann.* 1.95 (Skutsch). That the death of Remus constituted 'an embarrassment for the patriotic' susceptible of various responses and interpretations is a theme of T. P. Wiseman, *Remus: A Roman Myth* (Cambridge, 1995).

<sup>113</sup> Syme, *Roman Revolution*, p. 8.

<sup>114</sup> Tension existed between Romans and Italians even down to Actium: *ibid.*, pp. 286ff.

<sup>115</sup> An earlier version of this paper was read to the Leeds Latin Seminar; I am grateful to the audience on that occasion and especially to Roy Gibson for patience and advice. Thanks are also due to Hans-Friedrich Mueller and to S. J. Heyworth.