CATULLUS 107: A CALLIMACHEAN READING*

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

'Excitement struggles with the restraint of form and language and the artifice of verbal repetition . . . runs riot.'[1] The repetition is more pronounced and personal here than in another Lesbia epigram, no. 70, where 'the repetition *dicit* . . . *dicit* makes it certain that Catullus had [Callimachus, *Ep.* 25 Pf.] in mind'.[2] Poem 70 illustrates how Catullus might allude to and adapt a Hellenistic model in expressing his personal feelings;[3] while the longer elegiac poems in particular (and 66, the translation of *Coma Berenices*) show the depth of his engagement with Callimachean literary technique.[4] We should not be surprised to find Callimachean elements here too, given the demonstrable correspondences with poem 68 in particular, a composition noted for its use of Alexandrian artifice.[5] But while there are close echoes of the high emotion, the *doctus poeta* of 68 seems to be largely missing from 107. Here Catullus exults *ipsa refers te / nobis* (5–6); there his mistress *se nostrum contulit in gremium* (132). Here he exclaims for joy *o lucem candidiore nota!* (6); there we learn that Lesbia herself highlights such a day on her calendar (148: *quem lapide illa dies candidiore notat*). Here he describes Lesbia as *carior auro*;[6] there she is *me carior ipso* (159). Here she returns to him *cupido optantique,*[7] *cupido atque insperanti* (1, 5); there Cupid himself hovers bright about her (134–5: *quam circumcursans hinc illinc saepe Cupido / fulgebat*). And in 68 he counts himself blessed if Lesbia should make the day unique

* I should like to thank Dr C. S. Kraus and *CQ*'s anonymous referee for their comments on the original draft. The following books and articles are referred to below by the authors' surnames: R. G. Austin, *Aeneid, Book 6* (Oxford, 1977); H. Bardon, *Catulli Carmina* (Paris, 1970); G. Bonazzi, *Catulli Carmina* (Rome, 1936); J. Ferguson, *Catullus* (Lawrence, KS, 1985); C. J. Fordyce, *Catullus: A Commentary* (corr. edn., Oxford, 1973); A. Ghiselli, 'Il c.107 di Catullo', *Filologia e forme letterarie: Studi offerti a F. Della Corte*, vol. 2 (Florence, 1988), 339–48; J. Godwin, *Catullus 61–68* (Warminster, 1996); S. J. Heyworth, 'Catullus 107.3 – a response', *LCM* 9 (1984), 137; G. O. Hutchinson, *Hellenistic Poetry* (Oxford, 1988); R. O. A. M. Lyne, 'The text of Catullus CVII', *Hermes* 113 (1985), 498–500; H. A. J. Munro, *Criticisms and Elucidations of Catullus* (London, 1905); K. Quinn, *Catullus, The Poems* (2nd edn, Basingstoke/London, 1973); D. O. Ross, *Style and Tradition in Catullus* (Cambridge, MA, 1969); D. A. Slater, 'Catullus CVII', *CR* 38 (1924), 150–1; J. Soubiran, *L'Élision dans la poésie latine* (Paris, 1966); D. F. S. Thomson, *Catullus* (Toronto, 1997); M. L. West, *Hesiod: Theogony* (Oxford, 1966); G. W. Williams, *Tradition and Originality in Roman Poetry* (Oxford, 1968); M. Zicàri, 'Some metrical and prosodical features of Catullus' poetry', *Phoenix* 18 (1964), 193–205.

[1] Fordyce, 393. [2] Ibid., 361. [3] Cf. Ross, 152–3.

[4] Cf. Hutchinson, 298–325.

[5] 'Not a translation from Alexandrian poetry like 66 but not less obviously Alexandrian in its inspiration' (Fordyce, 342); some would divide it into two separate poems (68*a* = lines 1–40, see e.g. Hutchinson, 314). Williams (229–31) makes a convincing case for unity, further elaborated by Godwin.

[6] *carior* is Walker's suggestion (*carius* MSS). Fordyce punctuates *hoc est gratum, nobis quoque, carius auro*, while Heyworth argues for the simpler *hoc est gratum nobis, et carius auro*. The latter readings take *carius auro* as referring to the event of self-restitution, but it would be preferable to refer the phrase to Lesbia herself.

[7] The Grecizing hiatus is defended by Zicàri.

to him (147: *si nobis is datur unis*), knowing that he is not the unique object of her affections (135: *uno non est contenta Catullo*); here the uniqueness of his felicity (7: *quis me uno vivit felicior?*) echoes the felicity he there accords his friends (155: *sitis felices*).

The poem is set to reach a climax with the rhetorical questions of the last couplet, but the corruption in the manuscripts gives pause. 'The words do not make sense, but the general drift is plain';[8] yet no emendation has been able to satisfy sense, poetry, and palaeography. Several conjectures assume that a form of *res* has fallen out: *hac res / optandas vita* (Lachmann), *hac re / optandam vitam* (Riese), *hac re / optandam in vita* (Kroll), *hac re / optandum in vita* (Lee). The introduction of *res* may justly be considered 'paleographically innocuous, [but] implausibly pedestrian'.[9] Of more imaginative suggestions, Ghiselli's '*magis hac est / optandum vita*' *dicere quis poterit* is over-subtle, straining both meaning and intelligibility.[10] Lyne lays stress on the futurity of the clause that depends on *poterit*, arguing that the sense of the last couplet should be 'who lives (now) more fortunately than I, or who (even in future times) will be able to conduct a life more desirable?'—hence *magis umquam / optandam vitam ducere quis poterit?* But *poterit* (especially with *dicere*) need express no more than potentiality (Kühner and Stegmann 36.2, p. 142): 'if I should ask, who will be able to say . . . ?' Catullus is surely concerned here only with his own happiness in the immediate present; as poem 68 indicates, he knows at some level that his future with Lesbia can never be secure. A life of lasting bliss (let alone the idea that his own will be assured above all others' in future) seems out of place in this very present-centred poem; and Lyne's suggestion also requires us effectively to abandon the manuscript tradition and to accept three successive *-am* terminations in the last couplet.

Since *vita* in line 8 must pick up *vivit* in 7, the required continuation should simply be an expanded restatement of *quis me uno vivit felicior*, that is 'Or who can say that any *vita* is more worthy to be chosen than this one?'[11] In other words, *aut quis potest dicere ullam vitam magis hac esse optandam?* These very words may be rendered into elegiacs with little alteration (and no added *res*) by *aut magis esse hac / optandam vitam dicere quis poterit?* Ribbeck's *aut magis hace / optandam vita* . . . is also worth considering.[12] But neither offers a clear rationale for the scribal confusion. What

[8] Quinn, 446. However, this has not stopped editors supposing that the MS readings make good sense; e.g. Bonazzi punctuates *quis me uno vivit felicior? aut magis hac est / optandus vita, dicere quis poterit?* The attempt to construe *vita* with the impossible sense 'Who is more fortunate *in* this life?' may account for the *me* ('than me') of the MSS.

[9] Quinn ad loc.

[10] Other conjectures may be found in the editions of Bardon and Thomson, who both opt for Guarinus's *hac quid / optandum in vita*. It may be argued that since an original *optandum* would have offered an acceptable predicate with *est* whereas *optandam* or *optandas* would not, the scribe's *optandus* is more likely to reflect an emendation of the latter; Lyne, quoting Ter. *Phorm.*164, considers that 'the agreement of *optanda* with *vita* in fact seems strongly probable'. Munro's *aut magis aevum / optandum hac vita ducere quis poterit?* and Slater's introduction of *Acme invita* (!) are exercises in ingenuity.

[11] Ferguson ad loc. draws attention to Catullus' identification of Lesbia with his *vita*, the life/love that he so urgently desires and chooses (cf. 109.1, *mea vita*, and 68.160, *lux mea, qua viva vivere dulce mihi est*)—a nuance that is lost if we restore *in hac vita* with Kroll and Lee.

[12] But reading *vitā* requires us to understand *vitam*, which is less straightforward than deriving *vita* from *magis hac esse optandam vitam*. The omission of a subject after *dicere* for *magis esse optandam*, combined with the hyperbaton *hac(e)* . . . *vita*, would create an effect akin to Callimachean 'dislocation': Williams (714–16) cites Cat. 68.147–8, *quare illud satis est, si nobis is datur unis / quem lapide illa dies candidiore notat*, noting 'the interest of Catullus in such effects and his willingness not only to experiment but to outdo his models in experimentation'.

might account for the vexed paradosis? The answer may be an unusual feature of versification in the original poem, the use of hypermetric *esse*: that is *aut magis hac esse / optandam vita(m)*. The first couplet of an epigram by Callimachus familiar to poets of Catullus's day (not least on account of a Latin version by Q. Lutatius Catulus) provides a model for such licence:[13]

> ἥμισύ μευ ψυχῆς ἔτι τὸ πνέον, ἥμισυ δ' οὐκ οἶδ'
> εἴτ' Ἔρος εἴτ Ἀίδης ἥρπασε, πλὴν ἀφανές.
>
> Half of my soul is breathing still, the other half I know not whether Love or Death took it, but it is gone.

οὐκ οἶδ' in the first line is a striking—and apparently unique—instance of hypermetric elision in Greek elegiac verse: the distich would be an appropriate vehicle for such elision, since it might naturally be treated as formal unit.[14] The use of the device in Latin poetry, though rare, may go back to Ennius.[15] It does not appear to be used for expressive effect before Virgil, and is hardly ever employed again thereafter.[16] Furthermore, it is found almost without exception in continuous hexameter verse rather than elegiacs. Catullus himself provides the only instance of a possible, though suspect, hypermetric *que* in elegiacs;[17] while his one indisputable hypermetre appears in continuous hexameters (64.298: *cum coniuge natisque / advenit*). But *hac ess(e)* might commend itself as offering a metrical form precisely similar to Callimachus's οὐκ οἶδ', a final elided disyllable following a monosyllable. Given that Catullus had Callimachus's singular example for introducing a hypermetre of this form into an elegiac love epigram, it would not be surprising if it crossed his mind to experiment with the technique on an appropriate occasion. Here perhaps was one such occasion. In 107 Catullus's cup overflows: might not his versification do so as well?[18]

Misunderstanding of the hypermetric elision would immediately account for the troublesome manuscript tradition, the futile scribal attempts at emendation.[19] The

[13] → Call. 1.41 Pf., lines 1–2; for Catulus (Courtney, *FLP* 75–6 = Morel p. 43 = Aul.Gell. 19.9) see Ross, 150–2.

[14] Ancient grammarians draw attention to the Callimachean example when discussing word-division between successive lines of verse (see n. 19 below). The only other example in Greek hexameters seems to be the archaic accusative Ζῆν at line-end (as in εὐρύοπα Ζῆν). Since in every case the following line starts with a vowel, it was regarded by Aristarchus (and perhaps early rhapsodes) as elided hypermetric Ζῆνα (i.e. Ζῆν'). See West on Hes. *Th.* 884.

[15] Sen. ap. Gell. 12.2.10: 'Vergilius . . . non ex alia causa duros quosdam versus et enormes et aliquid supra mensuram trahentis interposuit quam ut Ennianus populus adgnosceret in novo carmine aliquid antiquitatis.'

[16] Soubiran (466–8) lists a total of thirty-one instances, 80 per cent with *-que*, in Latin hexameters from Lucilius to Silius Italicus, with twenty-one instances in Virgil; Lucretius's only hypermetre (*D.R.N.* 5.849) is also a present infinitive (*debere*).

[17] 115.5, *saltusque paludesque / usque . . .* Fordyce resurrected the Renaissance conjecture *altasque paludes / usque . . .*, which is preferred by most editors with good reason.

[18] As the journal's referee notes, 'it is not done in polite society to introduce a metrical anomaly by conjecture, and it would be very neat if a hypermetric elision in Catullus' final couplet could be shown to echo one in Callimachus' opening couplet. But I fear this is wishful thinking.' I hope I may be forgiven any breach of etiquette on this occasion.

[19] Choeroboscus, noting πολλὰ μέτρα εἰς μέρος λέξεως ἀπαρτίζοντα καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἄλλου μέρους τῆς λέξεως ἀρχόμενα (ap. Hephaest. 226, 12 Consbr.), div → Call. 1.41.1–2 οἶ / δ' εἴτ'. An unusual word-division in the text here (e.g. *es / se optandam*) would have encouraged precisely the kind of emendation found in the MSS.

change of *esse* to *est* may naturally have impelled the scribe to emend the following *optandam* to *optandus*;[20] and accordingly to write *vita* instead of *vitam*, since the latter could not meaningfully stand after *hac est optandus*. Muretus's comment, 'tres postremi versus . . . ita varie leguntur ut appareat eam varietatem non aliunde quam ex corrigere volentium temeritate extitisse', is quoted approvingly by Fordyce.[21] In this case, perhaps, the poet's own metrical temerity allowed the true reading of the last couplet to remain elusive for so long:

> Quis me uno vivit felicior, aut magis hac esse
> optandam vitam dicere quis poterit?

Jesus College, Oxford ARMAND J. D'ANGOUR
armand.dangour@jesus.ox.ac.uk

[20] Lyne (498) writes 'a text that read *quis . . . vivit . . . aut . . . est* would almost inevitably attract *optand-* grammatically; so little weight should be accorded to the letters *-us*'. But note my proviso (n. 10) that *optandum* would be less likely to force a change to *optandus*.

[21] Fordyce, 396.

WHAT DID VIRGIL'S SWALLOWS EAT?

> nigra uelut magnas domini cum diuitis aedes
> peruolat et pinnis alta atria lustrat hirundo,
> pabula parua legens nidisque loquacibus escas;
> et nunc porticibus uacuis, nunc umida circum
> stagna sonat: similis medios Iuturna per hostes
> fertur equis rapidoque uolans obit omnia curru.
>
> (*Aeneid* 12.473–8)

Just as when a black swallow flies through the great house of a rich master and passes on the wing through the high halls, gathering small things to eat and food for its talkative nestlings; and now twitters in the empty colonnades, now round the wet pools: similarly Juturna is borne by the horses through the middle of the enemy, and ranges over every part, flying along in the swift chariot.

Juturna drives Turnus' chariot now here now there, hoping to throw off Aeneas' pursuit, but he follows the twisted circles (*tortos orbes*, 12. 481) of her course. Virgil compares her to a black *hirundo* flying through a rich man's house out into the colonnades and then round the pools or fishtanks. *Hirundo* can mean swallow, martin, or even swift.[1] All these birds eat insects and air-borne spiders; they do not eat human food. The common swallow chiefly eats flies, and feeds the nestlings on flies; it also eats wasps and bees. Its average prey size is much greater than the house martin's.[2] Virgil's *hirundo* gathers *pabula parua* for the nestlings. W. F. J. Knight in the Penguin translation writes 'tiny scraps of food'; C. Day Lewis translates 'crumbs of food'. If Virgil meant scraps of meat or crumbs of bread, stolen from the rich man's dinner table, then Virgil did not know what these birds eat.

According to Hough:

> Of seventeen passages in the *Aeneid* that contribute to poetic imagery . . . one, though beautiful, is an ornithological curiosity. This is the elaborate simile in which Juturna goes through the enemy lines like a black swallow that flies through the house of a rich man and crosses high atria

[1] Jacques André, *Les Noms d'oiseaux en Latin* (Paris, 1967), 92.

[2] *BWP* V 266. *BWP* = Cramp, S., and other edd., *The Birds of the Western Palearctic* (Oxford, 1977–). *BWPC* is the concise edition, ed. D. W. Snow and C. M. Perrins (Oxford, 1997).