

## THE UNITY OF CATULLUS 68: THE STRUCTURE OF 68a

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The problem of unity versus multiplicity in respect to Catullus 68 is still provoking argument and counterargument; to date, there is apparently no sure way to resolve the issue.<sup>1</sup> Yet this crux-ridden poem is a critical document in the investigation of Catullus' artistic techniques, his themes, his handling of myth and symbol, and his relationship with Lesbia. Furthermore, any literary interpretation which sees 68.1-40 as an integral part of a longer work must necessarily

<sup>1</sup> A full review of even the most recent material on this vexed problem would demand an impossible amount of space; consequently, my summary of the secondary material must necessarily be selective. The following works are cited by author's last name.

*Commentaries:* I have especially used R. **Ellis**, *A Commentary on Catullus*, 2nd edition (Oxford 1889); W. **Kroll**, *C. Valerius Catullus*, 3rd edition (Stuttgart 1959); C. J. **Fordyce**, *Catullus* (Oxford 1961); K. **Quinn**, *Catullus: The Poems* (London and Basingstoke 1970).

*Critical Studies:* Reference will frequently be made to H. W. **Prescott**, "The Unity of Catullus LXVIII," *TAPA* 71 (1940) 473-500; J. P. **Elder**, "Notes on Some Conscious and Subconscious Elements in Catullus' Poetry," *HSCP* 60 (1951) 101-36; G. **Lieberg**, *Puella Divina* (Amsterdam 1962) 152-263; E. **Fraenkel**, review of Fordyce's *Catullus*, *Gnomon* 34 (1962) 261-63; T. E. **Kinsey**, "Some Problems in Catullus 68," *Latomus* 26 (1967) 35-53.

Although I realize the limitations of the terms "unitarian" and "separatist," I nevertheless employ them as convenient labels in the summary of recent scholarship below. "Unitarian," for the purposes of this paper, refers to the view that Catullus 68 is one poem, divided into two or three parts. "Separatist" refers to the view that 68a and 68b are two poems, which (according to various theories) may or may not be thematically related and may or may not have a common addressee.

The best presentation of the unitarian point of view is still Prescott's, whose notes, incidentally, provide an excellent bibliography of earlier research. Prescott's argument involves an attempt to clarify all disputed passages; he champions Schoell's emendation *mi Alli* and presents a case for a tripartite structure of the poem. The theory of tripartite structure (1-40 and 149-60 framing the central section as prologue and epilogue) has also been accepted by E. Schäfer (*Das Verhältnis von Erlebnis und Kunstgestalt bei Catull*,

differ from any interpretation which sets these lines apart as an independent composition.<sup>2</sup> The scholar must therefore settle this problem of unity, at least to his own individual satisfaction, before making any effort to draw broader conclusions about poetic devices or psychological implications. Accordingly, I would hope that another attempt to decide this matter will not be unwelcome.

If we wonder why so many of the traditional arguments, both those for and those against unity, have failed to convince the opposing side, we may receive a partial answer from Godo Lieberg. "Die Frage auf Grund äusserer Kriterien nicht in dem einen oder anderen Sinne entscheiden lässt," he claims. "Die äusseren Kriterien erlauben keine präzise Antwort, weil sie je nach den methodischen und ästhetischen Voraussetzungen des Interpreten verschieden ausgelegt werden können."<sup>3</sup> The subjectivity of the critic is indeed an important aspect of this debate. Too many arguments are based on assumptions about what may have been written or what the poet may have intended—assump-

*Hermes*, Einzelschriften 18 [1966] 77–78, note 1); J. Granarolo (*L'Oeuvre de Catulle* [Paris 1967] 186, note 3); and Quinn 381–82 and 395, although Quinn admits the difficulties in reconciling "Mallius" with "Allius." A different approach to proving unity has been taken by G. Pennisi, "Il carme 68 di Catullo," *Emerita* 27 (1959) 89–109 and 213–38, who cites thematic and verbal parallels between 68.1–40 and 68.41–160. This method has also been followed by I. K. Horváth ("Chronologica Catulliana," *A. Ant. Hung.* 8 [1960] 338–39); Lieberg 156–60; and A. Salvatore (*Studi Catulliani* [Naples 1965] 97–125).

Fordyce 341–44 defends the separatist position by three traditional arguments: the divergent MS tradition of proper names for the addressee, the apparent misery of "Mallius/Manlius" in 1–40 as opposed to the apparent happiness of Allius in 41–160, and the almost-identical brother passages. F. della Corte (*Due Studi Catulliani* [Genoa n.d.] 135–42) sees 68a and 68b as two poems juxtaposed as dedicatory letter and elegy on the analogy of 65 and 66, the elegy being the earlier work. J. Wohlberg ("The Structure of the Laodamia Simile in Catullus 68b," *CP* 50 [1955] 42–46) and F. O. Copley ("The Unity of Catullus 68: A Further View," *CP* 52 [1957] 29–32) base separatist arguments on the structure of 68b. Kinsey 36–38 summarizes the possible contradictions in content between 68a and 68b.

<sup>2</sup> For example: if 1–40 and 41–160 are two sections of one poem, how can we reconcile Catullus' seeming abandonment of love (15–26) with his profound devotion to his *era* in the latter part of this work? The advocate of unity must assume that the two passages were written at different times (so Ellis 402) or that the poet is speaking of two kinds of love, incidental encounters and deeper commitments. The separatist need only consider each attitude valid for its particular poem. Cf. Kinsey 36.

<sup>3</sup> Lieberg 152.

tions which in themselves cannot be decisively proved or disproved.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps it is time to return to the text itself to discover whether unmistakable objective evidence of unity or disunity is present there. Such objective evidence would certainly include clear-cut patterns of structure and composition. It is the intent of this paper to demonstrate that 68a (1-40) is composed and organized upon a structural pattern complete in itself and fundamentally distinct from the structural pattern of 68b (41-160).

Compared to the remarkable amount of critical attention accorded to the intricate ring composition of 68b,<sup>5</sup> scholars have paid relatively little heed to the underlying pattern of lines 1-40. For this reason, my paper must begin with a comprehensive analysis of the schema of composition employed in the initial forty lines.

Theodore Birt was the first to recognize the basic thematic principle of *bipartitio* evident in these verses.<sup>6</sup> In 5-8 Venus allows the addressee no sleep, nor can he find solace in the "sweet song" proffered by the Muses. He requests from Catullus "munera et Musarum . . . et Veneris" (10). The *excusatio* of the poet is divided into sections corresponding to the particular functions of Venus and Muses: "de re

<sup>4</sup> The repeated brother passage is one excellent example. Fordyce 343 argues: "A passage relating to the death of Catullus' brother appears in almost identical form in both parts (20-24, 92-96), standing at the centre of each and integral to the argument of the first and to the structure of the second. If the two were sent to the same person, it is difficult to think that they were sent at the same time." Fraenkel 262 responds: "Man sollte denken, zumal wenn man einen Blick auf F.'s (S. 344) Schema der Ringkomposition wirft, dass die Entsprechung von 22-24 und 92-96 das denkbar stärkste Argument für die Einheit wäre." Two diametrically opposed conclusions, each based on a particular set of preconceptions, can thus be drawn from the same passages.

<sup>5</sup> While most commentators agree on the "pyramidal" or omphalitic arrangement of 68b, a number of schematic formulae have been proposed. Kroll 219 accepts Westphal's and Skutsch's theory that the brother lament forms the apex, or "mesode," of the poem. Kroll divides the work into nine main sections, "aber ohne genaue Responion in den Verszahlen." Wohlberg (above, note 1) 43-45 argues, however, that the second brother passage is a later insertion: with these lines removed the remainder of 68b forms a symmetrical omphalos with the Laudamia myth at the center, the myth itself containing a subordinate omphalos. Following Wohlberg's structural theory, Copley (above, note 1) 32 proposes that the second brother passage was added to thematically link epistle and elegy. T. P. Wiseman (*Catullan Questions* [Leicester 1969] 23, note 1) likewise omits the brother passage but claims that the omphalos of the whole design is *coniugium*, line 107.

<sup>6</sup> T. Birt, *De Catulli ad Mallium epistula* (Marburg 1890) 16.

amatoria excusat v. 11–32, de Musis v. 33–38.”<sup>7</sup> Finally, *utriusque* (39) looks back at each of these antecedent *bipartitiones*.<sup>8</sup> Elder, in turn, finds a more extensive symmetrical arrangement in the first fourteen lines of the poem: waves of misfortune—Venus—Muses—Muses—Venus—waves of misfortune.<sup>9</sup> And recently Kinsey has noted that the lament for Catullus’ brother (15–26) forms the exact center of 68a with fourteen lines before it and fourteen after it.<sup>10</sup>

The presence of motif-repetition and numerical balance of verses in such an ostensibly straightforward occasional piece may in itself seem unusual and unexpected. However, modern scholarship has traced the tight elaborate construction present, as a general rule, throughout Catullus’ work—not only in the architectural craftsmanship of the longer poems but also in the most “artless” of the lyrics.<sup>11</sup> It should

<sup>7</sup> While Birt correctly postulates *bipartitio* as a basic structural principle of 1–40, his division of the verses differs considerably from the arrangement proposed in this paper. Birt’s structural pattern places considerable emphasis on *res amatoria* at the expense of the Muses; the outline suggested here gives equal weight to both elements, an arrangement more in keeping with the concept of *bipartitio* itself.

<sup>8</sup> Kroll 221 also claims that the arrangement of the whole epistle depends on the distinction of *munera Musarum* and *munera Veneris*. Prescott 478–79 enlarges upon Birt’s suggestions, calling attention to the chiasmic order of Venus–Muses (5–8) and Muses–Venus (10). However, he begins the *recusatio* of the gifts of Venus at line 15 and continues it to line 30; 31–32 are a transitional passage; 33–36 form the *recusatio* of the gifts of the Muses.

<sup>9</sup> Elder 132, note 5.

<sup>10</sup> Kinsey 38, note 1. As evidence for dividing 68 into two poems after line 40, he makes the following observation: “Separately 68a and 68b have an elegance of structure lacking if the two are taken together as a single poem.” Other than pointing out the central situation of the first brother passage, however, he does not develop this idea.

<sup>11</sup> K. Quinn in *The Catullan Revolution* (Melbourne 1959) 58 states without qualification: “In Catullus, the qualities of concision and slickness are so apparent that it is hardly necessary to quote examples from the short poems. Even in the longest poems, e.g. 64 and 68, there is a new attention not only to overall structure but, instead of a loose string of purple passages, an effect of carefully calculated contrast . . . , as well as studied exploitation of the unexpected angle and of the diversity of layout in description, extremely detailed description contrasting sharply with succinct résumé.” Artistic contrast is especially effective, we may add, in the dirge section of 68.1–40. Catullus’ brief retrospective glance at the *iucundum ver* (16) of his youth intensifies the despair of the apostrophe to his brother.

In passing, it might be worthwhile to cite several studies which deal with the structure of various short poems. E. A. Havelock (*The Lyric Genius of Catullus* [Oxford 1939] 137–38) charts the balanced antithetical arrangement of two epigrams, poems 72 and 75. Elder 103–4 examines the patterns of thought sequence and repetition in three very different works, poems 8, 45, and 46. The latter piece, on the surface a simple eleven-line lyric, is shown to have a complexity of structure no less intricate than that

not prove surprising, then, if a closer examination of the formal pattern of 68a reveals a greater degree of methodical arrangement than has yet been observed.

Let us begin by accepting Kinsey's division of 68.1-40 into three major sections: 1-14 (which we will call the "introduction"), 15-26 (the "dirge"), and 27-40 (the "conclusion"). Now, the introduction itself may be subdivided into two parts, corresponding to the two periodic sentences 1-10 and 11-14. The opening distich:

Quod mihi fortuna casuque oppressus acerbo  
conscriptum hoc lacrimis mittis epistolium<sup>12</sup>

is a noun clause which finds its predicate in 9-10:

id gratum est mihi, me quoniam tibi dicis amicum,  
muneraque et Musarum hinc petis et Veneris.

Throughout these first ten lines, the reader's attention is focused almost exclusively on the addressee. It is he who sends the *epistolium*, he who is "fortuna casuque oppressus." His misfortune is heightened by the simile of the sailor cast adrift (3-4) and then obliquely depicted in the two following distiches (5-8). Here the fundamental motif of Venus-Muses is first introduced. It should be noted that special emphasis is placed on the potency of Venus as the cause of the correspondent's sleeplessness, and on the impotence of the Muses who can offer him no comfort. Up to now, Catullus himself has only appeared as the recipient of the letter and, metaphorically, as a possible savior of a drowning man. At line 9, however, "quod . . . mittis" is awkwardly picked up by "id gratum est mihi." The construction of the entire sentence seems to underline the passive secondary role of the speaker, especially since we immediately return to the *epistolium* itself and its request for *munera*.

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proposed here for 68a. E. Fraenkel ("Two Poems of Catullus," *JRS* 51 [1961] 51-53) also discovers a severe formal structure controlling the intense emotion of Catullus 8. J. D. Bishop in "Catullus 2 and Its Hellenistic Antecedents," *CP* 61 (1966) 161 notes the emotional tension built up through the opening series of *qui*-clauses in poem 2. Cf. also W. C. Scott's perceptive study of the structure of Catullus 50 and the relationship of style to content in the first and second sections ("Catullus and Calvus [Cat. 50]," *CP* 64 [1969] 169-73).

<sup>12</sup> Quotations from and references to Catullus 68.1-40 and 41-160 follow the text of R. A. B. Mynors, *C. Valerii Catulli Carmina* (Oxford 1958).

Line 10, "muneraque et Musarum hinc petis et Veneris," lays the groundwork for the further development of 68a. The dual motif of *munera Veneris* and *munera Musarum* will be expanded and resolved in the concluding section, when Catullus justifies his inability to write love poems because of his grief and his inability to compose erudite works because of inadequate source material.<sup>13</sup> Accordingly, line 10 prepares us for the first important transition in the poem; while it explains the objective of the *epistolium*, it also looks forward to the speaker's response.

*Sed tibi* (11) signals not only a break in thought but also a decisive shift in focus—particularly since *tibi* occupies the same position in the line as *mihi* in the opening verse. Catullus takes possession of stage center to make his refusal, and he begins with still another *bipartitio*. Proleptically, he first hints at his own misfortunes, then denies any

<sup>13</sup> The explication of this much-discussed line continues to trouble scholars attempting to attain a better understanding of poem 68. For the clearest and most concise review of the various aspects of the controversy, the reader should turn to Prescott 478–79 and 497–500. However, I find myself in disagreement with his conclusions. For Prescott, the *munera Musarum* are new poems written in the modern manner; the *munera Veneris* are the sensual joys of love. Catullus can grant both favors "by the single act of composing a love poem in the modern contemporary style."

All attempts to interpret *munera Veneris* as erotic pleasure of some sort, and *munera Musarum* as poetry of some sort, come to grief in trying to explain how erotic pleasure can even be requested, much less sent as a gift. I do not think that Prescott provides a satisfactory answer to this question. If "Allius" himself requested both favors combined in an original poem, we must then assume hendiadys in verse 10; but Prescott pointedly disagrees with those who advocate hendiadys. If "Allius" asked for erotic pleasure in another form, for which Catullus would be able to substitute a sensual love-poem, we must wonder about the exact nature of the original request. Prescott himself ridicules the ingenuity of those who have proposed extreme solutions to the latter problem, but he does not commit himself to an explanation.

G. Jachmann in his review of Kroll's commentary (*Gnomon* 1 [1925] 210–12) forcefully defends the old interpretation of "munera et Musarum . . . et Veneris" as "Kunstgedichte und Liebesgedichte." Prescott dismisses this proposal because Jachmann presents no evidence to substantiate the claim that the Latin words could be used in this technical sense. He does not come to grips, however, with Jachmann's most important argument: "Ich sagte, die *munera Musarum* und die *munera Veneris* müssten, wenn anders ihre enge Verbindung in dem Satz überhaupt sinnvoll ist, in derselben Ebene liegen." We might add that the structural principle of *bipartitio* would also demand that both components be a related pair possessing a common nature or common attributes. The lack of other examples of this particular usage proves little, since Catullus was capable of employing old words in a new sense when occasion required.

In conclusion, it would seem that the interpretation defended by Jachmann is the simplest and most satisfying explanation of this problematical line.

charge of indifference to his obligations (11-12): "ne mea sint ignota incommoda . . . , / neu me odisse putes hospitis officium."<sup>14</sup>

Immediately after these two negative clauses, the shipwreck metaphor recurs, this time applied to the poet himself: "accipe, quis merser fortunae fluctibus ipse" (13). Several effects are produced by the repetition of this image. First, the chiasmic sequence of motifs noted by Elder is rounded off for the introductory section of the poem. Second, a psychological equation between writer and addressee is established; implicitly the reader is informed that Catullus, too, suffers from insomnia and can find no solace in the works of long-dead authors. Finally, the metaphor once more suggests the antithesis of potency and impotence, for the *incommoda* of the poet, his "waves of misfortune," are forceful enough to overwhelm his sense of obligation, rendering him helpless to fulfill his *officium*. The concluding line of the second subdivision reflects the last line of the first subdivision. The verb *petere* is repeated, while the *munera* have become *dona beata*, the adjective contrasting sharply with *misero*, which will become a key word in this poem.

The second section or "dirge" can likewise be divided into two subsections. The first four lines (15-18) are a flashback to the poet's late adolescence. Here the sudden temporal shift is underscored by an abrupt transition between lines 14 and 15. Except for the apostrophe to the brother which begins within line 20, this is the only passage in 1-40 in which Catullus does not indicate the direction his thought is taking by the use of some logical connective (*sed, quare, igitur*) marking out the relation between what precedes and what follows.

There is also a noteworthy shift in tone in these four lines. The voice of the speaker, up to now, has been polite, hard-edged but controlled. Now a series of evocative images—white garment, flowers, springtime—summons up a mood of wistful longing, regret for the innocent joy of the past. But this mood is broken by ironic undertones in "multa satis lusi" (17); there is a sharp note of depreciation here.<sup>15</sup> For poetry was, after all, only a young man's game, and the

<sup>14</sup> The paired construction of this distich foreshadows the arrangement of the concluding section: in 27-36 Catullus explains that grief has made it impossible for him to send the *munera*, in 37-40 he pleads that he is not being ungenerous or neglectful.

<sup>15</sup> Does *lusi* refer to love affairs, love poetry, or both? Apparently influenced by the immediate presence of Venus, Kroll 222 flatly states: "mit dichten . . . hat es hier nichts

sufferings of love, the "sweet bitterness" sent by Venus, now seem childish frivolities in comparison with the bleak reality of bereavement.

This ironic shading of the memory of past happiness prepares the reader for the actual revelation of the brother's death in 19-20: "sed totum hoc studium luctu fraterna mihi mors / abstulit." "Totum hoc studium," connoting both love experiences and poetry, looks back to the "munera et Musarum . . . et Veneris." Similarly, at the conclusion of the lament, the line "haec studia atque omnes delicias animi" (26) again reflects the *munera* and *dona* which the poet is now incapable of conferring. The lament proper in which Catullus directly addresses his dead brother (20-24) is thus framed by statements which not only stress the mental depression brought about by the death of a beloved person but also tacitly remind us that the speaker will not be able to carry out the task required of him.<sup>16</sup>

The lament itself seems a spontaneous outburst of sorrow breaking away from the logical progression of the poem.<sup>17</sup> By the sudden

zu tun." Prescott 480-81 and Fordyce 346 also support this position. But Jachmann (above, note 13) 211, arguing against Kroll, contends that *lusi* involves both the experience of love and the writing of love poems, "was bei einem Menschen wie Catull eben unlöslich zusammengehört wie Same und Frucht."

The parallel construction of verse 10 is good evidence for assuming that the gifts of the Muses and the gifts of Venus are allotted equal status. If *lusi* refers only to love affairs and not to poetry, it must follow that *studium* (19), *gaudia* (23), and the *studia* and *delicias animi* of 26 also denote erotic activity. The theme of poetic composition, then, would not be taken up until line 33, and the gifts of the Muses would be relegated to a secondary place, almost as an afterthought. If *lusi* and the related nouns in 19-26 are ambiguous, however, Catullus (with characteristic economy of expression) is insisting that his brother's death has quenched both his enjoyment of love and his delight in the making of verses—thereby providing much stronger motivation for his refusal. And, in fact, it is quite obvious that all these words have been chosen precisely because of their ambiguity. Like *ludere*, *deliciae* may be used in contexts involving either love or literary composition, as Prescott 481, note 15 shows. The very abstractness of *studium* and *gaudium* make exact definition impossible except by context, and the context here is deliberately left vague. As in many of his other poems, Catullus has carefully selected and positioned his words in order to express the full range of his meaning. (For a stimulating discussion of similar ambiguities in Catullus 2 and 51, cf. D. N. Levin, "Propertius, Catullus, and Three Kinds of Ambiguous Expression," *TAPA* 100 [1969] 230-35).

<sup>16</sup> Kroll 223: "C. fasst in diesem Distichon [25-26] nochmals den Gedanken von V. 19 zusammen." Quinn 377 finds in *totum hoc studium* and *haec studia* an implied rejection of the request in line 10.

<sup>17</sup> E. Baehrens (*Catulli Veronensis Liber*, volume 2 [Leipzig 1885] 496) remarks: "quavis data occasione poeta adhuc doloris plenus nudare amicis luctum atque eloqui et pietatis documentum mortuo et sibi ipsi levamen dulce maeroris putavit." But it is conscious artistry which produces this effect of spontaneity.



change to direct address, Catullus achieves such heightened intensity that his anguish is immediately understood and shared. The emotional power of this passage confirms the truth of his assertion that grief has rendered him incapable of performing the ordinary duties of friendship. Helplessness in the face of overwhelming tragedy, previously suggested by image and metaphor, now becomes concrete personal experience.

Moreover, these lines contain a number of verbal echoes closely associated with both the introductory verses and the concluding *recusatio*. *Misero* (20) is a metrical parallel to the *misero* of 14, while in 30 *miserum* emphatically describes the speaker's present attitude toward love. The associative bond is quite clear: the addressee is first warned not to pursue his request, then told of the death which has affected Catullus so deeply, and finally informed of the reason why his request cannot be granted. At 21 *commoda* is a poignant reversal of the *incommoda* of 11; in the following line *domus* foreshadows "illa domus, / illa mihi sedes" (34-35). In this distich both *commoda* and *domus* bear connotations of security and comfort: death, in effect, has shattered the poet's world. The final distich of the lament:

omnia tecum una perierunt gaudia nostra,  
quae tuus in vita dulcis alebat amor

once more evokes the vanished happiness of Catullus' youth. *Dulcem amaritatem* sent by Venus is related to the *dulcis amor* which fostered his earlier pleasures. At the same time, the word *gaudia* eases the transition from the brother back to the correspondent, becoming the most immediate referent for *haec studia* (26). Thus the central section serves as the emotional climax of 68a, while a series of verbal links and associations draws a closer bond between the first and last portions of the epistle.

In the conclusion, Catullus returns to the primary motif of Venus and Muses presented in lines 5-8 of the introduction; the *bipartitio* between *munera Veneris* and *munera Musarum* forms the substructure of the last fourteen lines. Like the other sections of 68a, this passage may be subdivided into two parts. Lines 27-36 give the reasons for the poet's *recusatio*, and lines 37-40 reaffirm his refusal. The ten lines of the first subdivision of the conclusion correspond exactly to the ten lines

in the first segment of the introduction; likewise, the last four lines of the second subdivision find their mathematical parallel in lines 11-14, which end the first major section of the poem. However, lines 27-36 themselves fall into a 4-2-4 pattern unparalleled in the introduction. This pattern is based upon the explicit distinction now made between love poems and erudite compositions.

It is commonly accepted that 27-36 present the addressee with two separate excuses for refusing what has been asked: 27-30 give the reason for not providing the *munera Veneris*, 33-36 the reason for not providing the *munera Musarum*. To each *excusatio* Catullus allots four lines. Each passage, furthermore, is introduced by an analogous construction (*quare, quod* 27; *nam, quod* 33).

Much debate has ensued over the exact sense of lines 27-30; the difficult construction of this sentence and the obscure significance of *hic* (28) have been explained in varying ways.<sup>18</sup> But whether *hic* refers to Rome or to Verona, and whether the *epistolium* contained a hint of Lesbia's infidelity or an allusion, serious or jocular, to the rigid mores and vulgarity of a provincial town, Catullus' reaction itself is clearly set forth and undebatable: "Because of my brother's death, I cannot care, one way or the other, about the situation you describe." Line 30 is a rueful sigh of dismissal; the effect is produced by the rejection of a popular catchword for a much stronger adjective with tragic associations already established by its prior use in the poem.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> The modern consensus of opinion appears to favor accepting the vocative *Catulle* in 27, reading *tepefactat* in 29, and considering the entire clause "*Veronae . . . cubili*" a direct quotation, probably referring to Lesbia's behavior at Rome in Catullus' absence. But in spite of the arguments of Prescott 481-84, Fordyce 346-47, and Quinn 378-79, I prefer to take *hic* to mean "Verona," primarily because the close proximity of *Veronae* and *hic* makes that the most natural reading.

Prescott rightly dismisses as absurd the notion that "Allius" might be making a sober criticism of the puritanism of Verona. However, Fraenkel 262 indicates a way out of the difficulty; he assumes that the author of the *epistolium* has poked fun at Catullus' home town. This involves the further assumption that the misfortune of the correspondent was in reality not as serious as most readers suppose—possibly a quarrel with his girl.

Following Fraenkel's hypothesis, we might even conjecture that Catullus deliberately draws an ironic contrast between the exaggerated quasi-tragedy of 1-10 and the real tragedy of 15-26.

<sup>19</sup> Ellis 408 regards *turpe* and *miserum* as "an ordinary antithesis," citing Cicero, *De har. resp.* 23.49. But Fordyce 347 is right, I believe, in assuming a colloquial usage here. There may be a good deal of irony in the employment of the word *miserum*, since the

That Catullus' present emotional state makes him incapable of writing the love poems requested is proclaimed in the next distich (31-32):

ignosces igitur si, quae mihi luctus ademit,  
haec tibi non tribuo munera, cum nequeo.

*Igitur* stresses a result proceeding from the cause outlined immediately before; *quae* finds its referent in *haec munera*, "these gifts which grief has taken away." Most commentators assume, therefore, that this distich is a *recusatio* of the *munera Veneris* alone.<sup>20</sup> On artistic grounds, however, the structural division proposed by Prescott is much more appealing.<sup>21</sup> *Munera* in 32 echoes the plural of line 10, making 31-32 an implicit denial of both favors. *Cum nequeo* is then carried over into "the delayed consideration of the *munera Musarum* in vss. 33-36." Consequently, I regard these lines as a transitional segment looking backward to the reason for refusing love poetry and forward to the reason for refusing allusive modern poetry.

While the relationship between the speaker's indifference to *amor* and his denial of the *munera Veneris* has been explicitly stated in the transitional distich, the relationship between the *munera Musarum* and his lack of an adequate library must be inferred from a verbal reminiscence. In the first section of 68a the Muses have been introduced in conjunction with ancient authors: "nec veterum dulci scriptorum carmine Musae / oblectant." Now Catullus picks up the important word *scriptorum* in 33-34:

nam, quod scriptorum non magna est copia apud me,  
hoc fit, quod Romae vivimus . . .

The gifts of the Muses, then, must be provided from a store of earlier writers, and the scantiness of Catullus' collection becomes sufficient grounds for dismissing the request.<sup>22</sup>

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adjective can be conventionally applied to the lovesick *amator* as well as to the bereaved mourner or to the dead man himself (cf. Lieberg 129-34 for a thorough discussion of the associations of this word). Here the irony would arise from its application to a situation in which erotic pleasure no longer possesses any value.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Kroll 224: "C. fasst das Ergebnis seiner Auseinandersetzung über die *munera Veneris* zusammen."

<sup>21</sup> Prescott 479.

<sup>22</sup> The interpretation of 68a presented here lays heavy stress on the effect the brother's death has had on Catullus' artistic life as well as on his emotional life. Consequently, it

The elliptical construction of 33 and the obliqueness of expression which forces the reader to discover the major premise and the conclusion from a statement of the minor premise are remarkable because the logical development of 68a is otherwise quite self-evident. Furthermore, the fact that Catullus has left most of his books in Rome seems, on the surface, to have little to do with his brother's death, which heretofore has been the underlying reason for his *recusatio*. As a result, suspicion might arise that the lines were hastily composed, inserted only to provide a reason for denying the *munera Musarum* and so complete the *bipartitio*. But Catullus is not normally so lame a craftsman, and this work is otherwise a very polished, tightly integrated artistic product.

It is possible that one additional unifying principle connects 33-36 with the verses immediately preceding it. This passage could be taken symbolically as well as literally, the poet's situation in Verona becoming the objective correlative<sup>23</sup> for a sense of emotional and creative apathy which is a product of the depression caused by his brother's death. The contrast between Verona and Rome is the basis of the implicit metaphor. Rome is the center of the poet's erotic and artistic life: "illa domus, / illa mihi sedes, illic mea carpitur aetas" (34-35), the last phrase recalling "aetas florida" (16). Verona, on the other hand, is a place of mourning. If *hic* in 28 indeed refers to that city,<sup>24</sup> it is also a place where Catullus, or in fact "quisquis de meliore nota" (28) would find little opportunity for companionship even if he were so inclined. Finally, it is a place to which one brings books rather than a metropolis where one can buy them. The picture of Verona sketched in the first

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is assumed that the *munera Musarum* are original poems modelled, like 64, on Greek originals. Or, indeed, the addressee may even have appealed for a few translations of Hellenistic works. But there is nothing in the text itself to contradict the theory that he has merely asked to borrow a book. Kinsey 38-42 makes a good case for the latter hypothesis. His interpretation of 68a as a whole, however, while ingenious, seems a little farfetched. The tone of the poem belies his conclusions.

<sup>23</sup> In the celebrated essay "Hamlet and His Problems" (*The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism* [London 1920] 92), T. S. Eliot coins the term "objective correlative" to refer to the means of communicating emotion in art. An objective correlative is "a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked."

<sup>24</sup> See above, note 18.

ten lines of the concluding section may symbolically correspond, then, to Catullus' own state of mind. Verona is a psychological wasteland, a world where "omnes delicias animi" are unknown. The structural parallelism between 27-30 and 33-36 would be strongly reinforced, if this interpretation is correct, by the repetition of a symbolic motif signifying the barrenness of the speaker's present existence.

Lines 37-40 conclude the poem with a recapitulation of statements made in the last four lines of the introduction. "Quod cum ita sit" (37) refers to the entire situation outlined in 15-36 and directly responds to "ne mea sint ignota incommoda . . ., / accipe, quis merse fortunae fluctibus ipse." The remainder of the distich, "nolim statuas nos mente maligna / id facere aut animo non satis ingenuo," expands the protest made in 12, "neu me odisse putes hospitis officium." *Utriusque* (39) is a reference to the *munera* of 10 and the *dona beata* of 14; the favors are once again spoken of collectively. *Petenti* in the same line repeats *petas* (14). And in conclusion the double use of *copia* (39,40) underscores the decisiveness of the *recusatio* and rounds off the poem.<sup>25</sup>

The structural pattern described above can be schematically represented by the following outline:

## I. INTRODUCTION

A (1-10): *Situation of the addressee*

1-2 General circumstances

3-4 Shipwreck metaphor

5-6 Venus

7-8 Muses

9-10 Catullus' reaction

Request for gifts of Muses and Venus

B (11-14): *Preliminary recusatio*

11-12 Catullus' *incommoda*

<sup>25</sup> The sense of finality expressed by the repetition of *copia* is not unlike the effect produced by the repetition of the last line in Robert Frost's "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening":

The woods are lovely, dark and deep.  
But I have promises to keep,  
And miles to go before I sleep,  
And miles to go before I sleep.

Awareness of his *officium*  
 13-14 Shipwreck metaphor  
 Proleptic refusal

## II. DIRGE

*A* (15-18): *Catullus' past joy*  
*B* (19-26): *His present sorrow*  
     19-20 Death of his brother  
     20-24 Apostrophe to his brother  
     25-26 Recapitulation of 19-20

## III. CONCLUSION

*A* (27-36): *Reasons for the recusatio*  
     27-30 Apathy towards *amor* (*munera Veneris*)  
     31-32 Transitional passage  
     33-36 Lack of a library (*munera Musarum*)  
*B* (37-40): *Concluding recusatio*  
     37-38 Denial of petty motives  
     39-40 Final refusal

Having finished our structural analysis of 68a, we may now proceed to consider the problem of its relationship to 68b. And the first question to be raised is whether the pattern we have discovered is integrated and complete, indicating that these forty lines function independently as a perfect organic whole.

All evidence points to an affirmative answer. The poem, as we have seen, falls into three major sections, each section in turn comprising two subdivisions. Between the main introductory and concluding sections and between their subsections as well, we observe perfect mathematical symmetry: each Part A contains ten lines, each Part B four. "Munera et Musarum . . . et Veneris," the dominant theme established in Part A of the introduction, is developed and resolved in Part A of the conclusion. Part B of the introduction is a preliminary *recusatio* anticipating the revelation of the brother's death in the central section; Part B of the conclusion restates and confirms this refusal. Between these two sections, the middle passage, the dirge, forms the emotional and verbal nexus of the entire poem. In the first four lines,

we are briefly allowed to view present tragedy from the vantage-point of a vanished Eden. In the last eight lines, the absolute power of death is contrasted with the happiness it has destroyed. Erotic and artistic activity are blended in the ambiguous references to *gaudia* and *studia*; each of these motifs will be expanded in the concluding section. Lastly, several key ideas and images are linked together by word association.

In short, 68a is a finished artistic product. Analysis of the structure reveals a proportionate arrangement of parts, and study of the composition discloses a comprehensive treatment of motifs. No essential element is lacking, and any attempt at expansion would destroy the perfect balance the poet has already achieved. For this reason, we should consider it extremely improbable that lines 1-40 were written to stand as a subordinate part of 68b, either as a prologue or as a preliminary *recusatio* later rescinded by the elegy. The tripartite theory of unity, which posits 1-40 as prologue and 149-60 as epilogue, respectively, of a unified poem 68 is erroneous. Lines 149-60 bear no structural correspondence to 68a.<sup>26</sup> On the other hand, to assume a bipartite structure and to divide 1-160 into prologue and main section is equally mistaken, for 68b is built upon a framework totally unlike that of 68a.

The rich but confused tapestry of the "Allius-elegy," with its vividly embroidered figures and scenes crowding upon and entangling each other, has elicited much puzzled commentary. Kroll terms the organization of the poem "alexandrinische Spielerei"; Wheeler, in a famous comparison, likens the work to a nest of Chinese boxes; Havelock

<sup>26</sup> Prescott 475-77 defends the tripartite theory, basing his case on two arguments. He claims that 1-40 and 149-60 are formally bound together by the use of the second person singular in direct address to the correspondent; the body of the poem, however, is separated from the prologue and epilogue by the use of the third person singular in reference to the correspondent. But this argument depends on the assumption of identity between the addressee of 1-40 and the addressee of 149-60. Prescott does not furnish decisive proof that this assumption is correct.

He also cites verbal correspondences between lines 9-12 and 31-32 on the one hand and lines 149-50 and 155-56 on the other. But these parallels are not conclusive: Prescott himself remarks upon the appearance of the motif of hospitality earlier in 68b (41-42). Perhaps 1-40 and 41-160 are two poems juxtaposed precisely because in both works the theme of *munera* as fulfillment of the *hospitis officium* plays a prominent part. In the absence of structural parallelism, similar language is not quite enough to prove unity.

rightly suggests that a pattern of emotional associations links the passages of intense feeling.<sup>27</sup> Kenneth Quinn has recently offered a description which makes the nature of 68b readily comprehensible to the modern reader: he calls it "this early experiment in stream of consciousness technique."<sup>28</sup>

In this work the speaker's mind progresses from scene to scene and image to image, clearly following a sequence of associations. His debt to Allius brings to mind the moment when his *candida diva*<sup>29</sup> first entered the *domus* Allius had provided, halting momentarily on the threshold (70-72); this memory, in turn, evokes the mental picture of Laudamia and her arrival at the house of Protesilaus (73-76). The doom of Protesilaus reminds the poet first of the rape of Helen and the mustering of the Argive army (87-88), then of his brother buried at Troy (91-100). Throughout the elegy, transitions are often accomplished by the use of a comparative conjunction, adjective, or pronoun (*qualis rivus*, 57-58; *velut*, 63; *ut*, 73; *tanto vertice*, 107; *nec tam carum*, 119). Frequently a new thought is loosely connected to a former statement by the use of a relative adjective, pronoun or adverb (*quo*, 70; *quaene*, 91; *ad quam*, 101; *quo . . . casu*, 105; *cui*, 131). Catullus then proceeds to develop the new idea, often without returning to the original subject. In 107-17, for example, the poet's attention seems to wander far away from his immediate topic. The sequence of thought moves from the comparison of Laudamia's love to a *barathrum* (107-8) to the marsh near Pheneos in Arcadia, to the myth of Hercules, his killing of the Stymphalian birds, and his marriage to Hebe before returning to Laudamia and *barathro . . . illo* (117).

In 68a we notice no such meandering flow of associations; this

<sup>27</sup> Kroll 219; A. L. Wheeler, *Catullus and the Traditions of Ancient Poetry* (1934; reprint Berkeley and Los Angeles 1964) 172; Havelock (above, note 11) 39. Both Kroll and Havelock disparage the artificiality of 68b, which for them is redeemed only by the deep emotion of the more personal passages. This judgment depends upon the older view of Catullus as "lyric poet" *par excellence*, a view criticized by Quinn in *The Catullan Revolution* (above, note 11) 27-32.

<sup>28</sup> Quinn 373.

<sup>29</sup> On Catullus' use of *diva* (as opposed to *dea*) in line 70, Lieberg 186-94 constructs an interpretation of 68b involving the symbolic apotheosis of Lesbia: her entrance into the house of Allius at that moment becomes, for Catullus, the psychological equivalent of the manifestation of a goddess. But evidence presented by Granarolo (above, note 1) 385-86, note 1 does seem to indicate that Catullus uses *diva* and *dea* interchangeably. Kinsey 50-51 finds some ironic implications in the treatment of the Laudamia myth; I tend to agree.



poem follows a precise pattern of logical development. With the exception of the transition between 14 and 15 and the beginning of the lament, each new shift in thought is accompanied by a connective word or phrase indicating its specific relation to what has been said before. *Sed* in 11 directs the reader's attention from the addressee to Catullus; *sed* in 19 brings us back from the happiness of the past to the sorrow of the present. *Quare* (27) and *nam* (33) introduce reasons for not sending the *munera*, while *igitur* (31) explicitly draws the connection between the reasons given and the *recusatio* itself. At the end of the epistle, *quod cum ita sit* (37) sums up the whole situation as it has been described. The structure of the poem is plainly marked out by connective expressions which indicate the course of reasoning followed; unlike 68b, each statement logically succeeds the one before as the speaker develops his argument.<sup>30</sup>

In its structural outline 68a with its clear-cut reflective pattern of thought stands in the sharpest possible contrast to the stream of consciousness technique of 68b. It is unlikely that Catullus incorporated these forty lines into poem 68 as the prologue to his *avant-garde* elegy. Such a conflation of schemata would certainly violate basic principles of unity and consistency. The jarring discrepancy would annoy any reader sensitive to the formal design of poetry; and the Roman audience capable of appreciating intricate patterns of arrangement in Hellenistic literature would be quick to note structural anomalies in a contemporary production. We must conclude, then, that the epistle and the elegy are two separate and independent poems, each faithful to its own specific formula of construction.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Elder 124-25 traces a dominant structural pattern in Catullus' poems—a habit of opening the work with a question and answer, or with a statement, or a condition, following this with a reason introduced by *nam* or *quod* and ending with a conclusion introduced by *at* or *quare*. It is obvious that 68a follows this pattern with some minor variation. Lines 1-10 and 11-14 comprise two preliminary statements, the latter more fully explained by the brother passage; *quare* at 27 introduces the first of two reasons, and *nam* at 33 the second. "Quod cum ita sit" (37) then substitutes for *at* or *quare* in drawing the conclusion.

<sup>31</sup> D. O. Ross, *Style and Tradition in Catullus* (Cambridge, Mass. 1969) 121, presents some stylistic evidence for the disjunction of 68a and 68b. In frequency of elisions, lines 1-10 and lines 41-160 show a striking difference. While the average frequency of elision in 68a is closer to that of the epigrams, the lower average frequency of elision in 68b corresponds exactly to that of the neoteric distichs as a whole (65 through 68). Moreover, J. B. van Sickle, "About Form and Feeling in Catullus 65," *TAPA* 99 (1968) 505, briefly examines 68 in terms of patterns formed by separation of substantive and

Moreover, our preoccupation with the daring experimental technique of 68b must not blind us to the workmanship of 68a. The structure of the latter poem is indeed more traditional. Yet the complex organization and the strict proportion of the verse epistle demonstrate qualities which we have come to regard as intrinsic to all Catullan poetry: an acute sense of form and a fascination with difficult problems of composition.

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qualifying attribute. He finds that separative patterning is sparse in 1-40 and frequent in the second part of the poem. Although none of this evidence is decisive in itself, it lends additional weight to an argument based on different structural patterns, for style and structure are always closely related.