Catullus and Roman Dramatic Literature

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ABSTRACT
Christopher Brian Polt: Catullus and Roman Dramatic Literature
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This dissertation examines how Roman drama, and Roman Comedy in particular, informs the poetry of Catullus. It argues that Latin drama continued to play a significant role in Roman thought and literature after the second century BCE and offered a shared cultural vocabulary through which authors could communicate private ideas about love, friendship, and rivalry. It argues that many of Catullus's poems contain meaningful intertextual allusions to Roman Comedy whose presence contributes additional layers of complexity to his work. It also argues that reading Catullus with an eye towards theatricality and performativity reveals new ways in which his poetry can be understood, from both ancient and modern perspectives.

Chapter One outlines evidence for ongoing interest in the Roman stage in the first century BCE, including scholarly and antiquarian study, large scale public performance, and private entertainment at aristocratic dinner parties and literary recitations. Chapter Two examines Catullus's engagement with Plautus and Terence in his erotic epigrams and argues that the Catullan speaker consistently invokes the figure of the young lover from Roman Comedy. It considers how early Latin epigrammatists like Q. Lutatius Catulus drew on the language and themes of comedy to modify Alexandrian epigram and argues that Catullus continued this tradition of blending drama and subjective poetry. It also explores how Catullus creates a unified speaker across separate poems through

divided allusions to the opening of Terence's *Eunuchus*. Chapter Three examines how the Plautine *servus callidus* functions throughout Catullus's polymetrics in poems of erotic, social, and literary rivalry. It argues that Catullus alludes to stock routines from Plautus's comedies to ridicule traditional power structures and elevates Plautine *malitia*, "Heroic Badness," as a vehicle for asserting dominance over others.

Chapter Four approaches Catullus's poetry as literature for performance, studying how dramatic elements in his work can affect its reception, especially in the context of Roman *convivia* and *recitationes*. Using theater semiotics and reader response theory, it examines how poem 8 creates open spaces for readers to fill. It also argues that allusions to Roman Comedy in poem 8 create a "palimpsestuous text" that constantly shifts and enables multiple readings.

For David…

…nam mihi ante oculos dies noctesque versaris.

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The debts I have accrued while engaged in the present study, to mention nothing of those accumulated over the course of my growth as a scholar, are too numerous and too great to reckon here either accurately or adequately. Still, I would like to note a few in particular who have given so much and so freely, and without whose help I could not have completed this work. To any whom I have neglected, I offer my sincerest apologies and, of course, my unspoken gratitude.

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INTRODUCTION

Classical scholarship has for a long time drawn a line separating the performance

literature of the 3rd and 2nd century BCE Roman stage from the written prose and poetry

of the 1st century BCE and beyond. In the case of the *fabula togata* and *Atellana* on the

comic side and the *fabula praetexta* and *crepidata* on the tragic side, this division is not

unexpected: so little of these genres survives that it is difficult, if not impossible, to

determine how they informed later literature.[1] But the *fabula palliata*, which has been

much more fortunate in its preservation, has also been read more or less in isolation from

its literary successors. On the rare occasion that scholars used to acknowledge late

Republican or Augustan debt to the comic stage, they tended to assume that Menander,

and not Plautus or Terence, was the primary source of inspiration.[2] This elision of Roman

Comedy as a potential tool for understanding later literature is especially unfortunate in

the case of Catullus, whose poetry demonstrates an undeniable interest in everyday

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[1] To clarify this terminology: the *fabula togata* is a comic play in Roman dress (e.g., the plays of Titinius), while the *Atellana* is a comedy of native Roman farce with heavily improvisational elements. The *palliata* that I mention in the next sentence is a comic play in Greek dress (e.g., the plays of Plautus and Terence). The *fabula praetexta* is a tragic play in Roman dress (e.g., the *Octavia* attributed to Seneca), while the *crepidata* is a tragic play in Greek dress (e.g., the plays of Accius and Pacuvius).

[2] See Goldberg (2005, 102), who remarks that "This Greek focus is the legacy of Friedrich Leo [(1912, 140-157)], who was a great lover of Plautus but nevertheless thought only a 'falsche Methode' would attribute the affinities of comedy and later love poetry to anything more than similarities of subject and a common grounding in Greek precedents." Cf. comments by Wheeler (1934, 227-230) on Catullus's debt to Menander in poem 8 rather than to Roman Comedy.

language, social issues, love, friendship, deception, and any number of other elements that are recognized as the most prominent features of the work of Plautus and Terence.

Fortunately, recent scholars have begun to appreciate more and more how important Roman Comedy was for Catullus, as well as the vital role it can play in understanding Catullus's poetry more fully today. T.P. Wiseman (on Catullus's engagement with the stage generally), William Fitzgerald (on poem 10), Sander Goldberg (on poem 42), Marguerite Johnson (on poem 37), David Wray (on poem 37), Marilyn Skinner (on Catullan performativity), to name just a few, have made important arguments about the connections between Catullus and Roman Comedy. This dissertation is an attempt to approach Catullus's use of Roman Comedy more systematically and fully than has been done before. I aim to show that the ancients did not think of Plautus and Terence as fundamentally different from other literature, that these authors formed a central part of the literary culture and imagination of Roman authors in the 1st century BCE, and that Catullus saw in them a wealth of material and experiences to shape his own work.

In order to situate Catullus's poetry and its relationship to Roman Comedy more fully within the ancient traditions, I begin in Chapter One by outlining briefly the role that Roman drama played in the social, political, and literary milieu of the 1st century BCE. I argue against the traditional view that Rome, as it developed into an imperial power exposed to the established literatures of the Mediterranean world, moved away from the popular entertainments that were considered only the rough beginnings of its own literature. Instead, I show that elite literary and scholarly culture in the 2nd and 1st century BCE embraced Roman drama, using it to fuel studies of history and society, to create coherent bodies of literature that provided Roman national identity, and to

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appreciate it as *ars gratia artis*. I also show that Roman drama continued to be performed on the stage for a wide variety of audiences, that it remained a powerful tool of the elite who sponsored it at a growing number of public venues and occasions, and that it was developed as a thriving art form by new authors who inherited the traditions set down by Plautus and Terence. Finally, I argue that the 2nd and 1st centuries BCE saw the addition of new locales for Roman drama to be performed, heard, and viewed, in the form of semi-public recitations and private banquet entertainments. These new venues introduced drama into intimate settings and encouraged its appropriation by non-dramatic authors. I conclude by suggesting that each of these different ways in which Romans in the 1st century BCE experienced Roman drama informed the way authors like Catullus viewed and adapted Roman Comedy for their own purposes.

It is important to note here that accepting the arguments for the prevalence of Roman drama presented in this chapter is not a requirement for believing the arguments I present in the chapters that follow it. Regardless of whether Catullus experienced one play on stage and another in school, we will see that his poetry contains numerous allusions to Plautus and Terence, and to Roman Comedy's themes and tropes in general. My goal in this section is only to offer a glimpse into the importance that Roman Comedy held for Romans across the spectrum in the 1st century BCE.

In Chapter Two I discuss some ways in which Catullus blends Roman Comedy with Hellenistic poetry, the latter of which has long been appreciated as a source of inspiration and material. I focus on Catullus's epigrams, particularly the erotic ones that revolve around his love-torn speaker's relationship with Lesbia. I begin by examining one of Catullus's Roman predecessors in writing Latin epigram, namely Q. Lutatius

Catulus, who, as I show, produced some early experiments in combining the themes and form of Hellenistic epigram with the diction, style, and thought of Roman Comedy. I also show how Catulus uses a specific intertext to Plautus's *Bacchides* to add nuance to his speaker's erotic complaints, depicting his soul as a runaway comic slave and himself as a *senex durus* figure in fr.1 Courtney. I then show that Catullus took several of his cues from Catulus's work, approaching Plautine comedy and epigram in the same basic way, blending Hellenistic themes with Plautine diction. I argue that Catullus likewise uses a specific intertext in poem 70 that points to Plautus's *Casina* to emphasize his speaker's suspicions about Lesbia and develop themes of gender inversion he explores elsewhere.

In the rest of Chapter Two I examine how Catullus in his epigrams uses the figure of the *adulescens amator* from Terence's comedies to depict his speaker as helplessly torn between love, hate, and suspicion in his relationship with Lesbia. I point out a number of intertexts between the epigrams (85, 75, 70, 72, and 109) and the opening of Terence's *Eunuchus*, which continues to serve as a model for conflicted love after Catullus's day. I argue that by drawing on the same section of this play across several different poems through a divided allusion, Catullus creates a unified picture of the fragmentary and inconsistent experiences of his speaker in the epigrams. This unification also sheds light on the silent Lesbia, whose voice is reported only indirectly by the speaker. At the same time that Catullus invokes the *adulescens amator* from the *Eunuchus* to depict his speaker, he also imports the play's *meretrix* as a model for Lesbia and thereby gives her to some extent a voice undistorted by the speaker.

In Chapter Three I move to the polymetrics and discuss ways in which Plautus's *servus callidus*, the figure of the clever slave, informs Catullus's conception of social

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control and highlights the value of cleverness as a means to cultural and literary power. I argue that the conflict between male and female that features so prominently in these poems is often depicted in terms of the conflict between socially superior blocking figures from Roman Comedy such as the *senex durus*, *miles gloriosus*, and *leno*, who represent elite male control, and socially inferior figures such as the *servus callidus* and *meretrix callida*, who overcome their masters through clever tricks and deception. I discuss three poems in which the male speaker attempts to assert dominance over female characters by acting like one or more of these blocking figures (55, 10, and 36) but is then embarassingly subverted by the clever words or actions of the females he tries to bully. These female figures, largely powerless in Roman social dynamics, subsequently win in conflicts with the speaker, offering *a fortiori* arguments for cleverness as a virtue.

But the speaker is not always the butt of jokes in the polymetrics: I also show how he appropriates the qualities of the *servus callidus* for himself in his own conflicts with potential rivals. I discuss a distinctive intratext that links three disparate poems which seem on the surface to have nothing to do with one another (21, 24, and 49). I argue that this intratext is also an intertext to a stock routine from Plautus's comedies in which a blocking figure is defeated by the tricks of an inferior *servus callidus* figure. I argue that these Plautine themes of deception and rivalry also stand behind these Catullan poems, so that reading them in light of their intertext with Plautus can help us understand better how some poems fit together within Catullus's corpus.

Finally in Chapter Four I present a reading of Catullus's poem 8 (*miser Catulle, desinas ineptire*), which has long been recognized as owing a great debt to Roman Comedy, particularly in its allusions to the *adulescens amator* and his traditional lament

in soliloquy about the difficulties of love and relationships. These elements of Roman Comedy have, however, led to an impasse in scholarly interpretation, because for more than a century arguments have arisen as to whether these allusions make the speaker of the poem comic or tragic in the modern sense. In order to attempt to overcome this deadlock, I propose a reading of the poem that takes into account the performative qualities that these allusions to Roman Comedy enable, particularly in the context of oral performance in 1st century BCE recitation and convivial culture. After a brief review of the literature on the poem, I show that attempts to discover an inherent meaning in the speaker's lament are faulty. I argue that it is potentially more fruitful to approach the poem as if it were a scene from a play, since so much of the poem consists of elements from Roman Comedy, and suggest that aspects of reader-response theory, theater semiotics, and performance intertextuality can help us better understand how the poem functions. I then cite the character Shylock from Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* as a parallel with an interpretive history comparable to poem 8's Catullan speaker in order to highlight the speaker's function as a role to be performed.

In the second half of this chapter I analyze the poem closely in terms of its dramatic situation, a term used by theater semioticians to denote the non-verbal instructions (e.g., gesture, movement, and voice) and relationships between speaker and audience (i.e., deictic qualities like space, time, "you," and "I") that potentially appear in the text. I address both the elements that inscribe interpretive choices and those that leave open spaces for the reader and performer to fill, showing that much of the poem's situation consists of these open spaces. The poem thus acts as a set of "instructions for use" with a framework that guides but does not determine meaning. I then argue that the

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allusions to the stock routine of the lover's soliloquy from Roman Comedy offer the performer what is essentially a set of previous performances that he or she can draw on to fill the spaces in the poem's dramatic situation.

My conclusion offers a brief glimpse at ways in which a greater appreciation of Roman Comedy's importance in Catullus's work can help us understand and interpret authors who continue to develop connections between the public stage and private poetry. I show that this enlarged understanding can be particularly fruitful for reading the Roman elegists, who invoke Catullus and the playwrights of Roman Comedy in their work.

CHAPTER ONE: ROMAN DRAMA IN THE 1ST CENTURY BCE

I.1.1: INTRODUCTION

For very few ancient authors does any evidence survive concerning their reading habits, their enjoyment of popular entertainment, or the content of their social conversations. Catullus, unfortunately, is not one of these few. There is no explicit testimony that he ever owned a text of Accius or read a play of Terence, that he saw a comedy of Caecilius or a tragedy of Pacuvius on stage, or that he discussed Plautus or recited Ennius with friends. And yet, despite the deficiency of our evidence, there can be little doubt that Catullus experienced dramatic literature deeply, regularly, and readily. In the quiet of Verona and the bustle of Rome, in the schoolroom and the courtroom, in the private hallways and seedy alleyways and public roadways, he was surrounded by a culture that from its beginning had embraced, enlivened, and exploited all that the theater had to offer. Drama left its mark on Catullus, and he in turn used dramatic literature to mark his work, drawing on the cast of characters, the plots and routines, the forms and conventions of the Roman stage and mixing them with other poetic traditions in his own way. This invocation and adaptation of drama in Catullus's poetry stands at the heart of this project.

But before we can see how Catullus engages with dramatic literature in his poetry, it will be helpful to understand how he would have engaged with it in real life. I do not intend to recreate here a biography of our poet and his daily interactions with the theater, but only to set out in brief what role drama played in the cultural and literary milieu in which Catullus was writing and which undoubtedly influenced his work.[3] In this chapter I will argue that Roman drama continued to exert influence throughout Catullus's lifetime on many important areas of Roman life. First, I will show that dramatic literature became a subject of serious scholarly and literary study among the educated elite, occupying some of the greatest intellectuals in the late Republic and forming a substantial part of the canons of Roman literature. Second, I will show that dramatic literature did not simply exchange its wide-ranging popularity on the stage for the safety of canonization as written text, but instead enjoyed continued public performance on a large scale for socially, economically, and culturally diverse audiences, both in revivals of the "classics" and in new plays written during the 1st century BCE. Third, I will show that drama also entered a middle ground between written literature and public performance, becoming a vital part of the elite dining and recitation culture that formed the backbone of intellectual and social life for literate Romans like Catullus. To conclude, I will suggest that Catullus was exposed to dramatic literature in all these forms, that he read, saw, and heard Roman

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[3] A better understanding of how Roman drama functioned in the 1st century BCE is important, because for the most part modern scholarship dismisses the continued importance of the Roman stage after its supposed heyday in the 3rd/2nd centuries BCE. The general consensus holds that drama faded away almost entirely long before Catullus was even born, with the occasional play brought out as a curiosity from a lost age or forced into the school curriculum more out of patriotism and reverence than admiration and popularity. Representatives of this view include Duckworth (1952, 68-72), Beare (1955, 106-7), Wright (1974, 180-1), Gratwick (1982, 117-27), Goldberg (1986, 203-20; 1995, 43; and 2005, 55), Beacham (1991, 127 and 1999, 4), Segal (2001, 4), Griffith (2007, 31-32), Hollis (2007, 4), and Lowe (2007, 131). There are other scholars who argue persuasively that drama continued long after the 2nd century BCE, but they are too often overshadowed by the standard works just cited; see Opelt (1978), Jory (1986), Wiseman (1987), Lebek (1996), Erasmo (2004), Boyle (2006, 143-159), and Martin (2007).

plays, and that each of these ways he experienced the theater contributed something different to his poetry.

Despite its broad title, this project is concerned primarily with the ways in which Catullus engages with one specific genre of Roman dramatic literature, namely Roman Comedy.[4] Still, I think it worthwhile to address briefly the role that all scripted drama in Latin played in the 1st century BCE for two reasons. First, our information concerning the Roman stage has been preserved rather paradoxically. On the one hand, while we have access to more of Roman Comedy than of any other dramatic genre of Latin literature, evidence about its actual circumstances and dates of performance survives only in the barest of fragments. That comedy was performed on stage in the 3rd through 1st century BCE is certain, but when and where and how it was staged is more difficult to pin down. On the other hand, while virtually no Roman tragedy has survived, evidence about its performance contexts, especially about its revivals, is far better than for nearly any other area of Latin literature. But because the different genres of Roman drama were closely intertwined in antiquity, and because we know that tragedy and comedy accompanied and complemented one another in the same performance venues and times, we can use evidence about tragedy's productions and revivals to supplement our knowledge and to sketch, at least in outline, a picture of comedy's continuing influence as public performance literature.

Second, I will argue in Chapter Four that live performance and recitation greatly affected how Catullus and his contemporaries received, interpreted, and used dramatic literature. Many of these performative elements remain constant and consistent across

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[4] Note that I will use the phrase "Roman Comedy" throughout this dissertation to denote the *fabula palliata*, as opposed to the other forms of Latin comedy like *togata* or *Atellana* that have largely been lost.

different genres: narrative frames, dramatic chronology, the relationship between performance space and movement, and paralinguistic elements all inform the audience's understanding of a dramatic piece, regardless of whether it is comic or tragic. And, most importantly for Chapter Four, the interpreter of any performance – whether actor, reciter, or reader – must make choices based on the text being used, deciding how to decode aspects of the work that the author has inscribed into the script and how to encode his or her own interpretation as an intermediary between the text and the audience. This rule holds true for all genres of scripted drama, including both tragedy and comedy. Consequently, understanding how poets in the 1st century BCE encountered tragedy onstage can also help us understand how they experienced Roman Comedy in performance. This understanding can in turn reveal how larger performative elements influenced the way non-dramatic poets invoked and appropriated dramatic works. Thus by appreciating that Catullus experienced tragedy and comedy performed on the Roman stage and recited in banquets, we can understand how he translated theatrical elements into his own work and enabled his audience (including both silent readers and oral performers) to approach his poems as scripts with a range of interpretable ambiguities.

I.2.1: ANCIENT SCHOLARSHIP ON ROMAN DRAMA IN THE 2ND AND 1ST
CENTURIES BCE

Roman drama caught the attention of ancient scholars almost from the beginning
of their discipline. In this section I will give a brief overview of the breadth, depth, and
wealth of scholarly activity in the 2nd and 1st centuries BCE that focused on Roman
dramatic literature. I will show that this activity covered a wide range of fields, including
literary history (e.g., investigations into the origins, chronology, and biography of
drama), philology (e.g., textual and literary criticism), and performance studies (e.g.,
work on performance history and performative aspects of drama). I will also show that
this activity was not the cursory work of isolated academics, but rather was undertaken in
earnest by a thriving community of scholars, poets, and members of the educated elite.
Finally, I will argue that the evidence for sustained, significant intellectual interest in
drama in the late 2nd and early 1st centuries BCE suggests that Catullus had access to, and
could have been influenced by, scholarly work on Roman comedy and tragedy
undertaken in the generations immediately preceding and during his own. As a result of
this intellectual interest, the status of Roman Comedy was much higher among elites of
the 1st century BCE than is often assumed nowadays, and therefore Roman Comedy
could easily serve as a respectable way for aristocratic authors to communicate with one
another through a shared literary and cultural vocabulary.

In contrast to the great breadth, depth, and wealth of ancient scholarly activity that
will occupy our attention here, what follows is purposefully brief, necessarily cursory,
and unfortunately fragmentary. While it does attempt to bring together information about

drama in the 1st century BCE not collected in one place before, this section is not meant to be the full treatment this topic deserves and, I hope, will one day receive. I use this small set of scattered samplings only to demonstrate generally the pervasive and sincere interest in dramatic literature that Catullus and his contemporaries enjoyed.

I.2.2: LITERARY HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY

Ancient scholars were fascinated by the history of Roman drama, at least in part because they equated the first play in Rome with the very foundation of Latin literature.[5] But while scripted drama came to Rome in the 3rd century BCE, professional scholarship did not arrive until almost a century later. In the intervening years much about the early theater had fallen into obscurity, and the retrospective task of recovering the fading traditions of the stage was arduous. But it was also supremely important to the advocates of Rome's fledgling literature to understand their beginnings, and consequently Rome in the late 2nd and early 1st century BCE saw a flurry of intellectual activity focused on the origins, development, and early authors of dramatic literature. By Catullus's lifetime such work took center stage in the intellectual community of Rome and pushed drama into the limelight of high culture.

Although there were no contemporary scholars or literary historians to record the origins of Roman drama, early in Rome's history magistrates and public officials began producing *commentarii*, accounts of activities relevant to the state that are now largely unknown.[6] Whatever other information these accounts contained, it cannot be doubted

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[5] Livius Andronicus, whose works included a hymn to Juno, a translation of Homer's *Odyssey*, and both comedy and tragedy, was credited by Cicero (*Brutus* 72-74) and Livy (27.37) with being the first author to compose written literature in Latin. He may have written his *Odusia* earlier, but since the only definite date associated with the beginning of his literary career is 240 BCE (when he produced the first play at Rome), it seems more likely that his dramatic works were used by Romans to mark the origins of Latin literature. See Habinek (2005), however, for problems in defining early "literature" and for the existence of literary work before Andronicus.

[6] It is unclear what kind of information appeared in these *commentarii*, how this information was presented, and how an individual would access it. For a brief discussion of what *commentarius* denotes in terms of public documents, see Sini (2001, 401-404) and Vaahtera (2002, 100 n.2), with accompanying bibliography there, and especially Riggsby (2006, 133-145). For the problems in accessing these and other public records in Rome, see Culham (1989), who argues that such documents were not stored centrally, but rather

that by the 3rd century BCE they began to preserve details about the history of dramatic

literature at Rome: Cicero says that he and Varro each consulted these "ancient

commentaries" while trying to date the beginning of Roman drama, and the annalist

Valerius Antias probably drew his information about the origins of the Roman theater

from similar documentary sources.[7] It is not clear why or how details about dramatic

history made their way into public documents, especially given that Rome, unlike many

Greek cities, does not appear to have kept publicly-displayed records of activities at *ludi*

scaenici,[8] but it is probable that their preservation was accidental.[9] Starting around the

end of the 2nd century BCE, however, scholars began to compile these haphazard records

into coherent chronologies, narratives, and biographies of Roman drama. Three figures in

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were held privately by the magistrates who kept them during their official terms and were neither indexed nor easily retrieved. The fact that 1st century BCE scholars were using these records to uncover the history of Roman drama suggests that they were engaged in earnest, labor-intensive work and hints at the importance they placed on understanding drama's origins.

[7] Describing ongoing debates about the chronology of early Roman playwrights, Cicero calls these records *veteres* (*Brutus* 60) and *antiqui commentarii* (*Brutus* 72-73). Douglas (1966, liii) contends that the *commentarii* Cicero refers to in the *Brutus* were not official records, though his assertions are unconvincing. See also Beare (1940, 11), Rawson (1985b, 271), and Goldberg (1995, 5 n.3). For Valerius Antias's investigations into the origin of Roman drama, see Livy 36.36.3-6; cf. Drews (1988), Vaahtera (2002, 108), and Rich (2005) for the primary documents from which Antias probably drew his information, all of which are possible sources for his and Livy's dramatic history.

[8] Rawson (1985b, 271) argues that the aediles in charge of the games kept official production records, rather like other documentary *commentarii*. Sandys (1921, 174) and Rawson (1985b, 268) also propose that Rome did, in fact, keep public records of performances, though their claims seem based too much on coincidence (e.g., that since Accius's *Didascalica* perhaps drew its name from Aristotle's *Didaskalika*, which used Greek public records, Accius himself used now-lost Roman public records); cf. Goldberg (2005, 70-72). Rawson (1985b, 275-276) and Goldberg (1995, 5-6) also argue that literary guilds maintained performance records, though the evidence is unclear; cf. Jory (1970) and Horsfall (1976).

[9] If the *commentarii* Cicero and Varro consulted were pontifical records, the dramatic information they contained was probably corollary to religious incidents – that is, "prodigies, expiations, and *eventus* ...everything, in other words, that indicated whether the pax deorum was ruptured or intact)" (Drews 1998, 296); cf. also Habinek (1998), who notes that "virtually every scrap of information that we have pertaining to Latin literature in the third century B.C.E. can be related to the preservation of social cohesion at Rome" (39). The type of information preserved about Livius Andronicus seems to support this theory, as the extant details are exclusively incidental to larger concerns of the state (i.e., his arrival at Rome is linked to war with Tarentum, his first literary activity is linked to public feasts, and his hymn is linked to the expiation of prodigies during the military crisis in 207 BCE).

the history of Roman scholarship are responsible for most of this initial work, all from the late-2nd and early 1st centuries BCE: the poet Porcius Licinus, the critic Volcacius Sedigitus, and the tragedian L. Accius, all of whom contributed considerably to Roman drama's reception and continued interest in the 1st century BCE.

Porcius Licinus's poetic work is all but lost, but we can infer some information about it from the extant fragments.[10] He claimed that the Muse first came to Rome in the Second Punic War when Naevius began writing,[11] that Ennius lived near the *porta Tutilina*, and that Terence's friends Scipio and Laelius had sexual affairs with the playwright before abandoning him to poverty.[12] If these pieces are representative of the larger whole, Licinus dealt with the development of Roman drama from its beginnings to his own day[13] and presented miniature biographies of at least the major Latin playwrights. Moreover, it seems that Licinus not only wrote about Roman drama, but even adapted drama's meter for his own didactic work: atypically for such a poem, the fragments are all trochaic septenarii, one of Roman Comedy's most prevalent meters. This coincidence of material and meter perhaps confirms that Licinus's content was

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[10] Little is known about the life or date of Porcius Licinus. The death of Scipio Aemilianus, whom Licinus mentions in fr.3 Courtney, gives a *terminus post quem* of 129 BCE (see Sihler 1905, 12), and Ritschl (1845) argues that Gellius (19.9.10) implies a chronological sequence in naming Licinus before the poet and politician Q. Lutatius Catulus (died 87 BCE), though this conclusion is not definite; see also Courtney (1993 ad loc.) and Mattingly (1993) for further details on Licinus's biography and *floruit*.

[11] Licinus fr.1 Courtney. This chronological point has remained an inscrutable issue for many scholars; cf. analyses in Beare (1940, 11), Skutsch (1970), Rawson (1985b, 274), and Courtney (1993 ad loc.).

[12] See Courtney (1993 ad loc.) for discussions of these details in the fragments.

[13] Licinus fr.4 Courtney refers to Afranius, who wrote in the late 2nd century BCE, so Licinus probably covered drama's history up to his poem's publication.

exclusively dramatic.[14] Whatever else it contained, Licinus's poem seems to have been an early attempt at dramatic literary history.

Volcacius Sedigitus's work is also mostly lost, but enough remains to show that he was primarily concerned with literary biography of Roman playwrights.[15] We know his poem *De Poetis* detailed Terence's career, notably his mysterious death abroad and rumors that Scipio had ghost-written his plays, and probably contained a full biography of the poet that served as a basis for much of Suetonius's *Vita Terenti*.[16] We only have biographical notices about Terence in Sedigitus's fragments, but this is probably the result of chance: every fragment of the *De Poetis* but one survives only in Suetonius's *Life of Terence*, which does not really treat the other playwrights. The work's title, however, suggests that Sedigitus gave biographies of other poets, and the one long fragment Gellius preserves – the famous "canon" of Roman Comedy – touches on Terence as well as Plautus, Caecilius Statius, Turpilius, and four other lesser-known comic playwrights.[17] Sedigitus's poem was thus probably a broad and extensive collection of dramatic biographies that, like Licinus's, touched on the major authors of Roman drama, perhaps with special emphasis on those of Roman Comedy.

We are on firmer ground with Accius, the last of the great tragedians of the Republic, and the first major Roman scholar of the ancient theater. Besides his more than

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[14] See Courtney (1993, 91) for the unusual application of Italic septenarii to didactic material.

[15] Even less is known about Volcacius than about Licinus. The death of Turpilius, whom Volcacius mentions in fr.1 Courtney, gives us a *terminus post quem* of 103 BCE, but all other biographical information about him has been lost.

[16] See Courtney (1993 ad loc.).

[17] Sedigitus fr.1 Courtney.

fifty plays, he wrote a poem now largely lost whose focus was the history of the Roman

theater. His *Didascalica* in at least nine books discussed issues of literary chronology,

dating Livius Andronicus's arrival at Rome and the first play he produced there.[18] But

beyond merely offering a chronology of Roman playwrights, Accius's *Didascalica* also

attempted to situate Roman drama within the larger history of theater in the

Mediterranean world by seeking its origins in Greece. Accius discussed the developments

of the major Athenian playwrights before drawing his literary history to Rome,

presumably showing how the Latin playwrights engaged with longstanding Greek

traditions.[19] In another work, the *Annales*, Accius also claimed Greek origins for some

Roman festivals, and he may have developed this same project more fully in the

Didascalica for the Roman *ludi scaenici*.[20] He was, then, an active member of the Roman

stage who displayed extensive scholarly interest in Roman drama's development and who

dedicated substantial effort in crafting multi-volume works on the history of the Greek

and Italian stage. Furthermore, Accius seems, during the height of Rome's absorption of

Hellenic culture, to have attempted to connect Greek drama to its later Latin incarnations.

This attempt at connecting Greek and Roman drama suggests that Roman dramatic

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[18] The work in which Accius discussed Andronicus's arrival at Rome is uncertain, though most scholars agree that the *Didascalica* is the most likely source, especially since it dealt with chronological issues in Greek literature (cf. the debate over the primacy of Homer and Hesiod in fr.1 Funaioli); see Degl'Innocenti Pierini (1980, 71), Rawson (1985b, 271), and Goldberg (1995, 5-6).

[19] "[The *Didascalica*] may have used official records of production at festivals in Rome, but did not confine themselves to these; fragments deal with Euripides' awkward use of the chorus, the problems (most probably) of *stichomythia*, and the dress of actors, perhaps as traditionally fixed by Aeschylus. In other words, there was something on the Greek theatre which was the model of the Roman one" (Rawson 1985b, 271).

[20] In *Annales* fr.3 Courtney Accius traces the Roman *Saturnalia* back before Rome's foundation to the Athenian *Cronia*. Whether he likewise traced Rome's scenic festivals back to Greek antecedents, either in the *Annales* or the *Didascalica*, is unknown but seems likely given his theatrical interests.

history took part in the larger changes that Latin literature experienced in the 1st century BCE, especially in its fuller appropriation of Greek material.

Of course, even with his perspective as a playwright, insider access to the dramatic community,[21] and long lifespan that overlapped with, or was at most two generations removed from, every major figure in the Roman theater, Accius did not have the final word on matters of dramatic chronology. Indeed, Accius's greatest contribution to dramatic scholarship was probably the ability of his work to spur debate and encourage interest in Roman drama in the 1st century BCE. In the period immediately following Accius's *floruit*, debates arose within the Roman scholarly community over many of his dates associated with the Latin playwrights, spearheaded by such prominent figures as Cicero, T. Pomponius Atticus, and the polymath M. Terentius Varro.[22] Varro was the first to break from his predecessors and substantially revise the date of drama's origins at Rome. He claimed to have discovered evidence in old *commentarii* that contradicted the research on which Valerius Antias, Licinus, and Accius had relied for their early 2nd century BCE dates.[23] He dated Livius Andronicus's first play to 240 BCE, at least a full generation earlier than any of his predecessors had, and he proposed an alternate date for

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[21] Goldberg (1995, 5-6) suggests that Accius, as a member of the guilds of poets in Rome, probably drew on their performance records, though it is by no means certain that such records were kept; see the discussion about guild records above.

[22] The most famous of these revolves around Accius's identification of Livius Andronicus's first play in 197 BCE. The issue is complicated and has garnered a great deal of modern scholarly attention; see especially Beare (1940), Rawson (1985b, 271-274), and Goldberg (1995, 5-6).

[23] Gellius remarks, "pace cum Poenis facta, consulibus C. Claudio Centhone, Appii Caeci filio, et M. Sempronio Tuditano, primus omnium L. Livius poeta fabulas docere Romae coepit" (*N.A.* 17.21.42). Although Gellius does not explicitly state that the information about Andronicus came from Varro, his mention of the *De Poetis* with reference to both Ennius's and Naevius's dates (*N.A.* 17.21.43-45) within this section suggests that Varro was the source (see Oakley 1997, 43-44), and Goldberg (1995, 5 n.3) suggests, probably rightly, that it came from the *De Poetis* . There is no evidence to indicate where Varro found his information, but Cicero's remark at *Brutus* 60 on Varro's disagreement with the old *commentarii* about Naevius's death suggests documentary records as a possible source.

Naevius's death. Atticus in his *Liber Annalis* agreed that Andronicus put on his first play in 240 BCE,[24] and Cicero claimed that he had confirmed Atticus's findings by looking in "old commentaries."[25]

In addition Varro, who was Accius's pupil and seems to have been greatly influence by his teacher's scholarly inclinations, devoted considerable thought and energy to drama's origins besides its chronology. Two of his works dealt extensively with dramatic biography and history. The *De Poetis* discussed the circumstances under which Livius Andronicus gave his first play and probably gave fuller biographies of each major dramatic poet, while his *De Scaenicis Originibus* was dedicated to examining the origins of Roman drama: it discussed the rustic roots of native drama, etymologies for the word *ludus*, and the foundations of a number of scenic festivals in Italy. The *Antiquitates Divinae* likewise focused on the origins of these dramatic festivals in at least one full book.[26] Varro picked up where his predecessors had left off and, in his typical fashion, greatly expanded scholarship on Roman dramatic history.

Varro's work on Roman drama contributed to a lively scholarly and literary discussion about Roman drama's origins throughout the 1st century BCE. It seems to have been the main source for a number of other authors of his generation. In this way, Varro essentially bridged the foundational work of Licinus, Sedigitus, and Accius and the fuller appropriation of dramatic history in later 1st century BCE literary discussions. Of the other 1st century BCE historians and biographers of Roman drama writing alongside

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[24] See Habinek (1998, 95-98) for Atticus's history and his engagement with Varro.

[25] Cicero *Brutus* 72.

[26] For Varro's work on dramatic history, see Funaioli (1907 ad locc.) and Rawson (1985b, 271).

Varro we know next to nothing, but the sheer number of people working on these issues during this period is proof that intellectual interest in Roman drama expanded rapidly immediately before and during Catullus's generation.[27]

At least four of the most significant Augustan authors – Livy, Vergil, Tibullus, and Horace – also took up this question in the latter half of the century, and each had a different opinion about the circumstances under which drama developed in Rome, guided in part by their own literary agendas.[28] Though these poets lie outside the scope of this present work, it is important to note that for each of these Augustan authors drama's origins had significant relevance to Roman society, culture, and literature: Livy and Horace declared it a threat to the old virtues and customs, while Vergil and Tibullus marked it as the end of savagery and the beginning of Italian culture. Based on the constant attention given to its origins and development, the active debate among the most educated individuals in the 2nd and 1st centuries BCE, and the increasingly sophisticated thought dedicated to its relevance among contemporary Romans, we can safely conclude that Roman drama's history and biography engaged the interests of the Roman *literati* in the 1st century BCE both seriously and deeply.

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[27] The other scholars working on Roman dramatic history in this period include Valerius Antias (indirectly in his historical works), Quintus Cosconius (early 1st century BCE literary historian whose work is completely lost), Santra (mid-1st century BCE literary biographer whose work is completely lost), and Nigidius Figulus (scholar in the first half of the 1st century BCE, second only to Varro in learning, whose works on religion apparently touched on the Roman stage). See Rawson (1985b ad locc.) for each of their contributions. See also Goldberg (2005, 95-97) for dramatic history generally in this period.

[28] Cf. Livy 7.22, Horace *Epistles* 2.1.139-176, Tibullus 2.1.51-56, Vergil *Georgics* 2.380-396; see Oakley (1997, 48-49) for a fuller account of this debate.

I.2.3: TEXTUAL AND LITERARY CRITICISM

Roman dramatic texts are fickle and ever-changeable, because with few exceptions they were not originally intended as static pieces of literature.[29] Plays in antiquity started as acting scripts,[30] set down in ink but easily adaptable to the needs of the individual actor, audience, and performance event.[31] But in the 2nd and 1st centuries BCE, ancient scholars began the task of gathering together dramatic texts, editing them, and evaluating their authenticity in order to create a coherent corpus of dramatic texts and to establish them as part of the canon of Latin literature.

Editing classical texts is by no means an easy task, for modern and ancient scholars alike. We often assume that, since the ancients were so much closer in time to their literature than we are, they must have had easy access to texts of reasonable quality. But frequently such was not the case, especially with early Latin literature. There were no public libraries before Asinius Pollio's was established on the Palatine in 39 BCE,[32] while private libraries were rare, their use restricted by their owners, and their contents

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[29] Possible – though certainly not definite – exceptions to this rule are the tragedies of Seneca, who may have written purely for a reading audience or for recitation rather than for staged performance, as well as Ovid and Curiatius Maternus. See Boyle (1997, 3-12) and bibliography cited there for an overview of this question.

[30] For the form and content of ancient acting scripts, see Obbink (2001) and Marshall (2004 and 2006, 29).

[31] Despite the relative lack of information we have about performance practice in antiquity, there are plenty of examples of scripts being altered for a variety of needs. The prologue to Plautus's *Casina*, for instance, came from a revival production adapted to suit an audience around 160-150 BCE, and two alternate endings for Terence's *Andria* are preserved in the manuscripts. See Braun (1980) and Goldberg (2005, 62-69) for this phenomenon. See also Beacham (1991, 160) for the famous case of the actor Aesopus modifying lines during his performance of Accius's *Eurysaces* in 57 BCE to recall to the audience's minds Cicero's exile.

[32] See Horsfall (1993).

overwhelmingly Greek.[33] There were booksellers, but some texts simply were not for sale

and could be consulted only at great expense,[34] while others were of questionable quality

and authenticity.[35] Personal copies could be borrowed, but few had the necessary

connections to large private collections.[36] For dramatic texts, early Roman scholars

probably relied upon other sources, specifically the collections of scripts held by the

collegium poetarum and acting troupes.[37] Apparently, though, by the middle of the 2nd

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[33] The earliest private library we know of in Rome did not appear until the 2nd century BCE and was the result of L. Aemilius Paulus's conquest of Macedonia and acquisition of the royal library of Perseus in 168/167 BCE. Probably because of the extraordinary cost of book manufacture, most libraries from this period consisted of loot from military campaigns in the East and consequently were predominantly Greek; see Casson (2001, 65-69), who notes that even libraries not comprised primarily of pillaged books (of which the earliest he mentions is Cicero's in the mid-1st century BCE) would invariably contain mostly Greek works. The exclusivity of such private libraries is shown best by Plutarch's enthusiastic approval of L. Licinius Lucullus's extraordinary decision in the 1st century BCE to open his library to everyone (*Life of Lucullus* 42.1-3). For a brief but clear overview of private libraries in Rome, see Rawson (1985b, 39-42).

[34] Gellius relates a debate over the correct reading of a line of Ennius, which his friend Apollinaris verified after he rented an old text through great expense of effort and money ("librum summae atque reverendae vestustatis, quem fere constabat Lampadionis manu emendatum, studio pretioque multo unius versus inspiciandi gratia conduxi," *N.A.* 18.5.11). As Marshall (1976) notes, "some authentic texts might not even be for sale" (254), and this lack occurred even in an age when critical editions had already been established.

[35] "We hear nothing of the book trade at Rome before the time of Cicero. Then the booksellers and copyists (both initially called *librarii*) carried on an active trade, but do not seem to have met the high standards of a discriminating author, for Cicero complains of the poor quality of their work (*Q.f.* 3.4.5, 5.6)." (Reynolds 1991, 23).

[36] Goldberg sums up the state of access to texts nicely: "Older texts too circulated in only limited numbers in limited circles. They were generally passed among friends, were occasionally made available in private libraries, and only rarely were to be found through commercial booksellers" (2005, 40).

[37] We do not know whether the *collegium poetarum* maintained an archive of scripts, though it seems unlikely (*pace* Questa and Raffaelli 1990, 144); it is more likely, however, that such a centralized association could provide ancient scholars contacts with playwrights and stagefolk who had or could acquire scripts. The nature, duration, and extent of the *collegium poetarum* is hotly debated and poorly represented in our evidence; see Sihler (1904), Jory (1970), Wright (1974, 183-185), Horsfall (1976), and Quinn (1982, 173-176). Casson (2001, 64-65) argues that Greek scripts could have been found either in private libraries or in the collections of acting troupes, but that only the troupes would have had scripts of Latin plays. Goldberg (2005, 73-75) argues persuasively that the *didascaliae* that accompany Terence's plays in the manuscripts came not from official records, but rather were details that "consistently reflect the knowledge and concerns of the professionals involved in these productions, not of the aristocrats who contracted for their services" (73) and therefore demonstrate that the first canonized texts of Terence came from scripts acquired from the acting troupes or managers directly. He also argues that the jumble of various names in the *didascaliae* probably represent not groups of business partners, but multiple

century BCE scripts of Naevius and Plautus had become hard to find even for an insider like Terence.[38] Merely compiling collections of plays was an undertaking of Herculean proportions, evidence that ancient scholars of Roman drama were not engaged in a dilettantish task.

Even on the rare occasions when scripts were readily available, these texts frequently had suffered much violence, either from neglect or alteration for new performances,[39] and textual criticism garnered sizeable attention from 2nd and 1st century BCE scholars. Such criticism came late to Rome,[40] but the textual problems of Roman drama quickly caught the attention of many ancient scholars, whose work pushed dramatic texts to the fore of literary studies in the generations immediately preceding Catullus's.[41] Around 100 BCE L. Aelius Stilo, the first great Roman grammarian,

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performance events and sponsors. Since this information could only be preserved by long-standing acting troupes, it was probably attached gradually to their own collections of scripts.

[38] Discussing the prologue to Terence's *Eunuchus*, where the speaker defends the author against a charge of plagiarizing earlier Latin plays leveled by Luscius Lanuvinus, Goldberg (2005) notes, "Luscius implies that the scripts of Latin plays were readily available for Terence to consult, to copy, and to adapt. Was this true? Professionals obviously had access to Greek texts in sufficient numbers to provide Plautus and Caecilius with dozens of models....But Latin scripts? Their accessibility is not so obvious. Terence implies that they were not easily found, which is why he did not know the *Colax* plays of his two illustrious predecessors. For the claim to be credible, as presumably it was since he saved his contract and the show went on, there can have been no repository of Latin texts, no archive or library for him to consult. Access to scripts would instead have been erratic and uncertain, as Luscius' own conduct [in watching a pre-performance of Terence's play rather than demanding a reading copy] confirms" (49-50).

[39] Studies of Plautine interpolations from later performances, both in antiquity and now, are plagued by haphazard methodologies and subjective judgements; nevertheless, there is abundant proof that the texts of Plautus, as well as of other playwrights, regularly acquired numerous accretions. See the readily apparent interpolations in the prologue to the *Casina*, as well as the duplicated lines mentioned Zetzel (1984, 21-24). Some acting scripts had the additional difficulty of containing only the lines for an individual part or actor (cf. the 1st century CE acting script *P. Oxy.* 4546 discussed by Obbink (2001) and Marshall (2006, 29)).

[40] According to Suetonius (*De Gram. et Rhet.* 2), C. Octavius Lampadio was the first Roman to work on textual problems, namely with an edition of Naevius's *Poenicum Bellum* sometime soon after 168/167 BCE. See Kaster (1995, ad loc.).

[41] Nor should this development be surprising, considering the fact that Roman scholarship was apparently directly inspired by the work of Hellenistic scholars, including Crates of Mallos in Pergamum, Aristarchus

devoted himself to untangling the texts of Plautus, as did his son-in-law Servius Clodius

and pupil Varro.[42] Each attempted to identify later interpolations, scribal errors, and

archaic spellings,[43] among other problems, though their methodologies may have differed

greatly.[44] Terence's plays, perhaps because they were written closer to the start of Roman

textual criticism, or perhaps because they were performed less often than Plautus's,

endured far fewer alterations and errors, but it is probable that 1st century BCE editors

also gave attention to his work, given the existence of later commentaries by Helenius

Acro and Donatus. It was during this period of intense textual scrutiny and debate that the

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of Samothrace in Alexandria, and Dionysius Thrax in Rhodes, all of whom had applied themselves to Homeric textual problems. The connection between Roman comedy and archaic Greek epic is closer than would appear, as Reynolds (1991) points out: "Although Plautus is a far cry from Homer, the nature of his text and the circumstances of its transmission presented problems similar to those that had exercised Hellenistic scholars and for which their critical methods had an obvious relevance. Plautus' text needed to be standardized: there was a mass of spurious plays, and the genuine ones contained later accretions and interpolations and varied considerably from copy to copy" (22).

[42] Explicit information about the textual criticism of Stilo is preserved only in the 8th century CE *Anecdoton Parisinum*, probably derived from Suetonius's lost *De Notis*. See Bonner (1960) for a persuasive restoration of the corrupt text and a clear explication of its implications for textual criticism in the 2nd and 1st centuries BCE, as well as Reynolds (1991, 22). Evidence for Clodius's attention to Plautine interpolations appears in Cicero *Epist. Ad Fam.* 9.16.4, and for textual emendations in Plautus see frr.6-8 Funaioli. Varro's *Quaestiones Plautinae* was devoted wholly to Plautine grammar and textual criticism; see d'Anna (1956) and Zetzel (1984, 21-24).

[43] See Reynolds (1991, 22) for evidence for the textual criticism of all three preserved in the *Anecdoton Parasinum*.

[44] Rawson (1985b, 270) suggests that Stilo followed the Stoic editors of Homer in emending conservatively and preferring to seek explanations for textual oddities rather than accepting them as errors. Clodius may have been more apt to adjudge a line spurious, if Cicero's brief remark on his supposed ability to identify Plautine lines by ear alone (*Epist. Ad Fam.* 9.16.4) is representative. Zetzel (1984) argues that "Varro's text, in sum, was composed by addition, not by recension; he tried to give all the verses that he found in any of his copies of Plautus, and then perhaps he expressed his cautious opinion about the authenticity or spuriousness of the alternate versions by the use of critical signs in the margin" (246).

texts of plays as we have them now were probably formed,[45] though they continued to

attract attention long after the 1st century BCE.[46]

More than textual criticism, however, studies of the authenticity of plays

apparently dominated ancient scholarship on dramatic texts, especially in the case of

Plautus. Perhaps the greatest evidence for his enormous success and popularity is the

story that by the 1st century BCE at least 130 different plays circulated under his name.[47]

Presumably, attribution of a work to Plautus automatically granted it the good will of an

audience and made it a more desirable commodity for prospective buyers.[48] As scholarly

interest in his works increased, however, critics caught on to such false advertisements

and began the laborious task of separating the wheat from the chaff, though not without

controversy. "Everyone in fact had a crack at the Plautine problem," Elizabeth Rawson

remarks,[49] and the list of players is a veritable who's who of ancient scholarship.

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[45] See Zetzel (1984, 259 n.38) for a brief discussion and bibliography about how extensive Plautine textual criticism was in the 2nd and 1st centuries BCE. Reynolds (1991, 20) and Goldberg (2005, 51-86) rightly state that it was during this period that drama entered the literary canon as texts and so were preserved.

[46] The sheer number of references and commentaries on dramatic texts after the end of the Republic is proof that textual criticism still held the interest of many. Pliny (*Nat. Hist.* 18.107) dismisses a line of Plautus as an interpolation based on the chronology of bakers in Rome, and both Asinius Pollio (Charisius 106.5b) and Nigidius Figulus (Donatus *ad Phorm.* 190) chimed in on other plays. A certain Sisenna (on Plautus), M. Valerius Probus (on Plautus and Terence), Helenius Acro (on Terence), Aemilius Asper (on Terence), Q. Terentius Scaurus (on Plautus), and Donatus each wrote commentaries that probably or certainly dealt with textual criticism. For Probus's textual work on Plautus and Terence, see Zetzel (1984, 47).

[47] Gellius *N.A.* 3.3.11 preserves this famous problem.

[48] *Pace* Gellius, who thinks that falsely-attributed plays were not the result of deceptive advertising, but were in fact plays by older poets that Plautus reworked and made semi-Plautine ("neque tamen dubium est quin istaec quae scriptae a Plauto non videntur et nomini eius addicuntur, veterum poetarum fuerint et ab eo retractatae et expolitae sint ad propterea resipiant stilum Plautinum," 3.3.13).

[49] Rawson (1985b, 273).

The tragedian Accius, probably under the influence of Pergamene scholarship's research into the genuineness of Classical Athenian plays,[50] is the earliest scholar we know to have evaluated the authenticity of plays attributed to Plautus. Against Terence,[51] he claimed that the *Commorientes* was not authentic, nor were a number of others, including the *Gemini Lenones, Condalium, Anus Bis Compressa, Boeotia,* and *Agroecus*.[52] Soon after him and probably under Alexandrian scholarship's influence,[53] the scholar Aelius Stilo offered his own opinion, concluding that only 25 plays in all were authentic.[54] Stilo's son-in-law Servius Clodius also engaged with the authenticity question, as did Aelius's contemporary Volcacius Sedigitus, the grammarian Aurelius Oppilius, and an otherwise unknown Manilius.[55] How each decided whether or not a play was Plautine is unknown, though it is probable that their judgements were largely based on style and technique.[56]

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[50] Gellius (*N.A.* 13.2.2) mentions that Accius travelled to Pergamum in the 130s BCE, for which journey see Degl'Innocenti Pierini (1980, 29-31) and Dangel (1990, 50-53). See Goldberg (2005, 75) for the influence of Pergamene scholarship on Accius generally.

[51] Terence *Adelphoe* 7.

[52] Gellius *N.A.* 3.3.9.

[53] Aelius went into exile with Metellus Numidicus in 100 BCE to Rhodes, where he listened to Dionysius Thrax, the famous grammarian and pupil of Aristarchus of Samothrace in Alexandria.

[54] Gellius *N.A.* 3.3.12.

[55] Gellius *N.A.* 3.3.1 lists all of these obscure scholars.

[56] So Rawson (1985b, 273) for Stilo and Clodius. Gellius (*N.A.* 3.3.6) shows that his teacher Favorinus based his opinion on the same stylistic criteria as Clodius, and that Gellius's pronouncements of authenticity are likewise made on purely stylistic grounds, perhaps suggesting that such an approach was standard in Rome; see Beall (2001). Certainly the Pergamene scholars who evaluated the authenticity of Classical Athenian drama made their decisions largely on stylistic grounds, and it is not unlikely that these Roman scholars who had been inspired by the work of Crates of Mallos and Dionysius Thrax followed their lead; see Rawson (1985b, 271).

The last, and undoubtedly most significant, evaluator of the authenticity of Plautine plays was Varro, who established in his *De Comoediis Plautinis* a list of 21 authentic plays of Plautus. His approach was quite conservative and apparently his list was built by a process of elimination: only plays that none of his predecessors had objected to as spurious were included, even when he himself disagreed with another scholar.[57] Varro personally held that many more plays were authentic, but no doubt because of Stilo's short list excluded many from his final decision.[58] Varro was also less cynical about why non-Plautine plays had become attached to Plautus's name, suggesting that there was, in fact, a playwright named "Plautius" whose plays became confused with Plautus's.[59] Varro seems to have had the final word on the problem and his list became the official canon of authentic Plautine plays in antiquity, as the 21 so-called *fabulae Varronianae* are most likely the same as those that have survived to the present day.

A question of authenticity also plagued Terence and occupied ancient scholars, though far removed from the problems of conflation that Plautus's plays had endured. During Terence's lifetime rumors arose, perhaps started by his rival Luscius Lanuvinus, that others had ghost-written his plays for him.[60] Roman scholars, in spite of their

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[57] "That is to say, Varro himself expressed no opinion about these plays, he merely canonized those that had been regarded as genuine by all earlier critics" (Zetzel 1984, 17).

[58] Varro certainly thought the *Saturnio*, *Addictus*, and one other possibly not among the 21 preserved plays were authentic, since he believed them to have been written by Plautus while the author was working in a grain-mill; see Gellius *N.A.* 3.3.14.

[59] Gellius *N.A.* 3.3.10; see Rawson (1985b, 277). Whether or not this is true, similar problems and explanations appear for other dramatic authors. In the 1st century BCE the scholar L. Cotta distinguished a grammarian named "Ennius" from the famous playwright, and a certain Maecius separated Terence from the obscure author Terentius Libo of Fregellae; see Rawson (1985b, 278-279), as well as Donatus *Vita Terenti* 9w.

[60] See Terence *Heauton Timoroumenos* 22-27 and *Adelphoe* 15-21.

professionalism and devotion to academic inquiry, were eager to embrace these rumors and turn their talents towards literary gossip from early on. Just one generation later, Volcacius Sedigitus may have discussed this accusation as a reason for Terence's journey to the East,[61] and certainly in the 1st century BCE people like C. Memmius, Santra, Cornelius Nepos, and Cicero each pronounced opinions on the matter with varying degrees of skepticism.[62] But whether or not Terence actually wrote his own plays is less important than the fact that this issue was a subject of running debate during the 1st century BCE, and more broadly that questions of authenticity and accuracy stood in the limelight of intellectual activity in the periods before and during Catullus's lifetime.

The careful and intensive work of Roman philologists on the textual criticism and authenticity of dramatic texts was also accompanied by serious debates over relative literary quality and canonization. Once the texts of Roman plays had been established, scholars undertook the inevitable task of determining which of these newly formed texts were worthy of becoming "classics" of Roman literature, which had the most to offer literary scholars and schoolteachers, and which were ultimately expendable. In stark

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[61] Sedigitus fr.4 Courtney does not actually address the rumor, but its preservation in the *Vita Terenti* immediately after Suetonius describes the controversy and suggests that Terence left Italy because of it might imply that Sedigitus attributed Terence's departure to the accusation of plagiarism; cf. however Courtney (1993) ad loc., who thinks Suetonius made the connection himself.

[62] All of this information is preserved only in Suetonius's *Vita Terenti*; see Rawson (1985b, 279) for a brief discussion of this passage. While many seem to have agreed that Terence did in fact rely on his friends for help, they were divided as to who the real authors were. Nepos incorrectly believed that Scipio and Laelius were the same age as Terence, but he claimed that a reliable source had told him that Laelius's wife walked in on him while composing the *Heauton Timoroumenos*, and Cicero agreed (*Epist. ad Atticum* 7.3.10). Quintilian (10.1.99) claimed that Scipio was the real author. Santra, on the other hand, argued that neither Scipio nor Laelius were old enough and proposed that the consulars C. Sulpicius Gallus, Q. Fabius Labeo, or M. Pupillius helped Terence write his plays.

contrast to Greek drama, whose canon formed much more organically and over a longer period of time, Roman drama was shaped into a coherent corpus of literature rapidly.[63]

The clearest and most famous example of this canonizing is the *De Poetis* of Volcacius Sedigitus, who lists ten comic playwrights from the 3rd and 2nd centuries BCE in order of relative merit, occasionally with explanations for his reasoning:[64]

multos incertos certare hanc rem vidimus,	1
palmam poetae comico cui deferant.	
eum meo iudicio errorem dissolvam tibi,	
ut contra siquis sentiat nil sentiat.	
Caecilio palmam Statio do comico,	5
Plautus secundus facile exuperat ceteros	
dein Naevius, qui fervet, pretio in tertiost.	
si erit quod quarto detur, dabitur Licinio,	
post insequi Licinium facio Atilium.	
in sexto consequetur hos Terentius,	10
Turpilius septimum, Trabea octavum optinet,	
nono loco esse facile facio Luscium.	
antiquitatis causa decimum addo Ennium.	13

   Volcacius Sedigitus *De Poetis* fr. 1 Courtney

We see that many men uncertain fight over this matter,
namely to which comic poet they should give the prize.
I shall solve this confusion for you by my judgement,
so that anyone who does not know may instead know.
I give the prize for comedy to Caecilius Statius,
Plautus easily surpasses the rest as second,
then Naevius, who rages, is in the third spot.
If there is something to give to the fourth, it will be given to Licinius,
I make Atilius follow after Licinius.
In sixth place after these Terence follows,
Turpilius seventh, Trabea holds the eighth,
I easily make Luscius in ninth place.
I add Ennius as tenth because of his age.

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[63] See Goldberg (2005, 75-86) for this retrospective activity of scholars in Latin canon formation, though note that he seems to overemphasize the degree to which antiquarians in the 1st century BCE desired to actively manipulate the course of Latin literature.

[64] This and all translations in this dissertation are my own, unless otherwise noted.

The list is vague and idiosyncratic, but it offers the earliest concrete example of attempts to define a literary canon in Rome and, more importantly, to situate drama within the larger corpus of Latin literature. The same type of ranking occurs also in the works of Varro, who gives slightly more defined reasons for his judgements. In the *Menippean Satires*, for instance, Varro ranked Caecilius Statius first for plot, Terence for character, and Plautus for dialogue, and gave a number of other judgements about the relative value of playwrights in specific fields of their art.[65] Varro also gave canonical ranking in some of his lost works about the theater, including his discussions of the differences in style between Plautus and Caecilius Statius in his *De Proprietatibus Scriptorum* and *Peri Characteron*.[66]

Some of Varro's contemporaries also weighed in on dramatic quality and ranking, including notably Cicero and Caesar on Terence's style and the relative value of Greek and Roman drama.[67] By this time the canon of dramatic literature solidified sufficiently to enter the standard school curriculum, to the chagrin of students like Horace who were forced to learn the texts that the scholars of the preceding century had deemed worthy of study.[68] We can see, then, that by Catullus's lifetime the most prominent playwrights of Classical Roman drama had been standardized and selected for study and transmission, forming a substantial core of scholarly debate, elite education, literary culture.

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[65] See Sandys (1921, 190-191) and Rawson (1985b, 276-277).

[66] See Rawson (1985b, 277-278).

[67] Fr.2 Courtney of Cicero's *Limon* and fr.1 Courtney of Caesar's untitled verses. For Cicero's opinions about dramatic quality, see Fantham (1984, 301) and Erasmo (2004, 11 and 42).

[68] See Goldberg (2005, 75-86).

I.2.4: PERFORMANCE CRITICISM AND HISTORY

As we saw earlier, ancient scholars in the 2nd and 1st centuries BCE exerted a great deal of effort to set out the dates of certain pivotal performances, including the first play of Livius Andronicus and that of Naevius. We also saw that much attention was given to the coincidence of dramatic performances and important points in the social and political history of Rome and that these points of contact between the political and theatrical were largely responsible for preserving what we know about early Roman drama. Works like Accius's *Didascalica*, and the subsequent controversy it created for Varro, Atticus, and Cicero, addressed large-scale dating issues, but some attention was also being given to identifying the circumstances of individual performances that did not have significance for key points in Roman history.

As I already noted, Rome, unlike many Greek cities, did not keep publicly-displayed records of individual performances. But by at least the 2nd century BCE non-monumental records about individual performance details were compiled, either by magistrates administering *ludi scaenici* and sponsors of *ludi extraordinarii* featuring Roman plays or, more likely, by individuals associated with acting guilds and troupes.[69] What information we have from these records eventually made its way into the manuscripts of Plautus and Terence as *didascaliae*,[70] notices about the circumstances,

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[69] Though see Mattingly (1959), who thinks the Terentian *didascaliae* are inventions of later grammarians. Lindsay (1904, 88) believes the Plautine *didascaliae* were also largely the product of grammarian research, though he thinks they come from closer to the original performance dates and shows less skepticism as to their quality.

[70] For Plautus, these notices accompany *Pseudolus*, *Stichus*, *Vidularia*, and possibly *Rudens*; but see Mattingly (1957, 78-85) for an argument that the *Stichus* notice is not Plautine, but instead gives information about a reperformance of Terence's *Adelphoe*. See Goldberg (2005, 69-86) for a more detailed

sponsors, actors, and musicians involved in the production. Regardless of their source or reliability, they demonstrate a clear interest in preserving and investigating the ephemeral information about particular performances.[71]

There may also have been more academic attention given to individual performances in Accius's *Pragmatica*, though we know very little of this work and scant fragments survive. In the poem – in septenarii like Licinus's, and therefore probably intimately related to the Roman theater – Accius apparently discussed individual failed performances and may have addressed allusions to contemporary issues within plays.[72] Varro's logistoricus *Scaurus* may also have dealt with these issues, since it discussed the sumptuous games that the younger Scaurus put on in his aedileship.[73]

There was also a large amount of work devoted to general performance theory that discussed the development of stage issues. Accius's *Didascalica* certainly discussed this material with regard to Greek drama, and probably covered Roman drama as well. The most wide-ranging and significant research of this type was performed by Varro, who wrote (in addition to closely-related historical/biographical works like the *De Poetis*) a *De Personis*, a *De Actis Scaenicis*, a *De Actionibus Scaenicis*, among others. It is also likely that much work on the theater has been lost, and we know certainly of a theater

discussion of the *didascaliae*'s sources and authority. Rawson (1985b, 275-276) thinks it unlikely that acting troupes would have kept such records and poses instead that they came from the guilds of poets and actors.

[71] The nature and peculiar problems of the *didascaliae* are complicated and outside the scope of this study. For fuller discussions, see Dziatzko (1865, 1866), Lindsay (1904, 86-88), Jachmann (1934, 601-604), Mattingly (1957, 1959), Klose (1966, 5-41), Linderski (1987), and Goldberg (2005, 69-75).

[72] See Rawson (1985b, 271).

[73] See Rawson (1985b, 273). For what little is known about *logistorici*, see Dahlmann and Heisterhagen (1957).

history by King Juba II of Mauretania, as well as those of several scholars after him. And perhaps the greatest loss is the work by the great 1st century BCE actor Roscius on his art, which apparently dealt with the general theory of performance but may also have touched upon his own experiences and provided information about contemporary performances in the 1st century BCE.[74]

Finally, we have evidence of a great interest in the individual performances and lives of actors, both contemporary and in anecdotes and stories of past actors. As Easterling points out, "A measure of the prestige of theatrical performers throughout antiquity is the sheer number of stories about them that still survive, in spite of the filtering effect of time and the more or less total loss of a large body of writing on theatre history."[75] It is clear that, although most of what remains about ancient scholarship on performance is anecdotal and fragmentary, there was enormous interest in the 1st century BCE in how plays were presented in public and how actors practiced their craft. Moreover, the fact that Cicero – himself not a professional scholar of the stage and therefore perhaps more representative of the general elite population of Rome – discusses actors and acting so extensively and in a variety of settings suggests that dramatic performance offered Roman *literati* a common cultural vocabulary.[76] When Cicero mentions performances of Afranius in the *Pro Sestio*, of Caecilius Statius in the *Pro Roscio Amerino*, and of tropes of Roman Comedy throughout the *Pro Caelio*, he recalls

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[74] See Easterling (2002, 333), who also mentions Amarantus of Alexandria, Rufus, and Sopater as scholars of ancient performance theory at Rome.

[75] Easterling (2002, 333).

[76] The bibliography on this topic is large, but see representative discussions in Geffcken (1973), Dumont (1975), Vasaly (1985 and 1993), and Monbrun (1994).

theatrical events that must have been memorable enough to make an impact on his

audience and to drive his point home, rather as modern Americans use popular culture

references to communicate with one another. Whether professional or casual, attention to

dramatic performance history frequently kept the stage alive and relevant for 1st century

BCE Romans.[77]

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[77] For the continued relevance of the tragic stage for Roman communication and self-presentation, see generally Erasmo (2004, 1-9). See also Erasmo (2004, 81-100) for specific instances in the 1st century BCE of how actual revival performance affected Roman political and social conceptions.

I.3.1: PERFORMANCE OF ROMAN DRAMA IN THE LATE 2ND AND 1ST CENTURIES BCE

So far I have focused on how Roman drama became a focus of intellectual attention in the 2nd and 1st centuries BCE – and indeed this movement from staged and spoken entertainment to elite book culture was vital for the early development of Roman literature and Latin canon formation. But ancient drama did not simply exchange its public performativity for the safety of books: comedy and tragedy continued to be produced in the late 2nd and early 1st century, when Rome's theatrical infrastructure developed and expanded rapidly.

In the following section I will survey a small sample of evidence showing that Roman drama remained a popular medium for public performance well into the last years of the Republic. I will discuss briefly the growing number of opportunities and venues for dramatic performance in Rome and elsewhere, the expansion of communities of professional stagefolk, the revival performances of Classical Roman drama from the 3rd and 2nd centuries BCE, and evidence for the continued production of new plays in the 1st century BCE as both written and performative literature. To conclude, I will suggest that Catullus's world was suffused with live drama and that he would have engaged with both tragedy and comedy on the stage as much as on the page.

As with the previous section, the following is not meant to be the full treatment that this topic deserves. There is a wealth of evidence for stagings, revivals, and new plays in performance preserved implicitly in unlikely places – especially in the public court speeches and private letters of Cicero – that I cannot for reasons of space and time

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address sufficiently here. I will focus almost exclusively on what little explicit testimony about dramatic production in the 1st century BCE remains, only occasionally venturing into the implicit evidence that non-dramatic sources supplies to supplement this material. I will also limit myself largely to the evidence about 1st century BCE dramatic work, though it must be noted that there is also much evidence for the existence of scripted Roman drama in the 1st century CE and beyond that likewise cannot be fully addressed in this space, but that I will occasionally touch upon to supplement my argument.

I.3.2: PERFORMANCE OCCASIONS, VENUES, AND STAGEFOLK

The most significant opportunities for dramatic performance in Rome were the *ludi scaenici*, festivals held annually in Rome at which public officials presented stage shows, frequently in conjunction with other celebratory events like gladiatorial fights and chariot races. Initially, such festivals occurred infrequently, limited to the few days of the *ludi Romani* in the 4th and most of the 3rd centuries BCE, but around the Second Punic War they began to grow and to encompass the *ludi Megalenses* (founded in 204 BCE, scenic from 194 BCE), *ludi Florales* (founded by 240 BCE, scenic from 173 BCE), *ludi Apollinares* (founded in 212 and scenic from the start), and *ludi Plebeii* (founded in 220 BCE, scenic by 200 BCE).[78] In fact, over the course of the late Republic the number of dramatic festival days each year expanded from four days in 214 BCE to more than fifty by Caesar's death and over a hundred by the early Empire, with some months during the peak season composed of more days for stage celebrations than for regular business.[79] There were even attempts to create new dramatic festival days and to renew lapsed ones, as in the case of the *ludi Cereales*, which were quite old but only scenic near the end of the Republic, and the *ludi Compitalici*, whose dramatic performances had been suppressed by the senate in 68 BCE but were restored again in 58 BCE by P. Clodius

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[78] For foundation dates and contexts see Beare (1955, 154-155), Wiseman (1987, 32), and Beacham (1999, 2-3).

[79] Livy (24.43.7) sets the number of days for *ludi scaenici* in 214 BCE at four. For the growth of days for performance, see Beare (1955, 154), Wiseman (1987, 46), Beacham (1999, 2-3), Marshall (2006, 19-20), Martin (2007, 50), and Rehm (2007, 194). The month of April, when the *Megalenses*, *Ceriales*, and *Floralia* were held, had 17 days devoted to stage shows.

Pulcher.[80] And Sulla and Caesar, both of whom recognized the value of the theater for political control and popular appeal, instituted their own regular *ludi Victoriae* with space reserved for dramatic performance.[81]

But beyond the official calendar of regular dramatic festivals, there were ample *ad hoc* opportunities for performance. The *ludi funebres* held to honor the deaths of powerful elites frequently featured Roman plays, both tragedies and comedies; *ludi magni* and *ludi votivi* were held for triumphs and major dedications, including the inauguration of Pompey's Theater in 55 BCE.[82] Some smaller religious festivals also held games irregularly, including the *ludi Iuventutis* which Accius claimed was the occasion of the first Roman play by Livius Andronicus.[83]

The abundant opportunities for staged plays mentioned thus far take into account only performances in Rome proper. Archaeological evidence shows that many towns and cities in Italy, especially southern ones in frequent contact with the theater traditions of Magna Graecia and Greece proper, must have had thriving stage communities. Rome famously did not have a permanent theater until 55 BCE, but already in the 2nd century BCE Italian towns had begun to establish stone theaters for Roman drama, both by converting older Greek-style buildings and by creating new structures tailored for Roman

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[80] For both of these see Wiseman (1987, 46), although cf. Marshall (2006, 17) for skepticism about the scenic dating of the *ludi Cereales*.

[81] See Wiseman (1987, 26-27), Beacham (1999, 2-3), and Goldberg (2005, 55-56).

[82] *Ludi funebres* were scenic by 174 BCE; cf. Beacham (1999, 2-3) and Livy (41.28.11). For specific examples of these funeral games, see Marshall (2006, 17-18). See Marshall (2006, 17) and Rehm (2007) for *ludi magni*, as well as Livy 27.33.8, 30.27.12, and 34.44.6 for examples in 217/207, 203, and 194 BCE, respectively. For *ludi votivi* see Taylor (1937, 297-298) and Wiseman (1987, 33-34), as well as Cicero *Epistulae ad Familiares* 7.1.2.

[83] See above on Accius's dating of Livius Andronicus.

performances. Around 200 BCE Pompeii had built a Hellenistic theater, which was subsequently converted to a Roman theater shortly after 80 BCE when Sulla resettled veterans in the area. Around the same time as the conversion of the open-air Greek theater, the city built a smaller, purely Roman theater.[84] About fifty miles northwest the town of Teano had also built a freestanding Roman theater, probably at the very end of the 2nd century BCE.[85] There are literally dozens of other theaters, both in the new Roman style and converted from Hellenistic structures, that sprung up throughout the growing empire in the late 2nd and early 1st centuries BCE, offering clear evidence that theatrical literature and performance was not confined to Rome nor was it deferred until Pompey's Theater finally offered a permanent venue.[86]

In fact, even before Pompey's Theater there had been a number of efforts to build theatrical spaces in the city of Rome during the 2nd and 1st centuries BCE. There were, of course, the temporary wooden structures that probably dominated the Roman stage throughout its history but survive only in vase paintings, frescoes, and offhanded remarks in literary sources. Some of these were spectacularly ornate despite being temporary, including two especially grand theaters built to much acclaim around the time that Catullus was writing.[87] But even more significant are the repeated failed attempts in the

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[84] See Bieber (1961, 170-180) for a brief discussion of the theaters at Pompeii.

[85] See Dodge (1999, 212 n.19) for the theater at Teano.

[86] Cf. theaters at Segesta & Tyndaris in Sicily (Dodge 1999, 221), Gabii (Dodge 1999, 218), Praeneste (Garton 1972, 149 and Wiseman 1987, 94), and Pietrabbondante (Wiseman 1987, 94). See also Sear (2006, *passim*). Sear (2006, 119-143) catalogues 27 significant stone theaters definitely from the 2nd and 1st centuries BCE within a 100km radius of the city of Rome alone. See the rest of his catalogue for evidence of extensive Roman theatrical architecture throughout the Mediterranean during this period.

[87] For temporary theater structures generally, see Rumpf (1950, 40-50), Beacham (1991, 56), and Dodge (1999). M. Aemilius Scaurus built in 58 BCE a fabulously ornate and expensive temporary theater with imported marble and ivory; see Dodge (1999, 215), Beacham (2007, 217-218), and Pliny *N.H.* 36.113-115.

late Republic to build permanent stages in 179, 174, 154, and 106 BCE, which show a consistent attempt to promote theater during Roman drama's supposed decline.[88]

Pompey's Theater, dedicated in 55 BCE, finally achieved this solidification of theatrical space in Rome. It is remarkable that Rome acquired its first permanent theater in the 1st century BCE, just when Roman tragedy and comedy are often assumed to have faded away. While it is true that Pompey's Theater is less a monument to Rome's drama than to one of its greatest statesmen and generals, and the space was designed to be a center of worship (as well as religious propaganda) as much as a place of entertainment, there can be no doubt that it also demonstrates the reverence of Roman politicians for the continued power of dramatic literature to make grand statements of status and influence. Shortly afterwards, two other structures attempted to harness this same power. In 44 BCE Julius Caesar started his own grand theater, which was cut short by his death in the same year but was finally dedicated as the Theater of Marcellus by Augustus in 13 BCE. There was also the Theater of Balbus, dedicated in 19 BCE. All of these buildings suggest that the 1st century BCE was a period of increasing theatrical interest in Rome.[89]

We have seen, therefore, that there was an enormous growth of official theatrical space in the 2nd and 1st centuries BCE. While scholarship has traditionally cited this

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C. Curio built in 53 BCE a wondrous swiveling theater that could transform into an amphitheatre, apparently by turning the two halves on a pivoted stage; see Goldberg (1996, 268), Beacham (2007, 218), and Pliny *N.H.* 36.116-120. While temporary, the theater of Curio seems to still have been in use at least two years later; see Cicero *Epistulae ad Familiares* 8.2.1.

[88] For evidence and the problem of determining why these attempts failed, see Beare (1955, 163) and Goldberg (1998, 2-11).

[89] The bibliography on Pompey's Theater is expansive. For discussions of material evidence, see Sear (2006, 133-134) and the bibliography found there. For social and literary ramifications of all three of these theaters, see Garton (1972, 149), Beacham (1991, 156-163), Goldberg (1996, 266 and 1998, 1-2), Dodge (1999), Erasmo (2004, 51 and 83-90), Marshall (2006, 31-35), and Martin (2007).

phenomenon as a paradox – performance venues seem to increase in inverse proportion to the number of playwrights known to be writing for the stage – this must be more an accident of preservation than a Roman propensity for useless building expenditure. The remains of a tangible stage are, after all, less susceptible to complete destruction than the intangible plays whose survival depends so much on continuous enjoyment, faithful copying, and uninterrupted transmission. Especially for this reason the stones of the theater seem to be a far better indicator of the unbroken interest in Roman drama as a performative art than the fragile literary record.[90]

There must, of course, have been many other opportunities for performance outside major events and official locations, especially since we know of large numbers of stagefolk active during the 2nd and 1st centuries BCE who could not have remained completely unemployed for the majority of the year. As early as the end of the 3rd century BCE actors and playwrights began to join together in *collegia*, and such groups seem to have continued to gain in number and influence throughout the late Republic. A *Collegium Poetarum* was established in the early 2nd century BCE to honor the public service of Livius Andronicus and by the 1st century BCE had become a tightly-knit group that included some of the most prominent playwrights.[91] There was also a *Collegium Tibicinum Romanorum* and a *Collegium Fidicinum Romanorum*, both possibly but not

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[90] See Jory (1986) for a clear analysis of this point from a material culture perspective.

[91] See Sihler (1904), Tamm (1961, 157-167), Jory (1970), Garton (1972, 231-265), Wright (1974, 183-185), Horsfall (1976), Quinn (1982, 173-176), Beacham (1991, 20), and White (1993, 291-292 n.57).

definitely associated with Roman drama, as well as a large number of mime, pantomime, and Greek acting associations circulating around Italy.[92]

In addition to these official and semi-political organizations, there was a number of acting troupes and independent stagefolk for hire that formed the backbone of the stage community in the 2nd and 1st centuries BCE. The most famous of these was Q. Roscius, who earned immense salaries for his comic acting, gained equestrian status directly from Sulla, performed on stage for free for more than a decade, and even wrote works about his profession and trained rising stars of the theater. The actor Clodius Aesopus was for tragedy what Roscius was for comedy, also earning enormous sums and engaging with some of the most prominent figures of the Roman state in the 1st century BCE. Such actors as we have records of suggest that there was both a thriving community and substantial demand for Roman drama throughout the 2nd and 1st centuries BCE.

In sum, then, it is apparent that there was a substantial and growing infrastructure for theatrical production and performance in the late Republic. The evidence we have just surveyed shows that there was indeed a thriving community of dramatic performers, a large number of venues for scripted drama, and plenty of opportunities throughout the year both for regular performances and for *ad hoc* scenic celebrations. That scripted drama gradually ceases to be attested in the written record by the 1st century BCE is not a paradox of literary interest, but a demonstration that much more of the Roman theater's literature has been lost than we could guess from the scattered remnants that have survived. In Catullus's lifetime there would have been ample opportunities and places to see talented performers, and therefore we can only conclude that there would likewise

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[92] See Jory (1970) for information on different acting and theatrical associations in Greece and Rome.

have been ample work to be performed on the stage. In the next sections I will explore

the evidence for this work in greater detail, with attention both to revival performances of

3rd and 2nd century BCE drama and with new work written for the 1st century BCE

theater.

I.3.3: REVIVAL PERFORMANCES OF CLASSICAL ROMAN DRAMA

Roman plays from the 3rd and 2nd centuries BCE as a whole garnered enormous popularity among their contemporary audiences, but perhaps the best indicator of their literary merit and entertainment value is their substantial staying power among later generations. As was the case with 5th century BCE Athenian drama, many of the "classics" of Roman comedy and tragedy were so esteemed that they earned revival productions even centuries later, and the evidence suggests that audiences of every socio-economic class continued to enjoy seeing these plays on the public stage well into the 1st century BCE. As with most of our evidence for drama in this period, the testimony is scattered and fragmentary, but I think that taken together it offers a clear picture of continued demand for early Roman drama.

Roman Comedy was hugely popular and even just a generation after Plautus's death his plays were being revived on stage. The text of the *Casina* as we have it opens with a prologue not belonging to the original production:

qui utuntur vino vetere sapientis puto	5
et qui lubenter veteres spectant fabulas.	
antiqua opera et verba quom uobis placent,	
aequomst placere ante alias veteres fabulas.	
nam nunc novae quae prodeunt comoediae	
multo sunt nequiores quam nummi novi.	10
nos postquam populi rumore intelleximus	
studiose expetere vos Plautinas fabulas,	
antiquam eius edimus comoediam,	
quam vos probastis qui estis in senioribus:	
nam iuniorum qui sunt, non norunt, scio,	15
verum ut cognoscant dabimus operam sedulo.	
haec quom primum actast, vicit omnis fabulas.	
ea tempestate flos poetarum fuit,	

> qui nunc abierunt hinc in communem locum:
> sed tamen absentes prosunt pro praesentibus.   20
>   Plautus *Casina* 5-20

> Those who enjoy old wine have taste, I think,
> just as those who gladly watch old plays.
> Since ancient works and words please you,
> it is right that old plays please you before all others.
> For now the new comedies which come out
> are much inferior than newly-minted coinage.
> After we learned from the rumor of the populace
> that you eagerly sought Plautine plays,
> we produced his ancient comedy,
> which you all who are older approved:
> for I know that the youngsters do not know it,
> so indeed we will exert ourselves attentively so they will know it.
> When this play was first performed, it beat all the others.
> At that time existed the flower of playwrights,
> who now have departed from here into their common place:
> but though absent they are present here for those today.

The play is described as one of the *veteres...fabulas* (6) and *antiqua opera* (7), an "old comedy that all of you who are getting on in years enjoyed before" (14-15). The original production is dateable to between 186 and 184 BCE, so even if the speaker is being a bit hyperbolic this incarnation of the *Casina* must have been performed around or shortly after 150 BCE, when a very different, un-Plautine kind of comedy was being put on stage by authors like Terence (*nam nunc novae quae prodeunt comoediae / multo sunt nequiores quam nummi novi*, 10-11).[93] Mattingly (1960) has also persuasively shown on the basis of interpolations of chronologically-inconsistent material that a number of other Plautine plays underwent revivals in this period, including the *Amphitruo*, *Bacchides*, *Captivi*, *Curculio*, *Epidicus*, *Stichus*, and *Truculentus*. Moreover, Beare (1955, 3-4) has

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[93] See Beare (1955, 151) and Mattingly (1960, 230).

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suggested that the alternate endings to the *Poenulus* indicate it too was brought back on stage.

Both of these scholars also show that after the initial craze for reperforming Plautus in the middle of the 2nd century BCE, revival productions retained their popularity and continued unabated. Here the evidence becomes less explicit, but traces of Plautine revivals continue to appear in the record and seem to confirm their arguments. Cicero mentions, for instance, that the famous comic actor Roscius had acted on stage for decades, had become accustomed particularly to play Plautus's pimp Ballio from the *Pseudolus*, and still famously took up that role even in the 70s BCE.[94] Cicero also mentions explicitly that Roscius performed in a revival of Turpilius's *Demiurgus* that he saw.[95] Now, Roscius's acting career spanned the larger part of the early 1st century BCE, for which theatrical work he earned his equestrian status from Sulla, and he continued to perform in public for free afterwards. The logical inference from this testimony is that Roscius's extraordinarily successful career, based in large part on his roles in plays by authors like Plautus and Turpilius, must have been fueled by regular and unimpeded revival performances of classical Roman Comedy.[96] In addition to Roscius, we know there were other *comoedi* making a living on the stage, and their repertoire also likely

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[94] Cicero *Pro Rosc. Comoed.* 20-21; see Garton (1972, 170).

[95] Cicero *Epist. Ad Fam.* 9.22.1.

[96] For Roscius's career and the princely sums he earned for performances before his elevation to equestrian rank, see Beacham (1991, 155). See also Garton (1972, 169-182).

came from the 3rd and 2nd century BCE Classics, especially in the case of actors trained by Roscius himself.[97]

There is also some evidence for the reperformance of Terence, both during the initial period of Plautine revivals in the 150s and much later. Besides revivals of the *Hecyra* in Terence's lifetime,[98] we also know from the variant endings preserved in manuscripts that the *Andria* was brought on stage again.[99] Likewise, Goldberg (2005, 70) has shown that confusion in the didascalia to the *Phormio* probably resulted from a revival of the play in 141 BCE.[100] There are, besides this direct evidence, also many examples of 1st century BCE authors citing Terentian comedy with an eye towards performance elements, and since such references and jokes function properly only if the audience shares this cultural vocabulary, it seems certain that his plays must have been put on the 1st century BCE stage as well.[101]

But even more than for Roman Comedy, we have much evidence showing that classical Roman tragedy maintained its appeal well into the 1st century BCE; as I noted earlier, since comedy and tragedy occupied the same stage space and occasions, evidence for revivals of tragedy necessarily implies revivals of comedy as well. The oldest

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[97] See Fantham (1984, 303-305) for *comoedi* in general in this period. Cicero says that Roscius frequently trained other actors, including investment slaves; see *Pro Roscio Comoedo* 27-31 and *De Oratore* 1.129-133. See also Goldberg (2005, 57 n.16) for two lesser comic actors around this time.

[98] Once at the *ludi Megalenses* of 165, again at the funeral games for L. Aemilius Paullus in 160 BCE.

[99] See Beare (1955, 3-4).

[100] See also Tansey (2001) for further revivals of the *Phormio*.

[101] See, for example, Geffcken (1973, 1-5 and 22-28) for a treatment of elements of the *Adelphi* that Cicero exploits in the *Pro Caelio* and Vasaly (1985) for similar elements in the *Pro Roscio Amerino*. See Fantham (1984) for a fuller discussion of Terence as an intermediary for knowledge and use of Menander by 1st century BCE poets.

tragedians had some revivals in the 1ˢᵗ century, including the *Equos Troianos* of Livius

Andronicus or Naevius at the dedication of Pompey's Theater in 55 BCE.[102] We know of

five full restagings of plays by Ennius, and Cicero preserves an anecdote about some

lines from Ennius's *Andromache* being worked into a reperformance of Accius's

Eurysaces for a political attack against Clodius in the theater;[103] such an interpolation

suggests that Ennius's work had entered the regular repertoire of 1ˢᵗ century BCE actors

and enjoyed its own revivals. Cicero gives some opinions on gesticulation and its proper

use by actors of Ennius's *Medea*, and these statements suggest that this play, too, was

seen on stage by the orator at least once.[104]

But the real stars of classical Roman tragedy in revival were Pacuvius and Accius,

whose works we know to have been reperformed frequently after their deaths. More than

half of Pacuvius's plays received revival runs in Cicero's lifetime alone, and Accius's

Brutus, *Clytemnaestra*, and *Eurysaces* were all staged to great political effect and popular

applause just in the period between 57 and 55 BCE.[105] We know in addition that the great

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[102] See Cicero *Epist. ad Fam*. 7.1. Goldberg (1996, 266 n.2) believes the play could not have been Livius's, based on the fact that Cicero found his work not worth a second read (*Brutus* 71), but this argument is weak in light of the fact that Cicero clearly disapproved of the entire program of dedicatory performances (*Epist. Ad Fam.* 7.1.1). Cicero may not have enjoyed Livius, but it is quite possible that the man selecting the plays, Sp. Maecius Tarpa, did.

[103] Ennius's *Ajax*, *Andromache*, *Hectoris Lytra*, *Iphigenia in Aulis* were all restaged with Clodius Aesopus in prominent roles, and the *Andromache* was staged again with the actor Antiphon in the title role; see Erasmo (2004, 143-144). For the interpolation in Accius's play, see Beacham (1991, 160).

[104] See Cicero *De Oratore* 3.50.196.

[105] On Pacuvius, see Beacham (1991, 121). Pacuvius's *Antiopa* was performed frequently in Cicero's youth, his *Teucer* in 51 BCE and again at an unknown date, and his *Iliona* and *Chryses* appeared on stage at some point during Cicero's life. Also, Pacuvius's *Armorum Iudicium* was featured at Caesar's funeral games in 44 BCE. Accius's *Brutus* was performed at the *Floralia* of 57 BCE, his *Eurysaces* during Cicero's exile in 57 BCE, and his *Clytemnestra* at the dedication of Pompey's Theater in 55 BCE. For an analysis of the political and social importance of these last three performances for the late Republic, see Erasmo (2004).

tragic actor Clodius Aesopus earned sums almost as great as Roscius's for his continued performances at revivals of Pacuvius and Accius. Again these performances suggest that many more plays were reperformed in the 1st century BCE than the record indicates.

We can see from this brief survey of evidence that both comedy and tragedy continued to be revived long after they are often assumed to have disappeared from the stage. Moreover, we have not even taken full account of the numerous scattered references that Cicero makes in his speeches to both comedies and tragedies, references that the audience must have at least been familiar with for Cicero to have invoked them effectively.[106] When he paints Marc Antony in *Philippics* 2 as a *miles gloriosus* and his underlings as comic parasites,[107] or Verres as hopelessly reliant on his own real-life *servus callidus* Timarchides,[108] or practically turns his entire speech defending Caelius into a live comedy,[109] he is attempting to communicate with an audience that must primarily have known Plautus and Terence in repeated and memorable performance.

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[106] See Fantham (2002) and Erasmo (2004, 31-33) for the relationship between oratory and acting and its importance for understanding the degree to which the audience must have been aware of staged performance.

[107] See Sussman (1994) and Damon (1995).

[108] See Steel (2001, 38-40).

[109] See Geffcken (1973).

I.3.4: AUTHORSHIP AND PRODUCTION OF NEW ROMAN DRAMA

The production of new plays in the 1st century BCE, both in text and on stage, was

not nearly as atrophied as has been assumed.[110] Although Terence and Accius are

frequently accepted as the last practitioners of their art, other playwrights continued the

traditions of both comedy and tragedy, as well as other literary dramatic forms. And

while the evidence for these playwrights is scanty, we must not take relative silence to

mean that dramatic production ceased.

First, Roman Comedy: while Terence is usually considered the last significant

author of the *palliata*, there were others from the period after him who continued writing

Roman Comedy in Latin. We know of at least one play each by a certain Aquilius,

Iuventius, Vatronius, and Valerius, as well as at least thirteen plays by Sextus Turpilius,

who, we are told by Jerome, died a full half-century after Terence did.[111]

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[110] For the "death" of tragic production, see Beare (1955, 118-119), Beacham (1991, 125-126), Goldberg (1996, 270-272), Hesk (2007, 87); for comic, see Beacham (1991, 127), Goldberg (2005, 55).

[111] The dates for all but Turpilius are uncertain. Aquilius is one of the authors whose works were conflated with Plautus, though Ribbeck (1855) shows that the two extant fragments of his *Boeotia* cannot have been written before the mid-2nd century BCE since they mention widespread use of sun-dials, which Pliny the Elder (*Nat. Hist*. 7.60) says were not publicly available in Rome until then. There are no dateable biographical details about Iuventius. Lindsay (1929) doubts the existence of an author named Vatronius, though his argument is not altogether convincing and ignores the possibility that the conjunction *vel* in the gloss in Ps.Placidus (*Burrae Vatroniae, fatuae ac stupidae, a fabula quadam Vatroni auctoris, quam Burra inscripsit, vel a meretrice Burra*) is specifying rather than alternative (i.e., "from a certain play of the author Vatronius, the *Burra*, which he wrote, or more specifically from the prostitute Burra [who appears in the eponymous play]"). Valerius is perhaps the epigrammatist Valerius Aedituus from the mid- to late 2nd century BCE, but this is altogether uncertain. For Turpilius, see Wright (1974, 153-181).

The comic tradition was certainly still alive in the 2nd century BCE long after Terence stopped breathing.[112]

Likewise, we know for certain that at least three authors were still writing Roman Comedy in the 1st century BCE, and we can infer from references to them that others were also engaged in the same business. And, at least in the case of our first writer, we know that these playwrights were not dilettantes, but professionals who earned their living as full-time authors of comedies.

In his *Menippean Satires*, Varro mentions a certain author of comedies named Quintipor Clodius, whom he criticizes because "he has made so many comedies without any Muse."[113] Issues of quality aside, "so many comedies" implies that Clodius engaged in producing *fabulae palliatae* regularly, and there is no reason to believe these were intended for anything other than performance on stage.[114] Likewise, this phrase suggests that Clodius had attained some admiration from a substantial audience, even if not from Varro, since it is unlikely that he could have continued writing plays if they were not at

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[112] *Pace* Goldberg (2005, 55), who thinks Turpilius's plays lacked any innovation and offer proof that Roman Comedy had stagnated immediately before its presumed collapse. For a discussion of Turpilius's potential innovation in combining aspects of Plautine and Terentian comedy, see Wright (1974, 153-156).

[113] Varro *Men.Sat.* fr.59 Astbury: *cum Quintipor Clodius tot comoedias sine ulla fecerit Musa, ego unum libellum non 'edolem,' ut ait Ennius.* Besides this notice, there is one other reference to Quintipor Clodius by Varro in a lost *Epistula ad Fufium*: *si hodie noenum venis, cras quidem si veneris meridiem die natalis Fortis Fortunae...Quintiporis Clodi †Antipho fies† ac poemata eius gargaridians dices, 'O Fortuna, o Fors Fortuna, quantis commoditatibus hunc diem* (Nonius p.144 s.v. *Noenum*, 117 s.v. *Gargaridiare*, 425 s.v. *Fors Fortuna*. I follow Brożek (1966) in placing these three fragments together, but prefer Riese's conjecture *Antipho fies*, which seems the most sensible and least intrusive. It is uncertain when Clodius lived and wrote, but Varro's criticism in the *Men.Sat.* (published after 67 BCE; see Coffey 1976, 152-153) suggests a *floruit* in the early to mid-1st century BCE. Based on his demonstrably servile praenomen, Brożek (1966, 118) thinks he was a freedman of the Clodii, many of whom inhabited Rome during the mid-1st century BCE.

[114] That *comoedias* here signifies *palliatae* is perhaps confirmed by the fact that Varro's quotation of Clodius itself contains a quotation of Terence's *Phormio* 841.

least mildly popular.[115] Furthermore, Clodius was almost certainly a freedman and this fact indicates that he, like his freedmen predecessors in Roman Comedy, was a professional playwright whose livelihood depended on the success of his work.

In his commentary on Horace, Porphyry remarks that a certain Aristius Fuscus, a man much esteemed and several times mentioned by Horace, was also a writer of comedies.[116] His life and work are obscure, but we can extrapolate from references in the *Sermones* and *Epistles* that he was roughly Horace's age and must have been writing in the mid-1st century BCE.[117] If both Porphyry and ps.-Acro are correct in their commentaries, then Fuscus followed predecessors like Livius Andronicus, Naevius, and Ennius in writing both comedies and tragedies.[118]

In the *Sermones*, Horace explains that he has chosen to write satires for two reasons: first, they will need neither to impress the distinguished dramatic critic Sp. Maecius Tarpa nor to obtain repeated performances before audiences in the theater; second, they do not have a recognized contemporary master, unlike the genres of comedy and tragedy, whose current preeminent practitioners he claims are his friends Fundanius and C. Asinius Pollio:

haec ego ludo,	38
quae neque in aede sonent certantia iudice Tarpa	
nec redeant iterum atque iterum spectanda theatris.	40
arguta meretrice potes Davoque Chremata	

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[115] So Brożek (1966, 117).

[116] Porphyry ad *Epist*.1.10.1: *ad Aristium Fuscum scriptorem comoediarum.* Horace mentions or addresses Fuscus in *Odes* 1.22, *Serm*.1.9.61-74, 1.10.82-83, and *Epist*.1.10.

[117] See especially *Sermones* 1.9.60-74, *Epist.* 1.10.1-5, and ps.-Acro ad locc. for suggestions that Horace and Fuscus were agemates.

[118] Ps.-Acro ad *Epist*.1.10.1: *hac epistula alloquitur Aristium scriptorem tragoediarum*.

eludente senem comis garrire libellos
unus vivorum, Fundani; Pollio regum
facta canit pede ter percusso   44
        Horace, *Sermones* 1.10.38-44

                                        I play with those things
that neither sound striving in the temple where Tarpa is judge
nor return again and again to be seen in the theaters.
You alone of those alive today, Fundanius, can make
charming plays chatter, using a sharp prostitute and a Davus
tricking Chremes; Pollio sings the deeds of kings
with the three foot meter…

This passage holds two critical implications for our knowledge of the production of new comedies in the 1st century BCE. There must have been sufficient numbers of comic playwrights to justify contests and evaluations by a judge like Tarpa (*certantia iudice Tarpa*, 39), and these authors were writing with an eye towards public performance on multiple, presumably regular occasions (*iterum atque iterum spectanda theatris*, 40).[119] In the process of singling out Fundanius as the most capable living author of Roman Comedy in his eyes (*potes...unus vivorum*, 41-43), Horace reveals that there were others writing at that time who did not quite meet his standards.[120] Furthermore, there must have been a considerable pool of other playwrights for Horace to exclude; if Fundanius and Fuscus were the only practicing authors of Roman Comedy, then these lines would have

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[119] Ps.-Acro ad *Serm*.1.10.38 says that Horace calls Tarpa a "iudex" either because poets used to come together in the *Aedes Musarum* and compete before him for prizes, or else because he used to approve what plays would be performed on stage (*vel in aede Musarum ait, quo solebant poetae convenire et dicta sua multis audientibus recitare captantes laudem ex versibus, et ideo Tarpam iudicem voluit, vel quod Tarpa probare consuevisset, quae ad scenam deferenda essent*). In either case, live recitation and performance, not silent reading, are implied.

[120] Fundanius must have been a playwright of *palliatae*, as the stock names (Davos, Chremes) and plot (a shrewd prostitute tricks an old man with the help of a slave) are emblematic of Roman Comedy. Goldberg (2005, 60) misses the point of Horace's praise in suggesting that *unus vivorum* implies that Fundanius is the only living author writing comedies in Horace's day.

been an irreconcilable slight to a poet singled out only forty lines later as

optimus...Fuscus![121] But in assessing the value of these unnamed playwrights we must

also keep in mind that Horace's poetic criteria are not always clear and his inclusion,

derision, and omission should not be taken as any indicator that comedies in his time

were inferior in quality to the classics of the 3rd and 2nd centuries BCE.

Although it is outside the scope of this study, it is perhaps worthwhile to mention

here that we know of several more *palliata* authors in the Imperial period, a fact that

suggests Roman Comedy was a lively enough genre at the end of the Republic to create

sufficient knowledge of and demand for continued plays and performances. Pliny the

Younger mentions a certain Vergilius Romanus who wrote plays in the style of

Menander, in addition to mimes, and claims that he rivaled even the classics of Plautus

and Terence.[122] A generation later an epitaph for a certain M. Pomponius Bassulus

reveals that he wrote Latin plays based on Menandrian originals.[123] While Vergilius

Romanus's work might possibly be idle literary dabbling, it seems unlikely that Bassulus

would celebrate on his tombstone anything less than work that he had devoted himself to

professionally.

Now, Roman tragedy: Accius is usually considered the last significant

professional playwright of Roman tragedy, but we know from fragmentary evidence that

there was considerable interest in producing new plays, especially among elite Romans

whose main profession was not in the theater. Unlike for Roman Comedy, however, there

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[121] Horace *Serm*.1.10.82-83.

[122] Pliny *Epist*. 6.21, Beacham (1991, 139).

[123] *CIL* IX.1164.

has been some recent work on these 1st century BCE playwrights, so what follows will be only a brief survey drawn largely from the efforts of others.[124]

In the early 1st century BCE the great-uncle of Caesar the dictator, Julius Caesar Strabo, wrote at least three tragedies and apparently engaged actively with the theater community while maintaining a thriving political career. Other politicians writing tragedies in the 1st century BCE include Q. Cicero, Asinius Pollio, Cassius of Parma, at least one of the sons of Calpurnius Piso, Julius Caesar, and Octavian. There were, in addition, other authors writing tragedy around the same time about whom we know very little, including a C. Titius, a Pompilius, a Santra, a Pupius, an Atilius, and a Volnius.[125] There were also at least two professional poets who wrote tragedies in the 1st century, namely Varius Rufus and Ovid. Varius Rufus staged a successful production of his *Thyestes* in 29 BCE at Octavian's celebrations of his victory at Actium. Whether or not Ovid's *Medea* was staged is difficult to say, but it seems likely that his tragedy was at least meant for recitation and perhaps for performance as well.[126]

Whether or not these tragedians wrote for the stage is difficult to say and scholarship on the issue has so far produced no fully persuasive answer. It may be that all of these known playwrights wrote purely for an audience of readers, which at least Ovid claimed and seems likely in the cases of people like Q. Cicero, who probably wrote his

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[124] Most of the following material is drawn heavily from Erasmo (2004, 50-51) and Boyle (2006, 143-145).

[125] Volnius, whom most scholars on tragedy in this period omit, was according to Varro (*De Ling. Lat.* 5.55) an author of *tragoediae Tuscae*. Whether or not these tragedies were of the same time as Accius's and the rest is impossible to say, but I include him here for the sake of completeness.

[126] See Heinze (1997, 227-231) for arguments and bibliography about the staging of Ovid's *Medea*.

four tragedies as a playful diversion while away in Gaul.[127] Or it may be that these plays were, in fact, all intended for performance on the stage and testimonia about their productions has simply fallen out of the literary tradition. But the most likely situation – especially in light of the fact that other dramatic genres like Roman Comedy in the 1st century BCE gained new status as written literature while continuing their performative traditions at the same time – is that Roman tragedy, too, was written simultaneously for private readers and public spectators.

We have seen, then, that Roman dramatic literature maintained its status as a lively and performative art well into the 1st century BCE and that Catullus certainly had many opportunities to see both Roman Comedy and tragedy on the stage. By drawing together the evidence for drama's inclusion in intellectual scholarship and the literary canon that we noted in the first section with what we have just seen in this section about the continued performativity of Roman drama, we begin to see better the broad impact that dramatic literature had on 1st century BCE Rome and the ways in which it permeated society in a variety of media.

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[127] See Goldberg (1996, 272).

I.4.1: ROMAN DRAMA, RECITATION, AND CONVIVIAL CULTURE IN THE 1ST
CENTURY BCE

As we have just seen, Roman dramatic literature entered the world of ancient
scholarship while remaining a performative art on the public stage in the 2nd and 1st
centuries BCE. But there also arose other venues for drama uniquely adapted to and vital
for the poetics of the 1st century BCE, namely the intimate settings of banqueting
entertainment and semi-public recitations that began to dominate the discourse of elite
poetry during and after Catullus's generation.[128] Prior to this period there was already a
native convivial culture at Rome, apparently influenced by elements of the Greek
symposion, which employed sung and recited literature to create entertainment, social
cohesion, and a sense of historical continuity among elite Romans.[129]

But around the 1st century BCE these traditionally oral and spontaneous elements
began to be supplemented with both regular banquet entertainment – sometimes informal,
but frequently involving hired actors reading snippets of plays and giving small-scale
performances – and with poetic recitations before small audiences, both at home and in
larger venues like Roman *odea*.

First, the entertainments at Roman *convivia*: unfortunately, most of our surviving
evidence is somewhat later than the period in which we are interested here, but early
Imperial testimony can help establish a baseline from which we can work backwards. The

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[128] For the importance of these venues for 1st century BCE non-dramatic poetics, see Quinn (1982).

[129] See Zorzetti (1991), Habinek (1998, 97), Goldberg (2005, 3-14), and Polybius 31.25.5 for Cato the
Elder's complaints about the growing extravagance of banquets at Rome and a discussion of native song
traditions in Italy. See also Murray (1985) and O'Connor (1990) for Horace's use of convivial culture in his
work.

best-known example of a Roman *convivium* is Trimalchio's in Petronius's *Satyricon* and, while much of the banquet is hyperbolic and highly fictionalized, it is possible to draw information from this literary evidence with some care.[130] After a long procession of non-dramatic entertainments from the theater, Trimalchio mentions that he had bought *comoedi* to perform at his parties as well, but that he usually asked them to put on Atellan farces instead of their normal routines and had his choral flautist accompany some recited Latin text with music.[131] One logical implication of this statement is perhaps that the troop of comic actors he employed were accustomed to putting on Roman Comedy, since Trimalchio's alternate choice is the Latin farce and Latin poems set to music.[132] We also know from Plutarch's *Quaestiones Conviviales* (711A-712B) that tragedy could occasionally be staged at dinner parties during the Empire, and that Menander's comedies in particular were suited to dining entertainment.[133] Pliny the Younger likewise approved of *comoedi* performing at *convivia*. Although it is unclear whether he means Greek or Roman Comedy, we might infer from his praise of Vergilius Romanus's comedies in Latin that plays like Plautus's and Terence's were standard fare.[134] Moreover, Hadrian himself enjoyed having tragedies and comedies, along with Atellans and mimes,

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[130] See Jones (1991, 185) for the usefulness of the *cena Trimalchionis* for understanding real social activities despite its clearly fictional qualities.

[131] Petronius 53.12-13; cf. Jones (1991, 188).

[132] Whether "choraulen meum iussi Latine cantare" (53.13) implies isolated *cantica* performances or mimed versions of non-dramatic poetry is entirely unclear. See Moore (2008) for musical accompaniment to *cantica*. See Oakley (1997, 67-69) for the association of Atellan performances with mimes, Wiseman (1987, 47) for mimes at dinner parties, Beare (1955, 118-119) for Ovid's *Metamorphoses* as staged mimed texts, and Beacham (1991, 149) for Vergil's works being mimed on stage.

[133] See Jones (1991, 191-193) for a brief discussion of this passage in Plutarch. For Vergilius Romanus, see Pliny *Epistulae* 6.21 and Beacham (1991, 139).

[134] See the citations in Jones (1991, 192-193) for Pliny's praise of *comoedi* as dinner entertainers.

performed at his dinner parties.[135] Finally, virtuoso singers and actors could perform

famous excerpts from full plays, both Greek and Roman, of both tragedy and comedy.[136]

We can see, then, that the performance of dramatic works at *convivia* was a normal

practice in elite households under the Empire.

But what of the Republican period? Here the evidence is more difficult, but there

is some scattered material that suggests similar entertainments were being held already in

the 2nd and 1st centuries BCE. There is an apocryphal story that in the early 2nd century

BCE an aspiring Terence read one of his plays to Caecilius Statius at a dinner party to get

the elder playwright's approval and recommendation for public performance.[137] Polybius

says that elite Romans began to provide theatrical entertainment at banquets after the

importation of Hellenic culture in the 2nd century BCE,[138] and Livy confirms that this

kind of dinner entertainment was a new luxury imported to Rome in this period.[139]

Moreover, several other 1st century BCE authors discuss *ludi scaenici* at banquets in their

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[135] *SHA Hadrian* 26.4; cf. Jones (1991, 193).

[136] See Joshel (1977, 514-515), Fantham (1984, 304), Beacham (1991, 22-23), and Goldberg (2005, 56-57). Apuleius (*Florida* 16) remarks on recitals of portions of comedies, and Plutarch opines that it is senseless to go to the crowded theater to see Menander when one can watch his plays performed at home during dinner parties (*Moralia* 854B). Plutarch also preserves a shocking account of a dinner party held by the Parthian king after Crassus's defeat at Carrhae in 53 BCE, where an actor used the Roman general's disembodied head as a stage prop for a scene from Euripides *Bacchae*; although the anecdote is entirely non-Roman, the horror of the account may come largely from the perversion of a readily accessible and familiar custom (i.e., dramatic performances at dinner).

[137] See Goldberg (2005, 46) and Quinn (1982, 90).

[138] Polybius 31.25.4; cf. Beacham (1991, 22-23).

[139] Wiseman (1987, 45 n.105) cites Livy (39.6.8), who says that Manlius Vulso's army brought back dancing and convivial *ludi* from the East in the early 2nd century BCE.

own period as well.[140] There is, in addition, the question of stagefolk in this period, who probably spent much of their time not dedicated to public festivals by performing for private parties.[141] We can see, then, that Roman drama, including scripted plays, was finding a new niche in these smaller entertainment venues.

Now, for recitations: Asinius Pollio is credited by Seneca with being the first to give recitations to small invited audiences sometime soon after his retirement from public life in 39 BCE, but there is evidence that this practice began before him.[142] Q. Vargunteius gave readings of Ennius's works in the late 2nd century BCE, and Roman drama was starting by the 1st century BCE to feel just as at home in these small venues as on the public stage. In the *Ars Poetica* (385-390), Horace advises the young Piso to give readings of his tragedies to the dramatic judge Sp. Maecius Tarpa before he even considers letting the broader public see them, and he implies in the *Sermones* (1.10.38-43) that this was perhaps regular practice for many aspiring playwrights in his day. Somewhat later, but explicitly in the context of making new comedies in Latin, Pliny the Younger (6.21) mentions that the playwright Vergilius Romanus read his work aloud to much acclaim. And Seneca's tragedies may likewise have been experienced in *recitationes*, as was the *Cato* of Curiatius Maternus.[143] Again, the evidence is largely

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[140] Wiseman (1987, 45 n.105) cites Sallust (*Historiae* II 70M) for stages built for actors at Q. Metellus Pius's dinners in 74 BCE and for actors at parties in general (*Bellum Iugurthinum* 85.39), as well as Vitruvius (6.7.3) for *ludi* in male *convivia*.

[141] Beacham (1991, 22-23).

[142] Seneca *Controversiae* 4 pr.2. See White (1993, 60-62) for a brief discussion of this passage and its implications for 1st century BCE literature.

[143] See Boyle (1997, 3-12) for Seneca, and Goldberg (1996, 272-273) for Curiatius Maternus (late 1st century CE), who is one of the speakers of Tacitus's *Dialogus de Oratoribus*. Tacitus *Dialogus* 2 contains the reference to Maternus's recitation.

skewed towards the Imperial period, but it seems that these recitation practices had probably begun before, and certainly by the middle of, the 1st century BCE.[144]

Both of these forms helped shape how Romans in the 1st century BCE experienced Roman drama, and in turn I think they showed elite poets writing non-dramatic works – like Catullus – that drama could be scaled down, made intimate, and incorporated into contexts outside the theatrical stage proper. If a play by Plautus or Terence could be read aloud in the small dining rooms of aristocrats just like iambic poetry, and if epic and pastoral could be publicly staged and recited to the accompaniment of music and dance, then the lines between dramatic and non-dramatic genres are far more fluid than one would at first assume.[145] In this movement from the public stage to these smaller performance contexts, Roman drama showed itself to be versatile and adaptable for elite poetry, and I think this is one of the points from which Catullus and poets like him took his cue to use comedy and tragedy. The intimate experience of drama in *convivia* and *recitationes* helped merge the public and private, offering a new way for poets of the 1st century BCE to communicate uniquely individual experiences and emotions using aspects of communally shared genres and cultural vocabulary.

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[144] See Quinn (1982, 158-165) for arguments against Pollio being the first person to have thought of *recitationes*.

[145] McKeown (1979) has shown that the stage, in the form of mime, already had entered the repertoire of the Roman Elegists, and Newman (1990, 343-366) notes pantomimetic elements in Catullus's poem 63 (the galliambics on Attis and Cybele). See also my discussion in Chapter Four for this blurring of lines between dramatic and non-dramatic genres.

CHAPTER TWO: THE COMIC *ADULESCENS* IN CATULLUS'S EPIGRAMS

II.1.1: INTRODUCTION

We have seen in the preceding chapter that Catullus lived in a world permeated by Roman drama and that the stage was an invaluable locus of individual thought, public cohesion, and social communication. It should not be surprising if we discover that much of Catullus's poetry is marked with this same attention to and experience of the theater. Plautus and Terence, whose works highlight the erotic and social rivalry that dominated Roman life from the 3rd century BCE to the end of the 1st century BCE, provide material for a number of poems in which Catullus probes personal relationships between lovers and friends. Catullus uses Roman Comedy throughout his work to sketch these individuals and to delineate their relationships to one another, especially when such relationships revolve around conflict and competition. In the following chapters I will examine some ways in which Catullus invokes Roman Comedy to consider and play with these relationships.

I will begin in this chapter by focusing on the erotic aspects of his poetry that draw on Roman Comedy, particularly in his epigrams. Throughout these poems Catullus adapts the language and characters of Roman Comedy to the traditions of Hellenistic

epigram. This blending is particularly apparent in the Lesbia poems, whose speaker

repeatedly invokes the character of the *adulescens amator* from Roman Comedy. In

Chapter Four I will address the speaker's appropriation of this character in poem 8 (*miser*

Catulle, desinas ineptire), but in this chapter I will focus on how Catullus uses the

comedies of Plautus and, even more pervasively, those of Terence to describe his speaker

in his epigrams, weaving Hellenistic poetry with Roman Comedy. I will first argue that

several early Latin epigrammatists in the late 2nd and early 1st centuries BCE paved the

way for reading Hellenistic erotic epigram through the lens of Roman Comedy. I will

show that Catullus took some of his own cues from their experiments and combined

Greek personal poetry with Roman drama in more sustained and complex ways, creating

a coherent but conflicted speaker from disparate epigrammatic and dramatic vignettes. I

will show that Terence serves as a source for much of Catullus's conception of erotic

competition within his poetry. I will also argue that the *Eunuchus*, Terence's most

successful play during his lifetime and the one that made the greatest impact on 1st

century BCE authors, stands significantly behind Catullus's depiction of his speaker's

mixed feelings about Lesbia throughout the corpus and helps to bind together the often

contradictory voices present in the erotic epigrams.

II.2.1: A NOTE ON METHODOLOGY: TEXT, DRAMA, AND SYSTEM
REFERENCE

Before we can begin examining how Catullus invokes Roman Comedy, it is
necessary to make some theoretical and methodological remarks to clarify my approach
to these texts. Identifying and understanding points of contact between Catullus's poetry
and Roman Comedy – in fact, between written texts and dramatic works of any sort – is
more difficult than examining intersections between two texts written primarily to be
read, because performative literature like scripted drama poses special problems for the
interpretation of allusivity. Whereas intertextual moments between written texts are often
distinguishable and interpretable by traditional philological approaches to
intertextuality,[146] allusions to performative texts are more nebulous and elusive, requiring
a modified methodology for full interpretation.

This requirement results largely from the fact that two types of intertextuality can
operate simultaneously in performative texts, namely text-to-text and text-to-
performance, and these two encourage the reader to take very different paths. On the one
hand, intertexts between primarily written texts use a static medium, invoking
unchanging signs on the page that are both re-traceable (i.e., the reader can potentially
find and see precisely the same words the author saw when making the allusion) and able
to be re-experienced (i.e., the reader and the author, regardless of their temporal / cultural
/ personal contexts, engage with an intertextual source in the same fundamental way, as

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[146] See, for instance, the traditional philological approaches to dramatic intertextuality in my review of
literature in Chapter Four on poem 8, which has long been seen as alluding to various elements of the
adulescens amator from Roman Comedy.

individuals interpreting words on a page surrounded by a specific written context). On the other hand, intertexts between written and performative texts can use both static media (acting scripts and editions of plays) and dynamic media (performance events preserved through cultural and personal memory that cannot be verified against a static document). The addition of dynamic media complicates intertextual literature, because allusions involving them are necessarily imprecise: it is frequently difficult, and sometimes impossible, to determine whether an allusion invokes a single instance of a play (in reading or in performance) or the larger set of performances that the author experienced throughout his lifetime. For instance, we might ask whether a text alludes to the final "successful" staging of Terence's *Hecyra* or all three known performances during the playwright's lifetime, including the first two interrupted ones. It is also difficult to pinpoint whether a reference invokes a common element shared by the genre of the performative text (e.g., the stock figure of the *servus callidus* or the type-scene of anagnorisis of freeborn status from Roman Comedy) or only a single instance of that element (e.g., *Pseudolus*'s eponymous *servus callidus* hero, in isolation from other *servi callidi* like *Epidicus*'s eponymous hero and *Persa*'s Toxilus, or the anagnorisis scene at the end of Plautus's *Rudens,* in isolation from the comparable scene in the *Cistellaria*).

As I have shown in Chapter One, Catullus and the poets of his generation certainly had access to written texts of Roman Comedy. Moreover, the Catullan speaker explicitly points out the importance of texts for his own poetic composition, apologizing to Manlius in poem 68 for being unable to write him a proper poem because he is away from his library at Rome and has only one small container of books with him (*nam, quod scriptorum non magna est copia apud me, / hoc fit, quod Romae vivimus: illa domus, /*

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illa mihi sedes, illic mea carpitur aetas; / huc una ex multis capsula me sequitur, 68.33-

36). Consequently, it remains useful to approach allusions to Roman Comedy in

Catullus's poetry in traditional, text-oriented ways.

But I have also presented evidence that Romans in the 1ˢᵗ century BCE were still

regularly experiencing Roman Comedy live on stage, and these performance

circumstances certainly informed authors like Cicero, whose use of performative

elements from drama has long been noted.[147] These live performances, I think, influenced

the way Catullus engaged with Plautus and Terence just as much as their newly-edited

and canonized written texts did. In addition, the comedies of Plautus and Terence recycle

a remarkably large amount of material. As a result, it is more fruitful to talk about

references to these plays both as individual texts and as elements of a larger generic

system, especially in Catullus's poems, which we will see in the following chapters use

Roman Comedy extensively, often by applying stock types and type-scenes in broad

strokes.

Edmunds (2001, 143-150) notes the importance of these types of generic systems,

which in the context of intertextual allusions he defines as "verbal categories, literary and

nonliterary, larger than single texts" (143).[148] He shows that "system references,"

intertextual allusions that invoke larger systems of meaning through common and

accessible markers, point the reader simultaneously both toward the variant instances that

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[147] *Pace* Goldberg (2005 and 2007), who argues that Cicero's use of Roman drama serves to flaunt his
aristocratic education with texts in order to exclude those who did not receive such an education and
therefore are ignorant of Roman drama. Cf. Geffcken (1973) and Leigh (2004), to cite only two among a
vast bibliography, who discuss how the performative aspects of Roman Comedy and mime inform the *Pro
Caelio*, which Cicero himself calls attention to in his peroration. See also Dumont (1975), Vasaly (1993,
179 n.36), and Monbrun (1994) for further bibliography on Cicero's theatricality.

[148] Cf. also Thomas (1999, 114-141) and Hinds (1998).

constitute such a system (e.g., the daughters of Anius at Ovid *Metamorphoses* 13.644-674

or at *Cypria* fr.29 Bernabe) and toward the common elements shared by such instances

(e.g., that the daughters accompany the Achaeans in each version). I will address the

issue of systemic variation and its effects on interpretation more fully in Chapter Four,

but for now I will focus on the shared elements in systems.

Two of the most prominent and memorable features common to Roman Comedy

are the stock character and the type-scene, each an element of a generic system with its

own rules and implications. Stock characters, which scholars have already treated

abundantly within the context of Roman Comedy,[149] appear frequently in Catullus's

poetry as well. In particular, the comic young lover (*adulescens amator*) and his helpful

clever slave (*servus callidus*) appear in many of the poems I will discuss in the following

chapters. The phrase "stock character," however, properly applies only to individuals

within the context of Roman Comedy, since such characters are a native part of this

genre's traditional systems, whereas within the context of Catullus's poetry they are

foreign imports (that is, they are not Catullus's own "stock"). Therefore, I will use the

phrase "character intertext" to describe them and to denote sets of generic markers that

constitute a system of common character traits, actions, and reactions that such allusions

can be seen to import into a new context.[150] As they are a subset of Edmunds's system

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[149] See Duckworth (1952, 236-271) for a good overview of the qualities and functions of stock characters in
Roman Comedy.

[150] The phrase "character intertext" was coined by Wray (2001, 166), drawing on ideas that Laird (1997)
presents in the context of Vergilian characterization.

references, character intertexts can, but do not necessarily, point to a specific model; instead, they can be seen to invoke standard characteristics that individual types share.[151]

We will also see that Catullus draws on Roman Comedy through another broad intertextual approach, by alluding to familiar "stock scenes" that appear in a number of plays. Because Roman Comedy draws so heavily on generic systems of characters and themes, there tend to be substantial overlap and repetition that consequently create types of "stock scenes" (e.g., the disguise scenes at *Asinaria* 381-387 and at *Pseudolus* 594-606) and "stock relationships" (e.g., the antagonism between slaves and pimps, as in *Persa* and *Pseudolus*). Again, it will be useful to talk about these intertexts in Catullus's poetry in terms of system references: even if the audience is unaware of any one particular text that works to create these systems, the repeated types ensure that the systems themselves will be familiar and recognizable, both in their original Plautine and Terentian contexts as well as in their new Catullan setting.

Throughout the following chapters I will show that Catullus sometimes invokes specific moments in specific plays through close intertexts (e.g., the Plautine intertext in poem 70 in this chapter), but I will also argue that broad character- or scene-types common to many plays and not easily differentiable from one another inform his poetry as well (e.g., the Plautine types in poems 55 and 58b in the next chapter). As I have also suggested above, there are several difficulties particular to system references between

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[151] Uden (2006, 20) summarizes this point nicely: "The connection between Catullus' amatory *persona* and comic *adulescentes* is one which might be made not only by Catullus in shaping his images of a love affair, but by his readership in their perceptions of Catullus as an individual in a literary and political milieu. This connection need not be founded on their knowledge of particular characters in particular plays, but rather on their easy acquaintance with the comic *adulescens* as a familiar cultural stereotype of the passionate young man in love."

Catullus's poetry and Roman Comedy (i.e., the problem of multiple variants within a

shared system) that I will address more fully in my discussion in Chapter Four.

II.2.2: PAVING THE WAY: Q. LUTATIUS CATULUS, HELLENISTIC EPIGRAM, AND ROMAN COMEDY

Q. Lutatius Catulus, Marius's co-consul in 102 BCE and one of Sulla's supporters in the conflict between the two dynastic generals before his eventual suicide in 87 BCE, was also a poet who worked in epigram during the formative years of personal Latin poetry.[152] How much he actually wrote, and how much that writing influenced later poetry, is unclear.[153] But in his two extant epigrams we can see the beginnings of a phenomenon that Catullus and the Roman Elegists develop more fully later: each of Catulus's poems blends the learning and themes of Hellenistic epigram, collections of which were just beginning to circulate around Rome in Catulus's lifetime, with aspects of the Roman stage, especially in the form of *palliata* comedy.[154]

The shorter epigram (fr.2 Courtney) is remarkably Catullan in its encomiastic joy, similar in many ways to Catullus's poem 9 (*Veranius, omnibus e meis amicis*) and poem

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[152] The dating of Catulus's, and in fact all of early Latin epigram, is difficult; see Wheeler (1934, 69), Castorina (1968, 17), Ross (1969, 140-142), Mariscal (1993, 59), Cameron (1993, 51-56), and Courtney (1993, 70-92) for various arguments placing the five preserved examples somewhere between 130 and 90 BCE. I use the term "personal poetry" here to mean "poetry that is presented by a singular speaking *persona*," in contrast to mimetic (e.g., Roman drama) or narrative (e.g., Latin epic) poetry, and do not mean to suggest anything about the biographical poet's personal emotions or thoughts.

[153] Clausen (1964, 187) and Ross (1969, 152) claim that this poem was an idle diversion for a man with primarily political and military leanings, though I think Cicero's ready citation of Catulus fr.2 (*De Natura Deorum* 1.79), Gellius's later praise of its quality (19.9.10), and the apparent increase in interest in Hellenistic literature at Rome in this period (see Van Sickle 1988 and Cameron 1993, 47-56) belie such readily dismissive interpretations. I am inclined to believe that Catulus (and the other Latin epigrammatists) were not dilettantes and in fact wrote much more that is lost, especially in light of the fact that Cicero and Gellius quote the extant pieces in the same manner as they do the work of more substantially-preserved poets. See also Vardi (2000) for the possibility that the epigrams preserved by Gellius were part of a larger anthology, which might well have included more of their work that has since been lost.

[154] For the introduction of Hellenistic epigram at Rome in this period, see Ross (1969, 139-152) and Cameron (1993, 47-56).

31 (*paene insularum, Sirmio, insularumque / ocelle*). The epigram praises the famous

Roman comic actor Roscius, invoking Theocritus, Meleager, and Alexandrian

etymologizing along the way:[155]

> constiteram exorientem Auroram forte salutans   1
> > cum subito a laeva Roscius exoritur,
> pace mihi liceat, caelestes, dicere vestra
> > mortalis visus pulchrior esse deo.   4
> > > Catulus fr.2 Courtney

> I stood, by chance, greeting the rising Dawn,
> > when suddenly from my left Roscius rises,
> may I say, by your leave, heavenly ones,
> > a mortal seeming more beautiful than a god.

Catulus's use of Hellenistic epigram, along with etymological play on the connection

between the words *Aurora*, *exorior*, *roscidus*, and *Roscius*,[156] to describe a figure from

the Roman stage is remarkable, because we can see already in this early period an attempt

to combine this newly-introduced elite poetry from Alexandria with popular public

entertainments of *palliata* Comedy.

    The longer extant epigram of Catulus (fr.1 Courtney), and the one most important

for our purposes here, combines Hellenistic epigram and Roman Comedy even more

fully by using the language of the *palliata* to adapt Callimachus *Epigr*. 41 Pf., a Greek

poem on lovesick *aporia*:

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[155] See Courtney (1993 ad loc.) for the Greek sources Catulus invokes in this epigram, including Theocritus 18.26-8 (Ἀὼς ἀντέλλοισα καλὸν διέφανε πρόσωπον, / πότνια Νύξ, τό τε λευκὸν ἔαρ χειμῶνος ἀνέντος· / ὧδε καὶ ἁ χρυσέα Ἑλένα διεφαίνετ' ἐν ἁμῖν) and Meleager *AP* 12.127.1 (εἰνόδιον στείχοντα μεσαμβρινὸν εἶδον Ἄλεξιν).

[156] The rising of Dawn (*exorientem Aurora*) is accompanied generally by the appearance of dew (*ros*, from which Aurora's name was sometimes derived in antiquity), and, specifically in this epigram, by the appearance of Roscius rising (*exoritur*) from the left. See Mariscal (1993) and Weber (1996) for a fuller discussion of the etymological play in this epigram.

aufugit mi animus; credo, ut solet, ad Theotimum   1
    devenit. sic est; perfugium illud habet.
quid si non interdixem ne illunc fugitivum
    mitteret ad se intro, sed magis eiceret?
ibimus quaesitum. verum, ne ipsi teneamur,   5
    formido. quid ago? da, Venus, consilium.   6
        Catulus fr.1 Courtney

My soul has fled me; I believe, as usual, to Theotimus
    he's gone. That's how it is; he has that refuge.
What if I didn't forbid him from taking that fugitive
    in to himself, but instead said to toss him out?
We'll go to look for him. But we'll be caught ourselves,
    I'm afraid. What do I do? Advise me, Venus.

ἥμισύ μευ ψυχῆς ἔτι τὸ πνέον, ἥμισυ δ' οὐκ οἶδ'   1
    εἴτ' Ἔρος εἴτ' Ἀίδης ἥρπασε, πλὴν ἀφανές.
ἦ ῥά τιν' ἐς παίδων πάλιν ᾤχετο; καὶ μὲν ἀπεῖπον
    πολλάκι· 'τὴν δρῆστιν μὴ ὑποδέχεσθε νέοι'.
†οὐκισυνιφησον·† ἐκεῖσε γὰρ ἡ λιθόλευστος   5
    κείνη καὶ δύσερως οἶδ' ὅτι που στρέφεται.   6
        Callimachus *Epigr*.41 Pfeiffer

Half of my soul still breaths, half I don't know
    whether Love or Hades have taken it – only that it's gone.
Has it gone back to one of the boys? I even warned them
    many times: "Don't take in that runaway, lads."
†Did I not talk with them?† That stone-worthy and
    hard-hearted soul, I know, is off wandering.

Catulus's adaptation brings into Latin many of the ideas and images in Callimachus's

epigram, but the manner in which he does so is remarkable: as Pascucci (1979) and

Perutelli (1990) have shown, he appropriates the Alexandrian poet's work using the

language of Roman Comedy. This is most noticeable in Catulus's additions of *ad*

Theotimum / devenit (lines 1-2; cf. *devenit ad Theotimum*, Plautus *Bacchides* 318,

discussed more extensively below) and *mitteret ad se intro* (line 4; cf. variations of

mittere intro, Plautus *Truculentus* 718, 751, 756, etc...), as well as in many of the lexical choices Catulus makes (e.g., *perfugium* in line 2, which appears in Plautus three times but never in Augustan poetry).[157]

But beyond merely clothing the Greek poem in Roman Comedy, Catulus's changes can be seen to alter the Greek source text by alluding to a specific scene from a Plautine play. Catulus's poem draws heavily on Callimachus, playing with the idea of a runaway soul and the speaker's need to find it and regain control of himself. But by invoking Plautus's *Bacchides* at the end of his opening line, *ad Theotimum* / *devenit*, Catulus modifies the tension in the poem. Whereas the Callimachean speaker seems to have an antagonistic relationship with his runaway soul, aggressively calling it "stone-worthy" and "hard-hearted" (lines 5 and 6), Catulus's speaker is tentative and indecisive, afraid and dependent on Venus's aid. In many ways, especially in his *aporia* and inability to function without external help, he mirrors the *adulescens amator* of Roman Comedy.

What is most interesting about the Plautine intertext that Catulus invokes here is that the character Theotimus is a red herring in the *Bacchides*. In order to hide the fact that his young master Mnesilochus has absconded with his father's money to buy a prostitute, the slave Chrysalus tells the old father Nicobulus that the money has been deposited with a fictional banker named Theotimus living far away in Ephesus. Chrysalus means to trap and mislead the *senex* while he and the young lover carry out their various erotic plans, and this trap stands behind the concerns of Catulus's speaker as well: he plans to go to Theotimus to find his missing soul, but he's afraid that he will be held up

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[157] See Pascucci (1979, 122-126) and Perutelli (1990, 261-262) for a comprehensive list of parallels between Catulus fr.1 Courtney and Plautus and Terence, respectively. For a more thorough discussion of how this adaptation through Roman Comedy functions within the context of Catulus's translation, see Polt (2007, 28-63).

(*ibimus quaesitum. Verum, ne ipsi teneamur, / formido*, lines 5-6) while his fugitive

animus cavorts behind his back. The speaker marks his soul as a *fugitivus*, putting it on a

level with the clever slaves of Roman Comedy, including *Bacchides*'s Chrysalus who has

set up the trap for the old man. So by invoking Plautus, Catulus's epigram pushes in a

different direction than his Greek source. Whereas the speaker in Callimachus's poem

rants and heaps insults upon his half-soul, Catulus's speaker plays simultaneously the

roles of *adulescens amator* unable to function without Venus's help and of *senex durus*

being fooled by clever rogues, caught in an indecisive struggle between fear and love on

the one hand and trust and suspicion on the other.

In his analysis of these poems, Maltby (1997) concludes by summarizing the

relationship of Catulus's work, and that of all five extant early Latin epigrams,[158] to their

Hellenistic sources and to Roman Comedy: "In spirit and in language the aristocratic

authors of these epigrams are much closer to the Roman comedians Plautus and Terence

and, like them, freely adapted their Hellenistic Greek models to the Roman idiom" (56).

Directly or indirectly, these early Latin epigrammatists influenced later Roman poets, not

least Catullus, who followed their precedent in his own poetry. Let us turn now to his

poems and see how Catullus further develops this blending of Hellenistic epigram with

the language, scenarios, and characters of Roman Comedy.

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[158] Besides the two epigrams discussed above, Gellius (*Noctes Atticae* 19.9) preserves two by Valerius Aedituus and one by Porcius Licinus. See Courtney (1993 ad locc.) for these poets, who were roughly contemporary with Catullus.

II.2.3: THE OATHS OF CALLIGNOTUS, OLYMPIO, AND LESBIA (POEM 70)

Catullus's poem 70, the first Lesbia poem in the epigrammatic section of his

corpus, has been adduced by scholars as a counterpoint to the early Latin epigrams of

Lutatius Catulus and Valerius Aedituus.[159] In Catullus's poem, the speaker says that his

woman claims to love no one other than him, but that he has doubts about her assertion:

<blockquote>

nulli se dicit mulier mea nubere malle   1
    quam mihi, non si se Iuppiter ipse petat.
dicit: sed mulier cupido quod dicit amanti,
    in vento et rapida scribere oportet aqua.   4
      Catullus 70

My woman says that she prefers to marry no one
    other than me, not even if Jupiter himself should ask.
She says: but what a woman says to a desirous lover
    should be written in the wind and rapid water.

</blockquote>

In comparing this poem of Catullus with the epigrams of Catulus and the other early

Latin poets, Pascucci and Maltby state that Catullus was writing something radically

different from and uninspired by his epigrammatist predecessors: whereas the early

epigrams clothe the themes of Hellenistic poetry in Roman Comedy, they argue that

Catullus conveys uniquely Roman ideas and borrows only Callimachus's formal elements

and some proverbial images that happen to be shared by his Greek predecessors.[160] But

closer examination reveals several affinities between this poem and the Callimachean

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[159] Pascucci (1979, 119-120) and Maltby (1997, 44-45).

[160] Maltby (1997) sums up succinctly: "[The early epigrams'] themes may be Hellenistic, but their style and language are purely Roman. In this they differ from Catullus' later adaptation in poem 70 of Callimachus' epigram 25....Here Catullus' theme is personal and Roman, but the linguistic structure of the poem is based on this or a similar Greek original. Though it is generally assumed that this particular Greek epigram served as Catullus' model, the only clear similarities are the repetitions" (44-45).

epigram of Catulus, and in fact we see in both pieces the same move towards blending

Greek epigrammatic themes with Roman Comedy.

As I discussed above, Catulus modifies Callimachus's speaker by adding

elements of the *adulescens amator* of Roman Comedy and by alluding intertextually to a

recognizable point in a play of Plautus. Catullus performs the same shift in his poem 70,

altering the tone and tension in his own Greek sources by invoking Roman Comedy.

There are at least two Greek sources that Catullus draws on in poem 70, the one

Callimachus *Epigr.* 25 Pf. (quoted below) and the other Meleager *A.P.* 5.8 (χὠ μὲν ἐμὲ

στέρξειν, κεῖνον δ' ἐγὼ οὔ ποτε λείψειν / ὠμόσαμεν· κοινὴν δ' εἴχετε μαρτυρίην. / νῦν δ'

ὁ μὲν ὅρκια φησὶν ἐν ὕδατι κεῖνα φέρεσθαι).[161] As in Catulus's epigram, Callimachus's

poem offers the primary elements of Catullus's themes and imagery:

ὤμοσε Καλλίγνωτος Ἰωνίδι μήποτ' ἐκείνης   1
    ἕξειν μήτε φίλον κρέσσονα μήτε φίλην.
ὤμοσεν· ἀλλὰ λέγουσιν ἀληθέα τοὺς ἐν ἔρωτι
    ὅρκους μὴ δύνειν οὔατ' ἐς ἀθανάτων.
νῦν δ' ὁ μὲν ἀρσενικῷ θέρεται πυρί, τῆς δὲ ταλαίνης   5
    νύμφης ὡς Μεγαρέων οὐ λόγος οὐδ' ἀριθμός.   6
        Callimachus *Epigr.* 25 Pfeiffer

Callignotus swore that he would never leave Ionis,
    preferring neither a pretty boy or girl.
He swore: but what they say is true, that oaths given
    in love cannot reach the ears of the gods.
But now he burns with fire for a youth, and of that
    girl, as of the Megarians, there is neither word nor reckoning.

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[161] Konstan (1972, 103) remarks, "This apparently simple, straightforward poem is, as it happens, indebted for almost every thought and phrase to some Greek model or other." I follow his and Laurens's (1965) analysis for several aspects of how these Greek sources function in their Catullan context, especially in how Catullus rejects the Greek sources' notions of erotic love in favor of lasting affection bonded by fidelity and obligation.

The broad theme of deception that Catullus appropriates is immediately apparent, though he makes a number of changes. Whereas Callimachus's epigram is spoken by an omniscient narrator removed from the characters and events of the poem, the Catullan speaker is directly involved, and the subsequent gender inversions created by the speaker's assumption of the female Ionis's victimized role bear the mark of Catullan adaptation (cf. poem 51, where he takes up the role of Sappho's speaker).[162] Note also that Callimachus explicitly states that Callignotus's deception of Ionis has occurred, whereas the Catullan speaker only suggests that he has doubts about his woman's assertions of faithfulness. As I will discuss shortly, this elevation of suspicion, that is of perceived over actual infidelity, is a major part of Catullus's appropriation of Roman Comedy throughout the epigrams. So we can see that Catullus is marking his Greek source clearly, through both thematic and textual signs, manipulating Callimachus and not merely borrowing his phrasing.[163]

But as Merrill pointed out long ago, the reference to Jupiter at the end of Catullus's first couplet invokes a distinctly non-Greek and non-epigrammatic source, namely Plautus's *Casina*.[164] While several commentators have assumed that the phrase, "not even if Jupiter himself should ask" (line 2), should be understood as merely proverbial,[165] this expression is not common, appearing only once before Catullus's

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[162] See Skiadas (1975) and Skinner (2003, 64) for the self-insertion of the speaker into the Callimachean narrative, and Miller (1988) for a fuller discussion of gender inversions and other oppositional modifications Catullus makes to Callimachus's epigram.

[163] *Pace* Maltby (1997, 45) and Thomson (1997 ad loc.).

[164] Merrill (1893 ad loc.)

[165] See Fordyce (1961 ad loc.) and Thomson (1997 ad loc.). This expression appears only four times in extant Latin (Plautus *Casina* 323, Catullus 70.2, Ovid *Metamorphoses* 7.801, and *Heroides* 4.36), and it

usage, at *Casina* 323. I argue that we should instead understand it as a precise intertextual

link that modifies Catullus's Greek source in a significant but complementary fashion,

just as Catulus's allusion to Theotimus from the *Bacchides* modifies his own

Callimachean source.

  In the Plautine scene alluded to in Catullus 70, the *senex* Lysidamus's slave

Olympio, whom his old master is trying to have married to Casina so that he himself can

have sex with her through some kind of *ius primae noctis*, has just been wrangling with

the old master's wife Cleustrata about the whole affair:

   LYSIDAMUS: quid istuc est? quicum litigas, Olympio?   317
   OLYMPIO: cum eadem qua tu semper. LY: cum uxori mea?
   OL: quam tu mi uxorem? quasi venator tu quidem es:
   dies atque noctes cum cane aetatem exigis.   320
   LY: quid agit, quid loquitur tecum? OL: orat, opsecrat
   ne Casinam uxorem ducam. LY: quid tu postea?
   OL: negavi enim ipsi me concessurum Iovi,
   si is mecum oraret.   324
     Plautus *Casina* 317-324

   LYSIDAMUS: "What's up over there? Who are you litigating with, Olympio?"
   OLYMPIO: "The same woman you always are." LY: "With my wife?"
   OL: "What wife are you talking about? You're really more like a hunter:
   day and night you spend your life with a bitch."
   LY: "What's going on, what did she say to you?" OL: "She's begging, pleading
   that I don't take Casina as my wife." LY: "What did you say then?"
   OL: "I denied that I would even yield to Jove himself,
   if he were to beg me."

Olympio seems to be genuinely intent on marrying Casina, but his assertion is misleading

because Lysidamus is ultimately the impetus and beneficiary of this marriage. Olympio's

statement here is soon revealed to be disingenuous through a subtle joke in a not-so-

seems likely from the context that Ovid is pointing back to Catullus's usage in both cases. Otto (1890) does
not include it among his proverbial expressions.

subtle scene of slapstick. During a confrontation in the very next scene between

Cleustrata and her slave Chalinus on the one side and Lysidamus and his slave Olympio

on the other, Lysidamus orders Olympio to punch Chalinus as a proxy for his wife:

LYSIDAMUS: percide os tu illi odio. age, ecquid fit?
CLEUSTRATA: cave obiexis manum.   404
OLYMPIO: compressam palmam an porrecta ferio?
LY: age ut vis. OL: em tibi!   405
CL: quid tibi istunc tactio est? OL: quia Iuppiter iussit meus.
CL: feri malam, ut ille, rusum. OL: perii! pugnis caedor, Iuppiter.
LY: quid tibi tactio hunc fuit? CHARINUS: quia iussit haec Iuno mea.   408
      Plautus *Casina* 404-408

LYSIDAMUS: "Smash that jerk in the face. Come on, what're you doing?"
CLEUSTRATA: "Don't you dare raise your hand."
OLYMPIO: "Do I hit him with my fist open or closed?" LY: "Whatever you
want." OL: "Take that!"
CL: "Why did you touch him?" OL: "Because my Jupiter ordered me."
CL: "Hit him back." OL: "I'm dead! I'm being slaughtered by punches, Jupiter!"
LY: "Why did you touch him?" CHARINUS: "Because my Juno here ordered
me."

The fun here revolves around the perversion of religion and prayer for a squabble

between petulant spouses. But Olympio's childish defense of his actions, "Because my

Jupiter [i.e., Lysidamus] ordered me," also points back to the previous scene's exchange

between Olympio and Lysidamus about the slave's confrontation with Cleustrata.

Olympio asserts there that he would not yield Casina to Jupiter himself, but then in

identifying his master Lysidamus as his personal Jupiter he completely undercuts his

assertion, since his primary function in the play is precisely to give Casina up to

Lysidamus. So within the context of the play, Olympio's oaths are just bluster, spoken to

please his master but without any real conviction behind them.

Catullus's allusion to the first scene will, I think, automatically import the next scene for most readers of the poem who are familiar with Plautus's affinity for playing with prayer by invoking and then undercutting its seriousness.[166] The evocation of this set of Plautine exchanges can be seen to produce several effects in our reading of Catullus poem 70. First, the speaker's representation of Lesbia's promise through the semi-quotation of Olympio completes the gender inversions in the poem: just as the speaker identifies himself with Callimachus's female Ionis in the first line, in the second line he cloak's Lesbia's female voice in the male speech of *Casina*'s slave antagonist.[167] In addition, as in the case of the Catulus epigram, the combination of Greek epigram and Roman comedy puts the speaker simultaneously into two separate roles, one of a young lover (in the form of the girl Ionis) and the other of the passive and objectified female as a symbol of someone else's control and dominance (in the form of the non-speaking Casina). That both women are silent in their respective sources is significant, mirroring the feminine passivity that appears elsewhere in the Catullan corpus (cf. poem 11).

Second, the speaker elevates the seriousness of the situation from Callimachus's description of fickle infatuation to an issue of marriage.[168] This latter kind of relationship

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[166] Cf. *Pseudolus* 326-350, where the *adulescens* Calidorus at first prepares to sacrifice to the *leno* Ballio as his personal Jupiter before he revokes his prayers and engages in a *flagitatio* against the pimp. It is difficult to determine how much of the context the poem invokes. See Thomas (1999, 114-141) and Edmunds (2001, 133-163) for a discussion of boundaries in intertextual allusion and the degree to which the larger context of the source text is imported into the target text. The proximity of the scenes in Plautus's play, their similar and complementary content, and the emphasis in both the *Casina* and Catullus poem 70 on prayer as a marker of deception all serve to reinforce my reading here.

[167] See Pedrick (1986), who notes that we are only told what the speaker says Lesbia said, and that we must be aware that any pretense of a female voice is entirely modulated and colored by the speaker's male self-interest here.

[168] See Ross (1969, 90) for this elevation and for the final couplet's unusual phrasing as part of Catullus's appropriation of the "vocabulary of political alliance" to new erotic contexts.

is entirely foreign to the Greek sources, and as Konstan has noted, is largely foreign to ancient erotic poetry in general.[169] Furthermore, Miller and Skinner point out that this poem's reference to Jupiter and gender inversions point intratextually to Catullus 68.135-140 (two poems earlier in the collection). In poem 68 the speaker identifies himself with Juno, who must endure her husband's *plurima furta*. The discussion of marriage in poem 70 thus "is 'doubly duplicitous,' insofar as neither [Lesbia] nor the king of the gods was actually free to wed."[170] The invocation of Olympio's assertion adds another layer of duplicity, since in the *Casina* the slave could potentially marry the girl and fully intends to, but he does so knowing full well that his master's commands and plans will immediately stain his marriage with infidelity, in the form of Lysidamus's first-night privileges.

This knowingly unfaithful profession of faith by Olympio produces a third effect in Catullus's allusion to the Plautine play. By invoking Olympio's false oath, the Catullan speaker doubly undermines the promises that he says Lesbia made to him. Callimachus's Callignotus swears to love only Ionis but turns out to be faithless, and Plautus's Olympio swears to stand against Jupiter himself though fully aware that he will never defy his own Jupiter, Lysidamus. The Greek source highlights Lesbia's reckless fickleness, whereas the Roman one suggests that Lesbia has made her oath knowing that someone else will take the Catullan speaker's place. But whereas the blending of these multiple sources expands the speaker's suspicions exponentially in poem 70, we will see that in the other

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[169] Konstan (1972, 104) remarks that, "...the idea of marriage (nubere), which is here proposed to the *cupidus amans*, the victim of passionate infatuation, again appears to be Catullus' contribution: marriage is a notion generally foreign to the erotic tradition." Williams (1968, 404) states that the language of marriage appears in both Roman Comedy and Catullus "to express depth of feeling in a relationship which is not marriage," adding another point of connection between the two here.

[170] Skinner (2003, 65). The internal quotation is Miller's (1988, 131).

epigrams the poet controls this potentially explosive situation by mediating it through one

common source, namely Terence's *Eunuchus*, to which I turn now.

II.2.4: LOVE, HATE, SUSPICION: TERENCE'S *EUNUCHUS* AND THE CATULLAN

AMATOR (POEMS 85, 75, 70, 72, AND 109)

The speaker of the prologue to Terence's *Eunuchus* offers a defense of the

playwright against the attacks of his rival Luscius Lanuvinus, who has apparently

claimed that Terence stole parts of his play from previous adaptations of Menander's

Kolax by Naevius and Plautus. The speaker asserts that he did employ some of the stock

character types that happen to be in those plays, but that these elements are in the public

domain. After all:

> quod si personis isdem huic uti non licet: 35
> qui mage licet currentem servom scribere,
> bonas matronas facere, meretrices malas,
> parasitum edacem, gloriosum militem,
> puerum supponi, falli per servom senem,
> amare odisse suspicari? denique   40
> nullumst iam dictum quod non dictum sit prius.   41
>   Terence *Eunuchus* 35-41

> But if he is not allowed to use these same characters,
> how then can he write about a running slave,
> fashion good matrons, wicked prostitutes,
> a grasping parasite, a braggart soldier,
> a boy discovered, an old man deceived by a slave,
> to love, hate, and be suspicious? All in all,
> nothing's said now that hasn't been said before.

Through his prologue's speaker, Terence essentially sums up all the individual elements

that he considers essential to traditional Roman Comedy. The first four lines present the

familiar stock character types and their typical actions within the plays, all generally

agreed upon as the primary constituents of Roman Comedy. But for now I want to focus

on the final line of the speaker's summary of fundamental comic components, which highlights not the typical characters and plot elements, but instead the major themes Terence senses at the heart of comedy: love, hate, and suspicion (*amare, odisse, suspicari*, 40). It is important to note that, whereas the stock types the speaker mentions are part and parcel of the whole tradition of Roman Comedy, the three thematic elements are uniquely dominant in Terence's comedies. This preference in Terence's plays stands in contrast to Plautus and the other traditional comic playwrights, for whom erotic affairs are largely just vehicles for social inversion and the disruption of the status quo.[171] It is love, hatred, and suspicion that drive Terence's work, and this thematic trio helps explain why his plays push the characters of the *adulescens* and *puella* to the foreground, reversing the Plautine comic formula by limiting the clever slave elements except insofar as they advance his romantic plots.

It is no coincidence, I think, that so much of Catullus's heteroerotic poetry is developed through precisely these themes: Terence's *adulescens* and his erotic conflicts stand prominently behind Catullus's speaker, whose most common laments revolve around this opposition between love and hate, as in poem 85 (*odi et amo; quare id faciam, fortasse requiris. / nescio, sed sentio et excrucior*).[172] And it is also no coincidence that the play in which this prologue appears, the *Eunuchus*, seems so often to deal with the same themes, phrases, and words that Catullus uses to portray his speaker in

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[171] Wright (1974, 134-135) notes this difference specifically in the context of the *Eunuchus*, and Anderson (1996, 60-87) argues persuasively that Plautine comedy (and therefore also the comedies of Naevius, Caecilius Statius, and Turpilius, since Wright (1974) shows they are all of a kind) is distinct from both Greek New Comedy and Terence in that it relegates the lover to the background in favor of the slave's exploits. We will address these aspects of comedy in Catullus later in Chapter Three.

[172] Uden (2006, 19) also picks up on this connection between the *Eunuchus* prologue and poem 85, although he connects these three themes to Roman Comedy generally rather than to Terence specifically.

the epigrams. Konstan (1986) and Minarini (1987) have argued that the *Eunuchus* stands

at the root of Catullan and Roman elegiac poetry, especially in its opening scene, which

Horace rewrites in part at *Satires* 2.3.259-271 to represent the irrationality of young

lovers. The part of the play that serves as source text for the largest number of intertexts

for Catullus's epigrams, as well as for the Elegists and Horace, comes directly after the

prologue. The *adulescens* Phaedria has threatened to abandon the *meretrix* Thais, only to

be brought to reality by his slave Parmeno, who tells his master that he is just blustering

and will inevitably give in to the girl. Phaedria laments:

     o indignum facinu'! nunc ego   70
  et illam scelestam esse et me miserum sentio:
  et taedet et amore ardeo, et prudens sciens,
  vivos vidensque pereo, nec quid agam scio.   73
    Terence *Eunuchus* 70-73

    O undeserving crime! Now I
  feel that she is wicked and I am wretched:
  I am both tired of and burning with love, and fully aware,
  living and seeing it I die, and I do not know what to do.

Much of Catullus's invocation of Terence here revolves around the conflict between love

and hate, and the resulting schizophrenia that the lover experiences. Take, for example,

poems 85 (quoted above) and 75, whose conflict mirrors that in Phaedria's lament in the

Eunuchus:

  huc est mens deducta tua mea Lesbia culpa   1
   atque ita se officio perdidit ipsa suo,
  ut iam nec bene velle queat tibi, si optima fias,
   nec desistere amare, omnia si facias.   4
    Catullus 75

86

My mind has been led up to this point, Lesbia, through your fault,
    and so has ruined itself by its own devotion,
so that now it cannot wish you well, if you should become very good,
    or stop loving you, if you should do everything.

Minarini (1987, 64) has pointed out several intertexts between Phaedria's lament and

poem 85: *odi et amo* picks up Terence's balanced *et taedet et amore ardeo* (line 72),

excrucior plays off of *pereo* (line 73), and *nescio* is a calque on *nec...scio* (line 73).[173]

Poem 75's *perdidit* (line 2) also invokes Terence's *pereo*, and Uden (2005) has noted the

thematic parallels between the two. So we can easily see that the Catullan speaker's

conflict of love and hatred draws on Phaedria's conception of his own situation in the

Eunuchus.

But what about the third Terentian theme, suspicion (*suspicari*, Terence *Eunuchus*

40)? We find it prominently displayed in Catullus's poem 72, at an intersection between

the Plautine elements I noted above in poem 70 and the love/hate conflict we just saw in

poems 85 and 75:

dicebas quondam solum te nosse Catullum,   1
    Lesbia, nec prae me velle tenere Iovem.
dilexi tum te non tantum ut vulgus amicam,
    sed pater ut gnatos diligit et generos.
nunc te cognovi: quare etsi impensius uror,   5
    multo mi tamen es vilior et levior.
qui potis est, inquis? quod amantem iniuria talis
    cogit amare magis, sed bene velle minus.   8

You said once that you knew Catullus alone,
    Lesbia, and would not want to hold Jove before me.
I cherished you then not so much as the crowd loves its girlfriend,

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[173] See also Barsby (1999, 7-8) who analyzes poem 85's relationship to this scene in the *Eunuchus* in a slightly different way.

> but as a father cherishes his sons and sons-in-law.
>   Now I know you: so even if I burn more fiercely,
>   still you are much cheaper and lighter to me.
>   How is this possible, you ask? Because such harm
>   forces a lover to love more, but to wish well less.

The suspicions of infidelity hinted at by the Callimachean and Plautine elements in poem 70 come rushing to the surface in line 2 of poem 72 (*nec prae me velle tenere Iovem*; cf. *nulli se dicit mulier mea nubere malle / quam mihi, non si se Iuppiter ipse petat*, 70.1-2), combined at lines 5-6 and 7-8 with the love and hate contrast in poems 85 and 75, respectively (lines 5-6: **quare** *etsi impensius uror, / multo mi tamen es uilior et leuior. / qui potis est,* **inquis***?*; cf. *odi et amo.* **quare** *id faciam, fortasse* **requiris***. / nescio, sed sentio et excrucior*, 85.1-2; lines 7-8: *quod amantem iniuria talis / cogit* **amare** *magis, sed* **bene uelle** *minus*; cf. *ut iam nec* **bene uelle** *queat tibi, si optima fias, / nec desistere amare, omnia si facias*, 75.3-4). And these elements of the poem are tied back to the Terentian scene by the phrase *nunc te cognovi* (line 5), which Minarini (1987, 64) connects back to Phaedria's *nunc ego...sentio* (*Eunuchus* line 70).

Allusions to Phaedria's lament in the *Eunuchus* bind all these poems together, informing their interaction and creating a sense of continuity and unity out of the Catullan speaker's multiplicity of conflicted feelings. Even though Catullus splits references to Phaedria's emotions into multiple poems, his invocation of this single section of Terence reconnects the individual epigrammatic voices into a sustained elegy.[174] We will see in Chapter Three that several Plautine intertexts also function in this way in the corpus, combining different poems into coherent cycles whose connections become most apparent when read in relation to Roman Comedy.

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[174] Cf. Wills (1998) on such "divided allusions" in Vergil and their unifying qualities.

These Terentian intertexts do double duty, because while they create a sense of coherency to the speaker and flesh out aspects of his point it view, they also reveal ambiguous aspects of the speaker's self-presentation. The *Eunuchus* also stands behind poem 109, the last Lesbia epigram in the collection, which presents a reconciliation between the lovers. As with the other Catullan poems just discussed, this epigram also alludes to elements of Phaedria's conflict with Thais:

iucundum, mea vita, mihi proponis amorem   1
    hunc nostrum inter nos perpetuumque fore.
di magni, facite ut <u>vere</u> promittere possit,
    atque id <u>sincere dicat</u> et <u>ex animo,</u>
ut liceat nobis tota perducere uita   5
    aeternum hoc sanctae foedus amicitiae.   6
        Catullus 109

My life, you propose to me that this love of ours
    between us will be pleasant and enduring.
Great gods, make it so she can promise truly,
    and say it sincerely and from her heart,
so we can create through our whole life
    this eternal bond of sacred friendship.

Barsby (1999) has suggested that this poem invokes the very next scene in the *Eunuchus*, in which Phaedria accuses Thais of infidelity face-to-face and the *meretrix* defends her actions. Phaedria still distrusts his lover despite her protestations:

utinam istuc verbum <u>ex animo</u> ac <u>vere</u> diceres   175
"potius quam te inimicum habeam"! si istuc crederem
<u>sincere dici</u>, quidvis possem perpeti.   177
        Terence *Eunuchus* 175-177

Would that you were saying from the heart and truthfully,
"rather than have you as an enemy"! If I believed that was

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said sincerely, I could put up with anything.

Pedrick (1986) points out that Lesbia's speech in these epigrams is reported indirectly through the filter of their Catullan speakers, and therefore we should question the degree to which the epigrams can be read as a fair representation of the relationship in the poems between the speaker and Lesbia.[175] But the intertexts between Catullus's epigrams and the *Eunuchus* I have just discussed, especially this final one, hint that the Catullan speaker is less sympathetic than has generally been assumed.[176] By casting the speaker's lament in terms of Phaedria's internal conflicts and suspicions, Catullus can also be seen indirectly to import Thais as a parallel for the silent Lesbia. In doing so, he casts doubt on the speaker's representation of Lesbia, because Thais is the most sympathetic protagonist in Terence's play. While it is true that she has mercantile interests and manipulates both Phaedria and the *miles* Thraso to her advantage, her comments addressed to the audience – which we expect to be unfiltered representations of her true thoughts, since there is no one on stage for whom she must dissemble – reveal that she is far more sympathetic and concerned for Phaedria than the *adulescens* suggests in his opening rant. This allusion in poem 109 colors the other intertextual connections between the Catullan speaker of the epigrams and *Eunuchus*'s Phaedria, since it casts Lesbia in the role of the noble Thais. In so doing, it modifies the way suspicion can be read in Catullus's epigrams. Instead of accepting the speaker's assertions of fidelity at face value, the reader aware of the Terentian intertext can see that there are two sides in this argument. Lesbia, depicted as a

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[175] Cf. also Fitzgerald (1995, 134-139), who discusses the confessional rhetoric the speaker uses and the doubt this poetic approach casts on his own presentation of Lesbia's words.

[176] See discussions and bibliography in Pedrick (1986), Fitzgerald (1992), and Janan (1994, 81-88).

meretrix, is not altogether devoid of self-interest, but neither is the speaker entirely objective or honest in his self-presentation.

To sum up, in his epigrams Catullus describes his speaker in terms of the *adulescens amator* from Roman Comedy, creating a coherent voice of suffering and confusion out of a myriad of smaller experiences. But in so doing he also aligns Lesbia with individuals from Plautus and Terence, adding depth to her characterization in spite of her silence within the poems themselves. Catullus presents the struggle between the speaker and his girlfriend in terms of the struggles in Roman Comedy, both those between Plautine slaves and masters and between Terentian lovers and prostitutes. In the following chapters we will see that Catullus uses this same approach outside erotic contexts, especially in competitions for social control. As in the Lesbia epigrams, these other poems draw on comedy to play with ambiguities about power struggles in Roman society and to simultaneously glorify and undercut the speaker.

CHAPTER THREE: PLAUTINE HUMOR, SUBVERSION, AND CONTROL IN
CATULLUS'S POLYMETRICS

III.1.1: INTRODUCTION

As with most scholarship on the role of Roman Comedy in Catullus, my focus in

the previous chapter was on his amatory poems. But like Roman Comedy, Catullus's

poetry is not exclusively – or even predominantly – about love. In fact, a larger

proportion of the polymetric and elegiac poems is devoted to social relationships than to

erotic ones. Often the love poems' most noticeable contribution to the corpus is their

ability to contrast with and complement poems about friends, rivals, and enemies in

Catullus's social circles. In these poems, too, Roman Comedy offers Catullus

opportunities to engage with his literary predecessors and with Roman culture while

exploring the constantly shifting dynamics of personal and social relationships.

In this chapter I will discuss some ways in which Roman Comedy informs these

social interactions in Catullus's work. I will focus on one particular aspect of Roman

Comedy that features prominently in Catullus's poetry, namely the themes of comic

inversion and deception that permeate and drive Plautus's comedies. I will show how

Catullus invokes this carnivalesque spirit both through "character intertexts," in a series

of thematically-linked poems that highlight the speaker's self-deprecating playfulness, as

well as through explicit textual references, in a set of disparate poems linked by a common intratext to a particular type-scene involving schemes of Plautus's clever slaves. I will demonstrate that Plautus's triumphant rogues simultaneously offer Catullus models for humorous release and allow him to examine problems of social position in Roman society. They also give the Catullan speaker a mask through which he can gain license to criticize and to deceive his freeborn peers with impunity.[177]

I will also show that reading Catullus through the lens of Plautus, a master of mixing frivolity with sincerity, helps to reveal relationships between poems that Catullus's text encourages us to read together (e.g., through clear textual echoes or programmatic positioning) but that seem on the surface to have nothing to do with one another. Some of the poems I will examine in this chapter are quite familiar, but my focus will rest primarily on several pieces that have traditionally been neglected, to the detriment of our understanding of Catullus's poetic methods and cultural preoccupations. I will demonstrate that careful attention to these overlooked poems can reveal a great deal about priorities and anxieties in Catullus's poetry, as well as in the broader context of elite society in 1st century BCE Rome.

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[177] The most thorough and penetrating works on these two aspects of clever slaves and comic subversion in Plautus are Segal (1987), Anderson (1996), and McCarthy (2000), on whom I draw extensively in this chapter. Fitzgerald (2000) and Leigh (2004) also deal with a number of important elements for understanding the roles of social competition and slavery in Plautus.

III.2.1: PLAUTINE INVERSION: CATULLUS'S HEROICALLY BAD WOMEN
(POEMS 55, 58b, 10, 36, AND 37)

Nothing in Roman Comedy is quite as funny as the artful scheming of its

underdogs, characters who use their native cunning, quick wit, and disarming charm to

exploit their superiors and explode the status quo. Whether actualized as a woman,

prostitute, or slave, this character's antics have precisely the same aim, to show off and

celebrate what W. S. Anderson (1996, 89) has dubbed "Heroic Badness, which is one of

the great achievements of Roman and comic literature."[178] Whatever its ultimate effect, it

is primarily this comic *malitia* that propels Plautine comedy.[179] But, as I will show in this

chapter, this dubious virtue is not Plautus's alone. There are many underdog characters in

Catullus's poetry as well, and these individuals display roguishness similar to Plautus's

socially inferior characters in order to gain control in social and erotic contests.

Before we can see how this Heroic Badness functions in Catullus, a brief

summary of its fundamental features in Plautus is in order. In its broadest sense, it is

rebellion for rebellion's sake, a temporary triumph of unbridled play over the chafing

constraints of society. More specifically, it is the prime virtue of the comic rogue, an

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[178] Fitzgerald (2000, 81) notes that in Plautine comedy the slave, parasite, prostitute, *paterfamilias*, and *uxor* who demonstrate cleverness all share the same archetypical qualities and perform roughly the same function in Plautus's plays, namely the heroization of *malitia*, regardless of their respective contexts and goals. While a *meretrix callida* and a *senex callidus* might have opposing goals, their methods and primary functions within the plays center on highlighting the "virtues" of Heroic Badness.

[179] Anderson (1996, 60-106) argues persuasively that what distinguishes Plautus's comedies most especially from Menander and Terence is their emphasis on the social competition between classes at the expense of love plots, which are necessary to the play's structure and movement but relegated to the background to highlight the rogues' antics. This is not to say that love is unimportant to Plautus's plays, but only that is it secondary to the author's social interests. For interpretations of the different effects of this comic *malitia* on the audience, see Segal (1987), Anderson (1996), and McCarthy (2004).

individual who has been subjected to an inferior position by nature, society, or situation and who feels the urge to undermine the authority of other individuals in substantially superior positions, invariably by performing some clever action or speech. It reaches its fullest expression when the two sides of this contest are pushed to the utmost extremes and effectively become caricatures of all that is pleasurable about rebellion and all that is detestable about authority: that is, when the superior individual flaunts and revels in what he believes is his unassailably dominant position,[180] while the inferior individual engages in social subversion with no hope or desire for personal gain beyond the sheer satisfaction of victory against the odds and against traditional mores.

It should not be surprising that this same celebration of Heroic Badness that Plautus exploits so well and fully should permeate Catullus's poetry. During the late Republic, aristocratic culture in Rome was circumscribed by a series of rigid hierarchies based on ancestry, class, rank, wealth, trade, sex, gender, and any number of criteria for which individuals were constantly judged, appraised, and assigned relative social roles. Regardless of background, frequently Romans were in one way or another subject to the authority or dominance of someone else and often exerted tremendous efforts while jockeying for position.[181] The insecurities and assertions about the status quo, and one's

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[180] The patriarchal nature of Roman society guarantees that this superior figure will always be male. This point will be important to keep in mind, especially when we come to Catullus's use of Plautine *malitia* to sketch the social power struggles of female characters in poems 55, 10, and 36.

[181] See McCarthy (2000, 17-29) for this social hierarchy and competition in relation to Plautus and his audience. Most of her discussion of 3rd and 2nd century BCE Roman social structures is directly relevant to those of the 1st century BCE when Catullus was writing. While enormous advances in the fields of literature, art, and warfare occurred in the intervening years, the basic patronage system that defined Roman society remained more or less the same until well into the late 1st century BCE, when it began to experience the strain that altered so many aspects of Roman social systems in the last years of the Republic. Compare Fitzgerald (2000, 69-86), whose discussion focuses primarily on slavery as a means for understanding social hierarchy during the early Empire. See also Wallace-Hadrill (1989) for a brief

place relative to it that such a system engenders, stand prominently in many of Catullus's poems, particularly those that touch on poetic rivalry, social oneupmanship, and erotic competition.

Although more than a century had elapsed since Plautus lived, and although Roman Comedy centers on different socio-economic classes than Catullus's poetry does, many of the same problems that Plautus's plays explored in the 3rd and 2nd centuries BCE persisted well into the 1st century BCE. And many of the social issues that affect slaves and prostitutes in Plautus's comedies likewise afflicted affluent young men like Catullus, albeit of course on a different scale and with different repercussions. Catullus's world was, in effect, one continuous dramatic play centering on individuals' struggles for superiority across traditional set boundaries. His poetry reflects these contests against the odds time and again. The key to success in this series of social performances lay in accepting and even embracing one's relative inferiority and using the tools available to make the most of one's position as subjugated individual, essentially to cast oneself as a versatile comic hero rather than an inflexible and doomed tragic protagonist.[182] In this way, Plautine Heroic Badness was an optimal weapon in the Roman social arsenal.

As Kathleen McCarthy has demonstrated, one of the most accessible ways for Romans in the Republic to cope with this constant struggle was through humor, and particularly through the self-consciously clever and malevolent humor of an inferior individual aimed at taking a superior rival down a social notch, even if only

discussion of the pervasiveness and pluralism of the Roman social hierarchy in the Republic and early Empire.

[182] The idea of theater as a metaphor for life and society, and the accompanying equation of real person with dramatic *persona*, was well-established in antiquity. Cf. Erasmo (2004) and Bartsch (1994) for the use of tragedy in this way in the late Republic and in the early Empire, respectively.

temporarily.[183] The clever slave of Roman Comedy embodies precisely this kind of

humorous subversion: when audience members watched a Chrysalus or a Pseudolus on

stage, regardless of their age, sex, or class, they could see an essentially universalized,

idealized, and triumphant avatar of themselves sketched in the clearest and simplest

terms, a Platonic form of personal control in a society in which control was usually in the

hands of someone else. William Fitzgerald (2000, 11) summarizes McCarthy's point

nicely:

> Doubtless slaves at Rome did resist and manipulate their masters to the
> best of their ability, but Plautus' clever slaves are not just portraits,
> however exaggerated, of that resistance. These lovable tricksters in their
> imaginary Greek setting can be read, among other things, as fantasy
> projections of the free, not so much portraits of slaves as others through
> whom the free could play out their own agenda. Slavery, as a polar
> opposite of the free state, could be the place where the free imagined
> escaping from the demands of "liberal" comportment and indulging in
> revolt against their own superiors.

In contrast to the affinity that the genericized and relatable heroic clever slave offers

every audience member, there is a wide range of antagonists against whom the *servus*

callidus struggles in Plautus's plays. Each of these represents some unique form of

domination and oppression in Roman society: the braggart soldier (*miles gloriosus*)

embodies physical and military mastery inherent in Roman political life, the pimp (*leno*)

is an exemplar of financial control and the growing power of the nouveau-riche

businessman, and the harsh old man (*senex durus*) epitomizes domestic control and

traditional *virtutes*, to name only a few of the most prominent villains the clever slave

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[183] McCarthy (2000, *passim* but especially 25-34). See also Fitzgerald (2000, 32-50).

must overcome. The slave protagonist's Heroic Badness represents freedom for anyone and everyone, because *a fortiori* if a slave, the character most subject to the will of others, can triumph over his social betters, then certainly everyone equal or superior to him (i.e., the entire audience) can likewise gain a modicum of control over their own lives. Each antagonist, however, stands for a unique form of social domination and control. We will see in the following section that Catullus takes his cue from Plautus in this respect and uses the character of the clever slave to sketch a variety of individuals in different situations, but that he draws on a variety of Plautine villains to portray characters trying to dominate others.

Now that we have briefly addressed the applicability of Plautine power struggles and Heroic Badness to Roman social relations in Catullus's time, a tangible example will offer a useful coda to our summary of the main features of comic *malitia*. The *Pseudolus* offers the clearest and most familiar example of Heroic Badness in Roman Comedy. In the play, the young lover Calidorus laments that his beloved courtesan Phoenicium has been sold out from under him by the pimp Ballio to a braggart soldier. Incapable of recovering her by himself, he enlists the help of his father's clever slave, the eponymous hero of the play and the very incarnation of comic puckishness, who sets to work finding money to buy Phoenicium.[184] The entire play centers on the schemes of Pseudolus as he

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[184] Anderson's (1996) summary of Pseudolus's perfected comic *malitia* is worth quoting in full: "[Pseudolus] is the most self conscious of any clever Plautine slave, so he constantly calls attention, with impudent pride, to his badness, to the incredible way he undertakes superhuman tasks and then accomplishes them. He humiliates his older master, Simo (though he does not actually defraud him), and he cheats a pimp of the price of a prostitute, who of course is desperately desired by the young master. The finale of the comedy has been composed as a lyric scene of drunken triumph, in which Pseudolus rubs his victory, impudently and with impunity, into the face of old Simo. The slave reels around the stage, burps familiarly at Simo, good-humouredly recites to him the victor's creed – 'woe to the defeated' (*vae victis* 1317) – and confidently styles himself as *vir malus*, smiling as the frustrated Simo calls him *pessumus*

attempts to outwit both Calidorus's disapproving father and, even more importantly, the arch-pimp Ballio, foremost antagonist of all extant Roman Comedy.[185]

Like all comic clever slaves, Pseudolus's only asset is trickery. From the outset he professes his complete poverty and lack of resources beyond his own two hands and native skill,[186] but he promises Calidorus that by the end of the day he will cheat the necessary money out of someone, whether a stranger, a member of the audience, or his father Simo. Even more telling, he makes this promise without expecting or asking for any reward for his efforts (lines 99-128). In fact, none of these individuals becomes victims of his swindling. Instead, the plot turns so as to pit Pseudolus almost exclusively against the infamous pimp Ballio, whom the slave marks explicitly as his target (*illic homo meus est*, line 381).

Ballio is from the very beginning characterized as the worst possible villain, a violent pimp who constantly threatens his prostitutes with no fear of reprisal (lines 133-228, 767-789), acts haughtily and disrespectfully usurps the place of Jupiter (lines 249, 265-268, 321-356), and revels proudly in his own wickedness (lines 360-380). But of course none of Ballio's self-importance is justifiable: pimps are low on the totem pole, socially inferior to almost every character in Roman Comedy and entirely reliant for their status on their ability to dominate others. His extreme hubris, as well as his confidence

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homo (line 1310). Admittedly, Plautus presents it as a moment of temporary victory, but it is total in the special comic representation" (101).

[185] The famous 1st century BCE actor Roscius was recognized and admired for performing this role in particular; see Cicero *Pro Roscio Comoedo* 20-21, Beare (1955, 108-109), Beacham (1991, 155), Goldberg (2005, 56), and Martin (2007, 52).

[186] See the clever slave's speech at *Pseudolus* 82-107, where he admits that he does not know where he will find the money needed, but assures his young master Calidorus that by his own good natural resources and hand (*bona opera aut hac mea [manu]*, 106) he will win the girl and the day.

that Pseudolus cannot deceive him (lines 892-904) and his certainty that he has outwitted

the slave (lines 1052-1102), ultimately make his downfall all the more humorous. The

climax of the play comes when Ballio suddenly realizes that his position was not

unassailable and that Pseudolus has indeed defeated him (lines 1103-1237, especially the

epiphany at 1220-1221). The denouement of the play is quick, lingering only briefly on

Ballio's ruin and Pseudolus's accomplishment both in inverting the status quo and in

gaining dominance over his enemy.

The final act of the play (lines 1246-1335) is pure jubilation, highlighting

Pseudolus's triumph and the temporary victory of inferior individuals over their

superiors. The clever slave is drunk, crudely belching in his master's face. He does claim

a prize from a bet he had made earlier with his master Simo, but he then immediately

promises to return it, emphasizing again that this contest between social inferiors and

superiors is not about material rewards. Here Plautus underscores Pseudolus's Heroic

Badness repeatedly, with Simo calling the slave *pessumus homo* (lines 1285, 1310) and

Pseudolus calling himself *vir malus* (line 1293). This is, of course, only the culmination

and open celebration of a connection between *malitia* and *calliditas* that Plautus has been

building gradually throughout the play,[187] and it is key for understanding Heroic Badness

in Plautus. We see here for the first time in the play the complete payoff of being

Heroically Bad: the frequent acknowledgement of the clever slave as *vir malus* and

pessumus homo in this final scene is one of the clearest methods Plautus employs to show

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[187] Ballio calls Pseudolus *serve Athenis pessume* (270), Pseudolus calls his own scheming *malitia fraudulenta* (581) achieved *per malitia et per dolum et fallaciam* (706). He seeks the aid of someone who is *malum, callidum, doctum* (724-725) and is delighted by his new partner in crime Simia, than whom he has never seen anyone more clever and bad (*peiorem ego hominem magisque vorsute malum / numquam edepol quemquam vidi, quam hic est Simia*, 1017-1018). And Simia likewise praises Pseudolus's own skill at being bad (*nimis illic mortalis doctus, nimis vorsutus, nimis malus; / superavit dolum Troianum atque Ulixem Pseudolus*, 1243-1244).

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that his *malitia* is what the play has centered on and that it is the most important character trait to embrace, at least in the world of the theater. The vocabulary of badness, especially the words *malus* and *pessimus*, are thus typical markers of both cleverness and Heroic Badness throughout Plautus's comedies, a point that will be vital for understanding Catullus's deployment of this "virtue" later.

One final remark about Plautine *malitia* is necessary before we can move on to see how it functions in Catullus. I have cited Pseudolus as the most manifest archetype of a Heroically Bad character in Roman Comedy, but there are many more examples and frequently they are not just iterations of the traditionally-bad *servus callidus*. Instead, Heroic Badness often becomes the primary trait of clever prostitutes, *meretrices callidae*. As I mentioned above, the humor of Plautus's Heroic Badness comes largely from its inversion of submissive and dominant roles, and the identity of the opponents in a play is far less important than their relative status, whether social, circumstantial, or natural. Consequently women, who in the male-dominated Roman world are automatically subjected to an inferior position, play a prominent role in subversive Plautine humor. The two women after whom the *Bacchides* is named, Phronesium from the *Truculentus*, and Acroteleutium and Milphidippa from the *Miles Gloriosus* all engage in the same kind of *malitia* that Pseudolus displays so well, and with the same effect.[188]

This phenomenon holds special importance for understanding how Catullus invokes Plautus for one fundamental reason: sex and gender are by far the most prominent and recurrent means by which Catullus figures status in relationships, whether erotic, social, or political. Slavery does not figure into his poetry in the same way or on

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[188] See George (1997, 25-65) for a fuller discussion of the independent *meretrix* as clever schemer, particularly *Truculentus*'s Phronesium.

the same scale that it does in the Roman Elegists, and the language of social parasitism

and patronage is all but absent. But sex and gender do figure in a vast majority of the

poems. In poem 11 the speaker's impotence and passivity in his relationship with Lesbia

is symbolized by the sexually-charged and highly-gendered image of the flower being cut

down by a passing plow, just as in 51 his appropriation of Sappho's female voice conveys

his helplessness at the hands of his *puella*. In poem 16 the speaker asserts his dominance

over Furius and Aurelius through sexual metaphor, by verbally threatening to make them

passive sexual recipients, while in poem 28 the speaker's own loss of power while abroad

with the praetor Memmius is represented by sexual passivity. Consequently, the inversion

of gendered status and the triumph of female characters is the most common way that

Plautine *malitia* appears in Catullus's poetry. In the first part of this chapter I will focus

on four poems that present Heroic Badness as a tool through which women in Catullus

exert their authority over temporarily domineering incarnations of the male speaker

(poems 55, 58b, 10, and 36) and will explore the effect that this inversion has on the

speaker's self-characterization, both within these four poems themselves and within the

larger corpus of Catullus's poetry.

III.2.2: CATULLUS'S *ADULESCENS CURRENS* AND *MERETRIX CALLIDA* (POEMS 55 AND 58b)

Two of the more neglected pieces in the corpus, poem 55 and its companion poem 58b, offer a good starting point for exploring Plautine *malitia* in Catullus's poetry. These poems taken together present a comedy sketch in miniature, a surprisingly complex and comprehensive collage of comic characters, routines, and motifs compressed into an exaggerated example of Heroic Badness.[189] Since, as I have shown in the case of the comic *amator* in Chapter Two, much of Catullus's interplay with Roman drama takes place through "character intertext," I will focus my analysis here largely on how the poet develops the characters in these poems and subtly merges them with readily recognizable stock figures from Roman Comedy.

In poem 55, the speaker recounts a day spent searching fruitlessly all over Rome for his elusive friend Camerius:

> oramus, si forte non molestum est,   1
> demonstres ubi sint tuae tenebrae.
> te in Campo quaesivimus minore,
> te in Circo, te in omnibus libellis,
> te in templo summi Iovis sacrato.   5
> in Magni simul ambulatione

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[189] Poems 54-60 are problematic in a number of textual, metrical, and thematic ways, leading many editors and scholars to consider them an appendix of unfinished but genuinely Catullan work added to the collection by a post-Catullan editor. This part of the "Catullan question" has received a great deal of attention; see Thomson (1997, 6-10) for a brief overview. The relationship between 55 and 58b is one of the more contentious issues in this debate, for which see Comfort (1935), Condorelli 1965), Peachy (1972), Macleod (1973), Goold (1973, 15-21), and Benediktson (1986). I am inclined to read them as two separate poems that balance and contrast with one another to create a coherent cycle, since (1) the manuscript evidence, although muddled, gives no indication that these pieces should be combined and (2) Catullus frequently links two complementary poems in this way (cf. poems 2 & 3, 5-7, 23 & 24, 37 & 39, 69 & 71, 70 & 72, etc...).

femellas omnes, amice, prendi,
quas vultu vidi tamen sereno.
†avelte† (sic usque flagitabam):
"Camerium mihi, pessimae puellae!"   10
quaedam inquit, nudum reduc<ta pectus,>
"en hic in roseis latet papillis."
sed te iam ferre Herculei labos est;
tanto te in fastu negas, amice.
dic nobis ubi sis futurus, ede   15
audacter, committe, crede luci.
nunc te lacteolae tenent puellae?
si linguam clauso tenes in ore,
fructus proicies amoris omnes.
verbosa gaudet Venus loquella.   20
vel, si vis, licet obseres palatum,
dum vestri sim particeps amoris.   22
     Catullus 55

I ask, only if it isn't too much trouble,
that you show me where you're hiding.
I searched for you in the Lesser Field,
in the Circus Maximus, in every bookshop,[190]
in the temple dedicated to Jupiter on High.
In the Colonnade of Pompey, too, my friend
I rounded up all those little women,
who, when I looked them over, were still unfazed.
"Hey!" (that's how I kept berating them non-stop)[191]
"Hand over my Camerius, you naughty girls!"
Then one of them, exposing her bare chest,
said, "Look, he's hiding here in my rosy tits!"
But putting up with you is a Herculean labor.
You withhold yourself with such disdain, my friend.
Tell me where you're going to be, state it
boldly, confide it, bring it to the light of day.

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[190] The topographical details in this poem are the prime reason it has garnered scholarly attention, but some of them are still disputed. Catullus's *Campus minor* (3) is unattested outside the poem and arguments about its exact location can be found in Wiseman (1979), Richardson (1980), Wiseman (1980a), and Wiseman (1980b). I follow Wiseman's identification of the *Campus minor* with the *Campus Martialis* near the Caelian. Likewise, what Catullus means by *in omnibus libellis* (4) is unclear; see Wiseman (1980a) for a survey of proposed emendations and interpretations. I follow Wiseman's defense of Scaliger's "in every bookshop," which seems most persuasive and intrudes least upon the text.

[191] The opening word or words of line 9 are hopelessly corrupt, but the gist of their form, meaning, and tone can be inferred from the surrounding context. The syntax of the sentence requires an imperative taking *Camerium* as its object; the prostitute's retort implies that the speaker has demanded she relinquish his friend; and the verb *flagitabam* suggests that the command was not particularly gentle or polite. Something like "hand over" or "reveal" must be understood in these garbled letters.

Are some milky-white girls holding you now?
If you keep your tongue locked up in your mouth,
you throw out all the fruits of love.
Venus rejoices in chatty gossip.
Or, if you like, you can keep your secret,
As long as I'm the one taking part in your love.

The poem opens unremarkably enough with a request reminiscent both of cultivated colloquial Latin and of other courteous and self-deprecating incarnations of the speaker from throughout the poetic collection.[192] The phrase *oramus demonstres* (lines 1-2) is gentle and submissive, and the phrase *si forte non molestum est* (line 1) frequently expresses polite deference in Latin.[193] The latter also appears abundantly in Roman Comedy, often in exactly the same words, especially in Plautus near the beginnings of dialogues between two people on friendly terms.[194] The speaker's opening address to Camerius thus simultaneously invokes three separate, but not necessarily mutually exclusive, connotations: he is putting on a mask of polite gentility, or he is trying to recall other instances of an apologetic stance from elsewhere in his poetry, or he is invoking specifically Plautine speech – or any combination of the three. The ambiguity inscribed and isolated in the first two lines sketches out an equivocating character whose intentions and inclinations are altogether uncertain.

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[192] Cf. Catullus 13, 14b, and 32. Note that the speaker's submission and self-deprecation is prominent in all four cases: poem 13 contains an apology to Fabullus for the speaker's poverty, 14b hesitantly asks his readers to forgive his poetic *ineptiae*, and 32 is a wheedling and submissive request for sex, for a thorough reading of which see Heath (1986).

[193] Cf. Terence *Adelphoe* 806 (*ausculta paucis, nisi molestumst*), Cicero *Epistulae ad Familiares* 5.12.10 (*si tibi non est molestum, rescribas mihi velim*), *Pro Cluentio* 168 (*tu autem, nisi molestum est, paulisper exsurge*), Martial 1.96.1 (*si non molestum est teque non piget*).

[194] Cf. Plautus *Epidicus* 460-461 (*volo te verbis pauculis / si tibi molestum non est*), *Persa* 599 (*nisi molestum est, percontari hanc paucis hic volt*), *Poenulus* 50-51 (*sed nisi molestumst, nomen dare vobis volo / comoediai*), *Rudens* 120-121 (*sed nisi molestumst paucis percontarier / volo ego ex te*), and *Trinummus* 932 (*lubet audire nisi molestumst*).

In the next four lines the speaker shifts from the present to a narrative of past events that have led to his current ambivalent pose. The speaker recounts his efforts exerted in searching all over Rome for his friend Camerius. He spent the day visiting the most entertaining places in Rome for a young well-to-do intellectual, including the Circus Maximus (*te in Circo*, line 4), all the bookshops (*te in omnibus libellis*, line 4), and the colonnade at the recently-built Theater of Pompey (*in Magni...ambulatione*, line 6), but surprisingly he did not once stop to enjoy the pleasures these sites have to offer. He even went to the Lesser Field of Mars (*in Campo...minore*, line 3) and the Temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline (*in templo summi Iovis sacrato*, line 5), venues for the most serious business of the Roman state and places where we would least expect to find a man elsewhere so openly hostile to military life and ambitious leaders.[195] We have, of course, seen the speaker in similar unexpected settings, but his visit to these places is always qualified by his usual slick poise and subversive charm. In poem 10, for instance, he visits the Forum, the very center of Roman business and politics, but only to idle away the day (*Varus me meus ad suos amores / visum duxerat e foro otiosum*, poem 10.1-2);[196] he has military interests, but only inasmuch as they can offer him personal gain (cf. poems 10, 28, 47);[197] and he is certainly aware of sacred spaces in Rome and elsewhere, but these are important only as they relate to love (cf. the Temple of Jupiter Ammon in

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[195] Cf. Catullus 10.6-13, 28, 29, 57, 93, 94, 114, and 115. See also Nappa (2001, 85-105), who more fully discusses Catullus's criticism of traditional Roman military and political life in other poems, especially in poems 10, 28, and 47.

[196] Nappa (2001) points out that in poem 10.1-2 "the contrast between the locus of public and private *negotium* [the Forum] on the one hand, and the *otiosus* Catullus on the other, defines him as someone who is not serious, who does not quite belong on the rolls of 'respectable' Romans" (89).

[197] See Skinner (1989) and Nappa (2001, 85-105).

poem 7.5) or luxury (the Temple of Serapis in poem 10.26).[198] No aspect of this journey is in keeping with the speaker as we know him.

But while parallels for the speaker's behavior are not to be found in the Catullan corpus, Plautus twice employs a comic routine that is remarkably similar to the speaker's narrative of his frantic but fruitless search in poem 55.3-6. The first instance appears in the *Amphitruo*.[199] A brief summary of the events leading up to this scene seems necessary here. Jupiter has disguised himself as the play's eponymous husband, who has been away on a military expedition, and spends an extended night with Amphitruo's wife Alcumena. Unaware of this divine mischief, Amphitruo upon returning home becomes confused and infuriated when Alcumena claims to have slept with him the previous night, thinking that she is trying weakly to cover up an affair with another man. Distrusting her assertions of fidelity and seeking grounds for divorce, Amphitruo stalks off to find his shipmate and Alcumena's relative Naucrates, who he says will testify that Amphitruo was on-board the ship the night before and could not have been with Alcumena. As is to be expected in a comedy of errors, he fails to find Naucrates and returns from the harbor complaining of his futile search:

> Naucratem quem convenire volui in navi non erat,   1009
> neque domi neque in urbe invenio quemquam qui illum viderit.   1010
> nam omnis plateas perreptavi, gymnasia et myropolia;
> apud emporium atque in macello, in palaestra atque in foro,
> in medicinis, in tonstrinis, apud omnis aedis sacras.

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[198] See Skinner (1989).

[199] Kroll (1959 ad loc.), Condorelli (1965, 465), and Agnesini (2004, 80) have each noted the lexical parallels in these passages, although none of these has explored the implications of these parallels fully and each attributes their coincidence largely to Roman cultural patrimony. See their comments for other *loci similes*, especiallyTerence *Andria* 353-358.

sum defessus quaeritando: nusquam invenio Naucratem.
nunc domum ibo atque ex uxore hanc rem pergam exquirere,   1015
quis fuerit quem propter corpus suom stupri compleverit.   1016
        Plautus *Amphitruo* 1009-1016

That Naucrates I wanted to find wasn't on the ship,
and I can't find anyone at his house or in the city who's seen him.
See, I crept all around every street, the gyms and the perfume shops;
at the market and in the grocer's, in the schools and in the forum,
around the doctors, the barbers, at every sacred shrine.
I'm worn out with searching: I can't find Naucrates anywhere.
Now I'll go home and keep interrogating my wife about this matter,
who it was that was worth her selling her body and stooping so low.

The similarities between Amphitruo's monologue and the speaker's account of his day in

Catullus's poem 55.3-6 are readily apparent: both characters have searched for a person

who never appears in the play/poem and mention this hunt explicitly (Plautus:

quaeritando, line 1014; Catullus: *quaesivimus*, line 3); both characters describe their

searches in four rambling lines (Plautus lines 1010-1013, Catullus lines 3-6); both list

explicitly the many locales they have searched, which include both places of serious

business (Plautus: *apud emporium atque in macello...in foro*, line 1012; *apud omnis aedis

sacras*, line 1013; Catullus: *in Campo...minore*, line 3; *in templo summi Iovis sacrato*,

line 5) and frivolity (Plautus: *gymnasia et myropolia*, line 1011; *in palaestra*, line 1012;

in medicinis, *in tonstrinis*, line 1013; Catullus: *in Circo...in omnibus libellis*, line 4; *in

Magni... ambulatione*, line 6); and both lament their sufferings and ultimate failures

(Plautus: *sum defessus quaeritando; nusquam invenio Naucratem*, line 1014; Catullus:

sed te iam ferre Herculei labos est; tanto te in fastu negas, amice, lines 13-14).[200]

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[200] See Condorelli (1965) and Agnesini (2004, 79-89) for further similarities, especially linguistic and semantic ones.

Amphitruo thus offers a clear model and character intertext that explains the uncharacteristic behavior displayed by the speaker.

The second instance of this comic routine appears in the *Epidicus*.[201] Again, a brief summary of events up to the relevant scene will be helpful here. The eponymous slave protagonist has defrauded his master, the *senex* Periphanes, of money needed to buy a music girl for his son, the *amator adulescens* Stratippocles. Meanwhile, Stratippocles has fallen in love with another captive woman while on a military expedition and purchased her with money borrowed from a professional lender. The young man asks Epidicus to get rid of the first girl and find money to pay off the lender for the second girl. The clever slave decides to get the money from his master Periphanes, whom he meets on the street. At this point Epidicus urges himself to pretend to have been searching all over Rome for his master:

> age nunciam orna te, Epidice, et palliolum in collum conice   194
> itaque adsimulato quasi per urbem totam hominem quaesiveris.   195
> age, si quid agis. di inmortales! utinam conveniam domi
> Periphanem, per omnem urbem quem sum defessus quaerere:
> per medicinas, per tonstrinas, in gymnasio atque in foro,
> per myropolia et lanienas circumque argentarias.
> rogitando sum raucus factus, paene in cursu concidi.   200
>   Plautus *Epidicus* 194-200

> Come on now, gird yourself, Epidicus, and toss a little cloak on your neck,
> and so make it look as if you have sought the man around the entire city.
> Come on, if you're going to do it! Oh gods! Would that I could find at home
> Periphanes, searching for whom around the whole city I have become weary:
> Through all the doctors, through the barbers, in the gym and in the forum,
> through the perfume stores and butcher shops and around the banks.
> I've become hoarse with asking, I almost died on the journey!

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[201] Ellis (1889), Condorelli (1965, 465), and Agnesini (2004, 81) also note parallels between the *Epidicus* scene and Catullus poem 55, but their focus is largely lexical and they attribute the coincidence of these parallels to cultural patrimony rather than purposeful allusion.

As with the *Amphitruo* example, the parallels between this monologue and the speaker's search in Catullus's poem 55 are readily apparent: both explicitly use verbs for searching (Epidicus: *quaesiveris*, line 195; *quaerere*, line 197); both use a rambling narrative of the journey to list visits to places of business (Epidicus: *in foro / ...lanienas circumque argentarias*, lines 198-199) and of leisure (Epidicus: *per medicinas*, *per tonstrinas*, *in gymnasio...per myropolia*, lines 198-199); and both lament the pains they have endured (Epidicus: *sum defessus...rogitando sum raucus factus*, *paene in cursu concidi*, lines 197-200). Epidicus thus offers another clear model and character intertext that explains the speaker's unusual behavior.

Before we can examine how these two Plautine characters and routines influence our understanding of Catullus's speaker, we must first examine some of the implications they present in their respective comic contexts. While the presence of two scenes as close to one another as these are might suggest that this is a stand-alone stock routine, in fact they are both made of a number of divergent elements from Roman Comedy that Plautus blends together to create entirely new hybrid characters.[202] Let us look first at the construction of Amphitruo's character in his search scene.

While the *Amphitruo* is unique among Plautus's plays in its treatment of mythological topics, it is still quite clearly a representative of Roman Comedy and employs the genre's standard attributes. It is fundamentally a love-and-deceit comedy whose plot revolves around the deception of a blocking character (in this case,

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[202] Plautus is particularly adept not only at selecting, modifying, and combining the standard stock elements of Roman Comedy, but also at transferring entire routines and scenes across plays and situations. This technique is beyond the scope of our current discussion, but cf. the brilliant conflation of two separate deceit scenes from the *Asinaria* and *Curculio* in the *Pseudolus*.

Amphitruo) by a young lover and his clever servant (here Jupiter and Mercury,

respectively) to allow the lover access to a woman otherwise engaged or protected

(Alcumena). The protagonists use disguise, theft, and misdirection to baffle Amphitruo,

who – though a legitimate husband – is in many ways a modified version of the standard

miles gloriosus figure. This characterization is most apparent in the threats of physical

violence in back-and-forth dialogue between Amphitruo and his slave Sosia at lines 551-

632, and especially in the exchange of greetings between Amphitruo and his wife

immediately following this scene. Amphitruo addresses his wife in the guise of a typical

miles gloriosus, putting his own victory at the fore of his concerns:

> edepol me uxori exoptatum credo adventurum domum,   654
> quae me amat, quam contra amo, praesertim re gesta bene,   655
> victis hostibus: quos nemo posse superari ratust,
> eos auspicio meo atque ductu primo coetu vicimus.
> certe enim med illi expectatum amicae venturum.   658
>   Plautus *Amphitruo* 654-658

> By Pollux, I think that I will come home much longed for by my wife,
> who loves me, whom I love in return, especially since the war went well
> and my enemies were conquered: no one was thought to be able to beat them,
> whom we conquered under my auspices and leadership in the first meeting!
> Yes indeed, I will come back waited for by that wife of mine.

Thus far in the play Amphitruo has been portrayed as a violent, overbearing, and arrogant

man, the prime qualities of the *miles gloriosus*.[203] Alcumena by contrast is "the noblest

woman character in Plautine comedy,"[204] known by the audience to be perfectly virtuous

and innocent but berated cruelly (lines 705-860) and accused by her husband of

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[203] Cf. the *miles gloriosus* Stratophanes's entrance speech and conversation with his *meretrix* Phronesium at *Truculentus* 482-517.

[204] Duckworth (1952, 150).

prostitution, the most debased form of adultery (line 1016). This dramatic irony, created

by a tension between the audience's certainty that Alcumena is blameless and her

husband's staunch refusal to take his noble wife's word in the face of her outstanding

character and irrefutable physical evidence (lines 760-798), further elevates Amphitruo as

the play's prime antagonist by making him a senseless braggart soldier and villain.

But this farcical type-scene that provides the character intertext for Catullus's

speaker in poem 55 is not typical of a *miles gloriosus*, or even of any respectable

paterfamilias or socially-dominant figure in Roman Comedy. It is, in fact, a routine

performed almost exclusively by the ridiculous *servus currens*, the running slave who

represents the interests of the blocking figure (usually a *senex durus* vel sim) and serves

to contrast with the *servus callidus* figure as his polar opposite, largely as a butt of jokes

and center of physical slapstick.[205] Amphitruo has thus put on the guise of a recognizably

undignified character type, trading his aggressive malevolence as a braggart soldier for

the impotence and absurdity of the running slave. He becomes, in effect, his own slave.

The humor in these scenes ultimately derives from this bizarre hybridization and

unexpected reversal from dominating character type to one that is naturally dominated.

Plautus has not altered the audience's antipathy towards him, since the *servus currens* is

still a figure closely associated with the blocking characters of Roman Comedy, but he

has completely undercut Amphitruo's *auctoritas*. Moreover, Amphitruo's new theatrical

pose as a running slave here reveals that all of his braggadocio in the preceding sections

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[205] Duckworth (1936 and 1952, 106-107). Duckworth excludes from his classification of the *servus currens*
both the *Amphitruo* scene under discussion and the *Epidicus* scene we will turn to next, on the grounds that
the former is a parody of the standard routine and the latter a contrived performance by Epidicus. Such
metatheatrical blending, however, seems to justify even more their inclusion as self-conscious
modifications of the stock routine.

of the play was just for show: this scene presents Amphitruo alone on stage for the first time, no longer blustering with pretenses to importance and power but rather stripped down to the innate and contemptible servility that his boasting is meant to conceal.

Epidicus, on the other hand, is far removed from typical blocking character types: he is one of the most accomplished examples of the *servus callidus* in Plautus, the exact opposite of the *servus currens*. As Duckworth notes, however, in this scene Epidicus is self-consciously pretending to be a running slave in order to ingratiate himself with his master, the *senex durus* Periphanes, essentially performing a play-within-a-play.[206] Amphitruo's running slave monologue is directed at no one in particular and serves to reveal his innate servility. Epidicus's, however, is a performance designed not to reveal any actual allegiance to the blocking figures of the play but only to trick the blocking figure, the *senex durus* Periphanes, into thinking that he is on the side of the antagonists.

In the *Epidicus* scene, the play's eponymous *servus callidus* aligns himself closely with his master, displaying the morals and opinions typical of the old man blocking character. For instance, he comments condescendingly upon the courtesans crowding around the returning soldiers, including Periphanes's son Stratippocles:

> EPIDICUS: tum captivorum quid ducunt secum! pueros, virgines, 210
> binos, ternos, alius quinque; fit concursus per vias,
> filios suos quisque visunt. PERIPHANES: hercle rem gestam bene.
> EP: tum meretricium numerus tantus, quantum in urbe omni fuit,
> obviam ornatae occurrebant suis quaeque amatoribus,
> eos captabant. id adeo qui maxime animum advorterim.   215
> pleraeque eae sub vestimentis secum habebant retia.
> quom ad portam venio, atque ego illam illi video praestolarier
> et cum ea tibicinae ibant quattuor. PER: quicum, Epidice?
> EP: cum illa quam tuos gnatus annos multos deamat, deperit,

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[206] Duckworth (1952, 106 n.12). Metatheatrical plays-within-plays are a common technique of the Plautine *servus callidus*; see Blänsdorf (1982), Slater (1985, 139-148), and Moore (1998, 68-77).

ubi fidemque remque seque teque properat perdere;　　　　　　220
　　　ea praestolabatur illum apud portam!　　　　　　　　　　　　221
　　　　　　Plautus *Epidicus* 210-221

EPIDICUS: And what captives they lead with themselves! Boys, girls,
two, three, five each; there's a rushing through the streets,
everyone looked for their songs. PERIPHANES: By Hercules, well done!
EP: And as many prostitutes as there are in the whole city,
every one of them all dolled-up, rushed to meet their lovers,
they kept trying to hook them. That's what I paid the most attention to.
And most of these women had fishnets under their clothes.
So when I come to the harbor, and I see that one girl loitering there,
and four musicians were walking with her. PER: With whom, Epidicus?
EP: With that one your son loved to death and pined for for many years,
and with whom he rushes to ruin both you and him in credit and property;
she was loitering at that harbor!

By pretending to ingratiate himself with Periphanes and taking the traditional moral stance of the *senex*, Epidicus crosses the boundary between *servus callidus* and the blocking figures that represent domination and control in Plautus's universe. His appropriation of the *servus currens* guise at the beginning of this scene turns him into a hybrid, albeit a temporary one, of the heroic *servus callidus*, the ridiculous and farcical *servus currens*, and (by association with the moral stance of Periphanes) the *senex durus* who represents control and authority in the play.

　　　We can see, then, that in each of these comparable scenes in Plautus's *Amphitruo* and *Epidicus* the character who delivers his querelous and exhausted monologue is a hybrid of several character types, blending a social inferior (*servus currens*) with a social superior (a *miles gloriosus* in *Amphitruo* and a *senex durus* in *Epidicus*).

　　　This hybridization in the passages of the *Amphitruo* and *Epidicus* has a number of implications for the passage in Catullus poem 55.3-6 that invokes them. First of all, it creates a sense of instability in the characterization of the speaker. In both cases the

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servus currens monologues reveals that some aspect of their speakers' persona is artificial: in Amphitruo's case, his public persona as a steadfast, noble, and brave soldier is undercut by his frantic servile behavior, while in Epidicus's case the obedient slave routine offers a mask for his own deceptive intentions. When the speaker assumes the guise of these Plautine characters, he destabilizes his persona and throws into confusion which parts of his self-presentation are real and which are just pretend. We will see momentarily that the same character instability between pretended authority and actual servility is present in Catullus's speaker as well.

Moreover, there are two simultaneous effects that the invocation of both of these passages creates, defined by the direction in which the character change takes place and the audience to whom the *servus currens* monologue is directed. In the *Epidicus*, the protagonist puts on the guise of the submissive running slave in order to ingratiate himself with a social superior, in this case the *senex durus* Periphanes. Likewise in Catullus poem 55 the speaker shifts from polite-but-equal (in lines 1-2) to submissive and querulous (in lines 3-6) in order to manipulate Camerius into feeling sympathy for his pains and therefore revealing his whereabouts. These lines are, after all, aimed directly at Camerius as the addressee of the poem and to no one else. In this way Epidicus serves as a model for the speaker's inferior and wheedling stance relative to Camerius, because both individuals are essentially putting on a performance for an audience inscribed in the text in order to win goodwill and make their addressees feel in control.

But while Camerius is the only individual in the poem who sees the speaker in abject submission, the poem's reader has also been privy to this ridiculous acting. Consequently, once he has put on the guise of an inferior running slave, the speaker

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forever marks his persona in the poem as capable of the lowest forms of social debasement. In this way poem 55.3-6 parallels the *Amphitruo* scene closely. Amphitruo's monologue is directed only to himself, but the audience is listening in metatheatrically and sees the ironic distance between the clumsy *servus currens* he reveals himself to be in his unguarded moments alone and the brash *miles gloriosus* he pretends to be to dominate others. In the movement in poem 55 from the running slave narrative to Camerius in lines 3-6 to the next scene in lines 7-10, where the speaker recounts an embarrassing clash with a group of individuals presumed to be socially inferiors, we see this same kind of ironic character shift.

In line 7 the narrative of poem 55 slows down and the speaker zooms in on the final locale that the speaker describes, where he runs into the prostitutes who ply their trade around the Colonnade of Pompey. Here the speaker takes up an unusually condescending tone with the prostitutes, whom he calls "little women" (*femellas*, line 7) and rounds up like some brutish police detective (*simul omnes prendi*, lines 6-7) before berating them without provocation (*usque flagitabam*, line 9).[207] If we compare the way the speaker treats these women with his interactions with other prostitutes elsewhere in the corpus, we find that poem 55.7-10 presents him in a bizarre pose: in poem 32 he chats with a prostitute, but with remarkable submission and grace (*amabo, mea dulcis Ipsitilla,*

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[207] The word *femellas* (7) is attested only here, but it is almost certainly colloquial and mildly derogative; see Ellis (1889) and Thomson (1997 ad loc.). The latter notes that Isidore uses the term *femellarius* to mean "womanizer," perhaps suggesting that *femella* connotes both sexual looseness and female objectification, both appropriate given the tone of the speaker here and the surrounding context of the poem. The verb *prehendere* frequently implies aggression and violence; cf. parallels in Ellis (1889) and Fordyce (1961 ad loc.). The verb (*re*)*flagitare* is semi-technical (Williams 1968, 197) and implies, if not violence, then certainly unrestrained hostility; see Usener (1901), Fraenkel (1961, 46-51), and Williams (1968, 196-199).

/ meae deliciae, mei lepores, 32.1-2);[208] and in poem 42 he berates a woman coarsely

with the *flagitatio* of traditional Roman folk justice, but only when he feels she has

provoked him and he sees no other recourse (*circumstitite eam et reflagitate: / 'moecha*

putida,' 42.10-11).[209] These examples serve to underscore all the more how far his

apparently inexplicable and obviously crass pose in poem 55 departs from the standards

of urbanity the speaker sets in the rest of the collection. This is not the speaker we have

come to know; we might expect this kind of behavior from a provincial soldier or self-

important Roman civil servant, but certainly not from him.

More importantly, the arrogant and domineering character presented in these lines

stands in direct contrast to the slavish version of the speaker in the preceding three lines.

In this way the speaker of poem 55 mirrors the two-faced Amphitruo, attempting to cover

his innate servility with the facade of the *miles gloriosus* he wears when berating his wife

Alcumena. But in addition to importing the blocking figures of the *senex durus* and the

miles gloriosus from the *Epidicus* and *Amphitruo*, this final development of the speaker's

character in the narrative of poem 55 invokes the most detestable of the superior

antagonists in Plautus, the cruel *leno*. We have already seen briefly how the pimp Ballio

performs this function in the *Pseudolus*, but one additional scene from this play is helpful

here for understanding the characterization of the speaker of poem 55 through comic

character intertexts. The very first moment we see Ballio in the play, he is yelling at his

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[208] Heath (1986) offers an in-depth analysis of the speaker's wheedling and submissive pose in addressing the prostitute in poem 32. See Thomson (1997 ad loc.) for a discussion of the textual problems in *Ipsitilla*.

[209] Fraenkel (1961, 46-51) and Williams (1968, 197) note that the *flagitatio* was primarily a tool of a person who had been wronged and not just a method for forcing compliance without justification. In poem 42 the female addressee of the *flagitatio* is depicted as having injured the speaker through theft and is therefore fair game for folk-justice; in poem 55, however, the prostitutes are innocent bystanders and the speaker never indicates any wrong – or even any actual involvement – on the part of the women in this Camerius affair.

prostitutes and beating his slaves, threatening them without provocation and building

audience antipathy to a pitch. The entire scene (lines 133-228) is filled with his

terrorizing, but lines 172-178 clearly reveal his dominating attitude towards the women:

       auditine? vobis, mulieres, hanc habeo edictionem.   172
       vos, quae in munditiis, mollitiis deliciisque aetatulam agitis,
       viris cum summis, inclutae amicae, nunc ego scibo atque hodie experiar,
       quae capiti, quae ventri operam det, quae suae rei, quae somno studeat;   175
       quam libertam fore mihi credam et quam venalem, hodie experiar.
       facite hodie ut mihi munera multa huc ab amatoribus conveniant.
       nam nisi mihi penus annuos hodie convenit, cras populo prostituam vos.   178
           Plautus *Pseudolus* 172-178

       Do you hear? Women, I have this command for you.
       You, who spend your little life in elegance, softness, and delights
       with the greatest men, celebrated women, now I'll know and today I'll discover
       who works for life, who for stomach, who strives for business, who for sleep;
       I think that I'll find out who I'll free and who I'll put up for sale.
       Make sure that today many gifts come from your lovers – here to me!
       For if your yearly cost doesn't come to me today, tomorrow
       I'll put you on display as a common whore for the crowd!

Ballio's speech is not a direct parallel to the speaker's abuse of the prostitutes in poem

55.7-10, but the comic pimp and this stock routine, of which this speech is only the most

absurd example, clearly lie behind the Catullan speaker in poem 55. Moreover, the

reaction of the prostitutes in poem 55 mirrors the reactions of Ballio's servants during his

abusive speech. The women in the Colonnade of Pompey stand with calm faces

(*vultu...sereno*, 8) and practically ignore the brutish speaker, just as the various servants

in the *Pseudolus* seem to disregard all of Ballio's verbal and physical abuse (lines 136-

155). Moreover, as the speaker's stance moves from polite to obsequious to overbearing

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and blends the *servus currens*, *senex durus*, *miles gloriosus*, and *leno* into his character, he undercuts all audience sympathy.

As I noted earlier, character intertexts are the primary means by which Catullus develops his speaker in many of his poems that deal with Roman Comedy. The speaker slowly merges into these broad categories of recognizable types – especially the stock characters familiar from Roman Comedy – and "momentarily fills the boots, and the pre-existing form" of these comic characters, to borrow Wray's phrasing.[210] By importing these character intertexts, then, Catullus confirms the presence of Roman Comedy in the opening address to Camerius (lines 1-2) and gradually overlays multiple comic masks on top of his speaker in poem 55. The characteristics of the *servus currens* invoked in his narrative of his hunt around Rome (lines 3-6) belie his gentility and the dignity of his opening address, portraying him as an individual both lacking self-control and aligned with antagonistic representatives of social dominance. At the same time the invocation of a non-standard running slave/superior blocking character hybrid suggests that the speaker is not acting within the circumscribed expectations of the genre (as he would if he were portrayed only in terms of the *servus currens* as Duckworth (1936) defines him), but is trying to cross social boundaries and usurp roles that do not belong to him. He tries to assume the power of a variety of blocking characters from Roman Comedy, blending aspects of the *miles gloriosus* (from the *Amphitruo* intertext), the *senex durus* (from the *Epidicus* intertext), and the detestable *leno* (in poem 55.7-10). By the time he reaches the middle of the poem and finally encounters another speaking part, namely the prostitute, he has attempted to gloss over his own servile nature (lines 3-6) with a veneer of gentility

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[210] Wray (2001, 166).

(lines 1-2) and multiple ill-fitting masks of dominance (lines 3-10). Like Ballio in our discussion of Plautine *malitia* at the beginning of this section, the Catullan speaker has built himself up as an antagonistic superior now fully ripe for deflation by a heroic inferior.

The crux of the poem comes at its exact middle, after the steady buildup of the speaker's arrogant character, when one of the prostitutes he berates finally breaks her silence and responds to his attacks. The speaker demands Camerius's location, calling all the women "you worst girls" (*'Camerium mihi, pessimae puellae!'*, line 10). As Anderson points out and as I emphasized above, *pessimus* is the word used most often in Plautus to explicitly mark instances of Heroic Badness and it frequently appears either directly before or directly after some clever turn has been executed by the protagonist *servus callidus* figure. By naming the group of prostitutes (and therefore also the one particularly clever woman (*quaedam*, 11)) the "worst girls," the speaker thus immediately prefigures the instance of *malitia* that is about to come. Here, and in all the poems in which we will examine female *malitia* in this chapter, Catullus invokes Plautus's vocabulary of badness to mark both his use of Roman Comedy and the execution of Plautine subversion in a new Catullan context. We will see Varus's girl (poem 10) and Lesbia (poem 36) so marked for their wicked cleverness, but we will also see that the speaker himself invokes *pessimus* as an index of Heroic Badness in his own social maneuvers (poem 49).

The climax of the poem comes at the execution of Heroic Badness by the one bold and clever prostitute. The speaker, tossing himself about and expecting either to browbeat the women into silent submission or to elicit a direct answer about Camerius's

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whereabouts, receives a rude but – at least to the poem's audience – unexpected and hilarious response. The *meretrix callida* bares her breasts, perhaps hinting at an attempt to appease the aggressive speaker, and then says that Camerius is "hiding here in my rosy tits!" (*hic in roseis latet papillis*, line 12). The delay of *papillis* until the final word of the line creates suspense and a final emphatic *paraprosdokeion*, fully deflating all of the speaker's blustering in a single word. The prostitute has thus turned the tables on the man trying to dominate her, and in doing so she switches social positions temporarily and subjects the speaker to a state of humiliation with only her wit. As I noted above, the speaker's shift from *servus currens* to *leno* and the subsequent triumph of the clever prostitute is the central movement in the poem and shows both the speaker's attempt to take up a social role far beyond his reach and the subsequent loss of face and status he suffers at the hands of a clever social inferior.

The speaker of poem 55, thus deflated, abruptly ends his narrative and returns to the present with the striking conjunction "but" (*sed*, line 13). The remainder of the poem is a querolous lament, sometimes plaintive (*sed te iam ferre Herculei labos est; / tanto te in fastu negas, amice*, lines 13-14) and sometimes cringing (*vel, si vis, licet obseres palatum, / dum vestri sim particeps amoris*, lines 21-22), but always submissive. The speaker returns to the same deferential stance he exhibits in lines 1-2, but now we understand why he strikes this pose in the first place: he has tried to bully what he expected would be an easy target, namely a lowly street prostitute, but she has disabused him of any pretense to authority in one clever line and sent him away with his tail between his legs.

Here it will be useful finally to examine the companion piece to poem 55, poem

58b, which will further elucidate this shift in character and strengthen the cycle's

connection to the Plautine character intertexts in the *Amphitruo* and *Epidicus*. The subject

is still the hunt for Camerius, but this time the speaker describes himself using

grandiloquent comparisons to great legendary figures:

non custos si fingar ille Cretum,   1
non si Pegaseo ferar volatu,[211]
non Ladas ego pinnipesve Perseus,
non Rhesi niveae citaeque bigae;
adde huc plumipedas volatilesque,   5
ventorumque simul require cursum:
quos vinctos, Cameri, mihi dicares,
defessus tamen omnibus medullis
et multis languoribus peresus
essem te mihi, amice, quaeritando.   10
      Catullus 58b

Not if I should be created the guardian of the Cretans,
not if I should be borne on Pegasus's flight,
not if I should be Ladas or wing-footed Perseus,
not Rhesus's snowy and swift chariot;
add to this those feather-footed and flying ones,
and likewise look for the course of the winds,
even if you were to chain them up and call them mine,
Camerius, still weary in all my marrow
and in all my weakened fatigue,
I would be worn out with my seeking for you, friend.

The mythological figures in poem 58b are all icons of speed and seem appropriate

enough in the context of a frantic search for a friend, though many of the references to

them are erudite to the point of obscurity, so a brief explanatory commentary on the

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[211] *Pace* Thomson (1997 ad loc.), I see no reason to accept Muret's conjectured transposition of lines 2 and 3.

figures described in these opening lines and their relationship to swift journeys will be useful here. The first reference (*non custos si fingar ille Cretum*, line 1) refers to Talos, the bronze giant that Hephaestus built to guard Crete by circling the entire island three times a day.[212] The second (*non si Pegaseo ferar volatu*, line 2) recalls Pegasus, who was granted to Bellerophon to carry him swiftly on his journey to slay the Chimera.[213] The third (*non Ladas ego*, line 3) refers to a famous Spartan runner who won the long race at Olympia.[214] The fourth (*pinnipesve Perseus*, line 3) is the slayer of Medusa and rescuer of Andromeda, whose winged sandals imparted speed. The fifth (*non Rhesi niveae citaeque bigae*, line 4) invokes the famous Thracian king whose famously swift horses and chariot were stolen by Ajax and Odysseus.[215] The sixth (*ventorumque simul require cursum*, line 6) suggests the winds that Aeolus gave bound up (*quos vinctos*, 7) to Odysseus to help him on his journey to Ithaca.[216]

Additionally, and more importantly for our understanding of poem 58b, most of these are famous for being powerful figures representative either of physical domination or of socio-political control. Bellerophon tamed Pegasus, who stands prominently as his signifier in the poem (*Pegaseo...volatu*, 2), and Rhesus was most famous not for his battle prowess but rather for his status as master of his legendary horses, which likewise function as his primary signifier (*niveae citaeque bigae*, 4). Bellerophon and Perseus won

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[212] Apollonius *Argonautika* 4.1638-1644. See Ellis (1889 ad locc.) and Thomson (1997 ad locc.) for this reference and the rest cited here.

[213] Pausanias *Periegesis* 1.4.6.

[214] Pausanias *Periegesis* 3.21.1.

[215] Homer *Iliad* 10.427-502.

[216] Homer *Odyssey* 10.1-27.

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fame for dominating monsters. Talos is named explicitly in the poem as the guardian of Crete, and Bellerophon, Perseus, Rhesus, and Odysseus were kings of Lycia, Mycenae, Thrace, and Ithaca respectively.[217] Such models of legendary mastery are appropriate objects of emulation for the domineering speaker of poem 55 who attempts to exert authority that he does not have.

But these legendary figures also complement the performance of poem 55's speaker on another level, namely in their spectacular downfalls, and thus serve simultaneously as models of domination and as unheeded warnings about the consequences of usurped authority. Ladas died immediately after and directly because of the race he ran, in the same way that the speaker's superior stance falls short in poem 55 because of his frantic search for Camerius. The winds that Aeolus bound for Odysseus were released and blew him back to the start of his journey, just as the speaker's stance moves full-circle in poem 55 from humble to haughty and back to humble again. Bellerophon became arrogant and attempted to surmount Olympus before the gods struck him down,[218] mirroring the speaker's own hubristic attempt to assert himself. And both Talos and Rhesus were killed by the quick thinking and clever scheming of their enemies, just as the speaker is defeated by the cleverness of the prostitute.[219] The speaker's mythological comparisons are thus ironic, invoking simultaneously the social control they each represent and the resulting losses they suffer because of that social control. The

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[217] Ellis (1889 ad locc.).

[218] This story was part of Euripides's lost *Bellerophon*, for whose fragments see Curnis (2003).

[219] It is important to note here that Perseus is the only of Catullus's mythological allusions who seems not to have suffered a downfall.

speaker's downfall in poem 55.11-12 is perhaps less grand and more amusing, but no less definite and damning.

Moreover, as Agnesini (2004, 83) points out, there are further parallels not only between poems 55 and 58b, but also between the lament in 58b and those in the two Plautine passages we have seen are models for poem 55. The most apparent connection lies in the similar complaints of weariness made by poem 58b's speaker, by Amphitruo, and by Epidicus. The speaker exclaims that even if he had all the speed and stamina of his copious mythological predecessors, still he would be worn out with searching (*defessus tamen omnibus medullis / et multis languoribus peresus / essem te mihi, amice, quaeritando*, lines 8-10). Amphitruo likewise complains of his weariness with searching using similar words (*sum defessus quaeritando*, line 1014), as does Epidicus at even greater length (*sum defessus quaerere*, line 197; *rogitando sum raucus factus, paene in cursu concidi*, line 200). Catullus thus ties poem 55 to *Amphitruo* and *Epidicus*, *Amphitruo* and *Epidicus* to poem 58b, and poem 58b to poem 55, combining both Catullan poems with a series of clear Plautine references. While the speaker's complaint in poem 58b is far grander than the *sermo cotidianus* of poem 55, their shared connections to Plautus reinforce their relevance for each other as a coherent two-poem cycle that contrasts with and complements one another.

One final note about poem 55 will elucidate an additional element of Plautine Heroic Badness present in the poem. There is no denouement after the confrontation between the speaker and the clever prostitute – the battle of wit and social control ends at poem 55.12 with no real gain and no unfortunate consequences for the *meretrix*. Heroic Badness is, after all, a purely temporary revelry and one that always ends on a high note

(cf. the drunken *canticum* at the end of the *Pseudolus*, where the play's eponymous hero suggests that he will give his winnings back to his master Simo and completely escapes any punishment that his social superiors have the right to give; see Anderson (1996, 101)). The triumph of the Plautine clever rogue leads the speaker back into a submissive position in lines 13-22 and readjusts potential inequalities in social status, albeit not permanently. As we will see in the next section of this chapter, Catullus's speaker repeats his hubristic attempts to dominate women in several other poems. But again, Plautine *malitia* gives these other women tools to assert themselves in the face of the speaker's social positioning. The lesson the speaker fails to internalize in poem 55 will be taught again and again, and as readers we can appreciate the dramatic irony of seeing this interaction play itself out in poems 10 and 36 through slightly different iterations of Plautine Heroic Badness.

III.2.3: CATULLUS'S *MILES AMATOR* AND FEMALE SUBVERSION (POEMS 10, 36, AND 37)

The Plautine character intertexts in poems 55 and 58b offer the most fully developed and intense examples of comic Heroic Badness in Catullus's poems, but there are other examples where hints of Plautus accompany explorations of similar themes of social inversion and the celebration of cleverness against a dominating figure. In poems 10 and 36 the Catullan speaker again takes on the role of a comic blocking figure, in both cases the *miles gloriosus*, and attempts to assert authority over a female character who uses wit replete with Plautine *malitia* to turn the tables on the arrogant speaker.

Poem 10 describes an encounter between the speaker and his friend Varus one afternoon, when the latter introduces the former to his new girlfriend:

Varus me meus ad suos amores	1
visum duxerat e foro otiosum,	
scortillum, ut mihi tum repente visum est,	
non sane illepidum neque invenustum,	
huc ut venimus, incidere nobis	5
sermones varii, in quibus, quid esset	
iam Bithynia, quo modo se haberet,	
et quonam mihi profuisset aere.	
respondi id quod erat, nihil neque ipsis	
nec praetoribus esse nec cohorti,	10
cur quisquam caput unctius referret,	
praesertim quibus esset irrumator	
praetor, nec faceret pili cohortem.	
'at certe tamen,' inquiunt 'quod illic	
natum dicitur esse, comparasti	15
ad lecticam homines.' ego, ut puellae	
unum me facerem beatiorem,	
'non' inquam 'mihi tam fuit maligne	
ut, prouincia quod mala incidisset,	

non possem octo homines parare rectos.'   20
at mi nullus erat nec hic neque illic
fractum qui veteris pedem grabati
in collo sibi collocare posset.
hic illa, ut decuit cinaediorem,
'quaeso' inquit 'mihi, mi Catulle,   25
paulum istos commoda: nam uolo ad Serapim
deferri.' 'mane' inquii puellae,
'istud quod modo dixeram me habere,
fugit me ratio: meus sodalis –
Cinna est Gaius – is sibi parauit.   30
verum, utrum illius an mei, quid ad me?
utor tam bene quam mihi pararim.
sed tu insulsa male et molesta vivis,
per quam non licet esse neglegentem.'
       Catullus 10

My Varus led me, full of leisure,
out from the Forum to see his love,
a little slut, as she immediately seemed to me then,
but not altogether uncharming or ungraceful.
When we came there, various topics
came to us, including: what Bithynia was like then,
how it got along with itself,
how I had benefitted from it in cash.
I responded as it was, that there was nothing
either for the praetors themselves or for the troop,
such that someone could come back with a sleeker head,
especially for those whose praetor was a fucker
and didn't care a bit about his troop.
"But certainly still," they said, "you got what's said to be
the native crop, some men for a litter." Then I,
to make myself out to the girl to be a little more fortunate,
said, "It wasn't so bad for me that,
though I happened on a bad province,
I couldn't get together eight sturdy men."
But I didn't have one, either here or there,
who could put the broken leg
of an old cot on his shoulders.
Then she, like the man-whore she was,
said, "Please, my Catullus,
lend me them a little while. I want
to be carried to the Temple of Serapis."
"Wait!" I said to the girl,
"What I just said I have,

my mind blanked. My buddy –
Cinna, that is Gaius – he got them for himself.
But really, whether they're his or mine, what does that matter to me?
I use them like I got them for myself.
But you wickedly impudent girl, you're a bother
who won't let anyone be forgetful!"

The poem opens with the Catullan speaker we are accustomed to seeing, a man of leisure shirking the political and business world (*e foro otiosum*, line 2) to indulge in matters of love (*Varus me meus ad suos amores*, / *visum duxerat*, line 1-2) with refined friends (*non sane illepidum neque invenustum*, line 4). But after line 5 the conversation shifts to affairs abroad, and the spoils of the provinces (lines 6-20). As Bernek (2004) has shown, the speaker here attempts to put on the guise of the typical Plautine *miles gloriosus*, recalling a number of scenes from Roman Comedy, especially the characterization of the soldier Pyrgopolynices from the *Miles Gloriosus*.[220] We find out quickly, though, that the speaker's new pose does not fit him well: he has none of the spoils he claims to have gained while away in Bithynia (*at mi nullus erat nec hic neque illic / fractum qui veteris pedem grabati / in collo sibi collocare posset*, lines 21-23). Nappa (2001, 91) points out that rather than being an independent *miles* himself, the speaker is subordinate to his friend Cinna, who is the real owner of the litter-bearers he claims for himself (*meus sodalis – / Cinna est Gaius – is sibi parauit. / verum, utrum illius an mei, quid ad me? / utor tam bene quam mihi pararim*, lines 29-32). Nappa notes that he is, in fact, a comic parasite trying to usurp the role of the braggart soldier in order to impress Varus's girl (*ut puellae / unum me facerem beatiorem*, line 16-17). We have, then, precisely the same kind of hybrid characterization through Plautine stock types in this poem that we saw in

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[220] Nappa (2001, 100-105) points out as well that the poem's primarily concern is the political and social spheres of Roman life, particularly the military.

poem 55, with the same attempted shift on the part of the speaker from inferior (poem 55: *servus currens*; poem 10: *parasitus*) to social superior (poem 55: *leno*; poem 10: *miles*). The character intertexts of the pretended *miles gloriosus* and the actual *parasitus* thus cast the speaker's character in terms accessible to the audience familiar with Plautine comedy.

But as in poem 55, the woman whom the speaker is trying to cow into submission with his feigned superiority in poem 10 has all the quick wit of the Plautine rogue. The speaker gives a number of hints as to her cleverness in the poem, particularly in the opening lines (*scortillum, ut mihi tum repente visum est, / non sane illepidum neque invenustum*, lines 3-4). The derogatory term *scortillum*, together with the speaker's unconvincing claim that he instantly knew what the girl was like in line 3, stand in sharp contrast to the grudging admiration for her charm and wit that he confesses in line 4. When the speaker thus lies about his gains to Varus and his girl and then reveals his lie ironically to the audience (lines 21-23),[221] the *puella callida* speaks up and deflates the speaker with a demand of proof cleverly disguised as a submissive request (*'quaeso' inquit 'mihi, mi Catulle, / paulum istos commoda: nam uolo ad Serapim / deferri'*, lines 25-27).[222] As in poem 55, this one statement completely derails the speaker, throwing him into a defensive flurry directed not at both of his acquaintances, but specifically

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[221] As Pedrick (1986) and Skinner (1989) both point out, this confession to the reader is itself a rhetorical attempt to create intimacy between the speaker and his extra-poetic audience. I think, however, that there is an element of Plautine metatheatricality implicit in poem 10's asides. The speaker's tendency towards deception within the poem may indicate that he is potentially unreliable in all situations, but it seems in the case of this poem that the information shared with the audience is meant not so much to deceive the reader as to provide background and internal information otherwise inaccessible in the narrative.

[222] Most scholars agree that the girl's question is purposefully designed to trap the speaker, though there are some who take the opposite view and claim that her request is meant to be benign. See Nappa (2001, 92 n.12) for a brief discussion and bibliography.

towards the girl who he knows has just caught him in a lie (*'mane' inquii puellae*, line 27). The poem reaches its climax and concludes with no real consequences for the girl, whose victory over the hubristic speaker is total and mirrors the triumph of the *servus callidus* from Plautus's comedies.

Again, it is important to note that the clever turn performed by the *puella* is accompanied by a signal marker of Heroic Badness immediately following the speaker's attempted recovery. He calls her troublesome and bad (*sed tu insulsa male et molesta vivis*, 33), just as he tagged the clever prostitute of poem 55 as *pessima*. Moreover, the colloquial use of the intensifying adverb *male* and the emphatic use of *vivis* for *es* are both linguistic features common to Plautine speech.[223] Catullus thus underscores the connection between these two scenes and their comic referents, elevating the *puella* through the explicit celebration of her *malitia* and *calliditas*.

This elevation of the *puella* as Heroically Bad in poem 10 also brings into question issues of authority and control in spheres beyond poem 55's everyday civic affairs. As Skinner (1989) suggests, poem 10's "greater significance must lie in its efficient representation of the deployment of power and, in particular, of the verbal subterfuges practiced by members of a ruling caste in order to maintain their hierarchical privileges – along with the frame of mind that accompanies the habitual use of such subterfuges" (18). The Plautine inversions I have just explored in the poem play with assumptions about gender, class, and authority in light of the more prominent concerns of military and political life that dominated Roman thought in the 1st century BCE. The *miles gloriosus* figure in Roman Comedy serves as a signifier of socio-political control in

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[223] See Fordyce (1961 ad locc).

traditionally acceptable spheres of Roman life, but he is a black-and-white figure of fun

in the plays. Catullus's innovative appropriation of Plautine character intertexts, in

contrast, is far more ambiguous. Poem 10's speaker, in switching between parasite and

soldier, and especially in confessing that his claim to authority based on property is false,

suggests that the power of Roman provincial subjugation is far less stable. The speaker

depends not on actually being a strong soldier for his authority, but rather on being able

to assert that he is a strong soldier and to maintain that facade in front of others. And the

puella callida, in undermining that authority through her Heroic Badness, reveals that

there are serious problems with such assumptions about empty appearances as a means to

control.[224]

Let us turn to the final set of poems where yet another subtle example of Plautine

Heroic Badness appears in the form of a woman whom the speaker tries and fails to

control. Whereas in poem 55 we dealt primarily with *malitia* in lower-class civic spheres,

and in poem 10 we explored *malitia* in relation to public and military life, in poems 36

and 37 we will see how *malitia* functions in elite amatory contexts, particularly in the

erotic contests between the Catullan speaker and his girlfriend. I will show that these

poems about the relationship between Catullus and Lesbia are neither spontaneous

Romantic outpourings of emotion about biographical events, nor bookish and theoretical

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[224] Skinner (1989) argues that "the message of C. 10 is that the game will be won by the side that has usurped the prerogative of defining the rules. Such a postulate is inherently opposed to the spirit of comedy; yet it is present in the subtext, which identifies the very jargon of *urbanitas* as one prominent dialect of the controlling discourse" (18). While I certainly agree with her assertion about the message of poem 10, I think her division of comedy and *urbanitas* into two mutually exclusive spheres is perhaps too strong. As we have seen, *urbanitas* (in the form of the girl's *lepos* and *venustas*, line 4) and comedy (in the form of the girl's Plautine *malitia*) are complementary despite apparent gaps created by gender and class divides.

reflections in Alexandrian modes on the nature of love, but instead are performances of

social control set against the backdrop of the Roman stage.

In poem 37 the speaker addresses a seedy tavern and its sleazy patrons, who have

apparently accepted his girl into their sexual coterie:

salax taberna, vosque contubernales   1
a pilleatis nona fratribus pila,
solis putatis esse mentulas vobis,
solis licere, quidquid est puellarum,
confutuere et putare ceteros hircos?   5
an, continenter quod sedetis insulsi
centum an ducenti, non putatis ausurum
me una ducentos irrumare sessores?
atqui putate: namque totius vobis
frontem tabernae sopionibus scribam.   10
puella nam mi, quae meo sinu fugit,
amata tantum quantum amabitur nulla,
pro qua mihi sunt magna bella pugnata,
consedit istic. hanc boni beatique
omnes amatis, et quidem, quod indignum est,   15
omnes pusilli et semitarii moechi;
tu praeter omnes une de capillatis,
cuniculosae Celtiberiae fili,
Egnati, opaca quem bonum facit barba
et dens Hibera defricatus urina.   20
      Catullus 37

Saucy tavern, and you tentmates
at the ninth column from the Capped Brothers,
you think that you alone have cocks,
that you alone can fuck whatever little girls you want
and think everyone else is a goat?
Or, because you sit sassily confident,
one or two hundred, you don't think that I'll dare
to fuck over two hundred men sitting together?
Well, think about this: I'll draw pricks
all over your tavern's front wall.
For my girl, who fled from my lap,
loved as much as no one will be loved,
for whom many great wars have been fought by me,

has sat herself there. All you good and kind men
love her and, what is really a shame,
you're all little boys and streetwalking sluts.
And you beyond all others with your little hair,
son of rabbity Spain,
Egnatius, whom your dark beard makes nice,
and your teeth brushed with Spanish piss.

The speaker rails against the tavern's occupants, whom he threatens with *irrumatio* for

their sexual appetites and for their alleged affairs with his *puella*. The most important

feature of the poem for our purposes is the way in which the speaker characterizes the

men, himself, and his girl. As Nappa (2001, 63) and Johnson (1999, 86) note, the speaker

casts the men as fellow-soldiers (*contubernales*, line 1), thereby suggesting that he

himself is also a soldier of some sort. He confirms this self-identification by asserting that

he has fought many wars for his girl (*pro qua mihi sunt magna bella pugnata*, line 13).

The speaker is a soldier of love, and his battleground centers exclusively on the

possession and control of his girl.

But he is not just any soldier: he is, in fact, the greatest of soldiers, superior to all

the other men in the *salax taberna* – at least in his eyes. Wray (2001, 85) argues

persuasively that the term *contubernales* connotes, in addition to normal military "tent-

mates," the sexual partners of slaves. The men in the tavern are the speaker's fellow

soldiers in the battle for love and sex, but by using this *double entendre* the speaker also

asserts his own authority over them as social inferiors. Moreover, the pair of sexually-

charged threats (*non putatis ausurum / me una ducentos irrumare sessores*, lines 6-7;

namque totius vobis / frontem tabernae sopionibus scribam, lines 9-10) further subjugates

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the men to the speaker's power, albeit now sexually rather than socially.[225] The speaker

has thus effectively cast himself as the most commanding soldier, one whose wars have

been the greatest and whose social and sexual potency are unassailable.

But this, of course, is a weak facade, as revealed by the absurd pitch of the

speaker's braggadocio. Wray (2001) astutely notes this disparity between appearance and

reality in the poem: "The Catullus of Poem 37...seems to be as much at pains to paint

himself as a comically absurd blusterer as many readers have been at paints to give him

back his high moral seriousness and his *simpatico* as a tender lover roughly wronged"

(84). Wray goes on to show that the speaker is not only a *miles*, but the essentially

Plautine *miles gloriosus*, mirroring in a number of ways the archetypical soldier

Pyrgopolynices from Plautus's *Miles Gloriosus*. His summary is worth quoting in full

here:[226]

> Given that this poem opens by setting a burlesque, even carnivalesque
> context through a pair of puns involving military imagery, given that the
> characterization of the 'barflies' as *contubernales* reads both as playful
> fiction (since they are no soldiers) and as bawdy comedic gag (by the
> sexual reference pitched at the lowest social register), and given that
> Catullus' Priapic threat to irrumate two hundred men is on its face a
> venting of wildly absurd braggadocio, it seems at least worth suggesting
> that the claim to have 'fought many wars' for the *puella* be taken not as a
> veiled reference to be fitted by the reader into the collection's novelistic
> narrative, but rather as a line spoken 'in character,' as an instance of
> Catullus 'getting into' the ridiculous stock role of *miles gloriosus*
> ('Braggart Soldier') in which his miniature mime has cast him.

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[225] Nappa (2001, 64-68)

[226] Wray (2001, 85-86).

As a counterpoint to this absurd characterization, Wray (2001, 86) concludes that the *puella* of the poem becomes a comic *amica*, similar to the beloved who has tried to escape the *miles gloriosus* to return to her *amator adulescens* in several of Plautus's plays. The central comparison of her to a runaway (*puella nam mi, quae meo sinu fugit*, line 11) marks a shift in the poem from typical Catullan invective to hybrid Plautine performance.

The speaker, then, sets up the relationship between himself and his girl as identical to that between the comic *miles* and *meretrix*. And this relationship, with all its Plautine character intertexts, stands strongly in the subtext of poem 37's complementary piece, poem 36. In this poem the speaker describes a vow his girl makes in order to reconcile them and to get him to stop writing invective. She vows to dedicate the poems of the worst poet to the sacred fire. But the *puella* apparently had a trick up her sleeve, and she seems to have meant the speaker's poetry as the work of the worst poet:

annales Volusi, cacata carta,	1
votum soluite pro mea puella.	
nam sanctae Veneri Cupidinique	
vovit, si sibi restitutus essem	
desissemque truces vibrare iambos,	5
electissima pessimi poetae	
scripta tardipedi deo daturam	
infelicibus ustulanda lignis.	
et hoc pessima se puella vidit	
iocose lepide vovere divis.	10
nunc o caeruleo creata ponto,	
quae sanctum Idalium Uriosque apertos	
quaeque Ancona Cnidumque harundinosam	
colis quaeque Amathunta quaeque Golgos	
quaeque Durrachium Hadriae tabernam,	15
acceptum face redditumque votum,	
si non illepidum neque inuenustum est.	

at vos interea venite in ignem,
pleni ruris et inficetiarum.
annales Volusi, cacata carta.   20
    Catullus 36

Annals of Volusius, shitty sheets,
fulfill a vow for my girl.
For she vowed to sacred Venus and Cupid,
if I were restored to her
and stopped hurling my harsh iambs,
then the choicest works of the worst poet
would be given to the slow-footed god
to be burned by the unlucky kindling.
And that worst girl saw that she made
this vow with a charming joke.
Now, O goddess born from the blue-green sea,
who dwell on sacred Idalia and spreading Urii,
and who dwell in Ancona and reedy Cnidos,
and who dwell in Amathunta and Golgi,
and who dwell in the Dyrrachian tavern of the Adriatic,
mark this vow accepted and paid,
if it is not uncharming and ungraceful.
But you meanwhile come to the fire,
full of roughness and lacking polish,
Annals of Volusius, shitty sheets.

The girl is angry at the speaker for writing *truces iambos* (5), which Thomson (1997 ad

loc.) argues convincingly refer pointedly to one of the only two true iambics in the

Catullan corpus and the one most closely connected to poem 36, namely poem 37. Like

poems 55 and 58b, these two poems form a complementary cycle that play off one

another and correspond in form, vocabulary, and tone.[227]

As in the case of poem 37, the speaker in poem 36 attempts to assert his

dominance and draws on the character of the *miles gloriosus* that he pretends to be while

assaulting the *salax taberna*. Wray (2001) argues that "everything in Catullus' stance

here bespeaks a hypermasculine, aggressive mastery – a mastery that expresses itself both

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[227] See Wray (2001, 75), who picks out the many connections between poems 36 and 37.

in scatological *convicium* ('verbal abuse') against Volusius and in the performance of

verbal wit and exquisite poetic form" (79). And in many ways, he is correct: the

domination of Volusius's poetry through the speaker's consignment of it to the flames,

the apparent inversion of the *puella*'s vow by means of his own prayer to Venus in lines

11-17, and the insult of *pessima puella* (line 9) directed at Lesbia all indicate an attempt

on the part of the speaker to gain control over the situation. But whereas Wray believes

this poem marks the speaker's successful recovery of power, I would argue that poem 36

follows the same formula for female Plautine *malitia* that we have just seen at work in

poems 55/58b and 10 and that there are a number of character intertexts from Roman

Comedy at work here.

Like poem 55, poem 36 consists of a narrative of the past framed by the present,

and in roughly the same proportions as in poem 55. The opening two lines describe a

current request, followed by a description of the past that runs until the exact midpoint of

the poem, at which point the speaker returns to the present. For now, only the past frame

concerns our attention. The speaker has been writing *truces iambos*, presumably

including poem 37 and the speaker's attempt there to assert dominance over other men

and the *puella* by putting on the guise of a *miles gloriosus*. The speaker's girl vows to

burn the poems of the worst poet (*pessimi poetae*, line 6) in order to stop the speaker's

harsh insults and mollify him. But in the ambiguity of the unnamed *pessimus poeta* rests

the potential for misunderstanding, as well as the potential for the girl to assert her own

authority over the speaker. The girl seems to have spoken tongue-in-cheek (*et hoc*

pessima se puella vidit / iocose lepide vovere divis, lines 9-10), and the speaker's vague

description of events seems to imply that she meant he was the worst poet and that the

poems that would be consigned to the fire would be the offending iambs. Here again, as in poem 55 and poem 10, the naughty joker is marked by the vocabulary of wickedness as *pessima puella* (line 9), signaling another instance of Plautine Heroic Badness. Furthermore, the juxtaposition of *pessimus poeta* (line 6) as a supposedly bad author with *pessima puella* (line 9) as Heroically Bad woman grants the girl added authority. Running away from the speaker did not work for the girl in poem 37, but her clever subversion in poem 36 grants her temporary victory over the aggressive posturing of the speaker as *miles amator*.

Of course, there is an added dimension to this poem not present in the other two instances of Plautine *malitia* we have explored in this chapter. The speaker in poem 55 loses face in front of the prostitute and his narrative instantly ends, marking his impotence in attempting to dominate others. In poem 10 the speaker fumbles frantically in front of Varus's girl, having again failed to assert his authority and resorting finally to childish name-calling.[228] In poem 36 the speaker comes full circle, returning to the present and fulfilling the vow he makes at the beginning of the poem (*annales Volusi, cacata carta, / votum soluite pro mea puella*, lines 1-2) at the very end (*at vos interea venite in ignem, / pleni ruris et inficetiarum / annales Volusi, cacata carta*, lines 18-20). Moreover, the speaker makes this new vow in the hopes of recovering something of his urbane composition, supposing that he will become witty and charming again (*si non illepidum neque inuenustum est*, line 17) by turning his *puella*'s joke against himself into his own joke against the poet Volusius. Note that this same phrase appears in poem 10, albeit applied to Varus's clever girl instead (*non sane illepidum neque invenustum*, line

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[228] See Skinner (1989) for the ramifications of this last-ditch aggressive effort on the part of poem 10's speaker.

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4). The speaker seems to have taken a lesson from the Heroically Bad *scortillum* of poem 10, using her as a model for the virtues of *urbanitas*. In this way he gets the last laugh, not against the *puella* but against an uninvolved individual. By making Volusius's poems the work of the worst poet, he thus adds an extra dimension to the *pessimus poeta* of the vow. The speaker endures and accepts the *puella*'s joke and appropriates the badness for himself, but in finally turning the tables on Volusius he adopts some of her own Heroic Badness. In executing his own clever inversion, the speaker moves from being called a bad author by a Heroically Bad female to appropriating the role of the Heroically Bad rogue himself. We will see him exercise this newfound Plautine cleverness again and using the same words in the second part of this chapter in the context of poem 49, a wry attack on Cicero.

We have seen, then, a mixture of iambic threats and Plautine farce in poems 37 and 36. The speaker has leveled invectives as poem 37 against his *puella* and attempted to pose as a superior *miles gloriosus* character. But the *puella* in poem 36 is not the quiet comic *amica* that the speaker paints her as in poem 37. She vows to dedicate the poems of the worst poem to the fire if the speaker will cease writing such *truces iambos* (line 5), and then in a sudden turn we can infer that her vow is a *double entendre*: she in fact means to burn the speaker's own poetry. Immediately before this revelation, the speaker calls her *pessima puella* (9), prefiguring her Heroic Badness in the same way that he does the *malitia* of the clever prostitute in poem 55.10 and of Varus's girl in poem 10.33. The *puella* in poem 36 has thus turned the tables on the speaker yet again, engaging in the Heroic Badness that most often is the only – and the most powerful – resource that characters in inferior positions have in both Plautus and Catullus. The speaker, having

apparently learned from these repeated lessons about cleverness and social control, tries

out Plautine *malitia* for himself with some modest success. The girl dominates the

speaker, but the speaker dominates Volusius, resetting the balance in a zero-sum game of

Roman social hierarchies.

III.3.1: CATULLUS, THE *SERVUS CALLIDUS*, AND IRONIC DECEPTION (POEMS 21, 24, AND 49)

Plautus's clever slaves offer useful models for individuals in subordinate positions to understand and cope with their inferior status, as well as to gain a modicum of control in interactions with people who try to dominate them. We have just seen these effects in action through the characterization of women in Catullus's poems 55/58b, 10, and 36/37. But as I noted above, even for individuals already in relatively superior positions – like aristocratic males in Catullus's circle of acquaintances – the *servus callidus* provides a model whose emulation offers one way to gain control over social and erotic rivals when the playing field is level.

In the following section we will look closely at three poems in which the Catullan speaker is in competition with a social or erotic equal, namely poems 21, 24, and 49. While their subject matter is quite disparate (poem 21 is a rebuke of Aurelius's lusty designs, poem 24 a financial warning to Juventius, and poem 49 an ironic panegyric of Cicero's patronage), they are linked to each other by a distinctive intra-corpus intertext in exactly the same prominent opening position that has so far baffled scholars. I will show that this intratext in Catullus's corpus is also a systemic intertext with two memorable scenes from Plautus's plays, one from the *Bacchides* and the other from the *Persa*. I will argue that these scenes are representatives of a comic stock routine in which the play's antagonist has just discovered that he has been tricked by the clever slave protagonist. Finally, I will show that by invoking this stock routine in poems 21, 24, and 49, Catullus grafts the attributes of a triumphant *servus callidus* onto his speaker's persona and

intertextually demonstrates that the speaker has gained the upper hand over a dominant character by trickery. At the same time, he calls attention to his own cleverness and – like the Plautine *servus callidus* – reveals that he is more concerned with his successful assertion of temporary dominance than he is about any tangible benefit gained from his deceptions.

III.3.2: THREE CATULLAN INTRATEXTS AND THEIR INTERTEXTUAL REFERENTS IN PLAUTUS (POEMS 21, 24, AND 49)

Poems 21, 24, and 49 each open in almost exactly the same way, with a self-contained three-line vocative address that highlights one character trait of the addressee and enlarges it to a superlative pitch. It will be useful to see all three in succession and compare them here:

Aureli, pater esuritionum,   1
non harum modo, sed quot aut fuerunt
aut sunt aut aliis erunt in annis   3
        Catullus 21.1-3

Aurelius, father of hungers,
not of these only, but all who either were
or are or will be in other years

O qui flosculus es Iuuentiorum,   1
non horum modo, sed quot aut fuerunt
aut posthac aliis erunt in annis   3
        Catullus 24.1-3

O you who are the little flower of the Juventii,
not of these only, but all who either were
or afterwards will be in other years

Disertissime Romuli nepotum,   1
quot sunt quotque fuere, Marce Tulli,
quotque post aliis erunt in annis   3
        Catullus 49.1-3

Most learned of Romulus's grandsons,
all who are and all who were, Marcus Tullius,
and all afterwards who will be in other years

The similarities between these openings far outnumber the differences: each contains a vocative in the first position of the first line (*Aureli*, *O*, *Disertissime*), an extreme or superlative modifier (*pater*, *flosculus*, *Disertissime*),[229] a plural genitive of a class of people to whom the addressee belongs (*esuritionum*, *Iuventiorum*, *nepotum*), a comparison of the addressee to all who were, are, or have been in that class (lines 2-3), and an identical four-word coda (*aliis erunt in annis*, line 3), all arranged following the same train of thought. Despite some variations, a single template stands behind these three intimate addresses to people in the speaker's social circles.

The problem that has perplexed scholars is that none of these poems is on its surface about the same thing as the other two: poem 21 is a rebuke of Aurelius for trying to steal the speaker's boyfriend, poem 24 is a warning to Juventius not to get involved with a man who has no money, and poem 49 is an ironic self-deprecating panegyric of Cicero. This problem has led many scholars to assume that these three opening addresses are similar purely by coincidence, the result of Catullus's borrowing of an idiomatic rhetorical construction from everyday Latin speech and nebulous Greco-Roman cultural patrimony.[230]

But even if this unusual construction were a common feature of Latin *sermo cotidianus*, Catullus has obviously gone out of his way to tie these three poems together and to encourage his audience to read them in light of each other. And in fact, as far as we can tell this phrasing is not altogether common: comparable examples are few and far

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[229] For *pater* as a roughly equivalent to a superlative, see Ellis (1889 ad loc.) and Quinn (1970 ad loc.).

[230] See especially Ellis (1889 ad 21.2), Kroll (1959 ad 21.1), Quinn (1970 ad 21.2-3), and Agnesini (2004, 75-76).

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between, especially in the 1ˢᵗ century BCE, and most parallels cited by the commentators are from contexts quite removed from Catullus's nugatory poetry or any of the themes dealt with in these three poems.[231] Exaggerated comparisons of this type do, however, appear regularly in Roman Comedy, notably in sets of stock routines by Plautus that are typical of his farcical hyperbole and frequently involve the clever slave character type.[232] Moreover, commentators have long cited without further remark two parallels in Plautus's plays that are remarkably close, in both form and content, to the intratextual phrases in these three Catullan poems.[233] As I will now argue, these parallels in Plautus represent a familiar and prominent stock routine that Catullus invokes to give his speaker the mask of a clever slave who is in the process of overcoming an antagonist and asserting his authority by means of clever deception. This Plautine routine offers a basic approach to Roman social rivalry that transcends specific contexts by using the familiar *servus callidus* figure. In turn, it binds all three Catullan poems together and explores common themes of inversion and control in disparate situations.

The first parallel occurs in Plautus's *Bacchides*. In the play, a young man named Mnesilochus falls in love with a courtesan named Bacchis, who much to his misfortune has already been hired for the year by a soldier. In order to have her released from this contract Mnesilochus employs the aid of his clever slave, Chrysalus, to defraud his father, the *senex* Nicobulus, of money necessary to buy the soldier off. Chrysalus manages to

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[231] See Ellis (1889 ad 21.2) and Agnesini (2004, 76 n.93) for an exhaustive list of parallels in Greek and in Latin. Some of these parallels are indeed close, especially the one at *Odyssey* 16.437, but I will show in the following pages that these sources, even if they do affect the Catullan poems, come through the filter of mock-tragic Plautine referents.

[232] For Plautus's exaggerated comparisons, see Fraenkel (2007 [1922], 5-16, esp. 9-10).

[233] See Ellis (1889 ad 21.2) and Fordyce (1961 ad 49.2).

trick Nicobulus not once or twice, but three times before the old man realizes what has

happened and flies into a frustrated rage in a monologue, comparing himself to all the

buffoons that are, were, and ever will be:

> quicum ubi ubi sunt, qui fuerunt quique futuri sunt posthac 1087
> stulti, stolidi, fatui, fungi, bardi, blenni, buccones,
> solus ego omnis longe antideo stultitia et moribus indoctis. 1089
>   Plautus *Bacchides* 1087-1089
>
> Whoever anywhere are, who were, and who will be later
> foolish, hardheaded, ignorant, lumps, dolts, fatheads,
> I alone outdo them all in stupidity and ignorant manners.

The second parallel appears in the *Persa*, a play whose plot and characters are quite

different from the *Bacchides*. But despite the disparate circumstances, the situation and

phrasing of the particular scene in which the parallel appears are almost identical to

Nicobulus's lament in the *Bacchides*. In the *Persa*, a clever slave named Toxilus must

quickly find money to buy his beloved, a courtesan owned by a pimp named Dordalus.

He borrows money from his fellow slave Sagaristio, whom he promises to repay by

tricking the pimp using an elaborate cross-dressing scheme. Once he secures his beloved,

he gets a parasite named Saturio to dress up his daughter, a freeborn Athenian girl, as a

Persian slave, whom Sagaristio (disguised as a slave-dealer from afar) will sell to

Dordalus. Once Sagaristio takes the money and runs off, Saturio charges in to reclaim his

daughter and drags the pimp to court for dealing in freeborn women, and so Toxilus bilks

him out of both the girl and the money necessary to repay the original loan from

Sagaristio. Later, Dordalus discovers the deception and returns on stage to complain that

he is more miserable than any who live, have lived, or ever will live:

> qui sunt, qui erunt quique fuerunt quique futuri sunt posthac,   777
> solus ego omnibus antideo facile, miserrumus hominum ut vivam. 778
>   Plautus *Persa* 777-778
>
> Those who are, who will be and who will have been and who will later be,
> I outdo them all easily, as most wretched of men as I am.

It is, of course, not surprising that these two lamentations are so similar; Roman Comedy, and especially Plautus, revels in repetition, whether it be of character types, of joke routines, or of plot structures. But Plautus does not recycle haphazardly, and most often routine type-scenes like these two share commonalities that override any differences.

The basic routine that underlies both scenes runs as follows: an individual, previously confident in his superior unassailable position (the *senex* Nicobulus and *leno* Dordalus), has just been duped by another individual in an initially inferior position (the *servi callidi* Chrysalus and Toxilus). Upon realizing the deceit, the victim of the slave's clever ruse announces to the audience and himself that he belongs to a certain class of people (*Bacchides*: *stulti, stolidi, fatui, fungi, bardi, blenni, buccones*, line 1088; *Persa*: *omnibus...hominum*, line 778); he compares himself to all who are, were, or ever will be in that class (*Bacchides*: *quicum ubi ubi sunt, qui fuerunt quique futuri sunt posthac*, line 1087; *Persa*: *qui sunt, qui erunt quique fuerunt quique futuri sunt posthac*, line 777); and he marks himself within that class as the superlative example of wretchedness and stupidity, the two traits most readily associated with being tricked (*Bacchides*: *longe antideo stultitia et moribus indoctis*, line 1089; *Persa*: *antideo facile, miserrumus*, line 778).

It is also worthwhile to note that in both plays the person who ultimately deceives the antagonist who laments exaggeratedly puts on a guise of mock-humility, much in the same way we will see the Catullan speaker does. In the *Persa*, Toxilus gives Dordalus a letter supposedly from his master that lures the pimp into buying the freeborn daughter of Saturio. Toxilus himself wrote the letter, but he claims complete ignorance in the face of Dordalus:

> TOXILUS: ita me di ament, ut ob istam rem tibi multa bona instant a me. 492
> nam est res quaedam, quam occultabam tibi dicere: nunc eam narrabo,
> unde tu pergrande lucrum facias: faciam, ut mei memineris, dum vitam
> vivas. DORDAUS: bene dictis tuis bene facta aures meae
> auxilium exposcunt.   495
> TOX: tuom promeritumst, merito ut faciam. et ut me scias esse ita facturum,
> tabellas tene has, pellege. DOR: istae quid ad me? TOX: immo ad te attinent et tua refert.
> nam ex Persia sunt haec allatae mihi a meo ero. DOR: quando? TOX: haud dudum.
> DOR: quid istae narrant? TOX: percontare ex ipsis. ipsae tibi narrabunt.   500
> DOR: cedo sane [mihi]. TOX: at clare recitato. DOR: tace, dum pellego.
> TOX: hau verbum faciam.   502
>   Plautus *Persa* 492-502
>
> TOXILUS: So help me gods, since because of this many good things are coming from me to you.
> See, there's a certain matter that I was hesitant to tell you about: now I'll tell you how you can make a ton of profit. I'll make you remember me, as long as I live. DORDALUS: My ears ask for kind deeds to help your kind words.
> TOX: You deserve what I do deservedly. And so you know that I'll do it, take these tablets, read them through. DOR: What do these have to do with me? TOX: Really, they concern you and matter to your matters. See, they've been brought to me from Persia by my master. DOR: When? TOX: Just a bit ago.
> DOR: What do they say? TOX: Ask them. They'll tell you themselves.
> DOR: Fine, give them to me. TOX: But read them clearly. DOR: Shut up while I read. TOX: I won't make a peep.

In *Bacchides* a nearly identical letter-exchange takes place. The slave Chrysalus helps the

young lover Mnesilochus write a letter to his father, the *senex* Nicobulus, but then upon

presenting the letter to the old man feigns ignorance:

> CHRYSALUS: nosces tu illum actutum qualis sit.   786
> nunc has tabellas ferre me iussit tibi.
> orabat, quod istic esset scriptum ut fieret.
> NICOBULUS: cedo. CHRYS: nosce signum.
> NIC: novi. ubi ipse est? CHRYS: nescio.
> nil iam me oportet scire. oblitus sum omnia.   790
> scio me esse servom. nescio etiam id quod scio.
> nunc ab trasenna hic turdus lumbricum petit;
> pendebit hodie pulcre, ita intendi tenus.   793
>   Plautus *Bacchides* 786-793
>
> CHRYSALUS: You'll know what sort he is soon.
> Now he's ordered me to bring these tablets to you.
> He asked that you do what has been written there.
> NICOBULUS: Fine. CHRYS: See his seal?
> NIC: I see. But where is he? CHRYS: I don't know.
> It's not right for me to know. I'm ignorant of everything.
> I know that I'm a slave. I don't even know what I know.
> <aside> Now this thrush here is looking for a worm from my trap;
> Today he'll hang beautifully, just as I've set him up.

In the *Bacchides* example Chrysalus pushes his humility to the extreme, claiming that he

recognizes that he is a lowly slave (*scio me esse servom*, line 791) and that therefore he

does not even know what he knows (*nescio etiam id quod scio*, line 791). It is, after all,

appropriate for someone so inferior to the *paterfamilias* to be ignorant (*nil iam me oportet

scire*, line 790) and incapable of any purposeful guile. This pose is one of the clever

slave's most useful tools. While he has access to some of the most intimate secrets of the

household, his very status as a slave requires that he be inconspicuous and harmless to his

superiors, practically trained to be unaware.[234] Consequently, no one suspects either that he knows enough to subvert dominant individuals or that he has the wherewithal to use that knowledge to his own ends.

The same assumption holds true for people like the Catullan speaker who appropriate this guise of humility and harmlessness. As we will see in the following section, the speaker in each of the poems for which this comic routine provides a systemic intertext wheedles his addressee in order to gain his trust. But like the *servi callidi* Toxilus and Chrysalus, he then executes a clever trick to assert his dominance and to gain control over the target of his ruse.

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[234] See Fitzgerald (2000, 13-31) for this paradoxical relationship between master and slave and the training for ignorance required to maintain this relationship. He shows that, on the one hand, slaves are constantly aware of the master's everyday actions and domestic secrets, since their usefulness as "living tools" in the household requires the slave to anticipate the master's needs. On the other hand, slaves as "other" pose a danger to the master, since they offer a weak point through which the master's guarded personal information is out of his control and potentially available to enemies.

III.3.3: CLEVER ENTRAPMENT (POEMS 15 AND 21)

Few of the characters in Catullus's poetry are as baffling as Aurelius: now a sympathetic friend (poem 11), then a lecherous rival (poems 15 and 21), here a boorish critic (poem 16), there a refined hedonist (poem 81), his relationship to the speaker is in constant flux. In poems that mention him, Aurelius's status relative to the speaker is a constant source of anxiety.[235] Paradoxically, the speaker seeks his approval at the same time that he tries to undermine Aurelius's position, and the conflicting stance of love-and-hate in poem 85, so often cited as an emblem of the speaker's affair with Lesbia, could just as sensibly be applied to his relationship with Aurelius.[236]

Plautus's comedies often revolve around this kind of competition in the form of a rivalry between clever slave and dominant antagonist, as we have already amply seen, and it should not be surprising that the Plautine deception/revelation scenes from the *Persa* and *Bacchides* stand behind a poem addressed to Aurelius. But before we can examine how this intertext and its accompanying social competition function in relation

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[235] Several recent scholars have picked up on the importance of the relationship between the speaker and Aurelius for understanding the various anxieties – literary, social, and erotic – that occupy the speaker throughout Catullus's poems. See Fitzgerald (1995, 44-55) for a metapoetic reading of his anxieties of publication and Nappa (2001, 45-58) for anxieties of social standing and reputation.

[236] For too long poem 85 has been circumscribed as referring exclusively to the speaker's conflicting emotions towards Lesbia, even though the epigrammatic ambiguity of the couplet enables and encourages its application to the wider range of love/hate relationships that dominate so many of Catullus's poems. We should keep in mind that poem 85 is not so much about some outside recipient of these emotions (n.b. the complete lack of direct objects beyond the vague pronoun *id* in line 1) as it is about the speaker's own feelings (note the six first-person verbs packed into two short lines). We should allow for poem 85's inclusion in parts of the corpus outside the Lesbia poems, especially with regard to other individuals who evoke conflicting emotions in the speaker. Cf. also poems 14 (to Calvus) and 30 (to Alfenus), who likewise reveal a complex relationship with the speaker. And while some of the vocabulary of poem 85 is strong or eroticized, these qualities do not automatically require that the poem be about an erotic or particularly deeply-felt relationship; cf. the vocabulary of torture, death, and hatred in poem 14 or that of eroticized Homeric suffering in poem 50.

to poem 21, we must make a brief excursus to examine another poem that, together with

poem 21, creates a complementary cycle. Poem 15, also addressed to Aurelius and on the

same topic (Aurelius's lust for boys), serves as a vital backdrop to poem 21's harsh

invective.

In poem 15 the speaker entrusts his beloved Juventius to Aurelius, so far in the

poetic collection known to us only as a *comes Catulli*, one of his social companions:[237]

<blockquote>

commendo tibi me ac meos amores,   1
Aureli. veniam peto pudenter,
ut, si quicquam animo tuo cupisti,
quod castum expeteres et integellum,
conserves puerum mihi pudice,   5
non dico a populo – nihil veremur
istos, qui in platea modo huc modo illuc
in re praetereunt sua occupati –
verum a te metuo tuoque pene
infesto pueris bonis malisque.   10
quem tu qua lubet, ut lubet, moueto
quantum vis, ubi erit foris paratum:
hunc unum excipio, ut puto, pudenter.
quod si te mala mens furorque uecors
in tantam impulerit, sceleste, culpam,   15
ut nostrum insidiis caput lacessas,
a tum te miserum malique fati!
quem attractis pedibus patente porta
percurrent raphanique mugilesque.   19
      Catullus 15

I entrust to you me and my love,
Aurelius. I seek decently one favor,
that, if you have desired anything in your heart

</blockquote>

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[237] In the discussion to follow I will assert a particular order for reading some poems, but only insofar as the poems themselves encourage or require such an order (e.g., the strong invective and narrative descriptions of Aurelius's attempts at seduction in poem 21 must follow the softer warning and initial entrustment of Juventius to Aurelius in poem 15). While not explicitly named as such, I believe *meos amores* must point to Juventius because (1) poem 24 connects Juventius with Furius in poem 23 through verbal and topical echoes, (2) poems 48 and 99 connect Juventius to Furius and Aurelius in poem 16 through the kiss motif, and (3) poem 81 connects Juventius to Aurelius through a pun on the latter's name (*inaurata palladior statua*, line 4).

that you would ask be chaste and untouched,
protect my boy chastely,
not, I say, from the people – I'm not afraid
of those, who pass in the street now here, now there,
busied in their own affairs –
In truth, I fear you and your penis,
hostile to boys good and bad.
Move that thing wherever you please, as you please,
however much you want, when it will be ready outside:
I exclude this boy only, and decently, I think.
But if your wicked mind and raving madness
drive you into such fault, you criminal,
that you harm my life with your tricks,
how wretched and ill-fated you'll be!
With your feet pulled apart and your hole opened,
radishes and mullets will run you through!

The speaker's request in lines 1-8 seems heartfelt, asking that Aurelius guard Juventius's

chastity and treat the boy just as he would want his own *puer delicatus* to be treated by

another (*ut, si quicquam animo tuo cupisti, / quod castum expeteres et intellegum*, lines 3-

4). The poem begins benignly enough, but we soon learn that Aurelius is an odd choice

for the boy's guardian. Halfway through the poem the speaker reveals that his main

concern is not the vulgar crowd, but Aurelius himself, whose penis threatens all boys

alike (*non dico a populo – nihil veremur / istos...verum a te metuo tuoque pene / infesto

pueris bonis malisque*, lines 6-10). The remainder of the poem is not really invective as

much as it is an acknowledgement of Aurelius's propensity for lust (*mala mens furorque

vecors*, line 14) and an approval of his sexual escapades (*quem tu qua lubet, ut lubet,

moveto / quantum vis, ubi erit foris paratum*, lines 11-12) provided they do not touch

upon the speaker's own interests (*hunc unum excipio*, line 13). It concludes with a vivid

hypothetical threat: if Aurelius lays a finger on the speaker's boy with his lecherous traps

(*insidiis*, line 16), then he will suffer public humiliation and sexual penetration with

radishes and grey mullets (lines 18-19), a punishment most frequently associated with adulterers caught red-handed.

A known philanderer in the habit of seducing boys is perhaps the last person to whom the speaker could entrust Juventius for safe keeping. But this point is true only if the speaker's real goal is to protect his *puer delicatus* from rivals, among whom must be numbered Aurelius himself. If, however, we consider that the speaker has ulterior motives beyond the boy's best interests, then the effect of poem 15 becomes far more intriguing and resonates more fully with the rest of the Juventius cycle. What if, as I will now argue, poem 15 is not so much about the erotic relationship between the speaker and Juventius as it is about the social relationship between the speaker and Aurelius? That is to say, what if the speaker's pose in 15 is purely ironic and designed to entrap Aurelius, using Juventius as bait and to put the speaker in a position of control and superiority over Aurelius?

Poem 15 revolves around Juventius, but it is not really *about* him: the boy appears only three times and only as an object, never by name (*meos amores*, line 1; *puerum*, line 5; *hunc unum*, line 13). Compare the five references to the speaker's own interests (*commendo...me ac meos*, line 1; *conserves...mihi*, line 5; *veremur*, line 6; *metuo*, line 9; *nostrum...caput*, line 16) and nine to Aurelius's (*tibi*, line 1; *Aureli*, line 2; *animo tuo*, line 3; *a te...tuoque pene*, line 9; *tu*, line 11; *quantum vis*, line 12; *te*, line 14; *te miserum*, line 17; *quem*, line 18). The first line gives the thrust of the poem: the situation involves Aurelius (*tibi*), the speaker (*me*), and the boy (*meos amores*), but the boy is just a possession of the speaker and the symbolic object of a social transaction between the other two individuals, the addresser and addressee (*commendo tibi*).

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The difficulty behind this transaction is that Juventius is not a neutral object of social exchange or control. He is, in fact, bait. The speaker knows that Aurelius, unlike those who run around town busy with their own affairs (*in re...sua occupati*, line 8), is constantly occupied with his lust to such a degree that he and his penis are known as predators ravenous for any and all boys (*te...tuoque pene / infesto pueris bonis malisque*, lines 9-10). And the speaker seems to understand perfectly, encouraging Aurelius to go hunting as much as he wants and to take advantage whenever the opportunity arises (*quem tu qua lubet, ut lubet, moveto / quantum vis, ubi erit foris paratum*, lines 11-12). In the first half of the poem, the speaker goes to great lengths to show that he is Aurelius's trustworthy and knowing confidante, mirroring the *servus callidus*'s own attempts to get as close to his future victim as possible. By the time the speaker finally gets to his request in line 13 and threat in lines 17-19 he has spent considerable effort titillating Aurelius with the possibilities of seduction and working him into a frenzy of sexual temptation (*furorque vecors*, line 14). And when he finally does make his threat, he does so with the apparent certainty that Aurelius will give in to his urges: he does not say, "In the unlikely event that you should make a bad decision and take advantage of my boy," but uses a future more vivid conditional with mad lust as the subject and Aurelius as passive object (*si te mala mens furorque vecors / ...impulerit*, lines 14-15). Lines 14-19 essentially say, "If your inherent desires, which I have just brought to a pitch, eventually overcome you, then you will be mine and I will publicly assert my dominance over you."[238]

Poem 21 is the sequel to poem 15 and presents the all-too-foreseeable outcome of the speaker's deceptive entrustment of Juventius to Aurelius:

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[238] Fitzgerald (1995, 44-58).

Aureli, pater esuritionum,   1
non harum modo, sed quot aut fuerunt
aut sunt aut aliis erunt in annis,
pedicare cupis meos amores.
nec clam: nam simul es, iocaris, una,   5
haerens ad latus omnia experiris.
frustra: nam insidias mihi instruentem
tangam te prior irrumatione.
atque id si faceres satur, tacerem;
nunc ipsum id doleo, quod esurire   10
a te mi puer et sitire discet.
quare desine, dum licet pudico,
ne finem facias, sed irrumatus.   13
            Catullus 21

Aurelius, father of hungers,
not of these only, but all who either were
or are or will be in other years,
you desire to fuck my love.
And not secretly: for as soon as you are together,
you play, and clinging to his side you try everything.
Futile! For I will hit you with mouthfucking first
when you are laying traps against me.
And if you did that sated, I would be quiet.
Now I grieve, because my boy will learn from you
to thirst and to hunger.
Therefore stop, while you can decently,
before you end up – mouthfucked.

Unlike poem 15, poem 21 begins brusquely with a rebuke of Aurelius as the father of all appetites (*pater esuritionum*, line 1). A trait that the speaker acknowledged and accepted in Aurelius in poem 15 (lines 9-12) has become elevated and outrageously scandalous here. But note that despite the speaker's harsher tone, the terms of this social transaction are the same. This poem is as little concerned with Juventius's interests as poem 15: again the boy appears only three times and always as an objectified possession (*meos amores*, line 4; *ad latus*, line 6; *mi puer*, line 11), in contrast to the six appearances of the

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speaker (*meos*, line 4; *mihi*, line 7; *tangam*, line 8; *tacerem*, line 9; *doleo*, line 10; *mi*, line 11) and nine of Aurelius (*Aureli*, line 1; *cupis*, line 4; *es*, line 5; *iocaris*, line 5; *experiris*, line 6; *te*, line 8; *faceres*, line 9; *a te*, line 11; *finem facias*, line 13). Juventius is only an object whose possession is the main issue in this cycle, and the speaker knows his prey well enough to be certain that Aurelius will have taken the bait, just as the clever slaves in *Persa* and *Bacchides* were sure that their victims could not resist the temptations they offered their social superiors. Aurelius's resulting attempt to seduce Juventius puts him in a position of weakness, one that the speaker exploits immediately by asserting temporary dominance over him. He will inflict oral rape on Aurelius (*tangam te...irrumatione*, line 8; *quare desine, dum licet pudico, / ne finem facias, sed irrumatus*, lines 12-13) if Aurelius does not learn his place as an inferior. The speaker has thus revealed his trick, pointing out explicitly that he has gained the upper hand.

In doing so, he also marks Aurelius as the victim of his scheme by applying to him the same superlative formula that both the pimp and the *senex* use to describe themselves after their subversion at the hands of slaves. Just as Nicobulus suffers a loss of status because he excelled in his stupidity and foolishness all others who are, were, or ever have been (*stultitia et moribus indoctis*, *Bacchides* 1089), Aurelius too suffers because he excelled in his lust all who are, were, or ever have been (*pater esuritionum*, poem 21.1). This two-poem cycle is, of course, cruel to Aurelius, like placing a treat in front of a dog and then punishing him for trying to have a taste. We might even extend this simile somewhat further. This is an example not only of punishment but of asserted dominance meant to train a potentially unruly rival. The speaker, acting like an ostensibly subservient and ignorant slave, has turned the tables on Aurelius, using a carefully-

devised trap that played on his target's own weaknesses and active attempts to control

another. In the end, the speaker has won the day and reserved Juventius for his own use.

As we will see in the next section, this will not be the last time he pulls this trick.

III.3.4: BOY FOR SALE...SOLD! (POEMS 23 AND 24)

As we have just seen, Juventius in Catullus's poetry often is less a love interest, or even a sexual diversion, than a living symbol of control and dominance in the speaker's social contests. It is true that two poems (poems 48 and 99) focus on amatory themes and involve the speaker and the boy to the exclusion of all others, in the same way that the other two kiss poems (poems 5 and 7) create a world in which only the two lovers really matter.[239] But more than twice that many poems (15, 21, 24, 81, and 106) present the boy as an object up for bids, sometimes metaphorically, sometimes actually, and these focus on the speaker's anxiety that he will ultimately lose possession of or control over Juventius to someone else.

While in poems 15 and 21 the speaker fully objecitifies the boy, in other poems it becomes clear that the speaker's *puer delicatus* has a mind of his own and that the speaker's hold over the boy is tenuous and in constant need of reaffirmation, as in the case of poem 24. Here too the speaker finds use for the Plautine *servus callidus*, putting on the mask of clever slave to mark his attempt to assert dominance over an individual. But whereas the contest for dominance plays out in terms of social positioning in the Aurelius pieces (poems 15 and 21), it occurs here between individuals jockeying for control in an erotic context. The speaker uses the clever slave's mask this time to subvert his *puer delicatus*, who is the superior figure in this erotic relationship and whom the speaker must negotiate into an inferior position.

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[239] See Khan (1967) for connections between the Lesbia and Juventius kiss poems.

But before we can see how the Plautine intertext and *servus callidus* function in poem 24, it will be useful to step back as we did with Aurelius in poem 21 and discuss briefly the nature of the speaker's relationship with Juventius in the rest of the poetic cycle. Because the two kiss poems (poems 48 and 99) deal exclusively with the speaker and his *puer delicatus* while minimizing the number of outside variables, they offer a good baseline against which to evaluate their relative status towards each other. In poem 48, the speaker talks about all the kisses he wishes to give Juventius:

mellitos oculos tuos, Iuventi,	1
si quis me sinat usque basiare,	
usque ad milia basiem trecenta	
nec numquam videar satur futurus,	
non si densior aridis aristis	5
sit nostrae seges osculationis.	6

       Catullus 48

If someone should let me constantly kiss
your honey-sweet eyes, Juventius,
constantly I would kiss them three-hundred thousand times
and I would never seem to be going to be sated,
not if the crop of our kissifications
should be denser than dry wheat.

The tone of this poem is far more hesitant than in the kiss poems to Lesbia. Most of poem 5 is streaked with urgent jussives, imperatives, and future tense verbs (*vivamus*, *amemus*, line 1; *aestimemus*, line 3; *da*, line 7; *fecerimus*, line 10; *conturbabimus*, line 11), each expressing the speaker's confidence about his devil-may-care relationship. In poem 48, however, the speaker is tentative, waiting for the permission of someone else (*si quis me sinat*, line 2) and presenting everything as a future-less-vivid possibility rather than an asserted certainty (*nec numquam videar satur futurus, / non si densior... / sit*, lines 4-6).

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The speaker is positively subservient in this poem,[240] a stance that he follows up on in

poem 99 by lamenting what happened when he overstepped boundaries of the

relationship that Juventius himself set down:

surripui tibi, dum ludis, mellite Iuuenti,   1
    suaviolum dulci dulcius ambrosia.
verum id non impune tuli: namque amplius horam
    suffixum in summa me memini esse cruce,
dum tibi me purgo nec possum fletibus ullis   5
    tantillum vestrae demere saevitiae.
nam simul id factum est, multis diluta labella
    guttis abstersisti omnibus articulis,
ne quicquam nostro contractum ex ore maneret,
    tamquam commictae spurca saliua lupae.   10
praeterea infesto miserum me tradere amori
    non cessasti omnique excruciare modo,
ut mi ex ambrosia mutatum iam foret illud
    suaviolum tristi tristius elleboro.
quam quoniam poenam misero proponis amori,   15
    numquam iam posthac basia surripiam.   16
            Catullus 99

I stole from you while you played, honey-sweet Juventius,
    a buss sweeter than sweet ambrosia.
But I did not take it unpunished: for more than an hour
    I remember that I was fixed on the top of a cross
while I apologized to you, and I could not with any tears
    remove any of your savage hostility.
For as soon as it happened, you wiped your lips
    washed with many waterdrops using your whole arm,
so that nothing from my mouth would stay on yours,
    as if it were the filthy spit of a pissed whore.
Then you did not stop handing me, wretched, over to hostile love
    and torturing me in every way possible,
so that that buss of mine was changed from ambrosia,
    more bitter than bitter hellebore.
Since you demand this penalty for my wretched love,
    never hereafter will I steal kisses.

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[240] Cf. Heath (1986) on poem 32

In contrast to the unnumbered kisses he yearns for in poem 48, the speaker in poem 99 steals only a single tender but de-eroticized buss (*suaviolum*, line 2; cf. the friendly *suaviabor* in poem 9.9 on Veranius's homecoming). But even this is too much and it seems the permission hoped for in poem 48 (*si quis me sinat usque basiare*, 2) has not been granted. The speaker is subjected to emotional punishment highly reminiscent of the physical kinds experienced by slaves in Plautus's comedies, a symbol of their lack of control and subjugation to the power of another (line 4).[241] We find out that Juventius is the one who inflicts this torture (lines 9-10, 13). This is obviously not a relationship based on equality, or even one in which the speaker has any hope of control. He is, for all intents and purposes, just as subjugated in his relationship with Juventius as a Plautine slave is in his relationship with his own master.

The speaker does not, then, have the ability to urge, command, or declare anything in his relationship with Juventius in the same way he feels he can in his relationship with Lesbia. But he does have at his disposal the same kind of Plautine servile trickery he uses to assert his authority over Aurelius in poems 15 and 21, and this is the tool he turns to in poem 24 to gain the upper hand over Juventius. In the poem, he describes a financial and erotic transaction that one of his other rivals attempted to engage in with Juventius, as well as his own advice on the matter to the boy:

> o qui flosculus es Iuventiorum   1
> non horum modo, sed quot aut fuerunt
> aut posthac aliis erunt in annis,
> mallem divitias Midae dedisses
> isti, cui neque servus est neque arca,   5
> quam sic te sineres ab illo amari.

---

[241] See Parker (1989) for the connection between control, clever slaves, and torture in Plautus.

"quid? non est homo bellus?" inquies. est:
sed bello huic neque servus est neque arca.
hoc tu quam lubet abice elevaque:
nec servum tamen ille habet neque arcam.   10
          Catullus 24

O you who are the little flower of the Juventii,
not of these only, but all who either were
or afterwards will be in other years,
I would rather you had given the wealth of Midas
to that man, who has neither a slave nor a strongbox,
than allow yourself to be loved so by that man.
"What? Isn't he a pretty man?" you say. He is:
but he's a pretty man who has neither a slave nor a strongbox.
Toss this away and throw it out however you like:
still, he doesn't have a slave or a strongbox.

Juventius seems to be interested in another lover, whom he calls a "pretty man" (*homo bellus*, line 7), but the speaker tries to convince the boy that any reciprocation would be a bad idea. He is pretty (*est*, line 7), but he is also poor and does not have even a slave or a strongbox (*neque servus est neque arca*, lines 5 and 8; *nec servum tamen ille habet neque arcam*, line 10). Who can this undesirable man be, and why would the speaker have such strong feelings about Juventius's affairs with him? An answer of sorts lies in several intertextual references in the poem that point to other poems in the corpus. First of all, the phrase *homo bellus* appears one other time in the Juventius poems, namely in poem 81. In the poem, the speaker tries to warn the boy away from a man whom he has become attracted to:

nemone in tanto potuit populo esse, Iuventi,   1
    bellus homo, quem tu diligere inciperes,
praeterquam iste tuus moribunda ab sede Pisauri
    hospes inaurata pallidior statua,
qui tibi nunc cordi est, quem tu praeponere nobis   5

audes, et nescis quod facinus facias?   6
            Catullus 81

        Can no one in so great a populace, Iuventius, seem
            a beautiful man whom you would begin to cherish,
        besides that diseased fellow from the seat of Pisaurum,
            a guest paler than a gilt statue,
        who now is in your heart, whom you dare to prefer
            to me, and you do not know what crime you commit?

Again the *bellus homo* is unnamed, but as Thomson (1997 ad loc.) notes, the line *hospes*

*in**aurata** pallidior statua* contains a covert punning reference to the same Aurelius whom

the speaker tricks in poem 21. The reference to Midas's wealth in poem 24 (*mallem*

divitias Midae dedisses / isti, lines 4-5), with its implicit connection to gold, further

strengthens this connection to Aurelius. But there are some conflicting intertextual

references in the poem as well that connect the *homo bellus* to Aurelius's friend, Furius.

In poem 23 the speaker addresses Furius, who has asked him for a loan, and

exaggeratedly mocks Furius's poverty:

        Furi, cui neque servus est neque arca   1
        nec cimex neque araneus neque ignis,
        verum est et pater et noverca, quorum
        dentes vel silicem comesse possunt,
        est pulcre tibi cum tuo parente   5
        et cum coniuge lignea parentis.
        nec mirum: bene nam valetis omnes,
        pulcre concoquitis, nihil timetis,
        non incendia, non graves ruinas,
        non facta impia, non dolos veneni   10
        non casus alios periculorum.
        atqui corpora sicciora cornu
        aut siquid magis aridum est habetis
        sole et frigore et esuritione.
        quare non tibi sit bene ac beate?   15
        a te sudor abest, abest saliva,

mucusque et mala pituita nasi.
hanc ad munditiem adde mundiorem,
quod culus tibi purior salillo est,
nec toto decies cacas in anno;   20
atque id durius est faba et lupillis,
quod tu si manibus teras fricesque,
non umquam digitum inquinare posses.
haec tu commoda tam beata, Furi,
noli spernere nec putare parvi,   25
et sestertia quae soles precari
centum desine, nam sat es beatus.   27
        Catullus 23

Furius, who has neither a slave nor a strongbox
nor a bed-bug nor a spider nor a fire,
but you do have a father and mother-in-law,
whose teeth can eat up flint –
it's all well for you with your father
and your father's twiggy wife.
Not surprising: you all are quite strong,
you digest well, you fear nothing,
no fire, no grave downfalls,
no wicked deeds, no plots of poison,
no other misfortunes of dangers.
And you have bodies drier than horn,
or whatever is more dry,
than the sun, than cold, than hunger.
So why isn't it all well and good for you?
You have no sweat, no spit,
no mucus or foul running of the nose.
Add to this cleanliness something even cleaner,
the fact that your ass is more pure than a salt cellar,
and you don't shit ten times in the whole year.
And when you do, it's harder than a bean or pebbles,
so if you rub and polish it with your hands,
you can never dirty your finger.
Furius, don't spurn these blessed benefits
nor think them worthless,
and stop praying for 100,000 sesterces as you do,
because you are blessed enough.

The opening line contains a clear and strong echo of the references to the *homo bellus*'s

poverty in poem 24: *cui neque servus est neque arca* (line 1) follows immediately after

the vocative *Furi*, picking up the three repetitions of this line in poem 24 (lines 5, 8, and 10) and connecting them closely to Furius.[242]

The intertexts in poem 24, therefore, can be seen to inscribe both Aurelius and Furius simultaneously.[243] But this ambiguity is not, I think, problematic, nor does it indicate that the poems simply do not give enough information to pin down who exactly the *homo bellus* is. Rather, this simultaneous inclusion of both rivals undermines their importance as individuals in poem 24, much as Juventius's objectification in poems 15 and 21 undermines his importance in the speaker's rivalry with Aurelius. The focus in this poem is on the struggle for power in the erotic relationship between the speaker and Juventius, and not at all about others who pose a threat to that relationship. Now that we have seen that the struggle for dominance centers on these two people only, let us see how it develops within the poem itself.

At the opening of poem 24 the speaker takes up the same wheedling stance he does towards Aurelius in poem 15, and the same one the *servus callidus* of Roman Comedy uses to ingratiate himself with a superior character. He calls the boy *flosculus Iuventiorum* (line 1), flattering the *puer* and attempting to cast himself as his protector.[244] Furthermore, he continuously emphasizes the boy's interests in this erotic matter. He says that he would rather Juventius give away all the riches of Midas to the *homo bellus* than to let himself be loved by the man (*mallem divitias Midae dedisses / isti, cui neque servus est neque arca, / quam sic te sineres ab illo amari*, lines 4-6). The speaker does not

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[242] So Dettmer (1997, 48), Syndikus (2001, 165-166), and Wray (2001, 73).

[243] Wray (2001, 73) thinks that only Furius is meant, though it seems that either both of these individuals can be thought of together or there is some cross-pollination of their qualities in the mind of the speaker.

[244] Quinn (1970 ad loc.).

himself offer any money or attempt to bargain with the boy, but merely discusses what the boy can do (*dedisses*, line 4; *te sineres*, line 6), thereby asserting that he has no stake of his own in this decision. And as with Aurelius, the speaker knowingly sympathizes with Juventius's predicament. He agrees with the boy that the man is pretty (*est*, line 7), but he still has reservations about this relatively small positive point in light of the larger financial issues at stake.

And this matter is primarily about finances, as the speaker emphasizes that this other man is a poor choice because he is not the most promising buyer. While it does not refer directly to Juventius by name, the short epigrammatic poem 106 stands in the background of this situation:

> cum puero bello praeconem qui videt esse,   1
>   quid credit, nisi se vendere discupere?   2
>   Catullus 106

> When someone sees a herald with a pretty boy,
>   what does he think, except that he wants to sell himself?

The boy in poem 106 – possibly Juventius, or perhaps someone in a similar situation and with similar concerns – is essentially selling himself, at least in the speaker's eyes. The speaker's professed aim in poem 24 is to make sure that the boy does not make a poor choice. Of course, as readers aware of poems 48 and 99, we know that his tacit goal is to claim the boy for himself. He achieves this goal by deceiving Juventius about the *homo bellus*'s financial status and glossing over his own potential assets.

As O'Bryhim (2007) has pointed out, Furius's requested loan in poem 23 precisely corresponds to the price of a *puer delicatus* in Rome during this period, and it is

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probably no coincidence that Juventius is portrayed as precisely this kind of boy. It seems

that Furius at least is trying to gather enough funds to buy off Juventius for himself. Of

course, the speaker's extended lampoon of Furius's lack of money suggests on the

surface that the man is, in fact, too poor for Juventius. But Marsilio & Podlesney (2006,

167-181) have suggested that the invective against poverty is merely a pose,[245] using

financial vocabulary metaphorically to stand in for literary and cultural poverty.

Moreover, another companion piece to the invective against Furius, poem 26, suggests

that the man does indeed have plenty of financial resources to draw upon:

> Furi, villula vestra non ad Austri   1
> flatus opposita est neque ad Favoni
> nec saevi Boreae aut Apheliotae,
> verum ad milia quindecim et ducentos.
> o ventum horribilem atque pestilentem!   5
>   Catullus 26
>
> Furius, your little villa is not set against
> the gusts of Auster nor of Favonus
> nor of cruel Boreas nor of Apheliote,
> but rather against 15,200 sesterces!
> O horrible and plaguing wind!

It seems that Furius has taken a second mortgage, so to speak, putting his house as

collateral against 15,200 sesterces he has acquired from elsewhere. The loan Furius has

secured is not insubstantial, and at first glance the speaker seems to suggest that is will be

a horrible and pestilential windfall for his rival (*o ventum horribilem atque pestilentem!*,

line 5). But we could just as easily understand this emotional apostrophe to apply to the

speaker's own situation: though his tiny villa is mortgaged, Furius now has enough

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[245] Cf. poem 13, where the speaker himself complains about his own poverty to his friend Fabullus.

money and more to outbid the speaker for Juventius's favor. The loan then can be read as doing double duty, both costing Furius interest and potentially endangering his house, but also horrible and plaguing to the speaker himself.

Traditionally, commentators have assumed that *milia quindecim et ducentos* is bizarrely precise, equaling 15,200 and therefore a rather small sum in comparison with what Furius had asked of the speaker in poem 23.[246] But such an exact figure seems out of place in the poem, and elsewhere we have seen other sums whose precise amount belies their larger implications. In poem 5, for instance, the speaker's request for thousands and hundreds of kisses adds up to 3,300. But surely such an amount is not meant literally, especially in relation to the hyperbolic comparisons of kisses to the sands in Libya and the stars in the sky in poem 7.3-8. Compare also the use of *ducentos* in this poem to other appearances of the number, where it stands for some indefinitely large sum: Mamurra's insatiable greed at 29.14 and Lesbia's numerous customers in the *salax taberna* at 37.7-8 are each marked by the term "two hundred," and "three hundred" appears even more often in the corpus to mean "innumerable amounts."[247] The phrase *milia quindecim et ducentos* (26.4) literally means "15,200," but I think we are meant to infer an undefined large number at least equal to the 100,000 sesterces Furius needs in poem 23.26-27. It seems, then, that Furius's destitution is less real than the speaker would have Juventius believe.

The other person inscribed into poem 24's *homo bellus*, Aurelius, is likewise not as poor as we would assume at first glance. In poem 21, the speaker calls him *pater*

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[246] See Fordyce (1961 ad loc.), Quinn (1970 ad loc.), Thomson (1997 ad loc.).

[247] Cf. poem 9.2, 11.18, 12.10, 29.14, and (most importantly, of kisses to Juventius) 48.3.

esuritionum (line 1), and fears that Juventius will learn hunger and thirst from this man (*nunc ipsum id doleo, quod esurire / meus iam puer et sitire discet*, 10-11). But as Peek (2002) has shown, the speaker also reveals that this is not the hunger and thirst of true poverty, but rather the insatiable sexual appetite that the speaker emphasizes in poem 15.

The speaker, however, goes to great lengths to deceive Juventius in poem 24 into believing that this *homo bellus*, whether Furius or Aurelius or both, is far more indigent than he is in reality. Three times he asserts the man's poverty (lines 5, 8, and 10), suggesting that someone so poor cannot possibly deserve the attentions of a boy worth more than Midas's wealth (line 4). He is smart enough to elide over his own finances, which he claims elsewhere are just as bad as he says the *homo bellus*'s are in this poem (*nam tui Catulli / plenus sacculus est aranearum*, poem 13.7-8). At the same time, the speaker's intertextual invocation of the Plautine clever slave gives a knowing wink to the audience, revealing the sleight of hand he has pulled to keep the naïve boy under his own "protection," or rather control.

III.3.5: PATRONS, PARASITES, AND PROSTITUTES (POEMS 49 AND 58)

The oddest aspect of the intertext I have examined so far in this section has to do

with its last appearance in the corpus, namely in Catullus's famous piece on Cicero

(poem 49), who seems utterly removed from the social and erotic squabbles played out

between the speaker, Aurelius, Furius, and Juventius. Nevertheless, I will argue here that

the same assertion of control by the speaker in an inferior position over a rival in a

superior position stands behind his interactions with Cicero as well, and with similar

humorous effects. Moreover, this poem does double duty as a Plautine intertext, drawing

both on the stock routine that connects it to Aurelius in poem 21 and Juventius in poem

24, as well as on the markers of Heroic Badness that we explored in the first half of this

chapter. I will show that in this short poem the speaker mocks Cicero in the guise of a

clever slave and simultaneously points to his subversion explicitly, outstripping all of his

other Plautine incarnations in a triumph of irony and social inversion.

In the poem, the speaker deferentially praises Cicero as the best patron of all

while undercutting his own quality as a poet:

> disertissime Romuli nepotum,   1
> quot sunt quotque fuere, Marce Tulli,
> quotque post aliis erunt in annis,
> gratias tibi maximas Catullus
> agit pessimus omnium poeta,   5
> tanto pessimus omnium poeta,
> quanto tu optimus omnium patronus.   7
>   Catullus 49
>
> Most learned of Romulus's grandsons,
> all who are and all who were, Marcus Tullius,

and all afterwards who will be in other years,
Catullus gives the greatest thanks to you –
Catullus the worst poet of all;
as much the worst poet of all
as you are the best patron of all.

Scholarship on poem 49 falls into two distinct camps:[248] the first argues that the speaker is being genuine, humbling himself before the great orator for some benevolent act performed by Cicero; the second argues that the speaker is exaggerating ironically, that his hyperbole is not in keeping with any sincere gratitude, and that the last line presents an ambiguity that conceals light invective against Cicero's oratorical and literary inclinations. The latter case, I think, has been made most persuasively,[249] and the Plautine intertext in the background of the opening lines offers here another piece of evidence to further support an ironic reading of the poem.

The pose that the speaker strikes is consistently and throughly wheedling: his hyperbolic thanks (*gratias tibi maximas*, line 4), his extreme humility and self-deprecating description of himself (*pessimus omnium poeta*, lines 5-6), and elevation of Cicero (*tu optimus omnium patronus*, line 7) all serve to set the speaker up as a sycophantic confidante on par with a Plautine slave. Furthermore, the speaker's tongue-in-cheek juxtaposition of himself as worst poet (which, Tatum (1988, 180) notes, can hardly be taken at face value) and Cicero as best patron of all conceals jokes on several levels. On the one hand, by calling himself a *poeta* and Cicero a *patronus*, the speaker

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[248] It seems unnecessary here to give an exhaustive bibliography on poem 49, but see Fredericksmeyer (1973) for a representative bibliography of both sides of this argument, as well as Tatum (1988) and Batstone (1993) for more recent work.

[249] See Thomson (1997 ad loc.).

emphasizes that poetry is not the orator's best suit, diminishing Cicero's literary merit.[250]

On the other hand, by using an ambiguous genitive in *omnium*, the speaker implies both

that Cicero is the best *patronus* of all *patroni* (i.e., *omnium* is a partitive genitive) and that

he is the best *patronus* of anyone who needs a *patronus*, regardless of situation or

standing (i.e., *omnium* is an objective genitive).[251]

There is still a third joke perhaps inherent in the poem, that the speaker presents

an ironic and bitter barb against Cicero because of some sexual misdeed or potential

erotic rivalry involving Lesbia *qua* Clodia.[252] As Tatum (1988, 179-180) points out, such

a biographical reading ignores the fact that the speaker of the poem is a persona, not

necessarily Catullus himself, and that the autobiographical bent that the poem presents is

quite clearly a manufactured pose. Moreover, Fredericksmeyer (1973, 271) points out

some logical problems in assuming such an erotic association, even if we could read the

poem as genuine autobiography. But, I think, we can salvage something of Ferguson's

(1966) theory and, while eschewing the biographical portion of his argument, still pick up

an important point he makes about an intertext in poem 49 to another poem within the

Catullan corpus. Ferguson (1966, 872) notes that the effusive praise of Cicero in the

opening line of poem 49 (*disertissime Romuli nepotum*, line 1) recalls quite clearly the

only other instance of this grandiloquent reference to legendary Roman ancestry in

Catullus's poetry, namely the final line of poem 58, a remark to Caelius about some

misdeed on the part of Lesbia:

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[250] So Gugel (1967) and Thomson (1967, 227 and 1997 ad loc.).

[251] So Schmidt (1914) and Collins (1952).

[252] Ferguson (1966).

> Caeli, Lesbia nostra, Lesbia illa,   1
> illa Lesbia, quam Catullus unam
> plus quam se atque suos amavit omnes,
> nunc in quadriviis et angiportis
> glubit magnanimi Remi nepotes.   5
>   Catullus 58

> Caelius, our Lesbia, that Lesbia,
> that Lesbia, whom Catullus loved
> alone more than himself and all his people,
> now in the crossroads and alleyways
> strips the grandsons of great-souled Remus.

As Ferguson (1966, 872) points out, the collocations *Remi nepotes* (poem 58.5) and *Romuli nepotum* (poem 49.1) seem far too close to one another to be mere coincidence. But if there is a connection between poems 58 and 49, what are we supposed to think Lesbia has done to Cicero, and how does that relate to the ironic pose the speaker strikes in poem 49?

Marc-Antoine Muret, the first modern commentator on Catullus, set the course of scholarship on poem 58 for the last four and a half centuries when he supposed that *glubit* in poem 58.5 referred "to sexual indecency rather than to the plunder of fortunes."[253] His immediate successor, Achilles Statius, readily followed him and cited an example of *deglubere* with obscene connotations from the 4th century CE poet Ausonius to confirm Muret's judgement.[254] Ever since then, *glubit* has become "Catullus' most mysterious and

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[253] Muret (1554) ad loc.: "ad Veneream turpitudinem potius, quam ad fortunarum spoliationem, referri puto."

[254] Statius (1566) ad loc.: "Eodem verbo, atq. hoc ipso in genere usus est Ausonius, „Deglubit, fellat, molitur per utramq. cavernam.'" Penella (1976) has shown that *deglubere* in this particular context, Ausonius *Epig.* 71.7 is undoubtedly obscene and probably signifies *masturbari* with transitive force.

cherished obscenity,"[255] whose precise meaning has been tantalizingly elusive and has provoked surprisingly frank debate among scholars. Whatever its significance, *glubere* and c.58 have almost invariably been accepted as thinly-veiled sexual invective.[256]

But Tränkle (1981), following Parthenius's 1485 reading, suggests that *glubere* has other, non-sexual meanings as well. In fact, only Ausonius of all authors from antiquity uses the word sexually, and it may be that he himself coined this usage independently of Catullus. He goes on to show that, besides its regular meaning, "to strip bark from a tree," it is commonly used as a financial metaphor to mean, "to strip money from someone." Tränkle goes on to show that it is used in much the same way as the verb *tondere*, "to fleece" (with the same agricultural and financial double-meaning the English word connotes), is used in Roman Comedy.[257] There is, then, great potential for ambiguity in poem 58: if *glubit* is purely sexual, then it follows on the other sexual invectives against Lesbia elsewhere in the corpus;[258] if, however, it is financial instead, or at least in addition to its sexual connotations, then its connection to Cicero and poem 49 makes much more sense.

The speaker of poem 49 extols Cicero expressly for his role as *optimus patronus* (49.7), praise whose connection to erotic contexts is difficult to construe.[259] But *patronus*

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[255] Fitzgerald (1995, 75).

[256] More or less every scholar writing on poem 58 takes this view. See Baehrens (1885 ad loc.), Kroll (1959 ad loc.), Lenz (1963), Penella (1976), Arkins (1979), Jocelyn (1979), Randall (1979), and Adams (1982).

[257] Cf. the extensive fleecing metaphors in Plautus *Bacchides* (1094-1119) and *Captivi* (266-269).

[258] Cf. poems 11 and 37.

[259] This difficulty is one of the reasons Fredericksmeyer (1973, 271) finds fault with Ferguson's (1966) reading.

inherently contains a wide range of other associations, including financial ones,[260] and if

we understand *glubit magnanimos Remi nepotes* in poem 58.5 to mean "she fleeces the

great-souled descendants of Remus," then we can understand yet another joke potentially

implied in poem 49's mock-humble hyperbole. If Cicero, the most eloquent of

descendants of Romulus (*disertissime Romuli nepotum*, 49.1), is numbered among the

descendants of Remus whom Lesbia has fleeced (*glubit...Remi nepotes*, 58.5), then his

status as a shrewd businessman (*optimus patronus* in a financial sense) would be ripe for

the speaker's hyperbolic irony.[261]

Poem 49, therefore, conceals a broad range of humor at Cicero's expense: on one

level the speaker attacks his literary talent, while on another he pokes fun at the orator's

willingness to take on any case expedient for himself, and on yet another he may ridicule

Cicero for being duped by Lesbia in some unnamed business matter. The subversive trick

that the speaker pulls off in the poem rests in his multiple ambiguous statements and

carefully ingrained invective in poem 49. He wheedles Cicero with praise and

compliments, all the while making fun of the man to his face and in the open, public

setting of his published poetry. Moreover, he has ironically undercut his own assertion of

being the worst poet of all (*pessimus omnium poeta*, poem 49.5-6). No author who can

encode triple ambiguity in the way he does in this poem can be said to lack talent, and

this in turn further subverts Cicero by flipping all of his praise upside down. If Cicero is

as good a *patronus* as the speaker is a bad *poeta*, and the speaker shows that he is in fact

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[260] See Wiedermann (2003) for these connections.

[261] I will not argue for a biographical reading regarding the finances of Lesbia as Clodia Metelli here, though it is interesting to consider Skinner (1983) for Cicero's multiple attempts to engage with Clodia in business, both before and after the delivery of the *Pro Caelio*. See Plutarch *Life of Cicero* 29 for suggestions that Clodia had romantic interests in Cicero as well. That Caelius is addressed in poem 58.1 may lend support to this connection as well.

an excellent poet, then Cicero must be a terrible *patronus* indeed. The speaker thus uses irony to cleverly invert the relative positions of Cicero and himself, advancing – at least temporarily – in the zero-sum game of social jockeying that dominates both 1st century BCE Roman society and Catullus's poetry.

And this clever malevolence on the part of the speaker highlights the final Plautine intertext in this poem. As I noted earlier, *pessimus* and the vocabulary of badness is a clear and repeated marker of the presence of Plautine Heroic Badness. The women in poems 55, 10, and 36 all display this comic *malitia* and use it to their advantage to gain control over someone trying to dominate them, namely the speaker himself. Here the speaker takes a page from their books, marking himself as a representative of Heroic Badness in this poem and gaining the upper hand over Cicero, a man clearly in a socially superior position. The speaker thus connects his attempts to assert himself over Aurelius, Juventius, and Cicero in social and erotic situations, adopting the universalizing *servus callidus* and his distinctively humorous *malitia* to find ways to advance his own interests over those of his peers and superiors.

CHAPTER FOUR: CATULLUS IN PERFORMANCE:
A DRAMATIC READING OF POEM 8

IV.1.1: INTRODUCTION

At the end of Chapter One, I discussed how Roman drama in the 2nd and 1st

centuries BCE gradually expanded its sphere of influence, beyond its traditional venues

on the public stage during circumscribed festival periods (which nevertheless maintained

their viability) and into new settings: *ad hoc* public performance events, the personal

studies and libraries of scholars, and – most significant for the following pages – intimate

locales like private banquets and semi-public recitations. As Roman literary and reading

culture grew in the 2nd century BCE and beyond, Roman drama grew with it and followed

wherever it could find new niches, eventually lending its own performative qualities to

banquet entertainments and socialized group reading. The *convivium* and the *recitatio* in

turn offered comedy and tragedy (as well as any number of other ancient dramatic

genres) new audiences and opportunities for performance on a variety of scales and in a

variety of forms.

But convivial and recitation culture at Rome was not limited to drama alone.

Other genres – from epic to lyric – also found in these growing literary venues a way to

communicate with audiences. Included among these were Catullus's poems, performed

probably in his own day by himself and by friends, as well as by admirers after his

death.[262] In this chapter I will explore some performative aspects of Catullus's poetry to

consider how the oral presentation and reception of his work can reveal new ways of

understanding his poems. In particular, I want to show how the presence of Roman

Comedy in Catullus's poetry, with its inherent performativity, informs how we can

understand Catullus's work as poetry for performance as well. In other words: when

Catullus borrows from and alludes to drama, how does his poetry absorb drama's

performative qualities and what effect does this absorption have on the reception of his

private poetry in public readings at recitations and banquets?

This line of inquiry could expand exponentially, so I will limit my investigation in

this chapter to one poem that is particularly rich in dramatic allusion, namely poem 8

(*miser Catulle, desinas ineptire*). Drawing on ancient conceptions of text and

performance, and using Roland Barthes's concepts of textuality, as well as theater

semiotics, reader-response theory, and theories of intertextuality, I will examine how we

can approach this poem, replete with elements of Roman Comedy, in the same way that

we do Roman Comedy itself: as a scripted framework for potential performance.

Borrowing the theater semiotician Marco De Marinis's concept of script as "instructions

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[262] See Wiseman (1987, 125-129) for an argument from probability for Catullus's contemporary recitation and performance, as well as Skinner (1993 and 2003, xxx-xxxi) and bibliography cited there for other arguments for Catullus's poetry being performed in antiquity. Horace attacks an unnamed "ape" who does not know how to recite anything but Calvus and Catullus (*Satires* 1.10.18-19: *simius iste / nil praeter Calvum et doctus cantare Catullum*), and the Horatian scholia's *commentator Cruquianus* s.v. *simius iste* remarks: "notat M. quendam Demetrium, quem simium nominat propter deformitatem & brevem staturem; erat autem δραματόποιος, hoc est, modulator, histrio, actor fabularum, ad nihil aliud doctus, quam ad carmina Lucii [sic] Calvi & Valerii Catulli decantanda; quare fastidit eorum iudicium: quemadmodum in fine huius Sermonis ait, Demetrium teque Tigelli discipularum inter iubeo plorare cathedras." Since the *commentator*'s source is unknown, some caution is necessary in accepting the scholiast's account, though it seems to fit what we know of recitation culture in the Augustan period. How exactly this literary "ape" performed Calvus and Catullus is unclear, since his identification as *modulator, histrio, actor fabularum* spans several modes of public performance (singing, pantomime acting, and dramatic acting respectively).

for use," I will examine how Catullus inscribes ambiguity into poem 8 to create a series of blank spaces that a reader and performer can fill in. I will then show how Catullus modulates the ambiguity of his text through intertextual allusions to Plautus and Terence, creating a set of possible interpretations that the performer can choose to import to his reading. I will show that these allusions cannot be reconciled easily with each other into a unitary performative reading, since they import conflicting elements from their respective contexts, and that at the moment of performance the performer must choose which elements from this set of possibilities to press. Approaching the poem as "instructions for use" that present a performer with a series of interpretive choices explains why its scholarly tradition, which I will review briefly, has reached an impasse, and also helps to reconcile the two major camps of interpretation on this poem by moving away from monologic reading and towards embracing the text's multiplicity.

IV.2.1: *CONVIVIUM*, *RECITATIO*, AND READING CULTURE IN LATE
REPUBLICAN ROME

      Catullan scholars have tended to downplay or elide the significant performative
aspect of 1st century BCE Roman literary culture, accepting the Catullan speaker's
emphasis on textual literacy to the exclusion of its potential for oral performance.[263]
While it is true that the written text, in contrast to the spontaneous oral composition,
exerted enormous influence in the 1st century BCE, the orality and performativity of
literary work never fully disappeared.[264] Rather, we find in the scattered metaliterary
remarks of the late Republican and Augustan poets a growing impulse to combine the
two forms, to address *lector* and *auditor* interchangeably as two interdependent
participants in the reception of literature.[265] A brief theoretical digression will help to

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[263] Quinn (1982), for instance, despite arguing that convivial performance and recitation formed a major
part of literary culture in late Republican and Augustan Rome (83-88), thinks that Catullus's poetry is
predominantly private and epistolary. See also Edmunds (2001, 108-132) on aspects of Catullus's
textuality.

[264] *Pace* Goldberg (2005, 87-114), who argues that the oral/performative function disappears for dramatic
texts and is largely replaced by textual reception. See Johnson (2000) for the continued importance of
group oral reading and performance in non-dramatic literature. On the continuing importance of song and
orality in Roman culture, see Habinek (2005). See also Russell (1981, 38 and 136) for acknowledgements
by ancient critics from Aristotle to Demetrius that orality and textuality coexist, even in the case of
dramatic works (cf. Demetrius's comparison of Philemon's and Menander's respective degrees of textuality
and performativity at *On Style* 193).

[265] Quinn (1982, 86-88) sees in this merging an attempt to combine elements of traditional oral culture with
new ideas about textuality and readership. Cf., however, Habinek (1998, 107), who sees in this
phenomenon, especially in the public *recitatio*, a reaction against private reading designed to let authors
reclaim an authoritative presence as determiners of meaning. Edmunds (2001, 108-132) argues from the
other side that the rise of private reading was a reaction against oral and performative literature, whose
primary function as expression of aristocratic *virtus* ceased to hold meaning in the years leading up to the
principate. Habinek's and Edmunds's theories about aggressive reactions in Roman literary culture are not
entirely convincing, and in the following pages I will argue for a more complementary system of reading
cultures.

explain this interdependence of reader and listener more fully, and to clarify my methodology in this chapter.

Scholars have traditionally approached non-dramatic works of the 1st century BCE exclusively as written texts. But while they have moved away from Romantic readings, and while historicist and psychoanalytic approaches have more or less abandoned the fallacy of authorial intention, the assumed status of 1st century BCE literary works as text has encouraged scholars to embrace the "intent of the text" instead, removing the author but keeping an authoritative locus of meaning.[266] This interpretive approach has many benefits,[267] and for this reason I have used it myself in the preceding chapters. But is also poses a distinct problem: it assumes that the text embeds what Chomsky calls a "deep structure," that is, a singular meaning without ambiguity or inconsistency, and that the reader's task is to find the interpretation that aligns most closely with this meaning.[268] But as reader-response theory has shown, the locus of interpretation and meaning resides in the reader as well, and while the text creates cues for the reader to follow, it also leaves spaces for the reader to fill,[269] just as dramatic texts create a framework with spaces that the actor can fill with his individual interpretation.

Therefore, and because the contexts of recitation and convivial culture in the 1st century BCE allowed literature to be both textual and oral at the same time, it will be most fruitful to approach these works as "performative" literature. To put it another way,

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[266] See Conte (1994, 133-134), and criticism of this approach by Edmunds (2001, 39-43).

[267] See Skinner (2003, xxxii-xxxiii and 191 n.45) for "intent of the text" as a useful interpretive tool.

[268] See Martindale (1993, 35-43) for some criticisms of this approach.

[269] See Iser (1980) for these gaps that can be filled by the reader.

we can understand these non-dramatic works, as with dramatic literature, simultaneously as scripted text and as potential performance event. The Roman tendency to mix and blur the lines between *lector* and *auditor* encourages this blended approach, because it acknowledges that understanding these texts requires two interdependent interpretive motions: first, a readerly appreciation of ambiguity and multiplicity, and second, the listener's/performer's narrowing of this multiplicity (without necessarily narrowing ambiguity) at the point of reception.

On the one hand, the *lector* approaches literary work as *text*, whose primary role in the process of interpretation is to encode, preserve, and disseminate the author's words. Since an author's memory, life, and physical presence are limited, he cannot personally keep his work in stasis, perpetuity, or circulation, and therefore must entrust his words to a medium that can perform these functions in order to extend the work beyond his limited reach.[270] But while granting the work the potential for permanency and portability, the physical medium creates new difficulties: in his "Death of the Author," Roland Barthes theorizes that when the work becomes text, it is no longer in the author's power to determine or explicate meaning, since he has been disconnected from his work by the act and at the moment of writing.[271] At the same time that the author yields from his work, a vacuum appears in the space he once occupied, and what steps in is a non-authorial

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[270] For this impulse of encoding, preservation, and circulation, see, e.g., Horace *Ars Poetica* 332, Ovid *Tristia* 1.1 (where the speaker addresses his *parvus liber* that can go where he cannot), and most importantly Catullus poem 1.

[271] Barthes (1977, 142): "As soon as a fact is *narrated* no longer with a view to acting directly on reality but intransitively, that is to say, finally outside of any function other than that of the very practice of the symbol itself, this disconnection occurs, the voice loses its origin, the author enters into his own death, writing begins." Socrates famously complained about this function of the written text in Plato's *Phaedrus* 275d-e, and Ovid's address to his *parvus liber* in *Tristia* 1 casts the relationship between author and book not as that between a biological and textual self, but as that between *dominus* and *servus* or *patronus* and *cliens*.

subject.[272] This subject of enunciation[273] follows the rules and cues that the text inscribes

but also carries no implicit intentionality and therefore opens up the ambiguities of the

work to multiple interpretations.[274] The *lector*, then, receives through the text a static and

singular work, but paradoxically also receives the complete range of meaning that is

encoded into the text.[275] He is not bound to a solitary reading following the author's

original intent. In the act of reading the text he can understand conflicting versions of the

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[272] The recipient of the text can, of course, put the author back into the subject position (i.e., produce a historicizing reading), but the text does not itself require an authorial subject. In "From Work to Text," Barthes (1977, 161) remarks that the written text "reads without the inscription of the Father [i.e., the author]....It is not that the Author may not 'come back' in the Text, in his text, but he then does so as a 'guest.' If he is a novelist, he is inscribed in the novel like one of his characters, figured in the carpet; no longer privileges, paternal, aletheological, his inscription is ludic. He becomes, as it were, a paper-author: his life is no longer the origin of his fictions but a fiction contributing to his work."

[273] The subject of enunciation consists of the empty space where the work voices itself (e.g., the "I" of a text). There is, however, a difference between the work's speaker and its subject of enunciation. The speaker, according to Barthes in *S/Z*, is a "character," a singular (though not necessarily consistent) personality formed from traits ("signifieds") attributed to itself and maintaining a sense of "biographical duration" throughout the work. The subject of enunciation, in contrast, is a "figure," the larger set of possible roles described by the symbolic relations of the work that can oscillate between characters and that different speakers can occupy. See Barthes (1974, 67-69) for a fuller discussion of these differences.

[274] See Edmunds (2001, 24-34) for a summary of these ideas, primarily Benveniste's and Derrida's, regarding the split between author and subject of enunciation. An example will help to clarify what I mean here. The sentence, "I hit the man," encodes a set of fixed relational cues regulated by the grammatical and syntactical systems of English. The subject ("I") acts ("hit") on the object ("the man"). Moreover, English lexical codes inscribe a broad semantic range of meaning for each of the words: "I" is an animate, speaking individual, "hit" is an aggressive physical act, and "the man" is a human male. But the sentence also contains spaces of ambiguity that fluctuate as the subject of enunciation changes: connotations of the sentence are very different if the subject is a small child than if it is an adult woman or, to push the example to absurdity, a talking car. Each of these different subjects is possible, but as the subject shifts between them the rest of the sentence's meaning also changes: for example, "hit" may be envisioned as a harmless aggressive act performed by a child, or socially-loaded act of gender aggression performed by a woman, or simultaneously humorous and harmful act performed by an animate car.

[275] In "The Death of the Author," Barthes (1977, 148), drawing on J.-P Vernant's work on Greek tragedy, remarks: "A text is made of multiple writings...but there is one place where this multiplicity is focused and that place is the reader, not as was hitherto said, the author. The reader is the space on which all the quotations that make up a writing are inscribed without any of them being lost." He expands this idea in "From Work to Text" (1977, 159-160), where he remarks, "The Text is plural. Which is not simply to say that it has several meanings, but that it accomplishes the very plural of meaning: an *irreducible* (and not merely an acceptable) plural....The plural of the Text depends, that is, not on the ambiguity of its contents but on what might be called the *stereographic plurality* of its weave of signifiers" (159).

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subject of enunciation simultaneously and can multiply the ways in which he fills the

gaps that the text inscribes.[276]

On the other hand, the *auditor* approaches the literary work as *performance*,

whose primary role in the process of interpretation is to decode the author's words.[277]

While a reader can maintain conflicting meanings simultaneously and contain the

subject's multitudes,[278] the listener by his very nature can hear only one speaker at a time.

Now, the listener may be an *actual* listener (i.e., physically hearing an external performer

reading the text orally) or an *imagined* listener (i.e., mentally creating an internal

performer who is silent from the perspective of others but audible from his own

perspective), but the interpretive effect is the same.[279] At the moment the work is heard,

the *auditor* receives it as a performance by a single speaker vocalizing the text. When the

subject of enunciation solidifies into this unitary speaker, many (though not all) of the

work's ambiguities fall away temporarily. This is not to say that the work's other possible

interpretations are invalidated,[280] but only that the performer (real or imagined) must

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[276] To clarify, the *lector* does not necessarily take up the role of the subject of enunciation for himself, since the two can be distinct (i.e., the *lector* can take up the role of poetic addressee or of uninvolved observer watching the speaker address the poetic addressee), but can if he so chooses to fill the subject's ambiguous space with himself.

[277] For performance as a process of decoding, see De Marinis (1993, 15-46).

[278] Barthes (1977, 160) compares Mark 5:9 ("My name is Legion: for we are many") to portray this difference in terms of the conflict between monologic readings of Holy Scripture as God's [read: the Author's] word and heretical multiplicative interpretations, but I think Whitman's significantly less hostile rendering is more appropriate in the context of pre-Christian work.

[279] See Larash (2004, 10-20) for the connections between external and internal performer/listener in the context of Martial's epigrams.

[280] Martindale (1993, 16-17) remarks, "Texts ensure their 'iterability' (though this formulation erases the agency involved) in a process of 'dissemination.' In the light of this, instead of treating texts as having more or less fixed meanings located firmly within partly recoverable backgrounds, which help to explain them, we could negotiate the possible connections which can be constructed between texts, yet with an

choose how to fill these ambiguous spaces by applying his individual intelligence and

experience to the text: decoding the broader semantic range of words (i.e., separating the

specific object or action from its overarching class or form and identifying the signified

by using the signifier), their societal relationships to each other (e.g., expected emotions

linked to the signified), their wider literary implications (e.g., intertexts imported, generic

rules invoked or altered, etc.), and any number of other meanings not built into the words

themselves.[281] So we can see that the act of reading a work as text and the act of reading a

work as performance are two fundamentally interconnected parts of the process of

reading.

Approaching performative texts in terms of these two interpretive motions is, I

think, especially helpful here, because, as I suggested briefly above, there was in 1st

century BCE Rome an implicit connection between writing, listening, and performing,

and between *scribere* and performance script. Quinn (1982, 90) presents one way of

looking at this phenomenon that has long been popular among Classical scholars:[282]

> I think it is clear that the Romans even as late as the first century AD still
> felt that performance was the real thing, and a written text only really
> appropriate where the work was of a highly technical nature – a
> philosophical treatise, for example. Until at least the Augustan Age, at any

awareness that this involves a constantly moving 'fusion of horizons.' Every reading of a work becomes a
fresh 'instantiation' with its own characterization."

[281] See Martindale (1993, 17-18) for this performative selectivity in reading.

[282] Many other scholars and theorists use the same musical metaphor for the act of performative reading
within the process of literary interpretation; cf. the references to Smith, Barthes, Iser, Jauss, Ricoeur,
Riffaterre, and Johnson in Edmunds (2001, 44 n.18), as well as Martindale (1993, 9-10). Barthes (1977,
162) remarks: "In fact, *reading*, in the sense of consuming, is far from *playing* with the text. 'Playing' must
be understood here in all its polysemy: the text itself *plays* (like a door, like a machine with 'play') and the
reader plays twice over, playing the Text as one plays a game, looking for a practice which re-produces it,
but, in order that that practice not be reduced to a passive, inner *mimesis* (the Text is precisely that which
resists such a reduction), also playing the Text in the musical sense of the term."

rate where poetry was concerned, the written text played very much the role which the printed score of a musical composition plays today: it recorded the final text as passed for publication by the author. But you acquired a copy with the intention of having it performed for you by a professional reader, or as a record of a performance which you had heard by the author. It was not in itself a substitute for performance.

The major points on which I disagree with Quinn's summary are his requirements that the text (1) be read by a professional and (2) be merely a preserver of a single author-authorized performance.[283] For while there was indeed a class of people, mostly slaves, who were trained to read texts aloud to others,[284] this person was not a prerequisite in antiquity for accessing what a text can mean. This idea is especially true for the *convivium* and *recitatio*, both literary-cultural phenomena that could – but did not necessarily – rely on a professional servile *lector*.[285] And while evidence for authors' recitation of their own work is substantial, we know of recitations in which performers are entirely removed from any author-approved reading, including examples of Catullus's

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[283] Recent scholarship on Catullus has taken Quinn up on this point. Fitzgerald (1995), for instance, remarks that "because the written poem is the record of a performance we have missed, and the spoken poem can never realize the possibilities of the written text...we are made to feel that 'you had to be there.'" (6). But cf. Skinner (2003, 185 n.6) for criticism of Quinn's model for its excessive reliance upon modern publishing practices, which I think also informs his ideas that oral reading was professionalized among slave *lectores* and that the text was designed to preserve single authorial performance events. For the idea of preserving an original performance event, cf. also Dupont (1994, 20) and Habinek (1998, 107), and pointed criticism of both by Edmunds (2001, 124-131).

[284] See Starr (1990-1991) and references to slave readers in Johnson (2010)

[285] Cf. for instance the report in Suetonius's *Life of Vergil* about Julius Montanus's friendly envy for Vergil's reading voice in his *recitationes*, as well as Skinner (1993 and 2007, xxviii-xxxi) for a model of understanding Catullus as presenting his own work at *convivia*.

poetry being recited after his death (*neque simius iste / nil praeter Calvum et doctus cantare Catullum*, Horace *Satires* 1.10.18-19).[286]

Moreover, the written text in antiquity did not function like a modern audio/video recording of an author's original performance: literary texts can to a certain degree encode paralinguistic functions (e.g., reading speeds encoded by meter, emotional ranges encoded by narratological cues, etc.), but they cannot transmit every nuance of a single authorial reading.[287] Drawing on Johnson's sociological analysis of ancient reading, Edmunds (2001, 116) hits closer the mark with respect to the venues we are dealing with here:

> Indeed the Roman reader's experience of listening to a reader at a dinner party would have provided a model for that role. That reader's reading was itself a performance. The 'strict attention to continuous flow in the ancient book' [Edmunds is quoting Johnson 2000] suggests the task that was set for the reader: a continuous rendition of the text. 'Direction for pause and tone given by the author's metalinguistic markup in our texts (commas, quotes, italics, indentation, etc.) was left to the reader's interpretation.' 'Punctuation, if it existed, had no authorial force, and could be – and was – changed at will.' The social reading here described is a performance because, beginning with its physical conditions, it must be an interpretation. The ancient bookroll gives the reader no

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[286] Cf. the story reported in Suetonius *De Gramm.* 2.3-4 about the origins of recitation in Rome and the readings of Naevius and Ennius by G. Octavius Lampadio and Q. Vargunteius respectively, each of whom is said to have recited publicly well after the deaths of their authors. See also Edmunds (2001, 31-32) for an anecdote about the oral presentation of Vergil's *Georgics* to Octavian in which the author rested his voice while Maeceneas, properly the addressee of the work, took over reading aloud, thereby displacing the authorial version and mixing the roles of narrator and narratee.

[287] Cf. Conte (1994, xx), who argues for a "correct" performance encoded by the text comparable to Quinn's authorial performance. Theater semioticians, recognizing that there is no dramatic Ur-performance and that each actual performance is potentially a valid interpretation of its written script, have attempted to develop systems of textual notation to encode extratextual aspects of dramatic discourse, for an example of which see Elam's brief overview and a "dramatological score" of the opening of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (1980, 184-207), though such systems ultimately fail to capture the performance fully. See De Marinis (1993, 25 and 193 n.24) for criticism of such performance transcription.

straightforward way to convey the author's intent. The bookroll is
tantamount to a script.

The performative aspects imparted by the *convivium* and *recitatio*, and the rich

interpretive possibilities that approaching a text as a performative script enables, can

instantly be appreciated in the case of traditionally performed work like Roman Comedy.

There are, after all, only small differences between interpreting a comedy or tragedy in

front of a crowded plaza and interpreting one staged between a few dinner couches. But

outside these traditionally performative genres, the prospects of performativity can also

be felt keenly in the case of non-dramatic texts composed of substantially dramatic

elements, including many of the poems of Catullus we have examined so far. As we have

done in the previous chapters, we can treat the plays of Plautus and Terence as texts that

add layers of nuance and subtle literary and socio-cultural background to Catullus's

work. But in this chapter I will show that we can also treat the plays as pieces for the

public, semi-public, and private stages whose performative qualities also inform the way

audiences – ancient and modern – would and could have received Catullus's ostensibly

private elite poetry. The question I want to pose here is: with so much of his work replete

with Roman drama, what happens to our interpretation of Catullus if we read his poems

not as texts, but as a series of dramatic vignettes? In other words, how do we understand

Catullus's poems if we switch the roles we play from *lectores* to *auditores*, and if we try

to understand how his poetry would have been experienced not as private aesthetic text

but as socially-received performance?[288] To answer these questions, let us turn to poem 8,

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[288] The former approach, which has long dominated Catullan scholarship, is nicely summarized by
Edmunds (2001, 108-132). For the latter, I will be drawing on Johnson's (2000) conception of reading
sociology.

which will serve as a test-case for this performative model of reading non-dramatic

poetry with heavily dramatic elements.

IV.2.2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE: MODERN INTERPRETATIONS OF

CATULLUS POEM 8

Catullus's poem 8 presents the speaker delivering in monologue a short speech

about the difficulties he is experiencing in a relationship with an unnamed woman:

miser Catulle, desinas ineptire,
et quod vides perisse perditum ducas.
fulsere quondam candidi tibi soles,
cum ventitabas quo puella ducebat
amata nobis quantum amabitur nulla.   5
ibi illa multa cum iocosa fiebant,
quae tu volebas nec puella nolebat,
fulsere vere candidi tibi soles.
nunc iam illa non vult: tu quoque impotens noli,
nec quae fugit sectare, nec miser vive,   10
sed obstinata mente perfer, obdura.
vale puella, iam Catullus obdurat,
nec te requiret nec rogabit invitam.
at tu dolebis, cum rogaberis nulla.
scelesta, vae te, quae tibi manet vita?   15
quis nunc te adibit? cui videberis bella?
quem nunc amabis? cuius esse diceris?
quem basiabis? cui labella mordebis?
at tu, Catulle, destinatus obdura.   19

Wretched Catullus, stop being a fool
and consider lost what you see has been lost.
Once bright days shone for you,
when you used to go wherever your girl led,
a girl loved as much by us as no one will ever be loved.
Then when you had many laughs,
which you wanted and your girl did not not want,
truly bright days shone for you.
Now she does not want: so don't be powerless,
or follow one who flees, or be wretched,
but endure with a steadfast mind, stay strong.
Goodbye girl, now Catullus stays strong,
and he will neither seek nor ask for you unwilling.

But you will grieve, when you are called by no one.
Wretch, woe to you! What life is left for you?
Who will approach you now? To whom will you seem beautiful?
Whom will you love? Whose will you be said to be?
Whom will you kiss? Whose lips will you bite?
But you, Catullus, endure and stay strong.

This poem has been a particularly rich nexus of modern interpretive battles, largely because it consists of two directly contradictory elements. On the one hand, the speaker contrasts a happy past and bitter future by invoking elements drawn from poems from the Catullan corpus. The juxtaposition in poem 8 of intratexts from hopeful scenes in poems 2 and 5,[289] hopelessly sad pieces like poem 76,[290] and biting invectives like poems 11 and 37[291] creates a sense of conflicted emotion and tragic love. On the other hand, the speaker also constructs his lament using the form, themes, and words of the young lover from the comic stage, which I will point out in the following review of literature. The speaker thus sets up an apparently inconsistent self-portrait by combining sorrowful Catullan intratexts with comic Plautine and Terentian intertexts.

Before we can tease out how these elements conflict with one another and what that opposition means for our interpretation of the poem, it will be useful here to offer a brief survey of modern interpretations of the dramatic elements in poem 8. I will then show that common flaws underlie all these analyses and have led to the critical impasse that Catullan readers currently face. Finally, I will show that the new performative

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[289] Cf. *ibi illa multa cum iocosa fiebant* (8.6) and *carum nescioquid lubet iocari* (2.6); *fulsere quondam candidi tibi soles* (8.3) and *soles occidere et redire possunt; / nobis, cum semel occidit brevis lux* (5.4-5); and *quem basiabis* (8.18) and *da mi basia mille* (5.7).

[290] Cf. *miser Catulle, desinas ineptire* (8.1) and *desinis esse miser* (76.12); *sed obstinata mente perfer, obdura* (8.11) and *quin tu animo offirmas* (76.11).

[291] Cf. *vale, puella* (8.12) and *cum suis vivat valeatque* (11.17); *amata nobis quantum amabitur nulla* (8.5) and *amata tantum quantum amabitur nulla* (37.12).

approach I have suggested briefly above is especially useful for understanding poem 8 and its remarkable combination of dramatic and non-dramatic elements while reconciling the apparently irreconcilable conflict between scholars writing on the poem.

Morris (1909) was the first to elucidate the dramatic elements present in poem 8, noting the strong connections between on the one hand its form, structure, plot, and speaker's characterization and on the other hand those of a particular and familiar stock scene present in Roman Comedy. He shows that poem 8 is a representative in lyric form of this common comic type, which he summarizes:

> Its essential element is the humorous portrayal, through a soliloquy, of a lover trying to win back the favor of the girl by the threat – which he both hopes and fears that he may not carry out – of leaving her forever. With this, as secondary elements, go usually some reference to the happiness of the past and some prediction of the misery that will ensue, if he is allowed actually to go (146).

Morris cites parallels for poem 8 in the soliloquies of the *adulescens amator* in Plautus's *Asinaria* (127-152), *Bacchides* (500-525), and *Truculentus* (759-769) and in Terence's *Eunuchus* (46-70), all of which share the same basic outline.[292] He notes that in each case the lover vacillates between grim determination and professed weakness, and he argues that in Catullus's poem 8 this vacillation is not so much a crystallized exploration of some tragic internal conflict – as most scholarship up to 1909 had concluded – but rather it attempts to create a genuinely comic and performative effect. Morris contends that Catullus's use of a stock comic monologue scene separates the writer of the poem from

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[292] The *Eunuchus* scene, as Morris points out, is not a soliloquy proper, since the *amator adulescens* is accompanied on stage by a slave during the speech, but he notes correctly that the lover is not in fact addressing the slave at all, but only propounding upon his predicament and indecision while the slave essentially takes the role of an audience member.

its speaker, creating a space between the two individuals in which a hypothetical play can be acted out: "Catullus the lover in this little dramatic lyric tries to touch the heart of the girl, but Catullus the poet trusted to the acuteness of his readers – and of Lesbia – to see that this is only a scene in a pretty comedy" (147). In Morris's view the poem is a humorous and artificial piece, separate from biographical reality but incorporating the biographical Catullus and Lesbia into a performance guided by dramatic forms and conventions. The speaker, in the guise of an *amator adulescens*, uses comic frustration and *aporia* from Plautus and Terence and in doing so reenacts metaphorically and metatheatrically Lesbia's complete domination of Catullus.

Along these interpretive lines, but apparently independently, Rebert (1931) stresses that the metrical qualities of poem 8 are particularly suited to dramatic utterance. He argues that the sound and rhythm of the poem, and the choliambic meter's potential for irregularity and variety, create the sense of an overheard impulsive outburst in soliloquy, as if it were a performance on stage. But while both Morris and Rebert sense dramatic elements in the poem, their conclusions about the effects of these performative aspects are quite opposite: whereas poem 8 is a playful staging of an artificial comedy for Morris, it is a heartfelt outpouring of intense and irremediable passion for Rebert. This scholarly conflict between comedy and tragedy in the poem is one that will appear repeatedly throughout our review in the following pages.

Fraenkel (1961) picks up on this same auditory rhythmic qualities in poem 8, although he argues that there is a disconnect between meter and material throughout the poem. Whereas Rebert sees unrestrained emotion in the possibilities for irregularity in the meter of individual lines, Fraenkel argues that "the sustained staccato will not have been

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lost on the ear of an ancient reader, who would expect, in a poem of this metrical type, a smoother movement, at any rate an occasional overflow from one line into the next" (52). He concludes that this end-stopping undercuts any notion of self-pity, creating a sense of "supreme detachment in the midst of profound passion....Part of the poem's secret lies in its form, in the compactness of its language, the severe structure of its sentences and the touching simplicity of its clauses. An experience which might have lent itself to a display of unmanly sentiment has here become the theme of a firm, a virile, a Roman poem" (53). So there is for Fraenkel a sense of tragedy in the poem, but it is a tensely masculine and traditionally Roman heroicized tragedy.

Swanson (1963), again apparently independently of these scholars, combines the ideas that Morris, Rebert, and Fraenkel present. He argues that the poem's meter and rhythm define its tone, but whereas Rebert would have the variability of the choliambic imply spontaneous tragic outburst and Fraenkel prefers a sad but staid speaker, Swanson points out that this meter in the rest of the Catullan corpus is, in fact, humorous and invective. Like Fraenkel, Swanson argues that there is a sense of detachment in the poem, but that it is the comic and invective elements that allow the speaker to rise above his potentially tragic situation and become indifferent to his girl's change of heart.

Rowland (1966) follows Swanson's satirical and ironic reading, although he modifies somewhat the conclusions of both Morris and Swanson. Morris claims that there is a distinct separation between the rational poet and irrational lover, and that the poem is thus framed as a comic play contrived by the former to highlight the absurdities of the latter. Rowland, however, thinks that the two voices are not the poet and lover, but rather are two sides of the speaker's persona that slowly merge in the first half of the poem until

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rationality takes over in the wake-up call in line 9 (*nunc iam illa non vult: tu quoque impotens noli*). But he also argues that the echo of the first line in the final line (line 1: **miser Catulle, des**inas ineptire; line 19: **at tu, Catulle, des**tinatus obdura) creates a cyclic vignette, revealing a speaker who gradually becomes rational and aware of his situation only to fall back into his irrationality and so unable to escape the cycle of delusion and despair. Poem 8 is thus a dialogue in a loop, with the speaker split into two actors that merge and separate endlessly, like a play stuck in one act.[293]

Skinner (1971) offers the most nuanced reading of poem 8, posing the possibility that its contradictory tragic and comic elements can exist simultaneously "as attempts to present both sides of a paradoxical situation, to reflect the fragmented, chaotic nature of human experience" (298). Like Swanson, she argues that the two voices in the poem are not different personae, but rather different perspectives from which a unified but conflicted speaker attempts to tackle his problems. She also argues that the poet's emotions in the poem are sincere and powerful, but that he frames the speaker in terms of comic *topoi* to comment sardonically upon his own indecision. Her conclusion (305) is worth quoting in full here:

> The true power of the 'Miser Catulle' can now be seen to lie in its ambiguous presentation of fundamental paradoxes recurrent throughout the Lesbia cycle. The dichotomies of love and hate, idealized *amor* and thwarted physical passion, illusion and reality, are the major cruxes upon which the poem is built.

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[293] We might compare Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, published in its full English version only a year before Rowland's article. Becket's two acts end in the same way with identical dialogue and stage directions, keeping the play's characters in perpetual stasis (Vladimir: "Well? Shall we go?" Estragon: "Yes, let's go." *They do not move*).

Skinner's emphasis on the acceptance of ambiguity and on simultaneous but not mutually exclusive contradiction in the poem hits the mark, though like Morris she leaves aside the possibility that such ambiguity exists in Catullus's multiple comic intertexts, an issue that I will address shortly.

Connor (1974) follows Skinner in accepting multiple aspects of a unified individual personality, although he breaks away sharply by denying comic overtones in the poem. He argues that the comic elements shape expectations for a light tone at the beginning of the poem, but that ultimately these are replaced with serious content and rapid questions in the second half, in turn making the tragic emotions of the speaker all the more poignant.

McCormick (1981) follows Skinner in accepting the paradoxes of the speaker's tragic and comic stances, and he goes a step further to embrace the poem's constant state of flux in every point – not just in its tone and use of poetic traditions – as the key to its interpretation. He notes that the poem continuously moves through unresolved ambiguities of speaker, addressee, and temporal setting, entirely destabilizing the poet's audience and undercutting any attempts to find definite settings or characters in the poem. He concludes by claiming that this emphasis on flux creates a timeless and universalizing quality for the reader or listener; while this conclusion perhaps falls short in its Romantic emphasis on universal meaning, his observations on the ambiguities and shifts in the poem are innovative and astute, and we will return to these ideas shortly.

Thomas (1984) finds an altogether overlooked source for poem 8, though his reading is the most monologic in that he departs from Morris and his followers by dismissing previously-noted references to Roman dramatic traditions. He argues that

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poem 8 does not draw on the broader tropes of the comic stage, but rather that a particular scene from Menander's *Samia* (lines 325-356, in which the old man Demeas delivers a monologue) stands behind its structure and overall movement. He points out how unusual this intertext is, given the fact that the contexts are radically different: "It is particularly significant that Catullus drew from a situation qualitatively different from his own. For while Demeas rejected a lover of sorts, his main anguish arose not from a sense of betrayal by that lover, but rather from the supposed betrayal committed by his son" (315). Thomas does not further analyze the effect of this unusual admixture within poem 8, but his contribution of this Menandrian intertext, in conjunction with the other comic parallels cited by Morris et al., will be significant for my reading of the poem's ambiguity and interpretive range later in this section.

IV.2.3: SHORTCOMINGS OF MODERN INTERPRETATIONS AND DRAMATIC

ENCODING VS. DECODING

There are two serious difficulties that most of these interpretations share. First, although they correctly note and tease out many of the dramatic elements present in Catullus's poem 8, they each treat the poem exclusively as a written text – granted sometimes a text that can and should be read aloud, but still ultimately merely a written text. That is, they read the dramatic elements of the poem as secondary coloration, isolated from their performance contexts by the fact that they have been incorporated into a poem, a literary form we do not traditionally associate with performance. And this approach to reading poetry has, for many good reasons, shaped Catullan scholarship for most of its history.[294] But with such a large proportion of poem 8 composed of dramatic elements, it is perhaps more useful to reverse interpretive priorities and to take these dramatic elements as the primary constituents of meaning while moving the written textual aspects into a secondary position.

In addition, we must remember that the ancients did not always see a clear distinction between poetry like Catullus's and performance literature like Plautus's, and in fact this issue of generic delineation fostered ongoing debates among Greek and Roman critics. In the opening to his discussion of the elusiveness of Catullan ambiguity

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[294] Schwabe (1862) played a large role in creating the idea of Catullus's poetry as autobiographical work in the form of a novelistic series of textual poems. See Skinner (2003, xix-xxii) for a brief overview of historicist and biographical readings. Cf. also Fitzgerald (1995, 25-27), who argues for this idea: "Restoring the author to life, or rather giving the text an author, becomes a matter of relating the poems to each other through some narrative....To acquire an author, they must be made to yield a story that turns this variety into coherence, a story in which the lover Catullus maintains a stable core while progressively realizing the truth about a changeable and fickle Lesbia from whom he finally succeeds in separating himself."

and its impact on interpretation, Batstone (1993) notes that ancient critics had difficulty

fitting the lyric genre, heavily reliant upon the "performance of self" (146), into a single

generic category. First he cites Proclus,[295] who aligns lyric poetry with epic, elegiac, and

iambic as a narrative genre, in contrast to the mimetic genres of tragedy, satire, and

comedy; then he cites Donatian,[296] who groups lyric poetry together with tragedy, satire,

comedy, farce, and mime as a dramatic (*actuale*, *drasticon*) genre, in contrast to both

narrative and mixed genres.[297] There is, then, late antique precedent that may go back

earlier for reading the genre of Catullus's work as a performative mode containing

elements shared with comedy and tragedy.

 Moreover, as we have already seen, one of the original contexts for receiving the

poem was innately performative, since 1st century BCE literary culture at Rome became

increasingly centered on the *convivium* and *recitatio* as locales for poetic reception. The

work's orality and subjectivity would have mattered greatly in these venues, where

interpretive delivery was a key element in poetic transmission. Therefore, reading

Catullus's poem 8 as a performative piece offers a new and potentially more fruitful way

to interpret the poem while taking into account its uniquely theatrical aspects and one of

its original Roman contexts.

 The second problem with these interpretations is that, with the exception of

Skinner (1971) and McCormick (1981), they each assume that there is a "deep structure,"

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[295] See *OCD* s.v. *Proclus*. He was writing in the mid-5th century CE

[296] See Kaster (1997 s.v. *Donatianus*) for brief overview of biography and works. Donatian perhaps wrote in the 4th or 5th century CE.

[297] Proclus ap. Phot. *Bibl*. Cod. 239: καὶ τὸ διηγηματικὸν ἐκφέρεται δι' ἔπους, ἰάμβου τε καὶ ἐλεγείας καὶ μέλους. τὸ δὲ μιμητικὸν διὰ τραγῳδίας, σατύρων τε καὶ κωμῳδίας; Donatian (*GLK* 6.274.6): *poeseos genera sunt tria, actuale, narrativum, coniunctivum. actuale est quod Graeci drasticon dicunt, ubi poeta [...] lyrica, tragoedia, satyrica, praetextata, comoedia, tabernaria, Atellana, Rhintonica, mimica*.

to use Chomsky's term, hidden within the text.[298] That is, they each argue that Catullus the poet has concealed within the poem some now-obscure but definite meaning, buried but recoverable with effort and careful prodding. This is not to say that they are all seeking authorial intention – though in fact some do – but rather that they are seeking a unitary reading that the text contains, consciously or subconsciously embedded by the poet. Skinner (1971) allows for some ambiguity, though she suggests that the paradoxes present in the poem are incidental side-effects of the poet's attempt to grapple with "the fragmented, chaotic nature of human experience" (298) rather than purposefully deployed to allow multiple interpretations. McCormick (1981) also argues for accepting ambiguity in the form of the poem's dynamic changes, but ultimately concludes that the paradoxes and uncertainties only serve to destabilize the situation as a timeless instance of tragic suffering. That is, he argues that Catullus the poet built interpretive flux into the poem to ensure that his own personal difficulties would resonate perpetually, perhaps picking up his prayer for poetic immortality in poem 1 (*plus uno maneat perenne saeclo*, line 10). Scholarly emphasis has thus focused almost entirely on the act of *encoding*, the process whereby meaning is imparted to the dramatic text at the moment of its creation by its author.[299]

I argue, however, that we can gain a better appreciation and understanding of the text if we shift our attention away from how the text is constructed and toward how the reader / listener / spectator construes the poem, taking our cue from the advances made by recent intertextuality and reader-response theories. In essence, I want to ask not only

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[298] For astute criticism of this "deep structure" approach, see Martindale (1993, 1-34).

[299] For encoding, and its accompanying interpretive shortfalls, see De Marinis (1993, 1-29).

how encoding functions within the text, but also to interrogate the function of *decoding*,

the process whereby the audience (as readers or listeners) uses cues from the dramatic

text and exterior knowledge of conventions and intertexts to extract and create meaning

individually. Edmunds's formulation of this idea for private reading holds true for

performative reading as well: "The reader occupies the place of subject of enunciation,

which means that reading re-creates each time the subject position of the persona, the

fictive speaker of the poem" (2001, 131). The key word in Edmunds's formulation is "re-

creates," since it places the locus of interpretation on the reader rather than on the text

and it allows for iterability of the subject position. The theater semiotician Marco De

Marinis (1993, 45) explains the interpretive importance of decoding even more fully in

the case of performative texts, which he theorizes act as "instructions for use":

> The theatrical text contains *directives* (orders, advice, suggestions, etc.,
> depending on the situation) about the way, or ways, in which it *may* be
> staged. Yet it never *prescribes* nor can it prescribe a *single* solution for
> how it should be performed, as 'directions for use' in the strict sense
> actually do. Rather, it suggests a range of *more* or *less* equally appropriate
> possibilities, from which the receiver of the directive can choose. Going
> back to an analogy used by Eco [1979, 56], I would argue that the
> dramatic text bears a closer resemblance to a box of Lego building blocks,
> which offers a choice of different projects for construction, than to 'a box
> of prefabricated elements, a kit, which puts the user to work simply to
> produce one and only one kind of final product, with no room for error.'

The major question we will be concerned with in the following pages is, "How does

poem 8 act as a set of 'instructions for use' and enable its audience to decode the

dramatic text as a theatrical text (i.e., to turn the static written text into a viable

performative text)?" In order to answer this question, I will treat poem 8 as if it were a

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discrete section of a larger dramatic work (i.e., a scene within a play), examining how the text either circumscribes or opens possibilities for interpreting various dramatic elements, including: space, movement, character, time within the poem, and relationships between the speaker in the text and the audience outside the text. Next, I will analyze how this poem-as-scene appropriates the conventions and expectations of the stage, particularly the elements from Roman comedy it invokes intertextually. I will then show that these dramatic intertexts offer a far wider range of meanings and choices than scholars have generally assumed and that these potential performative options add to the polyvocalism of the speaker's persona. Finally, I will show that Catullus's apparently paradoxical inscribed ambiguity encourages a reading of poem 8 that leaves meaning in the hands of its reader/performer and relies on individual interpretive motions that are simultaneously iterable and variable.

IV.3.1: A BRIEF DISCURSUS ON PERFORMANCE RANGE: THE CASE OF

SHAKESPEARE'S SHYLOCK

When we think of performers interpreting a play, often we assume that, while

they will create a unique version of their characters, they are ultimately bound by

restrictions that the text imposes upon them. That is to say, actors can bring to life their

own idea of who a character is through performance, but information encoded into the

play by the playwright's text (i.e., Chomsky's "deep structure") limits the actors' ultimate

range. A successful Hamlet, we assume, cannot be played comically in his first soliloquy

("O, that this too too solid flesh would melt"), because Shakespeare has inscribed into his

text a set of verbal cues that require a tragic performance, including unquestionably

mournful diction, themes of death and suicide, and pathetic anacoloutha.

But there is in fact much more leeway in how an actor can decode his character

than this assumption would allow. One particular role – and like the invariably tragic

Hamlet, also Shakespearean – presents such a rich and varied performance history as to

call into question the presence of a "deep structure" necessarily encoded into dramatic

texts, namely Shylock from *The Merchant of Venice*. I want to take a brief detour from

our analysis of Catullus's poem 8 here in order to sketch this character's remarkable

performance history, because for centuries Shylock has offered performers almost exactly

the same interpretive range as Catullus's speaker in poem 8 has offered critics: a

character either comically absurd, or an affront to contemporary values, or tragically

sympathetic, but rarely any of these at the same time. Understanding how a role,

inscribed by a single text, can range over such a spectrum of emotion on stage will help

us understand as well how little of that emotion can be determined by the text itself. Acknowledging and embracing this interpretive difficulty, both for roles acted on the English stage and for personae presented in the contexts of the Roman *convivium* and *recitatio*, can then allow us clear away less helpful rigid philological approaches in favor of a more flexible methodology for handling performative texts like Catullus's poem 8.

For two and a half centuries, all extant evidence for the performance of the play indicates that Shylock was automatically received as an antagonistic figure. At first he was read as farcically ridiculous. In the beginning of its performance history, from its initial performances at the start of the 17th century to the turn of the 18th century, Shylock was a purely comic figure. Gross (1992, 109-110) notes that he was essentially a clown in George Granville's adaptation first performed in 1701:

> The part was duly assigned to Thomas Doggett, the leading comic actor of the day. Doggett specialized in playing old men and characters from low life. One of his contemporaries described him as "very aspectabund" (expressive), "wearing a farce in his face," and, improbable though it may seem today, when you read the text he had to work with, his Shylock plainly succeeded in making audiences laugh.

The play apparently was assumed by its performers and audiences to encode in its "deep structure" a comical Shylock from the beginning, but in the first critical edition of Shakespeare, dated to 1709, Nicholas Rowe suggested that this supposition mistook the playwright's intent:[300]

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[300] Gross (1992, 110).

...though we have seen that play received and acted as a comedy, and the part of the Jew performed by an excellent comedian, yet I cannot but think it was designed tragically by the author. There appears in it such a deadly spirit of revenge, such a savage fierceness and fellness, and such a bloody designation of cruelty and mischief, as cannot agree either with the style of characters of comedy.

Shortly after in 1741 Charles Macklin famously upended these comic conventions and performed his Shylock as a malevolent and greedy villain. An account of Macklin's performance by a contemporary viewer suggests as well that Macklin had simply discovered the correct version of the character encoded by the play's "deep structure":[301]

Shylock is not one of your petty cheats, who can spend an hour talking about the excellence of a cheap watch-chain. He is slow, calm in his impenetrable cunning, and when he has the law in his side unflinching, to the very limit of malice....The first words he utters when he comes on are spoken slowly and deliberately: "Three thousand ducats." The two *th* sounds and the two *s* sounds, especially the *s* after the *t*, which Macklin lisps voluptuously, as though he were savoring the ducats and all that they can buy – these sounds make an impression which nothing can efface. Three such words, spoken in this way at the very outset, reveal his entire character.

But from 1814 until 1833 Edmund Kean defined Shylock as a far more complex villain, an antagonist but a complicated and sympathetic one. William Hazlitt, a contemporary author and critic, remarked in response to Kean's portrayal that opinions about Shylock and Shakespeare's intent had changed:[302]

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[301] Gross (1992, 113), quoting a letter by the German scientist Georg Lichtenberg regarding a 1775 reprisal performance of the play by Macklin.

[302] Gross (1992, 131-132).

> In proportion as Shylock has ceased to be a popular bugbear, "baited with the rabble's curse," he becomes a half-favorite with the philosophical part of the audience, who are disposed to think that Jewish revenge is at least as good as Christian injuries....We suspect that the main feeling he had in writing the play was to give a kindly lecture to the egoism of sects and opinions.

In 1879 Henry Irving completed the transformation and rehabilitation of Shylock, interpreting Shakespeare's intent to have been critical not of the Jewish moneylender but of the people who had pressed him into such desperate straits. He remarked, "The tendency of the play is undoubtedly to show that "the worst passions of human nature are nurtured by undeserved persecution and obloquy."[303] And so his Shylock became a very human, largely faultless victim:[304]

> For the old Jew, Shylock, who was regarded usually as a ferocious monster, whose sole desire was to avenge himself in the most brutal manner on the Christians of his neighborhood, had become a gentleman of the Hebrew persuasion, with the manners of Rothschild, and not more ferocious than became an ordinary merchant of the period, afflicted with a stupid, foolish servant and a wilful, pernicious daughter.

The history of Shylock's performance does not end with Irving, and the current status of Shakespeare's character is one of multiplicity. Theater semiotics are moving away from encoding and "deep structure" and towards decoding and individualized actualization.

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[303] Gross (1992, 147).

[304] Gross (1992, 151).

"What does the play really mean?" is less important a question than "How does the play mean?" particularly in the difficult case of *The Merchant of Venice*.

But Shylock's current interpretive range goes beyond the scope of this project, and now I want to clarify why this discursus is relevant for our understanding of Catullus's performativity. What I want to bring out here is simply this: Shylock's character is not encoded in Shakespeare's text, but merely sketched out in the broadest possible terms. It is up to the performer / reader / listener to create the character individually and to understand that no meaningful individual in performative literature can be completely encoded by the text, because such characters are designed from the start to be presented to the audience by different actors. Shylock is particularly relevant for understanding Catullus's speaker in poem 8 because they have undergone similar interpretive struggles. The speaker of the poem has variously been viewed as either a sympathetic man with whom the reader is meant to side against the wickedly faithless Lesbia, or an example of a Roman aligned against his society's morals and ethics, or else a comic figure whose plight is bathetic. Ultimately, none of these interpretations has been capable of final proof, but I do not think it is because they are necessarily wrong or because Catullus the poet has failed to give his readers enough information to discover his intent. Rather, this broad range of equally plausible interpretations is encouraged by the performative ambiguity and iterability that the poem creates. Let us now turn to the poem itself and examine how it encodes and leaves open spaces for the performer to interpret.

IV.4. 1: INSCRIBED AMBIGUITY IN POEM 8

As I mentioned at the end of the review of literature, one of the difficulties that
has hindered a full understanding of poem 8 is the tendency of Catullan scholars to rely
on "deep structure" that is encoded into the text of the poem. But encoding is not always
a positive phenomenon, and in the following section I will focus on its negative aspects.
In addition to asking "What meaning does the poem create?" I will also ask "How does
the poem *not* create meaning?" In other words, I want to investigate the ability of poem 8
to "blank-encode" by leaving open spaces for individual interpretation. Theater semiotics
offers a particularly fruitful tool for this kind of investigation, because its focus
frequently tends towards the space between the dramatic text (i.e., the script) and the
performance text (i.e., the theatrical product in action), where the actor acts as an
intermediary between the play and its audience by filling in interpretive gaps left by the
playwright.

I will begin by examining the dramatic information that poem 8 presents, starting
with the context of performance within the text. Theater semiotics divides a performance
text's dramatic context into two distinct areas: first, the *situation*, which consists of "the
set of persons and objects present, their physical circumstances, the supposed time and
place of their encounter, etc."; second, the *context-of-utterance*, "comprising the
relationship set up between speaker, listener and discourse in the immediate here-and-
now."[305] In this section we will look at how the poem encodes (or does not encode)
meaning in both areas, as well as how the poem creates "instructions for use" to be

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[305] Elam (1980, 137-138)

decoded by the performer. I will show that, in contrast to many other Catullan poems,

poem 8 leaves a great deal of this dramatic context open to interpretation.

IV.4.2: DRAMATIC SITUATION: PROXEMICS, KINESICS, AND

PARALINGUISTICS

Traditionally, scholars of both the Classics and the theater have appreciated

dramatic works primarily as written texts, using the same approaches as for reading non-

dramatic texts. While this methodology confers a number of benefits, it omits one vital

aspect of the theater experience that theater semioticians have recently given more

attention to, namely the ability of the actor to affect the work's reception through his

interpretive choices: the drama's script encodes a certain framework that guides the plot

and characterization, but the actor's gesture, intonation, rhythm, and any number of other

paratextual qualities can fundamentally influence the way the audience receives the

scripted framework. Theater semiotics groups these different qualities under three basic

categories: (1) proxemics, signifiers of spatial relationships between individual characters

on the one hand and performance space, objects, other characters, and the audience on the

other; (2) kinesics, signifiers of movement within the performance space by any of these

characters or objects; and (3) paralinguistics, vocal signifiers like speed, stress, tone, and

timbre that communicate nuance about the scripted words. These elements all contribute

to the audience's reception of the performance text and greatly affect interpretation,

because they all modify the text's encoded elements to a greater or lesser degree. These

actorial elements make up the *dramatic situation*, which the script may control through

stage directions or through internal textual requirements, but may also leave open to

interpretation by the performer.

To illustrate how the text may or may not encode these qualities, let us look at one of the Catullan poems that we have already seen contains significant dramatic elements, namely poem 55:

oramus, si forte non molestum est,	1
demonstres ubi sint tuae tenebrae.	
te in Campo quaesivimus minore,	
te in Circo, te in omnibus libellis,	
te in templo summi Iovis sacrato.	5
in Magni simul ambulatione	
femellas omnes, amice, prendi,	
quas vultu vidi tamen sereno.	
†avelte† (sic usque flagitabam):	
"Camerium mihi, pessimae puellae!"	10
quaedam inquit, nudum reduc<ta pectus,>	
"en hic in roseis latet papillis."	
sed te iam ferre Herculei labos est;	
tanto te in fastu negas, amice.	
dic nobis ubi sis futurus, ede	15
audacter, committe, crede luci.	
nunc te lacteolae tenent puellae?	
si linguam clauso tenes in ore,	
fructus proicies amoris omnes.	
verbosa gaudet Venus loquella.	20
vel, si vis, licet obseres palatum,	
dum vestri sim particeps amoris.	22

The poem modulates between encoding and leaving open the dramatic situation, creating two distinct parts that play off one another. Within the narrative of the past (lines 3-12) the poem directs the proxemics and kinesics heavily, moving the speaker through a series of definite places in rapid succession. This swift movement, as I noted in Chapter Three, encodes the speaker's character as frantic and foolish, and the placement of the speaker at loci of traditional authority aligns him against roguishness and leisure. The narrative slows down halfway through and anchors itself spatially at the Porticus Pompei, focusing

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on the moment of the speaker's attempted assertion of dominance and subsequent failure (lines 6-12). This exclusion of other people and places narrows the conflict to male vs. female, aristocratic vs. elite, and the close physical interaction between the speaker and the women (*prendi* in line 7 and the intimate revelation of the clever prostitute's breasts at line 11) heightens the aggressive tension of the conflict. Moreover, the word "flagitabam" (line 9) inscribes the speaker's address to the prostitutes (lines 9-10) with elements of traditional folk *flagitatio*, encoding paralinguistic markers of scorn and social authority into his words.

In contrast, the present frame of the poem (lines 1-2 and 13-22) leaves the space and movement open, mirroring the speaker's inability to locate Camerius. As a result, a reader or performer of the poem could choose to represent the speaker occupying any reasonable place in the present. But in this frame the clipped grammar and ellipsis (lines 13-14) and the series of imperatives in close succession (lines 15-16) encode a sense of frustration and aporia, setting out some directives for the speaker's paralinguistic elements. The frenetic sense created by the past narrative's proxemic and kinesic markers thus leaks into the present frame through paralinguistic cues that mirror the speaker's rapid and forceful *flagitatio*. While the subject matter of this poem is similar to that of poem 6, where the speaker asks Flavius to reveal what girl he has been hiding with, the text encodes the tone differently, making poem 55's speaker less congenial than poem 6's can be read as. So we can see some basic ways in which Catullus encodes aspects of the poem in its dramatic situation.

Poem 8, by contrast, leaves proxemics, kinesics, and paralinguistics almost completely open to interpretation. There are no definitive or relative spatial anchors in the

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poem, since none of the speaker's physical movements or gestures are delimited. While there are verbs of motion in his narrative of the past (*cum ventitabas quo puella ducebat*, line 4) and that of the future (*nec te requiret*, line 13), the position of these moving subjects is indeterminate, and the single motion in the present frame is described only in negative terms (*nec quae fugit sectare*, line 10). In fact, in the present frame all verbs of external action (which we might use to understand the speaker's delivery) are presented in negative terms (*desinas ineptire*, line 1; *inpotens noli, nec quae fugit sectare, nec miser vive*, lines 9-10). The speaker only describes what he does not plan to do, leaving his external actions unnamed. Verbs of internal thought (which do not give proxemic, kinesic, or stable paralinguistic cues), however, are given in positive terms (*ducas*, line 2; *obstinata mente perfer, obdura*, line 11), shifting focus away from any definite dramatic situation. In effect, this emphasis on internal over external coincides with an emphasis on the polyvocalism of the *lector* (who internally maintains the text's indeterminacies) over the narrower reception of the *auditor* (who externally receives determinative signs). The speaker's monologue likewise omits most paralinguistic markers: only *miser*, whose connotations are exceptionally wide-ranging,[306] describes the speaker's emotional state (lines 1 and 10). Poem 10 thus encodes ambiguity into its dramatic situation and leaves open spaces for the performer's interpretation.[307]

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[306] See Hinds (2001, 29-34).

[307] Edmunds (2001, 47) remarks: "Different readers will perform the meaning of the text differently, to use the musical metaphor previously invoked. In particular, they will differ in the way they fill in the 'virtual dimension' of the text." See his discussion (47-48) of this virtual dimension (the equivalent of our dramatic setting) in Horace *Odes* 1.9 for a comparable example, and cf. his larger discussion (1992) for a fuller reading of the Horace poem.

IV.4. 3: CONTEXT-OF-UTTERANCE: TEMPORAL, SPATIAL, AND PERSONAL

DEIXIS

We have focused so far on semiotic aspects of poem 8 that encode (or leave open)

the transactions between performer and the audience, but communication between

characters within the poem presents another avenue of investigation that can help us

understand how the poem functions as a performative piece. This communication can be

understood in terms of its context-of-utterance, which I mentioned above creates the

second half of a text's performative context. Elam (1980, 138) remarks that:

> …the context-of-utterance can be represented as speaker, listener, time of
> utterance *now*, location of utterance *here* and utterance. It is constant in
> that dramatic discourse is always tied to speaker, listener and its
> immediate spatio-temporal coordinates, but is at the same time dynamic to
> the extent that the participants and the time and location of utterance
> indicated undergo continual change.

In sum, "the drama consists first and foremost precisely in this, an *I* addressing a *you*

here and *now*" (139). While, as we have seen, the dramatic situation sets up a number of

expectations on the part of the audience (i.e., encodes or leaves open meaning), the

context-of-utterance determines how the dialogue and action develop over the course of

the performance and how the performer can decode these developments. In poem 8 this

development is arrested, creating a closed system that encourages multiple readings and

enables iterable reinterpretation on the part of the performer.

Before we examine context-of-utterance and theatrical deixis of poem 8, it will

perhaps be useful to justify more firmly the application of this particular theater-semiotic

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approach to this poem, since even scholars of theater emphasize that drama is unique among literary forms in its extensive reliance on deictic discourse.[308] While my reading of this poem as a semiotic performance piece stretches many traditional generic boundaries, there is precedent for the applicability of deictic aspects similar to theater semiotics's context-of-utterance for interpreting non-dramatic work, and in fact even for interpreting ancient lyric. Drawing on and quoting the work of W.R. Johnson (1982, 31), Batstone (1993, 145) covers similar theoretical ground in the context of lyric poetry:

> The most usual mode in Greek and Latin lyric relied upon the pronouns
> "I" and "you" to give local habitation and a name to the emotions the poet
> soughts to share and clarify: "The specific context, the fiction of I and
> You and their situation of discourse, concretizes the universal, makes it
> perceptible and makes it singable." Johnson remains a Romantic in his
> emphasis upon the speaker's emotions, the "visible pattern for the inner
> tempests and stillnesses." Nevertheless, he calls attention to the important
> role played by the lyric 'you' in focusing and particularizing the speaker's
> personality.

The most important point about this convergence of theater semiotics and lyric interpretation for my purposes is this: although deixis is perhaps more distinctively vital in drama than in other genres, there is – as Donatian noticed – much overlap between lyric and dramatic work, and Catullan poetry freely borrows from the ostensibly exclusive property of the stage, so it would not be inappropriate to interpret poem 8 using the scheme of dramatic context-of-utterance.

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[308] De Toro (1995) remarks: "Deixis is fundamental in theatre discourse and it is one of the components that separates theatre from all other forms of literary discourse. This is due to the fact that, above and beyond the dual articulation of normal language (1. morpheme; 2. phoneme, that is, the locutory act), theatre possesses a third articulation. As in everyday communication, deixis links the locutory act to a pragmatic context. Without this articulation, the theatre dialogue would be incomprehensible" (14).

We will begin our interpretation with the spatio-temporal coordinates of poem 8. The poem's *now* is emphasized repeatedly, both explicitly through deictic adverbs (*nunc iam*, 9; *iam*, 12) and implicitly in hortatory/imperative verbs (*desinas*, 1; *ducas*, 2; *noli*, 9; *sectare*, 10; *vive*, 10; *perfer*, 11; *obdura*, 11; *vale*, 12; *obdura*, 19). But as in the case of the dramatic situation, "now" is left open to interpretation. There are no indications that the speaker's "now" is a particular time, either biographically, historically, or in the context of the poetic corpus. Moreover, the structure of the poem creates a strong temporal ambiguity. The chart below represents visually the distribution of temporal contexts throughout the poem, with the speaker's "now" in bold:

| | | |
| Past | **Now** | Future |

miser Catulle, desinas ineptire,
et quod vides perisse perditum ducas.

fulsere quondam candidi tibi soles,
cum ventitabas quo puella ducebat
amata nobis quantum amabitur nulla.
ibi illa multa cum iocosa fiebant,
quae tu volebas nec puella nolebat,
fulsere vere candidi tibi soles.

nunc iam illa non vult: tu quoque impotens noli,
nec quae fugit sectare, nec miser vive,
sed obstinata mente perfer, obdura.
vale puella, iam Catullus obdurat,

nec te requiret nec rogabit invitam.
at tu dolebis, cum rogaberis nulla.
scelesta, vae te, quae tibi manet vita?
quis nunc te adibit? cui videberis bella?

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quem nunc amabis? cuius esse diceris?
quem basiabis? cui labella mordebis?

at tu, Catulle, destinatus obdura.

 The "now" of the speaker opens and closes the poem with a set of clear echoes (*miser Catulle, desinas ineptire*, 1; *at tu, Catulle, destinatus obdura*, 19), delimiting the entire context-of-utterance. "Now" also prominently occupies the exact center of the poem, within a four-line section framed by echoes in deictic adverbs (*nunc iam*, 9; *vale puella, iam*, 12). But this central "now" exists within a nebulous time between equal measures of the past (*fulsere quondam candidi tibi soles...fulsere vere candidi tibi soles*, 3-8) and the future (*nec te requiret nec rogabit invitam...quem basiabis? cui labella mordebis?*, 13-18). It is, I think, no coincidence that five lines narrating the past and the same number of lines foretelling the future surround the speaker's description of the present. Because of its temporal equidistance, we cannot even say whether the "now" is closer to the past or the future, and therefore we likewise cannot determine whether the speaker's emotions are closer to the past's happiness or the future's loneliness. We know only that "now" is somewhere in the middle of an almost fairytale ideal "once upon a time" (*quondam*, 3) and a desolate future "when" (*cum rogaberis nulla*, 14), undefined and capable of being decoded as any "now" that the performer chooses.

The *here* of the poem is equally prominent, although somewhat more elusive since locative deictics are absent. In the past frame (3-8) the speaker mentions an open space consisting of wherever his girl led him (*cum uentitabas quo puella ducebat*, 4). He also implies the same open space in the future frame when he says he will not seek her

out (*nec te requiret*, 13) but does not indicate where he will be; he reinforces this idea

when he asks who will approach her (*quis nunc te adibit?*, 16) but does not indicate

where she will be. These two open spaces are mirrored in the center of the "now" section

in the speaker's command to cease following where the girl flees (*nec quae fugit sectare*,

10), since again "here" consists of wherever the girl exists and is therefore capable of

being decoded by the performer as any "here." Just as the poem can be read in any

"now," so too can it occupy any "where" that the performer chooses.

The context-of-utterance is more complicated in the case of the "I" and "you" in

the poem than in the "here" and "now," although it is equally indefinite. The references

to the speaker and listener ("I" and "you") simultaneously create and destroy dramatic

anchors for the performer to decode. The "you" is constant and the most clearly defined

part of the context-of-utterance in the overarching present frame. The listener is

"Catullus," addressed by name in the same line position at the beginning and ending of

the poem (*miser Catulle*, 1; *at tu, Catulle*, 19) and emphasized with deictics throughout in

the past and present (*tu*, 7; *tibi*, 8; *tu*, 9). There is a shift in listener halfway through the

poem, when at the end of the central present section the listener ("Catullus") and object

of utterance (*puella*, 4) exchange roles, with the girl addressed as listener in the vocative

case (*vale puella*, 12) and "Catullus" described as object of the utterance in the

nominative rather than being addressed (*Catullus obdurat*, 12). But the command to

farewell (*vale*, 12) yields the realm of the future to the *puella*, since these prospective

utterances separate the listener of the apostrophe (the *puella*) from the listener of the

present (the speaker), and so the "here" and "now" remain the realm of "Catullus," with

whom the poem ends (*Catulle*, 19). The abrupt return to the present in "but" (*at*, 19) in

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the final line reminds the audience that only the Catullan addressee exists in the poem's context-of-utterance. Thus, the clearly defined "you" in the present frame situates the poem within the Catullan corpus and creates a dramatic anchor that helps the performer decode the text as addressed to a specific individual with some known background situation.

The speaker of the poem, however, creates precisely the opposite effect, because while the listener is defined as "you, Catullus" the speaker remains unknown. Scholars have often assumed that the speaker must be a Catullus of some sort, whether the poet addressing his real biographical self, or the poet addressing a fictional poetic self, or a more rational fictional self addressing a less rational fictional self.[309] But McCormick (1981), noting the frequent and rapid shifts that occur within the poem, points out that the speaker can move between these roles, and in fact may become none of these Catulluses at all. His analysis of the speaker's ambiguity sums up some of the effects created by the undefined "I" in the context-of-utterance:[310]

> The first of these changes turns on the speaker's activity in the poem.
> Catullus, we know, is being addressed by an unknown speaker who may
> well be, although need not be, Catullus himself. This unresolved
> ambiguity is one of the devices the poem exhibits, a poetic feature which
> introduces still further movement into the text. The two poles of this

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[309] See the review of literature above for each of these interpretations.

[310] McCormick (1981, 317). Note that direct address to Catullus in the corpus is relatively rare, attested only here and in poems 46, 51, 52, 76, and 79. While it might be objected that the speaker of the poem can be assumed to be Catullus (biographical or poetic), the intertexts with Terence's *Eunuchus* here and in the epigrams mitigates against this strict identification. As I showed in Chapter Two, the *Eunuchus* opening stands behind many of Catullus's poems, and in this play the simultaneous voice of mad love and reasoned criticism is not the lover Phaedria alone, but also his slave Parmeno. We can thus at least take McCormick's suggestion into consideration, since one of Catullus's primary comic sources splits the address between two people.

ambiguity – Catullus as speaker or someone else as speaker – can reverse several times for the audience....Moreover, the dynamics of ambiguity can also result in both of two possible interpretations being simultaneously present to the hearer or reader.

Whereas the listener remains constant and is given a clear identity, the speaker's identity both remains indefinite and has the potential for change at any moment.[311] And this indefinite quality combined with the possibility of change in speaker gives more or less free reign to the performer to choose whatever incarnation of the "I" that seems appropriate. In short, because the poem's dramatic situation and context-of-utterance are ambiguous and unstable, the speaker becomes a role to be played, adaptable to the time ("now") and place ("here") that the performer chooses to present and open to a variety of paralinguistic, kinesic, and proxemic interpretations.

This openness of the speaker's character is, of course, definable by other factors, particularly the intertexts with dramatic texts outside the corpus. In my review of the literature above I have already touched upon an abundance of these intertexts appearing in poem 8. It is necessary to examine these aspects of the poem in order to understand better how the process of decoding functions in the interaction between the performer and the audience.

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[311] See Barthes (1974, 10-11) for the plurality that such deixis inscribes in the textualized "I," as well as Martindale (1993, 29-34) for the dialogism of this reading of the poetic speaker.

IV.4.4: MULTIPLE INTERTEXTUALITIES AND PERFORMANCE OF THE PALIMPSESTUOUS TEXT

So far we have focused on how poem 8 from a theater semiotics standpoint creates a series of open spaces that leave interpretive decisions in the hands of the text's performer. But not all aspects of the poem are ambiguous, since a number of intertexts with Greek and Roman Comedy are invoked in the speaker's monologue. These intertexts, I argue, present the performer of the poem with a set of "instructions for use," sources that import sets of external contextual elements that fill the gaps left open by the poem's dramatic context. In order to understand how a performer can decode poem 8 as a theatrical text, it is necessary to explore these intertexts in greater detail, first by teasing out some aspects of meaning they encode into the dramatic text of the poem and then by understanding how differences in these intertexts contribute to the decoding process.

As I noted above, Morris (1909) demonstrates that poem 8 recalls a series of comic conventions associated with the character of the *amator adulescens*. Their main attributes include an address in soliloquy given by a young lover, a threat to abandon a beloved girl, an admission of weakness on the lover's part, a recollection of past happiness between the lover and the girl, and a foretelling of future misery for the girl if/when the lover leaves. Thomas (1984) points out that poem 8 also invokes a monologue of the old man Demeas from Menander's *Samia*, who exhibits traits similar to those of the Roman *adulescens*. In this way, the speaker of poem 8 recalls a generic type by means of a system reference. By invoking this character type and its typical attributes, the speaker presents himself as a specific instance of an overall class, and in turn he

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imports a set of generic conventions that bridge a variety of texts from Roman Comedy

not explicitly encoded into the poem. In other words, by invoking one particular stock

scene from comedy (the lover's soliloquy), the speaker also invokes other expectations

associated with the *adulescens amator*, including his invariable *aporia*, recklessness, and

passivity in erotic affairs.[312]

But while a system reference can be seen to create a set of expectations from the

common elements each individual instance shares with the rest, it can also be seen to

import the conflicting differences that set them apart *as individual instances* of the

system. References to elements of the lover's soliloquy from comedy sets up poem 8 as

another version of the typical *adulescens amator* complaining, but it can also bring to the

Catullan text the full set of comic scenes that constitute this system. The soliloquy of

poem 8 potentially encodes at the same time the general *amator* type together with the

specific instances of that type found in Plautus's *Asinaria*, *Bacchides*, and *Truculentus*, in

Terence's *Eunuchus*, and in Menander's *Samia*.[313] The poem becomes "palimpsestuous,"

to use Genette's (1997) term, containing traces of these prior characters that can be

glimpsed and read through the Catullan speaker.[314] And, as Skinner (1971) hints briefly,

each of these instances of the lover's soliloquy presents far more variety than Morris

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[312] See Duckworth (1952, 237-242) for a fuller discussion of the *adulescens*'s typical attributes, as well as Chapter Two above for problems of boundaries in intertextual allusions.

[313] Elam (1980, 93) notes that the dramatic text cannot help but carry all previous instances of performances. Carlson (1994, 113-114) demonstrates that individual instances of larger stock types from 18th and 19th century comedy function in the same practical way as previous performances, and I think the same is true of stock types from Roman Comedy as well.

[314] "On the same parchment, one text can become superimposed upon another, which it does not quite conceal but allows to show through....The hypertext invites us to engage in a relational reading, the flavor of which, however perverse, may well be condensed in an adjective coined by Phillippe Lejeune: a *palimpsestuous* reading" (Genette 1997, 398-399). Cf. also Carlson (1994), who talks about prior dramatic intertexts as "ghosting" new instantiations of themselves.

(1909) allows. Whereas some of these lovers present their *aporia* in terms of personal

indecision, others claim that they cannot achieve their desires because of external factors.

These palimpsestuous performances can be used by the performer to fill the many

gaps created by poem 8's dramatic context (or lack thereof), since they encode these

elements much more fully. There are five different sources that constitute the system of

the lover's soliloquy, but to make my point clearly and succinctly I will focus here on

two only. The soliloquy of Diniarchus from Plautus's *Truculentus* and and that of

Mnesilochus from *Bacchides* reveal two very different approaches to dramatic context

within their respective plays:

> ***abiit intro, exclusit***. egon ut haec mihi patiar fieri?
> iam hercle ego tibi, inlecebra, **ludos faciam clamore *in via***,
> quae adversum legem accepisti a plurimis pecuniam;   760
> iam hercle apud novos omnis magistratus faxo erit nomen tuom,
> post id ego te manum iniciam quadrupuli, venefica,
> suppostrix puerum. ego edepol iam tua probra aperibo omnia.
> nihil me <prohibet,> perdidi omne quod fuit: fio impudens,
> nec mi adeost tantillum pensi iam, quos capiam calceos.   765
> **sed quid ego hic clamo**? ***quid si me iubeat intromittier***?
> conceptis me non facturum verbis iurem, si velit.
> nugae sunt. si stimulos pugnis caedis, manibus plus dolet.
> **de nihilo nihil est irasci**, quae te non flocci facit.
>   Plautus, *Truculentus* 758-769

> She's gone inside, she's locked me out. Shall I let these things happen to me?
> Now by Hercules, I'll make sport of you by shouting in the street, you entrapper,
> you who took money from too many people against the law!
> Now by Hercules, I'll make it so your name is before every magistrate,
> and after that I'll sue you for four times the amount, you huntress,
> you defrauder of boys! By Pollux now I'll reveal all your disgraceful deeds!
> Nothing stops me, I've lost everything there was! I've become reckless,
> and now I don't care one tiny iota what shoes I put on.
> But why am I shouting this here? What if she commands that I bet sent inside?
> I would swear with solemn words that I wouldn't do it if she wished.
> It's foolishness! If you punch a goad with your fists, it'll hurt your hands more.

It's no use getting angry at a nothing who doesn't think you're worth something.

inimiciorem nunc utrum credam magis   500
sodalemne esse an Bacchidem, incertum admodumst.
illum exoptavit potius? habeat. optumest.
ne illa illud hercle cum malo fecit suo;
nam mihi divini numquam quisquam creduat,
ni ego illam exemplis plurumis planeque — amo.   505
ego faxo hau dicet nactam quem derideat.
nam iam domum ibo atque — aliquid surrupiam patri.
id isti dabo. ego istanc multis ulciscar modis.   507a
adeo ego illam cogam usque ut mendicet — meus pater.
sed satine ego animum mente sincera gero,
qui ad hunc modum haec hic quae futura fabulor?   510
amo hercle opino, ut pote quod pro certo sciam.
      Plautus, *Bacchides* 500-511

Now I don't even know whether I should think that
My friend or Bacchis is more of an enemy to me.
She wanted him more? Let he have him! That's just fine.
By Hercules, she's done that to her own undoing.
For never let any god believe me hereafter,
if I don't truly and in every way – love her.
I'll make it so she can't say she's found someone to laugh at.
For I'll go home now and – steal something from my father.
I'll give it to her. I'll get my revenge on her in many ways.
I'll even push her so far that – my father will be a beggar.
But am I really thinking truthfully enough
when in this way here I'm telling stories about the future?
I think I love her, by Hercules, I know as far as one can for sure.

The *Truculentus* passage makes much of Diniarchus's exclusion, marking his *puella*'s

location inside her house in contrast to his position outside in the street (*abiit intro,*

exclusit, line 758; *in via*, line 759). Diniarchus's hypothetical question further underlines

this separation (*quid si me iubeat intromittier?*, line 766). This scene recalls many of the

elements of the *paraclausithyron*, where the eager lover is physically excluded by the

beloved.[315] Moreover, Diniarchus uses a series of verbs that mark the text

paralinguistically: shouting (*ludos faciam clamore*, line 759; *sed quid ego hic clamo*, line

766) and being angry (*de nihilo nihil est irasci*, line 769) demonstrate clearly that the

lover here is displeased, but not at all with himself. He is frustrated at his girl, whom he

considers to be the sole cause of his situation. This combination of deictic direction and

paralinguistic marker creates a distinct sense of opposition between the two characters,

attributing the lover's *aporia* entirely to external forces that are beyond his direct control.

The *Bacchides* passage, however, leaves the spatio-temporal elements open, since

Mnesilochus is not physically excluded from his *puella*. Rather, Plautus focuses on his

mental shifts, calling attention to his uncertain state of mind (line 501) and emphasizing

this doubt by three unexpected *paraprosdokeia* in a row (*amo*, line 505; *aliquid*

surrupiam patri, line 507; *meus pater*, line 508). These shifts in meaning encourage

paralinguistic shifts as well, since their humor only functions if the first part of each

sentence is delivered with serious hostility and determination before being delivered with

ridiculous resignation. The opposition in this instance of the *adulescens* lamenting is

therefore internal to the lover himself and focuses on his own mixed feelings rather than

the particular actions of his girl. For Mnesilochus, unlike for Diniarchus, his inability to

act derives entirely from suspicion about the beloved's motives and fidelity.

It is apparent that both of these *adulescentes* have quite different concerns and

internal motivation inscribed by the play's text. As a result, when the reader / performer /

listener approaching Catullus poem 8 chooses to fill in the gaps on the poem's dramatic

context, he or she is faced with the difficulty of which of these sources to draw on in

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[315] See Copley (1956) for an extended discussion of the *paraclausithyron* motif.

interpreting the speaker's motivations. These elements can be imported through the

dramatic situation and the context-of-utterance (i.e., location and movement between

performer and audience, gesture, and vocal qualities), which as I showed earlier are left

open to interpretation within the poem itself. If the performer of poem 8 chooses to

determine the speaker's impotence internally, then he or she can signal this choice by

imitating the conflicted paralinguistic elements that the *Bacchides*'s Mnesilochus

displays and minimize gesture and movement. If, however, the performer chooses to

locate the speaker's *aporia* externally, then he or she can signal this choice by imitating

in poem 8 the shouting and deictic directions in Diniarchus's speech in the *Truculentus*.

This split between previous incarnations of the aporetic lover encourages this

choice of intertextual elements to import, making the performance of poem 8 a series of

intertextual decisions.[316] The performer must choose which instances of the *adulescens*

from Roman Comedy to invoke, as well as how to draw that instance into his or her new

context by importing the dramatic situation of the previous performances. In the decoding

process, the performer can import the dramatic context of any of these comic sources,

including both the two I just mentioned as well as the others that I have only touched on,

and thereby cast the speaker in terms of Mnesilochus's wavering indecision (*Bacchides*

500-525), Diniarchus's frustrated resignation (*Truculentus* 759-769), Argyrippus's

violent indignation (*Asinaria* 127-152), or Phaedria's self-pitying misery (*Eunuchus* 50-

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[316] Kiebuzinska (2001), discussing the dialogism of intertextuality in performance texts, remarks,
"Simultaneously the spectator's awareness is split between an awareness of the text and awareness of other
theatrical presentations of the text. Thus the genesis of the performance is itself intertextual" (41).

70).[317] And this multiplicity also encourages iterability, because the recognition of previous performances opens up space for new performances that emphasize, suppress, or combine different elements from each.[318]

I would like to conclude by pointing out that reading Catullus's poem 8 in this dramatic fashion has one additional benefit besides clarifying the potential relationships between the target text and its sources. As I noted above in my review of the literature, scholarship on this poem has tended toward divisive questions. Is the poem tragic or comic? Does it point to Plautus or Terence or Menander? Can a comic figure display significant emotions and question human experience without eliciting laughter, or must he be ridiculous in spirit because he is ridiculous in form? By approaching the poem as a set of "instructions for use" and understanding the places that Catullus leaves open and ambiguous, we can also move away from these "either-or" arguments when they lead to an impasse, as they seem to have in the century since Morris (1909) first pointed out its dramatic aspects. Reading the poem as a scene within a play, we can better appreciate its broader applicability and see that the speaker's experience is not his alone, but one that others can relive and reinvent within new contexts.[319]

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[317] See Skinner (1971) and Thomas (1984) for a fuller discussion of some of the differences between the various lover's soliloquies.

[318] "Every position-taking is defined in relation to the *spaces of possibles*....It follows from this, for example, that position-taking changes, even when the position remains identical, whenever there is a change in the universe of options that are simultaneously offered for producers and consumers to choose from. The meaning of a work...changes automatically with each change in the field within which it is situated for the spectator or reader" Bourdieu (1993, 30).

[319] Eco (1979, 161) remarks that code-changing like this produces "a new type of awareness about the world insofar as the aesthetic labor aims to be detected and scrutinized by the spectator, producing thereupon a diversity of communication acts which may or may not elicit 'highly original responses.'"

CONCLUSION

I have attempted in this dissertation to show that Catullus found value and relevance in the works of Plautus and Terence and consequently drew on the plays, stock routines, and character types of Roman Comedy in order to examine in his poetry the social and literary preoccupations of his own day. The material covered in the preceding chapters reveals that it is important to consider Roman Comedy when dealing with Catullus's poetry, since it formed a vital background for literature in his lifetime and appears throughout his work. I have argued that staged drama remained important for Romans like Catullus in the 1st century BCE, both in performance on the public stage and in the writings of a growing class of intellectuals and authors in the late Republic. I suggested that, besides exploring many enduring human problems and questions, Roman Comedy offered a cultural vocabulary shared by Catullus and his audience that created a common ground for communication and understanding in ancient society. I also argued that elements of Roman Comedy informed Catullus's conceptions of erotic relationships, of social rivalries, and of literary competition, providing tools for manipulating and describing these difficult issues. Finally, I attempted to approach Catullus's heavily-dramatic lyric poetry from a new perspective, treating it as heavily-lyric dramatic work whose affinities with the theater enable an abundance of different performative readings.

It is my hope that, even if not all of my interpretations will be persuasive to every reader, still Catullus's debt to the playwrights of Roman Comedy can be glimpsed clearly and will encourage further investigations that consider the influence and importance of Plautus and Terence outside their immediate socio-cultural milieu, especially among the authors of the late Republic and early Empire. Moreover, I have attempted to show in each of my chapters that the theater was very much a part of Roman identity and that the ancients, Catullus included, recognized how valuable the stage was for thinking about and dealing with problems in their lives. In his defense of Roscius of Ameria, Cicero sums up this idea nicely by explaining why he feels it is appropriate to quote the comedies of Caecilius Statius as evidence in a court trial (47):

> *etenim haec conficta arbitror esse a poetis, ut effictos nostros mores in alienis personis expressamque imaginem vitae cotidianae videremus*
>
> "Indeed, I judge that these things were made up by the playwrights, so that we might see our manners depicted in characters not ourselves and the image of everyday life imitated."

When the scholars and antiquarians of the 2nd and 1st centuries BCE engaged with Roman drama, I think that they undertook their work with the knowledge that comedy and tragedy were vitally significant genres that let people see themselves from another perspective. Cicero also remarks immediately before this statement in the *Pro Roscio Amerino* that mentioning characters from plays has the added benefit of universality, both because these figures represent what is essential and common to different people and

because they are better known than any one real person can be.[320] In other words, characters from the stage help people find common ground, both to identify with one another and to communicate those identities easily and readily.

This universalizing element also stands at the heart of what I have tried to show in the last three chapters of this dissertation. Catullus likens his speaker, his friends and lovers, his rivals and enemies, to figures from Roman Comedy. In doing so, he focuses attention on commonalities of experience and behavior shared by a wide range of Romans of his day. It is perhaps especially significant that he managed this feat in the 1st century BCE, when Rome was facing a severe identity crisis as it experienced both the growing pains of an imperial power rapidly absorbing other cultures and countries as well as the internal fragmentation that had begun under Marius and Sulla and was coming to a head in the middle of the century. Dissonance and disaffection can certainly be felt in Catullus's poetry, but I think the sense of connection and continuation that the Roman stage offered features just as prominently in his work.

Regarding Catullus, there is still a great deal of work on his poetry's engagement with Roman Comedy, and with Roman drama generally, that I have left untouched for the present but that deserves fuller attention in the future. I have for reasons of space and time focused only on the shorter poems, the polymetrics and epigrams, but Plautus and Terence stand behind some of the longer poems of Catullus as well. To cite only one example, Ellis (1899) notes connections between the lament of Ariadne in Catullus poem

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[320] "'quid ad istas ineptias abis?' inquies. quasi vero mihi difficile sit quamvis multos nominatim proferre, ne longius abeam, vel tribulis vel vicinos meos qui suos liberos quos plurimi faciunt agricolas adsiduos esse cupiunt. verum homines notos sumere odiosum est, cum et illud incertum sit velintne ei sese nominari, et nemo vobis magis notus futurus sit quam est hic Eutychus, et certe ad rem nihil intersit utrum hunc ego comicum adulescentem an aliquem ex agro Veienti nominem" (47).

64.164-187 and Palaestra's opening shipwreck scene in Plautus's *Rudens* lines 185-219.[321] That Catullus's Ariadne, a heroine from Greek mythology inscribed here in a poem of intense Alexandrianism and complex erudition, should share a large portion of her speech with a *puella*/*meretrix* from Roman Comedy should seem odd. Palaestra, though in reality a freeborn girl, is at this point in the play equivalent to a *meretrix*, since she has a speaking role and free girls do not appear on stage in Roman Comedy, and because Labrax the pimp has claimed her and her maid Ampelisca as his property. It is therefore surprisingly incongruous that Ariadne should be modeled on Palaestra, since the latter is a prostitute and of different social standing than Ariadne even after her desertion by Theseus.

In addition, mention of Ariadne can lead to consideration of how more attention to the dramatic aspects of the longer poems would also enable us to examine at greater length the role that Roman tragedy plays, especially given the abundance of tragic intertexts – both Greek and Roman – woven throughout poem 64. Scholars, including Arkins (1982) and Thomas (1999, 12-67), have already examined in detail some sections of this poem that engage heavily with Euripides and Ennius, in particular how the opening lines play with the traditions of Greek epic and tragedy as well as with the tragedies of Ennius and Accius. And Ariadne's speech has also recently received attention of this sort by Zetzel (1983) and Trimble (2009). But these investigations leave many questions unanswered. For instance, what effect does the apparent intrusion of comedy have in a poem so thoroughly tragic? I have already discussed in Chapter Four

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[321] Ellis (1899 ad loc.): "164-170 with 184-187 have so many resemblances to the soliloquy of the shipwrecked Palaestra in the Rudens of Plautus, as to make it probable that Plautus was here Catullus' main model." Laird (1993, 28-29) comments briefly on this connection, though there is much more to say about the interpretive implications of this intertext.

the opposed notions of tragic and comic in my examination of poem 8. But in poem 64, how can the relatively straightforward and sympathetic character of Palaestra be reconciled with the darker and more complicated figure of Medea from Euripides, Apollonius, and Ennius that also stands intertextually behind Ariadne's portrayal in this poem?[322] Are we to see in Palaestra's eventual anagnorisis and recovery by her father Daemones a foreshadowing of Ariadne's "rescue" by Bacchus, itself a controversial topic among scholars, at the end of poem 64's ekphrastic section? All of these questions are fundamentally important for understanding Catullus's poem, its criticisms of virility and heroism, and its relationship to the literary tradition. And all of them are dependant on appreciating the idea that Roman Comedy, no less than Greek and Roman tragedy, offers vital clues to interpreting the most complicated piece of Catullus's work. When I return to expand and develop this project later, these problems will be among the first I plan to address.

Furthermore, understanding the roles that tragedy and comedy play in the longer poems like 64 can also shed light on larger issues of persona, style, and tradition in the rest of Catullus's poems. Take for instance the apparently contradictory mixture of tragic and comic in the presentation of Ariadne mentioned above. Also, I noted in Chapter Three, Catullus often aligns his speaker with female figures in his poetry, and Ariadne in poem 64 is no exception. Since there is extensive equivalence between these two figures, understanding how Ariadne functions simultaneously as comic and tragic can further clarify the poems of Catullus where his speaker also takes on comic and tragic aspects. To what degree can Ariadne's dual dramatic nature help us better understand the

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[322] See Ellis (1899 ad 64.177-183) for the Greek sources and some discussion of their implications. See also Arkins (1982) and Thomas (1999, 12-67).

conflicting elements of the speaker in poem 8, which I discussed in Chapter Four? Or how does her double nature as dark Medea and light Palaestra reveal more clearly how female Heroic Badness that I discussed in Chapter Three can balance vulgar wickedness and righteous subversion?

On larger points of style and literary program, Zetzel (1983) has pointed out that the apparent antipathy between Neoteric and archaic poetry in the 1st century BCE is perhaps less genuine than we might expect. Cicero laments that Ennius is disdained by the *cantores Euphorionis* (*Tusculan Disputations* 3.45),[323] traditionally identified with the Neoterics, but we know that Catullus made extensive use of Ennius's tragedies in his longer poems. It seems likely that, given more time and space, we will be able to gain a better understanding of Roman Comedy in the longer poems that can also reveal unnoticed aspects of Catullus's literary alignments in the rest of his work. I have tried to show that cleverness as embodied by the *servus callidus* figure is part of this comic literary program in the shorter poems, and I think it likely that similar elements of comedy stand behind even the ostensibly more serious longer poems as well.

The role of Roman Comedy in Catullus's poetry also has important ramifications for his successors, especially the Roman Elegists who take so many of their cues from his groundbreaking poetic work on issues of persona, erotic and social power struggles, sex and gender relations, and any number of other elements that occupied literary minds at the end of the 1st century BCE. Some scholars have already begun to explore the possibilities of Roman Comedy in Roman Elegy, most notably in the cases of Propertius

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[323] "o poetam egregium! quamquam ab his cantoribus Euphorionis contemnitur" (3.45).

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and Ovid.[324] But given the heavy use of Catullan conceptions of love and competition, which I argued above is informed in large part by Plautus and Terence, by the Elegists, I think much more good work can and needs to be done on the relationship between Roman Comedy and the Augustan poets. As scholars begin more and more to appreciate that Roman Comedy is not an isolated literary and cultural phenomenon of the 3rd and 2nd centuries BCE, and that the Romans did not draw a distinction between "elite" and "public" literature, I believe these gaps can and will be filled in gradually, much to our benefit. I hope that the present study contributes, if only in small ways, to this growing trend.

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[324] See Yardley (1974, 1986, and 1987), Dee (1978), and Butrica (1983) for Propertius, and Hollis (1994), Barsby (1996), and James (2006) for Ovid. See also Konstan (1986) for a fuller discussion of love in Terence and its influence on Catullus and the Elegists.

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