

NOTES AND VOCABULARY 1

- 1 **dono: dono, donare, donavi, donatum**, give, dedicate
cui: (interrogative pronoun) to whom?
lepidum: lepidus-a-um, adj., fine, elegant, charming
Does the poet refer here to a physical attribute of the finished book itself?
libellum: libellus, -i, m., small book; it is important to observe the way in which the poet uses alliteration and diminutives. What special effects does this word produce?
- 2 **arida: aridus-a-um**, adj., dry
modo: modo, adv., just, now, only recently
pumice: pumex, pumicis, m./f., lava-stone, pumice
expolitum: expolio, expolire, expolivi, expolitum, smooth off, polish; this book originally would have been written onto sheets made from strips of the papyrus plant. The uneven seams created by the bonding of one piece of papyrus with another by means of the natural secretions released in stripping the plant itself would require the use of pumice stone to gently smooth the papyrus into a scroll.
- 3 **Corneli:** vocative form of the proper noun **Cornelius**; this is Cornelius Nepos, author of a tersely written history whose learnedness and polish won the admiration of Catullus.
nam: nam, conj., for, with the enclitic conjunction **que**
solebas: soleo, solere, solitus sum, be accustomed to (with a complementary infinitive)
- 4 **aliquid: aliquid-aliquid**, (indefinite pronoun) someone, something
putare: puto, putare, putavi, putatum, think, consider
nugas: nugae, -arum, f. (plural), nothings, nonsense, trifles
- 5 **ausus es: audeo, audere, ausus sum**, dare
unus: unus-a-um, adj., alone, one
- 6 **aevum: aevum, aevi**, n., age, history
tribus: tres-tres-tria, adj., three
explicare: explico, explicare, explicavi, explicatum, unfold, explain; does **explicatum** recall **expolitum** of line 2?
cartis: carta, cartae, f., a sheet of the Egyptian papyrus; **cartae** suggests a series of sheets glued together to form a scroll, hence three volumes.
- 7 **doctis: doceo, docere, docui, doctum**, teach; the perfect passive participle used here means “learned.”
Iuppiter: (vocative case, an apostrophe) Jupiter. The poet may be invoking the king of the gods to emphasize his admiration for Cornelius’ literary accomplishments.
laboriosis: laboriosus-a-um, adj., labored over, worked
- 8 **quare: quare**, adv., on account of which thing; therefore
habe tibi: an abrupt, colloquial phrase with legalistic overtones suggesting the transfer of real property; essentially Catullus says, “Take it in ‘as-is’ condition.”
quidquid: quisquis-quaequae-quidquid, (substantive use of the indefinite relative pronoun) whoever, whatever
- 9 **qualecumque: qualiscumque-qualicumque**, (interrogative/indefinite adjective) of whatever sort
quod: qui, quae, quod, (relative pronoun), refers to a neuter indefinite antecedent which is the object of the imperative **habe** and modified by **qualecumque**.
<O>: Pointed brackets like these indicate an omission in the original manuscript which has been tentatively restored by the text editor to complete the meter.
patrona: patronus/a, -i/ae, m./f., patron
virgo: virgo, virginis, f., maiden, virgin; with the words **patrona virgo**, the poet is invoking a muse in a manner which recalls the invocation of the muse in Homer.
- 10 **plus: plus**, adv., (followed by ablative of comparison) more
maneat: maneo, manere, mansi, mansum, remain; here the jussive subjunctive form means “let it remain.”
perenne: perennis-perenne, adj., enduring, unending
saeclum: saeculum, saeculi, n., an age, a generation

NOTES AND VOCABULARY 2

- 1 **passer: passer, passeris**, m., sparrow
deliciae: deliciae, deliciarum, f. (plural), delight, favorite, "sweetheart"
- 2 **quicum = quocum:** (relative pronoun) with whom
ludere: ludo, ludere, lusi, lusum, play
sinu: sinus, sinus, m., the fold of the toga at the breast or chest, one's lap
tenere: teneo, tenere, tenui, tentum, hold, keep
- 3 **cui:** (relative pronoun) to whom
digitum: digitus, digiti, m., finger
primum digitum: fingertip of the index finger
appetenti: appeto, appetere, appetivi, appetitum, seek, seek greedily
- 4 **acris: acer-acris-acre**, adj., sharp, fierce
soleo: soleo, solere, solitus sum, be accustomed to, be used to; this verb takes four complementary infinitives, **ludere, tenere, dare, incitare**.
morsus: morsus, morsus, m., hunger pain, a bite, a peck
- 5 **cum: cum**, conj., when
desiderio: desiderium, desiderii, n., longing
nitenti: niteo, nitere, nitui, shine, be bright; the participle may be modifying the noun **desiderio** or may be taken with an unexpressed but understood word for Lesbia in the dative case. **Desiderio** would then be taken as an ablative qualifying **nitenti**, and **meo**, while strictly speaking a possessive adjective, can be taken in the sense of "for me."
- 6 **nescio: nescio, nescire, nescivi**, not know: with the indefinite pronoun **quis-quis**, an indefinite idiomatic adjectival construction modifying **carum**, and with **iocari** it means "to make some loving joke."
lubet = libet: libet, libere, libuit/libitum est, it pleases
iocari: iocor, iocari, iocatus sum, tease, joke
- 7 **solaciolum: solaciolum, solacioli**, n., a little comfort or solace
doloris: dolor, doloris, m., grief, pain
- 8 **credo: credo, credere, credidi, creditum**, believe
gravis: gravis-grave, adj., serious, dire, grave
acquiescat: acquiesco, acquiescere, acquievi, acquietum, become quiet, settle down
ardor: ardor, ardoris, m., flame of passion
- 9 **sicut: sicut**, conj., just as
possem: possum, posse, potui, (optative subjunctive) be able
- 10 **tristis: tristis-triste**, adj., sad, miserable. This is an example of the poetic form of the regular third declension accusative plural ending, **-es**.
animi: animus, animi, m., mind, being
levare: levo, levare, levavi, levatum, lighten
curas: cura, curae, f., care, anxiety, love
-
- 1 **gratum est:** it is pleasing
ferunt: in the sense of "they say"
puellae: refers to Atalanta, who was to marry the person who surpassed her in running. Milanion dropped a golden apple in front of Atalanta while racing her. She stopped to pick up the apple and was thereby defeated by Milanion, who then won her hand in marriage.
- 2 **pernici: pernix, pernicis**, adj., swift **aureolum: aureolus-a-um**, adj., golden
malum: malum, -i, n., apple
- 3 **zonam: zona, -ae**, f., girdle
solvit: solvo, solvere, solvi, solutum, free up, untie
ligatam: ligo, ligare, ligavi, ligatum, tie up, bind

2

The occasion of this poem, the first of the *passer* poems, is the poet's fanciful jealousy of a pet sparrow. The sparrow has been fortunate to become the focus of the attention of Catullus' girlfriend, Lesbia (Clodia). This occasion makes the poet eager to be with his beloved, to play with the sparrow and to receive the love and attention he craves.

Passer, deliciae meae puellae,
quicum ludere, quem in sinu tenere,
cui primum digitum dare appetenti
et acris solet incitare morsus,
cum desiderio meo nitenti 5
carum nescio quid lubet iocari,
et solaciolum sui doloris,
credo, ut tum gravis acquiescat ardor:
tecum ludere sicut ipsa possem
et tristis animi levare curas! 10

2B

Some scholars have suggested that several lines are missing at the end of Poem 2. They believe that these missing lines would have formed a coherent connection with Poem 2b.

tam gratum est mihi quam ferunt puellae
pernici aureolum fuisse malum,
quod zonam soluit diu ligatam.

NOTES AND VOCABULARY 3

- 1 **lugete: lugeo, lugere, luxi, luctum**, mourn, lament
- 2 **quantum: quantus-a-um**, (interrogative adj.) how much; used here as a pronoun upon which the subsequent genitives depend.
venustiorum: venustus-a-um, adj., beautiful, charming. Note that this form is the genitive plural of the comparative degree of **venustus**, which modifies **hominum**, a genitive of the whole or partitive genitive.
- 5 **plus: plus, pluris**, adj., more
illa: ille-illa-illud, (demonstrative pronoun/adjective) that; **illa**: nominative case, subject of the verb **amabat**, effectively an emphatic personal pronoun meaning she.
oculis: oculus, -i, m., eye; **oculis** is an ablative of comparison introduced by **plus**. Note the figure of speech, chiasmus.
- 6 **mellitus: mellitus-a-um**, adj., honey-sweet
norat = noverat: syncopated pluperfect active form
norat: nosco, noscere, novi, notum, know, be acquainted with
- 7 **ipsam: ipse-ipsa-ipsum**, (intensive pronoun) -self; here **ipsam** is probably being used as a noun to stand for the words, "the lady herself, the lady in charge, the mistress"; essentially **ipsam = dominam**.
- 8 **gremio: gremium, -ii**, n., lap
- 9 **circumsiliens: circumsilio, circumsilire**, hop around
- 10 **pipiabat: pipio, pipiare or pipire, pipiavi, pipiatum**, chirp
- 11 **qui**: (relative pronoun) refers to **passer tenebricosum: tenebricosus-a-um**, adj., dark, obscure, murky
- 12 **quemquam: quisquam-quisquam**, (indefinite pronoun) anyone, anybody, any person
- 13 **sit**: may it be, may it go (jussive subjunctive)
male: male, adv., badly
tenebrae: tenebrae, -arum, f., (plural) darkness (of the underworld)
- 14 **Orci: Orcus, -i**, m., name of the god of the underworld, metonymy for the entire underworld
devoratis: devoro, devorare, devoravi, devoratum, devour, destroy
bella: bellus-a-um, adj., beautiful, nice. Note apostrophe, personification, and chiasmus in this line.
- 15 **mihi**: (dative of separation) from me
abstulisti: aufero, auferre, abstuli, ablatum, take away, steal
- 16 **miselle: misellus-a-um**, adj., poor little (diminutive form of the adjective **miser-misera-miserum**)
- 17 **opera: opera, -ae**, f., work, deed
- 18 **flendo: fleo, flere, flevi, fletum**, cry
turgiduli: turgidulus-a-um, adj., swollen
rubent: rubeo, rubere, rubui, be red, "bloodshot"

3

The second sparrow poem paints a semi-serious picture of Catullus inviting his listeners to cry with him over the death of the little sparrow, a virtual mock funeral. The poem builds considerable pathos for the deceased sparrow, and offers a dramatic tonal contrast with Poem 2.

Lugete, O Veneres Cupidinesque,
et quantum est hominum venustiorum:
passer mortuus est meae puellae,
passer, deliciae meae puellae,
quem plus illa oculis suis amabat. 5
nam mellitus erat suamque norat
ipsam tam bene quam puella matrem,
nec sese a gremio illius movebat,
sed circumsiliens modo huc modo illuc
ad solam dominam usque pipiabat; 10
qui nunc it per iter tenebricosum
illud, unde negant redire quemquam.
at vobis male sit, malae tenebrae
Orci, quae omnia bella devoratis:
tam bellum mihi passerem abstulistis. 15
O factum male! O miselle passer!
tua nunc opera meae puellae
flendo turgiduli rubent ocelli.

NOTES AND VOCABULARY 5

- 1 **vivamus: vivo, vivere, vixi, victum**, live. Lesbia is in the vocative case. In deriving this name from the island of Lesbos in the Aegean Sea, Catullus associates his girlfriend with the poet Sappho, who lived on this island. The name Lesbia may gloss the real name of his love, Clodia, the sister of Clodius, a rather sinister figure, and the focus of so much anxiety in the consulship of Cicero.
amemus: amo, amare, amavi, amatum, love, make love
- 2 **rumores: rumor, rumoris**, m., gossip, rumor
senum: senex, senis, m., old man
severiorum: severus-a-um, adj., strict, austere
- 3 **aestimemus: aestimo, aestimare, aestimavi, aestimatum**, evaluate, rate
assis: as, assis, m., a penny, a copper coin. **Assis** is in the genitive case, the genitive of price or value dependent upon **aestimemus**.
- 4 **soles: sol, solis**, m., sun
occidere: occido, occidere, occidi, occasum, set, fall down
redire: redeo, redire, redivi or redii, reditum, return, rise. Note the chiasmus in the line.
- 5 **semel: semel**, adv., once
brevis: brevis-breve, adj., brief, short
lux: lux, lucis, f., light
- 6 **nox: nox, noctis**, f., night, darkness
dormienda: dormio, dormire, dormivi or dormii, dormitum, sleep; **dormienda** is a gerundive.
- 7 **da: do, dare, dedi, datum**, give
mi = mihi
basis: basium, basii, n., kiss; **basium** appears for the first time in Roman literature in Catullus. Later authors such as Martial use the word frequently. Its origin is obscure; perhaps it was a dialectical word whose use was elevated by Catullus' poems; possibly it was native to Catullus' home in northern Italy.
deinde: deinde, adv., then
- 9 **usque**: adv., continuously, without a break
- 10 **fecerimus: facio, facere, feci, factum**, (future perfect form) make, do
- 11 **conturbabimus: conturbo, conturbare, conturbavi, conturbatum**, confuse, disturb, upset
sciamus: scio, scire, scivi, scitum, know
- 12 **quis = aliquis**: (the indefinite pronoun) someone, anybody
malus: malus-a-um, adj., bad, evil
invidere: invideo, invidere, invidi, invisum, cast an evil eye upon

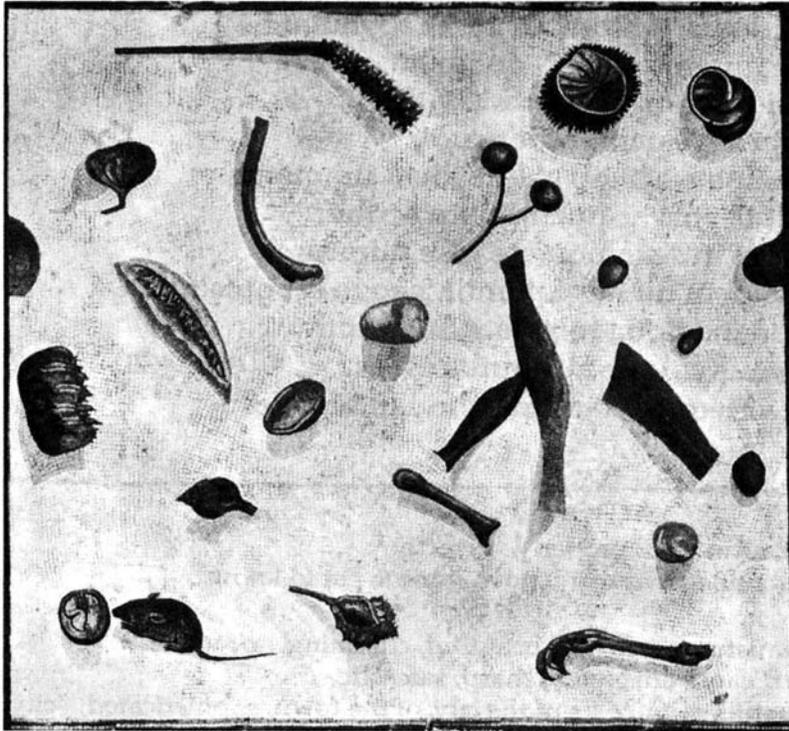
5

This emotionally charged poem reflects the passion for which the poet is famous and seems to come from very intense, and probably very early, moments in his relationship with Clodia. The poem is written in the hendecasyllabic meter.

Vivamus, mea Lesbia, atque amemus,
rumoresque senum severiorum
omnes unius aestimemus assis!
soles occidere et redire possunt:
nobis cum semel occidit brevis lux, 5
nox est perpetua una dormienda.
da mi basia mille, deinde centum,
dein mille altera, dein secunda centum,
deinde usque altera mille, deinde centum.
dein, cum milia multa fecerimus, 10
conturbabimus illa, ne sciamus,
aut ne quis malus invidere possit,
cum tantum sciat esse basiorum.

NOTES AND VOCABULARY 13

- 1 **cenabis:** *ceno, cenare, cenavi, cenatum*, dine
- 2 **paucis diebus:** within a few days; ablative of time within which
favent: *faveo, favere, favi, fautum*, favor, promote
- 3 **attuleris:** *affero, afferre, attuli, allatum*, bring, carry
- 5 **sale:** *sal, salis, f.*, salt, (figurative) wit
cachinnis: *cachinnus, -i, m.*, loud laughter
- 6/7 Note repetition of **attuleris** and **cenabis**.
- 8 **plenus:** *plenus-a-um*, adj., full
sacculus: *sacculus, -i, m.*, little bag, purse, wallet, knapsack
araneorum: *aranea, araneae, f.*, spider's web
- 9 **meros:** *merus-a-um*, adj., pure, unmixed; normally used of wine (see Poem 27, line 7)
- 10 **suavius:** *suavis-suave*, adj., pleasant, charming, agreeable
elegantiusve: *elegans, elegantis*, adj., elegant, charming, pleasing, rewarding
- 11 **unguentum:** *unguentum, -i, n.*, ointment, perfume
- 12 **donarunt = donaverunt**
- 13 **olfacies:** *olfacio, olfacere, olfeci, olfactum*, to smell
- 14 **nasum:** *nasus, -i, m.*, nose

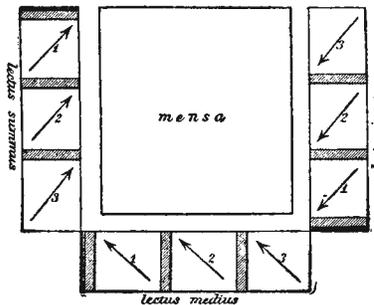


MOSAIC OF AN UNSWEPT FLOOR, FOUND ON THE AVENTINE IN ROME.

13

Addressed to his friend Fabullus, who has perhaps just returned from travel in Spain, this poem presents the poet's mock-heroic invitation to dine with him. Such a theme was a standard poetic device found in Alexandrian poetry. Perhaps evoking such associations here, Catullus carefully repeats his invitation after making certain clear warnings. In contrast to the returning, well-heeled world traveler, the poet, as always, has a cobweb-filled wallet, so he says. The dining will satisfy only a mutual appetite for friendship, whetted by the intoxicating and erotic scent of perfume, a gift from Lesbia to Catullus, a reminder of the greatest love of his life. The chance to be together and to share is a kind of wealth, surely worth Fabullus' bringing the food, jokes, companions, the "stuff" of dinner. The poem is written in hendecasyllabic meter.

Cenabis bene, mi Fabulle, apud me
 paucis, si tibi di favent, diebus,
 si tecum attuleris bonam atque magnam
 cenam, non sine candida puella
 et vino et sale et omnibus cachinnis. 5
 haec si, inquam, attuleris, venuste noster,
 cenabis bene; nam tui Catulli
 plenus sacculus est aranearum.
 sed contra accipies meros amores
 seu quid suavius elegantiusve est: 10
 nam unguentum dabo, quod meae puellae
 donarunt Veneres Cupidinesque,
 quod tu cum olfacies, deos rogabis,
 totum ut te faciant, Fabulle, nasum.



FLOOR-PLAN OF A TRICLINIUM.

NOTES AND VOCABULARY 51

- 3 **adversus: adversus-a-um**, adj., opposite, facing
identidem: identidem, adv., again and again, constantly
- 5 **dulce: dulce**, adv., sweetly
ridentem: rideo, ridere, risi, risum, smile
- 6 **mihi**: dative of separation
nam simul: for as soon as
- 7 **aspexi: aspicio, aspicere, aspexi, aspectum**, catch sight of, spot, look closely at, observe
- 9 **torpet: torpeo, torpere, torpui**, be numb, be stiff
tenuis: tenuis-tenue, adj., tender
- 10 **demanat: demano, demanare, demanavi**, flow down
sonitu: sonitus, -us, m., sound
suopte: suopte, adj., form of **suus = suo + pte**; an emphatic ablative
- 11 **tintinant: tintino, tintinare, tintinavi**, ring, tingle
ares: auris, auris, f., ear
gemina: geminus-a-um, adj., twin, both; this adjective is in the ablative case.
teguntur: tego, tegere, texi, tectum, cover, cloak
- 13 **otium: otium, otii, n.**, free time, ease, leisure
molestum: molestus-a-um, adj., troublesome, irksome
- 14 **exsultas: exsulto, exsultare, exsultavi, exsultatum**, revel in, boast about
gestis: gestio, gestire, gestivi, gestitum, throw oneself about, be cheerful about, long for

-
- 1 **Num: num** is a particle which expects a negative response.
leaena: leaena, -ae, f., lioness
Libystinis: Libystinus-a-um, adj., African
- 2 Scylla is the Homeric sea monster whose seaweed-girdled waist conceals six barking dogs, but whose upper body is female. The language of lines 1–3 is very similar to that of 64 lines 154–156.
latrans: latro, latrare, latravi, latratum, bark
infima: infimus-a-um, adj., lowest
inguinum: inguen, inguinis, n., groin
- 3 **taetra: taeter-taetra-taetrum**, adj., repulsive, offensive
- 4 **supplicis: supplex, supplicis, adj.**, (substantive) a supplicant
novissimo: novissimus-a-um, adj., newest, last, most recent
casu: casus, -us, m., event, misfortune, crisis
- 5 **contemptam: contemptus-a-um**, adj., despised, despicable
haberes, with the sense of “regard”
a:a, inter., an interjection expressing various feelings such as regret, distress, pity
nimis: nimis, adv., too much, excessively
fero: ferus-a-um, adj., hard, fierce, wild
corde: cor, cordis, n. heart; **a nimis fero corde**: “ah, (you) with a heart much too savage”

51

Using a poem by Sappho as a model, Catullus has translated the original Greek into Latin but has also liberally used figures of speech throughout his version. The poem is inspired by the poet's sense of awe upon seeing, even imagining, the stunning and spellbinding presence of his beautiful Lesbia. The meter is Sapphic as in Poem 11.

Ille mi par esse deo videtur,
ille, si fas est, superare divos,
qui sedens adversus identidem te
spectat et audit

dulce ridentem, misero quod omnis
eripit sensus mihi: nam simul te,
Lesbia, aspexi, nihil est super mi

lingua sed torpet, tenuis sub artus
flamma demanat, sonitu suo
tintinant aures, gemina teguntur
lumina nocte.

otium, Catulle, tibi molestum est:
otio exsultas nimiumque gestis:
otium et reges prius et beatas
perdidit urbes.

60

Lacking an addressee, this single sentence poem poses a weighty rhetorical question aimed at the unknown person who has shown an appalling lack of concern for the poet by ignoring the special desperation of the moment and the poet's crying need for attention. The meter is limping iambic (choliambic).

Num te leaena montibus Libystinis
aut Scylla latrans infima inguinum parte
tam mente dura procreavit ac taetra,
ut supplicis vocem in novissimo casu
contemptam haberes, a nimis fero corde?