Undoubtedly there are many ways of approaching Catullus; one could, e.g. start from a biographical point of view or from a research into his time and environment. But of course our knowledge about his life and time is rather scanty, and therefore results achieved by means of such an approach from without are too often controversial. Hence it seems safer to start from a more reliable basis, namely his language.

It is well known that ancient poetical language is based on linguistic devices: Catullus is no exception. Some of the devices used by him have been investigated,¹ some remain to be detected. One of those devices that have not been studied as yet is his technique of counterbalancing. Instead of a theoretical definition it is best to give a concrete example, e.g. carmen 36.

Carmen 36
Poem 36 addresses a bad book written by a bad poet. The occasion is a votum: the poet's puella had vowed to Venus that she would burn the 'choicest' writings of the worst poet in the world if Catullus came back to her and ceased to write truces iambos against her. The goddess has apparently granted the prayer: the poet, after having addressed her in a long invocation, throws into the fire the electissima scripta of Volusius, an apparently very inferior annalistic writer.²

It has been suggested by K. Quinn³ that c. 36 should be interpreted as merely describing in a jocose way a 'stage' in Catullus' love-affair with Lesbia. Quinn strongly rejects the view put forward by V. Buchheit,⁴ and more recently by D. Ross,⁵ according to which the hymnic 'invocation' is a jocular exaggeration and the poem itself a screen for literary criticism. This approach does not seem to be as 'dangerous' as Quinn affirms: a Catullan poem may have many aims, as E. Fraenkel⁶ has shown. That this applies to c. 36 too, can be proved in the following way.

¹ This article was originally submitted as an M.A. thesis at the University of South Africa (1975).
² Literature: RE 9A (= 33), 899, 45 sq.
⁵ Ross, D.O., op. cit., 96 sq.
⁶ Fraenkel, E., W. St. 69, 1956, 282 sq.

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The occasion of the poem— the votum—is not particularly striking, but its style is: there is a refined concoction of shifting tones and devices which Catullus elaborates. In the first part, vs. 1–10, e.g. expressions like sanctae Veneri Cupidinique,\textsuperscript{7} truces vibrare iambo\textsuperscript{s},\textsuperscript{8} tardipedi deo\textsuperscript{9} could no doubt be described as elements of high style, but the obvious discrepancy between style and occasion— the latter being so inadequate to the former— creates a shift in tone and mood: the style is really mock-solemmn, the whole concoction a joke, as the words iocose lepide (v. 10) poetically show. The play with mock-solemmn style continues in the second part: by imitating the high style of cletic hymns\textsuperscript{10} in the invocation to Venus Catullus brings the poem to a climax— and suddenly brings it down to an anti-climax with the clashing Hadriae tabernam (v. 15). The tension between pathos and bathos\textsuperscript{11} resolves the whole poem into a witty joke, as is indicated anew by the pointers non illepidum (and (non) invenustum (v. 17).

The poem ends with the utter condemnation of the cacata carta (v. 20): it has— by its varied, witty, learned style— proved itself to be the exact opposite of what the Annales Volusi must have been: bulky and dull, pleni ruris te inficetiurum, illepidi et invenusti.

The main aim of c. 36 seems therefore to be literary criticism, but equally important is the refined compliment paid to the witty puella and the representation of Catullus' own poetical aims: the poet does not explain directly why Volusius' scripta are just cacata carta until the very end of the poem (v. 19); this is no casual placing, it is the proof that the poem has already implicitly shown, by its own stylistic qualities, what Volusius' Annals lack. This kind of literary criticism works in a positive way: while condemning, it shows what should be done instead. In this case Catullus clearly shows that he appreciates a composition in which tones and moods, pathos and bathos, are balanced in such a way that they may be resolved into a jocose atmosphere.

Catullus' sensitivity to a joke by way of an anti-climax is confirmed, e.g. by c. 53. The solemnity of the charge directed against the Vatiniana crimina (v. 2 sq.) built up through mirifice\textsuperscript{12} and the sophisticated word-order, the almost

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\textsuperscript{7} Zeugma for: sanctae Veneri sanctoque Cupidini. A similar but more refined case would be Prop. 3, 1, 1; see Kiefner, G., Die Verspaarung ..., Wiesbaden, 1964, 43 sq.

\textsuperscript{8} For such metaphors cf. Cic. Nat. Deor. 3, 91: quem Hipponactis vulneratus laeserat aut qui erat Archilochi versu vulneratus.

\textsuperscript{9} Tardipedi: a Catullan coinage, cf. T.L.L. 5, 1; 907, line 78.

\textsuperscript{10} Norden, E., Agnostos Theos, Berlin 1913, 143 sq.; on hymnic style, see also Page, D., Sappho and Alcaeus, Oxford 1955, 16, n. 1. Further see Cairns, Generic Composition in Gr. and Roman Poetry, Edinburgh, 1972, 114, 284.

\textsuperscript{11} Such devices call for closer investigation; see for the time being, Maurach, G., Der Bau von Senecas Epistulae Morales, Heidelberg, 1970, 19 with n. 29.

\textsuperscript{12} Mirifice: used in poetry only by Catullus, with the exception of Pomponius; see T.L.L. 8, 1062, line 11.
epic manusque tollens,\textsuperscript{12} is resolved into a pure joke by the extremely colloquial salaputium disertum (v. 5). While paying a compliment to the great eloquence of his dear friend Catullus cannot resist a jocose dig at his small physical stature.\textsuperscript{13}

Catullus’ poetry has been studied under various aspects: attention has been focused on its social and intellectual background,\textsuperscript{15} on its relation to Greco-Roman poetry,\textsuperscript{16} on its archaistic elements,\textsuperscript{17} on the arrangement of its subject-matter,\textsuperscript{18} and recently on its vocabulary.\textsuperscript{19} The previous remarks (chapter I), however, have shown that an investigation into Catullus’ technique of counterbalancing pathos with bathos has at least in one case proved fruitful. There are indeed many more poems in which this device of verbal irony can be detected.

Poem 3, e.g. offers an example of that ‘fluctuation’ of tones and moods produced by the use of ‘verbal irony’ which characterises the first group of poems which we propose to examine.

The solemnity of the invocation in v. 1 sq. turns into a bathos in v. 3: a simple, humble passer should be mourned by gods and the ‘more refined amongst human beings’.\textsuperscript{20} The clash is however made less obvious by the fact that v. 3 is also the opening of a twofold narration which apparently focuses on the passer, but in fact concerns the puella: the proof that this is so lies in the insistent recourse to love-language denoted by words like delieiae, mellitus, expressions such as plus illa oculis suis amabat,\textsuperscript{24} norat ipsam tam bene quam puella matrem,\textsuperscript{22} and by the emphasis laid on meae puellae;\textsuperscript{23} the object of these lines is clearly Lesbia, whereas the passer itself comes to life more vividly in vs. 8–10 which draw a lively and more realistic picture of the bird’s nature and ways. In this poem the spmtow is for the first time presented as a real bird by means of such words as circumsiliens (v. 9), modo huc modo illuc (ibid.), nec sese a gremio illius movebat and, above all, pipiabat (v. 10); the image of Lesbia

\textsuperscript{12} manusque tollens: presumably this goes back to ritual lifting of one’s hands, see Sittl, C., \textit{Die Gebiirden der Griechen und Römer}, Leipzig, 1890, 174.
\textsuperscript{13} Cf. Seneca (\textit{Pater}), \textit{Contr.} 7, 4, 7. The contrast between the solemn tone of lines 1–4 and line 5 is of course heightened if we accept E. Bickel’s equation: \textit{salaputium} = \textit{menulla salax}. See \textit{Rh. Mus.} 96, 1953, 94–95.
\textsuperscript{18} Ross, D. O., \textit{op. cit.}
\textsuperscript{19} Veneres, plural, also a pointer to humour.
\textsuperscript{20} The expression is proverbial and in particular belongs to the ‘sermo amatorius’, see Otto A., \textit{Die Sprichwörter, etc.}, Leipzig, 1890, 249.
\textsuperscript{21} The expression shows that the passer is not the amator, since the puella–mater relationship sets a different tone from the one usually evoked by commentators.
\textsuperscript{22} Hellenistic iteration: cf. Bömer, F., \textit{ad Ov. Met.} 1, 325 sq.

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is still there as gremio (v. 9) and the affectionate solam dominam (v. 10) show, but it has shifted to the background.

The sparrow being now in the foreground, Catullus can smoothly introduce the (ostensible) main theme as indicated by the very first word of the poem (lugere): the lament (dirae24). The bird remains in the foreground, but the mood changes completely; the form of the transition (relative connection through qui) is smooth, yet there is a harsh contrast: the gloom of the subsequent imprecation contrasts with the delightful liveliness of the preceding scene.25 The melancholy of the subsequent verses is heightened by the uncanny circumscriptio (illuc, unde, etc.). They are made even more pungent by the curse Catullus introduces:26 the pathos which is expected to reach its acme in v. 14 (quae omnia . . . devoratis) is brought down, however, to a clashing bathos through the insertion of the extremely colloquial love-term bella27 into the highly solemn language of the preceding lines. The same effect is achieved by the reference to the subject on whose behalf Catullus is cursing the underworld – in itself an incommensurability –: a humble sparrow. After this anti-climax there is another rise in tension: the extremely effective hiatus between the two exclamations adds much emphasis to the anaphora (o factum male! o miselle passer!),28 but once again the highly strung exclamation ends up by using another colloquial love-term: miselle (v. 16).

The irony implicit in the discrepancy between the exiguity of the subject and the high style employed to describe it, is manifested by means of a clashing verbal twist: the plane on which the poem must be set is again jocose. The use of this kind of irony, however, is not self-centred, for the employment of the diminutives at the end of the poem (miselle, turgiduli ocelli) – if considered with Ross29 as a ‘conscious poeticism’ – reveals that the term venustiorum (v. 2) is no mere haphazard choice. The poem seems to be functioning on various levels, the wittily covered address to Lesbia,30 the vivid picture of the bird-scene: the shifting of tones represents the different aims which could be understood only by the initiated, a select circle which Catullus seems to call venustiores, who would be able to catch hints in a poem such as c.3 or c.36. It is tempting to call this circle ‘neoteric’; it is true that we do not know much about the neoterics, but investigations such as the present will help to elucidate their poetical aims.

25. Cf. Quinn, op.cit., 99, on tenabriocum, which, with its slightly jocular tinge, makes the transition to solemnity a little smoother.
26. Araireflects a Greek literary topos; see Cairns, op.cit., 93 sq.
27. Bella: another term which belongs to the sphere of the ‘sermo amatorius’.
28. I have followed Schuster’s reading with the hiatus male/o; for a lengthy and learned discussion on this hiatus see Goold, G. P., Phoenix 23, 1969, 187–203, a reply to Zicári, M., Phoenix 18, 1964, 193–205.
Carmen 4

This poem can be regarded as a test-case for the method adverted to in this paper. The wit of the poem does not spring from the clever play with epigrammatic forms only, but must be sought in the very nature of the composition: the question whether the *phasellus* was Catullus' ship, a fragment of it, or a votive piece, is quite irrelevant: what counts is the *linguistic play*. There is a startling rarity at the very beginning, namely an audacious graecism (*phasellus ait fuisse celerrimus*), the *recherche* circumlocution *natans trabs* for 'ship' (*trabs* alone would be normal, *natans* is pompously otiose) coupled with a 'shifting of weights' in almost tragic style (*impetus trabis* for *trabs impetuosa* or the like: an abstract acts like a concrete thing), and all the linguistic exaggerations that have long since been noted. It should, however, be observed that *silva* (v. 11) for one tree (or two or three trees) is much more audacious than the more recent commentators admit: this device ('the whole for a part') is much rarer than its opposite ('part for the whole'); the apostrophe is not 'mannered' (Fordyce p. 97), but is used as an epic device raising the style to the highest possible level.

Here, then, is a description of a ship (whether a real one or some representation of it) delivered in a most grandiloquent style, whether by some 'guide' or the speaker of an epigram is unimportant; what matters is that he remains anonymous, i.e. of no consequence. Yet this quantité négligeable speaks in the

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31. Cf. e.g. Arat. *Phain.* 122; Leum.-Hofm.-Sz., 364ab.
33. Shifting of weights: this is a Greek device, cf. Soph., *O.C.,* 1045; further Ennius, *Ann.,* 119. (Vahl.)
35. For the apostrophe see Norden, E., on Verg. *Aen.* 9, 446 (*fortunati ambo*); Klein­ knecht, H., *Hermes* 74, 1939, 313.
36. This was Wilamowitz' view, concerning which see Mette, *op. cit.* Much that has been written on c. 4 in the last fifteen years seems rather irrelevant: commentators have dwelt mainly upon the probability of certain biographical and geographical details which in no way contribute towards the understanding and appreciation of the poem. Copley, F. O., 'Catullus c. 4: The World of the Poem', *T.A.P.A.* 89, 1958, 9 sq., had warned scholars against this pitfall: in vain. When technique is discussed such things are said: 'These archaisms and unique words draw attention to themselves and thereby betray Catullus' mannered style' (Hornsby, R. A., *AJP* 84, 1963, 267) or: 'Furthermore, the technique fosters the illusion that the tale of the ship happened in a past which was romantic' (ibid. 263). These vague remarks add nothing to our understanding of c. 4's technique. - In 'The humour of Catullus, c. 4 etc.' *AJP* 88, 1967, 163 sq., by Khan, H. A., the humour of the poem is completely misunderstood, as it is assumed to be based on the garrulity and personification of the craft. 'It is the tension between the aspirations of the craft and its poor quality which gives the poem its chief quality - humour' (Khan, *op. cit.,* 164 n. 4): this would indicate that Catullus is actually poking fun at the old craft - which is nonsense. Catullus is here - as in many other instances - *playing* with the language, creating a diversion by means of archaisms, graecisms, etc., i.e. it is from the discrepancy between the subject and the style that humour arises (as in c. 3). For a reply to Khan see Richardson, L., *Jr., AJP,* 93, 1972, 215 sq., who, however, gets carried away by vague details (as the 'creaking', etc. 219) and by a symbolism reminiscent of Putnam's (see Putnam, M. C. J., 'Catullus' Journey', *C.P.,* 57, 1962, 10 sq.).
most elevated style. Furthermore, the clash between a rather trifling subject and the grandiloquent style again produces that jocose discrepancy that has been found in the poems mentioned above. But in this case there is no shifting of tones or abrupt bathos; the wit of the poem stems from a continuous tension between pathos and bathos. Nevertheless all these poems bear witness to Catullus’ interest in such tensions and the counterbalancing of levels.

Carmen 49

Interpreters are in two minds whether to take this poem as a sincere expression of gratitude or as ironical. Quinn, e.g. states (p. 233) that c. 49 is an ‘abject letter of thanks’, that it has ‘not the ring of sincere thanks’; Fordyce (p. 214) does not commit himself, but says: ‘If there is irony in it, it lies . . . in the deprecating humour’ (i.e. in the antithesis of pessimus – optimus). Further there have been discussions as to the occasion. But since nothing on this score is certain, there is no way but to fall back on the linguistic formulation. Here Kroll (p. 88) seems to have held a sound opinion when he regarded the tone as slightly exaggerated (‘zu hoch gegriffen’); but he, too, fell a prey to that unfortunate search for occasions when he presumed that Catullus must have been astonished at some service rendered to him by the great man.37

The first three lines sound high praise, but everyone nowadays agrees that the very solemnity, in its exaggerated form, is merely mock-solemn, e.g. the heroic (see Fordyce) formula Romuli nepotum, or the elaborate tripartite formulation of the idea ‘of all times’ (Quinn) and the very ‘formal address’ (Fordyce, Quinn; ‘feierliche Anrede’, Kroll).

Then follows the purpose of this ‘letter’ expressed by a wide hyperbaton (gratias . . . agit) and a seemingly formal reference to himself in the third person singular (Catullus). Commentators appear to have paid too little attention to the fact that Cicero and Catullus are named in the same formal way and in the same position in the two verses, namely at the end. But before dilating on this point we should watch the movement of the poem: first high praise, then the ‘purpose’, both expressed by high-sounding superlatives. Now follows another superlative (pessimus) which is the exact antonym of the terms of praise, and which forms a bathos such as treated of in this paper. This bathos seems to imply that Catullus regarded himself as the exact opposite of Cicero and his grandeur. The balance between the references to the persons involved (Marce Tulli and Catullus) seems to be that between greatness and humility. But this would-be absolute contrast is rendered relative by the last two verses: ‘Catullus means to call Cicero optimus just as little as he means to call himself pessimus’ (Fordyce’s rendering of B. Schmidt’s opinion).

37. E. Laughton’s hypothesis on the occasion of the poem – on which he expands in a lengthy article – is, as he himself admits, ‘quite incapable of proof, and is therefore, to that extent, fruitless’ (C.P. 55, 1970, 1 sq.), just as any other search for motive is bound to be; see also Wormell, D. E. W., Phoenix 17, 1963, 59 sq.

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There can be little doubt that this poem is akin to those already examined. It is ambiguous *in verbis* and *in rebus*. Catullus calls himself *pessimus*, which is obviously not meant sincerely; therefore *optimus*, too, is rendered relative. The language seems to be one of high praise; but being exaggerated becomes ironical. Both approaches, *a verbis* and *a rebus*, lead to the same result and show that from the outset this poem too is ambiguous. But in contrast to c. 4, with which it shares the continuous ambiguity, there is the same shifting from pathos to bathos as observed in the two poems discussed before c. 4 above, so that in this short poem the two stylistic devices examined in this part of the paper are combined, the brusque bathos and the continuous tension.

*Carmen 58*

Many sound observations have been made on this poem. Kroll (p. 103) noticed that the brusque opening (*Caeli* being the very first word: no formal address, no formal opening) is something like a scream ('ein Aufschrei'); Quinn (p. 260) felt that there is a sharp bathos after the highly emotional and doubtlessly sincere lament of vs 1–3 in the 'cold realism of ugly words' (Fordyce p. 231 — there will be more to be said about this presently). Undoubtedly there is such a 'bathos' after the sincere first three lines in the harsh *glubit*, but it has to be added that *magnanimi Remi nepotes* is not intended to be a mere 'parody' (Kroll) or 'ironical' (Fordyce); *glubit*, a vulgar word, clashes with *magnanimi*: the clash comprises an oxymoron, which represents the clash of the whole poem within two words, almost as a summing-up.

The poem is an outburst against the disproportion of Catullus' former and sincere love and Lesbia's present doings. And this incommensurability is summed up in the oxymoron of the two incommensurate expressions. It is true (as Quinn states) that the *Remi nepotes*, too, are disgraced by being involved in Lesbia's *glubere*; for the present theme, however, it is more important to watch how the poem ends by balancing the gross expression with a ‘quasi-heroic grandiose phrase’ (Fordyce). The poem starts with a 'sentimental dwelling on the past' (Fordyce) and proceeds by falling into vulgarity. Both these extremes are brought to a balance by the oxymoron of the last line.

This way of interpreting this poem leads deeper into the substance of Catullus' poetry and shows once again his interest in the tensions as they have been described. In this case one could say that the oxymoron counterbalances the gross. There are further examples of this stylistic device adduced below.

III

D. O. Ross classified *-que --que*, when used in a non-epic context, as 'neoteric'. He noticed how the insertion of this device, which was revived by Ennius, into colloquial contexts produces irony and even parody. There is,
however, the further question as to what purpose is served by the irony and parody within a specific context. In certain poems this device counterbalances the vulgar as was indicated at the end of the previous section.

_Carmen 15_

In this poem the alternations of stylistic levels—a certain long-winded statesmanship clashing with gross klimakes—reinforce the mood of the whole. Being faced, perhaps, with a journey which will not bear putting off, Catullus finds himself constrained to entrust his beloved boy to the care of a 'friend', Aurelius, who is requested to put up the youngster and protect him. Catullus asks a 'chaste question': if Aurelius, his friend, ever had a chaste desire, may he have it now too, and protect the boy; the formulation of this request seems to be complex (the involved construction _ut, si_ deserves attention) and almost formal (Catullus applies the epistolatory form of _commendatio_ for which there are numerous examples in Cic. ad fam. XIII); four lines of preparation, then the request in v. 5. The same structure appears in the following lines: three lines tell Aurelius of whom Catullus is _not_ afraid and in this way prepare the reader for the indication of him whom Catullus _does_ fear, namely Aurelius himself. The reader is prepared for something that does not happen, his expectation is baffled, and this twist _in rebus_ is reflected by a twist _in verbis_, for the mentioning of Aurelius' _penis_ comes in unexpectedly after the almost stately and formal verses 1–8.39

An equally complex and formal permission follows: Aurelius may 'aim' his _penis_ in whatever way he wants (this expressed in three relative clauses) if only he makes the _exceptio_ of Catullus' boy—all this sounds like a legal treaty. Catullus closes this part of the poem by repeating (see v. _2 pudetem_ ) that this request is modest and 'chaste'. This part (v. 1–13) contains the request, now follows the threat.40 It is introduced in a formal way (_quodsi_) and formulated in a very elaborate way (hendiadys in _mala mens furorque vecors_; hyperbaton in _tan tam . . . culpam_ and _nostrum . . . caput_ ; metonymy in _nostrum caput_ replacing the too simple _me_; Kroll here maintains that _meum caput_ for _me_ is colloquial and cites Plaut. Pseud. 723 but is entirely mistaken for in the Pseudolus passage the slave swears in an exaggerated way using a solemn formula.41 Now follows the actual threat expressed in a language which raises the expectation of a very grave punishment (_fatum_ points to a divinely inflicted penalty), but what follows once again creates a double perplexity both _in rebus_ and _in verbis_, for the punishment is rather ignoble and the language drops from the level of solemnity to the grossest vulgarity.

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39. _Integellum_ (v. 4) was used by Catullus and Cicero (Fam. 9, 10, 2) in a very colloquial context.

40. _Quodsi_ instead of _at_ is strange: it must mean therefore that the _exceptio_ is _pudens_; it follows that touching of the boy is _culpa_.

41. Cf. e.g. Soph. _Antig._ v. 1; _meum caput_ is used by Plautus in emphatic passages (T.L.L. 3, 404, 4 sq.); cf. Cic., _Planc._ 100 (highly pathetic).
The crudeness of vs. 9–10 would seem to be even more accentuated in vs. 16–17 if raphanique mugilesque did not give an effective and extremely witty twist to the whole: the vaguely Ennian ending in -que -que clashes with the vulgarity of its immediate context. The effect thus achieved is reflected back on the whole poem and shows up the preceding elevated language for what it really is: a mock-solemn style feeding on the unexpected both in subject and in language. The whole poem is jocose, the brutal traits are nothing but the instruments of elegant irony.

The same preoccupation of adding a light jocose touch to avoid what would otherwise be plain vulgarity is to be seen also in c. 32, 11 and 57,2. In c. 32 the poet begins by entreating Ipsitilla in an almost loving way and proceeds by forestalling disappointment. The language is non-committal up to this point; then comes the straightforward request (paresque nobis novem continuas fututiones) containing an enormous exaggeration. With verum he adds a condition to his requests which shows the actual situation: he is lying on his couch well-fed and feels in the proper condition for the fututiones, which adds urgency to the request. The grossly realistic description is once again mitigated by the mock-epical -que -que.

In c. 57, a ‘sustained outrageously insulting lampoon’ (Quinn p. 255), there is, however, the strange v. 2 Mamurrae pathicoque Caesarique. This line contains the very ‘rare’ shifting of -que and the already mentioned ‘Ennian’ doubling of this copula, which conveys the impression that Catullus wanted to mitigate the insult by mentioning the addressees’ names in a jocular way. This shows firstly that this poem is not a ‘sustained’ outrageously insulting lampoon, since there is this counterbalancing effect; secondly, the poem does not seem to have been written as an offensive attack, but since there is this jocular touch and because there are once again those enormous exaggerations the impression is created that the poet did not want to adopt the attitude of a Catonian censor but rather that of a more or less detached and amused spectator.

IV

We are dealing with shifts of moods and tones. There are many ways of achieving this; in order to show how wide the range of such possibilities was we shall examine two poems that follow entirely different lines of approach, namely c. 12 and c. 25. Both are based on the same topic, a ‘theft’ of something that belonged to Catullus.

42. Possibly Quinn is right when he hints at Catullus wearing the appropriate clothes to go out. See Quinn, op. cit., 189, n. 11.
43. Quinn (op. cit., 189, n. 11) speaks of mock-heroic style without giving the reason for it; cf. Fraenkel, Plaut. in Plaut., Berlin, 1922, 209.
44. So Quinn correctly (op. cit., 257, n. 2). The shifting of -que is said to be very rare at this early stage, cf. Marouzeau, L’ordre des mots, 3, 70 sq. and E. Bednara, A.L.L. 14, 326.
Carmen 12

Asinius Marrucinus is censured for not using his left hand ‘nicely’, since he pinched a napkin in ioco atque vino from those who did not watch out sharply enough: neglegetiorum carries, as a sesquipedale verbum, a jocular tinge possibly meant to soften the reprimand. In the next lines (vs. 4–6) Catullus expresses his sentiments very directly (inepte, v. 4; sordida res, v. 5). In v. 6 he uses the rhetorical device of an interrogatio: non credis mihi? crede Pollioni fratri. This enables the poet to bring in the the brother Pollio as a paragon to imitate. He is ashamed of his brother because he for one is dissertus leporum ac facetiarum. These terms belong to the sphere of style, but here they describe a moral attitude, as is explained in the succeeding verses.

First the conventional threat, but then follows something very unconventional: Marrucinus is taught that there are things that possess an emotional and very personal value although they may seem cheap and worthless. The fact that Catullus speaks about his personal aëstimatio (v. 12) shows that he did not want his reproof to be understood as an invective. What he offers is a lesson.

But this ‘lesson’ is not the only goal of this poem; it also contains the praise of his brother Pollio, and of Veranius and Fabullus. The brother is praised in general terms, Veranius and Fabullus however are lauded for their considerateness, which means for exactly the quality that Marrucinus is lacking, the considerate attitude of true friendship.

In other words: the tone of reproof and reprimand changes to explanation: the poet calls the young man’s attention to something he has neglected. There was no exact equivalent in the Latin of those days for our ‘tact’ and ‘considerateness’; Catullus found himself at a loss when he had to express what he wanted to say. Therefore he made good the egestas of Latin by loading with a much deeper meaning these terms that belong to the sphere of style.

Carmen 25

In c. 25 the ‘pained indignation’ (Quinn p. 165) of c. 12 gives way to something that could be described as bitter sarcasm: no reproach or ‘lesson’ is

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45. Belle is continued in invenuste, line 5.
46. in ioco atque vino, see P. Langen on Val. Flaccus, 258.
47. neglegetiorum: one may regard this comparative (see Neue-Wagener 2, 214) as an ‘überlange Wortform’ (H. Haffter).
48. On the interrogatio formula see Quint. Inst. 9, 2, 6.
49. The nuance of eloquence is lost, cf. Terent. Eunuchus, 1011; see M. Lenchantin de Gubernatis, Il Libro di Catullo, Turin, 1953, page 30, n. 9, for a comment on the rarity of the construction of dissertus with genitive.
50. Cic. Verr. 4, 23 shows that dissertus gradually developed, in colloquial texts, as an equivalent of commodus and urbanus (T.L.L. 5, 1, 1377, 52 sq.).
51. Parallels for the power to wound in a certain kind of poetry may be found in Catullus’ collection itself, for example in c. 36 v. 5 or c. 40 v. 2, and even in c. 42 v. 6.
52. On the egestas linguæ latīnae see Seneca, ep. 9. For the similar but more limited sensus communis see Horace. Sat. I, 3, 66; Juv. 8. 73; Sen. Benef. I, 12. 3.
intended here, but a real attack upon a thoroughly despicable character. Marrucinus in c. 12 was reprimanded with a shade of sadness for making a silly and inelegant joke; Thallus in c. 25 is cruelly chastised for making a 'professional' business of what for Marrucinus was still a joke: we are left with the impression that Thallus' *furia* are accurately based on an *aestimatio* of what he steals. The contrast between Thallus' usual languidness and his keen alertness whenever he sees a chance is brought out in vs. 1–5 by a string of diminutives (like *capillus, medullula, imula oricilla*) and very apt nouns (*penis languidus, situs araneosus*) set against the impressive image of a *procella turbida* (v. 4). The strength of this contrast is heightened by the technique of slowly creating the impression of a languid man (this takes three verses) and of expressing his rapacity by only three pungent words (*turbida rapacior procella*).

As in c. 12 Catullus proceeds to reclaim his stolen property in six verses that fall into two groups of three verses, each by way of anaphora beginning with a *remitte* (vs. 6 and 9). These two groups differ as to contents: the former reclaims Catullus' property, the latter comprises the threat. The request contains very different terms from those used in c. 12: not *remitte* only, but *ab unguibus reglutina et remitte* (v. 9), where *reglutina* superbly describes the predatory quality of Thallus' 'jokes'. Not only this quality is chastised but also his shamelessness, since he wears the stolen garments publicly (as if duly inherited). In short, the reader is compelled to feel that Thallus is a much worse character than Marrucinus. Therefore the punishment is worse too; not 'three hundred hendecasyllables', but a merciless scourging is promised as if Thallus were a common slave (a threat that must have touched to the quick the freed grandson of a slave).

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The extremely rare *conscribillent*, clearly a literary creation, adds some shade of jocularity to the threat; this jocularity is now enhanced by the contrast between rather low language, imagery and contents in vs. 6–11 and, on the other hand, the image taken from the most exalted poetry: the storm at sea, recalling grand scenes from epic poetry. Further, this image ends with a choice word that embellishes its grandeur, *vesaniens* (Kroll p. 48; a hapax eiremenon, almost as extravagant as *conscribillo*). This is not intended to invite the slightest

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54. This may be called a *iocus dieax*: the son or grandson of a slave cannot indeed have inherited much.
56. *Conscribillent*: the verb is extremely rare; it is found only in Varro, *Men.* 280; see also Plaut. *Poenulus*, 377 sq. (Ploratillus).
sympathy for Thallus (Quinn p. 168), but is meant to counterbalance the impression of boorish rudeness with which the reader would have been left had the last three lines been omitted.

To sum up: this poem contains many interesting features. Firstly there is a marked difference between the style of c. 25 and c. 12 which should be explained by the difference between the addressees, Marrucinus being a nobleman who on occasion tended to indulge in insipid practical jokes and who therefore deserved a mild reprimand, whereas Thallus was hardly more than a thief of low character deserving the punishment of a slave. Secondly, Catullus is once more struck by the interesting discrepancy in a man’s character: the ‘same’ (idem, v. 4, cp. 22,3; 30,9) person displays conflicting features. Such a clash leads to manifestations of bad taste (inepte in v. 8, cp. 12,4) by which Catullus was intensely irritated and which made him write poems of this sort.

Without going into further details of what may be called a psychological interpretation we should once again stress the fact that the device of counterbalancing appears: the reader is not left with the impression of harsh invective (which would have debased Catullus to the same level as the addressee): the harshness is counterbalanced by linguistic jocularity (conscribillent, vesaniente and in general by the grand and therefore jocular image of a storm at sea).

Carmen 11

Let us forget – for a moment – that there are other poems addressed to Furius et Aurelius (15, 16, 21, 23) and let us read the poem as it stands. Furius and Aurelius are said to be comites – not amici – of Catullus (v. 1). They are prepared to travel with him anywhere and to share the risks connected with such travelling (temptare simul parati, v. 14; this phrase harks back to comites and closes the ring around this ‘section’). These travels are both dangerous (he mentions the formidable Parthi and the horrible aequor of the North Sea, v. 6, and 11 resp.) and imaginary because nobody has ever reckoned with the possibility that Catullus really intended to go to India or to Arabia, to the dreadful Parthians or to the almost unknown Britons. His imagination represents the places and peoples in colours so vivid that an almost lyrical mood is created (one is reminded of Alcman, fr.PMG 148; Hor. c. 2,20, 14ff, cp. 1,7,1ff), yet a tinge of fear creeps in when the enumeration reaches Gaul, the Rhine and the Britons, but the description retains the attraction of adventure and of singular greatness (altae Alpes and Caesaris magni): fear and excitement seem mixed. The contrast between the two parts of the enumeration (vs 2–8 and vs. 9–12) is that between a tinge of the fairy-tale and the horrible (cp. horrible in v. 12) – of which the latter was much nearer to the Romans of Catullus’ days and much more ‘real’ than the former.

57. Temptare: The verb shows that dangers will have to be faced, e.g. Cæ. Imp. Pomp. 23; Hor. c. 3, 23, 14, etc.
58. For the lyrical mood see Schwinge, E. R., Hermes 93, 1965, 452.
All this the *comites* are prepared to face. The whole long enumeration creates suspense; the reader waits for the reason for such a lengthy introduction, and even expects something as appealing or as awe-inspiring as the introductory description would seem to foreshadow. But the expectation is disappointed, the poet has to send to his girl – by mouth of messengers only – a brief valediction which consists of *non bona dicta*. *Bona dicta* are words of goodwill, *non bona dicta* convey curses and imprecations. If this is so, why does he call the one he condemns *mea puella*, using an affectionate expression? She was his beloved girl in former times; he now looks back, that ‘former time’ has now come to an end and therefore these words *meae puellae* makes the remembrance the more painful. This contrast does not ‘counterbalance’ the *non bona dicta*, but strengthens their effect, which is the finality of this valediction (cp. v. 22 *cecidit*, it is all over). *Pauca*, too, enhances the effect: all is past, there is not much to say, the situation is clear. There she is, living with *moecho* (v. 17), ‘holding in embrace 300 of them at a time’, capable of *ilia rumpere*, not of *vere amare* (v. 19). This is no invective, no irony, but a gross exaggeration partly meant to disguise the trite and simple fact that Catullus regarded her as a whore. The picture is formidable, the ampleness of vision of the first ‘section’ (vs. 2–12) is continued: vs. 17–20 seem to recall the impressive grandeur of the first part, but, of course, on a very different plane. In c. 58 Lesbia does the same, but she is described within the limits of human capability; here she closely resembles a Kali, a man-devouring hydra. Within this considerable exaggeration we find a single expression that is wholly as sincere and straightforward: *nullum amans vere* (v. 19). Hitherto the crude reality behind all the imagery and exaggeration has been ‘veiled’; here we are allowed to look through the veil and perceive Catullus’ analysis of the reality: *nullum amans vere* (which has been neglected by most of the commentators) is the key to these verses. Not the Kali-like quality of infinite embraces suggests condemnation, but the fact – so simply told – that she loves no one, that she cannot love truly (v. 19). In other words: we once again find constant changes of tone and mood, of direct and indirect style. Only if these changes are noted does the tension between, e.g. *non bona dicta* and *meae puellae*, between *vivat valeatque* (which is a friendly valediction) and the gross subsequent picture reveal itself. The stylistic device employed is by no means an end in itself, but depicts the oscillation in the writer’s mind and the shrill contrast between his love and hers. The contrasts depict the incompatibility of his tender remembrances and the crude facts of the present situation. This contrast between his love and hers finds a pictorial expression at the

59. *Meae puellae* is not ironical as Quinn *op. cit.* 128, n. 15, says. To take it as such would mean to lose the poignancy of the contrast with the subsequent ‘gross’ lines.

end of the poem. This ending is no rhetoric, no useless 'coda'; it is the final and
decisive acknowledgement of the situation: there is no need for Lesbia to
search once more for his love (as she seems to have done before); this love is
dead, killed by her. In this way this stanza contains the past (ut ante, v. 21,
cecidit, v. 22), the present (the love is now dead), and the future: there is no
future, there will, of course, be no travelling abroad, there are no prospects
after that cecidit. It is her indifference and relentlessness, her brutal lack of
humanity that is symbolized by the unfeeling stroke of the plough. This simile
seems to be lyrical and soft, in reality it is harsh: machine-like sensuality kills
a tender and sensitive love, and this image with its double entendre is much
more poignant than the gross image in v. 17ff.

The meaning of this poem seems to be the contrast of Furius' and Aurelius'
attachment with Lesbia's lack of consideration and feeling. It should, however,
be remembered that the conites -- not amici -- have been attacked in other
poems. Such attacks -- so much has transpired during the previous interpreta-
tions -- need not be taken as made in deadly earnest; yet the fact remains that
Catullus has spoken to them in a way very different from his poems to Asinius
Pollio or Fabullus. This can only mean that Catullus wanted to convey the
idea that even such lowly conites feel attached and prepared to share dangers
in marked contrast to the heedless sensuality of Lesbia. He likens her to a
plough.

This sort of comparison is age-old, cp. Sapph. fr. 117 D., 105, c in L.-P. So
is the situation envisaged: a lover preparing to leave the country on a pro-
longed journey after having realised that his love will remain unrequited, cp.
Plaut. Mercator 588ff; Prop. 1.1,1ff. Catullus, in other words, uses well-known
patterns, elaborates them skilfully and thoroughly (cp. v. 2–12), uses choice
linguistic devices (cp. the enallage in v. 23: ultimi for ultimus), and counter-
balances the pangs in his heart with an elaborate style. This creates a contrast
that cannot logically be resolved.

*Carmina 48 and 41*

The same preoccupation to add an unexpected touch to the tone of a poem --
whether to limit its grossness or its emotional impact -- is revealed yet again
in such poems as c. 48 or c. 41. The whole aim of these poems is completely
different from, e.g. that of c. 51 or c.11: they are more in the
line of a 'scherzo', and their main attraction lies just in the fact that this aim
is disguised throughout and revealed παρὰ προσδοξίαν by an unexpected
linguistic twist at the very end. Let us consider c. 48: the poem is dedicated to

61. Of course if one considers the conites who are addressed as the same people as in
previous poems, the whole bearing of the poem is changed, see Richardson, L. Jr., C.P.
58, 1963, 93 sq., esp. 104 sq.
62. For the situation of the lover going away because of unrequited love, see Plautus,
Mercator, 335 sq.
Juventius and *prima facie* it seems to recall the passionate cry of c. 5: such devices as the stressed position of *mellitos* (Juventius has been called *mellite* before, in c. 99.1), the repetition of *usque*, the alliteration of *aridis aristis*, manage to create an atmosphere of emphatic love-poetry. Then, suddenly, in line 6 the Catullan coinage *osculationis* evokes an amused smile, introducing an unexpected touch of light irony, which completely disrupts the atmosphere of love that has been built up throughout; seen through the lens of *osculatio* the poetical perspective seems to change from love-pathos into a slight, elegant joke.

The unexpected and disruptive little twist occurs also at the end of c. 41; the poem seems to belong to that series of attacks launched by Catullus against Mamurra; this time it is Ameana's turn to be the butt of the poet's ridicule and Catullus conducts his attack in a brutal way, treating her not only as a whore, but also as one who has disproportioned expectations. In the first four lines Catullus swiftly depicts the situation: *defututa* immediately classifies Ameana, the *tota* stresses the exorbitant amount of the sum she asked, and the strange concentration of her ugliness in the particular ugliness of her nose together with the insulting *ista* (v. 3), really lays Ameana low; line 4 therefore comes like the cherry on the cake: on top of all the preceding qualities and possibly as a result of them, Ameana is the *unica* of the *decotor* Mamurra: the insult could not be more crushing. In the following three lines Catullus' attack becomes subtler: his almost motherly anxiety for the *puella*, his urgent request to her relations to call on doctors and friends, his curt statement - almost in the tone of a G.P. - *non est sana puella*, are but steps of increasingly cutting irony: the taunt at her ugliness (*quae sit, v. 8*) and at her blindness to it would not greatly add to the poem's impact without the final touch *aes imaginosum*: the stately word gives a slight twist to the poem: the irony remains, but is made more elegant, more spicy, by the unexpected epithet *imaginosum*. Linguistic wit blended with compositional wit heightens - not diminishes - the irony, but transposes it onto a slightly different plane.

*Carmen 1*

Much has been written about poem 1, and a general agreement would appear to have been reached among commentators on at least one basic point: namely, that the poem runs on two levels, the normal topic of introduction (self-presentation, dedication, appeal to the Muse) and the implicit statement of a literary 'credo'. But for the purpose of this paper it seems worth-while to examine a point which has so far been neglected by commentators, namely that oscillation of tones which has so far been pointed out above.

63. For the emphatic double negative, see 76. 3 Schuster, M., *Wien. St.*, 64, 1949, 101; for double negatives in general see Leumann-Hoffmann-Szantyr 804, a.
The first two lines present an inherent contrast: the rhetorical question – traditional in a literary sense – contains three definite pointers (lepidum, novum, and the diminutive libellum) to an innovation in poetical style;\(^\text{64}\) this ‘implicit’ contrast is carried over and developed in lines 3 to 6: the everyday simplicity of vs. 3-4 (which feign to express Catullus’ modesty) soars into the elevated style in vs. 5-6, only to fall down again with the clashing colloquialism of Jupiter, v. 7. It seems important to note that Catullus’ and Cornelius’ literary attitude has been hinted at throughout this quick shifting of tones: the closing lines continue the contrast even more sharply; v. 8, the stressed qualecumque, the plain connecting relative quod, set such a nonchalant and colloquial tone, that the high styled patrona virgo and v. 10 come as a ‘stylistic shock’, on which the poem solemnly ends.

It would therefore seem justified to interpret this oscillation of stylistic tones as a definite pointer to Catullus’ endeavour to create a harmonious balance in his poems, a tonal counterpoint that would create the urbane elegance which seemed to play such an important rôle in neoteric aims. Furthermore, the fact that such an endeavour is so clearly expressed in the introductory poem of his collection would seem to point to the basic importance of this technique and to its repeated use in the poet’s subsequent compositions.

\(^\text{64}\) For ausus in a literary context see Hor. A.P., 10; see also T.L.L. 2, 1248, 15 sq.
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