CATULLUS 64 AND THE HEROIC AGE: A REPLY
JAMES H. DEE

One of the prominent trends in recent criticism of Catullus 64 is the insistence of many interpreters that Catullus is taking a moral stand, not only against the immoralities of his own day, as indicated in the epilogue (384-408), but also against the vices and brutalities of the Heroic Age. In this paper I shall attempt to show that Catullus does not express any especially strong disapproval of the tales he elaborates in poem 64 and also that it is far from certain that the epilogue is as serious an attack on late Republican mores as many have thought it to be. In this demonstration I shall concentrate on what I consider some weaknesses and errors of this moralizing type of interpretation, in particular as it is applied to the section on Achilles, the Heroic and Golden Ages, the role of Jupiter and divine justice, and the epilogue. In a few parts of this essay I am inevitably following Giuseppe Giangrande, whose challenging article on this poem deserves wider recognition.  

In certain works of the last two decades a virtual consensus appears to have emerged on the section of poem 64 concerning Achilles (323-381). For example, Michael Putnam states that the Song of the Fates, which "should be designed to elaborate the future happiness of Peleus and Thetis," instead identifies Achilles with the "bloody brutality of war." Leo Curran raises a possible objection to this approach, only to set it aside; he states that the magnitude of Achilles' slaughter in lines 348-360 was an accepted, indeed glorified, part of the heroic code. But even if Homer or his heroes could accept such a simple view of life (and in fact they did not), after Euripides and after the Alexandrians no poet, least of all a sophisticated and urbane poet like Catullus, could describe such conduct from an uncritical point of view. We can be confident that Catullus regarded Achilles' brutality as we would. This is very near to asserting an identity of Catullus' attitudes with the critic's and it therefore invites our skepticism. Curran's idea that
Euripides and the Alexandrians exhibit a new revulsion against battlefield bloodshed and brutality needs demonstration. Further, one may wonder where to seek the "heroic code" if Homer and his heroes have already outgrown it and whether "sophistication" and "urbanity," as they would have been understood in the ancient world, have any necessary relation to high moral standards or to humane and compassionate sensibilities of the sort that Curran requires. Finally, J. C. Bramble, in what is often called the best recent discussion, says that certain details of the Fates' Song, namely blood, impiety, and destruction, "derogate from the initial atmosphere of heroism:" he describes the sacrifice of Polyxena as "an act of unwarranted barbarity," and says of the prophecy in general, "blood and slaughter are the keynotes, not heroism and virtue." But the ethical connotations of "heroism" and "virtue" are misplaced here. Blood and destruction are quite characteristic of those figures called hērōes in Greek, and so is a fair amount of impiety. And it has not been demonstrated that Catullus in particular regarded "blood and slaughter" as inherently reprehensible or that his concept of virtus involved an ethical sense - Werner Eisenhut has after all argued that virtus in Catullus is entirely traditional, i.e. non-ethical, in meaning.  

A reply to this apparent consensus is in order. We might note first that these writers often use "loaded terms" to help guide our responses; "bloody brutality," "unwarranted barbarity" and the like express the critic's feelings without providing evidence that Catullus felt the same way. How indeed can we know that Catullus would, for example, automatically have condemned the deeds of some mythical warrior, simply because they brought misery to the victims' mothers or because of the bloodshed involved? The sensibilities revealed in the remainder of the Catullan corpus do not seem to have been very delicate in such matters. Kinsey (925, note 3) faces this problem briefly: he says that Catullus "does not elsewhere admire soldiers," referring to poem 11, where in his opinion the mention of Caesaris... monimenta magni is not serious, and to poem 68.89-90 and 99, where Troy is reproached for causing so many deaths. But these passages have nothing to do with views on soldiers or "the military." Catullus' apparent dislike of Caesar has no direct relationship to his being a "man of the military," and even the intensity of language in poem 68 may have been prompted as much by the fact that Catullus' brother happened to die near there as by any outrage at the slaughters of the Trojan War. Interpretation of poem 68 is notoriously difficult, but it may be suggested that Catullus is more concerned to emphasize the pathos of the
loss of so many good men (virum et virtum... einis, 90) than to criticize those warriors for killing each other.

Let us now consider the matter of Achilles and Polyxena in greater detail, for there are specific grounds for doubting these critics' evaluation of this episode. They assume that the sacrifice must be taken as a perverted marriage or as an example of the rapacious brutality of warriors, and so must lead the reader, ancient or modern, to condemn the code of behavior that demanded or permitted such an act. This seems to me a simplification of the complexity of the sources on Polyxena and of the ancient attitudes toward the heroes.

The surviving evidence does not force any single interpretation of the Polyxena story upon us; rather, the assignment of motive and responsibility is as varied as our knowledge of other Greek myths would lead us to expect. A brief survey of these sources, based on Ernst Wüst's treatment, may help. Among the earliest known literary accounts, the Cypria, the Iliupersis, Stesichorus, Ibycus, and Simonides are all aware of Polyxena's death. In the Cypria (frag. XXVI OCT), she was wounded by Odysseus and Diomedes during the city's capture, died, and was buried by Neoptolemus. Proclus' summary of the Iliupersis (OCT p. 108) says that the Greeks sacrificed her (sphagiazousin) at Achilles' tomb; this clearly brings Achilles and Polyxena together but leaves the motive unspecified. Achilles' ghost appeared in the Ilias parva and in the Nostoi, but without any connection to the sacrifice. The ghost also appeared in Sophocles' Polyxena (480 N²=523 Pearson & Radt) and this time the sacrifice was clearly at issue. Euripides' Heebra is the first unambiguous literary source for the ghost's express demand (line 40), yet the same play has other accounts. The chorus mentions Achilles' staying of the fleet and his complaint that his tomb was ageraston, and Neoptolemus invites the ghost to come and drink Polyxena's blood (lines 111-15 and 536-37). A few late sources bring in the quasi-romantic theme of a love relationship and a possible marriage; in the first three, Achilles was killed from ambush when he came to negotiate for Polyxena's hand, so the motive for the sacrifice could have been love or revenge. Thus the posthumous marriage, sometimes taken for granted and interpreted in mal. part., is quite rare in our texts. The vase paintings listed by Wüst confirm the early appearance of the sacrifice, without providing evidence for the motive or for the audience's attitudes.

There are then as many as four possible reasons for Polyxena's death: (1) she was offered as a geras to Achilles, with or without a demand from
the ghost; (2) she was used to appease the ghost and end the staying of the fleet; (3) Achilles loved her and demanded a marriage in death; (4) he required her death as punishment for her involvement in his murder. One's judgment of Achilles might vary with the version chosen, so we must observe that Catullus is content to label Polyxena a praeda and a testis to Achilles' virtutes, which implies the first motive, and that he does not attempt to specify whose decision it was that Polyxena be sacrificed.

There is also a general consideration which may illuminate the problem from a different angle. Simply put, the question is this: what is the origin of the story of Polyxena? Few would argue that the sacrifice really occurred as described, although some commentators speak of it as if it were as verifiable as some modern atrocity. Ernst Wüst sees in the name Polyxena a faded chthonic goddess of death and concludes that in the original form of the tale Apollo and Polyxena must have combined to kill Achilles. This might be thought to explain Achilles' "hostility" toward Polyxena, but it seems to me unnecessarily clever. It raises more questions than it answers and there is inevitably no literary or artistic evidence to support it. Instead of regarding the tale as a distorted reflection of a much older conception, we may be closer to the truth if we take it as a development which is typical of the post-Homeric Epic Cycle. The differences between Homer and the Cycle have been well explored by Jasper Griffin, who notes especially the element of perverse romanticism in the tales of Iphigenia, Penthesilea, Polyxena, and Helen: "The conception of the hero in the Iliad is... more heroic - the warrior does not war on women.... In the Cycle both heroism and realism are rejected in favour of an over-heated taste for sadistically coloured scenes."

This argument may lead to a curious conclusion. If we accept Griffin's restriction of the term "heroic" to the Iliad and Odyssey, a restriction I am not sure the ancients would have recognized, then the "heroic code" and the "warrior ethos" are not responsible for Polyxena's death. Rather, the "blame" for her demise should be laid at the doors of those poets who concocted such scenes, following their own or their audiences' tastes for the strikingly melodramatic. This pleasant paradox, that the poets, not the soldiers, were the "brutal" ones, is perhaps forced; but it draws attention to the central question: how did the ancients (and how should we) regard the acts attributed to the hêrôes in the Greek mythological tradition? The exponents of the moralizing approach do not mince words in their condemnation of Achilles and the "heroic code" in connection with the sacrifice. At the other end of the spectrum is Giuseppe Giangrande (142-43),
who offers a vigorous defense of the "rights" of a "true hero of the Homeric type" to have his quasi-divine status honored and his need for a wife fulfilled. But Giangrande's main authority is Quintus Smyrnaeus, who is surely amalgamating the old tradition of the geras-offering with the idea that Achilles was a theos among the gods after death, an idea quite foreign to the severe outlook of Odyssey 11. Similarly, Giangrande oversimplifies considerably in his belief that Achilles, in being ameiliktos toward Polyxena, was merely displaying that laudable lack of sentimentality which is typical of Homeric heroes. After all, Erbarmungslosigkeit is treated in Homer as blameworthy, not laudable. 9) The truth, for Catullus and for us, probably lies between these extremes. The ancient legends concerning the hêrôes were full of spectacular misdeeds, and it does not appear that ancient authors felt compelled to treat them all as factual and to take a moral stand for or against. Catullus' own attitude is not easily estimated, but one might observe that Greek myth is in fact surprisingly rare in his surviving works. Only poems 34, 63, 64, and 68 have extended borrowings, and fewer than 20 other allusions, most not very recondite, are found elsewhere. Such comparative indifference, a contrast to his oft-noted Alexandrianism, suggests that Catullus did not ponder deeply on the subject. More specifically, the tone of the passage on Polyxena in poem 64 does not seem to me to hint at serious outrage; Esme Beyers' remarks (89) on the meaning of the word-arrangements in these lines confuse an attempt to create pathos with an intent to express condemnation. This confusion, as I call it, will recur in our examination of recent discussions of the Theseus episode.

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There are several other points, raised by certain critics, which call for consideration here. They involve alleged "flaws" in the Heroic Age, the relation of the Heroic and Golden Ages, and the portrayal of Jupiter in the Theseus - Ariadne episode. Since the poem deals with two tales from what we usually label the Heroic Age, quite a few scholars have concluded that Catullus must have meant to "say something" about that age. In general, they believe that he meant to demonstrate the immoral and unedifying features of that supposedly glorious period, so that the poem does not simply play upon the contrast of the better past and the degeneracy decried in the epilogue but subtly reveals that a similar corruption was already inherent in the very standards of the Heroic Age itself. A few examples must suffice. Bramble (38) declares that when the reader discovers that there is "a flaw in the Age of Heroes,... he then realise
that even the time at which Peleus and Thetis first met was not free from ambivalence." Harmon (318 and 320 - emphasis his) says that Catullus "makes a statement about the nature of the heroic ideal... through the characterization of Theseus" and concludes from Theseus' "preference" for his patria over Ariadne that "the heroic code, as it is presented in 64, actually encourages extreme cruelty." In reply, I would observe that we are not obliged to assume that every recorded act of a hērōs must exemplify or be in accord with some undefined "heroic code" or even with generally acceptable moral standards. If all the hērōes had been as modest and virtuous as Peleus and Philemon, many of the tales in Greek myth would never have come into being. If this view is correct, then to seek for revelation of a "flaw" in the Heroic Age or in heroic virtus is misguided. The common opinion, held throughout antiquity, that the Heroic Age was a wonderful period, better than our own, and also full of undeniable atrocities, may seem odd to some, but the ancients were quite willing to entertain such apparent inconsistencies. Similar problems arise concerning the "heroic code," which we have seen both excoriated and exonerated in the case of Polyxena. As Jasper Griffin's paper makes clear, we need a full study of what is properly "heroic" in Homer and the epic tradition - and we should remember that Greek has no exact equivalents for our "hero" group of words.

The second point to be discussed is a tendency of several critics to speak of the Heroic Age as if it were a golden age, even The Golden Age. Bramble (38 - emphasis mine) describes lines 38-42 as "in some ways, reminiscent of treatments of the Golden Age," and he argues that since Catullus "cheats the reader of the expected description of nature's automatic beneficence toward man," he must intend to show that "the evil potential of civilisation has already started to manifest itself." He adds that line 42, squalida desertis rubigo infertur aratris, "suggests wholesale dereliction" of the land and that Catullus is intimating that "at the time of the wedding man was being seduced by luxury and opulence away from his hardy agricultural existence." But what are the "seduced" Thessalians to be imagined as doing after they leave the palace (lines 267-68 and 276-77), if not going back to their toil in the fields? And in any case, a reader who knew his mythology would not feel cheated if a description of the Golden Age did not follow lines 38-42, for the wedding of Peleus and Thetis in most accounts assures Zeus's eternal rule on Olympus - and Zeus rules over all ages except the Golden. That Catullus knew this story is clear from his treatment of Prometheus in lines 294-97. Less cautiously,
Phyllis Forsyth speaks of "that supposedly Golden Heroic Age" and declares that Catullus means that "man has not altered his character; even the traditionally golden age of the heroes had its flaws and failures." 15 But an examination of the sources on the Golden and Heroic Ages shows that the qualities predicated of men in the Golden Age have nothing in common with those of the men of the Heroic Age: the purity and simplicity of life regularly attributed to the Golden Age can hardly square with the memorable crimes and punishments which dominate the Heroic Age. 16

The third point is the matter of Jupiter's role and divine justice. Here again, the search for a moralizing interpretation runs into difficulties. Kinsey (919-22) effectively paints himself into a corner in his discussion of Jupiter's behavior. He observes that, by agreeing to Ariadne's prayer for vengeance, Jupiter becomes "responsible" for Theseus' forgetfulness, and he finds it "unsatisfactory" that Aegeus, an innocent victim, should be punished by death, not through a fault in Theseus' character, but through Jupiter's intervention. He concludes that the "apparently inept decision of Jupiter" may be merely ironic, and he refers us to other supposedly humorous treatments of Jupiter in Catullus, namely the phrase Iovis aestuosi (7.5) and the "disrespectful" mention of his amores in 68.138-40. In his recent riposte to Giangrande, T. P. Wiseman (LCM 3, 1978, 22) approaches the problem differently. He says of Ariadne, "her insistence that her complaint is a just one (64.190 and 198) is not enough in itself to make us accept her version, but the matter is put beyond question when Jupiter grants her prayer.... The point is that for Catullus in this poem the gods are characterized by justifica mens (64. 406)." There is quite a distance between these two views, but they agree in assuming that uniform moral sense ought to emerge from the story, either in itself or through Catullus' deliberate retelling. Yet the striking thing about many Greek myths is an irreducible element of amorality; they frequently do not yield a simple moral calculus because their tellers, in Ben Edwin Perry's phrase, "viewed things separately" and saw no need to make their tales into theodicies. After all, what sense does it make to reward a mortal with immortality and a divine marriage simply because of her brief aid (or her "fidelity") to Theseus, or to punish an innocent father with death for his son's transgression against that most unserious of oaths, the lover's sworn promise? 17 Is that the justifica mens of the gods?

Such questions make clear the difficulty facing interpreters, that Catullus' version proves to be not very edifying if we must insist upon
working out its moral implications to the end. Kinsey's approach has the merit of recognizing the virtual incoherence of Catullus' narrative in this respect, but he errs in retreating to the explanation that Catullus was being ironic. It is simpler to say that Catullus was primarily interested in literary and emotional effectiveness in each part of his poem, without worrying whether the gods were just or whether Theseus and Ariadne "got what they deserved," whatever that might be. Scholars sometimes forget that audiences, and even well educated readers, can enjoy a fine story without trying to puzzle out the ultimate moral meaning of it all - and that this is frequently the tacit assumption of both author and audience in the ancient world.

* We turn now to the epilogue, which many have regarded as a serious and perhaps autobiographical piece. L. P. Wilkinson has said that it was the product of a "mature, more reflective, Catullus," who was "depressed by the decadence of the contemporary world."18) Kenneth Quinn agrees that Catullus took his moralizing seriously, though he denies him much maturity: "As moral statement it is clumsy.... Like many young men, Catullus has little talent for moral analysis."19) The major difficulty here is that, except for the word nobis in 406, there is no indication that Catullus means us to think particularly of his own time in the epilogue - and even nobis seems in context more likely to be general in meaning ("from all of us mortals") than specific ("from me and my contemporaries"). Although the examples of the crimes that drove Justice from the world may reveal a Catullan trait in their emphasis on family-centered outrages, scholars have found it hard to cite instances from the Roman Republic, or even from Greek myth, in which those specific crimes are attributed to humans.20) In other words, a Roman reader would not necessarily take Catullus' text as referring to his own time.

Another approach has been offered. Giangrande's article attempts to prove that Catullus was directly influenced by such Hellenistic poets as Rhianus, who, reacting against Apollonius' removal of the heroic element from epic, continued unhesitantly to celebrate the martial glory of warriors. His final paragraph seeks to clinch the argument that Rhianus in particular was Catullus' model by pointing to a similarity between the epilogue of 64 and Rhianus, fragment 1 Powell. The pessimistic condemnation of present-day morals in Catullus could not come, he says (146), from a court poet like Callimachus, so Rhianus, "in his splendid isolation, safely away from Alexandria," is the most likely candidate. This is
appealing, but doubts persist. The passage from Rhianus is in fact not
really parallel to Catullus' epilogue. In the fragment, Rhianus says, "We
humans are all hamartinooi and we bear the gods' gifts aphradei kradie." As
examples, he contrasts the man who, lacking a livelihood, complains
against the gods and the man who, receiving prosperity and power, cannot
control himself and tries to be an equal of the gods. Atê pursues the
latter and eventually makes him pay the price, thereby serving Zeus and
Justice. This summary of the 21 lines should suffice to show how differ-
ent the passages are: Rhianus is not describing a drastic change in human
morals but uttering familiar commonplaces about man's innate folly (for
which, cf. Odyssey 18.130-42). Further, the references to Justice and the
punishment of the arrogant do not sound "pessimistic." And since most of
the remarks in the fragment are commonplaces, we are not required to re-
gard them as political polemic against the "new royal courts," although
some eminent scholars have said that they are.21) The example in line 14,
the courting of Athena, may indeed be an allusion to the megalomania
of the Thracian Cotys, but it is stated in general terms and is little more
than a commonplace itself, as the parallels in Alcman (1 PMG) and Cercidas
(17.38 Powell) show. In fact, the text of Athenaeus (12.531 F) which pre-
serves Theopompus' narrative about Cotys marrying Athena (FGrHist 115 F
31) seems to me to share only the name of Athena with the text of Rhianus.
These reservations about the fragment should keep us from using it as evi-
dence that Rhianus could not have lived in Alexandria; as W. Aly observed
long ago, page Jacoby, the surviving material does not permit a clear
decision on that question.22) In sum, Rhianus can be, at present, no more
than a hypothetical source for the epilogue.

In view of the weaknesses of the foregoing explanations, a
new proposal may be ventured, which will attempt to account
for one important feature of Catullus' epilogue. It is pos-
sible that it presents an ingenious combination of two pre-
viously independent mythical motifs. From Homer, Odyssey
3.419-20 and 7.199-206 and Hesiod, fragment 1 M-W, there was
a tradition that the gods had once walked among mortals and
attended the banquets of certain hêrôês. The wedding of Pe-
leus and Thetis illustrates the motif, as do the banquets of
Tantalus and Lycaon and the gathering at Mecone. Alongside
this tradition, apparently unrelated to it, was another, that
at some point in human history the gods had departed the
earth because of the wanton criminality of humans, Justice
or a similar goddess being the last to leave. This tradition occurs in Hesiod (Works and Days 197-201), Theognis (1135-50), and Aratus (Phaenomena 129-34), where Aidôs/Nemesis, Elpis and Dikê respectively are involved. This second theme is a familiar moralizing refrain, taken with varying degrees of seriousness. I suggest, then, that in the epilogue Catullus (or his Hellenistic source23) joined an element from the moralizing tradition about human degeneracy to the non-moralizing theme of the Peleus - Thetis marriage. That is, to the folk-motif, "The gods once appeared among men," there is added a sort of continuation, "They no longer do because (quare, 407) human vice drove them from the earth." The insertion of the causal connection is the novelty.

To sum up, I have tried to show that the emerging consensus in recent writings on Catullus 64 is in error in several important respects. I hope to have made clear the difficulties attendant upon any attempt to derive a consistent and serious morality from the surface of Catullus' narrative. If my view is correct, that Catullus, like other ancient authors, felt free to develop episodes from the myths without judging them, then a certain quantity of commentary on the poem is well meant but over-subtle. The differences of opinion in this paper reflect fundamentally divergent assumptions about the nature of literature in antiquity. The view for which I have argued here accepts the possibility of a form of "detachment" of an author's personal moral judgment from the subject matter of his writings. Such a detachment seems to me an essential part of the experience and appreciation of many types of literature, for, almost paradoxically, it makes possible the emotional effects that so many ancient poets sought. This view, in my opinion, accounts for what we find in poem 64 and allows us to understand the work in the way Catullus would have expected.

University of Illinois at Chicago Circle

NOTES

1) "Das Epyllion Catulli im Lichte der hellenistischen Epik," AntClass 41 (1972), 123-47 - hereafter Giangrande. For a spirited controversy on


5) *Virtus Romana* (Munich, 1973), 43-44.


7) *Alloi in Schol. Eur. Hec. 41, alii in Serv. Aen.* 3.322, Hygin. *Fab.* 110, Quint. Smyrn. 14.254, a papyrus "epyllion" of Nonnian date (Pack 1428 = Pack 2 1803), and *Mythogr. Vatic.* 1.140 and 2.205. Giangrande, *Euripides* 60 (1962), 154, note 4, observes that there must have been an Alexandrian model for the papyrus *epyllion*; if so, it would be the earliest source for the romance theme.


10) Comparable expressions in Kinsey (916) and Konstan (46), who says that Theseus' *oblivio* "marks the breakdown in the traditional concept of *virtus*."


12) An example from a different field may illustrate the problem. Gilbert Lawall, *YCS* 19 (1966), 158, states, concerning Jason's cloak at *Argonautica* 1.721-67, "charm is recommended rather than strength, and treachery is recommended and justified.... The scenes teach success and survival - distinctly unheroic goals." But charm, in its various manifestations, is certainly not considered worthless in a speaker in the Homeric poems, and only to a modern, schooled in the ethical sense of "heroic," could success and survival be classed as unheroic. Arthur Adkins, in his various writings, can hardly be altogether wrong to assert that there is an important connection between success and *aretē* in Homer.

13) Similarly, S. E. Knopp, *CP* 71 (1976), 211, states that these lines "suggest a society which abandons duty to indulge passion" and quotes lines 1942 as if it demonstrated this proposition.

14) This consideration disposes of two Hesiodic fragments (1 and 204 M-W) which might appear to have a different version. Of the latter, Martin
West once observed, CQ N.S. 11 (1961), 133, that the Catalogues had no place for the metals scheme of the Erā and that "the heroic age is not distinguis-
shed from the golden age of the Erā." He is more circumspect in his commen-
tary (above, n.11), saying only that "the heroes' world resembles that of
Hesiod's Golden men (fr.1.6-13)." But since Zeus is presumed to be the king
of the gods in both fragments, it cannot be the epi kronon bios. The same
point should check the tendency to see portrayed in Catullus' epilogue a
"decline from a primitive Golden Age" (Forsdyce on 384-407).

15) "Catullus 64: The Descent of Man," Antiochthon 9 (1975), 41-51, esp.
44 and 51 - hereafter Forsyth.

16) The major text is Bodo Gatz, Weltalter, goldene Zeit und sinnver-
wandte Vorstellungen (Hildesheim, 1967), esp.216-32, which contain a con-
spectus auctorvm with over 480 fonts and a conspectus locorum with most
of the toponi on the subject.

17) On the complexity of Greek ideas of divine justice, cf. K.J. Dover,
Greek Popular Morality in the Time of Plato and Aristotle (Berkeley/Oxford,
Mounumentum Chiloniense. Studien zur augusteischen zeit, ed. E. Lefèvre
(Amsterdam, 1975), 400-18. On p.414, Skiadas discusses Hesiod, fr.124 M-W,
in which the proverbial impurity of an aphrodisios horkos, in that case
sworn by Zeus himself, is already well established. Furthermore, the view
that Theseus could be guiltv of "criminal Treulosigkeit" (conceded by Gian-
grande, LCM 2, 1977, 230) or of impietas (Forsyth, 43) cannot stand. No law
in antiquity covered a broken promise to elope, and the relationship be-
tween Theseus and Ariadne was not one of those embraced in the usual de-
finitions of pietas (for which see Forsdyce ad 76.2).

18) L'influence grecque sur la poésie latine de Catulle à Ovide (Vand-
euwerken-Genève, 1956), 54.

19) Catullus: An Interpretation (New York, 1973), 263. Less plausibly,
Forsyth (47) suggests that Catullus deliberately contradicts himself in
the epilogue in order to force the reader to rethink the entire poem.

20) There is one parallel which seems to have been overlooked. The story
of a mother deliberately having intercourse with her son (403f.) is found
also in Parthenius, Evōtika pathēmata,17; the subject is the Corinthian
tyrant Periander and the tale serves to explain his insanity.

21) Cf.F. Jacoby, FÖrHist III a,Comm.,p.199; Giangrande, AntClass 39

22) "Rhianos," RE I A 1 (1914), 782. Jacoby (above, n.21) declares the
idea impossible, basing most of his argument on this frg. Wilamowitz, Die
hellenistische Dichtung, I (Berlin, 1924), 225, takes the same approach;
but we should note that Gow and Page, The Greek Anthology: Hellenistic
Epigrams, II (Cambridge, 1965), 503, ignoring the controversy, say simply,
"his Homeric criticism [suggests] that he had worked within range of a
library and other scholars, presumably at Alexandria." Jacoby's somewhat
romanticized portrait of Rhianus escaping the power of the courts and re-
viving the old type of wandering rhapsode deserves a cautious reception.

23) Giangrande (140, n.93) provides a learned argument to prove that Ca-
tullus' putrida pectora (v.351) must be an allusion to IIlād 18.121-25, with
bathykolpos (v.122) taken to mean, as in Hesychius, arcaia, palaia, koita,
and thus that Catullus was indeed translating a Hellenistic poem. But (1)
the allusion to the IIlād is possible, not certain, for the details of the
two passages are quite different, and (2) putrida may simply be a native
Latin expression, as in Horace's mammae putres (Epod. 8.7); cf. also pu-
tidus,"old, withered," at Plaut. Bacch. 1163; Cat. 42.11-12; Hor. Epod.8.1.