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## V.—A REJECTED POEM AND A SUBSTITUTE.

### CATULLUS LXVIII A AND B.

Despite the fact that Schanz (1<sup>3</sup>, 2, p. 74) cites some thirty-five discussions of Catullus 68a and 68b (and Schanz has omitted several), I venture to inflict upon the long suffering Catullan enthusiast one more suggestion. The feeling of Schanz seems to be shared by many that Birt,<sup>1</sup> Hoerschelmann and Vahlen have solved the main problem of 68a by emphasizing the connection between *utriusque* (l. 39) and *munera et Musarum et Veneris* (l. 10), and by connecting *lusi* (l. 17), *studium* (l. 19), and *gaudia* (l. 23) with *munera Veneris*<sup>2</sup>—“recht körperlich zu verstehen”. Unfortunately this interpretation of 68a is very questionable and has only served to deepen the mystery regarding 68b.

<sup>1</sup> Birt, *De Catulli ad Mallium epistula*, 1889, and *Rhein. Mus.* 1904, p. 433; Hoerschelmann, *De Catulli carmine 68* (1889); Vahlen, *Sitz. Berl. Akad.*, 1902, p. 1026, refers *munera Musarum* to *scriptorum copia* and *munera Veneris* to *Lesbia*!

<sup>2</sup> Though this matter does not affect my main argument, I wish to say that I do not believe we can analyze *munera et Musarum et Veneris* into two elements since the word *studium* refers to the whole expression. The words *lusi*, *studium*, and *gaudia* can, so far as language goes be taken as Birt does, but there is more at stake than language. Catullus says explicitly that it is his brother's love which in the past has sweetened these *gaudia* (l. 23). In his most poignant grief over his dead brother he could not have written that line if *gaudia* meant “pleasures of the boulevard”. Hence all these words must have reference to verse-writing. It is of course difficult to find exact parallels for the expression *munera et Musarum et Veneris*, but Catullus naturally did not confine himself to stereotyped expressions. The association of love and song must have been a commonplace in Alexandrian verse if we may judge from Propertius and Ovid. The latter offers an excellent illustration in his *blanda Elegeia cantet Amores* (Rem. 379), and the former insists that love inspires verse even as the Muses (I. 7, 20; II. 1, 38, cited by Friedrich, p. 442). Propertius finds such doctrine in Philetas and Callimachus (II. 34, 31) and it is doubtless from these poets that Mallius expected Catullus to draw the inspiration for his *munera et Musarum et Veneris*. The second *et* simply emphasizes the fact that *molles elegiae* are desired.

I gather from 68a that Mallius, deserted by his Erotium, had asked Catullus for consolation in the form of *molles elegiae* or a romantic epyllion in the Alexandrian style.<sup>1</sup> He had at the same time urged Catullus to return<sup>2</sup> from Verona to win back Lesbia before she was irretrievably lost. Doubtless Mallius added the second point partly from a personal desire for Catullus' companionship. Catullus wrote 68a in answer, refusing both<sup>3</sup> requests (*utriusque*, l. 39). Regarding the first point, the poet insists, as in poem 65, that his brother's death has brought him such grief that he finds no joy in writing; furthermore, he would need many books if he were to weave together amorous romances in the Alexandrian style, and he had but a few rolls<sup>4</sup> with him. The second request was a bitter reminder, and he dismisses it curtly with a pointed correction of his friend's mode of referring to it. The letter ends with apologies for failing to grant either request.

If now 68a is in the main a refusal to write the entertaining epistle desired, what is 68b? Surely it is a new epistle written in place of 68a granting the very thing Mallius had asked for. The poet on rereading 68a threw it aside as wholly unsatis-

<sup>1</sup>"A combined gift of the Muses and Venus in the most approved style of recondite Alexandrianism" says Ellis in what is still the best commentary on this poem.

<sup>2</sup>This seems to me to be the second point referred to in *utriusque*, l. 39 though I would not insist that mine is the only possible view. Catullus passes over the matter quickly because the subject pains him; hence its importance as one of Mallius' requests is often overlooked by critics. The fact that Catullus treats it again in 68b proves its significance. Some critics insist that ll. 27-31 must, because of *hic*, refer to the poet's position in Verona, but in that case would he in his sorrow refer to *deserto cubili* as *miserum*?

<sup>3</sup>Birt and Vahlen so take the line despite Hoerschelmann's insistence that *non* negates *utriusque* rather than the whole line. See Birt's convincing argument in *Rhein. Mus.* 1904, p. 433. It is needless to discuss whether Birt's version leaves any ambiguity. Certainly Mallius would have had no doubts about the meaning of the line if he had received 68a and nothing else.

<sup>4</sup>Riese and Baehrens-Schulze have already given this meaning to ll. 33-6. Mallius would not send to Verona for books; nor has Catullus reference to his own poems: a small capsula would have held all that he had as yet composed. To be sure the reference to books comes in abruptly, but it would doubtless be clearer if we had the exact wording of Mallius' request.

factory. It was for the most part dull prose, loosely put together, and hardly a fitting answer to a benefactor whose friendship he valued (68a, l. 10). Sometime after writing and rejecting 68a (Mallius had in the meantime recovered his light-of-love<sup>1</sup>) Catullus decided to try again and see if after all he might not gratify the request for a poem. Perhaps he still had no access to his library of Alexandrian romances, but it occurred to him that the subject of his *munus* might be the story of that memorable day when after a distressing separation<sup>2</sup> he again met Lesbia through the good offices of Mallius. For that story he would need but few books. His one *capsula*, his memory, and his wits would suffice to provide a mythological parallel or two, and a few similes for the requisite Alexandrian embroidery. And since he had thrown aside 68a he felt at liberty to rescue from it the only lines of real value in it, the elegy over his brother.

However there was a serious difficulty. He had chosen a theme which was far more personal than the usual *cento* of mythological romances doubtless expected by Mallius. The recipient was himself involved. Catullus accordingly disguised<sup>3</sup> Mallius' name under the form Allius as he disguised the names of Clodia, Clodius, Mamurra and Tanusius (?), but it is to be noticed that the disguise is almost transparent. To those who shared the secrets of Catullus the *me Allius* of the very first line (pronounced Mallius, of course) gave a sufficient clue to the identity of the man intended. However, the uninitiated reader was for the present at least to be denied the secret. Obviously Catullus felt that there were lines of rare beauty in the poem and that these need not be completely buried if he judiciously suppressed the names of those most deeply concerned. Time alone could decide whether the disguise might at last be removed by publishing the poem under the appropriate title.

<sup>1</sup> 68b, 115; a felicitation which refers to the happy ending of the separation that 68a, 1-6 pictures.

<sup>2</sup> 68b seems to imply that the first meetings which led to his affair with Lesbia were followed by grief; so perhaps *clausum* of l. 27. At any rate 68b, 108, *lapide candidiore notat* seems to repeat 107, 6, *candidiore nota*, which marked the end of a separation.

<sup>3</sup> Palmer, *Hermathena*, 1879, 348, has already suggested that Allius may be a disguise for Mallius.

That 68b is a *substitute* for 68a seems under these conditions wholly probable. It is a gift of verse inspired—in part at least—by the Muses, certainly by Venus. It is just the Callimachean kind of composition that 68a, ll. 1–10 and 33–6 imply except for the fact that in true Catullan fashion the personal note is very prominent. The poet himself calls it a *munus*<sup>1</sup> (68b, 109) repeating the word which Mallius had apparently used (68a, 10). It is a return for officia (68b, 110) which he acknowledges in 68a, 12. He answers Mallius' reference to the infidelities of Lesbia (95 ff.) as he had attempted in 68a, 27–30; and though the answer is not identical, it clearly alludes to the very same complaint of Mallius. He transfers three lines on his brother's death verbatim from the rejected poem, and, as has been pointed out time and again, the poet nowhere else repeats himself in this fashion. To me it seems difficult to understand any of these things on the supposition that the two poems are one<sup>2</sup> or that the two are addressed to different<sup>3</sup> persons or that both poems though separate were actually *sent* to the same<sup>4</sup> person. Surely 68a was rejected by the poet and 68b sent in its place.

<sup>1</sup>Hoc tibi quod potui confectum carmine munus pro multis, Alli redditur officiis.

<sup>2</sup>If 68a and 68b are one poem as Ellis, Kiessling, Vahlen, Friedrich and others have held, I cannot understand the changed conditions in the household of Mallius, nor the repetition of lines, nor the equanimity with which Catullus refers to Lesbia in 68b, 95 after the apparent resentment of 68a, 30, nor the change of name from Mallius to Allius, nor the grant of a *munus* (109) after the refusal, nor the abruptness of the transition at l. 40.

<sup>3</sup>Munro, Baehrens, Birt, Merrill and others posit two different men. But the two poems assume the same debt of *officium* on the poet's part, the same request for a *munus*, the same report about Lesbia, the same knowledge of Catullus' secrets. Finally this view does not explain why the poet should repeat his lines, nor why the two names should happen to be so similar.

<sup>4</sup>So Palmer. Ellis who does not differ greatly from Palmer holds that there are "two quite separable parts" written at different times, but that "they are parts of the same poem", p. 400. However, these scholars do not satisfactorily explain the repetition of lines. Surely 68b, 54–6 would seem frigid to one who had already received 68a. Eichler avoids this difficulty by boldly rejecting the lines in 68a, but such drastic measures are not necessary. Lucas, *Recusatio*, in *Festschrift für Vahlen*, p. 329, considers the epistle a parallel to Hor.

That the poems are placed together in our manuscripts is doubtless due to the editor of Catullus who finding 68a among the poet's unpublished papers recognized its meaning and gave it its logical position. A discriminating editor would probably have consigned it to the oblivion intended by Catullus, but that the editor of our poet was unfortunately not discriminating is generally recognized. However, 68a when rightly understood proves at least to be a human document of no little interest to students of the poet.

The suggestion that Catullus rejected 68a and wrote a new poem in its place, casting the second into a different style while at the same time preserving in it lines of the original effort will hardly seem strange to readers of this poet. A good parallel for his procedure in this instance is doubtless to be found in Catullus 55 and 58b. No. 55, in the tone of Horace I, 8, twits Camerius on his disappearance (for obvious reasons) from his favorite haunts. The fragmentary 58b treats the same theme in a laboriously bookish manner for a few lines, then breaks off bluntly. There can be little doubt but that Merrill (Introd. XXXIV) is correct in saying that 58b is "but a rejected trial-sketch for the poem afterward elaborated as 55". The editor of Catullus seems to have recognized it as a rejected fragment by placing it as the last representative of the poems in the Phalaecean meter. Similarly c. 60—"Did a lioness bear thee, hard of heart"—seems to be an unfinished poem, the point of which was later rescued for a striking passage in Ariadne's complaint<sup>1</sup> (64, 154-7). Again the frag-

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Epistle II. 1, which in the spirit of a *praeteritio* grants what it modestly disclaims the power to bestow. However, no real similarity exists between the two epistles.

<sup>1</sup>My colleague, Prof. Wheeler, called to mind this passage, and suggested also that the reworking of Sulpicia's poems (Tib. IV. 8, 9, 11) by the author of Tib. IV. 5, 6, 4, provides an apposite illustration. It seems entirely probable that the confessions of Sulpicia were never meant for the public eye, while the finished poems that were based upon them deserved as wide a publication as anything in Tibullus. If Horace IV. 7 was an early spring poem, at first rejected in favor of the far more finished and genial I. 4, and later refurbished to fill space and afford variety in the last book of the odes, it too may be cited as a parallel. The suspicion is at any rate widespread that several odes of Horace, book IV, are rejected juvenal efforts later reworked for the sake of filling a slender roll.

mentary dedication of three lines which is usually numbered 14b is plausibly accounted for as an unsuccessful beginning presently thrown aside for a new effort which resulted in c. I. It begins in the same deprecatory tone as I, and purports to introduce the reader to the same kind of unassuming trifles.

It may well be that other fragments which occur in our manuscripts of Catullus, e. g., II. 11-14, LI. 13-16, LIV, and LXXVIIIb were left incomplete by the poet. Certain it is that if he had been his own editor, he would have rejected his attacks upon Caesar and many of the trifles which he had written stans pede in uno against time—reddens mutua per iocum atque vinum (L. 6).

In the preceding I have unhesitatingly adopted Palmer's suggestion that the name Allius was a disguise. Ellis objects (p. 401) that one does not "take so much trouble to preserve to eternal memory a disguised name", and the poet claims to write ne vestrum scabra tangat robigine nomen. This objection might apply equally well to the immortality which later poets promised Delia, Cynthia, Corinna and a dozen other personages whose real names were not disclosed by their eulogists. The promise of eternal fame was of course largely a literary convention which belonged especially to the versified epistle, as many a "Donarem pateras" will prove. That the promise is conventional in 68b must be self-evident, for one would hardly contend in all seriousness that immortality based upon the deeds celebrated in this poem is highly desirable. Mallius was doubtless satisfied, so far as these *officia* were concerned, to belong to the "choir invisible" in a very real sense. One need scarcely suggest further that so long as disguise was desirable, verisimilitude was added by the promise of everlasting fame.

Catullus, then, wrote 68a in order to explain to Mallius that he could not comply with the request for an elegiac romance because of his state of mind and because of his lack of books from which to draw the appropriate material. He presently rejected this effort as prosaic and futile, and undertook to write a poem of the kind that Mallius had requested. Since this second poem contained many references to actual experiences of a delicate nature he disguised the name of Mallius, lending plausibility to this disguise by the conventional statement that

he wished to guard the name of Allius from oblivion. The poet suppressed 68a but was apparently not averse to seeing 68b published<sup>1</sup> if at some future time his relations with Mallius and Clodia should permit. Whether or not conditions favorable to publication arose during the poet's life-time we do not know. After the poet's death the editor of his complete edition, finding 68a, placed it where it chronologically belonged, and the manuscript probably went forth with the two poems combined as one and bearing the title "ad Mallium".

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<sup>1</sup>There is only one objection to considering 68b an independent poem which seems at all plausible. Ellis (p. 401) thinks the poem begins very abruptly. However, it was apparently a favorite device of the Alexandrians to begin *in mediis rebus*. For instance the epyllia of Theocritus and Moschus do not contain the invocation or introduction of the Culex and the Ciris; and it is significant that Catullus 64 begins in the middle of the tale. It is very likely also that Catullus accompanied his verse epistle with a friendly letter explaining the reasons for his delay and for his choice of theme.