

## BOOK REVIEW

*What Catullus Wrote: Problems in Textual Criticism, Editing and the Manuscript Tradition.* By DÁNIEL KISS. Swansea: The Classical Press of Wales, 2015. Pp. xxx + 194. Hardcover, \$95.00. ISBN 978-1-905125-99-9.

This slender and unassuming volume should be on the bookshelves of anyone with an interest in Catullus or the textual transmission of Latin literature. While it may be most appreciated by those with a healthy awareness of the vast problems of Catullan criticism, it is also written and edited throughout with a generous (and judicious) sense of awareness of the needs of diverse audiences.

Dániel Kiss' Catullus collection is the result of a 2011 conference at the Center for Advanced Studies of the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München; six papers from that conference have been included in revised versions. The resulting book is a virtual prolegomenon to a future critical edition of Catullus, a collection whose brevity belies the comprehensiveness of its scope. Kiss is an ideal choice for editorship of a volume of this sort, having completed a dissertation on the immensely problematic c. 68 under Gian Biagio Conte; he is also responsible for "Catullus Online," a fine blending of old and new technologies in the interest of advancing our knowledge of the mysterious poet of Lesbia and Septimius' Acme.

The riches of this valuable contribution to Catulliana commence with the masterful (and lavishly illustrated) introduction. Kiss provides a précis of the history of how exactly we have arrived at the Catullan text of a Mynors or a Thomson; late antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance are considered in turn as periods of Catullan survival and transmission. These pages should be considered for required reading in undergraduate and graduate seminars on the poet.

Kiss' introduction is expanded, in a sense, with the volume's first paper—the editor's work on the "lost *Codex Veronensis* and its descendants." Here we find a detailed study of how textual errors and corruption may have entered the Catullan tradition; throughout, it is especially good at reminding us that certain of the

readings that are often taken for granted are, in fact, the result of a problematic and vexing process of editing and editorial judgment.

Next, Giuseppe Gilberto Biondi's paper considers the treatment of the Veronese poet by the Renaissance humanist Marcantonio Sabellico, and the question of the intrinsic worth of the *recentiores* as witnesses. Julia Haig Gaisser considers the use of Catullus by Giovanni Gioviano Pontano; her paper is an important contribution to the ongoing bibliography on the Renaissance reception of Latin lyric, and serves as a good introduction to an important and still sadly neglected area of classical studies. Pontano was a gifted poet in his own right, and as elsewhere in the corpus of Renaissance Latin verse, his echoes of classical predecessors offer insights of use even to scholars who prefer to pretend that Latin literature ended with Apuleius (if not earlier).

Antonio Ramirez de Verger offers a look at Nicolaus Heinsius' notes on Catullus; his paper is a valuable commentary on the problematic state of the corpus as preserved in the "standard" modern editions. David Butterfield follows with a look at the work of Emil Baehrens and A.E. Housman on the poet. In the case of the latter, Butterfield's paper offers invaluable insight into the work of the monumental British Latinist on the *Liber*, including unpublished material and conjectural annotations preserved in Housman's extensive papers and books. The coverage of Baehrens' work may send a curious student to revisit that editor's publications on Catullus, notes that still inspire critical thought and appreciation. Finally, Stephen Heyworth considers certain textual and interpretive problems that are peculiar to the "dialogue" poems, i.e. carmina 10, 45, 62, and 67. The material here on the justly celebrated *Vesper adest* is especially welcome.

The volume concludes with a detailed bibliography, a list of Catullan manuscripts, an index of manuscripts and annotated copies of the poet, and both an *index locorum* and a general index. These sections are of considerable value, especially insofar as the manuscript list both corrects and supplements Thomson's.

Kiss' collection is both a summary of the state of Catullan textual criticism in the early years of a new century, and an invitation to future editors and scholars of the poet (Butterfield's haunting remarks about such readers of this book are both moving and inspirational: "There is no twentieth-century editor who did more for the textual criticism of Catullus than Baehrens did in the nineteenth; we are, of course, yet to see whether the twenty-first century will witness such a person," 27). For students and scholars alike, the volume offers throughout a reminder that lost here and there in the scholarship of the nineteenth century in particular are real gems of critical acumen and scientific merit. Throughout, the material is

cast in a congenial, quasi-dialogue format; one is palpably aware of the spirit of a conference discussion of Catullan problems, with volume readers now invited to make their own responses and to develop their own thoughts.

Indeed, noteworthy among the many virtues of this collection is the appeal and accessibility it holds to a wide range of audiences. Undergraduate and graduate students will find in its pages something of an introduction to the problems of paleography, textual criticism and the editing of a difficult and relatively poorly preserved poet (not least because Catullus remains one of the more popular authors in the early level Latin curricula). Scholars and specialists will be rewarded with new treasures of old wisdom and novel ways of looking at familiar problems. And, not least, lovers of fine book printing and production will be grateful to the Classical Press of Wales for undertaking a challenging project with fine attention to detail and quality (the book is not only meticulously proofread, but also a beautifully produced work for the price).

The Catullan text continues to tantalize and attract the skills of scholars interested in the inseparable realms of literary and textual criticism. While a “definitive” text of Catullus may always prove elusive, Kiss’ edited collection of papers brings us closer to the authentic words of the poet, even as it challenges its readers both to read more closely, and to be more appreciative of the immense labors of those who work to improve our sometimes inadequate editions of favorite authors.

LEE FRATANTUONO

*Ohio Wesleyan University, lmfratan@owu.edu*