

Traditional Values in Catullus: Marriage is for Procreation

<p>Poems discussed: 61: dramatizes the events of an aristocratic wedding 67: a talking door tells about its household, which has included at least two scandalous affairs 17: Catullus plans to take revenge on a man who neglects his young wife 68: largely not about marriage, but contains one relevant simile</p>	
<p>1. uxor in thalamo tibi est, ore floridulo nitens, alba parthenice velut luteumve papaver. (61.185-8)</p>	<p>Your wife is in your bedchamber, Her face shining like a little flower, White chamomile Or saffron poppy¹</p>
<p>2. ludite ut lubet, et brevi liberos date. non decet tam vetus sine liberis nomen esse, sed indidem semper ingenerari. Torquatus volo parvulus matris e gremio suae porrigens teneras manus dulce rideat ad patrem semihiante labello. (61.204-13)</p>	<p>Play as you please and give Us children soon; it is not right for So old a name to be Without children, but to reproduce On and on down the line I want a little Torquatus To stretch his delicate hands from His mother's lap and to laugh Sweetly to his father From pursed lips</p>
<p>3. nupta, tu quoque quae tuus vir petet cave ne neges, ni petitum aliunde eat. (61.144-6)</p>	<p>Bride, you too be wary of denying What your husband seeks Lest he seek it elsewhere</p>
<p>4. “[...] non illam vir prior attigerat, languidior tenera cui pendens sicula beta numquam se mediam sustulit ad tunicam; sed pater illusi gnati violasse cubile dicitur et miseram conscelerasse domum, sive quod impia mens caeco flagrabat amore, seu quod iners sterili semine natus erat, ut quaerendum unde <unde> foret nervosius illud quod posset zonam solvere virgineam.” Egregium narras, mira pietate, parentem, qui ipse sui gnati minxerit in gremium. (67.20-30)</p>	<p>“[...] Her previous husband did not touch her; His sword dangling more flaccid than a delicate beet Never raised itself to the center of his tunic; But his father is said to have dishonored his own son's bed And polluted the wretched household, Either because his sullied thoughts blazed in blind lust Or because his son was impotent, had sterile seed, So someone more vigorous had to be sought Who could loosen her virginal belt.” You tell of a superlative father, of wondrous family feeling, A man who came in his own son's lap.</p>

¹ Translations adapted from Dunn (2016).

<p>5. ludere hanc sinit ut lubet, nec pili facit uni, nec se sublevat ex sua parte; sed velut alnus in fossa Liguri iacet suppernata securi, tantundem omnia sentiens quam si nulla sit usquam, talis iste merus stupor nil videt, nihil audit (17.16-21)</p>	<p>Yet he allows her to play as she likes, he doesn't split a hair, Nor rouse himself on his own account, but just as an alder tree Hewn by a Ligurian axe lies in a ditch Experiencing everything as if it were nothing at all, The fool I am describing sees nothing, hears nothing</p>
<p>6. insulsissimus est homo, nec sapit pueri instar bimuli tremula patris dormientis in ulna. (17.12-13)</p>	<p>The man is as backward as they come, his learning no match For a two-year-old boy sleeping on the swaying arm of his father.</p>
<p>7. nec tam carum confecto aetate parenti una caput seri nata nepotis alit, qui, cum divitiis vix tandem iuventus avitis nomen testatas intulit in tabulas, impia derisi gentilis gaudia tollens suscitata cano volturium capiti; (68.119-24)</p>	<p>Not so dear to a grandparent wearied by old age Is the child their only daughter feeds, born to her late in life, An heir found at last for his grandfather's riches, His name put on the testament tablets, Quelling the impious hurrahs of a relative now mocked, Putting to flight the vulture from the old man's head.</p>

Dunn, Daisy. *The Poems of Catullus*. Britain: William Collins, 2016.

Nappa, Christopher. *Aspects of Catullus' Social Fiction*. New York: Peter Lang, 2001.

Panoussi, Vassiliki. "Sexuality and Ritual: Catullus' Wedding Poems." In *The Blackwell Companion to Catullus* ed. Marilyn B. Skinner. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007.

Thomson, D. F. S. *Catullus: Edited with a Textual and Interpretive Commentary*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997.

Richlin, Amy. *The Garden of Priapus: Sexuality and Aggression in Roman Humor*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Richlin, Amy. "Invective against Women in Roman Satire." *Arethusa* 17, No. 1 (1984): 67-80.

Ross, David O. *Style and Tradition in Catullus*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1969.

Skinner, Marilyn B. *Catullus in Verona: A Reading of the Elegiac Libellus, Poems 65-116*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2003.

Skinner, Marilyn B. *Sexuality in Greek and Roman Culture*. 2nd ed. Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell, 2014.

Wray, David. *Catullus and the Poetics of Roman Manhood*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.