

Ill-conceived Excisions in J.M. Trappes-Lomax's New Edition of Catullus

J.M. Trappes-Lomax's new edition of Catullus is certain to elicit both compliments and criticisms. Aiming to supplement and improve the Mynors' Oxford Text, Trappes-Lomax suggests over six-hundred emendations to this standard text for English speakers. On the one hand, his review of problematical passages in which he summarizes the salient issues and offers possible solutions is a welcome addition to the ever growing secondary literature on the poetry of this remarkable poet. On the other hand, his excision of over seventy "interpolated lines" from the standard text, based on the single criterion *si melius est, Catullianum est*, is troubling indeed. My paper will respond to several ill-conceived excisions by demonstrating how lines of poetry that Trappes-Lomax obelizes constitute an integral part of the poem under consideration or are intended to serve as a verbal cross-reference between thematically related poems.

Poem 8.8. In Poem 8, a strong Catullus exhorts a weak Catullus to face the fact that the affair with Lesbia is nearly over. Throughout the poem repeated language conveys intense emotion. In the first part of Poem 8, nearly identical lines 3 and 8 frame the past happiness of Catullus the lover (*fulsere quondam candidi tibi soles ~ fulsere vere candidi tibi soles*), just as in the second part lines 11–12 and 19 with their similar language frame his beloved's future unhappiness without him (*obstinata mente perfer, obdura....Catullus obdurat ~ Catulle, destinatus obdura*). Despite the fact that Catullus employs the same technique to frame the two major sections of the poem, Trappes-Lomax expunges line 8 (which he misprints, making it identical, instead of nearly identical, to line 3), viewing it as "borrowed from l.3...and [as] a typical example of repetitious interpolation" (p. 50). The reason for striking this line is motivated by Trappes-Lomax's following Fraenkel's suggestion that *tum*—the reading of manuscript R— should be read instead of *cum*, since *cum* does not occupy the fourth place in the polymetra of Catullus ("Two Poems of Catullus," *JRS* 51 [1961] 51, n. 20). The postponed *cum* at 8.8 does not concern most critics.

Poem 8.5 and 37.12. Another example of erroneous excision pertaining to Poem 8 involves a striking verbal repetition meant to signal a clear connection between this piece and Poem 37:

amata nobis quantum amabitur nulla 8.5

amata tantum quantum amabitur nulla 37.12

Trappes-Lomax opines that line 5 of Poem 8 "was repeated by an interpolator at 37.12 in the form *amata tantum quantum amabitur nulla*, which is undoubtedly what Catullus wrote here [at 8.5]" (p. 50). The consequence of this observation is that Trappes-Lomax emends 8.5 and deletes 37.12. He misses the point that the nearly identical lines are intended to signal a responsive relationship between the poems. To the series of questions that Catullus poses in the final lines of Poem 8, "Who now will approach you? To whom will you seem pretty? Whom will you love? Whose girl will you said to be? Whom will you kiss? Whose lips will you bite?" Poem 37 supplies the answer, which is not "no one," but "anyone and everyone."

My paper will respond also to the deletion of lines 7–8 from Poem 38, which Trappes-Lomax suggests we consider "as poem 38B" (p. 106), and to his excision of lines 93–96 from 68B because they repeat lines 20–24 of 68A (p. 239).

J.M. Trappes-Lomax's *Catullus. A Textual Reappraisal* (Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2007).

E. Fraenkel, "Two Poems of Catullus," *JRS* 51 (1961) 46–53.