

## Subverting the Serenade: The *Komos* in Catullus 32

This paper examines Catullus' adaptation of the *komos* motif in Carmen 32, arguing that the poet's engagement with this Greek lyric convention transcends mere allusion to become a sophisticated tool for poetic and cultural commentary. Building on Cairns' (1972) analysis of generic composition in ancient poetry, this study posits that Catullus deliberately manipulates the *komos* tradition to create a uniquely Roman poetic experience.

Traditionally associated with nighttime revelry and male-dominated erotic pursuit, the *komos* undergoes a significant transformation in Catullus 32. Drawing on Copley's (1956) seminal work on the *exclusus amator*, this study identifies key elements of the *komos* tradition present in the poem, including the urgent tone, the blurring of public and private spaces, and the erotic objective. However, Catullus subverts expectations by inverting typical gender dynamics and spatial movements, placing the female beloved Ipsitilla in a position of power and confining the encounter to the domestic space.

The analysis explores Catullus' manipulation of temporal and spatial dynamics, his engagement with Roman sexual mores, and his linguistic choices that evoke Hellenistic traditions while remaining distinctly Roman. Furthermore, this paper examines the metapoetic implications of the *komos* as a metaphor for poetic composition and the intertextual relationships with Greek lyric and other Catullan poems.

By examining these elements, this paper demonstrates how Catullus uses the *komos* motif to engage with and challenge literary traditions, explore power dynamics in erotic relationships, and navigate the cultural space between Greek and Roman poetic conventions.

## Bibliography

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