

## Catullus and *Catellae*: Catullan Intertextuality in Canine Commemoration

In this paper, I demonstrate the possible application for intertextual studies in the Roman epigraphic corpus, including its potential benefits and difficulties, through the philological analysis of *CIL* 13.488, an epitaph for a pet dog named Myia consisting of ten hendecasyllabic verses. Contributing to scholarly discussions of memory, I contextualize the poetic epitaph in the extensive literary tradition of commemoration through poetry, as Catullus' wish for his *libellus* to last eternally in Cat. 1.10 and Horace's characterization of his collected odes as a monument longer lasting than bronze as at *Odes* 3.30.1.

Catullus' poetry left a marked and lasting influence on the poetry of Augustan age Rome and beyond, fulfilling the poet's wish "*plus uno maneat perenne saeclo* (may it last eternally, longer than one age; Catullus 1.10)." His playful rivalry with Lesbia's sparrow and mock elegy for it have been amplified in Ovid's dirge for Corinna's pet parrot in *Amores* 2.6. Beyond the age of Augustus, Flavian poets continued engaging with Catullus' literary legacy, seen in Statius' own take on avian eulogy in *Silvae* 2.4. As scholars like G.P. Goold and K.R. Walters have demonstrated, this legacy of literary *epikeidia* for pets seems to have influenced the creation of physical epitaphs for real pets, such as Myia of *CIL* 13.488. Notably, the epitaph for Myia includes the repeated refrain "*o factum male, Myia, quod peristi* (O it's evilly done, that you, Myia, have died!)" at lines 4 and 7, which echoes strikingly Catullus' "*o factum male, o miselle paser* (O it's evilly done, o poor little sparrow!; Cat. 3.16).

Walters' examination of *CIL* 13.488 leads to the somewhat common conclusion that the poem is best read as a literary game that playfully mocks Myia as getting in the way of a would-be lover. In contrast, I explore the above intertext along with other references within the

inscription to provide an alternative reading. Through careful evaluation of the poem's intertextuality, I suggest that the poem is not as insincere as Walters argues, and I argue that the author is presented as a woman, rather than a jealous, male rival of Myia. To conclude, I review the process of my intertextual analysis to comment on the use of intertextuality as a method in the study of epigraphy.

#### Selected Bibliography

Goold, G.P. "Catullus 3.16." *Phoenix* 23, no. 2 (Summer, 1969), 186–203.

Walters, K.R. "Catullan Echoes in the Second Century A.D.: CEL 1512." *The Classical World* 69, no. 6 (March, 1976), 353–359.