CATULLUS

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Chapter Overview

This chapter is the student's introduction to Latin poetry. Catullus is an ideal author for this purpose, since his poems are short and treat topics that are of interest to young people. The personal themes of these poems also provide a change of pace from the historical and political material featured so far in Book III. Students get a sense of accomplishment from being able to read a complete poem in a relatively short time, without struggling through the long sentences of Caesar or Cicero. A selection of poems related to Catullus' affair with Lesbia is followed by a presentation of the jussive and hortatory subjunctive. A few poems not related to Lesbia conclude the chapter, giving students a more complete view of Catullus and his poetry.

Resources

- Student's Book III, pages 109–124
- Online Activities: www.PHSchool.com; Web Code: jqd-0008
- Teacher's Site
- CD-ROM, large print versions of the poems
- *Language Activity Book III*

Standards for Classical Language Learning: 1.1, 1.2

A Cautionary Note

The poems of Catullus included in Book III are suitable for high school classes. However, a number of his poems are sexually explicit or use obscenities when attacking people he disliked. Complete editions or translations of Catullus cited here or on the Teacher's Site are for the use of teachers and may contain frank discussion of such material. Students may find some of this material if they search for Catullus on the internet. So it is best to be prepared for comments or questions from students (or their parents). Probably the best course, if students raise the topic, is simply to acknowledge that yes, some of his poems are "adult," and then move on.

Readings A-H

Background

The introduction to Catullus on page 109 of the Student's Book provides the information that students need before starting the text. We know little about Catullus' life; even the exact date of his death is uncertain. The first eight poems (Readings A–H) are presented in an order that suggests the course of Catullus' affair with Lesbia, beginning with the well-known Poem 5 (**Vīvāmus, mea Lesbia . . .**), through clear statements of Catullus' love and what he finds attractive about Lesbia, followed by growing disillusionment and finally the breakup. The order of the poems as given here does not reflect the order in which they appear in the manuscripts and in most printed editions; whether or not Catullus himself arranged the poems in a particular order is a source of much scholarly debate.

Reading A: Many Kisses pagina secunda

Vīvāmus, mea Lesbia, atque amēmus

rūmōrēsque senum sevēriōrum

omnēs ūnius aestimēmus assis!

Sōlēs occidere et redīre possunt:

nōbīs cum semel occidit brevis lūx,

nox est perpetua ūna dormienda.

Dā mī bāsia mīle, deinde centum,

deinde usque altera, dein secunda centum,

deinde usque altera mīlle, deinde centum.

Dein, cum mīlia multa fēcerīmus,

conturbābimus illa, nē sciāmus,

aut nē quis malus invidēre possit,

cum tantum sciat esse bāsiōrum.

Vocabulary list 62A

1. sōl, sōlis (M) – sun
2. bāsium, ī (N) – kiss
3. rūmor, rūmōris (M) – gossip, talk, rumor
4. sevērus, a, um – severe, strict
5. usque – without stopping, continually
6. aestimō (1) – to judge, think, value something (*acc.*) at a certain amount (*gen.*)
7. invideō, invidēre, invīdī, invīsus – to envy, begrudge, cast a spell on, look askance at
8. conturbō, (1) – to mix up, throw into confusion

Notes: Reading A

1. **Vīvāmus, amēmus** (1): The hortatory subjunctive is presented on pages 117–118 of the Student's Book; if students ask why these verbs are translated *let*, simply say that it is because they are in the subjunctive.
2. **sevēriōrum** (2): Make sure that students notice that the form is comparative, *rather strict, quite strict.*
3. **ūnius** (3): More often found with a long i, **ūnīus.**
4. **lūx** (5), **nox** (6): These are metaphors for life and death. Metaphor is formally presented in the Reading Note on page 115. Many students will already know this figure of speech, so you might discuss the metaphorical use of these words now, or use it as a review later on.
5. **est . . . dormienda** (6): Treat this simply as a vocabulary item (the entry in the Student's Book links the words together as a "phrase"). The passive periphrastic will be taught in Chapter 64.
6. **cum . . . fēcerīmus** (10): Future perfect indicative, so **cum** = *when*; a good opportunity to review the Reading Note on page 76 of the Student's Book. It is sometimes said that the perfect subjunctive has a long i in forms such as **fēcerīmus** while the future perfect has the short vowel, but in fact both quantities are found in both tenses.
7. **nē quis malus** (12): This use of **quis** with **nē** will be presented in Chapter 65. Treat it as vocabulary for now.

Reading B: Lesbia's special qualities

Quīntia formōsa est multīs. Mihi candida, longa,

rēcta est: haec ego sīc singula cōnfiteor.

Tōtum illud "fomōsa" negō: nam nūlla venustās,

Nūlla in tam magnō est corpore mica salis.

Lesbia formōsa est, quae cum pulcherrima tōta est,

Tum omnibus ūna omnēs surripuit Venerēs

Reading C: Catullus' Hope for the Future

Iūcundum, mea vīta, mihi prōpōnis amōrem

hunc nostrum inter nōs perpetuumque fore.

Dī magnī, facite ut vērē prōmittere possit,

Atque id sincērē dīcat et ex animō,

ut liceat nōbīs tōtā perdūcere vītā

aeternum hoc sānctae foedus amīcitiae

Vocabulary list 62 B

1. formōsus, a, um – beautiful
2. rēctus, a, um – proper, straight, upright [*rectify*
3. singulī, ae, a – individually, one at a time
4. negō, (1) – to deny, say no, negate
5. venustās, venustātis (F) – attractiveness, charm, elegance, a quality given by Venus
6. sal, salis (N) – salt, humor, wit
7. mica, ae (F) – grain, a small amount
8. iūcundus, a, um – pleasant
9. foedus, foederis (N) – pact, treaty, alliance
10. fore – futūrum esse – about to be

Notes: Reading B

1. **multīs. Mihi** (1): Notice how Catullus juxtaposes these two words to make clear the contrast between most people's view and his own. **formosa...multis. Mihi candida** is a chiastic arrangement (adjective—dative—dative—adjectives), although the verb **est** breaks up the strict chiasmus. The idea that Lesbia has qualities such as charm, taste, elegance, and sophistication that set her apart from other women is a recurring theme in Catullus' poetry.
2. **nūlla** (4): Students may need help with the agreement of **nūlla** with **mīca** at the end of the line.
3. **omnibus** (6): This use of the dative is similar to that with **adimere** that students met in Chapter 35:20.

Notes: Reading C

1. **Iūcundum . . . fore** (1–2): Students will need help with the structure of this sentence, including the indirect statement introduced by **prōpōnis** and the agreement of **Iūcundum** and **hunc nostrum** and **perpetuum** with **amōrem**. Note the emphatic position of **Iūcundum**.
2. **facite ut** (3): The first occurrence of this structure in Book III. The note provides the needed help, so there is no need to spend time on this now.
3. **aeternum hoc sānctae foedus amīcitiae**: Have students locate the synchysis (taught in the Reading Note on page 103) in these lines.

Reading D: No Greater Love

Nūlla potest mulier tantum sē dīcere amātum

vērē, quantum ā mē Lesbia amāta mea est.

Nūlla fidēs ūllō fuit umquam foedere tanta,

quanta in amōre tuō ex parte reperta meā est

Vocabulary list 62C

1. mulier, mulieris (F) – woman [synonym: femina]
2. tantum... quantum – as much as
3. fidēs, fideī (F) – good faith, trust, reliability
4. reperīre, repperī, repertus – to find
5. nūbō, nūbere, nūpsī, nūptūrus – to put on a veil for to marry (for a woman) [*nuptials*]
6. cupidus, -a, -um – desirous, eager

Reading E: A Woman's Words

Nūllī dē dīcit mulier mea nūbere mālle

quam mihi, nōn sī sē Iuppier ipse petat.

Dīcit: sed mulier cupidō quod dīcit amantī,

in ventō et rapidā scrībere oportet aquā.

fidēs _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

Notes: Reading D

1. **tantum . . . quantum** (1–2): Another instance of this correlative pair, which occurs again in lines 3–4. Correlatives were presented in the Reading Note on page 57.
2. **sē** (1): This word may cause difficulty; remind students that it must refer to the subject of the main verb (**mulier**), therefore it means *she*.
3. **Nūlla fidēs . . . tanta** (3): Continue to use the overhead or interactive whiteboard to help students with agreement such as this and **ex parte . . . meā** in the next line.

Notes: Reading E

1. **Nūllī** (1): This form is identified in the note as dative singular because students so often forget that it can be dative and assume it is nominative plural. See if students remember any of the other pronouns or demonstrative adjectives whose dative singular forms end in **-ī** (sometimes shortened to **-i**): inter alia, **eī, illī, ipsī, cui**, and **huic**. These same words have the genitive singular ending **-ius**.
2. **sē** (1): After encountering **sē** in D:1, students will probably not have trouble with the meaning of this word in line 1, but may find it tricky when it occurs in line 2, where they may think it would refer to Jupiter (i.e., would mean *himself*); the note in the Student's Book addresses this issue, but some may still have trouble with it.
3. **sī . . . petat** (2): *if*-clauses inside indirect statement must have their verbs in the subjunctive, regardless of whether an imaginary or factual condition would be used outside indirect statement. The context here suggests that the *if*-clause would be hypothetical in any case since Jupiter is not really going to court Lesbia.
4. **mulier cupidō** (3): In Book III we place great emphasis on identifying clause boundaries. Sometimes, however, words that belong inside a clause appear *before* the introductory word; another instance of words coming to the left of their clause marker. This concept will be officially taught in the consolidation of word order on page 260 of the Student's Book, but take note of instances that occur in the meantime.
5. **cupidō** (3), **rapidā** (4): More instances of adjectives separated from their nouns that

Reading F: Catullus' Love for Lesbia

Dīcēbās quondam sōlum tē nōsse Catullum,

Lesbia, nec prae mē velle tenēre Iovem.

Dīlexī tum tē nōn tantum ut vulgus amīcam,

sed pater ut gnātōs dīligit et generōs.

Nunc tē cognōvī: quārē etsī impēnsius ūror,

multō mī tamen es vīlior et levior.

Quī potis est, inquis? Quod amantem iniūria tālis

cōgit amāre magis, sed bene velle minus.

Reading G: Conflicting Feelings

Ōdī et amō! Quāre id faciam, fortasse requīris.

Nesciō, sed fierī sentiō et excrucior.

Vocabulary list 62D

1. vulgus, ī (**N**) – crowd, mob
2. nōscō, nōscere, nōvī, nōtus – to find out, to know
3. gnātus, ī (M) – son
4. etsī – although
5. impēnsus, a, um – strong, earnest
6. levis, -e – light, easy, fickle, insubstantial
7. potis – possible
8. vīlis, -e – cheap, worthless
9. ōdī, ōdise – to hate
10. requīrō, requīrere, requīsīvī, requīsītus – to seek, look for, ask *[requisition]*
11. excruciō (1) – to torture, torment

N.B. ōdī, ōdisse is defective, meaning it can only exist in th 3 perfect endings.

Thus perfect tense forms are translated in the present, pluperfect are translated in the past, and future perfect ar translated in the future.

** What other verb have we learned that functions like this? _____

Notes: Reading F

1. **Dīcēbās . . . Iovem** (1–2): Students may need help sorting out this indirect statement, where **tē** is the subject of **nōsse** and of **velle**, while **tenēre** is a complementary infinitive with **velle.**
2. **sōlum** (1): **tē** refers to Lesbia and so must be feminine; therefore this masculine adjective must refer to Catullus.
3. **nōsse** (1): Syncopated verbs will be formally taught in the Reading Note on page 179 (Chapter 67); treat this as a vocabulary item for now.
4. **Dīlexī . . . generōs** (3–4): These lines should prompt some interesting discussion. Students may find it strange that Catullus would choose sons and sons-in-law (particularly the latter) as examples of true affection; note, however, that the word **gnātōs** may include daughters as well as sons. The word **amīca** may refer to a prostitute; in any case Catullus has in mind a casual relationship, not a long-term commitment. A father would choose a husband for his daughter based on a number of factors (character, money, family connections) but certainly regarded him as an important, permanent addition to the family.
5. **ut** (3): The note provides the meaning *as*; students may not know why it means this. Students first met **ut** with this meaning in Chapter 16 but may have forgotten about it since the focus at the end of Book II and the beginning of Book III was on the various subjunctive clauses introduced by **ut**. Remind them about **ut** with the indicative at this point; there is a complete consolidation of the meanings of **ut** in Chapter 66 (p. 165 in the Student's Book) which will provide another opportunity to reinforce this meaning of **ut**.

6. **Nunc . . . minus** (5–8): This is one of several poems in which Catullus ponders the contradiction that while he recognizes Lesbia for what she is—a woman who will never be faithful to him—he is nonetheless attracted to her. (The next poem, Reading G, is another such poem.) The phrase **iniūria tālis** (7) is a reference to the fact that Lesbia was seeing other men; this may need to be explained to students.
7. **quondam** (1), **Nunc** (5): Notice how this poem is structured in two parts. The first two couplets refer to the past, while the second two describe the present.

Notes: Reading G

1. **Ōdī et amō** (1): This poem is one of Catullus' best and most famous; it distills his conflicted feelings into two simple but effective lines, introduced by two verbs of equal length that convey the essence of the poem.
2. **Quārē . . . requīris** (1): Students may need help with the fact that the actual indirect question appears before the head verb **requīris**, although the Latin can be effectively translated in this order.
3. **excrucior**: A very strong word, emphatically placed at the end of the sentence (and the poem). Students may recall from Chapter 58A:8–9 that Roman citizens could not be crucified; this painful death was reserved for slaves or non-citizens.

Choliambic Meter

This is the only poem in Book III in this meter, which is not widely used in general. Therefore it is probably not necessary to teach it to students and it is not included in Appendix II. See the Teacher's Site for information about it.

Reading H: Letting Go

Miser Catulle, dēsinās ineptīre,

et quod vides perīsse perditum dūcas.

Fulsēre quondam candidi tibī sōlēs,

cum ventitābas quō puella dūcēbat,

amāta nōbīs quantum amābitur nūlla.

Ibi illa multa cum iocōca fiēbant,

quae tū vōlēbas nec puella nōlēbat,

fulsēre vērē candidī tibi sōlēs.

Nunc iam illa nōn vult: tū quoque impotēns nōlī,

Vocabulary list 62E

1. dēsinō, dēsinere, dēsiī, dēsitus – to abandon, cease, stop from [*desist*]
2. ineptiō, -īre – to act like a fool, be foolish [*inept*]
3. pereō, perēre, periī, peritūrus – to perish, die
4. perditum dūcere – to consider as lost
5. fulgeō, fulgēre, fulsī – to gleam, shine
6. iocōsus, -a, -um – full of jokes, playful, fun [*jocose*]
7. quantum – as much as

Notes: Reading H

1. **dēsinās** (1), **dūcās** (2): The note tells students how interpret these subjunctive verbs; postpone discussion until you teach the independent subjunctive uses presented in this chapter.
2. **quod vidēs perīsse** (2): Students may need help here. The relative clause **quod vidēs perīsse** is the direct object of **dūcās** and is modified by the participle **perditum**.
3. **sōlēs** (3): Make sure that students understand that "bright suns shone on you" means "you were happy" or "things were going well for you."

4. **quō** (4): Remind students that **quō** can mean *where (to)* as well as be the ablative singular of the relative pronoun.

5. **nūlla** (5): Note the emphatic position of this word at the end of the sentence and the end of the line.

6. **cum** (6): Another instance of **cum** with the indicative = *when* (see page 76).

7. **nec . . . nōlēbat** (7): Students may be confused by the double negative, *(which) (your) girl was not unwilling*, i.e., *did not refuse.* This is an example of litotes, which was presented in the Reading Note on page 68.

8. **Nunc** (9): Note the use of time adverbs and of verb tenses throughout this poem. After two introductory lines, it begins in the past (**quondam**, line 3), the moves to the present in line 9, and then to the future in lines 13–18. Then the last line returns to the imperative, a variation of the mild command in the subjunctive with which the poem opened.

nec quae fugit sectāre, nec miser vīve,

sed obstinātā mente prefer, obdūrā.

Vale puella, iam Catullus obdūrat,

nec tē requīret nec rogābit invītam.

At tū dolēbis, cum rogāberis nūlla.

Scelesta, vae tē, quae tibi manet vīta?

Quis nunc amābis? Cuius esse dīcēris?

Quem bāsiābis? Cui labella mordēbis?

At tū, Catulle, dēstinātus obdūrā.

Vocabulary list 62F

1. sector, sectarī, sectātus sum – to run after, keep followin
2. obstinatus, -a, -um – resolute, stubborn
3. perferō, perferre, pertulī, perlātus – endure to the end, carry though, endure patiently
4. mēns, mentis (F) – mind
5. obdūrō, (1) – to be tough
6. vae tē – woe to you, so much the worse for you
7. bellus, -a, -um – pretty, attractive
8. mordeō, mordēre, momordī, morsus – to bite [*morsel*]
9. dēstinātus, -a, -um – fixed, determined

9. **sectāre** (10): Students met such imperative singular forms of deponent verbs in Book II, but there is a strong tendency to regard them as infinitives. The strongest clue here is the context, since **sectāre** is found in a series of commands (note how helpful it is in this situation to read the whole sentence before translating). The presence of a direct object with a form that looks passive also indicates that the verb is deponent, but here the antecedent **eam** has been omitted.

10. **nūlla** (14): This emphatic equivalent for **nōn** echoes **nūlla** at the end of line 5.

11. **Quis** (16): The various forms of **quis** in lines 16–18 provide a very nice opportunity to review the declension of this important word.

12. **At tū . . . obdūrā** (19): Discuss with students whether they think Catullus is really successful in his attempt to put his feelings for Lesbia behind him. Catullus' insistence that Lesbia will be unhappy without him is probably a projection of his own feelings (i.e., he will be unhappy without her) onto her. The fact that he progressively slips back into the erotic at the end of this poem (**bella, amābis, bāsiābis, labella**) compromises his directive to himself to be steadfast.

Illustration

Roman curse tablet (page 119)

This curse tablet comes from Roman Britain. It was found in the village of Uley (tablet number 72) and is in an excellent state of preservation. The website http://curses.csad.ox.ac.uk/ contains a great deal of information about these British curse tablets. You can go to the entry for Uley 72 and read the actual tablet; the website has an excellent feature that allows users to zoom in on any part of the tablet and compare it directly with a transcribed version. This same tablet is presented as a reading exercise in the *Language Activity Book*, Activity 62i, page 54.

The Ending -ēre (page 116)

Students frequently confuse this alternate ending for the perfect tense, third person plural, with the present active infinitive; another possible source of confusion is the imperative singular of passive or deponent verbs, such as **ēgredere** (59B:15). To deal accurately with such forms, they need to see many examples and be constantly reminded to look carefully at the stem of the verb before deciding which form they have in front of them. Point out that the first **e** in this ending is always long.

Building The Meaning

The Subjunctive as Main Verb

These uses of the subjunctive will call for a change in students' thinking, since up to now they have experienced the subjunctive in the context of various types of subordinate clause; the only exception has been the subjunctive in main clauses of imaginary conditions, which were presented in Chapter 60, pages 96–97 of the Student's Book. (A review of the uses of the subjunctive learned in Book II was provided on page 48 [Chapter 55] of the Student's Book, followed by Reading Notes that deal with relative clauses of characteristic, page 59, and **cum** concessive, page 61.) If you explained the reason why imaginary conditions use the subjunctive, review that and point out that hortatory and jussive subjunctives indicate also an action that the speaker wishes to occur, but which in fact may not. In addition, the jussive subjunctive is often translated by *let* . . . , a construction which is no longer part of the speech of most students and may seem unnatural to them. Occasionally, the jussive subjunctive appears in the second person, e.g., **dēsinās** (H:1) and **dūcās** (H:2). This usage expresses a polite request, as opposed to the more peremptory imperative. Also make sure that students remember the forms of the present subjunctive and how to distinguish them from the present indicative, i.e., that the vowel **-a-** characterizes all forms of the present subjunctive but those of 1st conjugation verbs, which substitutes **-e-** for the vowel **-a-** of the indicative. Students frequently overlook the fact that independent subjunctives are, in fact, subjunctive at all, thereby leading to misunderstandings.

II. Modus subiunctīvus:

The independent uses of the subjunctive are called independent volitive because they involve independent clauses and wishes.

The English word "may" can be used in every person to portray the potential use of the subjunctive. You find this translation usually in conjugation manuals.

e. g.

parem I may prepare	parer I may be prepared
pares You may prepare	pareris You may be prepared
paret He/ she/ it may prepare	paretur He/ she/ it may be prepared
paremus We may prepare	paremur We may be prepared
paretis You may prepare	paremini You may be prepared
parent They may prepare	parentur They may be prepared

The ordinary translation of the subjunctive forms is very delicate. Example for each person:

1st pers. sing.	parem	Let me prepare
2nd pers. sing.	parēs	You should/ may you prepare...
3rd pers. sing.	paret	Let him/ her/ it prepare
1st pers. pl.	parēmus	Let us prepare....
2nd pers. pl.	parētis	You should/ may you prepare...
3rd pers. pl.	parent	Let them prepare

N. B. Using let as a translation is very common in the 1st and 3rd person.

To make the subjunctive forms even stronger wishes, the particle Utinam may be used:

e. g. Utinam ego parem bonās rēs!
If only I may prepare good things!
Oh that I may prepare good things!

Nē is used ordinarily in the subjunctive to make verbs negative.

e. g. (Utinam) nē parem malās rēs!
If only I may not prepare bad things!
Oh, that I may not prepare bad things!

N.B. The independent subjunctive in the 1st person (usually 1st person plural e.g. **vivāmus - let us live**) is sometimes known as the *hortatory subjunctive*

The independent subjunctive in the 3rd person e.g. **vivat - Let/ may him live** is sometimes known as the *jussive subjunctive*.