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**J. H. Gaisser (ed.), *Oxford Readings in Classical Studies: Catullus*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. Pp. 606. ISBN 978-0-19-928035-3. £37.50 (pb).**

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A weighty volume on Catullus in the Oxford Readings in Classical Studies series offers twenty-eight papers selected for their 'intrinsic interest and importance' as the editor states in her Preface. The 'emotional, intellectual, and obscene Catullus' has foxed the best scholars even when, or perhaps especially when, they didn't even realise it. It is claimed that this collection of articles is organised from an historical and thematic perspective (p. 4), and this deceptively simple claim is substantially achieved here.

Themes range from Catullus as an anti-establishment poet, obscenity, allusion, to questions about the arrangement of the collection, poems and 'real' events (the sparrow, the boat, and that love affair with Lesbia), and Greek 'influence', all of which combine to provide a history of critical approaches. There are over five hundred and fifty pages of text and 41 pages of Bibliography with an Index of Passages in Catullus and Acknowledgements. Notes in each chapter are numbered consecutively and full bibliographical references are relegated to the comprehensive Bibliography.

After 'Introduction: Themes in Catullan Criticism (c.1950-2000)' (1-24), the book is split into eight parts. The first, I: Catullus and his Books (27-74), has papers by F. Copley, C. W. Macleod (Chapter 2, 'Catullus 116'), O. Skutsch, T. P. Wiseman, and including W. Clausen's '*Catulli Veronensis Liber*'. C. Segal, 'Catullan *Otiosi*: The Lover and the Poet' and M. Putnam's paper on Poem 11 are the totality of Part II: New Criticism and Catullus' Sapphics (77-106). Part III: Neoteric Poetics (109-164), has R. O. A. M. Lyne's 'The Neoteric Poets' and D. O. Ross on Neoteric elegiacs and epigrams excerpted from *Style and Tradition in Catullus* (Harvard University Press 1969). Part IV. Allusion and Intertext (167-258) rehearses G. B. Conte, G. G. Biondi, J. E. G. Zetzel, and J. H. Gaisser herself. Parts V: Obscenity and Invective (261-302) and VI: Debating the Sparrow (305-340) including notes from the Renaissance on that 'sparrow', provide much that is of interest until Parts VII: Roman Realities (343-426) and VIII: The Lens of Theory (429-559) complete the selection. Part VII has the second contribution from T. P. Wiseman, Chapter 21, 'A World Not Ours' from his 1985 book *Catullus and His World*. Also to be found in this book as Chapter 5, is his earlier paper 'The Collection'. Part VIII ends with a restatement this time by D. L. Selden (in Chapter 28 '*Ceveat lector*: Catullus and the Rhetoric of Performance'), of the importance of the poetry of Catullus as a place where social political and historical issues are subjected to exacting investigation in this important paper taken from *Innovations of Antiquity* (Routledge 1992) which acts as a kind of summary for the previous twenty-seven chapters (p.559).

The sections are broadly arranged according to the rationale explained by the editor in her introductory survey on Catullan scholarship. J. H. Gaisser is a measured, sensible, and good-humoured editor and eminently qualified for the task. The material the editor has collected ranges in time, from Renaissance contributions on the famous *passer* the earliest being 1489, to A. Feldherr on Roman funerary ritual and Catullus 101, published in 2000. The range of approaches is even more disparate, from metrical variations and textual problems (Chapter 3, O. Skutsch 'Metrical Variations and Some Textual Problems in Catullus') to the construction of male sexuality (Chapter 26, M. B. Skinner, '*Ego Mulier: The Construction of Male Sexuality in Catullus*'). The collection opens with the shortest paper (excluding the notes by Renaissance scholars on the *passer*) by F. Copley on Poem 1 and ends with the longest, '*Ceveat lector: Catullus and the Rhetoric of Performance*' by D. L. Selden.

In between, the richest section is IV: Allusion and Intertext, and that along with the last, Part VIII: The Lens of Theory, reflects the literary approach that is the major emphasis of this collection. Close readings of poems like Poem 101 principally by Biondi and Feldherr nestle beside those of M. Putnam on 'Catullus 11: The Ironies of Integrity' (Chapter 7) or by J. H. Gaisser on poem 64, 'Threads in the Labyrinth: Competing Views and Voices in Catullus 64' (Chapter 13) or W. J. Tatum, 'Friendship, Politics and Literature in Catullus 1, 65 and 66, 116' (Chapter 23). Readings of individual poems viewed through not only thematic but also theoretic lenses, especially D. Feeney (Poem 68), M. B. Skinner (Poem 63), P. A. Miller (Poem 51), makes this selection a useful resource for undergraduate students while still offering something to the more advanced scholar.

Bibliographical material in the footnotes as originally published is either updated by the author of that paper (e.g. Chapter 15, A. Richlin, 'Catullus and the Art of Crudity', and an addendum with supplementary bibliography on masculinity in Catullus, specifically on Poem 63, is made to Chapter 26 by its author M. B. Skinner) or by the editor (e.g. Chapter 20, R. W. Hooper, 'In Defence of Catullus' Dirty Sparrow'). Although you will not see papers from scholars such as C. Nappa, M. Janan, W. Fitzgerald, and D. Wray represented, the first is included in the Bibliography and the others are mentioned in the Introduction. Several more, B. Arkins, D. Konstan, and R. F. Thomas for example, are represented in footnotes and in the Bibliography. Words and phrases in the ancient languages and modern languages other than English are translated. Chapter 11, G. G. Biondi 'Poem 101' is translated from the Italian 'Il Carme 101 di Catullo' by L. Holford-Strevens. All of this is meticulously edited, and I have not noticed any misprints, and even though the additions and bracketing in the notes can sometimes demand excessive attention it makes the book more worthwhile as a work of scholarship. The book has a pleasing cover illustrating Lesbia and her sparrow.

The variety of scholarship on Catullus presented in this book is well and impartially passed on to the reader and all the chapters of this book constitute a *munus* that leaves her free to be silent or to speak further.

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