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The Poetics of the 'Carmina Priapea'

Abstract

This dissertation is on the *Carmina Priapea* (CP). The CP is a collection of 80 Latin epigrams that are about, in dedication to, or in the voice of the Roman god Priapus. The CP is obscene in content, notionally inferior in form and style, and curiously anonymous. The earliest scholarship was concerned with assigning a provenance to the book, but more recent scholars have turned to literary interpretation, paying increased attention to the CP's formal elements. I aim to fill what I see as a gap in the scholarship by offering a careful study of the CP's poetics. Although I do not think either the date of this text or the identity of its author can ever be determined with certainty, I endorse the growing scholarly consensus that the CP was written and organized by a single hand at the end of the 1st century CE. I argue that the CP is informed by a poetic discourse that is both sophisticated and ironic. The poet of the CP is cognizant of the Neoteric and Callimachean aesthetic principles practiced by his literary predecessors and contemporaries, but he adopts these principles by adapting them into a Priapic context, which is often tinged with irony. This dissertation consists of an introduction on the unity of the poetry book and three chapters on elements I see at play in the book: repetition, materiality, and liminality. In each chapter I focus on different aspects of Priapic poetry (repetitive language, the image of Priapus, and the idea of a confined garden) as a basis from which to move outward to the poet's thematization of these elements in the book. The poems in the CP take advantage of familiar themes by subverting readers' expectations. My work concludes that the CP is not so much "good" poetry in spite of its obscenity, but that its power and appeal come from the complexity of certain poems in which it is left to the reader to decide what is aesthetically good or bad. This is poetry that forcefully defies its status as "literature," while demonstrating that it does indeed deserve that status.

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THE POETICS OF THE *CARMINA PRIAPEA*

Heather Elomaa

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THE POETICS OF THE *CARMINA PRIAPEA*

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carissimo sponso et amico

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ABSTRACT

THE POETICS OF THE *CARMINA PRIAPEA*

Heather Elomaa

Ralph Rosen

This dissertation is on the *Carmina Priapea* (*CP*). The *CP* is a collection of 80 Latin epigrams that are about, in dedication to, or in the voice of the Roman god Priapus. The *CP* is obscene in content, notionally inferior in form and style, and curiously anonymous. The earliest scholarship was concerned with assigning a provenance to the book, but more recent scholars have turned to literary interpretation, paying increased attention to the *CP*'s formal elements. I aim to fill what I see as a gap in the scholarship by offering a careful study of the *CP*'s poetics. Although I do not think either the date of this text or the identity of its author can ever be determined with certainty, I endorse the growing scholarly consensus that the *CP* was written and organized by a single hand at the end of the 1st century CE. I argue that the *CP* is informed by a poetic discourse that is both sophisticated and ironic. The poet of the *CP* is cognizant of the Neoteric and Callimachean aesthetic principles practiced by his literary predecessors and contemporaries, but he adopts these principles by adapting them into a Priapic context, which is often tinged with irony. This dissertation consists of an introduction on the unity of the poetry book and three chapters on elements I see at play in the book: repetition, materiality, and liminality. In each chapter I focus on different aspects of Priapic poetry (repetitive language, the image of Priapus, and the idea of a confined garden) as a basis from which to move outward to the poet's thematization of these elements in the book. The poems in the *CP* take advantage of familiar themes by subverting readers'

expectations. My work concludes that the *CP* is not so much “good” poetry in spite of its obscenity, but that its power and appeal come from the complexity of certain poems in which it is left to the reader to decide what is aesthetically good or bad. This is poetry that forcefully defies its status as “literature,” while demonstrating that it does indeed deserve that status.

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INTRODUCTION: A Unified Book

The *Carmina Priapea*, or the *Corpus Priapeorum* (hereafter, the *CP*), is a book of 80 epigrams about, in dedication to, or in the voice of the Roman god Priapus.¹ Obscene in content, notionally inferior in form and style, and curiously anonymous, these poems have not received the same amount of scholarly attention as most other surviving Latin poetry books. This may be due in part to the way in which the poems present themselves. In the second poem in the collection, for example, the poet himself says he did not write his poems with much effort and that they are not worthy of a poetry book, but merely of a garden. Many modern readers have taken him at his word. If the poems in the *CP* are felt to be unworthy of a poetry book by the poet himself, then, by implication, they are also unworthy of literary study. Such a sentiment was once commonplace, and it is still shared by many. The earliest scholarship was concerned—almost exclusively—with assigning a provenance to the book. Who wrote this peculiar book of poetry? When was it written? Could Vergil *really* have written these trifles, as some have proposed?² Such questions are still posed and debated today, but in more recent decades of the late 20th and early 21st century scholars have turned to literary interpretation, paying increased attention to the metrical unity and thematic structure of the *CP*. But there is much more to be said, and in this dissertation I aim to fill what I see as a gap in the scholarship by offering a careful study of the *CP*'s poetics.

¹ There are some arguments in favor of 81 epigrams, for which see p. 180 n.79.

² See section two in this introduction for the question of authorship.

³ See (submit a work in the English literature section of the question of authorship) *„Die Priapeen des Dichters.“*

⁴ Herter 1932. See also O'Connor 1989: 18-25 for the historical background of Priapus.

Although I do not think either the date of this text or the identity of its author can ever be determined with certainty, I endorse the growing scholarly consensus that the *CP* was written and organized by a single hand at the end of the 1st century CE, and I will refer throughout the dissertation to the “poet of the *CP*” or the “*Priapea* poet.”³ As for the date, I agree with those who argue that they were written at about the same time as Martial’s *Epigrams*, but I do not think there is sufficient evidence to determine the priority of the two collections. I argue that the *CP* is informed by a poetic discourse that is both sophisticated and ironic. That is to say, the poet of the *CP* is cognizant of the Neoteric and Callimachean aesthetic principles practiced by his literary predecessors and contemporaries, but he adopts these principles by adapting them into a Priapic context, which is often tinged with irony. To return to the example from *CP* 2 from this perspective, we may understand the poet’s claim to artlessness as a pose in which he plays on readers’ expectations, and his association with the garden as not only a fictitious setting for the god Priapus, but also a place to conduct and ruminate on literary activity. My work concludes that the *CP* is not so much “good” poetry in spite of its obscenity, but that its power and appeal come from the complexity of certain poems in which it is left to the reader to decide what is aesthetically good or bad. This is poetry that forcefully defies its status as “literature,” while demonstrating that it does indeed deserve that status. Such a study, I suggest, will help us to better appreciate this often impenetrable body of work.

In this introduction I examine the poetics of Priapus more broadly before turning to the *CP*. As far as the aesthetics of poetry goes, Priapus is highly versatile and suggestive. Much about him is suggestive of “lowness”: he is a minor god; he is rustic

³ An (albeit awkward) English translation of Buchheit’s “*der Priapeendichter*.”

and made of wood; he protects the garden, which is often presented as small and meager; his erect penis is often exposed for the sake of comedy, which seems to put the poetry about him, almost automatically, in a lower register. After offering a brief review of the scholarship, I turn to the two introductory poems of the collection and then to another poem described by many as an outlier within the collection, to demonstrate not only the unity of the *CP*, but also the coherence of its poetic program. This introduction is followed by three chapters on different elements I see at play in the book: repetition, materiality, and liminality. In each chapter I focus on different aspects of the *CP*'s two proems (repetitive language, the image of the statue of Priapus, and the idea of a confined the garden shrine) as a basis from which to move outward to the poet's thematization of these elements in the whole text. This is a book of poetry that is at odds with itself. The poet insists on the *CP*'s humility, both literally in Priapus' connection to a religious cult of agriculture and figuratively in the poet's use of low and obscene language; but the poet simultaneously demonstrates his ability to work within a more stylized mode of literature. Familiar literary themes and motifs are at play throughout, and the poems take advantage of this fact by subverting readers' expectations. Historical truths about the *CP* may remain unknown, but one thing that is certain is that the *CP* is a text worthy of serious study.

Section 1: Priapus in Greek and Latin Poetry

Priapus originates from Lampsacus, a town in Asia Minor, and seeps into Greek culture around the 4th century BCE.⁴ A fragment of Xenarchus' Middle Comedy mentions either the god Priapus or a character by that name, and given the phallic features of Greek comedy, it is understandable that comedy would be one medium through which Priapus was incorporated into Greek literature. As Priapus becomes a mythico-political figure for the Ptolemies, the Hellenistic period sees a boon in literature about Priapus, particularly in pastoral poetry and epigram.⁵ It is also at this time that the Priapean meter is thought to have been created by Euphronius, a combination of a Glyconic and Pherecratean.⁶ Priapus' function as a garden scarecrow and his status as a fertility god makes him very much at home in pastoral settings.⁷

Priapus is initially adopted into Latin literature as a rustic *numen*, fit to provide the prologue of comedy.⁸ But it appears that Priapus may have been a particular delight to

⁴ Herter 1932. See also O'Connor 1989: 18-25 for the historical background of Priapus.

⁵ For Priapus as part of the procession of Ptolemy Philadelphus, see Athenaeus 201d.

⁶ Str. 8.6.24. Ὅρνειαι δ' εἰσὶν ἐπόνυμοι τῷ παραρρέοντι ποταμῷ, νῦν μὲν ἔρημοι πρότερον δ' οἰκούμεναι καλῶς, ἱερὸν ἔχουσαι Πριάπου τιμώμενον, ἀφ' ὧν καὶ **ὁ τὰ Πριάπεια ποιήσας Εὐφορίων** Ὅρνειάτην καλεῖ τὸν θεόν.

⁷ Pausanias (9.31.2) describes Priapus' associations with agriculture and herds in his observation of the god's statue.

ἐνταῦθα καὶ Τηλέφῳ τῷ Ἡρακλέους γάλα ἐστὶν ἔλαφος παιδὶ μικρῷ διδοῦσα καὶ βοῦς τε παρ' αὐτὸν καὶ ἄγαλμα Πριάπου θεᾶς ἄξιον. τούτῳ τιμαὶ τῷ θεῷ δέδονται μὲν καὶ ἄλλως, **ἐνθα εἰσὶν αἰγῶν νομαὶ καὶ προβάτων ἢ καὶ ἐσμοὶ μελισσῶν**: Λαμψακηνοὶ δὲ ἐς πλεόν ἢ θεοῦς τοὺς ἄλλους νομίζουσι, Διονύσου τε αὐτὸν παῖδα εἶναι καὶ Ἀφροδίτης λέγοντες.

⁸ Priapus was evidently the speaker of a prologue in a *fabula togata* of Afranius (2nd century BCE). We have part of this prologue in Macrobius' *Saturnalia* (6.5.6).

sed Afranium sequitur qui in prologo ex persona Priapi ait:

— *Nam quod vulgo praedicant*

Aurito me parente natum, non ita est.

the group of poets often referred to as the Neoterics, who may have included the figure of Priapus in their pursuit of Hellenistic literature and poetics.⁹ Catullus offers us some evidence for this interest. One of his fragments (*fr.* 117) is a *priapeum*. Not only does he refer to Priapus elsewhere (47.4) but he even writes in the Priapean meter (17). Furius Bibaculus also mentions the Priapus statue in a clever epigram about the humble garden of Valerius Cato.¹⁰ This Neoteric interest may help to explain the number of depictions of Priapus in Augustan literature.¹¹ He appears mostly in those literary works that are influenced by Callimachean literary values. Also, as Roman poets begin to look back to Hellenistic poetry for models and inspiration, we begin to see more of Priapus' comic and sexual nature incorporated with—and contrasted with—his agricultural background. Priapus is seemingly idyllic and rustic, in Vergil's *Eclogues* and *Georgics*, and he is menacing, aggressive, and ultimately ridiculous in Ovid's *Fasti*. By the time of the *Carmina Priapea* and Martial, Priapic poetry seems to be an identifiable sub-genre of Roman poetry. However, varying meters and genres in which he is portrayed makes the generic constraints of Priapic poetry unclear.¹² Priapus is a literary figure who, in many ways, invites us to think about boundaries – spatial and sexual, to be sure, but also generic boundaries. Physically, he is outside the civic center, but textually, he is very much present in the literature of the city (*i.e.* the urban setting of epigram and satire);

⁹ Luck 1959: 88, “Priapus was a fashionable god among the *poetae novi*.” See also O'Connor 1989: 24.

¹⁰ Hollis 2007: 138-9.

¹¹ Richlin (1992: 143) identifies a “vogue for Priapus” in the Augustan period.

¹² For a discussion of the “genre” of the *priapeum* in Rome, see Parker 1988: 10-30.

within that literature, however, he is subaltern; the poetry about him exists in a “sub”genre.¹³

Literature about Priapus is also literature about generic and aesthetic differences: for Catullus, the difference between verbose and polished poetry; for Tibullus, the difference between epic and elegy; for Horace, the difference between bucolic and iambic poetry; and for imperial writers, the limits of obscenity and decency. Some of these aesthetic polarities are concerned with *leptotēs*, a tenet of Callimachus, but the complexity Priapic literature cannot be captured within a simple antithesis between “Callimachean” or “anti-Callimachean” poetic ideals. On the one hand, Priapus embodies turgidity and has little refinement; poetry, at least in most of the genres concerned here, is meant to be subtle and fine. On the other hand, Priapus, as a physical representation of a god that is set up at boundaries and to which one makes offering, is the product of epigram, a short and witty genre. Priapus is a malleable character for those poets for whom Callimachean values are becoming commonplace. As they seek out new ways to craft witty and light poetry, they can manipulate Priapus into a Callimachean as well as anti-Callimachean character.¹⁴ It has been argued that Catullus, for example, explores this tension by “impersonating Priapus,” that is to say, by focalizing his discussion of

¹³ Uden 2010 describes Priapus’ garden in literature of the Imperial period as a distinctly urban space, more alike with the setting of satire than of pastoral poetry. Cf. Newlands 1987 on the “urban pastoral” of the 1st century CE.

¹⁴ For the role of Callimachus’ aesthetic values in the *CP*, see especially Prioux 2008 and Höschele 2008a. Uden 2007 touches upon the Callimachean and anti-Callimachean elements in Catullus’ Priapic voice, for which see more above and in note 15 below. I think the *CP* is perhaps most similar to other post-Augustan works in this respect. Ross’ 1975 study looks at Callimachean values in post-Augustan parodies (the *Culex* and *Moretum*, which, like the *CP*, have an unknown provenance). For Persius’ poetry as well as Augustan poetry, see Thomas 1993 and Wimmel 1960. Hunter 2006 does not engage much with post-Augustan poetry. Glauthier’s 2009 article on Callimachus and Phaedrus is also useful.

aesthetics through the cultural character of Priapus, who was a symbol of sexuality that was, among other things, “faricically boorish and unsophisticated.”¹⁵ Uden suggests that Catullus adopts the scathing “Priapic” voice often associated with Priapus’ more violent and aggressive nature, while simultaneously dismissing the “Priapic” (*i.e.* anti-Callimachean) turgidity of other poets.¹⁶ This aspect of the poetic Priapus has perhaps the strongest impact on the poetry collection of the *CP*.

Section 2: Textual Tradition of the *CP*

In this section we will turn to the history of the text in order to examine these early viewpoints of the *CP* from the Renaissance. The textual tradition of the *CP* gives us a window into a lively discussion about the *CP*’s background. The chief concern among early readers in the Renaissance who sought to edit and understand this text is the text’s authorship. Embedded in these debates directly about authorship are positions on issues related to authorship, such as its date and its status as a poetry book of one hand or as an anthology of several, but these questions do not seem to interest readers of this time independent of authorship. Given that authorship dominated the field of inquiry, it is difficult to base arguments on the *CP*’s status as a poetry book on the work of these early scholars. What I think we can say about this scholarship, however, is that some early readers of the *CP* identified it as the work of one author based on ancient testimonia, and other readers based their opinion of authorship on style and decorum.

¹⁵ Uden 2007: 2. Uden’s argument is dependant on the familiarity, at Catullus’ time, with Priapic literature and Priapus’ cultural associations, for which scanty evidence exists.

¹⁶ Uden 2007.

The text of the *CP* has come down to us in five manuscripts from the 14th and 15th centuries.¹⁷ Vollmer was the first to divide these five manuscripts into two families: a group around the *Laurentianus* 33.31 (*A*), which we discuss below, and a group of four manuscripts (*HLVW*) around a common model.¹⁸ These manuscripts present a collection of 80 poems about the god Priapus, which survived alongside the Vergilian *minora*, including the four *priapea* now considered to be the work of a Vergil imitator. Among the collection's earliest known editors, the main objective was to identify its author. The earliest surviving manuscript, a transcription made by Boccaccio in the 14th century, bears an original title in his hand ascribing the work to multiple authors, but, as we will discuss shortly, it is possible that the original inscription ascribed the work to Vergil.¹⁹ Other manuscripts have an *incipit* that does ascribe the work to Vergil.²⁰ It appears that Donatus' *Vita Vergiliana* had something to do with this attribution. In his list of Vergil's

¹⁷ *Laurentianus Pluteus* 33.31 (sigla *A*, ca. 1340); *Guelferbytanus* 373 / *Helmstadiensis* 338 (sigla *H*, 1450-60); *Vossianus Latinus* 0.81 (sigla *V*, 1450); *Laurentianus Pluteus* 39.34 (sigla *L*, 1460); *Wratislaviensis Rehdigeranus* 60 (sigla *W*, post-1469). Travillian (2011) provides a list of and accounts for all of the 88 manuscripts that contain pieces of the *CP*. Parker (1988: 51-3) offers a concise and readable summary of the manuscript tradition. Callebat (2012: lxv-vii) offers a more in-depth discussion.

¹⁸ Vollmer 1913: 36-9. Kloss (1988: 10-12) has suggested that the two big families center around *A* and *H*.

¹⁹ See Sabbadini 1905: 31, who notes that Boccaccio copied the manuscript "tutto di suo pugno." The title on the *Laurentianus* 33.31 is *DIVERSORUM AUCTORUM PRIAPEIA* with a reference at the end to *PRIAPEIA*, but Sabbadini notes that a *rasura* is visible in both the incipit and excipit, and says that the original title was most likely *VIRGILIJ PRIAPEIA*. Sabbadini suggests all of the writing is all by the same hand, but Buchheit disagrees for reasons we will discuss. A later manuscript in this family, *Parisinus Latinus* 8205 (15th-16th century) has the incipit *Priapea* with a reference at the end to *Explicit Priapea Virgilii Publii Maronis*. See Vollmer 1908: 17. Parker (1988: 52-3) notes that the title of the *Codex Wratislaviensis Rehdigeranus* 60 (*W*) is *EXCERPTA EX PRIAPEIA*, which does not mention authorship.

²⁰ Baehrens (1879: 54-7) attests to some of the titles of these other manuscripts, which, he notes, he saw in person. The title in *Helmstadiensis* 338 (*H*) is *Publij Virgilij Mantuani poetae priapeia incipit*. Parker (1988: 52) notes that beneath this title in *H* is the subscription *Publij Virgilij Maronis poetae inter omnes Latinos excellentis: Priapeia explicit per me Ioannem carpensem die 15 Novembris 1460. Bene Vale qui Legeris*. The *Laurentianus Pluteus* has no title, but some individual poems bear the title *Vergilius*. The inscription on the *Vossianus* manuscript is erased and there are no titles for the individual poems.

works, Donatus includes *deinde Catalepton et Priapea et Epigrammata et Diras, item Cirim et Culicem*.²¹ Peirano, who considers all of the supposed Vergilian *minora* to be forgeries, speculates that, “the idea of collecting Vergilian *minora* [in the 14th and 15th century] may have been stimulated by knowledge of the Donatan or Servian list.”²²

Pomponio Leto is the author of one of the first documented challenges to the attribution of these poems to Vergil, and this reservation made room for what grew to become a widely accepted viewpoint that the *CP* is an anthology.²³ The identity of the “others” to whom Leto refers is unknown, but his letter nevertheless indicates that a growing number of readers were questioning the Vergilian authorship. I would like to focus on a few specific claims in Leto’s letter quoted below. First, it is interesting that Leto refers to the *CP* as a book (*librum*). Even though he considered the work an anthology, his acknowledgement of the text as a *liber* might suggest that he saw some degree of artistic arrangement. Second, Leto bases his assumption not on testimonia, but on literary and aesthetic grounds. He brings up the playfulness of the poems (*ludicrum*) as the first piece of evidence against Vergilian authorship. Leto says that certain men

²¹ *Vita*. 17. It is unclear whether or not this list is Donatus’ contribution or Suetonius’, in which case the attribution of *Priapea* to Vergil goes back as far as the 2nd century CE. See Naumann 1990 and Horsfall 1995. See Holzberg 2004 for a different reading of this line. He suggests we put parentheses around *et Priapea et Epigrammata* in order to include the three Vergilian *priapea* and the poem ‘*Quid Hoc Novi Est?*’ in the *Catalepton*.

²² Peirano 2012: 78.

²³ *Ad Herculem Strotium de Virgilii Culice et Terentii fabulis liber* (Venice, 1530) “*assentior iis, qui ‘Priapeorum’ librum esse Virgilii non putant. quid est enim magis ludicrum, quam illa carmina? in eo tamen septo et quasi cavea Virgilii ludorum illa non sunt. quamquam quidem huius etiam sempei rei maximum mihi videri argumentum solet Virgiliana verecundia. Itaque magis audiendi sunt ii, qui omnino a compluribus uno tempore poetis inter seque familiaribus ioci gratia compositos fuisse illos versus existimant, quorum quidem cum Nasoni magnam partem tribuant, quia is Virgilio familiaris non fuit, negant Virgilii esse ullum in eo libro versum.*” Parker (1988: 33) provides an English translation.

consider a large number of the poems to be Ovid's, but it is not mentioned on what grounds that decision was made. The issue in this letter seems to be less about identifying the author of the *CP* correctly and more about negating the idea that Vergil was the author of these poems.

Some scholars were willing to ascribe *some* of the poems in the *CP* to Vergil, but others, none at all. The case against Vergilian authorship was argued on linguistic, literary, and even moral grounds, and in its place arose arguments for multiple authorship including Catullus, Vergil, Tibullus, Ovid, Petronius, and Martial, among others.²⁴ Not only was multiple authorship assumed for centuries following the time of Pomponio Leto's letter, but even the idea of single authorship was ridiculed.²⁵ For the most part the question of date goes hand-in-hand with authorship. There are three identifiable schools of thought: the whole collection is Augustan, the collection is mostly Augustan, but includes poems from later poets such as Petronius and Martial, or the whole collection post-dates some or all of Martial's works.²⁶

²⁴ Pomponio Leto (1425-98, see above n.23), Scaliger (1573), and Scioppius (1606) advocate multi-authorship; in addition, Scioppius denies that any of the poems in the *CP* are the work of Vergil. Pomponio Leto and Scioppius, following earlier arguments by Baptistus Pius and Gyraldus, take the setting of the garden in the book as a setting for the creation of the book, specifically the Garden of Maecenas. Scioppius imagines an actual temple to Priapus in Maecenas' garden where poets wrote verses on the walls. Such poems, he and others imagine, were copied by a later editor.

²⁵ Mueller (1870: xlv) says that even a child knows the [*CP*] is the work of multiple authors (*...Priapea quae plurimorum esse auctorum agnoscet vel puer...*). One wonders how many children were reading the *CP* in Mueller's age!

²⁶ If Vergil or Ovid is the sole author, then the collection is Augustan. In their arguments for multiple authors, Pomponius Leto and Scioppius (see note 23 above) imagined that the *CP* was created by poets in Maecenas' garden, where, if one takes Horace's eighth satire as evidence, a statue of Priapus was situated. Vollmer thinks the collection is Augustan, but identifies Martial as the collector. Arguments regarding the exact dating of the *CP* and Martial are discussed below.

Scholars in the early twentieth century tackled the question of single authorship again, but this time to argue that the whole collection was Ovidian.²⁷ The basis for this particular argument is a passage in Seneca's *Controversiae*, in which it appears that Scaurus is quoting *CP* 3.²⁸ The quotation, "*inepta loci*," appears only here in Seneca and in *CP* 3. The quotation is referred to as *Ovidianum illud*, and this invites the inference that Seneca is referring to *CP* 3 as the work of Ovid. If one accepts this inference, and also accepts the idea that the collection is the work of a single author, then one must conclude that it is the work of Ovid. This argument appears in recent scholarship, but is most often used to argue in favor of multiple authorship.²⁹

This quotation in Seneca was one of the points that Buchheit took up in 1962, at which time he published a monograph on the *CP*. In this study he dismantled the a few arguments in favor of an anthology: chief of which were Boccaccio's title ascribing the work to different authors and the attribution to Ovid in Seneca. The title he dealt with quickly. Buchheit agreed with Sabbadini (cited above in note 19) that there is a *rasura* in the *Laurentianus* 33.31, and both scholars suggested that the original title mentioned the

²⁷ Such an argument had been made prior to this time period—even as early as the 15th century by Poliziano—but it was given credence again in the work of Radford (1921) and Thomason (1931). Cf. Kissel (1994).

²⁸ Seneca *Controversiae* 1.2.22
audiebat illum Scaurus,
non tantum disertissimus homo sed venustissimus,
qui nullius umquam inpunitam stultitiam transire
passus est; statim Ovidianum illud: 'inepta loci,'
et ille excidit nec ultra dixit.

²⁹ Richlin (1992: 141-2) uses this Senecan evidence to say that a single author would have to be Ovid, but she points to the parody of *Amores* 3.7 in *CP* 80 as a strong reason why the author of that poem is *not* Ovid, thus cancelling out the argument for single authorship altogether. She suggests hypothetically that Ovid may be the book's editor, and the anonymity of the *CP* may be due to this work appearing after he went into exile. Uden (2007: 8 n.20) is not concerned too much with authorship in his study of the Priapic voice in Catullus, but nevertheless agrees with Ovidian authorship of *CP* 3.

name of Vergil, and that both *VIR* and *MAR* are visible. They differed, however, in whose hand that was written, and Buchheit suggested that this was a later change, made at the time when anthology was the preferred viewpoint.³⁰ He attempted to solve the issue of the Seneca passage by suggesting a lost poem by Ovid as not only the source of quotation in Seneca, but also the model for *CP* 3.³¹ More recent opponents of this argument include Richlin and O'Connor, and the basis for the argument is noticeably weak.³² Beck, in his study of the text of the *Controversiae*, has given us another way to understand this passage. Based on the grammatical unlikelihood of the original quotation, he suggests that *inepta* must be a scribal error for the genitive *inepti*, rendering the quotation as *inepti loci*.³³ Scaurus, then, is saying something along the lines of, "that little bit of Ovid is not suitable."³⁴

These arguments for authorship and date, single author or anthology, often rest on titles and attributions in both our ancient works (e.g. *Vita Vergiliana*) and in humanist

³⁰ Buchheit 1962: 15. "Der Titel: *Diversorum auctorum Priapeia* stammt nicht von Boccaccio, sondern ist **von zweiter Hand** nach Rasur eingefügt worden." In his assessment that the later title is the work of a second hand, he differs from Sabbadini 1905: 41: "Le parole *Priapeia incipit* sono in rasura; e *diversorum auctorum* fu aggiunto dopo **dalla stessa mano**; molto probabilmente il titolo primitivo era VIRGILIJ PRIAPEIA..." See also Buchheit 1962: 19.

³¹ Buchheit 1962: 15-7. This is a thesis he has defended in later articles (1997, 2007).

³² Richlin (1992: 142) attempts to dismantle Buchheit's theory by pointing to the unlikelihood that Seneca had a lost poem of Ovid that included the phrase *inepta loci* in a context similar to the context of Scaurus' *controversia*, but she does not advance the argument beyond pointing to equal strength of the argument for Ovidian authorship.

³³ Beck (2001: 102) points out that *inepta* must be neuter plural here, rather than the feminine singular in *CP* 3, so genitive in *inepta loci* would have to be a genitive of respect or partitive genitive to indicate space. Either of these interpretations, he suggests, would be unprecedented. Beck (104) points out a similar use of *loci...apti* in Cic. *de Orat.* 3.119. Furthermore, he points out the instances in Seneca where *ineptus* appears in the context of good content, not obscene.

³⁴ Beck 2001: 104, "Dieses Ovidianum (i.e. deine an Ovid erinnernden Worte) stammt aus (gehört zu) einem (hier) unangemessenen Topos (Argumentationsschema)." Kloss (2003: 40) takes up the issue of *inepta loci*, too, and adds to the argument in favor of a scribal error that Seneca elsewhere quotes a *Vergilianum, plena deo*, that does not appear in Vergil, but rather, in Silius Italicus. This consensus by Beck and Kloss has found favor with Morgan 2003: 70 n.20 and Travillian 2011: 12.

manuscripts. Radford and Thomason's work in the early 20th century demonstrated a turn in the scholarship when they based their arguments for Ovidian authorship on formal elements in the *CP*: its language, themes, and metrics. They identified similarities between the *CP* and Ovid's poetry. Although he did not agree with their position on Ovidian authorship, Buchheit proceeded to work on the *CP* in a similar fashion by giving consideration to its formal elements. Buchheit took what might have constituted as evidence for authorship and anthology a century prior—language and motifs, among other aspects, in the *CP* that seem similar to the work of multiple other poets—as evidence instead for an intertextual literary work with a sense of poetics. He posited a single and anonymous author who was familiar with the poetry of Catullus and with Augustan poets. The growing consensus of scholarship written after the publication Buchheit's monograph is that the *CP* is the work of a single author, and although there are still debates about the exact date—particularly the date of the *CP* in relation to Martial's *Epigrams*—most scholars agree that the collection can be dated between the middle and end of the 1st century CE for philological reasons as well as stylistic reasons. Support for a single author has given rise to a number of recent works on the literary aspects of the *CP*, to which we will turn in the next section.

Section 3: Literary Criticism of the *CP*

Many studies that have addressed questions about the text and authorship of the *CP* are more concerned with its historical nature than its literary nature. In such studies, answering the questions of when the *CP* was written and by whom is important more for what such answers tell us about cult practice, for instance, than for what they tell us about

aesthetics and literary history. Representative of this approach is Herter's foundational study in 1932 on the religious cult of Priapus. Herter uses literary and historical evidence, alongside material evidence and inscriptions, to provide an historical and religious background of the god Priapus. His range is all of Greek and Roman antiquity, and he considers not only on Priapus, but other phallic deities with whom Priapus is often associated.

The case for authorship has taken into account some literary aspects of the *CP*, but the questions have been focused on how the *CP* stands up next to the work of Ovid or Vergil in terms of its style, language, and content. Buchheit's study in 1962, which we examined above for his arguments against an anthology, provided an in-depth study of the *CP*'s literary program, and changed the state of scholarship on this collection. Although he, too, was concerned with authorship, his foremost concern was the unity of the text, which he used to argue in favor of single authorship. Reasons for this argument included the metrical rigor of the collection, its thematic and linguistic unity, the identification of epigrammatic cycles, and the appearance of a double proem.³⁵ I will consider his work on the proems in the next section when I turn to the *CP*'s introductory poems. As for the metrical rigor, Buchheit noted that only three meters are used in book—elegiac couplets, hendecasyllables, and choliambics. This is different from other *priapea* in which, for example, the Priapean meter is used.³⁶ Buchheit notes that not only do key words reappear (e.g. “*crassa*” in *CP* 3 and 80), but themes and motifs repeat

³⁵ Buchheit 1962: 19-28.

³⁶ *Cat. fr.* 2; [Verg.] *Priapeum* 3. Iambic trimeters are used in [Verg.] *Priapeum* 2.

throughout the book as well, including the comparison of Priapus to other gods, which will we discuss in Chapter Two, and verbal puzzles.³⁷ One of Buchheit's chief contributions to the study of the *CP* is his identification of *CP* 1 and 2 as a double proem. I will discuss these poems and the nature of the double proem in much more detail in the following section, but for now it is important to note only that this argument made the multiplicity of literary voices (here in the form of two introductions) into a feature of a unified book rather than an indicator of an anthology.

It seems fair to say that any work on the *CP* in the last 50 years has been motivated in some part by this seminal study. It has already been noted above that Richlin and O'Connor, in the 1980s and early 90s, took Buchheit's theory of single authorship to task, and their arguments have found followers in the past twenty years.³⁸ Although there was disagreement on the single-authorship/anthology debate, both Richlin and O'Connor continue Buchheit's work by treating the *CP* as a literary text. O'Connor's focus on genre builds upon observations made in Buchheit's study.³⁹ He sheds new light particularly on the *CP*'s relationship with Martial's *Epigrams*, a relationship that has itself inspired multiple studies.⁴⁰ Richlin's groundbreaking book had different motivations: Priapus, not the *CP* itself, was the central focus of *The Garden of Priapus*. She addresses the explicit

³⁷ Buchheit (1962: 25-8, 52ff.) classifies the poems in the *CP* into eight thematic categories (word-play and anagrams, presentation of verses, dedicatory poems, imprecations, comparison of Priapus to other deities, *triporneia*, mockery of old [female] lover, and mockery of bodily imperfections; trans. by O'Connor 1989: 100). This classification was expanded by O'Connor (1989: 100ff) who criticized Buchheit's classifications as "simplistic and incomplete...in some cases...even misleading."

³⁸ Goldberg 1992, Trankle 1999, Goldberg 1992.

³⁹ O'Connor 1989: 100.

⁴⁰ E.g. Willenberg 1973, Hallett 1996, O'Connor 1998, Sullivan 2004: 109-10.

language in the *CP*, and she cites Buchheit as an authority on the text in several areas, but the non-sexual poems of the *CP* fall outside of her scope. As a result, Buchheit's arguments for unity in the *CP* are not too important to her argument. Both Richlin and O'Connor, in addition to work by Hallett, made the sexual obscenity of the *CP* a topic worthy of study in and of itself. But whereas Richlin's work was centered on obscene humor (i.e. the *CP*'s content), and O'Connor's work on genres of epigram (i.e. the *CP*'s genre), Hallett started focusing on poetics alongside the sexual content.⁴¹

Among the different scholarly approaches that have obtained in the post-Buchheit era, it is alongside Hallett's work with poetics that I situate my work. In addition, the commentaries of Goldberg, Cano and Velasquez, Bianchini, and Callebat have helped make it easier for scholars to study the *CP* for its literary merit, enabling literary studies of the *CP* to develop into an active field of scholarship.⁴² One can see some of the fruits of such labor in the collection of conference papers on the *CP* that was published in 2007. In the introduction to the volume, co-editor Biville says that one motivation for the conference was to "reconsider the literary value of the [*CP*]...by removing the shackles—both philological and ideological, and even moralist—in which many critical studies of the 19th and 20th centuries locked them."⁴³ The topics of papers in this volume range from intertextuality to Callimachean aesthetics to rhetoric. They demonstrate that similarity in language between the *CP* and other literary works can point to issues other

⁴¹ Hallett 1996.

⁴² Goldberg 1993, Cano and Velasquez 2000, Bianchini 2001, Callebat 2012.

⁴³ Biville 2008: 9. "Réexaminer la valeur littéraire des Priapées, leur redonner leur pleine dimension, mettre en valeur leur sens, en les dégageant du carcan tant philologique qu'idéologique, voire moraliste, dans lequel les ont enfermées de nombreuses études critiques du XIXe et du XXe siècles..."

than that of authorship. In these papers authorship is often the content of preliminary footnotes and remarks rather than the point of scholarship, which is not to deny that the question of authorship is worth pursuing, but to demonstrate the number of other questions and issues the *CP* raises. What is still debatable is whether or not the *CP* was a designed by a single author as a unified poetry book, or collected and arranged by one of the authors who contributed to the collection or by a redactor, or even whether it is a collection of poems about a shared topic that was put together at random, in no particular order. As with authorship, without more concrete evidence this question cannot be answered completely, but strong arguments have been made in favor of unity and authorial design based on formal elements within the collection. Let us now turn to the text at hand. In the following section I consider aspects in three poems of the *CP* that demonstrate such unity and authorial design.

Section 4: Two Programmatic Poems (*CP* 1, 2)

The *CP* begins with a proem, as I mentioned in the previous section, and the double proem consists of two poems (1 and 2). It was once thought that the double proem was evidence for an anthology, that is, the identification of two proems was once thought to indicate that the *CP* was a compilation of different poems about Priapus, which were arranged into a book by a later editor. But Buchheit and, more recently, Citroni and Höschele, have argued that the double proem is a feature of the unified poetry book and

have pointed to ancient exempla of this literary feature.⁴⁴ Reading *CP* 1 and 2 as a double proem allows one to get more poetic program out of these two poems, as others have pointed out and as I develop, too, in this section. These two poems do function individually, but they also function as a unit. The first of these proems is addressed to the reader and the second to Priapus as dedicatee. Both poems introduce the work at hand and speak to its content and style.⁴⁵ *CP* 1 tells the reader about the content of the work (*i.e.* that its subject is the god Priapus), while *CP* 2 is more concerned with matters of style. Because they are placed at the opening of the collection, these poems function as programmatic statements. They defend the poet's decision to write Priapic poems. Central to his conception of this poetry is the act of play. This element appears in the first line of *CP* 1 as *lusus* and in the first line of *CP* 2 as *ludens*. The theme of play connects the *CP* to other literary works and traditions, some of which are explored here and others in later chapters. *Lusus* and *ludere* are important for their literary connotations. Forms of this word typically refer to "light" poetry (*ludus poeticus*), light because it is either written in jest, concerned with themes that are less than sublime, or is (or pretends to be) inferior to another form of poetry.⁴⁶ The verb *ludere*, furthermore, can refer to the act of play, of jesting, of sexual enjoyment, and of training oneself.⁴⁷ Catullus describes the act

⁴⁴ Cf. Strato *A.G.* XII. 1 and 2. Both Buchheit (1962: 10-3) and Goldberg (1992: 59) list exempla of double proems. See Citroni 2008, who considers the double proem alongside the work of Martial, and Höschele 2010, who looks at Martial as well as Strato.

⁴⁵ The repetitive nature of the proems is explored in Section 1 in Chapter One.

⁴⁶ Wagenwoort 1956: 31-32.

⁴⁷ Wagenwoort 1956: 37-8. See p. 39, "*Ludus* and *ludere* referring to verse-making point to a relative notion of variable import, which as a rule can only be determined by the establishment of the other notion to which it stands in relation and contrast. It may indicate playful or trifling versifying in contrast to serious, true poetry, but also true poetry of a lighter nature in contrast to epics and tragedies as a superior

of writing *versiculi*, for example, as an act of play (*lusimus in meis tabellis*, 50.2), and Fordyce suggests that the different nuances of *ludere*, delineated in Wagenwoort, may all be present here.⁴⁸ As we will see when we turn to the second proem of the *CP*, there is a clear intertextual link to Catullus' dedication of his own *nugae*, that is, his trifles.

Central to the proems, too, is the act of negation. The poet defines his work through negatives (forms of *non* appear four times in both *CP* 1 and 2; *incomptis* suggests a further negation in *CP* 1). The poet writes that the content is not virginal—and to emphasize that he remarks that Priapus' groin is covered by *no* clothing (*nullis vestibus*). In this way, the *CP* is defined not in positive terms, but primarily in terms of what it lacks. The idea that the *CP* is not poetry is reinforced in both introductions. Höschele calls this concept the *CP*'s “anti-book poetics,” and Sandoz, its “unpoetic poetics.”⁴⁹ What these two scholars mean by these expressions is that in these two proems the poet seems determined to convince the reader that his poetry is *not* poetry. Therefore his poetic program is an *antipoetic* program. As the poet says in *CP* 2, his poems are not worthy of placement in a poetry book (*horto carmina digna, non libello*, 2.2) and they were not written with effort (*scripsi non nimium laboriose*, 2.3). *Lusus* and its cognates are important in this respect as they can suggest inferiority both in form and in content. The *CP* lays claim to both of these inferior qualities, but as several critics of the proems have noted, the poet's claims are often undercut by the poetry itself. Buchheit

kind; it may even—though only in very exceptional cases—include the whole of poetry in contrast to a political life-work, considered as the more important.”

⁴⁸ Fordyce 1961: 215-6 *ad loc.*

⁴⁹ This exact phrase is from Höschele's 2007 paper at the APA Annual Meeting in San Antonio, TX; for this idea, however, see Höschele 2008a, 2008b. Chappuis Sandoz 2011: 96 “unpoetischen' Poetik.”

was the first to suggest that, in much the way in which poets like Catullus and Ovid figure their poetry as light or trifling, but in reality write with great care, the poet of the *CP* writes “light” poetry while achieving a high art form.⁵⁰ In addition, the poet declares his work as “anti-book” in these two proems, in the sense that it is not worthy of inclusion in a book, but does so while making intertextual references to three other “book” introductions: Catullus’ dedication to Cornelius Nepos, Martial’s introduction to Domitian, and two introductions in Strato.⁵¹ Much has been said about the relationship between the *CP* and these three intertexts, most of it supporting the idea that these allusions undermine the poet’s insistence that his book is not a book. I think there is more to be said specifically with respect to the *CP*’s relationship with past Priapus narratives, where form and content are also at issue. In the section that follows I suggest a few new interpretations that further demonstrate the *CP*’s “unpoetic poetics” not only in terms of content but also of form. My discussion of the two proems is unbalanced in favor of *CP* 1, but this is partly due to the fact that much less has been said about this poem in comparison to *CP* 2, where the Catullan intertext is obvious. More, likewise, has been said about line two of *CP* 1, which directly associates the poem with Martial *Epigram* 1.4, than has been said about the remaining lines of the poem. I also will have more to say about *CP* 2 in the following chapter.

The first proem, an eight-line poem in elegiac couplets, addresses the reader and explains the content of the work he or she is about to read.

⁵⁰ Buchheit 1962: 29-31 (at 29).

⁵¹ The two proems share verbal and thematic connections with Catullus 1, Martial 1.4, and Strato *A.P.* 12.1, 12.2. For a fuller discussion of these connections, see especially Höschele 2010 and Citroni 2008.

carminis incompti lusus lecture procaces,
 conveniens Latio pone supercilium.
 non soror hoc habitat Phoebi, non Vesta sacello,
 nec quae de patrio vertice nata dea est,
 sed ruber hortorum custos, membrorior aequo, 5
 qui tectum nullis vestibus inguen habet.
 aut igitur tunicam parti praetende tegendae,
 aut quibus hanc oculis aspicias, ista lege. (CP 1)

You who are about to read shameless jests of artless verse, lower that brow that befits Latium. The sister of Phoebus does not dwell in this shrine, nor does Vesta, nor does the goddess who was born from her father's head, but the ruddy guardian of gardens, more than usually well-endowed, who has his groin covered by no clothing. So, either put a tunic over the part that ought to be covered, or, with the eyes with which you gaze upon this part, read on.

The arrangement of this poem stands out for its artistry. The first and last couplets speak directly to the reader, and the middle two couplets define the work, first by a negative and then by a positive.⁵² This tightly organized structure already compromises the poet's description of his own poetry in the first line as *lusus* and *incomptus*.

This opening programmatic statement introduces the reader to the lowness of Priapic verses. As if to drive this point home, the poet refers to his poetry as the unkempt verse (*carminis incompti*) that tells of wanton diversions (*lusus procaces*). The two adjectives identify the poetry as not only thematically low (*procaces*) but also stylistically low (*incompti*). This line may be an allusion to *Georgics* 2.386, where Vergil recounts the festive performances of rustic Italians (*versibus incomptis ludunt risuque soluto*). The similarity between the two lines has not escaped readers' notice, but the exact

⁵² Goldberg 1992: 51. The short priamel here in couplets two and three may also recall Horace's longer one in the introduction to Book One of his *Odes*.

relationship between these two passages still remains to be explored.⁵³ This first line does set the reader up with low expectations for the poetry, but that set up is more nuanced than it may appear to be. To focus first on the content: It is certainly not an inappropriate gesture for a poet whose subject matter is obscene and rustic (*lusus procaces; custos hortorum*) to align his poetry with Fescennine verses, which is what the Italians are performing in the *Georgics*. The *CP* operates on the fiction that these poems are in dedication to a rural god of agriculture. Priapus is a rustic god of gardens whose statues are made of wood and are fashioned without much skill.⁵⁴ In this respect, the association with Fescennine verses imparts a feeling of primitive humor.

This connection has been solely on a thematic level—to identify some common ground between the poems of *CP* and Fescennine verses. In this case Vergil is nothing but the conduit for the narrative of rustic Italic verse. But I would like to explore a possible point of interaction between the poet of the *CP* and Vergil. In the five-line passage in the *Georgics* in which Vergil recounts the performance of Fescennine verses, there are two golden lines and two lines that Thomas considers their “artistic equivalent.”⁵⁵ The content and the style of this passage are in conversation with each other, as if Vergil were drawing an even sharper contrast between his own poetry and Fescennine verses by writing about this artless form of primitive poetry with such style

⁵³ Both Goldberg and Callebaut present Vergil as a comparable passage in their commentaries.

⁵⁴ Thomas (1988: 227 *ad loc.*) suggests that the reference *incomptus* suggests that the Italians’ verse is lacking in *ars*, so the fact that the statue Priapus statue is another object made *sine arte* (*CP* 63.10) helps us make this connection between the two passages.

⁵⁵ A golden line is comprised of two interlocking sets of substantive nouns and adjective and a verb in the middle.

and perfection.⁵⁶ This is not the case in the *CP*, which, we recall, claims not to have such craft. The first hexameter line in the *CP*, however, appears in such a way that it seems the poet is playing up the fact that this line is *not* golden. All of the components of a golden line — a pair of nouns, each with its own modifier, and a single verb — are there, but they are arranged in an order that is completely jumbled in comparison to the ideal arrangement where a verb is placed directly in between two sets of noun and adjective pairs (*carminis incompti lusus lecture procaces*).⁵⁷ In addition, the use of *lecture* (as opposed to *legis*) is telling in this respect, as it provides the line with the verb required of golden lines, but it is only a verbal adjective, not a finite verb.⁵⁸ The poet seems to be acting out for the reader the unpolished style that he claims for his poetry.⁵⁹

The second couplet introduces us to the goddesses who do not dwell in this shrine: Diana (*soror Phoebi*), Vesta, and Minerva (*quae de patrio vertice nata dea est*). These goddesses are all notable for their chastity, which makes them antithetical to Priapus. I suggest that these specific goddesses are also important for the poetic and literary associations they bring to the *CP*. The poet uses these figures as symbols either for content or for form, and if this reading is correct, then we can identify another layer to the poem's structure: the goddesses mentioned first and third speak to poetic form while the second to the issue of content. Again, the emphasis on negation here fits in with the

⁵⁶ Thomas 1988: 227-8 at 386-90.

⁵⁷ If a golden line is abVAB, then *CP* 1.1 is AaBVb.

⁵⁸ *Cf.* Mart.1.1: *legis*. *Cf.* also Ov. *Trist.* 3.1: *lectores*; Cat. 14B.1: *eritis lectores*.

⁵⁹ It is as if the poet of the *CP* is saying “My poetry is rustic and unpolished, like the Fescennine verses. No, really, it is!” For more on this manner of parody, see chapter one.

CP's poetic program. Diana is mentioned not by name, but as the sister of Phoebus Apollo. This designation is found elsewhere in other poetic works.⁶⁰ Given that *CP* 1 is a proem and that we might otherwise expect the name of Apollo or the Muses in a proem, the antonomasia could be asking us to look at both sister *and* brother, as if to say, Apollo does not inhabit the *CP*.⁶¹ It is possible that the mention of Minerva has a similar purpose. The periphrasis emphasizes her paternal birth, which calls to mind the existing trope of the male poet as procreator of his poetry that we see in Ovid, for example.⁶² Ovid makes an explicit comparison between the creation of his poetry and the birth of Minerva in *Tristia* 3.14.13-14.⁶³ Ovid's poetry, like Minerva, has sprung forth from his mind through his own creative will. But the poet of the *CP* says that the goddess who sprang from her father's head is *not* present in this book, so he is not making the same claim that Ovid seems to have made in the *Tristia*. This could, however, be another example of the poet's insincerity about his own work. The *CP* is, in many respects, an autogenetic product like Minerva, and the goddess is mentioned in *CP* 3 as a muse, albeit one who is

⁶⁰ Virg. *Aen.* 1.329; Ovid *Met.* 5.330; Mart. 9.35.5. (*soror Phoebi* occurs in Prop. 2.15.15, but refers to Selene.)

⁶¹ See Chapters one and three for more on the absence of Apollo (and the Muses) in Priapus' poetry.

⁶² One finds a number of comparisons to fertility and infertility here in the *Tristia*. For example, the three books of the *Ars Amatoria* are siblings (*fratres*; *Trist.* 1.1.107). See Davisson 1984 for a full study of this imagery. Cf. Stephanson 2004: 122-25.

⁶³ *Tristia* 3.14.13-4
*Palladis exemplo de me sine matre creata
 carmina sunt; stirps haec progeniesque mea est.*

crassa.⁶⁴ It is a collection that is produced without the assistance of the Muses, as the poet says explicitly in *CP* 2, or Apollo, as we possibly see in the reference to his sister.

Vesta, however, has less importance as a symbol of the craft of poetry and more importance for her literary association. The mention of her name in a collection of poems about Priapus possibly calls to mind Priapus' attempted rape of Vesta, which appears in the sixth book of Ovid's *Fasti*.⁶⁵ These two deities are not associated before the *Fasti*, and critics of that episode point out the incongruity of this pairing, something that Ovid himself seems to suggest when he refers to the story of Lotis as "fitting for the god" (*apta deo*, 1.392), but not the story of Vesta.⁶⁶ Granted, the mention of Vesta in the *CP* is not out of place alongside the references to Minerva and Diana. It is, however, not difficult to imagine the poet's reference to Vesta as being connected to the Ovidian narrative. A more explicit link between the *Fasti* and the *CP* appears in line 6 at the beginning of the third couplet. Priapus, like Minerva and Diana, is not referred to by name, but by an epithet; he is called the ruddy guardian of gardens (*ruber hortorum custos*). Priapus is called *custos* elsewhere, and he is even referred to as *custos horti*. Only in Tibullus 1.4 and *Fasti* 6 is he called *ruber custos*; elsewhere he is referred to as simply *ruber* or

⁶⁴ Stephanson 2004: 122-25. The poet of the *CP* does not invoke divine aid in writing his poetry. We do not see the sexual metaphors for this kind of poetic activity (see Fowler 2002) in the *CP*, but we do see several scenes or possible allusions to masturbatory phallic activity to represent creative activity, which does have comparanda in earlier poetry (*cf.* *Ov. Am.* 1.1).

⁶⁵ It is difficult to assess the impact of Ovid's later works from exile on silver age. It does seem to be the case that Martial is reading Ovid's exile poetry, and as later readings of poems in the *CP* demonstrate (*e.g.* *CP* 68), certain Ovidian verbal borrowings come from the exile poetry. For more on *CP* 68 and Ovid, see section 2B and 3 in Chapter One.

⁶⁶ The Priapus and Vesta episode has its fair share of critics, and it was long thought that Ovid intended to remove this episode, which many deem inferior to the comparable episode between Priapus and Lotis in Book One. See Fantham 1983. For arguments in favor of both episodes, see Williams 1991: 196-200; Newlands 1995, Chapter Four.

rubicundus.⁶⁷ But the exact combination of these epithets appears only here in the *CP* and in the Vesta episode in *Fasti* 6.333, where we see *ruber hortorum custos* in the same position of the hexameter line.⁶⁸ These are the only two places in extant literature where Priapus is the *custos hortorum* rather than *custos horti*. Since this couplet takes us from an explanation of what the work is not to what it is, *ruber hortorum custos* can be read as a link between past literary narratives of Priapus and the *CP*.⁶⁹ The phallic possibilities of *ruber* are confirmed in the second half of the line. Priapus is next called *membrosior aequo*.⁷⁰ This word suggests two possible meanings; first, and most obviously, it is a simple description of Priapus – more than usually well endowed. But, second, it could be a programmatic cue to the reader that the *CP* is noticeably more obscene than all previous Priapus narratives. The *CP*, at least in appearance, is brasher; it is taking an extra step beyond its milder antecedents that shrouded Priapus’ penis in euphemisms and jokes.⁷¹

The second proem reiterates many of the claims in *CP* 1, though in noticeably different terms. This poem addresses Priapus, not the reader, and asks him to receive his poetry kindly. The three virginal goddesses who do not dwell in Priapus’ shrine are replaced with a reference to the Muses and Priapus’ “non-virginal space” (*non virgineum*

⁶⁷ *ruber*: Hor. *S.* 1.8.5; Tib. 1.1.17; [Verg.] *Priapeum* ‘*Quid Hoc Novi Est?*’ 8; Ov. *F.* 1.415; *CP* 26.9 *rubicundus*: Ov. *F.* 6.319.

⁶⁸ Callebat (2012: 62-63) points out the repetition of Ovid’s phrase here, but takes the correspondence no further.

⁶⁹ The references to deities in Strato *A.P.* 12.2 are suggestive of characters typical to literary genres (e.g. Priam = epic, Niobe, Medea, and Itys = tragedy). See also Höschele 2010: 275-7.

⁷⁰ I will explore the linguistic form of this word more fully in Chapter One.

⁷¹ It is tempting to read *membrosior* here as a set-up for *CP* 80, where the poet’s *mentula* loses its strength. *CP* 80 is likely based on *Amores* 3.7, where Ovid refers to his flagging penis as a half-dead member (*semimortua membra*).

locum). In place of the periphrasis in *CP* 1.5-7 we see the direct mention of Priapus' penis (*mentulam Priapi*).

ludens haec ego teste te, Priape,	
horto carmina digna, non libello,	
scripsi non nimium laboriose.	
nec Musas tamen, ut solent poetae,	
ad non virgineum locum vocavi.	5
nam sensus mihi corque defuisset,	
castas, Pierium chorum, sorores	
auso ducere mentulam ad Priapi.	
ergo quidquid id est, quod otiosus	
templi parietibus tui notavi,	10
in partem accipias bonam, rogamus.	(<i>CP</i> 2)

I call you as my witness that is was with playful intention that I wrote these poems, Priapus, not with very much effort, worthy of a garden, not a poetry book. I have not called the Muses to this non-virginal place, as poets are accustomed to do. For I would have been stupid and senseless, if I had dared to lead the chaste sisters, the chorus of Pieria, to Priapus' prick. And so, whatever it is that I have scratched on your temple wall in my leisure, I ask that you accept it in good favor.

Here the poet claims artlessness in a more extended manner than in *CP* 1, where we find the descriptors “unpolished” (*incompti*) and “shameless” (*procaces*) only in the first line. The emphasis here is not so much on the content (Priapus) as it is on the poems' aesthetic value. They do not belong in a poetic book; they were created without the Muses; they were scribbled down in leisure on a wall. In our transition from *CP* 1 to *CP* 2, we have also transitioned from Priapus' indecent member to the *CP*'s uncouth aesthetics. The craft of poetry is first represented as the act of writing without skill or labor (*non nimium laboriose*), then later as the act of scribbling on walls (*parietibus...notavi*). The poet situates his poetry first in a garden setting and then in a temple, neither of which is the *libellus* towards which he has previously gestured. The medium for this poetry is the

surface of a wall, not a tablet or piece of papyrus. The distances himself not only from poets, but also from the Muses as inspirers and judges of poetry.

Even a hasty reader may notice the Catullan language in this poem. In addition to a similar tone and function, there are six obvious points of contact between *CP 2* and Catullus' dedication to Cornelius Nepos.⁷² Such correspondences were once thought to be grounds for attributing the poem to Catullus. Buchheit analyzed the similarities between these two poems from the perspective of literary influence and intertextuality, and this similarity has been thoroughly re-analyzed since then.⁷³ As Citroni observes, *CP 2* is, in many respects, an antiphrasis of Catullus' dedication. Catullus refers to his poetry book as a *libellus*, but *CP 2* is not fit for such a book (*digna non libello*). Nepos' work is industrious (*chartis...laboriosis*), the poetry of *CP*, on the other hand, is not so (*scripsi non nimium laboriose*). Catullus invokes the virginal Muse (*patrona virgo*), but the poet of the *CP* says that he did not call the chaste sisters to this non-virginal space (*non virgineum locum*). The past participle of *audere* also appears in both poems (*auso*;

⁷² Cat. 1
*cui dono lepidum novum libellum
arido modo pumice expolitum?
Corneli, tibi: namque tu solebas
meas esse aliquid putare nugas
iam tum, cum ausus es unus Italorum
omne aevum tribus explicare chartis,
doctis, Iuppiter, et laboriosis.
quare habe tibi quidquid hoc libelli,
qualecumque, quod, o patrona virgo
plus uno maneat perenne saeclo.*

⁷³ Citroni 2008 and de Miguel Mora 2008. Citroni is less willing to see Catullus as the overarching influence on the two poems of the *CP* and he concentrates more on the relationship between Martial and the *CP* in these introductory poems by focusing on the phrase *pone supercilium* in line 2 of *CP 1*, a phrase which only appears elsewhere in Martial's address to Domitian as reader in 1.4.2.

ausus).⁷⁴ Of this relationship, de Miguel Mora says: “the anonymous author of the *Priapea* places his poems, probably with the same ironic tone, at a level below that of Catullus, as unworthy of appearing in [poetry] books (small as they are) by their content and quality.”⁷⁵

The two proems set up low expectations for the *CP*. We are told that these poems are not artistic and do not treat serious themes. As we see in de Miguel Mora’s observation above, the poet’s positioning of his work at level below that of Catullus both diminishes the work – however ironically – and identifies Catullus as a poetic ancestor through clever allusions. The poet of the *CP* “plays” on several levels: he writes poetry that is diverting, he draws from and alludes to other works of poetry, he selectively observes and violates poetic norms and expectations, he mocks intruders into Priapus’ garden (although “mocks” puts some of his threats lightly), and finally, he makes fun of the whole institution of writing poetry by continually placing his work as beneath the lowest of the low, yet writing with advanced literary style. There is also the aspect of Catullan *lusus* that I will explore in the next chapter. For Catullus and Licinius Calvus in *c.* 51, play indicates the mutual exchange of verses in different meters. As Hallett observes, that is exactly what we have in these two proems.⁷⁶ They work together and

⁷⁴ Forms of *audere* appear in other poetic *apologiae*; of particular note for the *CP* are: Lucr. 1.36-7 (*primum Graius homo mortalis tollere contra / est oculos ausus*); Verg. *Ecl.* 2.174-5 (*tibi res antiquae laudis et artem / ingredior sanctos ausus recludere fontis*); Col. 10.pr.3.9 (*istud nobis fuerat audendum*), 10.435-6 (*qui primus veteres ausus recludere fontis / Ascraeum*); Mart. 12.94.7 (*audemus saturas*); Juv. 10.174-5 (*quidquid Graecia mendax / audet in historia*). See Chapter Three, Section 1 for more on these passages.

⁷⁵ de Miguel Mora 2008: 96. “El anónimo autor de los *Priapea* coloca sus poemas, probablemente con el mismo tono irónico, en un nivel inferior al de Catulo, indignos de aparecer en libros (por pequeños que estos sean) por su contenido y por su calidad.”

⁷⁶ Hallett 1996: 336.

although the poems have individual meaning, they also have meaning that is only present in the company of other poems. One fills in gaps of the other; questions of one are answered in the other. The two poems work together as programmatic statements for the *CP*.

We will revisit this particular aspect of play, in addition to the idea that one can “play” with readers’ expectations, poetic norms, and literary narratives, in the next section. This next section presents an often over-looked poem, *CP* 61. This poem offers a vignette that, at least upon first reading, is not hyper-masculine or obscene, and therefore, complicates our understanding of the *CP* as a whole. Upon a deeper reading of the poem, one finds that it follows a similar program to what we have seen in *CP* 1 and 2.

Section 5: A Case Study for Priapean Poetics and Unity (*CP* 61)

CP 61 has been considered an outlier to the collection. It does not feature Priapus, and is neither explicitly sexual nor satirical. The poem, which takes the shape of a priamel, is the self-defense of a barren fruit tree; after the tree has ruled out various vermin and the climate as sources of blame for its sterility, it reveals that dedications of bad poetry are the real burden.

quid frustra quereris, colone, mecum, quod quondam bene fructuosa malus autumnis sterilis duobus adstem? non me praegravat, ut putas, senectus, nec sum grandine verberata dura,	5
nec gemmas modo germine exeuntes seri frigoris ustulavit aura, nec venti pluviaeve siccitasve, quod de se quererer, malum dederunt; non sturnus mihi gracculusve raptor aut cornix anus aut aquosus anser	10

aut corvos nocuit siticulosus:
 sed quod carmina pessimi poetae
 ramis sustineo laboriosis. (CP 61)

Why do you complain in vain, farmer, that, once a well-producing fruit tree, I stand up sterile for two Autumns? Old age does not wear me down, as you think, nor am I crippled by hard hail, nor has the chill of a late frost burned the buds with the sprig just peeking out, neither the winds nor the rains nor the heat have given me ill to complain about; neither starling nor ravishing jackdaw nor old crow nor water-dwelling goose nor thirsty raven harms me: rather, the fact that I am holding up the poems of the worst poet on my hardworking limbs.

Scaliger said outright that *CP 61* is not a *priapeum*: *mirum autem hoc Epigramma, quod Priapeum non est, huc alieno loco immissum esset.*⁷⁷ Parker is in agreement. O'Connor mentions only the motif of exposure to weather and harm by birds as a link between *CP 61* and other *priapea*.⁷⁸ Arguments have been made that the tree is standing next to a shrine of Priapus.⁷⁹ Littlewood, however, suggests that the apple tree itself embodies Priapus.⁸⁰ Priapic statues were made of wood, as is commonly noted in the poems themselves, and Herter suggests that the earliest representations of Priapus were merely trees with phallus-like branches.⁸¹ Most recently, Callebat has suggested that the poem is a “stylistic excursus” introduced in the previous poem, *CP 60*, which compares apples to

⁷⁷ This is cited in Parker 1988: 162.

⁷⁸ These motifs appear in the *CP*, but more prominently in earlier Priapus narratives.

⁷⁹ Parker 1988: 161.

⁸⁰ Littlewood 1968: 162.

⁸¹ Herter 1932: 4-5. Of particular interest is Herter's following observation (at 4): “Facillime eius figura ex lingo bifurco nascebatur, sed poterat etiam ramus ut phalli loco esset trunco infigi; ex naturali autem lignorum flexura resupinus ille habitus ortus est, quo postea libidinem dei apte significari putaverunt, ut omnino haud pauca, quae posterioribus ad naturam eius accommodata esse videbantur (velut calvities), a priscorum fabrorum facultatibus tuo iure repetas.”

poems.⁸² There are verbal echoes that unite *CP* 60-62 as a cohesive unit.⁸³ In Höschele's analysis of the *CP*'s "garden poetics," *CP* 60 and 61, and additionally *CP* 68, demonstrate a continued motif of poems as apples, and poetry book as garden.⁸⁴

There are several clear Priapic elements to *CP* 61. We have noted above O'Connor's observation that the tree's exposure to inclement weather and birds is a typical complaint of Priapus statues in other Priapic poems. There is also the important fact that this apple tree contains the raw material of Priapus statues, that is, it is wooden. The woodenness of Priapus statues is a detail that appears often in Priapic poetry. In addition to the presence of these motifs in the poem, there is also a link between *CP* 61 and the poetic program of the book, which we saw laid out in the two proems. We should not understand the apple tree's claims that these common Priapic motifs are not the reasons for his sterility as evidence that *CP* 61 is not a *priapeum*. Instead, the invalidation of these motifs functions on a poetic level; it distances the poem from other *priapea*.

I think there are more reasons to affirm *CP* 61's role in a poetic program, and similar to what we saw in *CP* 1 and 2, this involves a negation of previous narratives and poetic forms. The priamel form emphasizes negation and associates *CP* 61 with *CP* 1, where we saw a much briefer priamel (*non...non...nec...sed*; 1.3-5). Lines 4 through 12 are all negated, and the climax comes in line 13. The content of the priamel is representative of the typical content in Priapus narratives and Priapic poems. In his

⁸² Callebat 2012: 249-50. "Si aucune référence explicite n'est faite ici à Priape, la prosopopée de l'arbre que propose ce carmen peut être interprétée comme un excursus stylistique généré par le thème du carmen précédent (dédicace versifiée à Priape)."

⁸³ Goldberg 1992: 39. *siticulosus* (61.12) = *siticulosam* (63.3); *canes* (62.1) = *caniculam* (63.2).

⁸⁴ Höschele 2008a, 2010: 281-2.

negation of this content, I suggest, the poet is distancing his Priapic poetry from earlier versions, which resembles the negation of literary content we saw in *CP* 1.

The first line of the priamel focuses on old age. This is not typical of Priapic poetry, but it is an important aspect of the thematic impotence that unifies the end of the *CP*, which I will explore in the third chapter. The following four lines focus on the weather, which is typical of Priapic poems. The devotee in Tibullus 1.4 promises to provide shelter for the Priapus statue to protect him from the sun and the snow.⁸⁵ Another example involving a devotee/farmer and Priapus statue appears in the first *priapeum* of the *Appendix Vergiliana*.⁸⁶ A Priapus statue is the speaker of this poem. Although he alludes to all four seasons in the opening lines, he focuses specifically on the adversities of winter. He fears that an ignorant farmer will use him for firewood. After the weather, the apple tree mentions birds as possible tormentors (*non sturnus mihi gracculusve raptor* | *aut cornix anus aut aquosus anser* | *aut corvos nocuit siticulosus*; 10-12). This motif, too, is found elsewhere. Tibullus also refers to Priapus in 1.1, and it is not Priapus' vulnerability to the weather that we see here, but his role as a protector against birds.⁸⁷ In

⁸⁵ Tib. 1.4.1-6

sic umbrosa tibi contingant tecta, Priape,
ne capiti soles, ne noceantque nives:
quae tua formosos cepit sollertia? certe
non tibi barba nitet, non tibi culta coma est,
nudus et hibernae producis frigora brumae,
nudus et aestivi tempora sicca Canis.

⁸⁶ [Verg.] *Priapea* 1.1-4

vere rosa, autumno pomis, aestate frequentor
spicis: una mihi est horrida pestis hiemps;
nam frigus metuo et uereor ne ligneus ignem
hic deus ignavis praebeat agricolis.

⁸⁷ Tib. 1.1.17-8

pomosisque ruber custos ponatur in hortis,
terreat ut saeva falce Priapus aves.

fact, a common epithet for Priapus seems to be something along the lines of “guard against/ source of fear for thieves and birds,” (*custos furum atque avium*; *Geo.* 4.110; *furum aviumque maxima formido*, *Hor. S.* 1.8.3-4). It is understandable that Priapus, as a garden god, would be regularly assailed by these two groups.⁸⁸ But the apple tree says that it is not the birds that are causing his infertility. These episodes provide evidence of Priapic motifs that are denied in *CP* 61.

The Priapus of Horace’s eighth *Satire*, who, as we just saw, is the “greatest terror for thieves and birds,” is in a situation that is similar to that of the apple tree in *CP* 61. The previous Priapus episode, that is, Horace’s *Satire*, is not necessarily rejected here in *CP* 61, but rather, serves as a possible model. Horace’s Priapus says that it is not the beasts, but the charms of witches that bother him.⁸⁹ Further, Horace’s correlative *non tantum... quantum* looks very much like a template for the priamel in *CP* 61. Priapus mentions birds and beasts only to subsequently deny them – or at least undermine their threat. In both *Satire* 1.8 and *CP* 61, common menaces (weather, birds, thieves) pale in comparison to the hazards of *carmina*. In *Satire* 1.8, those verses are incantatory (*carminibus atque venenis*); in *CP* 61, they are now poetic (*carmina pessimi poetae*). The emulation of *Satire* 1.8 is another Priapic element in *CP* 61.

⁸⁸ cf. Juvenal 6.17-18. *cum furem nemo timeret | caulibus ac pomis et aperto viveret horto*. The speaker uses the example of open gardens to illustrate the time when the world was free from theft.

⁸⁹ *Hor. S.* 1.8.17-20
cum mihi non tantum furesque feraeque suetae
hunc vexare locum curae sunt atque labori
quantum carminibus quae versant atque venenis
humanos animos...

In our progression through these other poems about Priapus and *CP* 61, we see the materiality of the tree, the Priapus statue, and the poetry frequently underscored. The poet of *CP* 61, I suggest, bookends the priamel, which contains common Priapic motifs, with a reference to sterility at the beginning and what may be a quotation of Catullus at the end in order to evoke and transform another element of Priapic poetry: the creation of the statue out of wood and the impermanence of such material. In the Vergilian *priapeum*, Priapus fears that he will become firewood for cold and lazy farmers in the winter. A similar threat may loom over the apple tree in *CP* 61. Although such a threat is never clearly expressed, one wonders why the apple tree is defending itself, or perhaps better said: what is it defending itself from?

The fact that Priapus is made of wood opens up the possibility for poets to play with the materiality of their own poetry. Wood is a common image in metapoetic commentary.⁹⁰ The *inutile lignum* is Horace's poetic material just as much as it is the craftsman's raw material. In *CP* 61, the apple tree's branches are called *laboriosis*, an adjective we only see elsewhere in *CP* 2 as an adverb describing the excessive style in which these poems were *not* written. The apple tree's branches appear to be excessively hardworking—perhaps we should emend the line to say *ramis nimium laboriosis*—if sustaining them has brought about sterility.

A comparison with Catullus 36 allows us to see a new element to this poem that is not obvious in a first reading. It is not only the threat of wood burning, but also the phrase “*carmina pessimi poetae*” that links Catullus 36 and *CP* 61. Catullus' infamous attack on

⁹⁰ See Coleman 1988: XXII-XXIII, Hinds 1998: 11-14.

Volusius' poetry begins with an order that Volusius fulfill a vow on behalf of Lesbia, who has promised to Venus and Cupid that she will devote the choicest bits of Catullus' poetry to be burned in honor of Vulcan.⁹¹ Comparing Catullus 36 to *CP* 61 allows us to consider the identity of *pessimus poeta* of *CP* 61. The use of the singular may simply be an echo of Catullus 36. But in poem 36, the identity of the *poeta* is unclear, so it is possible that such confusion of identity is a part of *CP* 61, too. According to Lesbia, Catullus is the *pessimus poeta*, but Catullus manipulates the structure of the poem in order to suggest that Volusius is the real *pessimus poeta*. In *CP* 61 the reference may be to any poet, and such an interpretation might call on us to see the tree as a version of Priapus that is rejecting types of poetry as the poet does in *CP* 2. But it could also be a reference to *this* poet, that is, the poet of the *CP*, as we see in the reference to *poeta noster* in *CP* 79. In this case, the hardworking branches that cannot sustain the poems of the worst poet "of the *CP*" also act out the distinction between types of poetry in *CP* 2, but from the opposite perspective. The tree has the ability both to be a Priapus and not be a Priapus; this cleverness is what makes the poem stand out, but it does not make the poem an outlier as critics once suggested.

We have just seen how the meaning of *CP* 61 is hidden in allusions and intertexts. It is almost impossible *not* to see the apple tree as an extension of the Priapus statue given the several motifs in the poem that are common to Priapic poetry. The apple tree, in

⁹¹ Cat. 36.3-8
nam sanctae Veneri Cupidinique
vovit, si sibi restitutus essem
desissemque truces vibrare iambos,
electissima pessimi poetae
scripta tardipedi deo daturam
infelicibus ustulanda lignis.

stating that the weather and animals do not injure him, is implicitly stating that he is not Priapus. But the apple tree demonstrates, nevertheless, that he *is* similar to Priapus. Even in the apple tree’s distinction between outdoor blights and poetry, he sounds Priapic, if we take notice of the echoes of Horace’s eighth *Satire* in this poem. The apple tree’s sterility and its existence as a woody plant point us to a nexus of readings about the aesthetics of the *CP*. These readings depend on the reader’s recognition of the Priapic motif of woodenness in *CP* 61.

But the apple tree is, also, decidedly *not* Priapus. It is the work of the most ironic poet, then, to present readers with a poem that is so obviously Priapic only two poems later. *CP* 63 seems to capture all of the typical elements of Priapic poetry, among which are climate conditions a statue must endure from being situated outside.⁹²

parum est mihi quod hic <simul> pedem fixi,
 agente terra per caniculam rimas
 siticulosam sustinemus aestatem;
 parum, quod hiemis perfluunt sinus imbres
 et in capillos grandines cadunt nostros 5
 rigetque dura barba vineta crystallo (*CP* 63.1-6)

Is it not enough that I have fixed my seat here at the same time when, while the ground cracks from the Dog Star, we endure the parched summer? Is it not enough that my clothes in winter are soaked through and hail falls on my hair and my beard stiffens, hardened by solid ice?

Both *CP* 61 and 63 include references to hail (*grandine*; *grandines*), and although one may argue that the two poems only share that one word, such *variatio* is typical of the *CP*. They both mention the rain (*pluviae*; *imbres*) and the heat (*siccitas*; *siticulosam aestatem*). The close proximity of the two poems lends further weight to the argument

⁹² O'Connor 1989: 149. Typical elements of the priapic poetry include complaints about the elements, the artless crafting of Priapus statues, the low position of Priapus among other gods, and sexual deviancy.

that they are responding to each other. This is another example of the “play” that is evident in the two poems. A reader may be forced to look for deeper meaning in *CP* 61 because the tree is an apple tree, not Priapus. And such a search for deeper meaning gives one to insight into the poetic program, as we have just seen. But the poet soon follows this up with a poem that is so stereotypically a Priapic poem that it is almost over the top with its inclusion of different themes and motifs, as if to joke with the reader and say, “Yes, we have been referring to Priapus this whole time.”

To conclude with one last point, I would like to bring into the discussion Propertius 1.16, a text that Stewart has already compared to *CP* 61 in an article on the artistic image of Priapus.⁹³ His comparison of the two texts is made only in passing, but much more can be said about these two poems. The main speaker of Propertius 1.16 is the door of an elegiac woman’s home. The door, a static witness to many *paraclausithrya*, is in a position that is similar to that of the apple tree of *CP* 61; it laments the suffering it has endured at the hands of another (*nunc ego...pulsata indignis saepe queror manibus*; 5-6). The hands, of course, belong to the *exclusus amator*, a figure that is thematically similar to the Priapus statue.⁹⁴ Like the apple tree, the door also

⁹³ Stewart 1997: 578.

⁹⁴ For more on this comparison between Priapus and the *exclusus amator*, see Chapter Three.

Cf. Tib. 1.2.31-4.

*non mihi pigra nocent hibernae frigora noctis,
non mihi, cum multa decidit imber aqua.
non labor hic laedit, reseret modo Delia postes
et vocet ad digiti me taciturna sonum.*

Tibullus’ speaker is not, strictly speaking, complaining about the weather. Like the apple tree in *CP* 61 he lists the weather as a common burden before getting to the heart of the matter, which in Tibullus’ case is that these burdens would not be troubling as long as his mistress lets him inside her home. In both instances, however, we can see forced exposure to the elements as a central concern of static objects, whether that is the apple tree, the Priapus statue, or the resolute lover.

complains about its own ineffectiveness, although instead of being unable to produce fruit, it is unable to ward off the voices of poets who assail its mistress (*non possum infamis dominae defendere voces, | nobilis obscenis tradita carminibus*; 9-10). Both the tree and the door are typically voiceless participants in poetic settings who are given a voice. The lament of the apple tree sounds similar to other *priapea* in which the god laments his fixed location. The door recites a standard elegiac paraclausithyron as if it were a poem the door had previously been forced to hear perhaps more than once, and had committed to memory. What both objects choose to vocalize is a direct reflection of the poetry in which they are situated. The tree in *CP* 61 laments of its poem-offerings in hendecasyllables, Catullus' favored meter for poetic critique. The door laments of its abuse by elegiac poets in the favored elegiac motif for singing at one's door. This comparison acts out what we see in the priamel of *CP* 61 and what we see in the negative language in *CP* 1 and 2. In all of these examples, a speaker tries to distance some aspect of the poetry from a "standard"—whether that is a genre of poetry, an aesthetic quality of poetry, or a literary theme—in the language and style of that standard. In the *CP*, this is a very ironic gesture. The poet is very conscious of books in his anti-book poetics, very poetic in his unpoetic poetics, and very aware of the potential for metaphors in his garden poetics. *CP* 61 is part of this poetic program, but it has more nuance than previous readers have identified.

Conclusion

The question of authorship may never be sufficiently answered, but as I hope to have shown in the first half of this Introduction, there are many aspects of the *CP* that suggest

a unifying author and poetics. In the following chapters I will further examine the poetic elements of the *CP* in greater, more expansive detail. In particular, I will discuss an especially rich and suggestive group of themes: repetition (of subject matter or poetic form, for example), statuary, and physical boundaries. These themes are present in the three poems we have just analyzed. To conclude this Introduction, I offer a brief overview of *CP* 1, 2, and 61 with these themes in mind, in preparation for a more detailed discussion in the chapters that follow.

CP 61 forces us to reconsider the role of intra- and intertextuality in a thematically “repetitive” text, which will be the subject of chapter 1. Priapus is not a character in *CP* 61, but we understand his presence there because of the poem’s many intra- and intertexts that connect this apple tree to Priapus and Priapic poetry. In the second chapter I turn to the theme of statuary. This theme, which we see in the references to wood of the apple tree in *CP* 61 and of the Priapus statue, is aligned with the poet’s description of his writing style in the two proems. That is, the manufacture of statuary is made comparable to the manufacture of poetry; both, the poet of the *CP* claims, are shoddy. The characterization of Priapus as the subject of “low” poetry and art underlies, as I will suggest in chapter 2, the comparison Priapus makes in *CP* 1 between himself and other gods. In the third chapter I consider the physical setting of these poems. The two proems present the reader with images of a physical setting and different spatial arrangements. These are poems that take place in a garden, and in *CP* 61 poems are even depicted as physical dedications hung onto a tree in that garden. But these are also poems that are scribbled onto a temple walls, another physical space. There is also the threshold

of the book, a threshold that the reader is invited to cross. So, let us cross that threshold now and explore this rich text further.

CHAPTER ONE: Readers and Repetition

Introduction

At the end of the Introduction we confronted the claim that *CP* 61 is not part of the *CP* because it is not consistent with the *CP*'s subject matter. This argument is dependent upon the idea that the subject matter of the *CP* is limited to Priapus.⁹⁵ *CP* 61 does not appear to be about Priapus, so critics found that reason sufficient enough to mark it as not belonging to the collection. But when one identifies the poem's inter- and intratexts, as we did in the Introduction, it becomes clear that *CP* 61 is a clever variation on familiar Priapean material. *CP* 61 not only demonstrates how other poetic voices and styles become "Priapic," but it also corroborates the poetic program set out in the two introductory poems of the collection. It is now accepted that such technical *variatio*, evident in the poet's use of thematic cycles and metrical variation, is typical of the *CP*, and that the poet uses variety, as Jackson and Murgia note, "to alleviate thematic monotony."⁹⁶ *CP* 61 may differ from the collection in its content, but it is standard in its technique.

It is precisely this relationship between subject matter and technique that I turn to in this chapter. The subject matter of the *CP* is limited, but the poet mitigates any sense

⁹⁵ Montero Cartelle (1984: 140) suggests that the idea that the *CP* is monotonous may be a (false) symptom of the argument for single authorship. "Este argumento concreto de la autoría única del CP puede inducir falsamente a pensar que, de esta manera, la monotonía campea en estos poemas y que su nivel literario es desechable."

⁹⁶ See also Montero Cartelle (1984: 140): "Se trata de mostrar que la *variatio* léxica--con la metáfora atrevida o la expresión pudorosa, la imagen brutal o la velada alusión, el término propio o el juego de las connotaciones--es en el C.P. el recurso literario más usual no ya para evitar la monotonía, sino, ante todo, para lograr el efecto propio del priapeo: el humor crítico sobre la cómica representación de Priápo y su mundo."

of monotony with technical, linguistic, and metrical variety.⁹⁷ As Lloyd-Jones observes: “The obvious danger for poems moving within such a limited sphere is that of monotony, and this is successfully avoided; the author [of the *CP*] rings the changes on the standard themes with great address.”⁹⁸ Lloyd-Jones then goes on to note metrical variety and familiarity with “Latin classics...Homer and probably...Callimachus” as a few of the factors that support of the poet’s successful avoidance of monotony.⁹⁹ The example of *CP* 61 demonstrates two major arguments of this chapter: first, that repetition can be both internal and external (*e.g.* the repetition of *laboriosis* draws us both to *CP* 2 and to Catullus’ poetry), and second, that understanding this act of repetition is the task of the reader—in other words, the *CP* makes certain demands on the reader, and anyone who does not understand and meet these demands will fail as a reader of this collection.

This chapter focuses on “repetition,” a phenomenon with many aspects.¹⁰⁰ First, there is the thematic repetitiveness of the *CP*, that is, the ostensible lack of variety in

⁹⁷ See the references to Montero Cartelle 1984 above. Scholars have examined to good effect the *CP*’s thematic and verbal *variatio*. Kloss’ work (2003, 1998) on the *CP*’s metrical unity demonstrates the refinement with which the poet varies the *CP*’s three meters, particularly at its beginning and its end. Much more work has been done, by comparison, on the variation of themes in the *CP*. There are different cycles in which the poet treats thematic subsets of the book’s central theme, Priapus’ penis. To take *CP* 61, for example: Höschele (2008a, 2008b) has argued that *CP* 61 continues a theme set out at the beginning and continued throughout that the poetry book is a garden and poems are apples. Holzberg (2005) suggests that the infertility of the apple tree puts *CP* 61 in harmony with the theme of impotence that, he suggests, concludes the book.

⁹⁸ Lloyd-Jones 1991: 65.

⁹⁹ *Cf.* Conte 1999: 465: “Given the relative monotony of the subject, the author’s virtuosity (the *Priapea* are notable for their technique) consists in producing a variety of effects by alternating his meters and turning the Priapean material to a variety of purposes.”

¹⁰⁰ I use the term “repetition” rather than “allusion” or “intertextuality” to signify both repetitiveness (monotony) and retelling (intra- and intertextuality). This is different from Wills’ (1996) focus on “repetition” in Latin poetry. In his book Wills considers the repetition of words for their linguistic and stylistic features. My work is informed by Wills’ study, but it is important to note the differences in our terminology.

subject matter. Second, there is the kind of literary repetition where specific words or entire lines are repeated from either another poem in the same text (intratextuality) or another poetic text entirely (intertextuality) for a particular effect. These two different forms of repetition—thematic and literary—work together in the *CP*: one draws our attention to the poet’s subject matter and the other, to his technique. The poet thematizes “repetition” by setting up the façade of a static and limited poetic collection where everything is reduced to the level of vulgarity. Literary repetition both confounds and is confounded by this façade. On the one hand, the quotation of well-known poetry challenges the poet’s assertion to have written rough-hewn poems haphazardly. On the other hand, any reference to other poetic works must be mediated by the pervasive obscenity of the poetry collection. Literary repetition in the form of allusion, parody, and translation can demonstrate, I suggest, the way that we are meant to read the *CP*. By reading the poet’s “reading” of his own text and the texts of others, we come to understand the process of reading the *CP*. This concept is not necessarily novel to Latin poetry, but what makes the *CP* different is the fact that, as a poetry book, it is so thematically limited.

This monotony may have been part of the reason why the *CP*’s intertextuality has not enjoyed the same level of academic interest that other poetic texts have. Scholars as early as Burman and Buecheler noted that the *CP* contains frequent citations of other works of Latin poetry, and recent editors and commentary writers have continued this practice. However, many of these observations do little more than point out the existence of parallels. Though many have looked at *CP* 68 as a parody of Homer, few have asked

what effect that parody has on the *CP*.¹⁰¹ Part of the problem may be that the *CP* has not been—and still is not—always read as a unified work, so that critics do not consider each individual poem’s relationship to the rest of the poetry book.¹⁰² Furthermore, there is the issue of the alleged status of the *CP* as “sub-literary.” In his chapter on “Repetition and Change” in *Allusion and Intertext* Stephen Hinds notes literary status as one possible reason for privileging texts in instances of allusions.¹⁰³ In the case of scholarship on the *CP*, it is not just that another text is privileged, but allusions are simply not always explored. The *CP* interacts with other texts in the same way as those works of Latin literature that make up Hinds’ study. It parodies literary works, it alludes to them, and it even manipulates other texts. I use parody to describe poems in the *CP* that are transparently altering earlier works to comic effect, such as *CP* 68.¹⁰⁴ In these same poems we also find allusion that has parodic undertones, such as when the poet of the *CP* uses Ovidian language to parody Homer and may in the process also be parodying

¹⁰¹ Parody in the *CP* has been a frequent topic of research, but the focus seems to have been more on religious parody (mock hymns, etc.) in the whole collection rather than literary parody. Buchheit (1962:103) sees the Homeric parody of *CP* 68 as a possible demonstration that the poet of the *CP* is, in fact, a *poeta doctus*. More recently, de Miguel Mora has provided two studies on parody in the *CP*, one entirely on Homeric parody (2000) and another on literary parody of Homer, Vergil, Ovid, and Catullus (2003).

¹⁰² See the introduction for an overview of the single author vs. anthology argument.

¹⁰³ Hinds 1998: 102. “...One of the texts is felt to be less important, less ‘good’, less canonical than the other: i.e. one of the two texts is felt to be insufficiently interesting to merit systematic reading, or to have so little compositional integrity on its own as to be incapable of responding to systematic reading.”

¹⁰⁴ Although “pastiche” is a term frequently applied to particular poems in the *CP* (e.g. *CP* 68), I use “parody” here to emphasize the role of comedy in this form of intertextuality. Rose (1993: 72) points out that pastiche has been used as a synonym for parody, but differs from parody “in describing a more neutral practice of compilation which is neither necessarily critical of its sources, nor necessarily comic.” de Miguel Mora (2003: 160) discusses the problems in using “parody,” but ultimately decides that it is the best term to use for the *CP*.

Ovid.¹⁰⁵ Parody may be the expected form of intertextuality in a work that is dominated by invective and satire, but not all allusions are necessarily parodic.

Love elegy offers an analogous example in this respect. Much of love elegy is focused on being “not-epic.” As Farrell notes, however, elegy’s declaration of difference exists alongside its inclusion of these different elements.¹⁰⁶ It is perhaps not a coincidence that Priapus appears as a genre-bending character in love elegy (Tib. 1.4; Ov. *F.* 1, 6), and furthermore, that the *CP* seems to take many cues from the elegists both in respect to the poetic book and to the poems themselves.¹⁰⁷ The two proems define the *CP* as “not-poetic” on any register, but just as the elegists draw epic motifs into the confines of their genre, so, too, does the *Priapea* poet adapt other poetic voices to his book. This chapter focuses particularly on the inclusion of epic and elegiac components, which the poet incorporates in different ways.¹⁰⁸ The repetition of particular epic motifs works both to vary the content of the *CP* and also to negotiate and renegotiate the *CP*’s own literary status. In *CP* 25 the poet repeats lines from Vergil and Homer and adapts them to the Priapic tradition. In *CP* 68, the most famous and longest poem in the *CP*, the act of translating epic is taken quite literally as a Priapus statue provides his own interpretation

¹⁰⁵ Thomason (1931) provides the most thorough analysis of the *Priapea* poet’s verbal debt to Ovid, but other than addressing the question of authorship, he offers no detailed interpretation of how that relationship manifests in specific poems, such as the Homeric parody of *CP* 68.

¹⁰⁶ Farrell 2003: 399. “Elegy insists on its difference from other genres, especially epic, but persistently demonstrates its capacity—despite the fact that it is by definition a “lower” and “weaker” genre than epic—to include epic perspectives within itself.”

¹⁰⁷ For the epigrammatic/erotodidactic Priapus in Tibullus, see Cairns 1979:36-37. For the comic and mimic Priapus in Ovid, see McKeown 1979, Fantham 1983:187, Barchiesi 1997: 238-51, Wiseman 2002. Holzberg (2005) offers the most recent analysis of the *CP*’s similarity to Roman elegy.

¹⁰⁸ The epic resonance in *CP* 74 (*per medios...medias*) is more muted in comparison, and is digested by means of earlier works of elegy and epigram. Wills 1996: 383 n. 26.

of Homeric epic. This elegiac poem calls upon Ovidian language and meter (also elegiac) to voice Priapus' reinterpretation of Homer.¹⁰⁹ This complex relationship between the *CP*, Ovid, and Homeric epic reappears in the final poem of the *CP* (80), in which an Ovidian source is clearly identifiable (*Amores* 3.7) in addition to a Homeric one (*Iliad* 5.801). Despite the poet's claim that his poetry is uninspired and jocose, he nevertheless includes and adapts elements from more serious, literarily prestigious poetic styles.

Section 1: Repetition and Rejection (*CP* 1, 2)

The fact that the *CP* has a double proem suggests the importance of repetition in this work. (One could equally criticize the *CP* as being *too* repetitive because it has a double proem.) In the introduction I identified some of the ways in which the two introductions work together: one speaks to content, the other to form; one addresses the reader, the other the internal dedicatee, Priapus. They have meaning independent of each other, but they also have meaning together as one unified introduction. Both proems emphasize "play" as a literary signpost: the poet declares that his poetry is light and he has not put much skill into writing it. By claiming to "play" around in his verses he is also connecting his poetry to a line of poetic predecessors including Catullus.¹¹⁰ As we noted previously, Hallett suggests that the double proem is an example of this kind of play and uses Catullus as a guide in this respect. In one instance Catullus describes literary *ludus* as the act of writing mutual verses in different meters (*scribens...ludabat numero modo*

¹⁰⁹ Thomas' (1986) "window reference" is a useful tool in thinking about the *CP*'s reception of Homer via Ovid, but the *Priapea* poet also engages with Homer directly, as in *CP* 25, thus removing the "window" of reference.

¹¹⁰ See Section 4 of the Introduction.

hoc modo illoc | reddens mutua; 50.4-6). Hallett notes the different meters of the two proems and concludes that they have the effect of such *versiculi*.¹¹¹ The poet's claims of minimal effort (*non nimium laboriose; otiosus*) corroborate this act of "scribbling back and forth mutually." We might expect, then, some further connections between the two proems beyond their shared status as poetic proem.

If we revisit these two proems we also see that alongside this emphasis on ludic aesthetics is a differentiation between the *CP* and other poetic voices and styles. The stress on *lusus* and *ludere* indicates that these poems are lighthearted.¹¹² But the poet does not leave this claim at the level of an implication. He defines his poems directly against other types of poetry and states that they are not present in this book. He adopts—and adapts—other voices and styles in order to distance his poetry from them, what we saw in the introduction as “unpoetic” poetics. In this section I focus more closely on the literary voice or style that the poet is defining his work against. Both proems set up an expectation that the work that one is about to read is not sophisticated. The two proems build up their candor by mentioning Priapus' penis first through its refined antitheses (e.g. chaste goddesses) and then directly (i.e. *custos membrorior* 1.5; *mentulam...Priapi*; 2.8). This juxtaposition of virginal goddesses and Priapus' penis further defines the poetry book; the first poem accounts for the *CP*'s obscene subject matter and the second, its style. The second proem, in which the poet defends his formal inelegance, is teeming with programmatic cues, but what seems particularly revealing is the following remark:

¹¹¹ Hallett 1996: 336.

¹¹² Callebat 2012: 60-61 *ad loc.* “...le mot *lusus* y a été plus particulièrement appliqué à un “divertissement,” composition facile et légère dissociant—en rupture donc avec les grands genres (epos, tragédie, ...)—*utilitas* et *delectatio* au profit de la seule *delectatio*.”

nam sensus mihi corque defuisset,
 castas, Pierium chorum, sorores
 auso ducere mentulam ad Priapi. (CP 2.6-8)

For I would have been stupid and senseless, if I had dared to lead
 the chaste sisters, the chorus of Pieria, to Priapus' prick.

Here the poet states more literally than anywhere else that his poetic endeavor is to sing of the penis of Priapus. Whereas in the first proem the subject matter of the *CP* is expressed through an adjective (*membrosior*; 1.5) and a rather wordy circumlocution (*qui tectum nullis vestibibus inguen habet*; 1.6), in the second poem the focal point of the *CP* is undisguised: all of this poetry is about the *mentula*. We saw this kind of intratextual game in the example of *CP* 61 and 63. The poet never calls the tree Priapus, but the reader infers it nevertheless. The motifs of *CP* 61 appear again in *CP* 63, but this time applied to Priapus, as if to reward the reader for the connection he or she made before. The poet relies on circumlocution and euphemism in *CP* 1, and readers intuit that he is referring to the *mentula*. In *CP* 2 there is an explicit reference to Priapus' *mentula*. The act of not calling the Muses to the *mentula* of Priapus is multivalent. It is suggestive of the poet's literary program to speak explicitly in every sense of the word (*cf. simplicius multo est: "da pedicare" Latine / dicere*; 3.9-10). This poet's sensibility is "coarse" (*crassa Minerva*; 3.10). Second, it evokes the kind of poetry that the *CP* claims not to be. *This* poet is not a Homer, Ennius, or Vergil; he does not write serious and inspired poetry. Serious genres like epic are not the only poetic tradition alluded to and apparently rejected here. This motif of the enthused poet was picked up by Callimachus and later by

his Roman adherents, whose poetics the poet of the *CP* alludes to earlier in line three: *non nimium laboriose*.¹¹³ This league of poets was both inspired and laborious.

On the surface level, the poet of the *CP* appears to be rejecting these poetic trappings. We saw how the first line of *CP* 1 looks as if it is a distorted golden line. The stylistic arrangement Vergil uses to compare his own poetry to Fescennine verses is manipulated into an arrangement that distances the *CP* not from Fescennine verses, but rather from Vergil's *Eclogues*. The alteration is close enough to the original to signal the difference. It may be the case that the poet of the *CP* is providing some commentary on the stylistic artificiality of Latin poetry by pointing to a perfect Vergilian line, but I think there is more to say on this issue given that the poet of the *CP* engages in such poetic artificiality himself. As others have pointed out, the word order of line 7 in *CP* 2 (*castas, Pierium chorum, sorores*) is highly artificial.¹¹⁴ This structure of apposition, referred to as the *schema Cornelianum* by Skutsch, appears in much of Augustan poetry, particularly in the poetry of Ovid.¹¹⁵ The fact that this arrangement takes up the entire line draws attention to it.¹¹⁶ In his survey of this "extremely stylish" phenomenon, Solodow suggests that in *CP* 2 the poet is demonstrating the elaborate style that he rejects.¹¹⁷ We might, then, envision this line in modern-day scare quotes, delivered with a great deal of mockery. Here is it important to take note that the poet does not say he wrote without

¹¹³ This relationship is explicated more fully in Section 4 of the Introduction.

¹¹⁴ Goldberg 1993 *ad loc.*

¹¹⁵ Skutsch 1956: 198- 199. For occurrences in Ovid, see Solodow 1986: 141-47.

¹¹⁶ The Vergilian line that is often quoted in connection with this stylized arrangement is *Ecl.* 1.57: *nec tamen interea raucae, tua cura, palumbes*. The last four words make up the inserted apposition.

¹¹⁷ Solodow 1986: 137, 148.

skill. The *nimum* is what is being negated. The poet says that he has not written with excessive skill, the sort of excessive skill, perhaps, that can be seen in poets who belabor the art of poetry by crafting golden lines and manipulating word order into something artificial. This *nimum* imparts, I suggest, the sarcastic tone necessary to envision line 7 in scare quotes. The reference in line seven is not only a rejection of grand poetry in its subject matter, but also of apparent trends in poetic style. The poet of the *CP* claims that his poetry is different, but he complicates this claim by demonstrating a level of proficiency in these more artistic poetic forms.¹¹⁸

There are two different acts of repetition here.¹¹⁹ First, there is the allusion to a line of poetry that is altered (1.1). To borrow Hinds' terminology, there is the alluding text (the *CP*) and the model text (the *Georgics*).¹²⁰ The allusion seems, at first, to be based on subject matter. The poet is describing his own poetry in terms similar to those that Vergil uses to describe Fescennine verses. But when one considers the arrangement of the line in both the alluding text and the model text, it seems at least plausible that the alluding text is also incorporating the style of the line. The second act of repetition does not have a model text; the poet alludes to a poetic style rather than a poetic text.¹²¹ The style of this line is not only *not* distorted, but it is also qualitatively perfect, we assume, given its resemblance to the Vergilian line on which Solodow bases his study. It is most

¹¹⁸ *CP* 2.7 mirrors the order of *Ecl.* 1.57, which Solodow sees (p. 130) as an exemplification of "the phenomenon in its original, commonest, purest, and most effective form."

¹¹⁹ *CP* 1.1: *carminis incompti lusus lecture procaces*
Verg. *G.* 2.386: *versibus incomptis ludunt risuque soluto*

¹²⁰ Hinds 1998: 101

¹²¹ *CP* 2.7: *castas, Pierium chorum, sorores*
Verg. *Ecl.* 1.57: *raucae, tua cura, palumbes*

likely a coincidence that this model line (*raucae, tua cura, palumbes*) also comes from the *Eclogues*, too, because there is nothing in *CP 2* to suggest an allusion to Meliboeus' message to Tityrus in the *CP*, and the simple fact that Priapus is a rustic deity who appears elsewhere in the *Eclogues* is not sufficient grounds to connect these two passages. But even if there is no connection between the two texts, we can still evaluate the fact that the word order appears in a book of stylized poetry such as the *Eclogues*. In this respect we can view this stylistic gesture as similar to that of 1.1. Both forms of repetition serve to reject and make fun of the kind of style exhibited in other poetic genres while ironically demonstrating that same style.¹²²

As we identified in the introduction, the second introductory poem of the *CP* seems to be modeled on the introductions in other poetry books, including Catullus' dedication poem. Key words are shared between the two texts, and what Catullus promotes in his introduction is what the poet of the *CP* rejects. But scholars have pushed back against any effort to associate these two texts too closely. *CP 2 looks* like Catullus' prologue, but it is not Catullus' prologue. Language may be shared between these two poems, but application of that language is different. For this reason Citroni suggests that the resemblance between the two passages has been exaggerated.¹²³ I do not think this is the case; in fact, I suggest the connection between these two poems is more complex than

¹²² We may compare this kind of repetition to Phaedrus' allusion to Callimachus' cicada in his fables, about which Glauthier (2009: 249) says, "By simultaneously 'attempting' and 'botching' or 'rejecting' standard Callimachean moments, Phaedrus writes a kind of *recusatio* and subtly mocks those authors whose mindless application of Callimachean material seems thoroughly uninspired." For more on the *CP* poet as both a practitioner of and critic of Callimachean principles, and the paradoxical nature of Callimacheanism in other post-Augustan poets, see Sections 2, 4, and 5 in the Introduction.

¹²³ Citroni 2008: 44. "Les ressemblances...ont été parfois exagérées." Citroni thinks Martial's *apologiae* are more of an influence in *CP 1* and *2*, so it does help his argument to see less of influence from Catullus' prologue.

an antiphrasis entails. To call *CP 2* an antiphrasis of Catullus' dedication poem implies that the contents of Catullus' poem are reversed in the *CP*. This is not exactly the case because the programmatic language in Catullus' prologue appears outside *CP 2*. We know, for example, that Catullus says that his book has been polished (*expolitum*) in his dedication, but such a reference does not appear in *CP 2*. In *CP 10*, however, Priapus says that he, as a statue, has not been given polish by Phidias' hand (*non sum...politus*; 10.3).¹²⁴ This verb, as we will see in the next chapter, suggests physical polish as well as stylistic refinement, just as it does in Catullus 1. It is not sufficient to call *CP 2* simply an antiphrasis of Catullus' prologue because doing so may lead one to overlook the repetition of language in Catullus' prologue elsewhere in the *CP*.

A similar act of cross-referencing appears in the two proems of the *CP*. Where we expect the reference to a god in *CP 1*, given the comparable passage from the *Georgics*, we see a reference to a reader.¹²⁵ Likewise, where we expect a reference to a reader, given the comparable passage in Catullus 1, we see a reference to a god. One of Citroni's objections to reading *CP 2* too closely with Catullus' prologue is that *CP 2* is dedicated to a god, not a reader. It is true that Priapus is a god, and not a living person in a poet's social and cultural milieu. But it is not the case, as Citroni suggests, that gods do not read books and therefore Priapus cannot be compared to Nepos.¹²⁶ Priapus is part of a reading milieu in the world of the *CP*. In *CP 68*, which we will analyze in the following section,

¹²⁴ With its emphasis on style and craftsmanship, *CP 10* can easily be read as a programmatic poem. For more on this poem and on statuary as a metaphor for poetry, see Chapter Two.

¹²⁵ *Ecl.* 2.388: *et te, Bacche, vocant per carmina laeta, tibi*

¹²⁶ Citroni 2008: 40. "Les dieux ne lisent pas de livres."

the god is a reluctant audience member of his master's recitation. He also gives his own interpretation of Homeric epic that puts him very much in the position of a reader of Homer, and as we will explore, a poet/narrator. And the way Priapus reads Homer is similar to the way in which a reader might approach the *CP*; everything can be read as the *mentula*.¹²⁷

In this section we have seen repetition function in the following ways: as the reiteration of a similar message in the double proem and as the quotation from other literary texts. In our analysis of the two proems and of programmatic language in other works of poetry, we have seen how the poet of the *CP* parrots phrases or stylistic structures in order to “reject” them. But in the poetic program of the *CP*, rejection is not the simple dismissal of other poetic voices and styles; it is, instead, the adaptation of those voices into a new context. The poet of the *CP* exchanges the content, but the literary significance of the repeated text is reserved in order to create a contrast that I suggest is intended to produce humor and wit.

Section 2A: Reading Homer in the *CP* (*CP* 25 and *CP* 68)

In this section we turn to two poems in the *CP* in which the poet engages with epic material on the level of parody. The poet borrows from Homer almost directly in *CP* 25, and in *CP* 68 the poet recasts some of the events of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in a Priapic light. Epic is not the only literary genre at play here; there is an interplay of epic, elegiac, and epigrammatic voices in these poems, to which we will turn in the following section.

¹²⁷ Höschele 2008a provides a study of *CP* 68 as a *mise en abyme*.

First, in this section, I will present close readings of the two passages in question, and then an analysis of the two poems together. Both poems have the same intertext (Homer), but they also relate to each other as intratexts.

CP 25 is an example of those poems in the *CP* in which Priapus threatens an intruder with sexual assault (*minae*).¹²⁸ The hendecasyllabic meter of *CP 25* befits its minatory content, but its first two lines put us in the world of epic. The poem begins with an imitation of Homer by way of Vergil, then transitions to a three-line description of Priapus' penis, and concludes in its two final lines with a threat to any thief. The introduction (1-2) and the conclusion (6-7) are contrasted in an especially piquant manner; the first is seemingly innocuous, the latter is graphically obscene. The world of epic clashes with the frank obscenity of the *CP*. This by itself is entertaining to any reader, but the real humor of *CP 25* lies in the different strata of allusions and parody underlying this poem, the recognition of which not only perverts the reader's interpretation of the epic original through its association with Priapic material, but also demonstrates the level of the *CP*'s engagement and dialogue with other poetic texts. The following section looks first at the imitation in its more immediate context as epic parody and then at the reworking of the original passage to fit the parameters of the *CP*. The remainder of the section looks at the imitation in the larger context of materiality and craftsmanship in Latin poetry.

hoc sceptrum, quod ab arbore est recisum
 nulla et iam poterit virere fronde,
 sceptrum, quod pathicae petunt puellae,
 quod quidam cupiunt tenere reges,
 cui dant oscula nobiles cinaedi,

5

¹²⁸ O'Connor 1989: 122-3.

intra viscera furis ibit usque
ad pubem capulumque coleorum! (CP 25)

This scepter, which has been hewn from a tree, will no longer bud with foliage, this scepter, which the submissive girls seek out, which certain kings want to fondle, to which well-known cinaedi bestow kisses, it will go inside a thief's guts all the way to the pubic hair and to the hilt of the scrotum.¹²⁹

The scepter, which we find out soon is a metaphor for Priapus' penis, is first situated in its epic roots.¹³⁰ The first two lines are borrowed from Vergil, who borrows them from Homer.¹³¹ Several commentators point out the repetition of these same lines in Valerius Flaccus, further proof of how ripe this passage was for imitation.¹³² It is clear that some part of the epic tradition is being handed down from Homer to Vergil to Ovid and then to

¹²⁹ Richlin (1992: 122 [1983: 353]) translates *nobiles cinaedi* as “aristocratic fags” which O’Connor (1989: 123) suggests maintains the heroic conceit of *reges*. I have rendered the translation literally, but I think the colloquial “queens” works here, too, and suggests a similar comparison between *reges* and *nobiles cinaedi*.

¹³⁰ de Miguel Mora (2003: 161-4) also focuses on the Vergilian parody in CP 25. We come to similar conclusions, but he privileges the final lines of the poem. The description of the thief's innards, he suspects, comes from the context of the oath in *Aeneid* 12, a sacrifice in which we see a reference to animal innards (*pecudes et viscera vivis*, 12.214). de Miguel Mora also suggests wordplay between *pubem* in CP 25.7 and *genae pubentesque* in *Aen.* 12.221. He explains the peculiar reference to the “hilt” (*capulum*) in CP 25 as a reference to the hilt of the sword in the *Aeneid* (*capulum ignotum*, 12.734).

¹³¹ Verg. *Aen.* 12.206-211.
ut sceptrum hoc (dextra sceptrum nam forte gerebat)
'numquam fronde leui fundet virgulta nec umbras,
cum semel in silvis imo de stirpe recisum
matre caret posuitque comas et brachia ferro,
olim arbos, nunc artificis manus aere decoro
inclusit patribusque dedit gestare Latinis.'

Hom. *Il.* 1.234-36.
ναὶ μὰ τὸδε σκῆπτρον, τὸ μὲν οὐ ποτε φύλλα καὶ ὄζους
φύσει, ἐπεὶ δὴ πρῶτα τομῆν ἐν ὄρεσσι λέλοιπεν
οὐδ' ἀναθλήσει περὶ γὰρ ῥά ἐ χαλκὸς ἔλεψε
φύλλα τε καὶ φλοιόν· νῦν αὐτὲ μιν υἴες Ἀχαιῶν
ἐν παλάμῃς φορέουσι δικασπόλοι, οἳ τε θέμιστας
πρὸς Διὸς εἰρύαται· ὃ δέ τοι μέγας ἔσσειται ὄρκος

¹³² V.F. 3.707-11.
hanc ego magnanimi spoliū Didymaonis hastam,
quae neque iam frondes virides nec proferet umbras,
ut semel est evulsa iugis ac matre perempta
fida ministeria et duras obit horrida pugnas

Variations of this epic motif also appear in Ovid (*Met.* 15.561-4; at 561: *vidit frondescere Romulus hastam; AA* 2.131-2; at 131: *ille levi virga (virgam nam forte tenebat)* and Statius (*Theb.* 7.552-3; at 552: *ante haec excusso frondescet lancea ferro*).

Valerius Flaccus and Statius in the reoccurrence of this motif.¹³³ The epic passages cited below are all about the swearing of oaths. The presence of the scepter, or the spear in some instances, makes the oath in question more permanent. As Kirk says of the *Iliad*, “just as [the scepter] will never sprout leaves again, so will this oath be fulfilled.”¹³⁴ In the case of Romulus in Book 15 of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, we find the reversal of this motif as the *adynaton* comes true (*i.e.* Romulus’ spear begins to grow leaves). The scepter can also demonstrate the speaker’s oral, judicial, and/or regal authority.¹³⁵

There is no obvious swearing of oaths in *CP* 25, and I will return to this particular aspect of the scepter at the end of our reading of *CP* 25. Despite the absence of the oath, the solemnity of the scepter by itself is not immediately or explicitly rejected. The epic borrowing in these two lines bears no trace of obscenity. The repetition of *sceptrum* in line 3 helps to divide the first two lines from the rest of the poem. Other than their placement in a book of obscene epigrams and their meter, there is nothing about the content of first two lines to suggest that they are different from the passages in epic poetry. Even outside of this two-line passage, the mention of kings who desire to hold scepter in line four is typical of these epic exempla since it often *is* a king who holds the scepter. But these poems are, in fact, in a book of obscene epigram, and whereas in these epics the scepter in question is obviously a scepter, in the *CP*, readers can only assume the poet means scepter metaphorically (by now readers have seen *telum* and *columna*

¹³³ Smolenaars (1994: 249) provides all of the epic exempla for scepters as unflowering trees in his note on *Theb.* 7.552. I have cited these exempla either in full or partially in the notes above. On this motif in Greek literature, see Combella 1948. For Roman literature, Alföldi 1959. For oaths, see Callaway 1990.

¹³⁴ Kirk 1985: 77 at *Il.* 1.234-9.

¹³⁵ Callaway 1990: 74-5.

used in such a way in *CP* 9 and 10) until such a reading is confirmed in line 3.¹³⁶ But even there it is not explicit; the presence of *pathicae puellae* is what makes one think of the sexual possibilities of *sceptrum*. We can take a second look at line 4 above and start to question the meaning of *tenere*. The poet relies on association and innuendo. Priapus never refers to the *mentula* and never refers to his own groin, which he does in *CP* 10 when he refers to the penis by means of euphemism (*adstans inguinibus columna nostris*; 10.8). Given the later interchange between *sceptrum* and *hasta*, one could even read the final lines, the most explicit lines in the poem, as a reference to an actual scepter or spear, the blade of which the speaker plans to drive through a thief's body. Readers, however, make the connection that begs to be made: this "scepter" is Priapus' penis; desired by certain kings, lustful girls, and *cinaedi*; and this is what he will drive up inside a thief's guts.

A graffito found in the basilica of Pompeii in the vicinity of quotations of Vergil as well as obscene proclamations is revealing in light of the *CP*'s suggestive comparison between the epic scepter and the penis.¹³⁷ The inscription appears to be a political attack; to understand the joke, it seems that one also needs to understand the connection in epic between scepters and political power.

<<Pum[pei]s>> fueere quondam Vibii opulentissimi;
 non ideo tenuerunt in manu sceptrum pro mutunio
 itidem quod tu factitas cottidie in manu penem tenes (CIL 4.1939)

"Once there were the very wealthy Vibii [in Pompeii?];
 they did not hold in their hand the sceptre on behalf of ????"

¹³⁶ Adams 1990: 17.

¹³⁷ This inscription (CIL 4.1939) is now in the Museo Nazionale in Naples.

in the same way that you do daily (when you) hold your penis in your hand.¹³⁸

The joke here is not quite the same as the implied joke in *CP* 25. Absent from this inscription are the lustful women and *cinaedi* who desire to caress and fondle the scepter. Instead, the person being attacked in this graffito handles his scepter alone (i.e. he masturbates). It is clear that the writer of this graffito, like the poet of the *CP*, is seeking to make fun. The attempt to write in verse (trochaic *septenarii*) is, as Milnor notes, “an appropriately comic meter for an apparently parodic text.”¹³⁹ There is some debate over the end of the second line in this passage, but it is clear that the scepter in line 2 is on the same level as the penis in line 3.¹⁴⁰ The reference to *mutunio* in line two is questionable beyond the textual level. Milnor’s translation leaves out *mutunio* entirely. She pushes back against the standard reading of this word as “obscene slang.”¹⁴¹ Her argument here may enlighten us on our reading of *CP* 25. She suggests that the writer’s joke would have had a greater effect if the connection between the scepter and the penis was not made until the final punch line in line three. Given the location of the inscription at the basilica, she suggests that it could be a reference to a certain *Mutunius*, so the line would then read: “on behalf of Mutunius.” It is not my goal to weigh in on this debate, but I do think

¹³⁸ I am using Milnor’s text and translation (2014: 124). On this inscription, see also Varone (2002: 93-4). It is interesting that *reges*, which also appears in *CP* 25.4, has been proposed for the first word of this graffito, but there is not sufficient evidence to read these two passages as anything more than analogs of the same type of phallic humor.

¹³⁹ Milnor 2014: 124.

¹⁴⁰ Earlier editors proposed *pro sceptro mutunium*, which makes more sense, but is not what the inscription says. This has been corrected by more recent editors. Varone (2002: 93-4 n. 150) provides an overview of this editorial debate.

¹⁴¹ Milnor 2014: 125 n.65. Varone (2002: 93), for example, translates the second line as “but they did not hold in their hands the sceptre like a member.”

Milnor's interpretation of the line is in tune with our reading of *CP* 25. Much of the joke depends on the reader's ability to connect the dots and see the phallic imagery in the allusion and euphemism.

The humor does not lie just in the imitation of epic in *CP* 25, but also, in the close association between the meaning of these two lines and the trope common in *priapea* and the genre of epigram more broadly by which the poet describes the materiality of an object's former life or the object itself describes its original state. The placement of these lines at the beginning of the poem resembles the position of an object's genealogy in epigram, which is often situated towards the beginning of the poem.¹⁴² In poems about Priapus statues, we see this most famously in Horace, *Satire* 1.8, which borrows its introductory structure from the genre of epigram.¹⁴³ In the *CP*, we see this genealogy alluded to in *CP* 6 (*ligneus Priapus*) but explored more fully in *CP* 10.¹⁴⁴ These three

¹⁴² It is possible, but not likely, that in *Epigram* 6.49, which is about a Priapus statue, Martial is spoofing these lines of the *CP*. This issue gets us into the murky waters of priority, and I do not think it adds much to our reading of the *CP*; other than the mention of a living tree, the epic intertext is largely absent in Martial and there is no reference to scepters.

*non sum de fragili dolatus ulmo,
nec quae stat rigida supina vena
de ligno mihi quolibet columna est,
sed viva generata de cupressu.*

¹⁴³ Hor. *S.* 1.8.1-3

olim truncus eram ficulnus, inutile lignum, [cf. *olim arbos; Aen.* 12.210]
*cum faber, incertus scamnum faceretne Priapum,
maluit esse deum.*

In her commentary on this passage, Gowers (2012: 266) points out instances of this motif in Greek epigram (*A.P.* 6.113; 9.131; 9.162). All objects (a bow, a boat, and a pen) mention what they were before production (goat horns, a pine tree, and a reed) in contrast to what they are now.

¹⁴⁴ *CP* 10

*insulsissima quid puella rides?
non me Praxiteles Scopasve fecit,
non sum Phidiaca manu politus,* [cf. *artificis manus; Aen.* 12.210]
*sed lignum rude vilicus dolavit
et dixit mihi 'tu Priapus esto'.
spectas me tamen et subinde rides:*

poems emphasize the materiality of Priapus statues, and the speaking Priapi of *Satire* 1.8 and *CP* 10 mention a craftsman (*faber; vilicus*). The scepter, like the Priapus statue, is made of wood (*ab arbore*), but agency is elided by the passive verb. The poet of *CP* 25 exaggerates the commonality between a stock epic and a stock epigrammatic motif in order to demonstrate the mutability of epic into Priapic material.

The absence of an artisan in *CP* 25 and the mention of chopping (*recisum*) as the only “art” form fit in well with the description of making Priapus statues elsewhere in the *CP* (e.g. *lignum rude vilicus dolavit*; 10.4), but they also contrast well with the descriptions of the epic scepters. In the *Iliad*, Achilles’ description of the scepter takes up over 3 lines. Achilles does not mention the manufacturer of the scepter here, but elsewhere the poet refers to the scepter’s divine artisan, Hephaestus.¹⁴⁵ Vergil promotes the role of the artisan in his description of the scepter (*nunc artificis manus aere decoro*; *Aen.* 12.210). Interestingly, Valerius Flaccus associates the spear in Book 3 (*magnanimi spoliū Didymaonis hastam*; 3.707) with the same name that Vergil gives to the otherwise unknown manufacturer of Nisus’ shield (*et clipeum efferi iussit, Didymaonis artem*; *Aen.* 5.359). It is possible that Valerius is at least alluding to the Vergilian artisan of Book 5 in this passage, given the fact that Vergil does refer to an artisan in the passage in Book 12.¹⁴⁶ Before we travel too far into the waters of epic, let us return to *CP* 25. We

*nimirum tibi salsa res videtur
adstans inguinibus columna nostris.*
For more on this poem, see Chapter Two.

¹⁴⁵ *Il.* 2.100-101: Ἀγαμέμνων / ἔστη σκῆπτρον ἔχων τὸ μὲν Ἥφαιστος κάμε τεύχων.

¹⁴⁶ It is unclear what the relationship is between Didymaon and the *hasta* in Flaccus’ poem, and we look forward to Manuwald’s forthcoming Green and Yellow Cambridge commentary on this book for any clarification. Soubiran (2002: 313-4) does not say forthright that the Didymaon here is the same in Vergil,

may surmise from these epic exempla not only that the epic *sceptrum* is the work of a skilled artisan, but also that the artisan's craft is related in some way to the craft of the epic poet. In Vergil's adaptation of this motif from Homer, Henkel sees Vergil as "a textual *artifex* who has taken the scepter of Achilles from *Iliad* 1 and given it to Latinus to bear."¹⁴⁷ The scepter in *CP* 25 has no artisan. It is not laboriously wrought, but hacked (*recisum*). In this epic parody, readers are reminded of the *Priapea* poet's own pretense to write without effort (*non nimium laboriose*; 2.3).

There is a polarity between the two literary scepters that the poet then manipulates. The genealogy one might expect in the beginning of a poem in the *CP* appears in the form of an epic borrowing about the crafting of another object, a very phallic one. The scepter stands in for the penis, which, in turn, represents the statue of Priapus given the reference to woodenness. The poet is not including these lines merely for decorative or cheap comic effect; rather, he is tailoring this passage to fuse epic imagery and language into his Priapic poem. In sum, the first two lines of *CP* 25 are not a random citation of epic poetry and the joke does not lie solely in the contrast between 'high' and 'low' forms. Much of the charm lies in the adaptation of this epic passage to the *CP*. The epic scepter transforms almost seamlessly into the epigrammatic object—the Priapus statue. The poet of *CP* 25 exaggerates the commonality between a stock epic and

but he does provide the reference in Vergil for comparison. The name Didymaon only occurs in these two passages, and the occurrence of the name in Vergil has been analyzed as possible wordplay (e.g. Paschalis 1997: 189). Translations of this line in the *Argonautica* suggest one of two things: Didymaon is either the maker of the spear (Slavitt 1999:65, "the **work** of the great Didymaon"), although this would be a rare use of *spolia*, or its former owner (Barich 2009:107, "a **trophy** from the brave Didymaon"). Given the relationship between Vergil and his "successors" one does not have to take too great a leap to see at least the possibility of reading the "spoil of Didymaon" as a specific point of engagement with Valerius' predecessor, Vergil. Hardie (2002) does not include this passage in his study, but it does seem to fit in with his conclusions.

¹⁴⁷ Henkel (Diss.) 2009: 250-3, at 252. See also Putnam 2001: 163-5.

a stock epigrammatic motif in order to demonstrate the mutability of epic into Priapic material. In this particular instance, the poet confronts the thematic repetition typical of Priapic poetry in a series of ways. The first two lines of *CP 25* are suggestive of the custom in some *priapea* to mention the statue's physical medium. I say that this is suggestive because of the placement of the lines at the beginning of the poem and the reference to raw material (*i.e.* wood) in the lines. But the two lines, as we have seen, are also an epic allusion to the physicality of another object that is not the Priapus statue or his penis. The poet inverts readers' expectations by beginning *CP 25* with an epic allusion that also describes an object's physicality where one might expect a reference to Priapus' physicality.

Until now we have explored what the epic borrowing does for the *CP*. It remains to be investigated, however, what the *CP* does, if anything, for epic. By recasting the imagery of the scepter to reflect a penis and, by extension, Priapus, *CP 25* creates a dialogue between the two poetic registers. The description of the scepter, as I hope to have shown, sounds very similar to the descriptions of Priapic statues. The description alone is not outwardly obscene; rather it is in the shift of significance from scepter to penis that it becomes obscene. This particular moment of intertextuality is cognate with Martial's reading of Ovid, *Amores* 1.1. Hinds argues that Martial makes Ovid into a predecessor of erotic epigram. Hinds suggests that Martial reveals a lurking penis in Ovid's opening poem (*Amores* 1.1), and by doing so, "literally sticks it" to the genre of love elegy.¹⁴⁸ Hinds' argument is attractive here, especially given his focus on Martial's

¹⁴⁸ Hinds 2007: 122. He reads Priapus' victims in *Mart.* 6.16 (*sed puer aut longis pulchra puella comis*) as the programmatic boys and girls of Ovidian elegy (*aut puer aut longas compta puella comas*).

Priapic poetry. If we explore *CP* 25 from the basis of Hinds' argument, we see that the *Priapea* poet is not *just* "sticking it" to epic by borrowing its imagery and adapting it to a lower brand of poetry, but it is also bringing to light a latent sexual metaphor in the original source for comic effect, and it may also suggest that there are common strands between Priapic poetry and epic.¹⁴⁹ As Hinds also demonstrates in his study of Martial, parody and perversion of a predecessor are rooted in close and attentive reading. If Martial is making Ovid into a predecessor for his epigrams, then one could make the same argument and say that the *Priapea* poet is making Homer or Vergil into Priapic predecessors.¹⁵⁰ The scepter is also an object of verbal authority. Earlier we mentioned the fact that this reference to the scepter occurs outside of an oath, which is the setting for references to the scepter in epic. The scepter, as we have seen above, is a symbol of the power of speech and the authority of speech. From the beginning, the poet of the *CP* demands for himself a version of this same authority, but rather than the right to speak, the poet seeks out specifically the right to speak bluntly and explicitly, to call a spade a spade, or to be more specific, to call a scepter a penis. If an oath is being implied in *CP* 25, one might understand the oath to be: "as surely as this scepter will never bear leaves, so surely will I punish you sexually for entering my garden."

The act of translating epic into epigram itself becomes thematized in *CP* 68. The first part of this poem is a comical analysis of false Greek and Latin cognates. The Priapus statue's misreading of Homeric Greek leads to word associations such as

¹⁴⁹ For example, Lyons (2012: 37) refers to the "phallic and kingly scepter" of Agamemnon.

¹⁵⁰ Hinds 2007: 116. "In form and in content alike, Martial recognizes—and makes us recognize—Ovid himself as an epigrammatist thinly disguised as a writer of longer poems."

κουλεόν, “sheath,” with *culum*, “asshole.” The remainder of the poem deals less with Homeric language and more with Homeric content. Whereas the false association of words is comical *because* of its obvious fabrication, the sexualized retelling of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* is funny because it does not alter the events; it merely refocuses the familiar narrative to make it about sex. *CP 68* has had its fair share of commentators, but the identification of this poem as Homeric parody dominates analyses of this long and intriguing literary artifact. *CP 25* is mentioned in commentaries of *CP 68* as another example of Homeric parody in the *CP*, but the connection often stops at the surface level. There is a deeper connection between these two poems other than citations from Homeric epic. The two poems are in dialogue not only with Homeric epic, but also with each other. This correspondence exists both on a verbal level, which I will survey in detail below, and also on a conceptual level, one that further sheds light on the poetics of the *CP*. To begin, let us first go through the entirety of *CP 68*:

rusticus indocte si quid dixisse videbor, da veniam: libros non lego, poma lego. sed rudis hic dominum totiens audire legentem cogor Homericas edidicique notas.	
ille vocat, quod nos psolen, ψολόεντα κεραυνόν et quod nos culum, κουλεόν ille vocat; μερδαλέον certe quasi res non munda vocatur, et pediconum mentula merdalea est.	5
quid? nisi Taenario placuisset Troica cunno mentula, quod caneret non habuisset opus. mentula Tantalidae bene si non nota fuisset, nil senior Chryses quod quereretur erat.	10
haec eadem socium tenera spoliavit amica, quaeque erat Aeacidae maluit esse suam. ille Pelethroniam cecinit miserabile carmen ad citharam, cithara tensior ipse sua.	15
nobilis hinc mota nempe incipit Ilias ira: principium sacri carminis illa fuit. altera materia est error fallentis Vlixiei:	

si verum quaeras, hunc quoque movit amor. 20
 hic legitur radix, de qua flos aureus exit:
 quem cum μῶλυ vocat, mentula μῶλυ fuit.
 hic legimus Circen Atlantiademque Calypson
 grandia Dulichii vasa petisse viri.
 huius et Alcinoi mirata est filia membrum 25
 frondenti ramo vix potuisse tegi.
 ad vetulam tamen ille suam properabat, et omnis
 mens erat in cunno, Penelopea, tuo!
 quae sic casta manes ut iam convivia visas
 utque fututorum sit tua plena domus. 30
 e quibus ut scires quicumque valentior esset,
 haec es ad arrectos verba locuta procos:
 “nemo meo melius nervum tendebat Vlixē,
 sive illi laterum sive erat artis opus.
 qui, quoniam periit, vos nunc intendite, qualem 35
 esse virum sciero, vir sit ut ille meus.”
 hac ego, Penelope, potui tibi lege placere,
 illo sed nondum tempore factus eram! (CP 68)

If I seem to have said anything like a hick, pardon me: I don't read, I reap. But simpleton that I am, I have to listen to my master here read countless times, and I've learned Homeric glosses. That guy calls a dick a “sooty shaft of thunder,” and he calls an anus a “hollow.” Something dirty is called “besmirched” and the sodomite's dick is foul. What? If that Trojan cock hadn't satisfied the Taenarian cunt, he wouldn't have a body of work to sing about. If the Tantalid's cock hadn't been so notorious, there was nothing for old Chryses to moan about. The same cock snatched his mate's slip of a girl, and though she belonged to the Aeacid, he wanted her for himself. Achilles wailed a bitter tune to his Pelethronian cithara, though he was harder than the cithara. As everyone knows, it's from *this* that the heroic *Iliad* begins—once Achilles got angry, and *that* was the opening of the venerable tale. Tricky Ulysses' wandering is a whole other subject. But if you ask me, sex motivated him, too. Here, we read about a root, and the golden flower that rises out of it, but when he calls it “molyhock,” “moly” means “cock.” Here's where we read about Circe and Calypso, child of Atlas, lusting after the Dulichian's hardware. Alcinous' daughter marveled at his member when it was scarcely covered by the bushy bough. Regardless, he was hurrying home to his old lady, and his head was only on your cunt, Penelope: you remained so faithful that you took stock of the party and your house was full of fuckers. So you could find out the brawnier one out of these guys, you said the following words to those woody wooers: “No one harnessed the bowstring

better than my Ulysses, whether it was his loins or his expertise. Since he has passed on, stretch it out now, so that this man may be my husband, the sort I know to be man enough.” Under that condition *I* could have satisfied you, Penelope, but I hadn’t been created at that time.

CP 68 has several verbal echoes of *CP* 25. Odysseus’ “leafy bough” (*frondenti ramo vix potuisse tegi*) draws us back to the scepter, which comes from a tree (*ab arbore*) and will never produce leaves again (*nulla iam poterit virere fronde*). The repetition of *frons*, which appears only in these two poems, ties these two lines together, and the repetition of *posse* in conjunction with *frons* strengthens this connection.¹⁵¹ The wooden scepter (*i.e.* penis) that will never be able to bear greenery again comically stands in apposition to the flowering branch that, despite its greenery, is scarcely able to conceal Odysseus’ penis. If we accept *CP* 25 and 68 are in direct conversation, then we may see another valence to the epic allusion in *CP* 25. The “epicness” of the first two lines in that poem is barely able to conceal the obscenity of the Priapic penis. The poet also uses *petere* to describe the actions both of the *pathicae puellae* in *CP* 25 and of Circe and Calypso in *CP* 68, both groups of women being ardent admirers of penises. Furthermore, the Greek κουλέον, here translated by the statue as *culum*, calls us back to the *capulum coleorum* of potential thieves in *CP* 25.¹⁵² The material genealogy that begins *CP* 25 (*ab arbore est recisum*) concludes *CP* 68 with a reference to the production of Priapus statues (*factus eram*). On the surface level, both *CP* 25 and *CP* 68 achieve the same effect: to praise the *mentula*. O’Connor’s criteria for declaring *CP* 68 an “*encomium* of the *mentula*”—

¹⁵¹ Forms of *frons* occur only in *CP* 25.2 and 68.26. Both lines also have a form of *posse*.

¹⁵² The association between *culus* and κουλέον is phonic (Callebat 2012: 268), and although the notion of “sheath” as a euphemism for a sexual orifice has a Latin equivalent (*vagina*) and there seems to be no such connection between “sheath” and “testicles”, *coleus* is aurally similar to κουλέον.

anaphora and alliteration—both occur in *CP 25*.¹⁵³ There is the repetition of *sceptrum* (1, 3), which is closely linked to the repetition of *mentula* in *CP 68*, as well as forms of *quod* (1, 3, 4, 5). There is also alliteration in lines 3 (*pathicae petunt puellae*), 4 (*quod quidam cupiunt*), and 7 (*pubem capulumque coleorum*). In this regard, the 7-line hendecasyllabic *CP 25* seems like a miniature of the 38-line elegiac *CP 68*. Or viewed another way, *CP 68* is an “epic” expansion of *CP 25*.

CP 68 and *CP 25* also look back and forth to each other on a literary level. They both refer to events of the first book of the *Iliad*. The description of the scepter in *CP 25* appears, in its Homeric context, in Achilles’ quarrel with Agamemnon over the loss of his prize, Briseis. In *CP 68* we get the surrounding narrative: the ransom of Chryseis, Agamemnon’s abduction of Briseis, Achilles’ absence from battle, and then the embassy to Achilles in Book 9. In other words, the narrative to which the poet of *CP 25* only alludes is the very narrative that makes up the first half of *CP 68*. Just as the second proem moves from euphemism to candor, so, too, does *CP 68* provide a full-frontal depiction of what the poet demonstrated only through metaphor in *CP 25*. The scepter there was really a penis, but the poet never explicitly stated as much. Rather, we as readers, by that point already conditioned to expect that everything is phallic, made the association that the poet set up for us. In the epic territory of *CP 68*, where we might naturally expect more euphemism, we instead have more laid bare. By placing Agamemnon’s scepter in *CP 25* in apposition to his penis in *CP 68*, the poet makes a comical, if obvious, connection between the two objects. According to *CP 68*, it is not Agamemnon’s scepter that holds power, however much it may dictate the real narrative

¹⁵³ O’Connor 1986: 152-53.

in question; rather, his penis (*mentula Tantalidae*) contains the real power. The “scepter” that certain kings want and that all women and *cinaedi* want to fondle in *CP* 25 is, here in *CP* 68, explicitly clarified. We have seen this kind of joke before in the collection; the poet uses verbal or thematic repetition to make explicit something that was only alluded to before. This kind of joke “treats” the reader for having made that connection before (*i.e.* for understanding the *sceptrum* as a penis).

Priapus does not simply retell Homeric epic, he places himself inside of the story. There are multiple layers of discourse in *CP* 68. In narrative time, we first have the exchange where the passive Priapus statue is audience member and the Homer-reciting farmer is speaker. Priapus, in the first person, then transfers that dialogue to us, the readers of *CP* 68. The role of addressee is, then, split internally and externally. We readers still remain on the outside, but Priapus places himself within the Homeric narrative and eventually he address Penelope alone (*Penelope*). Through his focus on men’s genitalia, Priapus likens himself to – or rather, likens to himself – Agamemnon, Achilles, and Odysseus. The only other *mentula* mentioned in the *CP* besides that of Priapus is Agamemnon’s. There is also the connection already established above that links Agamemnon’s scepter to Priapus’ penis. Priapus is *tensior cithara* in *CP* 6, Achilles is *tensior cithara* in *CP* 68. Although the *cithara* does not bear the same Homeric resonances for Priapus in *CP* 6 as it does for Achilles singing the *miserabile carmen* in *CP* 68, the phrase is specific enough to link these two figures.¹⁵⁴ The similarity between Priapus and Odysseus is represented a bit differently. As was mentioned above, Priapus

¹⁵⁴ The phrase *tensior cithara* appears only here in the *CP*.

positions himself inside of the narrative by directly addressing Penelope. His retelling of the *Iliad* is delivered as a narrator, as much of his retelling of the *Odyssey* is, too. But in his closing lines, he not only addresses the character of Penelope, but also tells her that he would have satisfied her if he had been alive then. Implicit in these lines is the assumption that Priapus is better – manlier, we might say – than the hero Odysseus. Priapus connects himself verbally to Achilles, Agamemnon, and Odysseus, as if to say that all of these Homeric heroes are really just men motivated by sexual desire, and the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are really just poems about the penis.

The comparison between Homeric heroes and Priapus/Homeric epic and the *CP* in *CP* 68 is reminiscent of other poets' readings of Homeric texts. We have examined Priapus' role in *CP* 68 as a literary character, but it is important to note that he is also the poetic speaker. Vallat and Plantade have identified some crucial similarities between speaker of *CP* 68 and the poetic speaker of Roman elegy.¹⁵⁵ If we consider Priapus' role as the poetic speaker of Homeric material, then we might look to comparable passages in Latin poetry in which speakers read Homer from a particular perspective. Horace, for instance, in his *Epistles* 1.2 provides an ethical reading of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* that is almost entirely devoid of sex. Ovid's sexualized interpretation of these texts in *Tristia* 2 is as one-dimensional as Horace's moralized reading. The poet of the *CP* seems to be working in a tradition of Homeric reception, one that exists well before the Augustan

¹⁵⁵ Plantade and Vallat 2005a. For more on this identification, see below.

period, but for this chapter I focus particularly on the *Priapea* poet's Augustan predecessors.¹⁵⁶

Section 2B: Reading Homer through an Ovidian Window (CP 68)

The Ovidian corpus is an important intertext in *CP* 68. Thomason surveys the large number of Ovidian words and phrases that appear in this poem, and says “there is no poem in the whole collection which is more certainly Ovid's than c. 68.”¹⁵⁷ The thorny issue of authorship aside, there is clearly something in the language of *CP* 68 that reminds readers of Ovid.¹⁵⁸ Ovid, too, was avid reader of Homer, and of the Homeric events mentioned in *CP* 68, he treated all but Nausicaa's encounter with the shipwrecked Odysseus.¹⁵⁹ In the following section I will look specifically at Ovid's handling of Homeric material in *Tristia* 2.¹⁶⁰ These two texts in particular shape *CP* 68 and mediate the *CP*'s handling of epic material. For the *Priapea* poet is not just parodying Homer;

¹⁵⁶ Buchheit 1962:104. “Diese Hinweise zeigen, daß unser Autor auf eine reiche Tradition innerhalb des Epigramms zurückgreifen konnte, aber nicht nur des Epigramms; auch anderen literarischen Bereichen der Römer war die erotische Homerparodie nicht fremd.” For parodic readings of Homer in epigram see Sistakou (another reading of Homer in an erotic context) and Sens in Acosta-Hughes et al. 2011. A separate study could easily be done on how *CP* 68's reading of Homer compares to other such epigrams.

¹⁵⁷ Thomason 1931: 10. For his analysis of *CP* 68, see pp. 28-29, 55-60.

¹⁵⁸ Of the many who have ascribed at least partial authorship to Ovid based on language alone are Scaliger, Burman, Buecheler, Teuffel-Kroll, Wernicke, Poliziano, et al. Thomason provides a thorough summary of the history of arguments in favor of Ovidian authorship of the *CP* on pp. 9-10.

¹⁵⁹ Odysseus and Nausicaa's encounter lies behind the exchange between Salmacis and Hermaphroditus in *Met.* 4.320-28 (Galinsky 1975: 186-89) and Nausicaa's parting words to Odysseus in *Od.* 8 is also a part of the literary background for *Pont.* 4.1.2 (McGowan 2009: 185n.40; Hexter 1986: 83n.1), but there is no sustained treatment of Nausicaa herself.

¹⁶⁰ Other notable Ovidian accounts of the scenes mentioned in *CP* 68 are the following: Helen's affair with Paris: *Her.* 16, 17; Briseis and Achilles: *Her.* 3; Circe and Odysseus: *Met.* 14.297-308; Calypso and Odysseus: *A.A.* 2.123-42; Penelope and Odysseus: *Her.* 1.

rather, he is parodying Homer through an Ovidian lens. But our poet here is not Ovid, nor is he an elegist proper, and unsurprisingly, he adapts Ovid's approach to Homer to suit his own Priapic program. Thus the poet connects himself not only to the line of poets like Homer, but also to the line of poets like Ovid. He demonstrates how he can adapt both serious and light poetry to a Priapic context, and by doing so, brings out what in those other poetic genres can be read as Priapic. The result of this endeavor is better appreciation not only for the *CP*'s poetics but also for its relationship with its Latin predecessors.

Before we turn back to *CP* 68, it is essential to point out Priapus' role, here, as the speaker of the poem. The poet delivers this poem through the *persona* of Priapus. After line 4, we hear the poet's reading of Homer through Priapus' recitation. There are precedents for this particular use of the poetic *persona*. Tibullus and Horace both feature Priapus as the speaker of an entire poem, and Propertius features the statue of the god Vertumnus in such a speaking role in Book 4. Plantade and Vallat consider the Priapus of *CP* 68 as a specifically elegiac speaker, a parodic one, but an elegiac speaker nonetheless.¹⁶¹ Whereas in the previous section we compared Priapus as a character to Odysseus, Achilles, and Agamemnon—a comparison that Priapus himself makes, here we are comparing his method of reading and delivery to the poet. The different narrative layers allow us to look at Priapus in both roles.

Let us look at *CP* 68's opening lines once again. The Priapus statue spends the first few lines of *CP* 68 apologizing for his humble position. His distance from

¹⁶¹ Plantade and Vallat 2005b: 325-7.

civilization (*rusticus; rudis*), he suggests, may affect how he portrays Homer. This claim is fitting for the uncouth figure of Priapus, but it is also reminiscent of the remote position from which Horace and Ovid offer their interpretations of Homer. These two poets experience geographical distance, rather than cultural distance, but, nevertheless, a comparison of these three readings of Homer offer new insight into *CP* 68. Horace writes his epistle on Homer from Praeneste, away from Rome. In a similar vein Ovid emphasizes his own distant location in *Tristia* 2, although his absence from Rome is compulsory whereas Horace is in Praeneste voluntarily. In exile Ovid offers a version of Homer that not only looks back to Horace's but also seems to pave the road for *CP* 68's reading of Homer.¹⁶² Both Ovid's and the *Priapea* poet's treatment of Homer takes place in the context of an apology. Ovid has a *carmen et error* for which he stages his defense. The poet of the *CP*, through the mouthpiece of Priapus, asks only for lenience for his ignorance (*da veniam*). This particular phrase is a favorite of Ovid, and although he does not use the phrase in *Tristia* 2, he does use it elsewhere in his exile poetry with reference to his own poetry.¹⁶³ The Priapus statue, therefore, can be read as a specifically Ovidian figure. In one sense he is Ovid and is asking for the audience's leniency; but his leniency is for being *rusticus*, which makes him, in another sense, similar to the uncouth Getae, the tribe among which Ovid lives in exile and to whose lack of civilization he repeatedly

¹⁶² Ingleheart (2010: 300ff.) observes several parallels between *Epistle* 1.2 and *Tristia* 2.371-80. The two texts do seem to be on polar ends of Homeric reception in Augustan Rome (Graziosi 2011: 35).

¹⁶³ Thomason (1931) notes 14 uses of *da veniam* in the Ovidian corpus. Of those 14 instances, 6 of them appear in the exile poetry (*Pont.* 1.7.22; 2.7.7; 3.9.55; 4.2.23; 4.15.32; *Trist.* 5.1.65).

refers.¹⁶⁴ Before we hear any mention of Homer in *CP* 68, we are already prompted to think of the poem alongside its Augustan predecessors, particularly Ovid.

In *Tristia* 2 Ovid includes both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in a long list of exempla that he uses to vindicate his writing of erotic poetry by pointing out the erotics in other genres. His catalogue is lengthy, but his treatment of Homeric material takes up only ten lines.

Ilias ipsa quid est aliud nisi adultera, de qua
inter amatorem pugna virumque fuit?
quid prius est illi flamma Briseidos, utque
fecerit iratos rapta puella duces?
aut quid *Odyssea* est nisi femina propter amorem, 375
dum vir abest, multis una petita viris?
quis nisi Maeonides Venerem Martemque ligatos
narrat, in obscuro corpora presa toro?
unde nisi indicio magni sciremus Homeri
hospitis igne duas incaluisse deas? (Tr. 1.2.371-80)

The *Iliad* itself, what's that but an adulteress over whom a battle broke out between husband and a lover? What is first before passion for Briseis, and how her abduction made the leaders angry? What's the *Odyssey* but a woman pursued by many suitors while her husband's away, for the sake of love? Who but Homer tells of Mars and Venus bound together, their bodies trapped in an adulterous bed? On whose evidence but great Homer's do we know that two goddesses were hot for a guest?

There are a few initial observations that connect Ovid's revision of Homeric epic to that of *CP* 68. First and foremost, Ovid's reading of Homer, here, is reduced to sex, just as *CP* 68 reduces Homeric epic almost exclusively to the male sexual organ of its key characters. There are other sexualized readings of Homer that perhaps lie behind both

¹⁶⁴ Among the adjectives Ovid uses to describe the *Getae* are *durus* (*Pont.* 1.5.12, 3.2.102), *ferus* (*Pont.* 4.15.40), *rigidus* (*Tr.* 5.1.46), *saevus* (*Pont.* 1.7.2, 4.8.84), *stolidus* (*Tr.* 5.10.38), *trux* (*Pont.* 1.7.12), *indomitus* (*Pont.* 2.2.3), *hirsutus* (*Pont.* 1.5.74, 3.5.6), *intonsus* (*Pont.* 4.2.2), *pellitus* (*Pont.* 4.10.2), *squalidus* (*Pont.* 1.2.106). Gaertner 2005: 183-84.

passages here, but for the time being, I will focus on the relationship between these two literary artifacts, as it seems clear that Ovid's version is a potential model for *CP* 68.¹⁶⁵ Beyond the shared theme of sex and the anecdotal nature of the synopsis, we also see mentioned in the two texts Helen's affair with Paris, Achilles' love for Briseis, and the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon; and for the *Odyssey*, Penelope's dealings with the suitors in Ithaca as well as the sexual desires of Circe and Calypso.¹⁶⁶ It is noteworthy, too, that the Homeric epics in *CP* 68 appear in the same order (*Iliad* then *Odyssey*) as they do in *Tristia* 2, and like Ovid, the *Priapea* poet spends more time on the *Odyssey* (16 lines of summary) than on the *Iliad* (10 lines).¹⁶⁷ Ingleheart notes the funny reversal of the *Iliad*'s opening in Ovid's text, switching the Iliadic order in which one reads about Achilles' anger before its cause (i.e. Agamemnon's theft of Briseis), and we see a similar reversal in *CP* 68.¹⁶⁸

But *CP* 68 is not just imitating Ovid in its sexualized interpretation of Homer; it is also presenting some light-hearted parody of Ovid's account as well. There is no mention of love in *CP* 68, as there is in the *Tristia* (*flamma*), but there is the mention of something more fitting for the *CP*: sexual frustration (*tensior ipse*).¹⁶⁹ The amatory pining of Roman

¹⁶⁵ Ingleheart 2010: 301 n.371-4. e.g. Hor. *Carm.* 2.4.3-12; Prop. 2.1.49-50, 2.8.29-38; Prop. 2.9A.3-14.

¹⁶⁶ Plantade and Vallat (2005b: 325-6) point out the way in which Priapus arranges the Homeric elements like an elegiac speaker. He uses allusion more than diegesis. Cf. Fabre-Serris (1998:113).

¹⁶⁷ Ingleheart (2010: 300 n.371-80) suggests that Ovid's ordering may reflect the chronological order of the two epics.

¹⁶⁸ Ingleheart 2010: 302 n.373-4.

¹⁶⁹ *Tensior* does not necessarily describe epididymal hypertension (colloquially referred to as "blue balls") since it is clear in *CP* 6 that *tensior* merely refers to the rigidity of Priapus' penis, as forms of *tendere* do elsewhere in Latin poetry (Adams 1990: 21). Here, however, the term takes on this more specific meaning

elegy has little room in the *CP*, where the subject matter is always just sex. Both poets envision Achilles' longing for Briseis as the central theme of the *Iliad*, but they express this in ways specific to their genre. Gibson interprets Ovid's *quid prius* as a claim that Achilles' passion is "the very subject of the epic."¹⁷⁰ In *CP* 68, the poet makes a similar claim, but it is more complex. In line 17 the poet says that Achilles' anger (*ira*) sprung from "this" (*hinc*), which looks back to Achilles' state in previous line (*cithara tensior ipse sua*). The graphic *tensior*, as I have argued above, is a more startling literary starting point than the image described in *flamma*, and one that is fitting for the *CP*. The *illa* in the following line (18) falls flat if it only refers to *ira*. Given that the *mentula* is the driver of the Homeric narrative presented in *CP* 68, it is possible to see a third reference in line 16 to Achilles' *mentula*. If we understand the presence of the *mentula* in the phrase *cithara tensior*, then we have two feminine nouns to which *illa* may refer: *mentula* or *ira*.¹⁷¹ The poet of the *CP* presents at least the possibility to read the start of the whole *Iliad* as Achilles' hard-on. Ovid claims to read Homer erotically, but the poet of the *CP* takes it to the next level and demonstrates what a *real* erotic reading of Homer looks like, as if to undercut Ovid's original claim.

Both Ovid and the poet of the *CP* are interpreting Homer through the act of reading, and therefore, reception is at the core of each poetic program. For Ovid, this act of reception is both his own and his reader's. In defense of his own "scandalous" poetry,

when combined with the reader's expectation to hear about Achilles' longing. His aching for his lover is literal.

¹⁷⁰ Gibson 1999: 29.

¹⁷¹ Cazzaniga (1959 *ad loc.*) identifies *illa* in "*duplici sensu 'ira et mentula'*."

he demonstrates how one can read even great Homer (*magni Homeri*) as a love poet. Ovid's main point is that eroticism lies not in the text itself, but in the reader's *interpretation* of that text.¹⁷² It is as if he is asking us to reevaluate the way in which we read not only Homer, but also Ovid's love elegy. The *Priapea* poet, through the mouthpiece of Priapus, brings up types of reception at different stages in the poem. The Priapus statue first presents himself as a passive audience member (*audire...cogor*), then he steps into the role of interpreter (*edidici*), and finally, he—as well as we, the reading audience of *CP* 68—become readers of Homer (*legimus*). There are multiple layers of “reading” taking place in this poem. The farmer is a reader, Priapus is a reader, and we are readers, not only of *CP* 68, but also of Homer and Ovid. The *Priapea* poet plays on the audience's familiarity with Homer, and by setting Priapus up as a perverted reader of Homer, the poet brings out the audience's ability to be a perverted reader, too. First, he establishes the Priapus statue as one who is allegedly well versed in Homer (*totiens audire legentem cogor*) despite his boorishness. He also turns the charge of repetitiveness on Homer by mentioning the number of times he has had to listen to the same poem. The Priapus statue, then, presents not only a distorted linguistic interpretation of Homeric Greek, but also a perverted literary interpretation, both of which are comical. Priapus' vulgarity lies behind both of these interpretations, but readers of the *CP* are vulgar, too—or at least we have become so by our reading of the *CP*. The poet's use of the plural *legimus* is, I think, a link between the Priapus statue and the reading audience (as

¹⁷² Gibson 1999: 30. “The examples of the *Odyssey* and *Iliad* show how the reception of a text is not in the hands of the author; the type of reading Ovid offers, burlesque though it may be, demonstrates the power of a reader.”

opposed to the majestic plural). The audience's own familiarity with Homer's language and narrative makes us participants in *CP* 68. We know the real meaning of the selected Greek terminology and we know what happens in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. But we are also tainted readers, just as we were in *CP* 25 when confronted with the epic scepter and left to make our own comparison. Ovid seems to be asking the audience to reevaluate how they read Homer, and by consequence, how they read Ovid's poetry. The *Priapea* poet does not seem to be asking the audience to reevaluate Homer, but he does point out and demonstrate the potential for "lower" readings of Homer.

In the *Priapea* poet's presentation of Homer is also, I suggest, a claim to membership in the poetic tradition, a claim to a place for poems like *CP* 68. The poetic tradition and motif of succession within that tradition is brought out towards the end of each poem. In *Tristia* 2 Ovid creates a tradition of love poetry to which he makes himself the inheritor and of which Homer is made a forefather. At the end of his catalogue of this "tradition," Ovid makes the following claim: *his ego successi* (2.467). With this phrase he solidifies a place for himself in the living (*vivorum*, 2.468) tradition of love poetry.¹⁷³ The approach in *CP* 68 is noticeably different. The poet's voice is not as present as Ovid's and there is no obvious claim of inheriting anything. The Priapus statue is our poetic narrator and storyteller, not the poet himself. There is, however, the boasting of potential succession that can be read as a statement about the poetic tradition. Priapus' final remarks in *CP* 68 take on new meaning when compared to Ovid's *his ego successi*.

hac ego, Penelope, potui tibi lege placere,
illo sed nondum tempore factus eram. (*CP* 68.37-38)

¹⁷³ Ingleheart 2010: 357 *ad loc.*

Priapus is noticeably *not* a participant in the bow contest, but he claims that he would have satisfied Penelope if he had been there.¹⁷⁴ One can take this remark metapoetically if we consider Priapus here not only as the narrator of the poem, but also the poetic *persona*. Priapus was not there in Ithaca to satisfy Penelope and take Odysseus' place, but now this poem can humorously rival Homer's poem about Odysseus (*i.e.* the *Odyssey*). For the question—however tongue-in-cheek—that is implicit in this final section is whose account the reader enjoys: Homer's or *CP* 68's? The answer, at least according to *CP* 68, may lie in Priapus' guarantee to Penelope. He is not just promising Penelope physical pleasure (*placere*), but literary pleasure as well. His revision of Homeric epic builds upon a theme of chaste women reading titillating literature that the *Priapea* poet has already depicted.¹⁷⁵ *CP* 8 addresses chaste wives such as Penelope and warns them to stay away; the wives, of course, cannot resist ogling Priapus' penis.

matronae procul hinc abite castae:
 turpe est vos legere impudica verba.
 non assis faciunt euntque recta:
 nimirum sapiunt videntque magnam
 matronae quoque mentulam libenter. (CP 8)

Chaste wives stay far away from here: it's shameful for you to read lewd dialogue. They care nothing of it and come right in: surely wives, too, have taste and they look willingly upon a massive cock.

¹⁷⁴ This final couplet has not been read in conjunction with Ovid's *Tristia* because the focus seems to have been on the chronology of Priapic cult practice. *E.g.* Callebat's most recent commentary (2012: 278 *ad loc.*): "Le texte s'achève sur une pirouette ironique par laquelle le locuteur noue une relation éphémère personnalisée avec le monde homérique. Plutôt qu'une référence aux origines du culte priapique, le vers final fait référence à la représentation matérielle du dieu."

¹⁷⁵ For more on this theme, see Chapter Three.

These wives look upon Priapus' enlarged penis with pleasure (*libenter*). Despite being *castae*, their actions are similar to the *pathicae puellae* in *CP* 25. They willingly enter Priapus' garden and read the *CP* for the enjoyment it provides.¹⁷⁶ Earlier I suggested that the poet sets up the Priapus statue as a mirror image for the stained reader who will now see phallic imagery even in great Homer's work. Here, the Priapus statue/poet makes Penelope his first audience and a model for his external audience. Just as Penelope is guaranteed to be satisfied by Priapus, we readers are guaranteed to be satisfied by this Priapic version of epic.

To conclude this section, there are many levels of reading, reception, and parody in *CP* 68. The subject matter first suggests a burlesque reading of Homeric epic. The underlying framework for that reading is distinctly Ovidian, which we see reflected not only in the subject matter but also in the meter (elegiac couplet). Not even Ovid escapes the perverted eye of the *Priapea* poet. What is only suggestive in the *Tristia* is explicit in the *CP*. Ovid mentions sex in euphemisms and cheeky language; the poet of the *CP* takes a full-frontal approach to Ovid's *G*-rated Homeric erotica. In this way, the poet is drawing the reader's eye to the latent obscenity not only in Homer's work, but also in Ovid's. Why exactly is Achilles bent out of shape by the theft of Briseis and what exactly does Ovid's *flamma* mean? We are readers of Homer and Ovid, but we are first and foremost readers of the *CP* and, therefore, are likely to process secondary readings with a Priapic filter. The poetic program of the *CP* is to put itself in opposition to epic by

¹⁷⁶ One thinks particularly of Martial 1.35.3-5 here.

*sed hi libelli,
tamquam coniugibus suis mariti,
non possunt sine mentula placere.*

rejecting the genre, but then to incorporate epic through the poems in order to complicate the reader's expectations. Readers are told from the beginning that elevated genres like epic and the *CP* are at variance with one another and we proceed through the text with this in mind. The *Priapea* poet, then, presents opportunities in the book for the reader to form a "Priapic" reading of epic. This "reading" has the following effects: it demonstrates the power of the *CP* to adapt a celebrated genre of ancient poetry (i.e. epic) into its obscene little book; it aligns the *CP* with these established poetic genres—to parody a text, one must work within that text's genre; and, finally, it reveals the textual intricacy of the *CP*.

Section 3: Poetic Futility (*CP* 80)

Homer and Ovid intersect again in the final poem of the *CP*. This poem, *CP* 80, deals with Homeric subject matter in an unmistakably Ovidian backdrop, but the poet handles this in a different way than in *CP* 68. There, the poet turns the tables on Homer and to some extent, Ovid, too, and clues readers in to the underlying obscenity in their works, thus parodying their works and also making them equal, if not inferior, to his own work. In *CP* 80 the poet seems to turn the tables on himself, too. He is not the boastful Priapus who concludes *CP* 68, and the pardon he seems to be requesting here is not for his lack of culture, but for his inadequate penis size. Even the eager women of *CP* 25 and 68 have changed; they seem to be unimpressed with the size of the member they once desired. *CP* 80 not only concludes the *CP*, but also concludes the dialogue between the *CP* and the genres of epic and elegy that I charted in the previous section. One can imagine the poet of the *CP* getting closer to the world of epic at various points in the book until *CP* 80,

where he imagines himself in contest with—and defeated by—the Homeric Tydeus. In *CP* 68 Ovid’s poetry provides the poet of the *CP* with an established mode of expression for his dialogue with epic, a way to describe what it means not to be epic. Ovid’s words here do not provide a framework for how to discuss epic in *CP* 80, but rather, for how to discuss powerlessness.

The basis of the poem is a speaker’s (a devotee, Priapus, or the poet) complaint about his phallic shortcomings.¹⁷⁷ He first phrases his complaint in distinctly Ovidian terms by revising the beginning of *Amores* 3.7, a poem in which Ovid laments his own ineffectiveness as a lover. The speaker, then, compares his utility—or lack thereof—with that of Tydeus, the father of Diomedes and one of the seven against Thebes. This man was still aggressive despite his physical size, and the poet cites a line from Homer’s *Iliad* expressing this sentiment.¹⁷⁸

at non longa bene est, non stat bene mentula crassa
 et quam, si tractes, crescere posse putes?
 me miserum, cupidas fallit mensura puellas:
 non habet haec aliud mentula maius eo.
 utilior Tydeus, qui, si quid credis Homero, 5
 ingenio pugnax, corpore parvus erat!
 sed potuit damno nobis novitasque pudorque
 esse, repellendus saepius iste mihi.

dum vivis, sperare decet: tu, rustice custos,
 huc ades et nervis, tente Priape, fave!¹⁷⁹ (*CP* 80)

¹⁷⁷ Arguments for all three speakers have been made (see Callebat *ad loc.* for a survey). Regardless of the immediate speaker’s identity, one can still read the voice as reflective of the poetic voice throughout the collection.

¹⁷⁸ *Il.* 5.801. Τυδεύς τοι μικρὸς μὲν ἔην δέμας, ἀλλὰ μαχητῆς, “Tydeus was small in size, but a warrior.”

¹⁷⁹ Several editors leave out this last couplet, which appears as the beginning of a separate poem in two manuscripts (*Ottobonianus* 2029 and *Rehdigeranus* 60). There is a break before these poems, but I agree with Callebat that this is to note a change in the speaker. This final couplet seems to be the words of the poet, and not of Priapus.

What? Isn't it long enough? Isn't my cock thick enough? If you stroke it, don't you think it could get up? Woe is me, the length doesn't satisfy those horny girls: this cock does not have something else greater than this. Tydeus was handier, who, if you believe what is in Homer, was aggressive in spirit, but small in body. But the newness and the shame could be my ruin; I have to beat it back all the time. ... As long as you live, you can hope. Rustic guard, may you be here, and may you be favorable to my loins, rigid Priapus.

Homer is the poet mentioned by name, but Ovid is an important a model for the poet of the *CP*. Behind this poem is his *Amores* 3.7 both in the form of direct citation and allusion. The first line of the poem is unmistakably Ovidian.¹⁸⁰

at non formosa est, at non bene culta puella,
at, puto, non votis saepe petita meis! (Am. 3.7.1-2)

Is she not beautiful, is the girl not cultured, but has she not,
I think, been frequently sought in my prayers!

The poet's revision of the Ovidian original shifts the focus of praise from the *puella* to the *mentula*.¹⁸¹ This shift is also a programmatic signpost. The *puella* is the focal point of Roman love elegy, just as the *mentula* is for Priapic poetry. Therefore, to adapt an elegiac poem to the *CP* involves refashioning the essence of that poem to suit the kind of poetry in which it now appears. The frequency with which Ovid desires his *puella* (*saepe petita*) now becomes a literal measure of desire (*longa bene*) manifested in the speaker's penis. The second line does not mirror the Ovidian original as faithfully, with the exception of the repeated form of *putare*, but it does allude to another couplet in *Amores* 3.7:

¹⁸⁰ Thomason *ad loc.*

¹⁸¹ Callebat 2012: 304-5 *ad loc.* "Il est licite de penser que la *retractatio* du carmen relève d'une perspective analogue intervient dans les deux textes: beauté de la partenaire, d'une part, perfection de la *mentula*, d'autre part, mais même échec d'impuissance."

hanc etiam non est mea dedignata puella
 molliter admota sollicitare manu. (Am. 3.7.73-4)

My girl did not even shy away from softly
 arousing it with the touch of her hand.

The tenderness of Ovid's *puella* (*molliter*) has no equivalent in *CP* 80. Both euphemisms for masturbation (*sollicitare*; *tractare*) share a violent connotation, but Ovid's inclusion of the adverb *molliter* softens the *puella*'s gesture into a sensual one. Just as Achilles' yearning in *Tristia* 2 became sexually explicit lust in *CP* 68, the soft touch of Ovid's elegiac mistress now becomes the yanking of Priapic *puellae*. The only thing "delicate" about the *CP* is the effeminate man who tries to steal from Priapus' garden.¹⁸²

A further comparison between these two poems lies in the fifth and six feet of their first lines. Ovid's girl is polished (*culta*); the speaker says that his penis is thick (*crassa*). The distinction between *culta* and *crassa* is not just a physical one, but a technical and aesthetic one as well. The adjective *crassa* occurs only one other time in the *CP*, in *CP* 3 where the poet explains the explicitness of his poetry by claiming that his muse is pot-bellied (*crassa Minerva mea est*; 3.10). In this context, the use of *crassa* is poetological, and as others have argued, the repetition of the word in the final poem of the book begs us to consider that instance as poetic commentary, too. Bringing in *Amores* 3.7 strengthens this argument. It is not just Ovid's girl who is *culta*, but it is his genre,

¹⁸² *CP* 64

*quidam mollior anseris medulla
 furatum venit huc amore poenae:
 furetur licet usque, non videbo.*

For more on this poem, see Chapter Three.

too.¹⁸³ Twice in the *Amores* Ovid identifies his elegiac predecessor Tibullus as polished and refined (*culte Tibulle*; 1.15.28; 3.9.66). Quintilian refers to Tibullus in synonymous terms (*tersus atque elegans*; 10.1.93). All of these terms hearken back to the Callimachean aesthetics that informed much of Augustan love elegy.¹⁸⁴ As far as the poet of the *CP* is concerned, elegy is *cultus*, so in adapting *Amores* 3.7 to the *CP*, the adjective is swapped for something that is better suited for Priapic poetics: *crassa*.¹⁸⁵ This term, too, appears in Quintilian to describe those educational theorists who are less well educated and have a level of dullness (*quosdam imperitiores etiam crassiore, ut vocant, Musa*; 1.10.28).¹⁸⁶ In this context, the *Priapea* poet's use of *crassa* seems perfectly in line with Priapus' defense in *CP* 68 that he is *rusticus* and *rudis*.

The interaction between these two texts is takes place beyond the level of genre. The two texts are in conversation because of their content, too. The *Priapea* poet spends most of *CP* 80 weighing the merits and demerits of size. The thickness of *crassa* seems in opposition to the fineness of *culta*, but if we recall the context of *crassa* in *CP* 80, the speaker is claiming that he is *not* thick enough, therefore implying that he is small. Then he proceeds to repeat Athena's praise of Tydeus' small size in the *Iliad*.

utilior Tydeus, qui, si quid credis Homero,

¹⁸³ Ovidian *cultus* bears the weight of copious commentary. For a recent discussion, see the introduction in Hardie 2002. See also Watson 1982 and Ramage 1973: 87-100.

¹⁸⁴ For Tibullus, in particular, see Cairns 1979, particularly pp. 3-6 for discussion of Ovid and Quintilian's descriptions of Tibullus.

¹⁸⁵ Note Martial's description of elegy as "refined" (*cultis...elegia comis*; 5.30.4).

¹⁸⁶ Quintilian's use of *ut vocant* suggests that *crassiore Musa* and its counterparts were colloquial expressions. Horace uses the proverb in *Sat.* 2.2.3, and it appears later on in a letter of Fronto (67.2) and in Macrobius *Sat.* 1.24.13. For *crassa Minerva* and *pinguis Minerva* as a proverbial expression, *OLD s.v.* 'Minerva' 3.

ingenio pugnax, corpore parvus erat. (CP 80.5-6)

Tydeus' small size is not just more beneficial than the speaker's in a literal sense; he is more serviceable in a sexual context, too. *Utilis* can have the opposite connotation of *inutilis* with respect to sexual ability.¹⁸⁷ In a comparable passage from Martial, a girl is unsatisfied by the two men who try to excite her. The one is a eunuch and lacks the right equipment; the other is an old man who is *not* "useful" in bed because of his old age.¹⁸⁸ The double meaning of *utilis* in CP 80, then, as "useful" both in a literal and in an obscene sense, demonstrates on a small-scale the sexualizing of Homeric epic that takes place in CP 68.¹⁸⁹ But there is also the size of the poetry. The poet of the CP is writing epigram, a "small" genre.¹⁹⁰ In CP 68 the poet condenses the highlights of 24 books of epic poetry into 38 lines. He refines that even further in CP 25.

The poet of the CP shifts from the Ovidian original by referring to an old Homeric hero who does not appear in *Amores* 3.7. Ovid compares himself to Nestor and Tithonus, both of whom seem to be common examples of old age.¹⁹¹ He writes that, unlike him, the two of them could be energized by his girl's touch:

illius ad tactum Pylius iuvenescere possit

¹⁸⁷ For "inutilis" as an innuendo for impotence: CP 73.3 (*mentula...est...inutile lignum*); Am. 3.7.15 (*iners iacui...inutile pondus*); Sen. *Contr.* 2.5.13-4 (*maritus...inutilis in concubitu suae uxoris iacuisset*). See also Adams 1990: 46.

¹⁸⁸ 11.81.4: *viribus hic, operi non est hic utilis annis: / ergo sine effectu prurit utrique labor*. See Kay 1985 *ad loc.*

¹⁸⁹ Callebat 2012:306 *ad loc.* "L'emploi de l'adjectif *utilis* ramène le texte homérique au niveau des *res veneriae*."

¹⁹⁰ For more on "size" as a reference to epigram, see Höschele 2008a: 63, 2008b: 385-6.

¹⁹¹ Nestor and Tithonus as paired examples of old age appear in Prop. 2.25.10; [Sen.] *Ap.* 4.1.14; Stat. *Silv.* 4.3.150-51.

Tithonosque annis fortior esse suis. (Am. 3.7.41-42)

At her touch the Pyliaean one could be made young
and Tithonus could become stronger than his years.

The main concern of *CP* 80 is size, not age and ability, and this explains to some extent the shift to Tydeus. The absence of Nestor and Tithonus in a poem where readers might otherwise expect them, given the Ovidian original, evokes the *Priapea* poet's handling of the pair just a few poems earlier in *CP* 76. There the two, along with Priam, appear as potential Priapic victims.

quod sim iam senior meumque canis
cum barba caput albicet capillis:
deprensos ego perforare possum
Tithonum Priamumque Nestoremque. (CP 76)

Though I may be older and my head may be white—both my hairs
and my beard: I can still plow Tithonus, Priam, and Nestor once
I've caught them.

The tone here is not one of defeat, but rather, of conquest. It sounds much closer to the speaker's conclusion in *CP* 68 than it does to the speaker in *CP* 80, as if to say, "I could have stuck it to Odysseus, and now that I'm old, I'll just stick it to those old guys in Homer." Here in *CP* 76, Priapus is still powerful, though admittedly older (*quod...iam senior*). The expectation of—and absence of—Nestor and Tithonus in *CP* 80 heightens the speaker's ineffectiveness in that poem.

Given that the recurring theme of the *CP* is Priapus' immensely large penis, it is true that any allusion might in some way reflect back on his member. But as we have seen, the poet seems to allude specifically to epic in reference to Priapus' genitalia or genitalia in general. *CP* 25 inserts Agamemnon's scepter where we would otherwise

expect Priapus' penis. *CP* 68 never loses its focus on the penis, whether through direct mention or metaphor, and concludes, rather than begins, with Priapus' physical endowment, spotlighting the *real* penis in this Homeric crowd. The remarkable length of *CP* 68 may, as Holzberg suggests, reflect the length of the praised *mentula*, but it is also the *CP*'s lone "epic."¹⁹² Priapus' phallic ability is first weakened and then becomes downright insufficient when it encounters Homeric figures in *CP* 76 and 80. There is something missing here.

Tydeus is not Priapus' victim, as Nestor, Priam, and Tithonus were in *CP* 76 and Odysseus might have been in *CP* 68. Instead, Tydeus is the contender. Of these lines O'Connor says: "Now transported to the world of Homeric saga, the speaker realizes at last that not his small penis size, but his own inexperience and shame could have been a loss to him if contending with Tydeus on the battlefield of love."¹⁹³ Our Priapus poet (or, our Priapus/poet) imagines himself again in the Homeric world, as he does at the end of *CP* 68 and to some extent in *CP* 76, but this time he cannot live up to the visions of hyperphallic grandeur he had then. To speak of a "battlefield of love" calls to this reader's mind the *militia amoris* of Roman love elegy. For the elegists, the arms and toils of war are metaphorical, not literal. In a similar way the *Priapea* poet considers Homeric epic not necessarily for what it *actually* is, but for what epic can become in the world of Priapus' garden. Elegists and the *Priapea* poet may cherry pick from epic because their poetry is precisely *not* epic. It is far less sweeping and comprehensive. Prioux uses this

¹⁹² Holzberg 2005: 377. "c. 68 has the appearance of 'grand' poetry, as it were..."

¹⁹³ O'Connor 1989: 163.

reference to Tydeus to make *CP* 80 a proponent of the very aesthetics it seems to reject.¹⁹⁴ I return to her argument in more detail in the next chapter, but for the present, it is important to take note of her suggestion that the speaker may not find Tydeus' short size to be wholly bad if we recall that small-scale composition is a Callimachean virtue. Holzberg, too, reads this poem as very tongue-in-cheek, and thinks that the poet is actually making a metapoetic statement that there is goodness contained in "small packages," such as the short epigrams of the *CP*.¹⁹⁵ The speaker finds his match in Tydeus, who lives in the world of epic, but is small in form just like the *CP*'s poems. Tydeus is an interesting model, as he is not a Homeric figure in the way that his son Diomedes is. By eschewing other potential heroes for the less expected Tydeus, the poet of the *CP* is making something small—both literally in terms of Tydeus' size and figuratively in terms of his role in the *Iliad*—into something suggestive of his poetic program. We might also read the sexual connotation of *utilior* as reflective of the sexual and perhaps literary pleasure (*placere*) that Priapus promises in *CP* 68; in the way that he claims he would pleasure Penelope more than Odysseus can, and by association, claims that the *CP* 68 may offer more literary pleasure than the *Odyssey*, so, too, does he claim that Tydeus' small size and the small size of the *CP* are more useful, both poetically and sexually.¹⁹⁶ The poet's mention of Tydeus is not just reflective of his close reading of Homer, but it is also demonstrates his thorough knowledge of Ovidian source material. This couplet demonstrates the layers of external and internal readings that make the *CP*

¹⁹⁴ Prioux 2008. I return to Prioux's emphasis on the aesthetics of statuary in Chapter Two.

¹⁹⁵ Holzberg 2005: 379-80.

¹⁹⁶ Underlying *utilior* may very well be parody of Horace's *utilis* (*A.P.* 343-44).

an intricate and enriched piece of literature, one that is immersed—however ironically—in the landscape of Greek and Roman poetry.

The last two couplets of *CP* 80 will be treated in fuller detail in the conclusion of this dissertation. In this chapter’s focus on repetition, however, it is interesting to note that we find *novitas* referred to here at the end of the poetry book. Not only does this term appear at the end, but newness, as well as shame (*pudor*), also vies to destroy our Priapus speaker. They are negative traits. Holzberg has rightly identified the meaning of *novitas* and *pudor* as the condition of impotence, and his reading has become the accepted reading of this poem.¹⁹⁷ Ovid uses *pudor* to describe his embarrassment about his sexual inefficacy three times in *Amores* 3.7.¹⁹⁸ Certainly impotence is a “new” experience for Priapus, but *novitas* is particularly interesting from a metapoetic perspective. In his commentary on the *Epistulae ex Ponto*, Gaertner observes that *novitas* rarely appears in poetry with the exception of didactic poetry.¹⁹⁹ This is not quite the case for Ovid. Gaertner also notes 17 uses of *novitas* in the Ovidian corpus. Poets make claims to novelty at the beginning of their work. It is often a qualitatively good thing. Catullus dedicates his new book (*novum*; 1.1) and in his *Epistulae ex Ponto* Ovid uses both *novus* and *novitas* in reference to himself and his work. He says that he has been in Tomis for some time (*Naso Tomitanae iam non novus incola terrae*; 1.1.1) and a few lines later he wonders whether the recipient of this book of letters will question its novelty (*quid*

¹⁹⁷ Holzberg 2005. *cf.* Callebat 2012 *ad loc.*

¹⁹⁸ *Am.* 3.7.37: *huc pudor accessit: facti pudor ipse nocebat*; 3.7.71-2: *per te deprensus inermis / tristitia cum magno damna pudore tuli.*

¹⁹⁹ Gaertner 2005: 102 on *Pont.* 1.1.13. *Novitas* occurs 15x in Lucretius and once in Hor. *A.P.* 223.

ueniant nouitate roges fortasse sub ipsa; 1.1.13). Gaertner suggests that the novelty here is in comparison to the *Tristia*, but I wonder whether, given the reference to the three books of the *Ars Amatoria* in the previous line, the novelty of the book of letters is also in comparison to that work.²⁰⁰ Such a reading would fit in well here in the *CP*, where the absence or loss of sexual play and potency (most of the subject matter of the *Ars Amatoria*) results in the experience of novelty.

The poet of the *CP* is reversing a trope found in the introductions of poetry books. We know from the beginning of this chapter that the poet is well versed in Catullus' dedication poem, but the reference to newness is withheld until the end. This reference to newness takes us back to the introduction, particularly *CP* 2. Given that the poet seems to reject the Callimachean trappings of poets such as Catullus and Ovid in that introductory passage, the idea that *novitas* would be ruin (*damno*) continues the "unpoetic" poetics promoted there. But as this chapter demonstrates, this claim that the poet's work lacks artistry and craft and stands apart from such poetry is a façade for poetry that is as intellectual as it is parodic and obscene.

Conclusion

In our progression from *CP* 2 to 25 to 68 to 76 and finally to 80, we have seen the extent to which the *Priapea* poet engages with other literary voices. This voice often takes on the form of parody, but embedded in this parody is a poetological discourse that incorporates several voices. Passages from epic poetry and elegy are not just something for the *CP* to imitate, but also something against which the *CP* can define itself. By

²⁰⁰ Gaertner 2005 *ad loc.*

adapting epic and elegiac voices into its obscene subject matter, the *CP* demonstrates not only its ability to parody but also its discourse with other poetic voices. The *Priapea* poet repeatedly upends the book's self-proclaimed status as coarse and crude by taking the reader from lows of obscene epigram to the highs of epic and back again. The exclusive focus on the penis as the recurring theme of the *CP* is confounded with the reiteration of more mannered poetic styles. Epic takes on a new form in the *CP*—it has to. By means of parody, the *CP* brings an elevated genre like epic down to its size and makes it something that epigram can absorb. By way of concluding this chapter I turn to *CP* 41, a short poem that, I suggest, functions as a metapoetic guideline for how the *CP* converses with other poetic forms. It is not that other literary voices and styles have no place in the collection, but that they can only become part of the *CP* once they become Priapic.

CP 41 is a warning to all poets who dedicate verses not to bother writing serious ones unless they want to be reamed out like the other “erudite poets.”

quisquis venerit huc, poeta fiat
 et versus mihi dedicet iocosos.
 qui non fecerit, inter eruditos
 ficosissimus ambulet poetas. (CP 41)

May whoever comes here become a poet and dedicate amusing verses to me. If he does not do this, may he move among the well-read poets as a well-reamed poet.

Of this poem, O'Connor has made the following remark: “Let anyone who won't condescend to writing *Priapea* go ahead and be a Vergil, a Hesiod or an Ennius, i.e. a poet proper, but he shall do so only after having been sodomized by me.”²⁰¹ I would suggest there is a second message here as well. It is not just that serious poets and their

²⁰¹ O'Connor 1989:134.

poems will be rejected; Priapus is declaring that poets and their poems will be given the Priapic treatment (*ficosissimus*) if they enter his garden space as serious poets. Buchheit views Priapus' shrine as the book of the *CP*, and it is with this line of thought that I take Priapus' assertion here as indicative for the entire poetic program.²⁰² The *eruditi poetae* are the same poets whose trimmings the poet rejected back in *CP* 2. There, the poet renounced poetic style, not necessarily the poets themselves.²⁰³ The juxtaposition of *iocosos* and *eruditos* in the final position of lines two and three echoes the contrast between *ludens* and *laboriose* in *CP* 2 and furthermore, the contrast between Priapus' *mentula* and the immaculate Muses. Whereas the Muses were potentially endangered in *CP* 2 (the emphasis on *virgineum* and *castas* in addition to the verb *ducere*, used in marriage, imparts a subtle sexual defilement), the *eruditi poetae*, mortal counterparts of the Muses, are threatened in *CP* 41. Once reamed, the poets and their work become Priapic subjects. In other words, they will be forced to become figures of fun—whether they choose to write humorous verses or not—by becoming Priapus' victims and suffering the same punishment as other intruders in his garden. If their verses are not jocular, then they will become the butt of Priapus' threatening joke. The act of “staining” is literal here, but it does not necessarily have to be as forceful as the act suggests. To become *iocosi* means to be on level with the *CP*, and this chapter has demonstrated the ways in which the *Priapea* poet brings the poetry of *eruditi poetae* to its own level.

Priapus is a fixed object in his garden and all incomers must bend over (literally!) to him.

²⁰² Buchheit 1962: 10. Cf. Richlin 1992: 162. “...the *Priapea* often repeat an identification of god with poet, *mentula* with power, garden with poetry.” For more on this idea of the temple and the garden as paratextual spaces, see Chapter Two and particularly Chapter Three.

²⁰³ Poets are implicated only slightly in the remark *ut solent poetae* (2.2).

All incoming literary texts—especially those of the *eruditi poetae*—must also submit to the *CP*.

CHAPTER TWO: Statues, Style, and Sex

Introduction

In this chapter we will turn to the Priapus statue in the *CP*, a topic that we discussed briefly in the Introduction with reference to the apple tree in *CP* 61. The representation of Priapus as a statue is a typical feature of Priapic poetry. This emphasis on the statue form in poetic texts develops out of the genre of epigram, and more specifically from the subgenres of dedicatory epigram and ecphrastic epigram. In dedicatory epigram we read about the cult statue to which one makes offering, the identity of the one making the offering, and/or the offerings themselves. In ecphrastic epigram poets write about the statue: its aesthetic quality, its artisan and his technique, and its appearance to a viewer. Greek *priapea* are, for the most part, dedicatory epigrams, but we do see some ecphrastic elements; readers are encouraged to imagine not only the Priapus statue to which one is offering prayer, but also the dedications themselves. In *A.P.* 9.10, Priapus is described as a figure carved out of fig wood.²⁰⁴ In *A.P.* 7.192, which is of unknown date but shows clear influence by the epigrammatists Leonidas and Antipater, the objects of dedication to Priapus are described in full and extensive detail.²⁰⁵ In an epigram possibly dated to the

²⁰⁴ *A.P.* 9.437 (Theocritus)

Τήναν τὰν λαύραν, ὄθι ταὶ δρύες, αἰπόλε, κάμψας,
 σύκινον εὐρησεῖς ἀρτιγλυφὲς ξόανον, τρισκελές,
 αὐτόφλοιον, ἀνούατον· ἀλλὰ φάλητι
 παιδογόνῳ δυνατὸν Κύπριδος ἔργα τελεῖν.

²⁰⁵ *A.P.* 7.192 (Archias)

Ταῦτα σαγηναῖοιο λίνου δηναῖα Πριήπω
 λείψανα καὶ κύρτους Φιντύλος ἐκρέμασεν,
 καὶ γαμψὸν χαίτησιν ἐφ' ἰππεῖησι πεδηθὲν
 ἄγκιστρον, κρυφίην εἰναλίοισι πάγην,
 καὶ δόνακα τριτάνυστον, ἀβάπτιστόν τε καθ' ὕδωρ

early 1st century BCE, Priapus is envisioned as a meager statue, “little to look upon” (βαιὸς ἰδεῖν ὁ Πρίηπος; 10.8.1).²⁰⁶ In this same poem we see reference to the statue’s makers: “the sons of toiling fisherman” (ξέσσειαν μογερῶν υἰέες ἰχθυβόλων; 10.8.4). By the Roman period we see the fabrication and quality of Priapus statues emerge as a motif in Priapic poetry. Although these poems never exploit the full range of epigrammatic possibilities that one finds in other epigrams, they use descriptive language to the extent that readers can imagine the statue in question. Poems about Priapus emphasize the statue’s raw material and plain appearance; a frequent adjective of Priapus in Latin literature is “wooden” (*ligneus*), which hints at his inferiority by zeroing in on his low-quality medium.²⁰⁷ Agricultural texts instruct one to hew a log roughly in order to make a

φελλόν, ἀεὶ κρυφίων σῆμα λαχόντα βόλων·
οὐ γὰρ ἔτι στεῖβει ποσὶ χοιράδας, οὐδ’ ἐπιαύει
ἠϊόσιν, μογερῶ γήραϊ τειρόμενος.

Law (1936: 235, 242) suggests that this is Archias of Byzantium. Hutchinson (2013: 110) provides the range of 1st century BCE-1st century CE for Archias of Byzantium.

²⁰⁶ *A.P.* 10.8.1-4. (Archias)

βαιὸς ἰδεῖν ὁ Πρίηπος ἐπαιγιαλίτιδα ναίω
χρηλὴν, αἰθυσίας οὐποτε ἀντιβίας,
φοξός, ἄπους, οἶόν κεν ἐρημαίησιν ἐπ’ ἀκταῖς
ξέσσειαν μογερῶν υἰέες ἰχθυβόλων.

This epigram—in addition to *A.P.* 10.7 and 10.10, which are about another Priapus statue and a statue of Pan—may be written by the Archias of Antioch in Cicero’s *Pro Archia*. For the different Archias poets in the *Anthology*, see Law 1936, specifically p. 235 and 237 for the poets of *priapea*.

²⁰⁷ References to the raw material of Priapus statues appear in Hor. *S.* 1.8.1 (*ficulus...inutile lignum*); [Verg.] *Priapea* 1.3-4 (*ligneus...deus*); [Verg.] *Priapeum* ‘*Quid Hoc Novi Est?*’ 17 (*ligneo tibi*); Col. 10.31-2 (*truncum...antiquae arboris*). In Tib. 1.10.20 the poet refers to the *ligneus...deus*, who is not named as anyone other than a *lar*. Stewart (1997: 583) suggests that this poem “recalls Priapus,” and we do have physical evidence (the wooden figurine from Marseille) in which Priapus is crafted as a figure for a *lararium*. Tibullus links Priapus and the *Lares* as *custodes* in 1.1.17-20. Martial reacts against this trope of the wooden Priapus somewhat in 6.49 (*nec...de ligno mihi quolibet columna est*, 49.2-3) and more fully in 6.73 (*aspice quam certo videar non ligneus ore / nec devota focis inguinis arma geram*, 73.5-6), which will be discussed in more detail below. Forms of the adjective *ligneus* appear in several poems in the *CP* (6, 10, 43, 56, 63, 73).

Priapus statue for one's garden, and in a few other instances as well we see specific reference to the haphazard manufacture of these statues.²⁰⁸

This chapter takes as its foundation the motif of the statue. As we will see, there is scanty reference to statues in the *CP*. I argue that the poet of the *CP* is less concerned with actual statues, that is the form in which one sees Priapus, and more concerned with the questions brought up by the poetic tradition of his statue: What are the aesthetics of his image? Who is looking at Priapus? I say that form seems to matter little because in the *CP* we see Priapus both as a static image (statue, painting, etc.) and as the subject of poetry verses. We also witness moments in the text in which Priapus seems more dynamic—more life-like—than a fixed object.

There is a shared set of aesthetic principles for image and text that will be explored in the first section. I first turn to the poem that is most obviously about Priapus as a statue, *CP* 10. This poem defines the content of and technique behind a Priapus statue while alluding to the literary sphere of the *CP*. The two proems of the book support this definition of content and technique. The proems blur the lines between image and book, and viewer and reader, and they encourage us to think of Priapic aesthetics as both artistic and literary. My second section suggests that the poet brings the themes of art and decorum into a group of poems in which he compares his form to other gods, so that the

²⁰⁸ In *Satire* 1.8.2-3 Horace suggests such a statue requires little manufacture, and the juxtaposition of the statue with a stool keeps it on a low register (*cum faber, incertus scamnum faceretne Priapum, / maluit esse deum*). Coincidentally a large number of the other references to the rough-hewn statue appear in the *Appendix Vergiliana*. See [Verg.] *Priapea* 2.1 (*arte fabricata rustica*), *Priapea* 3.2 (*rustica formitata securi*) – Callebat's text; [Verg.] *Culex* 86: *illi falce deus colitur non arte politus*; In the *CP* we see this in 10 (*non sum Phidiaca manu politus, / sed lignum rude vilicus dolavit*; 10.3-4), which we will consider in more detail below, and in *CP* 63.10 (*manus sine arte rusticae dolaverunt*). Cf. [Verg.] *Priapeum* 'Quid Hoc Novi Est?' 9-10 (*at, o Triphalle, saepe floribus novis / tuas sine arte deligavimus comas*).

reader, too, is invited to draw comparisons not only between deities, but also between their image and their literary context. The poet combines this group with another group of poems that deal with the female response to visually obscene display, which I turn to in my third section. In the *CP*, women are both viewers of Priapus' obscene statue form and potential readers of the naughty verses in which he appears. When Priapus interacts with these female characters, his likeness seems rather lifelike. In these passages the poet of the *CP* develops the piquant charm evident in other Priapus narratives wherein his inanimate state and the idea that he can move are in confrontation. Physical beauty and artistic beauty are conflated, as are sexual pleasure and aesthetic pleasure. I propose that these passages demonstrate what it means to have "taste" in the Priapic world and as a reader of the *CP*.

Section 1: Priapus—the A(nti)cultural God? (*CP* 10, 1, 2)

This section seeks to accomplish two things: to demonstrate that literary sources of all kinds take for granted or even insist upon the aesthetic inferiority of Priapus statues, and to establish that within the *CP* the image of Priapus and the poetic text that describes it are often elided into a unified image. A central component of this unified image of Priapus as statue/poetry book is predicated on the assumption that both are of a low, substandard aesthetic quality. The *Priapea* poet ironically adapts the trope of the second-rate god and statue from earlier Priapic poetry into a broader discussion that includes the literary alongside the artistic and visual. The pretense to inferiority in the *CP* is evident in the poet's own assertion (*e.g. scripsi non nimium laboriose*; 2.1), as we have seen in the previous chapter, but the book is inextricably linked to a god whose fictionalized shoddy

physical appearance makes him a figure of fun, so inferiority is not just a pretense, but a fabricated existence. Material craftsmanship and literary composition are related to one another in the same way as object and text.

In the first half of this section we consider the only “statue poem” in the *CP*. Although Priapus is referred to as “wooden” in several poems in the *CP*, an adjective that alludes to his presence in those poems as a wooden statue, only *CP* 10 focuses explicitly on his image as a wooden statue. This poem is a natural starting point for this chapter, not only because Priapus refers to himself as statue in this poem, but also because the poem illustrates all of the themes in this chapter: the aesthetics of Priapus’ image, the comparison of style and decorum, and the response of a female viewer to Priapus’ image. *CP* 10, as I will show, demonstrates the development of a motif common to Priapic poetry (*i.e.* Priapus as a “low” statue) into a poetic discourse that extends beyond static embodiment. I combine a close reading of *CP* 10 with an analysis of other poems about the Priapus statue in order to show where *CP* 10 touches upon elements of the common motif of wooden Priapus statues and where *CP* 10 begins to take the statue theme into new territory. I point to instances in the two proems that support the idea that Priapus’ image is conflated with Priapic verses.

CP 10 begins with a question to a girl, which reminds us of the dialogue between statues and passersby in some Hellenistic epigrams.²⁰⁹ Priapus is our speaker and we soon find out that this girl is laughing at him. He proceeds to defend himself and give the girl a

²⁰⁹ *E.g.* Call. *Iambus* 9 (a Hermes statue). See also Prioux 2008: 159-62. For the talking statue, more generally, see Kassel 1983.

typical Priapic threat, but in the process of defending himself he displays a brief explanation of Priapic aesthetics.

insulsissima quid puella rides?
 non me Praxiteles Scopasve fecit,
 non sum Phidiaca manu politus,
 sed lignum rude vilicus dolavit
 et dixit mihi: “tu, Priapus esto!” 5
 spectas me tamen et subinde rides:
 nimirum tibi salsa res videtur
 adstans inguinibus columna nostris! (CP 10)

Why do you laugh, most tasteless girl? Praxiteles or Scopas did not make me, nor was I given polish by Phidias’ hand, but a slave overseer hacked a log and said to me: “You, be Priapus!” Yet you look at me and immediately laugh: no doubt this seems an amusing thing to you, the column standing up in my groin!

Priapus speaks here as an object of art and not as a guardian of the garden, his usual role. He proceeds to define himself first by saying what he is not: a colossal work of an artisan sculptor. Line 2 and 3 focus on three famous sculptors: Praxiteles, Scopas, and Phidias. These men, the Priapus statue says, did not create him, but an overseer did. Priapus did not materialize from any act of polish, but simply by hacking a log.

The verb in line 3 (*sum...politus*) looks back to the verb in Catullus’ dedication poem (*expolitum*); it has the double meaning of “polished” in the literal sense as well as metaphorical. This statue was not smoothed over by Phidias’ hand, nor does it possess any of the elegance of Phidias’ works. The statue and poetry book are linked to one another, as the notion of polish brings to mind not only the physical object of the book and the physical statue, but also the artistic skill behind both works. The verb *dolavit* in addition to the adverb *rude* stand in opposition to the vocabulary of polish (*non sum...politus*) and of creation (*non...fecit*). The verb *dolavit* also resonates with the poet’s

beginning claim not to have written these poems with much effort (*scripsi non nimium laboriose*). The poet does not speak directly to skill (we see *labor* in *CP 2*, not *ars*) but *ars* usually attends *labor*.²¹⁰ The later reference in *CP 2* to verses as wall scribbles put us in the realm of graffiti. The action of making a Priapic statue is comparable to the action of writing Priapic poetry.

The image of the Priapus statue described in lines 2, 3, and 4 corresponds to the directions that Columella gives in his poetry book on gardens for constructing a Priapus statue. Columella advises one to put up a Priapus statue as one of the first steps of developing a garden, as if having a Priapus statue were an essential feature of having a productive garden. The construction of the Priapus statue, Columella says, should be minimal.

nec tibi Daedaliae quaerantur munera dextrae,
 nec Polyclitea nec Phradmonis aut Ageladae
 arte laboretur, sed truncum forte dolatum
 arboris antiquae numen venerare Priapi
 terribilis membri, medio qui semper in horto
 inguinibus puero, praedoni falce minetur. (Col. 10.29-34)

May you not seek out of the gifts of skilled Daedalus, nor may it be fashioned with the art of Polyclitus, Phradmon, or Ageladas, but the stump of an old tree, hewn haphazardly, you ought to worship as the godhead of Priapus, terrifying in his member, who always, in the middle of the garden, threatens the boy with his groin, the thief with his sickle.

²¹⁰ Compare, for example, the description of ships in *Ov. Her.* 19.183 (*arte laboratae...naves*). *Ov. Her.* 12.50 is comparable (*ultimus est aliqua decipere arte labor*), but the context here is not of craftsmanship, but of cunning.

Columella's Priapus is, like the Priapus in *CP* 10, little more than a tree trunk.²¹¹ Not only does Columella instruct the potential farmer *not* to have his Priapus made with the art and skill of Daedalus, Polyclitus, Phradmon, or Ageladas, but also he says that there should not be any real artistic element to this statue at all (*forte dolatum*).

Priapus' sex is a feature of the passage in Columella (*terribilis membri*), but the passage itself is not obscene. This is not the case in one of Martial's Priapic poems (6.37), which corresponds to *CP* 10 and to line 3 in particular. As is often the case with Martial and the *CP*, although it is next to impossible to determine chronology, the kinship is undeniable. Looking at this epigram as a point of comparison helps us to understand the humor of *CP* 10 and the irony of 6.37. Grewing notes the elevated language in 6.37 and points out the ways in which Martial wants his Priapus to stand apart from other Priapus poems—both his own and others, as this poem is clearly responding to the stock image of the comically primitive Priapus we see in *CP* 10 and Columella.²¹²

non rudis indocta fecit me falce colonus:
 dispensatoris nobile cernis opus.
 nam Caeretani cultor ditissimus agri
 hos Hilarus colles et iuga laeta tenet.
 aspice, quam certo videar non ligneus ore 5
 nec devota focis inguinis arma geram,
 sed mihi perpetua numquam moritura cupresso
 Phidiaca rigeat mentula digna manu.
 vicini, moneo, sanctum celebrate Priapum
 et bis septenis parcite iugeribus. (6.73)

No rude farmer made me with an unskillful sickle; you see the steward's noble work. For Hilarus, the richest cultivator of the land of Caere, owns these heights and rich hillsides. See how the

²¹¹ Herter (1932: 4-5) suggests that the earliest instantiations of the horticultural god were trees and that the "phallic" associations likely grew out of forked trees.

²¹² Grewing 1997: 474; 479.

impression I give with my clear features is not wooden and the weapon I bear in my groin is not fated for the fireplace; but, carved from everlasting cypress, my rigid cock is worthy of Phidias' hand. Neighbors, I advise you, honor sacred Priapus and spare the fourteen acres.

Martial's Priapus, first of all, *is* a work of art (*nobile opus*). He is defined not as the opposite of proper art but rather, as the opposite of Priapic art. The absence of a *rudis colonus* in *Ep.* 6.37 corresponds to the presence of *vilicus* who *rude...dolavit* in *CP* 10. The suggestion that he does not seem to be wooden (*videar non ligneus*) stems from the recurring image of Priapus as a log (*lignum*). It is the case, we find, that this Priapus is made of cypress. This sublimity, as Grewing notes, is broken in the very line in which Priapus makes his greatest claim of monumentality.²¹³ He says that his penis is worthy of the hand of Phidias (*Phidiaca...mentula digna manu*). The reference to *mentula* alone takes the register from elevated to obscene. In the final lines of the epigram the statue undermines his claim to artistic grandeur. His reference to Phidias is embedded in an obscene innuendo (*Phidiaca rigeat mentula digna manu*; 6.73.8). However refined as a sculpture, this Priapus is still the morally crude Priapus we see in other epigrams. Furthermore, the implied joke in a "rigid cock being worthy of Phidias' hand" takes the stock image of an artisan's hand as metonymy for the artisan himself, and turns it into a sexual agent. A similar joke is latent in *CP* 10. The poets in both passages juxtapose a name synonymous with artistic brilliance with a very Priapic and obscene innuendo.

On this note, let us return to *CP* 10, where obscenity and beauty seem to be linked in addition to image and text. The word *salsa* in line 7 in is particularly striking. It can

²¹³ Grewing 1997: 474.

have the basic meaning of humorous, but it more often suggests something witty. It is synonymous with words such as *facetus* and *urbanus*, words that seem incompatible with Priapus and that the poet suggests are incompatible with the *CP*. Furthermore, *salsus* appears more as a description of written work and speech rather than of physical objects like a penis.²¹⁴ Its cognate *salax* would be the more appropriate adjective if the intended effect were to demonstrate the god's lewdness.²¹⁵ By using *salsa* the poet draws a link as well as a distinction between Priapus' image and its female critic; to her, his penis seems a *salsa res*, according to Priapus, she is *insulssima*. In both of these words the emphasis is on taste or a lack thereof. The connection between these two words in the form of *sal* creates a dynamic of viewer-centered aesthetics, that is to say, "beauty is in the eye of the beholder." Priapus' penis is 'salsa' to a girl who does not know what 'sal' is. In *CP* 10 it is the form and image of Priapus that is of importance, but elsewhere we see this reduced to the image of Priapus with no clear indication of what form he appears. We also see in *CP* 10 that the terminology used to describe not only the aesthetics of Priapus' form, but the one who evaluates is primarily used for literary works.

²¹⁴ *OLD* s.v. 'salsus' 3. The sense here may be illuminated by a set of passages in Cicero in which he discusses wit. He uses both *salsus* and *sal* to describe Paetus' wit in *Fam.* 9.15.2 (*accedunt non Attici, sed salsiores quam illi Atticorum, Romani veteres atque urbani sales*). His distinction between Attic wit and homegrown wit appears in a similar passage in *de Off.* 1.104, in which Cicero makes a distinction between types of joking (*duplex omnino est iocandi genus, unum inliberale, petulans, flagitiosum, obscenum, alterum elegans, urbanum, ingeniosum, facetum, quo genere non modo Plautus noster et Atticorum antiqua comoedia, sed etiam philosophorum Socraticorum libri referti sunt... facilis igitur est distinctio ingenui et inliberalis ioci. alter est, si tempore fit, ut si remisso animo, <vel severissimo> homine dignus, alter ne libero quidem, si rerum turpitudine adhibetur et verborum obscenitas*). Attic wit can be *elegans, urbanum, ingeniosum, facetum*, its' opposite, *inliberale, petulans, flagitiosum, obscenum*. The *CP* seems to be posed as this *other* kind of humor that has *turpitudō* and *verborum obscenitas*.

²¹⁵ Forms of *salax* appear in *CP* to describe Priapus (*CP* 14.1; 34.1; 77.12) or objects associated with Priapus, such as an ass (*CP* 52.9), colewort (*CP* 51.20), Priapus' master (*CP* 56.5), and sexually aroused women (*CP* 26.5). By comparison, *salsus* appears only here in *CP* 10.

These connections between image, text, and aesthetics are introduced in a less obvious way in the two proems of the *CP*. The proems of the *CP* suggest that the trope of Priapic poetry wherein he is a statue is transformed into an ongoing commentary on the artistic and literary aesthetics, both as they operate within the confines of the *CP*, and also as they work within a larger literary landscape. When the poet describes Priapus as an artistic image, he can also be describing the literary text of the *CP*. In the two proems of the book we find the conflation of art and literature and an emphasis on the inferiority of the art object and literary book. The *CP* begins with an address to the reader, but the reader is not just using his eyes to read; he is also looking at the image of Priapus.

carminis incompti lusus lecture procaces,
 conveniens Latio pone supercilium.
 non soror hoc habitat Phoebi, non Vesta sacello,
 nec quae de patrio vertice nata dea est,
 sed ruber hortorum custos, membrorior aequo, 5
 qui tectum nullis vestibus inguen habet.
 aut igitur tunicam parti praetende tegendae,
 aut quibus hanc oculis aspicias, ista lege. (*CP* 1)

You who are about to read shameless jests of artless verse, lower that brow that befits Latium. The sister of Phoebus does not dwell in this shrine, nor does Vesta, nor does the goddess who was born from her father’s head, but the ruddy guardian of gardens, more than usually well-endowed, who has his groin covered by no clothing. So, either put a tunic over the part that ought to be covered, or, with the eyes with which you gaze upon this part, read on.

Regardless of the speaker’s identity, it is clear that the subject of this poem is Priapus and the addressee is the reader (*lecture*). As one moves through the poem the subject of the book takes on visual form. Lines 5 and onward describe Priapus’ physique—There is nothing here to suggest that this is a cult *statue* of Priapus, but there is, at least, the idea that one is looking upon an image of the god. The invitation to “put a tunic over the part

that ought to be covered” suggests the presence of a physical image, the penis of which *could* be covered. The invitation to cover up Priapus’ groin also presents the fiction of a physical person, that is, a human figure one can interact with. This physical interaction, limited to the covering and uncovering of male genitalia, is sexually charged. This tension between represented image and physical being is especially at play in the poems we will consider in the third section.

The other physical object envisioned here is the book, to which we will see a direct reference in the second proem. The subject of the poetry book is also a visual artistic form. The final couplet in *CP* 1 takes us from the role of a reader (*lecture*) to the role of a viewer (*aspicis*)—as we are invited to stare not at words on a page, but the deity’s groin—and then finally back to our role as reader (*lege*). In *CP* 1 we are at any moment somewhere between the reading of a literary text and the visualization of a cult image in a shrine. The poet blurs the lines between literary artifact and art object.

The second proem takes us from poetic subject to poetic form. We are still in the space of the shrine (*templi parietibus*), so the cult image of Priapus is still present. This poem further blurs the lines between reader/viewer and book/image.

ludens haec ego teste te, Priape,	
horto carmina digna, non libello,	
scripsi non nimium laboriose.	
nec musas tamen, ut solent poetae,	
ad non virgineum locum vocavi.	5
nam sensus mihi corque defuisset,	
castas, Pierium chorum, sorores	
auso ducere mentulam ad Priapi.	
ergo quidquid id est, quod otiosus	
templi parietibus tui notavi,	10
in partem accipias bonam, rogamus.	(<i>CP</i> 2)

I call you as my witness that it was with playful intention that I wrote these poems, Priapus, not with very much effort, worthy of a garden, not a poetry book. I have not called the Muses to this non-virginal place, as poets are accustomed to do. For I would have been stupid and senseless, if I had dared to lead the chaste sisters, the chorus of Pieria, to Priapus' prick. And so, whatever it is that I have scratched on your temple wall in my leisure, I ask that you accept it in good favor.

Priapus' form is represented in the reference to his penis (*mentulam ad Priapi*), which was the most notable feature of his image.²¹⁶ What we find here is a reference to Priapus' surroundings—the background, so to speak, of Priapus' world. The poet constantly weaves in and out from the physical world and the world of the book, and by juxtaposing *hortus* and *libellus* in line 2, the poet sets up a dichotomy: we can inhabit one of these two worlds, but not both. In spite of this claim, however, is the reference to “place” in line 5 (*ad non virgineum locum*), which is vague enough to be both the physical space of Priapus' garden and the space of the book. Furthermore, the final reference to temple walls suggests that these poems are writings on those walls.²¹⁷ *CP 2* draws out the aesthetic differences between designed poetry books and a humble garden or impromptu graffiti, other poets and this poet, and the chaste Muses and Priapus' penis. Furthermore, if we recall the influence of Catullus' dedication poem discussed in the Introduction, we see that it, too, is a poem about artistic media, skill, and aesthetics. Catullus' poetry book is polished (*expolitum*) both in terms of its refined Alexandrian interior and also in terms of its smoothed exterior surface.

²¹⁶ Some figures of Priapus appear as herms, so the phallus and the head would have been the only body parts carved out of the block. Cf. The Priapus in *A.P.* 10.8.3 who is both “headless” (φοξός) and “footless” (ἄπους).

²¹⁷ There is also the explicit reference to the poem as inscription in *CP 5*.

If we see the image of Priapus and text of the *CP* as parallel objects, then what Priapus and the *CP* are *not* comes across clearly in both proems. The poet defines both through several negatives (Priapus is *not* a chaste deity nor is his shrine virginal; the poet of the *CP* has *not* written elaborately nor is his poetry fit for a *libellus*). Priapus and the *CP* appear to be anti-modesty, polish, and refinement.²¹⁸ The *Priapea* poet invites readers to draw comparisons and contrasts through these negative definitions. We cannot think just of the *CP*, but rather of the *CP* as a text that does not contain poetry fit for a *libellus*, *i.e.* urbane and cultivated poetry.

CP 1 and 2 support the idea in *CP* 10 that Priapus' image can be conflated with the *CP* as a text. What comes out of the proems is that Priapus is an obscene figure and the *CP* is a crude poetry book. In *CP* 10 Priapus is mocked not just for the obscenity of his physical image, but also for its rough and unrefined composition. The adjective *salsa* invites us to consider the aesthetics of Priapus' physical form and the word evokes discussions of written works rather than objects of art. Whereas the distinction in *CP* 2 was between the *Priapea* poet and other, more sophisticated poets (*ut solent poetae*), here the distinction is between the maker of this statue and skilled artists such as Phidias. The connection between viewer and object in *CP* 10 picks up on the same dynamic between reader/viewer and text/object drawn out in *CP* 1 and 2, which I will explore in section three. In the next section we will stay with the statue and the idea of artistic representation as analogy for literary texts before turning to readers and viewers in the

²¹⁸ *C.f.* Stewart 2003: 77: "No figure in Roman art or literature is so expressly defined as an outcast from the norms of cult, art, and culture. This Priapus is anti-art, and as such, he serves to elevate and underpin *proper* cult, *proper* statues, *proper* art. To do so he must be a clown." Stewart sees the literary motif of the humble Priapus statue as a symptom of a larger cultural phenomenon during the Augustan period wherein Priapus is "anti-art."

third and final section. The underlying comparison between the Priapus statues and works of Phidias in *CP* 10 gets drawn out into an artistic analysis of the images of more prominent gods and goddesses.

Section 2: Artistic Comparisons (*CP* 9, 20, 36, 39)

The fact that Priapus is a statue is central to Priapic poetry, but what is interesting from the point of view of poetics is how the poet thematizes the statue in the *CP*. The *Priapea* poet incorporates the motif of Priapus as a lowly statue of inferior quality into a series of poems in which he compares his image to the that of other deities. The act of comparison is latent in *CP* 10, but there readers have to imagine the statuary created by Phidias and others in order to compare it to the humble form of Priapus. In the poems featured in this section, we are invited to make a more explicit comparison between images of other gods and the image of Priapus—at least as it is described in the *CP*.

CP 10 may be the most obvious poem in the *CP* on sculpture, but I suggest that a collection of poems in which Priapus compares himself to other gods is also an ongoing commentary on the aesthetics of art and poetry, which is based on Hellenistic precedents. Buchheit was the first to categorize *CP* 9, 20, 36, 39, 53, and 75 as a group of poems involving the same motif, which he calls “Göttervergleiche,” that is “comparison of gods.”²¹⁹ Out of the six poems in Buchheit’s classification, all but *CP* 53 and 75 concentrate on the physical representations of divinity. *CP* 53 focuses on votive offerings and *CP* 75 focuses on sacred spaces, but *CP* 9, 20, 36, and 39 draw our attention to the physical likeness of deities either by spotlighting their iconography (*CP* 9 and 20) or by

²¹⁹ Buchheit 1962: 78-82.

describing their physical likeness (*CP* 36 and 39). *CP* 63 contains a brief mention of Priapus' likeness as well as his symbol, which, in Priapus' case, is one and the same (i.e. his penis), and for this reason I include it in my study, although it does not fit into Buchheit's category because the comparison of gods is one small part of the poem rather than the entire theme.

The juxtaposition of images for the purpose of aesthetic commentary is not an innovation. The *Priapea* poet is working within a tradition of the Hellenistic period that requires some summary here. In poetry books such as Callimachus' *Iambi* and Posidippus' *Andriantopoiika*, which is a book believed to be dedicated entirely to statuary, statues often represented literary works or genres, and poets compare statuary in such a way that they are also comparing literary texts and genres. This tradition grew out of the descriptive focus of ephrastic epigram and the self-awareness of Hellenistic poets. Acosta-Hughes has recently drawn attention to the role of aesthetic criticism in Callimachus' *Iambi* and the thematic structure of the three poems on statuary in his poetry book. The representation of elevated cult objects such as Zeus in humble iambic verse, in addition to the juxtaposition of such elevated objects with more inferior ones, allows Callimachus to blur the lines between high and low artistic media. His two poems on Hermes in particular emphasize the "low" by referring to the statue in *Iambi* 7 as a "minor work" (πάρεργον; 7.3) and "rubble" (φθόρον; 7.25), and later by presenting the statue in *Iambi* 9 as graphically obscene. Both of these Hermes have qualities that foreshadow the Priapus of the *CP*. These two statues stand in opposition to the grand chryselephantine statue of Zeus described in *Iambi* 6, a statue that is a product of Phidias (ἀ τέχνα δὲ Φειδία; 6.1). As we saw above, it was a part of the motif of Priapus'

manufacture to mention that Priapus statues were *not* the work of a celebrated artisan such as Phidias or Polyclitus. It appears to have been routine for Hellenistic poets to favor sculpture that was not of the Classical aesthetic—or in Callimachus’ case, to explore cultural norms by situating such highbrow art in a low setting (e.g. Zeus in *Iambi* 6).

The newly discovered epigram book of Posidippus is an interesting comparandum because he seems to have dedicated an entire section of it, if not the entire book, to statuary. In these nine poems, heroic and monumental works of sculpture are frequently compared to the smaller and more graceful works of his contemporaries such as Lysippus.²²⁰ The first of these poems reads as programmatic not only for sculptors of Posidippus’ time, but also for Posidippus’ own poetics. The Hellenistic impulse to reject the bombast of epic is paired with an aversion to the monumental style of earlier sculpture.²²¹ The following two poems demonstrate these aesthetics by reusing epic material in a non-epic context: AB 63 presents the humble Philitas in a subtle gameplay with an “epic” Alexander, and the Idomeneus in AB 64 diverges from his ‘static’ epic representation along with his Meriones. A similar antithesis of poetic style is present in the *Iambi* as well. The opposition between Zeus and Hermes stands also on a literary level: Zeus is celebrated in high epic and lyric, whereas Hermes, as Acosta-Hughes points out, is a “mirror image in less elevated verse of the Apollo of elevated song.”²²²

²²⁰ For further analysis of Posidippus’ statue poems see Stewart pp.183-205 and Sens pp. 206-225 in Gutzwiller 2005.

²²¹ Sens 2011: 224, “The artists whose work the poet describes effect an innovative style that departs from the static ‘heroic’ mode of representation used by their predecessors; the identifications we have seen imply that the same is true for the epigrams themselves.”

²²² Acosta-Hughes (2012: 300-301) also points out that although Callimachus “transcends and refashions” *iambos* by introducing the gods of elevated verse, the inclusion of Hermes befits the lower genre.

The *CP* is very much working within this tradition, which, as we saw, features statues that seem to be archetypes for the Roman Priapus. But the way the poet handles this tradition is different from how Callimachus and Posidippus, for example, operate. With the exception of the statue and artists mentioned in *CP* 10, nowhere in this cycle nor in the whole *CP* are actual statues mentioned, such as they are in the *Iambi*. The *Priapea* poet evokes images of other gods by focusing on their likeness. This is an important point, so let us stop and clarify what this means for the *CP*. The comparison poems are about the physical forms and accouterments of gods in a poetry book *about* a god whose image is such an important detail. When Priapus speaks of other deities within the *CP*, he seems to be speaking of them as mirror images of himself. He brings them into his world, a world in which divine figures are images worthy of mockery or praise depending on the size of their penis. But these images do not *have* to be statues. The poet of the *CP* can adapt this Hellenistic tradition of comparing statuary to literature without referring to statues as such. In some of the poems to which we will turn, however, it is difficult *not* to think of physical statues or possibly paintings of statues because the poet frequently calls on our sense of vision.

CP 9 is the first poem in this thematic cycle. Its introduction is similar to the introduction in *CP* 10. Priapus is answering a question: why is my “obscene part” uncovered? He proceeds to point out that no other god or goddess covers his or her “weapon.”

cur obscaena mihi pars sit sine veste, requirens
 quaere, tegat nullus cur sua tela deus.
 fulmen habens mundi dominus tenet illud aperte;
 nec datur aequoreo fuscina tecta deo.
 nec Mavors illum, per quem valet, occulit ensem;

nec latet in tepido Palladis hasta sinu.
 num pudet auratas Phoebum portare sagittas?
 clamne solet pharetram ferre Diana suam?
 num tegit Alcides nodosae robora clavae?
 sub tunica virgam num deus ales habet? 10
 quis Bacchum gracili vestem praetendere thyrsos,
 quis te celata cum face vidit, Amor?
 nec mihi sit crimen, quod mentula semper aperta est:
 hoc mihi si telum desit, inermis ero. (CP 9)

If you ask me why my obscene body part is without clothing, ask, why does no other god conceal his or her own weapons? The master who has the thunderbolt of the world holds it openly, and a concealed trident is not given to the sea god. Mars does not hide that sword, by which he is strong, nor does Pallas' spear lie hidden in her warm breast. Surely it does not shame Phoebus to carry his gilded arrows? Is Diana accustomed to carry her quiver out of public view? Surely Hercules does not conceal the strength of his knotty club? Surely the winged god does not keep his staff under his tunic? Who sees Bacchus cover his cloak over his slender thyrsus; who sees you, Amor, with your torch hidden? May this not be my crime, that my prick is always exposed: if I should lack a weapon, I will be unarmed.

This poem raises some important points. First, the question underlying the first couplet of the poem is reminiscent of *CP 10*, which we have seen above, and of Callimachus' ninth *Iambus*, in which a viewer starts off the poem by asking Hermes about his erect penis. The *diegesis* gives us some context for this fragment: this is a dialogue between a lover and a statue of Hermes in a wrestling school.²²³ The remainder of the poem deals particularly with gods' and goddesses' weapons. Callebat notes the stylistic detail here and points out its form as a literary catalogue typical of the Hellenistic period.²²⁴ The list

²²³ *Diegesis to Iambus 9* (Acosta Hughes 2002: 278)

“Ερμᾶ τί τοι τὸ νεῦρον ὦ Γενειόλα Φιλη-
 τάδου παιδὸς εὐπρεποῦς ἐραστής ἰδὼν
Ἑρμοῦ ἄγαλμα ἐν παλαιστριδίῳ ἐντε-
 ταμένον...

²²⁴ Callebat 2012: 91 *ad loc.*

yours; Liber brings men into battle with his bound thyrsis; the arrow, sent from Apollo's hand, flies; Hercules' right hand is armed with his club. But my outstretched prick makes me terrifying!

Whereas the concluding joke in *CP* 9 is that Priapus would be “unarmed” (*inermis*) without his penis, the final comment here is that Priapus' erect member makes him terrifying (*terribilem*). This variation makes response a feature of the cycle.²²⁶ The adjective *terribilis* occurs in descriptions of sound and sight, in other words, in descriptions of perception.²²⁷ Given the emphasis on vision in *CP* 9 and *CP* 1—in addition to the scenario depicted in *CP* 10—it seems safe to say that this instantiation of Priapus is *terribilis visu* or *aspectu*. If the reference to “me” in line six is read as the words of a Priapus statue, then what this poem also says is that other deities' weapons are “terrifying,” too. This poem is not about whether or not a weapon should be concealed, which is the case in *CP* 9, where Priapus questions why it is acceptable for other gods' weapons to be displayed, but not his weapon. His question implies that there is a certain degree of tastefulness that his likeness is infringing. The message in *CP* 20 is that all of these weapons are terrifying, but his weapon is terrifying in a different way—in a less decorous way.

²²⁶ We see *terribilis* as an aesthetic term in *CP* 63 (9-12) because it is associated with the *rustica ars*. This poem develops the theme of Priapus as a cheap statue into comparisons of Priapus' statue form and his lowly rank with those of other deities.

*huc adde quod me terribilem fuste
manus sine arte rusticae dolaverunt
interque cunctos ultimum deos numen
cucurbitarum ligneus vocor custos!*

In this passage the poet associates (*-que*) the imperfect artistry of Priapus statues with the god's lowly rank among other deities. The craftsmanship has moved from the work of the *vilicus* in *CP* 10 to merely the work of *manus rusticae*, who makes Priapus *terribilis*.

²²⁷ *OLD* s.v. ‘*terribilis*.’ Cf. *Enn. Ann.* 140 Verg. *Aen.* 6.299; Cic. *Sest.* 19.3.

There is a further element to these two poems. In *CP* 9 and 20 Priapus likens other deities' equipment to his penis by association. O'Connor refers to several of these objects as “*ad hoc* metaphors for the *membrum virile*.”²²⁸ Although these objects are indeed the real accouterments of the divine, in close context and in comparison with Priapus, they become tainted. His message is tongue-in-cheek; he protests the fact that his “tool” is indecent, but some of these icons, in association with Priapus, can be read as indecent phallic objects, too. Minerva's “spear” may compromise her notable virginity if we consider this poem in connection with *CP* 64 in which a *puella* gives kisses to Priapus' *hasta*.²²⁹ We have seen this approach before. Priapus recast Homeric heroes as Priapic figures in *CP* 68 and made the whole of Homeric epic phallogocentric. The discussion there about the role of epic in Priapic poetry, and vice versa, is analogous to the questions posed by Priapus in *CP* 9 and 20: why must Priapus cover up his penis when other gods openly carry weapons that can be viewed as phallic? A reader's ability to make value judgments is complicated by the questions of decorum that underlie *CP* 9 and 20. These two poems suggest that the image of Priapus' penis is obscene and indecorous, and in these two poems that idea is based on the comparison of Priapus' penis to the imagery of other gods and goddesses. The focus of these images is

²²⁸ O'Connor 1989: 111. Some of these euphemisms are not necessarily “*ad hoc*” and are attested in the literary evidence. *Hasta*, for example, is used as a euphemism for Priapus' penis elsewhere in the *CP* (43.1, 4). See Adams (1990: 14-22). Adams points to Nicarchus *A.P.* 11.328 as an example of a sexual interpretation of epic verses, and I will add to that the fact that Nicarchus compares Cheobolus to Zeus “holding glowing fire in his hand” (τὸ ψολόεν κατέχων ἐν χειρὶ πῦρ) where it is clear that the “glowing fire” is his penis. Such metaphors appear in Martial, too, so it is possible that such euphemisms become popular in the 1st century CE.

²²⁹ For more on *CP* 43, see below.

specifically accouterments, but in the next section we will see poems in which the physical features (*e.g.* figure, physique) of gods and goddesses are compared to Priapus.

CP 36 and *CP* 39, turn the attention away from equipment and towards physical features. The notion that there are degrees of standards is conveyed in the first line of *CP* 36, the third installment in this cycle of the *CP*. The description of gods' and goddesses' bodily form is also evoked more clearly in this poem. We transition from the elegiac couplet to the choliamb, a medium for artistic and literary critique.²³⁰ Priapus begins with a declarative statement: each god and goddess has an acknowledged form.

notas habemus quisque corporis formas:	
Phoebus comosus, Hercules lacertosus;	
trahit figuram virginis tener Bacchus,	
Minerva flavo lumine est, Venus paeto;	
frontes caprinos Arcades vides Faunos;	5
habet decentes nuntius deum plantas;	
tutela Lemni dispares movet gressus;	
intonsa semper Aesculapio barba est;	
nemo est feroci pectorosior Marte.	
quod si quis inter haec locus mihi restat,	10
deus Priapo mentulatio non est!	(<i>CP</i> 36)

We each have a recognizable physical form: Phoebus is beautiful, Hercules is brawny; young Bacchus has a maiden's figure, Minerva has sparkling eyes, Venus, fluttering eyes; you see the Arcadian Fauns have the brow of goats; the messenger of gods has feet that suit him; the patron of Lemnos moves an unequal gait; Asclepius always has an unshorn beard; no one is more strongly-chested than fierce Mars. But if any place among these remains for me, a god is not more endowed than Priapus!

One can see how this poem looks back to *CP* 9 and 20: many gods reappear (Apollo, Hercules, Minerva, Mars) and the final line refers to Priapus' penis (*mentulatio* 36.11; *cf. mentula* 20.6; *mentula* 9.13). But this poem describes the physical features of the

²³⁰ See Acosta Hughes 2002: 21 and Morgan 2010: 115-30.

divine rather than their accoutrements. The mention of “form” (*formas*) and “figure” (*figuram*) in addition to “sight” (*vides*) stimulates our sense of vision much more explicitly than *CP* 9 and 20. We are not only reading the poem, but are also invited to picture the images presented inside of the poem. Callebat refers to this poem’s “iconographic description” (*cette description iconographique*) of deities as a “gallery of portrait types” (*une galerie de portraits-types*).²³¹ This, again, sets up a reading of this cycle as a discourse on the propriety of visual arts. The “portrait types” in question are particular physical features of the gods. This, again, sets up a reading of this cycle as a discourse on visual arts. The issue here does not seem to be about propriety so much as it is about aesthetics. Looking more closely at the order of this list allows us to think about what aesthetics are being presented in *CP* 36. The poet seems to be listing gods and goddesses in order of broadly defined features (*comosus, lacertosus*) to specific features (*barba, pectus*). The culmination of this list is Priapus’ penis. It is telling, I think, that beautiful Apollo is first, and Priapus is last. This arrangement may indicate that Priapus, who is *mentulior*, is in some way not *comosus* or any of the other adjectives mentioned in the lines above, for that matter.

A comparison between Apollo and Priapus with respect to beauty is one part of *CP* 39, to which we will now turn. *CP* 39 continues both the act of comparison and the underlying aesthetic discourse. This poem focuses on *forma* once again, but introduces a new element: female response to Priapus’ form. We have already seen this motif in *CP* 10, and in section three we will explore a separate set of poems in which women respond

²³¹ Callebat 2012: 178 *ad loc.*

deities possess, and he transitions from Cupid, the most beautiful of all (*formosissimus omnium*) to himself to heighten this contrast. The form in question is presumably their physical form. The reference to *deos priores* works both to distinguish the “previous” gods, i.e. those that were previously mentioned, but it also carries the sense of “preeminent” and can mean better looking in appearance.²³⁴ Those other gods are better looking, both for their beauty and we may add, for the refinement of their artistic depiction.

The adjective *luculentus* is peculiar in the same way that *salsa* is. The sense here is “beautiful.”²³⁵ The adjective is used elsewhere in Latin literature to refer specifically to written and spoken work, as well as the writers of that work.²³⁶ It can also, however, refer to physical objects such as statues. In Apuleius’ *Metamorphosis* we see the adjective used to describe the physical form of a statue of Diana (*ecce lapis Parius in Dianam factus tenet libratam totius loci medietatem, signum perfecte luculentum*; 2.4). Although that is almost certainly a later text, some suggestion of the beauty of a physical form and possibly the ironic notion of “beauty” in one’s words is implied in *CP* 39. A close antecedent to its use in *CP* 39 may be Terence’s reference to the *forma luculenta* of a

²³⁴ *OLD* s.v. ‘*prior*’ 7d.

²³⁵ *TLL* s.v. ‘*luculentus*’ 7.2.1747.69-75.

²³⁶ *TLL* 7.2.1749.4-22. See also Callebat 2012: 193, “Le caractérisation, de qualité essentiellement littéraire, paraît surtout choisie cependant pour un effet insolite et valorisant de transfert...”

courtesan, which has sexual undertones.²³⁷ In the same way that *salsa* can refer to both literary and visual aesthetics, so, too, can *luculentus*.

The sexual charge in this poem does not come from Priapus alone. The second half of the poem looks back to its predecessors in the cycle (e.g. the repetition of *mentula* in line six) but for the first time we see a potential viewer in the cycle. The girl who does not have a “foolish cunt” (*non fatui puella cunni*) prefers Priapus’ *mentula*. We will return to this female figure in the following section, but for now let us note how this closing remark perfectly blends the aesthetic discourse with Priapic obscenity.

In many respects *CP* 36 and 39 are developed from poems like *CP* 10 and the motif of Priapus as a statue in Priapic poetry. I suggest that the comparison made in these poems reflects not just divine status but specifically artistic image, and that this kind of comparison is closely related to the reference to Phidias in *CP* 10. Phidias was a creator of fine statues—finely carved statues of the beautiful figures such as Cupid and Phoebus Apollo. But as we have seen, however, statuary is not necessarily evoked or commented upon directly in this cycle. This is part of the *Priapea* poet’s ingenuity, I suggest, in his transformation of the statue motif into scenes that discuss image, aesthetics, and beauty. The idea in *CP* 36 and 39 is that images of other gods are more beautiful or at least less distasteful than the image of Priapus. His form offers only one thing: his penis, which is inferior with respect to propriety and style. This idea is similar to the notion in *CP* 9 and 20 that Priapus’ penis is obscene in comparison to the tools of other gods, but whereas

²³⁷ Ter. *Heaut.* 3.2.12: *et quidem hercle forma luculenta*. A sexual implication may be present in the Apuleius’ passage as well.

CP 9 and 20 focus on aesthetics obliquely, *CP* 36 and 39 address the issue of beauty head on.

There is a literary element to these four passages that centers on the association of particular deities with types of poetry, a motif perhaps most familiar from Ovid, *Amores* 1.1. In that poem, Ovid demonstrates generic boundaries through a series of exempla comparing different divine spheres. It is the confusion precisely of physical features and accouterments of gods and goddesses that seems so unreasonable to Ovid, and these exempla make evident his claim that Cupid ought to stay out of his attempt to write epic. Venus ought to have her torches just as much as blonde Minerva ought to have weapons. Diana always has a spear; Ceres always lives in the farmlands. It would be just as strange to see Apollo with a spear as it would be to see Mars with a lyre.²³⁸ This last example is particularly resonant with Ovid's dilemma. Cupid's bow, which is similar to Apollo's lyre, does not have a place in epic Ovid sets out to write.

The idea that accouterments are tokens of generic conventions provides us with a new way to read the comparison poems. Priapus echoes Ovid's sentiment in *CP* 36: *notas habemus quisque corporis formas*. He has the misfortune, however, of having an oversized penis as his *nota forma*, which he defends. But if we read the same literary undercurrent in these passages that we see in *Amores* 1.1, then the different descriptions of gods and goddesses may also reflect types of literature, too. The god or goddess

²³⁸ Ov. *Am.* 1.1.7-12
quid, si praeripiat flavae Venus arma Minervae,
ventilet accensas flava Minerva faces?
quis probet in silvis Cererem regnare iugosis,
lege pharetratae virginis arva coli?
crinibus insignem quis acuta cuspide Phoebum
instruat, Aoniam Marte movente lyram?

becomes representative of genre. The mention of certain figures such as Jupiter, Mars, and Hercules suggest serious genres such as hymn and tragedy; others such as Apollo have the air of stylized poetry, those poets who, as the poet says in *CP* 2, call upon the Muses and belabor the art of their poetry. Cupid brings with him connotations of love elegy, which is evident in *Amores* 1.1. Priapus' image and weapon is his penis, which we have already seen described with literary qualities above. Richlin suggests that, among Latin poets such as Martial, the word *mentula* can stand in as a metaphor for obscene poetry.²³⁹ This association between word and genre is related to the subtle association in *Amores* 1.1 between weapon and content, deity and genre. It is precisely the *mentula* that makes Priapic poetry. The adjective *mentulior*, a hapax, in *CP* 20 describes Priapus' image and Priapic poetry. Priapus is more physically endowed than other gods, and his poetry, the *CP*, is also more obscene in its content in comparison to other poems. This way in which the speaking Priapus insists on difference, but demonstrates sameness (he brings other gods down to his obscene level) and the way in which he humorously mediates between high and low registers, will continue to be emphasized in the next section, which looks not only at the image of Priapus and the poetry book about him as artistic objects, but the characterization of the women who view and read them.

Section 3: Women and Vision (*CP* 8, 10, 37, 66, 73)

²³⁹ Richlin 1992: 67. We might bring into the conversation here *CP* 75, the other comparison poem in the cycle about the sacred spaces of the divine. The punch line may be missing, so we do not see the reference to Priapus' sacred space, but the epithets used to describe other divine spaces are a combination of epic (*Cyllene...nivosa*, 10) and mock-epic (*Cyzicos...ostreosa*, 13), which suggests that literary genre may be at play here, too.

Situated around these comparison poems are poems that deal with women's response to Priapus as both a subject of art and of literature (*CP* 8, 10, 37, 66, 73). The *CP* features scenes in which women are characterized in relation to how they judge Priapus and Priapic verses.²⁴⁰ The girl who mocks a Priapus statue's inferior artistry in *CP* 10 is described in terms of her excessive lack of taste. Elsewhere, married women who are told not to read the lewd verses of the *CP* are said to do so anyway because of their taste for it. In *CP* 39 it is a girl with localized taste (*non...fatuus cunnus*) who will prefer Priapus' figure despite his lack of beauty. Poems such as Catullus 16 and Martial 1.35 set much of the tone for the female critics of the *CP*, but Hellenistic poetry also provides a fertile background. Poems such as Theocritus *Idyll* 15, in which women observe art objects and in commenting on them use the specialized vocabulary of the day, have been read as instances where the poet is teaching his reading audience how to perceive, by having them read/watch another watching.²⁴¹ In this section I not only demonstrate how the poet associates women and the act of aesthetic judgment, but also suggest that these internal female readers and spectators may reflect the presumed male readership of the *CP*.

I will go through the passages and make particular observations, and speak to common themes afterward. *CP* 8 merits close attention because it is the only poem that explicitly features women as readers, and it is the only poem that features *matronae* rather than *puellae*.

²⁴⁰ The interaction between the women in these passages and Priapus may be described as examples of the "female gaze." See Sharrock 2002 for a recent discussion of this phenomenon in artistic and literary media. Her example of the female painter from the House of the Surgeon (House VI.1.9-10) is telling for its possible inclusion of a Priapus statue. That fresco seems to corroborate the argument I pose in this section about the women who look at Priapus, although no passages in the *CP* explicitly feature women as artists.

²⁴¹ See Goldhill 1994: 197-223.

matronae procul hinc abite castae:
 turpe est vos legere impudica verba.—
 non assis faciunt euntque recta:
 nimirum sapiunt videntque magnam
 matronae quoque mentulam libenter. (CP 8)

Chaste wives, go away from here: it's shameful for you to read lewd dialogue. They make nothing of it and come right in: surely wives, too, have taste and they look willingly upon a massive cock.

The narrator, either Priapus or the poet, begins by declaring that it is improper for chaste married women to read lewd verses (*legere impudica verba*). In this respect, *CP* 8 is the female counterpart to *CP* 14, a few poems later, in which men are encouraged to come into Priapus' unchaste shrine (*in dei salacis...sacellum*; 14.1-2) despite any moral or sexual misconduct. Following Buchheit's apt observation that the shrine is a metaphor for the book of the *CP*, the invitation to stay away from/come into Priapus' space can be read as an invitation to read/not read the *CP*.²⁴² The first two lines of *CP* 8 confirm such a reading, Priapus considers the women's movement toward him as an interest in reading such obscene literature (*impudica verba*). The speaker allows the women to come in anyway. For, he notes, they, of course, have taste. It is at this moment that the women switch to being eager viewers of Priapus' physical form (*videntque...mentulam libenter*; 8.4-5). Like the two proems, this poem moves from reader to viewer. The speaker's concession that these women are going to read the verses despite his warning gets expressed through an image of viewing, not reading, but the implication is that these actions are one and the same. To put it simply, to read *impudica verba* is to look at the *mentula*.

²⁴² Buchheit 1962: 10. See also Höschele 2007. See also, Chapter Four.

condition, as now this is the increasingly impotent Priapus who speaks in the later half of the book.

obliquis quid me, pathicae, spectatis ocellis?
 non stat in inguinibus mentula tenta meis.
 quae tamen exanimis nunc est et inutile lignum,
 utilis haec, aram si dederitis, erit. (CP 73)

Why do you look at me, wanton girls, with eyes askance? An erect
 prick does not stand forth from my groin. Although my prick is now
 lifeless and a useless shaft, it will be useful, if you offer your altar.

In addition to a similar structure—that is, a question posed to female viewer, then a defense—*CP 73* also shares some language with *CP 10* (*adstans inguinibus columna nostris*, 10.8; *non stat in inguinibus mentula tenta meis*, 73.2). Priapus questions the girls’ reaction to him, as he does in *CP 10*, but their reaction in *CP 73* is not laughter, but staring (*spectatis*). He bases his description of them, furthermore, on sexual and not critical grounds. They are not *insulsa*; they are *pathicae*—an adjective that indicates some sort of presumed sexual unconventionality.²⁴⁵ Priapus acts as self-critic here when he refers to himself as an *inutile lignum*. This description signals Priapus’ statue form in less than favorable terms (*cf. lignum rude*, *CP 10*; *inutile lignum*, Hor. *S.* 1.8). As we noted much earlier in this chapter, there is a tension between Priapus’ existence as a statue and his abilities as a living thing. One grants him mobility, the other, fixity. Both of these representations are present here. If we understand Priapus as a being, then the women are responding to his limp member.²⁴⁶ If he is here at a statue, then they are laughing at the

²⁴⁵ Forms of *pathicus* appear four times in the *CP* (25.3; 40.4; 48.5; 73.1) and in all instances it applies to women (see Callebat 2012: 143 on *CP 25.3*). For the definition of *pathicus*, see Richlin 1978: 173, 288-289.

²⁴⁶ *Cf. CP 80.1-3*
 at non longa satis, non stat bene mentula crassa,

woodenness of his crude statue. In either scenario the women respond by “looking askance,” a complex gesture that I will discuss in more detail below. For now it is sufficient to say that the gesture reflects the girls’ parodic modesty, sexual interest, or disgust – most likely, a combination of all three responses. All of these responses to Priapus’ image have counterparts elsewhere in the *CP*: a girl’s false modesty, as we will see next in our reading of *CP* 66; sexual interest in the eyes of the *matronae* of *CP* 8; and contempt in the mocking laughter and gaze of the girl in *CP* 10.

The coy meekness of the *puella* in *CP* 66 stands in opposition to the forthrightness of women in *CP* 10 and 73. We do not read of the young girl’s response to Priapus, but are to imagine, perhaps, a blush or the more modest askance look mentioned above.

tu quae ne videas notam virilem
 hinc averteris, ut decet pudicam,
 nimirum, nisi quod times videre
 intra viscera habere concupiscis! (CP 66)

You who, lest you see the mark of my manhood, turn yourself away,
 as I’m sure befits a chaste woman—you want to have in your guts
 the thing you’re afraid to look at.

Note the change in language; we have gone from looking at Priapus to not seeing him (*ne videas; times videre*). The visual dimension is there, but it is negated. It is suggested that looking away from Priapus’ *notam virilem* befits a chaste woman. The *notam virilem* emphasizes his physical form (*cf. notas habemus quisque corporis formas; CP* 36.1). Priapus’ final remark, particularly his reference to the girl’s desire (*concupiscis*) is

et quam, si tractes, crescere posse putes?
 me miserum, cupidas fallit mensura puellas.

suggestive of the *matronae* in *CP* 10, who look upon Priapus' image with pleasure (*libenter*).

The final poem in this set is one we have already seen in the previous section. Priapus justifies his lack of beauty by claiming that a girl who is not tasteless prefers his appearance to other, more beautiful gods.

forma Mercurius potest placere,
 forma conspiciendus est Apollo,
 formosus quoque pingitur Lyaeus,
 formosissimus omnium est Cupido.
 me pulchra fateor carere forma,
 verum mentula luculenta nostra est:
 hanc mavult sibi quam deos priores,
 si qua est non fatui puella cunni.

5
 (*CP* 39)²⁴⁷

Compared to the main verbs in the previous three passages, the verb *malle* does not give any indication that this girl's presumed interaction with Priapus is as a reader, as in *CP* 8, or a spectator, as in *CP* 8, 10 and 66.²⁴⁸ The terminology of the first four lines, however, implies that we are in the realm of visual art—or sexual response, which I will discuss below. The word associations of *forma* and *formosus*—form and beauty—suggest both visual art as well as physical beauty. The description of the girl as not having a *fatuus cunnus* is a peculiar characterization, the semantics of which range from sexual obscenity to aesthetic judgment.²⁴⁹ In the context of *CP* 39's debate on form and beauty, the

²⁴⁷ For translation, see page 114 above.

²⁴⁸ Catullus 70 seems to be lurking behind this poem, given the verbal and logical similarity.
nulli se dicit mulier mea nubere malle
quam mihi, non si se Iuppiter ipse petat.

²⁴⁹ *TLL* 6.1.372.1-4. Martial has a very similar passage in 7.18.11 (*fatui poppysmata cunni*). The use of *fatuus* there suggests a simplicity and lack of refinement in her own speech, her "speech" here being nothing more than the sounds her vagina makes during the act of sex. *Fatuus* (*TLL* 6.1.370.74-372.30; *OLD*

adjective *fatuus* conjures up the image of boorishness not in speech, but in taste; but, of course, this girl's *cunnus* is not *fatuus*. Her preference (*malle*) for a *mentula luculenta* over the beauty of Mercury, Apollo, Liber, and Cupid is based on her sense of beauty, which may reflect the sexual utility of Priapus' "beauty" given which body part she is using to make her decision. Also, the act of calling her "not tasteless" implies that she has taste.²⁵⁰

Several themes are common to this group of poems. The women are all interacting with Priapus on some artistic level and many, if not all, are characterized by their sense or lack of taste. Furthermore, there are sexual overtones in each interaction between reader/viewer and Priapus: the *matronae* and *pathicae puellae* are depicted as sexually voracious or depraved; the reference to Priapus' *columna* in *CP* 10 and a possible double entendre behind *res* alludes to sex; the coy girl desires to have inside her the penis that she is afraid to look at; and the process of making an aesthetic judgment in *CP* 39 takes place in a woman's *cunnus*. In the remainder of the section we will look at these shared themes more closely. In a word study on *salsus* and *fatuus*, and their variations, I hope to demonstrate the web of associations—literary, aesthetic, sexual—the *Priapea* poet is evoking in his use of these words. This study will lead us to some final suggestions for using these passages on female critics to understand the male reader of the *CP*.

1) suggests silliness, foolishness, and idiocy Cf. Donatus on Ter. *Eun.* 1079: *fatui sunt qui verbis et dictis fatui sunt.*

²⁵⁰ Callebat 2012: 194 on *CP* 39.8: L'actualisation du mot dans cette priapée apparaît polysémique, transférant au *cunnus* les caractères de la puella: acception actualisée de "bégueule" et de "sans goût." (ici: "qui ne sait pas apprécier" et "qu'on ne peut pas apprécier").

I would first like to return to the girls' sidelong look in *CP* 73. The basic meaning of the *obliquus*, in conjunction with *ocellus*, is "to look to the side."²⁵¹ This ocular gesture does not necessarily imply contempt, but the girls do seem to be looking at Priapus with rejection, akin to the mocking glare of the girl in *CP* 10. Whereas the immense size of Priapus' penis was one reason for the girl's staring in *CP* 10, it is suggested in *CP* 73 that the lack of size, *i.e.* the flaccidity, of Priapus' penis explains why the girls are staring. Two possible literary parallels lie here: one that suggests the girls' gesture is motivated by disappointment, and the other, by contempt. In Ovid, *Amores* 3.7, a text we know the *Priapea* poet is familiar with due to his parody of it in *CP* 80, Ovid describes his girlfriend's disappointment at his sexual inefficacy.²⁵²

Therefore it is possible that the girls in *CP* 73 are disappointed, and that is why they stare with eyes to the side. If we consider *Amores* 3.7 to be a parallel of *CP* 73, then we may find further insight in the comparison that we made earlier between these poems wherein women object to the size, *i.e.* the erectness, of Priapus' penis. Another parallel, one that is, I think, more clearly related is the pseudo-Theocritean *Idyll* 20. In this poem the gesture of looking askance implies contempt.²⁵³ The cowherd says that Eunica has rejected him by looking askance with her eyes (ὄμμασι λοξὰ βλέποισα; 20.13).²⁵⁴

²⁵¹ *TLL* s.v. 'obliquus' 9.2.101.47-60.

²⁵² In this same poem Ovid characterizes himself as an immobile statue (*truncus iners iacui, species et inutile pondus, / et non exactum, corpus an umbra forem*; 1.8.15-16), and given the two poems' shared theme of impotence, it is likely that *Am.* 3.7 is a model for *CP* 73. For 3.7 as a model for *CP* 80, see Holzberg 2005 and Prioux 2008.

²⁵³ See also Encolpius' spiteful reaction to watching Giton in another's arms (*sed obliquis trucibusque oculis utrumque spectabam*; *Petr. Sat.* 113.6).

²⁵⁴ *TLL* s.v. *obliquus*. Glosses offer λοξός as the equivalent of *obliquus*. See *TLL* 9.2.99.55-65.

Priapus—that is to say the portrayal of Priapus in the *CP*—and the cowherd have some notable things in common. Chief among the attributes Eunica criticizes is his lowly appearance, which is rustic and boorish, like Priapus’ appearance. In his defense, furthermore, the cowherd enlists divine comparanda to justify his argument that the girl ought not to have spurned him. This is similar to the way in which Priapus legitimizes—however parodically—his status by calling on divine counterparts and pointing out similarities between himself and them, a theme which we discussed in the previous section.

These two literary parallels give more substance to the *Priapea* poet’s description of the girls’ look and demonstrate the many meanings behind a sidelong look: it can be sexual as well as critical.²⁵⁵ This visual gesture, however, is not the only one of its kind in the *CP*. Movements of the eyebrow appear both in the proem *CP* 1 and, what is argued by some as a third, much later proem, *CP* 49. The act of raising one’s eyebrows implies pretension and disdain—a gesture that the poet suggests is not for the reader of Priapic verses (*pone supercilium*). To state it simply: the (presumed) male readers addressed in *CP* 1 and *CP* 49 are told not to raise their eyebrows to express their rejection of the *CP*’s lewd verses; the internal female readers and spectators look at obscenity—represented either in Priapus or Priapic verses—with averted eyes to express either their interest or

²⁵⁵ It is interesting to think, but difficult to prove, that the poet also has Call. *fr.* 1.37-8 Pf. in mind in *CP* 73, which would add a further layer of Alexandrian influence to this argument. There Callimachus says that “for whomsoever the Muses did not look at askance (ἴδον ὄθμα[τ]...μὴ λοξῶ) as a child | they will not reject as a friend when he is old.” In the Priapic world the Muses are characterized by their sexuality (precisely their lack of it), just like the women in *CP* 73 (cf. *castae...sorores*, *CP* 2; *castas...puellas* in Prop. 1.1.5 was at one time thought to be the Muses, see Heyworth 2007: 5), so one wonders whether the *pathicae puellae* are not perverted images of the Muses, and whether their askance look to the aging Priapus who is becoming impotent is of generic import. Prioux 2008 makes a strong argument in favor of Callimachean intertextuality in the *CP*, but she does not include this poem in her study.

rejection. This multitude of visual cues relies on different ocular movements, but as Cairns says, they “may express the same attitude without the same movements.”²⁵⁶ This is not to equate the female spectator with the presumed male reader, only to suggest that the poet makes them into different representations of readers. The male raises his eyebrows to suggest aversion; the female turns her eyes to the side. But the female action, as we have seen, is sexually charged, and it is that specific sexual nature of viewing and reading that we will continue to explore.

The wordplay on *salsus* and *insulsissima* in *CP* 10 is particularly striking. At the core of these two words is *sal*, a highly charged literary term to convey a writer or a text’s wit. It is, along with words like *facetus*, *venustus*, and *elegans*, part of the aesthetic jargon that Catullus uses to describe the style of life and poetry that he prefers.²⁵⁷ We saw some of these examples above in our first discussion of *CP* 10. *Sal* does not necessarily apply to literary wit, but I do think two meanings of the nouns are at play. The other sense of *sal* describes piquancy in physical form. Cicero provides us with a short discussion of the poet Catulus and the actor Roscius, which is particularly apropos in light of the passages we have discussed in the *CP*. In *De Natura Deorum* (1.79) Cicero relays Catulus’ poem, in which Catulus praises the actor’s appearance, and in the final line of the poem Catulus suggests that he, Roscius, is more beautiful than a god (*mortalis visust pulchrior esse deo*). This is interesting in and of itself, but Cicero’s following remarks provide us with a stimulating comparison. Of Roscius’ appearance, Cicero notes

²⁵⁶ Cairns 2005: 136.

²⁵⁷ Catullus also uses the derivatives of *sal* such as *salsus* and *insulsus* in a similar vein. See Wiseman 1969; Seager 1974; Krostenko 2001 for more on Catullus’ literary language.

his squinty eyes (*perversissimis oculis*), which, he adds, provided him with piquancy and charm in Catullus' opinion (*salsum illi et venustum videbantur*). This physical feature, *i.e.* Roscius' squint, makes him *salsus*. A woman described in Catullus' poetry seems to possess qualities opposite to Roscius. This woman, Catullus says, is not wholly beautiful, despite public opinion. To express this he points to the absence of *venustas* and *mica salis*.²⁵⁸

As we have already seen in the first chapter, the *Priapea* poet is influenced by Catullus in his second proem. *Sal*, at least the literary and stylistic "wit" that we mentioned at the beginning of the previous paragraph, is something by which Catullus generates his poetry. The only other use of *salsa res* appears in Martial 3.12, in a poem in which Martial is providing some mockery and critique of his epigrammatic forefather. He says that it is a *res salsa* to be fragrant and be hungry.²⁵⁹ Upon a first reading, *res salsa* seems like "a funny thing," much in the same way that one understands *salsa res* in a first reading of *CP* 10. The adjective *salsus*, however, picks up the Catullan original, where Catullus asks Fabullus to provide *sal* in addition to wine and merriment.²⁶⁰ The term then, in the context of Martial's poetry, means both "funny" but also evokes Catullan "wit." Elsewhere Catullus characterizes his poetry as having *sal*. In the infamous poem 16 Catullus synthesizes his delicate poems (*molliculi ac parum pudici*, 16.8) as having wit

²⁵⁸ Cf. Cat. 86.4 (about a woman Quintia): *nam nulla venustas,/ nulla in tam magnos corpore mica salis.*

²⁵⁹ Mar. 3.12
unguentum, fateor, bonum dedisti
convivis here, sed nihil scidisti.
res salsa est bene olere et esurire.
qui non cenat et unguitur, Fabulle,
hic vere mihi mortuus videtur.

²⁶⁰ Cat. 13.

and charm (*habent salem ac leporem*, 16.7). According to Uden and Richlin, Catullus' response to his friends' criticism takes on the form of a hyperphallic Priapic persona.²⁶¹ He threatens them in more explicit terms than Priapus threatens the girl who mocks his appearance in *CP* 10. Many scholars have pointed out the force of *sal* and *lepos*, which are Catullan buzzwords, but are not used in their usual context here. Catullus is putting on a persona, and according to Uden, it is a specifically Priapic *persona*. He claims that poems that have *sal* and *lepos* and are little naughty poems (*molliculi ac parum pudici*) will have a desired effect on readers: sexual arousal (*quod pruriat incitare possunt*, 16.9). He wants this kind of poetry to titillate readers, whom he envisions not as boys, but as men, and manly men at that (*non dico pueris, sed his pilosis / qui duros nequent movere lumbos*, 16.10-1). The idea is that if poetry does not have this effect on readers, it does not have *sal* and *lepos*.²⁶² However much this theory is based in Catullus' sarcasm and irony, if we follow his line of thought that poetry with *sal* has to also arouse its readers, then we may add a new layer to our reading of Priapus/the *CP* as *salsa res*: this phallic poetry has to titillate readers. Of course, this is not the case for Catullus' poetry, where *sal* does not equate with *mentula*. What I think is important to take away from this passage, is the possibility that the poet of the *CP* takes Catullus' ironic reading of *sal* in poem 16 seriously; forms of *sal* in the *CP* seem to be sexualized.

In *Ep.* 1.35 Martial sets out his own poetic dictum. Instead of focusing on male readers, as Catullus does, he turns his attention to female readers. This defense of

²⁶¹ Uden 2007; cf. Richlin 2007: 12-3.

²⁶² Uden 2007: 21.

of bodily form. It is the case in several of the passages included in this section that Priapus seems less static and more dynamic. His penis not only seems to be providing literary or artistic titillation, but sexual titillation as well. There is an obvious connection between phallic power and literary power, sexual pleasure and reading pleasure, which the *Priapea* poet is taking full advantage of. Martial says that if his poetry did not have such sexual excitement, it would be a castrated Priapus (*gallo Priapo*). The response of women in *CP* 8, just two poems earlier, is similar to the response of the women envisioned in Martial 1.35. They are looking to be titillated. Furthermore, the penis is exactly what aesthetically—and sexually—pleases the girl in *CP* 39, and, we are to assume, the girl in *CP* 66.²⁶³ But what about the *insulsissima puella* of *CP* 10?

The adjectives *fatuus* and *insulsus* are roughly synonymous.²⁶⁴ Therefore, we can better understand why one girl is *insulsa* for laughing at Priapus, and the other is *fatua* for not desiring Priapus. The girl's characterization in *CP* 10 is best understood by her response to Priapus' form, which involves not arousal (*prurire*), but laughter (*ridere*).²⁶⁵ She laughs at Priapus; she is not turned on by him. She is not only *insulsissima* by virtue of her lack of taste in Priapus, but also because she does not taste Priapus sexually. Priapus' *sal* is sexual. To experience the *sal* of the *CP* is not just a feeling, but a sexual encounter. Callebat, pursuing the suggestion of Goldberg and O'Connor, sees the double entendre of *res* as the only sexual innuendo here. Goldberg, however, also sees an

²⁶³ Note that *placere* appears in both Martial 1.35.5 and *CP* 39.1 and suggests literary pleasure as well as physical pleasure.

²⁶⁴ *TLL* 'insulsus' 6.1.372.54. Cf. Ter. *Eun.* 1079: *fatuos est, insulsus, tardus*; Juv. 6.658: *Tyndaris illa bipennem insulsam et fatuam dextra laevaue tenebat*.

²⁶⁵ Adams (1990: 188) notes instances where *prurire* applies to both men and women.

innuendo in *salsa* that does not get picked up by Callebat. Goldberg suggests that the meaning of *salsa* as both “salty” and “tasty” would imply *fellatio* or *irrumatio*.²⁶⁶ I think our understanding of which of the two acts is implied here, as there is a clear difference between *fellatio* and *irrumatio*, depends on whether or not one is a sympathetic or skeptical reader of this poetry. I think the act in *CP* 43, in which a girl “gives kisses to Priapus’ middle,” suggests the former.²⁶⁷ This innuendo very likely lies behind *sapere* in *CP* 10.²⁶⁸ The *matronae* have taste, but if what they have taste for is a *salsa res*, then we are left to ponder which taste sensation is being aroused: their oral taste or their critical taste? The answer lies in both interpretations, and that adds a particularly colorful nuance to the aesthetics of the *CP*. If we do not have the desired response to Priapus and the *CP*, we are then *insulsi*, tasteless. But to have taste means to be receptive to every connotation of *salsa* and *sapere*. For the poetry of the *CP* to be “successful,” one must allow oneself to become sexually involved with the figure of Priapus. When readers do not have a sexual response or a positive aesthetic response to Priapus’ poetry, as the girl in *CP* 10, they are threatened with subjugation, just as Catullus turns Furius and Aurelius into submissives for their poor response to his poetry.

²⁶⁶ Goldberg 1992: 100 *ad loc.*, “...beide Bedeutungen (“salzig” und “schmackhaft”) würden eine *fellatio* oder *irrumatio* implizieren.”

²⁶⁷ *CP* 43.1-2:
 velle quid hanc dicas, quamvis sim ligneus, hastam,
oscula dat medio si qua puella mihi?

²⁶⁸ Martial uses phallic language in response to his friend Chrestillus’ criticism of Martial’s writing style. The rough style that Chrestillus prefers is characterized as a *mentula* that Chrestillus has taste in/taste of (*dispeream ni scis mentula quid sapiat*). He is characterizing his friend as an *irrumator*. See Williams 2002: 164ff.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have charted the development of a preexisting motif of Priapic poetry (that he is a statue) into a full-blown discussion of aesthetics—both artistic and literary—and arousal. At the center of this discussion is Priapus’ penis, an object that provokes arousal and disdain, is obscene and turgid, and yet, in this world, is presented as an *arbiter* of taste in that Priapus judges the wit and taste of those who judge his form. Uden notes that, in Catullus’ poetry, there is “considerable irony in [the Priapic *ego*] pronouncing on matters of taste and wit,”²⁶⁹ and that carries over to the *CP* as well. But the *Priapea* poet continually demonstrates his dexterity with poetic principles and theory, and it is no surprise that a study in “taste” in the *CP* is more complicated than it may seem at first glance. For the Priapic voice of Catullus’ poetic theory, Uden rightly sees through Catullus’ ruse and argues that “by adopting this Priapic voice, Catullus is only showing up its foolishness...its ignorance of Neoteric aesthetic principles of class and style.”²⁷⁰ But such conclusion should not automatically be applied to the Catullan voice of the *Priapea* poet’s poetic theory, which, as I hope to have demonstrated, is much more complex than one would suspect of a poetry book written *non nimium laboriose*. Our taste is coarsened by becoming readers of the *CP*. To appreciate, however, the true *sal* of the *CP* one also needs to be attuned to the book’s Hellenistic and Neoteric allusions and nuances. It humors us, titillates us, but ultimately subverts notions of literary taste and style that are standard to Hellenistic and Neoteric poets. If, as Krostenko suggests, in the

²⁶⁹ Uden 2007: 22.

²⁷⁰ Uden 2007: 22.

poetry of Catullus *sal* is “humor that assesses, then controverts expectations,” then we can truly qualify the *CP* as a *salsa res*.

CHAPTER THREE: The Garden as a Literary, Liminal, and Lascivious Space

Introduction

The appearance of Priapus statues in our literary sources presupposes the existence of a garden, where these statues would be situated,²⁷¹ and physical *location* is just as important as the physical *object*. The poet of the *CP* invites readers to think of the garden in his second proem—*horto carmina digna, non libello*—and the distinction between the garden (*horto*, a physical space) and the poetry book (*libello*, a physical object) invites us to visualize the garden as something more just a piece of earth in the *CP*. At the very least, it invites us to consider the garden as a significant element of this poetry book. Few, however, have taken up the poet’s invitation.²⁷² Höschele, in two articles, has identified a pun on *poma* and *poema* that makes the garden into a metapoetic space. She suggests that if we understand that anthologies of epigrams are envisioned as gardens of “flowers,” then we may read this book of epigrams as a garden of “apples.” Uden takes a different approach by looking at the absence of vegetation in the gardens of the *CP*.²⁷³ He argues that this text is conversing with contemporary moralistic discourses on gardens. These three studies lay the foundation for more in-depth study, but to date, there has been no sustained treatment of gardens in the *CP*. I aim to fill this absence in the scholarship

²⁷¹ As we noted in the previous chapter, only in Ovid’s *Fasti* and Petronius’ *Satyricon* is it ambiguous in what form Priapus takes shape. He appears in a dream in the *Satyricon*, but in the two episodes about him in the *Fasti* take place in an outdoor setting (*nemus*, 1.401; *vallibus*, 6.327). Note that he is referred to in both episodes by his epithet “guardian of gardens” (*hortorum decus et tutela*, 1.415; *ruber hortorum custos*, 6.333).

²⁷² Richlin’s appears to be using “garden” figuratively in *The Garden of Priapus*. She is not too concerned with the fiction of an actual garden and with that garden as an agricultural space.

²⁷³ Uden 2007.

by considering different aspects of the garden—literary, spatial, and sexual—and what they bring to bear on the *CP*. Although Priapus is at the center of the garden and is the focus of the book, the garden surrounding him is also an important feature.

The first section of this chapter revisits the proems. It is broken up into two subsections, the first of which looks at the introduction of the *CP* alongside the introductions in other works about gardens, including Varro's *Res Rusticae*, Vergil's *Georgics*, and, particularly, Columella's *Res Rustica*. Despite the fact that the *Priapea* poet is not writing about gardens, he, nevertheless, remodels these introductions in his own work. The second subsection looks at the boundaries set in the proems. The proems present different paradoxes that are operative elsewhere in the book: the poems are worthy of a garden, not a book, even though we *are* reading them in a book; Priapus is in his garden and we are told that this garden is not for the chaste and virginal. In the subsequent section I look more closely at the invitations into the Priapic garden. The theme of access and exclusion is key here and I explore how sexuality is mapped onto that theme. Priapus is “open” in terms of his sexual exhibitionism, but his garden is closed. Openness is beneficial to would-be intruders, but the threat of being made “open” (i.e. being forcefully penetrated) is present, too. The final section ties up threads carried throughout the chapter in a close reading of the final poems of the *CP*. There we find an impotent god. He is impotent because the physical and sexual framework of access and exclusion present throughout the book has crumbled. I explore, too, the literary resonance of this “deterioration of the Priapic world,” as Höschele puts it.

According to our literary evidence, Priapus statues played the role of modern-day scarecrows; their task was apotropaic, to keep intruders away from the domain of the

garden.²⁷⁴ They monitored the threshold between free and forbidden spaces. Scholars, most notably Richlin, have explored the semantic range of Priapus' boundaries in the Roman imagination.²⁷⁵ In her study Priapus is a metonymous figure for the setting and enforcing of sexual boundaries in Roman culture. The aggressive force with which he threatens intruders reflects, as she argues, the "phallogocentric" Roman male.²⁷⁶ In this chapter I consider the boundaries for their literary connotations rather than as a reflection of a Roman institution. As we shall see through my analysis of select poems in the *CP*, the poet opens up the division between open and closed spaces to include dichotomies between the naked and concealed body, candid and obscure language, and finally, access and exclusion.

It is difficult to track the metaphorical movement through metaphorical space within the poems. In certain poems it is unclear whether one has already trespassed, is in the state of trespassing, or is on the outside about to trespass. And it is unclear at times what space exactly is being trespassed. These uncertainties represent the tension between boundaries that is constant in the book. The open-air shrine leaves Priapus exposed to intruders; in *CP* 61, for example, Priapus complains about precipitation, sunrays, and bird

²⁷⁴ The phallus is an apotropaic symbol, the power of which is demonstrated by the popularity of this image across Greco-Roman culture. From the Greek *herma* to the Roman *fascinum* and *bulla*, the image of the phallus signified protection of one's space and one's self. Of the deities that embody this symbol, Priapus is chief among Romans in the empire. Priapus' provenance also includes fertility, so his function in gardens is both productive and prohibitive.

²⁷⁵ See Richlin 1992.

²⁷⁶ Richlin 1992: xvii, "On the symbolic level, a talking phallus situated in the middle of a walled garden surely makes a good sign for phallogocentrism."

droppings.²⁷⁷ This theme reveals in a light-hearted way the problems of being a statue, but it also reveals that Priapus' garden is *not* impermeable. The fact that the garden is both open and closed is significant to the poetics of the *CP*. The book, like Priapus' garden, is dependent on both openness and exclusion.

This tension is also embodied in the person of Priapus. Whether he is in a garden or not, it is clear that Priapus is always immobile despite his violent threats that suggest otherwise. Readers have to grasp the idea of threatening movement in the face of almost certain immobility, just as they have to comprehend the openness of Priapic language in the decidedly closed garden. It is not just Priapus' permanent statue form that keeps him from moving, but often it is the enclosed garden that reminds readers of his immobility. Further complicating this dynamic is the knowledge that trespassing into Priapus' garden guarantees punishment. But we are tempted to cross those boundaries, and as readers, we do "enter" Priapus' garden. The garden god continually warns intruders—warns readers—to stay away, but in the same breath lures them in.

The Roman threshold is a fitting comparison in this regard. Pucci has called the *limen* an "undecidable line that opens the possibility of both outside, profane, absence, etc. and inside, sacred, presence, etc. and that therefore holds, so to speak, in its grip both possibilities."²⁷⁸ Priapus' garden is at once religious and not. It is irreverent in its reverence. It is a dangerous space, but at the same time, it is not dangerous, because, as the reader of Priapic poetry comes to know, the god is rarely successful in his endeavors.

²⁷⁷ We see this theme elsewhere in poetry about Priapus (e.g. Hor. *S.* 1.8; [Verg.] *Priapea* 1). See the Section 5 in the Introduction for more on *CP* 61.

²⁷⁸ Pucci 1978: 54.

These traits are not specific to Priapus' garden. The garden itself occupied a liminal space in the Roman imagination. As literary and archaeological evidence attests, gardens were on the periphery; the boundaries between city (urban) and countryside (rural) were confused, presenting what von Stackelberg calls a "mediating, interstitial space."²⁷⁹ Gardens can also be places for transgression, as both Pagán and von Stackelberg have demonstrated in Tacitus' use of gardens as backdrops for imperial improprieties.²⁸⁰ Scholars such as Höschele has explored the threshold of the garden, beyond the liminality of the actual garden, as the threshold of the poetry book.²⁸¹ These different thresholds collapse into one another in the *CP* as the different spaces (the physical garden, the literary representation of the garden, the garden as Priapus' domain, the book) coalesce. As the following sections will demonstrate, the poet of the *CP* draws upon the conception of the garden as an intermediary space that invites transgression and double meaning.

Let us begin by returning to the two introductory poems to the collection. We have examined the two proems for their literary allusions in chapter one, for their presentation of aesthetics in chapter two, and now in this final chapter we turn to their vision of space. This is not to say, however, that these three spheres are mutually

²⁷⁹ von Stackelberg 2009a: 49-72, here 54. Von Stackelberg's work is only one recent example of the scholarship on ancient Roman gardens that takes a holistic approach by combining literary analysis with archaeological theory. Much of this scholarship is itself influenced by Jashemski's foundational work on the gardens of Pompeii (1979-93). Of influence, too, has been Purcell's article (1987) on the boundaries between city and country in villa gardens. Pagán (2006) contributes much to the literary side of this topic, and as more scholars examine the literary value of texts like Book 10 of Columella's *De Re Rustica* (e.g. Gowers 2000; Henderson 2002, 2004), the field continues to grow.

²⁸⁰ The literature on Roman gardens is vast, but Jashemski's work (cited above) and Grimal (1969) are essential. For the idea of the garden as a transgressive space, see Pagán (2006, esp. 65-92) and von Stackelberg (2009b).

²⁸¹ Höschele 2007.

words in the poem, however, help us to envision a particular kind of garden. In the Introduction and in Chapter One we identified a few key terms in *CP 2* that are Callimachean and Neoteric jargon, including *labor* and *otiosus*. To quickly review those terms: light poetry (*cf. ludens*) can be produced at times of leisure (*otium*), but Catullus' poetry is also the product of assiduous work (*labor*). These two words also have associations with gardens. For the Romans, the garden became a place for *otium*, a place to withdraw from the business of civic life.²⁸³ It was here that one attended to the labor of activities such as poetry, art, and music.²⁸⁴ It was no longer a place where one worked the land as idealized ancestors once had; such *labor* was now relegated to slaves and stewards, but a poet could, nevertheless, compare his efforts to those of the worker in the field.²⁸⁵

The different nuances of *otium* and *labor* are present here in the *CP*. The poet is at leisure, but at first glance it seems to be a fruitless leisure because it is not accompanied by the labor of poetry. Uden has rightly pointed out the absence of vegetation in the *CP*, which we will explore further later in this chapter; the lack of *labor*, then, takes place on a literary as well as literal level. These poems are suitable for a garden, but not a garden where one toils. Uden situates the *CP* alongside the moralizing discourse of the 1st century CE in which large, suburban *Horti* are criticized for their lack of productivity and almost exclusive focus on leisure.²⁸⁶ This criticism is, as Uden suggests, “brought to life

²⁸³ André 1966.

²⁸⁴ von Stackelberg 2009: 94-5.

²⁸⁵ Kronenberg 2009: 157; Volk 2002: 2-3; Harrison 2004: 109-10.

²⁸⁶ Uden 2010: 190-1. The meaning of *hortus* changes in late Republic and early Imperial Rome.

in the gardens of the [CP], where produce is in desperately short supply and visitors go (if we are to believe Priapus) explicitly to satiate their lusts.²⁸⁷

In the context of the poetry book, it is not a straightforward task to define *horto* in line 2.²⁸⁸ Typically in Priapic poetry, Priapus is just in a garden. The garden is an essential component of his literary heritage. We cannot read *too* much into the singular *hortus* in line 2 (as compared to the plural *Horti* of the Imperial period), because the god is the “guardian of *gardens*” (*custos hortorum*) in *CP* 1.5. The word may be in the singular here in order to contrast better with the singular *libello* at the end of the line. Likewise, a single *hortus* seems the more appropriate “space” for a genre of small works like epigram.²⁸⁹ Or it may, in fact, be singular in order to make this garden distinct from *Horti*, in which case the singular *hortus* would be aligned with the poet’s pose of humility in this passage. These different possible associations suggest, I think, that the poet of the *CP* is thinking of the different literary possibilities for the gardens in his poetry book.

It is useful at this juncture to consider the garden as the topic of other agricultural texts, and to look particularly at the introductions to these texts. There, too, we find a kind of duality of literary work and agricultural work. Among the twelve books of his agricultural handbook, Columella includes a tenth book on gardens. He describes himself as taking up the charge left by Vergil in the *Georgics* to write about gardens, which explains his decision to write the book in verse rather than prose. The prologue to the

²⁸⁷ Uden 2010: 213.

²⁸⁸ Uden (2010: 200) discusses the difficulty in translating this word in the *CP* and identifying what kind of “garden” the poet means to suggest. He argues (p. 213) that the poet of the *CP* takes advantage of the semantic range of *hortus* at this period.

²⁸⁹ Cf. Mart. 11.18.

book, however, is in prose. Nevertheless, there are literary elements in this prose prologue that are clearly worth looking at in relation to the *CP*. Lying behind Columella's work are two predecessors also worth consideration: the obvious, Vergil, we have discussed in previous chapters, but here we look more at his approach to agricultural poetry than the content of his poetry; the other is Varro, a prolific writer and scholar from the 1st century BCE, whose extant work includes three books of an agricultural treatise. These three Roman writers demonstrate what it means to write literature about gardens, and we will explore how the poet of the *CP* incorporates their work into his book about a garden god.

I will start with Columella, as there are close parallels between his tenth book and the *CP* that suggest that the poet of the *CP* is reacting to this work in particular. Towards the beginning of the prologue (10 *pr.*3) Columella says that he would not have dared such an undertaking (*neque...istud nobis fuerat audendum*), but he does so out of the wish of the most venerated poet (*ex voluntate vatis maxime venerandi*) as if the poet himself were encouraging him (*cuius quasi numine instigante*).²⁹⁰ The undertaking is to write a poetry book on gardens, an act that Vergil sets aside in the fourth book of the *Georgics*.²⁹¹ Columella's garden has the pretense of function and fertility.²⁹² In essence, however, it is

²⁹⁰ Scholarship on Book 10 of Columella is not vast, but it has been growing since the 1960s. As Gowers (2000: 127) notes, "as part of the wholesale rehabilitation of 'second-rate' Latin literature, [*Res Rustica*] has begun to be considered in its own right." Dominant in that scholarship is the agricultural writer's relationship to Vergil. There has a wave of such scholarship in the past two decades, including Gowers 2000, Henderson 2002, Coppolino 2005, Doody 2007, Dumont 2008, and Cowan 2009.

²⁹¹ Verg. *G.* 4.147-8
*veram haec ipse equidem spatiis exclusus iniquis
 praetereo atque aliis post me memoranda relinquo.*

²⁹² Col. 10 *pr.* 3.

a literary garden rich in Callimachean and Neoteric *topoi*. In the prologue Columella says that his material is rather slim (*tenuem admodum*) and that the book has slender limbs (*membra...exigua*).²⁹³ He mentions his effort (*laboris nostri*), and at the end, he refers to the work as a lucubration (*elucubravit*), calling to mind Callimachus' praise of Aratus' elaborate work.²⁹⁴ This kind of language continues to appear at various points in Book 10.²⁹⁵ Let us look more closely, though, at the end of the prologue.

The influence of Vergil on Book 10 is undeniable, but even though Vergil's influence is obvious, we can see possible influence from other poets who do not write didactic poetry, but who do write Neoteric and Callimachean verses. In particular I am thinking of the Catullus and his dedication poem, a text that we have already considered in much detail. Columella's posturing and distancing of himself from his work from the writer is similar to Catullus' posturing in his dedication poem. We have also seen this kind of action before in *CP* 2. Let us look at these three texts side by side.

quare habe tibi quidquid hoc libelli	(Cat. 1.8)
quare quicquid est istud quod elucubravit	(Col. 10 <i>pr.</i> 5)
ergo quidquid id est, quod otiosus templi parietibus tui notavi	(<i>CP</i> 2.9-10)

To start with, there is the combination of an adverb (*quare; ergo*) and an indefinite pronoun (*quidquid; quicquid*). This is soon followed, in Columella and the *CP*, by a past

quare cultus hortorum, quorum iam fructus magis in usu est, diligentius nobis, quam tradidere maiores, praecipendus est

²⁹³ Col. 10 *pr.* 4-5.

²⁹⁴ 27.4 Pf. = *A.P.* 10.507.4: Ἀρήτου σύντονος ἀγρυπνία.

²⁹⁵ Gowers 2000: 135.

tense verb describing some act of writing. I will discuss the difference between these two acts in a moment. We should compare here, too, Columella's description of his decision to write Book 10 (*nobis fuerat audendum*) to Catullus' description of Nepos' literary pursuits (*ausus est*) and the poet of the *CP*'s description of his own literary activity (*auso*). Also in the introductions of the three writers is mention of effort or the absence of it (*laboriosis*, 1.7; *laboris nostri*, 10 *pr.* 4; *non nimium laboriose*, 2.3). Now, I do not want to make too much of these connections because several of these words appear elsewhere and particularly in the introductions to texts.²⁹⁶ What I do want to emphasize, however, is that both Columella and the poet of the *CP* seem to be engaged with Catullus' dedication poem. Although the lines from Columella and the *CP* are similar to the language of Catullus 1, they are more similar to each other, which is deserving of attention. In the previous chapter we noted the similarities in the two writers' description of the manufacture of a Priapus statue.²⁹⁷ I do not have the space in this chapter to document every possible point of contact between Columella and the poet of the *CP*, but I do think a few observations from the beginning and end of Columella's tenth book will suffice, and could pave the way for future study.

After the preface, Columella spends 39 lines giving advice on the preparation of the garden before he starts to dispense the tasks for garden upkeep. First (*principio*) he recommends that the plot be a rich field (*pinguis ager*, 10.7) and that its dirt, once dug, will have the appearance of fine grains (*gracilis imitator harenas*, 10.8). Columella's

²⁹⁶ As we discussed in Section 4 in the Introduction, this is standard vocabulary for *apologia*, so I do not mean to suggest that forms of this verb *only* appear in these three texts. But the occurrence of the *audere* does strengthen the other verbal connections here.

²⁹⁷ See Section 1 in Chapter Two.

field is fecund (*pinguis*), and his verse, fine (*tenui...carmine*, 10.40). In the *CP*, the garden is, at times, fertile (*fecundi...horti*, 24.1), but the poet's "muse" is fat (*crassa Minerva*) and his verse, unkempt (*incompti*). Here we may compare the two writers' perspective on their writing: Columella describes his writing as the assiduous work of one who writes throughout the night (*elucubravimus*). By comparison, the poet of the *CP* "scribbles" at leisure (*otiosus...notavi*) and writes without much effort (*scripsi non nimium laboriose*). The effort of the one writer is aligned with labor of the garden; the minimal effort of the other writer represents the minimal effort in a garden that, we will discover, is only a representation that exists in poetry and wax.²⁹⁸

Once Columella advises Silvinus on the preparation of the garden, he recommends that he enclose it so that neither beast nor thief tries to enter.²⁹⁹ Once the walls are set up, they must be protected, so a Priapus statue must be made (29-34). It is directly at this juncture that Columella turns to the poetic introduction. He starts his invocation with the questions he seeks to answer: what is time to plant, how to take care of them once planted, when do they bud and sprout. He asks the Muses to spin these answers with their slender song: *Pierides tenui deducite carmine Musae* (40). Columella, like the poet of the *CP*, sets the Priapus against the Muses. The Priapus statue is not the product of labor or art (*nec...arte laboretur*), but rather, roughly hewn (*truncum forte dolatum*). The Muses on the other hand spin a slender song. If what seems to be in

²⁹⁸ See Uden 2010 for a recent study on the surprising lack of vegetation in Priapus' urban garden. This is an urban garden where fruit is store-bought or made of wax (*CP* 21; *CP* 42) and where apple trees are sterile (*CP* 60, 61). *E.g.* Uden 2010: 202: "There is an immanent feeling of deflorescence in [the *CP*]."

²⁹⁹ Col. 10.27-28
*talis humus vel parietibus vel saepibus hirtis
 claudatur ne sit pecori neu pervia furi.*

opposition here is the craft of the statue and the spinning of verse, then we compare the poet of the *CP*, whose pose makes the act of writing of Priapic verses analogous to the manufacture of the Priapus statue: both lack effort.

Columella's invocation to the Muses is, as others have noted, a departure from Vergil, who does not call upon the Muses at the beginning of the *Georgics*, but rather invokes "the ever present gods of rustics" (*agrestum praesentia numina*, 1.10).³⁰⁰ Likewise, Varro says directly that he is *not* calling upon the Muses; instead, he calls upon twelve gods who aid agricultural work.³⁰¹ Varro mentions gardens, but calls upon Venus as their caretaker (*procuratio...hortorum*, 1.1.6). Both writers call upon deities who are beneficial to the garden itself, not necessarily to the literature about it; that is, they do not call upon gods to help them create their poetry, they call upon gods who will help the garden be fertile.³⁰² Varro makes a distinction between his literary activity and what Homer and Ennius do (*ut Homerus et Ennius*). Columella's turn to the Muses is a literary gesture that we see in other didactic poetry of this time, but it still stands apart from its predecessors.³⁰³ If we turn back to *CP* 2, then we might take notice of the poet's aside in

³⁰⁰ Cf. Ov. *Met.* 15.622: *Musae, praesentia numina*.

³⁰¹ Var. *R.* 1.1.4.
et quoniam, ut aiunt, dei facientes adiuvant, prius invocabo eos, nec, ut Homerus et Ennius, Musas, sed duodecim deos consentis; neque tamen eos urbanos, quorum imagines ad forum auratae stant, sex mares et feminae totidem, sed illos XII deos, qui maxime agricularum duces sunt.

³⁰² For Vergil's relationship with Varro here, see Thomas 1988: 68-72 *ad loc.*

³⁰³ Cf. Man. 1.1-6
*carmine divinas artes et conscia fati
 sidera diversos hominum variantia casus,
 caelestis rationis opus, deducere mundo
 aggredior primusque novis Heliconam movere
 cantibus et viridi nutantis vertice silvas
 hospita sacra ferens nulli memorata priorum.*

line 4. He says that he does not call upon the Muses, as “other poets are accustomed to do.” It is a fool’s errand to track down the identity of these *poetae*, and I do think the poet means this remark generally, but it is tempting given the approximate chronology of Columella and the poet of the *CP* to read his comment here as a reaction to Columella’s decision to include the Muses in his garden poetry. He will not call the Muses into Priapus’ garden, as Columella has done. For the poet of the *CP* takes a literary stance that is more akin to that of Vergil and Varro. He does not *call* upon Priapus, but he does ask for the god’s favor in this poem. As we have already seen, and will continue to see, in the following sections, there are other reasons why the poet of the *CP* is not calling upon the Muses, but in the context of other literature about gardens, the poet’s remarks in *CP* 2, and also *CP* 1 if we consider the goddesses mentioned there, serve to distance his poetry from that of Columella, Vergil, and Varro, for he goes one step further than calling upon *agrestum praesentia numina* and invokes the rustic deity who will always be present—literally—in Columella’s garden: Priapus.³⁰⁴

The poet’s remarks about “space” in the two proems are particularly telling. The poet says in *CP* 2 that his poems are worthy of a garden, but not of a *libellus*. Given the poet’s apparent rejection of Neoteric and Callimachean works, as we have seen in this section and in previous chapters, and of agricultural texts, some of which are also Callimachean, it is possible that *hortus* and *libellus* represent agricultural poetry and Callimachean poetry, respectively. If the *CP* is neither of these—or at least, not either of these texts *exactly*, as he says his poems are worthy of a garden, but he does not say they

³⁰⁴ Col. 10. 32: *arboris antiquae numen venerare Priapi...medio qui semper in horto.*

are “in” a garden—then what is left for it to be? The answer is in *CP* 1: a *sacellum*. The diminutive form makes the word phonically similar to *libellus*. The shrine, too, has associations with the garden; a religious shrine, such as a *lararium*, was often located inside of a garden.³⁰⁵ To identify his poetry book with a *sacellum* allows the poet to possess elements of the *libellus* and *hortus* from a distant and ironic stance.

Section 1B: Defining the Boundaries (*CP* 1, 2, 51)

The mention of the walls of Priapus’ shrine (*templi parietibus*) in *CP* 2 summons readers not only into the figurative space of the poetic collection, but also into the physical space of Priapus’ shrine. In *CP* 2 there are multiple spaces being evoked: two physical spaces (a garden, a shrine), the paratextual space of the book (*libellus*), the space of the individual poem, and, we might add, the “space” of Priapus’ genitalia (*non virgineum locum*). The actual reference to “space” (*locum*) in line 5 is polysemous, and it brings to the surface of the poem these different notions of “space.”³⁰⁶ The two proems present a set of invitations to cross the bounds of physical, literary, and sexual spaces.

As I noted above, the poet identifies his book most closely with the *sacellum*, a religious space. The poet has already demarcated Priapus’ physical space from the chaste,

³⁰⁵ von Stackelberg (2009: 87) observes that one-fifth of the *lararia* in Pompeii are in gardens and planted peristyles. She even notes evidence for the worship of Diana and Hercules in the peristyle garden of House VII.6.3 and House II.8.6. See also Jashemski 1979: 115 and Foss 1997: 217.

³⁰⁶ Callebat 2012: 67 *ad loc.* “Nous avons retenu cependant la leçon *locum*, accordée plus naturellement au groupe *vocare ad*, et qui fonctionne comme terme polysémique: référence au contenu même du recueil; image imposée aussi d’un lieu de culte priapique; connotation sexuelle enfin d’un terme utilisé (seul ou avec un caractérisant) dans le vocabulaire de l’anatomie féminine.”

feminine spaces of goddesses in *CP* 1, and he carries this idea into the second proem as well. Not only are Muses outside of Priapus' space, but also, the poet suggests, it would be mad to think of calling them inside. Lines six through eight stay with the image of the Muses within Priapus' space. This image continues to be presented in the negative sense; the poet reiterates what the poet and the Muses are *not* doing, that is, inviting and being invited into Priapus' space. Furthermore, the description of Priapus' space is "non-virginal" (*non virgineum*). The poet excludes the Muses from Priapus' garden, but this is emphasized through language that expresses motion *towards* Priapus. At first the poet says he does not call the Muses to this non-virginal space (*nec Musas...ad non virgineum locum vocavi*). This is a bit more specific than simply calling upon the Muses, an act one might expect to see in the introduction to a poetry book (see above). It implies a motion inward and a space that cannot be entered. Likewise the emphasis on motion towards Priapus (*ducere mentulam ad Priapi*) draws a borderline because one must come in from some outside. The idea is that some may enter and inhabit the garden, but others may not.

The basis for access and exclusion is religious as well as sexual. Beyond the references to physical space, the garden is also defined by the people who do not dwell in it. In both proems this appears first by absence, and then by presence. Virginal goddesses do not dwell in this shrine, Priapus does. And those chaste Pierian sisters will not be called into the garden. We see a theme that will be repeated throughout the book: Priapus' space is defined as non-virginal, but here that theme is emphasized through divinity. Reverence is inverted. As Richlin describes it: "The *Priapea*...violates not only

the sexual territory of men, women, and boys, but the boundaries between serious poetry and the obscene, *between ethereal religion and the reverence for the sexual*.³⁰⁷

The hyperphallic male and the virginal maiden are diametrically opposed, and the divided space (inside/outside the shrine) envisioned in both proems keeps them separate. Here is where the threshold from love elegy is a useful comparison. The spatial dimensions of elegy involve a lover who is outside the beloved's home. There is a desired inside and one is excluded from that inside. Who is inside or outside depends partly on sex; the elegiac *puella* is by no means virginal, but her place inside the home makes her sexually unavailable. Likewise, the man outside the home is often described as sexually potent. The conventions of elegy are reversed in the Priapic world. Priapus is inside and therefore, the one to be desired, but as the hyperphallic male, he is the ultimate *amator*. There is a comical element to Priapus' position inside the garden, which the poet explores at the end of the book—and which I explore at the end of this chapter.

In his work on the elegiac threshold, Pucci refers to the *limen* as “a steady line that insures and protects an inside and an excellence.”³⁰⁸ One of the fundamental paradoxes of the *CP* is that the inside is desirable, but Priapus continually refers to the lowliness of that inside. In *CP* 55, of which we will see a brief excerpt in a moment, demonstrates that the inside of the garden is still desired by intruders despite the lengthy description—however ironic—of its simplicity and the guarantee of punishment. The existence of that threshold calls us to transgress, and in the Priapic world, to transgress literally—that is, to take a step across the threshold—is equivalent to sexual and cultural

³⁰⁷ Richlin 1992: 125. Emphasis is my own.

³⁰⁸ Pucci 1978: 55.

transgression. Unlike love elegy, in the *CP* it is not about asking permission to enter a space. In the Priapic world all that is obscene and typically outside is now made “reverent” in the inside space. Priapus is inside being venerated by the poet; in one sense this is where he belongs given that he is a sacred figure, but he is there in place of the Muses. They are on the outside, in what should be the place of the profane. The spheres of sacred/profane, virginal/hypersexual are switched.³⁰⁹

By way of transitioning from this section to the next, let us have a look at the ironic self-mockery of the garden in *CP* 51. As other scholars have noted, on a first reading this poem seems like a parody of the *laus horti*.³¹⁰ The mention of Arete in line 6 calls to mind the Gardens of Alcinous, a garden worthy of praise. The poetic trope by which one praises a lush and verdant garden is flipped on its head and becomes a lengthy description of the ways in which this garden is *not* lush. The poem begins with a rhetorical question: Priapus wonders why thieves break into his garden when he is just going to punish them sexually. I focus here on the introduction and the conclusion.

quid hoc negoti est quave suspicer causa	1
venire in hortum plurimos meum fures,	
cum quisquis in nos incidit luat poenas	
et usque curvos excavetur ad lumbos?	
...	
quae cuncta, quamvis nostro habemus in saepto,	
non pauciora proximi ferunt horti;	
quibus relictis in mihi laboratum	25
locum venitis, improbissimi fures!	
nimirum apertam convolatis ad poenam,	
hoc vos et ipsum, quod minamur, invitat!	(<i>CP</i> 51.1-4; 23-8)

³⁰⁹ Richlin 1992: 125.

³¹⁰ Buchheit 1963: 98 n.3; O’Connor 1989: 140-1; Uden 2010: 205-6. The *laus horti* can be traced back to the Gardens of Alcinous in *Od.* 6.112-31. A more contemporary example, Buchheit notes, is Prop. 4.2.13-18, 43-6. See O’Connor for a discussion of the *laus horti* and *locus amoenus* with regard to this passage.

What's going on here? What should I think is the explanation that a vast number of thieves come into my garden, since whoever runs into me pays the penalty and is hollowed out all the way up to the curved part of his spine?

...

Although we have all these things in our enclosure, the neighboring gardens have no less; you overlook this, however, and come into this place I toil over, most shameless thieves! Clearly you flock to obvious punishment; the very thing that I threaten entices you!

Lines 25 and 26 stand out in light of our discussions above regarding agricultural texts and boundaries. Priapus says that thieves have overlooked the other gardens and have come into his carefully-tended space. Earlier we noted the disavowal of *labor* in *CP 2*, in contrast to its foregrounding as a literary as well as agricultural act in Columella 10. As Uden notes, in addition to being the protector of this garden, Priapus also appears to be the one working the field, and it is in this respect that Uden compares him to the Corycian gardener.³¹¹ This image of Priapus as the Corycian gardener does not last long. The fact that Priapus does not receive much praise for his garden makes him “quite deliberately the antitype of the Corycian gardener.”³¹² Priapus summarizes the poem at the end: other gardens are as attractive as his garden. But he does not say this as clearly as my paraphrase suggests. His exact words are that neighboring gardens “do not have fewer [of those items he has in his garden],” (*non pauciora proximi ferunt horti*). The thing that entices people about this garden, Priapus surmises, is not the fruit and vegetables but the punishment. In other words, the *in laboratum locum* is very similar to the *non virgineum locum* from *CP 2*, which makes the reader question the meaning of *labor* here.³¹³ This

³¹¹ Uden 2010: 205-7. Cf. Thibodeau 2001.

³¹² Uden 2010: 205-6.

³¹³ Adams 1990: 156-7.

similarity also calls readers' taste into question. Why are we here in this humble garden? What are we hoping to get? The answer to both questions is the same: we want to go into that garden.

Section 2: Entering the Garden (CP 8, 14, 38)

In the previous chapter I pointed to Buchheit's argument that the shrine is a metaphor for the *libellus*. Given that my focus in that chapter was on artistic imagery, I used the connection between the shrine and the book to support my suggestion that viewing Priapus' form, perhaps in the form of a cult image, is equivalent to reading Priapic verses. Let us return to Buchheit's metaphor, but with a focus on access; for, if the garden is a book, then whoever enters or is forbidden from the garden is also entering or being forbidden from the book. We only find out who may enter the garden—who may read the book—by statements of who *cannot* enter the garden. As others have pointed out, the fact that we are reading these Priapic verses implies that we have entered the garden. But how do we reconcile that fact with the equal weight Priapus puts on those who are not called into the garden? The final reference to the temple's walls, in a sense, place us inside. Inside of what, exactly, is unclear. We may be in the garden looking at a shrine from the outside. Or we may be inside that shrine. Just as Priapus gives readers a choice to read on while noting that we are already staring, so, too, does the poet invite us into his space while describing it as if we were already inside of it.

This section focuses on the invitation and on what it means to be “open” in the Priapic world of the *CP*. By way of transitioning from the previous section, I want to

revisit lines 6-8 of *CP* 1, which I think acts as a window into the themes in this section. I will repeat the lines here for convenience.

qui **tectum** nullis vestibus inguen habet.
aut igitur tunicam parti praetende tegendae,
aut quibus hanc oculis aspicias, ista lege.

There is the obvious and literal reading of these lines: Priapus' groin is uncovered. The idea that one could cover it reflects the god's actual image, which material evidence verifies.³¹⁴ The well-known image of Priapus at the House of the Vettii shows the god pulling aside his drapery to reveal his genitalia. The reference to clothing, therefore, highlights the fact that the genitals are *not* covered. But the mention of a *sacellum* earlier in *CP* 1 also makes it possible to read more into the vocabulary of lines six and seven. It is clearly his groin that is covered (*tectum*) by no clothing, but the *sacellum* was an open-air shrine and *tectum* also suggests roofing. This reading allows us to connect Priapus' body with his *sacellum*. Both are exposed in some way. Access to the garden and the exposure of Priapus' body are closely connected. As line seven reminds us, these *could* be covered up. But to cover up Priapus' groin is to make Priapus chaste—to make him *not* Priapus. The reader is left with a tempting request at the end of the first proem: he or she may cover up Priapus' genitals or keep reading, an act that is, in essence, a decision to keep Priapus' groin exposed. This request is futile—we are already looking—and as readers, we see that nakedness and exposure are integral to Priapic poetics.

In the scenario of *CP* 1 the notion of “open” and “closed” is sexual; it is “covered” and “uncovered.” But implied in that scenario is the fact that we have made our way into Priapus' garden. Priapus is “exposed” to us on two different physical levels:

³¹⁴ Megow 1997: *LIMC* s.v. ‘Priapos’ 8.1.1028-44.

he is nude and his shrine is exposed if it does not have a roof. We soon find out that Priapic “openness” also involves the frankness of obscene language. In *CP* 8 Priapus reiterates the fact that his garden is not for the virginal. Priapus’ request that chaste wives stay far from his garden reinforces the distinction between the obscene and the chaste made in the two proems.

matronae procul hinc abite castae:
 turpe est vos legere impudica verba!
 non assis faciunt euntque recta!
 nimirum sapiunt videntque magnam
 matronae quoque mentulam libenter. 5 (CP 8)

Chaste wives, go away from here: it’s shameful for you to read lewd language. They make nothing of it and come right in: surely wives, too, have taste and they look willingly upon a massive cock.

I want to focus particularly on the connection between obscene verses (*impudica verba*), entering the garden (*eunt*), and the large penis (*magnam...mentulam*). In one sense, the obscene poetry and the obscenely exposed penis are equivalent to one another. Entering the garden to see the bare penis is similar to entering the poetry book to read the obscene verses. The *hinc* ought to refer to the garden or shrine (although neither is mentioned), but it can also refer to the poetry book. The confusion of spaces in the proems reappears here. The women are reading and looking (a gesture we explored in the last chapter as a visual encounter with both art and literature), and this implies that the threshold being crossed is both physical and textual.³¹⁵

In both the proems and here in *CP* 8, the poet makes chastity a reason for exclusion and obscenity the reason to enter. Priapus does not invite these chaste wives

³¹⁵ Höschele (2007) has recently traced the metaphor of reading as a journey from its earliest instantiation in Homer and Hesiod up through Imperial epigram.

into his garden, and his lack of effort in keeping them out demonstrates, here, not the god's impotence, but rather, the magnetic pull of his penis. By the end of the poem the women are no longer *castae*; they are simply *matronae* and they look eagerly upon Priapus' penis (*mentulam libenter*). By entering the garden—and it appears that Priapus does not mind their entering—they lose their chastity, as one cannot be chaste and inhabit the garden (although intruders often do *not* have a choice in the matter). Likewise, one cannot read Priapic verses with a chaste disposition.

What reads very much like an actual invitation appears a few poems later in *CP* 14. Höschele reads this poem as an inner proem. Given the fact that several of the poems before *CP* 14 cast out readers, viewers, and passersby, I agree that *CP* 14's welcoming invitation is likely to be a "postponed invitation."³¹⁶

huc huc, quisquis es, in dei salacis	1
deverti grave ne puta sacellum.	
et si nocte fuit puella tecum,	
hac re quod metuas adire, non est.	
istud caelitibus datur severis:	5
nos vappae sumus et pusilla culti	
ruris numina, nos pudore pulso	
stamus sub Iove coleis apertis.	
ergo quilibet huc licebit intret	
nigri fornicis oblitus favilla.	(<i>CP</i> 14)

In here, in here, whoever you are, don't think it a serious matter to turn in to the shrine of the lusty god. Even if a girl was with you last night, this isn't a reason to be afraid to come in. That is for serious gods. I'm a good-for-nothing and an insignificant divinity of the cultivated countryside; without shame I stand here with my balls exposed in the open air. So anyone is at liberty to walk into here, defiled with the ashes of the dark brothel.

³¹⁶ Höschele 2007: 354-5.

Access and exposure are paramount in this poem. Priapus is actively inviting people into his shrine—he seems to be more of a barker than a guard. The fact that the poem begins and ends with encouragement to come forth—“do not be afraid to enter” and “anyone may enter”—suggests that the main point of this poem to invite people into the shrine, and subsequently, readers into the book. In several respects this is the reverse image of the two proems. There, one’s modesty and chastity was reason enough to be left out of the garden. Here, Priapus welcomes people in, but such people seem to be sexually active men who still carry the scent and grime of the previous night’s sexual encounter—in other words, the *unchaste*. The reference to *grave* in line two and the distinction between *severi caelites* and *nos vappae, etc.* in 5-7 has lead Richlin and Höschele to read this as a *recusatio* (such as is typical) of minor poetry to conform to the expectations of those want something grander. Priapus distances himself from other gods “who traditionally featured as patrons and protagonists of epic poetry.”³¹⁷ Priapus is a “good-for-nothing” in comparison to serious gods (*caelitibus...severis*), and the reference to *grave* and *severis* could evoke higher genres.

In line seven, the poet emphasizes openness twice, and that is a point that invites attention. Priapus refers not only to his exposed genitalia (*coleis apertis*), but also to his standing “in the open air” (*sub Iove*). This pairing of images supports the suggestion I made above that *tectum nullis vestibus* in *CP* 1 may refer to Priapus’ uncovered shrine in addition to his uncovered groin. He is exposed from every angle, it would appear. The fact that his testicles are exposed to the sky is meant to make him approachable (*ergo*

³¹⁷ Höschele 2007: 355, who points out (n. 62) the number of places where forms of *gravis* is used to describe epic poetry. See also Richlin 1992: 125-6.

quilibet huc licebit intret). It is also what makes him Priapic. What defines this poetry is ultimately the obscenely erect penis that the poet exposes to readers. In this context to have one's genitals exposed is akin to having obscene verses. Priapus apologizes for neither.

The reference to his exposed genitalia calls to mind the reference to Priapus' exposed penis in *CP* 9. There is a similar tension between "open" and "closed" in that poem. Priapus asks why he should conceal his "weapon" when Jupiter can wield his thunderbolt openly (*aperte*; 9.3). He concludes by asking that it not be a charge that his weapon—his penis—is always exposed (*nec mihi sit crimen, quod mentula semper aperta est*; 9.13). For a god who is so concerned with keeping his garden closed off, he is rather preoccupied with openness. The different layers of "openness" come into play in *CP* 38. In the span of two elegiac couplets the poet connects the frankness of the *CP*'s obscenity, the image of Priapus' exposed genitals, the boundaries of Priapus' garden, and the vulnerability of that garden.

simpliciter tibi me, quodcumque est, dicere oportet,
 natura est quoniam semper aperta mihi:
 pedicare volo, tu vis decerpere poma;
 quod peto, si dederis, quod petis, accipies. (*CP* 38)

I ought to speak bluntly to you, whatever it is, since my nature is
 always open: I want to fuck you in the ass, you want to pick apples;
 you will receive what you seek if you give me what I seek.

A series of transitions between each line forms links between the openness of language, the openness of the body, and the openness of physical space. Line one describes the Priapic poet's obligation to speak directly. The following line, at first, seems to be a continuation of this sentiment. The god's nature is always "open." What exactly does

aperta mean here? I think readers are meant to understand different possibilities in *aperta* depending on how we understand the meaning of *natura*. One possible reading is that the god's disposition (*natura*) is to be frank (*aperta*), which restates the previous line.

Another way to interpret this line depends on our understanding of *natura* as a reference to the sexual organs.³¹⁸ In this interpretation the line is nothing more than a reference to Priapus' nakedness. The couplet that follows picks up on this idea. Priapus does not tell intruders to stay away; instead he tells them that his apples are available as long as the intruder's "apples" are also made available. Apples, here, are both actual apples as well as a sexual euphemism.³¹⁹ There is a latent threat here. Priapus' garden is open, and therefore one wants to take apples from that garden. However, Priapus' genitals are also exposed, and this suggests the means by which one will have to pay for those apples. The frankness of the last couplet, in which Priapus lays out the situation in blunt language (e.g. *volo pedicare*), represents the Priapus who speaks *simpliciter* in line one.

Lines three and four remind us that people do want to break into the garden, which is one of the chief conceits of Priapic poetry. Boundaries want to be trespassed. Priapus' willingness to let an intruder in—under his terms, of course—echoes Priapus' provocation to enter his shrine in *CP* 14. This is not quite the open invitation we saw in *CP* 14, but it is not necessarily a prohibition either. Priapus will allow this intruder to

³¹⁸ Adams 1990: 59-62. The euphemism seems to appear in both obscene and technical literature. Cicero uses it twice, which suggests is evidence for the euphemism's "polite tone."

³¹⁹ See Littlewood 1968: 149-59 for the erotic symbolism of apples in antiquity. Littlewood classifies this instance in *CP* 38 as "Miscellaneous Erotic," but I think we can infer from the other representations of apples as sexual objects that the poet may be thinking here of virginity (male or female) which we see symbolized by apples in Sappho fr. 105, and we see anal sex offered in *CP* 3 by a virgin bride who fears for her maidenhood. The apples could also refer to parts of the body, although "apples" tend to symbolize breasts (e.g. *A.P.* 6.211 by Leonidas of Tarentum), although this reading does not make much sense with *pedicare*. There is also the motif of the garden as the *culum*, for which see Adams 1990: 113.

enter the garden provided he makes himself sexually available. Line two connects frank speech with physical ingress. The frankness of Priapus' tongue reveals a pathway into Priapus' garden, and the sexual submission to his genitals is what will ensure access. The polysemy of line two tightly binds the different nuances of *aperta* that we have seen in previous passages in this section. Priapic "openness" involves speech, physical nudity, sex, and physical boundaries. Even though Priapus' duty is to protect the boundaries of the garden and keep intruders out, he depends, nevertheless, on openness. For Priapus to be "Priapic" he must rely on the possibility that one could enter his space and see his exposed penis or read the obscene verses dedicated to him.

A possible threat in *CP* 38 is that someone would break into Priapus' garden to steal his apples and would not, in return, offer his "apples." In that sense, the fear would be that the intruder is not sexual, and here we return to the idea that one's attitudes towards sexual activity determines one's qualification to enter the garden. An unwillingness to participate in Priapus' sexual game is also a rejection of the *CP*'s frank obscenity. Höschele, as I mentioned at the outset of this chapter, has recently suggested that *poma* is a possible aural pun on *poema*.³²⁰ *CP* 38 falls outside the scope of her study, but I think applying her reasoning to this poem may provide us with some further insight into its dynamics. If we revisit the final couplet thinking of poems rather than apples, then what the intruder desires are poems. This makes the first couplet a more specific reference to the content and language of the *CP*. One may wonder why, then, Priapus asks for *po(e)ma* in return, and to understand this we need not look any further than *CP*

³²⁰ Höschele 2008: 392-4.

41, only a few poems later in the book. There, Priapus asks for poetic verses as a dedication. If one does not accomplish this task, he will depart from the garden as a “well-reamed poet” (*inter...ficosissimus...poetas*; 41.3-4). The punishment there is similar to the latent punishment in *CP* 38 (i.e. anal rape); if poems are not given, Priapus will mete out his punishment. The intruder in *CP* 38 crosses the paratextual threshold in order to “take poems” (i.e. read).³²¹ This act further illustrates the close connection between reading and entering the garden. *CP* 38 demonstrates that one can inhabit Priapus’ world as long as that person is sexually unchaste, an idea that *CP* 14 corroborates even though the idea there is that one does not necessarily have to submit oneself to Priapus sexually.

Section 3: A Statue “Out”doors (*CP* 64, 65, 66, 77)

The final section of this chapter focuses on how Priapus’ garden comes to a close, both literally and figuratively. In exploring the issue of closure, the section ties together strands from the previous two chapters, specifically the reversal of two dichotomies, inside/outside and chaste/sexual, as well as the question of Priapus’ invitation to trespass. In the *CP*’s final poems (*CP* 71-80) we see a weaker Priapus who is gradually losing his ability to function in the usual ways. His world is changing and this limits his ability to function as a boundary keeper. It has already been noted that the changes in Priapus’ world here perfectly line up with the culmination of the book.³²² These final poems give us “a sense of an ending” on different levels. But more can be said here. It is not just the

³²¹ Cf. the poet’s pun on *legere* in *CP* 68.2.

³²² On metrical unity, see Kloss 2003; for thematic unity, see Holzberg 2005 and Hörschle 2007, 2008.

imagery of impotence, physical isolation, and old age that bring us to a close, but it is also the poetic reversal of a worldview that Priapus has advocated until now that brings this book to a conclusion. On a metapoetic level, these final poems demonstrate that the poet of the *CP* ends his collection in ways that call to mind other books. He may claim that these poems were not worthy of a *libellus*, but it is in these final lines that we are reminded of the structure and existence of the book most of all.

Before turning to the final cycle of poems in the book, I want to look at a few of the poems in the previous cycle (*CP* 57-70) that set up either the reversal or the dissolution of the spatial dynamics explored in the previous two sections. These poems signal that the end is near. As we saw in the Introduction, *CP* 61 and 63 reveal the dangers of dwelling in an open-air shrine or garden (bad weather and bird droppings). The “openness” that Priapus seemed to relish before is now hazardous. Priapus’ garden is open in *CP* 64 and the god does not mete out punishment to any intruder. And the intruder envisioned is not a chaste maiden or a devotee. He is a more extreme version of the thieves in *CP* 55, the ones who come inside in pursuit of punishment.

quidam mollior anseris medulla
 furatum venit huc amore poenae:
 furetur licet usque, non videbo! (CP 64)

A certain man—softer than a dove’s marrow—comes here to steal out of love for the punishment. Let him steal all he wants; I will not see (it)!

In *CP* 55, Priapus makes a similar remark (*nimirum apertam convolutis ad poenam | hoc vos et ipsum, quod minamur, invitat; 55.27-8*). The intruders “want” their punishment. The difference here in *CP* 64 lies in Priapus. He says that he will not see, i.e. will take no notice of the theft and so will not punish the intruder. The fact that the

intruder is sexually effeminate is typically understood as the reason why Priapus chooses not to punish him. There *is* something perverse about this intruder, but I suggest that we can understand this poem from a different perspective. What does it say about Priapus that the people now entering his garden are not young boys and girls, but effeminate men? This poem is different from *CP* 14 in which Priapus welcomed men in, even if they had been with a girl the previous night. The intruder in *CP* 64 is not welcomed in, but Priapus does overlook his desire to steal because this kind of intruder is not desirable to Priapus. What follows this poem is a typical *do ut des* prayer to Priapus, and I want to focus specifically on the last couplet.

hic tibi qui rostro crescentia lilia morsit,
 caeditur e tepida victima porcus hara.
 ne tamen exanimum facias pecus omne, Priape,
 horti sit facias ianua clausa tui! (CP 65)

This pig here, which munched sprouting lilies with his snout, is being slaughtered as a sacrifice to you from the warm pen. So that by no means you wipe out the whole herd, Priapus, make sure that your garden door is closed!

The injunction that the garden be closed is dangerous for Priapus. This is the god whose “garden” is always exposed and who relies on intruders into his actual garden in order to get his oats. There is also the idea that Priapus is not doing his job. In the previous poem, *CP* 64, Priapus concludes by saying that he will not look (i.e. will not do his job as guardian). Here, it is assumed that Priapus is not doing his job because a pig has been eating the growing flowers. The following poem stays with the image of the metaphorical *hortus* by focusing on Priapus’ “well-known manhood.”

tu quae, ne videas notam virilem
 hinc averteris, ut decet pudicam,
 nimirum, nisi quod times videre

intra viscera habere concupiscis! (CP 66)

You who, lest you see the mark of my manhood, turn yourself away,
as befits a chaste woman – unless, of course, you want to have in
your guts the thing you're afraid to look at.

This woman shares features with the *castae matronae* in CP 8. Priapus speaks of this woman as *pudica*, which is synonymous with *casta*, and he bids her to turn away her eyes (*hinc averteris*), which is reminiscent of his initial request in CP 8 that the *matronae* stay away (*hinc abite*). This woman is afraid to see (*times videre*) whereas those *matronae* looked eagerly (*vident...libenter*). The hint of irony in Priapus' voice almost makes him seem like he is asking her to look at him, which puts him in the opposite position to what he was in back in CP 8. There it seemed as though he could not stop the women from entering. Here it is almost as if he has to remind the woman that she desires him.

These poems reveal that Priapus' world is not what it once was. "Openness" is no longer a good thing; sexual pervers are entering his garden; there are threats to close his garden; and women are not looking at him in the same way. This only gets worse for Priapus. Soon his only sexual partners will be dogs (CP 70); women will look at his genitals again, but only to mock his "useless log" (CP 73); and he will experience the decrepitude of old age (CP 76). From here I want to provide a close reading of CP 77, and explore the different literary themes and motifs in these concluding "impotence" poems.

The threat in CP 65 is made real in CP 77. A hedge has been set around the garden to keep intruders from entering. Not only has Priapus been robbed of his duty as guardian of the garden, but also he has been robbed of his sexual partners. Priapus makes his blockade equivalent to forced celibacy.

immanem stomachum mihi movetis
 qui densam facitis subinde saepem
 et fures prohibetis huc adire!
 hoc est laedere, dum iuvatis; hoc est
 non admittere ad aucupem volucres.
 obstructa est via, nec licet iacenti
 iactura natis expiare culpam.
 ergo qui prius usque et usque et usque
 furum scindere podices solebam,
 per noctes aliquot diesque cesso!
 poenas do quoque, quod satis superque est,
 in semenque abeo salaxque quondam
 nunc vitam perago—quis hoc putaret?—
 ut clausus citharoedus abstinentem!
 at vos, ne peream situ senili,
 quaeso, desinite esse diligentes,
 neve imponite fibulam Priapo.

(CP 77)

You rouse great anger in me, you who—again and again—put up a
 dense hedge and keep thieves from coming in here! While trying to
 help, you do harm; this amounts to not giving birds access to the snare.
 The way is blocked, and the one lying on the ground cannot atone for
 his guilt by damage to his ass. And so, I who used to split thieves’
 assholes wide open over and over and over again, now I do nothing for
 days and nights at a time! I, too, pay the penalty, and what is enough
 and over, I am going to seed, and once horny I now live a life—who
 would have thought it?—of abstinence, like a closed up citharist! But I
 beg you, lest I perish through long neglect, stop being zealous, and
 don’t infibulate Priapus.

In this poem Höschele detects the “gradual deconstruction of this Priapic world.”³²³

Priapus is stuck inside of his garden, and without intruders he can no longer be “Priapus.”

This poem seems to be the opposite of the two proems. In the beginning, Priapus is
 sexually capable—*membrosior* suggests that he is *more* than capable—and he has the
 power to keep people out of his garden. In this later poem, however, Priapus is forced
 into chastity and he no longer has the ability to keep intruders out. Not only does he no
 longer have the ability to keep intruders out, but also he no longer has the ability to

³²³ Höschele 2008a: 59. “Nous assistons donc à une deconstruction graduelle du monde priapique.”

punish intruders. The connection we saw earlier between the “open” garden and the “exposed” genitalia is still present, but now both of them are closed. Priapus’ garden walled in, and he is to live out his life as a “closed off” cithara player (*clausus citharoedus*)—that is to say, to live in sexual abstinence.³²⁴ The two proems reiterate that Priapus’ garden is not virginal. If we understand that dictum to be representative of Priapic poetry, then we are left wondering what significance Priapus’ house arrest has for this poetry book. What does it mean for Priapus to be shut away in his garden? If no one can get in, and if trespassing is the totality of Priapus poetry, can Priapic poetry continue to exist? Priapus himself seems very aware of this possibility at the end of the poem when he starts speaking of sexual abstinence and the threat of infibulation. He sees only idleness (*cesso*) and sexual deprivation (*in semenque abeo*).

It has already been noted that this poem has much in common with the *paraclausithyron*, the motif of the locked-out lover.³²⁵ Höschele draws attention to the repetition of words signaling the motif of being locked out in *CP 73: prohibetis, non admittere, obstructa, and clausus*. Holzberg describes this poem as the “elegiac situation in reverse.”³²⁶ The lover is no longer outside of the doors, but enclosed within them.

³²⁴ Citharodes were proverbially chaste, yet also desirable, given the references to them in satirical works. Martial mentions a citharode in reference to a *fibula* in the *Apophoreta* (*dic mihi simpliciter, comoedis et citharoedis, / fibula, quid praestas? 'Carius ut futuant.'*, 14.215); Juvenal notes that some women pay money (*si gaudet cantu, nullius fibula durat / vocem vendentis praetoribus*, 6.379-80) Celsus describes the method of infibulation in 7.25.3 and notes voice and strength (*interdum vocis, interdum valetudinis causa*) as two reasons for the operation. See also Vendries 2007: 4 and Schultheiss *et al.* 2003: 758.

³²⁵ O’Connor (1989: 160) seems to be the first to have made this connection between the Priapus of *CP 77* and the *exclusus amator* by noting the imagery of the rejected komast (exclusion and possible death). Goldberg (1992: 129; 374-5) specifies the connection by referring to Priapus as the *inclusus amator*, and draws attention to the same motif in *CP 17*. Obermayer (1998: 212-3) offers a fuller analysis of the motif in the two poems, which has since been followed up by the work of Holzberg (2005) and Höschele (2008a).

³²⁶ Holzberg 2005: 371.

Priapus is still the masculine authority figure, but this time he is an *inclusus amator*. The *paraclausithyron* and the figure of the *exclusus amator* are fitting motifs for the *CP* to adapt for a number of reasons. First, the *paraclausithyron* is the result of limited access and the positioning of boundaries. The motif is predicated on the lover's inability to gain entry into the home of his beloved. Priapus' very essence lies in being a boundary keeper. Furthermore, Priapus is a statue to which devotees make appeals and offerings, like the closed door to which lovers speak and implore.³²⁷

The image of the *inclusus amator* appears earlier in the book in *CP* 17, and a brief comparison of these two poems demonstrates the finality of Priapus' isolation in *CP* 77.

quid mecum tibi, circitor moleste?
 ad me quid prohibes venire furem?
 accedat, sine: laxior redibit. (CP 17)

What's your issue with me, bothersome guard? Why do you prevent
 the thief from coming to me? Let him come in; he will return looser.

The relationship between *CP* 17 and 77 is predicated on the shared theme of blocked access to Priapus' garden, which we see clearly in the verbal repetition of *prohibere* (*ad me quid prohibes venire furem?* 17.2; *fures prohibetis huc adire* 77.3). In both poems Priapus voices his complaints directly to those who keep thieves from entering his garden, to the *circitor* in *CP* 17 and to the creator of the hedge (*qui...facitis...saepem*) in *CP* 77. His frustration with these figures suggests that trespassing into Priapus' garden has become the totality of Priapic poetry, compared to those earlier poems that were

³²⁷ The lament of the tree in *CP* 61 sounds very similar to the elegiac door that gets a voice in Propertius 1.16. The overlap between the motif of the *exclusus amator* and the immobile Priapus statue was already suggested in the Introduction; there the literary evidence demonstrated the similar suffering both figures undergo due to their vigilant and static position. See Section 5 in Chapter One for more on this comparison. Like the elegiac door, Priapus is also honored with a wreath (*cingit inaurata penem tibi, sancte, corona*) in *CP* 40.3.

concerned with Priapus' ability to protect, rather than punish. The *circitor* is an obstacle to Priapus' objective in a similar way that the *custos* and *ianitor* block elegists' access to their *puellae*.³²⁸ This aspect of the *paraclausithyron* is particularly elegiac, as Tibullus, Propertius, and Ovid sometimes modify the motif to focus on actual human figures rather than the *ianua*, as was customary for the motif up to that time.³²⁹ Unlike the narrative of *CP 17*, it is not necessarily another person who is keeping intruders from entering in this poem. The address to the second-person plural hints at the recipient's agency. Obermayer understands the addressees as the landowners. They, as he points out, benefit from the hedges' growth. In this scenario the hedges function as the *circitor* in *CP 17*.

A particularly Priapic touch to these scenarios is how the poet conflates garden boundaries with bodily ones. In elegy, the woman's home is often identified with the woman's body; penetration of the former was symbolic penetration of the latter.³³⁰ The imagined scenario in *CP 17*, however, does not focus solely on penetration. The restricted garden corresponds to the constricted orifice of an intruder. If access to the garden becomes lax (*accedat sine*), the intruder's body will also become loose (*laxior redibit*). As readers we are meant to connect those dots and infer what punishment Priapus intends to enact. And if we do not make those connections, other poems such as *CP 51* make this explicit.

heus tu, non bene qui manum rapacem
 mandato mihi contines ab horto,
 iam primum stator hic libidinosus

³²⁸ cf. *Am.* 1.6 in which Ovid sings to the *ianitor*.

³²⁹ Copley's foundational book (1956) still offers an essential and expansive analysis of this motif in Latin love elegy.

³³⁰ Fruhstorfer (1986) provides a concise study of the *puella's* house as a metaphor for penetration (cf. Tib. 1.10.61-2 and Prop. 2.5.21-2).

alternis et eundo et exeundo	
porta te faciet patientiorem!	5
accedent duo qui latus tuentur	
pulchre pensilibus peculiati;	
qui, cum te male foderint iacentem,	
ad pratum veniet salax asellus	
et nil deterius mutuniatus!	10
quare, si sapiet, malus cavebit	
cum tantum sciet esse mentularum!	(CP 52)

Hey, you, who scarcely keep your rapacious hand from the garden that has been entrusted to me, first the lusty guard here, by alternately going in and out of *your* gate, will make *you* more open! Then two will approach who take up the sides, both well endowed with hanging cocks; and, when they have plowed through you shamefully as you lie face down, a horny ass will come for your grass, and the ass is not of inferior endowment! So, if he is wise, a fiendish one will beware since he knows there are so many cocks!

The first five lines vivify the innuendo in *CP 17*. The intruder's "door" (*porta*) will become wider from a lusty attendant's constant thrusting, which is expressed in terms of entering and exiting (*et eundo et exeundo*). The threshold of the intruder's body is similar to Priapus' garden space.³³¹ The trespassing of one "gate" directly results in the trespassing of another. Also of note here is the fact that it is not just Priapus who will carry out this action, but attendants: two more (*duo*) and an ass (*asellus*). This is if we assume that the *stator* is Priapus. No reference to the god as such appears in our extant literature, and given the reference to *circitor* in *CP 17*, it is possible that the *stator* is another guard. If this is the case, then Priapus has little to no agency in the delivery of punishment in *CP 52*. Even if we do assume the *stator* is Priapus, he is still tasking his acts of punishment out to others, which makes Priapus into a bystander. As we have seen, both the physical space of the garden and the physical nature of Priapus' body are

³³¹ Fruhstorfer 1986: 55.

restricted and closed off in *CP 77*. Although *CP 17* and *77* are thematically linked, the end result in each poem is different. Priapus still envisions a world in which intruders will enter his garden in *CP 17*, and in the poems that follow, we see that the Priapic world has been set right again. Pessimism and ruin plague the Priapic world in *CP 77*. We have lost the agency of the *circitor*, or the attendants in *CP 52*; now artifice itself, in the form of hedges, is uncontrollably blocking Priapus' access to sexual partners.

I now want to turn to Priapus' assumed celibacy in *CP 77* and examine the "elegiac reversal" a bit more. Ovid invites readers to explore Priapus' potential as an *exclusus amator* in the episode of Vertumnus and Pomona in Book 14 of the *Metamorphoses*. Priapus appears only briefly at the beginning of the tale alongside Silvanus, Pan, and Vertumnus as potential suitors of Pomona, who is cloistered away in her garden. The scenario is not only one of an infatuated god pursuing an indifferent woman, which befits the *Metamorphoses*, but also one of a persistent lover in the clutches of a beloved who will not grant him access, which is reminiscent of Ovid's love elegy. Furthermore, the inset *paraclausithyron* of Iphis at Anaxarete's door reads as if it could have been taken right out of the pages of love elegy. It is true that Priapus plays little to no role in this episode, but his presence can be felt throughout. Ovid describes Pomona, Vertumnus, and Priapus all as holding scythes (*adunca dextera falce*, 14.628; *quique deus fures vel falce vel inguine terret*, 14.640; *falce data frondator erat*, 14.649), and of these three fertility deities, Priapus is most associated with the *falx*.³³² The idea of a Priapus who is trying to get *in* to the garden is comical to any reader who knows a

³³² *CP* 6.2, 11.2, 30.1, 33.6, 55.1. *cf.* Vergil *G.* 4.110; *Copa* 23; Ovid *Met.* 14. 640; Tib. 1.1.18, 1.4.8; Columella 10.34.

modicum of Priapic poetry. His position *outside* of Pomona's *pomaria* is significant as it turns inside-out the commonplace motif of Priapus *inside* his garden, keeping intruders *out*.

The connection between Priapus and Pomona can be pushed a bit further. There is the obvious connection between the two in their shared habitation of the garden. The fact that Priapus' garden is referred to as a *pomarium* twice, and only a few poems before *CP* 77 (*CP* 71, 72), may suggest an even closer parallel between the two figures' shared space.³³³ If we recall the two proems, it would appear that Priapus is, at the beginning of the *CP*, a reverse Pomona. Instead of blockading his garden from amorous suitors, he keeps chaste female divinities at bay—divine maidens like Pomona. Priapus undergoes a sexual transformation like Pomona, but whereas she transitions from virgin to sexual partner at the end of her episode, Priapus transitions from *mentulator* to *abstinens*. The dichotomy set up by the two proems is reversed. The inside is now chaste (though not by choice) and the outside is where sexual satisfaction lies because potential victims are on the outside of the garden. Myers has suggested that Ovid uses the Pomona and Vertumnus episode as a closing device for the *Metamorphoses*. She points out the ways in which this episode is a complicated happy ending in a series of tales involving sexual assault.³³⁴ The figure of Vertumnus, particularly, serves as a link both to the end of the *Metamorphoses* and to the beginning of the *Fasti*, a figure of “closure and

³³³ *CP* 71: *si commissa meae carpes pomaria curae / dulcia quid doleam perdere doctus eris!* *CP* 72 is a mess, and although the placement of the poet's reference to Priapus as a *tutelam pomarii* is contested, the reference itself is not.

³³⁴ Myers 1994: 243-4. Rape is hinted at (*vimque parat; Met.* 14.770), but ultimately Pomona lets Vertumnus in and “opens her garden” for him. For more on this particular episode, see Richlin 1992: 169; Curran 1984: 278.

continuation.”³³⁵ The Priapus in *CP 77* does not look forward to continuation. There is only closure. By asking that he not be infibulated, Priapus is, in essence, asking for the hedge to be removed and for his world return back to what it was in the beginning of the book. He looks back to what once was, but will no longer be.

Priapus’ newfound chastity in *CP 77* also reminds us of the other virginal divinities who were kept away in the two proems, and here, too, is another point of closure. The Muses were the central focus of *CP 2*. The poet said he had not invited them into his garden. I suggest that line six is another reference to Priapus’ garden as a poetic space. Priapus says that the way into his garden is obstructed (*obstructa est via*). On the surface level, this indicates the simple fact that the hedges are keeping people from entering. But I want to consider the metapoetic nature of this poem. Other hints in the concluding poems of the *CP* suggests that the poet is engaging with Callimachean poetics: his praise of small works in *CP 80*, for example, and the remote, inaccessible garden may be one of these signs.³³⁶ One does not need to go so far as to see the obstructed path as a direct reference to Callimachus and Neoteric aesthetics, which we

³³⁵ Myers 1994: 250.

³³⁶ See Prioux 2008: 170-7 for her argument that the reference to Tydeus in *CP 80* is a reference to actual statuary and Alexandrian aesthetics. Other possible Callimachean qualities of the garden may be in *CP 15* and *CP 30*. In *CP 15* the speaker refers to the remoteness of the garden (*in remotis locis*) and *CP 30* presents an interesting dynamic in which Priapus tells a traveler who seeks the pathway to a fountain (*ad fontem, quaeso, dic mihi, qua sit iter*; 30.2) that picking grapes from a vine will give him a different way to access water. The implied joke must be, as editors point out, a reference to the *os impurum* rather than to *fellatio*. (Cf. Martial 2.50.1-2.) That would, then, suggest a possible interpretation of the desired fountain as providing *aqua pura* for the *os impurum*. The Priapic garden, of course, is insistent on its inability to offer anything so pure and undiluted. (Cf. Prop. 3.1. 1-3: *Callimachi Manes et Coi sacra Philitae, | in vestrum, quaeso, me sinite ire nemus. | primus ego ingredior puro de fonte sacerdos.*)

explored with relation to garden poetry in the first section, but we can still appreciate this space for its poetic potential.³³⁷

If we recall the beginning of Book 10 of Columella, he instructs Silvanus to enclose the garden and then build a Priapus statue. In order to begin his poetry (*i.e.* invoke the Muses) Columella needs to set boundaries and protect them.³³⁸ In his prologue Columella refers to his own work as “bound by its own limits” (*suis finibus terminata*, 10 *pr.* 4). The fact that Book 10 appears in verse separates it from the rest of the *Res Rustica*. The hedges, then, of the garden are also the hedges of the book.³³⁹ In line 2 of Book 10, Columella refers to the who was excluded from this topic on account of time (*spatiis exclusus iniquis*). This is a direct quotation from Vergil’s *Georgics*, which I cited above, but will cite below for reference.³⁴⁰ It is precisely this text, the *Georgics*, that I want to consider. Gowers looks at this line and suggests that Vergil is “shut out by unfair constraints...as though [he] were on the wrong side of a garden wall.”³⁴¹ It is unclear, she

³³⁷ In some ways, then, *CP 77* is similar to another Ovidian work, *Amores* 3.6. There, the lover’s path to his beloved is blocked by a large river. He ruminates on the relationship with his girl in a similar retrospective fashion. The Callimachean resonances of that poem are much louder than I suggest they are here.

³³⁸ Col. 10.26-28

talis humus vel parietibus vel saepibus hirtis
claudatur, ne sit pecori neu pervia furi.
nec tibi Daedaliae quaerentur munera dextrae

Boldrer (1996: 129 *ad loc.*) discusses some of these early theories from the 15th and 18th centuries.

³³⁹ Boldrer (1996: 129 *ad loc.*) discusses some of early theories from the 15th and 18th centuries that the mention of Daedalus in line 29 (*nec tibi Daedaliae quaerentur munera dextrae*) refers not to the following lines about the Priapus statue, but to the construction of the hedge. I only suggest this possibility to demonstrate that the building of hedges could be the work of a master architect. If the hedges are the bounds of the poetry book, then Daedalus’ skill could become the poet’s skill.

³⁴⁰ Verg. *G.* 4.147-8

veram haec ipse equidem spatiis exclusus iniquis
praetereo atque aliis post me memoranda relinquo.

³⁴¹ Gowers 2000: 129.

adds, what relationship readers are meant to identify between Vergil and the *senex*.³⁴² I think a similarly unclear relationship exists between the poet and the aging Priapus.

Perhaps they both are becoming impotent, as Holzberg and others note, but that does not have to be the final word or the only way for this book to end. The closing of the garden may remind readers of the ending of Vergil's work, too, and by relation, Columella. The hedges in *CP 77* may be the hedges of the collection of the *CP*, closing in and waiting, like Columella and Vergil, to be resealed.³⁴³

Before we conclude, I want to turn briefly to other elegiac modes that are activated at the end of the book. In the beginning the god is Pomona in reverse; he maintains his garden by keeping all virgins out. His "suitors" are made up of thieves and depraved dedicatees. By the end of the poem Priapus is forced to become an, albeit ironic and comical, Pomona. His garden walls are sealed up, and he is forced into frustrated celibacy. The readings of *CP 77* that I have presented above center not only on the inversion of elegiac motifs, but also on loss. Here is where I suggest another elegiac situation is at play, one that involves Priapus as poetic persona. It has already been observed that Priapus' sexual impotence at the end of the book signals the poet's conclusion. What abilities are lost by this impotence are worthy of attention. It is not merely the act of "finishing the job," so to speak, but the loss of function. Priapus cannot get his penis to be erect, which is a slightly different situation than a penis that has lost its

³⁴² Gowers 2000: 131.

³⁴³ Gowers 2000: 141, "Virgil's boldness in unsealing long-shut fountains [*qui primus veteres ausus recludere fontis*, 10.435] and bringing Hesiod to Italy becomes a displaced description of Columella's own enterprise, recorded at the moment when his unsealed subject, gardening, is sealed up again."

erection for some reason, because in that situation, the flaccid state is temporary.³⁴⁴ In this final reading of *CP 77* I suggest a possible allusion to the dynamics in Ovidian exile poetry.³⁴⁵ As readers we are already made aware of Priapus' exilic qualities.³⁴⁶ Here in *CP 77*, Priapus decries the hands that have put this hedge around him as if it were a punishment. In Tomis, Ovid's immobility is both imagined and real. He is able to meet with Romans only on his poetic feet, not his physical feet (*contingam certe quo licet illa pede; Tr. 1.1.16*). Ovid is unable to cross the threshold and obtain the fruit of Rome. He, too, perverts the *paraclausithryon* of his earlier amatory elegies to recast the emperor Augustus as the petulant *puella*; Ovid is still the lover pleading to enter outside of the door.³⁴⁷ As we have seen, the poet plays with these same motifs in the *CP*. In *CP 77* the statue of Priapus is simultaneously the *puella* who is enclosed inside her house (his garden) and the lover who is still eager to penetrate. But he cannot penetrate, and penetration is now the sum of Priapus' existence. The obstruction in *CP 77* leads Priapus to take a view of his past sexual encounters. Höschele says, "The god takes a retrospective look at his past sex life; on a metapoetic level, it is a retrospective on the

³⁴⁴ Holzberg 2005: 379. "At the end of his book, then, the *poeta* suffers from the same problem as Priapus, and this admission undoubtedly also conceals a metapoetic statement: the author of the poems about the phallic god is now leaving this subject behind him, because he no longer feels capable of handling it."

³⁴⁵ It is unclear to what extent imperial writers had familiarity with Ovid's exile poetry. Recent scholars (Roman 2001; Holzberg 2005b) have put forth persuasive arguments in favor of Martial familiarity with the works, which makes the idea that the poet of the *CP* was also acquainted with the *exilia* at least plausible. Although there are no obvious linguistic connections between these works, I think that the thematic links between the *CP* and Ovid's *exilia* offers new insights into *CP 77*.

³⁴⁶ See Section 2B in Chapter One.

³⁴⁷ Stroh 1971; Nagle 1980: 63-4, 70. Holzberg (2002: -176-98) provides a thorough, but concise, study of the elegiac system in Ovid's works in exile.

collection that we have just read.”³⁴⁸ This retrospective view is similar to the view Ovid has of his own literary corpus in exile.

One does not need to go so far as to suggest a direct connection between *CP* 77 and Ovid’s exile poetry, but a comparison of the two poetic *corpora* is nevertheless telling given the possible allusion to the end of the *Metamorphoses* (Pomona and Vertumnus) and the obvious intertext between *CP* 80 and *Amores* 3.7. All of these possible points of contact are in some way endings to their poetry book (if we consider 3.7 as part of the final sequence in the love affair narrated in *Amores* 1, 2, and 3) or to Ovid’s poetic career. In the eyes of some scholars, the relationship between Ovid and the *CP* is strong enough to merit claims of authorship on the former’s behalf.³⁴⁹ We need not delve into that question, however, in order to entertain the idea that Ovid’s own engagement with physical space, poetic space, and the inversion of the *paraclausithyron*, may serve as a model for the poet of *CP*—a model that the poet, of course, inverts and perverts to fit the Priapic world. This poem does have in itself a sense of an ending, and this final section of the chapter has also demonstrated that this ending is also informed by the endings in other poetry books.

Conclusion

³⁴⁸ Höschele 2008a: 60. “Le dieu jette un regard rétrospectif sur sa vie sexuelle passée; sur le plan métapoétique, il s’agit d’une retrospective portant sur la collection que nous venons de lire.”

³⁴⁹ See Section 3 in the Introduction for more the question of Ovidian authorship. Although much of the argument is based on a possible quotation in Seneca, Thomason’s study (1931) demonstrates the close and numerous verbal connections between the *CP* and the Ovidian corpus. Even Richlin (1992: 142) says, though seemingly tongue-in-cheek, “Thus the *Priapea* can be taken to have been written by a single author only if that author is Ovid.”

Without the garden, Priapus is no different than a *herma* or statue. It is the physical space he inhabits that helps create the dynamics of the Priapic voice we see in the *CP* and elsewhere. The poet enters the garden to write and to be “inspired” by Priapus. Priapus is protecting a cherished inside that intruders want access to. The poet of the *CP* is similarly creating an inside of a text that readers seek access to. One may wonder where *we* are meant to be as readers in *CP* 77. If reading the poems implies that we are in the garden, too, then we might question whether we are enclosed in the garden with Priapus. If so, what punishment awaits us? Or are we looking in from outside the garden—clued in on the fiction and cognizant of the fact that we are readers of a poetry book? It may, perhaps, be no surprise that two poems later, we are introduced to our poet by title (*poeta noster*; 79.4), as if to remind us that, although we have been trespassing in Priapus’ garden up until now, we have been in the outside world that whole time, too, as readers of this book. At the threshold lies our presence in the world of the text, but also our absence in that we are only readers, not inhabitants; there, too, lies the presence of poetry, but also its absence in the poetic ruse that these poems are just scribbles.³⁵⁰ The *CP* is nominally about Priapus, but it is also about liminality, and the different thresholds that poets not only create but also dissolve, and the thresholds that we are tempted to cross as readers.

³⁵⁰ Pucci 1978: 60-1.

CONCLUSION

Let us begin our conclusion of this dissertation by considering the *CP*'s conclusion one last time. In the previous chapters we considered this claim in light of recent scholarship that suggests both the god and poet are growing impotent.³⁵¹ Priapus' penis cannot reach the length that would satisfy the lusty girls' expectations. I would like to revisit this poem not for the theme of impotency, but for what it says about the book. The circumstances of this poem center around size: the thickness and measure of Priapus' penis as well as the size of Tydeus' mind and body.

at non longa bene est, non stat bene mentula crassa
 et quam, si tractes, crescere posse putes?
 me miserum, cupidas fallit mensura puellas:
 non habet haec aliud mentula maius eo.
 utilior Tydeus, qui, si quid credis Homero, 5
 ingenio pugnax, corpore parvus erat!
 sed potuit damno nobis novitasque pudorque
 esse, repellendus saepius iste mihi.

dum vivis, sperare decet: tu, rustice custos,
 huc ades et nervis, tente Priape, fave!³⁵² (*CP* 80)

What? Isn't it long enough? Isn't my cock thick enough? If you stroke it, don't you think it could get up? Woe is me, the length doesn't satisfy those horny girls: does this cock not have something else greater than this? Tydeus was handier, who, if you believe what is in Homer, was aggressive in spirit, but small in body. But the newness and the shame could be my ruin; I have to beat it back all the time. ... As long as you live, you can hope. Rustic guard, may you be here, and may you be favorable to my loins, rigid Priapus.

³⁵¹ Holzberg 2005, Höschele 2008a, Prioux 2008. See also the Conclusion to the dissertation.

³⁵² Several editors leave out this last couplet, which appears separately in two manuscripts (*Ottobonianus* 2029 and *Rehdigeranus* 60). There is a break before these poems, but I agree with Callebat that this is to note a change in the speaker. This final couplet seems to be the words of the poet, and not of Priapus.

The speaker notes that spirit of Tydeus (*ingenium*) was warlike (*pugnax*), but his size, small (*corpore parvo*). As Prioux has noted, there is particular piquancy in the poet's connection of smallness (*parvo*), a term of Callimachean aesthetics, with something as large-scale as war.³⁵³ Towards the end the poem the speaker says that novelty and shame could be his ruin. There is, as others have pointed out, the novelty of a hyperphallic god's impotence, and there is, of course, shame that can accompany such a condition. At the end of the first chapter we considered *novitas* as a literary term, and compared *CP* 80 to some poems in Ovid's *corpus* in which he refers to the novelty of his work. *Pudor*, however, remains to be investigated. The obvious sense here is, as we have noted, sexual shame. But this word can also refer to modesty, and we see poets use *pudor* as a reason not to write serious poetry. When Horace gives a *recusatio* in *Odes* 1.6, he lists modesty and a powerful Muse as the two things forbidding him from writing on the grander topics of serious poetry.

conamur, tenues grandia, dum pudor
 imbellisque lyrae Musa potens vetat
 laudes egregii Caesaris et tuas
 culpa deterere ingeni. (Hor. *C.* 1.6.5-12)

We do not try these things, for we are too slender for these grand themes. Modesty and the powerful Muse of the unwarlike lyre forbid us from wearing out your praise and that of excellent Caesar by defect of spirit.

I do not think one needs to argue for allusion here in order to see how this passage of Horace presents us an impression of the aesthetic principles that motivated much of Latin poetry at the end of the 1st century BCE and that are also lying behind *CP* 80. There is the

³⁵³ E.g. Hor. *C.* 4.2.31-2: *operosa parvus / carmina fingo*.

distinction between size (*tenues grandia*) and between strength and weakness (the Muse is *potens*, but her lyre *imbellis*). There is also the implicit distinction between *ars* and *ingenium*, which also calls to mind a certain kind of strength. If Horace has some fault of *ingenium*, it implies, according to Thomas, that he has an abundance of *ars*, which is good for a Callimachean poet.³⁵⁴ In his version of a literary history, Ovid notes the son of Battus' strength in *ars*, not *ingenium*.³⁵⁵ The association of power and poetry underlies many of the passages we have examined in this dissertation.

Tydeus, as Prioux has noted, seems to be a Callimachean figure, and if this reference here refers to an actual Hellenistic statue of Tydeus by Myron, then that only further demonstrates the connection to Hellenistic aesthetics.³⁵⁶ It may be clear where I am going next. Given some of the aesthetic discourse we have seen in the previous paragraph about war and invention, not only Tydeus' bellicosity, but also his force in *ingenium* makes him, at least, a questionable Callimachean figure. It may seem as though Priapus is adjoining himself to Tydeus in *CP* 80, but it does not have to be the case exactly. It is unclear what produces the novelty and shame that must be driven away, and I think this uncertainty perfectly encapsulates the aesthetics of the *CP*. Other poets speak of powerful Muses (*potens Musa*) and strength in their ability (*valere*), but they make a distinction between this kind of power and the kind of brutal force that makes up epic

³⁵⁴ Thomas 2007: 52.

³⁵⁵ Ov. *Am.* 1.15.14
Battades semper toto cantabitur orbe;
quamvis ingenio non valet, arte valet.
 cf. *Am.* 1.15.19: *Ennius arte carens.*

³⁵⁶ Prioux 2008: 173-7.

material. Tydeus is small in size, just like a good Callimachean poet and just like a poem of epigram. But he is powerful in ways that are not perfectly in alignment with this more literary power. Prioux suggests that the idea that one could, as Tydeus, “unite *leptotes* to power...exudes a scent of dangerous novelty.”³⁵⁷ The poet of the *CP* makes this unification by writing about a powerful and aggressive figure in a poetry book of “small poems” that are, as we have seen throughout this dissertation, also familiar with Callimachean and Neoteric principles.³⁵⁸

In this dissertation I hope to have shed light upon some of the more intricate aspects of the poetics of the *CP*. In particular I hope to have shown how the poet incorporates Callimachean and Neoteric aesthetics into some of the key, preexisting motifs of Priapic poetry: thematic repetitiveness, the statue, and the garden. The poet’s *novitas* comes in redefining some of these poetic principles and modifying them to adapt poetry for a god whose sexual braggadocio often seems to resist the confines of epigram. There is also the pretense of *pudor*, for, just as we see the activation of Callimachean poetics, so, too, do we see the rejection of it. It is a pose that the poet, either in his own voice or through the voice of Priapus, adopts.

In the last couplet of *CP* 80, the poet asks Priapus to have favor on his *nervis*. This word has a semantic range that previous poets, such as Ovid, have already manipulated.³⁵⁹ In the context of a phallic god, *fave nervis* can, quite literally, be a

³⁵⁷ Prioux 2008: 177, “unir la λεπτότης à la puissance exhale un dangereux parfum de nouveauté.

³⁵⁸ Holzberg 2005: 379-80.

³⁵⁹ *Am.* 1.1.17-18
cum bene surrexit versu nova pagina primo,
attenuat nervos proximus ille meos.

request that the god have favor on his genitals. But it can also be a request that the god, in the context of the poem, look favorably upon the literary work that has just been produced, in which case this line calls to mind the poet's prayer early on in *CP* 2 that the god receive this work, whatever it is, in good favor. But as we saw there in the Introduction and in Chapter One, Priapus is in the typical role of a reader there. The poet's injunction to Priapus can also be interpreted as his message to the reader of the *CP*. At *CP* 80 the poet is also asking for the reader to be favorable to his literary work. To be favorable to this text requires us to understand its poetics, to see through the pose, to understand the text's engagement with literary texts, to exist in the world of the poetry while simultaneously existing in the world of the present day, and, ultimately, it requires us to laugh and to be pleasantly stimulated by the different associations the poet makes between his poetry and other literary works. There is more to say, but I, too, am *spatiis exclusa iniquis*, and, at present, must leave what remains for other readers of the *CP* to take up.

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