

## LESSON 1

### Two Renaissance Poems for Comparison

- A. Catullus 101 and Pontano, *Tumuli* 2.25
- B. Catullus 43 and Marullo, *Epigrammata* 1.13

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<b>Historical Context:</b>	Fifteenth Century Italy
<b>Full Texts Online:</b>	Pontano's <i>Tum.</i> 2.25: <a href="http://www.poetiditalia.it">http://www.poetiditalia.it</a> ; Marullo's <i>Epigrammata</i> 1.13: <a href="http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/marullo.html">http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/marullo.html</a> .
<b>Level:</b>	Advanced level high students in high school; intermediate/advanced level students in college
<b>Focus and Appeal:</b>	The Renaissance selections should appeal to students of Catullus. Translating imitative yet autonomous poems from the fifteenth century will impart the changing yet lasting power of Catullus.
<b>Learning Objectives:</b>	<p><b>Comparison.</b> Comparisons to the original encourage the student to look for more than one way of reading poetry. Moreover, while it is easy to engage with Catullus, I hope the Renaissance versions will further encourage the student reader to interact personally with Catullus after seeing him through an intermediary distance of time and history.</p> <p><b>Comparison of the Renaissance poems.</b> Catullus/Pontano and Catullus/Marullo can be used separately or together. If you have time to spend on both sets of comparison poems, you might want to ask the class to consider how Pontano and Marullo differ in their vision of Catullus.</p> <p><b>Imitation and emulation.</b> As a teacher you may want to begin the lesson with a discussion of imitation. What is imitation? Is it faithful reproduction? Is it an independent work? What do we mean when we say "imitation is the sincerest form of flattery"? How successful is an imitation, and what is the measure of success? The Renaissance distinguished between <i>imitatio</i> (imitation; following) and <i>aemulatio</i> (emulation; rivaling). Emulation calls attention to itself; the text as well as the model are important. The humanists used imitation and emulation together; the concept had its roots already in Quintilian. For further reading, see: G. Pigman, "Versions of Imitation in the Renaissance," <i>Renaissance Quarterly</i> 33 (1980), 1-32.</p> <p><b>Review of grammar rules and vocabulary.</b> The Renaissance poems follow the grammar rules of Classical Latin. For difficult vocabulary, students should consult a good lexicon such as <i>The Oxford Latin Dictionary</i> or Lewis and Short's <i>Latin Dictionary</i>.</p>
<b>Lesson Includes:</b>	Introduction, Latin texts, notes to Renaissance poems, English prose translations of Renaissance poems, focus questions and sample answers (which, like the notes are not assumed to be exhaustive).

## BACKGROUND

As popular as Catullus is today, he barely survived the Middle Ages. He resurfaced shortly after 1300 in a single Veronese manuscript. The first generation of Catullus scholars had to deal with a corrupt text, and they could not really begin to understand or appreciate Catullus until after the 1472 first printed edition became available. Even then, it was the epigrammatic Catullus which was popular; people mainly read Catullus through the poet Martial, who was better known at the time.

### **Giovanni Gioviano Pontano (Iovianus Pontanus), 1429-1503.**

Pontano came to Catullus by way of Martial, through the influence of the poet Antonio Beccadelli (Panormita). Pontano befriended Panormita in Naples, when he became a secretary of King Alfonso V of Aragon. Pontano continued to engage in politics and the administration of the kingdom under Alfonso's successor. But it was especially under Alfonso, known as "The Magnanimous" for his patronage of the arts and learning, that Pontano could begin to express his literary genius. He was a key figure of the Neapolitan Academy (later also called the Accademia Pontaniana), where poets met to exchange their writing and ideas. Pontano's collection of Catullan-styled verse consists of *Pruritus* (1449), *Parthenopaeus sive Amores* (1457), and *Hendecasyllabi sive Baiae* (ca. 1500). These compositions would dominate fifteenth-century interpretation of Catullus; poets generally preferred the shorter – and more playful, sensual, and often obscene – poems of Catullus to the longer ones, and they focused on hendecasyllabic meter. However, Pontano also wrote poignant verses on family. He married Adriana Sassone in 1461, and had one son and three daughters by her; he remarried but also survived his second wife. Pontano's domestic life and familial devotion are apparent in his collections *De amore coniugali*; *Naeniae* ("lullabies"); and *Tumuli*. The *Tumuli*, which Pontano worked on his entire life, are mournful elegies, funerary epitaphs in verse influenced by the epigrams in the Greek Anthology (a selection of Greek occasional poetry whose recension by the Byzantine Maximus Planudes was made available to the humanists for the first time in a 1494 printed edition by Janus Lascaris). Pontano's poem featured in our selection comes from his book of *Tumuli*, and it not only shows the influence of the epigram on the Renaissance humanists, but also mirrors the highly personal rather than playful Catullus.

### **Michele Marullo (Michael Marullus), ca. 1453-1500.**

Marullo was a Greek exile who fled with his family when Constantinople fell to the Turks in 1453, first to Ragusa in Croatia and then to Italy. He led a peripatetic life, traveling both as a composer of Latin poetry and as a soldier of fortune; nonetheless, he always considered himself Greek. He fought with Charles VIII and the French against Naples, hoping that Charles VIII might go on to liberate his country from the Turks. When this venture failed, Marullo went back to Florence, where he married the learned Alessandra Scala. Marullo's journeying took him to centers of humanism. He had already visited Naples in the 1470's and early 1480's, before the French campaign, and at that time he met Pontano and other members of the Academy. Marullo wrote books of *Epigrammata*; *Hymni Naturales*, *Naeniae*; and an unfinished didactic poem, *Institutiones principales*. The Catullan poem in our selection comes from the four books of *Epigrammata*; that and the hendecasyllabic meter in which it is written illustrates the lens of Martial through which the Renaissance so often imitated Catullus. However, it also reflects Marullo's own poetic program. The limits of obscenity in Catullus and his imitators were hotly debated, and whereas Baptista Mantuanus (Battista Spagnoli, 1447-1516) argued against wanton poetry (such as perhaps Pontano's *Pruritus*, *Amores*, and *Baiae*) in favor of devotional poetry, Marullo, on the other hand, preferred a chaste love poetry.

## FURTHER READING

J. Gaisser, *Catullus and his Renaissance Readers* (Oxford, 1993)

J. Hutton, *The Greek Anthology in Italy to the year 1800* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1935)

## LATIN TEXTS

A. Catullus 101 and Pontano, *Tumuli* 2.25

## Catullus 101

Multas per gentes et multa per aequora vectus  
 advenio has miseram, frater, ad inferias,  
 ut te postremo donarem munere mortis  
 et mutam nequiquam alloquerer cinerem,  
 quandoquidem fortuna mihi tete abstulit ipsum. 5  
 heu miser indigne frater adempte mihi,  
 nunc tamen interea haec, prisco quae more parentum  
 tradita sunt tristi munere ad inferias,  
 accipe fraterno multum manantia fletu,  
 atque in perpetuum, frater, ave atque vale. 10

*Tum. 2. 25: Pontanus Coniunx ad tumulum Ariadnae Saxonae Uxoris*

Quas tibi ego inferias, coniunx, quae munera solvam,  
 cum lacrimae et gemitus verbaque destituant?  
 pro veteri tamen officio, pro munere lecti  
 annua lustrato dona feram tumulo:  
 thura, puer, laticesque sacros. tu verba, sacerdos, 5  
 dic bona, et aeternos rite precare deos.  
 rite sacras adolete faces. mihi mortua vivis,  
 uxor, et in nostro conderis ipsa sinu,  
 (viva mihi ante oculos illa obversatur imago)  
 et mecum lusus deliciasque facis, 10  
 viva domum cultosque lares remque ordine curas,  
 viva, Ariadna, domi es, viva, Ariadna, toro es,  
 mecum perque hortos et culta vireta vagaris,  
 et mecum noctes, mecum agis ipsa dies.  
 sic mihi viva vales, sic est mihi grata senectus, 15  
 ut tua mors lasso vita sit ipsa seni.  
 haec ipse ad feretrum; at tecum mens ipsa moratur,  
 tecum post paucos laeta futura dies.  
 interea cape et haec miserae solatia mortis,  
 atque in perpetuum, fleta Ariadna, vale. 20

Notes to Pontano, *Tum. 2. 25*

The meter is elegiac couplets, as in Catullus.

- 1 **quas tibi ego inferias:** for the echo of the first line of Catullus 101, note Catullus' own opening allusion to the first lines of Homer's *Odyssey*; cf. also Catullus 51 and allusions to Sappho.  
**coniunx:** Adriana Sassone, Pontano's first wife, named Ariadna in Pontano's lyrics. They married in 1461 and had four children; she died in 1491. He erected the Pontano family chapel as a funerary temple for his wife in 1492. Go to <http://www.santamariamaggiore.org/cappellapontano.htm> for an image of the chapel.
- 9 **viva mihi ante oculos . . . imago:** compare *visa mihi ante oculos et nota maior imago*, Vergil, *Aen.* 2.773; also, *ante oculos errant domus, urbsque et forma locorum / . . . / Coniugis ante oculos, sicut praesentis, imago est*, Ovid, *Tr.* 3. 4B, 11-13. Finally, could Pontano picturing his wife alive be an allusion to Catullus 96, a consolation to Calvus on the death of his wife (mistress) Quintilia, whom Calvus in one of his own elegies had depicted as appearing to him after death?
- 10 **mecum lusus deliciasque facis:** *ludere* and *deliciae* are of course part of the Catullan vocabulary (see especially Catullus 2, 3, 45, 50, and 68A).
- 19 **solatia:** (for *solacia*); the *ci / ti* substitution is more typical of Medieval Latin style.

**ENGLISH TRANSLATION*****Tum. 2. 25 Pontanus Coniunx ad tumulum Ariadnae Saxonae Uxoris***

Pontano, spouse, at the tomb of his wife Ariadna Sassone

What obsequies, what gifts could I offer you, oh wife, if tears and groans and words are lacking? Still, according to long-standing duty, for the service towards a loved one, I will bear annual gifts to your blessed tomb. Incense, boy, and holy water! You, priest, speak fine words and recite liturgical prayers to the eternal divinities. Light the sacred torches according to ritual. Although dead, you live for me, oh spouse, and you are wrapped in my heart, (your image is present to me, living before my eyes), and with me you play and take your delight; you govern, alive, my house and its graceful rooms and my worldly goods -- alive, Ariadna, you live in my house and in my bed. Together with me you wander through the gardens and the planted greenery, and you yourself pass the days and nights with me. So alive are you for me, so pleasing is old age for me, that your death is life for this tired old man. These things I say at your tomb, but with you my very heart lingers, that which within few days will be happy with you. But you, however, take these comforts for your deplorable death, and forever, my wept-for Ariadna, farewell.

**FOCUS QUESTIONS****Pontano, *Tum. 2. 25***

1. The opening and closing lines of this poem are reminiscent of Catullus 101. The first lines of Catullus would be the most likely to be remembered—the most quotable and recognized, and therefore, Pontano’s opening would have had an immediate impact on the reader. How does the framework of Pontano’s poem inform its contents? Can we also see Pontano’s poem as one of journey and separation?
2. What are other similarities and differences between this poem and Catullus 101?
3. How many times does Pontano use the vocative? Characterize the nouns of direct address.
4. The meter of line three makes this seem a cheerful answer to the first two lines. Is the cheerful tone preserved throughout the poem? Analyze.
5. Find an example of paradox.
6. Find and explain the instances of anaphora / polyptoton.
7. Scholars have debated whether ceremony and tradition are inadequate and act as a foil for Catullus’ grief, or whether they are in fact a sincere expression of that grief. (See A. Feldherr, “*Non inter nota sepulcra*: Catullus 101 and Roman Funerary Ritual, in *Catullus. Oxford Readings in Classical Studies*, ed. J. Gaisser [Oxford, 2007], 399-426). Which interpretation do you prefer? The same discussion about ritual can be applied to Pontano’s poem. How does sacred tradition function in the poem to his wife?

## SUGGESTED ANSWERS TO FOCUS QUESTIONS

### Pontano, *Tum. 2. 25*

1. **The opening and closing lines of this poem are reminiscent of Catullus 101. The first lines of Catullus would be the most likely to be remembered—the most quotable and recognized, and therefore, Pontano’s opening would have had an immediate impact on the reader. How does the framework of Pontano’s poem inform its contents? Can we also see Pontano’s poem as one of journey and separation?**

We know from his words (such as present tense *advenio*) and the allusion to Homer’s *Odyssey* that Catullus has been on a journey and that the context is funereal. It has also been suggested that Catullus is denied crossing the threshold of death and communicating with his relative, something that Aeneas is allowed to experience in Book 6.692, when Vergil picks up the allusion to Homer (see G. Bionic, “*Poem 101*,” in *Catullus. Oxford Readings in Classical Studies*, ed. J. Gaisser [Oxford, 2007], 177-197 [p. 189]).

The arrangement of Catullus’ elegy is also instructive. Poem 101 is “chiastically shaped”: it is held together by the repetition of *ad inferias* and *munere*, lines 2 and 3, and again at line 8, moving on to the final *vale* as Catullus sets out on his long journey back (see J. Ferguson, *Catullus* [Lawrence, KS, 1985], p. 312). The journey on either end frames the fleeting moment of communication.

The alliteration of *m*’s, the apostrophe *heu frater adempte mihi* on line 6, the stiff word order and elision at the beginning of line 7, all suggest Catullus’ grief and his feeling of separation from his dead brother.

Pontano echoes Catullus in lines 1-4 and 19-20 and provides a similar frame. We know from the repetition of *inferias* and *munera* that Pontano is also making an honorary visit to the tomb of his dead wife, and the difficulty of performing the ritual is apparent in the difficult word order and elision of *interea cape et haec* at line 19. Pontano’s journey is not across space, however, but across time (although one could argue that the “Homeric” Catullus is conscious of time): Pontano is making an annual pilgrimage to his wife’s tomb in the Capella Pontano in Naples, on the anniversary of her death.

The ritual in Pontano’s poem also seems a bit hollow here, as it arguably does in Catullus. The ceremony is given three lines (5-7), whereas the rest of the poem describes Pontano’s emotions and answers the question set out in the first two lines. The poet’s sentiments are what is important. The anaphora of *viva* (5x) and of *mecum* (4x) / *tecum* (2x) suggest a feeling of connection with Ariadna, as does the paradox at line 16, “your death is life for this tired old man.” The memory of Ariadna is very real for Pontano, and it sustains him. However, at line 19 we realize that Pontano will never be (re)united with his wife until he dies; the illusion of connection is broken, the communication is fleeting, and he, too, gives his final “farewell,” like Catullus.

2. **What are other similarities and differences between this poem and Catullus 101?**

The *inferiae* in Catullus consist of wine, honey, milk, and flowers; in Pontano, they are incense and holy water. Words spoken by Catullus (e.g. *ave atque vale*, a formula found on sepulchral inscriptions) are here, words spoken by a priest.

It is not Pontano’s wife who is *misera* (cf. *miser frater*, Catullus line 6) but death that is pitiful and deplorable (*miserae mortis*, line 19).

3. **How many times does Pontano use the vocative? Characterize the nouns of direct address.**

Catullus addresses his brother three times in the manner of the funeral ritual – but doesn’t call out his name. Rather, their blood relationship is stressed, making his grief seem more personal and intimate than if his brother’s name had been used.

Pontano addresses Ariadna as “spouse” (line 1), “wife” (line 8), and “Ariadna” (twice in line 12, and again in line 20), perhaps calling her back to him with increasing urgency by using her proper name. In lines 11-

14 we are told something of Ariadna's personality and the relationship in the marriage; she seems more flesh and blood than does Catullus' brother.

**4. The meter of line three makes this poem seem a cheerful answer to the first two lines. Is the cheerful tone preserved throughout the poem? Analyze.**

I would argue that the poem posits a forced cheerfulness at the tomb and annual rites and offers a forced consolation that Ariadna is with Pontano, though absent. We finally conclude that husband and wife won't really be together until the poet's own death.

Line 3 is dactylic, and without the usual caesura, it moves very fast; "for obligation's sake" is an attempted casual answer to the question posed in the beginning. The lightheartedness continues in the following verses (especially line 7), but Pontano seems to stumble at line 9, with three elisions, as he envisages Ariadna in front of him. He appears to be convincing himself "you're *alive*" (note the meter and anaphora, *viva domum* line 11; *viva Ariadna*, line 12). Finally, the end of line 17 and all of 18 are spondaic and heavy, as Pontano lingers at the tomb and projects the time of his own death. Then, as he knows he cannot join Ariadna in death quite yet, he takes his leave with the Catullan ending of the last two lines.

Who has he been trying to cheer up? On line 19, the words *munera* and *inferias* have been replaced by *solatia*, the comforts for a deplorable death. Comforts for whom? Pontano addresses Ariadna and directs his question to her at the opening of the poem, but it seems to be himself he is trying to console.

**5. Find an example of paradox.**

Line 7, "although dead, you live for me" (*mihi mortua vivis*). The paradox serves to demonstrate that Pontano is not over the shock of his wife's absence and that she does not seem very far away from him in spirit. The word order in Latin actually suggests "dead to me, you live [on]," making the physical separation between husband and wife even more dramatic. The closeness that remains, however, is emphasized by the word order "alive to me" (*mihi viva*) in line 15.

**6. Find and explain the instances of anaphora / polyptoton.**

*munera / munere* (lines 1 and 3); *vivis / viva* (lines 7, 9, 11, 12, 15); *viva mihi / mihi viva* (lines 9 and 15); *mecum* (lines 10, 13, 14); *Ariadna* (lines 12 and 20); *tecum* (lines 17 and 18). The repetition of words suggest ritual and enchantment.

**7. Scholars have debated whether ceremony and tradition are inadequate and act as a foil for Catullus' grief, or whether they are in fact a sincere expression of that grief. (See A. Feldherr, "Non inter nota sepulcra: Catullus 101 and Roman Funerary Ritual, in *Catullus. Oxford Readings in Classical Studies*, ed. J. Gaisser [Oxford, 2007], 399-426). Which interpretation do you prefer? The same discussion about ritual can be applied to Pontano's poem. How does sacred tradition function in the poem to his wife?**

One could go a step further and in Pontano's case, proclaim this Renaissance poem a rhetorical exercise, one that is powerless to reshape history. Tradition, ceremony, rhetoric: these do not have to deny true emotion, however, but can in fact complement it.

## B. Catullus 43 and Marullo, *Epigrammata* 1.13

### Catullus 43

Salve, nec minimo puella naso  
 nec bello pede nec nigris ocellis  
 nec longis digitis nec ore sicco  
 nec sane nimis elegante lingua,  
 decoctoris amica Formiani. 5  
 ten provincia narrat esse bellam?  
 tecum Lesbia nostra comparatur?  
 o saeculum insapiens et infacetum!

### Marullo, *Epigrammata* 1.13 *Ad Neaeram*

Sic me, blanda, tui, Neaera, ocelli,  
 sic candentia colla, sic patens frons,  
 sic pares minio genae perurunt,  
 ex quo visa mihi et simul cupita es,  
 ut, ni me lacrimae rigent perennes, 5  
 totus in tenues eam favillas.  
 Sic rursus lacrimae rigant perennes,  
 ex quo visa mihi et simul cupita es,  
 ut ni, blanda, tui, Neaera, ocelli,  
 ni candentia colla, ni patens frons 10  
 ni pares minio genae perurant,  
 totus in riguos eam liquores.  
 O vitam miseram et cito caducam!

### Notes to *Epigrammata* 1.13 *Ad Neaeram*

The meter is hendecasyllabic, as in Catullus.

- 1 **Neaera:** a fictitious name. Unlike Catullus' Lesbia or Propertius' Cynthia, "Neaera" is not a pseudonym but merely representative, comparable to Horace's Lalage, Chloe, or Leuconoe, for example. It is a Greek name (Marullo was Greek) meaning a bright young girl. Might this also be an allusion to the poetry of the *neoterói*?  
**blanda ocelli:** cf. *flendo turgiduli rubent ocelli* C 3.18; *dulcis pueri ebrios ocellos* C 45.11, and especially *nigris ocellis* C 43.2.



**ENGLISH TRANSLATION****Marullo, *Epigrammata* 1.13 *Ad Neaeram***

To Neaera

So do your alluring eyes consume me, so likewise your fair neck, your clear brow, and our two rosy cheeks, Neaera, desired from the moment I see you, that if perennial tears wouldn't dampen me, I would turn into flickering, glowing embers completely. On the other hand, perennial tears so dampen me from the moment I see and desire you, that if your alluring eyes would not consume me, Neaera, nor your fair neck, nor your clear brow and two rosy cheeks, I would turn into drenched water completely. Oh wretched and quickly transitory life!

**FOCUS QUESTIONS*****Epigrammata 1.13 Ad Neaeram***

1. Analyze the structure of Marullo's poem. Note the use of anaphora and parallel constructions.
2. Examine the imagery of fire and water. What do the images represent?
3. How is Marullo's poem an imitation and emulation of Catullus 43?

## SUGGESTED ANSWERS TO FOCUS QUESTIONS

### *Epigrammata* 1.13 *Ad Neaeram*

**1. Analyze the structure of Marullo's poem. Note the use of anaphora and parallel constructions.**

The structure of both poems are noteworthy. In Catullus 43 "the first line and fourth contain a single point, and correspond; the second and third each contain two points and correspond. The lines are shaped in a typical chiasmus. The second part [of the poem] consists of three self-contained lines. The first two are rhetorical questions, and [they are] linked by having *te* (in different cases)" come first. They lead into the real comment on the last line. (J. Ferguson, *Catullus* [Lawrence, KS, 1985], p.125).

Marullo's poem is a rhetorical riddle. Lines 7-12 the are the negative of, and they reverse, the first six verses. The spondaic *sic* each time lend metrical emphasis. Lines 1 and 7 both begin with the adverb *sic*, setting up the result clause that follows, which contains the protasis of a future less vivid condition (*ut ni*, lines 5 and 9). Within the two halves of the poem, the anaphora of *si* occurs three times, mirrored in *ni* three times.

**2. Examine the imagery of fire and water. What do the images represent?**

*tenuis favillas* finds its opposite, or perhaps its complement, in *riguos liquores*, in the parallel-constructed result clauses, lines 6 and 12. The images of fire and water, a Petrarchan conceit, represent passion, and the object of love who is out of reach.

**3. How is Marullo's poem an imitation and emulation of Catullus 43?**

*nigris ocellis* (Catullus 43.2) and the reminiscent *ocelli* (Marullo, *Epigrammata* 1.13.1) link the two poems, which are both catalogs of beauty. Catullus employs the negative, through understatement, to state the positive attributes of a beautiful woman; Marullo's catalog of beauty is in the affirmative, but he does use reversal as a rhetorical device. Both poets use anaphora to emphasize their points. The closing lines or tags are faintly reminiscent, but Catullus is commenting as much on societal values and *urbanitas* as on Lesbia's beauty, whereas Marullo focuses inward, on the inner state of his emotions (cf. *odi et amo*, Catullus 85. This poem and that of Marullo's also are paradoxes.)