

## ESSAY P. 116

Compare and contrast the content, style, and tone of Poems 1 and 49, in which Catullus expresses gratitude to Cornelius Nepos and Cicero.

Support your assertions with references drawn from throughout the poem. All Latin words must be copied or their line numbers provided, AND they must be translated or paraphrased closely enough so that it is clear you understand the Latin. Direct your answer to the question; do not merely summarize the passage. Please write your essay on a separate piece of paper.



### TEACHER BY THE WAY

Students should reread Poem 1 before they compare the two poems. As a prewriting activity, it would be useful for them to make a list of similarities and differences between Poems 1 and 49 before beginning the essay.

Poems 1 and 49 share several common elements. Both express gratitude to individuals who themselves are writers. Poem 1 does so subtly through Catullus's dedicating the *libellus* to Cornelius because Cornelius thought Catullus's *nūgae* were “something,” while the whole point of Poem 49 is to express thanks to Cicero. Both poems portray Catullus as modest. In Poem 1 he refers to his poetry as “trifles” (*nūgās*, line 4) and later describes the book with the self-effacing colloquial expressions *quidquid* and *quālecumque* (lines 8–9), as he modestly asks the Muse to preserve his work for more than one generation (*quālecumque; quod, ō patrōna virgō / plūs ūnō maneat perenne saeclō*, lines 9–10). In Poem 49 he refers to himself as the worst poet of all poets (*pessimus omnium poēta*, lines 5–6). Both poems are characterized by humor. In Poem 1 Catullus describes Nepos's achievement in exaggerated terms; Nepos “alone of the Italians dared to explain the history of the world in three sheets of papyrus” (*cum ausus es ūnus Italōrum / omne aevum tribus explicāre cartīs*, lines 5–6). In Poem 49 Catullus parodies Cicero's style with numerous superlatives (five in the space of seven lines: *disertissime* line 1, *maximās* line 4, *pessimus* lines 5–6, and *optimus*, line 7), so characteristic of Cicero's oratorical speeches, and with his inflated praise of Cicero's rhetorical abilities (*disertissime*, line 1), which he achieves through anaphora of *quot* in lines 2–3.

The poems also exhibit important differences. Poem 1 seems playful while Poem 49 appears ironical, and hence lacking in sincerity. Students may point out, too, that Catullus appears to identify closely with Nepos in Poem 1—both are pioneers who share similar literary values—whereas

Catullus dissociates himself from Cicero in Poem 49. There he sets his vocation as a “poet” against Cicero’s as a “lawyer”; additionally, he uses the superlative antonyms “worst” in reference to himself (lines 5–6) and “best” in reference to Cicero (7), which he combines with the ablative of degree of difference (*tantō . . . quantō*) to create a sense of distance. Finally, Poem 1 indicates the reason for Catullus’s gratitude, while Poem 49 does not.

## SCANSION P. 116

Name the meter and scan the following lines.

The meter is hendecasyllabic.

—    ◡    —    ◡◡—◡—    ◡    —    ×  
 quotque post aliis erunt in annis,  
 —◡—◡◡—◡—    ◡    —    ◡—    ×  
 grātiās tibi maximās Catullus

## ORAL ACTIVITY

The teacher may instruct students after they have scanned the lines above on paper to read these lines aloud, remembering to observe the metrical pattern of the hendecasyllabic meter and to pronounce the elisions correctly (see Appendix B for more information on elisions).

## ENGLISH DERIVATIVES

### Student List:

*patrōnus* – patron, patronage, patronize, padrone

### TEACHER LECTURE NOTES

*patrōnus* – from *pater* = father. Other derivatives from *pater* include padre, paternity, patrician, patrimony, patron, patter, père, patriot, patrilineal, patricide, patriarch, and patriarchal. Note that patriot, patriarch, and patriarchal come to English from the Anglo-French, from Late Latin, from Greek.

- Patter – A variant of *pater*, as in *paternoster*; the word originally meant “to recite quickly and mechanically,” as prayers. The word thus came to include any quick chatter, like a stand-up comic’s routine, or that of a salesman. It can also refer to jargon (cant) spoken by a particular group or class not generally understood by anyone else.
- Patriot and related words refer to one who loves his fatherland (native country).

©2016 Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, Inc. This sample was created  
 www.BOLCHAZY.com  
 This document will expire May 31, 2017.