LIBERALITAS IN LATE REPUBLICAN AND EARLY AUGUSTAN ROMAN POETRY

by

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Abstract

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Liberalitas forms one of the central frameworks for defining social bonds within Roman society, and was part of how Roman poets constructed the world. This is most explicitly evident in the poets’ references to “patrons” and benefactors, but it extends much further. The poets worked within a broad framework of social conventions and expectations which must be understood in order to see how their poetry uses and responds to the concepts associated with liberalitas. Cicero’s de officiis and Seneca’s de beneficiis are therefore useful, as they offer idealised, prescriptive views of liberalitas in Roman society. Many scholars have investigated the relationships between poets and their patrons, including Peter White, Barbara Gold, James Zetzel, and Phebe Lowell Bowditch. I argue that any true understanding of the role of liberalitas in Roman poetry must also comprehend its importance in other areas. This dissertation focuses on the poetry of Catullus, Horace, Propertius, Tibullus, and Virgil in the Eclogues. The introduction addresses traditional liberalitas as defined by Cicero and Seneca in their works on benefits and duties. Chapter one illustrates how Catullus, Horace, and Tibullus display ideals similar to those of Cicero and Seneca and use the conventions of liberalitas for praising and blaming members of their social groups. Chapter two addresses the problems of status raised by liberalitas and investigates the strategies used by Catullus, Horace, Propertius, and Tibullus to
mitigate these problems and further their social, literary, and aesthetic aims. Chapter three demonstrates how the love poets used and redefined the terminology and ideology of *liberalitas* to construct an obligation on the part of their beloveds to reciprocate the gifts given by the poets but reject the gifts given by rival lovers. Finally, Chapter four examines the role of *liberalitas* in formulating and expressing a poetic program in Virgil’s *Eclogues*, which points to its function in mediating the connection between ‘real-life’ political and social concerns and the literary preoccupations of Roman poets. The various applications of this concept demonstrated in these four chapters present the study of *liberalitas* as a useful and productive tool in the investigation of the poetry of this period.
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Table of Contents

Abstract ................................................................. ii
Acknowledgements ...................................................... iv
Table of Contents ....................................................... v
Introduction .............................................................. 1
Chapter 1: Conventions and Expectations ....................... 20
Chapter 2: Redefinition and Rejection ......................... 71
Chapter 3: Elegiac Love and the Failure of Liberalitas .... 140
Chapter 4: Liberalitas and Literary Program ................. 184
Conclusion .............................................................. 221
Bibliography ............................................................. 229
Introduction

In Catullus’ poem 29, a condemnation of the unbearable greed, arrogance, and general degeneracy of Mamurra, and his masters Caesar and Pompey, Catullus uses the phrase *sinistra liberalitas*:

\[
ccone nomine, imperator unice,
fuisti in ultima occidentis insula,
ut ista vestra diffututa mentula
ducenties comesset aut trecenties?

quid est alid sinistra liberalitas? (29.11-15)
\]

This is the only use of the term *liberalitas* in the poetry of Catullus, Horace, Propertius, Tibullus, or Virgil; the concept, however, pervades their poetry. Kenneth Quinn sees an ambiguity here, in that the *sinistra liberalitas* could refer to Mamurra or Caesar: “But is the generosity meant Caesar’s (in letting Mamurra amass such a fortune) or Mamurra’s (in squandering it)?” (Quinn 2007 179). Either reading demonstrates that the application of *liberalitas* is open to abuse; however, the strong association of Caesar with *liberalitas* elsewhere suggests that the phrase should be linked to him. The phrase is a paradox, of course; *liberalitas* is a virtue, and so should not admit the characterization of *sinistra*. As we will see below, Cicero explicitly applies the term *liberalitas* to morally and socially approved instances of generosity, and uses other words to refer to incorrect or harmful giving. The appearance of this paradox in one of Catullus’ invective poems about Caesar demonstrates that the proper conduct of *liberalitas* was an

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1 The word, of course, does not fit into the dactylic hexameter or the elegiac pentameter.

2 Manning points out Cicero’s repeated linking of the term with Caesar in his speeches and letters: “*inter alia* we may cite *Ad Fam.* 11.9.12 and 18; 4.9.4; 7.5.3; 7.7.2; 7.8.1; 7.10.3; 7.17.2 and 3; 9.13.4; *Ad Att.* 9.11 A.3; *Pro Rab. Post.* 41; *Pro Lig.* 6; 23;31; *Pro Marcello* 16” (76 n.4). Sallust also highlights the quality of generosity in his summing up of Caesar’s character (*Cat.* 54) and uses *liberalitas* itself in connection with Caesar elsewhere (*Cat.* 49.3; 52.11-12).
important element of the Roman statesman’s behaviour; and it shows us a poet making a judgement about the degree to which an individual has succeeded or failed in the demonstration of this virtue. In particular, Caesar was famous for the related virtues of generosity and clemency, and Catullus’ attack on his generosity is therefore especially pointed, bringing into question one of the fundamental ways that Caesar had built up a network of friends, allies, and dependants.

This dissertation will examine the ways in which liberalitas and its related concepts function in the poetry of the late Republic and early Augustan period. This examination casts new light on individual poems from this period, and continues the ongoing expansion of our understanding of the interaction of poets with the larger Roman community of which they formed a part. All poets rely upon, and exploit, both the cultural and the literary expectations of their audience. In this study, I am interested in the ways in which poets could, and did, exploit the cultural expectations surrounding liberalitas.

Poetic negotiations of the concept of liberalitas are situated within the wider context of Roman society. In order to understand fully how each poet employs and manipulates the concept, it is therefore necessary to understand contemporary Roman views on the subject: what is liberalitas? How, why, and by whom should it be exercised, and what concerns surround it? What, in other words, was the ideal expression of liberalitas in late Republican Rome? An additional question, of course, is how actual historical instances of liberalitas compared to this

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1 Ian M. Le M. Du Quesnay (1981) clearly states the necessity of such understanding: “A reader can properly make sense of a poem only if he is as familiar with [the] paralinguistic codes as with the rules and conventions of the language in which it is written” (30).

4 Here again I am indebted to Du Quesnay’s formulation of this concept (though he is particularly concerned with generic conventions in the Eclogues): “Vergil, like any other speaker or writer, is able to exploit the expectations of his audience about what sort of things may be appropriately said in such circumstances in order to communicate economically with them and, to some extent, he relies upon their sharing with him a common framework of expectations in order to communicate at all” (1981 53).
ideal. This is harder to recover, since it is obscured by the generally prescriptive nature of the
texts discussing such interactions, but it is instructive to compare the idealised prescriptive
accounts of liberalitas with some of the individualised descriptions of particular instances. In
this introduction I will first give a basic working definition of liberalitas and a brief
anthropological background for the concepts of gift-exchange and generosity; I will then attempt
to establish one set of contemporary standards against which the poetry of the late Republic and
eyearly Augustan period can be viewed, using Cicero and Seneca to represent the philosophical
ideals of the elite Roman society of the period.5

The word liberalitas is derived from liberalis, which in origin meant simply “of or
relating to free men,” and then by extension “worthy or typical of a free man” (OLD s.v.
liberalitas 1, 2). This meaning is never completely lost, and can be exploited or developed by
authors when desired, both in this form and in words derived from it.6 However, it developed the
further, related meaning of “Free in giving, munificent, generous” (s.v. 5).7 It is this sense that
leads to the primary meanings of liberalitas: “Generosity, nobility, kindliness, magnanimity”
and “Munificence, open-handedness, liberality” (s.v. 1, 2). The word can also describe the
actions involved in such generosity: “An instance of generosity, a gift, donation, contribution”
(s.v. 3). In a Roman aristocratic context, liberalitas is the carefully considered exchange of gifts
and services which forms a bond of gratitude between the two parties in the exchange.

5 As I will discuss more fully later, Cicero and Seneca are themselves trying to establish ideals of
behaviour, rather than presenting a picture of how gift exchange and generosity actually functioned at the various
levels of Roman society in their time.

6 “It was well-known in Rome that liberalis was derived from liber in the same way that consularis was
derived from consul. Seneca showed his knowledge of this derivation when he wrote that it was so-called non quia
liberis debetur, sed quia a libero animo proficiscitur (Beat. Vit. 24.3)” (Manning 76).

7 This connection between the attributes of a free man and the ability and desire to confer benefits is an
important factor in the attention paid to the virtue of liberalitas by Roman moralists. If liberalitas characterises a
free man, then the definition of liberalitas and its correct deployment are issues of primary concern to Roman
citizens, who are obsessed with boundaries, categorisation, and hierarchy. We will see below (pg. 16) that the issue
of a slave’s ability to be liberalis is of concern to Seneca, for instance.
Gift-exchange, generosity, and gratitude have been important topics in both anthropology and sociology almost since the beginning of both disciplines. As a fundamental social structure of many non-industrial societies, and as a recurring feature of modern culture, gift-exchange has been the focus of several influential social theories. The first substantial study of gift-exchange, entitled *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, was published in 1922 by B. Malinowski, a pioneer of anthropological field-work. His study of the Kula ritual, “the pattern of ceremonial gift exchange among the population of the Trobriand archipelago,” led him to propose a “continuum of feelings involved in gift giving” ranging from pure altruism to barter and profit, with most gift giving lying somewhere in between, and “more or less equivalent reciprocity, attended by clear expectations of returns” as the general rule underlying gift-exchange (Komter 2005 108).

Building on Malinowski’s studies, Marcel Mauss wrote his seminal work *The Gift* in 1923, using ethnographical and literary evidence to look for basic patterns and forms of giving; he delineates “the three obligations: giving, receiving, repaying” which are evident in the societies he studies in different forms (37). He also drew direct connections between the practices of gift-exchange in archaic societies and the meaning and practice of gift-giving in modern societies (63). He argued that gift-exchange is “the mechanism that reconciles individual interests and the creation of a social system” (Komter 2005 109). He believed that all giving was based on the principle of *do ut des*, and that there is no purely altruistic gift, since every gift involves self-interest; in his view, “gift exchange is at the basis of a system of mutual obligations between people and, as such, functions as the moral cement of human society and culture” (Komter 2005 109).

Continuing to build on these ideas a few decades later, C. Lévi-Strauss declared the principle of reciprocity to be “a social structure determining our values, feelings, and actions”, and argued that it applies not only “to so-called primitive societies but also applies to Western society” (Komter 2005 109). He stressed the symbolic value of gifts: they are “vehicles and instruments
for realities of another order: influence, power, sympathy, status, emotion” (Lévi-Strauss in Komter 1996 19). This symbolic value gives interactions involving gifts a significance in archaic societies that transcends the practical or economic importance of the transaction: “Exchange does not bring a tangible result as is the case in the commercial transactions in our society. ... Goods are not only economic commodities but vehicles and instruments for realities of another order: influence, power, sympathy, status, emotion; and the skilful game of exchange consists of a complex totality of maneuvers, conscious or unconscious, in order to gain security and to fortify one’s self against risks incurred through alliances and rivalry” (Lévi-Strauss in Komter 1996 19). Following Lévi-Strauss’s work, Sahlins looked at “generalized exchange”, which involves more than two partners. He distinguished three types: “generalized”, “balanced”, and “negative” reciprocity, involving respectively altruistic motives and indefinite returns, emotional distance and “direct and equivalent exchange without much delay”, and unsociable emotions and the desire to “get something for nothing” (Komter 2005 110). These extremely influential scholars emphasised the “cultural significance of gift giving ... [it] creates the obligation to give in return and underlies the foundation of a shared culture” (Komter 1996 5).

What is important for my purposes in these authors, and in the work that has been done in the second half of the twentieth century and beyond in both the anthropology and sociology of the gift, is the recognition that gift-exchange, within any society, is not accidental, haphazard, or determined only by the individual. There are rules governing the giving and receiving of gifts and favours, and the expression of gratitude or the repayment of those gifts. These rules may be expressed as conventions, manners, taboos, laws, or philosophical ideals, and they may be applied differently to different groups or classes within the society. The existence of these rules, however, and the role they play in determining social and political interactions within the society, must be recognised and understood when we look at any individual instance of giving or
receiving. We must not examine such instances in isolation, but rather against the background of the societal expectations surrounding them, and as part of a larger pattern of behaviour.

The philosophical concept of *liberalitas* in Roman society did not develop on its own; there was extensive discussion of the virtue of generosity in Greek philosophical literature as well. Aristotle’s treatment of the subject in the *Nicomachean Ethics* is perhaps the best known (4.1 1119b-1122a). He uses the word ἐλευθεριότης to describe the virtue of generosity, and calls a liberal man ἐλευθεριος. The association between this virtue and freedom is parallel to the derivation of *liberalitas*, and the terms connote a similar range of ideas about generosity, proper use of money, and actions appropriate to a free man. Aristotle’s discussion centres on defining the negative extremes (prodigality and meanness) and outlining the conditions under which giving and spending money can be considered true liberality (the desired mean between those extremes). This formulation of a virtue as the mean between two undesirable extremes is, of course, Aristotle’s regular method in this work. Aristotle’s conclusions are similar to those outlined in Cicero’s *De officiis* and Seneca’s *De beneficiis*, which are the clearest Roman discussions of ideal *liberalitas*. These authors, however, elaborate much more on the specifically Roman context of the actions they describe. My concern in this project is with this Roman engagement with the ideals of *liberalitas*, and the poetic manifestations of this engagement. I will therefore use as my base texts the Latin discussions of the subject, and will not focus on elaborating the differences between the Roman and Greek philosophical treatments.

Much work has been done on the great importance of gift exchange (*beneficia*) and patronage in the society and politics of Rome. The virtue of *liberalitas* itself, and its relevance to

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8 This is the point stressed by Malinowski: all gifts must be examined within “the whole system of gifts, duties, and mutual benefits exchanged” between members of a family or social unit (Malinowski in Komter 1996 16).
the changing world of the late Republic, is examined in C.E. Manning 1985. Much of the work done on gift-exchange and its manifestations at Rome has focussed on the institution of patronage (*clientela or amicitia*). P.A. Brunt 1965 is foundational, and there is also a detailed examination of the institution of *clientela*, and the use of the terms *patronus* and *cliens* in relation to it, in P.A. Brunt 1988. He distinguishes between *clientela* and *amicitia*, though he says the latter can be used to “veil the real dependence of one party on the other” (386), and stresses that “men of some social standing resented the appellation of client, which implied a subordination incompatible with their sense of their own dignity” (386). He also underlines the fact that *clientela* produced specific obligations on both sides, which could even have the force of law; this was not true of *amicitia*, or looser relationships produced by various manifestations of *liberalitas* (395). The meaning of *amicitia* and the connection between friendship and patronage are explored by David Konstan 1995 and 1997. Important works of the last three decades include Richard Saller 1982 and Andrew Wallace-Hadrill 1989, as well as Susanne Dixon 1993. The intersection between *liberalitas* and Roman literature has been examined in terms of patronage by Barbara Gold 1982 and 1987. Of particular importance for my work in the latter collection are J. E. G Zetzel and T.P. Wiseman’s articles. Another work, which addresses the problematic issue of “how far patronage could in the Roman, and particularly in the Augustan, world carry with it the capacity to direct or at least to influence the composition of poems” (1), is Nicholas Horsfall 1981. Important work has also been done on *liberalitas* and patronage in early Imperial poetry, by Peter White 1978 and 1993, and by Richard Saller 1983. Many of these works focus on re-constructing the realities of the financial (or other) relationships between the poets of the late Republic and their patrons, and on determining the extent to which the concerns of the patrons affected the genre and subject matter of the poets they favoured. This is useful background for my work; however, my interest is not in attempting
One should not try to draw precise historical facts from the relationships suggested by the poetry. Whatever the real Maecenas did for the real people Horace, Virgil, and Propertius need not be connected in any very clear way to what they wrote about him. He is an element in poetry, and as such is subject to the same creative transformations that anything else in poetry is. While poems are themselves historical facts, they do not convey and normally do not even wish to convey precise historical information. (98)

This does not mean, however, that I am not concerned with the historical context of the poetry, but that I will not be trying to recreate the specifics of the historical events connected to the poems, and instead will be addressing the relevance of the societal values and the concerns and perceptions of the Roman elite during the late Republic and Augustan period to the poetry of that time, while recognising the importance of specific historical events where appropriate.

In particular, rather than focussing on the aspect of liberalitas connected to the patronage of poets, I am more concerned with examining the ways that the more general structures of liberalitas pervade the poetry of this period. In other words, while I do look at some aspects of the patron/poet relationship, especially in chapter one, I am widening my approach to encompass multiple manifestations of liberalitas, not just those between the poet and his patron. I am particularly concerned with the ways the poets use the framework of liberalitas to produce meaning in their poetry, and have therefore not focussed on the specifics of the actual exchanges between poet and patron, nor directly on the question of the patron’s ability to influence the subjects of the poets’ writing. Most closely connected to my work is Phebe Lowell Bowditch 2001. While this, too, focusses on the relationship between Horace and Maecenas, Bowditch’s
use of the anthropological framing of gift-exchange, and her exploration of the ramifications of this economy on multiple aspects of Horace’s work, have pointed the way towards a wider examination of the importance of the conceptual framework of gift-giving and *liberalitas* for the poetry of this period. I follow Bowditch in seeing Augustan poetry as embedded in the historical circumstances of its composition, in particular with relation to *liberalitas*:

Social relations of exchange provided more than a context for the production of verse; they also informed a shared system of rhetorical figures through which poets negotiated both their own interests and those of their varied audiences ... these rhetorical negotiations ... are embedded within, and partly determined by, material and discursive practices outside of the literary text. (2-3)

Bowditch focusses on “the triangular relationship of poet, patron, and “public” audience [that] must be interpreted in the social context of ancient Rome, where the exchange of goods and services provided for the ideological cohesion of a community” (3); using this approach to the intersection of anthropological ideas of gift exchange and the literary concerns of poetry, I extend my discussion to other figures that participate in some way in the exchange of *liberalitas*, and also of course to poets other than Horace. My approach differs, however, in that I focus not on the link between gifts of poetry and sacrifice (Bowditch 7), but on the ways in which a shared cultural understanding of the rules and conventions of gift-exchange, many of which have been elucidated for us by anthropological scholarship, affected the creation of meaning within the poetry that I examine. Thus, like Bowditch, I use the work of Seneca and Cicero to help elucidate the “codes and conventions [that] governed the behavior of those giving and receiving benefactions” (Bowditch 15); and because my focus is not on the patron/poet relationship, the fact that these texts “deal with the broader social phenomenon of liberality or benefaction, of which literary patronage is really a subset” (Bowditch 15) is helpful rather than restrictive.
The philosophical works by Cicero and Seneca give advice on how to live the good and happy life. A summary of the two authors’ arguments will provide a useful background against which the attitudes and the expectations (explicit and implicit) about the behaviour of others expressed by the poets can be judged. Both Cicero and Seneca consider *liberalitas* to be one of the essential mechanisms for creating and maintaining community and the bonds between individuals, and therefore the cohesion of the state. It is, however, important to remember that these works are protreptic rather than descriptive, so they provide an idealised view of the subject, one that aims to shape the actions of the reader. I have turned to these prose works for a framework for my discussion of *liberalitas* because they give a relatively clear picture of many aspects of the practice of gift-exchange as viewed by approximate contemporaries of the poets I am examining. In many ways, however, the information given by these texts is not essential to my argument; the concern about gifts, obligation, gratitude, and dependence are in the poems themselves, regardless of what is said by Cicero and Seneca. The poets I am discussing shared an educational and literary culture with Cicero and Seneca, which helped some of them to rise in elite society, and which tended to mask social difference within the context of literary production. These poets are certainly not engaging explicitly in a dialogue with the writings of Cicero, for instance, even if some of the poems (notably the *Satires* and *Epistles* of Horace) may be reacting, in part, to the same Greek philosophical background as informs his writing. In other words, my use of the philosophical texts is a convenience for the structuring and clarifying of my arguments; they give a necessary overview of the issues and the framework of the concept, but are not descriptive of any individual poem or poet.

For Cicero, *liberalitas* is “the disposition from which the act of conferring a *beneficium* is derived” (Manning 73). In the *De officiis* he defines it as a subset of the division of duty that is concerned with the maintenance of the bonds of society; the other subset of this division is
iustitia, which Cicero says is closely connected to liberalitas:

de tribus autem reliquis latissime patet ea ratio, qua societas hominum inter ipsos et vitae quasi communitas continetur; cuius partes duae, iustitia, in qua virtutis est splendor maximus, ex qua viri boni nominantur, et huic coniuncta beneficentia, quam eandem vel benignitatem vel liberalitatem appellari licet. (1.7.20)

In this definition Cicero makes it clear that he uses beneficentia, benignitas, and liberalitas as synonyms. Liberalitas itself is of two kinds, giving and giving in return; the first is optional, the second required (1.15.48). It can consist either of kind actions or of money, and can comprise help to an individual or to the state (2.21.72). Cicero also contrasts those who are prodigi with those who are truly liberales; both give gifts, but only those who are liberales do so in the proper manner (2.16.55). This consists of choosing the recipient wisely, preferring to give acts of kindness rather than money, and exercising moderation in giving money. Specifically, one must carefully weigh the worthiness of a potential recipient of beneficia: “in beneficentia dilectus esset dignitatis; in quo et mores eius erunt spectandi, in quem beneficium conferetur, et animus erga nos et communitas ac societas vitae et ad nostras utilitates officia ante collata” (1.14.45). A recipient should be the more favoured the more he displays the finer virtues: modestia, temperantia, and iustitia (1.15.46). These virtues are crucial in attracting the affection and services of others (2.5.17). In choosing recipients of beneficia, says Cicero, one looks either at a person’s character or his circumstances; people like to say that they take only the person’s character into consideration, not his circumstances, but in reality, most people would rather gain the gratitude of a rich or powerful man (2.20.69). However, liberalitas ought to be exercised with judgement: one should give to those who need it most, as long as they are not undeserving (2.20.62), and one should consider gratitude itself the best repayment, which is more likely to come from a poor man (2.20.69).
Cicero also prescribes what the content of *liberalitas* should be. Of the two types of *liberalitas*, that consisting of *opera* and that consisting of *pecunia*, he says service is nobler than money because it comes out of one’s *virtus*, ‘strength’, rather than from one’s *arca*, ‘safe’ (2.15.52). Giving money is often degrading to the giver and corrupting to the recipient (2.15.53), though it can sometimes be the right object of liberality, when it is given in moderation to *idoneis hominibus indigentibus* (2.15.54). The right use of money in *liberalitas* involves ransoming captives, assuming the debts of friends, providing dowries, and assisting friends in acquiring or increasing property (2.16.55). Those who are *prodigi* (and not properly *liberales*) waste money on games, shows, public banquets, and doles, which are not lasting, bring no glory, and are motivated by self-interest, not generosity (2.16.55). However, Cicero here makes a concession to practical realities at Rome: he says that lavish games are expected of *aediles*, and he lists various good men who have put such games on in the past (2.16.57). Cicero concludes that although the system of lavish public expenditure is wrong, it is necessary, and men of right judgement, to avoid the appearance of penuriousness, must do what is expected of them even if they disapprove, but must stay within their means. This is particularly laudable if they use gifts to the people as a means to an honourable end that benefits the state (2.17.58-60).

Cicero most approves of *liberalitas* by means of personal service, however – in particular, the use of oratorical or legal skills on behalf of friends or the state (2.18.65-66). Such service consists of acting as an advocate (though Cicero bewails the degradation of the legal profession in the unrest of Caesar’s dictatorship and the aftermath of his assassination), giving speeches, canvassing, bearing witness for friends, and soliciting the aid of others as advocates on
behalf of one’s friends (2.19.67). The more one practises liberalitas by means of personal services the more helpers in doing kindness one acquires and the more training in doing kindness one receives. This is in contrast to liberalitas with money, which exhausts the source of liberality, so that the more people one helps with money, the fewer one can help (2.19.52-53).

There is one more element necessary for giving if it is to be considered true liberalitas, according to Cicero. It is important that acts of kindness, whether by money or by service, should not harm anyone, including the one performing the act: “videndum est enim, primum ne obsit benignitas et iis ipsis, quibus beneigne videbitur fieri, et ceteris” (1.14.42). Moderation is necessary: a gift should not be beyond the resources of the giver (1.14.42). If benignitas exceeds the means of the giver it injures his next of kin and encourages plundering and misappropriation of property (1.14.44). As well, when benefiting the state, one must be careful not to harm individuals; above all, private property must be safeguarded, both that of others and one’s own (2.21.73). The conservation of private property was a major concern for members of the elite at this period in Roman history, and Cicero’s emphasis on this aspect of liberalitas comes both from his own interest in maintaining the status quo and his position as a landowner, and from the on-going conflict in the late Republic between conservative and populist politicians over issues such as land redistribution and debt cancellation.

In general, Seneca agrees with and expands on Cicero’s views of liberalitas, although his focus is often somewhat different. The increasing concentration of the power to confer benefits in the person of the emperor, coupled with the growing difficulty of either reciprocating liberalitas or refusing it (when it was offered by the emperor), led to a shift in the perception of the virtue itself. Liberalitas no longer required the same delicate handling and negotiation to disguise or mitigate the power imbalance implicit in its exercise; since the emperor was “now accepted as a being of superior status to senators, they were appropriate recipients of his
“liberalitas” (Manning 81). Seneca’s primary concern, therefore, is to define the correct form of liberalitas, and the duties and appropriate behaviour associated with both the giver and recipient, in contrast to Cicero’s focus on the role of liberalitas in the life of a Roman magistrate, and the “reconciliation of Stoic theory with the political practice of the Roman state” (Manning 74). Like Cicero, Seneca considers exchanging gifts and favours to be a very important part of human society: at the beginning of his De beneficiis he states that “nihil propemodum indignius ... quam quod beneficia nec dare scimus nec accipere” (1.1.1). He even connects human gratitude with the interactions between the gods and men, and suggests that the exercise of liberalitas among men teaches them proper gratitude to the gods: “quicumque ergo gratos esse docet, et hominum causam agit et deorum, quibus nullius rei indigentibus, positis extra desiderium referre nihil minus gratiam possimus” (2.30.2). He also stresses that giving that is not based on rational thought and decision-making is not liberalitas (1.2.1), and so men must know the rules governing the proper conduct of the exchange of benefits: “danda lex vitae, ne sub specie benignitatis inconsulta facilitas placeat” (1.4.2). Seneca specifically emphasises the intention of the giver: it is the desire to give something, not the thing itself, that is the benefit, and so one must in turn repay not the thing but the intention, the mental and emotional state that makes the act liberalitas (1.5.1-6.1). Real benefits, says Seneca, are those that give pleasure because of the identity of the giver, not for what they are in themselves (1.15.4); he is therefore concerned not only about how to choose a recipient but about how to determine from whom one should accept benefits. One should not accept them from just anybody, and must carefully choose those to whom one will owe something (2.18.3). Gifts that come from people whose judgement one deplores are not beneficia and impose no obligation (1.15.6). Seneca is very aware of the potential problems associated with giving or receiving gifts; he says that gifts from a superior only please when they are given with grace and gentleness, with no arrogance or pride (2.13.2).
The arrogant and hateful way some men bestow gifts turns them into a harm, not a benefit (2.9.2). Unfortunately, sometimes it is impossible to refuse a benefit, however much one disapproves of the giver; tyrants can give gifts that cannot be refused, but then that gift is not actually a benefit and imposes no obligation (2.18.6-7).

On the subject of choosing potential recipients of *liberalitas*, Seneca is as emphatic as Cicero about the need for moderation, care, and selectivity. The qualities to be looked for in an ideal recipient are that he is a “virum integrum, simplicem, memorem, gratum, alieni abstinentem, sui non averse tenacem, benevolum” (4.11.2). If one is selective in choosing the recipients of one’s benevolence one will increase its value, even if the gift itself is not unique (1.14.1); although Seneca repeatedly stresses that generosity is good for its own sake (4.11.1), he nonetheless frequently seems interested in the potential rewards of giving, and so gives advice about how to maximise the gratitude felt by the recipient. One should give rare or timely gifts (1.11.5), and the best are those that will last (“ut quam minime mortale munus sit”), since they will inspire more lasting gratitude by being constantly around as a reminder (1.12.1). An indication of his more practical (even perhaps cynical) approach is the analogy he uses to describe the effort to make each recipient feel particularly honoured: “quemadmodum meretrix ita inter multos se dividet, ut nemo non aliquod signum familiaris animi ferat, ita qui beneficia sua amabilia esse vult, excogitet, quomodo et multi obligentur et tamen singuli habeant aliquid, quo se ceteris praefertant” (1.14.4). However, although one wishes to engender gratitude in those to whom one gives, it is nonetheless important not to give anything that will harm the recipient, even if he himself asks for it: “sunt quaedam noctitura inpetrantibus, quae non dare sed negare beneficium est; aestimabimus itaque utilitatem potius quam voluptatem petentium” (2.14.1). It is *saeva bonitas*, not *liberalitas*, to give in to someone begging for a dangerous favour, for example, money that will be given to an *adultera* or used to aid a crime (2.14.3). One should
make sure, as well, that what is given is appropriate to both giver and recipient in size, importance, and value (2.15.1). In particular, benefits that are neither necessary nor useful (according to the categories defined by Seneca) should be given in moderation, since they tend to make people *delicatos* when given in abundance (1.11.5).

There are a few other important considerations in practising *liberalitas*, according to Seneca. One must give *beneficia* promptly, without hesitation, since no gratitude is felt for a gift that seems to be given reluctantly (2.1.1). In fact, a friend should be prevented from having to ask for a favour by being given what he wants before he requests it (2.2.1). Although giving a *beneficium* is always honourable, it may sometimes be less desirable to be seen to receive it; therefore, while those benefits that bestow honour or are glorious should be given openly and publicly, those that aid an infirmity or rescue someone from poverty or disgrace should be given in private (2.9.2). Sometimes benefits should even be given secretly or anonymously (2.10.1).

Finally, there is the issue of who is able to confer a benefit and, in doing so, be seen to be practising *liberalitas*. Seneca argues, at some length, that *liberalitas* is not, in fact, the attribute of free men exclusively, but that a slave is also able to give a benefit (3.18.1ff.). It is clear in the course of his argument that the commonplace view was that a slave could not be liberal, because *liberalitas* depends on voluntary giving and a slave is always constrained in his actions and has no free choice. Seneca contends that when a slave does something that he is not constrained to do – that is, performs an action beyond what is required by his duty or commanded by his master – he is acting in a voluntary manner, and so can confer a benefit. As we shall see, however, the standard assumption that freedom is a necessary component of *liberalitas* becomes particularly important when poets address the issue of patronage and their relationships with those of higher social rank or greater wealth. To be able to give benefits themselves, as well as receive them, is essential to their characterisation of these relationships as between a free man and his friends,
not a dependant and his master.

Cicero and Seneca approach the question of *liberalitas* in similar ways, but there are some differences in the emphasis they place on certain aspects of the problem. While Cicero concentrates on the ways in which *liberalitas*, or its misapplication, can affect the state and human society, Seneca particularly focuses on the intention of the giver. Both are aware of the potential for abuse that exists within the unequal relationship established by *liberalitas*, but Seneca expands much further on this point, examining such things as the inability to refuse favours from powerful people (2.18.6-7). While both authors argue for idealistic, philosophically based approaches to giving, they each also acknowledge that Roman society does not always allow this, and concede that it is sometimes necessary to allow pragmatic concerns to influence the exercise of *liberalitas*. For Cicero, giving and receiving and the carefully regulated exchange of services connect and negotiate the tension between his two most important, but potentially contradictory, ideals: on the one hand, safeguarding private property and on the other, placing the interests of the Republic and the community first (Feuvrier-Prévotat 264). For Seneca, *liberalitas* forms the basis of correct human behaviour, and is an indispensable element of proper interaction between good men. The importance of *liberalitas* for both writers is that it is an essential component of justice and the crucial Roman virtue *fides* (Feuvrier-Prévotat 266).

For the purposes of this dissertation, I will be limiting my discussion to non-epic Roman poetry from approximately 54 BC to approximately 13 BC, that is, from the date of Catullus’ poems to the last works of Horace. My focus will be on Catullus, Horace, Propertius, Tibullus, and Virgil, though I will look at material from other authors when it is relevant to my argument. This reflects my concern with the way in which the shorter and lesser genres of poetry of this period both support and subvert contemporary ideologies and social expectations; the lyric and elegiac metres also conventionally permit more explicit self-representation. The poets I will be
considering are distinguished by an engagement with, I believe, contemporary ‘real life’ in Rome that is much more tangible than that found in surviving epic or theatre. The fact that lyric and elegiac poems almost always have addressees, and are at least notionally in a dialogue with ‘real’ Romans and contemporaries, also makes them particularly valuable for this study. These poets are all explicitly concerned with status and related issues, and their works, when taken together, constitute a singularly valuable body of evidence for a period of immense social change. Lyric and elegiac poetry in this period simply addresses these issues more directly and more often than other genres.

Chapter one focusses on poetic manifestations of the conventions and expectations that govern the practice of liberalitas at Rome, using Cicero and Seneca’s codification of these conventions as a point of comparison. The discussion illustrates the ways in which Catullus, Horace, and Tibullus display ideals similar to those of Cicero and Seneca and use the conventions of liberalitas for praising and blaming members of their social groups. Chapter two then addresses the problems of status and hierarchy raised by the exercise of liberalitas, as shaped by these conventions, and investigates the strategies used by Catullus, Horace, Propertius, and Tibullus to mitigate or resolve these problems. Chapter three demonstrates how Catullus and the elegists used and redefined the terminology and ideology of liberalitas to construct an obligation on the part of their beloveds to reciprocate the gifts given by the poets but reject the gifts given by rival lovers. Chapter four examines the use of the vocabulary of liberalitas in an aesthetic context – specifically, the role of liberalitas in formulating and expressing a poetic program in Virgil’s Eclogues. Virgil’s use of liberalitas points to its function in mediating the connection between ‘real-life’ political and social concerns and the literary problems and preoccupations of Roman poets. The various applications of this concept demonstrated in these four chapters present the study of liberalitas as a useful and productive
tool in the investigation of the poetry of this period.
Chapter 1: Conventions and Expectations

With the basic definition of *liberalitas* established in the introduction, in this chapter I will demonstrate the ways in which poets of the period expressed some of the same ideals in their poetry or functioned within the expectations and basic framework described by Cicero and Seneca. I will argue that the poets of this period display the same fundamental assumptions and expectations regarding *liberalitas* as do other members of elite Roman society of the period, and in fact many of the anxieties and concerns that emerge in their poetry come out of the complexity of the concept of *liberalitas* and its applicability to the interactions of the Roman elite. Understanding the terms of reference, concerns, and problems of the world around the poets is crucial to understanding their poetry:

The poets themselves underline the need to see their situation in terms of a broader social context. ... patronage was not a sharply defined relationship with a predictable set of services exchanged between men of a given social distance. Rather, we are dealing with a varied, ill-defined and unpredictable set of exchanges unified by reference to values deeply embedded in Roman ideology. It may emerge that the anxiety of the poets to integrate their own activity within this Roman value system and legitimate the ambiguous figure of the poet is more revealing than the connections with specific social practices. (Wallace-Hadrill 11).

While they may at times consciously subvert or react against some of the specific manifestations of *liberalitas* as expressed in their contemporary society, the poets nonetheless function within the same basic framework as those around them, and expect their readers to do the same.

At this point it is useful to reiterate that in their works both Cicero and Seneca are attempting to define and reinforce what they see as normative, ideal values and societal
structures. They cannot be assumed to be describing the actual operation of gift exchange within Roman society, nor even the attitudes of the majority of participants in that society. Manning points out that “a huge chasm yawned between the ideal liberalitas of the philosophers and the actual practice of it in this period [the late Republic], practice which fell short precisely in those particulars on which the philosophers laid stress” (77). As we will see in our examination of the poetry of this period, the relationships and dynamics of liberalitas were far more complex and open to conflict and multiple interpretations than either of the philosophers Cicero or Seneca admits. Even within their own texts, their delicate negotiations of status and their own position are evident, most obviously in Seneca’s discussions of the role of the emperor in liberalitas, but also in such things as Cicero’s emphasis on giving services rather than money, and the honourable nature of oratory and legal advice. Nevertheless, I think we can see these works as built upon a reasonably mainstream view of the ideals of Roman elite social and political interaction, and so they are valuable in giving us one set of standards against which we can compare the treatment and use of liberalitas in the poetry of the end of the Republic and the early Augustan period. The ways in which the poets under examination both conform to and diverge from the strictures laid out by Cicero and Seneca help to clarify the extent to which these poets were implicated in the social and power structures of Roman elite society, and how greatly, if at all, they reacted against or manipulated societal norms.

The poets of the late Republic and early Augustan period, like both Cicero and Seneca, considered liberalitas to play an important role in creating and maintaining relationships. Among the poetry to be examined in this study (notably that by Catullus, Virgil, Propertius, Tibullus, and Horace), I will concentrate mainly on Horace’s poetry in this chapter, because his work, for reasons of both genre and his own personal situation, is the most explicitly concerned with the central issues of liberalitas. It is also less directly focused on rejecting traditional Roman elite
values than that of Catullus or the elegists, and so, unsurprisingly, contains many of the most obvious examples of correspondence between the values expressed by the poet and those endorsed by the philosophers. Horace writes about many of the same concerns as Cicero and Seneca do, in particular, the importance of moderation and care in giving, the proper selection of a recipient of *liberalitas*, and the need to balance suitable expressions of gratitude with independence and self-respect. Two examples from Catullus and Tibullus will serve as comparisons.

I will begin by discussing several of Horace’s *Satires* and *Epistles* (*Sat.* 1.1, 1.2, 2.5; *Epist.* 1.17, 1.18, 1.7, 1.5). These poems, although they fall at either end of his poetic career, demonstrate many similarities in terms of genre and of concern for status and personal relationships. The satirical and epistolary genres are more suitable for philosophical or ethical discussions than the lyric, and arguably allow more direct and realistic references to both the ideals and the flaws of contemporary society. Then I will turn to examine one epode and one ode (*Ep.* 3; *Odes* 3.16), to demonstrate how Horace handles these issues in genres that do not lend themselves so naturally to such apparently explicit discussions. Here we can see him enacting in lyric the strictures he expresses in the *Satires* and *Epistles*.

Lastly, two poems not by Horace, Catullus 49 and Tibullus 1.7, will demonstrate that, as anti-establishment as the stances of these poets may ostensibly be, they are nonetheless fully aware of the conventions of *liberalitas*, and are able to employ them for their own purposes. Also evident in these two poems is the changing relationship between the poet and other members of the Roman elite. Catullus’ presentation of his relationship with Cicero is a product of the same basic understanding of *liberalitas* as is Tibullus’ positioning of himself and Messalla; however, the degree to which each poet is willing to declare his gratitude and demonstrate his obligation differs. This contrast helps to illuminate Horace’s delicate negotiation
of the relationship between himself and Maecenas in the poems examined earlier.

To begin, therefore, let us turn to some of Horace’s most explicit discussions of *liberalitas* and its problems, in satires 1.1 and 1.2. In keeping with his general philosophical and poetic stance, one of the main concerns in these pieces is moderation in one’s approach to wealth and material goods, and the possible negative results of the two extremes of displaying either too much or too little *liberalitas*: avarice and prodigality. Condemnation of these extremes is the major theme of poems 1.1 and 1.2. The first is part of the larger vice of excessive love of money, and is fairly straightforward since it comprises simply too little or no willingness to give to others. Avarice was a favourite target of philosophers and comic writers, and Horace uses many of the conventional images to point out the absurdity of miserly greed, such as the miser brooding over his treasure, unwilling to touch it and treating it as if it were valuable in itself, instead of for what it can purchase:

congestis undique saccis
indormis inhians et tamquam parcere sacris
cogeris aut pictis tamquam gaudere tabellis.
nescis quo valeat nummus, quem praebeat usum? (1.1.70-73)

Another illustration of the foolishness of avarice is the pain and fear, rather than comfort and security, that comes with wealth: “an vigilare metu exanimem, noctesque diesque / formidare malos fures, incendia, servos, / ne te compilent fugientes, hoc iuvat?” (1.1.76-78). These are.

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1 This division of the vices concerning the use of money is already found in Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*: “περὶ δὲ δόσιν χρημάτων καὶ λήψιν μεσότης μὲν ἐλευθερίοτης, ύπερβολὴ δὲ καὶ ἐλλειψις ἀσωτία καὶ ἀνελευθερία. ἐναντίως δὲ ἐν αὐταῖς ύπερβάλλοντι καὶ ἐλλείπουσιν ὁ μὲν γὰρ ἀσωτός ἐν μὲν προέστη ύπερβάλλει ἐν δὲ λήψει ἐλλείπει, ὁ δὲ ἀνελευθερὸς ἐν μὲν λήψει ύπερβαλλεῖ ἐν δὲ προέστη ἐλλείπει” (*EN* 2.7 1107b9).

2 This image also recalls Tantalus, surrounded by water and food but unable to slake his thirst or hunger. The connection between Tantalus and misers was also made by Teles and Lucian (Brown 95).
The exhortation not to hoard money but to use it to buy the basic necessities of life (Sat. 1.1.73-75) also suggests the “Epicurean requirements for the avoidance of bodily pain . . . which came into the category of natural and necessary desires” (Brown 96); cf Lucretius 2.16ff.

Cicero considers liberalitas one of the fundamental virtues of society, which contributes to the cohesion of the community: “naturam debemus ducem sequi, communes utilitates in medium afferre mutatione officiorum, dando accipiendo, tum artibus, tum opera, tum facultatibus devincire hominum inter homines societatem” (Off. 1.7.22).
absence of *liberalitas*. This is the view found in Cicero (*Off.* 1.7.20), and Seneca (*Ben.* 2.30.2), who both believe it to be one of the basic bonds of society. It is for this reason that they, and Horace, attach such importance to the proper use of gifts and services, and are so concerned about abuses of *liberalitas*.

Satire 1.2 also demonstrates Horace’s awareness of the importance of appearance and reputation in connection with *liberalitas*. As we saw above, the man who will not help his friends is said to refuse them “ne prodigus esse / dicatur metuens” (1.2.4-5), and Fufidius the money-lender will not spend any money because “vappae famam timet ac nebulonis” (1.2.12), while another man says he spends all his money because “sordidus atque animi quod parvi nolit haberii” (1.2.10), and for this “laudatur ab his, culpatur ab illis” (1.2.11). Horace seems to be mocking not only the tendency of these people to avoid one extreme by going to the other, but also their foolish reliance on the opinions of others. However, in doing so, he by the same token shows how important *liberalitas* is in determining one’s reputation in Roman society. Cicero is very aware of this as well: “vitanda tamen suspicio est avaritiae” (*Off.* 2.17.58). This simultaneously highlights another important aspect of *liberalitas*: not only does it affect one’s reputation, but the converse is true. Whether a specific act of giving is considered *liberalitas* or prodigality, or whether a certain person is considered prudently modest in his expenditures or miserly, is a function of external judgements based on a complex of societal expectations and anxieties, not of intrinsic qualities or individual beliefs.5 Horace’s strictures in these satires seem to assume that the criteria of judgement are consistent and universally accepted, but the misguided actions of the fools in the introduction to satire 1.2 suggest that not every Roman was

5 This theme is exemplified in satire 1.3, which advocates the use of euphemisms and indulgence in dealing with the faults of friends; a fault is only so if it is recognised and labelled as such by others. At the same time, the term “luxurious” is relative, and depends strongly on the status of the person involved, and his social and political roles; what would be appropriate generosity from a consular would be prodigality from a provincial *eques* (Edwards 153).
aware of these criteria or accepted them. In fact, part of Horace’s program in these poems and elsewhere is to establish his standards of judgement as universal and unquestionable.

This is particularly noticeable in the treatment of the opposite extreme to avarice, prodigality. Its relationship with liberalitas is more complex, since prodigality and liberality are not as easily distinguished as are avarice and liberality. The difference is one of quality rather than quantity, since it is not the amount of money or other material goods given to others that is at issue, but more subjective questions such as the type of gift, the reasons for giving, and the character and identity of the recipient. These are all points that Cicero and Seneca discuss in some depth, and the standards that Horace seeks to establish are similar to theirs. It is clear that money spent on things that bring no benefit at all to the spender or to anyone else cannot be considered liberalitas: an extreme example of this is the “son of Aesopus” who dissolved a pearl worth a million sesterces in vinegar and drank it (Sat. 2.3.239-42). This is obvious waste, but Horace moves immediately from this example to another type of waste: extravagant spending on gourmet food, which might appear to some to be less clearly foolish. He connects the two by moving seamlessly from one to the other, and labelling the perpetrators of both acts equally insane:

filius Aesopi detractam ex aure Metellae,
scilicet ut decies solidum absorberet, aceto
diluit insignem bacam: qui sanior ac si
illud idem in rapidum flumen iaceretve cloacam?

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6 See Catherine Edwards, “Prodigal Pleasures” in The Politics of Immorality in Ancient Rome (173-206) for an extensive discussion of the concerns of Roman moralists about expenditure on pleasure.

7 Seneca suggests that giving superfluous gifts leads to degeneration of character: “cetera ex abundanti veniunt delicatos factura” (Ben. 1.11.5). This tale of gluttony and prodigality verging on madness was also told of Cleopatra (cf. Macrob. Sat. 3.17.15 and Plin. NH 9.120-21 in Edwards 187).
Quinti progenies Arri, par nobile fratrum,
nequitia et nugis pravorum et amore gemellum,
luscinias soliti impenso prandere coemptas,
quorum abeant? sani ut creta, an carbone notati? (2.3.239-46)

This condemnation of gourmet food and extravagant eating habits is developed at length elsewhere, and such activity is clearly viewed as prodigality.

The most important distinction between liberality and prodigality, however, seems to be the identity, status, and character of the recipient of the gift or money. Cicero and Seneca stress repeatedly that giving is only liberalitas if it is focused on those who are worthy recipients, and they define that worthiness on the basis of moral character and status. In Horace’s Satires, the unworthy recipients of money and gifts are, essentially, those who are not members of elite Roman society, and those who are involved with providing physical pleasure (e.g., food, music, sex, perfumes, dancing). Thus Marsaeus, “amator Originis ille, / qui patrium mimae donat fundumque laremque” (1.2.56) is roundly condemned by Horace, both because he gave away his whole patrimony and estate and because he gave it to a mima, a disreputable member of the lowest level of society. In the opening lines of this satire Tigellus is being mourned by a long list of disreputable characters: “Ambubaia rum collegia, pharmacopola, / mendici, mimae,

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8 See, e.g., satires 2.2 and 2.4.

9 The identity of the recipient affects whether or nor a gift is true liberalitas: “si turpi datur, nec honestum esse potest nec beneficium” (Ben. 4.9.3). See also Cicero’s strictures on the importance of the moral worth of the recipient (Off. 1.14.1-1.15.46).

10 The same distinction is observed by Cicero; in the Pro Caelio, Cicero defends Cælius from the charge of prodigality by denying that he pursues low-class pleasures (Cael. 44): “a connection is made here, as in countless other texts castigating the prodigal, between extravagance, debts, gluttony and low haunts’ (Edwards 179). Again, an important aspect of Cicero’s attacks on Antony, connected with his prodigality, is “the lowness of the company Antony keeps” (191).
11 This is one of Cicero’s major concerns about liberalitas – that people may squander their patrimonies and endanger the stability of private property by indiscriminate or excessive giving (Off. 2.15.52-55). Prodigal people “disrupt the social order by causing money to flow outside its proper channels” (Edwards 180).
balatrones, hoc genus omne” (1.2.1-2). Horace explains their grief by saying “quippe benignus erat” (1.2.4), but this is certainly sarcasm – benignitas, like liberalitas, is not something that can be practised towards people of this sort. In fact Tigellus, as a cantor, has only a shaky claim to the ability to bestow liberalitas himself; it is, after all, an innate quality of those who are truly liberi, which Tigellus probably is not. The sarcasm here becomes even more evident as the satire continues; all the subsequent examples are of problematic extremes, not of virtuous behaviour, and Tigellus’ “kindness” is in reality prodigality.

Finally, the story of Nomentanus makes Horace’s position explicit. Nomentanus was a young man who, upon coming into his inheritance, called together all the people who had entertained him and fulfilled his physical needs: “piscator ... pomarius, auceps, / unguentarius ac Tusci turba impia vici, / cum surris fartor, cum Velabro omne macellum” (Sat. 2.3.227-29). He gave vast sums of money to them, citing the trouble they had gone to on his behalf: “in nive Lucana dormis ocreatus, ut aprum / cenem ego: tu piscis hiberno ex aequore verris. / segnis ego, indignus qui tantum possideam” (2.3.234-36). What could have been, in a different societal context, portrayed as generosity and sympathy for those who work for a living is, instead, treated as insanity and prodigality. Nomentanus is called nepos, stultus, insanus, and grouped together with the filius Aesopi and progenies Arri as a madman. Prodigality, no less than avarice, threatens the state, because it simultaneously disperses patrimonies and enriches the worst sort of people.

The proper use of money, the median between the extremes that surround liberality, is
described explicitly by Horace in the course of his diatribes against avarice and prodigality.\textsuperscript{14} One’s physical needs must be looked after, in moderation of course: “panis ematur, holus, vini sextarius, adde / quis humana sibi doleat natura negatis” (\textit{Sat.} 1.1.74-75). If there is a surplus after those requirements are filled, then instead of lavishing luxuries upon oneself one should practise true \textit{liberalitas}:

\begin{quote}
\begin{align*}
\text{quod superat non est melius quo insumere possis?} \\
\text{cur eget indignus quisquam, te divite? quare} \\
\text{templa ruunt antiqua deum? cur, improbe, carae} \\
\text{non aliquid patriae tanto emetiris acervo? (\textit{Sat.} 2.2.102-05)}
\end{align*}
\end{quote}

These are worthwhile ways of spending money, in contrast to the indulgences described elsewhere in the \textit{Satires}.\textsuperscript{15} Noteworthy in this passage is the use of the root \textit{dignus}, though in a negative phrase: no one who is unworthy to be poor should be allowed to remain so, which implies that there are those who are rightfully poor, and should stay that way. To give those people aid is prodigality, not liberality. Finally, the supreme use of money is to help the state and the Roman people, demonstrating again that \textit{liberalitas} is an essential component of a cohesive, functioning community, merging with \textit{pietas} to become part of the supreme Roman social virtue.

These poems have demonstrated Horace’s views on the importance of properly

\textsuperscript{14} Again, Horace’s view here is very close to Aristotle’s statement that a liberal man is one who knows what to give, when to give it, and whom to give it to: “καὶ ὁ ἐλευθεριος ὁ ὁν τῶν καλῶν ἐνέκα καὶ ὑπηρώς· ὁ ὃς γὰρ δεῖ καὶ δσα καὶ δσε, καὶ τάλλα δοσα ἐπεται τὴ ὧθη δόσει” (\textit{EN} 4.1.1120a9).

\textsuperscript{15} Niall Rudd points out that “this passage is unique in the \textit{Satires} . . . temples and public works did not come within the field of private morality, and that is what the \textit{Satires} are about” (172). While it is true that the \textit{Satires} are concerned with the actions of the individual acting in his private capacity, and not as a representative of the state (Rudd 16), I would argue that this passage in fact indicates that Horace agrees with Cicero that \textit{liberalitas}, as a virtue, encompasses giving both to private individuals and to larger entities such as temples or the Roman people in general (Cicero discusses public \textit{liberalitas} at \textit{Off.} 2.21.72 and following). Horace is not moving away from his focus on the individual here, he is simply indicating some of the ways in which the individual can display his personal virtues. Cf. Augustus’ list of ways that he has personally benefited the state through his \textit{liberalitas} in the \textit{Res Gestae}. 
moderated giving. Another crucial aspect of *liberalitas* is of particular significance to Horace both because of his personal circumstances and because of the social and political context in which he was writing. In many of his poems, Horace displays considerable anxiety about the relationship between benefactor and recipient, especially as it applies to his relationship with Maecenas, generally called his patron. Horace’s main worry in regard to Maecenas is the potential perception of himself as an ambitious and greedy social climber. Ellen Oliensis suggests that this is a particular concern in the *Satires*:

> Horace was acutely aware of the kinds of things that could and would be said about him. His satiric response takes two forms. In *Satires* 1 he labors energetically to defend his integrity as a man and a poet, repeatedly differentiating himself from the targets of his satire... . The stance of *Satires* 2 is equally but differently defensive. Secure in his new Sabine villa and his new authority, the poet of *Satires* 2 mounts a brilliantly entertaining but nonetheless devastating satirical attack on the poet of *Satires* 1.¹⁶ (1998 18)

While Oliensis’ work concentrates on the specific relationship between Horace and Maecenas, and Horace’s changing social and poetic position over the course of the different poetry collections, manifestations of *liberalitas* will always leave the recipient vulnerable to accusations of greed or ambition. Thus Horace’s many attempts to influence the way in which his relationship with Maecenas is viewed and to define and defend the proper practice of *liberalitas* are applicable not only to himself but to Roman elite society as a whole. He engages this subject directly in several poems that deal with the proper way to give and receive *liberalitas*, and how

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¹⁶ Oliensis’ *Horace and the Rhetoric of Authority* focusses on authority and power, and how Horace constructs and reconstructs his ‘face’ throughout his poems with constant attention to the various audiences (not least Maecenas and Augustus) for whom he is writing. *Liberalitas* and its ramifications are an important part of this process, and Oliensis’ perceptive comments on Horace’s concern about how his relationship with Maecenas may be perceived by other readers have been very useful to my discussion of the wider issues pertaining to *liberalitas*. 
to mitigate some of the problems that can be created by the action of giving. Satire 2.5 and epistles 1.17 and 1.18 demonstrate the potential conflicts arising from misapplications of liberalitas on the part of both giver and recipient, and therefore provide useful insight into Horace’s views on the subject. His own strategies for handling the potential difficulties concerning the relationship between giver and recipient are particularly evident in epistle 1.7, a point to which I will turn after a discussion of satire 2.5 and epistles 1.17 and 1.18.

The whole of satire 2.5 is a parody of the advice given by Tiresias to Ulysses in the underworld; in it, Ulysses asks how to regain his fortune on his return to Ithaca and Tiresias instructs him in the fine art of legacy hunting. Tiresias tells Ulysses to flatter, conciliate, and obey any rich, old, childless man he can find, ignoring any distinctions of status or flaws on the part of his would-be benefactor: “qui quamvis periurus erit, sine gente, cruentus / sanguine fraterno, fugitivus, ne tamen illi / tu comes exterior si postulet ire recuses” (2.5.15-18). The frank advice reveals all the deceit, dishonour, and degradation associated with such flagrant abuses of the conventions of liberalitas, and is in direct contrast to Seneca’s exhortations to consider carefully from whom one will receive liberalitas, since one should not contract obligations to those unworthy of respect. Worse, Tiresias recommends that Ulysses play the part of a slave, citing the typical comedic slave Davus as his model: “Davus sis comicus atque / stes capite obstipo, multum similis metuenti” (2.5.91-92). As we have seen, liberalitas is a virtue of a free man, and participation in its reciprocal performance is also the act of a free man, so the role

17 As Oliensis remarks, Horace knows that while he is attempting to portray himself as a virtuous and true friend, “others may accuse him of being a Ulysses. By making the implicit comparison first himself, Horace precludes their attack and shows himself to be nobody’s fool” (1998 57). He has carefully distanced himself from this “specialized and degraded form of the art of friendship” (1998 57) by using the characters of Ulysses and Tiresias, and absenting his own persona from the poem, but the satire nonetheless highlights one way in which liberalitas can be perverted, and in doing so reveals a potential criticism of his own relationships with patrons.

18 “a quibus ergo accipiemus? ut breviter tibi respondeam: ab his, quibus dedissimus . . . grave tamen tormentum est debere, cui nolis” (Ben. 2.18.2-3).
suggested by Tiresias is its antithesis. Here, the corruption of *liberalitas* results in a change from free man to slave, demonstrating the importance of correctly negotiating the pitfalls inherent in gift exchange between people of unequal wealth or status, and providing some foreshadowing of the potential risks faced by Horace in his own relationships with those of higher wealth and status.

As a contrast to the disastrous recommendations given by Tiresias to Ulysses, Horace in his own voice gives advice in epistles 1.17 and 1.18 on how to cultivate great men honourably. In these poems, Horace defends the conventions of patronage and tells two younger men how to conduct themselves properly so as to gain the favour of more powerful friends.\(^\text{19}\) He proceeds mainly by negative exempla, such as the man who continually bemoans the pitiful state of his family, hoping for aid (1.17.46-48), and is no better than a beggar, or the companion who complains about the travel conditions during the course of a holiday with his patron (1.17.51-54), irritating his host and destroying his own credibility. The poet’s advice, as always, is to follow a moderate path, neither flattering nor overly abrasive, so as to merit the name of *amicus*, not *scurra* (1.18.1-4). The importance of *liberalitas* in this context is highlighted by Horace’s address to Lollius as *liberrime Lolli* in 1.18.1; he is a man who is superlatively *liber*, and thus well-suited to engaging in *liberalitas*. He can therefore allow himself to be considered an *amicus* (1.18.2) without fear that he will slip into the servility of a *scurra* (1.18.4). His more

\(^{19}\) Oliensis notes that these poems would be of particular interest to Maecenas as “overreader” (1998 168). She suggests that an overreader such as Maecenas would take epistle 1.17, for instance, “as a satiric portrayal of both the unscrupulous teacher and his crassly ambitious student” (1998 168-69). However, the advice given by Horace is consistent with both his own practice elsewhere, and his general devotion to the golden mean. While it is true that the explicit discussion of the means of acquiring the favour of a more powerful man is generally not viewed with approval by Horace (most notably in satires 1.9 and 2.5), that does not negate the truth of his advice. As Oliensis points out (1998 170), Horace’s own actions towards Maecenas conform to his satiric advice; it is only the intention and motivation behind those actions that is different in his case, and for that we must take his word. In other words, the interaction between benefactor and recipient, as outlined in this poem, is appropriate and even praiseworthy – if, and only if, both parties are driven by the correct motivations, as are, Horace has so often reminded the reader, he and Maecenas.
possible flaw may be, in fact, excessive *libertas*, a tendency to speak his mind too bluntly, so Horace concentrates on waming him against this (Epist. 1.18.5-9, 15-20). Reflected in 1.18, also, is the tension between *liberalitas* and dependency or sycophancy; Lollius fears to be called *amicus* because he equates the term with *scurra*, and this distinction is indeed the main focus of the poem. These two poems indicate some of the possible dangers of engaging in interchanges of favours and gifts without a proper understanding of what is appropriate to true *liberalitas*.

As noted above, it is epistle 1.7, however, that examines these problems at greater length and is most relevant to Horace’s own poetic persona. This poem explores the question of how to be a good patron, and how to give favours and gifts without causing problems for the recipient, while at the same time establishing both the value and the limits of the poet’s actual relationship with his own patron. Horace excuses himself for failure to comply with Maecenas’ wish that he return to Rome, but states that since he still is not ready to do so he will continue to disappoint his patron. Oliensis reads this poem as “an exercise in polite rudeness or amicable hostility” (1998 156). I am not convinced that Horace truly intended Maecenas, or any other reader, to see that much actual aggressiveness in this poem; however, there is a delicate and difficult negotiation between obligation and independence at work here. I see Horace as using the very conventions and expectations of *liberalitas* to demonstrate that his refusal to accede to Maecenas is not, in fact, rudeness, but instead a demonstration of the degree of perfection that the relationship with his patron has achieved. The poet tells four stories that illustrate four different aspects of the potentially uneasy relationship between the giver of favours and the recipient, and each of these scenarios is contrasted with the situation between himself and Maecenas. By means

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28 Cf. Cicero’s observation that great men object to any action that equates them with a client: “At qui se locupletes, honoratos, beatos putant, ii ne obligari quidem beneficio volunt; qui etiam beneficium se dedisse arbitrantur, cum ipsi quamvis magnum aliquod acceperint, atque etiam a se aut postulari aut exspectari aliquid suspicantur, patrocinio vero se usos aut clientes appellari mortis instar putant” (*Off.* 2.20.69).
of these negative examples Horace creates a picture of “the ideal benefactor and the ideally 
grateful beneficiary” (Mayer 1994 159), with the implication that this in fact describes the two of 
them.\textsuperscript{21} Oliensis sees this poem as a gesture of independence, that not only “stretches the ties of 
friendship” but “pulls away with more force – hard enough, indeed, to risk snapping the 
connection” (1998 157). I will argue, however, that Horace is using the idealising discourse of 
\textit{liberalitas}, and the expectations and conventions surrounding its expression, to modify and 
inform his response to Maecenas in such a way that it more than compensates for his refusal to 
comply with Maecenas’ request, and in fact strengthens and reaffirms those ‘ties of friendship’.

The first story told by Horace is of an over-zealous host who tries to force his guest to 
take pears that he does not want, thinking this to be generosity and hospitality (1.7.14-17). When 
the guest continues to refuse more pears, the host then declares that they are worthless, and will 
be fed to the pigs if they are not eaten (1.7.18-19). This shows a lack of understanding of 
\textit{liberalitas} on the part of the host: gifts should be appropriate, useful, and pleasing to the 
recipient, and this certainly is not the case if the recipient refuses them.\textsuperscript{22} This is the first point to 
be contrasted with Maecenas’ treatment of Horace; he made Horace \textit{locupletem} (1.7.15), but 
gave him only what he needed, and did not overload him with favours.\textsuperscript{23} It is also important that 
the gift be valued by the giver, or else it will not be valued by the recipient; it will then not be

\textsuperscript{21} Oliensis is right to see these \textit{exempla} as serving “for the most part less to illustrate than to obscure a 
point” (1998 158). Horace has, I agree, deliberately made them difficult to map directly onto the relationship 
between himself and Maecenas; the analogies between the stories he tells and the details (as far as he has given them 
in this poem and elsewhere) of his own connection to Maecenas are constantly shifting, with the tales sometimes 
serving as contrasts, and sometimes as parallels. This not only adds to the general subtlety and complexity of the 
poem, which is itself a compliment to the sophistication of Maecenas as intended audience, but also allows Horace 
to obscure the applicability of those aspects of the patron/client relationship which he may wish to disavow.

\textsuperscript{22} Seneca says gifts should be necessary, useful, or pleasurable to the recipient (\textit{Ben.} 1.11.1), and 
they should be appropriate to his needs (1.11.5). He warns that gifts that are not necessary may be unwelcome to the 
recipient, and he may even reject them: “potest in eo aliquis fastidiosus esse aestimator, quo facile carituros est, de 
quo dicere licet: ‘Recipe, non desidero; meo contentus sum’” (1.11 1).

\textsuperscript{23} This is also, as Oliensis points out (1998 159), the first indication of Horace’s concern that an 
overabundance of favours from Maecenas will disturb the balance between them and cause harm rather than benefit.
true liberalitas. Horace makes this point explicitly: “prodigus et stultus donat quae spernit et odit: / haec seges ingratos tulit et feret omnibus annis” (1.7.20-21). This time the comparison is applied to both Horace and Maecenas: what was given was valued by both parties, and Horace is therefore suitably grateful. The contrast to “prodigus et stultus” is given in the phrase “vir bonus et sapiens” (1.7.22), denoting the truly liberal man who understands the importance of choosing the recipient wisely and knows the value of his gifts. Horace then returns the focus to the main topic of the poem, his gratitude to Maecenas, with the line “dignum praestabo me etiam pro laude merentis” (1.7.24), which, by putting Horace in the position of a worthy recipient, implies that Maecenas is “bonus et sapiens” (Mayer 1994 161). In fact, by writing these lines Horace proves the truth of them, since to acknowledge a debt of gratitude is to repay it, at least in part, so that the very existence of this poem demonstrates both that Horace is indeed properly grateful and thus a worthy beneficiary, and that Maecenas is a wise benefactor who does indeed elicit gratitude.

From this point on, the relevance of the examples in the poem to the relationship between Maecenas and Horace becomes more complex. The poet appears to begin to point out some of the drawbacks associated with certain types of giving, and with the relationship that results. First, Horace indicates that although he feels grateful to Maecenas, he does not feel compelled to

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24 “Maecenas too, we presume, knows how to tell deserving from undeserving recipients and valuable from valueless gifts” (Oliensis 1998 159)

25 “qui grate beneficium accipit, primam eius pensionem solvit” (Ben. 2.22.1). Seneca says specifically that one should make one’s gratitude as public as possible (2.23.1).

26 The Epistles as a whole are framed as a response to Maecenas’ request for more lyric poetry from Horace, as he says in lines 1-4 of Epistle 1.1; while Horace says that he cannot comply with the request, these poems become his response, and do, therefore, provide Maecenas with much of what he has asked for: “the verse epistles that follow must have gone a long way toward satisfying Maecenas’ desire (or the desire Horace ascribes to him) for more Horatian poetry” (Oliensis 1998 157).
accede to his every request, and in particular will not return to Rome right now. He seems to suggest that age has changed him, and that if Maecenas could return his youth to him, he would be willing to join him in Rome. In describing his youthful self, Horace depicts aspects of his lyric persona, the qualities that connected him to Maecenas and his patron’s lifestyle originally:

quodsi me noles usquam discedere, reddes
forte latus, nigros angusta fronte capillos,
reddes dulce loqui, reddes ridere decorum et
inter vina fugam Cinarae maerere protervae. (1.7.25-28)

The impossibility of such a transformation seems to allow Horace a graceful way to refuse his benefactor’s request to return to Rome. One can read this entire poem, and this section in particular, as a continuation of epistle 1.1, in which Horace declines to write more lyric poetry for Maecenas. In epistle 1.7, Horace refuses to return to Rome and Maecenas and to the lifestyle associated with him, citing the transforming effects of age and Maecenas’ gifts as the cause of his unwillingness to leave the epistolary genre (the countryside and his Sabine villa; see Mayer 1994 173-74). Roland Mayer suggests that here, “urbane and candid, [Horace] lists the qualities that attracted Maecenas to him in the first days of their friendship, qualities well suited to that life of pleasure in which Maecenas still indulges” (1994 162). I would argue, however, that the qualities mentioned by Horace are so strongly associated with his lyric poetry that it is better to see this as metaliterary, reflecting the writer’s differing poetic personas rather than the actual facts of his character and appearance.

For example, “dulce loqui ... ridere decorum” seems to

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27 “Here again Horace represents himself in the act of declining Maecenas’ request, in this case not for poems but for a speedy return to Rome” (Oliensis 1998 158).

28 Cf. Oliensis’ concept of “face”, a “fusion of mask and self” that can also be called the authorial persona, “the first-person speaker who gradually accumulates characteristics associated with the figure known as ‘Horace’” (1998 2). This poetic face is not identical to any historical Horace, though it may share characteristics with him, and will be identified with him by readers of his poetry.
recall “dulce ridentem Lalagen ... dulce loquentem” (*Carm.* 1.22.23-24); his “angusta fronte” suggests an attractive feature of the lyric beloved Lycoris, “insignem tenui fronte” (1.33.5); throughout his lyric poetry Horace refers to greying hair as a sign of the end of one’s suitability for love and, by extension, lyric, and therefore, by implication, “nigros ... capillos” is appropriate for lyric; and, of course, Cinara is used in much the same way by Horace to symbolise his youthful love lyric in *Ode* 4.1: “non sum qualis eram bonae / sub regno Cinarae” (4.1.3-4).

However, the fable of the fox that immediately follows has a different moral, and implies that it was Maecenas’ gifts, not old age, that removed Horace’s desire to live in Rome. In the fable, a starving vixen enters a granary through a narrow crack, stuffs herself on grain, and then cannot escape the granary because she is fatter than when she entered (*Epist.* 1.7.29-33). In the context of this poem, the moral seems to be that gifts, once given, change a person so that he no longer has the qualities that allowed him to get the gifts originally; in addition, if he wants to enjoy his freedom, he must return the gifts. Horace then applies the moral to himself, saying that if he were to heed the fable he would give up everything, and would not want the riches of Arabia as long as he were free and at ease: “hac ego si compellor imagine, cuncta resigno: / nec somnum plebis laudo satur altilium nec / otia divitiis Arabum liberrima muto” (1.7.34-36).31

30 Black hair is directly linked to lyric in *Ode* 1.32, in which Horace refers to Alcaeus as a model for his own lyric program, and describes him singing about “Lycum nigris oculis nigroque / crine decorum” (11-12).

31 Mayer, translating “compellor imagine” as ‘I am arraigned by this parable’, says “the charge comes not from Maecenas but from what H. feels the malicious might think, namely that he bettamed on to Maecenas only to desert him after securing what he wanted in the first place” (1994 163). However, I do not think this is a very clear reading of the fable, which suggests that in fact the fox is forced to stay with its source of benefits (the grain bin) once it has consumed the benefits, and could only leave if it renounced them – transferred to Horace, that would mean that he must stay with Maecenas if he keeps his gifts, and can only desert him if he gives them back, so how could it reflect an accusation that Horace wanted to take the gifts and run?
While the desire for a peaceful and modest life is familiar from many of Horace’s poems, in the context of Horace’s gratitude to Maecenas such a rejection of wealth is unsettling. This also affects our reading of Horace’s nostalgia for his lyric self: following the logic of the story, if gifts change the recipient, perhaps it is actually Maecenas’ generosity which has altered Horace, to the point that he no longer is fit to participate in the very activities that first won him favour.

According to the fable, the only way for Horace to be free is to return his patron’s gifts, and in fact that is what the poet suggests, saying that instead of enjoying dinner parties with Maecenas he will choose *liberrima otia*. The implication is that Rome is the “cumeram frumenti” of the fable, and if Maecenas is successful in making Horace return to Rome, Horace will not be able to leave the life of luxury – the ‘fat life’. As he has grown older he now wishes the quiet life that Maecenas’ generosity has allowed him to enjoy, and now he discreetly instructs the other in the niceties of true *liberalitas*. He has demonstrated his gratitude for what he already has, and if he were compelled to take more he would suffer for it. As well, if he went to Rome to enjoy Maecenas’ overly generous hospitality, he would be open to criticism for betraying the *aurea mediocritas* he himself urges on others, even in this poem. So while he does not wish to return all the gifts he has received from Maecenas, he needs to refuse this new offer, showing in middle age the wisdom (and tact) Telemachus did in his youth.

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32 Mayer points out “the latent antithesis is: *otia liberrima < et pauperia > : divitiae < operosae >*” (1994 164). This is true, as far as it goes, but surely there should also be something to correspond to *liberrima*, implying that riches are accompanied by a loss of freedom.

33 If he became fat, like the vixen, he might also write *pinguis* poetry instead of *tenuis* Callimachean verse.

34 It is important to realise that Horace does not have only two options here – to return all of Maecenas’ gifts, or to obey all of his requests. What Horace in effect is doing is thanking Maecenas for the gifts he has already received while refusing any further favours, and the attendant obligations. As Oliensis points out (1998 161), Horace is trying to avoid giving offence to Maecenas while preserving a measure of his own independence. I would also suggest, however, that his willingness to publicise this delicate negotiation in a poem, even one as complex and indirect as *Epist. 1.7.*, is itself a compliment to Maecenas’ judgement and the quality of their friendship. As Oliensis puts it, “Horace is staking everything on his faith that Maecenas does not in fact view their friendship in terms of a strict quid pro quo” (1998 160), and the poet’s ability to do so is testament to the validity of that faith.
In the following lines, however, Horace softens this stance somewhat by showing that both he and Maecenas understand the true meaning of *liberalitas*. He says that Maecenas has publicly praised him for being *verecundus*, and that he in turn has acknowledged Maecenas as *rex* and *pater* (1.7.37-38). They have, in fact, each fulfilled their roles, Maecenas by demonstrating discrimination in his choice of beneficiary, and Horace by publicising his gratitude. Therefore the gifts themselves are unimportant, since the true functioning of *liberalitas* involves intention, not material goods. Horace’s willingness to return Maecenas’ gifts, then, becomes a way of recognising the real value of their friendship, and his request that Maecenas bear witness to that willingness is actually a request that he witness the depth of Horace’s commitment.

The final two illustrative stories concern the need for benefactors to make their gifts appropriate (*aptus*) to the recipient, and demonstrate the harm that can result from inappropriate giving. This provides a transition from the moral of the story of the vixen to the idea that Horace, now in middle age, is no longer *aptus* to be in the city with Maecenas and accept the hospitality on offer. Horace begins the third story with Telemachus’ polite refusal of the gifts of horses from Menelaus, and draws from this the moral that “parvum parva decent” (1.7.44). The theme of appropriateness is stressed by the repetition of *aptus/apta* in Telemachus’ speech (1.7.41, 43) and the verb *decent* in the moral (1.7.44). In applying this general truth to himself, Horace rejects *regia Roma* and says the peaceful countryside suits him better (1.7.44-45). After the use of *rex* to

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35 “quid est ergo beneficium? Benivola actio tribuens gaudium capiensque tribuendo in id, quod facit prona et sponte sua parata. itaque non, quid fiat aut quid detur, refer, sed qua mente, quia beneficium non in eo, quod fit aut datur, consistit, sed in ipso dantis aut facientis animo” (Sen. *Ben.* 1.6.1).

36 Oliensis (1991) stresses that “decorum is always an expression of power” (107), and that for a Roman male, decorum is a central part of his self-definition. Here, then, Horace’s use of the language of decorum implies that his very identity as a Roman male is implicated in the relationship between himself and Maecenas.
describe Maecenas earlier in the poem, which also of course recalls his Etruscan lineage,\textsuperscript{37} the rejection of \textit{regia Roma} sounds ominously like a rejection of the entire system of patronage and the relationship with Maecenas; however, in the same sentence Horace obliquely reminds us of the perfect appropriateness of the most important gift Maecenas ever gave him, the country villa which has allowed him to enjoy the peace and retirement he desires. Maecenas is in fact a better benefactor than Menelaus, because he knows how to choose a gift that is \textit{aptus} for his friend.\textsuperscript{38}

In the final extended anecdote Horace gives an example of a benefaction that harms rather than helps the beneficiary, meaning that it is not, in fact, true \textit{liberalitas}; he also demonstrates how patrons have power over their beneficiaries, and even their gifts exercise control, so that if this power is misapplied, poverty and \textit{otium} can be preferable to prosperity combined with dependence and discomfort.\textsuperscript{39} Volteius Mena is an unambitious, fastidious city dweller, who becomes a client of Philippus almost against his will. In the course of their association, which has already removed him from his normal occupations and imposed duties and obligations on him, Mena praises a small country estate they happen to see. Philippus, on a whim, persuades him to buy it, helping him out financially. Mena, however, does not enjoy farming, and returns to the city worn out and miserable, begging Philippus to take back his gift and return him to his former life. This is a clear case of someone failing to choose an appropriate gift for another, and so instead of the gift being a benefit, it actually causes harm. Mena could

\textsuperscript{37} See ode 1.1.1 “Maecenas atavis edite regibus”.

\textsuperscript{38} Thus, Maecenas’ gift has reinforced Horace’s self-representation as a self-controlled, rational man; his request that Horace leave the farm, however, threatens that self-controlled persona (cf. Oliensis 1991).

\textsuperscript{39} While Cicero does not seem to think that it is necessarily a bad thing, he does say that one of the reasons that “subiciunt se homines imperio alterius et potestati” is “beneficiorum magnitudine” (\textit{Off}. 2.6.22). Seneca is much more explicit and expansive on this topic. He gives numerous examples of arrogant givers who make their gifts hateful by the manner in which they are given (e.g., \textit{Ben}. 2.12.2), and he admonishes the reader to be extremely careful not to accept a benefaction from an unworthy man, since he will be tied to that person forever by the bonds of gratitude, and this will be a continual source of pain to him (\textit{Ben}. 2.18.5). This perhaps reflects the increasing difficulty of refusing \textit{liberalitas} from certain people by Seneca’s period, most notably the emperor, who could forcibly impose an unwelcome obligation by conferring a gift that could not be declined.
perhaps be said to be partially responsible for this, since he expressed admiration for the farm (1.7.77-78), and this is part of the implication of the moral which ends both the anecdote and the poem: “metiri se quemque suo modulo ac pede verum est” (1.7.98). However, it is the responsibility of the giver of liberalitas to make sure that his gift is not harmful, even if the recipient asks for a harmful gift, as both Seneca (Ben. 2.14.1) and Cicero (Off. 1.14.42) make clear.

Philippus failed to take the relative characters and positions of the giver and recipient into consideration, and therefore does precisely what Seneca advises against:

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\text{aestimanda est eius persona, cui damus: quaedam enim minora sunt, quam ut exire a magnis viris debeant, quaedam accipiente maiora sunt. utriusque itaque personam confer et ipsum inter illas, quod donabis, examina, numquid aut danti grave sit aut pravum, numquid rursus, qui accepturus est, aut fastidiat aut non capiat. (Ben. 2.15.3)}
\]

In addition, Philippus used his capacity for benefaction to control Mena for his own amusement (Epist. 1.7.79), which is contrary to the intent that should urge one to be liberal. The failure on the part of Philippus to act as the ideal benefactor leads to a similar failure on Mena’s part, who instead of feeling and displaying gratitude ends up miserably trying to renounce their association.42

Commentators have noted the points of similarity between this scenario and the

40 “Philippus is not interested, as a friend should be, in Mena’s welfare” (Mayer 1994 170).

41 Seneca considers the urge to help another to be central to liberalitas: “beneficium eius commodum spectat, cui praestatur, non nostrum; aliocuin nobis illud damus” (Ben. 4.13.3). Cicero concentrates on the requirement to help those who need it most: “sed in collocando beneficio et in referenda gratia, si cetera paria sunt, hoc maxime officii est, ut quisque maxime opis indigeat, ita et potissimum opitulari” (Off. 1.15.49).

42 Seneca warns repeatedly that errors on the part of those who give can cause ingratitude on the part of those who receive: “facimus autem plerumque ingratos et, ut sint, favemus, tamquam ita demum magna sint beneficia nostra, si gratia illis referri non potuit” (Ben. 2.17.5).
relationship between Maecenas and Horace as described in Horace’s poetry, as well as some crucial differences. The most obvious similarity is the gift of a Sabine farm, which clearly recalls Maecenas’ gift of the same thing to Horace.\(^43\) However, this parallel background allows the reader to see the important differences between the two patrons, and provides an elegant way for Horace to compliment Maecenas on his mastery of the intricacies of true liberalitas.\(^44\) The most significant contrast is in the attitude of the beneficiary to the gift: Mena mentions the farm in passing and must be persuaded to buy it, since it is not actually something he wants, while Horace has longed for his Sabine retreat and considers it his most precious possession.\(^45\) By extension, then, the characters and intentions of the benefactors are also contrasted: Philippus is a selfish and overbearing man who uses his wealth to amuse himself, while Maecenas is a generous and considerate man who uses his wealth to aid and gratify his friends. The final moral of the poem, therefore, applies to both benefactor and beneficiary: the former must consider the needs and desires of those to whom he gives, while the latter must know himself well enough to accept only what is appropriate, and not try to be what he is not.\(^46\) Maecenas and Horace provide

\(^{43}\) Other points of correspondence: Mena is a praeco, as Horace’s father was and he himself might have been (Sat. 1.6.86); both Mena and Horace had brief, tongue-tied encounters with their patrons which were followed by being summoned to be part of the great man’s entourage; the change in Mena’s life after he meets Philippus echoes Horace’s complaints from satire 2.6; Mena journeys with his patron to “relieve [the journey’s] tedium and to show the patron’s prestige” (Mayer 1994 170) as Horace did in satire 1.5; both Mena and Horace are fastidious about their personal grooming, and both like to wander in the Forum at the end of the day.

\(^{44}\) Oliensis cautions that “the tale cannot be read strictly e contrario as a model of bad patron-client relations and unhappy gifts designed to bring the righteousness of Maecenas and Horace and the rightness of Maecenas’ gift into sharper relief” (1998 163). But while the analogies between the situation in the poem and Horace’s own are indeed complicated and not susceptible to straightforward identifications, nonetheless it is clear that the manifestations of liberalitas throughout the story of Mena and Philippus can be related directly to the prescriptions given elsewhere by Horace himself, and certainly to the ideals laid out by Cicero and Seneca. Horace’s own program of carefully establishing his independence while maintaining his ties to Maecenas depends, as this poem makes clear, on their shared understanding of those ideals, and this tale reinforces that understanding.

\(^{45}\) Mena is, by nature, a town dweller; Horace generally presents himself as, by nature, a country dweller (especially in epistle 1.14).

\(^{46}\) This also applies to poetry; Horace here implicitly repeats his refusal to return to lyric poetry, since he no longer is the type of person who can write it.
perfect examples of ideal liberalitas in action, with this poem both contributing to and demonstrating their harmonious relationship.

The poems examined so far display the similarities between Horace’s explicit treatment of this issue and the discussions found in both Cicero and Seneca; the moralists’ basic assumptions about liberalitas are shared by the poet. Even in Horace’s work, however, there are relatively few poems which deal so directly with the subject of liberalitas. Notwithstanding, we can identify a number of poems which use and rely upon the same fundamental cultural preconceptions about the giving and receiving of gifts. Liberalitas forms a background to many poems on other subjects, or is a useful tool for accomplishing the literary goals of the poet.

In general, the convivium as an expression of liberalitas is fairly common in the poetry of this period. Inviting a friend to dinner was a standard way of displaying liberalitas in Roman society, and was one of the principal means by which patrons could benefit their clients. Both Catullus’ and Horace’s poems sometimes depict the Roman convivium in more or less conventional terms. Horace’s picture of Roman hospitality can be seen, for instance, in epistle 1.5, in which he himself is the host of an idealised version of a convivium. In it, the writer invites Torquatus to dine at his home, and the poem demonstrates many of the expectations associated with such an invitation. It comes close to resembling a “real” invitation, in that it

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47 “In ‘normal’ society [the cena] represented the reward to social inferiors for their attendance and a chance to impress social superiors with lavish expenditure” (Braund 305). Cicero says that he agrees with Theophrastus (presumably in his work “de divitiis” (Off. 2.15.56)) that hospitality is an important and credible expression of liberalitas (Off. 2.18.64).

48 See, for example, Odes 1.20, 3.8, 3.29, and 4.11.

49 Mayer points out that much of the material concerning preparations in this poem “suggest the literature of etiquette, especially for parties, which was pretty extensive . . . it seems that once again H. presents model behaviour in his own activities” (1994 143).

50 Francis Cairns classifies this type of poem as a “specialized minor type of kletikon usually known as uocatio ad cenam” (1972 240). He describes Epistle 1.5 as an example of an invitation by a social inferior to a social superior. Lowell Edmunds discusses the question of how to define the Latin invitation poem and where the form originated. He suggests that true invitation poems form a relatively select group, “each of which bears clear affinities
specifies the invitee, the place, and the time, all of which is necessary information for any actual invitation but is often omitted from poetic versions. The poem is in fact carefully situated in a specific time, with a mention of Augustus’ birthday and the particular case on which Torquatus is currently working. The form of the dinner invitation is useful because it gives an immediately recognisable context to the poem, one which can plausibly involve a figure like Torquatus, and the references to time, along with the domestic items listed by the poet, give a strongly realistic tone to the piece. So does the mention of Torquatus’ hangers-on (pluribus umbris) and his need to escape his (atria servament) clientem; these were common features of the life of a prominent public figure. This reinforces the wider relevance of the philosophical message of the poem: the advice about occasionally putting aside negotium and the importance of otium is not just a general truism, or something that relates only to idle poets, but is applicable to a real, well-known figure in Roman public life.

In the first part of the poem Horace emphasises the simplicity of both his food and his furnishings: “si potes Archiacis conviva recumbere lectis / nec modica cenare times holus omne patella” (Epist. 1.5.1-2). The plainness of his food is appropriate to Horace’s moderate persona,
for whom excessive concern about food is a mark of gluttony and prodigality. The wine, however, is given an elaborate geographical identification that marks it out as special: “vina bibes iterum Tauro diffusa palustres / inter Minturnas Sinuessanumque Petrinum” (1.5.4-5), although in the next line Horace modestly adds that if Torquatus wants better wine he will have to bring it himself, implying that in fact the wine is not the highest quality (1.5.6). The attention to the quality of the wine reflects the symbolic importance of wine in Horace’s social and poetic contexts. An invitation to a Roman dinner is not only an opportunity for free food; its most important function is as a focus of community, allowing relationships to be initiated and developed and the bonds between members of the elite created and strengthened. One can see this in Juvenal’s indignation in his first satire over the *sportula* replacing the *cena* as the patron’s gift, with the patron dining alone instead of with his clients: “optima siluarum interea pelagique uorabit / rex horum uacuisque toris tantum ipse iacebit” (Juv. 1.1.135-36). What bothers him is not only the loss of dignity involved in having to line up and struggle with freedmen for the handout, but also the destruction of the bonds between patron and client, and the loss of social cohesion this creates. The community disappears when a man chooses to eat by himself; it insults not only those who are not invited to dinner, but also the historical foundations of Roman society: “eating alone was a severe offence against social custom since eating was essentially a social activity for well-off Romans at least” (Braund 104). Since the consumption of wine was integral to the convivial activities of the *cena*, wine became a symbol of the emotional and communal aspects of the dinner party. At the same time, for Horace, wine is associated closely

54 “The simplicity of H.’s own domestic economy often points a moral . . . the salad dinner is typical of H. . . . and again has emblematic status” (Mayer 1994 137). Satires 2.2 and 2.4 show Horace’s opinion of elaborate cuisine.

55 Poems such as *Odes* 1.9, 1.18, and 1.20 show wine to be central to the lyric poet’s experience of friendship and social enjoyment.
with poetic inspiration.\textsuperscript{56} In his lyric poetry, in particular, wine is connected with the \textit{carpe diem} motif, and represents the brief enjoyment of physical pleasure that will inevitably, and all too soon, be ended by death.\textsuperscript{57}

There is a special point to the geographical identification of this wine, however. Robin Nisbet has argued convincingly that the provenance of the wine is in fact a graceful compliment to the addressee of the poem, Torquatus: “The first of the Torquati ... defeated the Latins in 340 between Sinuessa and Minturnae ... it looks as if Horace is deliberately offering his friend wine from his ancestor’s battlefield” (1-3). Thus Horace’s seeming modesty in suggesting that Torquatus could bring a better vintage if he has one is not as self-abasing as it appears, since he has in fact chosen the most appropriate wine possible, and Torquatus can be expected to understand that (Nisbet 3). I would add that this compliment to Torquatus, which draws attention to the military glory of his family by means of wine, acts as an appropriately lyric example of poetic \textit{liberalitas}, given the importance of wine to Horace’s lyric programme in the \textit{Odes}.\textsuperscript{58}

Instead of an epic poem praising his ancestors, Horace presents Torquatus with an invitation to a \textit{convivium}, in a poem that carries subtle lyric-style praise of those ancestors. When Horace stresses the details of his wine, then, he indicates to Torquatus that he is inviting him to share in the most intimate and meaningful aspects of the \textit{convivium} and implying that the two men share values and interests.\textsuperscript{59} He is also demonstrating, and offering a gift of, his poetic ability to praise

\textsuperscript{56} Two of Horace’s odes credit Bacchus with his poetic inspiration (\textit{Odes} 2.19 and 3.22).

\textsuperscript{57} One of the most famous, expressions of this, of course, is found in \textit{Ode} 1.11: “sapias, vina liques, et spatio brevi / spem longam resces. dum loquimur, fugerit invida / aetas: carpe diem, quam minimum credula postero”.

\textsuperscript{58} Nisbet points in particular to wine’s capacity to carry sentimental value in the \textit{Odes} in \textit{Odes} 1.20.2 and 3.21.1 (2).

\textsuperscript{59} This coheres with Cicero and Seneca’s emphasis on the importance of the emotional aspects of \textit{liberalitas}. Cicero concentrates on love and affection as motivation for generosity: “de benivolentia autem, quam quisque habeat erga nos, primum illud est in officio, ut ei plurimum tribuamus, a quo plurimum diligamur” (\textit{Off.} 1.15.47).
Not only is the wine special, but Horace intends to indulge in it freely, and advises his guest to do the same. The central section of this poem is devoted to a defence of inebriation, framed in terms that reinforce the poem’s focus on *liberalitas*. Horace opens by returning to a theme familiar from both his *Satires* and *Odes*, that of the foolishness of always saving up for the future, and the need to enjoy every moment as if it might be one’s last: “quo mihi fortunam, si non conceditur uti? / parcus ob heredis curam nimiumque severus / adsidet insano” (*Epist.* 1.5.12-14). This echoes Horace’s condemnations of avarice in the *Satires* and his urging to seize the day in the *Odes*, the latter most clearly evoked by the image of the undeserving heir. The language of the passage that follows, which praises the effects of intoxication, is filled with suggestions of plenitude and generosity. Horace has already suggested that the festival day, “nato Caesare festus” (1.5.9), provides an opportunity for “sermone benigno” (1.5.10), which certainly primarily means “kindly or friendly” conversation but also implies “generous” or “abundant”. He continues this by saying that, in contrast to the insane man who is too parcus and hoards for the benefit of his heirs, he intends to “potare et spargere flores” (1.5.14), actions that suggest openhandedness and lavishness. He even shows his awareness that this could be seen as

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60 I will examine this issue of lyric praise and commemoration in more detail in chapter 2, especially in the discussion of Horace *Odes* 4.8 and 4.9.

61 There are particular similarities between this poem and ode 4.7, which is also addressed to Torquatus, noted by Michael C. Putnam: “each poem meditates on man’s hopes and on the competitions wealth foments. Each urges the exploitation of good fortune, even at the expense of one’s heir and even if the resultant banqueting . . . appears to the imperceptive as the proclivity of an uncontemplative mind” (1973 139-40).

62 This idea recurs in the *Odes*: “cedes, et extractis in altum / divitiis potietur heres” (2.3.19-20); “indigno pecuniam / heredi properet” (3.24.61-62); and “cuncta manus avidas fugient heredis, amico / quae dederis animo” (4.7.19-20).

63 OLD sv. 1.b, “open-handed, generous, liberal” and 4, “Copious, abundant” (231).
prodigality by admitting “patriarque vel inconsultus haberi” (1.5.15), and the justification of his actions that follows is designed to counter just such an accusation.

The language of generosity is continued in the defence of drunkenness, which begins “quid non ebrietas dissignat?” (1.5.16). Dissigno here means “effect, accomplish”, but since signo can mean “to seal, close up”, di – or de – signo also suggests unsealing or opening. Drunkenness loosens and releases, as is implied by the Greek epithet for Bacchus, Λυαῖος, the ‘Looser’. This imagery is reinforced by the next clause, “operta recludit” (1.5.16), which more explicitly refers to the opening and release of hidden things. Next, “spes iubet esse ratas” is similar to ode 4.12.19, “spes donare novas largus”, and anticipates the emphasis on giving and generosity in that poem. Finally Horace describes fecundi calices as freeing people from contracta paupertate (Epist. 1.5.19-20), with the term solutum alluding to the Roman title for Bacchus, Liber. Although the origin of the name Liber is unclear, with the identification of Liber as Dionysus/Bacchus the name began to be used as a translation of the Greek epithet ἔλευθερος (Ernout 632). Seneca refers specifically to Liber’s power to free the mind of cares: “‘Liber . . . non ob licentiam linguae dictus est, sed quia liberat servitio curarum animum’ (dial. 9.17.8)” (Maltby 2002 337). There is a strong connection between Liber, liber, and liberalitas:

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64 Prodigality is, after all, ill-considered giving: “Non est autem beneficium, nisi quod ratione datur” says Seneca (Ben. 4.10.2), while Cicero warns that “multi enim patrimonia effuderunt inconsultere largiendo” (Off. 2.15.54).

65 In epistle 1.7, resignos is used in a similarly ambiguous fashion; in line 9 it means to open up or unseal a will (testamenta resiignat), while in line 34 it has the transferred meaning of give up or hand over: “hac ego si compellor imagine, cuncta resiigno”.

66 See Tib. 1.7.40, and Robert Maltby (2002 ad loc), as well as my discussion of Tibullus 1.7 below.

67 “Solutum” puns on a Greek title for Dionysus, Lyaeus ‘the releaser’ (whence Liber), cf. Epod. 9.37-8 curum metumque Caesaris rerum iuvat / dulci Lyaeo solvere. The thought again is a commonplace” (Mayer 1994 ad loc.).
generosity is necessarily an attribute of a free man. Much of Horace’s defence of drunkenness here is conventional; it closely echoes, for instance, some of the aspects of Tibullus’ praise of Osiris/Bacchus in elegy 1.7. However, the emphasis on lavishness and openness, and the linguistic connections to liberalitas, signal its importance here, and reinforce the overall theme of epistle 1.5: Horace’s offer to Torquatus of release from the cares of everyday life through the convivial exchange of liberalitas.

Drawing attention to the proper functioning of liberalitas, Horace suggests that his hospitality will be plain, not luxurious, but he also emphasizes the care and attention he has paid to the condition and cleanliness of his house and table settings: “iamdudum splendet focus et tibi munda supellex” (1.5.7). He returns to this subject towards the end of the poem:

haec ego procurare et idoneus imperor et non
invitus, ne turpe toral, ne sordida mappa
corruget nares, ne non et cantharus et lanx
ostendat tibi te. (1.5.21-24)

Horace’s care, in fact, extends to the selection of the other guests:

ne fidos inter amicos
sit qui dicta foras eliminet, ut coeat par
iungaturque pari: Butram tibi Septiciumque
et nisi cena prior potiorque puella Sabinum
detinet adsumam. (1.5.25-28)

These assurances serve several purposes. They show that every effort will be made to ensure

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68 In spite of Seneca’s argument to the contrary (Ben. 3.18.1ff.), the basic meaning of liberalitas as “an attribute of a free man” is always important.

69 “The praises of drink were a proverbial theme of symposiastic song; cf. esp. Bacchylides, fr. 20b S–M and Pindar, fr. 124a–b S–M” (Mayer 1994 139). Cf. the discussion of Tibullus 1.7 below.
The care taken, as well as Horace’s apparent diffidence about the quality of his house and dinner, are in part a product of the relative statuses of the two men; it was customary, when inviting a superior, to apologise for the ‘meanness’ of one’s resources (Cairns 1972 241).

The subject of food is a favourite of iambic and satire. “The pain and discomfort of indigestion had long been regarded as a subject for humour in the popular literary genres” (Watson 2003 125) (see Emily Gowers, The Loaded Table). The ‘occasion’ of this poem, real or imagined, is thus an appropriate way to approach the theme of dinner parties and hospitality within the iambic Epodes.

Torquatus’ comfort, demonstrating Horace’s respect and affection for him. They also indicate the elegance and discernment of guest and host alike, providing both a compliment to Torquatus and another indication of their compatibility. Finally, they are appropriate symbolic markers of Horace’s generic program in the Epistles: attention to decorum and the details of a well-regulated life, set in a plain and humble style that lacks the fancy touches of lyric but not the philosophical depth of the Odes. In this poem, then, Torquatus is being invited to share in Horace’s philosophical and poetic project, withdrawing briefly from his own concerns to consider the ethical questions that Horace confronts throughout the Epistles.

The convivium, because of its importance in Roman society, was a productive concept for Horace, whose poetry so often is concerned with the proper regulation of relationships between members of the Roman elite. Epodes 3, although neither an invitation poem nor a standard depiction of a convivium, nonetheless also demonstrates important elements of the relationship between host and guest, with a playful reversal of a thank-you poem furthering Horace’s poetic aims. Given the relationship between Maecenas and Horace, as demonstrated for instance in the first epode, an intelligent reader would assume that Horace’s response to having been invited to dinner at Maecenas’ home, if displayed in poetry, would be a poem of praise and gratitude for the favour. Epodes 3 is a depiction of a moment from a dinner party, at which, it seems, Horace has been Maecenas’ guest, but it does not fulfill this expectation. Instead of demonstrating the writer’s gratitude for this display of liberalitas, the poem complains about the quality of the hospitality, specifically the food, and ends by threatening, not thanking, Maecenas. The offence

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is feeding Horace garlic, and the tone throughout is humorous and friendly, with the poet’s extreme and hyperbolic reaction to the trick forming the main joke. The piece is seemingly the opposite of a thank-you poem, offering instead a rejection of the food, anger, and threats. However, the humorous tone and the hyperbolic nature of the complaint defuse the anger, while the threat is trivial and would only apply if Maecenas were to repeat his trick. On the other hand, the poem does include Maecenas’ name, and is full of wittiness, playfulness, and cleverness of treatment – making it a good gift for a discerning recipient. The irony and allusiveness of the poem expect a certain degree of sophistication in the reader, and this is by itself a compliment to the dedicatee. If read as a joke, the poem is a portrayal of intimacy between friends, and the accusations and complaints act to obscure status boundaries, though the roles of host and guest remain clear.

The terms in which Horace complains about the garlic remind the reader that *liberalitas* provides the background for this event. In two of the mythological *exempla*, the poison (either garlic itself or a venom to which garlic is compared) is called a gift: “hoc delibutis ulta donis paelicem / serpente fugit alite” (*Epod*. 3.13-14) and “nec munus umeris efficacis Herculis / inarsit aestuosius” (3.17-18). The gifts from Medea to Jason’s new wife were traditionally said to be a dress and a crown; Deianira gave Hercules a poisoned shirt. It is perhaps significant that clothing was a common gift from patron to client, especially at the Saturnalia.

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72 Lindsay C. Watson suggests that *iocose* is the key word in the poem, on the “principle that the epithet applied by Horace to his patron or other addressee is central to the subject matter of the poem in question” (2003 125). Cf. *amicus* at *Epodes* 1.2 and in Catullus 50 for the linking of playfulness, poetry, and friendship.

73 “A notable feature of the concluding imprecation is its studied toothlessness . . . The rather personal, light-hearted tone of the close also suggests the relaxed intimacy of two friends enjoying a shared and private joke” (Watson 2003 129).

74 Watson compares this poem to the description of Lucilius’ relationship with Scipio and Laelius in satire 2.1.71-4: “in implying that he is Maecenas’ *convictor* on similar terms to the above, Horace throws light on a very different aspect of their *amicitia* from that on view in *Epode* 1” (2003 130).
and usually given during aub. The clear implication is that this poison, the garlic, was also a gift, as of course it was, since Horace was Maecenas’ guest. Like the mythological gifts, however, this was not true liberalitas, since it harmed its recipient. Maecenas’ punishment for his abuse of liberalitas should be, according to Horace, to have his lover in turn withhold her gifts from him. The curse at the end of the poem is similar to the one Catullus directed at Sestius after his bad dinner experience (44; see Watson 2003 141-42). Both curses threaten their object with an appropriate reversal of their crime (Sestius with the cold his prose gave Catullus, Maecenas with the anti-social effects of garlic), and their removal from desired social interactions, a fitting punishment for transgressions against liberalitas. The two poems differ in tone, however; while there seems to be serious criticism of Sestius contained within Catullus’ poem, amusing though it is, Maecenas’ offence is petty, and Horace’s reproach lighthearted. Nonetheless, epode 3, like Cat. 44, uses and overturns the expectations of a thank-you for dinner, in this case to explore aspects of Horace’s relationship with Maecenas. Yet, as a thank-you poem, it clearly deflects the problems of liberalitas and of displaying gratitude publicly with its intimate tone and chiding, witty content.

The problems associated with displaying public gratitude and acknowledging indebtedness are of course most obvious in poetic expressions of gratitude for liberalitas received. In the poetry that has been preserved from this period there are not many direct and

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55 This punishment has been prepared for by the mythological examples of gifts, both presented in a context of sexual jealousy and anger.

56 The curse “is only one of many resemblances between the two poems . . . Additional points of contact are: the intention of both poets to make us laugh at their physical discomfort, the exaggerated seriousness with which they describe this, and the parodic use of formal language, archaisms, and outmoded inflections” (Watson 2003 142n3).
explicit thank-you poems, for reasons that will be discussed more fully in chapter 2. However, those that do exist show, again, that their authors were concerned with many of the same issues that Cicero and Seneca raise. The potential problems with the expression of gratitude can be seen in many of Horace’s poems. In the changing social and political circumstances of the end of the Republic and the beginning of the Principate, the relationships between poets and the great men around them became even more delicate and open to misinterpretation. Horace’s poem thanking Maecenas for the gift of his Sabine farm is probably the best-known example of a thank-you poem in early Augustan poetry; even in it, however, Horace’s gratitude is tempered by his insistence on his philosophical independence and his rejection of wealth. Odes 3.16 does not actually contain any explicit expression of thanks; instead, gratitude is shown by his pleasure and pride in his situation, and his clear enjoyment of the gift he was given. The existence and publication of a poem that states or implies gratitude on the part of the poet fulfills the need for a public expression of gratitude on the part of the recipient. Eduard Fraenkel suggests an additional role for the poem because of where it is: “Placed at the beginning of the second half of Book III, it serves as the dedication of this book to Maecenas” (229). The centre of a book is not a usual place for a dedication poem, and since the first three books of odes were published together, ode

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77 There must have been many short occasional poems and epigrams of straightforward gratiae from well-educated clients, in addition to those from our poets. We have poems of this type from later periods, such as Martial 8.28, 8.51, and 12.31, and Statius Silvae 4.2, all of which express thanks to a patron for a gift. Against this background, reversals or modifications of the thank-you poem must have been even more striking.

78 They are also reflected in varying ways in the poetry of Catullus, Tibullus, and Virgil, as we will see later in this chapter and in the following chapters.

79 For a detailed discussion of the circumstances of poets in this period, and the relationships between them and their ‘patrons’, see Peter White Promised Verse. While I believe he accepts the poets’ self-presentation too readily, he presents the evidence that we have for the statuses of the various poets, and argues for a continuity between poetic patronage and the wider applications of amicitia and liberalitas in Roman society.

80 Horace “is telling the donor how happy he is with the gift, how fertile the land, how agreeable the climate, how reliable the crops” (West 2002 150).
1.1 acts as the primary dedication for the entire collection. Nonetheless, the mid-point of a book is indeed an important position, and the poem’s demonstration of gratitude is therefore enhanced by its placement. It can perhaps be seen as a reiteration of Horace’s own reciprocal gift to Maecenas, that is, the collection of poetry. This poem demonstrates the proper workings of liberalitas on the part of both giver and recipient. Horace establishes that Maecenas’ gift is true liberalitas by indicating the ways in which it conforms to the expectations associated with proper giving. It is helpful, not harmful:

\[
\text{purae rivus aquae silvaque iugerum} \\
\text{paucorum et segetis certa fides meae} \\
\text{fulgentem imperio fertilis Africae} \\
\text{fallit sorte beatior. (Carm. 3.16.29-32)}
\]

It is suited to the recipient – Horace emphasises that he does not want more than he has, and that this small farm is perfect for his character and station in life. Maecenas is neither stingy nor excessive in his giving, and is willing to give more: “nec, si plura velim, tu dare deneges” (3.16.38). However, unlike the clumsy benefactor Philippus in epistle 1.7, he does not give more than Horace wants, and is sensitive to his friend’s character and desires: “contracto melius parva cupidine / vectigalia porrigam ... multa petentibus / desunt multa” (3.16.39-43). Horace does not mention that anything is requested of him in return for the gift of the farm, implying that

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51 G.O. Hutchinson has recently argued against the simultaneous publication of books 1-3, suggesting that each book was published individually and built on, and was organised in relation to, the previous books (144-148). The point, as he admits, is not finally provable, and may not substantially affect our overall understanding of the collection (148), since Hutchinson still believes that Horace did, in the end, mean for the books to be read together.

52 Conte, in “Proems in the Middle”, has argued that, beginning with Hellenistic Greek poetry, a preem placed in the middle of a poem or in a central poem in a collection performs the function of “offering a specific declaration of poetics” (1992 152), addressing the issues of style, purpose, or place in the literary tradition (as distinct from the opening preem, which announces the content and subject of the poem, as had been traditional for preems since Homer). If we can read 3.16 as performing a similar function, then, because of its placement, it suggests that the relationship between Horace and Maecenas, as framed by Horace’s gift of poetry and Maecenas’ gift of the farm, is central to the poetic program of the Odes (or at least the third book).
Maecenas, as a good benefactor, is content with gratitude as repayment. Indeed Horace’s assertions of independence throughout the poem could be seen as a way of demonstrating the “no strings attached” nature of Maecenas’ benevolence.83

However, there are some elements of the poem that may disturb this picture of perfect liberalitas. Some commentators have expressed uneasiness about Horace’s statement that he could ask for more if he wished, and Maecenas would give it to him.84 Other commentators have viewed this line as integral to Horace’s larger expression of gratitude and display of the appropriate functioning of liberalitas: “This statement [lines 37-38], which jars on some readers, has three undertones. The first is an expression of gratitude – Maecenas is always willing to be generous to Horace. The second is an expression of independence – Horace is not the sort of friend who is always coming cap in hand to ask for help. The third is that he does not wish his independence to be taken as ingratitude” (West 2002 151). To suggest that if Horace were to want more, Maecenas would give it to him, is to praise the sensitivity and appropriateness of Maecenas’ liberalitas. He is aware of his friend’s needs and forestalls requests.85

A greater problem is posed by the opening of the poem. It contains a series of exempla concerning the desire for wealth and the power of money. In each of these stories greed is the motivation for a problematic act: the seduction of Danaë by Zeus, Eriphyle’s deception of Amphiaras, the betrayal of their cities by Philip’s enemies, and Menas’ transfer of allegiance to

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83 Epistle 1.7 brings up the problem of benefactions ‘with strings attached’, suggesting, as I argue above, that Maecenas and Horace do not, in fact, have a relationship that requires specific repayment of benefactions; see Olienisis 1998 159-160.

84 “His intention in adding that if he wanted more Maecenas would give it to him was certainly to express gratitude to Maecenas for ungrudging generosity and to increase the spiritual value of his own pauperies by showing it to be totally voluntary. But again the ideal of self-sufficiency sounds so comfortable and sheltered as to give the impression of smugness” (Williams 603). This interpretation seems like cultural prejudice to me; reading this section within the context of the time when it was written, I believe that Horace is complimenting Maecenas by demonstrating that he has allowed Horace to live according to his philosophical ideals.

85 As recommended by Seneca: “illud melius occupare antequam rogemur, quia, cum homini probo ad rogandum os concurrat et suffundatur rubor, qui hoc tormentum remittit, multiplicat munus suum” (Ben. 2.1.3).
Augustus and subsequent downfall. The most notable of these examples is the first, in which the traditional story of Danaë being ravished by a shower of gold is rationalised to suggest that she, or her guard, was overcome by actual gold, in the form of a bribe. This interpretation may not have been original to Horace, but it was certainly not the most common version of the myth, and its inclusion here emphasises the deliberate focus on the power of money to make people commit disgraceful acts. The imagery of bribery in these opening exempla could be disturbing in a poem displaying gratitude to a patron for a gift. Any hint of a parallel between those stories and Horace’s situation would be intensely disruptive to the relationship, as constructed in his poetry, of deep and mutual friendship; it would also be fatal to the poet’s declarations of personal and literary independence and freedom. Nonetheless, Horace seems to have deliberately established this possibility in the opening of the poem. Presumably, the exempla are there in order to provide a distinct contrast to the ideal relationship between Maecenas and Horace, as outlined in the rest of the poem, and his simple desire for humble moderation. The implication of bribery, then, can be seen to fulfill the same role, and to establish by opposition the purity of Horace’s friendship with Maecenas. The strength of the image of the relationship between poet

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86 Fraenkel believes this to be a theme already found in Hellenistic literature, though he cannot prove it: “I cannot quote any instance prior to Horace, but the epigrams by Antipater of Thessalonice, Anth. Pal. 5.31.5f, and by Parmenion, 5.33 and 34, probably take this topic from earlier poetry” (228n2).

87 Although it had a long life in subsequent literature, in particular in Christian attacks on pagan mythology. See e.g. Prudentius, in a passage that recalls love elegy with its use of dives amator and amica: C. Symm. 1.66-68: nunc foribus surdis, sera quas vel pessulus artis firmarant cuneis, per teectum dives amator imbricibus ruptis undantis desuper auri infundens pluviam gremio excipientis amicae.

88 David West suggests that is a “rationalization of a myth, and has a philosophical flavour to it” (2002 142-43). Specifically, rationalizations of myth were common in Epicurean thought (cf. Lucretius’ rationalizations of the sinners in the underworld 3.978-1023), and Horace calls himself “pinguem et nitidum ... Epicuri de grege porcum” (Epist. 1.4.15-16). We must nonetheless explain why this particular myth and rationalization are used here.

89 “The exempla speak first and foremost of someone who gains by bribery . . . the greater sense is of aggression and success rather than of weakness and the ultimate destruction of the person bribed” (Connor 132).
and patron that has been built up through the course of Horace’s previous poetry prevents the
parallels between the opening images and the current situation from tarnishing his protestations
of friendship. Horace can introduce these suggestions as examples of the dangers inherent in
liberalitas because he, Maecenas, and the reader know that he and Maecenas would never
succumb to them.

The fragile balance between gratitude, friendship, and independence, so pivotal to
Horace’s poetic program, is visible in this poem. Horace concentrates on philosophical
arguments against greed and asserts his independence as a man who rejects excessive wealth and
has no desire for gain; at the same time he recognises his indebtedness to the man who allowed
him to reach a position of modest contentment, and who has made his independence possible. This
creates a tension centred around the bonds created by liberalitas, a tension that is central to
many of Horace’s poems concerning his relationship with Maecenas. The discomfort and
indirection evident in those poems which portray the speaker as a recipient of liberalitas are an
inevitable feature of the interaction, especially in the social context of the Roman elite.

To demonstrate that the concerns displayed in Horace’s poems are not unique to his
particular situation, I want to look now at an earlier example of a thank-you in verse, Catullus’
poem 49:

Disertissime Romuli nepotum,
quot sunt quotque fuere, Marce Tulli,
quotque post aliis erunt in annis,

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90 Horace actually seems to credit the gods, or a single but unnamed god, for the gifts he has received:
“quanto quisque sibi plura negaverit, ab dis plura feret” (Carm. 3.16.21-22) and “bene est, cui deus obtulit / parca quod satis est manu” (3.16.43-44). This contributes to Horace’s delicate attempt to establish his independence while
demonstrating his gratitude to Maecenas. By displacing some of that gratitude to the gods, Horace suggests that his
good fortune is, at least in part, due to his own virtues, which the gods are rewarding. On the other hand, it also
assimilates Maecenas into the company of those unnamed gods who have given their favours to Horace, and so
compliments Maecenas at the same time. See my discussion in Chpt. 4 of Virgil’s deus ille in Ecl. 1.
Suetonius \textit{Jul.} 73 indicates that his family was on familiar social terms with Julius Caesar.

In 1850, C.T. Clumper proposed that the thanks were ironic and the poem a manifestation of the enmity between Catullus and Cicero: “Hoc quoque carmen ironice est accipiendum. Ciceronem Catulli fuisse inimicum, inde effici potest, quod amicus fuit Cornificii, de quo supra memoratum, inimicus autem Catulli familiaribus, Asinio Pollioni, quem Carm. XII et Calvo, quem Carm. LIII meminit” (Clumper 150, as cited in Setaioli 211).

In the last thirty years the majority opinion has tended to the view that the poem is ironic, though with varying degrees of hostility implied by that irony; recent proponents of this view are Tatum (1988), Deroux (1985), McDermott, Westendorp-Boerm, and Ferguson. There are however several scholars who maintain that the poem is sincere, or only gently ironic; these include Basson, Fredricksmeyer, Laughton, D.F.S. Thomson (1967), and Fordyce.
The main reasons that scholars have suspected irony in poem 49 are linguistic. Most troublesome is Catullus’ repeated description of himself as “pessimus omnium poeta” (49.5-6), which seems to many commentators an impossible self-criticism for Catullus to have intended seriously. Another point is the use of *disertissime* (49.1): some scholars point to a difference between *disertus* and *eloquens*, the former denoting someone “endowed with gifts of a lower order than those of the ‘eloquens’” (Basson 47). Further, “Romuli nepotum” is said to be an exaggerated, mock-solemn phrase, the “tripartite formulation of ‘all times’” in lines 2-3 is seen as extravagant and mock-formal, and the use of “Marce Tulli” as the address is “formal, solemn, and official” (Basson 48). In the final line it has also been suggested that “patronus” is not Cicero’s favoured term for someone with “the highest oratorical distinctions” (Basson 49), and so the word may be less complimentary than it appears. Lastly, there is a potential grammatical ambiguity in this same line, since “optimus omnium patronus” can mean either ‘best of all patrons’ or ‘best patron of all clients’, and some scholars have suggested that the latter would be an insulting description of Cicero. Some have also been influenced by suppositions about a hostile relationship between Catullus and Cicero, whether on personal or literary grounds; this has led them to doubt that Catullus would ever wish to thank Cicero sincerely, or that Cicero would ever perform a favour for Catullus. However, the very variety of suggestions of possible occasions for this poem, both sincere and ironic, points to the difficulty of ever reaching a

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94 “There can be no question that line five is ironic, since Catullus hardly considered himself the worst of all poets” (Tatum 1988 180).

93 Cf. also Catullus’ use of “magnanimi Remi nepotes” in an ironical context in 58.5.

95 E.g. Ferguson, Westendorp-Boerm.

When one considers the poem as an example of the conventions of *liberalitas*, the most striking feature is the absence of a specified occasion, the lack of mention of what, exactly, Catullus is thanking Cicero for. If the poet is willing to publicly acknowledge his debt to Cicero, why does he not specify the reason? Seneca suggests a recipient of a benefaction might not be eager to reveal what he has received, if for instance the benefaction relieves bodily infirmity, poverty, or disgrace, and so advises benefactors to give certain types of benefactions secretly (*Ben*. 2.9.2). However, that does not seem to be the situation here, since Catullus would presumably conceal the transaction entirely if he was ashamed of it. This is a problem whether one views the poem as sincere or ironic – in either case, one might reasonably expect the poet to let the audience know the favour or the insult that has been done to him. Scholars have sometimes, perhaps unconsciously, treated this as a private communication from Catullus to Cicero, and assumed that the occasion is left unnamed because the two men would know what it was without needing to be told. This disregards the importance of publication and posterity for Catullus, as evidenced in his dedicatory poem: “hoc libelli / ... quod, <o> patrona virgo, / plus

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98 Basson has a good summary of the suggestions made by both sides of the debate; I include some of the most notable: “Schwabe ... takes [the poem] as an acknowledgement of Cicero’s defence of Caelius Rufus and his exposure of Clodia in 56 BC, a theory which was elaborated by Bahrens, who suggests that Catullus was grateful because his name had been kept out of the proceedings” (Basson 45); “Kroll takes c. 49 as Catullus’ acknowledgment of a copy of one of Cicero’s speeches, perhaps the *In Vatinium*” (Basson 46). Fredricksmeyer suggests this is a sincere expression of thanks to Cicero for helping reconcile Catullus and Caesar after Catullus’ invective poems against Caesar; thus the poet compliments Cicero’s abilities as patron/pleader and deplores his own poor judgement in his poetry – Cicero is the more wonderful pleader (*optimus*) the more Catullus’ poems were ill-considered and morally suspect (*pessimus*). D.F.S. Thomson and Laughon suggest that there is gentle irony, but it is part of a diplomatic criticism of Cicero’s poetry, which had been sent to Catullus by the orator either as a gift or with a request for his opinion. On the other hand, proposed occasions for the poem as hostile sarcasm range from Ferguson’s argument that Cicero was having an affair with Lesbia/Clodia to Deroux’s view that Cicero’s defence of Caelius offended Catullus, while McDermott views the poem as an expression of overt hostility to Cicero’s poetry and reputation.

99 “Its addressee and its unstated but implied occasion have led all its published critics to understand the poem as simply the address of Catullus to Cicero, an address meant to be overheard by the reading audience” (Batstone 156).
uno maneat perenne saeclo” (1.8-10). William Batstone exposes the Romantic presuppositions about lyric that underlie this assumption, and argues that Roman lyric, including Catullus’ poetry, was consciously addressed to both contemporary readers and posterity; it was “rhetorical, performed, and entangled with problems of self-knowledge and self-presentation” (Batstone 147). The absence of a reference to the occasion of the poem therefore remains a difficulty to be explained.

However, Daniel L. Selden has demonstrated that Catullus does at times deliberately separate his poems from any specific context: “the suppression of occasion is a gesture that is characteristic of this poet’s work” (467). This removal of context can serve different purposes – it can universalise, or it can produce poetry that seems “intensely personal” and “meditative” (Quinn, 1971 26), but it can also open the text to multiple reconstructions of context, as is evident in the many scholarly attempts to fix the occasion of the poem. Here it cannot be seen as universalising, since the identity of the addressee and the specificity of his description firmly connect the poem to a particular individual; instead, the absence of context focuses the poem on the act of giving thanks itself – on the framework of liberalitas and the relationships it creates.

The act of giving thanks is central, literally, to the poem: “gratias tibi maximas Catullus / agit ” (49.5-6) is the pivotal point of the poem, taking up the middle line plus one word of the next,
framed on either side by a description of the recipient and the sender. While Catullus gives no information about the reason for his gratitude, he does unmistakeably place the poem into the tradition of thank-you poems, and thus invokes all the conventions and assumptions associated with liberalitas. A Roman reader would immediately recognise the outward form of the poem, and the reader’s reactions would therefore be influenced by this background. This is reinforced by the fact that the relative statuses of the two people involved were, in fact, ostensibly appropriate for such a formulation of respect and admiration from the younger, less prominent Catullus to the older, widely respected, and politically prominent Cicero.

Nonetheless, the linguistic elements that cause discomfort for many scholars remain. In particular, the extravagant use of superlatives and hyperbole and the characterisation of Catullus as pessimus poeta (49.4-5) do, at the very least, seem to make this a humorous poem. The piece appears intentionally ambiguous. It is difficult to ignore the excessive fulsomeness of the writing, and the potential double entendres, but it seems equally feasible to accept these either as part of a meaningful expression of gratitude or as indications of sarcasm and disparagement. However, if there is the possibility of an ironic reading, the evident question becomes, on what is the irony focused? What is the surface meaning that is being opposed? Scholars have generally assumed that it is some aspect of Cicero the man or the orator who is “being mocked”

103 Tatum suggests the positioning of this poem within the discourse of amicitia and liberalitas is sufficient occasion for the poem: “After all, the thanks which Catullus offers to Cicero do not necessarily imply a reason for giving thanks; only a particular posture on the part of the poet is implied, that of a grateful cliens addressing his patronus” (1988 180).

104 Selden suggests that the production of two meaningful but irreconcilable readings is a common feature in Catullus’ poetry: “Catullus’ text not only generates two equally plausible, yet contradictory understandings of the poet’s circumstances, heart, and mind . . . the piece is so constructed as to make it effectively impossible for the reader to decide between them. In each case, moreover, this embarrassment arises from an asymmetrical interference between the formal elements of Catullus’ language (grammar, rhetoric, generic topoi) and the semantic features of his text” (475).

105 As Svavar Hrafn Svavarsson points out, in discussing a possible ironic interpretation of this poem it is necessary to be clear about the meaning of ‘ironic’: he suggests that if a poem is ironic, “it should not be taken at face value, but rather as meaning something in some way opposed to the surface meaning” (131).
If, however, we see that the focus of the poem is on the act of gratitude, this difficulty disappears. The absence of context and lack of specifics concerning the interaction between the poet and the addressee focus attention on the central action of the poem, Catullus’ formal declaration of gratitude. The poem displays in its most extreme form the subordination of the beneficiary to the benefactor that is integral to the asymmetrical relationship of *liberalitas* by labelling the one *pessimus* and the other *optimus*. The construction by which these two descriptions are linked shows how strongly they are connected: the degree of the orator’s elevation is equivalent to the degree of the poet’s abasement, implying an almost causal relationship between the two adjectives.\(^{107}\)

It is my contention that the humour and fulsome ness of the poem may in fact be a technique for mitigating this admission of indebtedness and the subordinate status associated with receiving *liberalitas*. In other words, the comic or ironic tone remarked upon by many commentators would undercut not the act of displaying gratitude, but the accompanying admission of inferiority, with the very extravagance of that admission rendering it harmless.\(^{108}\) If

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\(^{106}\) Svavarsson considers efforts to suggest a partially ironic reading, a “gentle irony”, to be problematic, and maintains “that the poem is either ironical or sincere; it cannot be half-ironical” (131n2). However, he too focuses on the irony as being directed towards Cicero, in this case his old-fashioned oratorical style and self-importance (136-37).

\(^{107}\) Deroux analyses the *tanto . . . quanto* construction in great detail (1985 127-32); he draws the conclusion that the poet, through the precision of his language, makes it impossible for Cicero to read *optimus patronus* as a compliment.

\(^{108}\) In discussing the “two irreconcilable systems of meaning” (475) of this poem, Selden says that “Catullus’ note to Cicero might be sincere and eulogistic, or it might well be ironical and taunting, but clearly it could not simultaneously be both” (465). However, while it probably cannot be both eulogistic and taunting, it is possible to be both sincere and ironic at the same time – the irony defuses the vulnerability caused by the admission of thanks, but it does not necessarily negate the thanks altogether. Deroux says that if Catullus wished to be self-deprecating while sincerely praising Cicero he would have said “Catulle qui n’est qu’un poète traitant de sujets
it is indeed a response to a specific act of Cicero’s, then Catullus has found a way to express his thanks while maintaining the integrity and status of his poetic persona. Regardless of the specific context of the poem, however, the poem can be seen as a generalising comment on the functioning of liberalitas in Roman society, simultaneously demonstrating its operation and its problems, and revealing a potential mechanism for mitigating those problems.\(^{109}\)

I will now turn to another example of poetry that conforms to, and relies upon an understanding of, the idealised picture of liberalitas found in Cicero and Seneca: praise poetry presented as a gift to the dedicatee. Such a poem exemplifies the type of gift approved of by both Cicero and Seneca; it is personal, unique, and long-lasting, and, most importantly, a published poem is a public gift.\(^{110}\) In such a poem the poet openly acknowledges the relationship between himself and the dedicatee, praises him, and contributes to his reputation. One type of poem that is a clear example of praise poetry as a gift is the genethliacon or birthday poem, of which there are several among the works of this period.\(^{111}\) Not only does a birthday poem perform all the general functions of a praise poem, it actually declares itself to be a gift for the dedicatee.\(^{112}\)

Tibullus’ elegy 1.7 is the most extensive example of this genre among the works

\(^{109}\) Cicero would then be a particularly appropriate recipient for such a poem, regardless of the relationship between the two men; his position as optimus omnium patronus, whether it means “best of all patrons” or “best patron of all men” establishes him as an exemplary benefactor, and implies the existence of many (potentially subordinated) beneficiaries.

\(^{110}\) Liberality by means of personal service is “lautior ac splendidior et viro forti claroque dignior” than gifts of money or goods, says Cicero, since it is taken “ex virtute” rather than “ex arca” (Off. 2.15.52). Seneca suggests that luxuries, in particular, should be rare and such as few people can or do possess (Ben. 1.11.5), and that “praecipue mansura quaeremus, ut quam minime mortale munus sit” (1.12.1).

\(^{111}\) Tib. 1.7, 2.2, Prop. 3.10, and in some ways Horace Odes 4.11.

\(^{112}\) “As munera presented on the natales of important friends and patrons, the poems both reflect the practices associated with such occasions and themselves have a role to play in establishing and maintaining each poet’s own web of social relationships” (Argetsinger 181).
examined in this study. It demonstrates well the important role of *liberalitas* in forming and maintaining relationships between the poet and others, and the usefulness of the concept as a tool for making judgements, giving praise, and categorizing the world around the poet. The occasion of a birthday is naturally connected with gifts and gift-giving. Elegy 1.7 reflects and emphasises this connection by including multiple intertwined aspects of *liberalitas*. The poem itself is of course Tibullus’ gift to Messalla, whose birthday it celebrates (1.7.1-4, 49-54, and 63-64). While the mere (public) dedication of a poem can be construed as a gift to the named dedicatee, the laudatory nature of the content of this poem makes it more explicitly a gift. The main subjects of Tibullus’ praise are Messalla’s triumph (1.7.5-8), his campaigns in Transalpine Gaul and the East (1.7.9-12 and 13-22), and his repair of the Via Latina (1.7.57-62). These are linked – it was the booty from his conquests that allowed Messalla to express his munificence by paying for the repairs to the road (Maltby 2002 297-98). This liberality follows the approved pattern of Roman elite generosity: it benefits both individuals and the Roman people as a whole; it confers a lasting and practical benefit to the state, and it does not deplete the

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113 Cairns classifies this poem as “a genethliakon which includes a triumph-poem” and points out that “the two genres are akin in that both celebrate a happy event of a semi-religious nature concerned with a single individual and occurring on a single day”, and that this generic reading of the poem helps in understanding the unity of the poem (1972 167).

114 “In the private sphere, Roman men and women marked their own birthdays and the birthdays of family members and friends with gift giving and banquets” (Argetsinger 175); as well, the sacrifices to a person’s Genius were often conceived of as gifts for the god in return for the year’s protection (177).

115 J.H. Gaissers suggests that one element of the compliment to Messalla in this poem is the comparatively high frequency of allusions to other poets; this is a tribute to Messalla’s interest in and knowledge of poetry, and in particular his taste for highly allusive, Alexandrian literature (221).

116 Cicero divides services to the state into those that concern all citizens and those that concern individuals; he advises that one should try to do both kinds of service, but must take care when helping individuals also to benefit, or at least not harm, the state (Off. 2.21.72).

117 According to Cicero, money is best spent on things such as “muri, navalia, portus, aquarum ductus omniumque, quae ad usum rei publicae pertinent” since “haec in posterum gratiora” because they will last for a long time (Off. 2.17.60).
giver’s resources because it comes from military conquest.\(^{118}\) Tibullus portrays the gratitude of
the Roman people through the figure of the farmer at the end of the poem, glad that he no longer
stumbles on the paving-stones (1.7.61-62). The old-fashioned resonances of the rustic festival
and rural setting contribute to the sense that Messalla is reviving the antique virtues of the old
Romans, the *mores maiorum*.\(^{119}\) By including this portrait of a grateful Roman, Tibullus also
reminds his readers that they too should be grateful to Messalla, and should likewise demonstrate
their gratitude.\(^{120}\)

The central portion of the poem is a hymn to Osiris/Bacchus (Maltby 2002 280-81).\(^{121}\)

Commentators have suggested many possible reasons why Tibullus included this section, which
is, on the face of it, only loosely related to the rest of the poem.\(^{122}\) One strong connection it has

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\(^{118}\) One of Cicero’s major concerns about *liberalitas* is that it not threaten the personal property
(*patrimonia*) of the giver (Off. 1.14.44 and 2.15.54).

\(^{119}\) For this revival of the *mores maiorum* as an aspect of the ideology of the Augustan period, see
Augustus’ concern for them in the *Res Gestae*: “nullum magistratum contra morem maiorum delatum recepi” (6);
“Legibus novis me auctore latis multa exempla maiorum exolescentia iam ex nostro saeculo reduxi et ipse multarum
rerum exempla imitanda posteris tradidi” (8); his restoration of the temples (20-21) is also relevant.

\(^{120}\) Tibullus, even while speaking in his own voice, stands as a representative of the community as well, and
so his praises of Messalla both encourage and represent the praises owed by the Roman citizenry at large: “The
hymnal poet, whether it be an archaic rhapsode or Tibullus in 1.7, speaks both for himself and on behalf of the
community" (Hunter 2006 54).

\(^{121}\) The identification of Osiris as Dionysus would have been “very familiar to Tibullus’ audience ...
particularly in the latter’s manifestation as ‘culture hero’, probably most familiar to us from the accounts of the god
in the first book of Diodorus Siculus’ *Universal History*. This is a figure who, in some Hellenistic versions ... was
regarded as or became a god because of his civilising benefactions to mankind” (Hunter 2006 54).

\(^{122}\) “The youth of Egypt praise Osiris and the Roman young hail Messalla, allowing us to compare the two”
(Putnam 1979 118); “there is . . . general uncertainty . . . about the relevance of Osiris to Messalla” (Guy Lee 133);
“as the god of wine, music and festivity [Osiris] is appropriately invoked in the context of a birthday poem. But
Osiris is also god of peace, supporter of the arts, a creative force who has brought great benefits to mankind; there
are obvious parallels with Messalla, and T. draws attention to these through the subtle repetition of certain words and
ideas” (Maltby 2002 281). More detailed discussion of the problem of the hymn to Osiris can be found in Gaisser,
R.J. Ball, Cairns (1979), and Timothy J. Moore. Richard Hunter points out the Alexandrian antecedents of the
birthday poem for a political figure, in particular the Ptolemaic stress on the birth of the ruler (2006 52); this
provides the poem with a strong thematic connection to Egypt and to the terms used to praise Ptolemaic rulers.
Cairns connects the hymn to “the associations between Bacchus, triumphs, and dithyrambs”, but also sees it as a
“transition passage between triumph-poem and genethliakon” (1972 168). See Alison Keith’s 2009 APA paper,
“Imperial Geographies in Tibullan Elegy”, for a discussion of Tibullus’ ‘Alexandrising’ here as an expression and
enactment of Roman imperial and literary expansion in the East.
with the rest of the poem is the emphasis on what the god has given humanity – the ways he has helped them, and specifically the gifts of civilisation, which foreshadow the praise of Messalla’s role in repairing the Via Latina. First, the Nile, which is explicitly identified with Osiris (1.7.27-28), is said to remove from the lands it waters the need to ask (postulat) or beg (supplicat) for rain (1.7.25-26). Egypt is briefly cast as a client requesting a favour from a more powerful friend (Jove), but in the same lines that role is mitigated by the beneficence of the Nile. Next, Osiris is praised as a culture hero, who first taught the arts of agriculture to humanity (1.7.29-38). The poet says that Osiris was the first to practise viticulture and make wine (1.7.33-36). The terms in which this is presented clearly accentuate and emphasise the theme of giving: note especially the repetition of the word dedit in the following and below: “illi iucundos primum matura sapores / expressa incultis uva dedit pedibus” (1.7.36). Finally, Bacchus (identified with Osiris), is also lauded for the gifts he brings to humanity, again with a stress on the idea of giving:

Bacchus et agricolae magno confecta labore
pectora tristitiae dissoluenda dedit.
Bacchus et afflictis requiem mortalibus affert,
crura licet dura compede pulsa sonent. (1.7.39-42)

Not only does this repeat and strengthen the imagery of gifts and benefits, it also foreshadows the discussion of Messalla’s liberality later in the poem, which features a quite possibly drunken agricola stumbling home (1.7.61-62).\textsuperscript{123} The use of dissolvere recalls one of the cult titles of Bacchus, \(\Lambda\nu\alpha\delta\omicron\omicron\omicron\zeta\), the “Looser” (Maltby 2002 ad loc.), while line 42, with its reference to chained slaves (Maltby 2002 ad loc.) perhaps suggests the god’s Roman name, Liber, and the freedom (or sense thereof) he brings to men. The reader’s awareness of the god’s Roman identity

\textsuperscript{123} “The word [agricolae] looks forward to agricola 61 and the benefits brought to the farmer by Messalla’s road” (Maltby 2002 293).
allows these connotations to be present even though the name itself is never mentioned. The theme of gifts, giving, and generosity, then, runs through this hymnic passage and so, implicitly, does the theme of gratitude. The worshipper/poet acknowledges and thanks the god for his gifts, at the same time tacitly encouraging others to do the same.

At the end of the hymn section the poem returns to Messalla (1.7.55). In this final passage the previous sections of the poem are tied together by the culmination of verbal and thematic repetition that has gone on throughout. The poem begins with the words “hunc cecinere diem Parcae” (1.7.1), which introduce the combined ideas of Messalla’s birth, his victories in war, and his triumph, as well as Tibullus’ association with him; the next section opens with “an te, Cydne, canam” (1.7.14) and passes quickly over the sites of Messalla’s travels in the East;\(^{124}\) the beginning of the focus on the Nile and Osiris is marked by the words “te canit atque suum pubes miratur Osirim” (1.7.27); finally, the last address to Messalla is concluded with the image of the farmer on the Via Latina and the words “te canat agricola” (1.7.61). Not only does this repetition of *canere* link the various sections of the poem together, but it also suggests specific parallels between the subjects of the songs/poems. As Tibullus sings (*canam*) of the sites of Messalla’s achievements, and of the Nile and its bounty, and the Egyptians sing of Osiris (*canit*) and the benefits he brought to mankind, so should the farmers sing (*canat*) of Messalla because of his generosity in repairing the Via Latina.\(^{125}\) The most obvious repetition specifically connects

\(^{124}\) A. Foulon suggests that this passage is modelled on Callimachus’ various examples of hesitation about which name, aspect, or deed of a god he will celebrate in his *Hymns* (81). I am sceptical that this connection to Callimachus in particular is as strong as Foulon believes, since the pattern of introducing a hymn by suggesting various possible cult titles or stories about a single god is fairly common (Luck 80n2). However, it is possible that this passage is meant to suggest this type of prelude to a hymn, since it does introduce the kletic hymn to the Nile and Osiris. In that case, these various places, which represent various aspects of Messalla, not Osiris/Bacchus, strengthen the identification between Messalla and the god by suggesting that the central figure of the hymn introduced by this passage is Messalla, not Osiris.

\(^{125}\) “As Isis and Osiris built cities and introduced agriculture for the benefit of farmers, so Messalla has extended the benefits of civilisation to those who need it. The parallel is pointed by *te canit* of the Nile-Osiris (v. 27), picked up at the end by *te canat* of Messalla (v. 61)” (Hunter 2006 55).
Messalla and Osiris: “te canit atque suum pubes miratur Osirim” (1.7.27) and “te canat agricola” (1.7.61). Both Messalla and Osiris have helped mankind, and both deserve praise and gratitude as a result. This parallel allows Tibullus to expand his praise of Messalla indirectly, implying a similarity between Messalla and a god without stating it too plainly.

This poem is a celebration of Messalla that uses manifold examples of giving and liberalitas to represent both his munificence and the reciprocal gratitude and generosity that he should receive on his birthday. Tibullus both acknowledges and gives gifts in this poem, demonstrating the intertwined, connecting nature of liberalitas. By multiplying and interconnecting Messalla’s liberalities and linking them with divine aid, Tibullus subsumes any particular, personal gratitude he might owe to his patron into a generalised Roman or even human gratitude to beneficent beings. This move from particular to general gratitude is similar to the strategy used by Catullus in poem 49; we see both poets attempting to balance the

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126 The section of the poem devoted to Osiris performs the function of a kletic hymn, of which genre this type of repetition is typical (Maltby 2002 280).

127 “The ordinary farmer also sings the praises of Messalla. Like Osiris-Bacchus, Messalla has helped him by making his way home easier after business in the city” (Putnam 1979 126). Moore argues that 1.7 is a poem that moves, by means of a constant opposition and then reconciliation of opposites, towards an integration of Messalla into Tibullus’ world “in spite of his wealth, ambition, and military pursuits” (429). In particular, he demonstrates that Messalla has earned the right to be praised by the poet as a result of his benefaction: “by repeatedly referring to benefaction which occurs in the face of apparent opposition or conflict, Tibullus makes clear that the reason he is eager to praise and even show himself at one with his “un-Tibullan” patron is that Messalla is a benefactor of those who dwell in the world which he idealizes” (430). Ball considers the most important point of connection between Messalla and Osiris to be the peaceful activities of Messalla, in contrast to the warlike and violent context of the recent past (737). If the farmer is drunk, Messalla’s gift also complements Bacchus’ gift of wine and even improves on it, by removing the risk.

128 Maltby 2002 points out that this comparison between Messalla and Osiris is facilitated by the earlier description of the triumph, since “the triumphator took on semi-divine status . . . His face would be dyed red and he would be wearing the insignia taken from the statue of Capitoline Jove, as the god’s momentary incarnation” (283). The parallels between Messalla and Osiris are clear in the poem, but are not explicitly stated; this may in part reflect a reluctance to directly equate a living Roman with divinity, but it may also tacitly acknowledge that there is another, greater, figure with a stronger claim to be identified with the god – Augustus: “There was, after all, room for only one living Osiris-Dionysus, and that was not (or was no longer) Messalla” (Hunter 2006 66).

129 Although it is difficult to prove, the farmer stumbling home may also be intended as a humorous reference to Tibullus himself, if perhaps his ager lay along the Via Latina. The farmer’s stumbling might even be a reference to the ‘lame’ metre of elegy, with its missing foot. In that case this example of the gratitude felt towards Messalla is both generalising and specific, and reflects Tibullus’ own experience as well.
conflicting requirements of gratitude and independence.

As is clear from the above examples, *liberalitas* was not simply a political or philosophical concern, nor was it too prosaic a concept to be found in poetry. It was a natural part of the cultural framework within which Horace, Catullus, and Tibullus all functioned, just as it was for the rest of the elite Roman society of their period. *Liberalitas*, both as a virtue and as a mode of interaction, was part of this frame of reference and influenced the relationships not only between poets and their patrons, but also between all members of the society in which the poets lived. This can be seen in the various allusions to conventional *liberalitas* in the works of these writers, and in the strictures about its exercise, especially in Horace. These poems also display praise of people who engage in *liberalitas* correctly and criticism of those who do not. Finally, there are manifestations of *liberalitas* within the poetry, in the form of such gifts as birthday poems and invitations, and such demonstrations of gratitude as thank-you poems.

The poets’ basic assumptions concerning *liberalitas* were generally similar to those expressed by Cicero and Seneca, reflecting the continuity between the cultural contexts of the prose authors and poets. They also assume similar expectations on the part of the reader and use those common expectations as a background to many of their poems. These expectations may be fulfilled or disappointed, or even reversed, but the poets often rely on them to produce significance or humour in their works. *Liberalitas* and its manifestations are also used as standards against which others are measured – judgements with which the poets can expect their readers to agree, since they are the result of shared assumptions. The common framework of *liberalitas*, a socially constructed concept, is used extensively by these writers to explore their poetic, ethical, and aesthetic concerns. However, there was a conflict between the ideally reciprocal exchange of *liberalitas* and the enormous emphasis on status, dignity, and hierarchy in Roman society. It is this issue that will be explored in the following chapter.
Chapter 2: Redefinition and Rejection

As discussed in the first chapter, Rome in the late Republic was a society built on asymmetrical reciprocal obligation. At the same time, social and political position was determined by prestige, dignity, and public image. This combination of factors resulted in tensions and concerns over status in the giving and receiving of gifts, favours, and services: to give a gift or confer a favour was to claim a position of superiority, while to receive a gift or accept a favour was to admit to a position of inferiority, and could therefore be potentially embarrassing or humiliating. Cicero and Seneca were both acutely aware of this dynamic,¹ which was, in fact, crucial to the establishment and maintenance of the complex power and status relationships in Roman society. In its most explicit form it bolstered the patron/client relationship, and it is precisely because the power and status roles were so clearly marked in such a relationship that it was generally only acknowledged as occurring between people who clearly stood very far apart on the scale of power and position (e.g., between freedmen and their former masters or between foreigners and Roman citizens; its vocabulary was also used in a restricted technical sense to refer to lawyers and their clients).² Instead, social and political interactions involving the exchange of gifts and services between members of the elite were “expressed by the participants in terms of friendship rather than the frankly unequal language of patronage

¹ Manning offers a good discussion of the difficulties associated with liberalitas towards the end of the Republican period. He points out that for Cicero in his philosophical works liberalitas is a praiseworthy quality, but there are occasions in his political writing when he “recognized that the term could at times have unfavourable connotations” (76). Sallust and Livy rarely use liberalis or liberalitas as favourable personal attributes in describing late Republican-era figures; Manning attributes this suspicion of liberalitas in part to the gap between “the ideal liberalitas of the philosophers and the actual practice of it in this period” (77), but more importantly to the fact that “it is not usually a quality displayed among equals, but offered by a superior to an inferior” (78).

² For a detailed examination of the institution of clientela, and the use of the terms patronus and cliens in relation to it, see Brunt 1988, 382-442. The meaning of amicitia and the connection between friendship and patronage are explored by Konstan 1997.
characteristic of favours from the wealthy to the clearly subordinate” (Dixon 1993 451).3 Within this discourse of amicitia, gift exchange could be treated as an affective process, instead of an explicit manipulation of power and property.4

As the society around them became ever more stratified, and the distribution of wealth and power ever more uneven, the poets of the late Republican and early Augustan periods developed various strategies to protect the position and status of their personas within their works. Many of their poems function within, and create for themselves, an overriding, shared fiction of friendship and relative equality between the main characters, namely the poet and the addressees of each piece. Any negotiation of position, status, or power that occurs within the poems, therefore, may take place within and under the cover of this fiction, and any overt disruption of it is rude and embarrassing. Nonetheless, such negotiation does occur, as is to be expected in poetry written in the context of a society so intensely concerned with stratification.5 Whatever the fictional framework of the poetry, issues of status never completely recede. Instead, there is an attempt to change the terms of reference. Traditionally, poets were able to assert a certain degree of authority as observers, teachers, moralists, and critics; in addition, they

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3 This is White’s central argument: “It is now generally recognized that in Latin sources language expressing friendship, affection, and love typifies the discourse between poets and the great” (1993 13). See also Saller 1982 24-25.

4 David Konstan (1995, 1997) argues that the language of amicitia was not synonymous with that of clientage, and that for the Romans of this period it described an affective and emotional relationship between putative equals, not one based on utility, self-interest, or political considerations. He takes issue with the idea that its terminology was regularly used euphemistically to describe more pragmatic relationships or those involving unequal power distribution. Even when a relationship between a social superior and inferior is involved, he argues that amicitia can have emotional meaning, and not only be euphemistic. However, in the end he seems to prove only that amicitia, because of its affective and value-laden connotations, was a very useful concept for negotiating and reducing the tensions and potential discomforts of obligation and inequality. He does not prove that it was not used that way, and of course it is essential for any euphemistic discourse to claim better, and different, associations than what it elides. True friendship, under the name of amicitia, must also exist, in order for that term to be useful as a euphemism for dependency.

5 Oliensis describes this fiction as the poet’s “face” in Horace and the Rhetoric of Authority (1-16). Her discussion of Horace's poems as “words that do things” (3) can also be applied to the works of other poets of this period. All of them, and especially the programmatic, dedicatory poems, can be seen as creating, defending, and negotiating the poet’s “face” or status.
could claim some status as divinely inspired mouthpieces of the Muses or various gods. Just as important, however, was the late Republican and early Augustan poets’ inheritance from the Alexandrian tradition in which the poet was viewed as possessing a refined aesthetic and artistic judgement along with a high level of education and esoteric knowledge. P. Bourdieu calls this accumulation of knowledge and prestige “cultural capital” (1993 7). Repeatedly in the poetry of this period we can see an attempt to present literary achievements, skills, and roles as the determining factors in establishing position, status, and power in the poems themselves. The re-valuation of poetic skill and knowledge as comprising cultural capital that is equivalent (or even superior) to social, political, and economic power is also connected with the effort to redefine liberalitas as including poetry as a privileged mode of benefaction.

One of the major ways in which the conventions of liberalitas were adapted by the poets of the late Republic was the redefinition of its substance. That is, the poets extolled different expectations about the objects and services that were or should be exchanged, while maintaining their emphasis on the importance of the exchange itself. The poetry of Catullus, in particular, focuses on the creation and maintenance of a community of friends by means of the exchange of items of mutually agreed-upon value. The important issue is the form of the objects of exchange. Instead of political support, legal help, dowries, loans, and personal attendance – the most common elements of exchange in aristocratic Rome – Catullus and his friends exchange poetry, support in love affairs, and companionship in indulgence in otium. The shared acceptance of the value of these beneficia is crucial to inclusion in the group of friends.6

I begin my discussion, therefore, with three poems by Catullus that demonstrate and

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6 D.O. Ross stresses Catullus’ concern for very traditional Roman conceptions of the importance of the bonds of fides and pietas between Romans: “One of Catullus’ chief concerns was the working of that formal and typically Roman code of behavior that governed and made possible everyday relationships between men . . . The Roman concern with social morality was very much a part of the poet’s intellectual and emotional character” (1975 12). Liberalitas was a fundamental part of this social morality.
develop the theme of redefining the substance of *liberalitas*: poems 12, 13, and 14; in these poems, in particular, we can see the intensity of Catullus’ redefinition in the context of the confusions and breakdowns of traditional Roman civil society at the end of the Republic. I follow this with an examination of Catullus 1, which as a dedication foregrounds *liberalitas* as a poetic problematic not only for his collection as a whole, but also for lyric collections at Rome in the next generation. This theme is picked up by Horace in the first epode, which I examine next; there are multiple allusions to and resonances of Catullus in this poem, and Horace appears to be using Catullus’ engagement with the problems of *liberalitas* as a model for his own early exploration of the dynamic between poet and patron. Next, I turn to Horace’s odes 4.8 and 4.9 as a pair of poems that, in a similar fashion to Catullus’ trio of 12-14, both discuss and exemplify the use of poetry in *liberalitas*; these poems can be seen as the mature Horace’s solution to the problems posed in Catullan lyric, shaped by the developing social structures of the principate. I then move into elegy to discuss Propertius 1.1 and Tibullus 1.1 as continuing to draw on Catullan lyric as a background and structuring principle for the relationship between poet and dedicatee; these two introductory poems also show the development of a specifically elegiac approach to *liberalitas*, which will be the focus of chapter three.

I begin then with Catullus, who, in his poetry at least, reacts to the shifting world of the disintegrating Republic by turning away from traditional objects of exchange while maintaining *liberalitas* as an essential component of his relationships with other Roman men. His poems 12, 13, and 14 are connected by both gift-giving and conviviality: “The theme of gifts and giving among loving friends is not a prominent one throughout the Catullan corpus; it is, rather, ‘clustered’ in the poems under scrutiny here. We may conclude that poems 12-14 are not simply a random collection of poems separating two better-defined units; they are themselves well defined, and their position in the text seems intentional” (Forsyth 574). This miniature unit of
poems, all connected with *liberalitas*, forms a transition between two larger units that have been recognised within the polymetric collection.\(^7\) In turn, poem 13 acts as a transition between 12 and 14; the theme of a dinner party and the presence of Fabullus connect it to poem 12, while the emphasis on gifts of poetry and shared critical standards points forward to poem 14.

This focus on gift-giving, then, begins with Catullus 12, in which the background understanding of all the ramifications and expectations associated with *liberalitas* give point to the joke at Asinius’ expense, and make the poem both meaningful and entertaining.\(^8\) This framework adds a typically Catullan depth and complexity to an amusing occasional poem. The gift in question in the poem is a set of Saetaban napkins and its value lies not in its price, says Catullus, but in its emotional significance as a connection to close friends. A similar emphasis on the emotional value of a gift rather than its material worth is also found in Seneca. In fact, in his more idealistic passages, Seneca denies that the material item itself has any significance, and asserts that it is in the intention alone that *liberalitas* exists, and it is by gratitude and affection alone that it can be repaid.\(^9\) The most important concern in this poem, as in much of Catullus’ poetry, is friendship and the inclusion or exclusion of others in the poet’s circle of friends.\(^10\) Thus

\(^7\) “The existence of two clearly defined ‘cycles’ of poems within the initial lyrics of the Catullan corpus has long been recognized. The first of these, the so-called ‘Lesbia cycle’, is contained within poems 2-11, while the second, or ‘Furius and Aurelius cycle’, can be found between poems 15 and 26” (Forsyth 571). For more detailed discussion of these cycles, and 12 and 13 as a pivot between them, see Skinner 1981 38-62.

\(^8\) This poem is classified by Cairns as a *flagitation*, a literary form of the “extra-legal or pro-legal self-help by which a man whose property had been stolen ... could attempt to regain his property by subjecting the offender to a barrage of insults and demands for the return of his property” (1972 93-94).

\(^9\) “Quid est ergo beneficium? Benivola actio tribuens gaudium capiensque tribuendo in id, quod facit prona et sponte sua parata. Itaque non, quid fiat aut quid detur, refert, sed qua mente, quia beneficiun non in eo, quod fit aut datur, consistit, sed in ipso dantis aut facientis animo” (Ben. 1.6.1).

\(^{10}\) “The Catullan collection situates the poet as the arbiter of elegance of his circle, in which capacity he is more often than not exposing those who fail to meet his standards” (Fitzgerald 93). Catullus’ poetry was intended for a small, relatively exclusive circle of friends, the *amici* of whom he speaks in his poetry and to whom many of his poems are addressed. Within this circle there was a system of gifts and support parallel to that of political *amicitia*, but centred on the exchange of poetry and criticism and praise of other poets’ work. This corresponds to the Callimachean ideal of writing for a small, highly learned, poetically erudite audience (Clausen 1964 183). The topic is much examined: Fordyce has a brief discussion of “Catullus and ‘Alexandrianism’” in his introduction (xviii-
the idealised view of *liberalitas* is useful in this poem, since it highlights the indefinable connection between Catullus and his friends, which is so crassly misunderstood by Asinius.11 Anything that helps Catullus define the boundaries between his knowledgeable, sophisticated group of friends and the rest of Roman society is useful to him, and *liberalitas* is a particularly effective tool in this strategy, not least because it is an essentialising concept, and can provide a “natural” standard against which to measure others. In the poem there are clear contrasts between those who understand the proper workings of *liberalitas* and Asinius, who does not. Veranius and Fabullus have shown their understanding by sending the gift, and Catullus has shown his by his concern and gratitude for that same gift.12 Asinius, however, has failed to appreciate its real value, and demonstrates by stealing the napkins that he sees only their material worth.13 He has also forestalled any generosity that Catullus could, perhaps, have shown him, since the theft disqualifies him as a possible recipient of Catullus’ *liberalitas* by revealing a lack of the qualities

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11 “The napkin has a value that the napkin thief neither suspects nor appreciates. His theft was loutish not because it transgressed some petty rubric of the social code, but because it unknowingly violated the intimate private relationship between Catullus and his *sodales*” (Skinner 1981 60).

12 This is visible in the poet’s use of terms such as *salsum* and *inepte* (12.4), along with *invenusta* (12.5), contrasting with *leporum* (12.9) and *facetiarum* (12.9); these words are important markers of desirable or undesirable behaviour in Catullus’ group (see Fordyce *ad loc.* and Quinn 2007 *ad loc.*). The poet also includes Pollio, Asinius’ brother, in the category of those who know how to behave. Pollio’s disapproval of and embarrassment about Asinius’ actions indicate this (12.6-8), and the terms used to describe him (“est enim leporum / differtus puer ac facetiarum” [12.8-9]) show the poet’s approval in the customary language of his social group. Brian A. Krostenko draws attention to the use of the language of social performance in this poem: “*Inuenustus, bellus, lepores, and facetiae* are not loose equivalents for ‘wit’ or ‘style’ but recall respectively gesture, the evaluation of small subgroups, and performances, all of which are plainly appropriate to the poem” (244). These terms contribute to the demarcation of Catullus’ circle, both socially and aesthetically: “In the context of this poem, possession of the common aesthetic standards described by the language of social performance is also a mark of social solidarity between a kind of elite, comprising Catullus, Pollio, and like-minded persons” (Krostenko 244). Ross (1969) also discusses the language of *urbanitas* in the polymetrics (104-12 especially).

13 A man who steals from the dinner-table was a conventional figure in classical literature (Cairns 1972 94), so Asinius, by committing this breach of hospitality, is perhaps also demonstrating his unfamiliarity with literary convention, another sign of his unsuitability for inclusion in the circle of Catullus’ friends.
required in a suitable recipient. Conversely, Veranius and Fabullus have marked Catullus as worthy of their friendship by bestowing liberalitas on him, and he has shown his estimation of them by acknowledging the gift and demonstrating his gratitude publicly.

Another aspect of this gift that accords with Seneca’s treatment of liberalitas is the reference in the poem to its being a mnemosynum (12.13). This word, found nowhere else in Latin, is generally taken to mean ‘souvenir’. C.J. Fordyce (ad loc.) does not make it clear whether he considers this to mean a souvenir of a place or of the person who sent it, but as Quinn (1973 ad loc.) mentions, it must mean that the gift is a reminder of the people who gave it, since the phrase is “mnemosynum mei sodalis”, and Catullus’ interest is in his friends and not in Saetaba itself. This also makes more sense in the context of liberalitas, as can be seen by certain remarks by Seneca. In spite of his earlier strictures about the thought behind the gift mattering more than the actual gift itself, Seneca does offer opinions about what objects make the best gifts. In discussing this, he suggests that the gift’s ability to recall the giver to the recipient’s mind is crucial: “Ingratos quoque memoria cum ipso munere incurrit, ubi ante oculos est et oblivisci sui non sinit, sed auctorem suum ingerit et inculcat” (Ben. 1.12.1). The Saetaban napkins function in this way in Catullus 12 – they recall to the poet his absent friends, and remind him of their generosity towards him. Catullus seems to feel that the gift, once removed

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14 The poet does, however, suggest a possible inversion of liberalitas if Asinius does not return the napkins: he threatens to send him hendecasyllabos as punishment for the theft. The poet can blame as well as praise, and sometimes “gifts” of poetry are in fact the opposite.

15 According to Seneca, gifts that come from people whose judgement is suspect, or that have provenances of which one is ashamed, are not truly benefits and impose no obligation; one must try not to accept gifts from people with whom one does not wish to be associated (Ben. 1.15.6 and 2.18.3).

16 Krostenko suggests that the use of this word may also be “meant to suggest the private world of sentimental value by recalling the language of Greek epigram and excluding the Latin equivalent, monimentum, which usually described reminders of grand achievements” (245).

17 Catullus shows that the value of the napkins lies in their emotional significance not their monetary value in line 12: “non me movet aestimatione.” He is asserting the importance of the value assigned to an item by an individual, rather than by the weight of Roman law and tradition; by asserting the sentimental value of the napkins,
from his sight, might not perform its role adequately, which anticipates Seneca’s opinion: “Apud paucos post rem manet gratia; plures sunt, aput quos non diutius in animo sunt donata quam in usu” (*Ben.* 1.12.2). While here Seneca is discussing possible causes of ingratitude, which is not at issue in the poem, the connection between remembrance and the physical object is relevant. Although Catullus stresses the emotional weight of the gift, he still values the objects themselves.

This examination of the thematic importance of *liberalitas*, however, is meant neither to suggest that it is the main point of poem 12, nor to over-emphasise its seriousness. The poem is humorous and light-hearted, and it is likely that, in fact, the reader is intended to realise that Asinius is a friend of the poet’s. This is an amicable reproach, not a deadly insult, although it does serve to mark the boundaries that define acceptable behaviour within Catullus’ social circle.

“Catullus is rejecting the legal and official in favour of the private and personal” (Krostenko 245). This assertion of personal criteria also contributes to Catullus’ definition of his social circle: the values of this circle do not necessarily match the dictates of Roman law. The idea of personal criteria for social acceptability here also anticipates its importance as a theme in the following poem (Catullus 13).

18 See William Fitzgerald on this poem: “Asinius’ ineptia, the bad timing that makes this exhibition of wit out of place, is the occasion for Catullus’ adroit compliment to Asinius’ brother and for his neat acknowledgment of the gift from his friends” (94). Fitzgerald argues against seeing poems like this as containing anything deeper and more lasting than surface judgements – his argument contrasts, for instance, with Skinner 2003: “in this view, the napkin mediates between surface and depth: trivial yet important, it is the site where the deft instinct for what is right, manifested in the poem’s aesthetic polish, is made to resonate with deeper moral issues of thoughtfulness and ‘deep mutual sympathy’ in the circle of Catullus’ friends” (96). Fitzgerald considers it important not to believe Catullus’ own portrayal of himself and his *urbanius*. Christopher John Nappa, however, supports the contention that this poem uses its “superficially nugatory stance in order to scrutinize the values and social protocols which make that stance seem appropriate” (385), and argues convincingly that the poet uses “his *nugae* as an attempt to scrutinize his social environment and the value systems which support it” (396). I would agree that it is important to be aware of the ways in which Catullus manipulates his readers into complicity with his value judgements, but also argue that this process is itself significant, and can reveal important social and literary concerns. The fact that so many of Catullus’ terms “are essentially about surfaces” (Fitzgerald 96) does not deny them importance; instead, it should focus our attention on the significance of those surfaces in Catullus’ world.

19 Asinius Marrucinus’ brother (12.6-7) is “almost certainly C. Asinius Pollio, the orator and historian and the friend of Virgil and Horace” (Quinn 2007 131), and it seems probable that both he and his brother were members of Catullus’ social circle; if nothing else, Catullus in this poem presents Asinius Marrucinus as having been at a dinner party with him.

20 “It may well be that Catullus is merely turning a practical joke into an opportunity for saying ‘Thank you’ to Veranius and Fabullus and paying a compliment to Pollio” (Fordyce 129).
Liberalitas is nonetheless a significant theme, which illustrates how this concept is a useful tool for Catullus’ larger poetic aims.

As indicated above, Catullus 13 is linked to poem 12 by the theme of gifts and liberalitas. It shows Catullus beginning the process of redefining the substance of liberalitas by challenging conventional Roman expectations: it sets up the prospect of an exchange or obligation, but then rejects the usual substance of that exchange, substituting other things that are given importance in the poet’s world. The framework of Catullus 13 deliberately establishes a conventional situation (a dinner invitation) and then seemingly denies the importance of the usual content, substituting a complex set of poetic and emotional values. It also establishes the boundaries of the poet’s group, defined by the exchange of these beneficia and an expectation of shared values and mutual agreement on priorities. As often in Catullus’ oeuvre, an ostensibly trivial poem can be read as focusing attention on an important aspect of contemporary social expectations and practices.\(^{21}\) The poem centres on gift-giving, liberalitas, and friendship, while replacing the conventional objects of exchange with meros amores and unguentum. The importance of this poem lies in its simultaneous expectation of complicity from its addressee (and the larger poetic and social community of which Catullus and Fabullus are both members) and its awareness of the unconventionality of the poet’s stance and the reversal of the standard pattern of the dinner invitation. The poem establishes the boundaries of Catullus’ social and poetic group and demonstrates the values they espouse while excluding those who do not share them. He presents a confident expectation that Fabullus will share his priorities and will be willing to provide most of the necessities for the party in exchange for the miraculous unguentum Catullus is offering.

\(^{21}\) The use of seemingly trivial poems to address larger social issues is discussed by Nappa: “We can see that poems 12 and 13 exploit their superficially nugatory stance in order to scrutinize the values and social protocols which make that stance seem appropriate” (385). He suggests that Catullus’ poems often “make a more or less clear attempt not only at connecting his poetry to a social milieu, but also at contrasting a set of personal values with those of that milieu” (396). Cf. Krostenko and Selden.
In form, poem 13 is an invitation to dinner.\textsuperscript{22} It contains conventional elements of invitation: the opening phrase “cenabis bene” (1) seems to be a standard formula for a dinner invitation;\textsuperscript{23} time and place are referred to, though not in specific detail (1-3); and the poet describes the expected menu and entertainments, although in this case he protests his own inability to entertain his guest properly, pleading lack of resources.\textsuperscript{24} Catullus takes this last element to a comic extreme (Gowers 229) and develops it into an inversion of a traditional invitation: instead of offering a dinner and its attendant enjoyments, he requests them of his guest.\textsuperscript{25} He promises in return a seemingly trivial recompense, assuring his guest that it will nonetheless be the most important contribution to the party. In spite of this reassurance, the inversion of the normal pattern may appear to be a serious breach of hospitality on Catullus’ part, albeit one with a humorous rather than hostile effect.\textsuperscript{26}

Some scholars have in fact read the poem as a refusal, more or less humorous in intention, to give Fabullus the dinner he has asked for. Christopher John Nappa refers the formula \textit{cenabis bene} to the interaction of a parasite and patron: “\textit{cenabis bene} answers the request for an invitation uttered most likely by a parasite, \textit{cenabo apud te} ... the opening words

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{22} Cf. the discussion of Horace’s \textit{Epistle} 1.5 in chapter 1. This does not imply that the poem was necessarily written about an actual occasion, however: “whereas in early Greek poetry verses of this kind [\textit{vocatio ad cenam}] derived from a definite social occasion, in later Greek and Roman poetry these forms provide an often fictional framework within which the writer could work and impose an individual voice on the basic material” (Arkins 72). For a discussion of the \textit{convivium} as an object of gift-exchange in the Julio-Claudian period, see Matthew B. Roller \textit{Constructing Autocracy: Aristocrats and Emperors in Julio-Claudian Rome}, Chapter Three.
\item \textsuperscript{23} It would reply to the conventional formula of a request: “From Cicero, \textit{De or.} 2.246, it would appear to have been perfectly acceptable conduct to invite oneself to dinner at the house of a familiar friend, using the formula \textit{cenabo apud te}” (D.F.S. Thomson 1997 242).
\item \textsuperscript{24} Edmunds discusses the conventional contents of a poetic dinner invitation: a reference to the insufficiency of the host’s resources is common, especially in poems addressed to a nominally more important or wealthier guest (184-85).
\item \textsuperscript{25} Cairns points out that asking the guest to contribute to the dinner is normal in invitations addressed to social equals, but of course Catullus’ request that Fabullus “provide the whole meal and almost all its accoutrements” is humorous exaggeration (1972 243).
\item \textsuperscript{26} “The source of the humor lies in the total reversal of the expectations” (Helm 213).
\end{itemize}
 imply a dramatic background in which Fabullus has attempted to wrangle a dinner invitation out of his friend”; he proposes that the vagueness of the date and time and the stinginess of Catullus’ offer are designed to rebuke Fabullus for the request, or to put him off with humour and, therefore, refuse to invite him (389). Helena R. Dettmer sees the poem as a joke at Fabullus’ expense. She builds on a suggestion by M. Marcovich, who argues that Catullus 13 is directly inspired by Philodemus 23 (136). Philodemus’ epigram, addressed to his patron, L. Calpurnius Piso, is discussed by Marcovich as the inspiration, not just a parallel, for Catullus’ poem, with the Latin version modifying aspects of the Greek one for humorous effect (137-38). And indeed, Dettmer points out that if this interpretation is correct, Catullus addresses his imitation of Philodemus’ poem to Piso to someone who served on Piso’s staff and failed to get satisfactory rewards or advancement (i.e., Fabullus, whose disappointment is referred to in poems 28 and 47), and who may well have resented Philodemus’ success where he failed (81). She says that “seen in this light, C. 13 is a practical joke on Fabullus, not unlike the sort that Calvus plays on Catullus in the very next poem, C. 14” (82). In something of the same vein, but with perhaps a darker undertone, Case suggests the unguentum is the contents of the pyxis sent to Clodia (Lesbia) as a joke, alluding to an episode mentioned by commentators on Cicero and Quintilian, in which, in reference presumably to the events reported by Cicero in the Pro Caelio, Clodia was apparently sent various tokens connected with prostitutes, including a pyxis containing “an unmentionable substance” (875). The unguentum would then be a ‘vile substance’ and the joke would lie in the fact that Fabullus would definitely not want to smell it, or be turned into a big nose to enjoy it further.

Emily Gowers develops the idea that the poem in fact denies the hospitality that it seems to offer. She suggests it is designed to frustrate Fabullus by repeatedly seeming to give him something and then denying it to him. Gowers reads the poem as moving from the material to the
insubstantial, thereby suggesting more than it promises, and tantalising Fabullus with the promise of sex and food that he cannot, in the end, enjoy, because they are shown to be abstract, elusive qualities rather than solid physical objects (240). Her argument about the elusiveness of Catullus’ offering, connected with the intangible and hard-to-define nature of urbanitas, however, does not require that the poem be designed to frustrate Fabullus and (presumably, therefore) the reader. Indeed her reading fails to take fully into account the context of the poem, and the strong thematic importance of liberalitas and gifts in both this poem and its companions, 12 and 14. The poem does indeed present an ambiguous and nebulous picture of the substance of Catullus’ invitation and, by extension, of his personal and poetic qualities. Crucially, however, Fabullus is shown to be not the frustrated and uninformed butt of Catullus’ joke, but a sophisticated and knowledgeable friend who is invited to share in the poet’s world: on one level he shares Catullus’ priorities, and is expected to acknowledge that the intangible qualities of friendship, love, sex, and poetry are more important than the conventional trappings of a dinner party; on another, reading the catalogue as a loosely programmatic list of desirable characteristics of Catullan and Callimachean poetics (as argued e.g. by Bernstein and Marcovich, see below, p. 84) Fabullus can be relied upon to contribute these qualities himself, and this in itself shows him to be a knowledgeable participant in Catullus’ literary circle.

All these interpretations focus on the inversion of the invitation, but assume that Catullus is reversing the intention behind the invitation, rather than its form or substance. That is, the

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27 Cairns’ point about the equality of status implied by Catullus’ request that his guest contribute to the dinner is important: “Catullus demonstrates his own and Fabullus’ friendship in many ways and the equality of the pair is manifest throughout” (1972 234). Cairns cites Horace’s ode 4.12 as a parallel for the jokes at the expense of a friend who is being invited to dinner: “Odes 4.12 is meant to express the friendship of Horace for Virgil as an equal. It should be read in the same spirit as Catullus 13. It is a parody of the invitation to the rich and busy superior which reveals itself as such by its excessive demands on the guest, demands all the more outrageous because a real invitation to a superior would not ask anything from him” (1972 244). Although my reading of Catullus 13 differs somewhat from Cairns’, I agree that the conventions of the genre are crucial to the poem, and recognising Catullus’ manipulation of them is central to understanding it.
proponents of these views assume that the underlying message of the poem is an anti-invitation or denial of hospitality and sharing. However, I would argue that the reversal concerns instead what Catullus is offering to Fabullus, namely the content of the *liberalitas*. This fits better with the portrayal of Fabullus elsewhere in Catullus’ poetry (in poems 12, 28, and 47), and with the tone and language of the poem. In this reading, poem 13 can be seen as a privileged and exceptionally warm and meaningful invitation, one that directs its focus away from the material and conventional elements of hospitality and friendship towards those prized by Catullus and his social and literary circle: the intangible ingredients of urbane social intercourse and Callimachean literary production.

Understanding the relationship between Catullus and Fabullus, as presented in the poems themselves, is important to any discussion of the tone of this particular poem. Throughout Catullus’ poetry, Fabullus is presented as a close friend, part of the “world of the *urbani*” (Arkins 72-73); in poem 12, as we have just seen, Catullus treasures a reminder of their friendship, and in poems 28 and 47, protests on his behalf about his treatment by Piso. Fabullus is a particularly appropriate figure to share in Catullus’ world and to receive intangible gifts. Fabullus understands how to behave, in particular with regard to wit and *liberalitas*. Within poem 13 itself, he is addressed in affectionate and intimate terms – “mi Fabulle” (13.1), “venuste noster” (13.6), and “tui Catulli” (13.17) – all of which mark the relationship between the two men as close and friendly (D.F.S. Thomson 1997 242). The use of the term *venustus* to describe Fabullus also identifies him as an especially appropriate recipient of a gift that derives, ultimately, from Venus herself – “donarunt Veneres” (13.12) – as noted by Marcovich (132).

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28 Krostenko suggests that *venustus* has a “performative function” here (and in poem 3, where the *homines venustiores* are asked to mourn Lesbia’s sparrow): “it is a kind of hortatory vocative that asks the addressees to participate in the fiction of the poem. In other words to be called *venustus* in these poems is to be asked to appreciate the conventions of polymetric poetry” (261).
Even the name Fabullus indicates his suitability: diminutive in form, it immediately demonstrates his compatibility with Catullus, whose name is also diminutive in form. Further, a name meaning ‘little bean’ surely suggests that its owner will value simplicity in a meal, and share the poet’s Callimachean appreciation for the small and humble. Gowers also notes the suggestiveness of the name, but I disagree with her proposal that it “gives a foretaste of the tiny, worthless dinner for which he is destined” (229), since I differ in my interpretation of the significance and value of the offered repast.

Smallness, indeed, has strongly positive connotations in both Catullus’ poetry and Callimachean poetics. Although diminutives in Catullus’ work have a range of meanings, he does frequently use them to express approval and affection, so there is no particular reason to interpret Fabullus’ name as indicating something negative. There is a close link between Catullus, Fabullus, and gifts and hospitality in this sequence of poems. The ending of poem 13 inverts that of poem 12: in 13, Catullus offers gifts to Fabullus; in 12, Fabullus is the giver to the poet. It is even possible to see in the sequence of poems a suggestion that the invitation of poem 13 is in fact a further return for Fabullus’ gift of the napkins – a continuation of the reciprocal exchange of liberalitas. Taken alone, poem 12 functions as its own reciprocation, since by demonstrating his gratitude Catullus has returned the gift; poem 13, if viewed as a further expression of gratitude, may be one that, by exceeding the original gift, continues the cycle and

29 Kajanto derives Catullus from Cato, ‘prudent’ (250), but it might also be a variant of Catulus, ‘little animal’ (Petersen 358).

30 A. Ronconi points out the importance of diminutives as stylistic markers for Catullus (114).

31 “Sometimes the diminutive mocks; sometimes it expresses affection; sometimes it claims sympathy for the poet or his mistress or a dramatic character such as Attis; sometimes it is part of a process of realistic, ‘modern’ description of scenes or characters from legend” (Quinn 2007 xxxi); compare flosculus ... Inuentorium (24.1) for a diminutive expressing affection or intimacy. In poem 12, Catullus makes a diminutive out of Veranius’ name in the final line to emphasise his affection for him: “haec amem necesse est / ut Veraniolum meum et Fabullum” (12.16-17), pairing it with Fabullus’ already diminutive-in-form name; this pairing is repeated at 47.3 (Ronconi 121). For a full discussion of the diminutive in Catullus, see Ronconi pp. 107-150.
presents the expectation of a further return from Fabullus.

Several scholars have suggested that the *meros amores* and *unguentum* offered to Fabullus by Catullus are in some fashion representative of his poetry. W.H. Bernstein examines the terms used to describe the various elements of the dinner party mentioned in poem 13 and demonstrates that most, if not all, can be taken to refer to aspects of Catullus’ poetic style. For example, *sal* is “wit” and *candida* is the “plain” style (128). He suggests that *meros amores* are Catullus’ own poems. Marcovich argues for a similar interpretation, citing Philodemus 23 as a parallel (135). Gowers summarises the arguments for seeing the elements of the dinner-party as programmatic for Callimachean poetry (230-31). She also notes the important point that viewing this list as metaphorical does not preclude also regarding it as material: “We can extract physical or metaphorical meanings from its vocabulary without having to reject either” (230). She raises several objections to the view that all the elements are programmatic in a positive sense, however. First, she underlines that “bonam atque magnam cenam” seems “antithetical to all the other stylistic metaphors”, since Catullan and Callimachean aesthetics regularly equate large things with bad things (232). This is an important point and should draw our attention back to the frame that surrounds the “aesthetic” elements of the poem. Because the context of a dinner invitation immediately activates the concept of *liberalitas*, the suggestion that the dinner will be *magna* may be connected as much to expectations of generosity and hospitality as to aesthetics. Size or quantity is an important element of hospitality and *liberalitas*, and Catullus is certainly not averse to lavish displays of emotion.32 As a key word, then, *magna* functions to indicate generosity and extravagance. The fact that Catullus then goes on to plead poverty and emphasise his lack of resources focuses this generosity on the things that he does have to offer: *meros amores* and *unguentum*. These are opulent and their presence alone is enough to make the dinner

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32 Poems 5 and 7 provide classic examples of emotional displays.
While Krostenko notes that “the poem describes the insufficiency of mere physical beauty, symbolized by Quintia, whose shapeliness (formosa ~ forma ‘shape, beauty’) is all she has”, it is also clear that physical beauty is a necessary condition for complete attractiveness: “Lesbia, by contrast, is not only beautiful in that way, she also possesses uenustas” (236). Candidus may therefore not describe the essential attraction of a Catullan puella, but that does not make it an uncomplimentary term. The use of candidus elsewhere in Catullus’ poetry suggests that the term has favourable connotations in his aesthetic. In the list in poem 13, therefore, while it is perhaps not a technical term designating a specific style, it does contribute to the overall sense that these elements are desirable in the poetic world shared by Catullus and Fabullus.

Gowers’ final problem with the standard programmatic reading is that the list of apparently desirable qualities is assigned to Fabullus to bring, and Catullus states that he does not have the resources to provide them himself. According to her, “the banal list-form contrasts so much with Catullus’ description of what he will offer in return that it is more likely that a

33 While Krostenko notes that “the poem describes the insufficiency of mere physical beauty, symbolized by Quintia, whose shapeliness (formosa ~ forma ‘shape, beauty’) is all she has”, it is also clear that physical beauty is a necessary condition for complete attractiveness: “Lesbia, by contrast, is not only beautiful in that way, she also possesses uenustas” (236). Candidus may therefore not describe the essential attraction of a Catullan puella, but that does not make it an uncomplimentary term.

34 Of the twelve times the adjective is used by Catullus outside of the two poems under discussion here, seven appear in contexts of love and happiness (8.3, 8.8, 35.8, 61.112, 68.30, 68.94, 68.104, and 107.6). In particular, candida puella describes Caecilius’ girlfriend, also called “Sapphica puella, / musa doctor” in poem 35, and candida diva is used of the puella (usually assumed to be Lesbia) in poem 68. A.M. Keith notes that “candidus belongs to the critical vocabulary of ancient rhetorical theory” (1999 47), in which it is connected with the plain style “championed by the self-proclaimed Roman Atticists” (1999 48). It is associated, therefore, with the elegant compression of, for instance, Tibullus’ poetry (1999 47-48).
contrast is being made between the bare essentials of a meal or poem and its intangible essence” (234). I agree that this is one possible reading of the poem, providing an important demonstration of the way in which Catullus used conventional Roman social structures to convey his own unconventional values and priorities. However, I do not agree that such a reading eliminates the possibility of also reading the text on a programmatic level. If the list can be seen as enumerating desirable qualities in Catullus’ poetry, then its assignment to Fabullus, rather than reducing the value of the items on the list, heightens the value attached to Fabullus himself. Catullus, by means of this request, invites Fabullus to share in the creation and enjoyment of poetry and demonstrates his confidence that his friend is able to contribute many of the significant aspects of this artistic and social process. Certainly, Catullus claims that his own contribution will be superior to that made by Fabullus, but the comparison does not devalue what the latter is asked to bring; rather, it establishes that the former will in fact act as host and will give his guest more than his guest gives him. For, in spite of the seeming “meanness”, as Gowers puts it (240), of the invitation, it is not true that Catullus is not offering hospitality to Fabullus. He says explicitly that he will more than make up for requiring his guest to bring many of the elements of the dinner: “contra accipies meros amores / seu quid suavius elegantiusve est” (13.9-10).

If this programmatic interpretation of the list in poem 13 is accepted, it is natural to take unguentum as also referring to poetic activity; in particular, since it is given by Venus and Cupids to the puella, who then gives it to Catullus, it seems to represent poetic inspiration and skill. Such poetic inspiration is traditionally associated with divinities and, in the case of love poems, it is appropriate for these divinities to be gods of love instead of the more conventional Apollo, Bacchus, or the Muses. The gifts that Catullus offers are therefore symbolic of the essence of his aesthetic and stylistic program.

There have been several other suggestions in the literature for what the unguentum might
be, focusing on a literal and physical interpretation: R.J. Littman argues that the *unguentum* is meant to represent vaginal secretions, specifically Lesbia’s, and that Catullus is offering them to Fabullus to smell, possibly in order to tease him, by offering her secretions but not the girl herself. He also argues that this interpretation makes the reading *meos amores* in line 9 most likely (123-28). J.P. Hallett (1978) agrees with Littman’s general sexual interpretation of the poem, but suggests that the unguent might instead be an anal lubricant that allows Catullus to enjoy his mistress, which makes it better than any of the other trappings of the dinner party; this removes the oddness of having Catullus offer his girl to Fabullus, replacing it with an actual unguent again (747-48). However, these readings have not been generally accepted, although the reminder of the potentially sexual undertones of many of Catullus’ poems is salutary. C. Witke points out some difficulties with Littman’s and Hallett’s readings, refuting in detail many of the arguments adduced by those whom he calls the “revisionists”. His general observations are that these readings require taking some parts of the poem literally (Catullus’ protestations of poverty), while ignoring others (the request that Fabullus bring a *candida puella* of his own, for example); that while Catullus is certainly not averse to coarse and overt sexuality in his poems, he is generally explicit in these cases (e.g., poems 10 and 16) rather than relying on double entendres; and that many of the parallels adduced by Littman and Hallett for *unguentum* as secretions or lubricant are found in very different contexts and with very different connotations, and so do not support this interpretation here (325-31). Gowers, while agreeing with Witke that the extreme readings by Littman and Hallett are unlikely, nonetheless argues for an implicitly sexual reading of the poem, though through allusion rather than explicit euphemisms for sex: “Catullus is relying on innuendo, something that can be received or ignored, extended or limited, according to taste” (239). She goes on to suggest that the invitation to dinner can also be read as an invitation to sexual pleasure, although this invitation is not fulfilled because ultimately
Fabullus is not able to enjoy Lesbia, or the *unguentum*, or the *meros amores*: “the nose is another blow to Fabullus’ expectations, one part of the body which can never participate fully [in sex]” (240).

However, any interpretation that restricts the *unguentum* to either its physical or its metaphorical properties ignores the richness of the image. Perfume is vital to the physical act of dining and socialising at Rome, as well as being an integral aspect of eroticism. At the same time, the intangible element of divine inspiration and beauty, as well as the indefinable quality that makes poetry good (along with the ability to appreciate this quality), are crucial to poetic activity and the friendship and love associated with it. The words *unguentum* and *meros amores* therefore encompass at the same time their literal meaning (the perfume that transforms food into social occasion and the emotion that transforms company into friendship) and the symbolic meaning of poetic talent and inspiration: they are both the inspiration for poetry and the poems themselves, as well as the talent that allows the poet to write. All of these things come from or are associated with the *puella* (Lesbia) and derive ultimately from Venus and Cupids. A complete separation of the metaphorical from the “actual” is not possible because the dinner itself cannot be completely removed from the poem even if the elements are all seen as programmatic metaphors. On one level Catullus offers his poetry or his beloved, along with her miraculous perfume or his poetic inspiration, to Fabullus in return for his provision of a dinner party. This is a mutually acceptable re-organisation of the pattern of hospitality. Catullus’ *liberalitas* is perfectly suited to his guest. On another level all the elements of the party are also

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35 As Gowers astutely suggests, “the vagueness of the last part of the poem may be intrinsic to the nature of the scent itself, which is both real and evocative” (230).

36 See Horace’s frequent mention of perfume in conjunction with wine and/or love, e.g. *Odes* 2.3.13-14, 2.76-8, 2.11.13-18; Griffin says “[perfume] was a regular part of the convivial evening” at Rome in the Augustan period and later (1986 11).
key words for the aesthetic and poetic program that both men adhere to. Catullus does not reject one level for the other, but welcomes and requires both for the occasion to be complete.37

The poem, then, is an invitation that rejects the standard ideas of what should comprise hospitality and liberalitas. Instead of providing his guest with the material components of a dinner party, Catullus offers him poetry and friendship. One crucial aspect of the poem, in this interpretation, is that it expresses the expectation that Fabullus shares the poet’s views of the importance of poetry and aesthetic appreciation. It starts from the assumption that he will understand and agree that the unguentum and meros amores are more valuable than the trappings of a conventional dinner party, and that his own contribution will be more than matched by Catullus’. At the same time, those things that Fabullus is asked to bring all relate to the poetic program Catullus espouses, so he is therefore cast as a participant in the production and appreciation of poetry.38 Catullus demonstrates his assumption that Fabullus will recognise the value of his offer in his prediction that Fabullus will wish to be concentrated entirely into his critical faculty and his capacity to enjoy poetry, represented by totum nasum (13.14).

The poem is therefore not a rejection of Fabullus’ request for dinner; rather it is a recognition of his place within Catullus’ circle. The framework of the invitation serves to mark Fabullus as included and others as excluded. Only if one understands and subscribes to the values presented in the poem can one participate in this dinner party and in the literary community of which Catullus is a part: “The anti-invitation thus becomes a model of hospitality and friendship, with Catullus and Fabullus becoming equivalent, along with the contributions of

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37 “Poem 13 does read as an evocation of Catullus’ style, but the connections are more complicated than has previously been suggested. . . . ultimately there are aspects of his style that are not meant to be pinned down. The essence of urbanitas is underplaying. Meros amores and unguentum combine those aspects of Catullus’ writing that are both most wickedly suggestive and most elusive and intangible: the indescribable something that cannot be written down in a recipe” (Gowers 244).

38 Cf. poem 50.
each” (Richlin 357). Dogmatic assertions about any individual element of poem 13, or of the work as a whole, seem unwarranted and less than useful. Ambiguity is common in Catullus’ poems and integral to the understanding of many of them.39

In fact, the ambiguity of the references in Catullus 13 may provide the key to its meaning. If it suggests a set of values, assumptions, and priorities shared between Catullus and his friends, a set which is not common to others outside that group, why could the poem not be intended to have different meanings for different readers? Might not part of the exclusionary work done by Catullus’ poetry be to establish boundaries by means of the possibilities of interpretation within and outside the group? These multiple layers of meaning may not be as organised as “a private code” (Witke 325 n. 5), but may still be more readily understandable by Catullus’ intimates than by outsiders.40

To sum up, poem 13, following on poem 12's establishment of the importance of properly conducted gift-giving and demonstrations of gratitude within Catullus’ poetic and social world, presents an innovative strategy for negotiating the relationship between poet and addressee, and a compelling use of the conventions of liberalitas to establish the poet in a position of authority. The re-definition of the content of liberalitas allows Catullus to portray his poetry as a pre-eminent gift. He has the power to give poetry and poetic activity to his friends, and so the prestige and standing of his persona within the poem are enhanced.

I will now demonstrate that poem 14 develops this strategy further, presenting the use of poetry in liberalitas as obviously acceptable, and concentrating on the more intangible qualities

39 “It proves to be impossible to receive Catullus’ work merely as a unit of referential meaning that can be decoded without leaving a residue. The syntax, rhetoric, and generic organization of his pieces are unusually enigmatic and complex” (Selden 463).

40 Krostenko’s examination of the language of social performance, specifically venustus, within this poem (and in poem 3) leads him to a similar conclusion: “it is not only that Fabullus and the venustiores are to be familiar with Greek poetry and comfortable with eroticism, they are also in effect challenged by Catullus to make a show of their familiarity by understanding the stance he has taken” (264).
that determine its value. In some ways it reverses the situation of the previous poem: “This poem, in which Catullus refuses a gift (recusatio) and threatens to send a counter-gift, clearly contrasts with poem 13, in which he begs for gifts and promises a counter-gift. Like poems 12 and 13 this is a party-poem: the bad poets (i.e., verses) are unwanted guests” (Claes 64). Poem 14 is a much more explicit demonstration of poetry as a gift, with Catullus receiving (and rejecting) a set of poems from his friend Calvus, who (Catullus assumes) had in turn received them from one of his clients. The contexts for the gift-giving are again conventional, just as the souvenirs and dinner party were in the previous two poems. Calvus was given the poems as a token of gratitude by a client whom he had defended, and then gave them to Catullus on the Saturnalia, an occasion on which the exchange of small gifts was customary. Catullus also appears to express satisfaction that Calvus has been rewarded for his services; in fact, it appears that the actual content of the gift is less important than the fact that Calvus has been given one by a client (since Catullus goes on to make it clear that he does not consider the poems to be worth much in themselves). This is appropriate to the idea that it is the act of recognising a service by giving a gift in thanks for it that is important, not necessarily the gift itself.

In spite of the low quality of the works in question, in this poem we see Catullus

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41 This chain of giving recalls that of poem 13, in which the unguentum and dinner party form a connected chain of gifts: “The gods have thus demonstrated their love and affection for Lesbia by way of the very same gift that the poet will use to prove his love and affection for Fabullus, who will have, on the occasion of the dinner, demonstrated his own love and affection for Catullus by the gifts he brings” (Forsyth 572).

42 The Saturnalia was a recognised occasion for giving small gifts to one’s friends, such as wax candles (Scullard 207). That a book of poems might be an appropriate gift is shown in a poem by Martial (14.195), written to accompany a Saturnalian gift of a copy of Catullus’ poems (Quinn 2007 138). Of course the Martial poem is quite possibly specifically recalling Catullus 14.

43 The fact that Calvus tried to use these poems as a Saturnalia gift presumably indicates that this would be considered a small token, not a present of substantial value, since the gifts exchanged on the Saturnalia were usually small.
presenting the exchange of poetry as a normal element of conventional *liberalitas*. Whatever the actual provenance of the poems Calvus has offered him, Catullus’ assumption that they are a gift from a grateful client seems to indicate that both he and Calvus would accept poetry as a suitable recompense for one of the central activities connected with *liberalitas*, legal services. The language of exchange and reciprocation is prominent in the description of the poems:

*quod si, ut suspicor, hoc novum ac repertum*

**munus dat** tibi Sulla litterator,

non est mi male, sed bene ac beate,

*quod non dispereunt* tui labores. (14.8-11)

To what extent this is intended to represent standard Roman practice, however, is not certain. In this poem Catullus clearly presents himself and Calvus as sharing particular aesthetic views and values, as opposed to such others as Sulla *litterator* and the hack poets Caesius, Aquinus, and Suffenus; perhaps their mutual appreciation of poetry as a gift is meant to be an element of this differentiation from the rest of Roman society. The same mechanism of exclusion by means of establishing shared values can be seen in Catullus’ treatment of the gift as a deliberate joke on Calvus’ part. His assumption that Calvus sent the poems in a jocular spirit is like the

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44 Among other things, this poem invokes the framework of *amicitia* that Catullus uses throughout his poems to structure his relationships both with his friends and with Lesbia. Ross offers a good discussion of Catullus’ use of the terminology of *amicitia* in his poetry about “the working of that formal and typically Roman code of behavior that governed and made possible everyday relationships between men,” and his use of the *amicitia* metaphor in his Lesbia epigrams (1969, 80-95).

45 Quinn is willing to believe Catullus that the poems came from a client (2007 136); Fordyce calls this a pretence, and suggests that Calvus arranged the selection himself (135). However, as D.F.S. Thomson says, “F.’s suggestion that Calvus ‘perhaps made the selection of poems himself’ encounters the difficulty that C. seems to take it as certain that the book (before it was passed on to him) had indeed been given to Calvus by a grateful client, since he speculates (*ut suspicor*) on the identity of the client (ll.8-9)” (1997 244). This suggestion also requires the reader to have knowledge about the situation that has not been provided by the poem itself, and though this is not impossible, it is not Catullus’ regular practice.

46 This reading of Catullus’ attitude, and the overall tone of the poem, is supported by Quinn (2007), Fordyce, and D.F.S. Thomson (1997); both Quinn and Thomson support the reading *salse* in line 16, which would seem to confirm the tone.
assumption in poem 13 that Fabullus will agree with Catullus in valuing the perfume more highly than the usual trappings of a dinner. Both assumptions act as compliments to the addressee by including him in the poet’s inner circle. In that sense, the poems act, paradoxically, as published “inside jokes,” which define the members of the inner circle through their ability to interpret the tone and meaning of the poem.

Calvus’ act of passing on the poems to Catullus appears to continue the cycle of continuous gift-giving that is the practice of *liberalitas* within the Roman elite. The bond between the client and Calvus has been demonstrated; now Calvus exhibits his friendship with Catullus by giving him a Saturnalia gift. Or so the situation could have been expected to unfold—but, of course, it does not. As in poem 13, Catullus plays against this background of *liberalitas* for humorous effect while at the same time introducing and developing a discussion of poetics. His most dramatic inversion of the expected pattern of *liberalitas* is his rejection of Calvus’ gift. In the previous poem, Catullus inverted the role of a host by inviting a guest to bring almost all the usual elements of a dinner party; in this poem, he inverts the role of a recipient of *liberalitas* by making public his refusal and lack of gratitude for a gift.

This group of poems (12, 13, 14) shows Catullus deploying and manipulating the basic conventions of *liberalitas*, but substituting poetry and aesthetics for the usual substance of exchange; he also applies his own standards to the process, judging the exchange on criteria that are important to him and his social and poetic circle rather than by the usual standards of Roman elite society. Although in poem 14 he rejects the poetry he has been given, he does so on stylistic grounds, rather than because of its lack monetary value or inappropriateness as a gift—it is the quality of the poetry, not its content or the fact that it is poetry that disqualifies it as a good gift. This use and manipulation of *liberalitas*, and especially the elevation of poetic activity as a valuable commodity to be transferred, is also evident in other poems by Catullus that deal
explicitly with the exchange of poetry. The creation and giving of poems can be seen to create a bond of obligation between friends, just as does the exchange of favours and services in Roman society in general.\footnote{Keith points out that this idea of Roman poetic composition as “co-operation and competition” continues in the succeeding generations, with the “exchange of verses cementing the homosocial bonds of privilege, poetry, and desire” in Propertius’s poetry (2008 117). Here, as elsewhere, Catullus acts as a powerful influence on later writers. One can also examine the question of ‘co-operation and competition’ from the perspective of aggressive Mediterranean masculinity, following the anthropological model favoured by, e.g., Michael Herzfeld in Poetics of Manhood.} We can also see this elsewhere in his poetry, and I will briefly touch on some further examples. Catullus 38, 65, and 68 demonstrate “that there is a significant obligation to compose poetry in answer to a specific request” (Burgess 582). In poem 50, this “obligation to compose in response to another [is] framed in terms of literary amicitia and the bonds uniting the members of the Catullan clique” (Burgess 581). The poem

shows the transition from the immediate responson of an Attic skolion (lines 1-6) to the slower responson determined by this poem’s form, the Roman verse epistle. The poetic obligation which Catullus imposes upon Calvus by the preces carries with it all the weight which we have seen in the verse epistles, cc. 38, 65, 68. He who makes the request has a right to expect it to be answered on the basis of amicitia ... Calvus is obliged to Catullus as a friend and as a competitor.

(Burgess 584-85)

Catullus’ creation and publication of poem 50 results in Calvus being “bound by the requirements of amicitia, by the rules of reciprocal composition, and, at the level of this poem’s central metaphor, by the beloved’s obligation to show favor to the lover” (586). If this is amicitia, it is of course a different version than the Roman social and political obligation usually meant by the term;\footnote{For definitions of amicitia in Roman ethical and political discourse, see Konstan (1997 122-24).} the priorities and values have changed, though the basic mechanisms remain the same. P. Pucci discusses the poem as a polemic attempt to establish a “Catullan” or
“neoteric/amatory” set of values for the good citizen, as opposed to the “Ciceronian” man.

Within this set of values, the exchange of political and material favours is replaced with the exchange of poetry and the sharing of poetic endeavour (249-56).49

Having demonstrated the main strategy that Catullus uses to redefine liberalitas as an important part of his social and aesthetic world, I will now turn to a programmatic example of his use of liberalitas that sets the stage for an important site of negotiation in the poetry of his lyric and elegiac successors: poem 1. This poem, as a dedication for his collection, brings to the fore the connection between poetry, liberalitas, and patronage. The relationship between poet and patron, insofar as we can see it reflected in the relationship between poet and dedicatee, is a continuing problem for the poets of the late Republic and early principate. As the political context changed, the question of dependence and status developed greater urgency. The tension between the reciprocity of liberalitas and the hierarchy of power and status within Roman society can be seen with particular clarity in poems that act as dedications of collections of poetry. These poems, both by their very nature and because of the literary tradition in which they stand, portray the poet as both giving a gift and expressing gratitude to the dedicatee.

The first poem in Catullus’ collection strongly foregrounds the issue of giving and receiving.50 It opens by asking who is a suitable recipient for Catullus’ poetry and for his generosity: “Cui dono novum libellum” (1.1). This is a rhetorical question answered immediately

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49 Krostenko demonstrates, though, that this ‘polemic’ differentiation is in many ways a process that went on in many spheres; Cicero himself worked to establish his own standards in his rhetorical works: “Like Cicero in his rhetorica, Catullus defines the language of social performance as the possession of a social group that conforms to its own ideal. Where Cicero defined it as the possession of Romans with an acute sense of social propriety ... Catullus puts judgment of what is lepidus and bellus and uenustus in the hands of those who understand the assignation of private, emotional value” (244). The structure of the relationships remains the same, but the terms of reference are established differently by different people, and are also constrained by the genres in which they appear.

50 It is of course not certain that the collection as we have it was organised in exactly this order by Catullus himself, but poem 1 must have been an introductory poem, whatever the precise collection it introduced. For discussion of the poem as an introductory poem, see Cairns 1969, Wiseman 1969, Quinn 1973, Van Sickle 1981, Skinner 2003.
by the poet, but it highlights the issue central to any dedication: who is the dedicatee and why, and what relationship does dedicating a poem or collection of poems establish between the poet and the dedicatee? \(^{51}\) Cicero says that there are two kinds of *liberalitas*: “unum dandi beneficii, alterum reddendi” (*Off.* 1.15.48), of which the former is optional, but the latter required. Since the poem begins by asking to whom the book should be given, it implies that the poet has free choice, and thus that the gift will be of the former type. This produces an initial impression of the poet as benefactor, in a position to bestow his *liberalitas* wherever he pleases, and thereby create an obligation on the part of the recipient. The emphasis on the quality of the gift (*lepidum, expolitum*) and its novelty (*novum, modo*) is appropriate in this context, since its purpose is to increase the value of the *beneficium*. Seneca says that in order to maximise the value of a gift, and the gratitude felt by the recipient, one should give something rare, suitable to the recipient’s taste and interests, not already possessed by the recipient, and enduring. \(^{52}\) The newness of Catullus’ poetry book takes care of the first and third items in this list, while the second is covered by the lines describing Nepos’ own literary interests. The last item is addressed in the final line, in Catullus’ prayer that his poetry will endure long past his own or Nepos’ lifetime. In this context the use of *dono* rather than *do* in the initial question is suggestive. Catullus uses *donare* only three other times in his poetry, and there seems to be a distinction in his usage between it and the simple *dare*. \(^{53}\) In his usage, *donare* seems to convey a greater sense of

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\(^{51}\) “Poem 1, the dedication to Cornelius Nepos, is not simply personal, but programmatic: its opening phrase, *Cui dono*, “To whom will I give,” introduces the theme of gift giving” (Martin 122).

\(^{52}\) “Si arbitrium dandi penes nos est, praecipue mansura quaeremus, ut quam minime mortale munus sit” (*Ben.* 1.12.1); and “munera non tam pretiosa quam rara et exquisita sint” (*Ben.* 1.12.4).

\(^{53}\) In poems 13, 62, and 101. The first occurrence (13.12) is perhaps for variety, since *dare* is used in the preceding line, but it is used of a gift from a goddess, however humorous the context may be. In the second passage (62.23), *donare* is used of Hesperus giving the bride to the bridegroom in marriage, while in the third (101.3), Catullus is giving gifts to his brother’s ashes; both contexts are formal and somewhat ritualistic. As well, *dō* has less weight metrically than *dōnō*, an important consideration for Catullus.
grandeur and formality than *dare*.

The immediate impression of Catullus as initiating a cycle of giving is modified, however, as the poem continues. A recipient is named, and the reasons for the choice are enumerated:

> Corneli, tibi: namque tu solebas
> meas esse aliquid putare nugas
> iam tum, cum ausus es unus Italorum
> omne aevum tribus explicare cartis
doctis, Iuppiter, et laboriosis. (1.3-7)

Both Cicero and Seneca repeatedly emphasise the importance of choosing the recipient of *beneficia* very carefully, and enumerate the qualities that should be looked for in a potential recipient. Cicero also stresses the importance of affection and friendship when deciding to give a *beneficium* to someone: “de benivolentia autem, quam quisque habeat erga nos, primum illud est in officio, ut ei plurimum tribuamus, a quo plurimum diligamur” (*Off.* 1.15.47). As I have already demonstrated in my discussions of some of his other poems, Catullus agrees with Cicero and Seneca on the importance of the structured exchange of *beneficia*, and he uses the associated language of *amicitia* throughout his poems to praise, exhort, rebuke, or condemn his friends, enemies, and lovers. Where Catullus differs from these authors is in his valuation of the qualities that are desirable in one who is to receive his favours and affection. Instead of traditional Roman virtues such as those enumerated by Cicero and Seneca, the characteristics that interest Catullus are primarily those associated with his literary and aesthetic affiliations. In particular, some of

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54 See especially *Off.* 1.14.45-1.15.46, and 2.20.69ff.; and *Ben.* 4.9.2ff and 4.11.1f.

55 Cicero lists “modestia, temperantia, ... iustitia” as the most important virtues to look for in a potential recipient (*Off.* 1.15.46); Seneca says he would choose to bestow *beneficia* on a “virum integrum, simplicem, memorem, gratum, alieni abstinentem, sui non avare tenacem, benevolum” (*Ben.* 4.11.1).
his key terms of praise are *venustus*, *lepidus*, *elegans*, *urbanus*, *bellus*, and *doctus*. 56 These terms are not alien to Cicero’s own language, especially in his personal correspondence, in which he generally views them as desirable qualities, 57 but they are not the characteristics that he considers important in judging the suitability of a potential recipient of *beneficia*, or even of a potential friend. 58 It is in this that Catullus and his associates break with conventional Roman attitudes, not in their basic regard for the traditional Roman structures of *amicitia* and gift exchange. They substitute aesthetic belonging and acceptance for traditional morality, but maintain the conventional mechanisms for constructing and demonstrating their connections and judgements.

To return to Catullus’ dedication poem, then, lines 3-7 outline the reasons that Catullus chose Nepos to receive this book: the services that Nepos has performed in the past for the poet, such as considering his *nugae* of importance and worth something within the literary community. This gift is therefore a requital, an act of gratitude, rather than an initiation of the cycle of gift exchange. 59 Catullus is thus not eliciting gratitude but displaying it by giving or dedicating his book of poetry to Nepos. The situation we originally imagined is reversed, with Catullus demonstrating his obligation to, and even perhaps dependence on, Nepos. Instead of claiming a position of comparative power relative to Nepos, Catullus acknowledges Nepos’ status as

56 For a detailed examination of Catullus’ vocabulary and its relation to Cicero’s terminology of approval and disapproval see Krostenko. Ross (1969) also discusses the language of *urbanitas* in the polymetrics (104-12 especially).

57 See, for example, his *Att. 4.8.2, Quint. 1.3.3, and Fam. 7.32.3, 3.8.3, and 7.15.2.*

58 According to Cicero’s *De amicitia*, friendship can exist only between good men “qui ita se gerunt, ita vivunt, ut eorum probetur vita integritas aequitas liberalitas, nec sit in eis ullos cupiditas libido audacia, sintque magna constanti” (5.19). There are other important considerations: “sunt igitur firmi et stabiles et constantes eligendi” (17.62) and “simplicem praeterea et communem et consentientem, id est, qui rebus isdem moveratur, elegi par est” (18.65).

59 The poem also highlights the characteristics that make Nepos a worthy recipient of Catullus’ benefaction: his literary judgement (“tu solebas / mes esse aliquid putare nugas”) and the quality of his accomplishment (“doctis . . . et laboriosis”). To mark these as the criteria for Catullus’ decision to give his book to Nepos is to signal a deviation from traditional Roman standards, and this contrast is made more striking by its juxtaposition with the normal, expected, and solidly traditional Roman institution of *beneficia.*
benefactor. This possible interpretation is supported by the deprecatory tone of Catullus’
description of his book of poetry.\(^{60}\) It was conventional for the recipient of a beneficiary to
protest his inability ever to repay it adequately, and to depreciate any requital he did make.\(^{61}\) This
tone, and the fact that the poem concentrates on Nepos’ actions rather than his intrinsic qualities,
seems on the whole to favour interpreting it as a token of gratitude, rather than an unsolicited
gift. As well, the conjunction namque in line 3 introduces a reason for Catullus’ choice of
recipient, and while it does not abolish the choice, it gently introduces the idea of a kind of
obligation. However, the initial impression does not fully disappear, and the ambiguity may be
deliberate; by suggesting both interpretations, Catullus could be said to be moderating the
explicitness of the status inequality generated by his expression of gratitude, thus lessening the
potential damage to his own dignity. At the same time, he is able to use the aspects of the
conventional workings of beneficia to his advantage, because he gains prestige from his
relationship with Nepos one way or the other, having given the reasons why Nepos is either an
appropriate recipient or a discriminating benefactor. In the end, Catullus can be deferential and
complimentary, and gain standing from his association with a man of good taste (which replaces
the criterion of proper ethical judgement in more conventional circles), while maintaining
enough ambiguity about the relationship between them to allow him to avoid unmistakably
taking on the role of lesser amicus.

The emended phrase in the penultimate line of the poem points to one final strategy for
deflecting any potential loss of status. According to the reading given by R.A.B. Mynors, and
generally accepted, Catullus turns at the end of the poem to address his patrona virgo, usually

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\(^{60}\) In his use of the term libellus for his book (1.1, 1.8) and the phrases “meas . . . nugas” (1.4) and
“quidquid hoc libelli / qualecumque” (1.8-9).

\(^{61}\) Off. 2.20.70 and Ben. 2.24.4.
understood as a muse, asking her to help his poems endure for more than one *saeclum*. He reserves the term *patronus* to the end of his poem, thus giving it greater emphasis – and then denies it to Nepos, who might have seemed a potential recipient of the title, according to the logic of the poem. By naming another figure as patron, Catullus transfers much of the burden of gratitude expected in a dedicatory poem away from Nepos, the original addressee. Displaying dependence or gratitude towards a deity was much less problematic than doing so towards another Roman citizen. Catullus uses the language of *clientela* in connection with a goddess elsewhere in his poetry (34.1-2), where the *puellae et pueri integri* are said to be *in fide* of Diana, as if, according to Fordyce, she were their patron (87). There have been some critics, however, who are uncomfortable with the reading “*patrona,*” and the sudden appeal to an unnamed goddess. Fordyce thinks that *virgo* is “curiously unexplicit”, and prefers Bergk’s emendation, “qualemcumque quidem est, patroni ut ergo”, suggesting that this gives the *libellus* “a *patronus* to speak for it – Cornelius himself. He, as Catullus has just said, is a figure in the world of letters and his name will ensure a future for the book in spite of its shortcomings” (87). However, this analysis ignores the anxiety over position that has been apparent throughout the poem. It is impossible that Catullus would have called Nepos his *patronus*; they were far too close in status.

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62 Keith points out that *patrona virgo* builds on the allusion to Meleager’s introduction to his *Garland* found in the opening lines: “In dedicating his polymetrics to Cornelius Nepos, Catullus closely reworks the opening couplet of the poem that prefaced Meleager’s *Garland* (AP 4.1.1-2=Meleager 1.1-2 Gow-Page): ‘Dear Muse, to whom do you bring this song, rich in fruit of every kind, or who constructed this garland of song-makers?’ In addition to the Meleagrian echo in his opening lines, Catullus transmutes the epigrammatist’s ‘dear Muse’ into the ‘maiden patronness’ (*patrona virgo*, Cat. 1.9) he invokes at the close of his lyric dedication” (2008 51).

63 See Cairns 1969: “Catullus in his replacement of Nepos by his Muse at the end of the poem is ... showing that the dedicatee was not his patron” (158).

64 For a fuller examination of the reasons for and effect of treating divinities as patrons, see the discussion of Tibullus 1.1 below (pp. 126ff).
for that to be acceptable, unless it were in the technical sense. Yet there is no way to make the legal meaning work here – it would be far more intrusive than an appeal to an unspecified muse. The manuscript reading, with the emendation for the metre, is perfectly appropriate as a final tactic in Catullus’ ongoing effort to preserve his dignity and status, while maintaining his connections to a chosen circle of literary contemporaries.

Catullus recognised the potential problems of status involved in a dedicatory poem and so exploited the ambiguity of the act of giving to make the power relationship between himself and his dedicatee unclear. I want to turn now to examine one of his successors, Horace, and his approach to this problem in his early work. When Horace was composing his collection of iambic poetry, strongly influenced by Catullus but attempting to establish his own claim to originality in Latin poetry, he was even more aware of these same problems and the ambiguities of liberalitas in a literary context. His situation was different from Catullus’, however, and the strategies he employed to lessen the difficulties of dedicating his work to a powerful contemporary were correspondingly different. Horace’s Epodes 1, like Catullus 1, is clearly a dedication poem, but it is addressed to someone who is explicitly identified as the poet’s benefactor. This poem, and by extension all the poems in the collection which it introduces,

65 The only other appearance of the word in the Catullan corpus (49.7) does not constitute evidence against this contention, since there Catullus uses the word in its technical legal sense of pleader or advocate. In any case Cicero is “omnium patronus,” which effectively nullifies any perception of real inferiority that might conceivably linger.

66 Quinn notes “C[atullus] unlike Horace does not specify which muse he means, but then neither does Homer – or Meleager; to do so here might overdo the mock solemnity which invests the genuine feeling latent in this prayer” (2007 90).

67 “Epodes 1 is in most ways a highly traditional and typical poem from client to patron . . . the poem is, in many ways, a perfect symbolization of the proper kind of attitude toward a patron who is regarded with affection” (Gold 1982 119-20). But this begs the question of what type of relationship between Horace and Maecenas is demonstrated or described by the poem; Barbara K. Gold herself notes that there are aspects of the poem that seem to present Horace as “the strong member of the pair” (1982 120). Cairns classes the poem as an excusatory proemptikon (1972 11), but sees lines 23ff. as introductory and dedicatory in function: “Epode 1 is the prologue to a book of epodes and so will necessarily have the functions of a prologue, its main function being programmatic, to display Horace as an epodic poet ... the secondary prologue function of 23ff. is dedicatory. The address to Maecenas
form a token of Horace’s gratitude for Maecenas’ generosity in the past. Horace must therefore carefully negotiate the issue of relative status, balancing his desire to be complimentary to Maecenas against his reluctance to reduce his own position too much. Oliensis sees this poem as opening with a “programmatic exercise in epodic hierarchy” which establishes the relative positions of poet and patron, and with a “gesture of deference [that] extends not only to his position in the hierarchy but to the very mettle of his manhood” (1998 80-82); as the poem continues, however, this subordination of Horace to Maecenas is problematized (1998 82-84).

While agreeing with the outlines of this reading, I think the mechanisms of Horace’s negotiation of his position require more detailed examination, especially with reference to the example furnished by Catullus 1, and the other Augustan dedications that will be discussed in this chapter.

Horace’s goal, and therefore his strategy, are not the same as Catullus’ in his interactions with Nepos. Although it is not made explicit in the poem, the gap between Horace, Italian freedman’s son, and Maecenas, close friend of Octavian and wealthy descendant of Etruscan kings, was enormous. It precluded the possibility of Horace trying to establish himself as the benefactor rather than the recipient, even in the constructed poetic fiction of friendship among equals. Also, it allowed Horace to acknowledge receiving liberalitas from Maecenas and to treat

at 4 is a dedication of the book of epodes to him, and Horace returns to Maecenas in his role as dedicatee in this last section of the epode” (1972 143).

68 Randall L.B. McNeill supports the assertion that Horace found the position of recipient of Maecenas’ favour problematic: “it might be denied that the inequalities of the patron-client relationship required any sort of response at all. One of the duties of a clients was to publicize the favors and other noteworthy accomplishments of his patron; consequently, it has been argued that clients had to accept openly their inherently inferior status. But Horace does not fit this model. Although he is careful to express his gratitude to his patron for his friendship, support, and other beneficia, he only implicitly acknowledges any subordination and does his best to confuse the issue with conflicting images of himself as Maecenas’s friend and chosen companion . . . There is certainly no open acceptance of the relationship’s uncertainties here but a definite attempt to present himself to better advantage” (30). Oliensis gives a close analysis of the opening lines of the poem which demonstrate its foregrounding of the subordinating relationships between Augustus, Maecenas, and Horace (1998 81), but she also points out that this is not an unproblematic subordination: “Horace is not, after all, perfectly comfortable with the subordinate status displayed in the opening lines of his first epode” (1998 82).
this as a mark of honour rather than degradation.\(^{69}\) Since Horace willingly admits his gratitude to Maecenas, the problem he faces is the possible perception that his relationship to Maecenas is based solely, or at least largely, on his hopes for material gain from his more powerful friend; connected to this is the possibility that he may be seen as writing poetry essentially for pay, with the gifts from Maecenas being rewards for his poetic production. Horace’s main strategy, therefore, is to present the relationship between the two men as founded on affection, and to emphasise his own emotional attachment to Maecenas. He raises the possibility that his desire for wealth and material rewards is the motivation for his support of Maecenas, only to dismiss it, and he attempts to redefine *gratia* in an affective, rather than material sense.

The framework of *amicitia* is signalled immediately in the first apostrophe to Maecenas: “ibis Liburnis inter alta navium, / amice, propugnacula” (*Epod*. 1.1-2). In fact, the key word *amice* appears before Maecenas’ actual name, introduced in the next clause: “paratus omne Caesaris periculum / subire, Maecenas, tuo” (1.3-4). This not only serves a programmatic purpose, by introducing the theme of friendship, central to the book as a whole, but also emphasises the connection between the poet and his addressee, which Horace wishes to be seen as primary. Also, the term *amicus* is, at least notionally, one used between equals, so by introducing it before he reveals the name (and therefore the exalted status) of his addressee, Horace immediately establishes a sense of parity between himself and Maecenas. The emotional aspect of the relationship is stressed in the following lines: “quid nos, quibus te vita si superstite / iucunda, si contra, gravis?” (1.5-6). This conventional protestation of devotion\(^{70}\) employs

\(^{69}\) Oliensis in fact suggests that Horace views the relationship between himself and Maecenas as an essential part of the stabilisation of Roman life after the civil wars: “his subordination to Maecenas appears to be an instance of the kind of coupling which holds Roman society together” (1998 80).

\(^{70}\) For the topos and Horace’s modifications to it in this poem, see Cairns (1972 141). Cf. also Tibullus 1.7, and Propertius 1.6. Oliensis points out the intersection of the language and actions of the client and the lover in “The Erotics of Amicitia: Readings in Tibullus, Propertius, and Horace”: “In the pursuit of their disparate goals, the client and the lover are represented as displaying similar virtues (constancy, discretion, eloquence) and encountering
language familiar from love poetry, especially *iucunda* and *gravis*, the first a very Catullan epithet for the beloved, the second a traditional description of the pain and sorrow felt by the rejected or abandoned lover. It serves the dual purpose of both emphasising Horace’s affection for Maecenas by exploiting the emotional intensity of the language of love poetry, and demonstrating the difference between the lives and characters of the two men.\(^{71}\)

The emphasis on the friendship that Horace feels for Maecenas is continued a few lines later:

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feremus et te vel per Alpium iuga
inhospitalem et Caucasum
vel Occidentis usque ad ultimum sinum
forti sequemur pectore. (1.11-14)
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These lines have been compared to a similar passage in Catullus 11, in which the poet quotes the protestations of his friends Furius and Aurelius back to them.\(^{72}\)

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Furi et Aureli, comites Catulli,
sive in extremos penetrabit Indos,
litus ut longe resonante Eoa
tunditur unda,
sive in Hyrcanos Arabasve molles,
seu Sagas sagittiferosve Parthos,
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\(^{71}\) Gold sees this as a conventional expression of loyalty from client to patron (1982 119), but the parallels with Catullus 11 suggest that Horace wishes to display friendship here, not obligation or duty.

\(^{72}\) This is a friendship topos, “the concept that the willingness to accompany a friend anywhere is a proof of friendship” (Cairns 1972 99).
Horace, by his own admission in the previous lines, is no more suited to accompany Maecenas to battle in foreign lands than Catullus’ friends seem to have been to carry out their extravagant promises. However, he is unsuited for such a task because of his essentially mollis and imbellis nature, the cause and result of his poetic persona, not because he is insincere in his protestations of friendship. This is what necessitates the modifications to the Catullan model that Horace offers in his poem. He uses the same friendship topos as Catullus, that of a willingness to travel to distant lands, but his choice of geography is different, and significantly so. Instead of the exotic locales named by Catullus (India, Arabia, Britain), Horace lists the Alps, the Caucasus, and the western shores of the Mediterranean. David Mankin (1995) points out that all three of the areas that Horace names were potential arenas for war with external enemies instead of fellow Romans: Gauls and Germans across the Alps, Parthians by the Caucasus, and Spaniards in the west. This is in opposition to the civil war to which Maecenas is headed in the east, a part of the world that Horace fails to mention (1995 53-54). He believes that the “focus on ‘trouble spots’ of military concern distinguishes this context from many of the supposed parallels, in which the destinations include impossibly remote or even fabulous places” (1995 54). The choice of locales may also suggest that Horace wishes Maecenas were fighting in wars against externi rather than

sive quae septemgeminus colorat  
aequora Nilus,  
sive trans altas gradietur Alpes,  
Caesaris visens monimenta magni,  
Gallicum Rhenum horribile aequor ulterior,  
mosque Britannos,  
omnia haec, quaecumque feret voluntas  
caelitum, temptare simul parati (11.1-14)
Romani.

There are stylistic differences between the two poems as well. In Horace’s poem, the list is given in much simpler fashion, in one sentence of four lines, and the descriptions of the locations are less elaborate: the *iuga* of the Alps are modified by no adjective, the Caucasus by the plain *inhospitalēm*, and the *sinum* only with *ultimum*\(^{73}\) and *Occidentis*; as well, the word order is relatively straightforward, with no dramatic sound effects. In contrast, Catullus’ catalogue, though also forming part of only one sentence, takes up eleven lines, and the language is as extravagant and exotic as the places that are described – *Eoa, Hyrcanos, molles, sagittiferos, septemgeminus, horribile* – and full of sound effects, such as the *n*’s, *o*’s, and *u*’s of “longe resonante Eoa / tunditur unda”, the *s*’s of “seu Sagas sagittiferosve Parthos”, and the *m*’s and *n*’s of “monimenta magni”.\(^{74}\) The contrast between the two poems makes Horace’s offer seem more realistic and more sincere than the exaggerated promises of Furius and Aurelius. The same effect results from Horace’s modification of the generic conventions of the friendship topos that both writers employ here. In Catullus 11, the topos is used in the standard, hypothetical way: “you are my friends and would therefore accompany me anywhere.” In the epode, however, “Horace uses it in a factual form: ‘I will accompany you anywhere’; and this makes the topos relevant to the situation in hand, where Horace is stating that he will in fact accompany Maecenas” (Cairns 1999 141). This reinforces the contrast between Catullus’ version and Horace’s, and emphasises the sincerity of the latter’s offer. Nonetheless, the parallels between Furius and Aurelius on the one hand and Horace on the other, established so carefully through verbal and thematic allusion, stress his unsuitability for the journey on which he is embarking, thus demonstrating how deep

\(^{73}\) This is perhaps a direct allusion to Catullus 11.

\(^{74}\) *Longa resonante* is also a translation of the Homeric πολυφλοισβος, which adds to the grandiose feel of the passage (Quinn 2007 127).
his friendship must be, since he wants to accompany Maecenas anyway.

There are further verbal references to Catullus’s poetry in the epode that underline the strength of Horace’s feelings for Maecenas. One of the more obvious is “satis superque” in line 31. The same phrase is found at Catullus 7.2, and “satis et super” is in line 10 of the same work, surely even in antiquity one of Catullus’ most memorable poems, along with its companion piece, poem 5. The phrase recalls the intensity of Catullus’ feelings for Lesbia and his insatiable appetite for her presence and her favour. Horace likewise wants Maecenas’ affection and favour (benignitas tua, line 31), but is more restrained: he can be and has been satisfied by what Maecenas has given him. He uses the connotations of the earlier poem and the whole complex of poems surrounding Lesbia to support and reinforce his argument and the emotion of his poem, but also as an ironic and witty contrast to his own situation. The allusion emphasises Horace’s own love for Maecenas and strengthens the emotional force of the piece.

The simile in lines 19-22 hints at Horace’s desire to assert his independence from his generous patron, while at the same time emphasising the emotional attachment between them:

$\text{ut adsidens implumbibus pullis avis}$

$\text{serpentium allapsus timet}$

$\text{magis relictis, non, ut adsit, auxili}$

$\text{latura plus praesentibus.}$

It is Horace who is being compared to the mother bird, and Maecenas who is equivalent to the helpless chicks. This implies a reversal of the position of the protector and protected, although,

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75 According to H. Hierche, satis superque is a colloquial expression, and super in an adverbial sense is not found in Horace’s odes (117).

76 Poems 5 and 7 are cited by Ovid (Am. 1.8.58) and Martial (VI.34.7, XI.6.14, XII.59.3) (Merrill 12).

77 Note especially the force of vesano in line 10 of Catullus’ poem, for which see Quinn (2007 ad loc.).
according to Oliensis, Horace is an ineffective protector (1998 83). She also connects the simile to the one used by Achilles in *Iliad* 9.32-4, in which the hero compares himself to a mother bird working to get food for her chicks and getting nothing for herself (Oliensis 1998 83-84). Horace has replaced the content of Achilles’ simile with “his own deferential blend,” but the implied reversal of positions

remains to remind us that the mother bird can figure not only helplessness but nurturing generosity in relation to her young. The simile may thus serve as an emblem, albeit highly compressed and imperfect, of Horace’s characteristic career trajectory, from recipient of benefits to source. (Oliensis 1998 84)

If the poet can be seen as in any way giving to Maecenas rather than accepting his generosity, it reinforces his argument that his connection with his patron is based on friendship, not expectation of material benefits.

Horace’s declaration that Maecenas has already sufficiently enriched him is part of an extended disavowal of excess:

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non ut iuvencis illigata pluribus
aratra nitantur mea,
pecusve Calabris ante sidus fervidum
Lucana mutet pascuis,
neque ut superni villa candens Tusculi
Circaea tangat moenia.
satis superque me benignitas tua
ditavit: haud paravero,
quod aut avarus ut Chremes terra premam,
disinctus aut perdam nepos. (1.25-34)
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This states Horace’s favourite philosophical stance of moderation, which he developed much further in his subsequent poetry. It is not, however, an original idea, and would have been familiar to his readers from other philosophical and poetic works. He acknowledges the need for a certain amount of wealth, but rejects any suggestion of continual acquisition, maintaining that once his modest needs have been fulfilled, he requires no further material reward from Maecenas. The phrase “iuvencis ... pluribus” in line 25 is key to this contention, since it assumes that some, or even many, bullocks (and by extension ploughs, and by further extension acres of land) are necessary and desirable, but sets a limit to the number. This is also relevant to Horace’s strategic self-positioning as motivated, in both his life and his poetic endeavours, by friendship rather than by obligation or greed. If he has already attained everything he wants, materially, he stands in a position of relative independence, with no need to court Maecenas’ favour. If he does attend on Maecenas, then, it is motivated not by self-interest, but by gratitude and affection; the “non ut” of line 25 is one half of an adversative pair, and since it is not answered by any “sed” in the final part of the poem, the phrase that precedes it must be seen as the other alternative. Therefore, “in tuae spem gratiae” is, by implication, opposed to the material riches described in the last ten lines of the poem. Horace has constructed his poem in such a way as to exclude material rewards from his current relationship with Maecenas (though he acknowledges that they did play a role in their past interactions). We have already seen that the relative positions of poet and patron are such that Horace can acknowledge his gratitude without significant loss of status, and the acknowledgement is certainly less degrading than the assumption that he acts out

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78 Its best-known expression is Aristotle’s doctrine of the mean, most clearly seen in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Epicureanism also taught that one should be content with the simple life (Dewitt 131).

79 Oliensis points out that “the perfect tense of ditavit, which locates Maecenas’ act of generosity in the past and its continuing effects in the present, also helps shield Horace’s behavior in this poem from the charge of materialism” (1998 84).
of impoverishment or greed – which explains Horace’s insistence on the modesty of his desires and his rejection of both avarice and prodigality: the last ten lines of the thirty-four-line poem are devoted to this theme. Unless the reader accepts Horace’s assertion of financial independence and contentment, his earlier protestations of affection may seem insincere. Though dedicated to Maecenas, this poem is obviously intended for a wider audience. Therefore Horace aims his rhetorical strategies not so much at Maecenas, who could be expected to know his feelings due to their close association, but at this wider readership, who may impute more mercenary and less creditable motives for his attachment. Horace can accept admitting inferiority to, and partial dependence on, Maecenas, but is not willing to lose his status and independence completely.

Horace’s deployment of the nexus of relations between poet, patron, and readers to mitigate the problem of status builds on Catullus’ inversion of conventional Roman ideals of liberalitas. The concept of poetry as an item of exchange, a gift that is more valuable than material objects, is useful to Horace in articulating the contrast between the poet and the statesman, a common theme in his poetry. I will now look briefly at two poems from later in Horace’s career, when both his social and his literary status had changed, giving him a more exalted position from which to write. In Odes 4.8 and 4.9 we can see him, like Catullus before him in poems 12-14, both establishing and demonstrating the value of poetry as a gift, and claiming a position of strength because he is able to give it.

These poems, as a pair, present the rationale for giving praise poetry as a gift while at the

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80 Some critics have indeed felt that Horace protests too much about his pure motives: “He insists overmuch that it is not for mercenary reasons that he would go, and more than a third of the epode is occupied with the assurance that Maecenas has already given him ample rewards and that he desires no more ”, and this “does not present Horace in a particularly pleasant light” (Mendell 130).

81 Here I am again using Oliensis’ concept of “overreaders”, the potential audience(s) other than the addressee. Other than Maecenas and Augustus, Horace’s overreaders “typically include Horace himself (Horace is always situated as an accomplished and interested overreader of his own poems), the reading public (including especially Horace’s invidious critics, whether fictitious or actual), and more and more, the audience of posterity” (1998 7).
same time reinforcing the picture of the poet as a figure of “enormous moral resonance and indispensable function in society” (McNeill 81). There are several strategies working together in a complementary fashion in these two poems to establish the poet as the superior partner in the exchange of gifts: the privileging of poetry as valuable gift, the imposition of the poet’s priorities and judgements on the reader, and the positioning of poet as patron.

*Odes* 4.8 signals the poet’s emphasis on gifts and intimates a connection between *liberalitas* and poetry by beginning with the word *donarem*. The poem addresses the question of what things are appropriate gifts for Horace to give to his friends, to which his answer is poetry; the following poem, 4.9, which praises Lollius, is an immediate example of this type of gift. In 4.8 Horace presents the argument that praise poems are desirable gifts because they immortalise their subjects, improving their reputations in life and preserving their memory long after their deaths (4.8.13-34). By contrasting poetry with other possible, and ostensibly more conventional gifts, such as statues or works of art (4.8.1-10), Horace focuses attention on the importance of the compatibility of giver, gift, and recipient. While saying he is unable to give works of art or rich gifts (“sed non haec mihi vis” [4.8.9]), he claims that the most important point is that he knows Censorinus, the dedicatee, would not want such things anyway, and would prefer poetry (“non tibi talium / res est aut animus deliciarum egens. / gaudes carminibus” [4.8.9-11]). In this context Censorinus’ cognomen is significant: it “implies the practiced critic’s ability to compose proper aesthetic judgements” (Putnam 1986 149). The suggestion, that people of discernment judge poetry to be the best sort of gift, leaves both the dedicatee and any other reader unable to challenge Horace’s defence of poetry without running the risk of being themselves labelled

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82 In fact 4.7 can also be included in this set, since 4.7 is concerned with “the thought that death brings with it the complete annihilation of all we are and all we care for”. Poem 4.8 presents encomiastic poetry as the only way to avoid this fate, and 4.9 demonstrates the principle (Fraenkel 421). This thematically linked triad, concerned with issues of poetry and its importance, works like the set formed by Catullus 12-14, raising a theme and exploring its ramifications and the poet’s particular view of the issue.
greedy, luxurious, or gauche. Horace exploits the power dynamic of poet over reader to establish his dominance in other areas: he imposes his aesthetic, philosophical, and moral viewpoint on the reader, and the result is an inversion of the seeming dependence of the poet on his audience for validation and approval.\textsuperscript{83}

The claim in 4.8 that poetry immortalises, and should be more sought after than any other gift, applies to more than this one poem. The fourth book of the \textit{Odes} contains a number of eulogies of various types, and the principles of 4.8 are relevant to all of them. In fact, it has been pointed out that the metre of this poem demonstrates the link between its subject matter and Horace’s views on the longevity and importance of his own poetry, because the metre of 4.8 is used in only two other odes – the programmatic poems 1.1 and 3.30 (Fraenkel 422). The link is clearly deliberate, but 4.8 develops the theme of those poems further. In the first three books of the \textit{Odes} there is in fact no mention of the idea that poetry can immortalise its subject, except in 3.13, in which the \textit{fons Bandusiae} receives this favour (Fraenkel 423). In 3.30 Horace claims that his work will endure, but his focus is on the poetry itself, rather than its content. In book 4, however, Horace builds on his earlier works to suggest that his poetry has the capacity to immortalise human achievements. This idea, while common to Greek poetry, had up until then been less appropriate to the Roman context, in which “a man’s claim to lasting fame was primarily based on what he had achieved in public life” (Fraenkel 423). In previous generations, epic, such as the laudatory poems written by Ennius, had come to be seen as an acceptable means to keep alive “the memory of a great soldier or an eminent statesman”, but other forms of poetry had never claimed this power (Fraenkel 423).\textsuperscript{84} In poems 4.8 and 4.9 Horace not only presents poetry as a means of immortalising Romans, he defends and explains the place of lyric in praise

\textsuperscript{83} See Oliensis 1998 154-97 for a discussion of a similar movement in the \textit{Epistles}.

\textsuperscript{84} Cf. Cicero’s desire for a poem on his own achievements, seen for example in the \textit{Pro Archia}. 
poetry, since “the idea that a lyric poem could secure lasting fame, though familiar to the classical age of Greece, had no roots in the life of Roman poetry as known to Horace’s contemporaries” (Fraenkel 422). Horace justifies his own practice by turning to the great lyric poets of Greece, and asserting that they were successful in immortalising their subjects, in the same way as was Homer:

\[
\text{non, si priores Maeonius tenet} \\
\text{sedes Homerus, Pindaricae latent} \\
\text{Ceaque et Alcae i minaces} \\
\text{Stesichorive graves Camenae;} \\
\text{nec, si quid olim lusit Anacreon,} \\
\text{delevit aetas; spirat adhuc amore} \\
\text{vivuntque com missi calores} \\
\text{ Aeoliae fidibus puellae. (Odes 4.9.5-12)}
\]

His own right to be numbered among the \textit{lyrici vates} whom he lists is implied and assumed, since it has been asserted and defended in and by the work he has already produced.\footnote{See note 86.} The immortalising capacity of lyric poetry, therefore, explains its value as a gift: the service a poet performs for the addressee of his poem is the enhancement of his \textit{gloria}, and therefore equal to any achievement in politics or war. This claim had already been made for epic poetry, for example by Cicero in the \textit{Pro Archia}; but now Horace extends it to lyric, his own specialty.\footnote{See note 86.}

This seemingly straightforward recommendation of poetry as a gift is immediately

\footnote{There was no need to say in so many words that the classical poets’ privilege of immortalizing those men whom they praised belonged by right to Horace as well; at this stage of his career he could take it for granted that he himself was on an equal footing with the \textit{lyrici vates} into whose circle he had been admitted” (Fraenkel 425). In particular, Fraenkel argues that the performance of the \textit{Carmen Saeculare} marked Horace’s ascent to Pindaric status (423).}

\footnote{Propertius further develops the concept of immortalising the subjects of poetry, repeatedly holding out to Cynthia the promise of lasting literary fame (e.g., 2.5, 2.11, and 3.2). Cf. Ovid \textit{Am.} 1.3.}
complicated within 4.8 itself, however. In spite of the introduction to the poem and its defence of praise poetry, 4.8 fails to contain any of the explicit praise its own argument suggests it should. Horace has declared his desire to give Censorinus an appropriate gift of poetry, which leads the reader to expect that this poem is that gift, and will do for Censorinus what Ennius did for Africanus (Odes 4.8.13-20). However, the poem is entirely taken up with proof and examples of the power of poetry; Censorinus’ own qualities and achievements are nowhere praised, or even mentioned. Putnam suggests that the carmina Horace refers to (4.8.11) are in fact the poems of book 4 of the Odes, and that either this poem was originally intended to stand as the dedication poem in the book or that Horace is referring to a presentation copy which he is giving to Censorinus (1986 314). The first suggestion assumes a major error on Horace’s part in allowing the poem to be included in this form in the book, while the second suggestion requires the reader to fill in an external context that is neither implied nor required by the poem. Instead, I suggest that the gift is indeed the poem itself, which accomplishes its goal more subtly than encomiastic epic would. The poet’s approbation of Censorinus is shown by his (seemingly unrealised) desire to give him poetry, and by Horace’s recognition and public proclamation of Censorinus’ approval of poetry as a gift. This demonstrates Horace’s generous intent and discriminating judgement, both of which are crucial to liberalitas as conceived by Cicero and Seneca. Liberalitas, and the expectations surrounding it, are the framework through which Horace praises Censorinus, at the same time as the poem itself is an instrument of liberalitas. Horace shows his respect and affection for the addressee by making the poem as a whole a compliment to Censorinus’ values and taste, without ever actually writing the explicit praise poetry of which he

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87 “Oddly enough, though Horace seems to be offering Censorinus poems of praise in C. 4.8, the poem itself does not contain praise, but rather the assertion of poetry’s power to praise” (Lowrie 76).

88 Off. 1.45, 1.46; Ben. 1.5-1.6 and 4.11.
speaks. This tactic is similar to Catullus’ invocation of similar taste and values within his social
circle, as seen in poems 12 to 14 and elsewhere.

By placing Horace in the position of offering a gift (of poetry) to his friends, poems 4.8
and 4.9 make the poet a benefactor rather than a beneficiary. In 4.8 this is established in part by
the comparison to athletic competitions and their rewards at 4.8.3-4 (Putnam 1986 149). Horace
says that he would give Censorinus gifts appropriate to Greek games:

Donarem pateras grataque commodus,
Censorine, meis aera sodalibus,
donarem tripodas, praemia fortium
Graiorum, neque tu pessima munerum
ferres ... (4.8.1-5)

Doing this would place Horace in the position of a patron, and Censorinus in the position of an
athlete (or even Homeric warrior) who has performed well. 89 The positioning is immediately
undercut by the next lines, in which Horace says that he is unable to give such gifts because he
does not have the skill of a sculptor or painter (4.8.5-9). Now Horace is not the patron awarding
the prizes, but the artist creating them. Finally, of course, Horace proclaims that his true gift lies
in making poetry, which is what Censorinus most desires (4.8.11-12). This progression blurs the
distinctions between the roles played by the poet, so that Horace as giver of poetry overlaps with
the patron who might reward Censorinus with a material prize. Horace develops the argument to
present poetry as a gift superior to anything material, since it is more suited to Censorinus’ taste
and, most importantly, more long-lasting. The poetry becomes a better prize than dishes or
statues, and Horace therefore a better benefactor: “The poet’s intangible gifts, ironically and
paradoxically, are the ultimate treasure ... the singer of songs is in the end the authentic patron

89 “Though an artist, [Horace] is implicitly viewing himself also as a patron” (Putnam 1986 147).
with the most lasting power to enrich” (Putnam 1986 149).

The conflation of poet and patron complicates its own evocation of the traditional model of the poet as immortaliser of his subject. Those alluded to in 4.8 (Ennius and Pindar) are classic examples of poets who were not themselves patrons but instead had patrons. Ennius’s patron, Scipio Africanus, is even specifically mentioned (“qui domita nomen ab Africa” 4.8.18). While Horace uses these writers as examples of poetry’s power, the images in the first half of the poem are intended to prevent him from being equated with these poets and their positions relative to their addressees. Instead, Horace inverts the Pindaric or Ennian model, claiming for himself the role of patron, while at the same time assuming the immortalising power of his predecessors.

If 4.8 seems initially to disappoint the reader’s expectations by failing to contain explicit praise of Censorinus, 4.9 apparently offers a clearer example of the praise poetry that Horace describes. It can be seen as exemplifying the theme of 4.8 by presenting a friend, Lollius, with a praise poem and thereby granting him everlasting fame, just as the most famous poets of history have done for their subjects (4.9.1-34). The lack of personalised and specific praise of Lollius, however, has led some scholars to question whether this poem is actually as encomiastic as its opening lines suggest it will be. These opening lines furnish exempla of deeds memorialised by poets (4.9.13-28) and the introduction to the encomiastic section promises not to allow Lollius’ own deeds to be forgotten:

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90 Poem 4.9 is clearly linked to the preceding poem both thematically and verbally. D.H. Porter (1986) gives a good summary of the verbal relationships between the two poems. Among other things, he points out the emphasis on gifts in the two poems, with the words donarem (1 and 3), munerum (4), donare (12), and muneri (12) in 4.8 and dona (42) and muneribus (48) in 4.9, and with “both passages contrasting two kinds of gifts, one associated with the person in question, the other not. Thus 4.8 contrasts the gifts Horace cannot give with those he can, 4.9 the gifts Lollius rejects with those he knows how to use” (1986 419).

91 Lollius (cos. 21 B.C.) was a novus homo, a partisan of Augustus, and active both politically and militarily. As proconsul in Gaul he suffered a defeat and lost a legionary eagle, which seems to have made him notorious; however, he continued to be trusted and employed by Augustus (OCD 618).

92 This poem “makes Horace’s claim explicit: not only epic poetry can be a lasting monument, but lyrics as well” (Fraenkel 424n1).
Putnam suggests that Horace praises general moral and mental characteristics, rather than specific deeds, because he wishes to establish a uniquely Roman paradigm of *virtutes*: “The expansive analysis of [Lollius’] characteristics surveys those courageous qualities of mind that lend value to the daily existence of a Roman statesman and that in turn enhance the spiritual excellence of the community which he serves” (1986 166). In particular, the characteristics being praised are those appropriate to a good governor; but they do not seem specific to Lollius, and the final lines are particularly gnomic.
non possidentem multa vocaveris
recte beatum: rectius occupat
nomen beati, qui deorum
muneribus sapienter uti
duramque callet pauperiem pati
peiusque leto flagitium timet,
non ille pro caris amicis
aut patria timidus perire. (Odes 4.9.45-52)

Fraenkel considers the lack of explicit praise to be a result of Horace’s ambiguous feelings about Lollius himself, and of a dearth of good qualities for which he could be praised, based on other reports of Lollius’ character and activities (226). Paula Winsor Sage, however, argues that this poem is in fact not meant as praise for Lollius, but that Horace instead takes on the role of *vates* and admonishes his friend, warning him against failings to which he seems prone: greed, cowardice, and inactivity (567). She sees the poem as deeply ambiguous, even in the ostensibly encomiastic passage, and points out that all the mythological figures named in the opening stanzas can be associated with negative actions and characteristics as well as with praiseworthy deeds. It seems, then, that the poet has demonstrated how desirable encomiastic poetry is, and then provided only a qualified example of it, reserving to himself the possibility of bestowing greater praise.

In the final evaluation, Horace has used the form of a praise poem to reinforce his own superior position with respect to the ostensibly “more important” people around him. He has shown in *Odes* 4.8 how poetry, and encomiastic lyric in particular, can be a valuable commodity and a significant gift, and positioned himself as patron and bestower of this gift. Now he also takes to himself the role of moral authority, placing his addressee, an important figure in Roman
politics and society, in the position of hoping for the poet’s approbation and the benefaction of a praise poem. Although this is all implied and nowhere overtly stated, nonetheless the power relationship between the two parties is no longer as expected, and the poet has avoided the implication of dependence and even subservience suggested by the Pindaric model of praise poet. In this, Horace exemplifies all the subtleties of the various possible stances and power relationships between poet and patron, based on the work of Catullus before him, and paralleling the developments explored by Propertius and Tibullus, which I will examine next.

As we turn from lyric and iambic poetry to elegy, it might seem at first glance that we move away from the world of status negotiation between putative equals, as we saw in Catullus and Horace, and into the context of the voluntary abasement and degradation of the elegiac lover addressing his mistress. However, although the main focus of elegiac poetry is on the beloved, and not on homosocial interaction, we can nonetheless see the poets’ self-representation by contrast with conventional Romans, in particular with regard to their patrons, as an important theme. In fact, it is even possible to present the entire relationship with the beloved as being itself a metaphor or strategy for representing the elegists’ overall engagement with traditional Roman models of elite male behaviour. As in the odes and epodes of Horace, this is especially evident in introductory elegies, where the issue of dedication and status is inevitably raised. In these poems, the strategies that Catullus and Horace use in their poems are adopted and adapted by contemporary and later writers; Propertius, in particular, shows the importance of Catullus to

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94 There is as well, in the works of Gallus, a more obvious, though unfortunately less accessible, predecessor and model for the elegists than Catullus. Propertius in particular seems to be interacting with Gallus’ establishment of elegiac themes and tropes: “We can infer, even with the loss of Gallus’ *Amores*, that Propertius’ development of an elegiac aesthetic is heavily indebted to Gallan precedent” (Keith 2008 68). For further discussion of Propertius’ interaction with Gallus’ poetry, see Keith 2008 66-69 and 120-126; also, Cairns 2006 104-249, Fedeli 1980, Ross 1975 51-84.

95 This argument is developed by Keith in chapter 5 of *Propertius: Poet of Love and Leisure* (115-138), in which she concentrates on Propertius’ poetry as circulating “within a culture of institutionalized social relations that consolidate male authority in and through women’s bodies” (115). Cf. Oliensis 1997.
the newly developing elegiac genre. I will now examine, therefore, the two elegists’ respective introductory poems, to see how they handle the problem of status and liberalitas in their dedications, and to show the connections between their strategies and those of Catullus, while also demonstrating the distinctly elegiac aspects of their approaches.

In Propertius first poem, 1.1 there are strong indications that Catullus has a significant place among the many poets to whom he is reacting. The first four lines of the poem

Cynthia prima suis miserum me cepit ocellis,
contactum nullis ante cupidinibus.
tum mihi constantis deiecit lumina fastus
et caput impositis pressit Amor pedibus

are an adaptation of the beginning of an epigram by Meleager (Camps 1961 42):

Τὸν μὲ πόθοις ἀτρωτὸν ὑπὸ στέρνοισι Μύσκος
δόμασε τοξεῦσας τοῦτ’ ἐβάζοσεν ἕπος ὥς
Τὸν θρασύν εἶλον ἐγὼ τὸ δ’ ἐπ’ ὕφυσι κεῖνο φρύαγμα

σκηπτροφόρου σοφίας ἠμίδε ποσσὶ πατώ. (Meleager AP 12.101.1-4)

This recalls Catullus’ close reworking of Meleager’s dedication of his Garland in the opening of his first poem. The allusion to Meleager in 1.1, then, while certainly indicating the importance of the epigrammatist in Propertius’ poetic programme, is also a window allusion to Catullus. There are also several verbal reminiscences of Catullan themes: in line 1, the use of “miserum me” to describe Propertius recalls Catullus’ frequent use of “miser” as self-description, as notably in the opening line of his poem 8, “miser Catulle,” and twice in what has often been

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96 For further discussion of Propertius’ use of Meleager in 1.1, see Fedeli 62-7 and Hollis 107-8.
97 See the discussion of Catullus 1 above (pp. 95ff).
called the precursor to Latin love elegy, poem 76: “dis invitis desinis esse miser” (76.12) and “me miserum” (76.19). Poem 76 in fact seems particularly present in Propertius 1.1. The phrase “bene facta valent” at line 16 is strongly reminiscent of Catullus 76.1 – “si qua recordanti benefacta priora voluptas / est homini” – in which Catullus bewails the uselessness of benefacta in love in general, and the lack of reciprocity and fides in his own beloved. In 1.1, however, Propertius asserts (temporarily?) that benefacta are in fact powerful and useful (valent) in love, suggesting perhaps that he is correcting Catullus’ despair. On the other hand, the resonances of that despair undercut Propertius’ claim here and imply that his efforts may not be as successful as Milanion’s were but may, in the end, more closely parallel the pattern of Catullus’ love affair. Propertius does not illustrate the benefacta of Milanion in his exemplum, and this may cause the reader to look for a source for the reference to benefacta, perhaps bringing the reference to Catullus more to the fore. According to W.A. Camps, “he has not actually said that Milanion made use of [bene facta], but he can easily enough expect us to assume it. He probably has in mind the standard figure of the devoted and imploring lover, and having dwelt so much, in his illustration, on the first of these attributes he has forgotten that he did not illustrate the second” (1961 44). This assumes a surprising lack of care on the part of the poet; it is more likely that Propertius does indeed wish the reader to think of a “devoted and imploring lover”, but a specific one: Catullus.

Propertius adapts several more ideas from his predecessor. First, the metaphor of love as a sickness, while not unique to Catullus, is a prominent feature of elegy 76: “eripite hanc pestem perniciemque mihi, / quae mihi subrepens imos ut torpor in artus / expulit ex omni pectore

98 Also at 35.14, 50.9, 51.5.
99 Catullus 76 is also important for Propertius 1.3, as demonstrated by Ross 1975 55.
laetitias... ipse valere opto et taetrum hunc deponere morbum” (20-23, 25). Propertius uses this metaphor in his lines 25-27: “et vos, qui sero lapsum revocatis, amici, / quaerite non sani pectoris auxilia. / fortiter et ferrum saevos patiemur et ignis”. Again, Propertius seems to be reacting to Catullus’ situation, since he has accepted his own inability to heal himself, and similarly calls on others for aid (though he summons his friends, not the gods), and even suggests the extreme measures of cautery and surgery. These images, of course, move the metaphor from medicine towards the language of the servitium amoris that will be so important to both Propertius and Tibullus, but it seems that Propertius finds Catullus’ poem a useful starting point for his own exploration of the painful properties of love. Next, Propertius takes the idea of “dis invitis” in Catullus 76.12 and restates it as “adversos cogor habere deos” (1.1.8). Again, he takes the Catullan reference as a starting point from which to develop a more expanded description of two specific gods, Amor and Venus, who are against him: “in me tardus Amor non ullas cogitat artis, / nec meminit notas, ut prius, ire vias” (1.1.17-18) and “in me nostra Venus noctes exercet amaras, / et nullo vacuus tempore defit Amor” (1.1.33-34).

Finally, there is an allusion to another famous poem by Catullus, one which we have already seen used by Horace in his Epodes. The lines “ferte per extremas gentis et ferte per undas /qua non ulla meum femina norit iter / vos remanete” (1.1.29-31) are a reminiscence of Catullus 11, in which the poet’s friends appear to have offered to travel with him to the ends of the earth, but are asked instead to give a parting message to Lesbia. In his poem, by contrast, Propertius asks to be carried to the ends of the earth, away from his girl, and tells his friends to stay behind.

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100 The idea of medicina amoris is often read as a Gallan topos, in particular because of the character Gallus’ use of the phrase medicina furoris in line 60 of Virgil’s tenth eclogue; see Ross 1975 67-8, Tränkle 22-3, Cairns 2006. It is possible therefore that here, too, we have a window allusion, through Gallus to Catullus.
with their own happy loves.\textsuperscript{101} In using the motif from Catullus, Propertius has adapted it for his own use: the proposed voyage that was rejected by Catullus in favour of a parting from his \textit{domina} is welcomed by Propertius as a means of separating him from the \textit{puella} who is the source of his unhappiness. Propertius even transforms Catullus’ angry message to Lesbia, that she may enjoy her many lovers without him (“\textit{cum suis vivat valeatque moechis}” [Catull. 11.17]), into good wishes to his \textit{amici}: “\textit{sitius et in tuto semper amore pares}” (1.1.32). The resonances of Catullus’ poem enrich Propertius’, indicating to the reader the unreality of Propertius’ command and suggesting the further unhappiness that will inevitably attend such a relationship.

How, then, does the connection to Catullus inform Propertius’ approach to dedication and its attendant problems? To answer this, we need to examine Propertius’ treatment of the addressee of his first poem, Tullus: “\textit{Milanion nullos fugiendo, Tulle, labores / saevitiam durae contudit Iasidos}” (1.1.9-10). Tullus is also seemingly included in a more general appeal to Propertius’ friends a little further on in the poem: “\textit{et vos, qui sero lapsum revocatis, amici, / quaerite non sani pectoris auxilia}” (1.1.25-26). While Propertius does not explicitly dedicate or offer this poem (and therefore the entire collection) to Tullus, choosing to address him in the first poem in the book does suggest that this is the intention. Undercutting this assumption, however,

\textsuperscript{101} The phrase could also recall “\textit{multas per gentes et multa per aequora vectus}” (Catull. 101.1). However, Conte has demonstrated that this line in Catullus alludes to the opening of the \textit{Odyssey}: “\textit{the ‘many peoples’ and ‘many seas’ that will mark out [Catullus’] long voyage belong to Homer’s Odysseus}. The \textit{Odyssey} begins:

\begin{quote}δς μαλα πολλα
πλαγχη, ἐπει Τροιης λερον πολλεθην ἐπερεσε.
πολλων δ’ ανθρωπων ἰδεν ἀστεια και νόον ἐγνω,
πολλα δ’ ἐν ποντω πάθειν ἀλγεα ὃν κατα θυμόν.\end{quote}(1.1-4)

The essential features of Homer’s opening, with its evocation of Odysseus’s long wanderings, all appear in Catullus’s line” (1986 32-33). Propertius may therefore be using the pairing \textit{per gentis} . . . \textit{per undas} to allude directly to the opening lines of the \textit{Odyssey}, and the epic hero’s travels as a contrast to the elegiac lifestyle, but the additional resonance of Catullus’ lament for his brother, on the site of Troy, both adds to the pathetic tone of Propertius’ despairing appeal to his friends and suggests that even such a Homeric journey will not restore him to happiness.
is the placement of the address to Tullus, which makes it clear that he is not the main focus. The name does not appear until line 9, and even there it is subsidiary to the topic of the sentence, which is the exemplum of Milanion and, more generally, Propertius’ own feelings of love. Rather, in place of “Tullus”, Cynthia’s name is the first word of the poem: “Cynthia prima suis miserum me cepit ocellis, / contactum nullis ante cupidinibus” (1-2). The focus throughout is on her and on Propertius’ role and experience as her lover. The multiple poetic resonances of this name also signal Propertius’ concern for poetry itself, evident throughout the collection.

Presumably, Propertius delays the dedication in order to reduce the importance of the homosocial interaction and privilege the erotic and poetic aspects of his work. Postponing Tullus’ name and transferring the focus from him to Cynthia has the effect of announcing the poet’s priorities and concerns as they will be demonstrated throughout the book. Cynthia, the love affair, and the poetic endeavour of elegy will be the main topics of the work, at least according to this programmatic poem. Again, though, the issues of status and indebtedness that emerged as central to Catullus in poem 1 and Horace in *Epodes* 1 are evident here. Propertius seems to be developing Catullus’ strategy for defusing the potential discomfort of a dedication poem: Catullus displaces the term “patron” from Cornelius to the Muse (*virgo*); Propertius displaces Tullus from the honorific position that a dedicatee could expect, and replaces him with a Greek girl, Cynthia. This accords well with what we have already seen of Propertius’ use of Catullus’ poetry: it provides a starting point which he develops, improves on, or corrects. Presenting Tullus as of secondary importance to Cynthia reduces the former’s status and importance; it also lessens the impact of the dedication, partially obscuring the relationship that the dedication produces, establishes, or demonstrates between poet and dedicatee. This relationship could have been problematic for the status of the poet if the poem were to suggest that he owed a favour to the dedicatee which he is repaying by means of these verses; however,
the casual manner in which Propertius mentions Tullus and his postponement of any explicit
discussion of their relationship until a later poem (1.6) work to counter any such assumption.

Such an informal approach is made possible because, strikingly, Propertius chose as his
dedicatee someone who was not far from his own age, and who, although bound for a successful
career in politics and government as a member of a consular family, had not yet himself attained
particularly high rank. Propertius’ relationship with Tullus could therefore be bound less by
considerations of deference and gratitude than if his dedicatee were older and higher ranking.
The young Tullus also makes a nice neat contrast – he is pursuing the regular career that men his
and Propertius’ age “should” be following. The effect of the comparison would have been
blunted had he used an older, more established man as the figure of contrast.

Propertius does, of course, address Tullus at much greater length in 1.6, which takes the
form of a propemptikon. In this poem Propertius more fully establishes the contrast between
his chosen “elegiac” way of life and the standard, laudable Roman way of life, presenting
himself as degraded and inferior, but proud of it: “me sine, quem semper voluit fortuna iacere, /
hanc animam extremae reddere nequitiae” (1.6.25-26). He apologizes to Tullus for not
participating in the usual activities of friends, such as accompanying him on a voyage, and
declares himself unable to do so, rather than unwilling: “non ego nunc Hadriae vereor mare
noscere tecum, / Tulle, neque Aegaeo ducere vela salo ... sed me complexae remorantur verba
puellae” (1.6.1-2, 5). He connects his enslavement to Cynthia with his inferiority and degradation
within Roman society: “multi longinquo periere in amore libenter, / in quorum numero me
quoque terra tegat. / Non ego sum laudi, non natus idoneus armis: / hanc me militiam fata subire
volunt” (1.6.27-30).

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102 For a detailed examination of the evidence for Tullus’ life and family see Cairns 2006 35-69.

103 For this poem as a propemptikon, see Cairns 1972 7-9 and Cairns 2006 114.
This contrast between Propertius and Tullus is further developed in 1.14, which explores the conventional elegiac contrast between the rich man and the lover; all the wealth of the Empire, the poet declares, will not protect his friend from love, nor is it worth anything in comparison to the life of a lover. In both this poem and 1.6, however, Propertius signals his independence from Tullus in the very terms he uses to describe his abasement to Cynthia. It is not Tullus’ wishes, happiness, or orders he cares about, but Cynthia’s and, in fact, this elevates him above Tullus in certain respects, as asserted in 1.14. While the poet cheerfully, and indeed proudly, admits his enslavement to Cynthia, he proclaims his freedom from the more conventional dependence on a patron.

The relationship between Catullus’ poems and the elegies of Propertius is only one of a number of interactions between writers and their works that occurred within the same time period, and that produced a continuing expansion of the possible approaches to liberalitas within Latin poetry. Only a few years, at most, after the release of Horace’s Epodes, Tibullus’ first book of elegies was published. Although Tibullus is most concerned with responding to his elegiac predecessors and exploring the interaction between traditional Roman concerns and the “life of love” that obsessed the Latin elegists, he shows awareness of the themes and concerns of Horace’s work. In fact, Tibullus’ negotiations of the issues of status and dedication seem to be a reaction to Horace’s techniques as well as to those of Propertius and Catullus, his more immediate models.

The opening poem in Tibullus’ first book functions as an introduction to at least that book

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104 R.O.A.M. Lyne 1998 summarises the arguments for dating the appearance of Propertius’ first book to around 28 B.C. and Tibullus’ first book to around 27 B.C., and argues cogently that Tibullus was reacting to Propertius’ poetry and interacting directly with its generic and programmatic aspects, especially in 1.1 (520-23). As always, there is the missing link of Gallus’ work – it is very probable that both Propertius and Tibullus are building on Gallus’ example; see e.g. Cairns 2006 for Gallan influence on Propertius. The consensus on the sequence of publication of Propertius’ and Tibullus’ first books has recently been challenged by Peter Knox, in “Milestones in the Career of Tibullus” (2005), who argues that Tibullus’ book should be dated to 29 B.C.
of elegies, if not to all of his work. While not every topic or theme found in the collection is mentioned in this poem, it does programmatically refer to many aspects of the work.\textsuperscript{105} The structure of the poem is bipartite: the first section (1-52) contains praise of the rural life and the contrast between it and the life of the soldier; the second (57-78) introduces Delia and the life and desires of the elegiac lover. In between, forming a transition from the first to the second, is a brief address to Messalla:

\begin{verbatim}
te bellare decet terra, Messalla, marique
ut domus hostiles praefeat exuvias:
me retinent vinctum formosae vincla puellae,
et sedeo duras ianitor ante fores. (1.1.53-56)
\end{verbatim}

This apostrophe to the man generally considered Tibullus’ patron seems not to strike commentators as at all incongruous; thus Putnam, for example, sees Messalla as part of the main theme of the poem: “The poet weighs two styles of living in the balance, the ambitious, practical, acquisitive, political life of a Messalla and a poor, quiet, country existence toward which he aspires” (1979 49). Similarly, Maltby 2002 divides the poem into two parts: “In the first (1-40) soldiering in the pursuit of riches is rejected in favour of the simple country life. In the second (53-74) soldiering in the pursuit of glory, as exemplified by T.’s patron Messalla, is rejected in favour of a life in the service of love” (115). He does not address the inconsistency between the two approaches to soldiering, and the possibility (even probability) that one section will influence the reader’s impression of the other. In this interpretation, Tibullus appears to accept the basic dedicator/dedicatee relationship with Messalla by including him in a conventionally honorific aside; he has his own relatively elevated position in Roman society, but Messalla, as an

\textsuperscript{105} “The poem is programmatic, establishing T.’s originality and foreshadowing themes of later elegies” (Maltby 2002 116).
If Catullus 65 is an introductory poem for an elegiac collection, it too contains a dedication to a prominent contemporary, in this case Q. Hortensius Hortalus (Skinner 2003 1).

older man, “statesman and orator ... distinguished member of an ancient patrician family” (Guy Lee xiv), is clearly above him in wealth and political power. Neither commentator deals with the contradiction that, within the logic and structure of the poem itself, the address to Messalla can potentially seem intrusive, even latently critical. He appears to be the diametric opposite of the pious and moral farmer praised in the first part of the poem, and a participant in a lifestyle condemned by Tibullus throughout the rest of the poem.

It was, of course, conventional for a poet to address a prominent friend in the first poem of his collection, as we have seen in Catullus 1 and Horace’s Epodes 1. While not every collection begins this way, the same thing occurs in Satires 1.1, and Georgics 1, also published before Tibullus’ elegies.¹⁰⁶ There would therefore have been a general expectation of such an address in Tibullus’ first poem. More specifically, there was an immediate model for the relatively new genre of Latin love elegy in the first poem of Propertius’ Monobiblos, in which, as we have seen, the primary addressee is Tullus (1.1.9). In Propertius’ treatment of his addressee, in fact, is probably to be found the main reason for one of the puzzling features about Tibullus’ address to Messalla – its brevity. In the poems of Catullus, Horace, and Virgil the significant addressee is much more the focus than Messalla is in Tibullus 1. In all three of Tibullus’ predecessors the name of the addressee occurs within the first four lines, often earlier. Usually he is also the only person apostrophised. In Tibullus 1.1, however, the address to Messalla is almost an aside, occupying only four of a total seventy-eight lines, and occurring more than halfway through the poem. There are apostrophes to several other figures before this one, and immediately after these lines comes a much more extended address to Delia, who is the focus of

¹⁰⁶ If Catullus 65 is an introductory poem for an elegiac collection, it too contains a dedication to a prominent contemporary, in this case Q. Hortensius Hortalus (Skinner 2003 1).
the rest of the poem. It almost makes the address to Messalla seem like an afterthought, included simply to conform to poetic convention, but without achieving the aim of that convention, which is to compliment the addressee by publicising the relationship between him and the poet. In this Tibullus may be following the precedent set by Propertius, thereby demonstrating his generic allegiances. While the introduction of Tullus’ name is not delayed as long in Propertius 1.1, and he is apparently addressed again in a longer passage as one of the amici, the overall effect is similar, with Tullus displaced from the focus of the poem by Cynthia and Propertius’ love for her. Tibullus is developing a new generic convention for elegy and signalling the connection between his poems and those of Propertius by their similar treatment of the address to a prominent friend.

As we have seen in Catullus 1 and Epodes 1, the act of expressing gratitude can be problematic. Rather than describing his role as returning a favour to Nepos, Catullus’ establishes himself as presenting a gift; this implicitly puts him in a superior position. Horace in his first epode, on the other hand, seems willing to allow himself to take on the role of grateful recipient of past favours from Maecenas. I would suggest that Tibullus is reacting to this epode, and its attitude toward liberalitas, as well as to Propertius 1.1, and that Propertius himself is responding to the dynamics between poet and dedicatee in previous Latin poetry. If Tibullus had placed the address to Messalla at the beginning of the poem, where Horace had placed his to Maecenas, it would have immediately established a parallel between Horace’s relationships with his addressee and Tibullus’ own with Messalla, and suggested a dependence and inferiority that I think Tibullus was not willing to accept. Instead, he postpones it, as Propertius did in his first poem, and between them the two elegists establish a new, elegiac stance with respect to their

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107 “The whole poem is not an excuse to Messalla, as has been sometimes suggested: it is not addressed to him, he is not mentioned until the second half (and then only briefly), nor is he even the only person apostrophized in it” (Murgatroyd 1994 48).
addressees. By doing so, both poets signal their divergence from the recent practice of their contemporaries, and display their unconventional priorities. In fact, the potentially “rude” displacement of the dedicatee in favour of the domina enacts the obsession of the elegiac lover, and his consequent disregard for social norms.

However, Tibullus differs from Propertius in how he replaces the honorific address. Propertius begins with the name of his beloved: “Cynthia prima suis miserum me cepit ocellis, / contactum nullis ante cupidinibus” (1-2); she is from the outset the centre of this poem and Propertius’ main concern. The first specific figure in Tibullus 1.1, however, appears in the description of an offering to the deus agricola, whoever he may be (1.13-14). This is part of a series of passages about and addressed to various rural divinities. If the poem is a dedication poem then it seems, on the face of it, to be dedicated not to Messalla, nor to any human figure, nor even to Delia, but to the rural gods who are apostrophised in the opening section. It is they who are credited with the power to create and preserve Tibullus’ happiness and prosperity, and it is to them that he addresses his requests and thanks. The do ut des relationship which every Roman worshipper has with the gods is, of course, very similar to the traditional gift-exchange relationship of amicitia, and the prominence of the deus agricola, Ceres, Priapus, and Lares at the beginning of the poem suggests that in this poem they are being placed in precisely that position relative to Tibullus. That is, he treats the rural gods, collectively, as his benefactors, honouring them with prominent addresses in his opening poem, asking them for continued favour, and promising to attend on them in the future.

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108 See Paul Murgatroyd (1994 ad loc.) on a possible referent for this phrase. Before lines 11-12 there is a proclamation of Tibullus’ habitual piety, with references to the worship of trees and stones, but no specific god is mentioned, and there is no real suggestion of a personality.

109 Lyne suggests that Tibullus’ delay in introducing Delia and love in his introductory poem teases the reader whose expectations were formed by Propertius’ first book (1998 524).
Tibullus goes on to describe a gift to the deus agricola: “quodcumque mihi pomum novus educat annus, / libatum agricolae ponitur ante deo” (1.13-14). The offering of first-fruits is a traditional feature of Roman religion, but it can also be seen as having a symbolic function here. This poem is itself a “first-fruit” – the first result of Tibullus’ poetic production – as its position and function as an introductory and programmatic poem suggest. Throughout the early lines of the poem, Tibullus emphasises his own agency in the cultivation and production of the first-fruits he is dedicating. He stresses the fact that he is personally involved, and that it is his own hand that will tend the vines and care for the animals:

ipse seram teneras maturo tempore vites

rusticus et facili grandia poma manu (1.7-8)

and also:

nec tamen interdum pudeat tenuisse bidentem

aut stimulo tardos increpuisse boves;

non agnamve sinu pigeat fetumve capellae

desertum oblita matre referre domum. (1.29-32)

His connection to the agricultural produce is thus parallel to his authorship of the poem. By treating the rural gods as his benefactors and placing them in the position of dedicatee, Tibullus implicitly dedicates the first-fruits of his endeavour to them. With the poem, his offering, he

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110 Murgatroyd (1994 ad loc.), and Maltby (2002 ad loc.).

111 This could also be seen as the first result of his new resolve to live a simple agricultural existence. The prominence of subjunctives throughout the poem suggests that Tibullus has not yet fully engaged with this lifestyle, but is instead longing for it and proposing it as a superior alternative to the normative pattern, as described in the first four lines; “we never lose sight of how much of his thoughts are couched in terms of future hope and how little describe a real present” (Putnam 1979 50).

112 Tibullus’ work on the farm is set against the labor of the soldier in line 3. Since labor can be a “literary critical term” with Hellenistic connotations, Tibullus “contrasts the toil of the rustic elegist with that of the epic poet” (Maltby 2002 119) and strengthens the connection between his agricultural labours and his poetic production.
solicits the favour of powerful figures, and asks for further good fortune while giving thanks for what he has received in the past.

If viewed as enacting the gift it describes, and dedicating itself to the rural gods, specifically the *deus agricola*, Ceres, Priapus, and the Lares, this poem can be seen as a strategic attempt on Tibullus’ part to portray himself as indebted not to any human figure, but to divinities – which effectively removes the problem of status inherent in any gift exchange between mortals. When gratitude is expressed to another person, and favours are acknowledged, there is an automatic assumption of inferiority on the part of the recipient, which is problematic when the exchange takes place between nominal equals; however, since the gods are undeniably superior to any mortal, and there can be no shame in accepting that fact, it is unproblematic to acknowledge gratitude and indebtedness to divinities. Indeed, while receiving favours or gifts can force the recipient into a lower status position, it can paradoxically also be a mark of honour or position. If the person bestowing the favour is discriminating in his choice of recipients, and is so far above the recipient in status that all hope of equality between the two parties is absurd, and is equally so for all but a small minority of people, the anxiety of accepting an inferior role is lessened, because then being given the benefaction marks the recipient as especially worthy of favour. This is of course particularly true in the case of receiving favour from the gods, who are traditionally considered to be responsive to the virtues of those to whom they give their blessings. A major theme of Tibullus’ first elegy is that the gods will grant him success because of his outstanding piety and moral soundness. His lengthy description of the various sacrifices, festivals, offerings, and prayers he has given or will give to them is one proof of his

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113 Anton Powell argues (in the context of a discussion of Augustus, the civil war, and the *Aeneid*), that a person’s *felicitas* was an index of his *pietas* (157-60); if someone was “not felix, could he be pius?” (157).

114 Lyne points out that his ideal life would sound particularly “strenuous and moral” to readers of the *Georgics*, who would, at least initially, see Tibullus as the rustic, old-fashioned small farmer (1998 525).
piety; the fact of his success and the blessings granted to him by the gods furnish another in themselves. By invoking these gods as dedicatees, Tibullus, like Catullus in his first poem, manages to reduce the tensions of status inherent in the act of dedicating a poem or a book of poetry, while at the same time claiming the benefits that pertain to being chosen as a worthy recipient of well-considered giving.

The implication that it is actually the gods who are the dedicatees of the poem and play the role of Tibullus’ benefactor is continued in lines 37-40, in which the gods are asked not to spurn Tibullus’ gifts because they are presented on humble clay dishes:

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adsitis, divi, neu vos e paupere mensa
dona nec e puris spernite fictilibus:
fictilia antiquus primum sibi fecit agrestis,
pocula de facili composuitque luto.
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The idea that the gods have become used to fancy and expensive adornments, but were once pleased by simpler decorations, is something of a commonplace in Roman thought, and fits with Tibullus’ modest desires and praise of simplicity in this poem and in the book as a whole. However, his apology also recalls a common element in dinner-invitation poems to social superiors or benefactors, in which the poet more or less apologetically tells the invitee that the food, wine, decoration, or some other element will not be up to the standard to which he is accustomed. This can be seen for example in Horace’s *Odes* 3.29 and *Epistles* 1.5, in which Horace invites social superiors to his home for dinner, and makes reference to the humbleness of

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115 Murgatroyd 1991 *ad loc.*

116 Maltby discusses the moral implications of the word *fictilia* and the “simple piety of early times,” which clay vessels symbolise (2002 135).

117 In fact, Tibullus can be seen, again, to displace Messalla from the position of patron and replace him with the rural gods; instead of inviting Messalla to dinner and making excuses about the humbleness of his home, he invites the gods.
his furnishings and table as compared to what the great man normally expects.\textsuperscript{118} In both those poems, however, the tone is not so much apologetic as gently moralising – the implication is that his guests would be better off if they lived more simply more of the time, as Horace claims to do. The same implication is present in Tibullus’ poem: he suggests that the gods are content with plain offerings, and claims this ancestral simplicity and piety for his own chosen way of life.

His attitude also conforms to the view of \textit{liberalitas} presented by both Cicero and Seneca, in which the attitude of the giver is more important than the form of the gift.\textsuperscript{119} Both writers state that even the most lavish gift, if it does not arise from a generous impulse, is not a benefaction and does not constitute \textit{liberalitas}; on the other hand, even the most humble object, if accompanied by sincere friendship and real generosity, should be appreciated as true \textit{liberalitas} and deserves gratitude. A gift should be valued according to the worth of the giver rather than the material worth of the thing itself, and for the intention behind it rather than any concrete benefit that might accrue.\textsuperscript{120} In the same way, Tibullus is asking the gods, his benefactors, to judge his piety and his sincere devotion rather than the material worth and lavishness of his offerings.\textsuperscript{121}

The claim of piety and moral worth sets the context within which the brief apostrophe to Messalla can be seen as potentially ambiguous. Although usually described as a “complimentary reference to an important friend” (Murgatroyd 1994 64), it actually seems to me to be surprisingly uncomplimentary. Essentially, Messalla is told that it is appropriate and right for

\begin{footnotes}
\item[118] “Plerumque gratae divitibus vices / mundaeque parvo sub lare pauperum / cenae sine aulaeis et ostro / sollicitam explicuere frontem” (\textit{Carm.} 3.29.13-16); “si potes Archiacis conviva recumbere lectis / nec modica cenare times holus omne patella” (\textit{Epist.} 1.5.1-2). “H. stresses the simplicity of his arrangements, a commonplace in some invitations from social inferiors” (Mayer 1994 143).

\item[119] This idea that it is the intention, not the value, that matters, is not unique to Cicero and Seneca in antiquity, of course; e.g. the parable of the widow’s mite: Mark 12.41-44 and Luke 21.1-4.

\item[120] “Non est beneficium, cui deest pars optima, datum esse iudicio: aliqui pecunia ingens, si non ratione nec recta voluntate donata est, non magis beneficium est quam thesaurus” (\textit{Ben.} 1.15.6; cf. also 1.7.1-2).

\item[121] Cf. Seneca \textit{Ben.} 1.6.3: “ne in victimis quidem, licet opimae sint auroque praefulgeant, deorum est honor sed recta ac pia voluntate venerantium.”
\end{footnotes}
him to do what Tibullus has condemned throughout the poem up to this point. In fact, Tibullus’ rejection of soldiering and travel and the gain procured by means of both has been based, implicitly at least, as much on moral grounds as personal preference, which makes his references to Messalla’s voyages, military accomplishments, and spoils of war rather problematic. Tibullus does not accuse soldiers outright of lack of piety, but he does contrast his own ideal life with that of a soldier in other ways, such as his paupertas (1.5) and the soldier’s divitiae (1.1),122 his vita iners (1.5) and the soldier’s labor (1.3).123 He then goes on to demonstrate his own piety and morality, as discussed above, which implies a similar opposition between his life and the life of a soldier in this respect as well.124 In the light of this comparison, how complimentary can it be for Tibullus to concede that it is right and appropriate (decret) for Messalla to live a soldier’s life? It is true that Tibullus presents Messalla’s accomplishments in traditionally laudatory language that suggests the Roman triumph,125 which allows the possibility of reading the lines as a contrast to those which would be used to describe an immoral soldier, and hence as a straight-forward compliment.126 But it is hard to see how Messalla is clearly different from the indefinite soldiers mentioned in the first half of the poem, since he is specifically said to make war by land and sea

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122 Wealth was “traditionally associated with war in antiquity” (Cairns 1972 143).

123 See also Murgatroyd (1991 ad loc.) on lines 1-6 and 25-10, and throughout his commentary to this poem.

124 “There is an obvious contrast between the divitiae of the soldier and T[ibullus’s] paupertas, but the concentration on religion suggests a further contrast, between the morality of T[ibullus’s] existence and immorality (greed) of the soldier’s” (Murgatroyd 1994 56). “Soldiering and commercialism are for the greedy” says Putnam, paraphrasing the end of the poem (1979 49). Maltby suggests that “the emphasis on rustic piety implies perhaps some moral criticism of the contrasting military life” (2002 125).

125 “Spoil won from the enemy by the Roman general was carried in the triumph and fixed in front of his house” (Murgatroyd 1994 64).

126 “Unlike the greedy soldier, Messalla wins spoil . . . for the glory of his family and himself . . . So his motives are correct (decret), again in contrast to the greedy soldier” (Murgatroyd 1994 64). “The only excuse for warfare, and the travel it entails, is military necessity, not greed etc. Messalla, who can put up with danger, is justly rich” (Putnam 1979 58). But no specific reason is given to demonstrate that Messalla is different from the soldiers mentioned in the poem; why then should we see this as a contrast, and not a similarity?
Tibullus opposes the life of the soldier (or merchant) to his own life of ease: “furorem / qui maris et tristes ferre potest pluvias” (1.49-50). Maltby comments on “decet” that “the introduction of T.’s patron entails a graceful shift in emphasis by which war is now associated with glory rather than greed” (2002 141). However, this reading requires a complete reversal of the picture of military life that has been presented so far in the poem, and produces an unacceptably abrupt transition, especially in view of the strong connections between this passage and the lines immediately preceding it. It assumes that the reader would instantly forget the connotations associated with the soldier throughout the first section and accept the new view of the military man without any lingering doubts about the moral validity of his lifestyle.\footnote{Assuming, of course, the reader had been persuaded by the first half of the poem; not all of Tibullus’ audience would have accepted that his own preference for apolitical farming, and a life devoted to certain types of \textit{otium}, was morally praiseworthy.} While the connection between Messalla and the impious soldier of the opening section is not explicit, therefore, Tibullus is nonetheless able to use the latent criticism of Messalla’s way of life to his own advantage. By placing an address to Messalla in his opening poem, the poet implicitly admits that the military man’s status is higher than his own. Transferring the role of benefactor and dedicatee to the gods is one strategy for avoiding this admission; suggesting that Messalla follows a way of life that is morally inferior to Tibullus’ is another tactic for achieving the same thing.

There are further complications to the question of status, however. Tibullus is working within and developing the generic conventions that we have seen in Propertius, but he is also reacting to and modifying them to suit his own purposes and situation. Propertius’ dedicatee, as we have seen, was reasonably close in both age and status to the poet, a departure from previous conventions, and one that accorded with his new elegiac stance. When Tibullus created his
introductory poem, by contrast, he chose as his dedicatee an older, much more distinguished man, perhaps because of external circumstances such as already having become connected with Messalla’s household. He did follow Propertius’ lead, however, by including only a brief, delayed apostrophe to Messalla in the first poem; but he included in that apostrophe an explicit reminiscence of Propertius’ “real” dedication poem, 1.6. The contrast between Messalla’s life of travel and warfare and Tibullus’ desire to stay at home echoes Propertius’ excuses for not accompanying Tullus on his travels. In particular, the “formosae vincla puellae” (Tib. 1.1.55) which hold Tibullus back recall the “complexae ... verba puellae” (Prop. 1.6.5) which detain Propertius. As well, the “duras fores” (Tib. 1.1.56) in front of which Tibullus waits recall the “duro sidere” (Prop. 1.6.36) under which Propertius lives. These reminiscences enrich the brief address to Messalla, importing the resonances of Propertius’ self-identification as a debased, enslaved, elegiac lover, as well as his complimentary references to Tullus’ political career. As we have seen, however, while Tibullus willingly adopts a position of degradation and enslavement with respect to Delia in 1.1, he does not seem willing to do so, here at least, with respect to other Roman men, specifically Messalla. Instead, he sets up an alternative value system, and declares himself, by that measure, at least equal to those who follow the standard model.

In this examination of dedication poems, and of the strategies that Catullus, Horace,

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128 Cf. Lyne 1998 526. He sees the concretization of Propertius’ emotional language as farce or even parody. If this is true, it is part of Tibullus’ effort to use Propertius’ newly defined generic stance but modify it to allow himself more independence and self-respect.

129 The negotiation between Propertius’ elegiac degradation and Tibullus’ moral and philosophical claims continues throughout the book. In 1.3, which occupies the same relative position in Tibullus’ book of 10 poems as 1.6 does in Propertius’ 22-poem Monobiblos, the topos of willingness to accompany a friend to the ends of the earth, seen already in Horace’s Epodes 1 and Catullus 11, is used by Tibullus to explore his relationship with Messalla further. Here Tibullus seems to admit to a certain participation in the lifestyle that he rejected in 1.1, even in the face of protests from his beloved. This is then developed in 1.7, in which he praises these very types of activities in Messalla’s career.
Propertius, and Tibullus used to negotiate the problems of *liberalitas*, I hope I have shown that the ramifications of incurring or expressing gratitude by acknowledging or creating an obligation in a poem are an important aspect of the poet’s self-positioning and interaction with the poetic tradition. Anxieties about *liberalitas* and the relationships it creates informed and shaped Roman poetry in this period, in a process in which the traditional conceptions of *liberalitas* in Roman society were employed, adapted, and even rejected by Roman poets. All of these reactions are affected by the social positions of the poets, by their aesthetic programs, and by the genres in which they work. The question of status in dedication poems reveals the importance of the conceptual framework of *liberalitas* in Latin poetry of the late Republican and early Augustan periods. The poems discussed in this chapter demonstrate some of the strategies for ameliorating the difficulties inherent in *liberalitas*, or conversely use *liberalitas* to explore and define the social, poetic, and political aspects of a poet’s work, and show that an analysis of the uneasiness displayed in the poems and of the strategies used to address it can help resolve long-standing problems of interpretation and open new areas for exploration. These strategies differ according to genre, historical context, aesthetic approach, and purpose of the work, but in every oeuvre, the issues of *liberalitas*, as originally outlined by Cicero and Seneca, are, of necessity, addressed.
Chapter 3: Elegiac Love and the Failure of Liberalitas

We saw in the last chapter that Latin poets frequently presented poetry as an appropriate, and even exemplary, item of exchange within the structure of liberalitas between members of the Roman elite. When the poets turn to erotic matters, we find that they go beyond this to try to redefine the currency of exchange entirely so as to reject the gifts offered by others as inappropriate, or even morally suspect. Instead, the gifts that they declare themselves capable of giving (love, poetry, and servile devotion) are presented as the only acceptable types of beneficia. The redefinition of liberalitas was further developed by the Latin elegists into a more explicit questioning of the moral value of some of the usual objects of gift exchange. An important theme in Latin elegy is the contrast between the sordid (but powerful) dives amator and the faithful (but powerless) poor poet. The elegists attacked the exercise of liberalitas by other men towards the poet’s beloved as bribery or payment for services, while accusing the beloved him- or herself of being greedy and venal. It is important to realise, however, that this was not an attack on the structural validity of liberalitas, but on the currency involved. According to these poets, gift-giving itself is not immoral: the rival is wrong to give material goods to the girl (or boy), while she or he is wrong to reciprocate with gratitude and loyalty, but the poet is right to give poems to his beloved, and justified in expecting gratitude and loyalty in response. It is not the giving but the gift that is at issue.

I will argue in this chapter that, in many of their poems, Tibullus and Propertius deliberately portray the relationship between themselves and their beloveds as structured by liberalitas in order to attempt to control the erotic activity of those beloveds. I begin by outlining the reasons why I see liberalitas operating in the relationship between the lover-poet and his puella as depicted in the poems. I first address the important issue of the gender and status of the beloveds: can women participate in liberalitas? Does their status affect whether or not they are
seen as able to do so? I then look briefly at Catullus’ activation of *amicitia* in his relationship with Lesbia, both as evidence for the expectations of female involvement with *liberalitas* and as a model for the later elegists. Next, I move to examples of a similar expectation being created in the work of Propertius and Tibullus. I examine the consequences of setting up this expectation, and possible reasons for the poets’ doing so. Then, I outline the ways the elegists modify their use of these expectations: their major strategy is to focus on the substance of the exchange and argue for the moral superiority of their own offerings. Thus, they equate the gifts given by others with payment and accuse those who accept them of greed. This establishes their rivals’ transactions as commercial and financial, rather than based on the mutual obligation of *liberalitas*, and so denies to them any moral validity. Here, again, I address the important issue of the beloveds’ status, and the ways that the poets play with the underlying ‘reality’ of the necessities of a courtesan’s life. I focus on Tibullus 1.9 and Propertius 2.16, which typify the moral overtones of the elegists’ attitude to gifts, and give supporting examples from other poems. I also examine Horace *Epodes* 11 as an example of this elegiac moralising about gifts, seeing similar themes and attitudes expressed in this epodic poem. Having looked at the negative characterisations of certain types of gift-giving, I then turn to Propertius 2.13 for a positive presentation of ideal amatory *liberalitas*, as also seen in Tibullus 2.4’s vision of an ideal bond between lover and beloved.

The attack on the exchange of money and material goods between lovers and beloveds is also connected to contemporary concerns about the use of money for *liberalitas* and the effects of prodigality and luxury on Roman society. I therefore move from establishing the elegiac attitudes to amatory gift-giving to a discussion of the elegists’ portrayal of the wider social and moral implications of *liberalitas* using money. This is seen particularly in Tibullus, and I look at 2.3 and 2.4 as examples. As Propertius moves into more patriotic poetry, he too makes this
connection between private greed and public disorder in 3.13. I then turn to an examination of how Horace’s epode 12 complements this discussion by showing how the conceptualisation of liberalitas in elegiac love poetry helps us understand this epode, and in particular the relationship between Horace and the old woman, as a commentary on larger social issues.

In the end, however, by looking back at the poems I have already examined as sites of elegiac liberalitas, I discuss the ways in which the poets’ strategies of establishing liberalitas as a controlling framework for their relationships fail and the ramifications of this failure for the larger elegiac programme, arguing that it reflects both the powerlessness of the elegiac persona and the conflict between the poets’ break with societal conventions and their appeal to those same conventions.

I begin, then, by addressing the issue of whether the relationship between an elegiac lover and his beloved can by characterised, at least some of the time, as attempted liberalitas. The obvious problem is that the elegiac beloved is usually a woman, probably to be conceived of as a courtesan (i.e. a freedwoman). The first question then is, can women be involved in liberalitas exchanges at all, in the contemporary Roman definition of the practice? The works of Cicero and Seneca take it for granted that liberalitas is generally practised by men towards other men. Women are not explicitly mentioned as either donors or recipients. This is unsurprising, especially in Cicero’s de officiis, since he addresses that work to his son, and is ostensibly writing about the duties of a young man destined for a political career at Rome. The most explicit definitions of liberalitas, then, do not include women, regardless of status. However, there is evidence that some women did engage in exchanges that could be characterised by Roman men as falling within the scope of liberalitas – though usually restricted to the private sphere, mainly family members.
In the inscription known as the *Laudatio Turiae*,\(^1\) the woman being memorialised is praised for her generosity: “[Liberali]tatem tuam c[u]m plurumis necessariis tum praecipue pietati praest[i]ti familiae)” (*Laud*. 1.42).\(^2\) This consisted of bringing female relatives to live with her and furnishing them with dowries (although her husband says that he and Cluvius chose to supply the funds for the dowries themselves) (*Laud*. 1.44-51). Such actions fall well within the scope of traditional *liberalitas* according to Cicero and Seneca, though it is true she exercised it towards family members exclusively.\(^3\) It is also instructive to note that the honorand, though praised as exceptional, is not said to be unique in her expressions of generosity: “[Licet cum laude item qu]is alias nominaverit, unam dumtaxat simillimam [tui]” (*Laud*. 1.43). This seems to be an acknowledgement that such a virtue could be expected of other women of similar status.

The honorand of this dedication is also praised extensively for all the services she rendered to her husband during the crises of the civil wars, notably sending him her jewellery, money, slaves, and provisions, and even (probably) pleading for his life at Rome while he was in hiding (*Laud*. 2.2a-9a). In fact, the husband says explicitly that the memorial he is setting up is in part intended to demonstrate his gratitude for these services: “quom pr[o magnitudine erga me] meritorum tuorum oc[ulis] omnium praeferam titulum [vitae servatae]” (*Laud*. 2.23-24). This exchange, though between husband and wife, seems to be a good example of conventional *liberalitas*: services performed out of respect for the recipient, both with material goods and with personal effort, followed by public acknowledgment of gratitude and praise for the giver.

Emily A. Hemelrijk discusses the *Laudatio Turiae* and its implications for our view of

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\(^1\) CIL 6.41062=ILS 8393. I am using the text given by Erik Wistrand.

\(^2\) The word *liberalitatem* here is a supplement, but it survives later in the column, in “[illa consi]lia vestra concepta pia liberalitate” (1.50).

\(^3\) There is a tantalising fragment at the end of the column which might hint at further benefactions, perhaps outside of the home: “[Complura alia benefici]a tua prae[termittenda] [duxi] ...” (1.52). Of course, with so much text missing, and several lines lost after this, it is impossible to draw any conclusions from these few words.
appropriate female behaviour at Rome. She demonstrates that we do have evidence for women being praised for *fides* and *pietas*, and other related, usually masculine, virtues. For women, however, these virtues are expressed in loyalty to their husbands or other family members, rather than to the state or in public concerns. The evidence from the *Laudatio Turiae*, from Cicero’s letters to Terentia, from Ovid’s portrayal of his wife, and even from the negative depictions of Fulvia likewise seems to support the idea that a woman could engage in *liberalitas* – as long as it was within the private sphere (the family, preferably) (Hemelrijk 190-196). Although this evidence is scanty, I believe it does suggest that limited participation in *liberalitas* was available to women, and, crucially, could be recognised and categorised as such by men.4

The best-known examples of female benefactors from the late Republic and Augustan periods are women in the imperial family, such as Octavia, Julia, and in particular Livia. Octavia gave her brother a present of ten ships (borrowed from Antony) which he reciprocated with a gift of a bodyguard (Appian 5.95). Livia was memorialised as the patron of buildings, such as the Precinct of Livia, and also held dinner parties (Cassius Dio 55.8); she was praised after her death for, among other things, her generosity in helping to support citizen children and find husbands for girls (Cassius Dio 58.2). The actions of the senate in granting her posthumous honours and dedications in gratitude for her generosity, both public and private, although presumably motivated in part by political considerations, nonetheless demonstrate an acknowledgement that her activities fit into the conventional framework of benefactions from a prominent personage which are matched by public expressions of gratitude. A useful point of comparison for this aspect of the behaviour of the Imperial women is the public activity of Hellenistic queens, who

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4 In all these cases we see women as benefactors, both to women and to men; we do not have a clear case of a woman as recipient from a male benefactor, except in the case of the female relatives in the *Laudatio*, whose dowries are, in the end, provided by the husband and Cluvius. But I believe that this evidence of participation in the framework is enough to allow us to see women as potential actors on either side of the exchange.
commonly involved themselves in public works and benefactions. But many aspects of Livia’s generosity, in particular her kindness to citizen children and her matchmaking (and probably granting of dowries) are similar to what we saw in the *Laudatio Turiae*, though on a grander scale, and expanded beyond her family. It seems that the Imperial women’s extension of their activities to the public sphere was in some ways an innovation, but it was a development from behaviour already present, and laudable, among upper-class *matronae*. Suzanne Dixon in fact argues that women in “the “inner circle” of the great noble families which monopolized the higher magistracies of the late Republic” were involved in political activities (1983 91), in part through their participation in the relationships of *clientela* and *beneficium* (1983 92). Using in particular the letters and speeches of Cicero, she traces the ways in which various prominent women controlled, affected, or used patronage to achieve political ends.

I will add one other piece of evidence for a woman acting as benefactor, though her status is not that of upper-class *matrona*. In fact, this example brings us closer to the probable ‘real-life’ situation of elegy (though see below for the issues of ‘reality’ and the status of the beloved). In Book 39 of the *Ab Urbe Condita*, while giving an account of the suppression of the Bacchic rites, Livy mentions a freedwoman named Hispala Faecenia. She is a *scortum*, but *nobile* in spite of that, and she supports a young man who is poorly maintained by his parents with her *munificentia*. She even makes him her heir; later, she saves him from the wicked Bacchic

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5 Hemelrijk points out this similarity: “This kind of generosity had also been typical for Hellenistic queens, see S. B. Pomeroy, ‘Charities for Greek women’, *Mnemos*. 35 (1982), 115–35 at 120–3 and ed., *Women in Hellenistic Egypt from Alexander to Cleopatra* (New York, 1984), 15–16.]” (195).

6 Hemelrijk sees this connection: “It was also noted that in her liberalitas (1.42–50) she kept within traditional limits: together with her sister she brought up girls from poor branches of the family and provided them with a dowry that suited their rank. This kind of generosity was much valued in women, and one that had an imperial model: Livia too provided orphaned girls of impoverished upper-class families with a dowry” (195). I should note that I am not certain to what extent we can call Livia an Imperial *model* for this inscription, though, given that many of the events described took place before Augustus took full control. In other words, we should see the praise in this inscription as evidence for previous or at least contemporary views of a woman’s role, not yet primarily shaped by Imperial models.
conspiracy (Livy 39.9).\textsuperscript{7} Again, this shows a woman in the position of benefactor, both with money and by her actions, and this time to a lover. While the story as a whole is undoubtedly highly embroidered, I am less concerned with the historical reality than with Livy’s willingness to portray a freedwoman, and courtesan, as a potential source of help and financial support for a well-bred young Roman man. Although she is clearly marked as exceptional, it seems to me that Livy is stressing that her actions are unusual mostly because she is a \textit{scortum}, not only because she is a woman.

All of this points to the conclusion that while women could participate in \textit{liberalitas}, this activity was generally restricted to upper-class \textit{matronae} interacting with their own relatives. This does not at first glance seem to be very like the situation found in elegy; to see the continuity between this evidence and what I will be arguing about the role of \textit{liberalitas} in elegy, it will be useful to look very briefly at Catullus, in whose poetry we can see a crucial step in the development of this theme. It has long been recognised that Catullus uses the language of \textit{amicitia} in his poetry to refer to his relationship with Lesbia.\textsuperscript{8} This is usually seen as innovative, because it transfers a homosocial vocabulary of male-oriented activities (politics) to female/male relations and the private sphere of non-marital love. The emphasis on the contrast between the public sphere and the private should not be overemphasised, however, as R.K. Gibson has pointed out, since the language of \textit{amicitia} applies not only to public politics, but also to private interactions; in fact, all areas of normal homosocial interaction can use this vocabulary (1995 62-63). Indeed, even the application to women is not strictly innovative: the language of \textit{amicitia} is

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\textsuperscript{7} The relevant passage: “\textit{scortum nobile libertina Hispala Faecenia, non digna quaestu, cui ancillula adsuerat, etiam postquam manumissa erat, eodem se genere tuebatur. huic consuetudo iuxta uicinitatem cum Aebutio fuit, minime adolescentis aut rei aut famae damnosa: ultimo enim amatus appetitusque erat, et maligne omnia praebentibus suis meretriculae munificentia sustinebatur. quin eo processerat consuetudine capta, ut post patroni mortem, quia in nullius manu erat, tutore ab tribunis et praetore petito, cum testamentum faceret, unum Aebutium instituerat heredem}” (Livy 39.9).

not restricted to male interactions, but can also be used of women, as Hemelrijk has shown. However, conventionally this is only true with respect to their actions toward female family members or their husbands. Catullus’ use of this language is therefore unusual specifically because Lesbia is in fact not his wife; but he attempts to bind her to a similar relationship by using language appropriate to marriage, or to the laudable actions of an upper-class matrona. Catullus does definitely seem to expect Lesbia to be bound by the rules of fides, and he professes himself shocked by her failure to feel herself bound by the rules of gratitude and obligation, as well as by her breaking her word. It is this attempted manipulation of the beloved by the poet’s representation of the relationship in his poetry that is picked up by the elegists of the next generation.

When we turn to the elegists, however, the question is further complicated by the issue of status. Lesbia, while not Catullus’ wife, nonetheless appears to be an upper-class matrona, whose irregular position is a result of her extra-marital sexual activity, in which she engages out of a desire to do so, not need for money. The status of the beloveds in elegy, on the other hand, has been a matter for dispute. Let me turn now to a brief discussion of this question; I will then return to the issue of women and liberalitas, and will argue that the very respectability of the class of women who were seen to be bound by its rules is crucial to the elegists’ use of liberalitas as a persuasive technique.

The subject of the elegists’ concern with gifts and their beloveds has been examined recently by Sharon L. James in Learned Girls and Male Persuasion (2003). She demonstrates that the world of elegy depicts the lover-poet as a member of the elite, with resources and status,

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9 This is summarized well by Gibson: “The key words here are the value-laden terms of amicitia: amor, benefactum, bene velle, fides, gratia, iniuria, officium, pietas. In (e.g.) Poem 72 Catullus’ love and fidelity have not been returned; such iniuria forces him bene velle minus. In 75 he has ruined himself with officia, and had no return. In 76 Catullus remembers his benefacta, and reflects on his amor, pietas and fides. All have met with ingratia” (1995 62).
although he claims (relative) poverty (36), and the **puella** as “a member of the courtesan class” (37) who has features of the **meretrix** of New Comedy, though she is not under the control of a **leno** (36). The **puella** is relatively independent, in that she has the ability to choose among her lovers, but she is also in a precarious position, having no single patron, and needs therefore to focus on acquiring wealth in order to survive (35 and **passim**). James argues that, when read from the point of view of the elegiac **puellae**, the elegists’ argument that poetry is the best gift to give to a beloved is a way to avoid having to pay for sex, and an attempt to elide or ignore the actual status and practical needs of the women whom they address. James’ reading of elegy from the perspective of the **puella** is important and compelling, especially in bringing to the fore the rhetorical devices and persuasive techniques of elegy. However, as James herself repeatedly emphasises, the **puellae** of elegy are, at least in their individual manifestations, fictional or at least fictionalised, generic characters. Therefore, although the overall purpose of elegy may seem, ostensibly, to be to persuade the **puella** to have sex with the poet, this cannot be, in fact, the main point of the poems if the girl herself does not actually exist.

In my view, the central issue is, how are these women presented in the poetry? In answering that question, it seems to me that James is right: they are meant to be seen as

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10. See Thomas McGinn’s *The Economy of Prostitution in the Roman World* for an in-depth study of the realities of venal sex at Rome, insofar as our evidence allows us to know them. In particular, chapter two “Basic Economics” outlines the various forms of prostitution at Rome, and the prices, profits, and participants in the exchanges. He, too, points out that for the prostitutes themselves, even the higher-status ones, the profits were marginal at best, and definitely transitory (52-53).

11. “Elegy depicts its **puellae** as demanding not money but gifts ... gift giving elides the commercial nature of the relationship between courtesan and suitor ... the lover can suggest that she owes him informal, spontaneous, genuine gratitude, to be expressed both sexually and socially, as part of a more equal and truly loving relationship” (James 2003 39). See especially chapters 2 and 3 of James’ book, which outline the probable position of the **puella** and her practical need for money, as well as the aims and rhetorical strategies of the elegists.

12. “The **docta puella** is a poetic fiction, not a real or historical woman. What is more, she is a generic woman, not a specific one. That is, even apparent specifics of character or personality are generic rather than individual, as certain traits and behaviors are generic necessities for the fictions, stances, attitudes, and events of elegy” (James 2003 36).
meretrices, for whom their relationships with men are their livelihood. However, this ‘reality’ has to be ‘read through’ the presentation of the women in the poems; I am arguing, as James does, that the elegists are trying to portray the women as independent (not in need of money) and able to make the choice as to what type of interactions they want to have with men (and that therefore they should choose liberalitas). If a matrona can, and should, be bound by the rules of liberalitas, then what we have in the elegists is an attempt to portray the women as something they (probably) are not, partly as flattery, and partly as a strategy to bind them to a set of rules established by the poets, instead of by the women themselves. That is, the poets (sometimes) treat their belovés as matronae, which is flattering, and which the belovés will not want to reject; but then they say that if the women are indeed of that status, then they also have to play by the rules. This is a strategy of persuasion, designed to convince the women to choose the poet over a wealthier rival.

But it is also a means to comment on liberalitas in society, and the wavering line between commercial and affective transactions. It is the liminal status of the women, as portrayed in these poems, that makes the relationship interesting, within the larger study of liberalitas. They hover on the border between engaging in liberalitas and selling themselves. And because the mostly male elegists write the poems through which we view these transactions, they are the ones who control (or attempt to control) the designation of the women’s actions as one or the other, according ostensibly to the type of goods exchanged, and the status or identity of the exchange partner. So, just as Catullus tried to define, in his own terms, the parameters of proper liberalitas in his poetry, and portrayed himself as doing so successfully among his male peers, (see especially Cat. 13), and Horace continually returned to the problems caused by different assessments of the positions of benefactor and beneficiary (in particular with respect to Maecenas), the elegists demonstrate the slipperiness of liberalitas, and the necessity of mutually
acceptable terms of reference for deciding what does and does not constitute this type of
exchange. While the elegists’ attempts to control what is and is not considered proper liberalitas
is directed first at their beloveds, they also have ramifications for their relations with their male
peers. If they fail to establish their poetry as a reasonable element of liberalitas, and in fact show
themselves to be unable to control how their own actions are perceived, they lose power with
respect to other men: they are shown to be truly subjugated to women, because they cannot
control their public ‘face’, even in their own poetry.

Let me now turn to examine the use of liberalitas in Tibullus and Propertius more
closely. The relationship between the Roman elegists and their beloveds is constructed in a
number of ways throughout their poetry; one important metaphor is that of servitium amoris.\textsuperscript{13}
However Gibson 1995 has argued that the framework of amicitia and reciprocal gift exchange is
also important in the works of Tibullus and Propertius, and is not found only in Catullus’ love
poems.\textsuperscript{14} In addition to poetry, the elegists offer their devotion and their personal service to their
beloveds. In fact, Oliensis (1997) demonstrates that the lover in Roman love poetry acts much
like a client; as James says, the slavery proposed by the elegists does not match very closely any
actual Roman experiences of slavery, and “is closer to obsequium, the duties and obligations of
attendance of a free man to his patron” (2003 147-148). While the actions performed by the two
groups can overlap, the crucial difference between them is the possibility, and in fact
expectation, of reciprocity. A slave may be rewarded by his mistress, but he has no right to
expect such a reward, and he performs his services because he is required to, not in order to gain

\textsuperscript{13} For discussion of servitium amoris, see Copley 1947, Lilja 1965, Hallett 1973, Lyne 1979, Murgatroyd

\textsuperscript{14} It is of course very likely that many, if not all, of the themes and tropes of elegiac love, and the
relationship between the lover-poet and the puella, were developed in Gallus’ poetry, and what we know of his
beloved (Lycoris/Cytheris/Volumnia) certainly fits extremely well into the model laid out by James. While
recognising the importance of Gallus to the development of the genre, however, I have chosen to concentrate on the
extant poems of Propertius and Tibullus.
something for himself. On the other hand, notes Gibson, a client or lesser amicus has a right to expect a return for his services, and indeed performs them for this very reason (1995 64). He argues that although the technical language of amicitia is not used systematically by the elegists, “the lover-poets ... pressurize their beloveds to accept the role of ‘patron’ while they play the role of dependent amici” (63). They invoke the underlying expectations of amicitia and liberalitas in order to demand reciprocity from their beloveds: “they transfer the ideology of a civic inter-male relationship to an erotic relationship with a woman ... they wish to impose on [these women] the obligations and commitments which society was supposed to sanction for conventional, ‘regular’ relationships” (75). Gibson makes the important point that there has been a tendency for literary critics to restrict the application of amicitia to “friendship among equals”, which has prevented them from seeing this framework as important to the clearly unequal relationships between the elegists and their beloveds (1995 63). However, even Gibson’s modification of the prevailing view is too restrictive in my view, since, as we have seen in chapter one, the framework of reciprocal exchange, whether between equals or between those of different status, was pervasive both in Roman culture and in poetry of genres other than elegy.

This ideology is important to the elegists’ view of their relationships. By attempting to establish a connection with their beloveds based on liberalitas, the poets try to set up a situation in which the beloveds are obligated to return the favours done for them. Both Tibullus and Propertius present positive portrayals of idealised versions of the correct way to engage in amatory liberalitas. Propertius 2.13 offers an example. The poet himself rejects material gifts in

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15 In the context of the poet’s tactics with respect to the puella, his invocation of liberalitas does not necessarily, as James 2003 argues, elide the status differences between the poet and puella, since even the lowest status Roman (e.g. a freedwoman) is implicated in the patron/client relationship, and therefore in the framework of liberalitas. I do agree, however, that the poet’s argument that poetry is better than material gifts does deliberately ignore the economic necessities of such a woman, using moral arguments to counter the practical realities that are never allowed to enter into the elegiac world (except in the words of the lena, as James 2003 discusses, pp. 52-68).
favour of poetic gifts and personal services in connection with his own funeral, and shows
Cynthia performing similar tasks. In a related vein, Propertius in 3.23 declares the power of his
writing tablets to win over his girl, and says they are more useful than gold; the poem announces
the loss of these tablets, and promises a reward for their return. Lines 7 and 8 describe the
writing tablets as lacking external richness or ornamentation: “non illas fixum caras effecerat
aurum: / vulgari buxo sordida cera fuit”; instead, they are valuable because of the words that they
contain: “Ergo tam doctae nobis periere tabellae, / scripta quibus pariter tot periere bona!”
(3.23.1-2). These words are so precious because they are efficacious in love: “illae iam sine me
norant placare puellas, / et quaedam sine me verba diserta loqui” (3.23.5-6). They are also to be
treasured because they are always faithful to the poet: “qualescumque mihi semper mansere
fideles, / semper et effectus promeruere bonos” (3.23.9-10). They therefore represent an idealised
picture of the poet-lover, who is valued for his inner gifts rather than his material possessions, is
able to sway his beloved with words, and offers outstanding faithfulness to his mistress. This
idealisation is continued in Propertius’ fantasy that the tablets currently contain words that reveal
his mistress’s love and jealousy, the desired features of a willing and compliant elegiac mistress:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{forsitan haec illis fuerunt mandata tabellis:} \\
\text{‘irascor, quoniam’s, lente, moratus heri.} \\
\text{an tibi nescio quae visast formasior? an tu} \\
\text{non bona de nobis crimina ficta iacis?’} \\
\text{aut dixit: ‘venies hodie, cessabimus una:}
\end{align*}
\]

16 Here “bona = ‘good things’, in the sense of clever sayings, res bona being regular Latin for one of these” (Camps 1966b 162).

17 Cairns also points out that the tablets demonstrate the Alexandrian nature of their owner, Propertius, by
their own qualities: they are learned, small, well-used, individual, have power to win over women, and are humble
(1972 78).
hospitium tota nocte paravit Amor,’

et quaecumque volens reperit non stulta puella
garrula, cum blandis dicitur hora dolis. (3.23.11-18)

In the idealised portrayal of the relationship, then, the words of the poet have more power than gold, and are able to produce the desired effects upon his mistress. By offering gold for their return, he suggests that his priorities are different than those of other people – he values his tablets more than gold, but others do not – this exchange, therefore, is not one of liberalitas, since the poet does not value what he will give away (gold) and the other person will not value what he has got (the tablets). It is instead a straight-forward financial transaction, and the reference to an avarus (3.23.21) makes that clear, since greed and miserliness are antithetical to true liberalitas.

Finally, Tibullus 2.4, with its portrait of a girl “bona quae nec avara fuit” contains an example of the strength of the bond created by “proper” liberalitas in love. The “loving relationship untainted by venality” as described by Paul Murgatroyd (1994 151) between the girl and her lover shows how the exchange of love for services, and not for money, creates and maintains fides, which is the primary function of liberalitas.18 The fact that it is an old man who tends the girl’s grave emphasises the lasting nature of the relationship. As well, the emotional tie between the two, emphasised by Tibullus, reminds us of the importance of emotion and intention in the ideal exercise of liberalitas as described by Seneca (Ben. 1.5.1-1.6.1). This last portrait of ideal amatory liberalitas has similarities to the marital liberalitas discussed by Hemelrijk, in particular in the image of the old man tending the grave: the situation recalls the Laudatio Turiae in its depiction of faithful, long-term love, and a man caring for a woman after her death. Here we see, then, an example of the strategy of offering the beloved a flattering portrayal, with the

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18 Liberalitas is closely connected to fides in Roman thought, as noted by C. Feuvrier-Prévotat (266).
implied expectation that she will then behave according to that model.

More explicit discussions of the tension between appropriate and inappropriate uses of gifts in an amatory context are found in Tibullus 1.4 and 1.5. The former poem, like 1.9, which is similarly occupied with this issue, concerns a male beloved; this situation might seem to fit more easily into the homosocial framework of liberalitas than the poems addressed to Delia or Nemesis. But the strategy seems to be consistent with those other poems: the ‘gifts’ of the rival are treated as morally flawed and equivalent to purchase, while the services of the poet are portrayed as preferable. Marathus is pressured to fit himself in to the more positive depiction, and therefore to demonstrate his gratitude as demanded by the conventions of liberalitas. In 1.4, an overall context of exchange and reciprocity is present from the very beginning, as Parshia Lee-Stecum notes (133). Priapus and the poet enter into a bargain in which the poet offers a covering for the statue in return for Priapus’ advice on wooing boys: “Sic umbrosa tibi contingent tecta, Priape, / ne capiti soles, ne noceantque nives:/ quae tua formosos cepit sollertia?” (1.4.1-3).\(^\text{19}\) This framework is developed throughout the god’s advice, especially when he “advises the lover, if he wishes to win the beloved boy and his favours, to play the role of the ‘lesser’ amicus and perform the officia appropriate to that role for the boy-patron” (Gibson 1995 66):

\begin{verbatim}
tu, puero quodcumque tuo temptare libebit,
cedas: obsequio plurima vincet amor.
neu comes ire neges, quamvis via longa paretur
et Canis arenti torreat arva siti,
quamvis praetexens picta ferrugine caelum
\end{verbatim}

\(^{19}\) There is also a connection between the wooing process as described by Priapus and the religious process, with both centring on an exchange of services (Lee-Stecum 146). On wooing in elegy see W. Stroh, Die römische Liebeselegie als werbende Dichtung (1971).
venturam admittat imbrifer arcus aquam.
vel si caeruleas puppi volet ire per undas,
ipse levem remo per freta pelle ratem,
nec te paeniteat duros subiisse labores
aut opera insuetas atteruisse manus.
nec, velit insidiis altas si claudere valles,
dum placeas, umeri retia ferre negent.
si volet arma, levi temptabis ludere dextra;
saepe dabis nudum, vincat ut ille, latus. (1.4.39-53)
The terminology of amicitia is explicit here, in obsequium, which is “the chief virtue of underlings” (Oliensis 1997 152) and comes, an almost technical term for a companion of a lower status.20 Many such services appear elsewhere in the elegists, in particular the willingness to act as a travelling or hunting companion (Gibson 1995 71). But as the passage progresses, there seems to be a blurring of status, as the proffered services, and the language used to describe them, become more servile: “nec te paeniteat duros subiisse labores / aut opera insuetas atteruisse manus” (47-48). It could therefore be argued that this is the language of servitium amoris, not liberalitas and amicitia, but I still see the metaphor of liberalitas as uppermost here, specifically because the poet expects a reward for his favours. James argues convincingly that elegiac servitium amoris is best seen as a persuasive device, “designed to demonstrate degradation and emotional suffering rather than to describe the performance of useful duties” (2003 149), and shows that it is “closer to obsequium, the duties and obligations of attendance of a free man to his patron, than to actual slavery” (2003 148). And the clearest

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20 For comes: OLD sv. 2: “A companion, friend, comrade (often in an inferior capacity or of humbler rank).”.
demonstration of this here is that the services are performed in the expectation of a reward:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{tunc tibi mitis erit, rapias tum cara licebit} \\
\text{oscula: pugnabit, sed tibi rapta dabit.} \\
\text{rapta dabit primo, post adferet ipse roganti,} \\
\text{post etiam collo se implicuisse velit. (1.4.54-57)}
\end{align*}
\]

Reciprocity is what distinguishes these actions from the services of a slave. These actions are not undertaken because of necessity, but as part of a strategic attempt to elicit a return from the beloved. And it is this reciprocity that is crucial to the program of the poet-lover, who uses his poetry to try to place his beloved(s) in the position of obligation that is associated with the recipient of favours and gifts.

This same pattern is seen in 1.5; Tibullus contrasts the services offered by a poor man with the gifts given by a *dives amator* (1.5.47):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{... num donis vincitur omnis amor?} \\
\text{pauper erit praesto semper tibi, pauper adibit} \\
\text{primus et in tenero fixus erit latere.} \\
\text{pauper in angusto fidus comes agmine turbae} \\
\text{subicietque manus efficietque viam.} \\
\text{pauper ad occultos furtim deducet amicos} \\
\text{vinclaque de niveo detrahet ipse pede. (Tib. 1.5.59-66)}
\end{align*}
\]

Again the line between servile functions and those of a client is blurred, but again the key element is the expectation of reciprocity. These services are offered by the poor man in an attempt to get services (love) from the *puella* in return; when she ceases to allow the lover in to see her, he stops offering the services. And by offering services analogous to those of a client, Tibullus implicitly fits his actions into the overarching framework of *liberalitas*, giving his
expectation of reciprocity a moral validity within the conventions of Roman society. By contrast, the *dives amator*, who offers *dona* (1.5.60) from a *plena manu* (1.5.68), is excluded from this framework by the poet, and is instead connected to the *callida lena* (1.5.48), described as a *saga rapax* (1.5.59). As well, the relationship based on these exchanges of money for *amor* is doomed to be transitory, as demonstrated in the final lines (1.5.69-76), unlike the (idealised) relationship based on affection and the services offered by the poet, which, in Tibullus’ dream (1.5.19-34), would have the stability of an actual marriage.

Gibson suggests that the relationship between lover and beloved is portrayed as similar to the relationship between a poet and his patron, with the beloved in the stronger position of patron; Marathus, for instance, is promised fame and immortality in poetry, just as is the patron (1995 65-69):

21

Pieridas, pueri, doctos et amate poetas,

aurea nec superent munera Pieridas.

carmine purpurea est Nisi coma: carmina ni sint,

ex umero Pelopis non nituisset ebur.

quem referent Musae, vivet, dum robora tellus,

dum caelum stellas, dum vehet amnis aquas. (1.4.61-66)

Propertius also suggests parallels between Cynthia and a patron, especially in book 2: “she is the inspiration for his poetry (3.2, 2.30b.40); he is determined to make her famous (2.25.3-4); she is his ideal reader and critic (2.3.22, 2.13.9-16); he swears loyalty to her (2.20.15-18, 34-6); he

21 Gibson notes, however, that the use of a pseudonym for the beloved undercuts this offer (1995 65n25). Compare Ovid Am. 1.3, in which he offers his beloved poetic immortality (“nos quoque per totum pariter cantabimur orbem / iunctaque semper erunt nomina nostra tuis”) in a poem that does not include any name for the beloved, not even a pseudonym. Here we can see Ovid exposing the hollowness of the elegist’s traditional offers (drawing most directly on Prop. 3.2), as he does throughout the poem with the other usual aspects of *servitium amoris*. 
advertises her generosity (2.15, 2.20.21-8); and celebrates her birthday (3.10)” (Gibson 1995 67). This fits with the overall portrayal of the lover/poet as subjugated to and dependent on the beloved.

However, I would argue that just as the relationship between the poet and the patron has been shown to be not so simple, neither is the relationship between the poet and his beloved. As demonstrated in chapter 2, the poets are generally not willing to portray themselves as completely subjugated to their patrons, and use a variety of strategies to establish themselves at least partially in the role of the giver of services and gifts, and even as potentially morally superior to their patrons. Although the strategies are different and, as we shall see, generally ineffective, some of the same negotiation of respective positions can be seen in the elegists’ portrayal of their apparent dependence on their beloveds.

Notably, just as they do when addressing their patrons, the elegists present their potential gifts of poetry and services as morally superior to the material gifts of money and luxuries offered by their rivals. This gives them a moral advantage over their beloveds. By increasing the value of their gifts, moreover, they suggest that they are more benefactors than beneficiaries. In fact, it is precisely because they take this position that they consider themselves able to demand reciprocity from their beloveds. After all, Cicero says right at the beginning of the De officiis that there are two kinds of giving, one optional and one required: to give, and to give in return (1.15.48). If the elegists attempt to elicit return giving from their beloveds on the grounds that the latter are obligated to them, then the elegists place themselves in the position of the originator of the exchange, and to a certain extent, therefore, in the superior position. This is much the same move that these same poets make in an attempt to level the ground with their patrons.

Because the elegists use the ideology of liberalitas to frame their relationships with their beloveds, they are able to complain about any lack of reciprocity and to use the moral suasion of
the societal expectations about gratitude and obligation to attempt to enforce such reciprocity (Gibson 1995 69). That is, they complain of immoral or anti-social behaviour on the part of their beloveds if, or rather when, the reciprocity fails. The beloveds are accused of ingratitude, greed, and venality because they prefer the gifts given by rivals to the poetry and services offered by the lover/poet.

One major aspect of this stance is equating the acceptance of gifts that come from other lovers with greed and avarice; coupled with this is the characterisation of the other lovers’ gifts as bribery or payment for services rendered. This focuses attention on the substance of the exchange: money and luxuries are in themselves immoral, and the desire for such material goods corrupts the one who desires. The characterisation of material gifts as purchase or bribe develops in part from New Comedy, both Greek and Roman, in which the young lover is often in competition with a rich rival for a prostitute’s attentions, and therefore is involved literally in a financial transaction, since her services are actually for sale. The situation in elegy is different in a significant respect, however. While the puellae may well represent meretrices, as James argues, they are not actually ever referred to as such by the poets.22 In fact, the poets often go to elaborate lengths to characterise their puellae as respectable; for instance, Propertius’ description of Cynthia as sitting at home alone, spinning, in 1.3, is clearly intended to evoke the ideal Roman matrona, and even suggests the occupation of the famous Lucretia, victim of Tarquin the Proud.23 There is always an underlying recognition of the unreality of this, however. Cynthia may be spinning, but she is spinning thread that has been dyed purple; the association of purple

22 Sometimes they do come close, though, such as at Tibullus 2.4.14: “illa cava pretium flagitat usque manu”. Even here, however, the lack of any explicit labelling of the beloved as a prostitute allows Tibullus to use her resemblance to one as a point of attack; it would not be much of an insult to say of a prostitute that she demanded payment, since it would be expected. Cf. Prop. 3.14.

23 Cf. Tib. 1.3.
cloth with Eastern luxury and the Roman use of dyed wool to metaphorically represent deceit undercut the scene’s appearance of chastity and respectability. As well, the heroines to whom Cynthia is compared are hardly paragons of respectability: Ariadne, a maenad, Io, and Selene are none of them complimentary comparisons for a *matrona*. Indeed, the tension between the unrealised ideal and the unvoiced reality is part of the focus of elegy. James suggests that the elegists deliberately elide or disguise the ‘real’ status of their *puella* in order to present her actions as individual traits (and often failings) instead of as professional obligations or behaviour motivated by real necessity (2003 40). This representation of the *puella* also assumes a freedom of action on the part of the beloved that is not consonant with either the purchase of a prostitute or the material needs of an unprotected woman. It therefore allows the lover-poets to appeal to the reciprocity of *liberalitas*, and to attempt to establish a relationship that is constrained only by the moral and social obligations of that reciprocity, rather than by practical necessity.

The depiction of the *puella* as free to choose her lovers and unconstrained by practical considerations allows the poets to attach moral judgements to her actions. They work hard to characterise the rich rival as immoral and the *puella* as greedy and mercenary for accepting material gifts. Tibullus 1.9, for instance, contains a denunciation of *lucrum* and mercenary behaviour on the part of the beloved (1.9.7-20 and passim). This poem is addressed to a boy, not a *puella*; this simultaneously heightens the degree to which *liberalitas* can be activated as a framework, since male to male *liberalitas* is the normative pattern, and problematizes it, since

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24 It is true that very successful prostitutes, such as Lais and Thais, do seem to have enjoyed great freedom and independence; they must have been the exception, however, about whom stories were told precisely because they were so unusual. See McGinn (52-54) for the probable financial hardships of most Roman prostitutes.

25 James: “Payment rendered by way of gifts allows two things: first, the woman in question retains her independence; and second, the lover can suggest that she owes him informal, spontaneous, genuine gratitude, to be expressed both sexually and socially, as part of a more equal and truly loving relationship” (2003 39).
the pederastic relationship has strongly marked Greek, especially Hellenistic, associations,\textsuperscript{26} and so is less firmly located in the Roman social and cultural context. Lee-Stecum points out that the examples offered in the opening of the poem (1.9.7-10) are of giving up power and control over oneself for the sake of gain (\textit{lucra}): the oxen submit to the yoke (1.9.7-8) and the ships are led by the stars over waves that obey the winds (1.9.9-10). These images also conventionally suggest the end of the Golden Age, and so stress the destructive power of greed. Lee-Stecum suggests that Tibullus’ argument is that this same loss of power and self-control occurs when material gifts are accepted from a lover (250), demonstrating the undesirability of a relationship founded on desire for gifts. When Tibullus turns to the specific situation in which he finds himself, he uses the language of bribery and corruption to describe the rich lover’s wooing. In lines 11-12, “\textit{est captus}” implies deception and even bribery (Maltby 2002 325), while in line 33, “\textit{pretium}” can mean ‘the price of betrayal’ (330).\textsuperscript{27} The exchange is described not as an example of \textit{liberalitas}, with its assumption of a reciprocal obligation, but as payment: “\textit{The measure of gold (\textit{auri} ... \textit{pondere}) and \textit{pretium} of land emphasise the commercial nature of the deal which the boy forsweares}” (Lee-Stecum 253). “\textit{Pollue}” in line 17 points to the corrupting influence of wealth, made explicit in line 53: “\textit{qui puerum donis corruumpere es ausus}”. The entire set of relationships is corrupted by the mercenary transactions between Marathus and the rich rival, and even Tibullus is forced into this pattern when interacting with Pholoe on the boy’s behalf, as can be seen in line 44 in the phrase “\textit{munere nostro}”, for which “the first meaning is ‘through my favour’ or ‘good offices’ (\textit{OLD} s.v. 6) but the word also suggests a bribe (\textit{OLD} s.v. 5). T. bribes

\textsuperscript{26} See Cairns 1979.

\textsuperscript{27} \textit{OLD} sv. 10: “money given or received for dishonourable purposes, a bribe, ‘money’, ‘gold’”; the entry cites Tib. 1.9.33.
Pholoe as a ‘gift’ to Marathus” (Maltby 2002 332). Even his attempt to use poetry to win Marathus’ love and loyalty has been contaminated: “quin etiam attonita laudes tibi mente canebam, / et me nunc nostri Pieridumque pudet” (1.9.47-48). Giving wealth not only affects the relationship between giver and recipient; it also destroys surrounding relationships.

Propertius 2.16 is another denunciation of wealth and gifts given in exchange for love, and again the vocabulary used by the poet contributes to his attempt to control the moral implications of this process. From the first couplet the exchange between Cynthia and the rich rival (praetor) is defined by its monetary nature: “maxima praeda tibi” (2.16.2). The term “praeda” can refer to the praetor himself as a source of profit, something to be plundered (OLD sv. 1b). It can also refer to the wealth that the praetor has brought back from Illyria, but it suggests that the gifts Cynthia will receive from him are the spoils of violence or robbery (OLD sv. 1), not the well-considered gifts of liberalitas. A few lines later, the image of Cynthia weighing the purses of her lovers (2.16.1-12) is explicitly financial; Propertius expands this in lines 15 and 16, and suggests that giving money for love removes all moral distinction, so that both good and bad have equal ability to acquire a lover: “ergo muneribus quivis mercatur amorem? / Iuppiter, indigna merce puella perit”. In line 16, “indigna” indicates the immorality of money in connection with love; this may mean “at less than she’s worth” or “shameful” because her love is sold at all (Camps 1966a 132); quite probably both meanings are intended here.

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28 As well, the holding of the lamp for the tryst is very much the office of a slave.

29 If Propertius book 2 is a response to Tibullus book 1, as argued by Lyne 1998, the similarities of theme and language here may be a deliberate continuation of Tibullus’ attack on wealth.

30 Cairns points out that in this poem, Propertius is attempting to speak for Cynthia, rejecting the praetor and simultaneously trying to influence her to reject the praetor (1972 206). He is therefore trying to control the terms on which she interacts with the praetor, and his use of pejorative terms for wealth is part of this attempt.

31 Cairns mentions that, while bringing back gifts from foreign travels for friends was usual, these gifts were not usually mentioned in poems welcoming friends home; thus Propertius’ emphasis on such gifts here inverts the generic conventions, in such a way as “to cast total doubt on Cynthia’s motives for welcoming the praetor, and to insult the praetor as someone welcome only for his money” (1972 207).
characterises the exchange as a commercial transaction, and evokes, of course, the label *meretrix*. Finally, “perit can certainly mean ‘is lost to me’ or alternatively ‘goes to the bad,’ and can perhaps mean ‘sells herself cheap’” (Camps 1966a 132). Again, in line 21 the *amicae* are called “venales”, and the man who would be able to purchase the girl is called *foedus* in line 24. The persistence of commercial language and imagery obscures the possibility of reading the exchange as anything but a purchase, implying that there can be no moral force exerted on the recipient of the gifts to feel gratitude. At the same time, the insistence on the immorality of the exchange denies it any validity. And again, we see that the use of money to get love leads to a breakdown of *fides*: Cynthia is accused of having broken her promises to the poet, and the bond between them has been destroyed by the wealth of the *praetor*: “non semper placidus periuros ridet amantis / Iuppiter et surda neglegit aure preces” (2.16.47-48), and “periuras tunc ille solet punire puellas, / deceptus quoniam flevit et ipse deus” (2.16.53-54). Finally, the examples Propertius uses to warn Cynthia demonstrate his view of the role of material gifts in love and support his argument that instead of producing *fides* and strengthening relationships, they destroy the bonds of society: Eriphyle (2.16.29) was given gifts as a bribe and caused the death of her husband, and Creusa’s deadly gifts (2.16.30) came from a woman who had suffered the destruction of the bonds tying her to her husband and who herself destroyed both the society around her and her own family. Specifically, these examples are of wives whose greed corrupts; Cynthia, then, is being implicitly compared to a wife, and we have seen that *liberalitas* between a man and a woman is particularly relevant to the marital context.

The commercial aspect of material gifts is also found in Propertius 1.2, which suggests that adornment is mercenary and *munera* are payment. This is a conventional theme, notes Robert J. Baker, in which the poet urges the beloved not “to mar her natural beauty with cosmetics” (69); also, the use of *vendere* makes attraction seem to be a commercial thing (70),
and makes the beloved a *meretrix*. Again, this equates material goods with selling and money, removing them from the sphere of *liberalitas*: “The cycle of barter latent in the second and third couplet is here continued: the girl who ‘sold’ herself with foreign ‘gifts’ is parading on her person bought ‘ornamentation’” (71). Camps, by contrast, does not see *vendere* as having its literal sense here, and sees *muneribus* as meaning ‘finery’ not gifts (1961 46). This view seems to result from discomfort at the harshness of the image of selling (and even prostitution) that is evoked. I would suggest, however, that this evocation is important, since it is part of the overall strategy of the elegists to remove the possibility of casting these gifts as manifestations of *liberalitas*.32 R.I.V. Hodge and R.A. Buttimore are among other commentators who take the same view:

*vendere* itself naturally means to sell. P. is accusing her of actually selling herself

... the nature of the transaction is brought out by the ablative *‘muneribus’*

*munera* in elegy comes to have almost a technical meaning, referring to the gifts lovers use to win access to their mistresses. The implication is that all of Cynthia’s finery must have come from wealthy admirers; the word here becomes almost a euphemism for fees. (75-76)

Again the poet has established an equivalence between accepting gifts in an erotic relationship and selling one’s sexual services for monetary gain as a *meretrix* does.

The same strategy can be seen even in poems in which the poet has, it seems, succeeded in winning his *puella* through poetry and services alone. Propertius 1.8 first tries to dissuade Cynthia from following another man on a trip, and then celebrates a moment in which the poet’s

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32 *Vendere* is used only in connection with homosexual love in Tibullus (Maltby 2002 233). This may have influenced earlier commentators in their understanding of the term in Propertius, since there has tended to be a feeling that the relationship between Tibullus and Marathus was more openly commercial than any of the relationships between the elegists and their *puellae*; James 2003 argues against this division.
alternative *liberalitas* appears to have successfully triumphed over the wealth offered by his rival. Propertius again implies that the wealth (rejected, in the end, by his *puella*) is immoral and connected with commercial transactions rather than true *liberalitas*. In lines 2-3 of 1.8, “vilior” and “tanti” describing the poet and the rival imply that Cynthia is judging the monetary value of each, as if engaged in buying and selling. In line 38 the pun on “sinus”, which can mean breast or heart, but was also a common word for the pocket in which money was carried, suggests that the poet’s heart or breast is a better “purse” than the rival’s literal purse (Baker 109). Later in the poem, the use of Hippodamia’s dowry (1.8.35-36) as an example of great riches points to the gifts and wealth given by a rival (Hodge and Buttimore 130). It also implies a moral problem with such wealth, since Pelops won her dowry in the end through deceit and murder. Again, although it is negated here, the epithet “avara” in line 38 applied to Cynthia characterises her potential desire for the gifts given by his rival as greed and condemns it on moral grounds. In contrast, the success of the poet is based on his devotion; he has won Cynthia’s agreement to stay with him through his avowed love and his “preces” (1.8.28). This is reminiscent of Milanion in 1.1, who used *preces* to win his beloved (1.1.16). It also recalls Propertius refusing to go on a voyage because he cannot endure his beloved’s pleas (1.6.5-6).

Here, he regards the bond between himself and Cynthia as inviolable on his part; 1.8(b) seems to celebrate a moment in which she displays the same *fides* to him, and the relationship based on devotion, service, and poetry is seen to be stronger than that created by riches.

Tibullus 1.4 explicitly characterises giving material *munera* as buying love (1.4.59-60) and contrasts it with poetry’s power to praise and immortalise. The poet establishes a situation in which there are only two alternatives: giving poetry and service as *liberalitas*, in exchange for

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33 I take this as one poem, not dividing it after line 26. Cairns demonstrates that the change at line 26 can be seen as part of Propertius’ play with the generic conventions of the schetliastic propemptikon (1972 150).
love, or buying love with wealth. In this dichotomy, any gift that is connected to wealth is equivalent to a payment (“qui vendit amorem” [1.4.67]). Priapus’ outburst against venality (perhaps suggested or influenced by Callimachus Hymn I.3 [Maltby 231]) stresses the immorality of wealth, cursing the originator of the practice of asking for money in the type of terms used to refer to those who caused the transition from the Golden to the Iron Age: “at tu, qui venerem docuisti vendere primus, / quisquis es, infelix urgeat ossa lapis” (1.4.59-60). The moral superiority of poetry as a gift, and the immorality of money, is supported by the approval of two gods, Venus (1.4.71-72) and Priapus himself. The same approach can be seen in the poet’s wooing of Marathus in Tibullus 1.9, in which “the poet tries to rely upon other munera, such as service, carmina, and the profession of his own amor, but he is powerless to achieve the boy’s compliance” (Lee-Stecum 256). Again, in Propertius 1.2, “mercenary” ornamentation is contrasted to the favour of divinities and poetry. A reference to Apollo “marks [Cynthia] as a docta puella ... fit both to write poetry and be wooed by the sort of poetry that P. writes” (Baker 75). The carmina – gifts that outdo Coan silk – become the munera appropriate to a girl like Cynthia (Hodge and Buttimore 84). Given by Propertius, these gifts are presented as both more attractive and more morally correct than the luxurious ornamentation given to her by her rich lovers.

A similar strategy can be seen in Horace’ Epodes 11. This is not an elegy, of course, but it reflects on elegiac-style love, and is “saturated ... with motifs familiar from Roman Elegy” (Watson 1983 229).\textsuperscript{34} Recognising the framework of liberalitas in the poem’s treatment of the relationship of the lovers can help in its interpretation. Epodes 11 portrays Horace as an elegiac lover vying for his hard-hearted and mercenary beloved with one or more rich rivals. He is not

\textsuperscript{34} Presumably Horace is reacting to Gallus’ poems, and their development both of Catullan love themes and of the young lovers of New Comedy.
able to obtain his beloved’s favours with poetry because she prefers “lucrum”:

‘contrane lucrum nil valere candidum

pauperis ingenium?’ querebar applorans tibi,

simul calentis inverecundus deus

fervidiore mero arcana promorat loco.

‘quodsi meis inaestuet praecordiis

libera bilis, ut haec ingrata ventis dividat

fomenta vulnus nil malum levantia,

desinet imparibus certare summotus pudor.’ (Epod. 11.11-18)

The use of this term denigrates material gifts and implies greed on the part of the beloved as well as dishonesty on the part of the rival: material goods as manifestations of liberalitas are immoral. Lucrum, notes Watson, is “an opprobrious term, suggesting both the wealth of the dives amator, which is frequently ill-gotten, and in particular the rapacity which makes a puella susceptible to its allure” (2003 369). By contrast, the term “candidum” used of the rejected “ingenium” of the poet (Epod. 11.11-12), which here clearly means poetic talent or skill, suggests as well ‘innocent of deception’ or ‘well-intentioned’; this emphasises the moral worth of poetry as opposed to wealth (369-70).\textsuperscript{35} It may also be significant that candidus is a positive aesthetic term.\textsuperscript{36} Horace continues his references to the moral superiority of poetry to wealth in his use of the word “imparibus” to refer to his rivals (11.18). Watson points out that this must imply ‘inferiors’, since the word impar never means ‘superior’ or ‘stronger’; in order for his rivals, who are wealthier than him, to be considered inferior, they must be morally inferior (2003 374). This

\textsuperscript{35} See OLD s.v. 5.

\textsuperscript{36} See OLD s.v. candidus 9 (of writers or writings) ‘clear, lucid, unambiguous’. See also Keith 1999 47-48 for Horace’s use of the term in connection to poetry.
reflects the same “attitude of moral superiority elsewhere struck by the impoverished lover towards his richer, more successful rival” (2003 373).  

Epodes 11 thus once more offers, in Watson’s words, the “typical complaint of the poor poets, whose gift of verse celebrating the girl, the products of his ingenium, are rejected by her in favour of the tangible gifts of the dives amator” (2003 359). The poem is closely connected in theme and tone to Latin love elegy, but its Archilochean metre and placement within an iambic collection tie it to the tradition of blame poetry (362). This is important, since it signals the moral overtones of Horace’s complaint: the poet is not just unhappy that he has been rejected by his beloved, he is making a larger point about the propriety of her actions and the exchange of material goods for love. The overall collection is concerned with issues of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and their impact on, and regulation by, the community; this poem, if it belongs in the collection, must address some aspect of these concerns as well.

Horace’s main complaint is that his poetry failed to establish the reciprocal bonds of liberalitas with Inachia because the poems were unrequited (Epod. 11.11-18). Inachia is therefore accused of considering herself obligated by the wrong thing; she has been bribed by immoral wealth instead of returning the favour given her by the poet. In this context the scattering to the winds of the ingrata fomenta becomes a meaningful invocation of the falseness of lover’s vows, since she has not kept fides with him, as the rules of liberalitas would require. To Watson, the fomenta seem to mean Horace’s poetry (2003 373), while Mankin (1995) takes them as his poetic complaints (201), which Horace hoped would work as a remedium amoris.  

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37 Cf. Prop. 2.16, Ov. Am. 3.8, and Tib. 1.9.

38 Taking the fomenta as complaints, we could see them as equivalent to Propertius’ elegiac querelae, a term he uses for his elegiac poems (Saylor 1967 142); multiple forms of the verb queri or noun querela are found in the first book of his poetry (1.4.28, 1.5.17, 1.6.11, 1.7.8, 1.8.22, 1.17.9, 1.18.1, 26, 29) and so the term is perhaps a Gallan inheritance (and thus accessible to Horace). Saylor notes that Horace most often uses forms of this root to refer to “the lover’s complaint,” but does have two uses of querela with the “technical sense of ‘elegy’” (1967 143). There are also indications that medicina amoris itself was a Gallan topos (Ross 1975 67-69).
they are best taken as his poems for Inachia, which were unable to compete with the money
given by the rival. *Ingrata* has been read as ‘ineffectual’ since they did not succeed (Watson
2003 373 and Mankin 1995 201), but I think here it has a stronger meaning. It is a key term; it
signals a connection to the Catullan conflation of *amor* and *amicitia*, in particular in poem 76, in
which Catullus’ love is *ingrato*. If the *fomenta* are Horace’s poems to Inachia, *ingrata* becomes
even more significant. The word can mean ‘not received with or deserving of gratitude or
appreciation’ (*OLD* sv. 2) or ‘that which is not welcomed with gratitude’ (Watson 2003 373).39
Because Horace’s poems to Inachia did not activate her gratitude, she feels no obligation towards
him, and so they were unable to cure his wound. This reading would also help to explain the
mixed metaphor of “ventis dividat fomenta”: if Horace hoped that his poems would form a bond
between himself and Inachia, then the invocation of an image more usually applied to lovers’
promises (Watson 2003 373) is very appropriate. Poetry proves ineffective at activating the
obligations connected with *liberalitas*, so Horace finds himself in a position similar to that of
Catullus bewailing the lack of *fides* between himself and Lesbia in poem 70, in which Catullus
refers to the proverbial idea of lovers’ promises being scattered by the wind: “sed mulier cupido
quod dicit amanti, / in vento et rapida scribere oportet aqua” (70.3-4).

The elegists argue that wealth cannot form part of the exchange of *liberalitas* because it is
immoral and harmful. Giving money as *liberalitas* breaks the bonds between people and destroys
society instead of strengthening relationships and improving society, as *liberalitas* should.40

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39 Propertius uses *ingratus* in 1.3 to describe Cynthia’s sleep when he tries to give her love-gifts: “omniaque
ingrato largibar munera somno” (1.3.25). Since she does not know that she has received any gifts, she does not feel
any gratitude (and therefore obligation) towards Propertius, so his gifts are without purpose. The sense is not exactly
the same as in the Horace passage, since it describes the person (by extension) not the gifts, but it produces a similar
situation.

40 Cicero says that giving money is often degrading to the giver and corrupting to the recipient (*Off.
2.15.53*), while both Cicero and Seneca stress the role of *liberalitas* in producing and maintaining the cohesion of
society and the state: “naturam debemus ducem sequi, communes utilitates in medium afferre mutatione officiorum,
dando accipiendo, tum artibus, tum opera, tum facultatibus devincire hominum inter homines societatem” (*Off.*
Tibullus, in his poems about Nemesis, illustrates the problems associated with giving money as *liberalitas*; among other things, it leads those without money to commit crimes and impious acts in order to acquire it so they can give it away. Poems 2.3 and 2.4, in particular, demonstrate the immoral nature of such exchanges. In 2.3, as summarised by Murgatroyd, “Tibullus embraces the way of the *praedator* (soldiering, robbery, etc. [35-6]), tolerates venality in girls and actually pictures himself giving his mistress very expensive gifts, just like a *dives amator*” (1994 84).

This description of the situation misses a significant point, however. Tibullus may admit the necessity of taking on the role of the *praedator*, but he does not give it moral validity, nor does he actually condone venality in girls, but instead acknowledges its existence. His willingness to give expensive gifts on the one hand admits the failure of his redefinition of *liberalitas*. On the other hand, he still maintains his moral stance and therefore continues to attempt to portray material gifts as wrong, even as he accepts the need to give them. In other words, where he could have said, “I was wrong, gifts are good, I will give gifts”, instead he says “gifts are indeed bad, but poems do not work, so I will give gifts”. The mention of robbery in lines 35-36 demonstrates this moral position; there is a strong emphasis on the greed and destructiveness of the *praedator* (Murgatroyd 1994 105). His rejection of *praeda* in lines 33-48, followed by his acceptance of the role of *praedator*, imply “that T.’s affair with Nemesis makes him give up cherished values and alter his outlook and ideals for the worse” (Murgatroyd 1994 84). The ex-slave status of the rival also continues the characterisation of wealth, and those who use it, as degraded.

In 2.4, having failed with poetry, Tibullus rejects it and turns to material gifts to attempt to win Nemesis. Nonetheless, although he has admitted the necessity of using wealth as *liberalitas*, he continues to portray it as morally wrong, as demonstrated by his expressed willingness to commit murder and sacrilege to obtain the necessary funds to win Nemesis

1.7.22).
This conjunction of evils is also noted by Cicero. In his discussions in the *De officiis* of the dangers of a liberalitas that involves money rather than service, he says that “etiam sequuntur largitionem rapinae. Cum enim dando egere coeperunt, alienis bonis manus afferre coguntur” (2.15.54). Again, in the *Catilinarians*, he says that excessive and ill-considered generosity and spending have resulted in Catiline and his followers turning to crime and sacrilege to get more money, which in turn threatens the very stability of the Roman state: “nihil cogitant nisi caedem, nisi incendia, nisi rapinas. Patrimonia sua profuderunt, fortunas suas obligaverunt; res eos iam pridem deseruit, fides nuper deficere coepit; eadem tamen illa, quae erat in abundantia, lubido permanet” (*Cat.* 2.10). Tibullus’ willingness to sell his ancestral lands for the sake of a woman is exactly what Cicero criticises as one of the dangers of prodigality: “Multi enim patrimonia effuderunt, inconsulte largiendo” (*Off.* 2.15.54). The violence and extravagance of the actions proposed by Tibullus are evidence of his desperation (Murgatroyd 1994 138), but they are also a demonstration of the immorality of material liberalitas. Again, the poet has constructed an either/or scenario, with no moderate middle ground: either he gives poetry and personal service, or he commits crimes and gives material gifts. He does not allow the possibility of giving material gifts morally, and suggests the serious public consequences of improper private giving.

The same connection between private greed and threats to public stability is made by Propertius. Poem 3.13 begins with a denunciation of venality in lovers, contrasting the current state of affairs with the simplicity and piety of the Golden Age (3.13.1-48). The poem then concludes with political and national topics, declaring that Rome is being destroyed by wealth: “frangitur ipsa suis Roma superba bonis” (3.13.60). This transition from the venality of mistresses to the destruction of the state is easier and more meaningful if we recognise that the underlying framework is the same in both private and public cases: money turns liberalitas into
To reinforce their attacks on the way that liberalitas is practised by their rich rivals, the elegists depict them extremely negatively. The rival is often described as disgusting or heartless, such that there could be no reason for the beloved to associate with him except for the gifts he can give to him or her. Tibullus 1.9 is particularly explicit in its description of the horrid old man whom Marathus accepted as a lover because of the gifts he offered. He is senis ‘old’ (1.9.74), corpora foeda podagra ‘body disfigured with gout’ (1.9.73), and stultissime ‘stupid’ (1.9.65), and is implicitly compared to a wild beast: “Huic tamen accubuit noster puer! Hunc ego credam / cum trucibus Venerem iungere posse feris” (1.9.75-76). The various physical and mental corruptions surrounding the rich rival suggest his moral decay and his potential to degrade others (Lee-Stecum 260).

Understanding the connection between the disgusting rich lover and the corruption of social bonds adds an important element to the interpretation of Horace’s epode 12. In this poem the poet himself is portrayed as the beloved swayed by wealth; the humiliating, disgusting, and miserable position in which he finds himself demonstrates the dangers of accepting wealth as liberalitas, while the disgusting vetula is a graphic representation of the immoral, corrupt, and hideous nature of someone who uses wealth this way. Considering the poem as (in part) a display of improper liberalitas also helps to explain Horace’s seeming inability to disengage himself

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41 Again, it is important to stress that liberalitas is not the problem – the problem is the corruption of liberalitas by money.

42 He resembles the vetula of Horace Epodes 8 and 12, who is also old (8.3-4, 12.7), disfigured (8.3-10), and compared to animals in a sexual context (8.5-8, 12.1 and 4-6); this connection is explored below.

43 This poem is not, of course, an elegy, and it predates the works by Tibullus and Propertius that I have been discussing. However, I would argue that the attitudes expressed in the poem can best be understood by framing them in an elegiac context; it is impossible to know whether this is a result of influence from Gallus, or is a parallel development out of the conventions of New Comedy that gave rise to many of the elegiac topoi.
from the woman: he may consider himself bound by the gifts he has been given, or at least have considered himself so in the past (hence his wish that she stop bothering him with gifts, which keep deepening his debt). The old woman certainly appeals to her gifts as reasons that Horace owes her at minimum sexual performance, and perhaps even love.

Oliensis focuses on “impotence” in this poem: “impotence, not disgust, is the premise of both poems [8 and 12]” (1998 74). Watson disagrees with the use of this term to describe Horace’s situation, since it should mean the presence of desire and the absence of ability, while in this poem there is the absence of desire (2003 384-85). Oliensis rejects this “narrow” definition of impotence, arguing that the term describes more than mere sexual incapacity accompanied by sexual desire (1998 74). Watson is correct about the lack of literal impotence in this poem, but I would agree with Oliensis that much of the focus of the poem is on the poet’s powerlessness. The important question, however, is what is he powerless to do? I do not believe the entire poem is about why Horace cannot achieve sexual potency; the real question is why does he even feel bound to try? Why is he presenting himself as being in a position to be berated by the *vetula*? What obligation is there, in the context of the poem, for Horace to endure her presence, especially considering how disgusting he finds it? The relationship between Horace and the old woman is viewed by Oliensis as “amorous subjugation” and “impotency” (1998 93-94), but she does not explain why the speaker should be subjugated like this to such a woman. The usual explanation seems to be that he got involved and now regrets it – but why did he get involved?44 That is, what is the dramatic context of the poem, and why should a reader believe that Horace (in his persona in the poem) would be connected with this woman? I suggest that Horace is casting himself in the role of the mercenary beloved who has endured these degrading

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44 Mankin suggests simply that this poem fits into the iambic tradition of “saying the worst things about oneself” and that the poem is framed in this way to allow Horace “to divert his friends at his own expense” (1995 205). He gives no suggestions for what the imagined circumstances of the relationship are.
horrors for the sake of munera, and thus is (or has been) bound by the ties of reciprocal obligation. If Horace is seen to be the equivalent of the avara puella who is willing to trade love (or at least sex) for riches, then the situation becomes explicable – he gave in because of the gifts, just as Delia or Marathus or Cynthia did. In this way the moral stance of the elegiac lover is exemplified: love exchanged for material munera is sordid, disgusting, degrading, and unpleasant.

The vetula has the characteristics of the dives amator, presented in such a way as to emphasise their unpleasant and immoral aspects. She has given Horace costly gifts (“munera” in line 2, “muricibus Tyriis iteratae vellera lanae” in line 21) and expects that he will give her love, or at least sex, in return. Watson acknowledges the commonality of her attitude with the standard conventions of literary love: “Amatory gift giving operated on the principle of reciprocity ... a tangible expression of gratitude on Horace’s part is called for, the woman implies” (2003 414). It is important to recognise that this “principle of reciprocity” is fundamental to all Roman gift-giving, not only amatory situations; the vetula could be considered to be acting in a completely acceptable manner according to the conventions of amicitia. She also expects him to demonstrate the relationship between them publicly (Epod. 12.21-24), thereby enhancing her status and showing his gratitude.45 The possibility of seeing the relationship between the vetula and Horace as based on amicitia and liberalitas is central to understanding why Horace was ever with such a disgusting creature, and why he should find it difficult to disentangle himself. Watson argues that the poem demonstrates Horace’s attempts to free himself from the vetula, making it clear that “the vetula is not propositioning Horace. She has established some kind of claim upon him by virtue of past sexual commerce” (2003 384). But Watson does not further discuss the specifics of the claim, nor why Horace is unable to simply walk away. I would suggest that the claim is that

45 Seneca says specifically that one should make one’s gratitude as public as possible (Ben. 2.23.1).
of liberalitas, and that, despite his current protestations, Horace presents himself as having, in the past at least, considered that the gifts given by the vetula obligate him to reciprocate.

Indeed, the vetula appeals to the framework of liberalitas, but Horace seems to reject this view of their relationship and instead describes it in commercial terms. Commentators such as Watson have generally accepted the poet’s commodification of these gifts, in which he makes a financial transaction out of what could be seen as liberalitas: “in an attempt to purchase H.’s affections, the vetula has given him a costly garment of Tyrian purple” (2003 413). In accepting the poet’s characterisation, they have also accepted the moral judgement of the situation: “equally unsavoury is her conviction, implicit in lines 21-4, that love can be purchased” (383). This process is aided by the gender inversion of the situation; usually the rich lover is male, and a woman giving gifts to a younger man is more obviously suspect than the reverse (383 and 414).

The invective and abuse of the vetula in this poem are extreme. Oliensis sees Horace as being smeared by the ugliness of his invective in both this poem and epode 8: “the ugliness that Horace describes is the ugliness of his descriptions” (1998 75). The contamination of the poet by the ugliness of the poem contributes to his presentation of the mercenary beloved’s corruption by the rich lover, so that his own persona becomes an example of the inevitable pollution that accompanies the use of money as liberalitas in an amatory context. The Epodes as a collection are concerned with social propriety and the cohesion of society, which is breaking down in the civil wars that are consuming Rome. If this poem addresses the question of how the bonds between people are formed and broken, and the corruption of one of the fundamental organising principles of Roman society, it is completely appropriate to its setting.

According to the argument made by these poets, then, when money is given by a rich rival, it can not be proper liberalitas. Because it is not liberalitas, the beloved should not be bound by the rules of reciprocity, and need not return love for money. The poets do not,
however, attack the basic idea that love should be given in return for something else. That is, they do not suggest that love should be given freely, without obligation on either side, or selflessly, without regard for personal gain (common assumptions or ideals in modern views of romantic love). This would damage their own arguments about what their beloveds owe them. Instead, they establish their own offerings of love, poetry, and services as the proper objects of liberalitas, which will help the beloved, not harm her or him.

There is, however, a fundamental problem with the elegists’ strategy of establishing a relationship of liberalitas with their beloveds and excluding the material gifts of their rivals from that relationship. They are attempting to redefine unilaterally the substance of liberalitas, but this cannot be done. Items of exchange have only the value that is mutually agreed on. In the redefinition of the substance of liberalitas that was discussed in the previous chapter, a crucial element of the strategy was the coercion or co-option of the audience, recipient, or social group; their acceptance of the relative value of poetry, for instance, was either assumed or enforced by various means. This was effective in the homosocial relations of the poets, but it does not appear to be so useful in erotic contexts. The elegies demonstrate the repeated failure of these strategies with the puellae and the pueri delicati. These beloveds do not accept the redefinition, and because they do not value the gifts given by the poet, they neither return his favour nor consider themselves bound by any obligation. Similarly, because they do not accept the devaluation of wealth, they do consider themselves bound to repay the rich rivals, whose gifts are of great value to the beloveds.

The tension that ensues is exemplified, for example, in Tibullus 1.4, in which the poet’s admission that Priapus’ advice was useless demonstrates the failure of the poetic attempt to set

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46 Seneca discusses the importance of having both parties in the exchange agree on the suitability of the benefit at Ben. 2.15.
the value of the items of *liberalitas*. Priapus wants the poet to have more power than the wealthy man, but his wish may not be effective; in the end, he must appeal to the boy(s) for the final decision (Lee-Stecum 148). Only the participants in an exchange can truly decide the value of the exchanged item. Similarly, Tibullus 1.9, in the course of denouncing the venality of Marathus and the immorality of wealth, seems in the end to demonstrate the failure of the poet’s attempt to define the substance of *liberalitas*: “The process which the poet had expected (*munera* for *amor*) breaks down as the boy prefers a different form of *munera*” (Lee-Stecum 255). Lee-Stecum also argues that this shows that the “processes, pacts and exchanges (*the foedera*) which function in other spheres of society which bring stability and which the poet seems to desire, are seen in this poem to break down entirely” (263). But I think this reading too readily accepts the poet’s characterisation of the transactions as purchase, not *liberalitas*. In fact, the *foedera* found in other spheres of society continue to function here (i.e., the beloved is loyal to a lover) but not as Tibullus would like (i.e., that lover is the rich rival, not him), and it is the poet’s attempts to control the process that have failed, not the process itself. This becomes most evident at the very end of the poem, in Tibullus’ imagined dedication to Venus:

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at tua tum me poena iuvet, Venerique merenti
fixa notet casus aurea palma meos:
HANC TIBI FALLACI RESOLUTUS AMORE TIBULLUS
DEDICAT ET GRATA SIS, DEA, MENTE ROGAT (1.9.81-84)
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He himself relies upon the fundamental process of exchange in his appeal to Venus. His promise to give gold to Venus is in fact very pointedly ironic in the light of the references to gold earlier in the poem: “*auro ne pollue formam*: / *saepe solent auro multa subesse mala*” (1.9.17-18) and “*tunc mihi iurabas nullo te divitis auri / pondere, non gemmis, vendere velle fidem*” (1.9.31-32). The poet’s imagined inscription asks for Venus’ gratitude: *grata mente*; presumably he hopes
that Venus will show her gratitude by making his next love affair, the one that he imagines will cause his current beloved pain when he is supplanted, happier than this one, and by making his next beloved boy less deceitful. Therefore, in this case at least, Tibullus admits that gold can indeed buy Venus, and that this type of liberalitas is appropriate in an amatory context.

The failure of the poetic attempt to define liberalitas is clearly evident in two of the Nemesis poems in book two of Tibullus. In 2.3 and 2.4 the poet declares that, since his poems are inefficacious, he must turn to wealth instead. In 2.4 he actually rejects poetry altogether, citing its uselessness in love:

\[
\text{nec prosunt elegi nec carminis auctor Apollo:} \\
\text{illa cava pretium flagitat usque manu.} \\
\text{ite procul, Musae, si non prodestis amanti:} \\
\text{non ego vos ut sint bella canenda colo,} \\
\text{nec refero Solisque vias et qualis, ubi orbem} \\
\text{complevit, versis Luna recurrit equis.} \\
\text{ad dominam faciles aditus per carmina quaero:} \\
\text{ite procul, Musae, si nihil ista valent. (2.4.13-20)}
\]

The poem is not an attempt to win over Nemesis, since Tibullus has admitted in this poem that poetry does not work for such things (Murgatroyd 1994 123). Instead, it exposes the elegiac poet’s inability to manipulate the expectations and priorities of his mistress. Lines 13-14 remind us of lines 41-42 in Propertius1.8: “sunt igitur Musae, neque amanti tardus Apollo, / quis ego fretus amo: Cynthia rara mea est!” In that poem Propertius claims that he has won over his girl with poems and that the Muses and Apollo were helpful (Murgatroyd 1994 133), but Tibullus’

\[47\] Of course, within the elegiac context a permanently happy love affair is impossible, and this is even more true of a pederastic relationship; this whole scenario is hypothetical.
The primary purpose of elegy is to persuade the puella to receive the poet-lover: “The contents of elegy must ... be understood not as self-expression but primarily as persuasion ... When it is directed at a female love object, elegy is hortatory, employed to gain the lover-poet unpurchased access to her bedroom” (James 2003 13).

The poem undercuts that optimism, and reminds the reader that the trajectory of Propertius’ relationship with Cynthia also reveals the impossibility of a unilateral redefinition of the items of exchange in love. On the one hand this is an extension of the standard elegiac rejection of epic as useless in love (e.g., Prop. 1.7), but on the other hand it undermines the very argument presented in such poems. In 2.4, Tibullus says that even elegy is of no use in love affairs: “ad dominam faciles aditus per carmina quaero: / ite procul, Musae, si nihil ista valent” (19-20). Since the elegists generally argue for elegy’s utility as their reason for writing poetry at all, Tibullus seems to suggest that the very action in which he is engaging, that is, writing a poem, is itself useless and a waste of time.

Tibullus’ pessimism about the whole poetic endeavour points to the larger significance of the elegists’ portrayal of amatory liberalitas. The seeds of the failure to redefine the substance of exchange are found not in the items themselves, but in the very structural basis of liberalitas. The poets attempt to control what is or is not an acceptable item of exchange; this is the same thing that Cicero and Seneca do in their prescriptive works on liberalitas. However, as both these writers acknowledge, the value of a benefit can only be set by a giver and recipient in tandem, and if the value placed on an object or service by one person differs from that set by the other, the reciprocity of the exchange suffers. Consistency of expectations and standards can be achieved partially by the general agreement of a group or culture about the relative value of different items: Cicero and Seneca both record and contribute to this process in their works. However, the very rejection of societal standards performed in the works of the love poets – of whom the elegists are the most aggressive both in their rejections and in their attempts to redefine the objects of exchange – eliminates the possibility of appeal to broader cultural values,
and leaves the poets reliant on the individual responses of their beloveds. We therefore see them appealing to the cultural norms of *liberalitas* while simultaneously denying the validity of those same cultural norms with regard to the items exchanged. This paradox is unresolvable on its own terms, and reflects the conflict at the heart of the genre as a whole: the poet attempts to establish himself and his own values as superior to and distinct from standard Roman society, but to do so he must invoke all the structures, concepts, and assumptions of that very society.

Although Ovid is outside of my period, and in the interests of practicality I have had to exclude his works from my overall discussion, in this area his poetry is so clearly relevant to my argument that I will include a brief discussion of how his work exposes the underlying ideas, hypocrisies, and failures of the Gallan-Propertian lover.⁴⁹ Ovid’s explicitness about the role of money and the ineffectiveness of poetry in love affairs, and his play with the expectations and conventions established by his elegiac predecessors, support my reading of these poems, by demonstrating that Ovid, too, saw these themes at work in the poems of Propertius, Tibullus, and (presumably) Gallus. In the *Amores*, and even more in the *Ars Amatoria*, he lays bare the elegiac poet’s failure to fix the terms of the exchange between himself and the beloved, and makes plain the mercenary aspects of the relationship with the beloved. A few examples should suffice to demonstrate this process. In *Amores* 1.8, the *lena*’s advice to Corinna exposes the unconvincingness of the previous elegists’ attempts to valorize the gifts of poetry and personal devotion, instead of money and material gifts:

‘ecce, quid iste tuus praeter nova carmina vates donat? amatoris milia multa leges.

ipse deus vatum palla spectabilis aurea

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⁴⁹ This is the main argument made by James 2003; see her work for a full discussion of Ovid’s presentation of the relationship between the *puella* and the lover.
tractat inauratae consona filae lyrae.

qui dabit, ille tibi magno sit maior Homero;

crede mihi, res est ingeniosa dare.’ (Am. 1.8.57-62)

Here the language of *liberalitas* (‘donat’, ‘dabit’, ‘dare’) ironically highlights the basically commercial nature of the transaction; it contrasts strongly with the language of the previous couplet, which compares the actions of the girl to theft and looting: “certior e multis nec tam invidiosa *rapina* est; / plena venit canis de grege *praedia* lupis”.

This is the process that we saw occurring in Tibullus 1.5, in which Delia has been swayed by a *lena’s* advice, and has moved on from the poet to a *dives amator*. Now, however, by giving the *lena* a speech extolling the advantages of the mercenary approach to love, Ovid highlights what Tibullus attempted to obscure: the poet’s offers are not very attractive, and there are practical reasons for a *puella* to choose a rich lover, whether the *puella* is understood to be a *meretrix* or a *matrona*. Ovid’s response to the *lena’s* speech, as portrayed in the poem, is ineffectual anger (1.8.109-114), demonstrating the powerlessness of the lover/poet to counter the *lena’s* arguments.

It is in the *Ars Amatoria*, however, that Ovid most plainly presents the relationship between lover and beloved as a commercial transaction, portraying the services and arguments of the elegiac lover as self-serving attempts to get something for nothing. This is particularly clear in his advice to use pretty words to avoid having to actually give gifts or money to the girl:

cera vadum temptet, rasis infusa tabellis:

cera tuae primum conscia mentis eat.

blanditias ferat illa tuas imitataque amantem

verba; nec exigus, quisquis es, adde preces.

50 See above, pp. 153 ff.
Hectora donavit Priamo prece motus Achilles;

flectitur iratus voce rogante deus.

promittas facito: quid enim promittere laedit?

polllicitis dives quilibet esse potest.

spes tenet in tempus, semel est si credita, longum:

illa quidem fallax, sed tamen apta dea est.

si dederis aliquid, poteris ratione relinqui:

praeteritum tulerit, perdideritque nihil.

at quod non dederis, semper videare daturus:

sic dominum sterilis saepe fefellit ager:

sic, ne perdiderit, non cessat perdere lusor,

et revocat cupidas alea saepe manus.

**hoc opus, hic labor est, primo sine munere iungi;**

**ne dederit gratis quae dedit, usque dabit.** *(Ars 1.437-454)*

And in this transaction, in which the girl is out to get money and gifts, and the lover is out to get sex but spend as little as possible, Ovid makes explicit the general irrelevance of poetry:

quid tibi praecipiam teneros quoque mittere versus?

ei mihi, non multum carmen honoris habet.

carmina laudantur, sed munera magna petuntur:

dummodo sit dives, barbarus ipse placet.

aurea sunt vere nunc saecula: plurimus auro

venit honos: auro conciliatur amor. *(Ars 2.273-278)*

The arguments of the previous elegiac poets are revealed as a ploy, and the stance of the *puella* is presented as practical, and no more immoral than the lover’s.
James sees the elegists’ obscuring of the ‘reality’ of the puella’s life, and their refusals to acknowledge that reality as the reason that their attempts at elegiac persuasion fail, as driven entirely by the elegists’ desire to obtain sex without payment. I acknowledge that this is the generic programme of elegy, but I believe that in Propertius and Tibullus, at least, the re-presentation of a commercial relationship as one based on liberalitas and moral and social considerations has larger implications for the homosocial world of the poets, in which their poetry is aimed as much (or even more) at other elite males as at the fictionalised puellae.\(^5\) The world of Propertius and Tibullus is, as James makes clear, one of shifting power structures, new forms of hierarchy, and redefinition of the roles of elite males and the ways in which they formed and maintained their relationships with one another (2003 213, 217-219). Propertius and Tibullus (and of course Horace, as well) are, in their poetry, concerned about the erosion of some kinds of relationships: those based on trust, reciprocity, and affective, rather than practical, bonds. By depicting themselves as turning away from traditional networks of power and amicitia (which are themselves being drastically transformed by the realignment of power around Augustus) and attempting to apply the social conventions of liberalitas to people who are clearly, in reality, entirely unsuitable participants in this form of exchange (i.e. meretrices), they both interrogate the validity of the societal emphasis on liberalitas and demonstrate the dangers inherent in its disintegration.

\(^5\) James also recognises and understands the importance of this male audience, of course: “Through the docta puella, the lover-poet can measure himself against others, from friends to patrons to rivals both wealthy and lower-class” (2003 222). What I want to emphasise is that the focus on gift-giving and liberalitas in the poetry, which she elucidates so clearly with respect to the docta puella, also needs specifically to be examined in the larger homosocial context.
Chapter 4: Liberalitas and Literary Program

This chapter will consider one final area in which liberalitas interacts with poetic production, which is that of style and poetic program. I have chosen to look in particular at the role of liberalitas in formulating and expressing a poetic program in Virgil’s Eclogues. Virgil’s use of liberalitas points to its function in mediating the connection between “real-life” political and social concerns and the literary problems and preoccupations of Roman poets, especially in this period of immense political and social change. He uses instances of liberalitas to interrogate the connection between the pastoral poetry of the Eclogues and the external world of Rome, with its political, military, and social complexities.¹

Phebe Lowell Bowditch has examined the importance of liberalitas in the aesthetic program of the Eclogues with reference to the poet’s need for otium. She has demonstrated that Virgil draws a connection between the patronal benefactions of land² and material goods and the otium and freedom that allow for poetic creation, and that by doing so he contributes to the process of naturalising and validating the changing political structures at Rome, in which individuals such as Antony and Octavian gained increasing status as benefactors.³ She is concerned with the ideological value of the Eclogues, and the interaction between that value and the aesthetic issues of the necessary conditions for poetic production.⁴ Her focus, therefore, is on

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¹ I have focussed this chapter on Virgil because of the close but complex relationship between all of his poetry and the social structures and political realities of his time. The Eclogues are of particular interest because of the complexity of the book’s relationship to patron(s) and the strong thematizing of liberalitas as part of Virgil’s generic stance.

² She is particularly concerned with the land confiscations and distributions of the triumviral period.

³ Her interest in Virgil is as a predecessor for Horace and his explicit exploration of this idea: “For both poets, land is perceived as a gift whose value lies in its capacity to ensure otium and the consequent production of poetry” (Bowditch 119). For her discussion of the Eclogues, see in particular pages 116-42.

⁴ “Because poetry is a means of displaying gratitude, its potential to serve the political interests of the benefactor is inscribed in the codes of social exchange: ideology, as a function of art, may be produced in the very same gesture as the aesthetic expression of gratia” (Bowditch 119).
the relationship between the poet/poetry and the patron/benefactor/political figure. My
discussion of the *Eclogues* builds on her work, but I focus more on the relationship between
Virgil and other poets, and on the importance of *liberalitas* to the mechanics of his composition
and use of the work of previous poets.

Scholars have employed different metaphors to characterise the relationship between
Virgil and his predecessors in the *Eclogues*. One such metaphor is echoes, used by A.J. Boyle
(1978) and Brian W. Breed; another is memory, used by Thomas K. Hubbard (1995a); a third is
filiation, also used by Hubbard (1998). I shall argue in this chapter for adding another metaphor
for this relationship to the discussion: *liberalitas*. This metaphor is validated by the presence of
gift exchange, generosity, gratitude, and patronage in the *Eclogues* themselves. In addition, the
metaphor of *liberalitas* extends beyond the relationship between Virgil and his predecessors to
encompass the connection between Virgil, his readers and posterity. As figured in these poems, the
process of creation is characterised by receiving the gift of poetry from previous poets and
then presenting that poetry, newly reshaped and improved, as a gift to others. Joseph Farrell
(1992) points the way towards this characterisation; he sees the world of the *Eclogues* – “the
social setting in which the poetry is produced” (71) – as crucial to an understanding of the
allusive process of the poet, a world in which exchange is a recurrent metaphor for Virgil’s
relationship with both his readers and his predecessors. Virgil emphasises gifts and gift exchange
within the *Eclogues* in order to support his portrayal of the composition of pastoral poetry as
engaged in the process of *liberalitas*. By construing his relationship with his poetic predecessors
as one of *liberalitas* and patronage, he validates his poetry as an element of *liberalitas*, and he
mixes poetically symbolic gifts with realistic, Roman elements to extend his claim for the role of
his poems beyond the literary realm to the real world of Rome. This aesthetic metaphor of poetic
composition as *liberalitas*, then, supports and validates his use of his *Eclogues* to create and
maintain his ties to actual patrons such as Octavian, Pollio, and Varus.

I will start by presenting some of the instances of the thematic importance of gift-exchange and *liberalitas* in the *Eclogues*, and will show that many of the gifts portrayed in the poems are symbolic of the type of poetry Virgil is producing. Then I will demonstrate how Virgil uses *liberalitas* as one of the structuring metaphors for his production of poetry and for the relationship between his work and that of his predecessors. Finally, I will connect these elements by showing how Virgil uses his *Eclogues* as gifts for his actual or potential Roman patrons.

The theme of giving and gratitude appears repeatedly throughout the collection of the *Eclogues*, and these references perform many functions; in this study I will restrict myself to examining a representative sample of those which are most clearly connected to the aesthetic concerns of the *Eclogues*. The prevalence of gift-giving throughout the collection has a programmatic purpose, demonstrating that relationships created by exchange, and the process itself, are integral to the poetics of the *Eclogues*: the process of creation, as figured in these poems, is characterised by receiving the gift of poetry from previous poets and then presenting that poetry, newly reshaped and improved, as a gift to others. Here I build on Hubbard’s demonstration that the genre of bucolic is “about poetic influence and succession: bucolic poetry by its very nature can exist only as part of an interconnected tradition of poets influencing other poets”, and that “[Theocritus’] bucolics are ... so invested in the idea of poetic inheritance as to invite literary heirs in later generations”(1993 28). In particular, I would add to his latter statement the argument that this invitation for literary heirs is reconstructed by Virgil into a relationship of give and take, so that his reply to Theocritus’ invitation is a form of reciprocal gift to the earlier poet.

The theme of *liberalitas* and gratitude is introduced at the very beginning of the
The first eclogue is, of course, a site of multiple programmatic signals: stylistic, thematic, and political.

See, e.g., Cairns 1999, John Van Sickle 1984, and James R.G. Wright (107-09 especially) on the literary program of the poem.

Bowditch: “Given the Roman context and Tityrus’ own dramatic perspective, the shepherd’s divine nomenclature constitutes a hyperbolic expression of his overwhelming sense of gratitude” (125). Compare the connections Tibullus draws between Messalla and Osiris, based in large part on aspects of liberalitas, in Tib. 1.7, discussed in Chapter 1. Du Quesnay points out that there is literary precedent in Ptolemaic Alexandria for treating a benefactor, in particular a ruler who is a benefactor, as a god, and for Tityrus’ act of setting up an altar for monthly sacrifices (1981 42-43). In particular, such “extravagant expression” of a “feeling of gratitude” is appropriate to the genre of eucharistikon (Du Quesnay 1981 55).

Ian M. Le M. Du Quesnay (1981) points out that Tityrus’ and Meliboeus’ speeches, in which the former expresses gratitude and the latter takes leave of his homeland, “belong to recognizable genres [the eucharistikon and the syntaktikon] and the reader can thus draw on his knowledge of the conventional and so expected features of what may properly be said on such occasions” (32). Tityrus begins by crediting a god with his ability to enjoy peace on his own land, and then makes it clear that his imputation of divinity to this figure is a result of his own gratitude and is a form of thanks on his part, which will also be demonstrated by regular sacrifices to this person. I shall return to the questions surrounding the figure of ille deus below; for now, my focus is on the way this discussion of gratitude signals its thematic importance in the collection. Regardless of the precise details of the situation, and even if the reader is not intended to understand or know those details, the basic relationship of benefactor and recipient, and the themes of generosity and gratitude, are all introduced in this poem. The theme of generosity and its consequences is subtly

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reinforced by Meliboeus’ response: “non equidem invideo, miror magis” (1.11). His use of invideo suggests the possible negative results of public generosity – envy is always a concern when power or wealth are displayed, or when one person obtains a benefit that another does not.\footnote{Envy as a result of liberalitas can be both positive and negative; it enhances the value of the gift to have others envy the recipient, but those who are denied the gift may react negatively or even violently. This negative reaction can be seen in Eclogues 3.12-15 when Damoetas accuses Menalcas of having smashed a bow and arrows that were given to another, because he resented not having been given them himself (Pearce 55). Wright sees Meliboeus’ denial of envy here as part of a basic stance of resentment and opposition between him and Tityrus: “[it] seems designed on the psychological level both to conceal from himself his manifest feelings of envy and to deprive Tityrus of the satisfaction of being envied” (111). I do not see this degree of hostility between the two herdsmen; however, I agree that the mention of envy here raises the possibility that benefactions and generosity can produce dissension and unhappiness both in this bucolic setting and in the real world of Roman politics. Also see Wright (130f.) for a discussion of envy as the φθειρας of Callimachus’ literary polemics. T.D. Papanghelis has argued that in eclogue 7 the envy felt by Thyrsis and Codrus of one another should also be read in literary terms, putting Thyrsis in an anti-Callimachean stance (1997 149-50).}

Again, in Tityrus’ account of his inability to buy his own emancipation, he complains of the ungrateful city (“ingratae ... urbi”, 1.6-34) to which he brought the products of his flocks to sell.\footnote{Wright sees this as an instance of the “town/country opposition” that is “apparent in several of the Eclogues” (133). This is probably correct, but the specific resonances of ingrata are still important.}

While Robert Coleman (ad loc.) says that “ingratae introduces the third hindrance to Tityrus’ emancipation, the meanness of urban consumers – a familiar complaint of real farmers but not part of the conventional pastoral myth” (79), the choice of ingratus has further resonance when read in the context of the favours and obligations surrounding the emancipation or lack thereof of Tityrus, and the gift of the right to continue grazing his herds as before that has triggered this whole discussion (1.6-8, 44-45). Tityrus’ labelling of the city as ‘ungrateful’ suggests that he is characterising his relationship with the city as one of gift and gratitude, rather than of commercial transactions.\footnote{“Tityrus applies to a commercial situation a word appropriate to a gift economy or to the exchange of benefits and favors: although he is presumably selling his goods for aera or bartering them for other items, he seems to be relying on the gratitude of the townspeople for the excess profit that would go to his peculium” (Bowditch 127).}

This implication, that the flocks and cheese he brings to the town are in some way gifts (above and beyond their commercial value) and ought to be repaid, in this context with his freedom, has no literal validity, but it fits with Tityrus’ general depiction of his
relationships with others. This raises, again, the possibilities of negative reactions to liberalitas, and therefore highlights Tityrus’ real and appropriate gratitude for the favour he himself has received from ille deus.\(^\text{10}\)

The end of the poem returns to the theme of generosity with Tityrus’ offer of hospitality to Meliboeus, which highlights the relative prosperity and abundance of his own resources, in stark contrast to Meliboeus’ reduced circumstances:\(^\text{11}\)

\[\text{Hic tamen hanc mecum poteras requiescere noctem} \]
\[\text{fronde super viridi: sunt nobis mitia poma,} \]
\[\text{castaneae molles et pressi copia lactis. (1.79-81)} \]

There are multiple ways to read this ending, depending on one’s view of the poem as a whole.\(^\text{12}\) Coleman sees it as resolving the internal problems of the poem:

Tityrus’ final belated gesture of hospitality reconciles the tensions of the dialogue and reasserts the Arcadian values of friendship and hospitality, but it serves also to underline what his friend has lost. In the closing lines we may detect a plea for charity and sympathy towards those whose lives have been ruined – as Vergil’s

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\(^\text{10}\) As Bowditch argues, it also demonstrates Tityrus’ valorization of gift-exchange and benefaction as the dominant social and political structure in his world, as opposed to a legalistic or commercial structure. Even commercial transactions are re-imagined as participating in liberalitas, and the benefactions of ille deus are central to his ideal(ised) existence: “In contrast to commerce, as dramatically presented by the poem, benefaction inspires gratia, the gratitude that, in an ideal world, lays the groundwork for community” (129).

\(^\text{11}\) Of course Tityrus has only a “programmatically rustic feast of apples, chestnuts and milk” (Wright 112) and a bed of leaves to offer, but the fact that he has enough to share still sets him apart from Meliboeus.

\(^\text{12}\) Particular attention has been paid to the wording of Tityrus’ invitation, specifically the tense of poteras, which has been seen as signalling that Tityrus is not, in fact, actually making a real offer, or that Meliboeus does not accept it if he does (Nussbaum 139-40). G. Nussbaum suggests that it signals simply Tityrus’ belated notice of the lengthening shadows, and his sudden recognition that Meliboeus will need a place to spend the night (140). It also may be a polite formula, allowing for the possibility that the invitation will not be accepted: Coleman cites Horace Sat. 2.1.16 and Ovid Met. 1.679 for the use of poteras for “a somewhat apologetic invitation” (88).
own can never have been – by the discordant effects of civil war. Du Quesnay (1981) points out that, after Meliboeus’ declaration that he is leaving Italy, the reader might expect Tityrus to respond with a *propemptikon*, and so he argues that “the deliberately engineered defeat of the reader’s expectations is presumably intended to heighten the impact of the invitation when it finally comes: it is the warmest of possible responses to Meliboeus’ situation” (90).

According to Putnam (1970), however, the offer of hospitality itself is dependent on the generosity of *ille deus* that Tityrus has received: “Tityrus could not even proffer the invitation were he not allowed to do so by a higher power” (70). Putnam sees this as a shadow over the entire poem, undermining the freedom and power of poetry:

> Once we are past momentary contemplation of Rome’s limited beneficence, any acknowledgement that the existence of the bucolic life is subject to the generosity of a higher power (be it Rome or anything else) is tantamount to an announcement that this essential freedom is in fact no longer viable. (1970 72)

However, the interrelationship of Tityrus’ generosity with that of *ille deus* is perfectly in line with the workings of *liberalitas*; any act of giving is naturally entangled with other moments of generosity, and with the gratitude and obligations each of these moments entails. In fact, we can see the offer to Meliboeus as a further development of the entanglement of benefaction and gratitude: “in making his invitation Tityrus is trying to include Meliboeus in his own good fortune, to extend the benefit and protection which he has himself received to help another” (Du Quesnay 1981 97). Christine Perkell (1990) argues that the relationship between Tityrus and

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13 Coleman’s use of the term “Arcadian values” here suggests a disassociation from the Roman reality that I would question; if the Roman reader is being asked to extend charity and sympathy to other Romans, it is necessary for the virtues associated with friendship and hospitality to be Roman virtues, too – as, of course, the qualities associated with *amicitia* and *liberalitas* were. It should also be pointed out that Arcadia, as a location or theme, only enters the collection in *Ecl.* 4.
Meliboeus is itself a demonstration of the power of poetry to create generosity in another: “Drawn out of his complacency and self-absorption by the beautiful power of Meliboeus’ song, Tityrus comes finally to answer Meliboeus’ loss with new-found pastoral generosity, thus moving to his own vision of nature and community”(176). This intriguing idea suggests another way in which poetic production participates in the structures of liberalitas: Meliboeus’ pastoral imagination gives Tityrus the ability to re-imagine himself as a pastoral poet, leading to his creation of the “splendid final verses of the poem, verses which, in their haunting and melancholy beauty, essentially characterize Virgil’s poetry: ‘et iam summa procul villarum culmina fumant / maioresque cadunt altis de montibus umbrae’” (Perkell 1990 171). It also creates generosity and recognition of the ties of community that are formed by liberalitas: Tityrus responds to Meliboeus’ poetry with his invitation. The reference to obligation and dependence certainly destroys any illusion that Tityrus’ world exists independently of outside influence, but as I will argue, the emphasis on liberalitas is an integral part of Virgil’s construction of the pastoral program, not an admission of the failure of that program.

Central to the interpretation of this poem is the identity of ille deus in lines 6-7. One strand of interpretation focusses on the literary and poetic resonances of the poem. John Van Sickle (1984) argues that the meeting between Tityrus and ille deus reworks the motif of poetic initiation found in Theocritus, itself a reworking of the Hesiodic scene, saying that “the three programmatic encounters line up and that they form a set of significant variants: first Hesiod, where an inexperienced youth meets the Muses in the country; then Theocritus, where an accomplished city youth meets an older goatherd on the road between city and country; and finally Virgil, where a weary old man gets a new push from a youthful benefactor in the city”
Of course this scene is more explicitly re-worked in the opening of eclogue 6, where the principal model with which Virgil interacts is that of Callimachus in the *Aitia*. But the reader has not yet encountered this scene when reading the first eclogue, and can naturally expect to find a reference to divine instructions about poetry in the introduction to the collection. Wright suggests that the implied initiation scene in eclogue 1 programmatically anticipates the more developed re-working of the *Aitia* prologue in eclogue 6 (123).

Wright argues that “Apollo is the presiding deity of the *Eclogues*” (119), and also points out Octavian’s exploitation of his links with Apollo in his own propaganda (120).

His contribution may even be more emphatic: Breed suggests that Virgil’s allusions to Lucretius, especially in eclogue 1, reshape Lucretius into a pastoral poet: “in the way Virgil alludes to Lucretius, he creates for himself a Latin predecessor in writing pastoral” (10). Virgil, then, is actually affecting previous poetry by writing his own; this is a reciprocal interaction.

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15 Wright argues that “Apollo is the presiding deity of the *Eclogues*” (119), and also points out Octavian’s exploitation of his links with Apollo in his own propaganda (120).

16 His contribution may even be more emphatic: Breed suggests that Virgil’s allusions to Lucretius, especially in eclogue 1, reshape Lucretius into a pastoral poet: “in the way Virgil alludes to Lucretius, he creates for himself a Latin predecessor in writing pastoral” (10). Virgil, then, is actually affecting previous poetry by writing his own; this is a reciprocal interaction.
There is a continuing debate about how “realistic” any or all of the eclogues were intended to be. In the case of some of the individual eclogues there is sometimes a tendency to see them as more or less transparent allegories for contemporary events; this is particularly true of eclogues 1 and 4, for instance. Servius sees the Eclogues as allegories, and Theocritus, Virgil’s prime model, is often read as writing “court masques” in his pastoral (and other) idylls; see Richard Hunter 1996 and Susan A Stephens Seeing Double ch. 3. As Bernard F. Dick says of eclogue 1, “when an Augustan poet (or a poet in the process of becoming an Augustan) alludes to the recovery of freedom, a visit to a young deity at Rome, dispossession and the curse of civil strife, one’s immediate reaction is that the poem is enclosed within a historical framework which was obvious enough to the poet’s contemporaries but has now been obscured by the passage of time” (279); however, he also lucidly points out that “a completely historical interpretation of any poem will always be unsatisfying” and that while “a poem will invariably reflect a historical milieu”, “in the case of the Eclogues, it is a milieu that has been transfigured” (278-79). Van Sickle (1984) states of eclogue 1 that “we can agree, too, with DuQuesnay’s general description of the work as a “realistic fiction” in which the reader’s expectations will be determined in part by “his generalized and composite preconception of the typical conditions and experience of contemporary rustics, and in part by reference to the literary conventions of Theocritian bucolic” (31)” (110). This seems to me to be a productive approach. There is certainly tension between, on the one hand, the idyllic poetic pastoral world constructed by the conventions of the genre and the distancing effect of the close connections to the Theocritan models, and on the other hand the contemporary Romanness of the poems, both explicitly in references to real places, people, events, and implicitly in social, legal, and cultural assumptions and background to the poem. I see this tension as a fundamental aspect of the collection, and suggest that the framework of liberalitas is one of the elements that contributes to and highlights this tension.

Even such basic “pastoral” issues as the social and legal status of the shepherds (are they free or slaves?) require the intrusion of the “real world” into the poetic world. Van Sickle argues that the reader’s recognition of the incompatibility of the poetic portrayal of the herdsmen’s lives and the reality of pastoral work in the Roman world is key to the interpretation of the Eclogues: “[T]he new image of the literary shepherd, sensitive and civil, even clean,
The world of the *Eclogues* never attains the Epicurean ideal of *ataraxia*. Whether this is due to Virgil’s own movement away from Epicurean philosophy or to his view of poetry in his own time as irredeemably contaminated by the “real” world of Rome, his pastoral world is as permeated by the networks of *liberalitas* as his “real” world was.\(^9\) The life of a “real” Roman of Virgil’s time is made up of an ongoing network of gifts given and favours received; he is unable to perform any act unencumbered by debts of gratitude or obligations; so, too, the herdsmen of the *Eclogues* are continually engaging in the exchange of favours and gifts, and are keenly aware of the importance of gratitude.

Du Quesnay sums up the two main trends in scholarship as follows:

It is now commonly assumed that Tityrus is in some way the special mouthpiece of Vergil and that through him Vergil is expressing his gratitude to Octavian either for his farm or for his patronage or as a saviour; alternatively Tityrus’ story is seen as a symbolical representation of Vergil’s response to the problems which

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\(^9\) Allusions to Lucretius’ poetry are certainly present in the *Eclogues*, especially at 6.31-40, and sometimes at particularly important moments. For instance, in eclogue 1, Tityrus’ praise of the god at Rome, with its *deus ... ille ... deus, ilius ... ille* “clearly resembles Lucretius’ apostrophe of Epicurus at the opening of book 5: *deus ille fuit, deus, inclute Memmi*” and “the phrase *silvestrem musam*, the object of Tityrus’ present pondering, is drawn from the fourth book of *de rerum natura* where music also plays a part” (Putnam 1975 172). Here, though, Putnam suggests that Virgil is presenting the protagonists of eclogue 1 as failed Epicureans, who are unable to remove themselves adequately from the passions and pains of the world (1975 172).
were facing him as a poet.\textsuperscript{20} (1981 33)

He correctly points out that ascribing special status to Tityrus as in some way representative of Virgil himself throughout the collection is problematic;\textsuperscript{21} however, the heavy emphasis on gratitude and benefactions in a poem that stands in the position of a dedicatory poem must, I maintain, immediately cause the reader to look for a connection between the internal narrative and the larger context of the book of poetry. As an opening poem, eclogue 1 displays an appropriate thematic concern for “patronage” – that is, for the workings of liberalitas and the existence of obligation. Despite this, it fails to present the reader with an obvious dedicatee for the collection (in part because of the dramatic form of the poem), giving us instead ille deus as Tityrus’ patron. Wright addresses this problem; noting that “It has been observed that this introductory poem lacks a dedicatee” and that scholars have therefore suggested that eclogue 8 was the original opening poem, he argues that the lack of a dedicatee is not an issue because of the dialogue form of the poem, which is necessary for programmatic reasons:

Virgil may ... have felt that it would be a violation of the bucolic convention to make an explicit dedication to a patron ... the author does not speak propria voce.

\textsuperscript{20} This is Servius’ view: “aliquibus locis per allegoriam at gratias Augusto vel aliiis nobilibus, quorum favore amissum agrum recepit” (Buc. Prooem. 2.17). See Coleman 33-4 on the ancient and medieval tradition of this allegorical interpretation.

\textsuperscript{21} Du Quesnay’s main points are: a) that there is no convincing explanation, in this reading, of the presence of Meliboeus, who must have some matching “identification” if Tityrus is Virgil; b) that the poem is clearly marked as Theocritean bucolic, which never functioned as an allegory (but on this point see Krevans and Stephens, who argue for the political relevance of Theocritus’ Idylls); c) that if Virgil were innovating here by making his poem allegorical, “it would be necessary for Vergil to signal clearly to his readers that he was doing something new”; d) that if Tityrus’ story is an allegory for Virgil’s, it would need to agree in detail with Virgil’s actual situation in ways that it does not actually do (1981 33-34). Van Sickle, on the other hand, argues that “the largest part of the first audience of the Bucolics must have perceived them as belonging to the public genre of mime,” in which political allegory would be both appropriate and expected (1984 121-22). He also suggests that Virgil does signal his departure from Theocritus by including specifically Roman elements in eclogue 1: “Precisely such elements as Freedom, given new emphasis and with inevitable political resonance in Rome, or the evictions and the dominant role of Octavian, might be taken as signals” (1984 123). To some extent this begs the question of whether the reader would be expected to identify ille deus entirely with Octavian, but I agree that this poem does signal the importance of the poetry’s Roman background as well as its literary inheritance.
He cannot address anyone without breaking the dramatic illusion. His only way of introducing a dedicatee is to have one of his characters talk about him. This leaves only one candidate, the young god. He is praised in extravagant terms and he is depicted as being the divine patron who instructs the poet what to compose. (121-22)

Wright presses the identification of Octavian as a literary patron of Virgil, even suggesting that Octavian himself is already actually telling Virgil what to write. I would disagree; there is little evidence that Octavian was directly involved in Virgil’s career at this point, and I am sceptical about the extent to which he personally directed the poetic production of any of the poets. This does not mean I doubt the identification of Octavian as ille deus; I do, indeed, believe that Virgil’s audience would find Octavian the most obvious candidate for the role.22 I think, however, that Virgil deliberately leaves room for multiple identifications, in part because he was not exclusively associated with any one patron at this point.23

The deference expressed in the poet’s own dedication and gratitude to a character within the framework of the poem – an unidentified god, in a fictional situation – can be seen as a way of complimenting a person without political commitment. But I believe we should also see this approach as, in some ways, parallel to that found in Catullus 49, a poem that presents gratitude as a theme, but leaves the precise details of the occasion deliberately obscure. By presenting in ille deus an ambiguous figure who epitomises patronage, Virgil interrogates the relationships  

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22 The basic identity of ille deus is now generally accepted: “it is almost universally believed that he is the twenty-three year old Octavian, the self-styled Divi filius” (Du Quesnay 1981 35); but see Mayer (1983) for an opposing viewpoint, and R.P.H. Green (1996) arguing for Lucius Antonius as the dedicatee of eclogue 1.

23 Poems placed later in the collection present both Pollio and Varus as potential or actual patrons. This multiple identification gives a good reason for the deliberate obscurity of the god’s identity. There may also have been political reasons for this obscurity: “That the poem does in fact constitute a curiously guarded encomium of Octavian will be intelligible and credible once it is recalled that at the time he wrote this poem Vergil enjoyed the amicitia and patronage neither of Octavian himself nor of Maecenas ... but of C. Asinius Pollio, the friend of Antonius” (Du Quesnay 1981 35).
produced by *liberalitas*, and the difficulties involved in expressing gratitude, especially within the volatile and violent circumstances of the triumviral period.

The theme of generosity and gratitude is not only evident in eclogue 1, but recurs in programmatic contexts. Every eclogue is to some extent programmatic; as Van Sickle (1967) correctly points out, “every Eclogue contains a poetics, which is to say that it reflects on its own nature as poetry” (492). Every theme, motif, character, and topic contributes to the definition of Virgil’s poetic project. For example, many of the gifts given, or promised, to Alexis by Corydon in eclogue 2 have poetic connotations, and strengthen the general associations between *liberalitas* and the production of poetry. In particular, Corydon spends eleven lines describing the various flowers and fruits he wishes to give to Alexis:

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huc ades, o formonse puer. tibi lilia plenis
ecce ferunt Nymphae calathis; tibi candida Nais,
pallentis violas et summa papavera carpens,
tum casia atque aliis intexens suavibus herbis
mollia luteola pingit vaccinia caltha.
ipse ego cana legam tenera lanugine mala
castaneasque nuces, mea quas Amaryllis amabat;
addam cerea pruna – honos erit huic quoque pomo –
et vos, o lauri, carpam et te, proxuma murte,
sic positae quoniam suavis miscetis odores. (Ecl. 2.45-55)
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As T.D. Papanghelis (1999) points out, “in the light of the ubiquitous association of flowers with poetry, the metaphorical potential of this garland is all too obvious”; he also draws attention to specific verbal parallels between this description and “the terms in which Meleager describes the composition of his literary garland” (45-46). If we view the relationships described in eclogue 2 as a version of the standard homoerotic love triangles seen in Greek epigram and Latin love elegy (Papanghelis 1999 45-46), then Corydon’s offer of “poetic” flowers here can be read as a restatement of his previous offers of poetry as his gift to Alexis: “O crudelis Alexi, nihil mea carmina curas?” (2.6) and “mecum una in silvis imitabere Pana canendo” (2.31). This link between the composition of poetry and the giving of gifts is developed throughout the collection.

Gifts and exchange also feature prominently in eclogue 3. Farrell points out that the poem draws heavily upon a number of *Idylls* that, taken as a group, dwell upon a unifying theme: the theme of exchange ... The theme of exchange appears in various guises within the allusive design of Eclogue 3. We find it certainly in the amoebaean structure of the singing contest between Damoetas and Menalcas; in the procedures by which the contestants fashion their songs, each of them picking up on and developing the same language and motif used by his opponent; and in the wager that the contestants make, which recalls in general terms similar wagers made in the *Idylls*, but more particularly alludes (in the cup ecphrasis of lines 36-43) to the price that the goatherd agrees to pay Thyrsis for a song in the first *Idyll*.

(1992 67)

In addition to all these allusions, this poem contains a number of symbolically resonant gifts. The herdsmen argue about appropriate prizes to be awarded to the winner of the singing contest.
Although these prizes are not themselves actual gifts, the terms which Damoetas uses about a previous reward (one that he did not receive, although he should have) suggest that the prize is exchanged for the song in a reciprocal fashion: “an mihi cantando victus non redderet ille / quem mea carminibus meruisset fistula caprum?” (21-22). Damoetas proposes a heifer as a prize:

_D. vis ergo inter nos quid possit uterque vicissim_

experiamur? ego hanc vitulam – ne forte recuses,
bis venit ad mulctram, binos alit ubere fetus –
depono; tu dic mecum quo pignore certes. (3.28-31)

Menalcas counters by offering a pair of cups:

_M. Verum, id quod multo tute ipse fatebere maius,
insanire libet quoniam tibi, pocula ponam_

fagina, caelatum divini opus Alcimedontos,
lenta quibus torno facili superaddita vitis
diffusos hedera vestit pallente corymbos.
in medio duo signa, Conon et – quis fuit alter,
descripts radio totum qui gentibus orbem,
tempora quae messor, quae curvos arator haberet?
necdum illis labra admovi, sed condita servo. (3.35-43)

In the end, the judge (Palaemon) declares a tie, but suggests only the heifer as a potential prize:

Non nostrum inter vos tantas componere lites:

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25 James B. Pearce marks the difference between prizes and gifts in terms similar to those Cicero uses to distinguish between “giving gifts” and “giving in return”: “A distinction is made there between the prizes staked and awarded in singing contests and the spontaneous gifts which disclose the shepherd’s heart; the one being compulsory, the other voluntary” (55). His view of “spontaneous gifts” as being manifestations of sincere emotion (later described as “a manifestation of inward pleasure”) is, however, too accepting of the affective cover for the practical and societally enforced aspects of _liberalitas_; the gifts to a beloved, for instance, which he describes in these terms, are surely designed not just as expressions of admiration but also as a means of inspiring love and a willingness to reciprocate in some fashion (e.g., with sex, cf. James 2003).
et vitula tu dignus et hic et quisquis amores

aut metuet dulcis aut experietur amaros. (3.108-10)

There seems to be ambiguity about whether the cups were, in the end, actually at stake in the contest, since Palaemon does not mention them. The proposed stakes can be seen as yet another area of rivalry between the two singers, in which each proposes to set a material equivalent for the poems they will produce. 26 As Celia E. Schultz puts it, the heifer is a “symbol of pastoral’s realistic aspect” and the cups “represent the genre’s poetic register” (199).

This debate over the worth of poetry and the type of response it should elicit is picked up again in eclogue 5. 27 In Ecl. 3, though, the cups are certainly proposed as possible equivalents for pastoral song, and they are described in terms that connect them closely to Virgil’s poetic program. The cups are made of beech, an “appropriately humble material for herdsmen’s cups” (Coleman 113), 28 but they are also elaborately carved with highly learned subjects (36-42). 29 The scenes on Menalcas’ cups present two figures of Alexandrian learning; Damoetas’ cup has Orpheus, the master musician, and an important figure in Virgil’s own poetry. One of the astronomers, Conon, is named; Menalcas cannot remember the name of the other. Conon was at

26 John Henderson (1998b). See for instance C.P. Segal for the view that the cups are the Theocritean prize and the heifer the rustic (not pastoral) practical prize. Eleanor Winsor Leach (1974) considers the heifer to have been dismissed as a prize by the singers, though Palaemon does not know this. Celia E. Schultz argues that Palaemon chooses to award the heifer, not the cups, because their songs have shown them to have a practical, pessimistic attitude to the pastoral world.

27 See discussion below, p. 210. The debate here in Ecl. 3 is inconclusive, but it draws our attention to the possibility of attaching a value to these poems, and points towards their use as currency in the relationships between Virgil and his addressees. Henderson notes that we are invited to contrast our potential valuations with those of the herdsmen: “We may regard the contrapositioning of (unique) heifer and (both players’ putative sets of) cups as the poem’s way to get us to ponder their relative charisma, and to compare and contrast the valuations we set on them with those of these denizens of the pastoral regime” (1998b 223).

28 Though W. Clausen suggests that this humble association may derive from this very passage (1994 100); still, the fact that Tibullus and Ovid both connect beechwood with primitive simplicity suggests that this association is appropriate here.

29 See Riemer Faber (415) for the suggestion that by describing the carving as caelatum Virgil draws on Theocritean allusions and “subtly develops the tension between epic and pastoral modes which forms one of the themes” of eclogue 3. This adds yet another layer of poetic significance to the cups.
the court of Ptolemy Philadelphus, and identified the lock of Berenice among the stars; he is therefore closely connected with Callimachus and the poem he wrote on the subject. The identity of the other figure has been a long-standing matter for discussion among scholars: recent suggestions have included Eudoxus, Archimedes, and Nigidius Figulus (Springer 131). Eudoxus would make a good parallel for Conon, since his *Phaenomena* was the prose source for Aratus’ poem, as Conon’s astronomical work influenced Callimachus. However, Carl Springer argues for Aratus himself, partly on the basis of a perceived pun in *arator* in line 42; as he says, Aratus would also be an appropriate figure: “Aratus was very much a model for the ‘new poets’ and the new poetry is at the heart of this poem” (133). He also sees Aratus “as a neat counterbalance for Conon. Both are third-century students of the heavens who spent time at the courts of Hellenistic rulers” (133). Whether Virgil intended a specific person to be identifiable or not, the figure as described clearly has Alexandrian and literary resonances. This emphasis on learning, workmanship and exclusivity is reminiscent of the Callimachean emphasis on the same qualities.

Both Menalcas’ and Damoetas’ cups have also never been used, having been carefully stored, untouched, raising their value to the level of treasure, as noted by James B.

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30 Springer also suggests that these allusions point not only to Greek sources for Virgil’s poetry, but also to his Latin predecessors: “Perhaps this Eclogue is not only a tribute to Callimachus and Aratus ... but a recognition of Catullus and Cicero, their Latin translators as well. As has been observed, vv. 41-2 are reminiscent of Catullus’ translation of Callimachus’ Aetia IV, fr. 110, and v. 60 contains striking similarities to the first line of Cicero’s translation of Aratus’ Phaenomena” (134). This not only enriches the significance of these gifts, but strengthens the link between liberalitas and poetic succession. T. Keith Dix bases a similar suggestion on the riddles at the end of eclogue 3, which he sees as referring to the antecedents of Virgil’s pastoral: “The exchange in Eclogue 3 is not only between Vergil and his predecessor in bucolic, Theocritus, but also between Vergil and his predecessor in the creation of Augustan poetry, Gallus” (262).

31 Richard F. Thomas (1999) is right to urge caution in using the term “Callimachean” too broadly in reference to Augustan poetry (see especially chapter 7). He does, however, distinguish a number of specifically Callimachean elements that deserve the term; in Virgil’s poetry, in particular, such elements include “embedded learning of all sorts” and “intertextuality and allusion”, along with the programmatic language of the slender style found in the opening of the *Aetia* (Thomas 1999 218-19). It is these aspects of the description of the cups that I would argue tie them to Callimachus, in addition to their obvious connections to Theocritean pastoral.
Menalcas’ reference to the way the cups have been denied to everyone else gains resonance from his own reaction to being denied a gift, as reported by Damoetas in the opening of the eclogue in lines 12-15.\footnote{Menalcas’ reference to the way the cups have been denied to everyone else gains resonance from his own reaction to being denied a gift, as reported by Damoetas in the opening of the eclogue in lines 12-15.}

The cups, then, are Theocritean, Alexandrian, Callimachean, skilfully created, made with effort, new, and kept for the exclusive use of a select few. Their poetic resonance is clear, on both stylistic and generic grounds, and they function as equivalents to the poetic act that they will reward. In this they build on and reflect the role of the cup in idyll 1: “Handed over to Thyrsis as a reward for his splendid song of the dying Daphnis, the cup becomes a precious heirloom, representing the sum of poetic traditions and styles which pass from the hands of one poet into those of another” (Hubbard 1993 30). Within the dramatic frame of Virgil’s eclogue, then, the cups have been invested with a value that far exceeds any monetary worth they might have; outside that narrative frame, their resonances with Virgil’s larger poetic project suggest the value of his poems as gifts or items of exchange.\footnote{Pearce states: “It would appear then that Theocritus established as a motif the enhancement of gifts through denial or envy and that Virgil in turn makes considerable use of the concept” (56). In a more general way, this motif goes back to Homer; for instance, among the prizes that Achilles sets out for the chariot race in the funeral games in book 23 are a cauldron and a jar that have never been touched by the fire, and are still gleaming and new (Il. 23.267-70). The worth of these prizes is therefore enhanced by the fact that they have been denied to others up until now.}

Once the two herdsmen begin their competition, we see that gifts are also an important theme of the poetic competition itself. Menalcas claims to have *munera* given by Phoebus Apollo, specifying the “lauri et suave rubens hyacinthus” (3.62-63); Damoetas says Galatea has...
All the fruits referred to by the term *malum* “were dedicated to Venus by her worshippers and offered as gifts to loved ones” (Coleman 118). See also A.R. Littlewood’s “The Symbolism of the Apple in Greek and Roman Literature” for parallels.

“*Hyacinthus* like the bay-tree *laurus* had its mythological origin in the thwarted passion of Apollo” (Coleman 118). Both are also involved in aetiological myths (Dix 257), which allude also to Callimachean themes. Apollo is presented as an archetype of the pastoral lover by Tibullus in 2.3, for instance; the stories of Daphne and Hyacinth both involve the god in a rural setting; cf. Ovid’s stories in *Met.* 1 and 10.

“The epithet [aeriae] emphasizes the hazards of the capture in contrast to Th. *Id.* 5.96-7” (Coleman 119).

In fact, Virgil does later claim the quality of daring, after completing the *Georgics*: *G.* 4. 565 “audaxque iuventa”.

For the *mala*, especially Th. *Id.* 11.10, 5.88-9, 6.6-7; for the *palumbes*, Th. *Id.* 5.96-7 (Coleman 118-19). For more detail on the Theocritean aspects of the *Eclogues* as a whole, see R.W. Garson and Hubbard 1998.
generally negligible, in keeping with the general principles of *liberalitas*, either the poet or the characters themselves frequently attempt to enhance the perceived value of their gifts using a number of strategies, several of which have been discussed already in other contexts in previous chapters. Like the elegiac poets who emphasise the quality and rarity of their poems, as well as the amount of effort expended on them and their compatibility with the taste and interests of the recipient, the herdsmen present their gifts as exceptional instances of the shared preferences and interests of their community, as Pearce describes:

> Of considerable weight to the shepherd are the value of the gift and the rustic criteria by which this value is measured. It must be understood that monetary value is at best of secondary importance. The gifts of the pastoral are for the most part deemed valuable because of the cunning of their manufacture, the effort invested in their perfection, or their inherent appeal to those of bucolic taste. (55)

Another important strategy for enhancing the value of the gifts and rewards, which we can see functioning here, is mentioning the envy that a particular gift has incited: “on occasion the rustic attempts to enhance in the eyes of its recipient the value of the gift he is offering by revealing how it had been denied to another who sought it” (Pearce 55), as Mopsus does in *Eclogues* 5.88-9 when he says that the staff he is giving to Menalcas had been repeatedly requested by Antigenes.⁴⁰

The importance of poetically symbolic gifts is also seen in the way in which the herdsmen of the *Eclogues* give gifts to one another, or speak about them. The objects which they exchange are themselves imbued with symbolic resonance, functioning as representations of the pastoral genre itself, and of Virgil’s poetic skill and stylistic preferences. Musical instruments in

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⁴⁰ The gift’s value is further enhanced by Mopsus’ stated opinion of Antigenes; since he himself is worthy (“et erat tunc dignus amari” [5.89]), what he desires must also be worthy (Pearce 55). In effect, Mopsus has preferred the cups to the sex that Antigenes seems to have been willing to give for them.
particular are an obvious focus of this symbolic resonance. In the second eclogue we see pipes as a representation both of musical and poetic skill and of the continuity of memory involved in the poetic composition:  

\[
\text{est mihi disparibus se septem compacta cicutis fistula, Damoetas dono mihi quam dedit olim et dixit moriens: ‘te nunc habet ista secundum.’ (2.36-38)}
\]

Damoetas’ words suggest that in passing on his pipe to Corydon he also passes on his musical and poetic skill, making Corydon his successor. Hubbard suggests that “the relation of Damoetas and Corydon can thus in a certain sense be seen as expressing the relationship of literary succession between Theocritus and Vergil” (1995a 56). Leach also sees Corydon as connected to Virgil’s poetic persona: “Corydon speaks for his creator as a young poet experimenting in pastoral verse” (1966 427). Hubbard further suggests that Corydon’s love for Alexis is reflective of Virgil’s anxiety about his own reception: “Corydon’s yearning for a boy-lover to whom he can teach the country arts is clearly associated with a desire for poetic influence among a generation of successors” (1995a 46-47). This fits well with the metaphor of \textit{liberalitas} for poetic production, since a recipient of a gift gains prestige and power by putting himself in a position to give gifts himself. Virgil can be seen as not wanting to be only a recipient; he wants to be a benefactor as well. Hubbard sees Corydon’s failure to persuade Alexis as reflecting “Vergilean self-doubt, a sense that he has not yet attained the status and preeminence requisite to the role of being a ‘literary father’” (1995a 56). He views the progression of the poetic concerns of the \textit{Eclogues} as representing “the emergence of Vergil’s 

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\textsuperscript{41} Compare Gallus receiving the pipes of Hesiod from Linus and the Muses in eclogue 6, discussed below. The importance of this moment of passing on the \textit{fistula} is emphasised by the placement of the scene: “The second Eclogue, at the exact mid-point, displays a coveted poetic tool, \textit{fistula}, invented by Pan, prominently set off as the first word of the line and framed within a five-line section by the name of Amyntas, who covets it (2.37)” (Van Sickle 1967 498).
The exact meaning of the term *avena* has been much debated by scholars. Peter L. Smith discusses the evidence for the technical specifications and generic appropriateness of various types of wind and reed instruments, and decides that the *avena* is closest to an “oatstraw monaulos”, although he does not suggest that we should take this identification too literally. He suggests that it should “evoke the visual and musical qualities of the monaulos, as opposed to the syrinx; but its role is less descriptive than symbolic. By suggesting the most primitive of country instruments at the opening of his *Eclogue* book, Vergil intensifies the archetypal setting in which Tityrus is placed” (507).

Cairns sees a programmatic reference to Theocritus here. He suggests that *avena* is the equivalent of καλαμος as shown by the use of that word in 1.10, and that these words function in part as a gloss on Tityre as a Doric term for a reed; he concludes that “lines 1-2 of *Eclogue* 1 contain not only an etymology but one attested by and very probably derived from Artemidorus. Virgil is exploiting Artemidorus’ definition to characterise his work as ‘Italian Doric’ and thus to signal his Theocritean program” (1999 293). Van Sickle (2004) disagrees with Cairns’ interpretation of this reference, but does agree that there is Theocritean resonance in these lines.

Coleman (*ad loc.): “*tenui*, which Servius saw as expressing the *humilitas* of the genre, may have neoteric literary associations; Servius was clearly correct in his reading of the term” (72); cf. “in tenui labor” in *Georgics* 4.6. Clausen points to the use of *tenui* at *Eclogues* 6.8 as the key to the aesthetic interpretation of the term: “Here ... *tenui* is defined by its context: it is the equivalent of λεπταλη and signifies a concept of poetry, poetry as conceived by Callimachus” (1994 175).
visible counterpart of the more impersonal *silvestrem musam*. (Putnam 1976 21-22)\textsuperscript{45}

The set of pipes (*calamos levis* [5.2]) played by Mopsus in the fifth eclogue is another more conventional instrument used as a symbol of the poetry produced by it, and *levis* describes both the instrument and the humble genre of pastoral. This idea of an instrument as a symbol of poetry and mark of skill and inheritance of a poetic tradition is made more clear in Gallus’ poetic initiation in eclogue 6. This poem contains the collection’s most explicit characterisation of the generic and stylistic attributes of the *Eclogues*: “pastorem, Tityre, pinguis / pascere oportet ovis, deductum dicere carmen” (6.4-5), an allusion to Callimachus’ own statement of aesthetic standards in the prologue to the *Aetia* (Fr. 1.23-24 Pf.; see Coleman 176). As a whole it is programmatic, “proclaiming in illustrative form Vergil’s allegiance to the poetic principles of Hesiod and Callimachus” (Coleman 206).\textsuperscript{46} Among other programmatic aspects, the opening of the poem rejects encomiastic epic, echoing Callimachus’ response to his critics in the opening of the *Aetia*, and the inset song of Silenus is “strongly reminiscent of neoteric hexameter poetry” in

\textsuperscript{45} See also Smith: “The oatstraw is in many ways a ‘slender’ pipe: esthetically it is a link to the preface of Callimachus’ *Aitia* (at least, when juxtaposed with the phrase *silvestrem musam*); morally it is akin to Horace’s *tibia ... tenuis simplexque* (*Aes P.* 202-3)” (507). However, some scholars see the *avena* as a pejorative term for a pipe, in contrast with *harundo* or *calamus*; Boyle (1978) agrees with Leach (1974) in seeing the *avena* as an inadequate tool for the production of real music, and therefore views Meliboeus’ use of the term in reference to Tityrus’ playing in *Eclogues* 1 as expressing “among other things his amazement at Tityrus’ apparent obliviousness – reflected in the triviality of his song – of the widespread rural chaos” (131n13). Van Sickle (2004) also elucidates the inappropriateness of the term *avena* for a pleasing musical instrument, and argues that it suggests ironic overtones in Meliboeus’ address to Tityrus, which Tityrus then reacts to by using *calamus* in his reply in line 10. In all of these interpretations, nonetheless, the *avena* has programmatic significance with regards to the genre of bucolic poetry.

\textsuperscript{46} Van Sickle points out, however, that Virgil in this poem “deliberately alters Callimachus rather than simply taking over the canon of ‘slight style’,” and that while eclogue 6 has programmatic aspects, it should not be taken as setting the complete program for the entire book of *Eclogues* (1977 107). Rutherford agrees that the allusions to Hesiod and Callimachus are not a complete and whole-hearted endorsement of their poetic program by Virgil; for one thing, it is Gallus, not Virgil himself, who is given Hesiod’s pipes and will climb higher up the mountain of the Muses than Virgil does, at least for now (45). He suggests that although Virgil admired neoteric poetry, he was dissatisfied with it on both aesthetic and political grounds, disliking “the superficial cleverness, the self-indulgent emotionalism, the shocking and fantastic themes” and the concept of poetry as “art for art’s sake” (46).
Thomas (1999) argues that the *recusatio* is in the voice of Tityrus, not Virgil himself; this would mean that “Virgil’s … refusal to engage in encomiastic or epic poetry, in fact becomes something slightly different; it becomes the *recusatio* of the shepherd, binding and embraced only because of the inappropriateness of a shepherd’s singing of kings and battles, situated as he is in the genre of pastoral” (296). This distinction seems artificial to me; while I do not argue that Tityrus should be seen to represent Virgil transparently, I do not think that the poetic statements in the opening of eclogue 6, with its address to Varus, can be separated from the stance of Virgil’s poetic persona.

The reference to the Grynean grove probably also points to Euphorion’s description of Apollo’s grove at Gryneion (Dix 258); this adds yet another poetic predecessor to this complex inheritance.

Also, allusively, of Orpheus, in the references to music that moves trees: “quibus ille solebat / cantando rigidas deducere montibus ornos” (70-71).
of Calvus, Virgil has connected the verbs *pascere* and *errare*, and so here Virgil’s play with Calvus’ line is echoed in his formulation of this poetic genealogy. Rutherford suggests that the sixth eclogue “presents Virgil and his fellow-poet in contrasting roles: Virgil makes the Callimachean *recusatio*, Gallus like Callimachus will don the mantle of Hesiod. Virgil declines high themes, Gallus will aspire to them” (47). If so, this presentation of the two poets in a sort of dialogue about the aims and achievements of their poetry reinforces or echoes the idea of poetry as an exchange between poets. The praise of Gallus here is also itself a form of *liberalitas*, the substitution of a poetic encomium for that denied to Varus: “Varus’ military achievements are contrasted with the poetic pursuits of Virgil and Gallus” (Rutherford 44). This formulation of gift giving as exchange between poets is a key element of the *Eclogues*.\(^5\)

In the fifth eclogue, the creation of poetry in and of itself is explicitly described both as a gift and as requiring reciprocal action. Menalcas asks Mopsus to recite a poem; he suggests possible topics, but he does not dictate the content, or ask for praise of himself, he just requests the favour of the performance of poetry by a skilled poet: 51 “*incipe, Mopse, prior, si quos aut Phyllidos ignes / aut Alconos habes laudes aut iurgia Codri. / incipe*” (5.10-12). After Mopsus has sung, Menalcas expresses his gratitude: “*tale tuum carmen nobis, divine poeta, quale sopor fessis in gramine ...*” (5.45-46) and prepares to sing a song in return: “*nos tamen haec quocumque modo tibi nostra vicissim / dicemus*” (5.50-51). Not only does he repay the favour of a song with another song, but he also receives the inspiration for his own poetry from the poetry

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\(^5\) Rutherford connects this to other examples of poetic interchange, especially among the neoterics: “Such mutual banter and exchange of ideas between poets is in fact a regular feature of the literary milieu. Friendship could be as productive of literary manifestos and self-characterizations as feuds. Thus Catullus and his friends evidently showed one another their drafts (Poem 35) and indeed composed in amicable rivalry (50). ... One poet defines his own literary stance by contrast with another’s. ... Choice of genre and poetic stance are not simply the prelude to poetic composition; they become an important part of the subject-matter of poetry” (48).

\(^5\) This situation may be seen as anticipating the “*iussis / carmina coepta tuis*” in eclogue 8; here, too, Mopsus sings by the command of another. In this case it is clear that there is no compulsion at all, much less any direction as to content; does this affect our reading of the situation in eclogue 8?
of his predecessor, Mopsus: “Daphninque tuum tollemus ad astra” (5.51). Poetry received as a gift results in more poetry, itself a gift given in return. Nor does the exchange end here. Mopsus emphasises the value of poetry as a mode of *liberalitas* by his response to the announcement: “an quicquam nobis tali sit munere maius?” (5.53). This explicitly characterises the poem as a *munus*, not only because of its content (“puer ipse fuit cantari dignus” [5.54]) but also because of the skill of the poet (“ista / iam pridem Stimichon laudavit carmina nobis” [5.54-55]); these are attributes of poetry that are consistently presented by poets as being integral to the value of poetry as a gift. The exchange between the herdsmen is not only about the internal exchange of poetry, but also mirrors and intensifies the connection between this poem and its most important model, *Idyll* 1.\(^{52}\) The inspiration and framework for the poem comes from Theocritus; Virgil then reworks the material and themes into a new (and, he claims, better) poem, which is presented to the reader, but also reflects back on and enriches the original Theocritean poem.

At the end of Menalcas’ song, Mopsus asks “quae tibi, quae tali reddam pro carmine dona?” (5.81). This is in fact a central question surrounding the giving of poetry: what sort of gift is an appropriate recompense for this sort of poem? It must be appropriate not only to the genre and aesthetics of the poem – and therefore humble, small, but perfectly crafted – but also to the skill, quality, and value of the poem – and thus exceptional and generous. Such a gift continues the process of exchange, enhancing the gratitude felt by each of the participants, and strengthening the bonds between them. And, in fact, having given each other their poems, the herdsmen now give each other further gifts, and these are indeed appropriate to their context. Mopsus gives a staff that is beautifully decorated and the subject of another herdsman’s envy; it

\(^{52}\) The verbal and thematic imitations of the idyll are shown in detail by DuQuesnay (1977), who stresses that the close use of a Theocritean poem does not make the eclogue “merely” derivative: “By generating new poetry out of a mass of Theocritean material and ‘tags’, quotations and topos, Virgil was able to talk with the accents of Theocritus in the language of bucolic and at the same time to innovate, to say in that language new things on new topics” (23).
is described as *formosus*, a key term of praise in pastoral poetry, as seen only four lines above in Menalcas' reference to the opening of the second eclogue.\textsuperscript{53} Menalcas' gift is even more appropriate: it is a pipe marked as Alexandrian by its epithet (*fragili*), and one that has already created pastoral poetry. Here we see the material representation of the relationship between gifts, memory, tradition, and poetic creation. The pipes are a literal repository of poetic memory; the presentation of them as a gift transmits that memory to another, along with (presumably) the capacity for poetic creation. The absence of *liberalitas* would mean the absence of this productive reciprocity. By exchanging poetry and gifts, the herdsmen have created new poetry: eclogue 5 itself.\textsuperscript{54}

The ninth eclogue, in fact, presents this very situation: the normal patterns of *liberalitas* and the exchange of songs and poetry have ceased to function, and so the transmission of memory, and hence the creation of poetry itself, is threatened. This poem, like most in the collection, features a dialogue between two herdsmen. However, the poem their dialogue produces, eclogue 9, demonstrates their inability to participate in the communal production of poetry, either by reciting to one another or in competition, as is the usual practice in such dialogues. After an ominous opening that raises the spectre of exile ("veteres migrate coloni" [9.4]), the first reference to poetry in the eclogue seems optimistically to recall the value of

\textsuperscript{53} *Formonsus* is one of the characteristic terms of praise in the *Eclogues* (Coleman 165); there is also an allusion to the staff in *Theocritus Id. 7*, which adds to the poetic symbolism of this object (Coleman 171). The reference to eclogue 2 also recalls the *fistula* that Corydon received from Damoetas (2.37); G. Karl Galinsky sees eclogue 5 as inverting the action of eclogue 2 (177), but I see it as an allusion to the cyclical nature of *liberalitas*, in which giving and receiving are a continuous process.

\textsuperscript{54} Boyle (1978) suggests that Virgil saw the pastoral genre, at least as he inherited it from his predecessors, "as essentially (to use Marie Desport's compelling phrase) 'une poésie à écho' ...pastoral song is to be construed as the internal resonance of the singer's fictive world, condemned to triviality by its inability to reach beyond the boundaries of private experience or private vision so as to affect the world of action, events, history" (121). In this theory of pastoral, allusions to previous poets point not to productive exchange but to the limited, echoic nature of the genre. Boyle argues, though, that the *Eclogues* are an attempt to transcend the generic limitations of pastoral, and to use song as a transformative medium by breaking the echo-chamber (1978 122). In this new form, then, the poet can and does interact with those who come before or after him, by using and alluding to their poetry, and having his poetry be used by others. Cf. Hubbard 1995a.
poetry as an element of *liberalitas*, by suggesting its power to induce gratitude and obligation:

“omnia carminibus vestrum servasse Menalcan” (9.10). But this optimism is immediately negated, as Moeris says that in actuality poetry has lost all its power to persuade or win favours (9.11-13). In fact, the same violence that has disrupted the workings of *liberalitas* has threatened the very survival of pastoral poetry, in the person of Menalcas. The herdsmen go on to recall fragments of songs already sung, urging one another to recite or to compose, but find themselves unable to continue them. Moeris explicitly says that memory is failing him, and with it his ability to create poetry and song: “nunc oblita mihi tot carmina, vox quoque Moerin / iam fugit ipsa” (9.53-54). Memory is crucial to the performance of *liberalitas*, since without memory there can be no gratitude, and giving and receiving will no longer create a bond between people. Memory is also crucial to poetic creation, with inspiration coming from the Muses, daughters of Mnemosyne, and from the poets who have come before. John Henderson sees this process as extending backwards through the whole succession of inspiration: “the chain passes up through Menalcas, to Daphnis, and thereafter, through Silenus, to Apollo and the source (*Eclogues* 5-6)” (1998a 163). This demonstrates the reciprocal nature of the exchange; the successors are not merely recipients of the poetic tradition, they re-create and re-imagine their predecessors through

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55 “Songs are the vectors of local culture. They are learned up and retained in the memory; the art of inventing and re-inventing songs is a spontaneous productivity, but it rests on a repertoire associated with masters, as well as technique and talent” (Henderson 1998a 162). There must be community for poetry to be created; and community is created and maintained, in part, by the proper functioning of *liberalitas*.

56 Farrell (1997) links memory and “the theme of reward, compensation, and remuneration” in Cicero’s work; he also points out that “the Romans in particular were to a very large extent in the habit not of storing memories but of performing them” (383). In the social and political realms, this is exemplified by the actions associated with *liberalitas*; in the *Eclogues*, memory exists only in performance, with allusion the performance of a previous moment in literature, a re-creation of a memory. When Moeris’ memory fails him, his resources for poetry are also lost.

57 “The banter of Lycedas and Moeris intertwines a performative poetics, hailing the seminal inspiration of the poet Menalcas, but in doing so setting out how singer, singing and song interlock, what they can do, and how embedded thinking (about) them must be” (Henderson 1998a 162). The master, Menalcas, takes his songs with him when he leaves, but by remembering him, his successors can re-create him, and his songs: “Personification of carmina ... nostra (v.11), he sings through his successors’ tributes” (Henderson 1998a 163).
their poetry. When memory fails, the poetic exchange itself fails, as the bonds of *liberalitas* are broken when memories are lost. It is true that the failure of pastoral poetry in this eclogue is connected to much more than the disruption of *liberalitas*, but the close associations between the two concerns throughout the collection are brought out here.

*Eclogues* 8 is another example of the complex relationship between Virgil and his predecessors, in particular Theocritus. It is based on idyll 2, but, as Jennifer MacDonald (2005) discusses, the model has been significantly reworked, and other idylls, notably 3 and 11, have also been used, drawing thematic resonances within Theocritus’ poems to the attention of the audience. It also activates the metaphor of gift exchange by formulating the very production of poetry as a gift, presenting this eclogue, or perhaps even the entire collection, as a present for Pollio: “accipe iussis / carmina coepta tuis” (8.11-12). Pollio must also be the judge of the singing contest, since no other judge is named; he therefore is asked to pass judgment on the very poem that he is given as gift. This is a gift that has been asked for (or at least suggested) by its recipient, but that does not reduce its value; in fact, it enhances it, since it makes clear the

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58 “Although the final line of eclogue 9 (67) appears to envisage the *possibility* of future, presumably effective song, the thematic focus of the penultimate eclogue is on the unrealisability of Virgil’s Hesiodic ideal of poetry’s didactic efficacy within the context of a society dominated, not by doves or singing swans, emblems of Venus in her pacific aspect (9.13, 29), but by spear, eagle and Mars (9.12-13)” (Boyle 1975 185). War, especially civil war, disrupts community and the bonds created by *liberalitas*; in such a context, poetry cannot be created, and has no power.

59 The addressee is not actually named; since antiquity the two proposed candidates have been Asinius Pollio and Octavian. G.W. Bowersock (1971, 1978) re-opened the debate by arguing that the reference to an Illyrian voyage does not fit the actual movements of Pollio, and that the addressee is actually Octavian. Since then, the topic has been much discussed; prominent in the debate have been R.J. Tarrant, Van Sickle, Mayer 1983, Mankin 1988, Farrell, and James J. Clauss. The strongest argument against Octavian is the reference to the writing of tragedies, which fits Pollio, but requires special pleading to apply to Octavian. I see no compelling reason to see the addressee as Octavian, and find the arguments advanced against this identification persuasive; in the absence of definitive proof, therefore, I believe that it makes most sense to take Pollio as the addressee.

60 “The placement of the address after the description of the singers suggests that this address can be read as the summons to judge the contest” (MacDonald 2005 13; see also page 29).
appropriateness of the gift to its recipient. We see, therefore, a connection between poetry as a gift and the process of composition.

Eclogues 4 also develops the idea of poetry as gift. Here Virgil presents his poem to Pollio as a gift worthy of a consul: “si canimus silvas, silvae sint consule dignae” (4.3). The careful framing of the poem’s genre in the opening lines indicates the attention with which Virgil has matched his gift to its recipient. He marks the poem as a little greater (“paulo maiora” [4.1]) than his other pastoral poetry, but he also locates it squarely within the Theocritean background of the collection as a whole by invoking the Sicilides Musae (4.1). This is important because in Ecl. 8 it seems that Pollio was the one who suggested that Virgil write Theocritean pastoral, so in honouring him, Virgil of course wants to continue in that genre. He also hopes for the chance to praise the puer and his future deeds, in poetry that outdoes that of Orpheus and Linus.

O mihi tum longae maneant pars ultima vitae,
spiritus et quantum sat erit tua dicere facta:

Bowditch suggests that maiora here has an additional resonance, connoting not only “the contrast between humble and grand themes” but also “the idea of excess or surplus value associated with gratia” (132), and perhaps even “the actual excess involved in a return gift or acknowledgment of a benefaction pure and simple” (133).

Specifically, this poem is most closely modelled on idyll 17; “this is in itself to be seen as a compliment to Pollio, an acknowledgment of indebtedness both for patronage and for literary inspiration” (Du Quesnay 1976 28). The other prominent allusive model for the poem is Catullus 64; since Pollio was an associate of Catullus, this choice of a Latin model also shows that “Vergil has carefully written his poem to reflect and to compliment the literary tastes of his addressee” (Du Quesnay 1976 29).

To what extent this promise of praise poetry to come is meant as a gift for a specific person depends on what, if any, concrete identity may be assigned to the puer. The arguments for different identifications are clearly summed up by Coleman (150-52), who himself views the child as “a symbol of the divine forces that will bring the nouum saeculum to pass” (152). While I agree that this is one role of the child, I also think, with Du Quesnay, that “because of [the] specific indication of time and the association of the child with a real man and a real event – Pollio’s consulship – it is inevitable that the reader should wish to identify the child” (1976 33). The ambiguity of the identification was intentional, but Virgil expected his audience to attempt to make that identification; the most likely candidate was an expected child of Antony and Octavia. The promise itself frames poetic praise as a powerful gift, but by leaving the identity of the puer unresolved, Virgil withholds the gift for the moment, thereby retaining the power of the potential benefactor.
The descriptions of the Golden Age allude to Catullus 64: e.g., “15-16 *divisque ... permixtos heroas* recalls Catullus’ Heroic Age, when *domos invisere castas / heroum et sese mortali ostendere coetu / caelicolae nondum spreta pietate solebant* (64.384-6)” (Coleman 135); “31 *priscae vestigia fraudis* echoes *sceleris vestigia nostri* (13); cf. Catullus’ *tellus sceler ... imbuta nefando* (64.397)” (Coleman 139). There are also references to Catullus in the words of the Fates in line 46-47: “Cf. Cat. 64.321-2 of the song of the Parcae at the wedding of Peleus and Thetis *talia divino fuderunt carmine fata, / carmine perfidiae quod post nulla arguet aetas; 326-7 sed vos quae fata sequontur / currite ducentes subtegmina, currite, fusi; 382-3 talia praequares quondam felicia Pelei / carmina divino cecinerunt pectore Parcae.* The song grimly foretold the violent deeds and early death of Achilles (338ff.), and was followed by an expression of Catullus’ own wistful longings for the innocent days when gods and men mingled freely together (397ff.). Now the valour of a second Achilles will form the prelude to the fulfilment of Catullus’ nostalgic wish” (Coleman 144); as well as in the instruction to the child to smile at his parents in lines 60-64, “In these closing lines Vergil’s imagination, playing around the concept of the Wonder Child, has formed an intensely realistic image reminiscent of Catullus’ picture of the infant son of Torquatus in 61.216ff. *volo parvolus / matris e gremio suae / porrigens teneras manus / dulce rideat ad patrem / semihiente labello*” (Coleman 149).

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64 The descriptions of the Golden Age allude to Catullus 64: e.g., “15-16 *divisque ... permixtos heroas* recalls Catullus’ Heroic Age, when *domos invisere castas / heroum et sese mortali ostendere coetu / caelicolae nondum spreta pietate solebant* (64.384-6)” (Coleman 135); “31 *priscae vestigia fraudis* echoes *sceleris vestigia nostri* (13); cf. Catullus’ *tellus sceler ... imbuta nefando* (64.397)” (Coleman 139). These gifts from the earth are flowers, themselves frequently symbols of poetry, is also significant. The *munuscula* are then Catullan – or Callimachean? – gifts for the child. Virgil later promises his own gifts, in the form of poems whose excellence will be judged by Arcadia itself: “Pan etiam, Arcadia mecum si iudice certet, / Pan etiam Arcadia dicat se iudice victum” (4.58-59). If we are to see these as

65 Bruce Arnold 147; this article has a detailed exposition of the literary-critical significance of the imagery and language of eclogue 4. For the poetic associations of flowers, see also A.S.F. Gow’s and D.L. Page’s introductory note to Meleager 1. Bowditch notes that the word *munuscula* “also connotes the symbolic gifts of Roman social relations”, being used by Cicero and others to describe the gifts and favours exchanged between patrons and clients (134).
The reference to the poetical parentage of Orpheus and Linus may itself point to Virgil’s own concerns for poetic inheritance; the quality of his own poetry is guaranteed by its descent from Catullus and Theocritus, among others, just as Orpheus and Linus are validated by their descent from Calliope and Apollo.

At the same time, the poem is itself a gift; its role in mediating poetic succession is inextricably bound up with its role in mediating the relationship between Virgil and his patron, Pollio.

Balancing the theme of gifts and gratitude in the first eclogue, eclogue 10 also centres around a gift, one which highlights the link between poetry and gift-giving that has been developed throughout the collection. Virgil gives this eclogue to Gallus, a friend and a poet. As Perkell notes, “the opening verses establish the ethical dynamic of this poem: that is, the poet of the Eclogues gives to another poet, Gallus, the gift of a poem (quis neget carmina Gallo? allows the inference that he has asked for a poem)” (2001 35). But more than that, Virgil gives a role in the composition of the poem as a gift to Gallus. That is, by giving Gallus a speaking part within the poem, imitating or alluding to aspects of Gallus’ own style, and by (probably) reworking and possibly even quoting lines from Gallus’ poetry, and framing the whole thing as a gift given in
response to Gallus’ request, Virgil enacts the relationship between gift-giving and the composition of poetry. Perkell suggests that this is “an inversion of the characteristic pastoral amoebaeon song, in which the singers try progressively to top each other” (2001 35). It seems to me that it is not an inversion, but an extension of this type of composition; in amoebaeon song one poet may be trying to top the other, but he also relies upon the verses spoken by the other poet in order to compose his own, and here Virgil, too, portrays himself as relying on the verses composed by Gallus to compose his own poetry. This is a natural development of the close linkage between poetic exchange and poetic composition throughout the collection. It is the process of giving a gift that has created the poem, and the creation requires an exchange between the two poets.

The theme of exchange and gifts in the Eclogues constructs the relationship between Virgil and his poetic predecessors, in particular Theocritus, as being itself an exchange. This relationship has been characterised by Hubbard as “poetic memory” of Alexandrian bucolic poetry (1995a 39 et passim). This is a powerful and convincing image, but it seems to me too passive and one-sided, and does not do justice to the reciprocity that is at the heart of the social dynamic of gift-exchange at Rome. Hubbard’s emphasis on the role of the reader in constructing the meaning of Virgil’s subtexts supports my view of Virgil’s poetic production as a form of liberalitas: the reader is not only a passive recipient of Virgil’s gift of poetry, but is in turn expected to contribute to the formation of the poetry by applying to its “hermeneutic interstices” his or her own “respective conceptual matrices” (1995b 11). Virgil is not only the recipient of the

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68 Farrell (1992) construes the “image of intertextuality/exchange as vital to Vergil’s conception of poetics as a whole”, even beyond the confines of the Eclogues (68).
poetic production of his predecessors; he also responds to and enriches it. The expanded definition I have established in previous chapters for *liberalitas* in a poetic context now allows us to see that we can supply an account of what Hubbard calls the ‘revisionary challenge’ to a degree that his own metaphor will not allow. Virgil seeks to strike a balance between his role as recipient of the bucolic genre and his desire to be a benefactor, creating, perfecting, and then giving this poetry to those around and after him. We have seen that gift-giving throughout the *Eclogues* is connected to the transmission of ‘memory’ and of poetic skill, as well as to the sharing of poetic accomplishment and practice. The transmission of form and content to Virgil by the earlier poet(s) is an occasion for gratitude, and his use of their poetry and allusions to it demonstrate his gratitude. As well, the reshaping of this material and the presentation of the resulting poems to the reader, sometimes generalised and sometimes particularised in a dedicatee, such as Pollio, is itself a gift and functions as another link in the endlessly interconnected chain of *liberalitas*. *Eclogues* 3 offers an especially clear example of the importance of this framework as a structuring device. Its emphasis on gifts reflects the amoebean, reciprocal intercourse of the poetry competition. The pattern of allusions to Theocritus strengthens the emphasis: many of the idylls drawn on in eclogue 3 themselves “dwell upon a unifying theme: the theme of exchange” (Farrell 1992 67). This thematic use of gift-giving formulates poetic competition as itself a gift exchange; the shared creation of poetry is a form of *liberalitas*, in which each singer gives to the other, on the one hand, inspiration and form, and, on the other hand, the finished product of a poem.70

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69 Hubbard does suggest that Virgil’s poetry revises his predecessor(s). He sees this as a progression in the collection, with “*Eclogues* 1-3 articulating Vergil’s revisionary challenge to his precursor Theocritus most directly and personally in terms of self-conscious *aemulatio*, *Eclogues* 4-6 challenging and transcending the norms of bucolic as a generic category, *Eclogues* 7-9 presenting Vergil’s own poetic voice as an already established model for subsequent dialogic revisionism, [and] with Eclogue 10 embodying and recapitulating all three movements” (1995a 40).

70 Compare Cat. 50.
In turn, the figuring of the act of poetic creation as *liberalitas* is reinforced by, and gives point to, the repeated allusions to earlier models in the *Eclogues*, in particular the reworking of the Theocritean models. The amoebean form, in the hands of a poet reacting to a previously established tradition, “presents an image of poetic composition as a process of exchange between poets” (Farrell 1992 68). Van Sickle sees the amoebean structure common in the *Eclogues* as a reflection, and indication, of the way in which Virgil inserts himself into the pastoral tradition, and more specifically through his dialogue with the Theocritean models for the *Eclogues*. Thus he suggests, for instance, that the “alternation that the seventh Eclogue intends to recall must simply be that of the dialectic which runs through all the poems, from the polarity of Tityrus and Meliboeus to its final transformation into Gallus and Arcadia” (1967 502). As an amoebean contest, Charles Fantazzi and Carl W. Querbach consider that eclogue 7 can be read as revealing “something about the composition of poetry, specifically, bucolic poetry as [Virgil] conceived it” (355). In regard to the current discussion, one point of interest is the way that Thyrsis, as the respondent in the contest, is constrained in his choice of subject matter and form: “in these amoebean contests the respondent is at a certain disadvantage. His composition is not a free, improvised choice but must answer to a theme that has been set for him” (Fantazzi and Querbach 357). This is significant because, in the pastoral poetic tradition, Virgil himself is always the respondent, always constrained by previous singers: “The role of the second singer is ultimately Vergil’s role in his response to Theocritus” (MacDonald 2003 207). It is his task to work within these constraints to produce poetry that tops that of his predecessors, so that in some sense he can gain a position of power. It is my contention that formulating the relationship between himself and his predecessors as a gift-exchange, as well as a contest, allows him to demonstrate some of that power. By using Theocritus’ poetry to create new poems, Virgil receives the gift of poetic inspiration and form from his predecessor, just as the competitors in the singing matches do from
one another; he then gives the final product, the poem, to his readers, and in a fashion, even to 
Theocritus, whose work is enriched by its interaction with Virgil’s. This process, of shaping the 
expectations and conventions of *liberalitas* through interaction with poetic and aesthetic 
concerns in order to mitigate the problematic implications of gratitude and to give power or 
status to the poet, is the same process that I have shown in the preceding chapters to be 
functioning in the manoeuvres made by Catullus, Horace, and the elegists.

The poems in this collection treat different aspects of the workings of *liberalitas*, and of 
the problematic relationship between giver and recipient. The process of composition is shaped 
by the structure of gift giving, and by the reciprocal relationship developed by and necessary for 
the creation of a poetry that is grounded within a specific literary tradition but that also draws on 
multiple other influences and sources. The results of this process of composition – both the 
individual poems, and the collection of *Eclogues* as a whole – then become items to be 
exchanged and elements in the “real-world” pattern of gift-giving and gratitude. The poems can 
be offered as gifts or used to demonstrate gratitude or obligation. But they can also reflect the 
problems associated with such obligations, and even demonstrate the social ruptures that are both 
caused by and causes of the destruction of the bonds of *liberalitas*, which are also closely 
connected to moments of poetic failure, loss of poetic memory, or the ineffectiveness of poetry.
Conclusion

The intention of this study was to explore using literature to elucidate ideology and using ideology to better understand literature. I hope to have demonstrated that a deeper understanding of the conceptual framework of *liberalitas*, as it governed the interactions between Roman elite males, enriches our understanding and appreciation of late Republican and early imperial non-epic Latin literature. By extending the discussion of *liberalitas* in poetry beyond the relationship between the poet and his patron(s), I have shown it to be one of the fundamental cultural frameworks shaping the creation of meaning in this poetry. In chapter one, I demonstrated that the basic framework underlying the poets’ assumptions about gift exchange and the relationships it creates were in general agreement with those displayed by Cicero and Seneca in their more prescriptive texts; this is particularly clear in Horace’s *Satires* and *Epistles*. I showed how this framework was used by poets to portray and negotiate their relationships with their addressees and to establish background situations (such as a dinner invitation, a thank-you, or a birthday gift) that would be immediately comprehensible to their audience and set up specific expectations that could then be undermined or confirmed, as was useful to the poets. Focussing on the details of the expectations created by the exercise of *liberalitas* allows us to see the ways in which many poets either subvert or call attention to those expectations, and to clarify the degree of irony, sarcasm, or playfulness in poems such as Catullus 13 and 49, or Horace *Epistles* 1.7. Seeing *liberalitas* as an important moral theme adds depth to our appreciation of Messalla’s role in Tibullus’ poetry, and the ways in which the poet elevates his own moral standards in opposition to, or as a complement to, the military and political world of his patron, in particular in poems 1.1 and 1.7. In the second chapter, I concentrated on the ways that the poets took this basic framework and modified it to suit their own purposes, most often by redefining the value of the items being exchanged. Catullus 12-14 show how this redefinition could be used to establish
criteria for inclusion in a friendship group, as well as for literary discussion. By examining the dedication poems of Catullus, Tibullus, Propertius, and Horace, I have shown that the theme of *liberalitas* is not only relevant to the relationship between the poet and his patron or dedicatee, but is intrinsic to the poetic programme of all of these poets. Catullus in his first poem foregrounds *liberalitas* as a poetic problematic not only for his collection as a whole, but also for lyric collections at Rome in the next generation. A concern for the proprieties of giving, and the problems it creates, runs through the poetry of Horace, Tibullus, and Propertius. As I show in chapter three, the elegiac poets Tibullus and Propertius move from the conventional situation of men who are (relative) status equals participating in exchange, to attempt to impose this framework on the interaction between the poets and their low-status, usually female, beloveds and use the rules and expectations of *liberalitas* as tools to control the relationship between themselves and their beloveds. They attempt to constrain their beloveds by dictating the terms of their exchange, while simultaneously undermining their own efforts by revealing the degree to which their own actions do not conform to the ideal practice of *liberalitas*. This interrogation of the potential misuses of exchange, and the damage done to relationships by disagreements about its practice, has ramifications for wider Roman society as well. Finally, in the fourth chapter I examine the importance of the framework of *liberalitas* in the *Eclogues* and argue that the social framework of *liberalitas* informs and shapes Virgil’s relationship with his literary predecessors, and becomes an important structuring metaphor for his construction of the pastoral genre in Latin.

I believe this study has demonstrated the usefulness of *liberalitas* as a lens for examining Latin literature, and points to reading other Latin poetry in this manner. Some possibilities for further work are to continue the discussion of dedications and status negotiation by looking at the *Georgics*, Statius’ *Silvae*, or Martial’s epigrams; to consider how Ovid uses the structures of
liberalitas in his exile poetry to attempt to secure his pardon; or to investigate the role liberalitas plays in Sulpicia’s poems, and how her gender affects its formulation.

To take one example of how the interpretive approaches presented here could be useful in examining other works, I will briefly discuss liberalitas in one episode of the Aeneid, pointing to ways my work can elucidate much-discussed issues there as well. Homeric types of gift-exchange have been noted in the Aeneid, and recent work by Neil Coffee has looked at Virgil, Lucan, and Statius’ use of specifically Roman formulations of generosity, obligation, debt and gratitude, in particular in relation to issues of social order and civil war, and to the breakdowns in civil concord caused by improper exchange and consumption. Building on these studies, and using the work done for this dissertation, several areas are evident that could be fruitfully explored further. For example, the relationship between Dido and Aeneas certainly involves gift exchange, and the themes of obligation, gratitude, and reciprocation are at issue in book 4 in particular. These themes have been examined with reference to Homeric xenia and the rules of hospitium by Gibson 1999, who has demonstrated the importance of Roman thinking about status, reciprocal obligation, and dependency in the relationship. Coffee also discusses Dido’s inappropriate focus on gifts, (mis)use of commercial vocabulary, and the mercantile language connected with the Carthaginians, emphasising her role as “representative of the past and future of Carthage” (74) and showing that “the mercantile nature of Dido and her Carthaginians contributes to the picture of the Punic city as the anti-type of Rome” (82). It could, however, also be fruitful to consider the issues raised in chapter three of this dissertation when thinking about the relationship between Dido and Aeneas. It is true that there is an emphasis on hospitium throughout the episode, and an ethnic contrast between the two characters, but as Gibson himself

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72 The Commerce of War: Exchange and Social Order in Latin Epic 2009.
points out, this emphasis lessens in book 4, with the emergence of the erotic themes (1999 195), which also marks a move into more personal and gender-based themes. Here, I suggest, Dido and Aeneas emerge as (potential) elegiac lovers, and I would argue that the exchanges between them, and their expectations about these exchanges, can be seen as reflecting the issues discussed in chapter three.\(^\text{73}\)

To outline the situation in broad terms, Dido gives gifts (both actual gifts and the help and hospitality that she offers) to Aeneas, and then has a set of expectations about his reciprocal behaviour. Although at first Aeneas appears to behave as she expects, when he decides to leave, he defends himself to Dido by stating that his expectations were different, and that he does not feel himself obligated to her in the same way she thinks he is. In other words, they disagree about what the terms of their relationship are, the degree to which he is obliged to return Dido’s *liberalitas*, and how he should display his gratitude; whether her generosity counts as *liberalitas* may even be at issue.

Dido appears in many ways to act as the lover in elegy does: she gives gifts to her beloved, Aeneas; she attempts to define their relationship, and the degree of the commitment involved (she considers it a marriage; compare Catullus’ framing of his relationship with Lesbia)\(^\text{74}\); and she is ultimately unsuccessful at this redefinition.\(^\text{75}\) Cairns (1989 Chapter 3) examines in detail the ways that Dido is presented as the ‘lover’ in an elegiac affair. He does not

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\(^{73}\) I do not mean to downplay the importance of various other genres throughout the *Aeneid*, and in particular of tragedy in the Book 4; I am not suggesting that elegy is the only, or even the dominant mode of the Dido episode, but only that it appears as a recurring threat to the teleology of the epic and as a source of tension in the characterisation of Aeneas, as well as in the historical allegorization of the episode.

\(^{74}\) In particular, her words “si bene quid de te merui”(4.317) in the context of reproaching a faithless lover recall Catullus 73.1 “Desine de quoquam quicquam bene velle mereri” and Catullus 76.1-2 “Siqua recordanti benefacta priora voluptas / est homini cum se cogitat esse pium” and that poet’s mobilization of the language of obligation and gratitude in an erotic context.

\(^{75}\) Giving gifts: e.g. her initial welcome (1.569-574), the feast (1.633-642), the cloak (4.261-264); her definition of the relationship as marriage (4.171-172), (4.314-316); her admission of the failure of that redefinition (4.323-324), and Aeneas’ rejection of her redefinition (4.338-339).
discuss the implications of this for Aeneas’ character and position, however. Saylor, too, has demonstrated that the stock characteristics of Roman lovers are found in the Dido episode, but with the gender roles reversed; in fact, he suggests that “if we could imagine Dido and Aeneas apart from the epic setting, the metre, and the objective narrative, it would be easy to see them as lovers in an extended elegy or set of elegies by Propertius or Tibullus” (1986 73). As demonstrated in chapter three, with reference to Horace *Epode* 12, this reversal of gender roles ultimately casts doubt on the validity of the situation. That doubt is appropriate here, however, because the question of the legitimacy of Dido’s claims on Aeneas is crucial to the evaluation of his behaviour with regards to her, as Gibson makes clear: “Vergil thus sets a problem for the reader of the *Aeneid*: how have Aeneas and Dido acted in the light of the values of *hospitium* to which they both appeal?” (1999 184). This question can be widened beyond the bounds of *hospitium* alone, since one of the central issues, as Gibson acknowledges, is whether Dido has a claim on Aeneas beyond that of *hospitium* (1999 201-202).

If we can see Dido as the elegiac lover, then Aeneas is placed, at least potentially, in the position of elegiac beloved. This is doubly problematic: first, it is generically inappropriate, since he is clearly an epic figure, and the opposition between epic and elegy is programmatic in the latter genre; second, it subverts his identity as a (proto-)Roman male, both because the elegiac

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76 Keith (1997) has demonstrated that the Dido and Aeneas relationship serves as a model for Sulpicia’s female-centred elegy, and has shown that Sulpicia challenges the presentation of female erotic conduct as misconduct, by altering the value judgments attached to the actions that she and Dido both engage in.

77 The question of whether Dido and Aeneas are legitimately married, and how the reader is expected to view the ‘wedding’ in the cave, has been much debated, and is of course very important to our evaluation of Aeneas’ actions; see e.g. Feeney 1990, Lyne 1987 (173). Peter Agrell reviews the narrative and argues that Virgil “has made a definitive answer impossible” (95) and uses this ambiguity to motivate the Punic Wars sufficiently while avoiding showing Aeneas to be clearly at fault, and while making the reader feel sympathy for both Dido and Aeneas (106-107). Edward Gutting has recently argued that while erotic love displaces conjugal love in Dido’s life, and hence in her relationship with Aeneas, the question of the status of their marriage is moot: “in such a context there is no practical distinction between a real and a fake marriage. Whatever its status, the marriage is doomed by fate ... the status of the marriage is problematic because its function in the text is to show once again how a combination of marriage and the erotic leaves the conjugal obscured and unstable” (273).
beloved is usually female, and because all males involved in an elegiac relationship are clearly marked as unmanly, and frequently as un-Roman. However, this problematization of Aeneas’ identity as a Roman man is prominent in Book 4: he is portrayed as wearing eastern, feminized clothing (4.261-4) and as distracted from his officium, his duty to the gods, to his people, and to his son (4.265-276). In fact, that last point, made explicitly by Jupiter and Mercury (“si te nulla movet tantarum gloria rerum ... Ascanium surgentem et spes heredis Iuli / respice, cui regnum Italiae Romanaque tellus / debetur” (4.272-276)), should perhaps recall Propertius’ declaration in 2.7 that he would rather be Cynthia’s lover than father sons for Rome: “nullus de nostro sanguine miles erit” (2.7.14) and “tu mihi sola places: placeam tibi, Cynthia, solus: / hic erit et patrio sanguine pluris amor” (2.7.19-20). Saylor points out that the otium that Mercury accuses Aeneas of is an almost technical term for the elegiac lover’s lifestyle (1986 74-75) and that the idea that Aeneas is forgetful of his duty (“rerumque oblite tuarum” (4.267) in Mercury’s speech) is characteristic of the Roman lover’s “waste of interests and resources that are ancestral, paternal, and which he is obliged to increase” (1986 76-77). The elegiac rejection of duty to Rome in favour of devotion to a woman is presented in Book 4 as a distinct possibility: this is the danger from which Aeneas must be rescued by Mercury’s message.

Gibson has demonstrated that, within the strict bounds of hospitium, Aeneas’ actions can be seen as a full and proper requital of Dido’s generosity. I would argue that we should then view her claims of marriage as her attempt to invoke the liberalitas associated with elegiac love, and read the relationship between Dido and Aeneas as, in part, one of elegiac mismatching of expectations about liberalitas, with Dido’s failed attempts to determine the terms of their exchange parallelling those of Catullus, Tibullus, and Propertius. This then suggest that Aeneas’ refusal to acknowledge her claims on him, and his denial that she has any right to accuse him of ingratitude, should not be seen as contrary to the fides and pietas that are such important parts of
his character. In fact, this reading adds to the over-determination of Aeneas’ leaving: by staying, he would be breaching generic decorum, as well as succumbing to the un-Roman lure of the elegiac lifestyle.

This reading also resonates with the allegorical identification of Dido as Cleopatra, the evidence for which has been summarized recently by Stephen Bertman. If Dido is Cleopatra, Aeneas is, or runs the risk of becoming, Antony. His departure prevents this identification from becoming permanent, rescuing Rome itself from incorporation into the empire of an eastern Queen. Antony, and the Augustan propaganda surrounding him, was an important figure in Augustan poetry; his character, and his devotion to erotic, rather than patriotic, values made him a type of elegiac (anti-)hero, standing in contrast to the morally upright Augustan ideal Roman male.78 And the issue of liberalitas was important both in the characterisation of Antony as an elegiac lover and in the propaganda war between himself and Octavian leading up to Actium.79 Aeneas’ rejection of Dido’s assertion that her liberalitas has produced an elegiac-type obligation for him to stay with her is a rejection of elegiac values that contrasts with Antony’s inability to reject Cleopatra’s erotic claims on him, and redeems Aeneas from the role of Antony, allowing him instead to be identified with Octavian, as the cause of the eastern queen’s suicide.80

78 See Jasper Griffin (1977) for the argument that “Propertius’ presentation of himself in poetry as a lover ... is closely related to the figure in history of Mark Antony” (17), and for the connections between the image of Antony and elegiac poetry.

79 Plutarch tells us Antony accused Octavian of not properly rewarding Antony’s soldiers with land in Italy, of not returning ships borrowed from Antony, and of not giving Antony his rightful share of Sicily; Octavian accused Antony of refusing to divide Armenia with him, while Antony’s refusal to welcome Octavia when she came to Athens with gifts, supplies, and troops for him helped turn public opinion against him (Ant. 53-5). As well, the so-called “Donations” of Antony and Cleopatra, assigning areas of the Roman empire to her children, did not fit into a Roman model of liberalitas, but into a Ptolemaic model of regal munificence that was, says Plutarch, a source of great resentment to the Roman people (Ant. 54).

80 This identification is then recalled in Book 8 when he is given the shield depicting the defeat of Cleopatra.
This is only an outline of some of the ways the understanding of *liberalitas* could be important to the interpretation of the Dido story in the *Aeneid* and can bring together several distinct strands of scholarship on the episode; it raises many questions that would require further exploration to answer fully. I hope it demonstrates that using this framework as an interpretive lens is a potentially fruitful approach to other areas of Latin literature, with the promise of enriching our understanding not only of the literature, but of Roman society as a whole.
NOTE: In parenthetical in-text citations, dates are only used when there is more than one entry under that author’s name in the bibliography.


