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**1. Research Statement:** 150-200 words. What specific question will you pursue with your research and why is it important to the field? This section enables you to give the reviewers an overview of your project. Keep in mind that other sections give you an opportunity to develop more details around the background, methodology, and rationale for the project.

This project identifies and explores poetic portrayals of gender-fluidity in the work of the Roman poet Gaius Valerius Catullus, by using Romantic, Victorian and contemporary translations/adaptations in English in order to track how these portrayals have changed over time. Grounded by the parallel conceptions of poetry in translation as valuable in its own right and artistic performance of gender as its own sort of ‘translation’, this project discusses and explores the portrayal and linguistic/cultural creation of gender in Catullus’ poetry in the context of poem form and content. I will look closely at both the original Latin poems and translations from two later time periods as a method of illuminating the constantly-fluctuating relationships between lyric poetry and queer gender. I aim to give Catullus’ poems new life and relevance outside of their original context with my exploration of how they have been reshaped and continue to actively reshape questions of gender identity. I plan to both build on the existing scholarship regarding gender in the Catullan corpus and provide a new way of looking at Catullus’ poetry that provides insight about its past lives and reminds contemporary readers of their own sociocultural situatedness in the present.

**2. Background to the Topic and Rationale for Your Research:** 300-400 words. What is already known about the field of research you will be working on? How does your research project fit in with what is being done currently in the field, and how does it build upon knowledge on the topic or fill in gaps in the field? Please cite references from the literature when applicable; these citations should be listed in #5 of this proposal.

In the past few decades, genderqueer readings of Catullus have become more prevalent. Many scholars with key works in the field, such as Marilyn Skinner, author of *Sexuality in Greek and Roman Culture* (2015) and a prominent scholar of Catullus, have recognized that Catullus’ poetry does not fall neatly into a normative male/female binary. However, the abundant themes of gender-fluidity in Catullus’ poetry have rarely been addressed outside of a distinctly cisgender- and hetero-normative lens, often focusing on modern conceptions of binary gender and homoeroticism in ancient cultural contexts to discuss portrayals of gender identity. I hope to expand upon the work of Skinner and others

to illuminate both the transitory nature of gender and of the poetry itself. This research will be focused on discussing gender-fluidity and non-conformity in Catullus' poetry in a way that increases the visibility and accessibility of these interpretations.

By looking at English translations from two separate eras (18th-19th century and the past 10 years) in addition to Catullus' original poetry, I hope to approach the themes of gender-fluidity in the Catullan corpus in a way that does not rely on the historicism of an approach informed primarily by contemporary contexts. Invaluable to my interpretive approach is Grace Gillies' article for *Eidolon*, "The Body in Question," which discusses gender-fluidity in ancient literature more broadly. It speaks to the subversive power of contemporary interpretations of ancient literature that are based on lived experience while also recognizing the anachronism of this perspective instead of seeking to resolve it.

By contrast, literature on the reception of Catullus in Romantic and Victorian Britain deals less closely with themes of gender specifically and more with the broader influences of Catullus on poets and translators (for example, Henry Stead's *A Cockney Catullus*). In addition to the translations of John Nott and George Lamb, both of whom represent the beginnings of Catullan influence during their era, I've elected to discuss Algernon Charles Swinburne because of his deeply subversive portrayals of gender transgression and rejections of cis- and hetero-normativity that draw very closely on Catullus' poetry. Including Romantic and Victorian translators in this project is intended to give contemporary readers a means of understanding gender portrayal as fluid by nature rather than to delve deeply into the gendered atmosphere of these poets' historical contexts.

**3. Research Plan - Methodologies and Timeline:** 450-700 words. Please define the main challenges of your project and what research methods you will use to address these challenges. Describe your research plan for the summer in chronological order - either use a week-by-week timeline or phases approach (i.e. week 1, week 2...or phase 1, phase 2...). Each week/phase should specify goals, action items, and methods. Please include in your plan information about exactly how/when you will check in with your research mentor.

This project will proceed in three phases, which are designed to allow me to systematically familiarize myself with the scholarly literature on Catullus relevant to the themes of this project and conduct close readings and analyses of Catullus' poetry itself, focusing on poems 8, 11, 37, 50, 51, 63, and 76 (and their adaptations/translations). I've selected these on the basis of their relevance to discussions of gender in Catullus' poetry, their diversity of style, and their popularity among translators.

I plan to meet over Zoom with my advisor every two/three weeks to provide updates on my progress and to discuss any questions or concerns I might have. We will likely also check in more often

via email.

Phase I (May 31-June 21) will involve deeply familiarizing myself with the literature in order to cement my approach, focusing both on close analyses of the poems I plan to discuss in addition to wide-angle scholarship which presents frameworks and methods for interpretation. The most important part of this phase will consist of thorough readings of key works on Catullus, including books like *The Poetics of Manhood* by David Wray and *Musa Pedestris* by Llewelyn Morgan. This phase will also involve looking closely at work which deals with Romantic translators and poets more broadly (Henry Stead's *A Cockney Catullus* and Kathleen Louis' *Swinburne and His Gods*) and literature which focuses on key translations and adaptations. In the first phase I also hope to refine the basis of my framework for genderqueer interpretation/gender-fluidity, which draws on Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity and the discursive creation of gender and is supplemented by the ideas of scholars such as Jack Halberstam and Kara Keeling.

In Phase II (July 12-Aug 2) I'll begin my in-depth analysis of gender portrayals in the original Catullus poems specified. I plan to look at 8, 11, and 37 in the first week, 63 in the second (as it is the focal point of the project and significantly longer than all others), and 50, 51, and 76 in the third. I intend to organize and record gendered language both by type and by persons involved. The type category will include cultural references, morphological/linguistic choices, and genre/style and form (which would include elements such as meter or figures). The persons category will include speaker, addressee, and third person (though these different categories often overlap). This mode of organization will facilitate qualitatively tracking both how and where gender transgression appears in the poems and provide specific reference points for comparison when I look at translations.

Phase III (July 19-Aug 9) will involve close readings of Romantic/Victorian and contemporary translations and adaptations. In the case of direct translations, I will mirror the process described in Phase II for each poem, paying special attention to the instances where phrases and ideas in the original and in the translation either align or explicitly deviate. For looser adaptations, the process will involve recording the same types of information without line-to-line comparison. In the first week of this phase I plan to look at Nott and Lamb's direct translations, and in the following two weeks Swinburne's "Dolores," "Hendecasyllabics," and "To Catullus," Isobel Williams' *Shibari Carmina* (2021), Jeannine Uzzi's *The Poems of Catullus* (2015), and Roz Kaveney's *Catullus* (2018). I've selected the Swinburne poems on the basis of their direct references to Catullus and striking connections to the specific poems I've elected to discuss, and the contemporary translations because of their diversity of style and recentness.

**4. Your Qualifications and Project Affiliations:** 150-250 words. What experiences have prepared you to carry out this research project, including coursework, previous research experiences, and other

relevant skill building? If your project involves access to people and/or institutions to support your work (i.e. interviewing subjects or partnering with institutions), please describe the affiliations, permissions and agreements you have already established as part of your plan.

As a Classical Languages major and someone who has been learning and reading Latin for several years now, I've had a great deal of experience with reading and analyzing Catullus' works in depth. My thorough experience with Catullus extends beyond coursework: in my final year of high school, I spent a semester composing and illustrating a small book of English translations/adaptations of Catullus poems. This project was a great opportunity for me to start synthesising my ideas about language and translation as fluid forms of art, mirrored in the elements of visual art that I included as part of the book. I continued this work during my semester abroad in London in 2019, over the course of which I wrote a research paper focusing on Romantic/Victorian and contemporary receptions of Catullus' poetry within the London literature scene. While this project was focused mainly on the impact of Catullus' work on London poets, the opportunity to study materials from the British Library inspired me to delve further into the themes of gender-fluidity and trans-ness that are deeply embedded in Catullus' work. Since my time in London I've been able to engage more broadly with transgender theory and its applications in other ancient literature, such as epic (Homer) and Athenian drama (Aristophanes). Additionally, I'm currently enrolled in a mentored research seminar, over the course of which I'm planning to do more preliminary work on Catullus and gender theory in preparation for this larger project.

**5. Citations and Core Texts:** No longer than 1 page. This section should contain citations for any references you made in your proposal, and you are welcome to list any additional texts that you feel are central to your project.

PRIMARY (core texts)

Catullus, Gaius Valerius, and George Lamb. *The Poems of Caius Valerius Catullus*. London: J. Murray, 1821.

Catullus, Gaius Valerius, and Isobel Williams. *Catullus: Shibari Carmina*. Manchester: Carcanet Press Ltd., 2021.

Catullus, Gaius Valerius, Jeannine D. Uzzi and Jeffrey Thomson. *The Poems of Catullus: An Annotated Translation*. Cambridge University Press, 2015.

Catullus, Gaius Valerius, and John Nott. *The Poems of Caius Valerius Catullus, In English Verse: With: the Latin Text Revised, And Classical Notes. Prefixed Are Engravings of Catullus, And His Friend Cornelius Nepos...* London: Printed for J. Johnson, 1795.

Catullus, Gaius Valerius, and Roz Kaveney. *Catullus*. Bristol: Sad Press, 2018. Swinburne, Algernon Charles, 1837-1909, Thomas James Wise, and Edmund Gosse. *The Complete Works of Algernon Charles Swinburne*. London: W. Heinemann ltd., 1925-1927.

## SECONDARY

Gillies, Grace. "The Body in Question: Looking at Non-Binary Gender in the Greek and Roman World," *Eidolon*, 9 November 2017,  
<https://eidolon.pub/the-body-in-question-d28045d23714>.

Louis, Margot. *Swinburne and His Gods : The Roots and Growth of an Agnostic Poetry*, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990.

Skinner, Marilyn. *Sexuality in Greek and Roman Culture*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2013.  
Stead, Henry. *A Cockney Catullus: The Reception of Catullus in Romantic Britain, 1795-1821*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015.