# *Catullus 13* – comparison of texts

## Activity 1 – translation

In pairs, read the poem [*Catullus 13*](https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.02.0003%3Apoem%3D13) and produce a translation in the space provided below.

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## Activity 2 – translation ordering

Your teacher will provide you with 2 translations of *Catullus 13*, one by A.S. Kline and the other by Matthew Warnez, cut into individual lines. Work together to place the lines of each text into the correct order, based on the original poem.

## Activity 3 – comparison of translations

Once you are confident that you have placed each text in the correct order, your teacher will provide you with both translations. Check your ordering of each text, discussing any challenges or key points. In your analysis consider:

* the similarities and differences across all 3 translations (including your own)
* the advantages and disadvantages of what each translator has created.

Complete the table below with the comparison between the 3 translations. Be prepared to discuss your findings with the class.

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| --- | --- |
| Similarities and differences | Advantages and disadvantages |
| Between Kline and Warnez | Between Kline and Warnez |
| Between Kline and your own | Between Kline and your own |
| Between Warnez and your own | Between Warnez and your own |

## For the teacher

Remove this section before sharing this resource with students.

### Activity 1 – translation

In pairs, students read the poem [*Catullus 13*](https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.02.0003%3Apoem%3D13) and produce their own translation in the space provided. Consider providing students with dictionaries or a vocabulary list to complete the activity, if required.

The following support may be provided to students, depending on your context.

line 4 *candidus -a -um*: white, fair-skinned, beautiful

line 5 *sal salis*: m. salt, wit; *cachinnus* *-i*: m. laughter, fun

line 6 *venuste noster*: ‘my charming fellow/friend’

line 8 *sacculus -i*: m. small bag (for holding money), purse; *arānea* *-ae*: f. cobweb

line 9 *contrā*: in return; *mērus -a -um*: pure, undiluted

line 10 *seu quid*: ‘or anything which’; *ēlegans ēlegantis*: tasteful, exquisite; -*ve*: or

line 12 *dōnārunt = dōnāvērunt*; *Venus Veneris*: f. Venus, the goddess of love; *Cupīdō Cupīdinis*: m. Cupid, the god of love

lines 11–12 word order: *quod Venerēs Cupīdinēsque meae puellae dōnārunt*

line 14 *ut tē faciant*: ‘that they make you’

13–14 word order: *quod cum tū olfaciēs, deōs rogābis ut tē, Fabulle, tōtum nāsum faciant.*

### Activity 2 – translation ordering

Provide students with 2 translations of *Catullus 13*, one by A.S. Kline and the other by Matthew Warnez, cut into individual lines. Students work together to place the lines of each text into the correct order, based on the original poem.

#### Translations

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| Translation by A.S. Kline |
| You’ll dine well, in a few days, with me, |
| if the gods are kind to you, my dear Fabullus, |
| and if you bring lots of good food with you, |
| and don’t come without a pretty girl |
| and wine and wit and all your laughter. |
| I say you’ll dine well, and charmingly, |
| if you bring all that: since your Catullus’s |
| purse alas is full of cobwebs. |
| But accept endearments in return for the wine |
| or whatever’s sweeter and finer: |
| since I’ll give you a perfume my girl |
| was given by the Loves and Cupids, |
| and when you’ve smelt it, you’ll ask the gods |
| to make you, Fabullus, all nose. |

(Kline 2001).

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| Translation by Matthew Warnez |
| Fabúllus, friend! Prepare to feast with me, |
| if fate allows, two days from now, or three. |
| But you must bring the meal—and make it great. |
| Yes, a good meal! And bring your charming date- |
| and wine, and salty speech, and jokes to tell. |
| If you bring these, my friend, *you will dine well*. |
| (Your dear Catúllus owns a spacious purse, |
| yet only cobwebs will the purse disburse). |
| But, in exchange, you shall receive my love |
| or something *more* delightful from above: |
| I’ll share the fragrance that my bride applies, |
| which love supernal sweetly magnifies. |
| Once it is whiffed, you’ll beg that heav’n bestows- |
| this gift: to be in love, or be a nose. |

(Warnez 2022).

### Activity 3 – comparison of translations

#### Translations

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| --- | --- |
| Translation by A.S. Kline | Translation by Matthew Warnez |
| You’ll dine well, in a few days, with me, | Fabúllus, friend! Prepare to feast with me, |
| if the gods are kind to you, my dear Fabullus, | if fate allows, two days from now, or three. |
| and if you bring lots of good food with you, | But you must bring the meal—and make it great. |
| and don’t come without a pretty girl | Yes, a good meal! And bring your charming date- |
| and wine and wit and all your laughter. | and wine, and salty speech, and jokes to tell. |
| I say you’ll dine well, and charmingly, | If you bring these, my friend, *you will dine well*. |
| if you bring all that: since your Catullus’s | (Your dear Catúllus owns a spacious purse, |
| purse alas is full of cobwebs. | yet only cobwebs will the purse disburse.) |
| But accept endearments in return for the wine | But, in exchange, you shall receive my love |
| or whatever’s sweeter and finer: | or something *more* delightful from above: |
| since I’ll give you a perfume my girl | I’ll share the fragrance that my bride applies, |
| was given by the Loves and Cupids, | which love supernal sweetly magnifies. |
| and when you’ve smelt it, you’ll ask the gods | Once it is whiffed, you’ll beg that heav’n bestows- |
| to make you, Fabullus, all nose. | this gift: to be in love, or be a nose. |

(Kline 2001) and (Warnez 2022).

##### Discussion points for comparison of translations

* Both Kline and Warnez have structured their translations as poems with line breaks, whereas students may have produced a prose translation.
* Kline’s translation has adhered to the word order more closely, producing a more faithful translation of Catullus’s poem, whereas Warnez’s has prioritised producing a rhyming translation in English, leaving more of a mark of the translator on the poem.
* Warnez’s use of rhyming couplets has changed the overall structure of the poem, meaning that the audience expects sense units to end at the end of the couplet, whereas the progression of ideas, set ups and punchlines in Kline’s follows the structure of the original poem.
* Warnez’s diction is at times more antiquated, unusual or less accurate, for example, disburse, supernal, bride, heav’n, which might cause the translation to lose its impact on a younger modern audience.
* Warnez has used italics for emphasis, as a modern English-speaking audience would easily understand, whereas Kline’s relies on word order and diction, so the emphasis might not be as apparent to a modern audience.

## References

Kline AS (2001) *Catullus: The Poems* (Catullus GV trans), Poetry in Translation.

Warnez MT (17 February 2022) ‘A Translation of “Catullus 13” by Matthew T. Warnez’, *Sparks of Calliope*, accessed 19 November 2024.

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