

Title:

Between the Confessional and the Glass Bead Game: Some Thoughts on Love Poets as Lovers

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Abstract:

The recognition that ancient love poetry is not to be taken as simply transcribing the poets' views of actual relationships has led to a purely literary approach in which poets juggle motifs from previous poems without any reference to life. I shall attempt to show that neither approach is satisfactory in all cases, and investigate whether the common reader has justification in resisting the literary view in the case of Catullus and Lesbia though not in that of Catullus and Juventius. I shall also revisit assertions that Roman poets employed cover-names metrically equivalent to the real ones, and shall re-examine the case for identifying Catullus' Lesbia with a sister of P. Clodius Pulcher.