

MAMURRA, *EQUES FORMIANUS*

The recent attempt by Paul Thielscher to identify Mamurra with Vitruvius, author of the *De architectura*, has given Caesar's *praefectus fabrum* new interest.¹⁾ Before that his claim to fame (or notoriety) had been a result of Catullus' vitriolic attack. He has little deserved the attention thus paid to him. In the course of discussion of the corpus Catullanum a career has been outlined for him which will not bear intensive scrutiny. Some elements in the poet's comments are clearly factual, and Mamurra's prodigality and wealth, his unscrupulous actions and immoral character cannot be seriously questioned. However inferences, especially from the twenty-ninth poem, are so speculative that a career rather different from the accepted version is probable²⁾.

References, other than those of Catullus, are scanty. The earliest are two in Cicero's letters to Atticus. Among other ills due to Caesar's actions in the fifties were *et Labieni divitiae et Mamurrae ... et Balbi horti et Tusculanum*³⁾. These three men had

1) Cf. *RE* s. v. "Vitruvius," cols. 419-426; 427-489 (1961). Cited below as PT. A refutation of this posthumous article is headed "D M Pauli Thielscher doctoris": P. Ruffel et J. Soubiran, "Vitruve ou Mamurra?" *Pallas* 11 (1962 [1964]) 123-179. Cited below as RS. Cf. my Supplementary Note.

2) Editors and critics dealing with Catullus have comments on Mamurra beyond his just due. These items, a few among many, are useful: H. A. J. Munro, *Criticisms and Elucidations of Catullus* (Cambridge, 1878) notes on 29, 57, 114f.; G. Q. Giglioli, *Not. Scav.* (1903) 391-94; F. Muenzer in *RE* s. v., cols. 966f. (1928); C. L. Neudling, *A Prosopography to Catullus* (1955) *passim*; K. Quinn, *Catullus: An Interpretation* (New York, 1973); F. della Corte, *Personaggi Catulliani* (2nd ed., Florence, 1976). These editions of Catullus: R. Ellis (2nd ed., Oxford, 1889); W. Kroll (5th ed., Stuttgart, 1969); C. J. Fordyce (Oxford, 1961); K. Quinn (2nd ed., New York, 1973). Cf. also the *Prolegomena* to the *editio maior* of B. Schmidt (Leipzig, 1887), especially on dating. Munro's elaborate commentary suffers from his obsessive defense of Caesar and Mamurra. Neudling's collection of material is useful but uncritical and at times erroneous: cf. his remarkable comment on Caesar and Catullus (91): "They were, in the first place, both patricians..." All citations and quotations of the text are from the edition of Sir Roger Mynors, Oxford 1958.

3) *Att.* 7.7.6: from Formiae, December 19 (?), 50. Text, date, place of writing from the edition of D. R. Shackleton Bailey, no. 130. The place of writing may have led Cicero to link Mamurra with two more important men.

all been enriched in Caesar's service, and Cicero's hostile comment is directed at Caesar rather than at the recipients of his largesse. Five years later Cicero described a visit to his estate by the dictator and his entourage. Among other items he wrote *tum audivit* (Caesar) *de Mamurra, vultum non mutavit*⁴). It is usually assumed that he heard news of the death of his former officer, but it could have been news of some difficulty in his business affairs⁵).

The fullest note on Mamurra is a fragment quoted by Pliny the Elder from the lost *Exempla* of Cornelius Nepos. Publication of this work almost certainly is to be dated 43 B.C. (*Fragm.* 34 M.)⁶:

Primum Romae parietes crusta marmoris operuisse totos domus suae in Caelio monte Cornelius Nepos tradit Mamurram, Formiis natum, equitem Romanum, praefectum fabrum C. Caesaris in Gallia, ne quid indignitati desit, tali auctore inventa re. hic namque est Mamurra Catulli Veroniensis carminibus proscissus, quem, ut res est, domus ipsius clarius quam Catullus dixit habere quidquid habuisset Comata Gallia. namque adicit idem Nepos primum totis aedibus nullam nisi e marmore columnam habuisse et omnes solidas e Carystio aut Luniensi.

The whole passage is quoted by Peter and Malcovati as a fragment of the *Exempla*, and this may be correct. The first and third sentences are certainly from Nepos, but the middle sentence might be Pliny's own comment. Both authors dwelt upon

4) *Att.* 13.52.1: from Puteoli(?), December 19, 45; SB, no. 353. It is possible that *de* means 'from', but Ciceronian usage makes 'Concerning' more likely.

5) Munro (84): "This is perhaps rightly now explained to mean that he heard of Mamurra's death ... perhaps Manutius' interpretation is right, that a sentence against Mamurra for transgressing the sumptuary laws ... was read to him..." Muenzer (col. 967): circumstances unknown. If he survived 45, he probably kept a low profile during the subsequent civil conflicts. However, if the report was *de morte*, Caesar's chill reception of the news implied alienation from his former prefect. If he survived 45 B.C. reference to Mamurra in the *Philippics* of Cicero might be expected. Also Mamurra would have been most fortunate to have escaped proscription in 43-42.

6) Plin. *HN* 36.48: Peter, *HRR* 2 (1906) *frg.* 24 of the *Exempla*: Malcovati's ed. of Nepos (1944) *frg.* 34. The dating of this work depends on Suetonius who noted young Caesar's abstemious use of wine (*Aug.* 77) in *castris apud Mutinam*. This fragment was correctly assigned to the *Exempla* by Peter (*frg.* 5) and Malcovati (*frg.* 15), since it is clear that Nepos was contrasting earlier severity with later laxity in this work. Peter (p. LIII) dated it after 44/43. Cf. PT, 438-441.

increase in luxury and deterioration from *mos maiorum*. In two other passages Pliny shows familiarity with the poet and his poems⁷). Under the Julio-Claudian emperors a *villa Mamurrana* was imperial property. Despite the use of the word *villa* this may refer to the *domus* of Mamurra in *Caelio monte*. Hence Pliny may have visited the mansion which he found mentioned by Nepos⁸).

The only further reference to Mamurra in literature is the sentence in Suetonius which is presumably based on a lost work contemporary with the event (*Iul.* 73):

Valerium Catullum, a quo sibi uersiculis de Mamurra perpetua stigmata imposita non dissimulauerat, satis facientem eadem die adhibuit cenae hospitioque patris eius, sicut consuerat, uti perseuerauit.

Without the references in Catullus this anecdote would have led scholars to speculation which would probably have resulted in the conclusion that the *stigmata* involved some financial double-dealing, notorious even within the circle of the corrupt elements in Caesar's entourage. Moreover the reconciliation was evanescent, even more so if we assume that the poet arranged his own works and blatantly included poems offensive to Caesar⁹).

7) *HN pr.* 1: where he quoted Catullus (1.3-4) apparently from memory, called Catullus *conterraneum meum*, and cast a glance at two references to Veraniolus and Fabullus (12, 17, 47.3). *HN* 37.81 where he cited details on the fabulous gem owned by the Nonius whom Catullus attacked (with a partial quotation of 52.2 - again apparently from memory).

8) A lead water-pipe with an inscription (vill(ae) Mamurranae) was found in Rome on the Caelian hill: *AJA* 6 (1890) 265; *RS*, 174, 176, no. 6. This was certainly Mamurra's mansion. Another inscription, found near the town of Marino (in Latium, 12 miles s.e. of Rome), is a sepulchral inscription for Claudia Prisca set up to his wife (a freedwoman) by Eutyches Tryphonianus (Caes. n. ser.: i.e. of Augustus) who in lines 6-7 is disp(ensator) vill(ae) Mamurranae: *CIL* 14.2431; *ILS* 1586; cf. 133. This is certainly the same *villa* from which the lead water-pipe came. The inscription set up by Eutyches gives no evidence for the location of the *villa Mamurrana*. However, an imperial slave who has as *contubernalis* a *liberta* whom he called *uxor* was an important official, despite his servile status, and could have had a suburban home near which he would honor the ashes of his wife. For this social pattern cf. P.R.C. Weaver, *Familia Caesaris* (Cambridge, 1972) 112-122 (for Eutyches 119, note 2) and B. Rawson, *TAPA* 104 (1974) 296f. A parallel is *CIL* 5197; *ILS* 1524. Musicus Scurranus, slave of Tiberius, was honored in a *titulus sepulchralis* by fifteen *vicarii* (each is listed with his function) and a sixteenth (*Secunda*) who was obviously his *contubernalis*. Mamurra's mansion in Rome (*villa*) had become imperial property by sale, testamentary bequest, or confiscation.

9) Cf. O. Weinreich, *Catull: Liebesgedichte* (Hamburg, 1960) 163-170.

Horace in his account of his journey with Maecenas to Brundisium (probably in 38) wrote of his stop at Formiae, a name which cannot stand in dactylic hexameter and wrote (*Sat.* 1.5.37) in *Mamurrarum lassi deinde urbe manemus*. He may have been thinking of Catullus, but he may be recalling gossip with local folk who spoke of their celebrities. We do not know whether our Mamurra was still live, but as late as A.D. 1071 the city was called Mamorrano, a clear recollection of Classical times¹⁰). Pseudo-Acro and Porphyrio note the distinction and wealth of several men of Mamurra's family, but, although these men were surely relatives of our *eques*, the dating and exact relationship are not clear¹¹). The same is true of two men mentioned in extant inscriptions¹²). A safe conclusion is that the Mamurras were prominent and wealthy in this ancient town on the shore at the southern border of Latium¹³), and that in late republican times they were of equestrian rank. All further conclusions are speculative.

For some interesting comments on the order of the poems by the poet in the *corpus* cf. P. Y. Forsyth, "The Gellius Cycle of Catullus," *CJ* 68 (1972-73) 175-177 and "The Aemiana Cycle of Catullus," *CW* 70 (1977) 445-450. Posthumous publication of the *corpus* is a possibility, but even if this were so, the general order of the poems is probably that of the author. K. Quinn discussed the problems involved: *Catullus: An Interpretation* (New York, 1973) 9-20. Cf. E. A. Schmidt, *Philologus* 117 (1973) 215-242; H. Offermann, *RHM*. 120 (1977) 269-302.

10) Giglioli, 393 and Muenzer, col. 966. 48-50.

11) Porphyrio (in *Serm.* 1.5.37): ...*hic namque fuit familia Mamurrarum, honesto loco nata*. This could mean knowledge of Mamurra as *eques*, but is probably only an inference from the line in Horace. The notice on the line in pseudo-Acro is fuller: *In Formias civitatem, quia Mamurrae quidam fratres dicebantur senatores, qui maximam partem Formianae civitatis possidebant*... Although for two members of the *stirps* the extent of their holdings is doubtful, the basic premise of wealth is clear. The factual residue of this notice may belong to a later period. Presumably the rank implied in *senatores* refers to Formiae, not Rome.

12) (1). *CIL* 8.18915; *ILS* 5566; PT, 421, no. 3; RS, 176, no. 32: M. Vitruvius / Mamurra / arcus / s(ua) p(ecunia) f(ecit). This imperial inscription from Thibilis (Announa) which records a gift to the town was taken by PT to prove that Vitruvius was the *nomen* of the *gens* to which the *stirps* of the Mamurrae belonged. This could be, but the interlocking of families by marriage in a small town can have strange results in nomenclature. (2). Giglioli, 392; PT 421f., no. 4; RS, 175, no. 15: Aufilliae P. / Mamurrae (uxori). Giglioli called the style not later than the end of the first century of the empire. P. Mamurra was probably related to Caesar's prefect, but certainty is not possible. Cf. my Supplementary Note below.

13) Cf. Weiss in *RE* s.v., cols. 2857f. (1909).

Thus without the evidence of Catullus the following picture emerges. Mamurra was *eques* from Formiae. His rank may have been inherited, and his financial position would be uncertain since the property qualification was low and many members of the *ordo equestris* were little better off than industrious citizens of a lower status. By 59/58 he attained the office of *praefectus fabrum* with Caesar in Gaul. Thus in earlier years he must have gained experience either in the army or in business. He held the position long enough to be rewarded and to have used his wealth with some ostentation, especially in his mansion in Rome. At some point he fell out of favor with Caesar for reasons unknown. He and Caesar were attacked by Catullus, and the poet was reconciled with Caesar. He may have died in 45, but there is no certainty about this. Evidence of the prosperity of Mamurrae in Formiae cannot be conclusively dated or specifically applied to this man. His *domus* in Rome was later imperial property.

With the poems of Catullus in hand and mined for historical data a very different picture emerged¹⁴). There are unsolved (and insoluble) problems in the standard account, and some exceptions have been entered¹⁵). In short his career was disgraceful. He squandered three fortunes (his inheritance, the plunder of the East and that of Spain) and was about to recoup with the plunder of Gaul and Britain. He was an officer with Pompey in the Mithridatic War¹⁶), with Caesar in Spain, became *praefectus fabrum* in 58 in Gaul. In Gaul he and Caesar were *pathici*. His liaison with Aemilia was a disgrace. He was bankrupt (*decoctor*), but his wealth offended men of higher social status. *Formianus* was cast up to him as an insult. He had literary pretensions without literary ability¹⁷). A thorough rascal with few defenders, and those mainly for the wrong reasons.

14) Cf. *MRR* suppl. (1960) 38f. "Praefectus fabrum under Caesar in Gaul (58–50) and probably in subsequent years... From Catullus 29 it appears that he had been an officer under Pompey in the Mithridatic war and had served under Caesar in Farther Spain in 61–60."

15) Munro (68): "My present design ... to try to rescue from obloquy a humbler man, who yet appears to have been a most efficient servant to two of the first generals in history..."

16) Munro (86) thought it "more than probable" that even before this he served under Lucullus.

17) Another fanciful addition is that of T.P. Wiseman: "For instance, can we doubt that Mamurra and Volusenus Quadratus were offered seats in Caesar's Senate?": *New men in the Roman Senate* (Oxford, 1971) 147. I find such doubt easy.

It is essential to look again and see whether we can write history by using satiric poetry as our source.

Mamurra and Catullus

In considering Mamurra in the poems of Catullus problems arise¹⁸). One is that of the date of composition and circulation. The critic is walking on quicksand in dating the poems as a whole¹⁹), but a possibility exists of some re-dating here. Another is the relation of poems on Caesar and his associates in which Mamurra does not figure, but this is a fringe issue in this essay²⁰). The basic problem is whether there is enough truth in the varied allegations of the poet to warrant acceptance of his statements as historical data? If the poet in anger should falsify the evidence, or be deceived in his data, could not an alternative view of Mamurra be closer to the truth than the received version?

Nine poems call for specific consideration and will be taken up in this order: 94, 105, 114, 115 (Mentula);²¹) 41-43 (Ameana); 29, 57 (Caesar).

94. When Catullus wrote *Mentula moechatur* he was a bit harsh in condemning a social phenomenon quite prevalent among the upper classes of his day and a lifestyle which could have feed-back for anyone who cared to criticise the poet. It has usually been assumed that Catullus is here harking back to 29.13. There can be no doubt that Mentula is Mamurra despite the fact the names are not metrically equivalent.

105. This epigram mocks Mentula's literary pretensions and indicates his failure as a poet. An *equus* from Formiae would presumably have a literary education, perhaps not inferior to that of Catullus. Many Romans of the small, educated upper classes had a taste for writing poetry. This poem parallels 57.7 where Caesar and Mamurra, mocked as *erudituli*, are pilloried as

18) PT in his section on the poet and the prefect was more favorable to Mamurra cols. 441-446.

19) Cf. Ellis, xlv-li and the prefatory notes in Quinn's edition.

20) Cf. especially Schwabe, 182-239 (De Caesare et Caesarianis); E. Bickel, "Catulli in Caesarem carmina," *RbM* 93 (1949) 1-23.

21. Schwabe (210-221) read *Mucillam* for *Maeciliam* (*Meciliam* in G) in 113, then assumed the faithful pair of adulterers as Caesar and Mamurra. This is usually rejected: e.g. by Kroll, *ad* 113.

writers. Perhaps we should not take too seriously Catullus' critical judgements when his emotions are involved.

114-115. Here Mentula is mocked as land-poor²²), but this is probably wishful thinking on the part of Catullus who could have no firm information on the productivity of Mamurra's Picene property. The possession of a *saltus Firmanus* has been criticised for a *Formianus* as unlikely²³). But an *eques* with ready cash or good credit could invest profitably in Italian estates. Moreover such rural real-estate was more available in Picenum than in Latium.

Summary on these four poems. They are ordinarily dated about 56-54 and the assumption seems to be that the estate in Picenum was purchased with Mamurra's fourth fortune, i.e. the booty from Gaul and Britain²⁴). However there is absolutely no evidence for dating. The phrase *decoctoris ... Formiani* (41.4, 43.5) obviously refers to Mamurra, and Catullus' use of *decoctor* is pejorative, but to link that phrase with the difficulties (probably imaginary) that Mentula had with his *saltus Firmanus* cannot stand close inspection. These poems could be dated in 56-54, but they could be earlier, and a date in 60 B.C. is attractive, since at that time Mamurra was back from Spain with his third fortune. If this speculation is true, then contact with Mamurra in north Italy would place the hostility of Catullus early. Also there is in the Mentula cycle the same trend that P. Y. Forsyth found in the Gellius cycle²⁵): mockery of morals, then of literary pretension, climaxing in the flaunting of wealth.

41-43. Poems 41 and 43 certainly, and 42 probably refer to Ameana, *decoctoris amica Formiani*, a prostitute who plied her trade in Cisalpine Gaul, probably at Verona. The reference to Lesbia (43.7) would date the poems about 58 B.C. An affluent customer was the man whom Catullus maliciously but inaccu-

22) Paul Harvey discusses these two poems in detail, compares the description of the *saltus* with the pattern of Italian estates, and concluded that it fits well into known categories of land utilization: "Catullus 114-115: *Mentula Bonus Agricola*," *Historia* 28 (1979) 329-345. H. A. Kahn suggested that the poems gain their humor by stressing that even such profitable estates could not support Mamurra's lavish expenditures: *Hommages à Marcel Renard*, 1 (1969) 3-9.

23) T. Frank argued that Mentula stood for Labienus since a *saltus Firmanus* was in the Picene area where Caesar's *legatus* was powerful: *AJP* 40 (1919) 407f., repeated in *Catullus and Horace* (New York, 1928) 89f.

24) E.g. by Kroll, *ad* 114.

25) Cf. the earlier article cited in note 9 above.

rately described as *decoctor*, obviously Mamurra (*Formianus*) who was then starting his service as Caesar's *praefectus*. The term used need not mean "bankrupt", but it had pejorative connotations whether literal or not. Thus the harsh opinion of Mamurra which found full expression several years later was already exercising the poet. The only substantive evidence in these poems marks a taste for low company – for both Catullus and Mamurra²⁶).

29 and 57. It is only in these two poems that Caesar is linked to the antihero Mamurra, and it is only in 29 that a secure date within the two year period of 55/54 can be set, although it is almost certain that 57 is to be dated at the same time. There is a gulf between the two poems. Poem 29 is a masterpiece of iambic diatribe. This poem has elicited critical acclaim among ancient and modern readers. Moreover its subtle and trenchant lines arouse speculation, often with diverging results. Poem 57 has the distinction of being among the most obscene of the *convicia* in the *corpus Catullianum*.

29. The first four lines brand any man who approves of the wealth gained by Mamurra as *impudicus et uorax et aleo*. These three words are susceptible to a double interpretation: the first may be only an indication of lack of moral scruple but could also mean a homosexual; the second could mean destructive or personally greedy with a subtle hint of perverted sex; the third could imply a man of disastrous rashness or a compulsive gambler. They are repeated in line 10 and are applied to *cinaede Romule* in lines 5 and 9. The vocative address has usually been assigned to Caesar, but with some reason could be assigned to Pompey. I assume that Catullus subtly intended the reader to apply it to either or both²⁷).

26) For *decoctor* cf. I. Opelt, *Die lateinischen Schimpfwörter und verwandte sprachliche Erscheinungen* (Heidelberg, 1965) 26, 152; J. A. Crook, "A Study in Decoction," *Latomus* 26 (1967) 363–376. The term is applied to a man of ill-repute who was bankrupt or insolvent. For the argument that Poem 42 refers to Aemilia cf. the later articles by Forsyth cited in note 9 above. Ellis (*ad* 41) suggested Transalpine Gaul as the scene of Aemilia's activity, and Muenzer suggested Rome (col. 967.14), but to Catullus *provincia* would naturally refer to North Italy and there is no hint of Rome in these poems. The date (about 58 B.C.) is in accordance with the generally accepted chronology of Catullus' affair with Lesbia (e.g. Neudling, 3F.).

27) For the three pejorative words cf. I. Opelt (note 26). Opelt cites poem 29 for all three words, and has many opposite references from

The three key words in lines 2 and 10 in their former meanings are applicable to Pompey and Caesar, not only in the poet's mind but also to those conservative senators who saw portents of disaster and destruction in the formation and renewal of the First Triumvirate. The latter meaning of *aleo* hardly applied to the two men, but *impudicus* and *uorax*, strengthened by the repeated *cinaede*, stress homosexuality. In the case of Caesar it is surprising that the poet never overtly mentioned the scandal linking him as a young man with King Nicomedes, but here we may have a hint of that story which was still current²⁸). In the case of Pompey the hint would refer to the one instance in which his enemies made the charge²⁹). Of course the charge does not involve a liaison between father-in-law and son-in-law, nor of either with Mamurra. The whole point of Mamurra's role in the poem is to illustrate Caesar's *sinistra liberalitas* and Pompey's acquiescence in it.

However in considering Poem 29 there is another area in which Catullus by a subtle use of an ambiguous word has led the historian astray. To the Romans battle with foreign enemies was glorious and the booty seized in war (*praeda*) was honorable as a reward of valor. But another meaning was early applied to the

Cicero. All of the editors try their hands at interpretation of 29. Two recent articles are especially noteworthy: J.D. Minyard, *CP* 66 (1971) 174–78; Alan Cameron, *Hermes* 104 (1976) 155–163. In line 23 Minyard retains *urbis opulentissime* as the true reading and refers it to Crassus – a very attractive solution. The address *cinaede Romule* is usually taken to refer to Caesar (e.g. by Ellis, 98), but Cameron would have it refer to Pompey.

28) Suetonius collected the references (*Iul.* 49).

29) Calvus did refer to the Bithynian scandal with the line and a half: *Bithynia quicquid / et paedicator Caesaris umquam habuit* (Suet. *Iul.* 49.1: *FPL* 86.17 Morel). But he also composed at least one couplet about Pompey: *Magnus, quem metuunt omnes, digito caput uno / scalpit: quid credas hunc sibi velle? virum* (schol. ad *Lucan.* 7.726: *FPL* 86.18 Morel): This fits into a historical incident in February of 56. Plutarch (*Pomp.* 48.7) wrote of a trial at which Pompey was heckled by questions shouted by Clodius and answered by his gangsters (Perrin's translation): "Who is the licentious imperator?" "What man seeks a man?" "Who scratches his head with one finger?" And they, like a chorus trained in responsive song, as he shook his toga, would answer each question by shouting out 'Pompey.'" Cicero, writing to his brother Quintus (2.3.2), described the scene in detail when Pompey appeared for Milo in 56, but omitted Clodius' obscene references. The version of Plutarch makes it likely that Clodius couched his questions in verse and that Calvus composed the scenario for the rioting of the *Clodiani* that day. The charge was surely an invention – Pompey was uxorious rather than homosexual, brave in private life, as well as in war, for he married five times.

word and it was used for money gained by dishonorable means. Cicero used it for Verres' looting of the Sicilians (cf. *Verr.* 3.119). Even profit from business often seemed to senators sordid (cf. *Cic. Off.* 1.15of.); with this in mind it is profitable to look at lines 17-20:

paterna prima lancinata sunt bona,
secunda praeda Pontica, inde tertia
Hibera, quam scit amnis aurifer Tagus:
nunc Galliae timetur et Britanniae³⁰).

It must have been common knowledge for those interested, for friendly or unfriendly acquaintances of Mamurra, that before his official post as *praefectus fabrum* his wealth had been gained by inheritance, in the East, and in Spain. Catullus can be taken as an accurate source with specific knowledge of the sequence of the activities of the *eques Formianus* at the date of writing 29.

By properly interpreting the poets' pejorative *decoctor*, as noted above, we can now consider these lines in the light of the accepted version of Mamurra's official status in those wealthy provincial areas. An enterprising business man with ready cash and credit could easily foresee immense profit to be gained in Asia Minor when the *Lex Manilia* of 66 gave Pompey the Mithridatic command. The assumption that *praeda Pontica* was Mamurra's share of the booty as a subordinate officer in Pompey's army is a hazardous guess, and not a very logical one. Too many superior officers, including the *imperator*, would skim off the cream. A much more profitable occupation would be the purchase of booty, such portions as were not saved to supply the magnificence of the *iustus triumphus* of 61³¹). Resale at higher prices of luxury items and slaves would bring large profits. The cash could be used for loans at usurious rates to cities impoverished by the lengthy eastern wars³²). Thus Mamurra who at

30) The emendation of *Galliae* and *Britanniae* to *Gallicae* and *Britannicae* by E. Badian is surely superfluous: *CP* 72 (1977) 320-322. At least his statement "...the reader will at once see for himself what it was Catullus must have written..." cannot stand. I agree with Minyard's defense of the line as printed by Mynors (175).

31) September 28-29 (the second day was Pompey's birthday). Many details in Plin. *HN* 7.98; Appian, *Mithr.* 116-117, 568-578.

32) Such practices were not confined to *equites*. When Cicero was proconsul of Cilicia he refused to grant *Scaptius Negotiator* the rank of *praefectus* and a troop of horse to collect a debt from the people of Salamis on Cyprus - the interest was 4% a month. But Cicero had set 1% in his

best was not too scrupulous would have been foolish to exchange the doubtful rewards of a *praefectus fabrum* under Pompey for the golden profits of a ruthless Roman *eques* dealing with provincials.

Reference to Lusitanian Tagus indicates Mamurra's presence in Caesar's province of *Hispania Ulterior* in 61-60. At that time Cornelius Balbus was Caesar's *praefectus fabrum* as he was briefly at the beginning of the Gallic command³³). Again I envisage Mamurra's decision to profit in Spain as he had in the East. Who could doubt that Caesar would attempt to pay his enormous debts by military action for prestige, pleasure and profit? I suspect that a few large bribes to Balbus gained Mamurra special favors in bidding for booty. Also at this time Balbus would have gained enough knowledge of Mamurra's ability and dynamism to bring him to Caesar's notice. Hence it was not surprising that he succeeded Balbus as *praefectus fabrum* in 58.

Two points call for brief mention. First, the use of the word *praeda* in its second meaning is a subtle insult to the entrepreneur. Then the question arises about the necessary qualifications of the office which both Balbus and Mamurra held with Caesar. Under many generals it may well have been a purely subordinate military post and have been granted to a senior centurion.

But under Caesar who because of past commitments and future plans needed an inexhaustible flow of money, the position

edict and refused to commission *negotiatores* as *praefecti* in his province. Imagine the horror of Cicero when he discovered that Scaptius was the agent of M. Brutus (Caepio Brutus). For details on Brutus' sharp practice cf. Cic. *Att.* 6.1.3-7 (February 20, 50). R. Y. Tyrrell and L. C. Purser have a satiric account of the whole sordid affair: *The Correspondence of ... Cicero*, 3 (2nd ed., Dublin, 1914) xxii-xxviii (and cf. *addendum IX*, pp. 337-344). If such was the action of "the noblest Roman of them all," it is not hard to see what *praeda* the unscrupulous Mamurra could bring back from the provinces.

33) Cf. Cic. *Balb.* 63: *In praetura, in consulatu praefectum fabrum detulit...* The first phrase means no more than that Balbus may have been appointed to the post while Caesar was still in Italy. The second may mean more active service in 59 since military preparation was inaugurated by Caesar before the end of that year. However Balbus was too valuable an agent to be retained in that post and probably early in 58 he was replaced by Mamurra. By *praetura* Cicero surely meant as governor of *Hispania ulterior*, although Suetonius (*Iul.* 54.1) called him proconsul. Hence the note in *MRR* suppl. 18 is misleading: "Praefectus fabrum under Caesar during his praetorship in 62 and his consulship in 59 (Cic. *Balb.* 63), perhaps also during Caesar's governorship of Farther Spain in 61-60."

called for financial acumen and a lack of scruple. Mamurra could, and probably did, concentrate on bringing in money for himself and for Caesar. The more technical engineering skill could be easily supplied by veteran centurions or even civilians attached to his staff. Experience with extensive financial affairs would be the best background for this post³⁴).

57. The ten lines of this poem may have been dashed off before the composition of 29 or subsequent to its circulation. It has been assumed that Caesar was offended by both poems and more particularly by 29³⁵), but surely Caesar whose critical judgement was acute would find 29 a work of art and 57 a crude effusion. To quote in full.

Pulcre conuenit improbis cinaedis,
Mamurrae pathicoque Caesarique.
nec mirum: maculae pares utrisque,
urbana altera et illa Formiana,
impressae resident nec eluentur:
morbosi pariter, gemelli utrique,
uno in lecticulo erudituli ambo,
non hic quam ille magis uorax adulter,
riuales socii puellularum.
pulcre conuenit improbis cinaedis.

The address *cinaede Romule* in 29 would be so general that it would probably not have offended the general, but lines 1 and 10 of 57 with the plurals and *pathico* in the second line applied to both Caesar and Mamurra were another matter. Caesar had heard the charge that he was bisexual often enough to be inured to it, and he could pass it off as part of the political vituperation of his generation³⁶). But *pathicus* was more derogatory and the

34) T. Frank in *Catullus and Horace* said (86): "Mamurra was by all means the best military engineer of his day." A flawed conjecture. For a good discussion that especially notes the scantiness of the evidence about the duties attached to the *praefectura fabrum* cf. RS, 157-159.

35) E.g. by Schmidt, XXXIII.

36) The charge was first aired in public in the *actio* of Cn. Cornelius Dolabella (consul in 81, *triumphator* in 78) in his defense on the charge *de repetundis* unsuccessfully lodged against him by Caesar in 77. It surfaced several times in public with Caesar either silent or indifferent until the soldiers sang of it in the Gallic triumph of 46, when Caesar swore it was false without gaining credence: cf. Suet. *Iul.* 2, 4.1, 49; Dio, 43.20.4. This incident is not the only time Caesar was noted for homosexual activity (e.g.

specific linking of his name with one of his less reputable agents was the basis of the *stigmata* cited by Suetonius. Also *morbosi* in line 6 was an additional insult. In line 7 *erudituli*, a contemptuous diminutive, would not sit well with a man whose grammatical and oratorical studies had made him a stylist in prose matched only by Cicero. In line 8 *uorax* could indicate a connection with 29, but *adulter* would not worry a typical Roman male. The diminutive of *puellae* in line 9 was a gratuitous insult to a man who preferred more mature women. A preference which the poet clearly shared with the *imperator unicus*.

Another factor in the *convicia* of Poem 57 is the age of the two men. Acting the feminine role of a *deliciae* with an older man might be passed off as youthful folly, and an older man as the male partner with a youthful favorite, as Catullus with Juventius and Camerius, might not have been considered reprehensible in that permissive generation, but for two men such as Caesar and Mamurra to engage in such a liaison would be considered disgraceful³⁷). Consequently I would assess the story as malicious fiction. It would have been rumor bandied about by Caesar's soldiers, invented by Caesar's political enemies, or even have been the product of the poet's vivid imagination.

This time the poet had gone too far. The explanation of Caesar's concern is clear, since it was serious to be charged with actions of which he was guilty, let alone to be the butt of a false charge. Thus the "reconciliation" which Suetonius recorded took place. Catullus for the sake of his father who had been Caesar's host endured a bit of embarrassment in the presence of the descendant of Venus, perhaps for once even tongue-tied. Of course it was not genuine contrition on the part of the poet for the offensive poem remained in his *corpus*. One line (11.10) *Caesaris uisens monimenta magni* has been considered apologetic, but it is surely ironic³⁸). Moreover I suspect Catullus soon gave

Iul. 76.3: trium legionum, quas Alexandreae relinquebat, curam et imperium Rufioni liberti sui filio exoleto suo demandauit). The whole question needs further discussion, and I plan an essay on this topic. Munro's blanket exoneration of Caesar (75-95), although approved by imitation, is too naive to meet the standards of our generation.

37) Cf. Galba and Icelus: Suet. *Galba* 22.

38) This poem should be dated after the "reconciliation" of Caesar and Catullus. Fordyce (*ad loc.*) considered it a compliment to Caesar. However *magni* might be a subtle way of reminding the reader of Cn. Magnus. Surely Pompey's enemies jested about his using this *cognomen*. Cf. Plut. *Crassus* 7.1: "And at a time when some man said that Pompeius

up political satire with 93 (*Nil nimium studeo, Caesar, tibi uelle placere, / nec scire utrum sis albus an ater homo*) as his last and most devastating comment.

One more question remains – when did Mamurra's position as *praefectus fabrum* terminate? There are conflicting answers to this³⁹). But if we assume that Caesar was offended not only by Catullus' poems, but also by Mamurra, it would fit his characteristic rapidity of action for him to dismiss Mamurra immediately from his post and allow him to return to Formiae or Rome with his ill-gotten wealth. Surely Caesar would have suspected that the scandalous rumor had originated with Mamurra, and his knowledge of his subordinate's character would thus have made the coupling of the two names even more offensive. It is unknown whether a new *praefectus fabrum* took over, but probably a senior centurion with engineering skill could handle the duties with or without the title. Thus the termination of Mamurra's tour of duty and license under Caesar was probably early in 54. By 45 B.C. when Caesar heard news of Mamurra the *eques Formianus* was only an unpleasant memory – much had happened to Caesar in that decade⁴⁰).

Conclusions

The evidence for the career and personality of Mamurra is scanty and speculative and susceptible to varying interpretation. However the standard account is flawed, since the poems of Catullus as a source for historical data must be treated with

Magnus was approaching, (Crassus) laughed and asked 'How big is he?'" This occurs early in the biography, but may have happened much later.

39) The view of Broughton (cf. note 14 above) that he held the rank until 50 or even during the civil war is certainly incorrect. M. Gelzer was confused when he listed the transfer of the office from Balbus to Mamurra late in 55 B.C.: *Caesar* (Engl. ed., Oxford, 1968) 134. R. Gardner placed the appointment of Balbus in 58 and implied that he held the post throughout the Gallic campaigns: Loeb ed. of *pro Balbo* (1958) 617. For the view of PT that Mamurra held the office at least until the siege of Pompey at Dyrrachium in 48 B.C. cf. the Supplementary Note below. Muenzer (967.14) suggested that he returned with his wealth to Rome in 55, but this may be a bit too early.

40) My friend and former student, Paul Harvey of the Pennsylvania State University, read with meticulous care the first draft of this article. His numerous suggestions have significantly improved this version: *ex discipulo magister*.

scepticism. This essay presents the following conclusions as possible, or even probable.

1. *Praeda* in Poem 29 (line 18) is a derogatory term for the profits of an *equus* exploiting the provinces.
2. Mamurra before his appointment as *praefectus fabrum* by Caesar in 58 B.C. was an entrepreneur in the East, in Spain, and in Italy.
3. Catullus use of *decoctor* in Poems 41 and 43 should not be taken literally.
4. The only official post attested for Mamurra was in Gaul from 58 to 54 where his duties were mainly administrative and financial. He was not a skilled engineer, but supervised a staff of military and civilian *fabri*.
5. Catullus did not charge Caesar and Mamurra with homosexuality in Poem 29, but reserved that charge for Poem 57.
6. Mamurra was dismissed by Caesar in 54 B.C. after Poem 57 was circulated.
7. Mamurra returned to Rome in 54, but whether he died in 45 is debatable.
8. Only the *cognomen* of Mamurra is attested, and the attempt to identify him with the architect Vitruvius is unsuccessful.

Supplementary Note

For the purposes of this essay it is not germane to consider in detail the arguments of PT in his double essay: on the *nomen* Vitruvius and the *cognomen* Mamurra, including the epigraphical evidence (cols. 419-426); on L. Vitruvius Mamurra, his reconstruction of the name (cols. 427-489). I have accepted the reference by Cicero in 45 as the last reference which is certainly to Mamurra and do not accept the identification with Vitruvius, but even if this were not my view, my interpretation of the evidence in Catullus is still a distinct possibility.

The arguments of PT, of RS, and mine in this essay all have a subjective element that makes certainty impossible. In *OCD* (2nd ed. 1970) C.E.S(tevens) s.v. "Mamurra" "For a possible identification with Vitruvius, see *Vitruvius*," and A.M.D(uff) s.v. "Vitruvius Pol(l)io (or Mamurra q.v.);" was ambiguous citing RS (incorrectly Soubiran). PT is readily available, RS is not. Perhaps a more careful reading of RS would convince them, as it has me, that RS are correct. Cl. Nicolet in his brief note on Mamurra considered him an officer with Pompey in the East and with Caesar in Spain, but did not accept the identification with Vitruvius by PT: *L'ordre équestre* 2 (Paris, 1974) 940f. (number 219).

There is no real evidence for the name L. Vitruvius Mamurra which PT reconstructed. For Mamurra only the *cognomen* is attested, and the *nomen* is speculative based on the inscription form Thibilis in Numidia (cf. note 12 above). For Vitruvius only the *nomen* is attested, and the *praenomen* is

speculative based on the inscription from Verona (PT, no. 1, col. 420; RS, no. 1, 174) of the freedman L. Vitruvius Cerdo, *architectus*, assumed by PT to have been freed by Mamurra. At one point PT wrote (459.40–43): "...den geschändeten Namen Mamurra hat er im Titel seines Lebenswerks verschwiegen, wie der Name Vipsanius in der Inschrift des Pantheon fehlt." I agree with RS who wrote (157): "C'est absurde..."

The most effective part of the refutation of PT by RS is in a brief summary (156–159) where they start with a comment (156): "P. Th. développe son intuition, devenue pour lui une évidence, ..." They then note the failure of Pliny to go further on Mamurra, the silence of Vitruvius on the engineering feats which PT assigns to Mamurra, and the assignment of duties to a *praefectus fabrum* which go beyond the references to this *praefectura*. Also RS find too great a contrast between the known sources on Mamurra and Vitruvius as he appears from his *De architectura* to allow an identification (cf. esp. 160–169).

The view of PT (cols. 446–45:) that Mamurra was the chief architect of all of Caesar's engineering projects from the destruction of the bridge over the Rhone in 58 (*BG*. 1.72) to the circumvallation of Pompey's forces at Dyrrachium in 48 (BC 3.43.1–2) is developed eloquently. However such derogation of Caesar as the commander, and the fact that Caesar never mentions Mamurra militate strongly against such a view. Moreover the great probability, as argued in my essay, that Mamurra was dismissed as *praefectus fabrum* not later than 54 would eliminate the latter portion of PT's theory. Two items are of special interest. PT wrote (447.28–30): "BG IV 17 beschreibt Caesar in der Sprache der römischen Technik die Rheinbrücke Mamurras." Again in commenting on *BG* 5.2.3 (*Collaudatis militibus atque eis qui negotio praefuerant...*) PT wrote (447.66–68): "...die *milites*, d.h. die *fabri*, und die, *qui negotio praefuerant*, d.h. den *praefectus fabrum* und dessen Untergebene und Helfer." Here speculative theory becomes historical fact.

The arguments of PT connecting Mamurra with many remarkable feats performed by Caesar and his army seem at first glance plausible, but note a pair of additional suggestions which were tentatively proposed. He wrote (441.17–20): "Es wäre denkbar, daß V. Mamurra z.B. das Haus des Maecenas... und das des Messalla... erbaut hat..." and again (448.47–50): "Er kam später mit Agrippa in enge Berührung, und vielleicht ist er, V. Mamurra, es gewesen, der die ganze Erdkarte zuerst angeregt hat." These would be unlikely for Vitruvius, but pure fantasy for L. Vitruvius Mamurra!

In my essay various items are in agreement with RS. Mamurra appears before 45 as an unsavory character, even if we make allowances for Catullus' exaggeration, Vitruvius as his *nomen* is not probable, the notice in Cicero might indicate his death in 45, the civilian character of some of his dealings as *praefectus* under Caesar in Gaul has verisimilitude. A final item concerns the Elder Pliny. According to his lists *ex auctoribus* in *HN* 2 Vitruvius was one of his authorities in Books 17, 35 and 36 (Jan-Mayhoff, pp. 53.17; 118.2; 121.41). It is unlikely that Pliny would fail to make the connection if the architect and the prefect were the same man.