

## Catullus 49

Disertissime Rōmulī nepōtum,  
quot sunt quotque fuēre, Mārce Tullī,  
quotque post aliīs erunt in annīs,  
grātiās tibi maximās Catullus  
agit pessimus omnium poēta,  
tantō pessimus omnium poēta  
quantō tū optimus omnium patrōnus.

### Vocabulary:

disertus, diserta, disertum	well-spoken, clever
nepōs, nepōtis, m.	descendant, grandson
quot	how(ever) many
quantus, quanta, quantum	as much
patrōnus, patrōnī, m.	patron

### Background:

Gaius Valerius Catullus was born into a noble family in Verona ca. 84 BCE.

Since nothing is known of him after 54 BCE, he may have died thereabouts.

Catullus' poetry (113 poems in modern editions) is known from a single manuscript.

This poem is addressed to the renowned orator, Marcus Tullius Cicero, who seems to have rendered the poet some service, although we do not know what that service was.

See the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* under "Catullus (1), Gaius Valerius, Roman poet."

### Note:

*tantō ... quantō*: "by as much ... as."

These forms are the ablative neuter sg. of *tantus*, -a, -um and *quantus*, -a, -um ("so great" and "as great").

The ablative can be used when comparing two things in order to indicate the degree of difference between them (e.g., *altior duōbus pedibus* "two feet taller" or *altior multō* "much taller"; see p. 293).

In this case *tantō* and *quantō* are used correlatively, i.e., to indicate an equivalent degree of difference. Catullus is *pessimus* by the same amount as Cicero is *optimus*.