

Marilyn B. Skinner, ed. **A Companion to Catullus**. Blackwell Publishing, 2007. 590p bibl indexes afp; ISBN 9781405135337, \$149.95. Reviewed in 2008jan CHOICE.

This formidable addition to the “Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World” series abounds with scholarship of a high order, state-of-the-art literary history and criticism, and, not least, solid practical advice for readers and (particularly) instructors of Catullus. Following a brief introduction, 27 chapters by recognized authorities address the textual tradition; circumstances under which the poems were produced; Greek influences (especially Sappho and Callimachus); distinctions of verbal style, poetics, word choice, and generic diversity; the (much-debated) grouping of the poems in the collection (this offered together with first-rate literary explication of specific poems); the reception of the poems up to modern times; and approaches to teaching Catullus. The book concludes with a brief critical history of English translations of this well-loved poet. Replete with extensive secondary source citations (the “consolidated bibliography” at the end runs to some 900 items), this book will best serve an audience of scholars, but it is also an excellent starting place for anyone interested in almost any aspect of Catullus's poetry. One minor oddity is the inconsistent quotation of the poems: by some authors only in Latin, by others only in English, by most in both languages.

Summing Up: Recommended. Upper-division undergraduates through faculty.

-- J. P. Holoka, *Eastern Michigan University*