



# A Cockney Catullus: The Reception of Catullus in Romantic Britain, 1795-1821 (Classical Presences)

*Henry Stead*

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Catullus, one of the most Hellenizing, scandalous, and emotionally expressive of the Roman poets, burst onto the British cultural scene during the Romantic era. It was not until this socially, politically, and culturally explosive epoch, with its mania for all things Greek, that Catullus' work was first fully translated into English and played a key role in the countercultural and commercially driven classicism of the time. Previously marginalized on the traditional

eighteenth-century curriculum as a charming but debauched minor love poet, Catullus was discovered as a major poetic voice in the late Georgian era by reformist emulators—especially in the so-called Cockney School—and won widespread respect. In this volume, Henry Stead pioneers a new way of understanding the key role Catullus played in shaping Romanticism by examining major literary engagements with Catullus, from John Nott of Bristol's pioneering book-length bilingual edition (1795), to George Lamb's polished verse translation (1821). He identifies the influence of Catullus' poetry in the work of numerous Romantic-era literary and political figures, including Byron, Keats, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Hunt, Canning, Brougham, and Gifford, demonstrating the degree of its cultural penetration.



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