

The Catallus Conspiracy

Who? Gaius Valerius Catullus. He was a Roman poet of the late Republic era. His poetry only survives to the present via the timely copying of a mysterious found, then lost manuscript -- ah, yes, you're wisely nodding your head. Yes, *trust* those conspiratorial instincts of yours. They will serve you well, in the Order.

So. Yes, those weren't actually Catallus's poems. They only exist because Catallus *was* a real person, who wrote real poetry, and who happened to be referenced by enough public figures later that it was deemed necessary to do more that time than simply bierce his poems and blame it all on those pesky monastery mice. So our medieval ancestors in the Order had some of their best people at the time put together a suitable body of work, and passed it off as being from the poet. Back in 1300 AD, this was simplicity itself.

And why? Well, that's a rather awkward thing to explain. It was all done because of fallout from the Habsburg dynasty taking over the title of "King of the Romans" and fallout from the Eighth and Ninth Crusades and a couple of incidents involving things not yet known to the Masses;

suffice it to say that the Order back then needed a Catallus that had written the right sort of poems, so they went ahead and got one.

Yes, yes, that **is** awful; in our defense, or perhaps more accurately theirs, it was a different world back then. It's still an intellectually unpleasant thing to contemplate, particularly since there was no supernatural, esoteric, or technological reason for the switch. It was all due to just boring, somewhat tawdry, internal politics.

Which is why we're in a very problematical situation right now. Some true manuscripts of Catallus's actual poems have surfaced. When and if they get revealed and authenticated, they'll cause a remarkable amount of controversy in academia. However, we're not expecting that said revelations are going to reveal our existence to the Masses, the original reasons for the switch no longer apply, and, well, Catallus really was a marvelous poet.

Then again, people are going to research what happened, and it's in the Order's best interest that they come to entirely the wrong conclusions. So get in there and muddy the waters a little. Not **too** much. Just come up with something salacious enough to justify one of those

oversized paperback nonfiction beach books. We've hidden some of our best coverups in that particular format.

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