Attention has been paid in a recent book¹) to some earlier remarks of mine about Catullus 31²). In the course of paying such attention, however, the author takes me to task for having "méconnu les valeurs féminines de ce texte" and argues that "il est difficile d'admettre son interprétation du poème 31: un 'friendship poem' (p. 33) et voir dans Sirmione 'a dear friend of Catullus' (p. 38)'³). This appraisal does, however, somewhat misrepresent what I actually wrote in that article; it is thereby so much the further removed from the possibility of understanding fully what I was trying (with perhaps too much understatement) to suggest. I wrote not simply that poem 31 was a "friendship poem" as Bonjour's note reports, but that "a friendship poem of a special kind is precisely what my interpretation of 31 takes it to be"⁴). The further suggestion which I was trying to make, and which Bonjour for one has failed to catch, was to a considerable extent to be conveyed by my choice of words for the article's title: "'Catullus and Friend...'". In choosing this form of words I was attempting to exploit a convention that was already well established in Latin literature by Catullus' time, and which has continued to flourish in popular literature down to our own day.

In Latin literature earlier than Catullus, much play was made with a special sense of amica, in particular by the comic dramaticists Plautus⁵) and Terence⁶). In Plautus' hands such play tends to turn

¹) M. Bonjour, Terre natale: Études sur une composante affective du patriotisme romain (Paris 1975), 365, n. 4; and especially in the long n. 5, on p. 366.
³) Bonjour, op. cit. (above, n. 1), 366, n. 3.
⁴) Baker, art. cit. (above, n. 2), 33 (with emphasis added).
⁵) See, for example, Asinaria 573; Cistellaria 405; Curculio 593; Epidicus 702; Trinummus 651.
⁶) Examples from Terence include: Andria 216 and Heautontimorumenos 104, 223.
on the contrast between the special meaning given to amica and the ordinary meaning of amicus. Thus we read, for example, at Asinaria 573: ubi amicae quam amico tuo fueris magis fidelis, and at Trinummus 651: in foro operam amicis da, ne in lecto amicae, ut solitus es. Terence, on the other hand, seems more fond of the point of contrast between amica in this special sense and uxor⁷). See, for example, Andria 215-216: haec Andrialsive ista uxor sive amicast, gravida e Pamphilost; and Heautontimorumenos 102-104: tibine haec diutius/licere speras facere me vivo patre/amicam ut habeas prope iam in uxoris loco. This too is the point we find being made by Catullus' contemporary Cicero, about Volumnia/Cytheris, the amica of Marcus Antonius⁸). Cicero makes the same jesting point about her by means of the contrast between amica and uxor, twice; once in private: hic tamen Cytherida secum lectica aperta portat, alteram uxorem. septem praeterea coniunctae lecticae amicarum; et sunt amicorum⁹), and once in public: reiecta mater amicam impuri filii tamquam nurum sequebatur¹⁰).

The same sort of point remains a fairly widespread convention of popular writing, at least in English-speaking countries. The commonest occurrence of this cliche is probably to be found in magazines which specialise in news reports on the private (and, especially, the amatory) lives of personalities from the world of popular entertainment. How often, for example, has one or other member of a couple of film stars whose names are romantically linked been quoted as saying ‘We are not married; we are just good friends’. An equally common visual equivalent of this convention is for a press photograph of some celebrity or other (usually male) looking happy in the company of another person (usually female) to have underneath it the archly coy caption ‘Mr. So-and-So and Friend’.

⁷) Cf. the cliche of modern times, ‘‘Not married, just good friends’’. See further below.
⁸) Also known to us, under the name Lycoris, as the domina of Cornelius Gallus—now in Gallus’ own words. See R. D. Anderson, P. J. Parsons and R. G. M. Nisbet, Elegiacs by Gallus from Qasr Ibrim, JRS 69 (1979), 125-55, esp. 140 ff.
⁹) Ad Atticum X 10.5. Note that Cicero here preserves something of the Plautine play on amica and amicus as well.
¹⁰) Philippics 2,58.