

BEING *BEATVS* IN CATULLUS' POEMS 9, 10, 22 and 23

sat es beatus (Catull. 23.27)¹

In the aggressively philosophical poem 23, Catullus attempts to change Furius' mind about how he perceives his poverty, 'advice' which has been identified as either Stoic or Epicurean.² Irrespective of the precise school of thought, it is clear that the poet ridicules Furius in eudaimonistic language. The poet of social commentary seeks to define the *beatus uir*. In fact, the term *beatus* has rich philosophical resonance and Catullus uses it in several other poems where attitudes to wealth form a significant backdrop to the poet's social posturing. Catullus was no philosopher. He employs the language and ideas of different schools, and, while his work does not reflect a coherent philosophical position, he was writing at a time when public discourse increasingly drew upon philosophical language and topoi. I will examine Catullus' use of the term *beatus* in poems 9, 10, 22 and 23 to demonstrate that the poet draws a contrast between its different meanings across these pairs of adjacent poems.³ I will argue that Catullus contrasts the eudaimonistic and material meanings of the word to show the differences between clear-sighted wisdom and deceptive pleasures, between the good life and a life filled with goods.

¹ Unless noted otherwise, I use the text of D.F.S. Thomson, *Catullus* (Toronto, 1997).

² Scholarship has generally connected Catullus with Epicureanism: see P. Giuffrida, *L'epicureismo nella letteratura latina nel 1 sec. av. Cristo*, vol. 2 (Turin, 1950) and the rebuttal by J. Granarolo, *L'œuvre de Catulle: Aspects religieux, éthiques et stylistiques* (Paris, 1967), 205–24; J. Godwin, 'The ironic Epicurean in poems 23, 114, 115', *Paideia* 73 (2018), 837–51; and B. Németh, 'Notes on Catullus, c. 23', *AClass* 7 (1971), 33–41 explores possible Epicurean ideas in particular poems, while in '*Risus ineptus* (Cat. 37 bzw. 39): ein Diptychon', *AAntHung* 38 (1998), 215–21 Németh argues that Egnatius (poems 37 and 39) was the known Epicurean poet; J. Uden, 'Epicurean banality in Catullus' (forthcoming) supports this identification, arguing that Egnatius' Epicurean principles (and Cornificius' Stoic principles in poem 38) are banalized to the level of social gaff. More broadly, J. Booth, 'All in the mind: sickness in Catullus 76', in C. Gill and S. Braund (edd.), *The Passions in Roman Thought and Literature* (Cambridge, 1997), 150–68 analysed poem 76 against the doctrines of Hellenistic philosophy and found these unhelpful, but K. Volk, 'Philosophy', in R. Gibson and C. Whitton (edd.), *The Cambridge Critical Guide to Latin Studies* (Cambridge, forthcoming) now suggests that the poem hides its (failed) Epicureanism well.

³ I will also remark upon *beatus* at Catull. 14.10, 37.14, 45.25, 51.15, 61.150 and 68a.14 to support my contention that Catullus exploits the term's varied senses. On authorial arrangement, see M.B. Skinner, 'Authorial arrangement of the collection: debate past and present', in M.B. Skinner (ed.), *A Companion to Catullus* (Malden, MA, 2007), 35–53. Catullus exploits the pairing technique most often in the polymetrics (e.g. poems 2 and 3, 23 and 24, 28 and 29), but cf. poems 114 and 115. See T. Barbaud, *Catulle: Une poétique de l'indicible* (Leuven, 2006), 9–11 and n. 22 on the 'poème doublé' in Catullus and their use in Hellenistic anthologies, especially by Meleager who pairs poems at, for example, *Anth. Pal.* 5.136 and 137, 5.151 and 152, and 5.165 and 166. On Meleager's influence upon Catullus as an editor, see K. Gutzwiller, 'Catullus and the garland of Meleager', in I. Du Quesnay and T. Woodman (edd.), *Catullus: Poems, Books, Readers* (Cambridge, 2012), 79–111.

THE VALUE OF 'EXTERNAL GOODS' IN GREEK AND ROMAN PHILOSOPHY

Catullus was writing at a time when Greek philosophy was being translated into Latin and the Roman milieu. Public culture was permeated with its discourse. Elite Roman men had long been finishing their educations with a trip to Athens to study philosophy, but more and more were returning to fashion themselves as committed adherents of particular schools.⁴ These Romans were learning how to make their lives happy and prosperous, independent of the vicissitudes of fortune and the gods. To differing degrees, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics and the Epicureans argued that people were in charge of their own εὐδαιμονία, 'happiness' or 'human flourishing'.⁵ The highest human good, happiness could be achieved through pleasure (the standpoint of the Epicureans) or through virtue (the view of virtually everyone else). According to Aristotle, who offered the first systematic discussions of the concept, by exercising virtue (or 'excellence', ἀρετή) and practical rationality (φρόνησις) one could 'live well' and 'do well', the very definition of happiness (*Eth. Nic.* 1095a19–21).

One significant difference between the schools, however, was the degree to which they thought the possession (or lack) of 'external goods' (τὰ ἐκτὸς ἀγαθὰ) could affect happiness.⁶ Aristotle allowed that the possession of external goods such as wealth, health and friendship (the three major factors affecting happiness in the Catullan poems studied here) furnished the conditions for virtue when used in the right way by the virtuous man.⁷ External goods could positively contribute to happiness, but, especially in the case of material goods such as wealth, Aristotle was careful to advocate for moderation (*Eth. Nic.* 1178b35–1179a9). When friendship was based on shared goodness, he considered friends (φίλοι) the greatest of the external goods (*Eth. Nic.* 1169b2–21).⁸ Friendship was also praised by Epicurus, so extravagantly in fact that critics still debate how placing value upon others and their interests could possibly fit with the Epicurean injunction to prioritize one's own pleasure.⁹ The Epicureans considered pleasure (that is, the pleasure of freedom from psychological disturbance, ἀταραξία) the greatest good, so that any bodily pains or privations could be withstood. They recognized that pleasures of the body (specifically, the pleasure of freedom from bodily pain, ἀπονία) could contribute to a happy life and valued 'natural' health and

⁴ For overviews of philosophy at Rome, see A.A. Long, 'Roman philosophy', in D. Sedley (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Greek and Roman Philosophy* (Cambridge, 2003), 184–210, at 184; M. Griffin, 'Philosophy, politics, and politicians at Rome', in M. Griffin and J. Barnes (edd.), *Philosophia Togata II* (Oxford, 1989), 1–37; and Volk (n. 2).

⁵ M.C. Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness. Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy* (Cambridge, 2001 [rev. ed.]) analyses the changing role of luck in the good life in tragedy, Plato and Aristotle. Cicero says that philosophy arms one against Fortune (*Tusc.* 5.19).

⁶ Philosophical distinctions between internal and external goods come to have a rhetorical dimension, e.g. *Rhet. Her.* 3.10–15; *Cic. Inv. rhet.* 2.177–8 and *De or.* 2.342.

⁷ See *Arist. Eth. Nic.* 1099a31–b8 on external goods, including friendship and wealth, and see 1178b34–5 on health. I include health, a bodily good, as an external good following T.D. Roche, 'Happiness and the external goods', in R. Polansky (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics* (Cambridge, 2014), 34–63, at 37.

⁸ Aristotle distinguished between friendships based on goodness, pleasure and utility, e.g. *Eth. Nic.* 1155b17–27.

⁹ e.g. Epicurus, *Sent. Vat.* 52: ἡ φιλία περιχορεύει τὴν οἰκουμένην κηρύττουσα δὴ πᾶσιν ἡμῖν ἐγείρεσθαι ἐπὶ τὸν μακαρισμόν. See M. Evans, 'Can Epicureans be friends?', *AncPhil* 24 (2004), 407–24 for possible Epicurean justifications of friendship in light of the philosophy's egoistic hedonism.

wealth in so far as the absence of these could cause pain and disturbance.¹⁰ The Stoics, on the other hand, regarded wealth, health and friendship as mere 'preferred indifferents'.¹¹ Like Socrates, they considered virtue sufficient for happiness, and argued that the virtuous person would continue being happy no matter the poverty, ill health or social abandonment he or she experienced. Like most things in the Stoic experience, friendship could, however, act as an arena for performing virtue: the wise person increased their own virtue by encouraging others towards virtue.

Roman ethical thinkers expressed the core concept of *eudaimonia* in constructions using the adjective *beatus*. Cicero encapsulated the concept of living virtuously and happily in the phrase *beata uita* and often wrote of philosophy providing the resources for *bene beateque uiuendum*: Seneca the Younger would also go on to use these expressions.¹² In Latin usage, being *beatus* encompasses a broad range of states. At base, it can simply mean being 'happy' or 'lucky'.¹³ Sometimes it refers to the good fortune that is granted by the gods, and even to that state of blessedness which the gods themselves experience.¹⁴ Like the English word 'fortunate', *beatus* could signify riches more material than spiritual: according to Seneca, the common crowd thought that this deeply ambiguous word celebrated the man who had amassed a hefty store of riches: *si utique uis uerborum ambiguitates diducere, hoc nos doce, beatum non eum esse quem uulgus appellat, ad quem pecunia magna confluit, sed illum cui bonum omne in animo est* (Sen. *Ep.* 45.9).¹⁵ Therefore, the Latin *beatus* stands in for a wide range of Greek terms, creating ambiguity but also reflecting the ideological tension at the heart of the debate about what makes a person fortunate.¹⁶

FORTUNATE RETURNS IN POEMS 9 AND 10

Though radically different, poems 9 and 10 explore being *beatus* in the context of returns from periods of provincial service abroad.¹⁷ Poem 9 has received little critical

¹⁰ Philodemus offers the most complete extant discussion of Epicurean attitudes to wealth; see S. Yona, *Epicurean Ethics in Horace: The Psychology of Satire* (Oxford, 2018), 34–42.

¹¹ On health as a preferred indifferent, see M. Graver, *Stoicism and Emotion* (Chicago, 2007), 49, 151–3, 159–60; on the Stoic conception of 'external goods' as unimportant for *eudaimonia*, see M.C. Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics* (Princeton, 2009), 361–2.

¹² See M. Graver, *Cicero on the Emotions: Tusculan Disputations 3 and 4* (Chicago, 2002), xxxix: examples include *beata uita* (Cic. *Fin.* 2.41; *Tusc.* 5.18), as well as *bene et beate uiuere* (Cic. *Parad.* 1.15), *bene beateque uiuendo* (*Fin.* 1.5), and *si et boni et beati uolumus esse, omnia adiumenta et auxilia petamus bene beateque uiuendi* (*Tusc.* 4.84). For Seneca's use of the phrase *beata uita*, see e.g. Sen. *Dial.* 4.13.2, the many examples in *Dial.* 7 (or *Ad Gallionem de Vita Beata*), *Ben.* 3.33.5 and *Ep.* 85. Horace uses *beatus* frequently (and *beata uita* just once at *Sat.* 2.4.95), but Lucretius uses *beatus* only at 5.165 to refer to the gods.

¹³ For *beatus* as 'happy', see Enn. *Ann.* 280 and Cic. *Fam.* 7.28.1; 'lucky', Plaut. *Truc.* 808.

¹⁴ e.g. Hor. *Carm.* 2.19.13–14 and 3.26.9, and Prop. 2.28.26.

¹⁵ For *beatus* as materially 'rich', see Plaut. *Curc.* 371–3, Cic. *Nat. D.* 3.81, Hor. *Carm.* 1.29.1–2 and Prop. 2.26b.25.

¹⁶ *beatus* (as well as *felix* and *fortunatus*) corresponds to a range of Greek terms such as μάκρορ, μακάριος, ὀλβιος, εὐτυχής and εὐδαίμων, according to G.L. Dirichlet, 'De veterum macarismis', *RGV* 14.4 (Geissen, 1914), 1–72, at 10–13, 23–4. A more recent study by C. De Heer, *Makar, Eudaimon, Olbios, Eutychia: A Study of the Semantic Field Denoting Happiness in Ancient Greek to the End of the Fifth Century B.C.* (Amsterdam, 1969) covers a narrower period than Dirichlet and does not examine Latin usage. The key point for my argument is that *beatus* covers a potentially conflicting range of meanings.

¹⁷ T.P. Wiseman, *Catullan Questions* (Leicester, 1969), 13 n. 3 mused: 'There may also be a play on *beatiorem* in poem 9 and 10.17: "Veranius is back from Spain, I'm lucky; I'm back from Bithynia,

attention and has featured mainly in studies of a sequence of poems dealing with friendship, travel, souvenirs and gifts in the first part of the *libellus*.¹⁸ Most characterize it as a sincere, uncomplicated poem of friendship, but only a bit player in the more important drama about Lesbia which, it has been argued, orders poems 1–14.¹⁹ Certainly, as we read the poems sequentially, the Catullan ‘narrative’ develops,²⁰ expanding its social and geographical range. Later poems will show us that Veranius, alongside his frequent comrade Fabullus, has been part of a provincial cohort so that poem 9 may also deal with a return from provincial service.²¹ By contrast, poem 10’s comic vignette about a character called Catullus,²² newly returned from service on a provincial cohort, has fascinated critics for its ambiguous portrayals of power, wealth and gender. Marilyn Skinner argued that Catullus’ performative *urbanitas* acts as a critique of gender- and class-based marginalization in Roman society even as it allows him to enact dominance over Varus’ girlfriend.²³ Recent readings of poem 10 have seen either complicity or aggression in Catullus’ pose.²⁴

A poem of welcome, poem 9 marks Veranius’ return home by imitating the epistolary genre in its representation of distance, communication problems and absence.²⁵ Regular communication by letter was necessary to maintain relationships with friends

I wasn’t lucky.’” Cf. C.P. Segal, ‘The order of Catullus, poems 2–11’, *Latomus* 27 (1968), 305–21, at 316 n. 2.

¹⁸ See Segal (n. 17), 308 and 316; Wiseman (n. 17), 9 and 12–13; H.D. Rankin, ‘The progress of pessimism in Catullus, poems 2–11’, *Latomus* 31 (1972), 744–51; M.B. Skinner, *Catullus’ Passer: The Arrangement of the Book of Polymetric Poems* (New York, 1981), 48 and 57–9; T.K. Hubbard, ‘The Catullan *libellus*’, *Philologus* 127 (1983), 218–37, at 229–30; H. Dettmer, *Love by the Numbers: Form and Meaning in the Poetry of Catullus* (New York, 1997), 27–9.

¹⁹ K. Quinn, *Catullus: The Poems* (London, 1973²), ad loc. represents the standard view of poem 9. On the Lesbia narrative ordering poems 1–14, see Segal (n. 17), 319; L. Ferrero, *Interpretazione di Catullo* (Turin, 1955), 221; N. Holzberg, *Catull: Der Dichter und sein erotisches Werk* (Munich, 2002), 73–4 asserts that poems such as 9 and 10 play a secondary role to the Lesbia cycle and argues that the happiness of poem 9 soothes the unhappiness of poem 8.

²⁰ M.B. Skinner, *Catullus in Verona: A Reading of the Elegiac Libellus, Poems 65–116* (Columbus, 2003), xxiv–xxvi reviews the mechanics of the scroll and the possibility of understanding the Catullan corpus sequentially. I agree with D. Wray, *Catullus and the Poetics of Roman Manhood* (Cambridge, 2001), 70 that a ‘Winklerian “first reading” of Catullus ... will almost immediately break down before the collection’s insistence on being read in several directions at once’. However, see M. Lewis, ‘Narrativising Catullus: a never-ending story’, *MHJ* 41.2 (2013), 1–19, at 14–16 for a convincing argument regarding the narrativization of poems 1–11 (perhaps even poems 1–26).

²¹ Only poems 9 and 13 are addressed to Veranius and Fabullus separately. Poems 12, 28 and 47 reveal their provincial service.

²² M.B. Skinner, ‘Among those present: Catullus 44 and 10’, *Helios* 28 (2001), 57–73, at 66 captures the ironic distance between the poet and ‘Catullus’, the poem’s exaggerated comic character. Though I call this character Catullus, I consider him a product of representation, who may or may not correlate with the historical author.

²³ M.B. Skinner, ‘*Vt deceit cinaediorem*: power, gender, and urbanity in Catullus 10’, *Helios* 16 (1989), 7–23.

²⁴ C. Nappa, *Aspects of Catullus’ Social Fiction* (Frankfurt, 2001), 85 argues that poems 10, 28 and 47 represent the trading of moral integrity for advancement; cf. W. Fitzgerald, *Catullan Provocations* (Berkeley, 1995), 169–84 and Wray (n. 20), 113–17, especially 116, on Catullan aggression in poem 10.

²⁵ For R. Armstrong, ‘Journeys and nostalgia in Catullus’, *CJ* 109 (2013), 43–71, at 53 n. 26, poem 9 is about ‘bridging distance’. While the poem echoes the language of letters, it may properly fit into a genre of travel poems: F. Cairns, ‘*Venusta Sirmio*: Catullus 31’, in T. Woodman and D. West (edd.), *Quality and Pleasure in Latin Poetry* (Cambridge, 1974), 1–17, at 7 judged poem 9 a *prospōnetikon*; cf. G. Giangrande, ‘Theocritus’ twelfth and fourth *Idylls*: a study in Hellenistic irony’, *QUCC* 12 (1971), 95–113, who deemed it an *epibatēriōn*.

and peers living and working across Rome's burgeoning empire.²⁶ News regarding their welfare might come first through rumour, to be confirmed as the evidence mounted in letters or further oral reports.²⁷ Anguish over absence could be assuaged by plans for future reunion but anxieties about relationships, fanned by the uncertainties of distance and rumour, were difficult to calm except by affectionate reassurances.²⁸ Similar concerns arise in poem 9, as Catullus first welcomes Veranius home with uncertainty, scarcely able to believe the news (9.3–4). The nominative plural of *nuntii beati* in line 5 suggests multiple reports of Veranius' return from different quarters, as Fordyce noted.²⁹ Catullus looks forward to a future meeting face to face, when he can hear all about Veranius' stay amongst the Spanish (9.6–7) and demonstrate emphatically his affection for his friend (9.8–9).³⁰

By contrast, Catullus' return from Bithynia in poem 10 reads like a comedy with its use of dialogue and its 'plot' involving misunderstandings, lies and reversals of fortune.³¹ Catullus enters stage left, straight into the thick of things in the forum (*Varus me meus ad suos amores | uisum duxerat e foro otiosum*, 10.1–2). Crucially, he is idle and Varus leads him away *huc* to a space which Skinner persuasively argued is 'always negatively defined by its exclusion from the forum' (*huc ut uenimus*, 10.5).³² Away from Rome's 'central business district', Catullus discusses his service in Bithynia with Varus and his girlfriend and dismisses the place as a *prouincia ... mala* (10.19), where there is nothing to gain for locals, praetors or their cohort. Varus and his girlfriend ask if he at least managed to procure eight strong-backed litter-bearers, the 'native product' of the region. Assured by Catullus' *braggadocio* that he did just that, Varus' girlfriend takes us further from the respectability of the forum in her desire to use the litter to visit the temple of the Egyptian god Serapis.³³ The braggart bureaucrat Catullus then comes comically undone as his desire to appear *unum ... beatiorem* (10.17) gets the better of him.³⁴

Poem 9 features only positive relationships and much of Catullus' good fortune lies in this social, quasi-familial, success. Catullus effusively exaggerates that Veranius stands out from all his friends by three-hundred thousand (*omnibus e meis amicis | antistans mihi milibus trecentis*, 9.1–2).³⁵ He imagines Veranius returning to a trio of important familial relationships, his Penates, his *fratresque unanimos* (9.4) and his old mother. Commenting on Catullus' use of *unanims* at 66.80, Du Quesnay suggests

²⁶ Consider e.g. Cicero's anxiety about the lack of letters between himself and Trebatius (Cic. *Fam.* 7.9).

²⁷ Cf. Cicero writing to Curio about his arrival (*Fam.* 2.6.1) or the role of rumour about those abroad in Caelius Rufus' letter to Cicero (*Fam.* 8.1.4).

²⁸ Repeated miscommunication affects Cicero's relationship with Appius Pulcher from *Fam.* 3.5 through 3.9; Cicero's side of the correspondence reveals frequent attempts to reassure Appius Pulcher of his affection.

²⁹ C.J. Fordyce, *Catullus: A Commentary* (Oxford, 1961), ad loc.

³⁰ Quintus Cicero writes to Tiro in a similarly effusive manner at Cic. *Fam.* 16.27.2.

³¹ On poem 10 as a 'comic scenario', see R.M. Nielsen, 'Catullus and *sal* (poem 10)', *AC* 56 (1987), 148–61, at 154.

³² Skinner (n. 23), 19.

³³ See Fordyce (n. 29), ad loc. on the repeated attempts to check worship of Serapis in the Late Republic.

³⁴ I follow Dániel Kiss's critical edition at Catullus Online (www.catullusonline.com) in reading *beatiorem* (MS 15, a manuscript from before 1479 now in Dresden's Sächsische Landesbibliothek [DC 133]) rather than *beatiorem* (MSS GR).

³⁵ R. Ellis, *A Commentary on Catullus* (Oxford, 1889²), ad loc. adduced several parallels for this phrase, including Heraclitus (B49), *Anth. Pal.* 7.128.3, and Cic. *Att.* 2.5.1. Cf. Cic. *Brut.* 191.

that Catullus applies the word to 'ongoing and lasting relationships which are or should be reciprocal and equal'.³⁶ Catullus becomes part of this happy family through the similarity between Veranius' return to his Penates (*domum ad tuos penates*, 9.3) and his own return to his Lares (*laream ad nostrum*, 31.9) in poem 31.³⁷ The solace that Catullus finds in this brotherly friendship of mutual understanding therefore reflects his happiness upon his return to the family home at Sirmio.

However, the relief of return in poems 9 and 31 implies that their respective experiences abroad were difficult. A disbelieving Catullus looks upon Sirmio *in tuto* (31.6), and likewise he anticipates that Veranius will arrive *incolumem* (9.6), a rather heavy-handed word in this context. Cicero uses *incolumis* to refer to a state of political safety, when a person possesses their civic rights.³⁸ We might infer that Veranius' time abroad was tough—indeed, poems 28 and 47 characterize his provincial service as economically unfulfilling at any rate. The choliambic metre of poem 31 strongly implies that Catullus' own time in Bithynia was ripe for criticism.³⁹ Given the marked similarities between the poems, it is possible that poem 9 also critically comments upon provincial service and imperial gain.

Rather than money or other forms of material wealth, Veranius returns from the provinces with an Alexandrian wealth of knowledge. Catullus anticipates learning about the *loca, facta, nationes* (9.7) of Hispania from Veranius, when he imagines the happy scene of reunion.⁴⁰ This dry list of topics would suit an ethnography or historical work, making quite plausible Wiseman's suggestion that the Catullan character was none other than the scholarly L. Veranius Flaccus, whose interests ranged between 'religious and constitutional antiquarianism at one end and the controversies of oratorical style at the other'.⁴¹ Knowledge seems to have been Veranius' only reward. The more successful figure of Gaius Cinna in poem 10 stands in sharp contrast to both him and Catullus. If the litter-bearers exist at all, they belong to Cinna, Catullus' fellow-poet and comrade of the Bithynian expedition, who procured additional souvenirs from the province according to other sources:⁴² he brings back a presentation copy of Aratus' *Phaenomena*⁴³ and we learn from the Byzantine Suda that, when the Romans defeated

³⁶ I. Du Quesnay, 'Three problems in poem 66', in I. Du Quesnay and T. Woodman (edd.), *Catullus: Poems, Books, Readers* (Cambridge, 2012), 153–83, at 167. Catullus uses the word *unanimus* again in poem 30, addressed to an Alfenus, whom commentators have frequently identified as Alfenus Varus, the character in poem 10: see Fordyce (n. 29), Quinn (n. 19) and Thomson (n. 1), ad loc.

³⁷ On the importance of the *domus* in poem 31 (and in other poems), see M.C.J. Putnam, 'Catullus' journey (*carm.* 4)', *CPh* 57 (1962), 10–19, at 11–12, and R.J. Baker, 'Catullus and friend in *carm.* XXXI', *Mnemosyne* 23 (1970), 33–41, at 39–41.

³⁸ e.g. Cic. *Cat.* 3.10 and *Mil.* 93. By contrast, the comic playwrights usually employ *saluum uenire* or *saluum aduenire gaudeo* to convey a safe return from abroad: e.g. Plaut. *Bacch.* 456, *Curc.* 306–7, *Mostell.* 448; Ter. *Haut.* 407, *Eun.* 976. Cf. *saluum uenire gaudeo* in Cic. *Fam.* 1.10.1, *Att.* 5.21.1, 6.5.1.

³⁹ M. Wheeler, 'Meter in Catullan invective: expectations and innovation' (Diss., Boston University, 2015), 122 argues that Catullus conveys 'implicit criticism of Bithynia' by using the choliambic metre.

⁴⁰ With Alexandrian learnedness, Catullus showcases the knowledge with which he returns by etymologizing Bithynia through its two tribes (*Thyniam atque Bithynos*, 31.5): see Cairns (n. 25), 8–11 and Quinn (n. 19), ad loc.

⁴¹ On L. Veranius Flaccus, see T.P. Wiseman, *Catullus and his World: A Reappraisal* (Cambridge, 1985), 266–9. Cf. C.L. Neudling, *A Prosopography to Catullus* (Oxford, 1955), 182–3. On the line's dryness, see Armstrong (n. 25), 54.

⁴² On Cinna as Catullus' comrade in Bithynia, see Quinn (n. 19), ad loc.

⁴³ Cinna dedicates the *Phaenomena* to a friend in fr. 13 [11 Bl., C.]: see A.S. Hollis, *Fragments of*

Mithridates, Cinna captured the Greek grammarian and poet Parthenius of Nicaea.⁴⁴ Cinna brings back cultural capital in its objectified state, whereas Veranius' more abstract knowledge of *loca, facta, nationes* represents embodied cultural capital.⁴⁵ As an eager audience for this information, Catullus is made *beatus* both by his association with Veranius and by his own connoisseurship. Cultural capital constitutes an important part of 'the good life' in poem 9.⁴⁶

Poem 9's final rhetorical questions underscore this sense of shared values. Several parallels from Greek and Roman New Comedy have been suggested for its concluding questions (*o quantum est hominum beatiorum, | quid me laetius est beatiusue?* 9.10–11),⁴⁷ but these may be partly generic, as Theocritus concludes his poem of welcome with a definition of the fortunate man: ὄλβιος ὅστις παῖσι φιλήματα κείνα διαίτῃ (Theoc. *Id.* 12.34).⁴⁸ Through their generalizing force,⁴⁹ the questions of poem 9 appeal to a like-minded audience just as Catullus asks *quantum est hominum uenustiorum* (3.2) to grieve for the death of Lesbia's pet sparrow⁵⁰ and questions whether it is possible to witness a more fortunate pair of lovers than Acme and Septimius, *quis ullos homines beatiores | uidit, quis uenerem auspiciorem?* (45.25–6). Poem 9 ends with an appeal to a community of like-minded fortunate individuals, who value wealth correctly, but it also leaves us with the possibility of other answers, other ways of valuing.

While poem 9 implies that being *beatus* depends upon mutual friendship, a happy family home and intellectual poetic pursuits, poem 10 demonstrates the lure of financial and material wealth as well as its corrupting influence on interpersonal relationships. With Catullus' rhetorical questions still ringing in our ears, we enter a scene of social misunderstandings and fraught, competitive relationships.⁵¹ Varus' girlfriend becomes

Roman Poetry c.60 B.C.–A.D. 20 (Oxford, 2007), 17 with discussion at 42–5. Critics debate whether it was a copy or a translation by Cinna: T. Woodman, 'A covering letter: poem 65', in I. Du Quesnay and T. Woodman (edd.), *Catullus: Poems, Books, Readers* (Cambridge, 2012), 130–52, at 145 argues that it was a translation; in the same volume, Du Quesnay (n. 36), 154 n. 4 rejects the idea.

⁴⁴ See Testimonia, 1 in J.L. Lightfoot, *Parthenius of Nicaea* (Oxford, 1999), 3–4. Some suggest that the encyclopaedia refers to the father of the poet known to Catullus. T.P. Wiseman, *Cinna the Poet, and Other Roman Essays* (Leicester, 1974), 44–58 and Hollis (n. 43), 19–20 assert that the poet is meant.

⁴⁵ P. Bourdieu, 'The forms of capital', in J.G. Richardson (ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* (Westport, Conn., 1986), 241–58 distinguishes between cultural capital in its embodied state (e.g. knowledge of provincial tribes), objectified state (e.g. material objects such as books and litter-bearers) and institutionalized state (e.g. 'job' titles like *praetor* or *comes*).

⁴⁶ Cf. *accipe quis merser fortunae fluctibus ipse, | ne amplius a misero dona beata petas* (68a.13–14). Emotionally *miser* Catullus cannot give 'happy gifts' of poetry, but poetry is also conceived of as a physical item (68a.33–6), and it is related to the poet's status in a relationship of *hospitium* offered by the addressee: see D.S. McKie, *Essays in the Interpretation of Roman Poetry* (Cambridge, 2009), 191–248.

⁴⁷ Including Plaut. *Capt.* 835–6, *Pseud.* 351; Ter. *Phorm.* 852 and *Eun.* 1031, but one could add Ter. *Hec.* 848 and *Haut.* 295–6, or Plaut. *Rud.* 1191 and *Capt.* 828.

⁴⁸ The repetitive question-and-answer structure (*uenistine ... uenisti*, 9.3 and 5) reflects the exuberant welcome extended to his young male beloved by the lover in Theocritus' *Idyll* 12: ἦλυθεῖς, ὃ φίλε κοῦρε; ... ἦλυθεῖς (Theoc. *Id.* 12.1–2). Cf. Sappho, fr. 48 V and Alc. fr. 350 V; Giangrande (n. 25), 95–101 discusses the genre of *Idyll* 12.

⁴⁹ A. Smith, 'Cocktail wit and self-deprecation in Catullus 9 and 10', *Paideia* 73 (2018), 1877–94, at 1879–80 remarks that the 'neutering' (*quantum* and *quid*) of Veranius and Catullus at 9.9–10 shifts the focus from the particular situation to the abstract concept of 'blessedness'.

⁵⁰ Fitzgerald (n. 24), 35. For B.A. Krostenko, 'Catullus and elite Republican social discourse', in M.B. Skinner (ed.), *A Companion to Catullus* (Malden, MA, 2007), 212–32, at 222–3, Catull. 3.2 orients readers to the 'conventions of light amatory verse'.

⁵¹ Nielsen (n. 31), 156 emphasizes the 'latent aggression' in the scene.

a focal point for attitudes to wealth: having already called her a *scortillum* (10.3), Catullus decides that her request to borrow the fictitious litter *decuit cinaediorem* (10.24), a jarring insult given that in Classical Latin it is always applied to men.⁵² In his nuanced analysis of Roman attitudes to men who had sex with men, Williams defines the *cinaedus* as a 'man who fails to live up to traditional standards of masculine comportment' and finds that the figure was 'gender-deviant' or 'gender-liminal' but that the associations of the term with the East 'always remained available'.⁵³ He concludes that Catullus' unusual wielding of the term against a woman in poem 10 'might simply suggest that she is especially lustful'.⁵⁴ However, the insult is prompted by her request to borrow the litter-bearers, items which evoked Eastern decadence.⁵⁵ Therefore, *cinaedus* must here connote the East and lifestyles of material excess. Catullus' wider use of the term supports this reading. With only one exception,⁵⁶ he applies the term *cinaedus* to men who exhibit excessive desire for material wealth such as Caesar and Mamurra (29.5, 29.9 and 57.1, 57.10), Thallus (25.1) and the Vibennii, father and son (33.2). This woman's desires for material wealth represented by litter-bearers make her as greedy as an effeminate man who pursues a wholly foreign lifestyle of luxury.

The acquisitive desires of the *scortillum* reflect those of Catullus and, if the sexual overtones of *cinaedus* do remain active, they insinuate that he has prostituted himself to get ahead. When he calls his praetor an *irrumator* (10.12), linking the insult specifically to the cohort's lack of financial success, he sets the reader wondering how he had to please the man to get these litter-bearers. In another poem addressed to both Veranius and Fabullus, he playfully asks whether the deprivations of serving on Piso's cohort have yielded any profit and ruefully relates his own experience (28.6–10):

ecquidnam in tabulis patet lucelli
expensum, ut mihi, qui meum secutus
praetorem refero datum lucello?
O Memmi, bene me ac diu supinum
tota ista trabe lentus irrumasti.

Explicitly sexualizing his service, Catullus suggests that there was a certain quid pro quo, an erotic cost for material gain. In poem 10, the end-of-line insult *cinaediorem*

⁵² Skinner (n. 23), 16–17 discusses how Catullus projects 'his own acquisitive impulses onto the girl who had made a fool of him' and comments that '*cinaedus* is absolutely gender-specific'.

⁵³ C.A. Williams, *Roman Homosexuality* (New York, 2010²) defines *cinaedus* at 193, finds the figure 'gender-deviant/liminal' at 232–3, and notes the associations with the East at 195.

⁵⁴ Williams (n. 53), 197. At 388 n. 106, he rightly refutes Skinner (n. 23), 17 n. 33, who follows the *TLL* to suggest that the term refers specifically to a male prostitute. J.N. Adams, *The Latin Sexual Vocabulary* (London, 1982), 132 comments that Catullus uses the term *cinaediorem* in a 'non-sexual context'.

⁵⁵ Nappa (n. 24), 90 discusses the association between litters, Eastern monarchs and effeminacy. Cicero (*Verr.* 2.11.27) castigates the greedy Verres for using the type of litter that eludes Catullus.

⁵⁶ The exception is poem 16.2, where *cinaedus* describes Furius, but his name may nod to *fur*, 'thief': see Holzberg (n. 19), 26 and Skinner (n. 20), 100; Dettmer (n. 18), 29 combines the names Furius and Aurelius to mean 'mad for gold' or 'money-mad'. On the relationship between Catullus' erotic persona and greedy Roman imperialism, see D. Konstan, 'Self, sex, and empire in Catullus: the construction of a decentered identity', in V. Bécaries et al. (edd.), *Intertextualidad en las Literaturas Griega y Latina* (Madrid, 2000), 213–31, at 222–4 (though he does not specifically connect the term *cinaedus* with greed); on the *kinaidos* in Classical Athenian texts, see J. Davidson, *Courtesans and Fishcakes: The Consuming Passions of Classical Athens* (London, 1997), 167–82, especially 174, who calls this figure 'the paradigm of insatiability, of desire-never-to-be-filled ... appetite unbridled'.

(10.24) comes so soon after the similarly placed *beatiorum* (10.17) that it invites nudging insinuation: the concatenation of sounds leaves us wondering whether being *unum ... beatiorum* means becoming like a *cinaediorem*?⁵⁷ The *scortillum* and the young officer of fortune may not be so different.

Ultimately, wealth and its pursuit alienate Catullus, Varus and his girlfriend from each other so that the poem shows the corrupting nature of the conventional means of valuing success.⁵⁸ Poem 9 appeals to a like-minded community of *homines beatiore*s, unknowable in number, while poem 10 quantifies good fortune into the singularly competitive *unum beatiorum*. Being not just *beatus* but *unum ... beatiorum* means turning a coin, extracting luxury items from the provinces, successfully engaging in social one-upmanship, and impressing a woman with material prosperity.⁵⁹ Placed between the positive valuing of knowledge (those *loca, facta, nationes*) and friendship borne out of service on a provincial cohort in poem 9 and the joint monstrosities of Lesbia's sexual rapacity and the imperial ethos in poem 11,⁶⁰ poem 10 mocks the desire to acquire material wealth. The insistent repetition of *beatus* across these poems contrasts good fortune as measured by friendship, affection and knowledge with another conventional but debased version of fortune that is measured by material wealth garnered via quasi-erotic compliance with the imperial system. Poems 9 and 10 enact a quasi-Aristotelian distinction between friendships based on goodness and those based on pleasure or utility. Catullus functionally agrees that friendship is the greatest of the external goods, but he does not arrive at this conclusion through philosophical discourse—nor does he clearly resolve the difference between the views presented across the two poems. The next pair of poems (22 and 23) interrogates the relationships between desire, pleasure and good fortune through language that is more explicitly philosophical. In the process, Catullus turns from primarily examining his own relationship with good fortune to judging what makes others think themselves *beati*.

DELUSIONS OF GRANDEUR IN POEMS 22 AND 23

Beyond their placement within the Juventius cycle, poems 22 and 23 have rarely been connected in scholarship. Brian Krostenko's analysis of the contrary ways in which the poems treat a *homo bellus* has been the most extensive enquiry into their connections to date.⁶¹ Their apparent difference in tone and attitude towards their subject has driven at least one critic to consider them unrelated, despite both poems lending themselves to

⁵⁷ As Skinner (n. 23), 17 argues. The emendation to *beatiorum* does not negate the rhyming association.

⁵⁸ A. McMaster, 'The rules of gift-exchange: Catullus 12, 13 and 14', *Mouseion* 10 (2010), 355–79, at 376 argues that Catullus' 'attempt to participate in the conventional type of exchange is both unsuccessful and corrupting. As a result of it, he becomes inelegant, inarticulate, unwitty'.

⁵⁹ For *beatus* as 'materially wealthy' in two similar contexts dealing with men off to make their fortune abroad, see *Thyna merce beatum* (Hor. *Carm.* 3.7.3), and *Icci, beatis nunc Arabum inuides | gazis* (Hor. *Carm.* 1.29.1–2). Cf. the wealth and power of the bride's new home at 61.149–50 (*en tibi domus ut potens | et beata uiri tui*) and the wealth of *beatas urbes* lost to *otium* at 51.15–16: although *beatus* refers to material wealth in these examples, the lines retain the notion of being 'blessed' by the gods with good fortune and happiness.

⁶⁰ See Fitzgerald (n. 24), 169–84; M.C.J. Putnam, 'Catullus 11: the ironies of integrity', *Ramus* 3 (1974), 70–86; Konstan (n. 56); and E. Greene, 'Catullus, Caesar and Roman masculine identity', *Antichthon* 40 (2006), 49–64.

⁶¹ B. Krostenko, *Cicero, Catullus, and the Language of Social Performance* (Chicago, 2001),

clear metapoetic interpretations—poem 22 seems to forgive Suffenus his all too human poetic foibles, while poem 23 strikes us as so much harsher in its scoptic reappraisal of Furius' arid style of writing.⁶² The term *beatus* has been commented upon in each poem separately: Suffenus' happiness has been seen as poetic 'self-absorption' or 'self-satisfaction',⁶³ while critics have recognized the concluding pun of poem 23 on *beatus* as a 'planned ambiguity', which combines the two meanings 'enjoying life' and 'not wanting for money'.⁶⁴ Nevertheless, the poems may be fruitfully connected through their depictions of characters who are unable to perceive themselves or their relationship with wealth correctly.

Poem 22 tackles the paradoxical poetaster Suffenus, who is *uenustus et dicax et urbanus* (22.2) but lacks control over the number of his verses when writing (22.3–5). Though *bellus ... et urbanus* (22.9) in person, on the page he seems *caprimulgus aut fossor | rursus* (22.10–11) and *inficeto est inficetior rure* (22.14). Suffenus opts for all the material accoutrements of literary luxury, cultural capital in its most objectified state. His books are described as lavish objects: *cartae regiae nouae libri, | noui umbilici, lora rubra, membranae, | directa plumbo et pumice omnia aequata* (22.6–8). The careful outward opulence of his physical work sits awkwardly with his stylistic impoverishment and rusticity.

Despite these obvious flaws in his poetry, writing it makes Suffenus *beatus*: *neque idem unquam | aequae est beatus ac poema cum scribit* (22.15–16).⁶⁵ The material overtones of *beatus* remain active because of the luxurious nature of his physical book, but because the poem focusses on the man's contradictory character, the ethical inflection of *beatus* takes prominence. Suffenus derives happiness from, or despite his unfounded pride in, his work: the basic paradox of the man is that his happiness can exist uncoupled from poetic excellence, essentially that he can have happiness and pleasure without *uirtus*. Philosophers might respond to such unfounded happiness in different ways, as we have seen, but Catullus certainly seems to disapprove. Suffenus lacks the control of a more Callimachean poet who would polish his poems rather than the paper they were written on and refine the slapdash thousands to a more disciplined number.⁶⁶ He experiences pleasure and pride in his excess (*tam gaudet in se tamque se ipse miratur*, 22.17).⁶⁷

269–71. Wiseman (n. 17), 12 n. 4 connected poems 22 and 23 through the phrase *homo bellus* but also likened poem 22 to 17, because both of them feature men 'unaware of their own faults'.

⁶² Skinner (n. 18), 47 judged poem 22 unrelated to surrounding poems. A. Richlin, 'Systems of food imagery in Catullus', *CW* 81 (1988), 355–63 and M. Marsilio and K. Podlesney, 'Poverty and poetic rivalry in Catullus (c. 23, 13, 16, 24, 81)', *AClass* 49 (2006), 167–81 argued that literary rivalry prompted poem 23; cf. M. Marsilio, 'Mendicancy and competition in Catullus 23 and Martial 12, 32', *Latomus* 67 (2008), 918–30, at 926.

⁶³ Krostenko (n. 61), 269. Fordyce (n. 29), ad loc. glossed *beatus* as 'self-satisfied'.

⁶⁴ Quotations from Quinn (n. 19), ad loc. Both Ellis (n. 35) and E.T. Merrill, *Catullus* (Boston, 1893), ad loc. compared the final phrase to *satis beatus unicus Sabinis*, Hor. *Carm.* 2.18.14.

⁶⁵ Horace adopts Catullus' critique at Hor. *Ep.* 2.2.106–8. In my interpretation of poem 22, I have been greatly influenced by M. Citroni, 'The value of self-deception: Horace, Aristippus, Heraclides Ponticus, and the pleasures of the fool (and of the poet)', in P. Hardie (ed.), *Augustan Poetry and the Irrational* (Oxford, 2016), 221–39.

⁶⁶ Catullus has a negative attitude to other prolific poets in poems 95 and 95b. P.E. Knox, 'Catullus and Callimachus', in M.B. Skinner (ed.), *A Companion to Catullus* (Malden, MA, 2007), 151–71 reviews Catullus' Callimacheanism and preference for the small and polished.

⁶⁷ Cicero seems to suggest a certain smugness when he uses a similar phrase (*in sinu gaudere*) to dismiss the Epicureans for their centring of bodily pleasure as *the good* in human life, *ut in sinu gaudeant, gloriose loqui desinant* (Cic. *Tusc.* 3.51).

He is, perhaps almost literally, Mr Good Enough,⁶⁸ someone who blithely expects his material and social polish to translate into the poetic arena without much effort on his part.

Yet, many scholars have judged Catullus sympathetic to Suffenus and so we must examine the available evidence to ascertain the tone of the poem. The overall restraint of this criticism and a final self-deprecating fable give a superficial appearance of balance. Although Catullus uses the choliambic metre, he does so with far more subtlety than in poem 37 where he attacks Egnatius and his 'mess mates' in a traditionally iambic manner full of straightforward abuse.⁶⁹ The final fable seemingly forgives Suffenus' inability to recognize his weaknesses as Catullus concedes (with an uncharacteristic generosity of spirit) that no one is without this fault (22.18–21):

nimirum idem omnes fallimur, neque est quisquam
quem non in aliqua re uidere Suffenum
possis. suus cuique attributus est error;
sed non uidemus manticae quod in tergo est.⁷⁰

Each person is assigned their own delusion, and all people can harness this inability to appreciate harsh realities as a comforting source of happiness—so would run a 'sympathetic' reading of Catullus' homespun philosophizing.

Several elements of the poem indicate that it has more bite. The choliambic metre does convey criticism: although Catullus concedes Suffenus' good points, he uses the metre's natural points of stress to encourage the reader to regard him negatively.⁷¹ Moreover, iambists commonly used fables as vehicles for attack so the tale of the unseen knapsack cannot be viewed as a straightforwardly sympathetic gesture.⁷² Other elements in the hardware of the poem, such as the high number of elisions and the flatness of vocabulary, underscore the contrast between incompetent, rustic Suffenus and polished, urbane Catullus.⁷³ For all the poem's apparent generosity, Suffenus is the butt of the joke. Another unfortunate excluded from Catullus' society of sophisticates, he has already acted as a stylistic cipher passed between friends in poem 14. Catullus promises to pay back Calvus for his joke Saturnalia present, a *horribilem et sacrum libellum* (14.12), by rushing to the booksellers and 'collecting all the poisons' including *Caesios, Aquinos*, | *Suffenum* (14.18–19). Suffenus draws Catullus' particular ire in

⁶⁸ The name is unattested. Catullus often uses 'speaking names', so Suffenus might connote *sufficere* ('to suffice')—thus Mr Good Enough—or perhaps even *sufferre* ('to endure') in reference to the patience required of the terrible poet's unsuspecting reader. See J. Ingleheart, 'Play on the proper names of individuals in the Catullan corpus: wordplay, the iambic tradition, and the Late Republican culture of public abuse', *JRS* 104 (2014), 51–72.

⁶⁹ Catullus calls Egnatius and the other barflies *boni beatique* (Catull. 37.14) to communicate their status and wealth but also to undermine their pretensions to lifestyles of Epicurean pleasure; in fact, he says, they are just pleasure-seeking low lives. Uden (n. 2) argues that Catullus uses the stock tropes of anti-Epicurean invective. On Epicurean self-perception, cf. Cic. *De or.* 3.64: *sine ulla contumelia dimittamus; sunt enim et boni uiri et, quoniam sibi ita uidentur, beati.*

⁷⁰ Horace refers to the same fable in his satire on human folly and the pompous responses of the Stoics at Hor. *Sat.* 2.3.298–9, as does Persius in his satire (mostly delivered through the persona of Socrates) on the need to know one's own faults (Pers. 4.23–4).

⁷¹ Wheeler (n. 39), 67, 87–93.

⁷² Wheeler (n. 39), 96–7 cites Archil. fr. 172–81 W, 185–7 W, Hipponax, fr. 63 W, 123 W and Callim. *Ia.* 1.32–77 as other examples of iambic attacks through fable. Pace Krostenko (n. 61), 270, who suggests that Catullus uses the fable to avoid condemning Suffenus outright.

⁷³ L.C. Watson, 'Rustic Suffenus (Catullus 22) and literary rusticity', *PLLS* 6 (1990), 13–33, at 27 n. 19 argues that the unusually gentle choliambic tone indicates Callimachean influence.

that line—the specificity of the accusative singular after the generalizing plurals of *Caesios* and *Aquinos* brings the sequence of awful poets to a pointed halt.⁷⁴

The generalizing fable extends the poem's criticism to include Varus and Catullus, because Suffenus and his work function as markers of taste in an exchange between them. Since the poem addresses Varus, part of its message may be that he has blind spots too—the sting in the concluding tale is that Varus is just as bad at judging poetry and poets as he is lovers.⁷⁵ He attaches himself to people (the *scortillum* of poem 10 and Suffenus) who do not understand that being *beatus* involves more than material wealth and empty pleasure. Moreover, Suffenus' lovingly prepared books *pumice omnia aequata* (22.8) resemble nothing so much as Catullus' own collection *arida modo pumice expolium* (1.2). Recent scholarship has framed these uncomfortable similarities within the context of Catullus' latent anxieties about his poetic composition, style and reception.⁷⁶ His criticism of Suffenus' delusional happiness may have wider ramifications for the Catullan persona and may resonate with his self-criticism elsewhere such as in erotic contexts like poems 8 and 68b.135–7. More immediately, proud, oblivious Suffenus resembles the socially inept ambition of Catullus in poem 10.⁷⁷

The following poem 23 undertakes the most overtly philosophical investigation into being *beatus* of all the poems under discussion. Béla Németh linked its themes to Stoicism and has been followed in this reading by recent commentators, but the poem has also been considered a parody of Epicurean attitudes to wealth.⁷⁸ By employing philosophical language and topoi, Catullus certainly activates the philosophical inflection of *beatus* as 'virtuously well-off'.⁷⁹ Posing as a *sapiens*, he redefines poverty as wealth and touts an absurd list of its benefits for psychological and bodily health. Any analysis, however, must consider the role of Furius and this poem in the Juventius cycle, which Németh discounted too readily.⁸⁰ Catullus represents Furius and Aurelius as

⁷⁴ Cicero mentions his friendship with an Aquinus in the context of remarks about every poet thinking his own work the best: Cic. *Tusc.* 5.63.

⁷⁵ Watson (n. 73), 15–17 and 27 n. 25 also argued this point, positing that Suffenus and Varus' girlfriend 'belong to the same mixed category' of people who stumbled in their efforts to adopt *urbanitas*—i.e. 'mixed' compared to others like Aemilius in poem 97, whom Catullus excludes outright from any claim to *urbanitas*. Cf. Dettmer (n. 18), 46. Thomson (n. 1), ad loc. judged Varus unscathed and the address to him a 'purely ornamental' Hellenistic device.

⁷⁶ M. Gale, 'Aliquid putare nugas: literary filiation, critical communities and reader-response in Catullus', in R. Hunter and S.P. Oakley (edd.), *Latin Literature and its Transmission* (Cambridge, 2015), 88–107 posited that Catullus was more sensitive to the role that readers play in shaping meaning and more anxious about his text's fate than the controlling figure described by Fitzgerald (n. 24); see also J. Farrell, 'The impermanent text in Catullus and other Roman poets', in W.A. Johnson and H.N. Parker (edd.), *Ancient Literacies* (Oxford, 2009), 164–85; D. Feeney, 'Representation and the materiality of the book in the polymetrics', in I. Du Quesnay and T. Woodman (edd.), *Catullus: Poems, Books, Readers* (Cambridge, 2012), 29–47, at 38–43; L. Roman, *Poetic Autonomy in Ancient Rome* (Oxford, 2014), 52–4, 86–7; B. Stevens, *Silence in Catullus* (Madison, 2013), 85–94.

⁷⁷ J.H. Gaissler, *Catullus* (Chichester and Malden, MA, 2009), 68 linked the Catullan speaker's lack of self-awareness in poem 10 to the final fable of poem 22; Stevens (n. 76), 90 comments that Catullus' unspoken anxiety about his own urbanity in poem 22 ought to remind us of his 'ironic knowledge of failure' in poem 10.

⁷⁸ Németh (n. 2 [1971]), 33–41. See J. Godwin, *Catullus: The Shorter Poems* (Warminster, 1999) and Thomson (n. 1), ad loc. Godwin (n. 2) revises his earlier reading of poem 23 to argue that the poem responds to Epicurean topoi.

⁷⁹ C.W. MacLeod, 'Parody and personalities in Catullus', *CQ* 23 (1973), 294–303, at 299 found philosophical overtones but did not link the poem specifically to Stoicism.

⁸⁰ See Németh (n. 2 [1971]), 39 n. 19. For the view that erotic jealousy precipitates poem 23, see Skinner (n. 18), 45–6; U. Carratello, 'Catullo e Giovenzio', *GIF* 47 (1995), 27–52, at 35–6; Holzberg (n. 19), 103–5; S. O'Bryhim, 'Catullus 23 as Roman comedy', *TAPhA* 137 (2007), 133–45; and

unsuitable erotic influences upon Juventius in poems 15, 21, 23 and 24. When Catullus urges Furius to consider himself *beatus*, he is not primarily concerned with that man's happiness: 'restrain your desires for wealth and for Juventius' is the message implicit in *sat es beatus*.

The language and themes of the poem support a philosophical framing. Phrases such as *est pulcre tibi* (23.5), *bene ac beate* (23.15) and *commoda tam beata* (23.24) readily prompt a philosophical reading.⁸¹ Catullus dismisses wealth as an important or desirable external factor in human happiness by equating good fortune with having nothing: from his opening statement regarding Furius' poverty (lines 1–2), he works through his reasoning to conclude that impoverishment is a satisfactory, even fortunate, state of affairs (lines 26–7). Németh argued that Catullus employs consolations that are specifically Stoic when he suggests that poverty frees Furius from fear (*nihil timetis, | non incendia, non graues ruinas, | non facta impia, non dolos ueneni, | non casus alios periculorum*, 23.8–11).⁸² However, Catullus does not set material wealth against Furius' self-sufficient virtue: he consoles Furius that he possesses family and health, preferred indifferents according to the Stoics. In order to be *beatus*, Furius must change his perception of his circumstances (*haec tu commoda tam beata, Furi, | noli spernere nec putare parui*, 23.24–5), and this conception of emotional states as intimately linked to beliefs or judgements might be related to any number of Greek philosophical positions.⁸³

Despite this philosophical framing, Catullus gives no firm indications that Furius pursues poverty for the sake of philosophical ideals, so we must look elsewhere to understand his situation. The poem's first line (*cui neque seruus est neque arca*, 23.1) closely resembles Lucilius' description of a poor man, who carefully guards the wallet of coins that is his only possession: *cui neque iumentum est nec seruus nec comes ullus* (fr. 243 M).⁸⁴ Németh described this man as a *miser avarus*, but the context of this satiric attack has been lost to us and, besides, Furius and his family escape the fear of fire, thieves and poisoning that typically plague the *miser avarus*.⁸⁵ Furius' only 'goods' are his health and family. We might recall Veranius' happiness in poem

A. Morelli, 'Catullus 23 and Martial. An epigrammatic model and its "refraction" throughout Martial's *libri*', in F. Bessone and M. Fucecchi (edd.), *The Literary Genres in the Flavian Age* (Berlin, 2017), 117–35, especially 119.

⁸¹ Németh (n. 2 [1971]), 37 comments that *est pulcre tibi* translates καλῶς. See also MacLeod (n. 79), 299. Catullus judges himself *bene ac beate* at 14.10–11, because Calvus has not wasted his labours in the courtroom. *bene ac beate* affirms their shared taste and friendship, but lines 10–11 also have the flavour of parody. *Sulla litterator* may have been associated with philosophy.

⁸² Németh (n. 2 [1971]), 37 argues that *nihil timetis* (23.8) is a direct reference to Stoic thought and cites among his evidence Cic. *Tusc.* 5.12, 5.16 and Hor. *Carm.* 3.3.7–8. Cf. Godwin (n. 2), 844 on the stock nature of these consolations, common to both Epicureanism and Stoicism, and on freedom from fear as a characteristically Epicurean concern.

⁸³ Nussbaum (n. 11), 80–1 summarizes the close relationship between emotions and beliefs in most Greek philosophies. Epicurus also mentions the relationship between perception and wealth and is approvingly quoted by Seneca the Younger: *si uis ... Pythocleae diuitem facere, non pecuniae adiciendum sed cupiditati detrahendum est* (*Ep.* 31.7; also quoted at Stob. *Flor.* 3.17.23). Cf. Epicurus, *Sent. Vat.* 25.

⁸⁴ W. Kroll, *Catull* (Leipzig and Berlin, 1929), ad loc. Some scholars argue that Catull. 23.1 quotes Furius' own words: see Fordyce (n. 29), Quinn (n. 19) and Thomson (n. 1), ad loc., as well as L. Richardson Jr., '*Furi et Aureli, comites Catull*', *CPh* 58 (1963), 93–106, at 97–8. Recently, T.K. Hubbard, 'The Catullan *libelli* revisited', *Philologus* 149 (2005), 253–77, at 263 argues that Catullus was parodying a poem by Furius, which praised the simple life and featured the terms *mundus* and *beatus*. No evidence for such a poem remains.

⁸⁵ Németh (n. 2 [1971]), 36. On the fears besetting rich men, see Hor. *Sat.* 1.1.77; Hor. *Epist.* 2.1.119–21; Juv. 10.18–22 and 14.298–331, especially 14.303–10 and 14.316–18.

9 or any number of platitudes relating to traditional Roman frugality.⁸⁶ With finely functioning digestions (*pulcre concoquitis*, 23.8), Furius and his father and stepmother are apparently the picture of simple, healthy happiness together: *est pulcre tibi cum tuo parente | et cum coniuge lignea parentis*, 23.5–6. There are valid objections to such a reading: first, the figure of the stepmother carried negative connotations in antiquity;⁸⁷ second, the family's beautifully functioning digestions cannot replace functioning interpersonal relationships between them;⁸⁸ finally, the subject of digestion leads to the climactic and abusively scatological image of the *culus*, which contaminates the saltcellar, that symbol of proud Roman domesticity.⁸⁹ This is no Veranian happy family and their simple domestic happiness will not withstand scrutiny.

If not a philosopher, or a miser, or a member of a happily frugal Roman household, what is Furius? His lifestyle could recall that of the comic *parasitus* Saturio, who lives like an impoverished Cynic philosopher at home and seeks to enjoy himself on other people's money when out (Plaut. *Pers.* 120 and 123–6). Furius' domestic destitution and his request for a hefty amount of money could point to a similarly parasitical disposition; his *Doppelgänger* Aurelius has been accused of this for his extreme appetites in poem 21.⁹⁰ Yet, it would be a mistake to align Furius with the strict role of *parasitus*. Rather, Furius, Aurelius and the *miser auarus* and *parasitus* stereotypes all share the same essential quality—greed. Furius shares with the miser and the parasite not a hoard of unspent riches (he does not have an *arca* after all) or a literal grumbling belly (hunger is more Aurelius' problem) but an ungoverned appetite for more. The strong connections between poems 23 and 24, and between poem 23 and the Aurelius poems, show that Furius is unsuitable for Juventius not simply because he is poor but also because he has greedy desires which he cannot control.⁹¹

Terms such as *mundities* and *sat* emphasize proper measure, restraint and satiety, and they take the poem further away from a narrow parody of Stoicism or Epicureanism. *mundus* and its cognate *mundities* are especially ambiguous. While associated with Aristotelian precepts of moderation and restrained 'neatness',⁹² the terms could also

⁸⁶ Ellis (n. 35), ad loc. compared Furius' happy possession of poverty and family to Plaut. *Truc.* 808: *puer quidem beatust: matres duas habet et auias duas*.

⁸⁷ As noticed by MacLeod (n. 79), 299, who argued that 23.1–4 subverts the topos that φίλοι are compensation for poverty. Cf. ἐν πενίᾳ τε καὶ τοῖς λοιπαῖς δυστυχίαις μόνην οἴονται καταφυγὴν εἶναι τοὺς φίλους (Arist. *Eth. Nic.* 1155a11–12). On the stepmother in antiquity, see P.A. Watson, *Ancient Stepmothers: Myth, Misogyny and Reality* (Leiden, 1995).

⁸⁸ As Fitzgerald (n. 24), 84–5 argued, further comparing the 'well-met' (*pulcre conuenit*, 57.1 and 10) pair Caesar and Mamura, which he considered another subversion of the 'happy family' theme to ridicule greedy characters.

⁸⁹ For the saltcellar as a proud symbol of simple Roman family life, see Hor. *Carm.* 2.16.13–16 and *Pers.* 3.24–9 (cf. *Pers.* 5.137–9). See also Callim. *Epigr.* 28 G–P = *Anth. Pal.* 6.301 = 47 Pf. for the saltcellar as a symbol of frugality.

⁹⁰ P.S. Peek, 'Feeding Aurelius' hunger: Catullus 21', *AClass* 45 (2002), 89–99 reviews and dismisses arguments that Aurelius was a parasite.

⁹¹ Cf. D. Konstan, 'An interpretation of Catullus 21', in C. Deroux (ed.), *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History* 1 (Bruxelles, 1979), 214–16 on Aurelius' greedy desire for Juventius, as well as Peek (n. 90), 93 on Aurelius' 'excessive and indiscriminate sexual hunger'.

⁹² R.K. Gibson, *Excess and Restraint* (London, 2007), 26–9, 93–104 identified *mundus* and cognates (fundamentally the 'absence of sordid matter') as part of a vocabulary of moderation in the works of Horace, Propertius and Ovid. Though most extensively defined by Aristotle, the concept of moderation was a central Graeco-Roman preoccupation from the days of Hesiod, as Gibson (this note) outlines at 10–16. Catullus' poems 23 and 97 make these same associations between *mundus*, restraint and moderation. Consider too *commoda* (23.24) from *commodus*, literally 'with due measure'.

connote feminine ornamentation and grooming.⁹³ Therefore, when Catullus urges Furius *hanc ad munditiam adde mundiozem, | quod culus tibi purior salillo est* (23.18–19), we must suspect a punning slight. The terms *mundus* and *mundities* accuse Furius of the kind of intimate grooming habits that would become a *cinaedus*, subtly reinforcing the accusation of poem 16 (*cinaede Furi, 16.2*) and, as we have seen with regard to the term in poem 10, associating Furius with greed and effeminate decadence.⁹⁴ The close correspondence in language between poems 23 and 97 (*nilo mundius hoc, nihiloque immundior ille est | uerum etiam culus mundior et melior, 97.3–4*) suggests a more specific, sexually pointed insult that goes beyond effeminacy in grooming habits: just as Catullus judges Aemilius' anus 'better' for sex because it has no teeth and is cleaner than his mouth,⁹⁵ he suggests that Furius' 'cleaner' anus is the perfect receptacle for penetrating male sexuality. *purior* (23.19) ironically evokes the vocabulary of sexual restraint from other Juventius poems, where *pubicus* (15.5, 16.4 and 8, 21.12), *castum* (15.4, 16.5) and *integellum* (15.4) delineate the morally unblemished poet and the sexually untouched Juventius as opposed to the insatiably corrupt and corrupting Aurelius and Furius.

It is, finally, Catullus' attempt to limit the appetites and desires of Furius that profoundly connects poem 23 to its fellows about Aurelius. Like Aurelius, Furius is consumed by appetite (cf. *pater esuritionum, 21.1* and *esuritione, 23.14*). Catullus asks Furius to take pleasure in his 'want', but a key part of this must come from restraining his desires (*precarī ... desine, 23.26–7*), just as Aurelius is told to cease (*desine*) in 21.12.⁹⁶ Furius is being told to exercise self-control. By punning on *munditia*, Catullus prescribes moderation and conveys Furius' distance from it. In a similar fashion, the final line of the poem seeks to moderate through the ambiguity of the term *beatus*. The sarcastic *sat es beatus* puns on both 'you are rich enough' and 'you are happy enough' to suggest that Furius does not need more to satisfy his desires. In fact, he needs to be more satisfied.

Though both men apparently have problems with self-control, the contrast with the preceding poem 22 is immediately obvious: Suffenus thinks himself *beatus* (but is not and ought not), while Furius thinks that he is not *beatus* enough (but he certainly is according to Catullus and ought to consider himself so). Perception becomes contested in these poems, and the theme continues into poem 24, where Catullus wearily addresses how Juventius perceives Furius without acknowledging his blatant reinterpretation of

⁹³ Though, as R.G.M. Nisbet and M. Hubbard, *A Commentary on Horace: Odes Book 1* (Oxford, 1970), 75–6 make clear, *munditia* in female grooming commended a simple toilette best summarized by the deceptive phrase 'natural beauty'. Applied to male grooming, *munditia* could involve censure: the risible *senex amator* Lysidamus describes his newfound interest in perfumes since falling in love with Casina via a similar jingle, *munditiis munditiam antideo* (Plaut. *Cas. 225–7*); Sen. *Dial. 4.33.3* recalls a young man executed by Caligula because of his too carefully groomed locks.

⁹⁴ Martial insinuates that Labienus followed a similar depilatory regime (*cui praestas, culum quod, Labiene, pilas?* Mart. 2.62.4). See too Pers. 4.35–6 and 4.39–41 and cf. Mart. 9.27 and Juv. 8.16. Martial links an older woman's intimate depilation with the term *munditia* (*quid uellis uetulum, Ligeia, cunnum? ... tales munditiae decent puellas*, Mart. 10.90.1 and 3). See Williams (n. 53), 141–5 on Mart. 2.62 and other texts, which imply that excessive grooming was a sign of effeminacy.

⁹⁵ S. O'Bryhim, 'Malodorous Aemilius (Catullus 97)', *CPh* 107 (2012), 150–6, at 152 and A. Richlin, *The Garden of Priapus* (Oxford, 1992), 151.

⁹⁶ Cf. Cic. *Tusc. 5.99–100*, where Cicero argues that real pleasure (*iucunditatem*) as well as dryness (*siccitatem*) and soundness of health (*integritatem ualetudinis*) can be had in wanting (*desiderio*), rather than in indulging too much (*satietae*) at table.

the value of material wealth. Acting as a concerned adviser to Juventius,⁹⁷ he concedes that Furius is a *homo bellus ... sed bello huic neque seruus est neque arca*, 24.7–8). Although he repeats the phrase *neque seruus est neque arca* from poem 23 (see again at 24.5 and with alteration at 24.10), the sense has changed so that he now values poverty negatively. Once again, with self-serving duplicity, he tries to look like *unum beatorum*. Since poems 10 and 28 have told us about Catullus' inability to procure material wealth (indeed, poem 13 about his poverty), how should we interpret his sarcastic abuse of Furius? Is it a question of scale,⁹⁸ hypocrisy,⁹⁹ or what Niklas Holzberg has called the 'big talk' ('Großsprecherei') of someone who rubbishes his more successful erotic rivals because he cannot make headway in his relationship with Juventius?¹⁰⁰ Poems 10, 23 and 24 depend upon lies to make Catullus stand out from his rivals.¹⁰¹

To conclude, Catullus exploits the philosophical inflection of the term *beatus* to negotiate attitudes to wealth, friendship and other external goods in his work. He defines that man as *beatus* who sees himself clearly and exercises self-control over desires to acquire wealth, and he sets this acquisitive desire for material wealth in opposition to family, friendship and the intellectual endeavour of poetry. It is these that he lauds as the more valuable human goods, the things which make us happy and fortunate. But a divide exists between Catullus the poet and Catullus the character in his poems. As poet, he prescriptively defines beatitude for others as a happy combination of self-awareness and self-control—the *beatus* man *ought* to shun the delusional pleasures of excess, ought to prize virtue above pleasure. As character, he cannot see the knapsack on his back. He cannot see, for example, that a person considered to be *unum beatorum* could also be deemed *cinaediorum*. He cannot see that he ought to take his own stern advice: *sat es beatus*. Although it is highly likely that Catullus was aware of the intense philosophical debates going on around him, we cannot claim a serious, coherent philosophical position for him. Though wielding philosophical concepts and terminology, he defines the *beatus uir* and assigns value to external goods in a non-philosophical manner, pursuing his own scattered, highly subjective conception of the good life.

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⁹⁷ Though not to the extent that he specifically parodies the bawd figure, *pace* MacLeod (n. 79), 297–8 and O'Bryhim (n. 80), 143.

⁹⁸ D. Konstan, 'The contemporary political context', in M.B. Skinner (ed.), *A Companion to Catullus* (Malden, MA, 2007), 72–91, at 81 comments on differences in Catullus' attitude to gain between poems 10 and 28.

⁹⁹ Godwin (n. 78), ad loc.

¹⁰⁰ Holzberg (n. 19), 103–4.

¹⁰¹ Cf. Fitzgerald (n. 24), 175–6, on Catullus' violations of group-inclusion in poem 10.