Catullus' Furius
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CATULLUS' FURIUS

While there is probably no *communis opinio* on the identity of the Furius mentioned in Catullus 11, 16, 23, 26, and by implication 24, by far the most widely favored identification, especially after the study of W. A. Heidel, is M. Furius Bibaculus.[1] Bibaculus was a contemporary of Catullus and a fellow neoteric poet, and he is mentioned alongside Catullus as a lampooner of the Caesars and a writer of iambus.[2] Like Catullus he was from Cisalpine Gaul

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1. Heidel 1901. This identification has been accepted and/or argued for by, e.g., Hendrickson (1917, 88 n. 1); Spaeth (1936, 550); Neudling (1955, 71); Frank (1928, 85, 284 n. 7); Green (1940, 348–56); Loomis (1969), who points out metrical and stylistic similarities between the two poets; Fordyce (1961, 124, 156); Granarolo (1973, 306); Lyne (1978, 171 n. 13); Arkins (1982, 107); Nisbet (1995, 393–95); Beck (1996, 168, 277); and Hollis (2007, 127). This view is not universally shared: Quinn (1973, 160, 169) and Thomson (1997, 236) are noncommittal; Courtney (1993, 200) is hesitant; Syndikus (1984, 140 n. 3) finds the identification very unlikely, but his statement that *nothing* indicates the Furius in question was the literary figure Bibaculus seems to breezily dismiss a century's worth of scholarship arguing otherwise.

2. Tac. *Ann*. 4.34 (*carmina Bibaculi et Catulli referta contumeliis Caesarum leguntur*) may indicate that Catullus attacked Julius Caesar and Bibaculus attacked Octavian/Augustus. Courtney (1993, 199) and Hollis (2007, 127–28) incline to this view, but Neudling (1955, 71–72) and Nisbet (1995, 394) consider it probable that Bibaculus disparaged both men. Neudling explains Furius' *Annales*, his epic on Caesar's campaigns in

(Cremona), and the two seem to have shared much the same set of associates. Both wrote punning hendacasyllables on the theme of a mortgaged villa; Catullus' poem was written to a Furius.[3] As C. L. Neudling states, "no more acceptable identification has been made" than that of Furius Bibaculus. I wish to put forward some considerations that may be used to support this connection to M. Furius Bibaculus, but which to my knowledge have never been adduced.

I begin with the observation that playing with names seems to have been a favorite pastime for Roman *literati*. There is a long tradition of punning on or etymologizing names, and of making use of significant names in Latin poetry.[4] Pliny the Elder records that one of the wittiest Latin book titles he knew was Furius Bibaculus' *Lucubrationes*, or "Night Studies." The theme of poetry as a product of sleeplessness or the night vigil (ἀγρυπνίη) appears in Callimachus' praise of Aratus' *Phaenomena* and was later adopted by many Roman poets, including neoterics.[5] Furius, however, appears to have used the word to imply a work inspired by long nights with the drinking cup rather than, as the word usually implies, nighttime study under lamplight. The title was suitable, says Pliny, *puto quia Bibaculus erat et vocabatur* ("I think because he was a drinker [i.e., *bibax*] and was thus named," *HN* praef. 24). The historian implies that the title was Bibaculus' play on his own name—an indication that the contents of the work were the sort of nocturnal studies one could expect from a man named "Tippler."

We might ask whether Catullus could not resist punning on such a ripe name anywhere in his collection. Consider Poem 23, the poem in which Catullus refuses Furius a loan of 100,000 sesterces, admonishing him instead to take comfort in his state of contented poverty. The poem focuses on the spare diet and excellent digestion of Furius and his family (*pulcre concoquitis*,

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Gaul, as "a drastic change of heart toward Caesar at some point in Furius' career" (p. 73). If Bibaculus attacked Augustus, Horace's jibes against a *turgidus Alpinus* at *Sat*. 1.10.36 and a *Furius* at *Sat*. 2.5.40 may have been penned in retaliation. The difficulties raised by these Horatian passages (see, e.g., Rudd 1966, 120, 289 n. 52; Brown 1991, 187–88) have been met by Courtney (1993, 198–200) and Hollis (2007, 124–28). For Bibaculus as a writer of iambus, see Quint. *Inst*. 10.1.96 and Diom. *Gramm. Lat*. 1.485.11 Keil.

3. Catullus 26; for Furius Bibaculus' poem, see Courtney 1993, 192; Hollis 2007, 123, 139–42.

4. Scholars have long recognized this: see Wölfflin 1887; McCartney 1919 is a tidy collection of more than 300 Greek and Latin puns. The scholarship on this subject is extensive. A short list of accessible and important contributions to Latin authors might include the following: Ahl 1985; Austin 1922; Cairns 1996; Duckworth 1952, 345–56; Hijmans 1978, esp. 119 n. 10; Holst 1925, esp. 47–51; Lee 1969, 72, 115–16; Maltby 1991; McKeown 1987, 45–62; Mendelsohn 1907, esp. 8–78; Michalopoulos 2001; O'Hara 1996; Rudd, 1966, 132–59, esp. 143–46; Snyder 1978–79; 1980, 52–121.

5. Callim. *Epigr*. 27.4 Pfeiffer = 56.4 Page, *Anth. Pal*. (anon.) 9.689, Cinna (from his adaptation of Callimachus' epigram on Aratus, frag. 11 Courtney 1993); on the theme in Catullus 50, see Batstone 2007, esp. 242–45. Note also the title Λύχνοι, "Lamps," mentioned by Aulus Gellius (*sunt etiam qui Λύχνους inscripserint*, *NA* praef. 7). For recent work on the theme of *lucubratio*, see Vardi 1993; Ker 2004. We may group Furius' *Lucubrationes* with a small number of titles "based on the circumstances of composition rather than on the content of the work" (see Vardi 1993, 298–300). Like other miscellanies, the plural noun of the title seems to indicate the work's heterogeneous nature. James Ker (2004) shows how the *lucubratio* tapped into different connotations of nocturnal activity; it could be used to convey a sense of diligence, industry, and erudition, but could also function as a defense against suspicions that literary endeavors were interfering with crucial *negotia*. It might also function as an excuse for a work that was less polished than desired, or even one that was unfinished. But nighttime activity also took on a negative coloring in some moralizing discourses, since it could involve an inversion of normal daytime behavior including the neglect of public life, licentiousness and drunkenness, and even illicit activities (see especially Ker's subsection "*Lucubratio* and Its Evil Twin," pp. 216–21).

23.8), and culminates with an explicit description of the results of Furius' sound constitution: *culus tibi purior salillost* (23.19). Catullus' preoccupation with Furius' excretory process has been read in a variety of ways. No less than six lines are dedicated to what has been dubbed a "bizarre fantasia on the social, oral and anal consequences of poverty."[6] The poem may be Freudian in nature,[7] or perhaps it is part of a parody of Stoic thought,[8] and/or it may borrow its tone from Roman comedy.[9] Undoubtedly it is rooted in—and a wicked twist on—a much older discussion about digestion and the condition of a healthy male body.[10] I shall argue elsewhere that one of the contexts of the poem is literary and stylistic, as the vocabulary of the poem indicates, with its references to Furius' dryness (*sicciora cornu, siquid magis aridumst*) and purity (*purior salillost*).[11]

Whatever the truth may be, I would like to imagine that one function of the presence of Furius' *culus* in the poem is to take the opportunity to pun on the name Biba<u>culus</u>. That is to say, the *culus* of line 19 is a pun on the (unmentioned) name of the poem's target, M. Furius Bibaculus.[12] Catullus engaged in wordplay with other proper names, too. For example, Furius itself is a fitting name for someone suffering the fate of a thief (*fur*) at the hands of a Priapian figure (Poem 16).[13] P. Clodius Pulcher is almost certainly the

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6. Martin 1992, 143.

7. On the supposedly extensive connections between money and defecation, see Freud 1955. I am unaware of any specifically Freudian analysis of this poem. For some examples of money and defecation in Greek and Roman comedy, see Henderson 1991, 189–90; O'Bryhim 2007, 140. *Pace* O'Bryhim, Henderson denies a Freudian explanation in a specific instance of Greek comedy, but not as an interpretive possibility for other passages.

8. So, e.g., Németh 1971; Godwin 1999, 139.

9. O'Bryhim 2007.

10. See the note on *pulchre conquoquitis* (Catull. 23.8) in Ellis 1889, 78, and the comments in Newman 1887–1902, 2: 354–55, on Arist. *Pol.* 1272a22; also MacLeod 1973, 300. On this theme in philosophical and medical literature in general, see Lloyd 1964.

11. Vocabulary all the more poignant if Furius is the neoteric poet. Richardson (1963) has already noted the literary implications of *sallillo* in 23.19.

12. A difference in vowel quantity, in this case *cūlus* vs. *Bibacŭlus*, does not prevent wordplay in Latin: "Latin jokes and puns often require the length of two vowels with the same graphic form to be disregarded" (Adams 2007, 53). See further Adams 1981: "Verbal puns in which vowel quantity is ignored . . . are common" (200 n. 3, with examples). For example, Catullus 64.72 *spinosas Ĕrycīna serens in pectore curas* evokes the word *ērĭcĭus*, a pun that O'Hara (1996, 95, 100, 129–30; see also his 1990 article) argues served as a model for Verg. *Aen.* 1.715–22 *mater Acidalia* (ἀκίδες, "darts"/"stings of desire") and that provoked Ovidian commentary on his predecessors at *Met.* 5.363–68: "Ovid shows that he sees both what Vergil is doing, and that Catullus had done it before" (1996, 100). See also Martial's poem (1.92), discussed in this article, in which the pun is on the words *cūlum, ocŭlum,* and *cŭlina*. In their discussions of the figure παρονομασία/*adnominatio*, the author of *Ad Herennium* (4.29) and (disapprovingly) Quintilian (9.3.69) quote some relevant examples, including names: *venīt* "he sold" and *venĭt* "he came," *vincīt* "he binds" and *vincĭt* "he wins," *cūria* "senate house" and *Cŭria* (proper name), *ăvium* "of birds" and *āvium* "wilderness" (cf. Verg. *G.* 2.328 *āvia tum resonant ăvibus*), *Fūria* (proper name) and *fŭria* "fury" (Ovid 4, Courtney 1993). Other examples include *cănis—Hyrcāni* and *lūmine—lŭstrans,* and *sōl—sŏleat* (Lucr. 3.750, 5.693, 2.147, respectively), *sīmia quam sĭmilis turpissĭma bestia nobis* (Ennius 23, Courtney 1993), and *fēmina fēminae* (Apuleius 7.14, Courtney 1993). Many other examples could be gathered from the works listed in n. 4 above. Vowel length was also frequently disregarded by etymologists, including the influential Varro (Kent 1951, 1: 21 n. f on *sōlus* "alone" and *sŏlum* "soil"); it did not always matter to the Greeks, either (e.g., Ἥρα from ἐρατή at Pl. *Cra.* 404c). See further O'Hara 1996, 61–62; Ahl 1985, 35, 43, 55–56. The explicit comment of Suetonius (*Nero* 33) that Nero would jokingly lengthen the first syllable of *mŏrari* "to delay" (i.e., *mōrari* "to be an imbecile") is interesting.

13. Holzberg (2002, 26–27), who points to the important statement regarding poetic interpretation and the division of persona and poet made by Catullus in Poem 16, suggests that Furius ("Diebisch") and Aurelius ("Goldfinger") are merely *sprechende Namen* fitting for men threatened by a Priapus figure and his phallus, and that the names do not conceal historical persons. My own view is that in much the same way as the Catullus of the poems is a persona distinct from the actual poet Catullus, so also real figures may lurk behind other

target of *Lesbius est pulcher* in Poem 79. It has been suggested that Aurelius, a sexual rival of Catullus who is paired with Furius in 11 and 16, is alluded to in the unkind line *hospes <u>inaurata</u> pallidior statua* (81.4), which suggests an etymology κατ' ἀντίφρασιν or by antonym.[14] J. D. Noonan argues that the phrase *mala . . . / bestia* (69.7–8), used in reference to Rufus' odor, links the poem to Marcus Caelius Rufus, who prosecuted L. Calpurnius Bestia in 56 B.C.E.[15]

The function of wordplay in Catullus is undoubtedly complex. On the one hand, it is a declaration of allegiance to a poetic tradition: "To engage in learned wordplay is to announce that one is writing in the tradition of Callimachus and Apollonius of Rhodes."[16] At the same time, examples such as those given above arise from the widespread belief in the numinous power inherent in a name or word and the idea "that the name of a human being allowed access to that person's moral character."[17] In the hands of iambicists and satirists, such a belief becomes a tool of humor, mockery, and disparagement, and an instrument of persuasion and control.

A potential difficulty with the scenario above is that the emphasis on Furius' desiccation and abstemious lifestyle might not be thought fitting for someone named "Bibaculus." But I am not convinced that we should necessarily expect Catullus to have resorted to the easy pun on the name. His work is notoriously elusive, favors the unobvious, and is at times merrily scatological. There is no requirement that he pun on both parts of Bibaculus' name; Pliny (and, it seems, Bibaculus himself) only punned on the first half of the name. It is even possible that Catullus' portrayal of a poor and arid Furius was generated by Furius' own portrayal of himself. Several commentators have voiced the suspicion that the words in the first line of this poem (and which reappear three times in the following poem, 24), *cui neque servus est neque arca*, were

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personas who populate the poems. Sometimes these individuals are named (Caesar, Calvus, Cicero, Memmius, Nepos, Vatinius, etc.), sometimes they are not. Furthermore, real *nomina* were often considered *omina* (see McCartney 1919).

14. Brunér 1863, 638 n. *. However, Michalopoulos (1996, 78) sees *inaurata* as an etymological pun on *Pisauri* in line 3 (cf. Servius on *Aen*. 6.825: *Pisaurum dicitur, quod illic aurum pensatum est*). It is not necessary to choose one pun over the other; the poet may have more than one pun in mind. Yet another view has been put forward by Braccesi (2006), who argues that the *bellus homo* and *hospes* of Poem 81 is Marcus Livius Drusus Claudianus, and that the mention of *Pisauri* and gold (*inaurata*) is a reference to the *aurum Gallicum* from which derives the name Drusus (Suet. *Tib*. 3.1–2; Cic. *Ad Att*. 2.7.3). He was a relative of Clodia Metelli. Braccesi might also have mentioned that the *bellus homo* in Poem 81 is a love rival for Iuventius, and that it has been inferred from a brief remark by M. Caelius Rufus in a letter to Cicero (*Ad Fam*. 8.14.4) that Drusus was a notorious violator of the *lex Scantinia*, which punished male homosexual acts involving *ingenui*. The letter was written in 50, when Catullus was presumably already dead, but perhaps Drusus' reputation was long in the making. It seems likely that he was known to Catullus: Cicero pairs Drusus "Pisaurensis" with Vatinius (*Att*. 2.7.3), who is the object of Catullus' scorn in Poems 52 and 53; C. Licinius Calvus, Catullus' good friend and courtroom foe of Vatinius, delivered a speech against Drusus (Tac. *Dial*. 21.2).

15. Noonan 1979. This is supported by Skinner (2003, 92–93) and tentatively by Hubbard (2005, 273 n. 86). Other, less pointed plays on names may also occur: at 114.1 the mention of Mentula's estate at Firmanus has been thought to allude to the object of Catullus' scorn, the similar-sounding Formianus Mamurra (see the discussion at Ellis 1889, 467–68, 496); Richardson suggests (1963, 96, 106) that *mellitos oculos tuos, Iuventi* (48.1) and *mellite Iuventi* (99.1) disguise the cognomen of Juventius—Mellitus or the like. For examples in Catullus of etymological wordplay with common nouns and proper names, see O'Hara 1996, 53–54; 1990, 339.

16. O'Hara 1996, 103.

17. Corbeill 1996, 74; see also p. 10 and esp. chap. 2, "Names and *Cognomina*." Corbeill's focus is on pejorative *cognomina* in the arena of Roman oratory, but much of what he writes is also clearly applicable to the way names were wielded against opponents in literary circles.

used by Furius of himself in his own poetry. For Catullus, therefore, they might serve as a convenient and recognizable tag by which he could identify the poet requesting a loan: "This poem and the next would gain point if this phrase was deprecatingly or jokingly used by Furius himself of his own straits . . . and was recognizable as a quotation from him."[18]

There is a final consideration in favor of identifying M. Furius Bibaculus with Catullus' Furius. Martial 1.92 is a well-known adaptation of Catullus 23. It is written to the penurious Mamurianus, and it takes some of its language from Catullus' earlier poem.[19] Lines 10–13 read as follows:

> pasceris et nigrae solo nidore culinae
>   et bibis immundam cum cane pronus aquam:
> non culum, neque enim est culus, qui non cacat olim,
>   sed fodiam digito qui superest oculum

> . . . your only food is the smell of a blackened kitchen and you drink dirty water on your belly with the dog: why, I shall dig my finger into—not your arse, for an arse that never shits is none, but your remaining eye (trans. Shackleton Bailey 1993)

Martial puns quite obviously here on *culum*, *oculum*, and *nigrae nidore culinae* (in *sensus obscenus*, like *immundam aquam* in line 10), but there is also a point to the words *bibis* and *culum*, which occupy the same metrical space at the beginning of lines 10 and 11.[20] These words allude to the name Bibaculus, and they indicate that Martial already knew of a tradition identifying the Catullan Furius as the poet M. Furius Bibaculus. Martial is here coyly identifying (who he thought was) the original target of Catullus' poem.

The presence of *bibis . . . culum* in Martial 1.92 suggests that Martial identified Furius with Furius Bibaculus, perhaps even that Martial caught Catullus' pun on *culus*, and adapted the pun (as a tribute to his predecessor, maybe out of love for the recherché, or perhaps in a game of one-upmanship). Admittedly, the pun does not incontrovertibly demonstrate that Martial was correct, and that Furius Bibaculus was in fact the target of Catullus 23. That claim is supported, however, by the idea that Catullus himself may have punned on the name Bibaculus in his own poem. If the reader is so moved, these puns might be taken as further confirmation of the identification of the Furius in Poem 23 with Furius Bibaculus, and as two newly found examples of clever poetic wordplay.

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18. Fordyce 1961, 152. See also Quinn 1973, 161; Forsyth 1986, 184; Garrison 1989, 107, 108; Thomson 1997, 263; Godwin 1999, 140. Did Bibaculus portray himself in this way in a poem belonging to the *Lucubrationes*? There is no indication that Bibaculus' *Lucubrationes* was known to Catullus, but it is tempting to suggest that Catullus' emphasis on Bibaculus was a response to Furius' play on Bibaculus.

19. E.g., Catull. 23.18 *munditiem*, *mundiorem*, Mart. 1.92.10 *immundam*; Catull. 23.19, 20 *culus*, *cacas*, Mart. 1.92.11 *culum*, *culus*, *cacat*; Catull. 23.23 *digitum*, Mart. 1.92.2, 3, 12 *digito*; Catull. 23.12 *sicciora*, Mart. 1.92.1 *siccis*.

20. The tendency to position figures of wordplay at significant metrical locations, such as the beginning or end of a line or at the caesura, is prevalent in Latin poetry and evident already in early poets such as Naevius and Ennius (see Snyder 1980, 69, 80–84).

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SCYLLA, THE DIVER'S DAUGHTER:
AESCHRION, HEDYLE, AND OVID

Among many mythological reworkings in the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid provides pathetic origin stories for three female monsters whom Homer represented as inhuman and dangerous. The Gorgon Medusa, Ovid claims, was once a beautiful-haired girl raped by Neptune; the Sirens were once beautiful-voiced girls bereaved of Proserpina; Scylla was once a beautiful-limbed nymph poisoned by jealous Circe.[1] The first two origin stories are not attested in earlier literature and are probably invented. Ovid's presentation of Scylla as

1. Ov. *Met*. 4.790–803, 5.551–63, and 14.1–74, respectively. Medusa does not appear in Homer per se, but the ghoulish face of Gorgo in the underworld (*Od*. 11.633) and the use of the gorgoneion as shield blazon (*Il*. 11.33–40) presuppose a terrifying monster like that described in [Hes.] *Sc*. 216–36. According to Hes. *Theog*. 267, Medusa "experienced sufferings" (λυγρὰ παθοῦσα), but there is no mention of transformation before her beheading by Perseus, and the story is very different. The intercourse with Poseidon is not described as temple desecration, as in Ov. *Met*. 4.798–99, but takes place in a flowery meadow, like the consensual sex between Zeus and Hera at Hom. *Il*. 14.346–51.