

Urbanity and rusticity passages

How does Cicero criticize city-living?

How does Catullus portray urban lifestyle and rusticity?

“Here you have the other [Greek freedman Chrysogonus] coming down from his fine house on the Palatine: he has for his enjoyment a pleasant suburban country-seat, besides a number of farms all of them excellent and near the city; a house crammed with Delian and Corinthian vessels,^a among them that self-cooker,^b which he recently bought at so high a price that passers-by, hearing the auctioneer crying out the bids,^c thought that an estate was being sold. What quantities besides of embossed silver, of coverlets, pictures, statues, marble can you imagine he possesses? (Cicero *Pro Roscio* 133, 80 BCE)

“to charm his mind and ears, he has so many artists, that the whole neighbourhood rings daily with the sound of vocal music, stringed instruments, and flutes, and with the noise of banquets by night. When a man leads such a life, gentlemen, can you imagine his daily expenses, his lavish displays, his banquets? Quite respectable, I suppose, in such a house, if that can be called a house rather than a manufactory of wickedness and a lodging-house of every sort of crime. And look at the man himself, gentlemen;¹³⁵ you see how, with hair carefully arranged and reeking with perfume, he struts about all over the forum accompanied by a crowd of wearers of the toga^d; “ (*Pro Roscio* 134-5)

Catullus’ friend Suffenus is: “a charming person, witty and urbane” (Cat. 22.2; tr. Lee) (“homo est venustus et dicax et urbanus”)

However, he is a failure in art: he writes far too much:

“new rolls of royal papyrus,

New bosses, scarlet thongs and parchment covers,

The whole lead-ruled and levelled off with pumice.

But when you read them, that nice urbane man

Suffenus now seems like a mere clodhopper” (Cat. 22.6-10; tr. Lee)

“You’ll dine well, my Fabullus, at mine

One day soon if the Gods are kind to you,

If you will bring with you a dinner

Good and large plus a pretty girl

And wine and salt [*sal* also = wit] and all the laughs.” (Cat. 13.1-5)

“For [Quintia] she has no charm,

No grain of salt in that great body.” (Cat. 86.3-4; tr. Lee): unlike Lesbia

“Because Egnatius has shiny white teeth

He’s always grinning...” (Cat. 39.1f. [including in court and at funerals])

Egnatius is “neither elegant ... nor urbane” (Cat. 39.8; my translation)

(“neque elegantem ... neque urbanum”)

“... in Celtiberia

Everyone uses his own pee each morning

For rubbing down his teeth and his red gums.

So the more highly polished your teeth are

The more piddle you are proved to have drunk.” (Cat. 39.17-21; tr. Lee: comes from Celtiberia and is flaunting his vulgar, provincial customs)