Francis Cairns
Roman Lyric
Prefatory Note

This volume, which is a companion to my *Papers on Roman Elegy*, contains periodical papers and book chapters on Catullus and Horace published in the UK, the USA, and various European countries, over more than forty years (1969–2010), together with several new papers, viz. Chapters 14, 21, and 29. The academic and typographical conventions of the original publications were highly varied, and the earlier papers used abbreviated bibliographical references acceptable at their time, but now no longer so. Harmonization of styles and up-dating of references throughout the volume would have greatly extended the production process, risked the intrusion of new errors, and blurred the chronology. Hence the conventions of the original publications, with the exception of a few idiosyncracies, have for the most part been retained; citations of ancient texts, however, have been standardized, with Arabic numerals and full stops between numbers. A composite Bibliography of all works cited in the collection, with full references to items cited incompletely in early papers, appears at the end of this volume. This has permitted the omission of the individual bibliographies attached to some papers in their original form.

Misprints and minor errors, including erroneous references, in the originals have been silently rectified where they have come to light. Very occasionally minimal rewording has repaired infelicities of expression, and similarly punctuation has been inserted in a few places to remove un-clarities. But in substance the papers are reprinted unrevised, and, since *L’Année philologique* on-line and other bibliographical resources have substantially reduced the need for follow-up coverage, only a few citations of subsequent scholarship will be found in the Addenda and Corrigenda.

All the papers have been reset. Original page numbers are indicated in the margins. Resetting has resulted in some reformatting; hence the layout of quotations, lists, etc. may differ from that of the originals and, whereas some originals printed the notes as endnotes, in this volume all notes are footnotes. Internal cross-references within individual papers have been altered to correspond with the pagination of this volume. References within one paper to others in this volume usually give both the original pagination and, in curly brackets, the page numbers within the volume. Where a

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paper, as first published, referred to forthcoming work, the original wording has been retained to preserve chronological integrity, and the year of eventual publication has been added in square brackets; in these cases full details are given in the Bibliography. Addenda and corrigenda are signalled by a double asterisk (‡), and are listed on pp.471–2.

My gratitude to those who advised on individual papers is noted in them. I am grateful also to the Editors of Beiträge zur Altertumskunde for their gracious acceptance of this volume into that series, and to Dr Michiel Klein-Swormink and Dr Jens Lindenhain of Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co. for efficient administrative input and for typographical guidance respectively. Finally my warm thanks go to Frederick Williams for his patient and meticulous proof-reading of the volume.

Francis Cairns November 2011

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*Museum Philologicum Londiniense* 1 (1975), 79–91 (11: ‘Horace *Epode* 2, Tibullus 1, 1 and Rhetorical Praise of the Countryside’)

*Philologus* 126 (1982), 227–46 (‘Horace *Odes* 3, 22: Genre and Sources’)

*Papers of the Leeds international Latin Seminar* 8 (1995) 91–142 (24: ‘Horace’s First Roman *Ode* (3.1)’)

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1

Catullus 1

cui dono lepidum nouum libellum
arida modo pumice expolitum?
Corneli, tibi: namque tu solebas
meas esse aliquid putare nugas
iam tum, cum ausus es unus Italorum
omne aeuum tribus explicare chartis
doctis, Iuppiter, et laboriosis.
quare habe tibi quidquid hoc libelli
quaecumque; quod, o patrona uirgo,
plus uno maneat perenne saeclo.  

1. The dedication

In this dedicatory prologue Catullus compliments Cornelius Nepos by playfully contrasting his own work, which he makes light of (nugae line 4), with Nepos’ Chronica which he praises highly.

This ironic contrast as well as the incorrect notion that Nepos’ work was a lengthy one have obscured an important feature of Catullus’ encomium on the Chronica which in turn throws light on Catullus’ own literary claims.

Catullus’ praise of the Chronica is couched (albeit informally) in the language of Alexandrian literary criticism and shows clearly that Catullus is lauding the Chronica as a work conforming to the canons of that school and possessing all the standard Alexandrian virtues.

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1 I am indebted to Professor G. Williams and Mr. C.W. Macleod for advice on this paper. Their assent to its conclusions should not be assumed.

2 E.g. Fordyce ad. loc. Long ago Jos. Scaliger interpreted the matter correctly. More arguments could be added to his but the point is minor. Even if Nepos’ work had been long it could still have been Alexandrian since even Callimachus wrote long prose works.
First he awards Nepos the typical Alexandrian encomium upon innovation and priority. \(^3\) Unus Italorum (line 5) = primus Italorum and the verb audeo (line 5) is a further reinforcement of the idea, cp. scripsiere alii rem etc. ... nos ausi reserare (Ennius Ann. 7, Prologue)\(^4\) and primum Graius homo mortales tollere contra est oculos ausus ... (Lucr. 1.66–67).

Second he praises him for the most common Alexandrian virtue doctrina (doctis line 7).

Thirdly he attributes to him the quality of labor first lauded by Philetas in his ideal description of a poet: ἐπέων εἰδὼς κόσμων καὶ πολλά μογήσας / μύθων παντοίων οἴμον ἐπιστάμενος (Fr. 10 Powell, in which place it is also conjoined with doctrina) — and thereafter frequently mentioned in literature derived from Alexandria.\(^5\)

Thus Catullus, himself a neoteric poet, prefixes to his collection a dedication to Nepos giving as one of his reasons for so doing the fact that Nepos has written a neoteric historical work. Many prologues to poems or collections of poems are in part or in whole programmatic. Catullus in this prologue expresses at least some\(^6\) of his programmatic material by adopting the elegant device of presenting it as an encomium not on his own work, but upon that of his dedicatee, whom he specifies as belonging to the same literary school as himself. The virtues he attributes to Nepos are thus by implication those he is claiming for his work.

The Alexandrian programmatic material of lines 5–7 may assist in the interpretation of lines 1–2. These lines describe the physical book. And yet, since the adjectives lepidus and nouus (line 1) could be equally well applied to the Alexandrian contents of the book, there is a strong temptation to take them as having a double reference, both to the physical book and to its contents, Catullus’ poems.\(^7\) This temptation is reinforced by the fact that the adjectives applied to the chartae of Nepos (line 7), adjectives which like lepidus and nouus are descriptive of Alexandrian characteristics, certainly do refer to the contents of the chartae.

However, Kroll (ad loc.) denies that line 1 has this double reference. Presumably Kroll found line 2 intractable. And it would certainly be imprudent to claim a double reference for line 1 if no such double reference can be shown for line 2.

In this situation, part of an Alexandrian prologue of Propertius (3.1) may be helpful. In a poem full of Callimachean echoes Propertius writes:

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\(^3\) Kroll, Studien, 12ff. cites many examples.
\(^4\) Cf. also Virg. Geor. 2.175.
\(^5\) Cf. Kroll, op. cit., 38ff. for examples and discussion.
\(^6\) See below on lines 1–2.
\(^7\) Cf. Baehrens ad loc.
2. patrona uirgo (9)

The defences of the MSS reading *patrona uirgo* made by Kroll and Baehrens (ad loc.) seem to me sufficient in themselves to justify its retention.\(^{10}\)

However, some examination of the practice of Catullus’ near contemporaries in their prologue poems and of the language of the last section of Catullus 1 may help to reduce the residual attractiveness of emendations which would import into the biography of Catullus the dubious proposition that Cornelius Nepos was his *patronus*.

Neither the Muse nor a dedicatee is a necessary element of such prologues. Examples can be found which omit the Muse while including a

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8 The only difference between the two examples is that Propertius applies to *pumex* an adjective (*tenuis* – λεπτός) specifying a further Alexandrian characteristic, whereas Catullus simply applies the epitheton ornans *aridus* (cp. Plaut. *Aul.* 295 and *A.P.* 6.62.3–4 (Philippus) κισσηριν, αφόμηρον … λιθον.

9 Another passage involving similar concepts is [Tib.] 3.1.7–14. The *uersus* (line 8) are *nouii*, and the *opus* (line 10), i.e. the poetry, is *comptum* but otherwise the poet is thinking of the physical book. However the absence of a sustained metaphor in this passage does not, in view of the poor quality of [Tib.] 3, constitute an argument against the above interpretation of Catullus.

10 Fordyce however (ad loc.) favours Bergk’s *patroni ut ergo*. 
dedicatee\(^\text{11}\) or omit a dedicatee while including a Muse or Muse-equivalent\(^\text{12}\) or which simply omit both.\(^\text{13}\)

Thus Catullus was not bound by contemporary literary conventions to introduce his Muse at any point in his prologue. But at the same time a sufficient number of such near-contemporary prologues including both Muse and patron have survived\(^\text{14}\) to show that Catullus’ readers would not have been surprised to come upon the Muse in line 9, especially since \textit{A.P. 4.1} (Meleager) which out of all Classical prologues most closely corresponds in its first few lines with those of Catullus 1 and to which Catullus was probably alluding by adaptation introduces the Muse prominently in its first line in conjunction with the dedicatee.

\begin{quote}
Μοῦσα φίλα, τίνι τάνδε φέρεις πάγκαρπον ἀοιδάν;
δ’ τίς ὁ καὶ τεῦξας ὑμοθετάν στέφανον;
ἀννυε μὲν Μελέαγρος ἄριζαλω δὲ Διοκλεῖ
μναμόσυνον ταύταν ἔξεπόνησε χάριν.
\end{quote}

To this convention must be added another. A writer asking or wishing that immortality or long life be granted to his work traditionally makes his request or wish to a divinity. Cp. \textit{ἔλατε ὑνι.} ἐλέγοισι δ’ ἐνψήσασθε λιπώσας / χείρας ἐμοῖς, ἵνα μοι ποιλῇ μένοσιν ἔτος (Call. \textit{Aet. 1 Fr. 7.13–14 Pf.}, addressed to the Charites) and \textit{floreat ut toto carmen Nasonis in aeuo / sparge, precor, donis pectora nostra tuis} (Ov. \textit{Fasti} 5.377–8, addressed to Flora).\(^\text{15}\) It is not simply a pious hope \textit{in uacuo}. The Muse is thus necessary in Catullus 1 to provide a divine addressee for \textit{maneat}.

\[\text{Finally the introduction of the} \textit{patrona uirgo} \text{is undoubtedly eased by the formulaic language by which it is surrounded. It is not necessary in this connection to make sharp distinctions between legal and religious language. Such distinctions are perhaps in any case not very meaningful where Latin is concerned. Nor is it necessary to argue that Catullus was deliberately setting out to echo or reproduce specifically any single legal or religious situation. It is simply that his use of} \textit{habe tibi} \text{(line 8), a legal echo,} \] 

\[\text{his use of the indefinites} \textit{quidquid} \text{and} \textit{qualecumque} \text{(line 8–9), words of a type frequently found in religious and legal formulae,} \] 

\[\text{his use of} \textit{quod} \text{(line 9) with its associations with prayer formulae} \] 

\[\text{and the}\]

\(^{11}\) E.g. Tib. 1.1; 2.1.

\(^{12}\) E.g. Ov. \textit{Am.} 3.1; Prop. 3.1.

\(^{13}\) E.g. Prop. 1.1; 4.1.

\(^{14}\) E.g. Hor. \textit{O.} 1.1; 2.1; Prop. 2.1.

\(^{15}\) Cf. also Ov. \textit{Am.} 3.15.19–20; Lucr. 1.28.

\(^{16}\) Cf. Fordyce ad loc.

\(^{17}\) Cf. L&S \textit{s.vv.} and Norden, \textit{Agnostos Theos}, 144f.

\(^{18}\) Cf. L&S \textit{s.v.} and K–S II, 322.
appearance of *maneat* and the notion of permanence in the actual prayer\(^{19}\) to the *patrona uirgo* all combine to constitute a linguistic climate which, although it in no way detracts from the primary meaning and function of the lines (see above), forms a suitable background to the introduction of the religious figure of the Muse.

The introduction of *patrona uirgo* is therefore natural, necessary and in context. But it is noticeable that, whereas Meleager’s prologue began with his Muse and proceeded with his dedicatee, Catullus in his imitation begins with Nepos and ends with his Muse. It is impossible to state with certainty that this disposition of material is meaningful. But in this case, since we possess two prologue odes of Horace (*Odes* 1.1 and 2.1) (which may be presumed to share identical literary conventions with one another and with Catullus 1) both of which refer to both Muse and dedicatee, one of them in the Catullan manner (2.1) and one (1.1) in another fashion, some tentative conclusion applicable to Catullus may perhaps be elicited from Horace’s dispositions of his material.

Maecenas was Horace’s patron in both senses of the word. When making a prologue dedication to him (*Odes* 1.1) Horace gives him both places of honour, beginning and end, inserting the Muses just before the end. Pollio (*Odes* 2.1) on the other hand is merely a dedicatee. He is given the initial place but not the final place which is reserved for the Muse.

It would be imprudent to press this distinction too far. A poet’s use of material is influenced but not controlled by conventions. But it is a reasonable hypothesis (backed also by the order of material in Prop. 2.1) that the structural prominence of the dedicatee in a prologue poem reflects the poet’s dependence on him or independence of him and that Catullus in his replacement of Nepos by his Muse at the end of the poem is, like Horace in *Odes* 2.1, showing that the dedicatee was not his patron.

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\(^{19}\) Cf. Prop. 1.4.27; [Sen.] *Oct.* 760–1.
Too many recent accounts of Catullus’ basia poems turn the poet into a sentimental schoolgirl. This short article seeks by exploring some of the intellectual background of these lyrics to reassert faith in Catullus’ literary craftmanship, maturity and masculinity.

A. Genre

Catullus 5, 7, and 48 belong to the genre ἀριθμητικόν (sc. ἐπίγραμμα). They are sophisticated examples of the same genre as is exemplified by the less subtle arithmetic epigrams of the fourteenth book of the Anthologia Palatina (1–4, 6–7, 11–13, 48–51, 116–147).

Arithmetic epigrams have in common that they pose a computational problem. In some cases the computational problem is offered as the answer to a question which introduces the epigram (e.g. A.P. 14.1, 3, 4, 117, 129).

Among epigrams thus structured, A.P. 14.1 resembles fairly closely Catullus 7. It begins with Polycrates asking Pythagoras how many members his school has

\[
\text{"Ὅλῳ Πυθαγόρῃ, Μουσέων Ἐλικόνιον ἔρνος,}
\text{εἰπέ μοι εἰρομένῳ, ὁπόσοι σοφῆς κατ᾽ ἀγώνα}
\text{σοῦς δόμοις ἔσαι ἄθλεοντες ἄριστα.}
\]

Cp. Catullus 7.1–2

\[
\text{quaeris, quot mihi basiationes}
\text{tuae, Lesbia, sint satis superque.}
\]

In lines 4–8 of A.P. 14.1 Pythagoras gives his answer in the form of a computation for solution:

MNemosyne ser. iv 26 (1973) 15–22

* I am very much indebted to Mr. R.M. Pinkerton for advice on this article.

1 Their authorship and date are unknown but they are probably later than Catullus. This is not important since these surviving examples of the genre are clearly representatives of an old tradition.
Cp. Catullus 7.3–8
quam magnus numeros Libyssae harenae lasarpiciferis iacet Cyrenis oraculum Iouis inter aestuosi et Batti ueteris sacrum sepulcrum; aut quam sidera multa, cum tacet nox, furtius hominum uident amores.

Finally Pythagoras sums up his answer in line 9
tōssoς Πιερίδων ύποφήτορας αὐτός ἄγινῳ.

Cp. Catullus 7.9–10
tam te basia multa basiare uesano satis et super Catullo est.

Other arithmetic epigrams of A.P. Book 14 begin, as do Catullus 5 and 48, with a piece of scene-setting (cp. A.P. 14.137 with Catullus 5 for the initial injunction).

The computational method required by Catullus 5 reflects (to the extent which the different subject-matter allows) that required by the majority of the arithmetic epigrams of A.P. 14.

As in them, the solution to the problem posed in Catullus 5 is arrived at by addition. In many examples in A.P. 14 the unknown total is reached by adding fractional parts of this unknown to a given integer: e.g. \( x = \frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{4}x + \frac{1}{7}x + 3 \) (A.P. 14.1).

In others, the addition of whole numbers plays a more important part, the unknown total being reached by the addition of various fractions of this unknown to a number of given quantities: e.g. \( x = \frac{1}{5}x + \frac{1}{12}x + \frac{7}{11}x + 12 \text{ t(alent)} + 5 \text{ t} + 25 \text{ m(ina)} + 20 \text{ m} + 50 \text{ m} + 10 \text{ m} + 8 \text{ m} + 7 \text{ m} + 30 \text{ t} + 2 \text{ t} + 2 \text{ t} \) (A.P. 14.123); \( x = \frac{1}{5}x + \frac{1}{12}x + \frac{1}{8}x + \frac{1}{20}x + \frac{1}{4}x + \frac{1}{7}x + 30 + 120 + 300 + 50 \) (A.P. 14.3).

Nowhere in A.P. Book 14 is found a simpler type of ἄριθμητικόν involving only addition of whole numbers, a type which Catullus 5 may reflect. The reason for this omission is probably that this type was considered too elementary to be worth including in A.P. 14. An indication that one of the criteria of admission to the book was difficulty is provided by the only ἄριθμητικόν in A.P. 14 which involves only simple multiplication of whole numbers (147):
Here the *magna nomina* are at once a comment on the antique simplicity of the calculation and an explanation cum justification of its inclusion in the collection.

Catullus 7 and 48 differ from Catullus 5 as regards computation. They simply indicate that a calculation might be possible before reversing this possibility by giving, not information about a finite total, but the information that the total is infinite.

Catullus 5, 7 and 48 further differ from almost all the arithmetic epigrams in that the latter have solutions whereas the former do not. It is this difference which explains Catullus’ choice of the genre. By composing insoluble examples of a genre where solutions are normal, he further underlines the paradox behind the three *basia* poems, i.e. that the computation can arrive at no solution.

**B. ‘Doctrina’**

The known Alexandrian features of the *basia* poems are discussed by Kroll and Fordyce ad locc. Further such features may be added. First of all the very fact that these three poems are three variations upon a single theme recalls both the practice of individual Alexandrian epigrammatists of writing variations upon a single theme and the arrangement of the pre-Catullan Garland of Meleager in which different authors’ variations on the same theme were juxtaposed. The details of Catullus’ variations are worth stating since they involve some subtlety. In 5 Catullus asks Lesbia to give him a very large but finite and hence potentially enumerable number of kisses. A separate and subsequent process of concealing the sum of this finite number of kisses must be gone through in order to avoid the malevolent influence of *fascinatio*. To suggest that something is likely to be the object of *fascinatio* is of course here (as in 7 and in Callimachus *Aetia* 1, see below) an indirect way of suggesting that it possesses the excellence which will attract envy.

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2 *A.P.* 14.48 and 144 are insoluble but this is probably due to lack of wit on the part of their composers.
In 7 Catullus answers Lesbia’s imaginary question as to how many of her kisses will satisfy him with a set of ἀδύνατα, i.e. he mentions an infinite, uncountable number of kisses which will therefore automatically defeat the fascinatores.

In 48 Catullus is not interested in fascinatio at all. He is rather piling paradox upon paradox, declaring that neither a very large but finite number of kisses (milia trecenta, line 3) nor an infinite number (lines 5f.) will satisfy him. Thus in 48 he is in one respect combining the notions of 5 and 7 and going one stage further than either of them.

A further Alexandrian feature of Catullus 7 is that the combination of the word harena (line 3) and the reference to the oracle of Jupiter Ammon (line 5) hints at the learned etymology Ἄμμων – Ἄμμος. Servius, in commenting on Aeneid 4.196, collects several aetiological legends about the oracle of Ammon which are doubtless of Alexandrian origin and which all involve the etymology summed up by Servius in the words Ioúi Ammoni ab arenis dicto. Shackleton Bailey pointed out another Augustan allusion to the etymology at: hoc neque harenosum Libyae Ioúis explicat antrum (Propertius 4.1.103).

Moreover the particular ἀδύνατα chosen by Catullus in 7 may well hint at the style of oracular responses. The most famous and most subject to allusion and quotation of all ancient oracles (Parke and Wormell, The Delphic Oracle, Vol. II, no. 52) begins

Oída δ’ ἐγώ ψάμμου τ’ ἄριθμον καὶ μέτρα θαλάσσης,
καὶ κωφοῦ συνίμμι καὶ οὐ φοινεύντος ἄκούω
and a later Delphic response (no. 472) begins

Πάντῃ Φοιβείη τέταται τανυσσικόπος ἀκτίς·
καὶ τε διὰ στερεῶν χορεῖ θοῦν ὅμη πετράων,
καὶ διὰ κυκλεύσης ἄλος ἔρχεται, οὐδὲ ἐ λήβει
πληθὺς ἀστερόδεσσα παλινδήνητος ἴωσα
οὐρανὸν εἰς ἀκάμαντα σοφῆς κατὰ θεσμὸν ἀνάγκης,
though the point in this latter passage is the god’s all-seeing vision which is more general than, though it would doubtless include, his numerical knowledge.

The doctrina of the basis poems is unlikely to be simply ornamental. For although fascinatio (βάσκανία) is a common notion, its occurrence in Catullus 5 and 7 may well allude to Callimachus’ treatment of βάσκανία in one of the most influential poems of antiquity, the prologue to his Aetia. There the Ἑλεχίνες attack Callimachus: εἶνεκεν οὐχ ἐν ἄεισίμα διηνεκές ἢ βασιλ[η/ .....]ς ἐν πολλαῖς ἡνύσα χλώσιν (lines 3–4). Although this passage from Aetia 1 seems at first sight very far from the Catullan basis

3 Propertiana, ad. loc.
poems, three points confirming the significance of the coincidence should be observed.

(1) Catullus alludes directly to Callimachus at 7.6.

(2) A similar situation allows the Τελχίνες to attack Callimachus as would allow fascinatores, curiosi, mali to attack Catullus, i.e. Callimachus is assailed because he does not write many thousands of lines just as Catullus would be open to attack by fascinatores if his kisses were not numerous enough to elude them.

(3) In the vocabulary of ancient poetic literary criticism of poetry, the kind of poetry a poet wrote and the kind of life he lived were interchangeable equivalents. That it is sensible to hypothesise an implicit interchange of this sort in Catullus 5 and 7 is confirmed by an identical explicit interchange in a Propertian elegy which begins with the same theme as Catullus 5.

\[\text{In Propertius 2.30, where lines 13–14} \]
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ista senes licet accusent conuiua duri} \\
\text{nos modo propositum, uita, teramus iter}
\end{align*}
\]

\[\text{parallel Catullus 5.1–3} \]
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Viuamus, mea Lesbia atque amemus} \\
\text{rumoresque senum seueriorum} \\
\text{omnes unius aestimemus assis,}
\end{align*}
\]

Propertius develops this theme into an explicit Alexandrian manifesto in recusatio form. In 2.30 the attack of the senes on Propertius’ love-life turns into an attack on his love poetry and Propertius’ rejection of their attacks on his love-life goes hand-in-hand with a rejection of the literary alternatives the senes propose to erotic elegy.\(^4\) The literary manifesto of Aetia 1 is therefore nearer to the love-life of Catullus 5 and 7 than might at first appear. In a sense therefore Catullus 5 and 7 are also Alexandrian literary manifestos although they are more indirect and uphold a more specialised form of Alexandrian poetry than Aetia 1.

C. Erotic enumerations

Kiss counting is another traditional Alexandrian theme. No direct and unassailable evidence of purely erotic kiss-counting survives from Hellenistic poetry. The one fragment mentioning a specific number of kisses, τὸν μὲ παλαιστρίταν ὄμοσας θεὸν ἐπίκαις φιλήσειν (Callimachus Fr. 554 Pfeiffer) is religious rather than, or as well as, erotic. There is also

the kissing competition mentioned in Theocritus 12.27ff., an institution probably paralleled in antiquity, but in such cases quality rather than quantity was the criterion. But there must have been an Alexandrian tradition of kiss-counting. The pre-Alexandrian nine kisses of Eubulus Fr. 3.4 (Kock) and the ten kisses, derived from New Comedy, of Plautus, Truc. 373 indicate that kiss-counting was probably known to Alexandrian writers. In addition, post-Alexandrian examples such as omnia si dederis oscula, | pauca dabas (Propertius 2.15.49; ep. line 53f. with Cat. 5.5f.), ab ipsa Venere septem sauia (Apuleius Met. 6.8; cp. Moschus I 4, a single kiss, but an indication of the Alexandrian background), and ταῦτα μυθολογήσαντα τὸν Δάφνιον οὖ δέκα μόνον ἀλλὰ φιλήματα, ἀλλὰ πάντες πολλὰ κατεφύλησεν ἤ Χλόη (Longus, Daphnis and Chloe 3.23 ad fin.) hint strongly at the lost Alexandrian sources from which Catullus derived the motif.

Moreover kiss-counting is analogous to another kind of erotic enumeration, that of fututiones (see A.P. 5.181.11–12 [Asclepiades]; Catullus 32.8; A.P. 11.30 [Philodemus]; Propertius 2.22.23; Ovid, Amores 3.7.23f., 26; A.P. 5.61 [Rufinus?]).6 Although the numbers involved in this latter kind of erotic enumeration are naturally small (and even so, doubtless exaggerated) there are two indications that the traditions of enumerating kisses and fututiones are closer than might be thought. The first is the language of the earliest numeration of fututiones: A.P. 5.181.11–12 (Asclepiades):

eipè δὲ σημεῖον, Βάκχων ὅτι πέντε ἐφύλησεν
ἐξῆς, ὅν κλίνῃ μάρτυς ἐπεγράφησο.

where the tectum uerbum φιλέω, which could be rendered either as basiare or future did not the context demand the latter meaning, is used to avoid an obscene term. The second is Catullus 61.199–203

ille pulueris Africi
siderumque micantium
subducat numerum prius,
qui uestri numerare uolt
multa milia ludi.

In these lines from one of the Catullan epithalamia the bride and groom are together within the marriage chamber. A third kind of erotic enumeration, i.e. an enumeration of something intermediate between basia and fututiones, takes place in terms of milia and in combination with the same images of sand and stars as are found in Catullus 7.

5 See Gow on Theocritus 12.29.
6 Apples are also enumerated in erotic contexts (Eubulus loc.cit.; Theocr. 3.10; Virg. Ecl. 3.70f.; Prop. 2.34.69) but they appear to be of limited significance.
I am not of course suggesting that in the basia poems Catullus says *basia* and means *futationes* or even *ludi*. In poem 48 at any rate, this possibility is explicitly excluded by *oculos tuos* (line 1) as well as implicitly by the social background of 48.7

What I am suggesting is that the contiguity of these other kinds of erotic enumeration and the traditional nature of enumerations in erotic circumstances are welcome antidotes to over-romantic assessments of Catullus’ *basia* poems. The choice of a particular kind of enumeration has nothing to do with the feelings of the poet. It is dictated by formal and literary considerations including the type of poem being composed and above all the conventional character of the addressee. Catullus himself exemplifies this throughout the whole range of enumerations. He has enumerations of kisses for Lesbia the lyric mistress and for Iuventius the ιπτίτιλας (5, 7, 48), of *futationes* for Ipsitilla (?) the *scortum* (32) and of *ludi* for the bridal pair (61).

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7 See G. Williams, *Tradition and Originality in Roman Poetry*, 549ff.
Catullus 27

Minister uetuli puer Falerni
inger mi calices amariores,
ut lex Postumiae iubet magistrae
ebrioso acino ebriosioris.
at uos quo lubet hinc abite, lymphae,
uni pernicies, et ad seueros
migrate. hic merus est Thyonianus.

This short symptotic poem is difficult to understand. It has forerunners in early Greek lyric; and therefore it clearly contributes towards expressing the lyric personality which Catullus is assuming in his work. But this fact does not help with the interpretation of the poem’s meaning.

A valuable suggestion about the literary function of Catullus 27 has recently been put forward by T.P. Wiseman. Noting that it is followed by two harsh iambic poems, Wiseman regarded it as programmatic within Catullus’ original collection, its “harsher wine” pointing to the astringent wit of 28 and 29. But despite this insight the poem’s content still requires exegesis. In particular its wit is not obvious although its length and manner seem to imply that it is humorous.

J.D.P. Bolton saw the last sentence as the key to the poem’s wit. He rejected the traditional view which treated merus as if it were merum. Instead Bolton understood hic as ego, retranslated the sentence as referring to Catullus, “This one is Bacchus’ man throughout” and declared that the poem’s humour lay in Catullus’ proving his unmixed (merus) devotion to the god of wine by drinking his wine unmixed (merum). Bolton’s views

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*Mnemosyne* ser. iv 28 (1975) 24–29

1 I am very much indebted to Mr C.W. Macleod for his generous criticisms of and additions to two drafts of this paper and also to Mr. Robin Seager for his advice on the historical material relating to Postumia.
2 Cf. Kroll and Fordyce.
3 *Catullian Questions* (Leicester 1969), 7f.
4 *CR* 17 (1967), 12.
have their attractions: the “sting in the tail” provides the point of many ancient epigrams; and *hic* (1) would seem to contrast well with *ad seueros* (line 6) (those others — the water drinkers). But the sting Bolton proposes is not particularly biting or funny; and the interpretation of *hic* as “here” seems to offer a clearer contrast between *hinc* (line 5) (from here) and *abite* (5), *migrate* (7) (go away) on one hand and *hic* on the other. These reasons are not enough in themselves to make us reject Bolton’s suggestions. But they do make it worthwhile to consider new alternatives.

Catullus 27, in my view, contains a number of congruent humorous touches. To begin with, Catullus makes amusing and novel use of commonplace generic material. The poem is an example of a specialised type of *epistaltikon/mandata* to a wine pourer at a banquet. From other examples, viz. Anacreon 356(a) *PMG*; 396 *PMG*; Diphilus Fr. 57 K–A, it is clear that in this type of poem the speaker addresses the wine pourer and requests either a moderate or an immoderate mixture of wine and water. He then gives the reason for his request, which also functions as a justification of it. Like Diphilus Fr. 57 K–A, Catullus 27 is a request for an immoderate mixture — in fact in both cases no water at all is asked for; and like Diphilus’, Catullus’ reason is a joke. Whereas Diphilus alludes to the medical theory of humours, Catullus gives as the reason and justification for his orders to the wine pourer orders he himself has received — from the *magistra bibendi* Postumia. This piece of “buck-passing” is meant to be recognised as a lame and hence amusing excuse; and the position of subordination which Catullus assumes vis-à-vis the drunken *meretrix* and *magistra bibendi* Postumia apropos of drinking is a lyric analogue of the situation later seen in Roman elegy where the poet is dominated in matters of love by the *meretrix* mistress who rules over the elegiac *convivium*.

This is not all: the excuse is made all the more humorous by the ramifications of the words *lex* and *magistra* (line 3). Drunkenness is, quite naturally, associated in antiquity with lack of restraint and good order. The duty of the person in charge of the banquet was to ensure among other things that drinking was done in an orderly and moderate fashion.⁵ But in Catullus 27 drunkenness is being disguised and excused as the regulation of the symposiarch. In this way the conventions of decent society are not just being ignored or breached. They are being deliberately flouted by this reversal of the restraints which normally controlled social behaviour at banquets. The “law-giving” powers of the presiding officer are being used to promote the very opposite effect to that intended for the office.

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⁵ Cf. Plut. *Mor.* 620ff. and *RE* IV, 612f. s.v. *Comissatio*; IIA, 204, 207f. s.v. *Saturnalia*. The νόμοι σωματικοί are (*pace* Kroll) very much part of the same conception of the symposium.
The play on legal language in *lex* and *magistra* is continued in Catullus’ use of the associated field of religious language in lines 5–7. These are a parody of an *apopompe* (*auersio*), the formula of aversion of evil upon others, particularly upon enemies. Catullus’ wit here is manifold: he is suggesting — like Diphilus — that water is medically dangerous, since a characteristic evil averted in this way is disease. *Pernicies* (line 7) recalls *pestis*, with which it is often linked. The *seueri* (water drinkers) are at the same time enemies of the drunken poet and also amusingly appropriate persons for water to be averted upon. Again the evils like *Fames* and *Pestis* which are characteristically the object of *auersio* often themselves have a supernatural quality or are personified as deities. Here the *lymphae* have this characteristic. *Nymphae/lymphae* were worshipped in antiquity and the religious cast of lines 5–7 suggests that they should be understood as semi-personified deities. Finally the language of lines 5–7 and the deification of the *lymphae* reveal the meaning of the final sentence: there *Thyonianus* (as Ausonius correctly realised) is the god Bacchus and the sentence means “Here Bacchus is undiluted”. The *lymphae=nymphae* (*Hyades*) are usually the companions of Bacchus or even his nurses. The application of this concept in the context of mixing wine and water can be seen in a passage from the *Aththis* of Philochoros quoted by Athenaeus (693 d–e): καὶ θέσμιον, φησίν, ἐπέθη τότε προσφέρεσθαι μετὰ τὰ σπέια πάσιν ἀκράτου μὲν ὀσον γεῦμα καὶ δείγμα τῆς δυνάμεως τοῦ ἄγαθοῦ θεοῦ, τὸν δὲ λοιπὸν ἥδη κεκραμένον. δὴ δ’ καὶ τροφοῦ τοῦ Διονύσου τὰς Νύμφας ὀνομασθηναι. But paradoxically in Catullus 27 the *lymphae* are Bacchus’ enemies and rivals. As such they are driven out and Bacchus alone is accepted as the god worshipped at Postumia’s symposium. The legal-religious language used by Catullus is designed to combine with this paradox so as to create an absurd contrast between the actual disorderly and impious banquet and the solemn terms applied to it.

A final source of humour lies in the proper name *Postumia* (line 4). It has been suggested that Postumia is a real person, a contemporary of Catullus, the wife of Ser. Sulpicius Rufus (consul 51 BC), a mistress of

7 Id.
8 Cf. Cat. 76.20 and Fordyce ad loc.
10 Cento praef.
11 Cf. *RE* VIII, s.v. *Hyaden*, 2620
12 Cf. also Athen. 38 CD; Plut. *Mor.* 613 D, 657 F.
Catullus 27

Caesar and a lady of known loose life. This suggestion is, I believe, highly probable and it gains further support from Wiseman’s observation that 27 has a programmatic function. 28 and 29 are attacks on Caesar’s father-in-law Pompey, on Caesar himself, and on Caesar’s henchman Mamurra. What better magistra bibendi to preside over the serving of this harsher wine than Caesar’s mistress?

But a sneering reference to a noble lady presiding like a harlot over a drunken banquet, although iambic, is not in itself witty. There is more to Postumia than this. One notion associated with the gens Postumia in Roman history is that of the imperia Postumiana. These were the legendary orders of A. Postumius Tubertus (dictator 431 BC) for the execution of his son who had abandoned his post after a battle. Postumius and his orders thus became a stock example of severity.

At first sight it might appear that the orders of a general on the battlefield and those of a magistra bibendi of the same gens at a banquet are worlds apart. But in antiquity the authority of the presiding officer at a banquet was sometimes treated as analogous to military command. Roman titles used for the post such as modimperator (i.e. modi imperator) (Varro ap. Non. 142) and dictatrix (Pl. Pers. 770) show this.

Moreover there is an excellent parallel for the same association of thought in a context very similar to Catullus 27. The harshness which Postumius showed to his son on the field of battle was also attributed to T. Manlius Imperiosus Torquatus (dictator 353 BC), whose Manliana imperia were synonymous with the Postumiana imperia. In Epistles 1.5 Horace, writing in the role of future host and magister bibendi, invites his contemporary L. Manlius Torquatus to dinner. He tells Manlius, in terms which allude to the Manlian family’s distinguished past history, what wine Manlius will be served (lines 4–5). Then, in an allusion to the Manliana imperia Horace says: si melius quid habes, arcesse uel imperium fer (6).

There is a difference between Horace’s joke and that of Catullus. Horace keeps the word imperium and leaves his reader to supply the proper name Manlianum from the context. Catullus supplies the proper name Postumia and substitutes lex for imperium. This is not to say that these two words are synonymous. But the commonplace use of both lex and imperium to refer to the authority of the president of a banquet allowed

13 Cf. Kroll and Fordyce ad loc. C.L. Neudling, *A Prosopography to Catullus* (Oxford 1955), 149 believes that Postumia was a native of Brixia because of the Brixian Postumius at Cat. 67.35. The lex Postumia introduced by Barbarus into the text of Pliny *N.H.* 14.88 is unacceptable and unhelpful; see André ad loc.
14 Cf. Livy 4.26.4ff. and Ogilvie ad loc.
15 *Id.* and cf. Livy 7.3ff.
Catullus to interchange them here as they are interchanged in a different context by Propertius (4.8.81–2):

\[
\text{indixit legem: respondi ego ‘Legibus utar’.} \\
\text{riserat imperio facta superba dato.}
\]

The allusion to Postumius is appropriate to a doctus poeta. Of the two kinds of imperia — Manliana and Postumiana — the Manliana are far better known and more often cited.\(^{17}\) So Catullus has carefully chosen to base his humour on the more recondite incident.

The wit of Catullus lies therefore in its contrasts — between the harsh imperia of Postumius and the very far from harsh lex of Postumia and between the anarchic drunken banquet and the pretence of legality and religious observance. Catullus defends his own drinking of unmixed wine by alleging the command of Postumia, a lady of the strictest ancestry. The legal/religious language is thus ironically in keeping with this pious early Roman image.

Catullus is not only attacking his contemporary Postumia by representing her presiding over a courtesan’s banquet. He is also doing it in a witty way by contrasting her with her great ancestor the dictator. The specific command ad seueros migrate (lines 6–7) may well hint at descriptions of the dictator Postumius such as uir seuerissimi imperi (Livy 4.26.11). This way of attacking a noble lady can be paralleled in this period. It is exactly how Cicero attacks Clodia when he contrasts her with her highly moral ancestor Appius Claudius Caecus.\(^{18}\) By introducing an allusion to an incident from early Roman history into this kind of sympotic poem Catullus is of course blending Greek and Roman material in a way characteristic of Roman poets and making an original contribution to the genre.

If Catullus had a specific source of historical information, this may well have been C. Licinius Macer, a near-contemporary historian and the father of Catullus’ closest and most esteemed poetic colleague and friend, C. Licinius Macer Calvus. Livy 4.29 (on the imperia Postumiana) is derived from Macer.\(^{19}\)

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\(^{17}\) Cf. \textit{RE} XIV, s.v. Manlius (Imperiosus), 1187

\(^{18}\) \textit{Pro Caelio} 33f.

\(^{19}\) Cf. R.M. Ogilvie, \textit{JRS} 48 (1958), 40ff. I note for completeness the occurrence at Livy 4.29 of another passage derived from Macer dealing with the Vestal Postumia accused of unchastity propter cultum amoeniorem ingeniumque liberius quam uirginem decret, acquitted after two trials but warned by the Pontifex Maximus abstinere iociis colique sancte potius quam scite. On balance however I believe it unlikely that this Postumia has anything to do with Cat. 27 in that she would blur the contrast which provides the poem with its wit.
Venusta Sirmio: Catullus 31*

The Emotions of Poet and Reader

† Catullus’ homecoming poem addressed to his villa at Sirmio is one of his most attractive lyrics. Its effusive representation of that universal human sentiment, love for home, shows us clearly why Catullus is reckoned to be outstanding among Latin poets as a creator of the illusion of spontaneity.

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* The most important modern expositions of Catullus 31 are contained in the commentaries of Fordyce (1961), Kroll (1968) and Quinn (1970). Two recent articles on poem 31 — Baker (1970) and Witke (1972) — do not, in my view, further our understanding of it. The latter indeed obscures the poem by arguing that there is ‘a sexual relationship between “uenusta Sirmio” and Catullus’ (240), a notion for which I find no evidence in the text.

In the preparation of this analysis, I was aided by the valuable advice of my colleague, Mr J.R.G. Wright, and also by numerous editorial observations, both stylistic and factual.
A superficial reader might happily be deceived by this illusion. He would have some justification: the ‘deceptive’ power of poetry is one of its most basic characteristics. Hesiod, who obviously disapproved, made the Muses say to him on Helicon: ‘we know how to tell many untrue things, making them appear true’ (Theogony 27). But the scholarly critic is more exacting: he is not so much interested in his own feelings about the poem. Rather he wants to know the intentions of the poem and the ways in which these intentions have been carried out; and this involves a stringent effort to discover the meaning of the poem on all its levels.

In these terms Catullus’ own feelings are irrelevant to poem 31. We can well believe — although we cannot know — that Catullus felt warmly towards his home at Sirmio. But the poem is not a simple expression of love for home; it is a complex effort to convey this emotion to a reader. The process of conveyance forms an impermeable barrier between us and any questions we might ask about Catullus’ own emotions. To us as critical readers, it does not matter whether Catullus really felt the emotion conveyed by a poem or not; the poem can stand by itself as a medium of expression. Of course its seemingly artless simplicity is the principal means whereby the emotion is conveyed.

When we investigate and expound 31 we are not attempting to dissect the reader’s experience of the poem. We are investigating the poem itself as objectively as possible. The situation has physical parallels: we can for example investigate the chemical properties of sodium chloride and study their physiological interaction with the human taste-buds; but we cannot with any success describe or analyse the taste of salt. The investigation of poetry differs however in one important respect from the investigation of salt. No amount of scientific erudition will help us taste salt better or more intensely. But the scholarly investigation of poetry, especially poetry of other ages and cultures than our own, does help us towards a truer and deeper experience of the poem. It does so partly by clearing from our minds irrelevant and prejudiced attitudes, which could generate in us false reactions; and partly by informing us about the intellectual content of poetry. So while we cannot compel the ‘romantic’ to read commentaries on Catullus, we can advise him to do so. Our grounds are that if he does not, he is in danger of splashing in a bath of ignorant and self-generated sentimentality which has nothing to do with Catullus. The application of scholarship to Catullus 31 ought then to produce a deeper and more objective appreciation of it and enable it to be read with a more mature and reasoned pleasure.
Poetic Craftsmanship

Catullus was one of a group of Roman poets who adopted the ideals of the Greek ‘Alexandrian’ literary movement.¹ In his prologue poem (1) he claimed as the hallmarks of his poetry the Alexandrian virtues: fine finish and sophistication in the laboured treatment of small-scale work, learning and originality.² Technical expertise and careful composition are of course characteristic of all good poetry in antiquity, non-Alexandrian as well as Alexandrian. But in his conscious proclamation and intensive practice of them Catullus is typically Alexandrian. Some of Catullus’ craftsmanship in 31 can easily be detected. Something as simple as the relative lengths of individual words demonstrates it well. The first three lines are particularly interesting in this respect. The word-lengths (with in liquentibus in line 2 taken as one word-unit) are:

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<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
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<tr>
<td>line 1</td>
<td>5, 3, 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>line 2</td>
<td>3, 3, 5, 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>line 3</td>
<td>3, 2, 1, 3, 3</td>
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Here Catullus is employing a traditional device which goes back to remote antiquity. J.D. Denniston describes the opening sentence of Herodotus’ history in these words:

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¹ The ‘Alexandrian’ movement is so called because it flourished mainly in the city of Alexandria during the third century B.C. although its effects naturally became more widespread in the course of time. Its most influential champion was Callimachus (c. 305–240 B.C.), but another famous name associated with it is Theocritus (c. 300–260 B.C.). Through dissatisfaction with the dominance of inflated epic poetry, these poets advocated ‘lower’ forms such as didactic, pastoral, epigram, hymn and ‘miniature epic’ (epyllion). The features we chiefly think of as ‘Alexandrian’ are those listed above: literary polish, erudition of all kinds (literary allusions, antiquarianism, science, geography, etc. — Callimachus’ most famous poem was called Αἴτημα, ‘Origins’), originality of theme and treatment, a personal approach. The movement, which is sometimes referred to also as ‘Hellenistic’, had a notable contemporary opponent in Apollonius (see Bramble (1974) p.83 and n.6).

Although Alexandrian poetry was known at Rome early (e.g. to Ennius), ‘Alexandrianism’ as such had no major influence upon Latin poetry until the middle of the first century B.C. Thereafter its effect was extensive, a famous instance being the ‘new poets’ such as Catullus himself: see in general Wimmel (1960) and Clausen (1964). The essays in the volume in which this paper originally appeared, Woodman–West (1974), demonstrate in particular the influence of Callimachus upon Catullus (the present paper) and upon Horace (Woodman (1974) pp.123–6), and of Theocritus (who, despite having written narrative poems, encomia and epigrams, was regarded by Romans as the founder of pastoral poetry) upon Virgil (Williams (1974) pp.32–3, 42–3) and Propertius (Bramble (1974)).

² Cairns (1969) {above, ch. 1}. 

The power of the sentence is heightened by the relative word-lengths, the four sweeping polysyllables with which it opens being followed by a series of short words (a rhythmic effect which we can observe also in the openings of the *De Rerum Natura* and Sappho’s ode to Aphrodite).\(^3\)

Catullus is doing something similar. The longer words of the first line are followed by the run of shorter words in lines 2–3, broken only by *in liquentibus* in line 2. We can see the effect which Catullus achieves by this device: the praise of Sirmio, a place making its first appearance in literature (see below, p.26), is made to sound more impressive. Catullus’ use of similar patterns of word-lengths to obtain an effect of anticlimax and parody can be seen at the beginning of poem 3.

The remainder of Catullus 31 also shows a delicate sense of balance in word-lengths. Notable is line 10 standing in contrast to line 9 and line 11. It is unlikely that every detail of the word-length patterning is Catullus’ conscious creation. But an easy and partly unconscious achievement of balance and alternation between long and short words characterizes the fully trained, competent and careful craftsman-poet. It makes for a flowing, pleasing and natural-sounding diction.

Another very basic and easily observable aspect of poetic craftsmanship is the poet’s care to vary the positions of pauses within his lines. This usually involves variation in the use of end-stopped and enjambed lines (for which see Kenney (1974) p.19 and n.2). Catullus’ care for this in 31 is easy to see. If stopped lines are symbolized by *S* and enjambed lines by *E*, we observe the following pattern:

\[E E S S E S S E S S E E S\]

Besides illustrating Catullus’ poetic technique this analysis helps with the textual problem in line 13. One of our manuscripts gives us the reading *gaude* which is unmetrical and does not make sense. Another offers *gaudete*. With the latter reading the line has meaning. But if this reading were correct then both lines 12 and 13 would be end-stopped. This would mean that six successive lines (9–14), with no significant internal pauses to break them up, would be end-stopped. Such wooden regularity is not normal Catullan practice. Bergk’s emendation *gaudente*, as well as its other advantages (see below, p.22), turns lines 12 and 13 into enjambed lines. This affords the desired variety in pause-structure; and the fact that it does so favours *gaudente*.

Besides noting whether a line is enjambed or end-stopped, we can distinguish various strengths of enjambment or end-stopping. The end-stop at 10, for example, is stronger than at 3; the enjambment at 1 carries the reader over to 2 with greater force than he is carried from 5 to 6. Further

\(^3\) Denniston (1952), 7.
variety is introduced into enjambment when different cases run on to pauses at different points in the next lines. ocelle (line 2) and gaudente (line 13) take us three syllables into the next line to a pause; but the enjambment from lines 2 and 5 take us to the end of lines 3 and 6 respectively. All these variations prevent the poem becoming monotonous or rhythmically repetitive at any place. The metrical regularity of the iambic scason is subtly counterpointed by the studied irregularity of the poet’s speaking voice.

The details of technique so far observed are accessible on the surface, although they are no less interesting for this. We could add to them, if we wished, some account of the sounds of the words chosen by Catullus and their relation to the meaning of the poem. But this is something every reader can do for himself. It is more interesting to go on to less obvious aspects of poetic technique. One is grammatical variation. For example there are considerable differences in the grammatical status of verbs: lines 1–6 are a statement in the indicative; 7–10 are still in the indicative but are a ‘rhetorical’ question; 11 returns to statement and 12–14 are in the imperative mood of command. Similarly descriptions of Sirmio (1–3, 12–14) are mingled with reflections on Catullus’ travels (4–6, 8–10) and with generalizations (7, 11). These variations overlap. The effect is one of alert liveliness; the poem is never regular or capable of being anticipated.

A fair number of figures of speech and of thought are found in Catullus 31. In line 1 there is assonance and homoeoteleuton in the repeated insularum. Catullus prevented this sound-play from becoming trite by placing que at the end of the second insularum. Another assonance combined with polyptoton (for which see West (1974), p.70) appears in gaude gaudente (12–13). This may be an elegant imitation of a Greek turn of phrase like χαίροντι ... χαίρων (‘you rejoicing to me rejoicing’, Homer, Odyssey 17.83) (see below, p.29). Line 4 employs anaphora (the repetition of a word at the beginning of successive clauses, phrases or verses) in quam ... quamque. In lines 8–10 three clauses describe the joy of homecoming. In lines 12–14, three commands constitute an ‘ascending tricolon’ climaxing in the last line. In each case the three clauses are deliberately varied to avoid any suggestion of the prosaic or monotonous. Lines 8–10 show differences in clause length, with the longest clause in the centre. This prevents the final clause of the three becoming so weighty that the poem

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4 Assonance is the close repetition of similar vowel sounds; homoeoteleuton occurs when words or clauses have a similar ending (from ὀμοιότελευτον).
5 Also known as ‘tricolon crescendo’, i.e. a series of three syntactically parallel clauses so arranged that they are in ascending order of magnitude. The parallelism is often marked by anaphora, with the repeated word sometimes in a different case, gender or number in each colon. See further Fraenkel (1957), 351 n.1.
comes to a halt at line 10. The positions of the verb differ in the three clauses; and there is a deliberate and obvious grammatical variation. In lines 12–14 the first two clauses are short, the third longer than the first two put together. The weight of length is given to the final clause because the poem ends at this point. The positions and grammar of the verbs are again varied.

All these figures and especially the two tricola are meant to convey the plenitude of Catullus’ emotions and to give the impression of a man carried away by his feelings. The same joy and pleasure is expressed in other kinds of fullness of language throughout the poem. So in the first few lines we have a style almost reminiscent of Ciceronian rotundity:

- paeneinsularum ~ insularumque (1)
- liquentibus stagnis ~ marique uasto (2–3)
- libenter ~ laetus (4)
- Thuniam ~ Bithunos (5)

Note however that three times out of four he places one of the pair at the end of a line, at the point where the ‘limping’ trochaic rhythm is found. Thus one of each pair is contrasted rhythmically with its complement, which occurs in the earlier iambic part of a line. We also find this expansive tendency in the indefinite clauses (quascumque …, 2; quidquid …, 14) (te, 4, 6; mi ipse, 5; nostrum, 9; uosque, 13), in the phrase hoc est quod unum est (11) and in the uses of the emotional o (7, 12, 13).

But Catullus, although aiming at effusiveness in poem 31, never lapses into the fault of looseness of composition. Tautness is achieved by his habit of constantly setting words in tension with, opposition to, or concordance with each other. These little touches sharpen the intellectual edge of the poem. So liquentibus stagnis (2), designating lakes, is answered by uasto mari (3), the sea. inuiso (4) is picked up by uidere (6). The central section contains multiple contrast and complementation: solutis curis (7) corresponding to onus reponit (8), peregrino (8) contrasting with larem nostrum (9), fessi (9) contrasting with acquiescimus (10), labore (9) contrasting with lecto (10). Framing the whole section is curis (7) corresponding to laboribus (11).

These then are some of the detailed resources of Catullus’ poetic technique. A more general technical problem faced by Catullus is one of the most difficult faced by all professional lyric poets. This is the problem of how to give the audience in brief all the information it needs to understand the poem while avoiding a tedious statement of facts. In poem 31 Catullus must convey to his audience the following information: ‘I have just returned from Bithynia to my beloved home at Sirmio. I did not enjoy being abroad and I am glad to be back.’ At the beginning of the poem Catullus deliberately postpones giving hard information. He launches
straight away into three lines of colourful praise of Sirmio. These three lines tell the reader little, although there is some informational content. The reader who has begun not even knowing what Sirmio is now knows that Catullus likes Sirmio very much and that Sirmio is either an island or a peninsula. But the main point of these lines is not to give information. They are meant to intrigue the reader and awaken his interest in Sirmio and in the poet’s attachment to it.

It is because the reader’s curiosity is aroused and his imagination stimulated in the first three lines that Catullus is able to slip most of the information necessary for understanding of the poem into lines 5 and 6: he has left Bithynia behind and is now safely at Sirmio. These two informative lines are strategically placed between 4, in which Catullus tells us something we already know from 1–3 (that he likes Sirmio), and 7, in which Catullus does some general philosophizing. Lines 4 and 7 are deliberately non-informative: they are meant to disguise and palliate the informativeness of 5–6. Catullus’ skill extends even to an indirect presentation of the facts of 5–6. We are not told them as plain facts but as something Catullus can ‘hardly believe’. The calculated interplay of personality and fact in this presentation is typical of the best kind of writer.

Catullus has reserved one very important fact until line 8 — that Sirmio is his home. The effect of not revealing his relationship to Sirmio for so long is to keep the reader in suspense and so retain his attention. In lines 8–10 Catullus finally reveals his relationship to Sirmio. As in lines 5–6, this fact is expressed indirectly. The general reflection begun by Catullus in line 7 is continued in lines 8–10: ‘What is nicer than coming home after wearying foreign travel?’ Since Catullus has already told us in 5–6 that he has been abroad, we naturally assume that Sirmio is the home to which he has returned. The poet shows his skill by allowing us to draw a conclusion here rather than simply giving us a fact. The general reflection also implies a second fact about Catullus’ stay abroad; it was wearisome. This fact is cleverly represented as an additional reason for Catullus’ joy at being home. The first informative section (5–6) was framed between the generalities of 4 and 7; 7 is a centrepiece in the poem and combines with 11 to form a generalizing frame for 8–10. By 11, therefore, we know all the facts we need to know; and Catullus uses a second non-informative address to Sirmio to complete the poem.

This analysis reveals an interesting structure of information conveyance. The poem is constructed like a double sandwich. The first section (1–4), third section (7) and fifth section (11–14) are repetitive, non-informative expressions of Catullus’ love for Sirmio and of his pleasure at returning there. The hard core of factual information is sandwiched between these relatively non-factual expressions of feeling; it forms the
second and fourth sections of the poem (5–6, 8–10). The particular artistic technique found here is also used, for example, in poem 9, the prosphonetikon (welcome-home poem) for Veranius’ return from Spain.\(^6\)

We can usefully analyse Catullus 31 also in terms of another kind of structure — that of thematic content. The themes of the poem are arranged in the commonest pattern found in ancient poetry — a ‘ring’. The description ‘ring-composition’ is sometimes applied to poems which end with a repetition and further development of their initial concept. But in the case of Catullus 31 I am using the term to mean a structure in which not one but all the themes recur. The central point is sometimes a unique and non-repeated theme (as e.g. in the form A B C D C B A); but sometimes, as in Catullus 31, the central theme is yet another expression of one of the surrounding themes. A ring-structure provided a convenient framework upon which ancient poets could arrange their material. In addition it had the advantages of artistic symmetry and of allowing the poet to achieve subtle contrasts between his two treatments of a single theme. Finally, an ancient poet’s audience anticipated that he might employ this device. Their expectation therefore eased the problem of communication between writer and reader.

In Catullus 31 the ring-structure is easy to detect. Sirmio is named and apostrophized at 1 and 12; and the subject of both 1–3 and 12–14 is praise of Sirmio and its lake. The body of the lyric lies between two general expressions of Catullus’ pleasure at coming home — lines 4 and 11. Line 7, another such expression, is the centre-piece of the poem. The two informational passages (5–6 and 8–10) are parallel in function and content, the second being a development upon and addition to the first. So we can schematize the poem roughly as follows:

\[
\begin{array}{ll}
A^1 & 1–3 \quad \text{Praise of Sirmio} \\
B^1 & 4 \quad \text{C.’s pleasure in seeing Sirmio (his home)} \\
C^1 & 5–6 \quad \text{C.’s journey and return} \\
B^2 & 7 \quad \text{The pleasure of freedom from care} \\
C^2 & 8–10 \quad \text{Homecoming after work abroad} \\
B^3 & 11 \quad \text{The pleasure of homecoming and freedom from care} \\
A^2 & 12–14 \quad \text{Praise of Sirmio and requests to it and the lake to share C.’s pleasure}
\end{array}
\]

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\(^6\) Cairns (1972), 122.
Learning

Another Alexandrian literary catchphrase — the one which is nowadays thought to be most characteristic of the movement — was learning. Catullus in his first poem also claimed this virtue for his work. It used to be thought that this Catullan learning was shown in his longer poems rather than in his short lyrics. But in fact his short lyrics are just as learned in every way as the longer poems.

The learning of poem 31 is seen first in Catullus’ choice of Sirmio as its addressee. Sirmio is a small peninsula in the northern Italian Lake Garda. To our knowledge no previous writer had given Sirmio literary or any other kind of fame. It was Catullus who first decided to dignify his unknown Italian home with a literary accolade. In doing so he is in the great tradition of Alexandrian learning. Alexandrian poets did sometimes write about hackneyed myths and places, although always in an original manner. But, as Catullus does here, they often treated unusual or even seemingly insignificant subjects untouched by previous literature (compare Horace on his local territory, Woodman (1974) p.123). This is part of what the greatest of Alexandrian poets, Callimachus, meant when he described how Apollo, in metaphorical language, gave him the following advice about writing poetry:

I also tell you this: walk a path
untrodden by chariots; do not drive your carriage

|on the common prints of others, or on a wide road,
but on unworn ways, though your track be narrower.

_Aetia fr. 1.25–8 Pfeiffer_

The format of Catullus’ description of Sirmio further demonstrates his learning. He gives Sirmio encomiastic treatment of a kind familiar to us not only from Alexandrian but also from earlier Greek literature. The eulogistic method is to dignify the unusual and previously unsung deity or hero or place or whatever in two ways: by association with more celebrated deities, heroes, places; and by employing formulaic language of a kind usually employed in association with important deities etc.7 Catullus says that Sirmio is the gem of all the peninsulas and islands in all the lakes and seas under Neptune’s control (1–3). The little lake of Garda is thus associated with the awe-inspiring concept of the three divisions of the universe, under its tutelary deity, the great god Neptune, brother of Jupiter and Pluto. This encomiastic formula strengthens the praise of Sirmio in another way too: it is one familiarly used of great themes for praise — a

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7 Such encomiastic techniques are especially frequent in Pindar, e.g. the beginnings of _Pythians_ 6, 8, 11; _Nemeans_ 2, 7, 8.
sweeping favourable comparison of the object lauded with all other things of the same type. It takes the form: ‘best of (all) the …s in the …’. We may compare for example:

πάντων ἄριστον ἄνδρα τῶν ἐπὶ χθονί
the best man of all men in the world

Sophocles Trachinia 811

optima caelicolum Saturnia magna dearum. Ennius Annales 491 Vahlen

A use of this formula somewhat similar to Catullus’ use can be found, interestingly enough, in Callimachus:

… surely all
the Cyclades, most sacred of islands that lie in the sea,
are worthy of song …

Hymn 4.2–4

Two further touches in lines 1–3 reveal the flavour of scholarship sought after by Alexandrian poets like Catullus. The extended reference to all the lakes and seas in the world is reminiscent of the encyclopaedic prose works which Greek Alexandrian scholar-poets composed. In particular Callimachus’ work, ‘On the Rivers of the World’, a different but related study, comes to mind (frr. 457–9 Pfeiffer). Such prose catalogues provided raw material for Alexandrian poetry. The ‘On the Rivers’ is reflected in Callimachus’ Hymn to Zeus (lines 16ff.); and a similar interest in islands can be detected in Callimachus’ Hymn to Delos (lines 13ff., 48ff., 153ff.). The second touch of scholarship in lines 1–3 is the phrase uterque Nep-tunus. Alexandrian poets were deeply concerned with local cults and with the odd characteristics which deities were given in different localities. Mythographers sometimes spoke as though the various attributes meant that there was not one god with a particular name but several. The end result can be seen for example in Cicero De Natura Deorum 3.53–9 and in Clement of Alexandria Protreptikos 2.28.1–4 with their lists of ‘three Jupiters and several Vulcans’ and so on.

This interest is connected not only with antiquarianism but with religious syncretism and philosophic scepticism about the more literal side of polytheism. In Greek Alexandrian literature however it is the antiquarian interest which predominates, along with the passion for obscure cult-practices and local history. We can see this from a fragment of Callimachus:

The Aphrodites — for the goddess is not one —
are excelled in wisdom by Aphrodite of Castnion,
all of them …
for she alone allows the sacrifice of swine.

Callimachus Iambi 10.1–4 Pfeiffer
In Catullus the concept of ‘two Neptunes’ is just literary ornament, possibly with a humorous overtone (see below, p.35). But it sets him firmly in the Alexandrian tradition.

Lines 5–6 contain a varied and precise reference to the Thuni and Bithuni, the two tribes inhabiting Bithynia. Ancient poets, including Alexandrian poets, were usually, by our criteria, very ignorant of geography and tend to confuse and misplace localities. But Alexandrian poets tried to give the impression of having accurate and detailed geographical and ethnographical information; and in his reference to the Thuni and Bithuni Catullus is following in their footsteps. He has recently been in the area himself and so has precise knowledge which he can, in Alexandrian fashion, show off to his literary friends back home. There is also some kind of word-play here: Bithuni with its prefix *bi* brings to mind the notion ‘second Thuni’. Part of the intention of this word-play may be etymological to show how the Bithuni came to have this name. Etymology, much of it inaccurate, was a favourite occupation of Alexandrian poets, although it is also found in earlier Greek poetry. Another jocular etymological word-play may possibly occur in the final section of Catullus 31. Catullus describes Lake Garda’s waves as ‘Lydian’ (line 13). He may be hinting that *Lydius* is connected with *ludere* and so underlining the aptness of the word to describe the playful waves. If so the proximity of *gaude*, *gaudente*, *ridete* and *cachinnorum* would help the reader to guess that this was what Catullus had in mind.8

Whether this suggestion is correct or not the adjective *Lydiae* is certainly learned in another way. The Etruscans were supposed to have originated in Lydia and so were called Lydians. To call Garda’s waves Lydian is therefore an allusion to the Etruscan settlers who had once occupied the Garda region. This reference recalls the great interest of Alexandrian poets in the foundations of cities and in foundation legends. As well as many poetic treatments of these themes Greek Alexandrian interest expressed itself in Callimachus’ prose work ‘On the Foundations of Islands and Cities and their Changes of Name’ (see Pfeiffer (1949) 339).

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8 It is possible that *ludius* (actor etc.), derived from *Lydius*, may have generated false popular etymologies linking *Lydius* and *ludere*. But Varro’s etymology of *ludius* was correct (cf. Walde–Hofmann s.v. *ludius*). For a false etymological link between *Phrygius* and *fruges* see Lucretius 2.611–13 and West (1969), 105–6.
Catullus 31 contains a sustained personification of Sirmio. Catullus is the owner of Sirmio so that Sirmio stands in an inferior social position to him. But it is an exaggeration to suggest, as a recent commentator has done, that Catullus is thinking of his estate as a slave. The arguments advanced for this view were that ero (12) is ‘the slave’s word for his master’ and that the notion is continued in the ‘ambiguity’ of domi (14) so that ‘Catullus’ Sirmio property and its lake setting are spoken of as his household of slaves’. Neither argument is valid. The word erus used in line 12 is a substitute for dominus. It may be used because the three short syllables of dominus are hard to fit into the iambic metre. Erus may have overtones of ‘common’ speech; but it is not specifically and solely ‘a slave’s word for his master’. It is used in poetry on three other occasions also of the ‘owner of a place’ — Horace Satires 2.1.12; Epistles 1.16.2; Catalepta 2.4. In no instance is there a notion of slavery. Similarly domi does not suggest slavery. The whole phrase quidquid est domi is common and colloquial and means ‘(laugh) all the laughs you have’. In any case a slave household in Latin is familia not domus.

Catullus then is just the master of Sirmio asking his property to welcome him and personifying his property in his request. The highly personalized quality of Catullus’ command to Sirmio and to the lake is achieved by Catullus’ exploitation of the Greek greeting γαῖρε, which he has in mind. Roman poets often render Greek terms, sometimes as learned ornament, sometimes also, as here, because they convey a useful shade of meaning. The greeting γαῖρε means both ‘hello’ and ‘show your joy’ and so conveys more than the Latin salute. Catullus translates it by both salute and gaude, so that the pair together make up a full equivalent of γαῖρε. Catullus’ contemporary Cicero explains the principle behind this type of multiple translation: ‘equidem soleo etiam, quod uno Graeci, si aliter non possum, idem pluribus uerbis exponere’ (De Finibus 3.15).

By moving from salute to gaude Catullus strikes a direct and personal note. This is continued in his command to the waters of the lake. From gaude he graduates to a more specific instruction to joy — ‘laugh’. Waves in antiquity were often said to ‘laugh’, so that the notion is in no way odd. Yet it forms an apt climax to the personification.

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12 Fordyce (1961), 170.
Lyric poets in all literatures have the same problem. They must use language not too different from that of ordinary life and at the same time elevate it with an infusion of ‘poetic’ vocabulary. Or in alternative terms, they must revivify traditional ‘poetic’ diction without debasing it by blending into it hitherto common or even vulgar vocabulary. This process in Latin poetry is difficult to discuss. Our limited knowledge of the Latin language often leaves us uncertain whether a word is prosaic, vulgar, refined or whatever. The difficulty is particularly acute in Catullus, because one source of his ‘non-poetic’ vocabulary is clearly the smart clichés and elegant social idiom of the Roman upper classes. Such diction tends to contain an admixture of former vulgarisms purged of their vulgarity by use in unvulgar contexts. A further complication is that old vulgar or common words may in time become ‘archaic’ and hence ‘poetic’ through sheer hoariness.

Our pronouncements therefore are highly fallible; but in spite of the danger of error, it is worth trying to glimpse Catullus’ intentions. Lines 1–3 contain much elevated language. paeneinsula, although perhaps not a distinguished word in itself, gains distinction from its context. The diminutive ocella (line 2) stands in contrast. It is at once urbane and tender. Lines 4–6 are more relaxed; the use of quam ... quamque is emotive and familiar, as is the phrase uix mi ipse credens. But the jingle Thuniam atque Bithunos campos provides weight and contrast in these lines. Lines 7–11 begin with the emotional o and the rhetorical question of 7. This leads into four lines of familiar but not common language followed by the emotional and prolix summary of 11. At the end of the poem, a formulaic, exalted setting is filled out with a combination of familiar, affectionate expressions (salve ... ero ... est domi) and of urbane touches (gaude, gaudente, uenusta).

Genre

Catullus 31 is an epibaterion — ‘the speech of a man who wishes to address his native land on arrival from abroad, or to address another city at which he has arrived ...’ (Menander 377.32–378.2). Examples of this genre are found throughout antiquity. It became one of the epideictic speeches taught in rhetorical schools and practised by professional orators;
and it is not only defined but exemplified by Menander the Rhetor in his work ‘On Epideictic Genres’.

A complete study of the genre would be long and detailed. Present purposes allow only a rough placement of Catullus 31 in its generic context. The epibaterion, like many other genres, is in origin Homeric, in the sense that the actions, feelings and circumstances described in the genre were first set down in permanent literary form by Homer. There are several scenes of arrival in Homer;\(^\text{14}\) but no single passage is detailed enough to have been considered by late antiquity as the prototype of the genre. In this respect the epibaterion differs, for example, from the syntaktikon (the speech of farewell), where Menander specifies the speeches of farewell by Odysseus to Alcinous, Arete and the Phaeacians as the Homeric prototype.\(^\text{15}\) Although the arrival scenes in the Odyssey taken in combination supplied antiquity with enough basic material for the genre, the lack of a single exemplar was probably felt. This may be one reason why a much later writer made up his own example of the epibaterion Odysseus ‘should’ have given on returning home to Ithaca. This takes the form of a prosopopoeia — a rhetorical exercise in which words appropriate to a mythical or historical character in a particular recorded situation were invented:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ithaca, hail! After my labours, after the bitter woes} \\
\text{of the sea, with joy I come to your soil, hoping to see} \\
\text{Laertes and my wife and my glorious only son.} \\
\text{Love of you enticed my heart; I have learnt for myself that} \\
\text{‘Nothing is sweeter than a man’s country and his parents.’}\end{align*}
\]

Anon. Anthologia Palatina 9.458

Here we can see some basic elements of the epibaterion in simple forms: the greeting to the land; the toils and the miseries of abroad and of the journey; the man’s joy at returning; mention of his loved ones; more expressions of love for his country and family.

|This is a basic ‘personal’ epibaterion. The other extreme to which the genre could go is shown by Menander’s prescription. This is a recipe for the elaborate, formal, public epibaterion of a professional rhetor returning to his native city. According to Menander, the rhetor’s epibaterion could include:

i) The returner’s affection for his native city expressed in some heightened, elaborated form.

ii) Praise of the founder of the city.

iii) An encomiastic description of the city’s physical features.

\(^\text{15}\) 430.12ff.
iv) An account of the city’s development (\(?\)).

v) A laudatory rendering of the character of the inhabitants.

vi) A eulogy of the actions of the inhabitants in terms of the four virtues division,\(^{16}\) embroidered by comparisons.

vii) A general comparison of the city with others to the city’s benefit.

viii) An epilogue dealing with the city and its buildings.

The place of Catullus 31 between these two extremes can now be seen. It is a personal, not a public epibaterion. It consists mainly in expressions of Catullus’ affection for Sirmio and of his joy at his return (ocelle (2), quam etc. (4), 7–11). Various other topoi (i.e. motifs of the genre) stress the personal nature of Catullus’ epibaterion. The first is mention of the private difficulties which Catullus has surmounted — solutis curis (7), labore fessi (9) (compare Aeschylus Agamemnon 511; Horace Odes 1.7.16–21; 2.6.7–8). The second is the topos that the returner had lost, or almost lost, hope of return. Catullus cleverly varies the topos in lines 5–6 by saying that, even now that he is back, he can hardly believe he is back. This topos first appears in the Homeric Odysseus’ address to the Nymphs of Ithaca on his return home: ‘Naiad Nymphs, daughters of Zeus, I never thought I would see you (again)!’ (Odyssey 13.356). It is later found again in epibateria.\(^{17}\)

A third personal topos is mention of Catullus’ safety (line 6).\(^{18}\)

Catullus does of course praise his home Sirmio (lines 1–3) and describes its character in laudatory terms (lines 12–14); and in these respects his epibaterion is nearer the formal prescription of Menander. Catullus also alludes to another formal topos in Lydiae (line 13). Here he is touching on the topos of ‘praise of the city’s founder’ (Menander 382.24ff.; 383.9f.) in a reference to the Etruscan ‘founders’ of the Lake Garda region. But Catullus is mainly concerned to expand personal topoi, to contract others and to blend topoi with artful simplicity so as to produce an illusion of unthinking emotional spontaneity. In this respect also Catullus 31 is comparable with Catullus 9.

The Blend of Greek and Roman

By Catullus’ time educated Roman society and thought were already heavily Hellenized. Roman poetry was influenced through and through by

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\(^{16}\) Virtue in general is often treated in antiquity (especially in rhetorical contexts) as consisting of four particular virtues: justice, bravery, self-control, wisdom.

\(^{17}\) E.g. Aeschylus Agamemnon 506–7; Seneca Agamemnon 392–3.

\(^{18}\) Commonly found in the prosphonetikon (welcome-home speech): see Cairns (1972), 22.
its Greek forebears; and we have already spent some time on an examination of the Greek side of Catullus 31. But at the same time Romans were always conscious that they were different from Greeks; and Roman poets often express their Roman character by additions, omissions or emphases which give a new turn to a Greek genre. In Catullus 31 the Roman side is subtle and not at first obvious.

We can best approach it by considering the difference between Greek and Roman attitudes to the home. For a Greek his native land was sacred: a Greek homecomer would kiss the soil on returning to it; and he would treat the gods of his homeland and household with awe and reverence. This was because the principal gods of localities were wild gods of the open air, owned by no man, potentially dangerous and requiring placation. Even the Greeks’ θεοί πατεροί (family gods) were not possessions of the family but protectors of it. In contrast the principal deity of a Roman homestead was the lar familiaris — the household god — a domesticated spirit associated with the farm and its buildings and with human beings, ‘owned’ by the farmer and worshipped indoors. Other rustic deities of localities were usually amenable to summary and simple dealing. When Catullus returns to Sirmio he does not kiss the earth or show any other reverence to the gods of Sirmio. He simply mentions in passing his Roman lar (line 9). We may compare Cato’s instructions for the Roman farmer’s visit to his uilla: ‘pater familias, ubi ad uillam uenit, ubi larem familiarem salutauit, fundum eodem die, si potest, circumeat’ (De Agricultura 2.1). The business-like attitude of Catullus to the religious side of his homecoming is just as typically Roman.

The passage of Cato quoted illustrates also the second Roman factor in the poem. It continues with the Roman farmer surveying his property, asking questions and giving orders. It is imbued with the proprietorial attitude. This too pervades Catullus 31. Such an attitude is not in itself any more Roman than Greek; but in the generic context of the epibaterion it contributes to the Roman side of the poem. The standard Greek epibaterion is addressed either to an individual or a polis, a collection of men. Thus the addressee will tend to be superior or at least equal to the speaker; and such distinctions are important in ancient generic examples. In Catullus 31 however the addressee |Sirmio is a place, Catullus’ property, and so inferior, to whom he can give orders like a typical Romanus paterfamilias.

19 Cairns (1972), 235ff.
Originality

Catullus also claimed in his prologue the Alexandrian virtue of originality. This quality is difficult to discuss because the loss of much ancient literature means that we cannot be sure what is really new in the surviving portion. But something can be done; and the concept is a useful peg for a summary of what precedes, since originality is manifest in all the aspects of Catullus 31 which have been treated.

The choice and arrangement of words and rhythms, the grammatical variations, the figures of speech, the information conveyance, the thematic structure, all these evidences of craftsmanship also show Catullus’ originality. Little earlier Roman lyric poetry survives with which Catullan lyrics can be compared. But the ease and control which allow Catullus to appear so simple and straightforward are an advance on the laboured quality of the lyric fragments of Laevius and of the elegiac epigrams of the early first century B.C. Catullus’ own contemporaries and fellow Alexandrians appear from the remains of their lyric poetry to have written in a manner fairly close to his. But Catullus was the leader of the school so that in this style we should probably see the predominant influence of his originality.

We can also discern Catullan originality in the content of 31. The learned allusions and literary devices are part of Catullus’ individual contribution; so too are the word-plays and his poetic diction with its ingenious use of material from several levels of the Latin language. But it is in his use of genre that Catullus shows his greatest originality. Our knowledge of the traditional content of the genre epibaterion allows us to detect the alterations made by Catullus to the generic material. As we saw above, Catullus 31 is notable for original and apt selection of topoi, compression of some and elaboration of others. Lyric poets above all others must select among the available topoi because their small scale work cannot usually convey a large number — except in allusive form. They must differentiate their handling of the chosen topoi to produce the genuine flavour of lyric by elaborating personal topoi and compressing others. So Catullus elaborates those topoi which convey a personal relationship between himself, the Roman master, and his home Sirmio. Catullus also provides satisfactory transitions between the topoi and as we saw above, subtly alters the form of some topoi in an original and engaging manner. Finally he combines in his epibaterion the commonplace joy of homecoming with a new emotion — the pride of home-ownership — by making his addressee an inferior. At the same time Catullus innovates on general generic practice by expressing also in 31 the emotions characteristic of the other two status relationships — encomium and affection.
The overall tone of the poem is also worth mentioning. It is serious in the sense that it conveys genuine joy at homecoming, and love of home. But the word-plays and jingles, the application of great learning to a small subject, the flippant handling of the learning and the mock heroic beginning and ending, all these combine with the other side of the poem to produce a tone which is humorous without being mocking and serious without being dull.

Catullus 31 is therefore a miniature masterpiece in every way. To appreciate it fully, it is necessary to understand how Catullus created it.
Acmen Septimius, suos amores,
   tenens in gremio “mea” inquit “Acme,
   ni te perdite amo atque amare porro
omnes sum assidue paratus annos,
   quantum qui pote plurimum perire,
solus in Libya Indiaque tosta
caesio ueniam obuius leoni.”
hoc ut dixit Amor sinistra ut ante
dextra sternuit approbatione
   at Acme leuiter caput reflectens
et dulcis puери ebrios ocellos
illo purpureo ore sauiata,
   “sic,” inquit “mea uita Septimille,
huic uni domino usque seruiamus,
   ut multo mihi maier acriorque
ignis mollibus ardet in medullis.”
hoc ut dixit Amor sinistraruit ante
dextram sternuit approbationem
   nunc ab auspicio bono profecti
mutuis animis amant amantur.
   unam Septimius misellus Acmen
mauult quam Syrias Britanniasque;
uno in Septimio fidelis Acme
facit delicias libidinesque.
quis ullos homines beatiores
uidit, quis Venerem auspiciatiorem?

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* Earlier versions of this paper were given in the USA at The Florida State University and Ohio State University, and in Italy at the Universities of Torino and Trento. I am grateful to the audiences on those occasions for their comments, and to Prof. Brian Campbell, Dr Ermanno Malaspina, and Dr Harry Neilson for their advice. I alone am responsible for the paper’s opinions and errors.
The repeated refrain (8–9, 17–18) of Catullus 45 has been beset by problems of text, punctuation, and translation. In this paper I shall revive a neglected emendation in the refrain, adding supporting evidence and argument.

V, the lost manuscript believed to lie behind the three most important surviving manuscripts of Catullus, offered in lines 8–9 and 17–18 the readings in bold above. There is no reason to think that Catullus varied his two refrains verbally or in their punctuation: indeed Fordyce cogently noted that punctuating differently to alter the meaning would breach the “clearly marked coincidence of grammatical colon and metrical unit”.\(^1\) *sinistrauit* (17) is obviously a simple *scriptio continua* error, i.e. *sinistra* and *ut* are run together with a superfluous upright added; similarly a stroke over a vowel indicating final ‘m’ can more easily be omitted than inserted in error. Hence V’s antecedent tradition read *sinistra ut* in 8 |and 17, and *dextram ... approbationem* in 9 and 18. This approach seems to underlie the text of the older OCT of Robinson Ellis, *Catulli Carmina* (Oxford, 1904), who printed those readings in both occurrences of the refrain, placing a comma after *ante*. Ellis obviously wanted his text to embody the sense presented by his earlier commentary: “When he had said this, Love sneezed his good-will on the right, as he had sneezed his good-will on the left before”.\(^2\)

Ellis’ text failed to impress subsequent editors and commentators,\(^3\) virtually all of whom print *dextra* in lines 9 and 18. The standard modern text, then, is (sometimes with an additional comma after *sinistra*):

\[
\text{hoc ut dixit Amor, } \textit{sinistra ut ante dextra sternuit approbationem} \quad (8–9, 17–18)
\]

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1. C.J. Fordyce, *Catullus: a commentary* (Oxford, 1961), 205 (on lines 8–9). This view has not, however, gone unchallenged: e.g. M. Lenchantin de Gubernatis, *Il Libro di Catullo. Introduzione testo e commento* (Torino, 1972), 83–4 changed the priorities of right and left by punctuating differently in lines 8 and 17; and S.J. Heyworth, in S.J. Harrison and S.J. Heyworth, ‘Notes on the text and interpretation of Catullus’, *PCPS* 44 (1998), 96–7, emended to differentiate the lines both verbally and in punctuation.


3. They do not spell out their reasons. But Ellis’ meaning is hard to extract from his text, and the repudiation by Fordyce (n.1), 205 (on lines 8–9) of two erroneous views of poem 45 — namely that there is a change of heart by *Amor*, and that there was an omen earlier than the poem — may be intended to counter both Vossius’ unacceptable emendation of *sinistra ut ante* to *sinester ut ante* and Ellis’ partial willingness to read such views into his text, i.e. his: “ante implies that up to this time the love had been only incompletely happy.” (159 on lines 8, 9).
The clause at issue is generally interpreted: *Amor primum dextra, deinde sinistra sternuit* (‘Love sneezed first on the right, then he sneezed on the left’). Thus (as also in Ellis’ text) *Amor* sneezes four times in all, which leads commentators to note (correctly) that in antiquity a repeated omen was more trustworthy, and (again correctly, but with more questionable relevance) that for Greeks the right was the lucky side for omens, while for Romans it was the left.

However, a major problem lurks within the standard modern text, as in that of Ellis: both texts assume that *ante* in lines 8 and 17 is temporal, meaning ‘beforehand’. But in fact *ante* must be spatial, meaning ‘ahead’, ‘in front’. Recently Adrian Gratwick has placed this rendering beyond doubt, emphasizing that the linguistic register of Catullus 45 is akin to that of Roman comedy, and that, if Catullus had wanted to achieve a temporal sense, he would have needed to use *antea*. Gratwick also criticised the stiltedness of the phraseology which results if *ante* is taken temporally, and he offered conclusive parallels for *ante* in a spatial sense. Gratwick’s (further) metrical claim, that “the elision *sinistr(a) ut ante* is strange” (234), is, however, less persuasive, as is his eventual textual proposal, to

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4 So W. Kroll, *C. Valerius Catullus* (Leipzig, 1923), 84 (on line 9).
5 An exception is D.F.S. Thomson, *Catullus: Edited with a Textual and Interpretative Commentary*, Phoenix Supplementary Volume 34 (Toronto, 1997), 317, who wrote of *sinistra ut ante dextra* (unpunctuated) as a “reversible word-group, in which *ut ante* can be read either with what precedes or with what follows. The point of the repetition is that the love between Acme and Septimius goes on endlessly, without any change” — an ultra-romantic interpretation which sits ill with the implied accompanying image of *Amor* suffering from a perpetual head cold.
6 It is generally believed that Acme is meaningfully Greek because she has a Greek name — perhaps rashly since we do not assume that Catullus’ Lesbia, Propertius’ Cynthia, or Tibullus’ Delia were Greeks.
8 A.S. Gratwick, ‘Those Sneezes: C. 45.8–9, 17–18’, *CP* 87 (1992), 234–40, esp. 234–6. His predecessors in this view (Scaliger, Baehrens, Fröhner, and Birt) are discussed below.
9 This point needs to be underlined since some treatments of poem 45 even of the late 1990s (e.g. Heyworth (n.1), 96–7) still had not grasped it.
10 The spatial rendering of *ante* also (incidentally) eliminates once and for all the old error already mentioned — that *Amor* had changed his attitude to the two lovers from disfavour to favour.
11 His observations about Catullus’ elisions “before a final bacchiac in his hendeca-syllables” (234) are correct, but do not amount to a metrical rule. There are, as he
transpose to: *hoc ut dixit, ut ante Amor, sinistra, / dextra sternuit approbationem,* and to render either: “The second (s)he said this, Love sneezed blessing ahead, to the left, to the right” or/and “as (s)he said this, how Love sneezed …” (235–6), i.e. a triple sneeze. This proposal may be set aside with even greater confidence because a preferable emendation was proposed in 1885 which requires the alteration of only a single letter of the transmitted text, and which places Catullus within the mainstream of Roman thought and practice in such areas as *Amor*’s sneezes.

The emendation is that of E. Baehrens (*Catulli Veronensis Liber*, 2 vols [Leipzig 1876, 1885]), in the commentary volume of 1885, 242–3 (on line 9). Having noted that *ante* must be spatial, and having mentioned both Scaliger’s old emendation of *ut ante* to *inante* and an earlier emendation of his own, Baehrens continued: “nunc rescribo ‘sinistra et ante’ sensu nimirum eodem quem Scaliger intulit” (243). Baehrens then quoted *Appendix Vergiliana Priapea* 2.3 (below) as a possible imitation of Catullus’ line before interpreting his new text: “est igitur sententia: haec Septimii uerba Amor, bis sternuens ex parte bona, plenissime approbavit.” Baehrens therefore continued to think that a double sneeze is involved in each occurrence of the refrain, as his further comment (244) on lines 17–18 confirms. Baehrens’ text (1876) had read *dextram … approbationem* in lines 13 and 18, and, although he did not comment on this reading in 1885, he presumably continued to approve of it, particularly since it is implied by the emendation of *ut* to *et*. There now followed a curious train of events: first Fröhner proposed the emendation already made by Baehrens, along with the points with which Baehrens in 1885 had accompanied the emendation, i.e. the spatial interpretation of *ante*, the reference to *Appendix Vergiliana Priapea* 2.3 and the reading *dextram … approbationem*. Fröhner thus added nothing new to what appears in Baehrens (1885), but he made no reference to it. Then Birt, acknowledging neither Baehrens

admits, three exceptions (234), each (incidentally) unique, viz.: *Libyss(ae) harenae* (7.3); *ab ill(o) amari* (24.6); *gemell(i) utrique* (57.6). There is therefore no compelling metrical case either against *sinistra ut ante* or against the emendation proposed below.

12 For some arguments against it, not all correct, cf. Heyworth (n.1), 96–7. It was, however, favoured by Thomson (n.5), 317 (on line 8), although not incorporated into his text.


14 Fröhner (n.13), 291–311 did refer to Baehrens’ (earlier) edition of *Priapea* 2; but he seemingly imagined that both the spatial interpretation of *ante* (“Der Fehler liegt darin, dass man *ante* zeitlich auffast, statt räumlich”, 305) and the emendation of *ut to et* (“Ich corrige (sic) ohne Weiteres”, 305) were his own ideas.
nor Fröhner(!),\textsuperscript{15} repeated their points. But Birt also added important new considerations: he noted that Roman augurs thought in terms not only of right and left, but of \textit{pars antica} and \textit{postica} — correctly, although the text which he invoked in support of his statement \textit{does not in fact provide that support}.\textsuperscript{16} Birt also referred to a gromatic text cited also below,\textsuperscript{17} first to bolster his contention that the language of Catullus 45.8 and 17 is that of ordinary life, and then to confirm his view that Catullus too was linking ‘right’ and ‘left’ and ‘front’ and ‘back’ in poem 45. Clearly also Birt perceived that each occurrence of that lyric’s refrain reports only one sneeze. If it had been more cogent and better evidenced, Birt’s paper might have put Catullan scholarship on the correct path. Its treatment in 1923 by Kroll (n.4), 84 (on line 9) put paid to any such possibility: Kroll, whose influence on subsequent Catullan studies was enormous, summarized Birt’s conclusions perfunctorily, and obviously did not find them acceptable. They were later rejected explicitly in 1930 by Schuster;\textsuperscript{18} before and after this a few papers referred to them, but only in passing.\textsuperscript{19}

The line of interpretation found in Baehrens, Fröhner, and Birt needs therefore to be underpinned. All commentators have accepted the indubitable fact that poem 45 refers to augury and auspices: \textit{sinister} and \textit{dexter} are technical terms of augury/auspices; after the second appearance of the refrain Catullus immediately explains that the lovers have received a \textit{bonum auspicium} (19); and Catullus’ own rhetorical question of line 26 asks who had seen a more well-omened love (\textit{Venerem auspicatiorem}) than that of Acme and Septimius. As Birt observed, not only ‘right’ and ‘left’, but also ‘front’ and ‘behind’ were meaningful for augurs, and the augural content of poem 45 gives his observation vital relevance. Birt also, as noted, cited an agrimensorial text, and these concepts played a key role


\textsuperscript{16} I.e. “Festus p. 220 M.” = Paul. Diac. 244L.

\textsuperscript{17} “Hygin (S. 137, 14f. der Thulinschen Ausgabe)” = Hyginus (2) \textit{Constitutio (Limitum)} Campbell (n.20 below) 138 lines 14–18.

\textsuperscript{18} M. Schuster, ‘Septimius und Akme (Zu Catull c. 45.)’, \textit{Mitteilungen des Vereines Klassischer Philologen in Wien} 7 (1930), 29–42.

in Roman land surveying too. Finally, they also seem to have been significant in Etruscan haruspicy and Roman architecture. As will be shown, this spread of usage made them widely known.

The earliest surviving augural evidence comes from Varro, who explains that the sky was called a templum because people “look at” it (tuerti). Varro follows this explanation with a statement long recognized as a quotation or adaptation from the Libri Augurales:

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eius templi partes quattuor dicuntur, sinistra ab oriente, dextra ab occasu, antica ad meridiem, postica ad septemtrionem. (De Lingua Latina 7.7)²¹
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Of this temple the four quarters are named thus: the left quarter, to the east; the right quarter; to the west; the front quarter, to the south; the back quarter, to the north. (tr. R.G. Kent, Loeb Classical Library)

Here Varro is reporting a system in which the augur takes the auspices standing in the centre of his templum facing south. In front of the augur (south) is antica, behind him (north) is postica; to his right (west) is dextra, to his left (east) is sinistra. A Roman land-surveyor (agrimensor) did something very similar: he first selected an orientation, that is a line of sight (see below), and he then established his decumanus maximus (running ahead of him and behind him) and his kardo maximus (running to each side of him). The decumanus and kardo met at right angles at the central point where the surveyor stood, and in this way they fixed the four central centuriae of the survey. The surveyor could now expand his grid to include all the land to be surveyed, keeping the same orientation,

²⁰ B. Campbell, The Writings of the Roman Land Surveyors: Introduction, Text, Translation and Commentary, JRS Monograph No. 9 (London, 2000), with its excellent new text of, and commentary upon, the works of the Roman land-surveyors, has made this highly technical subject more easily accessible to non-specialists.


²² Augural and agrimensorial practice disposes, incidentally, of questions sometimes raised about Cat. 45 such as: ‘from whose point of view does Love sneeze sinistra’? ‘Left’, ‘right’, and so on were determined by the orientation selected, usually more or less on the cardinal points, namely: South (using different sighting methods): Varro Ling. 7.7 (quoted above); Festus 262L, cf. Paul. Diac. 263L; Hyginus (2) Constitutio (Limitum) Campbell (n.20), 136 lines 18–22; Campbell (n.20), 490 Diagram 8; East (common): Hyginus (2) Constitutio (Limitum) Campbell (n.20), 136 lines 13–17; West: Campbell (n.20), 326 n.25, 384 n.2; 491 Diagram 9; Other: Hyginus (2) Constitutio (Limitum) Campbell (n.20), 136.22–7, 291 ill. 72, 385 n.7. The possible orientations are discussed summarily by O.A.W. Dilke, The Roman Land Surveyors: An Introduction to the Agrimensores (Newton Abbot, 1971), 86–7.
decumanus, and kardo throughout the entire survey.\textsuperscript{23} The exact location of any centuria marked out in the survey could be given by two spatial identifiers (e.g. ‘left and beyond’ or ‘right and nearside’) — both of which were essential — plus two numbers specifying how many rows that centuria was distant from the decumanus and kardo respectively. These specifications then formed the basis of the abbreviations inscribed on boundary stones at the four corners of each centuria; and they were also employed in the sortition process by which land was assigned.\textsuperscript{24} Two very closely related gromatic passages which derive from the disciplina of the Etruscan haruspices employ a terminology of the four quarters similar to that of the augurs: dextra, sinistra, antica, and postica.\textsuperscript{25} They also equate with antica and postica, respectively, the terms ultra and citra that were inscribed in abbreviated form on boundary stones as $V$ (ultra) and $K$ (citra): et a media ultra antica citra postica nominauerunt. Another gromatic passage about boundary stones (the one quoted by Birt [n.15, 1919], 575)\textsuperscript{26} uses these latter terms and distinguishes the four quarters as: in regione s\textless inistra\textgreater et u\textless ultra\textgreater ... in regione dextra et ultra ... in regione sinistra et citra, in regione dextra et citra. It is of particular interest for Catullus 45 that in each case the two specifications are linked by et.

Further, hitherto unnoticed, assistance comes from an ancient Virgil commentary which not only associates ante and sinistra with augury but also provides a close parallel for Catullus’ language and for the concept underlying his ominology. At Virgil Eclogue 9.14–16 the bucolic character Moeris reports an omen:

\begin{flushleft}
\begin{verbatim}
quod nisi me quacumque nouas incidere lites
ante sinistra caua monuisset ab ilice cornix,
nec tuus hic Moeris nec uiueret ipse Menalcas.
\end{verbatim}
\end{flushleft}

\textsuperscript{539}The commentary of Servius (edd. Thilo–Hagen),\textsuperscript{27} on line 15 is, characteristically, somewhat muddled. But it starts off with a sharp prescription which comes from Servius auctus and which bears the stamp of the

\begin{flushright}
\begin{verbatim}
23 Cf. Hyginus (2) Constitutio (Limitum) Campbell (n.20), 154 lines 6–16.
24 Cf. Hyginus (1) De Limitibus Campbell (n.20), 78 lines 5–17.
25 Iulius Frontinus De Limitibus Campbell (n.20), 8 lines 23–9 (on the identity of this and other authors of gromatic texts, see now Campbell [n.20], xxvii–xliv); Hyginus (2) Constitutio Limitum Campbell (n.20), 134 lines 4–13. Campbell (n.20), xlv explains (with arguments): that ‘Varro was not necessarily right’ in claiming an Etruscan origin for limites.
26 Hyginus (2) Constitutio (Limitum) Campbell (n.20), 138 lines 14–18. Cf. also Hyginus (1) De Limitibus Campbell (n.20), 76 lines 8–23.
\end{verbatim}
\end{flushright}
authority of Donatus: ‘ante sinistra’ indiuisse legendum. Donatus is warning us not to understand ante as “beforehand” but to take ante with sinistra (which, of course, in this case agrees with cornix). Hence ante at Eclogue 9.15, as in Catullus 45.8 and 17, is spatial – and we have, this time reversed and in asyndeton, the same combination (ante, sinistra) as in Catullus 45.8 and 17. Donatus/Servius continues:

\[
\text{et dicendo ‘monuisset’ oscinem fuisset demonstrat. sane hoc ad auguralem pertinet disciplinam: augures enim designant spatia lituo et eis dant nomina, ut prima pars dicatur antica, posterior postica, item dextra et sinistra.}
\]

First Donatus notes that monuisset is a technical term of augury and that by using it Virgil has characterized the cornix as an oscen — a bird of divination. Then Servius restates (but probably misunderstanding the technicalities) the information about the four quarters already found in several of the authorities already cited, this time (as in Varro De Lingua Latina 7.7, quoted above) specifically in connection with augurs. Servius’ remaining comments attempt to explain ante sinistra, the role of the cornix, and the import of the hollow ilex. They deploy the augural technical terms antica and sinistra, but they are not transparent and they may involve inaccuracies. The core of information in them was extracted by Coleman;\(^{28}\) he noted Cicero De Divinatione 1.85 as stating that a cornix appearing on the left guarantees the reliability of the omen, and Servius as holding that the omen is bad in Eclogue 9 because the cornix settled on a hollow, and hence unsound, ilex. The addition of ante to specify the locus of Virgil’s omen as the ‘front left quarter’ presumably adds a further and even more technical refinement to the guarantee of the omen’s validity.

Virgil, then, was doing much the same as Catullus, i.e. describing an omen, and specifying, although more indirectly, the quarter in which it occurred (ante sinistra) so as to guarantee that it was a valid — in his case, bad — omen. The sum total of Catullus’ omen is Love’s sneeze, and since it happened on the left, the lucky side from a Roman viewpoint, his Roman readers would probably have assumed that it was a good omen. But Greek dubiety about omens (including sneezes) on the left\(^{29}\) will have penetrated Roman culture. So to place the matter beyond doubt Catullus explicitly declared the sneeze to be a good omen in dextram ... approbationem. Catullus was, of course, also alluding playfully to that other augural technical term of location dextra; but he wrote dextram meaning ‘favourable’ without reference to location. Little did Catullus realize what havoc his playfulness would wreak among his commentators.

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\(^{28}\) R. Coleman, (ed.) Virgil Eclogues (Cambridge, 1977), 260 (on line 14).

\(^{29}\) Cf. the arguments and material collected in Oldfather (n.7).
Appendix Vergiliana Priapea 2, cited apropos of Catullus’ ominology by Baehrens, Fröhner, and Birt, not only exemplifies the same fourfold augural/agrimensorial division found in Catullus 45, but almost certainly does so using the same words as Catullus. It begins:

Ego haec, ego arte fabricata rustica,
egro arida, o uiator, ecce populus,
agellulum hunc, sinistra et ante quem uides,
erique uillulam hortulumque pauperis
tuor, malaque furis arceo manu. (1–5)

Of the four MSS two, including the oldest B (twelfth century), offer in line 3: sinistre tante, but all modern texts rightly restore sinistra et ante. A statue of Priapus assumes the role of surveyor or architect, and perhaps also that of augur since the god uses tueri (tuor, 5) which Varro claimed as the etymology of the augur’s templum (above). In one or more of these roles Priapus specifies the location of the farm which he “protects/looks at” as “on the left and in front”, i.e. “in the left forward quarter”. He thus uses the very words which this paper argues should be restored in Catullus 45. Both writers may be quoting an augural or agrimensorial formula, or the Priapea poet may be imitating Catullus. If sinistra et ante was indeed an exact augural or agrimensorial formula, this might explain why Catullus elided before the final bacchiac.

The concepts employed by Catullus in his refrain might be described as ‘learned’ since they relate to augury and other technical areas. But they are not esoteric, and Catullus’ readers would have had no difficulty in recognizing their origin and meaning. This is clear from a punning passage of Ennius’ Medea Exul, which requires its audience to recognize that anticus, as well as representing antiquus, could also mean “in front” qua augural technical term:

asta atque Athenas anticum opulentum oppidum
contempla et templum Cereris ad laeuam aspice.
(Ennius fr. 92 (239–40) Jocelyn)

30 Birt (n.15, 1919) 576 also quoted: ἐτέρου μὲν γὰρ πτερόντος ἀκ δέξιος ἐτ’ ὀνόιον ἐτ’ ἔμπροσθεν ὅρμην αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τὴν πρᾶξιν, εἰ δ’ ἐξ ἀριστερὰς ὀποτρέπεσθαι (Plut. Mor. 581a.10–b.2). It is the only Greek ominological example known to me of the four quarters. It may well reflect Roman influence, even though Plutarch employs the Greek distinction between good omens from the right and bad omens from the left.

31 anticus is Roth’s restoration for the MSS reading anti eum; its correctness is not open to doubt.

32 Curiously Jocelyn fails to remark on any of the features pointed out here (H.D. Jocelyn, The Tragedies of Ennius: The Fragments, Cambridge classical texts and commentaries 10 [Cambridge 1967]).