Classical Quarterly **55.2** 534–541 (2005) *Printed in Great Britain*
doi:10.1093/cq/bmi048

CATULLUS 45: TEXT AND INTERPRETATION*

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 pueri ebrios ocellos
illo purpureo ore sauiata,
'sic,' inquit 'mea uita Septimille,
huic uni domino usque seruiamus,
ut multo mihi maior acriorque
ignis mollibus ardet in medullis.'
hoc ut dixit Amor **sinistrauit** 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 auspicatiorem?

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, that is, *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

* 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 Professor Brian Campbell, Dr Ermanno Malaspina, and Dr Harry Neilson for their advice. I alone am responsible for the paper's opinions and errors.

[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.

Classical Quarterly 55.2 © The Classical Association 2005; all rights reserved

https://doi.org/10.1093/cq/bmi048 Published online by Cambridge University Press

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 goodwill on the left before.'[2]

Ellis's 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*):

hoc ut dixit Amor, **sinistra ut** ante
dextra sternuit **approbationem** (8–9, 17–18)

The clause at issue is generally interpreted: *Amor primum dextra, deinde sinistra sternuit*[4] ('Love sneezed first on the right, then he sneezed on the left').[5] Thus (as also in Ellis's 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)[6] that for Greeks the right was the lucky side for omens, while for Romans it was the left.[7]

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,[8] 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*.[9]

[2] R. Ellis, *A Commentary on Catullus* (Oxford, 1889), 159 (on lines 8–9).

[3] They do not spell out their reasons. But Ellis's 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 *sinister ut ante* and Ellis's partial willingness to read such views into his text, that is, his: '**ante** implies that up to this time the love had been only incompletely happy' (159 on lines 8–9).

[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.

[7] For assemblages of evidence supporting these contentions, cf. Ellis (n. 2) 159–60; G. Friedrich, (ed.) *Catulli Veronensis Liber* (Leipzig and Berlin, 1908), 221–2; A. S. Pease, 'The omen of sneezing', *CP* 6 (1911), 429–43; W. A. Oldfather, 'The sneeze and breathing of Love', in *Classical Studies Presented to E. Capps on his Seventieth Birthday* (Princeton, 1936), 268–81. Fordyce (n. 1), 206 on lines 8–9 rightly notes that 'the confusion in Latin usage' calls for caution in the latter area.

[8] A. S. Gratwick, 'Those sneezes: Catullus 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.

https://doi.org/10.1093/cq/bmi048 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Gratwick also criticized the stiltedness of the phraseology which results if *ante* is taken temporally, and he offered conclusive parallels for *ante* in a spatial sense.[10] Gratwick's (further) metrical claim, that 'the elision *sinistr(a) ut ante* is strange' (234), is, however, less persuasive,[11] as is his eventual textual proposal, to 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), that is, a triple sneeze. This proposal may be set aside with even greater confidence[12] 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 verba 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's 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[13] proposed the emendation already made by Baehrens, along with the points with which Baehrens in 1885 had accompanied the emendation, that is, 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.[14] Then Birt, acknowledging neither Baehrens nor Fröhner(!),[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 *pars antica* and *postica*—correctly, although the text which he invoked in support of his statement

[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 hendecasyllables' (234) are correct, but do not amount to a metrical rule. There are, as he admits, three exceptions (234), each (incidentally) unique, namely: *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.

[13] W. Fröhner, 'Kritische Studien', *Rh. Mus.* n.f. 47 (1892), 304–5.

[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 corrigire [sic] ohne Weiteres', 305) were his own ideas.

[15] T. Birt, 'Zum Acme-Gedicht Catulls', *BPhW* 39 (1919), 572–6, esp. 574–5. Birt referred only to his own earlier proposal (made in passing) of the same emendation at T. Birt, *Jugendverse und Heimatpoesie Vergils: Erklärung des Catalepton* (Leipzig, 1910), 28.

https://doi.org/10.1093/cq/bmi048 Published online by Cambridge University Press

does not in fact provide that support.[16] Birt also referred to a gromatic text cited also below,[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;[18] before and after this a few papers referred to them, but only in passing.[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: *sinister* and *dexter* are technical terms of augury/auspices; after the second appearance of the refrain Catullus immediately explains that the lovers have received a *bonum auspicium* (19); and Catullus' own rhetorical question of line 26 asks who had seen a more well-omened love (*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 in Roman land surveying too,[20] as seemingly also in Etruscan haruspicy and Roman architecture—a spread of usage that will have 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 (*tueri*). Varro follows this explanation with a statement long recognized as a quotation or adaptation from the *Libri Augurales*:

> eius templi partes quattuor dicuntur, sinistra ab oriente, dextra ab occasu, antica ad meridiem, postica ad septemtrionem. (*Ling.* 7.7)[21]
>
> 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. (trans. 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

[16] I.e. 'Festus p. 220 M.' = Paul. Diac. 244L.

[17] 'Hygin (S. 137, 14f. der Thulinschen Ausgabe)' = Hyginus (2) *Constitutio (Limitum)* Campbell (n.2), 138, lines 14–18.

[18] M. Schuster, 'Septimius und Akme (Zu Catull c. 45.)', *Mitteilungen des Vereines klassischer Philologen in Wien* 7 (1930), 29–42.

[19] J. B. Stearns, 'On the ambiguity of Catullus XLV. 8–19 (= 17–18)', *CP* 24 (1929), 48–59 at 49 n. 1; H. A. Khan, 'Catullus 45: what sort of irony?', *Latomus* 27 (1968), 3–12 at 10 n. 3; H. Tränkle, 'Catulls Septimius – und – Acmegedicht (c. 45)', in R. Hanslik, A. Lesky, and H. Schwabl (edd.), *Antidosis: Festschrift für Walther Kraus zum 70. Geburtstag* (Wien, 1972), 425–36 at 429 n. 11; E. Frueh, 'Sinistra ut ante dextra: Reading Catullus 45', *CW* 84 (1990), 15–21, 15 n. 3.

[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.

[21] Cf. P. Regell, 'Fragmenta Auguralia', *Königliches Gymnasium zu Kirschberg*, Progr. No. 164 (Ostern, 1882), 3–19 (repr. in *Roman Augury and Etruscan Divination* [New York, 1975], 18).

https://doi.org/10.1093/cq/bmi048 Published online by Cambridge University Press

(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,[22] that is a line of sight, and then he 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, *decumanus*, and *kardo* throughout the entire survey.[23] The exact location of any *centuria* was fixed by two spatial identifiers in combination (for example, '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.[24] Two very closely related gromatic passages which derive surveying from the *disciplina* of the Etruscan haruspices employ a terminology for the four quarters similar to that of the augurs: *dextra*, *sinistra*, *antica*, and *postica*.[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)[26] uses these latter terms and distingushes the four quarters as: *in regione s<inistra> et u<ltra> . . . 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 Verg. *Ecl.* 9.14–16 the bucolic character Moeris reports an omen:

> quod nisi me quacumque nouas incidere lites
> ante sinistra caua monuisset ab ilice cornix,
> nec tuus hic Moeris nec uiueret ipse Menalcas.

[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)* Campell (n. 20), 136 lines 18–22; Campell (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.

[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.

https://doi.org/10.1093/cq/bmi048 Published online by Cambridge University Press

The commentary of Servius (edd. Thilo-Hagen),[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 authority of Donatus:

> 'ante sinistra' indiuise 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 *Ecl.* 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:

> *et dicendo 'monuisset' oscinem fuisse 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 *Ling.* 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 Diuinatione* 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, that is, 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.

Appendix Vergiliana Priapea 2, cited apropos of Catullus' ominology by Baehrens, Fröhner, and Birt,[30], not only exemplifies the same fourfold augural/agrimensorial

[27] G. Thilo and H. Hagen (edd.), *Servii Grammatici qui feruntur in Vergilii carmina commentarii*, 3 vols (Leipzig 1902–27), vol. 1, fasc.1 (ed. G. Thilo), *Servii Grammatici qui feruntur in Vergilii Bucolica et Georgica commentarii* (1902).

[28] R. Coleman, (ed.) *Virgil Eclogues* (Cambridge, 1977), 260 (on line 14).

[29] Cf. the arguments and material collected in Oldfather (n. 7).

[30] Birt (n. 15, 1919), 576 also quoted: ἑτέρου μὲν γὰρ πταρόντος ἐκ δεξιᾶς εἴτ' ὄπισθεν εἴτ' ἔμπροσθεν ὁρμᾶν αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τὴν πρᾶξιν, εἰ δ' ἐξ ἀριστερᾶς, ἀποτρέπεσθαι (Plut. *Mor.* 581a10–b2). 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.

https://doi.org/10.1093/cq/bmi048 Published online by Cambridge University Press

division found in Catullus 45, but almost certainly does so using the same words as Catullus. It begins:

> Ego haec, ego arte fabricata rustica,
> ego 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', that is '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*,[31] 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)[32]

These lines contain the augural terms *anticum*, *templum*, and *ad laeuam*, although 'in front' and 'to the left' are applied to different objects;[33] moreover, *con**templa*** not only etymologizes ***templ**um* directly but, through its synonymity to *tueri*, also alludes to the Varronian etymology of *templum* (above). If all this is not proof enough that Ennius is using augural language, Varro quoted line 240 when discussing augury and pointed out the etymologies (*Ling.* 7.9). A further reflection:[34] the many settlements of veterans and others in colonies in the second and first centuries B.C. must have made all sections of Roman society aware of an essential prerequisite for such land distributions—the surveyors and their technical language and procedures. Catullus could therefore have expected his contemporaries to grasp his allusions from their knowledge of both augury and surveying.

[31] *anticum* 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]).

[33] Nevertheless this text further encourages the notion that 'in front' and 'to the left' were combined in an augural or agrimensorial formula.

[34] This point I owe to Professor Brian Campbell, who also referred me to *Poen*. 46–9, where Plautus expects his audience to be aware of other technical terms of surveying, namely: *regiones*, *limites*, and *confinia* (reinforced by *remigrare*, *determinabo*, and *finitor*).

https://doi.org/10.1093/cq/bmi048 Published online by Cambridge University Press

With the emendation of *ut* to *et*[35] in 8 and 17 and the reading *dextram approbationem* in 9 and 18 the refrain can be rendered: 'When (s)he said this, Love sneezed his well-omened approval on the front left.' Hence *Amor* does not sneeze on both left and right, or give a different (Roman and Greek) omen for the Roman Septimius and the alleged Greek Acme. *Amor* sneezes only once in each instance—in the same quarter, the one that guarantees the validity of the omen. *Amor* does, however, sneeze twice in all; so the often touted idea that a repeated omen is more reliable can still be applied validly to his two sneezes, one for Septimius' declaration of love, and one for that of Acme. As for rightness and leftness, Catullus tells us that Love's sneeze 'to the front and left' was on each occasion a 'right', that is, a 'good' omen. If Acme was really conceived by Catullus as Greek, then this formulation might elegantly accord with the racial diversity of the lovers. At all events Catullus was alluding to the well-known fact that for Romans the left was (usually) the good side for omens, while for Greeks it was usually the right, and also joking about the confusions which could arise in this area. We are here in the realms, not just of wit or folk curiosity, but of *doctrina* and contemporary interest: the augur Cicero thought it worth remarking on the reverse phenomenon, that is, Romans calling good omens which were actually on the right 'left': *ita nobis sinistra uidentur, Graiis et barbaris dextra meliora: quamquam haud ignoro quae bona sint sinistra nos dicere etiam si dextra sint* (*Diu.* 2.82). Catullus' qualification *dextram* may well evoke and pre-empt the opposite tendency, by which Romans could sometimes Hellenize and use 'left' of bad omens.[36]

The Florida State University/Faculty of Classics,
University of Cambridge

FRANCIS CAIRNS
fcairns@mailer.fsu.edu

[35] The implied corruption (that is, of *et* to *ut*) is clearly old. If it took place in one instance under the influence of the preceding *ut*, then presumably the other line was changed to produce conformity. But *et* could have been altered to *ut* in both lines 8 and 17 by a copyist or scholar unable to make sense of *sinistra et ante*.

[36] Cf. Fordyce (n. 1), 205–6 (on lines 8–9).

https://doi.org/10.1093/cq/bmi048 Published online by Cambridge University Press