Reading Antiquity: Vergil's *Aeneid* and Augustanism

A) References to Augustus

• by 20s BC when *Aeneid* written, panegyric historical epic common BUT not an *Augusteid*. Augustus appears in passing in Vergil's mythological epic (prophecy of *Aen*. 1 and 6; shield)

1) "From this noble stock there will be born a Trojan Caesar to bound his empire by Oceanus at the limits of the world, and his fame by the stars. He will be called Julius.... In time to come... you will receive him in the sky, laden with the spoils of the East... Then wars will be laid aside .... The dread Gates of War with their tight fastenings of steel will then be closed" (Verg. *Aen*. 1.286-94: prob. Augustus)

2) "The gates of the Temple of Janus on the Quirinal..., he [Augustus] closed three times during a far shorter period, as a sign that the Empire was at peace on land and at sea." (Suetonius, *Life of Augustus* 22; tr. Graves)

3) "Here is ... Augustus Caesar, son of a god, the man who will bring back the golden years to the fields of Latium once ruled over by Saturn, and extend Rome's empire beyond the Indians and Garamentes to a land beyond the stars, beyond the yearly path of the sun ... Hercules himself did not make his way to so many lands ... though he gave peace to the woods of Erymanthus and made Lerna tremble at his bow." (Verg. *Aen*. 6.791-803)

• difficulties in treating emperor in detail (e.g., how treat Augustus? Dangers of criticism; Flattery?)> indirect evocation

B) Augustus and his gods

• Apollo. Association between Apollo and Octavian from the early triumviral period onward (cf. Miller). See e.g. temple complex of Palatine Apollo (dedicated 9 October 28 BC): temple of Apollo was next to house of Augustus; Apollo and the Palatine temple would have been exploited in victory of Actium

4) "He [Augustus] himself was seated at the white marble threshold of gleaming white Apollo, inspecting the gifts brought before him.." (*Aen*. 8.720–1; temple of Palatine Apollo; post-Actium triumph traditionally at temple of Capitoline Jupiter)

5) "But the devout Aeneas made for the citadel where Apollo sits throned on high and for the vast cave standing there apart, the retreat of the awesome Sibyl, into whom Delian Apollo, the God of Prophecy, breathes mind and spirit as he reveals to her the future. They were soon coming up into the grove of Diana Trivia and Apollo's golden shrine" (*Aen*. 6.9–13, shrine of Apollo at Cumae)

6) "Its lofty domination of its hill ... matches the site of Palatine Apollo at the crest of the Palatine, looking south-west over the Circus Maximus, while the apparent joint cult with Diana ... which 'seems to be a Virgilian innovation' recalls the appearance of Diana in the triad of cult-statues in the Palatine temple (Propertius 2.31.15)." (Harrison 2006: arguing Cumae shrine recalls Palatine temple)

• Cybele (guardian god of the Trojans: 2.788 Creusa under her protection; 3.111-14 why Anchises thinks Crete is the promised land; 10.220ff.: goddess turned ships into nymphs)

7) "Kindly Mother of the Gods, dweller on Ida, who takes delight in Mount Dindymus, in cities crowned with towers and in the lion pair responsive to your chariot reins, be now my leader in this battle" (*Aen*. 10.252-5, Aeneas to Cybele)

• associations of debauchery and effeminacy (due to the castration of its priests, the Galli); BUT long association with Rome (brought to Rome 204 BC) AND Augustus rehabilitated the cult: see building of her temple on the Palatine (*Res Gestae* 19) (cf. Wiseman for symbolic placing of temple: in precinct of *Victoria*, next to Augustus)

8) "You are Phrygian women, not Phrygian men! Away with you over the heights of Mount Dindymus, where you can hear your favourite tunes on the double pipe. The tambourines are calling you and the boxwood pipes of the Berecyntian Mother of Mount Ida. Leave weapons to the men. Make way for the iron of our swords" (*Aen*. 9.617-620, Italian Numanus Remulus)

C) Roman topography

• Latium: like Rome (cf. Campus Martius, Servian Walls and the Capitol). Latinus' palace: cf. Palatine house of Augustus (laurel trees planted, 27 BC) and Capitoline temple of Jupiter

9) "Deep in the innermost courtyard of the palace there stood a laurel tree" (*Aen*. 7.59, Latinus' palace)

10) "Here too, carved in old cedar wood, stood in order in the forecourt the statues of their ancestors from time long past..." (*Aen*. 7.177-8, Latinus' palace: cf. wooden statues in capitol area)

• *Aeneid* 8.95-369 as site of future Rome. Aeneas comes to Pallanteum. Hears story of Hercules/Cacus fight at *Forum Boarium* ("Cattle Forum"); at southern edge of *Forum Boarium* = *Ara Maxima*, "Greatest Altar"; tour of Pallanteum with Arcadian Evander.

11) "The fiery sun had climbed to the middle of the vault of heaven when they saw in the distance walls and a citadel and the roofs of scattered houses. What Roman power has now raised to the heights of the sky, in those days was a poor land ruled by Evander." (*Aen*. 8.97-100: future Palatine home to Apollo and Augustus)

12) "It so happened that on that day the Arcadian king Evander was performing yearly rites in honour of the mighty Hercules … and was sacrificing to the gods in a grove outside the city" (*Aen*. 8.102-4)

13) "Meanwhile, when his herd had grazed its fill, and the son of Amphitron was moving them out of *pasture* [*stabulis*] and preparing to go on his way, the cows began to low … Then, deep in the cave, a single cow lowed in reply" (*Aen*. 8.213-18, story of Hercules and Cacus)

14) "The father of this monster was Vulcan, and it was his father's black fire he vomited from his mouth ...in the end we too were granted the help and the presence of a god. For the great avenger was at hand ..." (Verg. *Aen*. 8.198-203, of Hercules who defeats monster Cacus)

15) "this altar to a great divinity" (*Aen*. 8.186, triumph of Hercules celebrated at altar)

16) "We shall always call it The Greatest Altar, and the greatest altar it will always be" (*Aen*. 8.271-2: cf. annual Roman sacrifice to Hercules at the *Ara Maxima*)

17) “This altar was set up in its grove by Potitius, the first founder of these rites of Hercules, and by the Pinarii, the guardians of the rites.” (*Aen*. 8.268-70; in charge of cult until 312BC and prominent in Augustan times)

• Aeneas' journey with Evander: Ara Carmentalis > Vicus Iugarius where Evander points out Lupercal and the grove of Argiletum (Curia Julia, Forum Iulium, planned forum Augustum) > cross saddle between the Arx and Quirinus and climb up Arx to look at places (capitol; Janiculum)> down through Forum Romanum > look over Carinae > Evander's home on Palatine

18) “From here he pointed out the great grove which warlike Romulus set up as a sanctuary – he was to call it the Asylum – and also the Lupercal there under its cool rock (*Aen*. 8.343-4, Evander showing Aeneas)

19) “... the Capitol, now all gold, but in those distant days bristling with rough scrub. Even then a powerful sense of a divine presence in the place caused great fear among the country people” (*Aen*. 8.347-50)

20) “And here are the ruined walls of these two towns. What you are looking at are relics of the men of old. These are their monuments. One of these citadels was founded by Father Janus; the other by Saturn. This one used to be called Janiculum; the other Saturnia (*Aen*. 8.356-8)

21) “the fusion of urban monuments, pastoral values, and antique religiosity” (Boyle)

• different levels of knowledge: Aeneas can't fully understand

22) “Aeneas was lost in admiration and his eyes were never still as he looked about him enthralled by the places he was, asking questions about them and joyfully listening to Evander's explanations of all the relics of the men of old” (*Aen*. 8.310-12)

• Augustus: Evander a precursor as founder (like Aeneas and Romulus); importance of areas of building work in Augustan Rome (e.g. Palatine); Carinae (former home); chief priest Potitius (Valerius Potitus= consul suffectus 29BC); timing (August 12th i.e. in 29BC =day before Augustus' entry into Rome to celebrate his Actium triumph)

23) “the founder of the citadel of Rome” (of Evander, *Aen* 8.313)

<u>D) Augustus links with mythological figures</u>

• Aeneas / Augustus analogies: e.g. 3.276 Trojans arrive at a little town near promontory of Actium (Augustus had enlarged into Nicopolis); games at Actium (according to Dion. Hal. 1.50.3, Aeneas had inaugurated games at Zacynthus; Augustus instituted Actian games); Book 5 games (Augustus honoured JC with two sets of games), including arrow portent (cf. comet, 44BC) and Troy game (featuring Atys)

24) “crowding the shores of Actium with our Trojan games” (*Aen*. 3.280; prototype for Augustus’ Actian games)

25) “Augustus also ordered frequent performances of the Troy Game by two troops, of older and younger boys...” (Suetonius, *Life of Augustus* 43; tr. Graves)

26) “The second squadron was led by Atys, the founder of the Atii of Latium. Young Atys was a dear friend of the Atii of Latium” (Verg. *Aen*. 5.568-9; Atia = Augustus' mother)

• Nb loose connections; troubling links? capture of youths to sacrifice (*Aen*. 10.517-20 and 11.81f,) following Achilles, *Il*. 21: cf. Augustus' alleged human sacrifice of 300 to JC at capture of Perusia, 41 BC?

• verbal correspondences (Anchises>Aeneas>Augustus)

27) “stans celsa in puppi” (“standing high on the poop”) (Verg. *Aen*. 8.680, of Augustus at Actium)

28) “stans celsa in puppi” (Verg. *Aen*. 3.527, of Anchises; also at 10.261 of Aeneas)

29) “from his radiant forehead there streamed a double flame” (“geminas cui tempora *flammas* / laeta *uomunt*”) (*Verg*. Aen. 8.680-1, of Augustus at Actium)

30) “fire-spurting helmet”(“galeam *flammas*que *uomentem*”) (Verg. *Aen*. 8.620, of Aeneas' helmet)

• Hercules/Augustus (defeater of monsters; god; avenger; Hercules’ triumph celebrated on 12th August and Augustus’ triumph on 13th, when Aeneas visiting Rome)

• typology: civiliser figures (Hercules, Aeneas, Augustus) defeating monsters (Cacus, Turnus, the Egyptian side at Actium).

• Though not straightforward presentation of Aeneas and Hercules: Hercules acting because spoils taken and affected by rage: cf. Aeneas at the end. Need violence and fury to conquer? Pain and loss (see e.g. civil war) accompanying Augustus' rule?

<u>Bibliography</u>

Boyle, A. J., 'Reading Vergil's Rome' in Perkell, C. *An Interpretative guide*
Camps, W. A., *An Introduction to Virgil’s Aeneid* (1969), ch. X, pp. 95-104; Appendix 5, 137-143
Clausen, W., *Virgil’s Aeneid and Hellenistic Poetry* (1987), Ch. V
Lyne, R. O. A. M., *Further Voices in Vergil’s Aeneid*, (1987) e.g. 27-35
Frantuono, L. *Madness unchained: A Reading of Virgil's Aeneid*
Harrison, S., ‘The Epic and the Monuments’ in *Epic Interactions* edd. M. J. Clarke, B. G. F. Currie and R. O. A. M. Lyne (Oxford: 2006), pp. 159-183
Miller, J. F. *Apollo, Augustus, and the poets* (Cambridge, 2009)
Wiseman T.P., 'Cybele, Virgil and Augustus', in *Poetry and Politics in the Age of Augustus* edd. A Woodman and D. West (Cambridge, 1984), 117-28