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Furor epigraphicus: Augustus, the Poets, and the Inscriptions

Jocelyne Nelis-Clément and Damien Nelis

In an insightful exploration of the processes of periodization that underpin our conception of what makes the Augustan age, Barchiesi has written: 'I would say that the crucial factor for modern scholars has been the possibility of making multiple connections between political change, material culture, ideology, literature and the visual arts.'¹ One important feature among the Augustan visual arts was the appearance throughout the Roman world of thousands of inscriptions marking or celebrating, in one way or another, the arrival of a new age.² Even a cursory survey of the corpus of the major Augustan poets, Vergil, Horace, Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid, reveals the presence of numerous and varied points of contact between their works and this new world of Roman epigraphy. Readers of these texts encounter direct quotations of inscriptions and passing references to the presence of inscriptions. They also encounter descriptions of monuments which carried inscriptions, and the use of various different epigraphical genres, particularly sepulchral epigram and epitaphs, and they meet inscribed spoils, altars, shields, and much else. They also find in these texts subject matter and forms of expression which Romans would have met most frequently inscribed in stone and bronze. One scholar, for example, has gone so far as to describe the whole of the fourth book of Horace's *Odes* as 'epigraphic poetry'.³ We can even read a complete work, Ovid's *Fasti*, which is a poetic version of a genre that Roman readers would automatically have understood as fundamentally

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¹ Barchiesi (2005) 281.

² Strictly speaking the title 'Augustus' became official in 27 BC, but it is clear that many of the trends that are generally thought of as Augustan in nature were in operation much earlier; see e.g. Millar (2000); Scheid (2005). On the question of periodization, see now Flower (2010).

³ See MacL. Currie (1996). Note also Putnam (1986) 302, where *Odes* 4. 15 is described as 'one grand *titulus* of the emperor'.

epigraphic in nature.⁴ Others, of course, look at this relationship the other way round and treat epigraphic texts as types of literature.⁵

These interactions raise all sorts of questions about language, literacy and orality, technology, architecture, the circulation of texts and information, reading practices, patronage, and the control of the media, in fact about the sociology of Roman communication as a whole, but the space available here precludes anything like a detailed study of such vast, complex, and difficult subjects.⁶ What follows may be considered a survey of a few details in a complex picture and a prolegomenon to the much fuller investigation of Augustan literary epigraphy which is now a major desideratum. Within the wide span of time covered by the contributions to this volume, our most immediate task will be to demonstrate that the Augustan period is an extraordinarily important one in the wider history of Graeco-Roman epigraphy, and that the Augustan poets do indeed seem to have reacted in typically interesting ways to those trends described by Galinsky as 'a tidal wave of inscriptions' leading to 'the creation of an epigraphic culture'.⁷ We will begin with a survey of the evidence for the development of epigraphic writing in the later first century BC, before moving on to look at some cases in which the poets, first Vergil and Horace and then the elegists, with particular focus on Ovid, seem to be coming under the influence of and responding to the evolving Augustan epigraphic habit.

We take as our starting point a fundamental study on Augustus and the inscriptions by Alföldy in an article published in 1991,⁸ in which it is demonstrated that Augustus is indeed der 'Schöpfer der "epigraphischen Kultur" der Römischen Kaiserzeit'.⁹ Underlining the huge development of the epigraphic habit in the Augustan age and describing the phenomenon as the direct result of a *furor epigraphicus*,¹⁰ Alföldy shows how the development of epigraphy flourishes in the same cultural and political setting as the profound transformations in art and architecture analysed by Paul Zanker as 'the Augustan Program

⁴ For the inscribed *fasti*, see Degraasi (1947), (1963) with Rüpke (1995); Pasco-Pranger (2006); Feeney (2007) ch. 6.

⁵ See e.g. Millar (1993) 2 = (2002) 323, who notes that the 'late-Augustan' and 'post-Augustan' period is marked by the 'production of long and complex inscribed texts which can be seen not merely as counterpoints to the literature of the period, but as a sub-branch of literature in themselves'. On these texts, see, for example, Rowe (2002). On textuality and monumentality in Augustan poetry, see Lowrie (2009) and Houghton, Ch. 16 in this volume. In general on the relationship between epigraphy and literature in the Graeco-Roman world, see Sandys (1927) 1–19; Stein (1931) with a very useful index (45–9); Chevallier (1972); Calabi-Limentani (1983) 29–37; Millar (1983) = (2002) 39–81, esp. 52–61. For recent studies of a specific genre, author or book, see, for example, Tremoli (1960); Horsfall (1986); Fedeli (1989); Moles (1999); Zelazowski (2001); Sironen (2003); Nelis-Clément and Nelis (2005); Zizza (2006); Ramsby (2007); Coleman (2008); Liddel (2008); Lane Fox (2010); Agosti (2010); Bettenworth (forthcoming). For studies of more recent literary traditions, see, for example, Newstok (2009); Mathieu (2010).

⁶ Future research on the Augustan period will have to build from the work of Wallace-Hadrill (2008) and Lowrie (2009). More generally, see Bresson et al. (2005); Corbier (2006); Johnson and Parker (2009); Peachin (2011) chs 8–11.

⁷ Galinsky (1996) 385.

⁸ Alföldy (1991), inspired by Eck (1984); see also Luce (1990); Alföldy (1992). Rushforth (1930 [1893]) is an extremely useful collection of inscriptions.

⁹ Alföldy (1991) 322.

¹⁰ Alföldy (1991) 292.

of Cultural Renewal'.¹¹ The number, density, and chronological spread of the inscriptions known to us today, as Alföldy points out, give us a rough idea of the extent of that *furor*, which has also been described as 'una sorta di esplosione dell'epigrafia' by Panciera in a recent synthesis entitled 'L'epigrafia latina nel passaggio dalla Repubblica all'impero', where he confirms Alföldy's observations.¹² The numbers speak volumes: for the five centuries of the Roman Republic, we know of around 3,000 monumental inscriptions (and among these 627 for Rome),¹³ compared to c.300,000 inscriptions for the five centuries of the Imperial period.¹⁴ The progression, which increased extremely rapidly during the period of the last years of the Republic and the early Principate, is nothing less than extraordinary.

Vibrant epigraphical practices were of course already present under the Republic and it would be wrong to present the Augustan period as totally original. As so often, Augustan innovation must be interpreted in relation to established traditions. Romans had long since, for example, celebrated the victories and triumphs of Republican personalities with dedications set up (from the second half of the fourth century BC) in the Forum or sanctuaries, as well as erecting funerary inscriptions commemorating the members of important aristocratic families, such as the *elogia* of L. Cornelius Scipio Barbatus and his son L. Cornelius Scipio, consuls respectively in 298 and 259 BC.¹⁵ Subsequently, the use of inscriptions (both official and private) is well attested during the crisis of the Republic to celebrate and commemorate competing personalities. Several historians mention or even quote the texts of inscriptions relating to Sulla,¹⁶ Pompey,¹⁷ Mark Antony,¹⁸ and Julius Caesar,¹⁹ thus illustrating both their exploitation of

¹¹ The title of a chapter of his book *Augustus und die Macht der Bilder*, originally published in German (1987) and then translated into English (1988) as *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*. This book has been enormously influential. See now also Wallace-Hadrill (2008).

¹² Panciera (2007).

¹³ Panciera (2007) 1095.

¹⁴ Alföldy (1991) 292. These figures represent only the tip of the iceberg if we consider the total number of 20 to 40 million inscriptions, according to recent estimates; see Alföldy (2004) 148. For a recent discussion of these figures, see Meyer (2011) 191 n. 3.

¹⁵ *CIL* I² 6–9 = VI 1284–7, cf. 4670–1 (and VI 31587) = *CLE* 6–7 = *ILS* 1–3 = *ILLRP* 309–10, and see Langslow, Ch. 7 in this volume; in general on Republican epigraphical traditions, see e.g. Niquet (2003) 151–6, esp. 154–5; Panciera (2007); Berrendonner (2009); Ferrary (2009).

¹⁶ Plutarch, *Sull.* 38. 6 mentions Sulla's epitaph and *Sull.* 19. 9–10 the inscriptions engraved on his trophies, among them a dedication to Mars, Victoria, and Venus; on Sulla's dedication to Diana placed on the doors of the temple and inside the *aedes* on a *tabula aerea*, see Velleius 2. 25. 4; Appian, *BC* 1. 451–2 cites the text of the inscription engraved on the base of a gilded equestrian statue of Sulla (figured on an *aureus*, cf. Crawford (1974) 381), which was erected near the *rostra* in the Forum by vote of the Senate in 82 BC; see also Velleius 2. 61. 3; toppled after Pharsalus, this statue, with the statues of Pompey, was restored by Caesar: Plutarch, *Caes.* 57. 4–6 and Suetonius, *Jul.* 75. 7 and *Aug.* 31. 9; see Flower (2006) 106–7 and more generally on Sulla and the political use of epigraphy Mayer (2008).

¹⁷ Plutarch, *Pomp.* 27 (Pompey reading the inscriptions erected for him in Athens) and *Pomp.* 45 (on the *tituli* carried in Pompey's triumphs in Africa, Europe, and Asia, with the names of all the regions he had conquered); on Pompey's trophy in the Pyrenees, see Cassius Dio 41. 24, Strabo 4. 1. 3. See also Diodorus Siculus 40. 4, Pliny, *Nat.* 7. 97. 8 with Cooley (2009) 32–3.

¹⁸ Plutarch, *Ant.* 60. 6 (in Athens); on the inscription he erected for Julius Caesar, see following n.

¹⁹ Cassius Dio 43. 14. 6 (46 BC) for an inscription on a bronze statue of Caesar describing him as a demi-god; he later ordered the removal of this title (43. 21. 2; according to Servius Danielis, *Buc.* 9. 46, Augustus set up another statue with the inscription *Caesari emitheo*; see Bringmann and Wiegandt

epigraphy and its impact on the people, in Rome and in the provinces. And it was in that same tradition that Octavian was celebrated when, in 36 BC, he returned to Rome, following the defeat of Sextus Pompeius at Naulochos and the abdication of Lepidus. According to Appian, the Senate voted him unlimited honours, and erected in the Forum in Rome a golden statue with an inscription commemorating the peace he had ensured on land and on sea.²⁰ Another inscription recently discovered in Lycia, again emphasizing the gift of universal peace, describes Augustus as ‘guardian of land and sea’, a title earlier used of Pompey on inscriptions in Asia Minor.²¹ We can glimpse here the way in which forms of Republican competition gave way progressively to what amounted almost to a monopoly of certain kinds of epigraphic communication, shared by the *princeps* and the members of his *domus*.²²

Studying genre by genre the monumental inscriptions of the Augustan period, Alföldy revealed how the name of Augustus appeared on a very large number of the monumental inscriptions of his time, both private and public. His various titles were displayed in Rome and in the provinces on all sorts of monuments, first as *C(aius) Iulius Caesar pontif(ex)*, soon after Caesar’s murder,²³ then as *Imp. Caesar Divi f(ilius)*, when he received in January 43 BC the title of *imperator*, then from January 27 BC as *Augustus*, worn as *cognomen*, then as *pontifex maximus* in 12 BC and as *pater patriae* in 2 BC. These titles appeared on votive altars, on funerary, dedicatory, and honorary monuments, on statue bases,²⁴ on buildings and public works such as temples, theatres, amphitheatres, towers, gates, triumphal arches, bridges, columns, aqueducts, and trophies.²⁵ They appeared also on the milestones along all the roads of the Empire and on the numerous boundary stones or altars erected at the street corners of the regions of the

(2008) 196–7). A statue with the inscription PARENTI OPTIME MERITO was erected on the *rostra* by Mark Antony (Cicero, *Fam.* 12. 3. 1); a *columna* of almost twenty feet was erected by the *plebs* in the Forum with the inscription PARENTI PATRIAE (Suetonius, *Jul.* 85; the same expression is used of Augustus in an inscription from Pisidia: *CIL* III 6803 = *ILS* 101); see also Plutarch, *Caes.* 6. 1–2 and Suetonius, *Jul.* 11. 2 (restoration of the trophies of Marius); on these statues and inscriptions, see Kienast (2001) 9–10.

²⁰ Appian, *bc* 5. 130; see also Velleius 2. 61. 3; *AE* 1989, 342b with Højte (2005) 240–1, 68, perhaps erected the same year in Syracuse.

²¹ On this inscription with a title already well attested for Pompey in Asia Minor, see Schuler (2007); cf. *AE* 2007, 1505; this title, often used for gods, underlines the direct presence, supervision, and universal control of Augustus on land and sea, a motif already known in Hellenistic panegyric poetry and which recalls the expression ‘custos imperi Romani totiusque orbis terrarum praeses’ given to Augustus by the decurions of Pisa (*CIL* XII 1421 = *ILS* 140); see also Hor. *Carm.* 4. 15. 17, 4. 4. 1–2; also Ovid, *Fast.* 1. 529–36.

²² On the process by which Octavian-Augustus came to dominate personally a sphere which had been occupied by competing figures under the Republic, see e.g. Eck (1984), (1999), (2010); Flower (2006) 122–3; Panciera (2007) 1101.

²³ *CIL* V 4305 = *ILS* 75 with Alföldy (1991) 293.

²⁴ See Højte (2005) 229–63 and 159–60 (on the statue bases erected in connection with Augustus’ travels).

²⁵ On the inscription on the Trophy of Nicopolis, see p. 327 below and also Cassius Dio 53. 26. 4–5 (on an arch with trophies erected in the Alps, probably in Aosta, in 25 BC) and Pliny, *Nat.* 3. 136–8 (inscription on the *tropaeum Alpium* dedicated to Augustus in La Turbie by the *gentes Alpinae omnes . . . redactae*), *CIL* V 7817 and 7818 with Højte (2005) 242, 80, and 79; Binninger (2006); and Mayer (2007) 174; see also Horace, *Odes* 2. 9. 18–20: ‘. . . et potius nova | cantemus Augusti tropaea | Caesaris.

city and its hundreds of *vici*, as epigraphy plays a key role in Augustus' spatial reorganization of the city of Rome and its physical links with the provinces. The actual name of Augustus will have figured on all his administrative documents and on the *acta* of his reign (*senatus consulta, leges, decreta*), usually posted in highly frequented places so that they could be seen by all (*celeberrimi loci*),²⁶ but it also featured on numerous monumental stones recording the titles of members of his *familia* and of his *domus*, from every *servus* or *libertus Augusti* to all the agents of the government, such as every equestrian *procurator Augusti* or every senatorial *legatus Augusti pro praetore*. Also bearing his name were the priests, the *Augustales*²⁷ and the *flamines Augusti*, soldiers in the army, for example, the *evocati Augusti*, and the names of cities or roads such as the *via Augusta* in Spain or the *via Sebaste* in Galatia. The gods were also often associated with his name, such as *Mars Augustus*, *Mercurius Augustus*, the *Lares Augusti*.²⁸ There was also the *Victoria Augusti* or *Victoria Augusta*, and he himself could be referred to as *Numen Augusti* or as *Genius Augusti*.²⁹

Since the publication of Alföldy's paper, the detailed attention paid by many scholars to the epigraphy of the Augustan period, perhaps particularly in relation to the imperial cult, has deepened and refined our appreciation of the ways in which the presence of Augustus and of the *domus Augusta* imposed themselves in Rome,³⁰ Italy,³¹ and throughout the Empire.³² We now know much more than ever before about the speed and thoroughness of the diffusion of early Imperial epigraphy and its impact. Two examples will illustrate the wider phenomenon.

In 27 BC, a letter (in Greek and in Latin) was addressed by the Proconsul Vinicius (probably L. Vinicius) to the magistrates of Kyme in Asia Minor. It was subsequently inscribed in stone and has survived. It orders the precise words 'Imp. Caesar Deivei f. Augustu[s] re[sti]||[tuit]' to be inscribed on the temple of 'Liber pater'.³³ The fact that we are in 27 BC, the year in which Octavian took on this new title, shows just how important it was to him to have it disseminated far and wide as soon as possible. But the lines of communication could also work in the other direction. Our second example is that of an inscription raised by the inhabitants of Sion, in the Swiss Valais region, in 8–7 BC in which they address the Emperor, their *patronus*, as *pater patriae*—that is, by a title he received officially only in 2 BC (Fig. 15.1).³⁴ Imperial titulature and its dissemination were, therefore,

²⁶ Millar (1984) 47–53; Corbier (2006); Nelis-Clément (2006) 141–8.

²⁷ Ostrow (1990).

²⁸ See Ovid, *Fast.* 2. 634–7, 5. 145–6 and 147 with Tarpin (2008) 44–7 and Wallace-Hadrill (2008) 275–95 for discussion; more generally, see Fraschetti (2008).

²⁹ See e.g. Kantiréa (2007) 108–9.

³⁰ von Hesberg and Panciera (1994); Ganzert (1996) 191–3; Alföldy (1992); see also now *CIL* VI. 8. 2–3 (1996 and 2000); Orlandi (2007).

³¹ See e.g. Buonocore (2007).

³² See e.g. Corbier (2001); Horster (2001); Deniaux (2007); Kantiréa (2007); Mayer (2007); Paci (2007); Kreikenbom (2008); Stylow (2008); Trunk (2008); Witschel (2008). See also for recent editions of the *RG* Scheid (2007) and Cooley (2009).

³³ *SEG* 18. 555 = Sherck (1969) 61 = *IK* 5-Kyme 17 = *AE* 1979, 596; Millar (1984) 51–2; Hurlet (2006) 46, 204–9.

³⁴ *CIL* XII 136 = *ILS* 6755 = *RIS* III 253; see also Witschel (2008) 95–6 and Højte (2005) 85, 243. Walser believed that the title *pater patriae* (of which the first word is today almost invisible on the stone) could have been added after 2 BC, but Wiblé informs us that 'rien n'indique une reprise du texte,

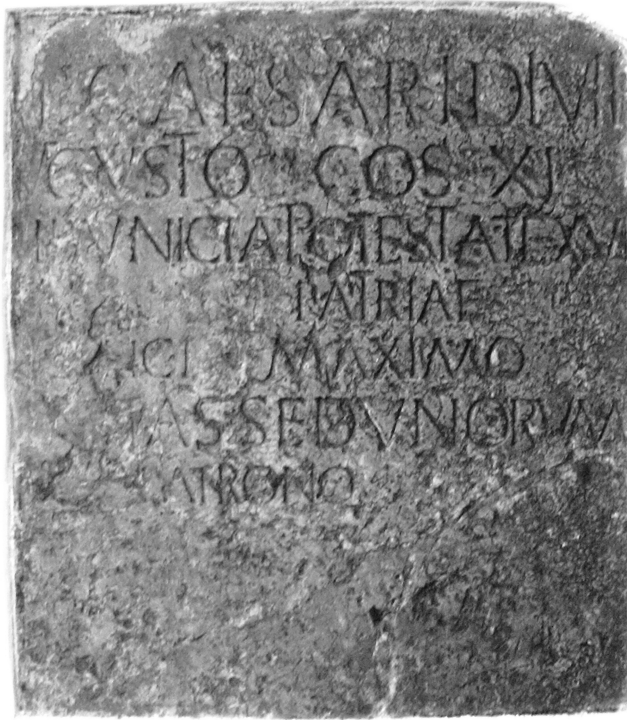


Fig. 15.1. Sion, canton du Valais (Switzerland) in reuse in the entrance wall of the Hôtel de Ville: Dedication to Augustus from the inhabitants of Sion, 8/7 BC (*CIL* XII 136 = *ILS* 6755 = *RIS* III 253).

matters of importance, and in due course we will see a reflection of these matters in the poets.

An interesting reflection on the Augustan epigraphic habit is to be found on some coins on which we find depicted inscribed monuments carrying the name of Augustus (see, for example, Fig. 15.2).³⁵ One of these even depicts an inscribed monument with the words *IMP CAES AVG LVD SAEC* (Fig. 15.3). This refers to one of the defining examples of Augustan epigraphy, the *acta* of the Secular Games of 17 BC, which were inscribed in monumental format. Such coins contribute to the dissemination of the Augustan discourse but also give us a glimpse of the reception of the Augustan epigraphic habit. The Augustan desire for memorialization is revealed in interesting ways by the *acta* of the *Ludi Saeculares*. They describe in detail the various rites and festivities of the occasion and within the

une érasion, voire un repolissage à l'époque antique' (email communication of 22 October 2010). According to Cassius Dio (55. 10) the title of *pater (patriae)* was already in use before being formally conferred and established by decree in 2 BC; see also *CIL* II 2107 = *ILS* 96 and Swan (2004) 104.

³⁵ See also Bergmann (2010) 374, 382; on Augustus, *RG*, and coins, Simon (1993); and on monuments of Rome as coin types, Hill (1989) figs. 82, 86, 87, 90, 99–101, 105, 111; see also Price and Trell (1977) figs. 125 and 128.



Fig. 15.2. Gold coin; 20–19 BC. Left (obverse): head of Augustus, laureate; right (reverse): rectangular altar, inscribed: *FORT·RED/CAES·AVG/S·P·Q·R·* (RIC 1 53a, p. 45). © The Trustees of the British Museum R.5986.



Fig. 15.3. Silver coin; L. Mescinius Rufus; 16 BC. Left (obverse): head of Augustus, laureate; right (reverse): cippus or altar inscribed referring to the *Ludi Saeculares* and a legend relating to the emperor's office of *Quindecimvir sacris faciundis* (RIC 1 354, p. 68). © The Trustees of the British Museum R. 2002,0102.4968.

text it is stated twice (ll. 59–60 and 62–3) that these had to be recorded on a bronze pillar and in marble in order to preserve their memory.³⁶ And on the inscription are preserved, in close proximity, the names of the Emperor and of the poet who wrote a poem for the occasion, Quintus Horatius Flaccus, thus illustrating in unique fashion the connections between epigraphy and poetry. Their relationship is in fact highlighted by the careful *ordinatio* and the *vacat* which follows Horace's name.³⁷

Quantity and ubiquity represent one characteristic of Augustan epigraphy. The size and appearance of the inscriptions and of the letters on the monumental inscriptions offer another aspect which merits attention, as well as the actual places in which they were displayed.³⁸ Augustus' massive use of marble not only in his architectural projects, but also in all the different types of inscription, deserves to be emphasized. In some cases the size of the letters was immense (23 cm, for

³⁶ Schnegg-Köhler (2002) 42 ll. 149–50; see also Lowrie (2009) 123–41.

³⁷ On the legibility, see Schnegg-Köhler (2002) 14, 288 (photograph) with von Hesberg (2009) 43, despite the omission in the drawing of the fragments B and C discovered in 1984.

³⁸ See, in general, Corbier (2006).

example, for the letters of dedication on the architrave of the temple of Mars Ultor, *CIL* VI 8.2 40311; Fig. 15.6a) and the use of gilded bronze characters (*litterae aureae*) fixed to the stone created an effect of gold brilliance in the eyes of onlookers. This practice of using bronze letters, rarely attested before, emerged under Augustus in relation to the ideology of the *aurea aetas* and became more and more frequent in imperial dedications.³⁹ Augustus was proud of the fact that he rebuilt and restored many buildings in Rome (Suetonius, *Aug.* 28. 5). In doing so he took great care to ensure that his name was inscribed into the fabric of the City, and indeed of cities across the Empire, as often as possible.⁴⁰

In a genre not discussed in Alföldy's study, the calendars and *Fasti*, the names and titles of Augustus and of his successors occupy a recurrent and very important place, as pointed out by Rüpke in his 1995 study, and particularly in his chapter whose title 'Die *Fasti* und die Geburt der Augusteischen Epigraphik' echoes Alföldy's article.⁴¹ Engraved in marble, the calendars become monuments in their own right and they are seen as an emblem of Augustan religious renewal. Of course both Julius Caesar and Augustus were honoured by having their names entered in the Roman calendar, when the month *Quin(c)tilis* became *Iulius* in 44 BC, and when *Sextilis* became *Augustus*, in 8 BC. As for the *Fasti Consulares*, the fragments of the long lists of names of the consuls today conserved in the Palazzo dei Conservatori and whose original location has been much discussed,⁴² the *ordinatio* of this list underlines and even exaggerates the effect of the ubiquity and recurrence of Augustus' names and titles, each first line of each year of his reign beginning with *Imperator Caesar Divi filius Augustus*, followed by the mention of his *tribunicia potestas*.⁴³

There can be no better proof of the importance Augustus attached to epigraphy than his *Res Gestae*, that 'queen of inscriptions' in which he records his achievements and which not only begins but also ends with the mention of inscriptions. Augustus brings his record to a close with the decision of the Senate, the Equestrian Order, and the People of Rome to celebrate his title of *pater patriae*.⁴⁴

When I was holding my thirteenth consulship [2 BC], the senate and equestrian order and people of Rome all together hailed me as father of the fatherland, and decreed *that this title should be inscribed in the forecourt of my house and in the Julian senate house and in the*

³⁹ On the use of bronze letters, see Alföldy (1990) 68–74, (1992) 18, 57, and on the brilliance of the Forum in general, 69–71; the letters of an inscription dedicated by the Senate for Lucius Caesar and found in the ruins of the Basilica Aemiliana in the Forum Romanum were 24.5 cm in height (*CIL* VI 4.3 36908 with Eck (1984) 147 and 164). For the bronze inscription (42–4 cm in height) of the Theatre of Marcellus, see Orlandi (2007) and Monteroso (2010), esp. 48–51 with *RG* 21.1, Cassius Dio 53. 30. For traces of letters in bronze of 20 cm in Byllis in Albania, see Deniaux (2007) 126–7 figs. 5–6; of 23 cm in Cordoba: *AE* 2007, 769. The bronze was in some cases covered with gold; see Alföldy (1990) 68–74, (1992) 69–73, Tacitus, *Ann.* 3. 57. 2 and 3. 59. 2, Suetonius, *Nero* 10. 2.

⁴⁰ See Favro (2005).

⁴¹ Rüpke (1995) 174–86, esp. 174–5.

⁴² Feeney (2007) 285 n. 1; Rüpke (1995) 186–8. See also Nedergaard (2001) and (2004).

⁴³ *Inscr. Ital.* XIII.1 59; Feeney (2007) 179 fig. 10.

⁴⁴ Cf. Ovid, *Fast.* 2. 127–34 with Herbert-Brown (1994) 43–63. On the famous chariot of the Forum Augustum, see now Stročka (2009).

Augustan forum under the chariot, which was set up in my honour by senatorial decree. When I wrote this I was in my seventy-sixth year [AD 13/14].

(RG 35; trans. A. Cooley; emphasis added)

On several other occasions, Augustus refers to inscriptions in relation to his restoration and rebuilding of Rome, and particularly to the choice of names engraved on the buildings and temples.⁴⁵ His words give us an impression of the control he exercised over this process, and his remark that he also restored buildings ‘without inscribing my name’ (*sine ulla inscriptione nominis mei*) is evocative, particularly when one considers that one of them was the Theatre of Pompey.⁴⁶ In some cases he states that he arranged for the inscription of the names of the previous builders in the inscription,⁴⁷ in other cases for the inscription of the names of his sons Gaius and Lucius (*sub titulo nominis filiorum meorum*) and of his son-in-law Marcellus (*sub nomine*).⁴⁸

The essential point should now be obvious. Augustus exploited in a massive way the capacities of epigraphy as a means of communication and found in it a perfect vehicle to shape, diffuse, and memorialize his image and his programme in Rome and throughout the Empire. The processes are complex and certainly evolve over time, but the picture represented by the surviving material offers us a consistent picture of the scale and power of the Augustan epigraphic habit. As Augustus rewrites Rome and writes his name into the very fabric of the city, it will come as no surprise that other writers of the day were alive to what he was doing, came under his influence, and reacted in their own written medium to the changes they saw taking place around them.⁴⁹

There are several places in the *Aeneid* where Vergil gestures towards different forms of epigraphy.⁵⁰ A full discussion of this phenomenon would have to look, perhaps most obviously, at the Caieta episode which opens Book 7 and the

⁴⁵ RG 20.4: ‘I restored eighty-two temples of the gods in the city as consul for the sixth time [28 BC], and I neglected none which needed repair at the time’; on his ‘restoration’ of religious buildings, rites, *ludi*, see e.g. Horace, *Odes* 3. 6. 1–8, Ovid, *Fast.* 2. 59–66 (with Herbert-Brown (1994) 33–43), Livy 4. 20. 7 and Scheithauer (2000) 51–5; on Augustus’ control of the names engraved on the buildings restored by him, see Suetonius, *Aug.* 31. 8–9, Cassius Dio 56. 40, and in general Horster (2001) 20–98. More generally, on Augustan control of Roman memory, see Gowing (2005) 18–27. Control of memory implies of course control of the art of forgetting, on which, see Flower (2006).

⁴⁶ RG 20. 1; note however *CIL* VI 9404: ‘... in scola sub teatro Aug. Pompeiano ...’ One wonders what Romans may have thought on reading the modest ‘*sine ulla inscriptione*’ engraved in the massive inscription carrying RG.

⁴⁷ RG 19.1.

⁴⁸ RG 20. 3; 21. 1 (Marcellus); on the inscription, see n. 39.

⁴⁹ See e.g. Livy 4. 20. 5–11 on Augustus and the authenticity of Cossus’ inscription, with the discussion of Sailor (2006). In this chapter we will concentrate on the poets, but it is noteworthy that recent scholarship on Livy has made much of his imagery of monumentality and revealed the ways in which the writing of his history amounts on one level to a monumental rebuilding of Rome in a manner that is in dialogue with the Augustan discourse; see e.g. Kraus (1994); Jaeger (1997). On the delicate question of the precise nature of the relationship between Augustus and the poets, much has been written and opinions differ widely; from a huge bibliography, see Griffin (1984), (2005); White (1993); Thomas (2001) ch. 1. On the trope of ‘writing Rome’, see e.g. Edwards (1996); Jaeger (1997); Barchiesi (1997) 69–73.

⁵⁰ Lowrie (2009) 142–74 contains discussion of some of the relevant issues and gives a good impression of the wider context in discussing the issues of monumentality, authority, and performance. See also Thomas (1988) 216–19 on sepulchral epitaphs and Horsfall (1986).

Palinurus and Misenus episodes with which it is explicitly connected.⁵¹ These opening lines of the second half of the epic, a strikingly marked position, have long been read as an example of genre-crossing between epic and epigram.⁵² However, since it is not immediately obvious that this inclusion of reference to sepulchral epigram owes its presence in the *Aeneid* to the precedent of Augustan epigraphic usage, our attention will focus on two other passages in the poem, one in which our grasp of the relationship with imperial epigraphy is relatively secure, another in which it is rather more elusive.

In the third book of the *Aeneid* the Trojan fleet arrives at Leucate, where there is a temple of Apollo (3. 274–5). Thereabouts, amidst some slight geographical confusion, they celebrate games on the Actian shore ('Actiaque...litora', 3. 280). Next, Aeneas dedicates a shield containing an inscription, fixing it to the doors of the temple:

aere cavo clipeum, magni gestamen Abantis,
postibus adversis figo et rem carmine signo:
AENEAS HAEC DE DANAIS VICTORIBVS ARMA.

(A shield made of hollow bronze, once carried by great Abas, | I fix on the facing door-posts and I mark there a line of verse: | AENEAS DEDICATES THESE ARMS TAKEN FROM VICTORIOUS GREEKS.)⁵³ (Verg. *Aen.* 3. 286–8)

For many contemporary Roman readers this combination of Apollo, Actium, and games would have been deeply resonant. In his *Life of Augustus*, Suetonius records that after the Battle of Actium Octavian went to great lengths to mark the site with a fitting memorial of his victory:

Quoque *Actiacae* victoria memoria celebratior et in posterum esset, urbem Nicopolim apud *Actium* condidit *ludosque* illic quinquennales constituit et ampliatio veterem *Apollinis* templo locum castrorum, quibus fuerat usus, exornatum navalibus spoliis Neptuno ac Marti consecravit.

(So that the victory of *Actium* would be even more celebrated in the memory of future generations, he founded the city of Nicopolis nearby and established *games* there to take place every five years. He enlarged the ancient temple of *Apollo* and, having adorned the place where his camp had been with spoils from the enemy ships, he dedicated it to Neptune and Mars.) (Suet. *Aug.* 18. 2; trans. Edwards (2000); emphases added)

⁵¹ See Dinter (2005) and in this volume, Ch. 14. The technique of embedding a funerary epigram in epic narrative goes back to the *Iliad*; see Thomas (1988) 205–7. More generally, on the *Eclogues*, see Breed (2006).

⁵² Vergil evokes Caieta's actual epitaph with the words 'honus...tuus' (*Aen.* 7. 3), which are best translated as 'the honours shown you', i.e. in the form of a tomb (Horsfall (2000) ad loc.), and thus actually refer to her funeral monument. The subsequent use of 'nomen' in line 3 ('ossaque nomen |...signat', *Aen.* 7. 3–4) has in turn been taken to allude to Caieta's inscribed name, but some prefer to associate it instead with the place name; see Horsfall (2000) 48–9 for full discussion. Horsfall picks up the fact that Vergil here, as well as referring back to the deaths of Palinurus and Misenus in Books 5 and 6, is also recalling the death of Deiphobus at *Aeneid* 6. 507, where he says of the hero's cenotaph 'nomen et arma locum servant'. Norden (1957) 81 translates this by 'Waffen nur und Namensaufschrift zeichnen | Jenes Grab', and Horsfall quips, 'Norden's "Aufschrift" might be right but he wisely does not venture to detect mention of four inscriptions in V.'s text and a busy stone-cutter on board Aen.'s ships!

⁵³ Unless otherwise attributed, all translations are our own.

The archaeological record preserves part of the inscription that was set up at this campsite memorial. The most recent edition of the text reads:⁵⁴

vacat [Imp · Caesa]r · Div[i · Iuli ·] f · vict[oriam · consecutus · bell]o · quod · pro [- r]e[- p]ublic[a] · ges[si]t · in · hac · region[e · cons]ul [- quintum · i]mperat[or · se]ptimum · pace [-]parta · terra [- marique · Nep]tuno [- et Ma]rt[i · c]astra [- ex ·] quibu[s · ad · hostem in]seq[ue]ndum egr[essu]s · est · navalibus · spoli]is · [exorna]ta · c[onsacra]vit *vacat*

(Imperator Caesar, son of the divine Julius, following the victory in the war which he waged on behalf of the Republic in this region when he was consul for the fifth time and commander-in-chief for the seventh time, after peace he had secured on land and sea, consecrated to Neptune and Mars the camp from which he set forth to attack the enemy, which is now ornamented with naval spoils.) (Text and trans. Zachos (2003))

It seems obvious that in having Aeneas set up an inscription near Actium Vergil is inspired by Octavian's actions. Chronologically, of course, the poem's narrative presents the gesture of Aeneas as prefiguring that of Octavian.⁵⁵ In each case an Actian inscription is set up to record a victory.⁵⁶ It has also been pointed out that there is a further metapoetic element, a form of *mise en abyme*, as in Vergil's epic we see Aeneas composing a hexameter verse which contains the word 'arma', the author of which is the 'vir' of the poem's famous opening verse, 'arma virumque cano'.⁵⁷ Aeneas' celebratory Actian inscription, with its pointed combination of Trojan defeat and victory inscribed in hexameter form, thus seems to go so far as to function as a kind of originary moment for the *Aeneid* itself, an epic long read as a meditation on both triumph and loss.

Our second example of epigraphic interaction in Vergil involves a highly problematic case for all attempts to make sense of the ways in which the poem relates to the Augustan context. Over the years, there has been intense discussion

⁵⁴ On the site and the inscription, see Murray and Petsas (1989); Zachos (2003). The text is taken from Zachos (2003) 76, where Zachos cautions that *Marti et Neptuno* should perhaps be read instead of *Neptuno et Marti*; see also *AE* 2007, 1286 and Kantiréa (2007) 89–93.

⁵⁵ Servius (*Aen.* 3. 274) notes that Vergil, *in honorem Augusti*, has Aeneas do exactly what Augustus had done after Actium; see Drew (1927) 99. For full discussion of the various levels of interaction, see Paschalis (1987); West (1994) 58; Gurval (1995) 81–2; Stahl (1998) 60; Miller (2009) 95–6; Lowrie (2009) 167–88. On the identity of Abas, see Miller (1993).

⁵⁶ See Stahl (1998) 68–70. Octavian's Actian inscription is dated to 29 bc by Murray and Petsas (1989). On Actium in the *Aeneid*, see Gurval (1995) ch. 5 (he underplays the importance attached to the whole Actian victory and the use made of it by Augustus in Rome) and, more generally, Miller (2009) ch. 2.

⁵⁷ See Barchiesi (1995) 5–6. It is worth noting also that on the shield of Aeneas, when Vergil has Vulcan fashion images of the post-Actian triple triumph, Octavian will be described as 'recognizing gifts' and fixing them on temple doors, 'dona recognoscit populorum aptaque superbis | postibus' (8. 721–2). These votive offerings will have included shields taken from the defeated enemy (cf. *Aen.* 8. 186 and Gransden (1976) ad loc.), thus certainly recalling Aeneas' gesture in Book 3 and emphasizing the connection with Octavian; see Gransden (1976) on 8. 721–2; Barchiesi (1997) 276. Inscribed shields must have had a particular resonance in contemporary Rome given the *clipeus virtutis*, the gift of which in 27 bc Augustus thought important enough to record at *Res Gestae* 34; for a fragmentary copy of an engraved shield found in Augustus' Mausoleum, *CIL* VI 8.2 40365 (with bibliography on the other copies and among them the copy found in Arles (Fig. 15.4)). On Vergil's reworking of the Augustan virtues of the shield (*virtus*, *clementia*, *iustitia*, *pietas*) in the shield of Aeneas, see Drew (1927) 27–31.



Fig. 15.4. Arles: Marble copy of the *clipeus Virtutis*, prob. 26 BC (AE 1952, 165).

of the relationship between the Forum of Augustus and the Parade of Heroes in *Aeneid* 6, when Aeneas sees in the Underworld the future generations of Romans waiting to be born.⁵⁸ Some scholars argue that the date of the dedication of the Forum, 2 BC, precludes any possible interaction between the text and the monument. Others, however, argue that direct influence on the *Aeneid* is indeed possible given that the temple was originally dedicated at Philippi in 42 BC and that Vergil could have had knowledge of ongoing planning.⁵⁹ Happily, only one small detail of this debate need concern us here. It has often been noted that the images of the Roman ancestors in the Forum contained encomiastic inscriptions recounting their most famous deeds. One of the surviving fragments reads thus (CIL VI 8.3 40931; Fig. 15.5):

⁵⁸ Important also of course are the description of the Palace of Latinus at *Aeneid* 7. 170–91 (see Rowell (1941)) and the depiction of the generations of Romans on the shield of Aeneas at 8. 626–728.

⁵⁹ For a recent discussion of these matters, see Harrison (2006), arguing for the influence of the planning for the Forum on the *Aeneid*. It is important to note that some scholars are highly sceptical about the historicity of the vow made at Philippi, arguing that the idea is a later (c.12 BC) invention; see Boyle (2003) 210–11 for discussion.



Fig. 15.5. Rome, Museum of the Imperial Forums: fragment of pedestal from the Forum of Augustus in Lunense marble with inscription referring to Aeneas (CIL VI 8.3 40931).

Aē[e]ā[s primus] | Latin[orum rex] | regnav[it annos III].
 (Aeneas, [first king] of the Latins, reigned [for three years].)
 (CIL VI 8.3 40931)

There is clearly some kind of intertextual relationship between this inscription below the image of Aeneas in the Forum and Jupiter's prophecy concerning Aeneas at *Aeneid* 1. 265–6:

tertia dum Latio regnantem viderit aestas
 ternaque transierint Rutulis hiberna subactis.

(until the third summer sees him reigning in Latium | and three winters pass for the Rutulians after their defeat.) (Verg. *Aen.* 1. 265–6)

There are various explanations for the similarities.⁶⁰ Vergil's knowledge of the plans for the Forum may have led him to include this particular detail in one of the most intensely Augustan passages in the whole epic, Jupiter's stunning prophecy, early in the poem, of Roman might and endless rule ('imperium sine fine', 1. 279). However, the detail of Aeneas' three-year rule is not a Vergilian invention. It is in fact part of the Aeneas legend and among the surviving sources is recorded by Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Roman Antiquities* 1. 64. 3). Vergil, therefore, did not

⁶⁰ It must be noted from the outset that the inscription is augmented in the light of the text of the *Aeneid*, but Vergil is in turn indebted to earlier accounts of the Aeneas legend. For the various sources that mention the three-year rule of Aeneas, see Horsfall (1974) 112; in general, see e.g. Galinsky (1996) 197–213 and Geiger (2008) 49–51 for discussion of the Forum and the parallels with the *Aeneid*.

need to know about the Forum in order to refer to Aeneas ruling in Latium for precisely three years. This fact, when allied to the late dating of the Forum (2 BC) compared to the publication of the *Aeneid* (19 BC), raises the possibility that the interaction should be seen from the opposite perspective and that the persons composing the *elogia* for the images in the Forum were drawing on the Aeneas legend as canonized in the *Aeneid*. Either way, this is a case of intriguing interaction between an Augustan literary text and contemporary epigraphic culture. More specifically, the similarity between the inscription and the text of the *Aeneid* is a reflection of the parallel between Vergil's writing of the *Aeneid* and Augustus' manipulation of the narratives of Roman history in art and architecture, a process which as well as leading to the construction of many monuments also involved the composition of countless inscriptions. If it could be demonstrated that Vergil did indeed have detailed knowledge of the plans for the Forum, we would have a fascinating insight into the genesis of important elements in the poem's Augustan discourse. On the other hand, if the inscription is seen as referring to the Aeneas legend and/or the *Aeneid*, we would have an example of the impact of Vergil's epic on Roman epigraphic culture.⁶¹ The latter option of course puts pressure on the literary culture of the reader of the inscription in the Forum. In approaching the question from this angle, that of a reader of the inscriptions who knows the *Aeneid*, we are lucky enough to be in a position to identify one such individual.

At *Fasti* 5. 545–98 Ovid describes Mars as a visitor to the Forum of Augustus and its temple of Mars Ultor. It is a passage of quite extraordinary brilliance from which we can focus only on a short section:⁶²

hinc videt Aenean oneratum pondere caro
 et tot Iuleae nobilitatis avos;
 hinc videt Iliaden umeris ducis arma ferentem, 565
 claraque dispositis acta subesse viris.
 spectat et Augusto praetextum nomine templum,
 et visum lecto Caesare maius opus.

(Here he sees Aeneas burdened by his beloved father | and many noble ancestors of the Julian line; | here he sees the Trojan carrying on his shoulders the arms of a general | and the famous deeds beneath all the images in a line | and he looks at the temple adorned with the name of Augustus | and on reading the name of Caesar the work seems greater.)

(Ov. *Fast.* 5. 563–8)

In this moment, Ovid goes so far as to present us with an image of Mars in the process of reading the inscriptions in the Forum.⁶³ Constantly drawn into the divine gaze ('hinc videt... hinc videt... spectat et...'), the reader sees Mars

⁶¹ On this phenomenon, see e.g. Hoogma (1959); Horsfall (1986) 44, *Enciclopedia Virgiliana s.v. Epigrafia*.

⁶² On the Forum Augustum in Ovid's oeuvre, see Boyle (2003) 98–102, 205–11; in relation to the *Fasti*, see Riedl (1989).

⁶³ For the numerous inscriptions of the Forum (the most recent editions of which are in *CIL* VI 8.3) and their impact, see Velleius 2. 39 and 2. 104. 2, Pliny, *Nat.* 22. 13, Suetonius, *Aug.* 31. 5, Cassius Dio 55. 10, 56. 40 with Alföldy (1992) 67–75; Geiger (2008) 62. Note also *CIL* VI 8.2 31267 = *ILS* 103, the base of a gold statue probably representing the province of Baetica and weighing almost 33kg; 'Imp(eratori) Caesari Augusto p(atr)i p(atriciae) Hispania ulterior Baetica quod beneficio eius et

looking at both the images of Aeneas and other great men ('claraque dispositis acta subesse viris') with the accompanying inscriptions of their *acta* and also at what must be the great inscription on the architrave of the temple ('Augusto praetextum nomine templum').⁶⁴ Furthermore, the poet actually informs his readers of the reaction of the deity to his reading of this inscription, when he says that after reading the name of Caesar ('lecto Caesare'), the 'work' (*opus*) appears greater. The term '*opus*' here is deliberately ambiguous. It could refer to the temple itself, but it could also refer to the achievements recorded on it. And there may be another layer of meaning present. The expression '*maius opus*' here may have led many readers to recall its use at *Aeneid* 7. 45, the prologue to the second half of the *Aeneid*, where Vergil describes the second half of his epic precisely as a 'greater work' (*maius opus*). Among the reasons for his doing so is the fact that he is now turning to his Iliadic narrative of war.⁶⁵ The possible Ovidian allusion to *Aeneid* 7 sits alongside further use of Vergil. As Ovid has Mars 'read' the Forum, he also alludes to another section of the *Aeneid* many visitors to the Forum will have read, that is to precisely that passage of *Aeneid* 1, Jupiter's prophecy, where we have been arguing for a parallel between the epic and the inscribed monument.⁶⁶ By incorporating allusion to Vergil within his description of the Forum, Ovid is drawing attention to the links between the Forum of Augustus and that of the Julian version of Roman history offered to Jupiter by Venus in *Aeneid* 1. In doing so he imposes a collusive reading of both the inscription on the temple of Mars Ultor and Jupiter's prophecy. In the end, the inscription on the architrave and the literary text both celebrate Augustan peace. It is a typically Ovidian twist that in the *Fasti* and in the Forum it is the god of War who is doing the reading. With typical wit and skill, Ovid is looking at and pointing up the workings of the Augustan discourse as it is produced in both literary text, the already canonical *Aeneid*, and in the monumental architecture and epigraphy of what was perhaps the grandest and most ambitious Augustan building of them all.

Alignment of Augustan literary text and monumental architecture receives probably its most famous and memorable statement in the final poem of the third book of the *Odes* of Horace:

Exegi monumentum aere perennius
regalique situ pyramidum altius,
quod non imber edax, non Aquilo inpotens

perpetua cura provincia pacata est auri p(ondo) C (=centum)', with Alföldy (1991) 309, (1992) 71–3. In general on representations of the provinces, see Cancik (1997).

⁶⁴ On the restitution of the full text of this inscription from the tiny surviving fragment, see Alföldy (1992) 17–32, now enshrined in *CIL* VI 8.2 40311 (Figs. 15.6a and 15.6b). For a different restoration, see Ganzert (1996) 70–5, 191–3. In general on the Forum and the temple, see, from a massive bibliography, Kockel (1995); Spannagel (1999); Ganzert (2000); Ungaro (2007) 118–29; Geiger (2008).

⁶⁵ See Galinsky (1996) 211–12; Barchiesi (2002) 12.

⁶⁶ The links between this passage as a whole and the prophecy of Jupiter in *Aeneid* 1 have been worked out by Barchiesi (2002) 19–22 and Harrison (2006) 181–2, noting particularly the parallel between Vergil's description of *Furor* at *Aeneid* 1. 294–6 and a painting in a highly frequented position in the Forum (Pliny, *Nat.* 35. 27, 93–4) depicting a triumph of Alexander the Great and including a personified War with his hands tied behind his back; note also Pliny, *Nat.* 34. 20 for another connection between Alexander the Great and the temple of Mars Ultor.

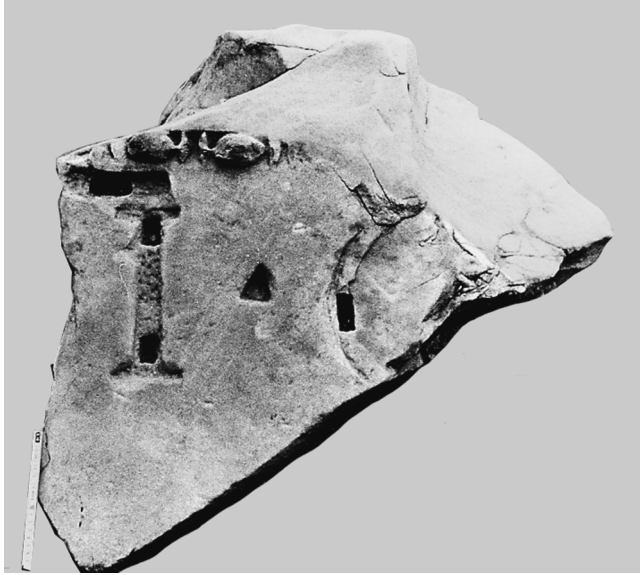


Fig. 15.6a. Fragment of the dedication on the Architrave of the Temple of Mars Ultor, Rome, 12 May 2 BC (*CIL* VI 8.2 40311).



Fig. 15.6b. Reconstruction by G. Alföldy of the dedication on the Architrave of the Temple of Mars Ultor, Rome, 12 May 2 BC.

possit diruere aut innumerabilis
annorum series et fuga temporum.

(I have built a monument more lasting than bronze | and set higher than the pyramids of kings. | It cannot be destroyed by gnawing rain | or wild north wind, by the procession | of unnumbered years or by the flight of time.)

(Hor. *Carm.* 3. 30. 1–5; trans. West (2002))

Intense scholarly discussion has been devoted to unpicking the precise nature of the relationship that this sentence evokes between the poet's 'monument' and the pyramids (see Houghton, Ch. 16 in this volume). For our purposes it will suffice to concentrate on one point: for a Roman reader of this text it will have been obvious that an essential element in the poem's internal logic will have been the fact that there was an inscription carved on the bronze. It is the realization that a Roman reader would immediately have thought of an inscribed monument that reveals an essential element in the comparison with Horace's poetic achievement. While the inscription will be worn away in the end by the forces of nature, the *Odes* will endure forever. Horace is clearly drawing on epigraphic habits even as he adopts the form of literary signature known as the *sphragis*. As Woodman has written: 'Horace's *Odes* are his tombstone, and this final ode, the epilogue, is the epitaph

inscribed upon them.⁶⁷ Galinsky has taken the connection between Horace's textual *monumentum* and the bronze even further. In discussing the expression *aere perennius* ('more lasting than bronze', line 1), he notes as follows: 'The range of references here includes bronze plaques on tombs, bronze tablets that had laws engraved on them . . . and the long-standing mania for honorific statues in Rome . . .'.⁶⁸ Horace goes beyond the obvious paradox that a written poetic text will outlast buildings, statues, and their inscriptions, as well as surpassing his Greek lyric models Pindar, Bacchylides, and Simonides.⁶⁹ Through his poetry and its reception down the ages his immortality is ensured, but whereas a tombstone or statue can carry only the name of a person, some essential quality of the man himself will be preserved in his texts which, as something more than mere words, surpass the communicative and memorializing capacities of inscribed stone and bronze.⁷⁰ And when the specific Augustan context is taken into account, given that in 23 BC, generally agreed to be the year of the publication of *Odes* 1–3, mention of the pyramids could not fail to evoke the recent Roman conquest of Egypt and perhaps even a new fashion in memorial pyramids in Rome,⁷¹ the poet's monumental gesture must surely be seen in the light of specifically Augustan epigraphic practices. Horace relates his provincial birthplace to contemporary Rome (*Carm.* 3. 30. 10–12), his poetry to both the Greek literary past (13) and the future of Roman society (8–9). His poem is definitively Augustan in its sense of grandeur, confidence, and triumphalism, but also in its evocation of Roman ritual and imperial control of space and time. Like Augustus, Horace is writing his way to immortality. But the poet suggests that his monument will survive those of the *princeps*. In typically Horatian manner, the poem both encodes the discourses of Augustan epigraphy and culture, and subtly distances itself from them.⁷²

We have treated *Odes* 3. 30 in isolation because of the fact that it is so well known and its opening so often quoted, but it is important to point out that in its evocation of Augustan architecture and epigraphy, it is by no means unique in the collection. Rather, it fits into and brings to a conclusion a coherent thematic nexus running through the first three books of *Odes* in which Horace evokes the physical reality of the city of Rome and its relationship to Italy and the wider world. Horace's creation of a lyric space involves a continuum that works outwards from

⁶⁷ Woodman (1974) 116.

⁶⁸ Galinsky (1996) 352. See also on monumentality and textuality in *Odes* 3. 30, Gibson (1997); Habinek (1998) 110–14; West (2002) 262; Lowrie (2009) 117–22; and Houghton, Ch. 16 in this volume. On Roman use of bronze inscriptions, see Williamson (1987); Ferrary (2009); and in general Haensch (2009).

⁶⁹ See Galinsky (1996) 351 and Nisbet and Rudd (2004) ad loc. for the poem's reworking of Greek lyric models. The latter take the reference to be to bronze statues, which is probably too narrow, but even statues would have carried an inscription, which means that even if one wishes to follow Nisbet and Rudd and reduce the range of reference, Horace is still establishing a parallel between his poetic text and an object carrying an inscription. The added point here is that even if rain, wind, and the passage of time do not totally destroy the pyramids and other monuments, they will much more easily and quickly efface the texts inscribed upon them.

⁷⁰ See Woodman (1974) 121.

⁷¹ See Gibson (1997); West (2002) 262.

⁷² See Lowrie (2009) 120–1.

the sympotic couch towards the confines of Empire.⁷³ Commentaries on these themes of Books 1–3 may be found in the fourth book, published ten years later.⁷⁴

At *Odes* 4. 8. 13–20 Horace explicitly contrasts the superiority of poetry over inscriptions when it comes to memorializing great men.⁷⁵

Non incisa notis marmora publicis	13
. . .	
clarius indicant	20
laudes quam Calabriae Pierides	

(Not marble slabs incised with public records | . . . confers such clear praise | . . . as do the Muses of Calabria) (Hor. *Carm.* 4. 8. 13, 20–1; trans. West (2002))

The importance of epigraphic commemoration in contemporary Rome is emphasized once again in *Odes* 4. 14, which begins thus:

Quae cura patrum quaeve Quritium
 plenis honorum muneribus tuas,
 Auguste, virtutes in aevum
 per titulos memoresque fastus
 aeternet, o, qua sol habitabilis
 inlustrat oras, maxime principum?

(What efforts by the Senate, what efforts by the citizens, | could immortalize your virtues, Augustus | and pay you due honour in inscriptions | and on commemorative days, | O greatest of princes, wherever the sun | bathes habitable shores in light?)

(Hor. *Carm.* 4. 14. 1–6; trans. West (2002))

These lines, in a poem that goes on to recall directly *Odes* 3. 30 (cf. 4. 14. 25–6 and 3. 30. 10–11 for mention of the Aufidus and Daunus; cf. also ‘per memores . . . fastus’, at *Odes* 3. 17. 4), refer to epigraphy in order to suggest that the achievements of Augustus all over the world may surpass the ability of inscriptions to embrace them. But even as it does so, the poem draws the attention of the reader to the fact that it is also through *this* text, as well as in honorific *tituli* and *fasti*, that the virtues of Augustus can be memorialized.⁷⁶ Once they are praised within the Horatian lyric text, the power of Horace’s poetry exceeds the abilities of epigraphic celebration. The Augustan *vates* once more brings his poetry into dialogue with other written forms of celebration of the victorious *imperator*.⁷⁷ For further

⁷³ There is much of interest on these and related topics in Lowrie (2009) ch. 3.

⁷⁴ The limited space available does not permit study of the *Carmen Saeculare*, which is of course a unique example of an Augustan text for which we have an inscription providing us with detailed information about its performance; on the inscription, see the excellent Schnegg-Köhler (2002) and for a recent reading of the poem, see Lowrie (2009) 123–41.

⁷⁵ Horace may have in mind here the statues with their *elogia* in the Forum Augustum; see Fedeli and Ciccarelli (2008) ad loc. for discussion.

⁷⁶ Note S. 1. 6. 17, where Horace mocks those who are impressed by honorific inscriptions, ‘qui stupet in titulis et imaginibus’.

⁷⁷ On the expression ‘pater urbium’ at *Odes* 3. 24. 27, which is printed capitalized in many editions as PATER VRBIVM to show that Horace imagines it as an inscription on statues (‘subscribi statuis’, 29), see Woodman and Martin (1996) 228 n. 1. Woodman argues that the expression is ‘close to meaningless’ and that instead ‘urbium’ is to be construed with ‘statuis’, which would then mean something like ‘if he wants “Father” to be inscribed on his statues in the cities’. We would like to thank Prof. Woodman for drawing our attention to his discussion of this question.

thoughts along similar lines, we can turn to Ovid and to the completion of our survey.

A considerable body of recent work on Roman elegy generally and on Ovid in particular has begun to reveal the fascinating ways in which this corpus is of particular interest for those interested in ‘literary epigraphy’.⁷⁸ This research liberates us from the need to study a brilliant and dense series of epigraphic moments in Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid.⁷⁹ Obviously, given the generic interplay between elegy and epigram and Hellenistic precedent for complex play between written and inscribed epigram, it would be difficult to prove that all these literary inscriptions owe much to the evolving Augustan epigraphic habit. Nevertheless, despite the intensely literary background, there are occasions on which it seems necessary to take into account contemporary epigraphic practice. Propertius 1. 21, for example, draws on the traditions of sepulchral epigraphy, but by doing so in relation to the civil conflict at Perugia it has been seen as inviting a reading of the *Cynthia* from a political perspective.⁸⁰ A reader of Propertius’ first book who has also read the tombstones of men killed in the Italian civil wars of the 30s BC may indeed bring a particular slant to bear on his interpretation of the elegist’s self-positioning in relation to the *acceptum imperium* (1. 6. 34).⁸¹ Subsequently, readers may always wish, in one way or another, to relate those occasions on which the elegists write their names into their texts in the form of inscriptions to the evolutions of the Augustan epigraphic discourse.⁸²

Obviously, in any consideration of the connections between Augustan elegy and epigraphy, Ovid’s *Fasti* immediately comes to mind as a central text, and it is a fascinating exercise to read this poem with an eye for epigraphic gestures. If, for example, we take a passage like *Fasti* 1. 590–616, we encounter an intense concentration on reading and titles, beginning thus:

*perlege dispositas generosa per atria ceras:
contigerunt nulli nomina tanta viro.*

(Read the waxen images set up in wide halls: | No other man has received such grand titles).
(Ov. *Fast.* 1. 591–2)

⁷⁸ See Dinter, Ch.14, and Houghton, Ch. 16 in this volume and their bibliographies; see also Videau (2010) 71–130. Bettenworth (forthcoming) will also move the debate forward in interesting ways. One contribution that has often escaped notice is Fedeli (1989).

⁷⁹ On Catullan precedents, see Thomas (1988) 214–16; Ramsby (2007) 39–50. Note also Cornelius Gallus 145 (Hollis (2007)), where the poet looks forward to ‘reading’ the temples of gods made richer by being fixed with Caesar’s spoils (‘multorum templa deorum | fixa *legam* spoleis deivitoria tueis’, 4–5), where the use of ‘legam’ surely (cf. Courtney (1993) 266) implies that the spoils and/or the temples carry inscriptions; for discussion of the word’s meaning, see Gómez Pallarès (2005); *AE* 2005, 152; Hollis (2007) 246. We would like to thank J. Miller and A. Keith for drawing our attention to this text. Gallus is of course fascinating as one who was both a poet and an inscriber of epigraphic texts; on his poems, see now Hollis (2007) 219–52; on his inscriptions, see Alföldy (1990); Hoffmann et al. (2009).

⁸⁰ See Du Quesnay (1992) on Propertius 1. 21 and epitaphs; for political readings in the light of 1. 21, see Ramsby (2007) 71; Breed (2009); Heslin (2010).

⁸¹ Translations of this difficult expression vary; for example, ‘popular government’ (Goold (1990)), ‘an accepted rule’ (Heyworth (2009)), ‘a welcome administration’ (Heslin (2010)). For updating of Propertius’ first book in 33 BC, see Heslin (2010). On another poem of Propertius, 4. 11, as a type of tomb inscription, see Ramsby (2007) 66–70; Cooley (2009) 33; Lowrie (2009) 349–59.

⁸² Cf. Houghton, this volume, Ch. 16, sect. 1.

Ovid refers to reading the titles which accompanied masks in Roman houses,⁸³ and then goes on to focus on the titles of great Romans and on the names of Octavian, especially that of 'Augustus' ('augusta', 'augusta', 'augurium', 'auget', 'augeat', 'augeat', all concentrated in verses 608–13).⁸⁴ Again, at the opening of Book 2, he states that his subject matter is 'the times marked in the *fasti*' ('signataque tempora fastis', 2. 7). After thus relating his *Fasti* to the inscribed *fasti* with which Romans would have been familiar and that were of great interest to Augustus, he goes on to describe his literary activity as *his* 'military service' ('militia'), in contrast to 'real' Augustan warfare, before once again returning to epigraphy and to names and titles:

at tua prosequimur studioso pectore, Caesar,
nomina, per titulos ingredimurque tuos.

(But we follow your names, Caesar, with attentive heart, | and we make our way through your titles.) (Ov. *Fast.* 2. 15–16)

Ovid here draws his readers' attention to the Augustan epigraphic habit. As he makes his way through the calendar year, he likens the process to a journey on which the names of 'Caesar' are visible at every turn.⁸⁵ As we have seen, precisely one of the reasons for the development of Augustan epigraphy was to ensure that the various titles of Augustus would indeed be legible all over Rome, and indeed all over the world. Ovid seems to suggest, as he does elsewhere and in many different ways, that the Roman calendar and year have become Augustan and so in the writing of his *Fasti* he is inevitably entering into dialogue with Augustus' rewriting of Roman time, and indeed his rewriting of the Roman *fasti*.⁸⁶

There may be related play in Ovidian love elegy. At highly marked moments in his *Ars Amatoria* Ovid draws on the erotic tradition, following Propertius and Tibullus, of inserting his own name in inscriptional mode into his text, first at the end of Book 2:

sed quicumque superarit Amazona ferro
inscribat spoliis NASO MAGISTER ERAT.
ecce, rogant tenerae sibidem praecepta puellae:
vos eritis chartae proxima cura meae.

(But whoever conquers his Amazon, | let him inscribe on his spoils NASO WAS MY TEACHER.
| But now young girls seek my advice: | you will be the concern of my next book.)

(Ov. *Ars* 2. 743–6)

Exactly the same 'inscription' appears once again at the very end of Book 3:⁸⁷

⁸³ See Flower (1996) 207 and n. 105 for the *imagines* and their *tituli* in Roman *atria*. For the occurrence of 'perlege' on *carmina epigraphica*, see Courtney (1993) 397.

⁸⁴ See Herbert-Brown (1994) 122–3. Cf. also *Fast.* 2. 127–32 where in close succession we encounter 'pater patriae', 'nomen', 'nomina', 'pater orbis', and 'nomen'.

⁸⁵ On Augustus and his titles in the *Fasti*, see Herbert-Brown (1994) ch. 2.

⁸⁶ On Augustus and the Roman *fasti*, see Feeney (2007) 172–93. Much has been written on Ovid's *Fasti* in recent years. From a huge bibliography, see Barchiesi (1997); Pasco-Pranger (2006).

⁸⁷ Cf. *Amores* 1. 11. 27, 2. 13. 25 and *Tristia* 3. 3. 76 for Naso once again on an imaginary inscription. In general for the practice of the elegists in naming themselves and evoking their literary production, career, and reception, see Houghton, Ch. 16 in this volume.

ut quondam iuvenes, ita nunc, mea turba, puellae
 inscribant spoliis NASO MAGISTER ERAT.

(Like the boys, so let the girls, my followers, | inscribe on their spoils, NASO WAS MY TEACHER.) (Ov. *Ars* 3. 811–12)

On one level, given the literary precedent of his two fellow elegists, this is simply a typical generic play on the relationship between elegy and epigram with accompanying play on the dividing line between purely literary/textual and inscribed/functional epigram. On a more specific level, Ovid here replaces in Roman erotodidaxis Tibullus, who had described himself as ‘magister amoris’ at 1. 4. 75. Furthermore, as in *Odes* 3. 30 and, as we shall see, at the close of *Metamorphoses* 15, what we have here is in effect a *sphragis*. But the mention of *spolia* and the use of *turba* seem to evoke the image of a triumph and certainly relate the inscription expected to be written by the *puellae* to more formal and public forms of epigraphy. If we take into account the Augustan epigraphic context, is it possible to suggest that in inscribing his name in this way Ovid is drawing attention to the pervasive presence of another frequently inscribed name in contemporary culture, that of Augustus?⁸⁸ How the relationship between poet and *princeps* is to be defined is of course a notoriously slippery topic, as scholars disagree over the nature of Ovid’s attitude to Augustus and even over how that very question should be formulated. But whatever one’s approach, it seems obvious that Ovid was an astute reader of the Augustan epigraphic habit, as our final example will demonstrate.

In chapter 6 of her *Textual Performance, Roman Elegists and the Epigraphic Tradition* (2007), Teresa Ramsby turns to study Ovid’s epic inscriptions. She discusses three examples of formal quotation of an inscribed text: Phaethon at *Met.* 2. 327–8, Iphis at 9. 794, and Caieta at 14. 443–4. Obviously, Ovid continues doing in epic what he had done so often in elegy, while his Caieta episode in particular reveals him to have been a fine reader of epigraphic gestures in the *Aeneid*. Among other moments in the poem, it is impossible not to mention here Ovid’s vision of a Golden Age in which there is no need for inscribed laws:

poena metusque aberant, nec verba minantia fixo
 aere legebantur

(Punishment and fear were absent, and threatening words set | in bronze were not there to be read) (Ov. *Met.* 1. 91–2)

It is difficult also to omit two other moments: that in the speech of Alcyone to Ceyx, when she expresses her fear of the sea by referring to the names inscribed on the empty tombs of shipwrecked sailors (‘in tumulis sine corpore nomina legi’, *Met.* 11. 429 (I have read names inscribed on empty tombs));⁸⁹ and also the account of the fate of Hyacinthus, transformed into a flower, which seems to contain the inscribed letters AI AI (‘ipse suos gemitus foliis inscribit et AI AI | flos habet inscriptum’, *Met.* 10. 215–16 (he himself inscribes his groans on the leaves

⁸⁸ For Augustus as a *magister*, see Schnegg-Köller (2002) 26 (for the text of Fr. C of the *acta* of the *Carmen Saeculare* where Augustus is ‘mag(ister) XV vir(or)um s(acris) f(aciundis)’) and 52–3.

⁸⁹ See Hardie (2002) 81–91 on tombs and cenotaphs in the *Metamorphoses*.

and the flower carries AI AI)).⁹⁰ But we will focus here on the end of Book 15. As Ovid slips into the final movement of his long poem, he turns to the apotheosis of Julius Caesar to provide its climax, bringing his narrative, as promised at the outset, down to his own times ('ad mea . . . tempora', *Met.* 1. 4.). In doing so, in tune with those times, he allots an important role to epigraphy.

As Venus foresees the assassination of Julius Caesar, she is terrified and angry that she can do nothing to prevent it. The narrator in response points out that Fate cannot be avoided (*Met.* 15. 780–1) and Jupiter takes up this same response a few lines later (*Met.* 15. 807–42):

talibus hanc genitor: 'sola insuperabile fatum,
nata, movere paras? intres licet ipsa sororum
tecta trium: cernes illic molimine vasto
ex aere et solido rerum tabularia ferro, 810
quae neque concursum caeli neque fulminis iram
nec metuunt ullas tuta atque aeterna ruinas;
invenies illic incisa adamante perenni
fata tui generis: legi ipse animoque notavi
et referam, ne sis etiamnum ignara futuri. 815

(With these words her father replied, 'Do you alone, my daughter, attempt to change unconquerable fate? You may go yourself to the house of the three sisters; there you will see the great archives, a huge work of bronze and hard iron, which fear neither the collisions of the sky nor the anger of lightning, nor, safe and eternal, do they fear destruction of any kind. There you will find the fates of your family cut in eternal steel. I myself have read them and marked them in my memory; and I will tell you, so that you will not be ignorant of the future.) (*Ov. Met.* 15. 807–15)

These lines equate the home of the Fates, figures which in the epic tradition go back to Homer's *Iliad*, to the Tabularium, the home of the official archives of the Roman state.⁹¹ The significance of this comparison works on a number of levels. Most obviously, the inviolability of the written laws underlines the inability of Venus to prevent the death of Julius Caesar. But on a more complex level, given the historical context, the combination of fate and a building containing unbreakable inscribed laws creates in the reader's mind, with the benefit of hindsight, the idea that in some sense the whole of Roman history had indeed been written out in fixed, inscriptional form. Jupiter explicitly states that if Venus goes to the home of the Fates, she will find all the history of her family inscribed on eternal steel ('incisa adamante perenni | fata tui generis', 813–14). When he goes on to say that he himself has read these inscriptions and taken good note of them ('legi ipse animoque notavi', 814), a further layer of meaning comes into play. As the reader ponders the use of the word 'legi' (I have read, 814) and the striking image of Jupiter engaged in careful research in an archive of inscriptions, she or he must also recall that this whole scene is modelled on an episode in the first book of the *Aeneid*. There, distraught at the attempt of Juno to destroy her son by means of a great storm, Venus complains to Jupiter on behalf of Aeneas, exactly as she does in Ovid about another of her sons, Julius Caesar. The imitation of the Vergilian scene

⁹⁰ See Hardie (2002) 64–5.

⁹¹ See Bömer (1986) ad loc. and *LTUR* s.v. Tabularium. On imperial archives, see e.g. Gros (2001).

is detailed and obvious. Therefore, when Jupiter says that he has read the inscriptions, the reader should no doubt consider that he has also read another text, the *Aeneid*, in which the fated history of Venus' family—that is, of Rome itself—was revealed.⁹² In a sense, what Ovid does here is to monumentalize the *Aeneid* (and no doubt at the same time Ennius' *Annales*), casting his epic predecessors as embodying inscribed massive and authoritative versions of Rome's history. As he does so, Ovid is writing in direct imitation of Jupiter's prophecy in *Aeneid* 1, a text that itself, as we have already seen, is involved in a complex relationship with the Augustan epigraphic habit.

Ovid's consideration of recent Roman history following the assassination of Julius Caesar allows him to bring the narrative of his poem to an end by looking forward to the apotheosis of Augustus. As the father yields to the (adoptive) son, Ovid compares them with other father-son pairs, Atreus and Agamemnon, Aegeus and Theseus, Peleus and Achilles, Saturn and Jupiter. The expression he uses to express the comparison between their respective reputations evokes the image of inscribed titles ('sic magnus cedit titulis Agamemnonis Atreus', *Met.* 15. 855 (thus great Atreus yielded to the honorific titles of Agamemnon)), which means that he is still thinking in epigraphic terms. Once again, the poet evokes the power of inscriptions to memorialize, but at the same time hints at the issue of the failure to do so in equally efficient ways over time. It is this long-term vision that he brings to the fore in the final lines of the poem (*Met.* 15. 871–9), which are devoted to an epilogue, in the form of a *sphragis*, in which the poet talks about himself and his poem.

Ovid proclaims that he has completed a work ('opus exegi', 871) that will last forever, fearing neither thunderbolt nor rain, nor iron, nor time. At his death, he goes on, part of him will rise to the stars and his name will be indelible, 'nomenque erit indelebile nostrum' (876), and that he will be read by the people wherever Roman power holds sway and that he will live forever. As has long been recognized, these brilliant lines rework closely Horace, *Odes* 3. 30, but it has been less often pointed out that Ovid picks up on the specifically epigraphic element in the Horatian claim to immortality. But as Hardie has noted: 'If we think of the *Metamorphoses* as Ovid's funerary monument, the poem is a cenotaph, since the poet is not dead, but eternally alive, like the unfortunate Aesacus at the end of the twelfth and beginning of the thirteenth books.'⁹³ This is indeed a poem in which the final word is 'vivam' (I shall live), and its final metamorphosis comes just when the reader realizes that the mortal poet will in fact enjoy immortal fame. On one level this shift represents the idealized concept of poetry as pure song and a free, disembodied voice. But Ovid is thinking about poetry and text on more than one level and we must also allow that one thing will never change. On the monument that is his poetic achievement his name will remain forever, 'indelebile' (15. 876), a word that makes its first appearance here in surviving Latin literature. Perhaps we are meant to ponder whether in the end, despite the massive number of inscriptions carrying the name of Augustus (the last word used of him in the *Metamorphoses*, as has been often pointed out, is 'absens' (15. 870)), it is instead that of the poet that will be the only name that cannot be erased: will

⁹² Feeney (1991).

⁹³ Hardie (2002) 96.

Augustus yield to the titled fame ('cedit titulis' (855)) of Ovid? Certainly, Ovid imagines himself as becoming a book at the end of his epic, but perhaps it is also as an indelible inscription that he imagines himself being read by the Roman people.⁹⁴

If we are prepared to believe that the poets of Augustan Rome did indeed consciously relate their works to the explosion of inscribed texts born of the Augustan *furor epigraphicus*, we may perhaps end with a final thought that brings us back to the theme of periodization with which we began. Some scholars argue that Vergil, Horace, Propertius, and Tibullus are better thought of as Triumviral poets and that Ovid, in chronological terms, is the only major poet who may be thought of as truly Augustan.⁹⁵ Considered in this way, he may be our best poetic witness to Augustus and the birth of imperial epigraphy. And if that is the case, then Ovid becomes an important figure in the history of the phenomenon this book is attempting to survey. Either way, and at the end of the day, it may be argued that Ovid's expression of hope in some kind of literary immortality at the end of the *Metamorphoses* is a statement of optimism that is quite in keeping with a recurring and essential theme in the Augustan discourse of peace and renewal, and one that practitioners of the epigraphic habit are still keen to convey in the modern equivalent of *litterae aureae* (Fig. 15.7).



Fig. 15.7. Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh, 7 December 2010.

⁹⁴ For Ovid as book, see Feeney (1991) 249; for Ovid and the concept of pure song and disembodied voice, see Farrell (1999) with the discussion of Hardie (2002) 91–7.

⁹⁵ See e.g. Millar (1993) = Millar (2002) ch. 14.

ABBREVIATION

LTUR: Steinby, M. (1993–2000). *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae*. 6 vols. Rome.

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