

FIACHRA MAC GÓRÁIN

## Authority

Rome witnessed a seismic shift in the structuring of authority during Virgil's lifetime, as Augustus established himself as the new centre of gravity. Augustus himself makes grand claims in the *Res gestae* (34): after he had transferred the Republic from his own power (*ex mea potestate*) to the control (*arbitrium*) of the Senate and the Roman people, he exceeded all others in authority (*auctoritate omnibus praestiti*), although he had no more power (*potestas*) than his colleagues in magistracy. Cassius Dio found it impossible to give a simple Greek gloss on *auctoritas* while discussing the *auctoritas* of the Senate (55.3.5). It is a moral quality rather than a constitutional power, which appeals to tradition and ancestral custom, and usually refers to the ability to drive initiative or influence others. The word is cognate with *augere*, ('to increase'), *auctor* ('author' or 'initiator'), and, of course, Augustus. Augustus' authority derived from his role in bringing the civil wars to an end, from the magistracies which he had held, from his religious functions, and from his personal prestige; it extended its influence beyond politics to law, religion, social, moral and cultural affairs, and included authority over memory of past events.<sup>1</sup>

As I shall explore in this chapter, Virgil's poems – and I focus particularly on the *Aeneid* – reflect and participate in the Augustan revolution, and are concerned with authority at every level. They address the political, military, and religious authority of Augustus in direct and indirect ways, which often involve allusion to the Homeric poems. As a result, Virgil's poems have become a central reference point in arguments about the authority of

<sup>1</sup> On authority and the *auctoritas* of Augustus, see Béranger (1953: 114–31); Arendt (1954); Hellegouarc'h (1984); Galinsky (1996: 10–41 and 376–89); with Rowe (2013); Galinsky (2015); Wallace-Hadrill (1997), (2005), and (2008); Gowing (2005); Lowrie (2009); Ferrary (2009); Rich (2012); Kienast (2014: 84–5).

For advice and feedback I would like to thank Alessandro Barchiesi, Jeffords Huyck, Aifric Mac Aodha, Charles Martindale, Donncha O'Rourke, Sophia Papaioannou, Valentina Prospieri, Francesco Strocchi, and audiences in London and Cambridge.



Augustus, whether they emphasize his brutal rise to power or the stability or necessity of his reign.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, the poems claim a canonical status by inscribing themselves into the poetic tradition and vying with their models. Virgil channels but also challenges Homer in the *Aeneid* and, as if to reflect this emulation, Virgil's characters also compete amongst themselves for control over the force of Homeric allusions within the narrative. The biographical tradition records that the *Aeneid* was published by imperial fiat (*auctore Augusto*) even though Virgil had wished to burn the manuscripts.<sup>3</sup> In light of Augustus' act of appropriation, it is difficult to separate the power dynamics within the narrative of the *Aeneid* from the discourses of power and authority in triumviral and Augustan Rome; and at times it is hard not to see Virgil shining an Orwellian torch on the processes by which authority is established and maintained.

Servius saw Virgil's intention in writing the *Aeneid* as twofold: to imitate Homer and to praise Augustus through his ancestors. While most readers today would wish to qualify the second part of that formulation, Virgil does often use Homeric allusion to rise to the challenge of writing about the *princeps*. Panegyric references to Augustus in the Parade of Heroes (6.791–807) and on the shield of Aeneas (8.678–723) are couched in Homeric sequences from the Underworld of the *Odyssey* and the Iliadic shield of Achilles respectively. The funeral games in honour of Anchises in *Aeneid* 5 replay those held for Patroclus in *Iliad* 23. It happens that the Trojans have been storm-blown to Sicily on the first anniversary of Anchises' death, and in his speech inaugurating the games Aeneas somewhat opportunistically claims that the coincidence betokens divine favour (5.45–71). His ritual *pietas* recalls Augustus' devotion to the memory of his adoptive father Julius Caesar, and the games culminate in the *lusus Troiae* or Troy Game, a ritual which Augustus especially cultivated (Suet. *DA* 43). We come full circle from Homer to Augustus when the games conclude with an aetiology that marks the continuity of the Troy Game from Ascanius to Virgil's present (5.596–603).<sup>4</sup> In these instances it would appear that the Homeric 'imitation' works to support the 'praise', but this is not the only possible interpretation of the relationship between the two elements.

A case in point is the epic's first simile, which has been invoked in discussions of Augustan ideology.<sup>5</sup> Neptune's calming of the storm is compared to a statesman quelling civil strife.<sup>6</sup> For many readers, the simile

<sup>2</sup> See Giusti (2018).

<sup>3</sup> *Life of Virgil* 39–41. See also Ziogas (2015: 117–19).

<sup>4</sup> See Rogerson (2017: 79).

<sup>5</sup> Hardie (1986: 204–5); Galinsky (1996: 20–24); Grebe (2004: 56); Beck (2014: 74).

<sup>6</sup> For text and translation, see Kennedy, Chapter 12 in this volume, p. xxx.

## Authority

evokes Augustus' calming of the civil wars, even as it may also suggest other historical moments or even a Roman ideal. For Servius Danielis (1.151), the statesman has 'weighty *auctoritas*' because of his *pietas*; and, interestingly, Robert Fitzgerald even imports 'authority' into his translation of *Aen.* 1.153: 'Then he prevails in speech over their fury, / By his authority, and placates them.' Virgil has adapted a simile from the *Iliad* (2.144–52), which might at first glance seem only to harness the strength of the epic tradition for his statesman's authority. Deceived by a dream from Zeus which assures him that he will capture Troy that very day, Agamemnon decides to test his men's courage by feigning despair at the state of the war and urging them to make for the ships and flee home.<sup>7</sup> To his dismay, they obey. In their boisterous murmuring and tumultuous flight to the ships they are compared to the billowing waves of the Icarian Sea. Hera and Athena must intervene to salvage the expedition, and engage Odysseus to cajole the men back to military discipline. The intertextual reader is faced with an interpretative choice. On the surface the simile appears to set up the poem's harmony between political and cosmic order,<sup>8</sup> a sense which is magnified by Virgil's inversion of the tenor and vehicle of the Homeric simile. A reader might observe the shift from an embarrassing crisis in Agamemnon's credibility as Commander-in-Chief to the statesman's charismatic quelling of the mob and interpret the contrast-imitation in favour of Virgil's statesman. Alternatively, the context of the model introduces an uncomfortable echo that might imply the precariousness of the statesman's success. At the very least, the reader's attention is drawn to Virgil's intertextual constructions of authority.

The absolute authority of Homer's epics is the starting point for Virgil's endeavours and can hardly be overstated. By Virgil's time, Homer had been filtered through earlier Latin poetry; indeed Latin literature 'begins' with Livius Andronicus' translation of the *Odyssey*, and Ennius had established himself as the Roman Homer in his historical epic, the *Annals*. Closer to Homer's own time, Xenophanes of Colophon wrote that 'from the beginning everyone learned from Homer', and he was a staple of both Greek and Roman education.<sup>9</sup> Ancient sources compared him with Ocean: the source of all literature and a universal poet. An anonymous epigrammatist of the Hellenistic period tells us that Homer 'once wrote the ageless songs of the

<sup>7</sup> The awkward narrative sequence may result from variations in the oral tradition. See Kirk (1985: 122, 124–5).

<sup>8</sup> Hardie (1986: 102–3, 204–5, 333); Feeney (2014).

<sup>9</sup> Diels and Kranz (1951: B 9.1). Cf. also Plat. *Republic* 10.606e. On Homer in education, see Marrou (1956); Beck (1964); Graziosi (2002); Joyal, McDougall, and Yardley (2009; esp. 41). For papyri, see Morgan (1998: 69, 105–9).



*Odyssey* and *Iliad* from his immortal mind'.<sup>10</sup> The poems are ageless because of their aesthetic sublimity, but they also have enduring appeal because of the political and ethical complexity of their narratives.<sup>11</sup> In turn they were often invoked by orators, statesmen, and writers including philosophers such as Philodemus, Virgil's teacher, to express a political vision.<sup>12</sup> Drawing on such traditions, Horace can critique the Homeric poems as political and philosophical treatises in his moral epistles. To Lollius Maximus he writes 'the most famous example of moralizing interpretation of Homer to survive from antiquity':<sup>13</sup> 'I've been rereading the author of the Trojan War ... He gives it to you straighter and better than Chrysippus or Crantor do: what's proper, what's dishonourable, what's advantageous, and what isn't' (*Troiani belli scriptorem ... relegi; I qui, quid sit pulchrum, quid turpe, quid utile, quid non, I plenius ac melius Chrysippo et Crantore dicit, Epist. 1.2.1-4*). Horace then goes on to give a moralizing summary of both Homeric epics. And later, to Florus, he writes: 'at Rome it fell to me to be educated and to be taught how much the anger of Achilles had harmed the Greeks' (*Romae nutriri mihi contigit atque doceri I iratus Grais quantum nocuissest Achilles, Epist. 2.2.41-2*). More ominously, Plutarch records how the evil counsellor Areius persuaded Octavian to murder Cleopatra's son Caesarion by adapting an oft-quoted line from the Iliadic Odysseus: 'too many Caesars is not a good thing'.<sup>14</sup> Virgil thus inherited a politically as well as culturally freighted Homer.

The *Aeneid* signals its bid for succession to the Homeric poems by various devices. The most obvious are programmatic and structural allusion, but Virgil also imitates Homer's formulaic and 'oral' style. *Arma virumque cano* ('I sing of arms and the man', 1.1) points to the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. The Sibyl's prophecy forecasts a rerun of the *Iliad* (6.86–94). Virgil inaugurates the second half of the *Aeneid* with *maius opus moveo* ('it's a greater work I'm

<sup>10</sup> Lloyd-Jones and Parsons (1983: 979).

<sup>11</sup> For politics in Homer see e.g. Haubold (2000); Hammer (2009); Cairns and Allan (2011); Elmer (2013).

<sup>12</sup> For the authority of Homer in antiquity, see Buffière (1956); Hunter (2004) and (2018); Graziosi (2002) and (2008); Carey (2007); Efsthathiou and Karamanou (2016); Most (2018). On Homer as Ocean, see Williams (1978: 98–9). On the reasons for Homer's authority, see Graziosi (2002: 251–5). On Homer in political discourse: Murray (1965) with reference to Philodemus; Carey (2007: 140); Brock (2013); for an early modern example, see Bizer (2011).

<sup>13</sup> Burbidge (2009: 117).

<sup>14</sup> Plutarch, οὐκ ἀγαθὸν πολυκαισαρίη (*Antony* 81.5), adapting *Il.* 2.204–5 οὐκ ἀγαθὸν πολυκοιρανή· εἴς κοιρανός ἔστω, | εἴς βασιλεύς ('Lordship for many is no good thing. Let there be one ruler, | one king', trans. Lattimore (2011)) from Odysseus' speech to calm unrest in the Greek camp. For another politically resonant Homeric quotation, made by M. Junius Brutus, see Moles (1983).

## Authority

setting in motion', 7.45), suggesting an Iliadic movement. Less obvious are narrative allegories of the Homer-Virgil relationship. The games in *Aeneid* 5, for example, may reflect on Virgil's competitive emulation of Homer.<sup>15</sup> Virgil has replaced the chariot race in *Iliad* 23 with a ship race, but as the ships start off their marks, they are compared to speedy chariots:

non tam praecipites biiugo certamine campum  
corripuere ruuntque effusi carcere currus,  
nec sic immissis aurigae undantia lora  
concussere iugis pronique in verbera pendent. (5.144–7)

Not so swiftly do chariots race headlong to the field  
in their two-horse contests, rushing on as they pour out of the gates,  
nor do charioteers flick the loose reins like this at the horses'  
backs, or lean so forward with their whips.

Surprisingly, the ships are swifter than chariots, and since both seafaring and charioteering are established metaphors for poetic composition, the simile is just shy of suggesting that Virgil's games outplay Homer's in this literary contest. Since Virgil's ship race is good-humoured, the tone of poetic emulation is probably more ludic than antagonistic.<sup>16</sup>

By setting himself up as a Roman Homer, Virgil was following the precedent of Latin poets inscribing themselves into the canon by hitching their wagon to an exemplary Greek model.<sup>17</sup> Sometimes this involved displacing a Latin epic predecessor, and one obstacle for Virgil was that there was already a 'Roman Homer' in Ennius (Horace calls him *alter Homerus*, 'a second Homer', *Epist. 2.1.50*).<sup>18</sup> By the first century BC Ennius' epic 'had become both the canonical epic of Rome and a powerful and familiar carrier of Roman memory'.<sup>19</sup> Despite the fragmentary survival of Ennius' *Annals*,

<sup>15</sup> Nugent (1992: 257–8); Farrell (1997: 231–2) and (1999). Other narrative allegories are discussed by Deremetz (2001); Harrison (2007b); Gasti (2010); Nelis (2010: 13–14); Michalopoulos (2016); O'Rourke (2017). On 'oral' poetics, see Papaioannou (2016).

<sup>16</sup> There is a long history of Virgil-Homer comparisons which often debate poetic authority and sometimes hinge on evaluating 'imitative' versus 'original' artistry, or *ars* versus *ingenium*. See the Suetonian 'Life' 46 with Farrell (2010: 444–6); Propertius 2.34.65–6; Quintilian 10.1.85–6; Juvenal 6.434–7; Gellius 9.9; Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 5.2–5.17.6; Ziolkowski and Putnam (2008: 12). On Homer-Virgil comparisons in Servius, see Maltby (2016). Renaissance discussants include Vida, Scaliger, and La Cerda, see Włosok (1990: 476–98) and Vogt-Spira (2002). For the moderns, see Haynes (2010). The comparison also emerges from tracing the fortunes of Homer; see Knauer (1964a: 62–106) on the Renaissance rediscovery of Homer through Virgil commentaries, and Sowerby (1997a) and (1997b).

<sup>17</sup> See Citroni (2005) on Latin poets and canons, and Farrell, Chapter 17 in this volume.

<sup>18</sup> See Goldberg (1995: 85–6) for Ennius' Homeric aspects.

<sup>19</sup> Goldschmidt (2013: 17).



we can still tell that its presence in the *Aeneid* was considerable, and that Virgil looked back through it to Homer. Nora Goldschmidt argues that Virgil competes with Ennius not merely for the title of the Roman Homer, but also for his ‘shaggy crown’, his status as guardian of ancestral Roman memory. Virgil achieves this by presenting himself as an archaic poet, and by writing prequels to Ennian scenarios while using Ennian language, thus assuming priority over Ennius in mythical and historical chronology.<sup>20</sup> Since Virgil is in many ways a ‘modern’ poet, the allusions to the *Annals* are particularly striking. Ennius’ epic was among Virgil’s most ideologically charged allusive conquests. In addition to its Homeric and historical credentials, it contained a line which Suetonius mentions in connection with Octavian’s choice of the name Augustus: *augusto augurio postquam incluta condita Roma est* (‘after Rome was founded by an august augury’).<sup>21</sup> Virgil, then, extends the tradition of Homer and Ennius down to the Principate of Augustus, scion of a god, who will refund the Golden Age (*Augustus Caesar, divi genus, aurea condet | saecula qui rursus*, 6.792–3, combining, as Ennius had done in similar positions in the line, *Augustus* with *condere*).

As Virgil rises to more sustained Iliadic grandeur in the second half of the *Aeneid*, the power dynamics of Homeric succession are thrashed out within the parameters of *reges et proelia* (‘kings and battles’, Ecl. 6.3). Authority in the Homeric poems is usually provisional and contested. The beginning of the *Iliad* dramatizes a three-way power struggle between Agamemnon, the Commander-in-Chief; Achilles, the foremost warrior; and Chryses, the priest of Apollo. Chryses is aggrieved that Agamemnon has dishonoured him by refusing to accept a ransom for his daughter Chryseis, and so he prays to Apollo to punish the Greeks. Achilles is infuriated that Agamemnon gets the lion’s share of the spoils, even when he himself has done most of the fighting, and a quarrel ensues that has repercussions for the whole plot of the *Iliad*. Virgil avoids precisely this conflict on the Trojan side by gradually conflating the three spheres of authority – political, martial and religious – in his eponymous hero. Apart from the *Aeneid*’s war between Trojans and Italians, tensions between spheres of authority tend to centre around Turnus: he dishonours Allecto, who is disguised as the priestess Calybe (7.435–44), and his resistance to the kingly and sacral authority of King Latinus leads directly to his death (12.48–53). By contrast, Aeneas grows in stature and confidence throughout the epic, despite the events of Book 4 and his vulnerability to figures from his past in the Underworld of Book 6.<sup>22</sup> Instead of Homer’s individualistic honour-based ethics, Aeneas

<sup>20</sup> Goldschmidt (2013). See also Elliott (2013).

<sup>21</sup> Suet. *DA* 7.2, quoting *Ann.* 155 Skutsch (1985).

<sup>22</sup> On the character of Aeneas, see Lovatt, Chapter 21 in this volume.

## Authority

espouses a public-spirited *pietas*, a sense of duty to one's gods, one's family, and one's homeland, even at the cost of personal fulfilment. On one view, he establishes himself as a 'good king' according to the tenets of ancient kingship theory, and it would be difficult for a contemporary reader not to think of Augustus' one-man rule. By contrast Turnus, Mezentius, and Dido (after she has become infatuated) are represented as 'bad' rulers.<sup>23</sup> In a similar vein, Aeolus and Latinus are 'weak' kings.<sup>24</sup> The main difficulty with this approach is that Aeneas too takes on characteristics of the 'bad' king in his angry outbursts<sup>25</sup> (and Dido is on the whole very sympathetically characterized, as attested by numerous positive responses throughout the ages).<sup>26</sup> Beyond kingship, Aeneas is characterized as a Roman *imperator* or, as Nisbet put it with detailed reference to parallels from Roman historical writing, 'a proto-Augustus, carrying the destiny of his nation on his shoulders, and prefiguring the political ideology of Virgil's own patrons'.<sup>27</sup> After the death of his father Anchises, he comes to assume the priestly mantle of sacral authority.<sup>28</sup> Here too there are contemporary parallels with Augustus, who might as well have been following Aristotle's observations on the successful tyrant's public displays of religious devotion.<sup>29</sup>

But even if Aeneas can be praised as a king and a warrior, as a priest he can be censured. Most criticism of his behaviour focuses on his furious outbursts after the death of Pallas and on his killing of Turnus at the end of the poem. Prompted by a vision of his ties of hospitality and pledges of allegiance to Evander and Pallas (10.515–17), he captures eight youths for live sacrifice (*quos immolet umbris*, 10.519). In the same *aristeia* he 'sacrifices' (*immolat*, 10.541) Haemonides, the priest of Apollo. As he kills Turnus he declares that it is Pallas who is 'sacrificing' him (*immolat*, 12.949). These are the only three uses of this technical ritual term in Virgil. The anger of Aeneas can be defended with reference to various ancient ethical frameworks,<sup>30</sup> but his figuring of the killing of Turnus as a ritual act is 'a gross violation of his sacral duties and functions' and compromises his priestly authority.<sup>31</sup> At this climactic moment, Aeneas cannot fulfil the conflicting dictates of *pietas*

<sup>23</sup> Cairns (1989: 1–84).

<sup>24</sup> Cowan (2015).

<sup>25</sup> Thomas (2001: 289).

<sup>26</sup> See Hardie (2014: 51–76).

<sup>27</sup> Nisbet (1978–9: 50). For echoes of Augustus, see also Binder (1971) and Schauer (2007: 26, 263–79).

<sup>28</sup> Panoussi (2010).

<sup>29</sup> See *Politics* 13.14b39–15a4.

<sup>30</sup> See Galinsky (1988); Cairns (1989: 77–84). See also Thomas (2001: 289–92); Horsfall (2000b: 192–211).

<sup>31</sup> Panoussi (2010: 63). See also Nisbet (1978–9: 57–8) and Hardie (1993: 19–23, 33–5).



(which – let us recall – was the basis of the statesman's *auctoritas* in the view of Servius Danielis): duty to Pallas and Evander based on their ties of hospitality and Evander's *commendatio* (8.514–19), duty to his father's injunction to spare the defeated (6.853), and whatever clemency was owed to Turnus' appeal for pity towards his own father Daunus (12.932–6). Of course, Aeneas' action is psychologically understandable. The irresolvable conflict is perhaps replicated by the experience of the reader. We want Aeneas to kill Turnus in the interests of strong closure and narrative resolution; on the other hand, we find this killing morally bleak.<sup>32</sup> As Thomas and Kallendorf have shown, complex and pessimistic responses to the *Aeneid* have a long history.<sup>33</sup>

Attempts to justify Aeneas' vengeful rage in books 10 and 12 generally draw on the argument that he is channelling the wrath of Achilles. Indeed, there is a sense in which Aeneas and Turnus figuratively compete for the role of Achilles in the battle books of the *Aeneid*.<sup>34</sup> Like the arms of Achilles over which Ajax and Odysseus squabble, this role has a symbolic status,<sup>35</sup> even if the structural and moral aspects of 'playing Achilles' are not always in alignment. It is as though victory in the war in Latium depends on structurally owning the role of Achilles in this modified rerun of the Trojan War in which the Trojans will be victorious, irrespective of the moral calculus which governs how the Achillean wrath is directed. Accordingly, Achilles is often rhetorically invoked in speeches, which, as Andrew Laird reminds us, are prime locations for the discursive negotiation of power and authority.<sup>36</sup> The Sibyl's prophecy of an *alius Achilles* (*Aen.* 6.89) in Latium would seem on the face of it to refer to Turnus, especially when followed by *natus et ipse dea* ('and he too born of a goddess'). But Venus intervenes to reinstate Aeneas in the role of Achilles which he had played during the games in Book 5, as he oversaw the funeral games:

arma rogo genetrix nato, te filia Nerei,  
te potuit lacrimis Tithonia flectere coniunx. (8.383–4)

<sup>32</sup> On the end of the poem, see Galinsky (1988) and Thomas (2001: 290–3). For Christian condemnation of Aeneas' behaviour after the death of Pallas, see Lactantius, *Inst. div.* 5.10 with Włosok (1990: 437–44).

<sup>33</sup> Thomas (2001); Kallendorf (2007a).

<sup>34</sup> On the role of Achilles in the *Aeneid*, see MacKay (1957); Anderson (1957); Galinsky (1981: 999–1001); King (1982); Quint (1993); Barchiesi (2015). On Homer in the *Aeneid*, in addition to these sources, see Knauer (1964a); Cairns (1989: 177–248); Dekel (2012).

<sup>35</sup> On the paradigmatic significance of the contest for the arms of Achilles in Homeric epic, see Dekel (2012: 53–6).

<sup>36</sup> Laird (1999).

## Authority

I ask for arms, a mother on behalf of her son; the daughter of Nereus was able to sway you with tears, and so was the wife of Tithonus.

In an attempt to redirect the plot, she recalls the tearful pleas of Thetis, the daughter of Nereus, on behalf of Achilles in *Iliad* 18 and of Eos, the wife of Tithonus, on behalf of Memnon in the less well-known Cyclic epic *Aethiopis*, and Vulcan's acquiescence in both cases. This reminds us that Virgil drew on the Epic Cycle as well as the Homeric poems, though not without hierarchical distinction: the structural importance of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* to the plot of the *Aeneid* may reflect ancient views on the superiority of Homer to the Cycle.<sup>37</sup> By an appeal to august poetic tradition, and specifically to *Iliad* 18, Venus' entreaty prepares the reader for a hoplopoia, the fabrication of the hero's armour, one of the most magnificent set pieces in the epic repertoire. Luckily for Aeneas, he becomes an Achilles rather than a Memnon. There is considerable irony, then, in Turnus' attempts to style himself as an Achilles in Book 9. In a highly rhetorical speech of encouragement to his men after the Trojan ships have metamorphosed into nymphs, he casts himself in several Greek roles: as Menelaus, whose wife has been stolen by Aeneas, whom he thus casts as Paris; and as Achilles, bereft of his captive bride Briseis. As Hardie notes, Turnus' words *nec solos tangit Atridas | iste dolor* ('it is not only the sons of Atreus who are affected by that grief', 9.138–9) virtually quote Achilles' words from *Iliad* 9.340–1, 'Do the Atreids alone of mortal men love their wives?' More explicitly, he exults over the dying Pandarus: *hic etiam inventum Priamo narrabis Achillem* ('you will tell Priam that an Achilles has been found here too', 9.742). With the death of Pallas, a reader alert to echoes of Homeric narrative will sense the Iliadic story pattern of the *Patrocleia* taking shape, and will expect Aeneas to be the avenger, just as Achilles took vengeance on Hector for killing Patroclus.<sup>38</sup> Eventually Turnus concedes the role of Achilles to Aeneas, critically at the moment in which he vows to meet him in single combat: *ibo animis contra, vel magnum praestet Achillem | factaque Volcani manibus paria induat arma | ille licet* ('I shall go bravely to fight him, even though he surpasses great Achilles, and even though he bears armour similar to *his*, made by Vulcan's hands', 11.438–40).

The contest for the role of Achilles is part of a broader pattern of focalized allusion to the Homeric epics which involves issues of narrative and poetic

<sup>37</sup> On Homer and the cycle, see Rutherford (1996: 16) and Graziosi (2008). On Virgil and the cycle, see Kopff (1981) and Gärtnert (2015). On allusion to both Homer and the cycle in the ecphrasis at *Aeneid* 1.453–93, see Papaioannou (2016).

<sup>38</sup> Barchiesi (2015: 23–30).



authority. Different characters within the *Aeneid* attempt to control the direction and import of Homeric intertextuality for their own rhetorical ends.<sup>39</sup> Thus, Juno unleashes the storm in Book 1 in the hope of reshaping the plot from a foundation epic or *ktisis*, which is Jupiter's vision of the narrative, to a Cyclic *nostos* ('return') with disastrous results for Aeneas (1.39–45).<sup>40</sup> Later she will insist that Aeneas is a Paris figure, an adulterous fomenter of war in Latium (7.321). Others too wish to define Aeneas simply as a wife-stealing Paris (Iarbas at 4.215, Amata at 7.362, and Turnus at 9.138–9). At the Council of the Gods in Book 10, against the spurious impartiality of Jupiter, Venus and Juno bicker over the course of the war with selective and partisan recollections which place the events of the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid* on a mythical continuum (see esp. 10.2–30, 59–62, 81–3, 91–2). In these and other cases, authority struggles over the Homeric model have a strong gendered element, which mirrors broader gender dynamics in the epics.<sup>41</sup>

Virgil's Diomedes provides a particularly fertile example of inventive remembrance of the *Iliad*. As he sends back word to the council of the Latins to decline their request for a military alliance, his version of events distorts the *Iliad* as we know it:

stetimus tela aspera contra  
contulimusque manus: experto credite quantus  
in clipeum adsurgat, quo turbine torqueat hastam.  
...  
quidquid apud durae cessatum est moenia Troiae,  
Hectoris Aeneaque manu victoria Graium  
haesit et in decimum vestigia retulit annum.  
ambo animis, ambo insignes praestantibus armis,  
hic pietate prior. (*Aen.* 11.282–4, 288–92)

I have fought him hand to hand,  
Faced his cruel weapons. I know – so believe me –  
How high he rears behind his shield, how fiercely  
His spear whirls ...  
All that long siege of stubborn Ilium,  
Ten years of victory stalling and retreating,  
We owed to Hector and Aeneas only –  
Both known for bravery and skill in war,  
But one more pious.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>39</sup> In this chapter I focus on archaic epic models; consideration of other models (e.g. tragedy, historiography, later epic) would nuance the picture.

<sup>40</sup> See also Fowler, Chapter 22a in this volume.

<sup>41</sup> See Oliensis, Chapter 23 in this volume.

<sup>42</sup> Translation Ruden (2008).





## Authority

The divergence from *Iliad* 5.297–318 is extreme. Aeneas was in fact a ‘negligible opponent’<sup>43</sup> for Diomedes in *Iliad* 5, and somewhat ignominiously needed to be rescued by his mother Aphrodite. Diomedes is one of the few surviving heroes of the Trojan War, and so his testimony has a privileged status which he exploits: *experto credite* (‘I know – so believe me’). His agenda is to stay out of the war and so he plays up his traumatic experience. Finally he advises the Latins to make peace with Aeneas. His speech moves through the whole gamut of archaic epic, touching on the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, and the *Nostoi*, but converging finally on a note of foundation. We get a sense that Iliadic values must be consigned to the past in favour of the values of the *Aeneid*. By emphasizing Aeneas’ *pietas* he signals the shift from Homeric to Virgilian heroism, implying that it is only under the sign of civic values that the Homeric tradition can be continued by an Italian kthic complement.<sup>44</sup> As these examples show, the material is there to be reshaped and manipulated as it becomes rhetorically contested between characters, but the process of creative refashioning was already underway in the Homeric poems. As Edan Dekel has shown, Virgil draws something of his method from Odysseus’ partisan and self-interested use of the *Iliad* in his own manipulations in the *Odyssey*.<sup>45</sup> To quote Duncan Kennedy, ‘What is called “tradition” ... far from being an inheritance “handed down” from the past, is an active, open process intimately connected with the pursuit of particular interests: the selective appropriation of the past to serve a particular vision of the present and to project that vision into the future.’<sup>46</sup> Kennedy was referring primarily to modern scholarly traditions, but the statement applies equally to Virgil’s rewriting of Homer, and to Virgil’s characters’ reminiscences of ‘Homeric’ material.

I place ‘Homeric’ within quotation marks here because in the mythical chronology of the *Aeneid*, the Homeric epics have not yet been composed. Even though Homer’s characters look forward to being commemorated in a poetic tradition (e.g. Helen’s words to Hector at *Il.* 6.357–8), Homer himself looks back an unspecified but very long time to the events which he narrates (e.g. *Il.* 5.503–4). There is, then, a certain paradox in Virgil’s gods or heroes citing Homeric epic. This puts a different spin on Homer’s authority over the events: are we talking about the Trojan War in general, or about Homer’s versions in particular? Poet’s voice allusions such as *Arma virumque cano* and those embedded in character speech obviously operate

<sup>43</sup> Horsfall (2003: 171).

<sup>44</sup> On this episode, see Papaioannou (2000: 212–15); Hardie (2012: 139–40).

<sup>45</sup> Dekel (2012).

<sup>46</sup> Kennedy (1992: 39–40). See also Kennedy, Chapter 2 in this volume, p. xxx.



at different discursive levels, but these levels interact with one another, as if not only Virgil and his readers, but paradoxically also Virgil's characters were familiar with the Homeric poems and the Epic Cycle.

Virgilian characters' manipulation of inherited tradition in the interests of their own authority extends far beyond poetic models: in fact, almost the whole narrative takes an interest in the dynamics of power and control, particularly as far as leaders' words and deeds are concerned.<sup>47</sup> At *Aeneid* 7.116, Ascanius declares *heus etiam mensas consumimus* ('look, we're even eating our tables'), which looks back to the harpy Celaeno's prophecy that the Trojans would not be able to found a city until terrible hunger had forced them to eat even their own tables (3.250–7). Aeneas intervenes: he silences the boy and sanctifies the moment as the fulfilment of a prophecy spoken, he says (7.120–7), by his father Anchises (rather than Celaeno; so there is an inconsistency here). Some scholars have argued that Aeneas is being creative with the facts, whether consciously or not. Certainly the distortion serves his advantage as a leader. He manages to turn around a prophecy of doom to one that validates the Trojans' entitlement to settle on Italian soil, galvanizing his men's morale; and he creates a neat tableau of three generations of his family who are involved in bringing the prophecy to completion.<sup>48</sup> The inconsistency can only draw attention to Aeneas' manipulation. To take another example, in the following book Aeneas attempts to ingratiate himself with Evander on the basis of shared heritage through Atlas. He begins his speech by telling Evander that he was not troubled by the fact that he was a Greek leader or by his blood connection to the sons of Atreus; rather, he wishes to emphasize their shared genealogy:

Dardanus, Iliacae primus pater urbis et auctor,  
Electra, *ut Grai perhibent*, Atlantide cretus,  
advehitur Teucros; Electram maximus Atlas  
edidit, aetherios umeru qui sustinet orbis.  
vobis Mercurius pater est, quem candida Maia  
Cyllenae gelido conceptum vertice fudit;  
at Maiam, *auditis si quicquam credimus*, Atlas,  
idem Atlas generat caeli qui sidera tollit.  
sic genus amborum scindit se sanguine ab uno. (8.134–42)

Our founder Dardanus, as fame has sung,  
And Greeks acknowledge, from Electra sprung:  
Electra from the loins of Atlas came;

<sup>47</sup> See also Zetzel, Chapter 15 in this volume.

<sup>48</sup> See O'Hara (2007: 82); Seider (2013: 28–31, 40–6); Rogerson (2017: 172–83).





## Authority

Atlas, whose head sustains the starry frame.  
 Your sire is Mercury, whom long before  
 On cold Cyllene's top fair Maia bore.  
 Maia the fair, on fame if we rely,  
 Was Atlas' daughter, who sustains the sky  
 Thus from one common source our streams divide.<sup>49</sup>

The genealogy is questionable and opportunistic. Aeneas may be conflating more than one Atlas from the mythological repertoire, and the formulation shows him selecting expedient options while conspicuously marginalizing others. The expressions *ut Grai perhibent* ('as the Greeks say') and *auditis si quicquam credimus* ('if we are to put any trust in what we have heard') allow as much room for scepticism or disbelief as for certainty. As Sharilyn Nakata has put it, 'What matters are not accurate genealogical facts regarding which Atlas is their common ancestor, or whether there are indeed multiple Atlases at play here. What matters instead are genealogical connections that are clear and plausible enough for establishing ties of kinship'.<sup>50</sup> This is just one of many instances of often quite transparent 'genealogical opportunism' in the *Aeneid* which, as Nakata documents in detail, can be paralleled in Roman practice, especially during the late Republic.

The mythical and historical past were forms of 'symbolic capital' which the Roman elite could appropriate and exploit.<sup>51</sup> Indeed, Roman education inculcated the ability to deploy mythical and historical exempla for legal and political advantage. Moreover, the habit of genealogical invention was 'a deep structural element of Roman political discourse'.<sup>52</sup> The *Aeneid* fits into this cultural matrix and goes one step further by holding up a mirror to the process, and even to its own inner workings. While Virgil always stands back from crude historical allegory, nonetheless his characters' cunning manoeuvres around the landscape of inherited poetry and myth do suggest the dynamics of late republican and Augustan propaganda. We might think in particular of the mudslinging and derision of the propaganda wars between Antony and Octavian during the triumviral years. Octavian did his best to cast Antony as an easternizing philanderer. Plutarch's comparison of Antony and Demetrius in the *Parallel Lives* even compares Antony with Paris (3.4), saying that in fact Antony was worse than the latter, since Paris fled to Helen's chamber *after* he had been worsted in the battle (*Il.* 3.380), while Antony lost the battle *because* he fled from the battle to Cleopatra's

<sup>49</sup> Dryden (1987: vi.614).

<sup>50</sup> Nakata (2012: 354). See also Binder (1971: 58–65) and Schauer (2007: 96–9).

<sup>51</sup> On this term, see Bourdieu (1977: 171–83).

<sup>52</sup> Smith (2006: 34).



bosom. This may well reflect an invective motif from the ‘war of images’ that raged in the years leading up to Actium.<sup>53</sup> The contest for the role of Achilles is reminiscent of nothing so much as the struggle between Caesarians and republicans after the assassination of Julius Caesar over who would control the patronage of Apollo.<sup>54</sup> Aeneas’ role as a ‘spin doctor’ and his habit of determining the official version of his own and his people’s history,<sup>55</sup> lends itself to comparison with Augustus’ own efforts to shape the memory of his past. As early as 36 BC, Augustus destroyed documents recording the activities of the triumvirs; the *Res gestae* is a tendentious *apologia*.<sup>56</sup> One might even be tempted to think of his intervention in publishing the *Aeneid* in terms of co-authorship. Even without looking beyond the text of the *Aeneid* itself, one can easily see why James Porter concludes that, ‘Insofar as it is “about” anything at all, the *Aeneid* is, quite simply, about the construction of an ideological edifice.’<sup>57</sup>

#### FURTHER READING

For a broad-based discussion of authority in Augustan literature and culture, see Lowrie (2009). For the *auctoritas* of Augustus, see Galinsky (1996), Rowe (2013), and Galinsky (2015). For the authority of Octavian in the *Elegies*, see Geue (2013). For Virgil’s creation of an authoritative persona in the *Georgics*, see Schiesaro (1997). For political authority in the *Aeneid*, see Nisbet (1978–9), Cairns (1989), Schauer (2007), and Green (2014); for sacral authority, see Panoussi (2010). See also Tarrant, Chapter 14 in this volume. For the authority of Virgil in the afterlife of the *Aeneid*, see Comparetti (1997), Ziolkowski and Putnam (2008), Wilson-Okamura (2010), and Hardie (2014). For a sophisticated argument on the manipulative reception of Homeric characters, see Papaioannou (2007).

<sup>53</sup> See e.g. Scott (1933); Zanker (1988: 33–78) on the ‘War of Images’; Freyburger-Galland (2009) on the ‘religious propaganda’.

<sup>54</sup> Miller (2009: 23–54).

<sup>55</sup> Powell (2011). See also Seider (2013).

<sup>56</sup> See Gowling (2005: 18), citing Appian *BC*. 5.132–548 and Suet. *DA* 36. On the *RG*, see Cooley (2010: 104–16).

<sup>57</sup> Porter (2004: 140).

