

Introduction

From the rubble of Augustus' Palatine residence there emerged a fragment of a wall illustration that features a brilliant and suggestive Apollo as cithara-player (Fig. 1). The god reclines on a throne, unclothed except for a violet cloak draped across his lap. Outfitted with his customary quiver and laurel wreath, he rests the cithara on his knee, holding it prominently in his left hand, and seems on the verge of moving his right to pluck its seven strings. The god looks straight ahead; his expressionless countenance might be called serene. The quiet and balanced coloration – light purple drapery, quiver-strap and ribbons set against Apollo's white complexion and gray marble chair, the golden instrument matching his long locks, the whole figure luminous against the sky-blue background – gives a harmonious impression.¹

We do not know in which room Augustus and his guests could behold the painting nor, more importantly, in which narrative or other context the artist located Apollo. Do other divinities join Phoebus for a celebration – the Muses or Graces, for instance? Is Victoria nearby (as on a ceiling fresco in Augustus' so-called 'study'), hinting at the emperor's conquests and consolidation of empire? Or does the divine citharode sit opposite Marsyas, the flute-playing satyr whom he bested in a musical contest and then flayed alive?² A subject fraught with such bloodthirsty punishment could have interestingly complicated the meaning of Apollo's peaceful disposition. Although the pictorial fragment's immediate context is lost, the larger context of the building – Augustus' house – and the building's context in the imperial complex make it all but impossible that viewers did not

¹ Andreae 1988: 286: "Die Absicht ist, einen stillen, beruhigten, ausgewogenen und edlen Eindruck zu erwecken."

² So suggests E. Simon, *LIMC* s.v. "Apollon/Apollo" no. 290, comparing no. 291 (from Herculaneum, Neronian), which features Apollo seated with cithara at his side and being beseeched on behalf of Marsyas, himself bound to a tree; cf. nos. 294–95. Romanelli 1955: 209 compares other instances where Apollo is seated alone.



1. Apollo with cithara and quiver. Fragment of a wall painting from the House of Augustus.

somehow see in this depiction of the god of music the patron deity of Augustus. One finds other Apolline symbolism in the residence. Most strikingly, the citharode in the painting echoes the two great statues of Phoebus citharoeus next door at the temple of Apollo, in the cella and at the altar in front of the shrine (Prop. 2.31.5–6 and 15–16).

An analogous experience in reading contemporary literature is presented by the opening movement of Virgil's third Georgic. There Virgil crowns his description of his future temple – his prospective epic – with a reference to Apollo. Along with statues of Troy's ancestors located in the shrine is mentioned “the Cynthian founder of Troy” (3.36 *Troiae Cynthius auctor*).

This is in the first instance the divinity who erected the city's fabled walls for Laomedon, *Troiae auctor* in an extended sense. The phrase also reminds us that, in the Hellenic tradition, Apollo is the god of foundations par excellence.³ *Cynthius* not only points honorifically to Apollo's birthplace Delos, but, as a recognizably Callimachean epithet,⁴ it makes this statue a token of the speaker's literary ambitions. Moreover, Apollo here evokes Octavian,⁵ whose triple *triumphus* of 29 BC the anticipated temple will celebrate along with Virgil's own poetic triumph. The battle most prominently featured in the building's artwork is Actium (3.26–29), and it was Apollo who, in the imagination of the age, vouchsafed the victory to Octavian. Virgil links Caesar and his divine patron by naming them respectively first (3.16 *in medio mihi Caesar erit*) and last among the figures represented in the temple. Further, the cluster of Trojan figures with whom Apollo is grouped highlights not just Rome's Trojan ancestry via Aeneas but especially that of the Julian family, whose most distinguished living representative will be enshrined in Virgil's monument. And, when Octavian himself dedicated a new Temple of Apollo on the Palatine Hill about a year after the publication of the *Georgics*, it was to some extent at least his own thank-offering for Actium. The reference to Apollo which culminates the description in effect glosses one of the main architectural models for Virgil's imaginary temple.⁶

The grand Palatine sanctuary greatly elevated the Roman profile of a hitherto relatively minor deity in Roman religion. It also helped to create a new signification of Apollo in Roman culture, as a symbol of the Princeps.⁷ Octavian already meant to assert a significant role for Apollo in his public image when, in 36 BC after the victory over Sextus Pompey, he announced his plan to build the god a temple next to his own main residence at what he was claiming was a pivotal moment in Roman history. Next came his

³ There may be allusion to Call. *hy.* 2.56–59, where Apollo's association with foundations is traced back to his own first foundation of an altar on Delos (cf. *Cynthius*).

⁴ As an epithet of Apollo also at *Ecl.* 6.3, in identifying the god about to deliver his influential poetic admonition in imitation of Apollo in the proem to Callimachus' *Aetia* (fr. 1.21–28). See Clausen 1976: 245–47 and 1977: 362. The epithet found at Call. *hy.* 4.10, *Aet.* fr. 67.6 and 114.8. Also used by Posidippus (*SH* 705.9), who elsewhere imitates his contemporary Callimachus: *AP* 5.202.4 and Call. *hy.* 5.2; Cameron 1995: 241–42.

⁵ See especially Kraggerud 1998: 13–16.

⁶ Drew 1924: 195–202 offers the most detailed argument for the Palatine Temple of Apollo as the model for Virgil's temple. Also apposite among contemporary buildings is the Temple of the Divine Julius Caesar (cf. 3.16 *in medio mihi Caesar erit templumque tenebit*), dedicated in 29 BC a few days after the triple triumph and decked with spoils from Egypt (Dio 51.22.2). Most recently, Nelis 2004: 83–84.

⁷ Of course Phoebus was but one such imperial sign, and Jean Gagé in his major study *Apollon romain* (1955) did exaggerate Apollo's relative importance by referring to Augustus' "apollinisme." On the other hand, Robert Gurval's reassessment (1995: 87–136) would swing the pendulum too far in the opposite direction.

dedication of the magnificent shrine in 28 BC as he was consolidating his supreme position in the Roman state. Finally there was the sacral celebration of a new age in 17, where the saecular pageant's rituals culminated at Apollo Palatinus.

This book explores the numerous manifestations of Augustan Apollo in the poetry of the Augustan age. Extant pre-triumviral poetry yields few references to Phoebus Apollo, and these are overwhelmingly Hellenic in orientation – most commonly the Delphic oracle is in view.⁸ Yet Apollo's participation at divine councils in Lucilius and Cicero pointed the way towards Roman contextualizations; in the latter's *De temporibus suis*, Apollo predicted the shameful returns to Rome by Gabinius and Piso, two of his political enemies.⁹ In contrast, the god appears frequently in Augustan poetry in all his traditional roles. All of the era's major poets (and some minor ones too) respond to the complex figuration. Not surprisingly, Apollo's musical and poetic qualities are prominent in elegy, lyric, and pastoral, where they not infrequently evoke his famous literary pronouncements in Callimachus' *Aetia* and *Hymn to Apollo*, but in nearly every genre and on many occasions this deity is linked with Octavian/Augustus. Explicit literary attestations to the connection begin with an anonymous lampoon written during the triumviral years and extend to the end of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, with its prayerful apostrophe to Phoebus as resident in the Emperor's house (15.865 *Phoebe domestice*). Yet political resonance of course often arises more allusively, an instance of which we observed just above with Virgil's multivalent designation *Troiae Cynthius auctor*.

In the invocation to Venus at the start of his *De rerum natura*, Lucretius directly acknowledges the familial association which his addressee Memmius had with the goddess and which the Memmii expressed on their coinage. Lucretius notes that the divinity always favors his dedicatee (1.26–27) and, when he prays to her for peace, he specifically includes Memmius as well as himself and the Romans in general (1.40–43). Venus is thus deftly shown to reflect his patron's private concerns as well as embodying Epicurean Pleasure, Empedoclean Love, Aphrodite of traditional mythology, and

⁸ Oracle: Plaut. *Men.* 840 ff., Ter. *And.* 698, Lucr. 1.739 and 5.112 (cf. 6.154 *Phoebi Delphica laurus*), Enn. *Ann.* 167 Sk., *Eum.* fr. 150–53 W, anon. ap. Cic. *Div.* 2.115; but also the lyre at Lucr. 2.505–06 and Varr. *Atac.* 15 Courtney; the bow to punish wrongs at Plaut. *Aul.* 394–96; and medicine at Plaut. *Men.* 886. Only four times in Lucretius (above), only once in Catullus (64.299).

⁹ We assume that Cicero followed through on his plan for such a "wondrous insertion" into Book 2 that he proudly confided to his brother (*Q. fr.* 3.1.24 *mirificum embolium*). See Courtney's note on fr. 14. In the fragments of Lucilius' *concilium deorum* there is no evidence of what if anything Apollo had to say about the matter of the Roman leader under discussion: see fr. 28–29 and 30–32 W.

one of Rome's national deities (*Aeneadum genetrix*).¹⁰ When under Augustus the private divine symbolism of the supreme ruler of the state not only overlaps but coalesces with the public religion and much traditional imagery, such possibilities for political reference multiply for poets who would write about the gods. The ever-deepening Augustan imprint upon Venus and Apollo, and eventually upon Mars and Vesta, opens up opportunities to recognize the Princesps and comment on his programs and ideals, whether by way of compliment or with other suggestion.

To speak thus of an Augustan imprint is not intended to suggest an utterly fixed ideology, which poets reflect in homage or against which they react. The concept "Augustanism" is notoriously difficult to theorize.¹¹ We more and more appreciate the experimental nature of the emergent emperor's project both of governing and of representing himself.¹² The Augustan poets' own experiments contributed to the construction of the imperial ideology. On the other hand, to speak of ideology implies a dominant and comprehensive vision, even if in prospect. And the victorious leader was in effect rewriting Rome's institutions and their attendant cultural symbols in his own image.¹³ From this perspective, contemporary writers participated in an 'Augustan discourse' which at the same time offered them a challenge. Apollo, for instance, the citharoedic icon of poets, is enshrined in the new Palatine Temple in the Emperor's residential compound. In response to the language of Augustanism, poets of the stature of Horace and Ovid not only mirror or incorporate that language but also, if to varying degrees, contest it in their private visions of the world. The personal poetic voices both acknowledge Augustan cultural appropriations and re-appropriate the constituent elements. Poets both collaborate and resist. One of these counterbalancing tendencies may predominate in a literary text or in a reader's sensibilities, but they often coexist. Consider again the proem to *Georgics* 3, an early encomiastic text. Virgil makes politics and poetics converge perfectly in the rich phrase *Troiae Cynthius auctor*. He glances at Octavian and the imminent Apollo Palatinus while pointing towards his own future epic about Trojan heroes, their gods, and their Roman descendants and his own Callimachean poetic ideals. On the other hand, in the passage as a whole there is a sense of emulative counterpoint vis-à-vis the dominating political figure; the poet privileges himself. The Caesarian shrine (= Virgil's poem) will be situated at Mantua, not Rome. The *triumphus* claimed by the poet

¹⁰ On the complexity of the address to Venus vis-à-vis Memmius, see Gale 1994: 211 and 214–15.

¹¹ Kennedy 1992. ¹² See recently Milnor 2005: 4; further Galinsky 1996: 363–65 (cf. 234–37).

¹³ Important discussion by Barchiesi 1997: 69 ff.

will match that of the great man. Caesar will have the temple, but Virgil owns the poetic turf. In this dialectical spirit the poetically charged epithet *Cynthius* may be especially emphatic at the end of the movement.

By “Augustan Apollo” I mean simply appearances of, or references to, the god that somehow evoke Augustus. The degree to which a text featuring Apollo conjures up the Princeps will of course vary. Whether Augustus is brought to mind at all is in many cases debatable. In my opinion an important criterion is a textual trigger that activates political meaning – an allusion, say, or appeal to a topos already redolent of Augustan significance, or an immediate context that is already politicized. One may disagree about how immediate the context need be but it cannot, I think, be simply Augustan culture writ large, an authoritative imperial symbolism. Although Augustus’ interest in Apollo clearly stimulated the god’s increased presence in Roman poetry, as it did the fashion of Apolline motifs in private artworks,¹⁴ poets and artists were not its captives. If Augustus appropriated Apolline symbols (like much else) in the public sphere to emblemize himself and his achievements, imperial ideology’s totalizing impulse does not color every literary and artistic appearance of this god. The figure’s status as Augustan icon does not leave everywhere an indelible mark; that status must be activated by its context. Virgil’s *Troiae Cynthius auctor* will stand in a *templum Caesaris* that commemorates the triple triumph for Actium and Octavian’s other victories; but in the proem to the following book of the *Georgics* such political prompts are absent. The Apollo whose name punctuates that text, whom the poet would have heeded his call (4.7 *auditque vocatus Apollo*), is strictly the patron deity of poetry. The Callimachean god who at *Eclogue* 6.3–5 refused to allow Virgil/Tityrus to sing of *reges et proelia* has been here summoned to inspire the handling of just such topics in the apian sphere, *duces . . . et proelia*.¹⁵ Even with the address to Maecenas and an expectation that the bees’ *duces . . . et proelia* will be made relevant to Rome, the fact that Octavian claimed Apollo as his patron and champion is here irrelevant.

When in the mid twenties BC we read the start of *Odes* 1.21, the hymning of Apollo along with his sister Diana and mother Latona piques our interest, particularly since that divine trio was enshrined in the cella of the Palatine Temple of Apollo. The fleeting suspicion of Augustan significance in the conventional familial grouping is confirmed by Horace’s concluding

¹⁴ See Zanker 1988: 265–74 on “political” art in the private sphere; also 86–87; further Galinsky 1996: 274 on depoliticizing state symbolism.

¹⁵ On the Callimacheanism and allusion to *Eclogue* 6, see Thomas 1985: 70–71.

assurance that Apollo will aid the Roman people and the Princeps. In this respect, however, what do we make of Ovid's four-line summons to "the inventor of song and medicine" which closes an opening movement of the *Remedia amoris* (75–78)? Can potential Augustanism in this prayer to Phoebus be activated by the Ovidian didactic poems' habit of glancing at Augustan subjects?¹⁶ Or is Ovid simply playing with traditional Apolline attributes? Do the medical references glance at medical imagery employed by the Princeps? Or will the meaning depend upon a reader's political sensitivity, not to mention sensibility?

Again, at *Aeneid* 4.143–50 the supremely handsome Aeneas advancing to meet Dido is compared with Apollo traveling to visit his Delian birthplace and leading the dances there, his flowing hair decked out with leafage and gold. The simile is implicated in a dense network of references across and outside the poem. In imitating the comparison of Jason to Apollo at *Argonautica* 1.307–09, the passage encourages our growing sense that Aeneas and Dido are replaying the doomed story of Jason and Medea.¹⁷ Virgil conspicuously adds to Apollonius an allusion to Apollo's ominously clanging arrows in *Iliad* 1.46, which hints at the plague-like wounds that Aeneas is inflicting upon the Carthaginian queen (cf. 1.712 and 4.90).¹⁸ The simile further consolidates the parallels between Aeneas and Dido, harking back to the comparison of the latter with Apollo's sister Diana at 1.498–504, and recalls Aeneas' own travels – like Apollo, he has been voyaging west from Asia Minor; at the god's "maternal Delos" (4.144) Aeneas at 3.94–98 was enjoined by Apollo to seek his own ancient motherland. One may wonder if, on top of all this, Virgil is inviting an Augustan reading of Apollo here, the dazzling god of the Palatine ever capable of dealing vengeance with his bow. The statues of Apollo in the Palatine complex supposedly included at least one with the features of Augustus (ps.-Acro on Hor. *Epist.* 1.3.17). The god and his representatives have thus far guided Aeneas, albeit fitfully, towards the Trojans' new homeland. At Delos, Apollo himself prophesied worldwide dominion for Aeneas' descendants, who we know will include most prominently Caesar Augustus. Later, in the Actian scene on the hero's shield, Phoebus will proleptically be shown guaranteeing that dominion for that very descendant (8.704–06), and in the adjacent panel visualizing triumph at Apollo's gleaming temple the seated victor Augustus will nearly

¹⁶ According to Sharrock (1994a: 107; cf. 109–10), "After Vergil, it becomes impossible to read didactic poetry apolitically." T. Johnson recently avers (2004: 56): "After Actium and the dedication of the Palatine temple . . . any prayer to Augustus's patron deity Apollo was potential imperial panegyric."

¹⁷ Nelis 2001: 133–35. ¹⁸ Otis 1964: 73–75; Lyne 1987: 123–25.

merge with the divinity (8.720), a moment that perhaps calls to mind the mirroring of Apollo and Augustus' ancestor back in Book 4.¹⁹ It is arguable, however, whether this simile at Carthage in the context of the epic narrative thus far evokes the Princeps. Surely by this point Virgil has habituated us to read Aeneas as a proto-Augustus – for instance, on his stop at Actium the hero prefigures Octavian's dedications and games in the wake of the battle there (3.278–88). But not every scene need be read that way.

In *Odes* 2.10 Horace assures one Licinius that misfortune is a temporary state and then caps his assurance with the illustration of Apollo switching from his fearsome bow to his cithara, the god's more pleasant stringed instrument (18–20). Phoebus and his father Jupiter balance one another at the close of successive stanzas, the two deities both embodying change of circumstances for humanity. The weather-god effects the natural rhythm of alternating seasons, but Horace's personification hints also at divine caprice. Horace counsels Licinius to be patient during hardship. Jupiter does bring brighter weather. Apollo does exchange the taut bow betokening mortal destruction for the cithara of harmonious celebration. The fifth stanza's multiple temporal indicators culminate with the idea that Apollo does “not always” (*neque semper*) wield his weapon, confirming both that the current adversity will “one day not” (*non . . . olim*) be present and that Phoebus plays the lyre “on occasion” (*quondam*). The divinity's propensity therefore seems to be towards violence; his habitual attitude to mortals is implicitly wrath.²⁰

If, as many think, the poet is consoling someone of prominence who has fallen from the Emperor's favor,²¹ such a plight gives added point to why

¹⁹ Unte 1994: 227–28.

²⁰ Callimachus in the *Aetia* (fr. 114) weights the balance between the archer and musical Apollo in exactly the opposite direction. The cult-image at Delos is said to betoken the deity's predisposition towards beneficence: the Graces and their musical instruments extended in the stronger right hand suggest that Apollo inclines to dispense favor quickly, while the bow and arrows held in the less commonly used left hand indicate his reluctance to punish. Horace transvaluates the Apolline ethics of Callimachus' allegory, which was kept alive by later Alexandrian writers (Apollodorus, *On the Gods* [FGFH 224 fr. 95 = Macr. *Sat.* 1.17.13]; Philo, *Leg. Ad Gaium* 95; cf. Pfeiffer 1960). Apollo “sometimes” turns to his cithara and thus away from his death-dealing bow. In the mind of Horace's addressee, the god's grimmer aspect is dominant.

²¹ The most common candidate is Maecenas' brother-in-law Licinius Murena, who (shortly after the publication of *Odes* 1–3) would publicly clash with the Emperor at the trial of M. Primus in 22, and later that year be implicated in the conspiracy of Fannius Caepio, losing his life as a result. Nisbet and Hubbard identify him with the Murena elected to serve as Augustus' consular colleague in 23 BC but who for unknown reasons was replaced by Cn. Calpurnius Piso. They take Horace to be consoling him after his removal from the consulship early in 23 (or his replacement by Piso while still consul designate), before the next, successive stages of his downfall the following year. On problems with the

Horace chooses Apollo to illustrate the maxim, and why he focalizes Apollo as terrible bowman in the mind of his addressee. The archer-god (and Jupiter too)²² would be a figure of Augustus himself. The Princeps has metaphorically wreaked vengeance upon Licinius in terms of a well-known ideological symbol. As part of a more public discourse, the ode's image of Apollo switching to his kindlier aspect also requests mercy from the leader who takes the god as patron divinity. One can imagine Horace reciting the verses in Augustus' Palatine residence within sight of the resplendent painting of Apollo citharoedus who also wears his quiver,²³ in effect interpreting that painting (if such a gesture would not have been indiscreet). But the identity of Horace's Licinius is a tangled matter; the man in question may have suffered quite a different sort of calamity. If the addressee is not at odds with Augustus, it becomes doubtful that the elegantly phrased Apolline exemplum radiates broader, political significance, that the illustration evokes a *generally* forbidding, if sometimes agreeable, Princeps. But others may feel that such caution is guilty of shutting down the text.

These few examples illustrate some of the problems and possibilities in looking for Augustan Apollo. There are many indubitably political allusions, even if subtextual and secondary in nature, intended by the author. Yet some literary references to Apollo may have contained relevance to the Emperor only for some contemporary readers. One aims reasonably to substantiate the most likely cases. Importantly, we here address this question within the larger dynamics of the particular text – issues of structure, tonality, genre, and intertextuality. Our main task, in fact, is to illuminate the play of the poetic texts featuring Phoebus. This is a book of literary-critical studies focused on Augustan Apollo rather than a study of imperial ideology *per se*.

The series of close readings that follow are organized around seven themes, which offer complementary angles on Apollo in Augustan literature. It is hoped that the interrelated chapters add up to a synoptic view of the subject. The topical foci were chosen to maximize the mutual light that

identification and further discussion, see J. Griffin, review of Nisbet and Hubbard's commentary on *Odes* 2, *JRS* 70 (1980) 183; Woodman on *Vell.* 2.91.2; Syme 1986: 387–92; Holtermann 1997. Other possibilities are the consul designate for 23 BC – presumably a cousin of the conspirator Licinius Murena – who never served because he was convicted of some offense; and M. Licinius Crassus, consul for 30 with Octavian and thereafter proconsul of Macedonia, who clashed with his consular colleague in his claim to have won the *spolia opima* (but was allowed to celebrate a triumph in 27). See Swan 1966; Sumner 1978: 193; Watkins 1985; Gerding 2004.

²² Jupiter and Augustus earlier in the *Odes* at 1.12.49–60; later at 3.4.42–48.

²³ Holtermann 1997: 79–80.

the texts can shed on one another.²⁴ These poems can speak to one another in various ways, through intertextual reference, as representatives of common literary traditions, and as participants in a composite political discourse. In the case of the myths of Virgil's *Aeneid* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the thematic approach is modified somewhat in order to investigate at length Apollo's treatment throughout the two major Augustan epics.

I begin at the beginning with Octavian's affiliations with Apollo in the context of the competitive divine self-imaging among the leaders at the end of the Roman Republic. Phoebus Apollo turns out to be a deity with appeal to more than one faction, at least partly because he shares with his biform Sol symbolic representation of the turn to a new era. Octavian can boast his own familial and priestly connections with the god, but in the end his Apollo elides opponents' symbolic emblems. Especially important for establishing Apollo's significance in Octavian's public profile are his public announcement to build the divinity a temple on property adjacent to his own house and the controversy over his alleged impersonation of the god at a banquet. The latter event occasioned a little studied anonymous elegy that offers a dense, if slightly clumsy, vituperative account. In a different sort of satire written during the 30s, Horace, being extricated from an annoying acquaintance, casts himself with mock grandeur as Hector rescued by Apollo on the battlefield. I consider the possible mix of poetics and contemporary politics in that Homeric allusion, and pursue a thread that leads to the *Odes*, where the idea of salvific Apollo more than once serves as a foil for Horace's recurring, distinctive conceit of Mercury the savior in his mythologizing of both himself and the emergent Princesps.

From the Triumvirate we move in Chapter 2 to Octavian's victory over Antony at Actium, a victory supposedly secured with the help of Apollo. In poetry the conceit takes epic and elegiac forms. Once again we treat familiar poems (by Virgil and Propertius) alongside lesser-known texts like the first Elegy for Maecenas and two Greek epigrams, which express, respectively, Nicopolitan and Alexandrian perspectives on Phoebus and the Roman victor. Virgil provides the central text with his electrifying image at the center of Aeneas' shield of Apollo frightening away the eastern hordes by stretching his bow. This became a classic version of the battle already in Virgil's day, provoking generic emulation and ideological critique from

²⁴ My thematic plan also entails discussing some poems in more than one chapter, from different points of view. Loupiac's study (1999) proceeds rather by surveying Apollo's appearances respectively in Virgil, Horace, and the elegists.