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The Curia in *Aeneid* 7

Abstract: In *Aeneid* 7, Latinus receives the Trojans in his *curia*, a building simultaneously described as *tectum*, *regia*, and *templum* in Vergil's ekphrasis (7.170-191), which has complicated discussions concerning the building's function and inspiration. Many studies have suggested that specific temples in Rome are the sole inspiration for Vergil. I argue, however, that the poet is more generally allusive, and I suggest below that the Roman *curia*, overlooked thus far in scholarship, also informs the poet's ekphrasis, through an examination of the architectural and ideological features in Latinus' *curia*. By projecting Roman architecture and monuments into the past, Vergil emphasizes that architecture comprises a significant part of the history and purpose of Rome.

In the seventh book of the *Aeneid,* the Trojans finally land on the shores of the Tiber, where Aeneas will establish his own destined civilization. Upon arrival, he sends an embassy to the nearby city, ruled by Latinus, to seek permission to build a Trojan settlement. As the Trojan emissaries reach Latium, they see a large roofed structure (*tectum,* 170) up at the citadel of the city (*urbe…summa*, 171). Virgil then launches into an ekphrasis about this building, which once was the palace of Picus,[1] but now is employed by Latinus as a multi-purpose facility, described as a dwelling (*tectum, sedes*), a temple (*templum, sedes*), and a meeting-hall (*curia*) at various points in the description:

> Tectum augustum, ingens, centum sublime columnis
> urbe fuit summa, Laurentis regia Pici,
> horrendum siluis et religione parentum.
> hic sceptra accipere et primos attollere fascis
> regibus omen erat; hoc illis curia templum,

[1] See Balk (1968) 46-47 and particularly Rosivach (1980, 146) concerning the debate about Virgil's "inconsistencies" in book seven, specifically the confusion as to whether the palace of Picus and the palace of Latinus are one and the same or two different buildings. Carcopino (1968) 254-255 suggests that Latinus may have refounded an earlier city (that of Picus') on the same site, which, as Horsfall notes, may help to clear up some of the skepticism.

hae sacris sedes epulis; hic ariete caeso
perpetuis soliti patres considere mensis.
quin etiam ueterum effigies ex ordine auorum
antiqua e cedro, Italusque paterque Sabinus ,
uitisator curuam seruans sub imagine falcem,
Saturnusque senex Ianique bifrontis imago
uestibulo astabant, aliique ab origine reges,
Martiaque ob patriam pugnando uulnera passi.
multaque praeterea sacris in postibus arma,
captiui pendent currus curuaeque secures
et cristae capitum et portarum ingentia claustra
spiculaque clipeique ereptaque rostra carinis.
ipse Quirinali lituo paruaque sedebat
succinctus trabea laeuaque ancile gerebat
Picus, equum domitor, quem capta cupidine coniunx
aurea percussum uirga uersumque uenenis
fecit auem Circe sparsitque coloribus alas. (*Aen.* 7.170-191)

A majestic, massive structure, lofty with a hundred columns,
The palace of Laurentian Picus,
Awe-inspiring by its trees and by the piety of its ancestors,
Was on the top of the city. Here it was an omen for kings to
Receive the scepter and to raise up the first *fasces*;
For those men this temple was a meeting-hall,
The place for consecrated feasts; here, after the ram was slaughtered,
The elders were accustomed to sit along unending tables.
Indeed there were also aged cedar images of the ancestors,
Italus and father Sabinus, the vine-grower,
Guarding a curved sickle beneath his bust,
And old Saturn and the image of double-faced Ianus
All standing in a row in the entrance-court, along with other kings
And those who had endured the wounds of Mars by fighting for the sake of the fatherland.
Moreover, many arms hang on the sacred doors:
Captured chariots and curved axes,
And the crests of helmets and enormous gate bolts,
And arrows and shields and prows stolen from ships.
Picus himself was sitting here, with a quirinal augur's staff and dressed in a short
White robe, and was wearing a shield on his left side,
Picus, the tamer of horses, whom Circe, his bride captured by desire,
Struck with her golden wand and poisons
And transformed into a bird, and spotted his wings with color.[2]

[2] All Vergil text is derived from Mynors' OCT. Translations are my own.

It has often been asserted that Vergil was recalling Rome when depicting Latium and its citadel,[3] and there have been many suggestions regarding the specific structures to which the poet might have been alluding. Many scholars have concurred that the depicted *tectum*, though designated by different terminology, is essentially a religious building, emulating either the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus on the Capitoline or the Temple of Mars Ultor and the Forum of Augustus.[4] Horsfall warns the reader not to ignore similarities to Roman aristocratic houses and to the topography and architecture of the Palatine, while Bleisch sees Latinus' *tectum* not only as a palace but a sacred, political space, drawing upon supporting evidence from the Roman Regia as well as the Augustan complex on the Palatine.[5] All of these readings are

[3] The idea originates in van Essen (1939) 235-236 (summarized in Rowell (1941) 264), whose article postulates that the architecture in the *Aeneid* is a general reflection of the architecture Vergil saw in Italy. Kondratieff (2015, 194) sees Latium as a pattern of archaic Rome and its chief elements.

[4] On the potential religious nature of the building, see, e.g., Rosivach (1980) 148-9. Wiseman (1994, 100-102) questions whether the *tectum* is a palace or a temple, and points to Servius *ad* 7.170 (who writes that Vergil must have had in mind the Palatine complex of the House of Augustus and the Temple of Apollo) as evidence for it being both. On the influence of the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, see, e.g., Camps (1959) 54; Rosivach (1980) 148; Harrison (2006) 176-177; Kondratieff (2015) 194-196. On the Forum of Augustus, see Rowell (1941); Reckford (1961) 263; and Harrison (2006) 177-178.

[5] Horsfall *ad* 7.170-91; Bleisch (2003). Horsfall *ad loc.* also suggests that Vergil had in mind literary antecedents, in addition to architectural antecedents: Alcinous' palace at *Odyssey* 7.81-102 (see Heinze (1993) 311 = Heinze (1965) 397) and Aeete's palace at *Argonautica* 3.215-248.

reasonable and as a whole present compelling evidence that Vergil surely could not have been alluding to only one structure, forum, or hill in his ekphrasis. The variety of architectural interpretations offered by scholars reveals yet another facet of the richness in Vergilian allusion, indicating the poet's skill in combining allusions to all of these structures into an evocation of Augustan Rome's monumental city center.

Here I propose adding an important but overlooked monument to the collection of Roman architectural allusions present in Latinus' *tectum*. No study thus far has considered the role of Rome's senate-houses, or *curiae,* in informing Vergil's description.[6] While also discussing further similarities between temples and *curiae*, I will examine how the poet incorporates architectural and ideological features of Roman *curiae* into his ekphrasis, in particular the Curia Julia in the Roman Forum, dedicated during Vergil's writing of the *Aeneid*. The influence of the *curia* contributes to the many similarities the reader acknowledges between Latium and Rome. Vergil intentionally constructs Latium with buildings and customs that reflect the architecture, culture, and institutions of contemporary Rome.

A brief overview of the term *curia* as well as the structures it came to represent is necessary here. The word *curia* denotes generally a meeting place where assemblies occurred (*OLD s.v. curia*, 2). In late Republican (Cicero) and imperial authors, it specifies the Senate house, whether in Rome or in other cities (*OLD* 3, 4 respectively) or the Senate itself (*OLD* 5). The Curia Hostilia, attributed to the third Roman king Tullius Hostilius (Liv. 1.30.2) and located on the northwest side of the Forum Romanum, was the original facility in which the senators

[6] This lack may be due to the arguments of scholars such as Rosivach (1980) 148, who claims that the civil function is secondary to the religious function of Latinus' *tectum*, based on the word order of line 174 (…*hoc illis curia templum*).

made political and military decisions. After Sulla's expansion of the building in 81 BCE, the Curia Hostilia was damaged by a fire in 52 BCE during the funeral of Clodius.[7] Although there were efforts to rebuild the Curia Hostilia, in 44 BCE Caesar commissioned the Curia Julia to replace the Curia Hostilia. In 29 BCE Augustus finished and dedicated the Curia Julia (Cass. Dio 51.22.1-2; Aug. *Anc* 19.1), as part of his building program which associated many buildings, new and old, in the Forum with the imperial family. The Curia Julia was restored by Domitian in 94 CE after a series of fires, but due to subsequent damage it was reconstructed to the same dimensions by Diocletian during the period 284-305 (which remains as the present structure in the Forum).

The Curia Hostilia and its later replacements all had the same rectangular architectural plan. According to a coin of c. 28 BCE (Figure 1), the newly inaugurated Curia Julia featured a colonnade across the front of the building that supported a low, pitched roof ending right below the three main windows of the façade, a facet replicated by the Domitianic and Diocletianic restorations.[8] The building was surmounted by a triangular pediment on which was inscribed *Imp(erator) Caesar*, with a statue of victory placed at the top and two acroteria on the sides.[9] A porch enclosed by the pitched roof before the wide bronze central doors, possibly identifiable as

[7] See Claridge (2010) 71. See Kondratieff (2010) 103-104 for more about the burning of the Curia.

[8] The identification of the structure on this coin as the Curia Julia has been debated, but according to Elkins (2015, 58-59), still remains the most acceptable option.

[9] *LTUR* (*s.v.*) *Curia Julia.*

the Chalcidicum,[10] comprised the entrance.[11] The internal proportions of the Curia approximate suggestions made by Vitruvius (*De Arch.* 5.2), with a height half the sum of the building's length and width.[12] A series of three paved steps on either side, on which the senators would place their chairs, led down to a center marble flooring in opus sectile. From literary sources we know that Augustus adorned the building with paintings, including one by Nicias (Pliny *Nat.* 35.10). He also likely placed an altar and a statue dedicated to victory, along with Egyptian booty from his triple triumph, behind the platform of the presiding magistrate along the rear wall of the building (Suet. *Aug.* 100, Cass. Dio 51.22).[13] Statue niches in white marble adorned the walls on either side below the paintings.[14]

In these *curiae*, in addition to senate meetings, ambassadors from countries contractually allied with Rome would conduct official business, whereas the embassies from countries which had not established a treaty with Rome were allowed to meet with Roman officials only outside

[10] Aug. *Anc.* 19.1. The location of the Chalcidicum is disputed, but Zevi (1971) defends a position in front of the Curia Julia; see also Balty (1991).

[11] The current doors are copies; the original doors were removed in the seventeenth century to serve as the portals of the basilica of San Giovanni in Laterano.

[12] For more on the Curia and its Vitruvian proportions, see, e.g., Ward-Perkins (1981) 418, Carter (1989) 41, and Sear (1992) 15.

[13] On the Curia as a victory monument, see Phillips (2011) 379; also De Angelis (2010) 140; Edwards (2003) 59; and Hafner (1989). On the Nike statue, see also Zanker (1988) 79-80.

[14] Gorski and Packer (2015) 126. For more on the architectural plan and location of the Curia Julia, see, e.g., *LTUR* 1, 332-334; Bartoli (1963); Zanker (1972) 46; Bonnefond-Coudry (1989) 168-174; Morselli and Tortorici (1989); Hafner (1989); Bonnefond-Coudry (1995) 386-403.

of the Roman *pomerium,* often in the Curia Pompeia in the Campus Martius.[15] From this discussion one could assume that the *curia* typically served a secular purpose, but according to Varro, there were two types of *curia*: *Curiae duorum generum: nam et ubi curarent sacerdotes res divinas, ut curiae veteres, et ubi senatus humanas, ut Curia Hostilia, quod primus aedificavit Hostilius rex*, "*Curiae* exist in two types: one where priests attend to religious matters, such as the Curiae Veteres,[16] and one where the senate attends to human matters, such as the Curia Hostilia, which King Hostilius first built" (*Ling.* 5.155). Having considered the various types of *curiae,* we can perhaps understand previous leanings towards a religious interpretation of Latinus' *tectum*. Nonetheless, in considering the narrative frame of Vergil's ekphrasis, it appears less likely that the poet is alluding to a religious *curia*. Unlike Evander in *Aeneid* 8, who is preparing sacrifices to Hercules when Aeneas arrives, Latinus is not undertaking any sort of religious ritual when the Trojans arrive, but rather performs a civic duty in welcoming the Trojans to Latium. At this moment, Latinus' *tectum* represents a civil structure in which the king is conducting important political business with the foreign embassy.

Turning to the ekphrasis itself, the dwelling of Latinus is first described as *tectum augustum ingens* (7.170). The use of asyndeton and a majority of spondees in the meter (Fordyce

[15] Taylor and Scott (1969) 570-572. Thompson (1981) argues that Senate meetings happened more frequently on the Palatine at the library within the Temple of Apollo (called the *curia in Palatio*), whose work Wiseman references to aid his own argument of Vergil alluding to the Palatine complex in his description of Latinus' palace.

[16] The Curiae Veteres was located on the Palatine Hill in Rome. For further discussion of similarities between priests and senators, particularly in their sacrificial duties, see Gagé (1972) 64.

ad 7.170) contribute extra solemnity and weight to this line, which describes a site that is meant to overwhelm the Trojan viewer as well as the reader. Vergil's preferred adjective *ingens* communicates not only the large size of the structure but also the powerful impression it imposes on the viewer.[17] While surely a nod to the *princeps*, the word *augustum* technically refers to something venerable or religious,[18] and it indeed has that sense here, with religious terminology appearing later in the description, including *templum* (7.174). Yet *templum* often does not designate the religious structure itself; it is defined primarily as any piece of land consecrated by augurs. Servius supports this interpretation, explaining that *augustum* means *consecrata augurio*, "inaugurated by augurs."[19] In order to make valid decrees, the Senate had to meet in a *templum* inaugurated by augurs, but the senators did not assemble only in established temples. In fact, the Senate's *templum* did not have to be dedicated to any divinity.[20] Ancient *curiae*, including the Curia Hostilia, the later Curia Julia, and the Curia Pompeia, were also *consecratae augurio*,[21] a practice originated by Tullius Hostilius. Political and religious institutions coexisted in Rome, as they do here. Scholars' perceptions of Latinus' *tectum* as solely a temple, [22] or as most clearly reminiscent of only a later Roman temple,[23] are too narrow. In fact, Varro suggests that some consecrated religious spaces are not temples (*non omnes aedes sacras esse templa*, cited in Aulus

[17] On the similar impressiveness of the Roman senate house, see, e.g., Cic. *Flac.* 57.

[18] See Horsfall *ad* 7.170.

[19] Servius *ad* 7.170 (and also *ad* 7.153). Cf. Ov. *Fast.* 1.609-612.

[20] Taylor and Scott (1969) 535.

[21] Taylor and Scott (1969) 535.

[22] Reckford (1961, 263) refers to the structure as the "temple of Picus."

[23] As discussed in note 4.

Gellius 14.7.7),[24] whereas *curiae* always are. Thus in line 174, when the words *templum* and *curia* appear next to each other (*hoc illis curia templum*), they are not only two separate functions of the structure, but are in fact concomitant: the *curia* is (and is located on) a *templum* and the *templum* can contain (or even constitute) a *curia*. Any religious aspect of the *curia* does not diminish its main function as a facility for civic meetings of the Senate; its civic, secular function is equally important.

The stature of the building is enhanced with the description *centum sublime columnis* (7.170). Horsfall suggests that this phrase could mean "lofty *on* a hundred columns,"[25] providing more height and grandeur to the building that is already located at the height of the city (*urbe summa*, 7.171).[26] Claridge's reconstruction of the Curia Julia (Figure 2) shows us that there were

[24] Additionally, the censor C. Cassius was not allowed to put a statue of Concordia into the Curia Hostilia and dedicate the building to her, because doing so would have transformed the building from *inauguratum templum* to *consecrata aedes,* whereas the Curia Hostilia (and later *curiae*) were *profana.* For more, see *LTUR* (s.v.) *Curia Hostilia,* and also Servius *ad* 11.235.

[25] Horsfall *ad* 7.170. Jenkyns (1998, 486) finds this description to be baffling to the eye, that the hundred columns would block every direction of the gaze and in effect shut out the light.

[26] See Smith (2005) 56-57, who writes that Vergil is careful to give highly visual details of the palace atop the city in an "area regarded with awe by past generations." Because of its location at the height of the city, scholars have previously assumed that Vergil is alluding to one of the temples on the hills of Rome (though Balk (1968, 48) suggests comparison to the Greek Acropolis in Athens). But, as I suggest in this work, Vergil is more generally allusive; he may not intend to refer to merely one structure, which seemingly lessens the importance of location.

at least 9 columns before the porch and the large main doors. If one were to stand in front of the Curia Julia from a lower perspective in the Forum (in the Via Sacra) and look directly up at the structure, much like the Trojans' perspective of Latinus' *tectum*, the pitched roof would blend into the main façade of the building and the colonnade could appear to be supporting the upper half of the building, thus echoing Horsfall's suggestion about Latinus' *curia*. Vergil's evocation of the Roman Forum is strengthened by the appearance of *regia* in the same line (7.171), which may remind the reader of the Roman Regia higher on the Via Sacra.[27] The Regia in the Forum was also the former home of a king, Numa Pompilius, the second monarch of Rome. Comparable to Latinus' *tectum,* it was then appropriated for more public use as the meeting place for the Pontifex Maximus and his college of Pontiffs and as the storage facility of their official documents. Similar to the Curia Julia, it also was a *templum* inaugurated by augurs.

Other potential allusions to the Curia, its connections to the past, and its columns occur in the next line, when the poet depicts the *tectum* as *horrendum siluis et religione parentum* (7.172). The ancestral piety inherent in Latinus' structure finds a conceivable parallel in Rome's Curia, which was known by the Romans to be charged with historical and cultural memories of the senators of the past (Cic. *Fin.* 5.2). Architectural parallels are at play as well. In the phrase *horrendum siluis,* it has been assumed that Vergil is describing the woods around the palace,[28] but it is possible to consider *siluis* as suggestive of columns, architecturally reminiscent of tall

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The curia, even in its lower position in the Roman Forum, can be as inspiring as any one of the temples on the nearby Capitoline and Palatine Hills.

[27] Rosivach (1980) 147; Horsfall *ad* 7.171. As Bleisch (2003, 97) argues, the nomenclature alone is enough to recall the monument.

[28] Horsfall *ad* 7.172.

trees. In a discussion of the "baffling" visual appearance of the *tectum*, combining physical and spiritual elements, Jenkyns notes, "There seems to be no distinction made between interior and exterior: tall pillars and ancient trees, the work of nature and the ancient work of man, merge strangely together."[29] Not only did the Curia Julia possess frontal columns, but an actual forest of columns also surrounded the Aedes Castoris in the SE part of the Forum,[30] and of course the most conspicuous frontal-columned structure would have been the nearby Temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline, boasting a "forested façade" of columns in a tripteral, hexastyle plan (with additional columns along the sides of the temple).[31] In addition to some architectural similarities, both of these structures served as meeting-places for the senate.[32] The abundance of frontal columns in structures aligned geographically and functionally with the Curia Julia again speaks to the richness in Vergil's evocation of the Roman city center in Latinus' *tectum.* The impressive external stature might be seen to replicate the impressive actions taking place within.

Soon after the mention of the word *curia* (7.174), *patres* are described as sitting at long, seemingly unending tables (*perpetuis…mensis,* 7.176) for sacred banquets. The image can be

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[29] Jenkyns (1998) 486. He believes the description is vivid and resonating but creates no actual picture for the viewer (and reader).

[30] In its earliest iteration (496 BCE), the Aedes Castoris contained three tetrastyle rows of frontal columns, mimicking Jupiter Capitolinus.

[31] Hopkins (2012) 122. His article discusses, *inter alia*, the innovation and possible Greek sources of the huge column porch as one facet of the monumentality of the temple as a whole.

[32] On the *Aedes Castoris* as a quasi-curia, see Cic. *Ver.* 2.1.129; also Sihvola (1989) 87; and Sumi (2009) 169-173. On the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, see, e.g., Harrison (2006) 177.

construed in a senatorial context: Roman senators as far back as Romulus were known as *patres*, and during Senate meetings they were accustomed to sit in long rows designated by the three steps along the sides of the Curia, not altogether dissimilar from the picture Vergil paints of the gatherings in Latinus' *tectum.*[33] Latinus, of course, sits in his ancestral throne at the far middle of the *tectum* (7.169, 192-194), presiding as the chief magistrate would at Senate meetings.[34] The imagery of the rows of senators is continued with Vergil's description of the statues, which too are found in a row (*ex ordine*, 7.177) and consist of important grandfathers or ancestors (*auorum ueterum*, 7.177), kings (*reges*, 7.181), and military heroes (7.182), all of whom would naturally make up a Roman Senate. Vergil then concludes the depiction of the statues with a description of Picus (7.187-189), who can possibly be seen as the earliest magistrate. As Bleisch has argued, the poet employs words that associate the former Latin ruler with early Roman ruler Romulus, wearing and carrying the garb of augury (note especially the use of *Quirinali*, 7.187).[35] Surely rows of statues of important men in the entryway to a monumental structure would also lead a

[33] See, e.g., Livy 1.17.8 for senators as *patres.* On the position of senatorial chairs along the three steps, see also Gorski's recent reconstructions in Gorski and Packer (2015) 128-130. Gorski's reconstructions are based off Bartoli (1963) 79-97; Nash (1976) 190-204; Morselli and Tortorici (1989, vol. 1) 13-26, 84-91.

[34] Bleisch (2003, 92) compares Latinus here to Dido sitting on her throne in the Temple of Juno in Book 1.

[35] Bleisch (2003) 104-105.

reader to imagine the Forum of Augustus with its gallery of *summi viri*, as argued by Rowell.[36] Although not completed until 2 BCE, the Forum Augusti was first conceived of in 42 BCE, and Harrison believes that Vergil may have seen its building plans.[37] Many senators who had sat in the Curia likely would have been included amongst the statues at the Forum of Augustus. Rowell could be read as connecting Latinus' *tectum*, the Forum of Augustus, and the Curia when he observes, "To Vergil, writing of legendary Italy, the greatest men were naturally kings, a status imposed by the period which he is describing. Had he been writing of republican times, such heroes would have been men who had held the highest magistracies."[38] The rows of important kings and magistrates at all three of these structures represent the physical, or architectural, manifestation of a continuum of history and greatness for Latium and for Rome, spanning both space and time.

The positioning of the statues also mimics the arrangement of the senators: during the course of a meeting some senators would be seated, such as Picus (*sedebat*, 7.187), and some would be standing (*astabant*, 7.181). The growing number of Roman senators precluded the possibility that all of them would be seated within the Curia; thus the eldest and/or most

[36] Rowell (1941). On the relationship between identity, memory, and the past within the Forum of Augustus and the *summi viri,* see Gowing (2005) 138-148. On the connection of the Forum of Augustus to earlier monuments, see Roller (2013), esp. 123-124.

[37] Harrison (2006) 178. Others have argued that the *Aeneid* may have served as inspiration for the Forum of Augustus.

[38] Rowell (1941) 270.

important senators would be given seats first, and the rest left standing.[39] Vergil then employs an architectural term (*uestibulo*, "entrance-court," 7.181) to describe the location of the statues. Vitruvius (6.5.1) designates the term as a home's entrance court open to the public, yet authors including Cicero have used *uestibulum* to also describe the porch or entryway to large public structures, such as temples (*in primo aditu uestibuloque templi*, "in the foremost entrance and forecourt of the temple," *Ver.* 2.2.160). It can be argued that the Curia Julia has a *uestibulum*: the Chalcidicum, where the sons of senators (but possibly anyone) could watch the Senate proceedings.[40]

However, the connections between the *effigies* and the senators are greater than their position within their respective buildings. Those in the Senate tended to be older (*ueterum auorum*, 7.177); their greatest active achievements, particularly in military roles, are behind them, but they are still remembered and recognized for those achievements—just as the heroic men of Italy's past are remembered and memorialized by their statues in Latinus' *tectum*.[41] Latium's valuing and appreciation of military heroics are further described at 7.183-186. The Latins' victories over other countries are highlighted in their architecture, by placing foreign arms and other trophies, including "enormous gate bolts" (*ingentia claustra portarum*, 7.185), an

[39] See Taylor and Scott (1969). For further discussion of attendance in the Roman Republican Senate, see Ryan (1998), esp. 38-41, 45-51, 126-133.

[40] Taylor and Scott (1969) 541. On *uestibulum* in other Roman sources, see Wistrand (1970) 204-206.

[41] Rosivach (1980) 150: The *effigies* are "civic memorials." See also Balk (1968) 51-53.

architectural feature and a war spoil unparalleled in Latin literature, upon their doors.[42] Latinus' doors evoke the doors both of Priam's palace (*barbarico postes auro spoliisque superbi / procubuere*, "The proud doors bent down by foreign gold and war spoils," 2.504-505) and of Augustus' temple to Apollo on the Palatine (*ipse sedens niueo candentis limine Phoebi / dona recognoscit populorum aptatque superbis / postibus*, "[Augustus] himself, sitting on the bright white threshold of shining Phoebus, acknowledges the gifts of the peoples and affixes them to the proud doors," 8.720-722). All the doors symbolize wealth, pride, and success in battle, similar to the function of the *effigies.* They remind the current and future generations of the prior *exempla* which must be followed. As the doors and statues of Latinus' *tectum* are a monument to his success (and Latium's success), so too was the Curia Julia a monument to Rome and Octavian's military success. The mention of *rostra* (7.186) might also draw the reader's imagination to the area of the Curia Julia and yet another victory monument. Prows (*rostra)* from defeated ships functioned as decorative signs of victory upon not only Latinus' door, but also on the front of the platform of the Rostra, located in the Roman Forum directly in front of the Curia. Both the architecture and the many great public speeches made from the Rostra evoked Roman history and prowess. Augustus' enlargement of the Rostra between 42 and 12 BCE would have drawn further attention to the structure and continuities with the customs and victories of the past.[43] The similar decorative custom of war spoils embellishing the façades of monumental structures such as Priam's palace and Latinus' *tectum,* as well as the Temple of Apollo Palatinus,

[42] Horsfall *ad* 7.185. On the violence implied by Latin military victories, see Moorton (1988) 255; cf. also Moorton (1989) 121-122.

[43] On his architectural plan, which was part of a continuation or revision of Caesar's architectural plans, see, e.g., *LTUR* (*s.v.*) *Rostra Augusti*; Gorski and Packer (2015) 147-153.

the Curia Julia, and the Rostra (all built or reconstructed by Augustus), links Latium, Troy, and Rome. Roman identity, of course, arises from the joining of Latins and Trojans through Aeneas, but their connection originates even earlier: Dardanus, the founder of Troy, was born in this part of Italy, as Latinus' greeting of the Trojan embassy reveals (7.195-197, 205-208).[44] Aeneas and Latinus are thus already of kindred blood, and their blood will continue to be shared in future generations of Romans. Both provide customs that Rome will follow: religious, political, and architectural.

In conclusion, through an example of ring composition, the Curia Julia, in correspondence with other monuments comprising the city center of Augustan Rome, serves as inspiration for Latinus' *tectum*, which in turn is meant to prefigure later Roman buildings. As the reader walks along with the Trojan ambassadors through the city of Latium and the *tectum* of Latinus, he/she finds them to be just like Rome. As Jenkyns observes, "we see Latinus' walls and towers through the wondering eyes of the approaching Trojans; and at the same time we see with our own eyes 'our city,' Rome, transformed by antiquity and romance."[45] Within the description of Latinus' *tectum*, Vergil illuminates many details regarding Latin customs that simultaneously mimic and lay the groundwork for Roman traditions, which has led some scholars such as Nelis to believe that Vergil wishes to deal more with "history and purpose" than architecture in this

[44] Lee (1979) 70. Vergil's tradition of Dardanus' birthplace (see Servius *ad* 7.207) differs from earlier Greek myths: Homer (*Il.* 20.215) states he came from Mt. Ida on Crete, while Apollodorus (3.12) names Samothrace as Dardanus' place of origin. Dionysius of Halicarnassus (1.61) cites Arcadia. See also Syed (2005) 212-214.

[45] Jenkyns (1998) 493. Cf. Bleisch (2003) 89, who remarks that, unlike the other Vergilian ekphrases in the *Aeneid,* this passage has no internal viewer, but rather the reader is the viewer.

ekphrasis.[46] But by projecting Roman architecture and institutions into the past, Vergil's treatment of architectural and decorative aspects is indeed part of the "history and purpose" the poet wishes to portray for Rome.

Architecture thus functions as one of the ways in which Vergil constructs continuity between past and present, myth and history.[47] It also constitutes an important component of Roman identity and the notion of monumental greatness in that identity. Buildings which last for generations speak to the eminence and security of a nation firmly in control of its destiny. The Curia (in all of its iterations) stood since the beginning of Rome and still stands today. It was integral to the very establishment of the Roman civilization and its identity, because it housed much of the literal and symbolic power of Rome. Vergil may have turned to various structures in the Roman city center to help characterize the city of Latinus, including his *tectum*, with similarities to Roman religious, political, and military rituals and structures. The poet, however, was also clearly aware of the power inherent in the Curia, particularly in the newly constructed and dedicated Curia Julia, which by its very title as a Curia associated Augustus and the Julian clan with the earliest rulers and institutions in the city. Roller discusses the phenomenon of intersignification of monuments in Augustan Rome, similar to intertextuality in poetry, whereby the new Augustan monuments "seek to appropriate the prestige of predecessors," or draw the older monuments into a new teleological story showcasing the even greater accomplishments of

[46] See, e.g., Nelis (2001) 283, who remarks that this passage "diverges considerably" from Apollonius' architectural description of the palace of Aeetes in *Argonautica* 3.

[47] Sumi (2009, 167): "Romans maintained a dialogue with the past through memories evoked by [the Aedes Castoris] and other monuments in the city."

Augustus.[48] Vergil creates his own intersignification (or architectural intertextuality) in employing contemporary structures, including the Curia Julia, as concrete symbols of an architectural, political, and ideological bridge connecting the early mythical and historical past (Aeneas and Latinus, Romulus and Hostilius) to the present and future (Augustus).[49]

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[48] Roller (2013), esp. 119 (cited), 120-124.

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Figure 1. Silver Denarius of Augustus. Uncertain value, 29 BCE – 27 BCE. ANS 1937.158.446. American Numismatic Society.

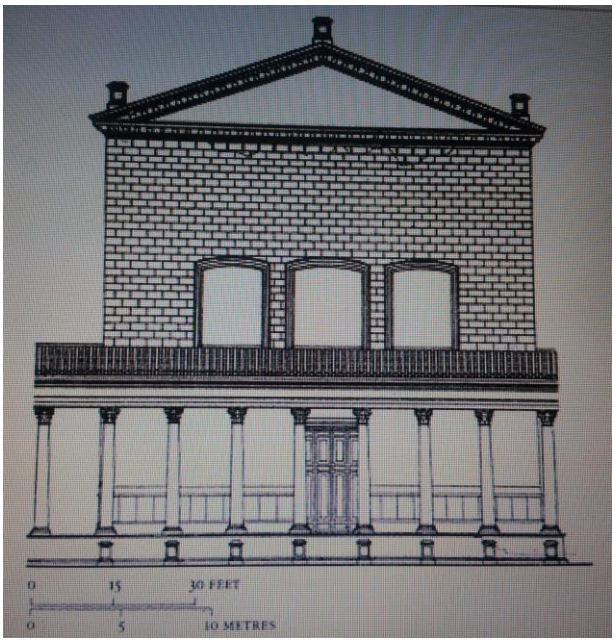

Figure 2. Reconstruction of Curia Julia. From *Rome: An Oxford Archaeological Guide* (2nd Edition) by Claridge (2010), Fig. 12, p.73. By permission of Oxford University Press.