

Observations on the Prehistory of Lat. *augur**

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1. The *augur* is the most strikingly distinctive figure of Roman religion. While the *pontifices* and *flamines* and their practices have widespread parallels, the augural *disciplina* has, to my knowledge, no precise comparanda outside ancient Italy. An understanding of the augural law is crucial to an accurate estimate of the synchronic function of Roman religion and likewise a hypothesis about the origin and evolution of augural practice must be a key part of any account of the prehistory of the Roman religious system. In this paper I intend to examine one more time the linguistic side of this issue. I will focus mainly on three questions relating to the word *augur* and its family (1) the phonological prehistory, (2) the morphological analysis, (3) the semantic connection of *augur* and *augeo*.

2. The word *augur*, *auguris* m. is attested first in Cato (*Agr.* 5.4) +, but the derivative *augurium* occurs already in Ennius (*Ann.* 154 Sk) and Plautus (*As.* 263, *St.* 463). The tri- and quadrisyllabic forms consistently show a *u* which must either be analogical—since short *u* or indeed any short vowel, in an open medial syllable before *r* regularly becomes *e*¹—or of secondary origin. A trace of a regular outcome of **augVrV-* is found in the forms *auger* and *augeratus* attributed by Priscian to the *antiqui* (Keil 2.27.17). That such forms are not mere creations of the late grammarian is shown by the cognomen *Augerinus* attested one time (AVGERINAE, Allifae 96, Samnium²) as a variant of the common *Augurinus*.³ Interestingly, there are no instances of a spelling †*augor-* in contrast to the superficially similar case of *fulgur*, *-uris*, which has evidence for both *fulgor-* (FULGORI AE 24.32, Mauretania Caesariensis; *fulgora* Cic. *Div.* 1.12) and *fulger-* (FULGERA(TORI) AE 1999:1284, Dacia Alba Iulia; *fulgere*, Lucr. 4.190, v.l.).

3. That the *r* of *augur* reflects an earlier *s* is generally thought to be proved by the derivative *augustus* ‘solemn, august’, which would appear to be a denominal *to-* stem of the same type as *uenustus* ‘charming’ <— **uēnes-* ‘Venus’.⁴ True Benveniste claimed that *augur* reflected an *r*-stem comparable to YAv. *aogarə* but there is no need to complicate the Italic picture in this way.⁵ In any case it is likely that the hapax *aogarə* (Yt. 13.12) has been created on the basis of the semantically overlapping *zāuuarə* ‘swiftness’ with which the *s*-stem *aojō* is conjoined six times (Yt. 1.22, 13.1, 10.62, Y. 9.22, 71.8, 72.6).⁶

* I would like to thank Jerzy Linderski and Alan Nussbaum for valuable advice on this paper. No endorsement of the views presented should be assumed.

¹ See WEISS 2009:117.

² MANCINI 2009:134.

³ Cf. also the reading *augeres* transmitted by the 4th century CE Veronensis palimpsest of Livy (3.20).

⁴ But again unlike *fulgur* which has *fulgus* (Paul. *Fest.* p. 82L; CIL 10.1603, Puteoli) there is no direct evidence for **augus*. Zimmermann 1900:487 quoted a supposed cognomen *Augus* from CIL 8.17058 (Mnia) but this is probably just abbreviated for *Augustalis*.

⁵ BENVENISTE 1935:37.

⁶ The *r*-stem *zāuuarə* is clearly more original since it is attested multiple times in Avestan and also in MMParth. *z'wr*, and Sogd. *z'wr*. On the supposed supporting evidence of Ved. *ogaṇá-/úgaṇa-* < **ogṛna-* see KUIPER 1991:80–1.

4. There are two etymologies for *augur* that have had modern adherents—both with at least partial ancient pedigrees—and are worthy of further consideration. The idea that *augur* is a compound with a first member *au-* < **auī-* ‘bird’ is an evident possibility considered already in antiquity given the unambiguous analysis *auspex* < **auī-speks*. In 1976 Günter Neumann proposed the most recent and acceptable version of this hypothesis.⁷ According to Neumann, who revives a suggestion first made in modern times by Pott,⁸ *augur* is a verbal governing compound with a first member **auī-* ‘bird’ and a second member *-gur* << **-gus*, an agential root noun from the root **ǵheus-* ‘taste, test’. Thus the *augur* is the ‘Vogel-Prüfer’ or “der welcher aus der Menge der anfallenden Zeichen die einschlägigen, deutbaren und aussagekräftigen auswählt”. Morphologically and phonologically there is nothing objectionable in this analysis. True the evidence for a root noun from this root is scant, but there certainly could have been such a form, especially as the second member of a compound.⁹

5. More problematic is the meaning required for the putative second member *-gus*. The PIE root **ǵheus-* is normally thought to have meant ‘taste/test’. This meaning is directly continued in Gk. *γεύομαι*, Hitt. *kukuš-* and Ved. *joṣ-*, although this last has mainly developed via ‘taste and enjoy’ to ‘enjoy’. Significantly in Latin itself the indubitable reflexes of this root mean ‘taste’: *gustus* ‘taste’, *gustare* ‘to taste’, *degustare* ‘to take a taste of’, *degunere* ‘to taste’.¹⁰ In fact the meaning ‘choose’ is found with certainty solely in Germanic and Celtic.¹¹ In Germanic it is evidently a recent development since Go. *kiusan* still means ‘test’ translating Gk. *δοκιμάζω*. In OIr. the meaning ‘choose’ is only found in the compound verbs *do-goa* and *as-gú*. There is no simplex attested.¹² Of course, the change from ‘taste’ to ‘select’ seems like a plausible one and certainly did happen in nearby languages, but the fact remains that Italic has no trace of such a meaning and instead has evidence that the root remained faithful to its original sense.

6. A second issue, first pointed out by Jerzy Linderski, is that the meaning ‘bird(-omen) selector’ does not provide a very good starting point for the meaning of the derivative *augurium*.¹³ Evidently, *augurium* is an *-iǵo-* derivative of the base noun *augur* and hence should originally have meant ‘that of the augur’. Cf. *auspicium* <— *auspex*. If *augur* meant ‘bird(omen) selector’ then *augurium* should originally have meant ‘selection of the birds’, but that is certainly not what *augurium* means nor is every likely to have meant. Contrary to Neumann, who follows Rubino, the idea that *augurium* meant ‘interpretation of signs’ as Linderski says “lacks any foundation”.¹⁴ One must admit that this problem

⁷ See NEUMANN 1976, who also gives a good survey of ancient and modern precursors of his analysis. Paul. *Fest.* p. 2L and Serv. *A.* 5.523 both connected the second half with *gero*. Paul. *Fest.* p. 2L offered an alternative explanation (*ab avium garritu*) and Suet. *Aug.* 7 offers three possibilities: *ab auctu, vel ab avium gestu gustave*.

⁸ POTT 1861:840–3.

⁹ See on the possible Indo-Iranian evidence KELLENS 1974:86–7 and SCARLATA 1999:166–8.

¹⁰ *degunere* : *degustare* (*Fest.* p. 63L).

¹¹ And possibly Hitt. *kūša-* ‘bride’ if from **ǵheuso-* ‘the chosen one’ as suggested by WEEKS 1985:32.

¹² See Schumacher 2004:356–7. On OIr. *gus* ‘force’, which does not belong here, but instead with the root **ǵheu-* ‘pour’ see GARCÍA RAMÓN 2006:86–91.

¹³ LINDERSKI 1986:2291.

¹⁴ LINDERSKI 1986:2291.

might also be soluble since one could argue that *augurium* simply nominalizes whatever the *augur*'s key rite eventually became. Yet it is less than optimal that this etymology does not illuminate the crucial and distinctive aspects of the concept of *augurium*.

7. A third objection is conclusive: the Pott-Neumann etymology does not permit any coherent account of the connection between *augur* and the adjective *augustus*. That which is *augustus* has been made *sanctus* through an act of augury. This is most clearly stated by Suet. *Aug.* 7. *quod loca quoque religiosa et in quibus augurato quid consecratur augusta dicantur*.¹⁵ It is hard to see how *augustus* could be directly derived from the agent noun *augur* and for that reason Neumann simply does not include *augustus* in his account. He appears to doubt that there is any connection between *augur* and *augustus* although he nowhere explicitly states what his view about *augustus* is.¹⁶ An account that operates with an **augus* and an **augusto-* that have nothing to do with each other etymologically is very costly.

8. The second major school of thought connects *augur* with the verb *augeo* 'increase'. This idea also goes back to antiquity and was given its first formulation by Ovid (*Fast.* 1.609–12):

Sancta uocant 'augusta' patres: 'augusta' uocantur
Templa, sacerdotum rite dicata manu:
Huius et 'augurium' dependet origine verbi,
Et quodcumque sua Iuppiter auget ope.

The fathers call *sancta* 'augusta': Temples when properly dedicated by the priests' hand are called *augusta*. The word *augurium* also comes from the root of this word and whatever Jupiter increases with his strength.

It was W. Corssen who revived this idea in modern times,¹⁷ but his particular formulation—the *augur* is 'the increaser', i.e. the one who offers the *augmentum* 'additional sacrifice'—has not convinced many, since the *augur* is not closely connected with sacrifice per se. In 1892 Zimmermann suggested that *augur* was originally a neuter *s-*stem 'das Mehren, Segnen' cognate with Vedic *ójas-* 'strength' and in parallel fashion to *Uenus* < **uenus* 'charm' (= Ved. *vánas-*) had been personified as 'der Segnende'.¹⁸

9. One might call this the standard view today. The connection of *augur* with *ójas-* is endorsed, for example, in Michiel de Vaan's recent etymological dictionary just as it was in Walde and Hoffmann and Ernout and Meillet.¹⁹ But there are still a number of issues

¹⁵ See VALETON 1892:341 who, however, argues that *sanctus* was the original word for this meaning.

¹⁶ This can be inferred from his comment (1976:221): "An Potts Deutung bleibt zu bemängeln, dass er ohne nähere Prüfung die Verwandtschaft von *augur* und *augustus* als gegeben annahm."

¹⁷ CORSSSEN 1854:271.

¹⁸ ZIMMERMANN 1892: 436, but note that Benfey already compared *ójas-* and **augus* inferred from *augustus* in 1848:40.

¹⁹ DE VAAN 2008:62; WALDE-HOFFMANN 82; ERNOUT-MEILLET 56.

that are unresolved. First, if *augur* really descends from a PIE neuter *s*-stem **h₂eugos* exactly matching *ójas-* why does it not decline like other inherited neuter *s*-stems of the *genus, generis* type? Second, if *augur* really began life as a simple neuter *s*-stem how has it become a masculine term for a person? Third, what exactly is the semantic link between the root **h₂eug-* and its *s*-stem derivative and *augur*?

10. If Latin inherited a reflex of **h₂eugos* one would expect in the first instance:

NA **augos*
 G **augeses*
 D **augesei*

and after rhotacism and raising of *e* and *o* to *i* and *u* before final *s*:

NA **augus*
 G **augeris*
 D **augerei*

This would have been the expected paradigm ca. 300 BCE if there had been no analogical remodelings. It is usually assumed, however, that somewhere along the way the paradigm of **augos* leveled the *e/o*-suffixal ablaut in favor of *o* yielding:

NA **augos*
 G **augoris*
 D **augorei*

Subsequently by progressive vowel assimilation **augoris* etc. became *auguris*. As a parallel the case of *fulgur, fulguris* is usually invoked.²⁰ This scenario, however, is not entirely unproblematic. First—unlike *fulgur* where a nonassimilated *fulgor-* is attested—there is no evidence for **augor-*. Second, and more importantly, assimilation of vowel nucleus to vowel nucleus, which is evidently required for *fulgur* (as well as *sulpur-* and probably *guttur-*, *murmur-*, and *furfur-*) is not necessarily evidence that a rounded glide in a coda would necessarily have the same effect. There is at any rate no precise parallel for this development.

²⁰ LEUMANN 1977:379.

11. One certainly could be content with this hypothesis if there were not an additional issue. The hypothesized starting point **augos* was a neuter and presumably a verbal abstract. How did this end up as a masculine name for a person? There is of course a well-known set of “parallels” which are normally invoked, but none of them is genuinely parallel. The supposed examples are *Uenus*, *flāmen*, *ūber*, and *uetus*. *Uenus* is undoubtedly a case of pure non-morphological transfer of an original neuter attested in Ved. *vānas-* to an animate, but a goddess of love is a personification of the force of love itself and this is not parallel to the case of an abstract becoming the name of a religious functionary. The case of *flāmen* is somewhat ambiguous because there is no truly convincing etymology. It is probable, however, that we are dealing with a *-men* stem, yet nothing prevents us from assuming a hysterokinetic form comparable to Ved. *brahmān-*. The fate of a long vowel before a final *-n* in a polysyllable is unknown and even if it were demonstrable that the quantity would be maintained, it is quite probable that such a form would have joined the much larger class of nominatives in *-men*. The adjective *ūber* ‘rich’ may simply be an *i*-stem derivative of *ūber* ‘udder’. Finally, the case of *uetus* is a true parallel, but not in the way usually conceived, and I will postpone discussion of it until later.

12. A second point, which is usually marshaled in support of the direct neuter origin of *augur*, argues rather against this analysis. There undoubtedly was a neuter noun *augur-*, which is directly attested in a line of Accius (*Telephus*, *trag.* 624 R):

pro certo arbitrabor sortis, oracula, ἀδύτους, *augura?* (tr⁷)

But from context this form does not mean ‘augurs’ but ‘augury’, in the nontechnical sense. Cf. Nonius’ introductory comment: *augura pro auguria Accius Telepho*. True Lachmann thought that this was an example of the very rare—probably nonexistent—metrical suppression of yod, but *augura* is transmitted twice without an *i*, unlike the supposed parallels cited by Lachmann.²¹ Such a neuter **augus* in the meaning *augurium* is precisely what is needed to explain *augustus*, which, as Servius (*A.* 7.153) noted, means *augurio consecrat[us]*. If **augus* meant *augurium* then *augus-to-* should have meant ‘provided with *augus*’, i.e. and act of *augurium*, which is just what the word is said to mean.

13. Before we turn to the third point (the connection of *augur* and **h₂eug-*) let us briefly examine the other side of the supposed word equation. Vedic *ójas-* has been the subject of a number of detailed examinations most famously by Gonda and Dumezil.²² Gonda’s position is not very clear, but Dumezil’s view is both clear and convincing: primarily, *ójas-* means ‘might’ and is a characteristic of the *kṣatriya varṇa* and its gods, i.e. in Dumezil’s terms *ójas-* is associated with the second function. The most explicit formulation of this view can be found at AitB 8.2 where it is said that the word *ójas-* is the

²¹ LACHMANN 1855:129. Furthermore, the phenomenon identified by Lachmann based on the apparent scansion of *oriundi* as *~ – –* Lucr. 2.991 (*denique caelesti sumus omnes semine oriundi*) is itself highly suspect. In the light of ORVNDI/ORVNDIS both attested on a 1st cent. BCE inscription from Moniego di Noale it seems probable that Lucretius wrote *semine orundi*. See BUCHI 1996 for the inscription and CAVARZERE 1996 for the discussion of the metrical evidence. Such a form could be explained as deradical rather than deprential.

²² DUMEZIL 1969:95.

symbol of lordly power (*tat kṣatrasya rūpam*) and the *rājanya* is might, lordly power and strength (*ojah kṣatram vīryam rājanyas*).²³ But Dumézil offers a more specific analysis. According to him *ójas-* is “le plein de ce qui conditionne l’acte du champion ou du combattant, le plein de force musculaire.” That is *ójas-* is strength *in posse*. Given the generally assumed proto-meaning of **h₂eug-* ‘increase’ Dumézil argues *ójas-* is a result noun meaning “the strength that results from one or more acts of augmentation.”²⁴ Armed with this account of the Vedic facts, Dumézil then turns to Latin. According to the great scholar the Latin *augura* are “the signs of the fullness of force”. The *augur* then is the one who reveals these signs in a person or place. It is worth pointing out a methodological flaw: Dumézil’s internal analysis of the semantics of *ójas-* depends on specifically Indo-Iranian developments. Only Indo-Iranian has evidence for the meaning ‘strength’ but Dumézil not only projects that meaning back to Proto-Indo-European, but imports it into Latin.²⁵

14. Thus the standard account has one or more problems, depending on how one counts: the supposed starting point, a neuter *s*-stem **h₂eugos* does not easily explain the form, the gender, or the meaning of Lat. *augur*.

15. Let us return to the case of *uetus* touched upon above. The standard view of *uetus* is that this is simply the PIE neuter *s*-stem for ‘year’ (Gk. (ϕ)ἔτος) which has simply become the adjective ‘old’. There have been various workarounds to explain how this might have happened, but none of them is convincing.²⁶ Szemerényi long ago noted the perfect semantic match with Lith. *vėtušas* and OCS *vetūxŭ* ‘old’,²⁷ but contra Szemerényi there is no plausible way of deriving Lat. *uetus* from an *o*-stem. In 1986 Alan Nussbaum offered a morphologically straightforward way of accounting for the various data. Nussbaum hypothesized that a *u*-stem adjective **uetu-* ‘old’ made an *s*-stem derivative **uetus* ‘old’ whence Lat. *uetus* and a substantivized neuter **uetus* ‘oldness’, which served as the basis for further derivation, **uetus-to-* ‘old’ or **uetus-o-* ‘old’. Cf. Ved. *tápu-* ‘hot’ → *tápuṣ* ‘hot’ and ‘heat’.²⁸ It is true that there is no direct evidence for a *u*-stem **uetu-*, which led Nussbaum to consider the account speculative, but we may at least point to evidence that the stem of *uetus*, *ueteris* probably does continue an earlier **uetus-* and this is of course the famous gentilic FETVSIA from the Bernardini tomb in Praeneste (ca. 650 BCE). The Latinity of this inscription has been vindicated numerous times²⁹ and given its date the *u* of the second syllable can only be an original *u*. The at least synchronic connection of *Uetusio-* with ‘old’ is supported by the myth and rite of *Mamurius Ueturius*, the incarnation of the old year.³⁰

²³ See SMITH 1994:51–2.

²⁴ But note that Dumézil’s analysis relies crucially on the result noun status of *ójas-* to account for the new meaning ‘strength’. Yet the same basic meaning is found also in the adjective *ugrá-*.

²⁵ Note that an *s*-stem in the meaning ‘growth’ is inferable from Lith. *augestis* ‘growth’. To my knowledge the meaning ‘be strong’—contra MORANI 1984—is nowhere directly attested for this root outside of Indo-Iranian.

²⁶ See BENVENISTE 1948 for one well-known attempt.

²⁷ SZEMERÉNYI 1951:204–5.

²⁸ NUSSBAUM 1986:146.

²⁹ PROSDOCIMI 1980, HARTMANN 2005:37–65.

³⁰ See USENER 1875:213.

16. From the purely formal point of view a similar scenario can account for the *augur* facts, and in fact the comparison of *uetus* and *augur* was first suggested by none other than Meillet.³¹ Suppose the root **h₂eug-* made a *u*-stem adjective **h₂eug-u-*. Such a form could serve as the basis for an *s*-stem derivative **h₂eug-u-s-*. This *s*-stem could then be specialized either as an abstract in the neuter or as an individualizing adjective in the masc. The former would be the source of n. *augus*, attested in Accius and the base of the adjective *augus-tus*. The latter would be the source of *augur* itself. The special character of the paradigm of *augur* can be the result of a straightforward leveling of the *u*-stem vowel throughout the entire paradigm. The absence of any trace of evidence for *o* is predicted. The lautgesetzlich outcome of the oblique is continued in the rare allomorph *auger-*.

17. This scenario would be much strengthened if one could point to clear evidence for a *u*-stem adjective. And in fact an apparent *u*-stem adjective has long been known in Old Prussian *augus* (87.6). This form, a hapax, has not been above all suspicion. It occurs in the Abel Will's 1561 Old Prussian translation of Luther's Enchiridion in a description of the qualities of an ideal bishop. The original German requires the bishop to be "nicht geitzig", which is translated in the Old Lithuanian version of B. Vilentas (p. 39, l. 5) as *negodings* 'not greedy'. Thus *augus* appears to mean 'greedy'. Endzelins objected to the traditional connection of this form with **h₂eug-* on the grounds that the Baltic verb represented by Lith. *áugti* is exclusively intransitive and hence *augus* could not mean 'increasing (something)' but only 'growing'.³² I don't think this is a substantive argument since what the greedy man seeks to increase is precisely himself.³³

18. A second possible instance of a *u*-stem from our root has been posited by Kim McCone and Blanca Maria Prosper.³⁴ In the 1st Botorrita inscription we find *soz auku arestalo tamai*. This clause comes immediately after a list of prohibited actions and before a specification of the penalty for violators. Both scholars have independently identified *augu* as a neuter *u*-stem adjective predicated to *soz* < **sod*. McCone translates "that (set up) is inviolate for Arestalos'/the president's followers" and Prosper "lo que precede es firme por orden del magistrato competente." McCone's view seems problematic in that it is not clear why the followers of the president would be singled out as the persons for whom the law was inviolate. Isn't the law supposed to apply automatically to an entire subject community? McCone's parallel HONC LOVCOM NEQVIS VIOLATOD "Let *no one* violate this grove" shows exactly why I don't find McCone's precise formulation convincing. Prosper's view is preferable but I think could also be elaborated in a potentially interesting direction. According to most scholars, including Prosper, the first sentence of Botorrita

³¹ Apud ERNOUT 1921:238.

³² ENDZELINS 1942:115. See also TOPOROV 1975:147–8 for a summary of other views on *augus*.

³³ Some Lithuanian evidence is sometimes cited in support of this form, e.g. *augus* and *augumas* 'growth, stature' = Latv. *augums* 'id.', but given the productivity of adjectival *u*-stems and the suffix *-umas* in that language these cannot be judged conclusive.

³⁴ MCCONE 2003:171–2. PROSPER 2008:34–8. Incidentally McCone's comparison of Celtiberian *auku* with Old Irish *óg* 'whole, complete, intact, inviolate' can be supported by the development of Latv. *augš*, which in combination with a time words means 'complete, whole', e.g. *augu dienu* 'the livelong day'. See MÜHLENBACH-ENDZELINS 1953:217.

tirikantam berkunetam tokoitoskue sarnikiokue sua kombalkez nelitom gives the authorizing statement for the restrictions. Thus the statement *soz auku arestalo tamai* is an authorizing confirmation of a proposal already put forward by another body. Opinions are divided on the overall nature of the Botorrita text. Some maintain that the text is a *lex sacra*, others that it is a profane compact of some sort. In either case the essential point of the first set of prohibitions of Botorrita I is to set off a piece of territory from ordinary economic exploitation. If the text is a *lex sacra* then the sentence in question could refer to the authorization of the just described set up by religious sanction, i.e. the sentence describes the “inauguration” of the relevant piece of territory. In accordance with this view *arestalo* need not be a political official but could also be a religious one. The metaphor of the priest as the ‘one who stands in front’ is quite well established. Cf. Pael. *pristafalacirix* and Lat. *antistes* ‘one who has charge of religious rites’ and, above all, Lat. *praestes* of which Paulus ex Festo p. 250L tells us *in eadem significatione dicebant antiqui, qua nunc dicimus antistitem*.

Alternatively, in a purely profane context the sentence could be interpreted, as Prosper does, as a ratification of some proposal of a general body by some additional authority. Whichever account is ultimately preferred, they both bring to mind the Italic implementation of the root **h₂eug-*. The religious interpretation brings us into the field of the *augur*, but the profane interpretation calls to mind the Latin *auctor*, or Umbrian **uhtur**. Particularly noteworthy are the *patres auctores* of early Rome who conferred *auctoritas* on a popular motion.³⁵

19. It is now necessary to address the question of the exact semantic pathway between **h₂eug-* and *augur*. The Latin descendent of the root in question has been subject to a famous analysis by Benveniste, which I myself have endorsed in earlier work, but which in fact is incorrect.³⁶ Benveniste claimed that *augeo* in the earliest texts did not mean “to increase, make something *which existed before* bigger” but instead “the act of producing from within itself; a creative act which causes something to arise from a nutrient medium and which is the privilege of the gods or the great natural forces but not of men.” In support of this view Benveniste cites two passages from Lucretius. The first occurs at 5.322 but it is useful to examine the broader context (318–323):

Denique iam tuere hoc, circum supraque quod omnem
 continet amplexu terram: si procreat ex se
 omnia, quod quidam memorant, recipitque perempta,
 totum natium mortali corpore constat.
 nam quodcumque³⁷ alias ex se res auget alitque
 deminui debet, recreari, cum recipit res.

Here Lucretius is arguing for the mortality of the sky (*hoc circum supraque quod omnem/ continet amplexu terram*). The argument goes that if the sky creates all things from itself (*si procreat ex se/ omnia*) as some (possibly Aristotle and Theophrastus) maintain, it suffers changes of decrease (when it causes something to grow) and increase (when it

³⁵ See my discussion of this in connection with **uhtur** at WEISS 2010:87.

³⁶ Benveniste’s views have been criticized by BELARDI 1995:146 and BETTINI 2005:250.

³⁷ HOUSMAN apud HABER 1956:387: *quomcumque*.

receives the matter back into itself). First of all, this passage can hardly be taken to illustrate Old Latin usage. Further, it is not evident that *auget* means ‘creates’ here. In fact, what is being described is a zero-sum event: what matter *caelum* re-attributes to another entity is subtracted from itself only to be reabsorbed when the entity perishes. But more importantly, the Lucretius passage is closely modeled on a passage from a truly Old Latin author Pacuvius (*Chryses* 86–7, 89, 90–2 R):

Hoc uide, circum supraque quod complexu continet
terram.

...

Id quod nostri caelum memorant, Grai perhibent aethera

...

quidquid est hoc, omnia animat, format, alit, auget, creat,
sepelit recipitque in sese omnia, omniumque idemst pater,
Indidemque eadem aequae oriuntur, de integro atque eodem occidunt.

In the crucial line of Pacuvius we see that *caelum*’s contributions to life are more finely delineated. It creates all things, and it makes them increase.

The fact is that a survey of the use of *augere* in Old Latin does not show that the word means ‘create’, but simply ‘increase’ *tr.* In a literal sense it means add to a pre-existing entity. This addition can be in kind in discreet units,³⁸ or in a gradient fashion (often of wealth).³⁹ A thing may be *auctus* by an event or activity, which does not add in kind, but adorns, supports, or favors the pre-existing entity. This may be a concrete thing like an altar,⁴⁰ or it may be something more abstract such as a friendship,⁴¹ or an individual’s spirit.⁴² The gods may be on occasion the source of this favor,⁴³ but the thing *auctus* can also be, and quite often is, a negative.⁴⁴ A particularly interesting idiom is the

³⁸ Pl. *Am.* 307: *metuo ne numerum augeam illum.* (Sosia fears he will be added to the four others Mercury claims to have robbed); Pl. *Mos.* 19: *augebis ruri numerum, genus ferratile* (Grumio predicts that Tranio will be shipped to the country to join the slaves there); Pl. *Per.* 474-5: *qui Atticam hodie ciuitatem/ maximam maiorem feci atque auxili ciui femina.* (Dordalus increased the number of Athenian citizens by manumitting a servant).

³⁹ Pl. *Mer.* 48: *lacerari ualide suam rem, illius augerier;* Pl. *Ps.* 1128: *boni me uiri pauperant, improbi augent* (The pimp Ballio profits from spendthrifts); Pl. *Capt.* 768: *Iuppiter supreme, seruas me measque auges opes* (The parasite Ergasilus exults in the good fortune his news will bring him); Gracch. *orat.* 41 *ut uectigalia uestra augeatis.* Cf. Pl. *Am. Pro.* 6 *bonoque atque amplo auctare perpetuo lucro.* Possibly belonging here is Pl. *Cist.* 200: *augete auxilia uostris iustis legibus.*

⁴⁰ Pl. *Mer.* 675–6: *Aliquid cedo/qui hanc uicini nostri aram augeam.* (Dorippa wants to adorn the altar with a laurel branch).

⁴¹ Ter. *An.* 987a-988a *sed amicitia nostra quae est a patribus nostris tradita/ nobis, aliquam partem studui adauctam tradi liberis* (Acts of kindness strengthen a friendship inherited from ancestors to be passed on to children).

⁴² Pl. *St.* 303–4: *bene facta maiorum meum/ exaugeam atque illam augeam insperato opportuno bono.* (Pinacium will add to the deeds of his ancestors by this good deed and will cheer his mother by his good news of his father’s return.) Cf. Ter. *Hau.* 232: *concurrunt multae opiniones quae mihi animum exaugeant.*

⁴³ Pl. *Epid.* 192: *di, hercle, omnes me adiuuant, augent, amant.*

⁴⁴ Pl. *As.* 280: *inimicum animos auxerit;* Ter. *Hau.* 435: *ne tua duritia antiqua illa etiam adaucta sit;* Pl. *Capt.* 782: *tanto mi aegritudo auctior est in animo;* Pl. *St.* 55: *Scio, atque in cogitando maerore augeor;* Ter. *Eu.* 436: *immo auge mage suspicionem;* Ter. *Ad.* 145–6: *si augeam/ aut etiam adiutor siem eius iracundiae;* Ter. *Hec.* 334: *morbis qui auctus sit;* Acc. *trag.* 109: *multi iniquo...animo sibi mala auxere in malis.*

use of *augeo*, especially the participle *auctus*, in reference to an addition to the family unit through birth.⁴⁵ This idiom was something of a formula still used by Cicero (Cic. *Att.* 1.2.1 *filiolo me auctum scito*) and the subject of occasional parody.⁴⁶ The inchoative has a similar sphere of usage with both positive and negative increase, but without expression of external agency.⁴⁷

20. Outside of Italic the cognates with the least additional derivational morphology show that the root **h₂eug-* was intransitive (Goth. *fraujins laiseins aukandei Sk.* 4.11; Jesus's doctrine increases; *Th.* 4.1 *gaaukaiþ mais* translates Gk. *περισσεύητε* (Paul hopes the Thessalonians will behave as he tells them so that they will thrive more.) In the Old Lithuanian of the Wolfenbüttel *Postilla* (1573) and Vilentas's version of the New Testament (1579) *augti* consistently translates Latin *cresco*.⁴⁸

21. Given the clear evidence of Baltic and Germanic, it is probable that the Latin forms of *augeo* owe their transitivity to the causative present-stem-forming suffix. In this light the form *auctor* and its probable Umbrian cognate **uhtur** present an interesting morphological question. Proto-Indo-European seems not to have made agent nouns to unaccusative verbs like 'grow', i.e. the suffix **-ter/*-tor* was not capable of adding an external agent to a verb of this class. This means that *auctor* must be derived from the Italic transitive present. In Latin second conjugation verbs agent nouns in *-tor* agree formally with the past participle, e.g. *monitor* ~ *monitus*, *tonsor* ~ *tonsus* and thus *auctor* ~ *auctus*.⁴⁹ Now Lat. *auctus* could be by syncope from **augetos*, but it seems that a theoretical **augetos* would probably have given an Umbrian †*oito-* (cf. **aitu** < **agetōd*) whence †*oitur* not the attested *ohtur/uhtur*. This suggests to me that the past participle on which the agent was based was already **aukto-* in Proto-Italic. Such a form points to a surviving *to-* verbal adjective **aukto-*, built directly to the root, meaning '(having) grown', that simply filled in for the past participle of *augeo*, since '(having) grown' and 'having been increased' are virtually synonymous.

22. We are now finally in a position to make an adequate evaluation of the semantic prehistory of *augur*. The *u-*stem **h₂eug-u-* reflected by Old Prussian and Celtiberian should have meant originally 'grown, increased'. Such a *u-*stem adjective would fit well within the structure of PIE *u-*stem adjectives, which typically occur in antonymic pairs

⁴⁵ Pl. *Rud.* 1207: *quom (Lares familiares) auxerunt nostram familiam*; Pl. *Truc.* 384: *cum tu es aucta liberis*; Pl. *Truc.* 516: *quomque es aucta liberis*. It is noteworthy that the past participle of the Germanic cognate (OE *eacen*, etc.) is often used in the sense 'pregnant'.

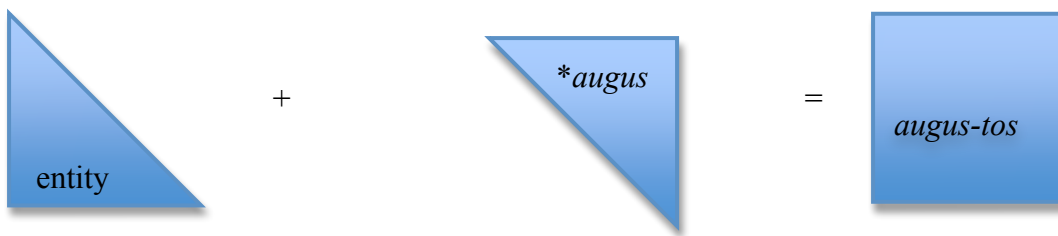
⁴⁶ Pl. *Per.* 484: *iam liberta auctu's?*; Ter. *Hau.* 628: *domina ego, erus damno auctus est*.

⁴⁷ Naev. *poet.* 33 (54): *fames acer augescit hostibus*; Ter. *Hau.* 423–4: *nam mihi quidem cotidie augescit magis/ de filio aegritudo, et quanto diutius*; Cat. *orat.* 162: *superbiam et ferociam augescere*; Enn. *Ann.* 495 Sk: *qui rem Romanam Latiumque augescere uultis*; Cat. *hist.* 20: *eo res eorum auxi*.

⁴⁸ Wolfenbüttel *Postilla* 1573 107r.26–7: *kurami wijsakias budawaghimas auga*. Cf. Eph. 2.21 *in quo omnis aedificatio constructa crescit*. The same line is translated by Vilentas as *ant kurio cielas budawoghimas šutaikyts aug*. Matth. 6.28 (*considerate lilia agri quomodo crescent*) is translated *Darbokiteši ant liliju lauka kaip anks aug* and Coloss. 1.10 (*crecentes in scientia Dei*) as *augket pašintije Diewa*. Latvian also has 'grow' intr. as the primary meaning of *aūgt*, e.g. in the saying *suns aug, zuobi aug* 'a son grows, teeth grow'. See MÜHLENBACH-ENDZELINS 1953:220.

⁴⁹ On *auctor* there is a huge literature. See most recently BETTINI 2005, BELARDI 1995, MASTRELLI 1984, ROCCA 2003.

describing physical qualities. **h₂eug-u-* would be a perfect antonym to **mei(h_x)u-* ‘diminished, small’ (Myc. *me-u-jo*, etc.) from **meih_x-* ‘diminish’.⁵⁰ As we have seen above, the concept of growth or increase often develops positive connotations, presumably since the unmarked cases of growth (plants, babies, etc.) are typically regarded as good things.⁵¹ The *s*-stem **h₂eug-u-s-* meant ‘the increase’ or ‘the growth’ a derivative exactly parallel to **tepu-s-* <— *tep-u-* or **uet-u-s-* from **uet-u-*. As a neuter **h₂eug-u-s-* became an abstract ‘(positive) increase’. This is the neuter **augus* reflected in Accius’s *augura* and *augus-tus*. In the *inauguratio*, the action uniquely performed by the augurs, a person or place is proposed for divine approval. If the correct signs are received, then that individual or place has undergone a permanent transfer to a different and superior sacral state, the state of being *augustus*.⁵² The positive sign is **augus*. Thus we may sketch the essence of *inauguratio* as:



The form **augus* as a masculine, given the model of *uetus*, should have been endocentric to the underlying *u*-stem adjective and therefore have meant ‘the increased’. This could be interpreted to mean that the one who received these signs of increase (the *augur*) was himself favored, as in the case of Romulus, *rex* and *augur* (Cic. *Div.* 1.3; 30; 107). In other cases the *augur* was a conduit for transferring the increase. Hence the necessity of *contactus* with the *inaugurandus*.⁵³ This passive and translational account of the *augur* seems preferable to an active reading (the increaser) since the *augur* does not cause the increase, which is sent by the gods, but merely observes its presence and directs the favor to its appropriate goal. The *augures* were, as Cicero (*Phil.* 12.5.12) remarked, *Iovis optimi maximi ... interpretes internuntiique*.

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⁵⁰ See LAMBERTERIE 1990:33.

⁵¹ For an examination of the positive evaluation of growth in the nexus of political and social development see GARCÍA RAMÓN’s 2009 discussion of *da-mo-ko-ro* etc.

⁵² LINDERSKI 1986:2290, 2295–6.

⁵³ See LINDERSKI 1986:2290 on *contactus* in inauguration, which is both legal (deictic), as Catalano thought, and sacral.

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