

## Hercules, Cacus, and an Ennian contest of auguries in *Aeneid* 8

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### 1. Verg. *Aen.* 8.230-235 – Hercules and Cacus on the lofty Aventine

*ter totum fervidus ira* 230  
*lustrat Aventini montem, ter saxea temptat*  
*limina nequiquam, ter fessus valle resedit.*  
*stabat acuta silex praecisis undique saxis*  
*speluncae dorso insurgens, altissima visu,*  
*dirarum nidis domus opportuna volucrum.* 235  
*hanc, ut prona iugo LAEVUM incumbibat ad amnem,*  
*DEXTER in adversum nitens concussit et imis*  
*avulsam solvit radicibus*

Three times, frothing with rage, he encircles the Aventine mount; three times he tests the rocky threshold in vain; three times, wearied, he **sits down** in the valley. Rising up above the cave's ridge was a protruding crag, with rocks cut all around it, highest to see, a fitting home for the nests of inauspicious birds. This, as it leaned with its ridge sloping toward **the river on its LEFT**, he shook, pressing against it from the **RIGHT** and, when it had been wrenched from its deepest roots, he dislodged it.

### 2. Enn. *Ann.* 74-76 (Sk.) – Romulus and Remus on the lofty Aventine

*In monte Remus auspicio sedet atque secundam*  
*Solus avem servat. at Romulus pulcer in alto*  
*QUAERIT Aventino, servat genus alti volantum.*

On a hill Remus **sits** for the auspices, **looking** alone for a favorable **bird**. But handsome Romulus **MAKES INQUIRY** on the lofty Aventine, and **looks** for the race of **high-fliers**.

### 3. Verg. *Aen.* 8.210-212 – Hercules the seeker

*cauda in speluncam tractos versisque viarum*  
*indiciis raptor saxo occultabat opaco;*  
*QUAERENTI nulla ad speluncam signa ferebant.*

The thief dragged them by the tail into the cave and, with their path turned around, he concealed them in the rocky darkness. They thus revealed to **ANYBODY** **SEARCHING** for them no signs leading to the cave.

### 4. Serv. *ad Aen.* 7.657 – Aventine-dwelling Tiber birds

*Aventinus mons urbis Romae est, quem constat ab*  
*avibus esse nomi natum, quae de Tiberi ascendentes*  
*illic sedebant, ut in octavo legimus “dirarum nidis*  
*domus opportuna volucrum”*

The Aventine is a hill in the city of Rome, whose name it is agreed comes from the word for “birds,” which settle there after flying up from the **Tiber**, just as we read in the eighth book: “a fitting home for the nests of inauspicious birds”

### 5. Enn. *Ann.* 84-89 (Sk.) – Light out of darkness

*Interea sol albus recessit in infera noctis.*  
*Exin candida se radiis dedit icta foras lux* 85  
*Et SIMUL ex alto longe pulcherrima praepes*  
*LAEVA volavit avis. SIMUL aureus exoritur sol*  
*Cedunt de caelo ter quattuor corpora sancta*  
*Avium, praepetibus sese pulcrisque locis dant.*

In the meantime the white **sun** withdrew into the depths of night. Then there shot forth a **light**, struck out in rays, and **THEN** from the height a bird flew out from the **LEFT**, a most beautiful prophetic bird. And **THEN** as the golden **sun** rose there fell from the sky thrice four sacred bodies of birds, and they took themselves to the most prophetic and beautiful places.

**6. Verg. *Aen.* 8.241-249 – Light into darkness**

*at specus et Caci detecta apparuit ingens  
regia, et umbrosae penitus patuere cavernae,  
non secus ac si qua penitus vi terra dehiscens  
infernās reseret sedes et regna recludat  
pallida, dis invisā, superque immane barathrum* 245  
*cernatur, trepident immisso lumine Manes.  
ergo insperata deprensū luce REPENTE  
inclusumque cavo saxo atque insueta rudentem  
desuper Alcides telis premit*

But the cave of Cacus—his huge palace—  
uncovered, stood open; deep below, the shadowy  
caverns lay open, just as if by some force the earth,  
gaping open deep below, were to unlock the infernal  
homes and reveal the pallid kingdoms— hateful to  
the gods—and from above the vast abyss were to be  
seen. The ghosts tremble at the intruding **light**.  
Then, from above, Hercules hurls missiles at Cacus,  
who is seized ALL OF A SUDDEN by the unexpected  
**light** and shut up within the hollow rock, roaring  
such things as he never has before.

**7. Aul. Gell. *NA* 7.6.10 – *praepes* vs. *infera***

*Discrepat dextra sinistrae, praepes inferae*

Right is the opposite of left, as *praepes* is the  
opposite of *infera*

**8. Verg. *Aen.* 7.655-663 – Hercules, Aventinus, and Rhea (Silvia?)**

*Post hos insignem palma per gramina currum* 655  
*victoresque ostentat equos satus Hercule pulchro  
pulcher Aventinus, clipeoque insigne paternum  
centum anguis cinctamque gerit serpentibus Hydram;  
collis Aventini SILVA quem RHEA sacerdos  
furtivum partu sub luminis edidit oras,* 660  
*mixta deo mulier, postquam Laurentia victor  
Geryone extincto Tiryntius attigit arva,  
Tyrrhenoque boves in flumine lavit Hiberas.*

After these, handsome Aventinus, born of handsome Hercules, presents on the grass his palm-wreathed chariot and victorious horses, and he carries on his shield his father's mark—one hundred snakes and the Hydra, surrounded with serpents. The priestess RHEA, a woman mated with a god, bore him in secret birth into the borders of **light** in the THICKETS of the Aventine hill, after the Tiryntian victor, having slain Geryon, reached the Laurentian fields and was bathing the Iberian cattle in the Tiber.

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