

## BOOK REVIEW

*Augustan Poetry and the Roman Republic*. Edited by JOSEPH FARRELL and DAMIEN P. NELIS. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. Pp. xi + 393. Hardcover, \$150.00. ISBN 978-0-19-958722-3.

The topic of “memory” has received much attention of late; Karl Galinsky’s project on *Memoria Romana*, funded by the Max-Planck-Gesellschaft, was perhaps the clearest example of institutional commitment to the theme, but engagement with the question of how Roman authors memorialized, massaged, and abridged the past has been a noteworthy focus of research over the past ten years. One of the ground-breaking works in this regard was that of Alain Gowing, *Empire and Memory: The Representation of the Roman Republic in Imperial Culture* (2005); in the course of an insightful series of readings of authors from Livy to Pliny (and beyond), Gowing pulled away from the collapse of the Republic chapter by chapter, demonstrating how different generations under the Empire presented the earlier era and its more controversial personalities.<sup>1</sup>

The new volume of Farrell and Nelis takes its ultimate inspiration from Gowing’s book; rather than follow the development of conceptions of the republic in the post-Augustan principate, however, its authors focus on the poetry of the Augustan period itself—an age both uncertain, at least in its early phases, of the permanence of the new regime and all too aware of the fact that something had changed.

Most readers will follow their own interests in perusing the fifteen papers, which originate from a 2007 conference held at the Fondation Hardt. They cover a significant amount of territory – Vergil’s oblique/allegorical references to history as interpreted by Servius (Maria Luisa Delvigo); considerations of the Augustan culture of remembrance and the treatment of the civil wars in Horace, Vergil, and Propertius (Jürgen Paul Schwindt); the historical relevance of Ovid’s allusions in the *Fasti* to the Temple of Concord (Joseph Farrell); the treatment of the Republican stories concerning the Fabii and the Claudii in the *Fasti* (Jacqueline Fabre-

<sup>1</sup> See also Gallia (2012) *Remembering the Roman Republic: Culture, Politics, and History under the Principate*, Cambridge.

Serris); the ways in which Republican history is prefigured in book 2 of the *Aeneid* (Philip Hardie); the post-Actium recouping of Bacchus in the *Aeneid* (Fiachra Mac Góráin); Caesar and Lucan's varying treatments of the taking of Marseilles in order to reflect the Caesarian assault in different ways (Jean-Christophe Jolivet); the use of Andromache and Vergilian memory in Baudelaire's *Le Cygne* (Joséphine Jacquier); late Republican/Augustan visions of the origins of Roman literature and their framing of the role of the earliest poets (Mario Citroni); the use of Roman history as national mythology in Horatian lyric (Mario Labate); the treatment of Numa and Romulus (Alain Deremetz); post-Actian references in Vergil's *Georgics* (Damien Nelis); the memories invoked by the relationship of Catullus 64 to *Eclogues* 4 (Gail Trimble); the undermining of the memory of Caesar by means of intertextual reminders in Vergil's works (Monica Gale); and republican overtones in the description of the house of *Fama* in *Metamorphoses* 12 (Bill Gladhill). The Introduction by the editors and the Afterword by Alain Gowing himself draw together the breadth of the volume well—these are essential reading in their own right and put forward a number of interesting questions.

Thus, while the editors took their cue from Gowing's book, the present volume's conception is both narrower and broader—narrower in the sense that it focuses mainly on Augustan poetic treatments of the republican past (with detours via Cicero, Varro, Lucan, Servius, and Baudelaire), broader in that it comprises a range of different approaches to the topic of remembering. Certain texts are treated on a number of occasions—Catullus 64 and the end of *Georgics* 1 are especially prominent in this regard—and this is no doubt as it should be.

I found particularly stimulating Labate's reconsideration of Fraenkel's view that history served as a form of mythology for the Augustan age (although both "history" and "mythology" require careful definition): this tallies with the Roman emphasis on exemplarity and with the fact that Roman poets were relatively uninterested in mythological cosmogony and the creation of humankind (with the exception of Ovid). One thing that certainly comes to the fore is the malleability of early Republican history, partly the result of the late appearance of Latin literature on the scene. Augustan poets, although they did not exactly have *carte blanche* in terms of their treatments of the early republic, were nevertheless unburdened by contemporary accounts of, for example, the fourth century bc and therefore had a great deal of latitude in describing it.

The volume opens up a number of avenues for further research, such as a deeper engagement with actual historical works and the rhetorical tradition (the

former are cited where appropriate and Jolivet makes good use of the latter): although the volume is dedicated to poetry, in many ways it is difficult to pry the poetic material away from the prose treatments that were also in circulation. Pollio, who had a complicated relationship with both the republic and what followed it, might have received more attention, possibly through Horace's poem to the historian (*Odes* 2.1). Moreover, one of the main figures of the early part of Gowing's book was Cicero himself; Velleius' coverage of the orator's murder is fascinating for its selectivity, and one anticipates further investigation of this event (or its absence) in the Augustan poets; the *Controversiae* and *Suasoriae* of Seneca the Elder, although themselves post-Augustan, preserve Augustan material on the topic, so the demise of this self-proclaimed symbol of the Republic was certainly in the air at the time.

In sum, the strength of the book derives from the way in which scholars working on a variety of themes have contributed to a topical debate. This volume will be of great value to those interested in the continuing discussion about the reflexes of the "Augustan republic" to the one that preceded it.

ANDREAS T. ZANKER

Heidelberg, andreas.zanker@uni-heidelberg.de