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Introduction to *Augustan Poetry and the Roman Republic*

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Abstract
A considerable body of recent scholarship has been devoted to investigating the ways in which societies remember, studying not only what they construct as memorable but also why and how they do so. Adopting a narrower focus, this volume examines the ways in which different aspects and images of the Roman Republic are created and exploited by the Augustan poets. Our subject immediately suggests two obvious strategies:- on the one hand, emphasis on a strictly historical project; on the other, concentration on versions of literary history. The latter has been more popular and influential in recent Latin scholarship, but the former has not been without its adherents, as the lively debate in recent historical research has fought over the value of ancient literary sources for reconstructing the early history of Rome and, crucially, for the origins of the Republic and the struggle of the orders. Simultaneously, recent work on Livy has provided strong support for a pre-Actian dating for the beginning of the composition of his history, and so has vastly improved our appreciation of the complexity and subtlety of this extraordinarily ambitious and influential historiographical project. In addition, more sophisticated readings of Roman historians in general that are themselves influenced by the application of New Critical techniques of dose reading developed by critics of poetic texts, have begun in turn to impinge on the ways in which the Latin poetry of the Augustan age is interpreted. Just as historical writers employ the materials of poetry and what we now call fiction-myth and metaphor, artful structuration, and the careful activation of intertextual possibilities involving models in both prose and verse-Augustan poets reveal their keen awareness of and interest in different historiographical modes, such as those of universal history, regal chronicles, and the tropes of annalistic writing. They are also interested in some of the characteristic themes and devices of historical writing, such as battle narrative, civil conflict, ethnography, speeches, and debates, even as they too engage intertextually with precise historiographical models in pointed and influential ways. The challenge for this volume, then, is not so much to ask whether the Augustan poets are concerned with Roman history, but to gain greater clarity with regard to the questions of how and to what end they may be seen as presenting their past as a specifically Republican history. In setting out to think about this vast topic, one which can only be treated in a highly selective manner in a book such as this, a series of obvious questions comes immediately to mind. Are there any particular aspects of the Republic that Augustan poets seem to remember with particular frequency and immediacy? Equally, are there any aspects they seem to prefer to forget? How do they shape the past in relation to the present: do they favour narratives of continuity, rupture, or repetition? What other forms of periodization do they adopt? And finally, how are we to define any given poet as 'Augustan'? Amidst such a bewildering array of questions, it seems advisable to attempt to seek some solid ground as a starting point.

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Introduction

JOSEPH FARRELL AND DAMIEN P. NELIS

A considerable body of recent scholarship has been devoted to investigating the ways in which societies remember, studying not only what they construct as memorable but also why and how they do so.[1] Adopting a narrower focus, this volume examines the ways in which different aspects and images of the Roman Republic are created and exploited by the Augustan poets. Our subject immediately suggests two obvious strategies: on the one hand, emphasis on a strictly historical project; on the other, concentration on versions of literary history. The latter has been more popular and influential in recent Latin scholarship, but the former has not been without its adherents, as the lively debate in recent historical research has fought over the value of ancient literary sources for reconstructing the early history of Rome and, crucially, for the origins of the Republic and the struggle of the orders.[2] Simultaneously, recent work on Livy has provided strong support for a pre-Actian dating for the beginning of the composition of his history, and so has vastly improved our appreciation of the complexity and subtlety of this extraordinarily ambitious and influential historiographical project.[3] In addition, more sophisticated readings of Roman historians in general that are themselves influenced by the application of New Critical techniques of close reading developed by critics of poetic texts, have begun in turn to impinge on the ways in which the Latin poetry of the Augustan age is

[1] For the Greek world see for example Grethlein 2010, Foxhall, Gehrke, and Luraghi 2011; for the Roman world, in addition to Gowing 2005, see Lyasse 2008 and the research project led by Galinsky: <http://www.utexas.edu/research/memoria/>. More broadly see for example Nora 1984, Assman 1992, Halbwachs 1992, Oexle 1995.

[2] For an outline of the debates see Cornell 1995: ch. 1.

[3] See for discussion Burton 2000. For a powerful demonstration of the ways in which Livy can now be read see Levene 2010.

interpreted.[4] Just as historical writers employ the materials of poetry and what we now call fiction—myth and metaphor, artful structuration, and the careful activation of intertextual possibilities involving models in both prose and verse—Augustan poets reveal their keen awareness of and interest in different historiographical modes, such as those of universal history, regal chronicles, and the tropes of annalistic writing. They are also interested in some of the characteristic themes and devices of historical writing, such as battle narrative, civil conflict, ethnography, speeches, and debates, even as they too engage intertextually with precise historiographical models in pointed and influential ways.[5] The challenge for this volume, then, is not so much to ask *whether* the Augustan poets are concerned with Roman history, but to gain greater clarity with regard to the questions of *how* and *to what end* they may be seen as presenting their past as a specifically Republican history. In setting out to think about this vast topic, one which can only be treated in a highly selective manner in a book such as this, a series of obvious questions comes immediately to mind. Are there any particular aspects of the Republic that Augustan poets seem to remember with particular frequency and immediacy? Equally, are there any aspects they seem to prefer to forget? How do they shape the past in relation to the present: do they favour narratives of continuity, rupture, or repetition? What other forms of periodization do they adopt? And finally, how are we to define any given poet as 'Augustan'? Amidst such a bewildering array of questions, it seems advisable to attempt to seek some solid ground as a starting point.

LOOKING BACK: THE SEARCH FOR 'THE BEGINNING'

It is characteristic of ancient and modern historical writing to emphasize the roots or causes of a historical process or event—in short, to identify

[4] In a broad sense the New Historicist movement of the 1980s and 1990s was largely responsible both for reintroducing historical consciousness into the field of literary study, which had for several decades mostly turned its back on history as an important factor in critical discourse, and also for exploring the role played by metaphoric, metonymic, and symbolic relationships in what had formerly been considered strictly historical subjects. Two exemplary early collections of essays that illustrate these aspects are Greenblatt 1988 and Veeser 1989. In Classics, Tony Woodman should be mentioned for pioneering the application of literary critical methods to historical texts and for playing a central role in creating dialogue between scholars of historiography and of poetry (in, e.g., Woodman and West 1974, 1979, and 1984; Woodman and Powell 1992; Woodman and Feeney 2002; see in addition Kraus, Marincola, and Pelling 2010).

[5] In addition to the works cited in the preceding note see especially Levene and Nelis 2002 and, more recently, Breed, Damon, and Rossi 2010; Miller and Woodman 2010; and Pausch 2010.

when it 'begins'. If we can identify the Augustan period with a time when one might conceive of the Republic as a thing of the past, when does this period begin? Alain Gowing's *Empire and Memory: The Representation of the Roman Republic in Imperial Culture*, a brilliant exploration of the ways in which memories of the Republic function in early Imperial literature, has illustrated the potential richness of this topic; but, crucially, Gowing begins his survey with the age of Tiberius. In doing so, in a manner which is of course deliberately reminiscent of the opening chapters of Tacitus' *Annals*, he underlines in the clearest possible fashion the liminal status of the Augustan period and the ways in which differing interpretations of its achievements depend on how we define it. At the very heart of any attempt to understand this period and its transitions must lie sensitivity to the Augustan negotiation of the tension between, on the one hand, a rhetoric based on idealizing myths of origins and the concept of restoration in a *res publica restituta* and, on the other, the presentation of the past as a period of endless civil war leading to the subsequent need for a radical renewal of the Roman political system.[6] It has long been recognized that literary texts can provide us with insights into these questions and into the realities and ideologies of the age. But for the literary scholar to exploit fully the potential of this line of enquiry, it is necessary to re-examine both what we think we know about the dating of key texts and some of the ways in which literary historians traditionally periodize Latin poetry, particularly, but not only, the division between Republican or Triumviral literature and Augustan. Several of the best-known and most influential works of Augustan poetry were produced in the 20s BC, which is to say, in the first decade after the Battle of Actium; and these reflect the overwhelming importance of Augustus' victories as confirming his pre-eminence.[7] In this sense, Actium would seem to serve as the essential point of transition between the end of Triumviral disorder and the inauguration of a new age. But representations of Actium in this period tend to forget that Augustus' real opponent in this battle was his fellow triumvir, Marcus Antonius—i.e. that Augustus' glorious victory was the decisive battle in a civil war. Instead of recalling this uncomfortable fact, monuments and poems insistently

[6] Recent contributions to the vast debates surrounding the nature of the Roman Republic, its periodizations, and the processes and transitions which led to its end can be found in Osgood 2006; Lobur 2008; Hurlet and Mineo 2009; Lange 2009; Flower 2010; Hölkeskamp 2010; and Cogitore 2011.

[7] Strictly speaking, of course, the name 'Augustus' should only be used when referring to events after 27 January BC; but for the difficulties involved in making and using such strict definitions see Damien Nelis's contribution to this volume.

allude to or name Cleopatra as the defeated party, converting Actium in memory into a victory over a foreign power.[8] In this as in other ways, the poets of the 20s seem eager to forget the recent past and to begin anew, even if the very concept of beginning anew seems inconsistent with that of a restored Republic, which itself makes sense only with reference to a period of civil disturbance and not to a foreign war.[9] But on the other hand, it is possible to argue that many elements often considered as hallmarks of 'Augustan' literary culture were actually very much in place in the poetry that was being produced several years before Actium. This is true whether we think primarily of social and semi-institutional elements, such as Maecenas' cultivation of an elite literary sodality, or of characteristic themes that these poets share, such as the idea of a golden age and the tendentious construction of literary genealogy, or, certainly, of the exacting standards of taste and refinement that these poets all exemplify. In all of these ways, if we focus on the careers of the poets rather than that of Augustus, we cannot ignore certain continuities between their pre- and post-Actian selves.[10] Just as a pre-Actian dating for Livy has highly important implications both for our understanding of the nature of his whole project and the true extent of his influence on contemporary literary production, so the recent dating of Propertius' first book to 33 BC has profound implications for attempts to come to terms with the political subtext of his entire corpus, the depth of its impact on Virgil, and the whole history of Roman elegy.[11]

Paradoxically, however, the end result of this approach may be that instead of making the 30s BC Augustan or proto-Augustan, it is in fact necessary to extend some of the associations of the term 'Triumviral' beyond the early 20s—certainly as far as 23, the year of the publication of Horace's *Odes*, perhaps even as far as 16, the year of Propertius' fourth book. In this way most of the poets usually described as Augustan—including Virgil, Tibullus, Horace, and Propertius—really belong in an important sense to the last generation of Republican Rome. What sets

[8] Thus the portico of the Apollo temple precinct on the Palatine, which in its Danaid sculptural programme and use of *giallo antico* marbles alludes to the defeated party as foreign, African, and specifically Egyptian. Similarly the spoliation and reuse of obelisks in the Circus Maximus and in the *horologium* in the Campus Martius. In poetry the key texts include Hor. *Carm.* 1.31 and 37; Prop. 2.31 and 4.6; and Virg. *Aen.* 8.675–728.

[9] Such 'forgetting' of the inconvenient Antonius might take the form of appropriating and redefining Antonian imagery against earlier Republican and Hellenistic precedents, as Fiachra Mac Góráin argues in his contribution to this volume.

[10] For example, on continuities between Virgil's responses to the figure of Julius Caesar in the pre- and post-Actian phases of his career, see Monica Gale's contribution to this volume.

[11] On Livy see Woodman 1989; on Propertius see Heslin 2010.

them apart from the previous generation of Catullus and Lucretius (and of Sallust, Pollio, and Cicero himself) is perhaps not a sense of foreboding that the inherited system could not maintain itself much longer, but a realization that some fundamental change was actually under way, the full import of which could not yet be predicted. This places the poets of the 30s and the 20s BC in a truly liminal position, perhaps making them the last voices of a waning era, with the result that from the traditional canon it is Ovid who becomes, as Fergus Millar has argued, the only truly Augustan poet.[12]

But of course it is always possible, and indeed vitally necessary, to view the Augustan period as both proto-Imperial and post-Republican; and here the range of opinions that one finds among political historians is instructive. No less an authority than *The Cambridge Ancient History* devotes an entire volume (X) to what it pointedly calls 'The Augustan Empire'. This volume begins, like Augustus' own account of his accomplishments in his *Res gestae*, with a young man's marshalling of a private army to avenge the murder of Julius Caesar in 43 BC and endures until the last of Caesar's nominal heirs is assassinated in AD 69. It is the previous volume (IX) of the same series that deals with 'The Last Age of the Roman Republic'; and in the preface to that volume (p.xv) one reads the following:

> In chapter 4, E. Gabba narrates the origins of the demand of Rome's Italian *socii* for admission to Roman citizenship and the 'Social War' of 91–89 BC by which, in the end, they achieved their demand, after which Rome was no longer a 'city state' and its citizen population was more widespread and differently constituted—events whose consequences were, arguably, the real 'Roman Revolution'.

Here the decisive change from Republic to Empire is dated not to some point within Augustus' own regime, nor even to those tumultuous events that set in motion his rise to power, but to a much earlier date and a very different sort of political event, one that appears superficially to represent consummately Republican values. In the Social War, Rome's Italian allies, frustrated in their desire to gain full citizen rights under the Republican system, formed their own Republic and went to war until the Romans acceded to their former allies' demands. The Italians, in other words, were unwilling to remain the subjects of an empire, even one administered by a republic. But by becoming citizens of that same republic, they in effect accomplished its transformation from an entity that could, even if with difficulty, govern itself by its ancestral constitution, into one in which the

[12] Millar 1993; 2000: 2.

effective value of citizenship was greatly diminished—a change so decisive that it deserves (or so it is argued) to be called 'the real Roman Revolution'.

Use of this phrase of course takes us back to an earlier stage of scholarship on this point and further back in Roman history as well. Sir Ronald Syme's classic study of *The Roman Revolution* presents a periodization that is a fascinating subject in itself and merits brief attention here. The book's preface begins thus:[13]

> The subject of this book is the transformation of state and society between 60 BC and AD 14. It is composed round a central narrative that records the rise to power of Augustus and the establishment of his rule, embracing the years 44–23 BC.

So far we are well within the parameters set by the more recent studies mentioned above. But after an opening introductory chapter entitled 'Augustus and History', Syme's second chapter is devoted to describing the Roman oligarchy. It contains this sentence:[14]

> With the Gracchi all the consequences of empire—social, economic and political—broke loose in the Roman state, inaugurating a century of revolution.

This of course is a central element of Syme's analysis, and one that has endured. It is not a matter of when Augustus consolidated or began to take power, nor a matter of constitutional innovations that were, in Syme's view, a relatively superficial feature of Roman political life. Indeed, the forces that made inevitable the Roman Revolution had been gaining strength over generations of aristocratic competition for power and prestige. As a direct result of Rome's acquiring dominion over extensive foreign territories (with decisive consequences for the ever more inequitable distribution of wealth among the citizen body), the contradictions inherent in the idea of a single political entity that was both republic and empire, both polis and world-state, exploded into conflict between the Gracchi and their foes. Thus it seems that it is only possible to start the narrative of the Roman Revolution in 60 BC—or for that matter in 91 or in 43—if one has an eye fixed firmly on the events of 133.

Syme's provocative use of the word 'Revolution' for his title has become so powerfully canonical that it often attracts redefinition.[15] As we have seen already in the pages of the *CAH*, just one of many attempts to define the 'real' revolution, scholars have also come to talk of the 'first' revolution, of a 'cultural' revolution, and, one step further away, of a

[13] 1939: vii. [14] 1939: 16. [15] See Galsterer 1990: 12.

process of 'evolution'.[16] But however one attempts to describe it, everyone faces the same problem: how to get a secure grasp on the series of historical events which has traditionally been seen as leading both to the end of a period of history and a form of government, which can meaningfully be described as the Roman Republic, and to the beginning of another which is universally known as the Roman Empire or, less frequently, as the Principate?

In a way, it is the *consciousness* of this problem that is the real subject of these papers. When did Roman poets become conscious that the Republic was in fact a memory, and generally a selective one? What about the consciousness of living under an Imperial dispensation? Did both realizations arise at once, or did one precede the other? In which order? Above all, how did they manifest themselves? In Augustan poetry, specific signs of this dual awareness are difficult to trace, not only because of the length, heterogeneity, and liminality of the period covered by Augustus' regime, but for other and perhaps more surprising reasons as well.

MYTH, HISTORY, AND THE PRESENT

The first point to be made is that the status of politics and history as proper subjects for poetry was anything but uncontested or constant over time.[17] Thus, to assess how Augustan poets remembered the Republic, one must have some idea of how Republican poets remembered their history and of the ways in which the Augustan poets themselves received this aspect of their literary legacy.

Two of the first three great epic poets of Republican Rome chose to write on historical subjects. Gnaeus Naevius evidently presented both a mythic narrative of aetiological import and a contemporary war chronicle, presumably coordinating the two disparate time frames involved in ways that would have far-reaching consequences. Quintus Ennius accepted the challenge implicit in Naevius' approach by telling his story continuously from 'the beginning'—the same point, in fact, where Naevius' mythic narrative had begun—to 'the end'. This endpoint he, again like Naevius, found at first in a single, defining, and epoch-making

[16] See Lacey 1996; Galinsky 1996; Habinek and Schiesaro 1997; Millar 2000; and Wallace-Hadrill 2008.

[17] This is one of the central points made by Maria Luisa Delvigo in her contribution to this volume.

event within his own lifetime and one with clear importance for his own place in literary history.[18] But as his life extended itself beyond the original endpoint of his story, he kept extending his poem as well, to cover later and later (and, in several respects, less and less) historical events. This solution as well would have significant consequences—inevitably, perhaps, inasmuch as any obsession with beginnings is likely to manifest itself in an equally strong obsession with the problem of the end.

Both Naevius and Ennius, then, in their different ways addressed the problems of the relationship between myth, the traditional subject of poetry, and history, the traditional obsession of Roman culture; of beginnings and endings; of continuous and discontinuous narrative.[19] Among their followers, these issues would all be inflected in contrasting ways, most crucially perhaps as a result of ongoing and continuingly varied reception of Hellenistic literary theory and practice. Possibly the most important aspect of this reception during the later Republic involved the rejection of historical topics by the most admired and influential poets. But the traditional version of this literary historical topic lacks nuance: it is insufficient and misleading to think in terms of a backward-looking majority producing a latter-day, quasi-Ennian brand of 'annalistic' epic tailored to the requirements of a self-aggrandizing patron class of soldier-politicians, and on the opposing side of a forward-looking coterie of politically disengaged, self-consciously innovative, ultra-refined *poetae novi*. It is true that later critics did not treat kindly the historical epics of the later Republican period. What is more interesting is the fact that for poets such as Lucretius—who invites his reader to consider his poem in relation to the epics of Homer and Ennius (both of whom he specifically represents as philosophical poets)—history does not actually exist: the great events of history, like the Trojan War and the Second Punic War, which made possible first the birth and then the rise to world dominance of the Roman state, mean as little as events that are yet to come: both past and future, lying outside our experience and our ken, are (he argues) as nothing to us.[20] Catullus agrees with Lucretius in his ostentatious disdain for contemporary politics; and when considered from a certain angle he agrees as well in rejecting a conception of myth

[18] See Skutsch 1985: 553, 563–6 on the end of *Annales* 15 and the continuation in books 16–18.

[19] For a recent discussion of these issues see Goldberg 2010.

[20] *DRN* 1.459–82, 3.831–69. But the question of Lucretius' 'historical imagination' is in fact even more interesting and complex than his stated position would seem to indicate: see Kenney 1972; Fowler 1989; and Schiesaro 2007.

and history by which the latter gains meaning and prestige from the former. So much is clear from poem 64, in which the idea that contemporary leaders represent the originary glory of a heroic past, common in ruler panegyric from at least the time of Pindar onwards, is twice inverted, first in the form of a lament that the age of heroes lies so far in the inaccessible past (implying that we in the present have fallen far from their standard), then through insistent suggestion that the values of that age were not so admirable after all.[21] It is (again) the Trojan War that is the key to this insight, and in particular Catullus' damning assessment of Achilles, the greatest hero of that war. And it is Catullus' treatment of Troy, the scene of Achilles' devastation (and of his own brother's death), that completes his inversion of the conventional relationship between myth and history.[22] Now the latter gains no dignity from association with the former any more than, generally speaking, the present does with the past. Instead both myth and history become the larger canvas on which the vices of the present are hyperbolically displayed. In these respects, Catullus would seem to have little use for the past, except as a reflection of the dim view that he takes of the present.

It is worth remembering, however, that Catullus dedicates his poetry to a fellow Transpadane, Cornelius Nepos, as author not of the biographies for which Nepos is best known today, but of a three-volume chronicle or universal history covering 'all time' (*omne aevum*, 1.6). The terms in which Catullus praises Nepos' work, as has been recognized, are emphatically the same as those in which he praises what he considers the best poetry.[23] It is less often noted that the theme of Nepos' work, time, and the organization of time, can be seen as setting the parameters for Catullus' own exploration of mythic, historical, and contemporary time, not least by simply calling attention to this theme in Catullus' own poetry.[24] In this sense, Catullus' praise of Nepos and his denigration of the historical poet Volusius may be simply two different sides of the same coin.

Do Lucretius and Catullus, then, represent a break with the past in their ways of thinking about the past? Is their distinctiveness better understood with reference to their ultimate ancestors, Naevius and Ennius, or to the several intervening generations of poets, among whom Lucilius deserves special mention? One might also ask whether we should see the next generation as reacting to and, in some measure, rejecting Lucretius' or Catullus' approach to the problem. Is someone like

[21] See in particular Konstan 1977.
[22] Cat. 65, 68, 101: see Clarke 2008; Putnam 2007; and Block 1984.
[23] See for example Cairns 1969 and Rauk 1996–7.
[24] See Hardie 2002: 192.

Varro Atacinus, author of both a 'neoteric' *Argonautae* and an 'annalistic' *Bellum Sequanicum*, to be seen as a transitional figure?[25] If so, in which direction does he move? From history to myth, or vice versa? Or is the point rather that the two subjects coexist within his œuvre? What can one say about Cornelius Gallus, himself both soldier and poet, the elegist who states that his happiness will not be complete until he sees that Julius Caesar has become the most significant factor in Roman history?[26] Is Gallus with this statement upending Lucretian and Catullan values and, in effect, returning to a conception of poetry and history that Naevius and Ennius might have understood? By doing so does he prepare the way for Virgil, in *Eclogue* 4, specifically to invert Catullus' conception of time, myth, and history?[27] Does the trajectory that we think we can trace in this sequence of poets help us to discern the beginning of a period during which the Republic was, gradually or suddenly, consigned to memory and so made available once again as material for poets? In short, is it the case that a turn to history, and specifically towards Republican history, is characteristic of 'Augustan' poetry in the largest sense? Is it, finally, the case that a poetic movement which begins with the earliest days of the Triumvirate, if not in fact before, and which does not reach its fulfilment until Lucan, writing under the last of the Julio-Claudians, returns to the project that Naevius and Ennius had launched by making history once again the proper subject for serious poetry?[28]

TURNING POINTS

A second fundamental point is that poets of all periods, regardless of their perspective on 'history' or 'the Republic', evince a lively, not to say obsessive, interest in 'firsts' and other liminal events. This too is of course

[25] His other works include a *Chorographia*, an *Ephemeris*, an unknown number of epigrams, and perhaps other titles. The possibilities are canvassed, and different inferences drawn from them, by Courtney 1993: 235–53 and Hollis 2007: 165–218.

[26] Gallus fr. 3 Blänsdorf, with the comments of Courtney 1993: 263–8 and Hollis 2007: 241–52.

[27] For a reading of the *Eclogue* as a very pointed reversal of Catullus 64 see Gail Trimble's contribution to this volume.

[28] See Jean-Christophe Jolivet's contribution to this volume and, for later perspectives, Marks 2010 on Silius Italicus; for abiding critical concerns about history as an inappropriate theme for poetry, cf. Quintilian's summary judgement of Lucan as discussed, again, by Delvigo in this volume. For samples of the ways in which later writers look back to Roman history and its narratives of Republic and Empire see Jacquier in this volume on Baudelaire and Feeney 2010 on Shakespeare.

an interest that they share with historians. We have commented already on the historians' determination to identify the 'beginning' or 'cause' of their chosen subject, be it a particular conflict or a more elusive topic such as general moral degeneracy or departure from the *mos maiorum*. Among poets of the Augustan age, an interest in 'beginnings' and 'causes' is generally referred to the example of Hellenistic aetiological writers, especially Callimachus. And the influence of this tradition is unquestionably very significant.[29] But Roman poets no less than historians had always been interested in this theme. And this is no surprise in a culture that celebrated the foundation of the city, the expulsion of the kings, and other key inaugural or transitional moments with great fanfare in the annual festivals of the civic calendar. Such moments were and had always been celebrated at Rome. And, if we return briefly to Naevius and Ennius, we see at once that the structure of their historical epics is aetiological both in terms of general architecture and in detail.[30] For Ennius in particular, this interest extends to epochal moments in literary history as well, most outstandingly manifested in the structure of the original, fifteen-book edition of the *Annales*, in which the achievement of Ennius' patron, Fulvius Nobilior, in bringing the Aetolian cult of Hercules Musarum in triumph to Rome is paralleled by Ennius' own achievement of making the Greek Muses, and not the Roman Camenae, the sources of his poetic inspiration—a feat instantiated in Ennius' abandonment of the Saturnian metre of previous Roman epicists in favour of the Homeric hexameter.[31] About half a century, then, after a recognizably

[29] See for example Nelis 2005 and Hunter 2006.

[30] Naevius is of course the first surviving poet to take an interest in the Trojan ancestry of the Roman state; more specifically, it is impossible not to see in his representation of Aeneas' visit to Carthage an aetion of the First Punic War. For a consideration of Naevius' mythic narrative as anticipating his war chronicle specifically as a reflection on Rome's newfound naval power in that war see Leigh 2010b. Presumably unconnected with the problem of Rome and Carthage itself is Naevius' interest in ritual, which is highly characteristic of aetiological poetry. The main episode in question would be his representation of the fetial ritual performed in advance of the war with Carthage to guarantee that it would be just (fr. 2 Stz.). Ennius inherits and develops Naevius' conception of Rome's Trojan origins (although he presented the details in his own way and with his own emphasis). But in addition to this, a continuous narrative of Roman history will have given Ennius many more opportunities to dwell on such things as cultic aetiology, which receives great emphasis in book 1 for example, in the augury contest between Romulus and Remus (72–91 Sk.), the foundation of the temple of Jupiter Feretrius (fr. li Sk.), and the division of the *populus Romanus* into three tribes (fr. lix Sk.). See too the following note.

[31] According to the thesis of Skutsch 1944: 79–80; 1963: 89; and 1985: 553–4. Like Naevius, then, Ennius designs his poem—at least in its first version—specifically as an aetiological treatment of how the Muses were brought in triumph to Rome, an event that in its literary-historical dimensions dwarfs the parallel military achievement.

'literary' culture had established itself, the poets began to represent themselves as heroes, conquerors, and founders. The process continued: another fifty years on Porcius Licinus would comment on the invasion of Rome by a warlike Muse during the course of the Second Punic War.[32] Quite a bit later, in the prologue to the third book of his *Georgics*, a crucial text for attempting to get to grips with the processes of change and the conceptualization of turning points in Roman history, Virgil, perhaps even more explicitly than Ennius had done, aligns his own poetic achievements with the military triumphs of Octavian.[33] By this stage, Roman cultural victory over Greece has come to occupy the centre stage, but this victory is situated in a broad historical backdrop within which Virgil invites his readers to look to their Trojan origins and the treatment of the themes of foundation and victory he will offer in the *Aeneid*.[34] The *Georgics* were completed in time to take account of the victory at Actium and offer reflection on its epoch-making importance; so too Horace's *Epodes*. Both poets would return to Actium as the crucial turning point of history, the beginning of a new era, in their masterpieces of the 20s BC.[35] The enormous emphasis that Virgil in the *Aeneid* and Horace in *Odes* 1–3 place on this event invites interpretation as a pointed revision of their earlier perspectives (i.e. those of the *Eclogues* and of *Sermones* 1) and as normative for Augustan poetry as a whole. But this is really too simple. Not only the *Georgics* and the *Epodes*, both of them so outstanding for their success in capturing the transitory sense that a long hoped-for moment may have finally arrived, but the *Aeneid*, and the first collection of the *Odes* as well, continue to fascinate in part for their recurrent brooding over the question of whether the new age that they celebrate will really last. Much less balanced in this respect is the Propertius of the *Monobiblos*, an intervention that is only slightly

[32] Mario Citroni in his contribution to this volume examines this statement in the context of an extensive meditation upon Augustan conceptions of continuity and rupture in Roman cultural history.

[33] Again, see Nelis's contribution to this volume.

[34] On Rome in relation to Greece and Troy see the contributions of Alain Deremetz and Philip Hardie to this volume.

[35] In this sense the *Aeneid* in particular, not least in its promotion of Actium as a cardinal event in Roman political history, can be seen as marking the most significant turning point both in Roman literary history and in Roman literature's engagement with political history. It is then interesting to use the *Aeneid* as a place from which to look back and forward in time, as Hardie does in this volume by considering Virgil's Troy as a repository of Roman and specifically Republican memories before the fact; note in particular his observations on Priam and Pompey, an implied comparison that arises intertextually from the reading of Asinius Pollio's *Histories*, and cf. the contributions of Jolivet and Delvigo regarding Lucan's reception of this motif.

earlier than the *Georgics* and the *Epodes* and that has virtually nothing to say about history—until the two epigrams that close the collection by taking the reader back in time by at least a decade to the darkest days of Triumviral strife.[36] The later Propertius would of course adopt a perspective on Actium more characteristic of his contemporaries, in his historical and aetiological fourth book.[37] In light of this Propertian evolution it is especially fascinating to trace Horace's development as a court poet, particularly in the fourth book of *Odes*. Whereas in his earlier lyrics, above all in the Roman Odes, memories of the Republic serve chiefly as a source of reproach to those living in the present[38]—even the post-Actian present—in book 4 Horace marshals a small battalion of Republican heroes as forerunners of a present that is more Julio-Claudian than post-Actian or merely Augustan, with enormous emphasis being placed on the princes and heirs apparent, Tiberius and Drusus. A fundamental shift seems to have occurred, so that the later Horace appears to have forgotten altogether certain inconvenient elements of his own Republican and Triumviral past and to have remade himself as an Imperial poet almost in the mode of Ovid. And indeed, convincing connections have been drawn between Horace's later poetry and Ovid's ambitious essay in Roman aetiologies, the *Fasti*.[39] But whether the explanation is to be sought in genre, circumstance, temperament, or in the continued passage of time, the lyrical Horace, writing at Rome after the publication of the *Aeneid*, is able to tailor his Republican memories to the requirements of the court. In contrast, Ovid's aetiological elegies, written at Rome and then revised in exile, even while speaking clearly and expertly in the language of Imperial panegyric, seem to reveal that memory, and particularly memories of a time that one has come to think of different from the here and now, can never really be controlled.[40] The *Fasti* can easily be seen, according to several influential readings, precisely as a response to official efforts to control speech, if not memory itself.[41] By the same token, Ovid's 'epic' masterpiece, the *Metamorphoses*, also written at Rome and then

[36] On the powerful coda to the *Monobiblos* see Jürgen Paul Schwindt's contribution to this volume and Breed 2009 and 2010. It is worth pointing out that Schwindt's paper was written and delivered before the publication of Breed's work.

[37] See Hutchinson 2006: 1–7 on discontinuity in the fourth book and the contemporary context.

[38] Important meditations on this theme are found in Mario Labate's contribution to this volume.

[39] See for example Barchiesi 1997: 268–9.

[40] Varying perspectives on this issue will be found in the contributions of Jacqueline Fabre-Serris and Joseph Farrell to this volume.

[41] See for example Feeney 1992; Newlands 1995; and Barchiesi 1997a, on the *Fasti* as ironically commenting on official attempts to control speech and memory.

apparently revised in exile, can be read as an expression of longing for the relatively uncontrolled conditions of speech that characterized the Republic, above all in its last days.[42] Thus have we unmistakably arrived at a point at which Republican history and Republican institutions can be regarded as existing only in the past and only in memory, inflected as well by a form of forgetfulness that goes by the name of nostalgia. In this sense, Millar's formulation is confirmed: if by 'Augustan' we mean 'post-Republican', then Ovid, who tells us he was born in the year when both consuls fell (*Tr.* 4.10.6), emerges as the only truly Augustan poet.

With Ovid and the rhetoric of control and power come inevitably crucial questions about the true nature of the political visions of the Augustan poets. In recent years the stark dichotomies ('optimism' v. 'pessimisim'; 'pro-' and 'anti-Augustanism') that once bedevilled attempts to address such questions have given way to a range of possibilities that are both narrower and less sharply defined. Increasingly it has been asked whether, for different reasons, actual opposition existed or was even possible.[43] Thus Alessandro Barchiesi has written that '"Anti-Augustanism" is a weak position with a very weak name; who really knows what it meant to be "against"?'[44] Perhaps this formulation can usefully be turned around: who knows what it really meant to be 'Augustan'? Already we have seen that the associations of the word are difficult to define, whether in chronological, institutional, or other terms. But even if 'Augustanism' is ill defined, that does not mean it is also automatically weak. Rather, its open, protean nature may be its chief source of strength. Modern historians take great interest in the vicissitudes and prevarications that marked Augustus' entire career, especially those that differentiate the triumvir from the *princeps*, but also those later developments that make him the founder of a dynastic monarchy and virtually a living god. An ability to outlive (and, at times, to do away with) the opposition certainly made it easier for the leopard to change his spots. But it may also be that 'Augustanism' was a thing with no essence other than an almost infinite capacity to represent itself as the logical conclusion of all historical movements. The various forms that Augustus' regime and Augustus himself took over time are intrinsically implicated in such a totalizing view of history.[45] Not only successively but in a real sense simultaneously

[42] For the representation of specifically Republican and Augustan conditions of civic discourse in the *Metamorphoses* see Bill Gladhill's contribution to this volume.

[43] See for example Raaflaub and Samons 1990.

[44] Barchiesi 1997: 272.

[45] See Zanker 1988: 79–100 on Augustus' changing image and policy after Actium, and 239–64 on stylistic eclecticism. On the construction of Augustan reception see Thomas 2001b.

he was the son of a god, his father's avenger, and a precocious leader in the tradition of Scipio, Pompey, and other heroes to whom the Roman Republic turned in time of need. A man who held more successive consulships even than Marius but who used more effectively the powers of the tribunate (which he held for even longer periods), and yet a man who ostentatiously turned away from power, like Cincinnatus (though he was pointedly never dictator). At different times these roles might be emphasized, played down, or brought back into new if somewhat altered prominence. Eventually Caesar's legacy would transform itself from the right to vie with several pretenders for the position of first man in Rome into the right to take on the mantle of the entire state religious apparatus as a matter of family entitlement; just as revenge itself would be redefined not as a family vendetta but a matter of maintaining Roman dignity (and pretended pre-eminence) in relations with one of the few foreign powers capable of dealing with Rome as an equal.[46] From our perspective, the history of Augustus' regime looks in many ways like a record of improvization, trial and error, changes of course, twists and turns. But exactly the same may be said about the reactions of the poets in an uncertain political environment, caught up at least on one level, in David West's memorable phrase, in searching for a new 'grammar of panegyric'.[47] Perhaps it was Augustus' ability to remain convincing in spite of, or perhaps even because of, this seemingly contradictory record that was his chief source of strength; and perhaps in the end literary Augustanism is to be defined in the same way.

In terms of history, the increasing diversity of Augustus' record must have been a huge advantage. Republican history itself is, after all, no single or simple thing.[48] Nearly every stage of it contains traces of a heroic, regal, or aristocratic past that would seem, logically at least, to be at odds with Republican values.[49] Vanquished Troy the ancestor of victorious Rome?[50] Priam the mythic prototype of Pompey?[51] Caesar's heir his avenger against Brutus, the tyrannicide, namesake, and self-styled avatar of the first consul? The Forum Augustum, a monument so often

[46] In the architecture of the temple of Mars Ultor and the political exploitation of the return of the Parthian standards are combined personal and public vengeance and the broadest possible vision of Augustan Rome's relation to the complete history of the Roman people; see for example, Zanker 1988: 183–215.

[47] West 1995: 15.

[48] See now Flower 2010.

[49] On ideas of kingship in general and their application in the *Aeneid* in particular see Cairns 1989.

[50] Again see Hardie's contribution to this volume.

[51] See both Hardie and Delvigo in this volume.

'read' in alignment with key literary texts, especially the speech of Anchises in the sixth book of the *Aeneid*, was a kind of sculpture gallery of ancestors and *summi viri*, the one group mythical, heroic, and regal, the other consisting of mutual enemies, many of them synonymous with very different sets of 'Republican' values.[52] But all of them presumably were there because they could meaningfully be presented, in some sense, as forerunners of Augustus himself. So that we might return once again to A. Barchiesi's question and ask what it meant, in view of such a diversity of Republican heroes, to be 'Republican'? Eventually it became possible to answer this question clearly: to be 'Republican' under the Empire meant to be anti-Imperial—another weak position with a very weak name. But in the period with which we are concerned no more than the first steps towards this position had been taken, and those only very late.[53] A simple definition of our period, then, might be that it was one when the word 'Republican' was not fully synonymous either with 'Augustan' or with 'anti-Augustan', even if (in some sense) it might contain elements of both. Inevitably such a paradoxical position serves to bring back to centre stage a question which the papers assembled here perhaps invite us to think about in a new light: how useful, ultimately, are some of the key categories which modern scholars traditionally bring to the study of the politics of Augustan poetry?

THE END OF HISTORY

One way in which 'Augustan' poetry demands to be read as proto-Imperial lies in its treatment of 'the end'. It is again Virgil in the *Aeneid* who most famously announces the end of history in the ascendancy of Augustus. In so doing, he effectively set himself the same trap as Ennius had in fashioning the first conclusion of the *Annales*, but he avoided it when fate intervened to make the end of Virgil's own life effectively coincide with the political and historical endpoint that his epic celebrated. The famously paradigmatic trajectory of Virgil's career makes it difficult to imagine what, if anything, he might have written after the *Aeneid*, had he lived; but one of the most important scholarly projects of

[52] For instance, the *summi viri* group is thought to have included statues not only of Pompey, the enemy of Augustus' father, but of both Marius and Sulla as well (Zanker 1968: 15–18), although the presence of Marius there has been challenged (Spannagel 1999: 318–20).

[53] See, again, the contributions of Gladhill and Farrell to this volume.

the past twenty years has been to understand how his successors, both in the immediate and in the longer term, grappled with this problem.[54]

Tibullus evidently survived Virgil by less than a year, but Horace, Propertius, and of course Ovid, not to mention Germanicus and Manilius (along with some other poets whom we know through meagre fragments or only by name), all faced the problem that Seneca, Lucan, Statius, and others would confront, and the solutions they proposed met with a varied reception. One aspect that was widely shared was a tendency to focus precisely on 'the end'—that is, on the entire series of events that consigned the Republic to memory and brought Augustus to power—either by returning to it obsessively (but always carefully) or, more often, by brooding over it indirectly when seeming to write about earlier episodes. In the former mode, figures like the murdered and deified Julius Caesar and the victorious avenger Augustus, along with events like the wars at Perugia, Actium, and Alexandria, are prominent; in the latter they, and frequently their enemies, appear in disguise: Priam becomes Pompey, Bacchus Antonius, and Camillus Augustus (and Tiberius as well). Either way, historical consciousness converges on the recent past and the present as defining a point or a period of decisive transition. Crucially, however, it is the second, allegorical mode, the device of commenting on recent events by citing the more distant past—a traditional device, after all, having been pioneered by Naevius—that is arguably the Augustans' most useful gift to their Imperial successors, who effectively combine it with the first, seemingly direct mode by focusing not on the victors, but on their opponents (Brutus, Cassius, Cato). In this way Augustan habits of remembering the Republic, which are varied and complex, but are generally characterized by indirection and an obsession with 'the end', can be seen as a very direct forerunner of the Imperial strategies that A. Gowing and others have analysed so insightfully. The sources of these habits are, no doubt, also varied and complex; but it is very clear that poetry is firmly implicated in this activity, and stands close to its centre. Whether anyone at any point in the long period to which the first *princeps* gave his name could have accurately foreseen the purposes to which these habits and strategies would eventually be put; whether such a person might have felt sympathy, antipathy, or indifference to those purposes; and how, indeed, any of Augustus' poets might have felt about his own involvement in the processes of remembering and forgetting that would eventually produce the literary culture of the Empire are questions that will never be answered. What we

[54] See especially Hardie 1993.

can say is that these poets were outstandingly successful contributors to the process of historical evaluation by means of which the Augustan age, however defined or understood, was made to seem inevitable—the necessary successor to the Republican past, and the indispensable precursor to an Imperial future.

Augustan Poetry and the Roman Republic

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