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## Twelve Augusti

PENELOPE J. GOODMAN

E. BALTRUSCH and C. WENDT (EDS), *DER ERSTE. AUGUSTUS UND DER BEGINN EINER NEUEN EPOCHE*. Darmstadt: Philipp von Zabern, 2016. Pp. 168, illus. ISBN 9783805350334. €34.95.

A. BUSETTO and E. BEDIN (EDS), *SULLE TRACCE DI AUGUSTO*. Trieste: Editreg, 2016. Pp. 144, illus. ISBN 9788897557876. €25.00.

L. CANFORA, *AUGUSTO: FIGLIO DI DIO*. Rome: Laterza, 2015. Pp. vii + 567. ISBN 9788858119273. €24.00.

M. FLECKER, S. KRMNICEK, J. LIPPS, R. POSAMENTIR and T. SCHÄFER (EDS), *AUGUSTUS IST TOT – LANG LEBE DER KAISER!* Rahden: Marie Leidorf, 2017. Pp. 620, illus, maps, plans. ISBN 9783896469151. €69.80.

A. GOLDSWORTHY, *AUGUSTUS: FROM REVOLUTIONARY TO EMPEROR*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2014. Pp. xi + 607, 16 pls, illus. ISBN 9780753829158. £10.99

H.-C. GÜNTHER (ED), *AUGUSTUS UND ROM: 2000 JAHRE DANACH*. Nordhausen: Traugott Bautz, 2015. Pp. 348, illus. ISBN 9783959480000. €60.00.

W. HAVENER, *IMPERATOR AUGUSTUS: DIE DISKURSIVE KONSTITUIERUNG DER MILITÄRISCHEN PERSONA DES ERSTEN RÖMISCHEN PRINCEPS*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2016. Pp. 424. ISBN 9783515112208. €69.00.

F. HURLET, *AUGUSTE: LES AMBIGUÏTÉS DU POUVOIR*. Paris: Armand Colin, 2015. Pp. 286, 8 pls. ISBN 9782200275310. €25.00.

E. LA ROCCA, C. PARISI PRESICCE, A. LO MONACO, C. GIROIRE and D. ROGER (EDS), *AUGUSTO*. Milan: Electa, 2013. Pp. 336, 38 pls, illus. ISBN 9788837096076. €32.00.

S. LUCIANI and P. ZUNTOW (EDS), *ENTRE MOTS ET MARBRE: LES MÉTAMORPHOSES D'AUGUSTE*. Bordeaux: Ausonius, 2016. Pp. 298, illus. ISBN 9782356131515. €25.00.

R. VON DEN HOFF, W. STROH and MARTIN ZIMMERMANN, *DIVUS AUGUSTUS: DER ERSTE RÖMISCHE KAISER UND SEINE WELT*. Munich: Beck, 2014. Pp. 341, illus. ISBN 9783406660528. €26.95.

D. WARDLE, *SUETONIUS: LIFE OF AUGUSTUS. TRANSLATED WITH INTRODUCTION AND HISTORICAL COMMENTARY*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. Pp. x + 603. ISBN 9780199686452. £115.00.

A rash of new festivals, a fashion for calendars and a renamed month all attest to the strength of anniversary culture in the Augustan era, and to Augustus' own facility for capitalising upon it.<sup>1</sup> We can safely assume that he would have understood, and perhaps even anticipated, that the bimillennium of his death might be commemorated. Whether he would quite have expected the exhibitions, conferences and publications with which twenty-first century academics chose to mark it is perhaps another matter. This review article examines some of the scholarly fruits of Augustus' 2014 anniversary, encompassing twelve books which were published that year, took it as an explicit prompt or were developed out of bimillennial conferences.<sup>2</sup> They are tackled in three broad groups, the better to bring out the characteristic interests and approaches of each.

## I AUGUSTUS IN THE PUBLIC ARENA

We begin with publications aimed primarily at non-experts. Academic readers are not precluded: indeed, all of the authors are or have been university-based professionals themselves. But these volumes assume no prior knowledge, present notes separately from the main text, and tend to prioritise narrative and synthesis over the shaping of scholarly debate.

**Goldsworthy's** volume takes a quasi-annalistic approach, aspiring to broadly equal treatment of each phase of Augustus' life in the manner of a contemporary biography. This presents some challenges, since Augustus' early life is little-attested and highly-mythologised, while dating issues with some later events force G. to decide where to place them and spend time justifying those decisions. As he points out, though, the approach differentiates his work from other recent English-language biographies, which have tended to reify the ancient habit of dividing the 'bad' triumvir from the 'good' princeps by treating only the period before Actium chronologically and then switching to a thematic approach.<sup>3</sup> G. is

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<sup>1</sup> Festivals: Rüpke 2011: 124-34. Calendars: Feeney 2007: 148-58; Hannah 2007: 135-6. August: Macrob., Sat. 1.12.35. Cf. also Somà in Busetto and Bedin 2016, reviewed below.

<sup>2</sup> I omit from this review a bimillennial volume of my own, Goodman 2018.

<sup>3</sup> Ancient examples: Vell. Pat. 2.86.2; Sen., Clem. 1.9.1 and 1.11.1; Dio 56.44.1; Julian, Caesars 309a-c.

able to trace more gradual evolutions in Augustus' behaviour, and to show a consistency of personality despite changing circumstances. Thus for example the ruthless pursuit of Caepio and Murena is 'a reminder that he was the same man who had ordered proscriptions and executions so many times in the past' (282). G. is also able to show the balance of priorities inherent in how Augustus spent his time in a way that thematic treatments obscure: especially his consistent attention to the provinces.

Non-expert readers will welcome the useful family trees, glossary and list of key personalities presented at the back of the book. They are likewise well-catered to in the main text, where G. succeeds in presenting complex material engagingly and without oversimplification. Particularly intensive scholarly debates are signalled and G.'s view of the most plausible interpretation set out, while more academic matters are pursued in full and rigorous endnotes. I felt the absence of Haselberger on Augustan Rome and Cooley on the *Res Gestae*, while G. cannot have read Boatwright's article on Augustus and the pomerium very closely if he thought she supported Dio's statement that he had enlarged it (381).<sup>4</sup> But he guides his reader expertly through the primary sources, explaining the need for scepticism when dealing with stories likely to have arisen from contemporary gossip or invective and always acknowledging the limits of certainty. Newcomers to Roman history could do worse than to internalise his statement that 'absolute truth is elusive, perhaps impossible, but that does not mean that we should not do our best to get as close as we can' (15).

In overview, G.'s Augustus was undeniably brutal as a triumvir and uncompromising about maintaining absolute dominance once in power, but no worse than his contemporaries and worthy of credit for using his position for the common good. He follows Levick in believing that Augustus aimed consciously for supreme power after Caesar's death, but does not credit him with unwarranted foresight. Rather, for G., Augustus groped by trial and error towards a workable system, and we cannot know whether what he did with it afterwards was politically- or philanthropically-motivated. Nonetheless, G.'s preference for believing that Augustus' clemency after Actium was 'real' (477) or his urge to improve the city of Rome 'genuine' (478) is clear. His grounds are that Augustus chose this behaviour rather than being forced into it, but this does not fully take into account the extent to which any politician's behaviour is dictated by expediency. Given that Augustus clearly wanted to maintain his supremacy, and probably suspected that losing it would also mean losing his life, we must ask to what extent any of his actions were truly spontaneous.

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<sup>4</sup> Haselberger 2007; Cooley 2009. Boatwright 1986 actually argues the opposite.

**Von den Hoff, Stroh and Zimmermann** likewise tackle Augustus' lifetime chronologically but divide each period into three sections: Zimmermann on history, von den Hoff on visual and material culture and Stroh on literature. Some cross-references point readers towards fuller discussions in parallel chapters, but for the most part the three threads run separately. The political machinations of the era thus fall largely to Zimmermann, who well captures the dynamic forces at work and Augustus' own efforts to control both power and opinion. He characterises Augustus' relationship with the senate as a precarious compromise, arguing that both sides bought in to the new arrangement for the sake of stability and personal benefit while simultaneously pretending that nothing had changed. But he is not entirely consistent about the place of the civil wars within this discourse. Chapter IV, covering the years 17–2 B.C., argues that Augustus now sought to wipe out memories of the wars with the promise of a new age of peace and prosperity, but Z.'s closing assessment (271–6) suggests that Augustus' dominance remained acceptable during this period precisely because the alternative prospect of civil wars was remembered.

Z.'s historical sections benefit greatly from a generous share of the volume's seventy-four illustrations, enriching his narrative with discussion of the potential for coins, inscriptions and monuments to articulate and reinforce Augustus' claims to power. But von den Hoff tackles the artistic and architectural changes of the era in detail. His scope is wide-ranging, with plentiful attention to provincial communities and their responses and contributions to empire-wide change. He follows Schäfer's argument that the temple of Roma and Augustus at Athens was modelled after a round temple of Mars Ultor built on the Capitoline to house the Parthian standards (139), but seems unfamiliar with the alternative view that the temple depicted on the coins was never actually built, being supplanted by the octastyle temple in Augustus' forum.<sup>5</sup> Stroh's sections are infused with his famous passion for Latin as a living language, and his identification with its writers tends to translate into antipathy towards Augustus. His indignation at Cicero's death and Ovid's exile are palpable and he is convinced of the principate's powerful influence over contemporary literature, but he views the literature itself as highly innovative and inventive.

Attentive readers will detect differences of perspective between the three authors, which might have generated some interesting conclusions if pursued. But the volume never addresses them explicitly, closing instead with a brief glance at Augustus' legacy, still divided into the same three spheres. Only a brief introduction is co-authored by all three

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<sup>5</sup> Schäfer 1998; cf. Rich 1998 and Spannagel 1999.

contributors, but this presents its own problem: the claim to be presenting an ‘unobstructed view’ (10: ‘unverstellten Blick’) of Augustus which transcends the vilification and the glorification of the past and encompasses both his ‘dark side’ (‘Nachtseite’) and his ‘other side’ (‘Kehrseite’). This is to forget that all historical writing is inevitably shaped by cultural context, and suggests that the authors see themselves as assembling a neutral collection of ‘facts’, good and bad, between which the reader will decide. In practice, a clear slant is detectable, from the opening characterisation of Augustus’ regime as a ‘golden age’ to the insistence on his transformative impact, prudent pragmatism, astonishing foresight and stable legacy.

**Hurlet** takes Augustus’ death as his point of departure, viewing it as a carefully-crafted moment designed to invite reflection on his life and legacy. H. argues that Augustus was ambiguous already in life and has been mythologised from his death onwards, making it crucial to explore the history of how he has been seen and interpreted if we are to understand him or the principate. His book is therefore part biography and part reception history, fitting the remit of the *Nouvelles biographies historiques* series neatly: to illuminate historical eras and topics through iconic figures, with particular attention to their contemporary resonances.

H. has published widely on the nature and underpinnings of Augustus’ power, so it is no surprise that the historical parts of his book rest on extensive up-to-date expertise. Some themes of particular interest, generally drawing on H.’s existing publications, include Augustus’ early emphasis on consensus, his relationship with the senatorial provincial governors and his development of potential heirs through co-regencies. It is in the third section that H. returns to Augustus’ death as a pivotal moment of mythologisation and traces the subsequent evolution of his image. Some material here would have benefitted from further development. H. is right that the medieval Augustus was above all a figure of Christian legend, but wrong that he was never deployed as a historical exemplum before the Renaissance.<sup>6</sup> He also risks ascribing too much to the simple availability of source material. Amyot’s Plutarch may well have fuelled interest in Caesar in early modern France, but texts glorifying Augustus were also available. The emerging contemporary debates about monarchism implicit in Corneille’s *Cinna* must surely have played their own part in dampening interest in them.

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<sup>6</sup> Augustus and other Roman emperors regularly sat alongside Biblical kings in medieval prince literature (Sanford 1944). They are particularly prominent in John of Salisbury’s *Policraticus* and Petrarch’s *Seniles* 14.1.

H.'s treatment of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century juridical humanists, Enlightenment thinkers and scholarly historiography is much stronger. H. argues that two major traditions still dominate Augustan scholarship today: Mommsen's emphasis on the legitimisation of his power and Syme's on its practical realities. This division outstrips national traditions, but can be reconciled by recognising the interdependence of the two forms of power. Meanwhile, national traditions can still be identified. As H. shows, Louis XIV's association with Augustus bolstered his public image but also reinforced perceptions of Augustus as an absolute monarch, in turn igniting Enlightenment critiques. The ongoing impact is clear from H.'s analysis of French historiography, and indeed arguably still traceable in his own clear conviction that Augustus was an absolute monarch who deceived others into accepting his rule.

## II AUGUSTAN SCHOLARSHIP

This second set of books, addressed primarily to academic audiences, were clearly published because they had reached completion rather than out of any intentional connection with Augustus' bimillennium. For **Wardle**, though, the coincidence is a happy one. As the works reviewed above attest, the bimillennium sparked a particular interest in biographies of Augustus, making a close examination of his fullest surviving ancient biography very timely. W.'s is the first English-language commentary on Suetonius' *Divus Augustus* since Carter's 1982 Bristol Classical Press edition, but its scope is also considerably more ambitious than that of its predecessor. It would be difficult now to conceive of a cultural or historical query raised by Suetonius' text which W. does not address and illuminate.

A substantial introduction establishes the key principles and context for understanding Suetonius and his text. Readers new to the work might have preferred some introductory words on its importance, rather than being plunged in *medias res* with a history of scholarly debates around Suetonius' career. But those who successfully clear this hurdle will reap the benefits of some very valuable thinking about Suetonius' view of Augustus and the structures he used to present it. W. argues that Augustus' biography both loomed large within Suetonius' collection and needed to be preceded with Caesar's for the sake of contemporary resonances with Hadrian's succession to Trajan. Meanwhile, Suetonius' preference for a thematic structure (*per species*) rather than a chronological one allowed him to demonstrate the extent of Augustus' impact across different contexts and achieve distance from his most partisan source material by setting it off against variant accounts. As W. notes, Suetonius is

unusual in eschewing the ‘bad’ triumvir / ‘good’ princeps dichotomy, instead handling negative material by placing it at the beginning of each section and then overwhelming it with positive material. The resulting biography is not straightforwardly panegyric, but as W. shows this is partly for rhetorical purposes: accepting some negative traditions about Augustus made Suetonius’ ‘fundamentally positive’ (32) portrayal more convincing.

To absorb the sheer range of published scholarship relating both to such a well-trodden text and to the lengthy career of Augustus is a daunting task, but W. has shown that it can be done. In the commentary itself he synthesises clearly, evaluates judiciously and offers perceptive insights of his own: for example noting Suetonius’ tragic framing of the reversals in Augustus’ family fortunes (416). His practice of not only referencing and discussing but often quoting the most relevant comparative or contextualising primary sources will be greatly appreciated by undergraduates in particular. He is also refreshingly forthright about the limitations of what we can glean from any of them, as for example on whether Octavian sent assassins against Antony before Mutina: ‘Logical calculation with two millennia of hindsight is no better guide to the likelihood of Aug. initiating such a plot than contemporary calculations’ (123). Textual and linguistic issues are not a core focus, and the use of Latin is kept to a minimum. But they are carefully addressed where needed, covering the range of possible readings and their strengths and weaknesses. The English translation of the text is clear and practical, carefully avoiding terms such as ‘republic’, ‘government’ or ‘constitution’ which might give an anachronistic impression of Roman politics.

Given the scope and thoroughness of W.’s commentary, any reader will find some entries to cavil at. I felt he had taken King’s recent suggestion that the Ox-Heads (*Capita Bubula*) toponym used by Suetonius to locate Augustus’ birth-place refers to land-surveying units as a settled fact where the evidence can only ever support a theory (96–7).<sup>7</sup> Likewise, it is rather beside the point to say that in relief sculpture such as the *Ara Pacis* frieze, Augustus’ physical shortness was ‘concealed’ (474). What mattered was his political stature, which artists would have conveyed visually whatever his real height. But the purpose of a commentary is to capture and facilitate debate, and in this spirit W. will surely welcome further discussion on any and all of the topics he has covered. Certainly, his work will be a central point of reference in all matters Suetonian and Augustan for a good time to come.

**Canfora** addresses another major primary source: Appian’s *Civil Wars*, and especially its relationship to Augustus’ lost memoirs (*Commentarii*). C.’s starting point is his

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<sup>7</sup> King 2010.



earlier observation that Appian's account of Octavian's march on Rome in 43 BC was drawn mainly from Augustus' memoirs.<sup>8</sup> That Appian used the memoirs, and without always saying so, is uncontroversial. A clear example, covered by C. (392–3), arises out of Suetonius' accounts of the fate of Quintus Gallius (Aug. 27.4). One variant also occurs in Appian (B Civ. 3.95), but only Suetonius attributes it directly to Augustus, so that without him we would not know where Appian found it. We may thus suspect further unacknowledged use. The same principle underpins Powell's recent suggestion that Appian's coverage of certain events during the Sicilian wars must reflect Octavian's apologetic account.<sup>9</sup> But C. considers it pervasive, especially in book 3, and builds his case through careful source criticism. Thus for example a comparison of Velleius and Appian's versions of the meeting between Lepidus and Antony in the Alps after Mutina and careful attention to Appian's characterisation of his sources allows C. to suggest that the 'some' whom Appian claims say that Lepidus knelt timorously before Antony must be Augustus, whose purpose was served by portraying him as weak (368–9).

C.'s core case is well built, but demonstrating Appian's use of the memoirs is only his first step towards a broader argument about competing historical narratives. His view is that for Augustus, the memoirs constituted 'another bloodless episode of the civil war' (3: 'un ulteriore, incruento, episodio della guerra civile'), designed to control the historiographical tradition by providing source material for writers like Appian. Nevertheless, the endeavour was not completely successful, and Appian's strongly Augustan account paradoxically puts us in a better position to identify alternative traditions. For this reason, C. is likewise interested in what he considers to be Appian's chief source for the period up to the death of Caesar: Seneca the Elder, whose own use of Asinius Pollio preserved much that was critical of Augustus. While this work was prudently reserved during his lifetime for family circulation only, C. argues that it may have furnished Seneca the Younger with a knowledge of the civil wars, scandals and conspiracies of Augustus' career, evident from his *De Brevitate vitae* (491–2).

The case of Seneca the Elder reflects Augustus' efforts to control the output of other writers as well as disseminating his own narrative, and C.'s treatment of this practice encompasses many familiar names: Maecenas, Livy, Asinius Pollio, Timagenes of Alexandria and Cremutius Cordus. Perhaps most likely to provoke debate are his arguments

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<sup>8</sup> In Canfora 2007.

<sup>9</sup> Powell 2009: 186–8.

concerning the publication of Cicero's letters. C. contends that the *ad Familiares* and the *ad Atticum* both emerged not only during Augustus' lifetime but under his close editorial control (422–34): a case made by Carcopino but not widely accepted.<sup>10</sup> Where Carcopino posited publication in the late 30s B.C. with a view to discrediting the memory of Cicero and the reputation of Antony, Canfora sees a more diffuse timescale and range of targets. For him, some letters, released during the civil wars, would have allowed Octavian to profit from Cicero's criticisms of Antony and gradual shift towards supporting Octavian, while others had greater potential if held as leverage over people who might prefer what they had written to Cicero to be forgotten: Munatius Plancus, Asinius Pollio, and Lepidus amongst others.

C.'s arguments are stimulating and deliberately provocative, often to great effect. The Augustan regime is clearly a live issue for him, presenting real lessons about modern political dissent and capitulation which he is happy to spell out. But bold arguments demand robust support. An author who considers Livy's knowledge of Cicero's grief for Tullia<sup>11</sup> sufficient evidence 'to put aside the modern fantasies according to which the letters to Atticus would remain unpublished... until the Neronian era' (423: 'per accantonare le fantasie moderne secondo cui le lettere ad Attico sarebbero rimaste inedite... fino all'età neroniana') needs to explain why Livy could not simply have learned of it orally from Cicero's surviving associates. C.'s insights into the culture of narrative and counter-narrative in the Augustan era might in the end have been more persuasive if tempered with a little caution.

**Havener** too is interested in the shaping of narratives, but in his case with specific reference to the construction of Augustus' military persona. While fully acknowledging the importance of Augustus' relationship with the soldiers, the primary focus of his analysis lies rather with the implications of that relationship in communications between emperor and senate. As much as possible, H. seeks to distinguish and examine both the senatorial and the Augustan sides of this discourse. This is far from easy, as the example of the *Ara Pacis* encapsulates, but his navigation of the relevant debates is astute and his efforts to reconstruct a two-way discourse are to be applauded.

On Augustus' side, H.'s principal contention is that he actively wanted the Roman political classes to remember that he had come to power through civil wars. His case is that Augustus needed the senate to understand that his power rested on military supremacy, and that he had permanently surpassed the traditional rules of senatorial competition, in order to

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<sup>10</sup> Carcopino 1947.

<sup>11</sup> Preserved in *Sen., Suas.* 6.22.

ensure that he remained unchallenged. For these reasons, his contributions to contemporary discourse were often deliberately provocative: for example, taking ‘imperator’ as a praenomen (11–17), implicitly characterising Actium as a civil victory over Antony (87–121), and presenting his recovery of the Parthian standards as though it were a military victory (253–75).

Key to all this was the notion of *parta victoriis pax*, and particularly its flexibility, which allowed either side of the equation to be emphasised according to circumstance. H. argues that the senate tended to focus on the outcome of peace, whereas Augustus foregrounded his external victories, which demonstrated his primacy over potential rivals and characterised him as the best protection against civil war. In this, of course, it helped that he had ensured new victories could be won only by him or his delegates. As H. points out, whether or not his *imperium proconsulare* was formally designated as *maius* during his lifetime, its superiority was guaranteed in practice by the division of the provinces (25–7). H. also captures evolutions in the discourse on both sides, suggesting in chapter IV that Augustus’ memoirs had emphasised vengeance for Caesar, but that by the time of the *Res Gestae* this had become overlaid with the idea of lawful fighter for the Roman state. Here, he adheres to Dobesch’s view that the tone of the memoirs can be reconstructed from Nicolaus of Damascus (154),<sup>12</sup> but will doubtless welcome Canfora’s case for reconstructing a similar picture from Appian.

H.’s monograph is a revised version of his 2013 Konstanz PhD thesis, which explains the thoroughness of his arguments but perhaps also the space sometimes devoted to demonstrating his mastery of established material. The inclusion of illustrations in the published version might have saved some description, but in fact there are none despite the highly visual character of many of H.’s key examples: the Ara Pacis, the Gemma Augustea, the Ephesian Pax cistophori of 28 BC and the Prima Porta statue. More surprisingly, there is also no discussion of how Augustus dealt with military defeats, despite H.’s argument that Augustus took credit for others’ victories through his position as the ultimate military commander. His equal facility in blaming others for disasters is surely the other side of this equation, but is referenced as a point of potential interest only in a single footnote (359, n. 361). Nevertheless, this is an important and accomplished publication which does much to illuminate both the military and the political underpinnings of the Augustan regime.

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<sup>12</sup> Dobesch 1978, countered – as Havener acknowledges – by Toher 2009.

### III EXHIBITIONS AND CONFERENCES

Our final and largest group of publications relate to events held to mark Augustus' bimillennium. They comprise edited volumes of various kinds, some extremely substantial in length and scope, and it will be necessary in most cases to signal highlights rather than attempting to convey the contents of each one in detail.

Perhaps the most ambitious exhibition of the bimillennial year was *Augusto*, a Franco-Italian collaboration which opened in October 2013 at the Scuderie del Quirinale in Rome. **La Rocca et al.**, its official catalogue, documents the major exhibits but also includes a series of short articles from an international panoply of scholars. The editors' introduction addresses the inevitable comparators: the imperialistic *Mostra Augustea della Romanità* (1937–1938, Rome) and the art-historical *Kaiser Augustus und die verlorene Republik* (1988, Berlin). Their aim was to convey the historical trajectory of Augustus' career, while the modest space available in the Scuderie favoured a focus on the figurative arts: particularly in Rome and Italy but incorporating some provincial responses.

The first part of the book continues with articles related to the exhibition's themes but not directly tied to its objects. Andrea Giardina likewise addresses the fascist past, reflecting on Augustus between his two bimillennia, though he perhaps over-states the success of the *Mostra Augustea*, whose visitor numbers were inflated by rail-ticket deals and compulsory group visits.<sup>13</sup> Nunzia Barbone delves into the complexities of Augustus' horoscope, rightly stressing that the chaotic condition of the calendar before Caesar's reforms created a perfect opportunity to align his birthday with the symbolically potent autumn equinox, even if in reality it fell only approximately around that time. La Rocca himself presents a good, clear account of changes to the city of Rome during Augustus' lifetime, nicely capturing the princeps' capacity to mould space and history to his advantage: for example by presenting historical rivals side by side amongst the *summi viri*, as though now reconciled in championing Augustus. He is attentive to new findings, ensuring for example that the plan of Augustus' forum includes the two recently-identified additional *exedrae* (95), but in this brief piece cannot always provide the explanatory context they need. This applies for example to his view, set out more fully elsewhere, that Agrippa's original Pantheon consisted of a round precinct.<sup>14</sup> Parisi Presicce's close reading of the *Prima Porta* statue and the many

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<sup>13</sup> Arthurs 2012: 122–4.

<sup>14</sup> La Rocca 2014: 125–32.

interpretations proposed for it is sure to include details new even to those who know it well. Partially-realised figures on the back strongly support his view that it is a copy of an original designed for viewing in the round, but I found his case for locating that original on top of the Mausoleum less convincing. His main arguments rest on the downwards sight-lines of the figures on the cuirass, suggesting that the statue was meant to be seen from below, and a series of parallels with themes in the *Res Gestae*. But of course a detailed work of art designed to honour Augustus will reflect his own self-fashioning, while any ordinary plinth would have placed the statue well above its viewers.

The second half of the book relates directly to the nine major rooms of the exhibition, presenting one or more papers on each followed by documentation and illustration of the exhibits. Andrew Wallace-Hadrill opens in characteristically stylish fashion on the Janus-like ambiguity of Octavian at the beginning of his career: both destroyer and saviour of republican values and simultaneously presenting a young face towards a new age and an old one towards the Republic. Other highlights include Paul Zanker's admirably clear account of Augustus' main portrait types, their relation to earlier Roman and Hellenistic art, and what we can deduce about their dissemination across the empire. Zanker gently queries some of Boschung's suggested dating for or identification of sub-types,<sup>15</sup> while his focus on the faces of Augustus' statues is usefully complemented by Matteo Cadario on their dress and context. Finally, Annalisa Lo Monaco considers the novelties presented by Augustus' deification, which differed from both Hellenistic precedents and the more immediate model of Caesar, and notes the unusual multiplicity of images of Augustus himself present at his funeral, made in different materials (wax, gold) and coming from different places (the senate, his house). This section of the catalogue also covers the 'Medinaceli' reliefs, brought together in this exhibition for the first time since their discovery. The illustrations are rather small, and the presentation of some in greyscale and others in colour does little to replicate the experience of seeing them as a set in the exhibition itself. But Thomas Schäfer in his description notes that he is preparing a fuller publication on them, so we can expect better coverage in due course.

In March 2014, the *Augusto* exhibition moved to the Grand Palais in Paris. Its catalogue, *Auguste*, mainly consists of French-language versions of the same articles as the Italian equivalent, so need not be reviewed here. **Luciani and Zuntow's** *Entre mots et marbre*, though, is a separate enterprise, presenting papers from a June 2014 symposium held

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<sup>15</sup> Boschung 1993.

to accompany the exhibition. An introduction by Luciani and a retrospective on both exhibition and symposium by Cécile Giroire and Daniel Roger explain that the symposium was organised to compensate for the impossibility of representing the literary climate of Augustan Rome within the exhibition. Giroire and Roger additionally offer an intelligent reflection on their own work, tackling questions such as whether Augustus shaped or was a product of his times, what we can make of the relationship between his power and the contemporary explosion of literary and visual arts and the interpretative problems caused by his role in shaping the language of power.

The rest of the book revolves primarily around the relationship between literature and politics, naturally from a range of perspectives but with consistent rigour and amounting to a fresh and coherent whole. Two papers, by Philippe Le Doze on poetry and Paul Marius Martin on historiography, are particularly programmatic. Le Doze argues that the new regime was obliged to show respect for *libertas*, and that in this climate, any instrumentalisation of the poets would have been dangerous and ineffective. Patrons encouraged and suggested but did not order, while poetic recusationes not only demonstrated independence but contributed to broader debates about genre. Meanwhile, some poets, knowing that Augustus liked to copy out examples from his reading, sought to influence the still-evolving principate by advancing their picture of the ideal leader. The overall case is compelling, but we might ask whether we can really trust Suetonius on Augustus' reading practices, especially given that – as Giuseppe Zecchini argues later in the volume – he probably hoped Hadrian would likewise draw exempla from his own text.

Le Doze notes that the relative freedom enjoyed by poets may not have extended to the more politicised arena of historiography. Here, Martin picks up, arguing that while exiles and book-burning were rare, the pressures on historians can be detected in anxieties around certain topics and decisions to withhold publication. In this, social and political status was a factor, so that the aristocratic Asinius Pollio could write about the civil wars with impunity, but Titus Labienus and perhaps even Livy could not. Here, M. has arrived independently at a similar position to Canfora (465–74), arguing that Livy probably chose to suspend publication around A.D. 10, perhaps sensing that he had pushed Augustus' tolerance far enough.<sup>16</sup> I found myself less convinced, though, by M.'s suggestion that Livy instead encouraged Claudius to tackle the same period: surely an even riskier move, given the potential for accusations of interference in the imperial household? Another possibility might

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<sup>16</sup> Cf. Tac., Ann. 4.34.

be that Livy responded prudently after seeing Claudius' efforts discouraged. Meanwhile, Bernard Mineo examines the exemplary weight of Livy's earlier books, suggesting that Camillus in particular may have been intended to embody the ideal reforming yet republican princeps.

Elsewhere, Bénédicte Delignon suggests that Horace drew on archaic Greek lyric to create a new form of erotic poetry compatible with Augustus' moral legislation. Francesca Rohr Vio demonstrates the impact of Augustus' marriage to Livia on contemporary pamphleteering, as well as the historical tradition around Hortensius' analogous marriage to Cato's former wife, Marcia. Olivier Devillers shows how Nicolaus of Damascus constructs Aug as an ideal head of household, relating this to Herod's court and similar themes in Nicolaus' other works, and thus taking it very much as its own text rather than a paraphrase of Augustus' memoirs.<sup>17</sup> Isabelle Cogitore shows that Augustan-period texts preserved in Seneca the Elder's *Controversiae* and *Suasoriae* blame Antony for the civil wars and cast Augustus as a literary connoisseur who allowed freedom of expression. As she notes, the rhetorical and pedagogical context counsel caution: the lost *Historiae* might paint a very different picture. But I would have welcomed some discussion of Seneca's excerption practices and the exemplary potential of the extracts on literary freedom: a topic central to her treatment of Seneca the Younger on Augustus under Nero. The volume closes with Emmanuèle Caire on the Christian legend of Augustus from John Malalas to the foundation legend of Santa Maria in Ara Coeli, showing how and why it evolved out of multiple distinct traditions.

**Günther's** *Augustus und Rom* likewise originated in a conference, *Augusto e Roma, 2000 Anni Dopo*, held in Rome in September 2014. Its editor expresses the hope in his opening chapter that it will be different from other bimillennial treatments, and it is, but largely for the wrong reasons. He has taken the opportunity presented by his editorship, not only of the book but of the series to which it belongs, to set out his view that most western observers are in denial about our own history of quasi-fascist imperialism, and thus in turn unable to understand Augustus' actions. He sees the Roman Republic as an exploitative aristocracy and argues that Augustus in overthrowing it was practising a pragmatic *realpolitik* worthy of his preferred heroes, Stalin and Mao, who like Augustus understood that violence was necessary in order to impose peace. Augustus has been compared to Stalin before, but not usually in admiring tones, and Günther's case is fatally undermined by loaded assertions

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<sup>17</sup> With Toher 2009, but contra Dobesch 1978 and Havener (reviewed here).

(the west is 'ignorant' and 'arrogant'; deaths resulting from Mao's Great Leap Forward are 'tragic errors'), superficial engagement with Augustus' career, and references to conspiracy-theory blogs and YouTube videos. It makes the rest of the volume hard to take seriously; a problem compounded by persistent errors of spelling, format and punctuation including two misspelt authors' names in the table of contents. Nevertheless, the contributors appear to have put forward their work in good faith, and deserve to be reviewed.

Eight more papers follow: three in German, four in Italian and one in French. The first three deal with Augustan poetry, starting with Paolo Fedeli on book four of Propertius' *Elegies*. Fedeli disagrees with those who have seen it as ironic and subversive, partly on the grounds of content, as the book foregrounds aetiologies of Augustan buildings and puts the words of a perfect Roman matrona into the mouth of Cornelia, but also on grounds of style: for Fedeli, both Propertius and Augustus are innovative traditionalists. Hans-Peter Syndikus follows with an overview of Augustan poetry. Setting aside the question of sincerity towards Augustus, he focuses on the poets' construction as prophetic vates and the relationship between Roman morality and Greek philosophy in their work. A second piece by Günther on the paradoxically apolitical nature of many successful political poets is better than his opening, but it is still striking that he cites almost nobody besides himself. He concludes that there have been figures at certain moments in world history without whom cultures would have perished, amongst whom Augustus was 'the greatest in European history' (159: 'die größte der europäischen Geschichte').

A change of topic is marked by Detlef Liebs, who offers a clear if somewhat descriptive account of Augustus' activities in the legal sphere and their development by later emperors. John Scheid tackles Augustus' 'politique religieuse' (a term which he acknowledges is anachronistic), noting the same innovative traditionalism found by Fedeli in Propertius. He discusses a treaty inscription published in 2005 which may indicate that Caesar revived the fetial priests, but otherwise largely re-treads ground covered elsewhere.<sup>18</sup> Alessandro Stavru offers an intriguing parallel reading between the Prima Porta statue and a passage from Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, in which Socrates converses with a painter, a sculptor and an armourer. Stavru's case is that these are the very three arts which come together in the painted, cuirassed statue. But he does not always distinguish clearly enough between the statue itself and the portrait-type named after it, and restricts his comments about the cuirass to the relationship between decoration and functionality, missing the potential

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<sup>18</sup> Scheid 2005; Scheid 2009.



raised by the passage to address its skin-tight fit. We finish with two papers on modern philosophy. Valerio Rocco Lozano looks at how Hegel used the Roman transition from Republic to empire to argue that citizens deprived of external political freedom must retreat to an inner liberty. Ivo de Gennaro and Gino Zaccaria examine Heidegger's thinking on the pursuit of happiness, informed by both Augustus' *perpetua felicitas* and Augustine's *beatitudo*. The volume's diversity is likely to mean that most readers consult it for individual papers rather than as a whole, and certainly its value lies in the work of its contributors rather than its editor.

**Busetto and Bedin's** *Sulle Tracce di Augusto* consists of six papers from a conference of the same name held in Vicenza in October 2014. The first four are concerned with Augustan high politics and ideology. Lorenzo De Vecchi begins by examining fascist uses of Augustus in the 1930s, Syme's contemporaneous assessment and the ongoing legacy of both. The body is thorough and well-supported, but the article closes by suggesting that, free of this 'ideological conflict' (27: 'lotta ideologica'), we can now recognise both the dark and the bright sides ('lato oscuro', 'lato luminoso') of Augustus. This recalls the similar language of von den Hoff, Stroh and Zimmermann, and presents the same problems. Irene Somà moves on to the Augustan regime's intensive use of anniversary festivals. Her particular interest is the accommodation of imperial women, and especially Livia, whose birthday was sometimes marked alongside Augustus' and sometimes in its own right. She might, though, have done more to acknowledge the impact of changes in calendar culture on our surviving evidence. It is not particularly surprising that Livia's birthday appears on only two Italian calendars, given that it only began to be celebrated just as the Augustan fashion for them abated.

Sara Lenzi addresses polychromy in Augustan art, particularly on the walls of the Aula del Colosso in Augustus' forum, the Ara Pacis and the Prima Porta statue. As she shows, the use of colour expressed status, conveyed narrative and clarified detail. But she misses Squire's point that leaving both the skin and the ground of the cuirass unpainted on the Prima Porta statue creates a deliberate ambiguity between the two.<sup>19</sup> In the fourth paper, probably the highlight of the collection, Alessandro Roncaglia examines Augustus' promotion of potential successors. He approaches this not through the usual frame of a frustrated hunt for a blood-heir, but with a view to each candidate's capacity to secure

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<sup>19</sup> Squire 2013.

support from key sections of the Roman political classes, allowing him to show the importance of staunch republicans in particular to Augustus' strategy.

The final two papers consider the broader impact of the Augustan age on the local Regio X Venetia et Histria. Marco Rocco explores the role of the region and its principal city of Aquileia in the conquest and transformation of the upper and middle Danube. While the area was certainly used as a military base – including by Augustus and Tiberius in 11 B.C. – Rocco rightly argues that trade connections were at least as important, before examining the gradual construction of the Danube itself as a cultural dividing line. His account, though, is rather reliant on literary over archaeological evidence, and treats 'Romanisation' as an inevitable consequence of conquest without stopping to discuss who drove it and why. Filippo Boscolo closes by using the epigraphic corpus of Este (ancient Ateste) to examine the impact of veteran settlement there after Actium. His key case that the long-term effects were more economic than political appears convincing, but he could do more to spell out its rationale. The appearance of named artisanal professions (wool-carding, fishing, cooking, selling straw) on tombstones in the early first century A.D. might for example reflect the emergence of specialised activity in an area previously characterised by agricultural subsistence, but Boscolo goes no further than noting their existence. This is rather characteristic of the collection as a whole, with the result that it will be important to those working on the individual topics covered, but does not amount to a compelling overall take on Augustus and his age.

As **Baltrusch and Wendt** explain in their introduction, *Der Erste* aspires to share with a wider public the fruits of a lecture series held from October 2014 to February 2015 at the Freie Universität, Berlin.<sup>20</sup> Chapters encompass the principate and its political underpinnings, the imperial family, material culture, geographical space, poetry and post-classical receptions. Though this does seem to have been arranged intentionally, three devote particular attention to *Res Gestae* 26, where Augustus claims to have pacified Germania as far as the mouth of the Elbe: a passage of obvious interest for a German audience. Werner Eck's chapter is devoted to the *Res Gestae*, covering the history of its discovery and scholarship, its nature and the mechanisms of its dissemination. On the pacification of Germany, he notes that the Varus disaster five years earlier makes Augustus' claim seem strange, but that *pacare* only means the area had been subjected to Roman rule, while

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<sup>20</sup> I was asked to co-author a chapter on screen portrayals of Augustus for this volume after the lecture series had been completed, and (with apologies to my collaborator) therefore omit our piece from this review.

Augustus' orders to reclaim it suggest that the defeat was seen only as a temporary setback. Indeed, the *Res Gestae* reveals Tiberius' later claim that Augustus had left instructions to keep the empire within the Rhine as a deliberate reinterpretation. Later in the volume, Klaus Geus uses the same passage to illuminate Augustus' claim to have subjected the whole world to Roman power. As he shows, most Romans understood the world not cartographically but through highly-schematised mental models divided into cardinal sectors. *Res Gestae* 26 shows how Augustus used this framework to portray his imperium as extending to the far edges of the world, circumscribed only by the Ocean. And this is the point of connection with Christian Wendt's chapter, for whom this is one of many examples of Octavian / Augustus' efforts to portray himself as master of the sea.

Another persistent theme is legitimacy. Egon Flaig draws an important distinction between the legitimacy of a political system and the legitimacy of a ruler in that system. As he shows, once established, the legitimacy of the principate was never seriously questioned, but Augustus and his successors were only accepted through consensus rituals directed towards the plebs, army and senate. Florian Sittig examines the tension between the role of family members in supporting the princeps and the indivisibility of his power. Having legitimate successors constituted a guarantee against civil war, but Augustus' claim to have restored the Republic meant he could not officially institutionalise a dynastic system. Meanwhile, adoption was a double-edged sword, allowing him to designate heirs in the absence of a son or brother but also creating the potential for rival claims within the imperial household. Finally, in the post-classical section of the book, Stefan Esders considers the relationship between power and titles in Carolingian and Byzantine claims to legitimacy. His account of the links between ancient, western medieval and Byzantine titulature is admirably clear, but some comment on how much Charlemagne's use of the title 'Augustus' related to the first princeps personally, rather than to the principate as an institution, would have been welcome.

Other highlights include Tonio Hölscher on expressions of *consensus universorum* in material culture and how we can explain their unprecedented ubiquity even in everyday and domestic contexts. He argues that the avoidance of exclusively political imagery made the language of the principate accessible: thus *Victoria* could signify happiness and success for ordinary citizens on New Year's lamps just as well as Augustus' victories. Felix Mundt also considers the political resonances of allusions to Greek predecessors in Horace and Ovid, suggesting that both used them to critical effect, but that Horace in particular eventually tired of the approach. The lavishly-illustrated coffee-table format of the book reflects its

orientation towards a general audience, but none of its authors talk down to their readers and its research seminar origins ensure plenty of fresh thinking throughout.

Finally, **Flecker et al.** presents twenty-four papers originating from a colloquium of the same name held at the Universität Tübingen in November 2014, most in German but including one each in English, French and Italian. The collection focuses squarely on visual and material culture, but as the editors explain in their introduction the approaches and topics represented are deliberately diverse. One goal of both conference and collection was to explore alternatives to the heavy emphasis on socio-political interpretations of Augustan art which characterised German scholarship from the late 1980s onwards. Rather than champion a particular alternative approach, though, the editors consciously threw open the doors to the widest possible range of contemporary thinking by scholars from all stages in their careers.

For the most part, individual authors focus on close readings of tightly-defined material, but dialogue between the papers also develops some strong overall themes. One, reflecting the recent ‘sensory turn’ in Classical scholarship, is an interest in the visual effects of colour and light. As Andreas Grüner argues in relation to Augustus’ forum, colour and light can contribute a great deal to the emotive impact of a monument, but follow a different logic from sculpture and inscriptions which has not always been appreciated. Richard Posamentir makes a similar point about the visual impact of gilded bronze building inscriptions, which convey a supplementary meaning alongside the words spelt out, while Martin Spannagel returns to Augustus’ forum to argue for the use of special effects on the statue housed in the Aula del Colosso. Working from his own earlier argument that this represented Divus Iulius rather than Augustus,<sup>21</sup> openings in the Aula’s rear wall, and the known use of light in other religious contexts, he argues that it was surmounted with an image of the sidus Iulium containing a real living flame: a case unlikely ever to be proven, but attractive and ingenious nonetheless.

Other major themes which emerge naturally from the volume’s concern with material culture include the relative input of Augustus and others into the visual language of the period, provincial responses to events and motifs originating in Rome, and later responses to the same. The first is central to all four papers in the volume’s section on numismatics (by Reinhard Wolters, Maria Molinari, Bernard Weissler and Alexa Küter), while Weissler also explores how provincial moneyers understood the imperial regime’s presentation of Germanicus. Remaining in the provincial sphere, parallel papers on a sculpted tropaeum from

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<sup>21</sup> Spannagel 1999: 300–16.

Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges by Jean-Luc Schenck-David and Thomas Schäfer touch on similar themes while also demonstrating the volume's spirit of diverse perspectives. Schenck-David interprets the tail of a sea-creature on the tropaeum's naval grouping as that of a tritones and assumes that Augustus himself sponsored the monument, while Schäfer sees the same tail as belonging to Scylla and the whole as a local show of loyalty. The task of deciding between the two is left as an exercise for the reader, which might in some contexts come across as a lack of coherence. Here, though, such differences are clearly the result of conscious editorial policy rather than oversight, and the result is a stimulating and lively volume which will surely prove to have set some important future research themes in motion.

#### IV AUGUSTUS AT HIS BIMILLENNIUM

Augustan studies is a diverse field, but the most striking shared characteristic of these publications is their interest in reception topics. Almost all give some consideration to Augustus' later legacy or modern resonances, while eight of the twelve dedicate at least one full chapter to the topic. This is no great surprise given the general direction of Classical scholarship over the last twenty years, but the connection with Augustus' bimillennium is probably more than coincidental. Marking as it did two thousand years of accumulated responses and reappropriations, it was an obvious prompt to address them directly. Fascist Italy continues to loom large in this context, but the scope has broadened noticeably to include later ancient authors and emperors, Christian mythologisation, medieval rulers, Renaissance humanism, scholarly historiography and film.

Where historical topics are concerned, various authors cover Augustus' formal political position, but none radically reinterprets it, and indeed it tends to come up only because it needs explaining in the context of a broader treatment. Rather, the most productive debates today revolve around the dynamics of the relationship between Augustus as the dominant political operator and various other groups within the society he inhabited, as mediated through political actions, literature and material culture. While some tendency to cast him as a Great Man who shaped his world more or less alone persists, especially when writing for non-experts, the capacity of others to collaborate in, influence or resist the Augustan project sits at the heart of contemporary thinking across multiple areas of study and is unlocking exciting new readings.

Writers' own opinions of Augustus also tend to be expressed most overtly in works aimed at the general public, but even in scholarly overviews a position can usually be

detected: including those which claim neutrality. No-one today can ignore or deny the brutality deployed by Augustus, especially but not exclusively during the triumviral period, but there is plenty of room for different interpretations of his goals and motivations. Some see him as interested only in power (e.g. Hurlet, Canfora) while others award more credit for good administration or peace and stability once he got it (e.g. Goldsworthy, von den Hoff, Stroh and Zimmerman, Günther). Much of Augustus' persistent fascination, of course, lies in the fact that we can never reliably distinguish between political expediency and genuine philanthropy when assessing any of his actions. Perhaps for this reason, ambivalence, ambiguity and metamorphosis are major key-words across all twelve books. Augustus at his bimillennium remains doggedly inscrutable.

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