

EGeA

VOL.6

MICHEL ABERSON, MARIA CRISTINA BIELLA,
MASSIMILIANO DI FAZIO,
MANUELA WULLSCHLEGER (eds)

***NOS SUMUS ROMANI
QUI FUIMUS ANTE...***
**MEMORY OF
ANCIENT ITALY**



PETER LANG



In 2011 Michel Aberson, Maria Cristina Biella, Massimiliano Di Fazio and Manuela Wullschleger (two Italians and two Swiss, two archaeologists and two historians of antiquity) met in Geneva at the Fondation Hardt pour l'étude de l'Antiquité classique and decided to undertake a challenging project together: to organize three conferences on the peoples of central Italy, taking into consideration the key milestones in their history, from their independence, through their relations with Rome and ending with the (re)construction of their identities within the Roman world.

Underpinning the project, which immediately found the support of many colleagues and institutions, was the idea of bringing historians, archaeologists, linguists and specialists of Latin literature together to collaboratively create a comprehensive picture of these significantly multifaceted and sometimes even conflicting topics.

The present volume is the outcome of the third conference of the series *E pluri-bus unum? Italy from the Pre-Roman fragmentation to the Augustan Unity*, held at the University of Oxford in October 2016; it deals with the specific moments of conscious rediscovery of conquered peoples' contribution to Roman culture from the late Republic and during the Empire. These influences can be recognized particularly during the Late Republic and Augustan period, and the final outcome is the formation of a connective tissue, which can be described as the cement of the "unaccomplished identity" of ancient Italy.

The volume investigates the issue from different perspectives in order to avoid the adoption of a Romanocentric perspective.

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CHRISTOPHER SMITH

The Augustan Invention of Italy Reconsidered

This trilogy has had clear aims from inception¹. It has sought to set archaeology, the literary record, and indeed the epigraphic record, in conversation with each other, across Italian history from the emergence of recognisably distinct ethnic groups in the 6th century BC to the apparent amalgamation of the peninsula into a single citizenship, a single narrative, around the time of Augustus. This has been a substantial undertaking, and has been achieved through a well thought through curation of pairings and groups, intended to maximise the eventual coverage and encourage debate. Those privileged to have been at all the conferences will have participated in an unusually rich and focused attempt to understand the *identità incompiuta*, to use Giardina's phrase, of Italy².

Inevitably, as the chronology has moved on, the sources have changed, the methodologies have changed, and the nature of the debate has shifted. This brief introduction will reflect on what has linked and individuated the conferences, and may be expected to continue here. I want to pick out some of the major challenges that have been laid down for us so far. Specific to this conference, Andrew Wallace-Hadrill's brilliant *Rome's Cultural Revolution*³ is going to be unavoidable, since it is far and away the most significant recent work in the area, so I shall reflect a little on the impact of that volume. I also want to look at some

of the ways in which the Augustan bimillennium was celebrated in Italy.

I also want to engage very directly with Mario Torelli, who has provided two very sharp reflections on the contemporary practice of Italian history⁴. It is not *pietas* to say that we need to take them seriously; Torelli asks a very specific question about the nature of the way in which we conduct the enterprise of ancient history, and we ought not to miss the opportunity to try to answer.

In Geneva in 2013, the focus was driven by geography and I suppose the presiding academic deity in some respects was Stéphane Bourdin, whose massive volume, *Les peuples de l'Italie préromaine*, was fairly new on our shelves⁵. Looking at each *nomen* as we did then, from a historical and an archaeological approach, demonstrated the difficulty of bringing the different evidence sources together. It is not that evidence does not exist – quite the opposite. Yet the obvious methodological obstacle is that the evidence either points in different directions or else the contamination of the one by the other is inevitable. This is not a laboratory experiment in which one can control for the other; we look for the Faliscans where the sources tell us to look for them.

In Rome in 2014, the focus was on the cultural axes along which we can trace shifting

1 The previous volumes are *EPU* 1 and *EPU* 2.

2 GIARDINA 2012.

3 WALLACE-HADRILL 2008.

4 TORELLI 2014.

5 BOURDIN 2014.

behaviours in response to Roman imperial success. Politics, language, city and countryside, religion and artistic activity took the foreground. Greg Woolf's *Becoming Roman* and Andrew Wallace-Hadrill's *Rome's Cultural Revolution*, two books which are at pains to avoid models of top-down Roman influence, were cited in almost every chapter⁶. What connects the two volumes, and why are we concluding with memories?

One way of reading this collection of work is that it represents a long and difficult struggle with a teleological reading of Italian history. 'In their beginning is their end', to reverse T.S. Eliot. The emergence of the distinct Italian groupings, each generating their identities in reaction to external and internal pressures, can be read as the first step on a path that will lead to a rich cultural mix, but one particulate in politics, and essentially fissive. This landscape was therefore ready to be overwhelmed by a culturally less impressive but militarily unstoppable force, and once military force had been successfully applied, the other Italians gradually became indistinguishable from the Romans (and vice versa) and disappeared into a universal cultural *koine*. The end point is Augustus' *tota Italia*, a fiction which captures previous fictions and subordinates them to an overarching narrative of powerless nostalgia and bucolic tranquillity. Distant echoes of the much more politically dynamic processes of ethnogenesis become the dilute traces of a Proustian remembered past, passion recollected in tranquillity.

Italian history can be read like that, but it is not evidently the way we want to read it. Much more messiness has been introduced along the way. Bourdin and the first volume of the proceedings show ethnogenesis in action but they are not and cannot be entirely successful in differentiating between genuine traces of identity formation and a much later narrative. At the same time, the sceptics have to face some surprising coherences, as recently demonstrated by Emma Blake's brilliant account of Late Bronze Age Italy,

where her careful analysis shows congruences of distinct circuits of exchange evident in the archaeological record, and subsequent population groups described in the historical accounts⁷.

If we struggle a little with the emergence of the patchwork of groups across Italy in the 8th to 4th centuries BC, we have real difficulties with what is loosely termed Romanization. Ed Bispham begins the volume by raising the suspicion that Romanization can mean anything or nothing and therefore may lead to a waste of breath. But the processes which underpin this term have enough puff to last over 400 pages.

On any reading the Social War is a massive bump in the seemingly steady trend towards the unitary Italy of the Augustan period; it is also a controversial one. It is discussed by Cappelletti and Raggi with reference to magistracies and citizenship, but it is otherwise a strangely mute player in the second volume of *E Pluribus Unum*. Apart from the chapters mentioned, it is only Bispham and Torelli who really worry about the Social War. Noting Benelli's suggestion that the mid-first century shift to Latin might reflect the passing of the Social War generation, and emphasising the asymmetry between Rome and the rest of Italy, Bispham still (rightly) stresses continuities⁸. Mario Torelli however is rather more definitive – the Marsic War is the 'atto finale della resistenza italica'⁹.

Andrew Wallace-Hadrill also thinks that the Social War was important – describing it as destroying 'the basis of the dialectic, between Roman and non-Roman, that had characterised Italy for at least two centuries, a dialectic which presupposed, and thereby promoted, a separation of identities'¹⁰. Saying the Social War is a break however, especially when what follows is a slide into cultural homogeneity, is interesting. If when we arrive at Augustus we are dealing with memories, the implication must be that the action is already past.

And indeed to a very large extent this is the argument, as I understand it, that permeates

6 WOOLF 2000; WALLACE-HADRILL 2008.

7 BLAKE 2014.

8 BISPHAM 2016.

9 TORELLI 2016.

10 WALLACE-HADRILL 2008, p. 81.

Rome's Cultural Revolution. The book posits at the outset a kind of intellectual bilingualism as a model to explain the earlier capacity of Italians to maintain several different identities. In place of hybridity or fusion, instead we have more or less instantaneous and highly individual code-switching, where an individual can move across identities at will and according to ability.

However, if by the Augustan period everyone (excepting some Greeks in Naples) is speaking Latin, wearing the same clothes and buying the same garden furniture, then there is no code to switch – at least not in this game. And there is some echo perhaps of this critique in the last chapter of *Rome's Cultural Revolution*, which as Osborne and Vout noted in their review, turns from agents to waves of fashion. «It is as if the canny individuals who worked so hard to control the material culture others are allowed to use, have given up, taken to the couch and resigned themselves to a decadent life of passivity» they write¹¹. This is inspired by a chapter in which Wallace-Hadrill produces a mail order catalogue of luxuries affordable even in small town Herculaneum as the trickle-down effect of conquest brings everything from candelabra to casseroles into the cities of Italy.

The chapter is in many ways brilliant and I think Osborne and Vout's critique is rather unfair, partly because it is difficult to unearth individual volition from within a mass cultural production phenomenon. How do we disentangle one person's desire for Arretine ware from another's on a phenomenological basis? The point is that the limitation of choice limits expression too. But I do agree that there is something mildly dispiriting about the catalogue of fashionable must-haves, as if the great passions of the late 2nd and early 1st century BC have come to this – from the Social War to the ancient equivalent of late night TV shopping. This volume has at some level to deal with the disjunction between the beginning and the end of the 1st century BC in terms of the function of Italia itself.

History re-enacted not as farce but as fashion strikes an intriguing postmodern note, and it takes me to Mario Torelli's lament about our loss of the grand theoretical traction. In *Entre archéologie et histoire: dialogues sur divers peuples de l'Italie préromaine*, Torelli took us to task for the speed with which we jettisoned ethnicity as a concept in the face of its misuse as a term¹². I think that this derives from the concern that we make protohistory into nothing more than the shadow projection of an antiquarian fantasy – indeed Torelli ends precisely by talking about the sorts of false Augustan age memories which will preoccupy us through this volume. We should indeed perhaps worry about the repeated downdating of our ethnogenetic myths, because we could evacuate a historical dynamic from the earlier period, although I think there is enough in the archaeological chapters of that volume to give a strong and vital sense of communities which had the vitality to construct their own identities, whatever identities were then thrust upon them by ancient ethnography. And this is important, because not much of 4th to 2nd century BC Italian history would make sense, as Bispham notes, without the *nomen* as a driving force.

Torelli's reflections in *L'Italia centrale* are rather more troubling I think¹³. The volume offers a kind of cultural bricolage of scattered ideas on Romanization, and some tendency towards models of Italic agency as local phenomena which are analysed to reveal the faint traces of a creative brief independent response to Roman power. This stands in place of a totalizing Roman discourse draped heavily across the peninsula. Torelli seems to me to pose the question of relevance – what can this model say to us now?

Previous models – the benevolent Roman empire or the post-colonial models of resistance which drove a more robust critique of Roman power – mapped directly to modern world concerns. Can the microhistories of cults in central Italy or the mapping of personal relationships between elite families provide a

11 OSBORNE & VOUT 2010, p. 240.

12 TORELLI 2014.

13 TORELLI 2016.

model of equivalent historical weight? Are there too many bits and pieces and not enough theory? And if the theory gets us no further than worrying about the choice of lamp fitting in private houses in the Bay of Naples, is it worth the effort?

I have some residual sympathy for the grand theory approach, and also for Torelli's concern that it has slid silently from fashion, but also some disagreement. In 1990 Quentin Skinner edited a volume *The Return of Grand Theory in the Human Sciences*, in which he put forward Hans-Georg Gadamer, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Thomas Kuhn, John Rawls, Jürgen Habermas, Louis Althusser, Claude Lévi-Strauss and Fernand Braudel as the new heirs to Marxism, psychoanalysis and utopian social philosophy¹⁴. It is arguable that without Braudel there would be no Horden/Purcell, and connectivity is the ineluctable backdrop to the trade networks and spectra of influence from Rome outwards and back again. The obvious missing figure is Gramsci – not part of the generation which Skinner chose to emphasise, but influential on many of them. One could fit a lot of late Republican Roman history into a Gramscian framework. Cultural hegemony would I think do much to help us explain on a theoretical level some of the changes, even in material culture, which are the subject of the debate between Wallace-Hadrill, Osborne and Vout¹⁵.

So we could be better at making our theory more explicit, but Torelli's second point is about how our history changes the world, and that is trickier. First, it is legitimate to ask whether we should expect to have that level of impact as a model. It is not only that European models in a global world look parochial, or that pre-industrial models in technologically transformed contexts might look quaint¹⁶; there is also a question as to whether historians and archaeologists should shoehorn their analysis into politically relevant packages. If however we accept that history is a political act, we cannot avoid the consequences. The

second argument one can make was foreshadowed in *L'Italia centrale* by Loredana Cappelletti, who defended the use of detailed case studies in order to avoid being driven by rigid models¹⁷.

In the flood of Augustus-related activity around the bimillennium of 2014, at least some of the attention focused on Italy, and I wanted to pick up some of these case studies to see whether they have anything to tell us about the subject at hand. The first is the spectacular Campanian celebration, with a two-volume catalogue on Augustus' impact on the region where he was born. With the immense riches of the Naples museum at its heart, but also including 'itineraries' around relevant Augustus related sites, this was a more general demonstration of the remarkable impact of the Augustan 'model' in art and architecture which complemented Eugenio La Rocca's Scuderie blockbuster, with its focus on portraiture¹⁸.

The richness of the Campanian experience was perhaps most notable for the focus on religious commemorations and for the diversity – the sober picture of Augustan mono-cultural Romanness simply has no place here. Here we see – beyond doubt – the kind of conspicuous consumption which Wallace-Hadrill identified. For our purposes, perhaps what is most striking is the new fragment of a festival calendar from Cuma, which needs to be considered alongside the better known Feriale Cumanum.

Here is the new text:

----- | ex[ta? ---] | lec(tisternium) Iov[i ---] | sum+[---]
 | Vesta t(---) f(---) mola sa[lsa ---] | Augusti Caesa[ris
 ---] | vinum[---] | uti t(---) f(---) ext[a ? ---] | ceter[---]
 | Vešta[---] | -----

It appears to come from a public building, and offers ritual prescriptions for the cult of Vesta. It offers the earliest attested epigraphic reference to the *mola salsa*, a toasted grain with salt, which according to Pliny went back to the time of Numa, and which

14 SKINNER 1990.

15 I explore this further in a forthcoming essay.

16 In fact at least for the imperial period, the relevance of the Roman model is being emphasised rather more at the moment, especially in models based on new

institutional economics; see for example the essays in SCHEIDEL *et al.* 2007.

17 CAPPELLETTI 2016.

18 ROMA 2014; LA ROCCA 2013. See also GOODMAN 2018 for a review of this and other Augustan bimillennial volumes.

had to be prepared by the Vestals with care and on specific days. It would be scattered over the *exta* and they would be cooked and left for the gods. This would then fit with the mention of a *lectisternium*.

Now if we then move to the *feriale Cumanum*, we see the same strong connection to Vesta, as well as a list of relevant Augustan dates, including his first consulship.

January 7	On the day on which Caesar [Augustus] first assumed the <i>fasces</i> , a <i>supplicatio</i> to Jupiter Sempiternus.
January 16	On the day on which Caesar was named Augustus, a <i>supplicatio</i> to Augustus.
March 6	On the day on which Caesar was elected <i>pontifex Maximus</i> , a <i>supplicatio</i> to Vesta and the public gods, the <i>Penates</i> of the citizens of Rome.
April 14	On the day on which Caesar first achieved victory, a <i>supplication</i> to August Victory
April 16	On the day on which Caesar was first named <i>Imperator</i> , a <i>supplicatio</i> to <i>Felicitatis Imperi</i> [Good Fortune of the Empire].
May 24	The birthday of Germanicus Caesar, a <i>supplicatio</i> to Vesta
[A day between the 4th and the 22nd of September]	On which the army of Lepidus gave itself over to Caesar
October 7	The birthday of Drusus Caesar, a <i>supplication</i> to Vesta
October 18 or 19	On the day on which Caesar took up the <i>toga virilis</i> , a <i>supplicatio</i> to <i>Spes</i> [Hope] and <i>Iuventus</i> [Youth]
November 16	The birthday of Tiberius Caesar, a <i>supplicatio</i> to Vesta.

As Beth Severy shows, this interweaves community and family gods, rituals and events, and specifically at Cumae, with its dense religious connections, it begins to tie in to the ways in which Augustus connected his own house at Rome to the cult of Vesta¹⁹. Augustus shares his house with Apollo and Vesta, and in the city of the Cumaean Sibyl, Vesta is clearly identified as a partner and recipient of worship, and worship which has an archaic feel. I am put in mind of the Alban Vestals, surely of imperial date, whom we find around Latium, and here in general we see the inventiveness of the rich amalgam of archaism and affirmation of the new order²⁰.

The sumptuousness of the Rome and Naples exhibitions is exceptional, and only some of that is due to the exceptional circumstances of the Vesuvian cities. More common are the scant but interesting finds at Venafrum, an Augustan colony on the borders of Latium, Campania and Samnium. Mosaic floors, evidence of an Augustan theatre, the epigraphy of euergetism, and the sense of an upswing in prosperity all mean that Venafrum confirms much of what Wallace-Hadrill described in *Rome's Cultural Revolution*. There is evidence of the reorganization of the urban plan in response to the consolidation of wealth, and here at least it is possible – perhaps – to see the continuing influence of a pre-Social War family, the Papii, into the Augustan period and beyond, with the highest honour of a consulship in AD 9²¹.

A very similar story can be told from the evidence at Formiae, where another well produced and published exhibition gathers the scanty fragments to give a sense of the Augustan period in a town on the Appian Way. The late Republic had already seen the development of a lively villa culture which continues into the imperial period. One villa has a bust of Augustus; and near the forum a collection of sculptures was found which represented the imperial family. Fragments of frescoes have also been found²².

19 SEVERY 2010.

20 On the Alban Vestals see *CIL* VI, 712.

21 RICCI 2015.

22 CASSIERI 2014.

Formiae is interesting because it was also closely associated with several figures who feature in the transition to the imperial world. Cicero was buried here, and his tomb was visited – even if we cannot prove that it was the monument which is now claimed to be his. Munatius Plancus, a nimble turncoat, was buried in a better attested and preserved monument and Lucius Sempronius Atratinus, part of whose funerary inscription found its way into the campanile of the cathedral. Both are thought to have imitated the Mausoleum of Augustus. But highly localized action is also visible – for instance in the new early 1st century AD inscription of a magister Augustalis²³:

*P(ublius) Luc[r]etius P(ubli) [l(ibertus)] Phalla[eus],
| mag(ister) Au[g]ust(alis); | Caec[il?]ia C(ai)
l(iberta) Th[a]lis v(ivit); | [---] C(ai) l(iberta) Nysa
v(ivit) | -----?*

(In passing, another phenomenon perhaps similar to the Alban Vestals is the invention probably in the 2nd century AD of a *rex sacrorum* at Formiae, and an *ordo Regalium* for ex office holders).

A common thread through many of these local celebrations in the Augustan period – and in the bimillennium of Augustus' death – are theatres and amphitheatres. At Lecce for instance, the theatre can now be potentially dated to the Augustan period owing to the find of some clay tablets with Augustan style heads and garlands. A bust of Octavian was situated somewhere in the theatre, and a later 1st century AD loricated statue of an emperor has been rediscovered and relocated²⁴.

For northern Italy, Rambaldi has tried to redate a loricated statue from Regium Lepidi (Reggio) showing the return of the Parthian standards as Augustan, and it would not be entirely surprising if its location was also in a theatre, since the parallels are drawn with a theatre statue at Butrint, but we have no archaeological evidence of such a building²⁵. A similar concern with dating led Massimiliano David to insist that the famous

Ravenna frieze must be Augustan²⁶. There is a very interesting contrast between the volume of *Antichità Altoadriatiche* which commemorated Augustus and the astonishing 2015/16 exhibition, *Brixia e le genti del Po*, which went out of its way to avoid mentioning Augustus, insisting on the Republican development of the same region²⁷.

What made the Brixia show so fascinating for our purposes was the wealth of material from northern Italy. The clear demonstration of the capacity of north Italy to develop elite housing and to trade in precisely the sorts of luxuries which Wallace-Hadrill describes, and the show was a sort of prequel to Mario Denti's brilliant account of the Augustan period²⁸. There were many other shows – Chieti hosted a display of the wealth of Amiternum, and also displayed the important statues from Foruli; Velletri had a small show of relevant statuary; and one could go on.

To return to the Adriatic theme, Giuseppe Zecchini's super edited volume on the Augusteum at Narona in Croatia was a reminder of how much we need to do to understand and incorporate the other side of the Adriatic in our view of Italy. The building was constructed around 10 BC; in the end there were at least twenty statues. The statue of Augustus is again loricated. The statues are on a raised pediment above a mosaic marble floor. A statue of Livia (formerly split between the Ashmolean and Opuzen, now reunited), has similarities with statues at Lucus Feroniae and Herculaneum²⁹.

At the same time, at Fossombrone near Urbino, the 67 cm high winged Victory, bought by the Landgrave of Hesse-Kassel Frederick II, and now in the Kassel museum, made a return, in connection with the work recently undertaken by Urbino University on an Augusteum, which the *seviri Augustales* there had established. Fossombrone now has an increasingly well-understood urban plan thanks to aerial photography and excavation. It had gilt bronze statuary which

23 *AE*, 2013, 214.

24 D'ANDRIA & MANNINO 2014.

25 RAMBALDI 2015.

26 DAVID 2015.

27 MORANDINI & ROSSI 2015.

28 DENTI 1991.

29 ZECCHINI 2015.

would have equalled the famous Cartoceto group nearby. The Augusteum was an absidal building, largely dismantled in the 17th century. The base of a statue of Augustus is dated to 5–6 AD, and a new fragment confirms the restoration of the office of Pontifex Maximus in the inscription³⁰. Last but not least, the excellent show on Augustus and Time at Palazzo Massimo was the first display of fragments of the early 1st century AD Alba Fucens Fasti, discovered in 2011³¹.

Taken as a whole, this highly partial and random selection of Augustan and early imperial material nevertheless has certain strong consistencies which are not surprising but are relevant. First, there is a degree of sameness about the story – the same statues, the same architecture, the same sorts of finds. Second, there is a strong focus on the imperial family, wherever one looks. Third, local initiative seems to be significant, but within those overall themes, and my reading is that even if we work hard to identify the local component, the overarching similarity is still striking. And this seems to me exactly what Wallace-Hadrill was pointing to – quite rightly – in the last chapter of *Rome's Cultural Revolution* – in other words the waves of fashion and other metaphors are less a tired last chapter than a recognition that something overwhelming is happening.

Now this does not help us greatly with the memory of ancient Italy you may be thinking, but this is where I want to try to pull a few threads together. My disparate questions are:

1. How do we deal with the phenomenon which Wallace-Hadrill identified, and which we have albeit selectively, seen confirmed, of high levels of similarity between cultural and material behaviour?
2. How does this fit in with the theme of emerging and invented identities across Italy?
3. How do we deal with Mario Torelli's grand theory challenge?

I want to start with a recent observation by Ando in an article in Myles Lavan, Richard E. Payne and John Weisweiler's edited volume *Cosmopolitanism and Empire*, in which he argues that non-Romans «“became Roman” by virtue of having been endowed with Romanness as a juridical fact, not through any instrumentalist cultural performance or act of self-fashioning. In that sense the one-time and perhaps continuing focus of historians of colonial cultures upon questions of agency in processes of Romanization (summarized in claims that provincials “Romanized themselves”) may have put the cart before the horse»³². This provocative statement challenges us to recognise the significance of citizenship as a tool of power. Ando also argues that the *ius adipiscendae civitatis per magistratum* further cements the relationship between local and imperial politics.

This essay is in part a reflection on Ando's brilliant book *Imperial ideology and provincial loyalty in the Roman Empire* (2000), which was a game-changer for understanding the Roman empire. Critically, Ando argued for the significance of law and legal argument as part of the mechanisms of consensus-building and information exchange. Building on Millar's picture of the Emperor at the heart of a bureaucratic machine, Ando focuses on the persistence of communicative messages from the centre in constructing an agreement as to the value of Roman power. The more recent essay perhaps nuances this by indicating how the co-option of local politics served to sustain an imperial consensus.

We also have to add an unseen element of the communicative mix, opinion. The observable actions of Roman and local elites in municipal Italy are opinions on Roman imperial rule. Every loricated statue of Augustus is an observation on the emperor's authority; every Augusteum expresses an opinion. The Kassel victory statue may well be a copy of the gilt bronze statue which stood in Taranto to celebrate Pyrrhus' victory over

30 LUNI & MEI 2014.

31 *Roma* 2014a.

32 ANDO 2016.

the Romans, and which Augustus moved to the Curia Iulia in 29 BC and decked with the spoils of Egypt, thereby appropriating the concept of victory over the east. Whether the local elite knew this and, Livy in hand, opined on how Augustus had turned history around is beyond knowledge, but veteran resettlement spread knowledge of the raw successes and failures of the triumviral period across Italy.

Walter Benjamin once wrote: «Opinions are, with respect to the monstrous apparatus of social life, the equivalent of oil for machines: one would not stand in front a turbine and pour oil all over it. Instead only a little is applied to the hidden niches and joints whose locations must be known»³³.

This seems to me to be a very good way of characterising the steady drip of communication which constitutes the network of consensus across Italy – consensus on governance, language, clothing, culture, leisure (theatres everywhere), visual imagery and so forth. It is not manufactured by some Orwellian propaganda machine, but rather it reflects and then recursively re-enacts an environment of consensus. So my answer to my first question of how we deal with Wallace-Hadrill's consumer world is to say that even without theorizing further, the quasi-universal aspiration for a cultural package which despite variations in detail nevertheless from tableware to temple constitutes a spectrum of Romanitas is a product of and vehicle for a spread of opinion which underpins the communicative consensus which Ando illustrates through legal and institutional utterances.

At this point I want to argue that the very concept of Italy is part of this story. The post-Social War settlement gave form and substance to the idea of an Italian citizenry, and Augustus' invocation of *tota Italia* is a logical arrival point. Both *Rome's Cultural Revolution* and *L'Italia centrale* trace the various mechanisms whereby this complex set of processes works its way through, and there are many others who have contributed hugely to this debate, not least Ed Bispham, whose *From Asculum to Actium* is

essential. Towards the end of the book, Bispham writes that «the reign of Augustus is a good place to stop, since it saw a great reshaping of Italy through Augustan propaganda and its reception. No longer dangerously separatist, the Italian peoples could be revived and redeployed, nostalgia for the past identities of Italy could be harnessed to build a conservative consensus»³⁴.

This could be a good epitaph for a conference entitled 'Memory of ancient Italy.' However, this end point is only reached after fifty years of deliberate and difficult work, much of it characterised by precisely the sorts of documents and communications which Ando explores for the imperial provinces, and it was work which did not finish. One of the very interesting aspects of the bimillennium celebrations was the amount of later 1st century AD material in Italy which was celebrating the first emperor, or developing the image of Italy which we sometimes think of as Augustan. The conceptualization of a 'memory' of Italy is older than Augustus, and was in no sense entirely fixed in his time, although the regions of Italy, and the emphasis on *tota Italia*, remain significant statements of this conceptualization.

I would like to float the idea that in answer to my second question, Italy becomes a space of consensus in the terms similar to those used by Ando in his book on provincial loyalty. Ando uses Habermas to argue for a production of consensus, arising from and to some extent stimulated by a Weberian concept of charisma emanating from the emperor, and based in repeated ideologically freighted communication. Here is one of Ando's most explicit theoretical formulations: «To adopt the phrasing of Habermas, the magistrates of Rome did not coerce the subjects of the empire; rather, they "rationally motivated" them, because magistrates assumed both that their commands satisfied the conditions of rationality imposed by the ideology of Roman government and that they could discursively redeem their imperatives by elaborating on their truth content and expounding on their normative content»³⁵.

33 BENJAMIN 2016.

34 BISPHAM 2007.

35 ANDO 2000, p. 78.

One other element of Ando's story here is a perhaps under-theorised view that whilst this consensus was generated for, by and between elites, who were self-interested, it in some way penetrated society much more deeply. In fact Ando underplays the concept of the political throughout, regarding it as embedded, or indissociable from religion, or insufficiently explanatory.

This works quite well with some elements of the interpretations we have been discussing. Ando's focus on charisma, celebrations of victory, dissemination of images, communication and consensus are – again – highly Gramscian, though – again – he scarcely mentions him. But it produces a strangely uncontested vision. In denying the connection between the ancient and modern worlds, Ando writes: «The Romans knew the seductive power exercised by material prosperity. Whether adorning cities with marble, leading clean water from distant hills, or elevating martial splendour to new heights, the Romans spoke a universal language. The immediately intelligible attractions of Roman urbanism, like the idiom of the Roman triumph, found receptive audiences throughout the Mediterranean world»³⁶.

Applying this logic to the world of Italy would give us a weak answer to Torelli's challenge and my third question of whether there is a grand theoretical approach left for Italic history. Ando's answer comes slightly close to saying no, even though his theoretical guides, Habermas and Bourdieu, explicitly acknowledge their debt to Marx, even whilst finding a distance from him.

Peter Rose in a long review of Ando's book tried to reinstate Marx³⁷. He insisted on the symbolic violence represented by the symbolic force of urbanism and rows of statues and the cultural ideology of the time, and he reasserts the political as a key concept in the understanding of ideology. I don't want to force the point about Marx especially hard, but I am in sympathy with Rose's concern that Ando has made it all a bit too much of a coalition of the willing. It is just a bit too easy

to say that Habermas posited «that orders based on subjective recognition of their legitimacy ultimately rely upon their consensual validity», as if somehow that gets us off a hook as to what is going on across the Roman empire, and that consensus was at least to some degree a consequence of that unhelpfully vague criterion, charisma.

But I think Ando has asked a very good question – or at any rate deployed Habermas against a central tension. He describes it as the tension between Hobbes and Locke, between a state which is just by definition whatever it does and which creates civil society as an application of force, and one which is created by civil society and must be a guarantor of justice. These positions are too starkly differentiated – it is akin to saying that the Romans must either have coerced submission by force from unwilling Italians, or the situation is entirely explained by those famous words *iuravit in mea verba tota Italia sponte sua*³⁸.

In answer to Torelli's argument then that Roman history needs to have some traction on contemporary concern, here perhaps we glimpse a possibility. If one takes an ameliorative view in which one is always trying to improve society and diminish the distortions of power, as Habermas argued slightly more than Ando gives credit for, then the Roman cultural revolution is an interesting experiment in which acts of communication can be analysed as to their potential for genuine enfranchisement and consensus as well as distortion and deception.

Specifically to this conference, it seems to me that we will be having to look very hard at how the Italia which appears to be in opposition to Rome in the Social War becomes the remembered Italy suggested here. Is there a more complex discourse to be unearthed, in which the construction of an Italy of unthreatening plenty and deep reserves of solid virtue creates a communicative space which permits Italians to wrest some degree of consensus from the centre? Is there some way of recasting Ando's approach and Rose's critique to allow for a degree of symbolic violence,

36 ANDO 2000, p. 67.

37 ROSE 2006, pp. 101–136.

38 *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* 25.

but countered by an imaginative redeployment and re-interpretation of Roman force as Italian consensus?

This is of course too optimistic, but this volume, as the previous ones, finds itself constantly on that cusp between overstating consensus and understating violence in Rome's relations with its neighbours. We can make of this a virtue, in that it reflects the complexity of the situation, the contingencies of each relationship and the impact of time in changing relationships. It also keeps the example fresh. We currently face some very tense conversations between centres and peripheries; between peripheries which think they can still be centres, and centres which have forgotten their peripheries; between actively constructed new radical social imaginaries, and freshly valorised nostalgic visions; between acts of symbolic and real violence, and examples of consensus building; and above all we have become incessantly occupied with, and arguably increasingly bad at, communication which builds consensus. Both the series as a whole, and this specific volume, ought to help us think a bit more about these themes and many others.

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