

Faliscan, and non-Italic languages of ancient Italy, such as Etruscan, have deliberately been excluded, partly in order to achieve thematic coherence and partly because excellent materials are easily available for their study.

The editors treat the Sabellic languages as three groups: a northern one comprising Umbrian and the archaic Sabine and South Picene — the last two are said to be possibly identical; a southern one consisting of Oscan; and a central one containing minor dialects such as Vestinian, Marrucinian, Paelignian, Marsian, and Hernician. While this subgrouping makes good sense geographically, I am somewhat hesitant to include South Picene in the northern group because it shows supra-regional features not untypical of a *koine*.

The order of the texts is geographical, from north to south, and within regions follows the scheme ‘coinage, public and sacred inscriptions, private inscriptions, and inscriptions on household tools’. In those areas where South Picene is attested, it comes before the other inscriptions.

The transcribed texts are mostly accompanied by high-quality photographs of the objects on which they are found, thereby giving readers the opportunity to see the inscriptions for themselves and to verify the readings. For each inscription where this is possible, the original and current locations of the object are given and the actual object itself is described; the texts are dated, the respective alphabets are classified, and the transcribed texts are translated in a convincing manner. A short but reliably up-to-date bibliography is given for each entry.

Any work of this size, if it is to be usable, requires a detailed table of contents, a good introduction, and good indexes. *Imagines Italicae* does not disappoint in this respect; for instance, besides an appendix of Oscan names in Greek inscriptions, there are various concordances and indexes of personal names, other names and offices, communities, and individual words.

With this wealth of material, *Imagines Italicae* is by and large superior to Rix’s somewhat Spartan *Sabellische Texte* (2002), which contains no images or translations and only very limited epigraphic information. However, even an outstanding work such as *Imagines Italicae* is bound to have some shortcomings. To my mind, the most glaring of these is the omission of the Iguvine Tablets, the largest and most important Umbrian text. The reason why they are left out, stated in the introduction, is that there have been recent treatments of them, but in a corpus an attempt at completeness is essential. Similarly, some maps would have been welcome, and a few tables outlining the various alphabets and the differences between them would have been very helpful. A brief discussion of Oscan vowels is offered in the introduction; while presumably no one will consult *Imagines Italicae* without having read Buck’s *A Grammar of Oscan and Umbrian* (1904) and Untermann’s *Wörterbuch des Oskisch-Umbrischen* (2000), or at least having their works at hand, a slightly fuller discussion of phonology and morphology would not have gone amiss.

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WOLFGANG DE MELO

G. MARASCO (ED.), *POLITICAL AUTOBIOGRAPHIES AND MEMOIRS IN ANTIQUITY: A BRILL COMPANION*. Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2011. Pp. xi + 461. ISBN 9789004182998. US\$216.00

To write about oneself can manifest itself in a variety of ways, in antiquity perhaps even more than today. During the last decades, therefore, ancient autobiography, just as biography, has increasingly been understood not as a well defined genre, but as being some kind of Proteus taking almost any literary form according to the intention of the speaker. Against this backdrop, it has been a wise decision — as highlighted already in the title and outlined by the editor Gabriele Marasco in his (rather short) preface — to take as the main selection criterion for this Brill Companion not any formal matters (dealing with autobiographies and memoirs alike) but the mainly political content of the texts in question. The multiplicity of literary strategies employed by the various authors and the continual interaction with related genres is thus one of the recurring themes of the volume in its entirety. Even if the cross-linking between some of the chapters could have been improved, the editor and the other authors are to be congratulated for producing an important volume on a still under-studied topic which will in effect act as a very useful up-to-date handbook for any one interested in this field.

The individual contributions are ordered chronologically and thus start with Vivienne Gray’s paper on ‘Classical Greece’ (1–36). Her central question is, to what extent various works written at this time meet the criteria for autobiographical literature as established by Georg Misch and Arnaldo

Momigliano (one of dedicatees of the volume). With this in mind, she discusses first related genres like travel-writing, Ion of Chios' *Epidemiai* as an example for anecdotic literature, apologetic speeches, and Plato's notorious letters, then memoirs in a more proper sense like Ctesias and Xenophon. In doing so, she also compares the various strategies employed to avoid the problem of 'praising oneself without provoking envy', to use the title of Plutarch's later treatise on this topic (*Moralia* 539a), thus raising for the first time an important point that will recur in many of the subsequent papers.

The next chapter is by Cinzia Bearzot and deals with 'Royal autobiography in the Hellenistic age' (37–85). Compared to the Classical period, she maintains that there was an increased interest in autobiography in the Hellenistic age. This claim is substantiated through a summary of what we know about autobiographical letters (authentic or not), diaries (*ephemerides*), and above all the newly-developed subgenre of *hypomnemata* written by some of the leading political figures of the time like Alexander or the Ptolemies. Sticking to the same period, Gabriele Marasco ('The Hellenistic age: autobiography and political struggles' (87–120)) focuses on the non-royal authors: Nearchus' report of his expedition to India on the one hand, and the works written by Demetrius of Phaleron and Aratus of Sicyon mainly to justify their rule over smaller city states on the other hand.

The latter especially offered an important model for the Roman aristocrats adopting Greek literature for their own purposes, as is shown by José M. Candau in the next chapter, 'Republican Rome: autobiography and political struggles' (121–59). He begins with a detailed treatment of Scipio Africanus' letter to Philip V of Macedon as the first known example of an autobiographical work at Rome and then discusses all relevant cases up to and including Cicero's *de consulato suo*. Thereby he stresses the controversial status of the various authors, a fact that helps to explain the almost complete loss of all these texts today. Dealing partially with the same material, but focusing on the last decades of the Republic, Jeffrey Tatum ('The Late Republic: autobiographies and memoirs in the age of the civil wars' (161–87)) compares Sulla's autobiographical project to some later attempts to write about oneself, especially the various ones made by Cicero.

Marc Mayer's paper on 'Caesar and the *Corpus Caesarianum*' (189–232), situated at the very edge of the Republic as well as of the genre autobiography in the strict sense, deals exclusively with Caesar's *commentarii* and (in a slightly dismissive manner) the works of his continuators. In return for this restriction, the reader gets a complete picture of Caesar in his own time, his writings and even their reception throughout the centuries.

The next two chapters, by Joseph Geiger ('The Augustan age' (233–66)) and Ronald Thomas Ridley ('Augustus: the emperor writes his own account' (267–314)) again share the same period, but centre upon different aspects. Whereas Ridley's task is to expose Augustus' complicated relationship with autobiography (having written the lost *de vita sua* covering the first half of his life and the surviving *res gestae* in turn — the latter being presented in some detail and taking up by far the majority of the article), Geiger's part is to cover the works written by people other than the *princeps* himself (dealing with leading figures like Agrippa and Messala Corvinus, with minor characters in Rome like Augustus' freedman Julius Marathus, presumably offering a kind of butler's view in his memoirs, and with Greek authors of the same period like Nicolaus of Damascus).

Pere Villalba Varneda's paper ('The early Empire' (315–62)) is the first of three chapters devoted to the Imperial period. His share is the first century A.D. After a brief collocation of the testimonies for the (rather large number of) lost autobiographical texts from this time, he focuses solely on the *vita Flavii Iosephi* as the only surviving example, giving an in-depth interpretation of this work and its historical context. After that Richard Westall and Frederick Brenk take over, dealing jointly with 'The second and third century' (363–416) and single out as the best known examples the works of four emperors (Trajan, Hadrian, Septimius Severus, Caracalla) on the one hand and of the historian Appian of Alexandria on the other. They conclude by assuming that — as none has survived in more than a few fragments — these texts had been intended mainly for the contemporary audience. It is for Hartmut Leppin ('The late Empire' (417–53)) to provide a kind of ring composition by giving priority in his chapter to Libanius' first oration. His choice, of course, is motivated by the fact that this is the only instance of a political rather than a spiritual autobiographical text from this period, but it also calls to mind the variety of literary forms that had been part of the early stages of this volume (ending with a useful index of ancient names (455–61)) as well as the development of this 'genre'.

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