



Vergilian Society

Call for Papers

SYMPOSIUM CUMANUM 2023

Virgil and the Roman Republic

June 27 – July 1, Villa Vergiliana, Cuma, Bacoli (NA), Italy

Organizers:

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For centuries, Virgil has been known, taught and studied as an “Augustan” poet. In fact, Virgil was born, educated and lived most of his life in the Roman Republic, and two of his three main works were published before Actium. We propose a conference focusing on the various ways in which the experience of the Roman Republic can influence or change our perception of Virgil as an “Augustan” poet, and on the dynamics through which the memory of the Roman Republic is faced and managed by Virgil during his poetic career. By blurring the line which artificially separates Virgil from the Roman Republic, we plan to revisit the historical, ideological and cultural relations between them. And in turn, by revisiting these relations, we hope critically to reassess the merits and the limits of the traditional categorization of Virgil as an Augustan poet. How did the experience of the Roman Republic impact his life and work? How do his works reflect the historical and literary achievements, ideals and struggles of the Republic?

The proposed conference builds on the work of some recent scholarship. For example, Richard Thomas argued that the received idea of Virgil as “Augustan poet” can be usefully problematized (*Virgil and the Augustan Reception*, Cambridge 2001). Some ten years ago [Joe Farrell](#) and Damien Nelis, in the wake of Alain Gowing’s *Empire and Memory: The Representation of the Roman Republic in Imperial Culture* (Cambridge 2005), edited a volume on *Augustan Poetry and the Roman Republic* (Oxford 2013), which naturally enough included various contributions on Virgil. This collection of essays aimed not only at studying the different aspects and images of the Roman Republic created by the Augustan poets; it also intended to question the methods of exploitation of this past in relation to the Augustan period. Many recent works have turned to a reconsideration of the ways in which Virgil re-elaborates the history of the Roman Republic in his poems, in particular in the *Aeneid*. For example, Alessandro Barchiesi, in his (forthcoming) *Sather Lectures* and in various articles, has focused attention on the importance of the Social War for the Virgilian conceptualization of the war in Latium; [Elena Giusti](#) has revisited the role of the Punic Wars in Virgilian memory (Carthage in

Virgil's Aeneid, Oxford 2018); Nora Goldschmidt (Shaggy Crowns, Oxford 2013) and [Thomas Biggs](#) (Poetics of the First Punic War, Ann Arbor 2020) have made interesting contributions to a re-evaluation of the ideological role of the republican epics in the Aeneid. The conference we propose intends to build on the themes and issues addressed in this recent scholarly trend. The Symposium will deal with every aspect of the influence of the republican past/present on Virgil's poetry. In particular, we encourage contributions on the following topics:

- Virgil's reception of the history of the Roman Republic;
- Virgil's reception of the literature of the Republic;
- language and themes between the late Republic and age of Augustus: continuity or hiatus?
- Virgil's representation of the Republic;
- Virgil and the Roman and nostalgic idealization of the past;
- the reception of Virgil's representation of the Republic in later epic;
- Virgil's relationship with the Republican past in the history of the exegesis.

Confirmed speakers include:

[Giancarlo Abbamonte](#), Università di Napoli Federico II

[Alessandro Barchiesi](#), New York University

[Barbara Weiden Boyd](#), Bowdoin College

[Thomas Biggs](#), University of St Andrews

[Jackie Elliott](#), University of Colorado, Boulder

[Denis Feeney](#), Princeton University

[Luigi Galasso](#), Università Cattolica, Milan

[Monica Gale](#), Trinity College, Dublin

[Elena Giusti](#), University of Warwick

[Peter Knox](#), Case Western Reserve University

[Philip Hardie](#), Cambridge University

[Fiachra Mac Góráin](#), University College, London

[John Miller](#), University of Virginia

[Jason Nethercut](#), University of South Florida

[Nandini Pandey](#), John Hopkins University

[Lily Panoussi](#), The College of William & Mary

[Stefano Rebeggiani](#), University of Southern California

[Giampiero Scafoglio](#), Université Côte d'Azur, Nice

[Alessandro Schiesaro](#), Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa

[Fabio Stok](#), Università di Roma "Tor Vergata"

[Richard Thomas](#), Harvard University

[Christine Walde](#), Johannes Gutenberg Universität Mainz

Please, send an anonymous abstract (300-400 words) to casali@uniroma2.it, by 15th January 2023; we will communicate our decision by 1st March. Papers will be 20 minutes long, with time for discussion after each. Participants will arrive on June 27th and leave on July 1st.

We wish to thank the following institutions for their generous support:

The Università di Napoli Federico II

The Notre Dame Institute for Scholarship in the Liberal Arts (ISLA)

The Notre Dame Department of Classics

The Notre Dame Department of Italian Studies

The Notre Dame Nanovic Institute for European Studi