approfondito e sistematico di questa dimensione può fornire un contributo sostanziale, e innovativo, all’analisi della variazione nel modo di rappresentare il cambiamento: basterebbe un caso come l’enantiometria di 13, 607 et primo similis volucri, mox vera volucris (nella trasformazione delle Memnonidi) a mostrare nitidamente come la mobilità prosodica possa prestarsi a dare forma e ritmo all’idea della metamorfosi.

Il panorama di riferimento bibliografico di V. è molto vasto, e tutt’altro che circoscritto agli studi ovidiani, o al mondo antico (tra le voci più produttive quelle di G. Bachelard, J. Rousset, R. Barthes, I. Calvino e altri), come non lo è l’orizzonte generale del suo discorso critico, che spazia da Omero alla Recherche proustiana («il libro delle metamorfosi della nostra modernità» secondo Stefano Agosti) e oltre. Questa padronanza di un ampio e articolato dibattito critico non pregiudica ma anzi stimola la libertà di pensiero di V. e alimenta anche la sua originalità di scrittura. Uno stile vivace ed elegante agevola la lettura di un volume si ponderoso, ma mai pesante o inerte, che rende giustizia, oltre che alla davvero inépuisable ricchezza, alla calviniana ‘leggerezza’ dell’opera ovidiana, e conquista a buon diritto una sua posizione originale nella vasta bibliografia critica sul poema.

Pisa

Gianpiero Rosati

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Pietro Li Causi: Il riconoscimento e il ricordo. Fama e memoria nel De beneficiis di Seneca.


This brief and elegant study stands at the intersection of a number of current trends in the study of Roman literature and culture. Firstly, it is a contribution to the recent revival of interest in the De Beneficiis. Li Causi himself is part of a team of Italian scholars at the universities of Palermo, Siena and Verona engaged on a thematic commentary on the work; from Li Causi’s own occasional acknowledgements it is clear that the present study has evolved through close dialogue with other members of this group. Secondly, through its focus on the roles of fama and memoria in the logic and dynamics of giving and receiving beneficia, the book is a part of the wave, flood even, of recent work on cultural memory and collective memory in ancient Rome, deriving ultimately from the seminal works of Maurice Halbwachs and Jan and Aleida Assmann. Li Causi draws usefully on sociological and anthropological approaches associated with his fellow-classicists Maurizio Bettini and Gianni Guastella. Thirdly, Li Causi subscribes to the school that sees a decisive rupture in the scope for political and cultural self-fashioning and self-promotion on the part of the Roman élite as a result of the transition from Republic to Principate, in particular in the matters of fame and memory. Li Causi cites with approval Matthew Roller’s ‘Constructing autocracy. Aristocrats and emperors in Julio-Claudian Rome’ (Princeton 2001); he might also have enlisted in his support Thomas Habinek, ‘Seneca’s renown: gloria, claritudo and the replication of the Roman élite’, Classical Antiquity 19 (2000) 264–303, and D. Sailor, ‘Writing and empire in Tacitus’ (Cambridge 2008). Other historians however, including Jon Lendon and Robert Kaster, have argued that
there is at least as much continuity as discontinuity, between Republic and Principate, within the Roman élite’s sense of itself and of its goals.

Put simply, Li Causi’s thesis, laid out in chapter 1, is that the Principate interrupts the communicative system of beneficentia, the giving, receiving, and returning of benefits, as practised in the Republic and equipped with a theoretical formulation in Cicero’s De Officiis. Within the properly functioning reciprocities of upper-class beneficentia, gratitude on the part of the receiver is inseparable from, and almost identical with, memory of the benefaction on the part of the receiver, and, beyond the relationship between giver and receiver, the liberalitas of the giver is productive of \textit{fama} and \textit{gloria}, perpetuated in exempla of virtuous generosity handed down in cultural memory. The line of fracture, Li Causi suggests, occurs with Nero, whose extravagant practice of the imperial virtue of liberalitas makes it impossible to reciprocate, so reducing the status of the recipients of imperial liberalitas to that of \textit{clientes}, or subjects, with a consequent diminution of their \textit{fama}. It might be objected that if this interrupts the reciprocities of beneficientia as they pertain to relationships with the imperial court, there is no necessary reason why it should interrupt the normal workings of beneficia in circles below the emperor. Furthermore, this schematic account of a sharp rupture is at odds with the more nuanced discussion of the De Beneficiis as a reaction to social change, and more specifically to the stresses created within the aristocratic code in the conditions of the principate, in a book that unfortunately appeared too late to be taken into consideration by Li Causi, Miriam Griffin’s ‘Seneca on society: a guide to De Beneficiis’ (Oxford 2013), the grand culmination of earlier work by one of the leading experts on Seneca and his times. Griffin acknowledges the challenge presented to the behavioural patterns of the élite, a challenge felt especially acutely by Seneca as \textit{amicus principis}, but she is of the view that (p. 74) «Seneca … reflects and supports the adaptation of that traditional aristocratic code to the existence of the new phenomenon of the Princeps. By making it clear that the Princeps was expected to practise beneficence according to that code, and to relate to his peers as they did to each other, he was endorsing the theory of the early Principate and strengthening the social side of civilitas.» Clearly the discussion will continue.

The following three chapters explore the response of the De Beneficiis to the claimed politico-cultural rupture. Chapter 2 traces the revaluation of the functions of \textit{fama} within the protocols of liberalitas. For a Stoic \textit{fama} is an indifferent, and has value only if it is the inevitable accompaniment of virtue (\textit{gloria as umbra virtutis}, a cliché that goes back at least to Cicero). In Seneca’s Stoic internalization of values what matters is the individual’s conscientia of having bestowed a benefit, not \textit{fama}, what the world says (the \textit{fama/conscientia} opposition, found already in Cicero, will become central to the Christian discourse on \textit{fama}, thanks above all to formulations in St Paul and Augustine). Li Causi proceeds, in this and the last two chapters, through subtle and probing readings of individual examples of the De Beneficiis; in the Senecan casuistry \textit{fama} may be something that either the giver or the receiver should willingly relinquish, in the interests of the relationship between the two. But if it is an indifferent, \textit{fama} may yet be something to be chosen, a \textit{ληπτόν} or \textit{sumendum}, when it can be construed as a ‘relational good’, in the sense of a good that results from the relationship between the two parties involved, as an
Chapter 3 turns from *fama* to the closely related subject of memory. Once again the contrast is between the popular view (‘senso comune’) of the value of an external, monumentalizing public memory accorded to benefactors, and a Senecan internalized memory that functions within the personal relationship between giver and receiver. Selective ‘forgetfulness’ of benefits bestowed on the part of the giver is a mark of true *liberalitas*, since the omission to remind the receiver of what he has been given encourages the maximum freedom within the relationship. On the other hand involuntary forgetfulness is equivalent to ingratitude (in Latin *immemor* can be almost synonymous with *ingratus*); to remember can in itself, it is suggested, complete the circle of reciprocity, without a material gift in exchange, so freeing the receiver from the impossible task of responding adequately in the asymmetrical relationship between emperor and receiver (pp. 82–4).

But the argument depends (a) on a (generally accepted) medieval supplement at *Ben.* 2.24.1, *qua nec referre potest gratiam, nisi qui meminit, <et, qui meminit,> eam refert*; and (b) on translating the last five words as ‘chi ricorda …. mostra [la sua riconoscenza] già col fatto di ricordare’. A more pregnant force of *eam refert* is registered in the translation by Miriam Griffin and Brad Inwood (Seneca: *On Benefits*, Chicago 2011): «since no one can repay a favor unless he remembers the favor, and all who remember the favor will do so.» [my emphasis]

It is important to keep alive the memory of *beneficia*, which, Seneca says, on the part of the giver may be through the repetition of instances of giving; but to see in this a connection with the repetition enjoined by the rhetorical art of memory (p. 79) hardly seems warranted. But the chapter’s thesis that Seneca displaces the element of ‘recognition’ («riconoscimento») in the protocol of gratitude from the public plane to the ethical plane of the relationship between giver and receiver is illustrated brilliantly by a reading of the anecdote of the exchange of immaterial *beneficia* by Socrates and his student Aeschines (*Ben.* 1.8–9), an anecdote which itself functions within the Senecan text as a memorable – and famous – *exemplum* of the ideal performance of *beneficentia*.

The nature and function of the *exempla* in the *De Beneficiis* are the subject of Chapter 4, which turns from individual memory to Roman collective memory, and to various aspects of Seneca’s selection and handling of good and bad examples of giving and receiving in the past. Again the emphasis is on the fracture between Republic and Principate, in contrast to Valerius Maximus’ pretence that the *exempla* of the Republic can smoothly be taken over in the new conditions of the Principate. The line of fracture is back-dated from Nero to Tiberius, whose wilful refusal to play the game of *beneficentia* in a way that acknowledges memory and respects the feelings of (potential) recipients of *beneficia* is taken to mark the beginning of the new era. Philosophers, not kings and emperors, are now the subjects of positive *exempla*.

There is much to admire in this book, especially at the level of the close readings of *De Beneficiis*, although in the end I felt that they did not sustain the overall thesis, at least in its schematic, black-and-white, presentation.

Cambridge

*Philip Hardie*