This is a book that has many strengths. It is written for a general audience and engagingly so. It is not meant to be a substantive contribution to Augustan scholarship that aims to chart new directions, but Dahlheim offers a splendid narrative punctuated by many concise and striking formulations that hit the mark. His forte is political history where he is excellently grounded in the primary sources. Rightfully, in this kind of undertaking, he shies away from rehashing conventional scholarly controversies and, again understandable from the perspective of writing for this particular public, the secondary scholarship he utilizes is mostly German. This is not to say that no other titles appear in the bibliography, but speaking just for myself, I certainly would not characterize my Augustan Culture (1996) as «Die literarische, religiöse und architektonische Umsetzung von der Wiederkehr des Goldenen Zeitalters» (p. 433), especially given my somewhat divergent assessment of the notion of the Augustan Golden Age. Mainly, then, this is a highly competent and readable treatment of the many vagaries of Augustus’ ascent to power, his reign and mode of governance, the problems he encountered and solutions he sought (and found), and of his lasting accomplishments. The utility of the volume is rounded out by thirty-three well-chosen illustrations, which are nicely commented on, a chronological table, two maps, and several charts of the Augustan family, Augustus’ friends and counselors, and the Augustan authors.

The structure is largely chronological, but, as is clear from the title, there are three emphases that are leitmotifs and supply a unified narrative fabric. The choice of the first two is hardly arguable. In Syme’s classic ‘The Roman Revolution’ (1939), Augustus was forever marked as the Auführer who came to power through a military coup and then changed the old order with the support of his faction. Of course there is more to Augustus and subsequent treatments have paid due attention to Augustus the Herrscher without letting the earlier period cast a never-ending shadow over his every action as princeps; the varying degree to which these aspects are negotiated goes back to Tacitus’ famous summary in Annales 1.9 and 1.10 and, just like Tacitus, modern authors have not been shy about their preferences. The fact is, of course, that Augustus did move on substantially beyond the triumviral period just as Augustan scholarship in recent decades has moved on beyond the fear of taint by association with Fascist sympathies. Dahlheim’s third thematic marker, Augustus the Heiland, is largely his own and sets his discussion apart from others. It does not, of course, reflect his personal view of Augustus’ merits but, rather, the role in which Augustus appeared to many of his contemporaries. Certainly, that case can be made; Dahl-
heim’s motives are authentic and cannot, for instance, simply be dismissed with the waggish observation that a book just sells better when it has Jesus or Heiland or, for that matter, sex in its title. Still, Dahlheim’s over-pursuit of this theme deserves some comment because it sometimes skews his presentation just by the anachronistic use of the associated terminology.

So, for instance, the Apollo Temple on the Palatine becomes Augustus’ Hauskapelle (p. 249); with the building of the Forum Augustum «wurde die Messe des neuen Rom zelebriert» (p. 241); the reliefs of the Ara Pacis propagated a Heilslehre (p. 251); the award of the title pater patriae confirmed Heilandsvorstellungen (p. 221); Ovid got into trouble because he did not want to hear or promulgate die frohe Botschaft of the return of the Golden Age (p. 274). As for the Aeneid, «Geschichte wird zum Heilsweg» (p. 268); Horace was intoxicated with the notion of the Golden Age fulfilling mankind’s dream of a «Rückkehr ins Paradies» (p. 269); in the final analysis, Augustus’ monarchy depended on the hynmic approval of his subjects, who had found «ihren Retter und Heiland» (p. 217); and the complex of the sun dial and Ara Pacis, with the obelisk’s shadow of the former pointing to the latter on Augustus’ birthday «betokened the transformation of the ideology of the Heils- und Friedensbringer into theology» (p. 255).

Besides excessive Frömmelei, there are, of course, problems with all these examples (and many more could be cited). To take only the last one: it turns out that Buchner’s hypothesis of the sundial cum piazza lacks conclusive support, to put it politely. On this and other issues there is ample scholarship, but, here as elsewhere Dahlheim simply stays with Zanker’s script instead of augmenting it in light of the literature that has appeared since. Not a word here, for instance, about the Andachtsbilder of the Ara Pacis (and other Augustan art and architecture) being deliberately so designed as to have viewers make their own associations and elicit their participatory responses. Similarly, there is no mention of what has been termed Rome’s ‘cultural revolution’, a process that was well under way by the time of Augustus and manifested the erosion of the Roman aristocracy’s power in the realm of the control of knowledge. The picture that Dahlheim draws, including the Augustan writers and provincial adaptations of Roman architecture, therefore is quite one-dimensional; it would be inaccurate to say that it is conventional because conventional here is not the same anymore as outdated.

The primary cause for this particular orientation is meritorious. It lies in the significant Christian reception of the pax Augusta as God’s choice for the time of Jesus’ birth. Dahlheim returns to the relevant sources in his penultimate chapter and his careful documentation provides yet another corrective to the simple-minded view, in vogue especially in current American New Testament scholarship, that is seeking to cast early Christianity as a social justice movement in

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rebellion against the Roman state and «the gospel of Caesar».1 It is an ahistorical view and therefore all the more popular; Dahlheim’s procedure, with its application of Christian terminology to Augustan phenomena, is the converse, aimed also at a popular audience. Habent sua fata not just libelli, but historical periods, too.

All this, however, does not overshadow the considerable merits of Dahlheim’s book. The historical narrative is reliable and vividly told. The author’s many aperçu-like summations lend it special flavor. There are excellent remarks on the mentality of the Roman aristocracy; the creation of a lasting empire out of chaos;2 Sextus Pompey («a child of his time in which everything seemed possible to outsiders, but little that was actually feasible»; p. 91); the fragility of the first decade of the principate («its beginnings were as brittle as the life expectancy of its creators»; p. 164), an issue that is often forgotten in assessments of the Aeneid, for instance; the mania of the Romans for the past (here Horace’s complaint in Epist. 2.1 could have been mentioned); the emptiness of seeking refuge in the modus operandi of the Republic amid an empire paralleling Alexander’s; and, in his final assessment, the lapidary truth that «der Makel des Anfangs aber blieb» (p. 392). Further, the short survey of the judgment of posterity is a helpful addition especially as it does not dwell on the usual suspects known to Anglo-American readers but takes up figures such as Wieland, Mommsen, and Wilamowitz (no mention at all of Syme or of Augustan England3).

Given the multi-faceted range of both Augustus the person – Julian the Apostate famously compared him to a chameleon (Caesars 399B–C) – and his immense activities and impact each interpreter, and I am no exception, will fashion his own Augustus especially when the aim is different than a Forschungsbericht.4 And it goes without saying that writing for a larger audience is very important. Still, looking forward to a second edition of Dahlheim’s book, one could wish for somewhat more nuance on important occasions, which, far from lessening the appeal of the book, might actually enhance it. I would single out, for instance, precisely the connection with soteriology, a phenomenon that took on many different manifestations. One of them is the cult of the emperor in the Greek east. It was a highly differentiated phenomenon and response to Roman imperial rule that has been masterfully studied by Simon Price.5 In that light, it is simply bad scholarship to flatten it out by a summary such as: «Das Drehbuch für die Rolle des Heilands [here we go again] schrieb Augustus selbst. Es enthielt eine

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4 This is not meant to slight the considerable achievement of D. Kienast of providing this immensely valuable tool for anyone seriously interested in the subject (Augustus. Prinzip und Monarch, 4th ed. Darmstadt, 2008).

politisch-theologische Liturgie, die in allen Provinzen durch Umzüge und Fest-tage zu einem großen Stimmungstheater ausgebaut werden konnte [um] das Los der Provinzialen erträglicher zu machen (p. 396). Clearly, Dahlheim should be able to bring the substance of the information up to the level of his smartly phrased presentation. Doing so would win his book additional respect.

Karl Galinsky


This impressive book is the result of more than ten years of research. While working on a project on late Roman Christian notions of leadership back in 1998, Susanna Elm realized the central importance of Gregory of Nazianzus’ second oration in this respect, as it represents the earliest systematic treatment of Christian priesthood propagated by a member of the Greek-speaking Roman elite. Gregory’s text occupies indeed an important place in ‘Sons of Hellenism’ and the focus on the idea of leadership is pervasive in the discussion, although the book enters much wider fields. It is about two competing – yet related – visions of universalism and the Roman Empire exemplified by, or rather crystallized in the emperor Julian and Gregory respectively. Given the far-reaching consequences of the outcome of the debate for the political and religious identity of the late Roman Empire and its heirs, Elm’s subject is central to the cultural history of Late Antiquity, and she treats it masterfully.

The book is constructed as a roughly chronological narrative, switching from one protagonist to the other in carefully directed scene changes with flashbacks and anticipations.

The first chapter, ‘Nazianzus and the Eastern Empire, 330–361’, sketches the background, both at the personal and local level (Gregory’s student days, for instance, and his connectedness, even at the small town of Nazianzus), and at the imperial level. Constantius II gets considerable attention as Elm persuasively redresses the largely negative picture of the emperor in ancient and modern historiography. He is shown to have been personally involved in the attempts at reaching a consensus in the complex christological controversies of the period. The resulting compromise, the ‘homoian’ (or ‘Arian’) formulation of Constantinople, 360, was signed by Western and Eastern bishops, including Gregory’s father, Gregory the Elder, bishop of Nazianzus. The compromise did not last: as early as 361, Christian leaders from West and East revoked their signing. Nazianzus was one of the cities that witnessed a schism as a result. Apart from the rehabilitation of Constantius, two main observations from this chapter characterize both the whole period and Elm’s approach to it. First, she rightly insists that there are not simply two camps within Christianity (heretical Arianism versus Nicene orthodoxy) – which necessitates a nuanced discussion of the technical, theological and philosophical matters. Second, theology and politics went hand in hand.

We take leave of Gregory and move to the Western part of the empire in the second chapter, ‘Julian, from Caesar to Augustus. Paris to Constantinople, 355–362’. Elm looks for Julian’s concepts of leadership in some of his public letters: the *Epistle to the Athenians*,...