

Jaclyn Neel, *Legendary Rivals: Collegiality and Ambition in the Tales of Early Rome*. Mnemosyne supplements, vol. 372. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2015. Pp. x, 274. ISBN 978-90-04-28185-9.

Sharing of power was one of the characteristic features of the functioning of the Roman Republic, which was, however, continuously challenged by the rivalry for recognition among the members of the aristocracy. Therefore it is no coincidence that the original cooperation of political figures of the same position fighting for the same goal could turn into rivalry. In her book Jaclyn Neel calls this phenomenon dyadic rivalry, which she defines as follows: “What I call ‘dyadic rivalry’ is seen when two men at the head of state work cooperatively towards a concrete goal. At some point in their collaboration, one of them dies or disappears from the story; the other goes on to become a crucial figure in Rome.” (p. 175) Her book does not deal with events after the 4th century but concentrates on legendary and mythical history. Several cases of rivalry feature in the book with the story of Romulus and Remus making up the backbone of analysis. The twins founding the city are especially suitable subjects to this investigation as it is not only their situation and goals that are common but due to the fact that they are twins they are also of the same age and appearance, among others. When investigating how the authors of a particular age viewed these legendary rivalries, Neel analyzes the phenomena from a historical point of view. What characteristic features did they highlight and how should this be interpreted in the framework of their age and its events? The book in fact gives an account of the literary conceptualization of power sharing from Ennius to Augustus.

After the first chapter, which provides a definition accompanied by a detailed methodological background, outlines the problem and the framework of the analysis, Neel analyzes Ennius’ fragment and devotes the second chapter to the augury preceding the founding of the city. In her interpretation Ennius presents the augury with the twins having the same chance during the act and the result not having been predetermined. Remus’ augury was also successful,¹ but as Romulus’ sign was more potent, he got into the position to become the founder of Rome. Before the augury the twins work in strong cooperation, and it is only the moment of request for the augury when they become rivals, with this rivalry being beneficial for the state. The interpretation of the text is rather difficult due to the fact that the fragments preceding and following the excerpt in question contain very little information. For example, we can hardly consider Neel’s view to be acceptable when she says that Ennius was trying to exonerate Romulus from his brother Remus’ death. (“Ennius’s account of Remus’ death did not place the blame on Romulus” [p. 48]). The personal tone of the fragment, notably the strong dative form of ‘*mi*’ seems to rather emphasize Romulus’ responsibility.

¹ Neel’s answer to the question whether Remus got an augury at all is a definite ‘yes’. The word ‘*avis*’ in line 87 does not necessarily have to be related to Remus because of the previous expression ‘*avem servat*’. The adjective related to *avis* is *pulcherrima*, with the adjective *pulcher* appearing twice in the fragment, in both cases referring to Romulus: ‘*Romulus pulcher*’ in line 75, and ‘*pulchrisque locis*’ in line 89.

In the next chapter, entitled ‘Invective’, the author contradicts the idea that the unfavorable presentation of Romulus would go back to the turn of the second and first century. In Catullus’ verses, both Romulus and Remus stand for the Romans and are therefore interchangeable, which is a further proof for the fact that Romulus’ image cannot have changed decisively in the age of Sulla. The story of the twins does not have any negative connotation. On the contrary, they both are regarded to be the founders of the city, which is also backed by the denomination *Romulus Arpinas* found in the pseudo-Sallustian invective, which caricatures Cicero’s self-identification present in his own speeches as well. In Cicero’s view, at least in *de re publica*, Romulus is an ideal king; thus the fratricide is not even mentioned. Nevertheless, it is exactly Cicero where the change in the image can be experienced. The first text to present Romulus as an assassin is Cicero’s *de officiis*, which was probably influenced by the civil war between Caesar and Pompeius. The formation of the negative image was strongly promoted by the fact that political rivalry proved to be harmful for the Roman state by the 40s. The atmosphere and the change in the Romulus image is well depicted in Horatius’ famous *epodos* 7 as well.

Chapter 4 analyzes the festivals of Lupercalia and Parilia with Neel arguing that the story of the twins came to be reinterpreted under the Late Republic. A key figure of this process was Caesar, who introduced several innovations. Firstly, the introduction of the third group of *luperci* eliminated the element of rivalry. Secondly, it equates Caesar with the founders of the city. A further similar innovation was the equation of Caesar and Quirinus, whose identification with Romulus comes from the Late Republic. This means that Caesar set the founder of the city as a model, which shows that he considered Romulus to be an acceptable parallel figure.

Chapter 5 is devoted to the works of art and monuments depicting the twins. The audience of visual arts was rather different from the readers of written narratives. The chapter provides a detailed analysis of the pediment of the temple of Quirinus, the Basilica Aemilia and the columbarium of the Statilii.² The presentation of the rivalry is quite rare with most depictions of Romulus and Remus coming from the Augustan Age. In this period Remus is depicted less frequently; however, if they are presented together the phenomenon can be interpreted as some reference to abundance. To give an explanation for the neglect of Remus, Neel says that rivalry could not convey a positive message after the civil war. Furthermore, a monarchy had been formed, where the position of Augustus could not be questioned. Consequently, the absence of the depiction of Remus did convey a message for the aristocracy.

The Augustan Age also saw a change in the nature of elite dialogue, which is referred to in Chapter 6 examining the building up of the city wall as presented in the works of Augustan authors. For them the main question was whether Romulus

² Although the composition of the audience is a recurrent topic in this chapter, Neel does not draw attention to the fact that while the temple and basilica were open for everyone, the depictions of the columbarium were located in a closed space.

was responsible for his brother's death or he can be exempt from responsibility. Both Dionysius Halicarnasseus and Livy have multiple versions when narrating the death of Remus, and out of the two authors it is the Greek historian who presents Romulus in a more positive light. Vergil's image of Romulus is completely positive with Remus being hardly ever mentioned in his epic. In Dionysius' presentation Romulus becomes upset by his brother's death, while in Ovid's *Fasti* we can see him mourn Remus, who was assassinated by Celer. In the presentation seen in *Fasti*, neither of the twins is to blame as Remus jumps over the wall unaware of the prohibition and Romulus does not commit fratricide. "In the *Fasti*, Romulus mourns his brother deeply" – says Neel (p. 163); however we have to note that this mourning is hidden: *lacrimas introrsus obortas* or *flere palam non volt*. It remains hidden for the founders of the city and only the readers of the poem will get to know about it at most. In *Metamorphoses* Ovid does not even mention Remus, which seems to deny the opportunity of the sharing of powers. The mere exclusion of the possibility of rivalry reminds the reader of the fact that the productive rivalry of the Republican Age is also over. Nevertheless, starting from the 20's the image of Romulus is getting more and more positive and there is a shift in the highlight of the presentation to the time when Romulus can be presented as a *conditor*.

At this point the book ceases to follow the story of the twins and the founding of the city and goes on to analyze parallel narratives that are also centered around dyadic rivalry. In the relationship between Romulus and Titus Tatius we can recognize the same features as those presented in Chapter 3 and 6. Livy's depiction of Romulus is much less favorable than the one that Dionysius provides. While making allusions in his word usage to the fate of Remus, the Roman historian presents the role of Tatius as a further case of failure to share power. It is the motifs of gaining power and the death of one of the brothers that make it possible for the story of Numitor and Amulius to appear in the Chapter entitled *Parallels*, even if this case of rivalry does not feature in all the literary sources. The third parallel narrative is that of the founders of the Republic, Brutus and Collatinus, who provide a further excellent example for the problematic relationship between collegiality and ambition. In the procedure against Collatinus, Brutus seems to act as a tyrant, notably in the Dionysian text. Livy alleviates the tension created by Brutus' procedure by giving a shorter account of the event. He quickly turns to the conspiracy to bring back the king, where Brutus becomes a key figure by revealing the plot. Eventually, in the conclusion Neel can rightfully sum up the following: "The presence of dyadic rivalry in these other narratives ... is a pattern, rather than simply a motif of the Romulus saga" (p. 205).

The next chapter deals with the relationship and rivalry between Manlius Capitolinus and Camillus. As the author herself says, the rivalry is eventually constructed by Manlius (pp. 208, 216).³ In Livy's Book 5 both of them are

³ Some elements of the *dyadic rivalry* also appear in the presentation of Furius and Camillus' common warfare (Liv. 6.22-25). Nevertheless here the "loser" party does not disappear or die at the end of the story.

presented as saviors of Rome; nevertheless Camillus' role is more important if we consider Book 5 as a whole. In Livy's presentation Camillus' figure shows several characteristics that make him similar to Romulus and Servius Tullius, who are both excellent examples for a great king and tyrant at the same time. Livy makes great use of this seeming contradiction in the Manlius story (p. 212). Camillus' depiction, however, is quite complex and ambiguous: besides being one of the heroes of the Republic and the savior of Rome he sometimes appears to be a real *tyrant*.⁴ However, when treating the Manlius episode Livy cannot make references to this interpretation, and he chooses to neglect placing Camillus in light, which is contrary to the presentation found in e.g. Plutarch.

Romulus, Brutus and Camillus appear in literature after the end of the Republic as well but their stories are not built along the pattern of dyadic rivalry anymore. After the civil war and the development of the Empire, the fair competition so much emphasized during the Republic is a thing of the past. A review will necessarily shorten, simplify or skip information or elements that are highly interesting in themselves. Such elements would be the detailed analysis of some verses by Propertius or the presentation of the Parilia festival, etc. Unfortunately I could not elaborate on e.g. the polyvalence of Camillus' character either. Besides all the above, Neel's work contains several further valuable remarks and detailed analyses for the careful reader. By following the changes that the story of Romulus and Remus underwent through the centuries, she definitely encourages us to rethink the antique view on the foundation of Rome, the sharing of power and rivalry.

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⁴ For example anger (*ira*) is a frequent driver of his acts in domestic politics: Liv. 5.22.1; 5.26.8; 6.38.5, 8.