

Hannah Cornwell, *Pax and the Politics of Peace: Republic to Principate*. Oxford Classical Monographs. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017. Pp. xiv + 254. 17 figs. 1 table. \$95.00. ISBN 978-0-19-880563-2.

Hannah Cornwell's monograph, based on her Oxford D.Phil. thesis, fills a significant gap in the scholarship on political symbols and rhetoric in the transition from Republic to Principate. Ancient thought, as well as some recent scholarship, understandably analyzes peace in relation to war, a natural pairing that helps elucidate both concepts. C., on the other hand, offers peace its own stage, decoupled from war to an extent, and focuses instead on "...the role that peace has to play in Roman ideas of imperialism and the language of empire" (3). Crucial to C.'s study is the development of the concept of *pax* in the rhetoric of Rome's civil wars and later in the symbolic language as well as the iconography of conquest, victory, and imperialism of Augustus' Principate.

C. points out (chapter 1) that the semantic range of *pax* (related to treaties and contracts as well as relationships between mortals and the divine [*pax deorum*]) subjected it to manipulation under the force of rhetoric during the civil wars and the collapse of political institutions in the late Republic. Cicero, for instance, saw the necessity of *pax* in the negotiations between Pompey and Caesar in 49 BC as a way to forestall war since victory in such a war would have destroyed the Republic. Caesar in response tried to redefine his victory through his *clementia*. Later, in his rhetorical contest with Antony in 44/43 BC, Cicero linked *pax* closely with the concept of victory, since only through victory over Antony could the stability of the state be assured (chapter 2). This reassessment of the relationship between war, peace, and victory in the rhetoric of the civil wars culminated in Octavian using the accomplishment of peace without an opponent as a central tenet of his victory rhetoric (79).

The concept of peace on land and sea (*pax terra marique parata*), so C. argues (chapter 3), was an expansion of the notion of peace without an opponent: peace now covered the expanse of empire and world conquest replaced reconciliation. Octavian's *columna rostrata* in the Forum (dedicated in 36 BC) and accompanying inscription describe victory without reference to an opponent, and instead "[t]he focus is on the accomplishment of victory by means of peace as an expression of Roman power..." (86). Moreover, Octavian's Actian victory monument at Nicopolis, both the inscription and the decorative frieze, articulate this new meaning of peace: Roman victory over the world and the place of the defeated within it (115). In victory celebrations in both 36 and 29 BC, then, peace was expressed as a condition of empire.

With the advent of the age of Augustus *pax* became dependent upon the *princeps* and his family (chapter 4). The *Ludi Saeculares* celebrated the dawn of this new age in 17 BC in the context of Augustus' return from the east, along with victory and peace. A close examination of the *Fasti consulares* inscribed on the Parthian arch in

the Forum reveals that the return of the Parthian standards was integral to Augustus' celebration (136). The *Fasti triumphales*, showing the end of triumphs in 19 BC, similarly express the notion of the *novum saeculum* of the *Ludi Saeculares*. The Forum Augustum, as the final repository for the Parthian standards, was an embodiment of this developing Augustan concept of peace (e.g., in its decorative scheme with marble from all over the world), and its ritual functions (e.g., as the point of departure for commanders leaving on overseas campaigns). All this underscored the growing connection between *pax* and *imperium*.

The security of the empire was now dependent upon a single person, and the concept of *pax* was an expression of this vision (chapter 5). C. argues that the iconography of the reliefs and decoration of the *Ara Pacis Augustae* "offers a conceptualization of peace as a discourse on the nature of Roman imperialism" (181), which combines the conquest of the world with the stability of the state. The Tellus relief, for instance, offers a view of prosperity and fecundity as ideals of the *pax Augusta*, and these ideals are further emphasized and linked by the "visual constant" of the acanthus scroll (168). The processions on the north and south sides (for C. idealized and not historical) further symbolize this stability through the political and religious offices of the state. The acanthus scroll (noted above) also links together the figures of Augustus and Agrippa in these processions, who with veiled heads must be understood in the context of their priestly functions. The obelisk that functioned as the gnomon in the larger complex and its inscription (referencing the victory over Egypt) must be understood as part of this whole complex of monuments, including the *ara Pacis*. C. argues that referencing the victory over Egypt in this way, rather than evoking unpleasant memories of civil war, "...reminds the viewer of [Augustus'] initial role in his conquest of Egypt at the end of the civil wars" (182).

C. concludes with a brief look at how the *pax Augusta* informed the ideology of later emperors. Vespasian's templum Pacis, for instance (seen through the eyes of the elder Pliny [*HN* 36.101–2]) was an expression of Rome's conquest of the world through its collection of artwork and non-indigenous plants. Such botanical displays, rooted in symbols of abundance and prosperity of the *pax Augusta*, also expressed Rome's economic and commercial interests made possible by the expansive *pax Romana*. "The gardens of the templum pacis were a fully realized expression of Rome's control, transforming the *pax Augusta* of the formative years of the Roman principate into the *pax Romana* celebrated by Pliny" (194).

A significant achievement of this book is to show how the concept of *pax* evolved over time in the period of transition from republic to one-man rule, as revealed in language (both literary and documentary), artwork, and coinage. A consequence of this evolution was that *pax* became something of a rhetorical and symbolic monopoly in the developing language of power, even nudging aside such related concepts as *concordia* and *otium*. As C. demonstrates, the rhetoric of civil war as well as changing political institutions had a transformative effect on the concept of peace.

It is also clear that for much of Roman history peace was perceived as a two-edged sword, a perception that C. only deals with on the margins: Cicero argued against peace with Antony in 44 and 43 BC because such a peace was tantamount to capitulation and therefore a sign of weakness. A further consequence would have been an end to the Republic as Cicero conceived of it. In a much later context Tacitus famously has Calgacus equate *pax* and *solitudo* (a starting point for C.'s discussion of *pax* and the language of empire). Here, Tacitus gets at the notion of peace as a condition imposed on the weak by the powerful (perhaps thinking of the root it shares with *pacare*). Under Augustus, however, *pax* apparently became a uniformly positive concept (Tacitus' later cynicism notwithstanding), even beyond the very gates of Rome (e.g., Perelius Hedulus' altar dedicated to the *gens Augusta* in Carthage reflected the iconography of the *ara Pacis* [169–72] and altars dedicated to *pax Augusta* in the provinces [183–86]). One of Augustus' singular achievements was transforming *pax* into a desirable state of affairs for all concerned, with the result that Romans living under the first *princeps* never seemed to question the nature and consequences of the *pax Augusta*.

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