

BOOK REVIEW

Pax Romana: War, Peace, and Conquest in the Roman World. By ADRIAN GOLDSWORTHY. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016. Pp. ix, 513; 16 p. of plates. Hardcover, \$32.50. ISBN 9780300178821.

Within the ever-fractious saga of European history, ancient Rome looms unchallenged as overseeing the continent's greatest period of unity and stability, and indeed, it was not just on one continent, but three, that Roman subjects swore their obedience to a single political system, acquiesced to the jurisprudence of a single law-code, and sought entrance into a single, distinct cultural community, despite their own often deep linguistic, religious, and regional diversity.

This "Roman Peace" is the grand subject of Adrian Goldsworthy's newest book, a detailed analysis of the nature of Rome's varied interactions with the people of its empire, be they allies or administrators, clients or collaborators, traders or revolting provincials. Through this prism of "peace," the work treats many contingent subjects, such as defense, conquest, and imperial administration, but the focus throughout is upon exploring the nature of how Rome created and sustained its empire in the period of its greatest imperial expanse, from roughly the mid second century BC, to the early second century AD. This thematic focus stands in contrast to the approach taken in other, more recent books by Goldsworthy, which have focused on particular time-periods, or historical events or actors (such as his book on the fall of the Roman Empire, or his biographies of Augustus, Julius Caesar, and Antony and Cleopatra), though it does hearken back in this regard to some of his earlier works that were also thematically focused, such as his books on the Roman army, and Roman warfare.

Chapter One of the first part of the book, on the Republic, offers a succinct overview of early Rome, the political and military structures of the Early and Mid-Republic, and the rise of Rome as an imperial power up to roughly the mid second century BC. These preliminaries are then continued in Chapter Two with a further overview of the nature of Roman militarism and involvement in overseas conquests, and it is here that the reader is presented with an admiral discussion about what has been one of the most vexed questions in Roman history for almost two centuries, the causes behind the drive for Roman expansion.

Goldsworthy describes the defensive imperialism hypothesis made famous by Theodor Mommsen, what one may call the “offensive imperialism” view of William Harris, and what Charles Tilley has dubbed the “path dependency” model as elaborated by such Roman historians as Kurt Raaflaub and Arthur Eckstein among others (including Goldsworthy himself), wherein the system of Roman imperialism formed a sort of positive-feedback loop, locking-in political and military structures that promoted future expansion. It is precisely with such discussions as these that Goldsworthy infuses his books in general, and this book in particular, with a quality that, from a pedagogical perspective, I have often found to be ideal for undergraduates, in that he provides a good outline of the important scholarly perspectives on a given topic, while at the same time providing many excellent points of departure for class discussion and future reading. The works cited in the endnotes are well-stocked with current and older, seminal scholarship (albeit only Anglophone) so as to allow students, or other interested readers, to delve further into the many topics touched upon more lightly in the main text.

Chapter Three uses the campaigns of Julius Caesar in Gaul to cover a wide-range of topics connected to the Roman peace: *amicitia*, *clientela*, *fides*, the process of Romanization, rebellion, and numerous political, administrative, and military details. This approach of using one main or several key episodes to explore their various connections to the larger theme of peace is the model for much of the book. Thus Chapter Four, on Roman settlement and trading practices in the provinces, uses the history surrounding Mithridates and the “Asiatic Vespers” to explore such issues as the dual nature of Roman traders as both bringers of desired goods as well as harbingers of Roman imperialism, the slave trade, resistance to Rome, and the Roman political response to crises in the provinces; Chapter Five centers around Cicero’s proconsulship and “splendid little war” in Cilicia so as to explore the themes of provincial administration, extortion, and tax-collection; Chapter Six, on Rome’s dealings with the Hellenistic kingdoms, offers several choice anecdotes illustrating Roman diplomacy, arbitration, embassies, and provincial garrisons.

Part Two of the book deals with the theme of peace under the Empire, and the same basic pattern of paradigmatic examples to which related topics are addressed is continued (Chapter Seven about Augustus’ problems in Germany is a springboard for an insightful discussion about the nature of the dramatic decrease of Roman expansion in the first century AD; Chapter Eight focuses on Boudicca’s revolt in Britain so as to discuss issues of Romanization, ill-treatment, taxation and independent identity among the provincials; Chapters Nine and Ten look at the

local structures (and rivalries) that were exploited by the Romans, particularly in the east, and Pliny's time in Bithynia is discussed; Chapter Eleven explores daily life under Roman rule with particular regard to Hadrian; Chapters Twelve and Thirteen deal primarily with issues surrounding the Roman armies in the provinces; and Chapter Fourteen elaborates on Rome's interactions with those outside of its borders through trade and treaties). There is much here that will remind one of such watershed studies as Clifford Ando's *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire* (2013), and Fergus Millar's *The Emperor in the Roman World* (1979), though of course with updated information, especially regarding more recent archaeological finds. This sort of synthesis of scholarship, combined with narrative history into an easily digestible and eminently readable form is in many ways the most important contribution of this book, and one which will commend it for many years to come.

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