

BOOK REVIEW

Pax and the Politics of Peace: Republic to Principate. By HANNAH CORNWELL. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2017. Pp. xiv + 254. Hardcover, \$95.00. ISBN 978-0-198-80563-2.

This book, which originated as the author's doctoral thesis, provides new and valuable insight into the concept of "peace" (*pax*) in Roman political discourse of the Late Republic and Augustan Principate. Examining the rhetorical application of *pax* in both literary and material contexts, Cornwell traces its shifting significance amid internal and external political change, beginning with its fluid definition during the civil wars and extending through its integration into imperial ideology. Where earlier literature in this area has tended to focus on peace only in relation to the rhetoric of war, or on the broader idea of *pax Romana*, Cornwell's study considers the conceptual development of *pax* within the decades treated "as part of a dynamic process of sociopolitical interactions and relationships" (15) that unfolded in tandem with a transforming political landscape.

The monograph's five main chapters, bookended by an introduction and conclusion, proceed in a loosely chronological fashion. Chapter 1 ("The Meaning of *Pax*") considers the complex of meanings associated with "peace" in Roman discourse—public and private, civic and religious—prior to the civil wars. Assembling an array of sources literary, numismatic, and epigraphic, Cornwell defines the traditional concept of *pax* as "at root a bilateral agreement, achieved and maintained through negotiations and conflict resolution in which one party (usually the weaker) sought peace from the other (usually the superior), which then gives the notion strong unilateral tones" (33).

In her second chapter ("Peace in Civil War"), Cornwell describes the "politicization" of *pax* (47) in Late Republican politics, a rhetorical arena in which "opposing sides would each champion the central ideological elements of the state to legitimize their own positions and contest those of their opponents" (48). Her discussion covers the entire decade of the 40s BCE and closes with the Pact of Misenum in 39, focusing on the tense hopes for reconciliation between Caesar and Pompey on the eve of civil war, Cicero's invectives against Antony after the

dictator's murder, and the Treaty of Brundisium that promised stability for the Roman state. The rhetoric of "peace" was employed in each of these historical moments, formulated to suit diverse agendas: for Caesar, *pax* represented a pact of reconciliation between equals, based on mutual esteem rather than the domination of a superior party; for Cicero in 44–43, *pax* in Rome required the militant suppression of Antony, who was labeled a *hostis* (another rhetorically charged term explored fruitfully in this section); for Octavian and Antony in 40, *pax* was identified, in response to chronic internal strife, with the stabilization and preservation of the Roman state.

Chapter 3 ("Peace over Land and Sea") turns to the events of the following decade, reaching to Octavian's Triple Triumph and the establishment of the Actian victory monument at Nicopolis. In the case of victory against Roman opponents, such as Sextus Pompey and Antony, the earlier identification of *pax* with the preservation of the state permitted the elision of the enemy in triumphal commemorations. Inspired by the Hellenistic language of global conquest already integrated into Late Republican rhetoric, the victories at Naulochus and Actium were celebrated as assertions of *pax terra marique*, the restoration of stability throughout the *orbis terrarum*. The concept of *pax* thus assumed a new significance in the ideology of empire, as the provision of universal security guaranteed by Roman power.

The early decades of the Principate saw the further promotion of *pax* as a signifier of worldwide security and prosperity, ideals increasingly linked to Augustus' own person. Chapter 4 ("Peace in the New Age of Augustus") and Chapter 5 ("The *Pax Augusta*") elaborate the expression of the imperial concept of "peace" through close examination of key monuments and events: chiefly, the performance of the Ludi Saeculares; the recovery of the standards lost to Parthia, and the Parthian Arch that celebrated their return; the Ara Pacis Augustae; and the Forum Augustum. Dedications to the *pax augusta* from communities and individuals outside Rome—in Italy, Gaul, and Asia Minor—highlight its centrality to the image of both the empire and the *princeps* himself: "the concept of *pax* was now viewed as a truly imperial quality" (186).

Curiously, the chapters on the Principate largely pass over the period between 29 and 20, important years that saw the formal definition of Augustus' powers—including the greater proconsular power that extended his personal control over the empire—as well as the composition of the *Aeneid*, which receives only scant mention in this book despite its formative role in the developing imperial ideology. On the latter point, deeper engagement with the Vergilian

prophecies of Augustan rule, all three of which deploy the rhetoric of global victory, security, and prosperity well elaborated by Cornwell, would have only enriched her analysis.

Cornwell handles her study's complex subject matter with admirable clarity, cogently defining *pax* in its various expressions with a diverse and judicious use of evidence. The volume is well produced, and the author's prose is lucid, concise, and lively. Her careful explication of the meaning(s) and political resonance of *pax* will be of use to historical and philological study, and her frames of analysis afford fresh observations on the visual rhetoric of monuments and coinage. In sum, this book presents a novel perspective on Rome's transition from Republic to Empire, and will be valuable to scholarship on Roman politics, rhetoric, civil war, and imperialism during these crucial decades.

TEDD WIMPERIS

Elon University, twimperis@elon.edu