
The Ara Pacis itself might groan under the weight of recent scholarship devoted to it, and a book about its floral frieze might seem less than promising, but this book has much to recommend it. C argues that the vegetal decoration was much more than just a flourish, or an affectation, or a mere stylistic exercise. Through a systematic study of the Greek antecedents of this decoration (Chaps. I-II), and a discussion of the Roman framework of ideas against which the Ara Pacis is to be understood (Chaps. III-IV), it is demonstrated that the floral frieze was laden with meaning.

Chapters I ('The Imagery of the Floral Friezes and Hellenistic Greek Precedents', 13-57) and II ('The Theonomous Tendril—Divinely Inhabited Floral Ornament in Late Classical and Hellenistic Art', 58-86) look at precedents for the Ara Pacis floral friezes in Late Classical and Hellenistic art (the tiny animal figures are also considered). It is good to see Hellenistic elements being emphasized. Paul Zanker's view of the purging of discordant 'Hellenistic' features by Augustus does not appeal. The latticework and garlands are both capable of recalling Hellenistic marble altars, being a reminder in stone of the provisional wooden enclosure. As if jargon were not beginning to proliferate in this field, words like 'polycarpophoric' (13 ff.) and 'polytheriotrophic' (41 ff.) are introduced. What it all boils down to is something that has been accepted for a while: that there are multiple associations or evocations behind all the elements of the Ara Pacis (including, as C stresses, the floral ones). C does not believe that the multiplicity of meanings would have created confusion: 'the synthetic range of traditions that informed the monument would hardly have made an ambiguous or muddled impression upon the knowing spectator. Instead, one begins to see the richly nuanced quality that an imagery with such varied origins could convey' (56). Leaving aside the issue of the 'knowing
spectator’ (with attendant problems like education, class, culture, age, setting, period, etc.), this is a view in tune with Karl Galinsky’s recent arguments that a strong and positive authorial centre governed contemporary interpretations of Augustan art and literature. Yet the kinds of cultural, moral and political ideas which are expressed by the Ara Pacis remained contentious in Roman society: tradition vs. innovation, Roman vs. Greek, pietas vs. impietas, etc. References to luxuria, adulatio, etc., abound in critical vein in post-Augustan literature. If the messages were intended to be nuanced but clear, their reception doesn’t in fact appear to have been uncomplicated. It is still difficult not to see something discordant, or lastingly complicated, in the scorpion on the Ara Pacis, and the snake attacking the bird’s nest, small scale though they are. The issue of response remains an open (very difficult, perhaps insoluble) question.

In Chapter III (‘Dionysos, Apollo, and Augustus’, 87-123), C attacks the idea that there was opposition between elements associated with Apollo and elements associated with Dionysos in Augustan art and ideology more generally. This was supposed to have been a result of the insults hurled back and forth between Antony and Octavian in the period leading up to Actium. C shows that the rich allusions of his tendril ornament relate in particular to Venus and Dionysos. Dionysiac motifs, he goes on to explain, abound in Augustan art and literature, and do not lead one to think necessarily of Antony. Augustus was capable of incorporating diverse elements into the range of permitted, or suggested, associations, for very different aspects could be useful as expressions of his power in different social contexts, e.g. the solemnity of a religious procession or senatorial meeting, the relaxation or exuberance of games or a triumph or an acclamation. If some elements thus incorporated seem as though Augustus is trumping an enemy, that could be valuable too, e.g. the beautiful Boston cameo depicting Augustus as Neptune, trampling the head of (perhaps) Sextus Pompey or Antony into the rolling sea. It is better to think in terms of a synthesis of what are often very different elements.
Chapter IV ('Degenerare and Renovare', 124-69) is a fairly predictable account of the political, religious and moral ideas of Augustan Rome. C stresses the return of the Golden Age, the emphasis upon mos maiorum, etc., and correctly associates these themes with the images of abundance and fertility on the Ara Pacis. Karl Galinsky's new book *Augustan Culture* supersedes much of this, though of course without the particular stress on the floral frieze.

The endnotes and plates are gathered together at the back of the book, which complicates the reading process, but does not prevent it being a worthwhile exercise.

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Only 18 out of Euripides' approximately 90 plays survive today in a more or less complete form. These 18 plays have been the subject of much scholarly discussion, but they have also become widely accessible to non-specialist readers through the proliferation of translations, especially over the last 50 years.

The many fragmentary plays, however, have hitherto remained almost exclusively the preserve of professional scholars. T.B.L. Webster's book *The Tragedies of Euripides* (1967) did offer the more general reader a range of useful insights into the possible content of the plays. There was no avenue, however, by which such a reader could study the details of particular fragments.