ANN L. KUTTNER Dynasty and Empire in the Age of Augustus: the Case of the Boscoreale Cups (Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1995); xiv plus 387, with 28 black-and-white plates and 125 figures; ISBN 0520 067738.

Augustan art has certainly attracted its fair share of interest in recent years. This book examines in depth two silver cups discovered about a century ago in Boscoreale, kept from public view in the Rothschild collection, lost and damaged during the upheavals of World War II, and recently rediscovered. They are now on display in the Louvre. Due to their damaged state, this study relies heavily on illustrations from an 1899 publication by Héron de Villefosse. K starts from the position reached by recent scholarship that Augustus monitored a carefully nuanced programme of dynastic image-propagation. She argues that the Cups must be understood against this background. They are 'Augustan' rather than 'Julio-Claudian' in date, and were modelled on relief panels erected c. 9 BC or just after—probably not from a triumphal arch but from the base of some honorific column or portrait of Augustus. The argument is interesting, and may be right, but there is nothing that clinches the case and many points at which the reader is made to wonder about the basis for connections.

It is puzzling, for instance, that the context of the cups is not fully explored. K does not analyze the ancient hoard to which the cups once belonged on the grounds that this would require a separate study. It may be so, but her case could have been helped by a better appreciation of the surroundings from which the cups derived. Nevertheless, there is an exhaustive analysis of the various iconographic aspects, and a comprehensive discussion of the historical background, especially Augustus' concepts of dynastic succession, world rule and political theology (esp. 13 ff., 172 ff.). K believes that the images on the cups relate to the period after Agrippa's death (12 BC) when Tiberius and Drusus were paramount in the succession plans of the princeps, before death and self-exile facilitated the elevation of Gaius and Lucius
Caesar. There is a problem if you believe, as some do, that Gaius was destined to succeed, and that this was understood, from the moment of his birth in 17 BC. Even in this case, however, there could be room for the kind of promotion of Tiberius and Drusus which K envisages. It is certainly correct to employ images as primary expressions, rather than as something subordinate to, or corroborative of, literature and written histories (cf. Appendix B on communications theory, 210-11).

The cups are distinguished as the 'Augustus Cup' and the 'Tiberius Cup'. On one side of the former (the scene of 'Augustus' World Rule'), Augustus appears with gods and the personifications of conquered geographical areas (Chaps. 1-3). The opposite side, in K's opinion, shows Drusus presenting the children of Gallic chieftains to Augustus for voluntary education in Rome (Chap. 4). Others have taken this scene to show Gaius and Lucius being presented to Augustus, and the 'barbarian princes' on the Ara Pacis, enlisted by K in support, are themselves a matter of controversy. So, even though K's arguments are impressive, matters are not quite 'clear beyond a shadow of a doubt' (203). On the 'Tiberius Cup', K interprets the sacrifice scene as Tiberius presiding at a nuncupatio votorum (Chap. 5), and the other side depicts Tiberius in triumph (Chap. 6). These four scenes are derived from the four-sided base to a (hypothetical) column monument or statue base of Augustus (Chaps. 7-8). The reader is left to wonder which scene would have been on the front (the scene of Augustus' world rule?) and which on the back. Then there is the sequence in which a viewer would move around the monument and contemplate the scenes. What would have been the fourth and climactic scene?

The issue of how images from public monuments are transmitted into private contexts remains problematic. Borrowings can be piecemeal rather than entire, and some allowance for adaptation, evolution and modification should be made. It is possible to imitate, select, combine, copy, allude, and so on. The
Cups might not be as absolute or accurate a reflection of an Augustan monument as K tends to assume.

Such difficulties and others notwithstanding, the work is a deep and interesting one. It is a surprise to find such a long gap between the latest references (1989) and the date of publication (1995), though the Notes (213-305), Bibliography (307-27), and Indices (329-87) are extremely full and valuable.

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Lacey assembles here, with revisions, his investigations into the government of the Augustan Principate, adding some new essays. It looks like out-of-fashion Staatsrecht, and risks being brushed aside; but Lacey is looking not statically at the ‘system’ (which is what people are nowadays castigated for if they do it) but dynamically at the ‘evolution of the system’, at shifts and changes, accommodations and formulations, related to an ongoing political story, and that has every right to be attended to.

Chapter 3 reactivates Lacey’s thesis from over 20 years ago, that there was no ‘constitutional settlement of 27 BC’ because there didn’t need to be. That one has come to be pretty widely accepted.

Chapter 4 contains the less well-known thesis, from just over 10 years ago, that there was no ‘constitutional settlement of 23 BC’ either (and Chapter 7 must be drawn in here, being a new version of Lacey’s 1979 paper ‘Summi fastigii vocabulum’); for Augustus