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978-0-521-19000-8 - Friendship and Empire: Roman Diplomacy and Imperialism in the Middle Republic (353–146 BC)

Paul J. Burton

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FRIENDSHIP AND EMPIRE

In this bold new interpretation of the origins of ancient Rome's overseas empire, Dr. Burton charts the impact of the psychology, language, and gesture associated with the ancient Roman concept of *amicitia*, or "friendship." The book challenges the prevailing orthodox Cold War-era Realist interpretation of Roman imperialism, and argues that language and ideals contributed just as much to Roman empire-building as military muscle. Using an International Relations Constructivist theoretical framework, Dr. Burton replaces the modern scholarly fiction of a Roman empire built on networks of foreign clients and client states with an interpretation grounded firmly in the discursive habits of the ancient texts themselves. The results better account for the peculiar rhythms of Rome's earliest period of overseas expansion – brief periods of vigorous military and diplomatic activity, such as the rolling back of Seleucid power from Asia Minor and Greece in 192–188 BC, followed by long periods of inactivity and unconcern.

PAUL J. BURTON is a lecturer at the Australian National University in Canberra, Australia. He has published on topics as diverse as ancient international law, the influence of the Classics on George Orwell, and the influence of Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* on Alfred Hitchcock's film, *The Birds*. His most recent article is a comprehensive study of comparisons of Rome with the United States as global powers in print journalism and current affairs literature in the first decade of the twenty-first century.

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Preface

This study was originally conceived and written as a Ph.D. dissertation in the relative comfort and security of post-Cold War 1990s United States (US) of America. From that vantage point it seemed that after a few missteps (in northern Iraq, Somalia, and Rwanda), the US seemed to be settling into its new role as “Globo-cop,” enforcing the consensual will of the international community and adopting suitably internationalist diplomatic positions, particularly in the rapidly disintegrating former Yugoslavia.

As a preliminary version of this study was under consideration by the editors of the ancient history journal *Klio*, the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 (9/11) on the World Trade Center in New York City, on the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia, and in a field near Shanksville, Pennsylvania occurred. As a part-time resident of both the Washington, D.C. area and Pennsylvania at the time, these events made a great impression on me, and guided the revision of my dissertation more firmly down a theoretical path to which I had already been inclining by the summer of 2001: International Relations (IR) Constructivism. My belief was that IR Realism – the dominant paradigm in foreign-policy circles as well as in Political Science departments in academia – had exerted a debilitating effect on inquiry into past empires, states, and state systems, and its inability to predict or account for the internal breakup of the Soviet Union and its satellite empire in Europe only added to that conviction. The change of tone and discourse in the way politicians and diplomats spoke about the world under the Clinton administration also compelled me to think more about the constructive power of language and ideas.

The horrors that followed the initial horror of 9/11 – a US administration that seemed determined to replace the enormous fund of goodwill poured forth by the international community towards the United States with an equally large fund of anti-American feeling after taking the ill-fated decision to shift the front line of the “Global War on Terror(ism)” from Afghanistan to Iraq; the revelations that the US leadership had approved of unspeakable

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acts of torture in black sites, prisons, and US bases all over the world; the daily perversion of language by US politicians and their speechwriters and spokespeople, and the cowed and passive absorption of these distortions by the press that reported on them – all of this confirmed my initial suspicion that language and ideas exert a significant autonomous impact on how we construct global realities.

The final version of my study of Roman international relations in the Middle Republic has occupied an eventful fifteen years not just in my life but in the lives of my friends and family as well as internationally. The project owes the most, as a glance at my bibliography will show, to my Ph.D. supervisor in the Department of History at the University of Maryland at College Park, Professor Arthur M. Eckstein. The loss of his life-partner Jeannie Rutenburg in 2009 was a devastating blow; she was a great mentor and a seminal influence in my early academic life, and much of what appears here bears the stamp of our long conversations as the research and writing of the dissertation progressed.

This project would have never seen the light of day without the loving encouragement of my friends and family. Unfortunately, my mother passed away before my book appeared; at many crucial stages in my research career, she was instrumental in helping me keep body and soul together. My father, too, has been an inspiration, as always. I thank my wife, Jessica Dietrich, and my two wonderful children, Harper and Eliot, for being so understanding of my needs and preoccupations, generous with their time, and always present and eager with their love. Finally, thanks are especially owed to those who endured long conversations about my work, and even read portions of it and provided insightful feedback. Special thanks must go to Jane Dietrich, an outstanding mother-in-law and superb editor who spent a good deal of her time on her visit to us in Australia not playing with her new grandson, but reading the entire manuscript end-to-end.

Canberra, Australia

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Abbreviations

Abbreviated references generally follow the conventions of *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, eds. S. Hornblower and A. Spawforth, rev. 3rd edn., Oxford 2003.

In addition, the following are used:

cos.	consul
mag.eq.	magister equitum
pr.	praetor
tr. pl.	tribunus plebis
OLD	<i>Oxford Latin Dictionary</i> , ed. P.G.W. Glare, rev. repr., Oxford 2004.

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