

Agrippa, in his aedileship of 33 BCE, is linked by H., via the cleaning of the Cloaca Maxima, to Hercules diverting a river to clean the stables of Augeas and to argue, in contrast to scholarship emphasising the practical nature of this aedileship, that Agrippa was demonstrating ‘his epochal nature as a leader’ (p. 112). Here H. misses the possibility of connecting the building of the Aqua Julia by Agrippa as a further reference to the myth of Hercules in diverting a river to clean the stables (pp. 113–15). I have added here two minor extensions of H.’s analysis to show how stimulating the book is and its importance in refiguring other areas of Roman history – not least the history of construction.

There is much more in the book that cannot be covered in this review: eternal returns (Chapter 2) and literary periodisation (Chapter 6). It is well written with a clear argument that temporal periodisation mattered to the Romans in the first century BCE, prefiguring the ‘Augustan Age’ (on which there is much discussion). Yet, reading the book, I was still left wondering whether Sulla was that original and, if he was, why did the concept of a Sullan *saeculum* become quite so murky and fragmented in the sources that survive? Putting this matter aside, the book is worth reading to open your mind to the concept of the Romans taking action with a view to a future that would last beyond their own lifetime.

Macquarie University

RAY LAURENCE 
ray.laurence@mq.edu.au

IDENTITY AND DIVERSITY IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

PRICE (J. J.), FINKELBERG (M.), SHAHAR (Y.) (edd.) *Rome: an Empire of Many Nations. New Perspectives on Ethnic Diversity and Cultural Identity*. Pp. xiv + 410, b/w & colour ills, b/w & colour maps. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021. Cased, £90, US\$120. ISBN: 978-1-108-47945-5.

doi:10.1017/S0009840X23001890

This handsomely produced volume originated in a 2015 conference in honour of Benjamin Isaac in Tel Aviv. Price’s brief introduction frames the volume’s essays as countering ancient and modern tendencies to foreground the ‘success’ of the Roman Empire, whether in terms of durability, strategy or unification. Instead, the essays emphasise the experience of local individuals and groups, in terms of ‘identity and inner lives’ (p. 5), inspired in part by Isaac’s *The Limits of Empire. The Roman Army in the East* (1990) and *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (2004). Price emphasises postcolonialism as pivotal in the trajectory of Roman imperial studies, but at the same time signals some scepticism about that approach, and other twentieth- and twenty-first-century critical approaches, as well as the longevity of identity studies more generally (pp. 4–6).

The essays are arranged into four thematic parts, ‘Ethnicity and Identity in the Roman Empire’, ‘Culture and Identity in the Roman Empire’, ‘Ethnicity and Identity in the Roman Empire: the Case of the Jews’ and ‘Iudaea/Palaestina’, the first two of which are somewhat loose and arbitrary categories. There is no further curation beyond brief summaries of individual papers in Price’s introduction. Papers in the first two sections mainly go their

own ways within a general, largely implicit rubric of engagement with the unity and diversity of the Roman world, with varying emphasis on the direct impact on or reception by local individuals and groups of Roman imperial structures, ideologies or preferences, and patterns of identification and self-identification. 'Culture and Identity' is particularly loose, encompassing everything from Finkelberg's discussion in 'Roman Reception of the Trojan War' of changes over time in Rome's self-positioning vis-à-vis Greekness via retellings of the Trojan War to I. Israelowich's argument in 'The Involvement of Provincial Cities in the Administration of School Teaching' that Vespasian's extension of immunity from liturgies to teachers as a class was a recognition of teachers' role in training up 'future bureaucrats' (p. 140) to serve the needs of the Roman Empire.

In the first two parts there are some strong individual contributions ranging from interesting aperçus to fully polished articles. Examples of interesting aperçus include B. Isaac's 'From Rome to Constantinople', which asks how transferring the capital was conceptualised and understood by contemporaries, with particular emphasis on word choice and the longstanding ancient motif of rumours of moving the capital. D. Dueck's 'Ethnic Types and Stereotypes in Ancient Latin Idioms' largely collates these stereotypes, with preliminary suggestions about the patterning of them across geographically nearer and more remote groups. Further attention to comparative and theoretical considerations and, above all, to the impact and consequences of such stereotypes on lived experience might be productive ways of developing the argument.

Amongst the more polished contributions within the first two sections, B. Shaw's 'Keti, Son of Maswalat: Ethnicity and Empire' stands out. Shaw performs a close reading of a bilingual, Latin and palaeo-Tamazight commemoration of an individual from Thullium, a comparatively remote highland community within Africa Proconsularis. A soldier of the Roman army and priest of the local imperial cult, he appears as Gaius Julius Gaetulus in the Latin part and as Keti, son of Maswalat, from the tribe Misiciri, in the palaeo-Tamazight part. As Shaw makes clear, the broad phenomenon of individuals within the Roman empire who claim two or more *personae*, expressed in two or more languages, is not what is remarkable here, but the detailed articulation of Gaetulus/Keti's social and ethnic affinities, and their specific histories and geographies of imperial entanglement. A. Chaniotis's 'Many Nations, One Night? Historical Aspects of the Night in the Roman Empire' is similarly polished, and it advances a convincing and evocative argument about the various ways in which Roman imperial ideologies and preferences, along with social, cultural, technological, religious and political changes more or less closely tied to empire, changed local peoples' experience of night. Chaniotis's attention to a Roman imperial ideology of crossing the 'frontier' of night and encouraging others to do so is particularly thought-provoking. J. Scheid's 'Roman Theologies in the Roman Cities of Italy and the Provinces' sits somewhere between an aperçu and a polished article. Its clarity and impact would have been improved by stronger editorial intervention, more explicit engagement with the state of the questions and attention to English expression. Nevertheless, Scheid's close attention to municipia and colonies of the northern and western provinces of the Roman Empire, particularly around the time of their foundation, as laboratories to advance understanding of the making of Roman theology beyond the city of Rome, is suggestive.

The third part is focused on 'The Case of the Jews', and here the problem is less that the individual papers scatter in different directions and more that readers are left to identify common themes and to navigate overlap and disagreement. On my reading, the six papers fall into three pairs. The essays by E. Gruen and A. Jacobson offer revisionist accounts of Roman treatment of Jews/Judaeans before and after 66–70 CE respectively. Gruen's 'Religious Pluralism in the Roman Empire: Did Judaism Test the Limits of Roman

Tolerance?’ argues against characterising Roman attitudes towards Jews as an example of proto-racism (Isaac’s preferred term in *The Invention of Racism*) as well as minimising accounts of Jewish separatism. He emphasises rather evidence of conversion to Judaism, adoption of Jewish practices on the part of Gentiles, and vice versa (pp. 177–9), and represents expulsions of Jews from Rome and Caligula’s intention to put a statue of himself in the Temple as ‘bumps in the road’ (pp. 180–1) amidst a generally ‘laissez-faire’ attitude towards Jews, as towards followers of other ‘alien religions’ before 66–70. In ‘Rome’s Attitude to Jews after the Great Rebellion – Beyond *Raison d’état*?’ Jacobson in turn argues against M. Goodman’s position in *Rome and Jerusalem* (2007), playing down any exceptionalism in Flavian treatment of Jews after the Jewish War, so that the Jewish tax, for example, was introduced for ‘mainly financial rather than propagandistic’ reasons (p. 195), and more generally takes issue with Goodman’s notion that the Flavians were engaged in a ‘war on Judaism’ (pp. 186; 192; 197). The argument seems strained and hard to square with the triumphal relief of the Arch of Titus, featuring, amongst other spoils, a Menorah and Showbread carried in procession, with the apotheosis of Titus featured above.

Y. Rotman’s and Price’s papers offer interesting perspectives on Jewish models of community identities. Taking up S. Honigman’s argument, in *Tales of High Priests and Taxes* (2014), that the Hasmonaean developed a notion of Jewishness as a civic status into which outsiders might be integrated by following Jewish Law, Rotman, in ‘Between *ethnos* and *populus*: the Boundaries of Being a Jew’, explores the consequences of Roman appropriation of the right to determine civic statuses, whether by banning circumcision and thus taking action against extending Jewish status or by upholding rabbinical authority to determine who was part of the community. Price’s contribution, ‘Local Identities of Synagogue Communities in the Roman Empire’, implicitly balances Rotman’s, with attention to the microworlds of individual synagogues. He asks how far synagogues articulated community identity through origin stories or distinctive membership, and concludes interestingly that their gaze was generally inward-looking, in contrast to Greek cities’ engagement in globalisation.

Shahar and A. Oppenheimer both consider traditions of relations between Roman emperors and Jewish authorities. Shahar’s piece, ‘The Good, the Bad and the Middling: Roman Emperors in Talmudic Literature’, is an insightful comparison of Palestinian literary accounts of second- to early fourth-century Roman emperors with Roman traditions. Anecdotes about individual emperors sometimes run across both traditions, but with very different overtones. In ‘The Severans and Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi’ Oppenheimer homes in on one line of discussion that is treated in Shahar’s piece: the relationship between ‘Antoninus’ (who can be one of several second-century emperors) and Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi, and the latter’s productive brokering of local authority in the context of Roman imperial power.

Two essays on the archaeological footprint of Roman legionary bases and their interactions with civilian communities make up the fourth part, ‘Judaea/Palaestina’. In ‘The Roman Legionary Base in Legio-Kefar ‘Othnay – the Evidence from the Small Finds’ Y. Tepper focuses on the presence of two legions in a base at a Jewish-Samaritan village, Kefar ‘Othnay, which appears in Latin sources as Caporcotani/Caparcotani. Tepper paints an evocative picture of the legions’ interactions with, and to some extent embodiment of, this complex religious, ethnic and cultural region, not least through modest finds such as brick- and tile-stamps, coins countermarked with legionary numbers and symbols, and armour pieces, in addition to a building with a mosaic, Greek inscriptions (including one to ‘the God Jesus Christ’) and bread-stamps indicating the presence of centurions with ‘Semitic’ and Nabatean names (pp. 298–9). The volume concludes with

S. Weksler-Bdolah's longer piece, 'The Camp of the Legion X Fretensis', on the location of the base of Legio X Fretensis in relation to that of the colony of Aelia Capitolina. Weksler-Bdolah's careful reconstruction, again based largely on the study of small finds, in addition to site layouts, and a striking deposit of pig and piglet bones, a marker of the characteristic diet of the Roman army, traces the trajectory of the base on the southwestern hill from 70 CE through the early second-century foundation of the colony and into the early fourth century CE.

Despite some strong individual contributions, readers looking to the volume as a whole for a sense of 'new perspectives on ethnic diversity and cultural identity' in the Roman Empire are in for a frustrating time. Whatever lively conversations and disagreements there were that connected the papers at the conference are missing from the volume, and even the explicit case study of 'the Jews' in the third part lacks a framework, so that we are left to guess what broader phenomenon or hypothesis each paper is illustrating or testing. More generally, authors are entering intense, decades-long debates across a considerable range of subfields with varying levels of awareness of, and interest in, these broader conversations. Meanwhile, the urgency of taking on (and, for that matter, naming) issues of race and inequality across the field of ancient and, more broadly, premodern studies has only intensified during the gap between the conference and the date of publication, with the result that the volume seems markedly abstract and disengaged from current conversations. It is nevertheless to be hoped that individual papers will inspire future enquiry.

Harvard University

EMMA DENCH
dench@fas.harvard.edu

POLITICAL CHANGES IN THE ROMAN REPUBLIC

BELONICK (P.) *Restraint, Conflict, and the Fall of the Roman Republic*. Pp. x + 228. New York: Oxford University Press, 2023. Cased, £54, US\$83. ISBN: 978-0-19-766266-3.

doi:10.1017/S0009840X23002391

'We know that competition makes the Roman Republic go, like a car ... but what makes the car brake, or at least stay on the road so long?' (p. ix). Starting from this question, B. sets out to investigate the social norms that regulated political relations in the Roman Republic: a sort of social contract that allowed the polity to function. He chiefly focuses on the unwritten norms that were part of the 'Roman constitution' and that were constantly in dialogue with laws and public institutions, often influencing each other. This thought-provoking book follows a rather original and stimulating approach to the study of the Roman Republic and offers a new look at the institutional change that occurred at the end of the Republican period: a topic that still fascinates scholars and on which much has been written since the early modern period (see the in-depth survey by F. Santangelo, *Historikà* 11 [2021], 301–478). Indeed, the book confronts many aspects concerning the rules that first regulated the functioning of the Republic and then caused its 'crisis' (B. prefers the term 'fall', riffing on the title of P. A. Brunt's renowned essay): from aristocratic competition to political innovation, from laws to abuse of power and so forth.