

instance, a certain Syrian bishop, who had previously turned a pagan temple into a church, refused to turn it back into a pagan temple. This decision resulted in the bishop's execution by an angry mob (p. 53). This incident may seem as part of imperial persecution against Christians and as an actual case of martyrdom, but Teitler emphasizes that even though such incidents happened, they were not encouraged by Julian and this was not the purpose of his new pro-pagan policies. Teitler strengthens this argument in Chapter 8, in which he focuses on Julian's School Edict and shows that its aim was not to persecute Christians, certainly not in the violent way Christians were persecuted after previous emperors had legislated anti-Christians laws. Teitler explains that 'the School Edict did not ... exclude Christians altogether from classical education, but merely tried to prohibit Christians altogether from teaching the classics' (p. 67) because 'a Christian teacher who despised the pagan gods, he [Julian] argues, could never correctly explain to his pupils the works of Homer, Hesiod, Demosthenes...' (p. 66). That is, Julian's legislation against Christians was driven by his under appreciation of their intellectual ability, but it was also driven by his wish to propagate Classical philosophy, literature and thought in the best way possible. In other words, the impact on the Christians was a by-product of a greater plan.

Chapters 9-13 examine stories about persecutions and martyrdoms of Christians that took place during the reign of Julian. Teitler discusses Basil of Ancyra (Chapter 9), Theodorus the Confessor (Chapter 10), Theodoretus of Antioch (Chapter 11), the martyrs of Caesarea and Gaza (Chapter 12), and Eugenius and Macarius of Antioch (Chapter 13). The results of these discussions are the same: while some Christians were executed during the time period of Julian's reign, their deaths were not caused by any imperial persecution or any attempt of Julian to go after Christians. The second part of the book concludes with two chapters that examine another policy of Julian's (Chapter 14) and some contemporary Christian responses to Julian, which also lay the grounds for the later negative depiction of Julian in history (Chapter 15). The last part of the book (Chapters 16-18) deals with this reception, and it delves further into Julian's reputation, showing that Julian's negative image is a result of biased Christian literature that emphasizes his apostasy and cruel persecution. Such an image, however, hardly had anything to do with Julian's actual behavior, as Teitler has shown throughout the book. By doing so, Teitler's *Last Pagan Emperor* succeeds in shedding new light on the image of the famous and well-studied Julian the Apostate.

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Walter Pohl, Clemens Gantner, Cinzia Grifoni, and Marianne Pollheimer-Mohaupt (eds.), *Transformations of Romanness: Early Medieval Regions and Identities*, Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2018. xi + 586 pp. ISBN 978-3-11-059838-4.

It is now a truism that the recipients of institutional privilege are mostly blind to the workings of their privilege and therefore assume that it does not exist. In a sense, this is also true for Roman voices in Late Antiquity, which are nothing if not privileged when compared to competing views. This bias of perspective has made understanding Romanness such a challenge. For Roman authors and their audiences, Romanness was ingrained in reality and seldom required explanation. Of course, Romans had ways of talking about themselves: as a society regulated by Roman law, as consumers of classical culture and inheritors of imperial glory, or, later, as Christians. Romanness could also encompass a wide range of localized identities. Communities of the Empire were described using a large vocabulary of regional, religious, and ethnic terms. Roman society had the

terminology for making subtle distinctions within and between these categories. As quickly becomes evident, however, it hardly ever used *Romanus* to describe a person fluent in this rich cultural language.

The Romans had plenty to say about people that lived beyond the border, too, for whom they reserved a rhetoric colored by ethnic terminology. Ethnographical *barbari* certainly functioned as the opposite of *Romani*. However, when we tease apart these collective identities, a more nuanced reality emerges. The sources reveal that Romans and Franks, to take one example, were not always mutually exclusive, as a third-century Pannonian funerary inscription which bears the words: *Franco ego cives Romanus miles in armis* seems to imply. For the soldier speaking to us through his headstone, the two actually meshed very well. Attempting to learn about Romanness by comparing Rome's perspective of itself with what its authors claimed lay beyond the border turns out to be a problem of apples and oranges. It is a problem this volume addresses in earnest.

The breakdown of the Roman state and the crystallization of successor kingdoms present an opportunity to re-examine the term 'Roman'. Romanness underwent profound changes in the societies that emerged in the post-Roman order. 'Roman' could suddenly be many things; it could function as a legal term, a political category, and a religious inclination. Its meaning could vary tremendously across space, time, and place within the social hierarchy. The twenty-seven contributions that make up this volume pursue the evolution of Romanness after Rome as a broad social, legal, and cultural category.

The scholarship on the creation of communities in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages, a large part of which is the work of this volume's editor, is vast. The attention it has devoted to the thorny issue of ethnicity has been invaluable, especially because it has cautioned us not to accept ethnicity as a default condition; other layers of identity could be just as important. This volume is not narrowly focused on ethnicity, yet, as it is able to show, Romanness also came to occupy a space in the ongoing ethnic discussion of post-Roman societies. In certain contexts, the term 'Roman' became readily comparable with other ethnic identities. To view Romanness as ethnicity was a natural outgrowth of an increasingly regionalized world that gradually came to replace centralized Roman culture after imperial authority faded from view.

Nevertheless, Romanness continued to carry a range of possible meanings, not only because it had a privileged semantic past but, importantly, because of its energetic present. Throughout the period in question, Rome the city continued to occupy a central place on the horizon of post-Roman polities. The city was home to an industrious bishop whose interaction with secular power transformed the term 'Roman'. Perhaps as importantly, Rome was the Byzantine Empire, which never ceased to promote its own ideas about Romanness. The volume approaches this complex historical question by dividing its chapters into geographical sections, each sub-divided chronologically. The first section, which functions as a conceptual framework for the discussion that follows, includes a lengthy introduction by Walter Pohl as well as two chapters: Guy Halsall's discussion of northern Gaul as a case study for the interplay between identity layers, and Yitzhak Hen's treatment of the Christian transformation of Romanness.

Pohl's introduction outlines the methodological difficulties of the question, not only as it pertains to the Empire's multifarious social contexts, but also in its various expressions after the disintegration of imperial rule. Expectedly, ethnicity plays an important role in this exploration, which is complemented by Halsall's consideration in the subsequent chapter. Pohl and Halsall are at odds in their interpretation of ethnicity as unique among other strategies of identification that were available to the peoples of the post-Roman world. In some cases, Halsall is happy to see regional and urban identities as essentially interchangeable with ethnic ones. Speaking of the

inhabitants of Bourges and Le Puy in Gregory of Tours' *Histories*, Halsall states that: 'There is no way, analytically, of distinguishing these identities as somehow less "ethnic" than those associated with the recognised "peoples" of Late Antiquity'. Regional and urban identity could be ethnicized, or not, depending on the historical context and the agenda of the author at work. Pohl, on the other hand, would like to preserve some of the uniqueness of ethnicity, which for him differs from other modes of identification that employ 'a decisive point of reference outside the group: the city, the land, the state, the army, a religious creed. [...] In ethnicity, by contrast, the principle of distinction and the symbolic essence of the community are thought to lie in the human group itself'.

To this complicated set of constraints, one must add Christianity, which played an increasingly important role in defining the Roman/barbarian divide. Hen argues that the civic overtones of religious practice were already an essential aspect of Rome's state religion, and that these attitudes lingered, albeit in a new form, when Rome made the transition to Christianity. *Romanitas* was weaponized by both senatorial-rank pagans and patristic authors in their struggle to take charge of the narrative, with the former citing the historical grandeur of the Empire and the latter focusing on Rome's apostolic past. If *Romanitas* quickly became synonymous with Christianity, *barbaritas* surely meant the opposite — paganism. Yet for many of our sources it was also a tool for excluding heterodox religious communities.

The chapters that follow, which belong to the section on the Late Antique and Byzantine Empire, survey the evolution of Romanness as a term in the service of military identity (Bjornlie), Augustinian thought (Corradini), and linguistic and political concepts of Romanness in Byzantium (Koder, Sturaitis). This is followed by a section on Rome the city, which looks at the Christianization of the Roman past in the *Liber pontificalis* (McKitterick), the city's citizenry as a political community centered on the pope (Delogu), and the efforts expended by the city's pope and its elites to reshape Rome's topography and its past (West-Harling). The next section, Italy and the Adriatic, surveys the Duchy of Spoleto (Vocino), Southern Italy (Granier, Peters-Custot), and the Dalmatian coast (Borri), examining the use of Roman identity and the Roman past in spaces that felt the tug of regionalization on the one hand and the imperial pressures of the Byzantines, Carolingians, and Ottonians on the other.

The section dedicated to Gaul is the lengthiest, with contributions on topics ranging from the erosion of Roman citizenship in the face of competing regional and ethnic identities (Mathisen), Romanness in the legal and political terminology of the Burgundians (Wood), in the service of Merovingian historiography (Reimitz), hagiography (Kreiner), and law (Esders, Böthe). The section on the Iberian Peninsula which follows is very short, with one chapter on the settlement of Goths in Hispania (Arce) and another on Romanness in Al-Andalus (Christys). Here, the volume might have benefitted from another chapter on Visigothic Spain in the late sixth and early seventh centuries, a period in which the kingdom was transitioning from Arianism to Catholicism and concepts of identity came under close scrutiny.

The next section, Northern Peripheries: Britain and Noricum, opens with an examination of *Walchen*, a Germanic ethnonym used to describe Romans, and is essentially a summary of the 2017 volume: *Walchen, Romani und Latini*, edited by Pohl, Hartl (the author of this chapter), and Haubrichs. The overview was perhaps intended to make the topic accessible to an Anglophone audience, although thematically it sits somewhat awkwardly in this section. It is followed by an examination of four communities in Britain and their efforts to repurpose Roman pottery (Fleming), followed by a look at Bavaria and its peculiar transition from a Romance to a Germanic speaking space (Winckler). The final section, From Roman provinces to Islamic lands, contains

two contributions — a wide overview of African identity and its interaction with Romanness (Steinacher), and a closing chapter on Syria's complex relationship with Romanness in the Byzantine and Muslim periods (Tannous). Although Steinacher's contribution touches on the topic, a chapter dedicated solely to the Vandals would have enriched this section. The question of Roman identity under Muslim rule is also touched upon very briefly.

This volume is a superb collection of articles on a topic much in need of such a treatment. While the volume's chronological and geographical scope is wide, its chapters come together very well to convincingly show the creativity and nuance with which Romanness could be used in the post-Roman world. It is an indispensable book for scholars and students of Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages and a worthwhile read for anyone interested in questions of identity more broadly.

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Fergus Millar, *Empire, Church and Society in the Late Roman Near East: Greeks, Jews, Syrians and Saracens. Collected Studies, 2004-2014*. (Late Antique History and Religion 10), Peeters Publishers, Leuven, 2015. XXXIV+807 pp. ISBN 978-90-429-3291-3.

The volume under review assembles 29 articles — among them, no less than six in this journal —, one original publication (John Moschus' *Reminiscences of the Christian Near East: Monks, Heretics and Others*, pp. 285-312) and an Epilogue (pp. 779-802); one of the articles is a translation from French (Un dossier d'accusation déposé auprès du praeses de Syrie Seconde pour faire parvenir une pétition à Justin Ier, Anttard 2010).

The Papers are arranged according to overarching questions. The first group assembles papers on "State and Church" between fifth and sixth century; these papers — much in line with his Sather Lecture *A Greek Roman Empire* (2006) — are interesting, beyond their arguments, also for the ample use of different types of documentary evidence (Acts of the Councils, onomastic evidence gathered from them; petitions, letters) and the wide range of arguments treated, extending from Imperial church politics to local rivalries and even to the Hellenization of the Near East, attested — or so M. argues — by the onomastics of the Acts of the Councils. The following papers on "Co-existence and difference" form a mixed batch, setting emperor Julian's supposed project of a new Jewish temple into its broader — Christian and Jewish — context, discussing the iconography of Near Eastern Mosaics and the relationship between the mosaics and their inscriptions (where Syriac inscriptions on a mosaic with Greek mythological scenes attest to "the emergence of Syriac culture as an off-shoot and adaptation of Greek culture", p. 156), and depicting the middle Euphrates region in the 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> c. as an area of diaspora in more than one respect. M. attempts to apply the concept of diaspora both to Jewish communities in the region and, perhaps less convincingly, to the Greek-speaking and Syriac communities and the nomads attested there.

Only at first sight does it seem to recall out-fashioned stereotypes if the next section is entitled "Greek Culture, Pagan and Christian". In fact, these articles very convincingly show that clear-cut identities are hardly to be expected in the late antique East. Discussing Libanius, an important witness to the overwhelming importance of Greek education in the 4<sup>th</sup> c. — when additional knowledge of Latin might be a bonus, but was considered irrelevant for being part of the empire —, M. demonstrates how to Libanius, ethnic attributions signify little more than the place of