

survived, and how many were there etc. Though KT does not allow much room for these queries, they are discussed at length by various others and should only be noted in this context. Finally, the book is very well written, well presented and edited and is a noteworthy contribution to existing scholarship. It is warmly recommended for students, as well as experts.

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Benjamin Isaac, *Empire and Ideology in the Graeco-Roman World — Selected Papers*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. 382 pp. ISBN: 978-1107135895.

This book consists of seventeen papers which had already seen the light of day between 1998-2014. Of these, two are lectures which have not before appeared in print. The remaining fifteen appeared in various journals and collections and, in a number of cases, have been rewritten to a greater or lesser degree. One originally appeared in Hebrew. No author is given for the translation so I assume it is Isaac's own.

I suspect I am not the only reviewer who, when confronted with a collection such as this, wondered if we are looking at a miscellaneous collection or if some overall theme is discernible. In the event Isaac tells us (30) that he is dealing with three broad topics, '(a) anachronisms in modern views of ancient empires; (b) problems in understanding the self-identification of ancient groups, views of others, and the role of religion in this sphere; (c) military matters'.

Within these broad parameters the variety of individual topics is great and I would suggest I am not the only reader who could not claim competence in all of them. However, thanks to Isaac's combination of erudition and lucidity, I would now claim to know more about issues in which I have but a passing interest. Notions of Core-Periphery (99-121) come to mind, for instance.

In a review such as this it would be possible to give comments on individual points, of greater or lesser importance. For example, I am not sure that in assessing the impact of veteran colonies, App. BC 5.12-14 should be invoked (262, n. 20) as this refers to an extraordinary time, the Triumvirate, when discipline was notoriously lax. However, a more fruitful approach seems to me to consider in detail four chapters in which I have an especial interest.

'Roma Aeterna' (1-32): Here Isaac examines the twin notions of an eternal city and empire. He traces the development of these notions starting with Cicero and notes they are found also (but not with great prominence) in Augustan literature and are also attested in inscriptions. Later, eternity is associated with the empire. Isaac concludes that the idea of Rome as an eternal city is not typical in the ancient world.

Yet down to our time Rome is still dubbed 'the eternal city' so I think it legitimate to ask what the phrase means for us? In the case of practising Roman Catholics it is bound up with the Papacy, an institution which has endured for two millennia. For others, I would guess it is no more than an affectionate nickname such as the Big Apple is for New York.

'Roman Victory Displayed, Symbols, Allegories and Personifications?' (45-68) begins by warning us that visual images of victory in the form of statuary and coinage could be misinterpreted. We tend to think in terms of personification, allegory and symbol. Isaac holds this to be mistaken and argues that we are looking at concrete specific images. He also reminds us that in the case of the Romans the empire, 'was not a single abstract entity' but either the *Imperium Romanum* or the *senatus populusque Romanus* in contradistinction to a monarchy (47-48). I would add Rome was once a *respublica* where every man belonged to a commonwealth and this may be

shown in the (to us) strange fact that soldiers made the *sacramentum* or military oath to their commander and not to a *civitas* which had no head (Keaveney, *The Army in the Roman Revolution*, 71-72).

Once we have grasped the nature of the state then, Isaac holds, we can see that whether depicted on coin, sculpture or relief, conquered peoples and individuals are real not allegorical. 'They are images that evoke glimpses of the culmination of success in warfare'.

I can think of one instance which contradicts Isaac's contention that these 'are not straightforward depictions of unique events which took place as shown'. It comes from the republic. With the connivance of Bocchus, Sulla captured Jugurtha (Sall. *Jug.* 1.13). Later, Bocchus put statues on the Capitol depicting the actual scene (Plut. *Sulla* 6) and Sulla had it engraved on a seal ring (Plut. *Sulla* 3). Finally it turns up on a coin of his son Faustus (RRC no.426). I believe we have an instance of the 'culmination of success' referred to above and a coin taking inspiration from statuary (54) but also a depiction of a specific scene in history.

Two other matters require comment. Isaac (65) draws attention to reliefs and coins showing captives smaller in stature than the emperor. This recalls the Bisitun relief where Darius is larger than the captured rebels standing before him. He also alludes (67) to representations of the emperor with his foot on a captive and wonders if oriental influence can be detected. Certainly, on the Bisitun, Darius' foot rests on a captive when in normal depictions of audience scenes he has a footstool. The mindset here is not too far, I would contend, from the Biblical (Psalm 110-NRSV), 'sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool'.

'Army and Violence in the Roman World' (69-81) can, I think, be described as studying the downside of the Pax Romana. The first section deals with mass violence of the army in cities and one point, to which I will return, is that the army was ill suited for police work. The second section deals with violence in a judicial context and the detailed discussion of the case of St. Paul (73-74) invites certain observations. In escaping punishment by declaring himself a Roman citizen he was essentially invoking *provocatio* or the right of appeal from an arbitrary decision of a magistrate. Moreover Cicero long before (2 *Verr.* 5.157, 167-168) had proclaimed that the mere fact of being a Roman citizen meant that one could travel with impunity. This did not always work out in practice. As Isaac emphasises, Paul was left bound for two years and Cicero made his declaration while prosecuting a governor who had allegedly executed a citizen. About that same time, when pirates captured people who claimed to be Roman citizens, they affected to be overawed. Then, dressing them in togas, they made them walk the plank (Plut. *Pomp.* 24).

The discussion of Paul also reminds us that the society depicted in the Gospels and Acts could be a violent one. To take some examples. When Jesus told the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10) his audience must have known there were robbers on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. Then there is Barabbas variously described as 'notorious' (Matthew 27), 'a bandit' (John 18) or one who committed murder in an insurrection (Mark 15; Luke 23). Whichever description is accurate it is obvious he was a man of violence. In Acts we can point to riots in Thessalonica (17) and rebellion in Egypt (21).

In discussing abuse by soldiers or those of a higher social standing, Isaac (77) mentions in passing a hazard on the Roman streets: emperors and nobles wandering by night beating people up for fun. Here Juvenal (3.278-305) may be invoked with his description of a thug of lower social standing who sought like amusement and his fear of burglary or murder. Yet again we find the lack of a proper police force and, we might add, adequate street lighting.

In 'Innovation and the Practice of Warfare in the Ancient World' (82-99) Isaac emphasises that science and technology are two separate concepts and while technology may advance by

scientific enquiry, it may also do by trial and error. In antiquity branches of science were established, but systematic enquiry as we know it was not, and science was barely applied to warfare. Passing various areas under review, Isaac finds technological development in warfare, for instance, through application of mechanics but advances in geography are not reflected in the Peutinger map or in any kind of naval chart (87-92).

This raises the wider question of the lack of the notion of progress. As one of my old teachers put it, if they could stamp images on coins why did nobody think of moving on to the invention of printing? It is as if the ancients reached a certain point and then ground to a halt. Medicine could classify symptoms but nobody sought to discover new and effective drugs.

Isaac sees three reasons for this state of affairs. The very notion of progress was largely absent. A narrowly rhetorical education neglected scientific matters. The philosophical schools, too, were hostile to the idea of progress. I have often wondered if they were a positive hindrance. The finest minds busied themselves with the abstract and neglected the concrete.

To sum up. As I said initially, there is much to be learned from this book about a large number of areas in which the reader may not have expertise and, in those where his or her interests lie, it can be seen that it provokes reflection and thought.

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Oren Tal and Zeev Weiss (eds.), *Expressions of Cult in the Southern Levant in the Greco-Roman Period: Manifestations in Text and Material Culture*, Turnhout: Brepols, 2017. 288 pp. ISBN: 978-2-503-55335-1.

In their introductory remarks, editors Oren Tal and Zeev Weiss state this book's intentions (xviii):

As no other volume has ever been dedicated to the many different facades of the cultic manifestations of the southern Levant in the Greco-Roman period, this volume is aimed at presenting the multifaceted nature of the evidence via the archaeological, artistic, and historical media available.

The book successfully delivers on these intentions, presenting sound and in several cases groundbreaking scholarship on an impressive array of topics and through multiple disciplinary lenses. All eighteen chapters are clearly organized, with opening and closing statements that summarize arguments and with substantial bibliographies, most listing in excess of fifty secondary works. The book features a general tendency toward caution, frequently noting uncertainties and issues in need of further research. In this way, it serves to provide both a collection of responsible and informative studies and a template for ongoing research.

Tal and Weiss also explain in the introductory remarks that the volume is based in large part on a 2013-2014 research group sponsored by the Israel Institute of Advanced Studies and a subsequent international conference. This collaborative approach no doubt has enhanced the quality of scholarship. Ideally, this collaboration would have been carried forward all the way through the writing process, to include cross-references between chapters. For example, the relatively brief section on Caesarea Maritima in Avner Ecker's chapter (63-5) would benefit from reference to the extensive study of the city's sculpted images in the following chapter by Rivka Gersht. Renate Rosenthal-Heginbottom (156) and Achim Lichtenberger (211) also have