have been observed anywhere in the world. This is all very illuminating, but destructive of the supposed ideology.

One possible reaction to these objections is to say that what Gershenson has in mind is not really a pattern of behaviour peculiar to Greeks and Indo-Europeans generally, but a nexus of connections which could be found in any part of the world at any time; but of course that would be a very different book and a very different theory. The whole point of Dumézil's perspective is that an unknown pre-historic tribe has projected its modes of thought into the different traditions, ideologies and languages of the different Indo-European speaking peoples; the result is a characteristic and identifiable structure based on three functions (law, war, production). If you abandon the architecture of that theory, then you have to think ágain from scratch, perhaps producing a new mixture of Dumézil and Eliade. That is a horrifying prospect and it is not what Gershenson is seeking to do.

There is also an unresolved question about the medium through which the patterns of thought postulated in this theory are carried from generation to generation. There seem to be two contenders: one is that it is simply borne in the languages: that somehow this structure of languages encodes a triadic conception of human activity and theology and that this surfaces, either in the main organising principles of society, or perhaps in occasional outbursts within the society. Secondly, it could be some kind of biological race characteristic imprinted in the genes of the supposed Indo-European races and not imprinted in the genes of other races. Advocates of Dumézil of course deny that this is what the theory means and presumably non-racist explanations have to rest heavily on the theory of transmission by language, so it is Indo-European language speakers to whom the whole theory refers.

The danger is that all the learning and ingenuity generates theories with no particular location. After all, the collection of data was not available even to learned Greeks: are they supposed to have known it all, but not recorded it? or do the theories explain how their beliefs and practices came into existence, but not what they meant at the time? or is the real objective to reconstruct the religious archetype, meaningful only in the social context of the lost Indo-European ancestors themselves? For even if the idea of religious structures carried in I.-E. languages is a valid one, they must have taken on new contexts and new meanings in each new time and place. This is a book that raises much light, but also much darkness; is Wolfish Apollo the right guide?

J.A North University College London

F. Millar, *The Roman Near East 31 BC — AD 337*. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1993. pp. xxix + 587.

How Roman was the Roman Near East, and precisely what did this Romanness signify? What was the Greek City, and to what extent did it contrast with the surrounding territory? In what sense can we speak of the unity of the region and its common characteristics, and in what way did local cultures and local traditions survive, in their original form, or in a new, Greek or Roman guise? What was the Roman Empire's attitude to local and regional traditions and how successful was it in applying its policies? What were the major trends of development from Augustus to Constantine and do they reflect deliberate policy or rather responses to the requirements of the hour? With what precision can we

draw the linguistic map of the Near East, and how confident can we be of the correspondence between this linguistic map, perforce based on written sources, and the map of spoken languages? And, finally, was the Near East nearer the East, the Parthian, later Persian, Empire, or was it the easternmost extension of the West, of the Mediterranean? These and similar questions are either expressly posed in the book, or stimulated by its reading. In some cases the replies are provided on the basis of the presentation and careful evaluation of the available evidence, in others the frontiers of our ignorance are drawn with caution, albeit without mercy.

This book presents not only these and other questions and their answers, but is also a state-of-the-art illustration of what Ancient History should be at the end of the century. This long-awaited synthesis, heralded by a number of important studies[1], is Roman History seen from the periphery and liberated from the fetters of the classical historiographical tradition. Though of course different in both geographical and chronological scope, it is thus perhaps best read against the background of the finest a preceding generation had to offer, A.H.M. Jones' twin masterpieces, *The Greek City* and *The Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces*. Also here a powerful synthesis is offered, obtained from the minute examination, always at first hand, of diverse, and quite often outlying and obscure evidence. The claim, or disclaimer (xiii and often), that the book is primarily based on inscriptions, is a glaring deceit; besides the exhaustive use of epigraphical evidence, inscribed perishable materials (including still-unpublished and partially published evidence, such as the new Greek and Aramaic dossier from the middle Euphrates), numismatics and archaeology are given due weight, together with a profound understanding and constant recourse to geography and topography; among literary texts, not only those in Greek and Latin, but also many in the various Semitic languages and dialects are considered. But a new attitude reigns. Apart from everything else, it is not any more the achievement of the Greek city that is in our focus, not the process of Hellenization or the unfolding of Graeco-Roman culture (M. justly regrets the absence of an appropriate abstract noun), but the processes and developments are presented with equal attention given to tradition and change, to indigenous survivals and foreign influences: the Roman Near East emerges before our eyes in all its rich cultural diversity, a mosaic of peoples, cities and villages, languages, cults and beliefs, with Roman penetration given its due — precious little in many places for much of the time.

The problem of diversity versus uniformity looms large, viz. "how far and in what senses there was a common culture, pattern of religious customs or sense of mutual identity or relationship among the peoples of the Near East who spoke Semitic languages" (11). Despite the diffusion of Aramaic[2] — the third world-language of the time besides Greek and Latin — diversity predominates. But even on the local level our stereotypes deserve to be reexamined: "And if it is appropriate to think in terms of a contrast between 'Greek' on the one hand and 'native' or 'Semitic' or 'Oriental' elements in the culture

---

1 Notably in *PCPS* 209 (1983) 55ff; *JJS* 38 (1987) 143ff; A. Kuhrt and S. Sherwin-White, edd., *Hellenism in the East* 110ff; H. Solin and F. M. Kajava, edd., *Roman Policy in the East* 7ff.

2 In my opinion too much is made throughout of the differences between the various dialects of Aramaic: Aramaic, properly so called, Nabataean, Palmyrene and Syriac. The variety is mainly that of scripts, and there can be very little doubt that they were all mutually intelligible. At least from the perspective of a reader whose primary acquaintance is with the Aramaic dialect of the Babylonian Talmud, there is no difficulty whatsoever in understanding the other types: undeniably, the uniform transliteration employed in the book is very helpful.

and social structure of the region on the other, it is by no means clear that any such contrast coincides with a division between city and country" (19). It will be best to present some examples from the wealth of information.

Games and festivals, among the foremost embodiments of Greek, and Hellenistic, civilization, are ubiquitous — except in Palmyra, or the regions east of it on the Euphrates and in Mesopotamia. With the exception of the Jews — on whom more presently — the Phoenician cities were unique in maintaining within their tradition clear memories of a pre-Hellenistic past: in all the other groups (M. has often recourse to this and other neutral terms) amnesia prevails. The public epigraphy of the cities was Greek, and in certain cases and for specific purposes Latin: only Palmyra consistently maintained bilingual inscriptions, in Greek and the local variety of Aramaic. Indeed Palmyra, so unique in many ways was, like Emesa, a recent formation. Thus it is of great interest to realize that "whatever led to the disappearance of Palmyrene as the language of public inscriptions, it does not seem to have been a deliberate and immediate Roman repression of a distinctive ethnic identity" (336). The Nabataeans emerge as a people, consistently described as one, who moreover minted the longest series of coins with Semitic legends, and were apparently in possession of a standing army. And of course there is the famous case of the *colonia* Berytus, once again described as a Latin island in the region. Above all it is in the local cults that the diversity along with the Graeco-Roman influence can be discerned — syncretism, like other abstract terms may be best understood when its individual cases are investigated in some detail. From Palmyrene Allat and Baalshamin to Emesan Elagabal, from the cults of Hierapolis to those of Heliopolis and nearby Niha, from "the Ancestral God, Zeus Betylos" with whom the book starts to Iuppiter Optimus Maximus Dolichenus Heliopolitanus, again and again the problem is set in terms of how the worshippers understood each cult and deity.

With all the ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity given serious consideration, we get fair warning against forming a picture based on false analogies and anachronistic conceptions: "a 'Greek city' within the Parthian Empire might have a population which was clearly divided along ethnic, cultural or linguistic lines, as has been common in the Near East in more recent periods — but is *not* clearly visible in the cities west of the Euphrates, except in Judaea and its surrounding region" (444).

This brings us to one of the most powerful, and most convincingly demonstrated conclusions of the book, the uniqueness of the Jews and the Jewish community. This has of course been asserted on endless occasions, both as part of a religious or national(istic) credo and in works of scholarship with claims to objectivity, but it seems that the case has very rarely been so convincingly argued, and against the background of such an impressive wealth of comparative material. The Jews and, as mentioned above, the Phoenician cities were unique in the entire Near East in maintaining a historical tradition going back before the Hellenistic period. But this tradition — and from here on the Jews differ also from the Phoenician cities — was a tradition of the Book, and moreover one that determined the frame of the life of both the community and the individual.[3] Thus the community far transcended its geographical boundaries. The question set at the beginning of the work (16): "were the Jews of Judaea the only speakers of a Semitic language in the Ro-

3 Ḥanukkah was a unique celebration under the Empire of a historical event of Hellenistic times (340). One should add, to avoid misunderstanding, that we possess evidence for the celebration already in the Hellenistic period itself (II Macc. 1.9; 1.18; 2.16).

man Near East who maintained active and continuous contacts with a related community in Babylonia?", is answered in the affirmative.

It is this uniqueness which places Judaism on a par with Hellenism, rather than with the surrounding Semitic speaking cultures — a position of momentous consequence for the future: "we can find in the Roman Near East only two established cultures: Greek and Jewish" (517). And we arrive at what lies at the heart of the matter, defined in unmistakable terms: "But 'Judaism and Hellenism' may be not quite the right label for the contrasts involved; at one level it was a conflict between Judaism and *paganism*, and at another between Empire and a claim to liberty" (353); cf. also, apropos the mosaic from the Tiberias synagogue, a firm stand on a much debated issue: "a mixed culture — but not a real compromise between paganism and Judaism — was possible" (359).

The uniqueness of the Jews provoked in some instances unique behaviour by the Romans. Note, e.g., the observation (46) when discussing the Roman control of the High Priest's vestments, that "there is no parallel to this deep official involvement in the annual cycle of festivals of a local community". One could add that the appointment of the High Priests falls in the same category. However, it is remarkable that the Romans apparently stuck firmly to the Jewish rules: it was only Herod at the beginning of his reign, and the revolutionaries in 66 who elevated unworthy men to the position.

The wealth of information, and the force of the analysis are such that every reader must come away indebted for having learned so much and having gained such penetrating insights. Naturally, in the midst of such riches it will not be difficult to find details where one believes to have good reason to disagree, or points which have not received the emphasis one would wish to accord them. I would like to discuss here briefly three points, Greek, Latin and Jewish respectively.

First, quite rightly the culture of the Greek cities is not given full treatment — this work is not an up-dating of *The Greek City* but rather a corrective for its point of view. As often happens, the shift to a new direction tends to obscure what lay on the old track. Even were one to agree with the contention that "an actual map of the origins of known writers in Greek, whether pagan or Christian, would of course be an absurdity" (234), still caution should prevail; the statement that no Greek literature is known from Nabataea/Arabia before the 160s does not take account of the great mathematician Nicomachus of Gerasa; to call Porphyry "the other of the two famous intellectuals who came from Tyre" (294) — the first was Ulpian — ignores, among others, the sophist Hadrian and the philosopher Euphrates.

My second point. One of the most illuminating theses of the book is the emphasis laid on the fact that the cities of the Roman Near East developed into Graeco-Roman, rather than Greek cities. In this connexion, due consideration is given throughout to the role of Latin, mainly in the epigraphic context. I intend to show (*Acts of the VII Colloquium of Latin Linguistics*, forthcoming), that in Palestine, at least, the spread of Latin was both wider and deeper than is usually assumed. I shall address here only M.'s assertion that "Ammianus Marcellinus ... seems to represent the earliest known literary work written in Latin by someone from the Near East" (527). At least three writers should be considered: Commodian, *if* he came from Gaza and *if* writing in the third century (I hold both these propositions very probable); Eutropius, who most probably hailed from Caesarea rather than from Bordeaux, wrote a generation before Ammianus; likewise the anonymous au-

thor of the *descriptio totius mundi et gentium*, who certainly came from one of the cities of Syria-Palestine.[4]

Third, one can hardly argue against the caution exercised in relation to Talmudic literature as historical evidence. Nevertheless, perhaps some profit may be derived from these notoriously enigmatic sources. From a discussion of *DJD* ii, no. 18, M. secures "one of the very few glimpses which we can gain into the Aramaic-speaking (and Aramaic-writing) world of the Jewish villages of Judaea proper, as it was while the Temple still stood" (364). Such glimpses of Jewish villages and village-life may also be obtained from Talmudic evidence (in conjunction with Josephus and the NT) in discussions of the pilgrimage, see S. Safrai, *Die Wallfahrt im Zeitalter des Zweiten Tempels* (Neukirchen-Vluyn 1981) 44ff.

It is very rarely that one reads a major work of synthesis which is so up-to-date, literally to the moment of going to press. Exactly because of this up-to-dateness one can already see the need, in a not too distant future, for a second edition. Two examples from this country shall suffice. Appendix B, "Documents from the Bar Kochba War" — one blushes that no such handlist has been available until now — lists as no. 2, under Year One, *DJD* ii, no. 22; in the meantime A. Yardeni's new reading for the document is Year Four, and the archaeological evidence for the end/aftermath of the revolt in late autumn/winter of 135 accumulates. There is also much hope for further documents of the war being found among the new discoveries both in the area of Jericho and in the upper Naḥal Ḥever: the two fragmentary Aramaic papyri from a cave near Jericho already published (*EI* 23 [1992] 276ff) and the three Greek ones in the process of publication seem to be dated by the *end* of the Bar Kochba War as their *terminus ante quem*. One also eagerly awaits the publication of the Greek and Aramaic papyri discovered in the Jericho area in November 1993. Second, mention is made (369-370) of the "beautiful mosaic with scenes from the myth of Dionysos, in which the episodes are labelled in Greek" discovered in Sepphoris. This was only the first in a series of discoveries, which includes, to date, a large Nilotic mosaic, a fine mosaic with Amazons, and a mosaic floor of a synagogue with zodiac and inscriptions. This same mosaic floor also contains, among other pictures of sacrifices, Abraham's offering of Isaac, so that it is no longer true that the "Biblical frescoes [in Dura] are the only visual representations from the entire region which explicitly portray events which occurred before the Hellenistic period" (470).[5]

If indeed such a second edition should be contemplated, two wishes may be recorded. Though one is aware of the present extent of the book and is in sympathy with both the author's and the publisher's reasons for not increasing it still more, the absence of illustrations, especially in a number of discussions of numismatic and archaeological evidence, is sorely felt. Second, a minor request: the very helpful maps at the end should include at least one more, of eastern and southern Mesopotamia, so that Hatra, which is extensively discussed, can also be physically located. Also Hierapolis, to be found only on map x, belongs in the discussion with map iii.

The volume is beautifully produced; among the very few and not awkward misprints, slips of the pen etc., one that cannot be left unmentioned is the curious slip of the misquo-

4 Possibly we also tend to underestimate the penetration of Roman law into quite unexpected quarters; see most recently H. Cotton, *JRS* 83 (1993) 94ff.

5 The Binding of Isaac from the synagogue of Beth Alpha, like other biblical themes from a number of synagogues, dates from a period much later than the one under consideration in the book; the date of the synagogue in Sepphoris has not yet been established.

tation of the inscription on the Cross (347). But in sum this is a splendid work, which will set standards for a generation of scholars.

Joseph Geiger The Hebrew University

Doron Mendels, *The Rise and Fall of Jewish Nationalism: Jewish and Christian Ethnicity in Ancient Palestine*, Anchor Bible Reference Library, New York, London, Toronto, Sydney, Auckland: Doubleday, 1992,. pp. x + 450.

For a fair appreciation of this substantial and very learned work it is essential to take into account its context, purpose and intended audience. As for its context, it forms part of the Anchor Bible Reference Library, intended to complement the *Commentaries* and *Dictionary* which go under the same title. As for its purpose, the author states it clearly in the Preface (p. ix): "This book was written with the intention of reaching a wide audience of students and readers who have an interest in Christianity, Judaism, and ancient history". The book is thus not intended as a scholarly monograph, but (far all the considerable learning which is embodies) as a vehicle of communication to a wider audience. The presumed interests of this audience are also very significant: the prominent place given to Christianity in the identification of the readers and their interests is not a mere aspiration, but is borne out in the relevant part of the book.

There is however also a further dimension, the location of Jewish history within the comparative study of nationalism in the Ancient World. What the author says about this in his Introduction (p. 1) manages in a sentence to express this aspiration, reveal a number of dubious presumptions, and set out the main themes which will inform his study of Jewish history from the Maccabees to Bar Kokhba: "The nations of the ancient Near East that were the neighbors of the Jews had specific and well-defined symbols of political nationalism, namely, the temple, territory, kingship. and the army".

The project of producing a survey of Jewish history in Judaea/Palestine over three-and-a-half centuries, and making it interesting and significant to a wide audience, is quite demanding in itself. But it is made more demanding — but correspondingly more interesting and meaningful — by its emphasis on the four symbols listed. The book is to be not just a rehearsal of what happened stage by stage (which it carries out successfully), but an analysis in terms of these four elements of statehood or nationalism: Temple, territory, kingship and army. Moreover the intention, in these respects too, is to go beyond an empirical study of these elements (how did the Temple function; or what were the geographical boundaries of Jewish settlement at any one time?), to treat them *as* symbols: that is, how are these elements understood and valued in our sources, both Jewish and Christian (and, to some extent, pagan)? In that sense the book is the direct successor of Mendels' *The Land of Israel as a Political Concept in Hasmonean Literature: Recourse to History in Second Century BC Claims to the Holy Land* (1987). It is essentially about ideology, rather than mere facts; and an ideology (inevitably) mediated through literary sources, above all narrative sources. This limitation has to be accepted; "popular opinion" on these topics is simply inaccessible to us.

In these respects the book seems to me quite successful. Mendels does manage to survey the dramatic changes in the fortunes of the Jewish community in Palestine while keeping his four chosen symbols firmly in view. As regards territory, the real settlement-