

valence of trading-related discourse on India to the Roman observers/consumers can hardly be overstated. Excitingly, some Indian sources to this exchange are moreover brought to contribute to the discussion: Tamil poems mentioning the beautiful ships of the *Yavana* (173) are just one example. The trade constituted a *topos* in the other end of the network, too.

In the next chapter Parker discusses the themes of dominion, imperial symbolism and providential universality, with a now-to-be-expected wide range of sources from Plato to Cosmas Indicopleustes. For the Roman discourse of imperial space, the crucial attribute of India was the fact that it lay definitely outside the *imperium* – unlike the formerly "exoticized" western lands. In this sense, India was ideal in perpetually anticipating the future glory of any *princeps* being eulogized; something which is affirmed time and again by plentiful passages from the authors, and which was elementally joined with the *imitatio Alexandri*. The Christianization of the empire did not really challenge the usefulness of India, as Parker points out in a fine sub-section (227–40), while some of the late imperial panegyrics are taken into account as well. Finally, as a crowning delight of the work, the theme of Indian wisdom and holiness is taken up (251–307) – arguably the most enduring legacy of Greco-Roman Indography. Unlike so many barbarian peoples that were characterized as impious, morally defective or just plain stupid, the Indians loom large as the mystified paradigm of righteousness, much like their predecessors and structural forebears, the Ethiopians of Homeric epic. Wide-ranging and erudite, the chapter weaves inspiring connections between the images of the Brahmans and Gymnosophists on the one hand, and the Cynic sages and Christian holy men on the other – hence explaining part of the enduring literary fascination with Indian philosophers, the quintessential "alien sages". Other similar groups, such as the Magi and the Druids, are largely left aside from the comparative dynamics, but this can hardly be criticized in a work of such scope.

The book is copiously annotated with a balanced and relevant apparatus of footnotes, with almost all crucial passages displayed in the original. In debating the earlier scholarship Parker does not exactly shy away from expressing his criticism, but does this in a courteous and reasoned fashion throughout. There are very few things that could have been improved on, but one such is the Index (355–57), which is sketchy and not very helpful in a book with such a wealth of information. However, the fact hardly reduces the importance of *The Making of Roman India* as a very significant contribution to our understanding of the complex processes of portraying cultural differences and negotiating the use of conventional narrative elements in ancient representations of India. It may well become a classic on the subject.

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JESPER MAJBOM MADSEN: *Eager to be Roman. Greek Response to Roman Rule in Pontus and Bithynia*. Duckworth, London 2009. ISBN 978-0-7156-3753-1. IX, 166 pp. GBP 50.

LOUISE REVELL: *Roman Imperialism and Local Identities*. Cambridge University Press, New York 2009. ISBN 978-0-521-88730-4 (hb). XIII, 221 pp. GBP 45, USD 80.

The debate regarding what it meant to be Roman in the Roman Empire has been ongoing for at least a century. One cornerstone of this debate is the question of Romanization, of a (perceived) cultural identity across the Empire and the ways in which this Roman-ness was manifested

through different aspects of culture, both material and immaterial. In this long debate, the most recent buzzword is identity: how identities were constructed and maintained, and how this can be traced in our records of the time. This is also the issue both Jesper Majbom Madsen and Louise Revell want to address from their respective points of view. Their handling of the matter, however, presents two very different approaches to the question, even considering differences in the source materials and areas of the Empire under discussion.

Madsen's work stems from a research group in the Danish National Research Foundation's Centre for Black Sea Studies and is based on the author's Ph.D. thesis. To start with, Madsen promises "... an important investigation into ways in which the population of Pontus and Bithynia ... engaged culturally with the Roman Empire." He sets out especially to analyze the long-standing view of Greek provincials under Roman rule as highly attached to their Hellenic background and thus less affected by Rome's influence than other provinces. Madsen gives a short discussion in the Introduction (pp. 1–9) of the definition of identity and how Greek identity was presented in literature, demonstrating primarily that the notion of plural (simultaneous) identities was already understood by the Greek writers. His point is to emphasize that one could remain Greek and at the same time willingly and purposefully express a Roman identity as well – this is what he sets out to prove in the subsequent chapters.

Chapter 1 ("A Governor at work", pp. 11–26) is dedicated to analyzing the experiences and the activities of Pliny the Younger as governor in Pontus and Bithynia from AD 109 to 111, and the letters he writes as a government official from the province to the Emperor. Chapter 2 ("Roman Rule in Pontus and Bithynia", pp. 27–57) analyzes the changes in local administration and the extent of these changes, in particular regarding the Pompeian provincialization of the area, the constitutions and autonomy of the cities and emperor worship. This he does mainly using literary sources, in addition to Pliny also, e.g., Cassius Dio. In Chapter 3 ("Greeks in the Roman World", pp. 59–81) Madsen analyzes the involvement and the career patterns of the local elite in imperial administration, and similarly in Chapter 4 ("Turning Roman in Pontus and Bithynia", pp. 83–102) the response to Roman rule of those officials who stayed at the regional level of governance, in both these chapters through literary sources as well as inscriptions, demonstrating that the governing elite displayed a willing commitment to Rome. Here, Madsen argues for a transformation of identity in Greece over time from an ethnic one into a negotiable dynamic one of social and political status. In Chapter 5 ("Responses to Roman Rule", pp. 103–26) Madsen focuses on the criticism of the period towards Roman rule and culture, connected to the genre of Second Sophistic (p. 105–7) and examining in particular Dio Chrysostom, Arrian and Cassius Dio. All previous chapters are drawn together in a Conclusion (pp. 127–34), followed by Notes, Bibliography (pp. 149–57) and Indexes (pp. 159–66).

Madsen's work is an interesting foray into the Greeks' self-perception of their identity in a colonial situation. Despite this, it is more a re-interpretation and re-examination of previous sources and studies than a work of solidly justified new ideas. Despite the inherently interesting issue, that of the Romanization of Greece, there are some fundamental biases in the approach that seriously diminish the value of the work. One big issue concerns the way Madsen uses the term "culture": as a monolithic phenomenon staying the same, an underlying static stratum of "Greek cultural heritage" (p. 102), that Madsen allows to remain unchanged over time. At the same time he argues that for the inhabitants of Pontus and Bithynia "... appearance as a part of the machinery of provincial administration ... is likely to have represented a genuine desire by the local elite to be seen as Roman". But where does this "genuine desire" originate if the

deed is only a pragmatic way of "demonstrating a sense of belonging" (p. 102)? Here Madsen treats identity and culture as separate entities and presents identity as a social thing and not as a cultural value. This separation is simply not acceptable, even when he arrives at the likely conclusion that the elite in Pontus and Bithynia were "eager to be Roman". On the technical side, lack of frequent sub-titling makes the text a heavy read and in general, research literature is not extensively used.

Madsen advocates the notion that a spectrum of responses to identity was the reality (p. 103) but himself admits that voices other than the male elite are not heard in the sources, "... when the body of evidence is predominantly textual" (p. 103). This to me is the other main flaw in Madsen's approach, of disregarding any other kind of evidence, to start with those embedded in the material world. A reference is made to material culture (p. 128) but only as a given something that arrived with the Romans and was accepted as a sign of "Romanization" when any modern work on the subject would have proved otherwise (starting with such seminal works as Susan Alcock's *Graecia Capta* (1993) for Greece or Greg Woolf's *Becoming Roman* (1998) for Gaul), none of which are used as references. This seriously narrows the potential of the work, even if its approach to local responses is in general of interest. It is exactly here, in the sphere of material culture, that experiences of groups outside the elite can emerge. The usefulness of another kind of approach is evidenced by Revell.

Louise Revell approaches Roman imperialism and identity utilizing concepts and theories derived from social sciences, of lived experiences and the agency of people in negotiating their changing identities. Her work promises to be "...an innovative approach to the problem of Romanization". What she seeks are the common elements in the imperial experience, and her study matter is public architecture in several urban settings in the Western provinces, from Baetica, Tarraconensis and Britannia. She seeks a shared understanding of what it was to be Roman (p. xi) and how the idea of Empire was maintained; and more explicitly, how routinized daily activity was a reproductive institution of Roman society. This is a richer approach by far than Madsen's but also one threatened by the complexity of the issues involved. This she sets out to counter with a thorough discussion of the fundamentals of the issue in Chapter 1 ("The Context of the Argument", pp. 1–39). In the subsequent chapters, she identifies and examines areas in which we can identify a shared idea of Roman-ness: urbanism, the emperor and religious practice. Moreover, she focuses on the paradox of similarity and difference: which elements were shared but also where they varied locally. Chapter 2 ("Living the Urban Ideal", pp. 40–79) considers urbanism as ideology and the reproduction of this ideology in the provinces as the framing condition and as a lived experience. In Chapter 3 ("The Roman Emperor", pp. 80–109) Revell examines elements of imperial authority and the emperor at the center of a complex series of power relations through imperial imagery, imperial cult and history as part of the localized encounters, and in Chapter 4 ("Addressing the Divine", pp. 110–49) Roman religion and religious practice as a local discourse, in all cases using public architecture as the plane of reference. Chapter 5 ("A Question of Status", pp. 150–90) takes a look at how different social groups negotiate their identities in urban contexts and how the creation and maintenance of political power and social relationships, so crucial in Roman society, was managed in local communities through the material world in buildings for politics, religion, entertainment and bathing. A short conclusion ("Being Roman ...", pp. 191–3) is followed by References (pp. 195–217) and a short Index (pp. 219–21).

Revell presents a modern, well-justified approach to a contemporary topic, with bibliography to match the scope of the subject. She herself points out the added value of her approach: "What it was to be Roman was talked about in the textual sources, but it was also something worked through in the everyday activities of the people of the provinces. The archaeological record is the remains of the material which was caught up in such activities: it is the medium and the product of human action." (p. 3). She argues her context in a clear and concise way, recognizing the theoretical basis of her approach in structuration theory and its application in archaeology. This broad discourse of Roman-ness moves the question of an ethnic identity beyond the model of the traditional elite-driven Romanization and the problematic non-elite emulation. She demonstrates the power the public architecture had in negotiating identities and allows also, though perhaps not as deeply as could be hoped for, for the presence of other social groups than the male elite. Somewhat regrettably, many of the inherent problems concerning context and methodology are referred to, but still remain unsolved, although given the complexity of the issue, in all honesty cannot be expected to be tackled by one single work. Ultimately, Revell produces a convincing argument of how the shared ideology of being Roman is there, how it gets local responses and how it can be studied through the material world.

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MARK BRADLEY: *Colour and Meaning in Ancient Rome*. Cambridge Classical Studies. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge – New York 2009. ISBN 978-0-521-11042-6. XIII, 267 pp. GBP 55, USD 90.

Think of a rainbow in all its brilliant colours. Is it really possible to understand that in another culture the colours of the rainbow might be perceived in a completely different way? The western world perceives its colours following the principles set by Isaac Newton's *Opticks* (1704), but many other cultures have very different views. Mark Bradley's book bravely tackles difficult and contested topics: what did ancient Romans think about colour? How did they perceive colour? The rainbow is the same for us and the Romans, but as Bradley's chapter on the rainbow shows, its colours were seen in a very different way by the Romans – not a neatly defined spectrum of seven colours, but something much more ambiguous and enigmatic. The rainbow was also related to ancient theories on light and sensory perception.

The slim volume is – perhaps intentionally? – devoid of colour as the text discusses the philosophical and scientific theories concerning visual perception and colours. The book is divided into seven chapters which after the rainbow discuss colour in philosophy (Chapter 2), natural history (Chapter 3) and rhetoric (Chapter 4) to create a theoretical background for examining colour in other contexts. The next two chapters (5 and 6) explore the body and colour, both natural and unnatural. The last chapter (7) concentrates on the colour purple, one of the most prestigious in antiquity. In some articles, Bradley has treated the topic in more concrete contexts concerning marble and sculpture (*Cambridge Classical Journal* 52 [2006] and *Art History* 32:3 [2009]) and these would probably interest the readers of this book.

The introduction discusses the meaning of the Latin words for colours which have for a long time been translated according to modern colour definitions; but can *flavus* really be translated as "yellow" and *caeruleus* "sky-blue"? Many of the Latin terms used for colour are also