

Reviews

Religious Studies

Yair Furstenberg (ed.), *Jewish and Christian Communal Identities in the Roman World* (Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity, 94), Leiden, Brill, 2016; xii + 286 pp., € 115.

This volume offers eleven essays on Jewish and Christian communal identities in the Roman world. In its first part ('Imperial Perspectives'), Sylvie Honigman describes how the term *Ioudaios* obtained a more cultic meaning – in contrast to its previous ethnic connotation – after the institution of the *fiscus Iudaicus* ('Jewish tax'). According to Martin Goodman, this *fiscus Iudaicus* also governed the Roman attitude towards Jewish diaspora communities: by allowing these communities to develop a national identity, Roman officials would be able to continue levying the Jewish tax. The second part of the volume ('Community and the City') opens with an essay by John Kloppenborg, who shows that Christians, despite their claims to be 'not of this world', were thoroughly embedded within Late Antique civic life. In his contribution on Pagan, Jewish, and Christian organised charity, Pieter van der Horst demonstrates that a stark contrast existed between organised charity in Judaism and Christianity and its absence in Graeco-Roman culture. Tessa Rajak supports her viewpoint that 4 Maccabees was written in Syrian Antioch by situating its Second Sophistic background vis-à-vis the available evidence of Jewish and Christian life in Antioch. The third part of the volume ('Varieties of Communal Identities') opens with a comparison of the Jewish communities in Rome and Alexandria. Daniel Schwartz argues that Jews in Alexandria were organised in a *politeuma* due to their common Judaean origin; in Rome, where Jews from the entire Mediterranean world lived, no such *politeuma* existed. Jörg Frey discusses the well-known methodological problem how knowledge of communities and their social circumstances can be derived from literary texts, referring to the examples of the Epistle of Jude and the Johannine writings. Cilliers Breytenbach zooms in on Christianity in Late Antique Lycaonia, basing himself almost entirely on epigraphical evidence. The fourth part of the volume ('Community and Continuity') opens with Tal Ilan's evaluation of Tcherikover, Fuchs, and Stern's magnum opus *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum* (CPJ). Ilan shows how the selection of evidence by these authors reflects their interest to

present ancient Judaism as highly assimilated and breaking down after the revolt in Egypt in 117 CE. The gaps in *CPJ*'s three volumes have triggered the publication of a fourth volume, on which Ilan and others are working. Seth Schwartz revives Salo Baron's view of Jewish history as containing a tragic element and urges historians of Judaism to reckon with 'an important and bracing note of pessimism' (242). Lutz Doering, finally, shows how 1 Peter adopts language used for Israel in the Hebrew Bible to construe an identity for its addressees. By so doing, 'Israel is appropriated without being expropriated' (276). The quality of these essays is excellent, and the volume as a whole should be applauded for treating Jewish and Christian identity-formation together. That said, some problems also remain. First, the volume covers too much ground for its aims to be wholly transparent. Apparently, the 'communal identities' referred to in the title could entail ethnic, juridical, cultic, and other identities, and are discussed both from a Roman perspective and from that of Jews and Christians themselves. Moreover, case studies and methodological essays occur side by side, but are not made to bear on one another. Furstenberg's introductory essay raises these issues, but does not remedy them all. As a result, it is not entirely clear to which debates in the study of Jewish and Christian identity-formation in the Roman world this volume intends to contribute. Second, the volume exhibits a strong centration on Rome as an imperial power. Though illustrative in many regards, this Rome-centredness is now increasingly being problematised in fields like ancient history and Roman archaeology. The volume under review would have benefited from more thorough engagement with these debates.

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Biblical Studies

Björn Corzilius, *Michas Rätsel: Eine Untersuchung zur Kompositionsgeschichte des Michabuches* (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, 483), Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2016; xvi + 466 pp., € 99.95.

Het Bijbelboek Micha bevat enkele prachtige teksten, maar stelt exegeten tegelijkertijd voor enkele raadsels. Hoe moet bijvoorbeeld de relatie worden gezien tussen de woorden van ondergang en de heilsprofetieën? Was zijn felle kritiek nu gericht op sociale misstanden of had deze vreemde vormen van Jahwisme op het oog? In 1881 formuleerde Bernhard Stade een antwoord: alleen de kern van Micha 1-3 is origineel, de rest zijn latere glossen en bijvoegsels. Volgens Stade was Micha een profeet die vanwege de overtredingen van het godsrecht Jerusalem het oordeel moest aanzeggen. Ondank de kritische bedenkingen bij deze positie – onder