

elections, through to the final *renuntiatio* (proclamation) of the elected candidates. The author goes far beyond a merely descriptive approach and explores a series of intertwined issues which concern the social, juridical and political background of the local vote, such as the number of candidates who supposedly run for local magistracies or the possible cases of shortage of candidates (255–70). The author pinpoints several specific, but controversial, aspects of the local electoral legislation which apparently imposed obligatory candidatures in case of absence of voluntary candidates, perhaps because undertaking a magistracy also implied considerable expenditures for the benefit of the community. Starting from the consideration that it is not possible to give a generic and comprehensive answer to these questions, the author hypothesises that in some cities the local charters could be implemented with norms that established specific rules in the case that the candidates were fewer than the available positions: on such occasions, the local decurions might have imposed candidatures on eligible citizens. The definition of the problem also permits further articulation of scholarly debate as to both the attractiveness of magistracies for local élites and the vitality of political debate at the local level.

The intensity of local political competition also arises from the analysis of the phenomenon of electoral corruption (ch. 6). R., after underlining the multiformity of the concept of *ambitus* in the Roman judicial system, shows how *ambitus* also affected the local vote and was therefore treated — at least in some of its expressions — by the local charters from Roman Iberia. In this respect, the author also offers an interesting and original interpretation of electoral disorders, which he places within the wider problem of the political struggles that frequently affected the public life of Rome.

The analysis proceeds by describing the different phases of the electoral procedure until its final moment and the official designation of the elected candidates (chs 8–9). The author devotes specific attention to possible diversions that could affect the final stages of the electoral procedure, namely scrutiny of the votes and the designation of the appointed candidates. Starting from the reading of some excerpts from the municipal charter of Troesmis (in Moesia Inferior), which similarly regulate the local electoral procedure, the author reaffirms some of the key points of his whole analysis, in this case with specific focus on the problem of the redaction of the local constitutions: they appear to reproduce analogous rules and measures, independently from their chronological as well as geographical collocation, as the issues that affected the electoral mechanisms of Rome could also concern the elections at a local level.

The book, which delves into a number of further issues concerning local electoral institutions, closes with a chapter that investigates the public image of the local magistrates (ch. 11). The author shows how members of the local political élites tend to take for granted the system of values as well as the forms of social conduct which were typical for the Roman ruling class. In this respect, the electoral competition played a fundamental role, as the magistracies were perceived as one of the most immediate means to obtain a significant position of prestige within the local social context, which also explains why political clashes must have been frequent.

In general, R.'s book represents a detailed and well-documented work which contributes significantly not only to modern scholarly research on the political institutions of the local centres of the Roman Empire, but also, and from a wider perspective, to the debate on the problem of the cultural homogenisation of the local elites of the Empire. R. brilliantly reads and interprets the available epigraphic evidence to provide us with a multifaceted and complex picture of the vivacity of public life in the centres of the Roman Empire.

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EMMA-JAYNE GRAHAM, *REASSEMBLING RELIGION IN ROMAN ITALY*. London and New York: Routledge, 2021. Pp. 251, illus., maps, plans. ISBN 9781138282711. £120.00.

The study of Roman religion often focuses on elite literary texts to interpret how ritual activities were understood. Emma-Jayne Graham introduces a 'new materialist' approach to the archaeology of

Roman religion by aiming to remove hierarchies between humans and ‘things’. Case studies are used to reveal relationships between different assemblages that generate what the author calls ‘religious knowledge’ allowing G. to move beyond textual evidence. The overarching theme is a refocusing on human experience and the formation of this knowledge. This aids in understanding religious practices by introducing new ways in which material evidence can be understood, such as considering the material itself rather than the object it creates.

Chs 1 and 2 introduce the topic, set parameters and flesh out G.’s approach. Tyrrhenian Italy, particularly Latium, is analysed, allowing a targeted discussion. The chronological parameters are broad, from the fifth century B.C. to the fifth century A.D., permitting the identification of changes over time and hinting at the broader utility of G.’s approaches. G. also convincingly outlines why her approach justifies a new book on Roman religion, suggesting that the subject is ready for a new interpretive framework.

Chs 3–6 focus on places, objects, votives and divinity. Terrace sanctuaries from the late Republic such as Fortuna Primigenia at Praeneste and Juno Gabina at Gabii are discussed. G. outlines how individuals may have moved through these places leading to the creation of ‘lived experiences’ that result from the unique characteristics of each site. G. highlights the differences between her earlier book and previous studies that catalogue sites without considering these experiences (e.g. F. Coarelli, *I santuari del Lazio in età repubblicana* (1987)), arguing that her approach allows deeper interpretations to be generated from the same evidence. The new materialist approach is also applied to objects such as incense boxes, ritual hats and votive offerings. G. considers the relationship between objects and users, concluding that the physical characteristics of objects impacted how individuals understood the religious landscape. These objects were not simply symbolic but helped create ‘religious knowledge’.

G. also argues that less anthropocentric approaches should be taken when discussing divinity. Instead of identifying which god was worshipped at a site, we should focus on how and why divine qualities mattered. G. discusses a variety of examples such as a trio of statues including Demeter from Ariccia and, importantly, the sacred water at Pantanacci. This allows G. to apply her non-anthropocentric approach, providing a new way of understanding the gods, considering what they mean rather than just their identity. Ch. 7 discusses magic, summarising the themes of the book. The fountain of Anna Perenna is utilised as a case study, analysing figurines, curse tablets and the location. G. argues that magical and religious agency were produced in the same way, indicating a close relationship. This provides insight into how new materialist approaches may help answer questions that have long interested scholars. This chapter also indicates how the themes discussed earlier combine to build a fuller picture of how religion can be interpreted.

G.’s book is therefore an important work in the current trend of scholarship that shifts focus away from privileging literary evidence. G. highlights Jessica Hughes, whose focus on the complexity of the functions of anatomical votives forms an important aspect of the argument (*Votive Body Parts in Greek and Roman Religion*, 2017). Scholars including Nicole Boivin (*Grasping the Elusive and Unknowable: Material Culture in Ritual Practice*, 2009) are also important as they argue that material objects were more than symbolic. G.’s innovation is to apply these ideas to Roman religion specifically. The Lived Ancient Religion project is also relevant as G. utilises the concept of ‘lived religion’ throughout the work. She states that, despite taking a different, non-anthropocentric approach, she shares a similar goal. G.’s approach also leads to a focus on the individual, another current trend in modern scholarship; for example Jörg Rüpke (ed.), *The Individual in the Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean* (2013).

Overall, G.’s approach is highly innovative as the reader is guided through a variety of case studies that illustrate how archaeological materials can be interpreted to understand how individuals experienced religion. However, the volume of technical terminology can sometimes be overwhelming. Sentences such as ‘Humans and more-than-human material things of all types are equally thingly in nature’ (40) may be confusing to readers with no prior knowledge of the approaches presented. A variety of technical terms employed such as ‘thingliness’ are defined in earlier sections, but these explanations could benefit from more direct language to convey the author’s meaning more simply. Nevertheless, G.’s book provides insight into how a variety of materials can be reinterpreted to generate new ideas about Roman religion. G. is able to build an overall convincing argument that may benefit the understanding of scholars of all levels. New materialist approaches could be applied to other areas of study. For instance, similar ideas could be applied to Etruscan bronze mirrors where G.’s understanding of divinity may provide insight into how the handlers of these objects experienced the gods that they depict. This is one simple

example, but similar methods could be applied to most rituals or places the reader can think of. This makes the book a strong entry into the scholarship of ancient religion.

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BASSIR AMIRI, *RELIGION ROMAINE ET ESCLAVAGE AU HAUT-EMPIRE. ROME, LATIUM ET CAMPANIE* (Collection de l'École française de Rome 581). Rome: École française de Rome, 2021. Pp. x + 421. ISBN 9782728308378. €35.

Having previously edited a volume on religious practices at the margins of Roman society (*Religion sous contrôle* (2016)), Amiri in this monograph studies the interaction of religion and slavery in the Early and High Empire, tackling both the primary evidence for the involvement of enslaved persons in religious observance and the secondary literature on the (presumed) exclusion of these persons from positions of religious authority. While anchored to central Italy, the book has plenty to offer ancient historians working on other regions of the ancient Mediterranean, beginning with its fine-grained readings of epigraphic evidence '[p]our percevoir les réalités de l'esclave' (14).

Following a preface by William Van Andringa, A.'s introduction critiques the idea that enslaved persons are definable by or containable within 'le cadre juridique' of civil status, highlighting the various social contexts where enslaved persons pursued 'la possibilité de construire et de proposer une image de lui-même radicalement différente de celle que nos livrent les discours officiels' (7). The book's great achievement is to bring to life the multiplicity of those *religious* contexts where this possibility bears fruit.

The book proceeds in three parts of three chapters each. Part I investigates signs of agency and the exercise of authority in the religious domain, moving from the parameters of exclusion/inclusion (ch. 1) to religious practitioners such as *auditui* and *victimarii* (ch. 2) and the enslaved and freedperson officiants in neighbourhood and domestic cult (ch. 3). Part II sifts through the evidence for social interaction ('sociabilité') in religious settings, first considering the social dynamics and benefits that *collegia* provided (ch. 4) before turning to the activity of enslaved persons within the *familia* (ch. 5) and the oscillation between 'communauté et individualité' in the fulfilment of *vota* (ch. 6). Part III assesses the creation of an autonomous religious realm at home and at work (ch. 7) and the forms of socially constrained religious autonomy that are potentially retrievable from the source material (ch. 8; the discussion of enslaved persons as 'vecteurs religieux' is a highlight) on its way to sampling some of the rich and varied evidence for funerary rituals among enslaved and freed persons (ch. 9). A conclusion reiterates the book's main findings, above all that the religious identity of enslaved persons 'n'est pas seulement définie par le critère juridique, mais par des facteurs sociaux'. Never a 'masse homogène', enslaved persons embraced forms of religious praxis that mirrored their 'hétérogénéité intrinsèque' (369).

There are many virtues to this book, which does more than simply compile the available evidence for the religious practices of the enslaved. First, it mounts, with care and due hedging, a sophisticated argument. At times, the hedging is overdone; but A. makes claims and defends them, in readable if pleonastic prose. Second, several sections of the monograph represent the first determined effort since Franz Bömer to bring together increasingly fissile bodies of evidence for the worship of particular deities by enslaved persons; these will need to be regularly consulted by specialists in Roman religion. A.'s discussion of the Bona Dea's salience in the religious world(s) of the enslaved has already received mention in a recent publication (see the reference to A.'s book in Giovanni Almagno, 'Epigrafia del sacro e committenza libertina in età repubblicana', *Scienze dell'Antichità* 28.3 (2022)). Noteworthy, too, is A.'s challenge to the idea that the worship of Silvanus is 'une spécificité servile' (303), and the salutary reminder that even the apparent overrepresentation of enslaved and freed persons in dedications to a specific deity is not always what it seems.

The book's deficits are few but worth remarking. One stems directly from the book's origins as a *thèse* submitted for a *Habilitation à diriger des recherches* (HDR). While exceptionally and