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Book Reviews



Maren R. Niehoff (ed.), *Journeys in the Roman East: Imagined and Real*, Culture, Religion, and Politics in the Greco-Roman World, 1. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017. Pp. xi + 440. Hardbound. ISBN: 978-3-16-155111-6. EUR 159.00

This volume contains nineteen articles on the theme of travel in the Roman East, with an introductory essay by the editor. In this introductory essay, Maren Niehoff describes the conference that lies behind this volume as “lively” (v). This liveliness has reflected on the volume: *Journeys in the Roman East* offers a stimulating interdisciplinary effort to think about travel in the Roman world.

In her introductory essay “Journeys on the Way to This Volume,” Niehoff sets the parameters for the volume. *Journeys in the Roman East* stresses “the interpretation of journeys as intellectual, emotional, rhetorical, and religious constructs” within the Eastern Mediterranean under Rome, so as to study “variety within a broadly shared cultural context” (1). Niehoff gives a helpful overview of earlier research on travel in the Roman world. The scarcity of comparative studies of Greek, Roman, Christian, and Jewish travel is particularly striking, and this is one desideratum that the current volume seeks to fulfil.

The essays that follow Niehoff’s introduction are divided, somewhat haphazardly, into five parts: Real and Imagined Geography; Reconstructing Encounters in Distant Places; Between the Bodily and the Holy; Jesus’s Travels from Different Perspectives; Destination Rome. The first section opens with Ewen Bowie’s “The View from Aphrodisias and Hadrianoutherae.” Bowie discusses the connection between the provincial character of Aphrodisias and Hadrianoutherae and the travel experiences of Greek novelists (many of whom seem to have come from Aphrodisias) and Aelius Aristides (from Hadrianoutherae). Janet Downie’s “The Romance of Imperial Travel in Aelius Aristides’s Smyrna Orations” treats the relationship between visitor and city in Aristides’s Smyrna Orations, which, Downie argues, is “figured as erotic desire” (72). Nicola Zwingmann, “The Account of a Journey in the *Erôtes* of [Pseudo-] Lucian in the Context of Ancient Travel,” discusses (ps.-)Lucian’s *Erotes*. This

work stands out for its extended descriptions of the practical aspects of journeying, such as transportation, but also the selling of promiscuous Cnidian pottery and prostitution. Zwingmann shows that these descriptions are confirmed by archaeology. Benjamin Isaac, “Virtual Journeys in the Roman Near East: Maps and Geographical Texts,” discusses a range of geographical texts and—more concisely—maps, sketching the development of geographical writing and map-making in the Roman East. Amit Gvaryahu, “There and Back Again: A Journey to Ashkelon and Its Intertexts in Yerushalmi *Sanhedrin* 4:6 (= *Hagigah* 2:2),” explores the intertextual connections of a story in the Jerusalem Talmud, in which Shim’on ben Shaṭaḥ travels to Ashkelon.

The second section opens with Froma Zetilin’s “*Apodēmia*: The Adventure of Travel in the Greek Novel,” which shows how travel in Greek novels serves as “a testing ground for resilience, fortitude, quick-wittedness, and constancy to one’s beloved, maintained in the face of adversity, and always (or almost always) inflected by Hellenocentric attitudes (and presumed superiority)” (159). Kendra Eshleman, “Indian Travel and Cultural Self-Location in the *Life of Apollonius* and the *Acts of Thomas*,” explores the role of India in two writings from the imperial period, arguing that “*ATH* authorizes its apostle in part through resisting the same signifiers that legitimize Apollonius—violating some, silently absorbing and out-performing others, and pointedly ignoring still others” (197). Similarly comparative in outlook is Niehoff’s “Parodies of Educational Journeys in Josephus, Justin Martyr, and Lucian.” Niehoff offers Lucian as evidence that “Greek intellectuals are alienated from their own tradition and are oriented towards Rome”; likewise, “Josephus and Justin tell the story of their intellectual journeys with an acute awareness of Rome” (221). Jonathan Price, “The Historiographical Vehicle of Lucian’s Journey in *Verae Historiae*,” analyses Lucian’s *Verae historiae*, showing how the work is at once “a parody of Greek historical writing, but also a searching comment and critique on historical narrative and its relation to truth” (235). Catherine Hezser, “Strangers on the Road: Otherness, Identification, and Disguise in Rabbinic Travel Tales of Late Roman Palestine,” investigates literary references to travelling rabbis and explores how these rabbis constructed their identity on the road.

Ian Rutherford’s “Concord and *Communitas*: Greek Elements in Philo’s Account of Jewish Pilgrimage” explores the links between Philo’s portrayal of Jewish pilgrimage to Jerusalem, Greek festival culture, and Hadrian’s Panhellenion. Laura Nasrallah, “Imposing Travelers: An Inscription from Galatia and the Journeys of the Earliest Christians,” shifts the gaze from literary, elite representation of travel to the experiences of those who had to accommodate travellers at the Roman *cursus publicus*. Confronting a first-century CE

inscription from Sagalassos with Paul's letter to the Galatians, Nasrallah shows that "the responsibilities, consequences—and any benefits—for the travels of Paul, Cephas, and others, seems to have fallen primarily on the *ekklesiai* of the region of Galatia" (292). Sarit Kattan Gribetz, " 'Lead Me Forth in Peace': The Origins of the Wayfarer's Prayer and Rabbinic Rituals of Travel in the Roman World," explores the development of the rabbinic wayfarer's prayer, showing how halakic ruling related to travel development within the urban landscapes of the Roman world. Georgia Frank studies literary accounts of tactile experiences during pilgrimage in her "Touching and Feeling in Late Antique Christian Pilgrims' Narratives," arguing that "the haptic gaze extended beyond sight to encompass a multi-sensory feel for the Holy Land in late antiquity" (337).

The fourth, and smallest, section comprises two essays on Jesus's journeys in the gospels. Reinhard Feldmeier's "The Wandering Jesus: Luke's Travel Narrative as Part of His Hermeneutical Strategy of 'Double Codification'" shows how Luke "likes to use motifs which can be read from both perspectives, biblical and Hellenistic" (351)—a practice which Feldmeier dubs "double codification." Luke's travel narrative, Feldmeier argues, fits this hermeneutical interest of Luke's, as it combines biblical-prophetic as well Graeco-Roman traditions. Richard Kalmin, "Jesus's Descent to the Underworld in the Babylonian Talmud and in Christian Literature of the Roman East," discusses an intriguing passage from the Babylonian Talmud, in which Jesus has descended to the underworld, is brought up by necromancy by Onkelos, and advises Onkelos to convert to Judaism. Kalmin shows how this story constitutes "a well-crafted narrative that subverts Christian beliefs and asserts instead that Judaism is the correct religion and that the Jewish God is in charge and metes out retributive judgment" (367).

The fifth section opens with Daniel Schwartz's "'Going up to Rome' in Josephus's *Antiquities*." Focusing on Josephus's unexpected use of the phrase "to go up to Rome" in *Ant.* 20.132, 134, 136, 161, 182, Schwartz argues that Josephus based this section of *Ant.* 20 on a Roman source, "probably one similar to the one that served Tacitus a few years later" (387). Knut Backhaus, "From Disaster to Disclosure: The Shipwreck in the Book of Acts in Light of Greco-Roman Ideology," explores Paul's shipwreck as recorded in Acts, showing how it serves as a symbol for Christianity making its way into the Roman world: "Paul's last journey demonstrates that Christianity has reached ... the cultural and political center of the Roman empire and ... the level of contemporary literature" (404). In the final essay of this volume, Yonatan Moss, "'From Syria all the Way to Rome': Ignatius of Antioch's Pauline Journey to Christianity," shows how Ignatius, in his letters, models his journeys on those of Paul, whilst also wishing to uphold the emerging hierarchy of the church. Thus, Moss argues, "Ignatius

redefines the journey in question. From a journey away from the center to a journey to the center" (419).

Without exception the essays in *Journeys in the Roman East* are of a high quality: they are rich in detail and open up fascinating new vistas on travel in the Roman world. The breadth of these essays, combined with the overall thematic focus of the volume, ensures that *Journeys in the Roman East* is more than the sum of its parts. The erotic dimensions of travel, intercultural encounters on the road, and the connection between travel and tactile or visual experience are but three of the intriguing aspects of journeying that recur in several essays in the volume. Likewise, particular travellers, travel writers, or travel narratives (e.g., Paul, Luke, Lucian, Aelius Aristides, the Greek novels) feature in various parts in the volume, which yields refined surveys of the complex experiences and literary endeavors of these authors. Finally, the volume stands out for its decidedly comparative outlook. Though the broad perspective this volume develops on Jewish, Christian, and Graeco-Roman travel in the Roman world may not be entirely novel (even though it is still rare), travel and travel writing in the Roman world remain a fertile soil for comparative study, and this volume makes a substantial and innovative contribution to this line of research.

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