

IMPERIAL IDENTITIES IN THE ROMAN WORLD



EDITED BY
WOUTER VANACKER
AND ARJAN ZUIDERHOEK

ROUTLEDGE

Imperial Identities in the Roman World

In recent years, the debate on Romanisation has often been framed in terms of identity. Discussions have concentrated on how the expansion of empire impacted on the constructed or self-ascribed sense of belonging of its inhabitants, and just how the interaction between local identities and Roman ideology and practices may have led to a multicultural empire has been a central research focus. This volume challenges this perspective by drawing attention to the processes of identity formation that contributed to an imperial identity, a sense of belonging to the political, social, cultural and religious structures of the Empire. Instead of concentrating on politics and imperial administration, the volume studies the manifold ways in which people were ritually engaged in producing, consuming, organising, believing and worshipping that fitted the (changing) realities of empire. It focuses on how individuals and groups tried to do things ‘the right way’, i.e., the Greco-Roman imperial way. Given the deep cultural entrenchment of ritualistic practices, an imperial identity firmly grounded in such practices might well have been instrumental, not just to the long-lasting stability of the Roman imperial order, but also to the persistence of its ideals well into (Christian) Late Antiquity and post-Roman times.

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Abbreviations

Abbreviations of names and works of Greek and Roman authors are according to the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (1983) and Liddell and Scott's *Greek-English Lexicon* (1996).

Literary sources

<i>ACO</i>	E. Schwartz & J. Straub (eds.), <i>Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum</i> , Berlin, 1914–1940.
<i>BNJ</i>	I. Worthington, <i>Brill's New Jacoby</i> , Leiden, 2006–present.
<i>FRH</i>	H. Beck & H. Uwe, <i>Die frühen römischen Historiker</i> , Darmstadt, 2005.
<i>FGrH</i>	F. Jacoby, <i>Fragmente der griechischen Historiker</i> , Berlin, 1923–1943.
<i>Gloss. Lat.</i>	Lindsay W. M. et al. <i>Glossaria Latina</i> , Paris, 1926–1931.
<i>Pan. Lat.</i>	E. Baehrens & W. A. Baehrens, <i>XII Panegyrici Latini</i> , Leipzig, 1911.
Wehrli	F. Wehrli, <i>Die Schule des Aristoteles: Texte und Kommentare</i> , Basel, 1944–1959.

Other sources

<i>BGU</i>	<i>Berliner griechische Urkunden (Ägyptische Urkunden aus den Königlichem Museen zu Berlin)</i> , Berlin, 1895.
<i>CIL</i>	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i> .
Crawford	M. Crawford, <i>Roman Republican Coinage</i> , Cambridge – Toronto, 1974.
<i>B Gittin</i>	<i>Babylonian Talmud</i> , Mishnah, Nashim, Gittin.
<i>EM</i>	<i>The Epigraphic Museum in Athens (Inv.)</i> .
<i>IG</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae</i> .
<i>IK</i>	<i>Inscripfen griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien</i> .
<i>ILLRP</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Latinae Liberae Rei Publicae</i> .
<i>ILS</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae</i> .
<i>Inscr. Délos</i>	F. Dürbach, 1926–1929, <i>Inscriptions de Délos</i> , Paris.
<i>Inscr. Ital.</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Italiae</i> .
<i>J Gittin</i>	<i>Jerusalem Talmud</i> , Mishnah, Nashim, Gittin.

<i>J Terumot</i>	<i>Jeruzalem Talmud, Mishnah, Zeraim, Terumot.</i>
O. Edfou 1, 48	B. Bruyère, <i>Tell Edfou (Fouilles franco-polonaises 1)</i> , Cairo, 1937–1939.
P. Hamb.	B. Snell, <i>Griechische Papyri der Hamburger Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, mit einigen Stücken aus der Sammlung Hugo Ibscher</i> , Hamburg 1954.
P. Köln Gr. 1, 54	K. Kramer, et al. <i>Kölner Papyri Band 1</i> . Opladen, 1976.
<i>RIC</i>	<i>Roman Imperial Coinage.</i>
<i>SCPP</i>	<i>Senatus Consultum de Gnaeus Pisone Patre.</i>
<i>Supp. Epigr.</i>	<i>Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum.</i>
Sydenham	E. A. Sydenham, et al., <i>The Coinage of the Roman Republic</i> , London, 1952.
<i>TM</i>	<i>Trismegistos (Inv.)</i> , http://www.trismegistos.org/ .

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Introduction

Imperial identities in the Roman world

Arjan Zuiderhoek and Wouter Vanacker

In his recent book on the world history of debt during the past five millennia, the anthropologist David Graeber provides a wide-ranging explanation of the so-called state-credit theory of money, whose proponents maintain that, contrary to the belief of orthodox neo-classical economists, markets and money did not predate states, but were actually originally created by the state to serve its needs. At one point during the discussion, Graeber observes that

[i]t is one thing to explain why early states demanded taxes (in order to create markets). It's another to ask "by what right?" Assuming that early rulers were not simply thugs, and that taxes were not simply extortion (. . .) one must ask how they justified this sort of thing.¹

How, indeed, do states justify what they do, and, more importantly, why do their subjects or citizens actually accept these justifications and obey their governments (something which, as the historical record shows, they mostly did and mostly continue to do, in all ages, throughout the world)? This of course is political history's million-dollar question. One answer, as Graeber indicates, is that of the thug: brute force and the fear that it inspires. As ancient historians, we are all too familiar with the type of argument: *After Actium, Octavian was the most powerful man in Rome because he controlled all the troops* – it is even in the sources, because Cassius Dio says it as well.² Yet as John Crook has pointed out, stating that 'Augustus' ultimate possibility of coercion lay in the control of the army' does not get us very far, 'for we have still to ask (. . .) *how* he was able to control the army'.³ To this question, Crook then provides an answer:

One of the reasons why Augustus' formal authority cannot be detached from his actual power is that armies can only with difficulty and exceptionally be recruited and held *without a legitimate claim*. Augustus was, in the first years after 30 B.C., consul, and the *provincia* he was given from 27 B.C. entitled him to overall command of the troops within it (which was most of the troops, and their *oath of obedience* was necessarily to him).⁴

In other words, it makes no sense to think of the Principate as a monarchy behind a Republican institutional and ideological façade, because in a way, the

so-called façade is the Principate; it is what makes the exercise of power possible. It allows people to believe in the legitimacy of the power of the *princeps*, and to identify with the politico-ideological system that he represents, by means of often ritualized expressions of consent (exemplified in this case by the oath of obedience to Octavian as consul). Here, then, we touch on the two themes central to this volume, namely legitimation, consisting of an identification with the ideological and political claims of the ruler, and the manifold ways in which this identification found public expression, in ritualized forms of behaviour and communication. These were the central elements of the process (or processes) that arguably led to the creation of something we might call ‘imperial identity’, that is, a sense (or indeed, various senses) of belonging to, and identification with, the *Imperium Romanum*.

This is hardly an earth-shattering insight, yet when one surveys the debates on identity formation and particularly on the fraught issue of ‘Romanization’ that took place during the past few decades, it is surprising to note how little attention is paid in some of these discussions to the issues of imperial power and its legitimation, and the way(s) in which processes of legitimation might actually shape identities. Romanization, as well as its ostensibly more neutral-sounding equivalences, such as integration, acculturation, reconfiguration, creolization, globalization and so on, are often primarily conceived in terms of ‘cultural change’. Modern postcolonial approaches rightly stress the indigenous agency of provincial elites and populations, who chose to adopt certain Roman cultural elements while ignoring others.⁵ These they then blended with, or used alongside, native cultural forms and practices, a process which, so the story goes, over time resulted in the formation of a patchwork of different ‘provincial cultures’, giving rise to the notion of the Empire as, to all effects and purposes, a multicultural society.⁶

Now this is a plausible enough scenario, yet there is of course an elephant in the room here, which is rather studiously ignored in many studies of this type: the imperial state, its power, and the way(s) in which it sought to exercise and project this power. There have in recent decades appeared a number of excellent analyses of the role played by Roman ideology, mentality and social practices in structuring the workings of the Empire.⁷ To a large extent, however, this has remained a separate debate. There have been some exceptions to this rule, such as the study of local elite responses to imperial power in the eastern provinces, where the debate is explicitly framed in terms of resistance or accommodation.⁸ There is also the highly influential work of Clifford Ando on provincial loyalty, but on the whole we think the observation stands.⁹ This volume, and the workshop in Ghent in May 2014 from which it sprang, were therefore explicitly designed to bring together these two themes: identity formation, on the one hand, and the legitimation of power resulting from the appropriation and acceptance, by inhabitants of the Empire, of ideological notions, ideas, institutions and practices produced by the centre of power and/or its representatives, on the other. To kick-start the debate, we included in our initial call for papers a ‘provocation’ as an invitation to people

to provide us with good case studies or disagree with us in interesting ways. The 'provocation' went as follows:

Rome was not a multicultural empire. The term 'multicultural' conjures up the wrong image in the mind of the modern reader, suggesting an equality of cultural traditions, a colourful pluriformity under the aegis of benign imperial overlords. Romans, however, were not politically correct. Culture, and the manipulation of various cultural traditions, did indeed play a crucial part in the way the Romans built up, and then for many centuries managed to maintain, their far-flung empire, but the result of this process did not resemble the modern metaphor of the 'melting pot.' Rather, what we see, with the onset of empire, is (1) among Romans and Italians, and then among provincial elites and middling and low status groups in the West (and to some extent in the East), a strong intensification of active engagement with Roman cultural forms and notions perceived as 'traditionally Roman', and (2), mainly among Rome's Greek-speaking subjects, but also among Romans themselves, a similar process of intensification of active engagement with forms and elements regarded as 'traditionally Greek.' Adaptation, reinterpretation and actual invention of tradition played an enormous part in these twin processes, which were simultaneously too complex to be simply labelled 'romanisation', but too visible and dominant to be neutralised under the heading of 'multiculturalism.' They were partly stimulated 'from above' (the so-called Augustan conservative revival), but mainly arose out of the constant interaction at all levels between countless individuals belonging to widely diverse groups, rulers and ruled, elites and masses, Romans, Greeks, and others, as people everywhere tried to discover and then maintain ways of being, producing, consuming, believing, worshipping, and understanding that fitted the (changing) realities of empire. The processes manifested themselves in virtually every cultural domain, from literature to architecture to dress, but first and foremost in action, in the active behaviour and strategies of individuals and groups trying to do things 'the right way', the Greco-Roman imperial way. Given this aspect of (implicit) 'rules', it would seem profitable to study such forms of 'identity practices' from the perspective of ritual, as ritualized behaviour consists of (repetitive, stereotyped) actions that suggest a deeper meaning, a higher goal that transcends the immediate implications or results of those actions.

The result of both processes, arguably, was the creation of a Greco-Roman identity template flexible enough to allow adoption and localized adaptation by individuals coming from various cultural traditions, but robust enough to provide a 'way of being', a form of cultural self-perception for millions of people, for many centuries, that crucially contributed to the long-term stability of empire. This template, or model, was of course subject to change and adaptation, as circumstances required. The severest challenges to it came from groups who, in response to the onset of empire, similarly fell back on (invented) traditions to fashion an identity for themselves, but one that

contrasted radically with Greco-Roman notions. The eminent flexibility of the Greco-Roman identity template was however underscored by the successful incorporation and adaptation of its source of severest criticism, Christianity, producing a 'reboot' that generated a second era of efflorescence for the model during the later Empire.

Being a provocation, this is, of course, overstated (though it worked well as bait!). It is also far too simplistic, with its focus on just a single so-called Greco-Roman 'identity template' (see the discussion below), as we discovered during the ensuing workshop and while reading and reflecting upon the various drafts of our contributors' chapters.¹⁰ Yet the 'provocation' simplified matters too much in other, more subtle ways as well. For while we have tried to steer clear, to some extent, of the fierce polemics surrounding the notion of 'Romanization', partly, as stated above, through our dissatisfaction with the way participants in this debate have dealt with (or not dealt with) the themes of the projection of state power and legitimation, it is nonetheless important to recognize that these debates have produced a number of crucial insights that should really form the starting point of all further discussion of identity formation.

Three issues in particular have been rightly brought to the fore in the more recent round of debates on Romanization and identity. The first is the notion, emphasized also outside ancient history and most prominently by Amartya Sen in his 2006 book *Identity and Violence*, of identity as a multifarious phenomenon.¹¹ People have multiple identities, and the particular identity they choose to emphasize at any given time is highly dependent on context. Hence, a dualist approach in which identity formation is perceived as a product of binary choices (e.g. colonial versus indigenous culture, or elite versus non-elite) is likely to fall short when one wants to describe and explain the various factors that created different individual and collective identities.¹² The second issue is that of agency (already referred to above), the agency of subjects, of the ruled, in taking the initiative to shape their society, within the ideological parameters set by the ruling power, and occasionally beyond them. Rather than being passive recipients of the dominant culture, subjects actively engaged with it, and creatively participated in the social transformations caused by imperial integration.¹³ However, the recognition of the importance of indigenous agency is one thing; its assessment is another. For assumed 'indicators' of (cultural) identity may just turn out to ensue from different motivations, such as social emulation. In a similar vein, Huskinson relates that it should not be taken for granted that cultural assimilation was primarily or necessarily the outcome of a redefined ethnic awareness.¹⁴ It follows from this that straightforward identification of material evidence as indicators of 'Romanization' or a Roman identity is far too simplistic.¹⁵ It is also important to think carefully about the kind of agency that we ascribe to the central power holders. While some ideological notions, institutions and practices clearly were spread outwards from the centre with an eye to legitimation, many Roman cultural forms also spread and were adopted locally arguably without such an *explicit* intention on the part of Rome. The end result, nonetheless, was the same – legitimation through

‘normalization’, as it were – which turned empire into the framework of everyday life. Mark Depauw’s chapter, in which he discusses the impact of Roman naming conventions on onomastic practices in Egypt, arguably offers a fascinating case study of this latter process.¹⁶ Given the abundance of papyrological source material, Depauw argues, ‘Egypt is an ideal place to study the impact of the Roman Empire on identification practices in a complex social texture with multiple socio-linguistic threads’, and close study of this material reveals that Roman conquest indeed triggered important changes in ‘how things were done “the right way”’, as Depauw puts it. Johannes Hahn’s chapter illustrates a similar dynamic.¹⁷ Hahn focuses on the Roman *ludi* and *munera* (i.e. gladiatorial combats), wild beast fights and public executions that took place in the arena and which constituted ‘rituals of killing’ that were organized in the first instance for Roman internal consumption, exemplifying, as Hahn argues, the quintessential Roman citizen-virtues of manliness, bravery, and devotion to victory and thus reinforcing a sense of collective Roman identity. These characteristically Roman public rituals were however enthusiastically adopted by provincial populations, and quickly spread throughout the Empire. Hahn’s contribution is particularly valuable, as it elaborates on a transformation in collective identity, in which a large variety of social groups participate. Several scholars have signalled the absence of the sub-elites in studies on cultural development in the Roman Empire.¹⁸ Of course, researchers have rightly stressed the role of social emulation and related elite agency.¹⁹ One pitfall scholars seeking to reveal such ‘hidden social drivers’ may face is the problematic *a priori* denial or underestimation of ethnic (and other cultural) valuation, which can lead to the construction of one-sided narratives of public identities that are essentially pragmatic and (socially, politically, and/or economically) instrumental. Moreover, the observations of Nevett and Perkins on settlement development in Asia Minor remind us of the fact that the mere presence of ideological processes including identity transformation were not the only precondition for the manifestation of cultural affiliation. Agency was bounded by economic opportunity.²⁰ It follows from this that the absence of assumed identity manifestations is by itself potentially incapable of revealing something about the actual nature of individual or collective identities. There is no doubt that there were poor individuals or communities too who were thinking of themselves as Roman.

The third issue stressed in recent debates on Romanization is the fluid nature of identity: manifestations of identity are, of course, not fixed. For the permanent reformulation of prior identities is an obvious consequence of an ever changing historical context, of constantly evolving individual and societal conditions.²¹ Neither ‘Greek’ nor ‘Roman’ were stable categories, nor were other identity-categories. Regional differentiation, and change through time, created a diversity of ways of being or acting ‘Roman’.²² This resulted in part from the fact that there was no homogenous socio-cultural substratum, no single or common starting ground for cultural interpretation or development, but instead a large variety of traditions.²³ Re-invention or actual invention could play an important part in such processes of change, as Claudia Beltrão da Rosa demonstrates in her chapter on the religious landscape of Augustan Rome.²⁴ She shows how the notion of an *ager Romanus*

antiquus, the supposed original territory of Early Rome, with its sacred boundaries, received considerable emphasis in Augustan religious ritual, given that it both legitimated imperial power through highlighting Augustus' restoration of Rome to its original glory, and provided an important marker of collective identity for the Roman civic community.

The three issues just discussed constitute important insights which have considerably advanced our understanding of the dynamics of identity in the Roman world, and they should not be lost sight of when we try to (re-)forge a connection between identity formation and imperial ideology and legitimation.

Yet how do we go about this latter task? We might want to start by asking the simple question posed by Graeber in the passage quoted above, but specifically for the Roman world: How did the Roman government in fact justify its actions, its exercise of power? Not so much in specific instances, but in general? Next, we might want to ask what were the ideological and political tools which the Roman authorities had available to them to construct such a justification? What kinds of bricks did the Romans have from which they could build a legitimating ideology?

As a working hypothesis, we would propose that the specific historical and socio-political development of the Roman community had resulted in the availability of at least three socio-ideological models that could serve as effective and attractive representations of the *Imperium Romanum* as a community: the civic model (the Empire as a city-state), the patronage model (the Empire as a reciprocity-network of patrons and clients) and the *familia* model (the Empire as a household). The first two had already constituted plausible scenarios from the moment when the Roman Republic became a hegemonic power in the Mediterranean region (around 200 BCE), while the third arguably only became important with the onset of single rule under the Principate.²⁵

We call these representations 'socio-ideological models' because, while they are, in a sense, legitimating fictions, they are nonetheless partially grounded in reality, in the workings of social and political institutions and cultural practices. In fact, it might be said that, over time, they became more 'real', since, as particular representations of the way ruler and subjects/citizens related to each other, they provided a set of implicit and sometimes explicit rules that structured the behaviour of both. Now if the participants in a political system, the ruler(s) included, want such a fiction to remain believable – and they mostly do, because it allows them to solve problems and conflicts through negotiation rather than violence and makes it possible to put the gloss of voluntary agreement, virtuous fulfilment of moral duties and high-handed public generosity on the issuing and carrying out of orders – they had better stick to these rules. Thus the ideal structures practice which, if moderately effective, again reinforces the credibility of the ideal, and so on.

As said, the persuasiveness of these models rested in part on the fact that they were clearly anchored in socio-political reality; after all, the Roman Empire had developed out of a city-state (*civitas*); many Romans, and above all the *princeps*, indeed were the patrons of individuals and communities throughout the provinces; and the emperor's household was, in effect, the largest administrative institution in

the Empire. What also made them work, as legitimating representations of community *and* as templates for identity formation, was the fact that while they certainly were Rome-centred, they allowed ample scope for some of the factors singled out above as crucial aspects of the dynamics of identity, particularly agency and multifariousness.

To start with agency, a crucial aspect of all three models was that they were participative. If the Empire was indeed one big *polis* or *civitas*, then everyone was indeed everyone else's fellow-citizen, and this included the 'first citizen', the *princeps*. Now of course this was *a fortiori* true for those individuals who actually were Roman citizens, but in a sense the civic model catered for all free inhabitants. The implication was that one could somehow share in the political process, as could the citizens of a *polis* (however illusory this proved in practice, at least, at the imperial level), and that, as a fellow-member of the political community, one was entitled to the attention of one's elite 'fellow-citizens' (senators, knights) and the 'first citizen'. The model allowed subjects to conceive of imperial largesse as euergetic acts, benefactions owed by wealthy citizens to their political community, for which the community could provide the emperor with the appropriate 'civic' honours in return. In other words, it allowed subjects to actively bypass the feelings of subservience that such largesse would otherwise have induced. Hence the civic model was psychologically useful, not just for the imperial elite of knights and senators (this was one reason why Augustus styled himself *princeps*, the other being that there were very few thinkable alternatives), but also for provincial elites, as Aristides's orations show.²⁶

Thus elites but also ordinary inhabitants could feel themselves to be part of the civic community of the Empire, an identification process that probably also partly explains why the civic model proved such a useful template for ordering social and political relations at a variety of levels, such as at the supra-civic level, where provincial leagues started to take on many of the trappings of a city-state (elected magistrates, councils, priests), but also at the sub-civic level, where civic associations but also villages and hamlets in the countryside in some parts of the Empire began behaving, and in the case of villages, also dressing themselves up, as if they were indeed *poleis* or *civitates* (electing magistrates, having assemblies, cults, festivals, public buildings).²⁷

Most of this was also true *mutatis mutandis* for the other two models. Identity could also be framed around the notion of being a client of the emperor, which of course implied that one owed him allegiance and compliance, but also guaranteed certain entitlements *vis-à-vis* the *princeps*, which individuals and communities could actively seek to have honoured. Cities and individuals could petition the emperor or seek a hearing to secure his protection against grievances or to obtain privileges. Epithets such as *philorhomaïos* or *philokaisaros* which we encounter in the honorific epigraphy for local notables can be understood as proud badges of allegiance to the Empire and particularly the emperor as a patron. The annual oath of allegiance of provincial cities and soldiers can arguably be categorized under the same heading, as a kind of *salutatio* from afar.²⁸ Moreover, one particular strength of the model of imperial patronage was that it was applicable among societies with

very different socio-political configurations. So it proved to be successful in structuring and legitimating the integration of tribal communities. Through ritualistic *colloquia* or meetings, the imperial hierarchy and the authority of both emperor and tribal chief were established in alignment with existing, pre-Roman traditions of tribal consent with empire.²⁹

The emperor's fatherly role was of course expressed in the title which he bore as *pater patriae*, which by implication made the Empire his household, subject to his *patria potestas*. In his chapter on the role of the imperial family in the rituals of the *ludi saeculares*, Jussi Rantala shows how this type of ideological discourse became a particularly prominent feature of official propaganda in the Severan period.³⁰ After the bloody interruption of civil war, Septimius Severus was strongly in need of a legitimating narrative that would justify and 'normalize' his and his family's holding of the imperial power. One way in which Severus aimed to provide such a narrative, Rantala argues, is by intricately weaving the motif of himself and his immediate family members as constituting the father, mother and 'first children' of Rome, its elite and its population, into the rituals of the Secular Games. Yet we can glimpse this patriarchal vision of the Empire already much earlier, for instance, in the organization of Trajan's *alimenta* in Italy.³¹ Again, there was the possibility of agency: the emperor as a father was supposed to care for his children and dependents, just like a Roman head of household, and one could in this way seek his care and protection. As with the civic model, this vision of society was replicated at the local level, where, as the discourse of the honorific inscriptions shows, local elites and the general populace in the assemblies introduced notions and authority structures from private life into the public sphere, with elite members being called fathers, mothers or sons and daughters of the cities.³²

Perhaps the best example of the cohesive power wielded by the (the idealized image of) the imperial family can be found in the army. Through allowing soldiers to participate in triumphs and also through the exercise of rituals to commemorate their own victorious role in battles, Gwyneth McIntyre explains in her chapter on the army's involvement in rituals of commemoration for Germanicus, members of the imperial family created a collective identity based on personal loyalty. Such military rituals forged a common identity among the members of an extremely diverse group, the Roman army, stationed in, and increasingly also recruited from, areas all over the Empire.³³

Beyond the military sphere, the actual worship of the emperor was a particularly strong tool to build individual and collective identities that confirmed and legitimated the local in the context of 'the global', and served the political and social needs of each agent involved. In his chapter on the imperial cult, Jesper Majbom Madsen argues against the present belief that there was a distinction between the worship of the living and the deceased emperor according to the cultural origin or legal status of the worshippers. Of major importance is his observation that the ways in which the emperor was worshipped were highly diverse and, despite this diversity, strongly influenced 'by the main protagonist himself', that is, the emperor. The emperors were well aware of the value of these rituals for generating social and political cohesion and for the process of negotiation between *princeps* and subject

communities. For they did not merely allow the imperial cult (or cults) to exist, they also, Madsen argues, had a hand in their organization.³⁴ The emperor was the symbolic centre of the Empire: allegiance to him in his role as a patron or a *pater*, or even as a deity, implied allegiance to the Empire, and simultaneously provided a justification of the subject's place within it.³⁵

It is highly significant that the different models of community just sketched existed alongside each other, and this is where the element of the multifariousness of identity comes in. One could identify oneself either as a fellow community member of the *princeps*, or as the emperor's loyal client, or as belonging to the Empire-wide fictitious 'household' of this *pater patriae* – that is, one could assume the role which the occasion required, and construct one's public persona accordingly. Nobody was forced to choose; indeed it was the sheer flexibility of the ideological system, allowing individuals to pick and choose from among the various models of legitimation, which ensured its political effectiveness. Depending on local context and tradition, one could also represent oneself as a member of the imperial *civitas* or *polis* community, or as part of the imperial web of patronage, or as part of the all-encompassing family of the Empire in different ways in different parts of the Empire. For instance, an eastern provincial notable might emphasize his Greek *paideia* to underscore his membership of the imperial *polis* community. Establishing and publicly demonstrating one's membership of the 'civic community' of the Empire could also be effected through a more complex interplay of existing modes of identity construction. By discussing Herodes Atticus's integration of an Ethiopian in his retinue and the reconversion of the Athenian *ephebeia* during the second century CE, Joel Allen illustrates in his chapter how standards of cosmopolitan citizenship brought change to old particularistic traditions and rituals at the local level.³⁶

This same capacity to skilfully adapt tradition in the light of imperial ideologies was also in evidence right at the heart of the imperial system. Andreas Hartmann reveals the selective nature of these processes in his chapter on the adoption of heroes as objects of worship, the *Graecus ritus* in Roman cults and the interpretation of Trojan descent as a Greek connection. The embrace of foreignness shaped imperial identity, even if, as Hartmann shows, appropriation was also a process of careful selection.³⁷ In the provinces, similar processes of identity formation took place, but, as it were, the other way around. While Madsen stresses imperial agency in his analysis of the imperial cult, Fabio Augusto Morales in his chapter convincingly highlights the importance of local traditions in facilitating the integration of imperial cult practices in provincial society. The example of the imperial cult at Athens and its archaeological manifestation shows how public identity markers locally 'available' from the Hellenistic and the recent Roman past were adapted and re-modelled to create and legitimate a new imperial narrative centred on the emperor.³⁸ Practices such as these should not be described in terms of resistance or, alternatively, 'total accommodation'. For then we risk losing sight of possible motivations and rationales that do not quite fit such a dichotomous interpretative scheme. This becomes particularly clear once bottom-up developments are considered. Conor Whately, for instance, in his chapter in the present volume, argues that

the Roman army adopted a Germanic ritualized war cry by the fourth century CE.³⁹ This process cannot be properly explained in terms of a grand Roman strategy of cultural imperialism. Even when the use of the Germanic war cry may be closely linked with the supposed 'barbarization' of the late Roman army, developments of this kind illustrate how markers of identity were adopted, adapted or reinterpreted in correlation with changing contexts, ideologies and identities.

An aspect that the three visions of imperial society just outlined share, it should be clear by now, is that they were models of belonging. They provided people with various, flexible yet convincing representations of imperial community with which they could identify in an attempt to determine and legitimate their place in society, or that of their social group or local community. In a social context, such notions of belonging were expressed through public practices of a highly ritualized character. These practices in fact constitute the clearest link between identity formation on the one hand and the process of legitimation of imperial power on the other.⁴⁰ For, the civic festivals referencing the emperor and imperial ideology, the oaths of allegiance, the strongly scripted civic embassies to the court, the honorific and cultic rituals for the *princeps* and for members of the imperial family, the imitation of the emperor's munificence or the Empire's civic ideal on a local scale, indeed the countless public expressions in which individuals and groups identified with some aspect of imperial ideology, all of these can in fact be seen as legitimacy-conferring actions expressing the consent of the ruled with the system of power of which they were part. The political scientist David Beetham in particular has placed great emphasis on such expressions of consent by the subordinate population in his model of power legitimation. As he writes:

[T]he consent of the subordinate makes its own distinctive contribution to the legitimacy of power, through the symbolic and normative force of actions which are conventionally recognised as expressing consent to the powerful, and, by implication, to the rules of power or constitutional system also. . . . [S]uch actions confer legitimacy on the powerful, both through the public acknowledgement that is made of their position, and through the obligations that derive from that acknowledgement. To have this effect, they must be positive actions taking place in public, since inaction or privacy can have no legitimating force.⁴¹

In the process, we would propose, rituals of legitimation had the potential to become expressions of identity, and *vice versa*. Now this, as stated earlier, is at present nothing more than a working hypothesis. Moreover, we have mentioned only three 'stories of belonging' or models of community that the Empire projected outwards, and that could be picked up by people and adapted to their purposes, that is, the city, the patronage network, and the household. There were undoubtedly other models available as well. For instance, if we focus on the emperor's role as *pontifex maximus*, or on the imperial cult, we might argue that contemporaries could visualize the Empire as a sacred community, with the emperor-as-priest or the emperor-as-god at its centre. We have also, in the above analysis, studiously

ignored change over time. The Later Roman Empire of Diocletian and Constantine undoubtedly projected different stories of belonging, different socio-ideological models for people to relate to. One possible example might be that of the Empire as an idealized military command structure, in which even a civil service career could be viewed as a tour of duty; another more obvious example, post-Constantine, was of course the notion of a Christian *oikoumene*, of Christendom. Even in the Late Empire, however, earlier Roman rituals of identity might still have a strong legitimating force, albeit in novel and perhaps unexpected contexts, as Luise Marion Frenkel shows in her contribution on senatorial rituals in Late Antiquity.⁴² In her chapter, she discusses how typically senatorial modes of deliberation and decision-making rituals inherited from the earlier Roman world not only (still) characterized proceedings in the senates of Rome and Constantinople, but were also adopted by Christian synods. Through embedding their own decisions in senatorial and imperial deliberative ritual and administrative practice, Frenkel argues, bishops not only sought legitimacy for their own decisions, but also contributed to the further legitimization of imperial power.

This volume, then, focuses on the reception and appropriation, by the inhabitants of the *Imperium Romanum*, of Roman notions, ideas and models of empire that were projected from the centre. In particular, as we saw, the focus is on how individuals and groups used such notions, ideas and so on to fashion their own identity *vis-à-vis* the Empire, particularly in the public sphere, often in ritualized contexts, and on how such appropriation of imperial notions in processes of local (provincial) identity-fashioning ultimately contributed to the legitimization of imperial power.⁴³ Some chapters focus on projections from the centre; others deal with appropriation in specific local or institutional contexts (including the city of Rome itself). What we offer is not a definitive analysis, but a series of case studies, which hopefully will provide food for thought and, as a result, stimulate much-needed further research on the crucial issue of interlinkages between identity formation and power legitimization in the Roman world.

Notes

1 Graeber 2011: p. 55.

2 D.C. 53, 16, 1.

3 Crook 1996: p. 114, emphasis added.

4 Crook 1996: p. 114, emphasis added.

5 Millett 1990; Webster 1997, 2001; Woolf, G. 1998; Macmullen 2000; Hingley 2005; Hitchner 2008.

6 On the development of provincial cultures: Woolf 1995.

7 Think e.g. of Lendon 1997, but also older studies such as Saller 1982; Price 1984; Braund 1989. The contributions in Rapp and Drake 2014 take a longer view and survey the entire development of ancient socio-political models from (Classical) *polis* through (Hellenistic and Roman) Empire to Christian *oikoumene*. Woolf 2012 offers, *inter alia*, an elaborate introduction to Roman imperial ideologies and models of empire.

8 For instance Swain 1996; Madsen 2009.

9 Ando 2000; see in particular also Ando 2010, an interesting reflection on 'imperial identities' that resonates strongly with the approach we have adopted in this volume.

- 10 Note e.g. the discussion by Revell 2009, who presents an effective critique of the notion of 'a single Roman identity'. Instead there was 'a discourse of Roman-ness within which a multitude of experiences could be created' (p. 193). Also, as Conor Whately points out in his contribution to the present volume, the provocation amalgamates 'multiculturalism' and 'the melting pot', whereas from his own (Canadian) perspective, multiculturalism signifies the coexistence of different cultural traditions within a single nation, while the (American) notion of the melting pot 'is usually defined in terms of acculturation, assimilation, and Americanization' (p. 62).
- 11 Sen 2006.
- 12 Van Dommelen 1998: p. 33–34. A clear illustration can be found in another contribution to the same volume. Uncovering the plural nature of collective identity among Greek communities in Cyrenaica, Marshall 1998 offers an interesting example of the flexibility of and supposed reasoning behind the selection and manifestation of both its Greek and Libyan components. Similarly, one may find this multi-layered nature of identities confirmed in ancient ethnographical discourse: van der Vliet 2003 on the construction of ethnicity in Strabo's work.
- 13 Ando 2010 argues that local identity under the Empire was precisely created 'through constant negotiation and regular reference to the superordinate structures of the empire itself' (p. 45). See also Hingley 2010: esp. p. 61.
- 14 Huskinson 2000b: p. 110.
- 15 Perkins 2000: p. 200–201. Grahame 1998: p. 156 rightly stresses the circular argument underpinning the descriptive inventories of change that ensue from such assumptions regarding the material record: '... Roman material culture ... demonstrates that the "Romans" did think of themselves as having been "Roman" and because they did so the material culture that they produced automatically reflects this shared argument'.
- 16 Depauw, chapter 10.
- 17 Hahn, chapter 2.
- 18 Alcock 2001; Hingley 2005: p. 91–93 and 118.
- 19 Woolf, A. 1998. See Huskinson 2000a: p. 17 for an appraisal of power as a main structuring principle of cultural representations.
- 20 Nevett and Perkins 2000: p. 226.
- 21 See Grahame 1998; Van Dommelen 1998: p. 26; Hodos 2010: p. 16.
- 22 E.g. Woolf, G. 1998: esp. p. 242; see Revell 2009 for good discussion of the manifold ways of 'being Roman'. Woolf 1998: p. 111; Dench 2005 also stress the plurality of Roman identities. In similar vein, Hingley 2005: p. 71 perceives Roman culture as 'shared by a widely spread group of governing elites, but one that was always, and everywhere, vulnerable to alternative readings'. In alignment with the general post-modern attitude towards the deconstruction of master narratives (Hodos 2010, 15f.), this approval of differentiation naturally leads to a heightened interest in the development of localism in the Roman Empire (Ando 2010), local identities (Grahame 1998) and locally discrepant cultural trajectories. Of the latter, Sweetman 2007 on the cultural development of Knossos relative to other communities in the Greek world is a good example.
- 23 Huskinson 2000b: p. 107.
- 24 Beltrão da Rosa, chapter 7.
- 25 An interesting parallel to this analysis can be found in Myles Lavan's exploration of the ways in which Rome's imperial elites themselves conceptualized their relationship with the provincial population; see Lavan 2013. Lavan notes that in the Latin literature written by and for members of the Roman elite, various 'paradigms of empire' are employed, i.e. the parent-child relationship (with Rome's elite in the parental role), patronage, and particularly (and revealingly) the master-slave relation. This latter model was of course less suitable for provincial consumption, but in the eyes of the Roman elite it did provide a crystal-clear legitimization of their imperial project.
- 26 Aristides, *Roman Oration* 36.
- 27 E.g. Schuler 1998 on Asia Minor.