

I found *A Thing of Beauty* interesting and enjoyable on so many levels. As I am a Philhellene, former Hellenic archaeologist, and current teacher of Latin, Greek, and Classical Civilisation, this book filled a void that my enforced absence from Greece created. I admired the author's ability to weave numerous different threads into his narrative. For example, not only does Fiennes tell us a lot, as we might expect, about Greece's distant past, namely the archaeological sites, Greek history, and mythology,

but we also learn about Lord Byron and his association with Greece, Schliemann and his excavations, Stuart and Revett and their controversial attitude towards antiquities, modern novelists Henry Miller, Roger Lancelyn Green, and Mary Renault, and Pausanias, the author of the ultimate and ancient tour guide. The many deep layers of this book are compelling and informing and so cleverly woven together in a way that reminded me strongly of Lawrence Durrell's book *Spirit of Place*, but in language much more accessible to a contemporary reader.

I enjoyed the way that Fiennes retold the myths as part of his narrative about each archaeological site he visited. For example, mentioning Sisyphus, Bellerophon, Pegasus, Glauke, and Jason in association with Corinth, and Zeus and Prometheus at Sicyon. As a teacher, I could imagine reading this book with my students in conjunction with Powerpoints showing the archaeological remains, and artists' impressions of the buildings, topography and geography of the sites. I thought my students would enjoy the retellings of the myths in this context, being able to picture them in the environment in which they played out.

Also, with my teacher hat on, I thought that this book would make a wonderful interdisciplinary study between a Classics class and a science or social studies class that was studying the environment. In addition to his lyrical and accurate descriptions of Greece's beauty, Fiennes also describes the sad truth of beaches covered with plastic bags and water bottles, dead dogs littering roadsides, and the pollution on the sacred way from Athens to Eleusis. We may be living in the sixth Age of Man, the Age of Plastic or Lithium as the author suggests, but it was heartening to read about the activists Fiennes met on his travels who are trying to save Greece's outstanding places of natural beauty, the WWF and the the Dancing Women of Vrissoules to name a couple.

In conclusion, I'd like to mention Fiennes' quietly sardonic sense of humour which I found an integral feature of his book. Why does Greece have an inexhaustible supply of old ladies dressed in black dresses not in the more commonly seen lounge gear? How is it that the author can eat so much Greek salad and never grow weary of it? Such humour, although welcome, lightened the tone of the much more serious message we need to hear. If, as Fiennes quotes more than once from John Keats, 'A thing of beauty is a joy for ever',

should we not, in countries as beautiful and culturally important as Greece, lay aside our greed and hubris and do everything we can to protect it?

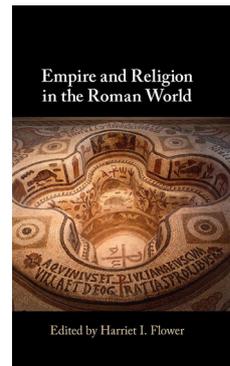
doi: 10.1017/S2058631022000393

Empire and Religion in the Roman World

Flower (H.I.) (ed.) Pp. xiv + 217, ills, maps.
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021.
Cased £75. ISBN: 9781-108932981

Timothy Adelani

Pimlico Academy, London, UK
TimAdelani@outlook.com



This book was an absolute pleasure to read, and for any students or teachers who are interested in learning more about more niche topics within the realms of religion within the Roman world, or the nature of power in particular circumstances, it is an absolute must read. The 11 contributions cover a wide range of topics within the themes of 'Empire' and 'Religion' to create an excellent collection that intrigues readers, and to present different perspectives on more liminal geographies and time periods.

It is perhaps within the classroom that it has a more limited use. There is perhaps little relevance to teachers who are teaching Latin, Ancient History and Classical Civilisation as there is little or tangential material that would be covered in curricula for Key Stage 3, or for public examinations in Key Stages 4 and 5. Therefore, as a teaching resource, it is not a must have, but should certainly be a port of call for students looking to further their knowledge of the Roman world as a whole. Furthermore, the timescale that the book covers stretches far into Late Antiquity, which again limits its usefulness in direct Latin, Ancient History and Classical Civilisation teaching in most cases. Nonetheless, for those students wanting to learn more about the connections that existed across the Roman world and across disciplines, this is an important read. This volume is perhaps most suited to the students who are looking to study Classics, Theology or any related subject at university, and want to explore issues and ideas from different perspectives. For such students, this book is written in an accessible and enjoyable way, and provides a level of academic challenge to stretch them beyond the curriculum.

doi: 10.1017/S2058631022000381