

Sarah H. Davies, Rome, Global Dreams, and the International Origins of an Empire (Impact of Empire, 35). Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2020. Pp. xi + 208, illus. ISBN 978900441262. €110.00 / \$132.00.

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DOI:

[10.1017/S0075435821000824](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0075435821000824)

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Document Version

Peer reviewed version

Citation for published version (Harvard):

Cornwell, H 2022, 'Sarah H. Davies, Rome, Global Dreams, and the International Origins of an Empire (Impact of Empire, 35). Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2020. Pp. xi + 208, illus. ISBN 978900441262. €110.00 / \$132.00.', *The Journal of Roman Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0075435821000824>

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SARAH H. DAVIES, *ROME, GLOBAL DREAMS, AND THE INTERNATIONAL ORIGINS OF AN EMPIRE* (Impact of Empire, 35). Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2020. Pp. xi + 208, illus. ISBN 978900441262. €110.00 / \$132.00.

The growth of Rome as an imperial power has never lacked interest. Sarah Davies' welcome ideological history of the origins of 'Empire' acknowledges the extensive literature on the subject – ranging from theories of 'defensive' to 'offensive' imperialism, from frameworks of interpretation that focus on cultural factors to structural Realism – and finds space in the interstices between such theories for a history, based on textual and material sources, of how power relations were negotiated and conceptualised by contemporaries in the third and second centuries B.C.E.

D.'s approach teases out the ideological structures of a pan-Hellenic world, conceived through the globalized thinking of intellectuals, writers and diplomats, while also underlining the misalignments, disjunctions and new spaces ('middle ground') between Roman and Hellenistic political thought. She depicts with clarity a world in which a universal framework of identity and interactions was used to understand Rome as a power – somewhere between a *polis* and a kingship. This study is a significant contribution in helping us understand the contemporary mental mapping of the *oikoumenē* and Rome's reshaping of it.

D. begins her main argument examining the development of a self-aware global community in the third century B.C.E. (ch. 1: 'Pan-Hellenism Goes Global'). Ancient geographers 'made their world' (24) through their conceptualisation of time and space and efforts to 'universal-ize... a schema of the *oikoumenē*' (25). The concept of *hellēnizein* ('to Greek-ize') is presented as a means through which to incorporate even non-Greek communities, connecting them in a shared identity (31). D. emphasises the significance of kinship diplomacy for the articulation of international ties. It was through these international norms, she argues, that Rome, as a *polis*, was brought into this shared space.

She goes on to discuss the 'middle ground' created through attempts to understand and conceptualise Rome's *politeia* (ch. 2: 'The Problem with Rome's *Politeia*). The theme of 'ideological disjunctions' (98) is central to D.'s examination and explanation of Rome's growing hegemony over chs 2-4. She stresses both the existence of an interconnected, self-aware global community and the 'interoperability and yet profound misalignment between how the Romans conceptualised their *res publica*... and how their Hellenistic contemporaries approached international political structures' (171). It was the disjunction between Roman and Hellenistic ideologies that, D. argues, created new spaces for the development of an

imperial ideology. Rome was understood as a *polis* and yet the role of its magistrates in international affairs made it possible to conceive of Roman power as a form of kingship, articulated through such titles as ‘Romans, [our] shared benefactors’ (63). This created what D. describes as a structural disconnect (77), notably demonstrated through the role of the senate in third-party interventions.

It is now that D. turns to consider Roman political ideology in more detail (ch. 3: ‘The Majesty of Rome’). Looking at an instance of *deditio in fidem*, D. argues that the misinterpretation of this process of submitting to Rome – a failure on the part of Hellenistic communities to comprehend a distinction between *pistis* and *fides* – created a ‘collision between world views’ which was ‘to be a crucial realignment of the structures of international political power’ (85). This is one of several instances where D. stresses what could be understood as semantic dissonance between Hellenistic and Roman thinking. But it is more than merely a matter of semantic misunderstanding between Latin and Greek. Whether or not the terms were translatable, D. shows that misalignment between what the terms signified internally to a state and how that state behaved as a consequence created space for misunderstanding and therefore new constructions of power relations. She cites as examples Polybius’ attempts to explain Rome’s *politeia*, his emphasis on the misunderstandings of *deditio* (80-86) and Prusias of Bithynia’s allegedly servile performance before the senate (63-4, 77).

While D. makes use of Polybius as emblematic of the *Zeitgeist* of the period (121), she reserves full consideration of his *History* until ch. 4 (‘The Cloud from the West’), viewing it in the wider context of contemporary historiographical responses ‘to the contemporary ideological re-mappings of the Mediterranean world’ (106). In both this chapter and the following (ch. 5: ‘A Liminal Finale’), D. tracks the evolution of historiographical thought and the unique space carved out for Rome within a cycle of political systems.

In both the introduction and conclusion (*Roma Aeterna*), D. evokes, through a close analytical reading of a Locrian coin and the Gemma Augustea respectively, the wider conceptual landscape from the third century B.C.E. to the first century C.E. By bookending her study with examinations of material culture (supported by high quality images), D. expertly illustrates ‘the ways of thinking’ (150) that evolved over the period and so delivers an accessible and thought-provoking study for (re)constructing contemporary ideas of imperialism.

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