Inevitably, the nature and style of the argument reflect much about H. himself. The snappy writing makes the book easily readable but is sometimes marred by a penchant for sarcasm, which too often stands in for developed argument. Important work is mocked rather than debated: Eckstein's 'silly historical falsehood' (42); Isaac's 'insufficient familiarity' with republican history (125); the impact of a 'prolonged period of bourgeois western comfort' on Averil Cameron's scholarship (220–2).

Also apparent is H.'s greater familiarity with the scholarship on earlier rather than later periods, a deficit in a book with so strong a teleological trajectory. Material mistakes arise because H. shows no awareness of frontier archaeology on the Rhine and middle Danube (231); of Giardina and Grelle on late Roman tax collection (231–3); of Frakes on the invention of the *defensor civitatis* (286); of Carrié and Grey on the colonate (287). Especially regrettable is the absence of engagement with the important work on fiscality by Carrié, Mazzarino, Delmaire, Bransbourg and Banaji.

Perhaps most notable is the absence of work on non-Roman peoples — with the exception of the Goths and early Muslims. The increasing power of Germanic confederations (Alamanni, Franks, Vandals, Lombards), of Sasanian Persia, of steppe nomads (Huns and Avars) and above all of the pre-Islamic Arabs goes a long way toward explaining the collapse of Roman territorial hegemony. This, enforced through military superiority, is by and large the subject of H.'s book, for what H. attempts to demonstrate is that the ruthlessly belligerent but astonishingly efficient Rome of the middle Republic is a thing of the past by Late Antiquity. Given that in many ways this goes without saying, one might have wished for an effort to look outside the Empire in search of the causes of the rise of a new world power order.

Yale University NOEL LENSKI
noel.lenski@yale.edu
doi:10.1017/S0075435818000709

C. B. CHAMPION, *THE PEACE OF THE GODS: ELITE RELIGIOUS PRACTICES IN THE MIDDLE ROMAN REPUBLIC*. Princeton, NJ/Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2017. Pp. xxv + 270. ISBN 9780691174853. £32.95/US$39.95.

Craige Champion tackles a thorny, long-standing question: did Roman elites of the middle Republic believe in their gods? Recognising the complexity and cultural specificity of 'belief', C. defines the term for the present study as 'a genuine, collective conviction on the part of the governing élites that Roman success, and indeed the city's very existence, depended on maintaining correct relations with the gods through orthopraxy' (xiv). C.'s analysis is motivated by the persistence in the work of ancient historians and classicists of what he terms 'élite-instrumentalism', that is, the idea that Roman elites either consciously or unconsciously used religion to control non-elites, while themselves remaining religious sceptics. Instead of jettisoning elite-instrumentalism entirely, C. aims to circumscribe its influence and to open new avenues for complementary approaches to elite religious practices.

The period under consideration stretches from *c.* 275 to 114/13 B.C. This era witnessed acceleration of Rome's imperial expansion, which exerted new pressures on existing social, political and religious structures. C. seeks to understand the beliefs of Roman elites from the actions they undertook in the midst of these strains on their community. His primary interest is the psychological and emotional states of individual historical agents. While acknowledging the impossibility of directly recovering these states, C. holds that they can be inferred based on what individuals actually did and with reference to anthropological, sociological, psychological and cultural theories. Elite-instrumentalism, although criticised in its more egregious forms, nevertheless is deployed by C. as a 'counterfactual interpretative strategy' intended to highlight, through contrast, what elites' subjective experiences are likely to have been (ix).

Following the introduction and ch. 1, which delineate these parameters, the core analysis is divided into four chapters. Ch. 2 addresses official religious structures in Rome itself, including priesthoods and the religious roles of the *populus Romanus*. For both priests and populace, C. usefully distinguishes between formal and functional authority, with both groups emerging in different ways as limited in the latter despite claims to the former. Most interesting is his discussion of the diffusion of religious

power among an accretive and incoherent collection of priesthoods. Here, C. applies the concept of 'heterarchy' to describe a system in which individual elements are unranked or whose rankings are contingent and mutable (46). He argues that such a decentred, non-hierarchical system is ill-suited to function primarily as a tool of elite control over non-elites.

Ch. 3, examining the religious behaviours of Roman generals on military campaign, is arguably the most cohesive and successful. C. vividly sketches the many uncertainties confronting a commander, from logistical difficulties to the ever-present possibility of defeat. In the face of the psychological burden imposed by these uncertainties and by the general's unilateral decision-making responsibility, his religious preoccupations before and during battle become more readily intelligible. They both served to alleviate his own fears and were viewed as a central, rather than ancillary, factor in military success.

The impact of martial success or failure on religious practices in Rome is the subject of ch. 4. Here, C. characterises Roman religion as 'accumulative civic polytheism'; new divinities and rituals were constantly entering Rome as a result of foreign conquest, prompting frantic elite attempts to impose order and reconcile innovations with the *mos maiorum*. Elite interventions are to be interpreted as reactionary, *ad hoc* and driven by sincere concern to uphold the *pax deorum*, not as the result of a consistent strategy to gull unsuspecting non-elites.

Most of the theoretical heavy lifting is postponed to ch. 5, which is the most innovative (and potentially controversial) section. C. introduces an avowedly eclectic mix of theories, principally drawn from psychological research. He pre-empts *a priori* objections to this methodology by citing recent scientific studies suggesting transhistorical continuities in human cognition. C. then applies to several historical case studies the psychological theories of attitudinal ambivalence, situational context and cognitive dissonance, with particular success in the case of the first two. One wishes that the book had commenced, rather than concluded, with this material so that earlier chapters might have engaged with it more explicitly. As it is, chs 2–4 occasionally belabour the refutation of elite-instrumentalism without fully articulating alternatives, and references to elite emotions can appear insufficiently theorised until the reader reaches the sophisticated treatment in the final chapter.

This critique notwithstanding, C. has written a thought-provoking book with much to recommend it. It joins a growing body of scholarship on both ancient and modern religions that attempts to reinvigorate discussion of the cognitive and emotional elements of religion after a decades-long emphasis on praxis. C.'s focus on experience helps the reader to unthink assumptions produced by hindsight, such as Roman military invulnerability or the rationality of Roman religious policies. Instead, we see practices like *devotiones* and live burials of Vestal Virgins as the highly charged, even traumatic, events that they assuredly were for contemporaries. Equally salutary is C.'s contextualisation of the question of elite belief within current debates in republican history. For example, recent re-evaluations of the relative political power of Senate and *populus* productively inform the analysis of their respective religious authorities in ch. 2, especially in its stress on the shifting composition of audiences from one religious performance to another. This approach is perhaps a result of C.'s professed perspective as an ancient historian, not a scholar of religion. Yet this book's erudition, creativity and readability make it a welcome addition for historians, classicists and scholars of religion alike.

Princeton University ANNE E. TRUETZEL
truetzel@princeton.edu
doi:10.1017/S0075435818000837

M. J. DILUZIO, *A PLACE AT THE ALTAR. PRIESTESSES IN REPUBLICAN ROME*. Princeton/Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2016. Pp. xii + 281, illus. ISBN 9780691169576. £34.95/US $45.00.

Studies on Roman religion of the past years have been marked by a strong focus on the (individual and collective) agents behind cultic practice. Various social groups and religious specialists, as well as the differences of one cult from another, have been discussed in these works. Nevertheless, the aspect of gender is often omitted, resulting in male-only generalisations and genderless perspectives, in which the religious activities of women are perceived as marginal affairs. A few exceptions to this