The impression that Price's historical approach is admirably cautious is explained by the origins of the book in a doctoral thesis (p. xi). What Price does not mention there, but perhaps might usefully have said, is that his thesis was submitted some five years or so ago and that in some respects he has been overtaken by other publications, not least my own, on the subject of the ruling class of Judaea. Since Price's study was entirely independent, our broad agreement on the main issues may perhaps be taken as an indication that we may both be correct, but that may be over-optimistic. To Price's credit, some bibliography up to 1991 has been added to a work conceived in the mid-1980s, but most such additions are only included for Price to express disagreement with them; in this respect his expressed desire to avoid loading his work with unnecessary references and excessively harsh polemics cannot be considered entirely successful.

The value of Price's book lies, then, in its thorough, detailed, level-headed and clear description of an exceptionally important period of Jewish history. The book should be much used and quarried for many years.

MARTIN GOODMAN


This major reassessment of the military dimension of Roman imperialism has now achieved an early revised (and slightly augmented) edition, and well deserves notice in these pages. Isaac adopts and justifies a regional approach but embeds this in a wider perspective. The Roman east was a vast area and the power of Parthia/Persia lurked in the background; as a particularly well-documented part of it, and one for which the author knows the archaeology exceptionally well, the Roman occupation of Palestine forms here a subject of intensive investigation. The principal arguments of his book—that the Roman army was concerned mainly with repressive policing rather than with lines of defence, that frontiers did not matter much, that extensions of Roman power were always on the cards and that the emperors nursed no 'grand strategy'—have an important bearing on the framework within which any historian of Palestine operates. From the Jewish evidence Isaac argues that there was much more continuous banditry and marauding than scholars have recognized, in other provinces, too, and even during the second and third centuries. He does not, however, undervalue the specific, indeed unique, religious elements which fuelled the Jewish revolts, and his account of the interplay between banditry and religious dissidence is valuable even if it cannot get to the bottom of this complicated matter. For the Talmudic period, his exploitation of rabbinic stories which reveal the impact of Rome will be a novelty to many Romanists and this material undoubtedly offers a fresh angle on the occupation. He is particularly instructive on the level of popular support and shelter often made available to bandits, and on listim in the Talmud. Some day, perhaps, the Talmudists will do the spadework necessary to make possible a truly critical use of Amoraic traditions and to get us beyond the anecdotal. How are we to decide what to make, for example, of the story in Pesikta de Rav Kahana (with a parallel in TJ Terumot) about the occasion when R. Abbahu was seated next to a dog by his host and then told to honour the dog because it had saved his wife from rape by biting off a marauder's genitals? For the moment, it is good to bring such material into the arena, as Isaac has done, even at the risk of seeming credulous. He is fortunate, moreover, in that his concern is more with atmosphere and attitude than with the historicity of any specific
detail, and so he is less vulnerable to the criticisms that may be made of some of the Israeli school of historians on this count.

Isaac adds to our understanding of many other key problems of Roman Palestine. On the road system, where his fundamental work is already familiar, he demonstrates that the important stage in the development of a road system comes at the point not of construction but of organization, and that this is the stage with which we should associate milestones, forts and other installations. Such structures may be varied in function, but should not be regarded as having to do with the large-scale defence of a province, even in the late Empire. It is telling that there are virtually no milestones in the desert. Centurions were the vital people in looking after security. Isaac even connects the construction of what he regards as the very first road in Syria, from Antioch to Ptolemais-Acco, as prompted by the difficulties of the Roman procurators in Judaea under Claudius. Some ten years later, Cestius Gallus and then Vespasian marched along that road.

On taxation and other levies, the role of the military, both official and unofficial, is clearly analysed, and various kinds of abuse, such as persistent non-payment to locals for the *annona* (corn levy) and illicit eviction associated with billeting (*akhsaniah*) are explored in a more searching way than hitherto. When it comes to the cities, there is a brave attempt to summarize the Roman role in urbanization, a role defined here more or less in terms of the personal intervention of the emperor, whether in ordering construction or in paying for it. More relevant to the army and more important is the long discussion of colonies (settlements of discharged veterans). Isaac is persuasive that not only were these not defensive in purpose, they were not even meant to be pacificatory: veterans would hardly have been the right people to rely on for that job and local militias raised from them, as back in the days of Varus, show themselves to have been singularly unprofessional. Colonies did fulfil a broader Romanizing function and it is striking that all of the sixteen inscriptions from Aelia Capitolina, the Hadrianan colony established on part of the site of Jerusalem after the Bar Kokhba revolt, are in Latin, not in Greek. Aelia is unusual in that there the colonists were settled next to serving soldiers, since Jerusalem had been from 70 the base of the tenth legion. Isaac is convinced, however, that Hadrian himself built almost nothing there beyond the temple of Zeus, and he shows in detail how little claim any of the Roman city has to be Hadrianan. Archaeology may still prove him wrong, but for the moment this unexpected conclusion carries weight.

University of Reading

T. Rajak


In *Paul and the Language of Scripture*, a slightly revised doctoral dissertation submitted to Duke University (1990), Christopher D. Stanley tackles the complex problem of verbatim quotations in the Pauline letters. Unlike previous New Testament studies that treat this technical question as one part of their overall theological programme, Stanley’s first book is focused exclusively upon the way Paul handles the wording of the biblical text. It is a text-critical and exegetical work that contributes to Pauline scholarship and Septuagint studies.

In his prolegomenon, 82 pages long, Stanley defines his thesis, recounts the history of scholarship and discusses such methodological issues as the identification of an explicit