“Citizenship” as a category is central to the events of our own times: the UN High Commissioner on Refugees estimates there are 25.9 million refugees, and close to 4 million stateless people, of 70 million forcibly displaced people worldwide. It is not surprising that scholars of the Roman empire, arguably the first trans-local entity even to use the category of “citizenship” to describe people so far from the metropolis, look to their own subject to think about this category. Standard histories of the Roman empire tell of a universal grant of citizenship to most free inhabitants of the Roman empire that occurred in the year 212 (e.g. OCD 3rd ed., s.v. constitution, Antonine, 383). But what did this grant mean exactly for the empire, and for its subjects?

This volume is, as its first page states, the proceedings of a conference that was held at the University of Aix-Marseille in September 2014. The conference and the volume are innovative in bringing together scholars not only of the Roman empire, but of ancient Judaism and early Christianity, to think about the “impact” Roman citizenship had on “Greeks, Jews and Christians.” It is an exciting attempt to link political events instigated by imperial fiat to developments and trends in the spiritual and intellectual world of provincials, who are not included in the upper echelons of power (or in the scholarship on those echelons either).

The book is divided into two parts of unequal length. The first comprises three articles on “Roman Citizenship in a Greco-Roman World.” It begins with a useful survey, by Myles Lavan, on the uses and spread of Roman citizenship from the fourth century BCE to the edict of citizenship in 212 CE. Lavan shows that “enfranchisement” was as often as not used for subjugation as for liberation, and that during different parts of Roman history it was put to different uses. The edict of universal citizenship was by no means a foregone conclusion, and right up to 212, citizenship was a means of differentiating between inhabitants of the empire, not bringing them together. In this, he upends the long-accepted opinion of A. W. Sherwin-White that the growth of
the franchise was a logical conclusion of the spread of the empire.1

Anna Heller, in her discussion of Greek citizenship in the Roman Empire, shows that the spread of citizenship to the east created a model of “dual citizenship,” in which it was eminently possible to be a citizen both of “Rome” and of one’s native city, and that stratification and a hierarchical class structure were not at odds, for the Romans, with citizenship as a broad participatory scheme. In this, she explicitly builds on the distinction of Philippe Gauthier between “Greek” citizenship as something one *does* and “Roman” citizenship as denoting something one *is*.2

While Heller discusses inscriptive evidence, Adam M. Kemezis offers a close reading of Roman intellectuals writing in Greek slightly before and after the grant of citizenship. He corroborates Lavan’s upending of the fatalistic reading of Roman citizenship by showing the uses to which these intellectuals put citizenship: not as a shared patrimony but as a mechanism for cementing and reflecting hierarchical difference between deserving élites and the undeserving masses. Even Cassius Dio, writing after the grant, nostalgically upholds the role of Greek urban élites in mediating between populace and autocrat.

These three articles, each in their own way, shed light on the processes and hierarchies that the citizenship grant upended. The grant, in their new telling, is not the foregone conclusion of a long-term process but rather in many ways the upending of the stabilizing role citizenship had played in the social life of the empire until 212.

The second part of the book is devoted to the “impact” of Roman citizenship, before and after the grant, on two faith communities in their formative stages, Ancient Judaism and early Christianity. This is an important discussion. It brings to the fore provincial voices, often antagonistic to the empire, in their negotiations with Roman citizenship. They confront citizenship both as a status in the real world and as a concept that they wielded for their own world-building.

Katell Berthelot, one of the editors, offers two case studies of “citizenship” in the Roman sense, as employed by Jews. The first is a purported use of citizenship as subjugation, suggested in 1978 by Morton Smith as an explanation of the forced conversion to Judaism of the Idumeans by the Hasmoneans.3 The second is the use of civic vocabulary in second temple Judaism, and what this may teach us about the way in which the acceptance of new members into the Jewish community was understood in those communities.

A similar occupation with the use of political language and the concept of citizenship in both the nascent Christian community is found in other articles in the collection. Peter Oakes discusses the precise meaning of *politeia* and *politeuma* for early Christians, by focusing on Philippians 3:20. Paula Fredriksen, on the contrary, states that “‘Citizenship’ does not come into play” in the Pauline corpus, which chooses models of kinship — fabricated or real — over political relationships to define the church. Gilles Dorival discusses the interface between “philosophy” and “citizenship” in early Christian
literature and shows how the two concepts were put to use by Christians, setting up a potent conflict with Roman power. Hervé Ingelbert offers a study of the idea of citizenship in Augustine’s *City of God*. He suggests that Augustine commutes the notion of participatory citizenship in the city to the church. In the Roman east there occurred a conceptual merge between the Roman empire and the Kingdom of Heaven. However, in the Roman west, Augustine’s work and legacy prevented this process.

Four articles focus on the Jewish community: two discuss rabbinic literature, while two others offer surveys of non-rabbinic material. Yair Furstenberg, in a substantial contribution, offers a reading of the status of Samaritans in rabbinic literature as comparable to Junian Latins. He shows how the rabbinic concept of membership centered around adherence to a law, and that like Roman notions of belonging, this criterion could accept gradations and in-between statuses. In this, he counters the claim made recently by Adi Ophir and Ishay Rosen-Zvi that for the rabbis, Jews and gentiles were binary opposites and that the rabbis worked hard to effect an “erasure of the in-betweens.” Oded Irshai also offers an argument against Ophir and Rosen-Zvi in his article on the rabbinic concept of conversion. Irshai suggests that the rabbinic notion of conversion into Judaism was an outcome of the universal expansion of Roman citizenship following the Antonine constitution in 212. Jewish “belonging” thus became, for the rabbis, commensurate with Roman “belonging,” applicable, at least in theory, to all people.

Samuele Rocca offers an important survey of epigraphic and literary scholarship on the status of Jewish organizations in Roman Italy and plots their evolution from *collegia* to a form of a “Jewish church,” recognized and incorporated as an equivalent to the Christian church. Capucine Nemo-Pekelman offers a survey of epigraphic and Roman legal sources on Jewish involvement in municipal life in the Roman empire. She shows that Jews did not refuse to participate in civic *munera* as a rule, and that the sources do not in fact contain blanket exemptions for Jews. Nemo-Pekelman shows that in the East Jews were recognized as having an ecclesiastical hierarchy of their own, whereas in the West they were not.

This is one of the most useful and illuminating conference volumes that I have encountered. The articles are on-topic and illuminate various aspects of that topic almost comprehensively. Three recent studies which would complement this book are Ari Bryen, “Reading the Citizenship Papyrus (P.Giss. 40),” the recently published Orit Malka and Yakir Paz, “Ab hostibus captus et a latronibus captus,” and chapter one of Clifford Ando, *Roman social imaginaries.* Together with its bibliography, *In the Crucible of Empire* is an important introduction to scholarship on both the institution and the reception of Roman citizenship in the high empire and into late antiquity. The collation of studies on the empire and its administration with studies on the Jewish and Christian groups which flourished under it is both innovative and laudable. Another innovation, only slightly less significant, is the bringing together of papers by Anglophone and Francophone scholars in one volume.

**Authors and titles**
Introduction / Katell Berthelot, Jonathan Price

Part 1: Roman citizenship in a Greco-Roman world: The foundation of empire?
The spread of Roman citizenship from the fourth century BCE to the third century CE / Myles Lavan
Greek citizenship in the Roman Empire: Political participation, social status and identities / Anna Heller
Beyond city limits: citizenship and authorship in imperial Greek literature / Adam M. Kemezis

Part 2: The impact of Greek and Roman models on Jews and Christians
Judaism as "citizenship" and the question of the impact of Rome / Katell Berthelot
How do the nations relate to Israel? Family, ethnicity, and eschatological inclusion in the Apostle Paul / Paula Fredriksen
The Christians and their Politeuma in Heaven: Philippians 3:20 and the Herakleopolis Papyri / Peter Oakes
How do the nations relate to Israel? Rabbis, the conversion of Goyim, and the Constitutio Antoniniana / Oded Irshai
The Rabbis and the Roman citizenship model: The case of the Samaritans / Yair Furstenberg
From Collegium to Ecclesia: the changing external framework of the Jewish communities in Roman Italy / Samuele Rocca
The involvement of Jews in municipal life during the late Roman empire / Capucine Nemo-Pekelman
Christian redefinitions of citizenship / Gilles Dorival
How to define the citizenship of the City of God: an Augustinian problem / Hervé Inglebert.

Notes:

7. Clifford Ando, Roman Social Imaginaries: Language and Thought in Contexts of Empire, Robson Classical Lectures (Toronto: University of
Toronto Press, 2015).

Read comments on this review or add a comment on the BMCR blog