Daniel Jolowicz/Jaś Elsner (eds.): Articulating Resistance under the Roman Empire. Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press 2023. X, 303 p. £ 85.00/$ 110.00. ISBN: 978-1-108-48490-9.

The edited volume "Articulating Resistance under the Roman Empire" delves into the intricate strategies to resist the cultural and political dominance of the Roman Empire. Moving beyond the semantics on warfare, the contributors explore a spectrum of responses that encompass opposition, subversion, dissent, and criticism within different cultural forms. The volume covers topics ranging from subtle acts of identity-assertion to more explicit forms of criticism and antagonism, such as language choice in epigraphy, the use of literary genres to express resistance, identity negotiation, and the role of religion in resisting hegemonic power.

A strength of the collection lies in its interdisciplinary approach which acknowledges the significance of both literary and non-literary cultural forms in understanding resistance. By extending the discourse to visual and material culture, the book broadens its scope beyond the written word. The introduction's initial focus on defining cultural resistance as genuine opposition and its manifestation not only in politics is commendable (Daniel Jolowicz/Jaś Elsner: "Introduction. Articulating Resistance," pp. 1–26). In doing so, the editors introduce the central concept of "hidden transcripts" (p. 5) complementing Michel Foucault's ideas. This theoretical discussion aims to justify the methodological approach of the volume by emphasizing the need for active reader engagement and the power of hermeneutic research. However, the editors do not emphasize the link between intellectual resistance and the need for educational and social resources: ancient authors must have been in the position to code their dissent and audiences to decode it. Therefore, both authors and audiences need a common ground, and so do modern scholars.

Since the Greek and Roman terms for 'resistance' and 'to resist' have not yet been thoroughly researched, it would have been helpful to also apply a positivistic approach. Before research proceeds with subliminal expressions of resistance, the examination of the exact wording would have allowed the sources to be interpreted from a conceptual angle. To understand 'resistance,' we need to understand the different conceptions of 'restistance' prevalent in our sources. Thus, the results of the analyses in the volume under

review can only be accepted with the caveat that the coding and framing of the text passages worked out only as "hidden transcripts."

Nonetheless, the individual contributions offer insightful reflections on the intimate connection between freedom, hegemony, and resistance on the one hand, and identity on the other. However, the lack of an explicit link to the remembrance and cultural memory of the historical discourse is a shortcoming. For instance, with the exception of William Guast and Eran Almagor, the contributors do not address the freedom discourses. The Greek struggle for freedom is – in the opinion of the reviewer – the best example to be studied, because the prevalent pressure of remembering the past freedom during Roman hegemony is obvious. The reviewer also observes a habitual disregard for non-English scholarship, resulting in the neglect of earlier research on resistance to the Roman Empire, such as that mediated through subtle references to the past during the so-called Second Sophistic.

However, a strength of the volume is its focus on the various provinces of the Roman Empire. Katherine McDonald and Nicholas Zair ("Linguistic Resistance to Rome. A Reappraisal of the Epigraphic Evidence," pp. 29–48), for example, make it clear that being non-Roman did not mean to be anti-Roman. They further differentiate between "active" and "passive" resistance (p. 32) in three case studies that analyze continued use of indigenous languages. The nuanced exploration of the inscriptional evidence contributes to the broader theme within the volume, emphasizing the complexity of resistance strategies employed by Faliscans, Oscans, Paelignians, and others against the cultural and political dominance of the Roman Empire. Their perspective challenges a simplistic binary understanding by highlighting the subtleties involved in the relationship between non-Roman identity and resistance.

Dawn LaValle Norman ("Courtroom Rhetoric in Imperial and Late Antique Philosophical Dialogues," pp. 51–70) delves into the dynamic realm of dialogue in literature, particularly within the context of interpersonal relationships. The author argues that examining power dynamics in terms of expressions of resistance is intrinsic to ancient philosophical discourse. Unlike real-life interactions, the control over power dynamics lies solely with the authors, who can shape the situation according to their preferences. However, this premise contradicts the idea that it requires an attentive reader to understand the coding. This is partially mitigated through LaValle Norman's diachronic analysis. Aligning with the broader theme of the collected

volume, this chapter explores a shift in the rules of conduct observed in literary dialogues from the first to the fourth centuries CE. The key focus is on the emergence and evolution of a new character in dialogue: the judge. The author argues that a shared embrace of forensic rhetoric, used to articulate philosophical antagonism, persisted despite changing modes of judgment within the Roman Empire. Crucially, LaValle Norman suggests that this forensic dialogic mode served as a means of sublimating political energy, redirecting resistance into a safer realm of scholastic antagonism. This perspective adds a layer to the understanding of resistance strategies, highlighting how literary dialogues became a controlled space for expressing and navigating power dynamics during this historical period. This hypothesis avoids diagnosing escapism, another coping strategy for those who feel overwhelmed by a political or cultural hegemony.

William Guast ("Greek Declamation and the Art of Resistance," pp. 71–88) explores the aesthetic and cultural allure of imperial Greek declamations that theatrically depict scenes of resistance, with a specific focus on Polemo's of Laodicea two declamations centered on the Battle of Marathon. The argument unfolds against the backdrop of an era where "spectacular resistance" (p. 72) – characterized by steadfast and ultimately triumphant resistance to oppression – was in vogue, exemplified by figures like Peregrinus the Cynic, Apollonius of Tyana, and early Christian martyrs. Guast's examination suggests that these declamations provided elites with a means to vicariously experience the glamour and rhetorical possibilities associated with spectacular resistance, which were conventionally accessible only to the powerless. The parallel drawn with the theatricalization of struggles with illness by figures like Aelius Aristides and Polemo adds a layer to the discussion. Guast enriches the understanding of resistance as not only a lived experience but also a performative and rhetorical endeavor, offering elites a unique avenue for engagement with the prevalent cultural and aesthetic currents of the time.

Eran Almagor ("Plutarch's Parallelism and Resistance," pp. 89–111) discusses Plutarch's unique parallel structure of the *Lives*, framing Greek protagonists against Roman ones. The paper posits that Plutarch deliberately encoded his text with devices of figured speech, such as allegory, irony, and innuendo. His idea is that Roman and Greek readers might have understood the respective biographies in different ways. This dual audience approach, as suggested, serves a dual purpose. Firstly, to Roman readers, Plutarch implicitly highlights the flaws of historical Greeks, subtly surfacing through the

overarching comparison, potentially escaping notice by his typically Hellenocentric readership. Secondly, the reading and circulation of Plutarch's text become a sophisticated form of resistance to the contemporary imperial environment. Within the framework of resistance strategies, the texts contain non-conformist elements, potentially overlooked by Roman readers. The two subversive elements directed against Rome are cultural resistance, employing cross-cultural irony to underscore the mismatch of Greek παιδεία in (barbaric) Rome and political resistance through a nuanced reading of the past, particularly grafting the Greco-Persian Wars onto the imperial reality and offering a sophisticated commentary on instances of Greek active opposition to Rome. These ideas are appealing to the reviewer, who discussed them extensively on a broader source basis in 2019 within the larger context of freedom, power, resistance, memory culture, and identity.[1] Accordingly, the general picture that Romans are concerned with power and Greeks with culture only resembles the Roman perspective. Plutarch's approach was to show that also the Greeks were familiar with hegemony.

Daniel Jolowicz ("A Glitch in the Matrix. Aphrodisias, Rome and Imperial Greek Fiction," pp. 112–135) contends that Chariton's of Aphrodisias novel, *Chaereas and Callirhoe*, stands out among extant novels due to its unique ideological entanglement with Rome, because Aphrodisias was *civitas libera* and supporter of the Roman emperors. Jolowicz suggests that the novel's fictional nature provides it with a certain freedom to 'speak truth to power,' that does not align with the earlier discussions on the (nearly subliminal) expressions with subversive potential within literary works and the ways in which they can subtly challenge established power structures. The conclusion, that an openly pro-Roman city as Aphrodisias was capable of expressing dissent, does not convince me since there is no identity of Chariton and the city of Aphrodisias. There would have been other acts of παρρησία to express dissent more openly, e. g. in case of Favorinus of Arelate or Dion of Prusa.

Nicolò D'Alconzo ("Portraying Power. Lucian's *Imagines* and Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations*," pp. 139–157) highlights the similarities between the portrait of the emperor Lucius Verus' mistress Panthea in Lucian's *Imagines* and

1 F. Ursin: Freiheit, Herrschaft, Widerstand. Griechische Erinnerungskultur in der Hohen Kaiserzeit (1.–3. Jahrhundert n. Chr.). Stuttgart 2019 (Historia-Einzelschriften 255), pp. 233–250.

the self-portrait of Marcus Aurelius in his *Meditations*. The two sources have in common the way in which they idealize the person they portray. However, whereas Lucian neglects his contemporary world by focusing only on the features of the abstract παιδεία, Marcus Aurelius presents himself as the sum of the positive exempla provided by his fellows. Thereby, escapism is presented as a mode of resistance suggesting that neglecting the contemporary world is a sign of resistance. This is reminiscent of the debate about Pausanias' alleged concealment of Roman monuments in Achaea, such as the temple to Augustus and Roma on the Athenian Acropolis, or his alleged silence on Greek history after the destruction of Corinth. The question of whether or not Lucian's *Imagines* are the best example of resistance is not easy to answer, but the effort to discuss it is to be appreciated, as it goes beyond the usually discussed Lucianic texts such as *Quomodo historia conscribenda sit*, *Rhetorum praeceptor* or his *Peregrinus*.

Aneurin Ellis-Evans ("Satire and the Polis in Lucian's *Timon* or *The Misanthrope*," pp. 158–182) also discusses a rather less known text by putting forth the argument that Lucian's *Timon* should be interpreted as a response to and critique of the political landscape within the *polis* during the Imperial period. It aligns with the broader discussions on resistance regarding the dynamics of power and societal changes under Roman rule. The key proposition is that Lucian particularly targets the controversial super-benefactor Herodes Atticus. He takes Herodes as an example of a group of Greeks having gained wealth and influence through their involvement in Roman hegemony, now disregarding the traditional duties and obligations imposed by his *polis* membership. Thereby, the critique extends to collaborators and opportunists, i. e. individuals who, having profited from Roman rule, neglect their civic responsibilities, thus breaking the social contract inherent in *polis* society. It is difficult to say whether Herodes Atticus is a good example of a Greek benefactor who refuses to fulfill his duties measured against his enormous donations for various Greek *poleis*, including Athens. It should be considered how Herodes Atticus has been perceived by his fellow Greeks: was he considered a Roman *consul* or a citizen of a Greek *polis*? The paper – and the whole volume – would have benefited if Plutarch's *Praecepta gerendae reipublicae* had been used as a *tertium comparationis*.

Helen Van Noorden ["Anti-Roman Sibyl(s)," pp. 185–203] acknowledges the dynamic history of the Sibylline Oracles before presenting it as an example of "resistance literature" (p. 187). While many oracles have an ex-

plicit anti-Roman tone, many do not. Van Noorden argues that if the Roman Sibyl speaks about Rome, she says something true. The use of archaic Greek hexameters can therefore be considered as "compositional resistance" (p. 191) whereby authoritative genres are inverted. Van Noorden's examination of content and themes ("contextual resistance," p. 195) is subdivided into the topics of schematized history and eschatological anticipation. The discussion would have benefitted from the contextualization within the 'Geschichtsbilder' prevalent in antiquity, i. e., the patterns of periodization of history and how one hegemony passes on to the other. It would then be clear that the Sibylline Oracles are in line with texts by other authors who apply similar philosophical ideas of history.

Ian Rutherford ("Traditions of Resistance in Greco-Egyptian Narratives," pp. 204–218) provides a nuanced examination of modes of resistance within Greco-Egyptian literature of the first millennium, challenging the perception of Egypt as a model of long-term cultural stability. This idea aligns well with the broader themes discussed above, shedding light on how narratives in different historical periods and cultural contexts reflect and respond to threats to cultural continuity. The following topics are taken into consideration: heroes of the Egyptian resistance to Persia, symbolic accounts of portraying the Ptolemies as re-establishing legitimate kingship after the Persians, apocalyptic Oracles of the 'Potter and the Lamb', and Manetho's narrative of Egyptian resistance to the foreign Hyksos rulers. The analysis underscores the presence of resistance narratives even during periods of external domination, highlighting the ways in which literature serves as a medium for expressing and preserving stories of resistance against foreign powers. Rutherford highlights the complexity of resistance narratives, intertwining historical events and mythological elements to convey resistance against rulers perceived as foreign or illegitimate, thereby raising thought-provoking questions about whether Manetho's narrative reflects contemporary concerns with foreign rule. From the reviewer's point of view, every recollection of past events has contemporary functions that derive from the person who remembers the past. Because it is not trivial who (by writing and publishing) intentionally recalls a past event at a certain moment and place, this is indeed a legitimate object of study.

Lea Niccolai ("Julian the Emperor and the Reaction against Christianity. A Case Study of Resistance from the Top," pp. 219–238) reverses the previously adopted perspective in tackling the question of whether Emperor

Julian can engage in resistance, particularly in the context of his opposition to Christianity. Niccolai examines how resistance can manifest even within positions of authority and power. Emperor Julian's opposition to Christianity is explored, highlighting his attempts to reverse the religious agenda pursued by his Christian predecessors. Julian's 'unconventional approach' adopts forms of expression traditionally associated with subaltern dissidents, such as humor and figured speech, instead of a top-down, authoritative stance. This approach aligns with the other 'resistance approaches' presented so far. By defending Greek philosophy and religion, Julian counters what he perceives as Christianity's intrusive and power-endorsed encroachment into the spheres of theology, philosophy, and the interpretation of history. It is precisely the approach of remembering examples from the past that underline one's own position that the reviewer identifies as the most common ancient coping mechanism for overcoming and dealing with cultural trauma.[2] Niccolai's case study is showcasing how even a figure of supreme authority can employ subtle and subversive literary strategies to challenge prevailing narratives. The bottom line is that this method seems to be a universal technique, no matter what the social or hegemonic status of a person is.

At the end of the volume it is good to read Simon Goldhill's epilogue ("Resisting Resistance," pp. 239–256), as a review of the book within the book. The epilogue is a positioning of the contributions in the larger historical context, as well as a conceptual and ethical meditation on the notion of resistance. With the help of the ethical perspective, Goldhill clarifies that we are dealing with partly different phenomena of resistance in antiquity than today, because we have epistemic boundaries and our theories of the colonial studies do not match with the ancient evidence. Having in mind that the "politically and militarily dominant Rome found itself speaking the cultural language of the colonized," (p. 243) what does it mean to "inhabit the culture of colonization, what [does] cultural bilingualism [...] embrace[?]" (p. 244). Goldhill also warns against a narrative of resistance, which was particularly popular in ancient Christianity and still shapes our interpretations. The re-

2 F. Ursin: Handling Traumatic Events in Greek Past. Plutarch's "Political Precepts" as a Struggle between Memory and Oblivion. In: E.-M. Becker/J. Dochhorn/E. Kragelund Holt (eds.): Trauma and Traumatization in Individual and Collective Dimensions. Insights from Biblical Studies and Beyond. Göttingen/Bristol, CT 2014 (Studia Aarhusiana Neotestamentica 2), pp. 289–307.

viewer would like to add that the Roman conception of *Graecia capta* (Hor. epist. 2.1.156–157) has also subjected modern research to a systematic bias.

The volume "Articulating Resistance" delves into diverse forms of resistance, challenging traditional power structures, and illuminating the intricate ways in which individuals and societies navigate periods of change and external pressures. The chapters collectively emphasize the versatility of resistance, transcending simplistic notions of direct confrontation. Ultimately, the question arises whether these attempts have had any effect in the political domain, which they wanted to transform. However, all these different 'resistance approaches' could be understood as psychological coping strategies to cultural trauma, i. e. being overwhelmed by the experience of having been defeated and ruled by an external power.

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