Mark Reasoner explains in this very useful book’s introduction that its material divides into three parts. Part 1 focuses on Gospels, part 2 on Acts and the letters, and part 3 primarily on Revelation. The cited material, both texts and images, spans the reigns of the emperors Augustus to Hadrian (27 BCE–138 CE) and includes material not only from Rome but across the empire. Reasoner justifies and positions his work by explaining that his Sourcebook is designed to prompt “consideration of how its [the New Testament’s] texts relate to the Roman Empire and how the Christianities that grew out of the communities behind those texts came to relate to the state” (1). He argues, though, that he is not advocating one particular form of interaction between New Testament writings and empire and abstains from favoring one particular form of interaction. He nevertheless rejects two analyses of these possible relationships offered in contemporary scholarship, either that the New Testament writers ignored the empire (J. Barclay) or that they directly and explicitly opposed the empire (N. T. Wright). Rather, he positions his work by arguing that the imperial texts set up an “analogous resonance with ideas in the New Testament” (4), though he recognizes that not all will be persuaded by these resonances. This introduction is helpful, although at one point he mistakenly asserts, with bibliography, that contemporary scholars “who look to Roman parallels … assume that the New Testament texts are intentionally subverting the Roman Empire’ claims” (2).
This depiction of an assumption in all contemporary imperial-critical scholarship is far too monolithic and misses the attention in this scholarship to simultaneous and multivalent forms of negotiation, including mimicry, ambivalence, and accommodation.

Reasoner introduces part 1, the longest of the three sections, with a four-page introduction. It foregrounds the language of “gospels” and “son of god” (divi filius) and delineates Roman emperors as chosen to rule, as ushering in a golden age, and as benefactors of the world. It notes the worship of divine qualities (Peace, Victory, Hope, etc.), the deification of some emperors, the prominence of Augustus, and the use of various linguistic and conceptual items in the New Testament writings and their presentations of Jesus. After the introduction, part 1 comprises one hundred pages featuring thirty-three numbered selections of either texts or images. The selections are organized (mostly) in chronological order by emperors from Augustus to Hadrian. Augustus gets by far the largest allocation of space (about a third of the hundred pages) with his Res gestae, the Priene inscription, and a sizeable extract from Suétion’s Divine Augustus. Strangely, the Flavians—Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian—emperors from 69 to 96 CE, when the Gospels were written, the supposed focus of part 1—are allocated only ten pages and four extracts. The sequence of ten emperors is interrupted once with a subsection on the emperors as the “Source of Deified Virtues.” The thirty-three selections offer a good range of materials: one image, eight coins, seven extracts from Suétion’s Lives, five inscriptions, and extracts from writers such as Ovid, Horace, Augustus, Philo, and Pliny.

In contrast to the chronological organization of part 1, part 2, ostensibly focusing on Acts and the letters, has a thematic focus on “identity in community.” The short (three-page) introduction makes the point that in the Roman world “a person’s identity is primarily constructed in terms of the community in which he or she lives” (105) and then cites a passage from Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics affirming the primacy of “political community.” Three subsections, each with its own brief introduction, follow, highlighting the urbs (city), the collegium (public association), and the domus (household). The subsection on the city is the longest (thirty pages, twenty-one selections) and includes material (texts, images, coins, inscriptions) related to Rome (eight selections), Jerusalem, Tarsus, Antioch, Thessalonika, Galatia, Ephesus, Philippi, Colossae, and Corinth (most of which have one extract). The subsection on collegium (trade guilds, burial groups, social and religious groups) includes twelve selections. Four are taken from the Pliny–Trajan correspondence, two or three concern religious meals, and five concern burials. The third subsection, on households, highlights paternal authority and grief, social structuring of meals, same-gender sex, and slaves.
The relevance of the claimed division of focus for each of the book’s three parts—Gospels, Acts and letters, Revelation—seems strained in this section. Much of this material is of no less importance for the Gospels, and the Gospels have much wider negotiation of Roman imperial structures and practices than the imperial virtues and Christology emphasized in part 1. Several times in both sections, in fact, Reasoner recognizes the obvious and cites a Gospel or Paul text out of section (30, 119, 162, 241). Yet the possible relevance of other selections on Rome (Mark?), Antioch (Matthew?), Ephesus (?), meals, slaves, and so on goes unacknowledged.

Part 3 focuses on the city of Rome itself and “the ways it kept the world in its grip” (175), with particular focus on Revelation. There are four subsections. The first concerns war, with textual selections from Virgil’s *Aeneid* and Tacitus’s *Agricola*, and images including the Prima Porta statue of Augustus as manly warrior and an arch of Titus panel depicting loot from the Jerusalem temple in the triumphal celebration of 71 CE. The second subsection covers commerce, notably Rome’s cooption and importing of provincial resources. The third subsection focuses on the use of entertainments and games. The fourth subsection features emperors, including a long selection from Seneca’s *Pumpkinification of Claudius*. It is not clear to me why this material constitutes a separate subsection and was not included in part 1. Again, the issue of the book’s organization based on the order of the New Testament canon seems somewhat restricted.

That being said, this is a very useful collection. The selection of material seems well chosen, with a variety of media and provenance. The book is clearly presented; the images of coins are especially well done. The introductions to each of the three parts are brief but useful. One could wish for more detail with some selections; the Prima Porta statue of Augustus would benefit from detailed images from and close commentary on aspects of the *cuirassed* figure, for example. There are also other pieces that might have been included. The Ara Pacis is not represented, for example, nor are the gendered panels from Aphrodisias. Gender remains an undeveloped category. Overall, though, the volume will be very useful for students and for scholars whose previous education has not prepared them for this area of New Testament study (though the lack of original-language extracts will require further resources).

I have paused several times over the labeling of the book as a *sourcebook*. The word *source* seems inappropriate. I for one do not want to claim any particular source relationship between an imperial text or image and a New Testament writing. I much prefer to think in terms of “intertextualities” whereby New Testament texts participate in an imperial world constituted by any number of these and other texts/images. Much fairer to the welcome contribution of this book is the notion of providing important *resources* for
thinking about possible multiple and simultaneous interactions between New Testament
texts and the Roman imperial world.

There is a production hitch that needs mention. On page 101 at the end of part 1, the
section labeled “Conclusion” is misplaced. As its references to the theme of “Identity in
Community,” to Pauline texts, and to the next section on Revelation indicate, this is
actually the conclusion to part 2, which is lacking a conclusion on page 172.