

# 1. Roman imperialism and the ‘post imperial age’

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For years, back then, I lectured on modern European history, and came to feel that its evidence was not enough on the minds of classicists in arriving at their views about the past. Possibly the deficiency still exists, but it is less striking. I could assume as a matter of course that among all the people of the Roman empire, as in any population ever, there were bound to be manifestations of choice, meaning deviance, meaning freedom, which the ancient establishment took little notice of, and so partly hid from our modern view, or which the establishment tried to suppress, with the same result ... At the same time, I was alerted to the possibilities of suppression, through having watched the House Un-American Activities Committee at work. From its actions, some of my older friends had suffered in their professional lives ... So I came to shape my curiosity and its findings in my own American, or un-American way.

(MacMullen 1992 iii-iv)<sup>1</sup>

Over the past few years there has been an increased interest amongst both ancient historians and archaeologists in the perennial issues of Roman imperialism and Romanization. This interest coincides with a questioning of our own imperial past, particularly amongst those of the first generation to have grown up in the post imperial age.

(Millett 1990a, 35)

## **Introduction**

The papers presented here are the result of a symposium, *Roman Imperialism: Post-Colonial Perspectives*, held at the University of Leicester in November 1994. The symposium brought together scholars from inter-related fields (including Roman Archaeology, Ancient History, and Classical Studies) who, within their own areas, were using analytical tools drawn from post-colonial theory. Our aims as a group were two-fold. First, we wanted to explore some of the central themes of post-colonial theory, and their implications for the study of the Roman Empire. These are, necessarily, themes which particularly concern Roman scholars who have grown up in what Martin Millett (1990a) calls the ‘post imperial age’; and most of those present at the symposium belonged to the first (and the second) generation of ‘post imperial’ Roman scholars. Our second aim was to look reflexively at Roman studies in the late-twentieth century. In what ways, we asked, is our position within the ‘post imperial’ condition causing us to reassess not only *Roman imperialism*, but the epistemological basis of our own discipline (the *study* of the Roman Empire), which developed in the context of Western imperialism?<sup>2</sup>

Despite the shared interests and concerns of the contributors, no one viewpoint characterizes this volume; indeed there are some explicitly contradictory viewpoints (compare, for example, the positions of Freeman and Hingley on the extent to which early Romano-British archaeologists modelled their Roman Britain on the British Empire). But these contradictions are healthy: partly because we are at a point in the study of

Roman imperialism where we are debating the value of different models and approaches; but also because there will never be a single ‘appropriate’ approach – indeed, it is probably eclecticism which will prove to be most creative and stimulating way forward. The papers presented here are offered in this spirit. Our objective has been to highlight the range of perspectives possible on Roman imperialism in the late-twentieth century, and to ask some questions whose time to be asked is now, but to which, we recognize, there is no single answer.<sup>3</sup>

This introduction aims to provide a context for the papers which follow, first by suggesting that the study of the provinces of the Roman Empire is properly the study not of imperialism, but of colonialism; and second by outlining the development and characteristics of the body of post-colonial theory which has informed the papers collected here. I will begin with the contention that the exploration of colonialism in the Roman Empire – the exploration of the maintenance of colonial control by Rome, and of the experiences of the indigenous peoples of the provinces – has fallen by the wayside of a debate as to whether the Rome Empire may be considered *imperialist*, in the highly specific sense in which that term has come to be understood since the late-nineteenth century.

### **Imperialism and *Roman Imperialism***

Rome undoubtedly had an empire, but for many historians, ‘imperialism’ is a modern phenomenon; the rise of Europe to world hegemony (Scammell 1989), which began *c* 1400, with Portuguese mercantile interests in North Africa, and ended, in theory, with the dismantling of the European empires after 1947.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, for some theorists, particularly those on the left who understand imperialism to be the globalization of the capitalist mode of production, imperialism has only properly existed for the last one hundred and fifty years. The following definition of imperialism by Bernstein *et al* (1992) is helpful here:

Whereas colonialism means direct rule of a people by a foreign state, imperialism refers to a general system of domination by a state (or states) of other states, regions or the whole world. Thus political subjugation through colonialism is only one form this domination might take: imperialism also encompasses different kinds of indirect control. Also ... imperialism is almost always used in an ideological way, usually as part of a particular theoretical view of the causes, nature and effects of such domination, such as Lenin’s view of imperialism as ‘the highest stage of capitalism’.

Bernstein *et al* (1992, 179)

This quotation clarifies the twin grounds on which so many Roman scholars have sought to place clear water between the Roman Empire and ‘imperialism’: the concept of imperialism as systematic domination, and the Marxist conflation of imperialism with the development of monopoly capitalism in the late-nineteenth century. It is clear, with reference to the first of these grounds, that the dominant theme in anti-analogies of Roman and Western imperialism has been economic exploitation. Many Roman archaeologists and historians have argued that the sustained, state-administered economic exploitation of the Western overseas colonies was absent in the Roman case. Although Harris (1979) and Garnsey and

Whittaker (1978) have argued that economic gain has been undervalued as a motive for Roman expansion, they suggested that the desire for such gains lay with individual members of the elite: the acquisition of personal riches for personal political ends. In more recent years, both Millett (1990a, 1990b) and Woolf (1990) have rejected a World Systems model of the Roman Empire, on the basis that Roman exploitation of the provinces was neither administered from the centre, nor systematic. Thus for Millett (1990b):

The nature of the pattern as presently understood cannot be interpreted in terms of any system of world domination based on a conscious economic motivation; such a system is an anachronism based on a contemporary view of modern, capitalist imperialism.

(Millett 1990b, 7)

Turning to capitalism, the second of these two grounds, many students of both modern and Roman history equate imperialism with the high imperial period (Morris 1976) of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, beginning (in the case of Britain) with state administration in India at the end of the Indian ‘mutiny’ (1857-8), and virtually synonymous with the ‘scramble for Africa’ between 1875 and 1900. So when Romanists, particularly in Britain, compare and contrast Roman imperialism with ‘the British Empire’, they are almost invariably thinking of a single phase of British colonial history. Freeman (this volume), thus argues that imperialism is a phenomenon of nineteenth-century origins, whose application to Roman Britain is, paradoxically, at once monolithic (‘imperialism as it is, at it was, and always will be’), and multi-variate (the term means different things to different people). For Freeman, imperialism is a mode of explanation which owes more to the present than to the past, and which is imposed on the past by some present-day scholars. But it may be countered that concepts of imperialism are varied precisely because imperialism has never taken a single, monolithic form, and because different generations have interpreted the term in ways which have reflected their own position in history.

As Hobsbawm (1987, 72-3) has noted, the imperialism of late-nineteenth-century Britain was a ‘new’ imperialism, related to the rise of large corporations and oligopolies, and increased state intervention in public matters, which would have appeared implausible even in the 1860s. It is this ‘new’ imperialism which Hobsbawm is describing in his often-cited remark that:

All attempts to divorce the explanation of imperialism from the specific developments of capitalism in the late nineteenth century must be regarded as ideological exercises...

(Hobsbawm 1987, 73)

As described above, it was this *late* phase in the history of imperialism which was regarded by some socialist theorists as integral to the emergence of monopoly capitalism (including Lenin, whose *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* was first published in 1916). The critique of imperialism by the ‘Marxist-oriented political theorists’ noted by Freeman (this volume) is

placed in context here. But by the late-nineteenth century, when imperialism in the Marxist sense was at its peak, some European countries had been *colonial* powers for five hundred years (and England itself for more than two hundred: by the time of the Act of Union in 1707, England possessed the ‘Thirteen Colonies’ of North America, colonies in the West Indies, and trading outposts in India). In that time, colonialism had passed through a number of phases; from the pre-capitalist mercantile empires of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, through the rise of industrial capital and the emergence of plantation slavery in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, to the peak period of ‘imperial’ colonialism outlined above. I am not suggesting here that any of these phases provide better or worse analogies for the nature of Roman territorial expansion. Rather, I should like to make two points. My first is simply that it is particularly easy for Roman scholars to point to the obvious contrasts between the impetus for British territorial expansion in the nineteenth century, and the expansion of the Roman Empire. Yet as Harris (1979) has argued, enforcing such distinctions actually takes us no further forward in our understanding of *Roman* imperialism:

Writers who artificially redefine imperialism as such-and-such, prove to their own satisfaction that Rome’s expansion was not a case of such-and-such, and therefore was not imperialism, have proved only what all Roman historians have long known: that Roman imperialism was not identical with any imperialism of the nineteenth century or twentieth century.

(Harris 1979, 4)

Few scholars, including the contributors to this volume, would attempt to draw formal analogies between the two imperialisms. Freeman and Hingley, for example, both argue here that the British Empire does *not* form a relevant analogy for the Roman Empire (nor the Roman for the British). But Hingley’s further point (see also Hingley 1995) is that, however erroneous the comparison, such parallels *were* attractive to late Victorians and Edwardians attempting to understand their own imperial condition. That hermeneutic process, Hingley argues, has fundamentally shaped our discipline. Critically, the parallels which were drawn were always selective: certain aspects of the Roman past were teased out, emphasized, and re-invented, in fostering a shared sense of moral purpose. Central here was the conceptualization of ‘imperialism’ as the dissemination of ‘civilization’. David Mattingly argues that a similar process informed nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century attitudes to Roman North Africa, where the French and Italians presented themselves as the direct and natural inheritors of the Romans, and where a distorted view of Roman imperialism was fostered as a result. Mattingly, who points to the extent to which aspects of modern colonial government aped Roman titles and institutions (for example the use of the title Proconsul for many governors), argues, like Hingley, that modern imperialism shaped the interpretation of the past, in the interweaving of ancient and modern colonialism.<sup>5</sup> These holistic processes - the interpretative cycle of encounter with and response to the past - created a specific interpretation of Roman imperialism which has had a formative influence on our discipline. To return to Britain, for example, surely only a

people like the British, with a recent history of empire, could accept the construct of the *Pax Romana* so uncritically that - with a few notable exceptions (MacMullen's 1966 history of the 'un-Romans'; Bowerstock 1987) the archaeology of *resistance* to Rome still remains outside the mainstream of study. Only such a people, again, could consistently read as irony, or disingenuity (Henig 1995, 31), Tacitus' comment on the Romanization of Britain:

And so the Britons were gradually led on to the amenities that make vice agreeable - arcades, baths and sumptuous banquets. They spoke of such novelties as 'civilization', when really they were only a feature of enslavement.

(Tacitus *Agricola* 21)

My second point is that as a result of our centrist fixation with issues of imperialism - with Roman expansion and the motivation for it - we have been far less concerned with issues of colonialism - with the hegemonic processes by which colonial rule was maintained, and the interaction between colonizer and colonized. Above all, we have rarely addressed these issues from the point of view of the colonized. Almost the only framework currently available for the analysis of post-Conquest provincial interaction is 'Romanization', an equally centrist concept, the inadequacies of which are discussed in a number of papers in this volume (Clarke, Cooper, Hingley, and Alston).

The conventional conception of the study of the Roman Empire as the study of Roman imperialism, rather than of Roman colonialism, has had enormous repercussions for the discipline. It is suggested below that the relationship between Rome and her provinces should be reconceptualized, and that post-colonial theory offers an important set of analytical tools to students of the Roman Empire.

### **Defining colonialism and post-colonialism**

The term 'colonialism' derives from the Classical notion of a colony as a permanent settlement of people who have moved away from their home territory (Bernstein *et al* 1992). Some writers attempt to distinguish between 'colonization' (the setting up of permanent settlements which mirror the parent settlement) and 'colonialism' (the conquest and direct control of other peoples' land) (see Bernstein *et al* 1992, 171, where the fifteenth-century Portuguese and Spanish European settlements in the Americas are cited as an example of the former, and the nineteenth- and twentieth-century German and English administered territories in Africa as examples of the latter). 'Colonialism', in this sense, implies exploitation by the ruling power through a relatively small number of local agents (Bernstein *et al* 1992, 171). In practice, the distinctions between colonialism and colonization are far from clear-cut, and 'colonialism' generally denotes all instances of direct political control of a people by a foreign state, irrespective of the number of settlers present.

The decolonization of the Western colonial empires formally began in 1947, but the extent to which the formerly colonized countries can be considered post-colonial is debateable (Williams and Chrisman 1993; McClintock 1992), because Western influence in many such countries



remains pervasive, particularly at the economic level. The term 'neocolonialism' is frequently employed to describe this relationship (cf Birmingham 1995, 25-38). While we may contest the reality of the post-colonial condition in some parts of the world, a body of theory which critiques the structures of colonialism, and whose point of origin was post-colonial, has emerged since the Second World War.

### Post-colonial theory

But how to write a new history? When, as Césaire observed, the only history is white?

(Young 1990, 119)

Post colonial theory is not simply 'anti-colonialism'. Rather, it is an exploration of colonial cultural politics, the main thrust of which is the critique of the processes by which 'knowledge' about the colonial Other was produced (Williams and Chrisman 1993, 4). As a theoretical project, its aim is to write a new history, which de-centres the dominant self-histories of the West, by

repositioning European systems of knowledge so as to demonstrate the long history of their operation as the effect of their colonial other.

(Young 1990, 119)

Its origins lie in the 'nativist' movements which emerged in a number of pre- or newly-independent countries, and in the development of colonial discourse (the analysis of texts written by Westerners about colonized countries) as a legitimate field of research in the 1970s. The point of departure for Young (1990) as for many others, was Franz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), a work which was both

a revolutionary manifesto of decolonization and the founding analysis of the effects of colonialism upon colonized peoples and their cultures.

(Young 1990, 119-20).

The psychoanalytical framework of Fanon's work has been expanded in recent years by, among others, Homi Bhabha (Bhabha 1986), Robert Young (1990, 141-56; 1995), and the Marxist literary theorist Peter Hulme (1992). Fanon and other early writers, particularly those of the *négritude* movement such as Aimé Césaire (1972), and Léopold Senghor (1970), are also associated with 'nativism', the espousal of an authentic ethnic identity, and a belief in 'pure' indigenous cultural traditions. Such concepts have proved problematic for later post-colonial scholars, and the complex legacy of the nativist movement in North African archaeology is raised in the present volume by David Mattingly. Mattingly points to the ways in which nativism facilitated anti-colonial resistance, but he also notes that the indigenous counter to the imperialist stereotype of the passive indigene has been the argument that the attested revolts of the Roman period formed part of a concerted resistance, akin to the liberation movements of the twentieth century; itself a projection of a crude contemporary stereotype onto the Roman African past.

Post-colonial theory is not an homogenous body, but it may be helpful here to isolate some key, interrelated themes:

- The **decentring** of Western categories of knowledge. Post-colonial theory explores

the projection from the 'civilizing' imperial centres of fetishized images of Africa, the 'Orient', Latin America, etc as civilizations Other, in ways that simultaneously bring these regions into being for Europe, fulfil its need for psychological and political centring, and silence any attempts at self-representation by these people and their post-colonial descendants.

(Connor 1989, 232)

In this way, it attempts to repudiate the domination of the 'centre', and to articulate the history of the 'margins'.

- The articulation of the **active** histories of colonized peoples, including their capacity for subtle forms of overt and covert **resistance**.
- The **deconstruction** of the binary models by which the West has categorized its Others, and in so doing defined itself. These oppositions include self : other, metropolis : colony, and centre : periphery (cf McClintock 1992). By applying deconstructive techniques to these structures of dominance and marginality, the margins are, again, brought into the centre (Connor 1989, 233).
- The critique of the imperialism of **representation**: that is, of the relationship between power and knowledge in the production of the colonial Other. The investigation of power-in-representation in colonial images and languages is also known as **colonial discourse analysis**.

Colonial discourse has been defined by Hume (1992) as

...an ensemble of linguistically-based practices unified by their common deployment in the management of colonial relationships ... Underlying the idea of colonial discourse ... is the presumption that during the colonial period large parts of the non-European world were *produced* for Europe through a discourse that imbricated sets of questions and assumptions, methods of procedure and analysis, and kinds of writing and imagery.

(Hulme 1992, 2)

Edward Said's 1978 work *Orientalism*, a hugely influential study of the Western conceptualization of the East, almost single-handedly created colonial discourse as a field of study (for summaries see Williams and Chrisman 1992; Young 1990, 119-140). Said stated:

My contention is that without examining Orientalism as a discourse one cannot possibly understand the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage - and even produce - the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively, during the post-enlightenment period.

(Said 1978, 3)

Colonial discourse analysis (also called colonial discourse theory) has expanded from Said's work on the construction of the Orient to investigate

the variety of textual forms in which the West produced and codified knowledge about many non-metropolitan areas and cultures under colonial control (Williams and Chrisman 1993, 5).

Colonial discourse analysis aims, therefore, to understand how the West has produced its colonial Others, and at the same time to articulate their hidden histories: for as Said said of the Orient, it

was not Europe's interlocutor, but its silent Other.

(Said 1985, 215)

Said's *Orientalism* was heavily influenced by Foucault's concept of discourse (which relates knowledge and power), and by the concept of hegemony (which relates culture and power) developed by the Marxist theorist Gramsci (see Said 1978, 3ff; and Porter 1983). His attempted fusion of discourse theory and (hegemonic) ideology theory has not been without its critics (most notably Clifford 1988; Porter 1983; and Young 1990) but has informed much subsequent post-colonial analysis (including the work of the influential critic Gayatri Spivak). This fusion might also be argued to have particular resonances for the study of the Roman Empire, which, like many later Empires, administered its provinces not through coercion, but through the co-operation of indigenous elites (Millett 1990a, 1990b). Foucault's demonstration of the strategic, productive, operation of power at *all* levels of society, not simply at the level of the state, coheres potently with Gramsci's recognition that social dominance involves the *consent* of the subordinate, manufactured through the operation of a hegemonic ideology which, although dominant, is met by dissent, expressed in subcultures, or in acts of protest.<sup>6</sup>

Regardless of whether one accepts this reading of hegemony as applicable to the Roman case, the analytical tools offered by a body of theory whose principal object of enquiry is the imperialism of representation have an obvious relevance to scholars of the Roman provinces.

### **But isn't it a-historical?**

It may be objected at this point that, if Roman scholars look to a body of theory whose point of enquiry is the colonial condition in the modern era, are we not simply drawing analogies between different colonial conditions? And if we make such analogies, are we not espousing an a-historical comparative colonialism, in which all colonialisms are viewed synchronically as 'the same'?

There are a number of grounds on which this objection may be refuted, not the least of which is the observation that comparative analysis enables the recognition of *difference*, as well as similarity. At another level, it may be argued that the terms 'empire' and 'colony', which have so frequently been re-employed since the Roman era, invite comparison/contrast for precisely that reason. One of the central themes of this book is the recognition that the interpretation of Roman imperialism has always, and in very complex ways, involved analogy between past and present. If nothing else, comparative colonialism from a more critical, post-colonial perspective offers a healthy corrective to the 'positive imperialism' (cf Hingley 1991) which informed



such analogies in the colonial era, and which continue to inform our interpretation of the Roman Empire. At the very least it may help us to remember, where we often seem in danger of forgetting it, that the *Pax Romana*, like the *Pax Britannica*, brought violence, disruption, and the loss of freedom for many indigenous peoples, and was met by resistance as well as consent.

Having said this, however, a more fundamental point may be offered. The focus of post-colonial theory is such that the reader will not find direct comparisons between colonial contexts in this volume; what are compared are not ‘colonialisms’, but the *discourses* which enable colonialism. We have taken from post-colonial theory the understanding that discourse plays a crucial part in producing and sustaining hegemonic power, and we have explored the discourses of Roman imperialism from that perspective. Thus, for example, when Philip de Souza compares nineteenth-century French writing on the Barbary Corsairs with Classical accounts of Rome’s pirate wars, he is not drawing a direct analogy between French imperialism and Roman imperialism: he is comparing the discursive strategies which made territorial expansion possible in either case, and using that comparison to reassess the Roman case.

Discourse is, nevertheless, *situated*: different colonialisms create their own discourse, and there is no unified colonial discourse, as Mills (1991) stresses:

There is a great difference between the representations and discursive strategies circulating about countries which were considered civilised and those which were not. Sometimes countries such as India slipped in and out of categories at various times during the colonial period. Hulme analyses Christopher Columbus’s diaries in order to show the way that the narratorial position vacillates between the discourse of the savage and that of the civilised Orient: the barbarous and the riches of Cathay. Africans can be portrayed as noble savages or savage cannibals, depending on the colonial situation.

(Mills 1991, 51-2)

Two points follow from this. First, the colonial discourses of the Roman world (and from province to province) must be expected to differ from colonial discourses in other imperial contexts, because they are situated in specific historical conditions. But as has been described above, our interpretation of the Roman Empire is so steeped in our own imperial past that the consensus on the historical conditions in which ‘Roman imperialism’ was created and maintained must be regarded as open to revision. My second point, therefore, is that the post-colonial deconstruction of Roman discourse will itself contribute to a new determination of those conditions.

### **Post-colonial perspectives in this book**

This volume is divided into three sections, *Imperialist agendas*, *Beyond acculturation*, and *Writing the other: colonial representations*, which apply some key post-colonial concepts to Roman studies. Underlying each of these three strands is a shared concern to articulate the ways in which the discourses of imperialism and colonialism, both in the Roman period and at the time of the growth of Roman studies in the nineteenth- and early-

twentieth centuries, have shaped our disciplines. Many of the contributors to this volume argue that a number of the fundamental tenets which inform contemporary study of the Roman Empire are embedded in these deeper discourses. These include:

- Defensive imperialism (de Souza).
- The civilizing mission of Rome (Hingley, and Mattingly).
- The opposition Roman/civilized : native/barbarian (Alston, Mattingly, and Webster).
- Evolutionary paradigms of ‘Romanization’ as progress (Clarke, Cooper, and Hingley: see also Hingley 1991, 1995).
- Homogenous ‘Romanization’ (Lomas; see also Jones 1994).
- Benign religious toleration and syncretism (Alston; see also Webster 1995a and 1995b).

No enquiry into the past can escape its own place in history, or avoid bringing contemporary concepts and prejudices to bear on the past. But it is argued in this volume that Roman studies has been less self-reflexive, and less ready to *de-construct* its dominant discourses, than have some other disciplines. Anthropology, which Edward Said once called the discredited sister of colonialism, forms a notable contrast here. A debate on the origins of anthropology as a colonial social science was initiated in the 1970s (Asad 1973; see also Hettne 1990, 26), and has prompted both the reflexive critique of ethnographic practice (see eg Clifford and Marcus (eds) 1986), and the recognition that ethnography is historically contingent (Fabian 1983; Webster, this volume). Roman archaeology, to single out one field, has yet to undertake the type of critical historical analysis which in recent years had demonstrated ‘Celtic Europe’ to be more a product of nineteenth- and twentieth-century nationalism than an Iron Age reality (cf Collis 1996; Fitzpatrick 1996; Hill 1989).

### ***Imperialist agendas***

The three papers in this section argue the need for reflexive histories of the relationship between Western imperialism and Roman imperialism. The contributions by Philip Freeman and Richard Hingley both explore the growth of Romano-British studies during Britain’s high imperial period (the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries), and the role of Francis Haverfield in shaping the field. These papers share a concern with the dangers of imposing a monolithic model of (capitalist) ‘imperialism’ on Roman Britain, but present opposing viewpoints on Haverfield. At issue is whether Haverfield saw parallels between British and Roman imperialism, and the extent to which Haverfield’s model of Romanization - which has had a fundamental influence on subsequent generations of scholars - was influenced by the British imperialist experience, at its height when Haverfield was teaching at Oxford. Freeman and Hingley’s different answers to these questions may best be illustrated by their reading of the following remark by Haverfield:

The methods by which Rome incorporated and denationalised and assimilated more than half its wide dominions, and the success of Rome, unintended

perhaps but complete, in spreading its Graeco-Roman culture over more than a third of Europe and a part of Africa, concerns in many ways our own age and Empire ... Even the forces which laid the Roman Empire low concern the modern world very nearly...

(Haverfield 1911, xviii)

For Hingley, this statement on assimilation and denationalization illustrates the underlying logic of the development of Romano-British archaeology, which has conditioned the history of subsequent research (see also Hingley 1991, 1995). For Freeman, this is an innocent declaration made before a public body (The Roman Society), which appealed, in its own recruitment advertisements, to patriots and men of learning.

Freeman, who provides a detailed account of the intellectual and political atmosphere at Oxford in the early part of the century, suggests that Haverfield was a man with little interest in contemporary politics. He drew few explicit parallels between the British Empire and the Roman Empire, none of which were fully developed. To regard him as an 'imperialist', Freeman argues, both ignores this fact, and condemns the man from a late-twentieth-century perspective for something which, in his own day, would not have been construed negatively.<sup>7</sup> The present, therefore, wrongly informs the past. For Hingley, Haverfield's understanding of Roman Britain must be seen in terms of a hermeneutic cycle of interpretation, in which the past was actively used to inform the present, and in the process of which the Roman past was itself re-invented.

David Mattingly's paper is also concerned with the relationship between nineteenth-century imperialism and Roman imperialism, from the perspective of North African Roman studies. Mattingly points to the persistence of the colonialist framework of analysis in Maghrebian archaeology and history. He argues that while many scholars would claim that no one seriously accepts the more extreme theories of archaeologists and historians working in the colonial era, it is equally clear that there has not been enough explicit rejection of these models. Nor has there been deconstruction of the theoretical positions underlying this vision of Roman Africa. Mattingly also charts the rise of indigenous reaction against the colonialist framework. He emphasizes that there are now two models for the study of Roman Africa - one imperialist, the other nativist - but both transpose polarized views of recent history into the more distant past. Both tendencies, in this respect, represent serious threats to the future development (and indeed continuance) of Classical archaeology in the Maghreb.

### ***Beyond acculturation***

The papers in this section, by Simon Clarke and Nicholas Cooper, highlight the inadequacies of the notion of 'Romanization', which remains the basic model for social change within the Roman provinces. Although recent years have witnessed increased recognition of 'Romanization' as a two-way process (particularly since Slofstra's call for an anthropological approach to Romanization as 'acculturation' in 1983: see also Millett 1990a; 1990b, 1-3), the process is still primarily seen as involving the homogenous adoption of Roman culture by indigenous populations (Jones 1994).

Clarke examines the Cotswold-Severn region, and asks what we are actually measuring when we attempt to quantify 'Romanization'. Does the adoption of Roman icons necessarily reflect major socio-economic change, as is frequently thought? Focusing on Corinium, Glevum, and their hinterlands, Clarke argues that differences in the settlement patterns, revealed by Rank Size analysis, upturn the conventional reading of the area. The *civitas* capital Corinium has always been seen as the more 'Romanized' of the two towns, but Clarke argues that it is not the adoption of Roman-style material culture which is important, but the level of social change which accompanied this adoption. In an approach which shares some similarities with Millett's (1990a, 1990b) stress on the continuity of pre-Conquest elites in Roman Britain, Clarke argues that the apparent 'Romanization' of Corinium conceals the continuity of the Later Iron Age ruling elite. At Glevum, on the other hand, the adoption of Roman-style material was much less pronounced, but the social transformation was profound.

Nicholas Cooper is also concerned with the social implications of the use of Romanized material culture, particularly the role of pottery in late Roman Britain, and during the early years of the Roman-Saxon transition (AD 410-450). He argues that the presence of foreign exotica does not necessarily signify emulation (as is often argued for the Late pre-Roman Iron Age) nor an incoming population (as is argued for the Roman-Saxon transition). Rather, both before and after the Conquest, availability and convenience were more important for the adoption of Roman-style (and Saxon-style) goods than any allegiance to the social symbolism of 'Roman' (or 'Saxon') material culture. Cooper argues that a substantial post-Roman population (the 'blank generation' of AD 410-450) has been written out of the archaeological record as a result of its almost total dependence on the output of the workshop pottery industries which collapsed with the Roman withdrawal. He suggests that the use of Anglo-Saxon pottery on fifth-century rural sites in the East Midlands represents not an incoming Anglo-Saxon population, but the adoption of a new range of pottery by an indigenous population that had lost the knowledge of pottery making, but still needed pots. These indigenes, Cooper stresses, were no more 'Anglo-Saxon' than their predecessors had been 'Roman'. What is masked by such labels, he argues, is the recognition of a continuously evolving indigenous material culture, open to different influences at different times, but also evolving in response to local demands and choices.

Romanization is also discussed by Richard Alston and Richard Hingley.<sup>8</sup> The latter extends Clarke's critique of the Haverfield model of 'Romanization as progress' to the more recent re-working of that model by Millett (1990a, 1990b), who has argued that the elite of the western provinces adopted Roman material symbols to reinforce their social position by identifying themselves with Rome. These new forms and ideas subsequently filtered down the social hierarchy through a self-generating process of emulation (1990b, 38). For Hingley, this model of the progressive, elite-initiated, trickle-down adoption of Romanized forms shares a common analytical framework with Haverfield's earlier study. Ultimately, for Hingley (as for Jones 1994), both models of Romanization

are the product of the colonial era and of widespread interest of the assimilation of both 'non-Western' societies in colonial contexts, and of immigrant communities in the West (Jones 1994). Richard Alston (this volume) similarly argues that the European colonial experience underlies Haverfield's consideration of cultural change within the Roman Empire, and has subsequently informed most considerations of the subject.

Hingley argues that post-colonial theory offers frameworks for a new understanding of 'Romanization', and draws particular attention, in this context, to three features of post-colonial analysis: the de-centring of dominant forms of knowledge; the recognition of complex and varied responses to colonial contact; and the emphasis on overt and covert opposition.

### ***Writing the other: colonial representations***

The four papers in this section all argue for the need to consider Classical historical sources on the pre- and post-Conquest provinces (whether documenting the rise of Rome, or ethnographic accounts of Rome's Others) as the literature of conquest and colonialism.

Richard Alston examines Roman attitudes to Egypt by contrasting two second-century texts: Plutarch's *De Iside et Oriside*, and Juvenal's *Satire XV*. Using an analytical framework which draws on Said's (1978) demonstration of the devices by which post-Enlightenment intellectuals constructed 'The Arab World', Alston argues that techniques similar to those recognized by Said may be seen at work in these Classical accounts of Egyptian religion. Juvenal, for example, structures his text around binary oppositions between the civilized Roman 'us' and the uncivilized (cannibalistic, animal-worshipping) Egyptian 'them'. By means of the *interpretatio Graeca* (the interpretation of the Isis and Osiris myth via Hellenistic philosophy) Plutarch removes the myth from the cultural possession of the Egyptians, making it part of 'universal' (ie Greek) knowledge. At the same time, however, Alston draws a distinction between what he terms the 'integrating' mentality of the Roman Empire and the 'divisive' mentality of Western imperialism. The Roman elite, Alston argues, offered intellectual avenues which eroded differences between Egyptian and Graeco-Roman culture. The integrating mentality was, therefore, a powerful tool in the integration of the Egyptian elite into the empire. The racist and monotheistic character of Western imperialism, by contrast, ensured that native elites would be regarded as Others who could never be properly assimilated.

My own paper attempts to deconstruct the Graeco-Roman portrayal of Celtic 'warrior societies', arguing that the conventional picture of endemic Celtic warfare is a product of two discursive statements within Roman colonial discourse: the barbarian, and the timeless primitive. I suggest that by placing the Celts beyond time - a common synchronic device of Western ethnography - Classical writers of the Late Republic and early empire ignored the context in which Celtic warfare was observed, and presented aggression as an innate characteristic of the western *barbaroi*. It is argued that if we accept that Classical ethnographies of the Celts are historically contingent - the literature of Roman territorial ambition and conquest - the deconstructive techniques offered by colonial discourse analysis enable us



both to question the self-histories of the Classical world, and to move beyond the centrist concept of the Celtic 'periphery' to a clearer articulation of the active, localized, histories of peoples whose lives intersected with the global trajectory of Rome.

Philip de Souza explores the ways in which the suppression of piracy and banditry were used as justifications for Roman imperialism in the Late Republic. In common with other recent critiques of the 'just war' (including Hingley 1995, Webster 1995c), de Souza considers the ancient material in the light of modern cases which have been reinterpreted in recent scholarship. He suggests that the French portrayal of the Barbary Corsairs as the scourge of the Christian seafarer, and the British portrayal of the Qawasimi as the enemy of all mankind, which were employed to justify Western imperial expansion in North Africa and the Persian Gulf respectively, offer interesting new perspectives on Rome's wars with the pirates in the first century BC. Even at the height of Rome's expansion, de Souza argues, tradition did not admit the open expression of imperialist goals, and the suppression of piracy was consistently put forward as a justification for expeditions which culminated in the acquisition of new territories. The justification of aggression was thus framed in terms of a defensive ideology, which presented Rome and her commanders as the protector of weaker states against a common enemy, and which has informed the long-lived tenet of 'defensive imperialism' in Roman studies.

Kathryn Lomas writes on the complexities of ethnic interaction in Hellenistic southern Italy, where the Greek communities of the Mezzogiorno, themselves colonists who had displaced indigenous populations, were subject to subsequent colonial settlement. Lomas argues that a double layer of colonialist discourse (Roman on Greek, Greek on Italic) obscures the history of the indigenes. Lomas investigates the interaction between the strands of colonialist discourse, and challenges the literary constructs which dismiss the Greeks of Italy as corrupt and degenerate, and the non-Roman Italians as barbarians. Like Alston, her approach is informed by the work of Edward Said (1978), and particularly by his analysis of the tendency for colonizers to construct single ethnic identities for the colonized. The native Italic peoples of southern Italy, she argues, fare especially badly in this respect. Lomas is also concerned with the effects which a portrait of southern Italy filtered through pro-Roman discourse has had on contemporary study of the area. The Messapic settlements of the south-east, for example, have been written out of the history of urbanization because they do not conform to the planned Graeco-Roman city until late in their history. Lomas thus concludes that an independent history for the indigenous peoples of the region can only be written by combining a critical approach to the literary sources with a non-diffusionist approach to the adoption of a dominant material culture.

## **Conclusion**

As these brief summaries suggest, this collection of papers challenges some of the fundamental tenets which inform the study of Roman imperialism. Fifty years on from the collapse of British imperialism, it is time to question those tenets, and to acknowledge that, working within a text-led discipline,

we study a diversity of colonized peoples through the filter of *two* imperialist discourses: that of Rome, and that of our own imperial history. By deconstructing those discourses, perhaps we can begin to write a new history of the Roman provinces.

### Acknowledgements

I have discussed many of the ideas presented here with John Barrett, Siân Jones, Martin Hall, Richard Hingley, David Mattingly, Karen Meadows and Jim Symonds. They have not by any means always agreed with me, but they have always given me lots to think about. I am very grateful.

### Footnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Preface to the paperback edition of *Enemies of the Roman Order*, first published in 1966. MacMullen had originally planned to call the book *The Un-Romans*.
- <sup>2</sup> All of those who spoke at the symposium are represented here, with the exception of Siân Jones. The loss of her contribution on power, culture, and identity in the sphere of the Roman Empire is much regretted.
- <sup>3</sup> It goes without saying that the views expressed in this introduction are my own, and that the contributors to this volume are not necessarily in agreement with all that I have said.
- <sup>4</sup> It is debateable whether we may properly refer to the contemporary world as 'post imperial', since as Williams and Chrisman (1993, 1) remark in the introduction to their recent collection of readings in post-colonial theory, one of the most far-reaching phenomena of our era has been the continued globalizing spread of imperialism.
- <sup>5</sup> Siân Jones (1994) has similarly argued that conventional models of 'Romanization' are the result of a complex intersection between the social sciences and the colonial discourses of the West.
- <sup>6</sup> It may be noted here that while for some theorists (including Porter 1983), the fusion of discourse theory (Foucault) and ideology theory (Gramsci) is flawed, for others who point to the contrasts between Foucault and Gramsci, Foucault's movement away from the concept of ideology towards a consideration of the relationship between 'truth' and power is itself a study of the elements which are constitutive of hegemony, albeit from a non-Marxist standpoint: cf Smart 1983; Barrett 1991, 140-1.
- <sup>7</sup> Although condemnation of imperialism in the late nineteenth- and early-twentieth centuries was often vociferous, particularly from the secular left: cf Hobsbawm 1987, 72.
- <sup>8</sup> The utility of the term Romanization has also recently been debated by Barrett (1989; *forthcoming*), as part of his questioning of the ontological status of the 'Roman Empire'. But whatever the problems posed by 'Romanization', the cultural imperialism it betrays speaks volumes regarding the discourses which have shaped our discipline. In abandoning it, we would not be abandoning the preconceptions and prejudices that brought it in to being, we would simply be leaving our dominant discourses even less open to reflexive critique.

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