

CHAPTER THREE

CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND UNITY: EMPIRE AND ROME

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An older world ... of dominant core and subject periphery, is breaking down, and in its place a less dichotomous and more intricate pattern of inequality is emerging. 'Empire' could be described as the planetary *gestalt* of these flows and hierarchies.¹

Introduction: Providing a Context for Research

Studies of classical Rome are modified through time to match a changing academic discourse.² Here I seek to explore an aspect of the relationships between the world of ancient Rome and our contemporary times by focusing upon a developing perspective within classical studies – the analysis of cultural diversity, plurality, and heterogeneity. Ideas about the cultural diversity of the world of classical Rome provide an increasingly powerful agenda in the United Kingdom and the USA.³ My contribution to the present volume raises the issue of the political and social context within which such ideas have emerged and are flourishing.⁴

I propose that we should work to develop a Roman past that enables us to challenge, as well as to ground, contemporary ideas about our own world. Studies of classical Rome often explain ancient historical phenomena in terms that satisfy modern tastes and interests.⁵ The development, alongside these works, of a critical perspective on the ways that classical concepts have been used to support the creation of political power and imperial relations between dominant and subject peoples

will help to make our studies relevant, enlightening, and appropriate. Through such an approach, we should seek to challenge the tradition of study in which accounts of the classical past do no more than mirror either our aspirations for or our nightmares about our contemporary situations.⁶ An exploration of hybrid Roman identity will form the core of my investigation of these issues.

Discourses of Domination – the (Re-)Creation of Imperial Civilization

Today's influential approaches to diversity and heterogeneity have developed as a reaction to an earlier school of thought that modelled Graeco-Roman culture as culturally dominant, effectively bounded, and highly incorporative. These earlier writings, developed in the context of interpreting classical Rome through the theory of Romanization, suggested that Roman civilization overwhelmed and subsumed native populations across the western empire. They drew upon simple and directional concepts of Western 'civilization' and 'progress' that few scholars today would propound.⁷ I shall explore this complex topic in a very general manner, studying the ways by which a fundamentally modernist discipline has reacted to postmodern critique.⁸ Such an account, necessarily, simplifies a very complex history in the development of the ideas of a multiplicity of authors.

A concept of Roman culture and identity was drawn upon in the western empire throughout the period of Roman rule. Since the fall of the Roman Empire in the West during the fifth century CE, classical Rome has been drawn upon to enlighten the present in varied and contrasting ways,⁹ but I shall focus on one particular issue. The writings produced by educated elite males within the Roman Empire defined what has been titled by Potter a 'discourse of domination,' one that has provided a powerful legacy for those who have sought to inherit it through the ages.¹⁰ One strongly teleological idea, which originated with classical writers, suggests that Rome played a fundamental role in the development of Western 'civilization,' taking a legacy from ancient Greece and transforming it through the creation of a vast empire with global pretensions.¹¹

One important aspect of this perspective concerns the Roman concept of *humanitas*, sometimes translated as 'civilization.' Greg Woolf has

explored how this idea provided a moral justification, through the creation of an ideal Roman identity, for the process of imperialism and the domination of other communities.¹² The definition of the 'barbarity' of the colonized society by their Roman masters was taken to provide a direct justification for the territorial, military, and political domination of these people, through the argument that imperial control was allowing a higher civilization to be passed on to culturally inferior peoples. The idea that this civilization had, itself, been passed on to the Romans by the classical Greeks helped to provide a strong ideological justification for the conquest and control of societies on the margins of imperial order. That the Romans had inherited these ideas as a result of the influence of the peoples of classical Greece upon their societies, was, in turn, taken to provide justification for the Roman domination of what were termed 'barbarian' societies.¹³

This powerful idea was received and transformed by Western powers during the nineteenth century to justify imperial relations. During the early twentieth century, Rome was interpreted as having disseminated a unique 'civilization' across a considerable part of the world, including areas that today lie within Europe, North Africa, and the Near East. This idea provided a conceptual legacy for emulation by the modern nations that have revisited and reinterpreted Rome's imperial ambitions, giving Europe, especially Western Europe, a precedent for imperial ambition.¹⁴ Early accounts of Roman culture projected such conceptions by focusing on the supposed unity of Roman imperial civilization through the use of the theory (or theories) of 'Romanization,' ideas that stressed a process of 'progress' from 'barbarian' to 'Roman' culture in the expanding empire.¹⁵ In doing so, classical studies adopted and helped to create the polarities and hierarchies that formed powerful tools in the conceptual armouries of modern imperial nations.

In these terms, classical knowledge was reinvented in the modern world to form a vital element of a developing discourse of modernity through which imperial relations were created and transformed. Modernity has been defined as a conceptual schema that was (and is) fundamental to the imperial undertakings of Western powers – a body of thought through which the world was imagined and manipulated. Knowledge was constructed through modernist thought that mapped the world from the secure position of the centre, a place that defined itself as the highest and

most advanced in symbolic and material terms.¹⁶ The periphery, the colonies or colonial possessions, were defined as subservient to this centre, occupying positions in the hierarchy according to their degree of 'civilization,' which was defined by those who created the system.

Although this discourse of modernity, developing in particular circumstances following the Enlightenment, marked a dramatic discontinuity with the past, many of the concepts on which modernity drew were ultimately derived from the Graeco-Roman texts.¹⁷ Germane ideas were adopted and adapted through the rereading of an inherited and powerful discourse of domination. Classical images formed a rich source of inspiration for the ruling classes of European nations during the imperial ventures of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, because they spoke within these contexts in powerful and authoritative ways.¹⁸ Part of the power of these images, however, derived from the inheritance (or reformulation) of classical concepts, which were felt to provide added authenticity to the ideas that were developed.¹⁹ As such, Romanization theory derived much of its explanatory power from concepts that are articulated in classical texts.²⁰ Romanization is linked to more recent national and imperial ideologies, while owing much to accounts of empire and civilization formulated in the late Republican and early Imperial Roman periods. At its core are imperial ideas that projected the empire as divinely sanctioned, with a mission to civilize barbarians.²¹ Some of the ideas inherent from the past – for instance, 'civilization,' 'barbarism,' and the idea of the 'just war' – have remained popular, and are being redefined again in order to justify the international actions of Western nations.²²

The classical inheritance constitutes a vital element in the ways that the world has been imagined and manipulated. The significant role played in this debate by classical 'knowledge' (texts, language, and archaeological remains) requires that we address the ideological role performed by classical archaeology and ancient history throughout modern times.²³ How do current understandings of imperial order and Roman culture relate to empire today?

Modelling Heterogeneity Today

Reacting against the continuity inherent in such a modernist approach, with its stress upon the unity and incorporative ideology of Roman

imperial civilization, during the 1960s the focus of study gradually started to shift onto the variability of local responses to Rome. Initially, changing perspectives were used to inform the new approaches to regional survey and excavation across Western Europe and the Mediterranean.²⁴ A variety of new types of site and landscape came to be recognized, which helped to challenge earlier understandings and to develop new approaches to the interpretation of society.²⁵ Some early 'post-imperial' accounts were 'nativist,' identifying local populations as integrated wholes, and setting these groups up through the idea of their opposition to the dominating Roman power.²⁶ These accounts perpetuated the simple distinctions between Roman and native presented in earlier writings, but gave priority to the latter rather than the former.²⁷ They reacted against the imperial agendas of earlier studies, but did not effectively challenge the conceptual foundations on which these earlier accounts had been based, merely refocusing attention on the resistance of natives to Roman control rather than their simple and directional Romanization.²⁸

Approaches to the interpretation of Romanization continued to change gradually, increasingly focusing, from the 1980s, upon the methods by which local groups within Italy and the provinces came to adopt a variable form of Roman culture.²⁹ A number of interpretations developed during the 1990s to account for the active role of local elites in the adoption and adaptation of the imperial culture offered to them by the expanding imperial system, elements that were used because of their distinct roles in new ways of life.³⁰ We should not imagine that such accounts are in some way value free when contrasted to the earlier approaches to Romanization.³¹ Instead, they address value in a different way from earlier accounts, by creating a distinct significance for tradition and locality, in contrast to the imperial focus of much earlier work.³²

The Roman Empire is reconstructed as focused on numerous elites, within the imperial core of the Mediterranean, who negotiated their own identities to create an imperial system that worked to the benefit of all, or at least a significant proportion (the most significant?). 'Roman' culture is no longer viewed as a clearly bounded and monolithic entity, but as being derived from a variety of sources spread across the Mediterranean. During the final centuries of the first millennium BCE, elite groups

across Italy developed a growing unity through a process that Nicola Terrenato has called 'elite negotiation.' A new culture arose as a result of the benefits brought to these groups through closer contacts with the growing power of Rome.³³ Nicola Terrenato has argued that as part of this process, communities within the expanding empire became allied with Rome and incorporated precisely because they were offered, or bargained for, or struggled for the privilege of retaining the core of their traditional organization within an imperial framework that was intended to guarantee order and stability.³⁴ Greg Woolf's account of 'becoming Roman' in Gaul has explored such an approach to focus upon the elite groups within these provinces. Concepts of Roman and native are seen to break down entirely in a global empire that recreates itself through local engagement.³⁵ The most advanced forms of such theory integrate imperial force and local interest by explaining the ways that the attempts of people from outside Rome and Italy to 'become Roman' fed back into a gradually evolving conception of what it was to be Roman across much of the empire.³⁶

This approach can be subject to criticism because of its emphasis upon consensus building.³⁷ It can also be critiqued for its focus upon the elite, projecting a bias inherent in previous approaches to Romanization.³⁸ Carol van Driel-Murray has argued that the application of recent approaches to the Batavians of the Lower Rhine Valley creates 'undefined, undifferentiated and apparently entirely male' elites, a critique that may also be applied in general terms to the important studies produced by Terrenato, Woolf, and, recently, by Emma Dench.³⁹ In response to such critiques of elitism, studies during the early twenty-first century have started to fragment Roman identity,⁴⁰ by turning to more complex interpretations that often draw upon material remains. This is achieved, for example, through the creation of the ideas of 'subcultures' and regional cultures, now argued by some to have formed constituent parts of a heterogeneous but relatively unified empire.⁴¹ These new approaches seek to establish the degree to which Roman culture (broadly defined) appealed to groups of different status and wealth across the empire. As a reaction to former ideas of the centrality of power, scholarship has transformed itself once again by modelling new approaches that explore 'the puzzling complexity of cultural identities' (to quote

Sommer, from Chapter Five), including those that are wealth-based, occupational, regional, and gender-specific. Dench defines this idea of Roman citizenship, and also Roman identity, as a 'virtual community'.⁴²

Groups such as soldiers, their wives, and families, traders, workers, and farmers can be seen to have redefined themselves in the new contexts created by the expansion of empire.⁴³ For example, soldiers were recruited from native peoples into the auxiliary units of the Roman army, where they were taught a version of Roman culture. If they survived to retirement they became Roman citizens after twenty-five years of service. These soldiers usually served abroad and, together with traders who lived outside their native communities, may have helped to spread an international Roman culture that identified them within a challenging and alien cultural milieu.⁴⁴

This brief survey of a number of studies explores transformations in the academic context of knowledge. The nature of this changing debate can be characterized in terms of the developing influence of broader ideas about society.⁴⁵ Shifting attitudes to the current world, together with the collection of new classes of archaeological data that have helped to challenge inherited ideas, enable classicists and classical archaeologists to imagine the Roman past in new and more complex ways. This allows the Roman Empire to be perceived as a more heterogeneous society, in which groups and individuals acted in different ways to 'become Roman,' while retaining the core of their inherited identities and also contributing to a centralizing imperial cultural initiative. These new areas of understanding relate to how interpretations of the classical past have developed in the context of our ideas about the contemporary world.

These new perspectives are intended to allow for a greater variety of cultural experiences across the empire.⁴⁶ In so doing, classical studies reflect changing perspectives in the humanities (sociology, politics, cultural studies, development studies, and anthropology), where an appreciation of 'locality' has become increasingly significant since the 1960s.⁴⁷ A previous focus upon cultures as fairly coherent and bounded entities and the investigation of 'development' or 'modernization' as a fairly simple form of 'progress' from the traditional to the modern has slowly shifted to a situation in which the indigenous context of change

is taken far more into account. These approaches aim to broaden (decentre) understanding and to challenge earlier interpretations of the centrality of imperial civilization and its progressive logic by exploring the complexity of identities, through a focus upon the locality. Indeed, regional variability is taken in some recent works to represent a tool in the creation and maintenance of the global world order, integrating people into complex, dichotomous, and transformative structures of power.⁴⁸ It is argued that cultural heterogeneity and hybridity in the modern world enable the integration of economic and political systems through a transformation of pre-existing power relations. Hardt and Negri's writings suggest that far from being oppositional, diversity articulates the inclusive logic of a spontaneous order that no longer formulates itself around the creation of categories and hierarchies.⁴⁹ As Balakrishnan has suggested in a review of Hardt and Negri's book *Empire*, even the distinction between 'systematic and anti-systematic agency is blurred beyond recognition.'⁵⁰ A state of global 'Empire' is created through the bringing into being of 'less dichotomous' and 'more intricate patterns of inequality' (and opposition) than those that formed the fundamental tools of imperialism during much of the twentieth century.⁵¹

Drawing upon these writings, I have argued that some recent accounts of the Roman Empire develop an empire-wide *gestalt* of flows and hierarchies – a less dichotomous and more intricate pattern of inequality than demonstrated by former interpretations.⁵² Ideas of Roman and native, elite and non-elite, incorporation and resistance, are seen to break down, at least to a degree, in a global empire that recreates itself through local engagement. The Roman Empire becomes a highly variable series of local groups, roughly held together by directional forces of integration that formed an organized whole and lasted for several centuries.⁵³ Heterogeneity becomes a binding force of imperial stability – a tool for the creation of perpetual imperial order.⁵⁴

This new focus upon the centrality of imperial power helps to explain the variable local response to changing power relations, as people were enabled to change their ways.⁵⁵ At the same time, it also raises an ethical issue, which focuses upon the continuing importance of the classical past to ideas of Western identity. Our accounts of Roman culture continue, on the whole, to take a fairly positive attitude to the effects

of Roman imperialism that can, perhaps, be taken to provide a historical foundation for comprehensions of the enabling influence of globalization. The Roman elite appears from this perspective to have been involved in a series of connected political actions that enabled members of various native societies to define their identities in new and stimulatingly original ways, also enabling the incorporation into these developments of many members of the non-elite. Changes in identity were accomplished through the use of surplus and widespread contacts, including service in the Roman army, and involvement in industry, trade, and agriculture. If we pursue such a perspective, the Roman Empire is viewed as having come into being and survived because of the variable character of the relations that were established between peoples over a vast area. The incorporation of diverse peoples into the variable structure of the empire was a fundamental constituent in both the ideas held by Romans about their own identity and also the methods that led to the creation and perpetuation of the empire.⁵⁶ This can be taken to suggest that, despite vigorous attempts since the 1960s to deconstruct the narratives of Graeco-Roman identity, the overtly positive assessment of classical culture that formed the basis for many accounts of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has yet to be replaced by a more balanced perspective.⁵⁷

Many of today's most influential accounts of identity and social change in the Augustan and post-Augustan empire stress negotiation and cultural interaction. In the terms explored by Hodos, in Chapter One, these develop new master narratives, but ones that do not provide a balanced viewpoint, since they continue to downgrade differences, local diversity, and othernesses. Membership in the army, together with involvement in expanded industrial and agricultural production, may have incorporated a substantial proportion of the population (perhaps 25 per cent), but these people will have remained in the minority. By contrast, the agricultural peasants and slaves that made up the majority of the population are largely excluded from dominant and masculinist 'Roman' cultural discourses.⁵⁸ Indeed, even the substantial minority who were partly incorporated have continued to be marginalized through the nature of the assimilation processes to which they were subjected. Roman culture by the Augustan period acted as a powerful culture of imperial incorporation, but as Dench has recently

argued, it also represented, at one and the same time, a 'highly ideologically laden and increasingly international culture of social exclusion.'⁵⁹ Certain highly visible aspects of culture – such as the correct diction in the pronunciation of Latin, the wearing of the toga, or correct etiquette at a banquet – will have helped to create an 'international' coherence in the hybrid local 'Roman' cultures that developed to exclude those who lacked advance knowledge and experience. These issues of incorporation and marginalization find echoes in recent writings about the colonial present that require us to reflect further on the theories that we develop.⁶⁰

Elena Isayev (Chapter Eight) and Tamar Hodos (Chapter One) suggest that we should be cautious of thinking about regional groups, or locality, in Roman terms, since Rome was responsible for manipulating the boundaries of regional groups. Isayev suggests that boundaries, which were in the minds of post-conquest authors, were projecting back to an earlier time to define the ethnic identities of various provincial populations.⁶¹ We need an increased focus on the administration of the processes of marginalization within the Roman Empire, together with new attention to issues that most people find less palatable, including the commonplace imposition of order, genocide, deportation, enslavement, and enforced military recruitment,⁶² issues that will often have represented what Shelley Hales (Chapter Nine) calls 'the Romans' ad hoc solutions for imperial rule.' Emmanuele Curti, for example, drawing attention to the violent imposition of order, social norms, and new cultural practices that often accompany modern colonial situations, argues that recent theoretical approaches to Roman archaeology effectively sanitize the past for the sake of political correctness. Simon James explores how influential models of Roman elite negotiation underplay the significance of violence, from the symbolic and implicit to the threatened and lethal. Carol van Driel-Murray addresses the creation and recruitment of 'ethnic soldiery' among the Batavi of the Lower Rhine valley and how the uses made of these people kept them excluded from the centres of imperial power.⁶³ The detailed development of case studies involving such perspectives remains, however, a rare occurrence.

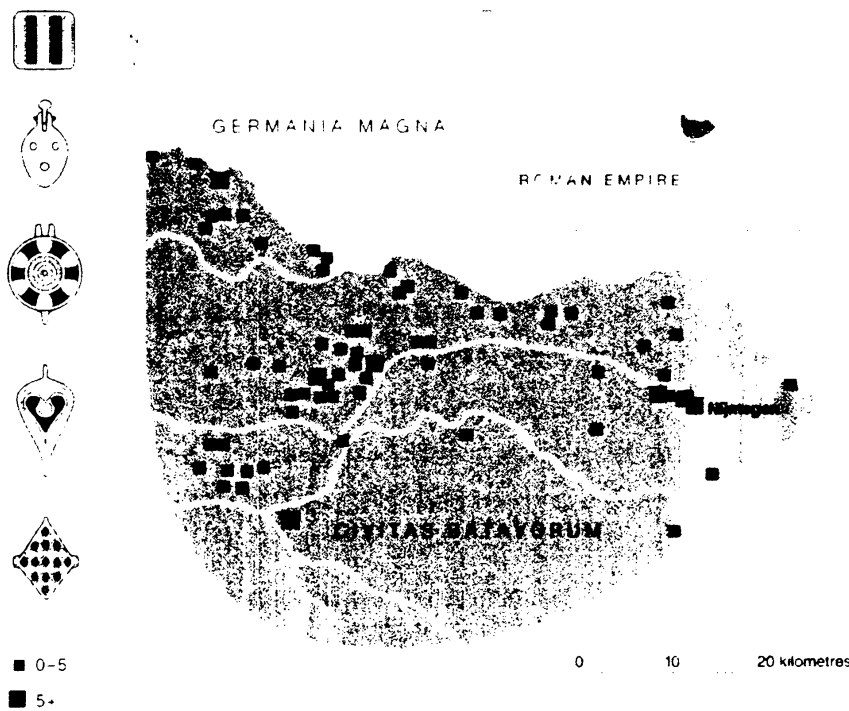
A balanced study should not explore the lives of those who were enabled to the exclusion of those who were killed, marginalized,

or exploited;⁶⁴ indeed, in some cases, the two groups will not have formed exclusive categories, since we have seen that people can be assimilated in ways that serve to develop their otherness and relative marginality. Only by balancing what we might regard as negative and positive attributes of empire, and by exploring the marginalized groups that archaeologists, ancient historians, and classicists often appear to have difficult identifying and understanding can we provide a critical context for the idea that Rome enabled regional and interregional integration, bringing benefits to all, a position that (unconsciously) reinforces positive concepts by providing a genealogy for ideas about the emancipating nature of contemporary globalization.

I should stress that such a critique does not make invalid the analysis of subcultures and cultural heterogeneity within the world of Rome, since recent research on classical literature and archaeological materials would appear to support the highly variable character of society, presenting a picture of complexity that was oversimplified by earlier interpretations. Indeed, the immediacy of the relevance of the complex articulation of integration and hybridity makes the relationship between imperial power and the local response to changing power relations of vital contemporary importance.⁶⁵

Enabling and Constraining Local Literacy

There are various ways to pursue the agenda that I am proposing, some focusing upon particular groups (including soldiers and traders) and some addressing variations in regional cultures across the empire and the forces that brought these about. Some of these fields of research involve areas in which the semi-distinct disciplines of ancient history and archaeology should hold common interests.⁶⁶ I shall provide a brief account of the military exploitation of one particular provincial society on the margin of imperial control in order to support the need for balance in our accounts. This involves a review of the development of Latin literacy among the Batavi of the Lower Rhine Valley (Figure 3.1), a study that draws upon the writings of Ton Derks and Nico Roymans, and Carol van Driel-Murray.⁶⁷ Derks and Roymans's study provides a compelling account of one of the variable ways in which native peoples were integrated into a Roman



3.1. An attempt to map the territory of the Batavi, showing the locations in which seal boxes have been found and the five types of artefacts that have been found (After Derks and Roymans 2002, figs 7.5 and 7.6; pls 7.I to 7.XII)

imperial culture that was itself highly variable.⁶⁸ It can also be formulated as a critique of the idea that the development of a variable Roman culture across the empire was primarily an enabling process, applying a more critical perspective to the aims and results of the actions by which these people (and others) were incorporated into the empire.⁶⁹

Ton Derks and Nico Roymans have argued that Latin spread through the agency of the Roman army in part of the Lower Rhine Valley. This appears to have been the homeland of a number of different tribal groupings, including the Batavi.⁷⁰ In this area, the development of native society has often been seen by archaeologists, including Derks and Roymans, as aberrant or abnormal in comparison with the supposedly 'standard' development of cities and villas in many regions of the Roman West.⁷¹ It has been argued that the Batavians witnessed a slower, or less thorough, Romanization than did the neighbouring areas of Gaul to the south,⁷² as the result of the development of a different form of social organization with origins in the pre-Roman period. The territory has been defined as mainly a 'non-villa landscape,' one that contrasts in a dramatic fashion with areas such as Gaul, where villas and successful towns became common.⁷³

The dominant settlements consisted of one or more traditional timber longhouses, comprising a living area and byre in the same domestic space.⁷⁴ The economy of this area also appears to differ from the neighbouring villa zones in its emphasis upon cattle-rearing rather than arable agriculture.⁷⁵ A number of settlements developed elements of Roman architecture (such as a timber portico, stone cellar, painted wall-plaster, or a partly tiled roof), but these innovations did not usually affect the basic traditional organization of domestic space within the individual house.⁷⁶ The few villas that do occur in this area have been tentatively interpreted as the homes of veteran soldiers who had returned after a period of military service. It has been argued that the Roman-period urban centres of the Lower Rhine were established, as part of official Roman policy, in an area that contained societies unaccustomed to urbanism.⁷⁷ These urban centres may have been dominated by settlers from further to the south and by the Roman army, while the local elite had, at the very most, only a limited input into their establishment, development, and administration.⁷⁸ Nico Roymans has recently challenged this argument, proposing a more active role for the native elite in the creation of these towns.⁷⁹ This interpretation fits a developing perspective on Roman urbanism, which argues that the Roman administration, wherever possible, would have used the native elite in the development of local urban centres.⁸⁰

Despite the relative lack of native urbanization and villas, it has been argued that considerable evidence exists among the rural native population for Latin literacy.⁸¹ The discovery of many so-called seal boxes may indicate the spread of Latin literacy through the recruitment of Batavians into the Roman auxiliary. Batavians were renowned for their fighting skills, and men from the community were taken in large numbers for the auxiliary units of the army,⁸² perhaps by recruitment that utilized a pre-Roman native system, adapted as the result of treaties between the Roman administration and the native leaders.⁸³ When they were recruited, Batavian auxiliary units may have been allowed to serve under their own commanders, recruited from the elite families of the tribe.⁸⁴ Almost every family may have supplied one or two members for the Roman army.⁸⁵ This practice of military recruitment may have had a major impact upon the development of society.

Seal boxes are usually interpreted as containers that were used to hold a range of items, particularly written documents. Those found in the territory of the Batavians are on military sites, at Nijmegen, and the major temple complex of Empel, but they are also widespread on rural settlements. Derks and Roymans have taken this to indicate a high degree of literacy among the people living within the non-villa settlements of this area during the first and second centuries, contrasting with neighbouring areas of north Gaul, where seal boxes are rare.⁸⁶

Evidence for literacy among this population may reflect the fact that auxiliary soldiers were required to communicate in Latin within their military units.⁸⁷ Indeed, the acquisition of literacy may have been one of the benefits of military service.⁸⁸ The military personnel at the fort of Vindolanda in Britain included Batavian and Tungrian auxiliary units, who, according to the evidence from archaeological excavations, were literate.⁸⁹ The diversity of writing styles on the writing tablets from this site, which dates from between 90 and 120 CE, probably indicates that literacy was fairly widespread among these military units, although it is likely that members of the common soldiery were unable to read and write to as high a standard as the officers. The seal boxes on non-villa settlements in the territory of the Batavi may indicate that the population of the Lower Rhine drew upon aspects of Roman culture – Latin language and the technology of writing – through a creative engagement with the imperial system. The large-scale recruitment of auxiliaries from the Batavians during the Julio-Claudian period may have led to an intensification of the martial ideology of traditional society.⁹⁰ The emphasis upon a military culture and apparent high esteem for the ownership of cattle may have resulted in a society in which elements of elite Roman culture, such as villa building and urban competition, had little cultural relevance for the vast majority of the population;⁹¹ conversely, Latin literacy and writing appear to have been vital for these people.

Derks and Roymans' study is of particular interest because, in the past, Latin in provincial contexts has usually been associated with the imperial and provincial elites. In the elite context, the adoption of Latin could be connected with a desire to 'become Roman.'⁹² The spread of the language to other less-privileged people within native societies across the Roman West has then to be explained through the idea that these people wished

to be Roman, assuming some form of passive acceptance of imperial culture.⁹³ The evidence from the Lower Rhine, however, expresses the practical value of both the Latin language and the technology of writing to a broader range of people.⁹⁴ Language and the practice of writing may actually have been used widely by different members of society as a result of the potential value of the various context-dependent forms of communication that it offered to many people.⁹⁵ Comprehension of the Latin language and an ability to write in it perhaps spread widely as a result of the recruitment of auxiliary soldiers from these communities.⁹⁶ These abilities may have been required in order for the individual soldier to function effectively in the Roman army and to communicate with distant friends and relatives. Language and literacy may also have enabled members of the deceased soldier's family to communicate with their own distant relatives and, for instance, to claim the savings of the men who had died.⁹⁷

The adoption of Latin in this context need not indicate a direct wish to participate more widely in the culture of the Roman elite. Indeed, for the Batavians, it coincides with only a gradual adoption of the various material aspects usually taken to define Roman culture.⁹⁸ The adoption of Latin and writing may indicate the practical advantages of two particular major innovations that spread to northern Europe with the empire: a common language that allowed communication between people who were separated by great distances; and the technologies that enabled this to occur. In other words, these people were not necessarily seeking their own regionally distinctive local way of 'becoming Roman,' but were retaining the core of their cultural identity, with the addition of certain powerful innovations that assisted them to perform their lives in new ways under changing political conditions.⁹⁹

One way to view these developments is to argue that the Roman administrative system enabled certain Batavian people to adopt such an approach by providing a flexible means through which members of the tribe were recruited into the armed forces. The Roman Empire is reconstructed as an enabling empire with a whole batch of administrative policies for the encouragement of local integration and incorporation, but we have seen that such explanations sideline other perspectives. An alternative orientation is to view developments among

the Batavi in terms of the recruitment of peripheral peoples as 'ethnic soldiery,' a situation that kept these people in a dependent position and excluded them from the centres of political power.¹⁰⁰ Such an approach stresses the asymmetrical nature of the relationship between Batavians and Romans, arguing that 'ethnic soldiers' represented an aspect of the deliberate creation of unequal imperial relations.

Latin language and literacy among the Batavi will have been highly symbolic of this cultural subservience, since the education of young members of the governing Roman elite will have ensured its significance as a highly effective culture of exclusion; correct diction will have provided an extremely reliable way of differentiating the highly educated from the relatively uneducated across the empire.¹⁰¹ The imperial elite recruited and used these soldiers for their own purposes, encouraging the development of a pre-existing military ethnicity that acted to keep Batavian soldiers in a position of dependency, symbolized in an effective manner by the un-Roman character of their cultures, their relative lack of involvement in urban life, and the general absence of villas and other aspects of imperial culture in their territory.¹⁰² Aspects of Batavian culture will have projected the marginalization of these people from central concepts of 'Roman' imperial culture, both within their own territory and when they travelled to other areas of the empire.

In these terms, in addressing the observations made by Isayev that were referred to earlier, we can follow van Driel-Murray by interpreting the active formation and transformation of the community of the Batavi, together with the territory that they occupied, as the creation by Rome of a new ethnicity that served imperial strategic ends.¹⁰³ New categories of thought, together with the creation of artificial and imposed boundaries, enabled Roman administrators to form a new and partly unified military identity among the formerly fragmented groups of the Lower Rhine Valley; this identity was particularly effective since it built upon some original concepts that derived from these subject peoples.¹⁰⁴ Modern scholars have used the reference to the Batavi in classical sources since the sixteenth century, together with the archaeological materials from this area, to tell useful tales about national origins; they define a valiant proto-nation (or ethnic group) that was both clearly bounded and distinctly un-Roman, providing a native origin for Dutch civility.¹⁰⁵

Summarizing Heterogeneity and Empire

The difficulty with many accounts of imperial integration is that they stress the ways that empire enabled local peoples to integrate themselves into imperial society, creating a context in which they could promote themselves and their families by exploiting their own innate abilities and resources. In the context of the latter part of the twentieth century, with the growing criticism of the outcome of Western empire building, this may have appeared a useful approach to take, since it emphasized the agency of native peoples, constructing their variable identities within an autocratic empire. Today, this idea appears more problematic, since many current interpretations fail to pay sufficient attention both to the negative aspects of the imposition of Roman order and to the dispossessed within Roman and provincial societies. Taking a more balanced perspective, however, is not to deny that many people were able to explore new situations for their own benefit; but it does require us to explore the degree to which local contexts were created, manipulated, and articulated by the imperial administration, in addition to how local people responded to these situations. Empires depend on negotiation and compromise to come into existence and to survive, but other strategies, including force and violence, also play a part. As Dick Whittaker has argued, the two positions of an interventionist Roman state and a responsive native population need not act in opposition; direct intervention and innovation could occur alongside one another.¹⁰⁶ Local societies were not established entirely in the form of either the marginalized or the assimilated, since such categories in most cases were not discrete but overlapped.

The issues discussed here raise questions for contemporary practice in Roman studies, focusing upon purpose, theory, and method.¹⁰⁷ These include the role of studies of the Roman past in the context of changing knowledge of the present. Hardt and Negri's *Empire* places great stock in the ancient genealogies of the postmodern world.¹⁰⁸ To conclude, I wish to emphasize a particular idea – that classical scholars should work in the opposite direction, in order to pursue the context in which our understanding of Roman imperialism has developed.¹⁰⁹ I have stressed the ideological value of ideas drawn from Republican and Imperial Rome to Western nations throughout the ages. If we do not address head-on the political context of the work that we produce, we

will follow a long academic tradition of recreating the imaginary and the impossible – an apolitically and neutral field within which classical studies might operate.¹¹⁰

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Notes

1. Balakrishnan 2003a, x.
2. Hingley 2005. For some earlier ideas, see Hingley 2003, 112–19.
3. The perspective has influenced classical studies in general, including research on Greece, Rome, and other Mediterranean societies. Recent publications include Dench 2005; Dougherty and Kurke 2003; Golden and Toohey 1997; Huskinson 2000.
4. Dench 2005, 233.
5. See Dench 2005, 231, who refers to works upon class, race, the military and technological ‘developments,’ to which we might add the various works on ‘becoming Roman’ discussed later.
6. Dench 2005, 11. Some studies have used the idea of ‘multiculturalism’ to explore these topics. I will not use the term in this study, neither should my paper be judged simplistically as an attack on multiculturalism.

7. It should be noted that the concept of 'Romanization' remains in very common use.
8. Hingley 2005 provides more detailed discussion.
9. Examples of an extensive body of relevant studies include: Dondin-Payre 1991; Ferrary 1994; Hingley 2000; Mattingly 1996; Settis 2006; Wulff Alonso 1991; Wulff Alonso 2003; and papers in Edwards 1999; Hingley 2001; Wyke and Biddiss 1999.
10. Potter 1999, 152; and see Habinek 1998.
11. Hingley 2001; Hingley 2005; Kennedy 1992; Woolf 1998; Woolf 2001a.
12. Woolf 1998, 54–60.
13. Hingley 2005, 62–7.
14. Ferrary 1994; Freeman 1993; Freeman 1996; Hingley 2001; Hingley 2005; Münkler 2007.
15. See the significant works of Wulff Alonso 1991, Terrenato 1998b, and Terrenato 2001, 1–6, on the contribution of Mommsen. See Freeman 1993, Freeman 1996, and Hingley 2005, 31–7, on Haverfield.
16. Featherstone 1995, 10; Tomlinson 1999, 32–47. For a contrasting approach to contemporary modernities, see Knaft 2002a.
17. Giddens 1984, 239; Tomlinson 1999, 36.
18. Desideri 1991; Hingley 2000.
19. For the relatively unchallenged position of classical text in previous ages, see Farrell 2001; Kennedy 1992, 37; and Wyke and Biddiss 1999.
20. Woolf 1997, 339; Woolf 1998, 54–67; Hingley 2005, 15.
21. Woolf 1997, 339.
22. Gregory 2004, 47–8; Hingley 2005, 15; Münkler 2007. Differences of opinion exist as to whether we now live in a postcolonial or postimperial, world, projecting comparable ideas about the continuation of modernity. Many, such as Hardt and Negri (2000), argue that the current world system is no longer an imperial one, while others affirm that imperialism is still present and has been revived in powerful new ways in the past few years. See, for instance, Brennan 2003, 93; Johnson 2004; Petras and Veltmeyer 2001; and Said 2003 [1978], xiii–xvi. For the use of the concept of the 'just war' in the Roman world see articles in Rich and Shipley 1993; and Webster 1995, 1–10; for the idea in the contemporary world, see Hardt and Negri 2000, 12, 36–7; and Petras and Veltmeyer 2001.
23. Goff 2005b, 1–24; Hingley 2000; Hingley 2001; Hingley 2005; Owen 2005; Settis 2006, 106–7; Vasunia 2003.
24. Van Dommelen 1993; Dyson 2003, 53.
25. Dench 2005, 232; Hingley 2005, 36.
26. Examples of such studies include Bénabou 1976; and Reece 1980, 77–91.
27. Curchin 2004, 9–10; Dench 2005, 84–5; van Dommelen 1993; Hingley 2005, 40–1.
28. Van Dommelen 1997.
29. See Hodos, this volume. For a corresponding increasing interest in the use of classical literature to study gender, sexuality, 'race' and 'disability,' see Dench 2005, 225–6.
30. Millett 1990; Terrenato 1998a, 20–7; Woolf 1998; papers in Keay and Terranato 2001.
31. Dench 2005, 11; Hanson 1994.
32. For the contemporary context, see Knaft 2002b, 25.

33. Terrenato 1998a; Terrenato 2001, in particular 3; see also Wallace-Hadrill 2000, 311; and Dench 2005.
34. Terrenato 2001, 5.
35. Woolf 1997; Woolf 1998; Woolf 2001b.
36. For example, Terrenato 1998a; Terrenato 2001; Woolf 1997; Woolf 1998. Woolf 2001b, 183, in the discussion of the 'Roman Cultural Revolution in Gaul,' provides the examples of bathing, *terra sigillata*, architecture, and viticulture.
37. Berrendoner 2003; James 2001a, 198; Mouritsen 1998, 42.
38. Alcock 2001, 227–30.
39. Van Driel-Murray 2002, 200. Rofel 2002 labels Hardt and Negri 2000 as an example of 'Modernity's Masculine Fantasies'; many accounts of the Roman empire appear open to a similar critique. Gender critiques are relatively rare in Roman archaeology. For examples, see Scott 1998; and van Driel-Murray 2002. Dench 2005, 367.
40. Hingley 2005, 91–116.
41. James 2001a; Hingley 2005, 91–109; Laurence 2001a; Laurence 2001b; van Driel-Murray 2002.
42. Dench 2005, 134.
43. Soldiers: James 2001a; their wives and families: van Driel-Murray 2002; traders: Laurence 2001a; workers: Joshel 1992; and farmers: Haley 2003, 4.
44. James 2001a, 203; Laurence 2001b.
45. Hingley 2005, 30–48, applies the concepts of modernism and postmodernism to this debate, but also acknowledges some of the problems of applying such a perspective.
46. For example, Huskinson 2000; Laurence 1998.
47. See Iggers 1997; Gardner and Lewis 1996; Rist 1997; Shanin 1997, 66.
48. Gupta and Ferguson 2002, 75; Hardt and Negri 2000, 44–5; Knauf 2002b, 25; and Balakrishnan 2003a, xiv. This interpretation of contemporary 'empire' is not without its critics. See Balakrishnan 2000; Balakrishnan 2003b; Brennan 2003; Boron 2005; Rofel 2002.
49. Balakrishnan 2000, 3; Balakrishnan 2003a, xiv; Hardt and Negri 2000, 44–5.
50. Balakrishnan 2000, 2.
51. Balakrishnan 2003a, x. It is important to record that Balakrishnan (2000; 2003b) has considerable problems with Hardt and Negri's suggestion that multiculturalism is at the heart of empire. Hales' use of Bhabha's comments in Chapter Nine that the rejection of postmodernism only leaves a return to modernism, with its inherently imperialist logic, draws on a comparable point.
52. The accuracy of Hardt and Negri's use of classical texts is not of great concern to me in this paper, although much could be written about this topic. Nor am I too concerned about the value or the dubious ethical connotations of their idea of 'empire.' See Brennan 2003, and Boron 2005 on these issues. What I do find relevant is the way that they work ideas of ancestry into their picture of the present. Hardt and Negri appear to follow an approach that is comparable to certain classicists and classical archaeologists who have recently argued for the relevance of the classical past in the present. See Benton and Fear 2003; Hingley 2005; Toner 2002; and Willis 2007. Such a focus emphasizes the linear inheritance of what might be titled a 'discourse of domination' within Western society. See Hingley 2005, 48, 117–18. See Dench 2005, 34–5, 218–20, for the context.

53. Woolf 1997; Dench 2005, 220–1.
54. One of the readers of this chapter noted that, in the Roman world, cultural difference was also used to establish opposites in order to crush and exterminate people; heterogeneity and imperial force had a complex interrelationship. This issue is discussed further here.
55. Beltrán Lloris 1999; Woolf 1997.
56. Dench 2005; Hingley 2005.
57. Hingley 2005, 119, drawing upon Brennan 2003, 98.
58. Hingley 2005, 115–16, reviews relevant information for the relative lack of integration of various groups in southern Britain into the empire. See Isayev in Chapter Eight for additional relevant discussion.
59. Dench 2005, 35.
60. Derek Gregory (2004, 253–5), in a reflection of the writings in Hardt and Negri 2000, has stated: ‘If global capitalism is aggressively *de-territorializing*, moving ever outwards in a process of ceaseless expansion and furiously tearing down barriers to capital accumulation, then colonial modernity is intrinsically *territorializing*, forever installing partitions between “us” and “them.”’
61. These writings have also been particularly valuable to scholars in modern times since they could be used to define pre-Roman ‘nations’ and to create ideas of racial ancestry. For the context, see Hingley 2001.
62. Hingley 2005, 120.
63. Curti 2001, 24; James 2001a, 198; van Driel Murray 2002, 215.
64. Hingley 2005, 115–16.
65. Dench 2005; Woolf 1997; Hingley 2005.
66. Hingley 2005, 11. Such studies may be best undertaken in a way that utilizes all available sources of material (see Hales, Chapter Nine). Dench’s impressive volume (2005, 84, and n. 149) criticizes a variety of recent approaches arising from ‘the archaeologists of Roman Britain.’ What some of the works that Dench briefly dismisses aim to achieve, from my reading, is to develop a less elite-focused perspective through an exploration of the material remains of past societies. While I would concur with some of Dench’s concerns about attempts to write purely archaeological accounts of the Roman past (see Hingley 2005, 10–11), the elite emphasis of much of the work that derives from a focus on ancient literature (see Dench 2005, 367) requires that we examine other sources of evidence. For example, one useful source might be provided by the material information for local versions of Latin literacy. See Woolf 2002.
67. Derks and Roymans 2002, 87–134; Roymans 1996; Roymans 2004; van Driel-Murray 2002, Van Driel-Murray discusses problems with the geographical identification of the Batavians (204).
68. For the context, see Hingley 2005, 91–116.
69. Van Driel-Murray 2002.
70. Derks 1998; Derks and Roymans 2002; Roymans 1995; Roymans 1996; Roymans 2004.
71. Hingley 2005, 95.
72. Derks 1998, 55–66; Roymans 1995, 48.
73. Derks and Roymans 2002, 88; Roymans 1995, 48.
74. Derks 1998, 63–4; Roymans 1995, 49–50.
75. Derks 1998, 64–5.
76. Roymans 1995, 50–3.

77. Carroll 2003, 22; Roymans 2004, 196–200.
78. Roymans 1995, 55–8; Carroll 2001, 60–1; Carroll 2003, 28.
79. Roymans 2004, 202–5.
80. Hingley 2005, 82, 95.
81. Derks 1998, 228–30; Derks and Roymans 2002.
82. Bowman 1994a, 26–7; Campbell 2002, 30; Carroll 2001, 65; Roymans 1996; Roymans 2004.
83. Roymans 1995, 58.
84. Bowman 1994a, 26–7.
85. Derks and Roymans 2002, 87–8; Willems 1984, 236.
86. Derks and Roymans 2002, 94–7.
87. Bowman 1994b, 112.
88. Van Driel-Murray 2002, 207.
89. Bowman 1994a; Bowman 1994b.
90. Roymans 1995, 48, and 60.
91. Derks and Roymans 2002, 102; Roymans 1995, 55.
92. Cooley 2002b, 9, drawing upon the work of Woolf.
93. See the comments of Adams 2003a, 189, on the attempts of potters at La Graufesenque to become Roman, and my comments (Hingley 2005, 101) on these observations.
94. Derks and Roymans 2002, 101.
95. Bowman 1994b, 123.
96. Derks and Roymans 2002, 100.
97. Van Driel-Murray 2002, 211.
98. Haynes 2001, 71.
99. Hingley 2005, 99. There are additional examples of flexible incorporation throughout that text.
100. Van Driel-Murray 2002, 215.
101. Hodos, Chapter One; Corbeill 2001, 282–4; Woolf 2000, 887.
102. Van Driel-Murray 2002, 215. It would be interesting to try to establish the extent to which some members of the *civitas* of the Batavi (in addition to women) were excluded from membership of the auxiliaries.
103. Van Driel-Murray 2002, 203. For the extent to which communities in the Lower Rhine Valley were manipulated by Rome during the fifty years after Caesar's conquest, including the wholesale moving of communities, see Roymans 2004, 23–9.
104. Roymans 2004, 203–9.
105. See Hessing 2001.
106. Whittaker 1995, 21.
107. Benton and Fear 2003; Cartledge 1998a, 16–28; Hingley 2005; Settis 2006, 106–7.
108. Hardt and Negri 2000; Balakrishnan 2003a, xiii. See also James and Nairn 2006; Robertson and Inglis 2006; and Willis 2007.
109. Hingley 2005, 117–20.
110. Cartledge 1998a, 20; Hingley 2005, 3; Toner 2002, 2.