

The Romans in Britain: Colonisation on an imperial frontier

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1. Introduction

This chapter addresses the means through which the southern and eastern parts of the British Isles were incorporated into the Roman Empire during the first century CE. It assesses the significance of the value of the concept of colonialism to address this process of military and cultural annexation. A number of classical authors wrote accounts of Britannia and many of these texts were rediscovered during the Renaissance of the sixteenth century, including the influential accounts of Julius Caesar and Tacitus. From the late sixteenth century, antiquaries also became interested in finding material evidence for Roman society in Britain, locating the ruins and artefacts that had been left behind (Hingley 2008). Several centuries of archaeological research has supplemented these early antiquarian works, providing a detailed understanding of the Roman occupation of *Britannia* and the impact of imperial rule upon the indigenous people. There are a number of recent summaries of the archaeology and historical evidence for Roman Britain (including Braund 1996; James and Millett [eds]. 2001; Mattingly 2006 and Millett, Moore and Revel [eds.] forthcoming). This paper provides a brief assessment of a number of significant themes that relate to the colonial archaeology of the Roman province of Britannia, including an assessment of the impact, since the mid 1990s, of 'post-colonial theory' upon this field of study (cf. Gardner 2013; Hingley 2014a).

The Roman Empire at its peak ruled a vast territory rimming the Mediterranean and extended into northern Europe (Woolf 2012). The indigenous peoples throughout Rome's territories were incorporated into a series of Roman provinces, including the frontier province of *Britannia* (Figure 1). Rome came into direct contact with the people of south-eastern Britain during the middle of the first century BCE and the conquest of this province commenced in 43 CE, under the emperor Claudius. The Romans conquered much of the south and east of the British Isles during the later first century CE, incorporating these areas into their province; however, the northern and western parts of the British Isles (modern Scotland and Ireland) were never conquered (Figure 2). Britain was divided at the time of conquest into a large number of communities—often titled 'tribes' by modern scholars (cf. Moore 2011). Violent military action was used to force many of the indigenous peoples of Britain to accept Roman rule, while others communities submitted to the Roman army without a fight (Mattingly 2006, 87-113). After the initial phase of conquest, the frontiers of the Roman Empire in Britain were maintained by a substantial military force of up to 50,000 men—stationed, from the latter part of the first century CE, across central and western Britain. This military occupying-force was seriously outnumbered by members of the indigenous communities since the Roman province may have had a population of at least two million; but the Roman soldiers were sufficient to keep order, although classical texts record trouble on the frontiers particularly during the later Roman period. One additional aspect of colonial control that is the focus of attention in this article is the means through which members of the indigenous communities that made up *Britannia* were assimilated into the Roman Empire through their incorporation into a set of new cultural practices that spread with imperial control (Hingley 2005; 2013). Roman rule in Britain lasted until the early fifth century and collapsed, at least in part, as a result of the pressure of peoples from beyond the imperial frontier upon the lands within. As a result, Roman ways of life in Britain were entirely lost during early medieval times and classical models and materials were rediscovered during and after the Renaissance.

Knowledge of Roman Britain was initially mainly based upon the writings of classical authors who had outlined a series of ideas about the 'barbarian' peoples of north Western Europe, including those of the British Isles accounts that were communicated by the writings of a variety of writers including Julius Caesar, Tacitus and Cassius Dio (Braund 1996). These writings described these non-Roman peoples as unsettled pastoralists who wore little clothing and possessed violent and aggressive temperaments (cf. Woolf 2011, 89-94). It has long been thought that the indigenous occupants of Britain became Romanised as a result of their incorporation in the Empire (Haverfield 1912; Millett 1990), but, despite the process of the conquest and settlement of Britannia, Mediterranean views of the indigenous peoples appear to have been slow to change. Greg Woolf (ibid, 94) has argued that Britannia represented 'Rome's permanent barbarian theme park' from the first to the fourth centuries CE, observing that an 'ethnographic discourse' of barbarity had become so well marked that the 'lived experience' of Mediterranean visitors who to Britain had little impact. Woolf wonders whether visitors from elsewhere in the Empire went to Britain in late Roman times expecting to find Caesar and Tacitus' 'savages' still in control; he notes that, if so, they will have needed to pass the Roman monuments of the city of Londinium (London) and those of Hadrian's Wall to reach the barbarians. This paper focuses upon the degree to which the people of Britannia became in any real sense 'Roman'. It argues that the 'barbarian' identity of communities across the 'civil' southern and eastern parts of the province might have continued to make an impression on elite visitors from the Mediterranean even during late Roman times.

Roman colonialism and Britain

At the heart of these issues is the term 'colonial'. This word ultimately derives from the Latin term '*colonia*'—a colony or a colonial settlement—and this paper seeks to explore the significance of colonialism to the study of the Roman period across the British Isles. There has been considerable discussion in classics and classical archaeology of the twin terms 'colonialism' and 'imperialism' and their meanings are often argued to be almost interchangeable (Goff 2005, 2; Hingley 2000, 7; Mattingly 2011, 6-7). Works that address the meanings of these terms build upon the contribution of the influential post-colonial scholar Edward Said (1993, 8), who defined imperialism as 'the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominant metropolitan centre ruling a distant territory'. Colonialism, he argued, 'is the implanting of settlements in a distant territory', almost always resulting from imperialism. Therefore, 'colonialism' derives from the classical notion of the colony as a permanent settlement of people who have moved away from their home territory, but has been extended to mean all instances of direct political control of people by a foreign state, irrespective of the number of people present (Hingley 2000, 7). Colonialism, therefore, provides a term that is effectively interchangeable with imperialism and archaeologists and ancient historians when addressing classical Rome adopt both terms to address comparable processes (Mattingly 2011, 6-7). Despite this, the powerful intellectual movement in Roman archaeology over the past twenty years has defined itself as 'post-colonial' rather than 'post-imperial' (cf. Webster 1996; Gardner 2013), creating a body of research that I have recently titled 'post-colonial Roman archaeologies' (Hingley 2014a).

The Romans are usually regarded as having been 'imperial' in their actions of conquering and subsuming peoples across their vast empire, since many people were incorporated through armed force and through cultural assimilation without any sustained and substantial acts of colonisation (Morley 2010). In other words, the Roman Empire did not witness the creation of substantial communities of settlers from the imperial core that

replaced or marginalised indigenous communities in the process.¹ Indeed, the basis of government in the Roman Empire was local, with significant decisions and local administration, wherever possible, devolved to local communities in the individual *civitates* that formed the basis of the civil areas of the province (Mattingly 2006, 260). The *civitates* of Roman Britain often appear to have been derived from the pre-existing Iron Age ‘tribes’, although these political groupings will have been manipulated by the Roman administration for their own colonial needs (cf. Moore 2011). As a result of this assimilative process, Chris Gosden (2004, 82-113) has defined the Roman Empire as an example of his ‘middle-ground colonialism’, since it was based on a high level of accommodation between the colonisers and the colonised and the idea that cultural change was ‘multilateral’ not ‘unilateral’. This is a useful definition, but we also need to allow for the power asymmetries inherent in Roman colonial contexts and for the idea of the widespread acts of violence through which Rome established imperial landscapes; forms of activity are that more characteristic of Gosden’s alternative colonial model of *terra nullius*; Mattingly 2011, 32-3). This paper explores the degree to which cultural change in Roman Britain was multilateral or focused on power asymmetries. It seeks to establish the degree to which Roman colonisation reduced Britannia to a peaceful and prosperous Roman province and also upon the extent of the impact of Roman culture upon the indigenous population and the peoples who came to live there.

2. Colonising Roman Britain

Initially, three processes of colonisation are defined that affected the peoples of ancient Britain:

Firstly, a formal type of colonisation, characterised by the establishment of a number of colonies, or cities, populated by Roman citizens during the first century CE. These urban centres formed one element in the imposition of control that occurred during the violent military subjugation of the province.

Secondly, a less formal types of colonialism involved fairly large scale movement of people into the province throughout its history. This included the movement of the military units that were used to impose control upon the province and to maintain the frontiers and also the movement of traders and other people who came into Britannia from other part of the Empire.

Thirdly, a rather more general form of colonisation involving a process through which the certain peoples across much of the southern and eastern parts of the British Isles were assimilated into an incorporative Mediterranean-style culture that is often titled ‘Roman’.

The first two of these processes brought new people into the province while the third formed part of a broader process of cultural change that involved people across the Roman Empire and beyond its borders during the later first millennium BCE and early centuries of the first millennium CE (Hingley 2005; 2013; Woolf 1998). A key question behind these three forms of colonisation concerns the extent to which indigenous people across Britannia became incorporated into a culture that might be identified as ‘Roman’ in

¹ In this article, I shall draw upon the concept of ‘indigenous people’ to contemplate the impact of Rome upon the British Isles. I am using this term to refer to the people resident in Britain at the time of the Roman conquest. The population of the British Isles was probably fairly mixed at the time of the Roman conquest and there are likely to have been waves of people that had moved to these lands in pre-Roman times, although archaeologists do not agree about the extent and character of population movement prior to the Romans.

any meaningful sense. This question also relates to the make-up of the population of Britannia. How many of the people in the province who appear to manifest 'Roman' ways of life were derived from indigenous communities and how many had settled in Britain or were the descendants of these individuals? At the core of this discussion is the issue of the degrees to which the indigenous population of Britain became, in any real sense, 'Roman'. I shall address the first two of the colonial actions defined above before turning attention, in the next section, to the third.

Colonisation and settlers

Initially, during the expansion of the Roman Empire across the Mediterranean, Roman colonies (*coloniae*) were chartered towns of Roman citizens, with constitutions modelled on that of the city of Rome (Mattingly 2006, 260). Roman culture was defined by citizenship and the city and colonies were legally defined settlements of Roman citizens (Laurence et al 2011, 4). Colonies were often established in new territories during the expansion of the Empire in order to create stability in frontier regions and the population of individuals colonies was often made up of retiring members of the Roman army. Three colonies were established in Britannia during the first century CE, at Colchester (Essex), Gloucester (Gloucestershire) and Lincoln (Lincolnshire) and it is clear from the archaeological evidence that these were the settlements of discharged veterans and that they developed on the site of Roman legionary fortresses as the army move further north and west into Britain (Mattingly 2006, 260). Excavation and survey at these sites has produced an understating of the chronologies and forms of these cities and they clearly represented an important element in the military subjugation and pacification of the province (ibid, 271-2). At Colchester (*Camulodunum*) the colony was founded at the former political centre (the *oppidum*) of a powerful Late Iron Age 'tribe' and this was the place at which the emperor Claudius had accepted the submission of 20 British rulers. It would appear that part of the pre-Roman community continued to live alongside the colony of retired veterans at Colchester, since a high-status pre-Roman burial ground at Stanway continued for over a decade after the Roman conquest (ibid, 77-78). Colchester developed as a Roman city, with the public buildings that defined Roman urbanism. The other two colonies were established later in the first century to aid in the establishment of settled life and a few additional cities were defined as colonies later in the history of the province (ibid, 271-272).

If we define colonisation in a more open manner, in terms of the movement of peoples to Britannia from other part of the Empire, it is likely that quite a substantial number of people came to settle in the province and these people fell into a number of categories. Firstly, Britannia was administered by a number of imperial officials who usually derived from the Mediterranean parts of the Empire, including the provincial governor and also the procurator who was responsible for the finances. Both officials were regular replaced and were accompanied by groups of officials to help them carry out their responsibilities (Mattingly 2006, 129). In addition, there was a substantial military presence in *Britannia*, which was a militarised province with probably as many as 50,000 soldiers at the peak of military activity; the majority of the military personnel were based in the frontier regions of the north and west (James 2001: Mattingly 2006, 130). Roman legionary and auxiliary soldiers were posted to Britain with their units for a period of time and many may have retired to live in the province, although the majority are likely to have left and returned to their homes at the end of their service. Many of the Roman soldiers in Britain were recruited from Spain, Germany and other parts of the Empire. Units of the Roman army when they were moved around the Empire were followed by communities of people, including the soldier's partners (the common soldiers were not allowed officially to marry) and also traders who sought to make a profit from selling goods to the soldiers. This

suggests a fairly substantial group of incomers to a province in which the total population may have been around two million (Mattingly 2006, 368).² Soldiers were also recruited from the population of Britannia and the general policy in the first few centuries CE was to send recruits to serve away from their home provinces, although some will eventually have returned home.

There will also have been a substantial body of tradespeople and industrialists who moved to the province during its conquest and the establishment of settled life and also throughout its history; these people came to Britain to exploit new economic opportunities. Information about their origins comes from Latin stone inscriptions and wooden writing tablets found at Roman-period sites across the province (Collingwood and Wright 1995; Noy 2010). In addition, the scientific analysis of human bones has begun to provide some idea of the scale of the movement of people into Roman Britain by exploring information for the place of birth of people who died and were buried in Britain (Eckardt et al. 2010). This initial work is highly important and, although it remains unclear how ethnically and genetically mixed the population of Roman Britain became, it is likely that in the major towns and the military zone of central Britain there will have been a highly mixed community. In towns, settlers from overseas could have exploited the new opportunities provided by the development of the market economy and some evidence has emerged from recent work to indicate the mixed origins of urban populations (ibid; Montgomery et al. 2010). The vast majority of the people of Roman Britain, however, lived in the countryside and the evidence derived from the excavation of rural settlements may suggest a considerable degree of continuity across much of the province. The rather gradual changes that occur in the architecture, ways of life and the agricultural organisation of many of these rural settlements suggests a good degree of population stability from the late Iron Age into the Roman period (Hingley 1989; Hingley and Miles 2001; Taylor 2001; 2007; Fulford and Holbrook 2011). Since Britannia was primarily a rural society, with a limited number of towns, it is likely that settlers from other parts of the Empire will always have been substantially outnumbered by descendants of the indigenous peoples, although additional research is certainly required (Mattingly 2006, 356-357).

One important issue that remains hard to address relates to the relative status of indigenous people and settler communities during the Roman period. Retired soldiers were relatively well paid during service and were given land on retirement; as a result, these people may have been able to maintain a relatively high standard of living compared to the descendants of many indigenous communities. Traders and industrial specialists will also have had opportunities to make profits in the towns that developed in the province, but so will members of the indigenous population who turned to these occupations. It is inevitable that many members of the indigenous population responded to new opportunities within the province and also that settlers and local peoples often intermarried. The idea that Iron Age 'tribes' were converted into Roman *civitates* also supports the idea of native continuity, since it focuses on the idea that members of the local pre-conquest elite were able to take over the government of their local area establishing their status in their own communities and enabling them to compete on the broader cultural stage offered by incorporation into the Empire (Millett 1990).

Cultural colonisation

² This figure is a rough estimate based on a number of factors (see Mattingly 2006, 368).

The prime emphasis in Roman archaeology for the past century has focused upon the incorporative nature of Roman culture, together with the idea that substantial numbers of indigenous peoples were assimilated to Roman ways through a process of Romanisation (e.g. Millett 1990; Woolf 1998). In other words, the dominant explanation for Roman Britain has been that it was conquered by a substantial military force and settled by the Roman administration, the provincial governor and his staff, largely through the encouragement of people across the 'civil' zone of the south and east to become Roman in their governmental organisation and life styles; this is viewed as a process that led to the spread of Roman urbanism, architecture and material culture. Indeed, the Roman Empire expanded and created stability across its territories through the twin strategies of military force and the institution of local self government (Hingley 2013). This process used to be defined through an approach to the 'Romanisation' of society in Britannia, but this term is now particularly unpopular with many archaeologists, since it seems to drive a very simplistic view of cultural identity and social change (Hingley 2005, 30-45; Mattingly 2011, 14-17). Instead a range of new approaches derived from post-colonial theory and globalisation studies have developed to explain cultural change and identity in Roman Britain (Gardner 2013). My own work focuses, in particular, on Roman culture as an incorporative medium—a set of practices and material items that allowed people across the Roman Empire to live in a flexible variety of new ways (Hingley 2005, 72-116). As Alfredo González-Ruibal (2014, 7) has recently stressed in a review of these incorporative models, however, that such a focus upon upon hybrid and discrepant experiences of the Roman Empire is far from politically innocent and serves, unwittingly, to endorse neoliberal ideologies—the celebration of the fluidity of identities in the ancient and contemporary worlds can serve to mask power inequalities. As a result, the focus on globalising Roman culture that I have aimed to develop increasingly seeks to re-cast Roman cultural incorporation as one of the means through which the Roman Empire spread and perpetuated its power structure. This is an approach that casts a more critical focus on Roman imperialism since the heterogeneous forms of 'Roman' culture that arose across the Empire can be viewed as part of the binding force that created imperial expansion and stability (Hingley 2014b).

Therefore, as the Roman army moved forward from the lowland areas that became what archaeologists call the 'civil' zones of the province, a system of self-governing *civitates* was set up, in which members of the indigenous elite are likely to have played a significant role (Millett 1990; Mattingly 2006, 260-263). These *civitates* included a *civitas* capital, or tribal centre, which formed the administrative centre for a substantial territory (figure 2). These formed the centres for local justice and also taxation and contained a variety of public buildings—including a forum, bathhouses, temples and spectacle buildings—presumably often built by the ruling families of the *civitas*. The standard explanation for the development of the province is that, as a result of their incorporation into an international imperial society, members of the indigenous elite were able to make the profit with which to live a more Roman style of life and also to construct the public buildings in the *civitas* capitals. Fifteen *civitas* capitals are commonly identified for *Britannia*, mostly in the civil zone but with a few examples across the military district (Mattingly 2006, Figure 10). In addition, Roman villas developed quite widely across the civil area of the province, possibly indicating the homes of the indigenous elite that was adopting new 'Roman' ways of life (ibid, 369-375; Taylor 2007, 113).

The Roman Empire also appears to have offered certain means for a variety of people who were not necessarily members of the indigenous elite to live in new ways (Hingley 2005, 91-116). One mechanism involved the way that free males could join the Roman army as auxiliary soldiers and learn a military form of Roman identity that resulted, if the soldier lasted to retirement, in the awarding of Roman citizenship (ibid, 93-4; James 2001).

As a result, a substantial number of retired soldiers and their families will have built up within the province. Another method for establishing new ways of life involved people moving to one of the developing Roman urban centres of the province to take up an occupation as a trader or industrial worker and considerable information exists in the cities and towns of Roman Britain for industry and trade. Another way to construct a new life was to work to expand the amount of agricultural surplus that was produced at a farm. The Roman state imposed taxation on all members of provincial society and, often, this taxation needed to be paid in cash. As a result, there may have been some pressure on individuals and families to make a profit through industry, trade and agriculture to pay this tax. Once a surplus had been produced and tax paid, any additional resource could have been used in a local market to purchase other manufactured goods (Mattingly 2006, 361). The flexibility of the culture that spread in the Roman Empire offered a variety of new ways of life and material items that could indicate new status, from building new types of housing, to visiting the local bathhouse, to buying imported pottery. When individuals indulged in these innovations they were effectively becoming more Roman (Woolf 1998), or, at least, they were becoming more fully integrated into new Mediterranean ways of life that spread across parts of Britannia as a result of the Roman conquest. As a result, society changed as people found new ways to express their identities. We shall see that not all, however, were fully engaged in this process of cultural change.

Traditional approaches to the Romanisation of society viewed these cultural changes as enabling, casting a positive view on the impact of Roman colonisation. Post-colonial approaches tend to take a more critical perspective and it is possible to view the spread of 'Roman' culture as a form of cultural imperialism (or cultural colonialism); one of the mechanisms through which Rome spread its power and subjugated indigenous communities across its Empire (Hingley 2005; 2014). Roman power spread and was cemented through the incorporation of disparate groups of people across the Empire into a fairly unified and pacified whole. 'Roman' culture offered a series of ways of life to members of the elite but also provided additional ways to create new identities for many people who had less status and power. Certain groups were excluded since these new opportunities will have been far more relevant to free male members of the population. Slaves formed a substantial element of society and many will have had a miserable life (Mattingly 2006, 294-5). Women were also politically and economically marginalised although we do know of some female traders and landowners (Allason Jones 1989). People were incorporated, in part, according to their natural abilities and the available materials, but under rules of colonial engagement that were certainly not of their own making (Hingley 2013, 275).

It is impossible currently to estimate the extent to which the Romanised people that lived in *Britannia* were descended from the pre-Roman indigenous populations or were incomers from other parts of the Empire. Since the Romanisation discourse placed a premium on the idea of the process by which indigenous peoples became Roman, it may be useful to focus more attention onto the idea that many of the apparently Roman families represented in towns and rural parts of the province were actually descended from incomers. Some of the members of the councils that ran the *civitates* and also the occupants of the villas found in the civil zone are likely to have been settlers who came to the province or the descendants of such people. The scientific analysis of human remains is beginning to provide some evidence from which to assess the origins of members of the population of Roman Britain, but much further work will be required before we have an adequate understanding of the character of the processes of cultural incorporation that operated in Britannia.

3. A Romanised Province?

The process of Romanisation has been imagined to include the growth of Roman cities across the province, the development of gracious country living in villas and the spread of 'Roman' ways to a substantial proportion of the population (Millett 1990; Woolf 1998), but there are some notable exceptions to the idea that this process worked evenly. Across the military zone on the northern and western frontiers of the province, the way of life for indigenous people appears not to have changed very much during Roman times and the majority of the indigenous population on the northern frontier appear to have continued to live in small settlement characterised by Iron Age style roundhouses (Hingley 2004). Roundhouses formed the typical homes of the pre-Roman population, but these were clearly not replaced by Roman style rectangular houses across the entire province (Hingley 1996; 1999). Indeed, the practice of developed-funded archaeology since the late 1980s has led to the excavation of a far wider range of settlements across the entire area of the former Roman province. Earlier excavation work focused on the more Roman styles of sites—the towns, villas and forts—but an increasingly quantity of excavation has focused on less-Roman types of sites, including nucleated settlement often called 'small towns' and various other types of 'non-villa' settlement (Taylor 2007). As a result, across the south, roundhouses are being found in rural contexts and it now appears that these house types which until the 1990s were supposed to represent a distinctive Iron Age type probably represented the most common type of house during the Roman period (Hingley 1989; 1999; Fulford and Holbrook 2011, 337; Mattingly 2006, 367-378).

Another way in which Romanisation was supposed to have operated is in the ability of people across Roman Britain to gain access to new types of industrially produced and imported good (cf. Evans 2001). Wheel-made pottery started to be made across southern Britain during the Later Iron Age, replacing earlier hand-made wares, but the finer wares were imported from the continent and this continued after the Roman conquest. In addition, Roman contact and conquest brought access for wealthy and well connected people to import wine and olive oil from Gaul and the Mediterranean, together with a variety of luxury and more day-to-day goods. These were supplied by the Roman state to members of the army and were also evidently available at the markets provided by the developing colonies and *civitas* capitals of the province. These innovations also found their way onto rural settlement across much of the civil zone and most communities in Roman times appear to have had access to some 'Roman' (i.e. non local) goods.

The emphasis has been primarily, however, on the idea of this process of Roman incorporation as progressive and enabling and this has not enabled a very full assessment of variations in the degree to which new materials and objects were available to communities in rural areas. Outside the southern and eastern parts of the province the prevalence of Roman-style pottery may not have been very common on rural sites (Fulford and Holbrook 2011, 326). The overarching picture that is emerging from recent research is that life for many may not have changed very much for many across *Britannia* as a result of Roman rule. The systems for taxation and enslavement are likely to have become more efficient as a result of the conquest and the imposition of order, but many individuals and communities may not have had much in the way of improved opportunities as a result of Roman rule. Indeed, the continuity of rural culture across much of the province may fit rather well with the dominant idea in the classical texts that characterise the island as what Greg Woolf's idea of the 'barbarian theme park'.

Classical writings continue to describe *Britannia* as a barbarian and backward land throughout the period of Roman control. Archaeologists and ancient historians have tended to dismiss the significance of these images by drawing attention to the apparent

Romanisation of the provincial populations, as demonstrated by the growth of cities and villas across the south and east. Greg Woolf (2011, 94) favours the idea that classical authors were downplaying the degree to which Britannia had become integrated into the Roman Empire by stressing out-of-date literary conceptions. I wonder, by contrast, if the tales of continuing barbarity might not, in themselves, have been a result of stories told in the province by the descendants of the people who had come to settle in Britannia. Perhaps, the Roman assimilation of *Britannia* was always a fairly shallow process and one that was limited to a relatively small number of members of the urban, military and rural elites. The recognisably Mediterranean-inspired culture of Roman Britain may have been primarily restricted to the towns and a scattering of rural villas, while much of the population continued to live in fairly traditional ways in rural areas and in a number of nucleated 'small towns' that developed to exploit the new economic opportunities along the Roman roads. These ways of life may not have impressed Mediterranean visitors who were more used to the urban centres of Mediterranean 'civilisation'. In fact, the continued need for a very substantial Roman military force on the frontiers of the province during the entire period of Roman rule might have served to emphasise, in the minds of Roman officials, the un-settled and uncivil nature of people within and beyond the frontiers of Britannia.

Of course, what this picture fails to recognise is that Britannia was not the only part of the Roman Empire that failed fully to Romanise. Mary Downs (2000, 209), writing about the Roman province of Baetica in Iberia argued that the image of this territory as a Romanised landscape is a colonial image, produced by Rome and reproduced by modern scholars. Many part of the Roman Empire never became particularly Roman (Hingley 2005), but perhaps Britannia was considered remarkable in the degree to which Mediterranean-ways failed to spread to the indigenous population.

4. Conclusion: colonisation and decolonisation

One key issue for future research will be to establish the extent to which the Romanised culture of urban and rural areas of the civil province was the result of the settlement of people from other areas of the Empire who already had considerable experience of Mediterranean-style life and too what extent indigenous people came to live in 'Roman' ways. The twentieth-century fixation for finding evidence for a relatively highly Romanised province (cf. Haverfield 1912 and Millett 1990) was the result of an agenda in English society that searched for parallels that told positive tales about the national past. These ideas emphasised how indigenous Britons across the civil areas of the province were able to take on Roman ways and, in the process, become more modern and more like the Victorian and Edwardian gentlemen who ran the British Empire (Hingley 2000). Post-colonial Roman archaeologists have come to argue in detail that Romanisation was a vital element in a search for a discourse of civilisation that helped to justify violent and oppressive acts across British colonial territories at a time of incipient imperial decline during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Hingley 2000; Webster 2001). Archaeologists are looking now to develop new interpretations that interact more effectively with contemporary concerns in a world that some characterise as 'post-colonial' (Hingley 2014b).

The Romans in Britain have long been taken to provide a rich series of examples and warnings for contemporary people and the study of the archaeology has long mirrored attitudes about civilisation and barbarity that relate to the later history of the British Isles (Hingley 2000; 2008). One irony is that by aiming to de-colonise the Roman-period in the British Isles, archaeologists appear, effectively, to be working to free ancient Britons from the shackles of Roman oppression by articulating a concept that indigenous people had

greater agency in the colonised past. Post-colonial archaeologies of Roman Britain do not really appear to possess a comparable ethical focus to the Indigenous and descendant archaeologies that have been developed during the past 20 years in the New World (Hingley 2014c). Indeed, there remains something of a contradiction at the core of the idea of developing a post-colonial Roman archaeology of Britannia. I have argued that one of the main purposes of this field of study is to enable archaeologists to continue to focus critical attention on the entanglement of the past and the present and to ensure that powerful classical concepts are not used too simply to justify modern actions (Hingley 2014a; cf. Morley 2010).

The study of colonisation and Roman Britain should aim to address the past but also to consider the entanglement of the past and present and the connotations of this relationship. This expresses the value of addressing the incorporative nature of Roman culture as a reflection of debates about how economic and political power is exemplified in the contemporary world (González-Ruibal 2014, 7; Hingley 2005; 2014a). This is why, in particular, we require a sustained focus upon power-relations in the Roman Empire—upon the slaughtered, marginalised, dominated, resistant and dispossessed populations of the Roman Empire. Such a refocusing of attention should help to counter continued emphasis in classical archaeology upon the culture of the elite, especially in the context of ideas of the global spread of an incorporative ‘Roman’ culture; an idea that may well tell us more about the global present than the ancient past (Hingley 2014b).

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