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## ASPECTS OF THE INTEGRATION OF THE PERIPHERY IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

### **Abstract**

This survey of ancient sources and contemporary theories on Romanization permits us to gain insight into a number of aspects of the integration of the western provinces of the Roman Empire. While Roman literary sources speak in denigrating terms about the (culture of the) subjugated peoples and celebrate Roman domination, the Roman Empire was characterized by its remarkably inclusive character. The affiliation with Roman culture and the acquirement of Roman citizenship provided opportunities to the indigenous elites in the periphery to maintain local social, political and economic power, and to pursue an imperial career. These processes, which were crucial for the empire's prolonged existence, may have entailed the development of a different type of coreness and peripherality within local peripheral communities, defined by the (deliberated) adoption of Roman traits.

### **Keywords**

Periphery, western provinces, Roman Empire, integration, Romanization.

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### **Introduction**

The purpose of this paper is to present a general introduction to a selective number of aspects of the integration of the periphery in the Roman Empire. This survey mainly focuses on the western part of the empire during the Principate (27 B.C. – A.D. 284). The regional delimitation is based on the observation that, particularly with respect to

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social stratification and culture, the eastern provinces were marked by higher rates of traditionalism and resistance. The chronological limits are in part chosen by the availability of primary sources and (hence) the state of actual knowledge of this part of Rome's imperial history. Most importantly, in this period imperial stability culminated and the considered social, economic, political and cultural processes that influenced, changed and interconnected provincial societies were most pronounced. During the preceding Republican and subsequent Late Roman era, these processes were either hardly present or already fading.

It is important to define what is meant by coreness and peripherality in this paper. As analytical tools, the terms *core* (or *centre*) and *periphery* are frequently used in the social sciences. The different qualities characteristically attributed to the involved societies are derived from their position within a system of social, economic, political and cultural relations. A basic trait in all core/periphery relations is the observation that this dissimilarity is matched by an apparent inequality in the order of strength, power, value, potential, significance, influence, etc. In this survey, the core and periphery are also defined by a similar relationship of inequality. Within a system of unbalanced relationships, the dichotomy between the core and periphery is often also articulated by spatial incongruence. However, one may argue that spatial separation is not necessarily characteristic to a core/periphery relationship. The application of the concepts of coreness and peripherality should not be restricted to intersocietal analysis. For instance, in the sphere of social relations, the terms may be used as analytical tools to denote vertical differentiation within one society, and to structure social relations between the different social communities within the larger society. Also, the relations between a society's primary culture and (subversive) subcultures, and the ways the former may influence the existence, traits and development of the latter, may be structured by a core/periphery model. While in this survey spatial incongruence is a hallmark of the core/periphery relationships between Roman society in Central Italy and the indigenous societies in the provinces, it will become clear that the dynamics of integration may have led to the emergence of a specific type of intrasocietal coreness and peripherality, particularly between the elite and the sub-elite segments of peripheral communities. It is now clear that Roman society in Central Italy is defined as the empire's core, and the rest of Italy and the provinces as its periphery. This model may simplify the complexities that shaped the relations between both zones, and it may overlook certain patterns of coreness and peripherality which do not

fit in this model. For instance, with regard to cultural relations between Rome and the eastern provinces, which are excluded from this paper's scope, the application of the current analytical scheme may be more difficult. This does not imply that the periphery should be perceived as an undifferentiated, monolithic entity. It does entail, however, that we not survey core/periphery relationships between Rome and other societies that escaped from Roman domination. One may think of the economic relations between the Roman Empire and India, which resulted in an outflow of gold and silver coins in exchange for spices, perfumes, female slaves and other highly valuable goods (Schmitthenner 1979, Young 2001: 28 ff.)<sup>1</sup>. In this survey, however, we will explore aspects of integration of the periphery *within* the Roman Empire.

By A.D. 117, when the Roman Empire had reached its largest dimension, the entire Mediterranean basin and a large part of north-western and central Europe was under Roman sway. A vast number of culturally distinct peoples and tribes were thus politically unified. From the British Iceni and the city-dwellers of Alexandria in Egypt to the semi-nomadic Musulamii in North Africa, they all shared the common situation of subjection to Rome.

The empire's extent and structure, as well as the character of imperial policy changed profoundly over the course of the centuries. During the Republic (509 – 27 B.C.), the Roman Senate chiefly pursued a hegemonic empire. Especially since the publication of Harris' argument that stressed the importance of personal and collective economic gain, the old vision, as elaborated for instance by Frank and Veyne, that Roman imperialism was mainly or even solely driven by defensive motives, powered by an (irrational) fear of potential rivals, has yielded (Harris 1979, Frank 1914, Veyne 1975). To explain Roman expansionism, primary emphasis has been laid on the competition among the Roman elite in the accumulation of military fame and the economic resources that were necessary to maintain extensive client networks and a high level of prestigious public expenses (Millett 1990: 3). But at the same time, the Roman Senate frequently restrained from annexation and the exercise of direct control (Badian 1968: 29-44). A large number of communities were tied to Roman im-

<sup>1</sup> Egyptian harbors along the Red Sea coast played an important role in this maritime trade. This is attested by inscriptions in Prakrit and Old Tamil in Quseir, which point to the presence of Indian merchants. Richard Salomon. 1991. "Epigraphic Remains of Indian Traders in Egypt." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 111(4): 731-6

perial policy by deliberated or enforced alliances (*civitates foederatae*). There was no standing army until the end of the first century B.C. (Gilliver 2005). Until well into the first century A.D., the Romans frequently resorted to indirect modes of control, like the installation of client states (Luttwak 1976: 20-40, 49). From a financial point of view, such strategies greatly diminished the costs of empire. They also reduced the threats incorporated in the assignment of military power and economic resources to Roman provincial governors. Increasing social discontent in Rome and in the Italian countryside, and the establishment of a strong relationship between the generals in the provinces and their armies – the latter hungry for big rewards when duty was finished, the former for political power – led to the loss of control of the ever-expanding empire and its military force by the traditionalist senate. During the frequent civil wars of the last century of the Republic, political instability threatened the very survival of the empire.

The rule of the eventual victor of those civil wars and Rome's first emperor, Octavianus Augustus, was crucial for internal stabilization and the integration of the provinces. As MacMullen stated: "Never (...) was there greater progress made toward one single way of life, a thing to be fairly called 'Roman civilization of the Empire', than in that lifetime of Augustus" (2000: x). This development may have come to its apogee during the first decades of the third century, with the grant, by Caracalla, of full Roman citizenship (cf. *infra*) to all remaining free foreigners and semi-Romans within the empire<sup>2</sup>. By then, the empire had become a territorial state with clearly demarcated frontiers, guarded by military garrisons and an infrastructure providing a permanent physical perimeter defence. The old system of client states was abolished (Luttwak 1976: 57-60, 75, 111-7). However, since the death of Trajanus (A.D. 117), the accumulation of empire was almost exclusively qualitatively defined, as the emperors were increasingly engaged with defending the empire rather than extending it.

### Ancient sources and early scholarship

<sup>2</sup> This was ordered by the famous *Constitutio Antoniniana* (A.D. 212). For an extensive commentary on the interpretations connected with the edict, cf. Adrian Nicholas Sherwin-White. 1973. *The Roman citizenship*. 2d. ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press: 380-94. Alexander Mlasowsky. 1997. "Constitutio Antoniniana," In *Der Neue Pauly. Enzyklopädie der Antike*, H. Cancik and H. Schneider (eds.). Stuttgart: Verlag J.B. Metzler: 147-8. Ancient sources in this paper are abbreviated according to Carl Andersen, Klaus Bartels, and Ludwig Huber (eds.). 1965. *Lexikon der alten Welt*. Zürich: Artemis Verlag, 3435-64.

The application of a core/periphery model to explain intersocietal relations and developments in the Roman Empire is stimulated by the nature of the literary sources. Ancient historians such as Tacitus and Suetonius were inclined to provide a history that was both patriotic and Romano-centric. Moreover, there was a tendency in historiography to centre on explanatory schemes that stressed the role of the individual and morality. Hence the main focus was laid on the emperor and the intrigues among the senatorial and equestrian elites (Cizek 1995: 9-10, 22-3). From these perspectives, an imperial discourse arose that did not question the political and religious legitimacy of Roman rule and domination<sup>3</sup>. These characteristics of Roman literary sources complicate the identification of the initiators of conflict and the reconstruction of the (real) motives of both conquerors and rebels. But archaeological remains and inscriptions on durable materials may reveal events and developments which, apparently, were perceived by the ancient historians as insufficiently relevant, important or acceptable to be incorporated in their works. Such items may include epigraphically attested dedications by Roman soldiers to a god or the emperor's genius, or the archaeological discovery of destructed camps or towns.

An analysis of the relations Rome maintained with provincial societies which were not accustomed to the epigraphic habit or who left little archaeological traces, heavily depends on a very one-sided tradition dominated by Rome. This is certainly the case for many pastoral nomadic societies (Cribb 1991: 65 ff.). However, ancient nomads provide an opportunity for archaeology if the context of the sites contributed to preservation of the artefacts. In the rough and arid Negev, remains of pastoral nomadic sites, still lying on the surface, have been dated to the Late Roman period. However, the material record is very often limited to shards of pottery, stones revealing the ground structures of tents, and rock art and inscriptions of which the meaning is often uneasy to grasp (Rosen 1993, Anati 1999).

A majority of the Roman literary sources present a positive image of the character and motivations of Roman imperialism. Others seem to stress what they perceived as the advantages of subjugation to the conquered *barbarians*. At the end of the Republic, Cicero defines Roman imperial rule as a kind of patronage, realised by the continuous effort to defend Rome and her allies: "the senate was a haven of ref-

<sup>3</sup> Tac. ann. XIII, 56 has been noted as an example of this tendency.

uge for kings, tribes, and nations; and the highest ambition of our magistrates and generals was to defend our provinces and allies with justice and honour. And so our government could be called more accurately a protectorate of the world than a dominion” (Cic. off. II, 26-7)<sup>4</sup>. In the first century A.D., Plinius Maior enumerates the sacred imperial duties of the Romans, who were chosen by the providence of the gods to care for the political unification of all scattered empires, the spread of Latin as an universal tongue and the civilisation of the subdued (Plin. nat. III, 39). A few decades later, Tacitus wrote a favourable description of the pacification policy of Agricola, his father-in-law, in Britain: “The winter which followed was spent in the prosecution of sound measures. In order that a population scattered and uncivilised, and proportionately ready for war, might be habituated by comfort to peace and quiet, he would exhort individuals, assist communities, to erect temples, marketplaces<sup>5</sup>, houses: he praised the energetic, rebuked the indolent, and the rivalry for his compliments took the place of coercion” (Tac. Agr. 21)<sup>6</sup>. The subjugated tribes were thus encouraged, and supported, to create a Roman-like social setting of public and private life, to acquire similar institutions and features of urbanisation. The indigenous elites were stimulated to compete in such investments. In the same fragment, Tacitus also mentions the adoption of Latin and the Roman toga, and the efforts that were taken to provide Roman education for the sons of native chiefs. These measures to bring civilisation or *humanitas* to the barbarians were taken to soften the state of subjugation, not to fulfil some kind of exalted service or plight. He concludes: “The simple natives gave the name of “culture” to this factor of their slavery” (Tac. Agr. 21)<sup>7</sup>.

Early historians of the modern period, like Mommsen and Haverfield, supported a view of the Romans as conscious agents of civilization in the provinces. Their works reflect the influence of contemporary nationalist and imperial ideology. The cause and (some) traits of Roman imperialism were identified with that of its modern European counterpart, and views on the latter also influenced the reconstruc-

<sup>4</sup> Translation: Marcus Tullius Cicero. *De officiis*. Transl. by Walter Miller. 1913. Loeb classical library. Cambridge (Mass.), London: Harvard University Press, Heinemann: 195.

<sup>5</sup> Fora are meant here (cf. infra).

<sup>6</sup> Translation: Publius Cornelius Tacitus. *Agricola*. Transl. by Maurice Hutton. 1970. The Loeb classical library. Cambridge (Mass.), London: Harvard University Press, Heinemann: 67.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

tion of the former<sup>8</sup>. Mommsen, for instance, perceived the unification of Italy by the Romans as a model for the fusion of the German states in his own time (Freeman 1997: 30, 34). The socio-cultural developments incorporated into the process of *Romanization* were seen as unidirectional phenomena: the conquered, culturally backward and uncivilised barbarians of the west were encouraged to adopt the superior Roman civilization. For indigenous societies, integration into the Roman Empire involved the making of progress. However, the development of a homogenous Roman culture may have been challenged by the existence of local variations in some parts of the empire. But according to Haverfield, this diversity, for instance in the sphere of religion, should not be perceived in terms of resistance: “Some of the native cults seem to have survived more vigorously in the consciousness of the worshippers than the others; the one thing in which they agree is that the Roman and the native are not hostile” (1915: 21). And even to those indigenous segments which preserved traits of pre-Roman culture, the progression of the new aspects of true *civilization* could not be neglected. Yet progress was a development that was least perceived among the rustic poor, where “superstitions, sentiments, even language and the consciousness of nationality, linger dormant (...)” (Haverfield 1915: 22). This development was seen as part of a deliberate Roman policy, though not imposed by force (Haverfield 1915: 14, 76 ).

The traditional interpretation of the Romanization of the indigenous population led to the exploration of adopted Roman traits as crucial aspects of the social, cultural and political integration of the periphery. Cultural influence was for instance measured by the spread of Latin and of Roman modes of entertainment, and by the acceptance of the Roman pantheon, which was marked by the construction of temples dedicated to Roman divinities. The appearance of *fora*, *curiae* and *basilicae* marked the adoption of Roman political institutions, and together with theatres and amphitheatres, they changed the set-

<sup>8</sup> For instance, in the work of Cagnat on the Roman army of North Africa, the influence of contemporary colonialism is apparent from the outset, as the author dedicated his work to the French armies that served in the North African colonies... The announcement of the dedication was followed by the words of Rutilius Namatianus addressed to Rome: “Profuit iniustus te dominante capi”. Rut. Nam. 64. Translated in English: “under your dominion subjugation has been advantageous to those without law”. René Cagnat. 1912. *L'Armée romaine d'Afrique et l'occupation militaire de l'Afrique sous les empereurs*. Paris: Leroux: v.



ting of social life<sup>9</sup>. In its totality, the entire process of urbanisation was and still is perceived as a hallmark of Romanized societies (Revell 2009: 36-79). Until the third century A.D., the habit to set up (Latin) inscriptions spread as a socio-cultural novelty in many regions of the west. These *tituli* publically commemorated the lives of the deceased, political or military achievements, gifts to communities, dedications to the gods, imperial and municipal laws and so on (MacMullen 1982: 238).

Such cultural acquisitions took place alongside the adoption of Roman social stratifications. A major tool that marked and encouraged social and political integration was the grant of Roman citizenship<sup>10</sup>. *Peregrini* or foreigners could acquire either reduced or full citizenship on an individual or collective basis. The grant of full Roman citizenship or *ius civile* comprised a large number of rights, for example the right to contract legal marriages and to make valid contracts and transactions, the right to change one's domicile at will and the right to vote in the people's council in Rome. Indigenous communities within the periphery were frequently given reduced citizenship, or *ius Latii*, and missed some of the rights possessed by full Roman citizens. In the provinces, the acquirement of Roman citizenship enhanced individual and communal prestige and status. Full citizenship was granted to individuals by personal merit and to discharged *auxilarii*, soldiers of the foreigners' army, when they had ended the required twenty-five years of service. In provincial municipalities which had obtained Latin citizenship, full citizenship could also be received by the exercise of the local magistracies. Hadrianus decreed that *decuriones*, or members of the *curia* or town council, could also obtain Roman citizenship by a grant of the so-called *Latium maius*<sup>11</sup>. Formal manumission allowed private slaves to join the community of citizens (Wiedemann 1985: 162).

As the regular army of legionaries was composed only of Roman citizens, this inclusiveness was one important strategy that distinguished Roman empire-building from that of the Greek city-states. The Roman Senate and Emperor could rely on a citizen body increasing in number to supply the military needs of an expanding empire.

<sup>9</sup> A forum was an important gathering place with great social significance. The curia was the building in which the local town council held assemblies; in Rome, this was the meeting place of the senate. In the basilica, the magistrates held court.

<sup>10</sup> On Roman citizenship, cf. Adrian (N.) Sherwin-White. *The Roman citizenship*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

<sup>11</sup> Gaius. inst. I, 96

### Post-modernist perspectives

Since the seventies, scholarly attention has drifted away from the simplistic perception of Romanization as a unidirectional process. While the modern colonial perspective contributed to the denial, or at least the neglect of the role of indigenous actors in the integration of the periphery, emphasis has increasingly been laid on the discernment of positive and negative indigenous agency in patterns of social, cultural and political integration (Thébert 1978: 71, 76-7, Decret et al. 1981: 319, Millett 1990: 80-3, MacMullen 2000: 137). Descriptions of the character and consequences of Roman imperialism tended to be less romanticized. Roman imperial policy and ideology were now more often characterized in negative terms. A clear example of this is the clear-cut negative tenor Chouquer attached to his treatise on the role Roman theatres and amphitheatres played in the spread and legitimization of Roman dominance, social order and culture (1985). Deman's survey of the role of Roman exploitation in the creation of divergent patterns of economic (under)development between different zones of the empire belongs to the same tendency in modern historiography. Deman even pointed to the *responsibility* of the Romans for the historical underdevelopment of contemporary North Africa (1968, 1975: 82-3). *Nativist* scholars of the post-colonial era have also ventured to survey indigenous negotiation concerning the adoption of Roman culture. For instance, with regard to cultural integration in North Africa, Bénabou argued that Roman divinities were only adopted because they could be identified with existing indigenous cults (1976: 379-80). So the popularity of Saturnus was based on the fact that the god could be identified with the Punic deity Baal Hammon. Fundamentally, the Roman deities that were accepted underwent profound adaptations to African needs (Bénabou 1976: 370-5). Likewise, the persistence of pre-Roman languages and names has been perceived as a sign of cultural continuity with the past (Bénabou 1982: 21-4). The study of more radical expressions or types of resistance has challenged the perception that peace and order, *pax Romana*, marked the Roman Empire since the reign of Augustus (Dyson 1971, Dyson 1975, Pékary 1987).

Most recently, it has been argued that many historians and archaeologists of the early post-colonial era failed to succeed in the abolishment of the colonial perspective. Van Dommelen stated: "The increased attention to the indigenous in [ancient] colonial situations has however only reinforced the dualistic nature of colonial representa-

tions" (1997: 308). As they continued to measure and evaluate Roman-ness and native-ness in these peripheral societies, "seeing life in the Roman Empire only through the dialectic of colonized and colonizer", the colonial dichotomy was not overcome (Berrendonner 2003: 46, quoted in Quinn 2003: 29)<sup>12</sup>. Culture was still reduced to ethnicity. As a result of such considerations, Romanization as a concept has been perceived as representing and encouraging the dualist or binary mode of analysis in which two distinct but internally homogenous cultures are opposed to one another. Especially in the Anglo-Saxon world, annoyance with *the R-word* eventually even made scholars denounce the term itself in favour of other terms and explanatory theories derived from anthropology, linguistics and sociology (Merryweather and Prag 2003)<sup>13</sup>. For instance, van Dommelen promoted the use of the concept of *hybridization* to describe the integration process, while Webster suggested the notion of *creolization* (van Dommelen 1997, Webster 2001).

Being one of the critics, Greg Woolf proposed an innovative integration model based on the genesis of a new imperial culture, which was internally diversified by aspects of region, class, gender, etc. Modern scholars now face the challenge of examining this differentiation, and of studying the diverse modes of negotiation on social and cultural influences from the core (Woolf 1997). The model advocates an approach that surveys the symbiosis of features that both unified and separated the numerous societies that together formed the Roman Empire. It allows for the perception of being Roman as an identity that may have been experienced very differently throughout the prov-

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<sup>12</sup> Specific Roman features that have been searched for and measured in peripheral contexts are, amongst others, urbanization and a particular type of monumental urban landscape, the villa, epigraphy, the Latin tongue, the slave mode of production, a specific way of life, characterized by visiting amphitheatres and baths, or a combination of multiple indicators. Clara Berrendonner. 2003. "La romanisation de Volterra: 'a case of mostly negotiated incorporation, that leaves the basic social and cultural structure intact?'" (N. Terrenato, in *Italy and the West*, Oxford, 2001)," *Digressus* Suppl. 1: 46-7.

<sup>13</sup> However, scholars have also pleaded to keep the concept of Romanization, and the Rome-centred approach it may entail, because of the fear of depreciating the importance of the centre by centring too much on the periphery in the study of integration processes. Patrick Le Roux. 2004. "La romanisation en question," *Annales: histoire, sciences sociales* 59(2): 309-11. As advocates of the concept's preservation, Keay and Terrenato argued in favour of a redefinition of the term so "it can be used simply as a convenient label that refers loosely to events involved in the creation of a new and unified political entity, although it should not be used to describe the occurrence or direction of acculturation between Romans and non-Romans." Simon Keay and Nicola Terrenato. 2001. "Preface," In *Italy and the West. Comparative issues in Romanization*. Simon Keay and Nicola Terrenato (eds.). Oxford: Oxbow Books: ix.

inces. Thus Roman culture was a culture "shared by a widely spread group of governing elites, but one that was always, and everywhere, vulnerable to alternative readings" (Hingley 2005: 71). As a consequence of differences in pre-conquest culture, administrative category, geography, moment of conquest and the specific "historical trajectories of individual communities", various interpretations of Roman identity have been observed in different parts of the periphery (Revell 2009: 192-3). Such dissimilar experiences of Roman-ness have not merely been perceived *between* individual communities. The assumption of a Roman identity – externalized by such adopted practices like the erection of inscriptions, the socially regulated use of urban space, and the acceptance of municipal magistracies – became a tool of structuring social hierarchy in local society. Revell studied patterns of discrepant Roman identities in Britain and Spain and concluded:

The cultural changes in the provinces following their conquest and incorporation into the administrative structures of the empire went beyond the changes in ethnic identity. It also encompassed new ways of expressing other aspects of identity within the local society. Social rank or status was understood in new ways: expressed through wealth and political privilege rather than, for example, warrior leadership. These changes spread beyond the elite themselves, and extended to aspects of identity around axes of elite/non-elite, free/un-free, male/female, adult/child. The structures of urbanism and religion, for example, which we have already seen forming part of a shared ethnic identity, also became ways in which ideas of social rank were expressed. Age and gender, for example, revolved around ideas of citizenship of the town: eligibility to participate in the running of the town, such as the annual election of the magistrates, became one way of distinguishing between men and women, and similarly of marking the transition from adolescence to adulthood. In turn, these aspects of personal identity were negotiated through the political spaces of the town, and the public ceremonies of voting, for example, which were enshrined in the town charters (2009: 150-1).

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The Roman theatre may illustrate how Roman urban structures could express social hierarchy. Strict laws were passed concerning the distribution of seats according to social class. Also, the use of entrances and stairways was regulated according to status. Large fines were stipulated for those who breached these laws, which clearly envisaged the expression of social order. Thus every performance at the theatre implied the symbolic affirmation of the existing social hierarchy. Elite identity was also expressed at the amphitheatre. For the wealthy freedmen who were barred from political office, the organisation of expensive games was an important means to compensate for the lack of social status that came with low descent (Revell 2009: 168-9).

The popularity of Roman tools that structure and confirm local social hierarchy can be connected with a number of motives that stimulated positive indigenous agency in the integration process (Hingley 2005: 70). In those regions where it occurred, the benevolence of native elites that was derived from such considerations would have facilitated the acceptance of Roman imperial rule and culture. It may be true that integration models have focussed too much attention on the aristocratic section of peripheral society, causing problems to arise when addressing the question of the integration of the sub-elites (Alcock 2001, Hingley 2005: 91-3, 118). The focus on the elites may lead to concerns about the creation of a model of cultural diffusion that supposes (and results in) an opposition between elite and sub-elite. The fact that major buildings of public utility and a majority of the literary sources and inscriptions were ordered or produced by the elite, has encouraged this situation (Merryweather and Prag 2003: 10). The local non-elites lacked financial resources to acquire many of those expensive material expressions of Roman identity. But according to Revell, public inscriptions and sculptures were erected to be seen and interpreted by less powerful groups as well, and thus also played a role in the creation of their social identities (2009: 152-4, 192). It has also been argued that a similar alteration of social representations of the less powerful groups could be traced through “the analysis of stylistic variability in everyday artefacts”, such as ceramic vessels (Roth 2003: 41).

Within the large and internally heterogeneous periphery, the identification with Roman dominant power often formed an important means to accumulate and express social status after the initial phases of subjugation. Was Agricola’s work in Britain, described by Tacitus (cf. *supra*), and indeed that of his numerous colleagues, part of a deliberate Roman strategy to stimulate the inclusion of the indigenous (elites) within the imperial system, and to spread Roman culture across the empire? Another clear example of such a strategy may be the organization of the emperor cults in the provinces. As both men (*seviri Augustales* and *flamines Augustorum*) and women (*flaminicae Augustorum*) of the local elites served as priests, the cult assured the maintenance of coherence in the empire while it also responded to elite aspirations to accumulate local status through affiliation with imperial institutions. However, some scholars have related that the immense socio-cultural impact of such Roman policies was neither deliberately planned nor foreseen. MacMullen, for instance, minimized Tacitus’ passage on Agricola’s measures in Britain as a source that suggested such a conscious policy. Instead, he stressed the singularity of Tacitus’

account and identifies the underlying motivation of Agricola’s work and that of his colleagues with the intention to facilitate the enforcement of power, with *an interest only in making their job easier* (2000: 135-6)<sup>14</sup>. Nevertheless, emphasis has been laid on the role of the Roman city as “a cultural instrument of imperialism” where propagandistic iconography (sculptures, portraits) celebrated Roman imperial rule. Indeed, in many a Roman theatre, the hierarchically structured mass of spectators was looked upon by a statue of the emperor positioned above the stage (Whittaker 1997).

The promotion to Roman citizenship provided opportunities to fulfil even higher ambitions above the local level. Provincial Roman citizens of free but non-Roman descent, who met the property requirements of the equestrian order, could attain high positions in the army and in provincial administration. Since the first century A.D., the *curia* in Rome was increasingly filled with senators from the provinces. Traianus (A.D. 98-117), like Septimius Severus (A.D. 193-211), are only two famous examples of provincials – from Spanish Baetica and North African Leptis Magna respectively – who managed to claim the supreme powers of emperorship.

Next to the fore-mentioned juridical rights and local social prestige attached to Roman citizenship, wealthy citizens could also turn economic profit from their civil status. The acquirement of Roman citizenship enabled them to participate in the lease system of public property and tasks such as the exploitation of mines and taxation. This system had multiple advantages to both Roman imperial government and local elites. It diminished the possibility of extreme exploitation by foreigners from outside the community and the subsequent risk of rebellion, while the local leading circles were not deprived of their wealth as they were crucially involved in the extraction of resources. Higher production rates were also necessary side-effects of the system, as Rome also claimed a portion of the surplus. Ørsted, who studied these issues of political and economic collaboration, came to a definition of Romanization as “a deliberate economic policy”, and concluded: “the wolf and sheep feed together” (1985: 357). The same author perceives the disconnection of the public and the private economy by the abolishment of the lease system as an important factor that contributed to disintegration in the later Roman Empire. By then, the above-mentioned *Constitutio Antoniniana*, which

<sup>14</sup> Similarly, Yvon Thébert. 1978. “Romanisation et déromanisation en Afrique: histoire décolonisée ou histoire inversée?,” *Annales: Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations* 33: 72. In response to: Marcel Bénabou. 1976. *La résistance africaine à la romanisation*. Paris: F. Maspero: 29, 257.



granted full Roman citizenship to all free citizens, was “a burden, not a privilege” as it entailed merely financial and social obligations (Ørsted 1985: 371-372).

The cooperation between the Roman government and local elites has thus been perceived as crucial for the social and economic integration of the subjugated peoples. The aim and the outcome of the taxation system was an inflow of resources from the provinces to Rome. A concentric model of resources flows from the surrounding periphery to the centre. However, this model does not apply in the case of the Roman Empire, where a vast quantity of resources was not consumed in Rome but in the empire’s utmost internal periphery: the frontier zone (Woolf 1990: 48). This is where hundreds of thousands of soldiers were stationed, soldiers who guarded the provinces and prevented external invasions, and whose wages needed to be paid. The presence of such huge markets at the frontier led to an impressive increase in local production near the military encampments (MacMullen 1968). It also fostered long distance trade to North and Central Europe of both staples and luxury goods from the southern provinces, where the commercialization of higher surpluses was encouraged by the levy of taxes in money (on the development of the economy and taxation: Jones 1974, Hopkins 1980, Millett 1990: 6-7, Leveau 2007). This led to the development of business outside the primary or agrarian sector, as more people were occupied with trade, banking and transport. The rise of interregional trade is attested by the remarkable increase of shipwrecks and the diffusion of ceramic containers (*amphorae*). Until the third century A.D., Rome chiefly expected payments in money, while taxes in kind were limited. An important result of taxes levied in money was the increased monetisation of the economy in the periphery, particularly in regions where taxes previously did not exist or were levied in kind (Ørsted 1985: 31).

While the economy in the empire’s periphery principally retained the traits of a subsistence economy, it was marked by notable growth with regard to production, markets and regional interconnectedness. This development was a response to the extraction of labour (slaves, though only initially) and resources (plunder, later taxes) by the core, and was rendered possible by the taxation system, the strategic military design of the Roman empire, the improved road networks and the prevailing political stability. Nevertheless, the periphery was also marked by other economic side-effects of empire, like the expropriation of land to the benefit of Roman colonists and investors in large estates. The emperor was only the greatest of all big landowners from Italy who owned lucrative provincial domains.

## Conclusion

A number of issues were not, or were hardly, elaborated in this selective survey of the integration of the periphery in the Roman Empire. Neither the impact of the settlement of Roman colonies, for instance, nor the system of patronage which linked communities in the periphery to influential Roman statesmen in the core, often former governors of the province, have been discussed. Yet in this survey of ancient sources and the development of modern Romanization theory, a number of important aspects of integration have been clarified. While Roman literary sources speak in denigrating terms about the culture of the subjugated peoples of the west and celebrate Roman domination, the Roman Empire was characterized by its remarkably high inclusive character. Like the affiliation with Roman culture, the acquirement of Roman citizenship provided opportunities to the indigenous elites in the periphery to maintain local, social, political and economic power, and to pursue an imperial career. These processes may have entailed the development of a different type of coreness and peripherality within local communities, defined by the deliberate adoption of Roman traits. The Roman Empire’s ability to incorporate the higher social classes was crucial for its prolonged existence. The juridical promotion of entire communities among less advantaged neighbours, and the appearance of Roman colonies, led to a complex socio-cultural landscape in the periphery, where social and cultural features derived from the core were intermingled and often reinterpreted.

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## Streszczenie

28

### *Wybrane aspekty integracji peryferii w obrębie Imperium Rzymskiego*

Analiza licznych materiałów źródłowych oraz współczesnych teorii dotyczących zjawiska romanizacji pozwala lepiej zrozumieć różne aspekty integracji prowincji zachodnich z Imperium Rzymskim. Z jednej strony, źródła rzymskie mówią pejoratywnie o kulturach ludów podbitych, z drugiej strony, chwałą rzymskie panowanie. Imperium Romanum miało bowiem niezwykle inkluzywny charakter. Afiliacja z kulturą rzymską oraz uzyskanie obywatelstwa rzymskiego dawało miejscowym elitom peryferii możliwość utrzymania politycznej i ekonomicznej władzy nad lokalną społecznością, umożliwiało również realizowanie kariery w obrębie imperialnej struktury władzy. Procesy te miały kluczową rolę w przedłużeniu obecności imperium i prawdopodobnie przyczyniły się do rozwoju różnych rodzajów centrum i peryferii wewnątrz lokalnych peryferyjnych społeczności, zdefiniowanych poprzez przyjęcie cech rzymskich.

## Słowa kluczowe

Peryferie, prowincje zachodnie, Imperium Rzymskie, integracja, romanizacja.