

Beschäftigung mit dem Thema und eine gute Grundlage für eine intensivere Erforschung der einzelnen Provinzen.

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GREG WOOLF: *Becoming Roman: The Origins of Provincial Civilization in Gaul*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1998. ISBN 0-521-41445-8. xviii, 296 p. GBP 40.00 (H/b).

The aim of this book is to explore the relationship between Roman power and Roman culture in early imperial Gaul. Though admitting that 'Romanization' is a convenient shorthand for a number of cultural changes that took place within the Empire, Woolf strives to discuss all its different aspects separately and to discard the umbrella term altogether in his analysis. Architecture, material culture, consumption, urbanization, epigraphic habit, and religion, among others, are cautiously examined, and the evidence is presented with admirable clarity, often in very useful maps.

W. points out that regional variation was wide in Gaul before the Roman conquest and again increased in the second century after an intervening period of convergence. He also remarks that very soon the ethnic and political implications of 'being Roman' began to fade as Roman culture became a symbol and measure of social status and civilized upper-class life. Here W. might have discussed more fully the potential significance of Roman law (briefly done on 71-2 and 155). In theory, at least, 'being Roman' was a very concrete thing, determining your family relationships, property owning, liability to different forms of punishment, and so on. It was certainly not the same thing to be a rich Roman or a poor Roman, but the simple fact of being Roman made all the difference if you were going to be flogged, for example, as the experience of Paul in first-century Palestine shows (Acts 22:25). The reason W. does not elaborate on this, or the existence of Latin communities, is, of course, the lack of any direct evidence.

As his theoretical starting point W. adopts cultural relativism: "Roman civilization was no better, in other words, than the culture of late La Tène Gaul, but simply different, and we cannot explain cultural change in terms of intelligent savages recognizing the superiority of classical civilization. Cultural relativism too is open to objections... but... it seems to offer the best working hypothesis available." (5) I see no problem in taking it as a *working hypothesis*, but there is a certain risk of it, unnoticed, becoming a tenet which is not further questioned in the study. Thus, in his last chapter W. concludes (without rehabilitating the word 'Romanization') that the sequence of cultural change was strikingly similar in the western empire, while in the east "the picture is more complex". "[I]n most respects western cultures were artefacts of Roman imperialism. It is difficult to see any explanation other than the equal contempt in which all these cultures were held by Rome." (245) Here, at the latest, one would have liked W. to consider alternatives to the working hypothesis because it does not perfectly tally with the facts. It is true that the Romans respected classical Greek culture, and this would conveniently explain why Greece was not 'Romanized' in the same way as the western provinces. However, the same explanation does not apply to Jews, Syrians, or Egyptians, whose culture was hardly respected by Rome, a problem indirectly admitted by W. but left unresolved (245-6). I wonder if the provincial peoples could not be

given a more active role, rather than just being the object (or not) of Roman contempt. One might at least consider the possibility that some peoples regarded Roman culture as superior to their own, others did not, and, indeed, may not have had much reason to do so (on this, cf. B. Ward-Perkins, 'Why did the Anglo-Saxons not become more British?', *English Historical Review* 115 (2000) 513-33, at 528-31).

The way W. seems to define 'cultural superiority', as an overwhelming, morally charged, almost cosmically valid concept, certainly explains why he finds it difficult to use as an explanatory force. Certainly 'superiority' is devoid of meaning if the criteria have not been established. From the ecological perspective, for example, it might be claimed that simple cultures are superior to those which are technologically more advanced. Or superiority could be measured by the degree of women's participation in power and wealth. Clearly such considerations have no value in explaining cultural change in antiquity because no one came to think of them. But it is not at all impossible that the ancient Gauls would have understood 'superiority' in the same common, not universal but serviceable, context in which most Europeans have accepted it ever since: technical skill, military strength, political power, peaceful society, expanding economy, material wealth, basic education, and even higher forms of literary culture. One does not personally have to share the same "civilized values", let alone assert that they are morally better, but one cannot disregard the fact that many people have done so, and this in itself is a factor which has explanatory potential. The same evidently continues to be true in many regions around the world which are eager to embrace western culture and technology although they may detest western political influence and even successfully resist it.

Of course, the situation is more complex when two cultures can both claim 'superiority' on some (but not all) terms, like in the conflict of Christian and Muslim states in the Middle Ages, or the conquest of American civilizations by the Spanish. It also remains to be explained why the Germans did not easily adopt Roman culture or the other way round right after the Great Migrations in Gaul and Spain. Questions of cultural superiority, military power, identity, and contempt are obviously all relevant and deserve serious consideration. In the case of early imperial Gaul, power and 'superiority' appear to have converged. The Roman empire produced architecture, statuary, philosophy, and literature which have been admired by succeeding generations after many centuries, and it seems clear that the largely illiterate La Tène culture was not able to offer anything comparable. It would not have needed an intelligent savage to recognize that. I can appreciate that a British historian should feel especially wary of contrasting western civilization with colonial savagery. On the other hand, someone coming from a small country which has in the past been dominated by its neighbours would find little problem in admitting that the culture it has received from continental Europe is 'superior' to most that it could have produced if left to manage on its own.

W. observes that Roman culture (in the west) was not imitated outside the empire in the way neighbouring areas were keen to adopt aspects of Greek culture (246-9). In addition to his discussion, one might remark that, unlike the Greek world, the western empire was surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean, the Sahara Desert, and the forests of Germania. The last two were by no means uninhabited, but perhaps they were not able to produce such material and social preconditions as were necessary to support Roman cultural forms, be it architecture, a complex legal system, or satiric poetry.

To conclude, I find this a fascinating topic and a well-written book. Although we may not totally drop the word 'Romanization' from our academic vocabulary, we shall henceforth see it in a much more nuanced way. Whether or not the readers share my doubts about some theoretical perspectives and particular conclusions, they can peruse the main chapters with confidence and satisfaction. It is a work of high scholarly standards.

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ILIAS ARNAOUTOGLU: *Ancient Greek Laws. A Sourcebook*. Routledge, London and New York 1998. ISBN 0-415-14984-3 (H/b), 0-415-14985-1 (P/b). xxvii, 164 p. GBP 12.99 (P/b).

This is a selection of ancient Greek laws which have been preserved verbatim. It is aimed at students, hence only translations are given without the original text. The short introductions provide a minimum of context for each passage and rarely address any substantial problems in the text. Grounds for the dating might have been given at least in cases like no. 2, which has been tentatively dated to the 6th century BC, although the text mentions the archonship of 403/2 BC. The authenticity of laws cited in speeches might also have been briefly discussed. In all, somewhat more information could often have been given, as the book is not too long. However, each passage is accompanied by a list of other relevant ancient texts on the same subject and a bibliography of secondary literature. These together make the collection more useful for advanced scholars as well.

The book is advertised as 'comprehensive', which may be a commercially motivated exaggeration. The sample is undoubtedly large enough, but it remains somewhat obscure how representative it is. By far the largest number of texts derive from the Code of Gortyn, but there are also many passages from the Attic orators and a good number of inscriptions from all over the Greek-speaking world. The principles of selection, as explained by A. (xvi-xvii), are not entirely clear. For example, many omissions (Attic inscriptions, papyri) are justified by the existence of other collections, but the intended audience of students with no Greek may find little help in the *Inscriptiones Graecae* or the *Chrestomathie* (1912) of Mitteis - Wilcken. It is a good choice to give more space for evidence from other cities, and thus balance the usual prominence of Athens. Although there would naturally have been no reason to include examples of Roman law in this collection, more than one Greek city decree from the Roman period could have been incorporated, especially as A. himself stresses that Greek legislation continued for centuries after the conquest. A chart displaying the geographical and chronological distribution of all preserved Greek laws might have given readers an idea of the whole corpus from which A. had selected his material.

The collection gives undergraduates a first introduction to the laws of Greek cities. Others can profit from the suggestions for further reading. If the author had been allowed more substance in the general introduction and in the individual commentaries, the sourcebook could have provided even better insight into its topic.

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