

Oltean's comparisons between Dacia and other Roman provinces bring the study much-needed perspective, particularly as this is augmented with extensive comparison between pre-Roman and post-conquest patterns of the area. Despite the undeniable natural riches of Dacia, it seems that positing an analogy with Roman Britain could have some validity with regard to the *political* involvement of the area within the Empire: neither province has produced any conclusive evidence of native senators (Fishbourne Palace should not be regarded as testifying to the contrary). The prominent role of the army, on the other hand, compares well with the similar preponderance of military economies in the Roman Germanies. In whatever forms the Roman influence worked in Dacia, however, Oltean envisions the native Dacians responding to it on the whole enthusiastically, with no clear evidence for local resistance of either physical or ideological nature, and an ensuing swift integration of the province. This reasoning, of course, is based upon the notion that "Romanisation" was a conscious and concrete trend which could effectively be resisted or rejected, and which moreover both aimed and resulted in an "integration" of any given province to an increasingly homogeneous and centrally cohesive Empire. Yet some widespread markers of Roman provincial identity, such as epigraphic commemoration, do not seem to testify to any significant participation of Dacian "natives"; this remains a problem, though hardly a crucial one, in Oltean's vision of Roman Dacia.

If her results, such as finding evidence for an intermixture of continuity and change in provincial Dacia, seem at times to be rather predictable, it is not necessarily the result of self-affirming research hypotheses; though hardly revolutionary, such data needs to be spelled out at some point. Hence, and particularly when considering the past studies of Dacian archaeology of both pre-Roman and provincial periods, Oltean's book is a clear success even by the merit of its conception. The most interesting results may still stem from Oltean's view of the ways that the particular circumstances in Dacia affected the way Romans interacted with their province. According to her it was this, perhaps more than anything else – obviously together with the very short timespan of the Roman rule – that fundamentally explains the surprisingly vigorous evidence for a multifarious continuum of pre-Roman patterns. So we have a combination of provincial particularities conditioning a relatively uniform Roman approach towards their provinces: to disagree would be very difficult. The work's contribution for the field of landscape studies is naturally to be welcomed as well, as is the shift (of course symptomatic of much of Roman provincial archaeology today) away from the urban centres and towards the countryside.

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NICOLAE GUDEA – THOMAS LOBÜSCHER: *Dacia. Eine römische Provinz zwischen Karpaten und Schwarzem Meer*. Zaberns Bildbände zur Archäologie. Orbis Provinciarum. Verlag Philipp von Zabern, Mainz am Rhein 2006. ISBN 978-3-8053-3415-0. IV, 115 S. mit 37 Farb-, 14 SW- und 32 Strichabb. EUR 24.90.

Con questo volume la preziosa serie di Orbis provinciarum raggiunge la provincia romana di Dacia. Gli autori descrivono con competenza la storia e l'archeologia della regione a partire dai tempi preromani fino al ritiro romano sotto Aureliano e oltre. I temi maggiormente trattati riguardano il militare, l'economia, la demografia e la religione, e non poteva mancare un reso-

conto della romanizzazione (pp. 89 e sgg.) che in pratica significò urbanizzazione. Riguardo alla religione, la raccolta, di per sé utile, delle numerose testimonianze epigrafiche di divinità venerate nella provincia avrebbe approfittato da una più articolata contestualizzazione dei dati rispetto alla comunicazione religiosa, ai rituali locali e regionali, nonché al comportamento religioso dei soldati e di altri immigrati. Inoltre le diverse forme culturali e sociali osservabili all'interno del territorio provinciale meritavano di essere approfondite in modo da evitare l'impressione che si sia trattato di un'area culturalmente uniforme. Le illustrazioni sono ben scelte e la veste tipografica è di discreta qualità. Purtroppo sono rimaste nel testo alcune sviste irritanti. A p. 23, per esempio, il nome corretto di "Didius Terentius Scaurianus" (governatore nel 109/112 d. C.) è D(ecimus) Terentius Scaurianus, e "Lucius Grassus" (procuratore della Dacia Porolissensis nel 123 d. C.) deve essere sostituito da Livius Gratus.

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ERICH S. GRUEN: *Rethinking the Other in Antiquity*. Princeton University Press, Princeton – Oxford 2011. ISBN 978-0-691-14852-6. XIV, 415 pp. GBP 27.95.

Ancient perceptions and portrayals of barbarians have undeniably received much attention since the publication of *Le miroir d'Hérodote* by François Hartog (1980), *Le Barbare* by Yves-Albert Dauge (1981), and *Inventing the Barbarian* by Edith Hall (1989). Since those works, the Greco-Roman literary depictions of peoples labelled as "barbarian" have predominantly been treated either through their negative connotations, or through the traditional literary *topoi* that negotiated with what was "known" about the foreigners. This twofold viewpoint was exemplified in Paul Cartledge's *The Greeks. A portrait of self and others* (1993), and of course Benjamin Isaac's widely debated *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (2004). Professor Gruen, however, takes his cue from a slightly earlier, although similarly influential publication: the 1975 monograph *Alien Wisdom* by Arnaldo Momigliano, and its largely unprecedented view of Greeks as being perpetually inspired by their immediate and further-away neighbours. By focusing on constructions of collective identity that sought connections between ancient groups instead of highlighting differences, Gruen intends to present a corrective to what he sees as quasi-orthodoxy in recent scholarship. He does this with remarkable erudition, a broad basis in modern scholarship, and a consistent eye for bringing variation into a subject that has recently (with some remarkable exceptions) become a rather monotonous rehearsal of a "Greco-Roman *leyenda negra*".

Part One, "Impressions of the 'Other'" constitutes a selection of case studies on some well-known ancient sources. Operating from the start in a constructive mode, Gruen begins (Ch. 1-2) with the image of Persia in Greek imagination – a construct that is often cited as one of the fundamentals of the categorical Greek view of "barbarians", and furthermore a strong influence on the whole western tradition of Orientalism. There are no great surprises in the choice of source material: Aeschylus, Herodotus, visual representations, Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*, and the postulated attitude of Alexander provide the chapters' framework. Next, Egypt's ambivalent position in the Classical imagination is taken up (Ch. 3). As was the case with Persia, it is this very ambivalence within such an intertwined field of cultural encounter that makes it possible to find support for both exceptionally positive and exceptionally negative readings.