

Princeton/Stanford Working Papers in Classics

**Narratives of Roman Syria: a historiography of Syria as a province of  
Rome**

Version 1.0

July 2007

Lidewijde de Jong

Stanford University

Abstract: In this paper I examine the scholarship of Roman Syria and the history of research on this province. The scholarly narrative of Roman Syria revolves around strong Greek influence and little impact of Roman rule, which has resulted in studying Syria as a unique and distinct entity, separated from Rome. In light of new archaeological finds and a re-evaluation of older evidence, I argue that these assumptions of deep hellenization and shallow Roman impact need to be abandoned. Using models coming out of research in other provinces of the Roman empire and anthropological studies of colonialism and material culture, I propose a set of different narratives about Roman Syria. This paper is the first chapter of my dissertation: *Becoming a Roman province: An analysis of funerary practices in Roman Syria in the context of empire*.

© Lidewijde de Jong. [ljong@stanford.edu](mailto:ljong@stanford.edu)

## **Chapter 1 Narratives of Roman Syria: a historiography of Syria as a province of Rome**

In Syria [...] the flower of the Hellenic conqueror was settled. [...] For the Romans in Syria not much was left to be done as to the increase of urban development.

(Mommsen 1906, 132)

Mommsen's viewpoint in 1906 still informs most archaeological and historical analyses of Roman Syria between the 1<sup>st</sup> c. BCE and the early 4<sup>th</sup> c. CE. The narrative revolves around strong Greek influence (hellenization) and little impact of Roman rule, which has resulted in studying Syria as a unique and distinct entity, separated from Rome. This is an unusual conclusion, as Syria was under Roman rule for many centuries and, as outlined in the introduction, witnessed many changes in this period. In this dissertation I demonstrate that the existing image of Syria is mistaken and that in fact the conquest by Rome left deep marks on provincial society.

In this chapter I accordingly examine the scholarship on Roman Syria and the history of research on this province. In light of new archaeological finds and a re-evaluation of older evidence, I argue that the standard assumptions of deep hellenization and shallow Roman impact need to be abandoned. Using models coming out of research in other provinces of the Roman empire and anthropological studies of colonialism and material culture, I propose a set of different narratives about Roman Syria. I then test this model with the example of funerary practices in the next chapters and demonstrate how the coming of Rome resulted in economic, social, and political changes. In response to these changes, new relationships among provincials and between provincials and the Roman ruling and military classes were created. These altered relationships were expressed by new meanings of space and consumption, and can be read through the material remains of funerary practices throughout the region.

In the first section of this chapter, I assess the common views that exist about Roman Syria and the areas in which debate takes place. In the second, section I step back and critique the models that inform these views, such as the essentialist treatment of cultures and cultural transmission in provincial societies. Furthermore, I identify and deconstruct hellenocentric views and European biases in the research on Roman Syria.

In the third part, I propose a different approach, singling out several arenas in which the response of local communities to Roman rule can be explored. The fourth and final part of this

chapter introduces the research methods employed to reconstruct these responses through funerary practices, which are further explained in the second chapter.

### 1.1 Syria and the Roman empire

Existing scholarly accounts of Roman Syria revolve around three themes: hellenization, similarity to Rome, and a profound difference with the western provinces of the Roman empire. In the following sections I argue that the overemphasis on these three themes by scholars has obscured the process of Syria's incorporation into the Roman empire and the profound impact of this process on local communities.

#### *Ex Oriente Lux*

Scholars perceive Roman Syria as culturally hellenized, or influenced by Greek ideas and material culture. In the centuries before Roman rule, after Alexander the Great had conquered Syria in the 330s BCE, the region had been part of the Hellenistic empires (Seleucid and Ptolemaic, p. 5). In this period, Greek and Macedonian communities settled in Syria and disseminated their lifestyles to local Syrians. This hellenization included a political system (*polis*-structure), urbanization, city planning (hippodamian grid and public buildings), religious syncretism, and, most of all, Greek language. This, it is argued, persisted throughout the Roman period in Syria that started in 64 BCE.<sup>1</sup>

The hellenization of Syria rests largely on issues of language. Scholars interpret the use of Greek as evidence for hellenized identity and, conversely, the use of a local, Aramaic dialect as a lack of hellenization. Furthermore, references in these Greek texts to features known from communal life in cities in Greece are taken as indicators for hellenization. For instance, the mention of a city council (*boule*) and magistrates (*archontes*) demonstrates the existence of a city-state structure (*polis*). It is assumed that the cities founded by Hellenistic rulers in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BCE in North Syria were organized on the model of the Greek *polis* and held a degree of autonomy (fig. 3).<sup>2</sup> The political structure and cultural features of these four cities spread in greater or lesser extent to other cities and villages. Archaeological evidence for the process of

---

<sup>1</sup> Scholars tend to use the terms 'Greek', 'Hellenized' and 'Hellenistic' indiscriminately when discussing the eastern Mediterranean. For this research, 'Greek' refers to Greece and the western coast of Turkey, and to the language. 'Hellenization' is the influence of Macedonian and Greek traditions on those of the inhabitants of Syria. 'Hellenistic', on the other hand, is a time-period (323-64 BCE).

<sup>2</sup> These are known as the *Tetrapolis* in northern Syria (Antioch, Apamea, Laodicea, and Seleucia-ad-Pieria).

hellenization consists of rectilinear grid plans (also known as hippodamian grids), Macedonian-style fortification walls, public spaces such as an *agora*, and Greek influence on the arts.<sup>3</sup>

Scholars describe local or non-hellenized traditions in terms of their relation to Greek/Macedonian elements. They consider, for instance, the continuation of older traditions in the coinage and language of the cities on the coast of modern Lebanon, the so-called Phoenician cities, in opposition to their otherwise thoroughly hellenized culture.<sup>4</sup> For places where hellenization is more difficult to find, such as Doura Europos and Palmyra, the analyses focus on the mixture of local with Greek/Macedonian elements.<sup>5</sup>

Evidence for non-hellenized, local traditions is also sought in non-urban regions. For example, Jones argues, on the evidence of the adoption of Greek names, that hellenized culture was spread from colonists to native inhabitants in the cities. The countryside remained culturally unaffected by hellenization as the peasants continued to speak Aramaic dialects.<sup>6</sup> Bowersock however, concludes that hellenization was also strong in the villages, where Greek inscriptions have been found.<sup>7</sup>

The view of Syria as part of a hellenized East was developed in the early stages of research on the Roman provinces. Mommsen stated in 1906 that much of the east of the Roman empire belonged exclusively to the Greeks. Roman gods and political organization were never introduced in the East; rather, the Romans were heavily influenced in their contact with the eastern world as they borrowed gods, forms of administration, and Greek language.<sup>8</sup> The differences between East and West were also underlined by Haverfield, who commented that, in contrast to Britain, “in the East where an ancient Greek civilization reigned, the effects of Romanization were inevitably slow. Rome met here the most serious obstacles to union, a race whose thoughts and affections and traditions had crystallized into definite coherent form. That checked imperial assimilation”.<sup>9</sup>

This narrative was firmly entrenched when archaeologists started investigating Syria in the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Classical scholars were interested in the region for its large Hellenistic-period centers, such as Apamea and Antioch, both excavated in the 1930s. Previously unknown

---

<sup>3</sup> See for example: Bowersock 1994, 147, 168; Brunt 1990; Drijvers 1980, 74-75; Hopkins 1979, 259; A. Jones 1963; Leriche 2002; Perkins 1973, 15; Sartre 2005, 8; Schlumberger 1970, 5; Tchalenko 1953, 7; Walbank 1981.

<sup>4</sup> Garnsey & Saller 1987, 191; A. Jones 1971, 250; Millar 1987, 124; Sartre 2005, 9.

<sup>5</sup> For instance Palmyra: Richardson 2002, Schmidt-Colinet 1992; Doura Europos: Cumont 1926, Matheson 1982, Rostovtzeff 1938.

<sup>6</sup> A. Jones 1971, 247-253, 294; See also Butler 1903 xxiv, about the Hauran.

<sup>7</sup> Bowersock 1994, 147, 167, 168.

<sup>8</sup> Mommsen 1906, 127.

<sup>9</sup> Haverfield 1912, 11. See also Bouchier 1915.

sites such as Doura Europos, where French-American excavations started in 1922, were praised as great examples of Greek-Macedonian city planning. Cumont characterizes the site as an old Macedonian colony on the banks of the Euphrates barely changed by the Roman conquest.<sup>10</sup> Another example is Butler, who surveyed northwest Syria at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century and described the style of the Roman period remains as having an inherited independence from Rome and an origin in the Hellenistic architecture of Antioch. Art and architecture in this region was a “provincial reproduction of metropolitan Antioch, in the work of a people trained in Greek traditions and with an admixture of Greek blood in their veins”.<sup>11</sup> These sites and regions were of interest for their Hellenistic-period remains and the mixture of local traits with Greek and Macedonian traditions. The Roman empire, however, is virtually absent in these early accounts.

Scholars of Syria rarely state explicitly the reasons behind the adoption of hellenized ideas and material culture. There is no evidence that the Seleucid and Ptolemaic rulers of Syria actively participated in the conversion of provincial communities. Rather, they imply that contact with more sophisticated ideas and artistic forms resulted in adoption. It was a logical and spontaneous outcome of contact with Greek and Macedonian settlers in the cities and spread from these to other cities and perhaps villages.

The strong hellenization of Syria, it is argued, made the region similar to the Roman empire, in terms of political structure, arts, and level of urbanization, and as such less likely to change after incorporation into the empire. A second important inference is that changes in material culture are interpreted as local phenomena and that the increased urbanization, construction of public buildings and spaces (theatre, agora, temple), and the use of Greek language on inscriptions from the 1<sup>st</sup> c. CE onwards are a continuation of hellenization into the Roman period. The provision of peace and the influx of wealth in the first centuries of Roman rule stimulated or jumpstarted certain trends that had been dormant earlier.

In the second section of this chapter, I demonstrate that there is little evidence for the hellenization of Syria in the Hellenistic period and that this seems instead to be a feature of the Roman centuries.

### *East & West*

A second assumed characteristic of Roman Syria was a pronounced difference with the western provinces of the Roman empire.<sup>12</sup> This is argued for most provinces in the eastern

---

<sup>10</sup> Cumont 1926, x; See also Hopkins, one of the excavation directors in the 1930s (1979, 260).

<sup>11</sup> Butler 1903, xxxii.

<sup>12</sup> The western provinces for this study include the region of modern Belgium, Britain, France, the Netherlands, Spain and Italy, as well as the Roman provinces in North Africa.

Roman empire, including modern Greece, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria, and Turkey. Macmullen summarizes this common view when he states that in the West, non-Roman customs disappeared; however, “in the East, by contrast, it was the Roman intruder’s ways that were eventually forced off the stage”.<sup>13</sup> Scholars generally draw a strong boundary between the western and eastern empire. In the eastern empire, also called ‘the Greek East’, the impact of Roman rule on local communities and structures was supposedly minimal compared to the western regions. Mommsen and Haverfield already mentioned this division in the early stages of research on the Roman province.

The main evidence for this division is the lack of so-called romanization in these eastern areas. Romanization, literally the ‘making Roman’ of people in the provinces, deals with the connection between changes in material culture and incorporation into the empire. The Roman period in the western provinces witnessed the large-scale adoption of new artifacts, which were considered to originate in the dominant Roman culture. Traditionally, scholars of the Roman provinces argue that contact between Roman and provincial societies following conquest resulted in identity change in the latter. This process can be traced through change in language and material culture and the adoption of Roman lifestyles by provincial communities in the form of public buildings, Latin language, dress, bathing, diet, food preparation, literature, architecture, and art. This new culture accompanied the soldiers, colonists, and foreign merchants who entered the province and through whom Roman lifestyles spread.

The outcome was the creation of local mixtures, such as Romano-British or Gallo-Roman.<sup>14</sup> The reasons for the identity change are not often stated explicitly in these accounts, but they revolve around the idea that contact with technologically more advanced tools and sophisticated ideas results in adoption, similar to the reasons behind hellenization as explained in the previous section. In this process of adopting goods and ideas from the occupier, the provincial communities became more like the occupier. It was a one-way, progressive process which came, top-down, from the occupier to the occupied.

Some authors argue that it was an entirely voluntary process.<sup>15</sup> Others see a stronger role for the Roman government in encouraging the local communities to embrace Roman lifestyles. Frere, for instance, following Tacitus’ *Agricola* quite literally, argues that the Romans took care

---

<sup>13</sup> MacMullen 2000, 46. See also Garnsey & Saller 1987, 191.

<sup>14</sup> See for example: Haverfield 1912, 11; Frere 1967; Mommsen 1906; Wachter 1979. See also Collingwood 1932, 6-7. For a recent account with the same arguments, see MacMullen 2000.

<sup>15</sup> Haverfield 1912, 14; Wachter 1979, 74.

of teaching their ways to the people in Britain.<sup>16</sup> The limits of change are also investigated and the Roman impact on local religious beliefs and afterlife is debated.<sup>17</sup> Scholars consider material culture a marker of identity, and regard people who use a greater quantity of Roman objects as more Roman. Thus, romanization can be measured by means of a checklist, by adding or subtracting Roman ideas and objects in order to identify the degree of ‘Romanness’ of a provincial community or individual.<sup>18</sup>

The Roman province of Syria did not experience a shift in material culture in a similar way as Britain, France, and Spain. The large-scale introduction of Roman artifacts and ideas and the local production of these goods were absent in Syria. Since research on romanization has in the past focused predominantly on the introduction of these identifiable Roman artifacts and ideas, Syria is considered not to have been influenced by Roman rule. As a result of this lack of Roman goods and the presence of a strongly hellenized culture, scholars reconstruct a Roman Syria that looks profoundly different from the western provinces. The only archaeologically visible changes that are ascribed to Roman rule are engineering improvements (bridges, roads, and aqueducts), skills in which the practical Romans surpassed even the Greeks. The story told about Syria and, indeed, of most other eastern provinces is one of stability, continuity, and independence. This is illustrated, for instance, by Kennedy when he states that the region had a deep and rich heritage before the arrival of Rome and maintained a remarkable degree of independence in the Roman period: “for the Romans this must have been a confusing world”.<sup>19</sup> Price similarly describes cities in Turkey as civilized and complex, with ideals about freedom and autonomy.<sup>20</sup> By contrast, the Romans were never confused by the rich heritage of Gaul or Hispania.

In the last decades, archaeologists have strongly criticized the models that underlie romanization studies, in particular those concerning cultural transmission and identifiable Roman goods. Alternative readings of material culture in the western provinces have been sought; these are described in the second section of this chapter. These new readings have implications for

---

<sup>16</sup> Frere 1967, 304-305, 311. Tacitus writes about Agricola the governor of Britain: “he (Agricola) educated the sons of the chiefs in the liberal arts [...] the nation that used to reject the Latin language began to aspire rhetoric [...], the toga came into fashion and little by little the Britons went astray into alluring vices: to the promenade (arcade), the baths and sumptuous banquets” (Tacitus *Agricola* 21). See also Garnsey & Saller 1987, 186-188.

<sup>17</sup> Opposite opinions: Frere 1967, 303 and Wachter 1979, 104.

<sup>18</sup> The development of the concept of romanization since the 19<sup>th</sup> century is summarized in Mattingly 1997 and Webster & Cooper 1996. See also Woolf about the study of Roman Gaul (1998, 4) and Hingley (1996, 59-60) for Roman Africa. A good introduction into more recent studies of Romanization is provided by Derks 1998.

<sup>19</sup> Kennedy 1999, 79-80. See also Drijvers 1980, 77.

<sup>20</sup> Price 1984, 1.

research on the province of Syria and its development under Roman rule. These implications, however, are rarely appreciated and the models of cultural transmission remain uncriticized for Roman Syria. In this dissertation I apply some of these new approaches to Roman Syria.

*“What have the Romans ever done for us?”*<sup>21</sup>

A third and related common view of Roman Syria stresses its structural similarity to the Roman empire. The types of institutions created to govern, the demands of the empire as well as the pre-existing social, economic, and political structures of provincial societies are essential in understanding the degree, intensity, and form of imperial impact. Scholars argue that the pre-existing structures in Syria and their similarity to Rome’s own resulted in little change under Roman rule. To quote Drijvers: “in contrast to Britain and Gaul, where one could argue that the Romans brought the fruits of civilization to barbaric lands, in Roman Syria the new rulers added an administrative-military layer on top of a social and culturally complex society”.<sup>22</sup>

The Roman administrative body for instance, was small and incapable of governing the provinces on the ground. The Romans therefore relied in large part on local administrators for the maintenance of order and tax-collection, and used the city as a unit for governance of the provinces. Urbanization was thus stimulated, in the form of colonies with veteran settlers, but also in the form of new indigenous cities from which the local elite administered the region.<sup>23</sup> These cities were built on the model of Rome and formed points of contact between local people and veterans, other immigrants, and foreign merchants. In these cities the initial synthesis of several traditions occurred.

Most authors agree that, unlike other provinces, a structure of cities existed in Syria before the Roman conquest, specifically in northwest Syria and the Lebanese coast. Little administrative reorganization was thus needed. Furthermore, Roman administrators established only a single colony in Syria (Beirut). The volume of non-local settlers compared to local inhabitants was much lower than in other parts of the Roman world. Thus, the direct contact between colonizers and colonized was limited, as were intrusive practices such as land appropriation and intensification of agricultural return.

Other evidence for the structural similarity of Syria to Rome comes from the demands of the Roman empire. For tax purposes and supplying nearby armies, for instance, the provinces had to produce surpluses. In many regions, no system of taxation had existed before and agricultural

---

<sup>21</sup> *Monty Python's Life of Brian*, directed by Terry Jones (1979).

<sup>22</sup> Drijvers 1980, 77; see also A. Jones 1971 and MacMullen 2000.

<sup>23</sup> See also Hopkins 1980, 102.



practices were increased, resulting in a changing relationship to the land and rural life.<sup>24</sup> Most communities in Syria had been used to paying some type of tax for millennia, and agricultural intensification and urbanization were not necessary for the incorporation into the Roman empire.<sup>25</sup> Scholars of Roman Syria, therefore, argue that the similarity to Rome resulted in a diminished impact of Roman rule. In the west, Roman rule required new cities, markets, surpluses, and identifiable elites to take care of local governing. These were already in place in Syria, and so the narratives about the province revolve around the continuation of pre-Roman traditions.

These three related characteristics of Roman Syria, hellenization, difference from the western provinces, and similarity to Rome, explain the treatment of Syria as disconnected from the Roman empire. Jones concludes that “the most surprising feature of Roman rule in the Greek East is that despite its long duration it had so little effect on the civilization of the area”.<sup>26</sup>

This is a surprising feature indeed, and one that is refuted in this dissertation. In the next section I critique the narrative of Roman Syria and I argue that, while the different make-up of Syria does explain the why Syria looked so different from the western provinces, the actual similarity to Rome is exaggerated and obscures local variation. Furthermore, there is little evidence for hellenization in Syria prior to Roman rule, and the models of cultural transmission behind hellenization are questionable. Indeed, the narrative of Syria is more informative about the role of Roman and Greek culture in European and Euro-American self-definition than it is about life in Roman Syria.

## 1.2 Postcolonial critique and the Roman provinces

Romanization studies and the underlying models of culture history and culture change have been critiqued in the last decades, and with them also the analyses of the Roman impact in the province. Scholars of Roman Syria, however, have never re-examined the models that govern the accounts of the province. In this section I take a closer look at the evidence and the interpretive models behind the narrative of Roman Syria and situate them in the wider intellectual history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. I argue that the narrative of Syria provides a poor understanding of the different communities and their multiple responses to incorporation into the Roman empire.

---

<sup>24</sup> See for instance Hopkins 1980, 101.

<sup>25</sup> The limestone plateau in northwest Syria forms an exception. Surveyors of this region argue that the agricultural practices increase to greater (Tchalenko 1953) or lesser (Tate 1992) extent as a result of Roman intervention.

<sup>26</sup> A. Jones 1963, 3.

### *Culture-historical archaeology*

The notions of romanization and hellenization described above lean heavily on the so-called culture-historical approach. This approach, which characterized most archaeological and anthropological research until the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, involves identifying groups of people by their material culture.<sup>27</sup> A particular group, often described as a culture and an ethnic group, has a particular set of artifacts, building styles, and settlement patterns within spatial and temporal bounds. A change in these patterns indicates a change in the ethnic make-up of the group, meaning either mixture through diffusion or movement of people. In the case of the Roman province, the adoption of Roman pottery by provincial communities, for example, is interpreted as embracing a Roman style of consumption and thereby assuming a more Roman identity. Similarly hellenized settlement patterns and architecture in Syria indicate a certain measure of ‘Greekness’ or becoming Greek.

Romanization critics have used Said’s work in particular in their analyses. In *Orientalism*, Said uncovers stereotypical and simplified notions of the East (the Orient) in western literature. Orientalism is the discourse that deals with the Orient and therefore a construction by the West. It assumes an unchanging Orient with single, ethnic identities, and it is fundamentally different in this from the West.<sup>28</sup> Said’s work has stimulated close readings of texts about the Roman empire in order to tease out similar (binary) notions about colonizers and colonized. Especially in the case of the well-studied western Roman provinces, traditional research has been connected to colonial studies, i.e. studying the Roman empire in the context of the British and French empires of the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century. Descriptions of Roman encounters with local people are connected to the way these modern empires imagined and legitimized their role in colonial societies as a civilizing power. This includes the tendency to describe the Roman encounter with subject peoples in terms of binary structures (Roman vs. local) and depictions of unchanging and passive colonized communities.<sup>29</sup>

The traditional model of romanization provides good examples of the problems with treating cultures as distinct entities. The term ‘Roman’, although rarely defined or specified in romanization studies, appears to be both a temporal (after conquest) and a geographical (coming from Italy) term. Recent studies however, have pointed to the process of romanization that took place in Italy itself between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> c. BCE.<sup>30</sup> Coming from Italy cannot, at least not in all periods, be held as similar to ‘Roman’. Furthermore, much of the material culture identified as

---

<sup>27</sup> Most famously developed by Childe (1929).

<sup>28</sup> Said 1978, 1-3; for similar analyses see Abu-Lughod 1989 and Wolf 1982.

<sup>29</sup> Dietler 2005; van Dommelen 1997, 1998; articles in Webster & Cooper 1996.

<sup>30</sup> Key & Terrenato 2001, preface; see also Woolf 1998, 7 and Mattingly 2004, 9-10.

‘Roman’ in Britain and Belgium originates not from Rome or Italy but from other provinces, such as Spain and France. Finally, the process of romanization as described above did not always take place directly after conquest. Some coastal areas of Britain, for instance, adopted new pottery in the decades before the Roman conquest, whereas this took place several centuries after conquest in southern France and Spain. Both the temporal and geographical characteristics of the term ‘Roman’ are therefore problematic.

The use of ‘local’ in romanization studies similarly implies the existence of a single and homogenous pre-Roman (Iron Age) culture. This Iron Age culture was recognizable in opposition to Roman culture by its own –unchanging– material culture. Archaeological studies, however, reveal that local cultures were not static up to the point of contact with the Romans. Furthermore, as Jones argues, the term ‘local’ obscures the heterogeneous societies that existed in the Iron Age, and its different actors, locations, and settings.<sup>31</sup> Both ‘Roman’ and ‘local’ represent multiple identities in multiple contexts. They do not, however, correspond to ethnic identities with a distinct and bound set of material goods.<sup>32</sup>

The interpretation of cultures as stable and essentialist units of comparison abounds in studies of Roman Syria. Phoenician imagery and Parthian dress are equated with Phoenician and Parthian identities. ‘Local’ exists primarily in opposition to ‘Greek’, and refers to anything that is not hellenized, such as Parthian, Mesopotamian, Phoenician, Semitic, Arab, and sometimes Syrian. Furthermore, ‘Greek’ institutions such as a *polis*-structure refer to 5<sup>th</sup> c. BCE city-states rather than to the multiple political institutions that were common to the late 4<sup>th</sup> century Macedonian and Greek colonists of Syria. Finally, the equation of the language of inscriptions with spoken language is problematic. Most textual and onomastic evidence from Syria, Palestine, and Arabia suggests that Semitic languages were spoken in all regions through the Hellenistic and Roman period up to the present. A high degree of bilingualism probably existed, at least on the level of official communication. This was not uncommon in the region, as Aramaic was employed as a *lingua franca* in the Persian Achaemenid empire. The use of ‘Greek’ as a stable unit of comparison is untenable in the study of Syria, and, rather than viewing ‘local’ culture as a site for multiple foreign influences from east or west, a more effective notion of hybridity is discussed below.

---

<sup>31</sup> S. Jones 1997, 129. See also Fabian 1983, Lightfoot 1995, and Thomas 1991 for an anthropological critique of the notion of essentialist and unchanging pre-colonial cultures.

<sup>32</sup> For a general critique of the concept of ethnicity and the problems of this concept in archaeological studies, see Hall 1997 and S. Jones 1997.

*“Resistance is Futile”: acculturation and reverse acculturation*

The second point of critique relates to models of cultural transmission. Research on Roman provinces is influenced by acculturation studies, which involve tracing the mutual cultural influence between groups in settings of contact, and whereby older traditions are lost. In anthropology between the 1920s and 60s, the notion of acculturation was used in the context of colonization. Developed alongside western imperialism (19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century), the model offered a way to explain the frequent adoption of ideas and goods from the colonizer by the colonized. Whereas the original term concerns culture change on both sides, in the context of western colonization the focus has been on the colonized communities. The culture of the colonizer was considered better or more sophisticated and therefore assimilated by lesser, colonized communities which lost their own –pre-contact- traditions in the process. The stimulus for assimilation was contact and the mere presence of an advanced culture.<sup>33</sup>

As described above, both hellenization and romanization operate on these same models. In Syria, hellenization occurred because it provided greater sophistication than local options, leading to a loss of local traditions. Millar, for instance, concludes that in the Roman period there was no real local identity inside the Near Eastern provinces. Even the vibrant pagan and Christian cultures of Mesopotamia, as well as elements of Phoenician traditions, were in fact derivatives of Greek culture.<sup>34</sup> Greek traditions are placed higher on the progressive ladder of civilization and they change those on the lower steps. Furthermore, the interest in local traditions only in opposition to the dominant culture and the idea of diminishing local diversity, are reminiscent of the place of native communities in colonial narratives of western imperialism.

This notion of greater sophistication is problematic, since it is difficult to define what ‘better’ is. Research has also shown that greater sophistication is not necessarily a reason for adoption. The analysis of the anthropologist Thomas of value systems in Pacific Island communities and the contact with western traders, for instance, shows that the reason for adoption is not the technological sophistication of goods (such as more powerful and deadly weapons), but the extent to which they can be incorporated into local structures. Different ideas about the value and exchangeability of weapons and foodstuffs result in some groups adopting western artifacts more than others. The usefulness in local contexts in connection to, and not infrequently in

---

<sup>33</sup> Scholars employ different versions of the acculturation model in studies of the Roman province, not all of which explain greater sophistication as the driving force for change. Millet (1990) for instance argues that acculturation (transfer of cultural elements) took place in Roman Britain because the local elites saw an advantage in using Roman material culture and ideas for their local context (see more below). The notion of acculturation however, no matter how subtly defined, assumes the existence of essentialist cultures in opposition to each other.

<sup>34</sup> Millar 1993, 492-506. See also A. Jones 1963, 10.

conflict with, the needs of the foreign traders, informs the anthropologist about the patterns of material culture. The adoption of goods is not inevitable but part of local social, economic, and political networks.<sup>35</sup> The intrinsic qualities of Roman or Greek culture, therefore, if these ever existed, cannot account for their adoption by other communities.

The reasons why scholars of Syria have considered Greek traditions more sophisticated than local (oriental) traditions must be sought in the place of Greece in European self-definition. A close reading of the narrative of Roman Syria uncovers a strong hellenocentric approach to the region. The history of Syria is valued for its hellenization, in a pure or mixed form or in opposition to it. This is not only a feature of Syria. In fact, hellenocentrism is strongly embedded in European archaeology and history. Morris has described the evolution of the importance of ancient Greek history for European self-identification. Ancient Greece was viewed as the birthplace of the European spirit in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, especially by northwestern Europeans.<sup>36</sup> This has resulted in over-emphasizing Greek aspects in non-Greek areas. Sherwin-White and Kuhrt state that “it has long been customary to search the Middle East microscopically for any evidence of something Greek”, and we can trace this in many accounts of Syria.<sup>37</sup>

The assumed acculturative power of Greek culture should be considered in this light. Since Greek culture as a precursor to European civilization is supposed to be more sophisticated than local Syrian culture, it becomes a civilizing force. The period of strong hellenization in Syria is seen as a period of ‘west’ in the ‘east’. Also, the pairing of similar cultures when Rome entered hellenized Syria left the region unsuitable for acculturation, which doesn’t flow between equally sophisticated cultures. Interestingly, not only oriental but also Roman culture ranks lower than Greek culture. The notion of Greeks being culturally influenced by Romans is highly controversial, in ancient and modern times. The implicit assumption of Roman civilization as being lesser when compared to Greek civilization is noted elsewhere in archaeological accounts. This, according to Dietler, stems from contradictory notions about the place in Greek and Latin cultures in European and Euro-American societies in the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the present.<sup>38</sup>

This, finally, lies at the heart of Mommsen’s quote at the beginning of this chapter and many of the subsequent accounts of Roman Syria. In a hellenized world such as Syria, the Romans construct bridges and defend borders but cannot possibly have had a cultural impact. The absence of hellenization in most western provinces, by contrast, left them wide open to Roman

---

<sup>35</sup> Thomas 1991. See also Dietler 2005, 66.

<sup>36</sup> Morris 1994, 8-47. See also Shanks 1996.

<sup>37</sup> Sherwin-White & Kuhrt 1993, 141. See also Alcock 1993; Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1987, preface; Said 1978, 55-58, 74. The search for Greekness was also important in studies of other regions and periods, such as the western Mediterranean (van Dommelen 1998, 20) and Cyprus (Leriu 2002).

<sup>38</sup> Dietler 2005, 39, 41; see also Alcock in the same volume (2005, 301).

civilization. The strong divide between East and West in studies of the Roman empire should, at least partly, be explained within this framework.

MacMullen writes that “the Romans had nothing but respect for Greeks and hellenized culture. No aggression should be looked for on the cultural level. The intruders would defer to local custom, would already be converts to it”.<sup>39</sup> This corresponds to what Alcock has termed ‘reverse acculturation’ as a model applied by scholars looking at Roman Greece. In Greece itself no cultural change occurred as a result of being part of the Roman empire. Rather, Greek traditions were imported to Rome and changed Roman culture.<sup>40</sup> Horace writes “Greece, the captive, made her savage victor captive and brought the arts into rustic Latium”.<sup>41</sup>

Again, the notion of a more sophisticated culture is not useful in explaining cultural transmission. This long tradition of hellenocentrism and bias in research on Syria has, furthermore, obscured a great diversity of local traditions and communities. Exceptions are those (few) scholars who study Roman Syria from an eastern viewpoint and in terms of the interaction with Mesopotamian and Parthian traditions. Colledge and Downey, for instance, notice strong local traditions in the art and architecture of Roman Syria.<sup>42</sup>

It is important to draw attention to issues of power in the context of an empire. The asymmetrical power relations that are highlighted in the west are not an issue for the east and the absence of Roman artifacts is seen as a sign of resistance and independence from Roman power. This is problematic, since the Roman administrators and soldiers who set foot in Syria may have been marveling over its grand ancient monuments, but they never lost sight of their own dominant position of power. Most importantly however, there is in fact direct little evidence for the actual hellenization of Syria.

#### *Athens on the Orontes?*

A major problem with the traditional narrative of Syria is the lack of any actual evidence for hellenization before the Roman period. This scarcity of evidence is often mourned, yet it is not the evidence but the treatment of this evidence that is incomplete. As indicated in the first part of this chapter, scholars explain the changes that occurred in Syria in the first centuries of Roman rule as local developments, since these built on cultural traditions (hellenization) that existed in Syria before the conquest by Rome. In this section I demonstrate that these changes cannot be related to existing cultural traditions but coincided with the coming of Rome.

---

<sup>39</sup> MacMullen 2000, 1-2.

<sup>40</sup> Alcock 1989, 5; 1993, 1-3.

<sup>41</sup> Horace, Epistles 2.1.156: *Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit et artis intulit agresti Latio.*

<sup>42</sup> Colledge 1976, 8, 123, 218; Downey 1988.

Hellenization in Syria is inferred from the spread of a Greek type of administrative structure and cultural institutions through the presence of Macedonian and Greek colonists in the cities between the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> and the middle of the 1<sup>st</sup> c. BCE. Millar and Graf have demonstrated, however, that the evidence for these elements outside the *Tetrapolis* cities is questionable, and that even the evidence from these four cities themselves is inconclusive.<sup>43</sup> The evidence is slight and the reliance on the use of Greek terms problematic. Lauffray, for instance, takes the find in Palmyra of a weight with the name *Nikon Agoranomos* as evidence that the city had a Greek-style *agora*.<sup>44</sup> The term *agora* could however also refer to a local, non-hellenized, institution.

More problematic is that most of the evidence dates to a later period: Roman, Parthian, or Byzantine. All the references to the *polis*-structure of cities, almost all Greek inscriptions, and by far the greatest part of the archaeological evidence for hellenization date to a later period. Buildings that seem to signify Greek institutions and taste, for instance, such as theatres and gymnasia, were constructed after the 1<sup>st</sup> c. BCE.<sup>45</sup> Hellenistic Antioch is largely reconstructed on the basis of later sources such as Libanius (4<sup>th</sup> c. CE) and Malalas (6<sup>th</sup> c. CE).<sup>46</sup> Most authors assume that these buildings are a continuation from the Hellenistic period, but there is little evidence for backdating.

Sauvaget's study of Hellenistic city planning is an example of the longstanding paradigm of Hellenistic Syria and its problems. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, he surveyed modern cities and reconstructed their ancient city plan. He collected evidence for rectilinear city plans and the city walls in Laodicea (modern Lattakia), Antioch (Antakia), Apamea, Damascus, Beroia (Aleppo) and Doura Europos. He argued that these cities were designed and constructed in one try by the colonists at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> and early 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BCE.<sup>47</sup>

Even though Sauvaget's evidence, textual or archaeological, actually dates not to the Hellenistic period but to several centuries after the initial colonization (2<sup>nd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> c. CE), most scholars use his findings in their analyses of the Hellenistic period in Syria.<sup>48</sup> Recent re-evaluations of the grid plan and fortifications at both Doura Europos and Apamea, however, refute his idea of instant planning. At Doura Europos the construction of the city wall is now

---

<sup>43</sup> Graf 1992b, 3-10; Millar 1987, 114-115. See also van de Spek 2005, 395.

<sup>44</sup> Lauffray 1977, 141.

<sup>45</sup> Segal 1995.

<sup>46</sup> For example Downey 1961.

<sup>47</sup> Sauvaget 1934.

<sup>48</sup> Even Grainger in his very detailed study of Seleucid cities bases his reconstruction of the size and number of colonists on Sauvaget's findings (Grainger 1990).

dated to the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BCE, 150 years after the foundation.<sup>49</sup> The date of the construction of the rectilinear grid is still debated but was at least a century after the foundation.<sup>50</sup> The initial settlement at Doura Europos was a small military garrison on the citadel and some adjacent areas (fig. 26).

Similarly, no evidence can date the rectilinear grid plan of Apamea to the foundation, or even to the Hellenistic period. Balty re-dates the city wall to about 200 BCE, more than a century after the colonial foundation of the site.<sup>51</sup> The rectangular grid plan of Beirut appears to have had a Persian predecessor.<sup>52</sup> Sauvaget's idea that the rectilinear grid plan and city walls were built simultaneously, at the time of foundation of a Hellenistic settlement, is, so far, not supported by archaeological evidence.

Even cities that held a sizeable Greek and Macedonian immigrant population contained few of the buildings and institutions known from their homeland. From the military colony at Doura Europos there is no evidence for a theatre, gymnasium, or even a temple dating to the Hellenistic period.<sup>53</sup> A temple was excavated at another military post in Syria, at Jebel Khalid, but the excavators characterize this building as a mixture of Macedonian/Greek and Mesopotamian features.<sup>54</sup> Across the border in modern Iraq, the ancient colony and capital of the Hellenistic (Seleucid) empire, Seleucia-on-the-Tigris, did not seem to possess a Greek-style temple but a Mesopotamian ziggurat.<sup>55</sup>

These re-evaluations are beginning to point to an identification of the Hellenistic settlements as small, without monumental architecture (except perhaps fortifications), built in local material, and with few of the cultural institutions known from cities in Greece and Asia Minor.<sup>56</sup> There is little connection between the cities as they survive from the Roman period and their Hellenistic predecessors.<sup>57</sup> Instead, the construction of typical 'Greek' buildings, the mention of a *polis*-structure, and most inscriptions in the Greek language, belong to the 1<sup>st</sup> c. CE and later, well into the period of Roman occupation of Syria. The full expression of hellenization of cities and villages therefore was a feature not of the Hellenistic but of the Roman period.

---

<sup>49</sup> Downey 2000, 155; Leriche 1993, 119.

<sup>50</sup> Downey dates the grid to 150-100 BCE; Leriche tentatively assigns it to around 200 BCE.

<sup>51</sup> Balty & van Rengen 1993, 8.

<sup>52</sup> Butcher 2003, 30. See also Curvers & Stuart 1998-1999, 22.

<sup>53</sup> Downey 2000, 160; Leriche 2002, 103.

<sup>54</sup> Leriche 2002; Clarke 2003, 175.

<sup>55</sup> Downey 1988, 62-63. See also Hopkins 1972 and Invernizzi 1966, 1967, 1976.

<sup>56</sup> See also Bowersock 1994, 169; Segal 1997.

<sup>57</sup> Mitchell demonstrates a similar lack of evidence for hellenized cities before the Roman period for the better studied region of central and eastern Anatolia (1993, 81).



Scholars mention that the lack of hellenized material from the Hellenistic period itself is a problem of archaeological sample. They argue that the Hellenistic-period cities and villages have not been excavated yet, or were destroyed by the large-scale building projects that took place in the subsequent centuries.<sup>58</sup> While the latter is probably true to some extent, the first is questionable. Archaeologists studying other periods in the region have encountered Hellenistic remains since the 1910s when Sir Woolley blew up the Hellenistic settlement covering older layers at Carchemish. Since then the Hellenistic remains have been treated better and, although still not of much interest to Near Eastern archaeologists, are sometimes published.

At least 44 sites are known with Hellenistic remains from modern Syria and Lebanon (not counting those identified in surface surveys), of which 14 have been excavated on a large scale.<sup>59</sup> Furthermore, since the rise of survey studies, hundreds of Hellenistic-period sites have been identified in the Balikh valley, Akkar plain, Khabur valley (Tell Leilan survey, Upper Khabur survey), and in northern Syria (Gabra plain, Hierapolis/Membij region, Jabbul plain and the river Qoueiq valley).<sup>60</sup>

This is not the place to review the Hellenistic material, which would need careful and detailed consideration. The excavations and surveys of the Hellenistic period in Syria point to a time of great activity, settlement increase, and commercial contacts with the Aegean world, Mesopotamia, North Africa, and Italy. They do not, however, point to strong hellenization.

Stripped of its models of cultural transmission and Euro-American biases, a different Roman Syria starts to appear. The changes that took place in the first centuries CE can no longer be explained as continuations of existing patterns. Rather, the increased urbanization, construction of public buildings and spaces, and use of Greek for inscriptions from the 1<sup>st</sup> c. CE onward, should be considered part of a new development. In the third section of this chapter I argue that there is good evidence to connect these changes, including the hellenization of Syria, to the coming of Rome.

### *Syria and Rome*

In the previous sections I addressed how the scholarly narrative of Roman Syria is based on a treatment of essentialist cultures that obscures the diversity of communities in the region. Hellenization in Syria cannot be explained through greater sophistication. In fact, hellenization

---

<sup>58</sup> For instance Drijvers 1980, 76 and Millar 1987.

<sup>59</sup> Beirut, Doura Europos, Jebel Khalid, Kamid el-Loz, Mari, Oumm el-‘Amed, Palmyra, Ras el-Bassit, Ras Ibn Hani, Ras Shamra, Sheikh Hamad, Sidon, Tell Beydar, Tell Kazel.

<sup>60</sup> Bartl & Chaaya 2002, Dorna-Metzger 1996, Gerritsen 1996, Lund 1990, Lyonnet 1996, Matthers 1981, Sanlaville 1985, Schwartz *et.al.* 2000. See also Grainger 1990, 115-119.

itself is questionable, at least in the centuries before Roman rule. In this section I investigate the other traditionally perceived characteristics of Roman Syria: the similarity to Rome in terms of political and economic structures and the difference from the western provinces of the empire. I argue that the similarity to Rome is exaggerated and obscures regional and contextual differences. In fact, developments in Syria were not always dissimilar from changes in the western provinces. The treatment of Syria as disconnected from the Roman empire is therefore questionable.

Scholars of Roman Syria have argued that by the time Syria was incorporated into the Roman empire, it was urbanized along a *polis*-structure and had systems of agricultural return and taxation that were comparable to Rome, as well as civic elites that could take care of governing. These structural similarities, in combination with a small number of foreign colonists, resulted in little impact of Roman rule.

However, as mentioned already, there is no evidence for the spread (or even the existence) of a *polis*-structure in pre-Roman Syria. Graf, for instance, has demonstrated that there are no signs of self-governing and hellenized institutions in the ten cities of the *Decapolis* (southern Syria and northern Jordan). Rather, he describes these cities on the eve of Roman conquest as “a bunch of fortified towns and villages, dominated by petty kings, local tyrants and chiefs”.<sup>61</sup> The political structure and form of organization of most other regions in Syria in the Hellenistic period remains obscure. By the time the Romans arrived however, the region was divided into small kingdoms, chiefdoms, and a few city-states (p. 3). The similarity to Rome in terms of political structure is thus unknown. Initially, most of the existing power structures were kept intact, but, over the next century, the different areas were annexed and placed under the direct rule of a Roman governor. This means that power was transferred from monarchic or aristocratic local institutions to that of a Roman administrator. As in the western provinces, a reshuffling of local structure probably occurred in Syria when this happened. The Roman preference for the city as a unit of provincial organization is, furthermore, likely to have had a deep impact in regions where this type of organization did not exist before (in the steppe and desert).<sup>62</sup>

The regional diversity of Roman Syria needs to be considered as well. Surveys have indicated that both the Hauran in the south and the region of the Limestone Plateau in northwest Syria were only in the Roman period inhabited for the first time on a large scale since the Bronze Age. The development of these regions is connected to an intensification of agricultural practices.

---

<sup>61</sup> Graf 1992b, 3-5, 22.

<sup>62</sup> See also Butcher 2003, 223, 270.

The presence of veterans in these regions, as expressed through tomb inscriptions, could imply Roman involvement in the annexation and settling of these lands, but this is still debated.<sup>63</sup>

Producing tax revenues and supplying armies were demands of Rome, but so was providing access to luxury items. The hand of Rome is visible all over the Near East along the main trade routes for luxury items coming from Arabia (incense, scented woods) and the East Asia (precious stones, silk, and other textiles). There is evidence of direct meddling with trade affairs in the early 1<sup>st</sup> c. CE, such as the construction of a road from the main caravan city of Palmyra to the Euphrates and sending Palmyrene traders to the Persian gulf on the orders of Germanicus (p. 61-62).<sup>64</sup>

Scholars of Roman Syria have implied that there was little opportunity for cross-cultural contact since the number of foreign colonists was relatively small. The number of soldiers, however, never was. The location of the region in the battleground of Late Republican generals and local usurpers, and later on the border with powerful enemies (Parthians and Persians), ensured the continuous presence of large armed forces in many cities of Syria.<sup>65</sup> The military is often seen as a major source of the spread and mixture of new ways and ideas, and this perhaps occurred in Syria as well. Pollard, for instance, makes the connection between the presence of the Roman army and the introduction of new material culture (types of coins and baths) at Doura Europos.<sup>66</sup> Furthermore, as in the western provinces, the army also provided a new path of social mobility for people in Roman Syria.

A picture emerges of an empire that was intrusive in many aspects of provincial life in Syria, upsetting local hierarchies and demographic structures, and potentially transforming economic and agricultural practices. The similarity of Syria to Rome and the difference from the western provinces are thus not as monolithic as is argued by most scholars, and varies in relation to the regions, pre-existing structures, and the specific demands of the empire. The differences from other provinces are obvious, but the degree and extent of these differences should not be exaggerated, thereby reinforcing cultural tropes about 'East' vs. 'West'.<sup>67</sup>

---

<sup>63</sup> Tate 1992; Tchalenko 1953.

<sup>64</sup> Bowersock 1994, 85-89, 176; Dijkstra 1995, 82.

<sup>65</sup> Sartre reconstructs the presence of four legions in Syria and numerous auxiliary units. This number fluctuated in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> century as the borders were pushed further into Mesopotamia and back (Sartre 2005, 60-61, 136-137).

<sup>66</sup> Pollard 2004. Also Pollard 1996, 211.

<sup>67</sup> Scholars have also questioned the notion of dissimilarity of western provinces with Rome. Some argue that elite-structures in Britain and France were in many ways similar to Rome (Millett 1990, see more below). Others have pointed to the existence of similar religious practices (divine rulers and urban cult) in pre-Roman Spain and North Africa (Whittaker 1995, 21). Furthermore, the degree and development of urbanization, economic return, markets and elites, varied a great deal in the different regions of the western Mediterranean.

In the previous sections I have demonstrated the shortcomings in our understanding of Syria as a Roman province. The view of a deeply hellenized Syria that was part of a ‘Greek East’ and that developed relatively independently from the empire is no longer tenable. The assumption of essentialist cultures has covered up the diversity of communities and traditions that Rome encountered in Syria at the time of conquest. The models of cultural transmission that lie behind acculturation and reverse acculturation take away agency from the groups that are culturally influenced. A hellenocentric approach has furthermore overemphasized the so-called Greek aspects of Syria to the detriment of non-hellenized traditions. Finally, the position of Greek culture in relation to Roman culture and the place of Greek civilization in western self-identification has forced the Roman element off the stage.

The three related characteristics of Roman Syria, hellenization, difference with western provinces, and similarity to Rome, appear to be far more complex than described in most analyses of Roman Syria. The treatment of Syria as a distinct entity and separated or disconnected from the Roman empire cannot be justified and, I argue, distorts the picture of the events that occur in Syria after the Roman conquest.

### 1.3 Roman imperialism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century

In the previous sections I have demonstrated how common views about Roman Syria rest on little evidence and are perhaps more informative about the place of Oriental, Roman, and Greek cultures in Euro-American cultural traditions than about life in the Roman province of Syria. There is no good evidence to suggest that Syria developed independently from Roman rule. In fact, re-evaluations of textual and archaeological material have already hinted at the opposite. Great changes took place in the first centuries of Roman rule (1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> c. CE) in terms of civic urban culture, architecture, funerary patterns, and inscriptions. Now that it is no longer possible to connect these changes to prior practices, they need to be reconsidered and the reasons behind the changes sought in the provincial society of the 1<sup>st</sup> c. CE.

Funerary practices in Syria changed in terms of location, architecture, and decoration. There was a greater variety in forms, the tombs were larger and more visible (above-ground, made of stone, and at prominent positions), and new decorative (‘Greek’) symbols were employed. Cemeteries moved to a new location, connected to the civic landscape and flanking the main roads of the province. I propose that these changes were a direct result of the incorporation into the Roman empire. This incorporation upset local structures and resulted in a renegotiation of local social relations through a new use of material culture. In the following chapters I argue that

different expressions of social position, a changing relationship to land and resources, and new ideas about civic identities were represented in funerary practices. The coming of Rome resulted in economic, social, and political changes that created new relationships which can be read through the material remains of funerary practices.

In the next sections of this chapter I examine several approaches to addressing this proposition. The main conclusion is that patterns emerge that might not look 'Roman' but that are related to incorporation into the empire. These patterns are to be understood as resulting from asymmetrical power-relations between multiple actors which were acted out differently depending on the type of actor (conditioned by gender, social status) and on the context (urban, religious).

### *Imperial landscapes*

Alcock, in her study of Roman Greece, provides one method to look at the impact of empire beyond imperial artifacts and ideas. She focuses on economic and social changes visible in the landscape and argues that, since the administration of the province depended upon the cooperation of local power networks, its members became far more powerful than in previous periods. Their material affluence is visible, for instance, in the presence of wealthy landowners in the countryside. The disinterest of the Romans in the intensification of agriculture resulted in rural decline and produced a sharper contrast between rich and poor and altered social and political relationships.

Evidence from surveys indicates a redistribution of people in the countryside, where small sites disappeared. More farming took place on the large estates of wealthy landowners instead of on small family-sized plots. The rural landscape was thus transformed through a new system of landholding that favored the wealthier elements in Greek society.<sup>68</sup>

Alcock's study illustrates that Roman intentions, the pre-existing structures, and local actors are equally important in understanding provincial communities under Roman rule. A further important conclusion is that the impact of Roman rule need not be expressed through the adoption of 'Roman' goods, or even foreign goods. Patterns of local change can be connected to Roman rule as well.<sup>69</sup>

In chapters 3-5 I demonstrate how the location and visibility of tombs in the provincial landscape of Syria changed in the Roman period. Funerary architecture became a public site for

---

<sup>68</sup> Alcock 1993.

<sup>69</sup> Mattingly argues that this also happened in the Fenlands in Roman Britain (2004, 13).

the expression of social persona, which is linked to the development of a civic landscape and to conspicuous display by elite members of society, both resulting from Roman rule.

### *Colonial goods as cultural strategy*

Scholars of the western provinces employ another approach in addressing the impact of Roman rule through material culture. Uncomfortable with the models of culture transmission in traditional romanization studies, they have sought new models to address the change in material culture visible after conquest. These revolve around the idea that the coming of Rome resulted, consciously or unconsciously, in a redirection of local social relations and that within this redirection, Roman or foreign goods and ideas played a pivotal role.

As mentioned above, the governors of the Roman provinces relied in large part on local elites for the maintenance of order and tax collection, and these now played a role as mediators between the Romans and the rest of the provincial society. Several authors argue that the use of new artifacts was initiated by this group, for instance in Britain, France, and the Netherlands. These goods were, although not always produced in Rome, strongly associated with the Roman administration. The provincial elite found their interests aligned with those of Rome and tried to forge a connection with the Roman rulers by becoming more like them.<sup>70</sup>

Another aspect of Roman involvement was its potential to upset local power structures by removing some items used to express these. The armies, for instance, brought with them large numbers of coinage, foodstuffs and other goods, which possibly devalued items that had earlier only been accessible to elite members of the community.<sup>71</sup> Furthermore, if local leaders had maintained and legitimated their elite position through success in warfare, this was no longer an option in the period of prolonged peace in the first centuries of Roman rule. It is argued that competition over position now focused on a career within the Roman administration, which, like military prowess earlier, became a means of differentiation from other sections of society.

Scholars explain the adoption of new material culture as part of this process. New goods and ideas that referred to Roman rule could thus function as status symbols within existing processes of emulation and competition.<sup>72</sup> Not so much their origin but their usage is important in explaining the adoption of new goods. As demonstrated above in Thomas' analysis, the adoption of goods coming from a colonial power can only be understood in a local context.<sup>73</sup>

---

<sup>70</sup> Derks 1998, 35; Millet 1990; Woolf 1998.

<sup>71</sup> For instance Millett 1990, 38, 58.

<sup>72</sup> Alcock 1993, 181-191; Derks 1998, 35, 45; Garnsey & Saller 1987, 194; Millett 1990, 58; Woolf 1998, 33; 2002, 6-7.

<sup>73</sup> Thomas 1991.

In Syria no large-scale adoption of material culture from Italy or other western regions has been detected. However, as demonstrated above, the appropriation of a new, hellenized set of goods and ideas can be securely dated to the Roman period in Syria. These goods and ideas originating in Greece could potentially have operated in a strategy of local assertion of dominant position in society, similar to the way in which new 'Roman' goods were used by provincial elites in the western provinces. The strong connection between 'Roman' and 'Greek' traditions is relevant in this context. If hellenized ideas and artifacts were a form of cultural capital for the Roman elites, as the evidence suggests,<sup>74</sup> then the use of similar symbols by the provincial Syrian elite can be interpreted as an effort to align themselves with the Roman elite, i.e., hellenization as romanization.<sup>75</sup> Hellenized goods in this process do not indicate the becoming Greek of provincial communities, but signal a negotiation in which new goods are used according to a local set of rules and values. These artifacts and ideas are strongly associated with the political and economic elites in charge of the Roman empire.

In chapters 4-6 I demonstrate the use of this foreign symbolic ('Greek') language on tombs of Roman Syria. This is a new phenomenon in the 1<sup>st</sup> c. CE and can be linked to elite members of society (administrative, economic and sometimes religious leaders) and their changing position in the empire. I argue that hellenized symbols were used in the renegotiation of relationships among elites and between elites and other sections of society.

#### *Rome and the people without history*<sup>76</sup>

The approaches mentioned in the previous section are best applied to the visible groups in society, in the Roman case the urban, often male, elite groups. However, as Webster comments, the concept of emulation by local elites is a powerful but not a necessary one. There were other elite groups, for instance Druids, that explicitly did not choose the emulation path, and non-elite groups are rarely studied.<sup>77</sup> Instead, scholars treat non-elite choices as weaker emulation strategies, or as the trickle-down effect of elite artifacts and ideas to other sections of society. Such an approach assumes non-elites groups are passive, and this, as already discussed above, is problematic. The different communities in a provincial context were not passive recipients of foreign cultural influence, but active agents of local change. The adoption and adaptation of new

---

<sup>74</sup> See for instance Gruen 1990, 1992; Woolf 1994.

<sup>75</sup> See also Butcher who comments that the use of hellenized goods and ideas in Syria made the region part of a common identity in the eastern empire, similar to the way romanized goods were used in the western empire (2003, 207).

<sup>76</sup> Wolf 1982.

<sup>77</sup> Webster 2001, 215.

goods by non-elite groups should be explained along similar lines as those of provincial elite groups.

This is relevant for Syria, where changing patterns of urbanization and agriculture, as well as the use of a hellenized symbolic language, can be detected outside the urban centers. Inscriptions, names and representations of deities, and festivals and competitions in the rural towns and villages illustrate that changes occurred in other contexts besides those of urban male elite groups.<sup>78</sup>

Scholars have introduced two additional models besides emulation strategies to explain responses to imperial rule. Both are influenced by the postcolonial theory mentioned in the second part of this chapter. The first approach focuses on notions of resistance and subversive behavior in order to identify groups outside the governing and economic elite. These were first applied to the ancient Roman context in the 1970s in the example of North Africa. The French, and to some extent the Italian, colonial powers considered the Roman history of North Africa a part of their own history and enlarged the cultural distance between contemporary North Africans and the ancient Romans, for instance by controlling the study of written sources in Latin.<sup>79</sup> A response to this came from Maghrebi archaeologists who, instead of considering the indigenous people passive or marginal, emphasized the continuous but covert resistance of the indigenous people and questioned the depth of influence of Roman culture.<sup>80</sup> These studies have placed provincial populations on the map as active agents negotiating Roman rule. The archaeological application of resistance models, however, involves applying a checklist approach that was criticized earlier in this chapter. The absence of romanized goods and ideas is taken to mean an active act of resistance. Such a checklist approach fails to examine the specific local meanings of the adoption and rejection of certain artifacts.

The second model focuses on the synthesis that occurs in the colonial encounter. A process of mixture, also called hybridization or creolization, results in the formation of new, provincial, identities. These studies are informed by Bhabha's concept of hybridity, which deals with subjected people assimilating ideas from the colonizer.<sup>81</sup> Rather than becoming more like them, in Bhabha's conception they use this to create a new culture. Both colonizer and colonized have some kind of agency in the formation of this new culture, but the power asymmetries are essential in understanding the direction and outcome for different actors and contexts. In Bhabha's accounts, the hybrid subject people become a threat to the dominant culture, where a

---

<sup>78</sup> Bowersock 1994, 147, 167, 168. Also Millar 1993, 504, 523.

<sup>79</sup> Mattingly 1996, 51.

<sup>80</sup> For instance Bénabou 1982.

<sup>81</sup> Bhabha 1994.



similar-looking but subordinate individual cannot coexist with a dominant colonizer. This political aspect of Bhabha's hybrid subject people is difficult to analyze with archaeological remains, but his notions about the creation of new cultures mixing dominant and subordinate traditions have been applied successfully in archaeological analyses.

An example is Webster's analysis of religious iconography in Roman Gaul, in which a negotiation is visible between Roman and indigenous beliefs and iconographic traditions, creating an alternative pantheon. She argues that one response of non-elite groups was a partial emulation of elite culture (Roman in this case) mixed with indigenous traditions, thereby creating a new (creolized) religion that included the dominant culture as well as counter- or subcultures. This is evidenced by a selection of aspects from Roman and local elite religion (representation in human form), mixed with a rejection of other practices (epigraphic name-pairing). She concludes that provincial artifacts in the Roman world may appear romanized but perhaps operated according to different, indigenous sets of underlying rules.<sup>82</sup>

Van Dommelen draws similar conclusions in his analysis of three ancient colonial periods on Sardinia. The Phoenician, Punic and Roman periods differ in type of contact, number of colonists, and use of colonial or imported goods in local value systems. Whereas in some contexts the dominance of imported goods is conspicuous (Punic period agricultural production), in other contexts the changes are more selective (fertility cult performed at Genna Maria). Hybridization is demonstrated in the example of a cult celebrated in Roman times in the re-used well of Cuccuru Arriu, which displays a mixture of Punic, indigenous, and Roman elements.<sup>83</sup>

These examples go beyond the notion of a mixture of essentialist cultures such as Romano-British or Gallo-Roman. People did not become Roman, Phoenician, or European through the adoption of foreign goods; rather, they created a new identity in the face of provincial society, on top of existing ones. Everyone, potentially, had some kind of input and a new provincial, mixed culture came into being, one that included resistance and interaction.<sup>84</sup>

New, hybrid forms of provincial culture can be detected in the cities and towns of Roman Syria. In chapter five I examine hybridization in the context of funerary practices. The people in Roman Syria mixed symbols and materials that were part of a Mediterranean or imperial style of

---

<sup>82</sup> Webster 2001, 211-223; see also Webster 1997, 165-182, where she identifies religious practices of women in the context of empire (in Roman Britain). Ferguson's analysis of slave communities in the US in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century illustrates the same point. Objects that belonged to a white slave owner or that were made by nearby Indian communities might be used in a completely African manner. Differences in region, types of contact and demography are important in understanding the different archaeological distributions (Ferguson 1992).

<sup>83</sup> Van Dommelen 1997, 1998, 2005; see also Lyons & Papadopoulos 2002.

<sup>84</sup> See also Stein 2005, 6, 17, 28; and articles in Alcock, D'Altroy, Morrison & Sinopoli 2001.

architecture with local forms, and perhaps also with motives originating from outside the Roman world. The tombs in Syria were hybrid buildings in their outward appearance and represent not a Hellenized or Parthian but a local, Syrian-provincial way of burial.

Dietler described such developments as part of “an active process of creative appropriation, manipulation and transformation played out by individuals and social groups with a variety of competing interests”.<sup>85</sup> The use of new materials, ideas and styles combined with older traditions created multiple, hybrid provincial societies that differed depending on actor and context and change over time. Whereas the outward aspect of funerary practices (architecture and location) became the site of expressing redefinitions in social positions, the deeper ideas and values such as funerary ritual and beliefs about afterlife, changed to a much lesser extent. The final chapter (7) illustrates these limits of change.

#### 1.4 Syria as a Roman province

In 64 BCE, Syria was conquered by Roman armies, and over the next centuries its local traditions became entangled with the political, economic, and social structure of the Roman empire. Funerary patterns in Syria changed significantly in terms of location, architecture, and decoration during this period. In the next chapters, I examine these funerary patterns of Roman Syria. My selection of examples includes sites and regions in which urbanization increased and agriculture and trade economies intensified (Hauran, Limestone plateau, Palmyra) as well as points of contact with foreigners, in *coloniae* (Beirut) and in cities with large armed forces (Apamea, Palmyra, Doura Europos). These are compared to areas where less change is expected, either because of pre-existing urban structures (Hama, Tyre) or because of their location on the border between Rome and Parthia (Tell Sheikh Hamad). Aside from being one of the better published material groups in Roman Syria, funerary remains have the advantage over other material categories in their potential for exploring multiple communities, depending on gender, wealth, region, and type of settlement. A move beyond a focus on urban elites is necessary to explore the impact of Roman rule in a fuller extent.

In order to connect the changes in Syrian society to the coming of Rome, rather than to the continuation of earlier practices or to other changes in society that are unrelated to Roman rule, the funerary remains are compared chronologically with the Hellenistic period and regionally with Mesopotamia (modern Iraq), a region that was culturally similar to Syria but was never incorporated into the Roman empire.

---

<sup>85</sup> Dietler 2005, 63.

The endpoint of this study lies in the 4<sup>th</sup> c. CE (330s). In this period it is no longer possible to distinguish between a Roman center and a Syrian province, or these look profoundly different. The move of the center of the Roman world east to Constantinople, the change of Syria from a peaceful province to a battle zone between two empires (Roman and Sasanian), and the fragmentation of power-structures changed the political and social structures of the region once more. The official installation of Christianity in the early 4<sup>th</sup> c. CE, with its own ideas about death and afterlife particularly relevant for burial practices, also potentially changed the funerary record.

Syria's transformation as a result of incorporation into the Roman empire was fundamental, but it took a different form than in the western provinces. The neglected province of Syria and the body of evidence of funerary practices enhance our understanding of the process of Roman imperialism and, indeed, our understanding of imperialism in the past and present.

## References

- Abu-Lughod, J. L. *Before European Hegemony: The World System A.D. 1250-1350*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989.
- Alcock, Susan E. *Graecia Capta. The landscapes of Roman Greece*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
- . "Roman Colonies in the Eastern Empire." In *The Archaeology of Colonial Encounters*, edited by Gil J. Stein, 297-329. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 2005.
- . "Roman imperialism in the Greek landscape." *JRA* 93.2 (1989): 5-34.
- Alcock, Susan E., Terence N. D'Altroy, K. Morrison, and Carla M. Sinopoli. *Empires: Perspectives from Archaeology and History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Balty, Jean Ch., and Wilfried van Rengen. *Apamée de Syrie. Quartiers d'hiver de la IIe Légion Parthique. Monuments funéraires de la nécropole militaire*. Brussels: VUBPress, 1993.
- Bartl, Karin, and A. Chaaya. "Archäologische Untersuchungen der Südlichen Akkar-Ebene, Nordlibanon. Vorläufige Ergebnisse einer Oberflächenprospektion." In *Ausgrabungen und Surveys im Vorderen Orient I*, edited by Ricardo Eichmann, 23-48. Rahden/Westf: Verlag Marie Leidorf, 2002.
- Bénabou, M. "Les survivances préromaines en Afrique Romaine." In *L'Afrique Romaine. Les conférences Vanier 1980*, edited by C.M. Wells. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1982.
- Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. London & New York: Routledge, 1994.
- Bouchier, Edmund Spencer. *Syria as a Roman province*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1915.
- Bowersock, Glen W. *Studies on the eastern Roman empire*. Goldbach: Keip, 1994.
- Brunt, P.A. *Roman Imperial Themes*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990.
- Butcher, Kevin. *Roman Syria and the Near East*. Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2003.
- Butler, Howard C. *Publications of an American archaeological expedition to Syria in 1899-1900. Part.2. Architecture and other arts*. New York, 1903.
- Childe, V. Gordon *The Danube in prehistory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1929.
- Clarke, Graeme W. *Excavating and Interpreting the Governor's Palace, Acropolis, Jebel Khalid*. Canberra: Paragon Printers, 2003.
- Colledge, Malcolm A.R. *The Art of Palmyra*. London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1976.
- Collingwood, R.G. *Roman Britain*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1932.
- Cumont, Franz. *Fouilles de Doura-Europos 1922-1923*. Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1926.
- Curvers, Hans H., and Barbara Stuart. "The BCD Archaeology Project." *Baal* 3 (1998-1999).
- Derks, Ton. *Gods, Temples and Ritual Practices. The transformation of religious ideas and values of Gaul*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1998.
- Dietler, Michael. "The Archaeology of Colonialization and the Colonization of Archaeology. Theoretical Challenges from an Ancient Mediterranean Colonial Encounter." In *The Archaeology of Colonial Encounters*, edited by Gil J. Stein, 33-68. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 2005.
- Dijkstra, Klaas. *Life and loyalty : a study in the socio-religious culture of Syria and Mesopotamia in the Graeco-Roman period based on epigraphical evidence*. Leiden: Brill, 1995.
- Dommelen, P. van. "Colonial constructs: colonialism and archaeology in the Mediterranean." *World Archaeology* 28 (1997): 305-23.
- . "Colonial interaction and Hybrid Practices. Phoenician and Carthaginian Settlement in the Ancient Mediterranean." In *The Archaeology of Colonial Encounters*, edited by Gil J. Stein, 109-141. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 2005.

- . *On colonial grounds : a comparative study of colonialism and rural settlement in first millennium BC west central Sardinia*. Leiden: Faculty of Archaeology, University of Leiden, 1998.
- Dorna-Metzger, Francesca. "Hellenistic and Parthian-Roman pottery from the Upper Khabur survey: A preliminary study." In *Continuity and change in Northern Mesopotamia from the Hellenistic to the early Islamic period*, edited by Karin Bartl and S. R. Hauser, 363-375. Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1996.
- Downey, Glanville. *A history of Antioch in Syria: from Seleucus to the Arab conquest*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961.
- Downey, Susan B. *Mesopotamian Religious Architecture. Alexander through the Parthians*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988.
- . "The transformation of Seleucid Dura-Europos." In *Romanization and the city*, edited by E. Fentress, 154-172. Portsmouth: JRA supplementary series, 2000.
- Drijvers, H.J.W. "Romeinen in Syrië." *Phoenix* 26 (1980): 73-93.
- Fabian, Johannes. *Time and the other. How anthropology makes its object*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1983.
- Ferguson, L. *Uncommon ground. Archaeology and Early African America, 1650-1800*. Washington & London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992.
- Frere, Sheppard. *Britannia: a History of Roman Britain*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967.
- Garnsey, Peter, and Richard Saller. *The Roman Empire. Economy, Society and Culture*. Duckworth: London, 1987.
- Gerritsen, Fokke A. "Hellenistic and Roman-Parthian Pottery from the Balikh Valley, Northern Syria." *Oudheidkundige Mededelingen uit het Rijksmuseum van Oudheden te Leiden* 76 (1996): 93-108.
- Graf, David F. "Hellenisation and the Decapolis." *ARAM*, no. 4 (1992b): 1-48.
- Grainger, John D. *The cities of Seleucid Syria*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990.
- Gruen, E.S. *Culture and National Identity in Republican Rome*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992.
- . *Studies in Greek Culture and Roman Policy*. Leiden: Brill, 1990.
- Hall, Jonathan. *Ethnic identities in Greek antiquity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Haverfield, F. *The Romanization of Roman Britain*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912.
- Hingley, Richard. "The "legacy" of Rome: the rise, decline and fall of the theory of Romanization." In *Roman imperialism: post-colonial perspectives*, edited by J. Webster and N. Cooper, 35-48. Leicester, 1996.
- Hopkins, Clarke. *The discovery of Dura Europos*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979.
- . *Topography and Architecture of Seleucia on the Tigris*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan, 1972.
- Hopkins, Keith. "Taxes and Trade in the Roman Empire (200 B.C.-A.D. 400)." *JRS* 70 (1980): 101-125.
- Invernizzi, Antonio. "The Excavations at Tell 'Umayr." *Mesopotamia* 1 (1966): 39-62.
- . "The Excavations of Tell 'Umayr." *Mesopotamia* 2 (1967): 9-32.
- . "Ten Years' Research in the Al-Mada'in Area. Seleucia and Ctesiphon." *Sumer* 32 (1976): 167-175.
- Jones, A.H.M. *The cities of the eastern Roman empire (revised second edition)*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971.
- . "The Greeks under the Roman Empire." *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 17 (1963): 3-19.
- Jones, Sian. *The Archaeology of Ethnicity*. London & New York: Routledge, 1997.
- Keay, Simon, and Nicola Terrenato, eds. *Italy and the West. Comparative Issues in Romanization*. Oxford: Oxbow, 2001.

- Kennedy, David. "Greek, Roman and native cultures in the Roman Near East." In *The Roman and Byzantine Near East, volume 2. Some recent archaeological research*, edited by J.H. Humphrey, 77-106. Rhode Island, 1999.
- Kuhr, Amélie, and S. Sherwin-White, eds. *Hellenism in the East. The interaction of Greek and non-Greek civilizations from Syria to Central Asia after Alexander*. London: Duckworth, 1987.
- Lauffray, Jean. "Beyrouth Archéologie et Histoire, époques gréco-romaines. I. Période hellénistique et Haut-Empire romain." In *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt*, edited by Hildegard Temporini and Wolfgang Haase, 135-163. Berlin & New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1977.
- Leriche, P. Pierre. "The Greeks in the Orient: from Syria to Bactria." In *The Greeks beyond the Aegean: From Marseilles to Bactria*, edited by Vassos Karageorghis, 78-103. New York: Alexander S. Onassis Public Benefit Foundation (USA), 2002.
- . "Nouvelles données sur l'histoire architecturale et urbaine de Doura-Europos." In *Arabia antiqua. Hellenistic Centers around Arabia*, edited by Antonio Invernizzi and Jean-François Salles, 113-127. Rome: Istituto italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1993.
- Lerou, Natasha (Anastasia). "Constructing an Archaeological Narrative: The Hellenization of Cyprus." *Stanford Journal of Archaeology* 1 (2002): <http://archaeology.stanford.edu/journal/newdraft/lerou/index.html>.
- Lightfoot, Kent G. "Culture contact studies: redefining the relationship between prehistoric and historical archaeology." *American Antiquity* 60-2 (1995): 199-217.
- Lund, J. "The Northern Coastline of Syria in the Persian Period. A Survey of the Achaemenid Evidence." *Transeuphratène* 2 (1990): 13-36.
- Lyonnet, B. "Settlement pattern in the Upper Khabur (N.E. Syria), from the Achaemenids to the Abbasid period: methods and preliminary results from a survey." In *Continuity and change in Northern Mesopotamia from the Hellenistic to the early Islamic period*, edited by Karin Bartl and S. R. Hauser, 349-362. Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1996.
- Lyons, Claire L., and John K. Papadopoulos, eds. *The archaeology of colonialism*. Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2002.
- MacMullen, Ramsay. *Romanization in the Time of Augustus*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2000.
- Matheson, Susan B. *Dura-Europos, the ancient city and the Yale collection*. New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery, 1982.
- Matthers, J., ed. *The River Qoueiq, Northern Syria, and its Catchment. Studies arising from the Tell Rifa'at Survey 1977-79*. Vol. 98, *BAR International Series*. Oxford: Archaeopress, 1981.
- Mattingly, David J. "Being Roman: expressing identity in a provincial setting." *JRA* 17 (2004): 5-25.
- , ed. *Dialogues in Roman Imperialism. Power, discourse, and discrepant experience in the Roman Empire*. Vol. 23. Portsmouth: JRA supplementary series, 1997.
- . "From one colonialism to another: imperialism in the Maghreb." In *Roman imperialism: post-colonial perspectives*, edited by Jane Webster and Nick Cooper, 49-69. Leicester, 1996.
- Millar, Fergus. "The Problem of Hellenistic Syria." In *Hellenism in the East. The interaction of Greek and non-Greek civilizations from Syria to Central Asia after Alexander*, edited by Amélie Kuhrt and Susan Sherwin-White, 110-133. London: Duckworth, 1987.
- . *The Roman Near East 31 BC - AD 337*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
- Millett, Martin. *The Romanization of Britain: an essay in archaeological interpretation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Mitchell, S. *Anatolia. Land, Men and Gods in Asia Minor Vol.1 & 2*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993.

- Mommsen, Theodor. *The provinces of the Roman Empire. From Caesar to Diocletian, pt II*. New York: Charles Scribner's son, 1906.
- Morris, Ian. "Archaeologies of Greece." In *Classical Greece. Ancient histories and modern archaeologies*, edited by Ian Morris, 8-47. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- Perkins, Ann. *The art of Dura-Europos*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973.
- Pollard, Nigel. "The Roman Army as 'total institution' in the Near East? Dura-Europos as a case study." In *The Roman Army in the East*, edited by David L. Kennedy, 211-227. Portsmouth: JRA supplementary series, 1996.
- . "Roman material culture across imperial frontiers? Three case studies from Parthian Dura-Europos." In *The Greco-Roman East*, edited by S. Colvin, 119-144. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Price, S.R.F. *Rituals and Power. The Roman imperial cult in Asia Minor*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.
- Richardson, P. *City and Sanctuary. Religion and Architecture in the Roman Near East*. London: SCM Press, 2002.
- Rostovtzeff, M.I. *Dura-Europos and its Art*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1938.
- Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books Editions, 1978.
- Sanlaville, P. *Holocene settlement in North Syria*. Vol. 238, *BAR International Series*. Oxford: Archaeopress, 1985.
- Sartre, M. *The Middle East under Rome*. Cambridge & London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005.
- Sauvaget, J. "Le plan de Laodicée-sur-mer." *Bulletin d'Études Orientales* 4 (1934): 81-114.
- Schlumberger, Daniel. *L'Orient Hellénisé. L'art grec et ses héritiers dans l'Asie non méditerranéenne*. Paris: Éditions Albin Michel, 1970.
- Schmidt-Colinet, Andreas. *Das Tempelgrab Nr. 36 in Palmyra. Studien zur Palmyrenischen Grabarchitektur und ihrer Ausstattung*. Mainz am Rhein: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 1992.
- Schwartz, Glenn M., Hans H. Curvers, Fokke A. Gerritsen, J.A. MacCormack, N.F. Miller, and J.A. Weber. "Excavations and Survey in the Jabbul Plain, Western Syria: The Umm el-Marra project 1996-1997." *AJA* 104 (2000): 419-462.
- Segal, Arthur. *From Function to Monument. Urban Landscapes of Roman Palestine, Syria and Provincia Arabia*. Oxford: Oxbow, 1997.
- . *Theatres in Roman Palestine and provincia Arabia*. Leiden: Brill, 1995.
- Shanks, Michael. *Classical Archaeology of Greece. Experiences of the discipline*. London & New York: Routledge, 1996.
- Sherwin-White, Susan, and Amélie Kuhrt. *From Samarkhand to Sardis: a new approach to the Seleucid empire*. London: Duckworth, 1993.
- Spek, R. J. van der. "Ethnic segregation in Hellenistic Babylon." In *Ethnicity in Ancient Mesopotamia*, edited by W. H. van Soldt, R. Kalvelagen and D. Katz, 393-408. Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 2005.
- Stein, Gil J., ed. *The Archaeology of Colonial Encounters*. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 2005.
- Tate, G. *Les Campagnes de la Syrie du Nord du IIe au VIIIe siècle: un exemple d'expansion démographique et économique dans les campagnes à la fin de l'antiquité. Tome 1*. Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1992.
- Tchalenko, G. *Villages antiques de la Syrie du Nord; le massif du Bilus à l'époque romaine*. Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1953.
- Thomas, Nicolas. *Entangled Objects. Exchange, Material Culture and Colonialism in the Pacific*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991.
- Wacher, John. *The Coming of Rome*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1979.

- Walbank, F.W. *The Hellenistic world*. London: Fontana Press, 1981.
- Webster, Jane. "Creolizing the Roman Provinces." *AJA* 105.2 (2001): 209-225.
- . "A negotiated syncretism: reading on the development of Romano-Celtic religion." In *Dialogues in Roman Imperialism. Power, discourse, and discrepant experience in the Roman Empire*, edited by David J. Mattingly. Portsmouth: JRA supplementary series 1997.
- Webster, Jane, and Nick Cooper, eds. *Roman imperialism: post-colonial perspectives*. Leicester Archaeological Monographs No.3. Leicester: School of Archaeological Studies, University of Leicester, 1996.
- Whittaker, Dick. "Integration of the early Roman west: the example of Africa." In *Integration in the Early Roman West. The role of Culture and Ideology*, edited by Jeannot Metzler, Martin Millett, Nico Roymans and Jan Slofstra, 19-32. Luxembourg: Musée National d'Histoire et d'Art, 1995.
- Wolf, Eric. R. *Europe and the people without history*. Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982.
- Woolf, Greg. "Becoming Roman, staying Greek: culture, identity and the civilizing process in the Roman East." *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 40 (1994): 116-143.
- . *Becoming Roman. The origins of provincial civilization in Gaul*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- . "Generations of aristocracy. Continuities and discontinuities in the societies of Interior Gaul." *Archaeological Dialogues* 9.1 (2002): 2-15.